

Accessibility Toolkit

How to welcome all visitors

Visit **County Durham**

More than **1 in 6** people in England and Wales have an 'activity limiting' health problem or disability

Why is being accessible so important?

430,000 British adults with an impairment did not take a domestic trip in the last 12 months due to the lack of provision.

If each one had taken a trip this would have created **£116.7m** in extra domestic tourism spending.

People from this market are more likely to take longer trips and are very loyal to places that meet their requirements.



The Purple Pound – the spending power of disabled people and their families.



Case study

Mellwaters Barn Cottages, Bowes

With first-hand experience of the requirement for accessibility friendly accommodation, Mellwaters Barn have been a member of Visit England's Accessibility Scheme for a number of years.

Despite the fact that the cottages were designed by a wheelchair user who understands the problems of accessibility, not all guests require the cottages to be fully accessible and therefore they ensure that a balance is made between those who do and those who do not require additional equipment during their stay and have made much of the equipment mobile.

The access to the cottages is exceptionally good and the purpose built footpaths make the farm accessible too so that everyone visiting can enjoy the magnificent views.

To ensure that potential guests are fully aware of the equipment and features of the cottage they have an extensive overview on their website as well as highlighting the national accessibility scheme award. They provide a number of aids free of charge including mobile hoists and shower chairs.

The owners endeavour to update the information they have by visiting local attractions to keep up to date with accessibility which they can then pass onto their guests.



**Good experience
= return visitors**



Writing an accessibility guide

The guide replaces the former access statement and enables visitors to make informed decisions in relation to individual requirements. The guide allows a business to communicate their facilities and services to disabled people and other customers who want specific accessibility information, such as older travellers and families with young children. Putting your accessibility guide on your website makes it easier for prospective visitors to find out key information they may need.

Case study

Beamish Museum

The ethos of Beamish Museum is to bring history to life for all visitors.

The nature of the large open air museum with many historic buildings, means it is not completely accessible to visitors. An access booklet is provided online and at the museum, outlining all facilities that are provided and accessible routes around the site. Where possible, they have photographs and information that can be viewed by visitors unable to access an exhibit. There is also a period-style accessible bus, so all visitors can enjoy a heritage transport experience. They provide wheelchair hire, hearing aid induction loops and adult changing facilities.

As well as having a number of staff who have been trained as dementia friends, the museum have also signed up to the autism charter to ensure that they can be accessible across society.



How to become more inclusive

1. Produce an accessibility guide which includes a description of facilities and services, in order that visits can be planned in advance.
2. Provide an access for all section on your website including a virtual tour of facilities which can help in the decision making process.
3. Invest in staff training and consider appointing accessibility ambassadors.
4. Familiarise yourself with other businesses in the tourism sector, to support cross selling.
5. Ensure you have up to date information about facilities and accessibility of local amenities, such as shop mobility schemes.

For more information:

- www.visitbritain.org/business-advice/make-your-business-accessible
- www.durhamshopmobility.co.uk/
- www.accessibilityguides.org