

---

# Checklist

SCOTTISH  
MUSEUMS  
COUNCIL



## Improving access for blind or visually impaired visitors

---

Parts of this checklist should help you to improve access for blind or visually impaired staff, as well as visitors.

### Providing information and promotional material

- Have you thought about advertising your site through non-visual routes such as:
  - talking newspapers?
  - national tape magazines?
  - local radio or TV?
  - your telephone answer service?
- Does your website comply with web accessibility (WAI) guidelines? (See [www.w3.org/TR/WAI-WEBCONTENT](http://www.w3.org/TR/WAI-WEBCONTENT) for further information.)
- Is all your promotional material - such as leaflets or seasonal programmes - available in a variety of font sizes? (14 point is the minimum recommended by the RNIB, 16 point and above is considered 'large print'.)
- Does your written material provide a strong contrast between text and background? (Black on white or black on yellow are good options.)
- Is the layout of written material kept simple? (If you overcrowd a page with text or images it can be very difficult to read.)
- Do you offer information in braille? (Many organisations use a transcription agency for this but you can also buy in equipment.)

- If you have facilities for blind or visually impaired visitors, do you mention these in your promotional material?
- Do you provide clear guidelines about the location of your museum or gallery and transport links, to help with orientation?

### **Increasing access to the building or site**

- Have you got parking facilities for disabled visitors? If you do not have your own car park, what alternatives can you suggest?
- Is the entrance to the building or site clearly signposted, in large letters?
- Is there someone at reception trained to welcome blind or visually impaired visitors, check if they have any special requirements and explain the facilities on offer?
- Do you have staff available to lead blind or visually impaired visitors around the building or site?
- If you charge, do you allow free admission to a person assisting a blind or visually impaired person?
- Do you allow guide dogs on the premises? (You are not making “reasonable adjustments” if you refuse.)
- Have you taken advice on:
  - tactile surfaces to define potential hazards?
  - contrast strips on stairs and thresholds?
  - audible lift announcements?, etc.
- Is your internal signage and layout clear?
- Are your lighting levels adequate? (Although some of your collections may require low lighting, there is no reason why the rest of the building should be dimly lit.)

- Are your toilets clearly signposted and a short distance away from any display area? (No disabled person should have to travel further for 'special' facilities.)

## **Increasing access to exhibitions and collections**

- Do you offer guided tours designed for blind or visually impaired visitors?
- Do you have specially adapted audio guides? (These should include clear descriptions of the displays and orientation instructions.)
- Are there tactile objects – real or replica - available on display and/or by arrangement with your staff?
- Have your labels and text panels been adapted into a variety of formats (large print, braille, audio, etc)?
- Have you used contrasting colours or colour coding within your interpretation scheme, to aid orientation and understanding?
- Is your display clear and uncluttered? (Text over pictures can make reading difficult, for example.)
- Do you consult blind and visually impaired visitors about improvements to new and existing displays or other aspects of the museum or gallery? (You could also consult local disabled groups.)

## **Policies**

- Have blind and visually impaired people been considered as part of your access policy?
- Do you have a fire evacuation policy, which includes disabled people, as well as the able bodied? It may be difficult for blind or visually impaired people to locate exits easily in an emergency. (Your fire officer and local disabled groups can offer advice on this.)

## Recommended reading and contacts

It is only possible to give general pointers within this checklist. For more detailed information see “Access and the DDA Resources” and “Access and the DDA Contacts” on the SMC website.

Highly recommended: *Talking Images Guide – Museums, galleries and heritage sites: improving access for blind and partially sighted people* (RNIB and Vocaleyes, 2003), priced £9.95 from RNIB Customer Services – call 0845 702 3153.

December 2003

© Scottish Museums Council, 2003

County House 20/22 Torphichen Street Edinburgh EH3 8JB  
Tel 0131 229 7465 Fax 0131 229 2728  
E-mail [inform@scottishmuseums.org.uk](mailto:inform@scottishmuseums.org.uk)  
Web <http://www.scottishmuseums.org.uk>

A company limited by guarantee No. 74264, recognised as a charity No. SCO 15593