****

**Hebden Bridge Disability Access Forum**

**Brief guide to Disability Access Audits**

The following topics will give you an initial guide to what to consider when designing, building, making alterations or improvements to your business, venue or other public space. Some items might apply only to larger organisations or premises.

**Please contact HBDAF** at [sechbdisabilityaccess@gmail.com](mailto:sechbdisabilityaccess@gmail.com), or on 01422 844914, **for further guidance** or sources of advice and information.

1. **Information**

* How do you provide information including leaflets, menus, price lists, maps? Standard printed information should be in a plain font such as Arial, minimum 12 point font, black or dark font on white or pale paper for good contrast.
* Can you provide other formats on request? including large print and easy to read fonts? Braille? Audio recording? Easy read? Different coloured paper?

1. **Local Signage**

* Is there a clearly signed route to the venue from the nearest bus stop or railway station? And from the nearest car parking?
* Do you have designated drop-off points?

1. **Parking**

Is/are there

* barrier access to the car park?
* easily used by everyone? Small call buttons, operating swipe cards, reading small text, hearing via intercom etc can all create problems for some users.
* designated disabled parking bays of appropriate dimensions, appropriately marked out, near to entrance
* associated dropped kerbs, which are adequately policed by management?
* route to the entrance which is short, step-free, clear of clutter and street furniture?

1. **Entrance**

Is it

* wide and step-free?
* easily found, well lit, colour-contrasted, with a sign?
* Are handles and/or knobs easily gripped and accessibly placed?
* Fitted with an easily accessed call button? With clear instructions?

1. **Internal Signage/Wayfaring**

* Is there clear signage to toilets, rooms, Fire Exits from the entrance?
* Is all text in lower case and large font?

1. **Reception**

Does the counter have

* high section for those who find it hard to sit
* low section with knee room under for wheelchair users
* loose chair to sit?
* Any clear screens or large glass doors marked to avoid collision, including at low level for guide dogs?

Is the Reception area

* open and well lit?
* good acoustics (little background noise)?
* fitted with permanent or portable Induction Loop?

Can the telephone system

* deal with text phone calls and other telecare technology?

1. **Waiting Areas**

Is it

* well-lit with adequate ventilation?
* With a range of seating, with high and low seats, some with arms and some without, some loose, so space can be created for wheelchair and scooter users, and at least one bariatric chair for big and tall people?

1. **Quiet areas**

Are there quiet places or rooms to go if the Reception/Waiting area is too noisy or busy for some building users with, for example, hearing impairments, noise sensitivity, mental health issues, learning disabilities, chronic illness, or neurodivergence, to rest or to hold a conversation comfortably and privately.

1. **Stairs**

* Is there good lighting, contrasting nosings and handrails?
* are stairs wide and not too steep?

1. **Toilets**

* Is there an accessible toilet fully fitted with grab rails, drop-down rail, red emergency cord, lever taps etc?
* Is the red cord easily reached by someone who has fallen to the floor?
* Does pulling the red cord make a visual and audible signal which cannot be missed by staff in the building? Will staff recognise the signal?

For detail on accessible toilet size and specifications refer to Building Regulations Approved Document M, here <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/441786/BR_PDF_AD_M2_2015.pdf>

1. **Lifts**

Are there

* internal/external buttons large, accessible with tactile markings?
* visual and audible floor recognition system inside the lift?
* drop-down seat/perching rail?
* Handrail/grab rail for a standing person to hold?
* a very obvious Alarm button which could be reached if someone has fallen?

1. **PEEPS (Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans)**

Do you have

* a robust Fire Evacuation Plan for staff and visitors? particularly important if you have facilities above the Ground floor, and should cover lifts, evacuation chairs and the like.
* Do you go through the Plan and discuss alternatives with any disabled visitor on entry?
* Is there always sufficient non-disabled help on hand for disabled visitors?
* A plan for the effect of having several disabled building users or visitors present at the same time (possibly including a user of a large mobility scooter which may not manoeuvre down narrow corridors if a wider exit is blocked)?
* A plan for disabled building users or visitors carrying "dangerous" substances such as compressed oxygen cylinders?

1. **Fire Exits**

Are they

* clearly signed with unobstructed access towards them inside the building, and from them outside the building? Are routes step-free inside and out?
* With simple to operate locks/handles?

1. **Alarms**

* Is there an audible and visual response from your Fire and Smoke alarms?
* Do these alarms also register in the toilets, including any accessible toilets?

1. **General**

* Does the decoration design throughout the building maintain **good colour contrast** between floor and walls, between door surrounds and walls and between furniture and floor?
* The same rules apply inside toilets.
* Are all areas **clear of clutter** so there are no trip hazards such as fire extinguishers, planters and leaflet stands put in the line-of-walk?
* Are all parts of the building **well-lit** so the lighting is adequate and even?
* Are **door handles easy to grip** and accessibly positioned?
* Do internal doors have visibility panels except where privacy is essential?
* Are internal doors/Fire **doors easy to open**? A Fire door does not need to be stiff to open

**Finally**

When thinking about easy access, always consider disabled staff, suppliers, performers, contractors, visitors, customers, clients or anyone else who might use the building. They can all be disabled – 20% of the population are.

Guidance on door widths, level access, ramps and other issues is in the Building Regulations Approved Document M Volume 2, here <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/441786/BR_PDF_AD_M2_2015.pdf>

With grateful acknowledgements to

Chris Cammiss B Sc. (Hons). PGCE

Disability Trainer and Advisor [chriscammiss@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:chriscammiss@hotmail.co.uk)

who provided training materials.