

Ground Grading Minimum Requirements National Women's Grade A

This is a summary of the minimum standards required for The FA Women's Super League. National Women's Grade A is equivalent to National Ground Grading Category D, in the National League System Step 4 of the men's game.

Clubs are encouraged to provide higher standards where possible.

	Section	The FA Women's Super League Standards
1	Ground	
1.2	Location	The location of the ground must meet with the approval of both The FA and the management committee of the Women's Super League.
1.3	Future plans	The club must disclose plans and details of any proposed future move to a new stadium to both The FA and the management committee of The FA Women's Super League.
2	Security of Tenure	
2.1	Ground Ownership or Lease	A club must either own the freehold of the ground, or have a lease of the ground for the full forthcoming season, prior to which an inspection for grading may be carried out.
2.2	Ground Sharing	Ground sharing with existing men's clubs is permitted but on terms which are acceptable to The FA. Ground sharing with other clubs in The FA Women's Super League is permitted, but not advocated.
3	Capacity	Minimum safe capacity of 1,500.
4	Clubhouse	There must be a clubhouse facility either on or adjacent to the ground which should be open on match days to provide refreshments to spectators.
5	Car Parking	There should be adequate car parking facilities at or adjacent to the ground.
6	Spectator Facilities	Spectators must be able to view the match, either standing or seated for the full length of at least three sides of the playing area. Where sides are open measures must be in place to ensure there is no unauthorised access.
6.1	Spectator Accommodation	Spectator accommodation, in addition to hard standing, must be on more than one side of the ground. Covered accommodation, which should preferably be on 2 sides of the ground, must be of sound construction of timber/steel/brick/concrete or any combination of these materials. Existing timber stands are only acceptable subject to fire assessment.
6.2	Covered accommodation seat numbers	The minimum covered accommodation must be 300, of which at least 150 must be seated. There must be a minimum of 150 seats located in one stand which may be inclusive of VIP and press seating. Whilst individual seats are preferred, existing bench seating may be permitted provided that it is in good repair and that

		individual spaces (min width 500mm) are clearly marked. All seating must afford a good view of the pitch and be clean, functional and in good condition.
6.3	VIP Seats	There must be a minimum of 24 seats provided for VIPs with a minimum of 12 seats provided for the visiting club. These seats must be clearly marked "Home" and "Away".
6.4	Prohibited areas	Areas where no spectators are permitted to stand must be clearly marked with yellow hatched markings.
7	Press Seating	A minimum of 2 seats must be provided with lighting and writing facilities for use by the press and other media. A telephone line, internet connection and an interview area are also required.
8	Terracing	Where terracing is provided, it must comply with the requirements of the 'Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds' (see references for link). All terracing must be in a sound condition. Terracing that is crumbling, has grass/weeds growing through it or has broken or loose concrete will not be accepted. Any level surface within the ground should ideally be hard standing, such as tarmac, concrete, concrete paving or other approved materials which create a bound surface. However, flat and well maintained grassed areas may be accepted, provided the width between the hard standing (when measured from the edge farther away from the perimeter barrier) and the boundary fence does not exceed 15 metres. Spectator access must be denied to any grass banking so that it cannot be used for viewing the match.
9	Toilets	
9.1	Location	Toilets must be located within the ground and must be accessible to both male and female spectators. Such toilets need not be in a dedicated toilet block, provided access from the ground is immediate and they cannot be accessed for the duration of the match by persons using the clubhouse or any adjacent facility. (On no account may access be through licensed premises.)
9.2	Standards	All toilet areas must be in working order, with a roof and operational lighting, supplied with toilet paper and maintained to a high level of cleanliness. These facilities may be of the temporary or mobile type and must be connected to the mains supply.
9.3	Minimum Numbers	The following minimum toilet facilities must be provided, excluding those located in any clubhouse: Male: 2 urinals or equivalent and 1 WC Female: 2 WCs
9.4	Washing areas	In addition, wash hand basins with running water, warm air hand driers and/or paper towel dispenser with towels and waste paper bins must be provided in each toilet area.
9.5	Access	They must be fully accessible with permanent

		access.
10	Refreshment Facilities	
10.1	VIP Facilities	A separate room must be made available in which refreshments for VIPs can be served. This area must be able to accommodate a minimum of 24 persons with nearby toilet facilities.
10.2	Ground Refreshment Facilities	Refreshment facilities must be provided in each segregated area of the ground. These facilities may be of a temporary or mobile type.
11	Disabled Facilities	A club must take full account of the needs of disabled spectators and be mindful of its obligations under the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. Reference may be made to the publications/data sheets issued by both The FA and the Football Foundation. No specific requirement is currently included in the ground grading criteria but The FA strongly recommends that access is provided to both a covered viewing area and toilet and refreshment facilities.
12	Playing Area	
12.1	Size	The playing area must be a minimum of 100 metres x 64 metres and should conform to the requirements and the 'Laws of the Game' (see references for link).
12.2	Goalposts	Goalposts and goal net supports should be of professional manufacture and conform to the current safety requirements and to the requirements of the 'Laws of the Game'.
13	Technical Area	
13.1	Trainers' boxes	Two covered trainers' boxes clearly marked "Home" and "Away" or "Visitors" must be provided unless adequate provision is made in a seated stand. They should be on the same side of the pitch either side of the halfway line, equidistant from it.
13.2	Trainers' box numbers	Each box must be able to accommodate 8 persons under cover on fixed seats or benches.
13.3	Portable boxes	Portable trainers' boxes are permitted and must be securely fixed when in use.
13.4	Markings	The Technical Area must be marked out, as defined within the 'Laws of the Game'.
14	Safe Walkway	Clubs must provide for safe, unimpeded passage for players and officials between their dressing rooms and the pitch.
15	Floodlighting	
15.1	Minimum standards	Floodlights must be provided to an average lux reading of 120. No single reading can be less than one quarter of the highest reading so as to ensure an even spread of light. When new or improved installations are being planned, an average lux reading of 180 should be provided.
15.2	Readings	Reading shall be on a grid of 88 markings (8 across, 11 down) evenly spaced with the outside readings falling on the pitch boundary line. The average of all the readings is taken to be the average illumination level in lux of the floodlighting installation
15.3	Testing	The lux values must be tested every two years in accordance with current guidelines by an approved independent contractor. Floodlights must be retested after any significant alterations.

15.4	Date of Testing	The contractor must, when detailing the lux values, give confirmation in writing of the date when the illumination test equipment used was last calibrated.
16	Public Address System	A public address system must be provided which is clearly audible in all areas of the ground which can be occupied by spectators.
17	Entrances	<p>There should be at least 2 spectator entrances to control the arrival of spectators. These must be controlled by fully operational turnstiles of the revolving type and must be suitably housed and lit.</p> <p>Adequate protection for the turnstile operator must be incorporated. These entrances should be placed in appropriate positions around the boundary of the ground and take into account the requirements of segregation.</p> <p>It must be possible to gain access to the spectator viewing areas from the turnstiles via a bound surface to a minimum width of 1 metre.</p>
18	Exits	<p>The location and number of ground exits must comply with the requirements of the 'Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds'.</p> <p>There must be access via a bound surface to all exits from the nearest spectator viewing areas.</p> <p>All exits must be clearly signed, ideally with "running man" signs, and are to be kept clear and free from obstructions. Access must be provided for the emergency services and maintained free from obstruction.</p>
19	Entrance and Exit Lighting	Whilst their installation is strongly recommended, neither working nor emergency lighting is a grading requirement. Clubs are reminded that they have a responsibility to ensure the safety of spectators entering, leaving and moving about the ground and, if a ground is used in non-daylight hours, adequate artificial lighting should be provided. Further, consideration must be given by a club to its procedures in the event of a power failure.
20	Dressing Room Facilities	
20.1	Players – Minimum Standards	<p>Separate dressing rooms must be provided for both teams within the enclosed area of the ground.</p> <p>The dressing rooms must be of sound construction and be of a permanent nature.</p>
20.2	Players – Size and Dimensions	<p>Ideally, a minimum of 18 square metres excluding shower and toilet areas.</p> <p>Existing dressing room dimensions will be acceptable provided they are a minimum of 12 square metres, excluding shower and toilet areas.</p>
20.3	Players - Facilities	<p>Each dressing room must have the following:</p> <p>A shower area comprising of at least 4 showerheads.</p> <p>1 wash hand basin located outside the shower area.</p> <p>(All of the above must have hot and cold running water)</p> <p>At least 1 WC.</p> <p>There must be a cushioned treatment table which is clean and in good condition in each</p>

		room.
20.4	Match Officials – Minimum Standards	<p>The size of the match officials' dressing rooms must be a minimum of 4 square metres, excluding shower and toilet areas. When new dressing rooms are being constructed the match officials' room should be a minimum of 6 square metres in size, excluding shower and toilet areas.</p> <p>Where new dressing rooms are being constructed or existing ones are being re-designed, separate purpose built facilities for both male and female match officials must be provided.</p> <p>There must be an audible electronic warning device (bell or buzzer) in working order located in the match officials' dressing room and which is linked to the players' dressing rooms.</p>
20.5	Match Officials - Facilities	<p>Each match official dressing room must have the following:</p> <p>At least 1 shower and 1 wash hand basin (both with hot and cold running water).</p> <p>At least 1 WC.</p>
20.6	Match Officials - Gender	Provision should be made for separate dressing rooms for both male and female match officials.
20.7	Maintenance	All dressing room areas must be maintained to a high standard of cleanliness and be heated, well ventilated, free from damp and secure on match days.
21	Medical	
21.1	Room	<p>There must be a suitably equipped medical treatment room located in the vicinity of the players' dressing rooms for the use of both players and spectators. Access to this room must not be via the home or away dressing room.</p> <p>The designated room must contain a bed and/or comfortable seating, with cold and, ideally, hot water, together with paper towels.</p> <p>At least one stretcher must be provided for the removal of injured players from the field of play.</p>
21.2	Personnel	<p>There must be a nominated and suitably qualified person (minimum FA Emergency Aid Course) in attendance to assist with spectator problems unless the St John Ambulance Brigade, Red Cross Society or other capable agency are in attendance.</p> <p>The requirements of the 'Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds' are for one first aider per 1000 anticipated spectators.</p> <p>In addition, known and practiced arrangements should be in place to summon either a doctor or NHS ambulance alternative if required.</p>
22	Boundary of the Ground	
22.1	Enclosed	The ground must be enclosed by a permanent boundary, which will prevent individuals from viewing the game from outside the ground.
22.2	Construction	The boundary must be of sound construction, such as cast concrete, brick, breeze block or metal cladding with steel or concrete posts. Whilst lapped timber, latch panel wood fences and wire mesh fences with wooden posts might be acceptable, hedges, shrubs and/or trees will

		not normally be accepted.
22.3	Height	The boundary must be of a minimum height of 1.83 metres as measured from outside the ground.
22.4	Private Boundaries	Where one side of the ground is formed of private land/property, the fixed boundary of that private land/property may be acceptable as the boundary of the ground.
23	Pitch Perimeter Barrier	
23.1	Pitch Perimeter Barrier	<p>There should be a permanent fixed barrier 1.1 m high, of sound construction (e.g. concrete and steel) and free from all sharp edges, surrounding the pitch on all sides that may be occupied by spectators.</p> <p>Existing barriers/rails not at 1.1m high may be acceptable. However, it is important to distinguish between a pitch perimeter barrier/rail which exists to separate spectators from the playing area and a crush barrier which has been constructed and tested according to the requirements of the 'Green Guide' (see references for link).</p> <p>Where the structure cannot be designated as a crush barrier, e.g. its height exceeds 1.1m, the maximum depth of standing behind it is limited to 1.5m and this must be borne in mind in any capacity calculations. This may not be an issue for normal attendances but, when a larger crowd is anticipated, the club should be mindful of the associated management issues and, if necessary, be prepared to take professional advice.</p>
23.2	Construction	The barrier, if other than solid wall type of construction, must be infilled so that the ball cannot pass through or under it. Advertising boards are an acceptable means of infill.
23.3	Distance between touchline, goal line and the pitch perimeter barrier	A minimum run off of 1.83 metres is required.
23.4	Pitch barriers where no spectators	A barrier need not be erected on any side not open to the public.
23.5	Seated areas	Immediately in front of an area of seated accommodation the boundary of the playing area may be indicated by means other than a permanent fixed barrier, provided that the club is able to provide assurances that no spectator will be allowed to stand in this area to watch the match.
22.6	Standing areas	<p>Where there is a walkway in front of a standing terrace which is itself fronted by a crush barrier an alternative to a fixed barrier (e.g. A-frames) may be used, provided no spectators are allowed to stand in this area to watch the match.</p> <p>The club must implement a safety management system to ensure this and also to protect the integrity of the playing area.</p>

NB The above in no way purports to be a comprehensive list of Health and Safety issues which it is the responsibility of a club to address. Clubs are recommended to arrange regular safety audits conducted by persons with the appropriate expertise.

References

'Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds' (also referred to as the 'Green Guide') can be purchased from the TSO shop website at www.tsoshop.co.uk/bookstore – type the title of the guide in the search box.

'Laws of the Game' are the rules and regulations set by FIFA. Details of these can be found at www.thefa.com/TheFA/RulesAndRegulations/FIFALawsOfTheGame/