

A GUIDE FOR  
GRASSROOTS CLUBS

# REPORTING TOOLKIT



KICK  
OUT



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# PURPOSE

Following research facilitated by Kick It Out and the FA into grassroots football last year, it became evident that incidents of discrimination in the game go largely underreported.

Key findings found that some factors leading to underreporting involved lack of clarity and guidance around what the likes of players, parents, coaches and spectators should do from the moment a discriminatory incident has taken place on the pitch to ensure it is reported effectively.

As a result of this, we have decided to share some practical tips for how to report incidents of discrimination across various settings, including in game, during training, and online.

# IN GAME

## REFEREES

During a game, match officials (Referees & Assistant Referees) must report any discriminatory behaviour they have seen or witnessed, or any alleged discrimination, as part of their misconduct report following the game. Any offence which has been heard, seen or any allegation made (irrespective of its origins) must be reported as an 'Extraordinary Incident' in their post-match report. Once an Extraordinary Incident is reported by a match official, this is automatically received by the reported club(s) County FA.

Because of this, it is important that any witnessed or experienced discrimination during a match is reported directly to the referee in the first instance as they have the power to take action, as seen in the examples below:

### If referee witnessed incident

The referee must stop the game immediately and take accurate notes, detailing the comments.



The player must then be sent off for using offensive, insulting or abusive language and/or action(s).



The reason for the sending off must then be explained to a suitable representative of the club (e.g. Coach/Manager).



A full and comprehensive report of what has happened must then be taken before the restart of play, including: player name, offence, minute, what was said/done, where they were and any other necessary information.

### If referee hasn't witnessed

The referee must stop the game and speak to the player/s, taking accurate notes of the allegation.



Representatives of both teams must then be spoken to, detailing the allegation and explaining that a statement will be taken from the alleged victim following the game.

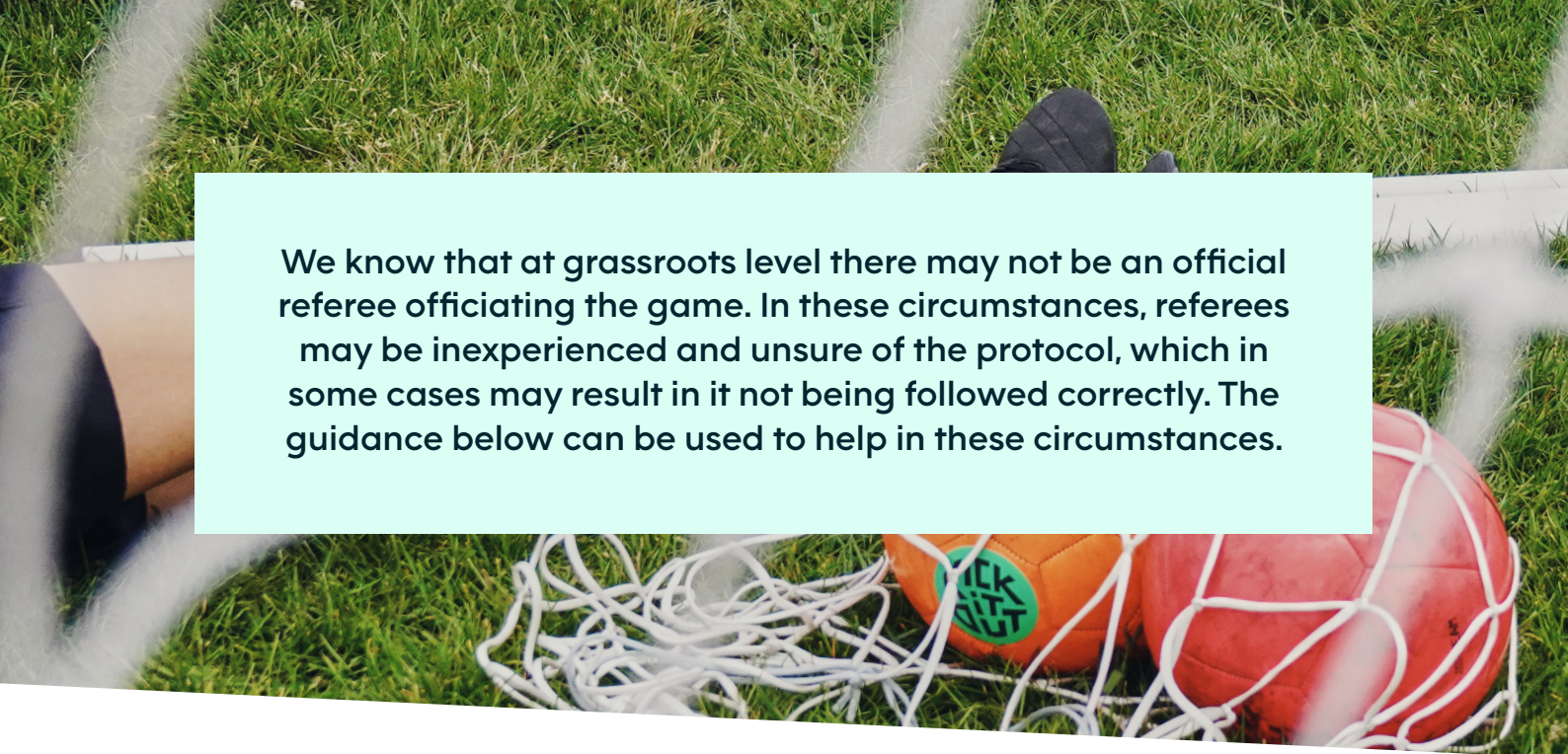


Post-match, a statement should be taken from the alleged victim. The referee must repeat the statement back to them to ensure it is an accurate reflection of the allegation.



Full details of the incident, including the player's statement, should be included in an Extraordinary Incident Report following the game.





We know that at grassroots level there may not be an official referee officiating the game. In these circumstances, referees may be inexperienced and unsure of the protocol, which in some cases may result in it not being followed correctly. The guidance below can be used to help in these circumstances.

## PLAYERS

### Experiencing discrimination

When experiencing discrimination, it is natural to feel a range of emotions, from anger, humiliation, resentment, anxiety and distrust. Even so, it is important to try and stay calm and avoid retaliating with the perpetrator.

#### What should you do?

- Report the incident to the referee as soon as possible. If the referee hasn't heard or witnessed the incident, ask that they take your approach as a formal report and that they include this in their match report.
- Once you have informed them of the incident, the referee should speak to both managers. If this has not happened, inform your manager of the incident as early as possible. Your manager should take down notes immediately, including the time of incident.

### Witnessing discrimination

If you witness discrimination, support your teammate as best you can. Try to check that they're okay and speak up against discrimination by writing a witness statement.





# COACH / MANAGER

## Experiencing discrimination

If you have experienced discrimination, report the incident to the referee. If the referee states they haven't heard or witnessed the incident, ask that they take your approach as a formal report and that they include this in their match report.

## Handling a report

- If your player reports a discriminatory incident to you during a break in play, ensure that they are okay and in a supportive manner, ask if they would like to continue playing.
- When possible, usually during a break in play, inform the referee (or where applicable assistant referee) of the allegation. It is the referee's responsibility to immediately take detailed notes if they did not witness or hear the incident, as explained above.
- Collect any evidence, such as witness statements from teammates, parents and/or spectators and report directly to either Kick It Out, or County FA.

## Supporting a young player

When dealing with an incident involving a young person, you must follow the same advice as outlined above. However, it is important that you inform the player's parents/guardians as soon as reasonably possible after the incident has been reported to the referee. If the player's parents/guardians aren't in attendance, they should be informed directly after the game.

## WALKING OFF THE PITCH

If there is an incident where you have decided to walk off the pitch, the FA will investigate. Should there be a proven case against the offenders, your club will not face any sanctions for walking off the pitch. However, please note, FA regulation states that should the discriminatory case be found **not** proven, due to your club walking off the pitch, you may be liable to a sanction for causing the match to be abandoned; FA Law 5.3 states only the Referee can deem a match abandoned. Nevertheless, your reasons for walking off will be taken into consideration as mitigation.

Our suggestion would be that although emotions may run high, if you wish to mitigate the risk of a sanction, your club can request that the Referee abandons the game on your behalf, should you no longer wish to continue, opposed to walking off. We would always advise to ensure that safety is the priority. In addition, it is important that no other forms of misconduct occur, as this could still face FA sanctions regardless of the discriminatory investigation outcome.





## PARENTS / SPECTATORS

- During a game, encourage other spectators to behave respectfully and call out any instances of inappropriate behaviour that you witness.
- Remember that your actions and words may influence those around you, especially children, so act accordingly.
- Focus on supporting your team in a positive and respectful manner, rather than engaging in negative or hostile behaviour towards the opposing team or their fans.
- Report any incidents of discrimination or other forms of inappropriate behaviour to Kick It Out, CFA or FA.



# TRAINING [NON-GAME]

- Aim to diffuse the situation to prevent further incidents from occurring.
- Provide support for the victim. They may be in an emotional state so ask how best to help.
- Collect all witness statements from anyone that witnessed the incident.
- Discuss with coaches (particularly youth level) and players about the potential of continuing training, being mindful of the impact the incident could have had on others.
- Report the incident to Kick It Out. This ensures that the incident is investigated by the County FA and additional support for the coach/club/player can be provided.
- Make the club aware of the incident to allow for suitable actions.







## PLAYERS

### Experiencing discrimination

- If you are the victim of discrimination, try to not react in an aggressive manner and raise the issue immediately with your coach/manager.
- They should stop the session and collect witness statements from those who have witnessed the incident.

### Witnessing discrimination

- If you are witness to discrimination, try to diffuse the situation to prevent any further incidents from occurring.
- Raise the incident with the coach/manager as outlined above.
- Ensure that the victim is supported and comforted, along with others that may have been impacted.

## PARENTS / SPECTATORS

- Aim to diffuse the situation to prevent further incidents from occurring.
- Provide support for the victim. They may be in an emotional state so ask how best to help.
- If you have witnessed an incident of discrimination, advise the coach/manager who is dealing with the incident and provide a witness statement.
- Report to Kick It Out to ensure it is investigated by the County FA and additional support for the coach/club/player can be provided.



# WITNESS STATEMENT PROMPTS

Below, we have outlined some of the key details that should be given in a witness statement:

**WHERE** Where on the field did the incident take place? Who was around?

**WHEN** When in the game/session did the incident occur?

**WHO** Who's statement is it? (Name, contact details etc.)

**WHAT** What happened? (Include details of who was involved, what was specifically said/done). Specifics of the language used are key.

**WHY** Why do you feel discriminated against? Including your perspective of how the comment made you feel will provide substance to your report & offer insight for the authorities to empathise with why you felt discriminated against.

These are the basic details that should be included in a statement. Try to ensure you get/give an accurate description of what happened as soon as possible. Often memory or opinions of an incident can differ as time goes on or if discussions amongst others occur.

Expand on the report/s through the Kick It Out reporting form. This allows us to ensure witnesses/victims/players and clubs are supported through the official reporting process.





# SOCIAL MEDIA

**If you witness any discriminatory content on social media platforms that is aimed at or inflicted by any participant in football (players, managers, coaches etc.), or anyone affiliated to The FA, you should:**

- Ensure that you screenshot the discriminatory content as soon as it is brought to your attention, and any further details regarding the offender, such as their profile and identifiable details. This is crucial as perpetrators often delete content soon after posting, and this evidence is required for an investigation.
- Report to Kick It Out via the reporting methods outlined at the end of this resource, providing all of the above information and any further context that may be beneficial. Depending on the severity of the incident, this may be advised to go directly to the police for investigation, or to the County FA.
- Once you have taken a screenshot of the abuse, you can then use the reporting tools on the social media platform where the incident took place, should you feel it breaches guidelines.
- Try not to engage in any hateful or reactive behaviour in response to the abuse, and where possible, provide support for the victim.





# BENEFITS OF REPORTING

1

You can easily report to us as and when an incident occurs using your smart phone. We encourage that all club members are given the power to report directly to us, even if this causes multiple reports on the same case.

More witness statements can support the County FA panel when making a judgement. We will pass all details on to your local County FA so you don't need to.

2

We will ensure that the correct processes are followed by the County FA, with an outcome concluded within the set regulatory time scales.

3

Kick It Out will always check for updates with the County FA on your behalf, ensuring that the case is going through the football discipline process.

4

The person reporting will be offered personalised support from Kick It Out in a way that is most relevant, based on the individual needs of the report.

## HOW TO REPORT

There are many ways you can report an incident of discrimination to us. The main way to report is by using our online reporting forms available on our website:

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

Alternatively, you can use one of the following methods:


Use our app




Email us: [report@kickitout.org](mailto:report@kickitout.org)

Call us: **02039678989**

Message us on social media:

 @kickitout

 @kickitout

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