

Criminal Records Check - FAQs

Important information relating to FA Criminal Records Checks.

CRB stands for 'Criminal Record Bureau'. On 1 December 2012 the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) merged to form the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS). The CRB and ISA therefore no longer exist.

Application paperwork

As a result of the change to DBS the paper application form has changed. From 31/01/13 the old CRB forms were replaced by the new DBS forms.

Quicker, cheaper and simpler processing of criminal records checks!

65 percent of people requiring criminal records checks in football are now using the online application process through TMG CRB. This service provides quicker, cheaper checks which are simple for clubs and organisations to administer. Feedback from users of the service has been extremely positive. We strongly recommend that applicants switch to the FA Online criminal records checks application system. For more about the Online application system, e-mail FAchecks@TheFA.com or see (**How do I get an FA Enhanced Criminal Record Check?**)

What is a Criminal Records Check?

A Criminal Record Check Disclosure Certificate is a document containing impartial and confidential criminal history information held by the police and government departments which can be used by employers to make safer recruitment decisions.

Disclosure information could include:

- Details of criminal records
- 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
- Or state that there is no information

The information included on the document will depend on the type of disclosure applied for and the table below indicates the different levels and type of checks.

Disclosure type	
1. DBS Enhanced Criminal Records Check with Children's Barred List	Those working in Regulated Activity with children
2. DBS Enhanced Criminal Records Check with Adults Barred List	Those working in Regulated Activity with adults
3. DBS Enhanced Criminal Records Check	Those eligible but not defined as Regulated Activity
4. DBS Standard Criminal Records Check	Football Stewards only
5. Basic Criminal Records Checks (Disclosure Scotland)	Anyone – no restrictions

Enhanced Criminal Records 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.

Standard Criminal Records Check contains all conviction information, spent and unspent, including cautions.

Basic Criminal Records Checks contains only convictions considered unspent under The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

For more detailed information about Enhanced Criminal Record Checks please visit www.gov.uk and search for criminal records checks.

Why do people in football need to have a Criminal Record Check?

Not everyone in football needs one. See 'Do I need an FA Enhanced Criminal Record Check'.

The law requires that The FA does all that it can to prevent people who are barred from working with children in Regulated Activity, from becoming involved in football with U18s. A DBS Enhanced Criminal Record with Children's Barred List Check tells The FA if a person is barred. The FA also use DBS Enhanced Criminal Records Checks for roles that are eligible. These checks help The FA to make informed recruitment decisions about the suitability of people with criminal records who are seeking to have a role with U18s football.

Do I need an FA Enhanced Criminal Record Check?

There are two clearly defined workforces that will require checks: those working in the child workforce in roles with U18s and those working with adults at risk.

Those who are working or volunteering directly with children and young people in football need to have a DBS Enhanced Criminal Record Check.

This includes those who are teaching, training, instructing, supervising, giving advice or guidance on wellbeing or caring for children or driving a vehicle solely for children on behalf of a club or football organisation.

In order to have a check, your involvement needs to be frequent. This is usually described as once a week or more, four days or more in one month or overnight although occasionally people with lower levels of contact may still need one.

Those who carry out these roles with children frequently and are unsupervised will need a DBS Enhanced Criminal Record Check with Children's Barred List.

The following roles in U18s football should have a DBS Enhanced Criminal Record Check: with Children's Barred List:

- Those in designated safeguarding/welfare officer roles e.g. Club Welfare Officers
- Team Managers, Coaches and Assistants (*this includes managers and coaches who are referred to as Assistant Manager's or Coaches*)
- Tutors, Mentors, Assessors, Sport Scientists
- Referees in U18 football, Referee Mentors, Referee Coaches and Assessors
- Professional Club Heads of Recruitment, Recruitment Officers (*also referred to as Scouts*), Agents, Chaperones, Landladies / Landlords, House Master's, and Host Families
- First Aiders, Doctors, Physios and other Health and Care Professionals Council (HCPC) registered roles
- Chaplains
- Regular Club Drivers.

Ordinarily, Club Chairmen, Treasurers and Secretaries do not require a check, if they are just or mainly administrative roles. However, if the people in these roles also help with coaching or at matches, then they will need a DBS Enhanced Criminal Record Check with Children's Barred List in their role as a coach, team assistant, etc.

Lots of roles do not need to have checks, for example: you do not need to have a check to watch your child play, if you occasionally run the line or if you drive your own child and his/her friends to games if this is a private and personal arrangement with other parents, or if your role is mainly administrative.

If you have been asked to have a check and you don't think you need one, please ring The FA Criminal Record Body on 0845 210 8080 or e-mail FAChecks@TheFA.com for advice.

If you have been asked to check certain individuals and are not sure if they need a check, then please speak to your County FA Welfare Officer or e-mail FAChecks@TheFA.com for advice.

It is very important that people who do not need a check are not required to have one, as this is breaking the law and has serious consequences.

How do I get an FA Enhanced Criminal Record Check?

You may have more than one role in football but you only need one DBS Enhanced Criminal Record Check to cover all your roles. Choose the role in which you have the most frequent contact with U18s, from the table below:-

Your role in football	Action to take
Grassroots Under 18s coach, manager, first aider or other Club based eligible role	Speak to your Club Welfare Officer
Club Welfare Officer	Speak to your County FA Welfare Officer*
Referee	Contact your County FA Referee Development Officer
Licensed Coach applicant	Ring 0845 210 8080 or e-mail FAChecks@TheFA.com for advice
Working in a private soccer school or unaffiliated football	You may not be able to get a, FA Enhanced Criminal Record Check. Please speak to your line manager or contact 0845 210 8080 or e-mail FAChecks@TheFA.com for advice
Working in Premier League Club	Contact the Children's Services Officer at your Club
Working in Football League Club	Contact the Child Protection Officer or contact 0845 210 8080 or e-mail FAChecks@TheFA.com for advice
Unsure what you should be doing	0845 210 8080 or e-mail FAChecks@TheFA.com for advice

What is the minimum age for an FA Enhanced Criminal Record Check?

The legal minimum age is 16 years of age.

How much does it cost?

This depends on whether or not you are a volunteer and what application method you use. The Home Office is very strict in its definition of volunteers. The Home Office define a volunteer as:-

"Any person engaged in an activity which involves spending time, unpaid (except for travel and other approved out of pocket expenses), which aims to benefit some third party other than or in addition to a close relative".

The applicant must not benefit directly from the position the Criminal Record Check application is being submitted for. The applicant must not:

- Receive any payment (except for travel and other approved out-of-pocket expenses).
- Be on a work placement.
- Be on a course that requires them to do this job role.
- Be in a trainee position that will lead to a full time role/qualification.

If you are unsure whether or not you are a volunteer you must contact us on 0845 210 8080 for advice. Making a dishonest application may have serious consequences.

You are	Administration fee paper application method*	Administration fee online application method	Government charge	Total
A Volunteer	£15.30*	£10	Nil	£20 or £10 depending on application method
Not a Volunteer	£15.30*	£10	£44	£64 or £54 depending on application method

* This price will increase from 1st June 2013 to £20. This increase in cost is directly linked to processing changes that have had to be implemented, as a result of the Protection of Freedoms Act, 2012.

Applications can now be made online. These are cheaper, quicker and prevent the errors that often cause delays in processing. Ask your Club Welfare Officer if your club is registered to use the online application service and, if not, ask them to contact FAChecks@TheFA.com for registration details. There is an easy to follow e-guide which describes step-by-step, how to use the online application process.

My Club doesn't know about the online method. What should I do?

Your Club can speak with their CFA Welfare Officer, email FAChecks@TheFA.com or ring 0845 210 8080 for information.

Why doesn't The FA pay for my check?

By developing the online Criminal Record Check application method, costs have been reduced. To keep costs down for Clubs, they are encouraged to use this method of application. The FA has made significant investments in seeking to make children's football fun and safe, through its education programmes, case management services and all the other support services available for clubs, leagues and individuals.

I have had a Criminal Record Check for my work, sport or voluntary role. Do I need another one?

Yes. The FA has taken advice and there are serious risks in carrying Disclosures from one job to another. The Government has said they want to make Disclosures 'portable' and The FA fully supports this. The DBS Update Service is due to be available from Spring/Summer 2013. Once the full details are known The FA will seek to introduce it, however, existing Criminal Records checks will not be included in the new service. To make a criminal records check 'portable' you will be required to make a new application and subscribe to the new service via www.gov.uk.

If you are in a Premier League Club your check may cover you for Football League or FA activities. Contact your Children's Services Officer for advice.

How long does it take to get an FA Enhanced Criminal Record Check?

Paper applications take on average 6-8 weeks. The online application method means 80% are completed within 10 days.

You can check the progress of your application online via the DBS website. To do this you need to keep the Form Reference Number from your paper Disclosure Application Form. This begins with an 'F' and has 10 digits. [Click here to track progress.](#)

If you are using the online application process you can track progress using the E Application number emailed to you as part of the process. [Click here to track progress.](#)

Why do some checks take longer than others?

Delays may be due to a number of reasons:-

- Complex address history
- Common name
- Delays in the local Police forces and in accessing local records.

Club Welfare Officers should use the Online Safeguarding Service accessed via Member Services to ensure the application progresses to an 'Accepted' status. People should be under supervision until their criminal records check shows as 'Accepted'.

[Click here to link to the Online Safeguarding Service.](#)

Best practice means people should wherever possible help or work in pairs or groups. This provides safeguards for everyone.

Why are some people asked for fingerprints?

In some cases the DBS and Police cannot confidently match the person against a record. Some names are more common than others and there may be two or more records with the same name and date of birth. The Police need to use another 'identifier' and finger prints are an effective way of

ensuring the correct record is identified and released. This is not at all unusual and is nothing to worry about.

If you have been asked for fingerprints and you want to find out more, please e-mail: FAChecks@TheFA.com or ring 0845 210 8080 for advice and assistance.

What if there is something on the Criminal Record Check Certificate?

The FA is very fair and it does have a duty to make sure the information released does not affect the safety of children. Every Disclosure is assessed individually taking into account the person's age at the time of the incident; the time expired since the conviction, the way the court dealt with the crime and other relevant information.

Old offences are not viewed as seriously as recent offences. Minor and financial crimes are usually not as relevant. Juvenile offending is generally less concerning than adult offending.

Recent assaults, violence with prison sentences, sexual crimes and drug supply are considered as a higher risk.

The FA will sometimes contact you about convictions or information on your Criminal Record Certificate and ask you to provide two character references. This is to reassure The FA you are now suitable to be involved in children's football and that your convictions, or other information are not relevant to the welfare of U18s in football. If you are asked for this information it is very important you provide it quickly. The FA may suspend people who do not reply to these requests for information.

The final decision will be made by a Panel of people who are fair and careful in their decision making.

Occasionally The FA may make a decision that a person should be suspended whilst these enquiries are carried out. If this happens you will be given clear information about what you may and may not do in football and how to progress your situation.

When the enquiry process is complete and The FA is satisfied, the Disclosure will be treated as if it were clear of convictions. This means The FA Online Safeguarding Service will be updated to show you as 'Accepted' in football and your Disclosure will be shredded in accordance with the law. You will receive a letter telling you when this happens.

To speak to someone in confidence about your history or to ask more about this process please call The FA Criminal Record Body enquiry line on 0845 210 8080 or e-mail FAChecks@TheFA.com with your query.

To find out more about the requirements on The FA to use Disclosures fairly visit www.gov.uk and follow the links to 'Employing People' and then 'Recruiting and Hiring'. This website can also put you in touch with organisations that support ex offenders.

Old and minor convictions and cautions

At the end of March 2013, the Home Office announced that it had started the legislative process (subject to agreement by Parliament) so that certain old and minor cautions and convictions will no longer be disclosed on a DBS certificate.

This action is in response to the Court of Appeal judgment in January 2013, which stated that the disclosure of all cautions and convictions on a DBS Certificate was incompatible with Article 8 of the Convention for Human Rights.

Since the judgment, the DBS has been working very closely with the Home Office to develop a set of filtering rules that would remove certain old and minor convictions and cautions from a DBS certificate. The filtering rules which are now before parliament for consideration are:

An adult conviction will be removed from a criminal record certificate if:

- (i) 11 years have elapsed since the date of conviction
- (ii) it is the person's only offence and
- (iii) it did not result in a custodial sentence.

Even then, it will only be removed if it does not appear on the list of specified offences. If a person has more than one offence, then details of all their convictions will always be included.

An adult caution will be removed after 6 years have elapsed since the date of the caution - and if it does not appear on the list of specified offences.

For those under 18 at the time of the offence:

A conviction received as a young person would become eligible for filtering after 5.5 years - unless it is on the list of specified offences, a custodial sentence was received or the individual has more than one conviction.

A caution administered to a young person will not be disclosed if 2 years have elapsed since the date of issue - but only if it does not appear on the list of specified offences, which can be seen on the attached link <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2003/44/schedule/15>

The changes will not come into force until after the legislation has completed its passage through Parliament. Until then, it's business as usual.

What if the information on my Criminal Records Certificate Disclosure is wrong?

You need to tell the DBS immediately. The DBS refer to this process as a 'Dispute'. If you wait more than ninety days information cannot be changed.

It is very important to tell the DBS as you might find the wrong information affects your ability to have a role in U18s football or to get a job elsewhere.

Information about how to contact the DBS will be on the back of your Disclosure. To start the process you can ring 0870 9090 811 or visit www.gov.uk and follow the links to 'Employing People' and then 'Recruiting and Hiring'.

Sometimes The FA Criminal Record Body disputes a Disclosure because the postcode is wrong or a name has been printed incorrectly by the Home Office. This may result in a second Disclosure being issued to you with the correct information. If this happens you are advised to destroy the first one.

Who will see my Disclosure?

Currently you will get a copy delivered to your home address and The FA will also receive a copy. From Spring/Summer 2013 only your copied will be issued and The FA may request to see your personal copy in order to update its records. Full details of this process will be made available in due course. You should not be asked by your Club Welfare Officer or anyone else in your club to show

your check. The Club can access the details they need by using Member Services to check the Online Safeguarding Service. You do not need to show your check to anyone outside of The FA's recruitment process. The FA may however, ask you to share your copy with the County Welfare Officer, or in the Football League, the Child Protection Officer as they may be directly involved with assessing your suitability to be involved in U18s football.

If there is no relevant criminal history a record will be kept stating that you have completed the Criminal Record Check process and there is currently no known reason why you should not be accepted into football. Club Welfare Officers and Counties can use Member Services to check the Online Safeguarding Service and see your Disclosure has been 'Accepted' by The FA. This system can also show the Club your Safeguarding Children training record. The FA's copy of your Disclosure is destroyed.

If there is a criminal history a set process will be followed. For more about this see the FAQ 'What if there is something on The FA Criminal Record Check?'

Neither your club nor County FA will be told what is on your record. If, however, you are suspended, your club and County FA will be told of the suspension.

What happens if I change clubs or register with a new County FA?

Speak to the Club Welfare Officer at your new club. They can access The FA's Online Safeguarding Service via Member Services to ensure that your Disclosure has been accepted. You will need to provide evidence of your identity, but not your Disclosure certificate. You do not need to show your Disclosure to anyone outside of The FA's recruitment process.

Some Clubs may ask you to have a new check especially if your previous one is over three years old. This is nothing to worry about and is simply best practice. Some Clubs and Counties require you renew your check every three years and this is also best practice.

If you move counties e.g. as a Referee your new County FA can access your previous records, however depending on when your check was done, they may require you to complete an updated one.

Will I need to renew my Criminal Records Check?

Given that a criminal records check is a snapshot in time and therefore potentially only accurate at the time it was printed, it is best practice to renew check every three years. Some Clubs, Leagues and Counties already enforce this.

In Spring/Summer 2013 a new DBS 'Update Service' will be introduced. As soon as further information on how this will work is available The FA will seek to introduce it, however, existing Criminal Records Checks will not be included in the new service. To make a Criminal Records Check 'portable' you will be required to make a new application and subscribe to the new service via www.gov.uk

We will share more about this, once the DBS Update Service is available, including what the renewals policy will be for those who do not use the DBS update Service.

Where can I get more information?

For more about the Criminal Record Check process visit www.gov.uk and follow the links to 'Employing People' and then 'Recruiting and Hiring'. This website also carries information about organisations that support ex offenders.

How do I make a complaint?

To make a complaint about any aspect of The FA Criminal Records process please contact The FA Criminal Record Check Body, email FAChecks@TheFA.com or call 0845 210 8080 or write to:

Complaints, The FA Criminal Record Body, 1 Wilford Business Park, Ruddington Lane, Nottingham, NG11 7EP

The FA Criminal Record Body will direct your complaint to the appropriate person.