

TICKETING STRATEGY

READING FOOTBALL CLUB STADIUM

JUNCTION 11, M4

READING

RG2 0FL

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Reviewed by	Paul Collins

TICKETING STRATEGY

Information on purchasing tickets, the locations of the stands, the types and location of the facilities and event day activities is provided on the Reading FC website <https://www.readingfc.co.uk/> and is circulated on social media as well as much of the information being included in the Reading Club Charter. This information is provided well in advance of all events with contact details and telephone numbers so that questions can be answered and so that away fans can prepare for their visit. This complements the information that can be placed on the limited space available on the paper and print at home tickets. Season tickets have limited information on them as the cards are re-activated on a yearly basis.

Entry to all events is by ticket or match day pass only and without either then no admittance is permitted unless it is the accredited match officials, media or photographers who all enter via the media/players entrance. Match official details and

those of attending media are provided to the club several days in advance. The match officials are met by the Club Secretary or the Safety Officer who escort them to their changing room or preparation room. Media representatives are issued with photo identification generated by the EFL accreditation system for men's matches. The football authority representatives and inspecting bodies enter via the main reception and are provided with a match day pass with access areas clearly visible. All areas of the ground are well signposted as is the emergency signage and all the stands, seats and facilities are easily identifiable even during night events when daylight has faded. Every steward is issued with a lanyard (Documents 4.2a and 4.2b) to which they can refer on which there is a stadium map as well as the maps on the back of all the paper tickets. All offers and incentives are published on the club website and social media well in advance of events including bands laying on the Purple Turtle Stage. This is intended to assist with pulsing anticipated arrival and departure crowd flows.

1. Type of Tickets for all sporting events at the Reading Football Club Stadium

Tickets are split into several different categories based on age of supporter, type of ticket, location and priority. They can be bought at the Ticket Office by telephone or online. Tickets can also be purchased in person on a matchday. Listed below are the different ticket options but more detail can be found on the RFC website covering age categories:

- Season Ticket – re-activated annually with accompanying RFC information updates and a map of the ground and where the facilities are located.
- Normal Ticket.
- Concession Ticket – for 12 and under, 17 and under, 18-24, adult, 65 and over. Babes in arms, classified as 4 and under by RFC, are permitted admission free of charge however if a seat is required then it must to be paid for. Fans who are 12 and under must be accompanied by an adult who is 18-year-old or over.
- Club 1871 – The only area that is unreserved but 1200 season tickets are sold annually, so identifiable, and others also sold only to season ticket holders who can solely purchase 1 ticket. This is policed by the ticket office via their computer system. There is a 10% reduction to capacity in this area which is more than accommodated by the positioning of the Club 1871 flag which is usually at the top of the stand. Anyone 15 or under must have an identifiable appropriate adult with them who is readily accessible in case of any issues and must be actively engaged in the purchasing process.
- Family Ticket.
- Hospitality Ticket.
- Print At Home Ticket – only available to home fans with bar codes read, as per the other paper tickets, by the turnstile system.

All tickets are scanned at the turnstiles to provide entry and if they cannot be read or appear to not be valid then access is not granted and a Fan Support team member is in attendance to provide assistance or the fan can attend the main Ticket Office or the Away Ticket Office.

Regular checks are made of concession ticket usage at the turnstiles. Any supporters purchasing age related concession prices are advised to bring a form of identification with them to the match. Staff may challenge anyone considered not to be a genuine concession and request proof of age. Anyone found trying to gain entry using a ticket with an incorrect price band will be required to purchase another ticket at full match day adult rate or will be refused entry depending on the circumstances plus further sanctions may be enacted.

Anyone aged 12 and under is not permitted to attend without supervision of an adult aged 18 and over which is monitored as per the concession tickets.

To purchase in the Family Area, you must have at least one child in each transaction. The 12 and under price band is not available in Club 1871.

Forgeries are a rarity as the soft ticket check then the Fortress ticket system would identify them and if the turnstile system were to be breached then the correct ticket holder would identify the issue as seating is reserved save for the 1871 area. Home tickets are loaded on to plastic season ticket cards, downloaded on to mobile phones (Apple and Google wallets) whose QR codes continuously update so taking a screenshot will not activate a turnstile or are print at home which means if photocopied or printed numerous times only the first activation will open a turnstile. Paper tickets which most away fans receive, depending on their club's preference, include a foil which makes forgery extremely difficult. If a ticket of any kind malfunctions then a member of Fan Support can ascertain via their electronic devices who it was sold to and can remedy any ticketing issues. Likewise the Ticket Offices have the same options available to them. On the tickets and in the ground regulations plus on the RFC website it is made clear that tickets cannot be re-sold.

All purchases of tickets are subject to availability and in accordance with club's terms and conditions.

If a minor is ejected for whatever reason then the safeguarding team are called and the Club's Safeguarding Policy (Document 4.10 including appendices) is adhered to. The same applies for vulnerable adults (Document 4.11). If accompanied by an appropriate adult they are required to leave with the vulnerable adult/minor for safeguarding reasons.

2. Information on Tickets

Ticket information is standardised and follows EFL guidelines. The information is on both sides of the ticket.

2.1 Front of the Ticket

2.1.1 Seat Information

The Stand and Entry Gate is supplied in bold along with the seat section, row and seat number. If the view is restricted, none are severely restricted, then it would be marked on the ticket as would if the area were to be uncovered which is not the case at the Reading Football Club Stadium.

2.1.2 Type of Ticket

Home tickets are blue and away tickets are red. It is also indicated on the ticket if it is an Adult Ticket, Under 17 and under, 18-24, U12 and under, 65 and over or complimentary. These have implications in terms of the cost associated with each ticket.

2.1.3 Customer Information

The name of the supporter, customer id, booking reference and ticket id are highlighted in this section. This gives accountability to the ticket holder if any problems arise during the event. If the visiting club sell out, then those purchasing in the home area must have purchase history on the system. Club 1871 fans must be season ticket holders or members of the club but as seating is unreserved the seat that they frequent is not captured however CCTV can be used to identify them if issues were to arise.

Occasionally away tickets are sold on the day if availability allows. If a credit card is used then the fan's details can be captured but is not shared with the visiting club to be compliant with GDPR.

2.1.4 Game Information

The fixture information, day, date, month, year and Kick Off time are displayed together at the top of the ticket.

2.1.5 Example of Ticket



THIS IS YOUR TICKET

THIS TICKET ONLY ALLOWS ONE ENTRY PER BARCODE SCAN

Unauthorised duplication of this ticket may prevent your attendance to the event.

Please print this ticket on white A4 paper to the full width of the page in good quality ink.

IMPORTANT, PLEASE KEEP YOUR TICKET SAFE

You must retain this ticket for the duration of your visit. The barcode only allows one entry per scan. Unauthorised duplication of this ticket may prevent your attendance to the event. Keep this ticket in a safe place. The venue is not responsible for any inconvenience caused by unauthorised duplication. In the event that unauthorised duplicate copies appear, the club reserves the right to refuse entry to and/or, if already in the ground eject all ticket holders.

FOLD HERE

FOLD HERE

SCAN AT TURNSTILE

SELECT CAR LEASING STADIUM
For terms and conditions please visit ticketing.readingfc.co.uk

Select Car Leasing Stadium, Junction 11, M4, Reading RG2 0FL

Select Car Leasing Stadium is an all-seater stadium. Nobody may stand in any seating area whilst play is in progress. Persistent standing may result in ejection from the ground.



- Entrance Gates
- Entrances for Wheelchair Users
- Accessibility Areas
- Club 106
- Royals Suite
- Premier Suite

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READING
FOOTBALL CLUB

READING
FOOTBALL CLUB

Void if removed

readingfc.co.uk

READING
FOOTBALL CLUB

Visiting supporter only

Adult

readingfc.co.uk

Concession

READING FC WOMEN

Void if removed

readingfc.co.uk



2.2 Back of the Ticket

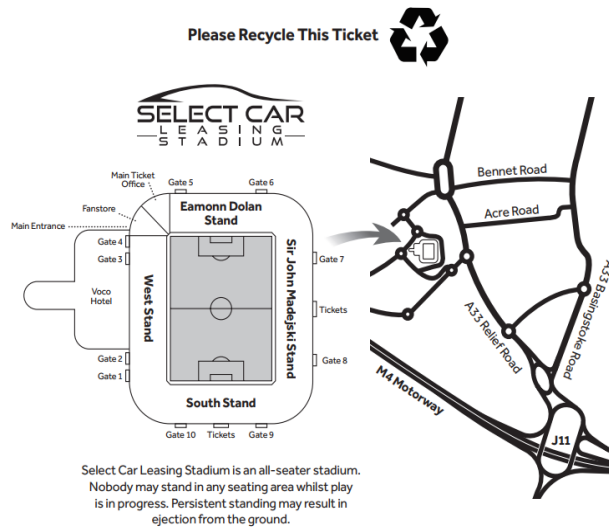
2.2.1. Conditions of Issue

The conditions contain information on ground regulations (also displayed on very gate and around the stadium), refund policy and abandonment. In essence, a refund will only be provided if the purchaser cannot attend a re-arranged fixture which is likely to be due to an abandonment which is extremely rare. It also explains that tickets cannot be re-sold.

Match Ticket Conditions of Issue

1. This ticket is issued subject to the rules and regulations of the relevant authorities and in accordance with Reading FC ground regulations
2. Tickets may not be re-sold
3. Refunds will only be given on any tickets which cannot be used on any re-arranged postponed fixture and provided that it is received at the Ticket Office not less than 24 hours prior to the revised kick-off time
4. If a match is abandoned, our policy is as follows:
If a match is abandoned before kick-off, ticket holders are entitled to free admission to the re-arranged match.
If a match is abandoned after kick-off, ticket holders are entitled to half price admission to the re-arranged match.
5. Match dates and kick-off times are subject to change and it is the responsibility of the ticket holder to ascertain the date and kick-off time of the re-arranged matches

VAT No. 211 270 758



0118 968 1313

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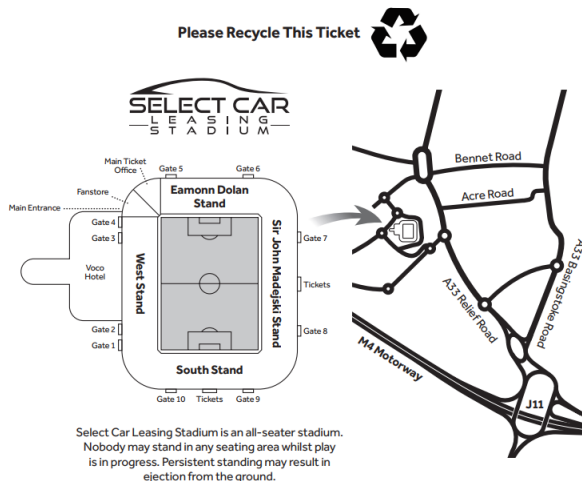
@ReadingFC



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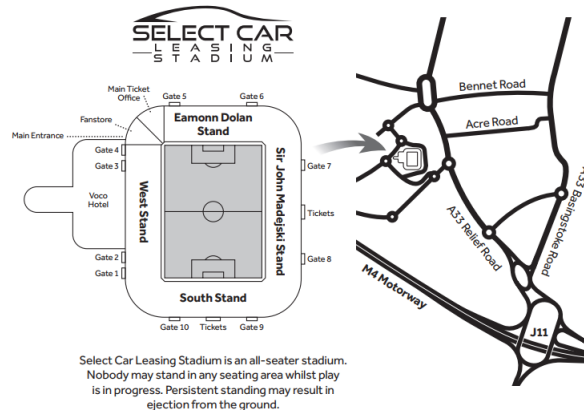


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VAT No. 211 270 758

Please Recycle This Ticket



0118 968 1313

readingfc.co.uk



@ReadingFCWomen



2.2.2 Maps

There are two maps. One highlighting the location of each stand, gates and ticket offices and the other the outer road network.

2.2.3 Contact Information

Contact information for the ticket office is contained in the form of a phone number. Also included is RFC's website and social media accounts (Twitter, Instagram, Facebook).

3. Away Ticket Allocation

RFC reviews various factors when deciding what to allocate the away team. Firstly, the UK Police matrix score gives indications as to the risk associated with each team. This gives a very broad picture however each game is subject to a GPP with the police and specific risks are drilled down in much more detail. The Safety Officer also uses a matrix to calculate the risk posed by away fans, in most cases, to the event (Document 4.1a, 4.1b and 7.17h). When an away club requests an allocation to the Head of Ticketing then the Stadium Manager and Safety Officer review this request based on all available information. Considerations include but are not limited to time of the kick off, associated risk, predicted attendance & type of fixture. The GPP and risk assessment are recorded for audit purposes, by the police, and used to influence the decision on the allocation of away tickets for first team football matches. Many away clubs do not take up their full allocation of seats. However, for cup competitions a set percentage of the total capacity must be made available to the visiting team (FA Cup 15% and Carabao 10%), so the whole of the South Stand may need to be allocated to meet the demand, in this case the Club 1871 season ticket holders are relocated as agreed with them when they purchased their tickets and no home tickets are sold in the stand. No away tickets are unreserved for first team football fixtures. All the other fixtures played here such as some U23 matches do not attract segregation nor restrictions on away ticket sales as

they have never posed a threat sufficient enough to warrant it. For U23 matches it is usually unreserved as attendances are always well below the stadium capacity.

Away tickets do not include refund details as the ticket would in all likelihood have been purchased at the away club who would hold the funds. However, this is agreed between the 2 clubs and the information passed on to the away fan affected. The affected fan would not be financially out of pocket if they cannot attend the re-arranged fixture.

4. How are tickets purchased?

Tickets can be purchased in a variety of ways and this varies for home and away purchases. Tickets are also released in blocks, so membership holders get priority on ticket sales. The options below exclude season tickets.

4.1 Home Tickets

4.1.1 Phone

Supporters can ring the ticket office and purchase tickets with a credit or debit card. Name and date of birth are taken and a valid membership number if they have one.

4.1.2 Online

Reading Football club has a comprehensive bookings system which allows purchases online. This can be done with a valid membership number and purchased with credit or debit card.

4.1.3 In Person

Supporters can attend the ticket office in advance of the game and purchase a ticket with ID and a membership number. 4 hours prior to the game matchday prices apply. Supporter details are still captured on the system if they are not already on the system. However, this is risk based and may be subject to change. If the capacity is likely to be met then ticket sales go offline the evening before the match to ensure that there is no threat of overcapacity and also in an attempt to prevent a walk up on match day which would result in fans being turned away. The Club's media team publicise availability so as soon as a sellout occurs or the decision is taken with the police to make the event all ticket it is communicated on both clubs' websites and publicised over social media. If the away allocation has sold out or it is predicted that it will be, then a loyalty points system is activated to deter away fans from purchasing in the home areas.

Ticket touting, which is a criminal offence, has not been an issue for Reading FC even when the away allocation has been sold out.

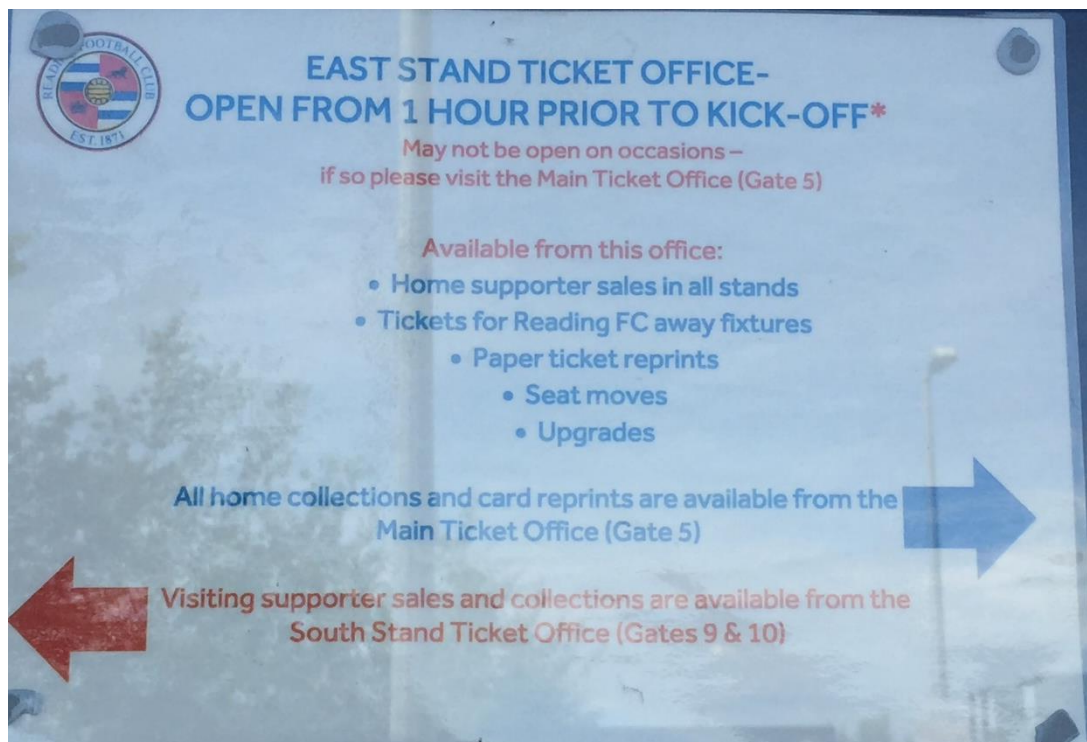
4.2 Away Tickets

4.2.1 From Home Club

Tickets can be purchased through the visiting club's normal channels which is defined by each individual club. The away club usually requests a set number of tickets based on their projected sales numbers. As Reading FC provide only circa 3000 away seats, as required by the EFL rules, they are usually only sold to those who have a long history of supporting the club and are season ticket holders and also members of a priority scheme. Once the allocation has been sold both clubs publicise this on their websites and social media outlets. The away club has the option of asking for a beam back if the home club and the police support it. For the U23 games there is no such restriction on the number of away supporters that can be accommodated due to full capacity never being attained.

4.2.2 RFC Away Box Office

RFC Away Box Office is now situated outside the Club 1871 area of the South Stand and is open on match days for sale to Away football fans only. On high risk fixtures the Away Box Office will be closed and pre purchased tickets will be issued by a Steward Supervisor from a booth near the away coach drop off area. Any on the day purchases will be from the Main Box Office. On high risk fixtures the Safety Officer in partnership with the away club will only sell tickets to away team member cardholders. Many away clubs sell out and so tickets will not be able to be purchased on a match day which is publicised by both clubs on social media and websites.



5. Complimentary Tickets

Complimentary tickets are issued to sponsors, EFL, staff and for any club promotions. No promotions are sanctioned without consultation with the Safety Officer prior to their launch and no drinks promotions are permitted. These are carefully monitored to ensure no onward sale and that the persons using each ticket comply with the ground regulations which are displayed at every gate and strategically placed throughout the stadium. Also, there is a link to the ground regulations when tickets are emailed out. The same information is included within the event package if it is mailed out to them.

6. Banning Procedures

If a supporter breaches the ground regulations, which are displayed on each turnstile, at the ticket offices and on the concourses, they may be removed from the stadium (Documents 8.3 and 8.4). In some cases, a breach is highlighted post-match and in this instance, they will be written to by the Safety Officer.

The first step will be to invite them into an interview. This interview is normally led by the Safety Officer with a colleague from Supporter Services taking notes. The purpose of this interview is to put forward the allegations to the individual and give them an opportunity to respond. Based on the outcome of the meeting the Safety Officer will make a banning decision based on EFL guidelines (Document 8.6). This is communicated throughout the safety management team, ticket office and Police. They will receive this decision in writing and will have 7 days to appeal. The appeal will be heard by the Stadium Manager. If the ban is upheld this will then be enforced. It is likely

the individual will be suspended from the ground while an investigation is ongoing depending on the nature of the offence. Any banned person under 18 or anyone displaying vulnerabilities is always accompanied by an appropriate adult. The club's Safeguarding Policies (Document 4.10 including appendices and 4.11) are strictly adhered to and on event day a dedicated Safeguarding Officer, the Deputy Safety Officer is always present with match day staff all briefed about safeguarding (Document 4.6). If it is deemed appropriate then the offender may be asked to sign an Acceptable Behaviour Contract (Document 8.5) or could face a short ban both of which are logged on the RFC banned staff database and the Ticket Office also update their system. If the offence is of a criminal nature such as pitch incursion, criminal damage, hate crime, pyrotechnic possession then RFC follows EFL guidelines and also informs the police and Kick It Out, for hate crimes, who may seek to prosecute and obtain a court civil or criminal banning order. Again, RFC ticketing systems and the banned database are updated. If a fan is issued with a football banning order by a court following a police investigation the Safety Officer will write to the offender confirming that the club are aware of the aforementioned ban and that their account will be suspended once the ban is in place.

7. Access Control

In order to access the stadium all tickets, including those issued to disabled fans and their supporters, need to be scanned. Ambulant disabled, those with other disabilities, be they visible or not, plus wheelchair users access the stadium by identified gates which are clearly signposted. RFC operate a fortress system which is linked to the control room. This gives a live headcount of the numbers in the stadium and allows access to only valid tickets. The access is monitored in terms of flow rates and overall capacity. At entry searching takes place with same sex searching fans aged 18 years or over. If a fan is under 18 then they should be asked to self search. If anyone refuses to be searched or to self search, in the case of under 18s, the likely outcome will be refusal to enter the stadium. However, for an under 18 attempts should be made to encourage a self search via the child's appropriate adult.

A visual soft ticket check occurs at this point. This entails a visual check of the ticket to ensure that it is valid for the event, the correct gate is being accessed and they the correct category ticket. If there are issues with the ticket then a member of the RFC Fan Support Team but if the ticket proves to be counterfeit or duplicate then entry will be refused and the police involved.

If a turnstile or the Fortress counting system malfunctions then there is capacity for a nearby one to cater for the queues and the gates would not be opened as safety is of paramount importance (Documents 7 and 7.14).

For reasons of safeguarding, the club has at least 1 and usually 2 EFL accredited safeguarding officers plus some stewards who have undertaken safeguarding training

as part of the main employment e.g. teachers, instructors, coaches. The Ticket Office at point of sale ensures that any child under 13 is accompanied by an adult., no fan aged 12 or under can purchase a ticket unaccompanied. The above applies to all stands save for Club 1871 where the ratio is 1 adult to 4 in relation to fans aged 15 or younger. This is the same ratio advised to away clubs. School and junior team trips on match day are required to comply with Ofsted childcare ratios as do flag wavers and mascots.

FAQs :-

Can a member of staff search a person of the opposite sex?

Yes, it is legitimate for a member of staff (SIA or Reading FC directly employed Response) of any sex to search a person of any sex. If a fan asks for a specific sex to search as they may be trans or gender fluid or for whatever reason then this request should be accommodated if practical (see further down). A member of staff can place his or her hand inside the pockets of outer clothing, and feel round the inside of collars, socks and shoes if this is reasonably necessary in the circumstances to look for the object of the search as well as a pat down search away from "personal areas" of the body e.g. genitalia, chest. A search should, as stated, be a pat down but also include arms, legs and the small of the back . The rationale being that blunt instruments and bladed articles are the current weapon of choice of terrorists in the UK as well as vehicle borne but also pyros and similar illegal articles can be concealed in these areas from experience.

However, every reasonable effort must be made to minimise embarrassment that a person being searched may experience. Therefore, where practicable a member of staff of the same sex as the person to be searched should conduct these types of searches, unless a member of staff of the same sex is not readily available and waiting would unnecessarily delay the length of time taken to conduct the encounter or frustrate the object of the search. This should be a rarity as sufficient staff of each sex should have been employed.

Any search involving the removal of more than an outer coat, jacket, gloves, headgear or footwear, may only be made by a member of staff of the same sex as the person searched and may not be made in the presence of anyone of the opposite sex unless the person being searched specifically requests it. Again this should be a rarity as an entry refusal should have been considered if it is felt that a banned item is in their possession and concealed. A self search is a viable option in theses circumstances. Where there is any doubt as to the sex of a person, the person will be asked what gender they consider themselves to be. They will then be treated by the members of staff as their elected gender. This must be undertaken sensitively and so as not to embarrass the fan.

Note: The gender of the searching member of staff may cause offence to the person being searched as would insensitivity by the searching member of staff towards persons who have undertaken gender reassignment. Failing to respect the confidentiality of the person being searched may be an offence under the Gender Recognition Act 2004.

How do I establish the gender of a person for searches?

When establishing whether the person concerned should be treated as being male or female for the purposes of searches, the following approach which is designed to minimise embarrassment and secure the person's co-operation should be followed:

- (a) The person must not be asked whether they have a Gender Recognition Certificate;
- (b) If there is no doubt as to whether the person concerned should be treated as being male or female, they should be dealt with as being of that sex.
- (c) If at any time (including during the search) there is doubt as to whether the person should be treated, or continue to be treated, as being male or female:
 - (i) the person should be asked what gender they consider themselves to be. If they express a preference to be dealt with as a particular gender, they should be asked to indicate and confirm their preference by signing the search record or the searcher's notebook. Subject to (ii) below, the person should be treated according to their preference;
 - (ii) if there are grounds to doubt that the preference in (i) accurately reflects the person's predominant lifestyle, for example, if they ask to be treated as a woman but documents and other information make it clear that they live predominantly as a man, or vice versa, they should be treated according to what appears to be their predominant lifestyle and not their stated preference;
 - (iii) if the person is unwilling to express a preference as in (i) above, efforts should be made to determine their predominant lifestyle and they should be treated as such. For example, if they appear to live predominantly as a woman, they should be treated as being female; or
 - (iv) if none of the above apply, the person should be dealt with according to what reasonably appears to have been their sex as registered at birth.

Once a decision has been made about which gender an individual is to be treated as, each member of staff involved in the search should, where possible, be advised before the search starts of any doubts as to the person's gender and the person informed that the doubts have been disclosed. This is important so as to maintain the dignity of the person and any members of staff concerned.

The gender of the searching member of staff may cause offence to the person being searched as would insensitivity by the searching officer towards persons who have undertaken gender reassignment. Failing to respect the confidentiality of the person being searched may be an offence under the Gender Recognition Act 2004.

What is the policy in relation to transgender members of staff conducting searches?

- (i) Those members of staff who identify as transsexual, (transgender being an overarching term) can go through a process of transitioning and be granted a Gender Recognition Certificate (GRC). If a member of staff holds a GRC she or he can clearly conduct searches in the way that colleagues can, it is encouraged for them to do so as the club seeks to be inclusive and normality should prevail.
- (ii) If a person identifies as transsexual but hasn't started the processes of transitioning or is on their journey, but has not yet been granted a GRC, then they can apply for an exemption certificate which will preclude them from carrying out searches.
- (iii) Members of staff who identify as bi-gender or non-binary or gender fluid can only conduct a search on those who have the same gender assigned at birth (same sex).

The 2025 High Court decision on sex is to be considered and EFL guidance is awaited.

8. Ticket Issues

8.1 Restricted Views

RFC do not currently have any severely restricted view tickets within the stadium. There is a small number of partially restricted and restricted views and this is highlighted at point of sale and on the ticket in line with EFL guidelines. The restrictions relate mainly to handrails in the Upper West Stand that make a corner of the pitch not being easily viewable and these seats are purchased mainly by season ticket holders who are aware of the issues. These seats are clearly identifiable on the ticketing system as they are a different shape to the other seats.

8.2 Counterfeit Tickets

During the soft ticket checks the ticket is visually checked for authenticity. These occur when fans are queuing prior to arriving at the turnstiles. The hologram is a feature to prevent the easy copying of tickets. If a ticket is deemed to be counterfeit it will be retained and control informed and the ticket holder will not be granted access and the police informed (Document 7.15). As events very rarely sell out this is not a common occurrence.

8.3 Duplicate Tickets



If a ticket is lost or stolen it can be reissued as a duplicate if proof of purchase can be confirmed. This automatically cancels the previous ticket and it is no longer usable. If there is an attempt to use it, the turnstile will go red and the turnstile will sound an alarm and will not open. The supporter will be referred to the box office (Document 7.15). This is a very rare occurrence and is monitored to seek out patterns.

8.4 Cancelled or abandoned matches

If a match is cancelled or abandoned prior to kick off then the ticket holder is entitled to free admission to the re-arranged match. If a match is abandoned after the kick off ticket holders are entitled to half price admission to the re-arranged match. Refunds will only be given on any tickets which cannot be used on any pre-arranged postponed fixture and if it is received at the Ticket Officer not less than 24 hours prior to the revised kick off time.

8.5 Resale of returns

Once a ticket is returned then the fan returner it may be offered a refund depending on timings. This ticket is then available again to be purchased, it is put back on sale.