

GOAL

A better future for football



Child protection and best practice

Guidelines

Recruitment and selection of volunteers working with children and young people

These **Child protection and best practice – Guidelines** have been developed to provide clubs and leagues with advice and guidance on the recruitment and selection of volunteers working with children and young people.

Any change to these guidelines will be notified via The FA's website and in any relevant publications. Please remember that the safety of children and young people should be paramount in all your activities and this has been designed to help you in this.

The Football Association is committed to providing a safe environment for children/young people under the age of 18. By adopting the points outlined in this guideline you will be putting in place the best possible practice to protect children and young people whenever a volunteer is sought to work with them.

INTRODUCTION

The intentions of most people involved in football involving children and young people are good. However, The FA recognises its responsibilities to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people participating in football by providing a safe and enjoyable environment. Sound recruitment and selection procedures will help to screen out those who are not suitable.

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. In addition, a club's or league's volunteer selection processes must be consistent and fair at all times. This guidance outlines methods club or league officials can use to assist with their recruitment choices.

While it has a special emphasis on recruiting volunteers to work with children and young people it could easily be applied to recruitment of all volunteers as well as paid staff.

PLANNING

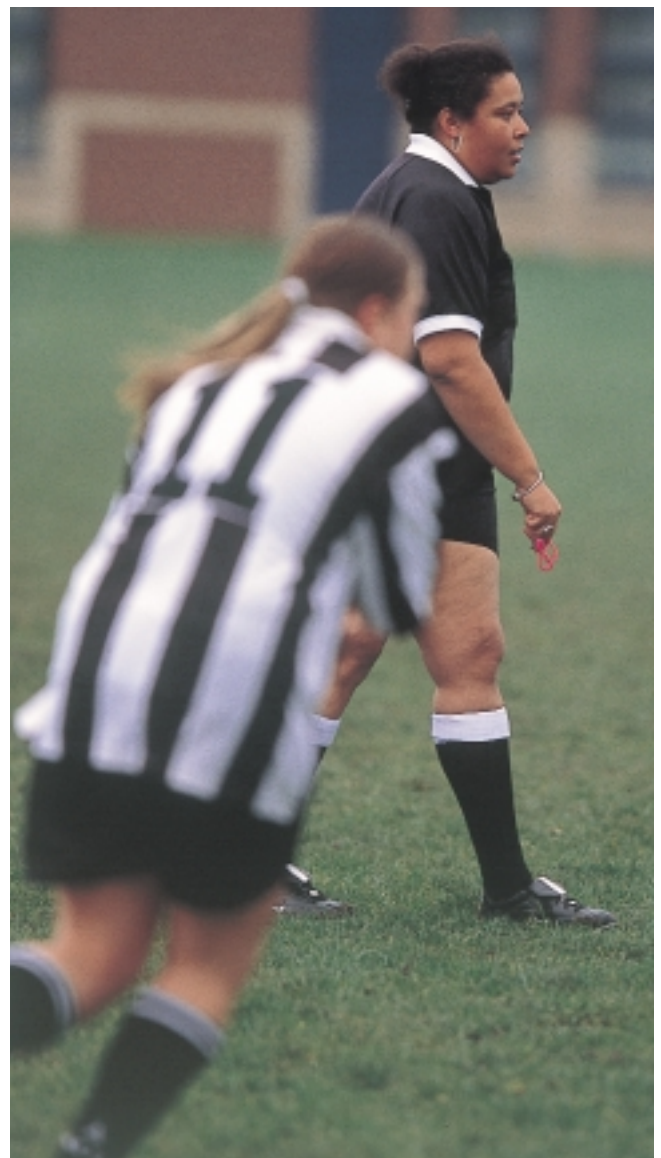
The first stage of any recruitment process involves planning. Club or league officials should draw up a role profile, which highlights the main areas of an identified voluntary role. They should also decide upon the skills and experience that an individual would need to fulfil the requirements of the role and draw up a person specification

A club or league's recruitment process must be developed in such a way that they treat every applicant in a fair and consistent manner.

ADVERTISING

In order to attract new volunteers it may be necessary to advertise outside the club itself, for example, on a sports hall notice board, a local school, shop/community hall or newspaper.

The advertisement should reflect the club or league's Child Protection Policy and it should contain the skills and experience required and the duties to be undertaken. However, it should not discriminate in terms of age, race, gender or disability.



APPLICATION FORM

Clubs and leagues should use application forms to collect information on each applicant. The Volunteer Application Form can be adopted for a club or league's use. Each applicant's information is then collected in a consistent way.

More than one official should look at the application forms to ensure that a fair and equitable scrutiny is completed. Clubs or leagues should also ask for identification documents to confirm the identity of the applicant, for example, a passport or driving licence.

MEETING/INTERVIEW

It is highly recommended that club or league officials meet with all applicants prior to any recruitment decisions being made. More than one official should be present. The meeting/interview will enable the club or league to explore further the information provided in the application form. The questions to be asked should be prepared in advance and should provide the applicant with the opportunity to recount previous experiences and give examples of how they have or would handle situations.

Whilst it is important to elicit information regarding an applicant's technical capabilities it is also necessary to explore his or her attitudes and commitment to child welfare. Listed below are examples of questions that could be used to discover this information:

- 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. For example, 'It is a winter evening and the training session 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 to find out where they were.
- Is there anything we should know that could affect your suitability to work with children or young people?

REFERENCES

At least two references should be requested from individuals who are not related to the applicant. One reference should be associated with the applicant's place of work and if possible one that demonstrates the individual has been involved in sport, particularly children's football previously. References should be followed up prior to any offer of appointment being made. If the references raise any concerns you are advised to contact The FA Child Protection Department for advice and guidance (see example of Volunteer Reference Form).

VETTING

Vetting is a further recruitment screening process clubs can utilise as an enhancement to the above recommendations. The FA has registered with the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and a pilot project is currently being undertaken to determine how vetting could be introduced across football. In addition, The FA is seeking clarification from the CRB regarding several issues that could affect any vetting programme. The FA will be issuing regular updates regarding its vetting policies on its Internet site (www.TheFA.com/Goal).



POST RECRUITMENT

It is important that once a new volunteer has been recruited follow up action is taken, for example:

- Any qualifications should be substantiated, for example, requesting photocopies of coaching certificates
- That new volunteers are made aware and sign up to the club's child protection policy and procedures, best practice guidelines and any codes of conduct
- That any training needs are established and actioned
- A statement of the roles and responsibilities of the new volunteer is prepared
- Initially, a period of supervision/observation or mentoring could be introduced to support the new volunteer.

SUMMARY

Child protection is about putting in place the best possible practices and procedures; this will protect not only the child but also you, the adult, in football. If you have any comments on this guideline or require any further support or guidance relating to children and young people please contact The FA Child Protection Department.

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For further information or advice please contact:

The FA Child Protection Department

Lilleshall Hall National Sports Centre,
Newport, Shropshire TF10 9AT
Telephone: 0207 745 4909
goal@TheFA.com

www.TheFA.com/Goal

Access The FA website, the Home of English Football,
for the latest child protection information.

**Your County Football Association
Child Protection Officer**

See The FA website for contact details for County FAs
www.TheFA.com

The FA/NSPCC Helpline

Telephone: 0808 800 5000
Asian Helpline: 0800 096 7719
Welsh Helpline: 0800 100 2524
Deaf Users Textphone: 0800 056 0566
www.nspcc.org.uk

This is a 24 hour free and confidential telephone
Helpline that provides counselling, information and
advice to anyone concerned about a child at risk of ill
treatment or abuse.

Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU)

NSPCC National Training Centre
3 Gilmour Close
Beaumont Leys
Leicester LE4 1EZ
Telephone: 0116 234 7278/7280
www.sportprotects.org.uk

The CPSU co-ordinates and supports child protection
across a range of sports organisations. Further advice
and guidance for sports organisations can be found
on their website or in 'sportscheck – a step by step
guide for sports organisation to protect children July
2002'

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