



Club Policy for Disabled Supporters

West Ham United Football Club fully supports the principle of equal opportunities and opposes all forms of unlawful or unfair discrimination on the grounds of disability.

The Club operates a concessionary ticketing policy for disabled supporters and will ensure that the scheme does not discriminate between disabled people with differing impairments.

The Club recognizes that not all of its facilities are fully accessible to disabled customers and confirms that it is committed to making the necessary reasonable adjustments described by the Disability Discrimination Act and its relevant Codes of Practice to ensure full compliance with the legislation.

The Club also recognizes that it is likely to have new duties with effect from 1st October 2004 to remove permanent barriers that make it difficult or impossible for some disabled customers to access Club facilities. The Club will undertake such additional works as are reasonably required within the timescales set out within the Act.

Definition of Disability

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” West Ham United Football Club, aim to fully comply with both the provisions and spirit of the Act.

For the purposes of this Policy only the definition of a disabled supporter is:

“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 or where the club has provided a “reasonable adjustment” to enable that supporter to attend the venue. Any such person will be considered for use of the “designated areas” of the stadium in line with the procedures set out in this policy.”

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 (e.g. match commentary for visually impaired supporters or “loop 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.

A person has a “disability” if he/she has a physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his/her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

West Ham United reserves the right to request “proof of a disability” before issuing any concession. Such proof shall include:

- Receipt of the higher rate of the Disability Living Allowance (mobility component) or a BD8 certificate.

NB Receipt of an Orange/Blue badge will not be considered sufficient proof of disability for the concessionary ticket price.

Contact with existing Disabled Supporters

West Ham United Football Club has an open dialogue with its disabled supporters and encourages them to contact the club on a regular basis to discuss facilities and improvements etc. Recent initiatives have included appointing a match-day disabled liaison contact and the holding of Open Forum evenings that are open to all disabled season ticket holders.

The club is a member of the National Association of Disabled Supporters (NADS).

The club has also undertaken a review of its DDA position both internally and via NADS and is putting in place a series of improvements/proposals identified as part of those discussions.

Facilities for Supporters Using Wheelchairs

The club has 121 positions for wheelchair supporters and, if required, a personal assistant. These are situated in all areas of the stadium with the exception of the East Stand and are at both upper and lower levels.

These places are provided at a concessionary price of £17.00. Subject to other concessions e.g. child, advanced booking, on-line booking and payable by the disabled person using the wheelchair. Should a Personal Assistant (PA) be required, they will not be charged. Season tickets are available at £310.00.

In conjunction with the proof of disability mentioned above, this concession will only be available to those people who meet the eligibility criteria described below.

- Wheelchair using applicants must be largely confined to a wheelchair, or not capable of walking a distance further than that required to reasonably and safely access any other part of the stadium.

- A person who is capable of supporting the disabled person's needs in the event of an emergency should ideally, also accompany wheelchair using applicants. For this reason West Ham United Football Club strongly recommend that a person is sixteen years of age or over and not be infirm.

Facilities for Supporters with Visual Impairments

The club has positions for visually impaired supporters and if required, their personal assistants. These are situated throughout the stadium at both upper and lower levels.

Visually impaired supporters using these areas will be charged £17.00 for their tickets. Should a personal assistant be required, they will not be charged for a match ticket. Season tickets are available at £310.00.

Match commentary is provided by West Ham United and 10 headsets are available from the Ticket Office upon request.

Eligibility for this concession requires proof of disability as described above or each person can provide a copy of their registration document which certifies they are Registered Blind or Registered Partially Sighted.

Guide Dogs are allowed into the Stadium but we would recommend that supporters with Guide Dogs contact the club before the match so that we can discuss with them access to the ground, facilities inside the ground and the welfare of the Guide Dog before, during and after the match.

Facilities for Supporters with Hearing Impairments

West Ham United offer customers with hearing impairments the facility to contact our Disabled Liaison Officer by e-mail using the address of disabledinfo@westhamunited.co.uk

The Ticket Office in the Dr Martens Stand is fitted with an Induction Loop as is the stadium bowl.

The club has positions for supporters with hearing impairments and if required, their personal assistants. These are situated throughout the stadium at both upper and lower levels.

Hearing impaired supporters using these areas will be charged £17.00 for their tickets. Should a personal assistant be required, they will not be charged for a match ticket. Season tickets are available at £310.00.

In the event of an emergency on match days, emergency messages are passed through the induction loop system and are also displayed on the trackside digiboards along with the Big Screens in the corners of the stadium.

Staff trained in sign language are also available to assist if required.

Facilities for Supporters with Ambulatory Disabilities

West Ham United Football Club recognise that there are considerable numbers of people in the community who use wheelchairs mainly for outdoors 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.

For the purposes of this policy and the administration of the concessionary ticketing policy both categories of people will be termed 'ambulatory disabled supporters' and those supporters with ambulatory disabilities of a severe nature will qualify for the concessionary treatment and have access to seating nearest the entrances/exists.

Provision will be in "designated areas" only and should the individual not wish to sit here, they forfeit the entitlement to a disability related concession.

Eligibility to these areas will be dependent on providing proof of disability (as described above) or will be decided on individual merit based on information provided to the Ticket Office; this information will assist in determining each individual's suitability for use of the facilities.

Facilities for Supporters with Infirmities

Supporters with physically restricting medical conditions can sometimes have difficulty in reaching seats in some parts of the stadium.

West Ham United Football Club is conscious of a growing elderly population and wish to consider their needs in order for them to be able to continue watching matches whenever possible. With this in mind it is proposed that those elderly people suffering from an infirmity which prevents them climbing large numbers of steps should be able to request a seat in the most accessible part of the stadium (i.e. nearest the entrances/exists). Please advise the ticket office of this request at the time of booking.

Should their infirmity be so severe that they cannot manage more than 1 or 2 steps, they may be entitled to the concession offered for ambulatory disabled supporters (see above).

Facilities for Supporters with Learning Difficulties

Supporters with learning difficulties can normally be accommodated in any part of the stadium in normal seating, if any remain available.

Family Seating

West Ham United Football Club recognizes that disabled people have families who may wish to attend matches as a family unit in much the same way as non-disabled people would. West Ham United Football Club will try and accommodate such requests although this may not always be possible.

Please contact the ticket office for assistance in obtaining tickets as close as possible to the designated areas.

Car Parking Facilities

West Ham United Football Club has 13 disabled persons parking places which are allocated to disabled people with the most severe mobility difficulties. These are provided free of charge to disabled season ticket holders and match-day attendees (depending on availability). Applications can be made to the Ticket Office and each request will be judged on its individual merit.

West Ham United Football Club would ask that people recognise that there are only a limited number of places available and it will not be possible to accommodate everyone who has a Blue/Orange Badge.

Please note that West Ham United Football Club car park attendants will routinely check that the Orange/Blue Badges are being used correctly – failure to comply will result in a refusal to park in these spaces.

Lines of Sight

The club appreciates that the view from some of the wheelchair platforms may be restricted at times of high excitement. Plans are being discussed to re-design the platforms and provide clear sightlines but in the meantime, supporters will be reminded to remain seated at all times by requests over the PA and in the programme.

We would like to remind ALL supporters not to stand in front of/to the side of the wheelchair platforms

Catering Facilities

Match day catering for disabled people is provided in the concourses with lowered serving areas in most kiosks. Due to the number of people using the concourses pre-game and at half-time, the club's stewards will also offer assistance in getting refreshments. There are also mobile 'hawkers' moving around the stadium.

Other facilities, which come under the general heading of Catering such as the Executive Lounges, Suites, Box's and the Board Room, are to be made accessible to disabled people, in the near future.

Measures are being taken to provide menus in large print and Braille. Induction loop equipment and signers for the deaf will be made available when required.

Disabled Persons Toilets

There are disabled toilets in each stand which have designated disabled areas and the majority of these are only accessible with a RADAR key. The toilets are alarmed.

If you experience any problems with use of the disabled toilets (or they are being abused), please contact the nearest steward on the day or the Ticket Office after the match.

Access to Other Facilities

The club has many facilities available on match days and non-match days which aren't directly linked with actually watching the match. Such facilities include the club shop, lounges/suites, bar, executive boxes, conference facilities, hotel rooms, etc. The club has carried out an informal DDA Audit of these facilities and whilst most are currently accessible, some improvements are planned.

Accessible Media

The club is taking steps to provide accessible information in audio tape, large print, Braille and electronic formats.

Should visually impaired supporters require alternative formats please contact the Ticket Office who will be pleased to discuss how these can be made available.

Accessible Websites

The official West Ham United Football Club website is provided by Premium TV. Discussions are ongoing between this company and the football authorities to make the site more accessible for visually impaired supporters who use text based browsers as part of The Soccer Sight Campaign.

The Internet is a useful means of accessing information by disabled people and future development of the West Ham United Football Club website should provide information in a downloadable format. It is hoped that the increasing use of the internet will allow an increasing number of disabled people access to information which they had previously experienced difficulty in obtaining. A page on the official West Ham United Football Club website will be dedicated to information specific to disability matters.

A useful website for disabled supporters to find out about facilities at grounds around the country can be found on the NADS website – www.nads.org.uk

Transport for Away matches

Subject to prior notice and the availability of a suitable vehicle, West Ham United will endeavour to book through their official coach company, a wheelchair accessible vehicle to take wheelchair bound supporters and their Personal Assistants to away matches.

It will be the responsibility of the disabled person who is travelling to ensure that someone accompanies them who is fully capable of supporting their needs. West Ham United cannot undertake to provide "personal care" or moving and handling assistance to people travelling because of Health & Safety implications but will use their best endeavour to assist in whatever way possible.

Steward Training

West Ham United Football Club stewards are trained in the NVQ Level 2 in Spectator Safety, which includes a disability module. West Ham United Football Club aim to use the same stewards in the disability designated areas as far as possible but due to the use of agency staff, this sometimes cannot happen.

West Ham United Football Club are investigating the possibility of supplementing the NVQ Level 2 in Spectator Safety by giving additional training generally known as “Disability Awareness Training” and is usually accompanied by “Disability Etiquette Training”.

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. West Ham United Football Club are forcefully committed to developing a “can do” culture by introducing such training and it will remain the hub to the further development of this policy.

Audit

As part of its disability awareness, West Ham United Football Club will undertake to have the Upton Park Stadium audited annually for accessibility for disabled people. This is a key component of the Disability Discrimination Act and FA Guidelines.

Conclusion

Every reasonable adjustment is being made to all the services provided by the different departments of West Ham United Football Club. All Department managers and personnel have 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 measures are in place to ensure compliance with all associated legislation.

West Ham United Football Club designated Disabled Liaison Officer is Julie Pidgeon who can be contacted on 08452171332 or via email -disabledinfo@westhamunited.co.uk

West Ham United Football Club openly welcome comments on this policy and would encourage any person to contact the club with their comments or queries.