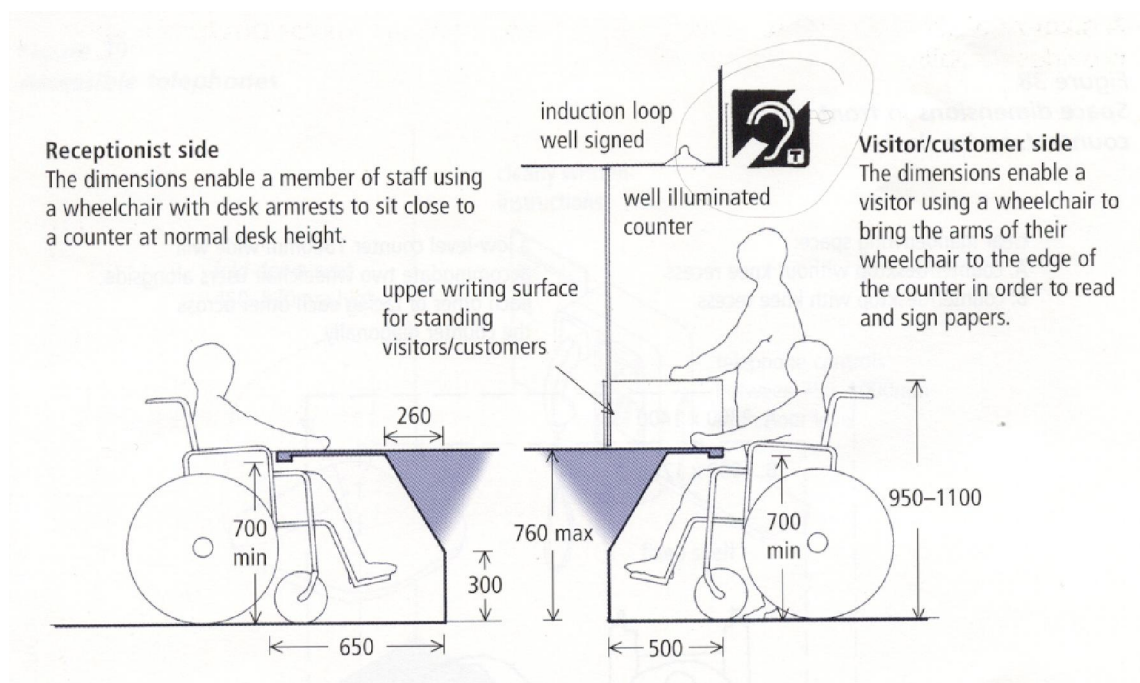


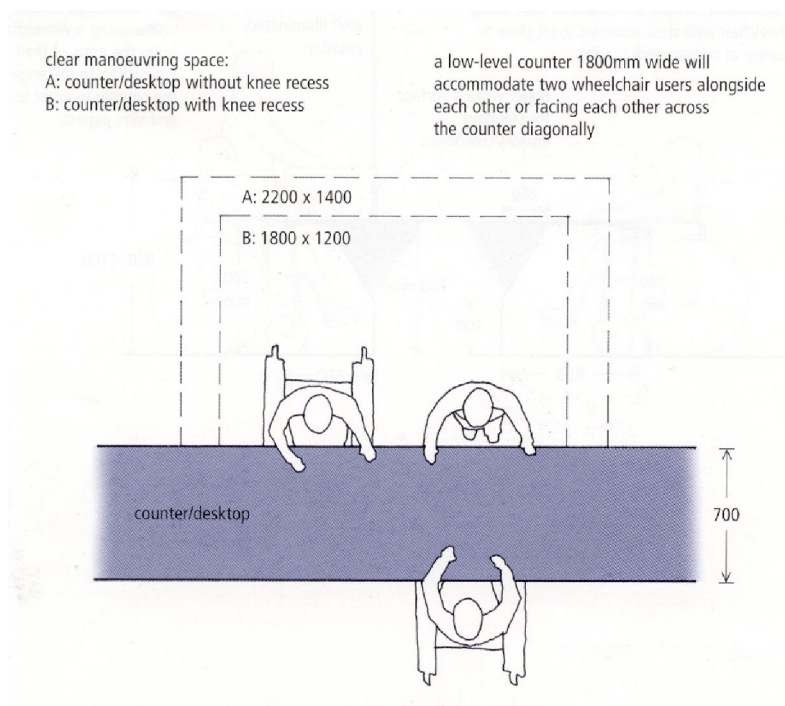
Counters and service desks should be designed so that they can be accessed and used, on both staff and customer sides, by as wide a range of people as possible in both standing and seated positions.



**Figure 37**  
**Counter/service desks**

- Counters, service hatches and desks should be set at a height suitable for seated and standing users with higher and lower sections (Figure 37) and with sufficient clear manoeuvring space in the front (Figure 38).
- Access for wheelchair users should be provided to both staff and visitor/user sides of the counter (with space for knees under). Some service areas in existing buildings (e.g. hatch from the kitchen) can have fitted drop down flaps to accommodate wheelchair users.
- A clear manoeuvring space around the area is required (Figure 38).
- There should be sufficient counter space to allow people to write or sign documents.
- An upstanding lip at the edge of the counter, if well detailed, can assist in picking up tickets or loose change.
- There should be tonal contrasts between objects and the surface; the top of the counter should contrast with the edge.

- All exposed edges and corners should be well rounded.
- Avoid positioning service desks in front of windows where bright sunshine will cause the user's face to be silhouetted and hence difficult to lip read or follow sign language. Similarly, avoid confusing backgrounds such as strong patterns.
- Lighting should be placed so that it assists lip reading from both sides of the counter.
- Induction loops should serve staff and visitors. There should be clear signs indicating where the loops are fitted.
- Speech enhancement and induction loop systems fitted at counters with glazed screens or where there is background noise will help people using hearing aids.
- Provision of seats near low counters could be considered.



*Figure 38*  
**Space dimensions in front of counter/service desk**