



# Keeping people involved in football safe

The FA's safeguarding plan from 2021-2024



easy  
read

# Contents

Page

---

Introduction 4

.....

What we have done in the past 7

.....

Working together 10

.....

Our principles 14

.....

What we are going to do 17

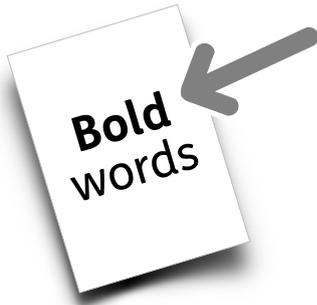
.....

Letting someone know 30

.....

For more information 34

.....



In this Easy Read document, difficult words are in **bold**. We explain what these words mean in the sentence after they have been used.



Some words are [blue and underlined](#). These are links which will go to another website which has more information.

# Introduction



The Football Association (FA) is in charge of football in England.



We have written this **safeguarding** plan to show what we are doing and what we are going to do to keep people involved in football safe.

**Safeguarding** means keeping children and adults who may be at greater risk safe from harm and abuse.



In 2016, we found out that in the past, hundreds of people had been abused at football clubs when they were children.



Even though this had happened a long time ago, it made us work even harder to keep all children and adults involved in football safe.



We asked a judge called Clive Sheldon to write a report about:

- what had gone wrong.
- what we should do differently.



Everything Clive Sheldon recommended has been included in this plan.



Our plan will work to help people to be safer in:

- football clubs.



- FA Partner programmes.



- Wembley Stadium and St. George's Park.



- all England teams.



- events and activities that we run.



- work we do with other organisations.



Our plan does not affect football organisations that do not work with us.

# What we have done in the past



We have changed how we work since 2000 to keep people who play football safe, including:



- training all coaches, managers, referees and welfare officers about safeguarding.



- checking that people in key jobs are not a danger to children and adults.



- making sure that safeguarding standards includes all work that football clubs did with children.



- working with football clubs to make sure everyone understood safeguarding standards.



- giving information to young people who play football about safeguarding standards.



- letting people know about our Deaf and Disabled Safeguarding training.



After we found out about children being abused in the past, we did even more safeguarding work.

Our work included:



- more safeguarding training – especially for those running clubs.



- checking that all football clubs were following safeguarding standards.



- finding out about what young people who play football and their parents thought about safeguarding standards.



All 8,000 youth clubs did our safeguarding training.



We have 26 staff in charge of safeguarding.



Over 1 million people have done safeguarding training since 2000.



We check around 75,000 people in key jobs in football are not a danger to children and adults in the game.

# Working together

We work on safeguarding with other football organisations, including:



- the men's and women's professional leagues and their clubs.



- 52 County football and national schools' organisations.



- thousands of leagues, clubs and people who volunteer and run local football.



- the professional footballers' organisation.



- the football managers' organisation.



- organisations of football referees.

We all agree that we will:



- continue following safeguarding standards, to keep people safe and stop harm and abuse from happening.



- make it as easy as possible to tell someone about harm or abuse.



- make sure that issues are looked at quickly, following our **policies** and **procedures**.



**Policies** are rules for how an organisation does things.



**Procedures** are the ways an organisation does things.



We also work with people who have been abused in the past to make sure we are doing the right things.



Another part of The FA looks at safeguarding problems.



The people who look at problems have spent a lot of time working on protecting children and adults at risk from harm and abuse.



If they think someone might abuse children or adults who may be at risk, they can stop them from taking part in football.



Football leagues, county football and national schools' organisations help us to keep football safe.



They have their own safeguarding staff.



We work together to make football safer.

# Our principles



**Principles** are ideas that we think are most important.

We have 5 principles:

## 1. Thinking about people



Everything we do should be to help people to be safe and enjoy football.



Everyone should be able to help keep people safe.

## 2. Being happy

We want children and adults to:

- be safe and supported to speak up.



- be happier and healthier.



- want to stay involved in football.

## 3. Everyone needs to help

We all need to play our part to make football safer.



## 4. Being clear



We will always be clear about who is in charge of safeguarding.



We will carry on giving out clear information to everyone we work with.

## 5. Working together



We will carry on working with other organisations to help keep children and adults safe.

# What we are going to do



We have 5 things that we are going to work on a lot.

## 1. Leading the way



We will lead the way in safeguarding in football.



This means making sure everyone in charge of football understands:



- safeguarding standards.



- what they need to do to keep everyone safe.

We will do this by:



- making sure everyone in charge of football organisations:
  - does regular safeguarding training.
  - gets regular reports on safeguarding.



- carrying on our support for people who were abused in the past.



- listening to The FA Survivor Support and Safeguarding Advisory Group (FASSSAG), which includes people who were abused in football in the past.



They give us advice and guidance.



- getting better at checking that our safeguarding standards are working.



Clive Sheldon's report also suggested that we:



- have safeguarding training for the people in charge of The FA every 3 years.



- have safeguarding training for everyone in charge of professional football leagues and clubs every 3 years.



- have more people who are in charge of football organisations speaking up about safeguarding issues.



- write a report about safeguarding every year.

## 2. Standards

We want to:



- let everyone know about the required safeguarding standards.



- support people in charge of safeguarding.

We will do this by:



- showing that our work meets the national standards for sport.



- working with men's professional and semi-professional football leagues to make sure standards are followed in their football clubs.



- working with the women's professional football leagues to make sure standards are followed in their football clubs.



- guiding every local football club to help them follow the standards.



- checking regularly and making sure our standards and policies change if they need to.



- checking what each football club does in safeguarding.



- making sure that everyone working in children's and adult's football has had safeguarding training.



Clive Sheldon's report also suggested that we:



- make sure the person in charge of safeguarding and the people in charge of the football club talk regularly.



- check how football clubs are safeguarding children, including rules about:



- staying away overnight.



- using social media.



- make sure the people in charge of safeguarding at professional clubs have enough time to do their jobs well.



- make sure that the person in charge of safeguarding and the people in charge of the football club talk regularly.

### 3. Stopping problems before they happen



We will keep football safe by stopping problems before they happen.

This means:



- having clear standards.



- working together to make sure the standards are put into practice.



We will also think about problems that could happen in the future, and work to stop them.

We will do this by:



- checking that people in key jobs are not a danger to children and adults.



- thinking about safeguarding in everything we do.



- making sure we follow safeguarding standards at:

- all England team games.



- all events at Wembley Stadium.



- Women's EURO 2022 - this football competition takes place in England this year.



We will do this using Event Safeguarding Advisors. These are people who are in charge of safeguarding at some events.



- making a new way for local grassroots clubs to check how they are doing with their safeguarding practice.



- giving advice to parents and carers who take children to football events outside of school.



- working with football clubs across England to make sure that children who referee are not treated badly.



Clive Sheldon's report also suggested that we:



- let people know about our safeguarding information and how to stop problems.



- have a National Day of Safeguarding every year.

## 4. Teaching people



We will teach people about safeguarding to make football safer for everyone.

We will do this by:



- thinking about children and adults who are more at risk of harm in our courses and programmes.



- giving safeguarding training to everyone we work with.



- working with leagues and clubs to train staff and support children to speak up.



- making sure our training courses are really good.



- making sure our training is available on computers and mobile phones.



- talking about safeguarding in all training that we do.



- following UK Government rules about teaching and supporting young people about keeping safe.



Clive Sheldon's report also suggested that we:



- make a special computer training course for parents and carers in football.



- make sure children are listened to.



- work with other organisations to support football clubs to listen to children.

## 5. Protecting everyone



We want to make it easy to let someone know if you have a safeguarding concern.



It is a good thing if people let us know about problems.



It means that they are thinking about safeguarding.

We will make it easier to tell someone about problems by:



- looking back and learning from the problems that people have told us about.



- providing updated guidance to clubs on managing complaints and concerns.



- talking with and sharing learning with other organisations



- training and making sure that people in charge of safeguarding know which problems they must let The FA know about.



- telling national sport and safeguarding organisations about the types of problems that we have been told about, to help us all understand the problems and how to solve them.

# Letting someone know



Anyone who is worried that a child or adult might be at risk of harm in football must tell someone who is in charge.



Anyone who is worried that adults are treating each other badly should tell their local County FA.



If they are adult professional footballers for their job, they should tell The FA Integrity team by email:  
[integrity@TheFA.com](mailto:integrity@TheFA.com)



If a child or **adult at risk** has or could be harmed very soon, you should call the police.



An **adult at risk** is an adult who is more likely to be abused or harmed. For example, a person with learning disabilities.



If you are worried that they might be harmed, you can talk to the person in charge of safeguarding at your football club.



Or you can email our safeguarding team at: [safeguarding@TheFA.com](mailto:safeguarding@TheFA.com)



If you can't get in touch with someone at your football club, contact the NSPCC by:



- phone: 0808 800 5000



- e-mail: [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)



If you are a child or young person and someone you have met online is putting you under pressure to act in a sexual way, you should report to CEOP at:

[www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre](http://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre)



If you were abused a long time ago, you can get in touch with the NSPCC by the contact details on page 31, or email The FA at:

[safeguarding@TheFA.com](mailto:safeguarding@TheFA.com)



If someone is in danger right now, always call 999.



If you think that safeguarding standards are not being followed, you can:



- contact us by email:  
[safeguarding@TheFA.com](mailto:safeguarding@TheFA.com)



- contact your local police.



- contact Children's or Adults' Social Care services.



- contact the NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit at:  
[cpsu@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:cpsu@nspcc.org.uk)



- contact the NSPCC Helpline:  
0808 800 5000

# For more information

You can find out more about safeguarding in football by looking at:



- The FA's safeguarding website: [www.TheFA.com/football-rules-governance/safeguarding](http://www.TheFA.com/football-rules-governance/safeguarding)



- a list of all local FAs here: [local FAs](#)



- [www.premierleague.com/safeguarding](http://www.premierleague.com/safeguarding)



- [www.efl.com/-more/governance/safeguarding](http://www.efl.com/-more/governance/safeguarding)



- [www.thepfa.co.uk](http://www.thepfa.co.uk) - this is only for people who play professional football for their job.



- [www.leaguemanagers.com](http://www.leaguemanagers.com) - this is only for people who are professional football managers for their job.



- [www.premierleague.com/referees](http://www.premierleague.com/referees) - this is only for people who are professional referees for their job.



- [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)



- [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)



- [www.thecpsu.org.uk](http://www.thecpsu.org.uk)



- [www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre](http://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre)

This Easy Read information has been produced by [easy-read-online.co.uk](http://easy-read-online.co.uk)