

Cardiff Blues Football Club



Policy for Disabled Supporters

Introduction

This policy demonstrates how Cardiff Blues wishes to underpin their commitment to disabled supporters.

The aforementioned disabled people referred to includes those with:

- Sensory impairments; i.e. those suffering from hearing loss or visual impairment.
- People who are largely dependant on using wheelchairs for their daily activities.
- People with learning difficulties.
- People with walking difficulties.
- People with physically restricting medical conditions.
- Older people who are infirm and who have mobility difficulties.

Cardiff Blues believes it has a proven commitment in looking after the needs and requirements of its disabled supporters and takes pride in their new stadium and the improved services being provided.

The Club follows Health & Safety regulation guidelines and adheres to the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) where fundamentally it states that disabled people should not be treated less favourably - without justification.

The lead contacts to deal with issues relating to Disabled Supporters are:

Annabelle Harries - Cardiff Blues Designated Disabled Liaison Officer and she can be contacted on 02920 643 780 or via email – Annabelle.harries@cardiffblues.com

Please note

The Club strongly recommends that a Personal Assistant be present with the disabled supporter, in particular for safety reasons in the event of an emergency and for general assistance at the stadium.

All disabled supporters must follow the ground regulations, evacuation and contingency plans.

Policy definition of a Disabled Supporter

For the purpose of this policy, the definition of a disabled supporter is as follows:

"Any person, who because of their disability or impairment is unable to use ordinary stand seating without contravening Health and Safety Regulations, guidelines or policy. Any such persons will be considered for use of the special provision areas of the stadium in line with the procedures set out in this policy".

Cardiff Blues reserves the right to request "proof of a disability" before issuing any concession. Such proof shall include:

- Receipt of the middle or higher rate of the Disability Living Allowance (mobility or care component).
- Receipt of either the Severe Disablement Allowance or Attendance Allowance
- A personal letter from your GP

Disability Discrimination Act (DDA)

As a fundamental principle, the Disability Discrimination Act states that disabled people should not be treated 'less favourably, without justification' and 'reasonable adjustments should be made to make goods, facilities and services accessible'.

A "reasonable adjustment" in the context shall include (but is not limited to), the need to use a wheelchair platform, the need to bring a "personal assistant" for either personal care or safety reasons, or the use of an auxiliary service ("audio systems" for supporters with sensory impairments).

A "designated area" is any area (including specific seats around the stadium bowl) that the club shall, in its sole discretion determine as being available for the disabled concessionary ticket price.

Cardiff Blues aim to fully comply with both the provisions and spirit of the Act.

Provision of facilities and amenities – sensory impaired supporters

Hearing Impaired Supporters

Those supporters with impaired hearing will be able to contact Annabelle Harries or fax request information to 02920 643 799 to obtain information pertaining to any services provided by Cardiff Blues that include the provision of a limited number of Synheisser audio headsets that are available upon request prior to the match via the ticket office where a refundable deposit of £10 will be required upon collection.

Supporters with impaired hearing can be accommodated in the stadium by various means either in the ambulant disabled designated area or it is also possible for them to use ordinary stand seating.

The introduction of induction loop equipment to all customer contact points, including the ticket office and the Main reception area, has been implemented at the new stadium.

The Club annually reviews the need to provide training for staff in relation to sign language as part of the Clubs development programme.

Visually Impaired Supporters

Cardiff Blues will deal with enquiries from visually impaired supporters and the allocation of the places available in the visually impaired section of the stadium will be managed by Annabelle Harries

The Club strongly recommends that each visually impaired person attending a match at the New Stadium should be accompanied by a person who is fully able to support their needs in the event of an emergency.

On match days information will be carried via the public address system.

The criteria for access to this facility requires that each person can provide a copy of their registration document which certifies they are Registered Blind (or Partially Sighted), or provide qualifying documentation from their optician equivalent to registration requirements.

Should Visually Impaired supporters require a Synheisser audio headsets they are available upon request prior to the match via the ticket office where a refundable deposit of £10 will be required upon collection.

Visually Impaired people wishing to attend a match aided by their Guide Dog should contact Annabelle Harries for all relevant information. Measures will also be taken to ensure that the welfare of the Guide Dog is preserved.

The Club annually reviews the need to provide accessible information in alternative formats.

Wheelchair dependent supporters

Cardiff Blues takes pride in its new and improved facilities for wheelchair dependant supporters.

Cardiff Blues wishes to make the most appropriate use of these facilities by providing them to disabled people who are unable to sit in any other part of the stadium. Access to this facility will initially be by those people who meet the eligibility criteria described below:

Criteria for Access to the Wheelchair Areas

Individuals using, or wishing to apply for use of the wheelchair platforms or areas must meet the following criteria:

Wheelchair using applicants must be largely dependant on a wheelchair for mobility purposes or are not capable for walking a distance further than that required to reasonably and safely access any other part of the stadium.

Wheelchair dependant applicants should also be accompanied by a person who is capable of supporting the disabled person's needs in the event of an emergency. For this reason we strongly recommend that a person is sixteen years of age or over and not be inform. Any exceptions to this must be notified to the Disabled liaison officer and appropriate arrangements for their safety will be made. Any refusals will only be on the grounds of a contravention of Health and Safety legislation.

People wishing to apply for places on the wheelchair platforms should apply Annabelle Harries

It is acknowledged that the above group will also have an enlarged circle of family and friends and Cardiff Blues will try to accommodate these additional requests where possible.

Supporters with learning difficulties

Supporters with learning difficulties can be accommodated in the stadium by various means but it is normally possible for them to use ordinary stand seating. If, for whatever reason, any person with a learning difficulty feels that ordinary stand seating would be unsuitable for them, they should contact the disabled liaison officer for further information

Ambulatory Disabled Supporters

Cardiff Blues recognise that there are considerable numbers of people in the community who use wheelchairs mainly for outdoor mobility purposes but are not necessarily confined to their wheelchair. There are also many people suffering severe walking difficulties who may wish to watch a match. There are also people with learning difficulties or debilitating illness. For the purposes of this policy and the administration of the facility this category of people will be termed 'ambulatory' disabled supporters and they will be asked to follow the procedure below in order to attend a match:

These supporters will be offered the opportunity of being seated in the designated ambulatory area of the stadium. Tickets for people in this position should be applied for by contacting Cardiff Blues Ticket office who will provide all the relevant information for applicants.

It will also be necessary for the ambulant disabled person to provide qualifying documentation relating to their condition in order to qualify for an ambulant disabled seat.

The Designated Ambulatory disabled areas will be stewarded accordingly and included on the clubs medical plan

The Club also recognises that disabled people also have families and indeed may wish to attend a match as a family and therefore the Club provides a designated ambulatory area within the Family Stand and where possible near & with wheelchair dependent supporters.

Supporters with infirmities

Cardiff Blues recognises that elderly people now form a larger part of the population than younger people. The Club therefore recognises that some of its longest serving supporters with infirmities may require to be relocated into a more appropriate area of the stadium.

Car Parking for Disabled Supporters

Cardiff Blues makes approx 100 of its parking places available to disabled supporters and these are allocated to supporters with the most severe mobility difficulties.

Using these criteria, people attending the wheelchair areas of the stadium are given priority for the available places and issued according to need. However, requests for the remaining places can be made by people with other mobility difficulties. Applications are to be made to Cardiff Blues Disabled Liaison officer on a seasonal basis where each request will be judged on its individual merit.

Cardiff Blues would ask that people recognise that there is only a limited number of places available and it will not be possible to accommodate everyone who has a Blue/Orange badge and therefore the qualification for entitlement to a disabled Parking bay will be the higher rate mobility component of Disability Living Allowance.

Accessible Information

Steps have already been taken to put procedures in place to provide information in formats that are more easily accessible to disabled people. Accessible formats of information have been discussed and mechanisms will shortly be developed to provide information in large print format and electronic format.

Website

The official Cardiff Blues website (www.cardiffblues.com) are currently looking at making the site more accessible to visually impaired supporters. The process will be one of phased development, commencing with the areas of the website considered to be most relevant to disabled supporters.

It is hoped that the increasing use of the internet will allow more disabled people to access information which they had previously experienced difficulty in obtaining. A link is dedicated on the official website to information specifically relating to disability matters at Cardiff Blues.

Catering

Match day catering for disabled people is provided in the concourses within the stadium relative to disabled persons facilities provided. Other facilities, which come under the general heading of catering such as lounge suites etc, are accessible to disabled people by means of a waitress service that is provided.

General

Department Managers and staff of all departments have now been made aware and instructed to comply with the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act. Access to goods and services, as well as match day facilities, are being fully assessed and reviewed to ensure compliance with all associated legislation..

Staff Training

Elements of staff training which relate to 'disability awareness' and 'disability etiquette' have been identified and a training programme will be instituted to ensure that awareness and etiquette are observed – 'This training programme will be ongoing'.

Cardiff Blues are committed to developing a 'can do' culture by introducing such training.