

Accessible Venues Guidance – Foreword

Foreword by Jane Hutt AM, Minister for Business, Equalities and Children

At some point in our lives, all of us face barriers that prevent us from fulfilling our potential and needless to say, these barriers are greater for some people than others. Recent changes to disability legislation has extended rights of access and has also rightly increased disabled people's expectations of the level of service they should now expect to receive when attending meetings and large scale events.



It is vital that we, as the Welsh Assembly Government, and our partners throughout the public sector in Wales take the lead and act as an exemplar to ensure that disabled people are able to participate in society. I am therefore pleased to announce that we have developed a good practice Accessible Venues Guidance document as a result of a recommendation of the Voluntary Sector Partnership Council. The guidance aims to promote good practice amongst organisations that arrange public events.

The development of the Accessible Venues guidance is an important achievement. This unique on-line guidance should be used as a tool by venue providers for assessing how best to meet the needs of disabled people. For example, by venue providers commissioning comprehensive audits of their premises and issuing access statements will, hopefully demonstrate to disabled people and venue organisers a like a real commitment to achieving accessibility.

I would like to thank the representatives from the Disability Rights Commission, Disability Wales, the JMU Access Partnership (RNIB) and the Wales Council for the Blind all of who gave up their time to help take this forward. I am grateful to them all for all their hard work and determination in producing this document.

I have no doubt that this guidance will contribute towards the Assembly Government's vision of creating a more inclusive society in Wales, where everyone has the opportunity to reach their full potential.

Jane Hutt

Accessible Venues Guidance – Introduction

In recent years a wealth of disability equality legislation has been introduced by the UK government to enhance the rights of disabled people and to create a more inclusive society. The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA 1995) aims to end discrimination against disabled people and offer protection in the areas of employment, education, access to goods, facilities and services and the management, buying or renting of property.

In relation to access to goods facilities and services, the final duties under Part 3 of the DDA was introduced on 1 October 2004. This imposed a legal requirement on service providers to make reasonable adjustments to the physical features of their premises to overcome physical barriers to access.

The Welsh Assembly Government recognises that if disabled people are to fully participate in society they require equal access to goods, services and premises. It is the intention of the Assembly to create a more inclusive society, where everyone has the opportunity to achieve to the best of their ability regardless of their disability, age gender, sexual orientation, religion or race. In terms of disability we will be producing a Disability Equality Scheme (DES), setting out how we intend to promote equality of opportunity for disabled people.

Also, in 2002 the Welsh Assembly Government adopted the Social Model of Disability as the foundation for all its work on disability. The model sets the barriers faced by disabled people in their social context, it suggests that it is not disabled people who are a problem because they are different, but it's society's failure to accommodate that difference which amounts to discrimination

In January 2005, Jane Hutt, Assembly Business Minister, established the Accessible Venues Working Group to promote good practice amongst organisations that organise public events and to develop a programme of action that will result in the Welsh Assembly Government and its partners routinely using accessible venues for all public meetings and events. The Welsh Assembly Government has worked with a number of disability related voluntary sector organisations and utilised their respective experience and expertise in order to inform the production of the guidance.

All specifications & technical guidance based on BS8300:2001 (Incorporating Amendment No.1 – June 2005)

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This guidance is designed for use by all venue providers in a positive attempt to improve accessibility for disabled people. It should be used as a tool for assessing how best to meet the needs of disabled people and for providing a service that goes beyond the current legal minimum requirements set out in Part M of the building regulations. The grading standard used in the guidance is detailed below and is subject to any change in regulation standards. It can be classified as follows:

Minimum: An organisation reaching this level on all points will be meeting the minimum standard necessary to ensure equal access for disabled people to their premises. For example, that at least one correctly designed, accessible unisex toilet is provided within the building.

Good: This grading is issued to organisations that go beyond the minimum standards and who wish to strive for good practice in meeting the needs of disabled people. For example, that the correctly designed accessible toilets are on the same floor as the conference hall and syndicate rooms.

Best: An organisation will offer a comprehensive service to disabled people and have an excellent understanding of how best to meet their needs. For example, for every set of male and female toilets there is a correctly designed accessible toilet.

This guidance is not intended to be a comprehensive checklist, but to highlight a number of key points for venue providers to consider that will help them in assessing how to best meet the needs of disabled people. It will enable them to determine what adjustments, if any, need to be made to their premises in order to offer an exemplar service and progress through the grading standard. WAG recognises that different venue providers will achieve differing levels of access depending on a number of factors. This guidance will play its part in helping disabled people obtain the access to services to which they are entitled, resulting in their full participation and inclusion in society.

Accessibility Guidelines for Venue Providers

Subject	Grading Standard			
1. Car Parking	Minimum	Good	Best	Notes
1.1	There is designated parking for disabled people available on site.			Spaces required may vary depending on the conference/event. These will need to be reserved and regularly monitored.
1.2	There is a sufficient number of designated parking spaces available and they can be reserved.			For detailed specifications & technical guidance on car parking please refer to: <i>Designing for Accessibility</i> Pages 13 – 14 Or click on the following link www.accesscode.info/external/5_16.htm
1.3	The designated parking spaces are of sufficient width to allow wheelchair users to get in and out of the vehicle (with sufficient space either side of the car and at the rear).			See above.

1.4	The designated parking is clearly signed from the site entrance to the parking space.			For recommended signage click on the following link www.accesscode.info/buildings/5_16.htm
1.5	When designated parking is above or below the reception level, there is a ramp, platform or passenger lift from the car park to reception.			For detailed specifications & technical guidance please refer to: <i>Designing for Accessibility</i> Pages 21 – 22, 41 – 44 Or click on the following links www.accesscode.info/buildings/6_2.htm www.accesscode.info/buildings/6_7.htm www.accesscode.info/buildings/6_7c.htm
1.6	There is a clear route with level access from the car park to the reception and it is of appropriate width.			For detailed specifications & technical guidance please refer to: <i>Designing for Accessibility</i> Pages 16 – 20 Or click on the following link www.accesscode.info/buildings/6_1.htm

1.7			Designated under cover car parking spaces are provided.	
1.8	The designated parking spaces and the path to the site have smooth/slip resistant surfaces.			
1.9	The car park area is illuminated.			
1.10			There is a telephone/text phone number that disabled drivers can ring when they get near to the venue to access the designated parking spaces.	
1.11			Valet parking can be provided.	

1.12	Assistance can be provided to visitors if they are dropped off at the entrance.			Please refer to <i>Designing for Accessibility</i> Page 15
2. Entrances	Minimum	Good	Best	Notes
2.1	The entrance is clearly signed, easily identifiable and is of an appropriate design to enable easy access.			For detailed specifications & technical guidance please refer to: <i>Designing for Accessibility</i> Pages 26 – 32 Or click on the following link www.accesscode.info/buildings/6_5.htm
2.2.		Disabled visitors can enter the building by the same entrance as other visitors without assistance.		In some instances altering the physical features of a building may not be possible or permitted, for example, if the building is listed. In these cases alternative adjustments are required.
2.3	If not, there is an entrance of an equal standard that is accessible to all users.			

<p>2.4</p>	<p>If there are steps, there are handrails to both sides and tactile paving and nosings are fitted.</p>			<p>For detailed specifications & technical guidance please refer to:</p> <p><i>Designing for Accessibility</i> Pages 23 –25</p> <p>Or click on the following links www.accesscode.info/buildings/6_3.htm www.accesscode.info/buildings/6_4.htm</p> <p>If there are steps a platform lift should also be provided – see note 6 below.</p>
<p>2.5</p>	<p>If reception is above or below entrance level, there is a ramp, platform or passenger lift.</p>			<p>For detailed specifications & technical guidance please refer to:</p> <p><i>Designing for Accessibility</i> Pages 40 – 44</p> <p>Or click on the following links www.accesscode.info/buildings/6_2d.htm</p>

				www.accesscode.info/buildings/6_7.htm www.accesscode.info/buildings/6_7c.htm
2.6	If the lift is out of service there are alternative arrangements in place.			
3. Reception Desk	Minimum	Good	Best	Notes
3.1	Reception is clearly signed and easily identifiable.			Please refer to: <i>Designing for Accessibility</i> Page 33
3.2	A section of the reception desk is at a height suitable for wheelchair users.			Please refer to: <i>Designing for Accessibility</i> Pages 51 – 52 Or click on the following link www.accesscode.info/buildings/6_12.htm
3.3	If not, an alternative desk can be used for all delegates			
3.4	Hearing enhancement systems are present at reception and clearly signed			Please refer to: <i>Designing for Accessibility</i> Page 53, 59 – 60

				Or click on the following link www.accesscode.info/buildings/6_14.htm
3.5	There is adequate lighting so the receptionists face can be clearly seen.			This is important to people who are Deaf or hard of hearing who need to lip read and also to prevent glare for partially sighted people.
3.6		Frontline staff have received the appropriate disability awareness training for specific impairments.		
3.7			On going Training in disability awareness to be provided	
4. Accessible Toilets	Minimum	Good	Best	Notes
4.1	There is at least one accessible unisex toilet within the building that complies with Approved			For detailed specifications & technical guidance please refer to:

	Document Part M of building regulations.			<p><i>Designing for Accessibility</i> Pages 45 – 49</p> <p>Or click on the following link www.accesscode.info/buildings/6_9.htm</p>
4.2		There are accessible toilets designed for disabled people on the same floor as the main conference hall and syndicate rooms		There needs to be a minimum of one accessible toilet available.
4.3			There is more than one accessible toilet. ³	<p>If there is more than one accessible WC these should be a combination of left and right- hand transfer.</p> <p>For every set of male and female toilets, there is an accessible toilet.</p>

³ For every set of male and female toilets in the building there is an accessible toilet

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4.4			Adult changing facilities are provided	(3500mm*2000mm compartment plus WC changing bench & hoist) www.accesscode.info/buildings/6_10.htm
5. Conference Rooms	Minimum	Good	Best	Notes
5.1	The main conference rooms are easily accessible and are adequately signed from the entrance ¹ .			
5.2	The acoustics in the main conference room are suitable for the event.			Please see acoustics and sound section.
5.3	If there are Syndicate rooms, they are easily accessible, clearly signed and close to the main conference rooms. ²			

¹ This may include a ground floor conference room or a lift to an upper floor.

² They are on the same floor as the conference room.

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5.4	There is sufficient circulation space for members of the audience and speakers.			Please refer to: <i>Designing for Accessibility</i> Page 34
5.5	The raised area or podium is wheelchair accessible			
5.6		Lecterns or other fittings and controls are adjustable to a variety of heights		
5.7	There are good sight lines to allow lip reading and sign language interpretation.			Please see lighting section
6. Passage and Doors	Minimum	Good	Best	Notes
6.1	All routes between facilities are an adequate width and are unobstructed.			This includes temporary obstructions such as boxes along corridors.
6.2	Routes are clearly defined using contrast and are well lit.			

6.3	Lobbies have adequate space for wheelchair users to manoeuvre.			There should be space for a wheelchair user to clear one door before approaching the second door.
6.4	All internal doors are an adequate width.			
6.5	All internal doors are clearly distinguishable from their surrounds.			This includes markings on glazed doors.
6.6	The door pressure on internal doors is kept to a minimum.			
6.7		Internal doors are kept open on electromagnetic hold-open devices and are linked to the fire alarm.		
6.8	All doors include vision panels.			

6.9	Door furniture is easy to operate, is at an appropriate height and is clearly distinguishable from the door.			
7. Lifts	Minimum	Good	Best	Notes
7.1	The lift doors (including lifts from the car park) are wide enough for a wheelchair			For detailed specifications & technical guidance on lifts please refer to: <i>Designing for Accessibility</i> Pages 41 – 42 Or click on the following link www.accesscode.info/buildings/6_7.htm
7.2	The lift can be easily distinguished by visual contrast from the surroundings			
7.3	The lift is big enough for a large wheelchair and at least one other person.			See above.

7.4			The lift car is large enough to allow easy access for all.	A lift car of 2000mm by 1400mm will accommodate any type of wheelchair together with several other passengers and allows wheelchair users and people with walking aids to turn through 180 degrees. See above for technical specifications.
8. Stairs	Minimum	Good	Best	Notes
8.1	If there are stairs, they are appropriately designed and there is adequate lighting.			For detailed specifications & technical guidance please refer to: <i>Designing for Accessibility</i> Page 40 Or click on the following link www.accesscode.info/buildings/6_3.htm
8.2	If there are stairs, there are handrails on both sides and nosings are fitted			See above.

9. Seating	Minimum	Good	Best	Notes
9.1	Chairs are comfortable for sitting for extended periods and at least some of the chairs have arms.			For detailed specifications & technical guidance please refer to: <i>Designing for Accessibility</i> Page 50 Or click on the following link www.accesscode.info/buildings/6_11.htm
9.2	All chairs are movable. i.e there is sufficient space to allow wheelchairs to circulate.			
9.3		A quiet space can be provided for people who need to lie down		
10. Acoustics and Sound	Minimum	Good	Best	Notes
10.1		There is a permanent built in hearing enhancement system in the main conference and syndicate rooms.		Please refer to: <i>Designing for Accessibility</i> Pages 59 – 60 Or click on the following link www.accesscode.info/buildings/6_14.htm

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10.2	There is a portable induction loop system available for use in the main conference and syndicate rooms.			
10.3		There is a microphone and sound system available in the conference and syndicate rooms.		
10.4		Effective insulation exists between rooms or separated workspaces.		
11.Lighting	Minimum	Good	Best	Notes
11.1.	The level of the lighting in the main conference and syndicate rooms is adequate and adjustable			Please refer to: <i>Designing for Accessibility</i> Page 58 Or click on the following link www.accesscode.info/buildings/6_20.htm

11.2	If the level of lighting is to be reduced during presentations, spot lighting solutions can be provided for interpreters and lip readers.			
12. Air Quality	Minimum	Good	Best	Notes
12.1.	The air quality is good in the main conference and syndicate rooms			
12.2		There is air conditioning and it can be adjusted if necessary on the day.		Ensure that it does not negatively affect the hearing enhancement system or interfere with good acoustics.
13. Catering Facilities	Minimum	Good	Best	Notes
13.1	The room where meals will be served is accessible.			
13.2	There is a clear route to the eating area from the main conference hall.			Please refer to: <i>Designing for Accessibility</i> Page 34 Or click on the following link www.accesscode.info/buildings/6_6c.htm

13.3	There is sufficient room between tables for wheelchairs			See above.
13.4	The tables are of a suitable height for wheelchair users.			Please refer to: <i>Designing for Accessibility</i> Pages 51 – 52 Or click on the following link www.accesscode.info/buildings/6_12.htm
13.5	Assistance is available for disabled people who might request it.			For example, this should include assisting visually impaired people choose their preferred food if requested.
13.6	The room where lunch will be served can accommodate some chairs and tables for people who cannot eat standing up, and/or a separate seating area can be provided.			

14. Dietary Needs	Minimum	Good	Best	Notes
14.1	The venue can cater for people with special dietary requirements and needs. i.e. there is food available that guests can eat with their fingers rather than cutlery.			
14.2	All food/ingredients can be clearly labelled to meet the needs of people with specific dietary requirements.			
15. Emergency Evacuation Procedures	Minimum	Good	Best	Notes
15.1	There are procedures in place for consulting with disabled people on evacuation, including wheelchair users, in an emergency.			Please refer to: <i>Designing for Accessibility</i> Page 63 Or click on the following link www.accesscode.info/buildings/6_15.htm

15.2	A copy of the procedures is provided to the delegates in advance of the conference/event.			
15.3			If a multi-story building, there is an emergency evacuation lift and there are procedures for its use by disabled people.	For further information, please click on the following link www.accesscode.info/buildings/6_15.htm
15.4		If there are fire refuges, there is a two-way communication system (audio & visual) so the person in the refuge can communicate with the evacuation manager.		For further information, please click on the following link www.accesscode.info/buildings/6_15.htm

15.5	If escape route is via stairs, for example an evacuation chair could be provided in the refuge and staff are fully trained in its use.			
15.6	All external fire exits are accessible to disabled people, with level thresholds.			
15.7	The fire alarms are dual signal offering both audio & visual warnings.			For further information, please click on the following link www.accesscode.info/buildings/6_15.htm
15.8		There is supplementary emergency lighting (way finding system) to help disabled people find their way out of the building in an emergency.		

15.9			It is a powered System	
15.10	Venue staff will be available to help evacuate disabled delegates and facilitators, and these staff have had appropriate training.			
16. Guest Rooms	Minimum	Good	Best	Notes
16.1	There is accessible accommodation in close proximity to the building where the conference is taking place.			Bathroom and bedroom facilities should be fully accessible with sufficient space for wheelchair users. For specifications, please click on the following link www.accesscode.info/buildings/6_17.htm
16.2		There is fully accessible accommodation available on site.		The minimum requirement is one accessible bedroom.

16.3		If accommoda- tion can be arranged, 3-5 accessible bedrooms can be offered.		
16.4			If accommo- -tion can be arranged, 5-10 accessible bedrooms can be offered.	
17. Assistance Dogs	Minimum	Good	Best	Notes
17.1	Guide dogs or other assistance dogs are accepted, including in the restaurant, if this is to be used.			
17.2	They can have access to water			
17.3	There is an open space for them to exercise.	There is an open space for them to exercise on grass.		

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Further information on good practice guidance and web sites.

Guidance Documents

(Welsh Historic Monuments) (2002), *Overcoming the Barriers, Providing Physical Access to Historic Buildings*. CADW

Centre for Accessible Environments (2003), *Making Your Conference Accessible*.

Disability Wales (2001) - *Conference Planning Checklist*.

Disability Rights (Northern Ireland) (2004) *Organising Accessible Events*. TSO

Disability Rights Commission (2004) - *Open 4 All Campaign Guidance for Guest Accommodation Providers*. TSO

Approved Part M, *Building Regulations (2004)*

This document provides practical guidance with respect to the requirements of Schedule 1 to regulation 7 of the Building Regulations 2000 for England and Wales. It is intended to provide guidance for some of the more common building situations, although alternative solutions could be used.

RADAR (2000) 2nd ed. *Conferences and Exhibition Venues. A Guide to Facilities for Disabled People*.

Web sites

Cadw (Welsh Historic Monuments)
www.cadw.wales.gov.uk

Centre for Accessible Environments
www.cae.org.uk

Disability Wales
www.dwac.demon.co.uk

Disability Rights Commission
www.drc-gb.org.uk

Disabled Go
www.disabledgo.co.uk

National Register of Access Consultants
www.nrac.org.uk

RADAR
www.radar.co.uk

Royal Institute of British Architects
www.riba.org.uk

Tourism for All
www.tourismforall.info

Venueslive
www.Venues.co.uk

WalesTourist Board
www.visitwales.com

JMU Access Partnership
www.jmuaccess.org.uk

Wales Council for the Blind
www.wcb-ccd.org.uk