Planning for Inclusive Access in Wales

Good Practice Guidance Toolkit

Way to Go
Y Ffordd Ymlaen

disability wales
anabledd cymru

Access
Design Solutions
UK Limited

The Way to Go Project

This good practice guidance is the final stage of the 'Way to Go' Project launched by Disability Wales in 2010 with grant funding from the Welsh Government Advancing Equality Fund. The Project aimed to equip planning officers, and disability and access organisations, with the practical tools to work together to ensure a fully inclusive built environment in Wales. This included consultation, engagement and a modular programme of training courses for access groups and planners.

The Toolkit brings together the issues and lessons from the training programme to provide an online resource for planners to enable them to plan for inclusive access and to engage effectively with access and disability groups.

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Introduction

Planning for inclusive access is an integral part of the professional duties of planners, whether working for central or local government or in the private sector.

The Welsh Government is committed to promoting social inclusion, and enabling independent living for disabled people. Wales was one of the first countries to adopt the Social Model of Disability in 2002 as a positive approach to achieving disability equality. The importance placed on the role of planners is reflected in the Welsh Government's funding of the Disability Wales 'Way to Go' Project, a 3 year project launched in 2010 to promote and support 'Planning for Inclusive Access'

This Good Practice Guidance Toolkit brings together the issues and lessons from the 'Way to Go' project to provide an online resource for planners to enable them to plan for inclusive access and to engage effectively with access and disability groups. The resource will also be useful for other professions and related disciplines such as design, highways and building control; and for access and disability organisations.

The Tools include:

- References to key national and international legislation, standards and guidance relating to disability rights and equality: the responsibilities of, and implications for, the planning profession

- Good practice guidance on engaging with access groups

- Case studies, checklists, frequently asked questions, good practice tips and practical resources

- Ideas for CPD - Continuing Professional Development activities

1 Why make planning more inclusive?

Disability rights and equality: the responsibilities of, and implications for, the planning profession.

In this section we will consider:

- What is 'inclusive access'?
- The Social Model of Disability
- The Welsh Government Framework for Action on Independent Living
- UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)
- The Equality Act 2010
- The demographic and economic implications
- Requirements of planning-related legislation and guidance

> "**Good design is inclusive design and design that does not achieve an inclusive environment is quite simply not good enough.**"
>
> *CABE 2006*

What is 'inclusive access'?

Inclusive access ensures that everyone can get to, into and around developments, and take part in activities and services provided. 'Everyone' includes parents with buggies, older people, people with less than perfect sight, less than perfect hearing, less than perfect mobility or less than perfect understanding of the world around them. Inclusive access is the end result of inclusive design combined with management, operation and maintenance; and positive well-trained staff.

> An accessible environment is better for everyone – anyone with children, or carrying shopping or luggage, or balancing a tray, or files of papers … will appreciate an automatic sliding door.

The Social Model of Disability

Wales was one of the first countries to adopt the Social Model in 2002 as a positive approach to achieving disability equality.

What is the Social Model of Disability?

Disability is viewed as something which is imposed on people with impairments (whether they have a physical impairment, sensory impairment, learning difficulty or mental health condition) by a society which creates barriers to equality. These barriers include:

- Lack of access in and around the built environment including transport systems (environmental barriers)

- Policies and procedures that prevent the full participation of disabled people within education, the work place and the wider community (institutional barriers)

- Attitudes that regard disabled people as inferior, helpless, weak and vulnerable (attitudinal barriers).

What does this mean?

If everyone in Wales was a blind or partially sighted person – information would always be audible, tactile and clear print; more people would use Braille; announcements would always be audible; …. and concerns about whether a blind person could do a job, or serve on a jury, or take part in an activity – would simply not exist.

> "Planners can't change the world but can contribute to positive change."

CPD Activities

Examples of how society could change to allow disabled people to participate equally: What might the social model say for each medical model example?

Medical model problem	Social model solution
Painful hands, unable to open doors or jars, packaging etc	Provide automatic doors; well designed door furniture; less and better designed packaging; easy open lids …. Etc.
Difficulty in standing for long periods	*Your ideas*
Person is "housebound" or "confined to a wheelchair"	*Your ideas*
People won't give individual a job because assume they couldn't do it	*Your ideas*
Person can't see or can't hear	*Your ideas*

Source: Disability Wales See link for solutions suggested by Disability Wales http://www.disabilitywales.org/social-model,3

Welsh Government Framework for Action on Independent Living

This Framework aims to provide for the first time a strategic approach to disability in Wales.

" **"This is about the kind of country we want Wales to be"**

Jane Hutt AM, & Gwenda Thomas AM, Framework Foreword

The Framework sets out the enablers of independent living:

- Information, advice, independent advocacy and peer support
- Accessible and supported housing
- Personalised care and support
- Person-centred technology
- A barrier-free transport system
- Accessible and inclusive places
- Employment

These are based on Disability Wales '12 Pillars of Independent Living'.

While 'accessible and inclusive places' and 'a barrier-free transport system' have the most obvious links to planning, planners have a key role in influencing all of these issues. Every new development or adaptation creates an opportunity to promote the inclusion of disabled people. In spite of equality legislation and strong policy guidance, the Welsh Government's engagement when developing the Framework for Independent Living suggests that these opportunities are still being missed on a regular basis.

> "Inclusive design places people at the heart of the design process; ... provides buildings and environments that are convenient and enjoyable to use."

UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

The Welsh Government and Local Authorities have a duty to implement the UN Convention. The Framework for Independent Living aims to take forward Article 19: The right to independent living.

The key area for planners is -
Article 9: The duty to ensure to persons with disabilities access, on an equal basis with others, to the physical environment, to transportation, to information and communications, including information and communications technologies and systems, and to other facilities and services open or provided to the public, both in urban and in rural areas.

The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 brings together and replaces the previous anti-discrimination laws (including disability) within a single Act. The Act includes a public sector equality duty (the 'general duty'), and 'specific duties' for public bodies in Wales. Local Planning Authorities must meet both the general duty and specific duty.

The aim of the general duty is to ensure that public authorities and those carrying out a public function consider how they can positively contribute to a fairer society through advancing equality and good relations in their day-to-day activities. The duty ensures that equality considerations are built into the design of policies and the delivery of services and that they are kept under review. Specific duties include, for instance, engagement and impact assessment.

The demographic and economic implications

In the UK there are at least 11 million people who identify themselves as disabled people and over 14 million people aged 60+ many of whom may have difficulties with mobility, sight, hearing, or cognitive ability. Add to that our ageing population and it makes sense to plan for inclusive access.

- Disabled Adults in the UK have an annual spending power of £80 billion
- 82% of disabled customers in the UK have taken their business to a more accessible competitor

(*Employers Forum on Disability Survey*)

Wales has a higher proportion of older people and disabled people than Britain as a whole. According to Stats Wales, around 18% of the population of Wales is aged over 65, and around 23% of the working-age population are disabled people, with both figures increasing.

Most of us do not go out to a pub, restaurant, or leisure facility on our own, and disabled people are the same. A service which is accessible for disabled people will win the business of the group of family or friends (and word will spread!).

The Welsh Government promotes the business case for accessible tourism and making sure that Wales offers a wide choice of

accommodation, venues and facilities to attract disabled visitors. Producing an access statement is a mandatory element of the Visit Wales grading process for tourism businesses. (*Framework for Action on Independent Living, 2012*)

Requirements of planning-related legislation and guidance

Planners have a professional duty to act in the public interest, and that includes disabled people. Planning Authorities are required to promote inclusive access under the Equality Act as well as specifically in Planning requirements where they "should consider the issue of accessibility for all, including the needs of people with sensory impairments, people with learning difficulties and people with mobility impairments, such as wheelchair users, elderly people and people with young children, at an early stage in the design process". *Planning Policy Wales*, and detailed in *TAN12*.

There are also requirements for inclusive access under sustainability drivers, for instance BREEAM (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method) New Construction MAN 04: 'To design, plan and deliver accessible functional and inclusive buildings in consultation with current and future building users and other stakeholders.'

Highlighting the importance of access for all at the start of the planning process is vital. Thinking about access early in the planning process saves planners and designers considerable time, effort and money in the long term. Rectifying access barriers caused by poorly designed buildings and environments can cost a considerable sum of money, especially when projects are near completion or are already completed.

> "
>
> **Planning should:**
>
> **"Foster social inclusion by ensuring that full advantage is taken of the opportunities to secure a more accessible environment for everyone that the development of land and buildings provides."**
>
> *Planning Policy Wales*

CPD Activities

Activity 1

Consider: What are the main influences the planning system has on the design process and ultimately inclusive design / access?

Assess the impact of these influences on – your Authority's development plan; planning policy documents; recent developments in your area.

List ways in which, in your role, you could have improved the result. Are there ways you could do things differently next time?

Activity 2

Use real life case studies to examine two differing aspects / elements in the built environment and the approaches to inclusive design.

For each aspect / element you select consider:
- The different options taken by designers and evaluate them
- Identify, where possible, better practice solutions and how you could have influenced this
- Think about underpinning models of disability and the effect these have on the design approach undertaken
- Think about the way that all built environment users interact with the selected aspects / elements

2 Engaging with access & disability groups

In this section we will consider:

- Access groups and their role – expertise / perspectives
- The diversity of disabled people
- Supporting your local access group
- Working Relationships, Engagement and Mediation

The role of local Access Groups

Access groups are generally groups of people who seek to help improve access and inclusion within the built environment. Some have a wider remit and also provide advice on other issues.

Access groups may fulfil some or all of the following roles:

- Representatives of the local community: disabled members will be able to draw on personal experience, and may offer a pan-impairment perspective on how a proposed development might affect potential users, or on how an existing scheme already affects users

- Technical experts on access and inclusion: many groups will draw on technical knowledge and expertise of Planning and Building Regulations and best practice guidance to advise on a proposed scheme, or on an existing situation, building or space

- Raising awareness and campaigning: many groups will adopt a proactive approach, and will help raise awareness of a particular issue by approaching external bodies or individuals. Groups may also pool their knowledge and experiences by producing a group response to relevant local or national consultations

Source: Access Group Resources website

"Ensuring that public buildings, shops, banks, leisure facilities, streets, parks and other public spaces are fully accessible to everyone cannot be achieved simply by compliance with legislation,

guidance and regulations. It also requires a detailed understanding of how the building and its wider surroundings will be used. This is where local Access Groups have invaluable expertise to help public authorities and private sector developers identify potential problems, as well as opportunities to create more inclusive buildings and places"

Framework for Action on Independent Living

Access group members can provide valuable advice; for instance, based on their experience of visiting other premises and areas, they may be able to advise on how others have tackled a specific access problem.

Diversity of disabled people

Disabled people may have a physical impairment, sensory impairment, learning difficulty or mental health condition, or a combination of these; they may be parents, carers, working, retired, children, male, female, black, white and so on. Local access groups represent their local community and consider issues in an inclusive way, learning from each other so that they appreciate how access solutions have to meet the needs of all. They live in the local area and will use, or want to use, the places and buildings provided through planning.

If your local access group does not appear to reflect this diversity of experience, offer to help them source and support more members. Involve local groups such as societies of blind and partially sighted people to ensure gaps in experience are filled. A range of organisations are listed in section 4, and these should have contact details for local groups.

Supporting your local access group

Research published in the Disability Rights Commission (now Equality and Human Rights Commission) report '*Towards Access Standards: the work of local access groups in England and Wales*' showed the wide variation in the support available to local access groups and highlighted the pressure access groups are under to respond to all the

demands placed on them. The engagement process for the Welsh Government Framework for Action on Independent Living showed that this continues and that several access groups have folded due to lack of support.

The Framework for Action on Independent Living challenges local public services to support access and disability organisations and recognise the contribution they make. For example, local Access Groups report that they each require a contribution of £1-2,000 a year, for secretarial and travel costs. This unlocks a huge amount of voluntary time and expertise, but many groups find it impossible to get this support.

Some Access Groups receive support such as staff time for administration from their regional Voluntary Services Associations, but this is not consistent.

Planning Authorities can support Local Access Groups by:

• Small grants

• Free use of venues for meetings

• Administration support such as typing and copying minutes and reports

• Funding for producing accessible material (e.g. Braille, audio), and support such as sign language interpreters, etc.

• Providing training such as on planning matters

• Funding external training – this could, where appropriate, be joint for planners and group members

• Paying travel expenses

• Making resources such as good practice guides available

• Appointing a person to link with the group – Access Officers provide invaluable support in some areas

• Being pro-active in engaging with the Access Group, and supporting this engagement

• Ensuring that engagement with the group is meaningful – a considered consultation process with accessible documents, easy read briefings particularly for large documents, allowing enough

time to respond, and providing feedback which demonstrates the value you place on their input and actions taken as a result. This is both good practice and part of equality duties.

The DRC publication '*Planning, buildings, streets and disability equality*' provides further advice on engaging with access groups.

Building an effective working relationship and engagement process

Many local access groups feel that their relationship with local authorities could be improved, and that a formal link may be useful in achieving this. There is support for the development of recognised terms of reference for local access groups providing this does not constrain local access groups' diversity and independent nature.

An Access Group and Local Authority could develop a joint terms of reference and engagement process which works for both parties, clarifying their respective roles and responsibilities while retaining flexibility, enabling work with other bodies, and valuing the independent campaigning role of the Access Group.

Mediation

The 'Way to Go' Project included a module on mediation.

Mediation is a process that enables parties to come to a level of understanding about each other's point of view and especially how their need and interests are challenged by the issue(s) they face together.

There have been past difficult relationships around planning issues between Access Groups and Local Authorities. A sensitive intervention like a mediation process can 'put a stake in the ground' and identify new ways and approaches to enable the difficulties of the past to be understood and then left behind in order to move forward. This approach will save both Access Groups and Local Planning Authorities' considerable time and effort in the longer term.

A mediation process can also help set a framework for a new access group to work with a Local Authority, helping to build an effective

on-going relationship and process to work together to ensure that planning policies and decisions are inclusive.

Skilled parties can work through the process themselves, but it is often helpful to have an independent trained mediator to guide the process and support ALL parties, so trust in the fairness and equality of the process is in place.

The 'Way to Go' project has identified some initial and follow-up process steps, and these are identified in **appendix 1** with more detail about how the mediation process (and other support) could work.

Good Practice Examples

During the engagement exercises leading to the Framework for Action on Independent Living "A number of participants emphasised the positive impact of local access groups, for example the improvements secured at Machynlleth station through engagement with Dwyfor Access Group, and the on-going involvement of Access groups in Cardiff, Swansea, Newport and Neath Port Talbot in major construction and regeneration projects."

Bangor University regularly consults Arfon Access Group on large and small scale development plans and also direct contracted developers to do so. Importantly, the Access Group recommendations are almost entirely adopted. The University supports the Access Group with a small annual donation.

Swansea Access for Everyone (SAFE), Guide Dogs, the Welsh Government, Swansea Council officers and Arriva Trains Wales worked together on the re-development of Swansea Rail Station. The customer help point, signage, lighting, and a tactile way finding path were all items considered in structured meetings where almost all feedback was taken on-board. Swansea also has the first tactile map in Wales to be funded by the Welsh Government and produced by RNIB.

Case study

In March 2012, Priory Church in Wales Primary School in Brecon, Powys became the inaugural recipient of the 2012 Selwyn Goldsmith Award for Universal Design. The school design was described as an exemplar of how thoughtful and innovative design, together with a clear understanding of user needs, can combine to produce an environment that is inclusive and accessible to all those who use it. The design team consulted with local community and access groups and potential users to gain a valuable insight of their needs and what they hoped to gain from the completed building. The sensitive design has resulted in a building that creates a warm, readily navigable, flexible, fresh, and usable space for pupils, staff and visitors.
Welsh Government Framework for Action on Independent Living, 2012

CPD Activities

1 Invite members of your local access group or disability organisation to a CPD session to discuss their access experiences.

2 Arrange a joint CPD session with your local access group where you invite a member of an organisation representing an impairment group, or interest group not currently involved in the Access Group to discuss their priority access issues.

3 Arrange a joint meeting between officers and your local access group or disability organisation to have an open session about how you could work together (or work more effectively if there is already a link). Consider the requirements and constraints on you both. This may benefit from an independent facilitator or mediator and may need to be a series of meetings.

3 How to make planning more inclusive

In this section we will consider:

- A duty to promote inclusive access
- What are the key issues to consider when:
  - preparing a development plan
  - producing supplementary planning guidance
  - writing a design and planning brief
  - considering a planning application
  - preparing and / or assessing a design and access statement
  - considering conditions or section 106 agreements
  - Equality Impact Assessments
- Planning, building control, highways: respective roles and responsibilities.

Promoting inclusive access is an integral part of a Local Authority's public sector duty under the Equality Act 2010

Key recommendations from the DRC (now EHRC) guidance 'Planning, buildings, streets and disability equality' are:

- Appoint an access officer to co-ordinate access issues across the authority

- Identify an access 'champion' in each department

- All officers should be trained and appraised in disability equality

- Key elected members should champion the interests of disabled people

- All elected members should be trained in disability equality.

- Value, support and develop the expertise and experience of voluntary access groups

- Equality must be addressed within all decision making

- Ensure consistent application of access requirements through monitoring

'Planning and Access for Disabled People' (ODPM, 2003) provides
Good Practice Points that local authorities and developers should
adopt. While almost 10 years old the good practice is still relevant.

Planning authorities are advised to:

- include appropriate inclusive access policies at all levels of the
  development plan supported by a specific strategic policy

- develop and implement supplementary planning guidance;

- encourage pre-application discussions with applicants;

- encourage applicants to submit access statements with their
  applications (now a requirement for most applications, authorities
  should ensure they are complete – see below);

- make sure planning officers receive appropriate training on all
  aspects of an inclusive environment;

- appoint an access officer and use a suitable access consultant;
  and

- encourage regular liaison with local access groups.

CPD Activity

Find out how many of these recommendations have been
adopted in your Authority?

Development Plans

Local development plans (LDPs) should provide clear policies,
supported where appropriate by supplementary planning guidance,
setting out the design expectations of local planning authorities for
places and development proposals. Local policies likely to provide the
basis for determining planning decisions, or for determining conditions
to be attached to planning permissions, should be set out in the LDP.

Local planning authorities and developers should consider the issue
of accessibility for all, including the needs of people with sensory
impairments, people with learning difficulties and people with mobility
impairments, such as wheelchair users, elderly people and people

with young children, at an early stage in the design process. (*PPW 4.11.11*)

Disability Access Groups need to be consulted throughout the land use planning process. (*PPW 3.4.1*)

It is not required, or sufficient, for national planning policies in *Planning Policy Wales* such as 4.11.11 to be repeated in an LDP, rather the LDP should explain how this policy will apply to the local area.

Consider:

- Does your LDP ensure that full advantage is taken of the opportunities to secure a more accessible environment for everyone that the development of land and buildings provides?

- Does 'accessibility' clearly require access for all disabled people, for instance 'accessible by public transport' includes distance to the bus stop with level, wide, obstacle free pedestrian paths, separate from vehicles and cycling; an accessible bus stop with audio and visual real time information, etc.?

Supplementary Planning Guidance

Planning authorities may also produce Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) to give detailed guidance on good practice and to explain ways in which the policies in their LDP should be implemented. SPG which derives out of and is consistent with the Development Plan and has been prepared in the proper manner can be given substantial weight in decision making on planning applications.

Putting an appropriate range of policies and guidance in place will inform the planning application process, will make requirements much clearer for applicants and give planning officers robust support when negotiating proposals or resisting unacceptable schemes which are not in accordance with the LDP.

Examples of Supplementary Planning Guidance in Wales

Some Planning Authorities have adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) on access. Denbighshire County Council SPG 8 'Access for All' was approved for use in development control in June 2003, to provide guidance to designers, developers and applicants to meet the needs of disabled people through inclusive design in all types of development.

Swansea's SPG 'Access for Disabled Persons' was held as a model of good practice across the UK but does not appear to have been updated since 1993.

Has your Authority adopted SPG on access for disabled people and inclusive design? If so, when was it last updated? Is it reflected in other SPG and policy documents?

Pembrokeshire County Council's SPG on Shopfront Design (2011) incorporates access for disabled and older people. These principles have also been adopted by Pembrokeshire Coast National Park.

Design and Planning Brief

A requirement for inclusive design should be part of all concept briefs to architects or other designers. This should set out key overall access requirements depending on the nature of the development, specify good practice standards to be met, and the involvement of the local access disability group throughout. Where appropriate, advise appointment of an access specialist to the design team.

Accessibility standards are continually evolving as expectations change and technology develops. Planning and design briefs should not be so rigid as to stifle innovations which may provide higher standards of accessibility, but where new design approaches are considered there should be a requirement that the accessibility for all should be subject

to robust research and testing pre-implementation. Time and budget should be built in to allow for changes should new approaches prove not to be fully accessible in practice.

Example:

An example of this is the implementation of the shared space approach through shared surface streets. Research among disabled people found that the lack of pavements and routes for vulnerable pedestrians clearly demarcated from traffic, and absence of crossing points, meant that some areas became very difficult or impossible for some people to use. In several UK areas retrofit measures were required. Remember that planning authorities must promote positive improvements rather than just guard against problems.

Design and Access Statements

Access Statements were introduced as a mandatory requirement to accompany most planning applications in Wales from 30th June 2007. From June 2009 a combined Design and Access Statements was required.

The Statement has two inter-related elements. One is the design element, which explains the vision and design aspirations for the proposed development scheme; showing how the scheme's design responds to the site, and to the physical character and context of the surrounding area. The other is the access element, which explains how issues relating to access have been dealt with; it shows how the proposed development will address the principles of inclusive design while responding to factors such as the existing topography of the site or constraints such as the shape of an existing building. (*Planning Aid Wales, 2011*)

Where a Design and Access Statement is required a Planning Authority should not validate the application unless it is accompanied by a suitable statement.

The Welsh Government has commissioned a review of the effectiveness of Design and Access Statements, due to report late 2013.

Planners in private practice may prepare access statements; while those in Planning Authorities are required to assess them. The following checklist provides a starting point:

Preparing or Assessing a Design and Access Statement: Does it include:

- a vision and objectives for achieving good inclusive access?

- the planning policies (local and national) and building regulations which have been taken into account in designing the scheme?

- how identified access problems have been dealt with in the design of the scheme, as illustrated by the design drawings, including:

- that entrances and exits are accessible and easy to find?

- that circulation routes and access to buildings are sufficiently level and firm, and that safe, accessible crossing points will be provided?

- the details and materials to be used for external features such as parking, open spaces, street furniture, external lighting …?

- that parking will link safely with footpaths to avoid unnecessary vehicle / pedestrian conflicts, and storage areas (e.g. for waste bins) will not create obstructions?

- how accessibility by different modes of transport has been considered, from drop-off point to the door?

- how access will be maintained during the construction phase, and give details of maintenance and management policies to ensure

continuing good access throughout the life of the building?

- why particular design proposals may not meet recognised standards, but will still provide inclusive access to at least as good standard?

- alternatives to be provided when one design solution doesn't meet all the access requirements?

- the people and groups consulted during the design process to help identify and overcome potential access problems?

- how the Access Statement has evolved from vision to submission alongside the planning application?

CPD Activity

Consider a recent Access Statement you have prepared or assessed. How many of these points are addressed? Are there other points you could add to the list?

The requirement for the access component of the statement relates only to "access to the development" and therefore does not extend to internal aspects of individual buildings which are covered by Building Regulations. However, there are often overlapping considerations, for instance unless the layout inside a building is considered, it will be very difficult to decide where entrances and fire exits should go. So, it may be useful for the statement to explain how internal access will be designed, provided and used as this can have an effect on how the place will eventually look and work.

The access statement process can ensure any tensions, for instance between creating an accessible environment and security issues, are identified at an early stage and thus enable them to be overcome.

An access statement for a residential development can help to ensure that the requirements for dwellings to meet Part M access standards, or lifetime home standards where these apply, are complemented by accessible infrastructure and community links thus contributing to lifetime neighbourhoods.

Communication Tool

Access statements are essentially communication tools showing that the principles of inclusive design and access for people have been considered throughout the development process. They should enable local communities, access groups and others to understand the rationale underpinning the development proposal and thus to make effective representation on proposals.

The Access Statement as a Living Document

An access statement should be viewed as a seamless living document which 'grows' with the project, as set out in '*Access Statements: achieving an inclusive environment by ensuring continuity throughout the planning, design and management of buildings and space.*' (DRC (now EHRC) 2004). Starting at the strategic level, the statement will record and explain decisions on accessibility associated with the planning, design and on-going management stages of a project. So while the design and access statements needed with planning applications should relate specifically to the planning stage of the development process, this should then be built on at the building regulations stage (though access statements are not a mandatory requirement for building regulations). These should form part of the living access document usable by building owners and facility managers.

This is similar to the requirement in BREEAM New Construction MAN 04: 'To design, plan and deliver accessible functional and inclusive buildings in consultation with current and future building users and other stakeholders.'

Access Statements should:

- Start with the users - It's about use by people, not just buildings
- Strengthen and assist planning applications
- Help designers identify barriers early
- Help planning authorities meet Equality Duties by refusing non-inclusive applications
- Identify sustainable and inclusive solutions
- Treat general guidance and minimum standards as a starting point
- Explain reasons for departure from best practice (and how this will be mitigated), not justify poor access
- As a minimum avoid discriminating against users of the building, which may mean exceeding the minimum building design standards

A design and access statement will only promote inclusive design in so far as the commitments made in the statement are adhered to. If details are conditional, planning enforcement officers should follow through ensuring that they are delivered.

Planning conditions and section 106 agreements

Local planning authorities may use conditions relating to access on planning consents or specify parts of the access statement through conditions. Planning conditions must be necessary, relevant to planning and to the development, enforceable, precise and reasonable. Section 106 agreements may be used to secure funding for enhancing inclusive access in the wider environment.

Equality Impact Assessments

The Welsh Government has reaffirmed the commitment for Equality Impact Assessments to be required in the Welsh Public Sector. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is required to ensure all policy

making and decisions, including budgets, are fair and equal. In preparing an EIA consider:

- Is the purpose of the policy change / decision clearly set out?
- Have those affected by the policy / decision been involved?
- Have potential positive and negative impacts been identified?
- Are there plans to alleviate any negative impact?
- Are there plans to monitor the actual impact of the proposal?

See: www.equalityhumanrights.com/wales

CPD Activity

Consider a recent EIA for your area. How many of these points does it address? Or prepare a model EIA for a recent policy development or proposal.

Planning, Building Control and Highways

While each has their respective roles, there are often overlaps in relation to access issues; all will influence and impact on the provision of an inclusive environment. Ensuring a consistent approach and that no issues fall between the gaps, will be aided by regular liaison and an adopted process for considering overlapping issues, a cross-department access officer and unified engagement with access groups.

CPD Activity

Some planners have commented that access issues are mainly dealt with at building regulations. Spend some time considering – for a typical medium scale leisure or commercial development – how many issues may it be too late, in terms of accessibility, to address at building regulations stage?

Welsh Government Framework for Action on Independent Living

Planned Actions:

- Commission a review of the effectiveness of Design and Access Statements.

- Use its devolved powers to respond to the DAS review and other evidence in relation to Building Regulations.

- Work with Construction Excellence Wales (CEW) and the Royal Society of Architects in Wales (RSAW) to promote excellence in inclusive design through a programme of training events aimed at the construction industry.

- Promote the Department for Business Enterprise Technology and Science (BETS) Inclusive Design Note as good practice across Welsh Government Departments.

- Require inclusive design in healthcare facilities.

- Share good practice on engagement.

- Work with partners through the Changing Places Charter to identify opportunities to increase the provision of these facilities across Wales.

Tips for Inclusion

- Train staff

- Consider disabled people in policies

- Engage with disabled people

- Plan and anticipate in advance

- Provide an inclusive environment

- Advertise alternative formats & auxiliary aids

- Consult experts when required

Examples

Pembrokeshire planning authority put a condition on a change of use where there was a deli on the ground floor and a restaurant on the first floor so that they had to provide some tables downstairs for disabled customers who could not get upstairs. The ground floor tables are now regularly used by both disabled and non-disabled customers.

North Wales Police made mistakes in refurbishing toilets in their headquarters building but responded positively to the concerns raised by disabled people by creating a completely new accessible toilet in the building foyer and consulting the Arfon Access Group both at planning stage and during construction to ensure a successful completion.

CPD Activities

Think about a short route that you know well. Write a description of the route from memory noting possible access difficulties, for instance for a wheelchair user, a blind or partially sighted person etc. Next time you walk the route take time to study it from an access perspective. Note how many of the access difficulties you had listed and any you had missed or not previously noticed.

Use a case study to examine a recent new development. First look at the planning application and design and access statement, any conditions etc. Then visit the development. List the points where access has been well designed and provided; and points of access difficulty. How might this influence assessment of a future planning application? This could be varied by inviting members of the access group to accompany you on the site visit as a training exercise.

Frequently asked questions

Q. 'If it's just guidance – can this be enforced?'

A. Guidance should be properly considered and used unless an alternative solution performs as well or better. A High Court Judge recently ruled that a London Borough's decision to depart from national guidance on the use of tactile paving to assist people with vision impairments was unlawful. (http://www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWHC/Admin/2012/2970.html)

Q. Developers will only do the minimum required – is there any point suggesting more?

A. During the 'Way to Go' training modules planners were asked to try raising access improvements in pre-application discussions and reported back that they were pleasantly surprised at the positive response, especially where they could show the benefits for users that could be achieved with relatively low additional cost.

Q. How can we do more to ensure accessibility without the resources to follow up on access issues or enforce conditions?

A. Several approaches can be considered, such as utilising local access and disability groups to feedback on new developments. Can you make use of other drivers such as BREEAM new construction and in-use assessments on sustainability which includes accessibility? Also, consider the priority given to accessibility compared to other matters such as conservation – for instance, how does enforcement of using the correct materials in a conservation area compare to that of accessibility of a new development?

Q. How do you evidence that due regard has been taken in building design?

A. Use an Access Statement as a tool to record and communicate what has been considered – good practice references; which good practice standards and guidance have been met; how the accessibility of new features has been assessed; who has been consulted. Remember design is one aspect – the starting point – executing the design, management and maintenance are also vital.

An access statement process can be a useful tool even if a statement is not formally required.

Q. How does the Equality Act 2010 link to building design regulations?

A. The Act places duties on employers and service providers to consider barriers (both physical and nonphysical) that disabled people might face when trying to access a service or employment. An accessible building which meets building design regulations and good practice will help meet Equality Act duties.

Q. Does a "Doc M Pack" from a commercial plumbing supplies company fulfil obligations under the Equality Act?

A. No. It is a fallacy that a product (or building) can be 'Equality Act compliant'. Duties under the Act are far wider and cannot be met by any such 'pack'. Also, some 'Doc M Packs' may not fully meet minimum standards or good practice so you will need to check with your local Access Group or Access Officer and / or study the details of British Standards BS 8300 Section 12.2

Q. What is the minimum allocation of accessible parking spaces in percentage terms?

A. A simple percentage will not meet the requirements. You will need to carefully work through Section 4 of the British Standard BS 8300, noting in particular paragraphs 4.2.1.1 to 4.2.1.6 which enables you to calculate an appropriate number of fully marked accessible spaces and enlarged but un-marked spaces. Monitor in use to assess if adequate provision.

Q. How can we promote access for all when disabled people have conflicting requirements?

A. This is a major reason for engaging with an access group that uses their members' pan-impairment experience to advise on inclusive solutions. Perceived conflicts raised by designers etc. have often already been addressed by disability organisations working together e.g. the inclusive approach of the Joint Statement on Street Design and the implications of a shared surface endorsed by disability organisations across the sector representing people with a wide range of impairments including sensory, mobility, cognitive and mental health.

4 Practical Resources

In this section we will consider:

- Disability and Language
- Training and staff development
- Communication
- Accessible meetings and events
- Booking an interpreter
- Producing accessible material
  - Easy Read Material
  - Clear Print Guidance
  - Producing accessible formats
  - Films, Videos and DVDs
- References, webpages and accredited access consultants

Disability and Language

Some 'traditional' words and expressions used in relation to disability carry negative connotations and can be inappropriate or even offensive. For those new to disability rights culture the issue of language can seem difficult, and lead to fear of inadvertently 'saying the wrong thing'; even amongst groups of disabled people there is not always agreement on which terms should and should not be used.

Disability Wales uses 'Guidelines for the use of disability terms'. Based on the Social Model, and engagement with disabled people, the guidelines set out how both Welsh and English languages can be used in a way that minimises offence and positively reinforces the disability rights culture in Wales. This is summed up by the opening statement:

"Disabled people are individuals, not medical conditions"

An extract from Disability Wales Guidelines is included in **Appendix 2** to provide a constructive tool to take away the confusion and enable

everyone to show respect and courtesy through our use of words and expressions, in both English and Welsh.

Of course, changing our attitudes to disability requires more than just using 'correct' words, it means tackling the values and assumptions behind the expressions we use. A positive attitude is reflected in positive language.

Training and staff development

Staff development may be achieved through traditional face to face training, but may also be acquired through structured reading, DVDs, e-learning, the use of mentoring, or work-shadowing opportunities. Some ideas for CPD – continuing professional development – activities are provided in this toolkit.

Two publications that, while aimed at other professions, provide useful read – across guidance are:

'*A National Framework for Disability Equality & Etiquette Learning (DEEL) for Health and Social Care Services,' DRC and Department of Health, 2007*; and '*Disability Equality and Awareness Training Framework for Transport Staff*', Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC), 2008

Both frameworks are based on the Social Model; are compatible with vocational qualification frameworks; and focus on the outcomes of training / learning in terms of the service delivered, that is the difference the learning makes to what staff actually do in practice and how this affects the experience of a disabled person.

Disability-related staff development should involve the voice and ideally the presence of disabled people as trainers or educational advisers.

Staff development can be a costly and resource-intensive activity, and if it fails to deliver the required outcomes then there is little benefit in doing it. It should therefore be measurable; regularly monitored and assessed against desired outcomes; and form part of an organisation's induction, supervision and Performance Management Review processes.

Useful extracts from '*A National Framework for Disability Equality &*

Etiquette Learning (DEEL) for Health and Social Care Services,' are included in appendix 3:

- **Guidance Sheet 1:** General Disability Etiquette provides guidance related to attitude, behaviour and communication skills useful for anyone to consider when engaging with a disabled person.

- **Guidance Sheet 2:** 'Impairment Related Disability Etiquette' provides specific information and guidance on communicating and working with people with a range of impairments and associated access requirements.

Communication

Make it easy for people to communicate with you, for instance:

- Offer a range of ways that the public can communicate with you including by email, post, telephone, text phone, type-talk which uses a third party to type the hearing person's reply. Publicise these options. Train staff in the use of a text phone and type talk.

- Ensure your website and information provided there is accessible, but don't rely on this to communicate information as this excludes those who do not have access to, or cannot use, the internet.

- Offer a public address system in meetings to improve sound levels and minimise background noise.

- Provide an induction loop or similar system, ensure it is working and staff know how to use it, but note that it will not benefit all people who are Deaf or have impaired hearing.

- Tips on communicating with individuals are provided in appendix 3.

Accessible Meetings and Events

Accessibility requirements must be considered for every aspect of your event, and integrated into the event planning process from the beginning. No disabled person should be excluded from a meeting or event because of their impairment or associated access requirements. **Manchester Disabled People's Access Group** has published a

comprehensive guide to arranging 'Accessible Meetings and Events'.

A checklist summary of some of the key points to consider is given in **Appendix 4.**

Booking an Interpreter

Association of Sign Language Interpreters - (booking directly with interpreters is often cheaper than booking through an agency). http://www.asli.org.uk/interpreter-search-p3.aspx

Action on Hearing Loss can provide information and support the booking of Language Service Professionals (LSPs) including sign language interpreters, lipspeakers, electronic notetakers, and speech to text reporters.
http://www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk/supporting-you/communication-support/book-communication-support.aspx

Producing accessible material

All written material should be available in clear print, use clear English and be easy read, or have an easy read summary version.

Most Authorities in Wales will have a policy on the availability of bilingual information in Welsh and English. Do you also have a policy on producing bilingual accessible formats such as Welsh Braille or audio documents?

Take care when translating disability terms as some words do not translate easily and incorrect terms can sometimes be inadvertently offensive (see Disability and Language above).

Easy Read Material

- Keep the information short, or break the information up into more than one document, or provide a summary.

- Keep sentences short.

- Each sentence should have just one idea and one verb.

- Take out words that are not needed. For example, say 'for 14 days' not 'for a period of 14 days'.

- Include a glossary explaining abbreviations and jargon, and an index, at the end of the document.

- Use full words not acronyms.

- If you need to use difficult words or ideas, say what they mean - do this in the next sentence, not as part of the same sentence.

- Use text colour that contrasts with paper, and consider breaking up issues with a different colour or bold type.

- Use pictures to support the meaning of your text.

Source: Office for Disability Issues

Clear print guidance

- Document text size should be 14 point, minimum 12 point.

- The font you choose should be clear, avoiding anything stylised

- All body text should be left aligned

- Use bold sparingly, only highlight a few words rather than a paragraph

- Keep the text layout clear, simple and consistent

- Don't use blocks of capital letters, and try not to use much italics or underlining

- Text should not be overlaid on images

- Ensure the paper is thick enough to prevent show through, and not glossy or reflective

- The contrast between the text and background is as high as possible

- All text should be the same orientation on the page

- Space between columns of text is large enough to be distinct

- Any information conveyed in colour or through images is also described

Source: RNIB

Producing accessible formats

What formats should we make available and how many?

That really depends on the type of information you have, and most importantly the requirements of your audience. If you are providing information for a group or known individuals the best way to meet those requirements is to ask them their preferred format, and keep a record of this up to date. Some people may prefer to have information in advance electronically or in audio format and for instance have short documents such as an agenda in Braille or large print for use at a meeting.

If you are not able to assess the requirements of your audience in advance you may be able to produce an appropriate number to start with based on monitoring previous requests. It is much quicker to produce more copies than to transcribe a new document. Publicise the availability of accessible formats and how these can be requested.

Some Authorities may have in-house capacity to produce accessible formats, though even then may require advance notice in the same way as large numbers of printed documents. Others may have regular suppliers. Ensure all staff know how and where to access this information.

RNIB Cymru can provide advice on producing accessible formats and supply transcription services.

Films, Videos and DVDs

These should be available with British Sign Language, sub-titles, narration and audio-description

Action on Hearing Loss can provide information and suppliers of BSL and sub-titled formats.

RNIB can provide information on audio description and narration.

References and Further Information

Technical Advice Note 12; Design
Welsh Assembly Government, 2009

Design and Access Statements (leaflet)
Welsh Assembly Government, 2009

Design and Access Statements in Wales
Design Commission for Wales, 2011

Access Statement guidance (relating to applications for planning
permission and listed buildings consent)
Planning Aid Wales and Wales Access Groups, 2010

Policy Clarification Letter CL- 03 -10 – Design and Access Statements
Welsh Assembly Government, 2010

Planning and access for disabled people: A good practice guide
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 2003

BS8300 - A1, 2010 - Design of buildings and their approaches to meet
the needs of disabled people

British Standards Institute, 2010 (cost: £240 or £120 to BSI members)
Tel: 0208 996 9001 Email: orders@bsigroup.com

Approved Document to Part M: Access to and use of Buildings
Department for Communities and Local Government, 2010

Inclusive mobility: A guide to best practice on access to pedestrians and
transport infrastructure
Department for Transport, 2002

Manual for Streets 2
Department for Transport, 2010

Inclusive Streets: Design principles for blind and partially sighted people
Guide Dogs, 2010

The Principles of Inclusive Design
Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE), 2006

Useful web-links

Contact details for Access Groups in Wales:
http://www.accessgroupresources.co.uk/index.php/access-groups/find-an-access-group/wales

Centre for Access Environments:
http://www.cae.org.uk/

Planning Aid Wales:
http://www.planningaidwales.org.uk/

The Planning Portal (Wales):
http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/general/glossaryandlinks/links/wales

Accredited access consultants

National Register of Access Consultants
http://www.nrac.org.uk

Inclusive Environments Consultants Scheme, Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors.
http://www.rics.org

Appendix 1:

"Way to Go" - "Planning for Inclusive Access in Wales" - Mediation Approach.

Mediation is a process that enables parties to come to a deeper level of understanding about each other's point of view and especially how their need and interests are being challenged by the issue(s) they face together. It is often seen as a process in search of solutions, but it is also a process that can, when used well, develop relationships and transform people's ways of dealing with their issues together – especially where that relationship needs to be ongoing. This process is helped by having a third party facilitating the conversations of the involved participants. The third party (with no vested interest in outcomes) can support both sides through a structured process that encourages honesty, transparency and the desire to find resolution. A 'Solutions Focused' transformational style will encourage parties to move quickly and fruitfully to identifying what they need and want – how it could be – and finding the resources they already have to make that happen.

Engaging the experts from disability access groups along with the experts from planning departments in the *ongoing relationship and process* of ensuring that planning policies and decisions are inclusive and that buildings and venues are accessible would be one of the results of a solid mediation process. *Resolving the issue* at hand is another result. Both are important and achievable – resolving issues and transforming and building good sustainable working relationships.

Outcomes for ALL participants in mediation processes include:

• To feel more confident, knowledgeable and skilled and able to participate effectively when there are significant difficult issues to discuss around access and inclusion.

• To feel engaged and to be able to participate effectively in a

process to understand issues and develop action around them

- To be able to articulate access needs, and have them met when participating in all sessions

- To find ways to ensure that their voices are heard and their views listened to, while also listening to the views and voices of others.

- To value input and expertise from all participants

- To identify when and how parties need to come to the table to address access issues – to have an approach and a method

- To resolve long standing differences in identified areas between the local access/disability forum and the local authority resulting in more harmonious and constructive relationships.

- To understand not only how far they have come in the process, but also to understand HOW the process worked – to be clear that there are activities, tools and approaches that will enable better solutions and better relationships

- And as these relationships become stronger, and long after the pilots have finished….that continued involvement and relationships enable wise and effective planning decisions and understanding of how to support the best results.

Why Mediation, and what is the process?

There have been past difficult relationships around planning issues between access groups and local authorities. A sensitive intervention like a mediation process can 'put a stake in the ground' and identify new ways and approaches to enable the difficulties of the past to be understood and then left behind - to find ways to resolve issues and respect each other's needs and expertise. This will form the foundation for more effective co-operation in the future. This approach will save both access groups and local planning authorities' considerable time and effort in the longer term.

Skilled parties can work through the process themselves, but it is often helpful to have an independent trained mediator to guide the process and support ALL parties, so trust in the fairness and equality of the process is in place.

Preparing for Mediation

The '**Way to Go**' project has identified some initial and follow-up process steps, and these are identified these here with more detail about how the mediation process (and other support) could work:

1. Identify the Local Authorities and groups of disabled people to take part (many of these participants may have taken part in the prior training) –

   Who are the stakeholders?

   Are all parties well-represented?

2. Achieve initial clarity about the issues they want to include in the mediation process.

   Is there a specific building or planning issue that needs to be addressed?

   Is it an ongoing issue around a particular site?

   Is it an issue around relationships and working well together?

3. Identify whether these issues can be handled by meeting together and discussing with an agreed party as 'chair'

   parties all committed to work together and have skills

4. or whether an external third party could or should be used

   history of difficult conversations in the past

   high emotion present

   particularly complex or deep issues

5. If needing a mediator – select and appoint at this point, or identify the 'chair' and a scribe

6. Confirm with all parties the specifics of timing and understanding of process

7. Conduct the mediation process – a more detailed description following

8. Prepare a report of the agreements reached and understandings of the ongoing process documented

9. Reflect on the process with all parties – identify the highs and lows and clarify the tools and techniques – involve the groups in

developing and building relationships

Evaluate what worked in the process, what the parties would like to continue to do, and what else might help

The Mediation Process

1. Meet Party One – Meet Party Two

2. Plan the Process

3. Get the Parties Together – Intros build the agenda

4. Explore the Issues – Identify what parties need and want

5. Identify options and possibilities for ways forward

6. Test the options and find agreements

Source: GroupWorks Associates

Mediation process:

If an external mediator has been chosen, she/he will facilitate the process from this point. If the groups have agreed to manage the process internally, it is still probably worthwhile having someone (this person must be agreed by both parties) at least 'chairing' the process to be sure all parties have input and the process (agenda) is managed.

1. Meet with separate parties initially – these may be small groups or individuals representing the differing points of view on the issues chosen – the process will be explained and their views heard. This may be one meeting or several and could take between 2 hours and a half day for each 'party' depending on numbers of participants and the complexity of the issues. Determine joint session needs for all parties.

2. Take some planning time to design/structure the session, etc.

   It may be simply to agree to move on to the next step.

3. Bring parties together – and build the agenda – create together the list of areas to be explored and resolved using knowledge gained from the initial explorations with the separate parties.

4. Explore the areas – challenge the 'status quo' – this takes the majority of the time the group spends in joint session. The mediator / 'chair' encourages a very open dialogue about the issues, ensuring that the participants remain supported and feel safe and that the process stays respectful, but allows people to express their feelings appropriately.

5. Identify Options and possibilities – this is a very wide open session – encouraging recognition of past successes and learning as well as seeking creative and innovative ideas.

6. Clarify the best options for resolving the issues and for working together – begin to prioritise select what seems best.

7. 'Test' the group's ability – select the options that can achieve success.

8. Develop a plan to work with these decisions and also plans to continue and support the relationship in the future. This plan must be fully documented and agreed as a final step in the process – again it is important that this reflects what actually happened in the session, and actions should have owners and timeframes.

All parties should then sign the agreement. If possible, this could be done IN the session if the scribe has a computer (and printer) OR this should be completed within a few business days of the session and sent around to all participants for approval within a prescribed timeframe.

Steps 3-8 will all be part of the joint session – and will hopefully take place on one day over 2 sessions, but may require additional days depending on ability of participants to keep going for extended timeframes. This can only be determined during the process.

Summary

The '**Way to Go**' project was conceived as a value-driven process of education, understanding, and relationship building that is exciting, substantial, and innovative. Conflict is a natural and normal part of our everyday lives, especially when our knowledge and understanding of each other and our diversity is incomplete. The mediation process, with a solution focussed approach, will certainly

further the goals of the overall project and help the groups and individuals involved to work effectively and with respect, increasing their understanding and ability to express their needs and developing their skills in handling difficult issues.

For more information contact: **Ann Lukens**, GroupWorks Associates **Email:** Ann@bigsnap.org.uk **Tel:** 01600 860059

Appendix 2:

Disability and Language

Extract from 'Guidelines for the use of disability terms' produced by the Welsh Terminology Centre, University of Wales Bangor for Disability Wales, 2001 available from DW

The disability movement differentiates between impairment and disability as follows:

Impairment is the functional limitation experienced by an individual because of a physical, mental or sensory condition. An impairment is the medical condition of an individual.

Disability is the loss or limitation of opportunities to take part in the everyday life of the community on an equal standing as others due to physical and social barriers. People are disabled by the barriers that result from their environment and from the attitudes within society that prevent them from playing a full part in that society.

Use	Do not use
disabled people *pobl anabl*	the disabled people with disabilities *pobl ag anabledd* *yr anabl*
people with hearing impairments *pobl fyddar*	the deaf *y byddar*
people with visual impairments *pobl ddall*	the blind *y dall*
people with epilepsy *pobl ag epilepsi*	epileptics
people with diabetes *pobl â diabetes*	diabetics

Use	Do not use
non-disabled people *pobl nad ydynt yn anabl*	able-bodied people healthy people *pobl iach* normal people *pobl normal*
disability *anabledd*	*analluedd*
disabled *anabl*	*analluog*
impairment *nam* *nam ar y corff* *nam ar y synhwyrau*	*amhariad* *amhariad ar y corff* *amhariad ar y synhwyrau*
wheelchair users *pobl sy'n defnyddio cadair olwyn* *pobl mewn cadair olwyn*	people confined to a wheelchair *pobl sy'n gaeth i gadair olwyn*
specific needs / requirements *anghenion penodol*	special needs *anghenion arbennig*
people with a particular condition / people who have a *specific condition* *pobl sydd â chyflwr arbennig*	people who suffer from a particular condition *pobl sy'n dioddef o gyflwr arbennig*
client / customer *cleient / cwsmer*	patient *claf*
disabled *anabl*	handicapped invalid
without speech *mud* *heb leferydd*	dumb *mudan*
cerebral palsy *parlys yr ymennydd*	spastic *sbastig*
sign language interpreter *cyfieithydd iaith arwyddion*	signer *lladmerydd* *dehonglydd* *arwyddwr*
sign language *iaith arwyddion*	*iaith dwylo*

Appendix 3:

Staff Development and Training

Extract from '*A National Framework for Disability Equality & Etiquette Learning (DEEL) for Health and Social Care Services*', DRC and Department of Health, 2007.

Guidance Sheet 1:
General Disability Etiquette

Attitudes and Behaviour

- Recognise disabled people's rights and entitlements

- Don't assume the disabled person is not working or able to work

- Avoid asking potentially intrusive and inappropriate questions, e.g. "What's wrong with you?" "How long have you been disabled?" or "Do you think it is worse to be blind or deaf?" etc.

- Avoid treating disabled people as charity cases, objects of pity, something to be cured etc.

- Ask if you can help, don't just do it. Don't be offended if the disabled person doesn't want or require your assistance

- Try to feel confident and comfortable

- In most service situations you can provide the same customer care as you would for any non-disabled person, e.g. professional and polite at all times, remaining controlled under pressure and calmly challenging extreme rudeness such as bad language

- Be aware of the person's impairment (or that they might have an impairment) and therefore may have access requirements that you need to meet

- Do not become fixated about the disabled person's impairment or difference

Communication Skills

- Find a suitable place to talk, with good lighting, i.e. avoid being

silhouetted with light behind you

- Make sure you have the listener's attention before you start speaking

- Use plain language and don't waffle

- Avoid jargon and unfamiliar abbreviations

- Don't shout

- Focus on what is being communicated

- If someone doesn't understand what you've said, don't just keep repeating it. Try saying it in a different way

- Use active listening skills including providing feedback, asking further relevant questions, and using body language effectively

- Ask for clarification if the disabled person hasn't understood something

- Feedback what has been understood - ask them to fill in the gaps

- Use questions to clarify specific points

- Encourage and allow others to speak without interrupting

- Consider methods of communicating e.g. writing it down, finger-spelling, BSL Interpreter

- Use their support worker / facilitator – but look at and talk directly to the person

Guidance Sheet 2:
Impairment Related Disability Etiquette

This provides more specific information and detailed guidance on communicating and working with people with a range of impairments and associated access requirements.

It covers 'Do's and Don'ts' when working with a person:

- who has lost some or all of their hearing

- who uses a British Sign Language (BSL) interpreter

- who uses lip speaking

- who uses an induction loop

- who has a speech impediment
- who is without speech
- with a visual impairment
- who is using a guide, hearing or assistance dog
- with a learning difficulty
- affected by autism
- who is visibly different e.g. has a birthmark, scars, burns, etc.
- who is a wheelchair user
- who has a mental health problem
- who is affected by epilepsy
- who is affected by asthma or allergies
- who is an amputee or limb deficient

Appendix 4:

Planning an Accessible Event: Summary Checklist

Comprehensive information to supplement this checklist is available in '*Accessible Meetings and Events*' published by Manchester Disabled People's Access Group

- Consider how the event will fit into your engagement process, and ensure this is clear in event publicity

- Set aside a budget which includes meeting access requirements

- Consider affordability if a cost event; and consider payment of travel costs and other expenses including support staff.

- Find a venue that is fully accessible, with adequate car parking, and easy to get to by accessible public transport

- Choose a date and time convenient for target audience – will they need to take time off work or education? Will an early start or late finish affect those who rely on support or have childcare commitments? Do start and finish times take account of public transport timetables?

- Publicise in advance – use a range of methods appropriate to target audience

- Is it an open event, invited participants, or booking required? How will you get information on people's access and diet requirements or enable people to let you know these. If there is a booking form this can be included here.

- Have several ways people can book or request information – telephone, text phone, accessible website, email – don't rely on one communication method.

- Consider accessibility of material and how this is requested – Easy read; Braille; audio etc. Allow time for this to be produced.

- Support to enable participation such as sign language interpreters, lip speakers, palantypists (speech to text operators), need to be

booked well in advance - consider when planning time schedule. Provisional bookings that can be confirmed nearer the time may be possible. If the event is more than an hour two interpreters will be needed.

- Plan room layout to include positioning of support staff and those who need to access this; and plan for this if using workshops and break-out areas.

- Ensure easy access routes to all parts of the event including refreshment areas and informal networking.

- Provide clear signage, and have staff available to give directions and support if a complex layout

- Ensure registration and other staff are well-trained and prepared to meet access requirements on the day including how to use equipment such as induction loops. Consider whether staff need training in sighted guide and communication skills to assist participants.

- Brief chair and speakers to ensure accessible presentations – avoidance of jargon; visual aids such as slides to be clear print and read out, images described; if showing a Video, film or DVD include subtitles, British Sign Language (BSL) and audio-description etc.

- Brief workshop leaders to ensure inclusive ways of taking part in discussions, recording input and giving feedback are considered in advance.

- Ensure induction loop or other sound enhancement available in all rooms to be used, and check working on the day

- When setting programme, timing should take account of any issue which will affect participation – need for interpreters to take regular breaks, number of people queuing for an accessible toilet at break time, time to move to 'break-out' areas if used.

- Check catering arrangements meet access requirements, for instance have cups with handles and straws available; enough seats and accessible tables if not a fully seated meal; accessible menu or description of food if a buffet.

- Provide bowls of fresh water for assistance dogs and information on dog spending areas.

After the event:

- Check evaluation forms and invite comments for lessons to improve the next event.

- Provide accessible reports, information on any decisions taken, feedback on how the event will influence future activity, and next steps, ensuring participants feel their involvement was worthwhile.

Contact information for Disability Wales.

Disability Wales
Bridge House,
3 Caerphilly Business Park,
Van Road,
Caerphilly, CF83 3GW

T: 029 2088 7325

F: 029 2088 8702

E: info@disabilitywales.org

W: www.disbilitywales.org

disability wales
anabledd cymru

Way to Go

Y Ffordd Ymlaen

Access
Design Solutions

UK Limited