Level Playing Field (LPF) Access Audit & Disability Equality Training programme

Level Playing Field offers an Access Audit programme & Disability Equality Training programme designed specifically for sports stadia, venues and arenas with audits delivered by LPF Access Auditors that are professional and peer-reviewed as NRAC (National Register of Access Consultants) auditors.

The LPF Access Audit provides a professional and cost effective audit, tailored to the requirements of providing accessible sporting venues that is not available elsewhere.

The reasons for carrying out an access audit are to help meet the requirements of the Equality Act and improve access and egress which in turn will increase your custom and turnover as well as help protect you from claims of disability discrimination.

Our full ‘Access Audit’ inspection comprises a visual assessment and written report of the Premises/Stadia/Arena in terms of suitability for the disabled visitor or staff. The Audit will be undertaken in line with Level Playing Fields’ “Accessibility Standards” as noted in Appendix 1.

The Audit visit gives recommendations and best practice guidelines for improvements inside the premises, any building plus surrounding grounds, which need to be provided to meet legislative requirements. The Access Audit also incorporates best practice guidelines and standards as outlined in the National Accessible Standards and British Standards.

The initial Audit Process

The ‘Access Audit’ takes a logical approach in the form of a ‘journey sequence’ of obtaining information, arrival, entrance, circulation, facilities and exit of the Premises/Stadia/Arena.

By following the sequence that most users of the building take the auditor can consider the suitability of the environment, its features and any potential barriers i.e. starting from obtaining information about the stadium, buying tickets, to the nearest access point of the Stadia whether that be by private or Public Transport (if available for the disabled visitor) to the entrance.

The Audit can also be tailored to look at other customer service elements that may not strictly be disability related eg family areas, facilities to women/girls, Black and Minority Ethnic Communities etc.
The Audit and recommendations firstly deal with the gathering of information (eg from websites or other sources to buying tickets via the various methods available) and then reviewing transport arrangements, drop-off points etc to looking at the outside area and grounds, the Premises/Stadia/Arena itself and then any exit or egress issues.

This includes car-parking facilities provided adjacent to the grounds, plus inspecting the accessibility of routes to the Premises/Stadia/Arena and internal entrances and buildings including disabled supporters viewing areas. The inspection then covers ease of circulation around the building and grounds, the ease of circulation inside buildings and facilities that are offered for people with disabilities.

The audit also covers aspects of BS9999, with regards to Fire Safety for Disabled Persons. By viewing the escape routes and reviewing any PEEP (Personal Emergency Escape Plan) plans that have been organised by management and staff. This also includes the inspection of Escape Routes and Emergency Fire Doors plus Fire extinguishers and equipment placement within the premises and other service providers within the building complex/Stadia.

The inspection comprises of a full photographic and written overview assessment of the premises in terms of suitability for the disabled user in respect of Access for the Disabled including Legislation Guidelines.

The report also provides an early “Action Plan” which involves highlighting areas that require action and our Auditors use a categorisation system which identifies such actions or faults as ‘A to D’. Each category represents the seriousness of the ‘fault’ and requires completion or a further review as follows:

a) A = requiring immediate attention;
b) B = at the next general site maintenance (within 6 monthly cycles);
c) C = at the next planned development/refurbishment (12 to 18 months limit but for major works could be 3 years);
d) D = as part of the next general management review (should be immediate or within reasonable timeframe of say 6 months to agree or change policies & procedures).

Also included within the audit cost is a two and half hour seminar/lecture to all staff and management on the Equality Act, the Accessibility Standards (see Appendix 1 below) BS9999 (Means of Escape for Disabled People), Part M of Building Control, Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Negligence Act, Disability Equality, Disability Etiquette and Best Practice. It is hoped to hold the Training Seminar on the morning of the second day of the audit. All who attend will receive an attendance certificate or CPD Points.

We envisage the on-site 'Access Audit' will take at least two to three days to complete; Two days for the on-site audit and training session and one day to get an overview of a match day – which will include the disabled person’s/Supporters experience.
The completed overview, report and findings including a ‘Point of Reference’ manual/document and will be returned to you approximately 4/5 weeks from completion of the audit.

After completion of the Access Audit, on-going guidance on DDA/Equality Act issues plus advice on new legislation impacting on the disability arena is given free of charge by the Auditor/LPF to the club for as long as they want it (many clubs have already taken advantage of this and been in contact to discuss specific issues arising from or after the audit or just general disability matters).

The ‘Access Auditor’ is a member of the National Register of Access Consultants and our Audits are fully covered by Professional Indemnity Insurance. The Auditor also has full Enhanced CRB Clearance.

Finally, clubs, stadiums and venues that commission a professional LPF Audit and sign up to working with LPF towards meeting the minimum accessibility standards for sports stadia and venues (on match (or event) and non-match days) will be presented with an ‘LPF Audited’ accreditation and will be entitled to display the ‘LPF audited’ logo as a demonstration of their commitment to improving access and inclusion standards (in line with the industry’s own good practice standards) at their venue and having been professionally audited.

The ‘LPF Centre of Excellence’ award will be presented to those sporting venues and stadia that demonstrate the highest access and inclusion standards in accommodating disabled spectators and visitors on match (or event) and non-match days. To qualify for the award, the club or venue must first commission an LPF Audit and demonstrate that it meets the requirements of existing equality and access legislation, building regulations and accessible sports grounds and stadia good practice standards.

Summary:

By undertaking this access audit programme, the football club will receive the following included services:

1. A full Access Audit undertaken with reference to current legislative and good practice guidelines;

2. An Audit specifically designed for Sports Stadia & Arena’s with reference to the acknowledged minimum standards in "Accessible Stadia";


4. Ongoing guidance on all DDA / Equality Act issues free of charge plus advice of any new legislation that may be introduced with regards to disability and access;

5. A two and half hour seminar/lecture to all staff and management on the Equality Act / DDA and disability awareness; and
6. ‘LPF Audited’ accreditation will be given as a demonstration of the club/venues commitment to improving access and inclusion standards (in line with the industries own good practice standards) at their venue and the opportunity to become a LPF Centre of Excellence.
Appendix 1

LPF ‘Accessibility Standards’

The minimum accessibility standards or references include existing disability/equality legislation, building regulations and existing good practice and reference documents that exist within the relevant sports and in particular the football industry such as:

i. Access for All - UEFA and CAFE Good Practice Guide to Creating an Accessible Stadium and Matchday Experience (2011);


iii. The Football Licensing Authority’s (now the Sports Ground Safety Authority) Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds, Fifth edition;

iv. The Equality Act (Disability Discrimination Act (DDA));

v. BS8300:2009;

vi. BS9999;

vii. Part M of Building Control; including the new amendments (2009);

viii. National Accessible Standards (Provided by the National Tourism Council);

ix. CEN/TR 15913:2009 “Spectator facilities. Layout criteria for viewing area for spectators with special needs”) and CAFE's Introduction Note 1 for the CEN Technical Report;


xi. Level Playing Field’s accessibility checklist & good practice policies and helpsheets on providing facilities for Deaf/Hard of Hearing spectators, and facilities for people with an ambulant disability. We also have joint publications with Mencap, the RNIB and Guide Dogs on providing for supporters with learning difficulties and facilities for blind/partially sighted supporters respectively;

xii. The various Premier League, Football League and Football Association access and disability Guides and publications – see http://www.levelplayingfield.org.uk/what-expect-accessible-stadium;