



## **Membership Matters - November 2024**

Welcome to November's edition of Membership Matters. We hope all Members have had an enjoyable start to the season and find the information below helpful and interesting. We ask that you share this email far and wide within your schools' football networks to ensure all members are kept as up to date as possible with ESFA activity and messages.

### **A welcome message from ESFA Chair, Nick Loftus**

“As Chair of the Association, I am keen for all children of school age to gain the benefits of participating in schools' football. Across the country there are some really positive examples of best practice and we need these opportunities to be provided for all. Representing the school, district or county team, are all fantastic achievements for some of the youngsters in our care and I would like to give thanks to those people who give their time for these extra curricular activities. We must also cater for others in our diverse school communities to play the national game; girls have been inspired by our Lionesses, boys have for a long time had their footballing idols on their TV screens. We must not forget that it is a game that can be just as important for a wide variety of underrepresented groups. Is there more that can be done to enable more children of school age to play in your area?”



### **ESFA CEO visits Leicestershire & Rutland CSFA**

I had the great pleasure earlier this month to visit L&RCSFA to be part of what may be one of the very few competitions specifically for girls educated in small primary schools. Outside of the cities, a high proportion of primary schools in the county fall into the ESFA's "small schools" definition and so the CSFA decided to run the equivalent of the Pokémon schools' cup for this group of schools.

Six teams, winners of the local District events, congregated at Judgemeanow School to compete in a league format which ultimately decided the winning team. All attendees received a participation medal and a great time was had by all!

The county is run by a very small, long serving group of volunteers and a regular cohort of qualified referees, all of whom are very keen to see the national cups expanded to include a girls' small schools' cup.



**CEO visits Durham CSFA**

I was pleased to receive an invite to attend a Durham CSFA Council meeting and enjoyed a warm welcome earlier this month.

As well as receiving their routine progress reports, Durham Members discussed the challenges facing Rep football in the face of expansive academy football and growth in the grassroots game. We discussed the agreement between the FA and the ESFA - the memorandum of understanding - which requires headteacher to approve any non-school activity at the weekend. Little used now, the Memorandum may still however help in tricky discussions. It was pleasing to see that a County FA rep was present at the meeting and was constructive and supportive in using his County FA position to address clubs who actively discouraged player engagement in the schools' game.

The Council also discussed the shortage of volunteers in a District and was reminded of the ESFA's volunteer recruitment programme ([Dan.smith@schoolsfa.com](mailto:Dan.smith@schoolsfa.com)).

With the agreement the Chair, I sought feedback from the Council on the ESFA's "service pledge", which you can see ([here](#)). Some constructive suggestions for service improvement were made, and accepted:

1. Ensuring that communications are timely, particularly where this relates to changes in procedures, or where there are suspensions for safeguarding reasons. Members were pleased to hear that the new ESFA portal would automate a series of earlier warnings of the need to renew safeguarding credentials. Council members also agreed that it would be helpful to remind new volunteers of the option to auto-renew DBS clearances.

2. The website remains difficult to navigate. Again, the new portal brings with it a much improved website which will be in place next season.

3. The high volumes of communications to busy volunteer Secretaries. To help manage this, we agreed that we would try to identify the importance of the content in email headers, as follows:

**For information:** any email with this header gives you information you might be interested in, but which does not require action. For example, our new newsletter for schools, sent from HQ and shared with Associations for their interest.

**For consideration:** any email with this header provides you with information you need to check and either determine if it is relevant for the Association at this time, or to note a future action. For example, the Membership Matters newsletter content or a new ESFA produce or service becoming available.

**For attention:** any email with this header contains an action, or essential information for schools' football in your area. For example, a discipline case, safeguarding matter or operational details such as joining instructions for national finalists.

It was pleasing to explore some practical suggestions and I am grateful that these matters were discussed.

The meeting was well run and supported, with all attendees making a valuable contribution. It was a great pleasure to spend some time with this group of volunteers, whose commitment and determination to sustain and develop schools' football was inspiring. Thanks to them also for the guidance and support they have given back to HQ during this meeting, and other engagements with them in recent years. We hope the players in area enjoy the football that their Associations work so hard to provide.

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## **ESFA AGM Part 2**

A notification to all members that the ESFA AGM Part 2 will take place on 28 November 2024 at 7pm. Only FORMAL Associations will be eligible to vote on matters arising during the meeting. The meeting will take place online via teams. If you wish to attend the AGM, please RSVP to [Dawn.Howard@schoolsfa.com](mailto:Dawn.Howard@schoolsfa.com).

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## **Reminder – new rule change**

**We still have a considerable amount of Associations who are not showing 2 coaches per rep team on the ESFA portal.**

Please be aware that as of the 2024/25 season and as agreed at the ESFA AGM, County and District Associations must ensure that a minimum of two fully compliant members of staff are assigned to each team and attend all fixtures and training sessions.

This does not necessarily have to be a coach and second S/G person could be a parent who is present. They will need to be added to the portal and have completed a FA DBS and FA Safeguarding Certification.

## **Change to FA DBS Application Charges**

From Monday 2nd December 2024, fees for Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks will change. Further information can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/dbs-fees-are-changing-in-december> and as a result please note the following:

**Current DBS applications are £10**

**From 2nd December will increase to £11.50**

## **Faith & Religious Clothing - FA Guidance**

The FA has asked us to remind members of the following guidance in regards to Faith and Religious clothing:

“The FA is committed to making football welcoming and accessible for everybody, and we strive to remove any barriers that may restrict people from taking part in our game.

To support this principle, if a player requests to wear trousers or leggings to ensure their faith and/or religious beliefs are not compromised, the match referee must allow this to be accommodated. Ideally, team shorts should be worn over the top of any trousers or leggings to comply with the Laws of the Game. However, if this is not possible, then wearing only trousers or leggings should still be accepted by match officials.

Trousers or leggings should be the same colour as team shorts. However, if this is not possible, then this should not prevent an individual from participating in a fixture.

Players are expected to adhere to Law 4 regarding all other playing equipment (i.e. socks, shin guards and the correct footwear).”

## **ESFA Enterprises Coaching Camps**



For members who attended the summer AGM, you will be aware that the ESFA has created a wholly owned subsidiary company through which to conduct non-charitable (ie profit-making) commercial activities. The first project is the summer coaching camps, which will run in July 2025. Registrations for the camps are now open and the ESFA is thankful to Associations for sharing this opportunity with their players and parents. It would be great if Associations and staff could continue to push these camps to their U14 Boys and U15 Girls.

The camps will take place in July 2025 at Marlborough College. We are aiming to register 50 boys at U14 (for the camp which starts on 21st July) and 100 girls at U15 (for the camp which starts on 28th July). You can find more details on the ESFA Enterprises website [here](#). You can also follow @esfaenterprises on X, Instagram and Facebook and share any posts from these channels across your own, to help promote these new opportunities for players.

Please remember that this is not part of the ESFA's core charitable purpose. The reason for running these camps at all, and specifically through the subsidiary company, is so that the company can donate its profits back to the charity, creating unrestricted income and profits which can be distributed to ESFA Membership.

If you have any questions, please contact Andrea on [Andrea.Chilton@schoolsfa.com](mailto:Andrea.Chilton@schoolsfa.com).

## Diary Dates

ESFA Final Trials – Sunday 8th December – Castle Vale

### England Schoolboys

Date	Home	Away	Venue	KO
Friendly Fixture				
Friday 24 January	England	Australia	Hednesford Town	TBC
Centenary Shield				
Friday 11 April	England	Wales	Macclesfield Town	19:00
Friday 28 February	Scotland	England	Greenock Morton	13:00
Friday 14 March	England	Northern Ireland	Truro FC	19:00
Friday 24 April	ROI	England	Athlone Town	19:00

### England Schoolgirls

Friendly Fixture				
Sunday 23 March	TBC	England v Wales	TNS	TBC

Schools' Football Week 2025 - Save the Date



# Schools' Football Week

[Schools' Football Week](#) (SFW) 2025 will be back in the calendars of schools across England from **Monday 31 March until Sunday 6 April** and for the first time, will run in partnership with Pokémon!



Schools' Football Week 2024 saw the campaign reach huge new levels of participation –

- Over 260,000 pupils took part in SFW activity
- Over 120,000 girls benefitted from schools' football activity during SFW
- Over 1,400 schools registered for events

Don't miss your opportunity to be part of this fantastic and reimagined campaign, bringing together the shared values of Pokémon and the ESFA, to create an inclusive and elevated Schools' Football Week for 2025 and beyond! Pokémon are a valued, long-term partner of the English Schools' FA, already providing the Pokémon Primary Schools' Cup to thousands of children each season. The addition of Schools' Football Week to the partnership will allow Pokémon and the ESFA to bring the far reaching benefits of schools' football to even more pupils within a fun and friendly environment – from the pitch and into the classroom.

The 2025 campaign will officially launch on Monday 13 January 2025, when schools, Associations and teams will be encouraged to register activity to put their schools and pupils on the map as part of the ESFA's largest campaign. Registration will be open on the 13 January and the ESFA and Pokémon team will be ready to celebrate all things schools' football!



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