

Other practical things

There are many other resources on the internet offering a basic common sense approach to the whole idea of accessibility. You may wish to consider a simple DIY appraisal of your church premises or even a professional accessibility audit.

The Diocesan Advisory Committee should be involved in planning and carrying out works from the outset. They have the expertise and skills to give the best advice and guidance.

In the end...

It's all about having a concern for everyone. The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) should be seen as a catalyst that motivates us to look beyond ourselves and to be prepared to welcome everyone.

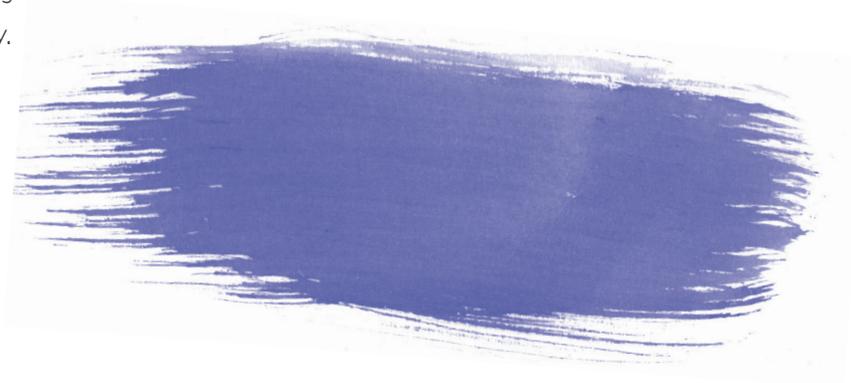
Being motivated by the law in one thing; but we should be motivated by the love of God in our hearts. It's about our minds being focused and our hearts reaching out in practical love and service. Then many more people can have access to the good news of Jesus. The DDA is an opportunity for discipleship and mission. It's both a duty and a joy.

The Revd Steve Morris
Chaplain among Deaf and Disabled People
5, Chaceley Close, Quedgeley,
Gloucester GL2 4WW
01452 720985 or 07580 243330 (text)
smorris@glosdioc.org.uk



Its our duty and our joy

THE DISABILITY
DISCRIMINATION ACT:
SOME BASIC CONSIDERATIONS



Key Elements

Since December 1996 it has been unlawful for service providers to treat people with disability less favourably for a reason related to their disability.

Since October 1999 service providers have been required to make 'reasonable adjustments' for people with disabilities, such as providing extra help or making changes to the way they provide their services.

Since October 2004 service providers have had to make 'reasonable adjustments' to the physical features of their premises to overcome physical barriers to access.

What does this mean in practice?

Where something on the premises make it impossible or difficult for people with disabilities to have access you must take reasonable action.

You might do one or more of these:

- provide a reasonable alternative way of accessing your facilities.
- provide means of avoiding the feature.
- alter the feature so that it is no longer a barrier to access. This should only be considered after the previous options have been exhausted and may require a faculty.
- remove the feature. This should only be considered after all the previous options have been exhausted and is likely to require a faculty.

What more must we know and do?

It is unlawful to discriminate against people with disability. Each parish should have a positive policy of including people with disabilities in all activities.

Tell people about your policy and monitor it.

Identify areas of your buildings that need attention and create a list of options that you might consider to address them.

Ensure that appropriate people have disability training. Liaise with people with disabilities and organisations when making decisions that affect them.

Review your policy and practice on a regular basis to ensure that your premises are accessible and that people with disabilities can maintain their dignity and their respect when using them.

Who are people with disabilities?

Amongst them are children and adults with

- mobility impairment
- visual impairment
- hearing impairment
- learning disabilities
- mental illness
- speech difficulties
- facial disfigurement
- dyslexia
- epilepsy