



Introduction

What is Wildcats?

Wildcats is an offer for every girl aged 5-11, regardless of ability, disability, impairment or health condition, to try football for the first time in a fun and safe environment.

Sessions take place on a weekly basis, either on an evening or at weekends, and are focused on helping girls make friends, have fun and be active through football. All sessions are delivered by FA qualified coaches, providing a safe place for girls to try football for the first time and develop key skills.

Why have we created Wildcats?

The Wildcats programme was introduced to address the findings that:

“only 3% of all mini soccer teams cater exclusively for girls and as such only 41% of girls (compared to 95% of boys) under the age of 10 regularly play football.”

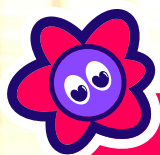
Therefore we wanted to create a sustainable Wildcats network where girls can regularly attend fun and engaging sessions.

We strive to ensure girls:

Have Fun!

Make Friends

Play Football



[Watch the Wildcats promotional video here](#)



What are Wildcats sessions?

Wildcats sessions are held at a particular location and time, attracting girls aged 5-11 years old. The expectation is that providers will differentiate children into appropriate age groups to ensure sessions are safe. For example, we would not expect a five or six year old to be grouped to play with an 11 year old. The sessions are non-competitive and participants are encouraged to turn up and play as much or as little as they'd like. The programme must be delivered with the intention of it becoming an established and embedded offer within your football provision.

The programme must:

- Have the capacity to host a minimum of 30 participants per session.
- Be delivered as sessions with a minimum duration of one hour.
- Maintain staffing ratios appropriate to the group.
- Parents and carers of the youngest participants (5-year olds) **MUST** stay to meet their child's toileting and intimate care needs. Parents and carers of older children are also encouraged to stay with their child during sessions as they know their child best of all.
- Each provider must use the Book Football to create sessions and take attendance weekly.

Who Can Apply?

Applications are welcomed from any organisation that meets the Wildcats criteria.

Organisations that have previously delivered Wildcats can apply to run additional programmes. In doing so, they must continue running the original sessions they have set up.

Additional Wildcats programmes must run at a different time and location, and must be engaging different participants.

Organisations will NOT be supported to deliver:

- New programmes to replace existing programmes
- Additional sessions for existing players





What You Will Receive

Support



Online training



Delivery support



National search engine and online booking tool

Kit & Equipment



Nike footballs



Wildcats bibs



Wildcats banner

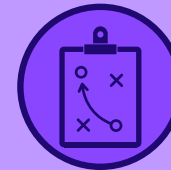
Resources



Branded marketing assets



Access to online activity pack



Session resources



Access to online Wildcats store



Criteria

01. Delivery

Organisations must deliver a minimum of six sessions per year



02. Safeguarding

Adhere to the safeguarding criteria throughout delivery of the programme and evidence a Safeguarding Policy



03. Health and safety

Complete a session Risk Assessment



04. Insurance

Evidence public liability insurance



05. Staff

Meet and adhere to the staffing criteria throughout the delivery of the programme



06. Sustainability

Aim to embed Wildcats within your organisation to continue offering girls the opportunity to play



07. Training

[Complete online Wildcats training](#)



08. Inclusive

Be inclusive for all girls to participate regardless of ability, disability, impairment, or health condition



09. Accessibility

Operate within community hours, to allow accessibility for all



10. Participants

Have capacity for a minimum of 30 participants, that are booked on via Book Football



11. FA Terms and Conditions

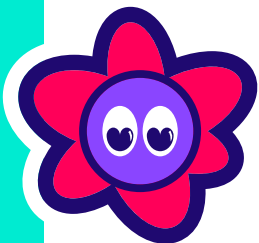
Agree to The FA Terms and Conditions and must operate within the parameters of this agreement



01. Delivery

Our research tells us that girls aged 5-11 want sessions that are:

- 1. Weekly and warm**
- 2. Safe and fun**
- 3. Good for fitness**
- 4. Girls only**



Timing of Delivery

The greatest demand for Wildcats is over spring and summer as they are the warmest months and the best time of year to engage with the beginner girl. If providers wish to continue with delivery into autumn and winter, then we recommend using an indoor facility to deliver these sessions.

Type of Delivery

Sessions can be delivered outside or inside, as long as this remains a safe environment to host Wildcats, and that they comply with all health and safety requirements.

Outside – e.g. grass, multi-use games area, artificial grass

Indoor – sports hall, school hall.

Each provider must use Book Football to create sessions and take attendance weekly. Once you have created your sessions on Book Football, your sessions will be promoted nationally on Find Football for participants to book their place.





02. Safeguarding

All those involved with Wildcats delivery must be able to evidence a Safeguarding Children Policy. If providers do not have a Safeguarding Children Policy, The FA's club template can be downloaded by visiting:

[THE FA SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY AND PROCEDURES: TEMPLATES](#)

The FA's Safeguarding Children Policy principles must be adhered to by those involved with the delivery of Wildcats and all of its related activities. When working in partnership to deliver football activity, it must be clear how Safeguarding Children Policy principles will be adhered to, and what the process is for recognising and responding to concerns about a child. The FA Safeguarding Children Policy principles are that:

- The child's welfare is, and must always be, the paramount consideration;
- All children and young people have a right to be protected from abuse regardless of their age, gender, disability, culture, language, racial origin, faith or sexual orientation;
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately;
- And working in partnership with other organisations, children and young people and their parents and carers is essential.

The safeguarding policy must be clear about the following requirements:

The Referral Process

Including reference to The FA Safeguarding Case Management Team (Safeguarding@TheFA.com) with a supporting flow diagram.

Named Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO)

Recruited against a role profile responsible for ensuring safeguards are in place and maintained effectively. All staff, parents/carers and players must be made aware as to who this person is and how to contact them. Providers are responsible for messaging the name of DSO & contact info to parents/carers.

Safer Recruitment

Including DBS checks; via The FA DBS Unit (checks completed via the Premier League and/or PL Club should make use of The FA portability agreement to comply with the requirement for an FA accepted DBS check).

Safeguarding Training

Completion of The FA's Safeguarding Children Training e.g. SCC/WOC. EFL and PL Club DSOs must be up to date with their respective leagues DSL safeguarding training requirements or complete The FA's WOC.

Reporting concerns

Concerns should be reported as quickly and easily as possible. Each provider must have a DSO who is clear about The FA referral and whistle blowing procedures.

Prevention

It is essential that every Wildcats provider implements preventative safeguarding measures (including [Safeguarding Risk Assessments](#)) to help create safe and enjoyable environments for every aspect of the proposed activities.

Planning, delivery and compliance

All parties must be clear about the safeguarding requirements for Wildcats including who is responsible for what safeguards during i) planning, ii) delivery and iii) compliance monitoring.

Please involve the DSO at your County FA.

Note: In addition to these measures, remember early years safeguarding guidance states 5-year-old participants MUST have a parent/carer stay for the duration of the sessions to meet their toileting and intimate care needs.



02. Safeguarding: DBS FAQs

Q1. How do I get an FA DBS Check?

Contact your County FA Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) or PL/EFL DSO for advice and guidance.

Or for more information reach out to:

The FA DBS Unit

Tel: 0115 969 4618 or

Email: FAChecks@TheFA.com

Q2. I already have a check via my PL Club - can I use this?

Yes, but only if your check is for the child workforce, was completed through your PL Club account with 'First Advantage', and there's no content on your DBS Check, you'll need to contact:

First Advantage

Tel: 0115 969 4618

FAChecks@TheFA.com

Who will be able to port this over to The FA.

You'll need to give your name, DOB, the address you used to complete your check and give consent for First Advantage to port your DBS Check to The FA.

Q3. I have registered with the DBS Update Service – do I still have to do an FA DBS Check?

If your check is for the child workforce and was completed through your PL Club account with 'First Advantage', follow our guidance in Q2.

If your DBS Check is for the child workforce and you have registered with the DBS Update service then please contact either First Advantage or FA Checks who will be able to help you:

First Advantage

Tel: 0115 969 4618

FAChecks@TheFA.com

Q4. I already have a DBS Check via another organisation – can I use this?

If your DBS Check was carried out by any other organisation e.g. a school, church group, or volunteering organisation, you'll need to complete an FA DBS Check (Children's workforce).

Q5. How long will it take for my DBS Check to be completed?

It generally takes around 14 working days to carry out a DBS check. But if you sent off a paper application vs online, it could take longer.

Other factors can also cause delays, such as if you have a complex address history, a common name, whether your local police force is busy, and the ease of accessing local records.

03. Health & Safety

04. Insurance

Wildcats is all about having fun and making friends
– in a safe environment.

To ensure sessions are operating safely, programme organisers must have the following in place:

- **H&S RISK ASSESSMENT**
- Public liability Insurance (minimum limit of indemnity of GBP 5 million)





05. Staff

Requirement

1. There must always be a minimum of two FA DBS checked adults with a clear role available at all times when U18s are involved in the activity. One of these adults (18+) must hold the EE Playmaker or The FA Introduction to Coaching Football qualification.
2. [Please refer to the following guidance document: 5.5 Ratios of adults to children](#) to understand the number of staff members your Wildcats session will require.

Applicant	Lead Coach	Coaches/ Volunteers	Designated Safeguarding Officer	Volunteers (U18)	Female Role Model
<p>This role is responsible for completing the application process. This person cannot be directly involved in the delivery of football activity unless they meet the criteria of another specified role namely; lead coach, coach/volunteer, or DSL.</p> <p>In this instance, they must also provide their details under the relevant role.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must be aged 18+. • Minimum of The EE Playmaker or The FA. Introduction to Coaching Football qualification. • In date accepted FA DBS check. • FA Safeguarding Children qualification. • FA Introduction to First Aid in Football qualification. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You must include a minimum of one adult (18+) who holds an in date accepted FA DBS Check to work with the Lead Coach. • Any coach or volunteer aged 16 and above must have an in date accepted FA DBS check. • Coaches U18 – coaches aged 16 & 17 can be registered – but they cannot be considered as part of the staffing ratio for the sessions, as they are not 18+ (you must have parental consent for them to volunteer and they must be supervised at all times). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruited in line with a role profile. • In date accepted FA DBS Check. • Responsible for ensuring safeguards are in place and maintained effectively. • Must have attended FA Welfare Officer Course (DSO) or PL/EFL relevant DSL training. • All staff, parents/carers and players must be made aware as to whom this person is and how to contact them. <p>Note – this person can also be the administrator, lead coach or coach/volunteer only if they meet the requirements for the role.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteers must be supervised at all times by the Lead Coach. • Volunteers aged 16 and above must have an in date accepted FA DBS check. • Minimum age for volunteer is 14. • You must have informed parent/carer consent for the volunteer to take on a role. • The appointing of an U18 volunteer must be covered within your Safeguarding Risk Assessment. 	<p>To increase the number of role models within football and meet the demographic of participants, at least one member of staff should be female, you can recruit this person at any time during the year.</p>

To successfully submit your online application you will be required to input the following fields, which meet the above requirements for each of the roles:

✓ Applicant ✓ Lead coach ✓ Coach/Volunteer ✓ DSO

06. Sustainability

Wildcats is a great opportunity to welcome new girls into the game, and we want to retain and grow these opportunities as much as possible!

TO BECOME SUSTAINABLE, YOUR WILDCATS PROGRAMME MUST BE:



Relevant

Is continuing to offer a programme which is appealing to the target audiences, evidenced by a high number of returning participants.



Reliable

Running a sufficient number of weeks to ensure it builds a reputation for being open, running and delivering to a high and consistent standard; with sufficient staff to ensure it can accommodate holidays / illness etc.



Financially Viable

Genuinely covering its costs, including those relating to delivery, facilities, marketing, upskilling staff and administration.

Questions to consider when building your sustainability plan:

- How much are you going to charge participants?
- How are you going to recruit staff?
- How are you going to involve your parent network?
- What links do you have to wider networks i.e. clubs, schools, colleges, universities or how could you look to build them?



07. Training

Applicants must commit to completing [Wildcats online training](#).

Wildcats training is a free, short online learning course, which is mandatory for all new providers to complete.

You will be unable to deliver any sessions until you have completed this. Please contact your County FA for support or questions regarding training.

The training will provide an introduction to Wildcats, provide technical and operational guidance, and advice to providers on how to promote sessions and recruit participants.





08. Inclusive

Inclusive Sessions

All Wildcats sessions should ensure that they reflect the diversity of the population in local areas and must be inclusive of players with a disability, impairment or long term health condition. With the right support and coaching, players with a disability can achieve their potential and by recognising everyone as an individual, as opposed to an impairment, we believe this is possible.

We will provide specific resources and training to support your delivery and in addition to this you can access our [free online 'Introduction to Disability Football' module](#). All of which will help build your knowledge and confidence as you develop your inclusive or disability specific Wildcats sessions.

Disability Specific Providers

We really want to ensure Wildcats is FOR ALL. This means as we grow our network we must make sure there are suitable opportunities for disabled girls. Therefore, we would encourage you and your delivery team to apply to run a disability specific Wildcats session to support the growth of the network. All the general principles of how to plan and deliver football sessions and activities are equally applicable when working with players with a disability, impairment or long-term health condition. Providers will also need to be aware of some additional factors when working with players with a disability to ensure a safe and enjoyable environment is created, but remember the players and their parents/carers will be well aware of their own needs so talk to them to find out what they are.

Providers will need to think carefully about the following:

- If staffing ratios are correct to effectively meet all of the participants needs.
- Whether additional safety checks are necessary.
- Developing a shared plan with your players in terms of goals and expectations - communicate and work together to achieve them.
- How to adapt the way sessions are delivered and organised to include everyone – sessions may need to be simplified.
- The length, intensity and frequency of sessions as well as the drills or activities within each session. For example, some players with a disability may tire more quickly, others may need regular rests, some have difficulty regulating temperature and need to rehydrate more frequently.



08. Inclusive

Providers may also need to:

Speak to your participants and their parents/carers to ensure you know if they have any particular needs and adapt drills and warm-ups accordingly.

Remember the STEP principle can help you to adapt your session to involve all players, including those with a disability:

Space – Modify the space by increasing or decreasing the area in which a task is to be performed or changing the distance or areas in which to score points.

Task – Give different participants different tasks, e.g. ball juggling without a bounce and ball juggling with multiple bounces.

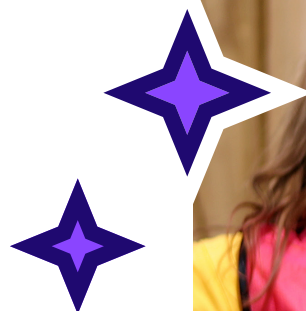
Equipment – Use different modified equipment to help players of different abilities access learning.

People – Modify the numbers within the practice to make it easier or harder to achieve success.

Be creative in finding a variety of ways to explain or develop a particular skill. Be prepared to use a range of communication methods and tactics to meet the needs of all your players.

Questions to consider:

- How inclusive is your Wildcats session?
- Is your session representative of the community?
- Does your session offer opportunities for players with a disability?
- Have you contacted your County FA with regards participant recruitment, support and how to ensure success?



LOVE





09. Accessibility

Wildcats is a community programme, which is designed to give every girl the opportunity to play football. Accessibility is about removing barriers to participation. These may be:

- **Physical Barriers** – if young people have Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND).
- **Economic Barriers** – if young people are from disadvantaged backgrounds. We want to ensure Wildcats sessions are accessible to all, which is why it's important for them to be available in locations which require little travel. It's also why we have capped the entry fee at £3.
- **Logistical Barriers** – Wildcats is a community programme and so needs to operate in community hours i.e. outside of school time.

Organisations should select a venue and a start time that is accessible for participants.

Can Wildcats be delivered in schools?

Any organisation delivering Wildcats on a school site must ensure that the session is delivered at a suitable time for access for participants from surrounding schools, therefore sessions must allow a minimum of 30 minutes following the school day before starting the session.





10. Participants

Session Capacity

Wildcats sessions must demonstrate that they have a minimum capacity of 30 participants. For example, sessions must have the correct coach ratios for 30 participants and a playing area suitably sized to host 30 participants.

Participant Target

Sessions should aspire to achieve 30 participants each week. Understandably this may take a number of weeks to achieve, and depends on each local community and type of session, e.g. if you are a disability specific provider then we understand the number of participants is likely to be lower than those suggested here.

Participant Booking/Consent

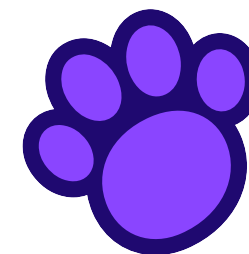
All participants must be booked onto a Wildcats session via Book Football online booking system by their parent/carer, prior to taking part in a session.

- Wildcats coaches/volunteers must take attendance at the end of each session.
- Wildcats coaches/volunteers must have confirmed parent/carer consent to participate.

It is mandatory for all Wildcats Providers to use Book Football.

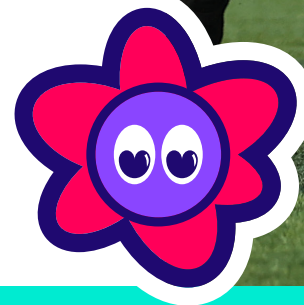
This system ensures that as a provider you:

- ✓ Are GDPR compliant
- ✓ Have parental/carers consent
- ✓ Have participant medical details
- ✓ Have parent/carers emergency contact information
- ✓ Obtain additional needs information
- ✓ Can take attendance of each session



11. FA Terms & Conditions

All Wildcats providers must agree to The FA Terms & Conditions upon application on Book Football and must operate within the parameters of this agreement.





Ready to get started and become a Wildcats provider?



If you're ready to start your journey to becoming a provider, all you need to do is get in touch with your local **County Football Association** by dropping them an email or giving them a call.

After that, these are the steps you will take:

- 1. Sign up to become a Wildcats provider on Book Football**
- 2. Complete the online Wildcats training**
- 3. Set up your sessions on Book Football**
- 4. Receive your voucher code from your County FA to redeem your equipment pack.**
- 5. Start your sessions - it's as simple as that!**



Have Fun!