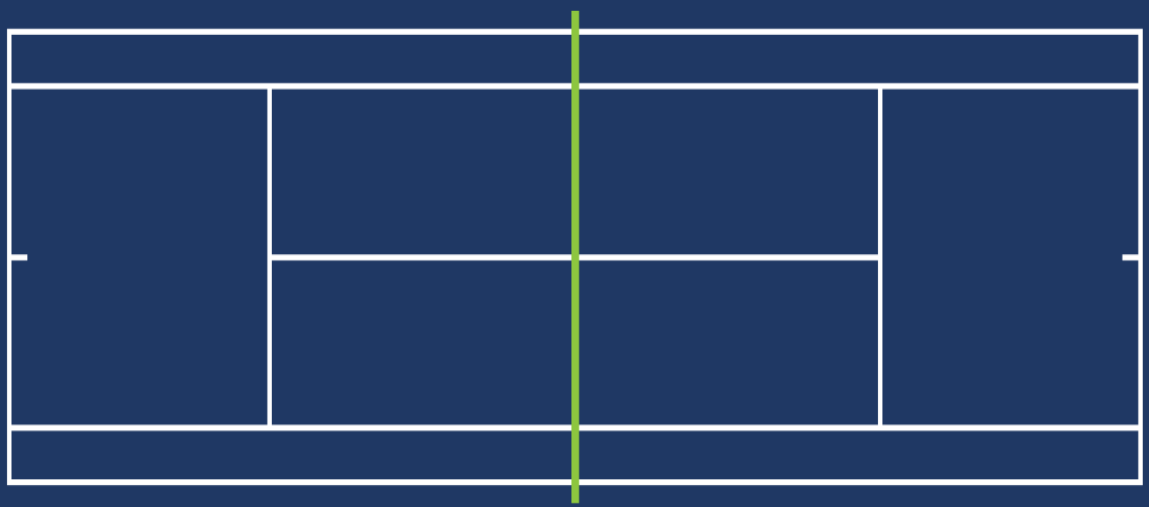
WELCOME PACK

An Introduction to Tennis and Padel Officiating



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Association of British Tennis Officials

Dear Member

On behalf of the LTA and the ABTO Management Committee, we would like to congratulate you on becoming an LTA Licensed Official and welcome you to the Association of British Tennis Officials (ABTO).

We're delighted to have you as part of our association. We are a diverse community of officials brought together by a shared passion for our sports. By joining the association, you will actively be contributing to the LTA's mission, which is to grow tennis and padel by making them more relevant, accessible, welcoming and enjoyable.

This Welcome Pack is designed to serve as an introduction to officiating and to help you understand more about ABTO and the LTA. It provides information that will guide you through your first months and years as an official and aims to answer the many questions that you will undoubtedly have, both now and over the course of your officiating career, as well as outlining some of the resources available to you.

We hope that your experience as an official will be enjoyable and rewarding, and that you will take pride in being a member of ABTO.

Good luck with your officiating, and again – welcome!

Malgorzata Grzyb
ABTO Chair

Matthew Morrissey
LTA Officiating Manager

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1. Your First 30 Days – A Quick-Start Checklist

Becoming a newly licensed official is exciting, but there is a lot to take in at once. To help you get started, here is a simple checklist of the key things to do in your first few weeks. Work through them in roughly this order and you will be ready to step out at your first event with confidence.

1. **Activate your Officials' Licence.** Once you have passed your course and hold a criminal record check (DBS in England and Wales, or PVG in Scotland) issued within the last 12 months, join the LTA Officials' Licence Scheme via the Official Hub. You cannot be selected for events until you are licensed. Make sure that you select the option to become an ABTO Member.
2. **Complete your Contractor Form and Right to Work check.** From 2027, you must complete both before you can be considered for selection by LTA Officiating. They are free and only need to be done once (see section 13).
3. **Complete your safeguarding training.** Take the free Safeguarding in Tennis Together (Officials) online course (see section 19). It is valid for three years and earns you two CPD credits.
4. **Explore the Official Hub.** Log in and look around - this is where you manage your licence, track your CPD, submit availability, keep your work cards and find resources.
5. **Order your uniform.** Purchase your official uniform from the webshop (see section 15) in good time for your first event.
6. **Sign up for your first event.** Watch for the email telling you the online calendar is live, then submit your availability. Signing up early helps you put your new skills into practice. For Referees and Court Supervisors, contact local competition organisers to see what work is available in your area.
7. **Request a mentor.** Contact the ABTO Training and Development Panel to be paired with an experienced official who can support you (abto.training.development@gmail.com).
8. **Connect with the community.** Ask to join the ABTO Facebook group – and, for Referees, your local Referee WhatsApp group – to stay in touch with fellow officials.
9. **Prepare for the day itself.** Before your first event, re-read the materials and procedures from your course and pack your equipment using the checklist for your role.
10. **Know the standards.** Familiarise yourself with the LTA Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Code, which all licensed officials agree to uphold.

> **Top Tip:** Don't try to do everything at once. If you only do three things this week, make them the first three on the list above.

2. About the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA)

The LTA is the National Governing Body for tennis and padel in Great Britain, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man. It is responsible for developing and promoting both sports, safeguarding their integrity, and helping as many people as possible to play and enjoy them.

The LTA runs and supports a network of almost 10,000 approved tournaments for players of all ages. The cornerstones of these tournaments are the grass court major events leading up to The Championships, Wimbledon, including the Lexus Nottingham Open, the Lexus Ilkley Open, the Lexus Birmingham Open, the HSBC Championships and the Lexus Eastbourne Open.

The LTA is responsible for the recruitment, training and selection of officials, including Referees, Court Supervisors, Chair Umpires, Line Umpires and Match Assistants. It administers the Officials' Licence Scheme, which all individuals wanting to officiate in the UK are required to join (see section 4 for further details).

3. About the Association of British Tennis Officials (ABTO)

Thank you for electing to become a member of the Association of British Tennis Officials (ABTO). ABTO is here to support you. We are the voice of British officials, and our role is to represent and safeguard your interests. While the LTA is ultimately responsible for your officiating licence, ABTO provides many additional benefits to help and support you at every stage of your officiating career. Becoming a member of ABTO is free and comes with no obligations from you, other than your consent.

Despite our name, ABTO represents and supports both tennis and padel officials. Working closely with the LTA, ABTO supports both on and off court officials across all aspects of officiating, ranging from training and selections through to grading, recruitment, mentoring and welfare. You can find out more about what we do here.

ABTO hosts several webinars throughout the year, called The Conversation. The webinars are designed to support officials in all areas of officiating, ranging from the application of the rules to developing the softer skills required in officiating. You can view previous editions of The Conversation here.

Recognising our officials – the ABTO Awards

Each year ABTO presents awards to recognise the contribution of its members. Any ABTO member can be nominated; the ABTO Management Committee shortlists the nominations and ABTO members vote on the recipients, who are announced at the ABTO AGM. The awards include the Alastair Wotherspoon Award for long-standing service to ABTO, the ABTO Up and Coming On-Court Official and ABTO Up and Coming Off-Court Official for emerging officials, the ABTO Umpire of the Year, ABTO Referee of the Year and ABTO Court Supervisor of the Year Awards and the ABTO Way award. To nominate a colleague or find out more, email abto.awards@gmail.com or visit the ABTO Awards page.

4. The LTA Officials' Licence Scheme

To be eligible to officiate in the UK, you will need to hold a valid licence, which is granted when you join the LTA Officials' Licence Scheme. Officials are required to have completed and passed either a Referee Course, an LTA Umpire Course or attended a Court Supervisor Course before being able to join the scheme. You will also need to have undergone a successful criminal record check in the last 12 months through the LTA.

Once you become a member of the scheme, you will be required to comply with the minimum annual CPD (continuous personal development) requirement of 8 credits to retain your licence. This may be completed by attending courses, workshops and/or online learning.

The benefits of joining the licensing scheme include:

- Free membership of the Association of British Tennis Officials (ABTO);
- The ability to apply for selections via the LTA's online tournament calendar;
- The opportunity to participate in courses and online training as part of your CPD requirements as an official;
- Access to the officials' Wimbledon ballot;
- Personal accident, public liability and employers' liability insurance;
- Discounts at Pro:Direct;
- A 24/7 wellbeing helpline;
- Access to free legal and tax advice through BASELINE - a business advice support line; and
- Access to the LTA Officiating Shop.

5. Starting out as a Court Supervisor



A Court Supervisor is an off-court official who supports the Referee with the running of larger tournaments. A Court Supervisor will be assigned several courts to watch and will help to ensure that play runs smoothly by handling any on-court disputes as they arise and managing player behaviour using the code of conduct as necessary.

To become a Court Supervisor you must complete a Court Supervisor course (currently available online) or be an accredited Referee.

A newly qualified Court Supervisor will receive a CS2 Grade and can be assigned to court supervise at Grade 3 to Grade 7 regional – county tournaments or Mini Tennis tournaments at all grades. Court Supervisors can apply for both tennis and padel events (see section 8).

Set up how you will be paid. Court Supervisors should complete the New Supplier Form for LTA selections, or send an invoice if they are engaged by another referee or organisation.

5.1. What to expect on your first day as a Court Supervisor

Prior to your first event as a Court Supervisor, it is advisable to review the materials provided during the Court Supervisor course and re-familiarise yourself with the procedures. On the day, you should arrive at the venue no later than 30 minutes before the scheduled start of play, unless directed otherwise. Always make a note of the contact number of the Referee to inform them if you are delayed.

You are required to wear official uniform at all tournaments (see section 15 for details). If you do not have the correct uniform in time for your first assignment, ensure that you wear clothing that is as similar as possible (navy blue polo, beige/chino trousers etc.) and try to acquire the official uniform in time for your second assignment.

On arrival at the venue, report to the Referee who will share with you all the information that you need to know, such as the order of play, the rota for Court Supervisors etc. Listed below are the items that you should remember to take with you:

- Copy of ‘LTA Competition Regulations’ and/or other tournament rules and regulations
- Copy of ‘Procedures for Court Supervisors’
- Clipboard
- Stopwatch - always check that this is working before the event
- Pencil(s), rubber, sharpener and other basic items of stationery
- Coin
- Tape measure
- A Court Supervisors’ backpack or court bag to keep all the equipment you require on the day

TOP TIP FOR COURT SUPERVISORS

Sangeeta, ABTO Hon. Secretary and White Badge Referee

Before the event: The scenarios you’re most likely to come across are disputed line calls and disputed scores. Make sure you’re familiar and confident with how to handle each one.

During and after: Talk to other officials about situations that have come up on court. Reflect on whether you handled each one the right way and think about what you could do differently next time.

6. Starting out as a Referee

After passing the Referee Course and becoming a licensed official, you will receive an R4 referee grade and can apply to organise and referee Grade 5, Grade 6 and Grade 7 competitions locally, such as Mini Tennis and Matchplays at your local venue, or local open tournaments. These grades cover padel as well as tennis competitions; to referee padel events you will first need to complete the online padel conversion course (see section 8). You may also be eligible to be selected to referee at Grade 4 tournaments and to court supervise at higher graded tournaments. Most work for new Referees is sourced through local competition organisers or local venues. As a Referee, you are also able to apply to the LTA to sanction a tournament at your local venue, and this can be a good way to start gaining experience.

Set up how you will be paid. Referees should complete the New Supplier Form for LTA selections, or send an invoice if they are engaged by another organisation.

On becoming a licensed official, you will have access to the Official Hub, where you can apply to be selected for tournaments as a referee or a court supervisor. As a newly qualified Referee, you should try to sign up for events as soon as possible to put into practise the skills that you have just acquired.



6.1. What to expect on your first day as a Referee

Once you have been assigned a tournament, and before the day of the event, it is advisable to read through the materials and guides that were issued at the course and prepare yourself for your first tournament.

On the day, arrive at the venue in plenty of time, and a minimum of 1 hour before the start time. Always leave plenty of time for your journey in case of problems and ensure that you have all the required contact telephone numbers so that you can let the appropriate person know if you will be delayed.

On arrival at the venue, report to the Duty Manager or the Event Organiser, who will inform you of any relevant information, such as where the fire exits are located, catering etc. If Court Supervisors will be attending the event, make sure that you brief them accordingly by sharing all the necessary

information, such as the order of play, Court Supervisor rota etc. If you have Umpires working at your tournament, liaise with the Umpires Manager to identify which matches will be chaired. You should also provide the Manager with an order of play, give details of the format of the matches, explain what catering is available and communicate with the Manager throughout the day in case there are any changes.

Always ensure that you have all the necessary equipment with you to perform your duties to the best of your ability. Here is the list of items that you should take to your events as a Referee (some of these may vary depending on the venue and type of tournament):

Essential

- Laptop with TTP software (Tennis Tournament Planner) or LP (League Planner) as appropriate
- Copies of draw sheets to put on the wall/board
- Paper copies of player rosters including contact numbers as a back-up to the computer
- Sign-in sheet
- Mobile phone and charger
- Copy of 'LTA Competition Regulations' and/or other tournament rules and regulations
- LTA Mandatory Notices
- Clipboard
- Stopwatch - always check that this is working before the event
- Pencil(s), rubber, sharpener and other basic items of stationery
- Tennis or padel balls, as appropriate (it is wise to have a back-up supply in case there is an issue at the venue)
- Coin
- Tape measure

Desired

- Printer
- Copy of 'Procedures for Referees'
- Copy of 'Procedures for Court Supervisors' (if any are working at the tournament)
- Court bag - not mandatory but can be very handy

7. Starting out as an Umpire

Once you have passed the Umpire course, you will become an L3/U3 Umpire and are eligible to join the LTA Officials' Licence Scheme (see section 4). Once you have acquired your licence, you will have access to the Official Hub, where you can apply to be selected for tournaments relevant to your grade. You should try to sign up for events as soon as possible in order to put into practise the skills that you have just learned. As a U3 Chair Umpire, you will be eligible to chair matches at non-professional events only; you can also apply for professional tournaments however you will only be eligible to work as a Line Umpire at these events. Umpiring is currently a tennis-only role: there are no umpiring opportunities in padel at present (see section 8).

Set up how you will be paid. Umpires should provide bank details as directed by the LTA so that payments can be made by BACS.

7.1. What to expect on your first day as an Umpire

Once you have been selected for an event, you will be notified by the LTA Officiating team. The selection email will direct you to the Official Hub, where you will need to confirm your selection and where you will also find details of the Manager as well as the address of the venue and the start time.

The Manager will be aware that you are a new Umpire but it is advisable to contact them in advance to let them know that this will be your first day (or make sure you mention this to them when you meet them on the day).

You should arrive at the venue no later than 30 minutes before the start time, unless you have been advised otherwise. Make sure that you have the contact details of the Manager so that you can let them know if you are running late.

You are required to wear official uniform at all tournaments (see section 15 for details). If you do not have the correct uniform in time for your first day, ensure that you wear clothing that is as similar as possible (navy blue polo, beige/chino trousers etc.) and try to acquire the official uniform in time for your second day.

The Manager will try to ensure that you are not on court for the first session so that you can watch the more experienced umpires in action before stepping on court. The Manager will also assign you to chair a match (or matches) of a standard appropriate to your experience. Before the day of the event, make sure that you read through the materials and guides that were issued at the course and prepare yourself for your first chair.

Matches at non-professional tournaments will usually be umpired in one of the following two formats: 'one plus one' (one Chair Umpire and one Line Umpire) or 'one plus two' (one Chair Umpire and two Line Umpires). In both cases as a Line Umpire you will cover one side line, including through the net, and the centre service line, including through the net. As a Chair Umpire, you will make all baseline calls, service line calls and, for one plus one matches, will cover the side line closest to you.

At the end of the set, as a Line Umpire you may be required to measure the net, so remember to bring a tape measure with you, and be sure that you know the correct height of the net.

Although it is difficult to know how long the day will last, you are expected to stay at the tournament for the duration of all matches. You should therefore wait until you have been released by the Manager before leaving.



Always ensure that you have all the equipment that you will need as an Umpire, including:

- Clipboard
- Stopwatch - always check that this is working before the event (and does not beep)
- Pencil(s), rubber, sharpener
- Copy of 'ITF Rules of Tennis'
- Copy of 'LTA Competition Regulations'
- Coin
- Tape measure
- Court bag - not mandatory but can be very handy
- Plasters, tissues, zip ties (for any emergencies or unexpected situations!)

TOP TIPS FOR UMPIRES

Jed, White Badge Chair Umpire

Prepare the night before. Re-read the relevant rules, procedures and tournament information so they are fresh in your mind.

Arrive early. It gives you time to settle in, get focused and reduce any nerves before play starts.

Keep learning. At the end of each day, note one thing you did well and one thing you would do differently next time.

8. Officiating in Padel

The LTA is the National Governing Body for padel as well as tennis, and padel officiating in Britain is still developing. There are currently no padel-specific grades, and Referee is the only padel-specific officiating role. Here is what that means for you, depending on your role:

- **Referees:** qualified tennis Referees can take an online conversion course that allows them to referee at padel events.
- **New to officiating:** a new in-person Padel Referee qualification course is being rolled out for those who would like to start their officiating journey in padel.
- **Court Supervisors:** you can apply for both tennis and padel events.
- **Umpires:** there are currently no umpiring opportunities in padel.

We will update this pack as padel officiating develops. In the meantime, the LTA Officiating team (see section 21) can tell you more about padel courses and events.

9. Other Officiating or Related Roles

Control Desk

Control Desks operate at larger tournaments, and the role varies depending on the level of the event. Typical duties include player sign-in, booking practice courts, collecting balls and name cards for matches, reporting scores, staffing the player information desk, coordinating next-match times, and coordinating bags for umpires. Throughout the day you'll work closely with the Referee and lend a hand wherever it's needed – anything from squeegeeing and watering courts to keeping balls, water and bananas well stocked.

Match Assistant

Match Assistants provide on-court support at ATP and WTA Tour events. The role was introduced in 2025 and is currently open only to Line Umpires who can apply once they meet the selection requirements set out in the Line Umpire Grading Structure (see section 10.2). There is not yet a separate grading structure for Match Assistants.

Chief Umpire

The Chief Umpire oversees the team of umpires at an event, assigning matches and providing support and guidance to ensure consistent standards of umpiring throughout the tournament. They are a good point of contact if you need advice or reassurance during a match.

Review or Electronic Line Calling (ELC) Official

The Review or ELC Official is responsible for reviewing decisions where technology such as electronic line-calling is in use, stepping in to confirm or overturn calls when required. You are most likely to encounter this role at higher-level events using electronic officiating systems.

Non-officiating roles

It is worth noting that the Tournament Director and Competition Organiser are not officiating roles. Unlike the Referee, Court Supervisor, Umpire and other roles covered in this pack, they do not require an officiating qualification, and holding one of these positions alone does not make you eligible for ABTO membership.

Tournament Director

The Tournament Director has overall responsibility for the running of the event, overseeing everything from operations and venue logistics to budgets and stakeholder relationships. They sit above the day-to-day officiating team and are accountable for the tournament as a whole.

Competition Organiser

The Competition Organiser handles the practical planning of a tournament or league, such as entries, scheduling and venue arrangements. They are often your first point of contact when sourcing local work, so it is worth getting to know your local Competition Organisers as you build up your officiating experience.

10. Progression as an Official – General Principles

We appreciate that everyone has their own individual aspirations in terms of how far and how quickly they wish to progress as an official, so the grading structures have been designed to provide a clear pathway through the various grades. It is worth taking the time to familiarise yourself with the relevant grading structures; these set out what is required at each grade, how to be promoted to the next grade and the types of tournaments that you are eligible to officiate at. All grading information can be found in the Official Hub (in the Resources section).

The current grades are as follows:

	Referee	Court Supervisor	Line Umpire	Chair Umpire
International grades	A (gold badge) B (silver badge) D (white badge)	-	-	A (gold badge) B (silver badge) C (bronze badge) D (white badge)
National grades	R1 to R4	CS1 to CS2	L1 to L3	U1 to U3
Trainee grade	RT	-	LT	ZT

All policies relating to grading are determined by the LTA in consultation with the ABTO Grading Panel. The LTA is also responsible for annually reviewing whether each official has met the criteria for retention at a grade or whether they are due to be re-graded. Grading reviews take place towards the end of each year. If you are unable to meet the requirements for retention of your grade because of exceptional circumstances that have affected your ability to officiate during the year, you should notify the LTA Officiating Manager (Matthew Morrissey - matthew.morrissey@lta.org.uk) in writing as soon as practicable during the year, and before the grading review takes place. This will enable your circumstances to be taken into consideration when making decisions in relation to your grade.

You may also wish to contact the ABTO Grading Panel (abto.grading@gmail.com) who can assist and advise on any grading matters. ABTO's role is to represent members by continuing to review and, when necessary, challenge grading decisions to ensure that they are fair and that grading structures are transparent.

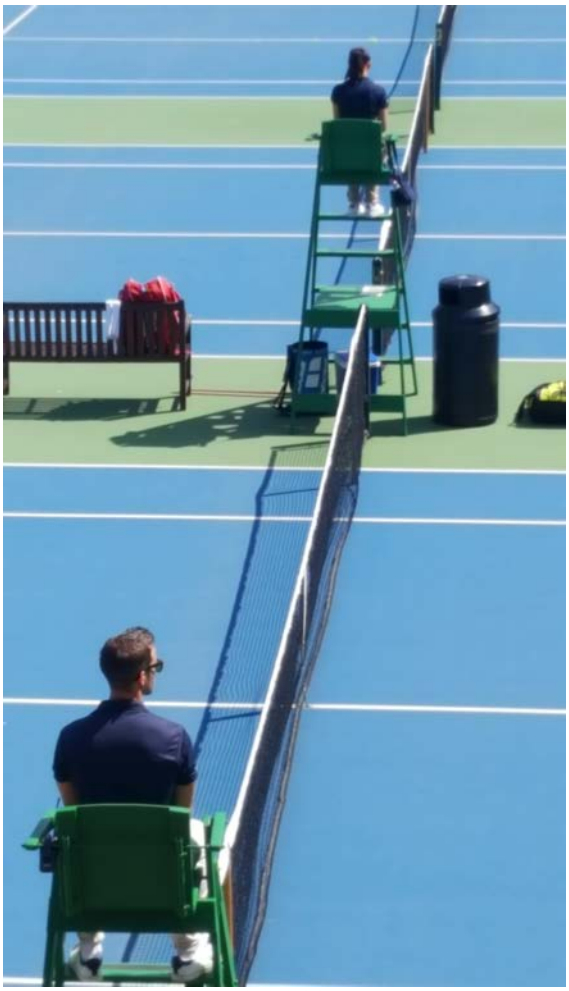
10.1. Progression as a Referee or Court Supervisor

As a newly qualified Referee or Court Supervisor, you should look to sign up for as many events as possible to start gaining experience as an R4 Referee or CS2 Court Supervisor. It is also important that you maintain an up-to-date online record of your work cards on the Official Hub, as this will be reviewed at the grading review at the end of the year. Importantly, your work cards must be completed **by 15 November each year** in order for them to be considered as part of your retention, promotion or re-grading criteria.

Promotion to the next grade (R3 or CS1) is based on the number of days worked, maintaining an up-to-date online Referee work record, any assessments that may have been carried out and, in the case of Referees, satisfactory use of LTA tournament software (TTP).

The next stage of progression for Referees (from R3 to R2) is to attend and pass the LTA Regional Referee Course, and to progress to R1 you will need to attend and pass the LTA National Referee Course. Selection for courses is based on the number of days and tournaments worked as a Referee. Please refer to the Referee grading structure for further details.

10.2. Progression as an Umpire



Each tournament that you work at is a learning opportunity, and you should look to apply the lessons learned from previous events as you build on your experience. When you work at a non-professional event as a trainee, the Manager will be aware that you are a new Umpire and if time allows, they will observe you throughout the day and provide feedback. The Manager should complete an Umpire Report Form and take you through this at the end of the day (if there is no time to go through the form on the day, the Manager will email it to you as soon thereafter as possible). This will highlight the areas that you are doing well and suggest areas for improvement. The form will then be sent to the LTA Officiating team. You should take the opportunity to ask questions of the Manager and more experienced Umpires throughout the day, and where possible, try to complete a scorecard under the guidance of another official.

The next stage of progression as a Chair Umpire is to attend and pass the Professional Tennis Course. Selections for these courses are based on the number of matches that you have chaired to date, and on the feedback received. The Professional Tennis Course is a 2-day course and will test you on the rules of tennis and will also include a practical on-court session. Once you have passed the course, your chair grade will become U2 and you will be eligible to chair matches at the early stages of professional tennis tournaments. You can find more information in the Chair Umpire Grading structure.

Progression as a Line Umpire is based on the number of days worked and on the Line Umpire assessments that you receive at professional events. As an L3/U3 Umpire, you can apply for professional tournaments where you will be eligible to work as a Line Umpire only.

Experienced Line Umpires will also have the opportunity to apply to work as Match Assistants at ATP/WTA Tour events (see section 9). This role was introduced in 2025, and some of our Conversation webinars include helpful information about it. The requirements for selection as a Match Assistant are set out in the Line Umpire Grading Structure, which you can find here.

10.3. LTA Development Groups

The LTA has created and runs a number of development groups, the aim of which is to maximise the potential of promising officials. These include the White Badge/U1 Chair Umpire Development Group, the U2 Chair Umpire Development Group and the U3 Chair Umpire Development Group. Individuals are invited to join the groups by the LTA and the criteria for membership are determined by the LTA.

10.4. Continuous Personal Development (CPD)

Continuous Personal Development (CPD) is an ongoing process and continues throughout your career as an official, no matter what your level. Not only does it enable you to maintain and enhance the knowledge and skills you need to be a proficient official, but it also helps to raise the standard of officiating in the UK.

Online courses and tests are available on the Official Hub, and these are updated annually. Successful completion of each test provides licence credits that count towards your annual requirement (as mentioned in section 4 of this document, you are required to comply with the minimum annual CPD requirement of 8 credits to retain your licence). Officials are required to complete the most appropriate test(s) for their role and grade each year to stay up to date with the rules of tennis. The tests include topics such as Rules of Tennis, Tournament Software and tests specific to different officiating roles (refereeing, court supervising, umpiring). There is currently no padel rules test.

Please note that you can only take a test once. When you have completed a test, you will not be able to book onto it again.

In addition to the online CPD tests, ABTO organises webinars throughout the year on a range of different topics to help officials develop their skills. Links to previous webinars can be found here, and look out for emails with details of future webinars.

11. Selections

As a newly qualified official, you should try to sign up for events as soon as possible to put into practise the skills that you have just acquired. Selections are managed through the online calendar, which is accessed via the Official Hub.

You should look out for email notifications from the LTA Officiating team letting you know when the online calendar for a specified time period has gone live. The email will also let you know what the deadline is for submitting availability.

We understand that for many people officiating is a hobby that fits in with work and other commitments, so it is useful to offer your time wisely. For example, if you can consider travelling a little further, this may help with being selected, especially if your 'local' tournament is likely to be oversubscribed. London events tend to be heavily oversubscribed, so if you are London based, you may need to consider applying for events further afield. Likewise, if you are limited in terms of when you can officiate, you should consider applying for all tournaments in the same week to maximise your chances of selection.

As an L3 Line Umpire, you are able to apply for professional tournaments however please be aware that you will only be selected for the first day(s) of the event. Do not apply just for the end of a professional tournament, as you will not be selected.

It is also recommended that you look out for emails sent from the LTA Officiating team asking for last minute availability, as this can be a good way of securing additional selections.

Once you have been successfully selected for a tournament, you will be notified by email and will be directed to the online calendar where you will need to confirm your selection. Further details of the event (location, start time, details of the Manager) will also be available via the calendar. Remember

that if you are unable to honour a selection after you have accepted it, please withdraw as soon as possible so that a colleague can be selected to replace you. If you are working an event, you will receive an email closer to the day giving specific information, including report time. Please ensure you respond to this email to confirm your attendance to the Chief Umpire, Referee or Court Supervisor.

In addition to the events posted on the LTA's online calendar, Referees and Court Supervisors are encouraged to find work from sources other than the LTA calendar, for example through local competition organisers or venues. Another option is for Referees to apply to the LTA to sanction your own tournaments at your local venue.

The ABTO Selections Panel's remit is to support its members by reviewing all selections to ensure that they are evenly assigned, and the Panel is available to advise and assist members with matters relating to selections. Should you wish to discuss any matters relating to your selection, the Panel can be contacted by email on abto.selections@gmail.com.

12. Mentoring

Receiving support and guidance is especially important during the first few years of your officiating career, and we appreciate that as a new official there will be many instances when the support of another more experienced official would be helpful. For this reason, we offer all new officials (or those officials transitioning into a new role) the opportunity to participate in the ABTO Mentoring Programme. By pairing mentees with more experienced mentors, we hope to provide a supportive environment for you to develop as an official. Any new official who feels that they would benefit from being mentored should get in touch with the ABTO Training and Development Panel (abto.training.development@gmail.com).

13. Fees, Expenses and Contractor Status

The fees and expenses paid to officials are set out in the Fees and Expenses Structures documents, which can be found in the Resources section of the Official Hub.

Referees and Court Supervisors are required to issue invoices for their fees and expenses. Umpires working at non-professional tournaments will either be paid in cash on the day, or by BACS after the event. Umpires working at professional events will be required to show their receipts to the Chief Umpire on their last working day to confirm the amount due, and will be paid by BACS.

Contractor status and Right to Work (from 2027)

From 2027, all LTA Licensed Officials selected by LTA Officiating for events at any level, including The Championships, Wimbledon, will be engaged on a self-employed basis under a Provision of Services (POS) arrangement. Before you can be considered for a 2027 selection you will need to:

- complete the LTA Contractor Form, choosing whether to provide your services as a Sole Trader or through a Personal Service Company (PSC) / Limited Company; and
- complete an online Right to Work check through TrustID, the LTA's verification provider. Have your passport or other government-issued ID to hand.

Both are free and only need to be done once. You will then be sent a POS agreement covering the whole calendar year, which must be signed and returned before you do any work. It is renewed each

year, and work at The Championships, Wimbledon has its own separate agreement. The way you are paid does not change.

You do not need to set up a Limited Company: you can work as a Sole Trader. The LTA cannot give tax, financial or legal advice, but licensed officials can use the free Legal & Tax helpline (see the My Benefits page of the Official Hub) or take independent advice from an accountant or tax adviser. If your status changes, or you no longer have the right to work in the UK, you must tell the LTA immediately. Any questions can be sent to POSworkforce@lta.org.uk.

14. The ABTO Way

At ABTO we are committed to ensuring that officiating is a welcoming, positive and supportive environment. The way that we behave can make a big difference to how enjoyable officiating is and this in turn can impact our performance on and off the court.

Based on the five values of *inclusion*, *teamwork*, *integrity*, *passion* and *excellence*, we have defined a culture – called The ABTO Way – which sets out the behaviours that underpin each of these values.

ABTO members are asked to make a personal commitment to adopt and embrace The ABTO Way. By demonstrating the positive behaviours in our interactions with fellow officials, we can encourage others to do the same and do our bit to make officiating enjoyable for everyone.

You can read a full version of The ABTO Way in Appendix A.

15. Uniform

The official uniform is made up of the following items:

- Branded navy polo shirt
- Branded navy sweatshirt
- Branded navy rain jacket
- Beige/chino trousers (cargo, combat trousers and jeans are not to be worn)
- White (or predominantly white) trainers
- White socks
- Navy cap (optional)

Beige/chino shorts can also be worn in the summer, however for professional events this will be at the discretion of the Chief Umpire so please check in advance. Long-sleeved base layers can be worn under the polo shirt for additional warmth; these should be navy and unbranded.

All items of official uniform, as well as accessories such as caps and stopwatches can be purchased via the officials' webshop here.

If you do not have uniform in time for your first day as a trainee, ensure that you wear clothing that is as similar as possible to the official uniform (i.e. navy polo, beige/chino trousers etc.) and try to acquire the official uniform in time for your next event.

Please always keep uniform clean and smart and in a manner that portrays an appropriate image.

16. Use of Social Media

The use of social media to keep family and friends up-to-date with regards members' officiating activities is something that we value and are keen to support. We recognize that use of social media is popular amongst our community of officials, however, it is also important to acknowledge the potential risks. As such, we have written an ABTO Social Media Guidelines document, which can be found in the Official Hub here.

These guidelines are intended to help ABTO members make appropriate decisions about the safe, effective and professional use of social media, particularly in relation to officiating matters and activities. It also governs the use of social media in relation to non-officiating matters when a member clearly identifies their relationship with ABTO and/or the LTA through their social media activities.

The guidelines apply to all ABTO members and cover officials of all grades working at all levels of tournament. The guidelines also provide specific social media guidance in relation to The Championships, Wimbledon.

All members are expected to comply with these guidelines at all times, so it is important that you familiarize yourself with them before becoming active on social media.

16.1. ABTO Facebook Group

ABTO has set up its own Facebook group, which aims to promote the many positive aspects of officiating within ABTO, and showcase the hard work that members do throughout the year.

Anyone who is a member of ABTO is able to join the group. Once you have joined, you can post photos of members officiating, write brief updates from tournaments, recognise colleagues for any notable achievements or post other items of interest.

All posts will need to be approved first so when posting anything to the group, please follow these simple rules:

- Be respectful at all times and avoid anything that could portray officiating in a negative light;
- Avoid anything that could cast doubt on members' impartiality, particularly if any players are included in a photo of members at events;
- Do not share other members' group posts to your own Facebook profile; and
- Always ensure that you are complying with the ABTO Social Media Guidelines, as referred to in section 16 above.

To join the ABTO Facebook group, please e-mail a request to any one of the following:

- Sangeeta Arora – omjaikali@hotmail.com
- Selena Coburn – selena.coburn@gmail.com
- Sophie Kitson – sophiekitson@talktalk.net

Once your details have been verified you will be sent an e-mail invitation to join.

Please note that the Facebook group is not intended to replace any existing methods of communication, and any member who does not wish to join will not be disadvantaged in any way. All

formal notifications and official communications will continue via emails from the LTA Officiating team, from ABTO and/or on the Official Hub.

17. Official Hub

This is the main tool that all officials use to access a breadth of information including details of selections, assessments, grading structures, rulebooks and contact details of other officials. There is a separate ABTO section on the Hub, where you will find details of ABTO webinars, the ABTO mentoring programme and lots of other helpful information.

18. Change of circumstances

Having become a newly licensed official, we hope that you will stay with ABTO for many years to come. However, we understand that there may come a time in the future when you need to cease being an active official, whether temporarily or permanently, perhaps due to a change in your personal circumstances.

In this situation, we ask that you write to the ABTO Honorary Secretary (abto.secretary@gmail.com) to inform them of your decision. If you still hold an LTA Officials' Licence you will continue to receive communications from the LTA until your licence expires. If you wish to cancel your licence with immediate effect, please include the LTA Officiating Manager Matthew Morrissey (matthew.morrissey@lta.org.uk) in your email to the ABTO Secretary.

In the event that your circumstances change again, and you would like to return to officiating, please don't hesitate to contact the ABTO Secretary and Matthew Morrissey, who will guide you through the steps required to do so.

Please also remember to tell the LTA straight away if your contractor status changes (for example, from Sole Trader to a Limited Company) or if you no longer have the right to work in the UK (see section 13).

19. Safeguarding

Safeguarding is one of the most important responsibilities you carry as an official. Our sport should be a safe and enjoyable environment for everyone, and officials play a key part in protecting children and vulnerable adults at the events they work at.

Before you can renew your licence – and ideally before your first event – you should complete the free Safeguarding in Tennis Together (Officials) online course. It takes only a short time, is valid for three years, and earns you two CPD credits towards your annual requirement.

Safeguarding is not only about formal training. As an official you should always be alert to the welfare of those around you, model good behaviour, and know how to raise a concern. If you ever see or hear something that worries you about the safety or wellbeing of a child or adult at risk, report it promptly – never assume that someone else will.

You can report a concern here.

If you would like advice and support before contacting the LTA you can call the NSPCC on 0808 800 5000, the police or your local authority. If you are a child or young person you can also contact Childline on 0800 1111. If you have any problems completing the form or are unsure of whether to report something, you can contact us at safeguarding@lta.org.uk.

Emergencies

In an emergency and/or if you are concerned that someone is at immediate risk of harm, please call 999 without delay.

You can find further safeguarding guidance and resources in the Official Hub.

20. Welfare and Support – If Something Goes Wrong

Officiating is hugely rewarding, but there will be days that test you – a difficult decision, an unhappy player or parent, or a match that does not go smoothly. This is a normal part of officiating and it happens to everyone, however experienced. What matters is that you know you are never on your own.

If you have a difficult experience at an event:

- **Speak to the Referee, Manager or Chief Umpire on the day.** They are there to support you and can step in if a situation escalates.
- **Talk to your mentor afterwards.** Reflecting on what happened with an experienced official is one of the best ways to learn and to put it in perspective.
- **Contact the relevant ABTO Panel or Group.** Representing and supporting members is exactly what ABTO is here for – whether your concern is about a selection, a grading decision, or how you were treated, you can reach the Management Committee at abto.committee@gmail.com, or see section 21 below for the contact details of the various panels and groups.

Your wellbeing matters to us. Please never let one bad experience put you off – reach out, and let the community help you move forward.

21. Contact Details

The LTA Officiating team and the ABTO Management Committee are here to help answer any queries and provide further guidance as required. We can be contacted as below:

Matthew Morrissey
LTA Officiating Manager
020 8487 7047
matthew.morrissey@lta.org.uk

Malgorzata Grzyb
ABTO Chair
07976 836690
abto.committee@gmail.com

ABTO Committee Chair	abto.committee@gmail.com
ABTO Secretary	abto.secretary@gmail.com
ABTO Treasurer	abto.treasurer@gmail.com
ABTO Grading Panel	abto.grading@gmail.com
ABTO Selections Panel	abto.selections@gmail.com
ABTO Training & Development Panel	abto.training.development@gmail.com
ABTO Reward & Recognition	abto.awards@gmail.com
ABTO Welfare	abto.welfare@gmail.com
ABTO Diversity & Inclusion	abto.committee@gmail.com
ABTO Data Protection	abtodataprotection@gmail.com

Details of all other ABTO Management Committee members can be found in the Official Hub.

22. And finally…

Once again congratulations on becoming a licensed official. Officiating can be challenging but it is also very rewarding and there are plenty of exciting opportunities ahead of you. We hope that you will enjoy being part of our community for many years to come and look forward to seeing you at the various events taking place across the country.

We wish you the very best of luck with your officiating.

Appendix A: The ABTO Way

THE ABTO WAY

A culture of **VALUES** and **BEHAVIOURS** for ABTO

INCLUSION



We truly value people's differences and believe they make us stronger

KEY WORDS
- Belonging
- Respect
- Understanding

HELPFUL BEHAVIOURS
- ✓ We welcome all and all are welcome
- ✓ We recognise that everyone is different
- ✓ We treat everyone as we would wish to be treated
- ✓ We recognise that everyone has a contribution to make

UNHELPFUL BEHAVIOURS
- ✗ We allow constraints to be barriers
- ✗ We lack tolerance of others and do not accept differences
- ✗ We are narrow minded and self- centred

TEAMWORK



We work together to grow British tennis officiating

KEY WORDS
- Togetherness
- Understanding
- Communication

HELPFUL BEHAVIOURS
- ✓ We trust, respect and support colleagues and team mates
- ✓ We are prepared to ask for and offer help
- ✓ We share knowledge to promote tennis officiating
- ✓ We put ourselves into the shoes of others
- ✓ We communicate positively
- ✓ We encourage colleagues to enjoy their successes and celebrate with them

UNHELPFUL BEHAVIOURS
- ✗ We perpetuate unfounded information
- ✗ We are overly competitive and jealous of the success of others
- ✗ We are insular, remote and unapproachable

INTEGRITY



We take responsibility for our actions and do what is right

KEY WORDS
- Honesty
- Courage
- Fairness

HELPFUL BEHAVIOURS
- ✓ We work to earn the trust of others
- ✓ We are genuine, open and honest
- ✓ We are impartial, transparent and fair
- ✓ We ensure our conduct reflects the highest standards
- ✓ We are courageous and call out conduct contrary to The ABTO Way
- ✓ We demonstrate integrity in our roles as ABTO members and officials

UNHELPFUL BEHAVIOURS
- ✗ We allow negative conduct to go unchallenged
- ✗ We act in a way that shows officiating in a bad light
- ✗ We disrespect the confidentiality of others

PASSION



We have an enthusiasm that makes everyone part of what we do

KEY WORDS
- Pride
- Inspiration
- Motivation

HELPFUL BEHAVIOURS
- ✓ We approach things with a positive mindset
- ✓ We inspire, enthuse and excite others
- ✓ We celebrate successes small and large
- ✓ We act as positive role models

UNHELPFUL BEHAVIOURS
- ✗ We are negative about things with no suggestions for improvement
- ✗ We are a drain on our colleagues

EXCELLENCE



We continually strive to be the best we can be

KEY WORDS
- Ambition
- Drive
- Learn

HELPFUL BEHAVIOURS
- ✓ We challenge ourselves and others to achieve
- ✓ We encourage and act on constructive feedback
- ✓ We recognise the need for change and improvement
- ✓ We are professional and organised
- ✓ We focus on getting things right
- ✓ We seek opportunities to learn and develop

UNHELPFUL BEHAVIOURS
- ✗ We fail to learn from our mistakes
- ✗ We don't listen
- ✗ We think we have nothing to learn
- ✗ We think there is no need for improvement

Issued: December 2021

Appendix B: Glossary of Grades and Acronyms

Officiating comes with its own shorthand. Here is a quick guide to the grades, roles and abbreviations you will come across in this pack and at your early events.

Organisations

Term	What it means
LTA	Lawn Tennis Association – the national governing body for tennis and padel in Great Britain, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man.
ABTO	Association of British Tennis Officials – the body that represents and supports officials and is here to look after your interests.
ITF	International Tennis Federation – the world governing body, whose Rules of Tennis you will apply on court.
ATP	Association of Tennis Professionals – the global governing body of the men's professional tennis circuits.
WTA	Women's Tennis Association – the main body that runs professional women's tennis tournaments around the world.
FIP	Fédération Internationale de Pádel (International Padel Federation) – the world governing body for padel.

Roles

Term	What it means
Referee	The official in overall charge of a tournament.
Court Supervisor	An off-court official who assists the Referee at larger tournaments by overseeing a group of courts.
Chair Umpire	The official who runs an individual match from the umpire's chair.
Line Umpire	An official who calls whether the ball is in or out on assigned lines.
Match Assistant	An on-court support role at ATP and WTA Tour events, currently open only to experienced Line Umpires. There is no separate Match Assistant grading structure yet.
Manager / Chief Umpire	The official who runs the team of umpires at a tournament and assigns matches ("Manager" at non-professional events, "Chief Umpire" at professional ones).

Grades (higher tiers are more senior)

Term	What it means
Referee: R4 – R1	R4 is the newly qualified grade, rising to R1. RT is a trainee grade.
Court Supervisor: CS2 – CS1	CS2 is the newly qualified grade, rising to CS1.
Chair Umpire: U3 – U1	U3 is newly qualified, rising to U1, then the international badges: D (white), C (bronze), B (silver), A (gold).
Line Umpire: L3 – L1	L3 is the newly qualified grade, rising to L1. LT is a trainee grade.

Tournament and match terms

Term	What it means
'A' / 'B' events	Categories of non-professional tournament that determine which grades of umpire can chair or line.
'One plus one' / 'one plus two'	Match cover with one Chair Umpire plus one (or two) Line Umpires.
Work cards	Your online record of the days you officiate, kept in the Official Hub (deadline: 15 November each year). For Referees and Court Supervisors only.
Official Hub	The LTA's online portal for licensing, selections, resources and contact details.

Everyday abbreviations

Term	What it means
CPD	Continuous Personal Development – the learning credits (8 a year) you need to keep your licence.
DBS	Disclosure and Barring Service – the criminal record check used in England and Wales.
PVG	Protecting Vulnerable Groups – the equivalent check in Scotland.
BACS	The bank-transfer system used to pay officials.
TTP	Tennis Tournament Planner – the LTA's tournament software.
LP	League Planner – software used for league competitions.
BASELINE	The free business, legal and tax advice line available to licensed officials.
POS	Provision of Services – the annual agreement under which officials selected by LTA Officiating are engaged from 2027.
PSC	Personal Service Company – a Limited Company through which an official can choose to provide their services.

Appendix C: Frequently Asked Questions

Below are the questions new officials ask most often, with a pointer to the section where you will find fuller detail. If your question is not covered here, the contacts in section 21 will be happy to help.

Joining and eligibility

I completed the LTA Competition Organiser Course – can I join ABTO?
Not on the basis of that course alone. The Competition Organiser and Tournament Director are non-officiating roles, so holding one does not by itself make you eligible for ABTO membership. ABTO membership is free and available when you join the LTA Officials' Licence Scheme as a licensed official – that is, once you have passed a Referee, Umpire or Court Supervisor course and hold a current criminal record check. If you go on to qualify in one of those officiating roles, you will be offered the opportunity to become an ABTO member at that point. Please note that when renewing your officiating licence each year, you will need to re-confirm your ABTO membership at the same time.

I officiated abroad and have now moved to the UK – how do I reach an equivalent grade here?
The UK grades and the Officials' Licence Scheme are specific to the LTA, so overseas experience is not carried across automatically. The best first step is to contact the LTA Officiating Manager, Matthew Morrissey (matthew.morrissey@lta.org.uk), who can advise on how your experience is recognised and what course or check you will need to become licensed here.

Is ABTO membership really free, and is it separate from my licence?
Yes. Membership is free and carries no obligations beyond your consent, and you can join when you take out your Officials' Licence, re-confirming your membership each year when you renew. The LTA looks after your licence; ABTO is your representative body, offering additional support, mentoring and welfare.

What is the difference between the LTA and ABTO?
The LTA is the national governing body – it runs the licence scheme, training, selections and grading. ABTO is the association that represents and supports officials, working alongside the LTA on grading, selections, mentoring and welfare. (See sections 2 and 3.)

Getting and keeping your licence

I've passed my course – how do I actually get licensed?
Once you hold a criminal record check (DBS in England and Wales, or PVG in Scotland) issued within the last 12 months and have completed safeguarding training within the last three years, you can join the LTA Officials' Licence Scheme through the Official Hub. You cannot be selected for events until your licence is active. (See section 4.)

How much does the licence cost?
The LTA Officials' Licence costs £28.00 per year.

Do I need a DBS or PVG check, and how often?
Yes. You need a successful criminal record check through the LTA, completed within the last 12 months, and it must be kept current – DBS in England and Wales, PVG in Scotland. If you stay licensed then this check lasts for three years, or alternatively you can register for the DBS update service.

What happens if I don't complete my 8 CPD credits in a year?
Eight credits is the minimum needed to retain your licence, so falling short can affect your licence and grade. If exceptional circumstances have prevented you from meeting the requirement, write to the LTA Officiating Manager during the year and before the grading review, so it can be taken into account.

Can I retake a CPD test if I don't pass it?
No – each test can be taken only once, so once you have completed it you cannot book onto it again. Make sure you choose the most appropriate test(s) for your role and grade. (See section 10.4.)

Getting work and selections

How do I get selected for events?
Selections are managed through the online calendar in the Official Hub. Look out for emails from the LTA Officiating team telling you the calendar is live, then submit your availability before the stated deadline. (See section 11.)

I keep missing out on selections – what can I do?
Popular events, especially in London, are often heavily oversubscribed. You can improve your chances by being willing to travel a little further, by applying for all tournaments in a given week, and by responding to last-minute availability requests from the LTA team. Feel free to contact the ABTO Selections Panel if you have any questions (abto.selections@gmail.com).

I'm a Referee or Court Supervisor – how do I find work locally?
As well as the LTA calendar, you are encouraged to source work through local competition organisers and venues. Referees can also apply to the LTA to sanction their own tournament at a local venue, which is a good way to build experience. (See section 6.)

I've accepted a selection but can no longer attend – what should I do?
Withdraw as soon as possible through the calendar, so a colleague can be selected in your place.

Can I officiate padel?
Yes, as a Referee or Court Supervisor. Qualified tennis Referees can take an online conversion course to referee padel events, and a new in-person Padel Referee course is being rolled out for people new to officiating. Court Supervisors can apply for both tennis and padel events. There are no padel umpiring opportunities or padel-specific grades at present. (See section 8.)

On the day

My uniform hasn't arrived in time for my first event – what should I wear?
Wear clothing as close to the official uniform as you can – a navy polo and beige/chino trousers – and aim to have the proper uniform for your next event. (See section 15.)

What time should I arrive?
Referees should arrive at least an hour before the start; Court Supervisors and Umpires no later than 30 minutes before, unless told otherwise. Always carry the Referee's or Manager's number so you can let them know if you are delayed.

It's my first event – should I tell anyone I'm new?
Yes. Managers will usually know, but it helps to mention it in advance or on arrival. At non-professional events they will often keep you off court for the first session so you can watch experienced officials first.

Getting paid

How and when will I be paid?
Fees and expenses follow the Fees and Expenses Structures in the Official Hub. Referees and Court Supervisors invoice for their fees; Umpires at non-professional events are paid in cash on the day or by BACS afterwards; Umpires at professional events confirm their receipts with the Chief Umpire and are paid by BACS. (See section 13.)

Set up your payment details once you are selected for an event – the New Supplier Form for Referees and Court Supervisors, or bank details for Umpires.

If your allocation is from another organiser outside of the LTA, they will advise how you get paid and may have different fees and expenses.

Do I need to set up a Limited Company to work as an official?
No. From 2027, officials selected by LTA Officiating are engaged on a self-employed basis, and you can choose to do this as a Sole Trader. You only need a Limited Company (Personal Service Company) if you wish to work through one, and any cost of setting one up is yours. (See section 13.)

What is the Right to Work check, and does it cost anything?
It is a quick online check, carried out through TrustID, that confirms you can legally work in the UK. It is free, only needs to be done once, and must be completed, along with the Contractor Form, before you can be considered for a 2027 selection. (See section 13.)

Progression and grading

How do I move up to the next grade?
It depends on your role, but broadly it is based on days worked, keeping your online work record up to date, any assessments, satisfactory use of TTP for Referees, and passing the relevant course for higher grades. (See section 10.)

When do grading reviews happen, and what is the work-card deadline?
Grading reviews take place towards the end of each year. Your work cards must be completed by 15 November to count towards retention, promotion or re-grading.

Illness or other circumstances stopped me officiating this year – what should I do?
Notify the LTA Officiating Manager in writing as soon as you can during the year and before the grading review, so your circumstances can be taken into account. You can also contact the ABTO Grading Panel for advice (abto.grading@gmail.com).

Support, welfare and taking a break

How do I get a mentor?
Contact the ABTO Training and Development Panel (abto.training.development@gmail.com) to be paired with an experienced official. (See section 12.)

I had a difficult experience at an event – who can I talk to?
Speak to the Referee, Manager or Chief Umpire on the day; talk it through with your mentor afterwards; and, if you need to, contact the relevant ABTO Panel or the Management Committee (abto.committee@gmail.com). Difficult days happen to everyone – you are never on your own. (See section 21.)

I need to step away from officiating for a while – what should I do?
Write to the ABTO Honorary Secretary (abto.secretary@gmail.com). If you want to cancel your licence straight away, copy in the LTA Officiating Manager. When you are ready to return, get in touch and they will guide you through the steps. (See section 18.)

Can I officiate at Wimbledon?
A range of officiating roles are used at The Championships, including Match Assistants, Chair Umpires (White Badge and above), Referee and Assistant Referee roles, Chief Umpire and assistant roles, and Electronic Line Calling (ELC) officials. Wimbledon sits at the very top of the officiating pathway, so you will first need to build up your experience at non-professional and then professional events at a lower level before you can be considered.

Can I get Wimbledon tickets?
Licensed officials get access to the officials' Wimbledon ballot, which is one of the benefits of the scheme.