

Recruitment and Selection of Volunteers



1. Introduction

The intentions of most people involved in football involving children and young people are good. However, The FA recognises the responsibilities clubs have to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people participating in football by providing a safe and enjoyable environment.

When clubs recruit new members all reasonable steps must be taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children and young people. In addition, a club's volunteer selection processes must be consistent and fair at all times. This guidance outlines methods which club officials can use to assist with their recruitment choices.

2. Planning

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

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

3. Advertising

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

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

4. Application Form

Clubs should use application forms to collect information on each applicant. A carefully designed application form is essential as part of the vetting process, CVs should not be accepted. (Please see an example in Appendix 1 that could be adopted for a club's use.)

More than one club official should look at the application forms to ensure that fair and equitable scrutiny is completed.

5. Meeting/Interview and Verifying Information

It is highly recommended that club officials meet with all applicants prior to any recruitment decisions being made. More than one club official should be present. The meeting/interview will enable the club to explore further the information provided in the application form.

Clubs should also ask to see identification documents to confirm the identity of the applicant, for example, a passport or driving licence, and a copy should be retained on file.

The questions to be asked at the meeting/interview should be prepared in advance and should provide the applicant with the opportunity to recount previous experiences and give examples of how they have or would handle situations.

To verify that the applicant has the technical capabilities that they profess to have it would be useful to use a job simulation test, where the applicant demonstrates that they understand and can deliver the job role.

It is recommended also that the applicant is asked to bring their original certificates for their qualifications. It is very easy for applicant to falsify certificates if copies are accepted. A copy should be kept on file. It is recommended that the applicant's higher education qualifications are verified with the awarding institution.

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

- Tell us about any previous experience you have working with children or young people.
- Give a child related scenario and ask the applicant what they would do. For example, 'it is a winter evening and the training session has finished. A parent has not arrived to pick up their child – what would you do?' The applicant would be expected to say that they would stay with the child and contact the parents to find out where they were.
- Is there anything we should know that could affect your suitability to work with children or young people?

6. References

At least 2 references should be requested from individuals who are not related to the applicant. One reference should be associated with the applicant's place of work and if possible one that demonstrates the individual has been involved in sport, particularly children's football previously. (An example of a reference request form is detailed in Appendix 2.)

7. Vetting

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

8. Post Recruitment

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

- Any qualifications should be substantiated if this has not already been done (see above).
- That new volunteers are made aware and sign up to the club's child protection policy, practices and procedures.
- That any training needs are established and actioned.
- A statement of the roles and responsibilities of the new volunteer is prepared.
- Initially, a period of supervision/observation or mentoring would ideally be introduced.