

# Important Information for all FA Charter Standard Leagues and aspiring Leagues



## CRITERIA FOR FA CHARTER STANDARD LEAGUES FROM SUMMER 2015

### FA Charter Standard Review Process

At the beginning of 2015 The FA initiated a review of its FA Charter Standard programme in order to ensure it remains fresh, relevant and useful to its affiliated clubs and leagues. It involved clubs and league volunteers in this process as well as County FAs (CFAs) and underpinned this with a significant piece of independent research.

### The FA Charter Standard Insight Project

The conclusions of the Insight project were a strong endorsement of the FA Charter Standard programme and its value to clubs and leagues. In relation to leagues here are two the most compelling findings;

- In 2013/14 FA Charter Standard Leagues showed a net growth in teams of 30 per cent. In the same period non-Charter Standard Leagues delivered a net team loss of 3 per cent.
- 82 per cent of FA Charter Standard Leagues believed that Charter Standard had raised standards across their organisation.

To see the FA Charter Standard League Insight Infographic please visit [www.TheFA.com/CharterStandard](http://www.TheFA.com/CharterStandard)

Based on the Insight, the feedback from the FA Charter Standard League Review Group and CFAs, a set of updated criteria for FA Charter Standard Leagues have been agreed by the FA National Game Board and will come into effect from September 2015

### FA Charter Standard League Criteria

The criteria at the heart of FA Charter Standard Leagues will remain the same as before but with three additions designed to strengthen grassroots football and contribute to the next FA National Game Strategy 2015-19.

#### Key FA Charter Standard League Criteria

These requirements remain unchanged;

- Leagues must produce a three-year League Development Plan
- Leagues must have at least 60 per cent of teams from FA Charter Standard Clubs
- Teams have one year to achieve FA Charter Standard on joining a Charter Standard League
- Leagues must be signed up to the FA Respect Programme

#### New Additional Criteria

- Leagues must have a **League Referees Officer**

- Leagues must have an **active link to another league** to support transition of players and improve partnership working
- After three years leagues must have a minimum **85 per cent of teams from an FA Charter Standard Club** to retain the award

#### Explanatory Notes on the New Criteria

- **League Referee Officers**  
This officer will be a member of the league management committee and his/her role is to be the lead on refereeing matters in the league, this could include, for example, making appointments, organising league based referee courses with the CFA, arranging mentoring opportunities. Leagues have a key role in improving game coverage by registered officials and this criterion supports this.
- **Active link to another league**  
This link is likely to be youth-to-adult or vice versa, but may also be mini-to-youth, adult-to-vets, youth-to-disability, adult-to-adult (where there is promotion between leagues as per the National league System). An active link describes a partnership that primarily delivers improved transition of players but may also deliver shared opportunities around officials and coaching admin. Ideally the linking leagues should both be FA Charter Standard Leagues. If one is not it must demonstrate that it is working towards becoming one. Leagues have a key role in addressing the drop out of players at critical transition points like youth to adult and this new criterion supports this.
- **85 per cent of teams from an FA Charter Standard Club**  
In order to achieve FA Charter Standard League status a league must have 60 per cent of its teams playing in a FA Charter Standard Club. To retain the award after three years the league must have a minimum 85 per cent of teams in FA Charter Standard Clubs. This is a change to the previous criteria where leagues had to achieve 100 per cent within two years. Achieving 100 per cent should remain an aspiration and will be a realistic goal for many leagues. Leagues clearly play a key role in driving clubs to raise standards and become a FA Charter Standard Club and this criterion supports this.

## **Implementation**

### Timescales

The criteria for FA Charter Standard Leagues will come into effect from 1 September 2015. Any league that achieves the status for the first time after this date will need to meet the criteria. Existing Charter Standard Leagues will have until 1 September 2016 to meet the criteria.

### Documentation

The documentation which supports the Charter Standard League process i.e. application form, LDP template and guidance notes will all be refreshed in the autumn of 2015. Until then leagues should use the existing documentation while bearing in mind the criteria change from 1 September 2015. Leagues may be pleased to hear that the LDP template will be reduced significantly in length.

FA National League System Leagues and FA Women's Pyramids Leagues have had a revised LDP template which they should use for the FA Charter Standard League process.

## Meeting the new criteria: Support for leagues

Some leagues will be confident that they already meet the new criteria and can demonstrate this to their CFA partners. Other leagues may feel that they will need support in order to meet the additional requirements. As part of the FA Charter Standard League process all leagues meet their CFAs at least twice a year, so it is important that leagues utilise these meetings to discuss how they will meet the new criteria and how the CFA team can support them to do this. All CFAs have targets which relate to the new criteria so delivering on them is mutually beneficial.

## Benefits package

It is clear from the FA Charter Standard League Insight findings that leagues believe that achieving and maintain the status delivers substantial benefits as follows

- Greater sustainability
- More attractive to clubs - Charter Standard Leagues grow their team numbers
- Higher standards of behaviour
- Higher standards of administration and organisation
- Higher standards in coaching
- Clearer direction and forward planning

The new criteria is designed to build on these benefits by improving referee coverage and standards across FA Charter Standard Leagues, improving the transition of players between FA Charter Standard Leagues and driving up the numbers of FA Charter Standard Clubs.

The FA will maintain its commitment to the additional benefits FA Charter Standard Leagues receive;

- Charter Standard League retention funding when they renew after three years
- A minimum of two tickets to the Community Shield each season
- Access to the Nike Charter Standard on line shop with significant discounts
- Access to the FA Charter Standard Legal Helpline (0191 211 7799)
- Exclusive use of the FA Charter Standard League logo

Leagues should also note that many CFAs offer resource in the form of officer time and finance to leagues to support them to deliver on their League Development Plans.

## The Future

The FA is committed to ensuring that the majority of football administration is channelled through the Whole Game System on the basis that this will increase efficiency and reduce the impact on volunteer time. Soon the FA Charter Standard League process will become available through the Whole Game System and this will include the functionality to complete the new format League Development plan online.

## Questions

If you have any queries regarding FA Charter Standard Leagues, including the new criteria you should direct these to your CFA or to national league development manager Andrew Hailwood at [Andrew.Hailwood@TheFA.com](mailto:Andrew.Hailwood@TheFA.com)