

**IMPROVING FACILITIES FOR DISABLED SUPPORTERS**

**A report by the Football Task Force**

**Submitted to the Minister for Sport 29 July 1998**

## **Executive Summary**

**The Football Task Force was asked by the Government to make recommendations on ‘improving access to spectating facilities for disabled people at football grounds’.**

**Football clubs have always sought to ensure disabled people have access to matches. Pre-1990, facilities were basic – usually uncovered spaces at pitch-side – but free of charge.**

*The watershed, as in so many other ways, was the Hillsborough disaster.*

**Lord Justice Taylor concluded that the game could do better. Facilities for wheelchair users, those who have trouble walking, blind and deaf people could no longer be ‘optional extras’ but must be seen as ‘integral to planning’.**

*Have clubs complied with Taylor’s wishes? How closely have legal requirements and technical guidance on disabled access been followed in recent ground re-developments?*

**Facilities for disabled supporters at English grounds have improved beyond recognition in recent years. Many now offer integrated raised viewing areas for wheelchair users and high-quality facilities for blind and deaf supporters.**

**There are shining examples of best practice. Northampton Town and Huddersfield Town have built new grounds that set the standard for the rest of the game to follow.**

**But the good news is not universal. There is still wide variation in the number of wheelchair spaces and the quality of facilities for disabled supporters.**

**New grounds have been built with too few wheelchair spaces. Manchester United, Arsenal, Liverpool and Southampton have all erected new stands with none at all.**

**Some new stands only have pitch-side spaces. Others have separate sections for disabled fans isolated from the crowd and the atmosphere.**

Blocked views are a common problem. One fan told us: *“We suffered restricted views at Stoke, Wolves, Sunderland, Charlton and Middlesbrough last season due to wheelchairs being behind a seated area. When there is any action, fans stand up and we see nothing.”*

**Now is a good time to take stock of changes in recent years.**

The Disability Discrimination Act comes into force in October 1999. It is intended to ensure disabled people get fair treatment as customers. It will be illegal for organisations to offer facilities or services that are not available to disabled people.

Disabled fans want to be able to enjoy the same benefits many of us take for granted: a decent view; choice of location; ability to sit with friends and fellow supporters; cover from the weather; and fair access to tickets.

These are fair requests – but it is rare for disabled fans to get all at once.

The DDA will oblige clubs to review the quality of service offered to disabled people. This report begins that process and is intended to help clubs comply with new legal responsibilities.

We look at every aspect of the experience of disabled fans - from buying tickets to using the supporters club after the match – and suggest how it can be improved. Examples of good practice are held up in the hope they will be adopted more widely.

We do not seek to rewrite established technical guidance rather to ensure that it is implemented effectively. Where it has been followed, facilities of the highest quality have resulted.

**English grounds boast some of the best facilities for disabled fans, but can be even better by learning from experience and improving consultation with supporters.**

The building of the new national stadium presents an opportunity to set new standards to which sports grounds the world over can aspire. It should be a flagship facility in every respect.

**Our proposals are not intended to benefit only a small number of people. Making grounds even more accessible to disabled people will benefit us all.**

England's population is ageing. Many of us will all have trouble walking, seeing and hearing in later life but will not want this to affect our enjoyment of going to the match.

Clear signs, good lighting, wide entrances and exits, low gradient floors, ample leg-room – basic ground improvements such as these enhance the experience of watching live football for us all.

In summary, we recommend:

- **amendments to legislation to ensure all new stadia, stands and extensions to existing facilities incorporate the recommended number of wheelchair spaces**
- **introduction of new requirements for minimum numbers of seats for ambulant disabled people, blind and deaf people in spectator seating**
- **incorporation of a minimum of 290 wheelchair spaces at raised levels and different locations throughout the ground at the new national stadium**
- **full consultation with disabled supporters on plans for new developments - starting with the new national stadium - as a condition of funding**
- **annual visits by 'hit squads' to all 92 football grounds to conduct audits of facilities and monitor progress on improvements**
- **introduction of new incentives for clubs to improve existing facilities such as grants and annual progress reports**
- **provision of raised viewing areas for disabled fans - at locations throughout the ground - in all new developments**
- **the ability for home and away disabled fans to sit amongst fellow supporters at all grounds**
- **ground improvements to use tactile paving, brightly-coloured floor surfaces and improved lighting**
- **ground developments to provide adequate leg-room in all seating rows**

- . parking spaces made available to home and away disabled supporters at all grounds where possible**
- . provision of easy access to an adequate number of lavatories for disabled supporters at all grounds**
- . measures to ensure disabled fans can buy refreshments easily and safely**
- . provision of wheelchair access to all existing social and retail facilities at grounds**
- . harmonisation of ticket allocation for disabled supporters with general ticket distribution procedures**
- . minimum numbers of tickets made available to visiting disabled supporters for FA Premier League, Football League and all cup matches**
- . appointment of 'named contacts' for disabled fans - with an e-mail address - at all clubs**
- . trained stewards to be deployed in areas of the ground for disabled supporters**
- . encouragement of standardisation of charging policies for disabled fans and helpers**

## 1. About this report

1.1 *How easy is it for a disabled person to attend a football match in 1998? What is a reasonable level of services and facilities for clubs to provide? Are they providing it now? What more can be done to improve the match-day experience of disabled supporters?*

1.2 These questions provide the starting point for our inquiry. We have put them to disabled supporters, football clubs, local authorities and disability organisations as part of a national consultation. On our regional tour, we have spoken to representatives of disabled supporters groups from clubs in all divisions in all parts of the country (*see appendix 1*).

1.3 The information gathered has been used to make a balanced assessment of the quality of facilities and services disabled fans should be able to expect as standard in 1998 at grounds in each of the four English divisions. Against these bench-marks, we judge the quality of facilities and services clubs are providing. Our recommendations are intended to bridge the gap and help all clubs reach agreed standards.

1.4 Facilities inside grounds are judged on two criteria: quantity and quality. Statutory requirements on access to new sports facilities are laid down in Part M of the Building Regulations and enforced by local authorities. Advisory guidelines are provided in the Guide to the Safety at Sports Grounds (Green Guide) and by the Football Stadia Advisory Design Council (FSADC). This advice is comprehensive and offers an excellent template for clubs to use. We do not seek to rewrite it, but rather examine the extent to which it has been followed in recent ground re-development. We suggest how it can be implemented more effectively.

1.5 A distinction is drawn between new developments and existing facilities. New stands and stadia offer a clean slate to provide improved accommodation for all supporters. We are concerned that this opportunity is used to the full, but also consider how clubs can be given incentives to make improvements to existing facilities. Factors such as age and condition of facilities and demand for tickets vary from club to club. They will have a bearing on what clubs can provide - but all should be able to reach basic standards.

1.6 Much of our report is concerned with bricks and mortar – but good customer care can help improve access, such as making it easier to book tickets. This issue will be brought into sharper focus by the enactment of new legislation in 1999 requiring disabled people to have access to all services provided by any organisation. Our recommendations are intended to help clubs prepare. Examples of good practice are held up in the hope they will be adopted more widely.

1.7 In Opposition, the Labour Party published a *Charter for Football* under the guidance of then Shadow Minister for Sport Tom Pendry MP. It stated:

*“Labour will require grounds to allow provision of improved access for disabled people. We will make this provision integral to planning requirements and ensure that disabled groups are fully consulted.”*

This report fulfils that commitment.

### ***What is disability and ‘disabled access’?***

1.8 Disability is a mental or physical impairment affecting a person’s ability to engage in day-to-day activities. There are four officially recognised categories of disability: mobility, sight, hearing and learning. Over six million adults in Britain and over a quarter of a million children have a disability of some kind. This total includes 500,000 wheelchair users. As the Sports Council notes in its 1994 Guidance Notes on *Access for Disabled People*, ‘disabled access’ to sports grounds is a not a fringe issue but should concern us all:

*“The issue is not making special provision for a special class of citizens, but making all buildings easier and safer for the whole population. Indeed many disabled people use the term disability to describe the limitations imposed upon them by a built environment which fails to take account of their particular needs.”*

We endorse this view. The design of buildings creates barriers for all people; poor design creates more barriers for some than others. Many of our recommendations are intended to benefit everybody who watches live football.

1.9 We interpret ‘disabled access’ in its widest sense. It is wheelchair access, but also access to grounds for people with visual and hearing impairments, with learning difficulties and those who have trouble walking (or ambulant disabled). It is more than the physical approach to a vantage point within a stadium but encompasses the entire process of going to a match, from booking a ticket to using the club bar afterwards. Barriers and problems arise at each stage and recommendations are made on how they can best be overcome.

1.10 Throughout the 1990s, there have been a number of significant developments on the issue of improving access and facilities for disabled people, both inside and outside football. These developments set the context for this report. We review them and provide an overview of football’s response, before looking in detail at getting a ticket; going to the match; and at the match.

## 2. Setting the scene

2.1 Football clubs have always sought to ensure disabled supporters have access to matches. Facilities were basic pre-1990, usually no more than uncovered spaces for wheelchair users at pitch-side. Such accommodation was considered to be the safest option - offering ease of access and egress – but it left disabled supporters with a limited view of the game, vulnerable to the elements and in striking distance of the ball. It was, at least, available free of charge.

2.2 The Hillsborough disaster was to prove a watershed. In his Final Report, Lord Justice Taylor concluded that the game could do better. There was too much variation in the quality of facilities for disabled people at our grounds. Clubs were urged to use impending ground re-development to change the way football caters for disabled fans. Taylor set out a checklist of basic features all disabled supporters - wheelchair users, blind, deaf and ambulant disabled people - should be able to expect as standard. His message was clear: facilities should no longer be considered ‘optional extras’ but seen as ‘integral to planning’.

2.3 Such an approach to stadium design was a radical departure, but it is evident in varying degrees in recent ground re-development. The publication of the Taylor Report at the beginning of the decade was followed by a number of other developments that have changed perspectives of the way facilities and services should be provided for disabled people. Each has had or will have a direct bearing on football. We list them in sequence with a summary of main points.

### 1990: The Hillsborough Stadium Disaster: Final Report (Taylor Report)

2.4 The Taylor Report is a touchstone for football. It sets out an impartial view of the standards the game should strive to achieve and by which it can be judged. This was Taylor’s assessment of facilities for disabled supporters:

*“Many clubs already make provision for the disabled but this is by no means universal. Particular attention is needed to the provision of safe and adequately spacious viewing areas for wheelchair users, with a seat alongside for a companion, protected from the weather, accessible to toilet facilities designed specifically for the disabled, and easily reached from a car park (with reserved car spaces for Orange Badge holders) by means of ramps.”*  
(p.23)

*“The needs of other disabled people - those who have difficulty walking, the partially sighted, and those with impaired hearing - require special attention, for example by the provision of handrails, clear signposts, steps painted in bright colours, and the use of electronic scoreboards to supplement loudspeaker announcements, if these people are to be able to attend sporting events enjoyably and safely.”*  
(p.23)

### 1991: Revisions to Part M of the Building Regulations

2.6 The Building Regulations set minimum legal standards for the design of new buildings and alterations to existing facilities. Part M requires that “reasonable provision shall be made for disabled people to gain access to and use the building”. Football grounds, supporters’ clubs, bars, restaurants and club shops are all subject to its requirements. Local authorities should approve plans for new developments only if satisfied that the requirements of Part M have been met.

2.7 Part M was revised in 1991 shortly after publication of the Taylor Report. Tougher requirements on the quality and quantity of wheelchair spaces in spectator seating were introduced. All applications for new developments submitted for approval after 1 June 1992 were subject to these new provisions. This was in good time to cover the vast majority of ground re-development projects in the top two divisions to comply with the Taylor Report.

2.8 **Quality of facilities:** Part M states that pitch-level facilities should be avoided and recommends integrated raised facilities within a stand:

*“Wheelchair users need to be provided with a space into which they can manoeuvre easily and which allows them a clear view of the event. In addition, they should have the choice of being able to sit next to disabled or able-bodied companions.”*

2.9 **Number of spaces:** Part M requires that the minimum number of wheelchair spaces should be six or 1/100th of total capacity, whichever is the greater, but it adds that in a large stadium ‘*it would be reasonable to provide a smaller proportion of wheelchair spaces*’. The terms ‘large stadium’ and ‘smaller proportion’ are not defined. The National Association of Disabled Supporters argues that this lack of precision is a flaw in the legislation and has allowed new football facilities to be built with inadequate provision. We agree. Part M also fails to prescribe a required number of spaces for people with other disabilities.

### **1992: Publication of guidance by Football Stadia Advisory Design Council**

2.10 The Football Stadia Advisory Design Council (FSADC) a Taylor recommendation and established in August 1990. It brought together experts in architecture, engineering and stadium design. In December 1992, the FSADC produced ‘*Designing for People with Disabilities*’, a guide offering detailed technical advice to help football clubs comply with the principles set out in the Taylor Report and Part M. The FSADC issues a stark warning to clubs:

*“The significance of the new Part M should not be underestimated. Its wide-ranging requirements for the provision of facilities for disabled spectators will have a profound effect upon football clubs and the design of their stadia and facilities, an effect no less demanding in certain respects than those of the Taylor Report ... In the past it has been common for football clubs to provide only limited facilities on the grounds that there has never been sufficient demand from disabled spectators. With the revisions to Part M, that argument will become increasingly difficult to sustain, particularly as those clubs which have made great efforts to improve facilities have experienced a substantial rise in demand.”*

2.11 If followed closely, the FSADC’s guidance would provide facilities of the highest quality. It gives technical advice on how clubs can meet the Part M requirement that raised integrated viewing facilities should always be provided. It acknowledges that Part M is unclear on numbers of wheelchair spaces and calls for research into the number of football supporters amongst wheelchair users:

*“The proportion of wheelchair spaces in individual stadia should remain a subject for negotiation between the club and the building control officers of the relevant local authority. Designers are nevertheless advised to pursue an enlightened and flexible approach.”*

### **1995: Parliament passes the Disability Discrimination Act**

2.12 The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 introduced civil rights for disabled people. Part III deals with the provision of goods, services and facilities and makes it an offence to offer a service, or provide goods and facilities, impossible or unreasonably difficult for disabled people to use. **It comes into force in autumn 1999 and will have a significant impact on football clubs.**

2.13 Disabled supporters will be able to pursue claims of unfair treatment if they cannot use services open to others or if services are not offered on the same basis. For instance, a disabled person may claim under the DDA if the only facilities available have obstructed views or if there is no choice of location. Pat Smith, Access Officer for Northampton Borough Council, believes clubs will need to pay careful attention to the impact of the

DDA. She told us:

*“With the DDA and all its implications, it would appear to be a wise move to consider seriously the repercussions of not including sufficient facilities in all new-build and alterations to existing grounds or club facilities. I am sure that disabled people will take action against clubs who do not consider their needs and quite rightly so as it is clearly discrimination.”*

### **1997: Publication of Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds (4th Edition)**

2.14 The Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds – or Green Guide - is a government advisory document on design and safety management of sports grounds. It has no statutory force, but recommendations can have force of law at football grounds if included in safety certificates. A new edition was published in 1997. Chapter 13 deals with spectator accommodation for disabled people. It sets out clear instructions to ensure facilities are safe, well-designed and well-managed and includes a commentary on Part M and its implications:

*“ ... all new construction at sports grounds should comply with the Building Regulations. This applies to: all new sports grounds; all new stands built at existing sports grounds; in certain cases, the extension of existing stands.”*

2.15 The new Green Guide corrects the failure of Part M to give clear guidance on the number of wheelchair spaces that should be provided. It defines ‘large stadia’ as facilities with “a seated capacity of 10,000 or more” and sets recommended levels of wheelchair spaces in the following sliding scale:

<b>S E A T E D CAPACITY</b>	<b>WHEELCHAIR SPACES</b>
Under 10,000	Minimum of 6 or 1 in 100 of seated capacity (whichever is greater)
10,000 to 20,000	100 plus 5 per 1,000 above 10,000
20,000 to 40,000	150 plus 3 per 1,000 above 20,000
40,000 or more	210 plus 2 per 1,000 above 40,000

2.16 Guidance is given on design and quality of viewing accommodation, although this was not available to clubs in the top two divisions when grounds were improved to comply with the Taylor Report. Choice of position and unobstructed views should be offered in all new developments:

*“ ... accommodation for disabled spectators should be dispersed throughout the sports ground. This is in order to provide a number of viewing positions.”*

(p.140)

*“The positioning and level of the wheelchair space should be designed in such a way that the views of both the spectator in the wheelchair and, where appropriate, those of spectators behind, are not restricted.”* (p.142)

## *Section summary*

2.17            These documents set high standards for improving access and facilities for disabled people at football grounds. If followed closely, substantial improvements would follow. Yet a question mark hangs over how they can be enforced. The Building Regulations are statutory requirements but subject to negotiation with local authorities. The Green Guide and the FSADC's guidelines are advisory and have no force of law.

### 3. Football's record

3.1 Have ground improvements in the 1990s complied with legal requirements? How closely have the Taylor recommendations and the advice of the FSADC been followed?

3.2 Facilities for disabled people at English football grounds have come a long way in a short time and improved beyond recognition. Raised viewing areas for wheelchair users have been incorporated in new stands together with facilities for blind, deaf and ambulant disabled people. Choice of viewing position is now common.

3.3 There are shining examples of best practice. Northampton Town's Sixfields Stadium and Huddersfield Town's McAlpine Stadium stand out. Both clubs have built new grounds with local authority support that offer high-quality facilities for disabled supporters in line with guidance from the FSADC. Derby County consulted disabled fans at each stage of the development of Pride Park and has provided integrated viewing facilities spread throughout the new ground.

3.4 Physical improvements to grounds have been complemented by a revolution in the way football clubs cater for disabled fans. This culture change is reflected in *Leaving the Trackside*, a survey of almost 1300 disabled supporters of clubs in England and Scotland carried out by the Sir Norman Chester Centre for Football Research. It found most disabled supporters have noticed a significant improvement in the quality of facilities and services given by football clubs.

3.5 **But the first wave of ground improvements was not all good news. Many new developments cannot be said to be in keeping with the spirit of Part M.** Millions of pounds have been spent on improving the country's flagship grounds yet many still offer inadequate facilities for disabled people:

- *some new developments do not have any wheelchair spaces – in blatant contradiction of Part M – while others offer only limited access;*
- *wheelchair users have blocked views from some new grounds and stands;*
- *new stands have been built that only offer uncovered pitch-side spaces.*

3.6 Rob Trent, a disabled Bournemouth supporter and advisor to the FSADC, states in a submission to the Task Force:

*“Despite influential reports such as the Taylor Report, and the FSADC document, I feel that football clubs are not paying enough attention to these issues, and are being ‘allowed’ to negotiate their way around recommendations and legislation on access for disabled people.”*

3.7 **It is regrettable that new stands have been built in recent years – some part-funded by public money - that do not incorporate adequate access and facilities for disabled people.** The fault is not of football alone - local authorities have also failed to insist on adequate provision. The problem can be traced to the lack of clarity in Part M of the Building Regulations. This report seeks to put that right and set mandatory requirements on minimum numbers of wheelchair spaces and seats for blind, deaf and ambulant disabled people in new stands and stadia. Only by ensuring all new facilities incorporate access and facilities will disabled supporters begin to have the same degree of choice that other supporters take for granted.

3.8 **It is also unfortunate that new stands and new grounds have been built that fail to offer disabled people a clear view of both goals during the game.** Incorporating elevated viewing areas into stands has been a genuine attempt to enhance the quality of facilities on offer, but there are many examples where insufficient clearance has been left between the platform and seats immediately in front. The result is that

supporters stand up during goalmouth incidents and block the view of disabled fans. Greater consultation with disabled supporters at the planning stage could have helped avoid these problems. By learning from past mistakes, we can ensure future developments set even higher standards.

## 4. Getting a ticket

4.1 Getting tickets is a always problem for football fans - and gets harder as the game becomes more popular. This is a fact of life for all supporters, but it should not detract from the principle of fair access for all.

4.2 Anybody seeking a ticket for a top game has a series of hurdles to cross. The first task is getting information about availability. Then there is the problem of qualifying for one of the few tickets that are available. Next comes the question of whether it is affordable and arranging for payment to be made. Finally there is the logistical problem of getting hold of the ticket. Each stage presents its own problems. Most fans can expect a fair share of frustration and disappointment over the course of a season, but disabled supporters face particular difficulties and challenges in getting hold of a limited number of tickets. In this section, we consider how to make ticketing arrangements as simple, convenient and fair as possible by addressing three questions:

1. **Is the number of tickets available to disabled supporters adequate?**
2. **How easy is it for disabled fans to book tickets and get information?**
3. **Are enough tickets made available for away disabled supporters?**

### Q1 Is the number of tickets available to disabled supporters adequate?

*“More places should be made available to disabled supporters at football grounds. The situation is pretty poor, particularly in the lower divisions. A poor example is set by the National Stadium on this matter. Despite the number of new stadia built in recent years, disabled access is still very poor.”* Rotherham United Supporters Club: submission to Task Force

4.3 This is the \$64,000 question for many disabled supporters. Everybody accepts that football grounds will not always be able to accommodate everybody who wants to go to a match, but many disabled fans feel the number of tickets available for league games, FA Cup matches and international games is inadequate. These concerns are not limited to the availability of wheelchair spaces but also seats with commentary facilities for blind and partially-sighted fans and extra leg-room for those who have difficulty walking.

### *Tickets for wheelchair users*

4.4 All FA Premier League clubs have carried out substantial ground re-development in recent years. Nearly all of these projects would have had to comply with requirements on wheelchair spaces in the new Part M, but the following table shows that they have not always been rigorously applied.

**Table 1: FA Premier League (season 97-98): provision of wheelchair spaces as a percentage of ground capacity**

Club	Capacity	Spaces	Spaces as % of capacity
Blackburn Rovers	31,367	280	0.89
Bolton Wanderers	25,000	134	0.53
Derby County	30,339	140	0.46
West Ham United	26,000	112	0.43
Leicester City	21,500	75	0.35
Barnsley	18,750	65	0.35
Coventry City	23,662	70	0.29

Arsenal	38,548	102	0.26
Newcastle United	36,610	95	0.26
Leeds United	40,209	101	0.25
Sheffield Wednesday	39,859	88	0.22
Crystal Palace	26,309	48	0.18
(Wimbledon)	26,309	48	0.18
Everton	40,177	61	0.15
Manchester United	55,500	70	0.13
* Chelsea	31,000	40	0.13
* Tottenham Hotspur	26,000	33	0.13
* Liverpool	35,561	44	0.12
Southampton	15,250	18	0.12
Aston Villa	39,339	41	0.10

Source: *National Guide to Facilities for Disabled Football Supporters (Sir Norman Chester Centre 1997)*  
*\* figures may have changed following recent ground redevelopment*

4.5 The Green Guide sliding scale was not available until 1997, but, as the Sir Norman Chester Centre concludes, it is disappointing that few FA Premier League grounds come close to its recommendations:

*“Few football grounds - and even some of the new ones - seem to meet the Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds guidelines on this score ... Some larger grounds today - including substantially redeveloped ones - are rather more likely to offer less than a half of what might be expected or required.” (p.13)*

4.6 Only Ewood Park exceeds the number of spaces recommended by the Green Guide for a newly-built stadium. Derby County and West Ham come close. Six FA Premier League clubs responding to the *Leaving the Trakside* survey said it was often the case that they had more applications for tickets from wheelchair users than they were able to accommodate. Across all four divisions, the survey found that 57 clubs offer 40 or fewer wheelchair spaces. Tables for Divisions One, Two and Three are in appendix 2.

### ***New grounds***

4.7 Clubs building new grounds have had a clean slate to re-design spectating facilities for disabled people and provide adequate spaces. Each of the following developments was subject to provisions in Part M. The new Green Guide had not been published by the time plans were finalised, but it is a cause for concern that they fall so short of its recommendations on wheelchair spaces.

- **Cellnet Riverside Stadium:** Middlesbrough offer 45 *dedicated* wheelchair spaces out of a capacity of 30,400 (more wheelchair users can be accommodated at pitch-side).
- **The New Den:** Millwall’s 20,000-capacity stadium offers 78 spaces - just over half of the recommended number.
- **Bescot Stadium:** Walsall’s 8,985-capacity ground accommodates 30 wheelchairs – one third of the Green Guide recommendation.
- **The Deva Stadium:** Chester City’s new ground has 32 wheelchair spaces - roughly half of the recommended number.

4.8 Other new grounds meet or exceed Green Guide recommendations:

- **McAlpine Stadium:** Huddersfield Town’s 19,661-capacity ground has 242 wheelchair spaces (almost

100 more than recommended minimum).

- **Sixfields Stadium:** Northampton Town's 7653-capacity ground has 75 spaces (five more than recommended).

4.9           A common feature of these latter two developments was the close involvement of the local authority. In each case, plans were scrutinised carefully – and disabled supporters consulted - before the green light was given. In Northampton, an access committee sought and was granted changes to original plans. These examples illustrate the crucial role local authorities have to play and the positive difference they can make. Derby County, Stoke City and Sunderland have incorporated wheelchair spaces at new grounds close to recommended levels.

## *New stands*

4.10 Stands have been built without *any* wheelchair spaces:

- **Manchester United:** new North Stand
- **Arsenal:** new North Stand
- **Liverpool:** Centenary Stand
- **Southampton:** Archer Road Stand
- **Watford:** North Stand

4.11 It is unfortunate that the new edition of the Green Guide was published so long after the Taylor Report. By then, work on most stadium improvements at FA Premier League and First Division grounds had been completed or was already underway. In the absence of guidance, some local authorities allowed planners to apply a liberal interpretation to the concession that a ‘smaller proportion’ of spaces may be provided in ‘large stadia’. Trafford Borough Council - the certifying authority for Old Trafford – uses this explanation to explain its failure to require changes to plans for the new North Stand:

*“Part M of the Building Regulations avoids recommendations in ‘large stadia’.”*

This statement is incorrect, but is evidence of the lack of clarity in the legislation.

4.12 Experience in the USA has shown the value of simple and clear legislation on wheelchair spaces in new sports stadia. The Americans with Disabilities Act (1991) requires wheelchair spaces to be equivalent to one per cent of capacity of new-build facilities. There is no room for doubt and there are no loopholes. New facilities have been built with the required number of spaces and, although older stadia are exempted, there has been a knock-on improvement at existing sports grounds where extra wheelchair spaces have been incorporated.

4.13 **We believe clear mandatory requirements on provision of wheelchair spaces in new sports facilities should be adopted in this country.** If the Green Guide’s sliding scale remains discretionary, it will not have the same impact as the Americans with Disabilities Act. All new developments built in this country should incorporate the recommended number of wheelchair spaces as a minimum. To do this, we propose that Green Guide recommendations be made mandatory through the Building Regulations. Of course, this amendment would apply to all new sports stadia and stands and not just football grounds.

4.14 A number of clubs in Divisions Two and Three will be carrying out ground improvements over coming months to fulfil the requirements of the Taylor Report. The Football Trust (FT) will be providing grant-aid for many of these projects. It has recently amended its grants policy to require new facilities to be built in accordance with the Green Guide and FSADC guidance:

*“Proposed work for spectator accommodation must incorporate access and appropriate facilities for spectators with disabilities. The Trust will expect clubs to aim for the highest standard of facilities for the disabled possible within a development.”*

This change is to be welcomed – but it could be strengthened. It is an important principle that funding is given **on condition** that adequate access for disabled people is provided. Until Part M is amended, this requirement should ensure new facilities incorporate the minimum number of spaces. But, to leave no room for doubt, FT policy should make specific reference to the sliding scale and require applicants to provide wheelchair spaces in line with its recommendations.

4.15 It is argued that demand for wheelchair spaces will sometimes be lower than Green Guide

recommendations. Demand is difficult to measure and differs from club to club, but low interest is usually a product of the poor quality of facilities. Northampton Town's County Ground did not have parking or toilet facilities for disabled people. On average, two to three attended matches. Last season, between 50 and 60 disabled people went to games at Sixfields.

4.16 **Getting the balance exactly right is an impossible task - and to some extent will always be a stab in the dark - but it can be overcome to some degree by use of flexible solutions such as removable seating.** All clubs should provide the minimum recommended number of wheelchair spaces in new developments, but it makes sense to ensure areas designated for wheelchairs are designed so that removable seating can be installed. This way, clubs can provide adequate spaces without running the risk of having unused capacity.

4.17 Local authorities will continue to play a key role in ensuring new plans incorporate acceptable provision for wheelchair users. Building control officers have ultimate responsibility to ensure new applications meet the requirements of Part M – but we believe this can best be achieved working in conjunction with an access officer. A 1996 survey of local planning authorities carried out by Dr Rob Imrie of the University of London found that 53 per cent of respondents (139 authorities) did not have an access officer. The Sixfields example is proof of the positive difference an access officer can make.

4.18 We recognise that Part M cannot be amended overnight. In the interim, clearer guidance should be given to local authorities on how to ensure plans for spectator seating at sports grounds are in keeping with the spirit of the legislation and the Green Guide sliding scale. This guidance could also clarify the roles of building control officers and access officers and clear up confusion about applying the sliding scale to the building of single stands or ground extensions. Where a single new stand is being built, it is unclear whether spaces should be provided in accordance with the capacity of the new facility or the entire ground.

4.19 The Football Licensing Authority (FLA) and Football Trust surveyors could also have a role to play in monitoring provision for disabled people within new developments. FLA inspectors keep a watching brief on new developments from a safety perspective and can provide an early warning on potential problems. It would make sense for this remit to be extended so that they can advise local authorities and the FT on the extent to which proposed new developments are in keeping with Green Guide recommendations on access and facilities for disabled people.

## **Recommendations:**

### *The Government should:*

- **amend Part M of the Building Regulations (Section 5) to require all new stadia, new stands and extensions to existing facilities to provide wheelchair spaces in accordance with the Green Guide sliding scale;**
- **issue guidance to local authorities in the interim about applying Part M (and the sliding scale) to applications for new developments.**

### *Local authorities should:*

- **appoint an access officer to scrutinise proposed provision of wheelchair spaces in plans for new facilities and advise building control officers.**

### *The Football Trust should:*

- **make it a specific condition of grant-aid that all new grounds, new stands and extensions to existing facilities provide wheelchair spaces in accordance with the Green Guide sliding scale;**

### *Tickets for ambulant disabled, blind and deaf spectators*

4.20 Many of us hope to be able to attend matches when we get older, even if we have more difficulty walking or problems with

our sight. In that event, we would all hope our clubs could provide seats with extra leg-room and close to exits or with commentary and induction loops so we could still enjoy the match. But today, how well are clubs catering for people with these requirements? This table shows there is inconsistency. (*Divs 1, 2 and 3 in appendix 3*). We believe this is due to a lack of guidance on provision of seats. It should be rectified.

**Table 2 Provision for ambulant disabled and visually-impaired supporters at FA Premier League clubs (season 97-98)**

Club	Capacity	Ambulant disabled	Blind/visually-impaired
Arsenal	38,548	None	28
Aston Villa	39,339	On request	12
Barnsley	18,750	38	12
Blackburn Rovers	31,367	On request	Unlimited
Bolton Wanderers	25,000	None	N/A
* Chelsea	31,000	None	None
Coventry City	23,662	None	12
Crystal Palace	26,309	None	12
Derby County	30,339	30	20
Everton	40,177	None	13
Leeds United	40,209	178	26
Leicester City	21,500	None	None
* Liverpool	35,561	On request	15
Manchester United	55,500	20	40
Newcastle United	36,610	Helpers seats	12
Sheffield Wed	39,859	103	20
Southampton	15,250	On request	10
* Tottenham Hotspur	26,000	36	None
West Ham United	26,000	None	On request
Wimbledon	26,309	None	12

*Source: National Guide to Facilities for Disabled Football Supporters (Sir Norman Chester Centre 1997)*

*\* figures may have changed following recent ground redevelopment*

## Recommendations:

### *The Government should:*

- **draw up a new sliding scale for minimum numbers of designated seats for people who are ambulant disabled or visually/hearing-impaired within new stands and stadia as an appendix to the Green Guide;**
- **ensure that revisions to Part M of the Building Regulations incorporate this guidance on minimum provision for people who are ambulant disabled or visually/hearing-impaired.**

### *Local authorities should:*

- **require all applications for new developments submitted in the interim to include provision for people who are ambulant disabled or visually/hearing-impaired agreed in negotiation with the applicant.**

### *The Football Trust should:*

- **make it a condition of grant-aid that clubs provide the minimum number of spaces for people who are ambulant disabled and visually/hearing-impaired as specified by new guidance.**

## *Getting tickets for Wembley Stadium*

4.21 Many disabled supporters have expressed concern about the number of wheelchair spaces available for matches at Wembley. For this year's FA Cup Final, Newcastle and Arsenal were each offered 30 wheelchair spaces despite the fact that both clubs accommodate approximately 100 disabled fans at home games.

4.22 It is imperative that the new national stadium as the home of the national game is equally accessible to all. It should be a flagship facility in every respect, setting new standards to which all other sports grounds in the country aspire. The new 80,000-capacity stadium must have a minimum of 290 wheelchair spaces in line with the Green Guide, but should aim higher. Adequate

provision must be made for ambulant disabled people and those with visual and hearing impairments. Guidance should be made available on the recommended number of such spaces before plans for the new stadium are finalised. We will deal with the quality of viewing facilities at the new Wembley in section six.

**Recommendations:**

*The National Stadium Trust should:*

- **ensure plans for the new national stadium include at least 290 wheelchair spaces in accordance with the Green Guide sliding scale;**
- **provide seats with extra leg-room for ambulant disabled people and commentary for people with visual impairments in line with new guidance to be issued by the Government (*see above*).**

*The London Borough of Brent should:*

- **appoint an access officer to work closely with the building control officer in scrutinising and approving plans for the new stadium;**
- **issue a licence for work to begin only if plans provide for wheelchair spaces and facilities for other disabled people are in accordance with recommendations in the Green Guide.**

*Wembley Stadium should:*

- **provide a minimum of 100 wheelchair spaces and adequate accommodation for other disabled supporters for all matches at the existing stadium, including the FA Cup Final.**

***Making more tickets available at existing facilities***

4.23 Adding in extra wheelchair spaces and seats for ambulant disabled supporters at existing grounds is difficult, particularly at those regularly sold-out. But new incentives should be found to encourage clubs to increase provision. The Football Trust already offers grants to encourage improvements to facilities such as lavatories for disabled supporters. This scheme could be extended to increasing wheelchair spaces and seats for ambulant disabled people and improving the quality of viewing facilities (*see section 6*). Until Taylor recommendations have been implemented, the Trust will have other priorities. But this responsibility could form a small part of a more general role once Taylor work has been completed. The problem does not apply to seats for blind and partially-sighted people who can receive commentary at any seat through radio transmission.

*The Government should:*

- **give the Football Trust responsibility to ensure increased provision for disabled supporters as part of a more general future role.**

**Q2 How easy is it to book tickets and get general information?**

*“At the start of last season, I wrote to every club in Division One to prepare myself for the different procedures and prices that individual clubs may have. Only a few clubs wrote back to me with the main advice to contact their ticket office nearer to the date of the game.”*

Glyn Holland, Bury Disabled Supporters Association

4.24 Disabled supporters can be passed from pillar to post when booking tickets or trying find out basic information. Unlike other fans, disabled supporters often have to work through the ticket office of the home club if they want to attend an away match. This can lead to inconvenience, confusion and large telephone bills. Glyn Holland followed Bury at away games in Division One last season. Here he gives a flavour of how booking

procedures differ from club to club:

**Nottingham Forest:** *“wanted all our disabled supporters to contact them individually in writing no later than four weeks prior to the match ... do they expect able-bodied fans to contact them individually in writing this early before a game?”*

**West Bromwich Albion:** *“took down all our names and had passes waiting for us at their disabled entrance but no tickets for the helpers. They had to go back to the ticket office in a separate building from the stadium.”*

**Manchester City and Wolves:** *“sent the tickets to Bury for collection.”*

**Stoke City and Oxford United:** *“posted the tickets but required pre-payment which can cause problems. At Stoke we had two members taken ill, one on the bus going to the game. This caused us problems in arranging refunds, as most clubs request being informed 24 hours before the game.”*

**QPR:** *“sent tickets free of charge to me prior to the match.”*

4.25 Such problems are not confined to wheelchair users. Wayne Busbridge, an Arsenal supporter who is registered blind, told us about a problem he had experienced in gaining tickets for a match at Newcastle. He had made six telephone calls to the club to find out about arrangements for blind supporters. Eventually, he discovered that seats were made available in the family enclosure but that away supporters were not allowed in that part of the ground. Mr Busbridge raised the issue with the Club Secretary – and was offered a ticket – but by that time the opportunity to travel with the official travel club had passed.

4.26 If disabled supporters were able to secure tickets for away matches through their own club – as other fans can – they would avoid the considerable inconvenience and expense of having to deal with a range of different clubs each operating its own ticketing policy. It would be part of ensuring disabled supporters are treated no differently from other fans.

4.27 Many clubs devolve responsibility for distributing wheelchair passes to disabled supporters’ clubs. Some disabled fans have raised concerns about this. Some of the bigger FA Premier League and First Division clubs have more members than spaces and use a rota to allocate tickets. Such tried-and-tested practices can work well, but there are problems inherent with supporter-controlled ticket distribution. First, there is a lack of transparency and accountability. Second, such systems can become a ‘closed shop’ making it impossible for those are not members of the disabled supporters association or who are new attendees to get tickets. We believe all ticket distribution should be handled by the ticket office.

## **Recommendations:**

### ***FA Premier League and Football League clubs should:***

- **agree a common policy for the distribution of tickets to away disabled supporters where distribution is handled by the visiting club;**
- **review ticket distribution for home disabled supporters with a view to bringing it under the direct control of the club box office and create an equitable system of distribution.**

## ***Getting information***

*“There is little, if any, basic information made available for the disabled supporter when wishing to attend a match. Instead, we have to take on that patience-testing exercise of being passed from*

one person to another just to get information like: 'do you have disabled toilet facilities?'"

National Association of Disabled Supporters: submission to Task Force:

4.28 Most clubs have improved communication with supporters in recent years. *Leaving the Trackside* found that 79.8 per cent of disabled supporters were happy with the attitude of club staff and almost one half felt that attitudes had changed positively in recent years. Yet many still experience difficulty in carrying out simple communication with clubs. *Leaving the Trackside* found only 35 clubs provide regular information for disabled fans, 10 of which are in the FA Premier League. No club produces official literature or general information in braille.

4.29 Many clubs have addressed communication problems by introducing a 'named contact' for disabled supporters. *Leaving the Trackside* found that six out of ten fans - and almost seven out of ten supporters of FA Premier League clubs - could identify a named contact at their club. In Divisions Two and Three, five and four out of every ten respectively could name a person responsible for dealing with disabled supporters. We believe all clubs should appoint a named contact.

4.30 Supporters who are deaf or have speech impairments can have the most difficulties in getting tickets and carrying out basic communications with clubs. Many are unable to make direct enquiries by telephone and have to rely on communicating by correspondence. But the football world moves fast and this can put these fans at a disadvantage when it comes to securing sought-after tickets.

4.31 Michael Devenney, a consultant with Disability Matters, told us about problems experienced by people with speech difficulties in obtaining tickets. As a long-standing supporter of Arsenal, he had faced considerable problems buying tickets for away matches. Few clubs have a mini-com system in ticket offices. This is an on-line system with communication by text messages. It allows deaf supporters or those with speech impairments to book tickets by phone. The cost of a mini-com system ranges from £200 to £400.

4.32 Blackburn Rovers is one of few clubs to have a mini-com system in its ticket office. The club also employs a member of staff trained in sign language - further evidence of the seriousness with which it regards its responsibilities to disabled fans. We consider it reasonable to expect all clubs to have a mini-com system in the ticket office. **An alternative solution would be to create an e-mail address for the club's 'named contact' and make it available to disabled fans.**

4.33 Many disabled fans welcomed the publication of the first *National Guide to Facilities for Disabled Football Supporters* by the Football Trust in August 1997. It provides comprehensive information about facilities at all league grounds and has filled a void. But information can become quickly out-dated and, in endorsing the Guide, we urge the Football Trust to publish regular updates.

4.34 Some disabled supporters need detailed information on the lay-out of facilities, yet there is a limit on detail that can be provided in a national guide. This is an area for individual clubs, yet there is concern amongst disabled fans about the quality of detailed information available. As *Leaving the Trackside* discovered, less than half of supporters of clubs in the FA Premier League (46.5 per cent) felt able to recommend their club on this score.

4.35 John Williams, Director of the Sir Norman Chester Centre, drew our attention to the way major sports facilities in the USA address this problem. Most major sports stadia publish a small easy-to-use guide to facilities for disabled people, mapping out the positioning of facilities for disabled people – such as toilets, parking spaces, entrance/exit points and wheelchair-accessible bars and restaurants – and giving clear instructions on how to purchase tickets. The Sir Norman Chester Centre believes FA Premier League clubs could produce a similar guide. Northampton Town's guide to facilities at Sixfields Stadium may provide a model for use by other clubs (*appendix 4*). Information could also be made available on club internet sites so that it can be easily accessed

by supporters all over the country. Clubs should also consider making greater use of match programmes as a notice-board for disabled supporters, with information on ticket availability or availability of parking at forthcoming away matches.

## **Recommendations:**

### ***FA Premier League and Football League clubs should:***

- **designate a club official as ‘named contact’ for disabled supporters and given responsibility for: (a) ticket distribution; (b) handling enquiries;**
- **find new ways of improving availability of information on facilities for disabled supporters such as producing a guide and making greater use of club websites and match-day programmes.**
- **install a mini-com in the ticket office and ensure members of staff trained in its use are on duty during opening hours;**
- **offer an e-mail address for exclusive use by disabled supporters through which to direct specific enquiries to club officials.**

### **Q3. Are enough tickets made available to visiting disabled supporters?**

*“Ticket allocation for away matches is unsatisfactory. Aston Villa give us four, Leeds five, Manchester United seven, Southampton five, Liverpool six, Sheffield Wednesday six. Leicester City offer 17 tickets per match.”* Leicester City Disabled Supporters Association: submission to Task Force

4.36 It is a common misconception that disabled fans have no desire to attend away games. *Leaving the Trackside* found lack of opportunities to go away is a major source of dissatisfaction. Three out of ten fans said it was difficult while 56 per cent said they would go to more away matches if it was easier.

4.37 Existing rules require clubs to accommodate visiting fans. FA Premier League rule 31.3 and Football League regulation 25(b) state: *“Each club must make provision for a reasonable number of visiting supporters at every home match.”* Rule 26(a) on tickets for FA Cup ties is more specific: *“In all Cup Ties, except the Semi-Final and Final Ties, the visiting club shall have the right to claim up to 15 per cent of all accommodation for which tickets are issued ...”*.

4.38 How far are clubs applying these requirements to the provision of tickets to visiting disabled fans? The tables in appendix 4 show that many clubs are providing a decent number of spaces to visiting fans although not all clubs accommodate visiting disabled fans at every match. 12 of the clubs replying to the *Leaving the Trackside* survey said they sometimes offered spaces, including two FA Premier League clubs. It concludes:

*“ ... it is clear that a substantial number of committed disabled supporters are being excluded from following football and from enjoying the unique aspects of the ‘away’ fan experience ... It seems to us that all clubs should be required to offer some spaces to away disabled fans.”*

We agree that clubs should be required to offer a minimum percentage of wheelchair spaces and seats for disabled supporters to the visiting club. Any not taken up should be returned to the home club for allocation to home fans.

## **Recommendations:**

### ***The FA Premier League and Football League should:***

- **require members to make a minimum of 10 per cent of spectating accommodation for disabled supporters available to visiting fans for all league matches.**

*The Football League should:*

- **require clubs to make a minimum of 10 per cent of spectating accommodation for disabled supporters available to visiting fans for Coca Cola Cup matches.**

*The Football Association should:*

- **require clubs to make a minimum of 15 per cent of spectating accommodation for disabled supporters available to visiting fans for FA cup matches.**

## 5. Travelling to the match

5.1 Many disabled supporters prefer to use cars to get to matches, but there is a significant unmet demand for public transport services. One quarter of disabled fans responding to the *Leaving the Trackside* survey indicated they would use transport services if provided. The report found four clubs offered transport for disabled fans to home matches. A further 15 reported that transport was provided by another body. It suggests schemes such as these could be adopted more widely:

**Leyton Orient:** *the club's Football in the Community scheme operates a scheme where disabled supporters are picked up from home.*

**Kirklees Borough Council:** *operates a 'dial-a-ride' service on match-days to the McAlpine Stadium.*

5.2 It is not clear how many disabled people would like to attend matches but are prevented by lack of access to transport. For home matches, local authority 'dial-a-ride' services could be a solution. Pilot schemes could establish demand and feasibility. Lack of transport to away matches is a major concern for disabled fans. *Leaving the Trackside* established high demand but found only 10 clubs offered direct help with transport. **All official coach operators should use wheelchair-accessible vehicles. Failure to do so may run counter to the DDA.**

### Recommendations:

#### *The Local Government Association should:*

- **identify local authorities to operate a match-day 'dial-a-ride' service on a trial basis to establish demand for a permanent service;**
- **prepare a report on the conclusions of the pilot scheme for circulation to local authorities which support a 'dial-a-ride' scheme.**

#### *FA Premier League and Football League clubs should:*

- **request coach companies operating official away travel service to provide a coach or coaches with wheelchair lifts.**

#### *Parking*

*"Parking has been one of our biggest problems. At Bury, we request parking for just one vehicle - our adapted mini-bus. We have been refused parking at Wolverhampton, Middlesbrough, Manchester City, Norwich, Ipswich, Stockport."* Glyn Holland, Bury Disabled Supporters Association

5.3 Reserved parking for disabled fans was seen by Lord Justice Taylor as non-negotiable - but not every club is providing it. In last season's FA Premier League, five clubs did not have reserved parking, three described it as 'limited' and four made it available on a season pass. Parking is important for away supporters - who often have to travel by car - but is not always available.

5.4 At grounds in residential areas, parking spaces are at a premium. Clubs must decide how to allocate them but we believe disabled fans should always be a priority. Clubs should designate a fixed number of spaces for home and away supporters at the start of the season and make them available at every match. Sufficient parking should be required at new grounds and follow FSADC guidelines. Where parking is restricted, imaginative solutions can be found:

- **Blackburn Rovers:** *local school used for disabled parking.*
- **Middlesbrough:** *disabled supporters operate a 'park-and-ride' scheme using an adapted ambulance between the car park and disabled entrance.*

5.5 Some clubs allocate parking spaces for disabled supporters on a first-come, first-served basis on match days to Orange Badge holders. It has been suggested that this scheme is abused. We believe the fairest way to allocate spaces would be on request through the ticket office when people are booking tickets. Parking passes for visiting supporters should be sent with tickets to the away club.

### **Recommendations:**

#### ***FA Premier League and Football League clubs should:***

- **reserve a fixed number of parking spaces for disabled supporters as close to the ground as possible to be allocated by the ticket office;**
- **make a reasonable number of those spaces available to visiting disabled supporters and allocate passes to the visiting club.**

#### ***Local authorities should:***

- **approve applications for new facilities on condition that adequate disabled parking spaces are provided in line with FSADC guidance.**

#### ***The Football Trust should:***

- **make it a condition of grant-aid for new facilities that adequate disabled parking is provided in line with FSADC guidance.**

#### ***Getting into the ground***

5.6 Most disabled fans prefer to get into grounds through designated entrances. It is important that entry points are clearly signposted. The quality of such signs has improved, but *Leaving the Trackside* found six out of 10 disabled supporters did not consider entry points to be well indicated. A similar proportion did not feel routes for disabled people were adequately marked inside the ground.

5.7 Geoff Smedley of the Governing Bodies of Sport Disability Project emphasised the need for clear and simple signs with large text and pictures to help people with poor sight or learning difficulties. He stressed the importance of regular consultation and site visits with disabled fans to identify improvements. This point was picked up by Fulham FC in its submission to the Task Force:

*“A representative of an established body such as the National Association of Disabled Supporters to visit clubs and undergo an annual audit and put forward recommendations. This should be Government funded. Key areas of the audit would include, for example, catering facilities to be adequate and accessible to disabled supporters.”*

5.8 We endorse this suggestion. All grounds should be visited annually by ‘hit squads’ – co-ordinated by the National Association of Disabled Supporters – to audit facilities against a standard checklist. Improvements should be identified and a timetable set for them to be carried out. Later in this report, we recommend the establishment of an awards scheme for disabled facilities by the Football Trust. These ‘annual audits’ could form part of this scheme as information gathered used in the judging process. Results should be published every year and could follow a similar format as the recent *Colman’s Football Food Guide*.

5.9 Such audits should also focus on access for blind supporters. Tim Pope from the Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB) spoke about the problems experienced by blind and partially-sighted people when entering grounds and finding seats. The RNIB is concerned that the complex interior lay-out of some football grounds creates barriers for blind and visually-impaired people. These problems were often compounded by a lack of training and awareness of the needs of blind people amongst stewards (*see below*). In 1994, the RNIB published a guide to sports grounds. It concluded that many football grounds were failing to cater for blind and partially-sighted people. Barry Ginley, a Liverpool supporter who is registered blind, advised the RNIB on the report. He had not noticed improvements since it was published. Mr Pope said solutions were often simple: tactile paving, brightly-coloured floors and good lighting. The RNIB has prepared a guidance for clubs on making facilities more accessible to blind and partially-sighted people. We endorse the importance of this and attach it in appendix 6.

5.10 The problems outlined above can be overcome to some extent by competent and responsive stewarding. If disabled people are met on arrival and guided to viewing areas, potential difficulties can be overcome. Good stewarding is good customer care. Most clubs realise this and provide designated stewards in areas of the ground where disabled fans are accommodated. Fulham FC recommended that designated stewards for disabled supporters be made standard practice across the game. *Leaving the Trackside* found that many clubs provide nominated stewards, but training is rare:

*“Our survey shows 88 clubs provide stewards for work with disabled fans, but that only 40 clubs offer stewards who have some special training for this sort of work. In fact only seven FA Premier League clubs offer specially trained stewards for work with disabled fans. However, the real situation is much less positive; on closer examination of club returns it is clear that only a handful of clubs offered stewards who had had training specifically designed for work with disabled people.”*

(p.11)

5.11 A number of people echoed concerns about stewards’ awareness of the needs of disabled people. Rikki Singh had been to few grounds where stewards appeared to be adequately trained. Leeds United Disabled Organisation called on the Task Force to require all stewards to have disability awareness training. Graham Bean, Chairman of the Football Supporters Association and Task Force member, drew our attention to an instance where a young person with diabetes was prevented from entering a ground because he had an insulin needle. This illustrates how awareness of the needs of all supporters can be improved.

5.12 In our first report, we recommended a mandatory NVQ qualification for stewards. We now want to build on that and suggest that stewards deployed near disabled fans should have received disability awareness and equality training. We recognise that providing trained stewards becomes more difficult if disabled fans are dispersed throughout a stand, but it should be manageable at most grounds. Examples of good practice have been brought to our attention:

- **Preston North End** employs a team of stewards in the areas of the ground for disabled supporters who are trained care assistants.
- **Queens Park Rangers** employs a steward who is registered disabled.

#### **Recommendations:**

##### ***FA Premier League and Football League clubs should:***

- **conduct an annual pre-season site visit with disabled supporters to identify problems and remedies (as part of annual awards scheme);**
- **ensure stewards deployed near disabled supporters have been given disability awareness/equality training as part of the NVQ qualification.**

##### ***The Football Trust should:***

- **require ground improvements to follow the RNIB code of practice and use tactile paving, bright floor surfaces and improved lighting.**

## 6. At the match

6.1 All football supporters want certain things when buying a ticket: choice of seat in different parts of the ground; cover from the elements; and a clear view of both goals. Many would not accept anything less, but it is rare for disabled fans to benefit from all three at once. Spectating facilities for disabled people have improved considerably - but they could be even better. This section considers these three issues in detail – choice, comfort and view – and suggests how to ensure disabled supporters enjoy benefits others take for granted.

### *Quality of view*

*“We suffered restricted views at Stoke, Wolves, Sunderland, Charlton and Middlesbrough due to wheelchairs being behind a seated area and when there is any action, fans stand up and we see nothing.”*

Glyn Holland, Bury Disabled Supporters Association

6.2 Most supporters are prepared to overlook problems buying tickets and getting in as long as they have a good view once they arrive. But, at many of our top grounds, disabled people spend much of the game looking at the backs of police officers, stewards and TV cameramen if they are at pitch level or at the backs of other supporters’ heads if situated in poorly-designed raised positions.

6.3 Part M requires that disabled people have access to any storey of a new building. The impact on football grounds should have been to ensure that disabled people were given more choice of location. Yet pitch-level wheelchair spaces are still common at English grounds and the only facilities available at some. Pat Smith says of the Sixfields development:

*“We all learn from our mistakes and one area I would alter given the choice would be the pitch-level seating which is less popular than the elevated area.”*

6.4 Some disabled fans prefer to watch from pitch-level, but most do not. The view is poor and intermittently blocked by people on the touchline. At televised games, a number of cameramen are now deployed at pitch-level to give more choice of angles to the viewer - but this is sometimes at the expense of the view of the disabled spectator at pitch-side. Disabled people often cannot move as freely as able-bodied people and may be unable to change position to avoid the obstruction. **At grounds with pitch-level facilities, care should be taken not to block the view of disabled people unnecessarily. For instance, TV companies should take care not to deploy cameramen in front of disabled supporters.**

6.5 There are other downsides to pitch-side spaces. They are usually uncovered and situated within striking distance of the ball. Steve Heneghan, Chairman of Everton Disabled Supporters Association, recalled how a woman with brittle bones had her arm broken at Goodison Park. **It is our view that pitch-level spaces should not be the only facilities provided in new stands.**

6.6 Elevated viewing areas avoid these problems and offer a superior quality of view – if designed carefully in accordance with technical guidance. Part M, the Green Guide and the FSADC all recommend situating raised platforms at the front of the first tier of new stands. It is imperative that they are high enough to prevent blocked sightlines if people stand up in the row in front. Many clubs have sought to follow this guidance - but their efforts have backfired. At Elland Road, the Boleyn Ground and Stamford Bridge, for instance, insufficient clearance means that disabled supporters experience the frustration of looking at the backs of other fans during the most exciting moments of the match. A member of Leeds United Disabled Organisation (LUDO) told us how she had not seen a Leeds goal at one end of Elland Road. The same mistake has been made at new grounds.

6.7 Steve Heneghan said these problems could have been avoided by consultation with disabled supporters when new developments are being designed. We agree. There is no reason why raised safe, integrated viewing areas cannot be incorporated into new facilities if carefully planned. It is argued that such facilities present a safety risk in the event of evacuation of the ground. This may be an issue if wheelchairs are dispersed throughout the stand but not if provided in designated areas as we recommend. Seats with extra leg-room for ambulant

disabled people should also be provided at a raised level. **All future projects - including the new national stadium – should incorporate raised viewing areas for wheelchair users and ambulant disabled supporters offering unobstructed views for 90 minutes. Corrective work on existing stands can prove costly and disruptive, but clubs wishing to improve sightlines should be encouraged to do so with grants from the Football Trust.**

## *Comfort*

6.8 Protection from the weather was one of Lord Justice Taylor's basic requirements. There have been improvements since the Taylor Report, but progress has been slower than in other areas. *Leaving the Trackside* concludes:

*“Slightly more fans are covered now but an astonishing 27.7 per cent claim to remain uncovered, including 28.9 per cent who are not yet fully covered even in the glossy, new FA Premier League! ‘I would make all clubs provide fully covered areas for wheelchair-bound supporters,’ a 33 year-old Blackburn fan told us. As a minimum, this seems a reasonable request.”*

6.9 We share the view that disabled people should be able to expect cover at all grounds. It is important to remember that some disabled people may be unable to move freely and will become cold in adverse conditions. If clubs are unable to provide covered accommodation, this must be made known to the disabled supporter and helper in advance. **The lack of progress on this issue is a cause for concern. There is a case for the FA Premier League and Football League setting deadlines for member clubs to provide cover. Football Trust grants could be provided to assist clubs in meeting the deadline.**

6.10 The comfort of older supporters was an issue raised by Lord Justice Taylor. He urged clubs to consider the needs of people with hearing and sight problem and those who have trouble walking when carrying out ground re-development. The Green Guide also emphasises the importance of this:

*“Although many elderly people do not consider themselves to have disabilities, it is often the case that they experience impaired vision, hearing or mobility, or may be semi-ambulant. Given that the number of elderly people as a proportion of the population has increased, and continues to increase, this may be reflected in the number of elderly people attending sporting events. Management should therefore be aware of their needs.”*  
(p.148)

6.11 Many older supporters need seats with extra leg-room. People with arthritis, for instance, have difficulty bending the knee and find cramped seating causes discomfort over 90 minutes. Others may need to stretch out, but, at many grounds, it is not uncommon for knees to touch the back of the seat in front. The Green Guide recommends a minimum seating row depth of 700mm, but advises at least 760mm ‘for comfort and accessibility’. We endorse the importance of these recommendations and believe they have the potential to improve the comfort of all supporters. New stands should always provide the minimum and, where possible, meet the Green Guide higher standard.

6.12 It has been suggested that the lack of no-smoking zones within football grounds causes discomfort to supporters who have asthma and breathing difficulties. Such zones are common in other leisure facilities and are becoming more common at football grounds. Where seats are allocated to season ticket holders, it would not be fair to designate that area ‘no-smoking’ overnight but it should be possible to offer designated ‘no-smoking’ areas at most grounds.

## **Choice**

*“The choice of viewing area is massively restricted ... Local authority planning officers could be much more mindful and proactive in this area.”*

Hatters Independent Supporters Club – submission to the Task Force

6.13 More choice of viewing position is an issue of defining importance for many disabled supporters. They want to be able to enjoy the benefits other fans take for granted, such as sitting with friends and amongst fellow supporters. The importance of providing choice of facilities was clearly stated by the FSADC:

*“ ... areas for disabled spectators should, where possible, be dispersed throughout the stadium to provide a range of locations at various levels and various prices.”*

*“Designated viewing areas should be provided for both home and away supporters. Many supporters with disabilities suffer isolation and intimidation when situated among or close to able-bodied supporters of the opposing team.”*

*“Spectators who use wheelchairs should not feel cut off from spectators in the main body of the stand.”*

6.14 We endorse the importance of the FSADC’s recommendations. They are challenging - but achievable. More attention must be paid to ensuring they are implemented properly, particularly at the new national stadium. All supporters should be able to sit amongst fellow supporters. Progress has been made here, but more could be done. *Leaving the Trackside* found 61 clubs offer away fans the chance to sit with their own supporters, but figures range between 82.4 per cent of clubs in the FA Premier League to 45.8 per cent in Division Three. Rob Trent says being split up from friends at away grounds it is a common experience:

*“It is unacceptable to expect away fans to spend up to the best part of a day travelling, socialising with friends, only to be segregated upon arrival at the ground. I went to an away game at a fairly new stadium (five years old) and had to go into a separate part of the ground. A friend saw me there, and had to ask a steward for ‘permission’ to come and talk to me. After only a few minutes the steward insisted that my friend return to his seat.”*

6.15 Steve Heneghan expressed concern that away fans often had no choice but to sit in close proximity to home supporters. Intimidating situations often developed. Members of Leeds United Disabled Organisation had experienced hostile treatment and said there had been instances of verbal and even physical abuse. **All clubs in the FA Premier League and Division One should be able to accommodate wheelchair users and blind fans amongst fellow supporters. Clubs in other divisions – particularly those about to carry out ground alterations - should provide home and away areas as soon as possible.**

6.16 Louise Arimatsu contacted us to express concern about the problems disabled people face in attending matches with friends. She had wanted to take a disabled friend and his carer to a match at Highbury, but was informed that wheelchair users could only bring one helper to a match. Ms Arimatsu claims:

*“The policy is denying people with special needs the opportunity to attend football matches with more than one person. People with no disabilities are able to attend matches with as many friends as they wish.”*

6.17 In principle, wheelchair users should be able to watch matches with two or more friends in a part of the ground with fellow supporters. All new grounds should provide this, but it is not practical to suggest clubs must adapt existing facilities to allow disabled people to attend matches with as many companions as they wish in an area of the ground of their choice. The Football Trust could give clubs incentives to improve customer

choice.

6.18 Wayne Busbridge and Barry Ginley expressed concern about the lack of choice of accommodation for blind and visually-impaired supporters. Many clubs took the view that blind people could be seated anywhere in the ground, including areas of restricted view or detached from the rest of the crowd. Norwich City, for instance, provided an enclosed facility for blind supporters. Mr Busbridge and Mr Ginley said this defeated the object of going to a match - blind supporters often have a heightened sensitivity to the atmosphere of the crowd and go to matches for precisely that reason. They argued that blind and partially-sighted supporters should have the same choice of seats as other supporters as infra-red technology makes it possible for commentary facilities to be picked up from seats in any part of a ground. The new national stadium should use this technology.

### ***Section summary***

6.19 Many grounds do not meet basic standards on quality of view, comfort and choice. Disabled supporters know what is and is not acceptable and should be consulted at all stages of the design and building of new stands and stadiums. *Leaving the Trackside* found that consultation is still lacking:

*“A number of disabled fans in the sample make it clear that despite the best intentions of planners and architects, stadium design is seldom right unless disabled fans are directly consulted at all stages of development ... Only one third of all respondents thought disabled fans were reasonably consulted about changes ... Consultation is largely better, but it is also almost completely lacking at some clubs even now.”*

(p.29)

6.20 A number of bodies awarding public money for new buildings make it a condition of funding that applicants agree to undertake an ‘access audit’ at every stage of the proposed development. These audits are intended to identify potential problems with access or use of the building for wheelchair users and other disabled people. The Arts Council, for instance, requires all new projects to be audited at all stages of project development: feasibility, development, construction and completion.

6.21 We believe a similar policy should be adopted by the Football Trust. Local groups – including supporters’ representatives - should scrutinise plans with particular regard to quality of view, comfort and choice. The Access Committee for England (ACE) has published detailed guidance on carrying out an ‘access audit’ in *Towards Better Access*. ACE spoke to us about the importance of involving people who will use the building at every stage of its development. We share this view. There is evidence that access committees work in the interests of all. They save money for clubs and secure better facilities for disabled spectators. Geoff Smedley explained that well thought-out plans avoid the need for costly and disruptive corrective work. An access committee had spotted potential problems at National Indoor Arena after scrutinising plans at each stage of the development.

6.22 We suggest in this section that the Football Trust could pump-prime improvements to existing facilities. This could be complemented by the establishment of an award scheme for disabled facilities. In 1997, the Trust ran a one-off scheme and gave cash awards to be used to make further improvements to disabled facilities. This could be extended into an annual scheme where the winner is the club judged to have done most to improve existing facilities for disabled people over the course of the year. Information gathered through annual site visits should be collected centrally to be used in the judging process. The possibility of commercial sponsorship for such a scheme should be explored.

### **Recommendations:**

***The Government should:***

- **give the Football Trust responsibility to improve quality of facilities (view, comfort and choice) at existing facilities.**

*The Football Trust should:*

- **make it a condition of grant-aid for major projects that: (a) access committees scrutinise plans at each stage; (b) FSADC guidance on raised facilities for disabled people is followed; (c) seating row depths comply with the 700 mm minimum recommended by the Green Guide;**
- **initiate an annual awards scheme rewarding the club in each of the four divisions judged to have done most to improve facilities for disabled supporters.**

*Local authorities should:*

- **constitute an access committee - including disabled supporters of the relevant club - on receipt of a planning application for major projects at football grounds (using FSADC guidance to judge quality of plans)**
- **approve plans for new facilities only if seating row depths comply with the 700 mm minimum recommended by the Green Guide.**

*The National Stadium Trust should:*

- **appoint an access committee – including a representative of the National Association of Disabled Supporters - to be consulted on plans for the new stadium at all stages of the development;**
- **incorporate raised viewing platforms for wheelchair users and seats for ambulant disabled people at different locations throughout the ground.**

*FA Premier League and Football League clubs should:*

- **encourage member clubs to provide covered viewing accommodation where disabled fans are able to sit amongst fellow supporters;**
- **introduce ‘no-smoking’ areas as ticketing arrangements allow.**

*Using the lavatory*

6.23 Many clubs have improved the number and quality of lavatory facilities in recent years. *Leaving the Trackside* found 80 per cent of disabled fans rate facilities at their home ground either good or adequate. 42 per cent said facilities had ‘improved a lot’ but it should be noted that supporter satisfaction was much lower amongst fans of clubs in the Divisions Two and Three.

6.24 But designers of new facilities still make the mistake of failing to match lavatories to wheelchair spaces. Efforts have been made to provide high-quality viewing facilities, but they are diminished if people have to miss the start of the second half queuing to use the lavatory. *Leaving the Trackside* concludes:

*“It is clear from the survey that large clubs, who may recently have, laudably, provided for a greater number of spectator spaces for disabled fans, have not provided the necessary number of adapted toilets.”*

6.25 The 1993 Sports Council publication *Toilet Facilities at Stadia* provides specific numbers that should be provided:

*“Wheelchair users generally require longer to use toilets than the able-bodied. Therefore, the provision of only one toilet can cause inconvenience, especially at half time. Ideally therefore,*

*wherever there is provision for ten or more spectators with disabilities there should be two toilets. At newly-built, larger stadia, the typical provision is for one special WC per 12-15 spectators.”*

6.26 The Sir Norman Chester Centre points to the examples of a big and small club and encourages others to aim for similar targets:

- **Blackburn Rovers:** *one toilet per 17 fans*
- **Northampton Town:** *one toilet per 12 fans*

6.27 The Football Trust (FT) offers incentives to improve lavatories for disabled supporters through enhanced grants. We recommend it continues to encourage clubs to improve facilities in existing stadia. Annual site visits should be used to identify improvements that could be made. FSADC guidance on design and location of disabled toilet facilities should be followed.

### **Recommendation:**

#### ***The Football Trust should:***

- **require all recipients of grant aid for new stands and stadiums to provide disabled lavatories in accordance with recommendations set down by the FSADC and the Sports Council.**

*FA Premier League and Football League clubs should:*

- **provide lavatories for exclusive use by disabled supporters in the vicinity of areas where they are accommodated;**
- **review lavatory facilities as part of the annual site visit with disabled supporters to identify possible improvements.**

#### ***Buying refreshments***

6.28 Disabled supporters can find it difficult to use food and drink outlets outside the ground. Easy access to refreshments on the inside is therefore important, but *Leaving the Trackside* found it is not provided at many grounds:

*“The results indicate that refreshment facilities are still relatively poor at many clubs, particularly in the FA Premier League, where 43.5 per cent of respondents stated that they were not easily or directly accessible, the lowest figure for any division.”*

6.29 There is also a safety concern. The National Association of Disabled Supporters drew our attention to the perils of buying hot drinks:

*“The disabled supporter in a wheelchair has had many a scalding of fingers, hands and legs thanks to the lack of a lower counter where they can see a cup of coffee, tea or soup and bring it down safely.”*

6.30 Split-level counters offer a simple solution and give disabled fans the freedom to buy their own refreshments. We see this as an important principle and encourage all clubs to install split-level counters at appropriate outlets. Annual site visits between supporters and officials could be used to agree plans for alterations.

6.31 An alternative solution is at-seat refreshment services before the match and at half-time. This could be similar to theatre interval services or involve a steward taking orders. A number of the disabled fans we spoke

to expressed a wish for such a service. *Leaving the Trackside* found only 20 per cent of fans (mainly of clubs in Division 3) were offered at-seat refreshment services at home matches. At-seat catering is common at sporting venues in the USA. They are not just available to disabled fans but people in all parts of the stadium. It would not be appropriate for food and drink to be offered during matches, but they could be made available before and during half-time. Such a service may benefit older supporters less inclined to queue at busy refreshment outlets.

### **Recommendations:**

#### ***FA Premier League and Football League clubs should:***

- **use site visits with disabled supporters to establish whether they can buy refreshments easily and safely and make necessary alterations;**
- **install split-level counters at food outlets accessible to wheelchair users.**

#### *Using the club shop and supporters club*

*“We are unable to get into The Chimes. This has caused us problems in getting the disabled supporters club off the ground as we have nowhere to meet after games.”*

portsmouth Association of Disabled Supporters

6.32 To play a full part in the life a club, disabled fans need to be able to use all social and retail facilities. In new facilities, full access to clubs, function rooms and shops should be provided as a matter of course. At older grounds, this may present a bigger challenge but the DDA will not leave any room for choice.

6.33 One of Northampton Borough Council’s few regrets is lack of wheelchair access to the West Stand Upper Level at Sixfields. It is home to a ‘unique facility’ (bar and exhibition area). Pat Smith explained how it happened:

*“It was due to the problems we had convincing people that the facility would be well used by disabled people and, by the time we had achieved this, the bleachers were already on site. It will now cost in the region of £200,000 to provide access in this area ... Disabled people want to access the bars and various other functions that occur on the upper level and the fact that they cannot do so discriminates against them. At some stage we will need to address the problem.”*

6.34 Three lessons can be drawn from this:

- **wheelchair access is not optional - to be determined by projected demand - but an essential aspect of the design of all facilities;**
- **incorporating full access at the planning stage saves time, money and avoids disruption;**
- **time should be allowed for an access audit to be conducted and action taken upon its conclusions before construction work begins.**

6.35 The Sixfields example illustrates how it makes financial sense to incorporate wheelchair access during the design stage. Modest expenditure at the outset can prevent the need for costly work later on. Wheelchair access to executive boxes and premium facilities should be provided as a matter of course.

## **Recommendations:**

### ***FA Premier League clubs and Football League clubs should:***

- instruct architects to incorporate full wheelchair access to all social and retail facilities when commissioning plans for a new stand or ground;**
- review access to existing social and retail facilities and carry out corrective work where necessary.**

### ***The Football Trust should:***

- make it a condition of grant-aid that major new developments incorporate wheelchair access to all social or leisure facilities.**

## 7. Conclusion

7.1 The time is right for football to review its relationship with its disabled supporters. All clubs will have to look closely at how they provide facilities and services in advance of the introduction of the DDA. We hope this report will help clubs begin that process and comply with the new legislation. By sticking to existing guidelines and adopting best practice, football will meet new legal responsibilities and gives disabled customers a superior quality of service.

7.2 This begs a final question: have football clubs got their charging policies right for disabled fans? This goes to the heart of the issue of improving access to and facilities for disabled people. Most clubs do not charge disabled supporters. Carers are usually charged in full or reduced rate, although some clubs offer free entry. As the Sir Norman Chester Centre explains:

*“This seems reasonable [ie free entry] given the generally limited access and facilities on offer and the service offered by those who attend with disabled spectators.”*

7.3 The policy of providing free entry for disabled people is as old as the game itself. Historically, it has ensured that people on low incomes can go to matches. Its survival as the game has become more commercially-conscious provides heartening evidence that it has not lost sight of its social obligations. Yet it suggests that football still regards its obligations towards disabled people as charitable and not customer-driven. Facilities have improved, but this distinction may explain why they have not proceeded at a pace most disabled supporters would have liked to see.

7.4 Today, pricing policies for disabled fans and helpers vary widely. *Leaving the Trackside* found 74 English and Scottish clubs did not charge disabled supporters with 35 charging helpers full price and 39 at a reduced rate. Two clubs ask disabled supporters to pay full price and 25 charge a reduced rate. The table in appendix 5 provides a snapshot of the variation in charging policies.

7.5 Fulham FC suggested to us that a general pricing policy for disabled supporters be agreed and used by every club. This suggestion is supported by many disabled people. We agree that there should be a standard charging policy with an emphasis on the disabled supporter as paying customer. The issues of quality of facilities and charging are inextricably linked. If disabled people are not seen as paying customers, there is no incentive other than legislation for clubs to make improvements. People given something for free feel unable to complain and ask for more; the giver feels he has discharged his responsibilities.

7.6 We have spoken to disabled fans of teams in all parts of the country. The majority want to be treated in the same way as other supporters and not made to feel different. Throughout this report, we call on clubs to improve choice and integration of disabled fans. If clubs can meet these requests, it follows that they should charge disabled supporters in the same way as other fans, preserving the principle of concessionary pricing for those who cannot afford to pay in full. At the same time, the practice of asking helpers to pay in full or a reduced rate should be reviewed. Disabled supporters are required to be accompanied. Carers provide a necessary service and should be give free entry or, at most, pay a reduced rate.

7.7 We believe most disabled supporters would favour these changes. Rob Trent sums up the feelings of many:

*“I believe that there is a definite direction in which professional league clubs should be heading. The signpost reads ‘integration’.”*

**The notion that disabled people be given free admission to matches because they are disabled is outdated.** Disabled supporters are as varied as any other group of supporters. Some work full-time. Some are

students. Others are unemployed or unable to work. Pricing policies for disabled people should reflect this diversity. The Sir Norman Chester Centre argues:

*“Generally speaking, our view is that clubs should be encouraged to see disabled fans as customers and provide facilities and pricing policies accordingly, taking into account both the facilities they offer (number of places and standard) and the capacity of fans to pay.”*

**7.8 Disabled supporters of every club should be consulted before any changes to pricing policies are introduced.** The effect of making the disabled supporter the paying customer should be cost-neutral, with charges switched from helpers. Such a change should form part of a general move to bring ticketing arrangements for disabled fans into line with those for all other fans. It would also give disabled supporters the right to expect the improvements recommended in this report.

### **Recommendations:**

*FA Premier League and Football League clubs should:*

- **review charging policies for disabled supporters and carers with a view to agreeing a standard approach;**
- **consult disabled supporters before any changes are introduced.**

### Organisations and individuals consulted

Access Committee for England  
Aston Villa Disabled Supporters Association  
Aston Villa FC  
Birmingham City Disabled Supporters Association  
Birmingham Disabled Supporters Association  
Blackburn Rovers Disabled Supporters  
Blackburn Rovers Disabled Supporters Club  
Blackburn Rovers FC  
Bolton Disabled Supporters Club  
Bournemouth City Council  
Bradford City Disabled Supporters Club  
Bristol City Council  
Bury Disabled Supporters Association  
Bury Metropolitan Borough Council  
Cllr Wayne Busbridge  
Derby City Council  
Derby County Disabled Supporters Club  
Disability Matters (Michael Devenney)  
Everton Disabled Supporters Association  
Exeter City Council  
Fulham FC  
Barry Ginley  
Governing Bodies of Sport (Disability Project)  
Hatters Independent Supporters Club (Stockport County)  
Kirklees Metropolitan Borough Council  
Leeds Disabled Supporters Organisation  
Leeds United Disabled Organisation  
Leicester City Council  
Leicester City Disabled Supporters Club  
Liverpool City Council  
London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham  
Macclesfield Borough Council  
Manchester City Council  
Manchester United Disabled Supporters Association  
National Association of Disabled Supporters  
North Lincolnshire County Council  
Northampton Borough Council

Northampton City Council  
Northampton Town FC  
Nottingham City Council  
Nottingham Forest Disabled Supporters Club  
Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council  
Oxford City Council  
Peterborough City Council  
Plymouth City Council  
Portsmouth Association of Disabled Supporters  
Preston North End FC  
Queens Park Rangers FC  
Rotherham United Supporters Club  
Royal National Institute for the Blind  
Salford City Council  
Sandwell Council  
Scope  
Sheffield City Council  
Sir Norman Chester Centre for Football Research (John Williams & Sean Perkins)  
Southampton City Council  
Southampton Disabled Supporters Club  
Stockport Metropolitan Council  
Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council  
Trafford Borough Council  
Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council  
Watford FC  
West Bromwich Albion Disabled Supporters Association

*The Football Task Force gives special thanks to Steve Heneghan, Chairman of Everton Disabled Supporters Association, for his valuable contribution to the preparation of this report.*

**Table 3: Football League Division 1 clubs (season 1997-98): provision of wheelchair spaces as a percentage of ground capacity**

Club	Capacity	Spaces	Spaces as % of capacity
Huddersfield Town	19,661	242	1.23
Stoke City	28,000	164	0.58
Wolves	28,500	150	0.52
Charlton Athletic	16,000	72	0.45
West Brom Albion	25,329	113	0.44
Bradford City	17,954	80	0.44
Sunderland	42,000	180	0.42
Crewe Alexandra	5,908	24	0.40
Swindon Town	15,728	49	0.31
Portsmouth	15,724	47	0.29
Manchester City	32,146	84	0.26
Oxford United	9,572	25	0.26
Nottingham Forest	30,587	79	0.25
Bury	11,900	28	0.23
Birmingham City	25,899	58	0.22
Sheffield United	30,370	56	0.18
Norwich City	22,021	40	0.18
Tranmere Rovers	16,792	28	0.16
Stockport County	12,086	20	0.16
* Middlesbrough	30,400	45	0.14
Ipswich Town	22,500	30	0.13
Reading	15,000	18	0.12
Port Vale	22,359	23	0.10
Queens Park Rangers	19,148	19	0.09

*Source: National Guide to Facilities for Disabled Football Supporters (Sir Norman Chester Centre 1997)*

*\* 45 dedicated spaces - more wheelchair users can be accommodated at pitch-side*

**Table 4: Football League Division 2 clubs (season 1997-98): provision of wheelchair spaces as a percentage of ground capacity**

<b>Club</b>	<b>Capacity</b>	<b>Spaces</b>	<b>Spaces as % of capacity</b>
Northampton Town	7,653	75	1.96
Grimsby Town	8,870	88	0.99
Preston North End	15,300	105	0.68
Bristol Rovers	8,975	50	0.55
Wycombe Wanderers	10,000	50	0.50
Millwall	20,146	78	0.38
Oldham Athletic	13,500	50	0.37
Walsall	8,985	30	0.33
Luton Town	9,975	32	0.32
Wigan Athletic	7,466	20	0.26
Chesterfield	8,667	20	0.23
Bristol City	21,497	48	0.22
Burnley	22,000	48	0.21
Wrexham	9,200	20	0.21
Bournemouth	10,440	20	0.19
Watford	22,000	40	0.18
York City	9,534	18	0.18
Southend United	12,500	20	0.16
Carlisle United	16,651	23	0.13
Plymouth Argyle	19,930	25	0.12
Blackpool	11,047	12	0.10
Gillingham	12,500	12	0.09
Brentford	12,763	9	0.07
Fulham	15,000	10	0.06

*Source: National Guide to Facilities for Disabled Football Supporters (Sir Norman Chester Centre 1997)*

**Table 5: Football League Division 3 clubs (season 1997-98): provision of wheelchair spaces as a percentage of ground capacity**

<b>Club</b>	<b>Capacity</b>	<b>Spaces</b>	<b>Spaces as % of capacity</b>
Lincoln City	10,918	82	0.75
Mansfield Town	6,905	40	0.57
Chester City	6,000	32	0.53
Scarborough	5,735	30	0.52
Notts County	20,300	100	0.49
Hartlepool United	7,229	21	0.29
Darlington	6,860	20	0.29
Barnet	4,015	12	0.29
Peterborough United	14,750	41	0.27
Torquay United	6,000	15	0.25
Cambridge United	9,667	24	0.24
Leyton Orient	14,000	30	0.21
Rochdale	6,448	14	0.21
Macclesfield Town	6,028	12	0.19
Exeter City	10,570	20	0.18
Doncaster Rovers	7,758	14	0.18
Scunthorpe United	9,183	16	0.17
Shrewsbury Town	8,000	12	0.15
Cardiff City	13,695	20	0.14
Hull City	12,996	15	0.11
Rotherham United	11,533	13	0.11
Colchester United	7,416	8	0.10
Brighton	12,500	12	0.09
Swansea	11,155	6	0.05

*Source: National Guide to Facilities for Disabled Football Supporters (Sir Norman Chester Centre 1997)*

**Table 6: Provision for ambulant disabled and visually-impaired supporters at Football League Division One clubs (97-98)**

<b>Club</b>	<b>Capacity</b>	<b>Ambulant disabled</b>	<b>Blind/visually-impaired</b>
Huddersfield Town	19,661	On request	26
Stoke City	28,000	None	Unlimited
Wolves	28,500	Up to 100	50
Charlton Athletic	16,000	On request	20
West Bromwich	25,329	None	12
Bradford City	17,954	None	25
Sunderland	42,000	Available	40
Crewe Alexandra	5,908	On request	10
Swindon Town	15,728	Available at reduced rate	3
Portsmouth	15,724	Available at reduced rate	4
Manchester City	32,146	20	22
Oxford United	9,572	None	None
Nottingham Forest	30,587	None at present	40
Bury	11,900	None	6
Birmingham City	25,899	70	12
Sheffield United	30,370	50	10
Norwich City	22,021	None	None
Tranmere Rovers	16,792	None	None
Stockport County	12,086	None	None
Middlesbrough	30,400	Available	Available
Ipswich Town	22,500	15	12
Reading	15,000	6	8
Port Vale	22,359	37 (incl helpers)	12
QPR	19,148	Limited	6

*Source: National Guide to Facilities for Disabled Football Supporters (Sir Norman Chester Centre 1997)*

**Table 7: Provision for ambulant disabled and visually-impaired supporters at Football League Division Two clubs (97-98)**

<b>Club</b>	<b>Capacity</b>	<b>Ambulant disabled</b>	<b>Blind/visually-impaired</b>
Blackpool	11,047	None	On request
Bournemouth	10,440	None	8
Brentford	12,763	On request	14
Bristol City	21,497	None	4
Bristol Rovers	8,975	None	2
Burnley	22,000	None	12
Carlisle United	16,651	None	None
Chesterfield	8,667	None	None
Fulham	15,000	On request	On request
Gillingham	12,500	None	10
Grimsby Town	8,870	50	10
Luton Town	9,975	On request	On request
Millwall	20,146	None	2
Northampton Town	7,653	Available in designated areas	6
Oldham Athletic	13,500	None	None
Plymouth Argyle	19,930	None	12
Preston North End	15,300	None	12
Southend United	12,500	None	7
Walsall	8,985	None	None
Watford	22,000	None	24
Wigan Athletic	7,466	None	2
Wrexham	9,200	On request	None
Wycombe Wndrs	10,000	None	6
York City	9,534	None	2

*Source: National Guide to Facilities for Disabled Football Supporters (Sir Norman Chester Centre 1997)*

**Table 8: Provision for ambulant disabled and visually-impaired supporters at Football League Division Three clubs (97-98)**

<b>Club</b>	<b>Capacity</b>	<b>Ambulant disabled</b>	<b>Blind/visually-impaired</b>
Barnet	4,015	None	None
Brighton	12,500	None	10
Cambridge United	9,667	None	None
Cardiff City	13,695	None	20
Chester City	6,000	None	10
Colchester United	7,416	None	2
Darlington	6,860	None	10
Doncaster Rovers	7,758	None	None
Exeter City	10,570	None	On request
Hartlepool United	7,229	None	None
Hull City	12,996	None	12
Leyton Orient	14,000	None	250
Lincoln City	10,918	None	None
Macclesfield Town	6,028	None	None
Mansfield Town	6,905	None	None
Notts County	20,300	None	None
Peterborough United	14,750	On request	Limited
Rochdale	6,448	None	6
Rotherham United	11,533	On request	None
Scarborough	5,735	None	None
Scunthorpe United	9,183	None	6
Shrewsbury Town	8,000	On request	None
Swansea	11,155	None	None
Torquay United	6,000	None	12

*Source: National Guide to Facilities for Disabled Football Supporters (Sir Norman Chester Centre 1997)*



Table 9: Wheelchair spaces for away fans in FA Premier League (97/98)

Club	Wheelchair Spaces	Spaces for Away fans	% of total spaces
Arsenal	102	up to 10	9.8
Aston Villa	41	up to 6	14.6
Barnsley	65	*N/A	N/A
Blackburn Rovers	280	up to 20	7.1
Bolton Wanderers	70-90	*N/A	N/A
Chelsea	40	up to 10	25.0
Coventry City	70	up to 24	34.3
Crystal Palace	48	*N/A	N/A
Derby County	140	up to 30	21.4
Everton	61	up to 13	21.3
Leeds United	101	up to 6	5.9
Leicester City	75	up to 17	22.7
** Liverpool	44	up to 4	9.0
Manchester United	70	up to 7	10.0
Newcastle United	95	up to 13	13.7
Sheffield Wed	88	up to 6	6.8
Southampton	18	up to 4	22.2
** Tottenham Hotspur	33	up to 3	9.0
West Ham United	112	up to 6	5.4
Wimbledon	48	up to 15	31.2

Source: National Guide to Facilities for Disabled Football Supporters (Sir Norman Chester Centre 1997)

\* N/A = figures not available

\*\* figures may have changed following recent ground redevelopment

**Table 10: Wheelchair spaces for away fans at Football League grounds (97/98) (figures unavailable for clubs not listed)**

Club	Wheelchair Spaces	Spaces for Away fans	As % of total
Barnet	12	up to 6	50
Bournemouth	20	up to 6	30
Bristol City	48	on request	N/A
Burnley	48	up to 10	21
Bury	28	up to 8	29
Cambridge United	24	up to 6	25
Cardiff City	20	up to 10	50
Carlisle United	23	up to 10	43
Chester City	32	up to 8	25
Chesterfield	20	up to 10	50
Crewe Alexandra	24	up to 10	42
Darlington	20	up to 10	50
Doncaster Rovers	14	up to 6	43
Exeter City	20	up to 3	15
Fulham	10	up to 5	50
Hartlepool United	21	up to 10	48
Huddersfield Town	242	up to 16	7
Hull City	15	up to 6	40
Leyton Orient	30	up to 10	33
Lincoln City	82	up to 20	24
Luton Town	32	up to 10	31
Macclesfield Town	12	up to 6	50
Mansfield Town	40	up to 15	38
Middlesbrough	45	up to 15	33
Northampton Town	75	up to 19	25
Nottingham Forest	79	up to 11	14
Notts County	100	up to 70	70
Peterborough Utd	41	up to 20	49
Plymouth Argyle	25	up to 6	24
QPR	19	up to 6	32
Reading	18	up to 2	11
Scarborough	30	up to 10	33
Scunthorpe United	16	up to 6	38
Shrewsbury Town	12	up to 6	50
Stoke City	164	up to 40	24
Swansea City	6	up to 3	50
Swindon Town	49	up to 6	12
Torquay United	15	up to 3	20
Watford	40	up to 24	60
Wigan Athletic	20	up to 6	30
Wolves	150	up to 15	10
Wrexham	20	up to 4	20
Wycombe Wndrs	50	up to 12	24
York City	18	up to 6	33

Source: National Guide to Facilities for Disabled Football Supporters (Sir Norman Chester Centre 1997)

\* N/A = figures not available

## Submission to the Football Task Force

### Access for visually impaired people

#### Introduction

The Royal National Institute for the Blind welcomes the opportunity to provide evidence to the football task force on access to football for visually impaired people. This submission encompasses the experiences of a group of visually impaired supporters working with RNIB to improve access.

A survey carried out by the RNIB and published in 1991 revealed that there were approximately 1 million blind or partially sighted adults in the UK. Many of the conditions which cause loss of vision are age related and it is therefore reasonable to anticipate that the proportion of blind or partially sighted people in the total population will increase progressively over the next few years. There are also many people who are not partially sighted, but simply have poor vision. It is estimated that there are 750,000 adults in Britain who are unable to recognise a friend across a street or read newsprint, even with the aid of glasses.

Like the rest of the population visually impaired and deafblind people enjoy watching sports. However the environment of football stadia often creates barriers to visually impaired people attending matches, removing these barriers through an "inclusive design" approach and providing special assistance where necessary, such as training for staff, will enable more visually impaired supporters to attend football matches.

Although there have been recent publications into designing for spectators with disabilities these have tended to focus on the needs of physically disabled people. Too often a token gesture towards disabled people seems to add cynicism to thoughtlessness: the ramp that provides wheelchair access to an unnegotiable building; the Braille invitation into an environment that, once entered, proves positively hostile to visually impaired people.

This said, there is evidence that much can be achieved by sensitive and informed design. Most of the key features of inclusive design can be integrated into new building projects. Many can be economically incorporated into an existing building through routine maintenance or refurbishment following an environmental access audit. Opportunities must be taken, wherever they occur, to meet the needs of people with disabilities.

RNIB is aware through its leisure services that visually impaired people's needs are not being met by the football authorities, although there are several examples of good practice.

Visually impaired and deafblind people are experiencing problems in access both before and during matches in terms of access to information, tickets, travel, commentary and stadiums.

Surveys by British Blind Sports (1990) and RNIB (1991, 1993, 1997) tried to evaluate what facilities were available for visually impaired and deafblind people in sports stadia. The findings showed a wide variety in the facilities that were provided but also identified a lack of awareness about what could be done.

The following report outlines the main problems and provides recommendations from RNIB's See it Right Campaign, Leisure Services and the RNIB/GDBA Joint Mobility Unit experience of meeting visually impaired people's needs.

## **Issues of concern**

The following section outlines some of the problems experienced by visually impaired supporters as they go through the process of trying to go to a football match.

### **Getting tickets and information**

The first difficulty experienced by visually impaired, and disabled supporters in general, is in obtaining information and tickets to attend.

Several calls are necessary before the information can be obtained to enable a supporter to decide whether to purchase a ticket and finding information about accessibility can be impossible. These calls are required because of differing pricing and access policies and standards between different clubs and the lack of a recognised calling point for information.

The problems with obtaining tickets are multiplied for away matches where a completely different system may operate and the delay in finding whether access is possible may result in the necessary tickets being completely booked.

### **Getting to the ground**

Visually impaired people are more reliant on public transport than most supporters and can not visit away matches if the relevant trains and coaches are fully booked. They also can not attend independently if any part of the travel journey is inaccessible.

This also includes the pedestrian environment around the stadium which should provide safe conditions for disabled people. Broken pavements, obstructions and unidentified hazards all contribute to an intimidating environment.

A basic consideration in new stadium locations should be their accessibility in terms of public transport access and the distance from transport to the stadium. When planning new stadiums access should be a fundamental criteria, both in terms of access in the general sense of location but also in terms of the design and accessibility of the stadia to disabled people.

Locating in areas only accessible by car limits the opportunities to get to the ground, especially for visually impaired and deafblind people wishing to do independently.

For some people a car will be the only form of transport which can be used and these people must also be catered for. Orange badges can be issued to blind people as well as wheelchair users and provision should be made for accessible car parking provision close to an accessible stadium entrance.

### **Getting into the ground**

Guide dog owners often experience problems and are refused access into stadia, often on health and safety grounds. The RINB believes that there is no justification on health and safety grounds of refusing access for a guide dog to a football stadium.

The Guide Dog is a mobility aid for the user and is a trained animal, in any environment the owner is responsible for the dog. If the owner considers their dog may be alarmed or intimidated by a large crowd as experienced in football stadia then it is their responsibility to make alternative arrangements. If they consider their dog capable of performing in this environment they should have the right to take the animal into the stadia.

The attached letter from the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association outlines their similar view that it should be owners choice whether to take a dog to a football match not the stadium operators. Also

contained is advice on how the needs of the dog can be met in the stadia.

Visually impaired football supporters have informed RNIB that ideally guide dog owners should have the opportunity and choice, as all other spectators, to see the whole game and not leave or arrive early.

Currently there is evidence that access is being denied by some clubs who believe that guide dogs are a safety hazard in the event of a fire. In such circumstances having their guide dog would mean that a visually impaired spectator could exit the ground with little or no assistance from stewards thus freeing them to deal with other evacuation duties.

Access for Guide Dogs is important but it should also be placed in context. There are only 4100 guide dog owners in the UK, 1% of the visually impaired population, 95% of visually impaired people receive no mobility training or assistance and 52% need help to go out because of the barriers in the environment.

It is important that all staff are aware of the club policy. There are examples of visually impaired spectators being refused access if travelling without a guide dog due to a lack of staff awareness, even when the spectator is in possession of a letter from the club confirming they can attend.

### **Getting to a seat**

Stewards are present at many grounds and can provide assistance to disabled people. However unless people are properly trained in disability awareness the assistance may not be what the person requires. Stewards should be given disability awareness training so that they can provide the appropriate assistance to their customers if requested.

Although stewards will be of assistance to many people it is the basic design of the stadia as building which disables them. The barriers created by the design means it is inaccessible as a result of poor lighting, dangerous steps or lack of signage for example.

There are many design solutions which can be applied to address these barriers and make the environment more accessible. Taking often relatively minor measures, such as decorating in a colour scheme that enhances contrast, will mean many visually impaired people can use a stadia without assistance. Many of these measures cost little to introduce and all that is required is a greater understanding of the problems disabled people face when people are designing, maintaining and managing the stadium.

In the Football Trust publication "Leaving the trackside?" It states that it is often difficult to identify visually impaired people. This should not be seen as a problem but as an indication that many disabled people want to be integrated in the rest of the crowd if facilities are accessible or could ask stewards for assistance.

### **Watching a match**

The provision of commentaries is a major benefit for visually impaired supporters both because it provides details of the play but also because it enables people to attend independently if they wish.

Commentary is vital to the enjoyment of visually impaired spectators. Many commentators are volunteers, hence standards at matches vary greatly. Training may enable better commentary to be given, if simple techniques are followed, to improve the content and quality.

There are a number of different systems for providing commentary and a wide variety in the standards. Headsets linked to local radio (especially hospital radios and increasingly club stations) is one of the most common forms of commentary. These have the benefit of allowing users to sit anywhere in the stadium but there is no check on the standard of the information provided. The use of infra red systems also allows users to sit anywhere in the stadium.

Some clubs provide headsets which are linked to their own commentary where it would be easier to raise standards but restrictions are placed on where people can sit. There are also limits on the number of seats where commentary is provided and no clear indication as to how many seats should have the commentary facility.

Ideally it would be possible to receive commentary from anywhere in the ground to a recognised quality using standard equipment either supplied at the club or which could be used around the country for home and away matches.

Some visually impaired spectators use viewing aids, such as monocular, which should not be used into direct sunlight, yet seating areas at some clubs face into the sun, which may also create glare so people are unable to optimise their residual vision.

Where only certain seats can be provided with commentary it is not acceptable to locate them in restricted viewing areas or where glare is a problem. Placing visually impaired supporters in restricted viewing areas without any commentary because "they can't see" shows a lack of understanding and awareness about visual impairment.

### **Getting refreshments**

Attending football matches is no longer solely about staying in one place for 90 minutes. Football stadia are increasingly like all other buildings providing functions such as toilets, restaurants and shops. All of these areas need to consider accessibility not just the entrance gate and the stands.

### **Recommendations**

The following section suggests measures which should be taken to address the issues identified above.

#### **Information provision and customer care**

The football authorities should consider ways in which customer care can be improved for all users, especially disabled people.

Information should be available to all potential users and in a format they can readily access. This information should be easy to obtain and not require numerous phone calls or letters.

Football clubs should be able to provide information about the facilities provided for disabled people, their pricing policies and also have access to information about other clubs policies and facilities. The RNIB is considering creating a database on accessible sports venues, based on the *Discovering Sports Venues* research, which could form a useful basis for providing this information. Making this database available to clubs and ticket agencies would enable them to provide the information to supporters.

Supporters should be able to identify a recognised contact point within the club and ticket agencies that will be able to answer their questions about access and ticket pricing and supply a ticket.

## **Audit of stadiums**

Any database of information would be enhanced by a programme of access auditing stadia to identify the level of facilities available nationally. This would also enable the Football authorities to identify areas that needed improvement and support investment programmes.

## **Minimum standards**

Investment programmes should aim to ensure that within a reasonable time limit certain minimum standards of access are provided. A set of standards to cover all disabilities, including sensory impairment, should be made a requirement of football stadia. This should cover all aspects of the football stadia design and operation, not just the allocation of seating.

Areas which need to be considered include:

- ! providing simple layout, which is logical and therefore memorable
- ! use of colour and tone contrast to raise viability
- ! floor surfaces and interior finishes
- ! high visibility and embossed signs
- ! adequate and evenly distributed lighting
- ! use of touch, sound, fragrance and air movement techniques
- ! audible and visual information and announcements
- ! auxiliary facilities such as guide dog relief areas and accessible seating

Regarding the number of seats for people with disabilities, the first objective should be to ensure the majority of people can use all seats and therefore sit anywhere in the stadium. This would then reduce pressure on the provision of "Accessible" seating. The provision of accessible seating should be encouraged at the levels recommended in Approval Document Part M of the Building Regulations (1/100th or 6, whichever is greatest) and the Football Stadia Advisory Design Council (1/100th in local consultation). As capacity increases so will demand for wheelchair accessible spaces.

Provision for guide dogs should be considered as described in the attached GDBA letter, consisting principally of enabling the dog to remain with the owner during the match, have an area to relieve itself and for water.

All staff and stewards should be trained in disability awareness so that they are able to offer the appropriate assistance to their supporters if required. Those providing commentary should also attain minimum standards.

The RNIB believes that if facilities for disabled people are provided then custom will increase as those currently "refused" access will be able to attend/

## **League tables**

After auditing and establishing minimum criteria the use of a "league table" of accessibility would publicise the provision of facilities for disabled people and encourage attainment of the minimum standards.

The RNIB would welcome effort to publicise improvements as they raise awareness of the issues and problems faced by visually impaired people. It is not sufficient to identify problems and is therefore necessary to provide solutions.

## **Conclusion**

The care and attention to detail that is necessary when designing for the needs of disabled people will enhance both the functional efficiency and the aesthetic appeal of stadia for all users. The careful use of design features, colour and tone contrasting, co-ordinated and well planning lighting will provide a hospitable and relaxing environment, at the same time enabling visually impaired and other disabled people to use and enjoy the stadia on equal terms with the population in general.

With the support of the Government, Football Authorities and the voluntary sector it should be possible to drive forward changes that benefit all users, especially visually impaired people.

Tim Pope, Joint Mobility Unit, RNIB & GDBA  
Alison Harding, Holidays and Leisure Services, RNIB  
Wayne Busbridge, visually impaired supporter  
Barry Ginley, visually impaired supporter

## Appendix 7

**Table 11: Charging policies for disabled supporters and carers**

Club	Charging policy
Arsenal	Disabled supporter: nothing ( <i>&amp; free match programme</i> ) Helper: nothing
Aston Villa	Disabled supporter: nothing Helper: £14
Blackburn Rovers	Disabled supporter: £16 or £19 Helper: nothing
Bradford City	Disabled supporter: £6.50 Helper: £6.50
Coventry City	Disabled supporter: £5 Helper: £13
Crewe Alexandra	Disabled supporter & helper: £10 joint ticket
Fulham	Wheelchair user: free Helper: £10 per game (98/99)
Grimsby	Wheelchair users: nothing Other disabled fans: £5 Helpers: £6
Liverpool	Wheelchair user: £3 Helper: £18/£16
Nottingham Forest	Disabled supporter: nothing Helper: £100 per season or £20 per match Helper (for partially-sighted): nothing
Torquay United	Disabled supporter: nothing Helper: half price
Watford	Wheelchair user: £50 per season (97/98) Helper: £199 per season

*Source: Fulham FC & National Guide to Facilities for Disabled Football Supporters  
(Sir Norman Chester Centre 1997)*