



# **DISABLED SUPPORTERS' POLICY**

**Aberdeen Football Club**  
**Pittodrie Stadium**  
**Aberdeen**

## **STATEMENT**

This policy must be read with any other policies activated due to pandemics or any other special circumstances which may affect any of the roles and responsibilities highlighted in this document and adjusted accordingly.

### **1.0 Introduction**

1.1 This policy will show how Aberdeen FC wishes to underpin their commitment to disabled supporters. The people referred to includes people with:

- Sensory impairments ie. those suffering from hearing loss or a visual impairment.
- People who are dependent on using wheelchairs.
- People with learning difficulties and unseen disabilities.
- People with walking difficulties.
- People with physically restricting medical conditions.
- Older people who are infirm.

### **1.2 Policy Definition of a Disabled Supporter**

For the purposes of this Policy 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. Any such person will be considered for use of the Special Provision areas of the stadium in line with the procedures set out in this policy.

### 1.3 **Equality Act 2010**

As a fundamental principle the Equality Act 2010 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. Aberdeen FC aims to fully comply with both the provisions and spirit of the Act.

### 2.0 **Provision of Facilities & Amenities – Sensory Impaired Supporters**

- 2.1 Supporters with impaired hearing 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 impaired hearing feels that ordinary stand seating would be unsuitable for them they should contact Aberdeen FC Ticket Office for further information. *(Please be aware that the stated criteria for ticket purchase applications will apply).*
- 2.2 The introduction of induction loop equipment at customer contact points, including the Ticket Office and the main reception areas, has been completed.
- 2.3 Enquiries from visually impaired supporters will be dealt with by Aberdeen FC Ticket Office and allocation of the places available in the visually impaired persons section of the stadium will be managed by the Club.
- 2.4 The Club strongly recommends that each visually impaired person attending a match should be accompanied by a person who is fully able to support their needs in the event of an emergency.
- 2.5 Visually impaired people wishing to attend a match aided by their Guide Dog should contact Aberdeen FC Ticket Office for all relevant information. Due deference will be given to all aspects of safety and guidance from Guide Dogs for the Blind to ensure a person's safety within and around the ground. Measures will also be taken to ensure that the welfare of the Guide Dog is preserved.
- 2.6 The official Aberdeen FC website is fully accessible for visually impaired supporters who use text-based browsers, except for any video content.
- 2.7 Equipment is available on matchday and is supplied by Access Audio Ltd. and comprises 1 (one) portable transmitter and 12 (twelve) portable receivers with earphones plus 1 (one) microphone. There is audio commentary throughout the match and receivers are available for distribution.

### 3.0 **Provision of Facilities & Amenities – Wheelchair Dependent Supporters**

Criteria for access to wheelchair specific seating:

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

- 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.
- Wheelchair using applicants should also be accompanied by a person who can support the disabled person's needs in the event of an emergency. For this reason Aberdeen FC strongly recommend that a person is 16 (sixteen) years of age or over and not be infirm. Any exceptions to this must be notified to Aberdeen FC Ticket Office and appropriate arrangements will be made. Any refusals will only be on the grounds of a contravention of Health and Safety legislation.
- People wishing to purchase a ticket for a wheelchair space should contact Aberdeen FC Ticket Office.

#### **4.0 Provision of Facilities & Amenities – Supporters with Learning Difficulties and Unseen Disabilities**

4.1 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 Aberdeen FC Ticket Office for further information.

*(Please be aware that the normal criteria for ticket purchase applications will apply ie. membership and the possession/provision of match vouchers when necessary).*

#### **5.0 Provision of Facilities & Amenities – Ambulatory Disabled Supporters**

5.1 Aberdeen FC 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. For the purposes of this policy and the administration of the facility itself both categories of people will be termed 'ambulatory disabled supporters' and they will be asked to follow the procedure below in order to attend a match using the purpose-built facility; supporters with ambulatory disabilities of a severe nature can be considered for use of parts of the stadium with the easiest access. Access to the area will be decided on individual merit based on information provided to Aberdeen FC Ticket Office; this information will assist in determining everyone's suitability for use of the facilities.

**6.0 Provision of Facilities & Amenities – Supporters with Physically Restricting Medical Conditions**

6.1 Supporters with physically restricting medical conditions can sometimes have difficulty in reaching seats in some parts of the stadium. Aberdeen FC has, therefore, instituted procedures whereby supporters suffering such conditions can apply for tickets in the most accessible areas of the stadium.

6.2 Tickets for people described in 6.1 should be applied for to Aberdeen FC Ticket Office who will provide all the relevant information for ticket applications. *(Please be aware that the normal criteria for ticket purchase applications will apply ie. membership and the possession/provision of match vouchers when necessary).*

**7.0 Provision of Facilities & Amenities – Car Parking for Disabled Supporters**

7.1 Aberdeen FC has several disabled persons parking places which are allocated to disabled people with the most severe mobility difficulties. Aberdeen FC 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 Badge.

**8.0 Accessible Information**

8.1 Steps have already been taken to put procedures in place to provide information in alternative formats that are more easily accessible to disabled people. Aberdeen FC has already produced copies of the Club Charter on CD.

**9.0 Website**

9.1 The official Aberdeen FC website is now fully accessible for those visually impaired people who use text-based browsers (except for any video content).

9.2 The internet is a useful means of accessing information by disabled people and future development of the Aberdeen FC website should provide information in a downloadable format.

**10.0 Transport – Domestic Away Matches**

10.1 Opportunities for disabled supporters to attend away matches are limited by the allocation received from the away club.

However, disabled people who use wheelchairs with a ticket for an away match should be able to travel on the official members coaches if they wish to do so, as the coaches are wheelchair accessible but there is a weight limit of 120kg combined weight of disabled person and their chair. Supporters may also travel with the official Aberdeen FC Disabled Supporters group who also arrange travel to some away fixtures.

10.2 Although the content of 10.1 obliges the coach company to provide adapted transport it will be the responsibility of the disabled person who is travelling to ensure that they are accompanied by someone who is fully capable of supporting their needs. Aberdeen FC cannot undertake to provide 'moving and handling' assistance to people travelling because of the Health and Safety implications but will use their best endeavour to assist in whatever way possible.

10.3 As in 10.2 above; any disabled person travelling to European away matches must take responsibility for themselves and be accompanied by a person who is fully capable of supporting their needs.

## 11.0 Catering

11.1 Matchday catering for disabled people is provided in the concourse behind the disabled persons facilities and is dedicated to that facility.

11.2 Other facilities which come under the general heading of catering, such as the lounges and suites, are accessible to disabled people.

## 12.0 Staff Training

12.1 Elements of staff training which relate to 'disability awareness' and 'disability etiquette' have been identified and staff training programmes are in place to ensure that awareness and etiquette are observed. This training programme is ongoing. Aberdeen FC is 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.

## 13.0 General

13.1 Every reasonable adjustment is being made to all the services provided by the different departments of Aberdeen FC. Department managers 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 matchday facilities, are being fully assessed and measures are in place to ensure compliance with all associated legislation.

Aberdeen FC openly welcome comments on this policy and would encourage any person to contact the Club with their comments or queries.

**CONTACTS**

Paul Hendry  
Head of Operations  
Aberdeen Football Club Limited  
Pittodrie Stadium  
Pittodrie Street  
Aberdeen  
AB24 5QH

Lynn Fiske  
Supporter Liaison Officer  
Aberdeen Football Club Limited  
Pittodrie Stadium  
Pittodrie Street  
Aberdeen  
AB24 5QH

**Signed on behalf of:**  
**Aberdeen Football Club Ltd.**

Name	Signature	Job Title	Date
<b>Paul Hendry</b>		<b>Head of Operations</b>	<b>04/01/2024</b>