

ACCESS QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CHURCHES

It is recommended that PCC'S carry out regular access audits on churches, church halls and other property that is the responsibility of a PCC, in order to comply with disability discrimination legislation. This questionnaire aims to help you prepare for the process.

The questionnaire aims to cover many of the areas of your church which may represent a barrier to people's participation in church life. It is not exhaustive, however, simply because each church has a unique mixture of problems. Equally, there may be areas mentioned here which do not apply to your church.

The questionnaire can seem daunting, but please remember that very few churches, if any, have problem-free access. Many churches have enormous difficulties that will take a number of years to put right. No one is suggesting that full access is going to be accomplished quickly, but we must all make a start somewhere. Completing this questionnaire can be a useful way of looking at your church through different eyes.

The questionnaire assumes that people are familiar with basic details of required dimensions, gradients, heights etc. Most relevant dimensions may be found in the Appendix of the Diocesan Guide, 'Open to All', or in Part 'M' of the current Building Regulations, or in 'Widening the Eye of the Needle'.

Your details

Church (e.g. Stone, St. John)

Date of Observation:

Contact person's details:

Address

Tel no.

Email address (if any)

Thos present for the observation:

<p>Approaches to Church</p> <p><i>From the road</i> Are there any designated wider parking bays for wheelchair users?</p> <p>If no car park, is there a designated drop-off point?</p> <p>If yes, is the drop-off point clearly signposted at the road?</p> <p>Is there a roadside Church notice board?</p> <p>If yes, are appropriate disability symbols displayed?</p> <p><i>Pedestrian access from road</i> Can a wheelchair user gain access independently?</p> <p>Are adequate handrails (on both sides) provided for existing flights of two or more steps?</p> <p>Is the pathway clear of obstructions that might impede a blind or partially sighted person?</p> <p>Is the surface of the pathway inclined to be slippery in bad weather etc?</p> <p>Does the surface of the path impede wheelchair users (e.g. grass; deep gravel)?</p> <p>Is the full length of the path adequately lit at night?</p> <p>Is there a significant up or downhill slope?</p> <p>If yes, is there a level 'resting' area for wheelchair users at reasonable intervals?</p> <p>Are there 'grab' handrails for wheelchair users on both sides of the slope?</p> <p>Is there a halfway seat or bench for those with breathing difficulties?</p>		
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Entrance to church

Is the entrance area adequately lit at night?

Are all existing ramps of an adequate standard (e.g. gradient, surface, flush edges, platform area, upstand, and handrails)?

If the ideal of independent wheelchair access (i.e. without assistance) via the main entrance is not currently possible, is an alternative entrance available?

If yes, is there the same welcome at this entrance (e.g. welcomers, distribution of hymnbooks etc.)?

Are there one or more steps* in the main entrance area?

** a 'step' means any sudden change in surface level of more than 1 inch.*

If yes, do flights of two or more steps have adequate handrails on both sides?

And do any steps have colour contrast to the edges?

Do all doormats protrude less than 1 inch above the floor surface?

The entrance doors

Are they all wide enough for wheelchair users?

Can handles, bolts and so on be manipulated by someone with impaired dexterity (e.g. arthritic hands)?

Can doors be opened independently by a wheelchair user?

If no, is a designated person 'on duty' to anticipate the requirement?

<p>Inside the church</p> <p>Steps Are ramps provided to all stepped areas?</p> <p>Are any temporary (i.e. not built-in) ramps built to an adequate standard (gradient, surface, flush edges, platform area, upstand etc.)?</p> <p>Do all steps (including flights of two or more steps to the Communion Rail) have adequate handrails?</p> <p>Do all step edges have contrast colour or texture for partially sighted people to distinguish them?</p> <p>Seating Do wheelchair users have choices of where to sit for services/events?</p> <p>Have some pews been removed or shortened to allow for wheelchair space?</p> <p>Are pews raised on platforms?</p> <p>If yes, is there a colour contrast at the edge of the floors for stepping down?</p> <p>Are spaces between pews generally sufficient for those with impaired mobility?</p> <p>If no, is alternative seating provided?</p> <p>Is there an audio loop system installed?</p> <p>If yes, is it in regular use?</p> <p>Is it professionally checked annually?</p> <p>Do enough people know how to operate it?</p> <p>Does a leader know if not switched on/not working during a service or event?</p> <p>Are notices announcing it visible in all areas in building?</p> <p>Is it advertised outside the church building?</p> <p>If the system is inadequate in parts of the building, is this clearly stated?</p>		
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Choir and vestry

Are choir stalls wheelchair accessible?

Is there adequate lighting of the choir area?

Are large print materials available to the choir if required?

Are facilities for robing-up accessible to wheelchair users?

Is the Vestry w/chair accessible?

Comfort facilities

Are there toilet facilities for members of the congregation?

If yes, are the approaches wheelchair accessible?

Is the WC accessible to w/chair transfer (i.e. where someone swings directly from the w/chair to sit on pan?)

If not accessible to w/chair transfer, is the WC accessible to people ambulatory disabilities (ie where someone can – with help, if necessary* – leave the w/chair sufficiently to use the pan in the usual way)?

**This would clearly imply that the room must be large enough to comfortably accommodate two people and a w/chair)*

Does the layout of the facility conform to Part M of the current Building Regulations in its detail?

Does the church or church hall have kitchen facilities?

If yes, is the whole kitchen area wheelchair accessible (including approaches)?

Are easy-to-hold mugs and straws routinely provided?

Is there adequate wheelchair space (including turning circles) between tables where people eat or drink?

<p>During services</p> <p>Are booklet pages, and hymn numbers + first lines routinely announced?</p> <p>Are large print versions of ALL materials available to congregation routinely offered?</p> <p>Are pre-printouts of acetates made available for those who sit while others stand?</p> <p>Is Communion as <u>part of the Body of Christ</u> accessible to all at the same place?</p> <p>Are alternative media routinely used to complement the written word (e.g. drama, mime etc)?</p> <p>Are preaching, reading and intercessory prayer positions w/chair accessible?</p> <p>Are all those positions visible to lip-readers?</p> <p>Is there a PA system in the church?</p> <p>If yes, can an adequate number of people use it?</p> <p>If expensive equipment is kept locked for security, do enough people know where the key is kept?</p> <p>Do all speakers (including visiting speakers) routinely use mics?</p> <p>Does the system have a facility for audio-taping main services for ministry in the community (i.e. those who cannot get to church)?</p>		
<p>Miscellaneous</p> <p><i>The younger church</i></p> <p>Are Sunday School/junior church buildings accessible to children who use wheelchairs?</p> <p>Are the facilities accessible to Deaf or hard of hearing children?</p> <p>Are they accessible to blind or partially sighted children?</p> <p><i>Location of the font</i></p> <p>Does it block wheelchair access to part of the building?</p> <p>Are baptisms accessible to those who are seated (e.g. wheelchair-using parents or Godparents)?</p>		

Information

Are all notice boards situated at wheelchair height?

Do all posters/notices use an adequate size of print (min 14 point)?

Are notice boards adequately lit?

Is there a colour contrast to distinguish the notice board from the wall?

Are there named photographs of all in leadership or PCC positions?

Has the PCC placed a public commitment to Disability Discrimination Act principles on the notice board?

Is there a book library and/or leaflet racks or tables in the building?

If yes, are they accessible to wheelchair users?

Is there a general colour contrast in the buildings (e.g. light switches from walls, electrical sockets from walls, step edges from each other, door frames from walls, chairs from carpets, walls from floors etc)?

Is your church building/s of a complex design for people to find their way around?

If yes, has the PCC considered the use of direction-signing underfoot, audio-taped map etc?

Are all emergency or alternative exits w/chair accessible (even if only with help - e.g. steps)?

Are those exits clear and uncluttered?

Is there a clear policy for emergency evacuation, known by all in leadership?

Does the church building (or artifacts within it) constitute a tourist attraction?

If yes, are any explanatory notices displayed in large print with simple typeface, and also in Braille?

Are all guide booklets, historical information etc. printed in minimum of 12 point (sans serif)?

Are large-print copies available?

<p>Other areas and buildings</p> <p>Is there a Church Hall or other building of similar function?</p> <p>Are the approaches to church hall or other buildings wheelchair accessible?</p> <p>Do flights of two or more steps provide adequate handrails on both sides?</p> <p>Is there a general colour contrast in the church hall (e.g. light switches from walls, electrical sockets from walls, step edges from each other, door frames from walls, chairs from carpets, walls from floors etc)?</p> <p>Are electrical switches and sockets accessible to wheelchair users?</p> <p>Are wheelchair friendly toilet facilities accessible to users of the church hall?</p> <p>Is there an adequate (e.g. portable) audio loop system available for meetings?</p> <p>Is the PCC responsible for the maintenance of a graveyard?</p> <p>If yes, is there adequate wheelchair access to gravesides for funerals and later visits?</p> <p>Is there a Parish Office?</p> <p>If yes, is it accessible to wheelchair users?</p> <p>Is a test phone available for deaf people?</p> <p>Are times of availability clearly marked outside?</p>		
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What now?

1. Seek advice from your Diocesan office or local council and Disability and Access groups.
2. Outline a plan for action of the next five years and discuss with the PCC.