

A&A Information Sheet 20
**WAYFINDING, INFORMATION
 AND SIGNS**

**COMMUNITY COUNCIL OF
 DEVON**

helping communities help themselves

Buildings designed with a logical layout can directly assist wayfinding, particularly for people with sight impairments and those with learning difficulties, as well as being helpful for emergency escape. As well as using standard signs, additional information can be conveyed using colour, communication systems, maps, models and Braille guides. Further reference should include the RNIB (Royal National Institute for the Blind), the RNID (Royal Institute for the Deaf) and Mencap. The RNIB for example provide a Braille transcription service. Additional guidance on the use of signs in buildings, see BS 8300 and the Sign Design Guide published by JMU and the Sign Design Society.

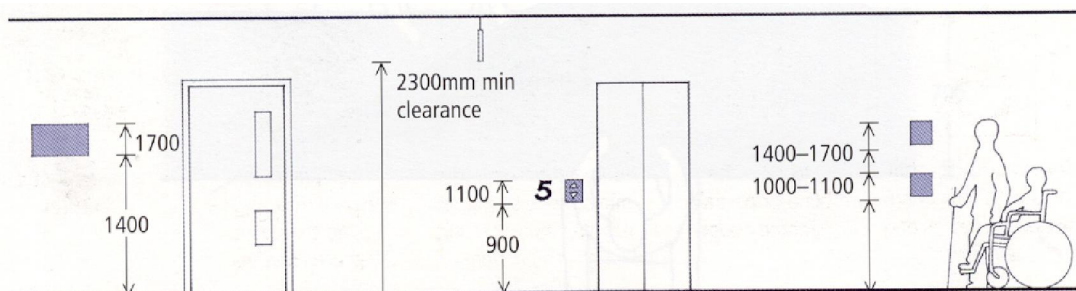


Figure 40
Height and position signs

- Audible public address systems should be supplemented by visual information (see 'Acoustics').
- Colour can be used to signal where certain features can be found within a building. For example, all walls within core areas containing stairs, lifts and WCs could be painted in a particular colour to help orientation (a map code is essential).
- Visual information can be provided by distinguishing floor, wall and ceilings, door surrounds and other decorative features.
- Tactile maps and models of the interior layout of buildings, aid the comprehension of the building for those with sight impairments.
- Where complex information is being provided, audio or BSL (British Sign Language) interpretation guides should be considered.
- Where a building uses its own vocabulary of textured surfaces or colours to convey information, a key should be provided at a central information point, or in the reception/lobby area.

Signs:

- Location signs should be part of the process of planning and managing the building. They should be placed in a logical position and be obviously identifiable.
- Signs are difficult to identify and read if they are positioned against a background or low level sunlight or artificial light.
- The sign board should contrast with the background against which it is mounted and the lettering should provide a strong contrast with the sign board.
- Directional signs should be situated so that they do not cause obstruction and are well lit. They should be positioned at high level in areas of buildings that are likely to be crowded.
- Informational signs should be read at close range (e.g. a table in front of a notice board will obstruct) and a suitable height. The recommended range for a wheelchair user is 1000 – 1100mm and for someone standing 1400 – 1700mm.
- Signs need to be simple, short, consistent and easily understood using prescribed typeface (e.g. Arial), colour contrast (dark lettering on light yellow background is ideal) and simple graphic devices.
- Signs are more easily read if the wording starts with a capital letter and is followed by lower case lettering (i.e. not block capitals).
- Factors which determine the legibility of signs include the contrast between the text colour and the background colour, the contrast between the sign itself and the background surface and the lighting conditions.
- To minimise glare, avoid reflective glass and ensure the sign has a matt surface.
- Symbols should be used to supplement written signs (Figure 42); symbols advertising special facilities for people with disabilities (e.g. installation of a hearing loop) should be placed near the main entrance so that it can be seen by people outside, or before they enter the building.
- Tactile signs (e.g. embossed letters, raised pictograms, directional arrows) should be used where they can be easily reached, for example, lift controls, door numbers, lockers and WC doors.



arrows and text aligned towards direction of travel



- locations listed and left-aligned where no arrows
- use of capitals and lower case text
- effective contrast between text and background

Figure 41
Sign design detail

Figure 42
Standard public information symbols

