



League  
Football  
Education

[lfe.org.uk](https://lfe.org.uk)

# CLUB GUIDANCE HANDBOOK



Established by



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# Welcome to the Apprenticeship Programme

**On behalf of LFE, it is my pleasure to provide an introduction to our guidance book for football clubs participating in the Apprenticeship programme.**

Firstly, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all clubs for their continued support across all areas of the Apprenticeship programme.

LFE remains committed to providing the utmost support to apprentices and club staff as we further embed the Sporting Excellence Professional Standard and BTEC qualification.

Our consistently high achievement rates would not have been possible without the supportive attitude shown by club staff and is a glowing endorsement of the programme. The dedication of all staff involved in the day-to-day operation of the programme ensures we deliver the very best we can for our apprentice players year after year.

LFE will continue to offer an extensive Personal Development, Life Skills and Transition programme to broaden opportunities, awareness and learning, to ensure that apprentices and clubs are viewed in a positive manner by those inside and outside the game.

Support will continue for clubs having a PGAAC audit and we will arrange health and safety visits to ensure all clubs can meet the relevant health and safety requirements.

I would also urge all clubs to continue to protect the integrity of the two-year Scholarship Agreement signed by all apprentices by giving

every young player equal access to the games programme and by allowing each player the opportunity to complete the full programme.

Your support across these areas will enable LFE to meet retention targets and increase successful outcomes for apprentices who engage with our Transition work. This includes Assessment Trials, Careers Events and Employment opportunities.

The ability to maintain your commitment in this area remains critical to successful apprentice achievement of the full education programme.

Understanding the key issues and challenges is important to all club staff and so we trust that you will find the latest version of this Club Guidance Book useful.

If you have any questions regarding the programme, you will find staff details in the back of the publication, so please contact us and use our website [www.lfe.org.uk](http://www.lfe.org.uk) for further information.

LFE will continue to provide the highest possible level of care and support, and we recognise that thanks to your commitment, we are not only helping to produce the professional players of tomorrow, but also well rounded individuals who are prepared for life beyond football.



**Sarah Stephen**  
Chief Executive

# Keeping you informed

LFE has developed a number of channels to engage everyone associated with the apprenticeship programme.

The website and social media channels are the first port of call for the latest news.

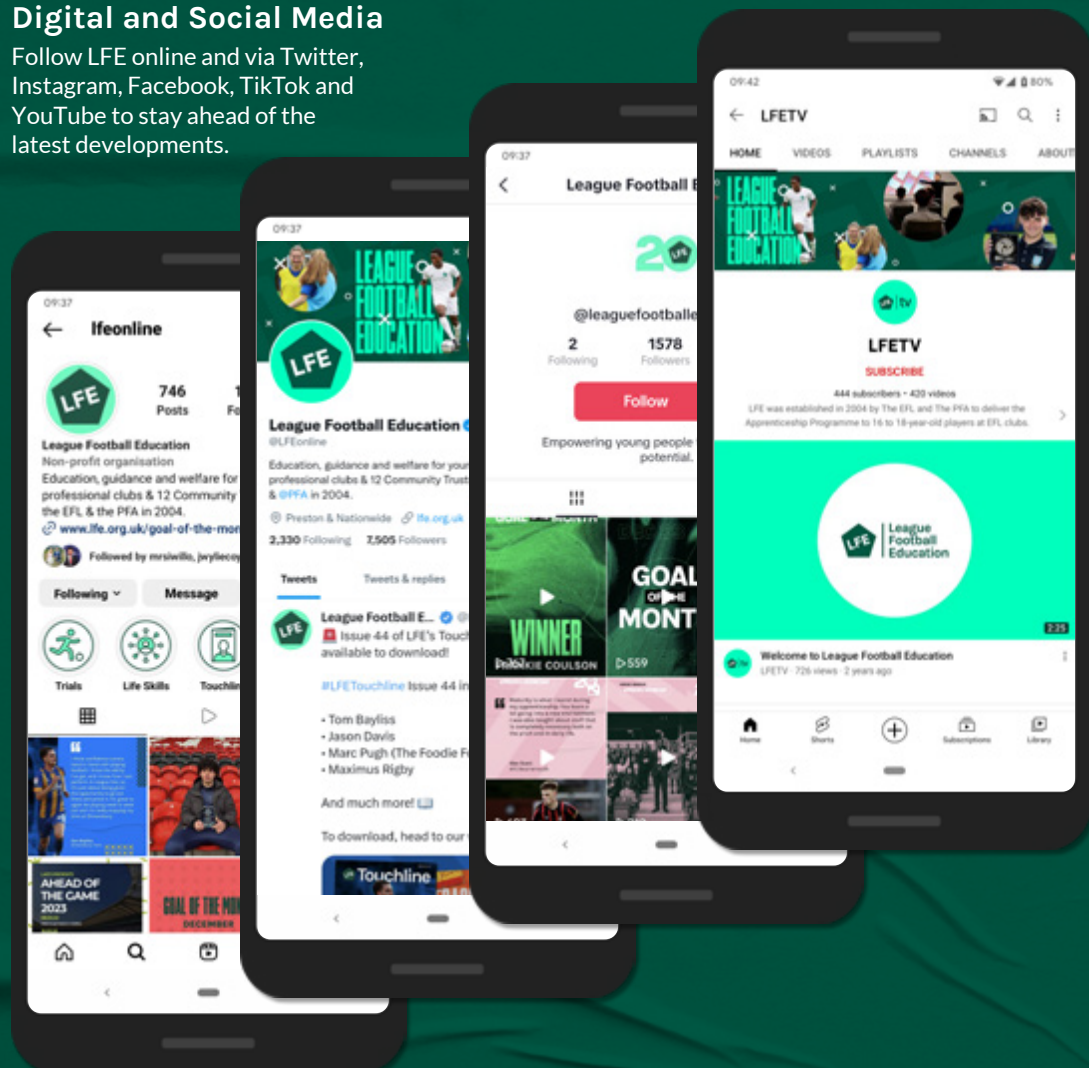
LFE tackles all areas from apprenticeship related issues to coverage of all the U18 Leagues - incorporating fixtures, results and league tables.

LFETV showcases the Goal of the Month competition, which features the best goals from all the Academy Leagues and attracts over 25,000 viewers each season.

LFE utilises an e-learning platform to manage the education programme and to provide players with useful guidance and information on a variety of life challenges such as well-being, discrimination and finance.

## Digital and Social Media

Follow LFE online and via Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, TikTok and YouTube to stay ahead of the latest developments.



## Publications

Publications include Touchline - a quarterly magazine - and guides to support players considering Higher Education or soccer scholarships in the USA.



## Follow Us



# Apprenticeship Programme

This section gives a brief outline of the components to make up the Apprenticeship programme and the process that is undertaken to ensure that apprentices' individual needs are identified and met over the course of the two-year programme.

LFE is funded by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) to deliver the Apprenticeship programme.

In addition, LFE also receives funding from its partners to provide wider opportunities to apprentices. A conceptual diagram of the programme is outlined below.



## Apprenticeship Programme

### Initial Assessment

Initial assessments are carried out with every apprentice to establish academic ability. LFE Regional Officers will undertake initial assessments.

The assessment process will be carried out between April and July, and will enable the apprentice to be placed on the most appropriate educational programme based upon expected GCSE results.

### Final Assessment

A second meeting will take place in late August/early September when the apprentices have had their GCSE results confirmed.

Should the GCSE results achieved confirm the grades given at the Initial Assessment, the apprentice will be able to commence the academic programme agreed previously.

However, if the apprentice has either exceeded or not achieved the grades given at the Initial Assessment, further discussions will take place to ensure an appropriate academic programme is designed to meet the apprentice's needs.

### Induction

This will be carried out at the start of the apprenticeship. LFE provides each club with a set of standard induction units that includes the following topics:

- Education programme
- Employment rights and responsibilities
- Equality, diversity and inclusion
- Health and safety
- Club rules and regulations
- Anti-doping
- Safeguarding
- Apprentice well-being

### Apprentice Reviews

Apprentice reviews are conducted with LFE Regional Officers and are recorded on an e-learning platform. The review process clearly establishes the level of progress made, and agreed goals to work towards during the next period for each apprentice. Regional Officers are responsible for coordinating this process.

Review comments will be collated in the following areas:

- Employer/club
- Sporting Excellence Professional (completed by the Tutor Assessor)
- BTEC Sporting Excellence and Performance
- Functional Skills English and Maths (completed by Functional Skills tutor if appropriate)

The Regional Officer will use the collected information to discuss progress and overall development of the apprentice.

### Review Cycle

Reviews will be conducted at regular intervals throughout the apprenticeship. It is essential that apprentices are available for reviews, and meetings should be rearranged if missed.

The only acceptable absences from reviews are as follows:

- Apprentices selected for the first team or international duty.
- Apprentices involved in FA Youth Cup matches.
- Apprentices who produce a sick note from the doctor or club physiotherapist.

### The Football Development Programme

- Pre-Season Training - This period of time is used to ensure that the apprentice is fully prepared for the start of the season.
- Football Training - This will include work on technical and tactical skills, physical conditioning and psychology.
- Football Coaching.
- Apprentices will follow their club's specific coaching programme and philosophy over the next two years.

### Education

The educational programme has been specifically designed for elite athletes and includes nationally recognised qualifications.

For the vast majority, the educational programme will consist of the following elements:

- Sporting Excellence Professional (Level 3)
- Academic Education (Level 3)
- Functional Skills (Level 2)
- Certificate in Coaching (UEFA C Diploma)

**It is essential that apprentices are available for reviews, and meetings should be rearranged if missed.**



## Apprenticeship Programme

### Sporting Excellence Professional (Level 3)

LFE apprentices will undertake the Sporting Excellence Professional Apprenticeship Standard.

The Sporting Excellence Professional Apprenticeship Standard is designed to equip young footballers with the knowledge, skills and behaviours required for a career in professional football.

The key activities of an Apprentice on the Sporting Excellence Professional are to:

- effectively and successfully represent their employer on the field of play at a local, regional, national or international level
- undertake a daily training routine, supported by a multi-disciplinary team, to ensure they retain and develop the technical, tactical, physical and psychological skills necessary for performing at the professional level
- practice a lifestyle conducive to maintaining a high level of performance
- act as an ambassador for their employer, sport and governing body in relation to younger players, fans and the local community – including their approach to diversity, equality and inclusion
- actively plan for life after their sporting career and to supplement the next phase of playing contract.

### Core Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours

- Technical performance – the movement and skills that underpin techniques required to play professional football.
- Tactical performance – understanding strategy and approach to professional football.
- Technical/tactical performance includes the ability to use technology to interpret and compare different forms of analysis in training and competition.
- Physical performance – development of physical capabilities to apply in a professional environment.
- Injury and risk management.
- Effective, safe and inclusive practice.
- Anti-doping.
- Nutritional performance.
- Psychological and emotional performance – the ability to cope with the psychological demands of a sport in order to perform at an optimum level.
- Communication.
- Lifestyle and personal development.
- Career and self-development.
- Integrated approach to performance – the active combination of all disciplines that contribute equally to achieve high performance.
- Behaviours, professionalism and values.

### Knowledge Test

The knowledge test should be taken as early as possible in the three-month period of the End Point Assessment.

The test will be comprised of 40 mandatory multiple-choice questions and six scenario-based questions. The knowledge test is graded as fail, pass or distinction.

Apprentices will have 90 minutes to complete the knowledge test, which will be closed book – i.e. the apprentice cannot refer to reference books or materials.

### Practical Observation

The apprentice must be observed by an independent assessor undertaking a range of day-to-day tasks as part of their regular working patterns and training/match play schedules.

The practical observations should include the following:

- Practical training session (60 minutes)
- Data analysis session and video showcase (45 minutes)
- Question and answer session with the independent assessor (45 minutes).

### Professional Interview Supported by a Portfolio of Evidence

The professional interview is a structured discussion between the apprentice and an independent assessor. The interview must last for 90 minutes, although additional interview time may be granted for apprentices with appropriate needs.

This will be supported by a portfolio of evidence, all of which will be developed while on programme, which should typically contain 22 pieces of discrete evidence. Examples of evidence are:

- individual learning and development plans
- witness testimonies
- poster presentations
- video analysis of match play
- digital storytelling
- training logs.

## END POINT ASSESSMENT (EPA)

The End Point Assessment consists of three distinct assessment methods.

- A knowledge test with multiple-choice questions and scenario-based questions.
- A practical observation with questions and answers.
- A professional interview, supported by a portfolio of evidence.

## Apprenticeship Programme

All apprentices are required to complete 20% of their learning through off-the-job hours. This is the academic part of the apprenticeship that allows learners to gain recognised qualifications.

### Academic Education

The BTEC programmes have been specifically designed to mirror the topics on the SEP so apprentices can maximise their knowledge about key topics that impact on their career.

There are three BTEC qualification sizes:

**BTEC National Extended Certificate**  
(360 Guided Learning Hours)

Includes three mandatory units.

**BTEC National Diploma**  
(720 Guided Learning Hours)

**BTEC National Extended Diploma**  
(1080 Guided Learning Hours)

### BTEC Units

Unit (number and title)	Unit size (GLH)	Extended Certificate (360 GLH)	Diploma (720 GLH)	Extended Diploma (1080 GLH)
A Careers in the Sport and Active Leisure Industry	90	M	M	M
B Health, Wellbeing and Sport	90	M	M	M
C1 Developing Coaching Skills	180			O
C3 Professional Sports Performer	180	M	M	M
D3 Applied Anatomy and Physiology for Professional Performance	180		M	M
E Research Project in Sport (Pearson-set)	120		O	M
1 Sports Development	60		O	O
4 Nutrition for Physical Performance	60		M	M
7 Functional Sports Massage	60		O	O
11 Rules, Regulations and Officiating in Sport	60		O	O
13 Influence of Technology in Sport	60		O	O
22 Sports Law and Legislation	60		O	O
23 Psychology for Professional Sports Performance	60		O	M

Apprentices must be willing to commit to independent study, over and above their normal education sessions in the club. The additional units required for the Extended Diploma will be completed remotely with support from club staff.

### Course Length and Duration

The Extended Certificate, Diploma and Extended Diploma will be completed over two years.

### DID YOU KNOW

As a rough guide, when making a university application...

Extended Diploma = 3 x A-Levels

Diploma = 2 x A-Levels

Extended Certificate = 1 x A-Level

### A-Levels

If an apprentice wishes to undertake A-Level qualifications, they will need their respective LFE Regional Officer and club Head of Education to complete an approval form.

A-Levels can be difficult to timetable into the football training programme. The club's Head of Education and LFE Regional Officers can offer more guidance on this subject.

LFE's minimum entry criteria is the following:

- Five GCSE's at grade 7 or above, with one GCSE at grade 8 or 9.
- English (Language or Literature) OR Maths at grade 7 or above (can be included in the required five).
- Grade 7 or above in the A-Level subject(s) that they wish to study (exceptions may apply).

### Expectations for the Apprentice:

- Attend classes
- Complete coursework as required
- Hit targets that are set
- To contact their Regional Officer if they have any concern.



## Apprenticeship Programme

### Functional Skills

These are Level 2 qualifications in English and maths that must be passed if GCSE English and/or maths are not achieved in school at Grade 4 or above. Functional Skills (FS) must be passed before an apprentice can go through the End Point Assessment process of the Sporting Excellence Professional (SEP).

### Course Length and Duration

The length of the course depends on the number of topics that each learner needs to cover, but ideally it will be completed within the first year of the apprenticeship. Some will complete in less than 10 hours, whereas others will need the whole year for the content they need to cover. FS courses are tailored to the individual.

Good communication skills will help them to make a valuable contribution on and off the pitch, and in whatever happens in the future. During the course, apprentices will have many opportunities to practise and develop these skills in a range of different settings, including:

- in media interviews
- in post-match analysis sessions
- on the pitch
- in class
- in one-to-one sessions with psychologists, physiotherapists, analysts.

### Assessment

FS assessments are all taken online, on demand. This means that when an apprentice is ready, they can take assessments. Results are back in within 20 working days.

Maths assessments are 25 minutes for test A and 90 minutes for test B.

English Reading assessments are 75 minutes.

English Writing assessments are 60 minutes.

English Speaking Listening and Communication is internally assessed for approximately 30 minutes.

English and maths skills development will continue, as appropriate for each apprentice, for the duration of their course, to ensure that they maintain or improve the skills learned in school.

Reading and referencing skills will be used and developed as they do research and include quotations, summaries or images formally in their work.

### UEFA C Diploma (Certificate in Coaching)

As part of the programme, each apprentice will also undertake the FA UEFA C Diploma. This includes units on the:

- player
- coach
- environment
- game.

### Course Length and Duration

The course will comprise of:

- a mixture of blended learning with theory and practical training
- child protection
- first aid
- coaching hours
- formative and summative assessment.

### Aims and Objectives of the UEFA C Diploma

The coaching qualification underpins the work that each apprentice completes on the Level 3 Sporting Excellence Professional and allows apprentices to:

- develop an appreciation of the ethical coaching process
- develop an understanding around coaching philosophy, communication, managing difference and player well-being
- plan, conduct and evaluate a series of football coaching sessions
- coach the basic skills and techniques of football to others
- ensure the health and safety of players and others within the coaching environment
- develop greater responsibility for your own learning and development
- demonstrate an understanding of the principles of attack and defence through the use of practices and small-sided games.

### FA Introduction to First Aid in Football

Apprentices will complete an online first aid workshop and learn to deal with emergency situations, such as choking, heart attacks, major bleeding and the resuscitation of unconscious casualties. On completion, this certificate is valid for a period of three years.

### The Value of the Coaching Qualification

The coaching certificate provides a formal and recognised qualification.

The course, which is a stepping stone to the UEFA B Licence, should also allow the apprentice to understand the role of the coach, improve upon their personal skills, such as communication, and give them greater responsibility.

It also affords apprentices the opportunity to coach in the following areas:

- American Soccer Camps
- Academies\* & Development Centres
- Football in the Community
- Soccer schools
- Local schools.

\* Dependent on the role, a UEFA B Licence may be required

Maths is **EVERYWHERE** in football. You will continue to practise maths related to your role as a footballer in the gym, with nutrition, statistics and data analysis to name just a few areas.

You will also access personalised maths resources on an online learning platform to help you to continue to develop your maths skills.



# Personal Development, Life Skills and Transition

League Football Education wants more for apprentices than successful achievement of the apprenticeship programme - we support the development of well-rounded people.

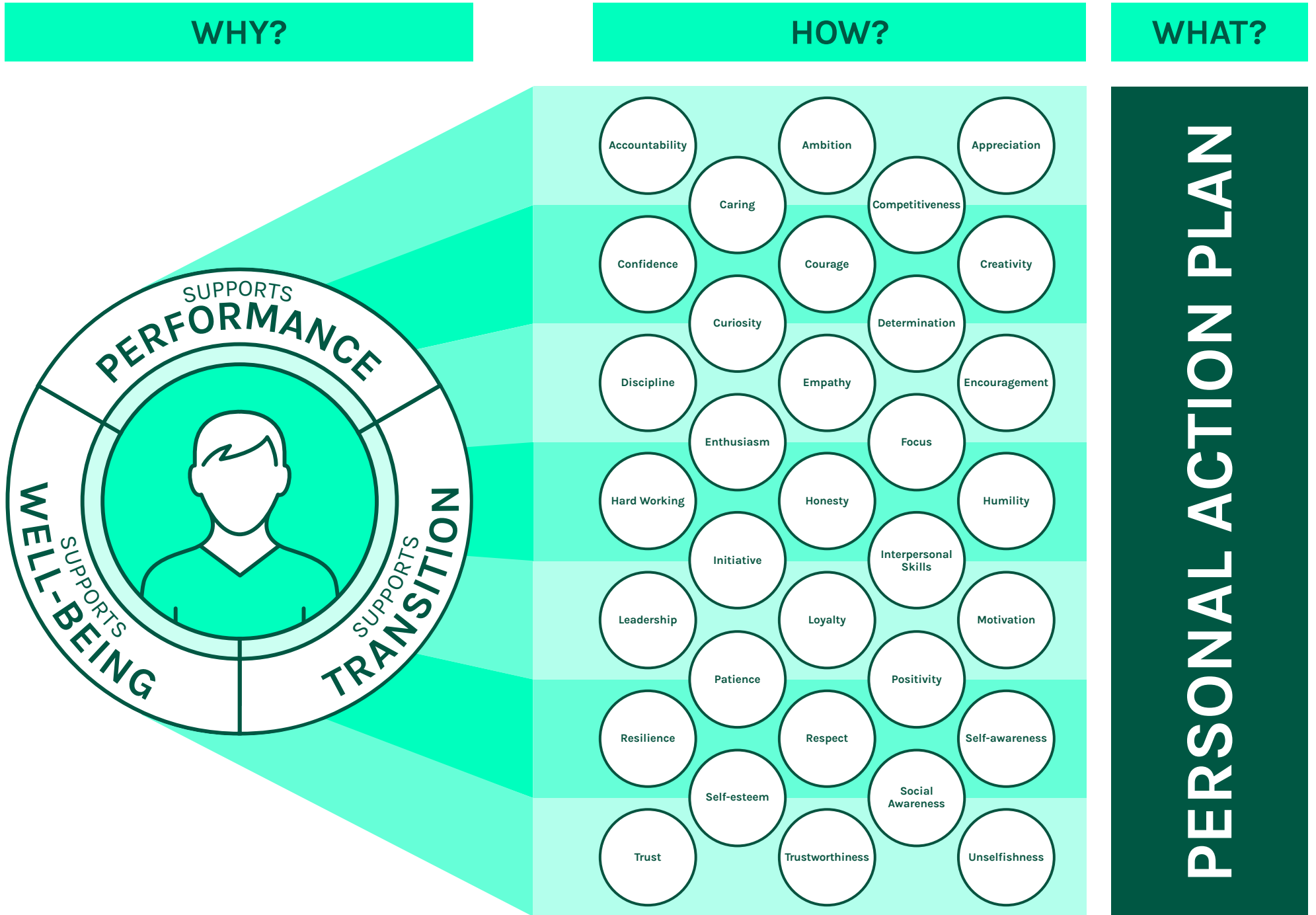
Those who embrace personal development as well as alternative interests, employment, education or training, equip themselves to excel as footballers and for life off-the-field.

### Personal Development

LFE's personal development model provides a framework for planning and delivering this wider development.

### Player Care

The education and support provided across personal development and transition forms part of the player care agenda. The definition of player care is the adoption of a holistic approach to personal and sporting development, supporting academy players to achieve their potential in and out of football. All academies have a mandatory full-time staff position to deliver player care support with this role proactively taking steps to improve the experience of academy players and their families.



# Personal Development and Life Skills

League Football Education provides information, advice and guidance for personal development. Through face-to-face delivery and resources, apprentices receive opportunities to support their performance, well-being and transition.

## Personal Development Model

LFE's personal development model provides a framework for club staff and apprentices to understand the process for holistic development and its supportive outcomes.

## Mentoring

LFE's six-session mentoring programme introduces personal development and identity, expands on opportunities for developing characteristic skills and supports individuals in their own goal-setting process. Delivered by a former professional athlete, there is insight to career challenges and masterclasses on transferable skills.

## Life Skills

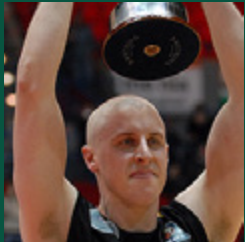
League Football Education is committed to providing life skills-based education relevant to the world of a young person in a sporting environment.

LFE's Life Skills Programme aims to raise awareness and empower apprentices with knowledge and skills to deal with the demands of football and life.

The programme delivers practical advice across different aspects of well-being, such as emotional, financial, mental, occupational, physical, social and spiritual. This is provided through face-to-face and webinar delivery, online modules and resources.

Some examples of the topics covered are criminal law, emotional well-being, discrimination, faith, finance, mental skills, sexual health and consent, social media, road safety and lifestyle education on key subjects such as gaming, gambling, alcohol and drugs.

## Personal Development Mentors



Dru Spinks



Mark Roberts



Adam Whitehead



Jack Rutter



Linvoy Primus



Rory Winters



Bobby Copping



Tobi-Sho Silva

# Transition

League Football Education defines 'Transition' as the ability to deal with and move through life challenges, which includes career pathways in and out of football.

LFE will support apprentices by providing:

## Transition Officer

A dedicated, qualified person providing transition information, advice and guidance.

## LFE Transition, Careers & Education Workshops

LFE provides apprentices & club staff access to a selection of Transition, Careers & Higher Education related workshops as part of LFE's transition programme. These can be accessed and booked by club staff via LFE's Delivery Request System.

## Tracking, Monitoring and Support Programme

A proactive programme contacting all apprentices on completion of the apprenticeship programme and for three years afterwards. It will gather information on what support they need and at the same time offer information, advice and guidance.

## Career Opportunities

Employers, educators and training providers recognise the characteristics and skills that apprentices can offer their organisations.

League Football Education has built strong partnerships with a variety of different organisations - from employers to leading universities in the UK and USA.

LFE apprentices and alumni have access to LAPS - Ahead of The Game careers events. Supported by LFE, the Premier League and the PFA, these events are designed to help players plan for careers and opportunities both alongside football and after football.

## START

A dedicated online career guidance tool for players to access whenever they want. More information on how to utilise the resource is available on the LFE website.



## Transition

### Football Opportunities

LFE (in conjunction with The EFL, The PFA and The Premier League) run Assessment Trials each year for players released at the end of their apprenticeship and is committed to supporting players with football opportunities post-apprenticeship.

All LFE apprentices are eligible to attend the Premier League & LFE PDP Preparation Programme. This residential five-day programme will provide an elite training experience where players will benefit from a range of Personal Development & Transition support.

LFE have partnered with Pro Player Pathways who combine global football opportunities with education. All players continue to work towards a career as a professional footballer in a variety of countries. They provide opportunities for players to play in the USA, Canada, South America, across Europe, Dubai, South-East Asia and Australia. These global football opportunities provide a platform for players to continue to progress as footballers whilst they also work towards an alternative career.

[chris.hirst@vluke.org](mailto:chris.hirst@vluke.org)  
[ProPlayerPathways@gmail.com](mailto:ProPlayerPathways@gmail.com)

### Higher Education/USA Scholarships

Many apprentices are interested in entering Higher Education once they complete their apprenticeship programme.

This has to be carefully planned for UCAS application deadlines. To help them with this, LFE has produced a 'Guide to Higher Education Applications' which can be downloaded via our website.

LFE has also established a partnership with **FirstPoint USA** - a consultancy that specialise in securing scholarships to USA universities.

For more information, please see the HE and USA Scholarship Guides:

[www.lfe.org.uk/usa-scholarships](http://www.lfe.org.uk/usa-scholarships)  
[www.lfe.org.uk/higher-education](http://www.lfe.org.uk/higher-education)



# Celebrating Success

LFE celebrates the academic, football and wider achievements of apprentices throughout the two-year programme and beyond.

## The 11

The 11, which is aligned to apprentice reviews, celebrates the holistic development of young players, with 33 apprentices being recognised each year for their outstanding efforts on and off the pitch. This competition runs three times each season, with the likes of Oli McBurnie (Bradford City) and Max Lowe (Derby County) both now Sheffield United, Ademola Lookman (Charlton Athletic) now Atalanta, and Jordan Adebayo-Smith (Lincoln City) now Minnesota FC in the MLS, all previously appearing in this select group.

## LFE Apprentice of the Season

Sponsored by LFE, an Apprentice of the Season Award is allocated to an apprentice player in each league at the annual English Football League Awards dinner.

This award celebrates the on and off the pitch achievements of apprentice players and is decided by a panel of expert judges.

Previous winners include Ashley Phillips (Blackburn Rovers now Tottenham Hotspur), Luke Matheson (Rochdale now Bolton Wanderers), Junior Tchamadeu (Colchester United now Stoke City) and Jude Bellingham (Birmingham City now Real Madrid).

## Goal of the Month

LFE’s Goal of the Month competition highlights the very best goals scored by apprentice players across the country. With each month’s winner decided by a public vote, it regularly attracts thousands of online viewers. Check it out at [www.lfe.org.uk/goal-of-the-month](http://www.lfe.org.uk/goal-of-the-month)



## Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

LFE has a wide range of strategies to support the learner and the club during the Apprenticeship programme to ensure that every apprentice receives Equality of Opportunity.

### Our Position and Commitment

LFE is fully committed to a policy of Equality of Opportunity. We aim to ensure that staff at all levels work in an environment free from any discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity.

At the same time, LFE also works hard to ensure that every apprentice is treated fairly and is encouraged to develop to his full potential in all aspects of his training. LFE will seek to ensure that apprentices do not suffer any form of discrimination and that they are supported to understand their rights and responsibilities during the two-year programme.

LFE will discuss equality awareness with apprentices during progress reviews to monitor their understanding and experience during training. Clubs and apprentices will be able to access a wide range of support provided by LFE from induction, to transition.

During the year, LFE will provide clubs, apprentices and Education Providers with the opportunity to comment on how we manage the education programme and to suggest any changes that might be beneficial.

LFE will continue to work in partnership with The EFL and the Premier League on anti-discrimination and inclusiveness awareness.

In addition, LFE continues to work with Kick It Out, Stonewall, Holocaust Educational Trust, Muslim Chaplains In Sport, The EFL and The PFA to deliver anti-discrimination training at football clubs which includes reporting and support.

### Club Responsibility

There is a significant amount of legislation to address discrimination, which clubs should be aware of, designed to ensure that each individual is treated equally and fairly.

All clubs should have policies and procedures in respect of Equality and Diversity. LFE reserves the right to ask clubs for their equality documentation at any time.

LFE expects all clubs to attend The EFL Safeguarding seminars and courses to support the equality agenda.

It is the responsibility of everyone involved in the apprenticeship, including club staff and apprentices, to ensure that our policies are implemented and supported. We ask that all clubs develop an environment where equality, fairness, security and respect are an integral part of the Apprenticeship programme.

### Useful Websites

[www.acas.org.uk](http://www.acas.org.uk)

[www.equalityhumanrights.com](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com)

[www.kickitout.org](http://www.kickitout.org)

[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

[www.thefa.com](http://www.thefa.com)

[www.mcst.org.uk](http://www.mcst.org.uk)

[www.het.org.uk](http://www.het.org.uk)

# THE PFA

## YOUTH ADVISORY SERVICE



Professional  
Footballers'  
Association



Image: PA Images / Alamy

“The PFA’s Youth Advisory Service is a fantastic platform for all of our players, parents and guardians. From the very youngest age groups to those transitioning into the first-team environment, their confidential and impartial advice across a breadth of services can help keep all involved abreast of support strategies to help young people on their journey through the Academy”

– Lincoln City

# Safeguarding Young Apprentices

LFE is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

## Overview

If apprentices wish to raise any issue relating to Child Protection or safeguarding, there are a number of avenues that they can follow. Your club is required to appoint a Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) who is responsible for implementing Safeguarding procedures which follow the policies established by LFE, The EFL and The Football Association with regard to safeguarding young people.

Alternatively, if apprentices do not feel comfortable approaching a member of staff at the club, they can also discuss any concerns with the LFE Regional Officer who will visit your club on a regular basis. Information on the process(es) for reporting abuse should be included in the apprentice induction programme.

Any such issues brought to the attention of LFE staff will be treated seriously and referred to the appropriate personnel and organisations.

LFE is committed to the welfare of all apprentices and recognises that a number of personal problems may arise during their time on the Apprenticeship programme or beyond.

These may be in relation to sexual health, drug and alcohol abuse, gambling problems, financial issues or adjusting to the workload that a full-time apprentice away from home has to cope with. LFE has therefore dedicated a section of its website to apprentice welfare and well-being and we would encourage apprentices and clubs to visit [www.lfe.org.uk](http://www.lfe.org.uk) for more information or contact their Regional Officer for more information.

LFE's Life Skills Programme also encompasses work in this area via If U Care Share, Paul Stewart and Sporting Chance.

LFE, together with The EFL, will be providing additional support to clubs on safeguarding children. This will be through advice, guidance and safeguarding workshops delivered by The EFL Safeguarding Manager. All LFE Apprenticeship programmes are expected to take advantage of this training and support which will contribute to the continued professional development of staff, working with young apprentices.

For further information or advice on safeguarding children and young people please contact:

- The FA Safeguarding Children - general enquiry line  
**0845 210 8080**  
[footballsafethefa.com](mailto:footballsafethefa.com)
- The EFL Safeguarding Manager, Alex Richards  
**01772 325940** (office hours and answer phone)
- LFE DSO, Paul Bartlett  
**07813 088469**  
[pbartlett@lfe.org.uk](mailto:pbartlett@lfe.org.uk)
- The NSPCC Child Protection 24-hour Helpline  
**0808 800 5000**

## Useful Websites

[www.ceop.police.uk](http://www.ceop.police.uk)

[www.thefa.com](http://www.thefa.com)

[www.gov.uk/dbs](http://www.gov.uk/dbs)

[www.ifucareshare.co.uk](http://www.ifucareshare.co.uk)

[www.lfe.org.uk](http://www.lfe.org.uk)

[www.sportingchanceclinic.com](http://www.sportingchanceclinic.com)

[www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk)

# Health and Safety

LFE aims to ensure that all training and learning takes place in a safe, healthy and supportive environment. LFE provides clubs and apprentices with extensive health and safety information at Induction, please ensure that this unit of Induction is carried out and that apprentices learn why they need to work safely, obey safety rules and how this can be accomplished. Incidents and things that seem dangerous, damaged or faulty should always be reported - it may help others in the future.

Football clubs/academies have a responsibility not to put apprentices or others at risk, others includes any person who may be affected by the activities of the business. Examples being contractors/service engineers and their employees, visitors, spectators, delivery persons, neighbours and the general public.

It follows that there must be safe access and egress for any part of the premises that are under the control of the club/academy.

There is a legal requirement for all employers, to have access to competent health and safety advice and assistance.

General health and safety duties, as covered under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the various Regulations subordinate to it also require a competent person. This could be an employee of the club/academy, or an external provider. The Health & Safety Executive define a competent person as someone with the necessary skills, knowledge and experience to manage health and safety. Relevant information on this can be found at [www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/) and a good starting point for finding general Health and Safety Advisers is the Occupational Safety and Health Consultants Register, OSHCR. Their website can be found at [www.oshcr.org](http://www.oshcr.org)



## Health and Safety

There is a duty to complete risk assessments and, where risk cannot be avoided, determine control measures that will reduce such risk to a level that is acceptable. There are various types of assessment, including those for Tasks/Situations, Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (CoSHH), First-aid Needs, Manual Handling, Display Screens, Fire Risk, etc. which is where the health and safety adviser is invaluable, as is their assistance in advising on the drafting of relevant policies and procedures for the club/academy Safety Management System. In addition, the training of employees of the club/academy enables them to carry out these tasks themselves, which spreads the workload and greatly assists the understanding of the need across the workforce.

### Vetting and Auditing

LFE is committed to vetting all football clubs/academies as quality learning on the Apprenticeship programme can only take place within a healthy and safe environment.

LFE audits football clubs/academies on a two yearly cycle and these audits are part of the ongoing EPPP monitoring processes on behalf of The EFL. The process covers the following areas:

- Health and Safety Policy, Organisation, Responsibilities, and Arrangements
- Hazards and Risk Assessment
- Occupational Health, Training & Development
- Control of Hazardous Substances (CoSHH) and Dangerous Substances & Explosive Atmosphere Regulations
- Electrical Safety
- Offices and External Areas
- Fire Safety
- Transport, Travel & Off Site Teambuilding
- Performance Measuring and Monitoring

The Audit aims to:

- assess the effectiveness of the present health and safety management procedures at football clubs and provide LFE with feedback on club arrangements
- identify strengths and aspects of football club procedures and systems that have worked well and contributed to a safe and healthy working environment
- identify areas where improvements in the management of health and safety are required to ensure that clubs follow statutory obligations and provide a healthy, safe and supportive working environment for apprentices
- inspect workplace and training environments to ensure that clubs provide a healthy, safe and supportive working environment for apprentices
- assist the development of action plans for improvement

Health and safety audits have been sub-contracted to our consultant, Chris Knagg of Carris Consulting. Chris contacts clubs to arrange these visits directly on a two yearly cycle, however, if you would like to contact Chris directly his details are:

#### Chris Knagg of Carris Consulting

**Email:** [chris@carrisconsulting.co.uk](mailto:chris@carrisconsulting.co.uk)

**Phone:** 07836 386567

Following the visits, action plans for improvement are created to help clubs/academies provide a healthy, safe and supportive working environment for apprentices, other employees and any person who may be affected by the activities of the business.

#### Health and Safety on Team Building/ Outdoor Events

Clubs considering this type of activity must take extreme care to ensure the health and safety of apprentices. This requires specific risk assessments to be completed with controls in place where necessary.

## Recruitment

**The players registered with an Academy must be notified by or on 31st December prior to the year in which they complete their education as to whether the club is to offer them a two-year apprenticeship.**

**Failure to do so will result in the club being deemed as to having made no such offer and the player is free to sign for any other club without compensation.**

### Introduction

In line with EFL Youth Rules, a club may only enter into an Apprenticeship Agreement with a youth player who has reached the statutory school leaving age applicable in England (i.e.16).

Prior to the start, Apprenticeship Agreements should be signed by the apprentice, club, parent or guardian and witnessed, with copies sent to The Football Association, The EFL and a copy retained by the apprentice and the club. All relevant registration forms for The EFL and The Football Association must also be completed.

### Apprentice Agreement, Eligibility Checklist & Training Plan (ILP)

The Apprentice Agreement & Eligibility Checklist are documents outlining:

- The Apprenticeship Standard connected to the Apprenticeship.
- The dates during which the Apprenticeship is expected to take place.
- The number of Off-the-job hours the apprentice is expected to complete.

Government eligibility requirements to be on the apprenticeship programme. Both documents are sent out to all Clubs pre-season and must be signed by each apprentice and Club representative, before being checked and signed by an LFE representative on return of the documents to LFE Head Office.

The apprentice must meet the criteria specified on the eligibility checklist in order to be eligible to be enrolled on the Apprenticeship programme. Some apprentices may not meet initial eligibility requirements on this form, in such cases Clubs should contact the LFE MIS Team – [misteam@lfe.org.uk](mailto:misteam@lfe.org.uk) or 01772 326873 to further query a learner's eligibility.

For players from outside of England, we suggest that Clubs contact the Football Association registrations department on 0844 980 0663 for advice on the clearance, transfer and status of players prior to offering Apprenticeships.

The Training Plan (ILP), is a live document accessible on LFE's Education Management System to signed apprentices, Club, Education Provider and LFE staff which outlines key information regarding the Apprenticeship, including:

- Apprenticeship Start and Planned End Date Details, including planned off-the-job hours.
- Qualifications being undertaken, including scheduled completion dates and progress to date.
- English & maths GCSE results on entry to the programme.
- Initial Assessment, and Dyslexia/Dyscalculia Screening results.
- Additional Learning Support.
- Progress Review schedules and completion.
- Roles and Responsibilities of the apprentice, Club, Education Provider and LFE.
- Queries and Complaints procedure for apprentices.

## Recruitment

### Apprenticeship start and end dates

For apprentices who meet the eligibility requirements outlined above, the period of the apprenticeship shall be 104 weeks.

As a guide, LFE recommends that the latest start date for taking on apprentices in 2024 is 16th September. Apprentices starting after this date will have potentially missed a significant proportion of the education programme and will therefore be disadvantaged with regard to completing the framework.

However, LFE will review each individual case on its merits and, where we are satisfied that the club will provide the appropriate guidance and support, will consider allowing apprentices to start after this date.

### National Insurance Numbers

All apprentices from within the UK (ie. England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland) should have been issued with NI numbers prior to leaving school. Apprentices from outside the UK (including Eire) will have to apply for a NI number via Gov.uk who will arrange an 'Evidence of Identity' interview or postal application. If relevant, they will confirm the date, time and location any interview and what information/documentation is need to support an application.

To start the application process, please phone the NI Number Application helpline on 0800 587 0024.

Information about the types of documents that can be used to establish a person's identity is contained on Gov.uk but main forms of identification that can be used include:

- Passport/ID Card
- Biometric Residence Permit (BRP)
- Letter from employer
- Payslips
- Birth certificate

### Child Benefit

LFE has been informed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) that following a review, parents/guardians of apprentices on the Apprenticeship programme in football are not entitled to receive Child Benefit. This is because HMRC deem the Scholarship Agreement to be a Contract of Employment and therefore consider apprentices to be in employment (as opposed to the 'non-employed' status they were previously considered as), this makes apprentices ineligible for Child Benefit.

## Apprenticeship Levy and Finance

### Apprenticeship Levy

A club with an annual payroll bill in excess of £3 million is subject to paying an Apprenticeship Levy of 0.5% of all payroll costs in excess of £3 million to HMRC, as part of their monthly payroll.

For example:

- A club with an annual payroll bill of £13 million will pay 0.5% levy on £10 m, resulting in an annual levy payment of £50k.
- A club with an annual payroll bill of £6 million will pay 0.5% levy on £3m, resulting in an annual levy payment of £15k.

For clubs with an annual payroll bill of less than £3 million, then no apprenticeship levy will be payable. However, the club will be subject to paying a co-investment of 5% for new apprenticeship starts.

All clubs need to have an Apprentice Service Account to enable clubs to manage their apprenticeship training funds. More information can be found [here](#).

Once a club is registered with the Apprenticeship Service, an 'Employer Agreement' needs to be signed. This is a contractual agreement with the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and must be signed before the funds can be accessed and managed.

Once signed, the club can select League Football Education (LFE) as their training provider for the apprentices on the LFE Apprenticeship programme and give LFE permission to add your apprentices for you.

The funds in your Levy account will be used for the education costs of your apprentices and if you don't have enough funds available you will be required to co-invest towards the shortfall. LFE will invoice the club for the 5% shortfall on a monthly basis as notified by The ESFA.

Non-Levy paying clubs also need to be on the Apprenticeship Service System. As a smaller employer, you can reserve funds in the 'finance' section of your apprenticeship service account. You can also give LFE permission to reserve them on your behalf.

Please contact LFE ([misteam@lfe.org.uk](mailto:misteam@lfe.org.uk)) for support if required.





# THE PFA SAFETY NET

HELPING YOUNG PLAYERS WITH  
THE CHALLENGES OF PLAYING  
ACADEMY FOOTBALL



FIND OUT MORE

**PFA.OUR-SAFETY.NET**

REGISTER TO ACCESS CONFIDENTIAL ADVICE, SUPPORT & VIDEOS

## Apprenticeship Levy and Finance

### Apprentice Minimum Wage

At the time of writing, the current national minimum wage rates for apprentices is as follows:

- £6.40 per hour from April 2024 - the rate for apprentices aged 16-18 and those aged 19 or over who are in their first year as an apprentice
- £8.60 per hour for an apprentice aged 19 in the second year of their apprenticeship.

Please note apprentice wage rates are subject to changes on 1st April every year.

All clubs will operate their apprenticeship programmes on a minimum 30-hour per week basis.

**Note: Clubs that sign apprentices after they have passed their 17th birthday will be subject to pay the National Minimum Wage rate when an apprentice player reaches his 19th birthday. The current rate for a 19-year-old apprentice is £8.60.**

### Required documentation

The following documents are required in order that LFE can draw down ESFA funding in respect of apprentices.

### Start documentation

In order to draw down funding from the ESFA, LFE requires the following start documentation for each new apprentice:

- a completed commitment statement and eligibility checklist
- and
- copies of GCSE results/certificates (English and Maths are mandatory)

LFE Regional Officers will liaise with club staff to ensure that these documents are completed.

Clubs need to ensure that the apprentices are made available for LFE Regional Officers to carry out this task.

### Attendance

Attendance registers are housed on the Education Management System and must be completed for all apprentices.

### Lodgings and Accommodation

Where it is unreasonable for an apprentice to travel to the club from home, lodgings shall be provided by the club. However, clubs will be entitled to charge apprentices up to £9.99 per day from April 2024.

In line with EFL rules on Youth Development and current legislation clubs shall, in all dealings with apprentices, do what is reasonable for the purpose of safeguarding apprentices' welfare.

Clubs are expected to ensure that lodgings are in keeping with those required by a professional sportsman and should utilise guidance approved by the EFL when selecting accommodation.

# Change of Apprentices' Circumstances

LFE must be contacted immediately in all cases where a club is considering pursuing one of these options in order that we can ensure the continuity of the apprentice's educational programme.

Failure to do so will mean that we are unable to draw down government funding.

## Change of Circumstances Form

We have identified five main instances in which an apprentice's circumstances might change during the course of the programme:

1. Termination by Mutual Consent
2. Termination for disciplinary reasons
3. Signing professional forms
4. Injury
5. Work experience

To assist clubs in keeping LFE informed of these changes, we have produced a "Change of Circumstances Form" which should be completed and returned to LFE Central Office when any of the above instances occur.

This form can be found on the EMS.

## Termination by Mutual Consent

In order for an apprentice's contract to be terminated by mutual consent, both the apprentice and the club must confirm their agreement with the terms of the termination by signing the Change of Circumstances form.

Clubs must notify LFE immediately if they are considering terminating an apprentice's contract by mutual consent.

## Termination for Disciplinary Reasons

Section 10 of the Apprenticeship Agreement outlines the standard disciplinary procedures that should be imposed on apprentices who breach either club regulations or the code of discipline concerning college attendance.

Clubs must ensure that the procedures in Section 6 of the Apprenticeship Agreement are followed and that LFE is involved in each stage of the disciplinary process.

If, having completed this process, the club wishes to terminate an apprentice's contract, the Change of Circumstances form should be completed and returned to LFE stating the reason for termination.

## Signing Professional Forms

If a club signs an apprentice on a professional contract on his 17th birthday, or before the end of his apprenticeship, English Football League regulation 55.6 states EFL rules state that he must continue with his education course until it is completed.

Clubs should notify LFE immediately of any apprentice who signs a professional contract using the Change of Circumstances form.

Under condition 3.2 of the scholarship agreement, the apprentice is obliged to continue their education programme even if they sign a professional contract. However in exceptional circumstances, the apprentice may be released from education upon the written agreement of all of the following parties:

- LFE
- The Club Secretary
- The Club Academy Manager
- The apprentice's parents or guardian
- The apprentice



## Change of Apprentices' Circumstances

### Player Registrations

Subject to English Football League Rule 11.0 (b) outlined below, only Players who are under 18 years of age as at 31st August in the current Season will be eligible to play in The EFL Youth Alliance.

(b) Clubs may include on their teamsheet for any match up to two players over the age of 18 provided always that such players are:

- (i) registered with The EFL as a Scholar; and
- (ii) under 19 years of age as at 31st August in the current season

### Injury

There are two instances in which the circumstances of an apprentice might change due to injury:

#### 1. Recoverable Injury

Apprentices who are suspended from the programme due to injury would still be expected to the educational element of the apprenticeship whilst undergoing rehabilitation or treatment.

Clubs should notify LFE immediately of any apprentice who is to be suspended from the programme using the Change of Circumstances form.

#### 2. Permanent Incapacity

Apprentices who suffer an injury which results in permanent incapacity shall, upon receiving the correct notice (minimum 3 months) as laid down in clause 8 of the Apprentice's Agreement, be released from the apprenticeship programme.

Clubs should notify LFE immediately of any apprentice who is to be removed from the programme due to permanent incapacity using the Change of Circumstances form.

### Long Term Injuries

The club physiotherapist/doctor should make a diagnosis to ascertain whether the apprentice has sustained an injury which could prevent him from training/playing for a substantial period of time. This period of absence from playing/training may prevent the club's coaching staff from carrying out a thorough assessment of the apprentice's playing ability. In the long term this may affect the apprentice's chances of being offered a professional contract.

Should this be the situation, the club may wish to suspend the apprentice's programme under Clause 4 of the Apprenticeship Agreement.

The clause states that if an apprentice is prevented from participating in the training programme for a period in excess of five weeks, the duration of the Apprenticeship Agreement shall be extended by the length of the excess period or, if earlier, the apprentice's 19th birthday.

### Apprenticeship Work Experience Between Clubs

Clubs have used work experience as a process of allowing apprentice players to train and play matches for other clubs.

Many clubs which have decided that they are not going to offer an apprentice a professional contract (usually towards the end of their second year but it could be earlier) are prepared to allow the apprentice to spend a reasonable time training and playing at another club to see if he can secure a professional contract with that club.

Please note that a club must not play apprentices that are on work experience from another club in any match at first team level.

### Inform LFE

As outlined in the Introduction, the LFE Regional Officer should be informed immediately in order that we can ensure the continuity of the apprentice's educational programme.

### Work Experience Process

Under Football Association Regulation C.3.(b) (v), At the time of writing the process for the arrangement of work experience was undergoing review. Please consult the Registrations Department of The EFL for further guidance.

After consultation with The EFL, a Change of Circumstances form should be completed and returned to LFE to confirm that all procedures have been correctly followed.

### Implications

The apprentice remains the original club's player who will hold his registration and be responsible for all travel, lodging and apprentice allowance payments. Should the apprentice be incurring lodging or high travel costs, it will be the responsibility of the original club to come to an agreement with the work experience club. You are also responsible for ensuring that attendance records are maintained.

Further guidance can be obtained from The EFL or The Football Association.

### Arranging a permanent move

Should a permanent move be agreed between the two clubs, the apprentice and his parents (if under 18 years of age), then the club taking over the apprenticeship become responsible for all allowances, travel and lodging expenses for the remaining period of the apprentice's agreement.

Permanent transfer of apprenticeships between clubs are allowed and in order to do this all applications with the original club should be cancelled and new forms signed at his new club.



# Discipline

## Apprentices should also be made aware of the disciplinary code of practice for college attendance.

Please note that all cases of disciplinary action must be recorded and placed in the club's records and deleted after a period of 12 months.

### Schedule Two of the Scholarship/ Apprenticeship Agreement

Should any apprentice fall foul of these regulations, then the disciplinary procedure outlined in Schedule Two of the Apprenticeship Agreement will apply. In summary, this procedure involves the following three steps:

1. Investigation
2. Disciplinary Hearing
3. Appeals

### Penalties and Termination

If, having followed the above procedure, an allegation is proved to the club's satisfaction, the club may apply the penalties outlined in Schedule Two, Section 4 of the Apprenticeship Agreement:

1. Issue a formal warning which should be issued as follows:
  - (i) Verbal Warning
  - (ii) First Written Warning
  - (iii) Final Written Warning
2. Impose a fine not exceeding the amount of 50% of his monthly basic wage.
3. Order the apprentice not to attend at any of the club's premises for such a period as the club thinks fit not exceeding two weeks.
4. Where the circumstances set out in Clause 10.1 of the Apprenticeship Agreement apply, terminate this agreement.

### Termination

Clause 10.1 of the Apprenticeship Agreement states that the club shall be entitled to terminate the agreement by fourteen days' notice in writing to the apprentice if, after due investigation and enquiry, it is reasonably satisfied that he:

1. Shall be guilty of Gross Misconduct;
2. Has failed to heed any final written warning given under the provisions of Schedule Two (see above); or
3. Is convicted of any criminal offence where the punishment consists of an immediate custodial sentence of or exceeding three months.

### Notice of Termination

Under Clause 10.2 of the Scholarship/ Apprenticeship Agreement, clubs are required to include in any notice of termination full particulars of the club's reasons for terminating the agreement with copies sent to the EFL, the FA and the PFA. A copy should also be sent to LFE.

### Appeals

Clause 10.3 of the Apprenticeship Agreement states that within seven days of receiving a termination notice the apprentice may appeal against the decision of the club to the EFL. All parties should then seek to ensure that the appeal is heard within a further 28 days.

**It is the responsibility of the club to ensure that apprentices attend any exams/assessments.**

# Discipline

### College/Education Provider attendance

As a condition of our funding from the ESFA, it is obligatory for all apprentices to attend their college/education provider sessions each week (i.e. usually one and a half days on their education programme).

The education days are decided in consultation with the club and, once agreed, it is the responsibility of the club to ensure that apprentices attend the college/education provider on these days.

Apprentices, if injured, must not miss their academic work to receive routine treatment at the club. If the club requires the apprentice to receive treatment, the apprentice must be called in after college/education provider work has finished.

The only acceptable absences from College are as follows:

- FA Youth Cup commitments.
- Apprentices selected for the first team or international duty.
- Apprentices who produce a sick note from the doctor or club physiotherapist.

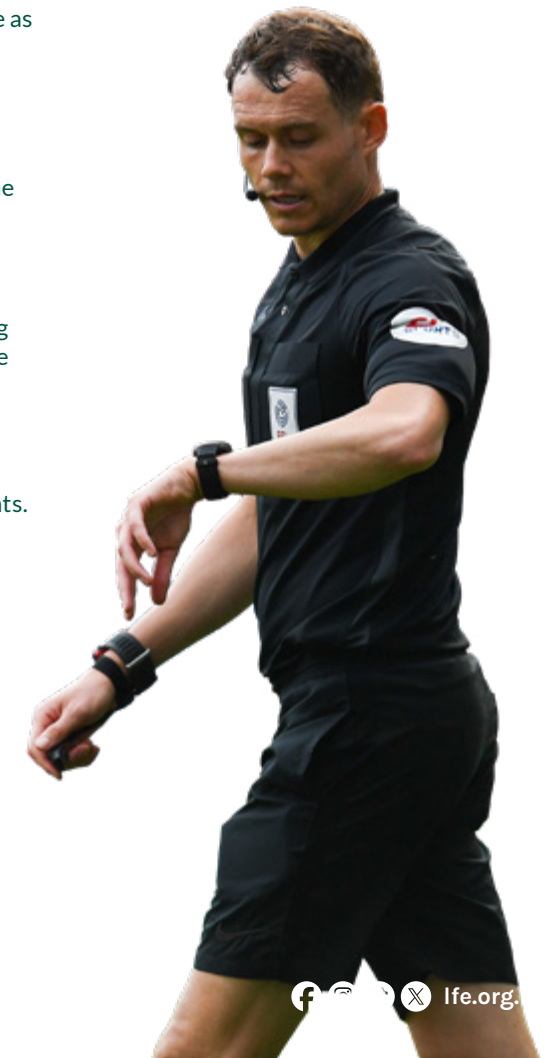
### Exams/Assessments

A proportion of our funding from the ESFA is dependant upon apprentices actually achieving the qualifications that they enter. It is therefore essential that apprentices are available to attend any exams/assessments in relation to their educational/vocational courses. It is the responsibility of the club to ensure that apprentices attend any such exams/assessments.

### Code of discipline concerning college/education provider attendance

The following regulations are in place regarding college attendance:

1. LFE reserves the right to remove an apprentice from the education programme if they miss college or their education work on more than three occasions in one academic year without a good reason (i.e. selection for the first team or a sick note).
2. Apprentices misbehaving at college may be subject to the disciplinary procedures outlined on page 27.
3. Apprentices who do not hand in written work set by the college may be subject to the disciplinary procedures outlined on page 27.



# LFE Media Protocol Guidelines for Clubs

LFE has developed the following suggested media protocol guidelines to help football clubs manage media enquiries in relation to issues around the Apprenticeship programme:

## Step 1

Football Club receives a media enquiry in relation to an issue that relates to the Apprenticeship programme, e.g. safeguarding, equality, conduct of an apprentice, etc.



## Step 2

Media Enquiries should be referred immediately to the Football Club's Head of Communications/Media who should contact LFE directly. At this point some enquiries may also require referral to other parties. E.g. Safeguarding issues should also involve the Club Child Protection Officer, The EFL Child Protection Advisor (CPA) and the LFE Safeguarding Officer. No comments should be offered to the media prior to the involvement of LFE's Communications Team.



## Step 3

The club's Head of Communications/Media will establish the details of the enquiry to build up case knowledge, background and establish the facts. This may involve a number of parties, depending on the nature of the enquiry.



## Step 4

Once case knowledge, background and facts have been established the club's Head of Communications/Media and the LFE Communications Team should agree a strategy for media responses.



## Step 5

Club/LFE then follow LFE media protocols and involve The EFL and The Professional Footballers' Association Communication Teams for all to agree a draft response for comment. If a response involves reference to third parties e.g. The Football Association, The Police etc. then consultation should take place as appropriate. Risks should be identified and mitigated against in drafting an appropriate response.



## Step 6

Once a response has been approved by all key parties and an agreement has been reached as to who will liaise with the media and contact them, a statement will be provided. All key parties should then monitor any reactions, or ongoing media coverage.

# Statement of Service and Quality Policy Statement

## Statement of Service

LFE manages and supports delivery of the Apprenticeship programme, the purpose of which is to simultaneously:

- support apprentices' football technical development to enhance their opportunities to progress to professional footballer status
- develop apprentices' academic, personal and employability skills so that they are able to maximise life opportunities

## Therefore the services LFE provides to clubs are:

- clear programme information and good practice advice
- support to deliver the programme
- resources to enhance educational arrangements

## What clubs can expect from LFE

- Clear and accurate information about services delivered through a variety of media.
- Confidentiality in all dealings with LFE.
- A prompt response to all enquiries.
- An impartial service.
- To monitor feedback, continuously improve the service and develop appropriate partnerships.

## Desired club outcomes

- High retention rates.
- High achievement rates.
- High positive destination rates.
- Improved educational arrangements in the club environment.

## Quality Policy Statement

LFE's Mission is "Inspiring young people through football and providing them with an outstanding education programme that empowers them to reach their full potential in life."

This is supported by LFE's Vision to lead the way for education and holistic support in football and beyond, inspiring our learners to be successful in life, by:

- achieving excellence through fully realising their potential
- providing excellent resources
- maintaining Ofsted Grade 1 status.

The Quality Policy and Strategy are underpinned by core values that are intended to demonstrate our professionalism and commitment to apprentices, clubs, education providers, key partners and each other.

LFE staff will always:

- be respectful
- be supportive of one another
- be inclusive
- act professionally
- be innovative and creative
- support and develop learner aspirations
- strive to meet the needs of the employees and all of our stakeholders
- treat everyone with respect and expect it in return
- behave with integrity
- never forget our apprentices are our focus

Therefore, LFE aims to ensure that the quality of the apprentice's welfare, success and experience is positive and improving, and that they remain at the forefront of everything we do. More specifically:

- For apprentice players – to support apprentices' football technical development to enhance their opportunities to progress to professional footballer status; and - develop apprentices' academic, personal and employability skills so that they are able to maximise life opportunities
- For clubs – to provide an independent quality service which supports the development of their apprenticeship programme in terms of regular advice, support and staff development.

LFE is committed to the continuous improvements in the standard of delivery of all its activities and services.

# Complaints Policy and Procedure

## Introduction

LFE is a learning organisation and values the learning opportunity presented by complaints that enable us to make changes and improve our services. LFE's Welcome to the Apprenticeship Programme handbook, Club Guidance book, Student handbook, Club Guide to Online Induction, LFE website and the Scholarship Agreement set out the standards and services apprentices and clubs can expect us to provide, as well as apprentice and club responsibilities.

Anyone not satisfied with the level of service should feel able to approach relevant staff to address their concern promptly and directly. Every attempt should be made to resolve complaints informally through a dialogue with those immediately concerned.

LFE will respond to any dissatisfaction with its services fairly and promptly.

## LFE Accountability

All LFE staff have a responsibility for receiving complaints, treating them seriously, and dealing with them promptly and courteously in accordance with the procedure set out below.

Members of the LFE Senior Management Team and Regional Officers have a responsibility for resolving a complaint, and leading or contributing to an investigation into a complaint when this is considered appropriate.

The LFE Chief Executive is responsible for resolving complaints which have reached the appeals stage and may nominate a senior manager if they have not been previously involved to investigate.

The LFE Board is responsible for dealing with referrals after the appeals stage where a complainant remains dissatisfied with how their complaint has been dealt with by LFE.

The LFE Board may become directly involved if a complaint is directed against the Chief Executive.

## Procedures for Dealing with Complaints

### Stage One (Informal)

If the nature of the complaint is a safeguarding issue, then the Safeguarding Policy takes precedence and those procedures are followed instead. Concerns should be raised in the first instance with the person or area concerned as soon as possible. Complaints from apprentices should be directed in the first instance to the obligations set out in their Scholarship Agreement (Clause 11), which advises apprentices to address the complaint with the member of club staff responsible for dealing with complaints.

Complainants should normally be directed to the relevant LFE Regional Officer or the relevant member of the LFE office staff unless any other member of LFE staff approached can resolve the issue.

Every reasonable effort should be made to resolve the complaint promptly at LFE head office or at local Regional Officer level.

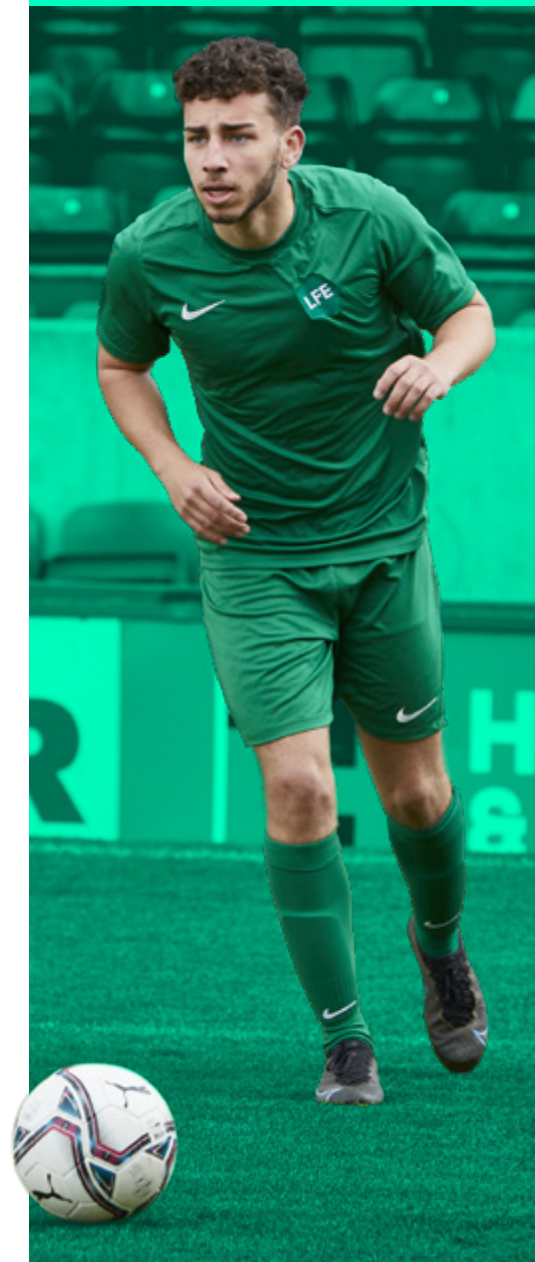
If appropriate, a meeting will be offered between the person complaining and the parties involved to arrive at an agreed resolution.

If a complaint is about a football club member of staff or education tutor it should be made to the Regional Officer. If a complaint is about a Regional Officer the complainant should ask to be referred to LFE's Designated Safeguarding Officer.

Verbal complaints to LFE office staff and requests to meet with the LFE Chief Executive should be referred to the local Regional Officer or office-based member of staff who can deal with the area which is the subject of complaint.

At this informal stage complaints may be made in person, by phone, by writing or by email. An initial written response to all written and verbal complaints will be provided within **4 working days**. If LFE needs longer to investigate, the complainant will be informed of when they can expect a reply.

**The LFE Board is responsible for ensuring that the complaints policy is operating effectively and may become directly involved if a complaint is directed against the Chief Executive.**



A full written response to all complaints will be provided within **15 working days**. This does not necessarily mean the complaint will be resolved within those timescales. The complainant must be kept informed of progress at all stages. All outcome letters should be copied to the relevant parties. If the issue is not resolved to the complainant's satisfaction the complaint moves to Stage Two.

**Stage Two (Formal - up to up to Chief Executive or SMT member level)**

If the Regional Officer or other staff are unable to resolve the issue it should be referred to a member of the SMT.

If a complainant has been through Stage One and remains dissatisfied, they should be advised to submit their complaint in writing or by email (if this has not already happened) to a member of the SMT - dependent on the nature of the complaint.

The senior manager dealing with the complaint will investigate and decide to:

- dismiss the complaint as unfounded, giving reasons
- propose an amicable settlement
- uphold or partially uphold the complaint, offer an apology, take appropriate steps to address the issue and to avoid a similar circumstance arising in future

All formal complaints will receive a formal written response within 15 working days, outlining the outcome, and the right of appeal where appropriate.



## Complaints Policy and Procedure

### Appeals (Chief Executive)

If a complainant remains dissatisfied with the LFE's response to their complaint they may appeal in writing to the Chief Executive.

The Chief Executive's nominated representative, who should be a manager not previously involved in the case, will investigate the complaint and the LFE's response and report to the Chief Executive.

The Chief Executive will decide to:

- uphold the original decision/dismiss the complaint as unfounded
- refer the complaint back to an area and propose an amicable settlement
- uphold or partially uphold the complaint, offer an apology, recommend appropriate steps be taken to address the issue and to avoid a similar circumstance arising in future

The decision of the Chief Executive is final and the complainant will be advised in writing of the outcome within five working days.

A member of the SMT that has not previously been involved with the case will deal with the appeal if the Chief Executive is not available.

### Taking a Complaint Further

If a complainant remains dissatisfied with LFE's response following appeal they should ask the LFE Chief Executive to take their complaint to the LFE Board.

The Education and Skills Funding Agency also provides guidance about making 'Complain about a further education college or apprenticeship'.

This can be accessed via [www.gov.uk/complain-further-education-apprenticeship](http://www.gov.uk/complain-further-education-apprenticeship) and is designed to help a complainant once they have exhausted LFE's complaints procedure.

### Record Keeping and Reporting

All LFE staff should maintain a clear record of all complaints dealt with. Issues should be fed into LFE's Complaints Log and other quality improvement processes as appropriate. A record of all appeals and outcomes will also be kept on file.

Complainants will be advised that, while confidentiality will be respected as far as possible, it may not be possible to resolve complaints without disclosing details of a complaint to relevant staff in order to allow LFE a fair opportunity to resolve the issue.

# Glossary of Terms

## Apprentices

Generic term used for all LFE Academy players

## BTEC

Business and Technology Education Council

## DWP

Department for Work and Pensions

## EFL

English Football League

## ESFA

Education and Skills Funding Agency

## FAQs

Frequently Asked Questions

## HSE

Health & Safety Executive

## IA

Initial Assessment

## LA

Learning Agreement

## LFE

League Football Education

## OFSTED

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills

## PFA

Professional Footballers' Association

## RO

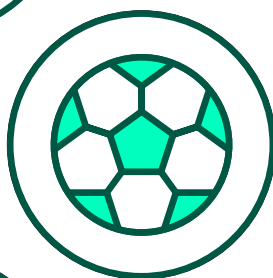
Regional Officer

## SEP

Sporting Excellence Professional

## UCAS

Universities and Colleges Admissions Service



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