

WRITING YOUR ACCESS STATEMENT: ATTRACTION AND ACTIVITY PROVIDERS

Good business means anticipating your customers wants and needs, and this includes the needs of disabled customers and their friends and family. We've set up this checklist to assist you in writing your Access Statement, but it is not exhaustive as there will be items that are individual to each activity and attraction.

Think broadly about a range of impairments, such as; mobility impairments including stick users and wheelchair users, visual impairments, hearing impairments, arthritis and limited dexterity, mental health, learning difficulties, learning disabilities.

The Equality Act 2017 makes it unlawful for a service provider to treat another person less favourably than they would treat another because of one of the characteristics protected by the Act. Those characteristics are sexual orientation, sex, transgender, race, religion or belief, age or disability. It is also unlawful to treat another person unfavourably because of their pregnancy or maternity or for a reason connected to a person's disability. The Act also **requires a service provider to take positive steps to ensure that disabled people can access their services**. This is called the duty to make reasonable adjustments. This may include the formats used by a service provider to offer information, such as large print; the change to a physical feature such as providing a temporary ramp, doorbell or marking the edge of a step in a contrasting colour; or providing an induction loop for hearing impaired people or audio visual fire alarms. It is not possible to anticipate the needs of every individual, but you are required to think about and take reasonable steps to overcome those barriers. By carrying out an access audit of your service and then preparing an access statement, a disabled person is able to make a decision whether your service is accessible to them. In doing this, you are opening up your potential market to a wider audience.

The disability provisions in the Equality Act 2017 replace and repeal the Disability Discrimination Act 2006.

Even where layout and architecture limit the opportunities for disabled access, staff training can make a huge difference in providing a fantastic customer experience. Take a moment to imagine you are a customer – take a typical journey through your activity or attraction and imagine you are entering for the first time. How do you find the site – what signs should you look out for? What do you need to know ahead of time? What level of access is there or what is the terrain like if outdoors and how easily can you access the facilities you need?

There are many more guides for further reading – for links to these or assistance in writing your Access Statement, please visit the Visit Isle of Man Trade website or contact the Business Development team at tourismquality@gov.im

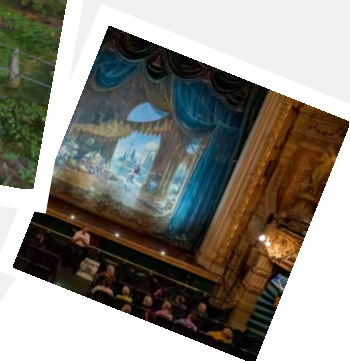


Photo credits: Laxey Woolen Mills, Ape Mann, Villa Gaiety

The access statement is the responsibility of the Tourism Service Provider and each establishment will be different. This statement helps the customer make an informed decision about whether a site will meet their requirements and suit their needs. The following has been drawn up as a guide, but is in no way exhaustive. Consider including the following in your Access Statement:

Pre-Arrival:

- Are you easy to find online or in tourism guides?
- Does your website or social media list your full contact details, address and opening hours?
- Current updates: Do you use social media to inform customers of any live updates such as temporary closures?
- Consider including photos of the premises; this may be helpful for people with learning disabilities or tourists who are not familiar with the area.
- Do you offer concessions or discounts? For example students, older people or carers? Are these clearly advertised?
- Do you offer different ability levels and are these clearly defined?

Getting to your site:

- A map with clear directions.
- Public Transport Routes – what is the best way to reach you? Are you located on a bus route? Is the walk up a steep hill?
- Parking: Are there designated accessible bays or drop off areas for disabled customers? If so, how close are they to the entrance?
- Is the approach to your establishment flat, or does it have steps? Do you have a ramp? Is the ground suitably even?
- Is your attraction or activity clearly signposted?
- Do you communicate full details to your meeting point or attraction or have a clear map?

Entering the site:

- Are there steps to the entrance? If so, how many?
- Do you have automatic, or handle doors?
- Is there ramp or step-free access into the building? Do you have handrails for assistance?

During the visit or taking part in the activity

- Is safety equipment or clothing provided?
- How long is the session or tour? What distance do you travel? Are there rest stops?
- Are instructions or information clearly written and easy to read? Do you have large print copy, a copy in brail, or are staff able to read it aloud?
- Are there seating areas and refreshments available on site?
- Is there level access throughout the visitor experience or is there another route for wheelchair users or those with limited mobility? If so, is this clear?
- If visitors cannot access certain areas – can you provide photographs, a video or a virtual reality tour?
- How well lit are certain areas?
- For audio do you have a hearing loop?
- Do you use subtitles on all video presentations?

Bathroom Facilities

- How do guests access the toilet or bathroom – is there level access? Is there a designated toilet for wheelchair users?
- Do you provide clear signage to inform visitors of the location of the facilities? Is there baby-changing facilities?
- Are hand rails fitted in the bathroom?
- Is there a pull-cord for emergencies?

Other Things to Consider

- Use visuals and photos in your access guide
- Do you have an on-site café or is food included? Do you offer options for those with special dietary needs? See our guidance for eateries
- Does the information you provide have good contrast? Check your contrast by ensuring that your backgrounds are dark with light text, or vice versa.
- Are any of your staff trained in sign language or disability awareness? Do you have any training or knowledge gaps which could be addressed?
- Is a member of your team championing accessibility at your attraction and addressing ways it could be improved?
- Do you provide secure storage such as lockers for visitors belongings?

Useful Statements to use in your Access Statement:

- Regrettably, our premises are not suitable for wheelchair users as there isn't level access throughout the Visitor experience.
- Please contact us to discuss any requests or requirements that we may be able to assist with and we will endeavour to accommodate.
- We do not accept pets, however if you wish to bring your assistance dog, please contact us to discuss your requirements.