



New to football?

The Level Playing Field supporter matchday guide

www.levelplayingfield.org.uk



"What time should I get to the stadium?"

"Can I park at the stadium?"

"How do I get tickets?"

"Will I be welcomed ?"

Going to your first football game can throw up some tricky questions, and for some, it can be a barrier to attending live football.

To help ease these worries, Level Playing Field has created a guide for the first-time football fan and Personal Assistants (P.A.), which we hope will contribute to the best matchday experience possible regardless of the score.

It's important to stress that this is a general overview. Every person's disability is unique to them. Not everyone's match-day requirements are the same, so the advice or guidance in this document might not meet your personal requirements. If this is the case, don't hesitate to contact info@levelplayingfield.org.uk or call 01923 545370, and we can offer advice and guidance.



Where to find information?

The club website

This will naturally be your first place to go for information. Most club websites will have a section on disability and attending a match day as a disabled person. Sadly sometimes, this information can be hard to find.

Each website is different, but most will have a search icon at the top right of the web page. Type the word 'disability' or 'accessibility', and you should find your club's page on disability.

Alternatively, you can search the club's name, followed by 'information for disabled supporters' in your search engine (e.g Google).



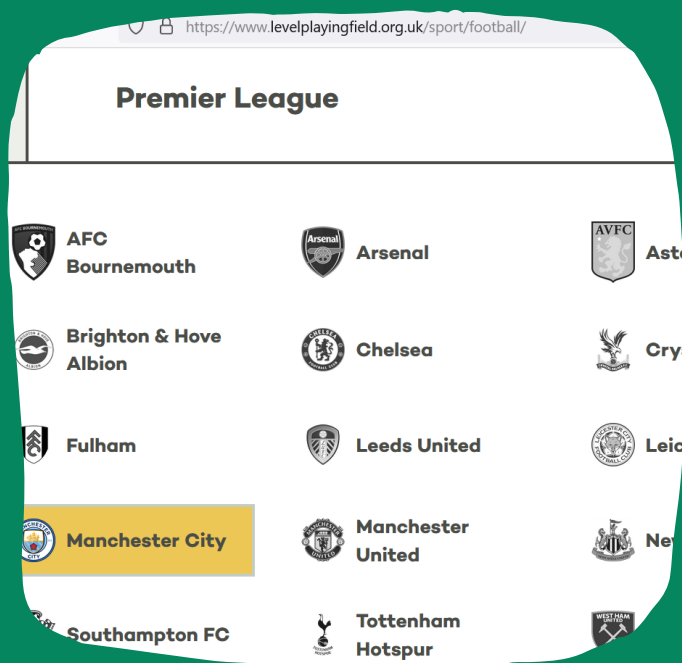
Level Playing Field club page

Level Playing Field club page. If you struggle to find your club's disability page, head to the Level Playing Field club page via our website

www.levelplayingfield.org.uk

You will find every club in the football league and National League (more leagues will be added in due course).

These pages include information on disability from the point of contact, stadium guides and what provisions the club offers for disabled supporters.



Points of contact at your club

DAO

Disability Access Officer

DLO

Disability Liaison Officer



These are the people whom you should ask to speak to when planning your first trip to your football club. A DAO and DLO will have lots of information to help you plan your day. If you have any specific access requirements, make sure you get in touch with them directly in advance of your match day.

If your club does not have a DAO or DLO, then ask for the Supporters Liaison Officer (SLO)

Disabled Supporters Association (DSA)

Does your club have a DSA? DSAs are a fan-led organisation that exists to advocate for disabled supporters at your football club. DSAs are a fantastic point of contact that can assist you with any questions you may have and ease any worries.



Ticketing



There are usually three ways of getting match day tickets. Online, over the phone and in person. For most, disability tickets are dealt with over the phone. You can find your club's ticketing number on the club website; you can also find it on the Level Playing Field club page.

Some clubs do have an online system that can provide disability tickets, but this is not the norm at this point in time, but it is getting better.

Personal Assistants (P.A)

Some disabled fans will require a PA in order to attend the match. If this is the case, then the club should provide a PA ticket free-of-charge, as a reasonable adjustment.



Most clubs will ask for some supporting documentation (they may call it 'Proof of disability) in order to ensure that disabled fans' access requirements are met.

There is no set standard for what clubs must accept as supporting documentation. It is up to clubs to decide, meaning that accepted forms of documentation may vary. Often clubs will ask to see a Personal Independence Payment (PIP) document at the higher rate.

If you believe you require a PA to attend football games, we suggest raising this with the club in advance.

Ticketing continued

Only you will know what kind of ticket you need in advance, but below are a few examples of the ticketing that will be provided.

If you are a wheelchair user, you will be seated in a wheelchair user space. These spaces can be pitch side or on an elevated platform in the stand. If you use a larger power chair or a mobility scooter, make sure you state this when purchasing your tickets so the club can find you a suitable space.

If you are ambulant disabled, you may want to ask for "easy access seating". These are seats that are located in parts of the stadium with fewer steps and can also be on the end of a row of seats.

If you or someone with you is neurodivergent, then a sensory room might support you to have a better match day experience. Speak to your club to see if they have such a room and its availability. They may have sensory packs available instead/as well.

Remember, when purchasing your ticket, think about the weather. Will you get wet if it rains? Will you be sitting in direct sunlight?

If you have any anxiety or worries, speak to the DAO/DLO at the club. They will assist you in these worries and possibly provide you with a visit to the stadium before the match day so you can see your seat in advance. Don't be afraid to ask for this.

Lastly, if you use an assistance animal, please raise this in advance and with the club so you can discuss what provisions you might need for this and how they will accommodate it. It is likely to be against the law for a club to refuse access to an assistance animal.



Know your stadium & surrounding areas

On a match day, a stadium is a busy place. Not only do you have fellow supporters, but you also have matchday stewards, matchday staff and visiting fans. It's a good idea to have a basic understanding of the layout of your stadium.

Most clubs will have an Access Statement or Disability Information page on their website. Here you will find more information on the accessibility of your stadium, including accessible entrances and accessible parking. Once again, similar information is available on the Level Playing Field club pages.

We all use them - Toilets. Find out where the accessible toilets are and, if required, whether they have a Changing Places toilet available. All Changing Places toilets can be found via <https://www.changing-places.org>

Parking and transport

If you need accessible parking, raise this with the club in advance, parking is usually limited at most football clubs, so if you depend on this to attend a game, please raise this when purchasing your match day tickets.

Some clubs have ZERO parking. If this is the case, have a good understanding of your local public transport provision and if there is any 'blue badge' parking in the surrounding area.



Parking tips and advice

- Ask what time the parking opens and how easy it is to leave the stadium on a match day (expect delays when leaving the stadium)
- An app called "What3Words" will be able to provide you with the exact location of a car park. Sometimes the satnav postcode will take you to the ticket office, not the car park.
- Ask questions about the parking. What is the terrain of the car park? Is it on grass (can be slippery when wet), gravel (can be challenging to manoeuvre in a wheelchair), etc.
- If you are parking off-site, are there drop-down kerbs near the stadium, and how far will you need to travel?
- If using public transport, is the train station or tube station accessible?
- All the above questions can be answered by your club DAO/DLO.



ACCESSIBLE
AREA



Pre-match questions you might want to speak to your club about



- What time does the stadium open as you don't want to be there too early?
- Is it a cashless stadium?
- Does your club have a bag policy? E.g. food and drink may not be permitted, or the size of the bag may be restricted. If you feel any bag policy might affect your ability to attend the game, please raise this with the club.
- You may be searched. If this is an issue for you, discuss it with Club staff before match day, and special arrangements can be put in place.
- Most clubs can provide commentary headsets to disabled fans who require them. Ask the club exactly where these can be collected from and dropped off, and whether you'll need to bring your own headphones/earphones. They may also offer a dedicated Audio Descriptive Commentary (ADC) service for blind and partially sighted supporters.
- Does your club have "safe places", including sensory rooms and inclusion rooms? If a supporter needs to leave the stadium due to anxiety, can they return?
- Lastly, read the fan reviews on the Level Playing Field club website. You might get some nuggets of info from these.

Support and Information

Clubs and venues

Have your say

Have you got a question, compliment or complaint? Let us know about your matchday experience to help improve access and inclusion.

Comments will be monitored by Level PLayering Field staff.

What to do if you have a bad experience or face abuse or poor customer care?

If you have a negative experience, raise it with the club. This can be via the match day stewards or the DLO on the match day.

If you feel you are in danger in any way, speak to a steward. Most clubs have a text number you can use. Ask your DAO/DLO what that is.

If you don't feel comfortable raising it with a steward or the club, then you can raise it with Level Playing Field by emailing info@levelplayingfield.org.uk. Your feedback/complaint will be kept anonymous unless you state otherwise.

**Football should be for everyone.
Level Playing Field will continue to
work to ensure it's accessible to all**

Going to live footy matches is such a different experience from watching it on T.V. or listening on the radio. Like going anywhere, occasionally, the experience can fall short.

The more you know before you go, the more reassured you can be. Don't be afraid to ask for someone at the club to show you around the stadium before match day. They should be able to show you where your seat is and where all the other facilities are in relation to this that you will need. Don't be afraid to ask lots and lots of questions. We have all been there.

Lastly, enjoy yourself and have fun. Attending live sports brings about new friendships, fantastic memories and a love of the game. However, it can also bring heartache and misery on the pitch... but that's why we love the game.

Level Playing Field

For disabled sports fans

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