

RNIB Soccer Sight

A guide to providing a service for blind and partially sighted football supporters



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“I still love the buzz of a match – even though I can’t see now. I follow every kick through my headphones. It’s brilliant, and the adrenaline rush when we score is still the same.”



Introduction

This guide has been written to help football clubs ensure that their services and facilities are accessible for blind and partially sighted people. It will help football clubs amend and improve the services that they currently offer, from the processes of buying a ticket to providing a dedicated match day commentary service.

The guide has been produced following the work of the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) project ‘Soccer Sight’.

Soccer Sight is a football access project designed to improve access to football at all levels for blind and partially sighted people. The project, which is funded by the HBOS Foundation, We are V and the Football Foundation, works with football clubs and other agencies to improve access to services and facilities at football grounds and to increase playing opportunities for young blind and partially sighted players.

The project began after an initial pilot in Scotland with 12 clubs from the Scottish Premier League. Soccer Sight now works in England and Wales with 17 clubs: Brighton and Hove Albion, Bristol City, Cardiff City, Swansea City, Doncaster Rovers, Halifax Town and Huddersfield Town, Hereford United, Swindon Town, Exeter City, Plymouth Argyle, Peterborough United, Norwich City, Ipswich Town, Nottingham Forest, Notts County and Watford.

Each of these clubs has benefited from access appraisals, staff training and development of their football in the community schemes.

The Soccer Sight team identified the issues that were preventing blind and partially sighted people from accessing football:

- Lack of football programmes and information in accessible formats.
- Lack of provision for Guide Dogs.
- Poor standards of commentary and commentary systems.
- Lack of awareness and understanding of visual impairment.

The main concerns were centred on the commentary. Fans were either unable to have any commentary at all, only receive it at home games or in specific areas or were given unreliable equipment. Soccer Sight has been working with football organisations and clubs to rectify these problems. This culminated in the project working in partnership with BBC sport to launch a national competition on BBC Match of the Day to find new commentators for the clubs and to generally raise standards amongst existing commentators.

The first training sessions produced 45 would be commentators who attended regional training sessions with the BBC to hone their skills. They learnt about preparation, technique, vocabulary and visual awareness.



Three winners were selected and attended a prize giving ceremony at the FA headquarters in Soho Square. The first prize was to spend a day with the BBC team at the 2006 FA Cup Final in Cardiff, including performing a live commentary on the BBC interactive service. The winner, Alan March from Nottingham, is a keen football fan and joined the rest of the trainees in providing a service at their local clubs for football fans with a visual impairment. He has now developed his skills further and commentates at Nottingham Forest and Wembley National Stadium.

Key facts about sight loss

In order to create suitable environments for blind and partially sighted people it is important that they recognise and have some understanding of the nature of visual loss. Only 8% of those impaired have no sight at all. The remainder will have varying degrees of sight, which will enable them to function visually to different degrees. Generally speaking, the result of different eye conditions will lead to the following types of impairment:

- A limited field of vision, being unable to see the sides or up and down.
- Some loss of central vision limiting the ability to see final detail.
- Severe short-sightedness, seeing the world as a continuous blur.
- Uncontrollable oscillations of the eyeball leading to an inability to see objects clearly.
- Night blindness, a sensitivity to light and a tendency to be dazzled by glare.

How many people are blind or partially sighted?

In the UK, around one million people are blind or partially sighted and a further 700,000 people have sight problems that have an impact on their daily lives.

What is the difference between blindness and partial sight?

An ophthalmologist (a medical specialist) will test a person's eyes and, based on the results, decide whether they are blind or partially sighted. Blindness is obviously more severe than partial sight but it is important to note that many blind people still have some useful sight and only a small percentage of people see nothing at all.

What causes sight loss?

There are many reasons why people have little or no sight. Some individuals are blind from birth, others are involved in accidents and a significant number develop illnesses that cause partial or complete sight loss. There are a number of differing eye conditions, each of which affects vision in a different way.



What are the most common eye conditions?

Some of the most common eye conditions and the way that they affect sight are listed below.

Macular degeneration

The macular is a small area at the centre of the retina. It is responsible for what we are able to see straight in front of us. When the cells of the macular are damaged, often occurring in later life, the central vision is affected, eventually leaving just peripheral vision. This is called macular degeneration and at present there is no cure. However, sufferers never lose their peripheral vision as a result of this disease.

Cataracts

A cataract is a clouding of the lens inside the eye (it is not a film growing over the eye as many people think). Vision becomes blurred or dim, as light is unable to pass through the clouded lens to the back of the eye. Vision in poor light is often difficult and some people may experience double vision. A small operation can often be performed to remove the cloudy lens and replace it with a plastic one. Most people will notice an improvement a few days after the operation.

Glaucoma

Glaucoma is a condition that damages the optic nerve. Vision is slowly lost due to the pressure in the eye. Eventually, as the condition progresses, sight is reduced to a "small tunnel of vision". In time, even this sight can be lost. However, if the disease is detected early enough, damage may be kept to a minimum and good vision maintained.

Diabetic retinopathy

This condition can occur as a result of diabetes. If it is not diagnosed in the early stages, the network of blood vessels in the retina can be affected. There are three types of diabetic retinopathy:

- **Background diabetic retinopathy**, which in its early stages has no effect on vision
- **Maculopathy**, which affects central vision
- **Proliferative diabetic retinopathy**, which is much rarer and causes blurred and patchy vision.

Most sight-threatening diabetic problems can be prevented by laser treatment, if this is given early enough.

For further more detailed information about sight loss contact the RNIB Helpline on **0845 766 9999**.



Access legislation – what are your legal duties

A main feature of the project is the advice given to clubs on how they can improve their accessibility for blind and partially sighted people. Each club that we worked with underwent an extensive access assessment that examined the clubs policies and procedures that affect the ability of a disabled person to buy a ticket, read the match day programme, follow each kick of the game and buy a pint at half time.

As a provider of goods, services and facilities, football clubs have a legal duty under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) not to discriminate against anyone because of their disability. Most were found to comply with the Act although in some instances clubs were found to be discriminating, especially around seating of blind and partially sighted spectators and on admission for guide dogs.

Many of the changes that we recommended, as a result of the assessment, did not require clubs to undergo major refurbishment or provide costly equipment. Generally, what is required is a change of policy. Any physical changes that are needed are recommended to be made as part of on going maintenance programmes

Access assessments/audits

The assessment or audit identifies features that will affect disabled people, as recognised by the Disability Discrimination Acts 1995 and 2005. The Soccer Sight teams undertake an assessment of a football clubs service and their facilities as well as the physical access at the stadium.

We recommend that the assessment follows a “journey sequence” through the stadium from car park, or public transport drop-off point through to the most extreme facility within the stadium. This approach will offer practical solutions to barriers to access in each section of the sequence.

It is advisable for all clubs to commission an audit of their stadium and services by a suitably qualified person (see **Useful contacts** at page 19) and to involve all of the management team in reviewing the recommendations and putting plans in place to implement the recommendations within the club. It can be helpful to consult with representatives from disability organisations, such as National Association of Disabled Supporters (NADS) or the clubs own disabled supporters group.

Undertaking an access audit and developing an access strategy based on its findings will not in itself guarantee that your club will meet the requirements of the DDA or any other legislation. However, it will give a clear indication of the intention of the stadium owner/manager and organisation to improve accessibility for disabled people.



General DDA guidelines for football clubs

Football clubs have a big role to play in ensuring that they are fully accessible to disabled people, whether they be board members, employees or ex players! By following the guidelines below, clubs should go a long way to becoming fully accessible to everyone as well as complying with the DDA.

- Ensure you have clear policies on ticketing, concessions, staff training, assistance dogs, parking and allocation of tickets for home and away support in disabled areas.
- Instigate or maintain consultation with disabled fans to ensure you are meeting all their needs.
- Consult with disability organisations at local and national level for advice.
- There should be adequate parking provision and drop off points for disabled people.
- Ground improvements should include highlighting steps and walkways, contrasted floor and wall surfaces and good signage and lighting.
- Provision of an adequate number of accessible toilet facilities.
- Provision of wheelchair accessible refreshment kiosks with large print menus at a critical height.
- Ensure segregation of home and away disabled supporters.
- Dedicated commentary and equipment available for blind and partially sighted supporters.
- Raised viewing areas free from obstruction for wheelchair users.
- Provision of disability awareness training for match day staff and ticket office staff.
- Accessible information available in alternative formats and clear website design with easily accessed information for disabled supporters.
- Accessible club activities and events.
- Designated disability officer and Director of the Board responsible for disability issues at all clubs.
- Inclusive and equal seating for all disabled supporters (in line with Accessible Stadia Guide recommendations).
- Complete regular access audits and implement on access strategy/plan for improvements in line with evolving DDA duty and Accessible Stadia Guide.


Inclusive environments and accessible information

In order to help blind and partially sighted people access a football clubs stadium and other facilities such as a club shop, museum or ticket office it helps to have a broad understanding of some of the access issues that blind and partially sighted people face.

There are three general areas of concern with design:

- signage
- visibility
- lighting.

BURGER	2.90
CHEESEBURGER	3.00
HOT DOGS	2.90
VARIOUS PIES	2.40
PASTY <small>CORNWALL'S PRIDE</small>	2.40
SAUSAGE ROLLS	2.20



Signage

The purpose of signs is to convey information and act as a warning as well as helping the user find their way to and from a destination. Making a sign clear and easy to read for a partially sighted person it will make the sign clear and easy to read for all.

Sign content should be simple, short and easily understood and the text and lettering should be of a clear uncomplicated font. (See **Printed information and websites** at page 9 for advice on font size and type).

Where appropriate, signs (with the exception of suspended signs) should have tactile embossed text, pictograms and arrows together with braille.

Signs should be located at key decision points on all routes.

The sign background and characters should be non-reflective, in a matt finish. All signs should be in contrasting colours to their background and the characters should contrast with the sign.

The **RNIB Sign Design Guide** provides an excellent source of information (See **Useful publications** at page 20).

Visibility

Many football clubs use their own club colours to paint and furnish their stadia. This can work very well in providing contrasting colours to pillars and other areas such as doors, glass panels and light switches, to make them more visible. Many football clubs stands have an internal concourse where refreshment kiosks, bars and general walkways are sited.

Every effort should be made to ensure that the internal support columns and pillars are not positioned where they will obstruct free movement. They should be coloured to stand out from the background and not merge in with it. This can be done quite simply with bands of contrasting colour.

Door furniture should be colour contrasted and L-shaped, lever or D-shaped handles are preferable.

Stairs and steps both within covered areas and on terracing and in stands and car parks should be highlighted with the provision of nosing on each step. The important point is that the step nosings provide a colour and tonal contrast to the steps. Although yellow and white are frequently used there is no correct colour for step nosings. Again club colours can be used as long as there is a contrast with the steps and surrounding area. A hazard-warning pattern should be at the top and bottom of all interior staircases.

Floor coverings should have a matt finish, such as matt vinyl, which will not cause reflections from windows or light fittings. Floor finishes should contrast with the walls so that the boundary of a floor is clearly visible. This can also be achieved by painting skirting boards a strong contrasting colour.

The RNIB JMU Access partnership has a range of factsheets available on access issues (see **Useful publications** at page 20)

Lighting

Blind and partially sighted people may require up to double the quantity of light needed by sighted people. Many blind and partially sighted people find it difficult to cope with extreme variations of light, for example strong light can cause deceiving shadows.

- Light should be evenly distributed with no dramatic changes when moving from one area to another.
- Lighting on stairs should be sufficient to highlight any obstructions.

Printed information and websites

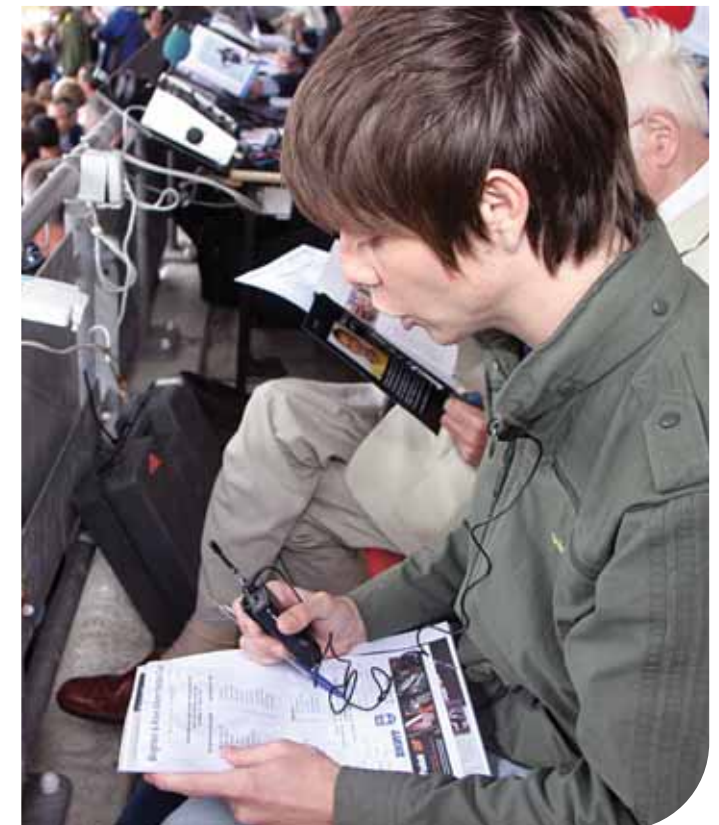
Most of the football clubs we work with produce most of their information in print format, through leaflets, match day programmes or on the website. Most do not have a policy within the club for accessible information.

The size of text in most football programmes is a size 8 font, which reads as follows:

Clear print is a design approach which considers the needs of people with sight problems.

Compare this with the size 14 fonts used in this publication.

A small font size makes a match day programme very difficult for many people to read. It is however quite simple and inexpensive, to produce accessible material by focusing on some basic design elements, for example font, type size and contrast.



Type size

The size of the type (known as text point size) is a fundamental factor in legibility. We recommend a type size between 12 and 14 point.

Contrast

The better the contrast between the background and the text, the more legible the text will be. Black text on a white background provides best contrast.

Font

Avoid highly stylised fonts such as those with ornamental, decorative or handwriting styles and use a font such as Arial, which is more easily read.

Type styles

Blocks of capital letters, underlined or italicised text are all harder to read. A word or two in capitals is fine but avoid the use of capitals for continuous text. Underlining text or setting it in italics should always be avoided.

Reversing type

If using white type, make sure the background colour is dark enough to provide sufficient contrast.

Setting text

Avoid fitting text around images if this means that lines of text start in a different place, and are therefore difficult to find. Avoid setting text over images or textures as this will affect the contrast.

Forms

Partially sighted people tend to have handwriting that is larger than average, so allow extra space on forms. This will also benefit people with conditions that affect the use of their hands, such as arthritis.

“This is the wrong way to set text around an image. It will be difficult to read as each line starts in a different place”




Printing

Avoid glossy paper because glare makes it difficult to read. Choose uncoated paper that weighs over 90gsm. As a general rule, if the text is showing through from the reverse side, then the paper is too thin.

Web pages

Soccer Sight surveyed all the websites used by the projects' participating football clubs and found varying levels of access. The main issue was that the information about services for blind and partially sighted supporters were not included on their sites.

Websites provide clubs with an ideal opportunity to promote the services available for blind and partially sighted supporters. Information should include:

- Details of policies for charging concessionary rates.
- Season ticket prices, an online booking service for home and away games.
- Provision for guide dogs.
- The availability and booking procedures for audio programmes and the commentary service.

Creative use of colour and contrast can dramatically enhance the accessibility of a website. People with cognitive or sight problems may have difficulty reading and distinguishing text from a background colour, so it would be advisable to be aware of colour and contrast in the design of the page. Background images and patterns may also cause problems of legibility.

RNIB's **See it Right** book sets out best practice and gives guidelines on designing and producing accessible information. (See **Useful publications** at page 20).



Techniques for accessible websites

- High contrast must be provided between text and background colours. Pale blues and grey will not be easy to read on white backgrounds but dark blues, black or reds will.
- Bold and large fonts can sometimes compensate for poor colour contrast. If a piece of text is large, then the contrast may be less critical. Good judgement is required to assess this.
- Colour blindness affects the way that certain colours differ from others. Red and green, for instance, can appear to be virtually the same to some users. Ensure that you choose colours that have a good differentiation for people with colour deficiency.
- Images must also have good contrast, especially if there is text on the image. Always check that logos are high contrast and tag lines within logos are readable.
- Ensure that images do not lose definition when style sheets are disabled. This can result in text appearing transparent on an image. To prevent this, ensure there are no transparent colours around the text on the image.
- Background images can sometimes interfere with the legibility of text. Watermarks or patterns can be problematic. It is best to avoid them if possible or ensure they are not behind text or that they do not interfere with legibility.

Is your football club accessible?

This section looks at key areas that are used by football supporters

Reception areas

One of the main problems in the reception area is not being able to cannot speak to or see the receptionist, because of the high level of the top of the desk. There are guidelines laid down by Part M of the building regulations (see **Useful contacts** at page 19) but many reception areas still remain inaccessible.

- Reception desks should be strategically placed, clearly signed and easily identifiable.
- Task lighting should be positioned to illuminate the top of the reception.
- The reception desk should have a working surface height at two levels – between 950mm and 1100mm to accommodate people who are standing 760mm to accommodate wheelchair users.
- Acoustics should be carefully planned and controlled.
- Furnishings should contrast with floor and walls.
- Seating layouts should have clear space for wheelchair users and space for an assistance dog to rest.

Toilets

While all of the football clubs we visited had an accessible toilet – very few were signed, maintained or had alarm systems that were operational.

- Accessible toilets should be well signed with a tactile symbol on doors.
- Door should have D and lever handles and have an emergency release mechanism operated from outside.
- Fittings should be colour/tone contrasted.
- Taps and toilet flushes should be easily operated, for example, lever controlled mixer taps.
- Soap dispensers, single sheet toilet roll and hand driers should be provided and easily identified and operated.
- An emergency assistance alarm pull cord should be sited so it can be operated from the WC and surrounding floor area. It should be coloured red and provided with two red bangles of 50mm diameter, one set at a height between 800mm and 1000mm and the other set at 100mm above floor level.



Lifts

- Where football clubs had lifts within the stadium, many were too small for the numbers of people requiring them on a match day.
- Multi-storey buildings including football stands, should have at least one lift of sufficient size to be used by wheelchair users.
- The lift door should be easily distinguishable from adjoining wall by colour and luminance contrast.
- Call buttons should have symbols in relief to enable tactile reading.
- There should be an audible announcement of lift arrival and floors reached and direction of travel.

Refreshment kiosks

Generally bars and refreshment areas were not well signed. There were issues about service for disabled people for instance, whether it is advisable to have an ordering service or dedicated queuing lanes/low level counters. The management of any system needs to be carefully thought through and discussed with the disabled supporters but the following points should be considered when managing these areas.

- Refreshment kiosks and bars should be well signed.
- Menu's and prices should be clearly displayed.
- Queuing lanes and gate systems should be stewarded at all times.
- Low level counters should be at a height of 760mm to accommodate wheelchair users and be stewarded at all times.

Providing a service for blind and partially sighted fans

The commentary service

The provision of a commentary service is the most important part of the football experience for someone with little or no sight.

For most football fans, there's nothing quite like attending a live match. Coverage of the game on TV or listening on the radio can never quite provide that match day experience. From the smell of the pies to the roar of the crowd, there's nothing quite like saying, "I was there".

It's something most of us take for granted. However for a blind or partially sighted football supporter the story is different. There are around two million people in the UK with a sight problem. Sadly many visually impaired supporters currently choose to stay away from games simply because of the inaccessibility of most grounds and the lack of a dedicated commentary.

Provision for blind and partially sighted supporters varies immensely but, sadly, very few clubs achieve a standard where blind and partially sighted people could feel really included in the game.

The ideal solution for blind and partially sighted supporters, is the provision of "audio-description" – a continuous and live commentary of the on-pitch action, provided by a commentator specifically trained in describing events for those unable to see them clearly. This is transmitted to a radio receiver through a headset which can be used anywhere within the stadium. This means that the blind and partially sighted supporters can choose to sit with their friends and family, and among their own club's supporters rather than in a designated area only for blind and partially sighted people, which is a system still used by some clubs. It also allows blind and partially sighted supporters from visiting teams to use the equipment.

Commentary equipment

Soccer Sight have worked with Access Audio to develop a radio broadcasting system **Aural Aide** that allows people to receive a match day commentary from any point in the stadium. The equipment is a UHF radio system operating in the licence exempt 863 MHz band.

The sound quality is crystal clear and the range, up to 200 metres is excellent. Each transmitter and receiver has sixteen user selectable channels available. The transmitters and receivers run from standard AA batteries, (rechargeable or disposable types can be used for maximum flexibility).



The standard kit includes 10 receivers and headphones, a hand held transmitter and microphone and a charger unit and case.

The equipment is simply booked out to the users before each game and then collected and charged ready for the next match. The system is very easy to use with a simple plug point for the ear phones, a volume control and an off/standby/on switch on top of the receiver. The hand held receivers can be customised with club or sponsor's colours and logos and they should be numbered for help with managing the scheme.

Recruiting a commentator

The key to a good service is having a good commentator. This has been one of the issues that have prevented people from fully following the game. Very often the person doing the commentary is not trained or does not understand the need to describe the on pitch action at all times rather than talk about statistics, tactics or lengthy summaries of previous action.

All of the Soccer Sight commentators were recruited from club websites, media articles or club competitions which were featured in match day programmes and on the web site, inviting potential commentators to send in an audio clip of their commentary featuring the club in the last five minutes of a cup final. An example of the promotion for this competition can be found at **Appendix 3** at page 26.

Those who were successful were then invited to attend regional training courses run by RNIB and a team of BBC sports commentators. The training includes an introduction to visual awareness followed by sessions on voice, technique, preparation and language.

RNIB will continue to run regional training sessions to provide clubs with trained commentators contact the Soccer Sight project for more details. (see **Useful contacts** at page 19).

We would recommend that there should be a team of two or three commentators who can work on a rota basis to cover all fixtures during the season.

The commentators work on a voluntary basis but should be treated as any other member of the media team with full accreditation and a place in the clubs media area with the other mainstream broadcasters on match days.

Audio programmes

One of the services that Soccer Sight provides is the provision of an audio match day programme. Quite simply, the match day programme is transcribed on to an audio CD and reproduced in sufficient quantities for each club.

A professional company would be able to provide this service and ensure it was delivered on match day for approximately £250 for each game. This service can also be produced inhouse to be more economical.

It is important to establish the numbers of people who would benefit from the service and to manage the scheme cost effectively such as being part of a season ticket package or on a subscription basis.



Provision for guide dogs

Some guide dog owners who attend football matches rely solely on their dogs to guide them safely both to and from the stadium and within the stadium itself. Many stadium managers simply do not understand the importance of the guide dogs and how it is important that the dog stays with the owner throughout their time at the stadium. Football stadia have a duty to care and provide for people using their facilities who require the assistance of a guide dog. RNIB have worked with the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association to produce a guidance document called **Access to Sports Stadia** (see **Useful publications** at page 20) which details the requirements for the provision of guide dogs within football grounds.

The main areas for consideration are as follows:

- Change policy and practice to amend a 'no dogs' policy to allow guide dogs and other assistance dogs.
- Never distract a working guide dog. Check with the owner before any contact is made.
- Never feed the dog. Guide dogs are working animals and are fed a strict diet at regular times. Any additional food may cause the dog to be sick or affect its health.
- Provide a water bowl for the dog if asked.
- In seating areas make sure there is sufficient space for a guide dog and its owner.
- Provide information, and help if needed, on access points into the stadium, which are not turnstiles which are too narrow for a guide dog owner and guide dog to access.
- Provide appropriate relief areas for guide dogs and other assistance dogs. Guide Dogs' district teams can advise on relief facilities. (see **Useful contacts** section at page 19).

The best place for a guide dog is with its owner, who will have both the skills and the relationship with their dog that ensures a high level of control. The front row of a block on any tier of seats will usually provide more space and comfort for a guide dog. A guide dog is extremely adaptable and would be used to attending football matches and coping with crowds and traffic as well as being able to utilise limited space to the best advantage as found in most forms of public transport, theatres and cinemas.

Although guide dogs for blind and partially sighted people are the most commonly seen at football stadia there are other assistance dogs such as hearing dogs for deaf people or support dogs for wheelchair users that may be seen at grounds and will need accommodating in a similar way to guide dogs.



Staff training

Staff training is key to ensuring good customer service. Soccer Sight has developed training programmes for all key match day staff and stewards. The two hour introductory session allows staff and stewards to understand more about sight loss and how they can help people with serious sight problems to access the clubs services and facilities.

There is a practical element of leading and guiding which gives staff confidence in communicating with blind and partially sighted people, often for the first time.

This training is especially helpful for stewards as they are usually the first port of call for people requiring assistance in the ground. The training also outlines the procedures for managing the commentary equipment, which again, relies on the input from match day stewards.

The sessions are available from RNIB Soccer Sight and more details can be found in **Appendix 3** at page 24.

Promoting the service

Once you have a scheme in place it is very important to let people know it exists! Articles in the local media, especially local radio stations, the club website and the match day programme will all help alert people to the fact that the service is available at the club. If the club has a disabled supporters association it is advisable to work with them to spread the word. Working with local agencies and organisations for the blind and older people who produce audio 'talking newspapers and magazines' is also helpful to promote the scheme.

Launch the service with an invited audience of blind and partially sighted people and don't forget to let visiting clubs know that they too can benefit from the scheme. An example of how to promote the launch of a service can be found in **Appendix 2** at page 23.

Managing the scheme

Each club will have their own policy and procedures in terms of managing the equipment.

The experience of the Soccer Sight project has shown that the best way to administer and run the service is to ensure that the receivers are numbered and logged onto a control sheet and then booked out to users on request. They can be booked out to season ticket holders on a regular basis or clubs can operate a booking service for casual users or for away fans wanting to use the equipment.

Football clubs cannot make a charge for the equipment but they can ask for a refundable deposit at the point of booking the equipment. This is however difficult to manage on a match day, especially signing for a deposit and then returning the equipment. Asking blind or partially sighted people to fill out forms with credit card details is totally inaccessible and not practical on a busy match day.

Soccer Sight recommend that the equipment is handed back to a match day steward at the end of the game. It can be very difficult finding the way back to a designated point in a busy crowd of people when leaving the stadium. We recommend that one person from the club is designated to take responsibility for running the scheme. This will include ensuring that all the receivers and transmitter are charged and ready for each game, each person has received and returned the equipment (including the commentator) and that the information about the equipment is readily available to home and away supporters on the website, on season ticket information and to disability organisations.

Most people will always return the receivers. It is then important to check the receivers and the transmitter back in and have them ready to charge for the next game. Ensure before you charge the equipment that all the sets are turned off and that the batteries being used are rechargeable!

Conclusion: The perfect Club

Having worked with 30 clubs across the football pyramid, we are not quite yet in the position to say that every element of access at each of those clubs is perfect.

What we can say, however, is that each club can demonstrate that they have a commentary system and that general access is good, although not every aspect of their service will stand out as being excellent. This can be due to many factors. Sometimes it is due to resources, location or changes in club personnel which can dictate a level of service.

What is important is that those clubs are now aware of the issues and are working on all aspects of their service to try and reach a standard of excellence and offer their disabled supporters a quality experience when they visit the football club.

There are clubs that have particular areas of good practice that other clubs can learn from and Soccer Sight will continue to work with the football authorities and other agencies to organise training days, information events and seminars to spread good practice throughout the football world.



Useful contacts

Access Audio

Unit 32/5 Hardengreen Business Park
Dalhousie Road, Dalkeith
Midlothian
EH22 3NX
Telephone: 0131 663 0777
(text phone is available)
Email: webinfo@accessaudio.co.uk

ECOM

Accessible information and Audio programmes
E-Com Communications
152 High Street, Uckfield
East Sussex
TN22 1AT
Telephone: 01825 76 59 99

Guide Dogs for the Blind Association

Hillfields, Burghfield Common
Reading
RG7 3YG
Telephone: 0845 241 2178
Email: guidedogs@guidedogs.org.uk
Website: guidedogs.org.uk



JMU Access Partnership

105 Judd Street
London
WC1H 9NE
Email: info@jmuaccess.org.uk

National Association of Disabled Supporters (NADS)

PO Box 2909
Reading
RG1 9LD
Helpline: 0845 230 6237
Email: info@nads.org.uk
Website: nads.org.uk

National Register of Access Consultants (NRAC)

70 South Lambeth Road
London
SW8 1RL
Telephone: 020 7735 7845
Website: nrac.co.uk
Telephone: 0845 766 9999

RNIB Helpline

Telephone: 0845 766 9999

RNIB

Royal National Institute of Blind People
105 Judd Street
London
WC1H 9NE
Telephone: 020 7388 1266
Website: rnib.org.uk

RNIB Soccer Sight

Telephone: 01792 36 67 56
Email: eleanor.ellison@rnib.org.uk
Website: rnib.org.uk/soccersight

Useful publications

Access to Sports Stadia for Guide Dogs

The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association
Ref: PPC 07/04.

A good practice guide for stadium managers on providing facilities for Guide dogs.

Accessible Stadia Guide

The Football Stadia Improvement Fund and The Football Licensing Authority, 2003, £25

A comprehensive source of information on accessible stadia for developers, management, designers and access consultants.

Approved Document M (2004 edition) of the Building Regulations

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM).

BS8300: 2001 Design of buildings and their approaches to meet the needs of disabled people

Code of Practice, British Standards Institute.

Building Sight

RNIB and TSO, 1995, £20.

A ground-breaking book that sets out to demonstrate how the needs of blind and partially sighted people can be met in the design of buildings and the environment.

Copies can be purchased at onlineshop.rnib.org.uk

Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds

Football Licensing Authority (fifth edition), 2008, TSO, £30. Copies can be purchased at tsoshop.co.uk

A good practice guide to design of facilities to meet the needs of disabled spectators and other users Football Licensing Authority (FLA).

JMU Access Partnership Fact Sheets

JMU have over 30 best practice factsheets, covering everything from lifts to lobbies, and these answer many preliminary enquiries. These are free of charge and available by contacting JMU (see **Useful contacts** at page 19). Up to three factsheets available per enquiry.

See it Right

RNIB, 2006.

Copies can be purchased at onlineshop.rnib.org.uk

The Sign Design Guide: The most current, comprehensive and in-depth guidance on accessible signage

JMU Access Partnership and the Sign Design Society, 2000, £20.

This guide promotes one sign for all, enabling you to include everyone's signage needs.



Appendices

1. The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA)

The DDA has brought in new laws and measures aimed at ending the discrimination that many disabled people face. Football Clubs will have duties under Parts II and III of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995

Part II of the DDA – Employment

Since 1 October 2004, it has been against the law for an employer of any size (apart from the armed forces) to discriminate against people on the basis of disability.

You cannot discriminate against a disabled person:

- in the recruitment process
- in their terms and conditions of employment
- in chances for promotion, transfer, training or other benefits
- by dismissing them unfairly
- by treating them less fairly than other workers
- by subjecting them to harassment.

Part III of the DDA – Goods Services and Facilities

Under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA), service providers (under Part III) are required to make reasonable adjustments to ensure disabled people are not discriminated against and can use their services easily and in comfort. Reasonable adjustments may involve changing policies, procedures and practices or providing auxiliary aids and services such as information in alternative formats. This may include providing information on request on tape, in large print or braille.

The requirement under the Disability Discrimination Act to make physical changes to premises to provide access came into force in October 2004.

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005

From 5 December 2005, the definition of disability has changed to include people with HIV, Cancer and Multiple Sclerosis from the point of diagnosis.



2. Programme promotion

“What a goal... did you see that?”

Have you ever thought how difficult it would be for you to attend a football match if you couldn't see the pitch or follow the action? How much do you take it for granted that you can sit anywhere you like with your mates or family, travel to away games, read the programme or simply buy a pie at half time?

For many thousand of blind and partially sighted people these simple activities become major issues that they have to cope with every match day. Whilst facilities for disabled people are gradually improving there is still much to be done to improve the situation for blind or partially sighted fans.

The solution is is being launched here today at XXXXXXXX providing blind and partially sighted supporters at the club with a trained voluntary commentator and 10 new radio headsets that allow blind fans to sit anywhere within the stadium to receive the commentary.

If you know of anyone with a serious sight problem who could benefit from this new service please contact xxxxxxxx.”



3. RNIB visual awareness training

The RNIB Soccer Sight training programme will enable key staff and stewards at all levels to fully understand the requirements of disabled people and give them a greater understanding of the legal implications of current legislation. The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) requires all service providers to take reasonable steps to ensure that they do not unjustifiably treat people with disabilities less favourably than they would other people.

The training course is run by qualified and experienced trainers and addresses the needs of all disabled people but with an emphasis on the needs of blind or partially sighted people.

This two-hour course offers a unique opportunity to learn both practical skills and have a greater awareness and understanding of how you can meet the needs of disabled people.

The course is highly participate and informal. Your staff will find increased levels of confidence and effectiveness when dealing with disabled people both as individuals and within their professional organisation. Having good customer service and a positive attitude towards disadvantaged groups in society not only allows you to increase your business but also lets you display your social awareness within the wider community.

What will you learn from the course?

There are a number of guaranteed learning outcomes from the training. Course participants will:

1. Have the ability to appreciate the range of ways that sight problems can affect individual blind and partially sighted people.
2. Have the confidence to offer hands-on assistance to individual blind and partially sighted people in a manner recommended by RNIB.
3. Be able to explain the purpose of the Disability Discrimination Act and understand the implications it has on their role.
4. Identify at least one way in which services to blind and partially sighted people can be improved.

Where does the training take place?

Ideally the training should take place at the Football Club – however, RNIB is happy to arrange for the training to be held at any mutually agreeable location.

Contents of the course

The Soccer Sight course starts with an introduction covering the importance of understanding the issues that blind and partially sighted people face when attending football matches. We will look at the facts and myths of blindness, definitions of blindness and explain how the Disability Discrimination Act affects service provision as well as giving key staff members the confidence and ability to meet, greet and guide a blind or partially sighted person. The course includes:

1. Key facts about sight loss
2. Successful communication. Looking at methods of effectively communicating with blind and partially sighted people.
3. Practical issues experienced by individuals at football grounds

4. How to lead and guide
5. Understanding the DDA, it's duties and obligations
6. Making your facilities more accessible.

Who is the training for?

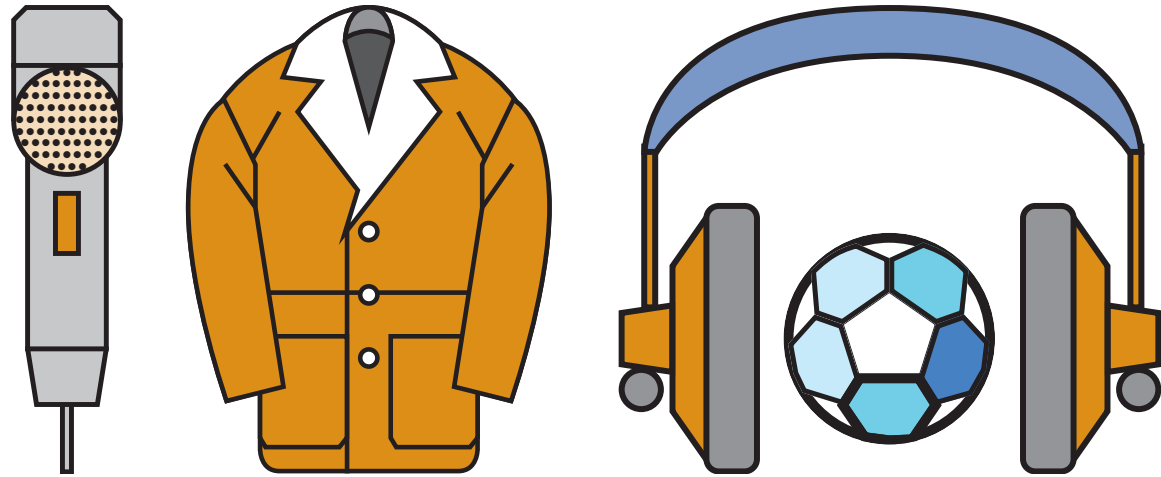
The training is aimed at stewards and front line staff at football clubs, for example reception staff, ticket office staff and club secretariat.

For more information and to book a course contact Eleanor Ellison at eleanor.ellison@rnib.org.uk



4. Commentary competition copy

Can't stop talking football?



Then why not talk for us and win a unique football experience!

RNIB Soccer Sight, in association with the Football Foundation, bringing quality commentary to blind and partially sighted supporters via new radio transmitters and headsets, wants to discover new commentating talent.



Enter our exciting competition and you could win the opportunity to become a professionally trained commentator at your club. You could also commentate on a major Premier League or international fixture, with BBC's Match of the Day team!

To enter, imagine that your team have just scored the winning goal in the 2006 World Cup Final. Record a five minute commentary describing the moment, and send your entry, with your name, age, address and telephone number to: **Soccer Sight competition, RNIB, 105 Judd Street, London WC1H 9NE.** Closing date: 14 November 2005. Entrants must be 18 years and over.



Reg charity no. 226227



RNIB Soccer Sight

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Website: rnib.org.uk/soccersight



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