

Level Playing Field

www.levelplayingfield.org.uk



AMBULANT DISABLED POLICY

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Introduction

The term 'ambulant disabled' refers to people with a wide range of disabilities who are not regular wheelchair users. This could include, for example, people who have diabetes, epilepsy, multiple sclerosis or cancer. The facilities they require would vary depending on the specific effects of the illness or disability and this policy aims to establish what should be provided for ambulant disabled people at football stadia.

The Equality Act 2010 states that the term 'disabled' refers to 'anyone with a physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long term adverse affect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities'.

Level Playing Field's Proposals

1. Football clubs should include a consistent and agreed definition of what is an ambulant disability in their disability policy or customer charter.
2. Clubs should provide adequate facilities and services for ambulant disabled supporters/people including a choice of seating areas within the stadium. Many ambulant disabled people are happy to sit within the general seating areas and clubs should identify and advertise all areas in the stadium where there are fewer steps and/or level access, at the end of rows and/or close to exits for home and away supporters.
3. Clubs should also provide a choice of amenity seating (in both home and away areas) for ambulant disabled supporters who may require extra leg-room, wider seats, arm rests, space for storing crutches, walking sticks, accommodation of assistance dogs, close to accessible toilets and with dedicated stewards. Clubs should ensure that some amenity seating is available within family areas.

4. Sightlines within amenity seating areas should follow the recommendations within the Accessible Stadia Guide i.e. to provide an unobstructed view of the pitch at all times even if supporters in front or to the side stand. These seats should offer shelter from the weather and the ball.
5. Some ambulant disabled people will need personal assistants. For example, some people may be reliant upon additional assistance within the stadium to climb stairs, use the toilets, purchase refreshments, etc and where required for their personal safety (such as for people with epilepsy). If a personal assistant is required then that person should receive the same consideration as given to assistants for other disability groups. This would include the provision of an adjacent seat in order that assistance can be given easily throughout the match/event.
6. Each club should operate their own system for pricing and concessions. This must be equitable and the information openly available at stadia ticket offices and on club websites. Furthermore, football club staff should have knowledge of the club's/stadium's policy in this respect. The provision of a "free" assistant ticket is a reasonable adjustment under the Equality Act and not a concession.
7. There should be dedicated accessible car parking spaces for Blue Badge Holders as close to the ground as possible. Where spaces are severely limited, clubs should agree the management of their allocation in full consultation with their local disabled supporters and the Disabled Supporters Association. Consideration should be given to ambulant disabled supporters who may perhaps find it more difficult to reach the stadium entrance than for example someone who uses a wheelchair. Where space and facilities are limited or some distance from the entrances, clubs/stadia should provide stewarded accessible drop off and collection points close to entrance/exit points.

8. To assist ambulant disabled supporters/people visiting the stadium on match and non match days, rest points should be made available wherever possible. This should include seating in the ticket office, reception, shop, refreshment bars, etc. and clubs should consider seating areas along the entrance route to the stadium (where possible) and within concourse areas. Rest points such as fold down seating attached to concourse walls will assist ambulant disabled people who might otherwise not be able to attend the match.
9. A shuttle bus service, buggy system from remote or long stay parking and public transport drop off points will assist ambulant disabled people attending the stadium. The club should be familiar with local accessible support networks such as dial-a-ride and taxi companies offering accessible transport.
10. Clubs should widely publicise information about their disabled parking facilities and accessible drop off points. This information should be available on the club's accessible website, included with tickets for both home and away supporters and shared with Level Playing Field, the club DSA and local community and disability networks.
11. The club should include storage points for wheelchairs, buggies and walking frames to accommodate ambulant disabled supporters who may use support aids to get to the stadium and can then transfer to a standard stadium seat. This may also help to 'free up' some wheelchair spaces

Level Playing Field (LPF) does not act in any legal capacity or as registered access consultants, and makes no representation and gives no warranty as to the accurateness or suitability of any advice contained within this policy. The views expressed in this policy are user led and intended only to provide a better understanding of key issues in relation to this policy. LPF advises that each football club should commission an access audit of its stadium and match and non match day facilities and services. An access audit should be undertaken by an experienced NRAC registered Access consultant who is experienced in assessing sports stadia. Please contact LPF for further advice and for details of the LPF Access Audit programme.