



## Player Dispensation Guidelines

### Introduction

The Scottish Women's Football (SWF) Player Dispensation Application Process is a measure SWF Member Clubs may only take in **exceptional circumstances** whereby a registered player is unable to play at their own age group based on geography, medical or player development principles.

SWF encourages member Clubs to **carefully** read the below criteria and guidelines **before** submitting any dispensation applications. Applications must be made per player. Clubs who wish to submit any applications are also encouraged to approach their Youth Regional League Management Committee or League Administrator for support or advice on their application in advance of submission.

SWF **strongly discourages** annual applications and encourages clubs to use any approved dispensation application as an opportunity to create a suitable Player Development Plan detailing the player(s) footballing journey within the player pathway.

### Application Process (*See Appendix 1 for Process Map*)

It is the responsibility of the Strong Quality Growth (SQG) Committee to review all Player Dispensation Applications **from the 12's age group and upwards**, whose decision shall be **final and binding**. Applications for activity below 12's shall be considered on a case by case basis by the relevant football delivery partners and Youth Regional League Management Committees. The SQG Committee is comprised of the following representatives:

*Strong Quality Growth Board Director – Scottish Womens' Football*

*Shirley Martin – Scottish FA*

*Corrie Campbell – Scottish FA*

*Joanne Murphy – Scottish FA*

*Fiona Dainty – Regional Representative (West/South West)*

*Debbie Horn – Regional Representative (Central/South East)*

*David Davidson – Regional Representative (North/East)*

*Independent Expert – Dispensation Support Partner*

Member Clubs must **fully** complete the relevant Dispensation Application Form below which can be found on the SWF website:

**Play Up Application** – [https://scotwomensfootball.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Dispensation-Application-Form\\_Play-Up.doc](https://scotwomensfootball.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Dispensation-Application-Form_Play-Up.doc)

**Overage Application** – [https://scotwomensfootball.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Dispensation-Application-Form\\_Overage.doc](https://scotwomensfootball.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Dispensation-Application-Form_Overage.doc)

SWF/Player Dispensation Guidelines/V5/October2021

**Regional\***: Scottish Women's Football League, Scottish Women's Football Highlands & Islands League & Scottish Women's Football Youth Regional League

**Performance\***: Scottish Women's Football Premier League, Scottish Women's Football Championship & Scottish Women's Football League One

## **Application Criteria to Play Up**

For Season 2022, players **must** meet the below criteria to be eligible to apply\*:

***To apply to play 12's, a player must be born in 2013***

***To apply to play 14's, a player must be born in 2011***

***To apply to play 16's, a player must be born in 2009***

Applications to play up shall be considered on a **case by case basis** and shall be referred to the Youth Regional League Management Committee in first instance for a recommendation, before being considered by the SQG Committee.

*\*Please note that, for Season 2022, to aid the transition to the new Player Pathway, players who meet the above criteria **and** were registered with your club for Season 2021 shall be granted dispensation, subject to a fully completed application form. Please note, however, the below supplementary information.*

### ***Additional Important Information for Clubs | Play Up Criteria***

Players granted dispensation to play up **can only represent the team for which they have received dispensation for the duration of the season**. Players who wish to move back down should submit an application to the Youth Regional Management Committee.

### **If Play Up Applications are granted:**

- The dispensation applies to Season 2022 **only**
- The dispensation is granted for **all** Youth Competitions.
- A full list of players who have been granted dispensation to play up will be circulated to all League Administrators prior to the start of the season for League Administration purposes.
- Teams must ensure that the dispensation approval letter is evidenced within the match arrangements between teams.
- Teams must adhere to player movement restrictions as per competition rules.

## Application Criteria to Play as an Overage Player

For Season 2022, players **must** meet the below criteria to be eligible to apply:

To be eligible to apply to play 12's, players must be born in 2009

To be eligible to apply to play 14's, players must be born in 2007

To be eligible to apply to play 16's, players must be born in 2005

### **No Overage Player Dispensation Applications may be submitted for 18's.**

**Only** in exceptional circumstances, the SWF Board may consider applications for players more than one year older than the age appropriate group.

The application must **clearly** outline appropriate rationale for the player to remain at a younger age group based on one or both of the following criteria:

- **Medical/Player Development Principles** outlining the player's inability to compete at age appropriate group, illustrating that it is in the best interest of the player's development. Please note that it is required that any applications submitted based on a medical/player development principal **must provide independent medical or expert evidence of condition outlined in application.**
- Where a full pathway (12's-14's-16's-18's) isn't in place at a Club, applications will be considered - initially by the Youth Regional League Management Committee who shall make a recommendation to the Strong Quality Growth Committee - based on the rural location of the Club and necessary player travel arrangements, meaning there is **no alternative Club** for the player to play for at the appropriate age group **within a 20 mile radius of their home.** Please note that, for the purpose of calculating the 20 mile radius, the distance from the player's home address to the registered venue of the nearest Club will be calculated. Applicants should note the distance (in miles) of the closest three age appropriate teams from the player's home address and detail the required travel arrangements as instructed on the application form.

### **If Overage Applications are granted:**

- The overage player **can only play for the team they have received dispensation to represent for the duration of the season** (i.e. 15 year old given dispensation to play 14's **cannot** move between 16's & 14's, and must stay at 14's)
- Clubs must ensure that their team(s) have a **maximum of 1 overage player on the pitch at any given time at 12's level, a maximum of 2 at 14's level and a maximum of 2 at 16's level.**
- The dispensation applies to Season 2022 **only.**
- The dispensation is granted for the League and League Cup/Plate competitions **only – not** the Scottish Challenge Cup/Scottish Cup.

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- A full list of players who have been granted dispensation to play up will be circulated to all League Administrators prior to the start of the season.
- As instructed within the outcome letter, clubs should prepare to submit a Player Development Plan after 6 months, clearly detailing a suitable pathway for the player.
- Teams must ensure that the dispensation approval letter is evidenced within the match arrangements between teams.

## Dispensation Timeline | Season 2022 & Season 2022/23

From 2020, SWF started to run two seasons with different dates: **Regional\* season** (February-November) and **Performance\* season** (August-May). The below timeline outlines the key dispensation dates within each season.

The following timeline for dispensation applications will be strictly adhered to for the 2022 and 2022/23 seasons unless a unique case is presented by the applicant to evidence that a prior application was not possible:

**16<sup>th</sup> January 2022:** Player Dispensation Application Window closes for first half of Season 2022

**16<sup>th</sup> January 2022:** Mid-season deadline for clubs to submit Player Dispensation Applications for Season 2021/22

**Wc 17<sup>th</sup> January 2022:** Youth Regional League Management Committees (LMCs) shall review all relevant player dispensation applications, as provided by SWF, and communicate recommendations to SWF League Administrator (LA) for Strong Quality Growth Committee (SQG) ratification.

**Wc 24<sup>th</sup> January 2022:** SQG meet to review all relevant dispensation applications

**Wc 24<sup>th</sup> January 2022:** SQG meet to review all relevant dispensation applications/recommendations from the Youth LMCs

**Wc 31<sup>st</sup> January 2022:** Clubs advised of outcome of dispensation applications

**Wc 31<sup>st</sup> January 2022:** Clubs advised of outcome of dispensation applications

**27<sup>th</sup> June – 4<sup>th</sup> July 2022:** Player Dispensation Application Window for second half of Season 2022

**27<sup>th</sup> June – 4<sup>th</sup> July 2022:** Player Dispensation Application Window for first half of Season 2022/23

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**Wc 4<sup>th</sup> July 2022:** Youth Regional League Management Committees (LMCs) shall review all relevant player dispensation applications, as provided by SWF, and communicate recommendations to SWF League Administrator (LA) for Strong Quality Growth Committee (SQG) ratification.

**Wc 11<sup>th</sup> July 2022:** SQG meet to review all relevant dispensation applications

**Wc 11<sup>th</sup> July 2022:** SQG meet to review all relevant dispensation applications/recommendations from the Youth LMCs

**Wc 18<sup>th</sup> July 2022:** Clubs advised of outcome of dispensation applications

**Wc 18<sup>th</sup> July 2022:** Clubs advised of outcome of dispensation applications

## **Appendix 1 – Dispensation Application Process Map**

Key:

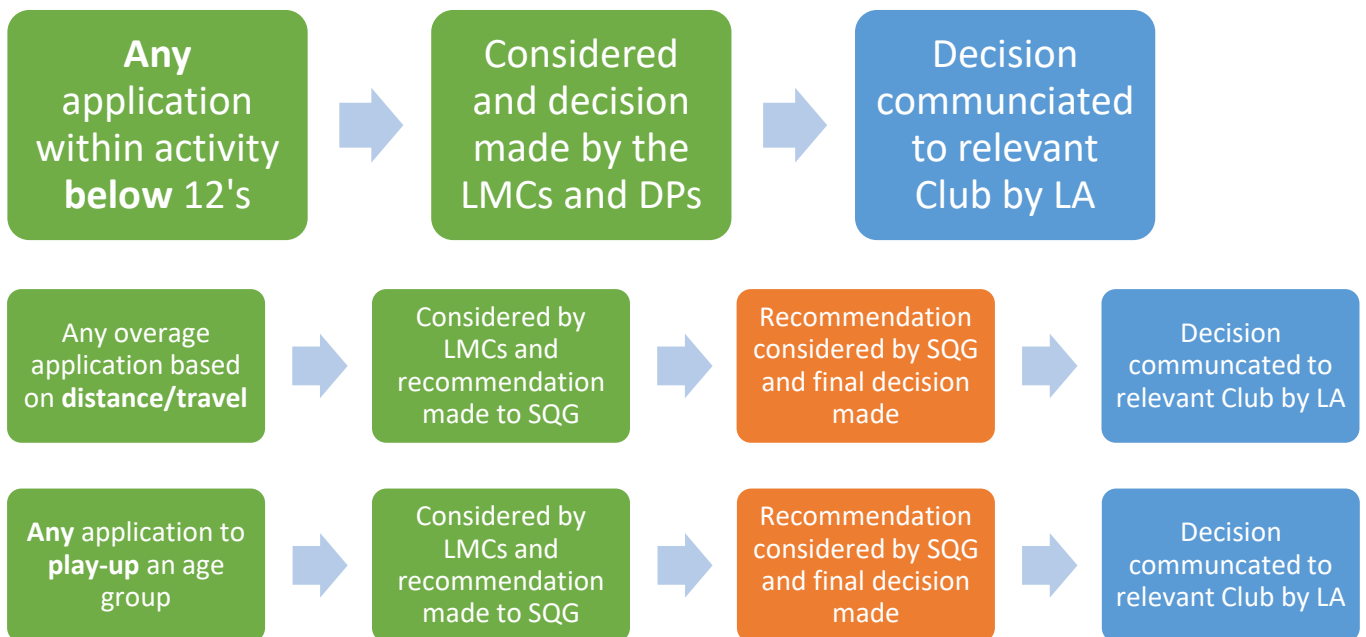
*Youth Regional League Management Committees (LMCs)*

*Delivery Partners (DPs)*

*SWF League Administrator (LA)*

*Strong Quality Growth Committee (SQG)*

**Youth League Management Committee based applications are as follows:**



**Strong Quality Growth Committee based applications are as follows:**



**Please note that decisions made shall be final and binding and are not appealable**

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