



Level
Playing
Field

Sport streaming services

Fan survey results

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The impact of covid-19 has been felt not just by those it infects, but the wider implications on day-to-day life have been felt by everyone. For the most part, fans have been unable to attend live sporting venues since March 2020. Aside from some limited-capacity matches, most supporters have been restricted to watching their favourite sports teams play live on tv, via various streaming services.

We wanted to hear from disabled supporters about their experience of watching live sport on these streaming services, in particular whether the services are accessible for their particular disability. When so many other facilities, events and venues have been put on hold, the option to watch live sport on tv has an increased significance. Therefore it's essential that tv streaming services meet the requirements of all viewers, particularly disabled fans. We decided to conduct a survey to find out.

The survey was conducted using SurveyMonkey and was sent out to disabled supporters through Disabled Supporters Associations (DSAs), through club contacts and also via social media. The survey was live for a month, running from Friday 13th Nov through to Friday 18th Dec. Responses were anonymous unless the respondent chose to give their name.

The results presented in this survey summary are being used to advise and support clubs, leagues and streaming service providers where possible.

238
responses

**Thanks to everyone
who participated**



Key findings



of respondents said they required some additional support to watch live sport via a streaming service.

8% of those surveyed said that they are less likely to return to watching live sport in stadiums when they reopen, after having watched live sport on tv during the pandemic.



We asked supporters to rate the different streaming services on accessibility for their disability. The scores ranged from...

3.4 - 4.2
(out of 5)

Streaming services

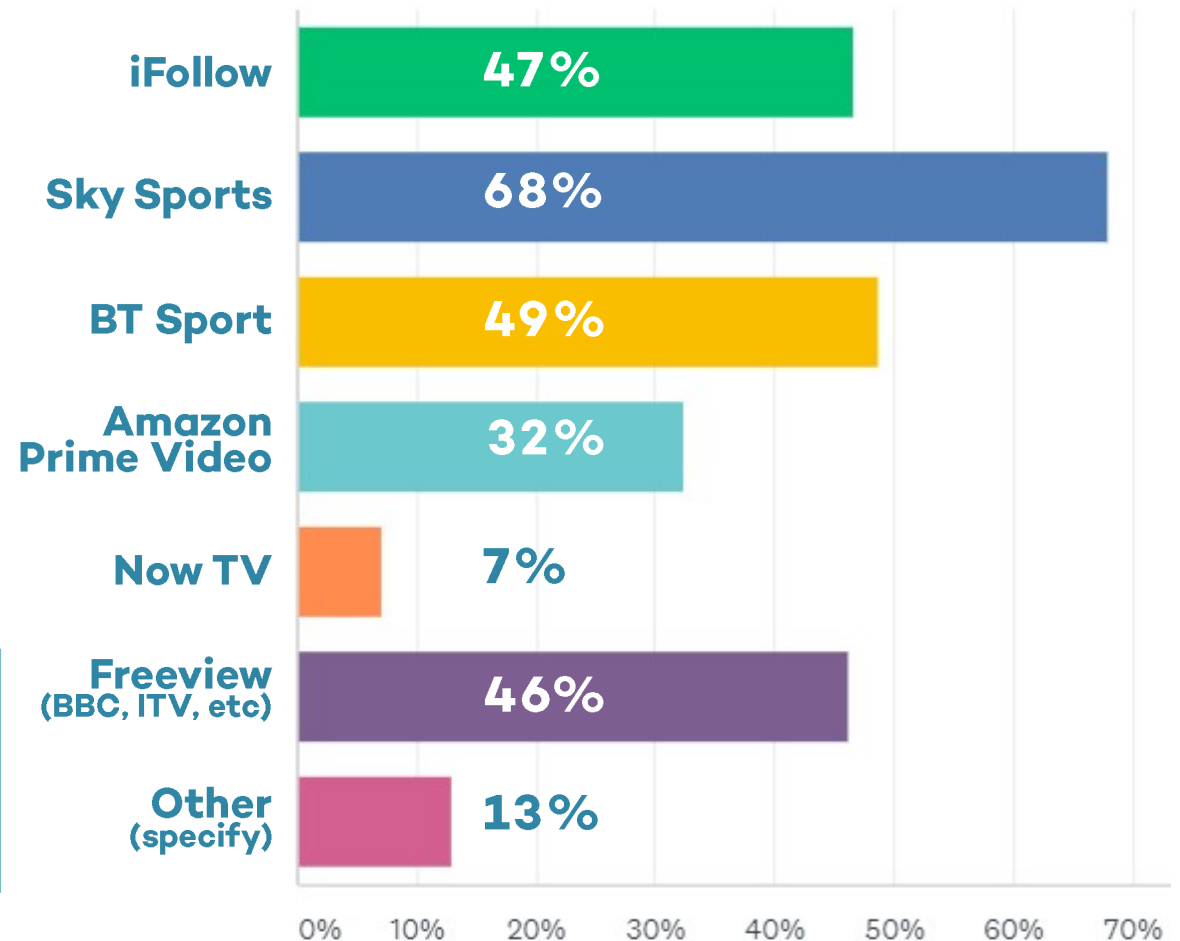
We asked supporters to tell us every streaming services that they'd used to watch live sport during the pandemic.

'Others' included some club-specific streaming services.

68%

**Sky Sports
was the most
used service**

Results are given to the nearest 1%



League respondents

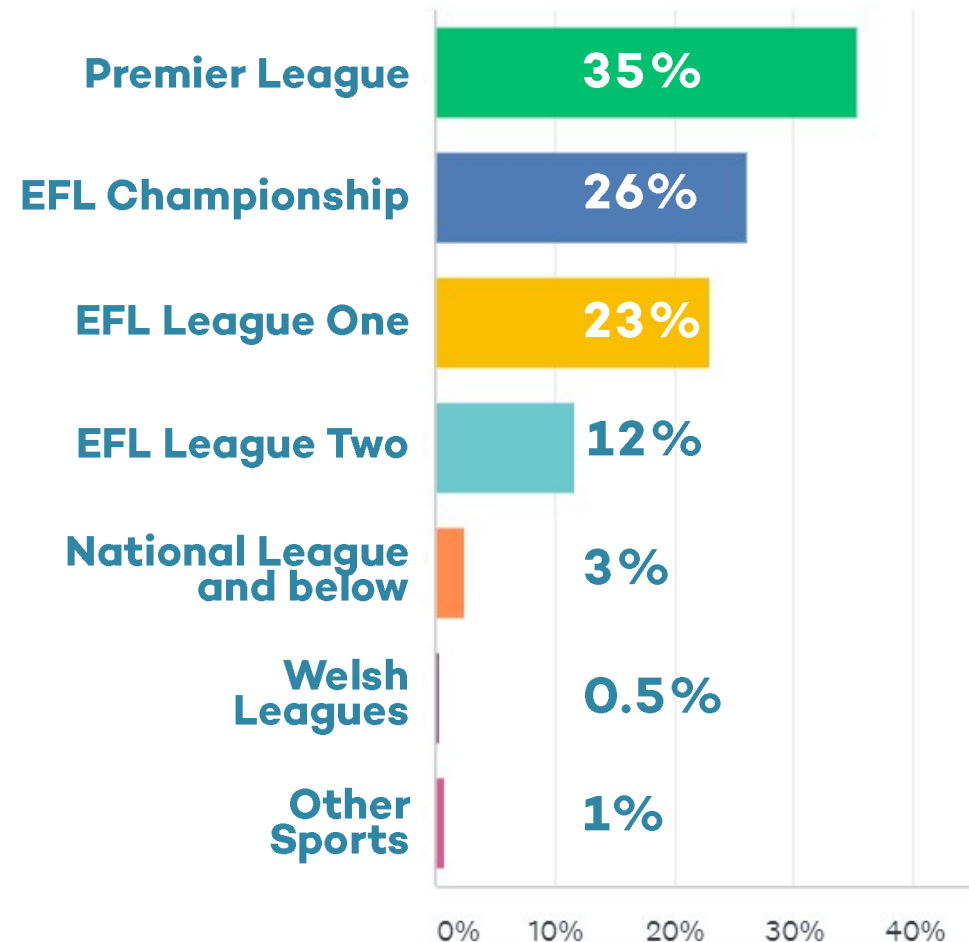
We asked supporters to tell us which league their club currently plays in.

Almost all of the responses were from football fans, and most from the Premier League and EFL.

96%

of responses were from fans of teams in the top 4 leagues

Results are given to the nearest 1% (with the exception of one 0.5%)

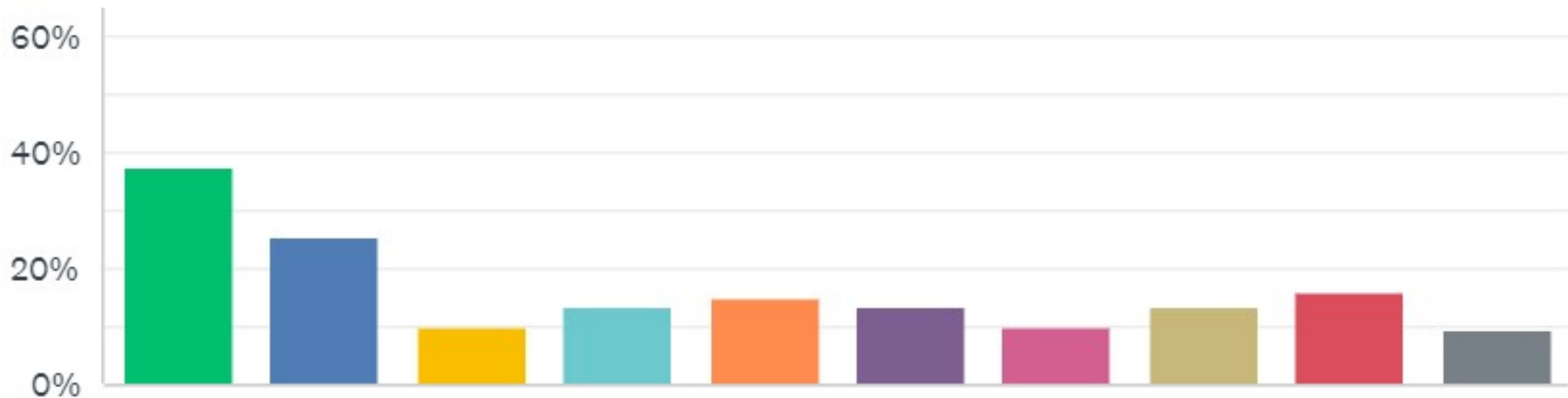


Disabilities

Responses to the survey were provided by people with a wide range of disabilities.

represented

Respondents were asked to select all that applied.



Wheelchair users - 38%

Ambulant disability - 25%

Sight disability - 10%

Hearing disability - 13%

Learning disability - 15%

Neurodiverse - 13%
(e.g. autism, dyslexia)

Neurological condition - 10%
(e.g. dementia, epilepsy)

Mental health condition - 13%

Other non-visible disability - 16%

Other disability not listed - 9%

Additional

Respondents let us know about what additional support they need to use streaming services.

support

The most common answer was audio descriptive commentary.



8%

of respondents said they required some additional support to watch live sport via a streaming service.

“A support worker to explain things”

“Assistance to purchase and to access the service”

“Audio descriptive commentary”

“A BSL interpreter”

Reviews section

After answering the general questions, already outlined in this summary, respondents were given the opportunity to rate the individual streaming services and provide any additional comments.

Respondents were able to review as many streaming services as they liked, or they could stop at any point. The results are shown on the following pages. For each streaming service there is one page showing the ratings given, followed by some of the comments that were left.



There are reviews of each of the streaming services except for Now TV. We only received two responses for this streaming service and so have not published the results.

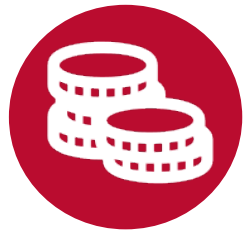
iFollow

110

of the survey respondents
rated and reviewed the
iFollow streaming service.

reviews

Here are the results...



Value for money
3.1 out of 5.



Ease of use
3.4 out of 5.



Overall quality
3.1 out of 5.



**Compared with
going to a game**
1.8 out of 5.



**Accessibility
(for disabilities)**
3.4 out of 5.



65% would
recommend it
to a friend

iFollow

110

of the survey respondents
rated and reviewed the
iFollow streaming service.

feedback

Here are some of the fan comments...

“It is hard to get on sometimes there are a lot of buttons to click to get to the game and the code we have been given is long and a mixture of upper and lower case letters. it stresses me trying to get on in time.”

“Match commentators on the Bolton Wanderers home matches are very high quality. Knowledgeable and balanced.”

“Poor substitute for matchday experience.”

[Multiple comments related to the fact that the commentary provided was for the wrong match]

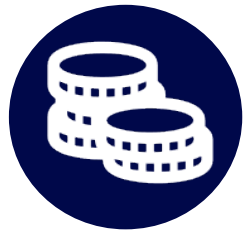
Sky Sports

104

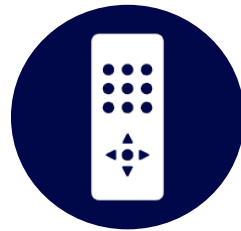
of the survey respondents
rated and reviewed the Sky
Sports streaming service.

reviews

Here are the results...



Value for money
3.0 out of 5.



Ease of use
4.0 out of 5.



Overall quality
3.9 out of 5.



Compared with
going to a game
2.3 out of 5.



Accessibility
(for disabilities)
3.8 out of 5.



72% would
recommend it
to a friend

Sky Sports

104

of the survey respondents rated and reviewed the Sky Sports streaming service.

feedback

Here are some of the fan comments...

“Need assistance, especially if match is on the red button.”

“Tends to give good coverage of the whole pitch and also good commentary.”

“Sky sports have no facilities for disabled viewers even though we are on a lot less of a budget than the general public.”

“Sitting at home watching is easier than going to game but not as good fun.”

“(Could be improved by) better actual commentary of what’s happening in the game for visually impaired people, BSL interpreters for D/deaf & HoH.”

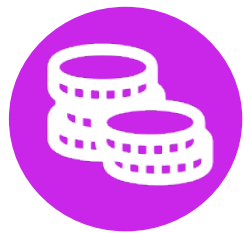
BT Sport

28

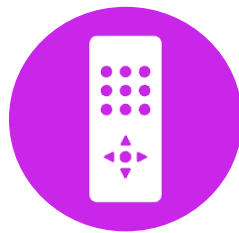
of the survey respondents rated and reviewed the BT Sport streaming service.

reviews

Here are the results...



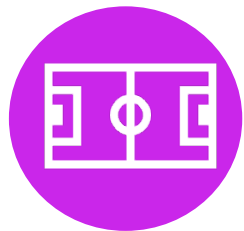
Value for money
3.4 out of 5.



Ease of use
4.1 out of 5.



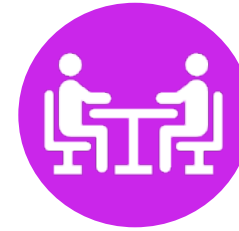
Overall quality
3.9 out of 5.



Compared with
going to a game
2.3 out of 5.



Accessibility
(for disabilities)
4.2 out of 5.



75% would
recommend it
to a friend

BT Sport

28

of the survey respondents rated and reviewed the BT Sport streaming service.

feedback

Here are some of the fan comments...

“No anxiety as don't leave home.”

“As all others, not a kick-by-kick commentary, just general.”

“They should allow you to nominate your team and stream all their games direct to your box.”

“Excellent picture quality in HD.”

“(Could be improved with) better commentary and no pay per view football.”

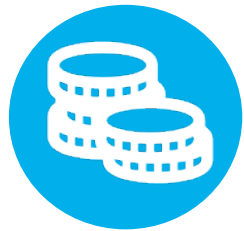
Amazon Prime

11

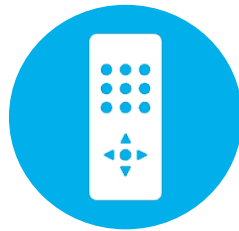
of the survey respondents
rated and reviewed the
Amazon streaming service.

Video reviews

Here are the results...



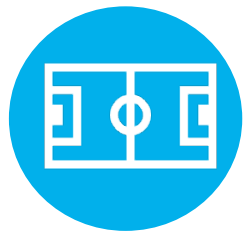
Value for money
3.8 out of 5.



Ease of use
3.8 out of 5.



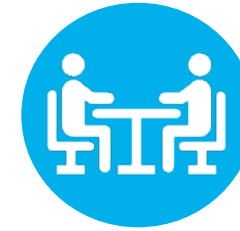
Overall quality
3.1 out of 5.



Compared with
going to a game
1.6 out of 5.



Accessibility
(for disabilities)
3.4 out of 5.



30% would
recommend it
to a friend

Amazon Prime

11

of the survey respondents rated and reviewed the Amazon streaming service.

Video feedback

Here are some of the fan comments...

“Commentary not very clear - too much talk about other stuff that's not happening on the pitch.”

“Easy to use.”

“It has improved but the platform is still shaky at times and seems much more impacted by slower broadband or wi-fi issues than others like Sky/BT.”

“Amazon Prime is a BRILLIANT product and amazing value for money, but for live football its streaming quality is the worst of all available and they really need to improve and make customers feel more comfortable / confident to use the service for live football.”

Freeview

19

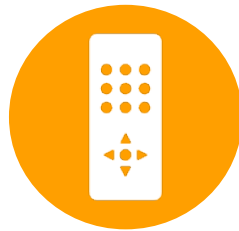
of the survey respondents rated and reviewed the Freeview streaming service.

reviews

Here are the results...



Value for money
3.5 out of 5.



Ease of use
3.8 out of 5.



Overall quality
3.7 out of 5.



Compared with
going to a game
2.4 out of 5.



Accessibility
(for disabilities)
3.8 out of 5.



68% would
recommend it
to a friend

Freeview

19

of the survey respondents rated and reviewed the Freeview streaming service.

feedback

Here are some of the fan comments...

“Easiest to tune into.”

“As pleasant as going to a game for most the time.”

“More lower league games should be shown and not just those at the top of the leagues.”

“More opportunities to talk about stadium access on phone-ins.”

Service Providers'

responses



We sent the results of the streaming survey to iFollow, Sky Sports, BT Sport, Amazon Prime Video and Freeview, and invited them to comment on the results.

The statements that we received back from these streaming services are shown on the next pages.

Sky Sports

response

“At Sky we want customers with disabilities to enjoy a great experience. We work hard to build accessibility into our products and content and have dedicated service team on hand to help too. This includes features such as live sports subtitling, voice search and voice control on Sky Q, high contrast display enhance our customers’ experience and we are always looking to innovate.

We look forward to introducing new features in future, to continue to bring our TV content to life for everyone.”

BT Sport response

“Accessibility is extremely important to us as a responsible and credible broadcaster. We meet all of our Ofcom obligations on the amount of programming carrying Audio Description and subtitles.

“Going forward, fans can expect innovation from us in this space. We’ve recently reviewed our website accessibility and we are always looking to improve, with features and updates added every month. We have employed an Accessibility Specialist in Digital and our website team has had training in the area.

“Fans can expect to see us deploy services enabling viewers to control their audio mix and volume, and we’re trialling other innovative technologies to aid accessibility such as colour blindness solutions and allowing customers to source alternative commentaries. This season on our App we launched Match Day Experience, a set of immersive and experiential features which put fans at the heart of the action utilising augmented reality.

“We are a long-term supporter of inclusivity. For example, in BT’s partnerships with each of the four Home Nation Football Associations, BT is working to help break down barriers to playing or supporting the beautiful game to inspire the next generation of disability players.”

Amazon Prime Video

response

“We take accessibility and inclusion very seriously at Amazon Prime Video and we want all Prime members to have a great experience with the service.

We are happy to be delivering live sports on Prime Video and understand our responsibility to make this an enjoyable experience for all customers. We offer integrated Alexa Voice Search across Prime Video on Fire TV devices, allowing customers to use their voice to access content on the service and last year we also included live sports subtitling across our Premier League matches and Autumn Nations Cup rugby coverage.

Beyond sports on Prime Video in the UK, we have ensured that over 90% of our streamed content includes closed captions coverage, including all titles produced by Amazon Studios. In addition, Prime Video continues to identify opportunities to make more audio descriptions and other important assistive tools on compatible devices available for customers.

We will continue to work to improve accessibility across the service for customers and add innovative features to enhance the experience for everyone.

Freeview

response

“Live sport has the power to bring us all together, however underpinning this is the ease in which we can all access it. As a free TV platform, we are committed to ensuring Freeview is easily accessible to all, and while we are not directly responsible for the specific content broadcast on each channel, we are actively working to improve the accessibility and ‘ease of use’ of the Freeview platform.

“As part of this, late last year we began rolling out our brand new Accessible TV Guide at Channel 555 on Freeview Play TVs. Welcomed by the RNIB and disability charity Scope, Freeview’s Accessible TV Guide is the first dedicated accessible area on any UK TV platform.

“The Accessible TV Guide allows viewers to filter what’s on the live TV guide to their own needs, making it simpler to find the content on the platform with subtitles, audio description or sign language. The guide has a high contrast UI, screen magnification, and a text-to-speech functionality. We are currently working to bring the Accessible TV Guide to more TVs, as well as integrating it with the on demand content available on Freeview Play.”

Conclusion

With so many other facilities, events and venues being closed due to the Coronavirus pandemic, the option to watch live sport on tv has an increased significance. It's essential that streaming services meet the requirements of all viewers, particularly disabled fans, many of whom have become much more isolated due to the pandemic.

The accessibility scores in the survey ranged from 3.4 to 4.2 (out of 5) for the different services. This indicates that generally they provide a good level of accessibility for their disabled supporters, but that there is still some room for improvement.

There are many barriers that disabled people face in life, but most of these barriers can be removed through effective dialogue and good practice. Our hope is that by communicating the results and comments from this survey, streaming service providers can be better informed and they can make improvements to access on their platforms.

What fans most commonly requested:

- Accurate subtitles
- Audio descriptive commentary
- BSL sign language interpreters
- An easier login process
- High contrast, for partially-sighted fans
- Text-to-speech feature

Improving accessibility is an ongoing process, and most of the streaming services have outlined recent improvements they've made.

Viewing sport is a lifeline to many, and tv services have a responsibility to ensure that **everyone** is able to enjoy supporting their team from home.





Level Playing Field Chair,
Tony Taylor, provided the
following summary:

“Our survey about sports streaming services comes at a significant time for everyone interested in following live sporting events. For disabled supporters, of course, streaming of matches is hugely important as we know that being a spectator really does make a difference – even if that has to be from home rather than being there on the day.

I am delighted that we have been able to receive pan-disability feedback, a summary of which will be passed on to the streaming companies and I know that they will pay particular attention to some of the recommendations given by supporters.

It is also pleasing to see a generally positive response, as many disabled supporters tell us that they will not be returning to stadiums until the vaccine means it is safe to do so – as that may be some time away, streaming of live events is genuinely a lifeline to many.”

www.levelplayingfield.org.uk



Sports streaming survey

for disabled sports fans



levelplayingfield.org.uk



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