



Annual Fan Survey 2024

summary report

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Annual Survey overview



Level Playing Field is a registered charity in England and Wales, that exists to improve the experiences of disabled fans attending live sporting events. As a campaigning and advisory charity, we work with both fans and organisations across all sports to help drive these improvements.

One of the key ways that we do this, is by engaging with disabled spectators to better understand their experiences and to ask what they require on matchdays. The annual survey helps us to gather this information and is the most significant survey in our calendar. This is the fourth year we have run the survey, and with over 2000 responses from disabled sports fans, it is our biggest one to date.

The survey was conducted online and was sent out to disabled supporters through disabled supporters' associations (DSAs), club contacts and also via social media. The survey was live for a month, and all responses were anonymous, unless the respondent chose to give their name.

This report summarises the results of the survey and compares many of these results with the last three years' findings. Throughout this report, the term 'pp' will be used as an abbreviation for percentage points when comparing percentages. For example, an increase from 10% last year to 15% this year would be 'Up 5pp'.

The results of the survey will be used to advise clubs on how best to improve the matchday experience of disabled fans. It will also be used to advise governing bodies, DSAs and non-disabled supporter groups on disability access & inclusion.



Key findings

Arrival and Departure Times

71% of respondents confirmed that accessibility considerations had an impact on when they arrived at or left live sports events.

Of these supporters, two-thirds cited 'crowding concerns' as one of the reasons for that impact, with over half also citing 'queuing for long periods of time' as a reason.



Disability Abuse

Sadly, this year continued the year-on-year increase in the number of disabled fans who said that 'disability abuse is a barrier when attending live sport' - from 5.5% in 2021, to 6.5%, then 7%, and now 8.5% this year.

The 'attitudes of others' also remains the second-highest barrier to attending (26% of disabled fans).



Contactless Payments & Digital Tickets

For the first time, we asked respondents whether they would benefit from having the option to pay using cash inside stadiums and also if they would benefit from having a physical ticket, rather than a digital ticket.

A fifth of respondents (20%) said that they would benefit from the option to pay using cash, while over a quarter of respondents (26.5%) said that they would benefit from having a physical ticket.



About the respondents

Disabilities represented



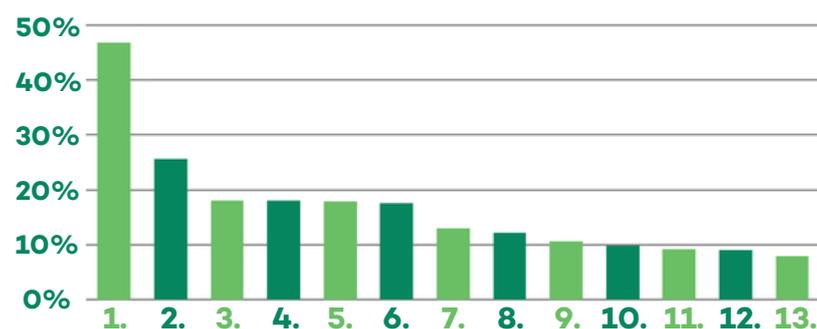
Fans were given the opportunity to provide an additional set of responses for a second team that they support, meaning that we received 2055 survey responses from 1924 individual fans, who between them support 156 different clubs. This response rate is up 15% from last year.

2055 survey responses

The first three questions of the survey were about these fans who took the survey - their age, disability and how often they attend live sport. The results to these three questions are shown below and on the next page, with previous year comparisons.

We asked supporters 'What do you consider your disability to be?' and provided them with several disability categories to select from. Respondents were asked to select all categories that applied. This question was optional, but was answered by the large majority. The results are shown below.

Figure 1: Disabilities represented



- 1. Ambulant disability - **47%**
- 2. Wheelchair user - **26%**
- 3. Non-visible disability - **18%**
- 4. Neurodivergent - **18%**
- 5. Mental health condition - **18%**
- 6. Pain or nerve related - **18%**
- 7. Hearing disability - **13%**
- 8. Fatigue/low immunity - **12%**
- 9. Neurological condition - **11%**
- 10. Sight disability - **10%**
- 11. Digestive condition - **9%**
- 12. Learning disability - **9%**
- 13. Motor skills/speech related - **8%**

Overall, there are a wide range of disabilities represented by the survey, and many respondents selected multiple categories. This was the first year we included the category 'digestive system conditions', which 9% of respondents selected. As with previous years, the highest represented disability categories were ambulant disabled people (47%) and wheelchair users (26%). There was a 2pp increase in the supporters who selected 'neurodivergent', 'hearing disability', and 'sight disability'.

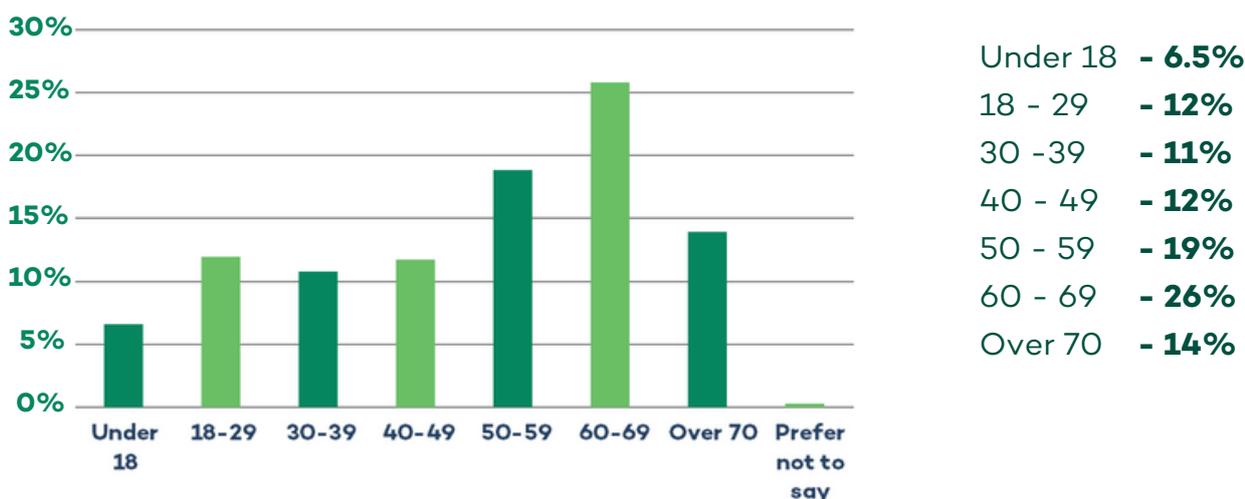
About the respondents

Ages & leagues represented



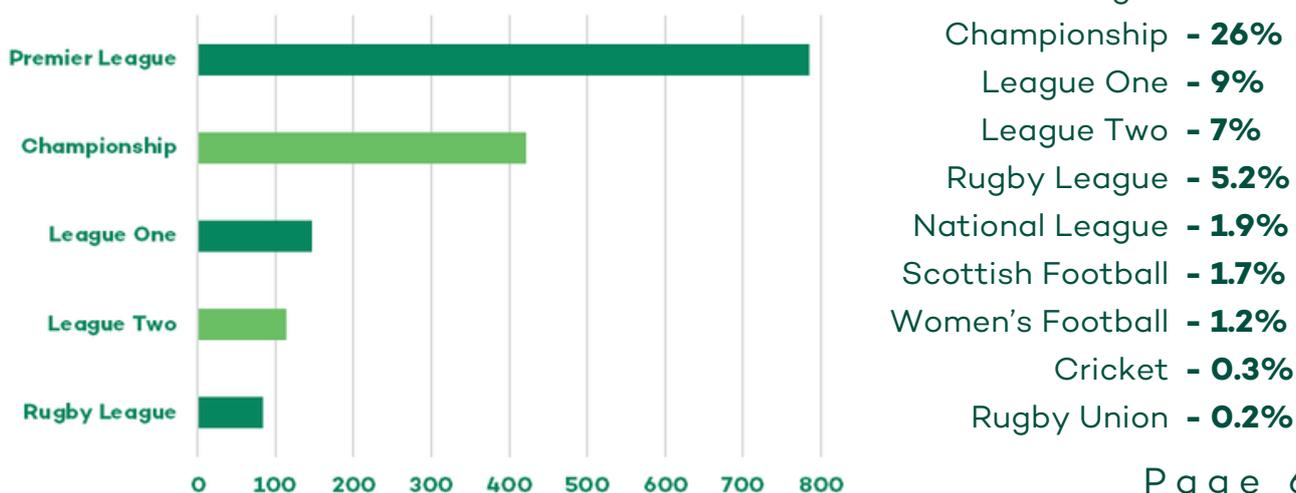
There was a good spread of ages represented in the survey, with over 200 respondents from each age bracket, except under 18s. As with previous years, the highest response rate was from those between the ages of 50-70. People are more likely to become disabled as they get older, hence the peak in those age ranges. Overall, the results are very similar to those from the previous three years. The full results are shown below.

Figure 2: Ages represented



We asked respondents to identify which team they support. The chart below shows how many respondents there were from different leagues/sports.

Figure 3: Number of survey responses by league/sport



About the respondents

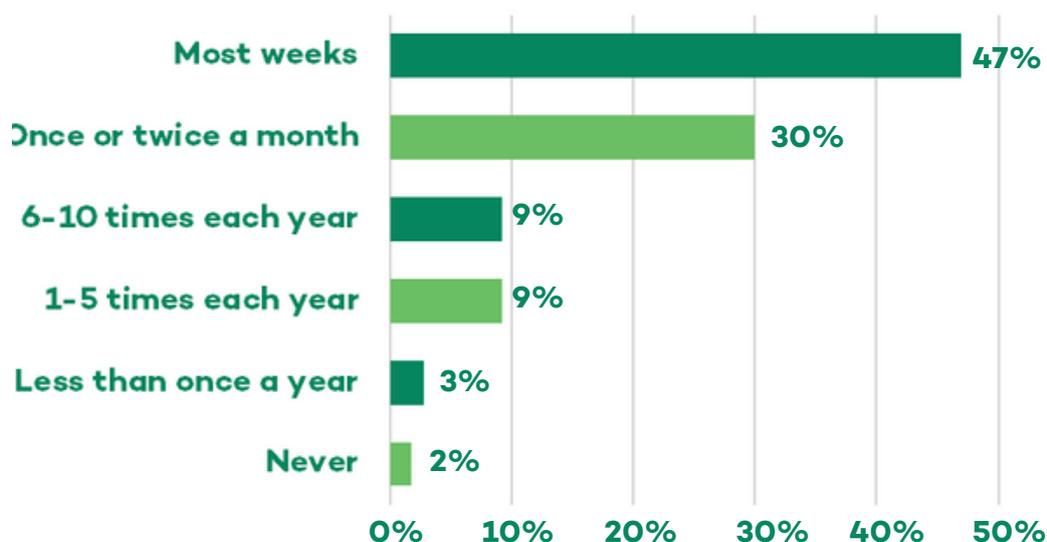
Attendance



The 2024 survey saw another significant increase in the number of responses overall. There were notable increases in responses from supporters across a number of leagues. Scottish football clubs were also added for the first time, following requests for data after their inclusion in Level Playing Field's survey on away days in Europe.

We asked respondents how often, on average, they attend live sporting events. The chart below shows the results.

Figure 4: Frequency of attendance



There is a small increase (2pp) in supporters attending 'most weeks' compared to last year. This is actually a reversal of the year-on-year decrease that we saw from our previous annual fan surveys. However, there was a 4pp drop in those supporters attending 'once or twice a month', so the proportion of supporters regularly attending live sport was still slightly down overall. Some of the potential reasons for the slight reduction in regular attendance are considered on the following pages.

The proportions of disabled fans who said that they 'never' attend live sport, and those who said that they attend 'less than once a year' remained the same.

Barriers to attending

Top 10 barriers



We asked respondents to identify all of the disability-related barriers they face when attending live sport. The ten most-selected barriers are shown below, and comparisons with the 2023 results are shown in brackets:

- 1 Physical access at stadiums – **33%** (Up 3.5pp)
- 2 Attitudes of others – **26%** (Up 0.5pp)
- 3 Difficulty purchasing tickets – **24.5%** (Up 1pp)
- 4 Anxiety or lack of confidence – **24%** (Up 1pp)
- 5 Cost of attending – **22.5%** (Up 5.5pp)
- 6 Inaccessible public transport – **22%** (Up 2pp)
- 7 Unable to travel to stadium – **19.5%** (Up 1.5pp)
- 8 "I don't think stadiums are inclusive for disabled people" – **18%** (Down 0.5pp)
- 9 Lack of information – **15.5%** (No change)
- 10 No access to a companion/PA ticket – **13%** (Up 3pp)

Last year's results saw a drop in the percentages of many of these barriers, but this year those percentages have increased again almost across the board. Most notably, the 'cost of attending' is the barrier that's seen the biggest increase compared to last year - 22.5% compared to just 17% 2023. There were also significant increases in the barriers of 'Physical access at stadiums' - up 3.5pp - and 'No access to a companion/PA ticket' - up 3pp - compared to 2023 .

Year-on-year trends - Disability Abuse and Public Transport getting worse.

Whilst many of the results have varied over the four years we have run the survey, there are some trends starting to develop in regards to these barriers. Below are three of the year-on-year trends that are particularly concerning:

- Disability abuse has increased from 5.5% to 6.5% to 7% to 8.5%
- Public transport inaccessibility has increased from 16% to 17.5% to 20% to 22%
- A lack of support from club staff has increased from 7% to 10% to 11% twice

Barriers to attending

Recommendations



The recommendations below are the same as in the 2023 Survey Summary Report, because the areas of concern remain the same. In addition, clubs should take note of the significant increase in respondents stating that the cost of attending is a barrier for them.



Disability abuse

Clubs should ensure there is a clear process for fans to report any disability discrimination they experience on a matchday, and that this process is known to fans. All reports should be taken seriously, investigated, and responded to. Stewards should be given appropriate training to recognise and act on any disability abuse.



Inaccessible public transport

Disabled fans often have different access requirements when travelling to matches. If these are not taken into account by local bus, train and tram services, then it may prevent disabled fans from attending. Find out from your disabled supporters whether local services are suitable. If not, clubs should raise this with their local council and public transport providers to highlight inaccessibility.



Lack of support from club staff

We recommend that all stewards and customer-facing staff receive some level of disability awareness training. It's also very important for clubs to have a named, and contactable, Disability Access/Liaison Officer who can answer any accessibility questions they may have.



Barriers to attending

Fan feedback



Many disabled fans provided additional comments, outlining the barriers to attending sporting events, which they come into contact with. These include further details on the impact of fellow supporters, poor infrastructure, inconsistencies from ground-to-ground, the environments surrounding venues, and mechanisms for purchasing tickets. A small selection can be found below.

“ No hand rails on stairs! When you have limited balance or mobility, standing at the top of stairs looking down can be intimidating. ”

“ Trouble travelling to away games, due to noisy and abusive fans on the coach. ”

“ The seats do not give me enough leg room. While i am not tall, my spinal issues mean I cannot 'fold up' and need extra leg room. ”

“ Wheelchair users are often put at the front and it's scary when supporters run forward and bump into you when your team has scored. ”

“ At some grounds, I've had to request to security to take my son to a disabled toilet in the home end, as there were no disabled toilets in the away end. ”

“ I can't stand for very long and at away games there is a culture of standing all match. This has meant I only go to away games where I know there'll be lots of spare seats I can move to. ”

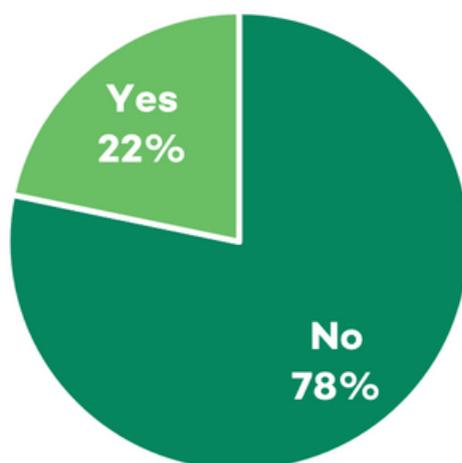
Barriers to attending

Inaccessibility



We asked respondents "Are there any sports or sporting venues that you feel unable to attend because they are inaccessible?" The results are shown below.

Figure 5: Supporters unable to attend a sport or sporting venue



Over the four years that we have run this survey, the results to this question have been 30.5% 'yes' in 2021; then 36.5% 'yes' in 2022; then 23% 'yes' in 2023 and now 22% 'yes' this year.

Overall, there seems to be an encouraging trend that fewer disabled fans have sports or sporting venues that they're unable to attend due to inaccessibility. That said, 22% of fans answering 'yes' to this question is still far too high.

Irrespective of the slight decrease from last year, it remains unacceptable that over a fifth of disabled fans are unable to attend some sports venues and stadiums because of inaccessibility.

Whilst this figure represents the percentage of supporters rather than the percentage of stadiums that are inaccessible, it is clearly unacceptable for any sports venue to be considered entirely inaccessible to disabled fans.

Arriving and departing

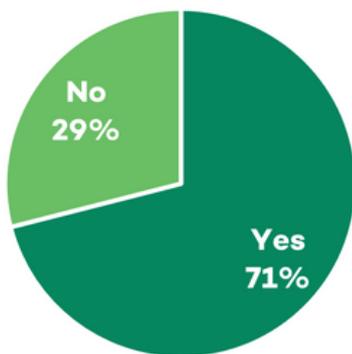
Additional barrier questions



We know from speaking with fans regularly that disabled supporters often need to plan their matchday timings around accessibility considerations. We wanted to investigate this further, including the specific accessibility reasons that supporters may adjust the times that they arrive at or depart from matches.

We asked respondents "Does accessibility impact when you arrive at or leave sports events?" The results are shown below.

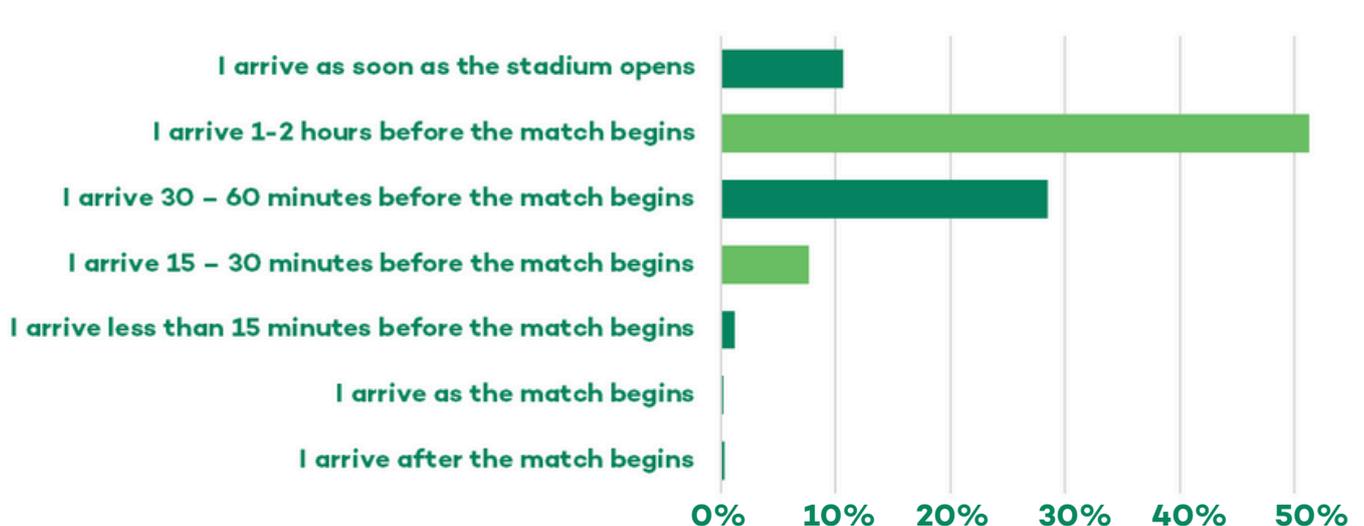
Figure 6: Supporters for whom accessibility impacts arriving/leaving times



Close to three-quarters of supporters confirmed that accessibility considerations did have an impact.

For those who answered 'yes', we asked when they typically arrive at and then when they typically leave sports events. The results are shown below.

Figure 7: When supporters typically arrive at sports events

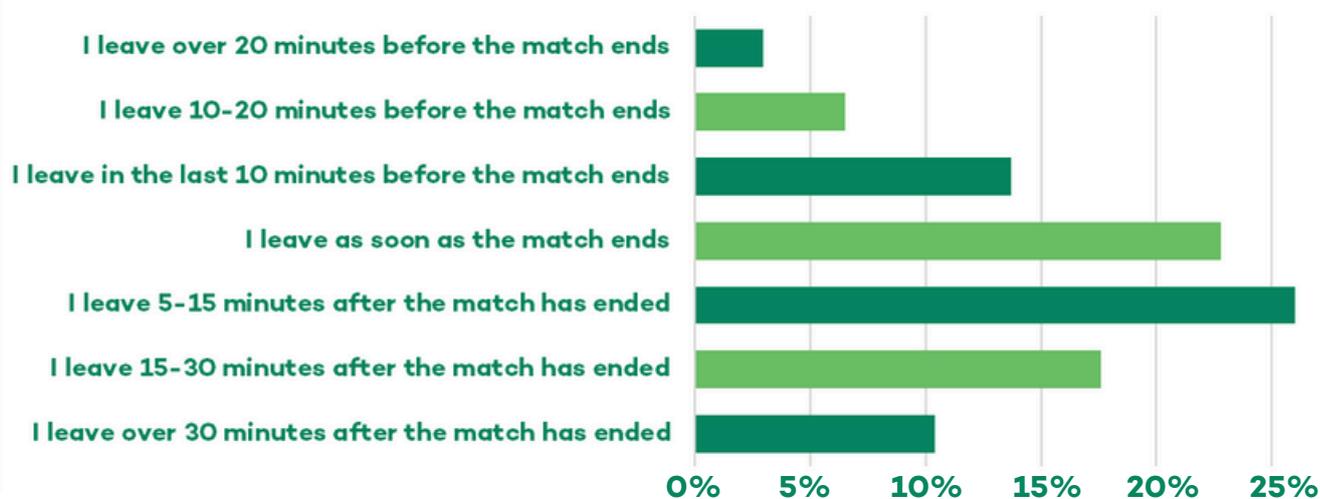


Arriving and departing (cont.)

Additional barrier questions

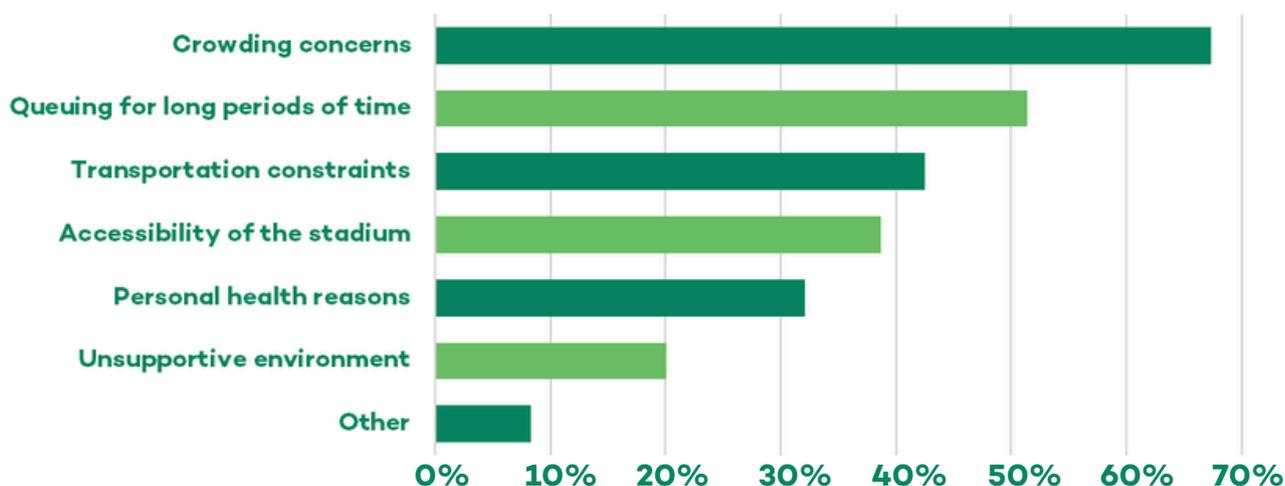


Figure 8: When supporters typically leave sports events



Most importantly, we wanted to understand what were the specific accessibility reasons that were impacting supporters' arrival and leaving times. We asked this question, allowing respondents to select from suggested options, or to select 'other' and provide their own reason. The results are shown below.

Figure 9: The accessibility reasons impacting supporters' arrival and leaving times



Arriving and departing (cont.)

Additional barrier questions



The relevance of accessibility to arrival and departure times and therefore the overall matchday experience, is evident from the vast majority of respondents informing us it has an impact. This supports anecdotal reports from disabled fans and observations from Level Playing Field staff over many years, which led to the specific area of focus being added to this year's survey.

Clear distinctions can be made between the reasons impacting disabled supporters' arrival and departure times and overall barriers to attending live sport. While physical infrastructure is a key concern for the matchday as a whole, crowding concerns' are the most common factor regarding arrival and departure times. In some cases, improvements to facilities would help alleviate these issues, but it is clear that changing the attitudes of other supporters and implementing effective stewarding would greatly improve the accessibility of events.

Some of the points raised by respondents, particularly relating to public transport and the environments surrounding venues, will not be within the immediate control of event hosts. In those instances, they would be well placed to engage with disabled fans and join them to apply relevant pressure on the local authorities responsible. There will also be instances where alternative solutions can be found internally. A holistic approach to the accessibility of disabled supporters' days can greatly improve experiences throughout.

In recent years, there has been greater focus placed on building up the occasion of attending a sporting event, beyond the live sport itself. This trend presents a great opportunity to provide for disabled fans already spending more time at the venue. Decisions on fan zones, entertainment, food kiosks and other services, should therefore place access and inclusion at the forefront.

Services and facilities

Matchday planning & travel



There are often significant considerations for disabled fans when planning for their matchday and travelling to the venue, as has already been seen. Even before entering the stadium, disabled fans will often have certain access requirements. We asked respondents which of the following services and facilities they might benefit from when planning for and travelling to matches. Below are the results.

- 1 Accessible parking – **63.5%** (Down 1.5pp)
- 2 The option to bring a PA – **55%** (Up 1pp)
- 3 Accessible entrances – **50%** (Up 2pp)
- 4 Accessibility information – **43%** (Up 2pp)
- 5 Contactable Disability Liaison Officer (DLO) – **38.5%** (Down 2pp)
- 6 Drop-off and pick-up points – **26.5%** (Down 0.5pp)
- 7 The option of a physical ticket – **26.5%** (New result)
- 8 Accessible transport for away matches – **24.5%** (Down 4pp)
- 9 Visiting the stadium on a non-matchday – **12.5%** (Down 2pp)
- 10 Additional communication support – **5%** (Down 0.5pp)
- None of the above – **7%** (Up 1.5pp)

As with last year, the top three responses were accessible parking, the option to bring a PA, and accessible entrance, although there was a small decrease in the percentage of respondents who said that they required accessible parking.

The percentage of supporters stating that they would benefit from the option to bring a PA has increased year on year over the four years we have conducted the survey. Clubs should adopt a flexible approach to this and treat PA requests on a case-by-case basis.

The percentage of respondents stating that they would benefit from the use of an accessible entrance has also increased year on year, from 37% of disabled fans back in 2021 up to 50% of fans this year. That includes 44% of disabled supporters who do not use a wheelchair. It is important for club stewards to be aware of this.



Services and facilities

Stadium services



We asked respondents which of the following 20 services and facilities they might benefit from whilst inside stadiums. The results are shown below.

- 1 Accessible toilets – **55%** (Down 2pp)
- 2 Easy access seating – **43.5%** (No change)
- 3 Accessibility stewards – **40%** (No change)
- 4 Priority use of lifts – **37.5%** (Up 1pp)
- 5 Additional legroom – **36.5%** (No change)
- 6 A wheelchair user space – **29.5%** (Down 1pp)
- 7 Disability identifiers – **29%** (Down 2pp)
- 8 A seat near to toilets/food – **26.5%** (Up 0.5)
- 9 Easy-access toilet cubicles – **25.5%** (Up 1pp)
- 10 The option to use cash – **20%** (New result)
- 11 Low-level counters – **16%** (Down 2pp)
- 12 Quiet room/area – **13.5%** (Down 0.5pp)
- 13 Changing Places toilet facility – **8%** (Down 1.5%)
- 14 Sensory room – **7.5%** (Down 0.5pp)
- 15 Sensory pack – **5.5%** (Down 1.5pp)
- 16 Audio descriptive commentary (ADC) – **5.5%** (Down 0.5pp)
- 17 Hearing loops – **5%** (Down 1pp)
- 18 Colour contrast in key areas – **4%** (Unchanged)
- 19 Provisions for assistance dogs – **3.5%** (Down 1pp)
- 20 Additional communication support – **2.5%** (Down 1pp)
- None of the above – **6%** (Up 1pp)

The order of the results above, and their respective percentages, are very similar to last year's results. Ignoring the new category (the option to use cash), none of the other 19 categories were more than 2 percentage points different to 2023, and 14 of them were within 1 percentage point. This consistency shows how accurate and reflective these results really are.

Services and facilities

(continued)



In our interactions with disabled supporters over the last couple of years, it had become apparent that certain technologies are not accessible or available to everyone. Specifically, the option to pay contactlessly and use of a smart phone for digital ticketing. For the first time, we included these two options within the survey.

A fifth of respondents (20%) said that they would benefit from having the option to pay using cash inside stadiums. while over a quarter of respondents (26.5%) said that they would benefit from having a physical ticket.



Clubs who have chosen to make use of these technologies, particularly those who have decided to implement a 'cashless stadium' policy, should be mindful that they may not be accessible to all. Clubs should therefore continue to provide alternative means of payment and ticketing, which take into account disabled supporters' access requirements.



Some fans also gave further points on services and facilities they would benefit from. Here are some of their comments:

“

Accessibility details should be available on every club's website and information forwarded to away clubs.

”

“

Captions could be added on screens for when announcements are made over the tannoy systems.

”

“

I have trouble getting through to support team when I want to get match tickets. I am often on hold for hours and have to end the call.

”

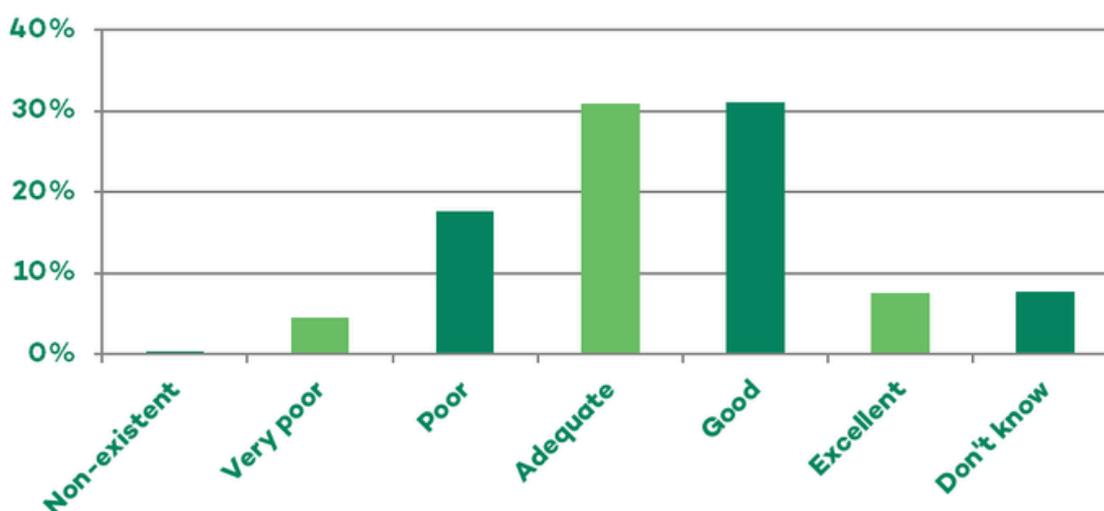
Club ratings

Nationwide accessibility



We asked respondents "Overall, how would you rate sports stadiums / clubs in England and Wales on access and inclusion?" The chart below shows the results.

Figure 10: Accessibility ratings for stadiums in England and Wales



- ▶ Non-existent – **0.5%** (Unchanged)
- ▶ Very poor – **4.5%** (Up 0.5pp)
- ▶ Poor – **17.5%** (Up 0.5pp)
- ▶ Adequate – **31%** (Down 3pp)
- ▶ Good – **31%** (Up 2pp)
- ▶ Excellent – **7.5%** (Down 0.5pp)
- ▶ Don't know – **8%** (Up 0.5pp)

Overall, fans gave an average rating of between 'Adequate' and 'Good', which is the same as the previous three years.

The results are comparable with previous years, and actually most similar to the results from 2021. The greatest increase is in respondents rating the access and inclusion as 'good', but unfortunately this is offset by an increase in the ratings of 'very poor' and 'poor' too, and a decrease in 'excellent' ratings. Overall there is no clear evidence that access and inclusion has improved in the four years that we have conducted our annual fan surveys.

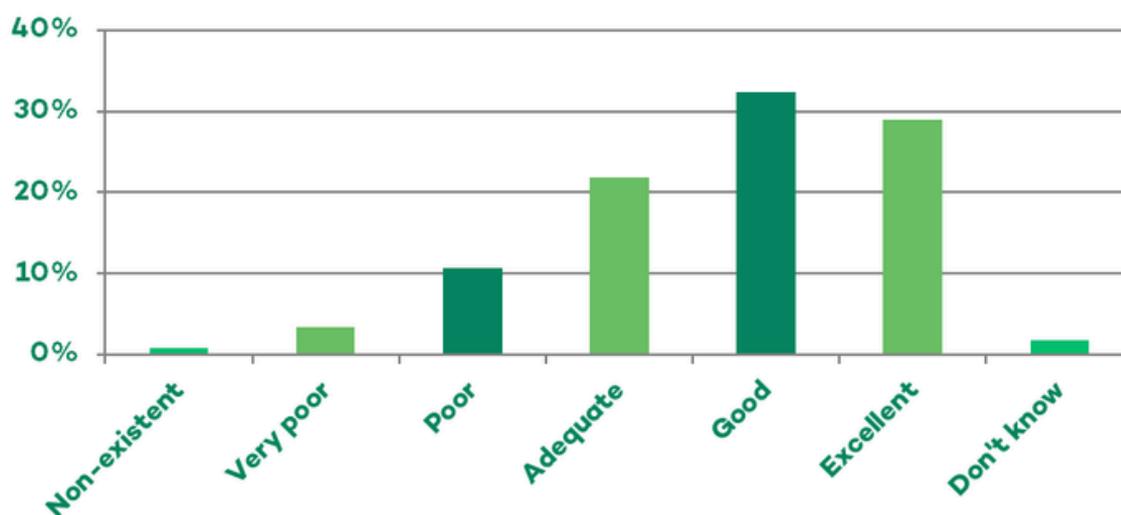
Club ratings

Club's accessibility



We asked respondents "Overall, how would you rate your club/stadium on its access and inclusion for disabled fans?" The chart below shows the results.

Figure 11: Accessibility ratings for the respondent's own club



- ▶ Non-existent – **0.8%** (Up 0.6pp)
- ▶ Very poor – **3.5%** (Up 0.5pp)
- ▶ Poor – **10.5%** (Up 1.5pp)
- ▶ Adequate – **22%** (Unchanged)
- ▶ Good – **32.5%** (Down 1pp)
- ▶ Excellent – **29%** (Down 2.5pp)
- ▶ Don't know – **2%** (Up 1pp)

As in previous years, fans tended to rate their own club more highly than stadiums generally, giving an average rating of between 'Good' and 'Excellent'. We know, from previous research, that disabled fans typically have a worse experience as an away supporter, which goes some way to explain this.

These results are notably worse than last year's ratings, with fewer fans giving a rating of 'Good' and 'Excellent', and more fans giving a rating of 'Non-existent', 'Very Poor' and 'Poor'. Whilst these club-specific results may be better than the overall results on the previous page, it is discouraging that the ratings are heading in the wrong direction.

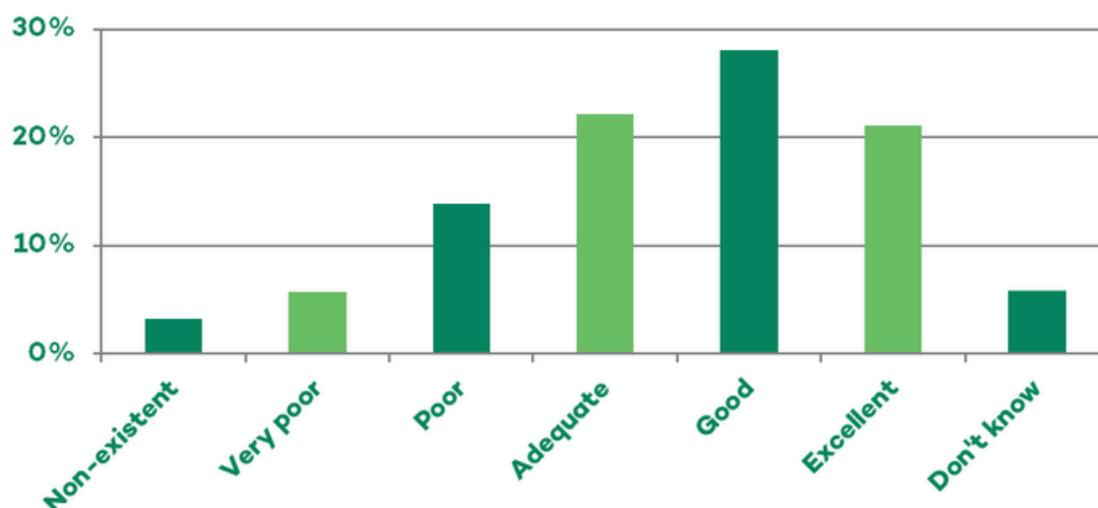
Club ratings

Club communication



We asked respondents "Overall, how would you rate your club on its communication to disabled fans?" The chart below shows the results.

Figure 12: Communication ratings for the respondent's own club



- ▶ Non-existent – **3%** (Down 0.5pp)
- ▶ Very poor – **5.5%** (Unchanged)
- ▶ Poor – **14%** (Up 1.5pp)
- ▶ Adequate – **22%** (Down 2pp)
- ▶ Good – **28%** (Up 1pp)
- ▶ Excellent – **21%** (Down 1.5pp)
- ▶ Don't know – **6%** (Up 1.5pp)

As with previous years, the rating that fans gave for their clubs' communication was lower than the rating they gave for its access and inclusion for disabled fans.

As with previous years, the rating that fans gave for their clubs' communication was lower than the rating they gave for its access and inclusion for disabled fans. The results were generally similar to last year's results, though slightly worse overall. This remains an area of concern and one which we would encourage clubs to address in order to improve experiences for disabled fans.

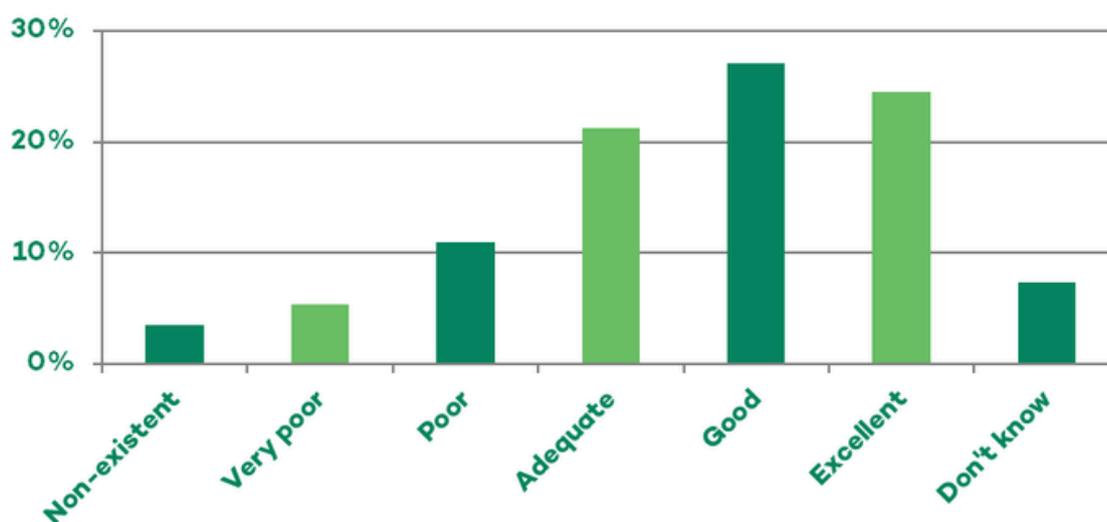
Club ratings

Club's stewarding



We also asked fans to provide a rating for their club's stewards. We asked respondents "Overall, how would you rate your club on its stewards' interactions with disabled fans?" The chart below shows the results.

Figure 13: Stewarding interaction ratings for the respondent's own club



- ▶ Non-existent – **3.5%** (Up 0.5pp)
- ▶ Very poor – **5.5%** (Up 1pp)
- ▶ Poor – **11%** (Up 0.5pp)
- ▶ Adequate – **21%** (Up 0.5pp)
- ▶ Good – **27%** (Down 1.5pp)
- ▶ Excellent – **24.5%** (Down 2pp)
- ▶ Don't know – **7.5%** (Up 1pp)

The ratings given for stewards' interactions with disabled fans are similar to those for access and inclusion for disabled fans, on page 19, but with a few more responses saying 'don't know' or 'non-existent'.

These results are notably worse than last year's ratings, with fewer fans giving a rating of 'Good' and 'Excellent', and more fans giving a rating of 'Non-existent', 'Very Poor' and 'Poor'. It is concerning that 1-in-5 disabled fans gave a rating below adequate, including 3.5% of fans who gave a rating of 'non-existent'. It is important that stewards have the confidence and training to interact with and support disabled fans on matchdays.

Fan comments



Alongside responses throughout the survey, disabled fans had opportunities to share further insight on their experiences. Below are some of the comments left across different areas.

“ Step markers need to be regularly painted, to keep them fresh and visible. Designated disabled staff in different colour and visible jackets would improve things. ”

“ The lack of accessible parking is a problem, but once I get inside our stadium, I cannot fault the accessibility facilities nowadays. ”

“ Most concourses have handrails leading up to the stadium levels, but then to get to the seats is a minefield. ”

“ I have been at away matches where everyone was standing, and I have to go to the toilet just to have a sit down for 10 minutes. ”

“ Staff need a good understanding of disabilities and disability abuse should be viewed in the same manner as other abuse. ”

“ I am repeatedly asked for ‘proof’ of my disability - emails like this really cause me anxiety and panic and I can't deal with them. ”

Fan suggestions



Level Playing Field asked the survey respondents for their suggestions of improvements to make matchdays more accessible and inclusive for disabled fans. Below are some of the responses.

“ Parking areas away from grounds, with small buses to and from parking areas. Pathways and walking areas to be more level, so there are not as many undulating paths which means you don't trip because you can't see what's beneath you. ”

“ An allocated seat space for my Guide Dog, which should be treated like space for a PA/companion. ”

“ The banning of bottle tops on drinks bought from the stadium kiosk is awful. How can a wheelchair user push themselves while holding an open container of liquid? ”

“ Stewards to be understanding of why we are waiting around for the crowd to go, instead of making us leave with the crowds at full-time. ”

“ Stewards, to support disabled people, or to access for help. You are often left to your own devices, or are lucky enough to get a kind steward who keeps an eye on you and or checks you're okay. Help entering, but particularly exiting the venue, when people are swarming. They can be abusive, threatening and with no real support or help. It can be very intimidating. ”

Conclusion



Clubs and other organisations have been sent their own specific reports with the full responses from disabled supporters relevant to them. This meant more than 130 individual reports were shared, meaning more organisations will have data to work from than ever before. Level Playing Field hopes to greater inform efforts to improve access and inclusion across the course of 2025, by providing a tool to help identify where improvements can be made and where successes are already making disabled fans' matchday experiences better.

The charity is committed to offering support and advice to sports organisations around the removal of the barriers highlighted in these results. Some key points for consideration include:

- ▶ Staff should have appropriate accessibility training and be able to dedicate the required time to disabled supporters.
- ▶ Take an overall view of disabled fans' matchdays and where you can have a positive impact.
- ▶ Be mindful of disabled fans when making changes, such as to policy, pricing and processes.
- ▶ Consult with your disabled supporters' association and disabled fans in general.
- ▶ Account for the additional time many disabled fans are likely to be spending inside venues.
- ▶ Be aware of the impact the wider fanbase can have in creating an inclusive environment.
- ▶ Review individual reports shared by Level Playing Field, to better understand specific access requirements and suggested improvements.
- ▶ Speak with Level Playing Field about delivering on access and inclusion.

Chair's review

Tony Taylor



The results from the 2024 Level Playing Field Annual Fan survey will greatly inform our work throughout this year, as we champion progress on access and inclusion for disabled fans. Renewing and expanding our data provides essential context to assist us in effectively advising disabled supporters associations, governing bodies, clubs, other organisations and individual fans. Surpassing 2000 overall responses for the first time was therefore an important milestone to develop our understanding of disabled fans' experiences.

I am grateful to everyone who shared their insights with us and those that helped us reach more disabled fans than ever before. It is pleasing to see a continuation in the spread of responses, across different disabilities, sporting divisions and ages. This, along with the increase in responses to a record level, have helped us to present a reflective set of results.

Engagement from different clubs and organisations with their individual results has already been very encouraging in some cases. With the annual survey now in its fourth year, they are now able to track developments since 2021, as well as compare their performance to the overall picture across sports. This gives these organisations a tool to measure the effectiveness of steps they have taken and identifies areas which must be rectified. Level Playing Field staff are happy to assist in understanding these results more fully and working to find solutions where necessary.

Two of the year-on-year rising trends in barriers to attending sporting events from the 2023 results continued, with 'inaccessible public transport' and 'disability abuse' both impacting a larger proportion of disabled fans. Level Playing Field is keen to address these concerning trends. We were pleased to welcome Transport For All as guest speakers to our recent forum at London Stadium and we have plans in place to counter disability abuse through our campaign work.

While it dropped out of the top ten barriers, it was concerning to see a 'lack of

support from club staff' hold it percentage as a barrier to attending live sport. Level Playing Field was pleased to introduce a Disability Access Officer Certificate course with the EFL for the first time in 2024, which will continue this year and look to increase standards in addition to the charity's wider work on training staff. However, in order to remove this barrier, all clubs and venues must take seriously the importance of accessibility training for fan facing roles, and providing staff with dedicated time to improve their knowledge and experience.

The key positive trend displayed through the results is the year-on-year decrease in the proportion of disabled fans reporting they feel unable to attend any sports or sporting venues because they are inaccessible. A marginal drop in 2024, after a dramatic fall the previous year is very encouraging. It remains completely unacceptable however, that more than a fifth of disabled sports fans are unable to attend some events due to inaccessibility.

One of the focus areas of the previous annual survey was on additional disability related costs to attending. The relevance of that became further pronounced though these results, with the biggest increase across the whole dataset being the 'cost of attending' as a barrier. We often speak about how matches should not be viewed in isolation from the matchday as a whole and this statistic emphasises that matchdays themselves should be considered in the overall picture of disabled fans' lives.

The area of specific focus in the 2024 survey was arrival and departure times and the relevance of this was proven through analysis of the results showing accessibility considerations impacted this for more than 70% of respondents. Having data on this confirms anecdotal reports and will help us to take action.

The importance of listening to supporters as we develop the survey was also shown through more than a fifth of disabled fans identifying physical tickets and the option to pay using cash within the stadium as services they would benefit from. This survey was the first time each of these was measured and will greatly inform the charity and other stakeholders.

I hope you find the results from our fourth annual fan survey useful. It has become a crucial resource for the charity's work, and we are keen to collaborate with all stakeholders to address the findings.

Tony Taylor

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