

# The Football Association Appointing a Youth League Welfare Officer (YLWO)



[TheFA.com/Goal](http://TheFA.com/Goal)

The FA is currently encouraging youth football clubs to appoint a Club Welfare Officer (CWO) to help the club to be more proactive in dealing with poor practice issues. In addition, having an appropriate CWO, will ensure that if there is a child abuse concern someone knows what to do.

The FA's vision, of having a local network of CWO's throughout as many youth clubs as possible, can be positively supported by youth leagues. Every County Football Association has a Child Protection Officer (CFA CPO), they are the official point of contact for any child protection concerns locally. CWO's are required to pass on any child abuse concerns to the CFA CPO. For more information about The FA referral process please see Section 5 of The FA Child Protection Policy and Procedures ([www.TheFA.com/TheFA/GOALChildProtection/](http://www.TheFA.com/TheFA/GOALChildProtection/) click on the Child Protection Policy and Procedure option under downloads).

The appointment of YLWO's will encourage the sharing and development of best practice across the grassroots game. As such The FA sees youth leagues as key to helping to ensure the safeguarding of young people in football. The FA recognises that there are many proactive leagues that are already doing a great deal to address inappropriate sideline behaviour and to get clubs to play their part in being more aware of child protection concerns. The appointment of the YLWO aims to give this stance a higher profile and consistency across grassroots football.

**Please note:** It is essential that the YLWO is perceived as being approachable, having a child centred approach and the ability to maintain this perspective when carrying out their role.

## Where to start

- Discuss the idea of having a YLWO on your committee and the benefits that this can bring e.g. to promote the leagues code(s) of conduct and review compliance during the season, to promote availability of basic child protection awareness training for clubs, to encourage the completion of CRB checks via The FA CRB Unit, encourage referees to share any concerns/issues they may have with clubs affiliated to the league
- Establish if this needs to be addressed by your leagues constitution, could you co-opt someone onto the committee to speed up the appointment and then make it a permanent role?
- Make it known amongst all affiliated clubs - in particular if clubs already have an appointed CWO that you are seeking to appoint a YLWO as an additional member to your committee and invite applications
- Provide all clubs with the relevant information about this role, this is detailed here on the following page and is also available on [www.TheFA.com/TheFA/GOALChildProtection/](http://www.TheFA.com/TheFA/GOALChildProtection/) click on the Child Protection Policy and Procedure option under downloads.
- Establish if anyone involved with your league or an affiliated club that has any professional child protection expertise, you may have a committee member or club member who is or was a police officer, teacher or social worker that might be willing to take on the role
- Ensure you have a fair and open recruitment process in line with your leagues constitution

## Ideally

- Get all youth league committee members to understand the need and benefits of appointing a YLWO and their support for the idea

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- Involve the clubs and youth league committee members in making suggestions of those with the potential to take on this role
  - Obtain and make it clear to everyone that the YLWO will have the support and backing of the youth league committee
  - Get the YLWO post onto the youth league committee as a permanent position
  - Adopt the YLWO role as recommended by The FA as detailed below:
    - To know who the CFA CPO is and how to contact them
    - To refer any club child protection or poor practice concerns to the CFA CPO
    - To seek advice from the FA/NSPCC Helpline if the CFA CPO is unavailable or in circumstances of child protection urgency
    - To seek advice from local Social Services or the Police in an emergency if CFA CPO is not contactable
    - To encourage the club to discuss and implement The FA's Child Protection Policy ([www.TheFA.com/TheFA/GOALChildProtection/Downloads](http://www.TheFA.com/TheFA/GOALChildProtection/Downloads) click on the Developing a Club Child Protection Policy and Sample Child Protection Policy)
    - To encourage the club to utilise The FA's Child protection and best practice – Guidelines on recruiting volunteers and always requesting and following up references ([www.TheFA.com/TheFA/GOALChildProtection/Downloads](http://www.TheFA.com/TheFA/GOALChildProtection/Downloads) click on the Developing a Club Child Protection Policy and Sample Child Protection Policy)
    - To encourage the club to discuss and implement The FA's Child protection and best practice – Guidelines on the use of images and organising travel, trips and tournaments ([www.TheFA.com/TheFA/GOALChildProtection/](http://www.TheFA.com/TheFA/GOALChildProtection/) click on the Travel and Trips Advice and Image Use – Guidelines)
  - To advocate that the CRB Enhanced Disclosure to be used as part of the clubs safeguarding initiatives and encourage the club to make use of The FA's CRB Unit
  - To support the club in identifying those who require a CRB Enhanced Disclosure
  - To promote, support and encourage the benefits of the child protection and best practice education and awareness programme
- ### What next
- Before appointing your YLWO ensure that you have considered their appropriateness for this role by checking them against The FA's Safeguarding Children Fit and Proper Person Checklist below
  - Follow the appointment of volunteers guidance as provided by The FA on [TheFA.com/Goal](http://TheFA.com/Goal) when appointing the YLWO ([www.TheFA.com/TheFA/GOALChildProtection/Downloads/](http://www.TheFA.com/TheFA/GOALChildProtection/Downloads/) click on Guidelines for Recruitment and Selection of Volunteers)
- ### Safeguarding Children Fit and Proper Person Checklist
- #### Essential
- Willing and able to provide relevant references
  - Willingness to update skills and knowledge
  - Previous experience of working with children
  - Knowledge of and positive attitudes to equal opportunities
  - Commitment to treat all children as individuals and with equal concern
  - Physical health – appropriate to carry out tasks
  - Mental stability, integrity and flexibility

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- Completion of The FA CRB Enhanced Disclosure Process and acceptance by The FA of the outcome. Note, many people with a history of offending can still be considered as appropriate people to work with and care for children. The FA CRB Unit or Goal website can advise on the current methods for checking this process has been satisfactorily completed
- Attendance at an FA Child protection and best practice – Workshop
- Understanding and appreciation of the need for confidentiality when dealing with issues
- Reasonable level of administration experience and how to deal with confidential documentation
- Attendance at an FA Welfare Officer Workshop
- Commitment to attend in-service training facilitated by The FA or the local CFA

## Desirable

- Knowledge of child protection issues\*
- Knowledge of child protection legislation (a appropriate)\*
- Relevant football knowledge/understanding\*

\*If an interested individual does not currently have knowledge of child protection issues and or child protection legislation this can be addressed initially by The FA's Child protection and best practice – Workshop. These workshops are normally taken at a local level organised by your County Football Association contact details can be found on [www.TheFA.com/GrassrootsNew/CountyFA/Postings/2006/03/12003.htm](http://www.TheFA.com/GrassrootsNew/CountyFA/Postings/2006/03/12003.htm)

**NB** If any person is considered not to be a 'fit' person to work with children, his/her application should be refused.