

Surrey FA

Club Survival Guide



Club Survival Guide 2017-18

This guide is predominantly aimed at new clubs wishing to compete within the County and offers advice and support on all the things our experience tells us would be useful for club officials.

Whilst we have tried to provide as much information as possible and included links to specific guides within our website, if you feel like you still have questions then you can always contact info@surreyfa.com or telephone the office 01372 373 543.

1. Club Affiliation

As per FA rules, all clubs must affiliate with their local County FA in order to be eligible to compete within recognised County Cups and leagues.

Clubs should use the affiliation window between May – June to complete the process in preparation for each new season. Newly created clubs can however affiliate at any time during the season should they need to.

For more information on club affiliation and a step by step guide on how to complete the process please [click here](#) or contact affiliation@surreyfa.com.

2. The Whole Game System (WGS)

The Whole Game System (WGS) is The FA's online portal for administering football, linked to The FA's national database allowing you to access your own clubs live information 24/7.

The Football Services Department regularly deliver training sessions and support forums on the different services offered by WGS. These include online training opportunities, individual support and/or attendance at league/club meetings. Please contact us using the [staff contacts](#) section of our website or call 01372 373 543 and ask to speak with a member of the Football Services team.

To get further information about the WGS, how you can set club officials up with the system and to access a comprehensive list of how to guides please [click here](#).

3. Player Recruitment

One of Surrey FA's key strategies is to **sustain and increase participation** across the County and we provide a variety of match formats to suit players of all gender, age and backgrounds.

Our dedicated Football Development team are on hand to support your club should you need it and will use their geographical knowledge and particular area of expertise to maximise the impact on player numbers.

If you do not know who your local Football Development Officer is, you can view [this helpful map](#) which breaks Surrey down by borough and tells you which member of our Football Development team looks after this area.

For full details of all the county staff including our FDO's, please visit our [Staff Contacts](#) webpage.

4. Volunteer Recruitment

The value of volunteers to grassroots clubs is invaluable and a major task can be finding the right number of willing individuals to support the running of the club.

There are a number of key roles, which need to be filled no matter whether you're a one-team start-up or a 30-team FA Charter Standard Community Club. If you need assistance recruiting volunteers please contact a member of our Football Development Team.

5. FA Charter Standard

The FA Charter Standard award is an important programme of The FA National Game Strategy and recognises best practice and quality assurance of grassroots football provision.

By committing to coaching, player and volunteer development whilst raising standards of behaviour in football, clubs can access a number of exclusive benefits, programmes and initiatives each season.

There are four different levels of FA Charter Standard available for clubs to achieve, each with their own set of criteria that must be satisfied. They are:

- **Adult/Youth** - Entry-level accreditation
- **Development** - Enhancing the quality and scope of the football offering
- **Community** – The most advanced level of club development and football provision.

For clubs who have FA Charter Standard accreditation, the challenge is to progress to the next level or to maintain that level each season. Clubs must also be in a position to demonstrate a good disciplinary record and administration to their leagues and Surrey FA.

Your local FDO will be able to provide further support about completing any charter standard application. To access additional FA guidance and to download useful resources please [click here](#).

Benefits of being a charter standard club include but are limited to:

- Free Nike footballs
- Use of the FA Charter Standard Logo on club website, letterheads and information
- Free Legal help from The FA
- FA Skills Programme – 6 weeks coaching support sessions

- Access to discounted coaching courses throughout the year
- Dedicated coaching and administration in-service training events
- FA recognition for best practice which promotes club to new players and volunteers
- Access to player recruitment and team delivery funding schemes
- Helps attract sponsors
- Recognise volunteers through the FA Community Awards
- Regular Charter Standard Newsletter
- Opportunity to ball boy for The FA
- Free tickets for selected matches
- Priority access to new development initiatives

6. Cup Competitions

Surrey County FA offers 26 County Cup competitions each season for both male and female teams, split by playing level (adult) and age group (youth) and now also includes a walking football and U21 competition.

Entry into County Cup's should be done by the club secretary during the club affiliation window which opens before the start of each season.

For specific County Cup guidance please contact Bob Dick, Football Services Officer (Affiliation and Competitions) at bob.dick@surreyfa.com or 01372 384 743.

7. Discipline Charges

During the season you may receive notifications via the Whole Game System (WGS) that your club and/or one of your club's players has been charged with misconduct. Misconduct can be as simple as a yellow or red card issued to player(s) or more serious for example an assault or where a club has been deemed as not having controlled its spectators.

Your club secretary will be the point of contact for all discipline matters and it is strongly advised that they use and know how to administer club discipline using their WGS portal. This will allow clubs to monitor their club discipline and pay fines where necessary.

Surrey FA has a dedicated team for resolving issues regarding discipline and can be contacted using discipline@surreyfa.com.

8. League Meetings

The league that your club teams are entered into will hold meetings throughout the season that will require attendance by a Club Official(s). Your league will provide details of all meetings and it is vital to send representation whenever possible as you may end up being fined by the league for non-attendance. This includes both the Annual General Meeting (AGM) and Special General Meeting (SGM) held each season.

AGM – to elect officers for the season, vote on the constitution of the league and approve rule amendments

SGM – to propose rule changes, changes to the constitution or election of a new official during the season, before the forthcoming AGM.

9. Club Code of Rules

Under County Rules, every club must adopt a set of Club Rules, which should be approved at the clubs own AGM (meetings of which must be kept and updated). The rules that are adopted depend on the structure of the club. Your local Football Development Officer will be happy to support you in collating a set of Club Rules for your club.

The FA does not have any rules or requirements that specify that a club must be structured in one form or another. It is a matter for each club to determine the legal form that is best based on its own circumstances.

The majority of football clubs in England are unincorporated associations comprising a group of individuals bound together by the constitution or rules of the club. This means that the club is not a legal person in its own right and so any contract of the club must be entered into by someone on behalf of the club. Normally a committee runs the club and it will be a member or members of the committee, who will enter into contracts and hold land on behalf of the club.

A club should seek independent legal advice in relation to the most appropriate structure and form that it should adopt and the steps to be taken if a club is considering making any changes to its structure including but not limited to incorporation. Before making any structural changes the club should give prior notice to The FA (and the league and County FA of which it is a member), in relation to the application of football's rules.

10. What to do if disbanding

It can be a daunting task to set up and run a football club, especially if you find yourself in the unfortunate position where there may not be enough players to continue, or no one is prepared to take on the vital roles of Chairperson, Treasurer or Secretary.

In the unfortunate event that a club needs to disband you'll need to follow the correct procedure in order to ensure all debts are settled and the County FA are aware you are no longer competing. You should aim to:

- Call an emergency management committee meeting to discuss the issues.
- Call an EGM (Extraordinary General Meeting) or AGM to officially disband the club.
- Let your local Football Development Officer know the outcome of this meeting.
- Email info@surreyfa.com to let Surrey County FA know you will be disbanding.

You may be required to complete a form and answer some questions to ensure there are no debts to Surrey County FA, league or any external organisations; and that your own assets are dealt with accordingly (alongside your Club Rules).

Club names are left dormant for a period of 5 years, with the option that other clubs can take up ownership of that particular name if left dormant for a period of 2 years (unless the previous management committee give permission for it to be used before 2 years).

11. Player Registrations

All players within your club will need to be registered to ensure everyone is eligible to play in their respective age categories. It is the clubs responsibility to obtain all of the relevant player data from its players (or parents). The league your teams are competing in will have their own criteria for what documentation they require in order to list players and they will communicate this with you.

Clubs and leagues often have their own system for keep records of player information and for registering players. This may differ between leagues so please check with your chosen league for what their criteria is.

From the 2017/18 season it will be possible to upload all player information onto the WGS at the start of the season. This will allow all player data to be captured securely on the WGS and make the discipline/administration processes more efficient. Not all leagues are using this system currently but this does not stop clubs utilising the benefits. As before, please check with your leagues.

The FA has a dedicated team for player registration and they can be contacted at playerregistration@thefa.com should you need additional support regarding this.

International clearance is required by all players moving across borders to play football. It applies to all players of 10 years of age and over. Please be vigilant when registering players. If you think they have played abroad they will need to receive clearance before they can play in England ("Abroad" includes Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland).

Make sure you ask your players if they have played outside of England before you register them. If they have, you will need to apply for clearance. Clubs seeking International Clearance should make a request in writing to The FA Registrations Department. For more information, please see www.thefa.com/football-rules-governance/more/player-registrations

12. Club Officials

As per Surrey County FA rules, you'll need to keep Surrey County FA informed of any changes to your **Secretary, Treasurer and Chairperson**. Youth Clubs will also need to inform Surrey County FA of any changes to the **Club Welfare Officer**. Failure to do so will mean that you may miss out on important club correspondence and a possible charge against the club for failing to comply with County Rules.

Any changes to your club officials can be made through WGS using the club dashboard or by email to affiliation@surreyfa.com.

13. Playing against International Teams

If your club wishes to go on tour, play one or more matches against foreign opposition, whether at home or abroad, clubs must send an application form to Surrey County FA Football Association at least 28 days in advance (we recommend you apply as early as possible).

You can access this form by [clicking here](#).

Permission is not needed for one-off matches against teams from Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales although documentation is required for matches against teams from the Republic of Ireland and other FIFA countries.

14. Football Debt Recovery

Sadly every season player's leave clubs without paying their debts or clubs might fail to pay debts to leagues once folded. The debt recovery scheme is the clubs and leagues opportunity to try to recoup the money owed.

Below you will find the process that must be followed in making an application to this scheme. It is limited to £50 minimum total claim, except for the recovery of discipline monies.

Stage 1:

Club gives notice in writing to the individual concerned with a breakdown of the debt owed. Correspondence must provide a date before which payment must be received.

Stage 2:

If payment has not been received by the date stated the club may request in writing a suspension of the participant. Surrey County FA should be approached within **28 days of formal payment being requested** in writing and within **112 days of the debt being incurred**.

Stage 3:

Request must be sent to Surrey County FA Association using the application form available and must include the following:

- Name, Address and Date of Birth of participant
- Detailed summary of all monies owed including dates
- Copy of the original letter sent to participant requesting Payment
- Any other clubs participant is registered with (if known)

Stage 4:

Suspension notice sent to participant, including administration fee, by Surrey County FA.

Stage 5:

Payment sent to County Association or appeal requested within 21 days from date suspension notice was issued. If no payment is received or appeal requested on the 22nd

day following suspension notice being issued then participant is suspended from all football activities until the debt is cleared.

What is a Valid Debt?

Football debts are defined as those costs arising directly from football activity, and as such would include disciplinary costs (e.g. fines), match costs (e.g. match fees) and playing expenses (e.g. pitch hire). Incidental costs (e.g. fund raising activities, club subscriptions) do not fall within the scope of Football Debt Recovery.

For example, the following would be a valid debt which would fall under the debt recovery procedures:

- Fines from discipline cases (cautions, dismissals, misconduct charges)
- Match fees

The following would not be a valid debt:

- Club subscriptions/Signing on fees/Internal club fines
- Lottery or any other fund raising schemes
- End of season trip costs
- Kit/Equipment
- External Club Debts

Where a club has disbanded its qualifying debts may be apportioned against its registered members and officers, and action taken against them individually to recover the club's debt. In these instances, players and officials will be suspended from all football activity until the debt is cleared.

If you wish to make an application to the debt recovery scheme please contact discipline@surreyfa.com or call 01372 373 543.

15. Medical Emergency Action Plan

When considering pre match preparation, Surrey FA recommend that all clubs consider the 'Medical Emergency Action Plan' (MEAP) pillars as safety of players is of paramount importance. The MEAP pillars are:

- **Club size:** number of players / staff / children / females / disabled
- **Training / match schedules:** 'out of normal hours' / after school activities
- **Training / playing areas:** distance from any 'medical facility'
- **Remoteness of site:** from ambulance service / transport arrangements
- **Other club sites:** health clubs / sports centres
- **Specific hazards:** swimming pool / gymnasium etc.
- **Travel arrangements:** home / away
- **Tournaments:** mini events / 5-a-side / Futsal
- **Who/what/when/where/how such care is provided is specific to each club**