

Licensed standing in seated areas – ‘early adopter’ criteria

From 1 January 2022, the UK Government will be implementing a historic change which will allow ‘early adopter’ football grounds currently subject to the all-seater policy to have licensed standing in seated accommodation (also known as safe standing).

For licensed standing areas to exist from 1 January 2022, grounds must apply to the Sports Grounds Safety Authority (SGSA) before receiving approval from the Government, based on SGSA recommendations.

To become an ‘early adopter’, ground management teams must:

- Demonstrate how they have addressed the criteria set out below.
- Obtain approval from the UK Government to operate licensed standing in seated areas.
- Receive a Sports Grounds Safety Authority (SGSA) licence with the necessary conditions.

The SGSA has been asked by the UK Government to conduct an evaluation of these grounds, to be known as ‘early adopters’, which will take place from 1 January 2022 until the end of the 2021/22 season.

Application criteria

Grounds applying to become an early adopter must demonstrate how they meet the following criteria, which cover three categories:

- A. Infrastructure (points 1-7)
- B. Safety management procedures (points 8-13)
- C. Safety Advisory Group (SAG) engagement (points 14-16)

A. Infrastructure

1. Any infrastructure must comply with the appropriate SGSA guidance.

Compliance with the relevant sections of the current (sixth) edition of the *Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds (Green Guide)*, with particular reference to Chapter 12 – Seated Accommodation, and Chapter 2 of the current (first) edition of *Supplementary Guidance 01: Safe Standing in Seated areas (SG01)*, in terms of:

- a. the design and installation of the proposed area(s) including testing/sign off of new seats with barriers/independent barriers by a competent person; and
- b. the safety management procedures put in place in advance of spectators being admitted to the area(s) in question, including the provision of suitably qualified/trained stewards.

2. Licensed standing areas must be made available to both home *and* away supporters.

In achieving this, away supporters should *also* be offered seated accommodation within the provision.



The ground management must be able to demonstrate active engagement with supporters, which has helped inform decision making on the size and location of those licensed standing areas. The final decision will be based on a range of factors, most notably the nature and scale of spectator safety risk associated with persistent standing in conventional seated accommodation and the associated SGSA Persistent Standing Enforcement Approach.

Note that it is recognised that the capacity of licensed standing areas, whether for home or away supporters, may vary according to the event and the likely demand, and that allocations will require continual review.

- 3. Each seat/space must be allocated to *only one* spectator.**
- 4. It should not be possible for any of the seats in the proposed areas to be locked in either the 'up' or the 'down' position.**
- 5. Each seat and seat row must be clearly identifiable.**

For the legibility of both spectators and stewards, each individual seat and seat row must be clearly, neatly and accurately identified, and in a contrasting colour. Where tip-up seats are in place, the seat numbers must be clearly visible both when the seat is in the 'up' position and the 'down' position and fixed so as to make removal difficult.

- 6. There must be no negative impact on viewing standards for other spectators.**

The ground management must be able to show that the provision of licensed standing will have no negative impact upon the viewing standards, comfort or amenity levels of seated spectators in adjoining areas.

- 7. There must be no negative impact for disabled spectators.**

The ground management must be able to show that the provision of licensed standing will have no negative impact upon the viewing standards, comfort or amenity levels of disabled spectators, either in the area in question or adjoining areas, and that the ground is continuing to meet its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010.

B. Safety management procedures

- 8. Ticket buyers must be informed in advance.**

Purchasers of tickets for licensed standing areas must be informed at the point of sale, and on the ticket itself, that spectators in the area in question will be standing during the activity (see Section SG01 2.4.c.ii of *SG01*).

- 9. A *Code of Conduct* must be introduced.**

Measures such as a *Code of Conduct*, enforced by ground management, to maintain high standards of spectator behaviour in the proposed areas must be provided to all ticket holders. This must reflect the entry conditions outlined in the *Supplementary Guidance* (see Section 2.4.c of *SG01*). An example of such a *Code of Conduct*, which can be tailored for local circumstances, is at Annex A.

- 10. Briefing and training must be in place for staff and stewards.**

Procedures must be in place, including the training and briefing of staff and stewards, to ensure that only relevant ticket holders are admitted to the areas in question.



11. A CCTV system must be in place and offer full coverage of the licensed standing areas.

The installation must be in accordance with the requirements outlined in the sixth edition of the *Green Guide* (see Section 16.20 – CCTV provision).

12. Safety management procedures must be in place to monitor and manage the behaviour of spectators in licensed standing areas.

13. Management must demonstrate compliance with the SGSA’s Persistent Standing Enforcement Approach in the ground’s conventional seated areas.

C. Safety Advisory Group (SAG) engagement

14. There must be meaningful consultation with the SAG.

Ground management must be able to demonstrate that there has been meaningful consultation with the core members of the relevant SAG as defined in its terms of reference, about the plans for licensed standing areas, together with evidence of support for those plans by the relevant certifying authority.

Additionally, ground management must show they have reviewed any information sharing agreement with the local police informed by their plans for licensed standing areas.

15. SAG consultation must be recorded and inform the proposed approach.

Ground management must demonstrate that SAG consultation has informed the proposed approach both in terms of the physical infrastructure and crowd management arrangements for those areas, including evidence that any existing and effective management of the segregation line between home and away supporters will not be compromised.

Note that in circumstances where such SAG consultation results in objections to the proposals for licensed standing areas from one or more of the core SAG members, the ground management must show evidence that the certifying authority has recorded formally:

- a. details about each of the objections, including the evidence base and who tabled each of them; and,
- b. the certifying authority’s accompanying rationale for rejecting each of those objections when giving its support to the proposed safe standing areas.

16. There must be continued engagement with the SAG.

Ground management must demonstrate that there are arrangements in place for regular dialogue with the core members of the relevant SAG about the operation of licensed standing areas to provide a suitable forum where partners, including the local police, can take an evidence-based approach to the ongoing effective management of the proposed areas.



Code of Conduct for licensed standing areas

Background

It has long been established that, simply by entering a sports ground, all spectators commit themselves to adhere to a number of ground regulations. Equally it is acknowledged that few spectators are familiar with those regulations, other than in the broadest terms. For this reason, it is recommended that all spectators who purchase or are allocated tickets for licensed standing areas are provided in advance with a copy of a *Fan Code of Conduct*. This should include both home and away supporters.

Management considerations

When preparing a *Fan Code of Conduct* for licensed standing areas, ground management should take the following into consideration:

- a. The Code should be tailored to the specific characteristics of the ground, the nature of the match being staged and to the provisions of any national and/or local guidance in force at the time (for example, in relation to COVID-19).
- b. The Code should be written in concise, plain language.
- c. If being communicated in digital form – as is strongly recommended – a check box should ideally be included for ticket buyers to confirm that they have read the Code, before leaving the page.
- d. Printed copies of the Code should be posted in prominent locations within the spectator accommodation.
- e. Where appropriate, the wording of the Code should be shared in advance with representatives of supporters' groups.

An example *Fan Code of Conduct* for licensed safe standing areas is available overleaf.



Example Fan Code of Conduct in licensed safe standing areas

This safe standing area has been introduced to help keep you safe while watching the match.

This *Code of Conduct* does not replace any other ground rules. Failure to comply with these may lead to you being removed from the ground and banned from future matches, and/or the ground losing the right to maintain safe standing areas.

1. Be respectful towards staff, stewards, and other fans at all times.
2. Behave appropriately in the stand – anti-social behaviour will not be tolerated.
3. Don't stand on the rails or seat. This safe standing area is here to keep you and other fans safe.
4. Unless needing to use facilities, don't move around in the safe standing area – your ticket is for your space only.
5. Don't stand in the gangways or on the steps to watch the match – these are for accessing and leaving your seat only.

Thank you for your support and co-operation.