



ACCESSIBLE TOURISM

TOOLKIT AND GUIDE

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WHAT IS ACCESSIBLE AND INCLUSIVE TOURISM?



The accessible (also known as inclusive) tourism market refers to anyone who has a specific access requirement such as people with hearing loss, visual impairment, learning differences, wheelchair users, older people, and families with young children.

Simply put, accessibility is all about removing barriers (for example physical, digital, relating to information and content, or attitudinal) to promote positive and equal experiences for all.

Accessibility is not only about human rights – it is a business opportunity for destinations and companies to embrace all visitors and enhance their revenues.

HOW WILL THIS TOOLKIT HELP?

- This toolkit will give you information on how you can help visitors with additional needs.
- The toolkit highlights some of the things you can do as a business to promote and develop accessible tourism and includes links to places where you can find more advice and help.

72%

OF DISABLED CUSTOMERS
ARE MORE LIKELY TO VISIT
NEW PLACES IF THEY FEEL
WELCOMED BY STAFF OR IF
VENUES APPEARS TO CARE
ABOUT ACCESSIBILITY

BENEFITS OF ACCESSIBLE AND INCLUSIVE TOURISM

There are many social and economic benefits of accessible and inclusive tourism!



LONGER BREAKS

People with accessibility needs often take longer holiday breaks than average and therefore tend to spend more money per trip.



HIGHER SPENDERS

Disabled and senior travellers spend significantly more when they go on holiday than other market groups.



INCREASED LOYALTY

Inclusive businesses have higher occupancy rates and a more loyal customer base who is keen to recommend them.



HUMAN RIGHTS

Everyone deserves to have a positive tourism experience!

Did you know? You are legally obliged under The Equality Act 2010 to ensure that your business or service is as accessible as possible. For more detailed information on the Act go to <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/equality-act-guidance>

TOP TEN ACCESSIBILITY TIPS



1. Provide an accessibility guide to your business on your website.



2. Make sure your signage is clear, free from obstruction and easy to read.



3. Train all your staff to make sure they are familiar with all your accessible facilities, services and equipment.



4. If you are an attraction, promote concessions for disabled customers and free personal assistant policies.



5. Appoint an accessibility champion.



6. Listen and engage with your customers. Provide accessible ways for disabled customers to give feedback, acting and responding promptly to comments



7. List your venue on Euan's Guide.



8. Fill up a water bowl for any assistance dogs.



9. Look after your accessible loo!



10. There's no harm in asking. Polite staff will have no trouble asking visitors if there is anything they can do to help, and this is encouraged!

TOP TIPS FOR IMPROVING YOUR CUSTOMER SERVICE



Exceptional customer service is important for all customers. But it is especially important for customers who may require specific services or facilities to enjoy your services.

Here are a few top tips:

- **Train your staff** to help them become confident in providing great service to all customers.
- **Ensure that your staff are aware** of your business' inclusive/accessible practices, policies, and facilities, and can confidently answer questions about them.
- **Take the time to understand your customer's needs** but don't make assumptions about the type of adjustments required. Instead ask "can I help?" or "how can I help?". Not all customers will want or require help.
- **Think about your customers:** For example, ensure that emergency evacuation plans are considerate of all customers and be ready to explain these procedures when required.
- **Ask your customers for feedback** to find out what think and use this to improve your offering.

ACCESSIBLE FEATURES AND FACILITIES

When customers visit your premises there are lots of ways you can improve their experience. Here are a few ideas:

For food and drink businesses



Step-free access may not always be possible: Providing a portable ramp (and ensuring staff know how to use it safely and effectively) is one way to ensure visitors with physical impairments can get into your venue.

Provide options and choice when it comes to seating. Think about design, height and back and armrest availability, as well as seating location. Some customers will benefit from quieter areas, and others will prefer a 'buzzy' atmosphere. If you don't have a lowered bar, for example, consider how wheelchair users and those of shorter stature can interact with staff and other customers.

Ask a wheelchair-using customer where they'd like to sit and if they'd like you to remove a chair.

Ensure any accessible facilities you have are well-signed and in good working order. For example accessible toilets, or hearing loop facilities at the bar.

Routes to accessible parking, entrances and toilets should be clear and free of clutter.

Provide menus in different formats, such as digital, large print and easy-read versions with accompanying images. Ensure staff have the confidence to read these out, if required.

A consideration of noise and light are key in pubs and restaurants. Could you provide a space with lower light, reduced background noise and comfy 'lounge' chairs, for example, if visitors are overwhelmed?

Consider providing accessible cutlery and crockery for customers with limited strength, grip or ranges of motion. For example: it might be easier for some people to hold a mug with a handle rather than cups or glasses, while bendable straws are really beneficial to some.



For attractions

Provide good signage throughout. Consider large print, contrasting and tactile signs and ensure accessible features such as parking and toilets are well-signed.

Make sure interpretation displays can be viewed by everyone, including people of shorter stature and wheelchair users. Self-guided tours are a good way to allow visitors to explore at their own pace.

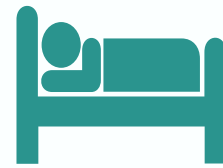
Provide interpretation in different formats – consider large print and tactile interpretation.

Fast track those unable to stand in a queue for long periods of time.

Provide a quiet space for neurodivergent users.

Offer relaxed sessions which are quieter and less busy.

For accommodation providers



Make your accessible rooms bookable online by including them as a room type on your website/online travel agent listings. This provides convenience and autonomy for people requiring these rooms, and removes the need for additional phone and/or email communications.

Provide room information in different formats.

Consider the flexibility of furniture when purchasing or updating these. Zip and link beds offer more combinations for those with accessibility requirements, their partners or support workers. Freestanding furniture also offers the flexibility to be removed if required.

Provide towels that contrast in colour to the walls and floor to assist visually impaired guests.

Provide phones with large buttons and a contrasting colour on the numbers.

Provide portable vibrating alarms for customers who are not able to hear an audible fire alarm, and vibrating alarm clocks with flashing lights.

Have a magnifying glass or magnifying sheet handy.

Enable subtitles on TVs in public areas, and ensure TVs in bedrooms support subtitle activation.

Provide bowls of water for assistance dogs and a toilet area, ideally within the grounds of the property or nearby.

Provide a selection of bathroom equipment such as a support rail by the shower attachments, bath seat, toilet seat height raiser and shower chair.

Provide quieter areas with no background noise for those with hearing loss and neurodivergent customers.

Have lever taps in bathrooms and kitchens.

If you have a ceiling track and/or portable hoist as part of your accommodation offer, make sure to provide information to customers about this, as well as the need to bring their own sling.

MAKE YOUR MARKETING ACCESSIBLE

Even if you have the best accessible facilities in the world, they aren't much use if you don't tell people about them! 91% of disabled people will search for information about disabled access online before visiting a venue for the first time.

An access survey by Euan's guide found:

72%

of respondents have found information on a venue's website to be misleading, confusing or inaccurate.

58%

say they avoid going to a venue if it has not shared its disabled access information because they assume it's inaccessible.

74%

have experienced a disappointing trip or have had to change plans due to poor accessibility.

51%

51% said reviews from other disabled people improve their confidence when visiting new places.

What sort of information should you include in your marketing?

- **Accurate and up-to-date accessibility information about your venue or premises** for example availability of facilities such as hearing loops, quiet areas or Changing Places toilets; Doorway dimensions and bed height measurements.
- **Information related to your operations** and what has been done to encourage a positive perception of disability, otherwise known as social accessibility. For example, your staff have attended disability awareness training.
- **Information about what else to see and do in the area** for example some time-saving recommendations of activities, attractions, pubs and restaurants that have good accessibility credentials.



An accessibility guide is a great way to show information about your venue

Remember to make sure your information is in accessible formats!

This includes your website, social media, printed materials etc – there are lots of places where you can find advice and help.

CREATE AN ACCESSIBILITY GUIDE

Access surveys consistently show that a lack of published accessibility information is one of the top barriers. This is true for both disabled people and others with specific access needs.

85%

OF DISABLED PEOPLE
WILL CHECK A BUSINESS'
WEBSITE BEFORE
VISITING.

An Accessibility Guide can help you to communicate your facilities and services to disabled people and other customers who want specific accessibility information, such as older travellers and families with young children.

56%

OF VISITORS THINK THAT
IF A VENUE DOESN'T
ADVERTISE THEIR
ACCESSIBLE FACILITIES,
IT'S BECAUSE THEY
DON'T HAVE ANY.

Detailing the accessibility of your venue in an Accessibility Guide will enable these people, their family and friends to make informed decisions as to where to stay and visit in view of their individual requirements.

Visitors with access requirements will make decisions to visit based on what they can find out about your offer. Promoting your accessibility will ensure that you don't miss out on attracting this loyal customer segment.

VisitScotland and VisitEngland have developed **accessibilityguides.org**. This website allows you to work through a tailored questionnaire and create your own guide. It's free, quick and easy to use, and will enable you to provide all the information your customers need to prepare their visit.

ACCESSIBLE EMPLOYMENT

Encouraging job applications from disabled people
is good for business.



It can help increase the number of high-quality applicants and help fill gaps created by the hospitality recruitment crisis.



You can create a workforce that reflects your diverse range of customers and bring additional skills and experience to your business.



The costs of making reasonable adjustments to accommodate disabled employees are often low. The benefits of retaining an experienced, skilled employee are usually greater than recruiting and training new staff.

Fife Council supports Fife employers to provide successful and meaningful employment opportunities for people with disabilities and health issues.

Fife Supported Employment Service offer employers:

- Information on current diversity and equality legislation
- Disability Awareness Training for staff to increase confidence when dealing with disabled colleagues and customers
- Support for employees who are struggling to stay in work due to disability or health issues
- Help to become a Disability Confident employer.

MORE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES TO HELP YOU WITH ACCESSIBLE AND INCLUSIVE TOURISM

VisitScotland guidance on accessible and inclusive tourism

<https://www.visitscotland.org/supporting-your-business/responsible-tourism/inclusion>

Visit Britain guidance on accessible and inclusive tourism

<https://www.visitbritain.org/business-advice/make-your-business-accessible-and-inclusive/visitengland-accessible-and-inclusive>

Creating an accessibility guide

<https://www.accessibilityguides.org/>

Euan's Guide

<https://www.euansguide.com/>

Fife Supported Employment Service

<https://www.fife.gov.uk/kb/docs/articles/jobs-and-training2/supported-employment>

Deaf Action

<https://deafaction.org>

RNIB

<https://www.rnib.org.uk/>

Dementia Friends Scotland

<https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/get-involved/dementia-friendly-communities/organisations/resources>

National Autistic Society

<https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/autism-friendly-guide>