

# KEEPING FOOTBALL SAFE AND ENJOYABLE

English football's ongoing work to protect children and young people who play or participate in our national sport







Football takes the safety and welfare of children extremely seriously. The game has robust checks and processes already in place. However, the allegations of child sexual abuse that have come to light since November 2016 have seen us re-double our efforts to ensure every child and young person has a safe, fun experience playing or participating in the world's most popular team game.







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# ‘We will never stop working to make the world’s greatest team sport as safe and enjoyable as possible’

For many years English football’s leadership organisations have worked collaboratively on safeguarding and child protection matters. The shared and unequivocal goal has always been to ensure the game is safe and enjoyable for all.

As the game’s governing body in England, The FA has led this work. It has worked with key safeguarding personnel from all the organisations at the foot of this page.

The united strategy has been, and continues to be, to:

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

To do this, The FA has a full-time team of safeguarding professionals. Within this team, some of the personnel drive preventative measures via policy, education and the sharing of good practice. They also support the national network of approximately 8,500 Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSOs). The DSOs work across professional and grassroots football. They are all criminal record checked and trained. Their role includes taking preventative safeguarding measures, promoting good practice, as well as making referrals to the appropriate authorities.

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

As you’ll read, the Premier League and the English Football League (EFL) undertake vital roles in supporting their clubs to implement safeguards. They oversee and guide club safeguarding provision.

The Professional Footballers’ Association (PFA) plays a critical 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 Officials 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. This work demands our constant vigilance and professionalism.

## In the 2016/17 season alone:

- **80,000** criminal record checks were carried out across the game, to screen out anyone who seeks to work in football who may pose a risk of harm.
- **55,000** coaches, referees, welfare officers and committee members attended either new or refresher FA safeguarding children education programmes. This includes additional welfare officer training for Designated Safeguarding Officers in grassroots football. Regular bespoke training is delivered by the Premier League and EFL to their respective clubs.



Premier  
League



LMA  
LEAGUE MANAGERS  
ASSOCIATION



PROFESSIONAL GAME  
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# Football's safeguarding framework – and how it's implemented



<sup>2</sup>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.

<sup>3</sup>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/>

<sup>3</sup>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>

<sup>4</sup>The Framework for maintaining and embedding safeguarding for children in and through sport helps sports organisations to maintain Safeguarding Standards (see <sup>2</sup> 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/>

**Football's safeguarding framework is underpinned by legislation, government guidance, as well as FA rules and regulations.**

**Here is an outline of the current framework for sport:**

**Sport England<sup>1</sup>** 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 Sport<sup>2</sup>**. These Standards benchmark sports against government guidance for organisations working with children, as outlined in *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015)*<sup>3</sup>. The standards include preventative safeguarding measures as well as procedures to respond to abuse (physical, sexual, emotional and neglect) and poor-practice 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 Framework*<sup>4</sup> to ensure sports are maintaining and embedding the Safeguarding Standards.

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 has for many years guided counties, leagues and clubs on the safeguarding requirements of every club with under-18 teams.

From the Premier League to the grassroots of the game, every affiliated club with youth teams **must** have a Club Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures and a DSO, who is criminal record-checked and trained. Coaches and others in regulated activity<sup>5</sup> must have an in-date FA criminal record check and have completed the required FA safeguarding training. A raft of other guidance supports clubs with putting their child protection policy into practice.

The Premier League and EFL have additional safeguarding rule-based requirements for their clubs, which they are responsible for overseeing and supporting.

The regulatory framework enables The FA to take action against any club or participant who breaches The FA safeguarding policy or regulations. On an individual level, The FA can put in place risk management measures ranging from education, mentoring, supervision agreements, to interim and permanent suspensions.

<sup>5</sup>Legally defined within the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012.

## LEADERSHIP ACROSS THE GAME

The FA, Premier League, EFL, professional clubs and County FAs all have a named person who acts in the role of 'Board Champion' or Senior Safeguarding Lead/Manager. Safeguarding children should be a regular agenda item on every board agenda.

## COLLABORATIVE APPROACH

The FA attends the CPSU's Safeguarding Lead Officer Forums and events with other sports. This facilitates learning and the sharing of good practice across sport.

There is a safeguarding forum attended by The FA and all the lead DSOs from the professional game authorities, which meets quarterly. The CPSU sits on this forum and formally provides advice and guidance. The forum enables a joined-up approach, reflections on progress and the sharing of good practice.

There is also an advisory body of County FA chief executives and DSOs for the grassroots game. This carries out a similar role and supports The FA with the implementation of safeguards across England.

The FA has oversight across the game. The Premier League and EFL have responsibility to support and monitor their clubs' compliance with affiliated football's safeguarding policy. The FA also oversees County FA compliance. In turn, the County FAs support and monitor their affiliated clubs. Each club (in the professional game they are the employer) is responsible for keeping children safe and meeting its safeguarding responsibilities.

Overall, collaboration with statutory agencies is essential. This is covered in more detail on page 13 under 'Partnership'.





## IMPLEMENTATION

### Putting football's safeguarding framework into practice involves various workstreams:

**Safer recruitment:** The FA, Premier League, EFL and County FAs promote safer recruitment practice within their organisations and across the game. Such recruitment requires criminal record checks, and a thorough process encompassing interviews and the following-up of references. It recommends that interviews should also take place even for voluntary roles. Safer recruitment practice also includes having a formal induction programme, monitoring the individual's progress and their continued 'fit' in the role for which they were appointed.

**Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSOs):** The FA requires every league or club with youth teams to have a DSO. DSO is an umbrella term, as the roles are referred to in different ways across the game (e.g. in grassroots clubs they are known as Club Welfare Officers). This network is invaluable to drive preventative measures, promote good practice and also to make referrals to statutory agencies and football, when there are concerns. In grassroots youth football, a DSO is a **mandatory** committee member role.

**Education and training:** These are crucial aspects of any safeguarding framework. This covers initial training and tailored ongoing continual professional development (CPD). The FA has a comprehensive range of face-to-face and online resources, as well as guidance and codes of conduct. These resources all help support people in football to understand their responsibilities and accountabilities when working with children and young people, including how and where to report concerns. In addition to this, the Premier League and EFL provide a range of tailored safeguarding training opportunities for their clubs.

**Reporting concerns:** Making it clear and easy for people to report concerns in football, including a whistle-blowing process, is fundamental to all safeguarding policies. The education and training courses all include this information and it is readily available on The FA website. Once awareness is raised about signs and indicators that should raise concerns about a child's wellbeing, there is generally an increase in referrals in all walks of life. To supplement existing information, The FA film documenting the reporting process, narrated by former Chelsea and England international Graeme Le Saux, is accessible on The FA website.

**Research and insight:** The leading football bodies carry out research to measure the progress of safeguarding implementation across the game. As we move forward, the insights gained from this research inform the provision of education and guidance – as well as gauging the external perception of the work being done.

**Monitoring:** The monitoring framework across the game has continually evolved, using technology to the best of our ability to oversee the implementation of safeguards. For example, The FA requires all clubs with youth teams to have up-to-date information on The FA central system. In this way, it can be verified that all named personnel have in-date criminal records checks and safeguarding training.

You can read more about this monitoring framework on page 15 under '5. Compliance monitoring'.

In the professional game, the Premier League (PL) and EFL (English Football League), through LFE (League Football Education), both deliver further education apprenticeship programmes which are subject to Ofsted inspections. When last inspected by Ofsted, the PL and LFE were both classified as 'Outstanding' providers. Ofsted inspect safeguarding as a vital component of Leadership and Management. The full Ofsted reports are publicly available at [www.reports.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.reports.ofsted.gov.uk)

# Safeguarding in English affiliated football

## – who does what?



ORGANISATION	DESCRIPTION	OVERVIEW OF KEY SAFEGUARDING RESPONSIBILITIES
<b>The Football Association (The FA)</b>	The governing body of affiliated football in England, across all levels (i.e. from grassroots youth football to the professional game, and everything in between). Runs all the England teams, The FA Women's Super League and various Cup competitions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sets the policy and regulatory framework across the game, underpinned by legislation and government guidance.</li> <li>Is monitored against the national standards for Safeguarding and Protecting Children in Sport.</li> <li>Maintains a full-time professional Safeguarding team, supporting the 8,500 Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSOs) across the country, in partnership with County FAs and leagues</li> <li>Operates the Criminal Records Check service for anyone in English football working with children and young people. The service extends from grassroots to the EFL. The FA collaborates with the Premier League which oversees the provision of checks in their clubs.</li> <li>Provides the baseline safeguarding awareness training for coaches, referees, medics, designated safeguarding officers and committee members – the latter from grassroots football to the National League System.</li> <li>Delivers refresher and tailored training in line with policy requirements for key delivery groups throughout the game.</li> <li>Employs full-time safeguarding professionals to manage reported concerns, working with the statutory agencies in relation to safeguarding concerns. Has the power to recommend and via its Safeguarding Review Panels, can implement risk management measures including suspensions from football.</li> <li>Commissions research and insight as required.</li> <li>In collaboration with the Premier League, EFL and County FAs, continually reviews compliance against safeguarding measures.</li> </ul>
<b>The Premier League</b>	The Premier League manages the highest professional league in England. It comprises 20 member clubs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has in place long-standing safeguarding and safer recruitment rules that complement FA regulations. These are reviewed each season.</li> <li>Requires all clubs to have a board-level senior safeguarding lead and a dedicated full-time head of safeguarding.</li> <li>Maintains a regular presence in member clubs and their community organisations to quality-assure and guide their safeguarding arrangements.</li> <li>Requires clubs to refer concerns to statutory and football authorities.</li> <li>Provides clubs with guidance, support, and education regularly throughout each season.</li> <li>Collaborates with The FA and EFL to share practice and strengthen safeguarding arrangements across the game.</li> </ul>
<b>The English Football League (EFL)</b>	<p>The EFL comprises 72 member clubs and is responsible for administering and regulating the Sky Bet EFL, Carabao Cup and Checkatrade Trophy.</p> <p>The EFL supports two charitable organisations: League Football Education and the EFL Trust</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Requires all clubs and Trusts to have a Safeguarding Senior Manager (SSM) reporting at board level, a Club and Community Trust DSO and a team of departmental safeguarding officers.</li> <li>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.</li> <li>Issues every club and Community Trust with a guidance document which identifies the measures they must have in place to meet their legislative requirements and the expected EFL standards for safeguarding.</li> <li>Requires clubs to operate in line with FA Policy and Regulations and issues additional safeguarding guidance and rules specifically regarding Academy youth development in EFL clubs.</li> <li>Ensures clubs and Trusts have in place safeguarding policies and procedures.</li> <li>Requires adherence to safer recruitment practice and monitors this via each club/Community Trust single central record.</li> </ul>





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ORGANISATION	DESCRIPTION	OVERVIEW OF KEY SAFEGUARDING RESPONSIBILITIES
<b>The English Football League (EFL) continued</b>	As opposite	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintains regular communication with clubs and Trusts to provide advice and guidance on all matters related to safeguarding.</li> <li>• Provides bi-annual training and continuous professional development (CPD) for club and Trust DSOs and collaborates with The FA and Premier League on networking and conferences for DSOs.</li> <li>• Requires bi-annual attendance at safeguarding training for Safeguarding Senior Managers (SSMs) and for all EFL and associated organisations staff.</li> <li>• Has developed over 20 bespoke safeguarding training modules for clubs and Community Trusts.</li> <li>• Requires clubs to report and refer concerns to statutory agencies, The FA and the EFL.</li> </ul>
<b>Professional Footballers' Association</b>	A trade union which represents the interests of professional footballers who have or are playing in the Premier League, EFL and The FA Women's Super League 1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Has a named lead DSO.</li> <li>• Provides support and guidance to its members.</li> <li>• Promotes its 'Safelynet' resources to young players.</li> <li>• Provides free counselling support to members via Sporting Chance.</li> </ul>
<b>League Managers Association</b>	A trade association for Premier League, EFL and national team managers in English football, including The FAWSL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has a policy to guide its staff who work with children and young people.</li> <li>• Has a named lead DSO.</li> <li>• Provides support and guidance to its members including counselling support via its confidential helpline.</li> </ul>
<b>Professional Match Game Officials Limited (PGMOL)</b>	Trains, develops and mentors referees and assistant referees to officiate across the Premier League, EFL and The FA competitions – all three organisations fund it.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has a policy to guide its staff in providing a safe environment for vulnerable group and responding to safeguarding concerns.</li> <li>• Provides support and guidance to its members as required.</li> </ul>
<b>County FAs (CFAs)</b>	Collectively in the 2016-17 season the CFAs affiliated 24,000 clubs, of which 7,903 between them run 62,900 youth teams. CFAs have the responsibility for overseeing safeguarding at this level of the game.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operates to The FA Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.</li> <li>• Has a Board Safeguarding Champion, Senior Safeguarding Lead and DSO.</li> <li>• Ensures clubs meet safeguarding criteria in order to affiliate and monitors their adherence to these criteria through the season.</li> <li>• Facilitates criminal record checks, FA safeguarding courses and support to the Youth League and Club DSO network.</li> <li>• Manages poor practice cases that are referred to them and work with The FA and statutory agencies on safeguarding and child protection concerns.</li> </ul>

# Since November 2016 – football's response

**November 2016 was the month several former footballers followed Andy Woodward, waived their anonymity and bravely opened the door with public disclosures of childhood sexual abuse suffered in a football environment.**

**We know from Operation Hydrant (see page 17) that while it's generally former professional players who have come forward and waived their anonymity in the public domain, the majority of survivors were abused in amateur football settings.**

The football world – like everyone else – was shocked and appalled by the revelations. Although the players' cases in the public domain are non-recent, the disclosures have understandably had a significant impact on every level of the game. The shock felt by football has quite rightly seen the game's leadership organisations, led by The FA, take a long hard look at all the safeguarding measures it already has in place across the game. This look in the mirror has resulted in six key actions:

1. **Support:** There is now a support service for survivors who have experienced child abuse in football.
2. **Partnership:** Immediately formed a professional working relationship with Operation Hydrant and police forces throughout the country in relation to non-recent allegations. Continued support with the investigative process undertaken by police forces regarding current safeguarding cases.
3. **External review:** An external review (led by an independent QC) was set up to consider The FA's role in safeguarding and child protection matters up until 2005, identify any lessons to be learned and make the appropriate recommendations.

4. **Proactive calls to report:** The FA used all its communication channels to encourage more survivors to come forward and disclose and to re-state its current measures.

5. **Compliance monitoring:** Every club in the country running teams was required to demonstrate up-to-date compliance with all FA safeguarding policies and procedures.

6. **Revised criteria:** Additional measures are now in place for new and existing clubs to affiliate to their County FA.

The FA has also contributed with other sports, providing feedback on high level policy matters with the DCMS, Home Office, Sport England and the CPSU.

## 1. SUPPORT

To support those who have come forward and disclosed sexual abuse in a football context, we have:

- **Set up a dedicated helpline number for survivors** via the NSPCC. This provides survivors with initial advice and guidance, as well as ensuring referrals are made to the police. From 23 November 2016 to 19 October 2017 the football helpline received more than 2,500 calls. 941 calls were from people concerned about abuse in football and approximately 65% of these resulted in referrals to external agencies. The remainder of the calls were enquiries and advice contacts.
  - **Engaged an independent expert:** Dr Elly Hanson is an independent clinical psychologist who specialises in the field of abuse and trauma. She has been retained by The FA
- **Offered direct support to all known survivors via the police:** Only the police know the details of the survivors who have come forward to pursue a criminal justice route. With this in mind, a letter signed by all the football authorities was sent by Operation Hydrant to all 43 police forces to distribute to everyone who had come forward. This offered survivors who chose to, free specialist therapeutic support for a sustained period of time. This offer from the football authorities was shared with and supported by survivors with whom we had an active dialogue.

to provide expert advice on engaging and supporting survivors, including the specific offer made to survivors (see above and below).

- **Partnered with Sporting Chance<sup>1</sup>:** This partnership is to provide nationwide opportunities for support to survivors of sexual abuse in football. With Dr Hanson's guidance, Sporting Chance increased the number of available phone lines, tailored the initial face-to-face therapist assessment process for survivors, developed a set of criteria to select therapists with expertise in the field, and educated them about the Crown Prosecution Service pre-trial therapy guidance. This is important to ensure that survivors receive support that will not hinder the progress of any criminal or civil justice processes.

<sup>1</sup>*Sporting Chance is the charity set up by Tony Adams, former Arsenal and England player, to support sportspeople with addictive disorders and their all-round well-being.*







- **Regular dialogue with survivors:** This has included dialogue with those involved with Safeguarding and Victim Engagement (SAVE)<sup>2</sup>, The Offside Trust<sup>3</sup> and individual survivors.

The FA shared the survivor support plan which offers therapeutic support for any survivor of non-recent child sexual abuse in football and gained feedback on this – and introduced survivors to the current and ongoing safeguarding work of The FA, Premier League, EFL, PFA and County FAs. Members of SAVE requested and were given access to The FA's safeguarding education programmes and quality-assurance mechanisms.

The FA has worked collaboratively to produce a film that is on TheFA.com. It features survivors talking about the benefits of therapeutic support and signposting them to the support available via Sporting Chance. This support is being accessed by both former professional players and those who played at grassroots level.

Football's 2017 Designated Officer Conference, included a keynote session with Dr Elly Hanson, Paul Stewart and Colin Bland, CEO of Sporting Chance.

This work continues to evolve in conjunction with survivor groups and other agencies.

<sup>2</sup>**SAVE:** 'Safeguarding and Victim Engagement' is a new organisation established and launched on 4 August 2017, by survivors **David White, Paul Stewart, Ian Ackley and Derek Bell** to engage and work with the authorities and support and signpost survivors of abuse in football. They work to ensure that survivors can access support and have their voices heard continues. [www.saveassociation.com](http://www.saveassociation.com)

<sup>3</sup>**The Offside Trust:** a new organisation committed to supporting survivors and working to make sport safer for children. The Trust is led by ex-footballer **Steve Walters** and former professional golfer **Chris Unsworth**, whose stories have inspired hundreds of people to speak out for the first time about their abuse. [www.theoffsidetrust.com](http://www.theoffsidetrust.com)

## 2. PARTNERSHIP

Working with the statutory agencies is standard procedure in managing safeguarding concerns. However, as soon as non-recent child sexual abuse cases came to light in November 2016, Operation Hydrant contacted The FA and established a partnership.

The objective of the partnership was to work alongside policing to manage the non-recent allegations as they were unfolding. In practice this included:

- Swiftly dealing with any 'live' child protection concerns: i.e. investigating any suspects named by survivors, to see whether they posed an ongoing risk to children now.
- Frequent contact with Operation Hydrant: in relation to our work with individual police forces and their investigative requirements.
- Consulting/sharing appropriate information with the police, and so have a joined-up approach in our support for survivors: and that the contact The FA has with survivors does not impede the criminal justice process.

You can read about the work of Operation Hydrant and its results to date on page 17.

## 3. EXTERNAL REVIEW

In December 2016, The FA announced the Terms of Reference (link below) for an external and independent review into The FA's role in safeguarding and child protection matters up until 2005.

[www.TheFA.com/news/2016/dec/05/fa-statement-terms-of-reference-061216](http://www.TheFA.com/news/2016/dec/05/fa-statement-terms-of-reference-061216)

Clive Sheldon QC was appointed to lead this review. He wrote to all professional and non-professional clubs and County FAs requiring all known information on non-recent concerns to be shared. Via the media, he also invited open contributions.

Mr Sheldon's team is liaising with Operation Hydrant officers on an ongoing basis.

### A NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY

The terms 'victim' and 'survivor' are used interchangeably in this document to describe someone who has experienced sexual abuse in their childhood. People who have experienced sexual abuse may relate to one term more than the other. Each emphasises different aspects of the experience and journey.

We also use the term 'lived experience'. This is a shorthand for 'lived experience of sexual abuse'.

# Since November 2016 – football's response (cont'd)

## 4. PROACTIVE CALLS TO REPORT

When the cases of non-recent child sexual abuse came to light, The FA produced a short film to encourage anyone affected to report their concerns – past or present.

The film released in December 2016, featured the then England men's senior team captain Wayne Rooney, Steph Houghton (women's senior team), Nathaniel Chalobah (under-21s) and Jack Rutter (Cerebral Palsy team). They collectively explained how parents and children can raise concerns they have about adults working in football.

The film also explained how the approximately 8,500 safeguarding officers across England football help ensure:

1. All adults are **checked** to ensure they are suitable to work with youngsters;
2. All adults working with children (e.g. coaches and referees), are given safeguarding **training**;
3. How concerns from both children and adults will be **listened to**;
4. The importance of **reporting concerns** about a child's welfare.

The film was aired through all The FA's digital channels, and was picked up nationally.

Operation Hydrant has subsequently informed The FA that they attribute one of the spikes in referrals to the police in December 2016 to the impact of this film.



The title page of film produced by The FA in the immediate aftermath of the November 2016 disclosures.

You can watch the film by visiting <http://www.TheFA.com/football-rules-governance/safeguarding/reporting-concerns> and scrolling down the page.





## 5. COMPLIANCE MONITORING:

On 6 December 2016, in conjunction with the County FA network, The FA contacted all 7,903 affiliated youth football clubs in England. The FA requested they all formally confirmed their commitment to all FA safeguarding policies, procedures and requirements. The commitment covered the 62,900 youth teams collectively run by the clubs.

The commitment itself was via an online form on the FA's Whole Game System on which the clubs were asked to confirm their commitment to safeguarding at youth clubs (e.g. the registration, criminal records checking and training of anyone working with children). Clubs with youth teams also have to have a named, checked and trained Welfare Officer.

The deadline for sign up to the mandatory commitment was 18 December 2016, by which time 99% of clubs had achieved full compliance. 327 clubs remained non-compliant clubs and were immediately suspended although all subsequently confirmed their commitment in January 2017.

At the beginning of January, The FA reminded all clubs about the need for compliance. Specifically, that any coach or manager associated with a youth team required an FA-approved, in-date criminal records check. Over an eight-week period The FA and County FAs worked closely with these clubs to achieve near complete compliance. By the end of February deadline, just 13 teams remained non-compliant and were immediately suspended.

To ensure safeguarding processes were being implemented on-the-ground a series of visits were made to club training sessions. In total, more than 1,000 unannounced safeguarding compliance visits were made to clubs, providing an opportunity to correct incorrect club data, and engaging with over 2,000 club coaches, managers, players and parents. The visit programme will be repeated every season.

In addition, the Premier League contacted its clubs – at shareholder, head of academy and head of community levels – to confirm that everyone involved in the development of young people in their role is aware of the different organisations, inside/outside football, they can contact should they have any safeguarding concerns. The Premier League has also written to the parents of all its clubs' academy players, and the parents of children engaged in community activities, to remind them of the safeguards in place and how to raise concerns.

In addition to making a commitment via The FA requirements identified above, separately the EFL contacted each of its 72 member clubs, all of whom renewed their commitment to safeguarding, including a review of their policies and procedures, a commitment to safer recruitment practices and ongoing training for staff at all levels.

EFL DSOs attended bi-annual training and Safeguarding Senior Managers (SSMs) attended already-scheduled training in January and February 2017.

Football's entire safeguarding workforce also gathers twice a year for a conference. Apart from general updates and case studies, conference delegates also help frame future safeguarding strategy across the game.

## 6. REVISED CRITERIA

Every club – whether new or existing – has to affiliate to its County FA each season. Only by affiliating can a club play in competitions (leagues and cups) under the auspices of the County FA, and ultimately The FA.

The criteria for affiliation are strict and comprehensive and have been for a number of seasons. Since the non-recent child sexual abuse allegations came to light, we have developed a bespoke online 'Safeguarding for Committee members' course. This is to ensure that in addition to the Club Welfare Officer, all Chairpersons, Secretaries and Treasurers, as well as other committee officials, fully understand their safeguarding responsibilities and accountabilities.

From the 2017-18 season, all Club Secretary, Chair and Welfare Officers from grassroots to National League System clubs running youth teams, are required to complete the course for their club to be able to affiliate. From next season, the requirement will also include Treasurers.

To date, there have been more than 25,000 course completions by people in these roles, as well as 3,743 completions by club members in non-mandatory roles. County FAs are under instructions not to award affiliation until all required roles have undertaken the course.





# Operation Hydrant – its work and statistics

## OPERATION HYDRANT

Coordinating the response  
to non recent sexual abuse

**Operation Hydrant is a co-ordination hub established in June 2014 by the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC). Since November 2016 and the allegations of non-recent sexual abuse in football, a professional and streamlined working partnership has been developed between policing and The FA, co-ordinated by Operation Hydrant. The partnership's shared purpose is to obtain the right outcomes for survivors, while maintaining both organisations' distinct and impartial roles.**

Operation Hydrant's independent remit is to deliver the national policing response, oversight, and co-ordination of non-recent child abuse investigations concerning persons of public prominence, or in relation to those offences which took place historically within institutional settings.

It was set up when it became apparent that Police Forces around the country were investigating a significant number of non-recent allegations of sexual abuse involving persons of public prominence or within institutions. There was a risk that investigators were looking at the same individuals and institutions and it was also clear that officers dealing with these complex cases required support and guidance.

Operation Hydrant is informed by individual forces about investigations which meet the Operation's criteria. It then co-ordinates the information among Forces to prevent duplication. This is called de-confliction. It does not carry out individual investigations – this is done by individual forces.

To read more, visit: [www.npcc.police.uk/FreedomofInformation/OperationHydrant](http://www.npcc.police.uk/FreedomofInformation/OperationHydrant)

Following widespread national publicity regarding allegations of non-recent child sexual abuse in football in November 2016, many police forces across the country received an increased number of calls from victims and from people offering information.

This information was forwarded by forces to Operation Hydrant, along with referrals from the NSPCC helpline, as part of the process of operational co-ordination across the police service.

Operation Hydrant collates this information, cross-references it to avoid duplication of investigation, and ensures information and intelligence is shared across forces. The process of operational co-ordination is complex and detailed, and remains ongoing, meaning that figures provided may fluctuate.

Statistics released by Operation Hydrant provide an indicative national figure, up to and including the 28 September, in relation to allegations of non-recent child sexual abuse within football. The figures are accurate at the time of publication, but may change as forces progress local investigations and as the information offered is further analysed.

### • **2,028 referrals have been received by Operation Hydrant from the NSPCC helpline and directly from police forces.**

- This figure does not equate to the number of victims.
- 688 referrals came from the NSPCC, and 1,340 from Police Forces.

### • **The indicative number of victims now stands at 784.**

- This is an indicative figure based on the information available at the time of publication, and may fluctuate.

### • **285 suspects have been identified.**

### • **331 football clubs have been impacted.**

- This does not equate to 331 football clubs under investigation, but instead refers to the number of clubs referenced when information is submitted.
- The figure spans all tiers of football, from premier clubs through to amateur.

### • **96% of those identified as victims are male.**

### • **The age range of victims at the time of the abuse spans four years through to 20 years.**

### • **The vast majority of referrals relate to football. However, a number of other sports have also been the subject of a referral.**

- 27 referrals relate to sports outside football.
- These referrals include basketball, rugby, gymnastics, martial arts, tennis, wrestling, golf, sailing, athletics, cricket, and swimming.
- No further breakdown of the categories within sports will be provided at this stage to avoid prejudice to any live ongoing investigations.

The figures relating to sport in the quarterly published statistics now include most of the data relating to allegations in football that were in the process of being audited and inputted at the time of the last quarterly publication in July 2017.

"Allegations of non-recent child sexual abuse are complex, and often require specialist skills and knowledge, and can take time to progress," says Chief Constable Simon Bailey, the National Police Chiefs' Council lead for Child Protection. "However, all allegations and information received by police

forces across the country are being acted upon.

"We continue to urge anyone who may have been a victim of child sexual abuse to report it, if they are ready to do so, by dialling 101, or contacting the dedicated NSPCC helpline, regardless of how long ago the abuse may have taken place. We will listen and treat all reports sensitively and seriously. Anyone with any information regarding child sexual abuse is also urged to come forward.

"When allegations are reported it enables police to assess whether there are current safeguarding risks and ensure that appropriate action is being taken to prevent children being abused today."

## HOW AN INVESTIGATION IS LAUNCHED

Investigations are launched by forces local to the area where allegations relate. These are progressed in a prioritised manner based on assessment of risk and harm.

Where allegations against a suspect span a number of forces, a lead force will be identified to progress the investigation, while maintaining liaison with other forces holding relevant information.

Due to the high number of calls received across the service, it may take longer than normal for an officer from a local force to make contact to follow up from the initial call. However, all information provided is taken seriously and acted upon.

# 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.

	<a href="http://www.TheFA.com/football-rules-governance/safeguarding">www.TheFA.com/football-rules-governance/safeguarding</a>	 ONLINE, ON THE PHONE, ANYTIME	<a href="http://www.childline.org.uk">www.childline.org.uk</a>
County Football Associations	A list of all County FAs and contact details is available at: <a href="http://www.TheFA.com/about-football-association/who-we-are/county-fas">http://www.TheFA.com/about-football-association/who-we-are/county-fas</a> Click on the specific County FA website to obtain the email address of the County FA Welfare Officer		<a href="http://www.nspcc.org.uk">www.nspcc.org.uk</a>
	<a href="http://www.premierleague.com/safeguarding">www.premierleague.com/safeguarding</a>	 Child Protection in Sport Unit play sport stay safe enjoy and achieve	<a href="http://www.thecpsu.org.uk">www.thecpsu.org.uk</a>
	<a href="http://www.efl.com/-more/governance/safeguarding">www.efl.com/-more/governance/safeguarding</a>	 A National Crime Agency command	<a href="http://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre">www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre</a>
	<a href="http://www.thepfa.co.uk">www.thepfa.co.uk</a> <i>Note – services only available to PFA members</i>	 SPORTING CHANCE PHYSIO FOR THE MIND BODY AND SOUL	<a href="http://www.sportingchanceclinic.com">www.sportingchanceclinic.com</a>
 LEAGUE MANAGERS ASSOCIATION	<a href="http://www.leaguemanagers.com">www.leaguemanagers.com</a> <i>Note – services only available to LMA members</i>		
 PROFESSIONAL GAME MATCH OFFICIALS	<a href="http://www.premierleague.com/referees">www.premierleague.com/referees</a> <i>Note – services only available to PGMOL members</i>		



# Football's reporting process

**Anyone who has a concern about the welfare of a child or the behaviour of an adult towards a child or young person under 18 years of age in football, must refer it to The FA's safeguarding team. The team is 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, must be reported to the police or children's social care in your area.

Referring non-immediate risk of harm concerns can be done via a club, league or County

FA – all have a Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO). Alternatively, The FA can be emailed directly at **safeguarding@TheFA.com**

If clubs or the County FA DSO cannot be contacted, call the 24-hour NSPCC helpline on **0808 800 5000**.

Concerns that someone may be behaving inappropriately or seeking to groom a child in an online environment should be reported to [www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre](http://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre). Reports made there will be directed to the team at the National Crime Agency.

The relevant County FA should also be informed, or The FA at **safeguarding@TheFA.com**

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

**If a child or young person 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 calling **0800 169 1863** and asking for The FA's safeguarding team, or via email to: **safeguarding@TheFA.com**

Alternatively, concerns can be reported:

- Direct to the local Police or Children's Social Care services, or
- The 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 All**

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