

# Accessible Sports Stadia Management Guidelines

2023 Edition



Disability  
Sport NI

[www.dsni.co.uk](http://www.dsni.co.uk)

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The views expressed in this guide are not intended to take away or diminish the responsibility of the user to comply with current or future legislation. The guidance is intended to complement requirements for Building Regulations, Town Planning Requirements or Licensing, not to replace or override them.

Whilst every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of these Accessible Sports Stadia Management Guidelines and all information contained herein, Disability Sport NI shall not be held responsible or liable to any party in respect of any loss, damage or costs of any nature arising directly or indirectly from reliance placed on this information.

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This publication supersedes Disability Sport NI's Accessible Sports Stadia Management Guidelines (2016 Edition).

## **Image Credits**

Disability Sport NI would like to thank Hearing Dogs for Deaf People.

**This document is available in  
alternative formats on request**

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# Overview

## Overview

### Introduction

Disabled people are much less likely to attend a live sports event in Northern Ireland than non-disabled people, with only 22% having been to a live organised sporting event as a spectator compared to 38% of non-disabled people (Department for Communities 2019/20 Continuous Household Survey). This is partly due to limited or poor accessibility at many stadia in Northern Ireland, but it is also because of a lack of proactive management in the inclusive use of stadia by disabled people.

Although this situation can be addressed through the inclusive design of new stadia, it is also equally important for stadia operators to proactively plan for the inclusive use of stadia by disabled people.

This management guide has been produced by Disability Sport NI to promote a greater understanding of how the inclusive management of stadia and the development of an inclusive stadia spectator plan can ensure that disabled people will have a quality spectator experience.

### Disability Sport NI Design and Management Guides

This guide is one of a series of five design and management guides developed by Disability Sport NI to encourage and support the development and management of sports facilities, stadia and outdoor places which are inclusive of disabled people:

- Guide 1: Accessible Sports Facilities Design Guidelines
- Guide 2: Accessible Sports Facilities Management Guidelines
- Guide 3: Accessible Sports Stadia Design Guidelines
- Guide 4: Accessible Sports Stadia Management Guidelines
- Guide 5: Accessible Outdoor Places Design Guidelines

In addition, two Guidance Notes have also been produced for Sports Pavilions and Boxing Facilities. All guides and guidance notes are available from the Disability Sport NI website: [www.dsni.co.uk](http://www.dsni.co.uk)

## About Disability Sport NI

Disability Sport NI is Northern Ireland's main disability sports charity working to improve the health and wellbeing of disabled people through sport and active recreation.

We believe that every disabled person has the right to participate in all aspects of life and are committed to building a more inclusive society where disabled people have the same opportunities as non-disabled people to lead a full, active and healthy lifestyle through sport and active recreation.

## Inclusive Sports Facility (ISF) Advisory Group

This guide has been produced with the support of the ISF Advisory Group, which is a forum established by Disability Sport NI consisting of representatives of the following key disability organisations in Northern Ireland who are committed to ensuring that sports facilities, stadia and outdoor places are inclusive of disabled people.

- Blind Sports Network NI
- Disability Action
- Disability Sport NI
- Guide Dogs NI
- IFA Inclusive Supporters Association NI
- Inclusive Mobility and Transport Advisory Committee (IMTAC)
- NI Deaf Sports
- Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB)
- Royal National Institute for Deaf People (formerly Action on Hearing Loss)

## Endorsements

This guide has been developed by Disability Sport NI and endorsed by:

**RN  
I:D**



## How To Use This Guide

This guide is an advisory document, divided into thirteen sections, each providing recommendations on how to implement a key area of inclusive stadia management:

- 1 Transport and Parking
- 2 Accessible Information
- 3 Accessible Communications, including Provision for People who are Deaf, have a Hearing Loss or Tinnitus
- 4 Match Commentary/Audio Description
- 5 Non-standing Policy
- 6 Assistance Dogs Policy
- 7 Management of Accessible Toilet Facilities Policy
- 8 Management of 'Changing Places' Toilet Facilities Policy
- 9 Management of Quiet Areas and Sensory Viewing Rooms Policy
- 10 Ticketing Strategy and Pricing Policy
- 11 Staff and Steward Training Policy
- 12 Egress - Emergency Evacuation Strategy
- 13 Inclusive Stadia Spectator Development Plan



### Guidance Signpost

Guidance Signposts are denoted throughout the document. The guidance signposts provide relevant cross-references to existing inclusive management standards.



Sections

# 1-12

## Sports Stadia Management Policies and Procedures

- 1 Transport and Parking
- 2 Accessible Information
- 3 Accessible Communications, including Provision for People who are Deaf, have a Hearing Loss or Tinnitus
- 4 Match Commentary/Audio Description
- 5 Non-standing Policy
- 6 Assistance Dogs Policy
- 7 Management of Accessible Toilet Facilities Policy
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- 12 Egress - Emergency Evacuation Strategy

## Overview

Accessible design and technical standards alone will not constitute accessibility or attract disabled visitors and spectators. Management policies and procedures are an integral part of overall stadia accessibility.

The development and implementation of management policies and procedures is required to ensure that stadia facilities take full account of the needs of disabled people.

### Guidance

- Appoint a dedicated Stadium Disability Access Officer (SDAO) to champion, manage and oversee all issues relating to disability access, including neurodiversity and inclusion. The SDAO will act as a contact point for disabled visitors and spectators and for stadia staff members. The SDAO should have a dedicated phone line and email address.
- Provide a stadium mission statement or charter that will define:
  - › Commitment to providing equal access and inclusivity for disabled visitors, spectators, staff, stewards and volunteers.
  - › Training plans.
  - › Identification of staff and steward responsibilities.

# 1 Transport and Parking

## Overview

When attending an event, disabled people and older people will require convenient access to and from sports grounds, including short walking distances and accessible routes of travel. Adequate public transport, accessible parking facilities and an accessible parking policy are essential to a quality visitor/spectator experience and will be a key factor in a person's decision to make return visits. On event days, Park and Ride or secondary transport measures may be required in addition to accessible parking provision. Any such provision should be accessible to meet the needs of disabled people and older people.

The careful management of accessible parking areas is essential to positive overall visitor experience. To ensure that disabled drivers and passengers can access sports grounds conveniently, accessible parking provision should be designated as close as possible to entry points and accessible spectator viewing areas. **Note:** in stadia, this may also include internal mobility scooter parking and buggy parking.



Image 1 - Accessible parking bay sign

## Guidance

- Provide an event management plan (Traffic/Travel/Access) in relation to transport infrastructure and parking, in consultation with all relevant organisations, to include:
  - › The allocation of responsibility for event management to a trained designated person(s).
- Provide pre-event communications giving up-to-date information on journey and parking options for disabled people and older people e.g. using pre-event media communications, including social media, website, e-newsletter, local community and disability networks, tickets and supplementary information along with tickets.

- Provide details of local disability support networks such as accessible community transport services and accessible taxi providers.
- Develop strategies to interlink public transport provision (bus and rail) and Park and Ride facilities, using low floor shuttle facilities, for event and non-event days.
- Develop a proactive external and internal parking strategy for event and non-event days, including designation of permanent and temporary accessible parking close to accessible entry points and accessible viewing provisions. **Note:** consideration should be given to ambulant disabled people who may have difficulty walking to sports ground entry points e.g. by providing stewarded accessible setting-down and pick-up points close to entry and exit points.
- Stadia operators should develop and implement a policy for the Management of Accessible Parking Bays. The policy should contain the following:
  - › Confirmation that accessible parking provisions are available in proximity to and within the sports ground for visitor, staff and steward use. **Note:** disabled staff members and stewards should be allocated separate designated accessible parking bays i.e. over and above the capacity required for disabled visitor parking (the recommended number of accessible parking bays for disabled visitors in stadia should be 8% of total parking capacity for general stadia use.<sup>1</sup> On event days this capacity requirement may increase significantly and increased need should be addressed by stadia operators through careful management planning).
  - › The total number of accessible parking bays and where these are located in relation to the sports ground entry points, both on and off site.<sup>2</sup>
  - › Methods available to disabled people to reserve accessible parking bays pre-event.
  - › Details of how accessible parking areas and accessible parking bays are clearly identified within the sports ground. For example:
    - Symbol signs at high-level to identify an accessible parking area within car parks.
    - Display of the International Symbol for Access at ground level for each accessible parking bay.
    - A vertical signpost at the head of each accessible parking bay denoting 'Blue Badge Holders Only'.
  - › Procedure adopted by stadia operators to ensure regular monitoring of accessible parking bays for misuse, and who has responsibility for this.
  - › Confirmation that delivery vehicles, press vehicles and vehicles used by tradespersons carrying out work at the sports ground are not permitted to obstruct or park in accessible parking bays.

<sup>1</sup> Where car parks have more than 500+ spaces a minimum of 6% of accessible car parking spaces may be acceptable, depending on anticipated use.

<sup>2</sup> Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds Sixth edition (SGSA) refers to the areas of public realm which are integral to the safe management of spectators and other personnel as 'Zone Ex' (or 'the last mile').

- › Course of action adopted by stadia operators in the event of misuse.  
**Note:** staff members and stewards should also respect stadia policy relating to the non-use of visitor accessible parking bays. Actions on the misuse of accessible parking bays could include:
  - Reminder notices/signs clearly displayed within the sports ground, advising visitors not to park in accessible bays.
  - Using the public address system to request that visitors not displaying a Blue Badge return to and move their vehicle.
  - Placement of leaflets on the windscreen of cars misusing bays, highlighting the difficulties this behaviour causes. This could read: 'You are restricting access to accessible parking areas for use by disabled people. This parking bay is for blue badge holders ONLY. Please be aware of others when parking and keep this area clear'.
  - Clamping measures.
- › Method(s) used by stadia operators to clearly advertise the management of accessible parking bays policy to the public. For example: display of the policy at visitor information points; availability of the policy on the sports ground website and on social media.
- › Procedure adopted by stadia operators to ensure that the management of accessible parking bays policy is circulated to staff members and stewards, is read and understood. Include process for regular review and who is responsible for the induction of new staff members and stewards.
- › Details of storage areas available for wheelchairs, buggies and walking aids.
- › Policy should reflect that buggies can be a problem in large crowds, but that disabled children (often older disabled children) will require use of their buggy at all times. Security information and instruction for use of internal buggy parking areas is required.
- Develop a flexible proactive policy on how to accommodate mobility scooter users attending events and on how to manage mobility scooter provision in stadia, including:
  - › Where booking is required for events, as part of the booking process ticketing staff should establish whether mobility scooter users require scooter access to a wheelchair accessible viewing space/platform or whether they will require parking and transfer.
  - › Where it may not be feasible for larger scooters to access viewing areas, provide a means by which mobility scooter users can get to their seat with a minimum requirement to walk any distance. For example, by providing assistance and means of travel from the external scooter parking area.
  - › See Section 1.3.6 of Guide 3: Accessible Sports Stadia Design Guidelines. Getting To and From the Stadium; Parking and Setting-down Points - Other parking facilities (mobility scooters, cycles and buggies).



### Guidance Signpost

- ▶ Disability Sport NI Guide 3: Accessible Sports Stadia Design Guidelines. **Section 1** Getting To and From the Stadium.
- ▶ BS 8300-1:2018. **Paragraph 6.2-6.2.4** Public transport infrastructure, p.14-15.
- ▶ Ambulant Disabled Policy. Level Playing Field.
- ▶ Accessible Supporter Guide. English Football League. 2016.
- ▶ Neurodiverse sports fans. Safety, accessibility and experiences when attending live events. **Section 3.3** Getting to and from venues.
- ▶ Inclusive Mobility: A guide to best practice on access to pedestrian and transport infrastructure. **Section 3.4** Walking distances, p.26; and **Sections 4-11**.
- ▶ The Northern Ireland Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds. **Paragraph 13.19d** Management of Accommodation for Disabled Spectators (Arrival and Admission), p.166.
- ▶ The Northern Ireland Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds. **Paragraph 13.19g** The Needs of Elderly Spectators, p.167.
- ▶ Providing Accessible Parking: A good practice guide. The Baywatch Campaign (NI). Inclusive Mobility and Transport Advisory Committee (IMTAC) in Northern Ireland: [www.imtac.org.uk/publications/providing-accessible-parking-guide-best-practice](http://www.imtac.org.uk/publications/providing-accessible-parking-guide-best-practice)
- ▶ PAS 1899:2022. Electric vehicles - Accessible charging - Specification.

## 2 Accessible Information

### Overview

It is important to have a comprehensive strategy for providing accessible information and an accessible booking system, to assist disabled visitors/spectators and supporters club members.

Inclusive marketing and the provision of accessible information is required, and should be in place from the point of initial advertisement and as part of the ticket booking process for home and away spectators. The opportunity to provide logical, clear information in a range of formats, and to utilise it to direct disabled people towards further accessible information, should not be overlooked before, during and after an event.

Sports grounds websites and match day programmes should be accessible to all spectators, including disabled people. **Note:** information about a sports ground and any associated stadium structure can be invaluable to disabled people in advance of a visit, including people with neurodivergent differences such as autism.

## Guidance

- Websites must be accessible, and user tested prior to going live. Consideration should be given to the inclusion of positive imagery of disabled spectators as part of an inclusive marketing policy for stadia.
- Virtual/digital accessibility tours of the sports ground, areas within the stadium structure and spectator seating within the stadium bowl are very helpful for all visitors in advance of a visit, including people with neurological differences. Where provided, website virtual tours should also be subtitled, have BSL/ISL signed commentary to assist people who use sign language as their first language, and audio description to assist people who are blind or partially sighted.
- Website and pdf images should include Alt Text.
- Pre-visit information should include sports ground maps and floor/seating plans which denote accessibility provisions such as the location of accessible entry points and accessible spectator viewing areas.
- Integrate communication procedures in conjunction with the inclusive spectator development plan e.g. regular stadium podcasts relaying information about forthcoming events and information about match day facilities for each sport. This should be used to highlight the provisions in place to assist disabled people on event days e.g. match commentary/ audio description services and where to obtain headsets, the availability and process for obtaining match day programmes in alternative formats, associated costs etc.
- Ensure plain English, and clear typeface and size are used as standard.
- Provide information in alternative formats on request e.g. downloadable sports ground maps and floor/seating plans, audio programme, Easy Read access guide etc. Include details to request alternative formats.
- Develop stadium-specific accessibility guides/leaflets, including information about journey requirements for getting to and from the sports ground (considering acceptable walking distances).
- Develop a comprehensive, consistent and accessible wayfinding/sign strategy for the sports ground, including within the stadium structure and stadium bowl. See Section 7.1 of Guide 3: Accessible Sports Stadia Design Guidelines. Accessible Communications; Wayfinding, Signs and Information.
- Consider the use of technology to facilitate wayfinding in and around the sports ground for people who are blind or partially sighted, to complement sports ground maps and floor/seating plans e.g. use of QR codes to assist people to confirm their location within the sports ground, stadium structure and stadium bowl, or a wayfinding App to provide indoor mapping and

directional instructions. **Note:** there should always be alternative means to assist people who find the use of screen technology difficult.

- Information about the use of strobe lighting during events should be given at the time of booking, displayed on tickets and announced by various means during events.
- Safety information, including fire safety and evacuation information should be concise and available in accessible formats.
- Warning notices should be available as advance information and at each localised area location.
- The design of printed materials should be carefully considered to improve legibility and understanding.
- Information available to the public, including stadia policies and procedures, should be sensory-friendly and available in accessible formats.

## 2.1 Colour Blindness

People with colour blindness have difficulty identifying colours or distinguishing between them. The different conditions associated with colour vision deficiency are protanomaly, deuteranomaly and tritanomaly. For guidance:

- People with deuteranomaly and protanomaly are collectively known as 'red-green colour blind' and they generally have difficulty distinguishing between reds, greens, browns, and oranges. They also commonly confuse different types of blue and purple hues.
- People with tritanopia, reduced blue sensitivity, have difficulty identifying differences between blue and yellow; violet; red and blue and green.

These conditions can cause issues for spectators and players e.g. as a result of poorly designed signs, sports ground maps and floor/seating plans, clashes between kits and/or the pitch and ball colour.

### Guidance

- Stadia information should be colour-blind friendly i.e. comply with colour contrast guidelines e.g. the sports grounds website and pre-visit information. Where colour-coding is used on wayfinding signs and sports ground maps and floor/seating plans e.g. stadium bowl floor plans, colours should be consistent and contrast strongly with each other to support people with colour blindness and to avoid sensory overload. Where colour-coding is used on printed materials, suitable background colour Light Reflectance Value (LRV) should be provided (minimum 70 points).
- For ticket elements that use only colour to relate information, such as the identification of a pedestrian route or a spectator viewing area, text and symbols should be included to assist people with colour blindness.



### Guidance Signpost

- ▶ Inclusive Mobility: A guide to best practice on access to pedestrian and transport infrastructure. **Section 3.4** Walking distances.
- ▶ Disability Sport NI Guide 3: Accessible Sports Stadia Design Guidelines. **Section 7.1** Wayfinding, Signs and Information.
- ▶ PAS 6463:2022. **Section 6** Wayfinding, p.23-32.
- ▶ PAS 6463:2022. **Section 10** Acoustics and noise management, p.51-57.
- ▶ PAS 6463:2022. **Annex A (A.5.1)** Printed materials, p112.
- ▶ PAS 6463:2022. **Annex C (informative)** Symbols for wayfinding, p.120-124.
- ▶ BS 8878:2010. Web accessibility - Code of practice.
- ▶ RNIB Soccer Sight. Printed information and websites, p.9-12.
- ▶ Mencap's Make It Clear. Mencap Communication Guide.  
[www.advocacyproject.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/make-it-clear-apr09.pdf](http://www.advocacyproject.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/make-it-clear-apr09.pdf)
- ▶ Neurodiverse sports fans. Safety, accessibility and experiences when attending live events. **Section 3.2.** Information ahead of the day.
- ▶ BS 8300-2:2018. **Paragraph 12** Signs and information, p.55-60.
- ▶ Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds, Sixth edition (SGSA). **Paragraphs 16.28-16.32** Signs, p.250-253.
- ▶ BS 5499. Safety signs, including fire safety signs (multi-part document).
- ▶ See It Right - Making Information Accessible to People with Sight Problems. RNIB.
- ▶ Sign Design Guide. A guide to inclusive signage. JMU and the Sign Design Society. Parker, P & Fraser.
- ▶ Colour Blind Awareness: CAFE Guidance Note. Centre for Access to Football in Europe. September 2019.
- ▶ [www.colourblindawareness.org](http://www.colourblindawareness.org)

## 3 Accessible Communications, including Provision for People who are Deaf, have a Hearing Loss or Tinnitus

### Overview

Many disabled people, including people with neurological and/or sensory/information processing differences, can find certain environments challenging; therefore, to offer a more comfortable visitor experience when attending events, the use of accessible communications and assistive aids is essential.

People who have a hearing loss often find it more difficult to hear in stadia, usually because of a combination of poor acoustics and the presence of extensive background noise. Problems can be alleviated through the provision of assistive listening devices in new and existing stadia, such as induction loop systems, radio frequency systems and infrared systems that reduce the effect of background noise so that people who have a hearing loss can hear sound more clearly. The provision of assistive listening systems in the stadium bowl and at ticketing/visitor information points creates a more inclusive environment.

**Note:** spectators who are deaf may wish to be seated in an area together, alongside their own supporters, as opposed to being dispersed throughout the stadium.

### Guidance

- Consider effective methods of accessible communication to assist disabled people e.g. ticketing information available by telephone (with call-back option), textphone, Relay UK, sign language relay/video call service and SMS; a dedicated access helpline to provide information on event day parking provisions and how to reserve a parking bay; an efficient call routing system etc.
- See Section 7.3 of Guide 3: Accessible Sports Stadia Design Guidelines. Accessible Communications - Assistive Listening Systems. Stadia operators should develop and implement a procedure to ensure that assistive aids and listening devices are regularly tested and that staff members are trained in their use.
- Premium phone rates should be avoided and disabled people should not have to wait on phone queues any longer than non-disabled people.
- Sports ground phone lines should include a text-to-speech service.
- Provide a dedicated email to enable disabled spectators to request ticket information or form-filling assistance.
- Public and emergency announcements displayed on large screens/electronic scoreboards.

- In direct consultation with local deaf organisations, stadia operators should consider and discuss additional provisions for people who are deaf, have a hearing loss or tinnitus, such as:
  - › The option (not mandatory) for event goers to disclose a hearing loss on arrival so that they can be located by staff and stewards, or by SMS, should an emergency announcement be made.
  - › The use of subtitles and BSL/ISL signing on large screens/electronic scoreboards for key stadia information, specific match-play action, goals and goal scorers, speeches and songs, and public address and emergency announcements.
  - › Staff members and stewards trained in deaf awareness.
  - › Staff members trained in BSL/ISL, including the SDAO.
  - › Methods of exchanging handwritten messages at ticketing/visitor information points.
  - › Aids to reduce noise impact or block out unwanted sound when entering or when seated within the stadium bowl e.g. ear plugs/defenders and noise cancelling headphones.
  - › The provision of registered interpreters on request and with adequate agreed notice given as policy. Procedures put in place for the advance booking of registered interpreters e.g. for stadia tours.
  - › Subtitled and BSL/ISL signed commentary of virtual tours e.g. museum or website virtual tours. Stadia museum virtual tours, captioned photos, seating plans and audio description features are helpful for first-time and returning stadia visitors, particularly as seating allocation can potentially vary, between tiers and between stands on different event days.



### Guidance Signpost

- ▶ Disability Sport NI Guide 3: Accessible Sports Stadia Design Guidelines. **Section 7.3** Accessible Communications - Assistive Listening Systems.
- ▶ BS 8300-2:2018. **Paragraphs 13.1-13.6** Audible Communication Systems, p.60-64.
- ▶ Deaf or Hard of Hearing Helpsheet. Level Playing Field.
- ▶ Loop and infrared systems for people managing public services. Action on Hearing Loss factsheet.
- ▶ Hearing Loops: A Guide for services. Action on Hearing Loss.
- ▶ The Northern Ireland Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds. **Paragraph 13.5 a-e** People who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing, p.156-157.
- ▶ The National Registers of Communication Professionals Working with Deaf and Deafblind People: [www.nrcpd.org.uk](http://www.nrcpd.org.uk)
- ▶ Assistive Listening Devices: CAFE Guidance Note. Centre for Access to Football in Europe. 2018.
- ▶ Access for All UEFA and CAFE Good Practice Guide to Creating an Accessible Stadium and Match Day Experience. **Section J:2** Stadium provisions for deaf and hard of hearing spectators, p.77.

## 4 Match Commentary/Audio Description

### Overview

Access to match commentary/audio description and digital broadcast can benefit all stadia spectators, including disabled people. It will particularly enhance overall visitor experience for spectators who are blind or partially sighted.

In-house match commentary should be more comprehensive and descriptive than general radio station commentary and needs to describe events within stadia e.g. describing half-time displays/entertainment.

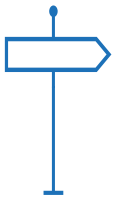


Image 2 - Use of match commentary in stadia

### Guidance

- Match commentary/audio description and digital broadcast should be available to home and away supporters throughout spectator viewing areas i.e. not designated to specific areas where the use of fixed plug-in devices assigned to particular seats is required.
- Provide information to home and away disabled spectators prior to match day i.e. inform disabled spectators of the commentary facility available, where to obtain headsets on arrival and whether a deposit is required. Display information on stadia screens on match days.
- In direct consultation with RNIB NI, stadia operators should consider match commentary/audio description provisions, such as:
  - › Visual Awareness training for commentators so that they acquire an understanding of audience needs.

- › Match day programme read out by the in-house match commentator 15 minutes before kick-off.
- › Equipment accessible to people who are blind or partially sighted, people with learning disabilities and people with limited manual dexterity i.e. easy operation.
- › Pre-recorded audio stadia tour and/or audio tour App.
- › Radio commentary equipment that ensures best practice and quality delivery:
  - Operate in the Licence free 863 to 865 Mhz Band with sixteen selectable channels.
  - Be totally portable, stored in self-contained cases, to allow use in other areas of the sports ground or at away game venues if required.
  - Have the facility to accept at least two commentators simultaneously and be able to connect to line level inputs to allow stadia PA systems to be broadcast.
  - Be compatible with personal neck induction loops and users' own personal headsets from MP3 Players with a 3.5mm jack.



### Guidance Signpost

- ▶ Disability Sport NI Guide 3: Accessible Sports Stadia Design Guidelines. **Section 7.2** Match Commentary/Audio Description.
- ▶ Access for All V.01. UEFA and CAFE Good Practice Guide to Creating an Accessible Stadium and Matchday Experience. 2011. **Section J:3** Audio description commentators, p.79.
- ▶ RNIB Soccer Sight. Providing a service for blind and partially sighted fans: The commentary service; Commentary equipment; Recruiting a commentator; Audio programmes, p.14-15.
- ▶ RNIB Soccer Sight. Managing the scheme, p.17-18.
- ▶ Soccer Sight has been established at the National Football Stadium Belfast since 2006 (partnership between the Irish Football Association and RNIB NI). Both organisations have experience of the technology and managing the service.

## 5 Non-standing Policy

### Overview

Spectators attending events do so in the reasonable expectation that they will have an unobstructed view i.e. clear unrestricted lines of sight to the whole of the pitch playing area or activity area, score boards and plasma/information screens. The enjoyment of wheelchair users, older people, people with hidden disabilities and people of small stature (including children) attending an event will be significantly impacted upon, as they will be unable to see if those in front stand up. They may choose not to return. If spectators stand in seated tiers, stadia operators may be unable to accommodate disabled people in seated areas of a stadium, which could have implications in terms of Disability Discrimination Act legislation.

Persistent standing in seated tiers during an event raises issues of customer care, crowd management and safety. Standing in seated tiers should be strictly prohibited, particularly in areas of existing stadia where poor-quality sightlines are evident or sightlines are not designed in accordance with good practice design guidance.

### Guidance

- Develop a non-standing policy and include measures to prevent and address persistent standing (considering that some spectators may have a natural tendency to stand at key moments during an event) e.g. steward communications with spectators within stands and within seating sections/tiers.
- Management should educate and persuade spectators (home and away) about the stadium's policy on why they should sit. Provide information on the measures that will be taken against persistent offenders e.g. communications on the stadium website; communications with clubs/promoters; display of clear rules on tickets; information on promotional materials and event programmes.
- Stewards trained and briefed to assist with implementing the policy.

## 6 Assistance Dogs Policy

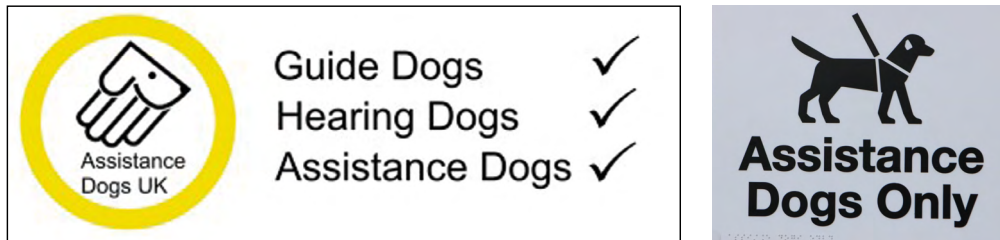


Image 3 - Assistance Dogs UK sign (image courtesy of Hearing Dogs for Deaf People); and External dog toileting facility sign

### Overview

Whilst assistance dogs are commonly associated with a 'guide dog' for people who are blind or partially sighted, they can also assist a wide range of individuals with other needs. For example, these dogs can be hearing dogs for people who are deaf or have a hearing loss, support/service dogs for people with physical disabilities, and medical alert assistance dogs to support individuals with complex health conditions who have limited awareness of an impending life-threatening medical event. An assistance dog provides a specific service to its owner and greatly enhances its owner's ability to lead a more independent lifestyle. Consideration to suitable and adequate facility provision for the dog will impact on its owner's overall visitor experience and will be a key factor in their decision to make a return visit. **Note:** an assistance dog has no responsibilities in the event of emergency evacuation.

Assistance dogs are highly trained working dogs and will wear an identification bib, harness/jacket and tag when they are working, making them easy for stadia operators, staff members and stewards to identify. Assistance dogs have well established toileting routines, so they are unlikely to foul in a public place. Clear policy relating to assistance dogs' access within the sports ground is essential to ensure that assistance dog owners are not unfairly disadvantaged.

### Guidance

- Stadia operators should develop and implement a policy for Assistance Dogs. The policy should contain the following:
  - › Confirmation that assistance dogs are welcome at the sports ground and that a sign is prominently displayed at entry points to denote this. **Note:** entrance sticker signs are available on request from Assistance Dogs UK: <https://www.assistancedogs.org.uk/contact/#form-sticker>
  - › Confirmation that a designated external dog toileting facility has, or has not, been provided at the sports ground. **Note:** a dog toileting facility is a designated area where assistance dogs can relieve themselves.
  - › Location of the designated external dog toileting facility, if provided, in relation to the sports ground entry points.

- › Features within the designated external dog toileting facility - see Disability Sport NI Guide 3: Accessible Sports Facilities Design Guidelines; Section 4.18 Facilities for Assistance Dogs.
- › Details of how the designated external dog toileting facility is clearly identified. For example: external wayfinding sign; embossed tactile and Braille sign mounted to the external dog toileting facility entrance gate denoting 'Assistance Dogs Only'.
- › Procedure adopted by stadia operators to ensure regular inspection, cleaning and maintenance of the designated external dog toileting facility, and who has responsibility for this.
- › Internal provisions made available for assistance dogs at the sports ground. For example:
  - Permitting an assistance dog owner to be accompanied by their assistance dog at all times and within all areas of the sports ground, including refreshment areas and spectator viewing areas, if that is their preference.
  - Appropriate internal provision, agreed with the assistance dog owner, to accommodate a safe and secure rest space for the dog, if that is the owner's preference. **Note:** the secure area should be within or close to a staffed area where direct supervision/monitoring can be provided. Guide Dogs NI recommends that the assistance dog should be unrestrained within the secure area and have access to a water bowl. If required by the facility, and only in agreement with the assistance dog owner, preference may be to have a benching hook(s) and benching line available within the secure area. If provided, the benching line should be 5ft long and the benching hook fixed 150mm above floor level to enable the assistance dog to lie down comfortably. Outline what the internal provision will comprise and who will be responsible for implementing these actions.
- › Method(s) adopted by stadia operators to increase awareness amongst staff members and stewards regarding assistance dogs, the provisions available outside and inside the sports ground to accommodate assistance dogs, and their understanding of duties under the Disability Discrimination Act with respect to assistance dogs. For example:
  - Awareness that assistance dogs are highly trained working dogs and will wear an identification bib, harness/jacket and tag when they are working.
  - Awareness that assistance dogs have well established toileting routines.
  - Awareness that the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health has confirmed that assistance dogs should be allowed access to food areas and there is no conflict with hygiene laws.
  - Awareness that assistance dogs are likely to be exempt from the 'no dogs' policies that normally apply in food areas.
- › Method(s) used by stadia operators to clearly advertise the assistance dogs policy to the public. For example: display of the policy at visitor information points; availability of the policy on the website and on social media.

- › Procedure adopted by stadia operators to ensure that the assistance dogs policy is circulated to staff members and stewards, is read and understood. Include process for regular review and who is responsible for the induction of new staff members and stewards.
- › Permission for Guide Dogs NI to conduct orientation training for guide dog owners within the sports ground, stadium structure and stadium bowl.
- › Reference use of Guide Dogs NI's My Guide service, whereby a blind person can be accompanied by a sighted volunteer companion for the duration of their visit to stadia.



### Guidance Signpost

- ▶ Guidance on dog toileting facilities for guide and assistance dogs. Guide Dogs.
- ▶ [www.assistedogs.org.uk](http://www.assistedogs.org.uk); [www.hearingdogs.org.uk](http://www.hearingdogs.org.uk) and [www.medicaldetectiondogs.org.uk](http://www.medicaldetectiondogs.org.uk)
- ▶ RNIB Soccer Sight. Provision for guide dogs, p.16.

## 7 Management of Accessible Toilet Facilities Policy

### Overview

The range of accessible toilet facilities within sports grounds can include:

- Accessible WC cubicles located within a general block of male and female toilets which is designed to be inclusive of non-disabled people and disabled people i.e. wheelchair accessible cubicles, ambulant accessible cubicles and enlarged cubicles.
- Self-contained unisex wheelchair accessible corner layout WCs for independent use.
- Self-contained unisex wheelchair accessible peninsular layout WCs for assisted use.
- Self-contained unisex accessible changing rooms that contain a WC pan, changing bench and shower.

(For examples of the above provisions, see Images 4-7 below).

**Note:** a 'Changing Places' toilet facility is not the same as an accessible toilet (see Section 8 of this guide: Management of 'Changing Places' Toilet Facilities Policy).

Management of accessible toilet facilities is required to prevent and discourage misuse and to ensure that provisions are available to disabled people when required. Sensitive stewarding is required.

## Guidance

- Stadia operators should develop and implement a policy for the Management of Accessible Toilet Facilities. The policy should contain the following:
  - › A list of the types and locations of all accessible toilet facilities available within the sports ground.
  - › Details of how accessible toilets are clearly identified throughout the sports ground, including within the stadium structure and the stadium bowl. For example: using directional wayfinding signs; using embossed tactile and Braille signs on or adjacent to toilet doors.
  - › Confirm that front-line staff and stewards can also direct disabled people to the nearest accessible toilet facility (ensure that staff and steward training addresses awareness of the types and locations of all accessible toilet facilities).
  - › Confirmation that each wheelchair accessible toilet zone in an associated concourse will be managed by stewards.
  - › Confirmation that stewards will be assigned to assist disabled people when entering and exiting units and to prevent misuse by non-disabled people.
  - › Method(s) adopted by stadia operators to increase awareness amongst staff members and stewards that disabilities can be hidden, and that people with hidden disabilities may require use of an accessible toilet.
  - › Confirmation that emergency alarm cords are regularly inspected by housekeeping and stadia operators to ensure that they are in good working order and are not tied up.
  - › Confirmation that accessible toilet facilities are never used for storage and are regularly inspected by housekeeping and stadia operators to ensure that the transfer space is always kept clear.
  - › Response procedure adopted by stadia operators should an emergency assistance alarm in an accessible toilet be activated, including how staff members and stewards are alerted and made aware of its particular location. For example: localised alarm indicators/sounders; indication on a control panel linked to a central location such as the stadium control point.
  - › Procedure for the regular inspection, cleaning and maintenance of accessible toilets. **Note:** inspection procedures should include assessment of the structural integrity and condition of fixtures and fittings e.g. wall-mounted grabrails, tip-up shower seats, shower curtains, changing benches, clothes hooks etc.
  - › Method(s) used by stadia operators to clearly advertise the management of accessible toilet facilities policy to the public. For example: display of the policy at visitor information points; availability of the policy on the website and on social media.
  - › Procedure adopted by stadia operators to ensure that the management of accessible toilet facilities policy is circulated to staff members and stewards, is read and understood. Include process for regular review and who is responsible for the induction of new staff members and stewards.

- As far as possible, the use of RADAR locks should be avoided. RADAR locks should only be used where essential for security/cleanliness reasons and where it is possible to easily obtain a key.
- Stewards in stands where RADAR locks are used should be provided with keys.
- If RADAR locks are necessary, this should be clearly stated on pre-event information and at each accessible toilet unit where this measure is adopted, including where keys can be obtained.



Image 4 - Wheelchair accessible WC cubicle and ambulant accessible WC cubicle incorporated within an inclusive toilet block



Image 5 - Examples of self-contained unisex wheelchair accessible corner layout WC for independent use



Image 6 - Self-contained unisex wheelchair accessible peninsular layout WC for assisted use



Image 7 - Self-contained unisex accessible WC/changing/shower room



### Guidance Signpost

- ▶ Good Loo Design Guide. RIBA Enterprises and Centre for Accessible Environments. 2004. Management Issues, p.45-46.
- ▶ Toilet Facilities at Sports Stadia: Planning, design and types of installation. Sport England. 1993.

## 8 Management of 'Changing Places' Toilet Facilities Policy

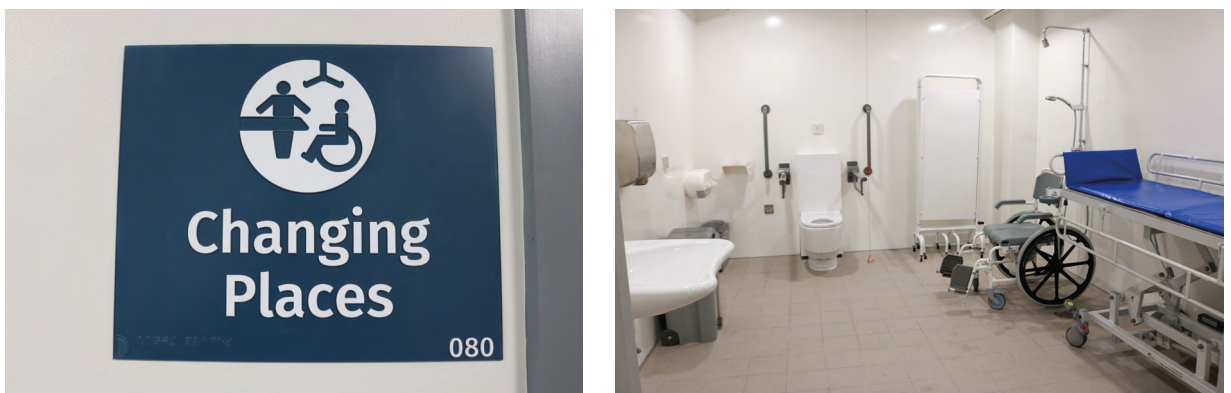


Image 8 - Changing Places toilet facility sign, including formal Changing Places logo; and Changing Places toilet facility

### Overview

Provision of 'Changing Places' toilet facilities in stadia will enable many more disabled people, including those with complex and multiple disabilities, to attend live events with their families.

A Changing Places toilet facility is not the same as an accessible toilet. It is a 12m<sup>2</sup> room equipped with an adult-sized changing bench and hoist, in addition to a shower and toilet. **Note:** a freestanding mobile changing bench allows a carer/s to assist from either or both sides and is recommended in stadia. It should be height adjustable, electrically operated.

Changing Places toilet facilities in stadia should be registered through Muscular Dystrophy UK and include associated sign logos.

Management of Changing Places toilet facilities is required to prevent and discourage misuse and to ensure that provisions are available to disabled people when required.

## Guidance

- Stadia operators should develop and implement a policy for the Management of Changing Places Toilet Facilities. The policy should contain the following:
  - › Confirmation that a Changing Places toilet facility has been provided at the sports ground, including its size and location. **Note:** if more than one Changing Places toilet facility is available within the sports ground, provide details for each.
  - › Equipment and accessories contained within the Changing Places toilet facility.
  - › Details of how the Changing Places toilet facility is clearly identified within the sports ground. For example: using the CP logo on directional wayfinding signs; using embossed tactile and Braille sign, and the Changing Places logo, on or adjacent to the door. Confirm that front-line staff and stewards can direct disabled people to the Changing Places toilet facility (ensure that staff and steward training addresses awareness of the number and location of all Changing Places toilet facilities provided at the sports ground).
  - › Confirmation that emergency alarm cords within the Changing Places toilet facility are regularly inspected by housekeeping and stadia operators to ensure that they are in good working order and are not tied up.
  - › Response procedure adopted by stadia operators should the emergency assistance alarm in the Changing Places toilet facility be activated, including how staff members and stewards are alerted and made aware of its particular location. For example: localised alarm indicators/sounders; indication on a control panel linked to a central location such as the stadium control point.
  - › Confirmation that the Changing Places toilet facility is never used for storage and is regularly inspected by housekeeping and stadia operators to ensure that transfer spaces are always kept clear.
  - › Procedure for the regular inspection, cleaning and maintenance of the Changing Places toilet facility. **Note:** inspection procedures should include assessment of the structural integrity of the fixtures and fittings e.g. grabrails, privacy screen, hoist, adult-sized wall-mounted changing bench (if applicable) etc.
  - › A list of any instructional information provided within the Changing Places toilet facility. For example, regarding use of the installed hoist, and the types of sling and sling connectors that are compatible with it.
  - › Method(s) used by stadia operators to clearly advertise the management of Changing Places toilet facilities policy to the public. For example: display of the policy at visitor information points; availability of the policy on the website and on social media.

- › Procedure adopted by stadia operators to ensure that the management of Changing Places toilet facilities policy is circulated to staff members and stewards, is read and understood. Include process for regular review and who is responsible for the induction of new staff members and stewards.
- As far as possible, the use of RADAR locks should be avoided. RADAR locks should only be used where essential for security/cleanliness reasons and where it is possible to easily obtain a key.
- Stewards in stands where RADAR locks are used should be provided with keys.
- If RADAR locks are necessary, this should be clearly stated on pre-event information and at each Changing Places toilet facility where this measure is adopted, including where keys can be obtained.



### Guidance Signpost

- ▶ Changing Places: the practical guide. Changing Places Consortium. [www.changing-places.org](http://www.changing-places.org)
- ▶ [www.musculardystrophyuk.org](http://www.musculardystrophyuk.org)
- ▶ To register a Changing Places Toilet in NI email: [changingplaces@musculardystrophyuk.org](mailto:changingplaces@musculardystrophyuk.org)
- ▶ Building Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012. **Amendments Booklet (AMD 8)** Amendments to Technical Booklet R. Department of Finance. June 2022.

## 9 Management of Quiet Areas and Sensory Viewing Rooms Policy

### Overview

Neurodiversity<sup>3</sup> relates to the diversity of the human brain. It is the term used to describe variation in neurocognitive profiles across the whole population and recognises that the way we think, move, process, act and communicate can vary.

Some people, including people with neurodivergent profiles such as Autism, Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, ADHD and Tourettes, and neurodegenerative profiles such as Dementia, can often experience sensory processing difference from the majority of people (i.e. may react in a different way when information is processed through the senses). Response reaction can be heightened (hypersensitivity) or reduced (hyposensitivity) in certain situations and

<sup>3</sup> Neurodiversity is defined as "all types of ways humans think, move, process and act; therefore collectively includes all groups termed as neurotypical, neurodivergent or neurodegenerative." Taken from PAS 6463:2022. Design for the mind - Neurodiversity and the built environment - Guide.

environments. Inclusive design and design interventions, such as the provision of quiet areas and sensory rooms, can help to reduce negative sensory experience and anxiety.

A quiet area(s) [or restorative space(s)] should be made available for adults and children within stadia to enable them to enjoy the matchday experience, or an event, in a safe and warm quiet area away from the noise and crowds of the stadium bowl, accompanied by their family, friends or carers. **Note:** quiet areas should be available to people as and when required e.g. when sensory overload cannot be predated but is triggered during an event (it is possible the area may not be pre-booked in this instance).

The inclusion of a separate sensory viewing room(s) should also be considered.

### Guidance

- Stadia operators should develop and implement a policy for the management of quiet areas and sensory viewing rooms to ensure appropriate use. The policy should include:
  - › Details of where the quiet areas and sensory viewing rooms are located, or available at short-notice, within stadia. **Note:** where possible, a combination of secluded private spaces and shared calming environments should be provided. Avoid the use of meeting or conference rooms within stadia, as they may be occupied when required as quiet areas (or restorative spaces). If more than one quiet area and/or sensory viewing room is available within the sports ground, provide details for each.
  - › Location of quiet areas and sensory viewing rooms in relation to accessible spectator viewing areas and accessible sanitary provisions throughout the sports ground.
  - › Location of quiet areas and sensory viewing rooms in relation to companion spectator seats. **Note:** these should be conveniently located adjacent to quiet areas and sensory viewing rooms to enable additional family members and companions to sit close by.
  - › Confirmation that sensory viewing rooms provide an unrestricted view of the pitch/action.
  - › Details of the provisions and features within quiet areas or sensory viewing rooms e.g. range of seating options, finishes and fittings (should not overstimulate the senses), odour-free, low background noise, adjustable lighting, specific sensory equipment/toys. **Note:** some people might have a need for different levels of sensory stimulation, so if it is not possible to provide a quiet area **and** a separate sensory viewing room, the provision of additional items that are discreetly stored within the quiet area should be considered.

- › Quiet areas and sensory viewing rooms should be warm. This will benefit disabled people and people with health conditions who may be unable to sit outside for long periods of time. **Note:** separate Warm Room provision should be considered for this purpose in stadia.
- › Clear and concise instructional information for the use of any technology or equipment used in the quiet areas and/or sensory viewing rooms.
- › Confirmation that occupancy indicators are provided on the door to a quiet area (or restorative space), or available digitally, to denote to stadia staff and stewards that the quiet area is in use and an alternative should be sought.
- › Confirmation that staff members and stewards have undertaken appropriate awareness training on how to support people with neurological and/or sensory/information processing differences.
- › Confirmation that quiet areas and sensory viewing rooms are never used for storage.
- › Procedure for the regular inspection, cleaning and maintenance of quiet areas and sensory viewing rooms. **Note:** inspection procedures should assess tidiness, cleanliness, sensory equipment, fixtures and finishes, including natural and artificial lighting levels in advance of next use.
- › Method(s) used by stadia operators to monitor the use and demand for quiet areas and sensory rooms on event days, with the commitment to provide more if demand dictates.
- › Method(s) used by stadia operators to clearly advertise the management of quiet areas and sensory viewing rooms policy to the public. For example: display of the policy at visitor information points; availability of the policy on the website and on social media.
- › Procedure adopted by stadia operators to ensure that the management of quiet areas and sensory viewing rooms policy is circulated to staff members and stewards, is read and understood. Include process for regular review and who is responsible for the induction of new staff members and stewards.

### Additional Considerations

- In certain circumstances where it proves impracticable to provide a sensory viewing room(s) which offers a direct view of the pitch/action, live action streaming should be made available within the designated area.



### Guidance Signpost

- ▶ BS 8300-2:2018. **Paragraph 19.3** Quiet spaces, p.154.
- ▶ PAS 6463:2022. **Section 14.1** Quiet and restorative spaces, p.87-92.
- ▶ PAS 6463:2022. **Annex B (informative)** Checklist for achieving flexibility in quiet and restorative spaces, p.115.
- ▶ Sensory Viewing Rooms: CAFE Guidance Note. Centre for Access to Football in Europe. 2019.
- ▶ Benefits of a Sensory Room. Jones, G. 2019.
- ▶ Neurodiverse sports fans. Safety, accessibility and experiences when attending live events. **Section 4.5.2** Tools and facilities.

## 10 Ticketing Strategy and Pricing Policy

### Overview

There is huge demand for accessible event and season tickets, and often there is significant inequality for disabled people when trying to obtain tickets in comparison to non-disabled people.

An accessible booking system is essential and the same methods for booking tickets (event tickets, season tickets, hospitality/VIP tickets etc.) should be available to disabled people as non-disabled people, both home and away visitors. The process of ticket booking, and distribution, can be used to relate stadia-specific accessibility information and key features of sports grounds. This may include verbal information, information printed on tickets and additional information supplements distributed with tickets.

The cost of full price standard/season/hospitality/VIP tickets can be a barrier for some disabled people and can prevent them from attending events regularly. Often, families with a disabled member have higher outgoings and expenses, and disabled people who live independently may have higher living expenses e.g. requiring use of an accessible taxi to attend events.

Some disabled people require a personal assistant (or two personal assistants) to attend events i.e. an essential personal companion(s). The cost associated with this additional assistance can prevent disabled people from attending regularly, or at all. Where a disabled person needs to be accompanied, it would be unfair to charge admission for two (or three) people if the accompanying personal assistant(s) is only there to provide support. Allowing disabled people to be accompanied by a personal assistant(s) free of charge ensures that disabled people are not unfairly disadvantaged. **Note:** given the nature of stadia environments, some disabled people may require an essential companion(s) on event days even if they do not require this support for normal day-to-day activities.

A sports ground's requirement for proof of eligibility relating to concessions can involve time and expense, which is often incurred by disabled people.

## Guidance

- Stadia operators should develop and implement a Ticketing Strategy, to assist disabled people attending events. The strategy should address the following:
  - › Tickets for disabled people should be no more expensive than tickets for non-disabled people.
  - › Disabled spectators should have the opportunity to sit with a companion or within a larger group, and with their own fans, to avoid separation during events. Where standing terraces are provided in stadia the principle of choice should be extended to disabled spectators when booking tickets.
  - › Tickets should be available in accessible formats and include key access information, such as:
    - Details of public transport options and accessible parking provisions.
    - Accessibility ticket category in relation to accessible spectator viewing e.g. wheelchair user space, ambulant accessible seat, sensory viewing room etc.
    - Specific access information for each seat.
    - Location of accessible toilets, Changing Places toilet facility, lifts etc.
  - › Sports ground maps, external routes to accessible entry points and accessible spectator viewing areas should be included on, or with, tickets (complemented by a clear, accessible signage strategy on site).
  - › Spectator viewing stands, rows and seats should be clearly numbered on ticketing information, to correspond with sports ground maps and floor/seating plans.
  - › QR code included on tickets to enable a disabled person to access additional stadia accessibility or wayfinding information e.g. to assist people who are blind or partially sighted using digital phone technology to navigate.
  - › If electronic entry cards are used at entry points, it is essential that associated systems are accessible for all people, easy to understand and easy to operate. Clear sports ground maps and floor/seating plans should be provided to complement entry cards.
  - › Booking and ticketing software should be accessible and user tested prior to going live, including online booking forms.
  - › Booking and ticketing software should be designed to enable identification of need in relation to accessible parking, specific spectator viewing requirements and facilities e.g. wheelchair user spaces or ambulant accessible seats, and assistive aids. Clear definition of the different ticket categories available is essential.

- › Booking and ticketing software should enable disabled people to block book additional tickets for family or companions without the need to access a second booking system, avoiding the potential for separation during events and to ensure proximity to a Changing Places toilet facility if required.
- › The booking system should have various booking methods, to accommodate the needs of people with a range of disabilities e.g. provision of a SMS text number for people who are deaf.
- › Access to a dedicated helpline to enable disabled people to make additional access requests.
- › Provision of additional information along with tickets e.g. stadium-specific accessibility leaflets(s), distributed to home and away spectators.
- › Awareness of ticketing staff with regards to flexible seating locations where persons accompanied by assistance dogs can be seated. **Note:** the allocation of two seats may be required to enable a person to be accompanied by their assistance dog.
- › Awareness of ticketing staff to establish whether mobility scooter users require scooter access to a wheelchair accessible viewing space/platform, or whether they will require parking and transfer.
- › Awareness of ticketing staff with regards to the booking and use of quiet areas and sensory viewing rooms. **Note:** some quiet areas may be required at short notice in the event that sensory overload is experienced during an event and a quiet area or sensory room has not been pre-booked.
- › Details of the location of quiet areas and sensory viewing rooms in relation to spectator seats. **Note:** companion spectator seats conveniently located adjacent to quiet areas and sensory viewing rooms should be available to enable additional family members and companions to sit close by. These spectator seats should be available as part of the booking process.
- › Flexible ticketing and management of accessible viewing areas, to enable increased availability of standard seating tickets in the event that wheelchair or companion viewing spaces are not booked or occupied after a certain time.
- Stadia operators should also develop and implement a policy for Pricing, which adopts subsidised schemes and initiatives that actively target disabled people and helps to encourage disabled people to attend events. The policy should contain the following:
  - › Confirmation that the SDAO consults regularly with local disabled supporters regarding ticket pricing matters.
  - › Confirmation as to whether the sports ground operates a waged or unwaged pricing policy. **Note:** concessions for disabled people should be based on ability to pay and should therefore be available to those with a disability who are in receipt of certain social security benefits or are financially dependent upon someone who themselves qualify for the service at a concessionary rate, for example an older person.

- › A list of subsidised schemes and initiatives that actively target disabled people i.e. concessionary rates available to the disabled individual and/or essential personal companion(s). **Note:** if it is intended to offer concessions to disabled individuals e.g. as part of a 'social ticket' scheme open to the public on a wider basis due to their financial circumstances, this should be considered carefully and in consultation with disabled fans and local disability groups. For example:
  - Offering concessions on standard/full fees to people on means tested benefits. Where a disabled person may, for reasons related to their disability be prevented from gaining full and equal access to a service or building, or from fully participating in an activity, a concessionary rate should be available. **Note:** whilst some stadia operators may feel it is courteous to offer concessions due to limited choice or lower quality, concessions should not be viewed as a suitable means to compensate for lack of accessibility at stadia, and stadia operators should continuously strive to improve the provision and quality of accessible facilities for disabled people.
  - Concessions should not be exclusive to a particular group of disabled people e.g. wheelchair users. Many people have hidden disabilities or progressive conditions requiring personal support. Some disabled people who use an Assistance Dog may also require an essential companion to attend events.
  - The introduction of a companion scheme e.g. 'Match Buddy/Buddy Card Scheme', whereby concessions are offered to ensure that disabled people who need to be accompanied or assisted by a personal assistant/carer to access a service do not also have to pay for this essential personal companion. **Note:** the same logic of free admission for personal assistants should be applied to disabled children and young persons accompanied by an adult i.e. their essential personal companion should go free, as their role is to provide specific support for the disabled child or young person.
- › Clear definition of the principle of entitlement relating to concessions offered within the sports ground i.e. who qualifies and the method(s) of proof that will be requested by the sports ground and that this will be requested in advance of the event or during advance ticket booking, not at the entry point on event day. **Note:** financially independent disabled people may not wish to be offered the same concessions as financially disadvantaged groups e.g. students, unemployed people and those on low incomes or receiving benefits, if that is their prerogative.
- › Confirmation as to whether the sports ground operates a registration scheme, a 'Universal Access Card Scheme' or 'EU Disability Card', which may help to simplify the eligibility process for both disabled people and stadia operators. **Note:** such a scheme eliminates the need to supply the same information every time a disabled person wants to attend an event, as an individual's access requirements can be accessed easily, including any essential personal companion/buddy scheme concessions, proof of eligibility etc.

- › Contact details for enquiries regarding pricing, including methods of communication for people who are deaf or have hearing loss e.g. email or Relay UK (formerly known as Text Relay or Next Generation Text NGT).
- › Details of any reasonable deposit fee required for match commentary headsets and handheld mobile captioning devices. Permit season ticket holders and supporters club members to purchase match commentary headsets/portable hearing enhancement systems, and at reasonable cost e.g. within stadia shops.
- › Method(s) used by stadia operators to clearly advertise the pricing policy to the public. For example: display of the policy at visitor information points; availability of the policy on the website and on social media.
- › Procedure adopted by stadia operators to ensure that the pricing policy is circulated to staff members and stewards, is read and understood. Include process for regular review and who is responsible for the induction of new staff members and stewards.



### Guidance Signpost

- ▶ 15 Steps to Create Accessible and Inclusive Ticketing Processes. CAFE Guidance Note. Centre for Access to Football in Europe. August 2020.
- ▶ Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds, Sixth edition (SGSA). **Paragraph 3.30** Ticketing Strategy, p.55-56.
- ▶ Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds, Sixth edition (SGSA). **Paragraph 7.9** Providing clear information, p.99-100.
- ▶ Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds, Sixth edition (SGSA). **Paragraph 16.33** Tickets and programmes, p.254.
- ▶ The Northern Ireland Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds. **Paragraph 16.29** Tickets and Programmes, p.213.
- ▶ Briefing Paper. Concessionary Charging Policy. Disability Action. 2016.
- ▶ Ticketing and matchday guidance. Premier League Guidance. 2018.
- ▶ LPF ticketing guidance document and seating management for disabled spectators/customers. Level Playing Field. January 2019.

# 11 Staff and Steward Training Policy

## Overview

Commonly held misconceptions about disabled people in society continue to act as barriers for many disabled people wishing to attend live events. Non-disabled people, who do not regularly meet disabled people, may feel unsure about how to interact and communicate appropriately. Staff members and stewards should be trained to be fully aware of policies and procedures developed by stadia operators to help meet the needs of disabled people, and the range of disability types i.e. physical (wheelchair users and people with mobility disabilities), sensory, learning, mental health and hidden.

Disability Inclusion/Equality Training is designed to provide staff members and stewards with the knowledge and understanding they require to provide a better level of service to disabled people, including home and away spectators; and will also help them to feel more comfortable when interacting with disabled people. This in turn will create a relaxed and friendly environment for disabled people using stadia.

Ticketing staff, frontline staff members and stewards can directly influence overall customer experience, therefore training is essential.

## Recommended Actions

- Stadia operators should develop and implement a policy for Staff and Steward Training. The policy should contain the following:
  - › Confirmation that all staff members and stewards are required to undertake Disability Inclusion/Equality Training. **Note:** all staff members should have completed Disability Inclusion/Equality Training within one year of commencing employment and stewards must complete training before officiating at an event.
  - › Confirmation that all staff members and stewards are required to undertake training on the access-specific policies and procedures adopted by stadia operators e.g. a stadium's emergency evacuation strategy, use of Soccer Sight, management of accessible parking, assistance dogs policy etc.
  - › Confirmation that ticketing staff members possess good knowledge of the disability types, the layout of the sports ground, the facilities available to assist disabled people within the sports ground, including the various accessible seating provisions/ticketing categories and assistive aids.
  - › Confirmation that front-line staff members and stewards are required to undertake regular training in the use of communication aids provided to assist disabled people within the sports ground. For example, assistive listening systems such as induction loops.

- › Management procedures adopted to ensure staff and steward assistance is offered to disabled people within the sports ground. For example:
  - Management of accessible control barriers, turnstile systems or entry points on visitor arrival.
  - Stewards positioned on approach and at accessible entry points to aid in opening manual doors/gates, to facilitate ticketing processes and to assist disabled people from unintentionally entering standard turnstiles.
  - Provision of a fast-stream line to assist people with neurodivergent differences or older people who may find queuing problematic.
  - Availability of staff members and stewards to assist with orientation, wayfinding and guiding.
- › Steward awareness that disabled people may require to carry food for medical reasons and this should not be confiscated.
- › Confirmation that staff members and stewards have undertaken appropriate awareness training on how to support people with neurological and/or sensory/information processing differences, including during emergency evacuation and drills.
- › Confirmation that staff members and stewards are trained regarding the management of quiet areas and sensory viewing rooms. See Section 9 of this guide: Management of Quiet Areas and Sensory Viewing Rooms Policy.
- › Method(s) adopted by stadia operators to increase awareness amongst staff members and stewards regarding the range of facilities available to assist disabled people within the sports ground e.g. assistance dogs provisions, quiet areas and sensory viewing rooms, Changing Places toilet facilities etc.
- › Method(s) adopted by stadia operators to increase awareness amongst staff members and stewards that disabilities can be hidden, and that some people may require additional assistance. For example, older people, people with breathing difficulties and people with neurodegenerative differences may have arthritis, reduced dexterity, hearing or sight loss, reduced understanding and slower response times.
- › Procedure adopted by stadia operators to ensure that the staff and steward training policy is circulated to staff members and stewards, is read and understood. Include process for regular review and who is responsible for the induction of new staff members and stewards.
- › A comprehensive Staff and Steward Training Record. The Staff and Steward Training Record should outline the following details for each specific type of training undertaken:
  - Name of the training undertaken e.g. Disability Inclusion Training (DIT).
  - When this training took place.
  - Who was responsible for conducting this training.
  - Which staff members and stewards attended, including their role within the sports ground.
  - When this training will be reviewed.

**Note:** update the Staff and Steward Training Record when new training is undertaken or when existing training is completed/reviewed.



### Guidance Signpost

- ▶ Training can be provided by various disability organisations, including Disability Sport NI and Disability Action.
- ▶ Steward Training. Level Playing Field: [www.levelplayingfield.org.uk/training-advice/disability-inclusion-and-etiquette-training/stewards-training/](http://www.levelplayingfield.org.uk/training-advice/disability-inclusion-and-etiquette-training/stewards-training/)
- ▶ Disability Access Officer Training. Level Playing Field: [www.levelplayingfield.org.uk/training-advice/disability-inclusion-and-etiquette-training/dao-training](http://www.levelplayingfield.org.uk/training-advice/disability-inclusion-and-etiquette-training/dao-training)
- ▶ Information on sight loss training and training on how to look after a guide dog when in the care of staff: [www.guidedogs.org.uk/how-you-can-help/sighted-guide-training/](http://www.guidedogs.org.uk/how-you-can-help/sighted-guide-training/)
- ▶ [www.rnib.org.uk/services-for-businesses](http://www.rnib.org.uk/services-for-businesses)
- ▶ RNIB Soccer Sight. Staff training, p.17.
- ▶ Assisting people with epilepsy: [www.epilepsyaction.org.uk/info](http://www.epilepsyaction.org.uk/info)
- ▶ [www.rnid.org.uk/information-and-support/deaf-awareness/remote-training-for-businesses](http://www.rnid.org.uk/information-and-support/deaf-awareness/remote-training-for-businesses)
- ▶ Dementia Friends training: [www.dementiafriends.org.uk](http://www.dementiafriends.org.uk)
- ▶ The Northern Ireland Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds. **Paragraph 8.7** Management of Concourses, p.79.
- ▶ The Northern Ireland Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds. **Paragraph 13.19 b-f** Management of Accommodation for Disabled Spectators, p.165-167.
- ▶ Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds, Sixth edition (SGSA). **Section 4** Management - Stewarding, p.63-73.
- ▶ Guidance on interacting with a disabled person. Level Playing Field.
- ▶ BS 7000-6:2005. Design management systems. Managing inclusive design. Guide.

## 12 Egress - Emergency Evacuation Strategy

### Overview

Egress relates to general exit, emergency evacuation because of an incident (such as fire) and egress because of exceptional circumstances.<sup>4</sup>

The efficient and safe coordinated emergency evacuation of all people, including disabled people, older people and people with neurological and/or sensory/information processing differences (who may have a broad range of needs and abilities), is essential to successful inclusive stadia management. Excellent staffing and stewarding in the event of emergency is critical and should be integral within staff and steward training policy.

It is important to consider that disabled people may be alone and unaware that an emergency is occurring, and to consider the needs of assistance dog owners during emergency evacuation.

### Guidance

- Conduct risk assessments and develop a fire safety plan that includes specific provision for enabling the identification of children and adults most likely to be at risk in the event of emergency evacuation e.g. those who may have difficulty using escape routes, such as steps and stairs, and may require assistance to escape.
- Conduct risk assessments and develop a fire safety plan that includes the coordinated evacuation of older people and people with a range of disabilities on event and non-event days e.g. people with mobility disabilities, people who are deaf, people who are blind or partially sighted, people with neurological and/or sensory/information processing differences etc. Include details of any evacuation equipment that may be required, and procedures for checking areas where disabled people may be alone and unaware that an emergency has occurred.
- The fire safety plan should consider management in terms of loading times and return times for evacuation lifts, where provided in stadia.
- Consider the needs of assistance dog owners during emergency evacuation, given that the dog has no responsibility or role to assist its owner in the event of emergency. Consider that the dog may be located with its owner or away from its owner in a designated secure area during an event.
- Permit Guide Dogs NI to carry out orientation training within stadia to familiarise guide dog owners with the location of escape routes and exit points.

<sup>4</sup>Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds, Sixth edition (SGSA) refers to this as 'exceptional egress' e.g. in the event of a terrorist threat or attack occurring inside or outside the grounds, and may involve full, partial or phased evacuation/invacuation.



### Guidance Signpost

- ▶ PAS 6463:2022. **Section 14.5** Emergency evacuation, p.96-98.
- ▶ The Fire Safety Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010. DHSSPSNI.
- ▶ BS 9999:2017. Fire safety in the design, management and use of buildings - Code of practice.
- ▶ BS 9999:2017. **Section 45** Evacuation of disabled people, p.245-250 (including the use of emergency evacuation plans).
- ▶ Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds, Sixth edition (SGSA). **Paragraph 10.14** Emergency exit and exceptional egress routes - management, p.136-137 and **Paragraph 10.15** Emergency and exceptional egress - disabled spectators, p.137-138.
- ▶ Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds, Sixth edition (SGSA). **Section 15** Fire Safety, p.209-229.
- ▶ Fire Safety Law: The Evacuation of Disabled People from Buildings. DHSSPSNI. 2011.
- ▶ The Northern Ireland Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds. **Paragraph 13.19 a-f** Management of Accommodation for Disabled Spectators (Good and Safe Design and Awareness), p.165.
- ▶ The Northern Ireland Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds. **Paragraph 13.19 g** The Needs of Elderly Spectators, p.167.
- ▶ Safe Evacuation for All. National Disability Authority (Ireland). 2011.
- ▶ Inclusive Design Standards. **IDS 30**. Emergency Egress, p.56.
- ▶ Access for All UEFA and CAFE Good Practice Guide to Creating an Accessible Stadium and Matchday Experience. **Section L** Leaving the Stadium, p.92-94.
- ▶ BS 7827:2019. Designing, specifying, maintaining and operating emergency sound systems at sports venues, large public buildings and venues. Code of practice.
- ▶ Accessible Stadia: A good practice guide to the design of facilities to meet the needs of disabled spectators and other users. **Part 2.35** Leaving the Stadium, p.59-66.
- ▶ Fire safety risk assessment: means of escape for disabled people. Ministry for Housing, Communities & Local Government
- ▶ Fire and Rescue Service Operational Guidance: Generic risk assessments **GRA 2.3** Rescues from lifts and escalators. Department for Housing, Communities & Local Government.
- ▶ Consult directly with Guide Dogs NI regarding the evacuation of assistance dog owners and on staff and steward/volunteer training relating to evacuation.



Section

# 13

## Stadia Spectator Development Plan

13 Inclusive Stadia Spectator Development Plan

## 13 Inclusive Stadia Spectator Development Plan

### Overview

To attract disabled spectators, stadia operators need to proactively plan for the inclusion of disabled people, older people and people with neurological and/or sensory/information processing differences. Proactive spectator development planning is an integral part of overall stadia accessibility.

Effective consultation with disabled people is crucial to the successful development and implementation of a truly inclusive spectator development plan.

Implementation of guidance within Disability Sport NI's Guide 3: Accessible Sports Stadia Design Guidelines and Sections 1-13 of this guide by stadia operators will assist in establishing some of the structure for an Inclusive Stadia Spectator Development Plan, however, the guidance below should also be applied.

### Guidance

- An inclusive stadia spectator development plan should be put in place in conjunction with local disabled people, disability groups/organisations and inclusive supporters' associations. To develop visitor and spectator inclusion, the plan should address the following:
  - › The appointment of a dedicated Stadium Disability Access Officer (SDAO) with responsibility for developing and implementing the inclusive spectator development plan.
  - › The establishment of an Inclusive Supporters Association, which can act as an advisory forum on disability access and inclusion issues.
  - › Ongoing delivery of Disability Inclusion/Equality Training as outlined in Section 11 of this guide: Staff and Steward Training Policy.
  - › Provision of communication procedures in conjunction with stadia inclusive spectator development plans e.g. regular stadium podcast.
  - › Development and implementation of proactive marketing initiatives designed to attract new disabled spectators, their friends and peers.
  - › The use of positive imagery of disabled spectators in stadia marketing materials.
  - › Organisation of stadia tours targeted at disability groups and their members, to show them the accessibility features adopted and to provide reassurance that a stadium can accommodate their needs:
    - Special schools, adult centres, targeted disability sports groups and organisations should be encouraged to partake in stadia tours.
    - This should actively encourage visits with family and friends on event days and initiate word of mouth amongst the disability community.

- Where a stadium tour is provided, stadia operators should design the tour to ensure that disabled people and people with sensory/ neurological processing differences can participate fully, including access to pitch side using a firm, level surface (or with shallow ramped gradients where a change in level is unavoidable) and with accessible toilet provisions within proximity (40m maximum recommended). If access is permitted onto the pitch as part of the tour, an accessible rest space using a suitable surface finish that will assist older people, wheelchair users and people using mobility aids should be considered.
- Stadia tour guides should be aware that use of simple descriptions can be helpful for people who are blind or partially sighted. A pre-recorded audio stadia tour and/or audio tour App should be considered.
- Suitable equipment should be provided for use during stadia tours e.g. portable hearing loops.
- › Development and implementation of a feedback tool to obtain disabled spectators' comments on visitor experience and accessibility of facilities. Mechanisms for feedback should be provided in a range of accessible formats, including telephone, textphone, Relay UK, SMS, email and Easy Read online forms.



### Guidance Signpost

- ▶ PAS 6463:2022. Design for the mind - Neurodiversity and the built environment - Guide.
- ▶ Disability Access Officer Training. Level Playing Field: [www.levelplayingfield.org.uk/training-advice/disability-inclusion-and-etiquette-training/dao-training/](http://www.levelplayingfield.org.uk/training-advice/disability-inclusion-and-etiquette-training/dao-training/)
- ▶ See RNID for product solutions: [www.rnidconnevans.co.uk/viewPage.do?id=index](http://www.rnidconnevans.co.uk/viewPage.do?id=index)



# Appendices

## Appendix A Guidance Signpost Bibliography

## Appendix A

### Guidance Signpost Bibliography

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## Notes

## Notes

## Notes

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