



## Player Passport – Frequently Asked Questions

New 17<sup>th</sup> March 2021

### Recently added FAQs:

#### **A. How will the ESFA share parents' contact details with partners?**

We won't. We will include the appropriate data protection consents in the App and will send marketing materials to parents on behalf of our partners. Without this, parents will find it less easy to access the perks, but will still be able to do so via the website if they prefer. Parental data will not be passed on to third parties.

#### **B. What other funding possibilities have been considered by the ESFA before deciding to charge players?**

In the past six years the ESFA has used three different sponsorship brokers, including the broker who helped secure PlayStation, and none has been able to find a commercial sponsor. The selective nature of rep football means that the “market” for the sponsor is relatively small and the returns therefore likely to be low. Since appointing the Commercial Director, the reasons for this are much better understood and the commercial imperatives – the marketing opportunity the App provides for companies to reach parents, as described above – are built into the new scheme. As it stands, rep football is not attractive to commercial sponsors. Consistent, good quality, wide reaching rep football is much more likely to be “investable”.

Funders in “the football family” will not support rep football. It is a specific exclusion in FA funding, as it is for County FAs: the PLCF will not sponsor our competitions at all any longer and the PFA will not fund anything which conflicts or competes with Academy or RTC provision. Football is very often excluded from charitable grants (such as supermarket “token” schemes) and the costs of the competitions means that individual fundraisers (such as bucket shaking, golf days and so on) are unlikely to be successful, and certainly can't be guaranteed.

Team entry fees (rather than individual fees) were also considered, but these would be prohibitive for almost every Association, and would not fulfil the commercial imperative described above, therefore would not provide for the possibility of securing sponsorship.

The costs of the competitions have been kept to the minimum necessary to create a good quality product – most importantly, for the players, but also to be commercially attractive to potential sponsors. All expenditure is subject to ESFA financial regulations, which includes value for money checks and price comparisons. Cutting costs any further is not a realistic possibility.

The ESFA has no income at all to support District and County rep football.

#### **C. One of the Head Teachers in my area has asked whether the school can pay the fee. Is this permitted?**

Yes, this is permitted. The fee can be paid by any third party should the parent agree.

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**1. Isn't this just a money-making scheme for the ESFA?**

No. The money made from the scheme will be distributed to members in recognition of their commitment to providing rep football. The funding, once available, will come with no conditions, unlike other funds the ESFA can access, which are often restricted to particular activities.

**2. Who is responsible for registering a player on the Player Passport?**

The parent, carer or person paying for the registration is responsible for setting up the record. Associations will need to support this by informing parents, carers or 'payers' of the requirement.

**3. When do players have to register by?**

Registration can be completed at any time up to kick off in the first round of the national competition in which the team is participating. All players in the squad must be registered at this point: team sheets can be submitted after the game, along with the scores. If you bring new players in during the season, they must be registered prior to their first fixture.

**4. If our team wants to play locally but not in the national competitions, do players still need to register?**

They don't, but any participation in the international trials process will be managed through the Player Passport, so players will need to be registered should they be involved in trials. This is simply an administrative process and there will be no fee for this if the player is not otherwise registered.

**5. How much will it cost and how will payments be made?**

Payments will be taken online at the end of the registration process. Associations are not expected to be responsible for this but will need to support the process by informing parents, carers or 'payers' of the requirements. An annual fee of £40 has been set. Payments must be made by bank/credit card or android or Apple pay.

Where more than one child in a family is involved in schools' rep football, the first registration fee will be £40 but any subsequent sibling registration will be £5.

**6. What if a parent can't afford the fee?**

If a pupil is in receipt of free school meals, a discounted Player Passport fee of £5 will be charged. The pupil and the parent will still get the full range of benefits and the fact that they have paid the discounted rate will not be visible to anyone other than the 'payer' and those administering the payment process at ESFA HQ. This will be processed through the Player Passport app/website, so will be managed electronically. 'Payers' will be required to declare criteria under which the player is eligible free school meals, and to note that the ESFA may check this. For this reason, those entitled to free school meals but not taking them will not be able to register for the rebated fee.

**7. What if a parent can't afford the rebated fee?**

We would encourage parents to discuss this with their child's school, or perhaps the local/County Association could support them in this circumstance.

**8. Is there an instalment payment process?**

No. Payments need to be made in full, up front, prior to playing. You can register players at a later stage if the hardship arrangements above are not suitable and a parent wishes to pay later.

**9. I already charge a fee for taking part in our rep teams – without it, we can't afford the cost of the team. Will you take that into account?**

Ultimately, the ESFA aims to share the cash generated from Player Passport with member Associations, but this cannot be done until the cost of setting it up has been recouped. In the meantime, there are no restrictions on local Associations fee charging arrangements

**10. If a player pays a fee but is then not selected for each match, or only plays one game, is (s)he entitled to a refund?**

No. Payment and match selection are not inter-linked, and this should be made clear to payers and players at the outset.

**11. What happens if the parents have not registered the player before the start of the season? Can that player still play in the District SFA team?**

Any player taking part must be registered prior to playing. Players may register throughout the season, but cannot take part until they have.

**12. What if, as an Association, we don't have enough players registered before we play our first game of the season?**

You will need to be able to field a fully registered team to enter the first round of the national competition.

**13. Can we add players throughout the season?**

Yes, as new players join teams, please make sure that they are registered. If they have already played rep football (in a previous year, for example), they may already have a registration. Bear in mind it is the pupil being registered as a player, not a player being registered to play for your specific team so those playing for a County, for example, may already be registered because they've played for the District.

The ESFA national competition rules state that "a pupil shall not play for more than one.. Association...in the same competition during any season, except by permission of Council": please note that for the purposes of District football in these competitions next season, this permission will automatically be granted in the case that a pupil changes school in-year, and moves from one District to another (but does not play for both).

**14. So if a player has registered as part of playing for a District, he or she doesn't need to register again as a County player?**

That's correct. A player registers once to be part of the ESFA's rep football programme and can then play through the ages and at any representative level, on selection, provided the annual fee continues to be paid.

**15. Is there a minimum/maximum number of players that can be registered for an Association?**

You will need a full squad of registered players before you play your first fixture of the national competition. There is no maximum number but obviously competition squad size rules will dictate the number of players named for a match.

**16. Can a player's registration be transferred between Associations (for example, if the player moves school which means they may qualify to represent another Association)?**

A player's registration will exist once they create their record. They will simply need to be included in your team if they join you part way through the season – there is no need for a second registration, just a need to link the player to the appropriate team.

**17. What if I need to bring in an unregistered player at the last minute, if, for example, my GK is unexpectedly unavailable? It's not fair to ask them to pay £40 for one fixture**

Once you've registered your full squad, the Association will be entitled to 3 free registrations for single appearances, at no charge, to accommodate these exceptional circumstances.

**18. Do passports have to be carried and provided on match days for opposition to see eligibility? If yes, what if they don't have them or is there an online function to show lists of players?**

Player Passport registrations will be made and held online. Players and 'payers' will input all their details and from this a squad list and a team sheet can be created. If the squad list and team sheet are created through the Player Passport and are visible online, all players named will be eligible to play.

**19. Does that mean that anyone can see everyone else's details?**

No. Both data protection and child protection legislation will be built into the Player Passport, with only those needing it having access to personal details. Player names can be published in a squad list and team sheet, but not any other identifying factor. The option to upload a photograph of the player will be available to parents but will not be mandatory.

**20. So as a team manager, I can log in and use appropriate personal details to set up and manage my team?**

Yes. You will have password-controlled access to the relevant information.

**21. Can the Player Passport be used to hold emergency contact details then?**

It can, subject to parents agreeing that such details can be provided in that way.

**22. What happens if rep team formed in season 1 and then the county or district doesn't run one in future, at no fault of the player/parent?**

Associations need to be certain that they are running a team before players register for the Passport. As the fee is an annual one, should teams not run in future years, then no fee will be payable for that year.

**23. What do the players get for their £40?**

Primarily the players get an enhanced fixture list, through the Champions League-style competition. We envisage at least four or five fixtures: rather than having only one game, if a team gets knocked out in round 1 of the current cups, the teams will play several others in the group phases, and some will then go on to contest a Cup or a Plate in a knock out phase. Their insurance is covered as part of this fee, and an increasing number of perks will be made available to payers and players as the Player Passport develops.

If used to its fullest extent, the player and parent will be able to track their participation and performance, and build up a record of their achievements, should the Association wish to operate the system in that way. The system will have the capacity to record things such as player of the match, goals/assists, corners, match time and so on.

**24. Our trials won't take place until mid-September so I can't ask players to register until then. Will this affect my entry into the national competition?**

No. You can enter your national competition as soon as you are ready, but you must make sure your players are all registered before the first fixture.

**25. What if I think the opposition is playing an unregistered player?**

If the player features on the squad list or team sheet produced by the Player Passport, then he or she is properly registered. The registration process will build in checks that a player is at an eligible DfE funded school, so that any anomalies can be addressed at the start of the season. If you have other grounds to believe the player should not be playing, you should follow the rules of the relevant national competition.

**26. What if I believe the opposition is playing a pupil from a school outside of their area?**

The player registration process will check that the player is at a school in the geographical area for Districts confirmed in the Association restructure process. Again, if the player features on a Player Passport squad list or team sheet, then their eligibility has been confirmed.

**27. What if a player moves schools and wants to play for a different District mid-season?**

In the inaugural season, this will be permitted by Council by default, providing that the pupil concerned does not play for two Districts at the same time.

**28. Who is responsible for changing the player's address and school records on the Passport in this scenario?**

All the data is personal to that player, so only they or their parent/carer/'payer' can change that data.

**29. At the AGM, reference was made to an U11 district competition for girls. This doesn't appear on the briefing?**

We will run an U11 District Girls' cup, but not in the Champions league format and a Player Passport registration will not be necessary for this age group.

**30. Will Associations have to pay a competition entry fee for these competitions?**

No. However, the ESFA reserve the right to charge a withdrawal fee should teams withdraw after the fixtures are published, which will be on the first working day after 1<sup>st</sup> September.

**31. Will travel expenses be paid?**

Associations reaching the Cup or Plate finals will be eligible to claim expenses.

**32. This all sounds complicated to me. Where can I get some help?**

Support will be provided in implementing for the Player Passport but remember, the responsibility for registration lies with the player and the payer so your obligation will be to encourage them to do so, to check players are registered before selecting them and to use the team sheet function so that

eligibility is clear. You may opt to use other functionality provided by the Player Passport, but this will not be mandatory. We will collate and update these FAQs and publish them on the website: please feel free to submit an FAQ by addressing it to [andrea.chilton@schoolsfa.com](mailto:andrea.chilton@schoolsfa.com), putting Player Passport FAQ in the email subject.