

**DEVELOPMENT/ BUILDING CONTROL
GUIDE TO 'DISABILITY ACCESS STATEMENTS' FOR PLANNING
APPLICATIONS
April 2005**

Social Inclusion

Social inclusion means recognising the different needs of all people and the variations in the ways they use the built environment. Even though an environment is 'accessible' it does not mean it is 'inclusive' because it can lead to separate facilities and therefore segregate people because they have an impairment. Social inclusion recognises that people are not disabled by their impairment, but by the barriers and structures present in society and introduces the concept of a single solution for everyone. The requirement for an Access Statement encourages access issues to be addressed at an early stage.

Access Statements

An Access Statement is an explanation of 'how access and facilities for people with disabilities and others has been addressed in a particular scheme'. The statement will allow Planning Officers to assess whether a 'Socially inclusive design' has been achieved.

The statement will vary in size dependent on the type and scale of the development but should generally include the following elements:

- Description of proposed works and the intended use of the building
- Access design philosophy on the scheme
- Sources of advice and guidance
- Evidence of any consultation with the Council's Access Officer or the Local Access Group
- Description of building
- Key issues of the scheme
- Current access provisions
- Proposed areas for improvement
- Areas not proposed for improvement and/or reasons why an alternative approach has been adopted

When is an Access Statement required

Applications requiring a full Access Statement include new and substantially extended buildings where the intended use is:

- Shops and commercial use, Restaurants, Public Houses and Bars, Offices, Banks, Public Buildings, Leisure, Assembly and Recreation facilities, Mixed Use developments, Churches, Schools/Colleges, Hotels, Industrial, Storage and General, Listed Buildings other than dwellings
- Housing development schemes for flats, houses and bungalows (excluding individual dwellings), Nursing or Old peoples homes

Applications will not require an access statement if the works are for new, altered or extended individual dwellings, ie houses, bungalows and flats. Similarly, minor alterations or extensions to other uses may not require a statement where it can clearly be seen that the accessibility of the building is not affected.

Matters for consideration

Matters for consideration on any development include:

- ❑ Transport links
- ❑ Disabled parking provision or setting down points or garaging
- ❑ Approach routes to building – wayfinding signage, gradient, width, surface finish
- ❑ External hazards/features – hard landscaping, projections, furniture
- ❑ External steps/ramps – gradient, width, guarding and heights
- ❑ Entrances – primary and secondary
- ❑ Doors – operation, size, level threshold, automatic
- ❑ Lobby sizes – for manoeuvrability
- ❑ Reception – counter height
- ❑ Aids for hearing impaired people – induction loop
- ❑ Visibility of signage – size and contrast for people with impaired vision
- ❑ Interpretation and Braille facilities
- ❑ Internal corridors – widths, obstructions, gradients
- ❑ Internal steps/ramps – height, width, guarding
- ❑ Lifts – size, height of controls
- ❑ WC accommodation – size, layout, number
- ❑ Spectator seating – Number of spaces, choice of viewing point, facilities
- ❑ Access to special facilities – meeting rooms, swimming pools, sports equipment etc
- ❑ Usability of the building/facilities – to meet the DDA
- ❑ Management arrangements – for assisted access and means of escape

Many of these matters are also considered as part of a Building Regulations application. The Access Statement can be used again at this stage of the design and approval process.

Special considerations need to be given to Listed Buildings, development in Conservation Areas and other buildings or spaces of special interest.

Ongoing obligations for owners/occupiers

The Access Statement should be amended to reflect any subsequent, decisions reached on site irrespective of whether the amendment requires approval under the Planning Act or Building Regulations so that any new owner or occupier can be aware of the rationale used in making decisions which impact on accessibility and their ongoing obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act. An up to date Access Statement can form part of the ‘Sellers Pack’ which will help to inform future owner/occupiers of the access provision in and around the building.

Sources of further information and advice

- ❑ **Centre for Accessible Environments**
Nutmeg House, 60 Gainsford Street, London SE1 2NY
Tel/minicom: 020 7357 8182
Fax: 020 7357 8183
e-mail: info@cae.org.uk
Website: www.cae.org.uk

- ❑ **Disability Rights Commission**
DRC Helpline, FREEPOST, M1D02164, Stratford upon Avon, CV37 9BR
Tel: 08457 622 633
Textphone: 08457 622 644
Fax: 08457 778 878
Email: enquiry@drc-gb.org
Web Site: www.drc-gb.org

- ❑ **Disabled Living Foundation**
380-384 Harrow Road, London W9 2HU
Tel: 020 7289 6111
Fax: 020 7226 2922
e-mail: advice@dlf.org.uk
Website: www.dlf.org.uk

- ❑ **Employers' Forum on Disability**
Nutmeg House, 60 Gainsford Street, London SE1 2NY
Tel/minicom: 020 7403 3020
Fax: 020 7403 0404
e-mail: efd@employers-forum.co.uk
Website: www.employers-forum.co.uk

- ❑ **JMU Access Partnership**
224 Great Portland Street, London W1N 6AA
Tel: 020 7391 2002
Fax: 020 7387 7109
e-mail: jmu@rnib.org.uk
Website: www.rnib.org.uk/jmu

- ❑ **National Register of Access Consultants**
Nutmeg House, 60 Gainsford Street, London SE1 2NY
Tel: 020 7234 0434
Minicom: 020 7357 8182
Fax: 020 7357 8183
email: marynoble@nrac.org.uk
Website: www.nrac.org.uk

- ❑ **RADAR**
12 City Forum, 250 City Road, London EC1V 8AF
Tel: 020 7250 3222
Minicom: 020 72504119
Fax: 020 7250 0212
e-mail: radar@radar.org.uk
Website: www.radar.org.uk

- ❑ **Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB)**
 224 Great Portland Street, London WIN 6AA
 Tel: 020 7388 1266
 Fax: 020 7388 2034
 e-mail: helpline@rnib.org.uk
 Website: www.rnib.org.uk
- ❑ **Royal National Institute for Deaf People (RNID)**
 19-23 Featherstone Street, London ECIY 85L
 Tel: 020 7296 8000
 Minicom: 020 7296 8001 Fax: 020 7296 8199
 e-mail: helpline@rnib.org.uk
 Website: www.rnid.org.uk
- ❑ **Access Officer**
 Environmental Health, Chichester District Council, East Pallant House, 1 East Pallant,
 Chichester, West Sussex PO19 1TY
 Tel: 01243 785166
 e-mail: johnwhite@chichester.gov.uk
- ❑ **Chichester District Council (contact details to follow)**
 Chichester District Council, East Pallant House, 1 East Pallant, Chichester, West
 Sussex PO19 1TY
 Tel: 01243 785166
 e-mail:

Publications

- ❑ **Chichester District Local Plan** - Available from Chichester District Council,
 Environmental Policy Services, East Pallant House, Chichester, West Sussex
 Tel: 01343 534571
 Web-site: www.chichester.gov.uk
- ❑ **Building Regulations 2000** – Approved document M (7004 Edition) – Available
 from TSO Shops
 Tel: 020 7242 6393
 Web-site: www.tso.co.uk/bookshop
- ❑ **BS 8300: 2001** Code of Practice
 Design of buildings and their approaches to meet the needs of disabled people –
 Available from the British Standards Institution
 Customer Services Tel: 020 8996 9001 Fax: 020 8996 7001
 Web site: www.bsi-global.com
- ❑ **BS 5588 Part 8:1999** – Code of Practice for means of escape for disabled people –
 Available from (See BS 8300 above)
- ❑ **Access Audits: a guide and checklists for appraising the accessibility of public
 buildings** CAE, 1999
 Comprising guidance notes, audit checklists and a copy of Designing for Accessibility
 (see below), the Access Audits pack is a useful tool for assessing the current

accessibility and usability of buildings by disabled people.

- ❑ **Access to ATMs: UK design guidelines** CAE, 1999 – Guidance for those who design, install and operate ATMs, based on ergonomic research.
- ❑ **Bringing the DDA to Life for Small Shops: improving access to goods and services for disabled customers** DfEE, 2000 – Series of four booklets with information for service providers about the DDA and each featuring a case study of a small business:
 1. Hairdressing salon.
 2. Café.
 3. Newsagents.
 4. Clothes shop.
- ❑ **Building Sight** by Peter Barker, Jon Barrick, Rod Wilson – HMSO in association with the Royal National Institute for the Blind, RNIB, 1995
A handbook of building and interior design solutions to include the needs of visually impaired people.
- ❑ **Designing for Accessibility: an essential guide for public buildings** CAE, 1999 – A guide to designing buildings which are accessible to people with a range of disabilities; also useful for adapting existing buildings.
- ❑ **Disability Discrimination Act 1995: Code of Practice: Rights of Access, Goods, Facilities, Service and Premises** DfEE The Stationery Office, 1999 – Deals with the duties placed by Part III of the DDA on those providing goods, facilities or services to the public and those selling, letting or managing premises. (A separate code has been published for use in Northern Ireland.)
Web-site: www.disability.gov.uk
- ❑ **Disability Discrimination Act 1995: An Introduction for Small and Medium-sized Businesses** DfEE, 1999 – Explains existing and new duties on service providers under Part III of the DDA.
Web-site: www.disability.gov.uk
- ❑ **Easy Access to Historic Properties** English Heritage, 1995 – Guidance in relation to achieving access in historic buildings.
- ❑ **Open for Business: a best practice guide on access** by David Bonnett and Patrick Tolfree Employers' Forum on Disability and The Bucknall Group Guide on better access for disabled customers.
- ❑ **Tourism for All: providing accessible visitor attractions** by Bob Donaldson – English Tourist Board, 1994 – Designing access that allows more people to get at and enjoy visitor attractions.
- ❑ **Widening the Eye of the Needle: access to churches for people with disabilities** by John Penton Church House Publishing, 1999 – Focuses on the alteration and operation of existing churches and associated buildings but also covers new churches.

Further information and publications on designing for people with hearing impairments and for people with sight impairments can be obtained from RNID and RNIB respectively (see Organisations).