STADIA IMPROVEMENT FUND
GUIDANCE
2026

Applicants are expected read the guidance before applying.

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

This document details the policies and funding principles for the Cymru Football Foundation ("CFF") Stadia Improvement Fund ("the Fund"). This fund has previously been referred to as the 'Welsh Grounds Improvement Fund' or 'WGI' for short; the Cymru Football Foundation undertook management responsibility for this funding programme in July 2025.

The Fund will support Clubs affiliated to the Football Association of Wales ("FAW") by:

- Enhancing infrastructure, to make stadia more welcoming, accessible and inclusive;
- Boosting Matchday Experiences, enabling increased spectatorship and advancing playing environments;
- Implementing League License Criteria, enabling Clubs to progress;
- Improving Environments for Match Officials, supporting the development of refereeing.

The Fund will consider relevant League License Requirements, particularly the 'A' and 'B' infrastructure criteria of each tier, to invest in Clubs to enable them to participate in the Cymru Premier, Cymru South, Cymru North, Ardal Leagues, Adran Premier, Adran North and/or Adran South.

The Stadia Improvement Fund is supported by funding received by the Premier League.

GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The Fund will be managed by the Cymru Football Foundation as grant funding programme, following the dissolution of the WGI non-for-profit company in 2025.

The Cymru Football Foundation will lead on all management responsibilities for the programme, with support from FAW staff to identify and agree the setting of strategic policy and implementing necessary changes based on case studies from time to time.

Grant decisions will be confirmed by the Decision-Making Panel, which is a panel of eight (8) individuals comprised of: CFF Programme Secretariat; CFF Board Member as Chair; maximum two (2) Independent Members; maximum three (3) FAW Board and Council Members; plus Premier League, Sport Wales and Welsh Government members. The CFF Programme Manager will provide recommendations to this panel to provide a clear basis for the panel to make decisions.

Any conflicts of interest will be managed accordingly as per usual CFF process.

The CFF will, at all times, adhere to procedures and align decision making to standard organizational policies.

FUNDING SCOPE AND ELIGIBILITY

Eligible applicants are any Football Clubs that are currently participating in any of the following leagues:

- Cymru Premier
- Cymru North & South
- Ardal Leagues
- Area Association Premier Leagues (Men's Tier 4)
- Adran Premier

- Adran North & South
- Area Association Premier Leagues (Women's Tier 3)

Any applicant must have a minimum of ten (10) years' security of tenure over the facility where infrastructure upgrades are proposed. Any issues regarding security of tenure should be clearly communicated with the CFF as soon as possible. Any queries regarding eligibility of any Clubs' current security of tenure arrangements can also be directed to the CFF.

Eligible Applications are capital funding requests towards infrastructure upgrades that clearly meet CFF strategic priorities as set out below:

- Enhancing infrastructure, to make stadia more welcoming, accessible and inclusive;
- Boosting Matchday Experiences, enabling increased spectatorship and advancing playing environments;
- Implementing League License Criteria, enabling Clubs to progress;
- Improving Environments for Match Officials, supporting the development of refereeing.

Applications that include any of the following infrastructure are **eligible:**

- All Stands, with preference for those that include security shutters and locks or CCTV;
- New or upgraded LED Floodlighting to meet a minimum of **500 Lux;**
- New spaces, or improvement of spaces used by Match Officials (including during matches);
- Increase in number or improvement of showers used by Players or Match Officials;
- TV Gantries (7m x 2.2m);
- 1.1m spectator fencing (encouraging 3m run-off areas);
- Concrete hard standing (encouraging 3m run-off areas);
- Two Dugouts of more than 13 seats each;
- New or improved spectator WCs, including accessible WCs;
- Disability viewing areas;
- Medical Room, and/or Multi-Purpose additional spaces (for use for Doping, etc);
- Pitch extensions to meet minimum 98x62m dimensions – where three-meter run-offs would be available (with preference for upgrades to 100x64m, which is the minimum stated within the Tier 1 Licensing Regulations);
- PA Systems;
- Refreshment areas;
- Turnstiles and/or upgrades to access and egress infrastructure;
- Carpark extensions up to 99m^2, with a dedicated area marked for a Broadcaster OB Van.

Applications that include any of the following infrastructure items are **ineligible**:

- New or upgraded LED Floodlighting that does **not meet 500 Lux** (i.e. 250 LUX floodlighting or Halide floodlighting would be ineligible);
- Pitch perimeter fencing that is not permanent, or is made of concrete or brick;
- Warm-up Areas;
- Carparking upgrades of 100m^2 or more;
- Pitch extensions where three-meter run-offs are not available;
- Dugouts of less-than 13 seats.

The following projects are also **ineligible:**

- Replacement of like-for-like existing facilities (as distinct from upgrades);

- Temporary items of equipment, personal equipment or small items with a limited life expectancy such as bibs, balls or cones;
- Tables, chairs or similar as individual equipment requests;
- Projects that have already commenced, or those that commence prior to formal permission being awarded by the CFF;
- Speculative purchases of land or facilities;
- Revenue projects.

Due to the prospect of alternative funding streams (TBA), the Stadia Improvement Fund will no longer accept proposals for projects that solely impact on environmental sustainability as it had in 2025/26.

GRANT FUNDING LIMITS

The maximum available grant is £50,000.00 per applicant towards eligible projects. The same maximum contribution applies across all applicants eligible to apply for this programme.

The minimum contribution ("Partnership Contribution") that an applicant can pledge towards a project is 20%. The same minimum contribution applies across all applicants eligible to apply for this programme.

Partnership contributions can be leveraged from any alternative source, such as sponsorship, alternative grant funding, Club Funds, donations, etc. Partnership Contributions must be cash values and must be evidenced prior to the project being awarded formal Permission to Proceed.

Applicants are reminded that the budget for the programme is limited. Applicants should always attempt to leverage as much alternative funding as possible - the more partnership funding leveraged, the more projects can be supported by the Fund.

CFF Grants are always subject to financial need.

Clubs of whom have achieved promotion will be prioritised through this funding programme.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Applicants must complete the 'CFF Stadia Improvement Fund Application Form' in full, and submit it to the CFF via email to applications@cff.cymru by the relevant deadline, below:

Men's Tier 1 and 2 Cymru Leagues **(those that have applied for a Tier 1 License)**	Friday 8th January 2027 20:00
Women's Tier 1 & 2 Adran Leagues **(those that have applied for a Tier 1 License)**	Friday 8th January 2027 20:00
Men's Tiers 1, 2, 3 & 4 Cymru Leagues, Ardal Leagues, Area Premier Leagues **(those that have not applied for a Tier 1 License)**	Friday 30th April 2027 20:00
Women's Tiers 1, 2 & 3 Adran Leagues and Area Premier Leagues **(those that have not applied for a Tier 1 License)**	Friday 30th April 2027 20:00

The below information is required as part of the application process.

Mandatory on application:

Please note, failure to provide the below mandatory documentation ***will result in automatic rejection****.*

- Minimum of two (2) competitive quotes for the project;
- Security of tenure documentation, signed;
- Proof of partnership contribution to meet the minimum 20%;
- Floodlighting Design Report (if applying for new or upgrading existing floodlights);

Highly recommended on application:

- Landlord's Consent for the project;
- Where relevant, a receipt from the Applicant's Pre or full Planning Application, or full Planning Permission;
    - *Written confirmation from the relevant authorities that the project does not require Planning Permission would suffice*
- Matchday Experiences Strategy including evidence of consultation with stakeholders;
- Photography of existing infrastructure – particularly where upgrades are requested;
- Detailed plans for the project.

It is recommended that the Club's relevant FAW Club Development officer has been consulted prior to the submission of the application, as these individuals will be able to give localised advice on how extra value can be added to the application.

If an applicant is unsure about whether they may require Planning Permission, **it is always best practise to consult the relevant member of staff from their Local Authority's planning department**. Planning may be required for the addition of new stands, security fencing, increase of LUX levels of floodlights, new floodlights, new buildings or extensions. Please note, applicants of whom declare that planning permission is not necessary will be requested to evidence this matter. If this later is proven to be a false claim, **the CFF reserve the right to withdraw any offer made on the initial basis**.

DECISION MAKING PROCESS

Grant decisions will be confirmed by the Decision-Making Panel, which is a panel of eight (8) individuals comprised of: CFF Programme Secretariat; CFF Board Member as Chair; maximum two (2) Independent Members; maximum three (3) FAW Board and Council Members; plus Premier League, Sport Wales and Welsh Government members. The CFF Programme Manager will provide recommendations to this panel to provide a clear basis for the panel to make decisions.

Applications are always reviewed by the CFF with support from the FAW and are subsequently scored based on their ability to meet programme priorities, with the Club's promotion a priority factor. Recommendations are presented to the Decision-Making Panel for review and confirmation in line with the available budget.

GRANT CONDITIONS, PERMISSION TO PROCEED AND CLAIMING FUNDS

Terms and Conditions will be sent alongside any grant offers.

Clubs must commence the project within six (6) months of the grant offer, unless an extension is agreed by the CFF Programme Manager. To receive an extension, the Club must provide clear assurance of its new delivery timelines supported by documentation.

All grant offers are conditional until the CFF have awarded 'Permission to Proceed'. The 'Permission to Proceed' award will be based on the adherence of the Club to the conditions presented via the Grant Offer Letter and the submission of further documentation as requested, such as Planning Permission. No capital works may begin until the successful applicant has been awarded this formal permission.

No claims for funding, including any deposits, can be made until the Club have ben awarded this formal permission.

To claim the funds made available to a Club, the Club must submit a CFF2 FORM following receipt of Permission to Proceed. The CFF2 FORM template will be sent to the Club alongside Permission to Proceed. The CFF2 FORM must be submitted via email to the CFF Programme Manager alongside the relevant invoices that are being claimed against. The Applicant Club is always the recipient of the grant funds, and not any individual personnel.

The Club can only claim at the funding ratio of the grant – for example, if the awarded Grant is £50,000.00 towards a Project Cost of £100,000.00 (50%), any claims to the CFF must be at 50% of the invoice submitted. Multiple claims can be submitted – the final claim for the project must be following project completion. Most likely, a contractor will expect payment of a deposit prior to the project start and then a payment following the project's completion. For awareness, payment schedules should always be communicated with the CFF before the first claim is made.

A grant may be reduced proportionately if the cost of the Project on completion is less than the anticipated cost set out in the grant offer letter.

Payment will be made by the CFF as soon as possible following an acceptable grant claim.

Proof of payment from Club to Contractor must be submitted to the CFF.

COMPLETION AND POST COMPLETION

The CFF may arrive on site or organise a site meeting at any time with the successful Applicant Club during the projects build phase or post completion. The purpose of this site meeting will be to check progress against claims submitted.

On acceptance of the grant offer, the successful Applicant Club agree to the CFF's Monitoring and Evaluation processes – this includes providing proof of payment, agreeing to the CFF's Social Media Policy and taking part in surveys or any other data capture methods post completion.

APPENDIX

	Men's Tier 1	Men's Tier 2	Men's Tier 3
'A' Criteria	1,500 capacity 500 seats 2 Turnstiles Obscure-view boundary fence (recommended 2m) PA System 100m x 64m minimum pitch (105 x 68m recommended) 1.1m spectator fencing (with 1.5m minimum run-off, though 3m advised) Warm-up area 13 Seat Dugouts 4th Official position with desk 5 Showers (H&A) 1 Private WC (H&A), new developments 3 20 Spaces for seating (H&A), new developments 25 1 Shower (Ref) 1 Private WC (Ref) 5 spaces for seating plus desk (Ref) Female match officials' space Wi-Fi Emergency Medical Room Doping Control Station 500 Lux Floodlighting 2 bus parking bays (teams and officials) 10 car parking bays (teams and officials) 20 car parking bays (VIPs) Four sides' access for spectator standing or seating Four sides' hardstanding 5% total capacity reservation for away segregation Even distribution of flushing WCs with sinks Disabled WC per 15 wheelchair users Dedicated disability viewing area 50 VIP seats (split 30 H, 20 A) Media room equipped with desks, power and Wi-Fi TV Gantry (multi-camera TV unit with 1 3-seater commentary position) Second TV commentary position near halfway line (3 seats) One covered radio position (3 seats) 20 seat Press Box inc min 5 desks, power and Wi-Fi Broadcaster OB Van Parking Area (hardstanding 100m2 area)	750 Capacity 250 Seats PA System 98m x 62m minimum pitch (105 x 68 recommended) 1.1m spectator fencing (with 1.5m minimum run-off, though 3m advised) Warm-up area 13 Seat Dugouts (minimum 8 on first inspection) 4 Showers (H&A) 1 Private WC (H&A), new developments 3 18 Spaces for seating (H&A), new developments 25 1 Shower (Ref) 1 Private WC (Ref) 3 Spaces for seating (Ref) Female match officials' space Matchday Office with strong phone signal and/or Wi-Fi Defibrillator 1 bus parking bay (teams and officials) 10 car parking bays (teams and officials) 10 car parking bays (VIPs) Hardstanding (concrete, stone or tarmac) – one full length and one full width Even distribution of flushing WCs with sinks 10 VIP seats (5 for visiting team officials) Hospitality area for VIPs Press box, central to the main stand Press box: 10 covered seats – 5 of which equipped with desks	500 capacity 100 Seats PA System 98m x 62m minimum pitch (105 x 68 recommended) 1.1m spectator fencing (with 1.5m minimum run-off, though 3m advised) Warm-up area 13 Seat Dugouts (minimum 8 on first inspection) 10 car parking bays (teams and officials) 10 car parking bays (VIPs) Hardstanding (concrete, stone or tarmac) – one full length and one full width Obscure-view boundary fence (recommended 2m) Drainage system Matchday Office Defibrillator Medical Room 250 Lux Floodlighting Four sides' spectator standing or seating 5% total capacity reservation for away segregation 1 seated WC per 250 males (3 WCs) 1 urinal per 125 males (5 Urinals) 1 seated WC per 125 females (2 WCs) Disability viewing area Disabled WC (per 15 wheelchair users) 10 VIP seats (5 for visiting team officials) Hospitality area for VIPs Press box, central to the main stand Press box: 10 covered seats – 5 of which equipped with desks TV Gantry (3 seats for TV commentary) 1 Covered Radio commentary position (3 seats) Post-match interview area Broadcaster OB Van Parking Area (hardstanding 100m2 area)
'B' Criteria	Control room Segregated post-match congregation area for Players, Officials and Family 1 seated WC per 250 males (5 WCs) 1 urinal per 125 males (10 Urinals) 1 seated WC per 125 females (3 WCs)	2 Turnstiles Obscure-view boundary fence (recommended 2m) Spare goalposts 250 Lux Floodlighting Four sides' access for spectator standing or seating 5% total capacity reservation for away segregation 1 seated WC per 250 males (3 WCs) 1 urinal per 125 males (5 Urinals) 1 seated WC per 125 females (2 WCs) Disability viewing area Disabled WC (per 15 wheelchair users) Press box' inclusion of power supply and Wi-Fi Media Room with Wi-Fi and power supply TV Gantry (3 seats for TV commentary) 1 Covered Radio commentary position (3 seats) Post-match interview area Broadcaster OB Van Parking Area (hardstanding 100m2 area)	

App.1 *This is a chart of which details the A and B priority infrastructure for League Licenses from Tiers 1-3 (M). Please note, the A and B infrastructure may have been updated since this image was uploaded to this document, so Clubs are encouraged to always ensure to have read the most up to date licensing requirements for the relevant tier. This may not be an exhaustive list – plus, it does not include personnel.*

Green: Eligible item via the CFF Stadia Improvement Fund; Red: Ineligible item. Any other items may be discussed with the CFF Programme Manager.