



Ball Assistants and Child Employment- Interim Advice and Guidance for Sports Clubs and Local Authority Officers

January 2025

Since the initial guidance the NNCEE and the FA put out in July 2024 there has been further discussions with Premiere League clubs and the FA. There is still a plan for sport stakeholders, the Department of Education and the NNCEE to meet to determine appropriate and proportionate guidance and legislation for youth employment in sport including the role of Ball Assistants.

It is the view of the NNCEE that the role of Ball Assistants is employment, and the child employment legislation should be applied.

- Where the Club currently has a performance licence in place for ball assistants it is advisable for the local authority and club to review and work together to apply the child employment legislation and remove the performance licences in place.
- We would encourage LA to look at ways they can reduce some of the paperwork if this is possible especially if you are looking at issuing a large number of permits, maybe you can ask the club to fill out one employment application for all and then submitted the child's details separately if this is possible.
- For new applications, Clubs should liaise with their respective Local Authority or Borough to apply for work permits.
- Clubs must ensure that there are appropriate procedures and arrangements for young people to safely travel to and from the club on match days.
- Local Authorities and Boroughs should ensure that Clubs have risk assessments in place for all children employed and undertaking the role of ball assistant on match days, including insurance, appropriate protective clothing together with a risk-based approach to deployments.

- To clarify, those ball assistants who have left compulsory school (official leaving date is the last Friday in June the year that they turn 16) in either year 12 or at college are to be used for fixtures that finish after 7pm and take place on a Sunday. All other weekday and Saturday fixtures that finish before 7pm can use ball assistants aged 14 years and above, or 13 years if their local byelaws permit, to fulfil the responsibility. Please note young people aged 13/14 years can only work for 5 hours on a Saturday 15/16-year-old 8 hours and the same hours during the week during school holidays.
- For further advice or help please contact Michelle Clement-Evans from the NNCEE.

Update on the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill 2025.

The new proposed bill going through parliament will change the hours for children to work to 8PM but still only 2 hours before or after school.

Children will be able to work for up to 5 or 8 hours on a Saturday and Sunday. However, total hours during term time must not exceed 12 hours across a week during term time and more during school holidays.

The act is going through parliament and there will be a need for further statutory regulations on types of jobs etc to be sorted out. There is **no date** when any changes might come into law. So, the current laws still stand.

Whilst this will give us some flexibility for some work on a Sunday and the change in the latest hours will help, this is unlikely to cover later televised or late evening sporting hours.

We do need to work with clubs and sporting organisations to ensure they do comply with the current legislation and prepare for the future as well.

We know that many sporting organisations are finding this a challenge and we can work with them to think about practical solutions as indicated above until the legislation is changed. We had a similar journey with music hubs.

NNCEE is here to support LAs as well. If sporting organisations wish to join us in the discussions about child employment, please get a contact person and I can pass these on to the DFE.