



Specially Featured Entertainment (“SFE”) Tariff Consultation

Summary of consultation responses

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1. INTRODUCTION

In April 2025 PPL began a twelve-week consultation on its provisional views for a new Specially Featured Entertainment (“SFE”) tariff. This document summarises the responses received, sets out PPL’s conclusions and then explains what will happen next.

The aim of the consultation was to invite individual licensees and representative bodies to review and comment on PPL’s provisional views.

The consultation was undertaken in accordance with PPL’s Code of Conduct, which states that whenever PPL proposes a new tariff or makes significant changes to an existing tariff, a fair, reasonable and proportionate approach to consultation will be undertaken.

PPL notified all potentially affected licensees of the consultation at the end of April 2025 and sent a follow up reminder at the end of June 2025. PPL also set up a dedicated area on its website where the relevant information, including the customer consultation document and response form, was available to read and download. The website also provided a dedicated email address for any comments and queries.

PPL has considered all the comments that it received and, following the closure of the consultation period on 14 July 2025, has settled the terms of a new SFE tariff (“the New Tariff”).

The New Tariff (PPLPP399) will take effect from 1 January 2026, and details of the tariff and its implementation are set out in Section 3 of this document.

2. SUMMARY OF RESPONSES

PPL is grateful for the responses, which were received from five trade associations, five individual licensees and one interested party.

The feedback that PPL received for each issue raised in the consultation paper is summarised below, along with PPL’s response to that feedback. Some general comments that were received but did not refer specifically to the consultation questions have been included in the most appropriate section of the summary.

Venues

PPL's provisional view was that a revised tariff would apply to any SFE event other than:

- SFE events at nightclubs, hotels, restaurants and cafes, pubs and bars (which are covered by tariff PPLPP299); and
- festivals, large individual recorded music events and SFE events at dedicated live music venues (which PPL explained would be the subject of a later consultation).

Feedback

Most respondents did not express a view on this question, although some respondents referred to the charitable nature of particular events and queried how such events might be affected by the application of any new tariff.

One respondent noted that their venue should not be unfairly impacted by any changes aimed at larger entertainment venues.

PPL's Response

The responses to the consultation paper did not identify any compelling reasons for treating SFE events at the venues to be covered by the revised tariff any differently from each other.

- Charitable events at such venues currently are licensed under tariff PPLPP001 in the same way as other events at those venues.
- Where such events fall within the scope of the New Tariff, they will benefit from its more proportionate structure. The structural changes addressed below mean that events with small attendances, including those at smaller venues, will no longer be treated unfairly by comparison to venues with events with larger attendances.

As for the events that will not be covered by the New Tariff:

- Events licensed under tariff PPLPP299 will continue to be licensed under that tariff.
- Festivals, large individual recorded music events and SFE events at dedicated live music venues will continue to be licensed under tariff PPLPP001 pending a review of the use of PPL's sound recordings as SFE at such events.

SFE events

PPL's provisional view was that a revised tariff should adopt the following description of an SFE event in tariff PPLPP299 in order to make it clearer as to when the tariff will apply.

Where sound recordings in PPL's repertoire are played at a venue/event and:

- (1) *a DJ is used to play the sound recordings; or*
- (2) *there is dancing by patrons in the venue to the sound recordings (or there is provision of facilities for such dancing with the reasonable expectation that it will take place), unless the playing of the sound recordings is specifically covered by another PPL tariff.*



Feedback

PPL did not receive any objections to this approach.

PPL's response

PPL will use the description in the New Tariff, noting that this description continues to work well in practice when administering tariff PPLPP299.

Structure

PPL's provisional view was that a revised SFE tariff should continue the approach in tariff PPLPP001 with a fee payable for each SFE event, that fee being based upon the **duration** of that event and the **attendance** at that event.

PPL did not consider making any changes to how duration is taken into account under an SFE tariff (the fee rising in direct proportion to the duration of the event, as is the case under both tariff PPLPP001 and tariff PPLPP299).

In respect of attendance, PPL noted that the structure in tariff PPLPP001 (with uneven attendance bands and variations in the "fee per person per hour") worked unfairly.

PPL's provisional view was that:

- the "fee per person per hour" for all SFE events should be broadly the same, regardless of the size of the audience;
- a revised SFE tariff should use consistent bands of 1-25 persons regardless of the size of the audience;
- the 1-75 persons band in tariff PPLPP001 would be split into smaller bands of 1-25 persons; and
- the fee would be set at the top of each band (e.g. the fee for the band of 1-25 persons would be based on an attendance of 25 persons).

In respect of the measurement of the attendance, PPL's provisional view was that attendances at SFE events under a revised tariff should be reported on the basis of **actual admissions**. The "ebb and flow" of attendees would be taken into account when setting the fee in the tariff rather than complicating the reporting process by requiring licensees to keep detailed records of when attendees arrived to and left an SFE event.

The admissions would be *"all persons admitted to the premises for the SFE event, whether those persons are admitted to functions when the premises are hired to an organisation which invites or admits guests, or to functions open to the general public"*.

Feedback

The creation of new attendance bands for events with lower attendances was broadly welcomed and seen to be fairer than the current system.

Some respondents were concerned about how they would accurately calculate attendance, and one respondent expressed concern that calculating attendance in bands of 25 people would be difficult to manage for larger events.



One other respondent queried how PPL’s approach would work in respect of “*latecomers and early leavers*”, saying that this could vary depending on the event / high street / venue type / weather / day of the week.

PPL’s response

PPL welcomes the overall support for the concept of basing fees on actual attendance and duration of the event.

The new uniform bands should make the calculation of fees easier and fairer for events of all sizes, ensuring that small events are treated fairly by comparison to larger events.

In removing this aspect of tariff PPLPP001 from events to be licensed under the New Tariff, events with large attendances may see comparatively higher increases in their fees than events with small attendances. To assist licensees with the changes from tariff PPLPP001, PPL will be applying temporary discounts to the higher attendance bands (see the further details on “phasing in” below).

While not all SFE events will be ticketed, PPL’s forthcoming guidance notes will address the measurement of attendance under the New Tariff.

Fees

PPL’s provisional view was that the licence fees in tariff PPLPP299 (which were set taking into the “ebb and flow” of attendees) should be adopted in the revised tariff. Taking into account the “phasing in” of such fees and making an estimate for the effect of indexation, PPL explained that the fees in the first year of a revised tariff would be as follows:

Start of customer’s Licence Year	1 January 2026 to 31 December 2026	1 January 2027 to 31 December 2027	1 January 2028 to 31 December 2028	1 January 2029 to 31 December 2029
Underlying rate per person per hour (before indexation adjustment)	5 pence	5.5 pence	5.75 pence	The 2028 fee adjusted for indexation using the change in the CPI for the previous September
Estimated rate per person per hour*	5.53 pence	6.20 pence	6.61 pence	6.74 pence
Estimated fee per hour per 1-25 persons*	£1.38	£1.55	£1.65	£1.69
	*For years, one, two and three the fees in this tariff will be adjusted for indexation using the Consumer Prices Index (All Items), comparing the rate in September of the preceding year to the rate in September 2022.			

PPL explained in the consultation paper that it welcomed views from SFE event operators as to whether there are any other factors that PPL should consider taking into account as part of

finalising what a fair and reasonable fee under a revised SFE tariff should be, whether for a particular type of venue or for venues generally.

PPL also pointed out that the impact of any change in the fees could be affected by the other reforms that PPL was considering in respect of reporting and the structure of the revised SFE tariff.

Phasing in

PPL's provisional view was that, in a similar way to the implementation of tariff PPLPP299, the fee increases would be spread over a period of 3 years (subject to CPI adjustments) with discounts for events with larger attendances to phased out over a period of 5 years.

Indexation

PPL's provisional view was that the fees in the revised tariff would be index-linked and adjusted annually with reference to CPI (the Consumer Prices (All Items) Index).

Surcharge

PPL's provisional view was that:

- the revised SFE tariff should include a surcharge where the operator of the SFE event does not obtain or pay for the appropriate licence on time; and
- this surcharge should be subject to a cap for each venue (adopting the cap in tariff PPLPP299 of £1,000 per venue as of 2023 and adjusted by indexation).

Feedback

PPL did not receive any material objections to the fees for the revised tariff.

The principle of "phasing in" any fee increase was welcomed by a number of respondents who noted that it will give them the opportunity to plan for the changes.

One respondent did note that larger events, those with higher attendance numbers will see a greater percentage increase in fees than smaller events.

Of the few respondents that specifically addressed indexation, one was in favour of PPL's approach whilst another said that they were not convinced by that approach.

While one respondent noted the financial risk of incurring the surcharge, others said that there should not be disproportionate penalties for venues operating in good faith and that the surcharge in existing tariff was often applied when the customer was in dispute around the charge.

PPL's response

Notwithstanding the invitation in the consultation paper and save for the references to charitable events addressed above (in the "Venues" section) PPL did not receive any specific comments on the fees set out in the paper.

The fees in the New Tariff will be as follows:

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Start of customer's Licence Year	1 January 2026 to 31 December 2026	1 January 2027 to 31 December 2027	1 January 2028 to 31 December 2028
Underlying rate per person per hour (before indexation adjustment)	5 pence	5.5 pence	5.75 pence
Estimated underlying rate per person per hour*	5.63 pence	6.25 pence	6.53 pence
Estimated fee per unit of 1-25 persons per hour*	£1.41	£1.56	£1.63

*The estimated rates and fees above have been adjusted for indexation by comparing the Consumer Prices Index (All Items) ("CPI") rate in August 2025 to the rate in September 2022 (the reference point for CPI adjustments for tariff PPLPP299). The August 2025 rate has been used as a proxy for the September 2025, September 2026 and September 2027 rates that will be used for the actual calculations of the Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3 rates and fees.

From 1 January 2029 the underlying rate per person per hour will be the rate for the preceding year adjusted by indexation using the Consumer Prices Index (All Items), comparing the rate in September of the preceding year to the rate in September of the year before.

The "phasing in" of the fee changes and the temporary discounts for events with larger attendances will enable licensees covered by the New Tariff to plan and budget accordingly.

The fees in the New Tariff will be adjusted by CPI.

The New Tariff will include the surcharge (with the surcharge cap, as in tariff PPLPP299).

The surcharge has worked well under tariff PPLPP299 for nearly three years.

In respect of the operation of the surcharge:

- A licensee paying on time will not be subject to the surcharge.
- Before the surcharge is applied customers receive at least three warning letters/emails in advance and providing that a payment is agreed in advance of the surcharge application date the surcharge will not be applied. Furthermore, where there is a genuine reason for a delay in payment, PPL PRS Limited (acting on behalf of PPL) will not apply the surcharge.
- In the cases where the surcharge is applied, the amount of the surcharge is reasonable given the need for it to provide an effective deterrent and provide redress for the additional time and expense in dealing with the licensee. The use of the surcharge cap helps to ensure that the surcharge is kept to a reasonable level.

Additional items

PPL's provisional view was that the revised SFE tariff should apply regardless of whether the recordings are played at the venue (for example, from vinyl, CDs or hard drives) or are transmitted to the venue (for example, by an internet stream or via a broadcast).



Feedback

PPL did not receive any comments on this issue, save that when commenting on the scope of a revised tariff one respondent stated that the definitions of DJs, streaming, vinyl etc were understandable.

PPL's Response

The New Tariff will apply regardless of whether the recordings are played at the venue or are transmitted to the venue.



3. TERMS OF THE NEW TARIFF TO TAKE EFFECT FROM 1 JANUARY 2026

Full details of the terms and fees (including the “phasing in” of the underlying “rate per person per hour” and the temporary discounts for events for larger attendances) of the New Tariff are set out in the accompanying draft tariff document.

As explained in Section 2 above, the fees have been estimated using the August 2025 CPI figure as a proxy for the September 2025 figure that will be used for the actual calculation.

4. NEXT STEPS

The New Tariff will take effect for events taking place in Licence Years starting on or after 1 January 2026.

Full details of the licence and FAQs are available on the PPL website here: <https://www.ppluk.com/licensing/playing-music-in-a-workplace-or-venue/>