

London 2012: The most inclusive Olympics ever

The Olympics and Paralympics are among the world's most spectacular sporting events and represent a massive opportunity to spread a message to a vast audience. London 2012 approached the Olympic and Paralympic Games for the first time as one event with exemplary accessibility as a key theme and set a high standard for all events to come.

ACCESSIBILITY POLICY OF THE LONDON 2012 OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC GAMES

Year of existence:	2009 - 2012
Country/region of origin:	London, United Kingdom
Beneficiaries targeted:	Persons with all kinds of disabilities, parents with infants, children, first time visitors and older people.
Responsible body:	London Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games (LOCOG)
Stakeholders:	Public and private sector

FACTS & FIGURES

- An accessible experience for 10 million ticket holders and 16,000 athletes.
- Offered more tickets for persons with disabilities.
- Projects with over 100 disability organisations.
- 4% of volunteers had a disability.
- Enhanced media coverage of the Paralympics (350 hours).

IN BRIEF

The London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games were held for the first time as one event. LOCOG's Accessibility Policy inculcated accessibility into everything done, from venue management to ticketing, and provided additional services where necessary, from mobility to information in accessible formats. For the first time people with disabilities were able to participate in every single aspect of the Games, including the Opening and Closing Ceremonies, and could serve in the workforce and as volunteers since staff areas were accessible.

INNOVATIVE ASPECTS

Accessibility as a priority

With the help of accessibility advisors, LOCOG implemented a strategy that mainstreamed accessibility and successfully delivered the world's most inclusive Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Enabling everyone's participation

With venue accessibility, inclusive ticketing, well-trained staff and additional services, LOCOG ensured that everyone, including people with high support needs, could participate equally as spectators, athletes or workforce.

Producing legacy

By improving accessibility in venues permanently, by including people with disabilities in the workforce, and by enhancing media coverage, London 2012 produced an important legacy.

HISTORY

In 2005, London won in the final round of voting of the International Olympic Committee. Shortly thereafter, the UK Government, the Mayor of London and the British Olympic Association jointly established the London Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games (LOCOG). LOCOG was responsible for organising, publicising and staging the Olympic and Paralympic Games in London. In order to ensure consistent access provision and a great experience for each client group across a wide variety of sporting venues, LOCOG developed and officially adopted in 2009 an Accessibility Services and Inclusive Ticketing Strategy and the LOCOG Overlay Access File. In connection with London 2012, LOCOG also developed an Employment and Skills Strategy, a Diversity and Inclusion Business Charter and a Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and the Transport Department issued an Accessible Transport Strategy.

«London 2012 Games were a truly inclusive and unique experience for athletes, visitors and volunteers. It should serve as a model for all major (sporting) events to come.»
Amelia Gentleman, 'The Guardian'



Image from the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games (© Mark Todd)

facilities suitable to the needs of everyone. Disabled people could apply for tickets like anyone else. For every session, venue and price category, LOCOG issued different ticket types. Furthermore, LOCOG ensured that all mainstream services were accessible, that persons with disabilities could participate, that they had access to parking, and that they could use mobility services.

IMPLEMENTATION

In order to develop and implement its Accessibility Policy, LOCOG engaged in-house accessibility advisors. It established an Access Inclusion and Integration Group that integrated services such as transport, tourism and venues, to produce a streamlined experience. LOCOG consulted widely with the disability community. Each Venue General Manager worked to design venues that are accessible and in line with the LOAF. A team of access consultants reviewed the plans at each stage, producing reports and highlighting issues and risks. Once the plans were at an advanced stage, the Accessibility Manager and the Project Manager conducted a series of client walk-throughs to test the Games time operability.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

Only a few cases of misimplementation in construction works occurred. Instances occurred in three out of the 20 temporary venues, and in only one existing venue did LOCOG not reach the same quality for persons with disabilities in viewing platforms. Currently, its best practices are being transferred, as far as possible, to Sochi 2014, Glasgow 2014, Rio 2016 and PyeonChang 2018.

KEY FEATURES

LOCOG's responsibilities included the delivery of all venues in Olympic and Paralympic Games mode. Therefore, LOCOG adopted the Overlay Access File (LOAF), which covered a wide range of topics concerning physical accessibility in the facilities and buildings of the Olympic and Paralympic Games. It provided a framework for the engineering, design and procurement teams on access and inclusion standards for temporary facilities and infrastructure added to venues (known as 'overlay'). LOAF was a practical tool to be applied consistently across all venues by all staff planning and designing temporary overlay. It provided Games-specific advice and highlighted important design features. In addition, LOCOG adopted the Accessibility Services and Inclusive Ticketing Strategy, which aimed to provide a wide range of ticket products making services and

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