



## **Yellow Armbands for Youth Referees**

**Aimed at supporting young up and coming referees in Kent, our new initiative will see yellow armbands introduced for all referees under the age of 18 from the 2019/20 season. We are keen to support all referees in the game, but it is important to remember that those who are under the age of 18 are still children. The yellow armband will aim to remind everyone that the referee is still subject to the children's safeguarding legislation, and should therefore be protected, encouraged and treated with the utmost respect.**

**Nick Dunn**, Kent FA Referee Development Office, said: "Nearly one third of our current registered refereeing workforce in Kent is under the age of 18; we have over 1,600 affiliated match officials in this County and, whilst it is important we support every single match official, supporting our next generation of official is important for the longevity of refereeing."

"The idea of the yellow armband is to help identify those referees who are under the age of 18 and ensure they are supported; the concept is to ensure that managers, coaches, parents and spectators think twice about making abusive or insulting comments to the young referees. Essentially, the armbands are to remind adults that the referee is still a child, learning to be the best official they can be; ultimately a reminder that these abusive comments can be detrimental to the retention of match officials.

"We have to understand that referees will make mistakes just like the young players they are refereeing; remember, they are human, and have to make a quick decision in a split second. This is all part of their development and I would ask that all managers, coaches, parents and spectators respect this. If anyone has an issue with a young referee, they should contact the County FA direct and not take issue with the referee directly. The introduction of the U18 Referee Armband for next season is further evidence that we take the wellbeing of our young referees extremely seriously."

**Darryl Haden**, Kent FA Chief Executive Officer, added: "Kent FA is fully committed to supporting match officials within this County. This new initiative further highlights the importance of safeguarding young match officials under the age of 18, and builds on other initiatives we have led on such as our recent "Let us Play" material. It is important that Respect is embedded across all levels of football and that an innovative approach is taken to proactively educate all participants in the game."

**All Kent FA U18 Match Officials will receive their armband before the start of the 2019/20 season and it must be worn at all times whilst officiating.**