



MANAGEMENT OF PERSISTENT STANDING AT THE CARDIFF CITY STADIUM

UPDATE REPORT ONE

**Version 1.1
Updated Final Report
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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This document is an independent report prepared by Dr Steve Frosdick of IWI Associates Ltd following a visit to the Cardiff City Stadium on Saturday 30 November 2013 for the match between Cardiff City and Arsenal. The report was revised on 31 January 2014 to correct some typographical errors.
- 1.2. This report provides an update on a previous report (Version 1.2 dated 14 February 2013). This report should therefore be read in conjunction with the original report, which dealt with five main topics:
 - The customer service context;
 - The legalities of standing in football grounds;
 - The risks around standing in seated areas;
 - Risks to safety, security and service,
 - Progressive crowd collapse,
 - Bumping and scraping,
 - Blocked gangways,
 - Obstructed viewing,
 - Disorderly conduct.
 - Persistent standing in the Canton Stand; and
 - Persistent standing in the Ninian Stand.
- 1.3. This update report has three purposes. The first two are to comment separately on Cardiff City's management of persistent standing in the Canton and Ninian Stands. These comments are made with reference to letters and emails from fans to the club, to discussions with stadium personnel and to the matchday observations carried out on 30 November 2013.
- 1.4. The third purpose is to review Cardiff City's management of persistent standing against the November 2013 joint statement on standing in seated areas at football grounds issued by the Sports Grounds Safety Authority, FA Premier League, Football League, Football Association, Core Cities Group, Football Safety Officers' Association and Association of Chief Police Officers.
- 1.5. The joint statement on standing in seated areas at football grounds is available at <http://www.safetyatsportsgrounds.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/standing-in-seated-areas-2013.pdf>.
- 1.6. Following this introduction, the report is therefore structured in three main sections:
 - Managing the Canton Stand;
 - Managing the Ninian Stand; and
 - The Implications of the Joint Statement.

2. MANAGING THE CANTON STAND

2.1. THE CARDIFF CITY APPROACH FOR 2013/14

- 2.1.1. The original report proposed an approach whereby persistent standing in the Canton Stand would be tolerated provided that gangways were kept free and the crowd behaviour remained of an acceptable standard. This approach was discussed at a Safety at Sports Grounds Advisory Group (SSAG) meeting on 4 June 2013.
- 2.1.2. The Chair of the SSAG subsequently wrote to the club on 1 August 2013. That letter noted the club's overall positive and constructive work on spectator safety and its efforts to manage standing in the Canton Stand. The letter also acceded that, *"the Stadium Safety and Operations Manual should be amended to reflect the proposed approach."*
- 2.1.3. Nevertheless, the letter pointed out (in bold font) that ***"neither Cardiff Council nor the SSAG can condone persistent standing at the ground or any part of it"***. The letter continued, *"In terms of your proposed approach then this is a matter for you but as discussed you should satisfy yourself that all areas of potential risk have been fully assessed in determining how you proceed. When we discussed this matter at our meeting, we suggested the need, amongst other things:*
- *To keep matters under review on an event by event basis (consider how the different crowd profiles affect the proposed approach),*
 - *To consider whether persistent standing word 'cloak' any anti-social behaviour (make it less easy to detect acts of anti-social behaviour and which individual is responsible for an act),*
 - *Whether failing to enforcing [sic] 'no standing' in one area of the ground would lead to the issue of persistent standing creeping into other areas of the ground and make enforcement elsewhere more difficult, and*
 - *Whether all risks had been properly considered such as the potential for crowd collapse in those areas where 'no standing' was not enforced."*
- 2.1.4. In respect of those four bullet points, the Cardiff City position for the Canton Stand as expressed by stadium personnel is as follows:
- The spectators occupying the Canton Stand for the season 2013/14 are the same type of people as for the season 2012/13. They are like-minded individuals who create atmosphere and generally remain standing throughout the match. They are almost entirely season ticket holders who occupy the same seat at every game. The crowd profile is the same for all league matches and there is therefore no need to review the approach on an event by event basis. The approach would however be reviewed for cup matches once the audience profile was known.
 - The spectators are almost entirely season-ticket holders and there have been no notable incidents of anti-social behaviour or disorder in that stand.

- Persistent standing continues to occur in parts of the Ninian Stand, however this is not a recent problem and so does not represent any form of ‘creeping’.
- The original report properly assessed the risks and, as reported to the SSAG on 4 June 2013, considered that the risks had been reduced to a level which was as low as was reasonably practicable (the ALARP principle).

2.2. MATCHDAY OBSERVATIONS OF THE CANTON STAND

- 2.2.1. To monitor spectator ingress and to be present to ensure the gangways were kept clear, ten stewards were deployed in the Canton Stand from before the stadium opened to the public. There were three stewards in each of gangways 105 and 106 and two stewards in each of gangways 104 and 108. There were one or two additional stewards in each of vomitories 104, 107 and 108 and four additional stewards facing the crowd from the pitch perimeter.



Stewards were deployed within the Canton Stand throughout the match.

- 2.2.2. Match observations confirmed that almost all spectators in blocks 104 to 107 remained standing all the way through the game. This was a larger area than previously observed, when the persistent standing area was broadly contained in the white shallow V shape across the stand. The club explained that this was because some season ticket-holders had chosen to relocate from other parts of the ground because they wished to stand and understood that this would not be tolerated other than in the Canton Stand.

- 2.2.3. Season ticket holders in the Canton Stand who positively wished to sit had been given the opportunity to transfer to the new seating area in the corner of the Canton Stand and the Grandstand. The club reported that these fans had been very happy to do so because of the quality of the view and the very quick egress at the end of the match.
- 2.2.4. During the Arsenal match, no incidents of a safety or security nature were observed and the gangways remained clearly visible at all times.



There were no incidents and the gangways remained clear at all times.

2.3. CONCLUSIONS IN RESPECT OF THE CANTON STAND

- 2.3.1. There was nothing arising from the match day observations or discussions with stadium personnel to suggest any change was needed to the club's approach to managing persistent standing in the Canton Stand.

3. MANAGING THE NINIAN STAND;

3.1. THE CARDIFF CITY APPROACH FOR 2013/14

- 3.1.1. There has been and is still no issue with persistent standing in the Grandstand, the Grange (Family) Stand or the southern end of the Ninian Stand. During 2012/13, however, the club experienced an issue with home supporters persistently standing in block 117 and, particularly, block 118. This issue was discussed at length in the original report.

- 3.1.2. The club's promotion to the Premier League has necessitated increasing the capacity of the away sector. This has been achieved by configuring the south side of block 118 as a flexible space. This can be sold to either home or away fans or used as a segregation area as the individual match circumstances require.
- 3.1.3. The north side of Block 118 remains in the home section. To reduce tensions at the segregation line, to provide some of the capacity required to be sold on a match by match basis and to relocate those fans who were persistently standing in block 118, the club now sells those seats to community groups and the like. As a result, the previous problem of persistent standing in block 118 has been totally removed.
- 3.1.4. The corollary of the club's position on persistent standing in the Canton Stand is that persistent standing will not be tolerated in any other home area of the stadium. This is for customer service reasons as the other home areas contain people who do not wish or who are unable to stand and whose view would be obstructed by standing fans.
- 3.1.5. Accordingly, the club approached the 2013/14 season with the clear view that persistent standing in block 117 of the Ninian Stand was desired to be eliminated. This would be achieved over the medium to long term by a combination of engagement, communication, education and enforcement.

3.2. EARLY EXPERIENCE IN THE NINIAN STAND THIS SEASON

- 3.2.1. The club reported that the problem of persistent standing in block 117 had continued at the six home matches played so far this season. On occasions, the issue had spread to block 116 and even, on one occasion, to block 115. At the fourth game (Newcastle) stewards had taken a firm approach to persistent standing. This had met with some success in terms of getting people to sit back down but at the price of considerable animosity displayed towards the stewards by certain fans.
- 3.2.2. For the fifth and sixth games (Swansea City and Manchester United), the volatility of the atmosphere had required the stewards to focus on the potential for anti-social behaviour and disorder and the risk assessment was that taking a robust approach to persistent standing would have been counter-productive.
- 3.2.3. Various emails and letters of complaint had been received by the club from fans who wished to sit but who found their view was obstructed. Two examples are set out in the following paragraphs.
- 3.2.4. *"I was forced to stand through all of the Man U match and witnessed a lot of aggressive behaviour because people were not making use of their seats and therefore shorter people were unable to view the spectacle provided by the two teams. Why all of a sudden are Cardiff supporters not encouraged by the stewards to sit down. I understand people stand when they get exited [sic] but more and more people are standing throughout the whole of the game".*
- 3.2.5. *"The enjoyment of our draw against Manchester United was spoilt by the arguments between older spectators (such as myself) disabled people [sic], against spectators in front of us who insisted on standing throughout the game".*

- 3.2.6. These examples clearly illustrate the customer service imperative for the club. Persistent standing simply cannot be tolerated in the Ninian Stand.

3.3. MATCHDAY OBSERVATIONS OF THE NINIAN STAND

- 3.3.1. Up until kick-off, many fans in the Ninian Stand were stood up engaging in their various pre-match activities. At kick-off, all of blocks 111 to 115 sat down. The northern part of block 116 (up to the gangway) also sat down, as did block 118 and the southern part of block 117. However the southern part of block 116 and the northern part of block 117 remained standing.



At kick off, the spectators in block 116 (south) and block 117 (north) remained standing.

- 3.3.2. As expected, the community groups and the like in Block 118 remained seated throughout the game. During exciting passages of play, some fans in the southern end of the stand stood for a short while and then sat down again.
- 3.3.3. There was a small group of fans at the very front of block 116 north who began the match by being a little more tardy in sitting back down. On several occasions, a brief intervention by a steward was seen to quickly secure their compliance and their 'sitting back down' improved as the game went on.
- 3.3.4. It was observed that the spectators in the southern part of block 116 and the northern part of block 117 remained standing at all times and made no attempt to sit down of their own volition. Requests by stewards early on in the match were simply ignored.



This small group in block 116 north were initially slower to sit back down.

- 3.3.5. At 3.10 pm, a quadrant manager and two stewards were observed working their way up several rows of the block 116 gangway trying to get the persistently standing spectators in blocks 116/117 to sit back down. Fans did so for a few seconds but then immediately stood back up again and the stewards withdrew.



After an initial effort at 3.10 pm, the stewards withdrew.

- 3.3.6. The quadrant manager was observed to persist in the work. Over the next four minutes, working together with the two stewards, she was observed to succeed in getting everyone up to and level with the vomitory to sit down.



By 3.14 pm, the stewards had succeeded in getting the front rows to sit down.

- 3.3.7. There were, however, soon shouts of, “Stand up if you hate Swansea” and the fans in 116/117 stood back up again. The two other stewards withdrew to the vomitory, however the quadrant manager persisted, albeit without success. She later reported that she had been extensively insulted and abused by the fans in that area.
- 3.3.8. Midway through the first half, the author was joined in his observation position by the chief steward and stadium manager. The chief steward contacted the female quadrant manager by radio and asked her to stop doing the work herself and to deploy her stewards. There followed some individual deployments of one or two stewards but these were ineffective.
- 3.3.9. The other (male) quadrant manager responsible for this part of the stadium had been absent for the first part of the match attending to an important staff welfare matter. On his return, the chief steward also contacted him by radio and asked him to deploy stewards to the area. Again, for whatever reason, this did not happen.
- 3.3.10. During the half-time interval and on into the second half, the male quadrant manager was engaged on the concourse talking to three spectators who had been persistently standing and who were not going to be allowed back in unless they undertook to sit down. Two of the fans were compliant and were allowed to return to the seating bowl.

- 3.3.11. One of the fans however was abusive to staff. Accordingly, enforcement action will be taken against him and his season ticket will be switched off for the next game. This will mean that he has to have the conversation outside the stadium rather than inside it. Staff report that similar enforcement action with other supporters has resulted in substantially improved compliance.
- 3.3.12. After the start of the second half, the chief steward and later the stadium manager contacted the quadrant manager by radio and asked him to organise the deployment of stewards in the gangways to seek to get the fans to sit down. For whatever reason, this did not happen. Observations of the CCTV system showed that stewards were standing in vomitories 116 and 117 but not deploying into the stand.



Stewards were standing in vomitories 116 and 117 but not deploying into the stand.

- 3.3.13. The stadium manager then contacted the response team manager by radio and asked him to make deployments in parallel up gangways 116 and 117, the idea being that the stewards would sweep up the stand from the front rows to try and get people seated. At 4.25 pm, four response team stewards were seen going up gangway 117, however no stewards were seen deployed in gangway 116. As a result, the deployment was ineffective.
- 3.3.14. At 4.35 pm, the male quadrant manager was observed on CCTV talking on the concourse to a spectator who had been persistently standing and who was not going to be allowed back in unless he undertook to sit down. The response team manager and another senior steward were observed engaged in similar conversations with two other fans. Some ten other stewards were observed to be stood around watching the conversations.

- 3.3.15. The stadium manager contacted the management staff by radio and asked them to return to the seating bowl and make a final attempt to deploy and get the fans to sit down. At 4.40 pm response team and other stewards were seen deploying in parallel up both gangways 116 and 117 and achieving some success with the front rows.



The deployment at 4.40 pm achieved some success with the front rows.

- 3.3.16. It must be emphasised that at no time were any of the gangways in the Ninian Stand obstructed by standing spectators.

3.4. CONCLUSIONS IN RESPECT OF THE NINIAN STAND

- 3.4.1. Persistent standing in the seating area comprising the southern part of block 116 and the northern part of block 117 remains a customer service problem. Furthermore, stewards who attempt to get the fans to sit down are met with insults and abuse. In order to defend the club's position on the Canton Stand and to meet the customer service requirements of other spectators, it is essential to continue the medium to long term process of tackling persistent standing in the Ninian Stand.
- 3.4.2. In the debrief after the Arsenal game, the following matters were discussed:
- It is clearly recognised that the quadrant managers and team leaders are very competent individuals to whom stadium management wish to delegate the management of their areas. Nevertheless there is a need to enhance command and control to improve responsiveness down the chain of command from the control room, through quadrant managers, team leaders and supervisors down to the stewards.

- To respond to persistent standing in a proportionate and targeted manner, there is a need to develop graded tactical deployments of stewards, response stewards and ultimately the police in a supporting role. It is important that these deployments are done in parallel either side of the block(s) where the standing is occurring. These graded tactical deployments could be as follows;
 - Level one – on the directions of the quadrant manager or team leader, one steward should walk up and down each gangway to provide a visible but low key presence and to remind spectators to sit down. If this fails to work, the quadrant manager or team leader could move to level two.
 - Level two – on the directions of the quadrant manager or team leader, three stewards should deploy to the front of each gangway. The quadrant manager or team leader should then coordinate the two groups to move in parallel up the stand, getting spectators to sit down row by row from the front. The quadrant manager or team leader should observe from the front of the stand, paying particular attention to any spectators who begin to chant or who wilfully defy the stewards. The quadrant manager or team leader could repeat the deployment at intervals through the match. If the deployments fail to work, then the quadrant manager or team leader should contact the safety officer and obtain authority to move to level three.
 - Level three – on the directions of the safety officer, the response team manager should deploy four or more stewards to each gangway and then carry out the level two deployment, albeit with more staff and in a more assertive manner. If this fails to work, then the safety officer may decide to move to level four.
 - Level four – the safety will liaise with the senior police officer present and secure the attendance of police at the front of the relevant block(s). The response team manager should then repeat the level three deployment, this time with police officers standing by to prevent a breach of the peace. Individuals who have been identified as wilfully defying the stewards could be targeted for removal from the stand and subsequent enforcement action.
 - Throughout the deployments, it is essential that stewards communicate with the fans, explaining their intentions and clearly pointing out the next level of deployment which will follow in the event of continued non-compliance. This is an absolutely key element in keeping the majority of fans onside by retaining their perceptions of the legitimacy of the action being taken. There is no need to tell people they will be thrown out etc. Stewards should simply say that they need the fans sitting down so that everyone can view the match and that non-compliance will result in (as appropriate) more stewards being deployed, the response team being deployed, or the police supporting stewards to take people out of the bowl.
- There is a need for quadrant managers and team leaders to be less active in doing the work and more active in managing their supervisors and stewards. This is particularly the case in working the gangways to ask spectators to sit down and in explaining to fans why persistent standing cannot be tolerated in this stand.

- There is a need for quadrant managers and team leaders to retain oversight of their areas and not to become diverted by doing the work expected of stewards.
- There is a need for stewards to become more active and not to leave their seniors to do all the work. This is particularly the case in working the gangways to ask spectators to sit down and in explaining to fans why persistent standing cannot be tolerated in this stand.
- Stadium management should write to all season ticket holders in blocks 116 and 117 to remind them of the club's policy, the reasons for it and the requirement for them to sit down.
- Regrettably, there remains a need to continue to take enforcement action against individuals who co-ordinate standing up (for example by starting a song) or who are abusive to staff.

3.4.3. These matters will be taken forward by the club and its stewarding staff into the next run of games. Thereafter the author will return for the match against Norwich City on 1 February 2014 to assess progress and compile a second update report.

4. THE IMPLICATION OF THE JOINT STATEMENT

4.1. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

4.1.1. The joint statement sets out four general principles. These principles and their implications for the Cardiff City Stadium are set out in the following paragraphs.

4.1.2. *"It is preferable for standing in seated areas to be addressed primarily through the education, persuasion and positive management of spectators. However, such measures alone have not always achieved the desired results. To the extent that they continue to prove insufficient, they may need to be backed up by more robust action."*

4.1.3. It is not accepted that standing in seated areas needs to be addressed in the sense that it needs to be eradicated. The evidence (as set out in the original report to which this document is an update) is that standing in seated areas only needs to be actively addressed where it poses risks to safety, security and/or customer service. Where such risks have been reduced to a level which is as low as is reasonably practicable, as indeed they have in the Canton Stand, standing in seated areas may in fact be passively addressed by being tolerated.

4.1.4. The Ninian Stand is different. Here there are customer service risks – indeed actual issues – to be addressed and these are being managed in accordance with the general principle.

4.1.5. *"This issue goes beyond safety, although safety is a major concern. It also encompasses customer care, crowd management and behaviour, and the relationship between clubs and their supporters. As such it cannot be resolved by a single agency but must instead be addressed in the round by the various responsible bodies acting together. The SGSA, the football authorities, the individual clubs and local authorities, and in some cases the police, all have a role to play."*

- 4.1.6. Safety can only be a major concern where risk assessment discloses that there are safety risks which are not being effectively managed. In the case of Cardiff City Stadium, risk assessment shows that the safety risks have been reduced to a level which is as low as is reasonably practicable.
- 4.1.7. It is completely accepted that the issue of standing goes beyond safety and requires to be managed in the round. This is precisely the approach Cardiff City has taken through the SSAG.
- 4.1.8. *“It is important that supporters are engaged in the process where possible and that they understand why the proposed action is both necessary and ultimately for their benefit. A heavy-handed approach that is perceived to penalise the innocent could be counterproductive and might exacerbate the situation. The measures taken should recognise that not all those who stand for prolonged periods do so out of choice. This may be their only means of seeing the game when other spectators around them are standing. Openness and transparency in how such issues are being managed is encouraged.”*
- 4.1.9. The Cardiff City approach has from the outset involved liaison, consultation and communication with supporters. The adoption of a graded deployment profile in the supporters in the Ninian Stand will ensure perceptions of heavy-handedness are avoided.
- 4.1.10. Cardiff City has been exceptionally open and transparent in its approach. The original report was widely circulated and indeed made available by the Cardiff City Supporters’ Trust for anybody at all to download from <http://www.ccfctrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/ManagementofPersistentStandingFeb12Final.pdf>. The report is also available at six other addresses on the internet (search for “Management of Persistent Standing at the Cardiff City Stadium”).
- 4.1.11. *“The measures taken will vary according to the configuration of the ground, the number and type of spectators standing, their location and whether this is a one-off problem or one that lasts all season. The measures should flow from a detailed event specific risk assessment, and should be reasonable and proportionate. While recognising the need for a tailored approach dependent on circumstances, the degree of consistency at a national or strategic level will have an impact on the success of tackling this issue.”*
- 4.1.12. The Cardiff City approach is indeed tailored to its circumstances and arises from well-documented and thorough risk assessment, which has been tested in detailed discussions at the SSAG.

4.2. SPECIFIC MEASURES

- 4.2.1. Pages 14 of the joint statement identifies specific measures which the local authority may choose to take in cases where they are *“not satisfied that any management plans provide for the reasonable safety of spectators”*. The following possible measure is particularly salient for the Canton Stand.

- 4.2.2. *“c) Where significant numbers of spectators are standing, the local authority may reduce the holding capacity of the area concerned by allocating each spectator a width of 550mm, rather than the 460mm of the typical seating configuration, to prevent them spilling out into gangways. Clubs and their supporters should be aware that this alone would result in one in every six supporters in the area concerned losing their tickets.”*
- 4.2.3. In putting forward this and other measures, the joint statement contains the important caveat that *“It is extremely important that local authorities act reasonably and follow due process if seeking to adopt any of the measures. It is particularly important to be able to demonstrate a proportionate and transparent approach if taking action which could result in reduced capacities.”*
- 4.2.4. As stated in the original report, the *Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds* specifies a minimum seat width of 460 mm and a minimum seating row depth of 700 mm for newly constructed stands. According to the seating plan produced by Sebel Furniture Ltd (a copy of which is held by the club), the majority of seats in the Cardiff City Stadium are 480 to 500 mm in width. The seating row depths are 800 mm. These generous dimensions and the stewarding deployments in the gangways reduce the likelihood of standing fans migrating laterally into the aisles. Match observations confirm that the gangways are kept clear at all times.
- 4.2.5. There is therefore no reasonably arguable case for the local authority to consider reducing the holding capacity of the Canton Stand.
- 4.2.6. The same is true of the Ninian Stand. There are however three further suggested measures of possible relevance to the Ninian Stand.
- 4.2.7. *“d) In addition, if the club is failing to manage the crowd, the local authority may reduce the S Factor for the area concerned to whatever level is necessary to ensure the reasonable safety of spectators.”*
- e) As an alternative to the previous option, the local authority could also require the closure of particular rows (radial or lateral) ... The progressive closure of rows from the front would effectively deal with the main transgressors and warn those behind that they may also lose their places if they did not sit down.*
- f) If a club fails to take measures to educate and persuade supporters that they must sit down, with a consequent impact on safety, the local authority may reduce the S Factor and therefore the ground capacity.”*
- 4.2.8. Note that all three of these measures are suggested in the context of safety. Risk assessment clearly shows that **the issue in the Ninian Stand is one of customer service, not safety**. The club is actively managing the crowd to ensure the reasonable safety of spectators and is taking measures to educate and persuade supporters that they must sit down. Having reflected on them, it is considered that these suggested measures are not relevant for the Ninian Stand at this time.

4.3. COMPUTER SIMULATIONS

- 4.3.1. The joint statement refers to computer simulations carried out by the specialist company, Crowd Dynamics to investigate the safety issues involved with spectators standing in seated areas. The results of these simulations were circulated to club safety officers who, *“were able to reassure us that the combination of circumstances as modelled in the extreme cases did not occur in their stadia and that current standards and stewarding methods already identified and dealt with the threats suggested by the modelling.”*
- 4.3.2. The simulations were carried out in 2008/09 when there was little data on persistent standing available and the technology has advanced considerably since that time. It would therefore not be appropriate to seek to replicate those particular simulations at Cardiff City Stadium. Nevertheless, as Cardiff City has previously offered to the SSAG, should it be considered necessary, the club would be willing to act as a pilot site for any new computer simulation experiments commissioned by the football authorities.