

MANCHESTER UNITED PLC

POLICY FOR DISABLED SUPPORTERS

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This policy will show how Manchester United PLC wish to underpin their commitment to disabled supporters. The aforementioned people referred to includes people with:

- sensory impairments, ie – those suffering from hearing loss or a visual impairment
- people who are largely dependent on using wheelchairs for their daily activities
- people with learning difficulties
- people with walking difficulties
- people with physically restricting medical conditions
- older people who are infirm and who have mobility difficulties

1.2 Supporters with disabilities who are located in parts of the stadium other than the special provision areas are advised to make the nearest steward aware of any special needs/ requirements.

1.3 To this end, Manchester United PLC channel all disability related issues through, and act in partnership with, Manchester United Disabled Supporters` Association (MUDSA), be they practical, administrative or advisory. MUDSA have assisted Manchester United PLC in every aspect of producing this policy.

1.4 Policy Definition of a Disabled Supporter

For the purpose of this policy the definition of a disabled supporter is:

- “any person who, because of their disability or impairment, is unable to use ordinary stand seating without contravening Health and Safety Regulations, guidelines or policy. Any such persons will be considered for use of the special provision areas of the stadium in line with the procedures set out in this policy.”

The Disability Rights Commission (DRC) have viewed this policy prior to publication. For further information on codes of practice and other related issues please visit their website: www.drc-gb.org

1.5 Disability Discrimination Act (DDA)

As a fundamental principle the Disability Discrimination Act states that disabled people should not be treated “less favourably, without justification” and “reasonable adjustments should be made to make goods, facilities and services accessible.” Manchester United PLC aim to fully comply with both the provisions and spirit of the Act.

2 PROVISION OF FACILITIES AND AMENITIES – SENSORY IMPAIRED SUPPORTERS

2.1 Hearing impaired supporters

Those supporters with impaired hearing will be able to use a text telephone, minicom (0181 868 8668) to make enquiries pertaining to any services provided by Manchester United PLC.

2.2 Supporters with impaired hearing can be accommodated in the stadium by various means but it is normally possible for them to use ordinary stand seating. If, for whatever reason, any person with impaired hearing feels that ordinary stand seating would be unsuitable for them they should contact MUDSA for further information. (Please be aware that the normal criteria for ticket purchase applications will apply – ie membership and the possession/provision of match vouchers when necessary).

2.3 The introduction of induction loop equipment to all customer contact points, including the Ticket Office and the Main Reception area, is part of an existing development programme. The possibility of introducing an induction loop area within the stadium is being evaluated.

2.4 The Club have identified staff to embark on sign language courses. It is expected that signers would then be available for museum tours and other circumstances or situations which may necessitate a signer being present once they have completed their courses.

2.5 On match days information will be carried on the electronic scoreboards and via the public address system.

2.6 Initial consultations with the RNID provided the advice and training surrounding this particular generic form of disability.

2.7 Visually impaired supporters

Enquiries from visually impaired supporters will be dealt with by MUDSA and allocation of the places available in the visually impaired persons section of the stadium will be managed by the Association.

2.8 The Club strongly recommends that each visually impaired person attending a match should be accompanied by a person who is fully able to support their needs in the event of an emergency. Any exceptions to this must be notified to the MUDSA

Secretary and appropriate arrangements will be made. Any refusals will only be on the grounds of a contravention of Health and Safety legislation.

- 2.9 A dedicated area of the stadium with commentary provided by Manchester United radio is available to visually impaired supporters.
- 2.10 The criteria for access to this facility requires that each person can provide a copy of their registration document which certifies they are Registered Blind or Registered Partially Sighted, or provide qualifying documentation from their optician equivalent to registration requirements.
- 2.11 Visually impaired supporters wishing to sit in areas of the ground other than the designated area will be able to do so by purchasing a ticket in the normal manner having notified the Ticket Office of their need for a commentary headset. On arriving at the stadium they will be able to collect special headsets enabling them to receive match commentary wherever they are sat. The special headsets should be returned to the notified collection point after the match.
- 2.12 Visually impaired people wishing to attend a match aided by their Guide Dog should contact MUDSA for all relevant information. Due deference will be given to all aspects of safety and guidance from Guide Dogs for the Blind to ensure a persons safety within and around the ground. Measures will also be taken to ensure that the welfare of the Guide Dog is preserved.
- 2.13 The Club is taking steps to provide accessible information on audio tape, in large print, in braille and electronic formats. It is committed to having the mechanisms for the production of such material and will be fully functional before the end of season 2002-2003.
- 2.14 The key areas of the official Manchester United website will be made accessible for visually impaired supporters who use text based browsers. The club will commence this process by March 2002.
- 2.15 Consultation with the RNIB and Henshaws Society for the Blind have provided the advice needed surrounding this generic form of disability.

3 PROVISION OF FACILITIES AND AMENITIES - WHEELCHAIR DEPENDENT SUPPORTERS

- 3.1 The facilities at Manchester United for people using wheelchairs are regarded as amongst the best in the country and are managed by MUDSA on a match-to-match basis. However, Manchester United PLC wish to make the most appropriate use of these facilities by providing them to disabled people who are unable to sit in any other part of the stadium. Access to this facility will be by those people who meet the eligibility criteria described below.
- 3.2 Criteria for access to the Wheelchair Platform

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

- wheelchair using applicants must be largely dependent on a wheelchair for mobility purposes or not capable of walking a distance further than that required to reasonably and safely access any other part of the stadium
- wheelchair dependant applicants should also be accompanied by a person who is capable of supporting the disabled person`s needs in the event of an emergency. For this reason Manchester United and MUDSA strongly recommend that a person is sixteen years of age or over and not be infirm. Any exceptions to this must be notified to the MUDSA Secretary and appropriate arrangements for their safety will be made. Any refusals will only be on the grounds of a contravention of Health and Safety legislation
- people wishing to apply for places on the Wheelchair Platform should apply to MUDSA

3.3 Consultation between Manchester United and MUDSA since 1990 have produced the expertise required in providing this facility.

4 PROVISION OF FACILITIES AND AMENITIES – SUPPORTERS WITH LEARNING DIFFICUTIES

4.1 Supporters with learning difficulties can be accommodated in the stadium by various means but it is normally possible for them to use ordinary stand seating. If, for whatever reason, any person with a learning difficulty feels that ordinary stand seating would be unsuitable for them, they should contact MUDSA for further information.

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

5 PROVISION OF FACILITIES AND AMENITIES – AMBULATORY DISABLED SUPPORTERS

5.1 Manchester United recognise that there are considerable numbers of people in the community who use wheelchairs mainly for outdoor mobility purposes but are not necessarily confined to their wheelchair. There are also many people suffering severe walking difficulties who may wish to watch a match. For the purposes of this policy and the administration of the facility itself both categories of people will be termed `ambulatory disabled supporters` and they will be asked to follow the procedure below in order to attend a match using the purpose built facility in the East Stand lower:

- supporters with ambulatory disabilities of a severe nature can be considered for use of parts of the stadium with the easiest access. Access to the aforementioned area will be decided on individual merit based on information provided to MUDSA. This information will assist in determining each individual`s suitability for use of the facilities

- supporters with ambulatory disabilities of a less severe nature will be offered the opportunity of being seated in the most accessible part of the stadium other than the aforementioned facility. Tickets for people in this position should be applied for by writing to MUDSA who will provide all the relevant information for ticket applications

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

6 PROVISION OF FACILITIES AND AMENITIES – SUPPORTERS WITH PHYSICALLY RESTRICTING MEDICAL CONDITIONS

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

6.2 Tickets for people described in 6.1 should be applied for in writing to MUDSA who will provide all the relevant information for ticket applications

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

7 PROVISION OF FACILITIES AND AMENITIES – ELDERLEY SUPPORTERS WHO ARE INFIRM

7.1 Manchester United is conscious of a growing elderly population and wish to consider their needs in order for them to continue watching matches wherever possible. With this in mind it is proposed that those elderly people suffering from an infirmity which prevents them climbing large numbers of steps should be able to request a seat in the most accessible part of the stadium.

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

8 PROVISION OF FACILITIES AND AMENITIES – CAR PARKING FOR DISABLED SUPPORTERS

8.1 Manchester United have a significant number of disabled persons parking places which are allocated to disabled people with the most severe mobility difficulties. Using this criteria people attending the wheelchair platform are given priority for the available places. However, requests for the remaining places can be made by people with other mobility difficulties. Applications can be made to the MUDSA Secretary and each request will be judged on its individual merit. Manchester United would ask that people recognise that there is only a limited number of places available and it will not be possible to accommodate everyone who has a Blue/Orange Badge

9 ACCESSIBLE INFORMATION

- 9.1 Steps have already been taken to put procedures in place to provide information in formats that are more easily accessible to disabled people. Manchester United have already produced copies of the Club Charter on audio tape and audio tape versions of the match day programme are in the early stages of development. Other accessible formats of information have been discussed and mechanisms will shortly be developed to provide information in large print format, electronic format and braille (where appropriate). Manchester United are committed to have the mechanisms for the production of such material fully functional before the end of the 2001-2002 season.

10 WEBSITE

- 10.1 The official Manchester United website will have been completely redesigned by the end of the first quarter of 2002. During the period of design, the club's commitment to making the site more accessible to visually impaired supporters (or "Bobby" compliant) will have been taken into consideration. However, the actual process of making the site accessible to visually impaired supporters will not commence until March 2002. The process will be one of phased development, commencing with the areas of the website considered to be most relevant to disabled supporters.
- 10.2 It is hoped that the increasing use of the internet will allow more disabled people to access information which they had previously experienced difficulty in obtaining. A page on the official Manchester United website will be dedicated to information specific to disability matters relating to Manchester United. Manchester United is committed to having this page on the website by the end of the first quarter to 2002.

11 TRANSPORT

11.1 Domestic away matches

Opportunities for disabled supporters to attend away matches are limited by the allocation received from the away club. However, disabled people who use wheelchairs with a ticket for an away match should be able to travel on the official members coaches if they wish to do so. The coach company has been informed of this requirement and every effort will be made to provide accessible transport should this be requested.

- 11.2 Although the content of 11.1 obliges the coach company to provide adapted transport it will be the responsibility of the disabled person who is travelling to ensure that they are accompanied by someone who is fully capable of supporting their needs. Manchester United cannot undertake to provide "moving and handling" assistance to people travelling because of the Health and Safety implications but will use their best endeavour to assist in whatever way possible.

11.3 European away matches

Disabled supporters wishing to travel to European away matches are advised that it will be in their best interests to travel with the official members party. This is the only way of being reasonably certain of gaining entrance to the away ground and the only way of being assured that each individual's safety will be fully considered in any reasonable circumstance. Again, Manchester United staff members will use their best endeavour to assist in whatever way possible.

- 11.4 As in 11.2 above, any disabled person travelling to European away matches must take responsibility for themselves and be accompanied by a person who is fully capable of supporting their needs.

12 CATERING

- 12.1 Match day catering for disabled people is provided in the concourse behind the disabled persons facilities and is dedicated to that facility.

- 12.2 Other facilities which come under the general heading of Catering such as lounges, suites, and the Red Café are accessible to disabled people. Measures are being taken to provide menus in large print and braille. Induction loop equipment and signers for the deaf will be made available when required.

13 MUSEUM

- 13.1 Every effort has been made to make the Museum and Tour accessible to visitors with disabilities. This is under constant review. The staff welcome feedback and constructive criticism from disabled visitors.

- 13.2 Manchester United Museum staff have made strenuous efforts to improve the general accessibility of the museum to disabled people and continue to improve the service they provide. Portable induction loop facilities are provided and a staff member is a signer for the deaf. The museum is currently renewing its video-taped presentations and signer captions will be included for deaf people.

14 STAFF TRAINING

- 14.1 Elements of staff training which relate to `disability awareness` and `disability etiquette` have been identified and a training programme will be instituted to ensure that awareness and etiquette are observed. This training programme will be ongoing. Manchester United are forcefully committed to developing a `can do` culture by introducing such training which will form the hub of the further development of this policy.

- 14.2 Manchester United have had discussions with an established and respected charity who will be contracted to provide staff training. All appropriate Manchester United staff members will be included in the training.

15 GENERAL

- 15.1 Every reasonable adjustment is being made to all the services provided by the different departments of Manchester United. Department managers and personnel of Marketing, Catering, Membership, Museum and Guided Tours have now been made aware and instructed to comply with the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act. Access to goods and services, as well as match day facilities, are being fully assessed and measures are in place to ensure compliance with all associated legislation.

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

Contacts: Ken Ramsden
Manchester United Football Club
Sir Matt Busby Way
Old Trafford
Manchester M16 0RA

0161 868 8000

Phil Downs
MUDSA
P O Box 141
South DO
Manchester M20 5BA

0161 434 1989

