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Football in England

14,446 clubs

105,033 teams

Context for Safeguarding in English football:

- 22 year journey
- Gradual process
- Continuous review and development
- Challenges & solutions
- Non-recent cases
- FA Safeguarding Survivor Advisory Group
- Development of Safeguarding Standards and The FA Strategy



Our focus for this session

1. Safeguarding education and training
2. Specialist staff - Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSO)
3. UK legislation – Disclosure and Barring Service Criminal Record Checks
4. The impact of our independently assessed FA Safeguarding Standard for County FAs
5. Input from Sarah Willis Birmingham County FA DSO

Safeguarding Education and Training

Challenges

- Volume of people
- Volunteer time
- Resistance to change
- Developing tutors
- Quality delivery
- Updating people

Solutions

- Phased roll-out
- 2001: mandatory for coaches, referees & specialist staff (DSOs)
- Safeguarding tutor network
- Quality checks on delivery
- Free online safeguarding course

1. Training includes – recognising & reporting incidents

- How to report concerns film (FA.com)
- What to do if someone discloses

Training = increased reporting



Coming soon - free online Parents course - April 2022

Over 1 million
completed FA safeguarding courses
2001 - 2022

2. Specialist Staff - Designated Safeguarding Officers



Challenges

- Size: 77,800 youth teams
- Fear of losing volunteers
- Finding right people (skills & attitude)

Solutions

- Role needed at all levels of football (approx. 8,500)
- X50 County FA DSOs 2001 voluntary workforce, paid workforce in 2008
- Club Welfare Officer mandated in 2008 for grassroots youth football
- Training & support for Club Welfare Officers
- Code of Conduct for Welfare Officers

3. Disclosure & Barring Service Criminal Record Checks

Challenges

- Volume of checks
- Resistance to checks / fear of losing volunteers
- Sharing recruitment decision with clubs

Solutions

- Mandated by The English FA & legal requirement
- Set up English FA DBS service to manage risk
- Helpline & support network
- Online applications & data management



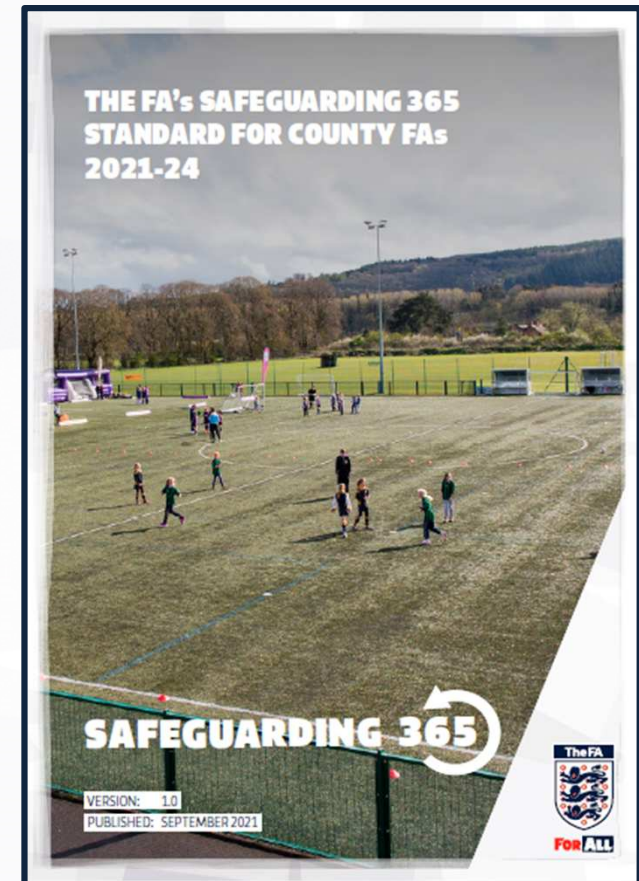
75,000

Criminal Record Checks
completed each season (and renewed
every 3 years)

4. Safeguarding Standard for County FAs

Six key Safeguarding Standards themes:

1. Governance and leadership
2. Operational delivery driving a culture of safeguarding
3. Listening to the voice and support under-18s
4. Football disciplinary
5. Case management
6. Compliance and monitoring



Independently assessed standard for
County FAs

**100% met the standard in
2020/21**

The standard continues to evolve



5. Birmingham County FA



2 x Designated Safeguarding Officers

380 grassroots youth clubs with a minimum of 1 Club Welfare Officer, covering 3,472 teams

- Work in partnership with the English FA, statutory agencies and other relevant organisations to manage safeguarding concerns
- Deliver the Safeguarding Standard for County FAs within Birmingham FA, driving and monitoring compliance
- Support the volunteer Club Welfare Officer network within the Birmingham area, providing training, advice and guidance.

So what have we learned?

1. Abuse in football has and does happen (2016)
2. Education and training is critical
3. Active leadership (ownership) at all levels is key
4. Listening to children & survivors broadens our understanding
5. Setting standards & monitoring brings greater consistency



Thank you for your time today