



A THRIVING LOCAL GAME

SAFEGUARDING 16/17-YEAR-OLD PLAYERS IN OPEN-AGE ADULT FOOTBALL

Version 1.0

A Guide For Clubs With 16/17-Year-Old Players

The FA and Suffolk FA are beginning a proactive drive to help support clubs to understand and ensure they are embracing their responsibilities for safeguarding 16/17 year old players.

Affiliated Footballs Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures is embedded across youth football and there is information, support and guidance for clubs with under 18 teams to help them to provide children and young people with fun, safe and inclusive football.

The purpose of this document is to support open-age adult football clubs to fully understand their safeguarding responsibilities for under 18s, and adults in disability teams.

For the avoidance of doubt every open-age adult club is required to safeguard under 18s and where there are adult disability teams to promote safeguarding adults, across every aspect of the club.

Please read the sections and take any actions you need to. Some clubs will already have completed the requirements detailed; others will be working towards ensuring this applies to all aspects of their club.

If you believe you already meet the requirements detailed below please review the safeguards you have in place across all aspects of your open-age adult teams from first team professionals, semi-professionals and amateurs to disability teams, community ventures and reserve teams for both men and women.



It's essential that every child (under 18) is afforded the appropriate safeguards at every level of the game and in every team

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'Know Your Rights'

Clubs with Open-age Adult Disability Teams



A stylized illustration of a castle with a lion rampant on a flag flying from a tower. The illustration is rendered in a dark red color against a lighter red background. The castle features a crenelated wall, a central tower with a dome, and a flagpole with a flag. The lion rampant is positioned on the flag. The text "So what does my club need to do?" is overlaid on the illustration in a white, sans-serif font.

So what does my club need to do?

What does my club need to do?



Clubs with Under 18s in open age football (including disability teams) are required to;

1. Adopt and adhere to Affiliated Footballs Safeguarding Children Policy
2. Identify which teams have 16 and/or 17 year old players
3. Identify the coaches/managers (including assistant coaches/managers) and medics for these teams and list them on The FA's Whole Game System alongside the registered team. This can be done by the club secretary, assistant secretary or if the club has a youth team by the Club Welfare Officer (Youth Teams).
4. Support coaches/managers (including assistant coaches/managers) and medics working with 16 and/or 17 year olds to complete an FA DBS Check
5. Provide 16 and 17 year old players with safeguarding information with the 'Know Your Rights' document



For more information or to discuss further, please contact Safeguarding@SuffolkFA.com

What does my club need to do?



Clubs with open-age adult disability teams are also asked to:

1. Adopt and share with members the Affiliated Football 'Safeguarding Adults Policy'
2. Appoint a Club Welfare Officer (Adult Disability Teams) and upload their name to The FA's Whole Game System
3. Encourage volunteers and staff to complete the newly launched free, online FA Safeguarding Adults course
4. Identify and list coaches/managers (including assistant coaches/managers) on The FA's Whole Game System alongside the registered team.



For more information or to discuss further, please contact Safeguarding@SuffolkFA.com

The background features a dark red gradient with stylized, lighter red graphics. On the left, there is a silhouette of a lion rampant. In the center and right, there are silhouettes of castle towers and battlements. The text is centered in white.

Where can I find Affiliated Footballs Safeguarding Children Policy?

Where can I find Affiliated Footballs Safeguarding Children Policy?

The Football Association has developed a range of Safeguarding Children Policy templates for your club.

Each club will have a different range of teams from youth, adult and disability. A policy for each can be found via;

[1.4A – Safeguarding Children Policy for Clubs with youth teams](#)

[1.4B – Open-Age Adult Clubs with 16-17 Year-old players](#)

The templates are editable and should be updated to include your club name where appropriate.

The document could then be uploaded to any club website/social media that the club may run and issued to club members when joining your club.



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FOOTBALL CLUB SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY

- XXXXXXXXXX**

Football Club acknowledges its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of every child and young person directly connected with the club and is committed to providing a safe environment for all. We recognise that those aged 16/17 years-of-age are legally defined as children and therefore we have a responsibility to ensure appropriate safeguards are in place. As such we subscribe to The Football Association's (The FA) Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures.

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Football Club endorses and adopts the following key safeguarding principles:

 - The child's welfare is, and must always be, the paramount consideration;
 - All children and young people have a right to be protected from abuse regardless of their; age, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, marital status or civil partnership, race, nationality, ethnic origin, **colour**, religion or belief, ability or disability, pregnancy and maternity;
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately; and
 - Working in partnership with other **organisations**, children and young people and their parents/**carers**, is essential. We acknowledge that every child or young person who plays or participates in football should be able to take part in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from poor practice and abuse.

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Football Club recognises that this is the responsibility of every adult involved in our club.
- XXXXXXXXXX**

Football Club has a role to play in safeguarding the welfare of all children and young people by protecting them from physical, sexual or emotional harm and from neglect or bullying. It is noted and accepted that The FA's Safeguarding Children Regulations (see The FA Handbook [TheFA.com/football-rules-governance/lawsandrules/fa-handbook](https://www.thefa.com/football-rules-governance/lawsandrules/fa-handbook)) apply to everyone in football whether in a paid or voluntary capacity, including coaches/managers, volunteers, match officials, helpers on club tours, or medical staff or other club officials/helpers.
- We endorse and adopt The FA's Safer Recruitment guidelines and we will:

 - Specify what the role is and what tasks it involves;
 - Request identification documents;
 - As a minimum meet and chat with the applicant(s) and where possible interview people before appointing them;
 - Ask for and follow up with 2 references before appointing someone; and
 - Where eligible require an FA-accepted DBS enhanced with barred list Check, in line with The FA's current Safeguarding Children Policy and Regulations.

All current **XXXXXXXXXX**

Football Club members working in eligible roles with children and young people, such as coaches/managers and physiotherapists, are required to hold an in-date FA accepted DBS enhanced with barred list check as part of safer recruitment practice.

All FA policies and procedures for Safeguarding can be found [HERE](#)

A stylized illustration in shades of purple and blue. On the left, a lion rampant is depicted. To its right is a flag on a pole. Below these elements is a castle with a prominent dome and crenellated walls. The background is a solid dark purple.

DBS Checks

DBS Checks

Introduction

The intentions of most people who work with children in football are good. However, as part of football's commitment to provide safe and enjoyable environments, sound recruitment and selection procedures are essential.

When clubs or leagues recruit new members, all reasonable steps must be taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with young people (U18).

As part of our safeguarding children strategy, The FA requires those working in eligible roles with children and young people to pass a DBS Check. This is in line with legislation and government guidance and is standard practice.

We provide the framework and guidance for DBS Checks in football. The leagues and clubs then have to implement this to ensure those required to have DBS Checks done have them.

Where the DBS Check highlights relevant information, this is investigated further and a risk assessment is carried out to establish whether or not they will be accepted to work with children and young people in football.



For more information on DBS checks, visit the FA website [HERE](#)

DBS Checks

What is a DBS?

The Disclosure and Barring Service Certificate which results from a DBS Check is a document containing confidential criminal history information held by the police and government departments. It can be used by employers to make safer recruitment decisions.

Disclosure information could include:

- Details of criminal records such as convictions and cautions;
- Information about a person's inclusion on children's or adults' barred lists;
- Other relevant information held by a local police force or government body;
- A statement that there is no information held about an individual.

The information included will depend on the type of disclosure applied for. Most checks in football are undertaken on those who work with children. An 'Enhanced DBS Check contains all conviction information, spent and unspent, and any other non-conviction information considered to be relevant by the police or other government bodies.



For more information on DBS checks, visit the FA website [HERE](#)

DBS Checks

Who needs a DBS Check?

Eligibility is governed by legislation and government guidance. In brief this means a DBS Check is required for anyone aged 16 years or over who undertakes any potentially unsupervised roles working directly with children and young people under the age of 18.

These activities include managing, training, coaching and supervising as well as giving advice or guidance on wellbeing, caring for children or driving a vehicle solely for children on behalf of a club or organisation. All coaches and managers working directly with under-18 players must hold a current, FA-accepted DBS Check.

You may have more than one role in football but you only need one DBS Check to cover all your roles in affiliated grassroots football.

Eligible Roles;

- Football Coach working with U18 players (including Goalkeeper coaches and assistant coaches)
- Football Manager working with U18 players
- First-aider/medic working with under-18s

Further information on eligible roles can be found [HERE](#)



For more information on DBS checks, visit the FA website [HERE](#)

DBS Checks

Do I need a DBS check as a committee member or player?

If your role is solely as secretary, chair, treasurer, club house manager, groundskeeper, caretaker, photographer, website administrator, or player you will not need to complete a DBS check.

As a committee member this is because you are not coaching, teaching or instructing, caring for, or supervising, advising or guiding on wellbeing, not driving for the organisation, or providing first aid on a frequent basis.

As a player a DBS is not needed as playing is not a DBS regulated activity.

HOWEVER, those holding these roles may be eligible for an Enhanced DBS Check if they have involvement within other areas of football activity such as a coach, manager or physio.

Example:

Mrs Ball is chairperson of Wyhampton FC and is also the First team assistant coach. As chairperson Mrs Ball is not eligible for a check, however she is eligible for an Enhanced DBS Check with children's barring list check for her coaching role, whether referred to as coach or assistant coach. As such, a check should be completed for her role as coach but not chairperson.



For more information on DBS checks, visit the FA website [HERE](#)

DBS Checks

How do I complete a DBS check?

Clubs With Youth Sections

If your club has a youth section then as an individual needing a DBS you should contact your Club Welfare Officer who will be able to assist you through the process.

Clubs Without Youth Sections or a Club Welfare Officer

The County FA has set up an account for each league to carry out a DBS check for applicants. If you are a club without a welfare officer or a youth section you should contact your league for the guidance notes on making a DBS application

Checks can be completed via the County FA . Please contact Safeguarding@SuffolkFA.com for more information and advice if needed.

Please note verification of documents must take place face to face so please take this into consideration when applying and choosing a document verifier.



A FA Guide on DBS Checks and FAQ can be found by click [HERE](#)

DBS Checks

What is the DBS process

1. Applicant sent guidance document from Club/League/CFA
2. Applicant registers for DBS online and enter basic details such as name, date of birth, previous address history etc.
3. Applicant contacts document verifier which is listed once basic details have been entered
4. Documents verified by verifier
5. Applicant logs back into account to pay for DBS check
6. Check is sent to DBS for processing
7. Check Complete – notification of approval/flagged sent to applicant and FA

Check Approved – DBS will be uploaded onto FA

Check Flagged – FA contacts applicant for further information



If you have any further questions related to DBS Checks, please contact Safeguarding@SuffolkFA.com

DBS Checks

How will you know I have a DBS Check?

An approved FA DBS check will appear on your FA Number (FAN).

Clubs should ensure that your role is listed within the Whole Game System and that roles are kept up to date by the club.

If you are joining a new club and have a DBS, the club you are joining can view your DBS information using your FAN and date of birth. All qualifications including DBS status are listed on your FAN.

A club can view an individual's qualification and DBS status by clicking on the person's name once in Whole Game System via either the Safeguarding or Team Officials tab.

A approved valid FA DBS will show in Green as per the screenshot below.

 **Darryn Marsh (33)** #55888963

- DBS - 28/06/2018
- SG - 03/07/2020
- EA - 21/11/2018
- WOW - 15/01/2020
- SCM - 11/05/2017
- SAM - 12/06/2019



If you need further assistance with Safeguarding in Whole Game System, please contact Safeguarding@SuffolkFA.com

DBS Checks

I have a Criminal Record. What should I do?

As an organisation using the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checking service to assess applicants' suitability for positions of trust, The FA complies fully with the DBS Code of Practice and the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act and undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly. It undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a DBS Check or self-disclosure on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed.

The FA is committed to the fair treatment of its staff, potential staff, volunteers and potential volunteers and users of its services, regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependants, age, physical/mental disability or offending background.

The FA is here to assist applicants who are worried about applying due to a previous conviction. If a conviction is highlighted when completing a DBS, the applicant may have to just engage with FA Safeguarding further to assess any potential risks.

At interview, or in a separate communication as part of a risk assessment for suitability for the post in question, we ensure that an open and measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offences or other matter that might be relevant to the position. At times this may be conducted by phone or letter or in person by a representative of The FA's safeguarding team.



Further information on the recruitment of ex-offenders and FA Policy can be found [HERE](#)

DBS Checks

Common Questions

Q: How much is a DBS check?

A check for a volunteer is £10.

Q: How long is my DBS valid for?

A: A DBS check is valid for 3 years

Q: I already have a FA DBS check with another club. Is it valid?

A: A DBS is completed in affiliated football rather than for a specific club or team so if you have completed a FA DBS which is approved and in date; your club will be able to view via Whole Game System.

Q: I already have a DBS from work. Is it valid?

A: A DBS from work is not valid unless you have signed up for the Update Service which you will pay a monthly direct debit for. If you have signed up for the Update Service your DBS can be registered with The FA.

Q: The FA has asked to see my DBS certificate. Is that normal?

A: This is not a regular occurrence but in many cases this is just routine to clarify information and is nothing to worry about. If the individual does not comply with the process they will be suspended. It is up to the FA to make a decision on whether they should be accepted.



If you have any further questions related to DBS Checks, please contact Safeguarding@SuffolkFA.com

The background features a stylized illustration of a castle. On the left, a shield with a rampant lion is visible. To the right, a flag on a pole stands above a domed structure. The castle's battlements are at the bottom. The entire scene is rendered in a light, semi-transparent style against a dark red background.

What is the 'Know Your Rights' document?

‘Know Your Rights in Football’

The Football Association has developed a guide for U16/U17 players to understand their rights and how to report whilst playing in open age football.

Clubs should ensure that it is sent to players who are existing and new members.

You may also wish to include the document on your club website and share on a regular basis on social media platforms.

Included within the guide is;

- Your rights
- What you can do
- Useful contact organisations



The ‘Know Your Rights’ document can be found [HERE](#)

A stylized, monochromatic illustration in shades of purple and pink. It features a castle with a crenelated wall in the foreground. Behind the wall, a lion rampant is depicted on the left, and a flag on a pole is on the right. The background is a solid, dark purple color.

Clubs with open-age adult disability teams

Open Aged Adult Disability Teams – What do we need to do?

The FA's safeguarding framework has now been extended to support adult open-age disability football, providing policy, procedures, regulations and guidance.

While it's important to recognise that adults may be at risk anywhere in the game, support and guidance is there for disability provision where there may be additional vulnerability.

1. Adopt and share with members the Affiliated Football 'Safeguarding Adults Policy'. NB 'easy read' versions are available for adults with learning disabilities. The policy can be found [HERE](#)
2. Appoint a Club Welfare Officer (Adult Disability Teams) and upload their name to The FA's Whole Game System
3. Encourage volunteers and staff to complete the newly launched free, online FA Safeguarding Adults course. Course guidance notes can be found [HERE](#)
4. Identify and list coaches/managers (including assistant coaches/managers) on The FA's Whole Game System alongside the registered team.



Further information in Safeguarding Adults in Disability Football can be found [HERE](#)



CONTACT US For bespoke club advice

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