



GUIDANCE NOTES NO:

**3.1**

# SAFER RECRUITMENT OF VOLUNTEERS IN GRASSROOTS FOOTBALL

**FOR CLUBS AND LEAGUES**

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**FOR ALL**

# SAFER RECRUITMENT OF VOLUNTEERS IN GRASSROOTS FOOTBALL

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, safer 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 children and young people both in open-age teams (who have players aged under 18) and in youth football.

Consistently following these eight steps will help ensure fair and safer recruitment across the game.

## STEP 1 – ROLE PROFILE

- Describe the main tasks and responsibilities;
- Identify the skills and experience required to fulfil the role;
- Ensure the final role profile is agreed by the club/league committee.

## STEP 2 – ADVERTISING

- Ensure club/league members are aware of volunteering opportunities, as well as advertising outside the club/league;
- Make use of club/league websites/newsletters/e-zine, social media e.g. X (formerly Twitter)/club Facebook page, local sports hall and school notice boards;
- Ensure the advert reflects the club/league's Safeguarding Children Policy, details the skills/experience required and the duties to be undertaken;
- Ensure you are inclusive in your process. You can find out more about equality, diversity, and inclusion within football [here](#).

## STEP 3 – APPLICATION FORM

- Use The FA's Volunteer Application Form – see [page 5](#);
- At least two officials must be involved in considering the application forms;
- Official photo identification documents must be seen to confirm the identity of the person e.g. passport, driving licence, bus/train pass.

## STEP 4 – MEETING/INTERVIEW

- Club/league officials need to meet/interview everyone who has offered to volunteer; more than one official must be present;
- The meeting/interview questions (prepared in advance) must provide the applicant the opportunity to recount experiences and give examples of how they have or would handle situations;
- While it is important to gain information about an applicant's technical abilities, it is also necessary to explore their attitudes and understanding of safeguarding and the welfare of children. Below are some suggested questions to ask:
  - *Can you tell us about any previous experience you have working with children or young people?*
  - *Give a child-related scenario and ask the applicants what they would do e.g. 'It's a winter evening and training has finished. A parent has not arrived to pick up their child – what would you do?'*

The applicant would be expected to say that they would stay with the child and contact the parents/carers to find out where they were.

*'Is there anything we should know that could affect your suitability to work with children or young people?'*

## STEP 5 – REFERENCES

- At least two references must be requested from individuals who are not related to the applicant; use The FA's Volunteer Application Form (see [page 5](#));
- One reference needs to be from the applicant's place of work and one that ideally demonstrates they have been involved in sport, working with children;
- References must be followed up before they begin to work at the club/league. If either reference raises any concerns, you are advised to contact your County FA Designated Safeguarding Officer for advice and guidance.

# SAFER RECRUITMENT OF VOLUNTEERS IN GRASSROOTS FOOTBALL CONT'D

## STEP 6 – DISCLOSURE AND BARRING SERVICE (DBS) CHECKS

- Establish if the role requires a Disclosure and Barring Service Enhanced Check by referring to **Guidance Notes 3.3: Eligibility of Roles.**
- Applications for DBS Checks need to be dealt with by the welfare officer;
- If an applicant claims to have an FA DBS Enhanced Check, this can be clarified via The FA's Club Portal to which your welfare officer will have access;
- To find out more about DBS Checks see:
  - **Guidance Notes 3.1: Safer Recruitment of Volunteers in Grassroots Football.**
  - **Guidance Notes 3.2 Safer Recruitment and DBS Checks.**

## STEP 7 – RECRUITMENT DECISIONS

- Consider all the information you receive via:
  - i. The application form;
  - ii. Confirmation of identity;
  - iii. Outcome of the take-up of references;
  - iv. Whether the person is accepted by The FA following their DBS Check.
- This information should then be considered alongside the outcome of the meeting/interview to make an informed decision as to whether or not to accept them into the club or league.

## STEP 8 – ONCE IN POST

Ensure new volunteers:

- Are clear about and have signed up to the role and its specific responsibilities;
- Are made aware of and sign up to the club/league's Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures and codes of conduct;
- Attend appropriate FA Safeguarding Children Training\*;
- Are supported in-post for the first few weeks. This may simply be via observation or more pro-active mentoring;
- Are introduced to relevant club/league officials (and parents/carers when appropriate);
- Are encouraged to attend further training specific to their role, as appropriate.

**It's important to recognise that volunteers may have limited relevant experience but can offer transferable skills, enthusiasm, an appetite to learn and an understanding of the ethos and behaviours required at your club/league. Investing time and energy in supporting committed individuals to gain experience and skills is often the way to find much-needed volunteers.**

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\* This could be the: Safeguarding Course/recertification, Safeguarding for Committee Members, Welfare Officer Course Safeguarding For All, Player Welfare Course or Safeguarding Adults Course – or a combination of these courses.

# FURTHER ADVICE AND GUIDANCE

Safeguarding Children is about putting in place the best possible practices and procedures. This will protect not only the child but also the club/league and the adults helping out with under-18s in football. If you require any further support or guidance relating to children and young people, please contact your County FA Designated Safeguarding Officer.

It is recognised that some larger clubs/leagues are in the fortunate position to be able to employ staff. While these guidelines have special emphasis on recruiting volunteers to work with children and young people, they could easily be applied to recruitment of paid staff.

Volunteers and others in football should be assured that The FA will take into account the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (ROA), 1974 and only consider offences which we are entitled to in relation to the ROA Exceptions Order, 1975 (2013 and 2020). The FA will only share information with those who are involved in the recruitment decision.

## SAFER RECRUITMENT IN PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALL

Professional clubs are advised to seek advice and support directly from their respective leagues via [premierleague.com/safeguarding](https://premierleague.com/safeguarding) and [efl.com/-more/governance/safeguarding](https://efl.com/-more/governance/safeguarding).



# VOLUNTEER APPLICATION FORM

## PART A: PERSONAL DETAILS

Title:			
Surname:			
First name:			
Any other names you are/ have been known by:			
Date of Birth:			
National Insurance number:		FAN (FA Number):	
Current address:			
Postcode:	If you have lived at your current address for less than 5 years, please provide any previous addresses on an additional sheet of paper		
Telephone – daytime:			
Telephone – evening:			
Mobile:			
Email:			

## PART B: EMPLOYMENT DETAILS

Current job title:	
Name of employer:	
Address:	
Postcode:	
Telephone:	
Nature of duties:	

### PART C: PREVIOUS VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

Name of organisation(s):			
Start date:		Finish date: (if applicable)	
Address:			
Telephone:			
Nature of duties:			
If you have any other relevant voluntary experience please use an additional sheet of paper.			

### PART D: QUALIFICATIONS

Academic/vocational, e.g. GCSE/NVQ:			
Sporting qualifications:			
Address:			
Have you undertaken any safeguarding training?			
If YES, please provide details:			
Nature of duties:			
Do you currently hold an In-Date, FA-Accepted DBS Check (checks will be made on the relevant FA systems and/or with The FA/County FA)			

### PART E: REFERENCES

Please provide the names the names and addresses of two people who know you well (but are not related) who have knowledge of your work with children whom we can contact. You must have known these people for a minimum of two years.

Names:		
Address:		
Telephone:		
How is this person known to you?		

### PART F: QUALIFICATIONS

I confirm the information that I have provided in support of my application is a complete and true record.

Signature		Date	
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