

S A F C

SUNDERLAND AFC

Disability Access Guide

Stadium of Light — supporting every supporter, every matchday

Disability Access Officer

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01 Welcome

Thank you for visiting the Stadium of Light.

On behalf of everyone at Sunderland Association Football Club, I look forward to welcoming you to our wonderful city. This guide is designed to help you make the most of your visit, offering information on travel to and from the stadium, the away area, and available refreshments. We hope you find this guide helpful and wish you a safe and memorable trip to the Stadium of Light.



02 Accessibility Statement

At Sunderland AFC, we are committed to providing a welcoming, inclusive and accessible experience for all supporters and visitors to the Stadium of Light.

Promoting equality, inclusion and accessibility sit at the heart of our values, and we are committed to creating an environment where everyone can enjoy matchdays and events with confidence and dignity.

Our disability guide has been designed to provide information on the services, facilities and support available to help you plan your visit to the Stadium of Light. Whether you are attending a match, event or visiting the stadium for the first time, we want to ensure your experience is as smooth and enjoyable as possible.

We recognise that every supporter's needs are different and we are committed to listening, learning and continually improving our accessibility provision. We understand that some supporters may require additional assistance and we aim to provide reasonable adjustments wherever possible.

If you cannot find the information you need within this guide, or would like to discuss any support requirements ahead of your visit, please email dao@safc.com.

Our aim is simple: football should be accessible and enjoyable for everyone.



YOUR DISABILITY ACCESS OFFICER

Debra Cumiskey

Email: dao@safc.com

Office hours: Monday–Friday, 8am–4pm

03 Planning Your Visit to the Stadium of Light

How to Get to the Stadium of Light

Stadium Address

Stadium of Light, Monkswearmouth, Sunderland, SR5 1SU

BY BUS

Buses are frequent, and numbers E2, 2, 3, 4, 9, 12, 13, 15, 16, 23, 24 and 56 all stop nearby. The city's main bus station, Park Lane Interchange, is within walking distance of the stadium.

BY TRAIN / METRO

Sunderland is the nearest main line station, located 10–15 minutes' walk away in the city centre. For journey planning and other rail information, visit National Rail.

The Tyne and Wear Metro serves the stadium via both Stadium of Light and St Peter's stations. After matches, supporters travelling towards South Hylton must board at St Peter's, while those heading northbound towards Newcastle must use Stadium of Light station. Visit Nexus for more information on Metro, including journey planning.

For further information on accessibility with Nexus, please visit nexus.org.uk/metro/looking-after-our-customers/access-all

BY TAXI

Station Taxis — 0191 555 5555

City Taxis — 0191 511 0111

Steels Taxis — 0191 565 3555

Taxis can drop off outside the stadium main entrance for hospitality up to one hour before kick-off, or outside the Black Cat House Fanatics store any time prior to kick-off. An Uber service is also available across the city — please download the Uber app for details.

FROM THE AIRPORT

Newcastle International Airport is roughly a 40-minute drive away. The Metro is also available from there to the Stadium of Light and takes approximately 45 minutes.

BY CAR

The postcode for the stadium is SR5 1SU. Entering this postcode into a sat-nav will direct you to the main entrance to the ground. The stadium is easily accessible from both the A19 and A1 via Wessington Way (A1231).

Via the A19, north or south: Exit the A19 via the Hylton Grange interchange onto Wessington Way (A1231). Continue through three roundabouts, passing the Northern Spire bridge on your right. Keep going along Wessington Way (A1290) and exit at the traffic lights via Queen's Road (A1290). Continue down Keir Hardie Way (A1290) and the stadium will be on your right.

Alternative route via the A19 (northbound): Leave the A19 at Seaton and follow the A1018 from there to Sunderland city centre. Head onto the Monkwearmouth bridge (A1018) and turn left at the second set of traffic lights onto Millennium Way. Continue on and the stadium will be on your left.

Via the A1 — southbound: Leave the A1(M) at junction 62 onto the A690. Continue before merging onto the A19. Leave the A19 at the Hylton Grange interchange onto Wessington Way.

Via the A1 — northbound: Leave the A1 at junction 80 and continue down the A19 until you reach the Hylton Grange interchange — leave onto Wessington Way.

04 Accessible Parking

Accessible parking facilities are available inside the stadium complex. These spaces are issued to eligible season card holders on a first-come, first-served basis for matchday parking. At present, our allocation of accessible parking is currently full.

DROP OFF / ROAD CLOSURES



Please be advised that several vehicle lockdowns are in place on matchdays. These are agreed with the local Safety Advisory Group to enhance supporter safety and allow crowds to successfully disperse.

Vehicles cannot access the stadium site from 60 minutes prior to kick-off until the fixture has started, with the stadium site once again locking down 30 minutes before the final whistle.

The roads reopen to vehicles wishing to depart or enter the stadium site once major crowds have dispersed, which typically takes 30–40 minutes after the conclusion of each game.

CITY CENTRE CAR PARKS

There are several car parking sites across the city centre, available to use on matchdays. Demand for these car parks is high, so please arrive early to ensure a space.

- St Mary's Car Park, SR1 3AH
- Sunnyside Car Park, SR1 1TP
- The Bridges Car Park, SR1 3DR
- The Bridges Shopping Centre Car Park, SR1 3PZ

Metro: The Stadium of Light and St Peter's Metro stations are both within a 10-minute walk of the venue.

PARK & RIDE

Fans should use the Park and Ride facility on Wessington Way (A1231). This is easily accessible from the A19 and is clearly signposted. Buses pick up from the permanent bus stops on Sunderland Enterprise Park, while pick-up points from the stadium are to the north on Keir Hardie Way.

Buses run every five minutes before the game from 90 minutes prior to kick-off, and regularly after the game until all fans have been transported back to their cars.

PLEASE NOTE

The Park and Ride facility may experience high usage and may not be fully accessible for individuals with certain disabilities. For more information about the accessibility of this service, and any reasonable adjustments, please contact the DAO at dao@safc.com

05 Ticketing Information

Home End Accessible Seating

The Stadium of Light has **196 home spaces** available for wheelchair users:

STAND	WHEELCHAIR SPACES
Jimmy Montgomery Stand	70
Carling Stand	16
East Stand	26
South Stand	80
South West Corner	4

They can be accessed via one of the four accessible entrances located at 62A, 32A, 46A and 54A. 76 Yards and all corporate areas in the West Stand are fully accessible via lift.



Ambulant supporters can sit in their allocated seat with their Personal Assistant to enjoy the game from any seat they choose. If an ambulant supporter feels they have more specific seating requirements, they should contact the ticket office to discuss their requirements in more detail – see the next section for how to register for accessibility support.

06 How to Register for Accessible Support

1

Submit your proof of disability

Submit a request on [ASK SAFC](#) to upload your proof of disability — you will need your supporter ID to do this.

2

Create your supporter account

Head to tickets.safc.com to create a supporter account and get a supporter ID (if you require support with this, please email dao@safc.com). If you require a Personal Assistant, they should also follow this process to obtain a supporter ID.

Current evidence requirements

Letters dated within the last 12 months. The evidence you provide must show the level of award and the expiry date. If you are a supporter from outside the UK, please provide equivalent documentation:

- PIP — confirmation of higher / enhanced rate daily care or mobility
- DLA — confirmation of higher / enhanced rate daily care or mobility
- Attendance Allowance — confirmation of higher rate
- Veterans' Agency letter confirming War Disablement Pension
- Blind or partially sighted registration certificate (BD8 / CVI)

3

Purchase your ticket

When match tickets are released, log onto your ticketing account and purchase via the site. Tickets are sold subject to availability.

07 Personal Assistant

A Personal Assistant (PA) or Essential Companion is an individual who provides essential physical, sensory, or cognitive support to a disabled or neurodivergent football supporter at a match. Stadiums issue complimentary or subsidised tickets to these assistants as a "reasonable adjustment" under disability legislation.

IMPORTANT

The Personal Assistant Ticket is **not** a concessionary ticket or "2-for-1" deal — it is a reasonable adjustment made by the club to enable a disabled supporter to access the full range of matchday and event services more easily, in consideration of UK legislation as described in the Equality Act 2010.

The primary role of a Personal Assistant in receipt of a complimentary ticket is to enable the wheelchair/ambulant supporter to access the full range of matchday services more easily. PA ticket holders do not qualify for loyalty benefits such as Black Cat Points (BCP), or have the right to automatically buy their ticket should they no longer act in the role of PA.

The PA must be over the age of 18 and should sit with the wheelchair/ambulant supporter to assist them throughout the entirety of a matchday. The PA must also enter at the same time as the wheelchair/ambulant supporter — PA ticket holders found entering the stadium on their own will be asked to pay the full price of a match ticket to enter. If the wheelchair/ambulant supporter is arriving later, PA ticket holders will be asked to wait to enter.

PA tickets are transferable game by game and are the responsibility of the wheelchair/ambulant supporter to manage. PA ticket holders must not attend matches on their own or with any other non-wheelchair/ambulant supporter. Supporters found to be breaching the terms and conditions of a complimentary PA ticket risk having both associated tickets cancelled.

08 Ticket Office

Located on the North East corner of the Stadium of Light, the purpose-built facility is supporters' in-person destination for all their ticketing needs and requests.

The ticket office is open Monday to Friday from 10am to 5pm, and includes eight service points, including an accessible counter.

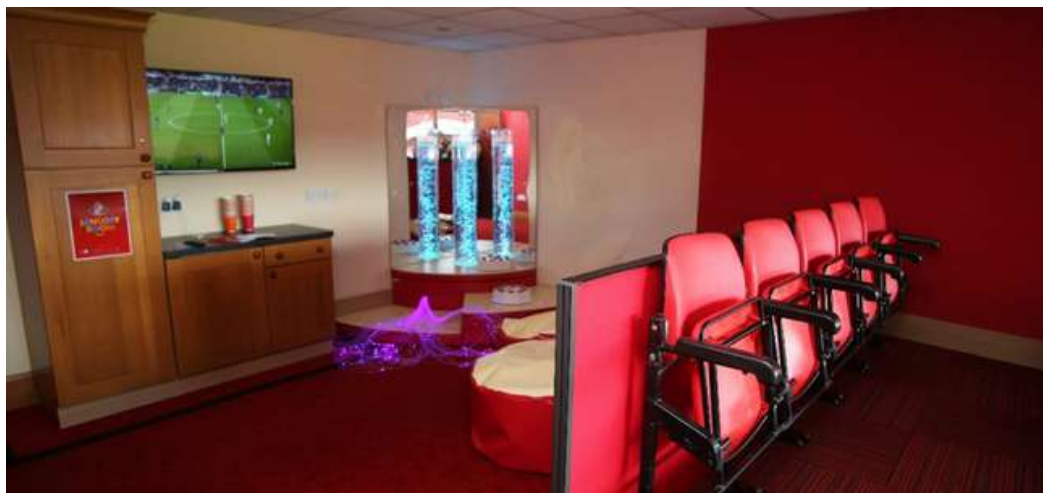


MATCHDAY OPENING HOURS

FIXTURE	OPENING HOURS
Saturday / Sunday (3pm KO)	10am – KO
Saturday / Sunday (early KO)	9am – KO
Midweek	1pm – KO

Supporters are advised that all opening hours are subject to change; any changes will be published on safc.com and asksafc.com.

09 Sensory Room



The Nathan Shippey Sensory Room

This initiative was inspired by the Shippey family, whose son Nathan, diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder, found the noise levels in standard seating areas distressing. Determined to enable Nathan to enjoy live football and support his team, his parents, Peter and Kate Shippey, collaborated with the Club to develop a suitable solution.

In 2015, Sunderland became the first football club to introduce a sensory viewing room, providing a calm environment for fans who might find the typical stadium atmosphere overwhelming. The Shippey campaign has gone on to support many clubs in developing their own sensory rooms.

Our Sensory Room provides a valuable matchday experience for supporters with sensory needs, notably those on the autism spectrum, while attending fixtures at the Stadium of Light. Due to increasing demand and limited capacity, we have a new booking process to help ensure all supporters have a fair opportunity to access the facility.

The Sensory Room offers a gentle transition into the matchday experience, helping supporters build confidence before joining others in the outdoor seating area. It is designed for neurodiverse supporters who find the stands overwhelming due to their disability. This space is equipped with soundproofing, soft furnishings and sensory activities, further enhancing the matchday experience for fans.

To keep the space available for those who truly need it, we ask that supporters who can sit in the stands do not request a spot in the Sensory Room. Due to high demand, there is a 1:1 guest ratio, with six places available for each home fixture.

HOW CAN I BOOK INTO THE SENSORY ROOM FOR A MATCH?

To register your interest in using the Sensory Room, please email dao@safc.com to receive a form. Once you've submitted the form, a member of our team will be in touch to discuss availability.

CAN I BOOK A FAMILIARISATION TOUR?

Should you wish to visit the stadium in a calming non-matchday environment ahead of your visit, please contact the Disability Access Officer via dao@safc.com. As part of your familiarisation tour, you will be able to view your route into the stadium, your stadium seat, and facilities such as the Changing Places facility and accessible toilets.

WHAT HAPPENS ON THE DAY OF MY SENSORY ROOM BOOKING?

In the week leading up to the game, the Disability Access Officer will call or email you to discuss a time and where to meet on the day. On the day, you will be met by a member of the team at the agreed location and time. They will then escort you up to the Sensory Room, where you will enjoy the game.

More information: safc.com/matchday/accessibility/sensory-room

10 Transition into the Stadium

At Sunderland AFC we recognise the importance of playing a role in supporting transition on matchdays into the main stadium, whether that be from the Sensory Room or your first match. Developing confidence and familiarity with different matchday settings can help increase independence, reduce anxiety over time, and enable supporters' better access.

Our goal is to provide the right support for everyone, helping them to enjoy Sunderland AFC in a way that meets their needs while encouraging opportunities for growth and inclusion.

Sensory Bags

Our sensory bags help ease transition into loud, overwhelming matchday environments by providing tools for self-regulation, supporting fans with sensory processing challenges or autism to enjoy live games.

Our bags typically include items designed to soothe and help focus:

- **Noise-cancelling ear defenders** — to dampen loud chants and sudden crowd noises
- **Fidget toys** — spinners, poppers, or stress balls to help release nervous energy and maintain focus
- **Notebook or activity books** — easy-to-read guides that help fans familiarise themselves with the stadium layout, helping to reduce anxiety

To request your bag, please email dao@safc.com — bags are subject to availability and items may vary from time to time. Sensory Bags cost £5 .



11 Accessible Stadium Tours



Visiting a busy stadium on matchday for the first time can be overwhelming. To help you feel comfortable and prepared, we are proud to offer accessibility tours — a familiarisation tour held on quiet non-matchdays, designed to explore the matchday route in a calm environment. These events promote independence, inclusion, and confidence in navigating the stadium.

WHAT HAPPENS ON AN ACCESSIBLE STADIUM TOUR?

- Main entrance and turnstiles
- Section of the stadium bowl and seating areas
- Routes to toilets and other facilities
- Location of the warm space / Sensory Room
- Access to the players' dressing room, tunnel and manager's dugout

The tour is taken at a slower pace, with a smaller group, and led by a guide. These tours operate once a month.

To book your place on a familiarisation tour, please email dao@safc.com

12 Stadium Accessibility

Assistance Dogs

We are delighted to assist and accommodate supporters with assistance dogs. We can, however, only accommodate supporters with assistance dogs on the lower tier and in Hospitality.

Any supporter wishing to bring an assistance dog to a fixture must contact the Disability Access Officer in advance of the game. Water bowls can be provided on request.

Headsets for the Blind or Partially Sighted

Supporters who are blind or partially sighted can enjoy match commentary at all home games via our complimentary headsets. These can be booked a week prior to the match via the Disability Access Officer at dao@safc.com

Accessible Toilets

Accessible toilets are located in all areas of the stadium; these are fitted with radar locks. Keys are available from nearby stewards, and you can also purchase a key if you require one from shop.disabilityrightsuk.org/products/radar-key

Changing Facilities



Changing facilities within the Stadium of Light have more space than the standard accessible toilets, and all the necessary equipment including a height-adjustable changing bench and a hoist.

There is a Changing Places facility in the West Stand at the Stadium of Light. It is located near block L15/U18; this also requires a radar key.

13 SAFC Store



The Stadium of Light store is fully accessible to wheelchair users. Please note the store will be busier than usual on matchdays.

Store opening hours

Monday to Saturday 9am - 6pm

Sunday 10am - 4pm

Times may change from time to time

You can also place online orders quickly and easily, 24 hours a day, via [safcstore.com](https://www.safcstore.com)

14 Information for Away Supporters

Parking at the Stadium of Light

Parking bays are allocated by your club. If you require a disabled parking bay, please contact your club's Disability Access Officer at least 7 days in advance of the fixture.



Arrival

The away section at the Stadium of Light is in the North Stand. Visiting supporters can access the stadium using turnstiles 69–74. Turnstiles open 90 minutes before kick-off for every game.

All visiting fans that require support with accessing the stadium can use a lift in the 76 Yards entrance to access the away end when they arrive. Please visit the 76 Yards entrance and request to use the lift to level 3 with the stewards.

Once you arrive on level 3, there will be stewards available to welcome you and direct you to the correct seating area or wheelchair platform to watch the game.



There are two food and drink courtyards within the away end concourse for visiting supporters. Refreshments are available to purchase from the turnstiles opening, during half-time, and up to 30 minutes after full-time.

15 Stadium of Light Security

NO SMOKING

There is a no-smoking policy at and around the Stadium of Light, including all car parks.

NO READMITTANCE

We operate a strict no-readmission policy – there will be no opportunity to leave and re-enter the stadium.

WHAT CAN I BRING INTO THE STADIUM OF LIGHT?



WHAT CAN'T I BRING INTO THE STADIUM OF LIGHT?



Lost Property

If you unfortunately lose any items at the Stadium of Light during your visit, please email lost.property@safc.com with full details of the item, your seat location and contact details.

16 Searching at the Stadium of Light

Enhanced Search Policy

Season 26–27 will see an increase in supporter searching at the Stadium of Light. Any supporter attending a fixture may be subject to search in line with current ground regulations. For all away supporters, there will be an enhanced search in place at the away turnstiles.

If the fixture you are attending has an enhanced search in place, this will be clearly communicated with your club and promoted a few weeks before the fixture on your own club's website.

For the enhanced search, the following items cannot be brought into the stadium: coins, vapes, power banks, flares, smoke canisters, and umbrellas.

All coins collected will be donated to a charity of your own club's choice following the fixture. For vapes, power banks, umbrellas and other larger items, a collection procedure is in place — you can leave your item with our steward team before entry, and you will be provided with a collection ticket to retrieve your item(s) after the game.

MEDICAL ITEMS

Any supporters with a medical requirement who wish to bring medication, including medicinal cannabis, into the stadium should contact the club at least 7 days in advance of the fixture at dao@safc.com to provide a medical exemption certificate.

ANXIETY AROUND SEARCHES

If your disability or condition may cause anxiety or stress related to being searched, please contact the DAO in advance of your attendance. Alternatively, you can inform a steward, and we will do our best to ensure the search is conducted in a way that is comfortable and respectful for you.

REPORTING AN INCIDENT

Sunderland AFC is committed to ensuring the Stadium of Light is a safe and welcoming place for all. If you need to report a concern, please contact us via the Ask SAFC website / Report a Concern.

17 Matchday Timings

Here is a guide to timings on a Premier League Matchday — please note these will differ according to kick-off time.

PLEASE NOTE

This timetable is for a traditional **3:00pm** kick-off home match. If the match you are attending is at another time, please adjust the scheduled times to three hours before kick-off.

10:00am	Ticket Office & Club Store open
12:30pm	Beacon of Light Fan Zone opens
1:00pm	First Team arrive at main reception (arrive early for a good spot)
1:15pm	Samson & Delilah arrive at the Fan Zone for photos
1:30pm	Turnstiles open
2:00pm	Team news announced
2:15pm	Players warm up on the pitch
2:20pm	Samson & Delilah pitchside
2:55pm	Players walk out of the tunnel
3:00pm	Kick-off — First Half
3:45pm	Half Time
3:50pm	Sunderland AFC former player / legend draw, Foundation of Light lottery
4:00pm	Kick-off — Second Half
4:45pm	Full Time

18 Stay in Touch

If you have any further queries or would like to provide any feedback, please contact Sunderland AFC's Disability Access Officer, Debra Cumiskey.

EMAIL dao@safc.com | **HOURS** Monday–Friday, 8am–4pm