

Unite For Access 2026 – campaign film transcript

Sophie

I lost a lot of things when I became disabled.

Sophie

Football became that continuous thread that was still me.

Graphic

Disability has changed the matchdays of all the fans featured in this film.

Lindsay

My first match was in the mid-1970s. I went with my father one very cold winter's evening.

Mark

I remember the excitement of an 8 year old boy walking up the steps and just looking at the pitch - and that was the thing that even to this day sends a shiver down my spine.

Michaela

I went to my first match when I was 13.

Michaela

It was wet, cold, we lost.

Laura

I came along with my son and it was just amazing to watch his excitement.

Sophie

Standing, singing on terraces - come rain or shine.

Daniel

I was absolutely hooked from day one really.

Daniel

Seven years ago, I went to a trampoline park and I broke my neck on one of the pieces of equipment and was going to be paralysed for the rest of my life

Lindsay

Tinnitus is a very loud, shrill ringing in my ears non-stop - so you've got constant pain.

Mark

I lost my sight in 1990 in a car accident.

Mark

There was a guy on a motorbike - he was 3 times over the limit doing 120mph on the wrong side of the road.

Laura

I have a hypoxic brain injury that I got from an asthma attack, and there was this moment of, "Wow life is really, very, very different now"

Michaela

Ronnie is five. I adopted him at 18 months old and he has ADHD and foetal alcohol syndrome, and it just generally means he struggles with sensory processing.

Sophie

I have ME and chronic fatigue.

Sophie

And I've also got a Chiari malformation, which is where the brain is too big for the skull - so it's pressing on the spinal cord, which I don't mind, because it means I've got a big brain.

Daniel

My club got relegated the year I had my accident.

Daniel

I made them play the commentary whilst I was in my bed - so it was pretty depressing whilst I was in that bed.

Lindsay

I gave up my season ticket because I was struggling so much with the noise in my ears.

Lindsay

I was giving up being with people; the routine - to be in the house, on your own

Michaela

I first took Ronnie at two and a half. I was very limited on my knowledge. And he ended the match crying.

Michaela

Was I actually causing him more distress by taking him?

Mark

I was determined that just having lost my sight didn't change who I was.

Daniel

The first thing I thought about after I got out of hospital was, "When am I going to get back to the football?"

Sophie

I had to think about all these things I'd never thought of before, so access; support. It was quite nerve-wracking.

Laura

As I was making it along to the seats we were going to be sat in, there were just lovely people. They were the ones I fell in love with before anything else.

Mark

I can only begin to imagine what my dad was thinking seeing me back doing something that I loved doing and we had done together.

Daniel

It was really emotional because for those 90 minutes I almost forgot about my injury completely and it took me into a different place.

Michaela

It was some very lengthy discussions with family and friends. Discussions with Ronnie and with the club's disability liaison officer. Now it's very much - Ronnie's in charge of that matchday.

Michaela

He gets to shout and be himself. He also likes to sing along. I call it our own version of football. That's away from what I had pictured originally.

Lindsay

Seeing the kiosks; seeing the stewards. It was just like coming home. It was like coming back to your family.

Laura

People will understand how you're feeling; people do want to help you. They want you to be back part of your tribe or even finding your tribe like I did.

Sophie

Why do I love football? I think it's continuing that sense of me.

Sophie

I've lost a lot of things - confidence, friendships, the life that I thought I was going to have - but football remained a constant.

Sophie

That passion never fades. It's always there in you. You just need to find a new way to support your club.

Daniel

When I went back to the football I was just the same as everyone else.

Michaela

For me, it was that sense of belonging - and now seeing Ronnie sharing that same passion and singing and chanting to the same songs that I did, makes it all worthwhile,

Lindsay

It is a lifeline for me and it's also a sense of joy and achievement.

Sophie

It was just redefining what I thought a football fan was. I thought it was going to every single game. I thought it was staying until 90 minutes. It's not. It's something inside you. And that never leaves you no matter what your abilities are.