

A good practice guide
to making reasonable
adjustments

Accessible Cafés, Restaurants and Hospitality



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Accessible cafés, restaurants and hospitality

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About this guide

This practical guide is specifically aimed at service providers in the hospitality sector. The legal duty to make reasonable adjustments for everyone to be able to access your goods or services is applicable to all organisations, regardless of size. Making your organisation or business more accessible means that more customers can come through your door and use your services; better access means better business.

Access does not have to be expensive – reasonable adjustments mean reasonable changes relative to the size and context of your company. Changing your approach from ‘Do I have to...?’ to ‘What can I do?’ will possibly make the biggest difference of all.

Many small changes to the way you work, how you present information and your premises can have a significant impact on the number of your customers and can be carried out at little or no cost.

How will this help you?

This guide provides recommendations, tips and practical advice on making your business work for more customers, including disabled and older people.

It includes case studies of where other businesses have maximised the potential of this ever growing, profitable and loyal market. Will you see the potential?

This guide will help you:

- understand your duties under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA)
- understand the issues that disabled customers face and how they can access your services
- make better decisions and reasonable adjustments to the way you provide your services

This guide has been prepared by the Department for Health and Social Care based on a similar document prepared by the Centre for Accessible Environments for the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.

Northern Ireland still has the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and much of the information presented in this document is based on more than twenty years of businesses experience of the Act.

Some of the examples used in this document are from businesses in Northern Ireland and have been retained to give examples of best practice and the positive effect on businesses that have embraced the DDA.

This good practice guide and the information within is for guidance only and does not impose any legal obligations in itself, nor is it an authoritative statement of the law. It is not intended to be a substitute for a full review of the DDA.

Legislation: What does the law say?

Does the Disability Discrimination Act affect me?

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2006 is divided into a number of sections. Part II of the DDA deals with the rights of access to goods, facilities, services and premises. It places a number of key duties on businesses and organisations referred to collectively as 'service providers'.

The DDA applies to you if you are involved in any business or organisation which:

- provides a service
- offers facilities
- supplies goods to the public.

All service providers are covered by the DDA, large and small, private and public sector, whether the service is free or paid for. This includes services and facilities such as:

- Shops and restaurants
- Banks and building societies
- Doctors and dentist surgeries
- Hotels and guest houses
- Sports and leisure facilities
- Churches or other places of worship
- Tourist attractions
- Insurance companies
- Libraries and museums
- Property letting / management agencies
- Pharmacies and opticians
- Hospitals
- Bus and railway stations
- Government departments
- Broadcasting services
- Post offices
- Cinemas
- Theatres
- Advocates offices

This is not an exhaustive list.

The DDA doesn't apply to the use of, and access to, heritage transport vehicles (e.g. MER and Steam Railway).

However, it is important to note that such transport providers are not wholly exempt from the DDA and the services connected to or the infrastructure surrounding heritage transport is covered by the DDA. This means that there is still a duty to avoid discrimination against disabled people and to make reasonable adjustments, for example, accessible timetables, booking facilities, waiting rooms, and bus and train stations.

Welcoming all customers: Open for business

There are over 11 million people in the UK who would meet the definition of disabled for the purposes of the DDA (source: Disability prevalence estimates issued by the DWP, published January 2014), this means that approximately 1 in 5 persons have some disability. It's also estimated that disabled people spend £80 billion a year in the UK. Providing better access will mean that your business is more welcoming to everyone, including customers of all ages and abilities, families with pushchairs, the elderly, and people whose first language is not English.

Good business means anticipating what your customers need and want, and this includes the needs of disabled customers, and their families and friends. It is also a good idea to talk to your customers about any issues they may have when using your services, such as, parking, getting in and out of your premises, using the facilities, and any recommendations they may have to help improve access.

Think broadly about a range of impairments too, such as:

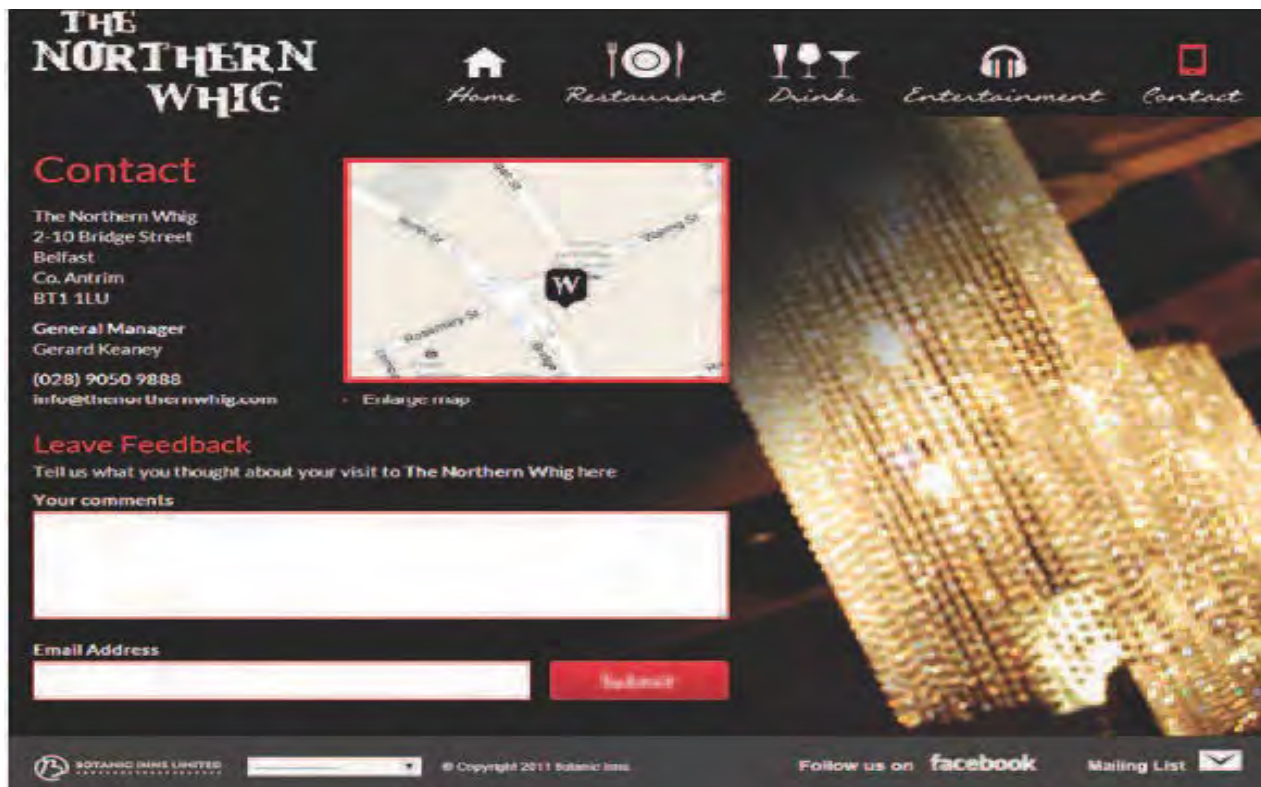
- mobility impairments, including stick users and wheelchair users
- visual impairments
- hearing impairments
- arthritis and limited dexterity
- mental health
- learning difficulties
- learning disabilities

If you have noticed that few disabled customers use your services, this may be because your business is not known to them and their families as providing suitable access. In addition to existing customers, think about what improvements would attract new customers.

A little can go a long way in helping many disabled customers. Some of these adjustments are relatively easy, such as making menus easy to read, clearing circulation space, putting grabrails in a toilet, or a handrail by a set of steps. Others, such as installing an accessible toilet, or creating a step-free main entrance can involve more work and may require technical planning, advice and finance.

Accessible website

Your website may be the first thing customers look at when making a decision about visiting and purchasing or using your services. You need to make a good first impression. It should convey a welcoming attitude towards all customers.



Include access and contact information on your website – including contact details, map, feedback option and list of access facilities on your 'Find Us' page will be useful for all visitors.

Website design

Things to think about include:

- **clear and accessible layout:** websites need to be easy to read, navigate and use, good size font (at least 14pt), good contrast without fussy backgrounds
- **screen readers:** ensure the website is compatible with text-to-speech converters, provide text captions and alternative text for images
- **Web Content Accessibility Guidelines:** the World Wide Web Consortium (WC3) provide guidelines, quick at a glance tips are available (<https://www.w3.org/WAI/>)

Pre-visit information

Before your customers or service users visit your premises, they are more than likely to have checked your website. Make it easy for your visitors to plan their trip by providing information on your opening hours, nearby transport links, and accessible facilities such as, induction loops, accessible toilets and large print resources. Make sure your website is accessible and easy to use.

Contact us

Let visitors know when, where and who to contact by providing:

- **contact details** – contact person, address, telephone number and / or email if people have specific queries about their visit
- **opening hours** – for stores or offices and helplines
- **customer feedback** – provide a channel for feedback – use the positive comments on your website to set you apart and improve your services
- **social media elements** – provide instant information and support
- **current updates** – social media can also be useful for live updates on any access facilities available or closed for maintenance or temporarily out of action
- **photos of trained staff** – it can be reassuring to recognise faces and uniforms and know that staff have received customer service training.

Pre-visit information can help an individual with Autism or other disabilities prepare for their visit experience. Photos of trained staff help visitors to recognise their uniforms and feel reassured. Ensuring that customers know that the business is disability aware can increase the numbers of individuals that use the service.

Christine E, Autism NI

How to get here

Remember X marks the spot, guide people to your door by providing:

- **a map with clear directions** – include any useful directions / landmarks, how long is the walk from the train station or landmark?
- **public transport routes** – give advice on how best to get to you whether by foot or bus, train and other means
- **parking information** – do you have any designated accessible bays or drop off areas for disabled customers and are these close to the entrance?
- **a photograph of the front of the premises** – helpful for people with learning disabilities and many others such as tourists.

Services and facilities

Let people know what you can offer, with information on:

- **accessible facilities** – give details, for example on accessible toilet provision, changing room, quiet room or nearest available facility.
- **any changes in level** – ramps, lifts, steps, or a short narrow route – a photo and description can help people to make their own choices and plan their visit
- **services and equipment** – such as induction loops, large print information, wheelchairs for loan, portable ramps, sign language interpreters and staff assistance available
- **photo / video guide of main areas** – showing the route and processes can help visitors prepare for trips to larger buildings
- **sound clips of regular sounds** – visitors can prepare for and expect the sound of frequent loud announcements, bells and alarms
- **concessions / discounts** – if these are offered to older people, disabled people and students (special lunch rates, accommodation deals, loyalty discounts) – advertise these clearly.

Getting there – making it easy

You need to make it as easy as possible for your customers to find you and get in to your premises. This can be difficult for some people who do not use the internet or have visual, hearing, mobility or cognitive impairments. It is important to provide clear signage.

This way to better signage:

Ensure your signage is in a visible location

Consider providing:

- Signs fixed to building walls rather than A-boards on footpaths. These can cause obstruction for most pedestrians and can be off-putting for your business.
- Flag signs attached to exterior walls can be a good way of getting noticed from a distance
- Signs should not be too high or too low – make sure they can be seen clearly from afar or when nearby

Provide clear information on your signage

This should:

- be simple, clear and short
- identify your business, and say what is in the building
- include a street number, a name, website and / or telephone contact



Text and symbols overhead

Overhead signage can be visible over crowds. Visually contrasting symbols alongside large-sized text in title case are good practice

Make sure the sign is easy to read

Good signage meets the following guidance:

- Signs should not be on glass, behind glass or on reflective surfaces – it can make them more difficult to see
- Use simple and clear 'sans serif' letters that are not italicised or underlined (this font is 'sans serif', this is not)
- Letters should be big enough to read from a distance
- Use a mix of lower and upper case lettering – this makes the text easier to recognise and therefore read
- Ensure there is a good visual contrast between the letters and your sign background.



Clear contrast

Symbols with clear tonal contrast indicate lift, accessible WC and baby change facilities. Including images as well as texts can help visitors identify the facilities available

Tactile signage

If tactile signs are installed, provide these at a suitable height with embossed (raised) lettering as well as Braille. Keep signs clean, visible and well maintained.



Assistance signs

Make sure that all customers feel welcome and let them know assistance may be available. If you have an intercom – indicate which button calls staff members.

Signs don't have to be expensive, if you make your own, make sure that they are a good size, clear and easy to read. This example may be hard to read for a person with a visual impairment due to its mixed use of capital letters and italics.

Approach by foot

Make it easy for all customers to approach your premises, including stick users, wheelchair users, people with assistants and those with assistance dogs.

Footpaths should be clear of obstructions:

- Unnecessary street furniture and clutter should be removed, such as bins and A-boards
- Surfaces should be maintained so they are firm, smooth and even
- Gradients should be gentle – they are usually 1:20
- Footpaths should have clear kerbs, and visual tactile markings
- Good lighting will provide added security
- Planting near footpaths should be managed so it not overgrown and not getting in anyone's way



Don't block your customers – remove you're A-boards and welcome more more customers in.

Street obstacles and the problems

- 95% of blind and partially sighted surveyed had collided with an obstacle in their local neighbourhood over a three month period
- The most common obstacles collided with are:
 - cars parked on pavements (70%)
 - bins of all kinds (64%)
 - permanent and temporary street furniture (59% and 55%)
 - advertising boards (49%)

(source: survey in RNIB document "Who put that there!", Feb 2015)

Writing on the wall

Using signs fixed to your building instead of A-boards which clutter the footpath.

Flag signs attached to buildings higher up can be seen above crowds.



Tips for outside seating areas

Keep a clear route – minimum width of 1.5m (2m preferred) for pedestrians including wheelchair users and people with pushchairs or walking aids to pass by comfortably.



Provide an enclosed seating area – define the edges with screens not ropes – so people with visual impairments, especially cane users can identify the boundary at ground level

Parking – how to get it right

Clearly marked accessible bays with a vertical signpost at the end of the bay. Make sure markings and signs stay clearly visible and maintained over time

Many disabled people drive or travel by car to get to where they need to go. Some may also cycle. You need to provide:

- **clear and visible signage** which will direct people to your car park, and accessible bays for disabled customers – ground markings and a vertical signpost at the end of the parking bay will help identify the correct spaces
- **a dropped kerb** - from the parking bay to the footpath and your entrance
- **accessible parking bays** - 2.4m x 4.8m with additional 1.2m hatched access zone to the side and rear for safe access
- **good management** - these bays should be available to those who might need them most

Provide accessible parking close to the entrance, remember to mark hatched safe zones to the side and rear of spaces. Make sure hatches are kept clutter free.



Local parking

Where local public car parks are available, make sure your customers know how to find them. Public car parks should include accessible parking bays – include tips on where they are located, where they are in relation to your business and include these details on your website to assist customers planning their visit.

Make an entrance

Can customers easily see and open your door? Whether you run a small shop, public service or large business, you want as many customers as possible to be able to enter your premises.

Make sure that your entrance is easy to identify and find, ensure it stands out from the façade. A main step-free 1000mm wide entrance will allow all customers equal access to your building. Providing a canopy will shelter customers in all weathers.



One of the easiest things you can do is to check your door handles, and feel how heavy the door is to open.

A D-shaped handle can be opened from different heights, or an easy action lever handle at the right height can make all the difference.

Propping doors open in the summer can be useful but don't forget to think about long term management.

We're open: Door tips

- D- shaped handle at 700 –1000 (lower edge) to 1300mm (top) height
- lever handle at 900mm height
- new main entrance doors should have a clear width 1000mm, 775mm minimum in an existing building
- new internal doors should be at least 800mm wide, 750mm in existing building easy opening
- vision panels to see other side is clear
- push / pull indication
- Is there enough space for wheelchair users in your lobby?
- Make sure door mats are flush and not worn or likely to trip someone up. Do not use coir mats – they can be wheel-traps

Automatic doors

Consider installing automatic doors – these can really open up your doors for all of your customers.

Automatic doors make it easy for customers to access the premises.



Go Step free

One small step for some, one giant obstacle for many others



Even if you have just one step into your building, this can be a barrier to a customer accessing your goods and services.

Step-free entrances are so much more inviting. Families with buggies, wheelchair users, people with walking aids and people with luggage will all find it much easier to come in and do business with you.

Always aim for completely step-free access, if customers can get to more of your products and services, they will buy more and keep coming back.

On the level: step-free access



Barred: remove barriers so all customers can come in.

One step too far: don't let one step limit your business.

Steps are the single biggest barrier to independent access for many older people and people with mobility impairments. Make reasonable adjustments – changes based on the size and context of your business.

Consider different options to make your entrance step-free:

- **remove the steps** - no change in level means no barrier
- **raise the footway** to the level of the doorway
- **install a permanent ramp** – slope gentler than 1:20 does not need handrails. A 1:12 ramp is the maximum gradient over 2m distance but can be difficult to use
- **temporary portable ramps** - provide assistance bell, and signs – make sure people know you have a ramp available
- **Seek professional and local user group advice** - there are always options!

Customer feedback:

One small step can stop me and my friends going into an establishment. A portable ramp doesn't cost much but can make a huge difference to my day out. If there is no access, I just go elsewhere. Some shops are great, if they have a portable ramp, there is a bell you can call for attention.

Michaela H

Customer feedback:

Although I am a mobile disabled person, steps and stairs are virtually impossible for me and slopes are not very easy for me. Shops that have a step up into them or within them aren't ideal. In shops that have narrow aisles, I can trip easily.

Laura B

Can I help you?

Getting customer service right

Making sure that your staff can provide great customer service for disabled people can make a huge difference. A disability confident and well-trained staff team will provide better customer service and boost your sales.

Nominating an Access Champion within your business could work wonders; they can help improve access to your services so you can reach more customers.



Word of Mouth – Great staff means great service

We asked locals who they would recommend and what makes a difference. It turns out it's just what we would all expect – polite staff and good customer service.

47%

said staff attitude has discouraged them from revisiting certain establishments.

Almost half of disabled customers surveyed would not go back to businesses with poor customer service.

Source: Short-changed: The Trailblazers' High streets report.

Customer feedback:

Keeps me coming back

I go to Brights café regularly because of the great service. I think it's important for staff to be well-trained in better engaging with disabled customers and should feel confident enough to ask customers what they need or where they would like help, as it is not always easy asking for help. This kind of courtesy keeps me coming back. Word of good practice spreads quickly.

Michaela H

Staff training: Break down the barriers

Help your staff team become disability confident and they can provide a better quality of service that keeps customers coming back for more.



Customer feedback:

A small business I think is excellent is The Cookie Box - they have a number of establishments. There's one which has room to sit in - and although it is very small they're great at taking a chair away if it's needed to make space. Staff there are brilliantly trained and will talk directly to me, rather than the person with me.

Michaela H

Customer feedback:

Service with dignity

Eclipse Cinema in Downpatrick has a variety of setups regarding seating throughout the cinema, and staff use common sense when giving a concession for disability. The staff team are little short of phenomenally trained – I only have the use of one hand and they are always the first to help make the tea, carry confectionary and get us into the screen - all with dignity.

Angela H

Claire McR, owner of Cookie Box, with three branches in Belfast, describes their approach and gives some advice:

We train our staff to treat all customers as equals. Some of our younger staff may be worried about approaching someone and we reassure them that all of our customers are just the same as us, and to break down the barriers. We're not experts, we just tell our staff to think, "If you were in the customer's position, what would you appreciate?"

Quick tips

If you are serving a deaf customer, use a pen and pencil to write something down, move chairs away for wheelchair users and families with prams - take the barriers away

Claire McR

Hidden disabilities

Some of your customers will have impairments that are not easily recognised and it might not be immediately obvious that they need your help and attention.

Some people may have a learning disability or difficulty, and some may have mental health issues. It will be reassuring and helpful to be patient and ask how you can help them.

Business feedback:

It can be simple

We have been trained to never disable someone with our attitude. We ask a customer what assistance they might need. It can be as simple as holding a door open, reading out a menu or showing someone our display fridge to choose from that makes all the difference

Tommy D, Clements Coffee

Prioritise the customer experience

Buy one get one free

Some disabled people require additional assistance or a companion when out and about. It's great practice to offer free entry for a disabled person's friend, family or personal assistant. Choose a system that's fair, easy to use and works well for customers and staff.

Customer feedback:

The 'buddy' card belongs to the person with Autism and may be used by a parent or any other carer. The card allows the carer to gain free entry into the Lisburn Leisureplex and Island Arts Centre. The Movie House Cinemas have a similar system of free entry.

Other venues may have reduced or free entry for carers and my advice is always to ask. Lisburn Leisureplex also has priority queueing system, just show your Autism NI membership card.

Claire, Lisburn



Customer feedback:

We can't wait to go back! Sam has autism and it was his first time at the cinema. I was so nervous but all of the staff were lovely and very helpful, even when he wanted more popcorn!

Sarah G, mother of Sam

Business feedback:

It is overwhelming to see so many regular customers returning to us, many of whom travel a great distance and often bypass other cinemas because of our high standard of inclusive service and facilities.

**Roisin McM, Manager
Eclipse Cinema**

Customer feedback:

We will most definitely be back

The entrance and foyer are all level and the ramp into the theatre itself is almost level. There is a platform for wheelchairs in the centre of the theatre- this is the perfect position to view the screen. To top it off the staff are friendly and helpful. It is an hour and a half drive but I think it's worth it. 10/10.

Sean E, Armagh - review posted on Tripadvisor

Customer Service Tips

Good manners

Introduce yourself, let customers know you are available to help

- Always talk to the customer directly, not who they are with
- Don't be afraid to ask 'Can I help?' or 'How can I help you?'
- Be patient and ready to repeat or clarify something
- Speak clearly and face-to-face to people who are lip-reading
- Offer to write things down
- Offer choice and dignity – don't make assumptions - not everyone wants or needs help

Practical assistance

- Offer to find or reach for items
- Can you carry or put items aside?
- Offer to describe items or help to read labels
- Do you know how to use your induction loop, portable ramp and other access equipment?

- Offer a seat to waiting customers
- Offer to rearrange furniture for people who need some space for example, wheelchair users, people with assistance dogs, buggies or mobility aids
- Turn any music down to improve communication.

Information

- Know your facilities and services - where is the nearest accessible toilet? Can you provide home visits, carry-to-car or delivery services? Are your menus, leaflets and information in a large and clear print?
- Toilet, changing room or lift out of action? Let customers know. Make sure that your service and facilities information is online and up-to-date so visitors can plan ahead
- Do you use social media or websites – can you offer live updates? Save customers' wasted journeys by forewarning them.

Access all areas: the customer experience

Imagine you are a customer - take a typical journey through your own service. Begin by checking your website, staff service and menus, routes to tables, access to counters and toilets, to paying when leaving. You want to make it as easy as possible for all of your customers.

Routes and surfaces

Keep a clear unobstructed width of 1500mm (preferred) 1200mm (minimum) for main routes from the entrance to service counter and table areas, toilets, and emergency exits.

Check your routes for trip hazards and maintenance issues, such as loose mats, spills or worn carpet, and remove any obstructions. Floors should be even and non-slip.

Level changes

Try to minimise the number of level changes in your premises – make them easy to negotiate:

- All public areas should be accessible as possible to everyone
- Consider providing a ramp or a platform lift for a short internal level difference
- If not obvious, provide signs for the ramp or lift route
- Warn people of all level changes as these can be a trip hazard. Provide good visual contrast to slopes, and good lighting
- All step edges (nosings) should be non-slip and visually highlighted
- Install strong handrails that are easy and comfortable to grasp both sides and extend beyond the top and bottom steps or the top and bottom of any slopes. They should also have good visual contrast.

Ramps steeper than 1:20 should have handrails at both sides. Provide visual warning at the edge of the ramp to reduce the trip hazard risk.

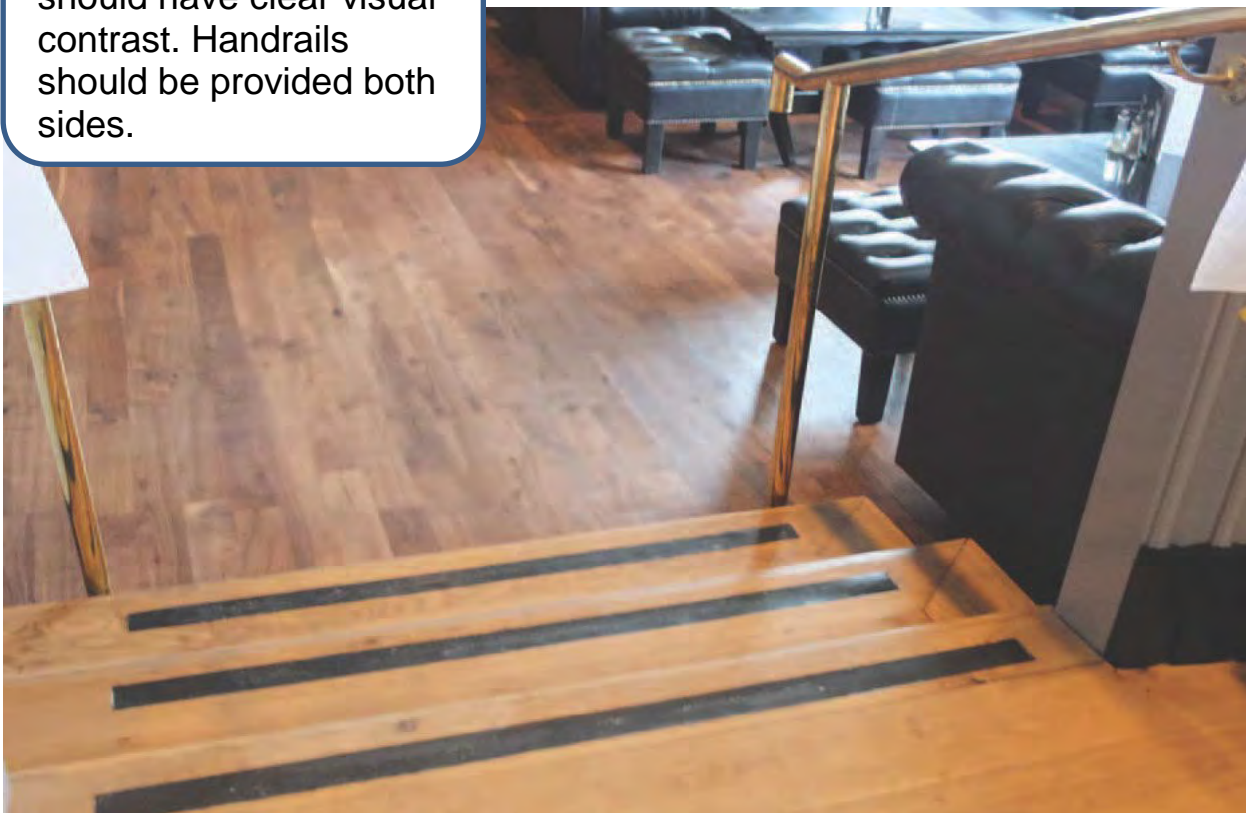
Where steps are provided as a route choice, ensure that handrails are provided to both sides and the stair nosing (edges) visually contrast with the rest of the step to help with identification and depth perception. Level landings between flights gives people a chance to rest.

Any step edges (nosing) should have clear visual contrast. Handrails should be provided both sides.



Helping handrails

Ramps can be difficult and a tripping hazard. Provide visual warning and contrasting handrails both sides.



Read the signs

Signage should be clear and appropriate to help all people including people with visual impairments or learning / cognitive difficulties orient themselves

- Provide clear product /service labelling and pricing
- Provide clear product / service information displays

Signs that work best are:

- Simple and short
- Bigger is better – good sized text, minimum 16pt font
- Easily read and understood with clear font in a mixture of lower and upper case
- Well contrasting with the background and the lettering
- Supplemented by symbols
- Not on reflective glass or backgrounds

On the menu:

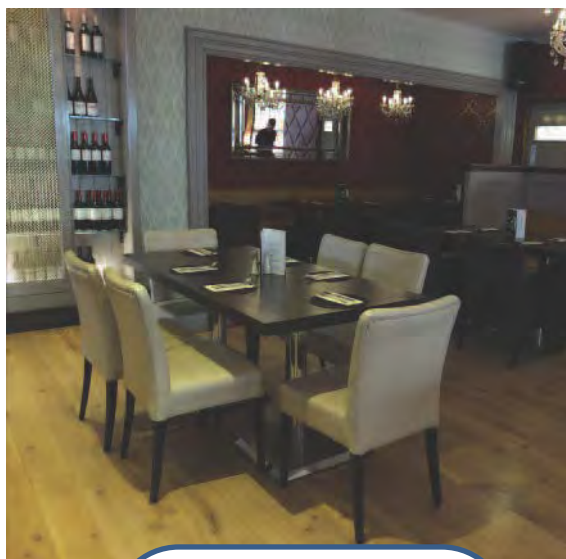
- **Super-size it** – make it easier for everyone – present your menus in a clear and large print
- **In the spotlight** – dim lights over tables make it difficult to read menus and see your delicious food
- **Stand out** – make sure the text stands out and avoid fussy backgrounds
- **Silver service** – staff should explain what is on offer and provide written notes if needed for people with hearing impairments

Please, have a seat

Whether you are a small café, bank or retail shop, chances are you want your customers to stay longer, feel comfortable and create a great purchasing or service environment.

Tips for seating:

- **Provide flexible seating areas** – where furniture can be moved around
- **Have a range of chairs available** – if you have chairs with back support, seats at different heights, with and without armrests, people can more easily transfer into and out of the seats
- **Clear routes (900mm minimum)** – between the tables and a choice of seating type will accommodate a wide range of users
- **Space underneath tables** – for wheelchair users to approach and fit their knees comfortably under a table and for assistance dogs.



Provide a range of flexible seating

Consider providing a good mixture of comfortable seating, with and without armrests

Outdoor seating

Provide plenty of space and movable furniture, offering a choice in seating and space for customers including wheelchair users.





A lower counter section is accessible for many customers (Lyric Theatre, Belfast)

Accessible counters

Providing counters and surfaces at different heights will make life easier for all of your customers.

A lowered section of a desk should be no more than 760mm high. A food serving or bar should have a section 850mm high for a length of at least 1500mm. All counters should have 700mm – 750mm high knee space beneath them for wheelchair users to approach.

Face-to-face service is important for many of your visitors; some might be lipreading or may need reassurance from a friendly staff member. Remember, no-one really likes to fill out a form, especially if there isn't a comfortable height to work at.

Everyone wants to be able to order at the bar, or sit there with friends. Make it easy for people to have a choice.

- **Provide a lowered counter section**, where possible, for wheelchair users and customers of short stature, or a single lower counter that suits everyone
- **Provide a chair** at the counter for those unable to stand for a time
- **Provide table service** - put up a sign saying table service is available, this way, people can be accommodated and feel more comfortable.

No space for a counter? Provide a clipboard

Perhaps your service or business is always on the move, or there's no space for a counter, you could always make sure that a clipboard is ready for use by your customers

Businesses should always have one Chip and Pin machine which is portable or detachable. And now that I have a wireless payment card it's going to make my life so much easier.

Trailblazer, Muscular Dystrophy Campaign

Pay here

Make it easy for all your customers to make a payment:

- **lower counter section** – provide a surface no higher than 760mm from the floor level for wheelchair users and customers of shorter stature, or a single lower counter that suits everyone. There should be 700mm high knee space underneath the counter for wheelchair users to approach
- **clutter free** - do not place items in front of the counter so that people have to lean over to reach the counter
- **priority policy** - or provide a chair at the counter for people less able to stand in a queue
- **well lit counter** - so that it is easy for someone lip-reading to see the cashier's face
- **portable payment terminals** - located so they can be easily used in a comfortable position by all customers
- **induction loop** - a hearing enhancement system that assists people who wear hearing aids. Clearly indicate with signage the availability of the hearing loop and train staff how to use it.

Common sense – better lighting and communication

Make sure your building is well-lit so that signs, product labels, menus, steps, thresholds, slopes or door handles, can be easily seen. Good lighting is essential for lip-reading. If background noise and music make it difficult for customers and staff to talk to each other, turn the music down or off.

Hearing enhancements like induction loops will help support communication in meeting rooms, at counters and information points. Make sure that there are signs to show that these are available.

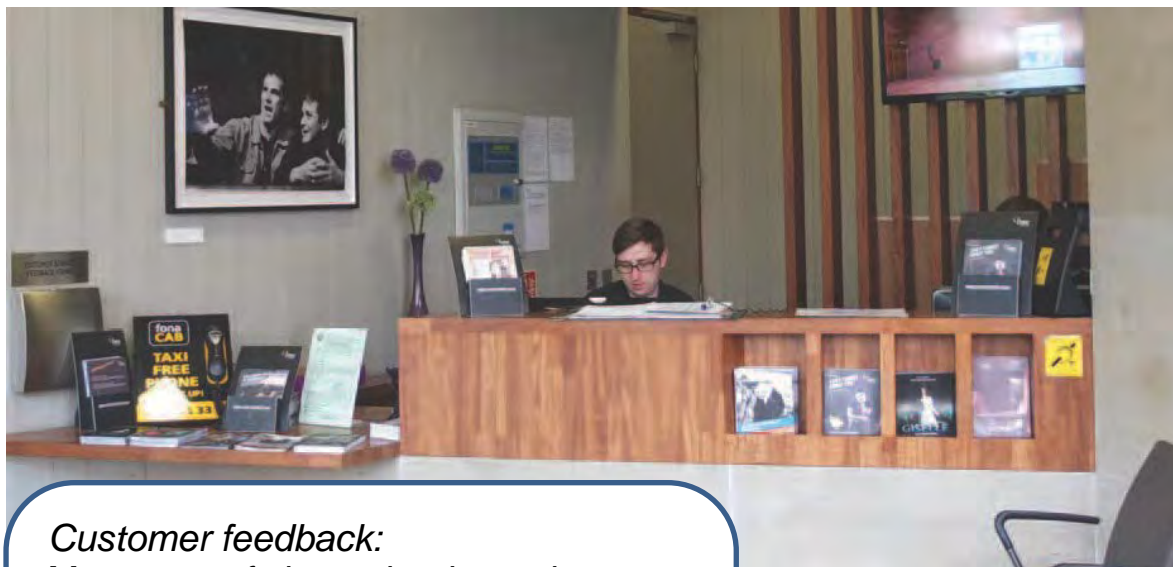
Customer feedback:

I like a café where the background noise or the music is not too loud: this helps me find my way around the place and I can hear when someone speaks to me.

Karl F, a white cane user

Being accessible is an ongoing aim – it is important to regularly check that everything is working as it should.

Be in the loop: The induction loop sign lets visitors know to switch their hearing aids to the T-setting. One of the Lyric Theatre's patrons is a hearing aid user, who regularly tests their hearing enhancement equipment.



Customer feedback:

Managers of shops, banks and even cinemas do not seem to realise that if a hearing loop system is working well, it gives hearing aid wearers amazingly clear hearing as well as getting rid of background noise!

Richard S, Hearing aid wearer

Lyric theatre's reception area with lower counter section, available seating and induction loop sign

Tips for lighting and contrast

- Avoid bright light and dark shadows
- Highlight hazardous areas such as steps or other changes in level
- Maximise light by keeping glass clean, maintaining lamps and blinds, and replace blown bulbs quickly
- Minimise glare from large areas of white or reflective surfaces – this can be done by adjusting lighting
- Use colours to guide the way
- Use dark and light colours to distinguish between large features or areas, such as, doors, floors, walls and ceilings
- Smaller fittings, such as, light switches, handrails and door handles should also contrast well against backgrounds
- Do not use large areas of mirrors or glazing without markings – these may be difficult to identify and people might walk into them and injure themselves.

Customer feedback:

Shopping is so much more enjoyable when staff understand how to communicate with deaf people. I lip-read, so if they know to look at me when speaking to me, rather than turning away to focus on their till, it really helps! I'm often anxious in case there's an emergency alarm and I can't hear it. Some businesses have flashing alarms installed so I'm not left in the dark, which is great.

Trish V, a lipreader

Excuse me – Can I use the toilet?

Good visual contrast – signs, grabrails, the WC and fittings should contrast the background, making them easier to identify.



Tips for accessible toilets

- **Where are they?** Provide clear signage so that they are easy to find. If refurbishing make sure that accessible WCs are in a location near to entrances and activity areas
- **Outward opening doors** – space is needed inside for wheelchair users to be able to turn and use the facility
- **Easy-to-use door locks** – light action locks which can be easily operated by a closed fist and minimal dexterity requirements

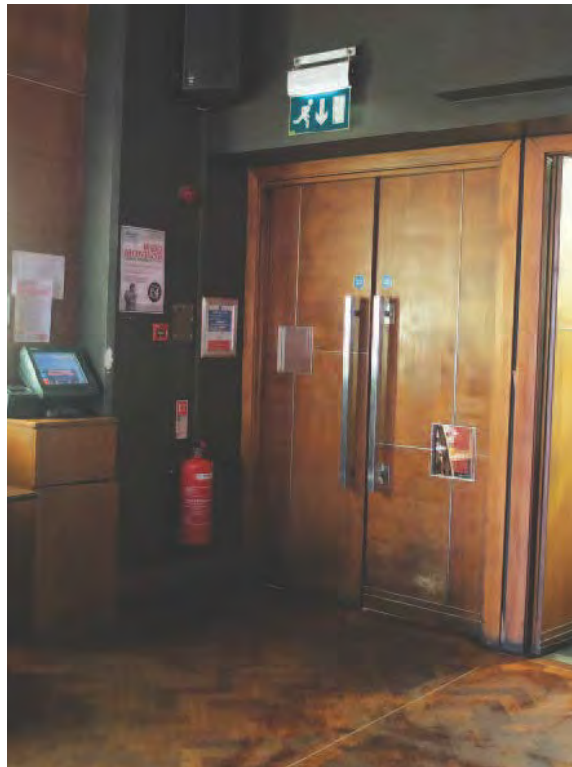


- **Clear and clean** - keep the transfer space next to the WC clear of bins - wheelchair users need this space for manoeuvring
- **Emergency alarm** - Check your alarm system works and your staff are trained in appropriate response. The cord should almost reach the ground and never be tied up, so that someone on the floor could reach it in an emergency
- **Replace any difficult cross head taps** – mixer lever taps can be easy to operate with a closed fist and limited dexterity
- **Check your grabrails** – these need to be installed at the right height and location to provide sufficient support for transfer. Further information is available in [Part M – Access to and use of buildings](http://www.gov.im/media/1346193/approved-document-m-2004.pdf) (www.gov.im/media/1346193/approved-document-m-2004.pdf)
- **Visual contrast** – grabrails, WC and fittings should contrast against the background, making them easier to identify
- **Don't use them for storage** – as soon as you use the toilet as a storage room, it stops being an accessible toilet.

Emergency Exit

All exit routes should be as barrier-free and step-free as possible.

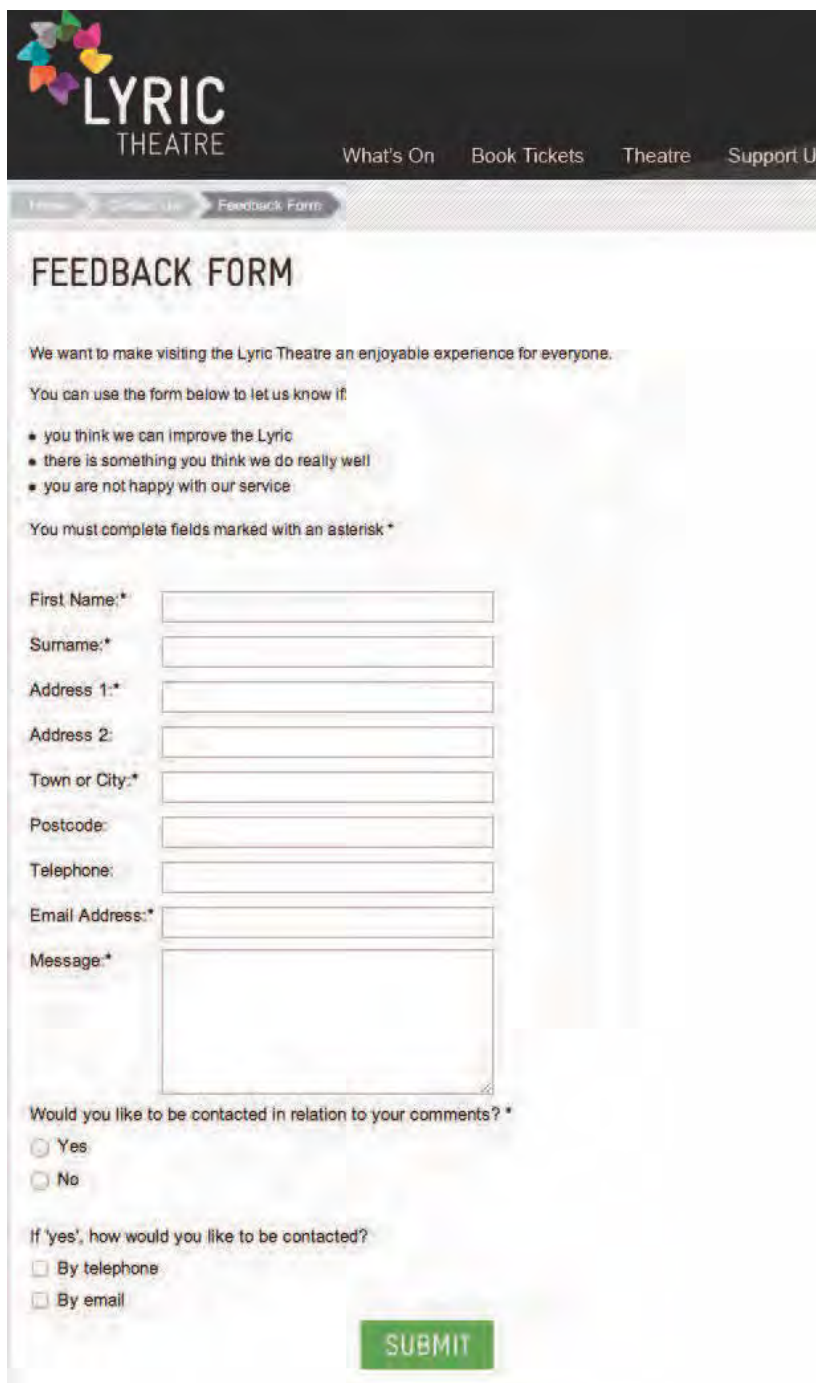
- **Provide clear signage** – make it easy for people to find their way out
- **Keep checking for obstructions** – walk your evacuation routes regularly, keep them clean and clear
- **Visual and audio alarm systems** – don't assume everyone can hear the alarm
- **Test the alarms** – systems should be regularly checked and maintained
- **Staff training** – staff should know correct procedures and how to provide appropriate assistance to visitors
- **Regular fire drills** – practise makes perfect, test and refresh your staff knowledge
- **Develop emergency egress plans** – which include provisions for any disabled staff and visitors.



Further information may be available from the Isle of Man Fire and Rescue Service, Fire Safety Department on 647303.

Consultation and Feedback: How did we do today?

Giving customers the chance to let you know what you are getting right and what needs improving could be the best move you make. Responding to suggestions and making positive changes for paying customers and visitors will only help your business or grow. You could welcome comments on your website with a contact phone number or email address – encourage customers to chat to you on social media or complete a five-minute online survey.



The image shows a screenshot of the Lyric Theatre's website feedback form. The header features the Lyric Theatre logo and navigation links: 'What's On', 'Book Tickets', 'Theatre', and 'Support Us'. Below the header, a breadcrumb trail shows 'Home' > 'Contact Us' > 'Feedback Form'. The form itself is titled 'FEEDBACK FORM' and includes an introductory message: 'We want to make visiting the Lyric Theatre an enjoyable experience for everyone. You can use the form below to let us know if:'. A bulleted list follows: '• you think we can improve the Lyric', '• there is something you think we do really well', and '• you are not happy with our service'. A note states: 'You must complete fields marked with an asterisk *'. The form contains several input fields: 'First Name:*', 'Surname:*', 'Address 1:*', 'Address 2:', 'Town or City:*', 'Postcode:', 'Telephone:', 'Email Address:*', and a large 'Message:*' text area. Below these fields, there are two questions with radio button options: 'Would you like to be contacted in relation to your comments? *' with 'Yes' and 'No' options, and 'If 'yes', how would you like to be contacted?' with 'By telephone' and 'By email' checkboxes. A green 'SUBMIT' button is located at the bottom right of the form.

Create your own access focus group

Having an access focus group with members of staff, local disabled visitors and disability representatives can help you to improve your services so that they are more attractive and more efficient for your employees and customers.

Lyric Theatre appointed a staff access officer and dedicated Access Group, which provides disability awareness training to the staff. One of their patrons with a hearing impairment regularly tests their hearing enhancement equipment. They have made a number of changes to the facilities as a result of consultation with the group, including better signage.



The customer is always right:

Consulting with user groups can only make your products and services better and more popular

How to impress your customers – play the Loyalty Card

If we receive excellent service as customers, we are more likely to reward businesses with our loyalty. If we're getting a better deal, we spend more on other services and keep coming back for more.

Business feedback:

Accessible restaurants and pubs which provide excellent customer service will attract disabled people, their friends and family. 18% of disabled customers visit restaurants at least once a week and 22% visit at least two or three times a month.

Pizza Express At your service Visit England

Next steps.....

This Good Practice Guide is one of several documents available to support service providers seeking to ensure that their services are accessible to disabled customers. Other documents include:

- **Code of Practice – Rights of Access, Goods, Facilities, Services and Premises**

A comprehensive guide to the DDA, providing information in respect of reasonable adjustments.

- **Guidance on matters to be taken into account in determining questions relating to the definition of disability**

Defines the meaning of disabled for the purposes of the DDA, mainly for use by the court in determining whether a disability is covered by the Act if it's not particularly clear.

- **Disability Discrimination Act 2006 – A guide for small to medium businesses**

A smaller guide providing examples for service providers based on a version previously in use in the UK when it had the DDA. Also contains details of the Tiered Award Scheme in the Island, some FAQ's and a list of contacts and resources available to assist service providers comply with the Act.

- **Disability Discrimination Act 2006 – what service providers need to know**

Another useful guide based on a version in use in Northern Ireland, contains useful examples of best practice.

- **Self-Assessment Checklist**

Designed to help service providers review how accessible their business premises / services currently are.

- **Access Action Plan**

Will assist service providers who have completed a self-assessment to plan, prioritise, implement and evaluate any changes they decide to make.

This guide and all documents can be downloaded from www.gov.im/dda

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