



# Annual Report

## 2023

[levelplayingfield.org.uk](http://levelplayingfield.org.uk)

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# President's foreword

David Bernstein CBE

Welcome to the 2023 Level Playing Field Annual Report.

First of all, my thanks go to the Level Playing Field members of staff. Their efforts throughout this year have brought about many successes for the charity.

Our team is small in number, but continuously makes a dramatic impact on driving standards forward. Their commitment and expertise have resulted in significant improvements to the experiences of many disabled sports fans across England & Wales.

I would also like to recognise the contributions of our Trustees. They each care so deeply about the charity's work, with the advice and consideration they offer proving invaluable. Those contributions, combined with the staff team's pursuits, make Level Playing Field a formidable force for change.

To vice president Lord Faulkner of Worcester and my other fellow honorary officers, particularly, I remain grateful for your vital input. Since the turn of the year, we have been saddened by the passing of Lord Rosser of Ickenham, and our thoughts have been with his wife, Sheena, and the rest of the family. He made a tremendous contribution to the standing of Level Playing Field and we will reflect on that further in our next annual report.

A significant change in our approach this year, came in the form of our 'Unite For Access' campaign, which was rebranded from its previous name of 'Weeks of Action'. This helped strengthen the connection to access and inclusion as the focus of our annual period of celebration. Record breaking levels of participation, mean the campaign outperformed all previous years and realised the potential of the rebrand to its fullest, in helping our team raise awareness and drive equality, to bring about more inclusive experiences for disabled sports fans. I look forward to seeing the campaign evolve in the coming years and am excited to see what strides we can make through it.



Relationships with other organisations have been a key area of development throughout the course of the year. Governing bodies and major venues across a range of sports acknowledge the value which Level Playing Field can offer, when addressing access and inclusion for disabled spectators and that is testament to our track record as the leader in this field. We have also strengthened our ties with a number of other charities, with knowledge sharing to strengthen knowledge bases across the board.

2023 has also raised challenges and our team have worked tirelessly to support disabled fans. This encompassed combatting issues on a national level, but crucially involves representing individual supporters to help bring about direct improvements to their matchdays. The coming year will undoubtedly raise new challenges, but I am confident that we are equipped to continue deal with them.

I look forward to another year Level Playing Field making a meaningful impact on the experiences of disabled sports fans, by leading on access and inclusion.

With best wishes,

**David Bernstein CBE**



# Chair's report

Tony Taylor



On behalf of the Board of Trustees at Level Playing Field, I am delighted to welcome you to our Annual Report for the year ending 31st December 2023. We would particularly like to send our thanks to President, David Bernstein CBE, who has shared his comments above, as well as our Vice Presidents Lord Faulkner of Worcester and Lord Rosser of Ickenham, for all the support they have offered to the charity throughout the course of this year. Very sadly, Lord Rosser passed away in 2024 after a courageous battle against illness and we send our deepest condolences to his wife Sheena, his friends and colleagues. His wise counsel and dedication to the work of Level Playing Field will be missed. There will, of course, be a more detailed obituary to Lord Rosser in our report for the year ending 31 December 2024.

This year was an important milestone for one member of the team, with our General Manager & Head of Access & Development, Ruth Hopkins, celebrating a decade at Level Playing Field. Ruth has made an immense contribution to the work of the charity and for disabled supporters across England and Wales. Her technical expertise has been instrumental in building the organisation into the leader in our area of operation. The loyalty she has shown to the charity, its principles and objectives, as well as to me and my fellow trustees, is something that I greatly value. I am proud to call her a colleague and friend and look forward to many more years working together with Ruth.

The staff team Level Playing Field also saw new introductions this year. Joseph Crabtree joined as Media & Communications Officer in the spring and then later in the year, Mark Phillips was appointed in the newly formed Fan Engagement & Enquiry Officer role. These appointments have brought new ideas and additional expertise to the team. The expansion of our staff has also provided us with increased capacity, so that we can better represent disabled fans, as well as enabling us to respond to increasing demands for our support and guidance.

All of our staff have made huge contributions throughout 2023 and I am grateful for their work to elevate access and inclusion for disabled fans. The passion they each have for making a difference combines with their individual skillsets to

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bring us repeated success. They are also supported locally by disabled supporters' associations doing terrific work to directly improve experiences at their clubs, which I am again hugely grateful for.

In 2023, there were more clear reminders of the importance of our work to have access at the top of the agenda. Failures to accommodate disabled fans at another UEFA Champions League Final was a prominent example of this, with Manchester City supporters sharing troubling reports from the event. Level Playing Field staff were in discussions with individual disabled fans, the club and Manchester City's disabled supporters association. Accounts gathered were then brought to UEFA and the Government, with Level Playing Field demanding accountability. Fans' stories also received prominence through the media, bringing an important spotlight on the accessibility aspect of the showpieces' unacceptable organisation. Following repeated failures by UEFA, it vital that the planning is rectified with the final set to be held at Wembley in 2024.

Beyond sporting events, Level Playing Field was pleased to join other charities and organisations dedicated to accessibility, to campaign against proposals on rail ticket office closures. The inaccessibility of public transport has risen year-on-year as barrier to attending live sport, according to the 2023 Level Playing Field Annual Fan survey, and it was therefore important to be part of the campaign, which resulted in the biggest response to a public consultation in British history. I am grateful to Transport For All on their leadership on this issue, where we ultimately saw a reversal from the Government. We will continue to do our duty in making the voices of disabled sports fans heard and representing their interests on matters of more general accessibility, as the leaders in this space.

Action in the political sphere has often been important in furthering access and inclusion for disabled fans. 2023 marked five years since the Equality and Human Rights Commission's final report on Premier League clubs' accessibility and the positive legacy from that emphasises an urgent need for a permanent mandate. It has been deeply concerning to see without that, momentum has been lost in relation to clubs promoted since then and we will therefore continue to push for increased oversight.

A large amount of focus this year was on the rebranding of our campaign to 'Unite For Access' from its previous name of 'Weeks of Action'. The Trustees took the view that the transition may results in a year of reduced or stagnant impact, but that this would then be outweighed by subsequent growth. I am delighted to

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report that, to the contrary, this change saw an immediate, positive impact, with record-breaking participation levels. Involvement from 100% of Sky Bet Championship clubs helped take the total number of teams beyond 120, which was a phenomenal achievement and displays the potential for the future of the campaign. Beyond the figures, real change took place at stadiums across England and Wales, with some transformative initiatives introduced.

Another evolution this year, came in the form of the Level Playing Field Annual Fan Survey. Now in its third edition, the survey was able to display year-on-year trends for the first time; this presented some concerning data on barriers which are impacting increasing proportions of disabled fans and has helped us to make specific plans to effectively target our efforts. There were 1791 responses to the survey, across 115 different clubs. The response rate was therefore up 37% on the previous year and created a sample size to provide us with unquestionable evidence to utilise in discussions with key stakeholders.

This year's targeted survey was focused on women's football, with a need for more detailed knowledge in that area of rapid growth and where we recognised that minimal data existed. The results raised some interesting points of difference from the men's game, which have formed key parts of our follow up work. Level Playing Field is committed to putting disabled supporter voices at the centre of improving the access and inclusion for disabled fans attending women's football and will continue to consult with fans as more work is done there. The feedback from disabled supporters in our 2023 surveys is something I value and appreciate. The data gathered provide us with essential, informed evidence to enhance our advocacy for improvements in accessibility and inclusion.

The need for us to be able to present the collective voice of disabled fans was made clearer by the Government's response to the consultation on the Football Governance White Paper, which confirmed the scope of an independent regulator would not include equality, diversity and inclusion. The lack of consideration for disabled fans was, we believe, shameful. The introduction of the Regulator was described as a once in a generation opportunity, but the decisions on implementation have squandered the opportunity to improve the experiences of disabled fans. There were accompanying requirements on fan engagement, but these had no measures on accessibility. Instead, it promoted hollow discussion, which previously resulted in a neglect of disabled fans over the course of the process and I saw no evidence for why that would change with no set standards and less public attention. The need for the Regulator to be concerned with

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accessibility matters is something we will continue to campaign for as it heads towards implementation.

Elsewhere, we are grateful to have had more positive engagement with our funders, particularly the Premier League and the EFL. The financial support they provide is essential to the work of the charity. We are also pleased to have regular discourse with them on projects to improve access and inclusion.

Finally, I would like to place on record my appreciation of the work of my fellow trustees. In the past year, Joanna Deagle stepped down from the board and we are extremely grateful for the contribution she made to Level Playing Field. The relentless work of all our trustees is important to everyone at the charity and is especially valued by myself. I know that the knowledge they are contributing to the continued development of access and inclusion leaves them each with a great sense of satisfaction, although we all recognise that there is still so much to be done. Our aim remains to make constant improvements to the experiences of disabled fans attending live sport and 2024 will be no different.

**Thank you all for your support.**

**With best wishes.**



# 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, 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 can be prejudice and stereotypes, the way things are organised and run, along with little to no access to information, buildings and transport.



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# Knowledge centre





# Women's football survey

Women's football has grown significantly in popularity over recent years, both in terms of those participating and those watching the sport. The average attendance at matches this season has more than trebled compared to the previous season. With so many fans now eager to watch their women's team play live in stadiums across the country, Level Playing Field decided to conduct a first-of-its-kind survey to find out about the experiences of disabled supporters as they attend women's football.

The survey was sent out to disabled supporters through club contacts and via social media. It was live for two months, running from Friday 10th February through to Friday 7th April 2023, and responses were anonymous unless the respondent chose to give their name.

Comparisons were made with data from the 2022 Level Playing Field Annual Fan Survey, which provided a baseline for the experiences of over 1300 disabled fans across all sports.

The survey was answered by 190 disabled sports fans who between them supported 33 different women's teams.

# Key findings

## Lack of information

Over a quarter of disabled fans (26%) stated that 'lack of information' is a barrier for them when attending women's football matches.

This figure is significantly higher than the 16% of fans who said this was a barrier in our most recent Annual Fan Survey 2022 (AFS).



## Attitude and anxiety barriers

Over 28% of disabled fans said that 'anxiety or lack of confidence' was a barrier for them attending women's football. One of the contributing factors to this anxiety is likely to be 'the attitudes of others' which 24% of respondents identified as a barrier.

This is very similar to our AFS, where the figures were 26% and 28% respectively.



## Attending matches

In general, disabled fans attended women's football matches less frequently, with only 34% attending 'most weeks', compared to 50% of fans in the AFS. One issue highlighted by several fans was that the 'home' ground wasn't always the same venue, making planning difficult.

However, the cost of tickets was less of a barrier for disabled fans attending women's football.







# Annual fan survey

One of the key ways that Level Playing Field is able to improve access and inclusion at live sporting events, is by engaging with disabled spectators to better understand their experiences and to ask what they require on matchdays.

The annual survey helps us to gather this information and is the most significant survey in our calendar. This is the third year we have run the survey, and with almost 1800 responses from disabled sports fans, it is our biggest one to date.

The survey was conducted online and was sent out to disabled supporters through disabled supporters' associations (DSAs), club contacts and also via social media. The survey was live for a month, running from Thursday 25th May through to Friday 30th June 2023. Responses were anonymous unless the respondent chose to give their name.

This report summarises the results of the survey and compares many of these results with the last two years' findings. Throughout this report, the term 'pp' will be used as an abbreviation for percentage points when comparing percentages. For example, an increase from 10% last year to 15% this year would be 'Up 5pp'.

The results of the survey will be used to advise clubs on how best to improve the matchday experience of disabled fans. It will also be used to advise governing bodies, DSAs and non-disabled supporter groups on disability access & inclusion.



# Key findings

## Travel barriers

The percentage of disabled fans for whom 'inaccessible public transport is a barrier to attending live sport' has increased year-on-year, from 16% to 17.5% to 20%.

This is similar to the year-on-year trend for those who said that being 'unable to travel to stadiums' was a barrier:- 15.5% of fans in 2021, now up to 18% in 2023.



## Disability Abuse

Another year-on-year increase is the number of disabled fans who said that 'disability abuse is a barrier when attending live sport' - from 5.5% to 6.5% to 7% this year.

The 'attitudes of others' remains a significant barrier to disabled fans, with 25.5% of respondents saying it was a barrier to them attending.



## Additional disability-related costs

We asked respondents if there were any additional costs for them when attending live sport, because of their disability. Over 53% of fans identified additional costs, including equipment, support, and appropriate travel.

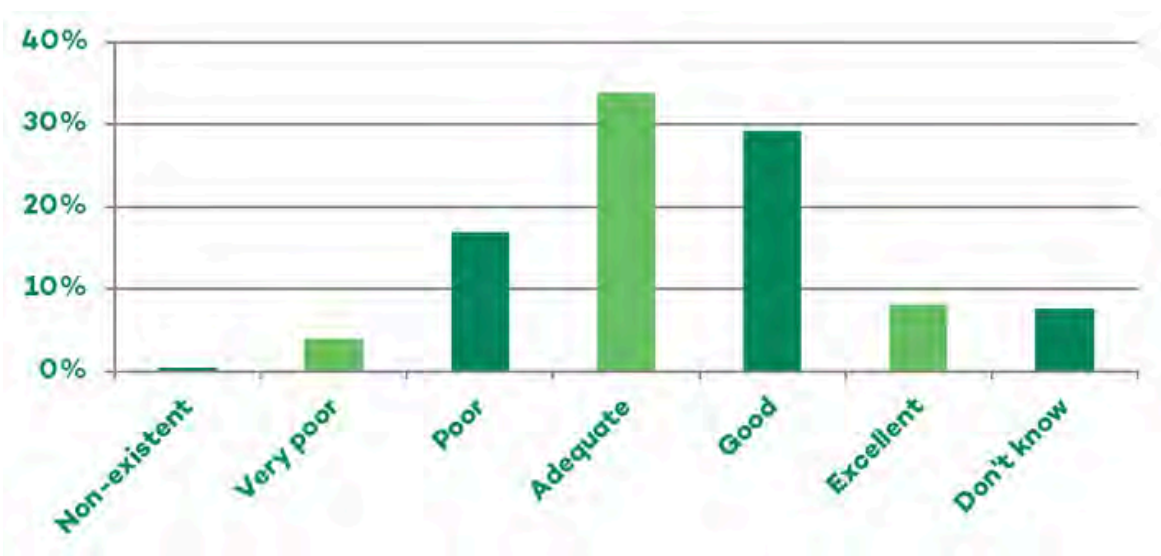
For those who did have additional disability-related costs, they averaged £66 for home games and £111 for away matches.



# Club ratings - nationwide

We asked respondents "Overall, how would you rate sports stadiums / clubs in England and Wales on access and inclusion?" The chart below shows the results.

**Figure 9: Accessibility ratings for stadiums in England and Wales**



- Non-existent – **0.5%** (Unchanged)
- Very poor – **4%** (Down 0.5pp)
- Poor – **17%** (Down 1.5pp)
- Adequate – **34%** (Up 0.5pp)
- Good – **29%** (Unchanged)
- Excellent – **8%** (Unchanged)
- Don't know – **7.5%** (Up 2pp)



Encouragingly, there was a slight decrease in the number of supporters who rated accessibility as 'poor' or 'very poor', with a slight increase in those rating it 'adequate'. The biggest change from last year is the increase in supporters who selected 'Don't know/prefer not to say'. It's not immediately obvious what the reason for this is, but it may be linked to the reduced frequency of attendance highlighted on page 7.

# Campaigns

# Unite For Access

A record-breaking number of clubs participated in Level Playing Field's Unite For Access campaign.

Involvement from 100% of Sky Bet Championship clubs, helped take the total number of teams beyond 120.

The campaign, which was rebranded for 2023, ran from February 25 to March 12 and focused on raising awareness and driving equality, to bring about more inclusive match day experiences for disabled sports fans.





## The rebrand

Sport in England and Wales plays a vital role in the nation's culture. It has the ability to drive social change and unites a community, ensuring it reflects its diverse make-up. This is why charities and equality groups use sport as a way to raise awareness.

Disabled people are the largest minority group in any population with over 16 million disabled people in the UK, yet disability is underrepresented.

Over the years the campaign has had year-on-year success, with more:

- Clubs backing the campaign
- Dedicated 'Weeks of Action' matchdays
- Social media activity
- National press recognition

Despite this, it was felt that the campaign was not fulfilling its potential and was not being directly associated with disabled supporters. After liaising with sports clubs and supporters, the feedback received highlighted that the previous name was confusing, lacked clarity and purpose.

After a lengthy consultation and working with creative agencies, we have decided that the new name of the Level Playing Field flagship campaign would be 'Unite For Access'.

The intention was to give Level Playing Field a proactive and powerful message, along with a direct link to disability. The aim was to:

- Continue to raise awareness across all sport
- To raise the profile of the real-life matchday experience of disabled fans
- Improve disability access and inclusion on a matchday







## Across the divisions

The 'Unite For Access' campaign saw participation from the Premier League, right through to non-league clubs.

At the top level, Manchester City celebrated 25 years of providing audio descriptive commentary, while in Sky Bet League Two, Stevenage gave a young disabled supporter the opportunity to lead the team out.

One of the most memorable moments of the campaign, came when the national anthem was once again performed alongside a British Sign Language Interpreter, ahead of the Carabao Cup Final at Wembley.





# Fan engagement



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# Forums

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The Level Playing Field South Forum welcomed disabled fans, club representatives and other key stakeholders from across sports, to Tottenham Hotspur Stadium.

100 guests attended the charity's first regional forum since the pandemic, with different experiences of accessibility from across all levels of professional sport represented in the room.

Discussions took place on enhancing fan engagement for disabled sports fans and evolving perspectives on disability language, as well as a guest talk from the Royal National Institute of Blind People.

Spurs provided a tour of the stadium's accessible facilities and disability access officer, Simon Blewett, joined SpursAbility's Dee Bright and the legendary Gary Mabbutt, for a conversation on relationships between clubs, disabled supporters' associations and wider fanbases.

Beyond that, there was an opportunity to network and further sessions catered specifically for disabled supporters' associations and staff working for clubs, venues or other organisations.

The Level Playing Field South Forum marked the start of a tour, which will take regional forums to the Midlands, North and Wales.

Online forums have continued, allowing more regular discussion with disabled fans and other stakeholders. They also presented opportunities to bring more guest speakers to the fore.

# New disabled fan groups

2023 saw an increased appetite from disabled fans to organise into groups, which could help improve standards of accessibility and inclusion at their clubs.

Fans Liaison Officer at Level Playing Field, Liam Bird, regularly assisted supporters with their initial meeting and the process of establishing their groups. In some cases, these have gone on to become formalised disabled supporters' associations (DSAs).

It is encouraging that emerging groups were spread across a wide range of levels and locations. The timelines have also had a positive impact for knowledge sharing on the unique landscape to navigate, when starting out in 2023.

The development of new disabled supporters' associations highlights the effectiveness of many existing DSAs across England and Wales. Level Playing Field is proud to support their efforts at a local level and is a huge advocate of the differences made by raising disabled fans' voices as collective.



# Club resource



# Training & Engagement

Facilitating discourse between club staff and disabled fans through forums is a key service to inform clubs, as is survey data which allows them to see their specific circumstances alongside the context of sport as a whole.

Many clubs also make use of Level Playing Field's in-person staff training, as well as attending remote sessions and receiving bespoke guidance on a range of topics.

The charity was delighted by feedback from the first EFL Disability Access Officer Conference.

Disabled fans, organisations, Level Playing Field officials, club representatives and EFL staff shared their perspectives in panels hosted across the day, at the Poundland Bescot Stadium.

The all-new conference forms part of the EFL's 'Together' strategy, which was launched last summer, to improve equality, diversity and inclusivity over a five-year period.

The day headed up by Level Playing Field in Walsall featured guest speakers from Colostomy UK, RNIB and Tourettes Action.





# Centre of Excellence Award

Level Playing Field's expert auditing team have been able to offer practical advice on existing stadia and planning.

In 2023, the auditing process saw Cardiff City Football Club become the first club in Wales and only the sixth club to achieve this award.

The Cardiff City Stadium now sits alongside Wembley Stadium, The Etihad Stadium (Manchester City FC), Pride Park (Derby County FC), The American Express Community Stadium (Brighton & Hove Albion FC) and The Emirates Stadium (Arsenal FC), as the only football grounds to have reached this standard.

The "Level Playing Field Centre of Excellence Award" is presented to sporting venues 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 undergoes a Level Playing Field professional access audit and must demonstrate that it meets all good practice standards, equality and access legislation and building regulations for accessible sports stadia.

Cardiff City FC was innovative in making many excellent improvements and provisions for its disabled fans. These included several smart and low-cost groundbreaking solutions that established good practice examples for existing stadiums that Level Playing Field now hopes other clubs will look to adopt.

Level Playing Field recognises Cardiff City FC as an excellent example of a club making continued improvements to its disabled fans' facilities and services.



# Lobbying

## Rail ticket office closures

A responsibility to contribute on a wider matter of accessibility, where disabled sports fans could be impacted, was clear in the case of proposals on rail ticket offices.

The Government ultimately asked train operators to withdraw their proposals to close hundreds of rail ticket offices, in a dramatic reversal.

This decision was vital for the accessibility of rail infrastructure and followed campaigns against the plans, which resulted in the biggest response to a public consultation in British history.

The importance of this to disabled sports fans was emphasised in the 2023 Level Playing Field Annual Fan Survey results. The report showed year-on-year rises to 'Inaccessible public transport' as a barrier to disabled supporters attending live sport, with it making the top five most common barriers overall.

Had the proposals gone through, the consequence would have been further negative impact on the accessibility of public transport.

Transport For All led the campaign against the proposals and Level Playing Field was pleased to join more than 60 other organisations representing disabled people, to sign its letter condemning closures.

Level Playing Field also wrote directly to Government ministers and Rail Delivery Group officials, to emphasise the impact closures would have on disabled sports fans specifically, with disabled supporters' associations across England and Wales co-signing the letters.



# UEFA Champions League Final

Level Playing Field wrote to UEFA and Government officials, on repeated failures to accommodate disabled supporters at Champions League Finals,

Reports from disabled and non-disabled Manchester City fans attending the final in June, detailed hazardous and potentially life endangering conditions for disabled supporters' arrival and departure from the Atatürk Olympic Stadium.

The charity also shared some of the accounts it received, including that of disabled fan Clare Watson, who broke her femur in two places at the event.

The failures in Istanbul followed horrific scenes at the 2022 UEFA Champions League Final in Paris.

UEFA has been limited in public acknowledgement of the issues and accountability is necessary.



# Football Governance White Paper

The Government's response to the consultation on the Football Governance White Paper confirmed the scope of an independent regulator will not include equality, diversity and inclusion.

The justification given for this decision was that: "in the government's view, there should only be intervention in an area where there is clear evidence of a market failure." This failed to acknowledge football's current failure to provide an equal experience for disabled fans on a consistent basis.

The 2023 Level Playing Field Annual Fan Survey results revealed the most common barrier disabled fans face when attending live sport is 'physical access at stadiums.' This was also the case in the 2022 dataset, which was the most recent at the time of the Government's response. It is indisputable that failing to accommodate disabled fans' 'physical access at stadiums' is a market failure and rectifying it falls under governance.

Rt Hon Stuart Andrew MP, Minister for Sport and Minister for Equalities, claimed that the independent regulator will "ensure fans are always at the heart of football."

Not all fans will be at the heart of football, while barriers remain in place. Based on the Government's own estimates, 16 million people in the UK had a disability in the 2021/22 financial year, which represents 24% of the total population. That is almost a quarter of those whom they claim to serve, that this decision neglects.

Level Playing Field has fed into the process of the Fan Led Review and Government White Paper consultation at each stage. This included the direct input of disabled fans, which must have been disregarded in order to reach this outcome. The charity remains committed to working with Government officials to improve access and inclusion for disabled sport fans, wherever possible.

# The staff team



# A decade of Ruth

General manager & head of access and development, Ruth Hopkins, celebrated a decade of improving access and inclusion for disabled sports fans with Level Playing Field.

When Ruth joined the charity on 29 April 2013, she was the only fulltime member of staff, but has been an essential part of its growth and impact upon the industry since then.

The organisation was highly football focused upon her arrival, but has since diversified across sports, including the Rugby World Cup and Cricket World Cup.

During Ruth's time at Level Playing Field, all national stadia across England and Wales have been audited and the Premier League made a promise to ensure that all clubs comply with the Accessible Stadia Guide.

Ruth's responsibilities at Level Playing Field have been far reaching, including support for DSAs, parliament representation, sitting on consultancy panels and originally being the sole access auditor. The growth of the charity has allowed some of these roles to be taken on by others, but she now leads on the rewrite of the Accessible Stadia Guide.

The impact Ruth has made in her decade at Level Playing Field has been felt by many, with congratulatory messages coming in from supporters, DSAs, colleagues and former colleagues alike.



**“There has never been a day I regret coming to Level Playing Field.**

**“I love meeting people and working with our team of passionate staff.**

**“In the rewrite of the Accessible Stadia Guide, I am adding more clarity on standards and examples of good practice.**

**“You can see with the growth of our Weeks of Action – now Unite For Access, that the appetite is there to keep on improving.”**



## Joseph & Mark Join the team

Two additions were made to the Level Playing Field staff team in 2023, with the appointments of Joseph Crabtree and Mark Phillips, in the respective roles of Media & Communications officer and Fan Engagement & Enquiry Officer.

Joseph joined the charity at the start of March - midway through the 'Unite For Access Campaign.

His background in sports club media roles across football and rugby league. He has previous experience in sports journalism and has looked to strengthen Level Playing Field's communications output and impact.



Mark joined Level Playing Field in December, in a newly created role, which will enhance the charity's capacity to provide support to disabled fans on a daily basis.

Since graduating with an LLM in Legal Practice, Mark has been passionate about promoting accessibility and inclusion while supporting other disabled people throughout his career.



An avid football supporter and a lifelong Swansea City fan, Mark has been a member of the disabled supporters' association (DSA) in South Wales since its formation in 2013. In 2017, Mark became the club's first Disability Access Officer and with the support of Swans DSA introduced a number of new initiatives to improve accessibility for disabled fans at the stadium, including the introduction of a Sensory Room. He regularly attends live sport with both Swansea City and Cymru Football where he is also a member of the Equality Advisory Group.

This background will give Mark a detailed understanding of the experiences of disabled fans and club staff. Both Mark and Joseph have been welcome additions to the Level Playing Field staff team.

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# **A year in review**

# A year in review

At the end of 2023, the charity took a look back on a record-breaking year for, which saw plenty of challenges and important advancements in access and inclusion for disabled fans across England and Wales.

Reflecting on the year showed outstanding levels of participation across Unite For Access and the 2023 Level Playing Field Annual Fan Survey.

There were also individual advancements at clubs and neglect from positions of power which needed to be challenged.

Take a look through some of the key events for disabled sports fans from this year, below.



## **January**

Away Fan Survey launched

## **February**

Unite For Access kicks-off

## **March**

DCMS Committee meeting on White Paper

## **April**

Ruth celebrates a decade with the charity

## **May**

Five year anniversary of EHRC's final report

## **June**

Repeated Champions League Final failings



## **July**

Women's Survey results published

## **August**

Further boosts for British Sign Language

## **September**

Formation of new disabled fans groups

## **October**

Annual Fan Survey results published

## **November**

Regional forums return in the South

## **December**

RNIB guidance published

# Staff

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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

# Staff



David Moffat

Access Auditor



Joseph Crabtree

Media and Communications Officer



Mark Phillips

Fan Engagement & Enquiry Officer



# Trustees

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Tony Taylor

Chair



Steve Evans

Secretary



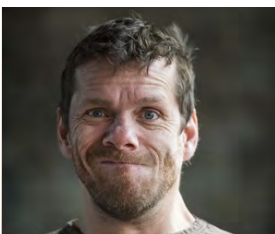
Joanna Deagle

Trustee



Jo McNicol

Trustee



Jamie Beddard

Trustee



# A word from the Chief Executive

Owain Davies

I hope that through this annual report, you have seen a snapshot of the value Level Playing Field has delivered towards access and inclusion, through our staff and network of disabled fans. Thank you for taking the time to find out about our work throughout 2023.

We look back on a year of so much positive development but have also been presented with a number of challenges. The failures of another UEFA Champions League Final and the disregarding of disabled fans' interests in the Football Governance White Paper, have reemphasised the importance of our advocacy.

My personal highlight was the return of regional forums, with the Level Playing Field South Forum at Tottenham Hotspur Stadium. Bringing disabled fans, club staff and other stakeholders together has huge value and those in-person discussions are also extremely beneficial for our own staff.

An important change this year, came through the rebrand of our 'Weeks of Action' campaign, to 'Unite For Access'. It was launched in the perfect manner, with a fan-focused video, which took us to the heart of the subject matter. The campaign was an even greater success than expected and I look forward to building on this in the years to come.

It was pleasing to see engagement with the campaign from sport at different levels, with so many poignant moments and examples of meaningful progression. In Sky Bet League Two, none of us will forget the look of sheer elation on Stevenage fan Archie's face, when the young wheelchair user led out his team. Then at the elite level, I particularly enjoyed seeing the legacy of ongoing provisions for disabled fans, with Manchester City celebrating 25 years of audio descriptive commentary, alongside the new introduction Arsenal's British Sign Language Service (BSL).

# Annual Report

BSL continued to be a theme throughout the year, including interpreters present at the EFL Finals and the Ashes for the first time and permanent services launched at Wembley and Tottenham.

Surveys were a driver once again, in 2023. We were pleased to fill a void in data on accessibility in women's football and with the successes of the Lionesses accelerating growth in this area, it is clear that we need to push for access to be attached to that development.

A disparity in accessibility information was displayed in the survey results for women's football, but we are still aware of the need to address shortcomings in this area across sport. Guidance shared on best practice and standards here, in addition to our ongoing support for disability liaison officers has provided support to combat this.

The level of support we offer to fans, club staff and venues, would not be possible without support from the Premier League and the EFL. I am grateful to them, as well as the disabled supporters' associations and clubs that have worked with us to address more local matters.

I am most thankful to my fellow staff, for their efforts across the 12 months. The team has grown this year, with the addition of the Fan Engagement & Enquiries Officer. This has equipped us to provide even greater levels of support and has helped to increase efficiency across the board. Mark Phillips as an individual, has been the perfect recruit to the team and while we celebrated him joining, we also marked a decade of Ruth Hopkins' time at Level Playing Field. It has been a pleasure to work with Ruth throughout my time at the charity and the positive impact she has had on access and inclusion for disabled fans cannot be overstated.

The dedication of the whole team has seen us achieve so much over the last 12 months and I look forward to working alongside them to make further progress in the coming year.



# 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**

**For disabled sports fans**

**Directors' Report and**  
**Unaudited Financial Statements**  
**for the Year Ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023**



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## CHARITY REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

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CHARITY NUMBER:	1177415
COMPANY NUMBER:	11109719
TRUSTEES/DIRECTORS:	A Taylor (Chair) S Evans J McNicol J Deagle (resigned 13 March 2023) 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 BFP FMAAT Michael Harwood & Co Greville House 10 Jury Street Warwick Warwickshire CV34 4EW



## TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT (INCL DIRECTORS' REPORT)

The Trustees present their report and the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023. 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 13<sup>th</sup> 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 Directors/Trustees meet at least once a quarter and are actively involved in the strategic direction of the charity. Level Playing Field is an inclusive employer and actively promotes the positive impact of having a diverse workforce and trustee board. Level Playing Field has signed up to the Disability Confident Scheme. This commitment allows Level Playing Field to accurately and responsibly represent the community it serves. Trustees are recruited and appointed in line with best practice using both internal and external sources.

A business continuation policy is in place and the Trustees constantly review potential risks, producing plans incorporating financial, operational and strategic options to react to changing circumstances should they occur based on detailed risk assessment.

The Charity works on a collaborative basis with charities and organisations across England and Wales to assist in delivering our Charitable objectives and shared outcomes.

### OBJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

Level Playing Field adopts and promotes the social model of disability, in which disability is viewed as a social issue and that an individual only becomes disabled as a result of the social, attitudinal and environmental barriers that the individual faces.

The Charity is focused on removing these barriers in all sports. Level Playing Field (and its membership) is 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

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



## TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT (Continued)

Level Playing Field is working to remove the barriers that currently exclude disabled people, including:

- prejudice and stereotypes
- the way things are organised and run
- lack of/inadequate access to information, buildings and transport

The Directors/Trustees have had due regard to the guidance published by The Charity Commission on public benefit in managing the activities of the Charity.

The main activities of the Charity during the year were as follows:

### ***Fan Engagement***

2023 was a year where Level Playing Field's connection with the disabled fans it serves continued to strengthen. Areas of work which were important to that included:

- in-person forums: the return of regional forums, with the Level Playing Field South Forum, was successful in bringing fans, club representatives and other stakeholders together. This was the first time this format had been utilised since before the pandemic and received a highly positive response from attendees.
- online forums: this continuation allowed more regular and open discussion with disabled fans and other stakeholders. It also presented opportunities to bring more guest speakers to the fore.
- podcasts: the introduction of transcripts made the podcasts more accessible, while bitesize clips have enabled the charity to revisit topics when they are of particular relevance to ongoing matters.
- disabled supporters' associations: support and guidance were provided across the season, resulting in significant progress from emerging disabled supporters' associations and groups exploring the possibility of starting a formalised association.

### ***Surveys***

Two surveys had a dramatic impact on the knowledge centre pillar of our work during 2023. These enabled the charity to gather real life experiences and use that information to push for change. Throughout the year, the charity had almost 2,000 survey responses in total, evidencing mass consultation with disabled fans. This directly informs the charity's work, equips supporters, and allows Level Playing Field to provide clubs and governing bodies with valuable data to use themselves. Some key points to consider from each survey are:

#### **Annual Fan Survey 2023**

- 1,791 responses represent a record number for the charity. This would be expected to have increased how reflective the results are of disabled fans' perspectives across the board.
- more than half of disabled fans identified additional disability-related costs to attending live sport.
- almost a third of respondents had been impacted by the use of flares, smoke bombs, and other such pyrotechnics.
- the data displays year-on-year trends for the first time, allowing Level Playing Field to look at the trajectory of certain focus points for access and inclusion.
- trends included troubling rises in the percentage of disabled fans for whom 'inaccessible public transport' and 'disability abuse' are barriers when attending live sport.
- results that related to barriers experienced by disabled fans showed some positive movement. There were noticeable drops in the percentages of fans where 'physical access at stadiums' and 'attitudes of others' were a barrier. These did remain the top two overall however, emphasising the scale of those issues.



## **Women's Football Survey**

- a first-of-its-kind survey which presented data on relative unknowns for the charity, clubs and governing bodies.
- showed a 'lack of information' was a barrier for attending matches to a significantly higher proportion of fans (26%) than in the previous annual fan survey across all sports (16%).
- data on information corroborated by 38% of respondents rating their club's 'communication and marketing when it comes to attracting disabled fans into watching women's football' as 'poor', 'very poor', or 'non-existent'. 46% of fans listed 'accessibility information' as something which would help when planning for and travelling to women's matches, with only accessible parking ranking higher.
- 'cost of attending' and 'difficulty purchasing tickets' were both shown to be lesser barriers for disabled fans attending women's football and 19% of respondents were aged 18-29, which all displays the potential for teams to attract new supporters.

## **Campaigns - Unite For Access**

In its first year under a new name, the campaign set records, with significant buy-in from clubs, disabled supporters' associations, disabled fans and governing bodies.

Involvement from 100% of Sky Bet Championship clubs, helped take the total number of teams beyond 120.

The name change to 'Unite For Access' from 'Weeks of Action' proved extremely effective, with an immediate connection to messaging at the core of Level Playing Field's aims. An essential part of this came through the film, which showcased the experiences of disabled fans, gained significant traction and started the campaign off in an impactful manner.

Across the fortnight, there was participation from the Premier League, right through to non-league clubs. At the top level, Manchester City celebrated 25 years of providing audio descriptive commentary, while in Sky Bet League Two, Stevenage gave a young disabled supporter the opportunity to lead the team out.

One of the most memorable moments of the campaign, came when the national anthem was once again performed alongside a British Sign Language (BSL) interpreter, ahead of the Carabao Cup Final at Wembley. This was followed by more work on BSL, as Arsenal introduced a permanent matchday provision.

## **Club Resource**

Facilitating discourse between club staff and disabled fans through forums is a key service to inform clubs, as is survey data which allows them to see their specific circumstances alongside the context of sport as a whole.

Expert stadium auditing and staff training is also made use of by many clubs. The auditing process led Cardiff City to become the latest recipient of a 'Level Playing Field Centre of Excellence Award,' in 2023. On a wider scale, the charity was delighted to lead on the inaugural EFL Disability Access Officer Conference, which was a positive vessel for the sharing of best practice.

## **Lobbying**

There were a number of instances in 2023, where it was important for Level Playing Field to represent the interests of disabled fans on key issues, through official correspondence with politicians and governing bodies.

Responses to the publication of the Football Governance White Paper and the independent report on the events at the Champions League Final between Liverpool and Real Madrid, sustained efforts from previous years in those areas.



## TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT (Continued)

The Champions League Final in 2023 once again saw a failure to accommodate disabled supporters of a Premier League club and it was therefore vital that Level Playing Field applied pressure on UEFA. The direct accounts of Manchester City fans impacted were essential throughout the process.

A responsibility to contribute on wider matters of accessibility, where disabled sports fans could be impacted, was clear on proposed closures of train station ticket offices. Level Playing Field supported the efforts of Transport For All and brought disabled supporters' associations from across England and Wales together to challenge this. Ultimately proposals were withdrawn, in a dramatic reversal and a major victory for accessibility, which followed the biggest response to a public consultation in British history.

### FINANCIAL REVIEW

The financial position of the charity at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023, as more fully detailed in the accounts, can be summarised as follows:

	2023 £	2022 £
<b>Net income/(expenditure)</b>	<b>99,781</b>	<b>5,783</b>
Unrestricted Revenue Funds available for the general purposes of the charity	250,502	192,194
Restricted Revenue Funds	41,473	-
<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>291,975</b>	<b>192,194</b>

### 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 Taylor  
Chair

Date: 30 Jun 2024

## INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS' REPORT

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the company for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023 which are set out on pages 7 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.

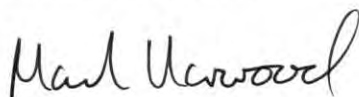
### Independent examiner's statement

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

Date: 4<sup>th</sup> July 2024



## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (Incorporating the Income and Expenditure Account) For the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023

	Note	2023 Unrestricted £	2023 Restricted £	2023 Total £	2022 Unrestricted £	2022 Restricted £	2022 Total £
<b>Income from:</b>							
Donations & grants	2	29,119	-	29,119	394	-	394
Charitable activities	3	48,447	347,967	396,414	39,659	316,241	355,900
Discontinued activities	6	-	-	-	82,033	-	82,033
<b>Total income</b>		<b>77,566</b>	<b>347,967</b>	<b>425,533</b>	<b>122,086</b>	<b>316,241</b>	<b>438,327</b>
<b>Expenditure on:</b>							
Raising funds		216	-	216	216	-	216
Charitable activities	4	18,125	296,358	314,483	29,674	316,910	346,584
Other	5	917	10,136	11,053	1,069	9,646	10,715
Discontinued activities	6	-	-	-	57,012	18,017	75,029
<b>Total expenditure</b>		<b>19,258</b>	<b>306,494</b>	<b>325,752</b>	<b>87,971</b>	<b>344,573</b>	<b>432,544</b>
<b>Net income/(expenditure) for the year</b>		<b>58,308</b>	<b>41,473</b>	<b>99,781</b>	<b>34,115</b>	<b>(28,332)</b>	<b>5,783</b>
Transfers between funds		-	-	-	(28,332)	28,332	-
<b>Net movement in funds for the year</b>		<b>58,308</b>	<b>41,473</b>	<b>99,781</b>	<b>5,783</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>5,783</b>
Fund balances brought forward		192,194	-	192,194	186,411	-	186,411
<b>Fund balances at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023</b>	14/16	<b>250,502</b>	<b>41,473</b>	<b>291,975</b>	<b>192,194</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>192,194</b>

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



## BALANCE SHEET As at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023 (Company no. 11109719)

	Note	2023	2022
		£	£
<b>Fixed assets</b>			
Tangible assets	9	3,854	2,748
Investments	10	1	1
		<u>3,855</u>	<u>2,749</u>
<b>Current assets</b>			
Debtors	11	206,470	12,088
Cash at bank and in hand		131,273	221,191
<b>Total current assets</b>		<u>337,743</u>	<u>233,279</u>
<b>Current liabilities</b>			
Creditors	12	(49,623)	(43,834)
<b>Net current assets</b>		<u>288,120</u>	<u>189,445</u>
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>		<u>291,975</u>	<u>192,194</u>
<b>Funds of the Charity:</b>			
<b>Restricted funds</b>		41,473	-
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>		250,502	192,194
<b>Total charity funds</b>	14/16	<u>291,975</u>	<u>192,194</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 30th June 2024.

On behalf of the Trustees

  
A Taylor  
Chair

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

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**For the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023****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.



## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (Continued) For the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023

### 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) Investments

Investments in subsidiaries are measured at cost less impairment.

#### (g) 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.

#### (h) 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 15 to the financial statements.

#### (i) 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.



## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (Continued)

For the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023

### 2. DONATIONS AND GRANTS

	2023 Unrestricted £	2023 Restricted £	2023 Total £	2022 Unrestricted £	2022 Restricted £	2022 Total £
Memory Giving	-	-	-	358	-	358
JustGiving	1,162	-	1,162	36	-	36
LPF Consultancy Ltd	27,957	-	27,957	-	-	-
<b>Total donations and grants</b>	<b>29,119</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>29,119</b>	<b>394</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>394</b>

### 3. INCOME FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	2023 Unrestricted £	2023 Restricted £	2023 Total £	2022 Unrestricted £	2022 Restricted £	2022 Total £
Membership Income	112	38	150	90	-	90
Performance-Related Grants:						
- Premier League Fans Fund	-	347,929	347,929	-	304,803	304,803
- The Football League	46,000	-	46,000	36,000	-	36,000
- The Football Association of Wales	-	-	-	3,000	-	3,000
Expenses recharged	2,265	-	2,265	569	11,438	12,007
Miscellaneous Income	70	-	70	-	-	-
<b>Total income from charitable activities</b>	<b>48,447</b>	<b>347,967</b>	<b>396,414</b>	<b>39,659</b>	<b>316,241</b>	<b>355,900</b>

### 4. EXPENDITURE ON CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	2023 Unrestricted £	2023 Restricted £	2023 Total £	2022 Unrestricted £	2022 Restricted £	2022 Total £
<b>Direct spending</b>						
Expenses recharged	1,501	-	1,501	1,333	10,805	12,138
Unite for Access & Campaigning	1,121	21,296	22,417	1,043	24,566	25,609
Event costs	-	-	-	2	28	30
Other campaign costs	22	417	439	11	217	228
<b>Total direct spending</b>	<b>2,644</b>	<b>21,713</b>	<b>24,357</b>	<b>2,389</b>	<b>35,616</b>	<b>38,005</b>
<b>Support costs</b>						
Staff costs (see Note 7)	11,807	214,107	225,914	12,139	218,002	230,141
Travel and subsistence	1,427	20,011	21,438	1,751	7,247	8,998
Telephone costs	50	1,006	1,056	102	1,194	1,296
<b>Carried forward</b>	<b>13,284</b>	<b>235,124</b>	<b>248,408</b>	<b>13,992</b>	<b>226,443</b>	<b>240,435</b>



## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (Continued) For the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023

### 4. EXPENDITURE ON CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES (continued)

	2023 Unrestricted £	2023 Restricted £	2023 Total £	2022 Unrestricted £	2022 Restricted £	2022 Total £
<b>Support costs (continued)</b>						
Brought forward	13,284	235,124	248,408	13,992	226,443	240,435
Premises	1,034	19,646	20,680	2,237	42,506	44,743
Publicity	77	1,452	1,529	57	723	780
Administration & office supplies	554	10,537	11,091	927	6,266	7,193
Professional fees & insurance	238	2,295	2,533	629	4,585	5,214
Website & email hosting	265	5,043	5,308	3,152	97	3,249
Training	24	450	474	1,266	228	1,494
Postage	5	98	103	21	394	415
Bad debts	-	-	-	5,004	52	5,056
<b>Total support costs</b>	<b>15,481</b>	<b>274,645</b>	<b>290,126</b>	<b>27,285</b>	<b>281,294</b>	<b>308,579</b>
<b>Total expenditure on charitable activities</b>	<b>18,125</b>	<b>296,358</b>	<b>314,483</b>	<b>29,674</b>	<b>316,910</b>	<b>346,584</b>

### 5. OTHER COSTS

	2023 Unrestricted £	2023 Restricted £	2023 Total £	2022 Unrestricted £	2022 Restricted £	2022 Total £
Bank charges	102	-	102	102	-	102
Governance travel costs	87	1,675	1,762	77	277	354
Other legal and professional	585	5,746	6,331	557	6,656	7,213
Depreciation	134	2,538	2,672	94	1,781	1,875
Loss on disposal of assets	-	-	-	37	703	740
Sundry expenses	4	82	86	202	229	431
Donations	5	95	100	-	-	-
<b>Total other costs</b>	<b>917</b>	<b>10,136</b>	<b>11,053</b>	<b>1,069</b>	<b>9,646</b>	<b>10,715</b>

#### Independent examiner's remuneration

Included in the above figures are independent examination fees of £3,060 (2022 - £3,000) and other financial services of £648 (2022 - £846).

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (Continued) For the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023

### 6. DISCONTINUED ACTIVITIES

	2023 Unrestricted £	2023 Restricted £	2023 Total £	2022 Unrestricted £	2022 Restricted £	2022 Total £
<b>Income from discontinued activities</b>						
Income from Audits	-	-	-	74,383	-	74,383
Training Income	-	-	-	7,650	-	7,650
<b>Total income from discontinued activities</b>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>82,033</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>82,033</u>
<b>Expenditure from discontinued activities</b>						
Staff costs (see Note 7)	-	-	-	57,012	18,017	75,029
<b>Total expenditure from discontinued activities</b>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>57,012</u>	<u>18,017</u>	<u>75,029</u>

The above income streams and their associated costs were transferred to LPF Consultancy Limited, a subsidiary company of Level Playing Field.

### 7. STAFF COSTS

	2023 £	2022 £
Gross wages	202,194	271,762
Social security costs	18,584	25,635
Pension costs	4,440	6,879
Other costs	696	894
<b>Total salaries, wages and related costs</b>	<u>225,914</u>	<u>305,170</u>

Average number of employees	7	7
Cross-charged to LPF Consultancy Limited	(2)	0
	<u>5</u>	<u>7</u>

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
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### 8. TRUSTEE REMUNERATION AND EXPENSES

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



## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (Continued) For the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023

### 9. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Computer Equipment £	Total £
<b>COST</b>		
At 1 <sup>st</sup> January 2023	8,955	8,955
Additions	3,778	3,778
Disposals	(1,110)	(1,110)
At 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2023	11,623	11,623
<b>DEPRECIATION</b>		
At 1 <sup>st</sup> January 2023	6,207	6,207
Charge for the year	2,672	2,672
Eliminated on disposal	(1,110)	(1,110)
At 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2023	7,769	7,769
<b>NET BOOK VALUE</b>		
At 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2023	3,854	3,854
At 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2022	2,748	2,748

### 10. INVESTMENTS

	Shares in group undertakings £
<b>COST</b>	
At 1 <sup>st</sup> January 2023	1
Additions	-
At 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2023	1

The company's investments are as follows:

#### LPF Consultancy Limited

Company number:	14396922
Country of incorporation:	England
Nature of business:	Performing access audits on sporting stadia
Ordinary shares of £1 each	100% held

	2023 £
Gross income	185,130
Total expenditure	185,130
Profit/(loss)	-
Balance Sheet total	1

LPF Consultancy Limited was incorporated on 4<sup>th</sup> October 2022 and commenced trading in 2023, taking over the audit and training income from Level Playing Field. Any profits made during the financial period is donated to Level Playing Field.

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (Continued)**  
For the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023

**11. DEBTORS**

	2023 £	2022 £
Trade debtors	-	283
Prepayments	36,320	4,170
Other debtors	6,147	1,000
Amount owed by subsidiaries	164,003	6,635
	<u>206,470</u>	<u>12,088</u>

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

	2023 £	2022 £
Trade creditors	1,697	393
Accruals	3,286	3,532
Social security & other taxes	10,155	9,694
Deferred income (see Note 13)	34,485	30,215
	<u>49,623</u>	<u>43,834</u>

**13. DEFERRED INCOME**

	2023 £	2022 £
Balance brought forward	30,215	38,162
Amounts released to income	(30,215)	(38,162)
Additions during the year	34,485	30,215
	<u>34,485</u>	<u>30,215</u>

Deferred income comprises of performance-related grants covering the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024 (£34,485).

**14. MOVEMENT ON FUNDS**

	Balance at 01.01.2023 £	Income in year £	Expenditure in year £	Transfers £	Balance at 31.12.2023 £
<b>Unrestricted &amp; designated funds</b>					
Unrestricted revenue funds	192,194	77,566	(19,258)	-	250,502
<b>Total unrestricted funds</b>	<u>192,194</u>	<u>77,566</u>	<u>(19,258)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>250,502</u>



**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (Continued)**  
For the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023

**14. MOVEMENT ON FUNDS (continued)**

**Restricted funds**

Fans' Fund	-	347,967	(306,494)	-	41,473
<b>Total restricted funds</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>347,967</b>	<b>(306,494)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>41,473</b>
<b>Total charity funds</b>	<b>192,194</b>	<b>425,533</b>	<b>(325,752)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>291,975</b>

**15. 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.

**16. ANALYSIS OF NET ASSETS BETWEEN FUNDS**

	<b>Fixed Assets £</b>	<b>Current Assets £</b>	<b>Current Liabilities £</b>	<b>Total £</b>
<b>At 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023</b>				
Restricted funds	3,661	80,530	(42,718)	41,473
Unrestricted funds	194	257,213	(6,905)	250,502
	<b>3,855</b>	<b>337,743</b>	<b>(49,623)</b>	<b>291,975</b>
<b>At 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022</b>				
Restricted funds	2,611	35,583	(38,194)	-
Unrestricted funds	138	197,696	(5,640)	192,194
	<b>2,749</b>	<b>233,279</b>	<b>(43,834)</b>	<b>192,194</b>

**17. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS**

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