
Checklist

Improving access for visitors who are wheelchair users or have impaired mobility

SCOTTISH
MUSEUMS
COUNCIL



Parts of this checklist should help you to improve access for staff who are wheelchair users or have impaired mobility, as well as visitors.

Providing information and promotional material

- Do you provide clear guidelines about the location of your museum and transport links? (Bearing in mind that public transport can still be relatively inaccessible for wheelchairs.)
- Does the museum or gallery have its own transport scheme, to help address mobility problems? (Other sites may be able to advise you on their approach to this.)
- Is your website clear and informative and do you provide a mailing list? (These are likely to be particularly helpful resources for visitors with impaired mobility.)
- If you have facilities for visitors who are wheelchair users or have impaired mobility, do you mention these in your promotional material?

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?
- Can visitors in wheelchairs or with impaired mobility gain access to your building by the front door? (Often the disabled entrance is

at the back or side – e.g. the goods entrance - which can be humiliating for visitors.)

- Can a wheelchair user see over the top of your reception desk, to buy their ticket or make enquiries? (You might consider a multi-level counter, if you need to have one at all.)
- Is there someone at reception trained to welcome visitors in wheelchairs or with impaired mobility, check if they have any special requirements and explain the facilities on offer?
- Have you sought advice on:
 - ramps
 - handrails
 - accessible lifts
 - door widths
 - wheelchair accessible toilets, etc?
- If you charge, do you allow free admission to a person assisting someone in a wheelchair or with impaired mobility?
- Is there plenty of seating around the building or site, for those who might need to rest?
- 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.)
- Are all other areas of the building or site easily to access physically? If not, what alternatives have you investigated?

Increasing access to exhibitions and collections

- Does your interpretation scheme allow for the free movement of wheelchairs?
- Are your labels and text panels fixed at a height that can be read by wheelchair users or people sitting down?

- Do you take into account that some visitors cannot stand in one place for long periods? (You should bear this in mind for guided tours or audio displays.)
- Do you offer virtual tours or other alternatives (such as objects that can be moved and handled) where parts of the exhibition are physically inaccessible?
- Have you considered moving your special exhibitions and/or permanent collections around the building, to ensure that they can all be easily seen by regular visitors at different times of the year?
- Have you looked into offering remote access to collections via your website, for those who are unable to visit the site in person? (For instance SCRAN could help digitise and interpret certain elements of your collection.)
- Do you consult visitors in wheelchairs or with impaired mobility about improvements to new and existing displays or other areas of the museum or gallery? (You could also consult local disabled groups.)
- Do you offer an outreach service or travelling exhibition programme, so that people can enjoy the museum or gallery experience without having to travel so far?

Policies

- Have wheelchair users and people with impaired mobility 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? Normally accessible lifts may be unusable in the event of fire, as may certain other exit routes. (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 Resources: Access and the DDA and Contacts: Access and the DDA on the SMC website.

Highly recommended: *Exhibitions for All: A practical guide to designing inclusive exhibitions* (National Museums of Scotland, 2002), priced £5.00. This is very informative about physical access issues, but also addresses other areas of access.

December 2003

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