



**EFL**

# **AWAY FAN EXPERIENCE**

**END OF SEASON REPORT  
2018/19**

# INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the EFL's Away Fan Experience Campaign 2018/19 End of Season Report.

Since the 2016/17 season, we have assessed the experience that away fans have at your club in a very similar way to the Family Excellence Programme.

Using criteria at all of the key touch points, the assessor provides a score, insights and recommendations to help you understand what the experience is like, and to improve it for future seasons.

This end-of-season overview captures the key statistics and learning from the programme in 2018/19, when over 1.5m away fans attended EFL fixtures, based on the visits to all 72 clubs. We've included some best practice, ideas and direct quotes from real fans who take part in the assessments.

We hope all Clubs find the report useful, and the stats and findings help to drive improvement and increase awareness of the away fan experience in years to come.

Good luck for next season.

Andy Pomfret  
Supporter Services Manager



## Club Reports

We assessed one game at each Club between September 2018 - February 2019 and Club reports accompany this document. Please contact us if you haven't received yours.

# 2018/19 SUMMARY

When we introduced the Away Fan Experience Programme, the objectives were to:

- Establish a context for understanding away fans across the EFL
- Establish opportunities of where we can positively influence the away fan experience
- Provide recognition and reward Clubs in each division for high levels of away fan engagement
- Drive advocacy, share ideas, best practice and future plans

This purpose of this end of season report is to provide the summary headline results and key highlights from all 72 Club visits.



72

**MATCHES ASSESSED  
(23 AWAY WINS)**



1.5m

**AWAY FANS IN ATTENDANCE AT EFL  
GAMES IN 2018/19**



171

**GOALS SCORED (75  
AWAY GOALS)**



£22.83

**AVERAGE TICKET PRICE**



6.9

**AVERAGE  
RECOMMENDATION SCORE  
(THE HIGHEST YET)**



3

**DIVISIONAL  
WINNERS**

# 2018/19 AWAY FAN EXPERIENCE DIVISIONAL WINNERS

Congratulations to the leading Clubs in the EFL this season....



**PRESTON  
NORTH END**



**DONCASTER  
ROVERS**



**EXETER  
CITY**



# WHAT'S CHANGED?

One of the key objectives of the programme is to identify gaps and potential improvements and help clubs to implement best practice.

Here are some of the best we've seen so far since the launch season in 2016/17...

1. **FANS GUIDE** - The number of clubs providing a guide specifically for away fans has increased since 2016 with more than two-thirds now having them on their website – but information about the host club SLO and 'things to do on arrival' are still scoring low
2. **REFRESHMENTS** – Menu options, quality and hygiene levels at the refreshment kiosks have all improved considerably (4.3 in 2018/19 from 3.5 in 2016/17) but the promotion of food and drink options to away fans remains a weakness, and queue management also has plenty of room for improvement
3. **VIEW** - The view (the third highest scoring individual measure) and comfort levels that away fans now have seems much improved and receives generally positive feedback
4. **WELCOME** - Stadium guides (on websites and outside the ground) have made it easier to find the away turnstiles, but the quality of actual turnstile welcome received and in-stadia signage are both mixed and there is room for improvement as a whole
5. **PROGRAMMES** - The away team content in match day programmes has improved dramatically in both the number of pages and the quality of the information and articles, a change that hasn't gone unnoticed by visiting fans

# BENCHMARKING

Since the start of the Away Fan Experience programme in 2016/17, we've seen significant steady improvements.

This season's results across all of the key measures in the assessment were at their highest level since the launch season.

\* Based on average assessor ratings across all 72 clubs

	2016/17*	2018/19*	
<b>OVERALL RECOMMENDATION SCORE</b>	<b>6.36</b>	<b>6.96</b>	
Overall Score for Making Away Fans Feel Valued	6.02	6.32	
Overall Score for Friendliness Towards Away Fans	6.86	7.33	
Overall Score for Planning and Travel Touchpoint	6.19	7.24	
Overall Score for Arrival and Welcome Touchpoint	6.04	6.36	
Overall Score for Refreshments Touchpoint	6.24	6.53	
Overall Score for Inside the Stadium Touchpoint	6.10	6.63	

# PLANNING & TRAVEL



The level of information provided for away fans on official Club websites scores an impressive **4.25 out of 5**.



**68%** of EFL Clubs provide a specific Away Fans Guide on their website. This is a great way to introduce the Club and advise away fans of what is on offer at your stadium – although some assessors did comment that guides can be hard to find.



*"The Away Fan Guide is the best I have seen. It's easy to locate on the website, then everything is clearly and logically set out in the right order with diagrams and photos that help"*

Visitor to Preston North End, 2018/19



Fans found it easy to locate the away fan turnstiles at the majority of clubs, scoring this part of the experience at **3.74 out of 5**.



There was a personal welcome for away fans at the turnstiles at **21%** of EFL Clubs in the assessments. Is this a way of creating a great first impression at your Club?



*"At the away ticket office, there was a bespoke sign, especially for us Cambridge fans thanking us for travelling 450 miles and wishing us a safe journey and enjoyable day...and also inviting all away fans to the centre point bar area. Really nice touch."*

Visitor to Exeter City, 2018/19

# ARRIVAL & WELCOME

# SOCIAL & REFRESHMENTS



One third of EFL clubs had a Fan Zone that was available for away fans to use. If your club isn't one of them, is this something you could introduce next season?



At **3.17 (out of 5)** the way queues were managed was the lowest scoring area of this touchpoint. What can be done to improve it?



*"A couple of large kiosks and plenty of staff meant queues were minimised, even at the initial half-time rush. Drinks were poured quickly & efficiently, contactless was promoted actively and was speedy and efficient. All very impressive"*

Visitor to Norwich City, 2018/19



32% of clubs displayed posters specifically to welcome the visiting fans on arrival, thanking them for their attendance and travelling to the game – was your Club one of them?



The quality of the welcome by the operator at the turnstile only scored **3.01 (out of 5)**. Is this a quick win for your Club in 2019/20?



*"The staff member on the other side of turnstiles was excellent as she recognised the need to smile, be friendly and say hello. It was a great impression of the club and made you feel very welcome as soon as you got into the ground"*

Visitor to Mansfield Town, 2018/19

# TURNSTILE & CONCOURSE



# ACCOMMODATION



Half of EFL clubs offered reserved seating for away fans. 46% offered unreserved seating and 4% of the assessors chose the standing area. During the games, nearly half of fans mainly stood whether in seated accommodation or not.



Away fans scored 4.07 (out of 5) for the view they had; a clear indication that clubs are making this a main consideration. Is this something that your club could look at?



*"The view was excellent. Close to the pitch but high up enough to get a great angle of the pitch at one end, and a good enough view of the other."*

Visitor to Aston Villa, 2018/19



The away team content in the match day programme was widely praised and scored a strong 3.64 (out of 5) but is this an area that could still be improved further?



A tannoy announcement specifically thanking away fans for travelling was heard at 26 Club visits. Is this a quick, no-cost improvement your club could make going forward?



*"There were 8 pages dedicated to Bradford City which is way beyond what I have seen by any other Club. Beyond the standard profiles and form guides, it also included 2 pages dedicated to successful Bradford goalscoring partnerships over the years"*

Visitor to Barnsley, 2018/19



# FAN EXPERIENCE

# HOST CLUB STEWARDS



Matchday staff scored a high 3.84 (out of 5) for their level of knowledge when approached by away fans. Remember – your people can make the biggest difference to the experience.



The stewards at 64% of clubs were easily identifiable with a name badge or, in most cases, a number. It makes it easy for clubs to recognise them when they receive positive feedback so check to make sure your stewards can be identified.



*"I was incredibly impressed by the stewards who went to a large group of supporters stood on the steps and advised them that another part of the stand was available for them to stand. I have been to many grounds where this wouldn't happen"*

Visitor to Doncaster Rovers, 2018/19



The matchday stewards outside the stadium scored an impressive 3.77 (out of 5) for friendliness OUTSIDE the stadium. These will often be the first point of contact for away fans so it will form a big part of their impression of the club.



The friendliness score for matchday stewards INSIDE the stadium was slightly lower at 3.54 (out of 5). Why is it lower, and is there a way of making this more consistent?



*"Most away fans will recognise and accept the constraints on some trips... but here, they make you feel valued and welcome. There's evidence throughout the experience that makes it look like this (fan engagement by staff) was planned and part of the culture at this club"*



Visitor to Shrewsbury Town, 2018/19

# STAFF ENGAGEMENT LEVELS

# CHECKLIST

Is there more your Club could be doing? Ask yourself...



- 1) Do you have a specific guide or page on your website that gives away fans the information they need to get the most from their visit to your stadium? ☐
- 2) Are you engaging with away fans on social media? A simple 'have a good journey' is a great way to begin. Some Clubs successfully use their SLO for this engagement. ☐
- 3) Are there dedicated staff who can provide a friendly welcome for away fans at the stadium and help them with any questions they have? ☐
- 4) Do you, or could you, have a fan zone or similar area that is available for away fans to use on arrival? Do you invite them to share a 'mixed fan zone'? ☐
- 5) Do you put up posters to thank away fans for travelling (X miles)? What about a message that is really personal to their club, or how details of how to engage with the home club's SLO with any queries? ☐
- 6) Is there anything that you could offer at the refreshment kiosks that is pertinent to the away club? Advertised 'up front' this could boost matchday sales. ☐
- 7) Do you thank away fans before or after the match and wish them a pleasant journey home? ☐
- 8) Do your stewards have name badges that make them appear far more approachable and friendly to away fans? ☐

# CONTACT & SUPPORT

## WE'RE HERE TO HELP

For any further guidance or advice please contact the EFL  
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