



Premier League Stadium Fund

Stadium Accreditation

Guidance for Regional Feeder
League Clubs (2026/27)

October 2026

Thank you for your application for promotion to Step 6 of the National League System ahead of the 2027/28 season.

The Premier League Stadium Fund is working with the Football Association to carry out the assessments of the stadiums used by the clubs that have applied for promotion, in order to ensure their compliance with Grade 7 of The FA Stadium Accreditation Criteria by the 31 March 2027.

The following document will explain in more detail of what the process will look like for you as a club, and what work you will need to carry out between now and the end of the season, as well as answer some of the commonly asked questions.

If you do have any further questions, please email us at stadiumpower@stadiumpower.org.uk

The Premier League Stadium Fund Team



What is the Stadium Accreditation Programme?

Since 2023, the Premier League Stadium Fund has had responsibility for the collection of 'ground grading' data for the National League System (NLS), Step 1 to 6.

Up to 996 Clubs are allocated across 48 Leagues of the NLS each season and every stadium that will be used within the pyramid has been assessed through the **Stadium Accreditation Programme** – a programme which was co-designed and developed by the Premier League Stadium Fund (PLSF) and The FA.

Independent PLSF Technical Managers will visit each stadium with the support of leagues and assess them in line with The FA's Stadium Accreditation Criteria to make a recommendation to The FA on whether the stadium meets the level required for each step of the pyramid.

Clubs that are applying for promotion to Step 6 will be subject to the same rigorous assessment as every other club within the NLS and will be given advice and guidance on work they will need to carry out to initially meet Grade 7 during 2026/27, and what further work they would have to complete to meet Grade 6 before the end of the 2027/28 season.



What is StadiumPower?

To collect the information consistently and accurately across the country, the Premier League Stadium Fund have designed and built a new bespoke digital tool called **StadiumPower**.

Historically the data collected under the old process was not held digitally, which would have allowed it to be used for reporting purposes or easily updated.

StadiumPower transformed this area of the game, as facilities data is now recorded through a new digital platform across the whole National League System and Women's Football Pyramid for the very first time – with live reporting available for all of the key stakeholders across the pyramid.

As part of the process, your Club Secretary will be given their own account to view the assessment of your stadium. You can visit the site at www.stadiumpower.org.uk

What are the main requirements of Grade 7?

What is required by March 31 2027?

Please read **The FA Stadium Accreditation document in full to understand the requirements**, but the key items required include:

- A grass pitch of at least 100m x 64m, in addition to at least 1.83m run offs on all four sides
- A 3G pitch – tested to FIFA Quality standard – of at least 100m x 64m in addition to at least 1.83m run offs on all four sides
 - The FIFA Quality test must be carried out (and pass) from the 1 January 2027 – and then continue to be tested **annually**
- Covered standing accommodation (or covered seating accommodation) for 50 people
- Covered dugouts (containing either 8 seats, or at least 4m of bench seating)
- Hard standing - the length & width of at least two interconnected sides of the pitch of at least 0.9m (if new, 1.2m)
- A compliant pitch perimeter barrier, and a safe walkway for players and officials to the changing rooms
- Turnstile (or lockable paybox) with cashier protection
- Two self-contained player changing rooms of at least 12m² of clear changing space, and at least one official's room of at least 4m².
- All changing rooms must additionally include their own WC and showers – this must be in addition to the 12m² of clear changing space (or 4m² of officials changing space).
- Although these are seen as the main requirements, **all aspects of the grade set out within The FA Stadium Accreditation document must be achieved in order to be compliant.**
- **If all requirements are not met by 31 March 2027, the club will not be eligible to be promoted.**

Floodlights

Existing floodlights

Existing floodlights should be fully operational, and this should be demonstrated during the visit.

The club will be required to provide a test certificate, that has been completed by an independent contractor within the last two years.

This should demonstrate an average lux reading of at least 120, and no single reading can be less than one quarter of the highest reading, to ensure an even spread of light. Further information is available within the Stadium Accreditation criteria document.

The hours of use of the floodlights must allow the club to complete fixtures at weekends (until 6pm) and night matches (until 10.30pm) from August until April.

New floodlights

If your stadium does not currently have any floodlights, these must be in place by **September 30 2027**.

However, by the 31 March 2027 you must be able to demonstrate that you have successfully been awarded planning consent for their installation and have the required funding in place to install them. Clubs without planning permission will not be eligible for promotion.

If the club already has planning approval and it contains conditions that limit the use of the floodlights during the season, the Club need to make a successful planning condition amendment to ensure the appropriate of hours of use are permitted prior to 31 March 2027. The hours of use of the floodlights must allow the club to complete fixtures at weekends (until 6pm) and night matches (until 10.30pm) from August until April.

Funding for floodlights

If you are hoping to secure funding from the Premier League Stadium Fund for your new floodlights, you should start the process of applying for planning permission immediately.

Funding of up to 70% is **only available for clubs that are successful with their promotion application**, but the club must use one of our preferred suppliers to do the work.

Please visit the LED Floodlight Fund page on our website for more information.

FAQ (1)

Where can we find a copy of the criteria document?

The latest document can be found [here](#).

Is there any flexibility on achieving the Grade?

No.

We will independently assess the stadium and make a recommendation to The FA on whether it is compliant or not. If the stadium is not fully compliant by 31 March 2027, you will not be awarded Grade 7 which is required for promotion.

We previously played in the NLS - does our previous grade count?

No. Every stadium will be assessed independently using StadiumPower

We currently groundshare with a club (or are a reserve team) that already plays in the NLS, or with a Women's team within the Women's Pyramid - has the stadium already passed?

You will need to speak to the club and ask them if they are compliant, or if they are working towards compliance by 31 March 2027. If they are unsure, please email us.

Who will arrange the initial visit?

We will contact you when The FA have reviewed your promotion application and allocate you a PLSF Technical Manager to visit the ground. The Technical Manager will then contact you separately to arrange a suitable date and time to visit the stadium, and we will invite league officials (current league and potential Step 6 league) to observe.

Who will arrange the revisit?

If you do not meet Grade 7 during the first visit, you will have to decide whether you wish to continue your application - or advise The FA that you wish to withdraw your application. **The onus is on the club to contact us to arrange a second visit once you believe you have achieved the work required to meet Grade 7.**

Please email stadiumpower@stadiumpower.org.uk to do this – please note that we may not send the same assessor to reassess the stadium.

What should we do ahead of the visit?

You should prepare the stadium to demonstrate it meets Grade 7, as it operates on a matchday. Please make available all areas of the ground for assessment, such as setting out the secure walkway, access to the clubhouse etc.

Ensure all areas of the ground are available to assess, if we cannot get into the match officials' room because you've not got the keys for example, it will be recorded as a fail.

Please email a copy of your tenure document, your floodlight lux test and 3G FIFA Quality test certificate (if applicable) to stadiumpower@stadiumpower.org.uk ahead of the visit

How long will the visit take?

If it is the first time that the stadium has been visited, please allow up to 3 hours. We collect measurements of all areas of the stadium including its capacity, pitch dimensions and the changing rooms.

We applied for promotion previously; do we need to be revisited?

Yes, we will want to see if anything has changed since our last visit, but the assessment may take less time to complete.

Who can we speak to for guidance during and after the visit?

Your Technical Manager will be able to give you guidance on the day whether the stadium meets the criteria and make suggestions on how to become compliant if you are not. Your StadiumPower report will give you the full analysis.

The Technical Manager will also be able to give you guidance on the Premier League Stadium Fund and what funding opportunities may exist in the future.

In addition, each Step 6 league has an official that is responsible for facilities who will be able to provide further guidance.

Can you tell us if any other clubs in our league have achieved compliance?

No, and this is the question we are asked the most! We will not share the grades of other clubs with you, nor will we share the outcome of your assessment.

We know we have work to carry out. Is there any funding available from the PLSF to help us meet Grade 7?

The Premier League Stadium Fund funds clubs at Step 1 to 6 of the NLS.

There may be some funding towards certain elements of your stadium of up to £10,000, which can be discussed with the Technical Manager during the visit.

Do you fund works at 100%?

If any funding is available, we fund works at 70%, so clubs will need to raise the required 30% partnership funding

If we are promoted to Step 6, can we get funding then?

Yes, if you are successful in your promotion application we will support you to carry out any works required to meet Grade 6 – typically floodlights and covered seated accommodation.

You will be required to have fully operational floodlights at Step 6 by September 30 2027 and therefore you can submit an application to us before the 31 March.

This funding would only be confirmed upon confirmation of promotion from The FA however, if you were unsuccessful, the offer would be withdrawn.

Can we find out more about the Premier League Stadium Fund and Stadium Accreditation?

Yes, please visit www.premierleaguestadiumfund.org.uk

If we fail the assessment, can we move to another ground?

No. Your assessment is based on the stadium listed within your application to The FA. You cannot move grounds in order to achieve promotion – you must meet Grade 7 in the stadium that you have played all your games at during the 2026/27 season.

We play on a 3G Pitch – what standard must it meet?

To play in the National League System, you must play on a FIFA Quality or FIFA Quality Pro pitch that is on The FA 3G Pitch Register.

If you wish to be successful with your promotion application, the pitch will have to be tested between the 1 January 2027 and the 30 April 2027 to demonstrate it still meets FIFA Quality requirements.

Please note that 'FA' Quality 3G Pitches do not meet the requirement for the NLS – they are only suitable for grassroots football.

What can be classed as hard standing?

The hard standing must be at least 0.9m wide, and typically, only the following materials are accepted:

- Tarmac
- Concrete (or well laid concrete paving slabs)

The following materials will not be accepted as hard standing:

- 3G carpet
- Compacted gravel or stone
- Soil

We have a breeze block, brick or concrete pitch perimeter barrier – is that acceptable?

The FA updated its Stadium Accreditation criteria in 2026/27 and now require any pitch perimeter barriers of this type to be removed, or where they cannot be removed, suitably protected.

This can be discussed at the Stadium Accreditation visit on how the club proposes to resolve the issue.

Who will carry out the assessment?

A member of the Premier League Stadium Fund Technical Team will carry out the assessment. The Technical Team are:

- Adrian Morris
- Ben Costello
- Charlie Saul
- Jody Gooding
- Matt Turner
- Scott Boden
- Warren Phillips



What is the timeline for the process?

Action	2026/27 Timeline
Promotion application window	From October 1 until December 31 2026
Club to be provided with a login to StadiumPower	Upon receipt of promotion application
First assessment of stadium completed and StadiumPower reports available to the club	Between 1 October 2026 and 29 January 2027
Club to advise The FA and PLSF whether they wish to withdraw their promotion application, or will complete the works	By 31 January 2027
Club complete any works required to meet Grade 7 in full	At any point before 31 March 2027
Clubs email StadiumPower and arrange revisit before the 31 March 2027 if they believe Grade 7 has been achieved	Please request the revisit by 28 February 2027
StadiumPower report to be reissued to the club and leagues confirming whether Grade 7 has been achieved	By 9 April 2027
The FA to confirm successful applicants for promotion and NLS allocations for the 2027/28 season	Mid to late May 2027

If you have any further questions, please email:

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stadiumpower@stadiumpower.org.uk