



Level Playing Field

Annual Report

2021

www.levelplayingfield.org.uk

Contents

President's foreword	3
Chair's report	5
About Level Playing Field	7
For the Fans	11
For the Clubs	25
Campaigns	30
Knowledge Centre	37
Partnerships	42
Covid-19	45
Level Playing Field	49
A word from the Chief Executive	53

President's foreword

David Bernstein CBE

I am pleased to welcome you to this year's Level Playing Field Annual Report.

In a year where we have had to adapt our ways of living and working, the charity has continued to promote access and inclusion in line with its charitable objectives.

Once again, the staff team has worked hard in a holistic fashion, ensuring that the real-life views of disabled fans are represented and shared, whilst also supporting clubs in providing greater access and inclusion.

We have seen some key challenges in 2021 that have significantly impacted disabled sports fans. Firstly, the Event Research Programmes, which saw Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) fans excluded from attending live sport during the test events (it is also important to acknowledge that not all disabled fans are clinically extremely vulnerable). Secondly, the abhorrent behaviour and stadium breaches we saw at the Euro 2020 final, where accessible entrances were targeted to unlawfully gain entry putting disabled sports fans in harm's way. I am pleased to report that Level Playing Field worked hard to successfully overturn the Event Research Programme exclusions and that the organisation also made a significant contribution and representations to the review of the Euro 2020 final undertaken by Baroness Casey.

We also saw the Fan Led Review, led by Tracey Crouch MP – something that many will know I have a keen interest in. Level Playing Field contributed both with oral and written evidence to the review, which is undoubtedly an important milestone for the overall governance of football. Level Playing Field strongly supported the call for an independent regulator, but there was some disappointment that the report was thin in terms of referencing disability.

Annual Report

I know that the team at Level Playing Field will continue to work with the government and all interested stakeholders to ensure disability has an appropriate platform and representation as football responds to the review.

Our campaigning activities continue to deliver both strong numbers and awareness. This year saw a 27% increase in social media analytics, with clubs delivering many innovative projects to celebrate the Level Playing Field Weeks of Action.

The charity is very fortunate to have a passionate Board of Trustees, Ambassadors and Honorary Officers and I am grateful for their support and dedicated work.

Moving forward, We will continue to see fans returning to stadia on matchdays and Level Playing Field will play a big part in supporting disabled fans and representing their views to ensure that the return to normality is as smooth and safe as possible.

It will be a busy 12 months ahead and I look forward to seeing the achievements during this period.

With best wishes,

David Bernstein CBE



Chair's report

Tony Taylor



On behalf of the Board of Trustees at Level Playing Field, I am pleased to welcome you to our latest Annual Report. I would like to thank our President, David Bernstein CBE, our Vice Presidents Lord Faulkner of Worcester, Lord Rosser of Ickenham and David Davies OBE, for their continued support and wise counsel in an ever-changing landscape.

Level Playing Field's Ambassadors play an integral role in raising awareness and bringing our vision to life. I am, as always, grateful for their continued and dedicated support over the year.

During the past 12 months, as the pandemic locked down society, many people have experienced the loss of live sport; it provides an opportunity to connect with others in our community. This brings so much more than simply being socially connected – we have long stressed the significant physical and mental health benefits for disabled people in attending live sport. After a period of fans being absent on matchdays, so many people now recognise that watching live sport is so much more than just the 90 minutes on the pitch. Lockdown did bring many challenges of course, but we have worked hard with governing bodies and clubs, many of which went that extra mile to ensure that their disabled supporters were not marginalised.

During the year, our work has benefitted from the data and analytics produced by our surveys. We launched the findings from our largest disabled sports fans survey in the summer, with over 1400 fans contributing to the Level Playing Field Annual Fan Survey. The results indicated that 30% of respondents felt that they could not attend sports or sporting venues due to poor access. Whilst much progress has been made in recent years, this represents a stark reminder that there is much more to be done and we must not be complacent.

Annual Report

As our President mentions in his foreword, we have seen several issues which have required our sharp focus. We are proud and passionate about representing disabled sports fans and their experiences. With the potential exclusion of CEV fans at the Event Research Programmes and the appalling and shocking incidents at the Euro 2020 final, we ensured disabled sports fans experiences were at the forefront of considerations.

Level Playing Field is fortunate to have a talented and passionate team of staff. Every single member of our staff team has worked tirelessly throughout the pandemic and produced innovative ways to ensure that they achieve their objectives. I am grateful to them for the way in which they have adapted to flexible working and exceeded objectives. During the pandemic, the need for their support proved to be greater than ever and it is pleasing to see an increased demand for access audits and associated work. As a result, the trustees have decided to recruit a new member of staff to support the access and inclusion work and we hope to have an appointee in place early to mid-2022.

It would be remiss of me not to mention the support that we have received from the Premier League Fans Funds and the EFL, along with other donors who have enabled us to steer a prudent, but efficient path through a challenging time given the impact of the pandemic. Their support has enabled us to provide innovative and effective advice to so many and I am grateful for their continued support.

Finally, I want to place on record my personal thanks to fellow trustees, who work in an entirely voluntary capacity but always go above and beyond the call of duty. As chair, I have been fortunate to have their wise input and support with key areas of the charity and this has ensured that Level Playing Field has been able to continue operating as smoothly as possible during unprecedented and unpredictable times.

We know that there are many challenges ahead, but the trustees are committed to ensuring that accessibility and inclusion remains at the forefront, representing the views of all our stakeholders. Of course, the input of disabled supporters themselves can never be overstated and I am grateful for the support and contribution that has been made to our work from so many.

Tony Taylor

About Level Playing Field

Annual Report

Level Playing Field is a registered charity in England and Wales, which acts as a campaigning and advisory organisation to its membership and other parties across all sports. We have a team of dedicated staff with specialist knowledge, skills and experience around issues concerning access and inclusion.

Level Playing Field embraces 'the social model of disability' and promotes the removal of barriers that might prevent a disabled spectator from attending or enjoying a live sports event. We want to ensure that disabled people enjoy an equality of experience as they attend live sport. Level Playing Field is driven to address the current inequality of experience for disabled fans attending live sport. Whether it's lack of choice, availability of tickets or a second-rate experience we use a proactive and constructive approach to tackle these and other issues.



Our mission

Level Playing Field promotes a positive, inclusive experience for disabled sports fans



Our vision

A world in which all disabled fans can freely access and enjoy live sporting events.



Our aims

- Providing support and advocacy for disabled sports fans.
- Offering advice, access audits and training to sports clubs and governing bodies.
- Working with architects and design teams to ensure an inclusive and accessible physical environment at live sporting events.
- Building relationships and partnerships with sports clubs, DSAs, fans and sector organisations.
- Campaigning to keep the disability agenda top of mind for the government.

Level Playing Field delivers its work through four key pillars:

- **For the Fans**
- **For the Clubs**
- **Knowledge Centre**
- **Campaigns**

Putting it simply, Level Playing Field campaigns and works towards improving the matchday experience for disabled fans by driving an equal matchday experience.

Why we do what we do

It is estimated that 50% of disabled people don't take part in recreational or physical activity.

The barriers to why a disabled fan chooses not to attend live sport can be addressed through training, raising awareness, and updating facilities and services. Last year, Level Playing Field received hundreds of enquiries and complaints and we aim to address these common recurring issues.

Level Playing Field are guided by the following principles:

- Anti-discrimination – so that disabled people do not face discrimination arising from poor or misinformed practice.
- Equality of opportunity or making things fairer – for disabled people in every aspect of their contact with sports clubs and venues.
- Increasing the independence and choices that disabled people have.
- Individual requirements / diversity – recognising that a disabled person is an individual who, like all others, has his or her own requirements, abilities, human rights and responsibilities.
- Integration/inclusion – such that services are made accessible to disabled people and offer choice.
- Involvement in decision-making – so that disabled people, and/or their advocates, are consulted before decisions that affect them are made.
- The social model of disability explains that it is social and physical 'barriers' that cause 'disability' not impairments.

Level Playing Field is working to remove the barriers that currently exclude disabled people. These barriers can be prejudice and stereotypes, the way things are organised and run, along with little to no access to information, buildings and transport.



Annual Report

For the Fans



Fan-led review

Announcement

On April 19 the UK Government announced the launch of the 'fan-led review' that examined the ways fans are treated by clubs and wider issues of ownership and governance.

The review was chaired by Tracey Crouch MP, who was Sports Minister from 2015-17, and was a guest on the Level Playing Field podcast. The terms of reference for the 'fan-led review' were released and it stated that:

'The independent review will aim to explore ways of improving the governance, ownership and financial sustainability of clubs in English football, building on the strengths of the football pyramid. The review will add to the recommendations of the English Football League's governance review and the government's 2016 expert working group on football supporter ownership and engagement. The review will be expected to engage extensively with fans to ensure any recommendations are led by fans' experience and interests.'

Level Playing Field fully supported the 'fan-led review' and found it to be an opportunity for real change. As the largest minority group in the UK, we insisted that disabled supporters' voices are heard.

We reached out to Tracey and the DCMS to offer our support.

Request to fans

Level Playing Field invited supporters who wished to raise any views that would feed into the government's football review to get in touch, as the organisation would be submitting evidence on behalf of disabled fans.

We wanted to ensure we were providing the real-life match day views of disabled fans to the government and panel members involved in the review.



Evidence session

In June, Level Playing Field and several fans provided verbal evidence to a panel led by Tracey Crouch MP.

The session provided a brief opportunity to outline key issues and experience where football governance needed to be improved to account for disabled fans and other matters relating to disability.

In the time permitted, the key areas raised were focused on the representation of disabled people at the board level, regulatory obligations and bodies and fan voice/consultation.

Key points Level Playing Field have raised and urged the review to include:

Board representation of disabled people/fans at executive and non-executive level

- Allows for disability matters to have a suitable and non-tokenistic platform that can be weaved into the overarching governance at a club and governing body level.
- Implementing a 'comply or explain' style agreement with clubs to ensure it's prioritised.
- A case of prioritising it, and it will get done.

Regulatory obligations and bodies

- Level Playing Field believes that the most significant catalyst to change for disabled football fans in recent time has been the Premier League pledge. It highlights a case of what gets measured gets done.
- Having both a set of clear, measurable minimum accessible standards along with a regulator/regulatory system would deliver greater access and inclusion and, more so, a fundamental human right.
- Outlines clear standards which take into account disability inclusion and other matters.

Fan voice/consultation

- Having a formal process recognised and reviewed by the board is essential for delivering representative governance.
- Having board involvement with disabled fan engagement further demonstrates a commitment to matters relating to disability and can be included in the governance framework.
- Structured dialogue needs to be an ongoing process, inclusive and varied (meetings, at matchdays, surveys and other formats)
- Disabled fan engagement needs to be standalone from non-disabled fan engagement and not bolted on.

Interim findings

Level Playing Field welcomed the 'Fan Led Review of Football Governance' interim findings, particularly the proposal of an independent regulator. However, we expressed our concern at the lack of detail and information regarding how the recommendations will produce the necessary benefit for disabled fans.

We urged the review panel to work with Level Playing Field and disabled fans to ensure that it wouldn't be an opportunity lost for the millions of disabled football fans who have a right to good governance.



Level Playing Field statement

Thursday 25 November 2021

Level Playing Field acknowledges the release of the independent fan-led review of football governance, conducted by Tracey Crouch MP, which we believe to be a significant piece of work for which we congratulate all those involved.

We are encouraged by this examination of the English football system and agree with the need for greater fan engagement and involvement in the game and in particular the role of an independent regulator. We are extremely disappointed, but sadly not surprised, at the lack of reference to disabled fans and the importance of disabled supporters' voices in the governance of our national sport.

Despite the review being 162 pages of observations and recommendations, actions regarding disability are disappointingly thin.

Disabled people are the largest minority group in the UK (14 million people) but are often an afterthought or low priority in the world of football (and sport in general); we fear that this has proven to be the case once again regarding this review.

We welcome the review's recommendation for an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion action plan. It is important that these plans are not simply broad sweeping statements but offer specific measurable actions that enhance experience and inclusion with all fans' voices at the heart of it.

At the very least, we would want plans to include:

- A set of minimum measurable accessibility standards across football clubs
- Board representation for disabled fans/people
- Regular and meaningful structured dialogue with disabled fans

Disabled fans' voices are imperative in delivering representative governance and understanding the 'whole picture' of the experience of a disabled fan. Having a structured communication process and ongoing fan feedback is essential for shaping effective governance and delivering appropriate inclusion.

Neurodiverse Sports Fans Research Project Launch

Research project with SGSA

Level Playing Field was pleased to announce a national research project in partnership with the Sports Ground Safety Authority into the experiences of neurodiverse sports fans when attending live sports events.

The research project ran from January 2021, and was managed by Britain's largest independent social research agency, NatCen.

We recruited people who have autism, ADHD, dyslexia, dyspraxia, or dyscalculia, Tourette's syndrome, or other neurodevelopmental conditions and who are sports fans.



Annual Report

It does not matter whether fans attended live sports events regularly, or at all, as we were also interested in understanding why fans may not attend.

As sports clubs in the UK strive to become more accessible for disabled fans, it is important to bear in mind that less than 8% of disabled people are wheelchair users.

Most disabled people have non-visible disabilities, and it is thought that up to 30% of the population may have neurodiverse conditions, with many undiagnosed. These conditions include, but are not limited to, autism, ADHD, dyspraxia, dyslexia, dyscalculia, and Tourette's syndrome.

The huge spectrum of each of these conditions means it is almost impossible to anticipate and cater for every individual's needs. This makes the position for stadium managers – with an anticipatory duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people under the Equality Act 2010 – very difficult.

As part of the Accessible Stadia Guide re-write it became very clear early on that there is a shortage of research and guidance available on this topic. We wanted to include some advice and recommendations for fans with neurodiverse conditions into the new edition and the Sports Grounds Safety Authority (SGSA) offered to fund a research project for us carried out by Britain's largest social research agency, NatCen.

Martyn Henderson, Chief Executive of the Sports Grounds Safety Authority, said: "We are pleased to fund this important primary research as part of our ongoing commitment to improve evidence in relation to spectator safety.

"Ensuring that sports grounds are safe and accessible for people with neurodiverse conditions is important to SGSA and we look forward to the outcomes of the research and future collaboration with Level Playing Field."

The key aim of this report was to recognise and highlight the access requirements of neurodiverse sports fans and how these related to questions about maintaining a safe environment within stadia and grounds.



Annual Report

Feedback from participants revealed the following areas needed improving:

→ Booking tickets

Participants wanted an easier process of booking, with a single accessibility scheme that recognised individual requirements operating across sports. This would reduce the need to repeatedly explain or justify their access requirements.



→ Information provision ahead of the day

Being able to plan improved confidence. Participants wanted more information available in advance of events, covering; what to expect in terms of arrival and transport; security checks and what could be brought into the venue; seating layout; and who they could speak to for help.



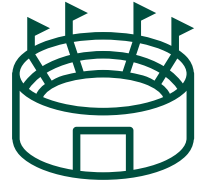
→ Staff

Negative encounters were reported arising from a lack of understanding from staff. They felt staff, particularly stewards, should receive training to be more aware of, better understand and support neurodiverse fans. Where participants received support from disability access or liaison officers, this was generally a positive experience. "Knowledge is key, the training of stewards is the way forward as they are on the grounds with the fans" - carer of child with ADHD and Tourette's, who attends live sport.



→ Venue design

Negative experiences where venues had narrow concourses and gangways or closely packed seating were reported. Being able to pick appropriate seating improved this. Fans often relied on support from other people to find their way around venues but suggested new stadia should be built with wider, more spacious concourses, gangways, and seating. Signage could also be improved using pictures, colours, and larger text.



→ Facilities

Participants were supportive of the provision of sensory rooms for neurodiverse children and for those with more complex needs, but noted that there were various limitations to these. They advocated having more quiet spaces closer to seating areas that could be accessed without prior booking and be used as a space to moderate anxiety or stress.

→ Safety

Many of the factors that improved participants' overall experience also made them feel safer while attending live events. These included accessible/open seating and accessible venue design, support from family or friends, and a strong presence of trustworthy staff who understood the requirements of the range of fans.



→ Venue Arrival

Being physically close to other people can be overstimulating and lead to a rise in anxiety. Participants wanted greater availability of accessible parking or more drop off locations nearer the venues. They also felt there should be more accessible entrances with consistent staffing who understand neurodiverse spectators.

→ Engagement from clubs/venues

Finally, participants wanted greater engagement from clubs and venues with their neurodiverse fans, through a 'neurodiversity champion' to understand the requirements among the supporter base. Participants also felt that clubs/venues could do more to raise awareness with other spectators.

Podcast

The Level Playing Field podcast

During 2020 Level Playing Field released its own podcast, the first of its kind to focus solely on disabled sports fans.

The podcast grew successfully throughout 2021, and below are some of our most popular episodes:

Episode 3 - Stigma

We turned our attention to the [stigma attached to disabled sports fans](#) attending live events as well as the stigma surrounding disability in general.

Our guests included Disability Development Manager at the Albion Foundation (Paul Glover), Strategic Accessibility Lead at the Royal National Institute of Blind People (Marc Powell), Chairperson of Arsenal Disabled Supporters Association (Anne Hyde), and Disability Access Officer at Level Playing Field (Nicky Baker).

Episode 5 - Views of non-disabled fans

In this episode, we [explore the viewpoint of non-disabled supporters](#), how non-disabled supporters' trusts can support better access and inclusion for disabled fans, and how disability is viewed by clubs and non-disabled supporters.

Our guests for this podcast are Nottingham Forest Supporters Trust board members (Lindsay Knott and Paul Severn), as well as a Fan Engagement Consultant (Kevin Rye).

Episode 8 - Disability abuse

This episode we focus on the very real, challenging and personal subject matter of [disability abuse](#).

Our guests on this month's episode include the Baroness Tanni Gray-Thompson, two Swansea City supporters (Diane and Callum), and West Midlands Police Force Football Unit officers (PC Stewart Bladen and PC Stuart Ward).

Fan insights

365 days absent from the Amex

As part of Weeks Of Action 2020, our Fans Liaison Officer spoke to lifelong Brighton supporter, Ed Osborne, about the 12 months away from the football during the pandemic: "I miss watching the game... football is my life," Ed explained

Ed has Tourette's Syndrome, a condition that can cause a person to make involuntary sounds and movements. He also has a rare genetic condition called 'Joubert Syndrome', which affects his balance and coordination, and also means that he has a profound speech impairment and some learning difficulties. He uses sign language to communicate, although he is not deaf.

He's no 'fair weather fan' and has been attending live football since he was a child. Seeing the pleasure Ed enjoyed from watching Brighton even got his dad, Andrew, into football and supporting the club.

The frustrating feeling of being away from the stadium is a familiar one amongst many supporters across the country. The sense of 'belonging' is one that's missed the most by disabled supporters. Just like every football fan, Ed is craving a sense of normality.

One of the most important parts of Ed's life is his connection with the local community, being part of Brighton's fanbase enhances that. Football gives Ed a common link with people, he is one of the crowd and no different to anyone else.

It's important to feel accepted for who he is.



'It means everything to Georgia to be part of the Leicester City family'

Foxes fan David shared his daughter's story as part of our Weeks of Action campaign.

Georgia, 10, is a huge Leicester fan who has been watching the Foxes at the King Power Stadium since the age of two.

David has commended the club for the work they have done to accommodate Georgia and make her matchday experience as enjoyable as it could possibly be.

Georgia has Rett Syndrome, a rare genetic disorder that affects brain development and causes severe physical disability from early childhood. She is unable to walk or talk, but this doesn't stop her from following her beloved club, thanks to the accessibility improvements made.

David said: "I honestly don't know where to start. The staff at Leicester City have been first class with us as a family, especially the Supporter Relations and Accessibility Manager.

"They've been so accommodating of Georgia's needs and have been really welcoming to us. Jim is brilliant and is just a lovely fella. He's always there for us, even if we've got a little gripe, and will do his best to help us out.

"I couldn't ask more from the Club. We're so proud to be associated with LCFC and I know it means the world to Georgia."

It's clear to David that Georgia is at her happiest when watching her beloved Leicester.

"Every time we drive up to King Power Stadium, Georgia always has a smile on her face. She loves the atmosphere and the hustle and bustle of the people around her.

"Her whole face just lights up, no matter what mood she's in, and it's just a really nice feeling for me and my wife as her parents."



Launch of Wycombe Wanderers Disabled Supporter's Association

Disabled Wycombe Wanderers supporters were invited to an event at Adams Park to officially launch the club's new Disabled Supporter's Association.

Disabled fans were invited to take part in a tour around the stadium and meet the co-founders of the Association – Trust Director Peter Lerner and Safety Officer Stephen Copp – to learn more about the associations aims for improving facilities and services for disabled supporters on matchdays.

Peter said: “Having received a fantastic response to the news that Wycombe Wanderers – both the club and Trust – were launching an association for our disabled supporters, it was great to get together in person and kick off the process towards making Adams Park a more enjoyable and accessible place for everyone to come to.

“We look forward to holding more events in future and welcome more members to be part of the continued development of the Association.”



Annual Report

For the Clubs

Tottenham's skywalk wheelchair accessible

As part of the club's wider work to deliver fully inclusive facilities at the Tottenham Hotspur stadium, Spurs have announced their 'The Dare Skywalk' is now accessible to all, including wheelchair users.

The feature is a new activity fans can enjoy which takes them to the summit of their new stadium in north London in a 90-minute adrenaline-filled experience.

Kris Aves became the first wheelchair user to take on the climb earlier this week: "The Dare Skywalk wheelchair climb was an amazing experience. The climb guides were brilliant and were on hand to share interesting facts and history about the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium. Being the first member of the public to take on The Dare Skywalk wheelchair climb was a great feeling – it's a day I won't forget!"

Wheelchair accessible climbs on the Dare Skywalk form part of the club's wider work to deliver fully inclusive facilities, with wheelchair users using a padded wheelchair to experience the Spurs stadium from heights of up to 48.8 metres!



Euro 2020 final

Level Playing Field responded to the deeply concerning scenes that took place outside of Wembley Stadium ahead of the Euro 2020 final (in 2021) between England and Italy.

In a match which saw truly abhorrent behaviour towards players there were major issues towards the safety of disabled supporters attending.

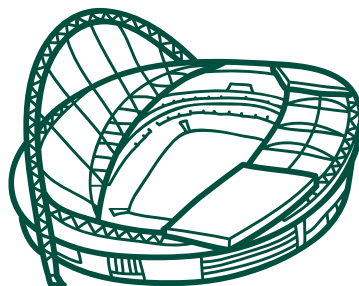
The issues at the final could have been catastrophic for all fans but particularly disabled supporters caught in the violence or injured as a result of reported breaches at the accessible entrance and wheelchair user viewing areas.

We knew from the feedback we have received already that this left some disabled supporters feeling extremely uneasy about attending live sporting events.

Level Playing Field sought assurances from Wembley Stadium and the Metropolitan Police that a thorough and detailed investigation would be undertaken, including the impact on disabled fans.

Level Playing Field continued to make itself available to work with all stakeholders to ensure watching live sport is safe and accessible for all.

Disabled fans have the right to feel safe to watch football – any fan that would knowingly endanger the safety of other supporters is not a true football fan.



Wembley review

Level Playing Field welcomed the independent review that Wembley commissioned after the events that took place ahead of the Euro 2020 final in July.

The magnitude of the event was inevitably going to put additional strain on safety and security at the final. Despite this, the measures in place clearly failed. People stormed the stadium through accessible entrances and disabled fans experienced further issues with overcrowding of wheelchair user viewing areas.

Level Playing Field spoke to fans who attended the final, and they made their views clear. It was a frightening experience that has put people off attending in the future.

We also heard from a wheelchair user who was 'hijacked' by someone impersonating a steward, attempting to gain entry.

We demanded that this review should go into fine detail about the targeted abuse of accessible entrances, stewarding processes and procedures and the lasting impact on disabled fans.

This could not be the lasting legacy of Euro 2020, and we urged Baroness Casey of Blackstock to adopt a more holistic, coordinated review.



Response to the report

The charity released a statement regarding the UEFA sanctions implemented on the English FA for a "lack of order and discipline" in and around the national stadium during the Euro 2020 final.

Level Playing Field statement on the Euro 2020 final at Wembley Stadium

Tuesday 19 October 2021

What happened on the 11 July 2021 must never happen again.

There is no place in our game for the terrible scenes that disabled fans witnessed and experienced that day. The so-called "fans" involved should be held accountable and apologies should be forthcoming from both the FA and The Metropolitan Police to disabled supporters who were directly impacted.

Sanction alone is not enough. It is only by good fortune that we are not discussing a more tragic turn of events and outcome on the day.

Looking ahead, the FA – and football as a whole – needs to learn from what happened and adopt suitable measures to ensure there is no repetition.

Level Playing Field is pleased that the independent review led by Baroness Casey is underway and has already submitted evidence to that process. We hope that the findings from the review will deliver recommendations that will ensure the chaos at the Euro 2020 final will never happen again and that the safety of disabled supporters and, indeed, all supporters remains of paramount importance.

Campaigns

Weeks of Action

With the coronavirus pandemic causing sport to come to a standstill in March 2020, including the postponement of last year's Weeks of Action, the 2021 campaign was in doubt. After a period of planning and consideration, Level Playing Field had little option but to make this year's campaign a virtual one, for the first time ever.

Over 100 clubs supported the campaign, which included clubs from the Premier League, the EFL, National League, non-league, the Women's Super League and Championship, as well as contributions from the Welsh Cymru leagues.

Clubs published content across websites and social media platforms, expressing their support for the campaign by engaging with disabled fans during what has been an especially difficult year.



Media day

Featuring Stephen Miller MBE

Ahead of the 2021 Weeks of Action campaign, Level Playing Field hosted a media day for local and national press, club media staff and other interested parties, to find out more about Level Playing Field and the Weeks of Action campaign.

Due to Covid-19 restrictions, the meeting took place via Zoom and lasted a little less than an hour. The session was hosted by Level Playing Field Chief Executive Owain Davies, and featured the charity's Chair Tony Taylor, and ambassador Stephen Miller MBE.

The aim of the meeting was not only to inform those unaware of Level Playing Field's work, but to also highlight the importance of live sport for disabled sports fans, especially almost a year of the pandemic began.

Before the previous campaign (2020), Level Playing Field staff travelled to Hotel Football in Manchester - located directly adjacent to Manchester United's Old Trafford - to film a round table discussion with fans and club staff from around the country. This short film was broadcast during the meeting to highlight the work being done throughout England and Wales, to help enhance the matchday experience for disabled fans.

This was the first time Level Playing Field hosted a media day, and will continue to do so ahead of future campaigns.



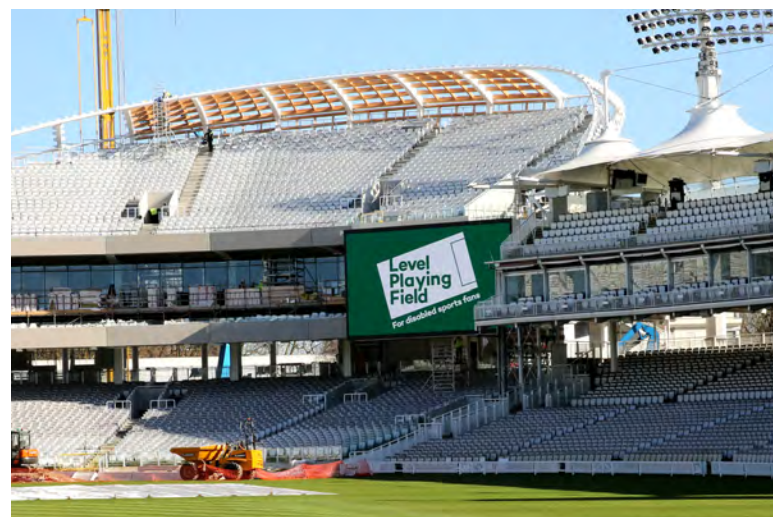
Digital campaign

On the eve of the campaign, Wembley stadium kicked things off by lighting up the world-famous arch in the green of Level Playing Field's logo. The large digital display screens at the front of the stadium also shone out across the London skyline, boldly announcing the imminent start to the Weeks of Action and displaying the important message of the campaign: Access For All.

The Principality Stadium, the proud home of Welsh rugby, also got behind the Weeks of Action on Friday as they lit up their giant display screen to announce that start of the campaign.

Level Playing Field is the leading disability access charity for sports fans across England and Wales, so it's fitting that the most high-profile stadiums from both nations have demonstrated their support for the campaign.

Lord's - the home of Cricket - also got involved in recognising the campaign, displaying the charity's logo on their brand new screen.



Campaign highlights

Fleetwood Town's Virtual Mascot

Fleetwood Town centred their Weeks of Action celebrations around their virtual mascot for the day, Tyler Kenyon.

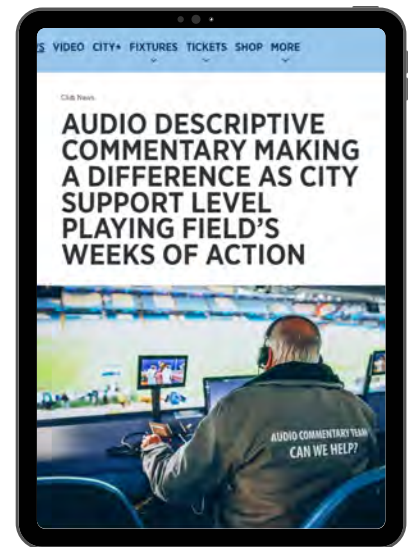
Before being led out on to the pitch virtually by goalkeeper Alex Caines, he got the chance to chat to former Stoke City and Republic of Ireland international, and current Fleetwood Town number six, Glen Whelan, accompanied by manager Simon Grayson.



Manchester City's Audio Description Commentary

The City team decided to use their designated fixture to shine a light on a vital accessible feature at the Etihad stadium – audio descriptive commentary. The club has been offering the service to visually impaired fans for over 20 years, and with the stadium being empty for the majority of 2020, it has become a more critical service than ever.

City confirmed their ADC services will be available for both home and away fans and, moving forward, will also be available for women first-team home matches.



Leeds United captain spends time with disabled supporters

Leeds United captain Liam Cooper joined an exclusive virtual call with some of the supporters from Leeds United Disabled Organisation (LUDO), as part of the club's activities to support the campaign.



Tottenham Hotspur's Disability Access Officer Interview

Simon Blewett, Disability Access Officer at Spurs, sat down with Level Playing Field during Weeks of Action to discuss his role at the club...

He spoke about his passion for disability access, the club's Weeks of Action plans, and how the club kept in touch with fans during the pandemic.

It was always clear to me that disability access could and should be better, and that's my goal.

The [full interview is available](#), but here's a little snippet below.

What's your passion for being a Disability Access Officer?

My mum was a wheelchair user, unfortunately she passed away in 1992 and something that I still find astonishing is that at no point in her life were her rights as a disabled person protected by law, it was always just clear to me that things could and should be better and that's my goal really.

What activities do you have planned for this year's Weeks of Action?

The campaign will be covered on our LED screens around the stadium and in the matchday programme. We have player engagements with both the men's and women's teams, and content that highlights the facilities here, the work of the foundation and some really exciting developments with our tours and attractions.

How have you been keeping in touch with disabled fans during the pandemic?

The club have tried to maintain contact with as many people as possible, via welfare calls, through SpursAbility and through club ambassadors. For me, it was great to make some calls, check in with people and hear their Spurs stories and their hopes for a return.



Annual Report

Knowledge Centre

Annual Report

Our knowledge centre pillar of work has been important in 2021 to gather real life experiences to bring about change. Throughout the year we have had over 1500 fans take part in Level Playing Field surveys.

TV streaming survey

With stadiums being closed throughout the country during the Covid pandemic, tv streaming services became the essential way for sports fans to follow their team's live action. As a disability access and inclusion charity, Level Playing Field wanted to investigate whether these services were fully accessible for disabled supporters, so we conducted an online 'Streaming Services Survey' to find out.

The survey ran from 13 November to 18 December 2020, giving an opportunity for disabled fans to share their experience of using various streaming services since the start of the pandemic. There were 238 respondents, and the comments and scores from the survey were been shared with the streaming service providers featured.

As a charity, we know that many barriers disabled people face can be removed through effective dialogue and good practice. Our hope is that by communicating the results and comments from this survey, streaming service providers will be better informed and improvements to accessibility on their respective platforms can be made.



Annual Report

Key findings included:

Required additional support

8% of respondents said they require some additional support to watch live sport via a streaming service.



Less likely to return

8% of those surveyed said that they are less likely to return to watching live sport in stadiums when they reopen, after having watched live sport on TV during the pandemic.



Ratings

We asked supporters to rate the different streaming services on accessibility for their disability. The scores ranged from 3.4 to 4.2 out of five.



Annual fan survey

Level Playing Field's record breaking annual fan survey report revealed the most in-depth results in the charity's 22-year history.

In its inaugural year the focus of the Level Playing Field Annual Survey was to receive greater feedback year on year, helping to drive change towards better access and inclusion for disabled sports fans.

Level Playing Field has carried out a number of specific surveys in the past, but this was the most comprehensive survey ever, reviewing the matchday experience of disabled fans.

The survey is a first of its kind, with a strong focus on club-specific feedback that will help clubs target specific areas to improve their facilities and services. Thanks to support from clubs, leagues and partners who helped to publicise the survey, Level Playing Field received a total of 1408 responses.

Level Playing Field Chair Tony Taylor said: "This first Level Playing Field annual fan survey provides a great insight into the experiences of disabled supporters as they attend live sport.

"We are grateful to the 1408 fans who took the time to share their experiences with us. It is our hope and expectation that their responses will serve to bring about improvements to services and facilities as clubs see their feedback and comments.

"With 73% of disabled fans eager to return to live sport 'right away' following various restrictions on attending, clubs need to ensure that they are ready, and this report can help with that preparation.

"There is clearly much that still needs to be done to ensure that disabled fans have an equal matchday experience to non-disabled fans. The fact that 30% of respondents said there was a sport or sports venue they felt unable to attend, due to poor access, highlights this inequality. Level Playing Field will continue to promote full access and inclusion for disabled fans and we expect that will be reflected in the results of our future fan surveys."

Annual Report

Key findings included:

Poor access

30% of respondents stated that there were sports or sporting venues that they felt unable to attend due to poor access for disabled supporters

Anxiety and confidence

25% of respondents said that 'anxiety or lack of confidence' was a barrier when attending live sport

Returning

Following lengthy restrictions on attending live sport due to the pandemic, 73% of the supporters surveyed said they would want to attend a match 'right away' once permitted

Covid measures

The top three Covid measures that fans wanted in place when returning were:

- Hand sanitising stations
- Hand washing facilities
- Mask wearing (bar exemptions)



Partnerships

The Wheelchair Football Association

Official partner

Level Playing Field announced the launch of a new partnership between The Wheelchair Football Association (WFA) in March, the national governing body of wheelchair football in the UK.

The announcement was made official on social media as part of Level Playing Field's Weeks of Action campaign. The announcement included a video featuring Level Playing Field's Nicky Baker and the WFA's Adam McEvoy.

Both organisations exist to improve access to sport for disabled people. The focus for the WFA is to promote and develop their sport so that more disabled people are able to actively participate in playing wheelchair football. Level Playing Field exists to promote and facilitate improved access to stadiums, so that more disabled sports fans are able to watch their favourite team play live. Whether watching or playing, both organisations are passionate about seeing disabled people become more included in society.

Having worked together on a couple of projects in the past, the two organisations decided that an official partnership would be the best way to work more closely together in future and also help to highlight the good work that each other are involved in.



The Racecourse Association

The Racecourse Association (RCA) commissioned pan-disability access audits across British Racecourses to identify areas where the race day experience can be enhanced to support disabled racegoers.

Racecourses that have opted into the project will receive an audit of the race day experience in its current form plus a detailed site audit to identify areas that can be developed to support racegoer accessibility. Following these audits, the RCA will work closely with racecourses to implement the findings whilst disseminating best practices from other relevant sectors to maintain British racing's commitment as a sport for all.

The project has been funded with a grant from the Racing Foundation plus contributions from the participating racecourses, demonstrating their commitment to enhancing accessibility.

Following a detailed tender process, the RCA have selected Level Playing Field and LiveTourism to conduct the audits. LiveTourism, an existing partner of the RCA with the Quality Assured Racecourse Scheme, provide a sector-leading service in assisting sports with race day experience programmes. Level Playing Field assessors working on this project are NRAC-accredited and offer an authentic view of the race day experience with their own experience of disability. Assessments will commence shortly and will run over three years.



Annual Report

Covid-19

Response to Clinically Extremely Vulnerable fans' excluded from live sport

Having seen the announcement that the World Snooker Championship at the Crucible in Sheffield refused entry to Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) fans, Level Playing Field expressed concerns that this act would set a potentially discriminatory precedent.

According to the UK government, all people who are CEV or with underlying health conditions have been urged to be vaccinated and yet the World Snooker Championship seemingly placed a blanket ban on their participation in attending this event. As an organisation we viewed this as an attack on freedom of choice and human rights.

The information provided to the UK press, including the BBC and Sky Sports, as well as ticket information on the World Professional Billiards and Snooker Association (WPBSA) website, offered no rationale for why this measure was confirmed to exclude CEV fans while also offering no information on who they deemed as CEV.

Last year the Sports Ground Safety Authority (SGSA) issued their Supplementary Guidance 'Planning for Social Distancing at Sports Grounds' (SG: 02), making it clear that attending the event as a fan was a personal decision.

Level Playing Field drove throughout the pandemic that when sport did start to re-open, it re-opens for all, and the choice to attend is for the individual.



Level Playing Field lobbied to overturn blanket ban on clinically extremely vulnerable fans

Carabao Cup Final 2021

Level Playing Field was made aware of the enforced measures being imposed by Wembley stadium for the 2021 Carabao Cup Final between Manchester City and Tottenham Hotspur.

In the guidance issued, all fans were required to wear face coverings, and those who are exempt were required to provide evidence from a 'GP or suitable medical practitioner'.

Level Playing Field believed this is discriminatory and against government guidance which states, "you do not need to seek advice or request a letter from a medical professional about your reason for not wearing a face covering."

Individuals who are exempt from wearing face coverings are not required by law to carry an exemption card or badge. This is deemed to be a personal choice.

Level Playing Field expressed disappointment that disabled fans and clinically extremely vulnerable fans are not having a fair and equal experience despite clear guidance which has been in place throughout this pandemic.

We strongly urged Wembley Stadium to abide by the government guidance, which did not unnecessarily discriminate against disabled fans.

Events Research Programme Guidance U-turn

Level Playing Field was pleased to see that after weeks of lobbying, the government had taken the correct steps in reviewing its Events Research Programme's approach to Clinically Extremely Vulnerable individuals attending pilot events.

The policy change would no longer exclude CEV people from attending government test events and will empower CEV fans to make their own decisions and risk assessments, which they have done both throughout this pandemic.

This decision was the correct one and the exclusion should never have been in place, having the right to choose how you live your life is a fundamental human right. The original government guidance had the potential to set live sport on a dangerous path of exclusion and discrimination.

Return of fans

After a year and a half, Level Playing Field was pleased to hear that sport was on track to have all stadiums back to full capacity in England for the 2021/22 season.

In August, when clubs planned to re-open their turnstiles to fans in England, Level Playing Field urged that they must be open to all fans.

During July Level Playing Field came together with 'Audience Access Alliance' to raise awareness of an accessible reopening when restrictions would be lifted. This is something we continued to push.

Level Playing Field created guides to support clubs with their re-opening plans ahead of the new season.

We also urged clubs to share information ahead of the season and have a consultation with their Disabled Supporter's Associations and fans to ensure no one is excluded because of a disability.



Level Playing Field

A year in review

As we approached the new year, we took a look back at the last 12 months, including some of the best fan stories Level Playing Field covered in 2021 with the release of Level Playing Field's year in review.

Click [here](#) to access the review.

From research projects to new partnerships, 2021 was not only a challenging period, but also a busy and successful one for the charity.

We have seen the return of fans after a season-and-a-half of watching football behind closed doors, we managed to showcase our biggest Weeks of Action campaign to date despite the suspension of fans in stadiums, and we announced new partnership agreements that will go well into the future as we look to continuously improve access and inclusion for disabled fans across all sports.



Staff



Owain Davies

Chief Executive



Ruth Hopkins

General Manager & Head of Access and Development - NRAC Auditor



Nicky Baker

Access and Development Officer - NRAC Auditor



Daniel Townley

Development Officer



Liam Bird

Fans Liaison Officer



Ben Southby

Media and Communications Officer

Trustees



Tony Taylor

Chair



Steve Evans

Secretary



Joanna Deagle

Trustee



Jo McNicol

Trustee



Rex Burton

Trustee



Jamie Beddard

Trustee

A word from the Chief Executive



Over the past year, fans have been returning to stadia. We have witnessed the excitement of being back together and the trepidation associated with this. We have worked hard to ensure that disabled sports fans eager to return can do so by creating guides and forums and working with clubs to be accessible from the earliest point of re-opening.

The Weeks of Action campaign this year was like nothing we had done before. It was completely virtual at a time where there were no fans at the grounds, and I am pleased to say that it was the most successful in terms of social media impressions, with a 27% increase over the previous year. We saw players have video chats with their disabled fans, along with fans being virtual mascots and heading out on the pitch with the players via a selfie stick and Facetime. It is commendable that the appetite to adapt and to be there for each other has often prevailed during tough times and that was particularly evident during these Weeks of Action.

As a part of our strategy, we have further invested and prioritised in developing our research. Our annual fans survey had over 1400 respondents (the largest to date), and the findings will help tackle key areas whilst showcasing what's being done well. 25% of respondents said that “anxiety or lack of confidence was a barrier when attending live sport”.

Our fan engagement continues to grow and develop with 'The Level Playing Field Podcast' now having monthly episodes and focusing on topics such as Matchday Travel, Disability Abuse, Return of Fans and more. The podcast has over 140 regular monthly listeners, something we are keen to grow.

Level Playing Field's achievements in the past 12 months would not have been possible without our brilliant staff. Often going above and beyond working with Disabled Supporters Associations, fans, clubs and partners who support our work to raise awareness of access and inclusion.

We are very grateful to the Premier League Fans Fund and the EFL for their continued support.

Owain Davies

Level Playing Field

For disabled sports fans

Level Playing Field
The Junction
Station Road
Watford
WD17 1ET



01923 545 370



info@levelplayingfield.org.uk



levelplayingfield.org.uk



@lpftweets



@levelplayingfielduk



/lpftweets



Company Number: 11109719
Charity Number: 1177415

LEVEL PLAYING FIELD
DIRECTORS' REPORT AND
UNAUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2021

LEVEL PLAYING FIELD

INDEX

	PAGES
CHARITY REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS	1
TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT (INCL DIRECTORS' REPORT)	2 – 5
INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS' REPORT	6
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES	7
BALANCE SHEET	8
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS	9 – 16

LEVEL PLAYING FIELD

CHARITY REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

CHARITY NUMBER: 1177415

COMPANY NUMBER: 11109719

TRUSTEES/DIRECTORS: A Taylor (Chair)
S Evans
J McNicol
R Burton (until 5 January 2022)
J Deagle
J Beddard

COMPANY SECRETARY: S Evans

REGISTERED OFFICE: Greville House
10 Jury Street
Warwick
Warwickshire
CV34 4EW

PRINCIPAL ADDRESS: The Junction
Station Road
Watford
WD17 1ET

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER: Mark Harwood FCA FMAAT
Michael Harwood & Co
Greville House
10 Jury Street
Warwick
Warwickshire
CV34 4EW

LEVEL PLAYING FIELD

TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT (INCL DIRECTORS' REPORT)

The Trustees present their report and the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31st December 2021. The Trustees have adopted the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) "Accounting and Reporting by Charities" in preparing the annual report and financial statements of the charity.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT

Level Playing Field, a charitable company limited by guarantee (Company no. 11109719 and Charity no. 1177415), was incorporated on the 13th December 2017 and is governed by a Memorandum and Articles of Association. The directors of the charitable company (who are its trustees for the purposes of charity law) have no interest in the company's assets or surplus and receive no remuneration.

The Trustees meet at least once a quarter and are actively involved in the strategic direction of the charity. Level Playing Field uses both in-house and external sources for appointing trustees in order to operate in line with best practice. Level Playing Field is an inclusive employer and recruiter. The Charity actively promotes the positive impact of having a diverse workforce and trustee board. This commitment allows Level Playing Field to represent the community it serves. Level Playing Field has signed up to the Disability Confident Scheme.

A business continuation policy is in place which clearly reviews risks and provides a plan to react to changing circumstances should they occur. The plan covers financial, operational and strategic areas and is supported by a detailed risk assessment.

The charity works on a collaborative basis with a number of other charities, including the Wheelchair Football Association which in 2021 a partnership agreement was signed. The charity also works closely with the Centre for Access to Football in Europe, but has no formal agreements or links in situ.

OBJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

Level Playing Field believes that disability is a social issue and that an individual only becomes disabled as a result of the social, attitudinal and environmental barriers that the individual faces (this is known as the social model of disability).

The charity is focussed on removing these barriers in all sports. Level Playing Field and its members are committed to achieving an environment where:

- all fans can enjoy an equal experience at live sports events
- all stadia and sports venues are fully accessible and inclusive
- all customer and/or fan services are equal and inclusive
- disabled people are seen as customers with a commercial value

We are guided by the following principles:

- Anti-discrimination – so that disabled people do not face discrimination arising from poor or misinformed practice
- Equality of opportunity and fairness – for disabled people in every aspect of their contact with sports clubs and venues
- Increasing the independence and choices offered to disabled people
- Individual requirements – recognising that a disabled person is an individual who, in a diverse society, has his or her own requirements, abilities, human rights and responsibilities
- Integration/inclusion – such that services are made accessible to disabled people and offer choice

LEVEL PLAYING FIELD

DIRECTORS' REPORT (Continued)

- Involvement in decision-making – so that disabled people, and/or their advocates, are consulted before decisions which affect them are made
- Acknowledgment of the social model of disability which explains that it is social and physical barriers that cause 'disability' not impairments.

Level Playing Field is working to remove the barriers that currently exclude disabled people. These barriers include:

- Prejudice and stereotypes
- The way things are organised and run
- Lack of/inadequate access to information, buildings and transport

The directors have had due regard to the guidance published by The Charity Commissioners on public benefit in managing the activities of the charity.

The main activities of the charity during the year are as follows (a more detailed summary of the charity's activities can be found in the Annual Report):

Fan Engagement

In 2021 Level Playing Field continued to evolve its work (in line with its charitable objectives) with the relaxation of restrictions and to support the current climate. A balance of dealing with key Covid-19 related issues and 'Business as usual' was a key priority.

- **Regional forums** continued to be hosted virtually with specific attention on the return of fans to stadia and how restrictions would impact access and inclusion
- **The Level Playing Field podcast** increased its frequency from quarterly to monthly to also include high profile guest such as Tanni Grey-Thompson
- **Disabled Supporters Association** were established at clubs for the first time.
- **Fan Insights** were shared as news articles to raise awareness of the impact of not attending sport in person.

Covid-19 – Event Research Programme

Having seen the announcement that the World Snooker Championship at the Crucible in Sheffield and other test events refused entry to Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) fans, Level Playing Field expressed concerns that this act would set a potentially discriminatory precedent.

According to the UK government, all people who are CEV or with underlying health conditions have been urged to be vaccinated and yet the World Snooker Championship seemingly placed a blanket ban on their participation in attending this event. As an organisation we viewed this as an attack on freedom of choice and human rights.

Level Playing Field was pleased to see that after weeks of lobbying, the government had taken the correct steps in reviewing its Events Research Programme's approach to Clinically Extremely Vulnerable individuals attending pilot events.

The policy change would no longer exclude CEV people from attending government test events and will empower CEV fans to make their own decisions and risk assessments, which they have done both throughout this pandemic.

Euro 2020 Final

Level Playing Field responded to the deeply concerning scenes that took place outside of Wembley Stadium ahead of the Euro 2020 final (in 2021) between England and Italy.

LEVEL PLAYING FIELD

DIRECTORS' REPORT (Continued)

In a match which saw truly abhorrent behaviour towards players there were also major issues affecting the safety of disabled supporters attending.

The issues at the final could have been catastrophic for all fans but particularly disabled supporters caught in the violence or injured as a result of reported breaches at the accessible entrance and wheelchair user viewing areas.

The Charity welcomed the independent review that was commissioned after the events that took place at the Euro 2020 final in July. We demanded that this review should go into fine detail about the targeted abuse of accessible entrances, stewarding processes and procedures and the lasting impact on disabled fans.

The independent review led by Baroness Casey has been conducted and to which Level Playing Field submitted evidence. The charity hopes that the findings from the review will deliver recommendations that will ensure the chaos at the Euro 2020 final will not be repeated and that the safety of disabled supporters and, indeed, all supporters remains of paramount importance.

Surveys

Our knowledge centre pillar of work has been important in 2021 to gather real life experiences to bring about change. Throughout the year the charity has had over 1500 fans take part in two Level Playing Field surveys (TV streaming survey and Annual Fan Survey).

Weeks of Action

With the coronavirus pandemic causing sport to come to a standstill in March 2020, including the postponement of last year's Weeks of Action, the 2021 campaign was in doubt. After a period of planning and consideration, Level Playing Field had little option but to make this year's campaign a virtual one, for the first time ever.

Over 100 clubs supported the campaign, including those from the Premier League, the EFL, National League, non-league, the Women's Super League and Championship, as well as contributions from the Welsh Cymru leagues.

Clubs published content across websites and social media platforms, expressing their support for the campaign by engaging with disabled fans during what has been an especially difficult year.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

The financial position of the charity at 31st December 2021, as more fully detailed in the accounts, can be summarised as follows:

	2021 £	2020 £
Net income/(expenditure)	8,950	(4,890)
Unrestricted Revenue Funds available for the general purposes of the charity	186,411	177,461
Restricted Revenue Funds	-	-
Total Funds	186,411	177,461

LEVEL PLAYING FIELD

DIRECTORS' REPORT (Continued)

RESERVES POLICY

The reserves policy is to maintain a level of unrestricted reserves which covers 6-12 months of operating costs.

The report of the directors has been prepared having taken advantage of the small companies' exemption in the Companies Act 2006.

On behalf of the board

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'A Taylor', with a large, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

A Taylor

Chair

Date: 18th May 2022

LEVEL PLAYING FIELD**INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS' REPORT**

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the company for the year ended 31st December 2021 which are set out on pages 6 to 16.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the company (and also its directors for the purposes of company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 ('the 2006 Act').

Having satisfied myself that the accounts of the company are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of your company's accounts as carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 ('the 2011 Act'). In carrying out my examination I have followed the Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.

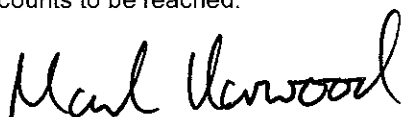
Independent examiner's statement

Since the company's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of the 2011 Act. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales, which is one of the listed bodies.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the company as required by section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view' which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
4. the accounts have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



Mark Harwood FCA FMAAT
Michael Harwood & Co
Chartered Accountants
Greville House
10 Jury Street
Warwick
CV34 4EW

Date: 20th May 2022

LEVEL PLAYING FIELD

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
(Incorporating the Income and Expenditure Account)
For the year ended 31st December 2021

	Note	2021 Unrestricted £	2021 Restricted £	2021 Total £	2020 Unrestricted £	2020 Restricted £	2020 Total £
Income from:							
Donations & grants	2	818	-	818	11,454	-	11,454
Charitable activities	3	74,107	270,902	345,009	34,297	289,439	323,736
Total income		74,925	270,902	345,827	45,751	289,439	335,190
Expenditure on:							
Raising funds		212	-	212	221	90	311
Charitable activities	4	36,706	290,195	326,901	34,985	291,481	326,466
Other	5	2,105	7,659	9,764	722	12,581	13,303
Total expenditure		39,023	297,854	336,877	35,928	304,152	340,080
Net income/(expenditure) for the year		35,902	(26,952)	8,950	9,823	(14,713)	(4,890)
Transfers between funds		(26,952)	26,952	-	(14,713)	14,713	-
Net movement in funds for the year		8,950	-	8,950	(4,890)	-	(4,890)
Fund balances brought forward		177,461	-	177,461	182,351	-	182,351
Fund balances at 31st December 2021	14	186,411	-	186,411	177,461	-	177,461

The notes on pages 9 to 16 form an integral part of the accounts.

LEVEL PLAYING FIELD
(Company no. 11109719)

BALANCE SHEET
As at 31st December 2021

	Note	£	2021	£	£	2020	£
Fixed assets							
Tangible assets	8			1,356			3,516
Current assets							
Debtors	9		9,785			7,939	
Cash at bank and in hand			225,069			205,434	
Total current assets			<u>234,854</u>			<u>213,373</u>	
Current liabilities							
Creditors	10		(49,799)			(39,428)	
Net current assets				185,055			173,945
Total assets less current liabilities				<u>186,411</u>			<u>177,461</u>
Funds of the Charity:							
Restricted funds				-			-
Unrestricted funds				186,411			177,461
Total charity funds	14			<u>186,411</u>			<u>177,461</u>

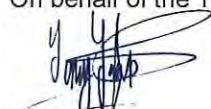
Directors' statements:

- The company was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies;
- No members have required the company to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question in accordance with section 476 of the Companies Act 2006;
- The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime.

The financial statements were approved by the Trustees on 18th May 2022

On behalf of the Trustees


A Taylor
Chair

The notes on pages 9 to 16 form an integral part of the accounts.

LEVEL PLAYING FIELD

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended 31st December 2021

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

(a) Basis of Accounting

Level Playing Field is a company limited by guarantee in England & Wales. In the event of the charity being wound up, the liability in respect of the guarantee is limited to £1 per member of the charity. The address of the registered office is given in the charity information on page 1 and the nature of the charity's operations and principal activities are given in the Annual Report.

The charity constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by FRS 102. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland issued in October 2019, the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), the Charities Act 2011, the Companies Act 2006 and UK Generally Accepted Accounting Practice.

The financial statements are prepared on a going concern basis under the historical cost convention, modified to include certain items at fair value. The financial statements are presented in sterling which is the functional currency of the charity and rounded to the nearest £1.

The significant accounting policies applied in the preparation of these financial statements are set out below. These policies have been consistently applied to all years presented unless otherwise stated.

(b) Income

All incoming resources are included in the Statement of Financial Activities when the charity is legally entitled to the income after any performance conditions have been met, the amount can be measured reliably and it is probable that the income will be received.

For donations to be recognised the charity will have been notified of the amounts and the settlement date in writing. If there are conditions attached to the donation and this requires a level of performance before entitlement can be obtained then income is deferred until those conditions are fully met or the fulfilment of those conditions is within the control of the charity and it is probable that they will be fulfilled.

Investment income is earned through holding assets for investment purposes such as cash and is comprised of bank interest.

(c) Government Grants

Government grants are recognised at the fair value of the asset received or receivable when there is reasonable assurance that the grant conditions will be met and the grants will be received.

A grant that specifies performance conditions is recognised in income when the performance conditions are met. Where a grant does not specify performance conditions it is recognised in income when the proceeds are received or receivable. A grant received before the recognition criteria are satisfied is recognised as a liability.

LEVEL PLAYING FIELD

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (Continued)
For the year ended 31st December 2021

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES (continued)**(d) Expenditure**

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all costs related to the category. Expenditure is recognised where there is a legal or constructive obligation to make payments to third parties, it is probable that the settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. It is categorised under the following headings:

- Costs of raising funds includes the monthly charges of donation collection organisations.
- Charitable expenditure comprises those costs incurred by the charity in the delivery of its activities and services for its beneficiaries. It includes both costs that can be allocated directly to such activities and those costs of an indirect nature necessary to support them.
- Other expenditure represents those items not falling into the categories above and includes governance costs.

(e) Fixed Assets

Items of equipment costing over £200 are capitalised and are stated at cost (or deemed cost) or valuation less accumulated depreciation and accumulated impairment losses. Cost includes costs directly attributable to making the asset capable of operating as intended.

Depreciation is provided on tangible fixed assets, at rates calculated to write off the cost, less estimated residual value, of each asset on a systematic basis over its expected useful life as follows:

- Computer Equipment 3 years straight line

(f) Debtors and creditors receivable / payable within one year

Debtors and creditors with no stated interest rate and receivable or payable within one year are recorded at transaction price. Any losses arising from impairment are recognised in expenditure.

(g) Funds

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the charity and which have not been designated for other purposes.

Restricted funds are funds subject to specific restricted conditions imposed by donors. The purposes and use of restricted funds are set out in note 13 to the financial statements.

(h) Taxation

The charity is an exempt charity within the meaning of schedule 3 of the Charities Act 2011 and is considered to pass the tests set out in Paragraph 1 Schedule 6 Finance Act 2010 and therefore it meets the definition of a charitable company for UK corporation tax purposes.

LEVEL PLAYING FIELD

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (Continued)
For the year ended 31st December 2021

2. DONATIONS AND GRANTS

	2021 Unrestricted £	2021 Restricted £	2021 Total £	2020 Unrestricted £	2020 Restricted £	2020 Total £
Small donations individually less than £100	318	-	318	330	-	330
Manchester United Disabled Supporters Association	-	-	-	500	-	500
National Association of Disabled Supporters	-	-	-	624	-	624
Watford Borough Council (Coronavirus Small Business Grant Fund)	-	-	-	10,000	-	10,000
W3RT	500	-	500	-	-	-
Total donations and grants	818	-	818	11,454	-	11,454

3. INCOME FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	2021 Unrestricted £	2021 Restricted £	2021 Total £	2020 Unrestricted £	2020 Restricted £	2020 Total £
Income from Audits	14,453	-	14,453	4,625	-	4,625
Training Income	11,518	-	11,518	7,100	-	7,100
Membership Income	387	-	387	-	-	-
Performance-Related Grants:						
- Premier League Fans Fund	-	270,902	270,902	-	289,439	289,439
- The Football League	47,749	-	47,749	22,572	-	22,572
Total income from charitable activities	74,107	270,902	345,009	34,297	289,439	323,736

Reclassification:

The money received from the Premier League Fans Fund has been reclassified from Donations and Grants to Income from Charitable Activities to more accurately reflect the nature of the income. £289,439 has therefore been moved within the comparative figures when compared to the filed 2020 accounts.

LEVEL PLAYING FIELD

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (Continued)
For the year ended 31st December 2021

4. EXPENDITURE ON CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	2021 Unrestricted £	2021 Restricted £	2021 Total £	2020 Unrestricted £	2020 Restricted £	2020 Total £
Direct spending						
Expenses recharged	(256)	1,452	1,196	(2,093)	631	(1,462)
Weeks of Action & Campaigning	633	12,572	13,205	479	9,050	9,529
Regional DSA Forums	2	33	35	-	-	-
Event Costs	(14)	(264)	(278)	30	569	599
Total direct spending	365	13,793	14,158	(1,584)	10,250	8,666
Support costs						
Staff costs (see Note 6)	32,678	220,324	253,002	33,131	220,762	253,893
Travel and subsistence	95	1,810	1,905	577	7,741	8,318
Telephone costs	33	1,343	1,376	98	970	1,068
Premises	2,188	41,579	43,767	2,096	39,842	41,938
Publicity	21	396	417	44	835	879
Administration & office supplies	728	6,006	6,734	331	5,737	6,068
Professional fees & insurance	316	1,677	1,993	105	2,000	2,105
Website & email hosting	250	2,993	3,243	108	2,052	2,160
Training	12	228	240	6	109	115
Postage	5	46	51	73	1,183	1,256
Bad debts	15	-	15	-	-	-
Total support costs	36,341	276,402	312,743	36,569	281,231	317,800
Total expenditure on charitable activities	36,706	290,195	326,901	34,985	291,481	326,466

5. OTHER COSTS

	2021 Unrestricted £	2021 Restricted £	2021 Total £	2020 Unrestricted £	2020 Restricted £	2020 Total £
Bank charges	83	6	89	22	146	168
Governance travel costs	18	337	355	106	1,202	1,308
Other legal and professional	1,885	5,046	6,931	478	9,032	9,510
Depreciation	119	2,270	2,389	116	2,197	2,313
Sundry expenses	-	-	-	-	4	4
Total other costs	2,105	7,659	9,764	722	12,581	13,303

Independent examiner's remuneration

Included in the above figures are independent examination fees of £3,000 (2020 - £3,000) and other financial services of £756 (2020 - £576).

LEVEL PLAYING FIELD

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (Continued)
For the year ended 31st December 2021

6. STAFF COSTS

	2021 £	2020 £
Gross wages	227,725	228,700
Social security costs	20,116	20,169
Pension costs	4,915	5,024
Other costs	246	-
Total salaries, wages and related costs	253,001	253,893

Average number of employees 6 6

The number of employees who received total employee benefits (excluding employer pension costs of more than £60,000 is as follows:

£60,001 - £70,000 1 1

7. TRUSTEE REMUNERATION AND EXPENSES

No Trustee or connected person received any remuneration or expenses either directly or indirectly.

8. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Computer Equipment £	Total £
COST		
At 1 st January 2020	6,939	6,939
Additions	229	229
Disposals	-	-
At 31 st December 2021	7,168	7,168
DEPRECIATION		
At 1 st January 2020	3,423	3,423
Charge for the year	2,389	2,389
Eliminated on disposal	-	-
At 31 st December 2021	5,812	5,812
NET BOOK VALUE		
At 31 st December 2021	1,356	1,356
At 31 st December 2020	3,516	3,516

LEVEL PLAYING FIELD

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (Continued)
For the year ended 31st December 2021

9. DEBTORS

	2021	2020
	£	£
Trade debtors	6,519	4,623
Prepayments	3,266	3,174
Other debtors	-	142
	9,785	7,939

**10. CREDITORS:
AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR**

	2021	2020
	£	£
Trade creditors	1,326	203
Accruals	3,270	8,789
Social security & other taxes	7,041	6,874
Deferred income (see Note 11)	38,162	23,562
	49,799	39,428

11. DEFERRED INCOME

	2021	2020
	£	£
Balance brought forward	23,562	49,036
Amounts released to income	(23,562)	(49,036)
Additions during the year	38,162	23,562
	38,162	23,562

Deferred income comprises performance-related grants covering the year ended 31st December 2022 (£25,962) and Access Audit income received in advance (£12,200).

LEVEL PLAYING FIELD

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (Continued)
For the year ended 31st December 2021

12. MOVEMENT ON FUNDS

	Balance at 01.01.2021 £	Income in year £	Expenditure in year £	Transfers £	Balance at 31.12.2021 £
Unrestricted & designated funds					
Unrestricted revenue funds	177,461	74,925	(39,023)	(26,952)	186,411
Total unrestricted funds	177,461	74,925	(39,023)	(26,952)	186,411
Restricted funds					
Fans' Fund	-	270,902	(297,854)	26,952	-
Total restricted funds	-	270,902	(297,854)	26,952	-
Total charity funds	177,461	345,827	(336,877)	-	186,411

13. RESTRICTED FUNDS

The purposes for which the restricted funds are held by the charity are:

- Fans' Fund Grant funding from the Premier League Fans' Fund to be used for the following outcomes:
- Outcome 1 - To Improve engagement between fans and fan groups and the key operational staff who deliver supporter liaison, disability access and any related facilities and services.
 - Outcome 2 - To make fans voice more representative, through the promotion and development of effective membership organisation.
 - Outcome 3 - To improve the matchday and non-matchday experience for all fans by making football more diverse and inclusive.
 - Outcome 4 - To fund use of not-for-profit skilled or professional services that create and support innovative fan engagement projects.
 - Outcome 5 - To improve the away fan experience.

LEVEL PLAYING FIELD

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (Continued)
For the year ended 31st December 2021

14. ANALYSIS OF NET ASSETS BETWEEN FUNDS

	Fixed Assets £	Current Assets £	Current Liabilities £	Total £
At 31st December 2021				
Restricted funds	1,288	32,719	(34,007)	-
Unrestricted funds	68	202,135	(15,792)	186,411
	<u>1,356</u>	<u>234,854</u>	<u>(49,799)</u>	<u>186,411</u>
At 31st December 2020				
Restricted funds	3,340	35,250	(38,590)	-
Unrestricted funds	176	178,123	(838)	177,461
	<u>3,516</u>	<u>213,373</u>	<u>(39,428)</u>	<u>177,461</u>

15. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

During the year the company made no transactions with related parties.

16. FINANCIAL COMMITMENTS

At 31st December 2021, the charity had total commitments under non-cancellable operating leases of £9,166.