

# Sunderland AFC Charter Report

Sunderland's customer charter for the 2019-20 season.

Sunderland Association Football Club's Customer Charter demonstrates the club's commitment to achieving the highest possible standards across all aspects of its off-the-field operations.

Affordable ticketing policies, supporter consultation and commitments to our local community, are all made within this Charter. The club abides by these policies and is committed to ensuring that the promises within its Charter are delivered.

The club motto 'Consectatio Excellentiae' means in pursuit of excellence and the SAFC Customer Charter sets the standard for all club representatives to achieve this on behalf of its supporters.

## **CONSULTATION AND INFORMATION**

The views and opinions of Sunderland supporters are of paramount importance to the club and feedback is encouraged, welcomed and highly valued.

Regular meetings are held with supporters groups, giving them the opportunity to discuss club and national football issues face-to-face with senior management and Directors. Supporter focus groups and research polls take place from time to time and the Club actively supports its independent Supporters Association. The club's dedicated supporter liaison officer, oversees the overall function of supporter engagement, ensuring a proactive and cohesive approach across all areas of the club.

Consultation with supporters takes place regularly through focus groups including the SAFCSA Branch Liaison Council, Red and White Army and the Sunderland Liaison Group. The club also operates fans forums, consulting and welcoming feedback from supporters on a wide range of issues.

Branch Liaison meetings take place monthly, whereby representatives from supporter branches meet with Club officials to discuss a variety of issues. Each meeting has a designated agenda, points for which are nominated by individual branches and the minutes are circulated to all branches and made available to view on the Club's official website, which has a special section devoted to supporters' branches.

An email database of supporters' branches ensures that club media releases and up-to-date information regarding matters such as fixture changes can be sent daily.

The club communicates with supporters through a variety of channels. These include safc.com, the official website, the matchday programme Red and White and other available media channels.

Club officials, including the manager, players and directors are made available regularly to the media and news releases are issued to regional and national newspapers, radio and television regularly.

We will continue to develop ways to consult with supporters, shareholders, sponsors, the local authority and other stakeholders. Fans' feedback is highly valued and ideas and suggestions are implemented where appropriate.

The Supporter Liaison Officer, Chris Waters, provides a direct line of communication for supporters to the club and will report the comments received to management. Supporters' ideas and suggestions relating to the match day experience at the Stadium of Light are encouraged. This feedback will be used

to provide an insight into supporter's views and opinions. Chris can be contacted via email on [chris.waters@safc.com](mailto:chris.waters@safc.com).

## **TICKETING**

Sunderland AFC believes in providing accessible football at a realistic price wherever possible and remains committed to this fundamental policy. The club has always strived to ensure tickets, both for season card holders and those who purchase on a match-to-match basis, are fairly priced and give as many supporters as possible the opportunity to follow the team.

The club aims to ensure that current and future generations of Sunderland fans and visiting supporters can attend matches at an affordable and realistic price.

To this end, the Stadium of Light affords a large number of concessionary seats throughout, including a dedicated Family Zone. Under-22s season cards are available, which aim to ease this age group through the transition from junior concessions to adult prices. Over 65s concessions operate for both men and women and under 16s can enjoy a whole season of football from just £40.

The Stadium of Light affords unrestricted views throughout, with supporters enjoying first-class facilities from the concourses to the seating decks. There is a broad range of ticket prices; by creating more expensive seats and packages we can charge less to other supporters.

An interest-free method of payment was available to supporters - the Club provides this at no cost , allowing fans to spread the cost of their season ticket over an 8 month. Match tickets are readily available for home fixtures and are sold from the Stadium of Light ticket office, via a 24hour telephone service and on the club's official website [www.safc.com](http://www.safc.com).

Match tickets for the 2019-20 season are priced from £7 for Under 16's, £10 for ages 16-21, £15 for over 65s and £18 for adults. Tickets can be purchased on a game-by-game basis.

2019-20 season card prices, Stadium of Light:

Concession areas

Under 16s £70

Under 18s £90

Under 22s £190

Over 65s £270

Adult £370

Family Zone (1 adult + 1 under-16) £395

Family Zone (additional under-16s ticket) £25

Carling North Stand

Adult £370

Under 22 £190

Over 65 £270

Under 18 £90

Under 16 £70

West / East Stand

Adult £495 or £455

Under 22s £190

Under 18s £90

Under 16s £70

Over 65s £270

West & East Stand

Adult £455 Disabled supporter

Personal assistant - Free of charge

Tickets for cup competitions are generally priced at the same level as league matches. However, in the earlier rounds, ticket prices are often reduced if the opposing club is in agreement. Season card holders have priority before any general sale of cup tickets. SAFC has set criteria for the allocation of tickets in games whereby the ticket allocation could be restricted, such as a semi-final or final of a cup competition.

## **MATCHDAY HOSPITALITY**

Sunderland AFC offer a wide range of match day hospitality from luxurious suites and private executive boxes to informal comfort and a great match day atmosphere.

We have a package to suit every need, whether you're entertaining guests, making contacts or soaking up the match day experience with friends.

For full details of all our packages please visit the hospitality section of our website.

[www.safc.com/hospitality](http://www.safc.com/hospitality)

## **LOYALTY AND MEMBERSHIP**

The club operates a Black Cat point ticketing scheme, whereby supporters accrue points for each away game attended and applied for, including cup and away fixtures. When tickets are limited, or when demand out-strips supply (i.e. set-piece cup fixtures), the Black Cat point system comes in to force.

UK Membership is available for supporters that want to attend games on a match by match basis through the season. Packages are available at £40 for adults and £25 for concessions and are available for the 2019-20 season. Further details can be found at [safc.com/ukmembership](http://safc.com/ukmembership)

International Membership is available for Sunderland AFC outside the UK at £25 or £50 for a plus package for the 2019-20 season.

## **FACILITIES FOR DISABLED SUPPORTERS**

Sunderland AFC is committed to providing first-class facilities for all supporters and every effort is made to ensure that disabled patrons are given the same level of access as other supporters.

Following changes to the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA), a full audit of all of our facilities was carried out to ensure compliance with the changes in legislation. Several changes were made following this audit, such as improved signage and including tactile signs in public concourse areas to assist the visually impaired - and adjustments to handrails, indicating the starting and finishing points.

All staff undergo training in Disability Awareness, ensuring that we can fully understand and meet the needs of our disabled customers. This is done on a rolling basis for new members of staff.

The club has a designated Disability Liaison Officer, Chris Waters, who is on hand to make the process of purchasing tickets, car parking and other matters as easy as possible for both home and visiting disabled supporters. The Disability Liaison Officer also attended meetings of the Sunderland AFC Disabled Supporters Group. Sunderland AFC consults on an on-going basis with its disabled supporters' branch, ascertaining their views on many issues such as DDA legislation, facilities and parking. This procedure will be on-going for the new season.

Sunderland AFC continues to be aware of the needs of disabled supporters. As part of our continued commitment, an independent access audit has been carried out in accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act. The recommendations, none of which were identified as high priority, are being addressed on an ongoing basis.

The club has spaces for wheelchair supporters located at lower and upper levels throughout the stadium, giving disabled patrons a wide choice of location and price. Visiting disabled supporters have a bespoke area within the visitors section of the stadium..

Designated car parking spaces in close proximity to the turnstiles are made available for disabled supporters.

In compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act, disabled patrons are charged the prevailing ticket price throughout the stadium, with personal assistants being provided with a ticket free of charge. This ensures that that the disabled patron is not penalised financially for requiring assistance.

## **REPLICA KIT CYCLE**

New home and away replica kits are released each season. This is in accordance with the club's commercial commitments to kit sponsor adidas. Sales of replica kit directly benefit the club and help to strengthen its resources in a continuing effort to take the club forward.

## **CHARITY POLICY**

Any requests for charitable donations must be sent in writing (not email) to: Charity Requests, Sunderland AFC, Stadium of Light, Sunderland, SR5 1SU.

The request must state which registered charity you are, your registered charity number, the date of the event, the nature of the event and full contact details. Any donations are in the form of signed memorabilia. We do not offer financial support of any kind.

Please note although we would love to donate signed merchandise/raffle/auction items to every worthwhile cause, this is simply impossible due to the volume of requests received on a daily basis. Due to the number of requests received, Sunderland AFC aim to respond to all requests within a six-week period to inform you if the club is able to offer a raffle prize.

We are unable to accept requests from third parties raising funds on behalf of registered charities or appeals unless the letter is accompanied by an official letter on the charity's letterhead confirming that the person is authorised to raise funds on the charity's behalf. The request has to be supported by this to receive a donated item.

SAFC does not offer sponsorships or donations of a financial nature.

## **CUSTOMER SERVICE**

Sunderland AFC is committed to providing the highest standard of service and quality products to its customers. The club continually monitors its procedures and welcomes all supporter feedback. All customers have the right to be treated with respect and club staff will endeavor to answer telephone calls promptly and handle all enquiries courteously and efficiently.

The club aims to acknowledge all enquires within five working days and subsequently respond in full to any contact from a customer within a maximum of 21 days. If a full response cannot be given within this timeframe, an acknowledgement is given indicating the time required to resolve the query. The club responds by telephone, email, letter and in-person to all feedback.

Customers are encouraged to contact the department relevant to their query in the first instance. If this department is unable to resolve the query then the clubs dedicated customer service department will personally handle the matter, liaising with other departments to ensure a satisfactory outcome for the customer.

In the unlikely event a query/complaint is not dealt with promptly or satisfactorily, customers are advised to contact Chris Waters, Supporter Liaison Officer – [chris.waters@safc.com](mailto:chris.waters@safc.com)

On the rare occasion we may be unable to meet your expectations with our response, we will direct you to the Independent Football Ombudsman for you to escalate your complaint.

Further details can be found at [www.theifo.co.uk](http://www.theifo.co.uk).

## **VIOLENT AND ABUSIVE BEHAVIOUR**

As an employer, Sunderland AFC has a duty to care for the health and wellbeing of its employees. The club also has a legal responsibility to provide a safe and secure working environment for staff. All supporters are expected to behave in an acceptable manner and violent or abusive behaviour towards staff or other supporters may result in removal from the premises and suspension from the Stadium of Light.

Sunderland AFC follows strict guidelines concerning Zero Tolerance of verbal and physical violence towards its staff.

We expect all supporters to be responsible and avoid attending the club under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.

### **Examples of Unacceptable Behaviour**

- Excessive noise e.g. re-current loud or intrusive conversation or shouting
- Violence
- Threatening or abusive language involving swearing or offence remarks
- Derogatory racial or sexual remarks
- Malicious allegations relating to members of staff, other supporters or visitors
- Wilful damage to Sunderland AFC property
- Threats or threatening behaviour
- Theft

## **ZERO TOLLERANCE**

Our staff will always treat everyone with dignity and respect and we expect the same from supporters. SAFC staff should be able to do their jobs without being physically or verbally abused. Anyone found abusing staff will be asked to leave the premises. This behaviour will not be tolerated.

In the event you witness any such behaviour please advise us immediately by contacting the club on [enquiries@safc.com](mailto:enquiries@safc.com)

## **DATA PROTECTION**

This Website is owned and operated by Sunderland Association Football Club Limited ("SAFC").

We are registered on the public register of data controllers maintained by the Information Commissioner. We are committed to protecting your privacy. We take our responsibilities to secure your personal information very seriously. Under the Data Protection Act 1998 ("DPA"), we follow strict security procedures in the storage and disclosure of information which you give to us.

## **SAFC CELEBRATES CULTURAL DIVERSITY**

Cultural diversity is something to be celebrated and Sunderland AFC believes that everyone has the right to attend football matches in a safe and friendly environment - and that means all members of our community, whatever their ethnic origin.

Players are committed to promoting diversity Sport and football in particular, is a universal language that unites people from different cultures and nations with a common interest. At Sunderland AFC we have players from a whole host of countries that work together as a team.

Our players, regardless of their ethnic origin and cultural background of a player share a great team spirit, work hard for each other and are supported by fans from around the world. There is no room for racism of any kind within the game, and our community and Sunderland's players offer their wholehearted support to the 'Kick it Out' organisation and 'Show Racism the Red Card', participating in community events and schemes aimed at promoting anti-racism and cultural diversity, particularly with young people.

The players participate in a team photo each year for 'Show Racism the Red Card' (SRTRC) - this is then produced in an anti-racism poster and distributed to tens of thousands of local youngsters through schools and community engagement. The players also attend events under the SRTRC banner, promoting diversity and highlighting anti-racism issues.

Actively working to eradicate racism Sunderland AFC has a zero-tolerance policy towards racism and anti-social behaviour of any kind at the Stadium of Light. Sunderland AFC is proactive in its attempt to tackle racism and anti-social behaviour. Any complaints which are received are monitored by the stewards and where necessary, working in liaison with the police who are on duty in the ground. Appropriate action is taken as a result of this monitoring procedure.

We remain committed to actively eradicating any such behaviour and ask our supporters to embrace this fundamental stance.

Inclusivity for all Sunderland AFC is an Equal Opportunities employer. The club is committed to a policy of treating all employees and job applicants equally. The aim is that all colleagues should be able to work in an environment free from discrimination, harassment and bullying.

Sunderland AFC wholeheartedly supports the principle of equal opportunities in employment. It is unreservedly opposed to any form of direct, or indirect, discrimination being applied against employees of Sunderland AFC, or those who seek employment with Sunderland AFC, on the grounds of their colour, race, ethnic origin, religion, nationality, sex, sexual orientation, marital/parental status, disability or age.

We take every possible step to ensure that individuals are treated equally and fairly and that decisions on recruitment, selection, training, promotion career management and every other aspect of employment are based solely on objective and job-related criteria.

The Foundation of Light - multi agency approach to tackling racism The Foundation of Light, the registered charity of Sunderland AFC has been instrumental in engaging youngsters and adults across the North East in programmes that challenge anti-social and racist behavior.

The Foundation has a strategic partnership with Sunderland City Council allowing the two to work closely together to promote a culture of inclusion is to demonstrate that the city is not prepared to tolerate racism of any kind.

Specifically the Foundation's 'Tackle It - Racism' programme provides positive activities involving teamwork and looking at differences and diversity within cultures to young people throughout the North East, particularly throughout Sunderland and Washington.

It aims to raise awareness of issues using the high profile of football, during informal education sessions, to increase tolerance and sense of community by striving to change attitudes, using prevention methods in primary children right through to family learning with all generations.

## **FOUNDATION OF LIGHT**

The Foundation of Light is committed to improving our community Foundation of Light, the registered charity of Sunderland AFC, was founded over a decade ago. Since then the organisation has grown to a team of more than 100 professional teachers, health workers, coaches, family learning officers, youth workers and support staff. This means a very diverse range of talent, skills and experience, all united in a common passion, enthusiasm and drive to make a difference.

The organisation runs programmes at the Beacon of Light, in local schools, community centres and at bespoke outreach centres throughout Sunderland, South Tyneside and County Durham.

The Foundation of Light aims to use the power of football, and the Sunderland AFC brand to involve, educate and inspire young people and their families through a broad range of innovative activities. Last year alone we helped improve the lives of more than 42,000 people across our local area.

Foundation of Light is committed and pro-active in addressing the issues within the local community, working both on their own initiative and with strategic partners to ensure the continuing improvement of quality of life for all in the North East.

Sunderland AFC supports the Foundation of Light through the use of the SAFC brand and facilities as well as involving first-team players to help raise the organisation's profile and inspire young people and their families. Each player is contracted to give at least two hours per week to support the charity's work. We use football to give people opportunities that can help them improve their lives and the lives of those around them.

The Foundation of Light aims to:

- ☑ Increase access and participation in positive activity
- ☑ Develop new skills and abilities to increase options
- ☑ Inspire people to achieve and raise aspirations now and in future generations
- ☑ Contribute to safe, healthy and regenerated communities
- ☑ Be an integral and embedded part of the local community

## **OUR COMMITMENT TO THE FUTURE**

Throughout the 2019-20 season and beyond, Sunderland AFC aims to continue a positive and productive dialogue with its supporters, aimed at ensuring that club and fans are working together positively and proactively for a common goal.