

Working with Young Umpires Guidance

1. Introduction

This guidance has been created to minimise risks while promoting the safe, effective, and positive development of young umpires in hockey. It reflects safeguarding principles, operational expectations, and best practice standards for everyone working with young officials. This document should be read with, and used alongside, other policies and guidance issued by England Hockey.

The same safeguarding principles apply regardless of whether a young umpire is appointed by a club, Area or national body but the arrangements required may differ depending on the environment and level of hockey.

Key points:

- Adults are in a position of trust
- Organisations have a duty of care to all U18's, safeguarding is paramount.
- Concerns about welfare or concern about adult behaviour must be reported immediately
- Advice can be sought from England Hockey Officiating, the Club Welfare Officer or the England Hockey Safeguarding Team
- **Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility**

Core Principle: Every young umpire deserves a safe, supportive, respectful, and enjoyable environment in which to learn and develop.

2. Definitions

Term	Meaning
Young Umpire	Any umpire under the age of 25; aligned with FIH
Junior Umpire	Any umpire under the age of 18; a subset of Young Umpire
Chaperone	Adult (18+) responsible for Young Umpire welfare, acting in a neutral capacity
Umpire Developer	People supporting Young Umpires who have completed the EHO Developer training

Note: England Hockey recognises that umpires aged 18-25 may still benefit from additional support, mentoring and safeguarding considerations as they develop within officiating.



3. Roles & Responsibilities

Anyone working with Young Umpires will need to take on additional responsibilities, in particular when working with Junior Umpires.

Role	Responsibilities	Key Notes
Young Umpire Manager	- Implement event Welfare Plan - Act as first point of contact - Escalate concerns - Ensure consent & medical info is collected - Be available at all times	Has responsibility for the welfare and support of Young Umpires during events
Young Umpire Coach or Assessor	- Give constructive feedback - Support young umpires in challenging behaviour - Report welfare concerns	Duty of care both on and off the pitch
Young Umpire Mentor	- Provide ongoing support to umpires in both personal and performance development - Encourage good practice - Support young umpires with challenges - Ensure awareness of Safeguarding support	Must work within safeguarding policies and best practice guidance
Young Umpire Tutor	- Deliver formal education programmes and courses - Encourage good practice - Ensure awareness of Safeguarding support	Must work within safeguarding policies and best practice guidance
Young Umpire Chaperone	- Support young umpires in challenging extreme or threatening behaviour - Report welfare concerns	Duty of care off the pitch

Note: Some events may assign a Welfare & Safeguarding Lead to the umpiring team to support the welfare of Young Umpires and implement the Event Welfare Plan.

4. Appointing Responsibilities

The appointing body is responsible for making sure all necessary requirements are in place for all matches or events they appoint. This applies to events and competitions as well as league and friendly matches.

This guidance applies to all appointments no matter the level.

These responsibilities sit with:

Club Hockey : the club making the appointment

Area Competition : the Area/competition organiser

National Competition : England Hockey or NPUA

The appointing body should make clear in pre match / event correspondence to the teams that a Chaperone will be present as the umpire is under 18.



It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to ensure that the young umpire can get to and from any appointed matches / competitions. If there are concerns about how the young umpire is travelling, this should be raised between the appointing body and parent/guardian.

Requirement	What needs to be in place
Chaperone	An appropriate adult must be identified to support a Junior Umpire. The chaperone must be 18+, neutral and not involved with either team or be the colleague. Ideally, they should be a qualified Umpire Developer or a suitably qualified and experienced umpire. An appointed Match/Technical Official is also acceptable to act in this role.
Umpiring Colleague	The other umpire officiating the match. Should be 18+ when officiating adult hockey. For junior hockey, another Young Umpire may be appropriate.
Communication	For Junior Umpires, parents/guardians must be included in pre- and post-match communication between the appointing body and any other persons
Changing Rooms	Arrangements must comply with England Hockey guidance where under-18s are using facilities alongside adults
Reporting	Any safeguarding or welfare concerns must be reported to the appropriate Safeguarding Officer.

Note: Where a Junior Umpire is appointed, the appointing body should appoint both the umpire and their parent/guardian to the fixture. If using GMS, this can be done by selecting the fixture through the Appointments tab. **Under no circumstances** should an account with incorrect data be set up for the junior umpire.

5. Tournaments & Festivals

Tournaments and festivals may create additional safeguarding challenges because young umpires spend longer periods at venues and in shared environments. Young Umpires should be appropriately supported, supervised, and safeguarded throughout to ensure a safe, positive, and enjoyable experience.

Key Points:

- Young Umpires' rest between matches should be planned to avoid fatigue.
- Umpire Developers must supervise Young Umpires both on and off the pitch.
- Arrival and departure must be pre-planned; adults may leave only after all Junior Umpires are collected by a parent/guardian.
- Event Welfare Plans must be followed throughout.



Note: Multi-day events require additional safeguarding considerations. Where accommodation is provided, details of room allocations and transportation to and from the accommodation must be included within the Event Welfare Plan.

6. Training & DBS Checks

Training and safeguarding education are essential to ensuring Young Umpires are supported within a safe, informed, and well-managed environment. Adults should be appropriately trained and vetted, while Young Umpires should receive suitable safeguarding guidance.

Key Points:

- Adults with regular responsibility must hold an up-to-date DBS check as well as have the right skill set and qualities to work with Young Umpires.
- Umpire Developers should complete the necessary safeguarding courses and workshops relevant to their role.
- All chaperones should make sure they are suitably trained and aware of the necessary report procedures.
- Young Umpires should receive age-appropriate safeguarding guidance.

7. Suggested Best Practice

Following best practice guidance helps create a safe, professional, and positive environment for Young Umpires. Clear standards around behaviour, communication, supervision, and safeguarding should be maintained at all times by adults working with young people.

Best Practice	How
Safe Recruitment	DBS & qualifications required; part of wider suitability assessment
Briefings / Debriefs	Publicly observable or supervised by multiple people
Communication	Copy parents/guardians into all communications; avoid private messaging
Social Media	Follow EH guidance on online safeguarding
Alcohol	Must not be consumed in the presence of Junior Umpires; under-18s may not purchase or consume alcohol
Code of Conduct	All participants must adhere to England Hockey's Code of Conduct – Spirit of Hockey

Note: Adults should consider whether consuming 0% alcohol products is appropriate, and delivers the right message, in the presence of Junior Umpires.



8. Reporting Concerns

Clear and timely reporting procedures are essential to safeguarding Young Umpires. Any concerns should be acted upon promptly, with appropriate advice and support sought through designated safeguarding leads and local procedures where necessary.

Key Points:

- All safeguarding concerns must be reported following the England Hockey procedures
- Initial advice can be sought from England Hockey Officiating, the Club Welfare and Safeguarding Officer or the England Hockey Safeguarding Team
- If a young person is at immediate risk of harm, contact emergency services or local safeguarding authorities immediately

9. Useful Contacts & Links

The following contacts are available for reporting safeguarding concerns, seeking welfare advice, and supporting DBS or safeguarding-related enquiries.

Purpose	Contact
Report a Concern	Club Welfare officer in first instance or England Hockey Safeguarding Team
General safeguarding enquiries	Safeguarding@englandhockey.co.uk

More Information: including details on obtaining a DBS and learning and development opportunities can be found on the England Hockey website: <https://www.englandhockey.co.uk/safe>

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Appendix 1 – Appointing Junior Umpires

If you are appointing a junior umpire, you should:

1. Confirm the umpire's age and whether they are under 18
2. Make sure an appropriate adult (a chaperone) is identified to support them at the match
3. Include their parent/guardian in pre-match communication
4. Make sure the young umpire and parent/guardian know who the chaperone will be
5. Consider changing-room arrangements
6. Make sure any relevant safeguarding information is available

Appendix 2 – Role of a Chaperone

If you are appointed as a chaperone, you should:

1. Introduce yourself to the young umpire before the start of the match as well as the team captain and colleague
2. Ensure they are comfortable and ask them if they have any concerns
3. Be pitch side throughout the match. It is recommended to be the same side as the umpire, but if there is not enough space to be there safely behind them, they should be bench side
4. Monitor behaviour of the bench, teams and spectators and challenge any extreme inappropriate or threatening behaviour on the bench or from the spectators
5. Check in with the umpire at half time to make sure they are comfortable. You should not offer any advice or feedback on performance, just make sure they are content with behaviour
6. If inappropriate behaviour is coming from players, it should be challenged via the coach, manager or captain. Try to avoid speaking directly to players, unless unavoidable
7. A chaperone should not influence or make decisions on behalf of the young umpire
8. If a physical altercation occurs, the chaperone should prioritise the young umpire's safety, move them away from the situation where possible and seek appropriate assistance
9. If the chaperone is also an umpire developer, provide feedback on umpiring performance post-match



Appendix 3 – Being a Colleague of a Young Umpire

Being a colleague of a Young Umpire is an important part of creating a positive and supportive officiating environment. The colleague should help the Young Umpire feel comfortable, included and supported before, during and after the match, while allowing them to develop their own confidence and independence.

Before the Match

- Introduce yourself and make the Young Umpire feel welcome
- Complete your pre-match chat and discuss any relevant additional support you will give them
- Make sure the Young Umpire knows they can ask questions or raise concerns with you
- Be aware of any arrangements that have been put in place by the appointing body or Chaperone

During the Match

- Treat the Young Umpire as an equal colleague and show respect for their decisions
- Communicate positively and constructively, particularly if something needs to be discussed
- Avoid undermining, criticising or publicly questioning the Young Umpire's decisions
- Support the Young Umpire if players, coaches or spectators behave inappropriately towards them
- Where appropriate, use breaks in play to check that they are comfortable and have no issues
- Remember, your role is to support not coach or assess

After the Match

- Check in with the Young Umpire and give them an opportunity to discuss how they felt the match went
- Keep any feedback positive, constructive and proportionate
- Encourage the Young Umpire to reflect on their own performance rather than providing your own views
- Raise any welfare or safeguarding concerns through the appropriate reporting route

As a colleague, you should:

Do

- Be approachable and supportive
- Communicate respectfully
- Encourage questions
- Lead by example
- Support the Young Umpire if they experience inappropriate behaviour
- Respect their decisions and allow them to develop their own style

Don't

- Undermine or ridicule the Young Umpire
- Publicly criticise their decisions
- Take over their role or make decisions for them
- Discuss concerns about their performance with players or coaches
- Use inappropriate language or behaviour around them
- Assume that being the more experienced umpire means you are responsible for their performance

Remember: A Young Umpire does not need someone to take over their match. They need a colleague who helps them feel confident, respected and supported.