

Access Statement Guidelines

What is an Access Statement?

In a nutshell, an Access Statement is a document containing information about accessibility within an establishment. In other words, it describes to what extent your attraction is accessible.

Whether you are fully accessible or have severe access limitations, an Access Statement is an essential document to have so that potential visitors with access needs will know exactly what to expect when visiting your attraction.

Key considerations

The two most important things to keep in mind when writing an Access Statement are **precision** and **detail**. It is important that the explanation provided should be accurate and highly descriptive so that potential visitors may formulate a clear picture of what to expect.

Access Statements must also be exhaustive. An Access Statement which only lists the available access-related facilities is not complete – any access deficiencies must also be noted. These two components are equally important.

Structure

It is recommended that the Access Statement is divided into different sections in order to be easy to follow.

One option is to structure it according to the type of disability being addressed. A common mistake when compiling access information is to focus solely on wheelchair access. Remember that there are many people with mobility problems who are not wheelchair users. This is particularly common among the elderly. Pregnant women and visitors with young children also have their own particular access needs, as do people with hearing and vision impairments. Finally, remember to address the needs of people with intellectual disabilities; while they may not be the ones reading the access statement, the person accompanying them to the attraction will find the information useful.

Alternatively you may choose to structure your Access Statement according to the sequence of the visitor experience (i.e. getting to the attraction, reception area, main attraction area, any retail and catering outlets, etc.).

Access to your Access Statement

After compiling all the necessary information and creating your Access Statement, remember that your Access Statement too has to be accessible!

Make sure it is available on your website and in an accessible format. You may also wish to print an easy-to-read hard copy and possibly have a copy also in Braille.

Items to include

Following are some suggested ideas you can consider including in your Access Statement.

PRE-ARRIVAL SERVICES & INFO

- Availability of promotional material which is suitable for people with a disability (e.g. large text, Braille, tactile, audio, etc.); from where can these be obtained?
- Availability of in-house or external equipment hire services (e.g. wheelchairs and pushchairs)
- Availability of fridges for storing medications or special dietary foods
- Details of any relevant policies (e.g. whether guide dogs are allowed, any concessions for carers, etc.)
- Are water bowls, food, etc. provided for guide dogs?
- Are there any specific restrictions to enter or use the facilities (e.g. certain medical conditions, height restrictions, etc.)?

TRANSPORT

- Information about public transport, including distance of closest bus stop
- Information about accessible transport (buses, taxis, etc.) and how these can be booked
- Availability of shuttle service or collection service for visitors
- What type of parking is available? (public or private car park, street parking, etc.)
- Are there allocated parking spaces for visitors with a disability? Can parking spaces be reserved?
- Is there rear access to a vehicle once it is parked?
- Describe the type of surface (flat, smooth, rough, paving, gravel, tarmac, etc.), the type of signage (is it clear, tactile, Braille, pictorial?) and any barriers to entering the parking area.
- How far is the parking area from the attraction? Describe the route in terms of surface, lighting, pathways, steps or ramps, handrails, resting places, whether visitors can be assisted by staff, etc.

INSIDE THE BUILDING

- Is the main entrance accessible? If not, is there an alternative entrance and is there signage to direct visitors?
- Describe the entrance – type of door (revolving, automatic, assisted, glass, etc.), any steps or ramps, details of any barriers (e.g. ticket machine), can visitors be assisted by staff?
- Describe the reception area – type of desk/counter, is seating available, etc.
- How many floors are open to the public? How are these accessible (lifts, escalators, stairs)?

- If some areas are not accessible, what facilities/services are situated there?
- Is there an induction loop system installed? Describe location/s.
- Types of public telephones available
- Type of fire alarm (solely auditory or also visual?) and evacuation procedure
- Describe the signage used within the attraction (is it clear, tactile, Braille, pictorial?)
- Describe the lighting – is it uniform, dim or bright, natural, use of spotlights?
- Describe the flooring – is it level (smooth) throughout the attraction?
- Details of any steps, ramps, aisles, corridors, etc.
- Availability and description of handrails (location, texture, colour, height, etc.)
- Is there contrast in colour between critical surfaces (e.g. door frames)?
- Is seating provided throughout the attraction, especially in areas where waiting is expected?
- Are there any particular known hazards? (e.g. slippery surfaces, low ceilings, etc.)

EXHIBITS & INTERPRETATION

- List all formats in which interpretation is offered
- Describe each format (text size on printed material, subtitles on audio-visual shows, etc.)
- Are specialised forms of interpretation available (e.g. Braille, sign language, easy-to-read versions of printed material, etc.)? Must these be pre-booked?
- If any of the staff are trained in sign language, specify in which languages.
- Are there any restrictions / obstacles to viewing the exhibits? (e.g. height restrictions, distance, platforms, etc.)

TOILETS

- Location within the property, especially the accessible toilet.
- Is the route accessible? (type of flooring, width, signage, etc.)
- Describe the bathroom / cubicle – dimensions (free floor space), flooring, types of doors, types of rails, height of toilet seat, seat adjuster, basin height, basin under-space, tap design, height of coat hooks, is there an emergency pull cord?
- Is there an adult size changing table or baby changing facilities? Are the facilities unisex?

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR CATERING OUTLETS

- Location within the property
- Describe the seating and tables – are they fixed or moveable, stability, height, do chairs have arms, etc.
- Describe the menu – font type and size, availability in Braille, etc.
- Is there waiter service, counter service or self-service?
- Does the outlet cater for people with allergies or special dietary needs?
- Is there colour contrasting (including crockery and glassware)?
- Are thick handled cutlery available?

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR RETAIL OUTLETS

- Location within the property
- What is the counter height?
- Are the prices clear? At what height are they displayed?

FUTURE PLANS

- Include any plans you may have as regards alterations to the building, changes in services and facilities offered, purchases of equipment, etc.
- Where possible, the expected date of completion should also be provided.