

TENNIS  
FOR BRITAIN

# COUNTY AND DISTRICT LEAGUE



GUIDANCE BOOKLET



# WELCOME & INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the County & District League Guidance. The aim of this document is to offer advice to County & District Leagues across Great Britain.

Whilst we acknowledge many people reading this document will be established League Organiser's there will be people new to running a league and we hope the advice offered in this guide will be of help and interest to all involved in the running of County & District Leagues.

County and District Leagues are hugely popular across Great Britain and are a huge part of the competition pathway. It is estimated that around 100,000 players compete in these leagues.

Events are run for juniors, adults and seniors with varying levels of playing standards.

Team sizes range from league to league with the most popular size being teams of 4 or 6 players.

Leagues need to ensure they work cohesively to be compliant, resourceful and sustainable.

You need to have the right people in the right place with the right plan, and this guidance document has been produced by the LTA to support county & district league organisers in delivering their League with excellence.

This document is aimed to help provide League Organisers with the following:

## SECTION 1:

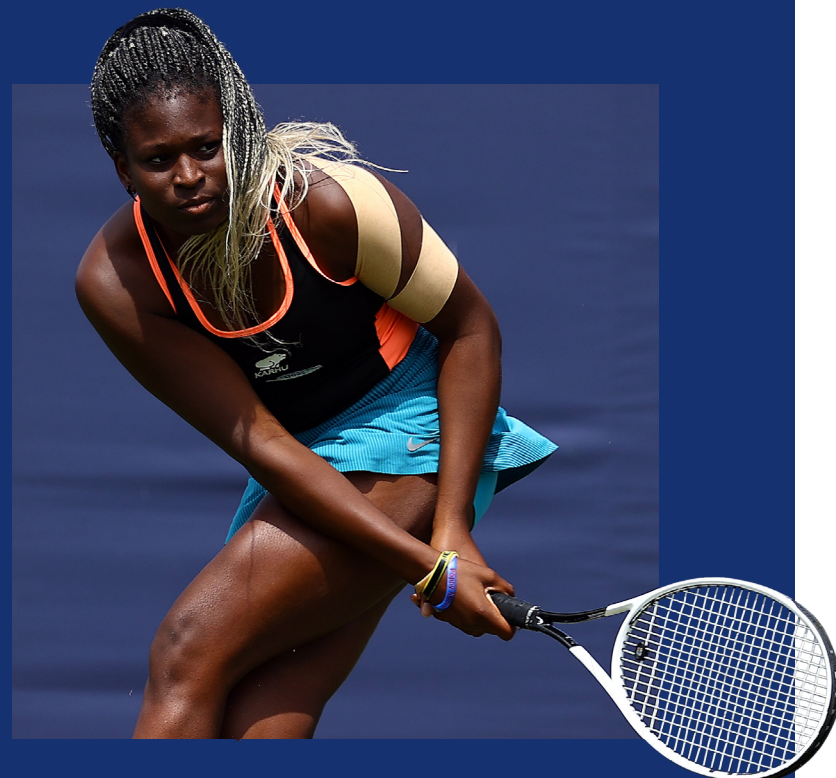
LTA Approved League status - including registration, benefits and insurance

## SECTION 2:

Running your League - including resources to support with the running of your league

## SECTION 3:

League Governance



## SECTION 1

# NEW LTA APPROVED LEAGUE STATUS

All leagues running in Great Britain are invited to complete the [LTA League Application Form](#), which registers their league on the LTA database.

From Winter 2022, all County & District Leagues will be invited to complete the League Application Process to register their league as normal, however, this will now include additional benefits to the league if all venues that compete in the league are LTA Registered Venues.

As part of the registration process, leagues will need to show evidence (via their league rules) that all venues competing in the league are LTA Registered Venues. All leagues that register with the LTA will receive a number of benefits and become an LTA Approved League. County & District Leagues that do not register with the LTA or are unable to fully register as non-Registered venues are allowed to compete in the league, will still be able to continue as normal but will not receive any of the benefits and will not receive the kitemark of being an LTA Approved League. The LTA & County Associations will only endorse and promote LTA Approved Leagues

**All LTA Approved Leagues will receive the following benefits:**

- LTA Insurance cover for officers such as the League Organiser
- Access to LTA League Planner & Tournament Software
- Option for results to be submitted towards players ITF World Tennis Number
- Kitemark – as an LTA Approved League – this shows that the league is safe to practice as all venues are LTA Registered
- LTA Competition Team support when required

**From Spring 2023 only LTA Approved leagues can have any of the benefits listed above, and therefore, we encourage all County & District League to ensure only LTA Registered Venues are able to compete in their league.** More information on LTA Venue Registration can be found [here](#).

All the details on leagues becoming LTA Approved leagues will be communicated in the Spring.

## SECTION 2

# RUNNING YOUR LEAGUE

## RULES & REGULATIONS

Every league needs a clear set of Rules & Regulations remembering to include information such as:

- Dates of league fixtures
- Name and Contact Number of League Organiser(s), Divisional Secretaires, Club Match Secretaries and Team Captains
- Age Categories across the league
- Venue Details – for league matches and / or finals
- Types of draws – round robin / knock-out draw / compass
- Promotion / Relegation – details of promotion and relegation, including league structure
- Scoring format – most common format is two tie break sets and a match tiebreak or two fast4 sets and a match tiebreak
- Play by times – considering sunset time and floodlight restrictions
- Match formats for Leagues – singles, doubles, mixed, etc.
- On-site / match arrangements – balls, match refreshments etc.
- Entry Method & Entry Fee(s) – how to enter, online etc, detail how payment can be made – i.e. PayPal, Stripe, credit card / cheque
- Number of courts required including court surface(s)
- Eligibility of players – players competing in the league should be encouraged to be [LTA Advantage Members](#)

If not already in place, you can view some examples of rules below:

- [LTA National League – Rules & Regulations](#)
- [LTA County Cup – Rules & Regulations](#)

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## RESOURCES

- Further information on the ITF World Tennis Number can be found via this [link](#)
- Further information on Competition Age Groups (primarily for junior events) can be found via this [link](#)
- Further information on Fast4 scoring can be found via this [link](#)
- Further information on LTA Advantage can be found via this [link](#)

The Competition Team have produced a toolkit of all the useful templates and resources to support referees and league organisers in planning, delivering and wrapping up a tournament or league of any size. You can view these resources [here](#).





## LEAGUE PLANNER

The LTA League Planner (LP) tool is ideal for those organisers running tennis leagues, making league management much easier by collating entries, making and scheduling draws.

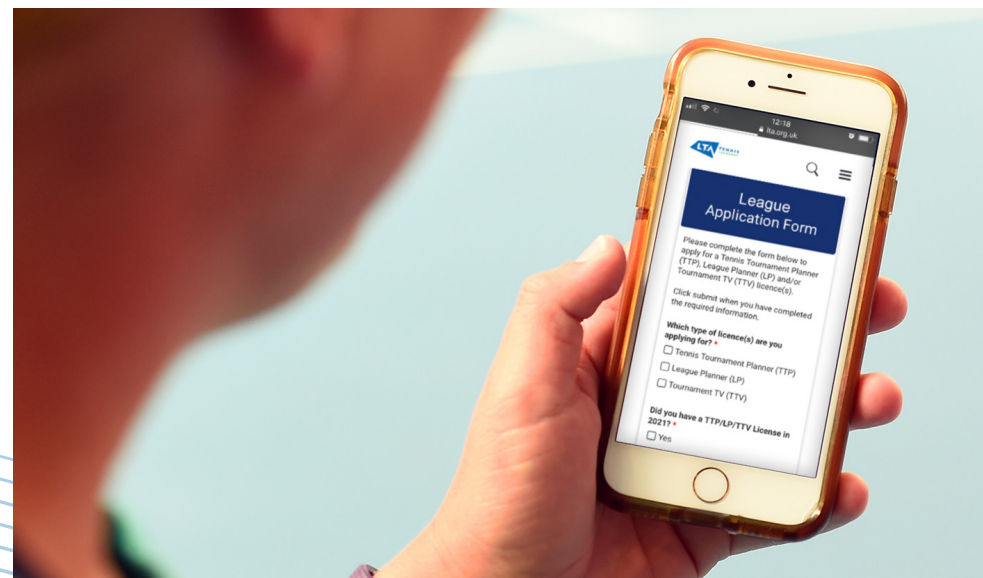
When using the LP tool, you can publish your LP file and have it converted to an online league allowing team captains to enter their own team's overall and rubber results.

To use League Planner, the league organiser will need to 'apply for a licence' and 'download the software'. Further information on this can be found [here](#).

**Coming soon...** In late 2022 the LTA will be introducing a new Online League Management system, more details to follow later in the year.

## WAYS OF WORKING

A key feature of successful Leagues is the ability of its volunteers, and any venue personnel to work cohesively together.



Whilst the size and make-up of the team will vary, there are a number of key elements that characterise all successful teams:

- An elected chairperson
- Inductions / handovers to roles as well as relevant training
- A clear strategic plan including budget
- Core operational policies and procedures
- Meeting rules or code of conduct that empower the chairperson appropriately
- Someone with financial and or legal experience to oversee audit and risk
- A diverse nominations committee to identify and attract representatives based on skill
- A clear and fair complaints procedure and methods to gain feedback from captains and players

## COMMITTEE AND SUCCESSION PLANNING

Some League Organisers set a maximum length of service for a role to keep talent and ideas fresh and reduce the burden of responsibility on any one individual. A few suggestions for consideration:

- Fixed terms (i.e.) three years
- Encourage committee members to find someone who could support their role and subsequently take it on
- Explore the use of a "buddy" approach for new joiners to roles
- Consider making a skills inventory to help with succession planning and identify people you may wish to approach to join in
- Encourage volunteers leaving roles to have a handover period and provide checklists / notes on how to undertake specific tasks
- Show appreciation for volunteers such as nominations for the LTA Awards or a simple thank you!





## SECTION 3

# LEAGUE GOVERNANCE

Governance is how the people in an organisation come together, aligning systems, processes and policies in order to be fit for purpose and ensures your League is professionally managed, safe and compliant with its legal obligations.

A well-run League will attract and engage venues and encourage more players to take part.

### Good governance can help a League to:

- Focus on the priorities to deliver an enjoyable match experience
- Meet funding (sponsor) criteria
- Engage a strong team of volunteers
- Manage risk and protect players, volunteers and spectators
- Create a sense of pride in delivering a League
- Meet a range of specific compliance standards
- Build relationships with external parties



## LEGAL STRUCTURE

It is vital to remember that organising a League should be treated like a business, meeting its responsibilities and financial and legal commitments. Running a League may seem daunting and time-consuming, particularly for volunteers, but this section will help you make informed decisions in your League's best interests.

The first task is to review the legal status of the league to suit the needs of the players and teams. There is no 'correct' or 'standard' way. County & District Leagues are diverse in terms of setup, size and income, so take the time to consider which structure will be best for you. A County & District League may be part of the County Association, or it can sometimes be a separate entity.

## DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Equal opportunities into volunteering should be applied. It's important to have a management committee that is reflective of your membership and of the local community. It is not always easy to encourage people to volunteer from every group, but by actively encouraging input you will become a more inclusive, forward-looking and sustainable venue.

Ask volunteers and staff if they have any individual needs that the club can help with. For example, can the league make reasonable adjustments to ensure a volunteer with disabilities has the best possible experience? Do any volunteers have religious requirements or caring responsibilities? Further information and online training can be found on the [LTA Safeguarding page](#).

Further information on diversity and inclusion, including the LTA's Inclusion Strategy can be found [here](#).



## SAFEGUARDING

The LTA Safeguarding Team are here to help. If you have concerns, or wish to report anything, you can use our [online reporting form](#). For further enquiries please contact the LTA via our ['Contact Us' Form](#).

You can view all the LTA Safeguarding Policies & Procedures [here](#).

Raising safeguarding concerns or those relating to abuse or neglect can be very difficult and distressing and deciding what the right thing to do is can be stressful. The LTA are here to support you and are keen to listen to any concerns you may have in relation to yourself or a child or adult at risk. If you would like some advice and support before contacting the LTA you can call the NSPCC on **0808 800 5000** or contact the police or your local authority.

## FINANCE AND TAX

You will need to ensure financial risk is managed effectively and further information on this area can be found [here](#).



## RISK ASSESSMENT

Risk needs to be managed by the leagues in these times of litigation, however leagues would have their risk covered if an LTA Approved league.

Managing risk means reducing the likelihood or impact of any identified risk and / or putting in place process, procedures and contingency plans. It is vital to ensure the venue facilities and equipment are safe for all users including your players, team captains, volunteers, staff, and visitors.

The process of identifying, assessing and controlling threats includes those that pose a risk to your League's reputation. These could stem from a wide variety of sources including financial uncertainty, legal liabilities and accidents.

The LTA require all registered venues to complete an annual online risk assessment to validate their public liability insurance cover. However, risk assessments should be regularly reviewed. If a venue playing in your league does not have LTA registration they may not have insurance, an up to date risk assessment or

safeguarding policies in place. This is something you should consider as a risk for your League.

For further Risk Assessment Guidance, please visit the Club Management section with the [LTA Resource Library](#).

## HEALTH AND SAFETY TIPS

Whilst risk assessments will cover health and safety hazards, below are a few practical tips to create a safe environment for your league:

- Ensure rules and regulations are clear of the process regarding inclement weather and the cancellation or postponement of fixtures
- Ensure a simple process for reporting any disputes that take place before, during or after a fixture

It is imperative to keep on top of managing risk at your League. Make sure you continue to monitor and take action on known risks and players know who to report potential risks to.

There are a number of additional policies and procedures that ensure the healthy and effective running of a League. Some are mandatory (legal) requirements, but all are recommended.



## IMPORTANCE OF VENUE REGISTRATION

As the governing body of tennis, it is the LTA's duty to promote the safety of all those who play, volunteer and support tennis in this country. The LTA is therefore committed to supporting, enabling and protecting registered venues by ensuring that these standards are upheld.

**To be eligible for LTA venue registration, venues are required to meet the following standards:**

1. Have a Safeguarding Policy and Procedures document that has been clearly communicated and implemented at the venue.
2. Have a Diversity & Inclusion Policy and Procedures document that has been clearly communicated and implemented at the venue.
3. Have a Welfare Officer who has undergone the necessary training and is engaged in their role.
4. Ensure that people in certain roles within the venue have completed a satisfactory Criminal Records Check.
5. Have completed an annual Risk Assessment of the venue and its facilities.
6. Ensure that any coaches qualified to Level 3 or above standard are LTA Accredited or Accredited+.

By registering with the LTA, you have committed to adhering to these Safeguarding Standards. Specific guidance around each of these standards is available on the LTA website. If a venue is playing in your league does not have LTA registration they may not have insurance, an up to date risk assessment and safeguarding policies, this is something you should consider as a risk for your League.

## GDPR

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) protects all citizens from privacy and data breaches. It impacts all organisations including leagues and their volunteers. It affects how organisations collect, use and store an individual's data. League Organisers are encouraged to review and amend their data processes in order to ensure that they are compliant with the new regulations and to avoid potentially significant financial penalties. Organisers with access to data will need training as to their data protection responsibilities and your League will need to carry out a data audit and create basic privacy policies.

## FEEDBACK

Problems can arise within leagues and between players but where good procedures are in place, problems may get resolved without prolonging the difficulty. However, players need to feel complaints are handled with sensitivity, and that they receive a fair hearing and that procedures are followed. It may be worth the league considering a feedback survey to send to venues / team captains / players at the end of each season.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

It is natural for a conflict of interest to occur amongst committee members at times. A conflict of interest policy sets out the process for managing this to ensure that decision making is not unduly influenced. Typically, early on in the committee meeting, the chairman will ask if any members have a conflict of interest regarding items on the agenda, for example a committee member may also be a team captain.

## FURTHER SUPPORT

Our dedicated delivery network is on hand to provide expert advice regarding the running and operation of your League including governance, operations and workforce development. If you don't already know your local County Association representative or regional delivery team contact, please find out more via our ['Contact Us' form](#).

 @LTACompetitions

[www.lta.org.uk/compete/adult](http://www.lta.org.uk/compete/adult)