



UEFA Accessibility Guidelines



Developed with
the support of
AccessibAll

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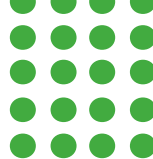
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Introduction

Enjoying football must be an opportunity for all. This requires accessibility across the board, and UEFA believes this to be a priority in the progress of European football.

By ensuring that the football environment and its infrastructure are accessible to everyone who wants to take part, we are welcoming ALL.

As one of the largest communities in the continent, European football has a duty to proactively think about how we can come together – in line with UEFA’s overall strategy ‘United for Success’ – to make football a game for all. To this end, ‘Football for all abilities’ is one of the eleven policies outlined in the UEFA Football Sustainability Strategy 2030, Strength through Unity, and the update and further development of these

guidelines is a concrete target set out in this strategy.

The FootbALL programme provides a key platform for ensuring that UEFA’s work around social sustainability – in this case accessibility – is highlighted, and that best practices, main achievements, and key information is shared and UEFA is committed to translating it into 35 European languages to further strengthen its reach and utility for the football ecosystem.

The objective of this guide is to be a resource for national associations (NAs), leagues and football clubs, providing concrete insight into European requirements regarding accessibility as well as showcasing how matchday experiences can be enhanced to be fully accessible.





Regarding access for all, the accessibility of football infrastructure such as stadiums, administrative facilities and training centres, as well as matchday activities and services, holds a key role. It is the duty of UEFA and other stakeholders in European football to work together to proactively remove barriers that prevent people of all abilities from fully contributing and being a part of the game.

Accessibility within European football needs to be integrated in all that we do, from all operational processes to the design and construction of infrastructure and to the training of staff and volunteers.

Published with the support of AccessibAll (formerly CAFE), this guide is a comprehensive update of the 'Access for All - UEFA and CAFE Good Practice Guide to Creating an Accessible Stadium and Matchday Experience', first published in

2011. It has been updated based on experience across events, tournaments and infrastructure projects.

The guide includes insights connected to social expectations, technological developments and feedback from fans of all abilities.





The guide reflects the social model of disability, which states that people are disabled by the barriers imposed upon them, be it physical structures, attitudes or procedures. Therefore, it focuses heavily on the impairment factors that exist in society and football, and on how we can consider these when building new infrastructure and activities. There are also opportunities for modifications to existing infrastructure, services and operational activities aimed at improving accessibility.

In line with the mission of the UEFA strategy, this guide aims to inspire, activate and accelerate collective action and emphasises the importance of the specific role played by the Disability access officer (DAO). While accessibility might seem like a static topic that refers only to one's own infrastructure and activities, it is so much more than that. As European national teams and clubs travel for away matches, so do their fans, which means a conscious

understanding and planning of the accessibility requirements of away stadiums and the services provided there.

The updates contained in the guide ensure it remains a relevant tool that can be consulted to ensure that accessibility is not only considered but embedded across the board in European football.

We invite all football stakeholders to use this guide as a springboard to further accelerate accessibility across infrastructure and services within the football ecosystem.

By learning from existing best practices and challenges, and by leveraging tools like the UEFA Accessibility Checklist, we can collaborate to create new and innovative solutions towards more accessible environments.

Michele Uva
UEFA Director of Social and Environmental Sustainability



#FOOTBALL



RESPECT



About AccessibAll

In 2009, UEFA's Monaco Charity Award facilitated the establishment of the Centre for Access to Football in Europe (CAFE), now AccessibAll. This non-profit organisation has been a driving force in ensuring that disabled supporters and fans across Europe can attend and enjoy football matches. Its aim is to facilitate a seamless and inclusive experience for everyone.

The presence of disabled people alone does not equate to inclusion. An organisation, programme, service or venue is only truly inclusive when disabled people are enabled and valued as fully contributing participants with a sense of worth, belonging and self-esteem. In this,

UEFA's Football Sustainability Strategy 2030 marks a significant step forward in harnessing the power of football off the pitch. Disability and inclusivity are pivotal pillars of this strategy, mirroring UEFA's long-standing mission to ensure that everyone, regardless of disability, can enjoy the beautiful game.

Since 2009, AccessibAll has been proud to stand alongside UEFA in a shared commitment to a game that is accessible, inclusive and welcoming for all.

In this, AccessibAll understands the positive impact that attending a live match can have on a disabled person's self-confidence,

empowerment and sense of inclusion. It collaborates closely with stakeholders, including UEFA, its 55 member associations and football clubs across Europe, providing them with advice on accessibility and how to improve facilities. It is supporting UEFA in continuously improving access and inclusion at UEFA club competition finals and men's and women's European championships.

AccessibAll also cooperates with organisations such as the European Committee for Standardisation (CEN)¹ to establish a more uniform pan-European approach to building standards and good practices for stadiums.

1 [About CEN](#)



Recognising the importance of accessibility for disabled supporters is crucial to ensuring that their needs and interests are considered in developments in policy and practice. AccessibAll is committed to empowering disabled fans through local supporter groups that enable them to engage directly with football clubs and governing bodies. The goal is to normalise equal access to the game's services and facilities so that in future it becomes standard practice.

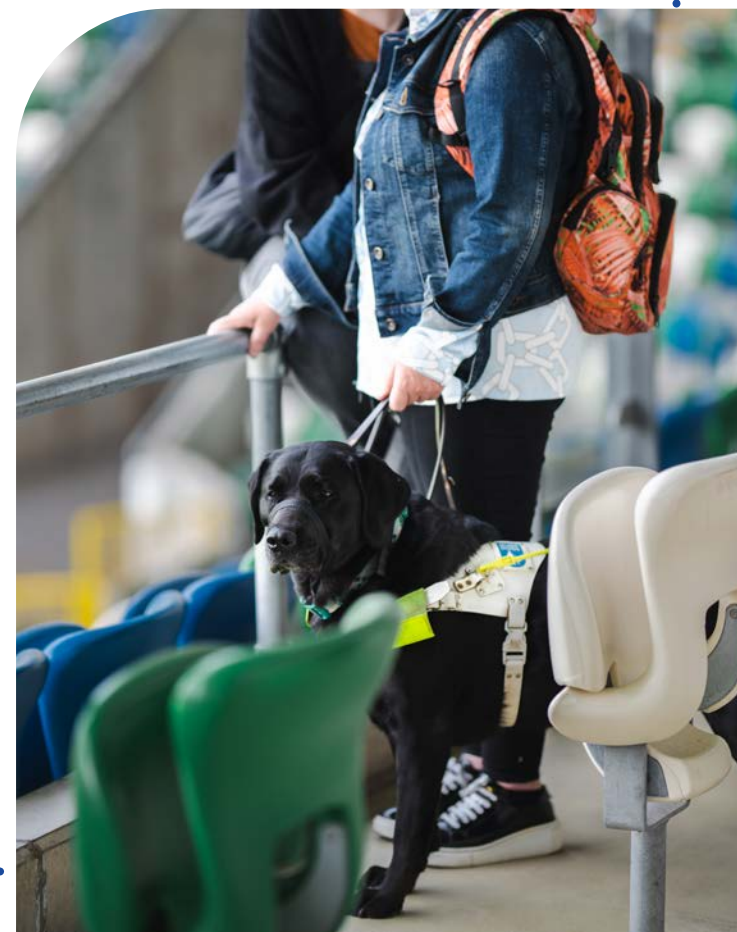
This guide goes beyond outlining the challenges disabled people may encounter on a matchday. It is part of a decade-long endeavour to create inclusive environments across Europe and beyond.

AccessibAll have conducted over 100 stadium access appraisals and advocated for equality and inclusion at every level of the game. The new UEFA strategy, 'United For

Success', launched in 2024 in Paris has set a visionary path within which AccessibAll aims to support UEFA's standards, championing the cause of disabled fans across the globe.

By inviting key stakeholders, clubs and organisations to join this journey, collaborative actions can create opportunities for everyone to experience the excitement of sports, making every stadium a place of inclusivity and equality. This publication serves as a comprehensive guide and a call to action to create a more welcoming environment for all fans and to ensure that the joy and unity of sports is shared by everyone, with disabled people able to take their rightful places across the game.

Olivier Jarosz
Chief Executive Officer, AccessibAll





What are the Accessibility Guidelines?

The Accessibility Guidelines are a resource created to:

Inspire

by highlighting the value of **making accessibility a priority** at every stage of football infrastructure projects and events.

Activate

by presenting a comprehensive overview of the **requirements and procedures** related to accessibility in football.

Accelerate

collaboration with stakeholders to **increase accessibility** in European football.



Why have these guidelines been created?

Disabled people constitute the largest minority group of any population – **an estimated 1.3 billion people globally** – which is about 16% of the world’s population. This number is expected to increase further in the coming years due to the rising prevalence of chronic conditions and advances in medical treatment.

Disabled people, according to the [social model of disability](#), are disabled by the barriers around them. These guidelines includes guidance and resources on catering to wheelchair users, people with limited mobility, partially sighted and blind people, colour-blind people, hard of hearing and deaf people, intellectually disabled people, neurodivergent people, people with mental health issues, people of short

stature, other non-visibly disabled people and people with long-term health conditions, as well as other beneficiaries of accessibility.

Accessible football stadiums, infrastructure and services cater to the diverse access needs of supporters, staff and volunteers, and should be considered as a key topic for all football organisations because:

1 Disabled people have the right to be a part of football in the same way as everyone else. This applies to football at all levels of the game.

2 Environments where accessibility is considered from the planning phase are more flexible and sustainable, requiring fewer costly adaptations in the future.

3 Football has a tremendous opportunity to positively impact the lives of disabled people.



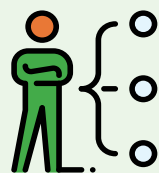
Who are the guidelines for?

Everyone plays a role in creating a football environment that is accessible for all. These guidelines have been developed with the full football ecosystem in mind, with a specific focus on:



Venue owners and operators

Organisations will benefit from reflecting on the accessibility requirements and best practices presented in the guidelines.



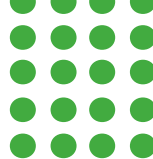
Event organisers

The guidelines highlight aspects to consider across all matchday activities, while also underlining the importance of considering the accessibility of the infrastructure used during the event.



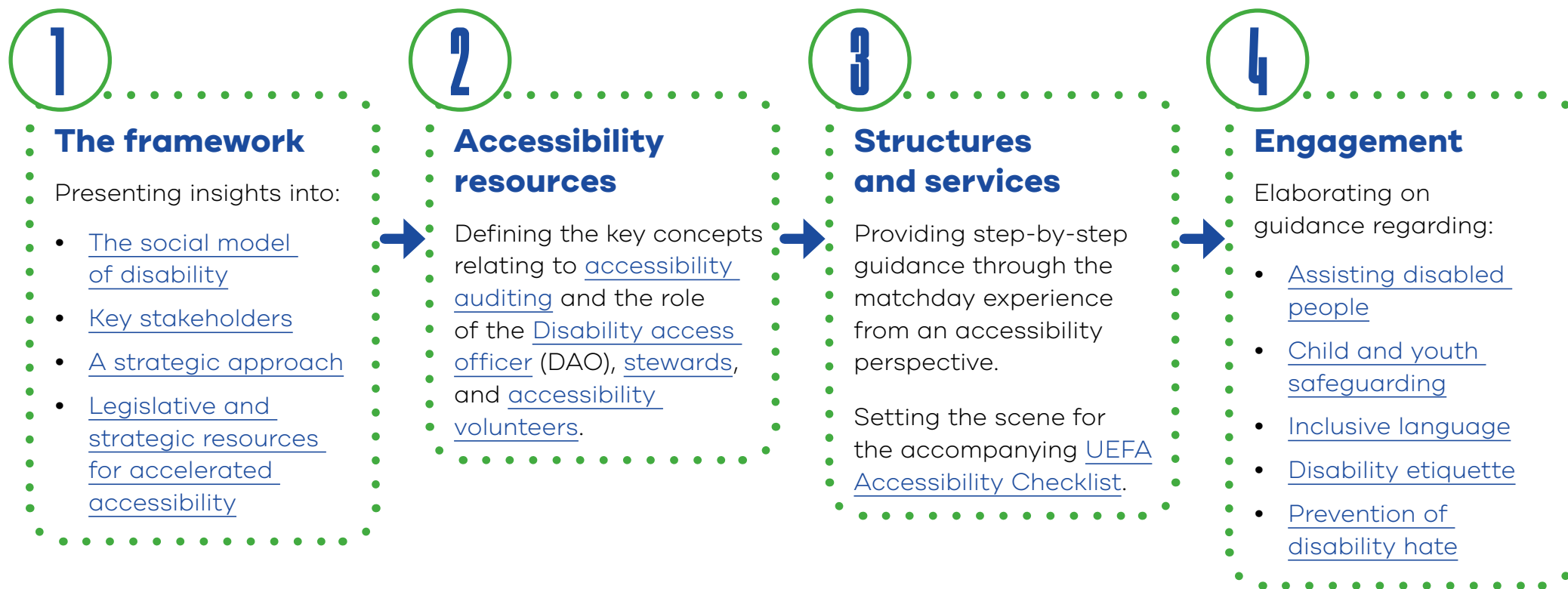
Disability access officers (DAOs)

The guidelines support the tasks of DAOs, providing clear and consistent outlines for them to present and use as a framework for collaboration within their organisation their organisation, e.g. in their work with stewards and accessibility volunteers.



How to use the guidelines

The guidelines aim to present accessibility in football as a journey focusing on four specific areas:





This guide is an advisory document and is not intended to be prescriptive or inhibit alternative and creative solutions. The guidance and standards contained in this document are not the only way to achieve inclusive access.

Furthermore, **this document is not designed to replace vital direct input from local disabled people and qualified local access professionals throughout the planning stages of any project**, be it a new build, modernisation or extension.

When using these guidelines in relation to infrastructure, UEFA encourages readers to also consider the [UEFA Sustainable Infrastructure Guidelines](#), to ensure that environmental sustainability is also considered throughout the planning and design.

Planners and designers should also recognise that local building standards tend to represent only

the minimum access requirements. Minimum standards, by definition, usually only provide for minimum access and fail to address many of the barriers facing disabled and other people who need an accessible environment. **Truly inclusive planning for the whole community means going beyond the bare minimum.**

Designers and management should always try aim higher when building or renovating venues and premises, to encompass the needs of a widely diverse and ever-ageing community.

For additional recommendations on accessible policies, services and facilities, please consult your local authorities, [DAO](#), and disability supporter groups, check local building regulations and refer to the documents listed at the end of this guide.

For further clarification on some of the terms used in this guide, please refer to the [Glossary](#).



Image | EURO 2024 tournament director and former German national team player Philipp Lahm (left, back to camera) is embraced at UEFA EURO 2024.



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#FOOTBALL



The social model of disability

When considering how to make a setting such as a football stadium accessible and inclusive, it is crucial to take into account the social model of disability. **According to this model, it is environmental, attitudinal, communication and institutional barriers that cause disability, not a person's medical conditions or diagnoses.** It is important to see the person, not the disability, and to dispel stereotypes. For example, a wheelchair user is disabled when confronted with steps or steep gradients that cannot be accessed in a wheelchair. Likewise, a blind or partially sighted person is disabled only if information is not provided in an accessible format or access routes are blocked by physical barriers or trip hazards.

The outdated medical model of disability viewed disabled people as unwell or unhealthy and defined them by their medical condition, seen as the cause of their disability. This model disempowers and patronises disabled people, who are just as able as anyone else provided their environment accommodates their specific requirements. **Various models of disability exist, but UEFA's preferred approach is one that places the burden on society and venues to be accessible, rather than on the disabled person. Disability is a characteristic of a person, not what defines them.**

For the purposes of this document, the main 'categories' of beneficiaries of accessibility are described below. However, it is important to remember that some disabled people may have complex or multiple access needs that span different categories (a wheelchair user may also be blind or deaf, for example). It must also

be reiterated that disabled people are limited only by the barriers they face, and they should not be defined by these 'categories' or limitations. **Instead, the focus should be on access requirements and how to create an environment that can be enjoyed by all.** Terminology use varies across the globe and in many cases is still evolving. AccessibAll has carried out extensive research to determine the most appropriate current terminology, in line with the social model of disability and disabled people's preferred terms. AccessibAll has published a [terminology guide](#), with explanations on why each term is used. **Some people may choose to use different terms than those used in this guide, but in all cases, the individual's preferences should be respected.**



Wheelchair users

Approximately 80 million people in the world use a wheelchair permanently or frequently or would do if they had access to one, because they find walking either difficult or impossible. This figure is even higher among older people. Depending on the country in which they live, it is estimated that only between 5% and 35% of people who would use a wheelchair actually have access to one.²

A wheelchair user may be limited by environmental or attitudinal barriers.

Wheelchair users, including people who use a powerchair or mobility scooter, are the most negatively affected by stadium design that does not embrace people with limited mobility. **Providing universally accessible grounds, facilities and services benefits not only wheelchair users but all stadium-goers.**



2 [WHO Assistive technology](#)

People with limited mobility

People with limited mobility, also referred to as ambulant disabled people, are those who can walk but require walking aids, such as crutches or a rolling walker, or who find it difficult to walk long distances. **This group benefits from facilities and services that are designed to reduce walking distances, limit or remove stepped access, and limit the need to stand for long periods.** Ambulant disabled people may be limited by environmental or attitudinal barriers.

Partially sighted and blind people

This group, which as the name suggests includes people who are totally blind as well as those with

limited or obscured vision, benefits from clear pathways and signage. This includes tactile surfaces, colour contrasting and non-reflective surfaces, as well as alternative information formats such as Braille, large print, audio recordings and audio-descriptive commentaries. **It is important to note that most partially sighted and blind people have some vision (limited or variously obscured).** Partially sighted and blind people may be limited by environmental, communication or attitudinal barriers.

Colour-blind people

Colour blindness is the world's most common genetic condition and affects the ability to perceive colours. **In Europe, one in 12 men and one in 200 women have some degree of colour blindness.** This group benefits from strongly contrasting colours



in all visual information, whether digital, printed or physical, as well as information provided by means other than colour alone, such as text, symbols, patterns and sounds. Colour-blind people may be limited by environmental or communication barriers.

Hard of hearing and deaf people

This group includes deaf people (i.e. those who cannot hear at a functional level), who often use sign language to communicate and benefit from interpretation services, visual information and text-to-voice telephone relay. **However, most people in this group have some hearing and may use hearing aids or cochlear implants to amplify sounds.** Deaf and hard of hearing people can benefit from assistive listening devices, such as induction loop systems, at customer-facing points

within stadiums, including ticket offices, concourses and information points. **Hearing loss is by far the largest single disability and it is often progressive over a long period of time, meaning a person may be unaware of the extent to which they are affected.** Hard of hearing and deaf people may be limited by communication or attitudinal barriers.

Intellectually disabled people

This group, which includes people with Down syndrome, Fragile X syndrome and other intellectual disabilities, benefits from flexible services and approaches, plain language or easy-to-read documents and logical stadium layouts. **They often face communication barriers at stadiums; for example, if food and drinks menus are not provided in accessible formats.** Stewards need to be sensitive to and aware of

their needs, particularly relating to communication and wayfinding on matchdays. **This group may also face institutional or attitudinal barriers.**

Neurodivergent people

Neurodivergent people, including but not limited to autistic people, people with sensory processing disabilities and learning-disabled people, can benefit from the provision of alternative formats and detailed advance information. **Many stadiums now provide sensory viewing rooms where the sensory environment is carefully managed, as some autistic people and people with sensory processing disabilities can find the stadium bowl overwhelming or over-stimulating.** Neurodivergent people often face attitudinal barriers from fellow spectators as well as club or venue staff, and can be limited by communication, institutional, environmental or attitudinal barriers.



People with mental health issues

This group, including but not limited to people who have anxiety, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia or post-traumatic stress disorder, benefits from a flexible and understanding approach to service provision, especially on matchdays. **It is important to provide appropriate training to all staff and volunteers, who should take account of the barriers that crowding, queuing, and confined or new places can present.** This group may be limited by institutional, environmental, communication or attitudinal barriers.

People of short stature

People of short stature, also referred to as little people, are commonly described as having a final adult

height of 4 feet 10 inches (1.47m) or less. **This group benefits from accessible toilets, low-level counters and raised seating platforms. They may be limited by environmental or attitudinal barriers.**

Other non-visibly disabled people and people with long-term health conditions

This group includes people who have neurological conditions such as epilepsy or dementia, inflammatory bowel disease, a stoma, diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis, a breathing/heart condition, endometriosis, cancer or chronic pain, to name just a few. **A common barrier encountered by many non-visibly disabled people is being questioned for using accessible services and**

facilities. These groups may be limited by environmental, institutional, communication or attitudinal barriers.

Other beneficiaries of accessibility

Many people, not just those who are disabled, benefit enormously from accessible and inclusive stadiums and flexible services. **At any given time, up to 40% of a population will benefit from accessibility,³ and almost everyone will benefit at some time in their lives as a result of the natural aging process and the accompanying reduction in sensory and physical functions.** The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated the value to everyone of accessible features such as automatic taps and hand dryers, contactless payment systems, wider circulation paths and automatic doors.



3 [InSuit - What is universal accessibility?](#)



Clearly, a significant number of people benefit directly from accessible stadiums, including:

- temporarily injured supporters, volunteers, staff and players (e.g. those with a broken leg or recovering from surgery)
- pregnant women and parents attending matches and other events with young children
- children themselves
- older guests, volunteers and supporters, who may be among the longest-standing members of a club
- people not familiar with the local language, who may not understand complex signage
- first-time visitors to the stadium
- first-aiders and emergency services

Advanced technologies

Stadiums and football stakeholders are increasingly recognising the importance of integrating advanced technologies and trends to cater to disabled fans and ensure that they can enjoy events with greater independence and comfort. Some modern stadiums have adopted advanced mobility solutions including sophisticated wheelchair accessibility options, such as flexible seating and accessible lifts, alongside the exploration of robotic assistance devices for navigating the stadium more efficiently. From website design to the deployment of smart technologies, this kind of innovation is crucial to create an inclusive, accessible and enjoyable environment for all fans, demonstrating a commitment to equality and diversity in the sports industry.



UEFA ACCESSIBILITY GUIDELINES

Key stakeholders

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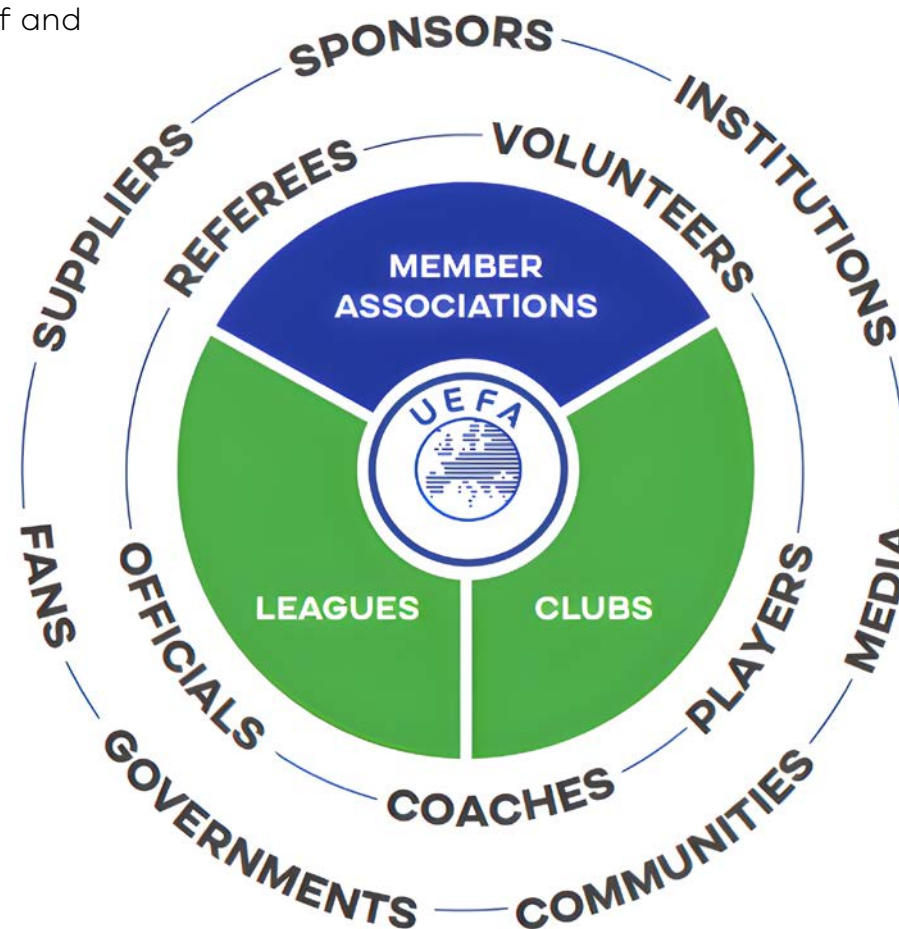


While this publication often refers directly to clubs and stadium owners, it is intended to serve as a good practice guide for everyone involved in the design, construction, modernisation and day-to-day management of new and existing stadium and club facilities for matches and other events.

It is through collaborative action that we can all play a role in removing physical, sensory and attitudinal barriers, as well as information, communication, operations and policy-related barriers. These barriers exclude and limit the choices and experiences of so many disabled people, their families and friends who wish to attend football matches across Europe.

All stakeholders within the European football ecosystem should therefore

participate in achieving this goal and should leverage existing networks, resources and expertise to effect lasting and meaningful change. This includes architects and designers, matchday staff and volunteers.





UEFA ACCESSIBILITY GUIDELINES

Strategic approach

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To advance accessibility in football, all stakeholders should unite to work towards clear priorities, targets and KPIs. Organisations are encouraged to follow five key steps:



1. Commit

Ensure that there is a clear strategic commitment to accessibility across the organisation's facilities, services, policies and communications.



2. Create ownership

Identify a team or person responsible for ensuring that these commitments are translated into concrete activities. This should include the appointment of a disability access officer (DAO) (see [Disability access officers](#)).



3. Develop strategic priorities, targets and KPIs

Assess current needs and resources to establish strategic priorities and actions. Include key performance indicators (KPIs) to provide a clear picture of what success looks like. Where possible, involve disabled supporters, disabled fan networks and disabled staff and volunteers in setting the framework for upcoming work on accessibility.



4. Take action

To achieve these strategic priorities and targets, follow a clear action plan. Work collaboratively with stakeholders.



5. Measure and report

Measuring an action's impact is the only way to determine its success. Interact with disabled fans, spectators, colleagues and volunteers to gather first-hand feedback. Reporting should take place yearly, and strategic priorities, targets and KPIs should be reviewed regularly to ensure continued relevance in line with technological and societal developments.



UEFA ACCESSIBILITY GUIDELINES

Legislative and strategic resources for accelerated accessibility

#FOOTBALL



Thanks to local, national and international legislation, disabled people's rights have never been better protected.

With developments such as the United Nations [Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities \(UN CRPD\)](#) and the [European Accessibility Act](#) – scheduled to become law in all EU member states in June 2025 – lawmakers have demonstrated the importance of accessibility and outlined means of recourse should service providers not ensure an inclusive experience for disabled people.

While these positive steps have been a welcome addition, question marks remain over how to compel service providers to ensure an accessible environment for differently disabled people. National and local legislation may be inconsistent or non-existent in

some countries, and recourse through international legislation can be complicated and lengthy.

All service providers are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the relevant disability legislation in their region.

To further strengthen legislative regulations, each football association should impose robust rules concerning inclusive and equal access on facilities and services as part of their club licensing requirements. This is especially important where national disability or equality legislation does not already exist, but is a necessary and welcome addition even where it does.

Legislation such as the UN CRPD lays an important foundation for disabled people's interests.

The purpose of such legislation is to protect and promote the full and

equal human rights and freedoms of all disabled people. The [EU's Charter of Fundamental Rights](#) prohibits discrimination on the grounds of disability and recognises the right of all disabled people to independence, integration and participation in society. In 2010, the EU became a party to the UN CRPD, which is the first time the EU has agreed to be bound by an international human rights treaty.

In March 2021, the European Commission adopted the [Union of Equality: Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021–2030](#).

This builds on the results of the previous [European Disability Strategy 2010–2020](#), in addition to considering the previously mentioned CRPD and the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.⁴

.....

4 [United Nations - Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#)



A number of the 2030 Agenda's sustainable development goals are relevant:



Goal 4 | Quality education – inclusive and equitable quality education and promotion of life-long learning opportunities for all



Goal 8 | Decent work and economic growth – promoting sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth and full and productive employment and decent work for all



Goal 10 | Reduced inequalities – reducing inequality within and among countries by empowering and promoting the social, economic and political inclusion of all, including disabled people



Goal 11 | Sustainable cities and communities – making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe and sustainable

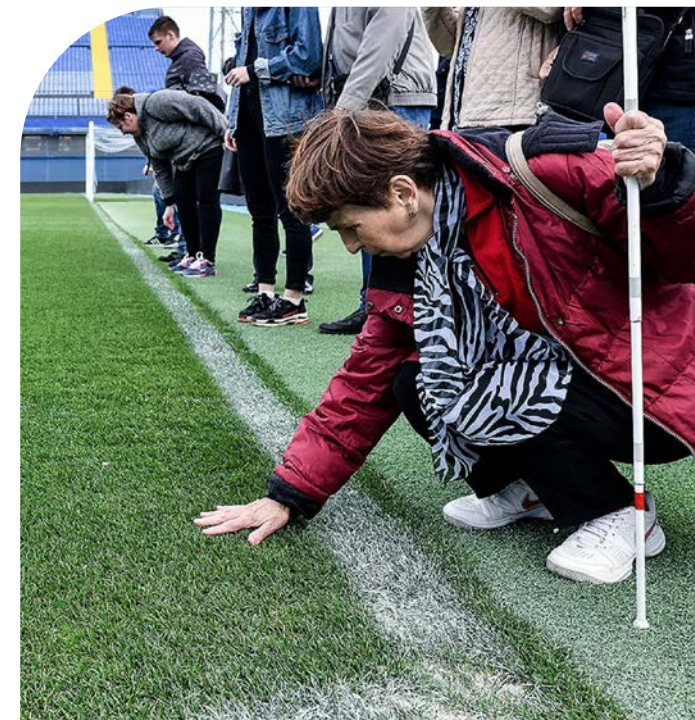


Goal 17 | Partnerships for the goals – global partnership, including in data collection, monitoring and accountability



**FOOTBALL
FOR THE GOALS**

These examples of strategy and legislation work in tandem to support disabled people's human rights and opportunities. **Continuously evolving country and region-specific legislation also protects the rights of disabled people.** Visit the [European Disability Forum website](#) for further information about local, national and international disability legislation in place across the EU.





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How to conduct an access audit

The best way to begin addressing the specific needs of disabled people at a sports infrastructure is to conduct an access audit of the stadium and other infrastructure, and then draw up an access strategy or business plan.

Ideally, an access audit should be conducted by a professional auditor or consultant who has a degree of detachment from the host's affairs in order to ensure an independent and thorough audit. Whenever possible, it should be carried out by an auditor experienced in auditing large sporting venues. **The auditor should be familiar with the principles of inclusive building design and accessible services, as well as local disability, equality and employment legislation, building and safety**

regulations and any available good practice guidance and technical reports. Since the situation varies from country to country, stadium managers or related personnel should seek local advice on who would be best suited to conduct their audit.

Each site or project to be audited will be different. It may be an existing stadium that needs to be modernised or adapted to provide accessible facilities and remove barriers, a stadium looking to expand, or a completely new build.

In all cases, the aim of the audit should be to identify features and services that may affect or impose environmental, institutional or communication barriers on a wide range of disabled people, including staff, volunteers, customers and supporters, on both matchdays and non-matchdays. It is advisable to structure the audit like a disabled person's journey through the stadium

and premises, starting from the car park or accessible drop-off point through to the furthest facility on-site. This approach will help to identify practical solutions to address the access barriers encountered at each stage of the journey.

This guide can be used as a framework for a walk-through approach to assessing facilities and infrastructure, with good practice solutions suggested in each section. But remember: ensuring good access involves more than following basic guidelines or a simple checklist.

An ongoing and evolving process of consultation and review is required.

For example, venue managers can create a record of supporters' access requirements and use it to help shape their strategy to improve access to services and facilities.



What an access audit should include

An access audit should be an independent, comprehensive and complete review of accessible facilities and services across a venue.

It is crucial for the audit to contain abundant detail and observations, with recommendations on how to raise standards in the short, medium and long term.

The auditor should seek the views of a wide range of differently disabled people with varying access requirements. This will help to identify all barriers and enable the owner, operator or event organiser to develop the most effective and inclusive solutions. Venues should also draw on the extensive experience of local and national disability groups

and organisations as well as any disabled supporters and staff of their own.

Conducting a stadium audit on both matchdays and non-matchdays is important to ensure that access during events when the stadium may be operating at full capacity, is evaluated. The sightlines of

wheelchair users, for example, might seem adequate on a non-matchday when the stadium is empty, but their view may become obstructed when surrounding spectators stand during a match. Likewise, signage that is clearly visible on a non-matchday may not be so apparent on a crowded concourse or on busy access routes on the stadium podium or perimeter.

A detailed access audit should include:

- A statement of compliance with good practice principles and guidance, local disability and equality legislation, and building and safety regulations (citing sources used)
- The organisation's own philosophy and approach to inclusive design, maintenance, improvements and management of its facilities and services
- Any key issues or constraints, which should be clearly identified, described and dated
- Consultation with disabled people, including disabled supporters, customers and staff
- An access appraisal checklist that can be used by disabled supporters (or a local user-led disability group), the auditor and

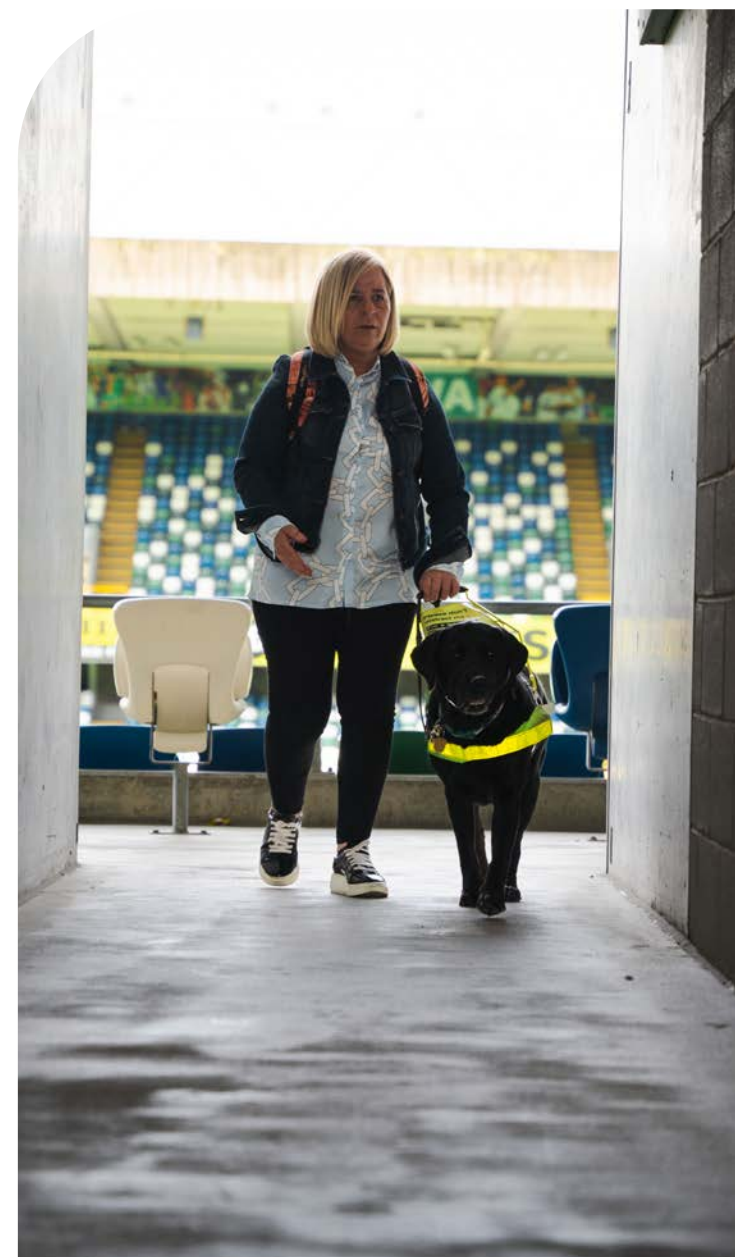


the host venue to evaluate the current situation and requirements

- A detailed walk-through description of the existing stadium and premises identifying all barriers that a disabled person might encounter, including detailed maps and photographs with descriptions and dates for future reference
- The construction dates of existing facilities and extensions and a copy of any building and safety certificates
- An access strategy or business plan agreed on by all key stakeholders, identifying the access issues to be addressed (starting with the most urgent) and describing the work required (with clear timelines or schedules) to remove all barriers (e.g. physical, sensory, psychological, operational, communication and attitudinal)

and improve and adapt facilities and services in line with good practice guidance

- A review of any mission statement or charter and an updated access statement for inclusion in it
- Existing disability and equality management and operational procedures and policies such as: ticketing and car parking; travel information; venue information, including matchday facilities and services; security information, including prohibited items; customer service contacts and helplines; websites, publications and match programmes; a safety plan for the evacuation of disabled people (both on matchdays and non-matchdays); staff training (disability etiquette and access awareness); employment and recruitment policies and procedures



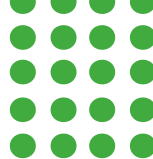


UEFA ACCESSIBILITY GUIDELINES

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Disability access officers

Disability access officers (DAOs) are individuals responsible for supporting and ensuring continued progress in the provision of inclusive and accessible facilities and services on both matchdays and non-matchdays.

The role of the DAO is enshrined in Article 46 of the UEFA Club Licensing and Financial Sustainability Regulations,⁵ which states that:

The license applicant must have appointed a disability access officer to support the provision of inclusive, accessible facilities and services.

The disability access officer will regularly meet and collaborate with the relevant club personnel on all related matters.



⁵ [UEFA Club Licensing and Financial Sustainability Regulations - Article 46](#)

This provision was added to the licensing requirements in 2015, as the result of a joint effort by UEFA and AccessibAll. UEFA also encourages its member associations to integrate the DAO requirement into their own national licensing systems and to incorporate the role into their own operations.

Given their responsibility for implementing access and disability policies and procedures within the stadium and associated premises, DAOs should have a clear, accurate understanding of both international and local disability legislation.

The DAO also needs to be familiar with good practice in providing an accessible environment, given that legislation may only encompass minimum requirements.

To constantly enhance access to facilities and services, the DAO



Image | Jason Browning, the DAO of the Irish Football Association



should ensure that the commitment to accessibility is reflected in infrastructure, activities and communications. **Additionally, the DAO should organise access awareness and disability etiquette training for all staff and volunteers (see [Training for accessibility](#)).** They should also be able to provide advice and guidance to club departments. For example, they should be able to guide the ticketing department on accessible and inclusive ticketing, or the HR department on accessible recruitment and staff retention policies for new and existing disabled staff and volunteers.

The DAO should report directly to the person with overall responsibility for stadium infrastructure, disability matters and inclusive access. **They should act as the main contact for disabled spectators and be available on matchdays and during other events.**

The DAO should support their organisation in collating and publishing access information on its official platforms, as the internet is usually the first port of call for those looking for information. This can be of use not only to disabled home supporters, but also to disabled away supporters who may be planning to attend the stadium for the first time. **The DAO should also proactively seek access information from opponents ahead of away fixtures.**

Ahead of a match, the DAO of the home team should reach out to the DAO of the visiting team to connect and build a relationship and identify communication channels for matchday. This should occur well in advance of a match to ensure that important topics are discussed in full, such as the number and needs of travelling disabled fans and how to provide the best matchday experience for them, as well as to ensure that both DAOs are in

agreement regarding the stadium and match-specific accessibility arrangements. In cases where there is a third DAO involved, e.g. in the hosting of a UEFA final, the event DAO should also connect with the club or NA DAOs ahead of the event.

Article 45 of the UEFA Club Licensing and Financial Sustainability Regulations also requires clubs to appoint a dedicated supporter liaison officer (SLO). **Some clubs have chosen to combine the SLO role with the DAO role. While this may seem to be the most logical approach, it is essential to recognise that the two positions are very different in terms of their responsibilities and requirements.** The DAO role – unlike the disability liaison officer (DLO) role previously seen in some countries – involves more than liaising with disabled spectators and ticketing. **The appointed person must have a thorough knowledge of disability legislation and accessible building**



regulations, as well as a good understanding of inclusive design for facilities and services. Depending on the size and resources of the club, NA or stadium in question, a DAO may be a full-time employee, a part-time employee or a volunteer. In larger clubs and stadiums, the DAO may also be supported by an access team. More information can be found on the [DAO Portal](#).

The recruitment of a DAO is crucial to ensuring inclusive facilities and services for all staff, volunteers, supporters, players and visitors.

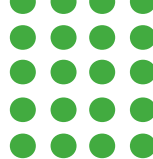
This contributes to fulfilling the legal, moral and economic obligations to disabled spectators, employees and volunteers and attracts a whole new group of fans and colleagues.

When recruiting a DAO, as with recruiting for any role, organisations should ensure that their recruitment process is as accessible and inclusive as possible. This may involve reaching out to specialist NGOs and local disability networks in addition to using the usual recruitment portals. It may also be necessary to adjust interviews to ensure that disabled applicants are able to participate in the process. This may involve providing a portable hearing loop for a candidate who is hard of hearing or making sure that documents are available in accessible formats for blind or partially sighted candidates. Interviewees should always be asked if they have any access requirements prior to their interview, and reasonable steps should be taken to fulfil them.

On matchdays, DAOs should attend all matches and be available to assist any home or away fans. **They should have a comprehensive knowledge of all accessible services, which should be regularly reviewed to ensure that they are functioning.** The DAO's contact details should also be made readily available for disabled fans attending the matches.

DAOs perform a range of tasks and roles, but their main responsibilities are advising their organisations on access and inclusion and acting as a dedicated point of contact for disabled fans. They are required to be on hand both on matchdays and non-matchdays.

To support the recruitment process, AccessibAll has published sample job descriptions for the [disability access officer](#) and [national DAO coordinator](#) roles.



The introduction of DAOs has changed the football landscape by encouraging more disabled fans to attend live matches. Additionally, UEFA's [Football Sustainability Strategy](#) and its 'football for all abilities' policy are raising overall awareness of disability among football stakeholders.

Disabled fans trust their club or national association more when there is a support network or individual dedicated to accessibility and inclusion, especially when they can see real change and new services being introduced. Trust is even greater when the DAO is able to facilitate a positive relationship between parties and bridge the gap between what is being suggested to support disabled fans in stadiums and what disabled fans actually need.

DAOs should ensure that all staff receive disability inclusion and etiquette training. They can do this by working with an organisation such

as AccessibAll or a local disability organisation or they can develop their own in-house training.

DAOs should implement short, medium and long-term strategies to improve accessibility around the stadium, with realistic timelines and annual maintenance plans for facilities and services. They should consider all facilities and activities, identifying where improvements can be made. A professional access audit of the stadium can be conducted to ensure that it meets the specific needs of disabled people (see [Accessibility auditing and planning](#)).

The regulatory requirement to appoint a DAO in every club and national association ensures greater consistency across services and stadiums, and creates a network for sharing best practices and solutions. This also benefits travelling disabled spectators, as their DAO can collate relevant and accurate access information ahead of a match.





The following sections present the roles of the stewards and accessibility volunteers. **It is crucial that the DAO and people in these roles all work together to share**

information and align on procedures, requirements and restrictions to ensure accessible, respectful and safe environments.





Stewards

Stewards will always be involved in accessibility activities as they are the ones managing aspects relating to safety and security, including emergency procedures and evacuation.

It is important that stewards who are assigned to work in areas with accessible seating and amenities are sufficiently trained on the topic of accessibility. This is to ensure that they are aware of the accessible services offered, but more importantly, so that they understand the wide range of disabilities that might be represented, and the sensitivity and etiquette expected when interacting with disabled fans and spectators.

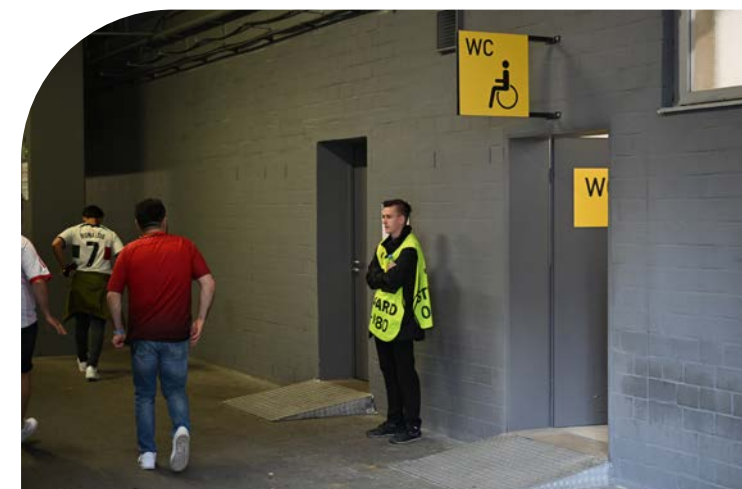
Stewards assigned to areas with accessible seating and amenities should always be trained in the

specificities of evacuating disabled people. This should cover the evacuation of not just wheelchair users but of people with the full range of disabilities referred to in these guidelines. Further information on what should be considered can be found in the section on '[Emergency systems and response](#)'.

In addition to specific emergency procedures, some other tasks for which stewards are often responsible in the area accessibility include:

- Managing accessible entrances and exits
- Performing security checks
- Managing priority lines for concessions
- Providing access to accessible toilets (often requiring a key)
- Ensuring that non-disabled fans are do not obstruct views by standing up for long periods of time

When possible, the stewards and the security team responsible for the facility, stadium or event should work with the respective DAO for the event or stadium (or other official responsible for the topic of accessibility) to ensure an open exchange of information and planning, so that the DAO is aware of the security procedures and the stewards are aware of the accessibility activities and services. The DAO should also participate in training the stewards who are set to work in accessible areas.





Accessibility volunteers

At events and matches, it is ideal to ensure that there are specific accessibility volunteers active to support disabled fans and attendees.

These volunteers should manage specific accessibility information points, and they should also stand as dedicated resources to manage any inquiries or situations relating to accessibility throughout the match or event.

These volunteers should be aware of all accessibility services available during the event, and they should be able to provide guidance in response to enquiries regarding accessible routes and access points. What this will include will differ across events and stadiums. **Accessibility volunteers should report to the DAO responsible for the event to ensure**

consistency and benefit from the expertise and insights of the DAO.

To be able to fulfill their tasks, these volunteers should receive in-depth training regarding not only the accessibility services available, but also the specificities of accessibility and UEFA's strategic priorities.

They need to fully understand the diversity of disabilities that might be represented at the event, and how to ensure accessibility in relation to this.

Ideally, some volunteers within this group should know sign language, in case any deaf or hard of hearing people attend.





UEFA ACCESSIBILITY GUIDELINES

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Ticketing and match information

In line with best practice, some venues provide a dedicated helpline for disabled supporters and visitors who may require specific access information or assistance.

Regardless of whether a dedicated helpline exists, all customer service staff should be familiar with the accessible facilities and services available at their stadium and premises, including accessible parking and drop-off points (mentioned later in this section).

Where dedicated helplines are available, they should not be more expensive than other supporter phonedlines.

Ticketing, customer service and switchboard/helpline staff should also be familiar with assistive hearing

devices and services available to support hard of hearing and deaf people. This might include a local telephone relay service that enables a deaf or hard of hearing person to communicate via telephone with the assistance of a third-party operator who translates speech to text or sign language and vice versa. **Alternative methods of contact (e.g. phone, email and post) should also be made available to ensure that all disabled people can contact the stadium or club.**

Induction or hearing loops that work with certain hearing aids should be available at all customer service points, including ticket offices, service counters, reception desks, shops and cafes. Where there are a series of counters, it may be sufficient to have just one fitted with an aid to communication, provided it is clearly identified as such using the international deaf assistance symbol or signage. Good-quality lighting and non-reflective glass should be used to

make the vendor or customer service representative more visible, which will make it easier for hard of hearing and deaf people to lip-read. **It is also important that the venue provides easy access to any dedicated window, so that a disabled person is not expected to queue for an unreasonably long time.** Reception, ticket and customer service counters (or at least one counter) should be accessible and lowered for wheelchair users and persons of short stature.

Disabled supporters and customers should be able to buy tickets for matches and other events in the same way as non-disabled people, be it online, through the ticket office or by telephone. Disabled people should also have access to the same methods of ticket delivery, including physical tickets, print-at-home tickets, mobile tickets or tickets delivered through a dedicated app. These services should be fully accessible. Should a disabled ticket holder request an alternative



method of ticket delivery because the usual method is inaccessible to them (e.g. if they cannot use a smartphone, and only mobile tickets are available), the ticket office should explore ways to grant this request.

Moreover, the ticket office management should make adequate provisions to ensure that there is no discrimination against disabled ticket holders. **This means accessible seating should be available in all ticket categories and disabled and non-disabled people should have equal access to the same spectator loyalty schemes and membership groups, season and match tickets, and away ticket ballots.**

Staff should be familiar with the layout of the entire stadium, including viewing areas, facilities and services for disabled people and people with access requirements.

An additional, complimentary ticket should be given to disabled spectators who require a companion

or personal assistant to enable them to attend a match or other event or to assist them with essential care.

It is important that ticket office staff understand that a disabled spectator with a non-visible disability may also require a complimentary ticket for a companion or personal assistant.

For example, an intellectually disabled spectator may be mobile but still require assistance to ensure their overall safety and guide them around the stadium. Likewise, a person with epilepsy who is prone to unexpected seizures may require the support of a companion or personal assistant.

A disabled spectator with multiple access needs may require more than one companion or personal assistant to assist with medical or personal care, for example if they need a portable ventilator or oxygen therapy. **It should not be assumed that they should refrain from attending the match or event because they are 'too ill' or a health and safety risk.** Instead, clubs should





be understanding and seek advice on how best to accommodate these challenges.

A disabled spectator who requires a companion or personal assistant should not be expected to pay a higher ticket price (including the companion's ticket) than a non-disabled spectator.

By the same token, clubs, national associations and venues should not be expected to routinely provide free tickets to all disabled spectators. Many disabled people prefer to pay for match tickets just like their fellow spectators, provided the facilities and services they receive are equal and they have the same choice of ticket categories and seating areas, including hospitality. Nevertheless, some venues still offer a range of reduced pricing structures, which may include free or discounted tickets for local disabled spectators.

This is a decision for each owner, operator or event organiser to take in consultation with its supporters and visitors.

Many venues are concerned about seeking proof of disability because they are worried about violating human dignity or causing offence. Nevertheless, according to [research](#) conducted in 2013, the majority of disabled fans are generally in favour of a proof of disability system, if managed well. **Requesting proof of disability may be an effective way to combat fraudulent applications and to ensure that accessibility tickets go to those who need them, particularly for matches with high demand.** However, consultation with local disabled supporter groups and disability organisations is advised to ensure a sensitive and appropriate approach. It is important to be aware of local legislation and guidance and bear in mind that not all countries have a designated register of disabled people. Some consider such registers unacceptable, as they tend to be based on the medical rather than social model of disability

(see [Accessibility concepts and categories](#) for more about models of disability).

Where registers do exist, methods to assess disability and how this is recorded vary from country to country. This means that types of proof, where required, will also vary so owners, operators and event organisers should take an open-minded approach and use common sense. To avoid repeatedly asking regular match-goers for proof of disability, venues may consider recording which disabled fans have provided proof of disability (subject to the disabled person's consent).

If proof of disability is sought at the ticketing stage, it should not be sought again, such as on matchdays at the stadium entrance, as this could be deemed discriminatory.

See AccessibAll's [guidance note](#) on accessible and inclusive ticketing policies and procedures for more information.



Getting to the stadium

Matches and other events held at football stadiums attract many thousands of spectators in high concentrations. Consequently, getting to and from the stadium at these times can present some major challenges for disabled people. **Accessible transport and access are essential, so venues should consider developing a transport access plan for disabled supporters and customers.**

The local infrastructure is key to providing accessible public transport able to cope with the large numbers of spectators, including disabled spectators, attending the stadium on matchdays. The European rail network is becoming more accessible for disabled people, as are many cities' public transport systems, so mapping out accessible routes from

stations and bus stops to and from the stadium should be part of every access strategy or business plan.



Image | Overview of access points and public transport routes for disabled spectators attending matches in Berlin during the 2024 EURO.



Drop-off and pick-up points

Where public transport remains inaccessible or unreliable, cars will continue to be the favoured means of transport for most wheelchair users and other disabled people. **Some disabled fans will choose to get to the stadium using accessible minibuses, coaches and taxis. Stadiums should have accessible parking and/or accessible drop-off and pick-up points at entrances for disabled supporters, staff and volunteers.**

It is important to remember that differently disabled people may require use of these services, not just wheelchair users.

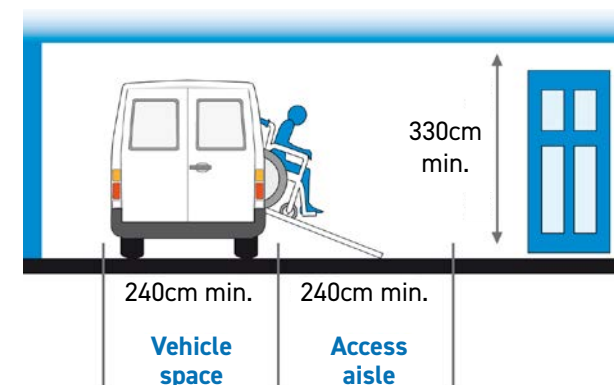
Venues may wish to consider issuing special passes or permits with disabled spectator tickets to ensure

access to the dedicated drop-off point on matchday. These passes, which should also be available to any disabled staff, would make it easier for security staff and traffic police in the area to identify the disabled spectator or staff member.

Any such procedures should be clearly communicated via appropriate websites, and security staff and local police should be informed and trained accordingly.

Accessible drop-off and pick-up points should be provided no more than 50m from any entrance used by disabled people. These should be well-signposted along all possible approaches to the stadium, as well as along exit routes from the stadium. Wherever possible, drop-off and pick-up points should also be covered. **Sufficient space should be provided for disabled people to get out of their car, minibus or coach safely and without causing congestion for other road users and**

incoming spectators. For wheelchair users in particular, this means a clear space between the vehicle and pavement (see figure 1). Transferring from a vehicle into a wheelchair on the pavement can be extremely difficult and hazardous for many disabled people.



Clearances at passenger loading zone

Figure 1 | An accessible drop-off point

Drop-off and pick-up points should be accessible to rear-lift equipped and rear-ramp accessed vans and minibuses, as well as those with



side-mounted lifts or hoists, which allow wheelchair users to remain in their wheelchairs when moving from their vehicle to the pavement.

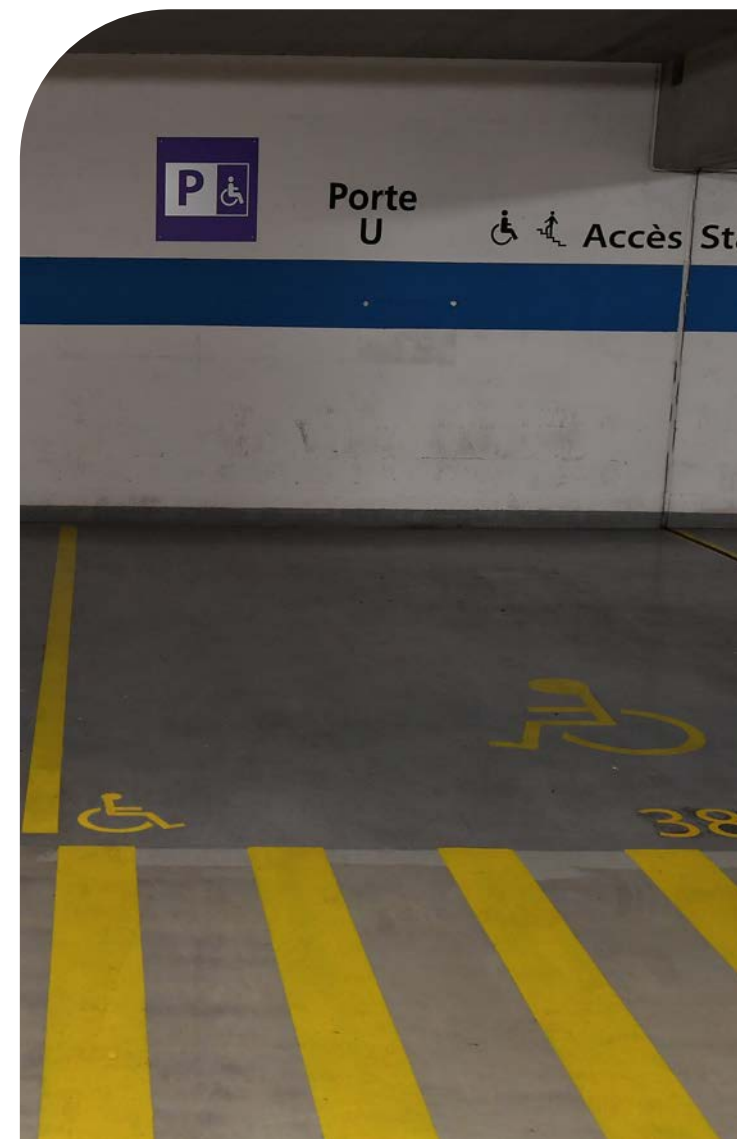
Should official travel be provided, such as a supporters bus or coach, disabled people should not be excluded from this service. It may be necessary to discuss accessibility with travel providers to that ensure an accessible vehicle is provided. **In planning for disabled spectators, it is important to consider that people tend to arrive at stadiums at different times but all leave at the same time.** Specific factors and constraints may mean provisions and arrangements on matchdays and for other events should be discussed and agreed on with the local authorities.

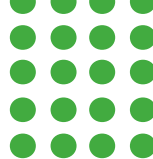
Car parking

As mentioned above, cars are still the most common and reliable means of transport for many disabled people. **Football stadiums that provide matchday or event parking should include accessible parking for local and visiting disabled spectators.** The use of designated accessible parking spaces should be supervised and enforced by stewards or other staff.

Because of the size and layout of football stadiums, it is recommended that designated parking spaces be located as close as possible to the entrances used by disabled spectators.

Accessible parking should be well-signposted along all entry points to the stadium, as well as along exit routes from the stadium. Stewards and volunteers should be able to direct disabled spectators





and guests to stadium entrances and back to accessible parking areas. Accessible parking areas should be well-lit for safety and ease of use.

Accessible parking spaces should be wide enough to accommodate wheelchair users transferring out of their vehicles into their wheelchairs.

Accessible parking spaces should be clearly marked, using the international symbol of accessibility, as shown in figure 2 and image 1.

This symbol should be painted on the ground and, ideally, displayed on elevated signs close to the parking spaces. Painted symbols and markings should be regularly checked to ensure that the minimum recommended light reflectance value (LRV) differential of 30 is maintained. If the contrast has decreased or paint has chipped due to weather or use, for example, the markings and symbols should be repainted.

Car park

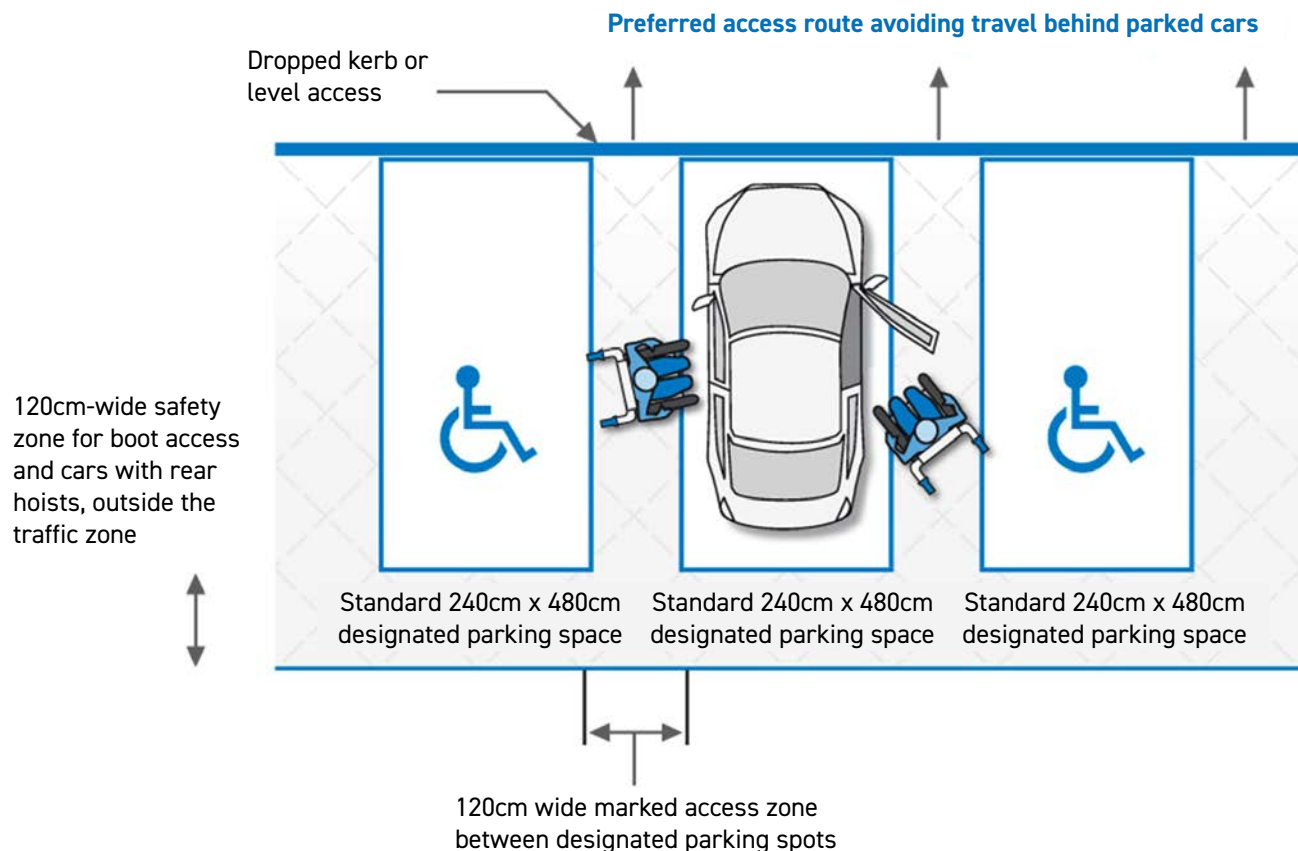


Figure 2 | Accessible parking spaces



Image 1 | Accessible parking spaces at Windsor Park in Belfast

It is considered reasonable to allocate a minimum of 6% of a stadium's overall car parking capacity to disabled people.⁶

Whenever possible this percentage should be increased, considering local demand and requirements of staff and visitors.

Consultation with local disabled supporter groups and disability organisations will help to take local considerations into account and achieve fair and reasonable provision.

When planning a new stadium or alterations and improvements to existing premises, particular attention should be paid to ensuring:

- level access routes for pedestrians and wheelchair users
- accessible drop-off and pick-up points
- accessible car parking
- adequate circulation for all within the stadium perimeter

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6 [Accessible Stadia Guide \(UK\)](#)



Shuttle services and accessibility measures

If on-site parking is limited or unavailable, an accessible shuttle service, with drop-off and pick-up points at stadium entrances, should be considered to assist disabled people attending matches and other events.

Depending on the local context, imaginative solutions can be found. For example, providing accessible golf buggies or carts to bring disabled people from long-stay car parks or public transport stops into the stadium perimeter. Such services would also be of benefit to other supporters, including elderly people.

The local traffic authorities may be able to help identify accessible parking bays in roads close to the

stadium for use on matchdays and when other events are being held.

Rest points

Where public transport hubs, parking or drop-off points are a considerable walk from the stadium entrance, the venue and, where required, local authorities should explore the possibility of installing rest points along the route.

Wheelchair loan services

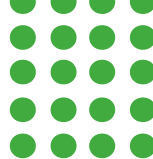
It is good practice to provide wheelchair loan services at events, aiming to support spectators and fans with limited mobility who did not come in their own wheelchair and need help reaching their seats after the security checks.

This service should be available at the accessible entry gates, and should be managed by accessibility volunteers when possible. If no

accessibility volunteers are active, the people managing these services need to have taken part in [adequate training for accessibility](#).



Image 2 | Accessible shuttle services at the Munich stadium during EURO 2024



Access routes

Wherever possible, to best accommodate wheelchair users and ambulant disabled people, access routes should be level or at least have the shallowest gradient possible.

Any route or part of a route with a gradient steeper than 1:20 (or 5%) should meet the recommendations for ramped access (see [Ramps](#)).

It is recommended that access routes used extensively by spectators walking in both directions on matchdays should be at least 180cm wide and have a clear height of at least 210cm. A width of 150cm may be acceptable if the route is less busy and passing places (sufficient space for two wheelchair users to pass one another on a ramp, pathway or walkway without touching) are

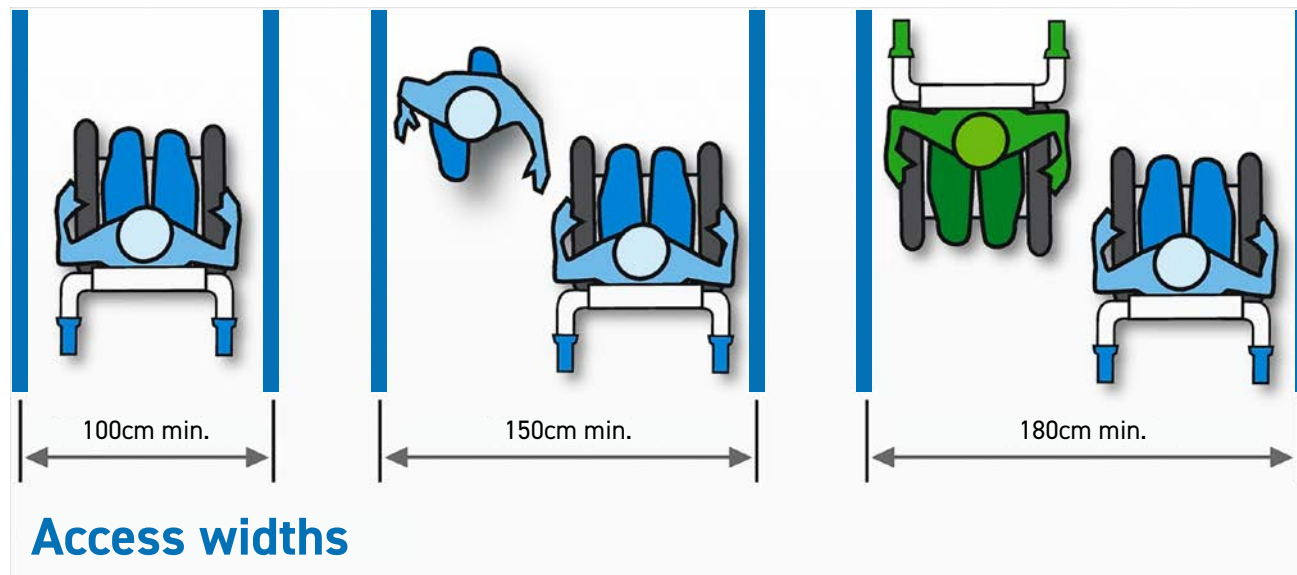


Figure 3 | Access widths for wheelchair users

provided for wheelchair users. Passing places should be at least 180cm long and 180cm wide (see figure 3 and local building regulations and access guidance for more details).

For the benefit of partially sighted and blind people, approved tactile paving⁷ should be provided at dropped kerbs, steps and road crossings along access routes, as well as at accessible drop-off and pick-up points. Tactile paving is a

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7 [Department for Transport - Guidance on the Use of Tactile Paving Surfaces](#)



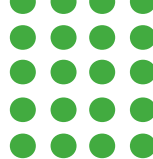
profiled paving surface that provides guidance and warnings to partially sighted and blind people.

In addition, access routes and circulation areas should be free of trip hazards such as protruding objects. Lighting, signs, rubbish bins, bollards and other fixed items located along access routes must be marked in highly contrasting colours. They should also be cane-detectable, as some partially sighted and blind people use a cane to feel their way and identify any such obstacles in their path. Objects that cannot be detected by a cane can also be hazardous to anyone whose attention is distracted.

Rest stops are extremely important for ambulant disabled people who use walking aids such as sticks, walkers, rolling walkers and crutches and for people with heart problems or breathing difficulties. **Wherever possible, fixed seating with back**

and arm rests should be provided at regular intervals (every 50m) along access routes to the stadium.

This will enable many spectators to attend matches and other events who might otherwise find it too difficult. **It is important to note that rest points should not obstruct the usual flow of matchday crowds, nor should they become a trip hazard.** Colour contrasting should be used so that they stand out against the surrounding area.



Signage and wayfinding

Good, frequent signage benefits everyone, especially spectators on matchdays. It is particularly important to disabled people.

A well-coordinated, consistent approach to signage should be adopted and followed throughout the premises, especially to indicate public service areas.

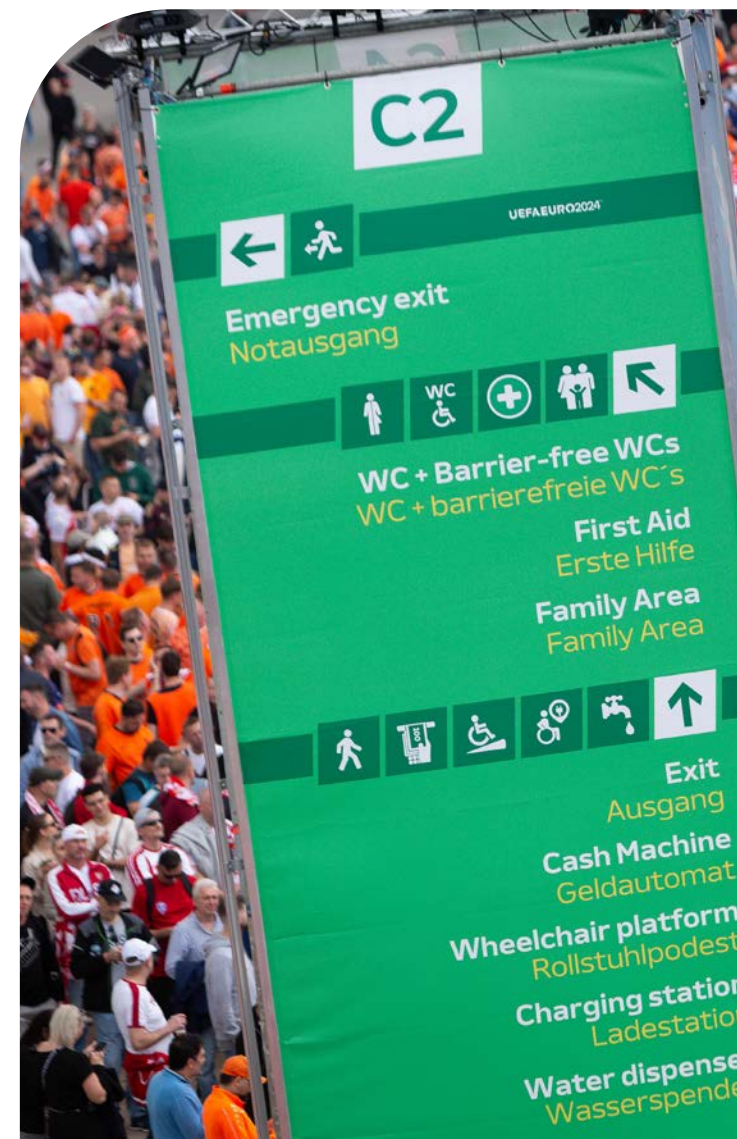
In this guide, 'good signage' means signage that is clear and legible, well positioned at a height that makes it visible in a crowd, illuminated and sufficiently colour contrasted.

Easily understood symbols, such as universal disability symbols, are preferred to words. **Ultimately, good signage is signage that is effective, since it plays an important role in conveying information to large numbers of people.** Signage should

be reviewed annually to ensure that it remains accurate and effective.

Good signage is particularly important for partially sighted and blind people, intellectually disabled people and hard of hearing and deaf people, some of whom may have difficulty asking for directions and finding their way. Good signage can help to minimise unnecessary walking for people with limited mobility. It also benefits first-time visitors to stadiums and visitors, who may not speak the local language.

Directional signage should be repeated at regular intervals along access routes to reassure people that they are moving in the right direction, while restricted access and 'no entry' signs should be clearly recognisable as such. Facilities such as car parking, information points, designated entrances (including to general seating, hospitality and VIP areas), accessible entrances, ticket





offices, club shops, refreshment kiosks, restaurants, cafes, museums, first aid, circulation routes, lifts, toilets and escape routes should also all be clearly signposted.

Signs should be clearly visible to people of all heights at all times, including wheelchair users on matchdays. **Signage that may be obvious in an empty stadium may disappear from view in a crowded access route, concourse or passageway.**

Signs should be mounted perpendicular to circulation flow. Signage should be large enough to be legible from a distance (consistent with any other directional signage in place), be non-reflective and have sufficient colour contrasting. The light reflectance value (LRV)⁸ differential between the sign and its surroundings or the surface on which it is mounted

should be at least 30. However, the LRV differential between the information (e.g. text and shapes) and its background should be at least 60. **Signs should be positioned logically (where they are expected) and be illuminated wherever possible.**

Signage should be easy to read and contain key information, such as distance indicators. Complex sentences and lists should be avoided. **Short, simple words that are clearly separated from one another are easy to read, and short, simple sentences are easy to understand and remember.**

Sentences or single word messages should begin with an upper-case letter and continue in lower case. Block capitals and italics should not be used, as they are harder to read. The same applies to abbreviations, words placed closely together and very long words. Text should be in

a sans-serif typeface and where possible be accompanied by a universally recognised symbol or pictogram. Commonly used typefaces include Helvetica, Arial, Futura and Avant Garde.

Where possible, information signs, whether permanent or provided only for a match or event, should be accompanied by signs with tactile text and Braille within easy reach of wheelchair users and people of short stature.

Stadium designers and managers should also consider using tactile or coloured wayfinding surfaces as an inexpensive, low-maintenance way of guiding people to and around the stadium. Indeed, colour coding can be helpful for some learning and intellectually disabled people, but must always be accompanied by other means of presenting information,



8 [Design of an accessible and inclusive built environment - External environment. Code of practice](#)



Image 3 | A tactile wayfinding surface indicating a change in level at Volksparkstadion Hamburg

e.g. a code or symbol, to ensure that it is accessible to colour-blind people. Many football clubs use their own club colours to decorate their stadium and this can be put to very good use to highlight pillars, doors, glass panels and light switches, making them more visible. **However, club colours should only be used if they meet minimum light reflectance value differential requirements.**

Many stadiums have an internal concourse where amenities such as refreshment kiosks and toilets are located. It is important that internal support columns and pillars do not obstruct free movement within these walkways. Bands of contrasting colour can be used around pillars to ensure that they stand out from their surroundings. In addition, door fittings should be colour contrasted to make them easily distinguishable from the door itself, while colour and tonal contrast should be used on stairs and steps to draw attention

to the edgings. Although yellow and white are frequently used, there is no rule on what colour to use for step edgings and side edges. Again, club colours could be a good solution, provided there is a clear contrast between the colour of the steps, the edgings and the surrounding areas, and minimum standards are met.

A tactile hazard-warning pattern (see image 3) should be provided at the top and bottom of all external staircases. This should also contrast in colour with the surrounding ground.

Floor coverings should have a matt finish, such as matt vinyl, which will not cause reflections from windows or light fittings. **Patterned flooring and sudden changes in floor design should be avoided. Floor finishes should also contrast with the walls so that the boundaries of the floor are clearly visible.** This can also be achieved by painting skirting boards in a clearly contrasting colour.



Tactile, coloured and tonal wayfinding information is especially helpful for partially sighted and blind people, as well as visiting spectators who may not speak the local language. It can provide

a creative and attractive means of communicating important information to everyone, provided it meets minimum colour contrast requirements.⁹

For more detailed information, please refer to local building regulations and guidance and the good practice publications listed at the end of this document.



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⁹ [WCAG - 1.4.3 Contrast \(Minimum\)](#)

Image 4 | Accessible entrance sign at Hampden Park in Glasgow



Image 5 | Clear universal disability signage at FC Porto's Estádio do Dragão

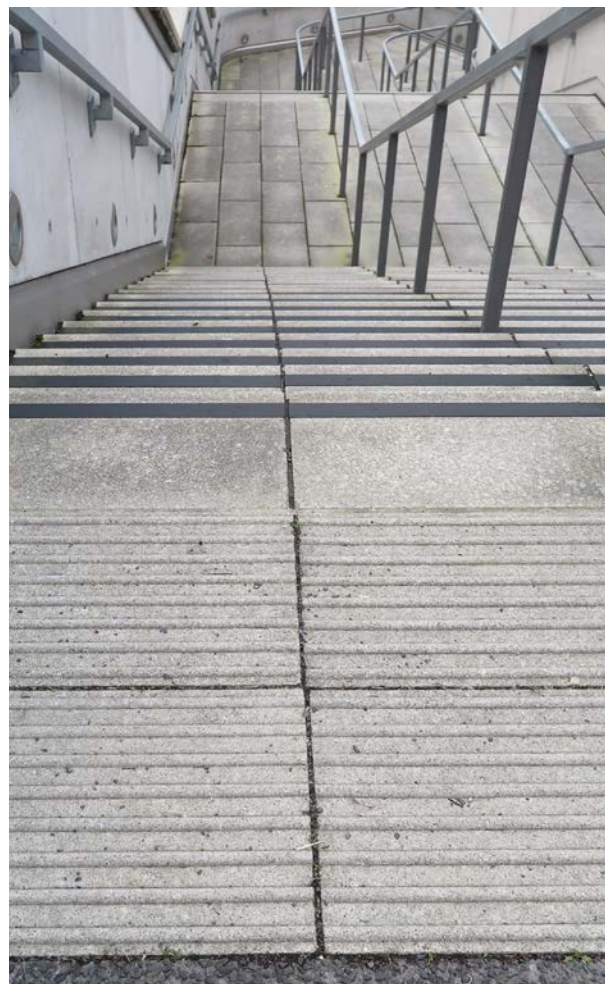


Image 6 | Tactile hazard warning patterns on steps at Dublin Arena

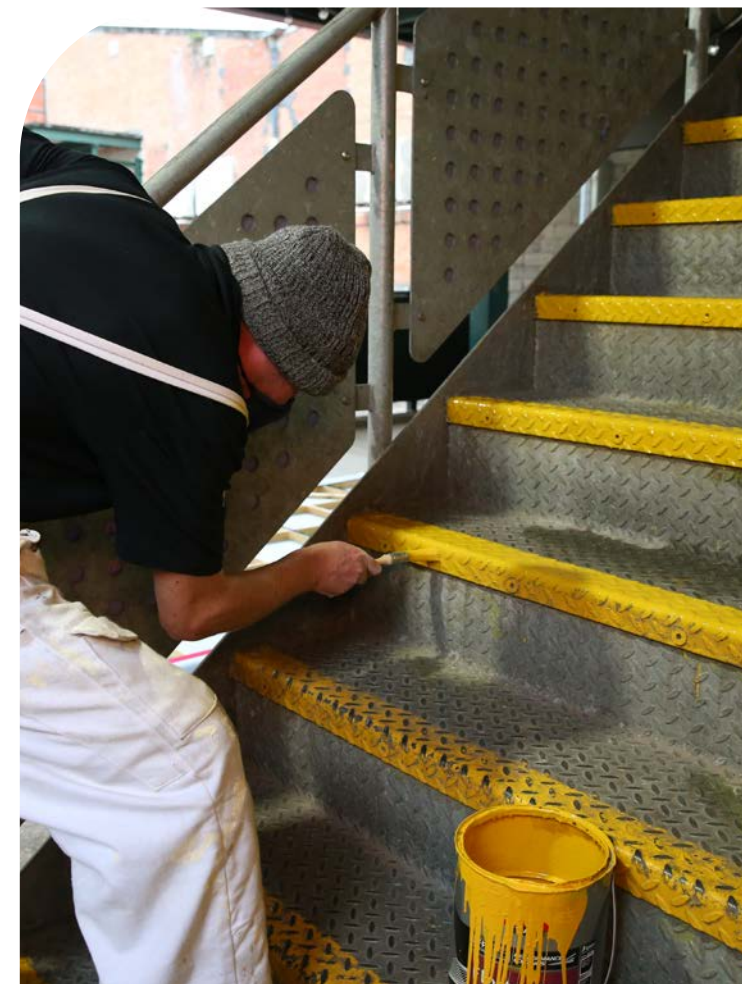


Image 7 | Touching up colour contrasting on steps ahead of the Women's EURO 2022 final



Staff, stewards and security

Matchday and event stewards and staff should be trained in disability etiquette and access awareness to ensure an inclusive welcome to all (see [Basic disability etiquette](#)).

The continuity achieved by using regular or permanent matchday staff in specific disabled spectator areas (such as wheelchair user or easy-access and amenity seating areas) is helpful. However, it is important to ensure that all staff and volunteers receive this training, as there may be disabled people throughout the stadium on matchdays and non-matchdays.

All staff should be sensitive to the specific access requirements of disabled people. **These requirements may be physical or sensory, or linked to communications, policies and**

operations and may not always be obvious. For example, a spectator may have a speech impediment or an unsteady gait, making them appear or sound intoxicated when they are not. Likewise, an autistic person may have a routine that is especially important to their well-being and staff should be alert and sensitive to this eventuality. Many disabilities are not visible and it is important not to jump to conclusions. Not all disabled people use wheelchairs (see [Accessibility concepts and categories](#) and [Training for accessibility](#) for more information).

An increasing number of football stadiums are adopting a proactive approach to providing an inclusive experience. For example, some clubs provide several matchday and event staff or volunteers who are trained in sign language so that they can more easily communicate with hard of hearing and deaf people. **Local disability organisations will be able to advise on such services and**

may be able to assist with extra staff training or the recruitment of trained volunteers.

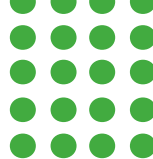
It is important that information provided to matchday staff and volunteers takes into account that they themselves may be colour blind. For example, emergency exit routes shown on stadium plans must not be marked by colour alone. Likewise, stewards and volunteers should be trained not to give directional information using colour alone, for example directing someone to the 'red' zone should be complemented by other indicators.

Disabled people entering the stadium should be subjected to the same security checks as non-disabled fans. It is important that security checks are carried out in a considerate and sensitive manner, and allow the disabled fan to discuss their requirements. If required, a more private space to carry out the necessary checks should be provided.



Security personnel should be mindful that some disabled fans may require the use of face masks or other personal protective equipment. **They should not be asked to remove these articles for any longer than necessary.**

Some disabled fans may also need to bring medication or medical equipment to the stadium. Ideally, they should declare this before arrival and, if possible, present a prescription upon entry to the stadium. In all cases, such situations and articles should be handled carefully and with discretion. Bags should be repackaged as they were presented. **It may be most appropriate to ask the fans themselves, if possible, to remove their own medication to allow for bag searches.**



Assistance dogs

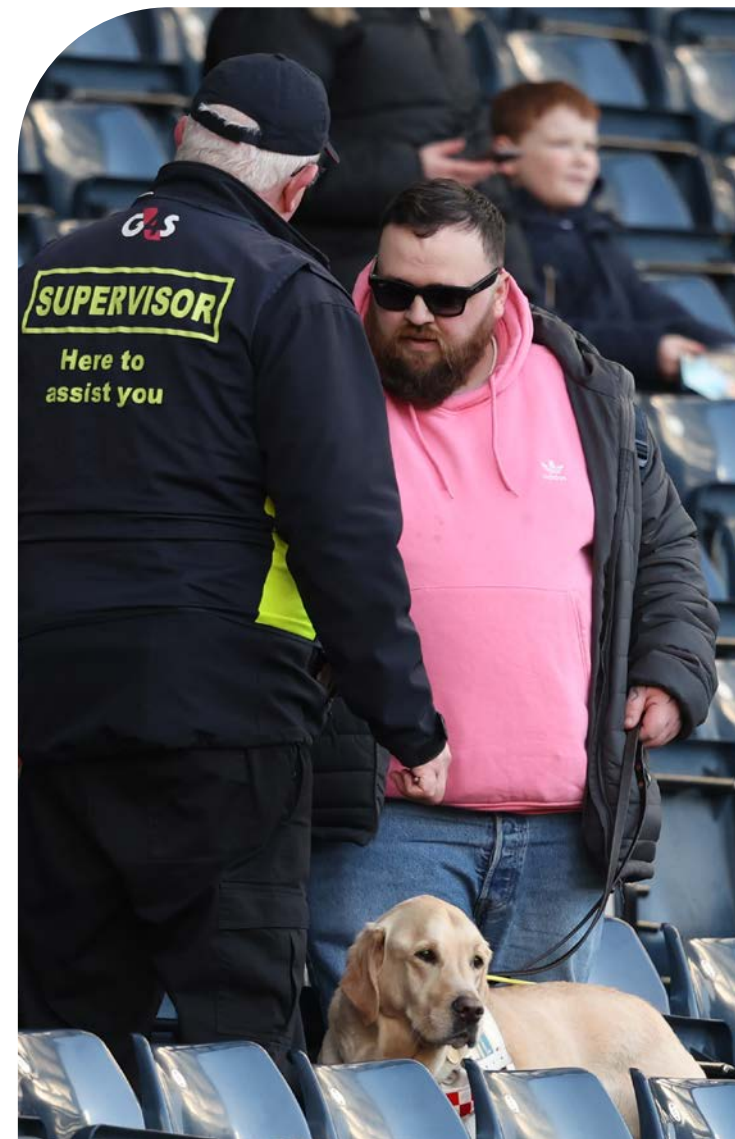
Some disabled people will need to bring a specially trained assistance dog to matches and other events. **While traditionally associated with partially sighted and blind people, assistance dogs are increasingly being used by other disabled people, including people with limited mobility, wheelchair users, and learning and intellectually disabled people.** Hearing dogs may be used to alert deaf people to important sounds or medical alert dogs to warn their owners of impending seizures.

A disabled person who uses an assistance dog may still require a companion or personal assistant to enable them to attend a match or to assist with essential care. For example, a dog would not be expected to carry refreshments but might be vital in guiding a disabled

person around the stadium or providing critical health warnings.

Assistance dogs are not pets. They are working animals and are relied on by their owners for independence and mobility. They receive intensive, specific training from professional staff before qualifying as assistance dogs and all owners, in turn, receive advice and training to enable them to maintain the high standards of working and social obedience expected of their dog.

Assistance dogs are specially trained to support their disabled owner in their everyday life and as such are used to attending live events in crowded venues such as stadiums on matchdays. **In most European countries, it is illegal to ban an assistance dog used by a disabled person.** They do not disrupt stadium operations and are specially trained not to bother other people or climb on seats. Staff and other spectators





should be encouraged not to distract a working assistance dog and to check with the owner before any contact is made.

Stadiums should welcome assistance dogs and provide areas where they can access water and relieve themselves (often referred to as dog spending or relieving stations, see image 8). It is also important to provide appropriate facilities in these areas for their disabled owners, including good signage and seating. **If the facilities are located outside the stadium, support from staff may be required to guide or direct owners to the area.**

Dog relieving stations should be secure, accessible and clean. Ideally, they should have a minimum enclosed space of 3m x 4m and a boundary fence or wall at least 1.2m high. A mix of soft (grass or similar) and hard surfaces, along with a slight gradient to assist drainage, is advised. A fresh

water supply and hose should be provided, as well as a bin for dog waste. **In line with best practice, the relieving station should have an entrance at least 2m wide to be accessible to wheelchair users and a floor space of at least 1.5m² to allow them to turn.**

A spectator who is accompanied by an assistance dog should have a choice of seating areas (with extra room for the dog) and facilities should be designed to take into account their needs. **The best place for an assistance dog is with its owner, who has both the skill and the relationship with their dog to ensure a high level of control.** The front row of a block or tier of seats usually provides more space and comfort for assistance dogs, but it should be noted that such dogs are extremely adaptable and use even limited space to their best advantage.

Assistance dog owners who wish to attend football matches should be advised to notify the stadium in advance, to allow staff to identify the most suitable seating options for them. They should also be encouraged to consider their matchday arrival and departure times to avoid the crowds and congestion often seen at peak times.



Image 8 | Dog relieving area at Wembley Stadium in London

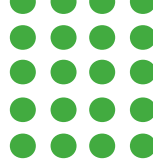


UEFA ACCESSIBILITY GUIDELINES

Moving around the stadium

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#FOOTBALL



Entrances and exits

In most public buildings, the most accessible entrance is usually and rightfully the main entrance. However, in football stadiums, where crowd control and safety are essential, designated entrances for disabled people are often required.

The most practical design solution or adaptation to an existing stadium is an accessible gate with an attending steward providing appropriate and level access.

Stadium entrances with turnstiles or access control vestibules (an entrance method consisting of a waiting space between two interlocking doors) are not always suitable for disabled people, including wheelchair users, partially sighted and blind people, people with assistance dogs, people using

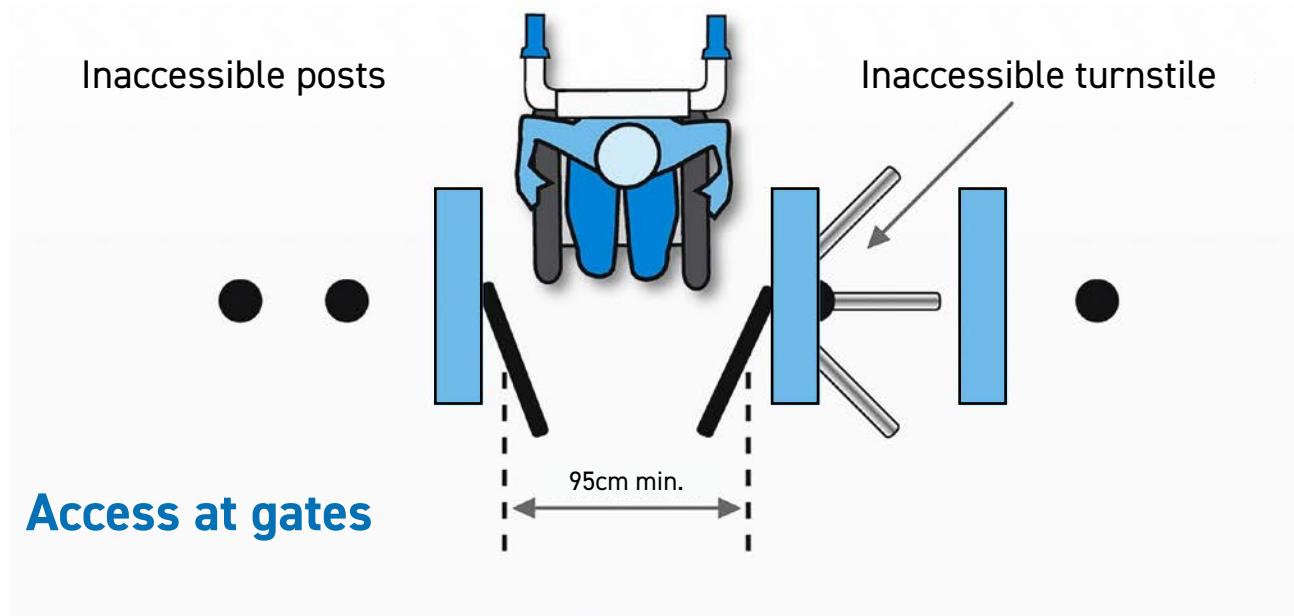


Figure 4 | An accessible entrance

mobility aids and neurodivergent people. **Turnstiles with rotating arms are typically not wheelchair accessible, so where possible an accessible gate or opening should**

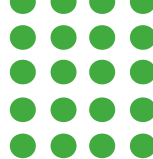
also be provided in their immediate proximity (see figure 4). This applies to all entrances to the stadium, including to VIP and hospitality areas.



Colour-coded turnstile entry information, such as a green light to allow access and a red light to prevent access, can cause particular issues for colour-blind people. This may result in bottlenecks at busy times if stewards are not on hand to advise on which colour light is shown.

Staff entrances should also be accessible and suitable for any disabled people working at the stadium. Appropriate identifiable signage, using the internationally recognised symbol of accessibility, should be in place at all accessible entrances and exits. The signage should be installed at an appropriate height to ensure that it is visible from a distance and in crowded environments.





Designated entrances

All designated accessible entrances and lobbies within the stadium should allow independent and safe entry for disabled people.

They should include access to resting areas, shade and shelter from the elements if there could be a wait, and a clear pathway without threshold steps or changes in level.

Entrance thresholds should be flush to the ground (level with the surrounding floor) or ramped to avoid any trip hazards. Entry mats should be recessed or flush with the flooring or ground to limit the risk of tripping, especially by those with limited mobility, who may use a walking aid or have an unsteady gait. It is advisable to avoid natural materials such as coir matting as this can cause additional friction and trip

hazards, especially for wheelchair users and ambulant disabled people. In addition, entrance mats should not contrast in tone with surrounding surfaces as this can create the illusion of a change in level.

External doorways should have a minimum effective clear width of 100cm for wheelchair users. Where double entrance doors are used, at least one leaf should have a clear opening of at least 87.5cm. There should be sufficient additional space at entrances and lobbies to allow a disabled person and their companion to move side by side and to allow someone to pass in the opposite direction to a wheelchair user or spectator with an assistance dog (see [figure 3](#)). **Disabled people are often not able to move quickly to avoid a collision and therefore need to be able to see someone approaching from the other side of a doorway and be seen themselves.** Doorways should therefore incorporate vision panels.





Glass or fully glazed doors and screens can, however, pose a hazard to partially sighted people. They should be clearly marked with permanent manifestations (features that make them apparent), such as brightly coloured signage or the club logo, provided contrasting requirements are met. These manifestations should appear at two heights (85–100cm and 140–160cm above floor level) and be visible in both artificial and natural light. Likewise, all doors should be easily visible and should contrast with the surrounding walls and door fittings.

Some disabled people have difficulty opening doors and operating door handles. It should be possible to open a door with one hand and to operate all door handles and locks with a closed fist.

Wherever possible, door handles and locks should be L or D-shaped or have a lever action. Knobs of a circular or spherical design are

especially difficult for people with limited dexterity, arthritis or a weak grip.

Door handles should be positioned to suit people of all heights, including wheelchair users and people of short stature. Grab or pull handles should be installed on all entrances designated especially for disabled people. Full-length horizontal handles should be fitted to enable the pulling open of entrance doorways. However, full-length handles should be avoided on the push side of doors.

Doors should be easy to operate with appropriate door closers. Heavy doors should be avoided and the maximum recommended opening force for manually operated doors is 22.5–30 N. **Automated door closers that use sensors to open and close the door should be installed wherever possible.** Where door opening control systems, such as intercoms, push button pads,

keypads, card or fob readers, are used, they should strongly contrast against the background and the control buttons should be located between 75cm and 100cm above ground level. Where a revolving door has been installed in an existing stadium, there should also be an automated sliding door or an automated swing door with a minimum swing of 90° and a minimum pathway clearance of 1.5m to enable a wheelchair user to enter with ease.

Designers should avoid revolving, manual sliding and bi-folding doors in all new stadiums and instead should adopt more accessible and inclusive solutions.



Circulation areas

Concourses should be designed for the smooth, unimpeded passage of spectators into, around and out of the stadium. **Careful design can ensure that circulation is not impeded in a crowded stadium on matchdays.**

Providing inclusive access for disabled spectators to all levels of a new, reconstructed or extended stadium or stand has considerable implications for the design of circulation routes. Stadium designers and managers should consider disabled people in particular when planning horizontal and vertical circulation routes and passageways in the upper levels of stands, as these must be carefully designed and managed to enable safe entry and exit for both non-disabled and disabled spectators.

It is important that circulation routes minimise the distance disabled spectators must travel from the stadium entrance to their seats, and from their seats to refuge areas, evacuation lifts and amenities such as toilets and refreshments.

Large matchday crowds can restrict and limit the visibility of people of short stature, wheelchair users and children.

Likewise, a wheelchair user attempting to turn around or reverse in a confined, crowded space can cause great disruption. A minimum width of 180cm is required for two wheelchair users to pass each other, assuming they can see each other approaching, and for a wheelchair user to turn 180°. A partially sighted or blind person who uses a long cane to feel their way requires a minimum width of 120cm to operate the cane. A person using crutches also requires a minimum width of 120cm in circulation areas and a width of 150cm to easily pass a wheelchair user.



Corridors and concourses should be unobstructed and objects such as fire extinguishers and radiators should not be allowed to project into the clear corridor space.

This will ensure that they do not present an access hazard to wheelchair users, ambulant disabled people or partially sighted and blind people.

The requirements for internal doors are generally similar to those for entrance doors and lobbies. With the exception of accessible toilet doors, they should not open out into corridors or concourses. All internal doors, except for accessible toilet and clinical room doors, should have vision panels to the same specification as entrance doors.

Slip-resistant floor finishes or materials should be used for stadium circulation routes, especially in areas where the ground could be wet.

Glossy and highly polished materials should be avoided, as they

can appear slippery even if they are not and can cause reflective glare that may confuse partially sighted people.

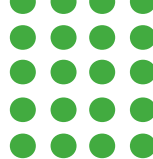
Cabling and broadcast equipment should not cross pedestrian pathways or access routes. If unavoidable, it must be suitably covered to preserve access and allow wheelchair users and others to cross safely and easily.

As a general rule, disabled spectators should be accommodated without prejudicing their safety or the safety of others. However, safety measures should not place undue restrictions on disabled spectators. For more information, please refer to local building regulations and guidance, as well as the good practice publications listed at the end of this document.

It is important that all spectators are able to access facilities and services within a stadium. Changes

in level, for example requiring a disabled person to move to a higher floor in the stadium to access a toilet, can cause access problems for many, particularly those with limited mobility, people with heart problems and breathing difficulties, partially sighted and blind people and wheelchair users.

It is very possible to find creative, low-cost solutions, even for existing stadiums, to improve accessibility and inclusivity and ensure that disabled spectators have a choice of seating like everyone else. A number of smart solutions have already been adopted at various stadiums across Europe.



Vertical circulation

Standard lifts

A conventional passenger lift is the most suitable means of vertical circulation, enabling disabled spectators to reach facilities quickly and in comfort. Ideally, passenger lifts should be fire-safe lifts that can be used to assist the safe evacuation of disabled people in emergencies (see [Leaving the stadium](#)). **Where possible, lifts should be located close to other means of vertical circulation such as stairs and ramps.**

The number of lifts provided and their sizes should be calculated based on the number of disabled and non-disabled spectators expected to use them on matchdays to prevent undue delays entering or exiting the stadium and its facilities. **Where lifts**

are available, it is advisable to install more than one to ensure continued accessible vertical circulation in the event of a maintenance issue and to reduce entry and exit times.

The landing area in front of any lift and the internal cabin area should be well lit and designed to avoid glare to assist partially sighted people. Doors should be visually distinct from their surroundings.

Clear signage should be used to indicate the floor number in each lift lobby area and on the wall opposite the lift doors. Signs indicating the location of a lift that is about to arrive should be visible from a wide angle to give due warning to people waiting anywhere in the lift lobby.

The lift call button on each landing should be positioned at a preferred height of 90–110cm above the floor and at least 50cm from any return wall so that they are within easy reach of wheelchair users. All lift entrances and controls should be





kept clear, meaning furniture and other obstacles should not be placed in the way.

Wheelchair users require sufficient time and space to move into a lift, so lift doors should remain open for a minimum of five seconds. There should be a clear space of at least 150cm x 150cm in front of the lift entrance to enable wheelchair users to conveniently enter and manoeuvre. The recommended minimum internal lift size is 110cm wide x 140cm deep, which would accommodate one wheelchair user and a companion, but would not provide sufficient space for a wheelchair user to turn easily. **An internal lift size of 200cm x 140cm, meanwhile, would enable one wheelchair user to travel with several other passengers and provide sufficient space for a wheelchair user and people with walking aids to turn 180°.** The entrance to the lift should provide a clear opening width of at least 80–120cm.

Where a lift has only one entrance or is of the minimum internal size, a mirror should be installed inside, on the wall opposite the lift door, to enable wheelchair users to reverse out more safely. This would also enable a wheelchair user to see if anyone is behind them and to see the floor number. The mirror should not extend below 90cm from the lift floor to avoid confusing partially sighted and blind people orientating themselves to the position of the floor and walls within the lift. See [Signage and wayfinding](#) for more information about providing a clear contrast between the colour of floors and walls.

The control panel within the lift should be at a height of 90–100cm above the floor and at least 50cm from any return wall. Duplicate controls should be provided on opposite sides of the cabin large lifts or lifts with more than one entrance and exit.

Lift call buttons should have symbols, tactile or relief (embossed) characters and Braille to enable tactile reading. Call buttons should also contrast visually with the surrounding face plate and the face plate should contrast with the wall on which it is mounted. To provide additional assistance to partially sighted and blind people, there should be audible



Image 9 | Accessible lift at the National Stadium of Wales

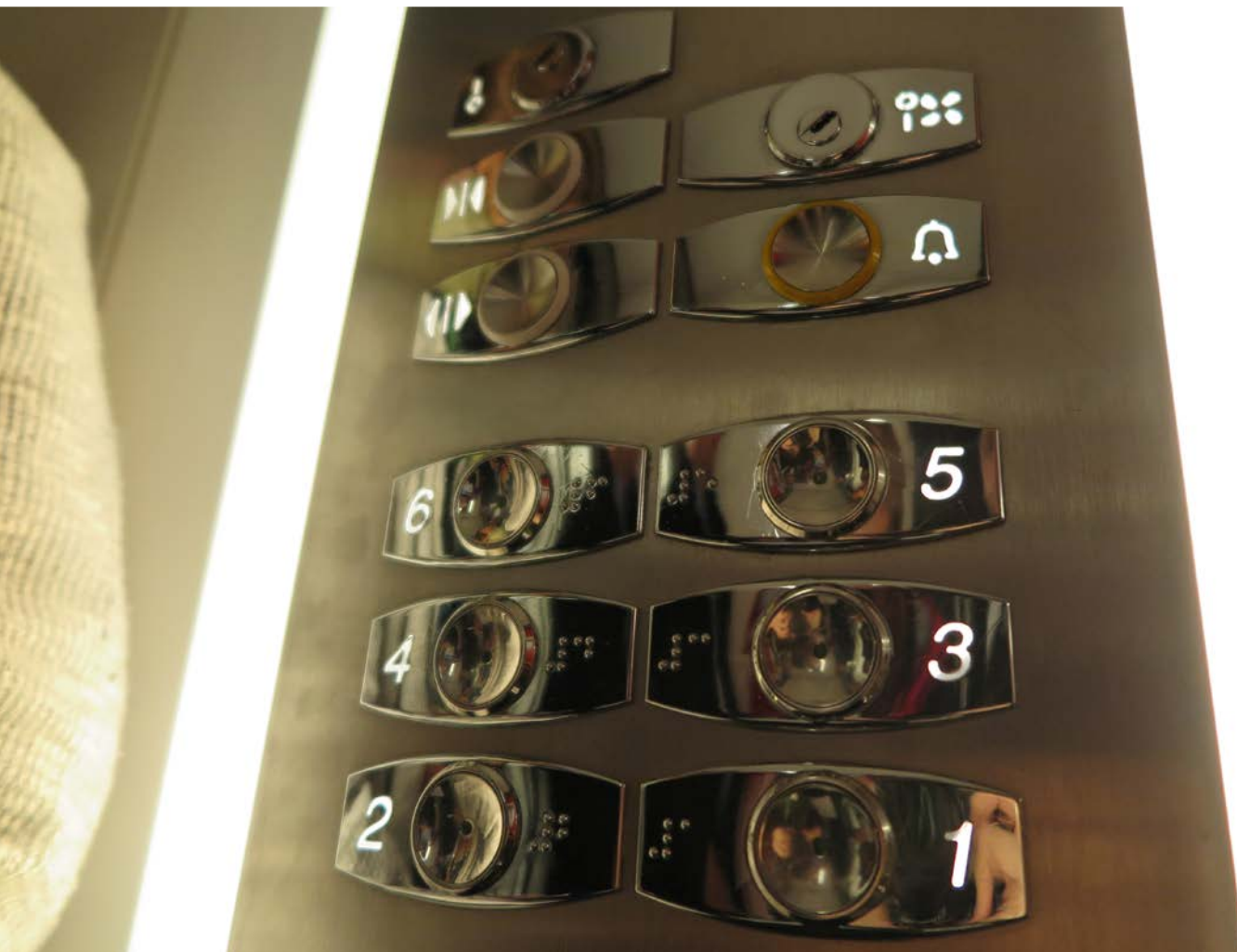


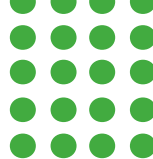
Image 10 | A lift control panel with tactile and Braille symbols at the National Stadium of Wales

announcements of lift arrival, floor level, door opening/closing and the direction of travel.

To assist deaf and hard of hearing people who use a hearing aid with a T-switch, an induction loop should be installed (see [Induction \(hearing\) loop systems](#)). **To assist deaf, hard of hearing and intellectually disabled people, lifts should also have a visual indicator inside the cabin showing the floor levels.**

Lifts should also be fitted with an emergency two-way communication system in case the lift breaks down during use.

The actual cabin size, position and height of controls, door clearance width and clear waiting area outside must all comply with local building regulations and legislation. **It is also important to note that the design of a passenger lift may determine whether or not it can be used in the event of an emergency evacuation.**



Vertical platform lifts and stairlifts

A conventional passenger lift should be provided as a means of access for all users to all levels in a new stadium, including below ground. However, it is understood that in some existing stadiums it may not always be possible to install a conventional lift that would be suitable for use by wheelchair users and anyone else with limited mobility. **In such cases, vertical platform lifts should be provided to ensure access to all key areas of the stadium, including wheelchair-user viewing areas, accessible toilets, refreshment areas, hospitality and VIP areas, executive or directors' boxes and media tribunes.** It should be noted that vertical platform lifts also have size and weight limitations and may not be suitable for some powerchair or mobility scooter users, for example.

There are two types of vertical platform lift: non-enclosed platform lifts that are used mainly to transfer wheelchair users and ambulant disabled people on a guarded platform from one level to another, and enclosed platform lifts (see image 11) that can serve a number of levels or floors. Wheelchair stairlifts may also be considered in some areas where a vertical lift cannot be installed, enabling wheelchair users to travel up and down stairs in their wheelchairs and potentially offering a good solution in less busy areas such as VIP lounges and media zones. However, wheelchair stairlifts should only be considered if no other options are possible, and weight and size limitations should be noted. **Platform lifts and wheelchair stairlifts should not impede general circulation.**

Vertical platform lifts should be provided with easily accessible, clear instructions for use and an emergency alarm in case users get



Image 11 | An enclosed platform lift at MetLife Stadium in New Jersey



into difficulty. **All users, including wheelchair users, should be able to reach and operate the controls and alarm.** Identifiable signage using the internationally recognised accessibility symbol, should be placed outside vertical platform lifts at a height visible in crowded environments.

Platform lifts are designed to travel slowly, so it is important to ensure that disabled spectators are not unduly delayed in reaching their allocated seats and services, or when exiting the stadium post-match.

These lifts may be operated remotely by a lift operator using a remote handheld control panel or independently by the disabled person using a continuous pressure control or push button. It should be noted that continuous pressure control can be more difficult to use than a single push button. Both operating mechanisms should be provided to accommodate differently disabled

people. A platform lift that is fitted with a fold-down seat for ambulant disabled people is also recommended.

Platform lifts may be designed for external or internal use and guidance should be sought from the manufacturer as to whether the lift is suitable for the location intended.

As mentioned, these lifts are designed to travel slowly, so where possible, external platform lifts and stairlifts should be covered.

Enclosed platform lifts

An enclosed platform lift for use by an accompanied wheelchair user should be at least 110cm wide x 140cm deep, as this would allow for a wheelchair user and their companion to enter the lift and would also provide sufficient space to turn the wheelchair 180°. However, where possible, a platform lift should not require the wheelchair user to turn to exit. An enclosed platform

lift measuring 90cm wide x 140cm deep may be permitted for use in existing buildings in exceptional circumstances. However, these dimensions would not allow for a companion to enter the lift alongside the wheelchair user.

The platform doors should be at least 80cm wide for a 90cm-wide lift, and at least 90cm for a lift that is 110cm wide or more and where door openings are at 90° relative to each other.

Doors should also contrast visually with the floor and walls, with any glass surfaces clearly identifiable to partially sighted users (see [Accessing the stadium](#) for more information).

Non-enclosed platform lifts

Non-enclosed platform lifts may be used to transfer people between levels up to 2m apart. Additional platform protection should be installed if a greater distance is to



Image 12 | An external, non-enclosed stairlift at Arena AufSchalke

be travelled. The minimum clear dimensions of a non-enclosed platform lift should be large enough to allow ease of access and movement (see dimensions under enclosed platform lifts). At the same time, the minimum clear stairway width for emergency escape should be maintained at all times.

Stairlifts

Stairlifts should not be installed in new stadiums or where it is possible to install a conventional passenger lift or platform lift. However, they can be a solution in some existing stadiums. It is important to note that not all disabled people can use a stairlift.

Stairlifts should be fitted with an alarm and be located within view of a member of staff in case users get into difficulty. The controls should be designed to prevent unauthorised use. **Where there is only a single stairway available to an area, the minimum**

clear stairway width for emergency escape should be maintained between the carriage rail of the stairlift and the handrail opposite.

If there are two or more stairways available, the stairlift should be installed on the stairway not intended as the main means of escape in the event of an emergency.

When in a parked position, a stairlift should not reduce the required minimum clear width of a stairway or escape route or cause a potential hazard for blind and partially sighted people using the stairway or the adjoining landings.

It is important to consult local building control, safety and fire authorities whenever installing a stairlift or platform lift to ensure that it will not conflict with or compromise evacuation or escape routes and regulations (see [Emergency systems and response](#)).



Image 12 | Example of a stairlift at San Marino Stadium

All lifts installed in stadiums, regardless of type, should be serviced and tested regularly. It is strongly recommended that checks are carried out 48 hours and 24 hours before matches, as well as on matchday mornings.

Measures should be in place for all lifts in the event of breakdown. For example, most platform lifts and stairlifts have a manual override mechanism. **Staff working in the areas where lifts are located should be appropriately trained to operate these mechanisms.**

Ramps and stairways

Wherever possible, an inclusive design approach avoiding small changes in level should be taken when building or renovating stadiums or stands. If this is not possible, it may be necessary to install stairs and alternative means of access, such as ramps.



For a route or concourse to be considered accessible, the gradient or slope should be no more than 1:20 or 5%. Where the change in level within a circulation route is greater than 30cm, steps should be provided in addition to a ramp. A cross-fall gradient on an internal ramp should be avoided. Where unavoidable, it should not exceed 1:50 or 2%.

Where there are substantial changes in level, ramps may not be the best solution as they generally occupy large amounts of space due to the low gradient and frequent landings required to make them suitable for wheelchair users. **Ramps should always be the last resort, but existing stadium characteristics or poor design may make them unavoidable.**

Stairways

While stairs are not usually considered part of an accessible route, inclusive design enables

people of short stature, elderly people, children and others to use them safely and efficiently, thus contributing to an accessible stadium.

A large number of people, including partially sighted and blind people, those of short stature and those with limited mobility, are generally unable to manage incorrectly designed steps or stairs. Even where alternatives such as ramps or lifts are available it is important that all stairways are well designed.

Stairways should incorporate features such as high-visibility colour and tactile paving close to edges, enabling partially sighted and blind people to use them independently and safely. In addition, stairway design should take into account the needs of ambulant disabled people. **Ramps can be a good solution for wheelchair users, but others may have difficulty using them, for example if they cannot easily flex**

their knees or ankles. Therefore, even where ramps are provided, steps are also necessary to ensure suitable and inclusive access.

Steps on a staircase should be of uniform height and depth (see figure 5). Each step should be 15–18cm high and 30–45cm deep, measured from step to step. This offers plenty of space for an ambulant disabled person to rest and for a partially sighted or blind person to place a foot.

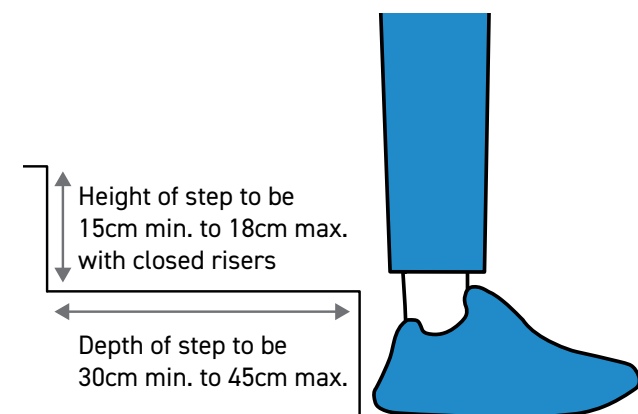


Figure 5 | Illustration of steps and accessibility standards



Image 14 | A stairway with uniform steps, handrails and contrasting step edges at Fisht Olympic Stadium, Sochi

Closed risers are essential, as open risers can act as trip hazards and may ensnare canes used by partially sighted or blind people, or mobility aids used by people with limited mobility.

Each step nosing should incorporate a durable and permanently contrasting material that runs along the width of the stair in high contrast to both the tread and the riser to help colour-blind, partially sighted and blind people to appreciate the extent of the stairs and identify individual treads. The nosing should not cover the whole step, but should be between 5cm and 6.5cm wide on the step tread and between 3cm and 5.5cm wide on the riser. Step nosings should be maintained regularly and repainted frequently throughout a season. The light reflectance value differential between the nosing and the tread and riser should be a minimum of 60.

Stairways should have between 2 and 20 risers on each flight. **Stairways with 20 risers or more should include a level landing at the mid-point to allow for a rest stop, particularly for those climbing up the stairs.** There should also be a level, unobstructed landing at the top and bottom of stairways. The length of a landing should not be less than the surface width of the flight.

There should be a uniform detectable warning that indicates having reached the top or bottom of each set or flight of external staircases. Warnings should only be installed on external staircases and not within the stadium bowl. They should extend 40cm beyond each end of the full width of the stairway and where possible, start 40cm from the first/last nosing. Please note, staircases within the stadium bowl would not require such warnings as no universally recognised solution for internal staircases currently exists.



The warning should have a depth of 40–80cm and be tactile so that it is easily detectable by a cane or underfoot. The warning indicators should contrast in colour against the surrounding flooring. The minimal light reflectance value of the tactile surface should be 60, with a differential of 50.

Where there are two or more steps, a single handrail should be provided on both sides.

The top of the handrail should be 90–100cm from the pitch line of the stair and 90–110cm from a landing. Handrails should always continue across landings to provide an aid to balance for ambulant disabled people and to enable partially sighted and blind people to safely navigate up or down the stairs.

Handrails should have either a circular profile with a diameter of 32–50mm or an oval profile 50mm wide and 39mm deep. Non-circular handrails with a broad horizontal face are also acceptable and provide greater forearm support. They should

extend 30cm beyond the top and bottom of ramps and steps and return to the wall or ground at both ends to avoid clothing getting caught. There should be a 5–7.5cm clearance between the wall and any handrail. **Handrails should also be in a colour that contrasts with the background to assist partially sighted and colour-blind people.**

Ramps

Ramps can be permanent, semi-permanent or portable devices used to provide access to wheelchair users.

However, portable ramps should not be part of the design of new stadiums or other newly constructed club buildings. They should only be used in existing builds as a solution where there is no other option.

Portable ramps should be located where they will not be a trip hazard for other spectators. All ramps should have a firm, non-slip surface. Good lighting of all areas is essential.

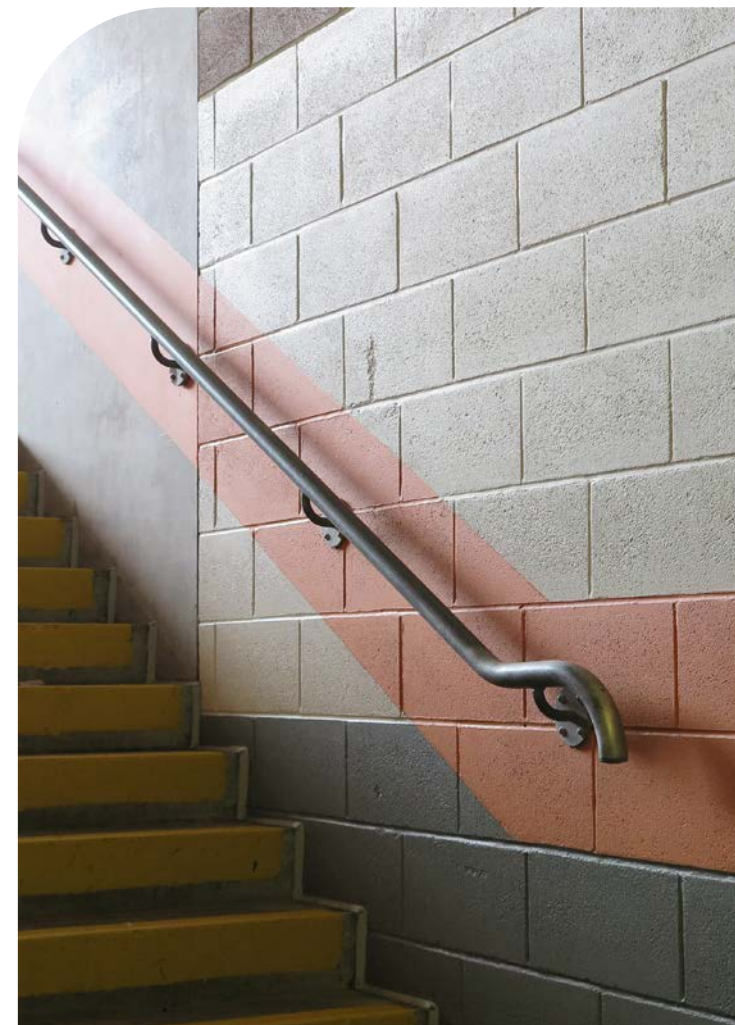
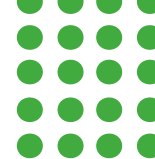


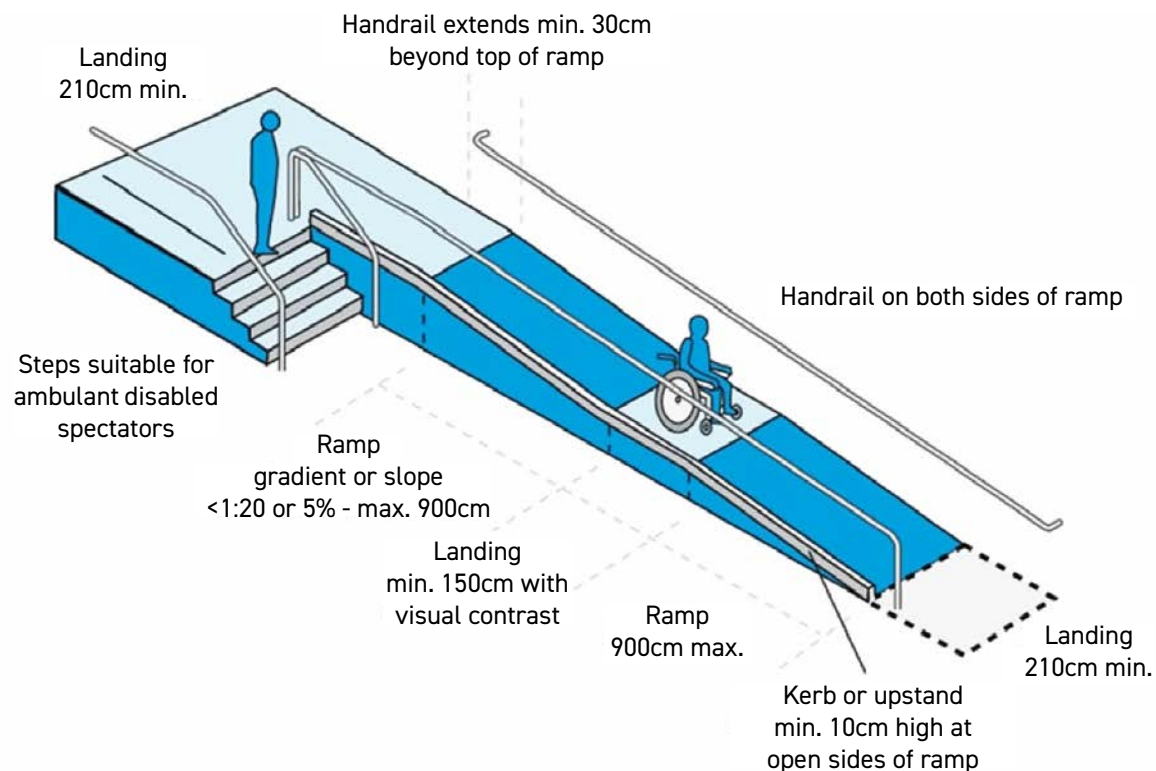
Image 15 | Example of a handrail with colour contrast



The gradient or slope of any ramp should be no steeper than 1:20 or 5%. **Where a ramp with a gradient of 1:20 exceeds 9m in length, there should be level landings on which wheelchair users can rest along the way.** Level landings or resting places should be a minimum of 150cm x 150cm and should contrast visually with the ramp to aid partially sighted users.

Ideally, a ramp should be 180cm wide to allow two wheelchairs to pass each other. However, on a shorter ramp (less than 10m long), a clear width of 150cm is acceptable, allowing an ambulant spectator to pass a wheelchair user. **There should be a level and unobstructed area at the top and bottom of the ramp that is 150cm clear of any door swing.**

This will ensure that wheelchair users are not required to attempt to open a door while on an incline.



Ramp should be min. 180cm wide (150cm if ramp <math><10\text{m}</math> long)

Figure 6 | A ramp with minimum widths, gradients and levels



Ramps should also include an upstand of at least 10cm on any open side to prevent wheelchair wheels from slipping off the side. The upstand should sufficiently contrast in colour against the ramp surface. Ramps with a gradient of less than 1:20 do not require handrails, but where handrails are required, they must comply with local building regulations. **Wheelchair users do not normally need to use handrails to negotiate a ramp. However, in slippery conditions on long and/or steep ramps, handrails can help manual wheelchair users to steady themselves.**

Tactile warning indicators should not be installed at the top and bottom of ramps as they can cause confusion to blind and partially sighted spectators, who may mistake the ramp for stairs.

Where ramps are installed, adjacent stairs should also be provided for people who have difficulty walking up or down ramps.

Augmented reality for enhanced experiences

Augmented reality (AR) is revolutionising the way disabled fans interact with the stadium environment, providing essential navigational aids and significantly enriching the live sports experience. **With AR technology, fans can easily locate accessible toilets, food and drink stands and their allocated seating, all through their mobile devices.** This technology not only enhances the matchday experience with live statistics and instant replays, but also improves inclusivity by enabling disabled fans to navigate stadiums independently. AR has the potential to revolutionise stadium experiences and demonstrates the importance of harnessing cutting-edge technology to cater to the diverse requirements of all fans.





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#FOOTBALL



Inclusive seating plans

It is considered good practice and a basic principle of inclusive design for disabled people to have access to all levels of a new non-domestic building. In a football stadium, this means that disabled spectators should be given a choice of inclusive viewing areas in all ticket categories and should have access to facilities throughout the stadium. Where full access is limited, for example by physical barriers that block the path of wheelchair users, a choice of alternative areas should be provided throughout the stadium, and not just pitchside.

The option to choose where you watch the match from and who with is critically important. Disabled spectators should not be limited to watching from exclusive disabled seating areas, but should instead

be given the opportunity to sit with supporters of their own team.

Not all disabled spectators require amenity seating or wheelchair-user viewing areas. It is therefore important to ensure that an appropriate amount of standard easy-access seating is available throughout the stadium, taking into account the number of disabled people overall and the increasing demand for accessible and inclusive facilities. This should include additional accessible seating within hospitality and VIP seating areas that is proportional to the overall number of hospitality and VIP seats available, to provide equal access for all.

To ensure that medical equipment can be accommodated, at least two accessible seats should include access to electricity.

New stadiums should be designed to be inclusive and equal from the outset, offering a choice of seating for disabled spectators and their families and friends. Although it is

commonly accepted that it is often more challenging to adapt an existing stadium to provide such choice, it is certainly possible with good planning and smart design solutions. An access strategy or business plan should provide a clear schedule of improvements over a reasonable period of time and a commitment from each key stakeholder to achieve equal and inclusive access for all (see [Key stakeholders](#) for more information).

All viewing areas should meet adequate standards to ensure that seating is safe and serves its intended purpose. Seated spectators should have a clear, unrestricted view of the whole match or event. They should be able to remain seated and not have to stretch or strain to see. This ensures that they do not obstruct the view of fellow spectators, especially people of short stature, children and disabled people.



Blind and partially sighted spectators

It is unacceptable to consider seating with obstructed views as appropriate for partially sighted and blind spectators. As explained earlier, it is a common misconception that blind people have no vision; in reality this is the case for only 14%. Some partially sighted and blind spectators prefer to sit near the pitch to make the most of their limited vision (sometimes with the use of a monocular or other visual aid) or to hear the ball and pitchside action to better follow the game.

It is important that they too be given a choice of viewing areas throughout the stadium.

It is also sometimes wrongly assumed that partially sighted and blind spectators need to sit together. This should not be the general rule as it provides them with no choice and is not inclusive. For the same reason,

the provision of an audio-descriptive commentary should not be restricted to certain areas, especially as portable transmitters and headsets are now widely available (see [Audio-descriptive commentary](#)).

All stadium seating should contrast visually with the surrounding surfaces and seat numbers should contrast with the seats to assist partially sighted and colour-blind spectators. In addition, all seats should have an unobstructed view of scoreboards and video screens on which match and stadium safety information can be clearly displayed. Where this is not possible, seating with a direct view of the scoreboards or video screens should be identified as such. These seats can be of great benefit to hard of hearing and deaf spectators, who may not be able to hear information over the public address system.

Deaf and hard of hearing spectators

When determining seating arrangements for hard of hearing and deaf spectators, there should be a degree of flexibility based on the accessible services available at the stadium (see [Stadium provisions for hard of hearing and deaf spectators](#)). **Hard of hearing and deaf spectators should have the opportunity to sit in any sector of the stadium.** However, many have also expressed a keenness to sit together, enabling greater communication and camaraderie between fellow hard of hearing and deaf peers. Such a provision also provides the event hosts with the opportunity to position sign language interpreters close to hard of hearing and deaf spectators, relaying important information to them throughout the match.



A flexible, collaborative approach is the most suitable route to take.

It would be highly advisable to communicate with hard of hearing and deaf supporters to understand their matchday experiences and what their preferred option would be. This should not determine seating options for all hard of hearing and deaf spectators however, and should somebody wish to sit in a different reasonable adjustments should be made to allow for this.

Inclusive design for accessible seating

This guide bases its recommendations on the European Committee for Standardisation's technical report CEN/TR 15913: Spectator Facilities – Layout Criteria for Viewing Area for Spectators with Special Needs, which has been ratified by all EU members.

CEN/TR 15913 makes minimum recommendations, but as explained previously, when taking an inclusive approach to stadium design, it is important to exceed minimum standards to meet the needs of the increasing number of disabled people wanting to attend football matches and other events. It is also important to future-proof new stadiums.

Disabled people should be seen as valued supporters, with accessibility seen not only as a moral issue but also as good business sense.

Accordingly, an increasing number of designers are now taking a more progressive approach by including flexible seating solutions.

It is also important to consider how the pitch infrastructure can change from fixture to fixture. For example, there may be some matches where advertising hoardings are higher than usual, video assistant referee (VAR) equipment is in use, or a larger

than usual number of substitutes are named in matchday squads, thus requiring more room in or close to technical areas. Sightlines should be considered for all fixtures, and plans altered to ensure that they do not impact disabled fans' matchday experience or their view of the pitch.

As CEN/TR 15913 is a licensed document, this guide summarises the standards outlined within it in order to provide a baseline for football to meet and exceed.

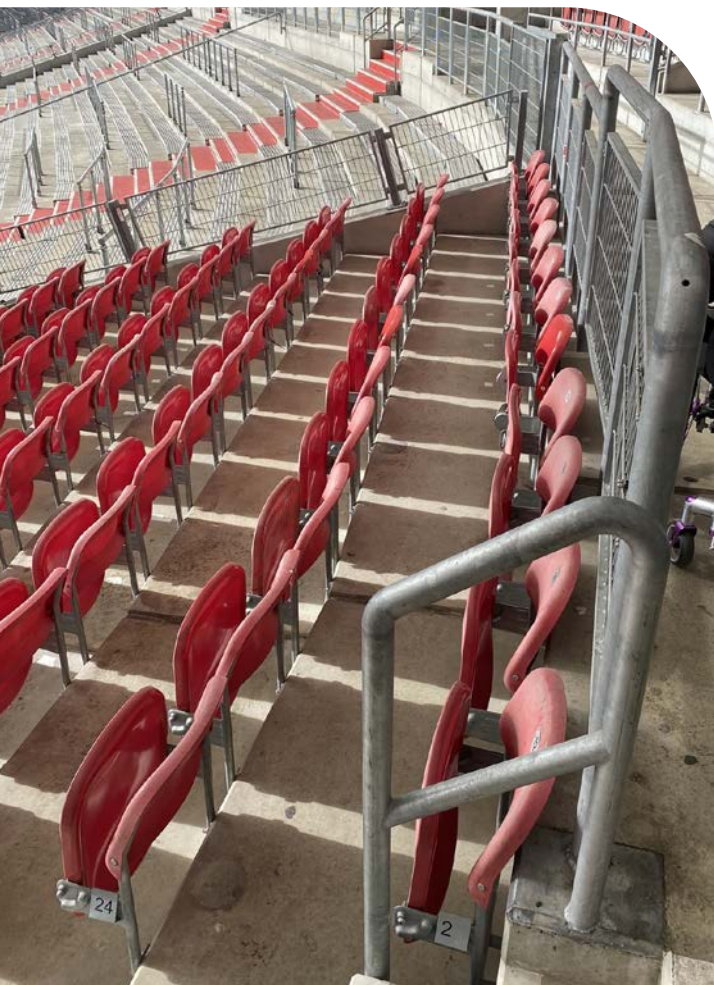


Image 16 | Example of easy-access seats with handrails at Stuttgart Arena

Amenity and easy-access seats

All stadiums should provide amenity seating for spectators requiring more space. Amenity seats should provide extra leg room, and it is helpful for some to have armrests, although these should be removable or retractable. Amenity and easy-access seats should also have backrests – benches and bucket seats are not advisable.

People with limited mobility may need extra leg room because they are unable to bend their knees or need extra space to access their seat while using a walking aid or crutches. They may be unable to stand easily, or for long periods, or easily change position. Therefore, amenity seating should provide sightlines from seated positions that are not obstructed by another spectator standing in front

or to the side. **A choice of amenity seating should also be available for disabled spectators with assistance dogs, who may require extra space for the dog to lie in front of or under their seat.**

Easy-access seats should be provided for spectators with limited mobility in easily accessible areas of the stadium, such as at the ends of rows and where steps are minimised. Typically, these seats do not provide extra legroom.

Easy-access and amenity seating can also be located on the front row of seating tiers where step-free access and entrance points are available. **Best practice is for there to be no more than three steps up or down to amenity and easy-access seats in elevated positions or at the rear of seating tiers.** All amenity and easy-access seats should have an adjacent companion seat. Steps leading to or from amenity and easy-access



seating should have handrails or ‘P’ rails to help spectators reach their seats. **Elderly fans and younger children will also benefit from handrails or ‘P’ rails on steps.**

Spectators requiring amenity or easy-access seats should be able to sit with supporters of their own team in a variety of viewing areas and ticket categories, including hospitality, VIP and directors’ boxes. Such seating should also be located close to accessible toilets and other facilities and amenities.

Table 1 shows the minimum requirements for the number of amenity and easy-access seats for general seating areas, as recommended by the European Committee for Standardisation (CEN). The recommendations are based on experience and good practice in relation to the number of disabled people likely to want to attend a match or other stadium event.

Additional amenity seating should always be provided in hospitality and VIP areas.

All new stadiums should comply with these minimum standards from the outset. In the case of existing stadiums, an accessibility audit should be commissioned and an accessibility strategy or business plan prepared so that the required improvements can be made and these standards met within a reasonable period of time (see [Accessibility auditing and planning](#)).

Some disabled spectators may wish to travel to the stadium by wheelchair or mobility scooter because they cannot walk long distances, but prefer to transfer to easy-access or amenity seating for the match. Safe storage of wheelchairs and scooters will ensure that concourses and other circulation routes are not blocked or obstructed during the match.

Amenity and easy-access seating may also be required by a variety of other spectators, such as those who are temporarily injured, elderly people, pregnant women, young children and so on.

Table 1 | Minimum number of amenity and easy-access seats (CEN/TR 15913)

Seated capacity of stand or stadium	Number of amenity and easy-access seats
9,999 and under	Minimum of 6, or 1 per 100 seats (whichever is greater)
10,000–19,999	100 + 5 per 1,000 seats above 10,000
20,000–39,999	150 + 3 per 1,000 seats above 20,000
40,000 or more	210 + 2 per 1,000 seats above 40,000



In addition, an increasing number of disabled spectators attend live matches with walking aids such as Rollators and Zimmer frames. **They should be permitted to enter the stadium with these aids via accessible entrances, and take them as far as possible through the stadium to their easy-access seats.** This would typically be as far as the nearest vomitories to their seats, or any steps that need to be used to reach the seats. The walking aid should then be taken, carefully and sensitively, and stored securely until it is required again. A nearby storage room or a room not readily available to the general public would be sufficient for this so long as the walking aid can be stored securely within it.

In some cases, a spectator may need to have their walking aid with them at all times. In these instances, it is advisable to engage with the supporter to identify a suitable

seat for them, such as an unsold wheelchair-user space.

The provision of adequate amenity and easy-access seating may also help to relieve the demand for wheelchair-user spaces if they are located close to dedicated wheelchair and mobility scooter storage areas.

Accessible toilets should be available within 40m of any amenity or easy-access seating. The number of accessible toilets should be in accordance with figures laid out in [Toilets](#).

In addition, it is important that family members and friends are able to sit with disabled spectators who require amenity or easy-access seating. Ticket office staff should be able to provide information about all amenity and easy-access seating areas within the stadium.





Wheelchair-user spaces

A variety of wheelchair-user spaces should be provided so that wheelchair users have a similar choice of seating and ticket categories to other spectators and are not isolated from the main body of the stand or stadium. The location and design of wheelchair-user viewing areas also need to be flexible and allow for greater demand in the event of growing matchday interest.

It is not acceptable to group all wheelchair users into one area or to provide wheelchair-user spaces only in home supporter sectors.

Wheelchair users, like any other spectators, want a choice of viewing areas and to be able to sit with supporters of their own team. For some disabled fans, not being able to sit with the rest of their team's

supporters at an away match will mean they will not attend the game. By the same token, wheelchair users should be able to sit with or near family and friends, in addition to a companion or personal assistant who may be required to help them access the stadium, facilities and services.

Companions and personal assistants should always be seated adjacent to the wheelchair user. This is important for a number of reasons. In a noisy stadium, it may be difficult for the wheelchair user to attract the attention of and communicate with their companion if not sitting next to them. Also, many wheelchair users have limited movement within their wheelchairs and are unable to turn to face a companion sitting behind them. **A companion sitting adjacent to a wheelchair user is better able to provide assistance such as fetching food or drink or helping to reposition the user in their wheelchair.**



A selection of right and left-handed companion seating should be available next to wheelchair-user spaces. Easily moveable or flexible seating also allows friends and family to sit together. Flexible seats can be removed quickly to allow two or more wheelchair users to sit together or allow more non-disabled family members or friends to sit alongside a wheelchair user (see image 17). Flexible seats would also allow a disabled spectator with complex needs to have two companions sit on either side of them.

Wheelchair-user spaces should also be able to accommodate reasonably sized mobility scooters (as long as they do not obstruct the view and movement of other spectators). These are usually larger and less manoeuvrable than manual and power wheelchairs. **In any case, a disabled spectator who uses a wheelchair should be able to manoeuvre easily to a space**

that gives them a clear view of the pitch and surrounding stadium. They may also be accompanied by an assistance dog, in which case additional space should be provided for the dog to lie next to its owner.

An individual wheelchair-user space can be created using a clear area measuring at least 90cm wide and 140cm deep. However, each designated space should ideally be at least 140cm x 140cm to allow space for one companion or personal assistant to sit next to each wheelchair user in a fixed or removable seat.

Where there are rows or platform areas accommodating multiple wheelchair users, a clear circulation zone at least 120cm wide should be provided to the rear of the wheelchair-user spaces to allow two wheelchair users to manoeuvre into position, turn and pass each other.

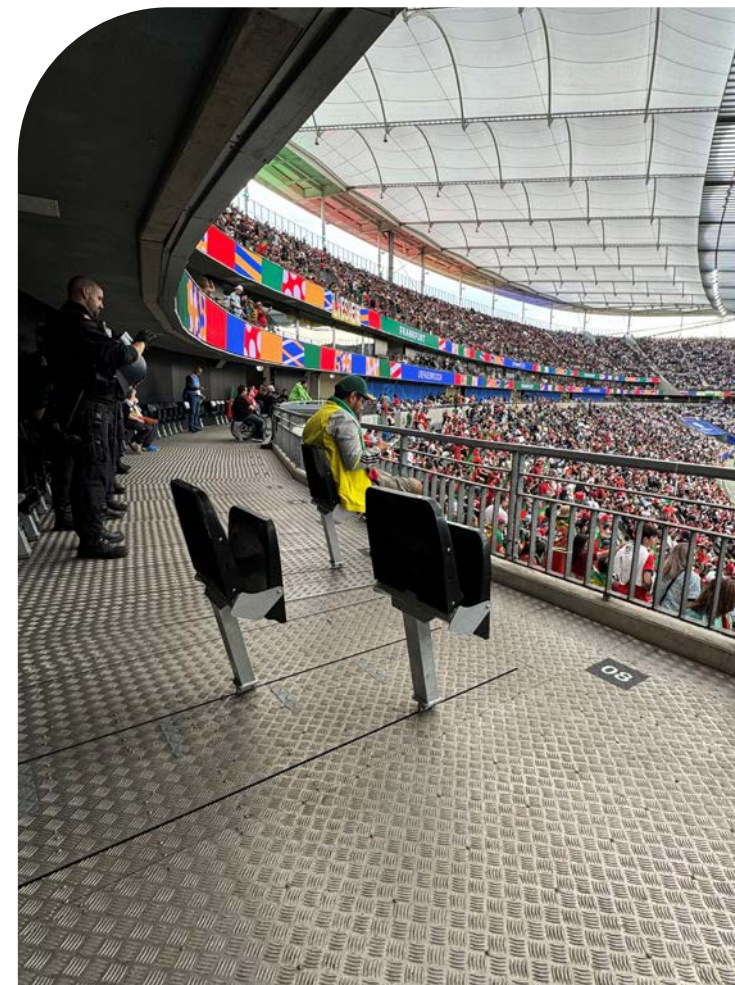


Image 17 | Flexible seating platform at the Hamburg stadium during UEFA EURO 2024.



Where possible, the circulation space should be large enough to allow larger powerchairs and mobility scooters to manoeuvre and pass other wheelchair users.

There should be a wheelchair-accessible toilet within 40m of any wheelchair-user space, with one accessible toilet allocated for every 15 wheelchair users. The wheelchair-accessible toilet should be easy to reach from the accessible viewing areas and, where possible, on the same floor.

Table 2 shows the minimum requirements for the number of wheelchair-user spaces in general seating areas as recommended by the European Committee for Standardisation (CEN). These recommendations are based on experience and good practice in relation to the number of wheelchair users likely to want to attend a match or other stadium event. Additional wheelchair-user spaces should always be provided in hospitality and

Table 2 | Minimum number of wheelchair-user spaces (CEN/TR 15913)

Seated capacity of stand or stadium	Number of wheelchair-user spaces
9,999 and under	Minimum of 6, or 1 per 100 seats (whichever is greater)
10,000–19,999	100 + 5 per 1,000 seats above 10,000
20,000–39,999	150 + 3 per 1,000 seats above 20,000
40,000 or more	210 + 2 per 1,000 seats above 40,000

VIP areas. The use of flexible seating, as illustrated in image 17, may be a good solution in these areas.

As in the case of amenity and easy-access seats, all new stadiums should comply with these minimum standards from the outset. In the case of existing stadiums, an accessibility audit should be commissioned and an accessibility strategy or business plan prepared so that the required improvements can be made and these standards met within a reasonable period of time (see [Accessibility auditing and planning](#)).





Inclusive viewing standards

It is important for everyone in the stadium to have a clear view of the whole pitch and surrounding areas so that they can comfortably enjoy the match and stadium atmosphere.

This includes all those in amenity and easy-access seating and wheelchair-user viewing areas.

An unobstructed view of the pitch, where a disabled spectator's sightline is not obscured by infrastructure or other supporters, should be ensured even when someone stands up in front or to the side. **This is particularly important for disabled spectators who may not be able to stand for long periods of time, change position or lean forward or to the side to get a better view.** It is vital to ensure adequate sightlines for wheelchair users in particular,

who may be unable to stand even for short periods and may be paralysed or unable to move or turn their head. Conversely, some disabled people are not able to sit for long periods of time and may need to stand. **Clubs and national associations should consult their disabled fans to determine ways to ensure that disabled fans who need to stand are able to do so without blocking the views of other spectators.**

No part of the pitch or field of play should be further than 190m from any seat or viewing space and sightlines should not be obstructed by barriers, balustrades, handrails, roof supports, pillars or columns.

The provision of wheelchair-user spaces in different parts of the stadium has implications for the sightlines of both disabled and non-disabled spectators sitting or standing nearby. All wheelchair-user spaces should be designed so that



wheelchair users can still see the pitch and surrounding areas even when located behind standing sections or when people seated in front stand up, even for a short time, such as during the national anthems or while the players are warming up.

The quality of a sightline is defined by a C-value. This is the vertical measurement from the eye level of the person in front to the sightline of the person behind. **Calculating C-values can be complex and should be undertaken by someone who fully understands the principles and wider issues of viewing quality.**

The accepted formula for calculating sightlines is:

$$C = \frac{D(N + R)}{D + T} - R$$

Where:

C = the C-value

D = the horizontal distance from the eye to the point of focus

N = the riser height

R = the vertical height to the point of focus

T = the seating row depth

When calculating the C-value, the average eye level of a wheelchair user is generally assumed to be 115cm, and the average height of the person standing in front 180cm. Particular care should be taken when considering average heights. It should be remembered that the person standing in front could be taller than this and that the wheelchair user sitting behind could be of a shorter stature or unable to sit in a fully upright position, due to their condition or the design of their wheelchair.

It is generally acknowledged that an acceptable viewing standard is obtained with a C-value of 9cm or above for all new stands. A C-value of less than 9cm is considered acceptable only in exceptional circumstances, for example where the recommended maximum viewing distance to the point of focus is exceeded.¹⁰



It has come to be expected that at exciting moments of a match some seated spectators will stand up, thereby obstructing the view of disabled people seated behind or to the side. **In order to create an acceptable sightline for wheelchair users in particular, an increased height riser, or 'super riser', should be installed, potentially several times the height of a normal stepping riser.**

AccessibAll recommends a minimum elevated position that allows a wheelchair user to see the action on the pitch over any spectators standing in the row directly or diagonally in front (as illustrated in figure 7). There are many examples of stadiums across Europe that have installed 'super risers' along existing wheelchair platforms to ensure an adequate view of the pitch under all circumstances.

The minimum recommended increased riser height is 120cm. However, sightline calculations are very complex and there is no 'one size fits all'. Designers may propose lower risers but should demonstrate that they still achieve an acceptable viewing standard (C-value).

It is also important to note that a companion or personal assistant seated next to a disabled person should enjoy at least the same minimum C-value as their fellow spectators. Likewise, non-disabled spectators sitting behind and to the side of wheelchair users also need to be considered to ensure that their sightlines are not unduly affected by the wheelchair user or their companion. Figures in the following sections provide guidance on adequate and inadequate seating solutions in reference to sightlines.

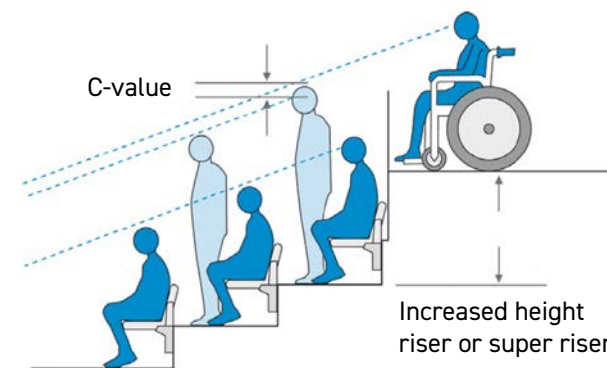


Figure 7 | A wheelchair user's sightline



Elevated viewing areas

Disabled spectators should be provided with a choice of viewing areas that includes elevated viewing areas with easy access to toilets and refreshment areas.

In the past, upper tier positions were sometimes considered inappropriate for disabled spectators because it was thought their safety would be compromised by the longer, more difficult access and exit routes. Thankfully, this is no longer the case, with smart design solutions ensuring a more inclusive approach.

Elevated viewing positions are generally preferred by disabled spectators as they often offer better protection from the elements and a better overview of the match, as long as sightlines are not compromised by overhanging tiers or roofs or spectators sitting or standing in front.

For wheelchair users, spaces at the rear of a seating tier may be ideal in several respects: they provide perfect sightlines, without any detriment to the sightlines of other spectators, they are easily accessible and particularly suitable for emergency evacuations and, most importantly, they present the designer with the opportunity to extend the viewing area horizontally for as far as is necessary to accommodate the number of wheelchair-user spaces required.

In a multi-tier stand, a position to the rear/top of the lower tier is convenient for wheelchair users for a number of reasons, as illustrated in figure 8. Lift access to such positions should also be relatively easy to achieve.

The layout of some grounds may even allow effective ground-level access to the rear of upper tiers. Designers should therefore be prepared to provide upper-tier viewing areas for

disabled spectators, together with lifts and easy access to amenities such as nearby toilets, refreshment areas and concourses (see figure 8).

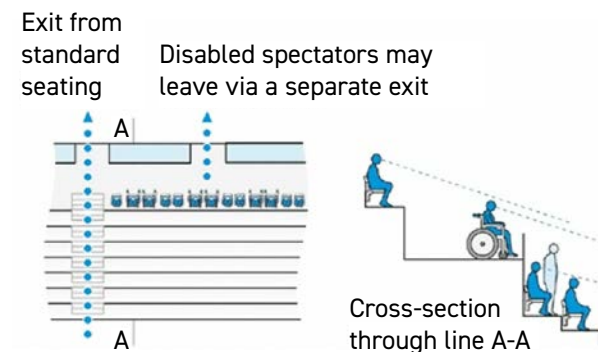
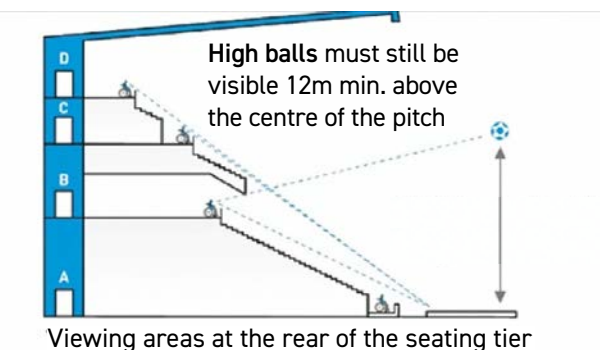


Figure 8 | Sightlines from elevated viewing positions



Pitchside viewing areas

It is still appropriate to provide some pitchside viewing areas for disabled people as well as accessible seating in the stands. Stadium designers and managers should ensure an equal level of choice for all, and disabled people in all areas should have adequate access to amenities such as toilets and refreshments.

It should be noted that some partially sighted spectators may still prefer to sit pitchside so they can hear the sound of the ball and activity on the pitch, helping them to better follow the game. That said, no more than 25% of wheelchair-user spaces and 25% of amenity and easy-access seating should be located pitchside.

Matchday staff, players and coaches, TV camera operators and their equipment, photographers, dugouts and advertising hoardings can all obscure pitchside sightlines (see figure 9).

The areas behind the dugouts and goals in particular (up to the 16m line and including the technical area) should be avoided as wheelchair users and ambulant disabled people are less able to adjust their position to see around or over obstructions.

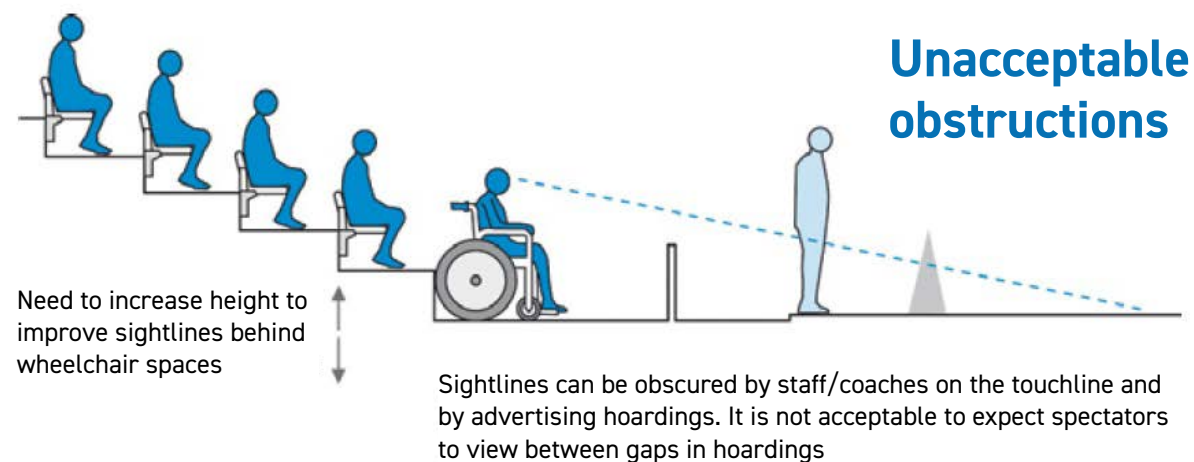
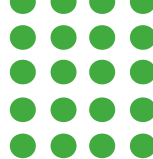


Figure 9 | Sightlines from pitchside viewing areas



It is not acceptable to locate wheelchair user positions along a running or athletics track. These locations can not only be extremely hazardous (due to flying footballs and exposure to the elements) but are also non-inclusive, creating a segregated area for wheelchair users. Viewing areas for disabled spectators should be covered to protect them from the elements, including rain, wind and sun, and while covered pitchside areas may be considered advantageous for some disabled spectators, they may interfere with the sightlines of spectators located in the rows behind, requiring that those rows be raised. **The first row of seats for both disabled and non-disabled spectators should, in any case, be raised from the pitch to ensure an adequate view.**





Mid-tier viewing areas

When planning for wheelchair users, spaces in the middle of seating tiers pose a number of issues for designers and stadium managers, as illustrated in figure 11.

A viewing platform directly in front of a vomitory may provide excellent sightlines for wheelchair users but this has to be balanced against the potentially adverse effect on the diagonal sightlines of other spectators seated behind or to the side. A good solution may be to provide a continuous horizontal platform along the length of a stand, avoiding any obstruction to diagonal sightlines. These platforms may also be ideal locations to fit removable or flexible seating (see next section). In such cases, a lift-up barrier may be considered to

prevent non-disabled spectators from migrating to the wheelchair-user area, creating congestion, obstructions and safety hazards. However, disabled spectators' opinions should be sought to ensure that such a preventative measure is appropriate and not

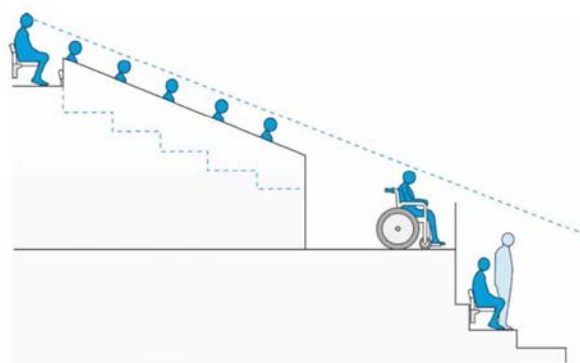


Figure 10 | An acceptable viewing standard for mid-tier wheelchair spaces (front of vomitory) and surrounding non-disabled spectators (Handrails omitted for reasons of clarity)

viewed as isolating. **Effective stewarding may be sufficient to mitigate crowding of wheelchair user platforms.**

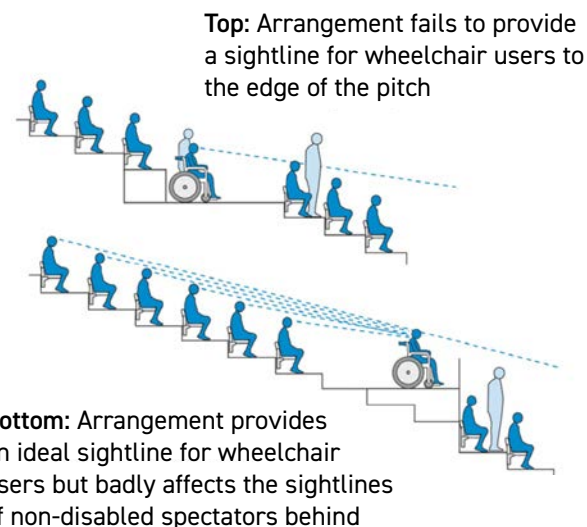


Figure 11 | Inadequate or unacceptable sightlines from mid-tier viewing locations



Flexible seating

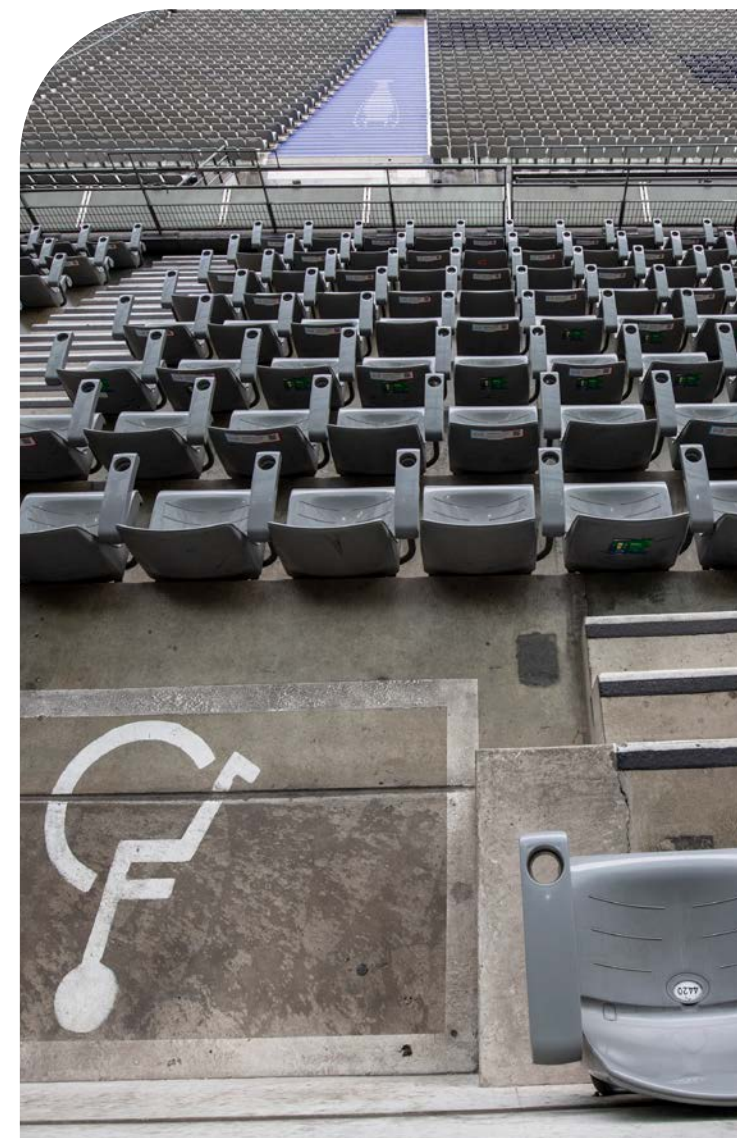
Additional wheelchair-user spaces may be provided in new and existing stadiums by removing seats, as long as there is fixed seating adjacent for companions and personal assistants. These should provide the same amount of space, viewing standards and access to facilities as permanent wheelchair-user spaces.

Flexibility may be useful when accommodating wheelchair users who wish to sit with family and friends or when two wheelchair users wish to sit together. In addition, on occasions when the minimum provision for wheelchair users fails to meet demand, flexible seating would be a good solution.

Another acceptable flexible solution may be to install drop-down or tip-up (not loose) seats in dedicated wheelchair-user viewing areas (see

[image 17](#)) for use by non-disabled spectators when the space is not required by wheelchair users. Nonetheless, if match tickets are usually available to people up to and even after the start of an event, this must be the case for both non-disabled and disabled people. This means the standard minimum allocation of wheelchair-user spaces, as shown in [table 2](#), must be available at all times. In addition, since wheelchair access and circulation routes must be provided for the maximum number of wheelchair users in any given area, it may be optimal to place flexible viewing areas only at the front or the rear of a seating tier, where generous circulation widths are more easily provided.

When considering flexible seating, designers should take into account the recommendation for elevated viewing and the use of 'super risers', as illustrated in [figure 7](#), due to the possible sightline implications when



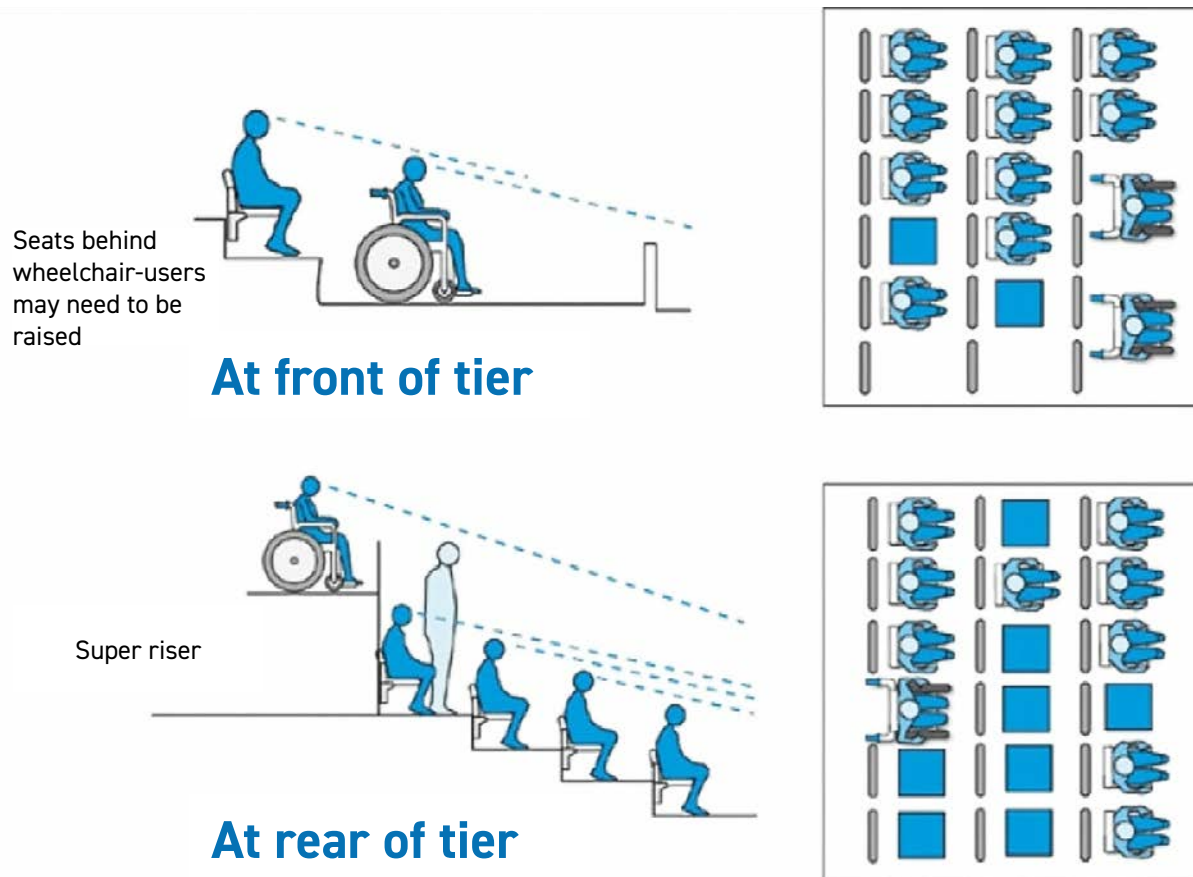
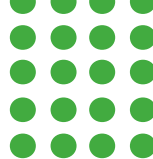


Figure 12 | Flexible viewing areas

positioning wheelchair users at the front or rear of a viewing area. Figure 12 shows adjoining fixed seats in the front row of a lower tier that are unused, with the space therefore occupied by wheelchair users. **On average, a wheelchair user's head is 4–6cm higher and 20–30cm further forward than spectators sitting in fixed seats.**

Therefore, the rows behind such flexible viewing areas may need to be raised to compensate. Likewise, when wheelchair-user spaces are provided in the back row, the height of this row will need to correspond with figure 12 to provide adequate sightlines when spectators in front stand up.

Designers should also be aware of the risk of forward crowd spillage in mid-tier or front-of-tier viewing areas and consider lift-up barriers to minimise the risk for wheelchair users.



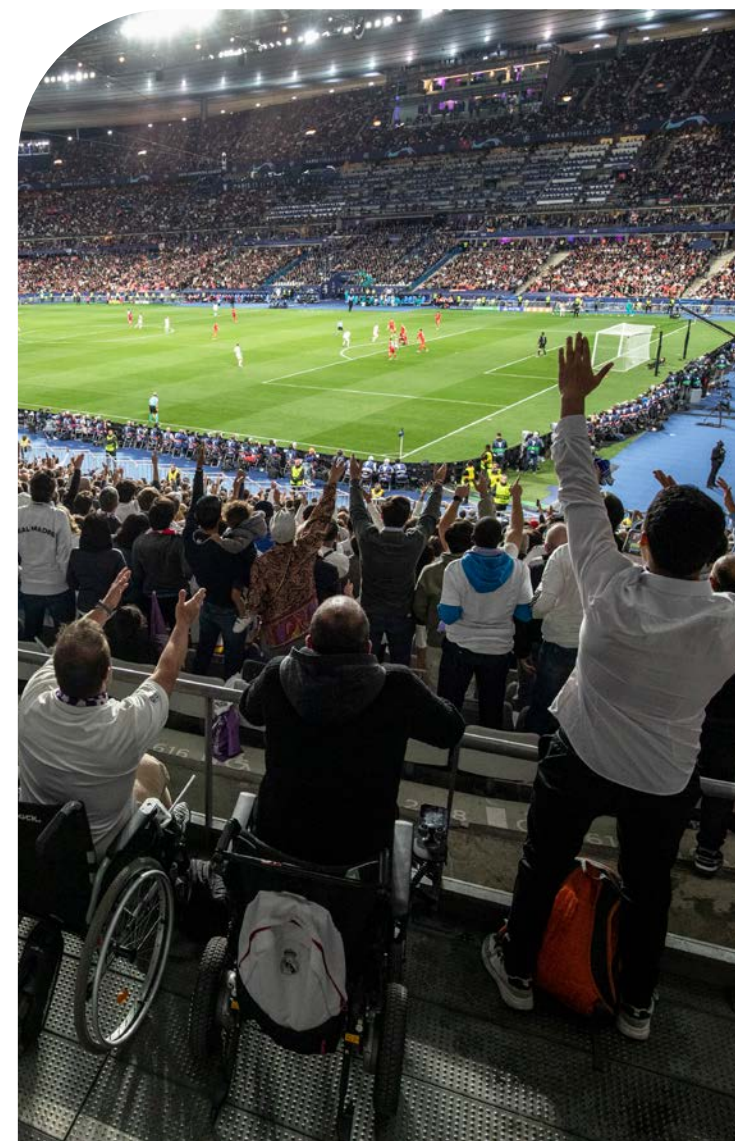
Standing accommodation

Where standing areas or rail seating (which allows supporters to sit or stand in their designated space) is provided at matches, disabled spectators should also have access to this. **Some stadiums contain large areas of standing accommodation and unless disabled spectators are taken into account this could easily cause an imbalance between the capacity of accessible viewing areas and the overall capacity of the stadium.**

In new stadiums that provide standing accommodation, designers should ensure that all standards of inclusive access are met as they would be in seated viewing areas. There should also be level spaces for wheelchair users who wish to sit with family and friends in these areas.

In existing stadiums, a sensible, inclusive approach should be adopted that allows disabled spectators to access standing accommodation without compromising anyone's sightline or safety.

Stadium designers and managers should consider the implications for other events held at the stadium when deciding on viewing areas and the location of amenity and easy-access seating, wheelchair-user spaces, facilities and amenities for disabled spectators. For example, an accessible spectator viewing area located at one end of a stadium might be rendered unusable when a temporary stage is set up in front of it for a concert. **As always, it is advisable to seek the advice of local disability groups and event organisers.**





Sensory viewing rooms

During a match, football stadiums can become noisy and crowded, and there may be strong smells from food and drinks. All of these sensory elements can be overwhelming for intellectually disabled and neurodivergent people. **A sensory viewing room provides a space for them and their families to watch the match without any potential sensory overload from the main stadium bowl.** It also provides a range of different stimuli to engage a person's senses and help them to calm down if needed. While the sensory experience within the main stadium bowl is difficult to control or anticipate, the experience within the sensory viewing room should be carefully moderated. For this reason, it should be soundproofed. Noise-cancelling headphones should also be provided

for users who find the level of stadium noise on matchdays overwhelming. Equipment to appeal to a person's sense of smell, touch, vision, hearing and motion should also be available.

It is important that sensory viewing rooms have a view of the pitch so that users can watch the match.

For this reason, these rooms are often found in converted hospitality boxes. Where a pitch-facing room is not feasible, providing a TV screen with coverage of the match is essential to allow users to watch the action on the pitch. It is also advisable to install TV screens in pitch-facing rooms for users who choose to come away from the window. **While some users may want to watch the entire match from the sensory viewing room, others may only need to use it for brief periods to avoid sensory overload or to calm themselves down.** Therefore, also providing users with a ticket to a seat in the main stadium bowl is recommended, particularly if the

sensory viewing room does not offer a view of the pitch.

Users of sensory viewing rooms may have more than one disability.

Therefore, these rooms must be fully accessible for all disabled people and have accessible toilets and concessions within close proximity.

Sensory room equipment must be varied in order to cater to different users' needs and to engage each of the human senses.

Features typically includes 'fidget' devices, calming lights, bubble tubes and





Image 18 | Example of a sensory viewing room at Bielefeld Alm stadium

seats of various textures, such as soft seating, bean bags and firmer seats. **As sensory viewing rooms can be used by supporters of different ages, it is important to provide age-appropriate equipment.** When creating a sensory viewing room, it is important to consult with experts and local disability organisations, as well as the club's disabled fans, to ensure that it has the most relevant and suitable equipment installed. **On matchdays, sensory viewing rooms should be managed by fully trained staff who are available to provide additional support to users if needed.**

Sensory viewing rooms are also often beneficial to supporters with dementia as they provide a quieter and more calming environment.

Where no sensory viewing room is available, it is beneficial for the owner, operator or event organiser

to give some level of consideration to intellectually disabled and neurodivergent people. It could be useful to provide access to a quiet room or space, or give them sensory packs to take to their seats. Sensory packs typically contain 'fidget' devices and smaller items for them to focus on, reducing any anxiety or overstimulation. The contents should vary in texture, size and weight.

New inclusive sensory technologies

Virtual reality (VR) technology is rapidly evolving and offers fans who cannot physically attend matches the chance to experience the thrill of the game in a fully immersive virtual environment. This innovative use of VR aims to make the exhilarating atmosphere of live sports accessible to a broader audience. It has even been used to enable disabled children to be player escorts.

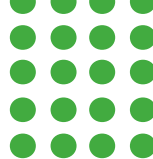


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#FOOTBALL



Alternative formats

Owners, operators and event organisers should consider sharing information about their facilities and services with local disability organisations in order to reach the wider community and encourage new spectators to attend live matches. In addition, websites and apps should be accessible, in accordance with the latest [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\)](#) published by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), and provide all the information needed by disabled people wishing to attend matches or visit venue outlets, such as shops, museums or cafes.

Accurate information is especially important for disabled people wishing to attend a match or event, as it enables them to plan ahead and anticipate any access difficulties they may encounter. Everyone should

have equal access to information that is publicly available. This includes partially sighted, blind, hard of hearing, deaf, intellectually disabled and neurodivergent people.

Partially sighted and blind people are often excluded from reading printed materials due to a lack of alternative media or large-print formats. Appropriate solutions, including large-print programmes and information leaflets as well as alternatives to traditional printed materials, such as Braille, audio formats (e.g. providing match programmes in the form of podcasts) and dedicated telephone services, are cost-effective ways of ensuring that more disabled people have access to club and stadium information. **Consultation with local disabled supporters and disability organisations should help to determine the best means of communication.**





Braille

Some partially sighted and blind people learn to read Braille. **It is considered good practice to provide Braille versions of documents that are unlikely to change, such as mission statements, upon request.**

Local disability organisations may be able to print low-cost Braille copies of documents, which may be an easy option for clubs and stadiums to consider. However, since most partially sighted and blind people do not read Braille, and Braille can vary by language, it should not be the only alternative format available. Both audio and large-format documents are good alternatives.

Audio recordings and programmes

Audio versions of publications can be simple recordings done in-house or by local suppliers and released via accessible websites or apps, or

as podcasts or downloadable audio files. They ensure that publications are accessible to partially sighted and blind people.

Electronic documents

This is a low-cost solution that has been adopted by many football clubs, national associations and stadiums to cater for their partially sighted and blind spectators.

Electronic documents should be RTF or doc/docx files with minimum formatting and graphics.

When preparing documents such as match programmes for publication, it is possible to produce a plain text version in a Word document for email distribution at no or very minimal extra cost. It is important to be aware that many PDFs are merely images, especially when they are created by scanning or taking a photo of a document, and cannot be read by

most PC screen-reader software used by partially sighted and blind people. Typically, if the text within a PDF can be highlighted, copied and pasted, it should be accessible for most screen readers.

Video format

All video and audio media formats should include captioning or an accompanying text description or script of the content to ensure that a hard of hearing or deaf person can access the information. Where possible, it is considered good practice to include a text copy of the script or dialogue, subtitles, sign language and an audio-described version of any video clips or films.

Easy-to-read

Easy-to-read documents should be available upon request. This format, aimed at intellectually disabled



people, is gaining recognition across Europe. As of yet, there are no official international standards, but it is widely accepted that a sans serif font at least 14 points in size should be used.¹¹ Each point or idea presented should be conveyed in one sentence and accompanied by easily understood images to enhance understanding of the text. Images should be placed to the left of the text. **It is also important to ask intellectually disabled people to review the document before publishing to ensure that it is comprehensible.**

Website and app design

Websites and apps should comply with the W3C guidelines and be accessible to all disabled people, including those who are colour blind or partially sighted or who use special

voice-activated or screen-reader software. **Voice-activated software is sometimes used by people with limited mobility who are unable to use a mouse or keyboard, while screen-reader software is often used by partially sighted and blind people who cannot read the content of websites.**

Creative use of colour and contrast can dramatically enhance the accessibility of a website or app for partially sighted people, who may have difficulty reading and distinguishing text from a background colour. Background images and patterns, on the other hand, may cause problems. **Pictures and photos should always have alternative text to provide screen-reader users with an image description.** Images that are purely decorative should have empty alternative text.

The layout should be logical and easy to follow and any audio information, such as in a video or audio clip, should be accompanied by a script or text for hard of hearing and deaf people. **Local disability organisations can provide further information about good website design.**

Printed information

Most football clubs, national associations and venues now provide the majority of their information online – on social media, official websites and apps. However, many still also publish printed leaflets and match programmes. **A policy should be established, with the help of the disability access officer, to provide these in accessible formats.**

The font size used in many football programmes is 8 points. A partially sighted reader may not be able to



11 [Inclusion Europe - Easy-to-read information is easier to understand.](#)



read text in this size and so will be excluded. **Small font sizes make it very difficult for many people to read standard matchday programmes, but it is quite simple and inexpensive to produce more accessible materials using some basic design principles.** The clear print guidelines below should be followed by anyone publishing documents such as club leaflets and match programmes.

Clear print guidelines

Contrast

Use highly contrasting colours for text and backgrounds. The minimum colour contrast ratio for digital and printed information is 3:1, or 4.5:1 for smaller text (under 18 points, or 14 points in bold type), in accordance with the [W3C Guidelines' AA rating](#).

Good examples are black or dark blue text on a white or yellow background,

or white or yellow text on a black or dark blue background. **The better the contrast between the background and the text, the more legible the text will be.**

Type colour

Printed material is most readable in black and white. If using coloured text, restrict it to titles, headlines or highlighting. Minimum colour contrast between text and background must be maintained. **Information should never be conveyed by colour alone, as this may prevent some people, including colour-blind people, from accessing information.**

Type size

Bigger is better. Keep text large; preferably between 12 and 18 points, depending on the font style used (point size varies between fonts).

Consider the audience when choosing a point size. Where 12 points or



smaller is used, alternative versions of the document in 14 points or larger should be available on request.

Font family and style

Avoid complicated and overly decorative fonts. Highly stylised fonts, such as those with ornamental, decorative or handwritten styles, should be avoided. Instead, choose standard, sans serif fonts with easily recognisable upper and lower-case characters. Arial and Verdana are good choices.

Type styles

Italics, underlining and the use of capitals for continuous text or in titles make text harder to read and should be avoided. Underlining should be used for online hyperlinks only.

Letter spacing

Do not crowd the text; instead keep a wide space between letters.

Choose a mono-spaced font rather than one that is proportionally spaced.

Text setting

Text should be aligned left for best legibility. It is important to avoid fitting text around images if this causes lines of text to start in different places. Such layouts are very difficult for a partially sighted person to navigate. Likewise, text should not be set over images or textures as this affects the contrast.

Forms

Partially sighted people often have larger handwriting than average, so it is good practice to provide extra space on forms. This also helps people with conditions such as arthritis that affect the use of their hands. Online form builders should be compliant with WCAG requirements.

Paper finish

Use a matte or non-glossy finish to cut down on glare. Also, reduce distractions by not using watermarks or complicated background designs. Ideally, uncoated paper with a weight of 90gsm (grams per square metre) or more should be used. If the text shows through from the reverse side of the page, the paper is too thin and the text will be difficult for a partially sighted person to read.

Clean design and simplicity

Use distinctive colours, sizes and shapes on the covers of materials to make them easier to tell apart.

Improved communication systems

The advancement of communication systems within stadiums, notably through [audio-descriptive commentary](#), has been a massive



upgrade for partially sighted and blind fans. **This service provides a blow-by-blow account of the live action, encapsulating the dynamic atmosphere and excitement of the game, and providing details of the visual information that other fans may take for granted.** In parallel, the provision of sign language interpretation for in-stadium announcements and live matches marks a significant step in ensuring that deaf and hard of hearing fans are not left on the sidelines, but instead fully integrated into the heart of the action. These enhancements in communication systems are pivotal in creating a more inclusive and engaging experience for all fans.

To enhance inclusivity for deaf and hard of hearing fans, stadiums across the globe are increasingly incorporating live captioning directly into scoreboards and video replays.

This ensures that all attendees, regardless of whether they are deaf

or hard of hearing or not, are kept in the loop with play-by-play updates, scores and critical announcements. Similarly, sign language interpretation at live events bridges the communication gap, offering a more immersive and participatory experience for those who rely on sign language for communication. These services are not limited to the action on the pitch; they extend to pre-match briefings, half-time shows and post-match analyses, ensuring that every aspect of the event is accessible. **By embedding these inclusive practices into their operational framework, stadiums are not only adhering to accessibility standards but are also celebrating the diversity of their fan base, fostering a sense of belonging and community among all supporters.**





Digital accessibility

In the realm of digital accessibility, significant strides are being made to ensure that websites and mobile applications are fully accessible to partially sighted and blind fans. This includes strategically designing digital platforms to be compatible with screen readers and voice-activated software, ensuring that all fans have equal access to online content, ticketing and event information. The integration of RFID wristbands further streamlines the stadium experience for disabled fans, facilitating effortless stadium navigation, cashless transactions and even simplified parking solutions. These digital innovations are instrumental in removing barriers and creating a more seamless and inclusive experience for many fans, embodying the shift towards a more

accessible and equitable sporting environment.

In the digital age, sports venues are harnessing the power of mobile technology to redefine the fan experience, especially for disabled fans. Through the development of sophisticated mobile applications, stadiums are offering unprecedented levels of personalisation and accessibility. These apps are not merely navigational tools; they are comprehensive platforms that allow fans to interact with the venue in real time, from finding the best accessible entry points to locating seating that meets their specific needs. For instance, fans with light sensitivity can adjust the ambient lighting in their area, while others can control the volume of public announcements and commentary. These applications often include features such as live chat support and the ability for fans to order food and merchandise directly to their seats, thereby



minimising the need for physical navigation and reducing potential stress or discomfort. The evolution of these mobile apps signifies a shift towards a more inclusive and accommodating approach to stadium design and management, where the requirements of every fan are considered and met with innovative solutions. **This digital transformation is not just about enhancing accessibility; it is about enriching the fan experience, making every game memorable and enjoyable for all.**

Smart stadiums

The concept of smart stadiums is at the forefront of enhancing the fan experience through the integration of the Internet of Things (IoT). This technology enables a range of automated features, including adjustments to lighting and temperature in accessible seating areas, ensuring comfort and convenience for disabled fans. The introduction of real-time feedback systems represents a leap forward in stadium accessibility, allowing fans to instantly request

assistance or report any accessibility issues. This immediate line of communication ensures that the needs of disabled fans are promptly met, reflecting a commitment to leveraging smart technologies to foster a supportive, inclusive, and enjoyable environment for all attendees. The evolution of smart stadiums exemplifies how technological advancements can significantly enhance the matchday experience for disabled fans, ensuring that they can fully participate in and enjoy live sporting events.





Stadium provisions for hard of hearing and deaf spectators

Impaired hearing is by far the most prevalent single disability, and this is often overlooked when designing facilities and providing services.

Hearing loss often progresses slowly and people can be unaware of the extent to which they are affected. Many older spectators, in particular, experience progressive hearing loss, making it essential to provide assistive hearing devices throughout stadiums.

Football club and stadium staff, especially all customer service and matchday staff, should be suitably trained and sensitive to the needs of

hard of hearing and deaf spectators. **Where possible, several members of staff or volunteers trained in sign language should be available on matchdays.** Much like spoken languages, there are several versions of sign language across Europe, but international sign language also exists. Local disability organisations can provide advice in this regard.

In areas such as ticket outlets, where customers are separated from staff by a screen, good quality lighting and non-reflective glass should be installed to assist hard of hearing and deaf people who can lip-read.

Ticketing, customer services and switchboard/helpline staff should also be familiar with local telephone relay services that enable hard of hearing and deaf people to make and receive calls via a third-party operator who translates speech to text or sign language, and vice versa. **Customer service staff should never refuse to speak with a disabled**

person through a third-party operator or translator, as this could be discriminatory.

Where possible, matchday staff should be ready to exchange written notes to communicate with people who cannot communicate orally clearly or at all. This may be done using a notebook and pen, or a mobile phone. However, staff should be aware that some spectators may not be able to read or write.

Matchday staff should also take into consideration the needs of hard of hearing and deaf people who use assistance dogs (see [Assistance dogs](#)).

Public address systems

Stadiums need to ensure that their public address systems are designed to cater for hard of hearing and deaf spectators. One of the easiest ways of doing this is to increase the



number of speakers in each area of a stand. The closer hard of hearing spectators are to the speakers, the more the volume can be lowered and the clarity improved.

Assistive listening devices

There are a number of assistive listening devices available, with new and improved technologies continually being developed. It is therefore important to be familiar with the latest equipment available. Local disability organisations will be able to provide further advice.

Assistive listening devices can be beneficial in many different places throughout the stadium, such as:

- within stadium bowls, where there is background noise from crowds and long distances between the audio source (e.g. the announcer's microphone) and the audience;

- at public-facing points, such as ticketing offices, information counters and concessions, where there may be poor acoustics, busy environments or obstacles to lip-reading such as reflective glass that obscures faces or side-facing tills;
- in meeting rooms, offices and workspaces, including media workrooms and press conference halls.

The most appropriate assistive listening device depends on the surroundings. Induction (hearing) loops and FM radio transmitters are most commonly used in stadium bowls, but care should be taken to avoid amplifying all surrounding sound. Passive infrared systems are considered inappropriate for stadium bowls as their efficiency can be affected by direct sunlight, but may be appropriate for indoor use, such as in meeting rooms.

Induction (hearing) loop systems

An induction loop system is regarded as the most suitable solution for stadium bowls and public-facing points. Although more expensive to install, a permanent induction loop system may ultimately be more cost-effective than other systems, as it is long-lasting and does not require additional equipment, such as receivers.

An induction loop transmits the audio signal directly into a hearing aid via a magnetic field, reducing background noise, competing sounds and other acoustic distortions that diminish sound clarity. Most modern hearing aids include a hearing loop setting called telecoil, which a user can activate by turning on a T-switch to pick up the signal from the induction loop. Both permanent and portable induction loops are available. Permanent induction loops



should comply with [International Electrotechnical Commission \(IEC\) standards](#).

A permanent induction loop is strongly advised in the stadium bowl and at customer service points. A portable system would not work in a stadium bowl setting, but may be installed at customer service points. However, its

application would be limited and its effectiveness dependent on correct installation, maintenance and regular testing. Being portable, the microphone could more easily be moved out of position or knocked over, negatively affecting its performance since it must be pointed directly at the source of sound (e.g. the staff member speaking) in order to pick up the audio. **Portable loops provide different signal strengths at different heights, meaning that a person of short stature would receive a different signal strength to a person of average height.**

Workrooms could have a permanent or portable induction loop installed. However, as mentioned above, it is important that the microphone is pointed directly at the source of sound. At a meeting or press conference, this could require the microphone to be passed around between different speakers and anyone asking questions.

If a stadium installs a permanent induction loop in the stadium bowl and at other locations, separate loop systems will most likely be needed in different environments. If portable induction loops are installed, they should be regularly tested and staff should be trained in how to operate them.

Wherever an induction loop – portable or permanent – is available, signage should be installed using the international T-switch symbol so that deaf and hard of hearing people are aware the service is provided.

Signage should be large, visible among crowds, and use adequate colour contrasting between the sign and the surface it is mounted on, as well as between the written information and background of the sign.

Stadiums are advised to consult local manufacturers, experts and deaf and hard of hearing organisations for further advice and training if needed.



FM radio transmitters

Radio frequency systems use FM radio transmitters and receivers. A low-output FM radio signal is broadcast, and the signal is picked up through a conventional microphone and transmitted through the FM loop. Users can access the signal via a dedicated receiver, which should be provided by the stadium or club. A licence must be obtained for the frequency band, which should be different to the frequency used for audio-descriptive commentary, if available.

An FM radio transmitter may be appropriate for use within the stadium bowl as it can cover large areas effectively. In comparison to an induction loop, an FM loop is usually simpler and cheaper to install. However, due to maintenance costs and additional equipment, FM loops can be more expensive in the long run. In addition, obstructions like

pillars can cause dead spots, which interrupt the service.

As an individual frequency is required for an FM radio transmitter, this system is not suitable for customer service points or meeting rooms. Each location would require its own individual frequency to avoid interference from others. Furthermore, since these signals are available through the public FM radio band, they do not provide secure communication so privacy is not guaranteed.

Passive infrared systems

Passive infrared systems use emitters placed strategically around a room to provide a line-of-sight service to the user, who typically needs a receiver (issued by the club/stadium) to access the signal. **Any physical obstructions between the emitter and the listener can interrupt the**

signal and cause a dead spot. Furthermore, infrared systems can be affected by direct sunlight. These systems are therefore unsuitable for use in a stadium bowl. Maintenance costs can also make passive infrared systems more expensive than induction loops in the long term.

Infrared systems may be appropriate for smaller spaces such as meeting rooms where there are no obstructions (e.g. dividers or pillars) and no direct sunlight. As the signal cannot pass through walls, the system also enables privacy within a room.

Receivers

As detailed above, dedicated receivers are required for users to benefit from passive infrared systems and FM radio transmitters. **The two most common types of receiver are neck loops and devices that use earphones.** Most users prefer discreet models of neck loops, as provide



better quality of sound, enable anonymity and do not require the user to remove their hearing aid.

If a stadium chooses an assistive hearing device that requires receivers, it must provide them.

Receivers must undergo regular testing, battery checks and cleaning.

If a device that requires receivers is installed, the distribution and collection of the receivers is the responsibility of the owner, operator or event organiser, unless otherwise decided. Distribution and collection points should have clear signage featuring the international symbol for deaf and hard of hearing people.

Information about the collection points should be shared with fans in advance of the match and matchday stewards should be aware of the location of the collection points to help direct fans on matchday.

Real-time captioning

Text versions of all spoken words and audio information should be displayed on the main video screens, scoreboards or other dedicated screens located throughout the stadium.

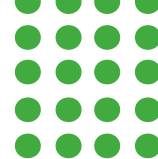
There are two forms of captioning: closed captioning, meaning only viewers who choose to decode or activate the captions see them, and open captioning, which is simply text displayed on a screen or scoreboard for all to see (the kind most commonly used in stadiums).

Captioning can be used on any scoreboard or video screen capable of displaying public announcements, general information and emergency instructions to supplement the public address system for hard of hearing spectators. **It is also advisable, where possible, to integrate sign language interpretation into announcements on stadium screens.**



Warning systems

Warning systems within a stadium usually consist of evacuation signals, announcements over the public address system and visual instructions on electronic scoreboards. In most situations, it is reasonable to expect hard of hearing and deaf spectators to rely on other spectators and staff for emergency warnings. However, there are some situations where they could be on their own, for example in the toilet. **Stadium managers should therefore consider installing flashing warning lights in such areas.**



Audio-descriptive commentary

It is recommended that audio-descriptive commentary be provided for partially sighted and blind spectators at live matches.

This service has also proved popular among other spectators, both disabled and non-disabled. At international matches, major tournaments and competition finals, best practice recommends audio-descriptive commentary be provided in the local language of each team.

Audio-descriptive commentary is a type of commentary that provides additional narration for people with a partial view or no view of the match or activities being described.

It covers all significant visual information that other spectators may take for granted. The specially trained commentator will describe





information such as body language, facial expressions, scenery, action, clothing, colours and anything else that is important to convey the image, venue, match, event or surrounding ambience. The commentator will also describe any pre-match ceremonies or events, where possible.

During the match, the commentator should describe the on-pitch action rather than talking about statistics or tactics or providing lengthy summaries of previous action.

Commentators should only explain what is happening, rather than sharing their own thoughts or interpretations, for example about a player's mindset or a coach's thought process. It is also important for commentators to keep up with play and describe the match as it is happening, so that listeners are fully aware at the same time as their fellow supporters.

An easy way to consider audio-descriptive commentary is to think about how a radio commentator usually delivers information. It is not the same as a TV commentary, as radio listeners rely entirely on the commentator's description whereas TV commentary is designed to complement the visual display on the screen rather than to act as a stand-alone commentary.

However, the difference between radio commentary and audio-descriptive commentary is that radio commentary still assumes a prior visual awareness of the match.

For example, radio commentary will generally not spend time describing the stadium, kit colours or player appearance as it is assumed that listeners already have such an image in their minds. In addition, radio commentary may not provide listeners with the exact location of the ball at all times, meaning the ball can travel vast distances without

listeners being aware. **It is important for blind and partially sighted fans to know where the ball is at all times to follow the action.**

There are a number of ways to provide audio-descriptive commentary, including via a headset, receiver, personal radio or smartphone, and it is important to pick a system that gives the users the greatest choice.

Fixed audio-descriptive commentary

Some stadiums provide audio-descriptive commentary to designated seats only. Where a fixed system is used, the disabled spectator is given a headset that plugs into a receiver point usually located under their seat. The headsets may also be fixed to the seats or handed out at every match. **While this system is relatively easy to manage, it is not inclusive, as it**



does not allow disabled spectators to choose where they sit or with whom. It also limits the number of listeners to the number of designated seats available.

Portable audio-description commentary

It is considered good practice to take an inclusive and accessible approach to all services and facilities and to not unnecessarily limit disabled spectators to one particular section of the stadium. When this approach is applied to audio-descriptive commentary services, the solution is a portable system.

A portable audio-descriptive commentary system broadcasts the commentary across the stadium bowl to listeners who can tune in via a dedicated app, an FM radio (if an FM broadcast frequency is being used), or a headset that can be

used anywhere within the stadium. This means that partially sighted and blind spectators can choose to sit with their friends, family or supporters of their own team rather than in designated areas only. This also allows partially sighted and blind supporters of visiting teams to use the service.

A growing number of venues are offering live audio-descriptive commentary via a dedicated smartphone app. This allows listeners to tune in using their own devices and, in some cases, the service is even made available to listeners outside of the stadium. **It is essential that the stadium's WiFi or mobile network supports rapid delivery of the commentary, since any delay is likely to mean that listeners will miss key moments of the match.**

Commentary equipment

There are several types of audio-descriptive commentary equipment on the market, including radio systems operating across a specific MHz bandwidth within the stadium (subject to local broadcasting licence regulations). **Depending on the system, listeners tune in using either their own compatible mobile devices or a headset provided by the stadium.**

The most inclusive and independent experience for listeners is one where they can simply arrive at the stadium and tune in at their convenience with their own device. The stadium should have a number of headsets or personal radios available for partially sighted and blind spectators to use in case their own devices are not compatible or if their batteries have run out.



Stadium-provided headsets usually offer good sound quality with a range of up to 200m between the transmitter and receiver. The transmitter and receiver have a number of user-selectable radio channels and are operated in the same way as a standard portable radio. Maintenance is usually very low, with both transmitters and receivers running off a standard or common battery supply using rechargeable (with a charger unit) or disposable batteries.

These headsets, consisting of a handheld receiver with headphones or an earpiece, need to be handed out to users before the match and then collected afterwards, and the batteries then recharged ready for the next game. They also need to be tested, cleaned and maintained between matches. The main limitation of this system is the need for distribution and collection.

Users often have to collect and return their receivers and headphones at designated points in the stadium and many stadiums like to take a deposit to ensure the safe return of their equipment after the match. This can mean that users may have to arrive at the stadium and depart at different times from of their fellow supporters, impacting onward travel.

With continued advances in technology, audio-descriptive commentary systems are improving constantly. The venue's technical team responsible for other commentary equipment should be able to advise on the most practical solutions. Local disabled supporter groups and disability organisations can also advise.



Audio-descriptive commentators

The key to a good audio-descriptive commentary service is to ensure that the commentary team are trained to a high standard.

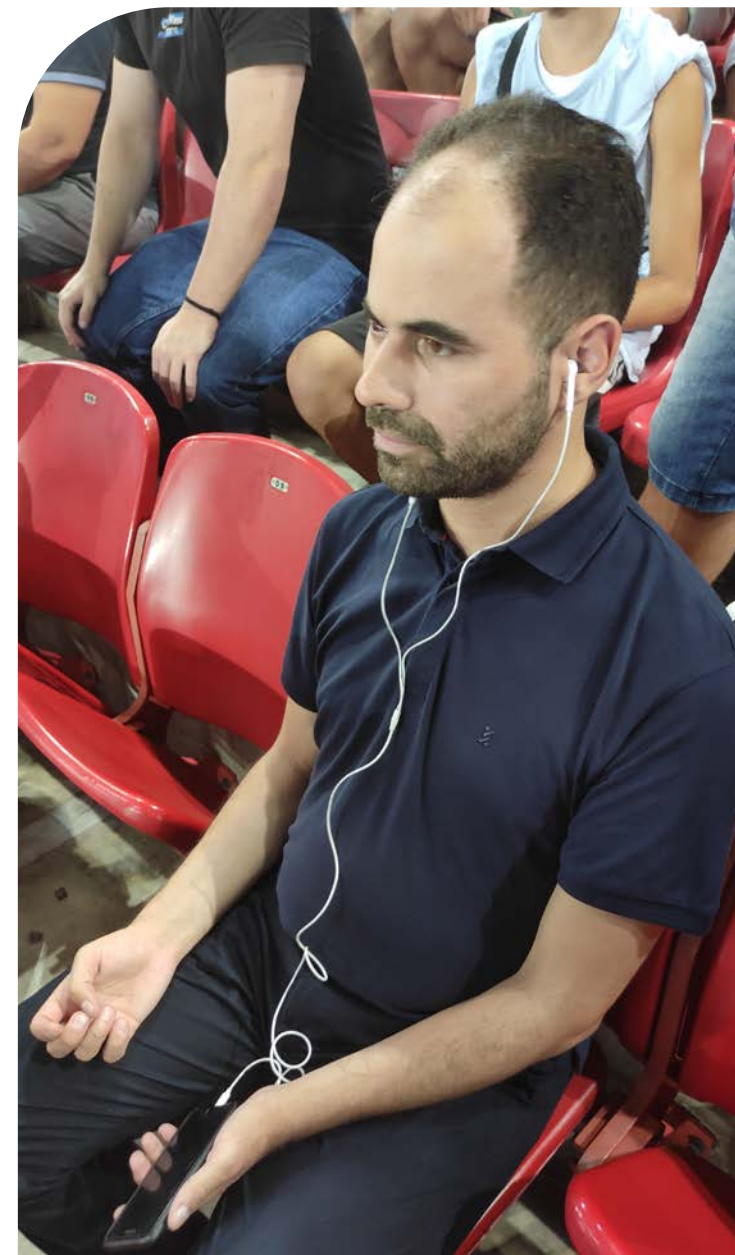
The person providing an audio-descriptive commentary should be specially trained to describe the on-pitch action at all times rather than talking about statistics or tactics or providing lengthy summaries of previous action. Their training should include an introduction to visual awareness followed by sessions on voice, technique, observational skills, preparation and language.

Audio-descriptive commentary training may take a number of weeks. Commentators will improve over time with practice and feedback from expert trainers and listeners.

Audio-descriptive commentators should be viewed like any other media representative and accommodated in the media area on matchdays to ensure that they have a good view of the pitch and stadium and therefore are able to provide an accurate live commentary.

An experienced audio-descriptive commentator will be able to describe the pitch activity, the surrounding atmosphere and any action in the stands to ensure that partially sighted and blind spectators can fully enjoy all aspects of a match. **Due to the fast pace and level of detail required, two audio-descriptive commentators per language should be appointed to deliver the service at each match.**

Usually, these commentators will take turns, providing around 15 minutes of commentary at a time.





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In addition to the stadium itself, all facilities and services should be inclusive and accessible to all. Disabled spectators are no different in wanting to purchase club merchandise and refreshments on matchdays. They may also wish to buy hospitality packages, have access to restaurants and bars and, of course, use the toilet.

Toilets

It is vital to ensure that adequate toilet facilities are provided for disabled people in all areas of the stadium (including those used only on non-matchdays), particularly for wheelchair users, who cannot normally use standard facilities.

As such, accessible toilets should be dispersed around the stadium and located as close as possible to areas used by disabled spectators and staff. **Accessible toilets should never be used as storage areas even on a temporary basis. They should be properly maintained and kept clean and serviced, ready for use.**

Stadium staff and stewards should ensure that specially designated toilets are not abused by non-disabled spectators on matchdays, when demand may be high at peak times such as at half-time or at the end of the match. However,

sensitivity is required, as some people, such as those who have a stoma or non-visible disability, may require an accessible toilet even though it is not immediately obvious.

In assessing the numbers required, designers should consider the time a disabled person may need when going to the toilet (usually longer than a non-disabled person as they may need assistance from a companion to get on and off the toilet) and the demand for accessible toilets at peak times. Accessible toilets should not be gender specific, to enable a companion or personal assistant of a different gender to offer assistance if required.

Accessible toilets should be clearly identified with appropriate signage, including tactile signs for partially sighted and blind people (see [Signage and wayfinding](#)). In addition to the internationally recognised symbol for accessibility, venues are increasingly displaying 'Not all disabilities are



visible' signs. This demonstrates best practice, highlighting that differently disabled people may need to use accessible toilets.

Doors should be fitted with easy-action privacy bolts for people with limited dexterity. It should be possible to open doors with one hand and operate all door handles and locks with a closed fist. Wherever possible, lever-action door handles and locks should be used. Knobs of a circular or spherical design are to be avoided as they are especially difficult for people with limited dexterity, arthritis or a weak grip to use.

All flooring should be of a slip-resistant material and every accessible toilet should contain an emergency pull cord that extends almost to the floor on the transfer side of the toilet so that a disabled person who has fallen to the floor can reach it easily. In addition, the end of the cord should be fitted

with an easy-grab pull ring and the colour of both the cord and pull ring should contrast with the walls (red is a commonly used colour and adding a yellow stripe will assist colour-blind people to see the cord). A reset button should be located within easy reach of the toilet seat in case of accidental activation.

Stadium staff should be alert to the emergency alarm and carry keys so that they can open the toilet door in an emergency. All accessible toilets should be checked ahead of matches to ensure that the pull cords are hanging freely and are not tied up or caught up in other toilet furniture.

It is important to note that some disabled people and people with long-term health conditions use standard toilets rather than accessible toilets. It is therefore recommended that the colour schemes of all toilet blocks incorporate sufficient colour contrasting to assist partially sighted



Image 19 | 'Not every disability is visible' sign on an accessible toilet door at Tottenham Hotspur Stadium in London



and colour-blind people in detecting the floor, walls, doors, fixtures and fittings. For example, all door handles and other fittings should have sufficient colour contrasting against the surface of the door, and the door itself should contrast with the surrounding walls. A black toilet seat is preferable to a white one where the toilet bowl is also white, and walls should use a colour that contrasts sufficiently against the colour of any furniture installed.

While common, green and red lock indicators should be avoided.

Green and red are particularly confusing for many colour-blind people. It is recommended that contrasting colours, such as red and white, are used instead and a strongly contrasting symbol is added to avoid confusion and embarrassment. **A closed sanitary bin should be available in all toilet cubicles, including in the men's toilets, for people who need to**

dispose of a used stoma bag for example. Where possible, these bins should be sensor-operated.

Wheelchair-accessible toilets

It is considered good practice to provide at least one wheelchair-accessible toilet per 15 wheelchair-user spaces, as close as possible to the wheelchair-user viewing areas. The horizontal travel distance from a wheelchair-user space to a wheelchair-accessible toilet should not exceed 40m and the route should remain accessible and free of obstacles at all times.

Wheelchair-accessible toilets should have a clear floor space (i.e. free of furniture or obstructions) of at least 150cm x 150cm to allow a wheelchair user to make a 180° turn. **The total dimensions of a wheelchair-accessible toilet should be at least**

170cm x 220cm to allow a companion or personal assistant to help the disabled person transfer from their wheelchair to the toilet if required.

This is the minimum space required to manoeuvre a wheelchair into and around a toilet cubicle. Where only one wheelchair-accessible toilet is available, the room dimensions should be 220cm x 220cm as a minimum.

It is also important to ensure that there is sufficient transfer space.

Wheelchair users transfer from their wheelchair to the toilet seat in different ways and using different angles depending on their degree of mobility. A clear space, with a minimum width of 73cm, between the wall and the vertical rail will allow a wheelchair user to transfer from their chair to the toilet seat. This clear space should measure at least 103cm if only one wheelchair-accessible toilet is available. **If more than one wheelchair-accessible toilet is available, they should offer different**



Image 20 | Left and right-hand transfer sign at San Mamés Stadium in Bilbao

layouts suitable for left and right-hand transfers from a wheelchair to the toilet seat, as wheelchair users transfer to the toilet seat from different sides depending on their degree of mobility.

Signs should be placed on the toilet doors indicating whether the toilet is a left-hand or right-hand transfer to allow disabled fans to use the facility that is most suitable for them. The locational signage should also be peninsular in design (i.e. protruding from the wall so it can be seen when approaching the facilities).

Identifiable signage should be placed on the toilet door at a height of no more than 140cm from the floor. This signage should strongly contrast against its background environment and contain tactile and Braille symbols.

The toilet flush lever should be placed at a height of 80–100cm on the transfer side of the toilet so that it is

within easy reach of the wheelchair user. Small push-button flushes should be avoided as they are difficult for people with a closed fist, limited dexterity or arthritis to operate. **Some venues may opt to fit an automatic (electronic) flush system as this eliminates the need to reach over the toilet to flush, which can be an unnecessary falling hazard.** However, an automatic system may not be suitable for some wheelchair users. For example, the wheelchair user may accidentally set off the flush whilst transferring, wetting their clothing.

The toilet seat should be at a height of 48cm to facilitate easy and safe transfer. The toilet seat lid should be fitted and supported 10–15° beyond vertical, to act as a backrest. A back support should be installed if there is no seat lid or tank and the toilet tank top or cistern should be securely attached to the near wall.



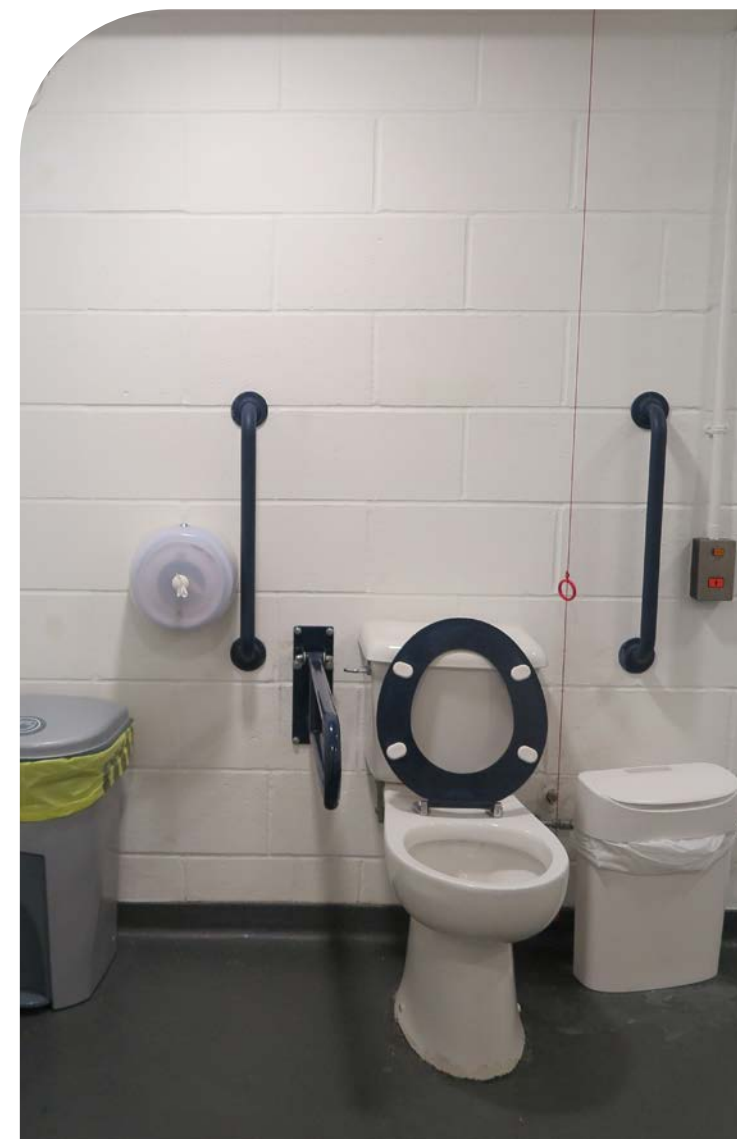
Toilet paper dispensers should be easy to reach from a seated position (80–100cm from the floor) and single-sheet toilet paper dispensers are preferred, as they require only minimal dexterity and grip.

All grab, support and fixed rails should be 68cm above the floor and hinged support or grab rails should be counterbalanced. Hinged support rails should be installed on the open (transfer) side(s) of the toilet at a distance of 32cm from the centre line of the toilet cistern. The length of the support rail should extend 5–10cm beyond the toilet seat. Where the toilet is located on one side of the room, a fixed grab rail should be installed on the side wall next to the toilet. This grab rail can be fitted horizontally or at an angle of 15°. There should be a clear space between the grab rail and the wall of 5–6cm to allow someone to support themselves (see figures [13](#) and [14](#)).

Vertical grab rails located on the open (transfer) side of the toilet should be a minimum of 60cm in length and fixed to the back wall with their centre 110cm above the floor and 47cm from the centre line of the toilet. Maintenance of hinged grab rails should be carried out regularly to ensure that they lift up, fold back down, and lock in place securely. If a hinged grab rail does not lift up and lock into a vertical position, a wheelchair user will encounter difficulties when transferring and using the toilet.

A coat hook should be available at two levels (105cm and 140cm above the floor), along with a small shelf at a height of 90cm that can be reached from the toilet seat by people who use special items such as gloves or stoma bags.

Rubbish, medical waste and sanitary bins should be closed or covered and ideally sensor-operated.





Where possible, foot pedal operated bins should not be used. All bins located in accessible toilets should be positioned so as not to obstruct the transfer side of the toilet, impede access to the hand-washing and drying facilities or encroach on the floor space needed for manoeuvring inside of the toilet. **Other potential obstacles such as cleaning equipment should also not block access to the toilet or other facilities such as the sink.**

A small washbasin should be installed 72–74cm above the floor, with a lever-handle mixer tap (monobloc) or motion-activated tap on the side of the basin nearest the toilet. The washbasin should be accessible both from a wheelchair and when sitting on the toilet and should be large enough to allow for somebody to assist the disabled person. **Height-adjustable washbasins may be considered to accommodate a greater range of disabled people.**

A soap dispenser should be located within easy reach, at a usable height of 100–120cm above the floor. It should be easy to operate, i.e. automated or easy to press. It should be located over the sink and not drip onto the floor causing a slip hazard. Soap dispensers in accessible toilets should be checked ahead of matches to ensure that they are filled up with soap.

A hand dryer should be located no higher than 120cm from the floor and should be easy to operate. Automated hand dryers are preferable as people with limited upper body movement and dexterity can operate these more easily. **Hand dryers can cause difficulties for some neurodivergent spectators, so hand towel dispensers should be installed as an alternative.** Hand towel dispensers should be placed no higher than 120cm from the floor and should contrast with the wall behind. Hand dryers should be checked ahead of matches to ensure

that they are in full working order and hand towel dispensers checked to ensure that they are stocked up with paper towels.

A long mirror should also be installed, extending from 50 to 150cm from the floor to allow both standing and wheelchair users to use it. This mirror should be located away from the sink.



Image 21 | An example of an accessible toilet in the Berlin stadium during UEFA EURO 2024

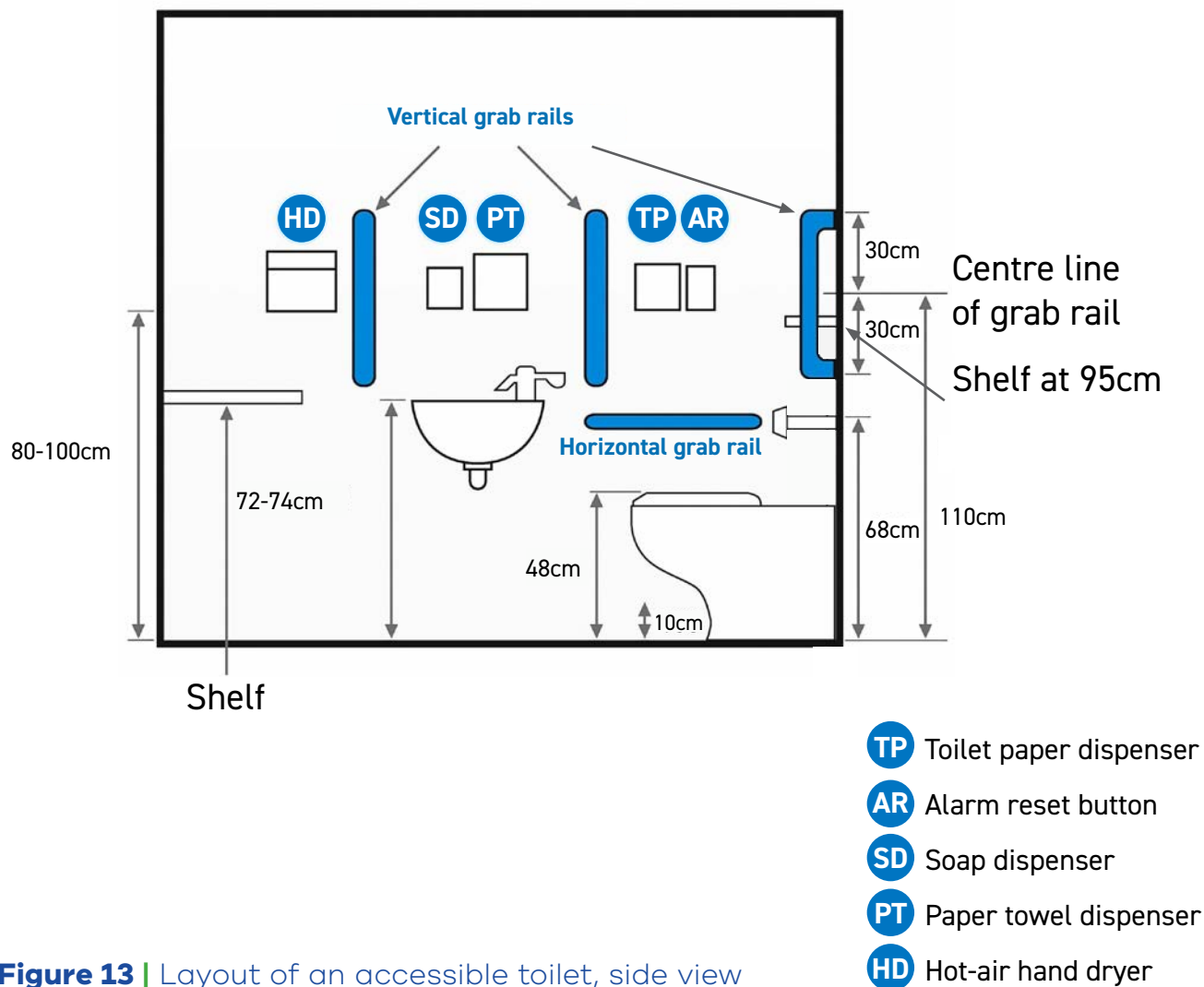


Figure 13 | Layout of an accessible toilet, side view

A smaller mirror should be located above the sink, allowing wheelchair users to view themselves easily.

Toilet doors should open outwards and not into the clear floor space.

It is best practice to paint hatching on the floor of the corridor in front of the toilet door, to warn approaching spectators and staff of a potential hazard. Where it is not possible for the door to open outwards because it would obstruct a circulation route, for example, a clear minimum space of 80 x 140cm should be provided between the door swing and any fittings to allow wheelchair users to access the toilet with the door open.

It must be possible for an inward opening door to open outwards in the event of an emergency.

Automatic door closers should be avoided. A vertical handle measuring at least 30cm in length should be mounted on the pull side of the door, 10cm from the edge of the door and

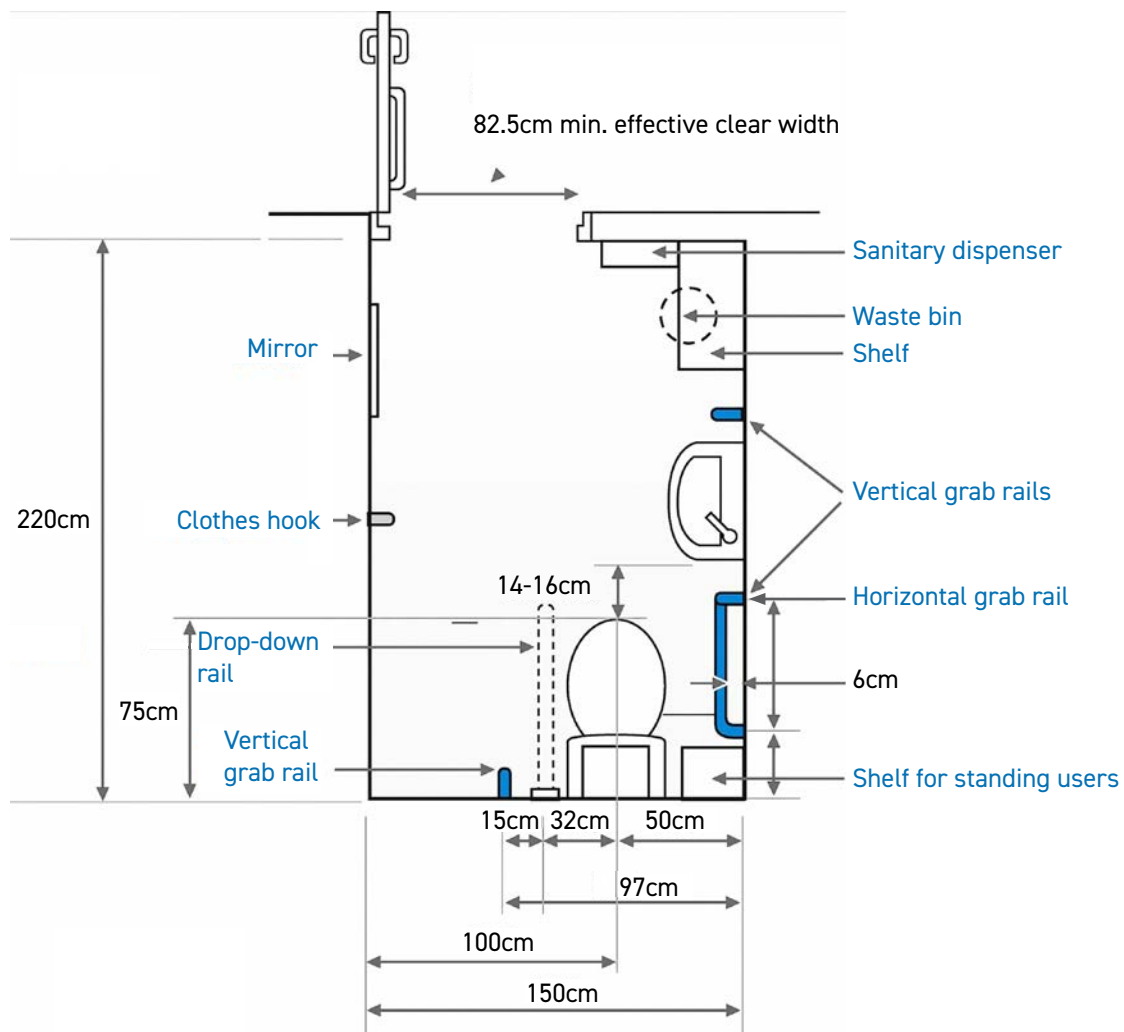
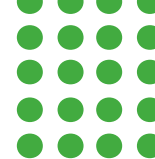


Figure 14 | Layout of an accessible toilet, view from above

70–100cm from the floor. A full-length horizontal grab rail, at 80–105cm from the floor, may be fitted to the inside of the door to help wheelchair users to close the door behind them. There should be a space of 4.5cm between the handle and the door, and the handle should be fixed to the door at each end.

Automatic lighting that activates when the cubicle is occupied should be considered. Otherwise, light switches should be installed inside the cubicle, within easy reach of the doorway and no higher than 120cm above the floor. Where automatic lighting is used, back-up switched lighting should be provided in addition to a motion sensor. **The sensor should be able to detect the presence of people at a lower height, i.e. wheelchair users and people of short stature.** Fixed or time-out automatic lighting systems should be avoided, as a disabled person may require longer than these systems allow for.



Accessible toilets for non-wheelchair users

Within each toilet block, a minimum of one cubicle and at least 10% of all cubicles should be designed for people with limited mobility.

This means they should be fitted with horizontal and vertical support rails and large enough to accommodate people who use crutches or have limited leg movement, as well as allowing space for parents with small children. The door should also open outwards. Ideally, the toilet pan in ambulant disabled toilet cubicles should measure 48cm in height.

Appropriate signage should be installed at the entrance to the toilet block to make spectators aware that these facilities are available. Identifiable signage should also be installed on the ambulant disabled cubicle doors so spectators know which of cubicles are suitable. Please note that there

is not currently an internationally recognised symbol for ambulant disabled spectators but the suggested symbol is a person using walking sticks.

In men's toilets with urinals, at least one urinal per block should be suitable for people with limited mobility. In addition, it is beneficial to offer a lower-level urinal for wheelchair users and people of short stature, which will also benefit children. Vertical hand or grab rails should be provided at accessible urinals where privacy screens are not installed. In all toilet blocks, an unobstructed space that is 80cm wide x 110cm deep should be provided in front of all washbasins, and basin rims should be 78–80cm above the floor. **Where possible, vertical support bars should be fixed to each side of each washbasin for use by people with limited mobility.**



Toilets in first-aid rooms

Disabled people should be able to independently access toilet cubicles incorporated into any new first-aid rooms. When an existing first-aid room is renovated, an accessible toilet should be provided either inside or nearby.



Changing Places toilets

Several football clubs across Europe have installed Changing Places¹² toilets in addition to standard wheelchair-accessible or peninsular toilets. **A Changing Places toilet offers a larger space, changing bench and specialised lifting equipment to accommodate disabled people with complex and multiple needs who often require the help of up to two assistants. Installing a Changing Places toilet will enable a disabled person to attend a match when they might otherwise be unable to without their assistant(s) having to resort to using the toilet floor for changing purposes.**

Changing Places toilets should be at least 12m² and fitted with an H-frame ceiling track hoist system. This hoist

system allows assistants to attach the user's sling to the hoist and move the user to the various items in the facility.

The additional space is also intended to accommodate disabled people who may use large, complex wheelchairs, such as those with elevated leg rests, a reclining facility or integral oxygen cylinders.

A height-adjustable changing bench should be installed to offer a stable platform suitable for changing adults and children. The bench can be manually or electrically operated and wall-mounted or free-standing. A free-standing bench is, in most cases, the preferred choice as it allows for more flexibility in supporting individuals. It should be possible to fix any height-adjustable changing bench at an appropriate, safe working height for

assistants, to reduce the strain on their backs.

Clear signage should indicate the maximum weight for hoists and changing benches. Staff should be trained to check the battery level of the hoist and ensure that it is placed back in its charger after each matchday or public event.



Image 22 | An example of a Changing Places toilet facility with a peninsular toilet at Munich Football Arena

12 [Changing Places](#) is a UK consortium set up in 2006 to design and campaign for people with more complex care needs who cannot use traditional toilet facilities. The organisation has established partnerships in various European countries, as well as countries outside of Europe.



In addition, a peninsular toilet should be installed so that assistance can be given to the disabled person from either or both sides of the toilet. The centre line of the peninsular toilet should be at least 100cm from both side walls. A wide tear-off paper roll to cover the changing bench and a large sanitary disposal unit should be provided. A privacy screen or curtain should also be installed in case a companion would like to use the toilet. A shelf for stoma bags should be fitted for those who need to use it.

A Changing Places toilet should be located near potential users' seating areas. Information and good signage throughout the stadium grounds are vital in informing users and companions of its location. **Stadiums and clubs should ensure that information about Changing Places toilets, including the need to bring the user's sling, is readily available on their websites and within the stadium grounds.**

Matchday stewards should also be

made aware of the location of any Changing Places toilets to be able to direct disabled spectators to them.

These facilities are not designed for independent wheelchair users but enable a diverse group of disabled people with complex requirements and needs, including older autistic people who require support for personal care, to attend and enjoy matches. Owners, operators and event organisers can avoid discriminating by providing a Changing Places toilet at their stadium. Depending on the size of the stadium, it may even be necessary to have more than one Changing Places toilet available. It is important that all disabled fans in all areas of the stadium, including away sections, are able to access a Changing Places toilet if needed. In some regions, it may be possible to hire a mobile Changing Places toilet on matchdays, until a permanent facility can be installed.

For further information on designing and installing Changing Places toilets, please visit the [Changing Places website](#).





First-aid rooms

First-aid rooms must be able to accommodate disabled as well as non-disabled spectators and staff.

They should be clearly signposted and easily identifiable, using internationally recognised symbols for first aid, and where possible, accessibility. The entrance and room itself should be step free and large enough to accommodate a wheelchair user and their companion or personal assistant, bearing in mind that either of them could be in need of first aid.

Accessible (easy-access) chairs with armrests should be available for accompanying friends or relatives with limited mobility. In addition, an adjustable examination couch should be provided for people with limited mobility or of short stature.

As always, it is also important to ensure a sufficient visual contrast between all first-aid room equipment and furniture and their surroundings to assist blind, partially sighted and colour-blind patients or companions.

The first-aid room should at least be located close to an accessible toilet or Changing Places toilet, but ideally there should be one within the first-aid room itself.

The event organiser should also ensure that an emergency procedure is in place to safely escort a disabled person located anywhere within the stadium, including any designated wheelchair-user areas, to the first-aid room.

All first-aid room staff and volunteers should be trained in disability etiquette and accessibility awareness, so that they are easily able to assist and communicate with a disabled person, be they a patient

or an accompanying relative or friend. **It is important to note that first-aid or emergency services personnel may be colour blind and therefore all first-aid equipment must also be accessible, e.g. avoid stretcher trolleys with red and green height adjustment indicators.**





Refreshment facilities

Disabled people should be able to make independent, unimpeded use of refreshment facilities, including self-service outlets. Bars and service counters should be close to disabled spectator viewing areas and accessible to all, including wheelchair users and partially sighted and blind people.

It should be noted that disabled spectators may experience difficulty using both toilet and refreshment facilities during the limited time available at half-time, when circulation areas within the stadium are often at their most congested. In this case, stadiums may wish to provide a refreshment order service (often known as an at-seat delivery service) for disabled spectators, through an app, online or handled by

volunteers and staff. Walking food and drink vendors, selling a choice of beverages and food services, may also be an effective solution in disabled spectator viewing areas. It is also beneficial to have matchday stewards located near to food and drink counters to provide assistance to disabled supporters making purchases, i.e. by carrying food and drinks back to seating areas. However, wherever possible, the stadium facilities themselves should be inclusive and accessible, allowing disabled spectators to mix with fellow spectators in the refreshment areas.

All refreshment counters and bars should be designed with a lower section no higher than 85cm from the floor, with at least 70cm of clear space beneath. It should be noted that low-level counters may not be accessible to some disabled fans. Therefore, clubs may also choose to offer an additional priority lane for disabled customers.



Where low-level counters and priority lanes exist, large signage that uses the internationally recognised symbol for accessibility and is visible in crowded environments should be installed to indicate the location of these amenities for disabled spectators.

Front-facing cash registers with a digital display are recommended at counters as they benefit deaf and hard of hearing fans as well as spectators who are not familiar with the local language. Queue rails (fixed or moveable) should not obstruct the width of the queue lane. Extendable card readers/process data quickly (PDQ) machines should be provided to allow disabled spectators to make payments independently.

All menus should include images, and it is recommended that handheld menus are available so that disabled spectators can point to refreshments. Allergen information

must be conveyed using means other than colour alone, e.g. codes or symbols. **When seating and tables are available, level access and removable seating, or no seating at all in some areas, should be available to accommodate wheelchair users.**

Table legs or bases should be set in from the table edge to allow

wheelchair users to use the tables. A number of seats with armrests should also be included to help ambulant disabled people to sit down and stand up. **Where possible, a range of high and low tables and seating options should be available to support differently disabled customers.**





VIP and hospitality areas

As explained earlier, all areas of the stadium, including the VIP and directors' boxes and corporate and hospitality suites, should be accessible to disabled people, along with any adjoining facilities and amenities. Inclusive design principles should be implemented in these areas, and improvements should be made where required to ensure equal access.

A mixture of higher and lower-level tables should be available in bar and restaurant areas, with step-free access to all levels.

Passageways should be clear of furniture to allow disabled fans to move around freely. **Food and drink stations should be designed with consideration for a range of differently disabled guests, and**

should include lower-level sections where possible. Relevant staff members should receive training on how to support disabled guests appropriately and considerately (see [Training for accessibility](#) for further information).

It is not acceptable to ask a disabled VIP or hospitality guest to sit somewhere else, e.g. in general allocation areas. Many stadiums are able to create wheelchair user spaces on demand, simply by removing seating in the relevant box/sector.



Retail outlets and other commercial areas

Many football clubs and stadiums have retail outlets that sell club merchandise and memorabilia, which have become an important and valuable source of income. Several stadiums also have museums and conference facilities, which are often open on non-matchdays. **It is important that these areas are fully accessible, as disabled supporters are no different from non-disabled supporters in wishing to purchase merchandise, attend club events and participate in other activities.** This means facilitating physical access as well as ensuring that any services and information provided are accessible and inclusive and that alternative formats, such as paper copies of a

conference agenda, are provided when needed. **If customer outlets are not accessible, it is not only the engagement of disabled people that may be lost, but also that of their friends and families.**

Club shops should provide low-level service counters with front-facing tills and portable or extendable payment readers. In addition, an accessible changing room large enough for a wheelchair user and a companion to enter should be available.

More and more clubs are now incorporating an 'autism hour' to welcome autistic fans and those with sensory processing disabilities into their shops. This includes dimming the lights, reducing background noise and making sure staff are adequately trained. Supporters with dementia may also benefit from quiet hours in club shops as the environment is calmer and quieter. **Merchandise labels should also include basic**

colour names to ensure that colour-blind people can identify the colour of the product.





Media and staff

There are an increasing number of accredited disabled press and other media representatives, including match photographers. They should be provided with accessible facilities and services just like spectators. This includes access to the accreditation centre, media working area, media conference room and interview area. **The media tribune should be accessible and should feature a wheelchair-accessible media desk.** In the media conference room, an accessible stage should be provided to accommodate speakers using wheelchairs. An induction (hearing) loop should also be installed for deaf and hard of hearing media representatives (see [Providing accessible information](#)). Accessible toilets should be located close to media working areas.

In older stadiums, TV and radio broadcasters may need to set up

temporary facilities from which to cover a match, which may involve laying temporary cables. **With careful planning, it should be possible to ensure that cables do not cross pedestrian pathways or access routes.** Where this is not possible, it is vital that cables are suitably covered to preserve access and allow wheelchair users and others to cross safely and easily. Covers should provide a gentle ramp over cables and contrast visually with the surrounding surfaces to make them easily identifiable by partially sighted and colour-blind people. For example, stadiums should not use red warning covers against green or dark backgrounds.

Beyond the media, accessibility should be considered in the design and operation of all the stadium's staff and volunteer working areas to ensure that disabled people can fully contribute to the administration and delivery of football activities and events.



UEFA ACCESSIBILITY GUIDELINES

Leaving the stadium

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#FOOTBALL



It is important to ensure the safety of disabled spectators, VIP and hospitality guests and staff before, during and after the match, which includes when they are leaving the stadium. Event hosts should bear in mind that, although not all spectators arrive at the stadium at the same time, they all want to leave the ground simultaneously.

Exit routes

As explained earlier, most guidance recommends that disabled spectators be accommodated throughout the stadium, which means providing accessible entry and exit routes for each stand wherever possible. However, much will depend on the design of the stadium, the number of accessible areas and entrances provided and the safety plan implemented within the stadium.

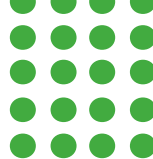
Many existing stadiums, in particular, have limited points of access for disabled people. However, even in these situations, with smart design solutions and alterations it should be possible to create more accessible entrances and exits to ensure greater choice for disabled people. **Exit routes are commonly just the reverse of the arrival routes.** However, if different exit routes are

in use, matchday stewards should be available to help direct disabled supporters to these exit points, and appropriate directional signage visible in crowded areas should be installed.

Appropriate lighting should be in place on exit routes for the benefit of all spectators, but particularly disabled fans, who leave the stadium when it is dark.

Any services in place to help disabled spectators reach the stadium, such as wheelchair loans or accessible shuttle buses, should also be available post-match. It is reasonable to expect that if these services are required before kick-off, they will also be needed to enable disabled spectators to exit the stadium in a timely and safe manner.

Safety procedures should prevent confusion and conflict between disabled and non-disabled spectators during both normal stadium exits and emergency evacuations.



Emergency systems and response

In all work relating to safety and emergency systems and responses, it is crucial to seek advice from local experts. The information provided here is for reference only. Different regulations, legislation and standards may apply locally.

The key to accessible emergency services is planning. Stadium managers should be aware of the steadily increasing number of active disabled people in the community and hence at their stadium on matchday. They should ensure that all emergency planning includes an analysis of how best to serve disabled and non-disabled people. **Just like good access planning, proper evacuation, first-aid and emergency**

procedures must take into account the specific needs of disabled people. In any case, measures that help people find their way, especially in an unfamiliar environment, are essential for everyone, not just those with specific access requirements.

It does not always follow that a person who is hard of hearing is completely insensitive to sounds; many are sensitive enough to conventional audible alarm signals to require no special provisions. In most situations, it would also be reasonable for hard of hearing and deaf spectators to rely on other spectators and staff for emergency warnings. **However, a visual fire alarm or strobe warning system in conjunction with audible signals should also be considered.** Such systems should, in particular, be visible in accessible toilets, standard toilet blocks and cubicles and in front of lifts throughout the stadium. **Safety and emergency**





information should also always be communicated on scoreboards or video screens throughout the stadium.

While red text on black scoreboards is often used, this colour combination is not accessible to many colour-blind people. Combinations such as white or bright yellow text on a black background benefit a much wider population. To ensure that written information is accessible to all, the colour contrast ratio for digital information should be at least 3:1 in accordance with minimum standard AA rating described in the W3C guidelines. Alternative means of raising the alarm include paging systems and vibrating devices.

Emergency equipment, including fire alarms, fire extinguishers and defibrillators, must be installed at an accessible height so that anyone, including wheelchair users, can reach them in an emergency.

Equipment such as fire alarms and emergency door release buttons should be mounted against surfaces with sufficient colour contrast to be easily found. Sufficient colour contrast means a minimum light reflectance value (LRV) differential of 30 between two surfaces. However, note that even where sufficient colour contrast is achieved, the equipment may still not stand out to colour blind people. **Consider edging emergency equipment and signage in bright yellow to ensure that they are easy to spot in an emergency situation.**

Easy-to-read, low-mounted emergency procedures and exit route maps should also be located around the stadium. They should be fully accessible to colour-blind spectators, stewards, emergency personnel, players and other staff.

Stadium staff should be trained to facilitate the safe evacuation of disabled people from all areas

of the stadium in an emergency, and response teams should be aware that not all disabilities are visible. As such, they should have an understanding of common health issues and conditions faced by disabled people, to ensure that they can provide the appropriate response.

Ambulant disabled people should be provided with a choice of more than one entrance and exit route. In addition, special equipment should be available to assist their evacuation. This could include spare wheelchairs or specialised evacuation chairs.

Safety measures are, of course, a critical part of stadium management. However, they should not place undue restrictions on disabled people. **As previously explained, accessible design should mean disabled spectators can be accommodated at all levels of the stadium (not just pitchside), without jeopardising their safety or that of others.**

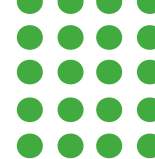


Image 23 | Accessible refuge point at the Stade de Bordeaux

Horizontal escape

Traditional fire safety standards mandate keeping escape routes clear, providing fire warning tones or signals and enabling people to escape independently via steps and stairs. **This is clearly inadequate for some disabled people, but stadiums can make satisfactory provisions for assisted escape by using appropriate fire-resistant construction methods and devising a comprehensive escape management system in conjunction with the local safety authorities and fire services.** If evacuation routes are shared by disabled and non-disabled spectators, it is also important that stadium managers ensure that staff and matchday stewards are trained in disability awareness and alerted to potential safety conflicts in the event of an emergency.

Refuges

A refuge is an area built to withstand fire for at least half an hour and providing a safe escape route to the final exit, via a protected stairway or external escape route. Where possible, emergency lift access should be provided, but in all cases the escape routes from refuges on all levels must comply with local regulations and safety standards and must be approved with the local safety authorities and fire services.

Refuges are designed as a temporarily safe space for disabled people to wait for an evacuation lift or assistance up or down stairs.

They must be large enough and sufficient in number to accommodate the maximum number of disabled people (and their companions) anticipated by the venue on all levels at full capacity. **It should be noted that some non-disabled people may also need to be accommodated**



if they are unable to use escape stairs, for example because they are temporarily injured.

A refuge can be a compartment of the building separated from any potential fire source or a protected lobby, corridor or stairway. A refuge may also be an open area such as a flat roof, balcony or podium that is sufficiently protected or distant from any fire risk and has its own means of escape.

Whatever the area used, each refuge must provide sufficient space for wheelchair users to manoeuvre and all those in need of the refuge to wait to be evacuated, without having an adverse effect on other people's evacuation.

It is also recommended that a system of two-way communication between each refuge and the fire control point be provided so that disabled people are not left unassisted in an emergency. Clear safety instructions should be available, using internationally recognised symbols, adequate colour

contrast and clear and concise text. **An induction (hearing) loop should be incorporated to facilitate communication with deaf and hard of hearing people.**

Evacuation lifts

In a stadium, an evacuation lift is likely to be a practical necessity to ensure rapid escape for disabled people, particularly wheelchair users.

A normal passenger lift may only be used for emergency evacuations if it has the safeguards required of an evacuation lift. Unlike a normal passenger lift, an evacuation lift is able to continue to operate with a reasonable degree of safety in the event of a fire. **This is only possible where suitable safeguards to the lift engineering system and the lift shaft construction exist.** Even with these safeguards, a lift can fail. Therefore, it is crucial that all refuges with evacuation lifts also provide



Image 24 | Evacuation lift sign at Sweden's Nationalarenan



access to a protected staircase that wheelchair users can be carried down as a last resort (more information on escape stairs is provided later in this section).

A firefighting lift, primarily intended for use by firefighters, may also be used to evacuate disabled people. Arrangements could be made by the stadium manager to initiate this evacuation by assuming control of these lifts until the arrival of the firefighters, who can then continue the evacuation of any disabled people still in the premises. Such lifts must comply with local safety and emergency regulations and meet the requirements for evacuation lifts. It is also essential to liaise with the relevant fire safety authority to coordinate procedures for the use of a firefighting lift for evacuation purposes.

All evacuation lifts should be clearly indicated as such, with signage

on every level. An evacuation lift should be situated within a protected enclosure consisting of the lift shaft itself and a protected lobby on each level served by the lift. The protected enclosure should also contain a protected stairway. **For lifts serving more than two storeys, evacuation lifts should contain a switch that brings the lift to the final exit (usually ground level), overriding the call buttons and enabling an authorised person to take control.**

The primary electrical supply should be from a sub-main circuit exclusive to that lift. **The lift should also have a secondary supply from an independent main or emergency generator and an automatic switch for changing from one to the other.**

Any electrical substation, distribution board or generator supplying the lift should be able to withstand the effects of fire for at least as long as the lift shaft itself.

Evacuation chairs

In the event of an emergency in which an evacuation lift cannot be used, an evacuation chair may be deployed to get disabled people down flights of stairs quickly and safely. **An evacuation chair enables a single user to evacuate a disabled or injured person down a stairway in the chair with no heavy lifting or manual handling.**

There are a number of evacuation chairs available on the market. The minimum requirements are that they are lightweight and easy to use. They should be wall-mountable or foldable so that they can be stored safely in refuges and key evacuation areas for use in case of an emergency. **Equipment should be properly maintained and checked regularly.** Any faults should be serviced by local contractors and fire safety experts. All staff should know where evacuation chairs are



stored and be trained and able to use them correctly in the event of an emergency.

If it is necessary to transfer a wheelchair user from their wheelchair to an evacuation chair, care should be taken to do so safely and to secure the person in the evacuation chair, which should be fitted with a safety strap or harness.

Escape stairs

Where a refuge area does not have emergency lift access, the stairs serving it should comply with the corresponding safety evacuation requirements. As a rule, they should have a maximum riser of 17cm, instead of the 18cm allowed for stairs elsewhere.

In general, narrow staircases with tight turnings are deemed unsuitable for escape purposes. **Staircases need to be of such a width that**

wheelchairs and their occupants can be carried down them if necessary.

The minimum width for any part of a stadium escape system is 110cm for existing premises and 120cm for new builds. If the handrails project more than 10cm from the edge of the stairs, these minimum dimensions apply between the handrails.

Handrails and exit arrows

The design of handrails for escape stairs requires particular attention.

They should contrast visually with the supporting walls. They also need to be continuous and large enough and far enough from the wall to allow a firm grasp. **It is also recommended that they be marked with arrows indicating the direction to the nearest exit level on every level other than the ground or exit floor.**

Wheelchair stairlifts

Where wheelchair stairlifts are used for normal access, they should not be used as a means of escape.

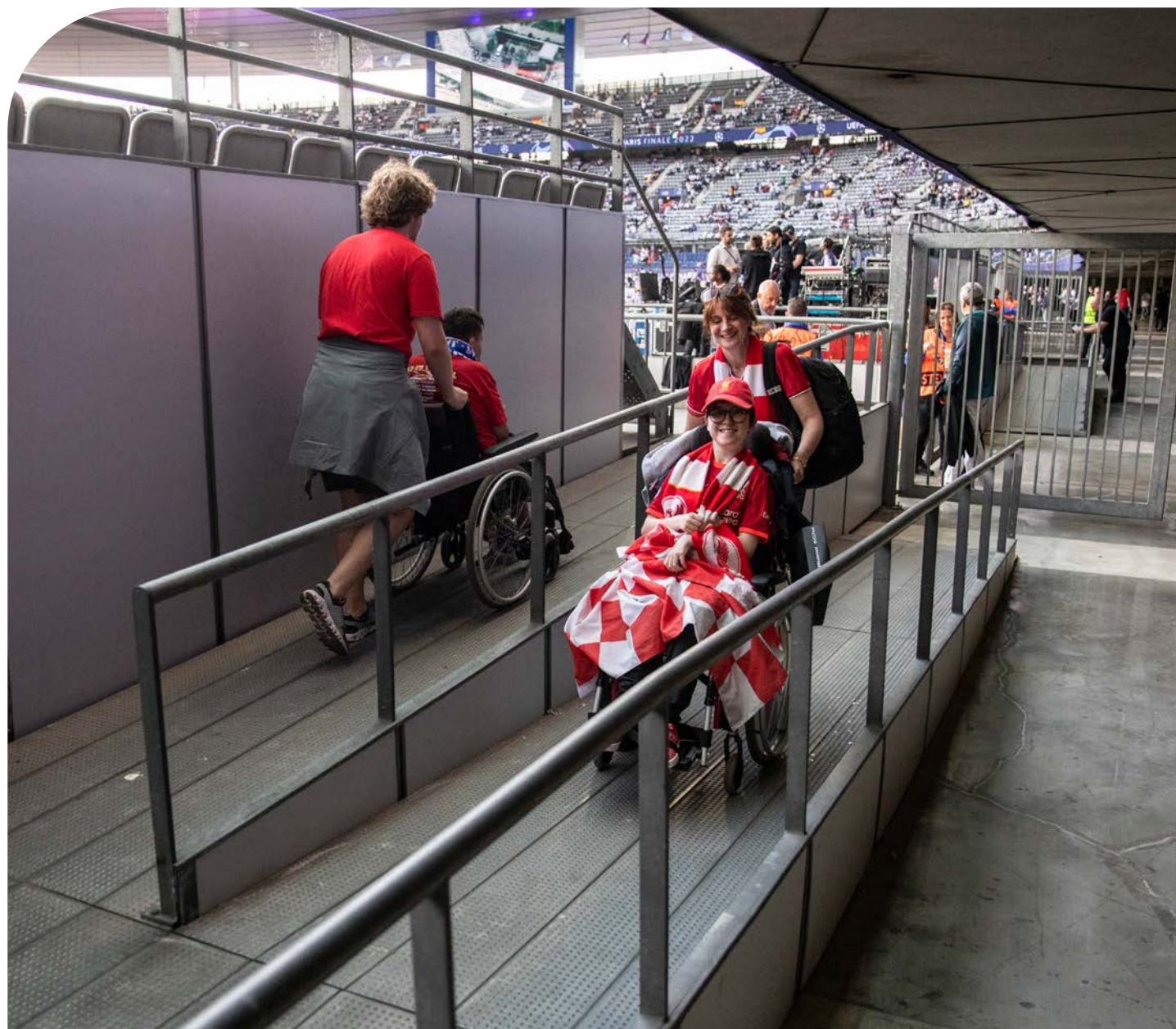
However, where stairlifts are installed in a stairway also used for emergency evacuation, it is essential that the stairway width required for escape stairs is not reduced by any fixed part of the stairlift, such as its carriage rail. Allowances may also need to be made elsewhere in the escape route for space taken up by other parts of the stairlift installation, such as its power unit and the lift itself when not in use.

Ramps

Ramps can be a useful alternative to stairs, but concerns have been raised about their suitability for small changes in level within stadiums, as they may not be easy to see during an emergency evacuation. Where they are



necessary, the gradient should be as gentle as possible and they should comply with local building and safety regulations. They should also include clear signage and sufficient colour contrasting to alert people to the change in level. See [Ramps](#) for general information on ramps.





UEFA ACCESSIBILITY GUIDELINES

Training for accessibility

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Well-designed facilities should reduce the need for additional stewarding and matchday staff.

However, regardless of how well designed the facilities are, access awareness and disability etiquette training remain crucial to delivering truly accessible services. **It is generally acknowledged that attitudinal and communication barriers, as well as misconceptions and stereotypes, can be even harder to overcome than architectural obstacles.**

Event hosts should therefore ensure that all customer service staff and matchday stewards and volunteers are well trained and sensitive to the needs of disabled people. **Familiarity with all the stadium facilities and services, including their location and means of access, is an essential part of this training.** Easy-to-understand stadium guides containing

information about the available accessible facilities and services and how to find them are a valuable tool for staff and disabled spectators alike. **These guides typically include information such as the locations of accessible toilets and stadium exits, how to tune in to audio-descriptive commentary and who to contact with any issues or concerns.**

Staff and stewards should receive general disability etiquette training as well as job and venue-specific access awareness training. This training aims to enhance understanding and eliminate misconceptions around disability for all customer service staff and volunteers. **Training should equip staff with the tools and confidence they need to apply basic disability etiquette and access awareness in their roles.** It should be effective, culturally appropriate and focused on practical ways to ensure a high-quality matchday experience for all disabled spectators. It should also

cover how to communicate effectively with disabled spectators.

The designated disability access officer should be involved in pre-match planning with the stadium manager and ensure that stewards and matchday staff are fully trained and capable of handling access and disability issues, including getting to, from and around the stadium, car parking, facilities (including toilets, catering and club shops), spectator viewing areas and emergency evacuation procedures.



Assisting a disabled person

It should not be assumed that a disabled person needs assistance just because they are disabled.

What might look like a struggle to you may simply be someone managing perfectly well at their own pace and in their own way. Always ask first, and if the disabled person tells you they do not need your help, do not impose your assistance or take offence at your offer being refused.

Be proactive and offer assistance if you think it is required, but never touch a disabled person or their mobility aid without their permission. It is impolite and may also affect their balance. If a disabled person requests assistance getting to their seating area or other facilities and you are unable to leave your position, call one of your colleagues for assistance.

If a wheelchair user requests your help getting somewhere, first ask where they want to go and then tell them you are about to push them.

When escorting a partially sighted or blind person, you should allow them to grip your elbow and walk beside you. **Always describe your path or the route you are taking, e.g. “Another few metres and we will be turning left” or “We are just about to reach some downward steps”.** It is also helpful to inform the partially sighted or blind person of any possible obstructions along the way, such as barriers or other people. When you reach the destination, let the disabled person know where they are and, if necessary, ask another member of staff to take over.

If the disabled person has an [assistance dog](#), they may prefer to walk independently beside you. Assistance dogs are highly trained and you should not touch, pat,

feed or distract them while they are working.

Most important of all, do not worry about interacting with disabled people. They will not mind if you make a mistake as long as you treat them with respect and understanding.





Safeguarding disabled children and young people

Whenever a disabled child or young person (defined as any person under the age of 18) is involved in an event or activity, it is important to ensure that the environment is respectful and enjoyable, but also safe. **Child and youth protection is a key pillar in UEFA's approach to sustainability, and its intersection with disability and accessibility is important to consider.** Learn more about child and youth safeguarding in football on [UEFA's dedicated learning platform](#).

Disabled children may participate in matchday activities, for example as player escorts, flag carriers or ceremony participants. Therefore, it is important that everyone involved is made aware of the guidelines on child

and youth safeguarding, and what to do if they have concerns about the behaviour of any other person in this regard. It is also important to provide this information to employees engaging with disabled spectators and fans, some of whom are likely to be disabled.

The responsibility for defining and implementing such guidelines lies with an organisation's child and youth protection officer or event child safeguarding lead (both of these terms are used across European football). **To ensure that the specific needs of disabled children and young people are considered, the organisation or its DAO should work closely with this person in the development and implementation of safeguarding policies and procedures.**

UEFA has issued competition-specific guidance for organisers and national association child and youth protection officers to assist in the



development and implementation of safeguarding guidelines.

The child and youth protection officer or event child safeguarding lead should perform risk assessments to cover all potential risks to the health, safety, protection and well-being of children and young people. If disabled children or young people are involved in an event, it is advisable to involve the DAO in this risk assessment.

All participation of children or young people in matchday activities requires a parental consent form and a medical form. There should be clear processes for registration, procedures in case a child goes missing, rules for filming, photography and the use of mobile phones, and reporting and referral. **For activities involving disabled children or young people, clear procedures regarding dedicated accessibility should be developed with the assistance of the DAO.**

Minimising safeguarding risks relies on thorough preparation and on-site organisation. To a large extent, it also relies on the cooperation, behaviour and understanding of venue staff,

as well as all volunteers and service providers who might interact with both disabled and non-disabled children and young people in match operations.





Communicating effectively

Effective communication is important when assisting any spectator, and particularly important for some disabled people, such as partially sighted, blind, hard of hearing and deaf people (see [Providing accessible information](#)).

When talking to a disabled person about a concern, it is important to always address them directly, not somebody accompanying them, and to do so in a respectful manner. Try to take a step back, crouch or sit down when talking to a wheelchair user so they can see you easily without straining their neck or having to look up at you. You may also need to move to a quieter location to ease communication.

Be sure to listen. **If a person is intellectually disabled or has speech or language difficulties, be aware that it may be necessary to wait longer than you are used to for them to explain themselves, ask a question or provide an answer.** You should never finish someone's sentences for them. Always listen carefully and patiently to what they are saying and if you do not understand them do not be afraid to ask them to repeat themselves. Alternatively, repeat back to them what you think they have said to make sure that you have heard them correctly.

Hard of hearing and deaf people may need to lip-read. If so, face them directly when talking and do not conceal your mouth or face. Be aware that bright sunlight or shadows can obscure expressions, making lip-reading difficult. Speak clearly using short, straightforward sentences, but at your normal speed and in your normal tone, unless the

person specifically asks you to speak louder or slower. **If they have not understood you, do not be afraid to repeat yourself or try to rephrase what you are saying.** Some hard of hearing, deaf and intellectually disabled people may find it easier if you also use hand gestures or a map when giving directions. If you have not been understood, offer to communicate using a mobile phone or tablet, or even a pen and paper. **If using a mobile phone or tablet, increase the brightness and font size to assist with effective communication.** When talking to an intellectually disabled person, it is especially important to use positive, straightforward sentences, such as "Are you looking for the seating area?" rather than "You're not looking for the seating area are you?"



Inclusive language

UEFA uses identity or disability-first terms. Such terms correspond to the [social model of disability](#), according to which people are disabled by barriers in society, not by their impairment or difference.

It is vital for all of us to do our best to use the correct terms when referring to disabled people and move away from more negative, derogatory or stereotypical words and expressions.

Be careful about portraying a disabled person or person with a long-term health condition as 'special'; needing or wanting pity or sympathy; being a 'victim'; 'suffering' from their condition; or being 'courageous', 'inspiring' or 'heroic' because of their condition. Even if intended to praise the person, such terms and euphemisms can be patronising.

Table 3 | Examples of inclusive and non-inclusive language

Inclusive language	Non-inclusive language
a disabled person, disabled people	handicapped person, person with a disability
accessible toilets/lifts/parking	disabled toilets/lifts/parking (The toilets/lifts/parking bays are not disabled.)
deaf person, blind or partially sighted person, disability football, blind football, cerebral palsy football	football for 'the disabled', 'the blind', 'the deaf', etc. (Do not use adjectives as a catch-all noun.)
non-disabled people	able-bodied people
person who has cerebral palsy, person living with epilepsy	person suffering from/afflicted by
wheelchair user	wheelchair-bound/confined to a wheelchair

It will take time for society to change, but the football family can take an important lead in helping to remove negative stereotypes and images of disabled people.



Basic disability etiquette

Disabled people expect the same customer service as non-disabled people. Disability and equality etiquette training is essentially about providing good customer service. To understand exactly what a disabled spectator wants, it is important to concentrate on the person, rather than their disability or condition. Their specific requirements may be different from those of non-disabled spectators, but the venue staff's approach to them should remain the same. **The aim is simply to remove any barriers that may restrict their use of the services and facilities.**

The disabled people that staff encounter will mostly be colleagues and volunteers working at the stadium or spectators coming to the stadium for a good time. They do not

require pity, just consideration and good service.

It is important to remember that not all disabled people use a wheelchair and that many have to deal with a range of physical, sensory and attitudinal barriers as well as barriers related to information, communications, operations and policies. For instance, some partially sighted and blind people also have limited mobility, so may use a walking aid, such as a stick, frame or crutches. Similarly, some intellectually disabled people may also be blind or deaf or use a wheelchair. In addition, many disabled people have non-visible disabilities or long-term health conditions such as arthritis, cancer, epilepsy, heart problems, breathing difficulties, mental health issues and hearing loss. These people may also need extra consideration and support when using facilities and services, much like wheelchair users and blind or partially sighted people.



Disability hate crimes, hate incidents and abuse

Disability hate crimes are criminal offences committed against disabled people, or people perceived to be disabled, that are motivated by hostility and prejudice towards disabled people. If people are targeted for their actual or perceived disability but the incident is not a criminal offence (under local law), it is classified as a disability hate incident.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), disabled people face 1.5 times more violence than non-disabled people.¹³

The Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) emphasises the issue of hate crimes against disabled people, noting that these incidents are often “widely unknown, hidden and misunderstood”.¹⁴ This underlines the importance of recognising the magnitude of the problem as the first step towards effectively countering these hate crimes. The OSCE provides resources for recognising and reporting hate crimes against disabled people, aiming to bring attention to how hate crime affects different groups.

For some European disabled people, safety and security are rights that is frequently denied. **Violence and hostility based on a person’s disability can occur in the street, on public transport, at work, at home and online.** As a result, disabled

people begin to accept it as part of everyday life and are often forced to go to extraordinary lengths to avoid it, thereby limiting their lives. **Such abuse stems from ignorance, prejudice, discrimination and hate, and it has no place in society or in football.** Feeling or being unsafe or unwelcome as a result of being shunned, rejected, negatively stereotyped or subjected to violence or harassment has a significant negative impact on disabled people’s sense of security and well-being. It also significantly impacts their ability to participate both socially and economically in their communities.

According to Scope’s 2017 survey of football fans in the UK, nearly 40% of disabled spectators have experienced negative attitudes from other fans. A further 29% reported being subject to verbal disability abuse at matches.



13 [WHO - Violence against adults and children with disabilities](#)

14 [OSCE - Disability Hate Crime](#)



These experiences further exclude disabled fans from football, with 62% saying they would not return to watch live matches.

Incidents are severely under-reported and most European countries fail to record specific data on disability hate crimes. According to the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), only 15 countries in Europe recorded incidences of hate crime against disabled people in 2022.¹⁵

To address the growing trend of such incidents, AccessibAll has developed a disability hate incident reporting tool. **Anybody who witnesses a disability hate incident is encouraged to submit an online report, whether the incident took place inside or outside a stadium or on social media.** Stakeholders across the game should encourage disabled

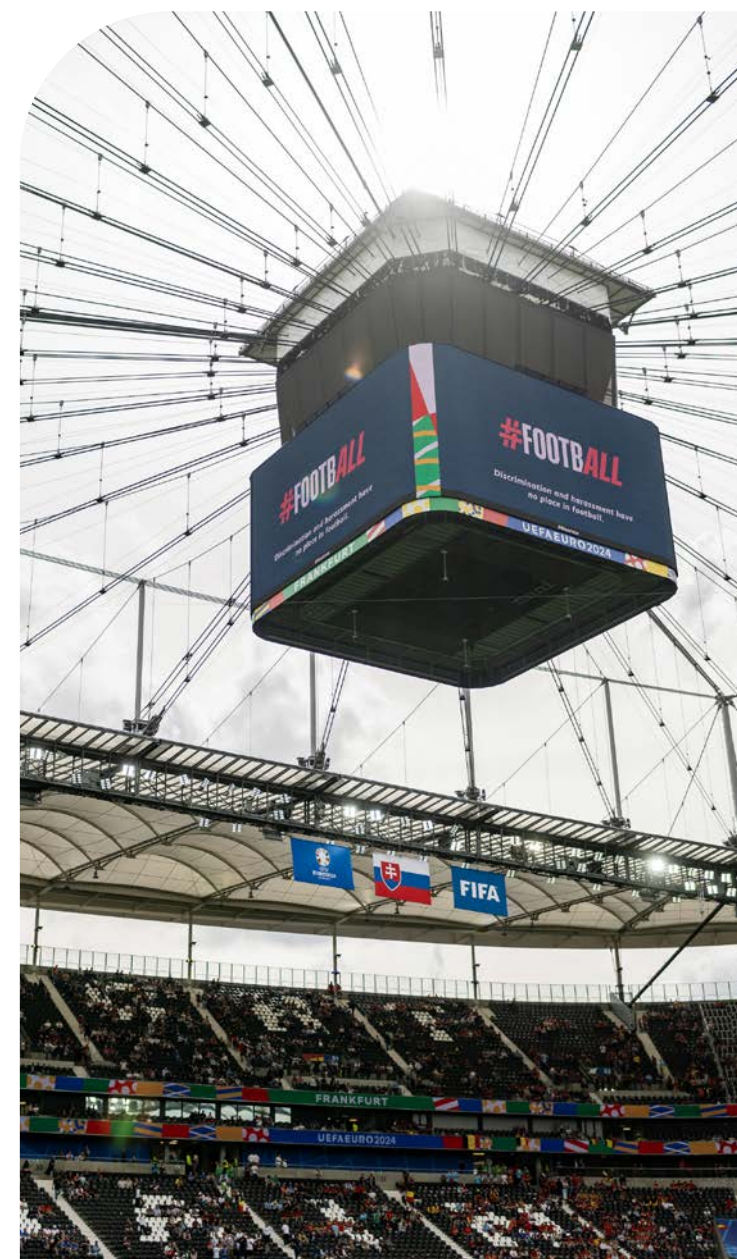
people to report any incidents they experience or witness.¹⁶

In 2023, UEFA released an episode of the [OUTRAGED series](#) specifically focusing on disability hate and its impact on disabled people and their experiences of football. **The OUTRAGED educational project uses the series' video content, in addition to specific educational materials, to engage children, youth players, coaches, team staff and parents in discussions about the potential harm of discrimination and what individuals can do to fight it proactively.** UEFA encourages everyone to educate themselves about the possible harms of all forms of discrimination in football, including disability hate, and to take every opportunity to act against such negative incidents both on and off the pitch.



15 [OSCE Hate Crime Report - Disability hate crime](#)

16 [AccessibAll - Tackling Disability Hate in Football](#)





UEFA ACCESSIBILITY GUIDELINES

Glossary

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Accessible

Provision of a barrier-free environment and related changes in policies, procedures or the built environment itself to ensure that all individuals can benefit from and participate in all activities and events.

Accessible built environment

A built or physical environment created or modified so that all people can get to, from and around it (see 'built environment').

Amenity seating

Seating with additional leg room to the front and side of the seat providing space for an assistance dog or for a person who uses mobility aids such as crutches or walking aids. The seating may incorporate arm rests. Amenity seating should be provided in addition to wheelchair-user spaces throughout the stadium. This seating is also suitable for

pregnant women and people of unusual body size.

Alternative format information

Written publications, websites and documents produced in any format other than in standard print. Examples of alternative formats include plain text files, large print, easy-to-read documents, audible files and Braille.

Assistive listening device

A device used by hard of hearing people that augments sound, making it clearer and louder, and in many cases blocks out surrounding environmental or background sound and interference.

Attitudinal barriers

Attitudes, fears, prejudices and assumptions that discriminate against and prevent disabled people from participating in society.

Audio-descriptive commentary

A commentary with additional information for people who have only a partial view or no view of the activities being described. It provides additional narration that describes all significant visual information that other spectators may take for granted, such as body language, facial expressions, scenery, action, clothing, colours and anything else that is important to getting a sense of the image, venue, match, event or surrounding ambience.

Barriers linked to communications or information

Obstacles that might hinder a disabled person from understanding their environment and services, or effectively communicating with others. These barriers could include complex instructions, information in limited formats, poor signage or complex wayfinding information.



Barriers linked to operations and policies

Obstacles that might hinder a disabled person from feeling safe in their environment or in using services. These could include rigid rules and routines, confined spaces and inflexible services.

Barrier-free design

An approach to design that creates buildings, transportation systems and outdoor environments that disabled people can access and use independently and safely and with the same level of choice as everyone else (see 'universal design').

Built environment

Spaces, infrastructure and venues created or modified so that people may live, work and socialise within them. Examples of built environments include buildings, public spaces, transport, parking spaces, streets, monuments and stadiums.

Colour contrast

The minimum colour contrast ratio for digital and printed information is 3:1, or 4:5:1 for smaller text, in accordance with the [W3C guidelines](#) (AA rating).

Companion

See 'personal assistant'.

Disability hate crimes

Criminal offences committed against disabled people, or people perceived to be disabled, that are motivated by hostility and prejudice towards disabled people.

Disability hate incidents

Instances where people are targeted for their actual or perceived disability but the incident is not a criminal offence under local law.

Easy-access seating

Seating located in easier to reach areas of the stadium, such as at the

ends of rows, and with few steps. This seating, which should be available throughout the stadium, should be clearly identified at the ticket office and available on request. A companion ticket should also be available for each easy-access seat.

Inaccessible

Any venue, activity, service, policy or event that is not open to or excludes disabled people because of one or more restrictive barriers.

Inclusion (of disabled people)

The active engagement of disabled people at all levels of society.

Independent living

Access to equal rights and opportunities with personal and consumer choice and control so as to be able to express independence and fully integrate and participate in society.



Interpreter

A certified or trained individual who facilitates communication between people who do not speak, hear or understand the same language. This might be, for example, from English to French or from the spoken word to sign language for someone who is deaf or hard of hearing.

Light reflectance value (LRV)

LRV differentials are used to calculate the colour contrast between physical objects, such as a sign against a concrete wall. The LRV is the amount of light reflected by a surface when illuminated by a light source. The LRV scale runs from 0, which is a perfectly absorbing surface (black) up to 100, which is a perfectly reflective surface (white). Sufficient colour contrast is a minimum of a 30-point difference in LRV between two surfaces. For example, a blue surface with an LRV of 20 against a

cream surface with an LRV of 70 has a 50-point difference, which would be considered a good contrast ratio. For more information on how to calculate LRVs, refer to British Standard BS 8493:2008+A1:2010.

Medical model of disability

Medical definitions of disability that focus exclusively on the individual and assume that all limitations are based on an individual's medical diagnosis or pathology. According to proponents of the social model of disability (see below), the medical model fails to measure the impact of external, environmental and socially created barriers in limiting people's capacity to fulfil 'expected' social roles.

Passing places

Sufficient space for two wheelchair users to pass one another on a ramp, path or walkway without touching.

Personal assistant or companion

A person who supports a disabled person to enable them to live independently in their home and community. The disabled person might otherwise be restricted by physical or sensory barriers, as well as those linked to information, communications, operations and policies. A personal assistant or companion might help a disabled person with daily living, self-care, mobility and independence.

Physical barriers

Material obstacles that might hinder disabled people from gaining access to buildings, public places and services. These barriers include steep ramps, steps and other permanent, temporary or transient barriers.



Real-time captioning

A process whereby a captioner types out, on a device and/or in shorthand, words that are spoken. The words are then displayed on a computer monitor, TV screen, video screen or other type of audio-visual device for people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Segregation (of disabled people)

The practice of removing disabled people from their communities, isolating or separating them from others, or treating them differently because they are disabled. Segregation is sometimes used as an unimaginative and non-inclusive solution to existing barriers. Segregation is considered by most disabled people to be a medical model solution that isolates and removes their right to choose.

Self-advocacy organisation

A national or local group of disabled people who speak and advocate for themselves. There are self-advocacy organisations throughout Europe as disabled people are increasingly empowered to form their own groups to promote equal access and inclusion.

Sensory barriers

Obstacles that might hinder disabled people from receiving information about their environment and services. These barriers could include alarms that are audible but not visual, or instructions, menus or signs in standard written text only.

Social model of disability

A framework for understanding disability in terms of the environmental limitations or barriers created by society. By removing these barriers, disabled people are enabled to express their independence and

enjoy fair and equal opportunities to participate fully in society.

Temporary/transient barriers

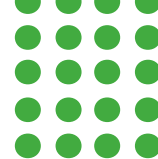
Movable obstacles in the built or physical environment that might hinder disabled people. These may be created by objects such as furniture, parked cars, planters and any other barriers that can easily be removed.

Telephone relay

A service that provides communication assistants or translators who act as intermediaries on the telephone between hearing individuals and individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind and/or have speech disabilities.

Voice recognition software

Assistive technology software that allows people to write and use equipment by means of their voice rather than their hands.



Universal design

An extension of the idea of barrier-free design to cover the needs of all members of society, including children and older people, to create a truly inclusive and equal environment.

Universally accessible

Equally accessible to all people, not just disabled people, and taking into consideration the experiences of everyone within society. This might refer to facilities, services, policies or attitudes.





UEFA ACCESSIBILITY GUIDELINES

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