

An open welcome

Why being accessible is good for your pub



A message from Baroness Tanni Grey Thompson DBE

Why 2012 is the year for pubs to get it right with accessibility

2012 is a huge year for many reasons. Not only is the UK hosting 'the greatest show on earth' with the two biggest sporting events on the planet – the Olympics and the Paralympics – but we will also be playing host to many visitors who will be coming over to experience our cultural activities, visit our vibrant cities and beautiful countryside, as well as enjoy the hospitality of our world famous pubs.

With visitors coming from all over the world, there has never been such a good time for the Great British Pub to capitalise on its reputation as the home of hospitality and be as accessible as possible to all.

Additionally, with a £2 billion per year market in accessible tourism at stake, there is a huge incentive for pubs and other tourism businesses to make changes now to capitalise on this incredible opportunity. Pubs are one of the top places that visitors to the UK love to visit – let's make sure that all visitors can enjoy them.

I am delighted that the British Beer & Pub Association is publishing this booklet to showcase best practice and give pubs advice on easy changes that they can make, but which can make such a huge difference to customers. As some of the examples here demonstrate, changes don't have to be expensive or complicated, and often some excellent customer service from staff goes a long way.

I am calling on all pubs to grab this opportunity with both hands. Be inspired by the tips and examples of best practice in this booklet and see what you can do, because if there is one specific and tangible legacy that this year's Olympics and Paralympics can leave behind, it is one of access and inclusion for all.



**Tanni Grey Thompson
DBE**

Pubs at the heart of hospitality

Prized for their warm welcome and excellent service, pubs are the home of hospitality in the UK. Whether you are after a quiet drink, a meal, quiz night or an evening of live music, the pub offers so much to its community.

Most pubs are small businesses. They are sometimes restricted in what they can do to adapt old or listed buildings. Yet pubs have been finding creative ways to ensure that all visitors can enjoy this uniquely British institution.

Why become accessible?

Pubs already have many customers with access needs – even if they do not realise it.

Think about the extended family group – from grandparents to young children – having a reunion. The older couple celebrating an anniversary. The family with a young child who is a wheelchair user. The group of friends with one using crutches.

How easy is it for them to enter and enjoy your pub? Can they negotiate the furniture easily and find their way around? Can they read the menu?

Accessibility is about making it easier for everybody to visit.



Easy access is good for business

Recent research from VisitEngland shows a compelling business case for making our tourism industry more accessible:

- Over one quarter (27%) of the UK population have a long-standing health problem or disability
- Attracting the business of someone with access needs attracts the spend of their entire party
- In 2009, UK residents with a health condition or impairment and their travelling party spent almost £2 billion on overnight trips in England
- By 2025 more than a third of the UK's population will be over the age of 55 – older people benefit from accessibility as well
- Tourism businesses often report that people with access needs are a very loyal market and tend to come back regularly

- Accessible tourism is in demand – the need for accessible accommodation outstrips the current supply
- Accessibility is a broader issue than you might think. Many disabilities, such as learning disabilities and hearing loss, are not visible. Many other groups such as families with push chairs, elderly people and those with temporary impairments will benefit from improved accessibility.

For further information about the business case for improving accessibility see the VisitEngland website: www.visitengland.org/access

“It is more important than ever that tourism businesses in England are able to give disabled visitors the best and most memorable visitor experience possible.”

James Berresford
Chief Executive, VisitEngland



Understanding the Equality Act

The Equality Act 2010 forms the basis of the obligations that service providers are under. While improving accessibility is a business opportunity, there are key legal obligations in the legislation:

The Act makes it against the law to discriminate against someone with a disability and also puts an obligation on an employer or service provider to make 'reasonable adjustments' to accommodate someone with a disability.

What is reasonable will depend on the circumstances, including the cost of the adjustment – so this will not always mean changes which would be too costly or not possible in an older building.

Reasonable adjustments can include changing practice and policies, such as providing additional service from staff or menus in a large print format.

Service providers should also take reasonable steps to find out whether someone is disabled, such as asking if anyone in the party has any access needs.

“Over one quarter (27%) of the UK population have a long-standing health problem or disability.”

What is discrimination?

Direct discrimination – treating a disabled person less favourably than a non-disabled person.

Discrimination arising from disability – when an employer treats a disabled person less favourably than a non-disabled person for a reason relating to their disability.

Discrimination by association – when a person is treated less favourably because of their association with a disabled person.

Victimisation – when a disabled person is treated less favourably because they have exercised rights under the Equality Act or assisted someone else in doing so.

Harassment – any form of unwanted/unwelcome behaviour that has the effect of violating the disabled person's dignity or creating an intimidating or offensive environment.

More detailed guidance on the Equality Act is available on the BBPA website: www.beerandpub.com/access



A
GREAT SELECTION
of
Regional
HAND-PULLED
ALES

The reception has double entry doors with a ramp leading the pub and restaurant

An

Pub case study

J W Lees – The Huntsman Inn, Holmfirth, West Yorkshire

The Huntsman is situated above Saddleworth Moor on the edge of the Pennines. Whilst always welcoming of customers with disabilities the pub has recently undergone a programme of work to improve facilities and make them more accessible.

The pub is now getting a reputation for having good facilities but also for very friendly and helpful staff. This has brought in a considerable amount of business both from individual customers and carers and from different associations bringing in clients.

The pub has a cosy bar and restaurant serving home cooked pub food, fifteen 4-star rated bedrooms, a function room with capacity for 150 people and a garden with views out over the stunning local landscape.

The Huntsman has introduced wet room bathrooms with seats and grab rails to help customers with access needs. The reception has double entry doors with a ramp leading to the pub and restaurant and the function room can be accessed directly. There is also a large disabled toilet with full facilities.

All staff at the Huntsman are regularly briefed on how to assist disabled customers and make them feel as welcome as possible. If a customer is in a wheelchair, staff will ensure that a chair has already been removed from the table when they arrive for a booking, so no excess attention is drawn.

Staff at the Huntsman always ask customers if they need assistance. They accommodate them as they would any other customer, with a warm welcome and great service. The Huntsman also benefited a lot from advice from customers. This was the best way to find out what customers need to enjoy the pub.



The Huntsman Inn exterior, West Yorkshire



The wet room with seat and grab rail

www.the-huntsman-inn.com
www.jwlees.co.uk

“On behalf of Tourism for All UK and myself, I would like to extend a warm welcome for the publication of this guidance. As an information service, Tourism for All UK is aware of the increasing numbers of disabled people who are travelling, usually with a companion or family group, as more accommodation and places accessible to visit are becoming available.

However, as I know from personal experience, finding somewhere to go for a quiet meeting or a meal remains a major headache – even though as a former regional tourist board chairman I know more about places than others, I am still pressed to think of pubs I could recommend. And so often, a tiny improvement or a helpful staff member could make all the difference.

Do take the advice in this booklet – and let us at Tourism for All know that you are open to business for all!”

Sir William Lawrence,
Chairman of Tourism for All UK

Access – informing your customers

Why have an access statement?

Anyone running a pub business can and should create an access statement. Providing customers with this information is a positive move and could reap significant business benefits.

An access statement is a description (written and/or pictorial) of your facilities and services. It can be made available on your website for customers, and also in your pub, for staff to use. It helps inform customers with specific access needs about what to expect and allows each visitor to make an informed decision as to whether your pub meets their particular access needs.

Your access statement can be a valuable marketing tool to tap into what is estimated to be a £2 billion a year market. Around one in five people in the UK have a disability and

many others such as parents with pushchairs have additional access needs. Creating one can also be an excellent way to get your staff thinking about customer service and accessibility, making them prepared to assist those that need it.

Most customers with access needs will make the decision to visit before they come to your premises. If they have access needs and they're not confident they will be met, they probably won't risk a visit.

There is a full guide, 'Why an access statement will make a real difference for your pub' on the BBPA website – www.beerandpub.com/access

You can create your own access statement through the online tool accessed via the VisitEngland website www.visitengland.org/accesstatements



Pub case study

Mitchells & Butlers – O'Neill's, Preston

Introducing bespoke bar runners with simple sign language has been a big hit with staff and customers at O'Neill's in Preston.

The pub worked with Olusegun Babatunde who runs the company 'YouMeSign' to produce the bar runners to assist staff to communicate and understand deaf customers when they were ordering.

Around 800,000 people in the UK are severely or profoundly deaf. Many of these people will use British Sign Language (BSL) to communicate.

Olusegun was a regular at his local O'Neill's. However, as a profoundly deaf person he often struggled to communicate effectively with bar staff who did not know sign language and therefore often misinterpreted his order or charged him incorrectly.

As he had done a graphic design degree at University, Olusegun came up with an idea to produce materials with simple sign language so that both staff and customers could understand each other.

Through meetings with the manager of his local pub and researching other pubs in the area he developed template bar runners with the BSL symbols, which could then be branded to fit into any pub.

The products have since been used in Preston O'Neill's and a number of other pubs in the local area (see picture below).

O'Neill's staff find the product innovative, fun and accessible. It builds up a basic knowledge of sign language and helps to overcome some of the communication barriers that deaf customers might encounter in a pub when ordering.

www.youmesign.co.uk/
www.mbplc.com/

“Pubs can tap into a £2 billion market by not only improving their facilities, but making information available on their accessibility, and offering excellent customer service to people with access needs.”

James Berresford
Chief Executive, VisitEngland



The bar runner designed by Olusegun Babatunde for use in O'Neill's pubs



Getting the order right
is made easier for
customer and staff alike

Staff training – key to access success

Great customer service is crucial for pubs. When it comes to welcoming those with access needs it has never been more important. Whilst pubs sometimes struggle to make major physical changes to their premises, if staff are warm, welcoming and helpful this can go a long way to help people have a great experience when they visit a pub.

Staff need to have the confidence and knowledge to meet the needs of disabled customers. Just as you would train your staff in food safety, cellar safety and beer quality, accessibility training can be an invaluable way to give staff the skills to enable them to be prepared for any situation and respond to any specific customer needs.

There are several organisations offering training on access and disability for staff. VisitEngland has teamed up with DisabledGo to provide a high quality online training programme. Tourism for All also offers a comprehensive package of training which is free for members or available to purchase for non-members.

For more information see:
[www.disabledgo.com/
tourismtraining](http://www.disabledgo.com/tourismtraining)

[www.tourismforall.org.uk/
About-TFA-Training.html](http://www.tourismforall.org.uk/About-TFA-Training.html)



Quick checklist

Improving accessibility in your pub

The following tips are low cost but can help make a big difference:

- Ensure staff are well trained to respond to those with access needs and help out where possible – this can often avert any potential problems or issues
- Think about contacting your local council to request a dropped curb outside the pub to assist customer entry
- Where possible ensure that access to the pub is level, such as through use of ramps
- Try to ensure that doors are as easy to open as possible or think about fixing open heavy or stiff internal doors
- Try to make sure that menus and drinks' lists are clear and easy to read or have large print menus available for customers – alternatively encourage staff to read out menus to those who need it
- Signpost different areas as clearly as possible, particularly accessible toilets
- Try to use contrasting colours where possible on signs and when laying tables to make things easier for those with visual impairments
- Train staff to assist those who might find it difficult to get to the bar by serving at tables
- Consider whether it might be possible to move the furniture to assist people in getting to the bar or toilets
- Think about installing grab rails on difficult stairs and steps, and in toilets
- Consider installing a hearing loop for those with hearing impairments
- Think about incorporating accessible adjustments into planned future refurbishments as this will reduce cost in the long run
- Talk to your customers to see what changes would make things easier for them and incorporate these if possible.

You can find more ideas on low cost ways to improve accessibility on the VisitEngland website www.visitengland.org/access



Staff at the Duke of York
read out the menu and
explain the chalk boards

SPICED CHICKEN
PORK BELL
& ORIENTAL
TART. CUSTOM
MOUSSE. C
COQUATE

Pub case study

Shepherd Neame – The Duke of York, Borough, London

Excellent customer service has been central to licensee Lorraine Hart's goal to make the Duke of York accessible to all. The 19th century Shepherd Neame pub, located near to Borough Market, attracts a range of loyal customers including office and trade workers and students from the nearby London South Bank University.

The pub ethos is that the right staff attitude can make a real difference to the customer's experience. "We talk to our staff about making customers feel welcome," says Lorraine. "We say, put yourself in their place; what would you think, how would you feel?"

They offer table service for customers who can't move easily around the bar area.

Staff also read out the menu and explain the chalk boards so that everyone has the same pleasant experience whether or not they can make it up to the bar.

There is a tiny step at the entrance, but otherwise physical access to the pub is good. Inside the bar, there are no stairs, no little steps, no nooks and crannies. There is also a fully equipped accessible toilet and staff keep a regular check to make sure the entrance to the toilet is kept clear at all times.

Lorraine's top tip: "Make sure staff are well trained. Even if access within your business isn't 100 per cent, you can overcome that if your staff are geared up and ready to assist."

www.shepherdneame.co.uk/pub/borough/duke-of-york



The Duke of York's outdoor seating area

“Make sure staff are well trained. Even if access within your business isn't 100 per cent, you can overcome that if your staff are geared up and ready to assist.”

Lorraine Hart
The Duke of York's licensee

Other useful publications and more information

'At Your Service'

VisitEngland booklet on the business case for improving accessibility

www.visitengland.org/access

'Easy does it'

VisitEngland booklet on low cost ways to improve accessibility

www.visitengland.com/easydoesit

For more information:

British Beer & Pub Association

www.beerandpub.com/access

VisitEngland

www.visitengland.org/access

Tourism for All

www.tourismforall.org.uk/

Access New Business

www.accessnewbusiness.co.uk

Disabled Go

www.disabledgo.com/

Please contact us if you would like a copy of this booklet in large print/plaintext.

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