

Access Audits Pack Introduction

This booklet is to help disabled people and others to carry out access audits of premises and services.

Here you will find information and advice on doing access audits, what you need in order to do an audit, the access needs associated with various disabilities, checklists, sample questionnaires, and design guides on toilets, lifts etc.

We want this pack to be easy for you to use, and to help you with anything you need to know in order to carry out an access audit.

It has been designed so that you can add new or updated pages as you wish. We will add to it ourselves.

We are putting it on the One Voice website and in print, because we think all disabled people should have the tools they need so they can learn about everyone's access needs and advise builders, planners and service providers of these needs. This is especially important as the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act come into force.

We think it is important that disabled people can do this for themselves. That is why we are putting this information out for free. You can print it, photocopy it, tape it, pass it on in any way you like. All we ask is that you let people know you got it from One Voice, the Wolverhampton Disability organisation.

This guide has already been used in various forms by people with a wide range of disabilities, doing access audits on many different things. If you have got ideas on how to make it better, email us and let us know.

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Doing an Audit

Like most things, the more planning you do, the better the audit will go.

Before you do the audit, it's a good idea to:

Find out opening times, parking/transport for the venue

Find out where the toilet is

Have a phone number of a friend or colleague in case you get into difficulty

Think about what you are going to be looking for

Think about the whole access experience from leaving home to leaving the venue.

You may find the audit easier to do if you have these things:

Change of clothing/waterproofs (for outdoor venues)

Mobile Phone

First Aid kit

Clipboard, pencil and pen

Questionnaire or paper

dictaphone

Access Pack or checklists

Digital camera

Tape measure/lengths of coloured/textured string

Letter of introduction

When doing an audit, it is a good idea to:

Make sure someone knows where you are

Do the audit *with* someone

Always be polite

Disability Access Needs

This section looks at the specific access needs of a various disability.
The disabilities covered enable us to look at access needs in terms of getting around, hearing, seeing, and communication.

Access needs of Blind and Visually impaired people

Getting there

Regular bus stops outside

Tactile surfaces like this at crossings and hazards:

Outside

Even pathways – no obstacles, potholes
pathways have raised edge

Steps have colour contrasted edges

Doors are in a contrasting colour

glazed doors have an access strip

sound and smell to help find your way around

Inside

Reception/helpdesk in direct line from door

no obstacles

bins etc are mounted

walls and floor in contrasting colour

furniture contrasts with floor and walls

doorways stand out

no reflective metal or glass

even lighting – no pools of light and dark

no pattern on carpets

colour contrasting around lifts/stairs

no open risers

colour contrasted nosings on steps

Signage

in contrasting colour like white on blue

bold, plain letters in lower case

Like this

signage easy to see/find

Information

Tape, Braille, large print, bold clear pictures, no blocks of capitals, no fancy type.

Other

Adaptations to equipment- large buttons lit up, Braille, talking lifts etc

Guide dog area

Deaf and Hard of Hearing People

Staff

Total Communication – sign language, talking clearly, facing person, lighting from side or in front of you, listening to person

Reception

Loop system at reception desks/info points

Sympathetic Hearing Scheme symbol

Text phone, fax or texting for bookings/inquiries

No background music, constant announcements

Information/signage

Plenty of signage

Plain English

Uses pictures

Other

evacuation procedure warning lights as well as sounds

Wheelchair users

Outside

Accessible bus/metro stop nearby

Blue Badge parking

Parking close to entrance

Walkway between parking/transport and entrance is covered or short even, firm pathways wide enough for wheelchairs

dropped kerb by entrance if there is a pavement

no obstacles, bollards etc

Entrance

level or gentle slope, ramps must be non-slip

gates open to wheelchair width, or easy to open from sitting

automatic door or wide light door with easy-to-reach handle

plenty of space for doors opening outwards

Inside

room in seating areas for wheelchairs

reception desk at good height (waist-chest height, sitting down)

All switches, buttons, controls at sitting height (900-1400mm/ 3' – 4' 8")

Plenty of circulation space to move around – 1500mm turning circle, or put your arms out and turn around, if anything is in the way, a wheelchair user wont be able to turn

Desks/tables/counters have enough room for wheelchair user ot get legs under

Facilities

Accessible toilet

Accessible lift

Accessible equipment such as gym equipment, pool hoists, changing rooms etc

Signage has wheelchair symbol for wheelchair fire exit, wheelchair toilets etc

Ambulant Disabilities

(people with mobility problems)

Outside

Blue badge parking close to entrance (wider parking space)

Dropped kerbs

Safe crossing areas

no hazards in walkways

Steps not too high (170mm/7" maximum), no open risers (gaps)

Non-slip edges of steps

Continuous handrails, both sides, 100mm from ground (3'3")

Handrails round easy to grip, and finished in a weatherproof coating like acrylic

Doors wide, automatic (with slow opening and closing), or light and easy to open

press button entry systems should be easy to use with one hand, and at 1000-1200mm

Inside

Plenty of space to move around

Seats with and without arms

Higher seats/perching stools

things to lean on/against

lifts, platform lifts, ramps or short gentle steps between levels

doors which aren't automatic must be light, easy to open without a handle, and have a glass panel from top to 1000mm from ground

handles buttons and switches should be light and easy to use with one hand.

Even floors

no obstacles

no queuing ribbons

warm inside

Learning Disabilities

Staff

Speaking in Plain English

Easy to understand instructions

Signage and information

Plain English

Lots of pictograms

Clear layout

lower case letters

Information on sessions etc sent before visit

Venue

Easy to find

Door easy to find

Colour coding on different floors, and around lifts, toilets etc

No open risers on steps

glazed lifts should only be glazed from waist height upwards

Other Disability Access Issues

people with weak or disabled hands

levers, handles, switches etc should be easy to reach, and easy to use with little effort

Avoid push button intercoms

Avoid lengthy application forms/other writing

alternative to self-service drinks and food

people with epilepsy

avoid sharp corners on furniture

quiet/first aid room available

recovering mentally ill people

quiet area

smoking area

Access Audit Checklists

Outside

Getting to building or venue

- Is there a traffic or parking barrier onto site
- Are there buttons to push
- Do you have to listen/speak into a grille
- How far away is parking
- Is there Blue Badge parking
- Is there a drop-off point /dropped kerb by the front entrance
- How far from the road
- Is there a bus stop nearby
- Is there seating at the bus stop
- Is it served by an accessible bus
- Do you have to cross a busy road
- Is there a puffin/pelican/other crossing
- Is it an even surface/ is there a dropped kerb
- Is it clear of parked cars/obstacles

Walkway

- Is there a pavement/dropped kerb
- How wide is it
- Does it have tactile clues or surfaces
- Are there handrails along the walkway
- Is it a firm and even surface
- Does it have raised edges
- Is it colour contrasted/easy to see
- What texture is the surface
- Is the approach covered
- Are there any obstacles/street furniture
- Is it well lit

Car Parking

- What size are the blue badge spaces
- Are they policed
- How long can you stay
- What surface
- Any slopes/steps/other obstacles
- Is the parking well lit/safe/secure

Entrance

- Is the entrance level or sloping
- Is there a ramp
- What angle is the slope
- How long
- Handrails (width, materials colour, number)
- Landings
- Tactile surface at top and bottom
- What is the surface like

Steps

Surface

Handrails both sides

Are handrails easy to grip

Tactile warnings top and bottom

Number of steps

Length and height of steps - open risers

Colour-contrasted edgings

Resting places

Alternatives to steps

Doorways

Is the door clearly marked

Does it stand out

Is there an access strip on the door

does it open out/in/auto/slide

Auto door: tactile/sensory info

How wide is doorway

Entry systems

is there a bell or buttons, what height

Is there a voice entry system

What handles on door/what height

Is Doormat-flush with floor

Is doormat rigid

Inside

Lobby

What lighting

Does door have accessible dimensions

is there a turning Circle (1500mm)

How do you get through internal door

Is mat flush with floor

Reception

Is it next to/opposite the entrance

Is it well signposted

is it well lit

Is the carpet plain

Is carpet low pile

does the furniture contrast with floor

does the floor contrast with the walls

Are there queing ribbons

Are they easy to see/navigate

Is there seating

Is it at different heights

is it with and without arms

are there any shadows or dark areas
height of desk
induction loop
SHS sign

Staff

Do they look at you when they talk to you
Do they speak clearly
Are they easy to understand (Plain English)
Do they explain things until you understand it
Do they offer to help
Do they offer to show you the way
Are they friendly
If you have a problem, do they offer alternatives

Signage

Is it easy to notice
Height
typeface
pictures
colour contrasting
colour coding
tactile info

Corridors

Is it wide enough for you to pass someone with a dog
is there a turning circle
does floor contrast with walls
lighting
floor surface
is there colour coding for multiple corridors
Does it make sense
are there obstacles
are doors light/easy to open
Can you see through them
Can you see if you are sitting

Toilets

Are toilets well signposted
Is door colour contrasted
Is it well Lit
do walls contrast with floor
Are floors non slip
Are locks, flush, soap dispenser etc easy to see reach and use
Are there any reflective surfaces

Is there an accessible toilet
Is it well signposted

Can you get to it in a wheelchair or while using crutches
Is the door wide enough
is there room inside toilet cubicles to turn in w/chair (1500mm)
door opening
ease of use of lock, handle etc
Is toilet well lit
can you reach the help cord from the toilet
can you reach the sink etc from the toilet
are the bars and handrails colour contrasted
Can you grip them with wet hands
Is there a full length mirror
Are there any obstructions on floor or handrails etc

Upward Movement

Lifts

Is there space to turn around outside
Is opening wide enough
Inside is there enough room to turn around in a wheelchair
Is there a mirror
drop down seating (on lifts to many floors)
Is there a handrail
Is it easy to see
height of control panel
Are the buttons raised and illuminated
Is it a speaking lift
Is there visual info about your floor (LCD)
lighting
Is emergency information easy to see/read
Is there any picture information
Braille information
If lift gets stuck can you press button or do you have to use 'phone

Stairs

Are they well signposted
size of steps, colour contrasted edges etc
lighting
surface
How many steps
landings
open risers?
Handrails both sides?
gripability of handrails
Are handrails easy to see
Is there a platform lift on the stairs
Does it block off the handrail

Communication and Information

What formats for information?

Maps?

Is there a tannoy/VDU

Is security system visual and aural

Public Telephone/minicom?

Generic Service/venue Questionnaire

Description/Name/address of service _____

Opening times _____

Cost _____

Pre-booking(explain) _____

Getting here

Dropped kerb drop off? _____ How close _____

Parking (comment) _____

Blue badge parking (dimensions, monitoring etc) _____

Bus stop/accessible bus? _____

Entrance

is via level ground ramp accessible steps

more than one entrance

details _____

The entrance **door/s** are on level ground yes no

wide enough for wheelchairs/dog yes no

automatic yes no

colour contrasted yes no

(explain) _____

Inside

Is reception easy to see find yes no

Is desk good height yes no

Is there an induction loop/SHS yes no

Is there good cc yes no

Describe lighting _____

Are there any obstacles yes no

Are there any chairs yes no

Describe them _____

Signage

Is there enough signage yes no

Describe it _____

Staff

Are staff helpful yes no

Do they face you when they talk yes no

Are they esy to understand yes no

Upward movement _____

Toilets

Are there toilets yes no

Are they easy to find yes no
Inside toilet
are things colour contrasted yes no
Well layed out yes no
Is there good lighting yes no
Are there reflective surfaces yes no
Other coments _____

Accessible toilet
Is there an accessible toilet yes no
Describe layout and dimensions _____

Upward movement

Lifts

Are they easy to find yes no
Is there enough room outside yes no
room inside for w/chair user to turn around yes no
height of buttons
talking lift yes no
emergency procedure _____
other _____

Stairs

Easy to find yes no
Handrails yes no
Describe _____
Height of steps _____
Colour contrasted nosings yes no _____
Number/landings _____
Other (risers etc) _____

Special

Cafes/showers/changing rooms/ other facilities
describe these with regard to disabled access needs

Comments on how service works for pwd

Other comments
Eg overall design/layout, internal doors, good features etc)

Shops and Supermarkets Survey

code/date:

Name/address of shop _____

Opening Hours _____

What does shop sell _____

OUTSIDE

Car parking nearby yes no

Blue Badge parking yes no

(say distances) _____

accessible bus stop/tax rank _____

Entrance is via level ground ramp accessible steps
more than one entrance(explain) _____

The entrance **door/s** are on level ground yes no
wide enough for wheelchairs yes no
automatic yes no
colour contrasted yes no

(explain) _____

INSIDE

What kind of **trolleys/baskets** _____

What height and stacking patterns on **shelves** _____

Are free standing **displays** mounted (explain) _____

Do any shelves or products have **braille** information _____

Are **aisles** wide enough for 2 wheelchair users to pass

yes no

Is there enough turning room at the end of each aisle

yes no

Are any staff available to shop with you if necessary

yes no

Is the **signage** easy to see yes no

easy to understand yes no

Are information/recipe **leaflets** available in large print/other formats yes

no

explain _____

Are there any wider/wheelchair accessible **checkouts** _____

Is there a **packing** service to assist disabled people and others

TOILETS/BABY CHANGE

Is there a wheelchair accessible **toilet**? yes no

comment _____

Are the toilets well colour contrasted, easy to use etc (comment)

Is the **baby change** facility accessible yes no

SPECIAL SERVICES

Are there any special services? What are they _____

STAFF

Are the staff helpful yes no

Do they have any special disability related **training**? (ask mgmt, list response)

Does it show? (give example)

GENERAL COMMENT

Any other comments, future plans of store etc, please note:

Signage

General

Signage should be located at all the main entrance points to the complex.

It should be rational and helpful.

There should be consistent colour-contrasting text/background colours for all outside signage.

Internal signage should also be uniform in colour and style.

Signage should be easy to see

It should not contain too much information.

It should include reception/helpdesk areas, parking, blue badge parking, entrances to buildings (and their access status), functional areas (such as gym, offices, sports hall).

Signage needs to be kept clean in good repair, and free of obstacles such as shrubbery or furniture.

Sign content – directional signs

Signs should be in Plain English

Signs should be in sans serif typeface (like Arial, Helvetica), with lettering colour-contrasting with background.

The lettering should be as large as possible.

Easiest signs to see are white or light lettering on a darker background.

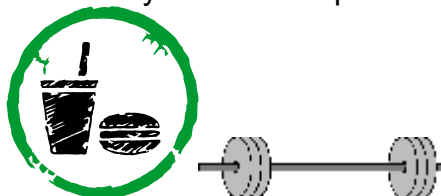
The sign background colour should be easily distinguishable from its environment.

Where the background to the sign is busy (like a brick wall or a mural), or the same colour as the sign (eg blue sign on a blue wall) there should be a border around the sign in the same colour as the lettering.

Signs that are wholly in capitals are difficult to read – this style is preferred:

Entrance

Wherever possible, signs should also include a pictogram that denotes what it says – for example:



for food hall and gym

Where the sign includes an arrow, the arrow should be close to the lettering. Arrows should have a longer tail than head, so it is clear that they are arrows.

Diagonal arrows should be avoided where possible, as it is not always clear which way they intend you to go.

All signage should have a matt or other non-reflective finish. Shiny surfaces are very difficult for people with visual impairments.

Sign content emergency signs

The familiar British standard for emergency exits should be adhered to. However the green signs should indicate whether the emergency exit is wheelchair accessible, by including a wheelchair user next to the running stick figure, when it is a level/ramped exit.

Sign Content – door signs

Door signs should follow the same criteria as other signs.

They should also include a tactile aspect – this may take the form of embossed characters on the sign, as well as Braille signifiers.

This is particularly useful by doors, lifts etc. A Braille sign should be on the wall beside the door or opening at the opening/handle/lift-call side.

Signs in wood and polished metal should be avoided.

Signs using a non-reflective background, but with shiny lettering should also be avoided.

Non-traditional wayfinding

Visually impaired people find it easier to find their way around a building or complex if other senses are engaged – changes of tactile surface and aromatic changes (such as aromatic planting at pathway junctions) are useful

Writing up an Access Audit

There are two basic ways your auditing information can be written up. Which method you use depends on your target audience. We are calling them an audit assessment, and an access guide.

Audit Assessment

An audit assessment or report is aimed at the manager of the project/building/service you are auditing.

What you will include should be discussed with the client before you do the audit. It differs from an access guide because you will be expected not only to highlight disabled access issues regarding the venue or service, you will also be expected to offer practical suggestions on how they might be overcome. When you suggest remedies it is important to be realistic – don't look for the most expensive alternative. In the short-term it might be possible to suggest a change in how the service is run, that doesn't have a cost implication. You can also suggest a more long-term solution, when money for adaptations is in place. This kind of report should also discuss these access issues within the framework of the Disability Discrimination Act. At least until service providers are more familiar with their rights and responsibilities under the Act.

Access Guide

This is usually aimed at disabled people and others.

The purpose is to give information, so you don't need to say how things need to be improved.

You can include information on who might have problems and why.

EG "There is a sloping step outside the door it slopes left to right 3cm-8cm, it is not colour contrasted, this may create problems for visually impaired people, and some wheelchair users".

Glossary of Access terms

Access strip – a coloured strip across a door at around eye-level for walkers and wheelchair users. It is usually placed across a glass door, so that you can see it is a door.

Ambulant disability – an ambulant disability is one that affects your movement. It includes people with crutches, sticks, and prosthetic limbs.

Circulation Space – the space a wheelchair user or a person with a guide dog or with crutches needs, in order to move around an area.

Colour Contrasting – colour contrasting is using colours that stand out from each other, so that visually impaired people can see things like doors, switches, counters, signage etc.

A good way to colour contrast is to pick a colour on the colour wheel that is opposite, +/- 1.

EG blue is opposite to orange, lemon is next to orange. Blue and lemon are better contrasts than blue and orange. This is because the opposite colours *fight* each other.

A good way to see if colours are a good contrast, is to shut one eye and squint with the other, while looking at them. Colours that are too similar will quickly disappear into each other. Colours that are exactly opposite will be fuzzy at the edges where they meet.

Also, contrasts of brown/green, and red/green should be avoided as they are the colours most colour blind people have difficulty with.

Elevation – an elevation is a drawing of a building as if someone had cut it like a cake. It is different from other architectural plans, which are floorplans

Nosings – nosings are the edges of steps

Pictogram – this is a picture that gives you information (see pxxx).

It can be on a leaflet, a signpost, a door etc.

Some pictograms are everywhere, like a cigarette with a red line through it for “no smoking”, or a stickman in a wheelchair for “wheelchair accessible”.

Pictograms help people with learning disabilities to find their way around. They can also be helpful to visually impaired people and people who don't speak/read much English.

Plain English – this is talking or writing that is easy to understand. With short sentences. And few adjectives and adverbs (descriptive words like frilly, silly, hard, quickly).

Tactile surfaces – tactile surfaces are raised surfaces, usually on the ground that give a clue about your environment. They are designed to help blind and visually impaired people.

Corduroy surfaces denote a hazard – they are usually found at the top and bottom of flights of steps, close to the edge of a railway platform etc. The corduroy surface is usually black rubber.

Bubbled surfaces are used to show there are crossings. They are usually pink or beige in colour. High bubbles are easier for blind people with diabetes to feel (as they tend to have less feeling in their feet), but the higher the bubble, the more difficult or painful it can be for wheelchair users and ambulant disabled people.

Tactile surfaces are best if they are also colour contrasted, so that more people are aware of them – those surfaces that *blend in* are not as useful.

The Disability Discrimination Act (1995)

The Disability Discrimination Act has sections on Employment, Education and the provision of goods, services and facilities.

Since most access work is concerned with part 3 of the DDA, this section will focus on that and the accompanying code of practice that looks at the provision of goods, services and facilities.

Since 2 **December 1996** it has been unlawful for service providers to treat disabled people less favourably for a reason related to their disability

Since 1 **October 1999** they have had to make 'reasonable adjustments' to their policies, procedures and practices so that disabled people can access their service.

This means that service providers are already expected to:

- change a **practice, policy or procedure** which makes it impossible or unreasonably difficult for disabled people to make use of its services;
- provide an **auxiliary aid or service** if it would enable (or make it easier for) disabled people to make use of its services;
- provide a reasonable **alternative method** of making its services available to disabled people where a **physical feature** makes it impossible or unreasonably difficult for disabled people to make use of the services.

From 1 **October 2004** they have to make '**reasonable adjustments**' to the physical features of premises to overcome barriers to access. This means they must:

remove the feature; or
alter it so that it no longer has that effect; or
provide a reasonable means of **avoiding** it; or
provide a reasonable alternative method of making the services available

Service Providers are anyone who provides a service to the public or a section of the public. So most services are covered. There are a few exceptions: private clubs where there is a proper selection process for members, and transport.

Also there are special rules for insurance providers. These are outlined in the Part III Code of Practice, which is available as a free download on the Disability Rights Commission website: www.drc-gb.org .

The Code of Practice gives excellent guidance on Access and the DDA, it is worth getting a copy and using it as a resource.

Physical features include steps, stairways, kerbs, exterior surfaces and paving, parking areas, building entrances and exits (including emergency escape routes), internal and external doors, gates, toilet and washing facilities, public facilities (such as telephones, counters or service desks), lighting and ventilation, lifts and escalators.

They can include things outside the building like seating in the street or a pub garden, stiles and paths in a country park, fixed signs in a shop or a leisure facility.

'reasonable adjustments' is a term open to question, but the DRC Code of Practice, which is to be taken account of when Courts make decisions, advises that what is reasonable will be based on:

- Type of service
- Size of the business and annual turnover.
- Cost of the adjustment.
- Disruption to the business while the work is being carried out.
- Practicality of carrying out the adjustment.
- Potential benefits to the customer.

So it may be that the service provider does not have to physically remove the barrier, if it is deemed unreasonably expensive. The service provider will be expected to find another way of providing the service that *overcomes* that barrier though.

Service providers are expected to anticipate the reasonable adjustments they may need to make and plan ahead, even though the section of the Act about physical features doesn't come into force until 2004.

The DRC Code of Practice recommends that this forward planning includes doing access audits. It also recommends consulting local disabled groups. The DRC code of practice for Part III of the DDA gives guidance on what reasonable adjustments should be made.

It is based on Part M of the Building Regulations.

Some newer buildings already meet the building regulations, including Part M. Where this is the case there may still be a duty under the DDA, as the Part M doesn't cover things like parking spaces, weight of doors, colour contrasts, position of emergency pull cord etc.

The Part III Code of Practice gives full information on what the building regulations cover, with examples of what adjustments should be made. It is a good document to consult if you are not sure.

Measurements - Part M (+)

In the UK, there are rules about access measurements for new buildings, these are called Part M of the Building Regulations.

This law tells people about the basic needs for a building to be accessible to disabled people.

Sometimes a building may do what the law says, but still not be accessible to some disabled people, but Part M is used as guidance by the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA).

Part M of the Building Regulations is being altered at the moment. The new version will be out soon.

At the moment, these are the part M guidelines:

Ramps 1:15 minimum, 1:20 preferred, non-slip surface

Width 1200mm

Raised kerb of 100mm on any open side

Door width 1000mm Internal doors, glazed strip at 900-1500mm door handles: 1000mm

Stairs/steps: 1000mm+ wide; step: 280mm+ tread, step height 150mm or less

Handrails: 50mm diameter, starting 1000mm from floor on landings 900mm from step, handrail should extend at least 300mm beyond top and bottom of ramp or top and bottom step nosings, with a closed end.

Steps should have closed risers.

Lifts: Clear 1500mm turning circle outside

Buttons at 900mm-1200mm, control panel, with tactile floor identification.

Handrail at 900mm

opening width at least 800mm

size of lift at least: 1100x 1400mm

Platform lift: 1200x1200mm (**BS6440**)

Corridors at least 1200mm wide

Accessible Toilets 1000mm clear opening space

1250mm turning circle inside

Toilet 450-475mm from ground

Rails: horizontal: 750mm, vertical: 800-1400mm

basin, flush, dispensers all reachable from toilet

Height of buttons, switches, 900-1300mm

Parking bays 2400mm parking bay with a 1200mm access strip on driver side.

Back access strip of 1400mm (this is not part M, which doesn't cover parking, but it is part of **BS8300**)

Accessible website design

Text

Use a sans serif typeface like Arial as it is easier to read for visually impaired people. A large font equivalent to Arial 14 is a good size – the alternative is to have a Large Print button at the top of the home page. The text should be colour-contrasted with its surrounds – like black/white, yellow/blue, green/white. Many visually impaired people find it easier to read *reverse* coloured text – eg white characters (#FFFFFF), racing green (#006600) background. The visited links colour should be a different colour and shade, so that people with colour-blindness or other visual impairments can distinguish it.

Images

Pictures/pictograms/icons help many people with learning disabilities, but can be a hindrance to people using voice software like Dolphin (text-reader software). Where pictures are included, make sure the alt tags say what they are or what they do (eg: click here for Toyota cars)

Frames

Frames are about the most unhelpful thing for blind and visually impaired people, firstly because it is not easy to see what is going on, secondly, because most Text Reader software works from left to right (in the West), so someone using Dolphin may be jumping from frame to frame and what they hear won't make sense.

Tables

Tables are usually a good way of keeping your information or images in specific areas.

Forms

Web-based forms can usually be read by text readers, but it's worthwhile including a "print" button, for people who can't use the online version.

Document downloads

pdf files can be read by text readers like Jaws, if they are written in Adobe Acrobat 5 or above.

Structure

A logical and easy-to-follow structure may be the most important thing in making a website accessible:

Avoid clutter

Keep the homepage as simple as possible

Pay particular attention to how you map out the site – the fewer clicks for a person to get to the information they want, the better – it is a resource not a Treasure Hunt

Useful contacts

This is not a complete list.

It is an annotated starting point for suppliers of access related equipment or adaptations.

All the suppliers listed provide DDA compliant equipment.

Evacuation Chairs

These are collapsible chairs that enable someone to transfer a wheelchair user down stairs in the event of an emergency.

The wheelchair user needs to be able to get into the evacuation chair (with assistance).

Paraid 0121 7066744
Parade House, Weston Lane, Birmingham, B11 3RS

Stairlifts

www.sslaccess.co.uk

Loop Systems

Loop systems can be fixed or portable. They should be put at reception desks, meeting rooms etc, so that wearers of hearing aids can hear better when they switch their aid to the T setting.

RNID Sound Advice 01733 232607
www.rnid.org.uk

Braille and tactile Signs

Braille and embossed signs are useful by the side of doors.

NES 01206 843200
www.nes-solutions.co.uk

Touchtype signs 01934 642642
www.touchtypesigns.com

Ironmongery

Handrails, door handles etc that are disability friendly. Including door furniture as well as toilet adaptations.

Hewi 01634 269555
www.hewi.co.uk