

Access Alliance

Registered Charity Number 1087696

Business Information Leaflet

In 2004 Building Regulations changed (available free on the Internet at www.odpm.gov.uk), in line with BS8300 – Design of Buildings and their approaches to meet the needs of Disabled People.

We would also like to bring to your attention the need to adjust interiors on refurbishment for disabled needs:

- Walls/ stanchions need to colour contrast with each other and the background as a Visually Impaired Person (VIP) will only see a flat plain of one colour if the walls etc. are of equal Colour. A Light Reflective Value of 30 is a minimum though the greater the better.
- Floor coverings needs to be of a suitable material not to restrict wheelchair movement and not to be of a design that is a heavy pattern or could appear as steps to a VIP. Likewise for those with a walking problem the floor surface does not want to be a trip hazard because they drag their feet.
- Any Reception Desk/Counter needs a lowered area so that a person in a wheelchair can see the receptionist/member of Staff, and vice versa, without difficulty.
- People in wheelchairs like to sit and enjoy a meal with their friends and relatives just the same as everyone else; therefore a seat at each table needs to be removable if fixed seating is used.
- For people with sight impairments the tables and chairs need to be colour contrasted to each other and the surroundings to be easily seen and not be a trip hazard. In some cases where lighting is poor (below CIBSE standards) additional table lighting may be required by those with sight impairments to see what they are eating.
- Any printed Information needs to be available in a minimum of 16 point Verdana Bold for VIP's but some people will like it larger – therefore we would like to suggest that the information is kept on computer and printed off at the size requested in text only, as due to their limited sight they will not be able to see any fancy artwork or logos. If a background logo etc is used it will combine with the text and they will be unable to read it. (see www.rnib.org.uk "See it Right" for more information).

- For those with learning disabilities a picture format should be used (see www.changepeople.co.uk for more information).
- For people who have a hearing aid a hearing loop is required. Using a portable loop will save the cost of installing a fixed one in the building, allowing it to be moved around as required.
- Those that have no hearing need British Sign Language, to communicate (see www.british-sign.co.uk or www.signstation.org for an alphabet card) then those that use sign language will help you and your staff to use signs for words as they appreciate the effort made.
- Audible Fire alarms need to have a visual alarm which can be seen throughout the building as deaf people will not hear the audible ones.
- Lighting in the building needs to, be to CISBE standards (www.cisbe.org) being bright without glare for VIP – too dim is like darkness to most and glare obscures what they can see.
- Glass panels, as with the outside of the building, need manifestations to show VIP that they are there so preventing being walked into.
- Doors need to be of a 1 metre clear opening to allow wheelchair access and can be of a single door or a door and a half design with colour contrasted handles that can be opened with a clenched fist from a wheelchair. Colour contrast of door and frame with the surroundings are also needed so a VIP can easily find the door. If a client with a disability of sight or learning needs to access a room without assistance coloured panels on the doors may be needed as they are easier to find as often with modern design and colouring all the doors in most buildings are the same size and colour so looking all the same.
- Signage. For those with sight problems signage needs to be large, positioned at average eye level embossed so it can be felt by those with no sight and easy to see from a wheelchair (details available in BS8300) with picture format for people with Learning Disabilities. Signage above a door will not be seen by a Visually Impaired Person as it is outside their focal vision and can cause the same difficulty for wheelchair users.
- Rooms in a building as well as the equipment need to be accessible to disabled people as well as able bodied ones.

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