
Access for All Audit Policy

Policy Aims:

- The Circuit recognises that as a charitable organisation it has a legal duty under the Equalities Act 2010 to ensure that all Circuit buildings are accessible to all.
- The audit covers all types of disability, wheelchair users are the most obvious, but they make up less than 8% of all disabled people in the UK. Think about the other 92%, which includes fully ambulatory people as well as those with hearing, visual and mental impairments, pregnant mothers, people with pushchairs, the young and the elderly.
- An access audit should contain a thorough, yet concise description of accessibility, from initial arrival to departure.
- There should be one for each separate building.
- The access audit will seek to find solutions to identified problems, with recommendations and relative cost. Essential work will be that to comply with legislation or to remove major obstacles to access. They might be categorised further:
 - Those which are of a minor nature, or adjustments to practice or management at little or no cost
 - Those which can be provided as part of ongoing maintenance, refurbishment or redecoration.
 - Those which are major items which needs a specific budget.

Scope: Each Church to provide an Access Audit, and to be reviewed by the Church Council/Management Group annually. The audit needs to be record and store so that it can be used as a guide when planning any special services or changes to the buildings.

Definition:

An access audit is a description of a business' facilities and services to inform people with access needs and allow for a written, descriptive approach to providing a wide range of information on accessibility and differing needs. The audit does not need to be carried out by a professional as it can be done by a person with knowledge of the actual building and the relevant people who attend on a regular basis.

AUDIT: Use the following headings when conducting an access audit:

Introduction

- A brief introduction and should include what the building is: chapel, church, other, etc.
- Where it is situated; on a hill, or exposed place, in a noisy environment, city centre of countryside
- A brief description of the specialist facilities available such as disabled toilets, ramps, hearing loops, large text books, etc.

Pre-Arrival

- Public transport links, including bus and train, distance from the stops
- Type of pavement or journey from the stop to your building (pavement, exposed road, etc)
- Vehicle routes, busy roads, local authority travel schemes and local accessible taxi schemes Car Park
- Car park on site, on pavement or free
- Disabled, blue badge, local authority 'Brown Badge' places and if payment is required
- Type of surface from car park to entrance level or slopped, tarmac or gravel, firm or uneven
- Lighting in the car park area
- Intercom or buzzer for assistance
- Steps or level access to the entrance
- Provided ramps; temporary or permanent
- Entrance doors, width, weight, direction of opening, manual, automatic, revolving, if glass are they marked.

Entrance and Reception

- Where is this situated, and how is it accessed (level, ramp, lift, escalator?)
- Is the floor level, slopped or stepped? • Is seating available?
- Floor surface, if carpet, what type of pile?
- How is the area lit? Natural or artificial light (or combination), tube, spot and general lighting
- Bear in mind different light conditions at different times of the day, or year
- Height of any desks, counters, tables and bookshelves
- Written signs, provided in different languages, large print, etc.
- Assistance for carers
- Hearing loops
- Other items to assist supplied such as magnifying glass, pen and paper, wheelchair loan, volunteers

Main Space

- Type of seating, access to pews, separate seating areas, chair availability, temporary requirements
- Internal doors, width and weight
- Corridor widths
- Wheelchair areas
- Floor surface
- Position of sunlight through windows
- View of main participants
- Means of interpretation; audio guide, subtitles, area colours, hearing loop
- Books in large print, Braille, pictograms or translations
- Use of music and any flashing lights
- Acoustics
- Lighting of any displays and general lighting

Toilet Areas

- Public facilities and location, inc. disabled toilets
- Separate male/female • Disabled facilities, RADAR keys
- Steps, ramps to WCs, any lift or escalator
- Width of doors to the WCs, do they open out or in
- Wheelchair or mobility aid access
- Space to side of WC for mobility aid, how wide
- Grab rails provided, fixed or drop
- Height of the WC Pan from floor to seat
- Alert for emergencies, who will respond, type of alert mechanism (ie red cord)
- Lighting
- Floor surface
- Height of sinks, hand drying facilities, type of taps on sinks

Grounds and gardens

- Describe any grounds, including burial grounds to which people have access, including the width of entrances
- Are these areas flat, undulating or sloped
- Width and surface of the footpaths
- Available seating
- Proximity to other necessary facilities

Means of Escape

- Emergency exit routes • Alarms including flashing repeaters
- Refuges and 'evac' chairs for upper floors
- Evacuation provisions including any Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans

Additional Information

- Disability training given to staff and volunteers
- Welcoming of assistance dogs, any facilities provided for these animals
- Describe signage
- Power points for charging of electrical mobility aids

If the audit identifies any deficiencies that need to be addressed then Churches may need to make an action plan to have a correction made. It is incumbent on us to make 'reasonable adjustments' as a result of the audit. However, this is not compulsory, but reasonable. As an example, you wouldn't need to remove all the pews to put in chairs to allow wheelchair access, when the congregation is small, the numbers of wheelchair users are small and removing or moving one or two pews would allow the wheelchairs to fit. If you had a level entrance to the side of a building, but steps to the front, a reasonable adjustment would be to make the side the disabled entrance and exit, but it would then be unreasonable to leave that door with a gravel or dirt path.

Further Information:

Can be found at: www.methodist.org.uk/media/868121/participants_sheets.pdf

Signed: (*Superintendent Minister*)

Dated:

Date for review: February Circuit Meeting