

A GUIDE FOR ACCESSIBILITY

Making Your Business Accessible for Customers



THE RAMP PEOPLE

Superior Quality Ramps

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Why make your businesses accessible

We think that making life more accessible for those with disabilities should be a no brainer with benefits that are pretty self explanatory, but there is no denying that there are still many businesses that aren't accessible for all of their customers. If you're not sure why you should be making your business more accessible, then here's why.



THE POPULATION

An ageing population and growing disabled population means there are more people than ever that need accessibility.



THE MONEY

An increase in our disabled population means the purple pound is more valuable than ever, and a slice of it could be yours.



THE LAW

The Equality Act 2010 has expanded the scope of discrimination and now includes reasonable adjustments.

Different disabilities

Accessibility might bring to mind different things for different people. For people living with a visual impairment, accessibility means visual aids whereas many of us may think of ramps and handrails when we think about accessibility. To make your business truly accessible you'll need to think about the various types of disability that you may need to cater for.



MOBILITY



VISUAL



HEARING

Business accessibility best practices

Here are our top tips and best practices for making your business accessible to all customers. These tips cover audio, visual and mobility disabilities as well as some other general guidance. The great thing about these practices is most if not all are relatively affordable and easy to implement, plus many will be just as appreciated by people living without a disability as they simply make for a more welcoming environment.

The Equality Act 2010

Want to know more about what the Equality Act 2010 has to say about your accessibility responsibilities as a business?

[Find out more here >](#)



OUTSIDE

Parking

If you provide parking as part of your business operations you should make sure to mark one space as a disabled priority spot. If you have a small car park or just a couple of parking spots than you can put signage to indicate it should be considered a priority spot, so it may be used by those without a disability as well. Make it clear to customers on your website or with signs in your business that you can reserve the spot for people with a disability if they want to call ahead.



OUTSIDE

Entrance

Providing a warm welcome is a huge part of any business so your entryway is a vital first step in making your business accessible. Many people with a disability turn away at the first hurdle and you'll miss out on valuable customers not to mention gain a reputation for not being accessible. Look at any obstructions such as steps or narrow doorways and provide a solution, whether it's a permanent or temporary wheelchair ramp or finding a way to make more space at the entrance, for example installing double doors.

You should also provide plenty of signs in the front of your business that customers can see from the street to promote your various accessibility benefits. Anything that you provide to make life easier for those with a disability should be clearly displayed to let people know that you put accessibility first.

BUY AFFORDABLE WHEELCHAIR RAMPS

Get affordable temporary wheelchair ramps and even semi-permanent and Part M & Part K compliant ramps! Click anywhere on this banner to shop.

INSIDE

Space

Ensuring that there is enough space for customers to easily get around is great for everyone, not just those with mobility or visual disabilities.

Common accessibility barriers...

- 44% narrow stairs, doors & corridors
- 23% inadequate lifts or escalators
- 22% lack of ramps or handrails
- 21% parking problems



Make sure aisles are clear and leave plenty of space between furniture, shelving or other items inside and make sure to look out for anything that seems to be blocking the way or negatively impacting the space. Remember that wheelchairs will want plenty of room to turn around; if you struggle with space then consider making a one-way system or some type of path to help people get around easier.

INSIDE

Obstacles

As well as ensuring there is enough space around the floor areas you should also identify any other obstructions throughout the premises. Use a wheelchair to go around as there could be things you miss such as narrow corridors, doorways or small steps. Just like your entryway, look at temporary ramps for steps and obstacles and try to widen doorways where possible if they are especially narrow. If you can't improve structurally you may need to re-organise your layout to ensure wheelchair users can access everything they need without having to use these narrow areas. Use the checklist on the next page to help with your walk through.

If there are obstructions that you can't get rid of such as sharp corners, then do your best to highlight these hazards with signage and coloured warning tape to help people avoid potentially dangerous accidents.

INSIDE

Furniture

As well as the overall space don't forget to think about how the furniture itself might be a problem for certain disabilities, particularly for wheelchair users. Have a mixture of high and low tables so wheelchair users can use lower tables and remain in their chairs, and make sure chairs or other furniture is easy to move around as you may need to make room in certain areas at the last minute.

TOP TIP

Doors

During business hours think about leaving doors open as heavy doors are often a key barrier for wheelchair users or those with a mobility issue and can be a problem for the visually impaired as well. If you can't leave them open, then look at other ways to ensure they are easy to open such as using a lighter material or even installing an automated system if it's practical. Similarly, if you have an upstairs area and you need to provide access to those with a disability then you may need to install some type of lift.

INSIDE

Toilets

If you provide public toilet facilities in your business space, then it's vital you ensure that you either have a separate disabled toilet or one toilet that can be used by people with a disability. You'll need to make sure there is enough space for people to manoeuvre with wheelchairs or even with a carer as well as providing additional aids such as handrails and low sinks.

INSIDE

Signage

Signage is another aid that is useful for all customers, not just those with audio disabilities. Make sure you signpost important aspects of your business such as hazards, disabled toilets and any other assistance you can provide customers. For the signage itself be sure to use a 72-point sans-serif font like Verdana or Arial in a dark contrasting colour to the background to accommodate people with poorer vision, and we also recommend trying to provide Braille or raised letter signage for those that are blind. Where appropriate use images with your signs so people can also indicate with images. For example, pictures of the dishes on a menu.



INSIDE

Lighting & Noise

While mood lighting is great for creating ambience, it can, unfortunately, make things difficult for those with poorer vision and people with mobility impairments. Try and think practically and make sure there is plenty of light for people to see where they're going and read signs properly.

Background music can also be tempting for some businesses, but noise can be extremely off-putting for a wide range of disabilities including hearing impairments where it can be hard to distinguish different sounds. Try and limit background music as well as other background noise and experiment with the general acoustics to try and keep noise to a minimum. If you have TV screen or video in your business, you should use closed captioning for those who are hard-of-hearing or deaf which also has the added benefit of allowing you to keep the noise from the TV down.



3 in 4 disabled people have had to leave a shop or business because of accessibility issues

SERVICE

Point of sale

The point of sale, whether it's a reception area or checkout desk, is vital to your business and your customers. Often it's where the main communication and customer service takes place. It's therefore key that you make this area as welcoming and flexible as possible for various disabilities.

Look at using a completely mobile or extended cord debit card machine and ensure the machine has Braille on the keypad for blind customers. For those that are hard of hearing you could get a hearing loop for the business especially at your reception or another point of sale area. A hearing loop or audio induction loop provides a magnetic, wireless signal that can be picked up by hearing aids set to the Telecoil (T) setting to help them hear better. Additional signs, such as pictures of the cards you accept, can help you communicate with deaf people.

SERVICE

Employees

The ideal is to have someone trained in sign language or with a good knowledge of various disabilities but of course, this isn't usually the case. It is, however, possible to ensure staff are trained in the best protocol for disabled customers. Models like Approach, Ask, Assist can help employees understand the best way to approach these customers and offer help in a friendly way. This type of training is also vital to break down the barriers and misconceptions about disabilities which is beneficial for everyone.

Get help making your business accessible



There are plenty of charities and government organisations around that can provide training and help you understand the equipment and processes you can put in place to ensure your business is as accessible as possible. At the very least you should have an emergency plan including fire evacuation that includes the considerations of all types of disability. Again, your local fire department along with other government bodies will usually be more than happy to help you make your business safer for these customers.