

Welsh Ground Improvements (WGI) 2015-17

National Game Board Pyramid Review

In September 2014, The National Game Board of the Football Association of Wales formed a sub-group to work on a Review of the Pyramid structure (Levels 1-4). It was decided that the immediate focus should be on Levels 1 and 2 and a weakness was quickly identified, the difficulties of promotion between the two levels of the pyramid. The threat for the Welsh Premier League and Welsh football pyramid is stagnation and an objective was agreed; to bridge the gap between Levels 2 and 1 with the introduction of a Tier 2 licence.

The purpose of the Tier 2 licence is to not only bridge the gap but also to homogenise standards at this level of the pyramid throughout Wales.

The Tier 2 licence, ratified by FAW Council in February 2015, focusses only on Infrastructure criteria and following on-site audits of the 40 clubs, which have played in Tier 2 in 2014/15 and 2015/16, individual club Action Plans have been developed. All clubs were provided with the Action Plan by September 2015 and work has already started at clubs. It is worth noting that the only club feedback received to date, has been positive.

For the project to be successful, the WGI must work in conjunction with the Action Plans over the coming seasons to provide clubs with the best opportunity to meet the Tier 2 Licence.

Draft Proposal for WGI 2015/16 & 2016/17

Level 1

No WGI applications - Clubs already and will continue to benefit from UEFA Hat-Trick III and WPL Broadcast Investment.

Level 2 - £250K

Focus clubs – Those applying for FAW Domestic Licence and directed to projects which help clubs meet the Tier 2 licence criteria. Spectator seating should be a primary focus following an analysis of licensing requirements for clubs in the Welsh Football League Division 1 (1,487 seats required) and Cymru Alliance League (1,282 seats required).

Note: Should the WGI allocate funds to such similar projects, the procurement opportunities to exploit economies of scale exist.

All applications to be considered against the latest Tier 2 Licence Action Plan, which are being monitored by the clubs and the FAW Competitions department.

Level 3 - £150K (£37.5K / League)

Focus clubs – Those who have potential to meet the Tier 2 licence and directed to projects which help clubs meet the Tier 2 licence criteria.

The proposed budget is a slight reduction from previous years following an historical underspend highlighted as part of an expenditure review from 2009 to 2015.

Level 4 - £60K (£15K / League)

Smaller projects which are required for promotion to Tier 3 league.

Current League placing should be considered to assist with decisions and to reward clubs that are close to promotion sportingly. The added complication is the timing of the deadline for grant applications (usually end of February) in relation to deadline for league ground inspection (30 March) and the end of season (May) meaning dispensation should be considered.

The proposed budget is reduced from previous years following an historical underspend highlighted as part of an expenditure review from 2009 to 2015.

WPWL - £25K

For those clubs, not playing at senior grounds (e.g. PTT / Aber), who need to meet the Women's Club Licence infrastructure criteria.

Promoted club from Level 5 to Level 4 - £25K

Grants will only be awarded to Tier 5 league champions, or the runners up, in the event of the Champions declining promotion

Generic WGI Principle – Underspend from lower Levels of the pyramid including WPWL will be transferred to level 2, where additional monies are required to support applications in line with the agreed strategy.

Summary

Level 2 -	£250K	
Level 3 -	£150K	(£37.5K / League)
Level 4 -	£60K	(£15K / League)
WPWL -	£25K	
Level 5 to Level 4 -	£25K	
Admin -	£20K	
Total -	£530K	

The decision of the FAW Executive Committee also includes the following conditions –

1. Any underspend at levels 5to4, WPWL, level 4 or level 3 will be directed solely to support the level 2 focus club programme (in line with the agreed strategy).
2. The financial proposal is a two year (seasons 2015/16 and 2016/17) recommendation, subject to the ongoing WGI review and approval of the 2016/17 budgets by the FAW Executive Committee.
3. Applications at level 2 (only) that support the strategy can include a two year / two phase programme over the two seasons.