

A close-up photograph of a soccer player's black cleat with white accents, positioned as if about to kick a white and black soccer ball on a green grass field. The background is a clear blue sky.

fearless

Part of Crimestoppers

**One Team.
One Goal:
Safer Communities.**

A football-based toolkit for coaches to help young people explore safety, choices and speaking up.



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What is Fearless?

Fearless.org is the dedicated youth service from the independent charity Crimestoppers.

Developed through consultation with young people, Fearless aims to break down any barriers that might prevent young people from reporting crime. Whether this is a fear of the process or a distrust of the police, we want to empower young people to speak up. We do this by promoting our unique service that gives anyone the opportunity to speak up to stop crime, 100% anonymously.

How does it work?

Young people can pass information about crime to Fearless 100% anonymously via an online form on the Fearless.org website or by calling our 0800 555 111 phone line, 24/7, 365 days a year.

After receiving the call or a completed anonymous online form, we create a report that brings together all the information given to us. Our specially trained contact centre staff make sure it doesn't contain any information that could identify who or where the information came from, protecting anonymity.

The sanitised report is then sent to the relevant authority with the legal responsibility to investigate crimes, make arrests and charge people in order to bring them to justice. This could be a local police force or an agency such as the UK Border Agency or HM Revenue & Customs.

Anonymity Promise

Anonymous means that your identity is completely unknown.

Our promise of anonymity is vital to us, as it is what makes our charity unique.

We guarantee to young people, indeed everyone, that:

- They can give us information about crime without giving their name or providing any personal details.
- They will not be asked for their gender or age.
- We will not record any personal details they might mention.
- We physically cannot trace their phone number, email or IP address as our system is designed to protect their identity.

For more information:

<https://crimestoppers-uk.org/fearless/professionals/fearless-scotland>

About this resource

This toolkit has been created specifically for football coaches and youth workers delivering sessions in clubs, community teams and informal football settings across Scotland.

It adapts core Fearless learning principles so that:

- Activities can be delivered while moving
- Conversations feel side-by-side
- No tables, worksheets or flipcharts are needed
- Coaches do not need specialist knowledge

This resource supports:

- Reflection without pressure
- Clear boundaries around safeguarding
- Relationship-led, youth-centred practice

This resource is not about asking young people to report crime. It is about helping them understand their choices.

Why football matters

Young people told us that on the pitch they often feel:

- Less judged
- More relaxed
- Part of something
- Able to listen without being put on the spot

Football already teaches teamwork, awareness and responsibility. These same skills help young people pause, think and make safer choices beyond the pitch.



Breaking down the barriers to reporting crime

There can be many reasons why young people (and adults) don't report information about crime. These normally fall into the following categories:

Fear of repercussions

Distrust of police/authority figures, or they don't have a safe place/person to report this information to

They experience higher rates of crime so become desensitised to it

They are not sure if what they have seen constitutes a crime

Joint enterprise: concerns around if they share too much information they may be associated with the crime/incident

Our findings

The young people we spoke to:

- Overwhelmingly denied that they would 'grass' when first asked.
- Had never been asked why they felt this way, they just knew it to be true.
- Reflected that the stigma of reporting a crime is often worse than that of committing a crime.
- Explored societal pressures to conform, and being labelled a 'grass' was a hard thing to shift and made them stand out negatively.
- Admitted there was a line where they would always report – likely this would be murder or serious sexual offences.
- Would consider reporting if they felt a close friend or relative was in danger.

Adults reported that young people often disclosed things as gossip, rather than outright reporting. They recognised young people understood that adults have a duty of care, and used this as a vehicle to report things indirectly. They also identified that young people report more than they let on to peers. Young people will often disclose incidents to trusted adults, but seek out confidentiality in doing so.



Grassing

- To get someone else into trouble.
- To stop yourself getting into trouble.
- To gain something from it.
- To hurt or upset someone you don't like.

Reporting

- To keep yourself safe.
- To keep someone else/others safe.
- The problem is serious.
- You may need an adult's help.
- Speaking up because you know something is wrong.



Grassing vs Reporting

For young people, reporting crime can be a difficult decision. One way you can assist is to help the young person to detach themselves from the information – it's not about them, but about the information they have.

When someone reports something to keep others safe, whether to a trusted adult, the police or Fearless.org, they are being an active bystander.

It is important to change the narrative of crime reporting when talking to young people about passing on information they may have about a crime. They are not being a 'grass'; they are helping make their community, friends and family safe.

They are creating a safer place for everyone.

The word 'grassing' carries a lot of negativity. No young person wants to be called a grass or to be known as a grass. It's helpful to explore with young people the differences between 'grassing' and 'reporting'.

Reporting crime has positive outcomes and is done for positive reasons.

It's vital to remember that some young people may feel the decision to report is out of their control. They may be incredibly fearful of the consequence of reporting.

As professionals, we need to accept and acknowledge their experiences and feelings. They may not feel able to make the same decisions and choices as their peers for a variety of reasons and past experiences.

For those reasons, and despite having trusted adults in their lives that they should be encouraged to go to when faced with crime, many young people feel that they can't speak up.

This is great opportunity to speak to the young person about Fearless.org and the opportunity to report what they know about crime 100% anonymously. They will not have to give any details about themselves, they will not have to speak to the police and they will not have to go to court.



Using this resource on the pitch

This short toolkit gives four simple, football-based activities to help coaches introduce Fearless as a way for young people to speak up about crime, 100% anonymously.

These activities have been designed to slot into normal training sessions, using football to create natural moments for reflection, conversation and learning, without turning sessions into lessons.

The activities were trialled with young people at a community football group and shaped by their feedback. They are designed to be practical, flexible and easy to adapt for different ages, abilities and settings.

Coach learning journey

Across these activities, young people explore:

1. How difficult but important actions can change what happens next
2. Why harm is harder to stop when it can't be seen
3. How the actions of a few can affect the whole team and community
4. How Fearless removes fear and stigma, and how speaking up leads to safer lives and safer communities

How the activities work

Each activity is broken down into four clear sections:

The drill: details of the activity content.

The team talk: a brief explanation of why the drill was delivered in the way it was, and what the learning outcome is.

The goal: how this learning from the drill parallels with the benefits of speaking up about crime to Fearless Scotland.

The post-match interview: feedback from youth community football group.

Prior to delivering these activities, you can learn more about our service: <https://crimestoppers-uk.org/fearless/professionals/fearless-scotland>

Activities

Activity 1: Key moments change games

Courage and impact

The drill

A simple warm-up using jogging and short sprints.

Players are encouraged to do a slow warm up jog for an appropriate amount of time for ability. This should be low intensity.

After stretches or shake-outs, introduce short cross-pitch sprints.

Players sprint across, walk back, then repeat.

Adjust for age and ability.

The team talk

Jogging helps players keep going and recover. It's what makes football sustainable.

Sprinting is harder and happens less often, but it's usually involved in key moments, like chasing a ball, closing someone down or making a run. These moments can change what happens next.

The goal

Speaking up about crime is more like sprinting than jogging.

Staying quiet can feel easier. Speaking up can feel harder in the moment.

But just like a sprint in a match, it can be the action that changes what happens next and helps prevent further harm.

The post match interview

"It's good it links reporting to something difficult. Most people wouldn't find reporting something easy, but obviously it needs done."

Activity 2: You can't stop what you can't see

Visibility and prevention

The drill

Set-piece drill with free-kicks at goal.

For the four or five shots, ask the goalkeeper to face in towards the goal, away from the shooter, while still trying to save.

Keep this light and short.

The team talk

Why couldn't the goalkeeper save shots when facing into the goal?

When you can't see where the shot is coming from, it becomes much harder to prepare, react and stop it.

Even a good goalkeeper is at a disadvantage if they don't know what's coming.

The goal

In real life, it's much harder for police and other services to stop crime if they can't see what is happening and don't know about it.

When people share information, it helps services spot problems earlier, understand patterns and take action.

Fearless allows you to report the information you know about crime 100% anonymously, which helps harm be seen and stopped, even when speaking up feels difficult.

The post match interview

"It was funny when the keeper couldn't see it. If nobody tells anyone what's happening, how are they meant to do anything about it?"

Activity 3: Small actions affect the whole team

Ripple Effects and Shared Responsibility

The drill

Small-sided game.

Quietly assign one or two players a different objective – to play to the benefit of the opposing team.

Only these players know who they are.

The rest of the team is told something in the game will feel different.

After a short period, pause and ask what players have noticed.

Ask them now to resume play but consider who the rogue players are and to find ways to adapt their play to suit in order to minimise the disruption to their team.

At the end of the game, if players can identify their rogue player/s, they are awarded a bonus goal.

Reset if frustration rises.

The team talk

The success of teams relies on everyone having a shared goal and working towards it together.

When one or two people are not fully working towards the same goal, everyone else has to work harder.

Even if most players are doing the right thing, the whole team is affected.

Young people can speak up about crime 100% anonymously at www.fearless.org

The goal

Just like the rogue player, someone breaking the law makes things harder for the whole of society.

It can affect how safe people feel and how much extra effort others have to put in.

By speaking up about those causing harm, everyone benefits.

If no-one speaks up, everyone pays the price.

Young people can speak up about crime 100% anonymously at www.fearless.org

The post match interview

“It’s mad that we are more annoyed that someone’s ruining our game than someone ruining our community. Makes ye think.”

Activity 4: Goal!

Anonymity, stigma and impact

The drill

Standing by the goal, ask the players to call out different reasons why reporting crime can feel difficult.

Each time a reason is shared, give that young person a cone/bib/other item and ask them to add it to a growing line across the front of the goal, gradually blocking it.

As more barriers are named, the space to score becomes smaller and smaller.

Common examples might include:

- Being called a grass
- People finding out
- Police turning up
- Getting into trouble
- Reprisals or backlash
- Losing friends
- "It's none of my business"

Continue until no more reasons are offered and the goal is clearly difficult to score in.

Ask players to now try to score a goal with the obstacles in play.

Explain:

"These are some of the things that can get in the way of stopping harm and keeping people safe."

The team talk

What does it feel like trying to score when all this is in the way?

Link to real life: "These same fears and pressures can make it harder for people to speak up and stop harm in their community."

Acknowledge that these fears are real and understandable.

The post match interview

"When all that stuff's out the way, it's way easier to score. It's the same if people aren't scared to speak up."

Activity 4: Goal!

Continued...

The goal

Explain:

Fearless.org lets you report information about crime 100% anonymous. That means they can't track your IP address, contact details or any other information that could identify you. Nobody will ever know the information came from you. Not your friends, not your family, not police, not even the charity.

Then, one by one, physically remove sections of the barrier and briefly explain why:

- Being called a grass - It's anonymous so nobody knows who shared the information.
- People finding out - No name, no details, no way to trace who sent it.
- Police turning up - Fearless doesn't know who you are - so Police will never know either.
- Getting into trouble - Fearless doesn't know who you are so you're never identified.
- Reprisals or backlash - No one knows who spoke up so there's never backlash.

Leave only barriers that Fearless cannot remove, for example:

- "It's none of my business"
- or personal values-based reasons

Fearless removes the fear, pressure and personal risk.

With most of the barrier removed, it becomes easier to reach the goal.

Why it matters

With the path now clearer, ask players to take shots at the open goal.

"Now that it's easier to reach the goal, what changes when people speak up?"

Let young people call out positives. As they do, link each one to the goal:

- Victims feel safer
- Harm is stopped sooner
- Younger kids are protected
- People don't have to live with it getting worse
- Someone gets help earlier
- Fewer people get hurt
- Communities feel safer to live in

When fear and stigma are removed, good things are more likely to happen.

That's how safer teams, safer clubs and safer communities are created.

Further steps you can take

For such a big topic that provokes strong opinions, it's important to revisit and embed Fearless within your club's overall culture.

These are just some of the other ways you can do this:

1

Order FREE posters to display in your setting at [Fearless.org](https://www.fearless.org)

2

Follow us & share our posts on Instagram @Fearless_Scot and TikTok [fearless.org](https://www.fearless.org)

3

Reference Fearless in your contextual safeguarding policies

4

Brief coaches and volunteers

5

Share links through team communications

6

Repeat our promise: 100% anonymous ALWAYS

Please get in touch with us to share ideas and examples of best practice.

 fearless@crimestoppers-uk.org



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