



**SMALL SIDED
FOOTBALL
ACCREDITATION**

GENERAL OVERVIEW AND GUIDANCE



1. SMALL SIDED FOOTBALL IN ENGLAND

Small sided football is a broad over-arching term used to describe and categorise the more flexible formats of football. The FA recognises and terms the following formats as being 'small sided football':

- Four, five, six and seven-a-side football
- Futsal
- Beach football

As the national governing body for football, The FA is responsible for the governance, administration and development of small sided football in England. In order to effectively govern and develop this area of the game in England, The FA works in

close cooperation with a variety of commercial and non-commercial small sided football organisations.

Latest figures from Sport England Active People show that 1.7m people play small sided football once a month and around 1.3m people play small sided football every week. There are over 28,000 adult teams that play small sided football across England in organised competitive leagues. This level of participation makes small sided football one of the largest sports in the country, and it is continuing to rapidly grow.

2. THE FA'S SMALL SIDED FOOTBALL ACCREDITATION

The FA's small sided football accreditation launched in 2011 replaces the old award scheme which is now obsolete.

This award is intended to reward excellence in the industry but to also assist organisations in raising standards and developing the quality of their small sided football business structures.

The award is the industry equivalent of 'Investors in People', 'ISO 9001' and 'Quest'. The FA has purposely aligned its own accreditation to these types of quality assurance kite marks but the award has been specifically designed for organisations running and operating commercial small sided leagues.

WHAT DOES THE FA ACCREDITATION OFFER YOU?

- The self assessment nature of the award can be used as a tool for continuous improvement, which has been developed for the small sided football industry
- The award defines industry standards and good practice and encourages the ongoing development and delivery of commercial small sided football within a customer focused management framework
- Small sided football providers can now assess the quality of their own service through a self-assessment process with external assessments undertaken by trained industry assessors
- The award is open to all small sided providers regardless of whether they are facility owners or league operators
- The award will be issued on a company basis therefore each provider that applies will be doing so on behalf of their entire stock of facilities or leagues.



3. ELIGIBILITY

The scheme is open to all providers of small sided football, including commercial operators, leisure management companies, leisure trusts, football clubs and competition organisers.

Applicants must fully affiliate all of their leagues and competitions appropriately to The FA and/or the relevant County FA's.

Only small sided providers operating leagues and competitions located in England can apply for the accreditation.

4. CRITERIA

Detailed criteria is provided in the accompanying documents and is based on five themes:

- Facility standards
- Operating policies and procedures
- Communication and customer service
- Staffing and personnel development
- Safeguarding and equality

Along with each criterion there is a bank of supporting information, resources and guidance to assist organisations to meet the requirements.

5. BENEFITS

There are a number of tangible benefits for organisations achieving the new small sided accreditation award:

APPROVED QUALITY ASSURANCE

The FA Small Sided Football Accreditation Award is the only industry recognised standard of excellence. Achieving the quality scheme means that your organisation can proudly boast the following quality assurance benefits:

ORGANISATION

- Better prepared to provide best value in an increasingly competitive market place
- A structured framework which supports the delivery of best practice services and a focus on continual business development relevant to the industry
- A recognised approach to managing your small sided business that is endorsed to a national industry standard.

CUSTOMERS

- Ongoing improvement of service
- Increased focus on identifying and meeting customer needs
- An independent assessment of the service that you offer to customers.

STAFF

- Improved motivation and understanding of the role and contribution your staff play within the organisation in helping to meet customer needs
- Improved continuous professional development for your staff
- Better understanding of the organisation's policies and objectives
- Improved understanding of shared values and objectives.

USE OF THE FA SMALL SIDED FOOTBALL AWARD LOGO

The successful applicants will be allowed to use The FA small sided football accredited logo alongside their own company logo as a sign of achieving excellence.

The FA quality standards for the small sided football industry. Small sided football providers that have not attained the accreditation will not be able to use The FA's logo.

The logo is used to identify and recognise those organisations that have been successful in meeting

There are some specific guidelines on use of the logo (see section 10).

THE FA DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

The FA will actively link development programmes to the successful small sided football providers. This may involve initiatives such as referee's education, driving increased participation and social inclusion projects.

INCREASED ACCESS TO THE FA'S SMALL SIDED DEVELOPMENT FUND

This is a fund specifically targeted at supporting the growth of small sided football in England. The FA's SSF Development Fund is particularly focused on attracting new players into football, or encouraging those players that have dropped out of the 11-a-side game to continue playing in the small sided formats of the game.

FA affiliated small sided football providers. Projects can apply for a maximum of £10K in financial support from the Development Fund, although applicants are encouraged where possible to secure partnership funding to support the project costs.

The Development Fund looks for innovative and unique small sided football projects to support. Applicants for this fund need to be

Providers that have achieved the award will have an increased chance of attaining funding providing that their projects meet the development fund criteria via the opportunity to submit an additional funding application per cycle.

ACCESS TO ENGLAND TICKETS

Successful providers will be added to The FA's list of suppliers who automatically get preferential access in the purchase of England tickets.

OPTION OF PURCHASING ACCREDITED BANNERS AND PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL

The successful providers will be able to purchase promotional material such as large banners with the accreditation kite mark on to assist in the promotion of becoming a recognised provider with assured quality standards.

INCLUSION IN A DIRECTORY OF CENTRES ACCESSIBLE FROM THE FA WEBSITE WITH AN ENHANCED PROFILE

The FA is seeking to give small sided football an enhanced profile on TheFA.com and only those providers that have attained the award will feature on the site.

ABILITY TO INSERT ARTICLES IN FA PUBLICATIONS (NEWSLETTERS, MAGAZINES ETC)

The FA undertakes various communication activities across the country to a wide range of different audiences. Achieving the award will provide organisations with opportunities to promote their venues and leagues through The FA's extensive range of publications.



NEW AFFILIATION PROCESS

The FA recognises that the personal information collected by small sided centres and providers is commercially sensitive. Therefore, The FA have agreed that those providers attaining the award will

no longer need to forward contact details of players or teams other than in the event of a discipline incident in accordance with The FA's small sided discipline process.

CRB CHECKS

A CRB check is a way of checking a person's history to make sure they do not have any previous convictions that means they are not safe to work with children or vulnerable adults.

This also checks against the appropriate list to ascertain whether an individual is barred from working with children.

The FA uses Enhanced Disclosure checks only. These show conviction and caution history from the police national computer and information that might be relevant from police intelligence.

The FA will enable all providers attaining the award to use their CRB provider, TMG CRB to process checks. CRB checks cost £10 online and £15.30 for a paper-based application for anyone involved on a voluntary basis. Non volunteers will need to pay an additional £44.

6. ASSESSMENT PROCESS

The first step of the assessment will involve your organisation completing and submitting the self-assessment application form to The FA. Remember you only need to submit one application form for your whole organisation.

On receipt of this self-assessment application, The FA will conduct a desk-top assessment to understand

the nature and processes of your organisation as well as checking that all necessary information has been provided.

Following this, an assessor will visit your organisation's head office and a random sample of venues / leagues will be visited for formal assessment. This will be done on a proportional basis as follows:

Number of centres owned / operated (active only) / leagues run (England only)	Number of sites to be assessed (if you are a site owning provider)	Number of sites to be assessed (if you hire your facilities)
1	1	1
2	2	2
3-10	3	3
11-25	7	7
26-50	15	10
51-75	23	15
76-100	31	20
101+	39	25

The assessment will be conducted by trained assessors or external verifiers (EV) who will compile a report against each of the criteria along with an overall assessment that focuses on the strengths and weaknesses of the organisation. This report will be confidential and will be shared with the applicant to assist their ongoing business development.

The applicant will bear the cost of the assessment and this will be a fixed fee of £300 (plus VAT) per assessment undertaken. You will be invoiced for the fee following completion of the assessments.

Following completion of all site visits to the selected centres / leagues The FA will inform you whether you have met the standard and attained the accreditation.

Failure of one site in the assessment process may result in a greater number of sites to be checked.

The FA can at any time add or remove criteria from the award. Should this happen we will write to you outlining these changes. The FA reserves the right to cancel the scheme giving a three months notice to all organisations who have attained the award.

ASSESSMENT PROCESS SUMMARY

STAGE 1 – MAKING AN APPLICATION



Organisations will need to complete the application form and submit it to The FA. The application form can be completed manually or electronically. Your form will be processed within 14 days of receipt. After this we will be in touch with you regarding site assessments.

STAGE 2 – APPLICATION RECEIVED



The FA will:

- Review the completed application form
- Check the form against the criteria
- Send a copy of the form to the appointed external verifier (EV)
- Make a decision about whether the application can be approved to move to the next stage.

STAGE 3A – REJECTION OF APPLICATION



Your application may be rejected or you may be asked for further information if you do not meet one or more of the criteria. As the application process is by self assessment it is unlikely that your application will be rejected at this stage.

STAGE 3B – APPLICATION SUCCESSFUL



Should The FA be happy that you meet the relevant criteria you will be notified that site visits will be undertaken in accordance with the above guidelines (proportional number of visits).

Sites will be selected randomly and in the confirmation correspondence you will be informed as to which sites will be assessed.

STAGE 4 – SITE ASSESSMENTS



Prior to the visit the appointed EV will:

- Arrange a site visit to the head office of the provider on a mutually agreeable date
- Arrange to visit the selected centres on a mutually agreeable date
- Send a copy of the assessment form so your centre can prepare for the site visit including collating any evidence that may be required.
- Give help or advice where possible.

The duration of the visit will vary depending on the time needed to complete the above but it will last at least 3 hours.

At the end of the visit the EV will:

- Compile a report which may include an action plan
- Submit a copy of the report to The FA

During the visit the EV will:

- Seek evidence to confirm that the centre has met or has the potential to meet the accreditation approval criteria
- Submit a copy of the report to the applicant and centre visited.

STAGE 5 – NOTIFICATION OF APPROVAL

Once all of the site visit assessments have been undertaken the applicant will be notified of the approval decision within two weeks of receipt of the final EV report.

There are three possible outcomes of an accreditation approval application:

- Outcome 1 – Accreditation approval has been granted
- Outcome 2 - Accreditation approval has been withheld
- Outcome 3 - Accreditation has been refused.

ACCREDITATION APPROVAL GRANTED

When an organisation is formally notified that accreditation approval has been granted, they will be able to register to access the benefits outlined in section 5. The applicant will also be encouraged to produce a media release which The FA will contribute to.

ACCREDITATION APPROVAL WITHHELD

Where insufficient evidence to satisfy the accreditation approval criteria has been provided, the

external verifier will indicate on the action plan:

- The areas that need to be developed further
- The date by which improvements should be made and additional evidence provided.

Once the action plan has been implemented, the applicant should contact The FA. You will require evidence to confirm that the accreditation approval criteria have been satisfied and, where necessary, a second approval visit will be made. Any supplementary visit will incur a charge.

ACCREDITATION APPROVAL REFUSED

This would mean that there is significant development required in order to meet the criteria.

Should an applicant want to pursue accreditation approval, they would be required to submit another application form.

To appeal against a decision to withhold or refuse accreditation approval, please follow the procedures described in section 8.



7. RE-ASSESSMENT

On the anniversary of your award each year The FA will contact you in respect of renewing your award.

You will not have to submit any new information though sites will be assessed on a random basis as per the original application process.

Half of the original sites inspected will be re-assessed. If an odd number of sites were initially inspected, the figure will be rounded down to fit.

The sites inspected in year two will include a sample of sites that have not been previously visited and a selection of any new sites that the owner / operator has opened since the original application was made.

The costs of the site inspection which the applicant must pay for reassessment (£300 per site assessed plus VAT) will remain the same, increasing by no more than inflation based on the Retail Price Index as set at the anniversary of the award.

8. APPEALS

Should your organisation fail the assessment there is a right of appeal. In the event of an assessment which results in a recommendation to defer or fail by the assessor, a written appeal may be sent to the National Manager for Adult Grassroots Football.

All appeals will be heard by an Appeals Panel selected from The FA Small Sided Football Committee. If the appeal is upheld, the findings of the assessor will be overruled. If the assessor is found to be correct, your organisation will be required to pay for a partial or full re-audit and the cost of the appeal.

9. AWARD REMOVAL

The FA reserves the right to withdraw the accreditation from an organisation on the basis of any of the following grounds:

- The provider continually fails to meet the minimum standards pre or post inspection
- The provider is taken over / bought out by another organisation which materially affects the provision of service
- The provider fails to pay the assessment fee
- A bankruptcy order is made against the provider
- The provider fails to affiliate to The FA
- The organisation misuses The FA logo or accredited status against The FA guidance or to the detriment of The FA.

10. USE OF THE FA SMALL SIDED AWARD LOGO

A bespoke logo has been designed for organisations who have achieved the accreditation to use. You should use this logo and not The FA crest (the 3 Lions logo) on websites and associated marketing materials connected to the provider.

The FA is keen to reiterate that no organisation or party, including small sided football providers, has the legal right to use The FA crest without the full written permission and consent from The Football Association. Affiliation to The FA does not permit the affiliate to use this crest; this condition is applicable to all forms of football and not just small sided football.

The FA crest can only be used by programmes directly coordinated by The Football Association or by commercial partners of The FA, and in these cases the use of the crest is tightly monitored to ensure the required standards and quality of The FA is upheld.

The FA Small Sided Award logo may only be used in conjunction with the following guidelines / principles which have been developed to ensure that The FA Small Sided Award is presented in a clear and consistent way. The guidelines give us purpose and direction so we can all work together to the same ends. Following the guidelines will ensure that everyone becomes familiar with The FA Small Sided Award and what we stand for.

The FA reserves the right in its sole discretion to terminate or modify permission to display any brand elements, and may request that you modify or delete use of any brand element.

- There are two versions of the logo – two colour or mono. No other colours or variations should be used
- To make sure our new logo gets the attention it deserves, it needs room to breathe so that it always stands out. An ‘exclusion zone’ of 5mm sets the minimum space that must be left clear all the way round the logo for use on A4 and smaller material and 10mm on any material larger than A4
- If the logo is too small, it becomes illegible. There’s a set minimum to make sure it can always be read. This should be 20 mm x 10 mm for material A4 and smaller and 40 mm x 20 mm on material larger than A4
- The logo should never be tampered with – don’t squash it, change the colours, flip it, use it smaller than the minimum size or redraw it
- When the logo is used on an A4 letterhead, the logo is 19mm across
- No brand elements (including but not limited to logos, product names, taglines, logotypes, designs, icons, trade dress, product packaging, or colours) may be used other than as provided by The FA.

11. TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Throughout this process it is acknowledged that skills deficiencies or personnel development needs may be highlighted within your organisation.

The FA is committed to signposting and assisting you and your staff with appropriate training opportunities.

In partnership with FA Learning and Skills Active, The FA is looking to develop a framework of qualifications, training

and continuous professional development based on industry requirements and standards.

Currently The FA is promoting the following Skills Active courses for which you may be eligible to receive funding for individuals to undertake the following training courses:

- Level 3 NVQ Diploma in Leisure Management
- Sport and Active Leisure: Operational Services Level 2 NVQ/SVQ



12. WHERE TO SEND YOUR COMPLETED FORM

Once you have completed your application form please send it to:

Ellie Blok
 NG Development Administrator
 The Football Association
 Wembley Stadium
 PO Box 1966
 London
 SW1P 9EQ

Email - ellie.blok@thefa.com