

# WRITING YOUR ACCESS STATEMENT: TASTE

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 restaurant or café and imagine you are entering for the first time. How do you find your eatery? What do you need to know ahead of time? Are menus easy to read and 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](mailto:tourismquality@gov.im)



Photo credits: Tanroagan, The Shed, Noa Bakehouse

The access statement is the responsibility of the Taste establishment and each establishment will be different. 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 or even the dishes features on your menu; 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?

#### 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 establishment flat, or does it have steps? Do you have a ramp? Is the ground suitably even?
- Is your property clearly signposted?
- Does your restaurant/eatery have clear and legible signage?

#### 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?
- Is there enough space in your lobby for wheelchair users?
- In the evening, is there sufficient lighting outside the property?

#### Getting around:

- Is there level access in and around the eatery?
- 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 not, can staff assist - for example, by taking away a chair to make space?
- 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?

#### Other things to consider for your accommodation:

- Is your menu clearly written and easy to read, for example by those with visual impairments? If not, do you offer a large print copy, a copy in brail, or are staff able to read it aloud?
- Do you have an induction loop?
- Are any of your staff trained in sign language?
- 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 toilets are situated on the first floor and are therefore unsuitable for wheelchair users.
- 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 usually accept pets, however we welcome service dogs and are able to provide space next to your table.