



Access Audit Report

Location: Buckland Centre, Newton Abbott
TQ12 4HS

Date : 2nd December 2021

Auditor: Nevil Salisbury ~ Rood

Living Options Devon
Ground Floor Unit 3 – 4
Cranmere Court
Lustleigh Close
Matford Business Park
Exeter EX2 8PW

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The Equalities Act 2010

Service providers should treat everyone accessing their goods, facilities or services fairly, regardless of their age, gender, race, sexual orientation, disability, gender reassignment, religion or belief, and guard against making assumptions about the characteristics of individuals.

Service providers also have obligations under The Equality Act, which replaced the Disability Discrimination Acts 1995 and 2005 (DDA) on October 1st, 2010.

The following summary information concerns obligations with regard to **disability only**; for full information on the Equality Act visit: <https://www.gov.uk/equality-act-2010-guidance>

The Equality Act 2010 - Disability

The law protects anyone who has, or has had, a disability; people who are mistakenly thought to be disabled; people who are linked or associated with a disabled person. Under the Equality Act 2010 there are a number of forms of disability discrimination:

- **Direct discrimination** - direct discrimination is where a person is treated less favourably than someone else because they have a disability.
- **Indirect discrimination** - this could be when a business applies a policy, criterion or practice in the same way to all individuals, but that policy has an effect that particularly disadvantages disabled people.
- **Discrimination arising from disability** - this means treating a disabled person unfavourably because of something connected with their disability when this cannot be objectively justified.
- **Direct discrimination by perception** - this means a person is treated less favourably than someone else, because someone incorrectly thinks they have a disability.
- **Direct discrimination by association** - this means treating someone less favourably than another person because they are associated with a person who has a disability.

Discrimination arising from disability will not be unlawful if the service provider can show that it did not know, or could not be reasonably expected to know, that the person was disabled. This means that **Service providers should take reasonable steps to find out whether someone is disabled** e.g., enquire as to whether visitors have any access needs.

Reasonable adjustments

Service providers are also under an obligation to make reasonable adjustments where, if the adjustment were not made, a disabled person would be at a substantial disadvantage compared to people who are not disabled.

What is 'reasonable' will depend on a number of circumstances, including the cost of an adjustment. The Equality Act 2010 requires that service providers must think ahead and take steps to address barriers that impede disabled people. Providers should not wait until a disabled person experiences difficulties using a service, as this may make it too late to make the necessary adjustment.

Requirements for making reasonable adjustments:

- 1. Make 'reasonable' changes to the way things are done** – such as changing practices, policies or procedures where disabled people would be at a 'substantial disadvantage' when accessing goods, facilities and services (e.g., amend a 'no dogs' policy to allow assistance dogs).
- 2. Adjustments involving the provision of auxiliary aids and services** – anticipate what reasonable adjustments you need to make such as providing information in an accessible format (e.g., audio on website or on CD or installing an induction loop for customers with hearing aids).
- 3. Adjustments to physical features** - Consider making reasonable adjustments to the physical features of premises, to better enable disabled people to access goods, facilities and services (e.g., handrails on stairways and steps or ramps for wheelchairs).

A service provider cannot legally justify failing to provide a reasonable adjustment. The only question is whether the adjustment is a 'reasonable' one to make.

Compliance with the advice contained in this report does not ensure compliance with the Equalities Act 2010.

Introduction

This Access Audit has been produced by Living Options Devon considering 'Public' accessibility to the Buckland Centre, Newton Abbott.

An Access audit of any buildings can only ever hope to give a 'snapshot' of how a disabled visitor may find their way around the building or surroundings.

Throughout the report, guidance and recommendations have been made using 'Approved Document M, (Access to and use of buildings) [2004 edition, incorporating 2010 and 2013 amendments] unless otherwise stated, all dimensions are in millimetres.

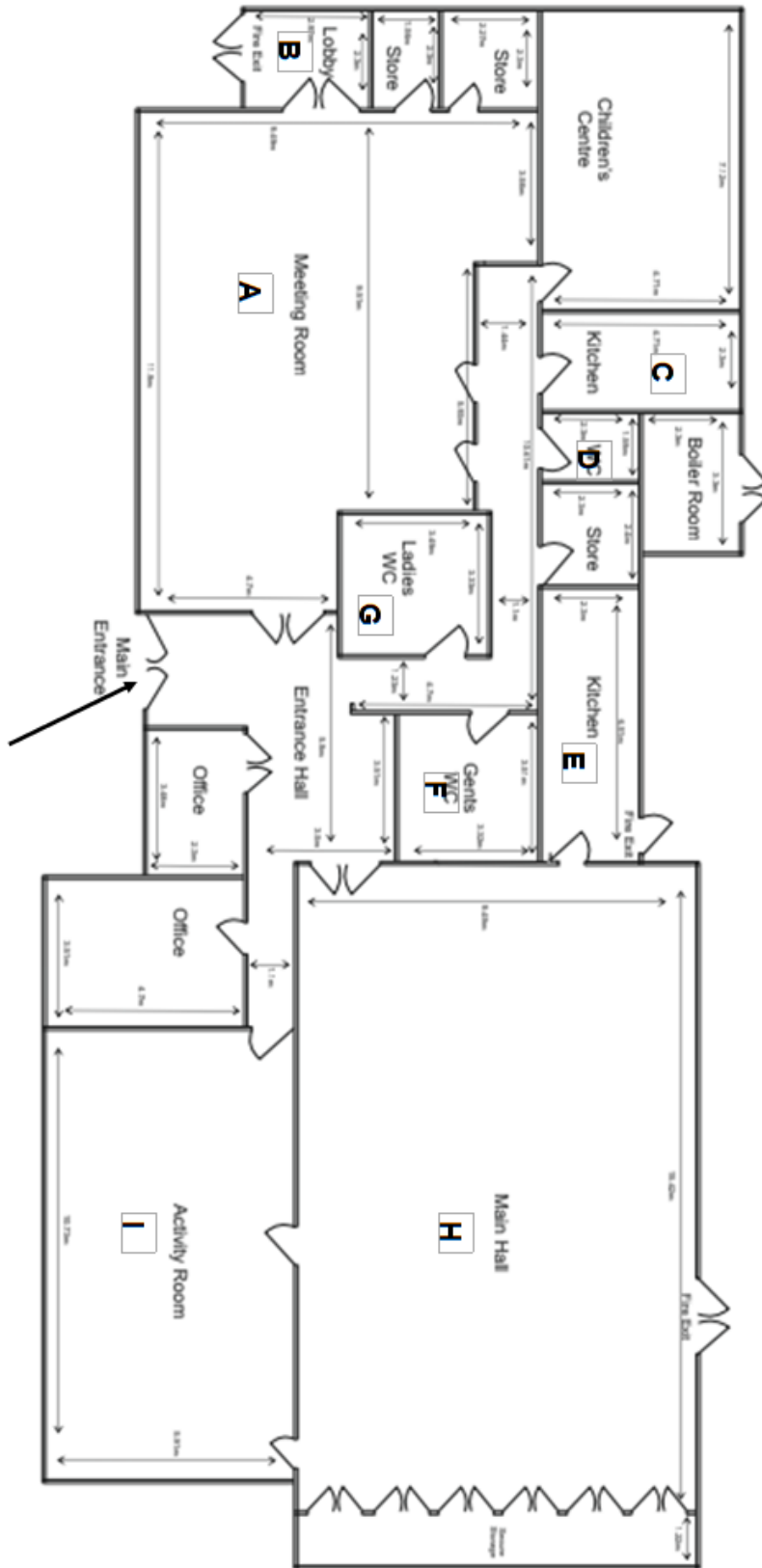
This report has been written following the route taken on the day.

Discussions were had with staff members at the Centre on the day and any issues they highlighted have been incorporated in the report findings.

Summary of Main Recommendations





- Car parking needs to be improved, with better access routes to the main building.
- The access ramp at the main entrance needs handrails on either side
- Use different styles of chair throughout the building, some with arms and some without, with varying heights
- improve ironmongery in accessible toilet and improve alarm
- adopt the use of vertical blinds throughout the building to ensure natural lighting is more controllable
- install hearing loop in main hall, or consider using portable loop system which could be shared with other rooms

Buckland Centre, Newton Abbott, Building layout


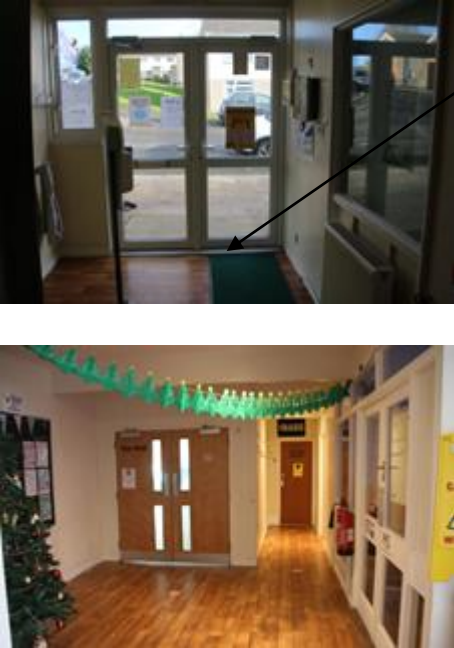







Front entrance to the building from the on-street parking

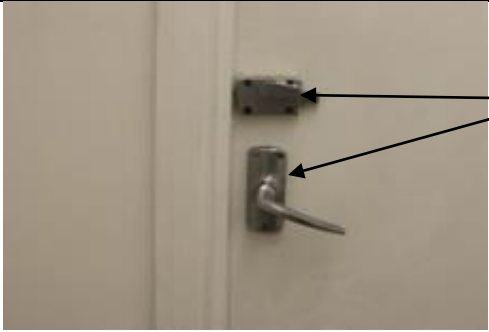



Audit findings and recommendation




Feature or location	Observations	Recommendations
<p>1. Approach to Car Park</p>   	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There are two signs indicating the direction of the car park, as shown with the black arrows. These are not immediately obvious when approaching the building.• The road around to the car park is poorly kept with grass growing over the kerb, making it difficult to define.• Upon entering car park there are lots of potholes, these can be uncomfortable, especially for visitors with back problems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A better directional sign could be employed on top of the post (as shown with white arrow) please see appendices for information on signage• Poorly defined kerbs are difficult for people using the pavement also for motorist. Keep cut back.• If possible, get potholes repaired (not sure if this comes under the centre's authority)
<p>2. Car park</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• As can be seen in the photo, the car park is littered with potholes, making transit for wheelchair users very difficult.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ask, whoever has responsibility for the car park area to get it resurfaced as a matter of urgency.






Feature or location	Observations	Recommendations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is only one accessible parking bay in the car park, the markings and identification are in a bad state of repair. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When the car park has been resurfaced it needs to be re-marked, please use guidance in the appendices.
<p>3. Routes from car park</p>    	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The route from the car parking area is poorly signed, the edges of the pavement are not well defined. The pavement along the front of the building has quite a camber - gradient not measured on the day - with the kerb difficult in places to identify. The path leading up from the car parking area is very poorly laid with slippery moss and potholes. There is quite a significant gradient in the path which will be a challenge, especially for manual wheelchair users. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changes in level are difficult for many people to negotiate. As far as possible, access should be level or near level from the edge of the site or from designated accessible car parking spaces to the main entrance and/or other entrances used by disabled people and other principal routes around and between buildings. The access routes from the car parking area are not suitable and should be avoided by wheelchair users wishing to access the building.

Feature or location	Observations	Recommendations
<p>4. Main Entrance</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The main entrance is accessed via a ramp. The gradient is acceptable; however, it is difficult to see where the ramp starts and finishes. The ramp rises to a height of 95mm with no edging or rail to stop people tripping off the edge. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As the ramp is not easily distinguishable from the surround it would be a good idea to use hi viz strips on all edges. As above
<p>4. Entrance hall</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a slight lip through the door, but this is easily overcome. The transitional lighting could do with improvement. Good circulation space, slightly cluttered with Christmas tree during audit, good amount of light. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider replacement of edging across the door to something with a rise of less than 5mm. Improve lighting No specific comment other than keeping the area free of obstruction.
<p>5. Meeting room (A)</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good Open Plan room, all the chairs are armless. The room does not have a hearing loop. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider having a range of chairs with different heights, some with arms. A room of this size should have a hearing loop.

Feature or location	Observations	Recommendations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Although the windows have blinds, they do not control the amount of natural light entering the room very well. This can cause problems for people with sight impairment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vertical blinds with a blackout element would be more suitable for controlling the amount of natural light entering the room.
<p>6. Lobby (B)</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No specific comment regarding this room, I was told it was not used. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No specific comment
<p>7. Kitchen (C)</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The kitchen has a good range of worktop space, 900 mm high, 600 mm deep. The natural lighting is hard to control with pull cords set above the sink. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All-natural light should be controllable, consider using vertical blinds, ensuring control cords are accessible.
<p>8. Accessible toilet (D)</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The toilet is well laid out, with suitable handrails around basin. The transfer side of the toilet is restricted with a bin. There is no alarm cord or auto light 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Would benefit from an electric hand dryer. It is important to keep the transfer side of the toilet free of obstruction. An alarm system needs to be fitted with alarm cord 100mm and 800-1000mm from the ground

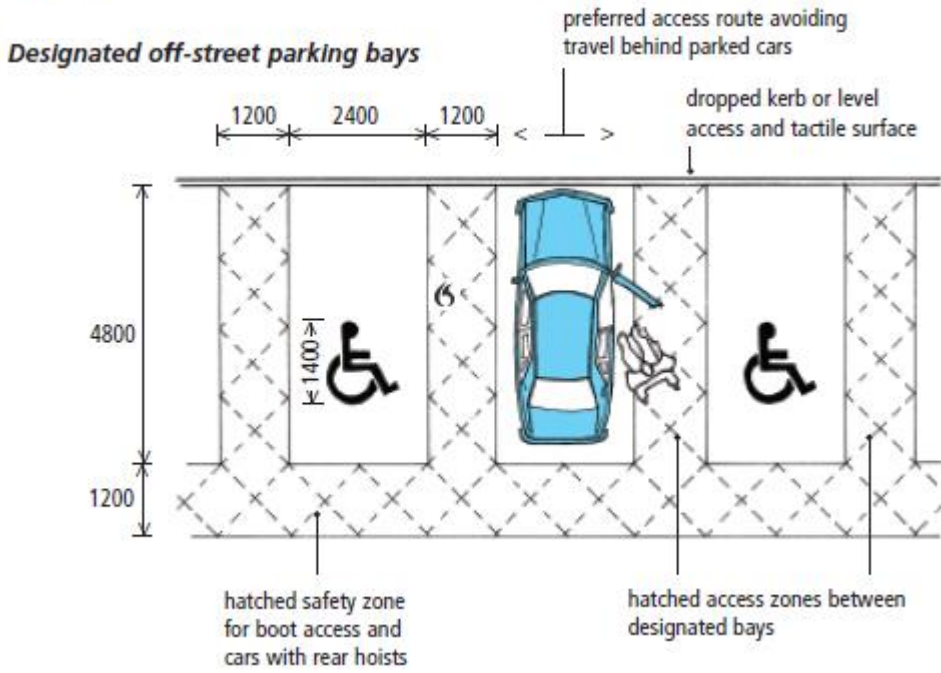
Feature or location	Observations	Recommendations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The lock and handle on the toilet door are not suitable and will be difficult to use for someone with limited dexterity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please see appendices for details of best ironmongery to use.
<p>9. Kitchen (E)</p>   	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A good range of worktops at suitable height, although not accessible to wheelchair users due to lack of turning circle The fire door was not opened during audit as clutter to the side opening was present Upon exiting through the fire door, the edges of the steps are hard to define. There are no handrails, making it difficult for some people to evacuate safely. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blinds need to be employed at the windows to control the amount of natural light. No specific comment about turning circle. Fire doors need to be always kept clear of obstruction, not only to keep the access route free, but also to ensure fire does not break out by the door The steps would benefit from having a contrasting strip 55mm wide on both faces. There needs to be a handrail on either side 900 – 1000mm high.

Feature or location	Observations	Recommendations
<p>10. Gents WC (F)</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A range of heights for the urinals is available, however no grab rails are provided. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It would be good to have a grab rail for at least one of the urinals to accommodate those less steady on their feet.
<p>11. Ladies WC (G)</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It was not possible to view these toilets on the day of audit as fully occupied. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No specific comment, Handrails will be useful in at least one of the cubicles to assist people lowering and rising.
<p>12. Main Hall (H)</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The hall is large and can be used for a variety of functions. The flooring is in good condition. There is not currently a hearing loop in place. Although there are blinds at the window natural light is not controllable and many shadowy areas are created. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If possible, a hearing loop should be installed to allow people with hearing impairments to maximise their residual hearing All lighting, including natural light, should be controllable and adjustable where possible, using vertical blinds may improve lighting in the hall should be explored.

Feature or location	Observations	Recommendations
 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upon exiting the hall through the fire door, the edges of the steps are hard to define. • The open ends of the handrails are not suitable as clothing/bags etc could get caught. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A strip of contrasting material 55mm wide on both treads and risers should be employed. • Open ends of handrail to be designed to reduce the risk of clothing being caught. See appendices.
<p>13. Activity Rome (I)</p>   	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good open space room, the natural light from the windows is not controllable and was rather bright on day of audit. • The flooring is in good condition although there is damage in one area that could lead to a trip hazard. • The counter is of suitable height, with lower-level access. Non the chairs have arms. There is no hearing loop. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider using vertical blinds which will allow more control over the amount of natural light entering the room. • This area needs to be repaired as soon as possible, in the interim cordon off area with high visibility tape. • Ensure the area around the counter is kept free of obstruction. Provide hearing loop.

Appendices

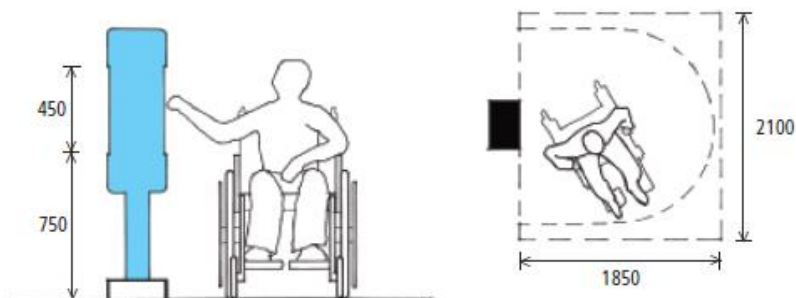
Car Parking



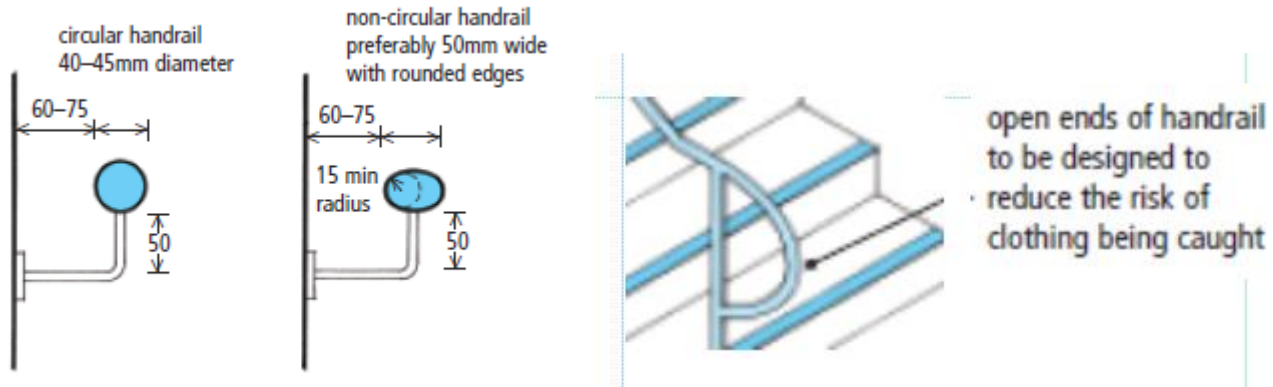
Example of on-street parking bay



Accessible ticket-dispensing machines



Handrail profiles



Accessible Toilets

Accessible toilets are useful for a broad range of people who are either permanently or temporarily disabled. All accessible toilets should be designed in accordance with BS8300 and Part M of the Building Regulations. The following information explains why it is important that the regulations are followed - what may appear to be a small and insignificant detail to some may pose a real element of difficulty or even danger to a disabled person (not only wheelchair users).



An example of a good accessible toilet

Standard height toilet pans are unsuitable: The seat of a standard wheelchair is approximately 480mm above floor level. Standard toilet pans are around 430mm to the top of the seat. It may be possible to slide off of the wheelchair and drop onto the toilet seat. Getting back onto the wheelchair is much more difficult.

The basin needs to be close to the WC: Some disabled people need to wash their hands first before rearranging their clothing and transferring back to their wheelchair so the basin should be easy to reach and use from the toilet.

The flush handle should be on the side nearest the transfer space: The flush lever should be on the open side of the cistern (not on the wall side). You should be able to flush it using a hand, an elbow, or any other part of the body. Some people do it with their chin. If it is not on the open side, it will be impossible to reach from a wheelchair.

Toilet tissues is preferable to toilet paper: Some people can only use one hand, which can make the job of tearing sheets of paper off of a traditional toilet roll quite

difficult. A toilet tissue dispenser, fitted in the correct position can make life much easier for everybody.

The type of rail is important: The fold down rail should be easy to pull down and push up from a seated position. Some rails lock into the upright position and have to be physically lifted before they can be lowered which is not easy, for even the most muscular and agile of us, especially whilst sitting on the toilet with our back to it. Drop-down rails are available with a friction hinge, so that they can be adjusted to fold down effortlessly, without them falling down uncontrollably.

Access to the cubicle: One of the most important points often forgotten is that none of the facilities described above are of much use unless physical access to the compartment is good. All of the following points are vital:

- Sufficient manoeuvring space outside the door to the WC – 1.5m x 1.5m should be regarded as the minimum.
- The door should preferably open outwards, but it should be positioned carefully so that it does not obstruct a circulation route or inconvenience other users of the building.
- Door furniture needs to be able to be used by people with limited dexterity or strength. It may be useful to ask whether it can be operated with a closed fist.
- The door furniture must also contrast with the with door for easy recognition



An easy-to-use combined door latch and lock

Additional Facilities needed in the cubicle

- A mirror located either above the wash basin or on the opposite wall to enable people to see themselves in the standing or seated position.
- A shelf located between the basin and WC to hold a colostomy bag.
- A disposal bins

Easy to Read and Accessible Information

Use plain bold fonts without serifs such as Arial Bold, Tahoma Bold, Helvetica Bold and Comic Sans. Keep all text the same style and size.

- Produce information in 14 points as a normal standard and 16 point for large print versions. If space allows, many more people will find 18 point easier to read.
- When producing written material for an individual with visual impairment you should ask them what size text they prefer.
- Keep information concise and to the minimum – less writing means less effort for the reader and more likely that it will be read at all.
- Use plain English avoiding long words and jargon. When using acronyms give full version in the first instance – plain English will be understood by many more people.
- Always write in short paragraphs with a double line spacing between each line and paragraph – small ‘bites’ of writing are easier to follow.
- When creating an index put the page number before the item which is much easier to follow and avoids the use of dotted lines which are not helpful. Remember page numbers need to be big and bold too.
- Using bullet points and isolating text in a box are effective ways of highlighting main points and important information. Bullet points should be solid and box lines bold.
- Forms and questionnaires should allow extra space for written responses. People who read large print often write with felt pen and even bigger than the printed large text. Tick boxes are best placed before the question and also should match size of text.
- Black print on pale yellow, cream or buff paper creates more comfortable reading - white paper reflects the light back at the reader. Give consideration to good contrast when using coloured paper. White or pale-yellow text on dark paper also works well.
- Reflective material can create confusion - avoid glossy finishes - use matt pouches when laminating and a satin finish where stronger material is needed.

Signs are a ‘physical feature’ of a building and covered by the Equalities Act

Heights of signs

- Room identification signs should be placed on the wall immediately next to latch side of door (too little wall space, on door itself).
- **Room identification** signs placed at same height throughout site = between **1400** and **1700** mm
- Overhead signs hung at **2300mm** (lowest edge) from floor.
- **Wall mounted** signs should protrude no more than **100mm**.
- Tactile signs **1400 --1700mm** from floor.
- **Tactile** control panels **900 -- 1200mm** from the floor.

Tactile Signs

- Should be embossed and not engraved.
- Should be raised from surrounding surface by **1 – 1.5mm**
- Stroke width **1.5 – 2mm** for a **15mm** letter height, (both sides of letter can be felt in one pass of the finger).
- Should not have sharp edges.
- Must be sans serif font (plain style).
- Should be inclined at **45 – 60 degrees** from the horizontal (tactile reading at a more natural/comfortable position).

Lettering Size Relating to Distance Recommendations

- **Long Distance** such as building entrances **150mm** minimum.
- **Medium Range** such as direction signs in corridors **50 – 100mm**.
- **Close Range** such as wall mounted information signs **16-25mm**.
- **Symbols** should be at least **100mm** in height overall.
- **Embossed** (tactile) letter/numbers **15mm** minimum height

Contrast

- The colours of signs should contrast well with:
- Signboard and background (bricks, stone, vegetation).
- Signboard and text/symbol placed upon it.
- Ideally the contrast between signboard and environment should be **70%**.

- The sign finish should have a gloss factor of no more than **50%** or be matt.

TIP: The contrast between colours can be effectively checked by reproducing in black and white (take a black and white photocopy of a colour photograph).

Borders

- The **thickness** of a border – **10%** of the **lower-case letter height**.
- Adding contrasting borders is an economical way of enabling the same colour scheme of signs to be bulk purchased/produced, which will ensure all signs contrast with all environments.

Minimising Glare

- Use materials with a matt finish.
- Do not suspend signs near a light source (windows, ceiling lights).
- Do not place signs on external glazing.
- Do not use illuminated signs.
- Do not use signs with white backgrounds.

Language

- Should be consistent throughout site (always 'Toilets' and not 'Toilets' on one floor and 'WCs' on another).
- Avoid abbreviations as they can be easily misinterpreted and should be used as little as possible.
- Omit full stops between titles and initials
- Information should be concise and minimal.
- Avoid long lists on one sign.
- A mixture of capitals and lower case is much easier to read.
- Start each key word with a capital letter and following words all lower case.

Symbols

- Added to signage provide quick and easy recognition.
- Helpful to visually impaired, and people with learning difficulties,
- Helpful to visitors from other countries and ethnic language communities.

- Must be simplistic, immediately recognisable.
- **Must be large, bold and in good, contrasting colours**



The recognised symbols relating to disabilities

Arrows should be:

- Bold and the same thickness throughout the symbol.
- The main stem should be longer than ends of point.
- The ends of the point should be parallel and not cut off at 90 degrees.



Correct



Incorrect

- Arrow location should correspond with direction.
- Arrow should be ranged to location side of and be close to text.
- Use only one arrow for several areas in same direction on same sign.

Braille

In the UK about 19,000 people use Braille regularly. It is a system made up of patterns of 6 dots allowing 63 possible combinations which correspond to individual letters, numbers, punctuation marks, letter groups and full words. It does not differentiate between capital and lower case and is read with the pads of the fingers, and not the fingertips.

Grade 1 Braille

- Transcription, which is the first learning to reading Braille. (Because it is bulky it is replaced by a contracted form).
- It should only be used for single word signs or short information e.g.:

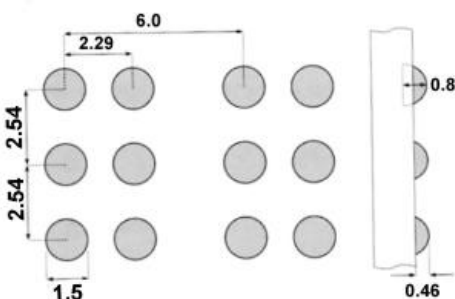
‘Reception’ and ‘Push Up Bar To Open’

Grade 2 Braille

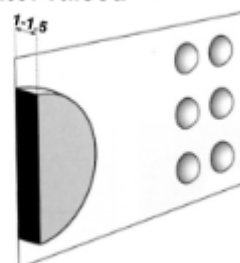
- Consists of contractions added to the dot combinations to represent common letter groups and words e.g., ‘the’ and ‘for’.
- Although contracted, it is still bulky – **1 A4 printed page** will take approximately **two and a half pages** when reproduced in grade 2.

Grade 2 Braille should:

- Be used for longer information signs.
- Instruction signs.
- Books, magazines and leaflets.
- Have rounded dots
- Be located below text and arrow
- Be ranged to the left of signs
- Have no raised edges or frames on signs to obstruct hand movement..
- Have a locator on left hand edge.
- Locators should be 6mm tall and 3mm wide.
- Locators should be raised or recessed by 1-1.5mm.



Locator raised



Useful Contacts

<p>Equality and Human Rights Commission: Equality Advisory Support Service 0808 800 0082 www.equalityhumanrights.com</p>	<p>Provides advice and guidance on rights, responsibilities and good practice, based on equality law and human rights including disability discrimination.</p>
<p>Royal National Institute for Blind People (RNIB) 0303 123 9999 www.rnib.org.uk</p>	<p>The leading charity offering information, support and advice to almost two million people with sight loss. Offer information about designing accessible environments, such as signs, maps, buildings, streets, websites and packaging and products.</p>
<p>Action on Hearing Loss Telephone: 0808 808 0123 Textphone: 0808 808 9000 www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk</p>	<p>Action on Hearing Loss is the new name for RNID. The experts in providing support for people with hearing loss and tinnitus.</p>
<p>Sign Design Guide by Peter Barker & June Fraser ISBN 185878 412 3</p>	<p>Available from: RNIB 0303 123 9999 publishing@rnib.org.uk</p>

Disclaimer

Living Options Devon's Access Auditors have been trained by accredited Access Consultants and carry professional indemnity insurance (details available on request).

They are not qualified surveyors.

The advice they give is based on their experience of living with a disability in an inaccessible environment and is given in good faith.

Specific recommendations follow the guidelines laid down in Part M of the building regulations and comply with the Equalities Act.

This information is correct at time of printing.