



Membership Matters

Introducing the ESFA's "Spotlight On..." Campaign

December, 2023

This month, the ESFA launched a new campaign with the aim of shining a light on the brilliant work that Members and Associations do all over the country to provide unique schools' football opportunities for thousands of pupils in their local areas.

The ESFA's PR, Marketing and Comms team visited Berkshire County Schools' FA at one of their U16 Girls' training sessions to speak to the staff, coaches, players and parents about the work that goes on within Berkshire and the benefits the young people in that area receive from the hard work of these volunteers.

You can now view the video on the ESFA's YouTube channel by clicking below.



[Click here](#)

We are grateful to colleagues in Berkshire for the access and insight they provided for this film.

This video is the first in a series of videos that we hope will highlight the scope of schools' football across England and recognise the efforts of thousands of volunteers working within schools' football.

ESFA Perception Surveys

Thank you to those of you who completed our recent surveys about your experience of being part of the ESFA. The Council was delighted to receive your responses, with around 1 in 3 of our Associations sharing their views.

As promised, we would like to share a summary of the views expressed back with you, and to explore in further detail some of the suggestions you made to us so that we can determine specifically what we can do in response. Your link Council Members will be hosting individual sessions for your area in the near future, and we will be in touch with you again shortly with some dates for further discussion.

Thank you once again for taking the time to give us your opinion and we look forward to working together in the future to strengthen our collective impact for the benefit of school pupils in England.

ESFA International trials and squad announcements

Friday 10th December saw the ESFA conclude the trial process for the 23/24 England U15 Schoolgirls' and U18 Schoolboys' squads. The squads were announced via the ESFA's social media channels and website on Monday 11th December, and we would like to congratulate all of the players that have been selected and the Associations that will be represented throughout this season's international programme.

You can view the squad announcement for the boys [here](#) and for the girls [here](#).

We are pleased to announce that Chesterfield FC & Walsall FC have been secured for the two U18 home fixtures. Full detail will be released in the new year.



Schools' Football Week | 5th – 12th February 2024

We are delighted to announce that we have already received over 900 registrations for Schools' Football Week 2024, including 19 Associations. If you haven't already registered some activity for your Association during the 5th – 12th February, you can click below to do so:

[Click here to register for SFW 2024](#)

So far, we've registered Schools' Football Week activity for almost 190,000 children and will continue to push registration until the end of January. We will be sharing updates on activity and plans in the coming weeks but in the meantime, make sure your Association and / or School are registered for 2024.

Volunteer recruitment campaign 23/24

The volunteer recruitment campaign is back again for 23/24, Following last season's success, which saw us fill 32 volunteer opportunities across the country.

Do you need volunteers?

If you let us know what volunteer support you need within your Association, we will share these details on the volunteer section of our [website](#). Once this is complete, we will launch both an email and a social media campaign to reach as many people as possible across the country.

All you need to do is -

- 1) Follow this [link](#) to our volunteer opportunity upload survey and submit up to 5 opportunities per survey. If you have more than 5 volunteer opportunities, then please complete more than 1 survey.
- 2) If you don't currently require any volunteer support, but are still interested in exploring possibilities for the future, please let us know. We can then agree what wording you would like to use under the heading for your area. For example, "There may be opportunities available in [your area] please email example@schoolsfa.com to find out more and to register your interest in volunteering". Feel free to share the wording you would like to use. (In the 22/23 season this helped to create a waiting list for future opportunities for many Associations)
- 3) The deadline for completing any volunteer opportunities is 08/01/2024.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact Daniel.smith@schoolsfa.com.



Safeguarding notifications

Please see the below messages from the ESFA's Safeguarding team. If you have any queries regarding the content below, please contact Emma.Allen@schoolsfa.com or Martin.Duffield@schoolsfa.com.

At the end of another year, we would like to thank you and your members for the continued work you do to keep your players safe and assure you that our two National Welfare Officers are always happy to give guidance and support at any time. In the meantime, we have some information to share with you below:

- The Times Educational Supplement (TES) recently published the document. – “7 Key Safeguarding Concerns” which we recently forwarded to Welfare Officers. We believe that this document would be a useful resource for our County and Local Association Welfare Officers. The document also includes links to other resources and training options which you may find useful
- A reminder that our next online safeguarding training session for CWOs will be on Wednesday 24th January 2024 from 6 - 7pm. Details will be distributed to Welfare Officers and Secretaries closer to the time
- There are currently 1,812 staff members listed on the ESFA Portal, many of these, we believe, are no longer involved with representative team football. We are close to moving onto the new portal ready for the 2024/2025 season. Could we ask all Associations to check the staff they have listed on the portal and delete those who are no longer involved? Associations who no longer have representative teams may still have staff listed, so we would be grateful if they could also check

Emma Allen- ESFA Designated Safeguarding Officer

Below is a short introduction from Emma Allen, the ESFA's new Designated Safeguarding Officer:

“I have recently retired from West Midlands Police having served for nearly 30yrs – with the last 7 years of my service as a Detective within the Public Protection Unit specialising in child abuse.

I am acutely aware of the need for appropriate safeguarding for all young people and bring a wealth of knowledge and practical experience to my new role as Designated Safeguarding Officer within the English Schools' FA.

I have lived a life of football as my husband and both of my sons have played, coached and officiated in the grassroots football arena for the past 18 years, with me being one of the Moms standing loyally on the side-lines and getting involved in the dreaded administration and organisation.



(Continued...)

I am committed to this new role which provides an exciting challenge and one which I will be able to utilise my significant skillset in safeguarding, to ensure that I can uphold the fantastic values that the ESFA and its members have created.

I believe that I can bring a new dimension of experience to the table and am really looking forward to working with everyone involved in schools' football.

Thank you all for making me feel very welcome”

Report of Council

Marvin Robinson, Chair for 2023/24, welcomed all to the November meeting of Council and passed on Council's thanks to outgoing Independent Council Member Sion Portman, whose work commitments were regrettably making his role with the ESFA untenable.

The Chair updated Members on the process of negotiations with the JPL regarding U16 girls' PGAs and clashes with CSFA fixtures. The CEO and the Governance Manager had put in place operational arrangements with the JPL to impose postponements where 3 or more players, or the GK in a PGA, were committed to county football. Members were reminded that the process for seeking player release was now managed between the ESFA and the JPL, not CSFAs and clubs, and county players involved in PGAs, along with their fixtures, needed to be lodged with the ESFA so that postponements could be made. Council were also updated on early discussions with Kick It Out, a charity working to end discrimination in all its forms in sport, on a potential partnership with the ESFA. A short update was provided on home international fixture venues, with announcement expected before Christmas.

The CEO reported on recent discussions with The FA, which had included an update on the Youth Review, attendance at the annual Safeguarding Conference and promotion of the ESFA at the “Dare to Lead” conference, led by The FA and designed for County FA Football Development Managers. A discussion about the ESFA's contribution to football nationally was held, and it was suggested that the Chair of The FA, the CEO and the Chair of the National Game Board be invited to an ESFA Council meeting to better understand our role and contribution. The CEO also responded on the awarding of a bursary, in the ESFA's name, by UCFB to one of its undergraduate students, and that she had acted as a guest speaker at the opening of the UCFB campus in Salford, at Old Trafford.

Council then went on to review a proposed “Council Commitment Statement”, designed to replace the existing Code of Conduct and a previously proposed role description. Designed to outline expectations from Council of its Members, and expectations of Council Members of the ESFA, the Statement would be counter-signed by both parties and would include provision for addressing non-exceptional absences from Council. Subject to minor changes, the Statement was approved by Council for adoption.

(Continued...)

Council received the data analysis that had arisen from the Membership perception surveys, via presentation from the CEO. Around 1 in 3 Associations had responded, with a wide range of views from nearly 170 volunteers. Council wished to place on record its thanks to all who had responded, and agreed to arrange follow up meetings with link Counties/Regions to share the findings, discuss local issues and hear suggestions for practical implementation of some of the suggestions. These meetings were to take place before the January Council so that additional qualitative information could be shared with Council so that actions adopted were as closely targeted to Members' requirements as possible. There had also been some expressions of interest from colleagues interested in hearing more about the role of Council and these were being followed up individually.

With thanks to Light Oak Junior School in Manchester, Council heard video testimonial from pupils who were now enjoying football, having overcome barriers to participation, including race, religion and gender as well as physical and emotional well being challenges. Council enjoyed a stimulating debate about means by which players' voice could be directly heard by the national body, and suggestions such as focus groups and national council were to be further explored.

Report of the Representative Football Committee:

- Members had been updated on the requirement for teachers to retrospectively self-declare their compliance with safeguarding training through their school, or to complete the FA's Safeguarding Certificate. All personnel in school were expected to complete Level 1 KCSiE training, with DSL's completing level 3 training. Operational arrangements to implement this data capture were under discussion & Council were asked to encourage Association Members to respond to the ESFA's requests.
- The ESFA's new DSO was taking proactive & supportive action to assist Associations to manage their safeguarding practices by completing "health checks", which included desk top reviews of Association social media, updates on staff whose credentials were soon due to expire & the promotion the parental engagement sessions.
- That there had been a reducing number of suspensions & that compliance had been improving, with 9 Associations & 14 teams being suspended at time of meeting.
- The Committee had also received a short paper from the CEO which had summarised the known issues facing sustained representative football, such as sourcing volunteers, funding, fixture congestion & the specific decline in boys' representative football in the U18 age group. An update on the actions that had already been taken were detailed to the Committee & the following were noted by Council:
- That there should be support for Members "in kind" by protecting representative football. Negotiating with other footballing bodies a "transfer window" outside of which clubs/leagues could not recruit players from representative football, in order to prevent mass losses to the game in September when Association trials would have already concluded.

- That pupils finishing their time as players in SFAs should be encouraged to remain involved in a voluntary capacity: these young leaders could become the ESFA's Youth Council, which Council agreed to in principle.
- That confirmation had been sought & received that representative football & ESFA Associations were intended to be part of SFW. The Committee had recommended that for season 24/25 & onwards SFW began on a Saturday with a celebration of representative football rather than finishing on the first Saturday of half term. CEO confirmed that this had been noted by the PRMC team & would be included in future plans.
- Council also discussed the target that had been carried forward from season 22/23's business plan to establish a working group of Members to help with solutions, this had been considered by the Committee & agreed to remain a relevant ambition.

Report of the Football Governance Committee:

- The Committee had discussed the prevalence of "one-man" bands, where one person was fulfilling multiple roles within an Association, which, unless an Association was an approved LFO, was counter to ESFA rules. The discussions that the Committee had held around the possible implications for safeguarding & governance of an Association with this type of structure were reviewed by Council.
- Council endorsed the plan to help manage these concerns that the Committee had devised. assist them to become compliant but noted that 1 Association had already been suspended for non-compliance.
- There was need to reinstate the question from national competition entrants about whether they entered local/County activity.

Report of the Football Development Committee:

- To support the expectations & work of the FDM, the Committee had looked at the priorities in satisfying the KPIs & meeting targets. Committee noted that entries to Hotshots had been opened & the Schools' Football Week entries were being opened.
- The development fund applications were being opened.
- The disability festivals had been set up.
- The deaf schools' finals would take place in February 24 & the Muslim Schools festivals would take place in the new year.
- The year 3 & 4 kickabout festivals had continued & that a new funding contract was being sought.

Report of the National Competitions Committee:

- There had been an operational update on the champions Cup. The Committee had agreed that 96 hours' notice would need to be provided for any notification of fixture changes, such as change of venue or kick off time. Any last-minute changes that occurred after this notice period must be mutually agreed by both parties in future.

- Inter county cups, Pokémon cups & the PlayStation Schools' cup week, at West Bromwich FC, Stoke City FC & Sixways had all been discussed. There would be branded Pokémon footballs at the primary finals but a date for these finals had not been confirmed.
- c.5,733 inter-school secondary age fixtures had been completed to date in season 23/24 & there had been an increased opportunity for districts to play football when compared to the same stage of the Champions Cup in season 22/23
- The ISF World Cup had been discussed & the Committee noted that the ESFA national competition winners from season 22/23 had not taken up the offer to play at the ISF World Cup event. Alternative schools were being identified by DoO
- South West Council Member (GR) had praised the quick turnaround for the box of Pokémon bibs, banners & certificates that had been issued for their county finals, where there had been over 200 children in attendance. The items had been well received & photos had been uploaded to the ESFA social media.

Report of Trustees:

- Trustees had met with M Ashton from professional auditors, Lancasters, to discuss & sign off the financial statements for 22/23.
- The ESFA had achieved a surplus from a budgeted deficit for the season. This had been due to new income being received along with season end performance bonuses, the sale of a long-term investment asset & operational savings that had been made.
- The auditors had agreed that all obligations & performance criteria for sponsor & partner contracts had been met or exceeded, therefore all income secured could be stated in the financial statements.
- The auditors had agreed that the treatment of activity which had exceeded the season end had been completed correctly.
- All procedural matters to comply with Charity Commission & Company House would be completed by FD
- The website & social media "spotlight on" County SFAs, with the offer to have a VEO camera for the season, had been accepted by Berkshire CSFA & footage would be obtained on 28 November. If this spotlight was successful, then this would be rolled out further.
- The Royal Household would be reviewing all patronages that had been affected by the recent changes in the royal family after the Christmas period.

Report from External Committees – SAFIB:

- There had been a unanimous agreement to the ESFA rule change proposal that all risk assessments for fixtures be shared with the opposition.
- The ESFA had hosted a successful SAFIB AGM at Lilleshall & thanks had been passed to M Spinks for all their work in organising the event on behalf of the ESFA
- The Rod Houston U14 girls' competition that had taken place at Lilleshall after the SAFIB AGM. South Hunsley School, representing the ESFA had finished in second place. The competition had showcased some good schools' football.
- The ESFA would be staging the Allen McKinstry in May 2025 & would need volunteers to assist with the event. This would be discussed further at the April 2024 Council meeting & SAFIB (DW) would provide the FD with all the event information & budget.

We hope you are all able to enjoy a very merry break over the Christmas period and wish you a peaceful and happy New Year.

If you wish to suggest or request content for next month's Membership Matters, please email Ben.Woolley@schoolsfa.com





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