

One half of the world does not know how the other half lives

Not just wheelchairs Making your accommodation accessible is not just about ramps and lifts for wheelchair users. Mobility problems cover everything from arthritic joints that make walking slow to the use of a motorised wheelchair. Did you know that the most common disability problem is a back problem? More people are hard of hearing than truly deaf. There are more partially sighted people than blind people.

It's difficult to know what small things can make the difference when you have no experience of what it's like to have a disability. However it makes sound business sense to make sure the service you offer helps every possible customer. A large and growing number of visitors require small but valuable adjustments and they look for businesses that have recognised and responded to their needs.



“The difficulty is that when you label someone as disabled, you immediately assume white sticks, guide dogs, wheelchairs and that is very much the minority of the disability market.”

Keith Richards, ABTA.

Reasonable adjustments The golden rule of accessible accommodation is to make reasonable adjustments. Some quick wins:

- Ask guests if they require assistance. Don't assume they do.
- Think about colour contrast, for example no white napkins on white tablecloths
- Use larger text size that is a minimum 14 point on brochures, menus and websites

- Keep a pen and paper at reception for guests to write down what they need
- Welcome guide and hearing dogs, and have a bowl of water ready
- Consider assistance in emergencies such as a portable vibrating alarm
- Install an induction loop hearing system or have a portable one available
- Provide audio menus e.g. MP3 player
- Provide a range of different chairs and include some with arm supports

Rating The National Accessible Scheme (NAS) operated by VisitBritain and Tourism for All UK gives clear guidance on providing a more accessible environment. The NAS information pack is free of charge and, at the very least, you should complete their self survey form. www.tourismtrade.org.uk/quality/assessmentstandards/nationalaccessiblescheme



Access statements Access statements provide consumers with a clear description of the facilities and services you offer. In London all businesses are encouraged to provide an access statement on their website or in hard copy. For more information and a suggested template go to www.tourismtrade.org.uk/quality/assessmentstandards/nationalaccessiblescheme

Accessibility workshops Learn more about the principles of accessibility and the benefits for your business by attending a free LDA Accessibility Workshop. For more information go to www.lda.gov.uk/tourismsupport

Useful websites

What do guest accommodation owners need to know about the law and disability pdf available from:
www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publicationsandresources/Disability/Pages/Services.aspx
www.equalityhumanrights.com
www.tourismforall.info
www.rnib.org.uk
www.rnid.org.uk