NATIONAL GROUND-GRADING CRITERIA – REGIONAL NLS FEEDER LEAGUE MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

(Appropriate to Regional NLS Feeder League top divisions)

When considering any developments of the ground to comply with the requirements of this grade, clubs are recommended to bear in mind the criteria for higher gradings which might be achieved for minimal additional expense.

NB The suitability of all installations shall ultimately be at the sole discretion of The FA's Ground Grading Sub-Committee

1. GROUND

1.1 General

1.1.1 Security of Tenure

Where a club does not own the freehold of their ground then evidence of adequate security of tenure must be provided. This will be in-line with the principles of Rule 2.3.2 from The FA's Standardised Rules.

1.1.2 Ground Share

Ground sharing would be at the discretion of each league within the National League System, taking into account local circumstances. Where ground sharing is permitted the club must have sole control over and use of facilities on match days.

Ground sharing must not be allowed in order for a club to gain promotion.

1.2 Capacity

There is no stated ground capacity.

1.3 Boundary of Ground

There is no requirement for a ground to be enclosed in any way.

1.4 Clubhouse

A clubhouse facility, whilst being desirable, is not compulsory.

If a clubhouse facility exits either on or adjacent to the ground, this should be open on match days to provide refreshments to spectators.

1.5 Parking Facilities

There should be adequate car parking facilities on or adjacent to the ground.

1.6 Pitch Perimeter Barrier

As a minimum, there must be post and rope surrounding the pitch on all those sides that may be occupied by spectators.

The barrier, if other than solid wall type of construction may be infilled. Advertising boards may be acceptable as a means of infill. Any barriers installed at new grounds should be purposed designed, with integrated infill panels as required and be made from UPVC or coated metal.

Ideally, there should be a minimum of 1.83 metres, ideally 2 metres between the touchline, goal line and the pitch perimeter barrier.

1.7 Pitch Standards

The playing surface will be grass, unless otherwise authorised by the respective League Rules and must be of an acceptable standard. It must be free from surface depressions and excessive undulations.

The maximum slope allowable shall not exceed an even gradient of vertical to horizontal 1 : 41 in any direction.

3G football turf

3G football turf may only be used provided conditions (i) to (v) below have been met (the "Performance Standard"):

(i) The pitch must be surfaced with 3G football turf that has laboratory type approval according to the FIFA Quality Concept for Football Turf (2012 & 2015 editions) – FIFA Recommended One Star/Quality level/ BS/EN 15330-1 2013 / BS/EN 14877 2013 standard.

(ii) The 3G football turf pitch must be listed on The Association's register of 3G football turf pitches before use is permitted.

(iii) Where a 3G football turf pitch is not yet listed on The Association's register (for example if it is a newly installed pitch), a Club must obtain a Laboratory Performance Test Report and submit it to The Association.

(iv) The Association reserves the right to instruct a Club to have its pitch tested at any time in order to ensure that it meets the Performance Standard. All such tests shall be at the Club's expense.

(v)The 3G football turf, including run-offs, shall be one continuous playing surface and shall be green in colour at least one metre from the outer edge of the touchline and goal line. All line markings shall be in accordance with the Laws of Association Football.

It should be noted that:

- To achieve the FIFA Quality performance standard that a pitch must be a minimum of 100 metres x 64 metres.
- For a Club to use a 3G football turf pitch at Step 6 or above it would be subject to annual testing, which would be at the Club's expense.
- To be eligible for other competitions such as but not limited to FA Competitions, the pitch may need to be a minimum of 100 metres x 64 metres. Please check this with the relevant competition Rules.

1.8 Playing Area

The playing area is to be in accordance with the requirements of the Laws of the Game. Law 1 states that the length of the touchline must be greater than the length of the goal line.

Length	-	Minimum 90 m (100 yds)	Maximum 120 m (130 yds)
Width	-	Minimum 45 m (50 yds)	Maximum 90 m (100 yds)

It should be noted that at Grade 7 the playing area **must** be a minimum of 100 metres x 64 metres and this is the recommended minimum size at Regional NLS Feeder League level.

Goal posts 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.

Reference should be made to the Goalpost Safety Information booklet published by The Football Association.

1.9 Technical Area

Portable trainers' boxes are permitted and must be securely fixed when in use.

It is desirable for a Technical Area to be marked out in accordance with the guidance contained in the 'Laws of the Game' booklet.

1.10 Safe Walkway

A secure walkway is not a requirement.

1.11 Floodlighting

Floodlighting is not compulsory at this Grade.

However, where it is provided it must be 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.

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.

The lux values must be tested every two years in accordance with current guidelines by an approved independent contractor.

When new or improved installations are being planned, an average lux. reading of 180 should be provided.

1.12 Public Address System

A public address system is not compulsory.

1.13 Entrances

There is no requirement for fixed entry points.

However, where a turnstile is installed, it must be fully operational and of the controlled revolving type.

1.14 Exits

Where fixed exit points are provided, there must be sufficient to ensure the safe evacuation of the ground if necessary.

All exits must be clearly signposted.

1.15 Lighting

There are no requirements for lighting.

1.16 TV Gantry/Camera platform

There are no requirements for TV Gantry/Camera platform.

1.17 Adjoining Pitches

There are no requirements for Adjoining Pitches.

1.18 Emergency Access

Access for emergency services should be provided.

2. SPECTATOR FACILITIES

2.1 Spectator Accommodation

Seated accommodation is not a requirement.

Covered accommodation is not compulsory.

Hard standing is not compulsory.

However, where it is provided it must be a minimum width of 0.9 metre, measured from the spectator side of the pitch perimeter barrier where provided.

2.2 Press Seating

There are no requirements for Press Seating.

2.3 Terracing

There are no requirements for Terracing.

2.4 Toilets

Provision should be made for adequate toilet facilities.

2.5 Refreshment Facilities

Refreshment facilities for spectators are not compulsory.

3. DRESSING ROOM FACILITIES

All dressing rooms must be secure and suitable for purpose.

3.1 Players

Separate dressing rooms must be provided for both teams. Existing dressing room dimensions will be in order, provided that they are of a minimum of 12 square metres, excluding shower and toilet areas. However, clubs wishing to progress should be aware of the need to increase to a minimum of 18 square metres. Where clubs are planning to build new changing rooms, these must be planned to be a minimum size of 18 square metres, excluding shower and toilet areas.

Each dressing room should have the following:

A shower area comprising of at least 3 working showerheads for each team – if not located in the dressing room then they must be located adjacent to it.

Adequate toilet facilities exclusively for the use of players - if not located in the dressing room then they must be located adjacent to it and must not be accessible to the general public.

Hot and cold running water

Shared shower facilities are not acceptable.

Ideally separate toilet facilities should be provided for each team. It is not acceptable for players and match officials to share toilet facilities.

In order to be considered for promotion to Step 6, clubs must have en suite shower and toilet facilities with a minimum of 4 showerheads.

3.2 Match Officials

Separate dressing rooms must be provided for match officials, the minimum size of which shall be 4 square metres excluding shower and toilet areas.

Each match official's dressing room should have the following:

At least 1 working showerhead.

Adequate toilet facilities, exclusively for the use of match officials, which must be separate from those provided for the players. These do not necessarily need to be situated in the dressing room but must not be accessible to the general public.

Hot and cold running water

Provision should be made for changing accommodation for both male and female match officials.

When new changing rooms are being planned or existing changing rooms refurbished an area of 6 square metres and facilities for mixed gender match officials should be provided.

In order to comply with the G Grade after promotion to Step 6, clubs must provide en suite shower and toilet facilities for the match officials.

All dressing room areas to be maintained to a high level of cleanliness and secure on match days.

4. MEDICAL

There must be a suitable qualified person (minimum F.A. Save a Life) in attendance.

All clubs must provide first aid equipment at their ground.

All Clubs are required to have a Medical Emergency Action Plan (MEAP), or equivalent, in place. A copy of which must be submitted to the League Secretary on the standard form provided by no later than 1st August in each year displayed in a prominent public area in the clubhouse and/or dressing rooms.