

NORTHUMBERLAND GIRLS AND WOMEN'S LEAGUE

NOMENCLATURE AND CONSTITUTION

1. (A) This Competition shall be designated the **Northumberland Girls and Women's Football League (NGWFL)** and all clubs shall be Full Member Clubs

All such Member Clubs must be affiliated to an affiliated County Football Association and their names and particulars shall be returned annually by the appointed date on the Form "D" to the Northumberland County Football Association. The area covered by the Competition Membership shall be Northumberland, Durham and Cumberland.

This Competition shall apply annually for sanction to the Northumberland Football Association and the constituent teams of Member Clubs may be grouped in divisions, each not exceeding 12 in number.

Member Clubs shall not enter any of their teams playing in the Competition in any other Competitions (with the exception of F.A. and County F.A. Competitions) except with the written consent of the Management Committee of the Competition.

(B) At the Annual General Meeting or a Special General Meeting called for the purpose, a majority of the delegates present shall have power to decide or adjust the compilation of the divisions at their discretion. When necessary this Rule shall take precedence over Rule 12.

ENTRY FEE, SUBSCRIPTION, DEPOSIT

2. (A) Applications by Clubs for admission to this Competition *or the entry of an additional team(s)* must be made in writing to the Secretary and must be accompanied by an Entry Fee of £50 per team which shall be returned in the event of non-election. The Entry Fee covers the first years subscription. For teams admitted to the Mini Soccer leagues an additional fee shall apply to cover costs associated with playing at a central venue. The exact fee will be decided by the management committee.

At the discretion of a majority of the accredited voting members present applications, of which due notice has been given, may be received at the Annual General Meeting or a Special General Meeting. The Entry Fee shall apply.

When Rule 12(B) is applied or a team seeks a transfer or is compulsorily transferred to another division and/or league no Entry Fee shall be payable.

(B) The Annual Subscription shall be £50 per Team payable on or before the 1st September in each year. For teams admitted to the Mini Soccer leagues an additional fee shall apply to cover costs associated with playing at a central venue. The exact fee will be decided by the executive committee. Mini soccer fees are payable in full on or before 31st December. Failure to pay the annual subscription and/or additional fees by the stated dates will result in a fine of £50 being levied.

(C) Each Club shall within 28 days of election pay a Deposit of £50 which shall be returnable to Clubs on leaving the Competition provided they have fulfilled their fixtures and complied with all orders of the Management Committee.

(D) A Club shall not participate in this Competition until the Entry Fee, Annual Subscription and Deposit have been paid.

(E) Clubs must advise annually to the Secretary in writing by 1st July of its County Football Association affiliation number for the forthcoming Season, failing which they may be fined £20. Clubs must advise the Secretary in writing, or on the

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prescribed form, of details of its Headquarters, Officers and any other information required by the Competition.

OFFICERS

3. The Officers of the Competition shall be the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Treasurer, Secretary, and League Welfare Officer to be elected annually at the Annual General Meeting. (*N.B.* Auditors are not Officers). In addition there will be 3 sub-committees comprising Fixture Secretary, Registration Secretary and Committee Representatives.

MANAGEMENT, NOMINATION, ELECTION

4. (A) The Competition shall be governed in accordance with the Rules and Regulations of The Football Association by a Management Committee comprised of the Officers and up to 5 members who shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting.

(B) Retiring Officers shall be eligible to become candidates for re-election without nomination. All other candidates for election as Officers or Members of the Management Committee shall be nominated to the Secretary in writing, signed by the Secretaries of two Member Clubs, not later than 23rd May in each year. Names of the candidates for election shall be circulated with the notice of the Annual General Meeting. In the event of there being no nomination in accordance with the foregoing for any office, nominations may be received at the Annual General Meeting

(C) The Management Committee shall meet as often as is necessary to deal with business as it arises.

On receiving a requisition signed by two-thirds of the Members of the Management Committee the Secretary shall convene a meeting of the Committee.

(D) Except where otherwise mentioned all communications shall be addressed to the Secretary who shall conduct the correspondence of the Competition and keep a record of its proceedings.

(E) All communications received from Clubs must be conducted through their nominated Officers.

POWERS OF MANAGEMENT

5. (A) The Management Committee may appoint sub-committees and delegate such of their powers as they deem necessary. The decisions of all sub-committees shall be reported to the Management Committee for ratification.

(B) Subject to the permission of the Northumberland County Football Association having been obtained, the Management Committee may order a match or matches to be played each season, the proceeds to be devoted to the funds of the Competition and, if necessary, may call upon each Club (including any Club which may have withdrawn during the season) to contribute equally such sums as may be necessary to meet any deficiency at the end of the season. (See Rule 6(e)).

(C) Each Member of the Management Committee shall have the right to attend and vote at all Management Committee Meetings and have one vote thereat, but no Member shall be allowed to vote on any matters directly appertaining to such Member or to the Club so represented. (This shall apply to the procedure of any sub-committee).

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In the event of the voting being equal on any matter, the Chairman shall have a second or casting vote.

(D) The Management Committee shall have powers to apply, act upon and enforce the Rules of the Competition and shall also have jurisdiction over all matters affecting the Competition, including any not provided for in the Rules. Except where these Rules provide for the imposition of a set penalty any Club, Official or Player alleged to be in breach of a Competition Rule must be formally charged in writing and given the opportunity to present their case before the Management Committee. All breaches of the Laws of the Game, Rules and Regulations of The Football Association shall be dealt with in accordance with F.A. Rules.

(E) All decisions of the Management Committee shall be binding subject to the right of appeal to the Board of Appeal in accordance with Rule 16.

Decisions of the Management Committee must be notified in writing to those concerned within 7 days.

(F) Three (3) Members of the Management Committee shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business of the Management Committee and three (3) Members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business by any sub-committee of the Competition.

(G) The Management Committee, as it may deem necessary, shall have power to fill in an acting capacity, any vacancies that may occur amongst their number.

(H) A Club having failed to comply with an order or instruction of the Management Committee, or failing to satisfactorily attend to the business and/or the correspondence of the Competition, shall be liable to be fined or otherwise penalised at the discretion of the Management Committee.

(I) All fines and charges shall be paid within 14 days of the date of posting of the written notification.

Clubs, Officials or individuals committing a breach of this Rule will incur such penalties as the Management Committee may impose.

(J) A member of the Management Committee appointed by the Competition to attend a meeting or match may have any expenses incurred refunded by the Competition.

(K) The Management Committee shall have the power to fill any vacancy that may occur in the membership of the Competition between the Annual General or Special General Meeting called to decide the constitution and the commencement of the Competition season.

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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

6. (A) The Annual General Meeting shall be held not later than 23 June in each year. At this meeting the following business shall be transacted provided that at least five (5) Members are present and entitled to vote:-
- (i) To receive and confirm the Minutes of the preceding Annual General Meeting.
 - (ii) To consider any business arising there from.
 - (iii) To receive and adopt the Annual Report, Balance Sheet and Statement of Accounts.
 - (iv) Election of Clubs to fill vacancies (as recommended by the Management Committee).
 - (v) Constitution of the Competition for ensuing season.
 - (vi) Election of Officers and Management Committee.
 - (vii) Appointment of Auditors (If required).
 - (viii) Alteration of Rules, if any (of which notice has been given).
 - (ix) Fix the date for the commencement and conclusion of playing season.
 - (x) Other business of which due notice shall have been given and accepted as being relevant to an Annual General Meeting.
- (B) A copy of the duly verified Balance Sheet, Statement of Accounts and Agenda shall be forwarded to each Club at least fourteen days prior to the meeting, and to the Northumberland County Football Association(s).
- (C) A signed copy of the duly verified Balance Sheet and Statement of Accounts shall be sent to the Northumberland County Football Association(s) within fourteen days of its adoption by the Annual General Meeting.
- (D) Each Full Member Club/team shall be empowered to send two delegates to an Annual General Meeting. Each Club shall be entitled to one vote only. Not less than 14 days' notice shall be given of any Meeting.
- (E) Clubs who have withdrawn their Membership of the Competition during the season being concluded or who are not continuing Membership shall be entitled to attend but shall vote only on matters relating to the season being concluded. This provision will not apply to Clubs expelled in accordance with Rule 17.
- (F) All voting shall be conducted by a show of voting cards unless a ballot be demanded by at least 50% plus 1 of the delegates qualified to vote or the Chairman so decides.
- (G) No individual shall be entitled to vote on behalf of more than one Full Member Club.
- (H) Any continuing Member Club failing to be represented at the Annual General Meeting or Special General Meeting without satisfactory reason being given may be fined £10.
- (I) Officers and Management Committee members shall be entitled to attend and vote at an Annual General Meeting.

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AGREEMENT TO BE SIGNED

7. The Chairman and the Secretary of each Club shall complete and sign the following agreement which shall be deposited with the Competition together with the Application for Membership for the coming season, or upon indicating that the Club intends to compete.

"We, A, _____ of _____ (Chairman) and
B _____ of _____ (Secretary) of
the _____ Football Club have been provided
with a copy of the Rules and Regulations of the Northumberland Girls and
Women's League Competition and do hereby agree for and on behalf of the said
Club, if elected or accepted into Membership, to conform to those Rules and
Regulations and to accept, abide by and implement the decisions of the
Management Committee of the Competition, subject to the right of appeal in
accordance with Rule 16."

Any alteration of the Chairman and /or Secretary on the above Agreement must
be notified to the County Football Association(s) to which the Club is affiliated and
to the Secretary of the Competition.

(Note: The spaces above are intended for the inclusion of the signatures and
addresses of officers and members).

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QUALIFICATION OF PLAYERS

8. (A) Contract players, as defined in Football Association Rules, are not permitted in this Competition. No player registered with a F.A. Premier League or Football League Academy will be permitted to play in this competition. A Player registered with a Centre of Excellence may only play in this Competition subject to the Regulations of the Programme for Excellence.

(B) A registered playing member of a Club is one who, being in all other respects eligible, has:-

(i) Attained the appropriate age for their playing category as listed :-

Under 9's - Must not have passed their 9th birthday on September 1st of the playing season. All players in this age group must be in Year FOUR (4) at school before they can play in the NGWFL Under 9 Football Competitions.

Under 10's - Must not have passed their 10th birthday on September 1st of the playing season.

Under 11's - Must not have passed their 11th birthday on September 1st of the playing season.

Under 12's - Must not have passed their 12th birthday on September 1st of the playing season.

Under 13's - Must not have passed their 13th birthday on September 1st of the playing season.

Under 14's - Must not have passed their 14th birthday on September 1st of the playing season.

Under 15's - Must not have passed their 15th birthday on September 1st of the playing season.

Under 16's - Must not have passed their 16th birthday on September 1st of the playing season.

Women's League - Must have reached the age of 16.

(i) Signed a fully and correctly completed Competition registration form in ink, counter signed by an Officer of the Club, and who has been registered with the (Registrations) Secretary 1 day (24 hours) prior to playing and whose completed registration counterfoil has been received by the Club prior to playing. 2 copies of a passport sized photograph must accompany the form.

(ii) Signed a fully and correctly completed Competition registration form in ink on a match day prior to playing, countersigned by an Officer of the Club and witnesses by an Officer of the opposing Club, and submitted to the (Registrations) Secretary within two days (Sundays excluded) subsequent to the match. The player shall not again play until the Club is in possession of the completed counterfoil. A maximum of two (2) players may be registered in this way.

Registration forms may also be submitted to the (Registrations) Secretary by facsimile machine prior to the player playing.

(C) A team shall not include an/more than two (2) players who/have taken part in any more senior competition matches during the current season unless a period of 14 days has elapsed since they played.

(D) A player having taken part in matches for any Club affiliated to any County Football Association shall not be allowed to join, be transferred to, or sign for a Club in the Competition without first proving to the officials of the intended Club that the player has discharged all reasonable financial liabilities to the previous Club or Clubs, and a Club official may not accept such player's signature without first ascertaining whether such claims have been discharged to the satisfaction of the Club, or Clubs, for which the player last played.

(E) No fee shall be paid for each player registered.

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Registration forms shall be obtained from the Registrations Secretary.

(F) The Management Committee shall decide all registration disputes.

In the event of a player signing a registration form or having a registration submitted for more than one Club priority of registration shall decide for which Club the player shall be registered. The Registrations Secretary shall notify the Club last applying to register the player of the fact of the previous registration.

(G) It shall be a breach of Rule for a player to:-

(i) Play for more than one Club in the Competition in the same season without first being transferred.

(ii) Having signed for one Club in the Competition, sign for another Club in the Competition in that season except for the purpose of a transfer.

(iii) Submit a signed registration form for registration that the player had wilfully neglected to accurately or fully complete.

(H) (i) The Management Committee shall have power to accept the registration of any player.

(ii) The Management Committee shall have power to refuse, cancel or suspend the registration of any player or may fine any player at their discretion who has been charged and found guilty of registration irregularities. (Subject to Rule 16).

(iii) The Management Committee shall have power to refuse or cancel the registration of any player found guilty of undesirable conduct (subject to Rule 16). Undesirable conduct shall mean an incident of repeated conduct, which may deter a participant from being involved in this Competition.

(iv) The registration secretary must not authorise any player registrations for any squads associated to their own club. In such cases a member of the Management committee can authorise the registration providing they also follow this rule.

(Note: Action under Clause (iii) shall not be taken against a player for misconduct until the matter has been dealt with by the appropriate Association, and then only in cases of the player bringing the Competition into disrepute.)

(I) Subject to The Football Association Rules dealing with players without a written contract when a player desires a transfer, the Club the player wishes to transfer to shall submit a transfer form to the Registrations Secretary. Such transfer shall be referred by the Registrations Secretary to the Club for which the player is registered. Should this Club object to the transfer it should state its objections in writing to the Registrations Secretary and to the player concerned within seven days of receipt of the transfer form. Upon receipt of the Club's consent, or upon its failure to give written objection within seven days, the Registrations Secretary may, on behalf of the Management Committee, transfer the player who shall be deemed eligible to play for the new Club from such date. If a player or club cancels a player's registration that player cannot sign for a new club unless SEVEN (7) days have elapsed from the cancellation date.

In the event of an objection to a transfer the matter shall be referred to the Management Committee for a decision.

(J) A player may not be registered for a Club nor transferred to another Club in the Competition after 31 March except by special permission of the Management Committee.

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(K) A Club shall keep a list of the players it registers and a record of the games in which they have played, and shall produce such records upon demand by the Management Committee.

(L) A register containing the names of all players registered for each Club, with the date of registration, shall be kept by the Registrations Secretary and shall be open to the inspection of any duly appointed Member Club representative at all Management Committee meetings or at other times mutually arranged. Registrations are valid for one Season only.

(M) A player shall not be eligible to play for a team in any special championship, promotion or relegation deciding match (as specified in Rule 12(A)) unless the player has played two (2) games for that team in this Competition in the current season.

(N) A player who has played for a Women's team two Divisions higher 4 times or more shall not in that season be eligible to play in this competition except by permission of the Management Committee.

(O)(i) Any team playing an unregistered or otherwise ineligible player or players may have the points gained in the match deducted from its total and may be fined and/or otherwise dealt with at the discretion of the Management Committee.

(ii) In addition the team may have three (3) points deducted from its total at the discretion of the Management Committee and may be dealt with in any further manner which is thought to be fit.

(iii) The Management Committee in exceptional circumstances may, at its discretion, award any points deducted from a Club under this Rule to the opponents in the match in question, subject to the match not being ordered to be replayed.

(The following Clause applies to Competitions involving players in full-time secondary education):-

(P) (i) Priority must be given at all times to school and school organisations activities.

(ii) The availability of children must be cleared with the Head Teachers (except for Sunday Leagues).

(iii) Children under 14 shall not play in a team involving players who are more than 2 years older.

(Note: For players under the age of 18 the provisions contained in Football Association Rules will apply.)

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CLUB COLOURS. CLUB NAME

9. (A) Every Club must register the colour of its shirts and shorts with the Secretary by 15th July who shall decide as to their suitability.

Goalkeepers must wear colours which distinguish them from other players and the referee.

No player, including the goalkeeper, shall be permitted to wear black or very dark shirts.

Any team not being able to play in its normal colours as registered with the Competition shall notify the colours in which they will play to its opponents at least three (3) days before the match.

If, in the opinion of the referee, two Clubs have the same or similar colours, the *home* team shall make the change. Any team not having a change of colours or delaying the kick-off by not having a change shall be fined £10.

The Secretary of the Competition may request shirts to be submitted if complaints are received as to lack of distinguishing colours, and the Management Committee may refuse to permit any shirts or shorts as they think fit. Shirts may be numbered.

(B) Any Club wishing to change its name and/or colours must obtain permission from its affiliated County Association and from the Management Committee.

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PLAYING SEASON. CONDITIONS OF PLAY

TIMES OF KICK-OFF. POSTPONEMENTS. SUBSTITUTES

10. (A) The Annual General Meeting shall determine the commencing and concluding dates for the ensuing season which shall be in accordance with Football Association Rules. No Club shall be compelled to play after the concluding date. Original fixtures arranged by the Fixture Secretary, or at a meeting specially convened for that purpose, to be held no later than 31 August, must not be arranged for a date later than seven days preceding the concluding date determined by the Annual General Meeting. There will be two (2) breaks in the competition at Christmas and Easter, the exact dates of the breaks will be fixed at the AGM.

(B) All matches shall be played in accordance with the Laws of the Game as determined by the International Football Association Board.

Clubs must take all reasonable precautions to keep their grounds in a playable condition. All matches shall be played on pitches deemed suitable by the Management Committee. If through any fault of the home team a match has to be replayed, the Management Committee shall have power to order the venue to be changed.

The Management Committee shall have power to decide whether a pitch and/or facilities are suitable for matches in the Competition and to order the Club concerned to play its fixtures on another ground.

All matches shall have a duration of 90 minutes unless a shorter time (not less than 60 minutes) is mutually arranged by the two clubs in consultation with the referee prior to the commencement of the match, and in any event shall be of equal halves. For variations for youth football refer to the League Regulations

The times of kick-off shall be fixed by the A.G.M. or the Management Committee. All matches must commence at this time unless an alternative time is agreed by the participating teams. Any Club failing to commence at the appointed time may be fined a sum not exceeding £10 or be otherwise dealt with as the Management Committee may determine.

Referees must order matches to commence at the appointed time and must report all late starts to the Competition.

The home team must provide at least two footballs fit for play and the referee shall make a report to the Competition if the footballs are unsuitable. Goal nets must be used.

(C) Except by permission of the Management Committee all matches must be played on the dates originally fixed but priority shall be given to The Football Association and all relevant County Association Cup Competitions as well as all County or School matches. All other matches must be considered secondary. Clubs may mutually agree to bring forward a match with the consent of the Fixtures Secretary.

(D) The Secretary of the home Club must give notice in writing of full particulars of the location of, and access to, the ground and time of kick-off to the match officials and the Secretary of the opposing Club at least four (4) clear days prior to the playing of the match. The away Club shall seek and acknowledge receipt of such particulars.

Any Club failing to comply with this Rule may be liable to a fine of £10.

(E) Every Club shall play its best available qualified team or teams in all matches in the Competition.

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(Note: The intention of this Rule is not to interfere with normal team selection by Clubs, but to prevent Clubs deliberately fielding a weakened team in order to unreasonably reserve players for another game or to boost the strength of another or lower team. It is NOT intended that Clubs MUST field higher team players in lower teams when the higher team has no engagement. If, in the opinion of the Management Committee, the substance or spirit of the Rule is obviously being disregarded, the Club or Clubs concerned may be called to account for its/their actions and shall be subject to such decisions as the Management Committee may determine, despite the fact that Rule 8 has not been infringed.)

For 11-a-side leagues, In the event of a Club playing in any match with less than eleven (11) players they may be fined £5 for each missing player. A minimum of seven (7) players will constitute a team for a Competition match.

For Small sided leagues, a minimum of six (6) players will constitute a team for a Competition match.

(F) Home and away matches shall be played where applicable. In the event of a Club failing to keep its engagement the Management Committee shall have power to inflict a fine, deduct points from the defaulting Club, award the points to the opponents, order the defaulting Club to pay any expenses incurred by the opponents or otherwise deal with them except the award of goals. Notwithstanding the foregoing home and away provision, the Management Committee shall have power to order a match to be played on a neutral ground or on the opponent's ground if they are satisfied that such action is warranted by the circumstances.

Any Club with more than one team in the Competition shall always fulfil its fixture, within the Competition, in the following order of precedence :- First Team, Reserve Team, A Team. Clubs in breach of this requirement shall be fined a sum not exceeding £25 or otherwise dealt with by the Management Committee.

Any Club unable to fulfil a fixture must, without delay, give notice to the Fixture Secretary, the Secretary of the opposing Club and the match officials. Any Club failing to comply shall be dealt with by the Management Committee who may inflict any penalty it may deem suitable.

In the event of a match not being played or abandoned owing to causes over which neither Club has control, it shall be played in its entirety on a date to be mutually agreed by the two Clubs and approved by the Management Committee. The Management Committee shall have power to order the match to be played on a named date or on or before a given date.

The Management Committee shall review all matches abandoned in cases where it is consequent upon the conduct of either or both Teams. Where it is to the advantage of the Competition and does no injustice to either Club, the Management Committee shall be empowered to order the score at the time of the abandonment to stand. In all cases where the Management Committee are satisfied that a match was abandoned owing to the conduct of one team or its Club member(s) they shall be empowered to award the points for the match to the opponents and/or take what other action they may deem necessary. In cases where a match is abandoned owing to the conduct of both teams or their Club members, the Management Committee shall take such action as they consider appropriate. Such action is subject to any disciplinary action taken by the appropriate Affiliated Association.

(G) A Club may at its discretion and in accordance with the Laws of the Game use 3 substitute players in any match in this Competition who may be selected from five (5) players.

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The referee shall be informed of the names of the substitutes not later than 10 minutes before the start of the match.

A player who has been selected, appointed or named as a substitute before the start of the match but does not actually play in the game shall not be considered to have been a player in that game within the meaning of Rule 8 of this Competition.

However a new FA rule passed 19th May 2009 allows for "Repeated substitutions for any League or Competition playing at Step 6 or below of the Girls' and Women's Pyramid." This ruling supercedes (G) for those Leagues playing at Step 6, currently the Women's League(s) within the NGWFL.

(H) The half time interval shall be a minimum of five (5) minutes but not exceeding a maximum of fifteen (15) minutes duration. The half time interval may only be altered with the consent of the referee. For variations on this rule for youth football refer to the League Regulations.

(I) For variations to these rules refer to the League Regulations.

REPORTING RESULTS

11. (A) The nominated person must receive within 4 days of the date played, the result of each Competition match in the prescribed manner. This must include the forename(s) and surname of the team players (in block letters) and also the Referee markings required by Rule 13, or any other information required by the Competition. Failure to do so will incur a fine of £5 and/or the Club being dealt with as the Management Committee decide.

(B) The Home Club shall telephone the result of each match to the nominated person by 6pm on the day of a match (for Weekend fixtures) and 9.30pm for any midweek fixtures.

(C) The match result notification, correctly completed, shall be signed by a responsible member of the Club. The Management Committee shall have power to take such action as they deem suitable against a Club which submits an incomplete form or incorrect information.

(D) For variations in reporting results refer to the league regulations.

DETERMINING CHAMPIONSHIP

12. (A) Team rankings within the Competition will be decided by points with three (3) points to be awarded for a win and one (1) point for a drawn match. The teams gaining the highest number of points in their respective Divisions at the conclusion shall be adjudged the winners. Matches must not be played for double points.

In the event of two or more teams being equal on points team rankings may be decided in any one or more of the following ways:-

- (i) goal difference - then
- (ii) goals scored

In any age group competition, where two teams are level on points, the Championship may be shared, with the agreement of both clubs. Otherwise, a play-off fixture will be arranged, at the expense of the League. If the two teams are level at the end of the allocated playing time, then extra time of 10 minutes each way shall be played. If the scores are still level, kick from the penalty mark, in accordance with International Football Association Board, shall be taken to decide the winner.

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(B) Automatic promotion and relegation shall be applied for the first and last teams in each Division except as provided for here under, subject to the provisions of Rule 1(b).

(i) Should one or more teams withdraw from any one Division after the fixtures have commenced an equal number of teams to those withdrawing in that Division shall not be automatically relegated.

(ii) Vacancies occurring after the conclusion of the season may be filled on any of the following ways:

- (a) retention of otherwise relegated team(s)
- (b) additional promotion of the next ranked team(s) from the Division below
- (c) election

(iii) The last team in the lowest Division shall retire, but be eligible for re-election except as below, and be subject to the conditions of paragraph (B)(1) above.

(iv) When a senior team is relegated to a lower Division of which its reserve team is a member, or entitled to be a member, such reserve team must accept relegation to, or retain its position in, the next lower Division; and should the senior team be relegated to the lowest Division its reserve team automatically retires from the Competition.

(v) Should either or both of the leading teams in any of the Divisions have its senior team in the next higher Division, promotion shall fall, at the discretion of the General Meeting, to the next highest team or teams in the Division concerned.

(C) In the event of a team not completing three (3) of its fixtures for the season all points obtained by or recorded against such defaulting team shall be expunged from the Competition table.

(D) Where a promotion and/or relegation link exists between Competitions, one (1) Club, providing they meet the appropriate grading criteria, will be eligible to make application to the North East Competition at their Annual General Meeting. (The League must sign the FA Agreement on the National Pyramid System for Women's Leagues for this to be applicable.)

(E) For variations refer to the League Regulations.

REFEREES

13. (A) Registered Referees for all matches shall be appointed in a manner approved by the Management Committee and by the sanctioning Association(s).

(B) In the event of the non-appearance of the appointed Referee the Clubs shall agree upon a Referee. A Referee thus agreed upon shall, for that game, have the full powers, status and authority of a registered Referee.

(C) The Management Committee may, if they consider it desirable, or upon application by the two competing Clubs, appoint Assistant Referees, if available, to any match. Where Assistant Referees are not appointed each Team shall provide a Club Assistant Referee. Failure to do so will result in a fine of £5 being imposed on the defaulting Team.

(D) The appointed Referee shall have power to decide as to the fitness of the ground in all matches and the decision shall be final subject to either in the case of a ground of a Local Authority or the owners of a ground, the Representative of that body is the sole arbiter and whose decision must be accepted unless the ground is declared fit for play.

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(E) Match Officials appointed under this Rule shall be recompensed according to the relevant County FA rules and regulations. The Home Club shall pay the Officials their fees and expenses immediately after the match.

(F) In the event of a match not being played because of circumstances over which the Clubs have no control, the Match Officials, if present, shall be entitled to half fee plus expenses. Where a match is not played owing to one Club being in default, that Club shall be ordered to pay the Officials, if they attend the ground, their full fee and expenses.

(G) A Referee not keeping his/her engagement, and failing to give a satisfactory explanation as to his/her non-appearance, may be reported to the Association with which he/she is registered.

(H) Each Club shall, in a manner prescribed from time to time by The Football Association, award marks to the Referee for each match and the name of the Referee and the marks awarded shall be submitted to the Competition on the prescribed Form provided. Clubs failing to comply with this Rule shall be liable to be fined or dealt with as the Management Committee shall determine.

The Competition shall keep a record of the markings and, on the Form provided by the prescribed date each season, shall submit a summary to The Football Association/County Association.

(K) Referees and Assistant Referees shall be supplied, each Season, with a copy of the Competition Rules free of charge.

CONTINUATION OF MEMBERSHIP OR WITHDRAWAL OF A CLUB

14. (A) After 31st December in the current Season a Club intending, or having a provisional intention, to withdraw a team from the Competition on completion of its fixtures and fulfilment of all other obligations to the Competition must notify the Secretary in writing by 30th April each Season or be liable to a fine not exceeding £25.

(B) A Club shall not be allowed to withdraw any or all of its teams from the Competition after the Annual General Meeting for the following Season. Any Club infringing this Rule shall be liable to a fine not exceeding £50 per team and shall also be liable for its share of any call which may be made under Rule 5(B).

(C) In the event of a Member Club which is an un-incorporated association withdrawing and/or disbanding it shall be immediately liable to discharge all its financial and other obligations to the Competition.

In the event that any such obligation remains undischarged after a period of twenty-one (21) days then such obligation shall be met by the then current Club Members, excluding those under the statutory school leaving age. Until a Member's pro rata obligation is discharged in full the Member shall not be allowed to participate in the Competition, which may apply to the Club's Parent County Association for a suspension order.

PROTESTS AND COMPLAINTS

15. (A)(i) All questions of eligibility, qualifications of players or interpretations of the Rules shall be referred to the Management Committee.

(ii) Objections relevant to the dimensions of the pitch, goals, flag posts or other facilities of the venue will not be entertained by the Management Committee unless a protest is lodged with the Referee before the commencement of the match. Any Club lodging such protest and not proceeding with it shall be deemed

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guilty of a breach of this Rule and shall be dealt with by the Management Committee.

(B) Except in cases where the Management Committee decide that there are special circumstances, protests and complaints (which must contain full particulars of the grounds upon which they are founded) must be lodged in duplicate with the Secretary within seven (7) days (excluding Sundays) of the match or occurrence to which they refer. A protest or complaint shall not be withdrawn except by permission of the Management Committee. A Member of the Management Committee who is a member of any Club involved shall not be present (except as a witness or representative of his Club) when such protest or complaint is being determined.

(C) Any dispute occurring between Clubs in the Competition shall be referred for determination by the Management Committee whose decision shall be binding upon all parties subject to Rule 16.

(D) No protest of whatever kind shall be considered by the Management Committee unless the complaining Club shall have deposited with the Secretary a sum of £10. This may be forfeited in whole or in part in the event of the complaining or protesting Club losing its case. The Competition shall have power to order the defaulting Club or the Club making a losing or frivolous protest or complaint to pay the expenses of the enquiry or to order that the costs to be shared by the parties.

(E) All parties to a protest or complaint must be afforded an opportunity to make a statement when the protest or complaint is being heard and must have received fourteen (14) days notice of the hearing, together with a copy of the submission. When dealing with a protest or complaint the Management Committee shall take into consideration the possession by the protesting or complaining Club of any information which, if properly used, might have avoided the protest or complaint.

BOARD OF APPEAL

16. Within 14 days of the posting of written notification of any decision of the Management Committee or the Competition, a Club, Official or Player against whom action is taken may appeal against such decision by lodging particulars in duplicate with the Secretary of the Northumberland Football Association, including a fee of £25, for adjudication of a Board of Appeal. The grounds of appeal shall be in accordance with FA Rules. The Board of Appeal may order the appeal fee to be forfeited and shall decide by whom the costs of the appeal shall be borne. The decision of the Board of Appeal is final and binding on all parties concerned.

No appeal can be lodged against a decision taken at an Annual or Special General Meeting unless this is on the ground of unconstitutional conduct.

EXCLUSION OF CLUBS OR TEAMS MISCONDUCT, CLUBS, OFFICIALS, PLAYERS

17. (A) At the Annual General Meeting, or Special General Meeting called for the purpose, Notice of Motion having been duly circulated on the Agenda, the accredited delegates present shall have the power to exclude any Club or Team from further membership which must be supported by (more than) two thirds (2/3) of those present and voting. Voting on this point shall be conducted by ballot.

(B) At the Annual General Meeting, or at a Special General Meeting called for the purpose, in accordance with the provisions of Rule 19, the accredited delegates present shall have the power to exclude from further participation in the Competition any Club whose conduct has, in their opinion, been undesirable,

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which must be supported by (more than) two-thirds (2/3rds) of those present and voting. Voting on this point shall be conducted by ballot. A Club whose conduct is the subject of the vote being taken shall be excluded from voting.

(C) Any official or member of a Club proved guilty of either a breach of Rule, other than field offences, or of inducing or attempting to induce a player or players of another Club in the Competition to join them shall be liable to expulsion or such penalty as a General Meeting or Management Committee may decide, and their Club shall also be liable to expulsion in accordance with the provisions of Clauses (A) and (B) of this Rule.

(D) Any Club or Team failing to complete three (3) of its fixtures in any season shall (unless the conditions are beyond their control, or the accredited delegates present at the Annual General Meeting or a Special General Meeting decide otherwise by a majority of two-thirds of the votes cast) be debarred from membership the following season.

TROPHY:- LEGAL OWNERS, CONDITIONS OF TAKING OVER, AGREEMENT TO BE SIGNED. AWARDS.

18. (A) If a Competition is discontinued for any reason a Trophy or any other presentation shall be returned to the Donor if the conditions attached to it so provide or, if not, dealt with as the sanctioning Association may decide.

(B)The following agreement shall be signed on behalf of the winners of the Cup or Trophy:-

"We A _____ and B _____, the Chairman and Secretary of _____FC, members of and representing the Club, having been declared winners of _____Cup or Trophy, and it having been delivered to us by the Competition, do hereby on behalf of the Club jointly and severally agree to return the Cup or Trophy to the Competition Secretary on or before _____. If the Cup or Trophy is lost or damaged whilst under our care we agree to refund to the Competition the amount of its current value or the cost of its thorough repair."

(C) At the close of each Competition awards may be made to the winners and runners-up if the funds of the Competition permit.

SPECIAL GENERAL MEETINGS

19. Upon receiving a requisition signed by two-thirds of the Clubs in membership the Secretary shall call a Special General Meeting.

The Management Committee may call a Special General Meeting at any time.

At least fourteen (14)days notice shall be given of either meeting under this Rule, together with an agenda of the business to be transacted at such meeting. Each Full Member Club shall be empowered to send two delegates to all Special General Meetings. Each Club shall be entitled to one vote only.

Any continuing Member Club failing to be represented at a Special General Meeting without satisfactory reason being given *may* be fined £10. Officers and Management Committee members shall be entitled to attend and vote at all Special General Meetings.

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ALTERATION TO RULES

20. Alterations shall be made to these Rules only at the Annual General Meeting or at a Special General Meeting specially convened for the purpose called in accordance with Rule 19. Any alteration made during the playing season to the Rule relating to the qualification of players shall not take effect until the following season.

Notice of proposed alterations to be considered at the Annual General Meeting shall be submitted to the Secretary by 1st May in each year. The proposals, together with any proposals by the Management Committee, shall be circulated to the Clubs by 16th May and any amendments thereto shall be submitted to the Secretary by 23rd May. The proposals and proposed amendments thereto shall be circulated to Clubs with the notice of the Annual General Meeting. A proposal to change a Rule shall be carried if a majority of those present and entitled to vote are in favour.

A copy of the proposed alterations to Rules to be considered at the Annual General Meeting or Special General Meeting shall be submitted to the sanctioning Football Association seven (7) days prior to the date of the meeting.

Any alterations or additions decided upon at any meeting shall not become operative until the approval of the Association issuing sanction shall have been obtained.

RULES BINDING ON CLUBS

21. Each Member Club shall be deemed to have given its assent to the foregoing Rules and agreed to abide by the decisions of the Management Committee subject to Rule 16. Each Member Club must abide by any issued Football Association Code of Conduct

FINANCE

22. (A) The Management Committee shall determine with which bank or other financial institution the funds of the Competition will be lodged.
- (B) All expenditure in excess of £100 shall be approved by the Management Committee. Cheques shall be signed by at least two Officers nominated by the Management Committee.
- (C) The financial year of the Competition will end on 30 May each Year.
- (D) The books, or a certified balance sheet, of a Competition shall be prepared and shall be verified annually by some suitable person(s) who shall be appointed at the Annual General Meeting.

NORTHUMBERLAND GIRLS AND WOMEN'S LEAGUE
LEAGUE REGULATIONS

1. Cup Competition – a League Cup competition may be arranged by the Management Committee each year in an appropriate format.
2. The League may run any number of appropriate age group leagues – all players must be Under 16 at midnight on 31st August in the current playing season. The age qualification for each age group is as outlined in the Qualification of Players section. See also FA Rules for any lower age groups.
3. All matches in the Under 16 League shall be of 80 minutes duration (except in situations where appropriate section of 10(B) shall apply.) Where lower age groups leagues exist, the playing time shall be in accordance with FA Rules.
4. Repeated substitutions, using up to a maximum of five (5) substitutes, will be used in the Under 16 and other age group Leagues.
5. Player Registration Rule Variations
 - I. Registrations for players at Under 16 and below must be accompanied by original/copies of the players Birth Certificate or Passport. Where either of these are not available other means of verifying the players date of birth may be submitted with prior approval of the Management Committee.
 - II. Match day squads may consist of no more than 12 registered players for small sided matches or 18 registered players for 11-a-side.
 - III. Squads may register no more than 18 players at any one time for all age group leagues Under 16 and below.
 - IV. Number of transfers and re-registrations will be limited to one (1) per player per season and will cost £5. The number of teams a player may be registered for is restricted to a maximum of two (2) at any one age group.
6. Match Day Rule Variations for Mini Soccer played at a Central Venue
 - I. The 'Home team' must ensure the team sheet is handed in to reception following the game.
 - II. Both teams shall be on pitch side ready to kick off for the allocated time.
 - III. All games must finish within the allocated time.
 - IV. If a late kick off occurs then the duration of the game must be reduced accordingly.
 - V. The duration of breaks for games played with 4 x 12.5mins shall be no more than 1min.
 - VI. The half time break for games played with 2 x 25mins shall be no more than 4 minutes.
 - VII. For games played at Under 14 and below a size 4 ball must be used.
 - VIII. For Under 10 and below ONLY – A goal kick may be kicked from the hands but ONLY by the goalkeeper. A Back pass to the goalkeeper is allowed.
7. Match Day Rule Variations
 - I. For Under 15 and above a size 5 ball must be used. For Under 14 and below a size 4 ball should be used.
 - II. Under 9's, 10's, 11's and 12's Mini Soccer matches shall have a duration of 50 minutes divided into equal quarters.
 - III. Under 13 and 14 Mini Soccer matches shall have a duration of 50 minutes divided into equal halves.
 - IV. Under 14 11-a-side matches shall have a duration of 70 minutes divided into equal halves.
 - V. Under 15 and 16 11-a-side matches shall have a duration of 80 minutes divided into equal halves.
 - VI. Both teams must exchange their player registration cards BEFORE kick off. The committee will not accept any protest/complaint about player eligibility unless the registration cards have been exchanged or a team fails to produce the registration cards on request.

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- VII. Any team failing to fulfil a fixture will be called before the Management committee, fined in accordance with the rules and the match awarded to the opposition. For youth matches the result will be 1-0, for Women's matches the result will be 3-0.

8. Match Cancellations for Mini Soccer played at a Central Venue

- I. The Central Venue Organisers (Venue) reserve the right to close one or more pitches at their own discretion should the weather or conditions deem necessary
- II. A member of the committee will place a recorded message upon the 'Managers Hotline' at their earliest convenience to ensure as much notice as possible is provided.
- III. All clubs have a responsibility to ring the 'Managers Hotline' if they are unsure of the conditions. This must not be given to parents due to volume of calls expected.
- IV. If your game is cancelled by the Venue, this fixture will be re-scheduled by the fixture secretary
- V. If a game is cancelled for any reason other than, The Venue closure of pitches or County selection, the club who instigates the cancellation must make alternative arrangements for the fulfilment of the fixture at their own expense to be played no later than 7 days before the of the season.
- VI. If any club is affected by the loss of players due to City or County call ups they may request permission to have their game cancelled. (*See County Games below*)

County Fixtures

- VII. All clubs must ensure they support the request for players at County level.
- VIII. Players selected for County games should be allowed to develop and be supported should they wish to attend the County fixture.
- IX. A club who has players selected at county level are under obligation to fulfil their official league or cup fixture with a minimum squad of 6 registered players.
- X. Any request to cancel a game due to selection of players must include the full names of those registered players who have been selected by the County/City.

9. Determining League Championship Variations

- I. Goal difference shall not be considered to determine any final league position for Under 16 leagues and below.
- II. Should two or more teams be level, winners and runners-up, at the end of the season, a play-off (with penalties if required) shall take place between these sides to determine final positions unless the championship is to be shared. If three or more teams are level the play-off will be in a round robin format. This variation only applies to Under 16 leagues and below.
- III. The league champions of each division shall receive a League Trophy for one season and individual medals for registered players.
- IV. The runners up for each division shall receive individual medals for registered players

10. Protests and Complaints

These must be lodged with the League Secretary using the appropriate form stating clearly which rule or regulation is considered to have been broken. Any such submission must comply with Rule 15.

11. Requests for postponements

All requests for postponements must be submitted in writing to the League Secretary; (A) at least seven (7) days in advance for youth matches; (B) at least fourteen (14) days in advance for Women's matches, of the match date stating the reason why. NOTE that a request for postponement does not guarantee acceptance by the League. The League will not accept 'fear of defeat', 'lack of confidence' or 'my players won't turn up' as a legitimate request. The committee will confirm its decision within 24 hours of the request being received. If

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permission to postpone a match is granted the requesting team MUST inform the opposition where a match had already been fixtured. For Women's matches – only two (2) fixture postponements per season are allowed.

12. Referees

(A) Every effort should be made at all times to appoint a fully qualified neutral Referee for matches in these Leagues but under no circumstances should a qualified referee be appointed if he/she is in any way associated with either of the Teams taking part in the match, i.e., Parent, Club Official, Management Committee, etc. If the person in charge of the Home Team does not inform their visitors that a person has some connection with their Team, and he/she referees the game, the League Committee will impose a fine of £25.00 and the game will be awarded to the non-defaulting team.

(B) When the services of a qualified Referee cannot be obtained club officials will spin for the choice of Referee. Such Referees are official and any decisions of theirs are as binding as those of a qualified Referee which includes the sending of Reports to Divisional Secretaries. When teams spin for the choice of Referee the person appointed must officiate for the full match.

(C) Team Secretaries and Managers are reminded that when a 'Club Official' is appointed to be the Referee he/she must act as a completely 'neutral' official and should not under any circumstances 'coach' his/her team whilst the match is in progress

13. Meetings

League meetings will be held at regular intervals. All clubs must be represented or a £10 fine PER TEAM will be imposed.

14. Fines and Sanctions

In addition to any fines or sanctions already mentioned in the League Rules the Management committee reserve the right to levy the following fines against defaulting teams: -

- Failure of a team to be represented at a League meeting **£10.00**
- Failure to provide a fully complete and correct result Sheet **£10.00**
- Failure to report results to fixtures secretary within agreed timescale **£10.00**
- Failure to respond to correspondence within an agreed timescale **£10.00**
- Failure to appoint a neutral referee as defined in the league regulations **£25.00** + points awarded to the non defaulting team
- Playing an unregistered player **£20.00** + points awarded to the non defaulting team
- Failure to abide by Fair Play Charter **£50.00**
- Bringing the league into disrepute - **levied by committee**
- Failure to return Cups on time **£25.00**+ any engraving / cleaning / repair / replacement costs
- Failure to fulfil a fixture **£25.00** + points awarded to non defaulting team
- Refusal or failure to exchange player's counterfoils **£20.00** + points awarded to non defaulting team
- Failure to pay fine within allotted timescale **£10.00**

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FAIR PLAY CHARTER

The League encourages every member club to actively support the provision and implementation of the NGWFL Fair Play Charter.

Coaches/Managers

1. Respect and abide by the rules of the game
2. Ensure your players are aware of the league and match rules.
3. Ensure equipment and facilities meet appropriate standards of safety
4. Encourage respect towards opposition players, match officials and each other.
5. Behave in a manner fitting to set a good example to others at all times.
6. Do not become involved in any confrontation before, during or after a game.
7. Report all instances of abuse, physical or verbal to a committee member.

Players

- Play by the rules
- Do not argue with officials
- Work hard for your team and yourself
- Do not let unsporting behaviour of others upset you
- Speak to your coach or manager if you have any problems
- Play hard, but fair
- Do not use any foul or abusive language at any time
- Always shake hands with the opposition at the end of the game, regardless of result.

Parents/Spectators

- Avoid coaching your daughter
- Offer encouragement at all times
- Do not challenge an official's decision; pass your comments on to your coach.
- Support and encourage the belief that all forms of abuse, physical or verbal, are totally unacceptable.
- Do not ridicule or shout at any player or official at any time.
- Support your team's coach/manager, this is their free time they give up to allow your daughter to participate
- Applaud good play at all times, regardless of which team/player displays it.

Playing Fair

We are committed to ensuring a positive experience for all involved in the NGWFL Football League. All Clubs entering the league will be bound by this charter. Clubs found to be in Breach of the Fair Play Charter will be considered to have brought the league into Disrepute, will be reported to the Northumberland Football Association. Depending on findings appropriate penalties will be applied.

Discriminatory Behaviour

The NGFL Football league operates a Zero tolerance policy in relation to discriminatory behaviour. Any Incidents will be taken very seriously by the NGWFL and may result in disqualification.

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CHILD PROTECTION

1. Any act, statement, conduct or other matter which harms a child or children, or poses or may pose a risk of harm to a child or children, shall constitute behaviour which is improper and brings the game into disrepute.
- 2.(a) In these Regulations the expression "Offence" shall mean any one or more of the offences contained in the Schedules of the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000 and any other criminal offence which reasonably causes The Association to believe that the person accused of the offence poses or may pose a risk of harm to a child or children
- (b) All persons in such positions that The Association deems relevant whose normal duties include caring for, training, supervising or being in sole charge of children are required to obtain an Enhanced Disclosure via The Association's CRB process.
3. Upon receipt by The Association of:
 - 3.1 notification that an individual has been charged with an Offence; or
 - 3.2 notification that an individual is the subject of an investigation by the Police, Social Services or any other authority relating to an Offence; or
 - 3.3 any other information which causes The Association reasonably to believe that a person poses or may pose a risk of harm to a child or children then The Association shall have the power to order that the individual be suspended from all or any specific football activity for such period and on such terms and conditions as it thinks fit.
4. In reaching its determination as to whether an order under Regulation 3 should be made The Association shall give consideration, inter alia, to the following factors:
 - 4.1 whether a child is or children are or may be at risk of harm;
 - 4.2 whether the matters are of a serious nature;
 - 4.3 whether an order is necessary or desirable to allow the conduct of any investigation by The Association or any other authority or body to proceed unimpeded.
5. The period of an order referred to in 3 above shall not be capable of lasting beyond the date upon which any charge under the Rules of The Association or any Offence is decided or brought to an end.
6. Where an order is imposed on an individual under regulation 3 above, The Association shall bring and conclude any proceedings under the Rules of The Association against the person relating to the matters as soon as reasonably practicable.
7. Where a person is convicted, or is made the subject of a caution in respect of an Offence, that shall constitute a breach of the Rules of The Association and The Association shall have the power to order the suspension of the person from all or any specific football activity for such a period (including indefinitely) and on such terms and conditions as it thinks fit.
8. For the purposes of these Regulations, The Association shall act through its Council or any committee or sub-committee thereof, including the Board.
9. Notification in writing of an order referred to above shall be given to the person concerned and/or any club with which he is associated as soon as reasonably practicable

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10. The applicable standard of proof shall be the civil standard, of the balance of probability. The more serious the allegation taking into account the nature of the misconduct alleged and the context of the case the greater the burden of evidence required to find the matter proved. Save that for charges pursuant to The Football Association's Child Protection Policy, where the welfare and protection of children shall be paramount and the test shall be whether more likely than not.

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

The NGWFL recognise that the Childs' welfare is paramount and recommend that all clubs adopt a safeguarding/child protection Policy.

The NGWFL recommend that all clubs appoint a Child Welfare office and that appointed person is the key liaison for all child protection issues and attend the appropriate FA training. The NGWFL will only speak with the named child welfare officer regarding any welfare issues.

The NGWFL Recommend that all people in contact with young people in a position of trust obtain an Enhanced Criminal Records Bureau Disclosure.

The NGWFL are committed to operating safe working practices and will report any allegations to the appropriate authorities.

Should you need any guidance on dealing with child protection issues it is recommended that you contact the FA- NSPCC Child protection Line: 0808 800 500

July 4th 2008