

*The criterion used in the checklist of this access audit is the same for all public buildings. This means that the DDA (Disability Discrimination Act) requirements are the same for large scale commercial venues (like shopping malls) and small charitable community venues (like village halls). However, there is some flexibility under 'reasonable adjustments'. This means that access works can be prioritised, but they should be addressed prior to other general improvements. If any work takes place in specific areas or under specific phases, all access issues must be included in the programme of works (as per the criterion in each section of the report). The specifications, including measurements, for the relevant DDA requirements can be found at the back of this report, after the photograph section.*

Any refurbishments or re-development undertaken after this access audit should fully comply with all the relevant criterion. Support and advice is available from the Community Council of Devon (CCD).

**It is very important that any building professionals involved in future refurbishments and/or re-development are aware of all the criterion in each of the sections of this report and they should sign a pre-prepared agreement which confirms they are aware, and will comply with all the requirements as laid out in current building regulations (Approved Document M).**



- 1.1 Building within convenient walking distant of:
  - A public highway?
  - Public transport?
  - Car parking?
- 1.2 Route free of kerbs?
- 1.3 Wide enough?
- 1.4 Surfaces even and slip-resistant?
- 1.5 Aural, tactile and visual clues?
- 1.6 Sufficient landmarks to aid orientation?
- 1.7 Route clearly signed?
- 1.8 Adequately lit?
- 1.9 Free of hazards such as bollards, litter bins?
- 1.10 Free of hazardous building features such as outward opening doors, windows or overhangs?
- 1.11 Adequate seating provided along routes?

***General comments and observations:***



**Checked**

- 2.1 Accessible bays clearly signposted from car park entrance?
- 2.2 Identified as provision for disabled drivers or passengers only?
- 2.3 Close enough to facilities the car park services?
- 2.4 Can car doors be fully opened to allow disabled drivers and passengers to transfer to a wheelchair parked alongside?
- 2.5 Space for tail loading?
- 2.6 Routes from parking area to buildings accessible, with dropped kerbs and appropriate tactile warnings?
- 2.7 Car park surface smooth, even and free from loose stones?
- 2.8 Adequately lit?

***General comments and observations:***



**Checked**

- 3.1 Ramp accompanied by steps for ambulant disabled people?
- 3.2 Wide enough and suitably graded?
- 3.3 Suitable handrails on each side?
- 3.4 Surface slip-resistant, firmly fixed and easy to maintain?
- 3.5 Edges protected to prevent accidents?
- 3.6 If a permanent ramp cannot be constructed, is a portable ramp, platform lift or stair lift available?

***General comments and observations:***



**Checked**

- 4.1 Visual and tactile warnings at top and bottom of steps?
- 4.2 Suitable handrails each side?
- 4.3 Lighting adequate and well positioned?
- 4.4 Treads long enough and all of same length?
- 4.5 Risers shallow enough, all of same height, and unlikely to trip users?
- 4.6 'Nosings' readily identifiable?
- 4.7 Landings big enough and provided at intermediate levels in long flights?

***General comments and observations:***



**Checked**

- 5.1 Main entrance easy to find and clearly distinguishable from façade?
- 5.2 Door opening wide enough for all users?
- 5.3 Level or flush threshold?
- 5.4 Can people each side of the door, either standing or seated see each other and be seen?
- 5.5 Adequate space available alongside leading edge for a wheelchair user to open the door while clear of door swing?
- 5.6 Door control at a suitable height for both standing and seated users, clearly located and easy to use?
- 5.7 Door handle to grip?
- 5.8 Door closer of appropriate type?
- 5.9 Entry-phones and security systems detailed to allow use by people with sensory or mobility impairments?
- 5.10 Glazed entrance door: markings for safety and visibility?
- 5.11 Automatically operated door?
  - Remains open long enough for slow moving person to pass through?
  - Both visual and tactile information and warnings?
- 5.12 Revolving door: supplemented by a non-revolving door in regular use?
- 5.13 Weather mat of firm texture and flush with the floor?

***General comments and observations:***



**Checked**

- 6.1 Clear view in from outside?
- 6.2 Transitional lighting?
- 6.3 Lobby?
  - Inner door meets same criteria as entrance door?
  - Big enough to allow wheelchair users to move clear of first door before negotiating the second?
- 6.4 Signs designed and located to convey information to visitors with sight impairments and wheelchair users with lower eye levels?
- 6.5 Reception desk/counter/checkout suitable for approach and use from both sides by people either standing or seated?
- 6.6 Induction loop fitted?
- 6.7 Telephone provided?
- 6.8 Waiting area:  
Seating designed for ease of use?
- 6.9** Space for wheelchair users?
- 6.10** Information given about how to reach other parts of building by appropriate signs and by tactile information?
- 6.11** Surfaces suitable?

***General comments and observations:***



**Checked**

- 7.1 Corridor wide enough for a wheelchair user to manoeuvre and for other people to pass?
- 7.2 Free from obstruction to wheelchair users and from hazards to people with impaired sight?
- 7.3 Turning space for wheelchair users?
- 7.4 Internal lobbies: space for wheelchair users to clear one door before approaching second?
- 7.5 Natural and artificial lighting avoid glare and silhouettes?
- 7.6 Visual clues to help orientation?
- 7.7 Floor surfaces suitable?
- 7.8 Direction or information signs clearly visible from both standing and seated position?
- 7.9 Tactile signs for use by people with sight impairments?

***General comments and observations:***



**Checked**

- 8.1 Is the door absolutely necessary for safety or functional reasons?
- 8.2 Distinguishable from surroundings?
- 8.3 Glass door: clearly visible when closed?
- 8.4 Can people each side of the door, either standing or seated in a wheelchair, see each other and be seen?
- 8.5 Clear opening width sufficient for a wheelchair user?
- 8.6 Adequate space alongside leading edge for a wheelchair user or someone with limited mobility to reach door control while clear of its swing?
- 8.7 Door control at a height suitable for both standing and seated users?
- 8.8 Control clearly distinguishable from door itself?
- 8.9 Easily gripped and operated?
- 8.10 Door light enough to open easily?
- 8.11 Door closers of an appropriate type and with minimum necessary opening pressure?

*General comments and observations:*



**Checked**

- 9.1 Is there a ramp at any internal level change?
- 9.2 Ramp available for short rise within a single storey?
- 9.3. Wide enough and suitably graded?
- 9.4 Surface slip-resistant?
- 9.5 Exposed edges protected to prevent accidents?
- 9.6 Suitable handrail each side?
- 9.7 If a permanent ramp cannot be constructed, is a suitable portable ramp available?
- 9.8 Suitable alternative stairs?

***General comments and observations:***



- 10.1 Treads long enough and each of same length?
- 10.2 Risers shallow enough, all same height, and unlikely to trip users?
- 10.3 'Nosings' all readily identifiable?
- 10.4 Suitable handrail each side?
- 10.5 Landings big enough and provided at intermediate levels in a long flight?
- 10.6 Visual warning at top of each flight?
- 10.7 Tactile warnings at top and bottom?
- 10.8 Location of stairs adequately signed at each level?
- 10.9 Each level clearly identifiable by tactile and visual information?
- 10.10 Adequate, well positioned lighting?

***General comments and observations:***



**Checked**

- 11.1 Passenger lift available for vertical circulation within a building of more than one storey?
- 11.2 Car dimensions sufficient to allow space for a wheelchair user?
- 11.3 Support rails in car appropriately designed and positioned?
- 11.4 Door opens wide enough for wheelchair users?
- 11.5 Delayed-action closer and override (not a door-edge pressure system) to allow slow entry or exit?
- 11.6 Controls including emergency call, located easily using visual tactile information, and within reach of all users?
- 11.7 Voice indication of floor reached?
- 11.8 Floor indicator clear and call controls within reach of all users?
- 11.9 Location of lift clearly defined by visual and tactile information?
- 11.10 Immediately outside lift: sufficient unobstructed space for waiting and manoeuvring by wheelchair users?
- 11.11 Alternative, suitable stairs?

***General comments and observations:***



**Checked**

- 12.1 Can platform lift or stair-lift be conveniently and safely approached by wheelchair users at both top and bottom?
- 12.2 Platform of adequate size for wheelchair use and manoeuvre?
- 12.3 Controls clearly identifiable and within convenient reach of both standing and seated users?
- 12.4 In the event of power failure or emergency, does platform automatically return to lower level and allow egress?
- 12.5 When not in use does stair-lift platform automatically revert to folded position so that it does not obstruct stair?

*General comments and observations:*



**Checked**

- 13.1 Is there WC provision for people with ambulant disabilities?
- 13.2 Lobby of sufficient size for easy access?
- 13.3 Lobby door light enough to open easily?
- 13.4 Slip-resistant floors throughout?
- 13.5 Fittings all easily distinguishable from background?
- 13.6 Compartment door controls all easily gripped and operated?
- 13.7 Sufficient space for ambulant disabled people to manoeuvre?
- 13.8 Can ambulant disabled people raise and lower themselves in standard cubicles?
- 13.9 Is their travel distance to a suitable WC no greater than that for able-bodied people?
- 13.10 Provision for wheelchair users?

***General comments and observations:***



**Part M layout only:**

- 14.1 Compartment large enough to allow manoeuvring into position for frontal, lateral, angled and backward transfer unassisted and with assistance?
- 14.2 If more than one Part M layout provided, are the layouts handed (a left-sided approach and a right-hand sided approach)?
- 14.3 Hand-washing and drying facilities within easy reach of someone seated on WC?

**Peninsular layout only:**

- 14.4 Compartment large enough to allow manoeuvring into position for frontal, lateral (from both sides), angled and backward transfer unassisted and with assistance?
- 14.5 Hand-washing and drying facilities approachable by and within easy reach of someone seated in a wheelchair?

**Part M and peninsular layouts:**

- 14.6 WC approachable by a wheelchair user – i.e. free of steps, corridor obstructions, narrow doors etc?
- 14.7 Location clearly signed?
- 14.8 Travel distance no greater than that required of an able-bodied person?
- 14.9 Sufficient space available outside toilet compartment manoeuvre and door opening?
- 14.10 Door controls, lock, alarm and light switch easily reached and operated?
- 14.11 Fittings arranged to facilitate easy manoeuvre?
- 14.12 Tap appropriate for use by a person with limited dexterity, grip or strength?
- 14.13 Suitably designed grab rails fitted in all positions necessary to assist manoeuvring?
- 14.14 Manoeuvring area free from obstruction such as boxed in pipe work or radiators?

***General comments and observations:***



**Checked**

- 15.1 Floor surfaces suitable for passage of wheelchairs?
- 15.2 Junctions between floor surfaces correctly detailed?
- 15.3 Floor and wall surfaces free of confusing glare and reflection?
- 15.4 Colours, tones and textures varied to help people distinguish between surfaces and fittings/fixtures etc?
- 15.5 Textured surfaces to aid orientation in people with impaired sight?
- 15.6 Floor surfaces slip-resistant?
- 15.7 Bright, boldly patterned floors avoided?
- 15.8 Busy or distracting wall coverings avoided?

***General comments and observations:***



**Checked**

**Seating**

- 16.1 Seats provided at intervals along internal routes or where waiting likely?
- 16.2 Seats stable, with armrests and provided in a range of heights?
- 16.3 In waiting areas: space for a wheelchair user to pull up alongside a seated companion?

**Counters and service desks**

- 16.4 Provision on both sides for wheelchair users?
- 16.5 Induction loops fitted at counters with glazed screens or where there is background noise?
- 16.6 Counters designed and positioned to avoid reflections or silhouetting?

**Telephones**

- 16.7 Fixed at a height that allows easy use by wheelchair users?
- 16.8 Is there a text-phone?

**Alarms**

- 16.9 Audible alarms supplemented by visual alarms?

**Controls**

- 16.10 Colour and tonal contrast helps distinguish controls from background?

***General comments and observations:***



**Checked**

- 17.1 Overall layout of building reasonably clear and logical?
- 17.2 Signs in a logical position?
- 17.3 Easily identifiable against their background?
- 17.4 Easy to read?
- 17.5 Information also given in tactile form (such as maps and models)?
- 17.6 Where a building uses textured surfaces to convey information to people with sight impairments, is there a clear key at a central information point?

***General comments and observations:***



**Checked**

- 18.1 Where a building uses textured surfaces to convey information to people with sight impairments, is there a clear key at a central information point?
- 18.2 Level of lighting sufficient for intended use?
- 18.3 Lights positioned where they do not cause glare, reflection, confusing shadows or pools of light and dark?
- 18.4 Can occupiers control lighting?
- 18.5 Workspaces: is lighting controllable and adjustable to meet the needs of the individual and the task they are working on?
- 18.6 Automatically activated booster lighting for dim conditions?
- 18.7 Fluorescent lighting installed only where it is unlikely to cause inconvenience to people with hearing impairments?

***General comments and observations:***



**Checked**

- 19.1 Acoustic environment suitable for intended use?
- 19.2 Quiet and noisy areas separated by a buffer zone?
- 19.3 Environment free of unnecessarily obtrusive noise (e.g. from heating units)?
- 19.4 Good balance of hard and soft surfaces?
- 19.5 Main power supply cables routed away from public spaces to avoid interference to hearing aid users?
- 19.6 Induction loops fitted wherever information given or meetings held?
- 19.7 If security needs preclude the use of an induction loop, is an infrared system available?

***General comments and observations:***



**Checked**

- 20.1 Audible alarm system supplemented by visual system?
- 20.2 Ground-floor exit routes are accessible to all, including wheelchair users, as entrance routes?
- 20.3 Vertical escape from upper or lower floors possible using a fire-protected lift with an independent power supply?
- 20.4 If people with disabilities cannot completely evacuate the building, can they reach places of safety or refuges?

***General comments and observations:***



***Are the following issues addressed by building management and checked on a regular basis?***

- 21.1 External routes**, including steps and ramps, kept clean, unobstructed and free of surface water, snow and ice?
- 21.2 Car parking**: designated spaces not used by non-disabled drivers and kept clear of obstructions?
- 21.3 Doors**:
- Door closers, door ironmongery maintained?
  - Side-hung doors accompanying revolving doors kept unlocked?
- 21.4 Horizontal circulation**: space required for wheelchair manoeuvre not obstructed by furniture, deliveries, storage etc?
- 21.5 Vertical circulation**: lift, platform lifts and stairlifts checked regularly for proper functioning?
- 21.6 WC's**: not used as unofficial storage areas?
- 21.7 Surfaces**:
- Cleaning and polishing does not render slip-resistant surfaces slippery?
  - Junctions between different flooring materials do not become worn, presenting a tripping hazard?
  - Flooring when renewed is replaced like for like?
  - Redecoration does not compromise a carefully devised colour scheme?
- 21.8 Wayfinding**:
- Maps of building interiors updated when use of building changes?
  - New signs integrate with existing signage?
  - Signs are replaced correctly after removal for redecoration?
- 21.9 Lighting**:
- Windows, lamps and blinds kept clean to maximise available light?
  - Blown light bulbs swiftly replaced?
- 21.10 Acoustics**:
- Induction loop and infrared systems advertised and checked regularly for properfunctioning?
  - Air conditioning and heating units regularly maintained to minimise noise due to wear?

**Checked**

**21.11 Means of escape:**

- Exit routes checked regularly for freedom from obstacles (including locked doors) and combustible materials?
- Alarm systems, including those in WCs, regularly checked?
- New user group co-ordinators trained in alarm response procedures?
- Overall escape strategy for users who may need assistance?
- Personal egress plan available for each regular user needing assistance?
- Personal vibratory alarms provided to employees with hearing impairments?
- Both general escape strategy and personal emergency egress plans checked regularly for efficiency and effectiveness?

**21.12 Access action plan**

Is there an access action plan to carry forward information and recommendations from this access audit?

***General comments and observations:***

Although the building and grounds are generally well maintained, there is no formal procedure to undertake this on a regular basis, using the management check-list (above) which was provided for such use on the CCD Access & Awareness training workshop.

The hall management committee have every intention of addressing the issues raised in this access audit report, by writing up a timed and costed action plan, which can be reviewed and monitored on a regular basis. They are aware that issues which cannot be addressed immediately, due to a lack of financial resources or due to the proposed re-development of the site, should be covered by a monitored policy, made available to all members and user group co-ordinators and private hirers.



## DISCLAIMER

The Community Council of Devon has been trained by the Centre for Accessible Environments to conduct DDA audits. We are not qualified surveyors.

The advice given is based on experiences of living with a disability in an inaccessible environment, and is given in good faith.

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

2005 - 2008

