

Welfare Officers FAQs

**Football has a clear responsibility towards young people and a Welfare Officer is vital for clubs**

**No Welfare Officer, no 2009-10 affiliation - Don't risk it.**

**Why is it so important to have a Welfare Officer?**

**All sports have a responsibility to ensure they provide a safe and fun environment for children and young people.**

Through the Every Child Matters: Change for Children programme, the government makes it very clear that sport has to put safeguards in place. Football, along with other sports such as cricket, rugby and swimming - to name but a few - believe the best way to do this is to appoint a Welfare Officer.

For more information on what is expected of sport in terms of safeguarding children, go to

[www.thecpsu.org.uk](http://www.thecpsu.org.uk) or to [www.everychildmatters.co.uk](http://www.everychildmatters.co.uk)

**Football accepts it has a clear responsibility towards young people.** Making sure everyone knows how to report concerns about a child's welfare is essential. Knowing how to deal with poor practice issues is also vital. Lots can be done very simply – but football needs leagues and clubs with youth teams to appoint a Welfare Officer.

**What does a Welfare Officer do?**

**Welfare Officers have two key roles:**

- Be informed and aware of the league or club's responsibilities when running football activities for children and young people. For example:
  - \* ensuring these responsibilities are well understood by others
  - \* developing best practice processes.
- Helping league and club personnel understand their 'duty of care' towards children and young people. For example:
  - \* ensuring all relevant people complete The FA's 'Safeguarding Children' training programme
  - \* helping to make sure trips away are organised properly
  - \* managing the roll out of FA CRB checks.

## **What type of person makes a good Welfare Officer?**

### **Someone who:**

- Always puts children's welfare first
- Is a good communicator
- Has a common sense approach
- Is willing to learn and seek advice
- Is over the age of 18

## **Why would anyone – perhaps me – want to become a Welfare Officer?**

### **You might want to go for this role if:**

- You want children/youngsters to be safe and have fun
- You can see a number of ways the league or club could be improved
- You feel a bit more planning would make a huge difference
- You don't fancy coaching, but you want to support your child's club
- You love working with young people and are willing to learn
- You have just the right skills
- Someone has to – you need to affiliate.

## **Do you need qualifications for this role?**

**Welfare Officers don't need to have a professional background in Safeguarding Children, but they do need to:**

- Have the interests of the child at heart and the ability to maintain this perspective when dealing with situations that may arise.
- Attend The FA's Safeguarding Children Workshop and the specific Welfare Officer training.
- Have an accepted FA CRB Enhanced Disclosure in place.

## **Can more than one person take on the role?**

**Yes – we welcome this in clubs/league with large numbers of teams.** Why not get two or three people to share the responsibilities, learn together and support each other?

It's also good to have a male and female Welfare Officer if you have both boys' and girls' teams. However, The FA only needs one named person for its main database, so we can communicate effectively through one person in every league and club.

### **Is there anyone who can't become a Welfare Officer?**

**Yes - anyone who is suspended under The FA's Safeguarding Children Regulations.**

Remember, to be a Welfare Officer you are required to be at least 18-years-old.

### **How do I become a Welfare Officer?**

**That's easy, talk to your club or league committee and let them know you want to take the role on. The club or league will need to nominate you for this position. You will then need to:**

- Apply for an Enhanced CRB Disclosure via The FA CRB Unit for more information on how to do this, [click here](#)
- Attend The FA's [Safeguarding Children Workshop](#)
- Attend The FA's [Welfare Officers Workshop](#)

### **How much time will I need to give to the Welfare Officer role?**

**This will depend on where your club or league is at now such as;**

- How many youth teams there are
- If there anyone else willing to act as a welfare officer to support you
- The numbers of volunteers who need to complete an FA CRB check
- If you already have an up to date Safeguarding Children Policy
- How aware your club or league is to their responsibilities when running activities for children.

### **How can I ensure everyone knows who I am and what my role is?**

**Ensuring you are on the committee is a good starting point. Make sure your name is included in the club or league handbook.**

The FA believes it is best practice to hold an information evening/session at the start of the season - which is the ideal place to be introduced. Arrange to meet with the clubs coaches and team managers so they know who you are and can introduce you to the players over the coming weeks. Find out when newsletters or other communications are sent to parents/carers - can you put some information into this?

### **How do I roll out FA CRB checks in my club?**

**First of all you need to have an accepted FA CRB linked to your club record.** You can then be authorised to check other members of the club. If you are not already active in checking other club

members your club may be required to complete a written authority. Alternatively, the club secretary may be able to authorise this by updating the Online Safeguarding Service.

Please call **0845 210 8080** or read on below for more information.

### **How do I roll out FA CRB checks in my league?**

**To be authorised to verify ID documents within your league, your County FA must issue you with a PIN reference number supplied by The FA CRB Unit.**

For further information contact your [County FA](#) or The FA CRB Unit.

### **How do I know everyone who needs a check has had one?**

**The FA has an Online Safeguarding Service to give feedback to clubs on the progress of club members, CRB checks and safeguarding children training.**

The appointed club secretary of every FA affiliated club which has at least one youth team, received a letter from The Football Association providing an update on Safeguarding Children in the game. Contained in this update was a username and password for the Online Safeguarding Service. This enables them to log on via <http://crbonline.thefa.com> which directs them to a page where the user can login and also change their password from the one which they have been supplied with, to one that is more personal and memorable.

All Safeguarding information is shown on one main page, which is divided into three sections; Club Details, About this service, and a lists section.

The CRB outcomes shown on this page are real time, live updates. As soon as an individual's Disclosure Application Form (DAF) is received by The FA CRB and logged on the system, an individual appears as 'In Progress'.

Throughout the history of that CRB check, the CRB outcome may be blank, 'Accepted', or 'In Progress'. If it is blank, this may mean that the person is in a role that is not eligible for a check, or that the check has not been started or that it has been 'timed out' as the person has not provided all the information required for the check to be progressed.

### **How does the Club Welfare Officer gain access to the site?**

**This is really straightforward.** As long as an individual has an accepted FA CRB check and a valid Safeguarding Children certificate (formerly known as Child Protection and Best Practice) then they

are eligible to be appointed as the Club Welfare Officer (CWO). This can be actioned by the Club Secretary when they are using the service, by clicking on the 'Assign' button on the left on that individual's record. The updated CWO appears in real time and the button does not appear for individuals who are not eligible.

The CWO then requests access via the screen above. They will need their FAN, club ID number and affiliation number. A password will then be emailed to them direct and they can access the system.

**What happens if there are people missing from the club list, or people showing who are not part of the club?**

**If Club Secretaries or Welfare Officers have queries on the data or outcomes being shown, they should use the forms on the site to report this.**

**How do I check new members who join the club, who say they have an FA CRB check?**

**There is a form on the system that assists you with this.**

You can simply use this to verify that The FA knows of no reason to exclude them from children's football.

**Why is it taking a long time for someone's CRB check to show as accepted?**

**You should not assume there is a problem if a Disclosure takes a long time.**

Delays may be due to a number of reasons:

- It could be that the person has had a lot of address changes
- There may be a number of people with the same name and date of birth and the Police have to get the correct record
- There may also be delays in the local Police forces. To see if there are delays in your area go to [www.crb.gov.uk](http://www.crb.gov.uk) and enter 'Police Performance' as a search word. You can then click on your local force to see how they are doing.

**What do I do if a club member has refused to do a CRB?**

**If this club member is in a role that is eligible for a CRB check and they will not complete a check, then they should not be allowed to continue in that role.**

They may continue in another role which doesn't have direct access to or influence over children.

**A club member is struggling to show me sufficient ID, what do I do?**

**In these instances, please call the enquiry line on 0845 210 8080.**

**Someone was showing as 'In Progress' and is now not showing, why is this?**

**If an applicant does not complete the process i.e. fails to provide all the information required for their check to be processed, then they will not become "accepted" and should not be used in children's football.**

The Online Safeguarding Service makes it very clear who is and who is not accepted.

**What kind of concerns should I report to the County FA Welfare Officer?**

**The CFA Welfare Officer is there to support you - so if you are not sure, ask.**

But as a general rule, follow your club/league policy to deal with poor practice issues (such as poor spectator behaviour). If this doesn't solve the problem, or you don't have a policy to deal with the issue, contact your County FA Welfare Officer for advice and support. You can then put this policy in place and deal with these issues in future.

The FA's Safeguarding Children and Welfare Officer Workshops will help you to understand what you need to action and when it's advisable to ask for some guidance from your County FA Welfare Officer.

If you have a serious concern about a young person's welfare, follow The FA's reporting procedures detailed in The FA's Safeguarding Children Policy, Procedures and Implementation Guidance for Grassroots Football, [click here](#) to view the document.

**Would I have to attend every match?**

**No – this will not be necessary.**

Part of your role as the Welfare officer is about helping members in your club/league understand what their responsibilities are. Remember, Safeguarding Children is everyone's responsibility. You will be expected to ensure everyone knows you are the Welfare Officer, what your role is and how you can be contacted.

**Could I be a Club Welfare Officer and the Welfare Officer for the league?**

**This is something you would need to talk to the leagues committee about.**

This is to ensure that there is not a conflict of interests if you were required to deal with a situation

about your club on behalf of the league.

**Will I be expected to be on the Club Committee?**

**Yes, The FA recommends all Welfare officers sit on their club or league committee.**

It's important that you are in a position to influence decisions that are in line with the club/leagues safeguarding children policy and develop an 'aware environment'.

**What happens if we don't put a Welfare Officer in place?**

**You won't be able to affiliate your league or club for the 2008-09 Season.** This mandate/policy is in place in every County Association in England.

**Is there anyone I can talk to about this role?**

**You can either contact your County FA Welfare Officer at your local [County FA](#).** They will definitely be able to give you further insight to the role and direct you to someone who is currently holding that position locally. Alternatively you could speak to your league and see if they have other clubs registered to them that have appointed Welfare Officers.

**I still have some questions who can I ask?**

**You can either contact your County FA Welfare Officer at your local [County FA](#) or email [Safeguarding@TheFA.com](mailto:Safeguarding@TheFA.com)** If you have specific enquiries to do with CRB, telephone: **0845 210 8080** or email: [CRB@TheFA.com](mailto:CRB@TheFA.com)

**'Let's make football safe – not sorry'.**