



DEBATE PACK

Number CDP-2018-0147, 19 June 2018

E-petition 207040 relating to allowing Premier League and Championship football clubs to introduce safe standing

Westminster Hall, Monday 25 June 2018,
4.30pm

A Westminster Hall debate on E-petition 207040, relating to allowing Premier League and Championship football clubs to introduce safe standing, is scheduled for Monday 25 June 2018. The Member leading the debate is Luke Hall MP, a member of the Petitions Committee.

The subject for this debate was determined by the [Petitions Committee](#). You may watch the debate online at [parliamentlive.tv](#)

There is more information about [e-petitions](#) on the Parliament website.

The text of e-petition 207040, [Allow Premier League and Championship football clubs to introduce safe standing](#), and the [Government response](#) to the petition, are available on the Parliament website.

The House of Commons Library prepares a briefing in hard copy and/or online for most non-legislative debates in the Chamber and Westminster Hall other than half-hour debates. Debate Packs are produced quickly after the announcement of parliamentary business. They are intended to provide a summary or overview of the issue being debated and identify relevant briefings and useful documents, including press and parliamentary material. More detailed briefing can be prepared for Members on request to the Library.

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1. Background

From August 1994, under the *Football Spectators Act 1989* (as amended), clubs in the English Premier League and Championship have been required to provide all-seated accommodation. This followed Lord Justice Taylor's [report](#) (Cm 962, January 1990) into the Hillsborough disaster of April 1989.

The 1989 Act applies in England and Wales.

In July 2011, the Scottish Premier League [relaxed](#) its requirement that clubs had to provide all-seated accommodation. Celtic opened a safe standing section in July 2016. This accommodates nearly 3,000 supporters.

Calls for change

The [Football Supporters' Federation](#) (FSF) has been [campaigning](#) for the introduction of safe standing areas.

The English Football League (EFL) and FSF ran a ["Stand Up for Choice"](#) survey between 27 April and 10 May 2018. The results were [announced](#) on 1 June 2018 and showed that 94% of fans believed they should be able to choose whether to sit or stand at EFL matches.

A [petition](#) calling for safe standing at Premiership and Championship grounds has been signed by over 110,000 people. It will be debated in the House of Commons on 25 June 2018.

The Government's view

In response to the petition, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) has said:

(...) The Government believes that all-seater stadia are currently the best means to ensure the safety and security of fans at designated football matches in England and Wales, while continuing to work closely with the Sports Grounds Safety Authority and football authorities to consider advances in technology and data that may enhance the existing policy...

2. News and blogs

Football Supporters' Federation

[Labour Party and Premier League back all-seater change](#)

9 June 2018

Spirit of Shankly: Liverpool Supporters' Union

[Talks begin to review safe standing](#)

5 June 2018

English Football League

[Stand up for choice: biggest ever fan response shows overwhelming support in standing debate](#)

1 June 2018

Football Supporters' Federation

[Biggest ever standing survey shows massive support for choice](#)

1 June 2018

Sports Think Tank

[Safe standing at football campaign – on the cusp of success?](#)

28 May 2018

Adam Smith Institute

[Safe standing: why it's time to remove the ban](#)

Ben Southwood 11 August 2016

Liberal Democrats

[Safe standing would cut the cost of football - John Leech MP](#)

15 October 2014

Liberal Democrats

[Liberal Democrats would allow safe standing at football](#)

22 August 2014

2.1 Press

Daily Record

[Aberdeen fans back an entire stand of safe standing at new £50m stadium](#)

12 June 2018

i News

[Dr Rosena Allin-Khan MP: why I'm backing safe standing in the Premier League](#)

11 June 2018

Express and Star

[Let clubs decide on safe standing - Tom Watson](#)

9 June 2018

Guardian

[Safe standing](#)

April, May, June 2018

Guardian

[Richard Scudamore: Premier League clubs should have safe standing choice](#)

8 June 2018

Huffington Post

[Labour backs safe standing at football stadiums](#)

8 June 2018

Guardian

[Review of standing ban a step forward but must be handled with great care](#)

5 June 2018

Liverpool Echo

['Big news for Liverpool fans' as government may shift policy on safe standing](#)

5 June 2018

Guardian

[Safe standing at football: government to review all-seat policy](#)

5 June 2018

BBC Sport

[Safe-standing: Government to review safe-standing](#)

4 June 2018

Kent Online

[Folkestone and Hythe MP Damian Collins supporting reform on safe standing in football grounds](#)

24 May 2018

Guardian

[‘It’s groundbreaking, pioneering’: Shrewsbury bring in safe standing](#)

24 May 2018

Telegraph

[It's cheap, it's popular, and it would revitalise top-tier football – so legalise safe standing](#)

16 May 2018

Yahoo Sport UK

[Safe standing at football 'will increase racial abuse' claims Labour MP](#)

10 May 2018

Guardian

[EFL hoping to work with government in bid to address safe-standing issue](#)

26 April 2018

Telegraph

[Petition demanding standing at Premier League grounds gains momentum](#)

14 April 2018

Telegraph

[Why Tracey Crouch is wrong to boot West Brom's rail seats idea over the bar](#)

13 April 2018

Telegraph

[Sports minister accused of ignoring own safety experts over West Brom safe-standing rejection](#)

11 April 2018

Telegraph

[Government rejects West Brom request to introduce safe-standing section at Hawthorns next season](#)

9 April 2018

Telegraph

[Government warned to address safe standing 'before something goes wrong'](#)

4 September 2017

Guardian

[Liverpool fans and Hillsborough groups have emotive safe standing debate](#)

22 July 2017

Liverpool Echo

[Differing views from Hillsborough families and survivors on 'safe-standing' debate](#)

19 July 2017

3. Parliamentary Business

3.1 Parliamentary Questions

[Football: Safety](#)

Asked by: Richard Burden

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent representations his Department has (a) made to and (b) received from professional football clubs in (i) England, (ii) Wales and (iii) Scotland on the potential introduction of safe-standing at sports stadiums.

Answered by: Tracey Crouch | DCMS

Representations have been received from the following football clubs about the possible introduction of certain types of accommodation which could facilitate standing at parts of their respective grounds: Bristol City, Peterborough United, Grimsby Town, Shrewsbury Town and West Bromwich Albion. Representations about the all-seater policy have also been received from Southampton City Council.

I also met Andrew R T Davies, Leader of the Conservative Party at the Welsh Assembly in 2015 to discuss standing at football in Wales. Standing at football matches in Scotland is a matter for the relevant Scottish authorities.

13 June 2018 | Written question | 149906

[Sportsgrounds: Safety](#)

Asked by: Alex Norris

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what representations (a) he and (b) Ministers in his Department have received from (i) football clubs and (ii) local safety authorities on safe standing.

Answered by: Tracey Crouch | DCMS

Representations have been received from the following football clubs about the possible introduction of certain types of accommodation which could facilitate standing at parts of their respective grounds: Bristol City, Peterborough United, Grimsby Town, Shrewsbury Town and West Bromwich Albion. Representations about the all-seater policy have also been received from Southampton City Council. The Sports Grounds Safety Authority is the regulatory body responsible for overseeing and advising on safety at sports grounds. The SGSA discusses a wide range of issues with local safety authorities in the course of normal business.

11 June 2018 | Written question | 150762

[Spirit of Shankly](#)

Asked by: Andy Slaughter

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will meet the Spirit of Shankly supporters group to discuss safe standing.

Answered by: Tracey Crouch | DCMS

We have noted the extensive consultation on a return to standing in football in England and Wales that has been conducted by the Spirit of Shankly supporters group. Any review to the existing all-seater policy would include conducting a thorough and robust analysis of safety at football stadiums and consultation with a full range of football stakeholders as well as clubs and safety experts, and other interested parties.

11 June 2018 | Written question | 150623

[Football: Safety](#)

Asked by: Alex Norris

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what the timetable is for the Government's review of the policy on banning all standing areas in the Premier League and Championship.

Answered by: Tracey Crouch | DCMS

An announcement will be made shortly.

11 June 2018 | Written question | 150763

[Football: Safety](#)

Asked by: Layla Moran

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether a mechanism is in place to allow a football club that has introduced a safe standing area to retain that area if it is promoted to the top two tiers of English football.

Answered by: Tracey Crouch | DCMS

The government's all-seater stadium policy precludes the use of standing accommodation at clubs in the top two tiers of English football.

Spectator safety at sports grounds remains the priority for Government.

The Sports Grounds Safety Authority (SGSA) is the regulatory body responsible for overseeing and advising on safety at sports grounds.

The government will continue to learn from the latest data, research, and advances in technology to improve the safety of spectators, but we have yet to see robust evidence of a safer approach to protecting spectators at football matches than the existing all-seater arrangements.

24 May 2018 | Written question | 145400

[Football: Safe Standing Areas](#)

Oral questions

HC Deb 10 May 2018 c870-2

[Sportsgrounds: Safety](#)

Asked by: Dr Rosena Allin-Khan

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport what the Government's policy is on safe standing at sporting events; and whether the Government plans to amend its policy on safe standing?

Answered by: Tracey Crouch | DCMS

The Government believes that all-seater stadiums are the best means to ensure the safety and security of spectators at football grounds in England and Wales. All-seater stadiums have helped improve crowd management, crowd behaviour and policing. They provide better and more comfortable facilities to enjoy football matches, which has helped encourage inclusivity and diversity amongst those attending.

While we are committed to monitoring the developments at Celtic and Shrewsbury Town FC, Government is not, at present, persuaded by the case put forward to re-introduce standing accommodation in grounds covered by the all-seater requirement.

29 November 2017 | Written question | 115105

3.2 Early day motion

[Safe standing in football stadiums](#)

Primary sponsor: Layla Moran

That this House welcomes the decision of Oxford United Football Club to consider introducing safe standing areas at the Kassam Stadium; notes that the proposals have received support from the majority of the Oxford United Safety Advisory Group; believes that safe standing areas can offer supporters more choice, a better atmosphere and cheaper match tickets; recognises that safe standing operates well in many sports and stadia; is concerned that there appears to be no mechanism for a club that has introduced a safe standing area to retain that area if it is promoted to the top two tiers of English football; notes that more than 110,000 people have signed e-petition 207040 relating to Premier League and Championship football clubs being allowed to introduce safe standing; and therefore calls on the Government to allow football clubs in all divisions to be able to introduce safe standing areas in their grounds.

4 June 2018 | Early day motion | 1320

4. Organisations and further reading

[Standing at football](#), Commons Library briefing paper SN03937, 7 June 2018

[All Party Group for Football Supporters](#)

A meeting: “Standing: coming to a ground near you?” was held on 1 May 2018

Home Office, [The Hillsborough Stadium disaster, 15 April 1989](#): inquiry by The Rt Hon Lord Justice Taylor: final report, Home Office, Cm 962, HMSO, January 1990

[Sports Grounds Safety Authority](#), All seated football stadia

Liberal Democrats, Our plan: families and communities: [access to culture and sport](#)

Football Supporters’ Federation, [Stand up for choice](#)

Scottish Professional Football League, [SPL statement: rule changes](#), 19 December 2011

Ben Southwood, [Safe standing: why it’s time to remove the ban](#), Briefing Paper, Adam Smith Institute, 2016

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