



## **Level Playing Field**

**Promoting Good Access For All Fans**

# **Making your club more accessible TOP 10 TIPS FOR RUGBY**



# Making your club more accessible

## Top 10 Tips for Rugby ...

As a service provider rugby clubs have a legal requirement to be accessible to disabled people but there are also ethical & commercial reasons to improve social inclusion and evidence shows that being accessible also makes good business sense.

There is a whole new / untapped market of over 12.4 m disabled people in the UK with an estimated spending power of over £80bn per annum. 1 in 4 families has a disabled person and disabled people can and do influence choice.

Here we list some simple, practical and achievable ways to help make your club more inclusive.

### 1 First Contact

- Allocate access, inclusion and equality issues to a senior member of staff (director or senior executive) to oversee provisions at the club / venue.
- Appoint a Disability (Access) Liaison Officer (DLO) and carry out staff and volunteer training.
- DLO will be responsible for providing accessible provisions and services, have a good understanding of disability and equality legislation, as well as practice and put access, inclusion and equality on the agenda of all departments of the business.
- DLO will act as a contact point for both colleagues and disabled visitors and supporters with an accessible and dedicated phone line or email address (try to avoid premium phone rates).
- Ensure all customer facing staff are trained in Equality, Inclusion & Disability Awareness.
- Match day volunteers or ambassadors (non-stewards) can provide additional assistance on a busy day.

### 2 Carry out an Access Audit

- An Access Audit is the first step to helping organisations meet the requirements of the Equality Act. It will demonstrate a commitment to improving access for disabled people and if used properly will increase custom and turnover and could help to mitigate clubs against claims of disability discrimination.

### 3 Information Services including Websites

- Make sure your disability policy and accessible facilities and services are known by including them on your website.
- Check your website is accessible.
- Ensure all paperwork is accessible to the majority of people by producing everything in 14 point, plain font as standard.
- Always ask if people prefer an alternative format such as large print, different colour paper, audio tape, British Sign Language interpreted video, etc. and know how and where to obtain these formats (ask LPF).

### 4 Getting to the Ground

- Do you provide accessible transport? Can you work with local service providers?
- Do you offer information on transport links and journeys to your venue and is this information accessible? Does it include accessible transport information?
- Monitor accessible car parking spaces to ensure spaces are not being misused and provide accessible drop-off and pick-up points.
- Ensure external routes / paths to entrances are kept clear of fallen leaves, moss, and obstacles etc. to reduce slipping and trip hazards for mobility and partially sighted and blind people.

## 5 Access to the Stadium / Seating

- If doors are heavy, or access into the building is not level, ensure there is a doorbell / intercom (or telephone number) with a sign to show that disabled people can summon assistance if required.
- Ensure areas are free from clutter and have good circulation space for wheelchair users and people who are blind / partially sighted.
- Once in the ground, most disabled supporters see "sitting with their own fans, friends and family" as a priority.
- We recommend there should always be a choice of seating areas including elevated and pitch side seating for wheelchair users. These should offer protection from the weather and the ball, and provide a clear view of the pitch at all times even if supporters in front stand or players, camera crews or match officials are present (at pitch side). Adjacent companion seats should also be provided. Disabled supporter seating should be available in both the home and away sections of the stadium.
- Ambulant disabled people and partially sighted and blind supporters should be able to sit anywhere but you might want to identify areas with Easy Access seating.

## 6 Ticketing

- Ensure your ticketing policy does not discriminate against disabled people.
- Personal assistants / carers should be admitted free of charge where a disabled supporter requires an assistant to attend the match. This is regarded as a reasonable adjustment and not a concession.
- Do not ask for proof of disability as a matter of course but only when there is an element of doubt.
- Try to provide various methods of purchasing match tickets - via the website, by telephone, by text phone and in person.

## 7 Accessible Toilets & Changing Facilities

- Ensuring you have an accessible toilet and that they are clean, well serviced and supervised on match days should be a priority.
- Would your club be able to provide a "Changing Places" facility? To find out more visit: [www.changing-places.org](http://www.changing-places.org)

## 8 Facilities for Blind / Partially Sighted and Deaf / Hard of Hearing supporters

- An increasing number of disabled people have Assistance and Guide dogs to help them live more independently. Your club should be able to accommodate these dogs in all areas.
- Could your club provide audio description during the match for blind and partially sighted supporters?
- In ticket offices, shops and information areas a hearing (or induction) loop is recommended but having staff trained to speak clearly, having areas well lit and a pen and paper available will also help.
- Could you provide match day programmes in different formats, such as large print and audio if requested?

## 9 Set up or communicate with your own Disabled Supporters Association

- Communication is key to achieving accessibility and being inclusive. Setting up a user-led Disabled Supporters Association (DSA) run by willing volunteers will provide invaluable insight. Level Playing Field can help guide you through the process of setting up a DSA with templates for the Constitution, committee job descriptions and advice.

## 10 Level Playing Field (LPF)

- Join Level Playing Field - LPF is a membership-driven charity which is managed by an elected Board of Trustees. Visit our website for information on club and individual membership rates and support the work we do.

These suggestions are just some of the ways you can remove the barriers faced by disabled people. LPF are always happy to provide advice either via a full access audit or on ad-hoc issues.

Please visit our website for information :

Online at:

[www.levelplayingfield.org.uk](http://www.levelplayingfield.org.uk)

Or email us at:

[info@levelplayingfield.org.uk](mailto:info@levelplayingfield.org.uk)

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### Finally, remember:

- The smallest changes can have the biggest impact.
- An accessible stadium is more sustainable, economical and flexible for everyone.
- An accessible stadium will demonstrate your commitment to your whole community.
- Enhance customer experiences and they will be more likely to come back.
- Always try to involve the disabled person when making any decisions.
- Don't make assumptions based on a person's 'disability'.
- There is no 'one size fits all' solution to being fully inclusive.
- The Equality Act is an evolving duty.
- See disability and social inclusion as a business 'opportunity' and not a threat i.e. focus on the commercial spending power of disabled people, and the influence they may have over non-disabled friends and family.

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