

# The **D**isability **C**ompliance **S**pecialists Access Guide to Consultation and Involvement in A Disability Equality Scheme.

September 2006

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## Notes

### **Where to find the references in the report**

There are pointers to websites in the text, where you may find the documents and information you need. Every effort has been made to ensure that the websites referred to are accessible websites at the time of writing.

Details of the publications referred to in the text, and the addresses, phone and Minicom numbers of organisations are in the Appendix at the end of the guide.

### **The author**

This guide was written for use by government authorities and private organisations acting as a public body.

It was researched and written by Andrew Robinson A.B.A.C. for **Disability Compliance Specialists**. **DCS** is an organisation of people dedicated to helping service providers and thence the disabled. **DCS** provides access advice, policy advice and consultancy to employers, service providers and organisations across Britain.

For more information about **DCS** see the website [www.dcs-group.org](http://www.dcs-group.org)

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## Foreword

From October 2004 statutory organisations across England have faced new duties under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) to make their buildings and services accessible to disabled people.

On the 5th December 2005 the Specific Duty part of a 2-part legislation called the Disability Equality Duty (DED) came into effect. The final part - the General Duty comes into effect on the 5th December 2006.

Unlike other parts of the DDA, the DED is about taking an organisation wide approach to tackling disability-related discrimination.

The goal is to promote true equality of opportunity for people with disabilities.

The General Duty is to promote equality for opportunity; eliminate unlawful discrimination; eliminate disability-related harassment; promote positive attitudes towards disabled people; encourage participation by disabled people and be prepared to take extra steps to meet the needs of disabled people. Or in other words it is not just to comply with the DDA, but to go further and encourage other service providers do the same.

The Specific Duty requires the involvement of disabled people in the development of a Disability Equality Scheme that will demonstrate how you intend to fulfil your duties. The scheme must describe:

How disabled people were involved in the production of the scheme.

How you are going to carry out your general duty-The Action Plan.

How you are gathering information on your performance.

How you are going to assess that information once you have gathered it.

How you are going to review and edit your scheme.

Within three years of producing the Scheme, you need to have taken the steps you set out in your Action Plan, or justify why you have not and produce a report summarising the steps taken, the results of your information gathering and what you are going to do with that information.

This is not a technical guide but offers advice on how disabled people can contribute to how buildings are designed and how they are used. It shows that the most effective way for organisations to achieve a good standard of access is to consult with disabled people and involve them in the process of change.

Andrew Robinson A.B.A.C.

Disability Compliance Specialists.

## Involving disabled people with access

### Key Recommendations

- 1 -Involve disabled people before, during and after making changes.
- 2 -There is no one-way to involve. Consult and involve face to face, on the phone, one to one, in small focus groups, in large meetings. For large projects, set up your own Access Advisory Group. Be imaginative!
- 3 -Consult with staff and with non-disabled users as well as disabled users.
- 4 -Be inclusive: disabled people from local communities, from Black and ethnic minority communities, people with learning difficulties, children and young people, have something to say on access.
- 5 -Make sure your involvement is accessible: venue, information, easy words, sign language interpreters, induction loops, and foreign language interpreters.
- 6 -Make sure your involvement groups are properly resourced. Set up a budget.

7 -Be prepared to pay a fee for expert advice.

8 -Talk to your local Access Group and Access Officer.

9 –If an Access Consultant or Advisor has been used, do make sure he or she is contracted to the client and not the architect.

10 –To get funding, good preparation is important.

11 -The project should be owned by the whole organisation. This way it can survive when key people change.

12 -When the work is finished, advertise the fact that the building/organisation now has improved access.

What's in this guide?

This guide is in two parts.

Part 1 is about access and about the law.

Part 1 is also about how access affects local councils, health authorities and private organisations acting as a public body.

Part 2 explains how to consult and involve disabled people.

In the appendix at the end, there is useful information about organisations that can help.

At the beginning of each chapter of this report, there is a short version of the chapter in Easy Words.

Easy words

## **What is this guide about?**

Introduction

This is a guide about access to buildings.

It is about how to work with disabled people to make access better.

It will help local councils in England.

It will also help health centres and hospitals and private organisations acting as a public body.

It will help all these organisations get the access to their buildings right.

If an organisation wants to make its building accessible, it should talk to disabled people and involve them in the decision making process.

## **Introduction**

### **What is this guide about?**

This guide is about encouraging good practice on access to the built environment. It focuses on how disabled people can contribute to how buildings are designed and how they are used. Its aim is to help England's public, health and private sector organisations work with disabled people to provide inclusive access to their buildings and services. It is about putting into practice the commitment of the public sector to social inclusion, so that disabled people have the same access to everything that England has to offer.

Throughout England, buildings used by statutory organisations are being modernised to provide access for all. Organisations are doing their best to meet their duties under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. While they may have gone some way to tackle the exclusion of disabled people from services and employment, many organisations are daunted by the task of making their premises accessible. How to get the best standard of access within limited resources? How to consult/involve with disabled people? Where to get the right advice?

This guide aims to answer some of those questions. Its main focus is 'working with disabled people for inclusive access'. The aim is to show that the most effective way for organisations to achieve a good standard of access, indeed to achieve inclusive access, is to consult with disabled people and involve them in the process of change. Disabled people may be involved as users and staff of a building, or as members of a local Access Group or a specially set up Access Advisory group; they may be involved as professional access auditors and consultants. This guide is therefore about a partnership between disabled people, building and other professionals and the organisation that owns or runs a building. This Guide is about existing buildings. This is because from October 2004, service providers may have to make changes to their buildings in order to provide access for disabled people, in order to meet the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA). For more information see [www.drc-gb.org/thelaw/thedda.asp](http://www.drc-gb.org/thelaw/thedda.asp)

Consulting with disabled people and involving them in making changes will help service providers meet their duties under the Disability Discrimination Act and the Disability Equality Duty.

## Why is this guide needed?

This guide is about getting it right. There are many public buildings in England that are designed to meet the minimum standards for 'access to and use of a building' set out in Part M of the Building Regulations. But they don't necessarily 'work' for disabled people or for other groups such as older people or people with small children. An organisation may have spent large sums of money on improving its building, only to find that the first disabled person to arrive can't find the reception counter or hear the receptionist because of the poor design of the entrance foyer. Yet if disabled people and others had been asked for their advice, and had been supported in doing so, these mistakes could have been avoided.

## How to use this guide

The guide is meant to be used for reference – look in Part 2 for guidance on consulting about the plans for your building. Or you might want to look through ideas for different ways to consult and involve, or how to contact the local access group.

Part One sets the scene. It explains inclusive access and the social model of disability, and the duties of service providers under the Disability Discrimination Act. It also offers a summary of the key points of this guide. It also raises the key practical issues that public sector bodies face in trying to make their buildings more accessible.

Part Two is about the details of consultation and involvement: why consult, who to consult and involve, how to consult and involve – and a step by step guide to the process of consulting/involving when making changes to a building. In this section you will find a road map about how to go about consulting and involving disabled people: some checklists and some ideas for different ways to consult and involve.

## How the research was done

The research for this guide was carried out by researchers from **Disability Compliance Specialists** with help from Action for Better Access, a Lancashire wide organisation of disabled people experienced for over twenty years in providing access advice and audits. The researchers interviewed building and service managers, access and design professionals, and disabled people as well as some members of Action for Better Access and disabled people's organisations. All of these people gave their time and ideas because they were proud of what

they had achieved. The research also looked at best practice in consultation and involvement.

### **What is not in this guide.**

This guide is about the process of achieving good access through consultation and involvement. It is not a guide to technical standards for access, or to how to design a building. There are many excellent guides for architects and designers. They should be used alongside this guide.

### **In conclusion**

This research provides tangible proof that consulting and involving disabled people works. Not only does it work, it is the best way to get a building refurbishment right. It is also the start of a process for organisations to ensure that they meet their legal duties under the DDA and DED as employers and service providers and become inclusive organisations.

## Part 1: Setting the scene

### Inclusive access and design

Before embarking on consultation and involvement on a building project, it is important to understand what is meant by disability and by inclusive design, and what the legal and planning requirements are.

#### The social model of disability

The social model, developed by disabled people, argues that the problems faced by disabled people lies not with disabled people themselves or their impairments, but with the economic, social, environmental and legal barriers that society puts in the way of disabled people which prevent them from participating fully in society. These barriers include access, attitudes, communication and information and legal and institutional barriers. Lack of access is therefore part of a pattern of discrimination. People are disabled by an inaccessible built environment - buildings, streets, other public spaces, and transport.

The social model places the responsibility on society to make changes, rather than disabled people having to adapt to a hostile environment. Access is no longer a matter of making *special* provision for disabled people – a separate entrance, a separate meeting, or providing a service at home because a service is inaccessible. It has become a matter of removing barriers to create equality and inclusion, of how disabled people can use the built environment and experience what it has to offer on an equal basis with the rest of society.

#### The case for access

Whilst the social model places duties on society to make changes, there is also a clear business case for access. One in four Lancashire households includes a disabled person. Like anyone else, they want to use local services, pay their Council Tax, or visit the doctor, but also borrow a library book or video, go for a swim, or visit their local park or swimming pool. Failing to provide access means that service providers miss out on the income of one in five people and their families, or have to provide the service in a different, and in some cases, more expensive fashion. Being able to access leisure facilities for example, also has a positive impact on people's health and thus cuts the cost to the NHS.

Added to this are the millions tourists who visit England every year, from the UK and abroad. Many public buildings also cater for visitors from

outside England. All of these services will lose out on their share of the estimated £60 billion spending power of the UK's 10 million disabled people.

‘Ensuring good access for disabled people raises an organisation’s profile, demonstrating high standards for all its patrons. Other benefits include creating opportunities for disabled arts practitioners to work in your organisation. Not only does this comply with the law but it makes good business sense and promotes better understanding of the needs of disabled people as employees, artists, participants and audiences.’

*Arts Council – making arts organisations more accessible*

## **What is access?**

Access to the built environment is about more than ramps and parking spaces and the physical structure of the building, or meeting the needs of wheelchair users. Access is about how people get to and find a building or public space, get into it, get around it, use its facilities, and work in it. It is also about how a building is used, about people’s experience when they come into a building. Can people find the reception desk easily and are they made to feel welcome, not patronised or ignored? Access is also about how information is provided, or whether a Deaf person or a Sylheti speaker has access to an interpreter when attending a hospital appointment.

Access and inclusion also go wider than just services. An organisation that is a good employer of disabled people (or members of any other excluded group) is more likely to provide an inclusive service to its disabled users.

It is also clear that if a person experiences discrimination on the grounds of their impairment, sexuality, race, religion, gender or any other factor, or they are made to feel unwelcome, the building is not accessible to them.

For this reason, it is essential that changes to the building go hand in hand with an evaluation of how an organisation provides services to and employs disabled people.

‘Access works are part of a wider change. Look at the barriers to inclusion of disabled people within your organisation before you start making changes to the building. How staff respond to disabled people

may be more important than the physical access. Any project to improve access to a building must also look at services, communication, information, attitudes, employment and staff training.'

*Greater London Action on Disability*

A priority must be staff training: Disability Equality Training will help the organisation and their staffs understand the social model of disability, legal duties and good practice on diversity in employment and services.

## **Inclusive design**

..'design that creates an environment where everyone can access and benefit from the full range of opportunities available to members of society. It aims to remove barriers that create undue effort, separation or special treatment, and enables everyone to participate equally, confidently and independently in mainstream activities with choice and dignity.'

*Greater London Authority*

The issue of independence is key; disabled people do not want special treatment, only an environment that is designed with everyone in mind.

'Some people will need assistance but this should arise from their needs rather than being imposed by the design of the facility.' *Gateshead Access Panel*

Inclusive design benefits other groups who have been excluded from so much of the built environment: parents and carers of small children, women, black and minority ethnic communities, lesbians, gay men and older people. Disabled people in England also belong to many different communities and have diverse needs.

'An inclusive environment does not, and cannot, attempt to meet every need of every individual who will use it. However, it should consider people's diversity and minimise unnecessary barriers and exclusions, something that will often benefit society as a whole. *Disability Rights Commission Guidance on Access Statements 2004*

An example: a large public building might provide inclusive toilet facilities; these will be easy to find, and well signed (with visual and tactile signs). The facility should include a larger number of toilet cubicles for women so they don't have to queue, at least one accessible cubicle, accessible baby change and an accessible space to wash

before prayers; visual and audible fire alarm facilities should be provided; the toilets should be well maintained, and kept free from homophobic, sexist or racist graffiti. These are inclusive facilities. In a small building, two accessible toilet cubicles might provide most of the above facilities within a small space.

The Disability Rights Commission states that inclusive design is advisable in order to meet legal duties:

‘It is likely when making alterations to premises that you will need to comply with a variety of legislation - not just the DDA but planning duties, building and licensing regulations for example. By adopting inclusive design you will be more likely to satisfy any obligations you may have under these duties.’

[www.drc-gb.org/businessandservices/access.asp](http://www.drc-gb.org/businessandservices/access.asp)

The DRC also points out that not only should changes to buildings seek to remove existing barriers to inclusion, but they should avoid the creation of additional barriers.

## **Planning and access**

This guide is a tool to help the public, health and voluntary sector deliver the requirements of the Disability Equality Duty and the DDA Design/Access Statement (DAS). The DAS sets the framework for all planning decisions in England.

The DAS seeks to ensure that all future developments meet the highest standards of access and inclusion. The DAS encourages the application of the principles of inclusive design in development briefs, in planning applications and in the detailed design and construction of a building. This approach applies to new and existing buildings for which planning permission is required.

It recommends adopting the following principles:

- .Accessibility for disabled people as a condition of any investment
- .Accessibility for disabled people must be a mainstream activity
- .Disabled people should be involved in determining accessibility
- .Accessibility for disabled people is the responsibility of the provider.

These principles were put together by the Disabled Person’s Transport Advisory Committee in their guidance on access to the built environment

www.dptac.gov.uk. For further guidance from the government, see Planning and Access for Disabled People – a Good Practice Guide published by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. www.odpm.gov.uk

## **Access statements**

The DED states that councils should require all planning applications to be backed up by an Access Statement. This is a useful tool for organisations that want to establish how inclusive access will be achieved when making changes to a building.

An access statement can set out:

- A definition of and commitment to achieve inclusive access
- The principles of what the organisation wants to achieve in making changes to the building (and services if appropriate)
- The process of achieving inclusive access
- The standards for access to be used in the construction
- Any reasons why some areas cannot be made fully accessible
- How the organisation will consult disabled people
- Management and maintenance procedures once the work is completed
- How good practice will be continued and enhanced.

An access statement will help organisations explain and defend any decisions as part of the process of obtaining planning and building control permissions from their local authority.

The Disability Rights Commission's (DRC) guidance on access statements sets out the key stages of putting together an access statement. The DRC also states that:

'Consultation should be seen as a crucial element in the preparation of an Access Statement and undertaken as early as possible in the development process.'

[www.drc-gb.org/businessandservices/access.asp](http://www.drc-gb.org/businessandservices/access.asp)

## **Standards for access**

Minimum legal requirements for access are set by legislation and by national standards and guidance. Part M of the Building Regulations (2004 edition) is the Approved Document.

[http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm\\_buildreg/documents/page/odpm\\_breg\\_025494.hcsp](http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_buildreg/documents/page/odpm_breg_025494.hcsp)

Part M, as it is known, sets out standards for access to and within buildings, including approaches, parking, entrances, circulation, toilets, audience and spectator facilities, and a range of other features. More comprehensive guidance is provided in the British Standard BS 8300:2001, *Design of buildings and their approaches to meet the needs of disabled people- Code of Practice*.

All works to improve access to existing buildings should be at least to the standards of Part M of the Building Regulations. Part M is a minimum standard – and a basic tool for designers. But inclusive design is about more than technical standards – it is about how a building is designed so people can use it easily. It is about quality. Part M will not tell a designer how to adapt a space so it is used in the best way possible to meet the needs of different users of a building. Consultation will show what is needed. Organisations may also wish to use additional guidance for their design, and in particular the guidance produced in consultation with or by organisations of disabled people.

## **The Disability Discrimination Act**

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) applies to employment (Part II), the provision of goods and services (Part III) and education (Part IV) across the UK. The Disability Rights Commission website [www.drc-gb.org/thelaw/thedda.asp](http://www.drc-gb.org/thelaw/thedda.asp) gives guidance on the DDA and its implications for service providers and employers. All service providers should refer to the DRC's Code of Practice: Rights of Access - Goods, Facilities, Services and Premises.

[www.drc-gb.org/publicationsandreports/publicationdetails.asp](http://www.drc-gb.org/publicationsandreports/publicationdetails.asp)

## **Service providers**

Part III of the DDA applies equally to commercial and public service providers including for example:

- doctors surgeries, hospitals, dentists and other health providers
- local authorities, regional authorities, and government departments and agencies
- community and voluntary organisations
- sports, leisure and the arts including theatres and cinemas, swimming pools and sports stadia
- housing associations and estate agents
- churches, mosques, synagogues and other religious bodies
- shops, pubs, cafes and restaurants, hotels

.events such as conferences, football matches or concerts

Education providers are covered by Part IV of the DDA, and by the Special Education Needs and Disability Discrimination Act (SENDA). The duties of reasonable adjustment are similar, but the timetable is slightly different from that for the DDA. For more information on SENDA:  
<http://drc.org.uk/thelaw/thedda/asp>  
<http://www.hmso.gov.uk/acts/acts2001/20010010.htm>

Since December 1996, it has been unlawful for a service provider to discriminate against a disabled person i.e. treat them less favourably because of their impairment. Since October 1999, service providers have had a duty to make reasonable adjustments so that a disabled person can use their services.

### **Duties of employers**

This guide is mainly concerned with service providers. From October 2004, all employers will be covered by the act and have a similar duty not to discriminate, and to make reasonable adjustments. Good practice is for employers to make changes to their buildings, not only to meet the needs of existing staff, but to provide inclusive access for all staff in the future. The *Disability Rights Commission's Code of Practice: duties of employers gives guidance for employers*.

[www.drc-gb.org/thelaw/new\\_codes\\_101004.asp](http://www.drc-gb.org/thelaw/new_codes_101004.asp)

See also the Employers Forum on Disability  
[www.employers-forum.co.uk](http://www.employers-forum.co.uk) for guidance for employers.

### **What is a reasonable adjustment?**

Reasonable adjustments include:

.Taking reasonable steps to change working practices, policies and procedures: changing the way you do things, for example by allowing guide dogs into a community centre, or allowing people to make complaints about a public service by phone or face to face as well as in writing.

.Providing auxiliary aids or adaptations:

This means for example a Sign Language Interpreter or information in large print.

.Providing a reasonable alternative method of using the service: for example by moving a meeting to a more accessible room, or going to a person's home to provide advice.

## **Duty of access**

From 1 October 2004, service providers have a duty to take reasonable steps to:

- remove or alter a physical feature which makes it impossible or unreasonably difficult for a disabled person to access a service or
- provide a reasonable means of avoiding the physical feature

Service providers also have a duty to provide a reasonable alternative method of making the service available.

Disability Rights Commission guidance makes it clear that making changes to a building is the preferred option:

‘It is good practice to consider first whether a physical feature which creates a barrier for disabled people can be removed or altered. This is often the safest option because it is the most likely to make the service accessible. It means that disabled people receive the services in the same way as other customers. This is called an inclusive approach.’

*Disability Rights Commission DDA Code of Practice 2002*

## **What is a physical feature?**

The Disability Rights Commission guidance says that physical features include steps and staircases, kerbs, footpaths, exterior surfaces and paving, parking areas, building entrances and exits (including emergency escape routes), internal and external doors, gates and other security features, toilet and washing facilities, public facilities (such as telephones, counters or service desks), lighting and ventilation, lifts and escalators, seating, lighting, public address systems and signage. This is not an exhaustive list.

## **What is ‘reasonable’?**

This will be decided in practice. The DRC’s Code of Practice advises that ‘reasonable’ may vary according to the type of services provided and the nature of the service provider and its size and resources. It also refers to ‘the effect of the disability on the individual disabled person who has complained.’

Some factors when considering what is reasonable are:

- Whether taking particular steps would be effective in overcoming the difficulty that disabled people face in getting access

- The extent to which it is practicable for the service provider to take the steps
- Financial and other costs of making the adjustment
- The amount of disruption caused by taking the steps
- Money already spent on making adjustments
- The availability of financial or other assistance

## **What if our building already has good access?**

Even if your building and services already have fairly good access, you have a duty to deal with any additional barriers. An audit will tell you what the barriers are and offer some solutions. Not all changes cost a lot of money. Consult with disabled users and staff to find out any barriers they experience. The more inclusive the building, the fewer changes will need to be made to a building in the future. Organisations have a duty to continue to review access to services:

‘What might not be considered a reasonable adjustment now could well be considered reasonable in future. Access should not be considered once and then forgotten.’

*Disability Rights Commission*

## **Duties of landlords**

The legal situation with regards to landlords is complex. Organisations based in rented premises are likely to be responsible for making adjustments they provide, but the responsibility for shared areas of a building are less clear.

A more detailed discussion of the issues for voluntary sector groups in rented premises is considered later in this section. For more information, see Chapters 2 and 6 of DRC the Code of Practice: Rights of Access – Goods, facilities, Services and Premises. [www.drc-gb.org/publicationsandreports/publicationdetails.asp](http://www.drc-gb.org/publicationsandreports/publicationdetails.asp)

## **Key issues for local authorities**

England’s local authorities have a key part to play in ensuring inclusive access across England. They should be making every effort to provide accessible buildings and services. Local councils can set an example to public, health, voluntary and private sector providers and employers. Local authorities’ own access officers can offer useful advice and guidance on access to the built environment to other organisations.

‘Local authorities, in their leadership role, should champion disability equality within the broader community and across all partnership relationships.’

*Local Government Association*

## **The Disability Discrimination Act and local authorities**

Local authorities have clear duties under the DDA not to discriminate, and to make reasonable adjustments in employment and service delivery. They also have a duty to take reasonable steps to either remove barriers to buildings or provide a means of avoiding the feature so that disabled people can use their services; alternatively they will need to find an alternative way for disabled people to access a service. Local authority run schools, nurseries and other direct educational services are covered by the Special Educational Needs Act (SENDA). The SENDA duties in relation to education buildings apply from October 2005. Local authorities also contract out many of their services. Those sub-contractors are also covered by the DDA duties. For guidance, see *Access to Services – Disability Equality in Local Government, Local Government Association and Disability Rights Commission* [www.lga.gov.uk/publications/accesstoservicessummary.pdf](http://www.lga.gov.uk/publications/accesstoservicessummary.pdf); see also [www.drc-gb.org/thelaw/thedda.asp](http://www.drc-gb.org/thelaw/thedda.asp)

Each English local authority may be responsible for up to 100 buildings. As with many other public sector providers, the task of making all their public buildings and workplaces accessible can seem daunting. However, local authorities have had a head start in providing access: most have been doing work for many years. All have been required to collate information about access to public buildings in order to complete returns for Best Value Performance Indicators. Many local authority buildings in England already have a basic, and in some cases excellent, standards of access to their key buildings: town halls, main housing or social services offices, some libraries and leisure centres.

However a 2005 survey of local authorities in England commissioned by the Disability Rights Commission found that disabled people were still ‘experiencing difficulties using everyday services because poor access and building design effectively barred them.’ *DRC 2005*

‘We are concerned that many larger local authorities are simply not grasping the opportunity to make their services accessible to disabled

people. We aren't just talking about putting a ramp up the front of the town hall but also about improvements to premises where a whole range of services are delivered including: libraries, sports centres, swimming pools, streets, parks and open spaces, housing offices and recycling centres.' *Bob Niven, Chief Executive of the DRC, www.lga.gov.uk.*

For some local councils, the challenge is to update those buildings where the access was provided many years ago and does not meet current expectations; in others only the reception areas have been made accessible and remaining public and staff areas remain inaccessible.

The result of poor access may be that disabled people have to make do with alternatives that are not inclusive, such as only dealing with a council officer over the phone, or voting by post instead of in person. Local authorities spend unnecessary resources in staff time and money in trying to provide a service in inadequate buildings.

### **Planning for access and disability equality**

The DED states that all local authorities should have a Disability Equality Scheme. This will help decide priorities and should be developed in consultation and involvement with disabled people's organisations. It will also help councils justify the use of public money for buildings.

Obviously it is not practical (or affordable) to make all of a council's buildings accessible at once. Priorities must be decided on. Buildings which offer a unique service which cannot be provided in any other way (a town hall and its meeting spaces for example), or those serving an area of a borough with poor transport links (a local housing office or library), are likely to be priorities.

This guide has been written in the run up to 5th December 2006, when the General Duty to tackle access comes into force. By 5th December 2006 all local councils should have audited their buildings, drawn up a list of priorities and began to identify money for works. In the long run, it makes sense to make all buildings accessible, and only to leave out those buildings or areas of a building that are impossible or unreasonably expensive to convert. In this case the organisation will need to find another way of providing the service.

'Providing access to buildings must be part of a wider strategy for inclusion of disabled people. This includes appointing an access officer

to provide guidance and a strategic approach across each local council.’  
*Local Government Association*

Access Officers have a key role in ensuring that local councils not only provide good access, but do so in consultation with disabled people. Some Access Officers are independent of the local authority; most are council officers. The role of Access Officers is explained further in Part 2. To contact your local Access Officer, contact your local Town Hall, or [www.accessassociation.org.uk](http://www.accessassociation.org.uk)

## **Consulting with disabled people**

Most local authorities in England are in the privileged position of having an Access Officer and a local Access Group in their area, which should be the first port of call when consulting and involving disabled people about access. Councils also usually run in-house Disability Equality Training courses for their staff, which are essential for anyone involved in consultation and in access.

The Government’s view (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister) is that:

‘Access groups... can provide local authorities with a valuable service by giving them the benefit of their personal and practical experience.’  
*Planning and Access for Disabled People ODPM*

In practice, the skill of Action for Better Access in Lancashire goes beyond this. They provide training to their members, and have experienced members with an awareness of access well beyond their own experience. For more information, please see Access Audits in Part 2.

English councils need to draw up a Service Level Agreement with their local Access Group, or fund them directly, to ensure that they have access to advice when making changes to their buildings. Action for Better Access is part of the Dial Network and affiliated to N.R.A.C.

The DED recommends that the local authority should work with disabled people’s organisations. In some cases the current group may not have the resources to be involved in a long term programme, and may need more support – either training for its members, money for meetings and transport, or a paid worker. The LGA also advises local authorities to set

up to set their own Disability Working Group that includes key officers, and disabled staff as well as disabled service users.

## **Planning for change**

Given the large number of buildings involved, it may not be possible for a local authority to involve disabled people in detail of every one of its access schemes, or in commenting on every ramp, induction loop or changes to layout of a reception area. For more guidance for service providers with large numbers of buildings, please go to Part 2. A step-by-step approach is recommended.

## **Find out what needs doing**

-Commission audits of all council buildings (including workplaces) from an independent access auditor; this audit should involve the local access group or disabled people's organisation. Include disabled staff. You may find the information on access from Best Value Performance Indicators a useful source of information.

## **Identify priorities**

- Once the audits are done, identify priorities and draw up 3 year, year-by-year plan.
- Consult and involve the local Access Group and disabled people's organisations (including for example organisations of black and minority ethnic disabled people) in the decision making of the priorities
- .Commission feasibility studies for the first set of priorities
- .Commission initial designs for the chosen access schemes

## **Consultation and involvement**

- Consult and involve on the plans for each priority access scheme: consult the local Access Group and Access Officer, staff and building users, including disabled people, involve them in the decision making process. Make sure the consultation is accessible.
- .Set up a specific Access Advisory Group for larger projects

## **Planning the funding of access works**

Not all access changes are expensive – some can be done as part of maintenance budgets, others will need major funding. Having projects ready to go ahead may mean they can be carried out as money becomes available, for example if another set of building works is cancelled or deferred and the money has to be spent.

- Draw up a list of minor works that can be done within current resources (e.g. maintenance budgets) for example marking up Blue Badge parking spaces, basic signage, clearing corridors of obstructions, providing colour contrast when redecorating
- Draw up a list of minor works that could be done at relatively low cost (visual fire alarms, handrails, induction loops, etc) and include them in the following year's budget bid, or fund from end-of-year under spend on other projects, if permitted.
- . Identify what could be done as part of other building works
- . Identify sources of funding for all other works.

### **Contractors running services**

Many local authority services are contracted out to outside providers – for example leisure services, who generate an income for their shareholders from these contracts. It is not unreasonable to expect contractors to pay part of the cost of upgrading buildings, as part of their duties as service providers under the Disability Discrimination Act.

### **Key issues for the health service**

'The involvement of patients, carers and the public in health decision-making is at the heart of the modernisation of the NHS. ... Public involvement influences the policies, plans and services of NHS organisations and increases the confidence, understanding and skills of the people who participate.' *Patient and Public Involvement in Health Department of Health.*

The main responsibility for England's health services lies with a range of NHS Acute and Mental Health Trusts who provide the services and employ most of the staff, and the Primary Care Trusts who commission services as well as providing some services directly.

### **The Disability Discrimination Act and the Health Service**

The Health Service has clear duties under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) both as a service provider and an employer. Around a third of NHS service users are disabled people. Services covered include everything from reception, equipment and of course buildings, to issues such as how a doctor might examine a patient with a physical impairment, access to BSL interpreters for Deaf NHS patients, or how information and signage is accessible to people with learning difficulties.

The Disability Rights Commission has issued guidance for NHS providers *Improving Hospital Services for Disabled People*, and will be producing a similar guide for primary care providers.  
[www.drc-gb.org/businessandservices/index.asp](http://www.drc-gb.org/businessandservices/index.asp)

-‘At the heart of the NHS plan is a commitment to improving Primary Care Services. To help achieve this, it is important that the needs of disabled people are addressed within the overall objective of providing an excellent service. Disabled people might be patients, or just as likely, they might be a parent or carer assisting another person when attending an appointment. Whatever their role, their needs must be addressed to the same standard as a non disabled person.’  
*Disability Rights Commission/NHS. The Disability Discrimination Act and Primary Care Trust Services 2004.*

Disabled people’s exclusion from primary health care services was highlighted in two recent reports. Leonard Cheshire’s Fair Treatment survey [www.leonard-cheshire.org](http://www.leonard-cheshire.org) revealed that four times more disabled than non-disabled people found accident and emergency units inadequate; 60 percent of Deaf people found doctors’ surgeries inaccessible. Yet 90 percent of PCTs did not provide mandatory Disability Equality Training to their staff. The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association’s NHS Services Report [www.gdba.org.uk](http://www.gdba.org.uk) found significant problems for blind and partially sighted people in accessing GP services. Other reports [www.mencap.org.uk](http://www.mencap.org.uk) have highlighted discrimination in health provision for people with learning difficulties and other groups of disabled people.

### **Working with disabled people**

The NHS is now looking more broadly at how it works with other organisations and with patients, carers and the wider public. Section 11 of the Health and Social Care Act 2001 requires patients and patient groups to be consulted about how NHS services are provided. Government guidance explains why this is important and how it should be done. See Strengthening Accountability Policy Guidance [www.dh.gov.uk](http://www.dh.gov.uk)

The Department of Health and the Disability Rights Commission aim to ‘foster a culture (within the NHS) which promotes the rights, independence, choice and inclusion of disabled people by improving and strengthening the extent to which disabled services users, carers and

the wider disabled community can influence service design and delivery.’  
*Framework for Partnership Action on Disability 2004/05.*  
[www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/EqualityAndDiversity](http://www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/EqualityAndDiversity)

Recent reorganisation of the Health Service has created new structures for consultation, the Patient and Public Involvement Forums. There is a Forum for every Primary Care Trust, NHS Hospital Trust and Mental Health Trust in England. The Forums can obtain the views of local communities about health services, make recommendations for action, influence how NHS services are delivered, and provide advice and information. The Forums can help develop new partnerships and bring the views of disabled people into focus. It is essential that forums are accessible and open to marginalised groups such as people with learning difficulties and mental health system users, and younger disabled and non-disabled people from ethnic minority communities. The Commission for Patient and Public Involvement in Health can give more information on forums [www.cppih.org](http://www.cppih.org)

The Patient and Public Involvement Forums (The Forums) potentially have a role to play in ensuring good access to buildings and services. Leonard Cheshire’s study of PCTs in England [www.leonardcheshire.org.uk](http://www.leonardcheshire.org.uk) found that prior to the Forums being set up; over half of PCTs had not consulted disabled users about solutions to access barriers. This clearly needs to happen. An integrated approach is needed, with the Forums and specific working groups on access involved at different levels:

-Make sure that these issues are laid out in Trust business plan and corporate objectives. There has always been a general commitment to improving access and improving patient experience, but it is not specific. Organisations ought really to make a written firm commitment to making these improvements. ‘I’d like to see organisations make a corporate commitment and not leave it to the power of individual officers.’ *Director of Estates and Facilities, Whipps Cross University Hospital*

Working jointly with local organisations of disabled people and/or Access Groups is essential – one option is for health providers to set up their own long term Access or Disability Working Groups that include representatives of local disabled people’s organisations. Like local authorities, health providers can also contribute to the funding of a local, borough based Access Group or disabled people’s organisation and

develop a partnership with them. Given the need to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act in employment and service provision, employing a specialist Disability Equality Officer to advise and develop policies also makes sense. Such a post could be jointly funded by the PCT, acute (hospital) Trust and the Mental Health Trust within an area. Whatever methods are chosen, it is clear that a mix of public consultation, partnership working and professional advice will help ensure that decisions made are the right ones, and avoid costly mistakes. Involving disabled people and their organisations may also require a change of approach from a medical based view of disability to one based on the social model.

-‘Health care providers are behind in their thinking about disability equality. They still think it is about looking after us, rather than providing an equal service.’ *Disability Equality Adviser, Brent Primary Care Trust*

The Health Service is under constant pressure to deliver good quality patient care. In hard-pressed Lancashire health centres and hospitals, involving disabled people in improving access may have to compete with other priorities. But in spite of the pressures, the benefits of consultation are many. The process in itself is a learning experience for all those involved, including disabled people who gained a greater understanding of how health professionals work. There are also long term savings from avoiding costly mistakes. Meeting patients’ access needs also means there is less pressure on services:

-‘The more engagement the staff have with users, the less questions they will be asked; the patients and visitors will be able to manage themselves and the smoother everything will run... consultation does work.’ *Patient and Public Involvement Manager, Whipps Cross Hospital*

## **Part 2-Getting it right: Consulting with and involving disabled people on access**

**Part 2 of this guide is about consulting with and involving disabled people about access**

Organisations should consult disabled people.

Consultation means listening to disabled people's ideas.

Involvement means they should take part in the decisions made.

Then doing something about it!

## **Consulting and involving about access**

if your organisation wants to make changes to your building, you should talk to disabled people and other people in the community. Involve representatives in the decision making process.

Disabled people can speak out about access. Disabled people want organisations to make the changes they ask for.

For example there can be better signs in a building.

Or wider doors that everyone can get through.

Or there can be information in Braille or in easy words

## **Asking people about a building**

Sometimes an organisation like a local council or a health centre wants to find out what disabled people think about their building.

There are lots of things they can do. They can set up a meeting for disabled people.

Small groups are easier for many disabled people.

They can send out a form with some questions to people who use the building.

An organisation can ask the people who work there about the building.

They can ask disabled people what they want the building to be like.

They can go out and meet with groups of disabled people.

They can take people around the building. Then they can ask them if they have any problems using the building (for example if there are too many steps, or the signs are difficult to read).

An organisation should also involve the Access Group in their area.

Access groups are groups of disabled people. There is an Access group in Lancashire called Action for Better Access.

They campaign so that all disabled people can get around and go to places like town halls, libraries, swimming pools or the doctors.

Access Groups can give advice about access to buildings.

People who work as Access Consultants can also give advice about access.

In most English councils, there is an Access Officer who can also give advice about access.

Disabled people and Access Officers or advisers can help organisations make their building accessible to everyone.

## **Accessible consultation**

If your organisation consults with disabled people, these are some things you should do:

Have the meeting in an accessible building.

Find out what support people need to take part in the meeting.

If people need them, book Sign Language Interpreters or support workers.

Send out accessible information before the meeting.

Ask everyone to use easy words and to explain things.

# Getting it right: Consultation with and involving disabled people on access

## Key points: Consultation

1-Consult and then involve your users in planning changes to your buildings and services.

2-Your organisation will benefit from involving disabled people and other members of the community.

3-Principles

-Empowerment

-Discussion

-Action

-Feedback

4 -Do not promise what you cannot deliver.  
Be creative but realistic.

5 All consultation must be accessible.

# Introduction

This section looks at how to consult with and involve disabled people. It considers what consultation and involvement is and how to do it. It also looks at how to use access officers and architects as part of this process.

The Disability Rights Commission, in introducing its Open 4 All campaign on access to services, states that:

‘Inclusive design in buildings starts at conception and goes through planning, detailed design, construction, occupation, management and operation. Each stage should fully involve disabled people and other possible consumers.’

<http://www.drc-gb.org/open4all/service/start.asp>

You may be a building manager in a local authority or the practice manager of a health centre. You know you need to make changes to your building, but you are probably not an expert on access. You will of course be asking for professional advice. You also know that your organisation will gain from disabled people’s experience and expertise and will be a better provider of services as a result. You want to involve disabled people. The question is, how do you do this?

The aim of consultation is for you to end up with a building that works for everyone. The key to getting it right is to know who to involve, how to involve disabled people in the most effective way possible, and at what stage of your project. Part 2 of this guide aims to help you achieve inclusive access by working with disabled people. Although this section of the guide is mainly about involving disabled people in access, much of the guidance applies to involving your users or customers in general.

## Principles of consultation

A useful starting point for defining consultation is provided by Leeds City Council’s own Guide to Consulting Disabled People,

‘Consultation is asking for views and opinions to help you decide a course of action. Providing feedback to those you consulted about your next course of action.’

Good consultation goes beyond this and should be based on four key principles:

- . Empowerment
- . Discussion
- . Action
- . Feedback

## **Empowerment**

If disabled people are to want to take part in consultation, they need to be empowered. They need to have the right tools at their disposal to do the job: accessible meetings, accessible language (no jargon!) and information (including plans and how they are explained).

One way to empower disabled people is to offer training to people who are going to get involved in a large long-term project – for example the modernisation of a hospital. Providing training to project staff and disabled advisers (and architects if you can afford it) helps bring them together at an early stage, and understand that no one is an expert in everything. Providers also cannot expect to find ready-made disabled experts. They must be prepared to invest either in training or empowering disabled people with an interest in their building. Training might include reading plans, understanding diverse access needs, Disability Equality Training, and access legislation.

If disabled people are to be empowered, their views must be taken seriously by disabled and non-disabled professionals. This means mutual respect, discussion and a ‘partnership’ approach to making changes and decisions.

## **Discussion and action**

Organisations that set out to consult must be committed to dialogue with disabled people: asking for their views and comments, involving their representatives and acting on those comments where practicable and feeding back what has been done and why.

At a basic level, consultation is asking your users (and in most cases your staff) about their experiences of services, and in the context of this

guide, your building or buildings. This will help you identify what works and what doesn't work about your building. That is your starting point.

To be truly effective, consultation needs to be about involving disabled people in planning change. In the case of a building, this means consulting at every stage of the process. In the best-case scenarios, consultation is about partnership with disabled people.

Consultation should be about outcomes - what happens at the end. People won't bother to have their say if they think it won't make any difference. Organisations should not expect disabled people simply to give the nod to decisions that have in effect already been made, or only consult about marginal issues not the main design. Disabled people want a real say in the decisions about access – and almost all decisions will have an effect on access.

'All too often our Local Authority will arrange a meeting to consult on plans for a building. But what we are frequently asked to do is to rubber stamp plans that have already been drawn up without our input. Changes we suggest are always ignored. That's our experience of consultation.' *Chief Officer of an organisation of disabled people*

- This does not mean that everything that consultees say must be acted on. People may suggest things that are not practical, or too expensive. Different people may suggest courses of action that contradict each other. It is the job of professionals, representatives of the disabled and in particular of the architect and access adviser and of key people in the organisation itself, to work out a solution that meets the needs of the organisation as well as meeting users needs.

- Do not promise what you cannot deliver. You will need to be clear that compromises may have to be made, that some things won't happen until funding becomes available, or that some things are just not possible. Decisions about changes to a building will be constrained by how much money is available, by local and national planning and building control requirements, by the structure of the building, and by the priorities of the organisation that owns or runs the building. All of these will impact on how the finished building turns out.

## Feedback

Even those people who have only been involved in giving their views may want to know what happened as a result of the consultation. For disabled people involved in more detailed consultation on plans and design, this is even more important. People want to know why a building, when finished, is as it is – why is the lift the size it is, why didn't the change 'we' suggested happen? Giving feedback helps people feel that the building redesign has been done with them in mind. It also allows you to find out about any outstanding issues such as signage, and to spread the word about the changes to the building.

## Consult, action, feedback

These stages may have to be repeated several times: consult, action, and feedback.

## Example

An advisory group of disabled people might be consulted about the size of the lift in a building; the architect might then find out that what people are asking for is not possible; the architect will go back to the consultation group with an alternative plan, and work with them to get a compromise. The architect might have to come back again to talk to the group about the detailed lift design, before he or she finalises the design. At each stage, they are consulting, taking action, and feeding back on the result.

This is an empowering process for all concerned.

## Why consult?

### Good practice

Consultation should help you:

- Establish a picture of the needs of existing and potential users of your building, what they may expect or what they would like to gain from the use of the building
- Ensure that you do not overlook issues of how users may access the building, its facilities, services or employment opportunities
- Enable the [organisation] to develop relationships with potential users, the local authorities and the wider community;
- Help you avoid costly alterations at late stages in the project to improve accessibility, often involving costly rework or lost time.

Adapted from Access Statements Guidance. Disability Rights Commission [www.drc-gb.org/businessandservices/access.asp](http://www.drc-gb.org/businessandservices/access.asp)

Consultation and involvement makes sound business sense. If an organisation wants to attract more users or customers, it needs to get them on board.

### **Consult and get it right**

The main reason why public service providers consult is to get it right: to help them decide how they can provide a better service to the public. To take action, you need to know what works for your users, and what does not. You need to know why some people are not using the building or services, and what could be done so they can use it. Good consultation and involvement will help you do this, together with a clear agreement with the architect to implement agreed recommendations from disabled people.

### **Good consultation and involvement means more people use your services**

People, who have been asked for their views and involved in decision making, will think about the building more; they will notice changes, and will tell other people. The higher profile the consultation, and the more it reaches out to groups not previously reached, the more people will be encouraged to use the building. Of course this only works if you have taken people's comments on board!

## Why consult with and involve *disabled* people

‘Involving disabled and other possible customers will make services and the built environment more accessible.’

*Disability Rights Commission*

[www.drc-gb.org/businessandservices/bizdetails.asp](http://www.drc-gb.org/businessandservices/bizdetails.asp)

### Dealing with access barriers

Most disabled people are disadvantaged by the built environment. Poor access also affects people with small children, those not familiar with a particular building, who cannot read written signs in English, women for whom there are few toilets etc. Disabled people are arguably the group most affected by poor access, and with the least options for avoiding barriers. You should consult disabled people:

‘... because we live in an excluding world and disabled people are those that are most excluded by the built environment.’

*ABA Group member*

### Who knows about access?

Organisations know how to run their service, but are not building design experts. Building professionals know about buildings, but are rarely experts on inclusive access – this is partly due to the lack of training on access which architects and other professionals receive.

‘You cannot have an inclusive service or environment without involving disabled people, and you need commitment from the provider.’

*Architect, Oxford House*

‘We will stop having to be consulted when professionals learn to do access properly. No one asks to be consulted about drainage!’

*Disabled person, ABA Group member*

Disabled people are the group most likely to have the lay expertise around access. Disabled people’s organisations will tell you for example that they frequently come across meeting spaces which they have been told are accessible, but that the non-disabled people who recommended didn’t notice the two steps at the entrance or the unmarked glass door that a visually impaired person might walk into! Disabled people who live every day with access barriers have developed knowledge and experience of how to overcome those barriers- what works and what

doesn't. Many have translated that practical experience into expertise – as members of local Access Groups and organisations of disabled people, and indeed as access professionals. It is far better to tap into a resource that is already there, rather than start from scratch.

'Get disabled people involved at an early stage. Let them meet the architects. Let them see the plans. Let them be able to put names to faces. Professional designers may have no idea of disability access. This way it will ... be beneficial to users and designers.'

*Access Officer, Disabled in Camden (DISC)*

## **Who should we consult?**

In order to get the broadest picture you will need the views of a cross section of disabled and non-disabled people from relevant local communities. Who you involve will depend on the nature of your building and the services you provide, and what the barriers are in the building.

You should place a high priority on consultation with the equality target groups. You should also be aware that each equality target group is not homogeneous and that there are multiple layers of discrimination...Some groups are excluded, because of direct and indirect discrimination, from making their voices heard effectively. Some groups are disengaged from traditional forms of participation, such as young people, people with learning difficulties, refugees and asylum seekers.

## **Good practice**

To get users' views on changes to access to your building, you should ideally consult with:

- Current users, including disabled people and people from black and minority ethnic and other communities
- Staff, including disabled staff
- Non-users: those people in the community who do not currently use the services your organisation provides. This might include people who can't get into the building because of poor access, or people who don't know what you do.
- Disabled people with knowledge of access: either the local Access Group or organisation of disabled people, or an Access Advisory Group set up to advise on your project.

The more inclusive the consultation, the better picture an organisation will get of what needs to be changed, and how to get it right.

Most organisations have identifiable groups of users who may have specific issues around access. If you know who your users are, it is easier to involve them in your consultation.

## **Representative consultation**

-Involving disabled people does not mean bringing a few token wheelchair users or a blind person with no knowledge of your building or of access. You must talk to the people who have an interest in what you are doing.

-Don't assume that in consulting mainstream community organisations, you will necessarily get the views of disabled people. Not all groups include disabled people – so when consulting with lesbian and gay groups, talk to organisations of disabled lesbians and gay men as well.

-People with physical and sensory impairments from the majority white communities are by and large more likely to get involved in access but that does not mean that other disabled people will not be interested in the changes you want to make to your building.

-If you are consulting with a group of disabled people, or setting up your own Access Advisory Group, it is important that it is as representative as possible.

If your initial consultation has not involved Deaf people, people with learning difficulties, young disabled people or black and minority ethnic disabled people, or other marginalised groups, your best route is to contact organisations representing those groups. For projects of county wide importance, you should talk to the county wide groups first.

There are some issues which are of particular interest for specific groups of disabled people or others: signage, for example, or the design of facilities to meet religious needs. You could either organise a specific meeting on the issue and invite outside organisations, or go and meet with them.

Be aware that how you consult will affect who gets involved. If the process is inclusive and accessible, marginalised groups will be encouraged to take part. Bringing everyone together will produce more discussion, and better solutions to your access barriers.

### **Good practice: Get the right advice from the right people**

- Consult with users and potential users of your building, staff (and where relevant, management committee members) and the local Access Group or organisation of disabled people.
- Seek expert advice from the local Access Group, from disabled people as part of an Access Advisory Group
- Seek professional advice from a professional access auditor or consultant, and from an architect or surveyor. You should also talk to your borough Access Officer.

### **How should we consult about access?**

The decision about how you consult and involve disabled people in the changes you want to make to your building will depend on your resources and the size and type of project. Our case studies show that it's not *one size fits all*, as one disabled professional put it. What is clear is that using only one method will not give you a clear picture.

'Research shows the need for a range of models of involvement, depending on the level of activity the participants wish to commit. What is important is that the choice is there, and the involvement – or partnership – is real...' *Social Care Institute of Excellence*

Consulting about buildings is a slightly different process to consulting on general services. If you are asking your users how they want services to improve, you might send them a questionnaire, or hold an open meeting, or talk to them as they come in the door. You will need to do all of this when consulting about your building, but you will also need to ask them about the plans and the design. This is technical information which most lay people do not understand – so you will need to find ways to explain and get comments in an accessible way.

Consultation will need to be flexible, accessible, within the resources of the organisation, and led from the top of the organisation. You may also want to train your staff so they can do the best job possible.

The key considerations for a successful consultation exercise are listed below.

### **Leadership**

Leadership must come from senior management – whether paid managers, local councillors, the Board of a Hospital Trust, or the

management committee. Consider also who is going to take the lead on the building works and see the project through. Identify and train a member of staff to lead the consultation and liaise with disabled people throughout the project.

### **Accessibility**

Any consultation must be accessible to all involved. For example you could use a model of what the building will look like, or explain plans to people face to face. The meetings must meet Disability Discrimination Act requirements, and be accessible.

**DCS** advocates three months minimum for the consultation. Everybody involved should have access needs met, venues fully accessible, transport for people, and ability to comment on reports - they should allow opposing views.

One method will not reach everyone. Some people are fine in large open meetings; others find them inaccessible and forbidding. Not everyone has time to come to a meeting, but they will probably still have something to say and might welcome speaking to someone one to one. Deaf people might prefer a video presentation, or a speaker to visit their local organisation.

### **Resources: money, people and time**

You will need a budget for consultation, to pay for an accessible room, British Sign Language and other interpreters and other interpreters if necessary, and items like transport costs. The scale of consultation will depend on resources. A small organisation might use mostly informal and low cost methods such as talking to users face to face in a meeting, carrying out a small scale phone and questionnaire survey of users, and commissioning an audit of the building from the local Access Group. A health or local authority undertaking a major project may need to use existing consultation budgets to pay for the cost of more extensive consultation and a longer term Access Advisory Group.

### **Payments to participants**

Disabled people should not have to bear the cost of being consulted. If you are a large organisation, paying a fee to members of an advisory group is good practice. At a very minimum, you should pay people for their costs of attending your consultation meeting or an Access Advisory Group (for example for disabled people who come by taxi).

## People

Good consultation needs people to run it. Make sure you have enough staff to do the work required, that they have time to put into the consultation and that they understand how to consult.

## Time

Allow enough time to prepare, work out who you are going to consult with, and how; give everyone enough notice of the consultation so they can fit it in their own work.

## Training

Staff working in an organisation will benefit from Disability Equality Training before the building project starts. This will help them think about wider disability issues, and how to involve disabled people. **DCS** provides Disability Equality Training.

On the next pages, you will find guidance on different ways of consulting, and on how to make your consultation accessible.

## Accessible consultation

Before you think about access to your building, you will need to think about access to the consultation process. Start off well and you will gain people's confidence. If the information is accessible in a range of formats, and the first consultation meeting is held in an accessible venue, disabled people will feel welcome. Below is a check list.

## Good practice

Make sure your consultation is accessible:

- Meetings: the venue, getting people there, facilitation and equipment
- How meetings are run
- How things are explained: language, jargon
- Information: publicity about the consultation, handouts, minutes (if a group is meeting regularly)
- Architects plans or drawings

## Meetings and Information

-Think inclusive access. How will you ensure that everyone is able to take part and contribute without any barriers?

## **Planning the meeting**

- Ask people about their access and facilitation needs in the invitation to the meeting – you can then book the facilities you need
- Send invitations at least a month ahead for a first consultation meeting.
- Check the venue out before you book it
- Do a layout and seating plan (allow spaces for wheelchair users and for easy circulation)
- Decide on the best time to hold the meeting.
- Draw up a timetable, with start and finish times, 'spare' time, with breaks (every 45 minutes for Sign language Interpreters)
- Provide refreshments
- Ensure no smoking is allowed
- Aim for a well-chaired meeting where everyone gets a say

Time is important. Give people notice, and time to read information before meetings, and to take information in at meetings.

When deciding when to hold a meeting, take account of childcare, cultural, religious, travel and safety issues – a Friday at 4pm is not the best time for most meetings!

## **Getting there**

- Provide transport for people who can't use public transport or their own vehicle, or offer to make bookings with Dial-a-Ride or a taxi firm or to pay people's travel costs (especially important for people who need to travel by accessible taxi)
- Provide parking for Blue Badge holders
- Include a map; include nearest public transport links.
- Put up extra signage in large print so people can find the building and the room easily

## **The venue**

The building you are aiming to make more accessible may not currently have a meeting space with basic access. You may need to hold meetings elsewhere, in a nearby community centre for example. An accessible meeting space should have:

- Parking and easy access from public transport
- Easy access into the building and to the meeting room
- At least one accessible toilet, preferably near the meeting room

- Adequate lighting and acoustics
- Either use a venue with its own induction loop in the meeting room; if not, hire or buy your own loop.

Your local council or organisation of disabled people may have a list of accessible meeting spaces in your area.

### **Facilitation and support**

- British Sign Language (BSL) Interpreters (book 6 weeks to 2 months ahead) for Deaf people on request
- Community Language Interpreters (book ahead of time) on request
- General helpers/assistants – this is important so disabled people can get assistance with moving around the venue, getting refreshments etc.
- Pay people's childcare costs if possible.

It is important to book interpreters (particularly BSL interpreters, who are in short supply, available through **DCS**) before you send out invitations; give people a deadline by which to tell you if they need an interpreter. For an open meeting where anyone could attend without notice, you should not cancel the interpreter even if no one books them. But if your budget is limited and no one has asked for one, you might cancel at least two weeks ahead and only pay a cancellation fee.

### **Equipment and facilities**

- Induction loop for people with hearing aids
- A Public Address (PA) system with microphone(s) for larger meetings
- Overhead projector and flipchart, and any equipment needed to present information

Always make sure equipment works – test it in advance, and if necessary, have technical support present. If the venue doesn't have its own induction loop, you may be able to hire one.

### **Publicity**

- At least a month's notice of any meeting
- Easy words invitation in a minimum sans serif 14-point font
- Arrange for the information to be put on tape and in other formats
- Provide many alternatives for booking (phone, email, text phone)
- Ask people about their access needs

## **Information for the meeting**

- Send out Easy Words summary of what the meeting is about in advance to people taking part
- Agenda, papers, minutes etc. sent out at least five working days in advance.
- Braille, tape, large print, translation if requested
- Send information in advance to Sign Language Interpreters
- Brief the speakers on how to make their presentation accessible

Most people need time to read information in advance. Few people can read text whilst taking part in a meeting. You could also send out a summary of the plans before a meeting – for example, what changes are proposed which areas of the building will be affected.

## **Resourcing an ongoing Access Advisory Group or User Group**

- Arrange meetings well in advance – this makes it easier to book BSL Interpreters or transport
- Provide resources to support the group, including a minute taker and someone to make the arrangements for meetings
- Find out about the access needs of participants
- Ensure that all information is available in the format people need
- Provide refreshments and transport
- Pay a fee to participants

## **How the meeting is run**

So that everyone can take part and contribute:

- Make sure the meeting is well chaired
- Ask everyone to avoid jargon – use Easy Words
- Take their contact details
- Give everyone a chance to have a say
- Encourage less confident people to speak out
- Allow frequent breaks
- Allow time for interpreters to translate
- Don't table papers and minutes
- Make sure anyone giving a presentation makes it accessible (for example reading out what is on the PowerPoint screen, or on the flipchart)
- Agree ground rules for mutual respect and dialogue

## After the meeting

- What was decided?
- Do you need to consult other groups to get a wider picture?
- What action do you need to take?
- Who do you need to involve in decision making?

## Explaining Building Plans

Consulting on access involves looking at architects drawings, and dealing with professionals with very specific technical knowledge. This process can be inaccessible to many people, disabled or not. It requires an understanding of how a three - dimensional building can be translated onto a flat page, and of how architects work. However, there are simple solutions to this problem.

'It is difficult for a blind person to visualise plans. The building manager talked through the plans with me to help me to understand them.'

*Disabled person*

The responsibility for making plans accessible lies with the Architect and the client. Explaining the plans may also help the architect find the flaws in the design. Access Advisory Groups will benefit from some training on how to read plans.

## A number of simple steps can make understanding plans easier:

- Use easy words and avoid technical jargon.
- Make building plans accessible to the participants
- Plans should be as simple and as clear as possible, and give a clear sense of how the space will be used. For example drawing in furniture will help show how large a room is.
- Tactile plans will help blind and partially sighted people read the plans.
- Talk people through the plans: which areas will change, what standards will be used, what are the barriers?
- Visual information in print, on a slide or on a computer presentation must be explained verbally. Describe pictures so everyone has access to the same information.
- Allow time for interpreters to translate: giving them a glossary in advance may be helpful, as some terms may be unfamiliar to participants in their first language.

- Make several copies of plans for people to see.
- Use a model of the building as it is and as it is proposed, and that everyone can see and touch. It is easier to imagine how a building will be with a model than paper plans. A model can be discussed at user meetings, and placed in a public area with a suggestion box next to it.

### **Walk and Talk**

- Talk people on a journey through the building. Describe each area and the changes you are aiming to make. Details are important e.g. where is the lift in relation to the reception desk, will there be Braille buttons on the inside as well as the outside of the lift?
- With an existing building, it is possible to 'walk' people through the plans. Go round the building in small groups (no more than 4 or 5 people at one time). Demonstrate to people how the building will change – 'we are going to put the lift in this space. It will have a door here, and the lift lobby will run to here.' If some areas of the building are inaccessible to members of your group, use a video or photographs as well.
- Use a 3D computer simulation. Technology allows people to be 'shown' through a building on a screen - but don't forget to make the information accessible to visually impaired people.

## **Working in partnership with disabled people**

### **Good practice**

- Consult with and involve your local Access Group about the design
- Set up an Access Advisory Group to advise on changes to larger or more complex buildings
- Ensure the group is as representative as possible
- Draw up terms of reference with groups members
- Build confidence via training and support and provide time
- Resource the group properly
- Don't make promises you can't keep
- Draw up an agreement that all final decisions agreed between the advisory group, the client and the architect will be implemented.

General consultation will help you decide what some of the barriers are. There are two key ways that you develop this into a partnership with disabled people and their organisations: working with existing local or county wide Access Groups and disabled people's organisations, and setting up your own Access Advisory Group to advice on the project until it is completed.

## Access Groups and disabled people's organisations

### Organisations of disabled people

In Lancashire ABA look after the interests of access issues for all the disabled. However, there are also organisations run by Deaf people, or people with learning difficulties. Your first point of call is these organisations, which are controlled and run by disabled people, work across all impairments and take an inclusive approach. You should also contact impairment based groups, or carers groups. Ensure that disabled people are heard and speak on their own behalf. Consult with groups run by black and minority ethnic disabled people, disabled lesbians and gay men and disabled women who may wish to be involved in your project.

### Access Groups

There is an Access Group in Lancashire called Action for Better Access that specialises in the built environment and has the skills to consult with clients and architects. An Access Group is an organisation of disabled people and others that campaign for better access to the built environment: public buildings, shops, leisure services, streets and open spaces, and in some cases transport and housing. Many also look at issues of information and communication. Most Access Groups provide key advice on access to their local authority and other local providers and employers, and work closely with the local Council's Access Officer. They comment on planning applications, carry out audits of streets and buildings. Some Access Groups are part of the local disabled people's association; others are independent. Some are resourced by Council officers, most are independent. Some include parents of disabled and non-disabled children, and carers of disabled and older people. Most Access Groups members will comment on the built environment not only from their own experience, but because they have an understanding of wider access issues. Professionals and disabled people themselves often underestimate these skills.

'As disabled people sometimes we do not realise how much effect we do have.' *Access adviser, disabled person*

Disability Compliance Specialists has set up a professional audit service. Several Lancashire disability organisations also provide an access advice and audit service. Your local Access Group may have dealt with

projects similar to yours before. They know what and what not to do. If they can't help, they may be able to point you towards people who can. However few Access Groups are likely to be able to see all projects through from beginning to end. They have many calls on their time and limited resources, and Access Group members are unpaid volunteers. Their role should be an assessment one – carrying out an audit, assessing plans. Members of the local Access Group may choose to get involved if an organisation considering major works to its building sets up its own Access Advisory Group.

If you do ask your local Disabled People's Association or Access Group for advice, you should make a payment for that advice.

### **Setting up an Access Advisory Group for your project**

If yours is a large project, or you have more than one building, the best advice is to set up your own Access Advisory Group.

The role of an Access Advisory Group is to ensure that views of disabled people are integral to the building design. The group may be there for the duration of the project or it may be an offshoot of a long-term Disability or Inclusion working group. It will focus in detail on your project.

The projects in this study that worked with an Access Advisory Group are, in the main, large schemes with sizeable budgets, or have several buildings. Major arts venues in London such as the Tate Modern and the Royal Festival Hall have set up their own Access Advisory Groups. Yet Advisory Groups can benefit the smallest organisation.

If an Access Advisory Group is properly resourced and is able to make a meaningful contribution to the changes in the building, you will find that disabled people are willing to give their time and commitment. You will need to set aside some staff time and a sensible budget for the Advisory group.

### **Agree clear terms of reference for the group**

An Access Advisory Group must be more than a discussion group. It is there to give advice on overall design, down to details. Disabled people are there because they have access expertise – though they will not usually have technical knowledge of buildings. Their role is not just to

have their say, but also to work with the architect and the organisation to help make the building accessible. This applies not just to decisions about 'access issues' but to the overall design, and to details, as many other aspects that will affect access - for example where the reception counter is located, or the materials used for soundproofing, will impact on how disabled people experience the building.

### **Working in partnership**

The most successful consultation has been on schemes where an Access Advisory Group (or in one case a general User Group that included disabled people) has been set up and supported by the client. The group is able to offer in-depth advice.

The architect (and if there is one, a professional access consultant) must be clearly mandated (and paid) to work with the advisory group. If the Advisory Group is to be a true 'partner' in the project, an agreement must be made that the client and architects will carry out the changes that have been agreed in discussion with the advisory group – or that they will come back to them if something cannot be done. Of course the final decision lies with the client – but disabled people involved at this level will need to know if their advice has been accepted or rejected, and why this is so, and have a chance to suggest options.

This type of compact is much easier to achieve with buildings, where all can see agreed changes, than with services. The Advisory Group and the Architect can agree on door widths for example, or on where induction loops will be fitted; it will be clear in the plans and as the building works progresses whether or not this has been done.

### **Make the process accessible**

Responsibility for making the process accessible must be made clear to all professionals working with an Advisory Group. Require (and if necessary, train) architects to explain any plans carefully and use easy language. The technical know-how and language used by building specialists can undermine the confidence of disabled people. How many people will feel able to argue with an architect who says 'But it's a listed building, it will never be allowed' or is enthusing about their design without thinking about how the building will actually be used?

## **Working with building and access professionals**

In the process of making changes to your building, you will work with different building professionals, and in particular you will commission an architect (or a surveyor on a small scheme) to design the changes and oversee the work. You may also want to get advice from access professionals: the local access officer, or an access auditor or consultancy service whom you employ.

‘Consultation is unlikely to be a suitable method for gathering technical advice and guidance. The purpose of consultation is to assist the developer in identifying the main issues and the practical impact of the development.’

*Disability Rights Commission Guidance on Access Statements*

### **Good practice**

- Seek professional access advice from a professional access auditor or consultant
- Employ an architect or surveyor with an understanding of access
- Get advice from your borough Access Officer and Planning Department.
- On large schemes, consider involving the Access Advisory Group or your local Access Group in selecting the Architect or Access Consultant for the project.

Access professionals have an important role to play, but they are not there to speak for disabled people – even if they are disabled themselves. Rather their expertise will provide you with solutions to the access issues raised by disabled people you have consulted.

‘If you just use an access auditor, you lose out on the views and ideas of people who use the building. If you just consult with users, you lose out on the expertise of people with knowledge of solutions to access barriers.’ *Access auditor/consultant*

### **Access Officers**

If you are planning to improve the access to your building, you can usually get advice from your local Access Officer. The role of an Access Officer is to promote inclusive access and provide advice to public, voluntary and private sector organisations, including how to meet access

duties under the Disability Discrimination Act. Access Officers work closely with local Access Groups, and can put you in touch with them.

Some organisations such as the Arts Council [www.artscouncil.org.uk](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk) and the Council for Museums and Galleries [www.resource.gov.uk](http://www.resource.gov.uk) have their own Access Officers who can provide specialist guidance.

The government's Good Practice Guide on Planning and Access recommend that every council appoint an Access Officer as part of their access and inclusion strategy.

To contact your local Access Officer, ring your town hall.

## **Employing an access consultant or auditor**

'An access consultant is the person who is the oil in the wheels between the architect and disabled people. A good access consultant can see both perspectives.' *Access Consultant*

Organisations may use an access auditor to carry out an audit. Or they may employ an access adviser or consultant to advise throughout the life of a larger project, as developers of some major sites are now doing. Getting the right advice is essential. An auditor may also stay involved as an access consultant- this is probably the best option, as they will be aware of barriers as well as solutions.

The access consultant is there on the client's behalf to make sure that the work that is done conforms to good practice on access. They can use their experience and expertise to resolve difficult issues relating to access.

An access consultant is not there to substitute for consultation with users. His or her role is to identify barriers, possible solutions, and work with the architect, preferably throughout the life of the scheme, and always in consultation with users.

'The ideal consultants are disabled people who have an interest in your business – the quality of advice will be high because of it.'

*Focus Group member*

The Access Consultant should:

- have a thorough knowledge of the Disability Discrimination Act, Part M and the British Standard.
- have a thorough understanding of the social model of disability, diversity and of inclusive access – a good access consultant will understand not only practical access issues, but also how a building is used.
- have a general understanding of building construction
- be willing and able to liaise with Architects
- be willing and able to liaise with disabled people and others involved in the consultation.

In addition they should be:

- employed directly by the client, not the architect. This allows them to prioritise the client's requirements
- offered a clear brief about their role
- have professional liability insurance to cover them when giving advice.

The National Register of Access Consultants [www.nrac.org.uk](http://www.nrac.org.uk) makes a distinction between access auditor who can do audits and provide general advice, and access consultants who are technically qualified in construction design. Though numbers are increasing, relatively few disabled people, particularly if they are women or from black and minority ethnic communities, have had the opportunity to train as surveyors or architects, or indeed as access auditors or consultants. Some disabled people's organisations in England now provide a professional audit service by disabled people. There are also disabled people who work as independent access auditors and consultants. The professional expertise of disabled people, including disabled women and/or black and ethnic minority disabled people will bring added value to your project. The advice of this guide is to identify the best available person for your project.

- An access auditor or adviser does not need to be a qualified architect or building surveyor but does need to have experience of how buildings work.
- An access auditor should be able not only to do the audit but also to produce a clear report of what the barriers are and what is needed.

For more information, please see Appendix 1.

## Choosing an architect

‘We have learnt how important it is to choose the right architect for the job – making sure they get it right, and if not, having the courage to get rid of them if they do not – we had a lot of problems early on until we took (our current architect) on.’

*Chief Executive, Oxford House*

Most building schemes require an architect or other building professional’s expertise. When selecting an architect or surveyor to design and manage an access project:

- Involve disabled people in helping you decide who you commission
- Include payment for meetings with the Access Advisory Group in the architects’ contract
- Recruit someone with experience of inclusive access projects

Some questions to help you decide who gets the work of designing the changes to your building:

- What does the architect understand by inclusive access?
- What standards of access will be used?
- What is his or her previous experience of inclusive access?
- How will the architect achieve inclusive access within the budget available?
- How will she/he work with disabled people on this project?

## Contact

Centre for Accessible Environments [www.cae.org.uk](http://www.cae.org.uk) keeps a register of architects with access experience.

Royal Institute of British Architects [www.architecture.co.uk](http://www.architecture.co.uk)

You can also find some useful information about building construction at the website of the Commission on the Built Environment [www.cabe.org.uk](http://www.cabe.org.uk)

## Nine ways to consult about access

### Complaints and comments

Complaints are the basic way to find out what your users think. Positive comments are also useful. Ensure people who complain can remain anonymous. Make sure people can complain in writing, phone, text phone or face to face. Monitor who uses your services; this will tell you

whether you are reaching all communities. Invite complainants to meetings to have an input.

### **Questionnaires and surveys**

A questionnaire must be short, easy, in easy words, with pictures. Help people fill it in; send the questionnaire out (with a freepost address). Be aware many people do not use printed English. Provide alternative formats (including tape, Braille etc. and respond by phone). Get someone to talk to people as they enter the building - Ask if people find it easy to use the building, what makes it difficult, what they think should be provided.

### **Consult with staff and volunteers**

A general consultation with all staff will allow disabled staff to express their views freely. Hold a meeting; give people a confidential questionnaire. Seek staff comments on building plans as they know the building well, and will also be affected by the changes.

### **User meetings**

These are general open meetings, specific meetings for disabled people etc. Large meetings are for presentations. For detailed user feedback over plans, a small group is essential. All meetings must be accessible and well chaired.

### **Planning for Real or Use your imagination!**

A 'Planning for Real' exercise aims to help people imagine what a building could be like, what would go where – this will bring up creative ideas. Use this exercise at the very start of a project. It should be aimed at regular users who know the building well – for example a library, a community or health centre. Housing providers have used 'Planning for Real' when redeveloping housing estates. You can use inexpensive materials – cardboard, paper, scissors, felt tip pens, glue and a board to make rooms and write out where things ought to be. This sort of exercise helps people understand buildings.

**Ask a question:** If money was no object and we could make all the changes we wanted, what would the building look like, what would it include?

## **Use video** or photographs of other buildings that are already accessible

- ones that do the same sort of thing as you do. A visit to a similar building that has been made accessible can give people ideas about what can be done.

## **Focus groups**

A focus group is a small group of people you invite to discuss specific issues. It can be very useful in planning what you want to do, and on specific issues. You could use a focus group of women to find out the issues for women, or of visually impaired people and people with learning difficulties about signage, or you could organise a focus group on for example Information Technology.

## **Outreach**

Not everyone will want to come to a meeting. Go and talk to local groups that may be interested in the services your building provides. For example if you want to consult about a leisure centre, talk to youth groups, older people's clubs, lesbian and gay, disabled people's and black and minority ethnic (black and minority ethnic) organisations. You may find that groups of disabled people from e.g. black and minority ethnic communities will not respond as readily to general consultation. Outreach i.e. going out to them, should be used to fill the gaps.

## **Consult with the local Access Group and other organisations of disabled people**

If you are consulting about access, you must talk to and involve disabled people and their organisations.

## **Set up an Access Working Group**

If yours is a large or complicated building, or you have more than one building, your best option is to set up your own Access Working Group to advise throughout the life of the project. A working group is best set up before you bring in an Architect. The group will develop expertise around the particular building, and work with the architects etc. as the plans develop. Give training if necessary. Resource the group properly and make it as representative as possible. Be flexible about how the group contributes. Use phone conferencing and e-mail (if available) between meetings.

## **A step by step guide to consultancy**

On the following pages you will find a step-by-step guide to each of the following five stages of consultation.

- Stage 1: Planning the consultation
- Stage 2: Identifying barriers and what needs to change
- Stage 3: Consulting on the design
- Stage 4: Making sure access happens
- Stage 5: After the work is finished

We have matched these stages to the four stages of the design and construction process, as described by the Royal Institute of British Architects: Prepare, Design, Construct, and Use. [www.architecture.co.uk](http://www.architecture.co.uk)

You should use this step-by-step guide alongside the earlier sections of this guide. You might refer for example to 'Who to consult?' when planning your consultation, or to 'How to consult' when thinking about how to involve disabled people in advising in more detail on your project.

### **Good practice: step-by-step consultation**

- Be clear on what basis you are asking people to get involved. There is a difference between what you ask people to contribute at different stages of the consultation.
- Be realistic. At the start of a project to make a building accessible be clear about what is promised when consulting.
- As a first stage, ask people for their views about how the building is now, what needs to change. As a second stage, ask for comments on the draft plans.
- Consult the local Access Group and Access Officer.
- On larger projects, set up your own Access Advisory Group. Be clear about its role and how much say it has in the final plans. Make sure the architect works with the Advisory Group.

## Step 1: Planning the consultation

### Prepare

- Consultation doesn't have to be difficult: good planning is the key.
- Get advice and training about how to consult
- Arrange Disability Equality Training for staff
- Be imaginative – there is more to consultation than meetings.
- Decide who you want to consult and the best method for reaching each group
- Work out a budget; fundraise if necessary
- Allocate staff to deal with the consultation
- Provide leadership
- Plan the consultation
- For large or more complex projects, set up an Access Advisory Group

### Provide leadership

- Senior management must provide leadership for any major project
- Decide who should take the lead on consulting disabled people
- Involve other staff when necessary

### Find out how to consult on access

'Find out about consultation before you consult: talk to other groups about how they have consulted, talk to an organisation of disabled people. Get advice. Get training.'

*Members of the Focus Group*

This guide will help you in this process. Talk to other organisations that have done their own consultation, preferably on an access project. County wide and local organisations of disabled people or the local Access Group may be able to help with contacts. Your local Council for Voluntary Service may also be able to provide you with advice on how to consult. Or you could send your staff on a course on how to organise accessible consultation.

## **Arrange for Disability Equality Training for staff.**

Prioritise staff that will be involved in the project to upgrade the building. Small organisations can take the opportunity to train all staff on disability equality issues. This should focus on making services and the building accessible. For contacts, see Appendix 1.

## **Plan resources for accessible consultation**

- Allow for transport, interpreters, creating accessible formats, etc.
- Plan staff resources for the consultation and the access project.

## **Plan the consultation**

Draw up a list of things to do, with deadlines. Plan ahead – match the different stages of the consultation with the stages of the building project.

## **Set up your own Access Advisory Group**

If you are in charge of a major redevelopment scheme such as a hospital, or you are a large organisation with many buildings, you will need an advisory group to work with on access. You can either work with members of your local Access Group, or set up an Access Advisory Group.

## **Step 2: Identifying barriers and what needs to change**

### **Prepare**

- Consult with users and potential users
- Commission an access audit
- Involve disabled people in the audit
- Use the information to decide what you want
- Decide if you need to employ an architect or a surveyor
- If this is a major scheme, appoint an Access Consultant or Adviser
- Put together an access statement, in consultation with disabled people and access professionals
- Decide on priorities

You can find out what needs doing by consulting with users and staff, and by commissioning an access audit. Both should include disabled people. If at all possible, do both of these, and link them together.

'It is far too late to get involved at the building stage. It is planning stage that is important because you have a chance to get your say in. At the planning stage you are more equal.'

*Disabled people's organisation*

## **Consult with users and staff**

The people who use your building and work in it will be able to tell you their views. You also need the views of those who do not currently use your building. This stage of the consultation should allow you to identify the following:

- What works about the building
- What doesn't, what is missing, how this affects users and staff
- Some ideas for change: where things should go
- What people think about how you provide a service

These are the people whose views you will need to get:

- Existing users or management committee
- Staff, including disabled staff
- Specific groups within your community
- Local organisations of and for disabled people
- People who do not currently use the building – check your monitoring statistics against statistics for your catchment area. Who are you missing out?

See Who to Consult.

You could use some of the following ways to consult:

- A questionnaire, a comment form and look at complaints
- Talk to people as they come in the building
- A meeting with a small group of users
- A large meeting of users
- Going out to groups
- Planning for real

See Nine Ways to Consult about Access.

You will need to create space for people's imagination to provide ideas and solutions – be focused, but do not limit the options at this stage. People need to be able to say what they would like in an ideal world.

### **Example**

An adventure Playground carried out what they called a Design and Build exercise with disabled and non-disabled children: what the children agreed on as the final design will be built. As a result the children have come up with imaginative ideas for play equipment which pushes the boundaries of what disabled children are normally 'allowed' to do.

### **Write up a report of this consultation.**

Plan what needs doing and brief the person or group who will do an access audit for you.

### **Act on issues arising from the consultation**

This is also a good time to act on issues that come up which are not about the building but about services – customer care, barriers to your services, communication, issues for disabled staff. This will help inspire confidence in disabled people that getting involved makes a difference.

### **Commission an access audit**

#### **What is an access audit?**

'An access audit is a detailed inspection and report on a building or site undertaken by an experienced access auditor it identifies barriers for disabled people and offer practical solutions. The audit will tell you how to meet your legal duties, and to provide an inclusive service. The audit should suggest priorities.'

*Disability Rights Commission*

**D**isability **C**ompliance **S**pecialists distinguish between three types of audits:

- Physical/DDA audit: checking the building to see if it complies with Part M legislation and would allow the organisation to meet its basic duties under the Disability Discrimination Act.
- Social model audit: a more in-depth audit, based on the social model of disability. How the building is used and addresses issues such as information, customer care, communication, staff attitudes etc.

- Organisational audit or appraisal: a full audit of the organisation's policies, practices, building(s), employment, customer care etc. to create an inclusive organisation.

The last two audits will give you a much fuller picture of what you are doing well and what needs to change. All auditors will offer a physical audit. Audits must be done by people with an understanding of inclusion and diversity and of access issues for different groups – for example of visually impaired people, people with learning difficulties, or specific religious groups.

One way to get the full picture is to ask the auditor to work with a group of disabled people or the local Access Group.

For a checklist of what to expect from an access audit: Disability Rights Commission [www.drc-gb.org](http://www.drc-gb.org)

## **Put together an Access Statement**

Once you have done your initial consultation you need to set out how you will achieve inclusive access in your project. An access statement is a document that you will need when applying for planning consent. It is also a useful way of explaining to users and funders how you will go about making the building accessible, what standards will be used, any difficult areas, and how you have consulted already and intend to consult.

## **Decide on priorities**

Use the information from the consultation and the access audit to plan what you are going to do, involve representatives in the decision making process.

- Identify the main issues raised by users and staff
- Decide priorities
- Make any changes to services now – those that don't involve changes to the building

## **Example**

Following an audit by members of the Disability Action Group of Liberal Judaism, and requests from congregation members, two synagogues decided to prioritise making the Bimah accessible, because the lack of

access to this area of the synagogue excluded disabled people from taking part in religious rituals.

If you need to do any structural work, you must employ a suitably technically qualified professional. Depending on how much work is needed, decide if you need to employ an architect or a surveyor. Small non-structural schemes may only need a builder.

## **Step 3: Consulting on the design**

### **Design**

- The architect or surveyor should draw up a draft design for the changes to the building
- Consult on the draft design
- Make sure the consultation is accessible
- Make sure comments are taken on board by the architect or why they can't be

### **Draft design**

Once you have the results of the consultation, commission a draft design from an architect, or on small projects, a surveyor. Consult on this. The Architect can use the comments from the consultation to draw up the plans. At this stage you should also have an estimate of the costs for the work; you should also know what is achievable. This can form the basis for fundraising or a bid for capital money, or for breaking the work down into manageable (and fundable) phases.

### **Consult on the draft plans**

Consulting on these plans for a draft design is part of making sure the building is right.

- Do not try to consult in detail with everyone, but let your users know what is being proposed.
- Consult in more detail with a small group of people: staff and a User Group
- If you have set one up, present the plans to your Access Advisory Group.
- Ask the local Access Group and Access Officer to comment on the plans. Go and meet with them rather than asking them to come to you.

- Even if the changes you are making are relatively small, you should ask staff and users for their views.

### **Good practice**

Some ways you could consult on the plans

- Comments from users and staff formally or informally
- A presentation by the Architect to users and staff
- Detailed discussion of each aspect of the design with the local Access Group and Access Officer
- Detailed discussion with the Access Advisory Group if you have one.
- Focus groups on particular issues
- You could use a range of methods to explain the plans.

### **Feedback**

You may need to consult several times on different aspects of the plans as the design progresses. Each time you should consult, design, and feedback to people what has happened at each stage.

### **Getting planning and other consent**

Once you have drawn up some definite plans, you will need to get consent from the local Planning Authority, Building Control, and where relevant, Listed Building Consent. You may have to make further changes if your local authority (Planning and Building Control) or English Heritage asks you to. If so, you should consult key people again on the changes.

## **Step 4: Making sure access happens**

### **Construct**

- Make sure that what has been agreed will happen
- Make sure any changes to the design as the work progresses are agreed with you and the Access Advisory Group and/or Access Consultant if there is one
- Keep key people informed of what is happening during the building works

Once the plans have been agreed and you have planning and building control consent, the works can start. In any building project, especially in an existing building, there will be decisions to make because something

unexpected happens. Make an agreement or 'compact' that actions agreed between any Advisory Group and the Architect or designers will happen.

It is important to make sure that you do not lose key features of the access – a decision to move a wall might mean there is no longer enough turning space for a wheelchair user, for example. It is also important to ensure that each detail is correct. If the door handles, entry phone system, light switches, lighting levels etc are not right, the building will be hard to use.

### **Good practice**

Some questions you could ask of the Architect before works start:

- Does the specification for the works cover all possible details of access? Are the details right? For example have the subcontractors been instructed properly?
- Who is responsible for making sure that access is kept on the agenda throughout the building works?
- Will changes made by the architect during construction be referred back to the Access Advisory Group and the Access Consultant? Most things have an impact on access – moving a wall, or repositioning light switches are access issues.
- Have you, the Access Advisory Group AND Access Consultant been told of any issues that will have an effect on how the building is managed once works are finished? For example, a lift that cannot be used in case of emergency.

## **Step 5: After the work is finished**

### **Use of the building**

- Go round the building with disabled users or the Access Advisory Group
- Monitor how the building is used; get feedback from users and staff
- After six months, do a mini-audit to check for what still needs doing
- Tell people about your new access!
- Continue to review and improve access to the building
- Review services, policies, practices and staff training

Even the best architect or builder will not get everything right. You need to evaluate how well the new design works in day-to-day practice.

### **How accessible is your building now?**

- Go around the building with the architect and with disabled people who have been involved. Note any remaining barriers to independent access.
- Let people use the building independently and see what they say. Ask reception and other staff for their observations of how people use the building.
- The small things that people notice can then be sorted out quickly. The building improvement will have raised people's expectations – you do not want to disappoint them!
- You will need to clarify responsibility for any problems: if something was in the specification but has been done wrong, the builder and the architect must sort it out. If it wasn't in the specification, you will have to pay for it to be changed. You can link this to the Building Control Completion check that the local Council will do to check that the work has been done properly.
- Make further checks three and six months after completion, to coincide with snagging checks between builders and architect. These will show up any sub-standard fittings and other problems.

### **Example**

Signage is one issue that most of the case study organisations felt they needed to improve once the work was completed. They all felt that it was easier to evaluate signage once the refurbished building was up and running – for example by checking what visitors were asking, which areas of the building they couldn't find easily.

### **Feedback about what has been done**

Tell everyone involved in the consultation what has been done, and why any items that the consultation recommended have been left out or altered.

### **Tell people about your new access**

It is no good doing all this work if no one knows about it. Disabled people might still think it is not accessible. You need to tell them!

- Put access details on all your publicity
- Get publicity in the local paper, disability press and other media
- Hold an Open Day – and ask for comments

## **And now the work is finished?**

Making your building accessible is only one part of the process of becoming accessible to disabled people. Now you have an accessible building, you have raised people's expectations. You must look at how you provide services, your employment practices, and policies and procedures. If you haven't already done so, provide Disability Equality Training for staff in the building.

## **Keep the dialogue going**

If you have consulted in depth with disabled people, and have been working with a committed group, you may find it useful to keep that either a general user group or a Disability Working Group.

'They realised that they couldn't put something there and it would cater for everybody for ever more! They realised that for disability access they need the feedback from people who use it once it's up and running.'

*Disabled Access Officer*

This is essential in providing an inclusive service that meets the changing needs of users. It also keeps new people coming in. It will also help organisations to meet their continuing duties under the Disability Discrimination Act.

## **Good practice**

### **Organisations with many buildings**

Many organisations will have more than one building. How should these organisations consult disabled people on making changes and meeting Disability Discrimination Act duties? It may not be possible or desirable to involve disabled people in commenting on every building, every park or play space. But it is possible to involve disabled people in a meaningful way in the following:

- Audits of buildings: You will need to commission a professional access auditor; but you still need to consult the disabled about the barriers in your buildings. One way to do this is to ask your access auditor (whether they are a disabled person or not) to work with a team of local disabled people. Another is to ask disabled people to do pilot access audits that can be used for similar buildings – for example all the libraries or doctor's surgeries in an area.

- Access standards and templates: Deciding on which access standards will be used – for example templates for reception areas, libraries or signage, or standards for meeting spaces
- Deciding priorities for action
- Commenting on the plans for each project
- Advising on particular issues: for example dual language signage or access for Deaf people to health centres
- Being part of an overall Access Advisory Group and taking part in consultation on individual major projects or schemes that people are especially interested in e.g. a library or hospital.

## **Some Frequently Asked Questions**

### **We have talked to the local Access Group but they can't get involved, as they are too busy. What can we do?**

They may not be sure of the benefits of getting involved. Did you offer them the chance for real partnership? Will you pay expenses and provide full access to meetings? If they are too busy now, The Access Group may be happy to comment on the plans at a later date. Your first step is to talk to your users and to disabled people generally. Set up your own consultation meeting to discuss the plans. Invite local organisations including the Access Group to send someone along. Commission an access audit.

### **We cannot afford to consult, let alone make our building accessible.**

Access doesn't always cost a lot of money. Talk to people as they come to your building. Or if staff go out to users, give them two or three questions to ask the people they visit. Finding out what users think is most important. Find out if the access problems with your building are stopping some people using your services. Work out priorities. Think about using volunteers for non-structural work. Pay for an access audit – it will help you get funding. There are more sources of funding than you think.

### **We are a health provider and want to consult disabled people in the Somali community about the design of our buildings and about our services? Where can we reach them?**

There may be specialist staff within your local health trust or local authority who can give you advice.

- -Your local disabled people's association or Council for Voluntary service can put you in touch with local groups.

### **We are a health clinic and provide a service to the lesbian and gay community, but we do not have any disabled users to consult about our building. What can we do?**

There may be specialist consultation staff within the Primary Care Trust or NHS trust who can advise you.

Don't assume that because there are no wheelchair users in your building, there are no disabled people. Many people may have access issues that are not obvious. Start by consulting your building users and staff. Use the lesbian and gay press. You may also wish to contact the following:

- -Regard: a national organisation of disabled lesbians, gay men and bisexuals [www.regard.org.uk](http://www.regard.org.uk)
- -Gemma: an organisation of disabled and non-disabled lesbians. BM Box 5700, London WC1N 3XX
- -Consortium of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender organisations [admin@clgb.org.uk](mailto:admin@clgb.org.uk)

### **We are a local council with an Access Officer – why do we need to talk to disabled people as well?**

Your Access Officer will be an excellent source of advice. You also need to talk to disabled people's organisations and to your disabled users to find out what the barriers are to using the building, and what disabled people want from your service.

### **Our plans meet Building Control and planning regulations, so why do we need to consult disabled people?**

Part M of the Building Regulations is a minimum national standard to make sure you get the technical aspects right. But access is about how a building is used, the services provided. Disabled people will tell you what you need to do to provide inclusive access.

### **We've been trying to get funding for a major access scheme for two years. What can we do?**

Don't despair - It may take time, but you will get there!

- Talk to other similar organisations
- Do the preparation work. Get an audit done; consult with disabled people – funders want this.
- Commission a feasibility study.
- Break the project down into manageable chunks
- Do the small things you can afford now: repaint to provide colour contrast, install a loop, and make your entry phone accessible
- Make reasonable adjustments to services and employment: train staff; do home visits or hold meetings elsewhere; review your policies; provide accessible information.

## **Appendix**

### **Resources on access and consultation**

#### **Organisations: General**

##### **Local Government Association**

Local Government House  
Smith Square, London SW1P 3HZ  
Phone: 020 7664 3131 Fax: 020 7664 3030  
Email: [info@lga.gov.uk](mailto:info@lga.gov.uk) website: [www.lga.gov.uk](http://www.lga.gov.uk)

##### **Disability Rights Commission**

Helpline for disabled people, employers and service providers: Phone: 08457 622 633  
Minicom: 08457 622644 Fax 08457 778 878  
For e-mail, follow the links on the website to the DRC helpline and fill in the on-line assistance box  
Website: [www.drc-gb.org](http://www.drc-gb.org)

##### **Employers Forum on Disability**

Nutmeg House, 60 Gainsford Street, London SE1 2NY  
Phone: 020 7403 3020 Minicom: 020 7403 0040  
E-mail: [enquiries@employers-forum.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@employers-forum.co.uk)  
Website: [www.employers-forum.co.uk](http://www.employers-forum.co.uk)  
The helpline provides advice and guidance on disability in the workplace and on serving disabled customers.

##### **British Deaf Association**

1-3 Worship Street, London EC2 2AB  
Minicom: 020 7588 3529 Phone: 020 7588 3520  
E-mail: [helpline@bda.org.uk](mailto:helpline@bda.org.uk) website: [www.britishdeafassociation.org.uk](http://www.britishdeafassociation.org.uk)  
National organisation of Deaf people who use Sign Language as their first language.

##### **REGARD**

National organisation of disabled lesbians, gay men and bisexuals.  
BM Regard, London WC1N 3XX  
E-mail: [secretary@regard.org.uk](mailto:secretary@regard.org.uk)  
Website: [www.regard.org.uk](http://www.regard.org.uk)

## **Access, design and planning**

### **Access Association**

[www.access-association.org.uk](http://www.access-association.org.uk)

Support to access professionals; useful for contact with access officers in your area.

### **Centre for Accessible Environments**

70 South Lambeth Road, London SW8 1RL

Phone and Minicom: 020 7840 0125

Email: [info@cae.org.uk](mailto:info@cae.org.uk) website: [www.cae.org.uk](http://www.cae.org.uk)

Information, advice and consultation on access and inclusive design.

### **Royal Institute of British Architects**

The RIBA run website [www.architecture.com](http://www.architecture.com)

includes a useful section on finding an architect

Planning Aid for London

Unit 2, 11-29 Fashion Street, London E1 6PX

Phone: 020 7247 4900 Fax: 0207247 8005

E-mail: [info@planningaidforlondon.org.uk](mailto:info@planningaidforlondon.org.uk)

Website: [www.pafl.org.uk](http://www.pafl.org.uk)

Advice on planning issues and planning law

### **CABE**

The Tower Building 11 York Road London SE1 7NX

Phone: 020 7960 2400 Fax: 020 7960 2444 [enquiries@cabe.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@cabe.org.uk)

Website: [www.cabe.org.uk](http://www.cabe.org.uk)

Public body funded by Government to promote good design in the built environment. Priorities include 'involving the public in shaping their own environments'.

### **JMU Access Partnerships**

105 Judd Street, London WC1H 9NE

Phone: 020 7391 2059 fax: 020 7387 7109

E-mail: [jmu@rnib.org.uk](mailto:jmu@rnib.org.uk)

### **National Register of Access Consultants**

[www.nrac.org.uk](http://www.nrac.org.uk)

A national register of access auditors or consultants.

Phone: 020 7234 0434 Minicom: 020 7357 8182  
Email: marynoble@nrac.org.uk Website: www.nrac.org.uk

Disability Equality Training for service providers, with a focus on arts, entertainment and allied sectors

### **British Council of Disabled People**

Phone: 01332 295551 Minicom; 01332 295581  
E-mail: bcodp@bcodp.org.uk website: www.bcodp.org.uk  
Disability Equality Training for private, public and voluntary sector employers and service providers

### **Centre for Accessible Environments**

Training for access auditors. General training on Part M, the Disability Discrimination Act, Reading Plans, Access Audits and specific aspects of access.  
Phone and Minicom: 020 7840 0125  
Email: info@cae.org.uk website: www.cae.org.uk

*Consulting Disabled People; A practical guide for Leeds City Council Departments.* Leeds City Council Equal Opportunities Unit (2002)  
Phone: 0113 2474188 Text: 0113 2243589  
E-mail: equalopps@leeds.gov.uk

*How to start an access group* (1997)  
*Access group membership* (1998)  
RADAR [www.radar.org.uk](http://www.radar.org.uk)

*Involving service users and carers in local services: guidelines for social services departments and others.* Harding T., Oldman H. London: National Institute for Social Work (1996)  
<http://www.elsc.org.uk/usersandcarers/involving/inv.htm>

*Has service user participation made a difference to social care services?*  
Carr, S. Social Care Institute for Excellence (2004). [www.scie.org.uk](http://www.scie.org.uk)

*Patient and Public Involvement in Health: the evidence of policy implementation.* Farrell, C. Department of Health (2004).  
<http://www.dh.gov.uk>

## **Accessible information**

*Picture banks to help make information accessible to people with learning difficulties from:*

CHANGE Picture Bank CD Rom and Pack  
From CHANGE, Unit 19020 Unity Business Centre  
26 Roundhay Road, Leeds LS7 1AB  
Phone: 0113 243 020 Minicom: 0113 243 2225  
E-mail: changepeople@btconnect.com

People First CD ROM and pack:  
Phone: 020 7485 6660 Fax: 020 7485 6664  
E-mail: general@peoplefirstltd.com  
Website: www.peoplefirstltd.com

## **Access**

### **Access and Planning**

*Planning and access for disabled people – a good practice guide.* Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. (2003) www.odpm.gov.uk or from ODPM Publications 0870 1226 236

### **Access standards and design**

*The Building Regulations 2000. Approved Document M: access to and use of buildings*, 2004 edition.

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (2004)

*BS 8100: 2001 Code of Practice for design of buildings and their approaches to meet the needs of disabled people.*  
British Standards Institute (2001)

*Designing to Enable - Improving access through consultation.*

Gateshead Access Panel (2001)

J30 The Avenues, 11th Avenue North, Team Valley Trading Estate,  
Gateshead NE11 0NJ

Phone: 0191 443 0058 Fax: 0191 487 7298

E-mail: gatesaccess@dial.pipex.com

Website: www.access.gateshead.dsl.pipex.com

Access design manual written by disabled people, in an easy format with clear black and white drawings

Centre for Accessible Environments Publications:

*Designing for Accessibility* (2004) (with RIBA)

*Good Loo Design Guide.* (2004) (with RIBA)  
*Access by Design.* Journal.  
[www.cae.org.uk](http://www.cae.org.uk) (for more details, see Organisations)

*Creating an Inclusive Environment - a report on improving the Built Environment.* Disability Rights Commission (2003) <http://www.drc-gb.org>

*Barrier free design – a manual for building designers and managers.*  
Holmes-Siedle, J. Butterworth Architecture (1996)

*Inclusive mobility – a guide to best practice on access to pedestrian and transport infrastructure.* Department for Transport (2002) DfT free literature line 0870 1226 236 or [www.mobility-unit.dft.gov.uk](http://www.mobility-unit.dft.gov.uk)  
<http://www.dptac.gov.uk/pubs.htm>

*Good signs – Improving signs for people with a learning disability.*  
Disability Rights Commission (March 2004)

*The Access Manual: Auditing and Managing Inclusive Building Environments.* A. Sawyer and K. Bright. Marston Books. (2004) 01235 465500

### **Access guidance – specific buildings**

*Access for Disabled People.* Sport England (2003)  
Phone: 08458 508508  
Publications: 0870 5210 255 Fax: 0207 383 5740  
E-mail: [Info@sportengland.org.uk](mailto:Info@sportengland.org.uk)  
[www.sportengland.org](http://www.sportengland.org)

*Access to Health Service Premises: Audit Checklist*  
NHS Executive (1998) [www.dh.gov.uk](http://www.dh.gov.uk)

*Widening the eye of the needle: access to church buildings for people with disabilities.* Penton, J. (2nd Edition, 2001). Available from Church House Bookshop via <http://www.chbookshop.co.uk/>

*DPTAC Access directory: an online directory of access guidance provided by the Disabled Persons' Transport Advisory Committee.*  
[www.dptac.gov.uk/accessdir.htm](http://www.dptac.gov.uk/accessdir.htm)

## **Disability Discrimination Act and Disability Equality**

*Disability Discrimination Act (1995)*

*Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Act (2001)*

The Stationery Office [www.legislation.hmso.gov.uk](http://www.legislation.hmso.gov.uk)

See also <http://www.drc-gb.org/thelaw/thedda.asp>

*Disability Rights Commission publications:*

[www.drc-gb.org/publicationsandreports/publicationdetail.asp](http://www.drc-gb.org/publicationsandreports/publicationdetail.asp)

For information about the DRC's Open 4 All 2004 campaign: [www.drc-gb.org/open4all.org.uk](http://www.drc-gb.org/open4all.org.uk)

*2004 - What It Means to You: Service Providers*

*Code of practice – Rights of access, goods, facilities, services and premises (Disability Discrimination Act 1995). (2002)*

Access to Services. Disability Equality in Local Government, Local Government Association and Disability Rights Commission (2003)

*The Disability Equality Duty*

[www.drc-gb.org/disabilityequalityduty](http://www.drc-gb.org/disabilityequalityduty)

*Doing The Duty*

[www.drc-gb.org/employers\\_and\\_service\\_provider](http://www.drc-gb.org/employers_and_service_provider)

[/disability\\_equality\\_duty/getting\\_started/doing\\_the\\_duty.aspx](http://www.drc-gb.org/disability_equality_duty/getting_started/doing_the_duty.aspx)

*You can make a difference. Improving hospital services for disabled people.* NHS and Disability Rights Commission 2004.

[www.dh.gov.uk/publications](http://www.dh.gov.uk/publications)

Orderline: phone 08701 555 455 text: 08700 102 870

*Department of Health Equality and Diversity Policy and Guidance*

[www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyandGuidance/equalityandDiversity](http://www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyandGuidance/equalityandDiversity)

*Fair Treatment A Survey of Disability Access Policies in Primary Care Trusts.* Champion, J. Leonard Cheshire: London (2003)

[www.leonardcheshire.org.uk](http://www.leonardcheshire.org.uk)

*Disability Discrimination Act 1995: Working towards 2004 – making arts organisations more accessible.*

Arts Council (2003) [www.artscouncil.org.uk](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk)

*Toolkit for local government employers.* Employers Association for Local Government [www.lg-employers.gov.uk/dialog/disability/toolkit](http://www.lg-employers.gov.uk/dialog/disability/toolkit)

*Open for Business- Taking the risk out of 2004.*

Bonnet. D et al. Employers forum on Disability, London (2003)  
[www.employers-forum.co.uk](http://www.employers-forum.co.uk)

*Resource: Disability Directory for Museums and Galleries.* Council for Museums, Archives and Libraries (2001) <http://www.resource.gov.uk>  
Phone: 020 7273 1444

*Our Rights, Our Choices: meeting the information needs of black and minority ethnic disabled people. Laying the foundations for black and minority ethnic organisations.* DRC and Council for Education in Racial Equality in Scotland. (2004) [www.drc-gb.org](http://www.drc-gb.org)

*Inclusive Citizenship: Social Equality for Disabled People.* Heaven C., Knight J., Christie, I. Leonard Cheshire: London (2002)