



For All

**PLAY
SAFE**

BUILDING AN EVER-SAFER CULTURE

THE FA SAFEGUARDING STRATEGY 2021/22 – 2023/24

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BUILDING AN EVER-SAFER CULTURE

Together we have led an important period of review and reflection across the game since December 2016, when we commissioned the Independent Review into non-recent child sexual abuse allegations in football, led by Clive Sheldon QC, and published in March 2021. The result is the new strategy you're reading, which conveys our joined-up ambition to build an ever-safer culture at every level of football in this country and details how we will do that over the next three years.

Like everyone else, in November 2016 we were profoundly shocked, appalled and deeply moved as former footballers made brave revelations of non-recent child sexual abuse by those who were in a position of trust over them. These abusers, some of whom have now thankfully been convicted of their crimes and are serving lengthy prison sentences, were in roles such as youth coaches, scouts, physios and referees. We've met with survivors, established an advisory group and sought to support survivors via our offer of therapy, access to The FA Benevolent Fund and practical help and guidance via the PFA's Survivor Support Advocate.

The 700-page report from Clive Sheldon's Independent Review included 13 recommendations. We are committed to implementing all of them as part of this safeguarding strategy.

But our strategy goes much further, by looking at all areas of the game where we can continuously improve and build on the progress we've made in recent years, inspired by learnings from other sports and sectors – all ensuring our culture and practices across the game are as robust as possible.

The safeguarding strategies, policies and practices of ourselves, the Premier League and EFL are all subject to external scrutiny. The feedback we've had expresses strong levels of confidence that the leadership of ourselves, the Premier League, EFL and County FAs are collectively setting and maintaining appropriate and relevant safeguarding standards and requirements. Collectively, we raise awareness and provide support to leagues and clubs throughout England to help them to develop a safeguarding culture.



We employ 26 experienced colleagues who work exclusively on safeguarding for The FA and we are immensely proud of the valuable work they do year-in year-out, alongside the highly valued, large network of paid and/or voluntary safeguarding and welfare officers across the game.

Of course, it is a fundamental duty of the game's governing body to create a framework so football can be played in ever-safer, enjoyable and inclusive settings – a publicly-stated aim in our Strategy 2020-24, 'Time for Change'. This entails many things, but at its heart is a culture at every level of the game, where children, young people and adults who may at times be vulnerable, are routinely engaged and listened to.

Safeguarding children and adults who may at times be more at risk is not just important now – it's vital for the game's future. That's because it fosters a lifelong relationship with the game, with today's players going on to become tomorrow's coaches, managers, referees, physios and administrators.

Practically, we have three asks of everyone in football, including those who watch from the sidelines:

- If you haven't taken one of the **free FA Safeguarding courses**, please do so;
- In everything you do, particularly when it involves children, or adults who may be at greater risk, ensure safeguarding is front and centre – never an afterthought or tick box;
- If you ever feel worried, or witness something that concerns you, never hesitate to **report it**.

Ultimately, we're here to serve our national game. Safeguarding is one of the most important services we provide.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Bullingham'.

Mark Bullingham
Chief Executive,
The FA



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James Kendall'.

James Kendall
Director of Football
Development, The FA



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sue Ravenlaw'.

Sue Ravenlaw
Head of Safeguarding,
The FA



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jenni Kennedy'.

Jenni Kennedy
Head of Integrity,
The FA



CONTEXT

FOOTBALL'S SAFEGUARDING FRAMEWORK

Football's strategic direction for safeguarding children and adults sits within the wider framework of safeguarding in sport and society. It is underpinned by legislation, Government strategy¹ and guidance, and safeguarding standards² in sport, as well as FA rules and regulations. We work collaboratively with statutory agencies, specialist organisations, other sports, national and international football bodies to prevent harm and manage the risks that arise.

You can read more about football's safeguarding framework in Appendix 1 on [page 36](#).



¹ *Tackling Child Sexual Abuse Strategy, 2021 HM Government, which you can download/read [here](#).*

² *These Standards provide a framework for all those involved in sport to help them create a safe sporting environment for children and young people and protect them from harm. The Standards also seek to provide a benchmark to help those involved in sport make informed decisions, and to promote good practice and challenge practice that is harmful to children. You can download a pdf of the Standards [here](#).*

The Ann Craft Trust (ACT) is funded by Sport England to develop standards and best practice in safeguarding adults at risk. You can read more about ACT's work [here](#).

SCOPE OF THE STRATEGY

The strategy reflects football's everyday work to safeguard children and adults at risk, as well as the recommendations from Clive Sheldon³ QC's Review. It also covers workstreams designed to continuously develop and improve our framework and approach.

The strategy seeks to build an ever-safer culture across:

- Affiliated football⁴;
- Our venues – Wembley Stadium and St. George's Park;
- All the England Teams and talent pathways;
- FA programmes, events; and
- Activity with or via our official partners and stakeholders.

It covers our work to prevent abuse in all its forms, as well as to manage concerns robustly.

The strategy does not extend to unaffiliated football or football delivered via third parties or private providers who are not official FA partners.

³ *Clive Sheldon QC was appointed by The FA to conduct the 'Independent Review into Child Sexual Abuse in Football: 1970-2005'. The Review was published in March 2021.*

⁴ *Affiliated football is football played by clubs affiliated to The FA, their County FA, or other types of designated FAs (as defined by The FA), and approved to play in leagues and competitions sanctioned by The FA, their County FA or other type of FA, or otherwise organised under the auspices of The FA – and includes referees registered with The FA.*

FROM 2000 TO NOW

Since the turn of the century, the role of safeguarding at The FA has grown in impact, and building on the initial policies of The FA and the Premier League in 1999/00, has included pivotal moments, such as the ones below, which are not exhaustive.

- **2000/01:** Introduction of mandatory safeguarding training for coaches, managers, referees, medics and designated safeguarding persons.
- **2003/04:** Criminal records checks required for certain types of role (e.g. coaches) and the Premier League mandated such checks as part of recruitment processes at their member clubs.
- **2007/08:** The EFL appointed a Child Protection Advisor and the first salaried Designated Safeguarding Officers appointed in all County FAs, including Jersey, Guernsey and the Isle of Man.
- **2007:** The Premier League's safeguarding Rules extended to cover any activity by or in the name of member clubs that involved children – not just Academy activities.
- **2008:** Club Welfare Officer moved from being a voluntary to a mandatory affiliation requirement for any grassroots or professional club with youth teams or players aged under-18.
- **2010:** Already in men's club licences, safeguarding requirements embedded into licences for clubs competing in the inaugural FA Women's Super League – and reviewed annually.
- **2010:** The FA Youth Development Review (under-7s – under-12s) is implemented, based on research and listening to children's views, leading to changing the player pathway and competition strategy for children.
- **2012:** Joint guidance issued with the Premier League and EFL across the game on the changes to the eligibility for DBS Checks, in line with the Protections of Freedom Act, 2012.
- **2012, 2014 and 2017:** Collaborated with the Premier League and EFL on hosting safeguarding conferences for Designated Safeguarding Persons across the game.
- **2013:** PFA introduced their Youth Advisory Service, as a free confidential resource dedicated to helping players and parents understand the rules and regulations that apply within academy football.
- **2015:** The FA's Deaf and Disabled Safeguarding training and best-practice resources are promoted.



ACCELERATED PROGRESS SINCE NOVEMBER 2016

There is no question that November 2016 was a watershed moment for safeguarding in football – and sport generally – in this country. The FA and football stakeholders responded immediately following the non-recent child sexual abuse disclosures made that month. Safeguarding work in football was reviewed, enhanced and accelerated, reflected in the timeline below, which shows where we are today, and the tangible progress made since November 2016.

- **February 2017:** Sporting Chance contracted to offer FA-funded therapy to survivors.
- **July 2017:** FA launched the mandatory online Safeguarding for Committee Members course.
- **August 2017:** FA launched enhanced independently assessed Safeguarding Standards for County FAs.
- **2017/18:** Premier League introduction of **Safeguarding Standards** and independent scrutiny each season by a leading children's charity.
- **2017 and 2018:** FA Regional Talent Clubs (2017) the new FA Women's Super League Academies (2018) introduce questionnaires, including a section on safeguarding, to gain feedback from players and parents.
- **August 2018:** EFL launched enhanced independently assessed **Safeguarding Standards** for their 72 clubs.
- **September 2018:** Cross-sport safeguarding seminar (38 UK/English governing bodies of sport in attendance), hosted by The FA, Sport England and CPSU sharing learnings to date alongside Operation Hydrant and some survivors of abuse in sport.
- **May 2019:** Objects of FA Benevolent Fund amended to cover non-recent child sexual abuse cases and independent experts retained to advise on applications.
- **2018/19 season:** The FA publishes its Safeguarding Policy and Procedures for Wembley Stadium and St George's Park and introduces Event Safeguarding Advisors for spectator events at Wembley.
- **Throughout 2019:** Wide promotion of The FA's Safeguarding Adults Policy and free e-learning course. All FA staff complete a bespoke e-learning safeguarding awareness course, now built into The FA's HR induction process.
- **November 2019:** FA co-funds with the PFA their Survivor Support Advocacy service to support survivors with practical and emotional support and signposting to legal advice and information.
- **July 2020:** FA launches Covid-19 safeguarding risk assessment and guidance.
- **March 2021:** Clive Sheldon QC's Independent Review into non-recent abuse in football is published.
- **September 2021:** NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU), Sport England and FA collaborate on a further safeguarding seminar for sport.
- **November 2021:** FA launches Play Safe campaign on a weekend to promote safeguarding in football.



SOME OF FOOTBALL'S ACCELERATED PROGRESS



50 County FAs complying to an independently-assessed Safeguarding Operating Standard



3 PL STAFF
26 FA STAFF
4 EFL STAFF

INCREASED NUMBER OF DEDICATED SAFEGUARDING PROFESSIONALS

£1.3m INVESTMENT
Survivor support and engagement via Sporting Chance, FA Benevolent Fund and meetings

ONGOING CHECKS AND TRAINING

Over **1 million** attendances on FA safeguarding courses since 2000/01 season

Up to **75,000** DBS Checks delivered each season

ENHANCED SAFEGUARDING STANDARDS

92 Premier League and English Football League clubs working to independently-assessed safeguarding standards



24 Barclays FA WSL and FA Women's Championship clubs operating to enhanced safeguarding requirements as part of the licence



8,000 Grassroots youth clubs completing online FA Safeguarding for Committee Members' course



OUR PURPOSE

Football's lead organisations in England are united by a threefold safeguarding purpose:

WE WILL:

- Implement preventative safeguarding measures and create fun, safe football environments.
- Make the reporting of concerns as easy as possible.
- Ensure safeguarding, child and adult protection concerns are investigated swiftly and thoroughly in conjunction with statutory agencies – and with demonstrable outcomes.



MARK BULLINGHAM

Chief Executive,
The FA



RICHARD MASTERS

Chief Executive,
Premier League



TREVOR BIRCH

Chief Executive,
EFL



DAWN AIREY

Chair, The Barclays FA
WSL and FA Women's
Championship Board



MAHETA MOLANGO

Chief Executive,
PFA



RICHARD BEVAN

Chief Executive,
LMA



PROFESSIONAL GAME
MATCH OFFICIALS

MIKE RILEY

Managing
Director, PGMOL

OUR COLLABORATIVE APPROACH

Day-to-day safeguarding takes place across the football landscape in England. The scale of this landscape is shown in the chart on the next page.

The FA itself has a full-time team of safeguarding professionals supporting affiliated football and all FA-related activity. Within this team, some of the personnel drive preventative measures via policy, education and the sharing of safer working practice. They also support the national network of approximately 8,500 Designated Safeguarding Persons (DSPs). The DSPs work across men's and women's professional and grassroots football and have a range of job titles. They are all criminal record-checked and trained. Their role includes taking preventative safeguarding measures, promoting safer working practice and making referrals to the appropriate authorities.

The FA's safeguarding team also works closely with The FA Survivor Group to ensure that those with lived experience are influencing present day safeguarding work, alongside independent safeguarding professionals.

In parallel, another part of The FA team manages referrals and reported concerns. These personnel comprise safeguarding professionals with significant experience in social work, policing, probation service and legal practice in relation to child protection in sport. In relation to investigations, they work with statutory agencies, and where appropriate the County FAs and women's or men's professional clubs. They assess people who pose, or may pose, a risk of harm and put in place safeguards. These include suspensions from football where necessary.

The Premier League and the English Football League (EFL) undertake vital roles in raising safeguarding awareness and supporting their clubs to implement safeguards. They oversee and guide club safeguarding provision. The Professional Footballers' Association (PFA) plays a key role by providing guidance to young people in professional club academies, as well as to professional players themselves. In addition, the League Managers

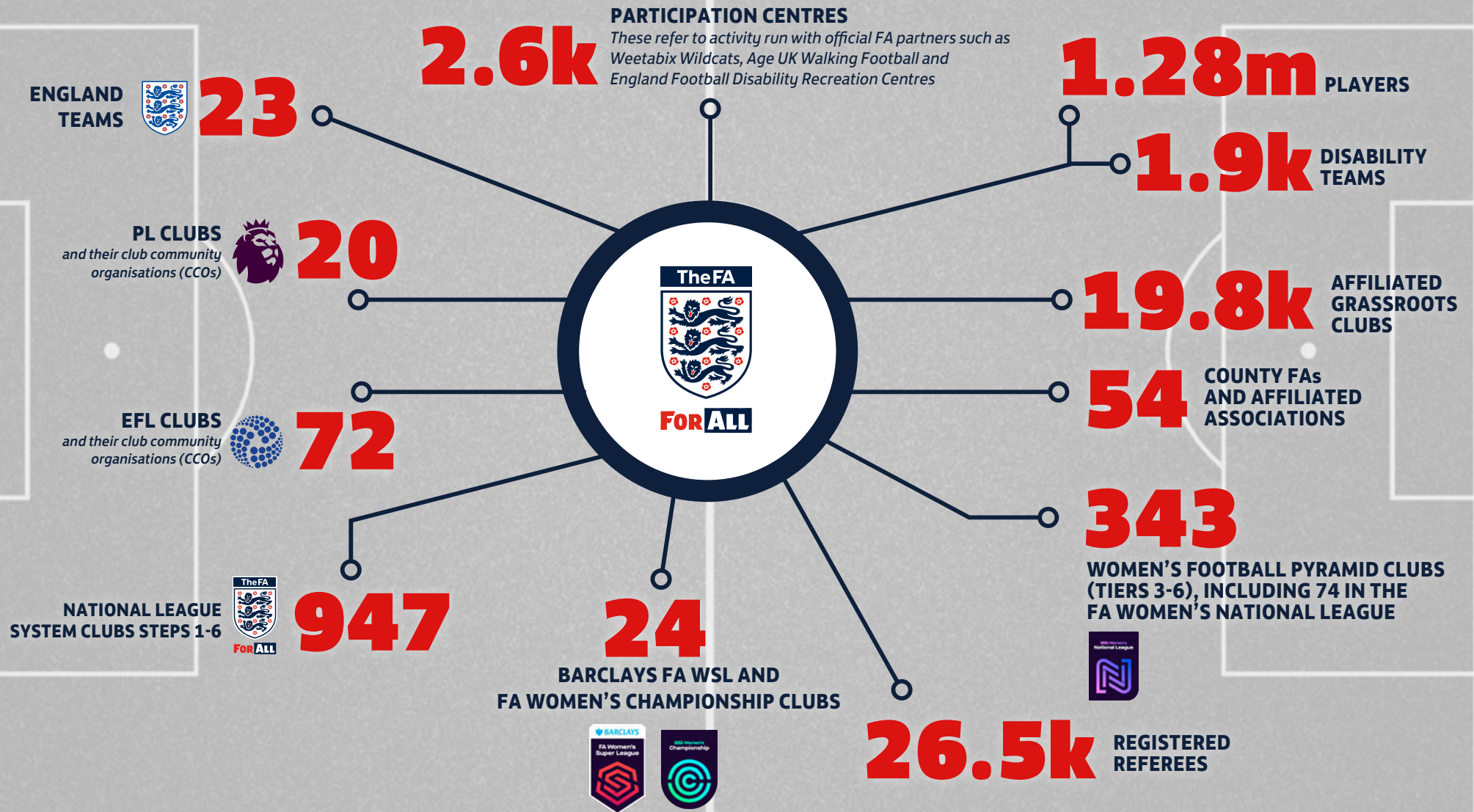
Association (LMA) and the Professional Game Match Official Limited (PGMOL) have safeguarding policies and advise their members accordingly.

Collectively we work to create safe environments in football. And if there are concerns, to ensure people know how and where to report them. Driving effective safeguarding culture and practice demands our constant vigilance and professionalism.

Note: The responsibilities and accountabilities of football bodies are covered on pages 37-40.



THE SCALE OF AFFILIATED FOOTBALL AND OUR DELIVERY PARTNERSHIPS





CREATING A POSITIVE FOOTBALL ENVIRONMENT WITHIN GRASSROOTS FOOTBALL

- In addition to the collaborative work with our partners to deliver safeguarding in affiliated football (set out in the diagram on previous page), The FA also leads a broader programme of work to create a positive football environment, by which we mean a game that is safe, inclusive and enjoyable – for everyone involved in the game. This work is set out in The FA’s Grassroots Strategy **‘Survive, Thrive, Revive.’**



- Over 14 million people play football, equivalent to a quarter of the population in England, which means it is uniquely placed to have a positive impact on the nation. The FA’s latest commissioned report on the social, health and economic value of grassroots football in England supports this; setting out that the grassroots game contributes more than £10bn to our society per annum. More detail on the positive impact that grassroots football has on society can be found in the full report, which you can read [here](#).

OUR PRINCIPLES

Our safeguarding work is based on five principles:



PERSON-CENTRED:

All our work should have children's and adults' wellbeing at its heart. Moreover, our players/participants should have a voice and their opinions should help shape safeguarding strategies, policies, procedures and practices.



POSITIVE OUTCOMES:

We want children and adults to:

- Feel and be more empowered, supported and able to speak up.
- Be happier, healthier and more confident and willing to contribute within football and life.
- Develop a deeper connection to the game and aspire to becoming football's future coaches, referees, physios and administrators.



COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY:

While lead organisations – such as The FA – provide guidance, frameworks and education, we will continue to strive to ensure everyone in football understands they have a responsibility to safeguard children and adults at risk. This means constantly creating safe, inclusive and enjoyable football environments. We all have a part to play.



CLARITY:

We will always be clear about the roles and duties of those with specific safeguarding responsibilities. We will continue to clearly communicate to all key parties (e.g. league/club officials, referees, parents/carers and children themselves) when, how and where to report concerns.



COLLABORATION:

We will continue to collaborate to keep children and adults at risk safe, by working with all football participants (including parents/carers), our football partners, including our survivor group, and external partners. These include the Police, Operation Hydrant, Children and Adult Social Care Teams, Sport England, UK Sport, NSPCC's Child Protection in Sport Unit, the Ann Craft Trust, the Disclosure and Barring Service, other sports, other national football associations, UEFA, FIFA and charities such as Sporting Chance.

The principles above that underpin our strategy, are aligned with the rights outlines in the Articles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), 1989, and the Care Act, 2014.

OUR FIVE FOCUS AREAS AND STRATEGIC GOALS

Our strategy has five focus areas, each with its own strategic goal:

FOCUS AREA

STRATEGIC GOAL

1. LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

To provide strong leadership of safeguarding across the game and deliver effective governance frameworks.

2. STANDARDS

To clearly communicate the expected standards, regulations, and policies across the game and to support those in designated safeguarding roles to drive and monitor safeguarding practice and culture.

3. PREVENTION

To create ever-safer football environments through robust recruitment processes, driving safer working practice and culture, utilising insight and delivering clear messaging and inspirational campaigns.

4. EDUCATION AND EMPOWERMENT

To deliver accessible, impactful safeguarding education programmes, resources and information to help create ever-safer football environments for children and adults at risk.

5. PROTECTION

To make the reporting of concerns as easy as possible, continue to build strong partnerships with statutory agencies in managing abuse cases, provide guidance on managing low-level concerns and deliver robust case management by The FA.



Focus area 1:

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Strategic goal:

To provide strong leadership of safeguarding across the game and deliver effective governance frameworks.

This means having informed leaders, Boards and Committees who receive baseline and refresher training, as well as regular reports to update them on progress, including evidence to demonstrate the impact the work is having.

It means listening to the voices of children, adults at risk and engaging with and providing support to those with lived experience of abuse in football, so that both current and past voices and experience are influencing how we build an ever-safer culture.

We'll achieve our strategic goal by:

- Continuing to deliver safeguarding training and continuous professional development (CPD) to The FA Board and the Boards of all County FAs and Affiliated Associations.
- Continuing to engage with and support The FA Board Safeguarding Champion and enhance the support for the County FA Board Champions.
- Continuing to partner with Sporting Chance¹ to provide therapeutic support to survivors of non-recent abuse, support the work of The FA Benevolent Fund² and the PFA in relation to the Survivor Support Advocacy work³.
- Support The FA Survivor Support and Safeguarding Advisory Group⁴ (FASSSAG) to input to football's work and exert their influence more widely in sport and society.
- Continually improving the ways in which we measure the impact of the safeguarding measures that are implemented.

Specific activity based on Sheldon Report recommendations:

- Regular safeguarding refresher training every three years for The FA Board and Senior Management Team.
- Safeguarding training every three years, for the Boards of all men's and women's professional clubs, across the Premier League, EFL, Barclays FA WSL and FA Women's Championship.
- Enhance the advocacy for safeguarding at Board level, through the appointment of and engagement with additional Board Safeguarding Champions e.g. in the women's professional game.
- Publish a safeguarding report at the end of each season, providing a position statement and progress updates on safeguarding across the game.



¹ **Sporting Chance** is a registered UK-based charity set up by former Arsenal and England football captain Tony Adams to provide support to current and former professional athletes for a wide variety of mental and emotional health problems.

² The FA Benevolent Fund is a registered charity which provides financial assistance to persons connected with football who may need assistance for reasons of poverty, age, disability or ill-health. You can read more about it [here](#).

³ The PFA Survivor Support Advocate is a service offering support and signposting for victims of all forms of child abuse in grassroots and professional football, which supported more than 90 individuals in its first two years or so.

⁴ The FASSSAG was formed in 2018 to ensure a forum for the voices of survivors of non-recent child sexual abuse in football, working alongside independent safeguarding professionals. The Group's views have informed relevant areas of the strategy you are reading and you can read more about FASSSAG overleaf.

WHAT WE WANT TO HEAR BY 2024:

“ The training has helped me to ask more relevant questions at Board meetings, to reassure me that the work that is being done is making a difference and keeping children and adults at risk safe in our clubs.”

EFL Club Board member

“ I am pleased to see that The FA's annual safeguarding reports show the progress being made each season, as well as the impact that the various interventions are having. This transparency helps to build confidence in football's current work.”

Adult survivor

A look at...

THE FA SURVIVOR SUPPORT AND SAFEGUARDING ADVISORY GROUP


To ensure a forum for the voices of survivors, The FA Survivor Support and Safeguarding Advisory Group (FASSSAG) was formed in 2018, following dozens of meetings with individuals and groups of survivors.

The Group brings together former footballers with lived experience to collaborate with others, alongside independent safeguarding professionals and specialist organisations.

The FASSSAG has an important role in both challenging and informing The FA's thinking in relation to the needs and experiences of survivors.

The Group is engaged in a range of projects, informing relevant areas of The FA's safeguarding remit as well as advocating for survivors externally. To date, the Group has:

- Helped shape research on the experiences that survivors have of the reporting process and support services – to identify gaps and improve provisions.
- Developed criteria for a new element of The FA Benevolent Fund to be open to survivors of abuse in football.
- Developed guidance notes for survivors to decide whether to waive their anonymity. You can read this guidance [here](#). It originated from ideas and content from Ian Ackley, a former member of FASSSAG, and was developed with the input of the wider Group.
- Informed the development of a specific advocacy role for survivors (hosted by the PFA).
- Responded to relevant government consultations on safeguarding, child protection and victim rights. Including for example the Ministry of Justice's consultation on improving The Victims' Code. The group have also lobbied the Victim's Commissioner on various issues.
- Given feedback and advocacy in relation to The FA and to the Football Review, undertaken by Clive Sheldon QC.
- Inputted to The FA's Safeguarding Strategy and projects such as the Play Safe Campaign and National Football Safeguarding Weekend.



**I'M A SURVIVOR
OF CHILDHOOD
SEXUAL ABUSE
IN FOOTBALL.
SHOULD I WAIVE
MY ANONYMITY?**

A guide to help you make an informed decision.

WRITTEN BASED ON THE LIVED EXPERIENCE OF FORMER FOOTBALLERS, WHO'VE BEEN SUPPORTED TO PRODUCE THIS GUIDANCE BY THE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION.

A guide to waiving anonymity is one of several projects where The FA and FASSSAG have worked collaboratively.



Focus area 2:

STANDARDS

Strategic goal:

To clearly communicate the expected standards, regulations, and policies across the game and to support those in designated safeguarding roles to drive and monitor safeguarding practice and culture.

We must maintain and continuously improve our own standards, while setting and monitoring the standards with and for the leagues, County FAs and clubs. This means regularly reviewing our progress in line with sport's safeguarding framework and keeping our regulations, policies and procedures up to date.

This also entails providing guidance for every club or affiliated football activity with under-18s, and/or adults who may at times be deemed to be at risk, to build an ever-safer culture. It's important that wherever children and young people and adults play or are involved, that they experience consistent safeguarding standards and practice. We have mechanisms in place to check and challenge this.

For the men's and women's professional game, we must ensure that the club safeguarding officer has a proportionate amount of time to focus solely on safeguarding. In the grassroots youth and adult game, we must ensure the designated safeguarding person's contact details and club policies are readily available and proactively shared with members. Linking with Focus Area 1 (Leadership and Governance), in all contexts, there should be Board and/or Committee support for the designated persons.

We'll achieve our strategic goal by:

- Continuing to demonstrate that The FA meets and evolves in line with the NSPCC CPSU Standards (see [page 20](#)).
- Collaborating with the Premier League and EFL as they ensure their independently-assessed Standards are met across their club membership.

We'll achieve our strategic goal by (continued):

- Ensuring all Barclays FA Women's Super League and FA Women's Championship clubs meet the required safeguarding standards as per their club licence.
- Supporting the independent assessment of every County FA and Affiliated Association¹ against The FA's bespoke 'Safeguarding 365' Standard and ensuring all compliance requirements are met.
- Ensuring The FA meets and continues to evolve in line with the Ann Craft Trust Safeguarding Adults' Framework to develop standards and promote best practice when working with adults in football.
- Reviewing the safeguarding provision within men's clubs in the National League System and women's clubs in The FA Women's National League and supporting their development.
- Regularly reviewing and updating our safeguarding regulations, policies and procedures.
- Providing ongoing support and training for the network of designated safeguarding persons (Board Champions, organisation Senior Leads and Designated Officers) across the game.
- Ensuring that those in regulated activity working with children's (under-18) and adult teams - including adult disability teams - who have not yet undertaken safeguarding training, do so.
- Refreshing and publishing updates to the series of FA safeguarding guidance notes which can be found [here](#) on various topics, and proactively promoting them across the game.

¹ Affiliated Associations are national bodies who govern specific areas of the game, such as the English Schools FA (ESFA), the Independent Schools FA (ISFA) and the football associations of the various armed services.

Specific activity based on Sheldon Report recommendations:

- Ensure that clubs proactively share their welfare/safeguarding officer's contact details, as well as their policy and procedures with their players and their parents/carers when players join and at the beginning of each new season.
- Incorporate into the Safeguarding 365 Standard, a review of the clubs' safeguarding policies and practices, including overnight stays, away travel and trips, use of social media, and coaching in a digital environment and obtain the views of children and young people.
- Ensure that the designated safeguarding persons in professional clubs regularly report to their club's Board on safeguarding matters. At every Premier League and English Football League (EFL) Championship club, there should be a dedicated, full-time, salaried post, with suitable qualifications and experience. In EFL Leagues 1 & 2, there should be, as a minimum, a part-time salaried post, with suitable qualifications and experience, and 50% of their time should be dedicated to safeguarding.

WHAT WE WANT TO HEAR BY 2024:

“ It's great to see the growth in the number of disabled players in both disability and mainstream football and that The FA has been recognised as meeting the Ann Craft Trust's safeguarding adult's framework for sport.”

England Para Player

“ I checked the club's social media to find out who the welfare officer is and easily found these details and the club policy.”

Parent

 A look at...

FOOTBALL'S SAFEGUARDING STANDARDS

THE FA'S SAFEGUARDING 365 STANDARD FOR COUNTY FAs

In August 2017, the range of FA mandatory safeguarding requirements for the grassroots game were brought together in the first Safeguarding Operating Standard for County FAs. Between the 2017/18 and 2020/21 seasons inclusive, the County FAs were independently assessed against this Standard by Girling Hughes Associates.

Each season, the Standard has been reviewed and updated and a new edition published each season. This is because we've listened to feedback from the independent assessors, as well as the County FAs and our collective learned experience through the process.

The FA's Safeguarding 365 Standard for County FAs, or 'Safeguarding 365' for short is the current edition, emphasising the everyday commitment that's required to keep safeguarding ever-present in football. The overall intention is to give the County FA and Affiliated Association network the tools to proactively support the leagues, clubs and referees in creating ever-safe football environments.

In effect, every County FA/Affiliated Association must comply with Safeguarding 365 and are independently assessed against it by the NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU). Apart from actual visits, The FA and County FAs track 'live' compliance with DBS Checks and training compliance across the grassroots game.

There are six Standards which collectively form Safeguarding 365:

- Governance and leadership;
- Operational delivery driving a culture of safeguarding;
- Listening to the voice of, and supporting, under-18s;
- Football disciplinary;
- Case management;
- Compliance and monitoring.



“It's great to see that every County FA, ESFA, ISFA and the Armed Services meet The FA's Safeguarding 365 Standard – maintaining and continuously enhancing this is a key priority. The ongoing challenge is to support every club in developing an ever-safer culture.”

Sue Ravenlaw
FA Head of Safeguarding

The manual explains the detail, including the measures that will be used in each case, a description of success and the evidence that's required to meet each Standard. Links are provided to relevant processes and various templated documents for County FAs to use. A detailed section on the independent assessment process is also included.

As Sue Hough MBE, Chair of The FA National Game Board says: "The Safeguarding 365 Standard – and the manual which covers it – continues to focus us all, especially those responsible for leading County FAs and those delivering football. There is no room for complacency."

THE PREMIER LEAGUE AND EFL STANDARDS

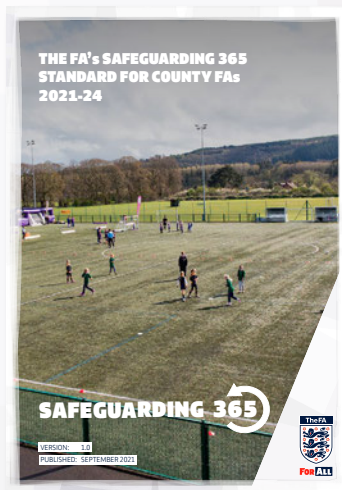
The Premier League and EFL collaborate regularly on safeguarding matters and have aligned their Safeguarding Standards. These have been in place in the Premier League since 2017 and the EFL since August 2018. The Standards are independently assessed by Barnardo's.

The Standards cover:

- Leadership, governance and culture;
- Roles and responsibilities;
- Prevention: policies, procedures and practice;
- Educating and empowering;
- Protection;
- Working together;
- Listening culture.

The Standards outline the requirements for each area and the achievement indicators that clubs are seeking to demonstrate.

SAFEGUARDING 365



The manual that covers The FA's Safeguarding 365 Standard for County FAs guides County FAs on safer working practice.



Premier League and EFL Clubs and club-associated community organisations are expected to comply with the Premier League and EFL Standards, which are aligned across the two Leagues.



Focus area 3:

PREVENTION

Strategic goal:

To create ever-safer football environments through robust recruitment processes, driving safer working practice and culture, utilising insight and delivering clear messaging and inspirational campaigns.

Planning and implementing strategies to create ever-safer football environments and making it as difficult as possible for any form of abuse, exploitation or mistreatment of children and adults at risk to take place is core to our work with football stakeholders at every level of the game.

To this end, this strategy also links with our ‘A Game for All¹’ strategy and ‘Football Your Way²’ plan, which are part of our long-term commitment to using our influence across English football to deliver an ever-more inclusive game, free from discrimination.

It is vital that across football, we continue to drive the effective foundational practice, such as safer recruitment practice – at interviews, by following-up references, undertaking background checks, inductions and probations. Whether the individual is in a paid or voluntary role, there should be a structure to support them and identify any concerns about them in relation to working with children or adults at risk.

In addition, it’s critical we facilitate the sharing of the great safer working practice in some of our professional and grassroots clubs, while developing further guidance and tools to support all clubs in their approach to delivering their safeguarding and wellbeing responsibilities and accountabilities. This sits alongside continuing to ensure that The FA embeds safeguarding across all its evolving activity.

¹A Game for All is our three-year equality, diversity and inclusion strategy. You can read it [here](#).

²Football Your Way is our three-year plan to help develop, improve and raise awareness of Disability Football in England. You can read it [here](#).

Linked to the Education and Empowerment focus area, we must ensure that those (e.g. coaches, managers, first-aiders, physios and referees), who work closely with under-18s and adults who may at times be more at risk, understand how to recognise and maintain safe professional boundaries, on and offline.

We will continuously identify any areas of risk across the game, adding them to the risk register and seek to apply mitigating actions.

We'll achieve our strategic goal by:

- Reviewing and updating The FA safer recruitment policy for all staff and consultants.
- Processing 70-75k DBS Checks each season and risk-assessing and managing the checks that include content indicating criminal convictions, cautions or additional information that may be relevant to safeguarding children and or adults at risk. This directly links to Focus Area 5: Protection.
- Continuing to embed safeguarding in all relevant FA strategies and participation programmes.
- Ensuring safer working practice is maintained across all England teams, at Wembley events, at England 'on the road' events, and at UEFA Women's EURO 2022. See overleaf for an explanation of the Event Safeguarding Advisor roles that The FA deploys at major events.
- Piloting and then launching a safeguarding self-audit tool for grassroots clubs' committees to track their progress in delivering their safeguarding and player wellbeing responsibilities.
- Promoting the UK Government's safeguarding guidance for out-of-school settings to parents/carers who may access football activity via unaffiliated private football providers.
- Continuing to evolve The FA's Respect campaign messaging to influence behaviour on the sidelines of youth matches and abuse towards referees.

- Working with County FAs and young referees to ensure coaches and spectators recognise that abuse towards any referee is not acceptable and that under-18 referees are children first, referees second.

Specific activity based on Sheldon Report recommendations:

- Launch an ongoing safeguarding awareness campaign, to signpost those involved in football, including parents and families, towards information on safeguarding and minimising risk.
- Work with stakeholders across the game and devote one day of the year to a National Day of Safeguarding in Football every season.

Note: Related to the above, see [page 25](#) for the much wider Play Safe campaign that has been created and launched.

WHAT WE WANT TO HEAR BY 2024:

“The FA's Play Safe campaign has enabled us to reach out in more meaningful ways each season, to players, parents and club officials to get our safeguarding and wellbeing messages across.”

Grassroots Club Welfare Officer

“Play Safe made me realise it was ok for me to speak up, so I told my coach I was being bullied by other kids on the way to school each day. The coach listened and helped me to report this to my school.”

Youth player

A look at...

EVENT SAFEGUARDING ADVISORS

The FA deploys independent Event Safeguarding Advisors (ESAs) to spectator events at Wembley Stadium. The ESAs are fully integrated to event-day operations and provide specialist briefings and training to event staff and support for safeguarding incidents that arise at the sporting events and concerts.

While there can be lost and unaccompanied children to support, the majority of child safeguarding concerns relate to anti-social behaviour, or where their parent/carer had raised a cause for concern. The more complex incidents the ESAs are involved with relate to adults who are at risk of harm to themselves or others.

In 2020/21, ESAs were deployed to 15 events following the return of spectators¹. They were involved with 17 incidents and as a result The FA made two referrals to the relevant adult social care team, one referral to a Local Authority Designated Safeguarding Officer, and supported the Police to make one referral to a local authority children's services team. Three incidents involving children were also referred to the participating club involved, to which the child was linked as a spectator.

The benefits of having ESAs include:

- Provision of support and advice to staff across all levels of event operations, increasing their capacity and confidence to respond appropriately to issues involving children and/or adults at risk.
- Knowledge and experience to provide professional challenge where appropriate to external agencies when handling incidents.
- Real-time response to incidents ensuring that the wellbeing of a child or adult is prioritised, when dealing with anti-social behaviour including when an ejection from the stadium is necessary.
- Issues are dealt with end-to-end; from responding to a concern, dealing with any issues in the stadium, supporting staff who have handled the incident, through to making an external referral.
- Consistency of approach to safeguarding issues across all events.
- Ensure feedback regarding safeguarding is included in all post event reviews.

¹ In previous seasons, the number of events run at Wembley has been as high as 60.



 A look at...

PLAY SAFE – FOOTBALL'S NATIONAL SAFEGUARDING CAMPAIGN

Led by The FA, every level of football in England joined forces over the weekend of November 20th/21st 2021 to launch Play Safe, an ongoing campaign to raise awareness of the importance of safeguarding in football.

Run in partnership with the NSPCC, Play Safe has the full backing of the Premier League, EFL, Barclays FA Women's Super League and the FA Women's Championship and the County FAs. It also has the full support of The FA's Survivor Support and Safeguarding Advisory Group, as well as the PFA, LMA and PGMOL.

As the Group says collectively: "Learning from the past is crucial, so that we can prevent the horrific experiences that happened to us and so many others in football, from happening again.

"As a group of survivors, we fully support the ethos and important messages that Play Safe conveys – whether to club officials, parents/carers and or vitally, children and young people themselves. Equally important is that Play Safe is not a one-off campaign – it will be used at key points in the football calendar to remind everyone in football, that children's welfare and keeping them safe, should be at the heart of all that we do."

The main current element of Play Safe is three short films aimed respectively at children, club officials and parents/carers. You can watch all three films at www.TheFA.com/PlaySafe where you'll also find more information on the campaign.

The films emphasise the importance of safeguarding and also explain to parents/carers and children what to do if they feel worried or unsafe.

These films were made available for all leagues and clubs at every level to use, alongside a range of assets for deployment on websites, social media and print. Coverage across the game was extensive, with the pictures on these pages showing just a few of the ways the Play Safe messages were promoted. Of the many positive outcomes, one was the significant increase in learners taking the free online Safeguarding For All promoted by England Football Learning (The FA's education arm) around the Play Safe launch.



Looking ahead, Play Safe will last at least three seasons and re-surface at other key safeguarding-related moments in the year, such as Safer Internet Day, NSPCC Parents in Sport Week and Anti-Bullying Week 2022/23. A designated Play Safe weekend is also planned for every football season.

We will also test Play Safe and assets with adults at risk to see whether the concept transfers impactfully to this audience.



Play Safe was activated at every level of the game in England, from grassroots youth football (above) to the professional game, such as the LED pitchside boards at Liverpool FC (below).

KEEP FOOTBALL FUN

You should always be able to enjoy your football. If you ever feel worried, or like you're not safe, please tell an adult you trust, like a parent, carer, teacher or coach. They will be happy to listen and help you. Find out more at TheFA.com/PlaySafe

PLAY SAFE

In partnership with
NSPCC

Supported by

- Premier League
- EFL
- Womens Super League
- Championship

Numerous digital assets were produced, used heavily across the County FA network and grassroots leagues/clubs.



Focus area 4:

EDUCATION AND EMPOWERMENT

Strategic goal:

To deliver accessible, impactful safeguarding education programmes, resources and information to help create ever-safer football environments for children and adults at risk.

The FA's preventative Safeguarding and England Football Learning¹ teams are aligned and connected in delivering learning experiences to drive cultural and behavioural change. We acknowledge the critical impact of seeking to educate and empower everyone involved in the game – especially children, young people and adults who may at times be deemed to be at risk.

Since 2000, we've delivered a range of mandatory safeguarding courses to help support those running clubs understand how to create child-friendly and or adult-friendly football, promote behaviour that's acceptable and the know-how to raise any concerns. There have been over one million attendances on these safeguarding courses.

This includes training that must be kept up to date by many in specific football roles, as well as tailored training co-ordinated or delivered by The FA, Premier League and EFL to designated safeguarding persons and staff in County FAs and men's and women's professional clubs each season. Our training and awareness measures stretch to include all stakeholders, not just designated safeguarding staff.

We intend to enhance the current course provision with more agile content via short films, podcasts, PDFs etc. This content will be conveyed on FA-owned communication channels and/or hosted on sites that people in football regularly visit.

¹ England Football Learning is The FA's education arm.

We'll achieve our strategic goal by:

- Instilling a child/adult at risk-centred approach and embedding this via wider FA programmes, educational courses and general messaging.
- Delivering safeguarding refresher training for all FA staff and consultants.
- The Premier League continuing to deliver workforce learning and development opportunities, empowering children, young people and their parents/carers, and working with the NSPCC to enhance child-centred interventions.
- Providing safeguarding training for the designated safeguarding persons across the men's National League System and The FA Women's National League.
- Reviewing, revising and re-launching the free 'Safeguarding for Committee Members' course run by England Football Learning, to ensure it is also meets the needs of grassroots adult open-age clubs.
- Continually evaluating, reviewing and improving critical courses to ensure they are high quality and provide appropriate support.
- Evolving the e-learning Safeguarding Children course run by England Football Learning with contextualised webinar content and the opportunity for learners in different roles to interact with an expert tutor.
- Continuing to embed safeguarding messages across all England Football Learning provision.
- Continuing to align with the UK Government's plans and messaging to empower adults to identify risk and keep children safe as part of its Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) strategy.

¹ Regulated Activity in relation to under-18s in football includes managing, training, coaching and supervising as well as giving advice or guidance on wellbeing, caring for children or driving a vehicle solely for children on behalf of a club or organisation. Further information can be found [here](#).

Regulated Activity is defined differently in adult environments. Anyone providing treatment in a health care/medical role in sport is performing Regulated Activity and must undertake the relevant DBS check. Further information can be found [here](#).

- Similarly, aligning FA messaging with the UK Government's compulsory relationships' education in primary schools and relationships and sex education in secondary schools.
- Reviewing and enhancing the safeguarding adult's guidance published on The FA's website, promoting this information directly to adult players.

Specific activity based on Sheldon Report recommendations:

- Build and launch a tailored safeguarding e-learning course aimed at parents/carers, including content to help them to understand grooming and how to regularly check in with their child(ren).
- Ensure the child's voice is considered and resources created for children themselves to empower them to contribute their views and to know they can speak up if they are worried about something. Partner with external experts and develop age-appropriate toolkits to support clubs and organisations. Regularly assessing the impact and acting on the feedback.
- Create and disseminate safeguarding resources to raise awareness with adult players on how to recognise that another player may be struggling with something and may need help.
- Mandatory safeguarding training for anyone working in regulated activity¹, who has not yet completed the training as part of an FA qualification.

WHAT WE WANT TO HEAR BY 2024:

“ I feel safe in football and know that if I'm struggling, I can speak to adults in my club if I want to.”

Youth player in an adult open-age team

“ Until I did The FA safeguarding course for parents, I hadn't really thought about whether I'd feel able to listen to my child in a way that would help them to feel ok to share anything that's bothering them with me. I'm better equipped now.”

Parent

A look at...

SAFEGUARDING TRAINING COURSES

Since they started in 2000/01, The FA's safeguarding in football courses have grown in scope and content.

MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

We began by mandating the safeguarding course for coaches and managers taking FA coaching qualifications in the 2000/01 season, as well as those taking on designated person roles –and then expanded this to other roles e.g., referees officiating in youth football.

Whilst there was some resistance to change at these early stages, with coaches and others having to find the time and money to complete the course, over time this requirement became 'normalised' for anyone seeking to coach, manage, act as a designated person or referee children's teams.

Updating the qualification every three years was made easier by the introduction of the free online safeguarding re-certification course.

In 2006, we developed formal Club Welfare Officer training for grassroots football, building on the existing awareness course, and adding more specific content for those leading on safeguarding in clubs and leagues. Along the journey, the various safeguarding courses were regularly updated in line with legislative change and developments in policy and practice and anyone can take the Safeguarding Children course.

INCREASED SPECIFICITY

In recognition of the need to further support grassroots clubs, in 2017 we developed and launched a bespoke free mandatory e-learning course for grassroots clubs' chairs, secretaries, treasurers and welfare officers to complete as an affiliation requirement. And in 2019, a free Safeguarding Adults e-learning course was promoted widely, particularly across the disability football landscape.

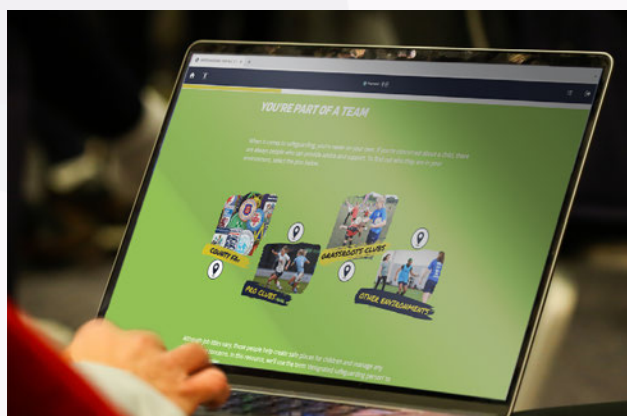
The following year we released our award-winning¹ BT Playmaker by England Football, as a simple first step into football, which incorporates coaching, first aid and safeguarding content – and the latter content was also released as a standalone course called Safeguarding For All.



ENGLAND FOOTBALL LEARNING SAFEGUARDING COURSES

All the England Football Learning courses listed below have the needs of children and young people, or adults who may be at times be at greater risk of harm, at their core and engage learners through interactive content. Critically, all the courses include consistent messaging to drive the cultural and behavioural changes we want to see across the game.

What	Who	Level ²
Safeguarding For All (SFA)	Volunteers, 14–15-year-old leaders, Referees in open age, Parents	Introductory
BT Playmaker (includes SFA)	Anyone interested in taking a first step in a more active role in grassroots football	Introductory
Safeguarding Children	Anyone working in Youth Football: Welfare Officers, Coaches, Managers, First Aiders, Referees	Basic
Safeguarding Adults	Anyone working with adults in open age football, including disability pathways	NHS Level 1
Welfare Officers	Grassroots club welfare officers	Specialist
Safeguarding for Committee Members	Grassroots club and youth league committee members 18+ years of age	Specialist



The FA's safeguarding courses and modules (delivered by England Football Learning) are readily-accessible.

¹ England Football Learning won two awards in the Learning Technologies Awards 2021, for best learning technologies project and excellence in the design of learning content, both relevant to the public and non-profit sector. Please see [here](#).

² The levels indicated relate to the [NSPCC Child Protection in Sport levels](#), except for the Safeguarding Adults course, which indicates equivalence with NHS training levels





Focus area 5:

PROTECTION

Strategic goal:

To make the reporting of concerns as easy as possible, continue to build strong partnerships with statutory agencies, provide guidance on managing low-level concerns and deliver robust case management by The FA.

As a result of all the awareness-raising work in football and society, clubs, County FAs and The FA's safeguarding case management team deal with a steady flow of referrals and work closely with the statutory agencies.

Referrals are an important and positive indicator that more people are recognising, responding and reporting when they have concerns.

It's critical we continue to ensure there is clarity around who deals with what level of concern in football and what must be referred to The FA and worked on in partnership with the statutory agencies. Equally importantly, we must evolve our support to clubs and organisations in football to manage lower-level concerns as effectively and efficiently as possible.

Understanding the volume and type of concerns arising in football – as well as those identified from other contexts e.g., in the family, school and other activities – is essential for The FA to drive effective interventions. It is also essential we share our anonymised case data with Sport England's official partners and take part in studies such as the Child Abuse in Sport: European Statistics (CASES¹). In this way, we can understand the prevalence and type of issues across sport and can work collaboratively to address them.

¹CASES is the first such study of this scale and the first prevalence study of its kind in sport in the UK and several other partner countries. You can read it [here](#).

We'll achieve our strategic goal by:

- Continuing to investigate all safeguarding-related allegations and concerns in line with internal policies and procedures.
- Refreshing our policy around 'low-level' concerns, taking on board the learning from Clive Sheldon QC's Review as well as more recent publications to drive a safeguarding culture at all levels of the game. We will also continue to and learn from other sectors so we can assist clubs and organisations dealing with such concerns.
- Continuing to deliver training on the types of concerns that must be referred to The FA, to all Designated Safeguarding Officers at County FAs/ Affiliated Associations and men's and women's professional clubs (from the Premier League down to Step 4 and Tiers 1 & 2 of the women's pyramid).
- Constantly improving awareness of the ways to report safeguarding concerns via all lead football organisations.
- Utilising The FA's Quality Assurance Framework to provide insight and patterns of concerns about the referrals made into The FA and drive improvements in the way we manage concerns in football.
- Continue to provide anonymised case data to Sport England-funded prevalence studies, to help gain a picture of the prevalence and type of concerns arising across sport.



WHAT WE WANT TO HEAR BY 2024:

“ The low-level concerns policy has helped us as a club to respond more confidently to complaints we receive, as the process we should follow is clearly laid out. As a committee, we're now more open about the complaints we receive and how we manage them. That can only be a good thing.”

Club committee member

“ We work closely with The FA and safeguarding officers in football on cases that require police involvement and consistently find a professional, collaborative and child or adult-at-risk-centred approach.”

Police Officer

REPORTING CONCERNS

Anyone who has a concern about the welfare of a child or adult at risk, including child-on-child abuse, or the behaviour of an adult towards an under-18-year-old, or an adult who may be at risk of harm in football, must refer it to The FA's safeguarding team.

Anyone who is concerned about misconduct between adults in grassroots football should report the concerns to their County FA and in men's and women's professional football should report their concern to The FA Integrity team via integrity@TheFA.com

The safeguarding and integrity teams are staffed by professionals who are experienced in dealing with these concerns.

It is important to state that anything urgent, where there may be an immediate risk of harm to a child, or an adult at risk, must be reported to the police or the children/adult social care service in your area.

Referring non-immediate risk of harm concerns can be done via a club, league or County FA/Affiliated Association – all have a Designated Safeguarding Person. Alternatively, The FA can be emailed directly at Safeguarding@TheFA.com

If clubs or the County FA DSO cannot be contacted, call the NSPCC Helpline for expert advice and support on 0808 800 5000 or email help@nspcc.org.uk

The CEOP Safety Centre helps children and young people who are being sexually abused or are worried that someone they've met is trying to abuse them online. If you are a child or young person and someone you have met online is putting you under pressure to have sex or making you feel uncomfortable you should report to CEOP at www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre If the concern happens within a football context, then please also let your **County FA** know, or The FA direct at Safeguarding@TheFA.com.

Victims of non-recent abuse in football should contact the NSPCC or The FA at Safeguarding@TheFA.com

If a child or young person or adult is in immediate danger, the advice is ALWAYS to call 999.

WHISTLE-BLOWING

Whistle-blowing in a safeguarding context means revealing and raising concerns over misconduct or malpractice within an organisation, or within an independent structure associated with it.

It can be used as an early-warning system or when it's recognised that appropriate actions have not been taken. This approach or policy is adopted in many different walks of life.

- Any adult or young person with concerns about a colleague's conduct towards a child or young person can also use whistle-blowing by emailing The FA's Safeguarding Team at: Safeguarding@TheFA.com

Alternatively, whistle-blowing concerns can be reported:

- Direct to the local Police or Children's Social Care services, or
- the NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit at cpsu@nspcc.org.uk, or
- The NSPCC Helpline on 0808 800 5000 or email: help@nspcc.org.uk

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

To find out more about safeguarding measures in football – and in general – please contact the organisations below. All relevant phone numbers and email addresses can be found by visiting the specific organisation’s website.

	<p>www.TheFA.com/football-rules-governance/safeguarding</p>
<p>COUNTY FOOTBALL ASSOCIATIONS</p>	<p>A list of all County FAs and contact details is available here. Click on the specific County FA website to obtain the email address of the County FA Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO).</p>
	<p>www.premierleague.com/safeguarding</p>
	<p>www.efl.com/-more/governance/safeguarding</p>
	<p>www.thepfa.co.uk <i>Note – services only available to PFA members</i></p>
	<p>www.leaguemanagers.com <i>Note – services only available to LMA members</i></p>
 <p>PROFESSIONAL GAME MATCH OFFICIALS</p>	<p>www.premierleague.com/referees <i>Note – services only available to PGMOL members</i></p>



www.childline.org.uk



www.nspcc.org.uk



www.thecpsu.org.uk



www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre

ADDITIONAL SERVICES FOR SURVIVORS

The PFA Survivor Support Advocate

Survivor Support Advocate offering support and signposting for victims of all forms of child abuse in grassroots and professional football.

E: SupportAdvocate@thepfa.com

The FA Benevolent Fund

Apart from its general remit, the Fund has provided financial assistance to 73 survivors to date and is open to new applications. You can read more about the Fund and football’s other discretionary funding sources [here](#).

E: benevolentfund@TheFA.com



APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 – FOOTBALL'S SAFEGUARDING FRAMEWORK

Here is an outline of the current framework for sport in relation to safeguarding children and safeguarding adults:

Sport England¹ requires all national governing bodies of sport to achieve the NSPCC's Child Protection in Sport Unit's (CPSU) Standards for Safeguarding and Protecting Children in Sport². These Standards benchmark sports against government guidance for organisations working with children, as outlined in Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)³. The standards include preventative safeguarding measures as well as procedures to respond to abuse (physical, sexual, emotional and neglect), poor-practice and low-level concerns.

The Football Association achieved the advanced level of the Safeguarding Standards in February 2010. Following achievement of the Safeguarding Standards, the CPSU continues to work with national governing bodies. It conducts an annual review under the Safeguarding Framework⁴ to ensure sports are maintaining and embedding the Safeguarding Standards. The FA has continued to demonstrate it is doing this and the CPSU has expressed a high level of confidence in The FA's delivery of safeguarding.

Sport England also works in partnership with the Ann Craft Trust (ACT)⁵, a national charity which exists to minimise the risk of abuse of disabled children and adults at risk. ACT has developed the Safeguarding Adults in Sport Framework to develop standards and promote best practice when working with adults in sport.

We have to maintain these standards and continually develop our safeguarding provision in response to the changing needs across the game.

The FA provides a policy, procedural and regulatory framework for the affiliated game (i.e. for leagues and clubs affiliated to County FAs). This guides County FAs, leagues and clubs on the safeguarding requirements of every club with under-18 teams, with under-18s in adult teams and with adults who may at times be at risk of harm.

¹ Sport England is a non-departmental public body under the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport. Its role is to build the foundations of a community sport system by working with national governing bodies of sport, and other funded partners, to grow the number of people doing sport; sustain participation levels; and help more talented people from all diverse backgrounds excel by identifying them early, nurturing them, and helping them move up to the elite level.

² These Standards provide a framework for all those involved in sport to help them create a safe sporting environment for children and young people and protect them from harm. The Standards also seek to provide a benchmark to help those involved in sport make informed decisions, and to promote good practice and challenge practice that is harmful to children. You can download a pdf of the Standards at <https://thecpsu.org.uk/resource-library/2013/standards-for-safeguarding-and-protecting-children-in-sport/>

³ Statutory guidance on inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. You can download a pdf of the guidance at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>

⁴ The Framework for maintaining and embedding safeguarding for children in and through sport helps sports organisations to maintain Safeguarding Standards (see ³ above) and to embed safeguarding practices throughout their organisation. You can download a pdf of the Framework at <https://thecpsu.org.uk/help-advice/develop-and-improve-standards-and-framework/>

⁵ The Ann Craft Trust (ACT) uses training, practice reviews and contributes to world-leading research, to support organisations to safeguard disabled children and adults at risk and minimise the risk of harm. ACT believes that everyone has the right to be treated with respect and dignity and to be safe. ACT is funded by Sport England to develop standards and best practice in safeguarding adults at risk. <https://www.anncrafttrust.org/safeguarding-adults-sport-activity/>

APPENDIX 2 – FOOTBALL BODIES' RESPONSIBILITIES AND ACCOUNTABILITIES

The table below outlines the responsibilities and accountabilities of the different football bodies in England. Collectively we work to create safer environments in football. And if there are concerns, to ensure people know how and where to report them. This work demands our constant vigilance and professionalism.

ORGANISATION	DESCRIPTION	OVERVIEW OF KEY SAFEGUARDING RESPONSIBILITIES
The Football Association (The FA)	<p>The governing body of football in England, from grassroots football to the professional game, including safeguarding responsibility for:</p> <p>England teams; The Barclays FA Women's Super League; The FA Women's Championship and The FA Women's National League; The National League System; specific Cup competitions, including The FA Cup; Registered referees; Safeguards at Wembley Stadium and St George's Park and the Safeguarding 365 Standard for County FAs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides policy and regulatory framework for safeguarding children and adults across the game. • Develops safeguarding policy, procedures and safer working practice guidance. • Reviewed annually by NSPCC CPSU re compliance with and continual progress against the national standards framework for Safeguarding and Protecting Children in Sport. • Manages child protection concerns in collaboration with the statutory agencies and those arising from content on DBS certificates - in line with FA Regulations, including managing suspensions, other risk management measures and referrals to the Disclosure and Barring Service. • Operates the DBS Check service for anyone in affiliated English football working with children and young people. The service extends from grassroots to the EFL and collaborates with the Premier League which oversees the provision of checks in their clubs. • Provides safeguarding awareness training for coaches, referees, medics, designated safeguarding officers and club committee members – the latter from grassroots football to the National League System. • Facilitates tailored training for those in designated roles in County FAs and develops toolkits and guidance for grassroots football. • Commissions research and insight as required. • In collaboration with the Premier League, EFL and County FAs, continually reviews compliance against safeguarding standards and measures. • Requires all Barclays FA Women's Super League and FA Women's Championship clubs to meet the safeguarding standards as set out in the Club Licence, working in collaboration with league staff and club safeguarding leads to develop and embed safeguards across all activity. • Works with colleagues to embed safeguarding in all relevant systems, processes, programmes, activities and events. • Collaborates with all football bodies, the NSPCC CPSU and ACT via the Pro-game Safeguarding Forum to share practice and strengthen safeguarding arrangements across the game.

APPENDIX 2 (continued)

ORGANISATION	DESCRIPTION	OVERVIEW OF KEY SAFEGUARDING RESPONSIBILITIES
The Premier League	The Premier League is the organising body of the Premier League football competition with responsibility for the competition, its Rule Book and its centralised broadcast and other commercial rights.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has long-standing safeguarding and safer recruitment rules which complement FA regulations. These are reviewed each season. • Issues clubs with Safeguarding Standards detailing requirements. • Commissions regular independent audits of internal and club safeguarding policies, procedures and practice. • Requires clubs to have a board-level senior safeguarding lead, a dedicated full-time head of safeguarding and an academy safeguarding officer. • Supports club understanding and compliance through guidance, training and work delivered against individual club support plans. • Delivers workforce safeguarding training and awareness events regularly throughout each season. • Delivers awareness raising measures and guidance to children, young people and adults to understand their rights and where they can get help or advice if they need it. • Requires clubs to refer concerns to statutory agencies and football authorities. • Collaborates with clubs and football authorities to share practice and strengthen safeguarding arrangements across the game.
English Football League (EFL)	<p>The EFL is the largest single body of professional clubs in European football and is responsible for administering and regulating the EFL, the League Cup and the League Trophy, as well as reserve and youth football.</p> <p>The EFL supports two charitable organisations: League Football Education (LFE) and the EFL Trust.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires all clubs to have a Safeguarding Senior Manager (SSM) reporting at board level, as well as a Club Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO). • Issues a set of safeguarding standards detailing the expected requirements across all members Clubs. • Inspects Clubs to ensure compliance and continuous improvement in the area of safeguarding. Clubs that operate an academy are independently audited by safeguarding specialists. • Issues every club that operates a youth academy with strict safeguarding rules and procedures that complement FA Rules and Regulations at the start of each season. • Requires adherence to safer recruitment practice. • Maintains regular communication with clubs providing advice and guidance on all matters related to safeguarding. • Requires Club Senior Safeguarding Manager and Designated Safeguarding Officers to attend compulsory training throughout the football season. • Requires clubs to report and refer concerns to statutory agencies, The FA and the EFL.

APPENDIX 2 (continued)

ORGANISATION	DESCRIPTION	OVERVIEW OF KEY SAFEGUARDING RESPONSIBILITIES
League Managers Association (LMA)	A member association which represents all managers who have worked or are working in the Premier League, EFL, Women's Super League and FA Women's Championship.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has a policy to guide its staff who work with children and young people. • Provides support and guidance to its members including counselling support via its confidential helpline.
Professional Game Match Officials Limited (PGMOL)	Appoints, trains, and develops referees and assistant referees to officiate across the Premier League, EFL and The FA competitions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has a Designated Safeguarding Officer. • Has a named Senior Safeguarding lead. • Has a Safeguarding minimum standards document which details PGMOL match officials and staff who engage in 'extra-curricular' activities in addition to their primary role, which may include supervised engagement with children, young people and adults at risk. These individuals will need to be on an approved list before carrying out the activity at hand. The approval criteria includes completion of an enhanced DBS Check and online safeguarding course.
Professional Footballers Association (PFA)	A trade union which represents the interests of professional footballers who have played or are playing in the Premier League, EFL and The Barclays FA Women's Super League.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has a policy to guide its staff who work with children and young people, requiring the relevant checks and training for staff in line with FA policy. • Has a named Designated Safeguarding Lead. • Has a Designated Safeguarding Officer. • Provides support and guidance to its members. • Promotes its online resource "The PFA Safety Net" to young Academy Players, Parents, Guardians, Carers and Club personnel. • Provides a national counselling service to its members.
League Football Education (LFE)	LFE is a charity established in 2004 by The EFL and The PFA, with a primary purpose to deliver the Apprenticeship Programme at EFL clubs. LFE's responsibilities extend to the delivery of Life Skills to U9-U23 players, parents/guardians and club staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has a team of Regional Officers (ROs) who monitor and support the Apprenticeship Programme in EFL clubs. • Provides Policies and Procedures for Regional Officers to support safeguarding arrangements in clubs. • Manages a Study Programme with Club Community Organisations (CCO's). • Has a Designated Safeguarding Officer, who works closely with the EFL Safeguarding Manager and sits on the EFL Safeguarding Strategy Group. • Supports the EFL in monitoring the pre-16 Academy programme. • Support learners after the completion of their apprenticeship, including tracking and monitoring calls and assistance with a range of transition opportunities, within and outside of football, in the UK and abroad.

APPENDIX 2 (continued)

PREMIER LEAGUE AND EFL CHARITABLE FOUNDATIONS

ORGANISATION	DESCRIPTION	OVERVIEW OF KEY SAFEGUARDING RESPONSIBILITIES
Premier League Charitable Fund (PLCF)	The PLCF distributes funds on behalf of the Premier League and its partners to 92+ Club Community Organisations (CCOs) in the Premier League and English Football League. The PLCF's goal is to help ensure that participants achieve their potential and positively impact their communities through the power of football.	<p>PLCF requires all CCOs receiving funding from PLCF to comply with a range of safeguarding standards set out within a Capability Code of Practice. The standards cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership, governance and culture • Roles and responsibilities • Safeguarding policies, procedures and practice • Educating and empowering • Service delivery • Managing incidents and allegations • Listening culture • PLCF commissions independent safeguarding audits of Premier League CCOs. • PLCF offers safeguarding advice, support and training to CCOs.
EFL Trust	The EFL Trust is the charitable arm of The EFL, supporting a network of Club Community Organisations (CCOs) to deliver and facilitate events, programme and activities within their local communities, often engaging with some of society's most vulnerable groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Along with the PLCF, outlines safeguarding measures for CCOs to comply with and evidence via the Capability Code of Practice CCOP. • Acts in an advisory capacity, supporting CCOs with ongoing safeguarding guidance & training. • Monitors safeguarding & incident data from CCOs, observing trends and patterns, making recommendations and offering support & guidance as required. • Operates robust safeguarding policies, procedures and measures for the direct delivery of a range of projects and programmes involving children and adults at risk.





FOR ALL

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