

WRITING YOUR ACCESS STATEMENT: ACCOMMODATION

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 will be items that are individual to each accommodation.

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 accommodation property and imagine you are entering for the first time. How do you find the property – what signs should you look out for? What do you need to know ahead of time? Are there any mobility aids, 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

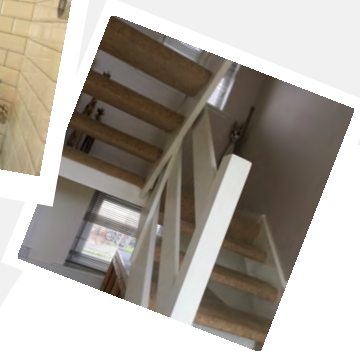
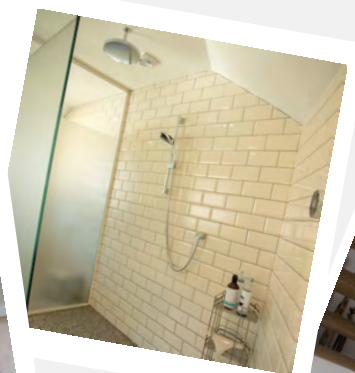


Photo credits: Salmon River Apartments, Stumbleholme, Sea View Apartment

The access statement is the responsibility of the accommodation and will vary from property to property. This statement helps the customer make an informed decision about whether a property 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 a photo of the premises; this may be helpful for people with learning disabilities or tourists who are not familiar with the area.

Getting to your property:

- 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 driveway to your property flat, or does it have steps? Do you have a ramp? Is the ground suitably even?
- Is your property clearly signposted?

Entering the property:

- 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?
- If you have a reception area, is there enough space for wheelchair users? Is there somewhere to sit for the less able?
- In the evening, is there sufficient lighting outside the property?

Getting around:

- Is there level access in and around the property?
- Is access offered by ramps or lifts?
- In self-catering units, is there sufficient space at tables for a wheelchair user to access comfortably?
- If you have outdoor facilities such as a terrace or patio, how is this accessed?
- Do you provide clear signage to inform your guests of location of facilities, hazards etc?

Bathroom Facilities:

- How do guests access the toilet or bathroom – is there level access? Is there a designated toilet for wheelchair users?
- Are hand rails fitted in the bathroom?
- Is there a pull-cord for emergencies?
- How would a guest with mobility needs access the bath or shower?

Other things to consider for your accommodation:

- Do you have any services for guests with hearing impairments, such as a text telephone, telephone with flashing light, a call system with vibrating pads (eg for fire/smoke alarms or front door)?
- Do you have an induction loop?
- Do you have any services for guests with visual impairments - for example, contrast markings on glass doors & full-height windows, guest information in large print format?
- Are you able to cater for specialist dietary requirements? If so, do you require notice to do so?

Useful Statements to use in your Access Statement:

- Regrettably, our premises/cottages/apartments are not suitable for wheelchair users, due to the door width, bedrooms being located on the 1st and 2nd floor.
- 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.