

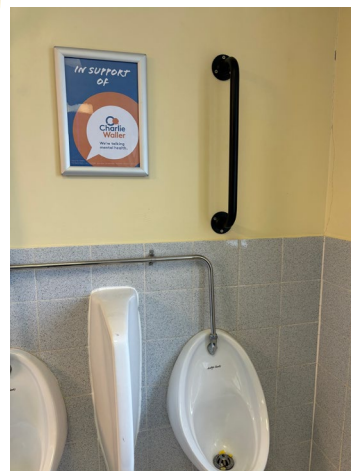


Showcase
& Awards
2024



RIPON RACES
Yorkshire's Garden Racecourse

Accessibility for All Diversity and Inclusion



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RACING POST



Objectives

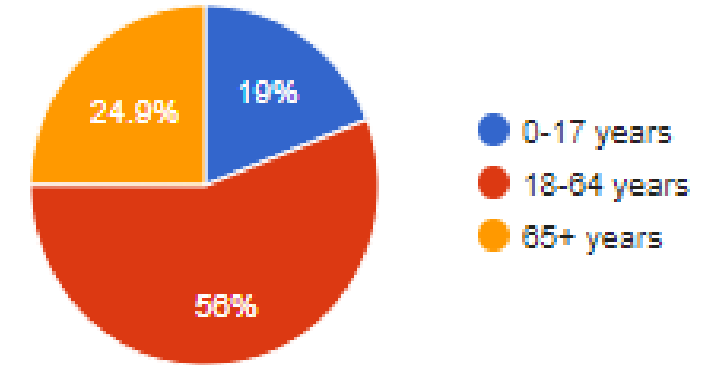
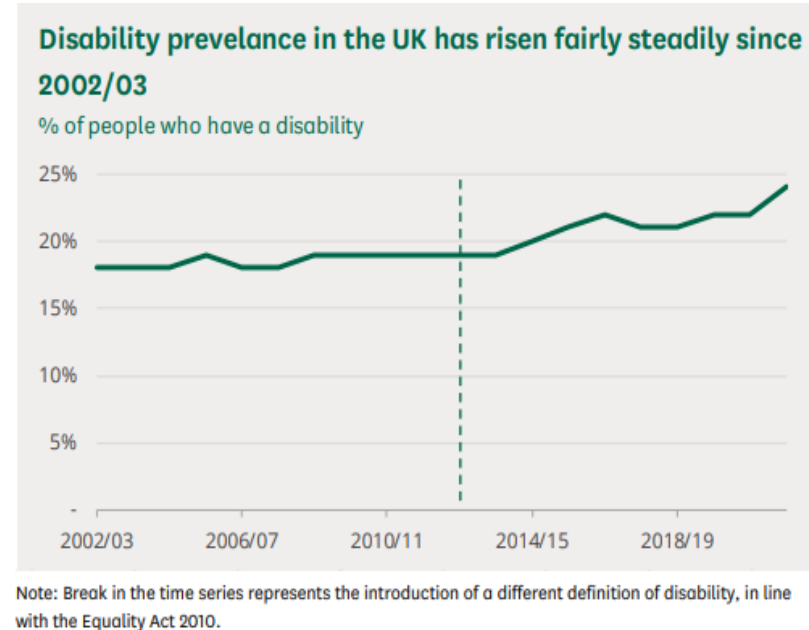
The House of Commons Library Disability Statistics 2023 shows:

- National average of disability prevalence in England is 24% and higher in North of England at 28-29%.
- Disability prevalence is highest among pensioners (46%). Average age of 'home living' wheelchair users is 63. Around a third of wheelchair users are ambulatory.
- 2%+ of UK population use a wheelchair regularly and more when attending an event.

With a significantly higher-than-average local population (24.9% aged 65+ vs National average of 18.6%), increasing national disability prevalence and ever evolving societal expectations, it is crucial that we provide a welcoming and inclusive environment for customers with disability/accessibility requirements at every stage of the customer journey.

The objectives of our Accessibility for All project were to:

1. Develop knowledge of accessibility and disability. Further understanding requirements and making the appropriate improvements to enhance experience for regular racegoers and break down barriers to attendance.
2. Create a clear process and customer journey for those with accessibility needs, from initial contact/enquiries, throughout the booking process to the on the day experience.
3. Enhance information and training for our staff so that they feel confident to support those with accessibility issues.



Parish of Ripon population statistics.

Delivery



Initially contacting a group of regular racegoers with different accessibility requirements, we collated feedback and opinions based on previous visits and invited participants to form a focus group. We invited the group to the racecourse on a non-race day to discuss the initial feedback they had provided, take a tour and test out facilities.

With the support and guidance of the focus group we identified key areas to address and implemented a multi-faceted plan to make the necessary improvements in each area:

Terminology, Training, Info & Signage

- We held a forum with the focus group to assist with current terminology used around disability and accessibility. This, along with wider research incorporating other venues (theatres, theme parks, museums and sports stadia) was used to ensure appropriate language is used across all platforms.
- A pre-season accessibility training session was held with all staff and additional one to one training for those in key positions. Accessibility information provided on staff briefing sheet for each raceday.
- Accessibility information and policy updated on website to reflect new initiatives and changes implemented.

Verification and Booking Process

- Working with Nimbus Disability, one of the country's leading providers of disability-related advice and support, we became the *first racecourse* to introduce the Nimbus Access Card.
- Nimbus' Queens Award for Innovation winning platform verifies eligibility and gives customers opportunity to highlight additional requirements through a simple and discrete application process.
- Customer receives a Nimbus access card, meaning they are eligible for a free companion ticket. This card is applicable across all Nimbus partner venues. Removes administration for venues and customer, they only verify once rather than to each venue individually.

Accessibility Officer + Assistance

- We appointed an 'Accessibility Officer' to provide an initial point of contact for any queries and liaise with customers where additional assistance or support is required on raceday. Present and contactable to customers on raceday.
- Accessibility Officer arranges for collection of customers who require aid with mobility on arrival/departure with our bespoke 'Mobility Assistance' vehicle. If more appropriate for the customer, the accessibility officer ensures wheelchair provision on arrival and/or person/people to assist should the customer require.
- Accessibility Officer leads on staff accessibility training and holds regular follow-ups with focus group.

Results



Terminology, Training, Info & Signage

- ✓ All accessibility/disability signage updated across racecourse.
- ✓ Multiple ambulatory toilets and urinals situated in all three enclosures.
- ✓ 10 additional accessible parking bays added to car park.
- ✓ Website traffic to 'Accessibility' page up 38% vs 2023.
- ✓ Staff confident to use appropriate terminology and assist as required.

"I feel a lot better about it now. We never really knew what to say before and I didn't want to offend so the training has really helped us" – Jean Bell (Raceday staff)

"Clear accessibility info and signage is so important. People with disabilities need a firm idea of what to expect before we'll attend. It's nice to feel considered rather than accommodated and involving us in the decision-making process really helps" – Karen Blissett (Racegoer/Focus Group)

Verification and Booking Process

- ✓ Customers apply to Nimbus for a Ripon Races access card. Nimbus verify details and customer can book a free companion ticket using their Nimbus membership number.
- ✓ The Nimbus card communicates the nature of the customer's accessibility requirements, translating the person's disability into symbols which highlight to venues the barriers they face and readjustments they might require.
- ✓ Reduced administration, no awkward questions or data/documents transfer.

"Very quick and straightforward. It makes for a smoother and less intrusive process. I've already used my card at the theatre and a music festival and my friends have joined too" – Jasmine Cofield (Racegoer)

"It's so much easier than having to send documents. Are more racecourses going to do this?" – D. Lee (Racegoer)

Accessibility Officer + Assistance

- ✓ Having point of contact puts customer at ease, especially on raceday, as they know they have somebody they can call on if they require assistance. Strong relationships built encouraging return visits and strong 'word of mouth' effect.
- ✓ 'Mobility Assistance' vehicle has proved a huge success, assisting over 250 people with arrival and departure over 2024 season so far.
- ✓ Fully engaged focus group keen to develop ideas to further enhance the experience and advise on implementation.

"Thank you again so much for all your help when I visited Ripon with my wife. You made it all effortless. We were thrilled when you greeted us at our car in disabled parking, together with a member of staff and a wheelchair, as promised. We couldn't have asked for more" – Alan Roberts (Racegoer)

Supporting Information (max 1 slide)

"It is a brilliant idea to actually get people in to SHOW you rather than tell you what the experience is like for people with a disability" - Dr Martyn Blissitt OBE (Focus Group)

"It was lovely to meet you. Ian and I wanted to say thank you for all the extra effort to make the day smooth for us. We had a great time. Everyone was just so nice to us. The liaison and organisation beforehand really made it!" - Cathy McClay (Racegoer)

Link to Ripon population statistics:
https://citypopulation.de/en/uk/yorkshireandthehumber/admin/harrogate/E04007409_ripon/

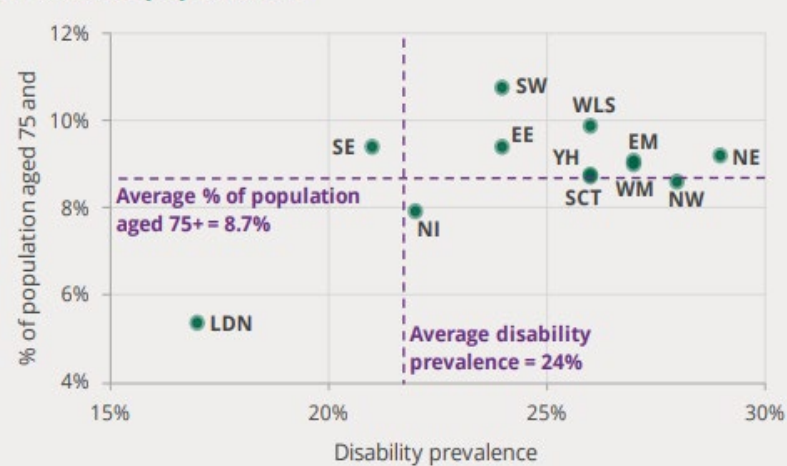
Link to UK Disability Statistics Prevalence and Life Experiences Research Briefing: <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-9602/>

"Working with disabled people is no longer a case of meeting legal obligations. It's an opportunity businesses can't afford to miss. 'Purple Pound' spending power is heavily influenced by perception of a business' ability and willingness to work with disabled customers. There is a wider influence on disabled people's social circles and on how the business is perceived in the wider community. It's great to be working with our first racecourse and hopefully more will follow!" – Mark Briggs, Nimbus Word certainly seems to be getting round as we noted a **31%** overall increase on Accessibility assistance tickets issued in 2024 vs 2023 and a **49%** increase in the last eight fixtures of the season vs the first eight.

Impairment types reported by disabled people
UK: 2021/22

Impairment type	Children	Working age	State Pension age	All ages
Mobility	16%	43%	64%	47%
Stamina/breathing/fatigue	18%	34%	43%	35%
Mental health	30%	44%	13%	32%
Dexterity	9%	23%	35%	25%
Memory	10%	13%	13%	13%
Learning	26%	15%	8%	13%
Social/behavioural	50%	10%	2%	11%
Hearing*	5%	5%	16%	9%
Vision	5%	7%	13%	9%
Other	16%	20%	20%	20%

Disability prevalence tends to be higher in areas of the UK with older populations



Disabled people in the UK have spending power of approximately

£80 billion





after housing costs their households have a spending power of approximately

£249 billion