



SETTING UP A JUNIOR SECTION

This factsheet is for existing road running clubs who are looking to set up a junior section. The steps highlighted will help your club create a safe positive experience for children and young people, as well as providing volunteers with the confidence to operate within the recommended guidance.

It's great that you are considering widening your club offer to children and young people.

Having a junior section isn't for every club so before you start, think about the following;



- Does your club's vision for the future involve children and young people?
- Do you have agreement from the club committee?
- Do your volunteers have the capacity and willingness to set up a junior section?
- Is there another local club offering athletics and running to children and young people?

DEFINITION



- In general terms, a youth/young athlete is an athlete aged under 18.
- In England, a child is defined as anyone who has not reached their 18th birthday. England Athletics often refers to the term in relation to various activities, so it is good practice to state the age range (e.g., the event is open to children aged 11-13).

For more digital club support, visit the [England Athletics Club Hub](#)



Steps to follow when setting up a junior section:

1

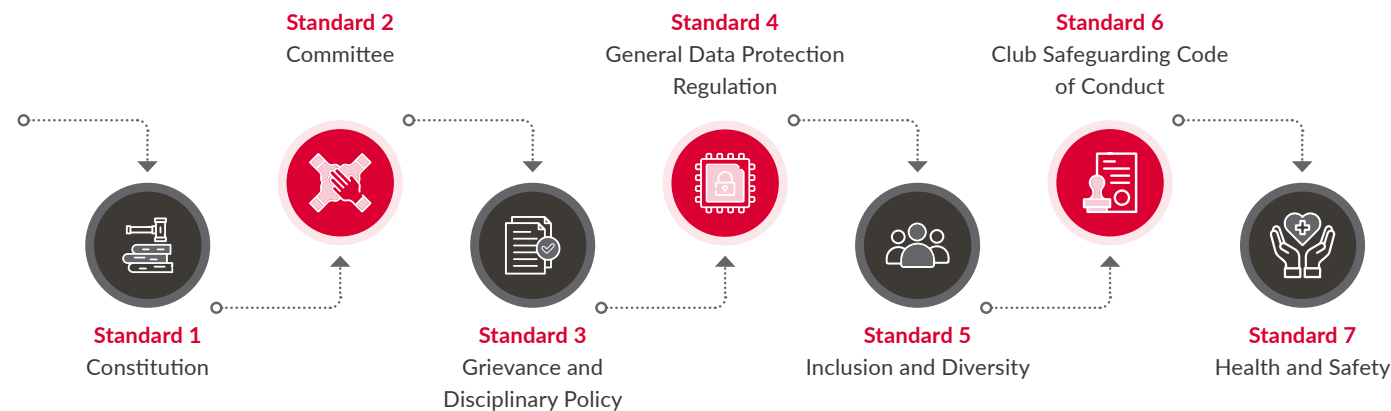
Club Management

The new junior section should be integrated into the main club rather than creating a separate constitution and committee. You may wish to review your constitution and ensure that a volunteer is represented on the committee from the junior section. Some clubs create a 'working group' for the junior section which then feeds into the club committee.

2

Club Standards

Review and update your Club Standards so that your constitution, policies, and procedures are specific to having children and young people within your club.



3

Club Safeguarding Code of Conduct

All clubs should sign and agree to the Club Safeguarding Code of Conduct as part of Club Standards. The code stipulates that clubs should:

- Adopt the children and young people safeguarding policy.
- Ensure all members sign up to relevant codes. Clubs should consider how they can introduce the codes to junior members and their parents and carers as well as coaches and leaders.

4

Welfare Officers

Clubs should have at least one lead welfare officer with the relevant training. Clubs can appoint one or more additional welfare officers to assist this person, depending on the size or structure of the club. If you have children and young people within your club the welfare officer must complete the England Athletics Time to Listen course and have a valid DBS certificate.

For more digital club support, visit the [England Athletics Club Hub](#)



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Leaders and Coaches

When working with groups of children, young people and adult participants, there must be enough coaches, leaders and other suitable volunteers to provide the appropriate level of supervision. Your club should ensure that you have enough suitable volunteers to ensure participants are safe and that the session can be delivered in a safe and enjoyable environment.

A risk assessment will determine the ratio of volunteers to children. As a guide, the recommended ratios are:

- 5-8 years old: 1 suitable volunteer to 6 children (delivered by volunteers with Leading Funetics certificate and supervised by at least 1 UKA Licensed Athletics or Coaching Running Fitness Coach)
- 8-12 years old: 1 suitable volunteer to 8 children (with at least 1 UKA Licensed Athletics Coach present)
- 13-18 years old: 1 suitable volunteer to 10 children (with at least 1 UKA Licensed Athletics or Coaching Running Fitness Coach)



Useful Links

[Coach Education and Development](#)

[UK Athletics Codes of Practice and Guidance](#)

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Defining the offer

Athletics is a varied sport with different disciplines that children and young people can enjoy.



Running

(track, road, cross country, fell)



Throwing



Jumping

England Athletics have the following programmes clubs can access to support them with delivery;

- [5 - 11 year olds Funetics](#)



- [12 - 18 year olds Athletics 365](#)

If setting up a junior section that is purely running, leaders and coaches should consider how they can incorporate technique-based sessions to work fundamental movement patterns (run, jump and throw).

Agreeing on the type, frequency and duration of sessions will help you decide on the number of volunteers required to support delivery of the session.

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Place to train

Once you have defined your offer you can start to look at the most suitable places where your club training can take place in both winter and summer. You might want to consider accessing track and field facilities, indoor venues such as schools and leisure centres as well as public paths and parks. For all, it is important that a risk assessment is completed to help you mitigate risk.



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Parent/carers engagement

Parents and carers will provide the main support for children and young people - engaging with them will help them understand how they can positively contribute to their child's hobby. You should also consider how you can safely recruit parents and carers as volunteers and what training you can offer to get them started.



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Competition/event offer

Competitions and events can bring young athletes together and provide a good social experience. You might have members who want to compete and progress in the sport so it is worth familiarising yourself with the junior competition structure by contacting your county association and other local clubs.

- County track and field competitions are held in May every year
- Local cross country leagues are held between October – March
- School competition information can be found on the [English School Athletics Association](#) website



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Community Engagement

Engaging with local community groups, schools, social clubs and other sports clubs can help gain support with promotion and with the recruitment of volunteers. There might also be the opportunity to work in partnership and access funding.



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