

BUSINESS ACCESSIBILITY

The Equality Act 2010 in Practice

With an expert account from Philip Shaw,
Director at The Ramp People



Accessibility in practice

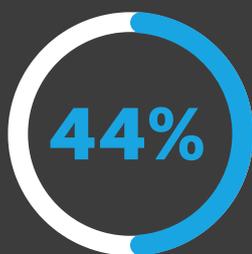
Accessibility is still a huge problem for many disabled people. Before we hear from an expert on how the law is being exercised to improve accessibility in the UK, take a look some current stats that highlight the challenges still faced by our disabled population.



3/4

of disabled people have left a shop or business because of accessibility problems

22% of disabled people have experience accessibility problems due to a lack of ramps or handrails



Narrow stairs, doors and corridors



Lack of ramps or handrails



Inadequate lifts or escalators



Disabled parking problems

The law in practice

Author: Philip Shaw, Director, The Ramp People

The Ramp People have been asked on a number of occasions to provide expert witness statements on behalf of claimants on various county courts in the UK. These cases are brought by wheelchair users who have tried to visit business like restaurants, estate agents and shops only to discover that there is no wheelchair access. The wheelchair users requests the provision of access and is told that there is no ramp facility available either portable or permanent.

The Equality Act 2010

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

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In these cases what tends to happen is the wheelchair user explains that under the 2010 Equality Act the business is obliged to provide wheelchair access. At this point the business owner either looks into the simple and cost effective provision of a portable ramp or digs their heels in and refuses. Where the latter occurs in some instances this goes to court.

Directors of The Ramp People have then assessed photos provided by the claimant and documented their recommendations for a portable ramp – in all instances that we have seen that have gone to court a ramp can be provided for less than £200, in most instances the cost is less than £100. Written statements to the county courts have then been provided.

To our knowledge the courts have awarded on the side of the claimant each and every time this has occurred. This goes to show that with some effort and lobbying the Equality Act 2010 can be seen to benefit wheelchair users and force businesses to provide reasonable wheelchair access.

We have only seen cases go to court where simple and cost effective ramp solutions would have been required, we suspect that where much longer and elaborate ramp solutions are required cases may not be successful but we would certainly be interested in hearing of any such cases.

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