



Welcome and Guidance

National Futsal Series

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(1) WELCOME

The FA is pleased to announce the launch of the new **National Futsal Series** competition. This is an exciting period for Futsal following on from the launch of The FA's first ever strategy for Futsal, '*Fast Forward with Futsal*' in 2018, and this new National Futsal Series competition provides us with an opportunity to continue the transformation of Futsal across England.

The drivers for change

Fast Forward with Futsal identified a number of key objectives relating to Futsal, including:

1. Reviewing the competitions pathway to better link grassroots to elite
2. Evolving the national structure to better support England teams
3. Making Futsal a recognised progression for players exiting football club academies
4. Commercialising the sport to make it more sustainable and fuel growth in participation

The FA conducted wide ranging consultation with the Futsal sector, both in the development of *Fast Forward with Futsal* and in the period following its launch, and the messages have been clear. There are opportunities to improve the profile of Futsal and the quality of the English national league offering, including all aspects of the competition experience, and to work towards a more sustainable league model which in turn supports the growth of the clubs competing within it.

The National Futsal Series

A strong domestic national competition structure is central to The FA's ambitions for Futsal and this has led to the decision by The FA in March 2019 to focus its investment into a new national Futsal competition from the 2019/20 season as part of a long term vision of transformation. This will be known as the **National Futsal Series** and will launch in September 2019.

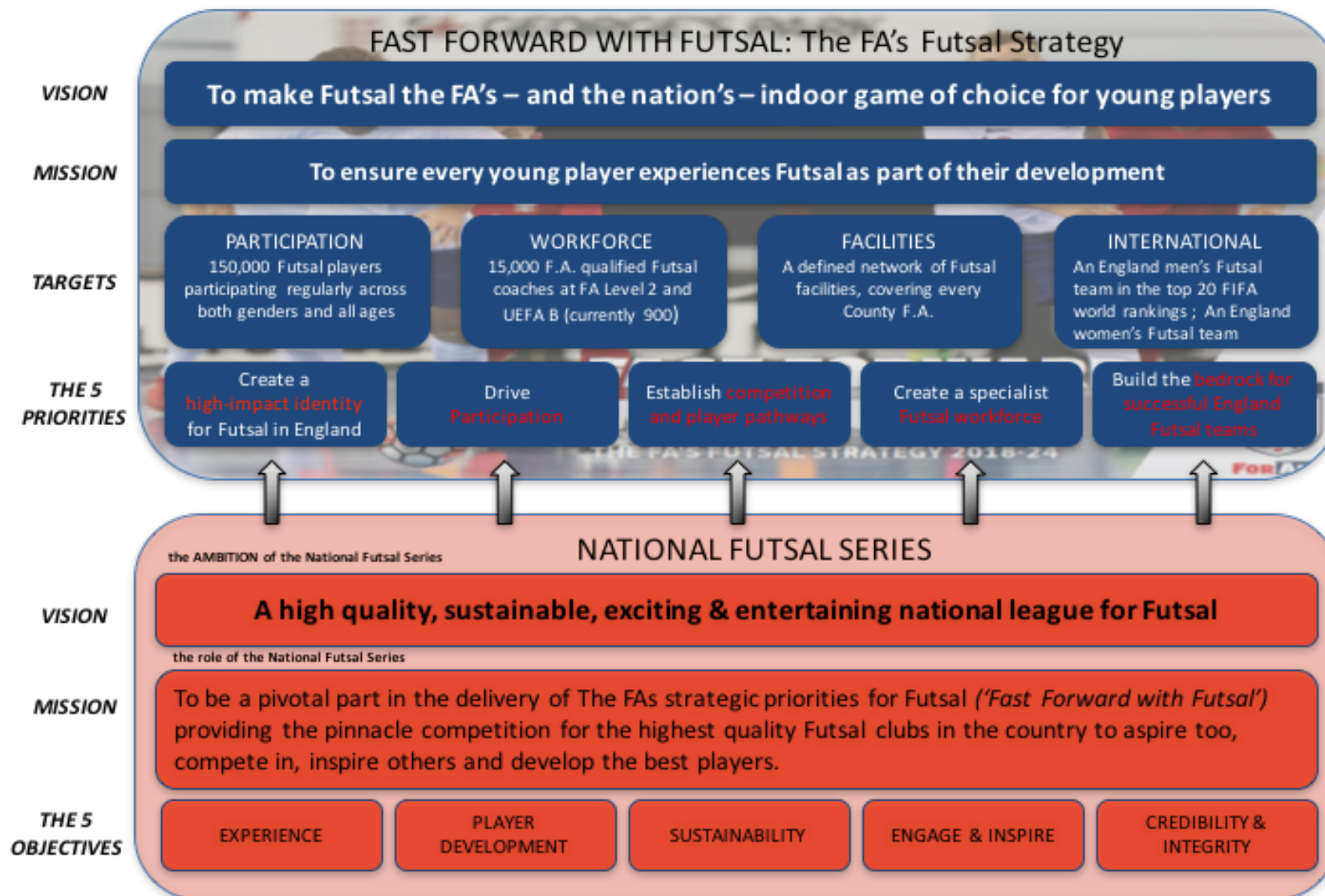
The new National Futsal Series will run under a new governance structure overseen ultimately by The FA Futsal Committee. This governance structure will be in place for the 2019/20 season and will be reviewed by The FA going forwards as the National Futsal Series grows.

Guidance

This document provides you with a brief overview of the National Futsal Series. The FA is in the process of preparing the detailed rules that will apply to the competition, and the minimum criteria that clubs must achieve to participate, which will be provided to clubs who have expressed interest in participating in the National Futsal Series in due course.

Expressions of interest to participate in the National Futsal Series for the 2019/20 season **must be submitted** by email to NFSApplications@thefa.com by **midday on Tuesday 7th May** (see further section 3 below).

(2) THE NATIONAL FUTSAL SERIES VISION AND OBJECTIVES



The 5 Objectives

(1) EXPERIENCE: Deliver high quality, entertaining and competitive Futsal in an exciting environment providing an inspirational experience for players, coaches and fans.

(2) PLAYER DEVELOPMENT: Provide a key part of the player development pathway maximising opportunities for English players to develop and compete.

(3) SUSTAINABILITY: Increase the profile, media exposure and attendances in order to attract increased inward investment and support the development and sustainability of National Futsal Series clubs.

(4) ENGAGE & INSPIRE: Use the league, clubs, players and matchday experience to engage and inspire inclusive growth in Futsal participation.

(5) CREDIBILITY & INTEGRITY: To create a league that is underpinned by strong leadership and transparent governance, is equitable and fair in its conduct with clubs and maintaining the integrity of sporting competition at its heart.

(3) APPLICATION PROCESS

A 2-stage application process has been developed. All applicants will need to complete both stages starting with the expression of interest (stage 1).

Expression of Interest (EOI) (Stage 1)

The FA are keen to understand likely levels of interest in the National Futsal Series in order to inform resource planning, club support requirements and league operational decisions.

The EOI form which forms part of this Welcome Pack¹ **must** be:

1. completed by a nominated representative of the club with the full authority of the named club; and
2. submitted by email to NFSApplications@thefa.com by **midday on Tuesday 7th May 2019**.

Application (Stage 2)

The Stage 2 Application window will open on **Friday 7th June 2019**.

Underpinning the new National Futsal Series is an aspiration to raise standards and grow the game. With the National Futsal Series, The FA intends to:

- Deliver high quality, entertaining and competitive Futsal in an exciting environment
- Provide a player development pathway maximising opportunities for English players to develop and compete and for FA qualified Futsal Coaches to operate and develop
- Increase profile and attendances, and become more sustainable
- Engage and inspire inclusive growth in Futsal participation
- Demonstrate high standards of governance

The FA is in the process of preparing the rules that will apply to the competition and the minimum criteria that clubs must achieve to participate. Clubs must be affiliated to a County FA to be eligible to participate in the National Futsal Series.

Following receipt and consideration of the EOI, The FA will email copies of the competition rules, any minimum criteria for participation, the application form and any other supporting forms or evidence required to those who have submitted the EOI form. The stage 2 application opens on the **7th June**.

Formal applications must be submitted by email to NFSApplications@thefa.com no later than midday on Friday 5th July 2019. Applications will then be assessed by an assessment panel, with a view to communicating to clubs whether their application is successful by the **31 July 2019**.

Please note, the timelines above have changed from what was originally communicated to clubs, although the overall timeline for confirming applications has only been put back slightly, recognising the advance planning required prior to the opening round of fixtures on the 29th September.

¹ Form FM1

Application Support

Any questions regarding the National Futsal Series, or the application process, should be directed to the following dedicated email support address: NFSQueries@thefa.com

Opportunities to raise queries on the application documentation and process for those Clubs who are considering submitting an EOI will be available through **pre-booked 1hour face-to-face sessions** to be conducted at **St Georges Park** on the following dates (slots to be booked by clubs by contacting john.folwell@thefa.com).

- **Friday 3rd May**
- **Saturday 4th May**

Across the application window, for those clubs developing their stage 2 application The FA will also develop **FAQs**, shared via TheFA.com, and conduct **Webex support sessions and face to face sessions**, details of which will be communicated in due course to the registered EOI's (Stage 1).

(4) COMPETITION RULES AND FORMAT

The FA is in the process of preparing the detailed rules that will apply to the National Futsal Series, which will be communicated to clubs in due course. However, this section provides a short summary of the key rules and changes that The FA intends to implement.

For the avoidance of doubt, the detailed rules governing the National Futsal Series (including its format) will be set out in the competition rules to be published in due course. Nothing in this document, including the summary below, should be considered to constitute an offer or be legally binding on The FA.

1. Subject to there being sufficient interest, The FA intends to operate two Tiers of the National Futsal Series: Tier 1 (National) and Tier 2 (Regional), with Tier 2 operating 3 regional divisions (North, Midlands and South). There will be a minimum of 8 and a maximum of 10 teams in each division providing available places for 32-40 teams. Detailed rules regarding eligibility, promotion and relegation will be set out in the competition rules.
2. Clubs operating in Tier 1 can apply to submit a development team to play in Tier 2. The development team should be mainly comprised of players under 21 to encourage the development of young players.
3. The 2019/20 season will run from September to May, with games to be played on a Sunday and a maximum of one round of up to five games (one game per team) per weekend.
4. There will be a central venue format, with each club hosting two rounds of games per season (one in each half of the season).
5. There will be a Super Cup competition for each division, with two rounds which will take place halfway through and at the end of the season.
6. Clubs must appoint a designated Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer and Safeguarding & Welfare Officer. Clubs must also appoint appropriately qualified pitchside staff (coaching & medical, in accordance with the specifications in the competition rules).
7. Clubs must demonstrate their financial sustainability to the National Futsal Series.
8. Squads must have a minimum of 12 and maximum of 30 players, including players under 19 to encourage the development of young players. The FA is currently reviewing the position regarding 'Home Grown Players'.
9. Pitches must comply with certain minimum requirements (in accordance with The FA's recently launched pitch size guidance (Premier & National League) v3/2019 dated March 2019) and venues should meet FA specifications and requirements for event delivery (details of which will be confirmed in due course).
10. Spectator seating which is pitchside or in a viewing gallery, providing between 150-250 seats subject to Tier level applied for will need to be provided at each central venue round.