

Download

The internet provides a wealth of information

www.throughtheroof.org

Good advice and resources on many aspects of church and accessibility available to purchase online.

www.cae.org.uk

Centre for Accessibility Environments can help organisations meet the Disability Discrimination Act through consultancy and training.

www.equalityhumanrights.com

The Equality and Human Rights Commission was set up in October 2007 to replace the Disability Rights Commission. It contains much information and advice on disability discrimination such as employment of and working with people with disabilities.

The Equality Act: There is much information available on the internet. The webpage at www.gov.uk/government/publications/equality-act-guidance provides a series of pdf documents on various aspects of the Equality Act.

www.accessministries.org.uk

Access Ministries encourages and equips the Church to make Jesus Christ accessible to people with a spiritual, physical, mental or emotional disability.

www.gloucester.anglican.org

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DIOCESAN CHAPLAIN
AMONG DEAF AND
HARD OF HEARING PEOPLE

Access for People with Disabilities

An **A B C D**



A Access and attitude

Accessing buildings

Ramps and handrails are an important consideration. Unassisted wheelchair users will have different needs to pushed wheelchairs, so think about the slope. Some will simply need a handrail to assist them. Talk to the DAC if you are considering installing any ramps or handrails as this work may need a faculty.

Sound systems and induction loops

Use radio microphones where possible – UHF is very popular but check if your chosen frequencies require a licence. VHF may be preferable in churches with many pillars. Estimate the number of microphones needed, allow for a couple more as well as a CD or MP3 player. Speakers - bigger isn't always better. Column speakers may be necessary in a few churches. A qualified installer will advise. Ensure an induction loop covers the entire church, including the sanctuary. Don't skimp on quality, train a small team to use it and a good system will serve you well for many years. Talk with the DAC early if you are considering installing a new sound system as this work will need a faculty.

Good lighting

Entrance and exit clearly identified. Lectern and pulpit evenly lit, avoiding shadows cast across the face wherever possible - this will help the reader appear more natural and greatly aid the people who rely on lip reading.

Notices and information

Use larger sizes, 16pt or above if necessary. Where possible print on pastel coloured paper such as cream, pale green or pale blue. Use plain fonts like this one (Gill Sans) and others such as Arial, Basic Sans, Arial, Calibri and Tahoma. Include the Bible readings or an outline of readings and perhaps a commentary on readings and sermon notes.

Training

Train all appropriate people, for example, sidespeople, worship leaders, PCC members, to be aware of different needs that people may have, such as accessing the building, finding the place in the books, getting to and from the communion rail and getting to coffee or the toilet after the service. It's also important that people are made aware of how to exit the building safely, should the need arise.

B Belonging

Let everyone know what's going on

Keep in touch with church members unable to attend services; help them maintain contact and still feel they belong. Make sure newsletters, parish magazines and other information is taken to those who can't get to church. Record services if possible, for people to see and listen to. Be aware of confidentiality and copyright where appropriate.

Inform and involve all the community

Inform church members and other interested parties of any access work to be done. Work *with* rather than just *for* people eg ask a person with a hearing loss about the quality of an induction loop system, ask people with sight loss where lighting needs to be more effective. Invite any who have stopped coming to church because of poor access to consider the improvements.

C Communicate

Make a portfolio of all work you intend to do showing 'priority', 'mid-term' or 'long term' work. Show that you have identified areas to improve and the range of options you are considering to make these improvements. Flag up achievements - praise yourselves where it's due. Have the portfolio available to anyone who wishes to praise or challenge your efforts towards good access. Let it be a motivation, not a burden.

Help from the Diocesan Advisory Committee

Contact the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) before planning any work. They will advise whether or not formal permissions are necessary. The DAC can point to other churches in similar situations and what has worked for them, helping you to clarify your own ideas. This may well help you save time, effort and money too.