

2025/2026



# SOMERSET PLAYER PATHWAY GIRLS PATHWAY HANDBOOK



# PLAYER PATHWAY



# INTRODUCTION

MATT DRAKELEY | DIRECTOR OF TALENT & WOMEN'S PERFORMANCE

In 2020, Somerset County Cricket Club (SCCC) made a significant move by taking over the running of all Pathway cricket from Somerset Cricket Board. This transition aimed to align our Pathway with the intentions of SCCC, providing more players with the opportunity to be identified, developed, and inspired within our programme. Since this handover, we've seen a rise in training hours by almost a third and a corresponding increase in player numbers. In the past year, we assessed more than 1000 players across both the boys' and girls' programmes for the Somerset Pathway.

In addition to the above in 2024, Somerset were successful in their bid to become one of eight Tier 1 counties, meaning for the first time ever there is a journey for young players from club cricket to becoming a professional cricketer for Somerset County Cricket Club.

From 2025, the structure of our programmes will become; the Foundation Phase which comprises U11 and U12, the Youth Development Phase U13s, U14s and U15s and the Senior Development Phase at U16s and U18s. These groups then feed into an Emerging Players Programme and then an Academy Programme, with the ultimate goal of inspiring and developing cricketers from across the South West to reach the highest level of cricket that they can.

Our philosophy centres on providing as many opportunities to players as possible in an environment that is representative of the game they play. We aim to teach not only the fundamentals of cricket but also the holistic aspects that will support them in every game they play. We strive to create a lifelong affinity for cricket, a strong understanding of development, and happy memories of their opportunities within the Pathway.

Although only about 6% of our 150 girls that have earned a place within the Pathway this winter will end up being offered a place on the Somerset Emerging Player Programme, and less than 4% will end up being offered a professional contract, we believe that the value of our programme extends beyond professional cricket.

As we look to the future, Somerset County Cricket Club takes immense pride in our commitment to nurturing the next generation of cricketers. Our dedication extends not just to those who will make cricket their profession, but to all who pass through our programme. We strive to instil in them a love for the sport, the skills to excel, and the resilience to face any challenge, both on and off the field. Our ultimate aspiration is to see each player grow, not just as a cricketer, but as a person, cherishing their time spent within the Somerset Cricket environment.



# PURPOSE & AIMS

## PRIMARY PURPOSE

To identify, develop and inspire high potential young cricketers across Somerset.

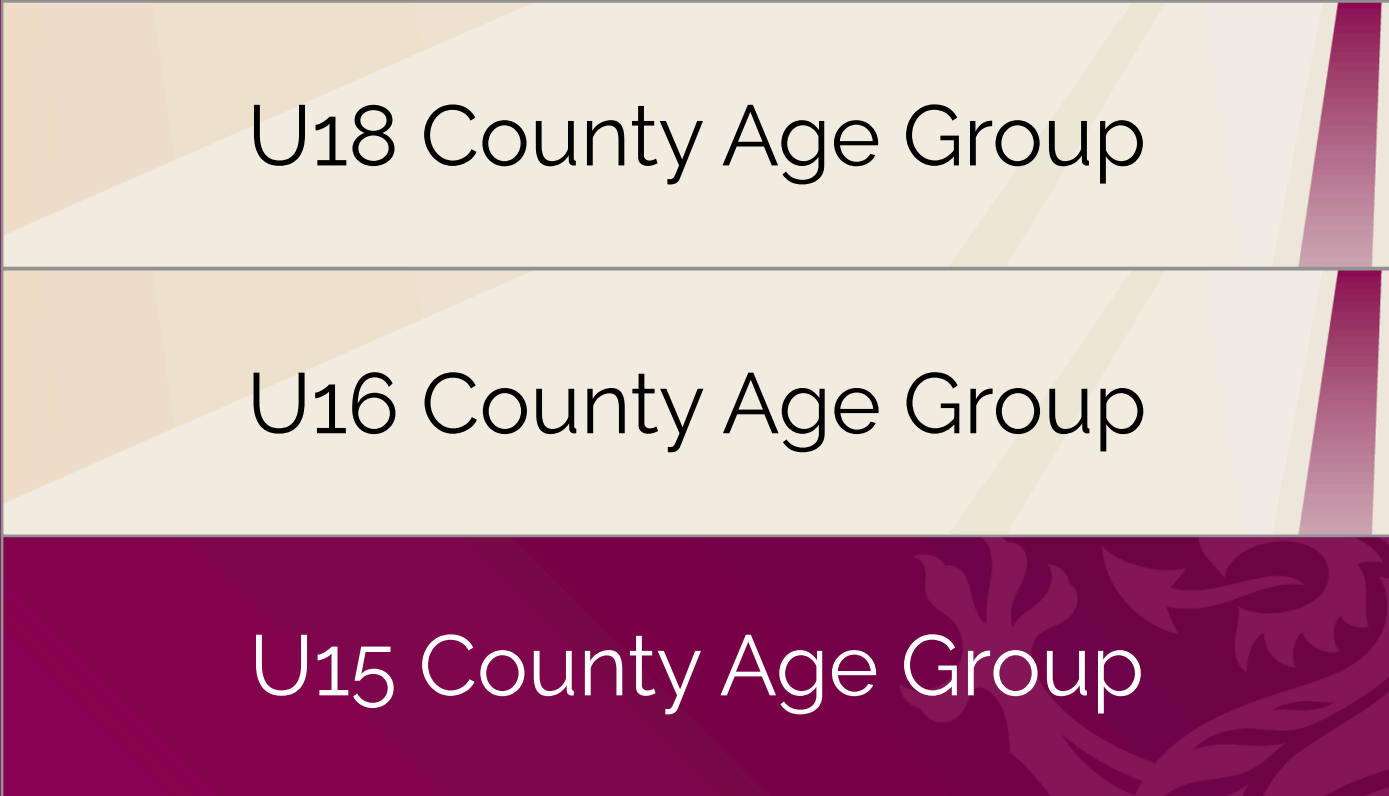
## ADDITIONAL PURPOSES

- Produce high potential young cricketers to go on to the Somerset EPP and Western Storm Programme
- Use the Pathway as a vehicle to develop people and provide them with transferable skills
- To inspire players to stay involved with cricket in the region beyond the Pathway



# PATHWAY STRUCTURE

Senior Development Phase



Academy

EPP

Youth Development Phase



Foundation Phase  
Players in this phase are evenly distributed across two training groups



# ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

## SOMERSET STATE SCHOOL PROGRAMME

In 2024, The Somerset State School Programme, made significant strides in increasing cricket coaching available to Pathway players attending state schools.

The initiative aims to ensure that young cricketers from state schools receive the same opportunities and high-quality coaching as their peers from the independent sector. In its first year the programme catered for approximately 150 players across the boys' and girls' programmes, providing each with an additional 24 hours of coaching on top of their County Age Group programme.

This extra coaching is crucial for enhancing players skills and ensuring they are not left behind in their development. The sessions are held at Weston College, a facility recently upgraded with new cricket nets, located conveniently just off the M5, making it accessible to a large portion of the county.

The programme is managed by Thom Bunker, our State School Lead Coach. His role is not just about coaching

but also about identifying talented players from state school backgrounds and integrating them into the Pathway. His leadership ensures the programme aligns with our player development goals and provides targeted support to those who need it most.

This initiative has not only enhanced the skills of these players but also broadened our understanding of their potential. The State School Programme initially targets players from under 11s to under 16s, focusing on where we can make the most significant impact.

The winter programme runs from November through April, followed by a summer programme starting in early May. The summer sessions focus on providing match play opportunities against club and school opposition, which is vital for the practical application of skills learned during training.



# ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

## GIRLS MCC FOUNDATION PROGRAMME



The MCC Foundation and Somerset County Cricket Club have worked in partnership since 2021.

This partnership is pivotal in ensuring that young state school girls (U11-U17) who miss out on Pathway selection still have access to high-quality coaching and competitive match play, providing them with opportunities to reach their potential.

At Somerset, the Girls MCC Foundation Programme is managed by our Girls Foundation Phase & State School Lead, Tilly Bond. Her leadership ensures that the programme is aligned to our player pathway.

# PATHWAY FRAMEWORK

This section provides clarity on what skills we look to develop in the County Age Group, Wyvern and early stages of the Pathway.





# FRAMEWORK

## WHAT IS IT AND WHY WAS IT INTRODUCED?

The Pathway Framework was introduced in 2020 with the aim of providing a roadmap for Pathway players, coaches throughout the club & school network, and parents alike to have a greater understanding of the Pathway development journey.

The Framework is essentially a blueprint which outlines the key skills and competencies players should aspire to demonstrate at each stage of their development within the Somerset Pathways. It is structured in a way that ensures progressive learning, starting with establishing an understanding of core skills at the Foundation Phase, developing them during the Youth Development Phase and demonstrating them as they progress into the Senior Development Phase. This progressive structure of the Framework ensures that players are continually challenged and engaged, promoting consistent growth and development.

The Somerset Pathway programme is built from the Framework, allowing us to create an

aligned, age group specific, coaching curriculum that ensures players have the opportunity to develop all aspects of the Framework across the winter and summer. The creation of this coaching curriculum ensure that all aspects of a player's game are developed and that no critical skills are overlooked. By providing a clearer understanding of the areas of development at each phase it is hoped that players have a greater ability to also develop relevant skills outside of formal Pathway training sessions.







By sharing the Pathway Framework we can start to build a common language and understanding of what the Pathway sees as important for the progression of young players. This common language will also ensure a clear and effective communication between all parties involved, which is critical for efficient learning and improvement.

The next three pages, summarise the Pathway Framework for all skills across the Foundation Phase, Youth Development Phase and Senior Development Phase.








# SKILLS FRAMEWORK

## FOUNDATION PHASE: UNDER 11 - UNDER 12







### BATTING

-  Is establishing the ability to identify gaps and space and find ways to score runs in different areas
-  Is establishing an awareness of different roles and approaches to batting
-  Is establishing an awareness of positive running between the wickets
-  Is establishing a position at release that allows them to be balanced, aligned and ready to move to different types of delivery against pace and spin
-  Is establishing the ability to identify length and attempt positive movements against pace and spin
-  Is establishing an awareness of contact and how to use hands to add, use and remove pace







### PACE BOWLING

-  Is establishing an awareness of why different deliveries (varying in line, length, pace and movement) are effective for taking wickets or reducing runs in certain ways and is learning how their field can support this
-  Is establishing an awareness of different roles and approaches to bowling
-  Is establishing an awareness of an efficient bowling action and working in a straight line towards a target
-  Is establishing the ability to regularly challenge the stumps
-  Is establishing the ability to bowl yorkers
-  Is establishing a grip allowing for lateral movement
-  Demonstrates a desire to bowl fast and take wickets

### FIELDING

-  Is establishing an understanding of the requirements of their role whilst fielding in a variety of positions
-  From an effective ready to move position, is establishing the ability to anticipate where the ball could go based on the movements of the batter
-  Is establishing an awareness of the technique required to catch and stop the ball in a variety of locations on the field
-  Is establishing an awareness of how to attack and intercept the ball from a variety of locations on the field
-  Is establishing an awareness of the technique required to throw quickly at a target from a variety of locations on the field
-  Demonstrates a desire to keep the ball in play at all costs

### SPIN BOWLING

-  Is establishing an awareness of why different deliveries (varying in line, length, pace and movement) are effective for taking wickets or reducing runs in certain ways and is learning how their field can support this
-  Is establishing an awareness of different roles and approaches to bowling
-  Is establishing an awareness of an efficient bowling action by creating rotational energy when working towards a target
-  Is establishing the ability to regularly challenge the stumps
-  Is establishing a grip allowing for spin
-  Demonstrates a desire to spin the ball hard and take wickets







### WICKETKEEPING

-  Is establishing an awareness of how to take different types of catches when standing up and standing back
-  Is establishing an awareness of how posture combined with a positive use of head, hands and feet allows them to manage different deliveries
-  Is establishing an awareness of how to be involved and influence the game
-  Is beginning to show confidence and bravery when stood up to the stumps

# SKILLS FRAMEWORK

## YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PHASE: UNDER 13 - UNDER 15





### BATTING

-  Is developing the ability to adapt their role and approach based on the game situation, surface, conditions, and the strengths and weaknesses of their opponent and themselves
-  Is developing the ability to identify and hit gaps and space in different areas to maximise run scoring
-  Is developing the ability to run positively between the wickets
-  Is developing a position at release that allows them to be balanced, aligned and ready to move to different types of delivery against pace and spin
-  Is developing the ability to identify length and effectively play off the front and back foot against the fast moving ball and the spinning ball
-  Is developing the ability to effectively use their hands to add, use and remove pace








### PACE BOWLING

-  Is developing the ability to adapt their role and approach based on the game situation, surface, conditions, and the strengths and weaknesses of their opponent and themselves
-  Is developing an awareness and understanding of appropriate fields; how they are influenced by the deliveries they are bowling and how they can influence the batter's approach
-  Is developing their bowling action to increase pace and accuracy
-  Is developing the ability to regularly bowl a length challenging the top of the stumps
-  Is developing the ability to bowl yorkers and bouncers
-  Is developing the ability to generate lateral movement
-  Is developing variations that deceive batters in the air or off the pitch
-  Demonstrates a desire to bowl fast and take wickets





### FIELDING

-  Is developing an understanding of the requirements of various fielding positions
-  From an effective ready to move position, is developing the ability to anticipate where the ball could go based on the movements of the batter
-  Is developing the ability to catch and stop the ball in a variety of locations on the field with appropriate technique
-  Is developing the ability to attack and intercept the ball from a variety of locations on the field
-  Is developing the ability to throw quickly and accurately at a target from a variety of locations on the field with appropriate technique
-  Demonstrates a desire to keep the ball in play at all costs

### SPIN BOWLING

-  Is developing the ability to adapt their role and approach based on the game situation, surface, conditions, and the strengths and weaknesses of their opponent and themselves
-  Is developing an awareness and understanding of appropriate fields; how they are influenced by the deliveries they are bowling and how they can influence the batter's approach
-  Is developing their bowling action to increase spin and accuracy whilst bowling with intent and energy
-  Is developing the ability to consistently release their stock ball in a way that maximises spin
-  Is developing the ability to regularly bowl a length challenging the top of the stumps
-  Is developing variations that deceive batters in the air and off the pitch
-  Demonstrates a desire to spin the ball hard and take wickets

### WICKETKEEPING

-  Is developing the ability to convert wicket taking chances when standing up and standing back
-  Is developing an understanding and consistency of their posture and movements to manage different types of delivery when standing up and standing back
-  Is developing the ability to positively impact the game by providing relevant information to fielders, bowlers and captains
-  Is developing the courage to stand up to the stumps and the ability to identify when this is most appropriate

# SKILLS FRAMEWORK

## SENIOR DEVELOPMENT PHASE: UNDER 16 - UNDER 18







### BATTING

-  Demonstrates the ability to adapt their approach and successfully perform different roles, resulting in match influencing performances
-  Regularly demonstrates the ability to run positively between the wickets
-  Regularly demonstrates a position at release that allows them to be balanced, aligned and ready to move to different types of delivery against pace and spin
-  Regularly demonstrates the ability to identify length and execute appropriate movements, minimising risk and maximising run scoring opportunities against pace and spin
-  Regularly demonstrates the ability to effectively use their hands to add, use and remove pace

### PACE BOWLING

-  Demonstrates an understanding and adaptability of role by setting appropriate fields to effective deliveries, resulting in match influencing performances
-  Consistently demonstrates a bowling action facilitating pace and accuracy
-  Regularly demonstrates the adaptability to execute an appropriate wicket taking length
-  Regularly demonstrates the ability to accurately execute yorkers and bouncers
-  Regularly demonstrates the adaptability to generate lateral movement in different directions
-  Regularly demonstrates the ability to execute variations that deceive batters in the air or off the pitch
-  Demonstrates a desire to bowl fast and take wickets

### FIELDING

-  Thoroughly understands the requirements of various fielding positions
-  From an effective ready to move position, regularly demonstrates the ability to anticipate where the ball could go based on the movements of the batter
-  Regularly demonstrates the ability to catch and stop the ball in a variety of locations on the field with appropriate technique
-  Regularly demonstrates the ability to attack and successfully intercept the ball from a variety of locations on the field
-  Regularly demonstrates the ability to throw quickly and accurately at a target from a variety of locations on the field with appropriate technique
-  Demonstrates a desire to keep the ball in play at all costs

### SPIN BOWLING

-  Demonstrates an understanding and adaptability of role by setting appropriate fields to effective deliveries, resulting in match influencing performances
-  Consistently demonstrates a bowling action facilitating spin and accuracy when bowling with intent and energy
-  Regularly demonstrates the ability to release their stock ball in a way that maximises spin
-  Regularly demonstrates the adaptability to execute an appropriate wicket taking length
-  Regularly demonstrates the ability to adapt their pace to remain threatening in all conditions
-  Regularly demonstrates the ability to deceive batters in the air and off the pitch with their stock ball and variations
-  Demonstrates a desire to spin the ball hard and take wickets

### WICKETKEEPING

-  Demonstrates the ability to convert a high percentage of wicket taking chances when standing up and standing back
-  Demonstrates a strong and repeatable posture and appropriate movements to manage different types of delivery when standing up and standing back
-  Demonstrates the ability to positively impact the game by providing relevant information to fielders, bowlers and captains
-  Demonstrates the courage to stand up to the stumps and positively impacts the game by identifying when it is appropriate to do so

# SELECTION & TALENT ID

The process of talent identification encompasses numerous different considerations, is multifaceted and ever-evolving.

Recognising that it is impossible to achieve perfection, it should be an ongoing process that adapts, evolves, and improves over time.

This section gives an idea of how we select, what we select on and the process of selection for all players





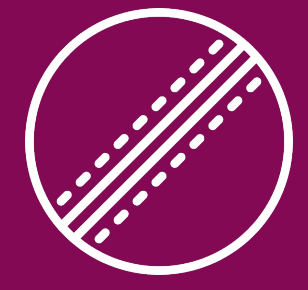
# FUNDAMENTALS

WHAT FUNDAMENTALS DO WE LOOK FOR AT OBSERVATION DAYS?



## BATTING

- Creates a balanced position at ball release
- Identifies length and moves appropriately
- Uses hands effectively to add, remove and use pace



## PACE BOWLING

Has an action that shows potential to bowl with pace & accuracy



## FIELDING

- Shows a desire to catch and stop every ball
- Is able to throw with accuracy and intent



## SPIN BOWLING

Shows potential to bowl with energy and accuracy  
Is able to spin the ball off the surface

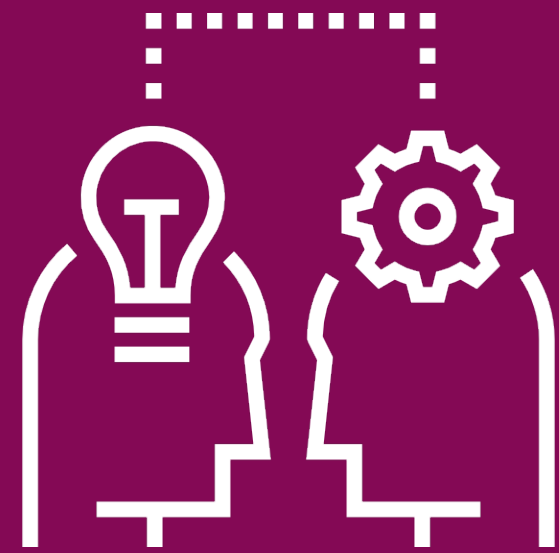


## WICKETKEEPING

- Creates a strong position to catch from
- Manages a variety of deliveries

# SELECTION CONSIDERATIONS

## COACH JUDGEMENT



Coach judgment is crucial in talent identification and selection. Coaches rely on their experience, judgement, evidence, opinion and intuition to assess a player's potential and capabilities.

Throughout our observation process full-time members of staff will work alongside Pathway coaches to evaluate players fundamentals against the Pathway Framework. These coaches are able to use a strong awareness of Pathway cricket to observe technical skills, tactical awareness, game understanding, and strategic thinking.

## PLAYER POTENTIAL



Player statistics form little to no part of our Pathway selection and instead a players potential will be the key selection factor. The evidence says that until the U18 age group, there is no link between statistics and players long term success at senior/professional level.

This is where a player's ability to demonstrate the skills within the Framework is so important as these are all directly transferable to the high level of cricket that they aspire to play.

# OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

## TRAINING HISTORY



Understanding a player's cricket journey and current access to the sport helps us gauge their developmental progress. This information is particularly valuable for newcomers or those with limited exposure to the game.

## ATHLETICISM



Assessing a player's athleticism is crucial for their development. We look at their movement abilities and overall physical coordination to determine how well they can perform certain aspects of the game.

## MATURATION



In the observation phase, we consider growth and maturation data to ensure fair comparisons among players of similar biological age. This is especially important for players aged U13-U15, as early maturers may have advantages over their later developing peers.

## ADAPTABILITY



Players in the Pathway are exposed to higher levels of challenge. Those who demonstrate a higher level of awareness and the ability to learn from and cope with challenges quickly tend to excel. We assess how quickly players adapt, learn, and embrace new ideas.

## MONTH OF BIRTH



Considering the month or stage of the year a player is born becomes relevant, especially in the Foundation phase (U9-U12). This factor can significantly impact performance, as players born in the first quarter of the year may have an advantage over their peers.

## EXPLORATION



We evaluate how players approach tough situations, challenges, and adversity. Their ability to handle discomfort and push beyond their comfort zones, as well as their willingness to adapt and improve, is key to their development.

# OBSERVATION DAYS

WHAT ADDITIONAL THINGS MIGHT YOU SEE AT THE OBSERVATION DAY?

## USE OF BIBS



We use bibs within our sessions for a variety of reasons but mainly because it allows us to have an awareness of certain key selection considerations like relative age effect and growth and maturation data without constantly referring to clipboards or electronic devices

## CONVERSATIONS



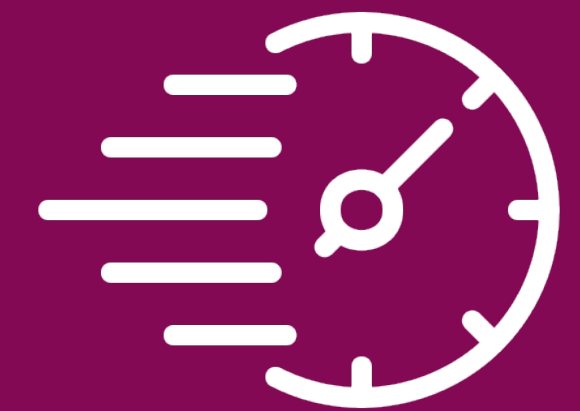
Building rapport with players and beginning to understand relevant aspects of their cricket journey helps us build a greater understanding of the player. Coaches may also look to get a better understanding of how a player may overcome a challenge or problem.

## FOOTAGE



Collecting footage throughout sessions allows us to review aspects of the observation day away from the day itself. This is particularly helpful when recording bowlers and overseeing net scenarios

## DATA COLLECTION



Getting bowling speeds not only provides a unique experience for players but also allows us to build a picture of what good looks like using data.

# SELECTION TIMELINES FOUNDATION PHASE

Selection numbers are all approximate, based on historical data and/or projections for 2026/2027



# UNDER 11 GIRLS TIMELINES



# UNDER 12 GIRLS TIMELINES



# SELECTION TIMELINES YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PHASE

Selection numbers are all approximate, based on historical data and/or  
projections for 2026/2027



# UNDER 13 GIRLS TIMELINES



# UNDER 14 GIRLS TIMELINES



# UNDER 15 GIRLS TIMELINES



# SELECTION TIMELINES SENIOR DEVELOPMENT PHASE

Selection numbers are all approximate, based on historical data and/or projections for 2026/2027



# UNDER 16 GIRLS TIMELINES

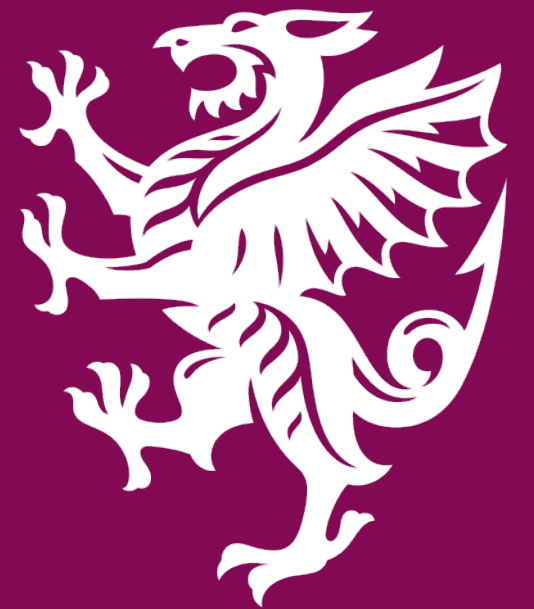


# UNDER 18 GIRLS TIMELINES



**ARE YOU WORRIED  
OR CONCERNED  
ABOUT ANYTHING?**

**TELL  
SOMEONE**



- **PARENTS**
- **COACH**
- **SCCC STAFF**
- **SOMEONE ELSE THAT YOU CAN TRUST**

If you think you are in immediate danger call: **Police 999**

You can also call:

Child line **0800 1111**

SCCC Safeguarding Lead, Jane Law:

**07394 803026**

ECB Safeguarding Team:

**02074 321200**

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