New Specially Featured Entertainment (SFE) tariff FAQs

These FAQs are provided for guidance only and readers are referred to the new SFE tariff (PPLPP399) https://www.ppluk.com/licensing/playing-music-in-a-workplace-or-venue/#specially-featured-entertainment-sfe-and-sfe-tariffs for its full terms.

1. *Why introduce a new SFE tariff?*

PPL identified that its existing tariff for Specially Featured Entertainment ("SFE"), tariff PPLPP001, had several issues:

- it undervalued the contribution of PPL's repertoire to SFE events;
- it failed to treat customers fairly as the fees did not take proper account of differences in the attendances at events; and
- there was uncertainty as to how customers should report their attendances, which led to further inconsistencies.

2. *What types of premises and events does the new PPL SFE tariff PPLPP399 apply to?*

A new tariff, PPLPP399, will apply to the use of PPL's sound recordings as SFE in any venue except for the following events:

- SFE events at:
  - Venues covered under PPLPP299 SFE – Nightclubs, pubs/bars, restaurants/cafes & hotels; and
  - Dedicated live music venues
- Festivals; and
- Large individual recorded music events.

3. *What is an SFE event?*

SFE events include playing sound recordings in public as part of discos, dances and DJ sets/presentations (the latter is where a DJ is used to play the sound recordings). It is not necessary for there to be a DJ, if there is dancing by the customers, or there are facilities provided because customers are expected to dance (for example, a dance floor), this will be considered an SFE event. A full definition is included in the tariff PPLPP399 document.

The tariff applies regardless of whether the recordings are played at the venue (for example, from vinyl, CDs and other devices such as laptops or hard drives) or are transmitted to the venue (for example, by an internet stream).

4. *If I operate an event not covered by tariff PPLPP399, how will I be charged for SFE events?*

Please see the list above in section 2 that shows which SFE events fall outside tariff PPLPP399, and which will be licensed as set out below.

Events at nightclubs, pubs/bars, restaurants/cafes & hotels will continue to be licensed under tariff PPLPP299.

Festivals, large individual recorded music events and events at dedicated live music venues will continue to be licensed under tariff PPLPP001 (pending a review of the licensing of these events).

5. Why are SFE events at dedicated live music venues, festivals and standalone recorded music events not being treated in the same way?

Such venues/events may use sound recordings as SFE in a different way and different licensing arrangements for such SFE events may be appropriate given their particular circumstances. Therefore, PPL took the view that a separate consultation for such venue/event types would be appropriate. PPL plans to consult on possible changes for these venue/event types separately in due course.

6. When will the new SFE tariff apply?

The new SFE tariff comes into force on 1 January 2026.

Fees for SFE events will be charged under the new SFE tariff if they take place in a customer's Licence Year that starts on or after 1 January 2026.

For example, if the start date for a customer's licence is 1 July 2025, the new SFE tariff will first apply to SFE events (that fall within the scope of tariff PPLPP399) taking place at their site(s) from 1 July 2026 onwards.

7. What are the main changes from the old tariff?

In both tariff PPLPP001 and the new SFE tariff, the fees are based on the attendance and the duration of the event.

However, to make the new tariff fairer, there are key changes to the approach to the use of attendance figures under tariff PPLPP399.

- The fees for an SFE event rise in direct proportion to the size of the audience attending that event, using bands of 1-25 persons (whereas under tariff PPLPP001 the fees for events with large attendances often feature a lower effective fee per person per hour than for events with small attendances).
- There is a clear policy on reporting with licensees having to provide details of their SFE event attendances (that is, the total number of people through the door).

Furthermore, the fees have been revised, although any increases will be phased in annually by 2029.

There are several other important changes under the new SFE tariff. Please read the new tariff for the full details but, in summary:

- the tariff applies to both the playing of sound recordings at the venue and those transmitted to the venue (see also Q3 above); and
- in line with a number of PPL's other tariffs, the new SFE tariff will introduce a surcharge for late payment and/or holding SFE events without first obtaining a licence.

To help licensees moving to the new tariff, some of these changes are being phased in as follows:

- the fee increases are being phased in over three years; and

- in the first five years of the new tariff, there are temporary discounts for events with large attendances.

As a result of the phased approach, the fees for many events will be lower in the early years of the new SFE tariff compared to the fees that are currently charged under tariff PPLPP001 (see Q8 below), with details being set out in the tariff document https://www.ppluk.com/licensing/playing-music-in-a-workplace-or-venue/#ppl-tariff-consultations

8. How much is it going to cost me?

The fees under tariff PPLPP399 for an SFE event are based upon its duration and the total number of people in attendance, charged in bands of 1-25 attendees.

For licence years starting between 1 January 2026 and 31 December 2026, the fees per event are set out in the new SFE tariff and will be in force from 1 January 2026 https://www.ppluk.com/licensing/playing-music-in-a-workplace-or-venue/#ppl-tariff-consultations

The new tariff will be subject to transitional arrangements, with fee increases phased in over three years and temporary discounts for events with large attendances applying in the first five years. Full details of the tariff including fees and discounts can be found here: https://www.ppluk.com/licensing/playing-music-in-a-workplace-or-venue/#ppl-tariff-consultations

This phased approach means that many licensees with relatively small events may see reductions in their SFE fees for those events in 2026.

One aspect of the new SFE tariff is that all SFE events are charged in the same way. This results in larger fees for SFE events with larger attendances. In addition to the general “phasing in” of the fees in the new tariff, there are temporary discounts, reduced over time, for such events to help licensees adjust to these changes.

Once the transitional arrangements come to an end, the fees in the new tariff will continue to be adjusted annually 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.

9. How do I report attendance figures?

The new SFE tariff requires licensees to report their actual attendance figures (that is, the numbers through the door). PPL will be producing guidance notes to accompany the new tariff in advance of the launch date.

10. How will you calculate my fees in the first year?

As part of the licence review process, PPL PRS will firstly review the events that licensees held in the last year for which they were charged under tariff PPLPP001 The purpose of this review is to check whether the number of events held and the attendance and duration of these events were in line with the licensing detail used to calculate the charges for that year.

PPL PRS will then use these figures, subject to any anticipated changes, to provide an estimate for the year going forwards. Licensees will need to take into account the changes in the way that attendance is reported under the new tariff when providing estimates of attendance for the forthcoming year.

Throughout the year PPL PRS will ask licensees to keep a record of the total attendance and duration of each event.

As part of your annual review PPL PRS will then compare the actual figures to the original estimate and an additional invoice/credit note will be raised as required.

11. What is the surcharge? How is it different to other PPL tariff surcharges?

Where sound recordings have been played in public as part of an SFE event without first obtaining a licence or paying the licence fees for that Licence Year in accordance with the terms of this tariff, the fees for that Licence Year will be subject to a surcharge. The purpose of the surcharge is designed to discourage use of PPL's sound recordings without a licence and/or payment and to compensate PPL for the additional work involved in enforcing its rights on behalf of performers and recording rightsholders.

Where the surcharge is applied, a customer will be charged 50% of the applicable fee for that Licence Year (in line with the approach taken with other PPL tariffs). This is subject to a cap for each site at which SFE events take place in the relevant Licence Year. The level of this cap is estimated to be around £1,125.20 for Licence Years beginning in 2026 (and is subject to annual adjustment for indexation in each following year).

To the extent that there is any clarification required between these FAQs and the terms of the new SFE tariff (PPLPP399), the terms of the tariff prevail.