

## **2021/22 Open Licence Application Process**

### **Overview**

For the 2021/22 season the FAW is holding an open application for Tiers 1 and 2 in the women's pyramid, meaning that any Club at any level of football has the opportunity to become part of the new league structures that are being created.

There will be a total of 24 places available in the three leagues: eight in Tier 1 and 16 shall make up Tier 2 (eight North, eight South).

The application process will consist of two phases, the first will be the initial licence award, which was introduced in Tier One for 2020/21 and will continue for both Tier 1 and Tier 2 into the future; this element involves Clubs providing evidence to show that they meet the set criteria for each level. Phase Two will help us to determine the final 24 Clubs and will be based on a presentation by the Club on their development plans.

### **Phase One**

In order to become part of the process Clubs first need to apply and pay for the relevant licence via COMET.

The deadline for entry is the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2021, we cannot accept any applications after this date.

To apply for a Tier One licence [click here](#) – the fee for Tier 1 is £100.

To apply for a Tier Two licence [click here](#) – the fee for Tier 2 is £50.

**\*\*There is no need to apply for both licences, if you are not awarded a Tier One licence, you will automatically be assessed for Tier 2\*\***

Phase One involves Clubs showing that they fulfil the A Criteria in the relevant licence ([link to Tier 1/ Tier 2 license criteria](#)) and as applicable any B criteria. This evidence shall be entered onto COMET.

A link for your COMET licence profile will be sent in the New Year and progress will be able to be tracked in real time by the Club and FAW, so we will see when documents are uploaded and you'll know if they've been accepted or rejected.

The FAW will provide clubs with templates, also in the New Year, including job descriptions, financial frameworks and codes of practice – there is no requirement for you to use some of these, however, any substitute must provide the same or equivalent information.



The deadline to provide all the relevant information for both Tier 1 and Tier 2 is 26<sup>th</sup> March 2021. Anything added after this date will not be considered by the First Instance Body.

The evidence provided shall be presented to the First Instance Body for Tier 1 and 2 on 9<sup>th</sup> April.

Should you wish to appeal a decision you will have 10 days to inform us and provide any further evidence for the Appeals Panel to consider. The Appeals Body shall sit on 22<sup>nd</sup> April for Tier 1 and Tier 2. The decision of the Appeals Panel will be final.

Only Clubs being awarded a licence shall move forward to Phase Two of the process.

## **Phase Two**

Phase Two will be the stage at which decisions are made on who shall be offered one of the eight places available in each league and Clubs will be asked to present their Club Development Plans, to help panellists understand how the Club will be, and continue to be, competitive in the relevant league and how they will contribute to the continued growth of female football in Wales.

Each Club will be invited to present to a panel of FAW staff and independent experts, presentations will be judged according to a set framework.

## **Assessment Framework**

There are seven key assessment areas that shall be assessed on a scale of 1-5:

- 1 – not fulfilled
- 2 – to some extent fulfilled
- 3 – to a large extent fulfilled
- 4 – completely fulfilled
- 5 – over and above

### Key Assessment Areas:

- Overall Club development presentation (5)
- Sporting (Core area - 10)
- Partnerships (5)
- Financial sustainability (Core area - 10)
- Human resources (Core area - 10)
- Facilities (5)
- Media and communications (5)

**TOTAL: 50**



There are three 'core' assessment areas, which are the most important of the criteria and therefore the scores for these areas shall be doubled. The maximum number of points available to each Club is 50.

Each panel member will mark separately, these scores will then be combined to create an average, which will be the final mark for each area. If the average is a decimalised figure, this will be rounded up/down to the nearest whole number (.4 and below will be rounded down, .5 and above rounded up).

To be considered for a place in the league Clubs must achieve at least 50% in the individual core areas.

The final mark out of 50 shall be used as a guide to the Panel to award the League places. The Clubs with the four highest marks shall be automatically awarded a place; where there is a tie, the Panel will refer to the guiding principles to make a decision. For the remaining four places, the final decision on the award of the licenses is to the absolute discretion of the panel. In addition to the scores, other key relevant factors may be taken into account, in line with our guiding principles.

#### FAW GUIDING PRINCIPLES TO BE APPLIED TO DECISION MAKING:

- *AWARENESS AND VISIBILITY: To Increase visibility, awareness and challenge perceptions around the women's game in Wales*
- *WOMEN IN FOOTBALL: Support women and girls to fulfill their potential on and off the field*
- *PATHWAYS: An effective player pathway and recruitment plan to the senior team.*
- *SUSTAINABLE CLUBS: Sustainable clubs planning for future growth and not over reliant on one or two individuals*
- *GROWING THE GAME: Increasing opportunities for women and girls to play and work within the sport.*
- *PLAYER DEVELOPMENT: Ensure female players in Wales have access to a high quality training programme and performance support to reach their potential*

Scores shall be for internal use only, however feedback shall be provided to each Club.

#### Club guidance for development plan

What should you consider including in your presentation?

#### *Overall Club development presentation*

Please give an overview of your Club vision and how you intend to develop over the next three years:

- Introduce your key objectives, goals and targets to grow your Club
- How does it support the growth of Women's football?
- Ensure your implementation plan across the various areas align to your club's objectives and vision



## *Sporting (Core area)*

Can you demonstrate how/when you've previously been successful and explain how you intend on building on this success?

- Detail how you will field a competitive team and your ability to be competitive in the league.
- What steps are you taking to develop a high-performance environment (Tier 1 only)?
- How are you supporting player development on and off the pitch?
- Describe your pathway and recruitment plan into the senior team

## *Partnerships*

Please explain how you work together with partners to deliver on your vision:

- Give details of your current internal and external partnerships and how they deliver against your objectives. (Please provide details such as length of agreement, VIK, any other benefits)
- Please describe business partnerships and football partnerships (e.g local leagues and grassroots clubs)
- What further partnerships could benefit the Club and what actions do you propose to put these in place?

## *Financial sustainability (Core area)*

- Using this current 2020/21 season budget as a foundation, please provide a detailed one year budget forecast for 21/22
- What actions are you undertaking to ensure the Club is financially stable for the long term?
- What plans do you have in place to increase income and reduce costs in order to support your objectives over the next three years
- In Tier 1: The FAW is offering £6k per season to each Club to support their development plan – how will you match fund this grant and utilise it?
- In Tier 2: The FAW is offering £3k as an introductory grant into Tier 2 to support their development plan, how will you match fund this grant and utilise it?

## *Human resources (Core area)*

Having the right people, with the right skills, in the right positions is essential for any organisation; can you please describe:

- Your organisation and governance structure
- Describe the responsibilities of the key roles within your club



- Describe the experience and qualifications (where relevant) of key roles within your club
- For key positions, demonstrate their commitment to the team and vice-versa e.g. what is their level of qualification, how much time do they offer per week, what do you offer in return, how are you supporting their personal development etc?

## *Facilities*

How well do your facilities aid the growth and development of women's football?

- What experience do users have when they access your training and match day facilities? Do they effectively meet their/ your needs?
- What facilities do you utilise and when?
- Tier 1 only: How do they contribute towards creating a high-performance environment?

## *Media and communications*

Please provide an overview of your marketing plan. Can you demonstrate:

- How will the Club drive awareness and raise the profile of the women's game in Wales
- Have you defined clear target audiences and plans to drive attendances, online following and engagement? (Please outline clear engagement targets)
- Evidence of activities that support this plan.

We also encourage Clubs to consider the following:

This information is provided as a guide to indicate we will be looking for in your answers. Please give as much detail as you can, but make sure it is appropriate – also be aware that some answers may fall into two categories, so avoid repeating yourself at length.

Remember that you are applying to be in one of the two top tiers of women's football in Wales, we are looking for Clubs that can demonstrate excellence, ambition and commitment to building the women's game and showcasing the best talent in the country.

Use the Licence B criteria as a guide for where we may look to grow the game next. If B criteria became A how prepared are you to meet the new conditions? For Clubs applying for Tier 2 licences, how prepared are you should you achieve promotion into Tier 1?

Don't be afraid to talk about challenges you might face, recognising weaknesses and having strategies in place to overcome them will suggest a much more considered and realistic plan than one that only lists positives.



## Appeals Process

Should you wish to appeal a decision you will have five days from notification to inform the FAW that you wish to do so. There is a fee of £100 which must be paid on notification of appeal; this may be returned should your appeal be successful.

The Appeals Body will be entirely independent of the FAW and the prior licencing process. They shall only have the authority to review the process by which the original decision was made and ensure that all Clubs were given equal and fair opportunity to present their case and were judged appropriately based on this. Should it be found that the process was not adhered to the Appeals Body shall recommend a remedy for the application(s) affected.

The decision of the Appeals Body shall be final.

Please note that by signing up to the licensing process you are accepting the application process as outlined in this document.

