

Access all Areas
Diversity Group Conference 9th June 2008

Workshop: Disability Audits of Libraries – Presentation

Accessibility – equality of treatment and opportunity for everyone regardless of their ability or background. An inclusive environment that values diversity.

Disability - limitation of opportunity to individuals by external and environmental factors. The marginalisation of people from the mainstream.

Models of disability

Medical Disabled people seen as a problem and a burden, needing care and support and as having little value to society. Power is in the hands of the medical profession.

Social Disability seen as limiting opportunity because of environment and society . The model relies on political will and legislation to bring change. It seeks to empower the disabled community rather than the individual.

Representational – this incorporates elements of the medical and social Models. It identifies the limitations based on individuals by the labels placed upon them. It recognises individuals specific needs, experiences and values. The model empowers the individual

Definition: Access Audit

A review of policies, procedures and practices in order to establish the current position of the organisation and gauge the level of compliance with legislation.

Physical audit evaluates the physical environment both within and outside premises.

Web audit – measures the effectiveness of information and access to services provided against established access protocols.

Service audit – assesses the perceptions and experiences of disabled people and staff in all areas of service delivery and evaluates policies, procedures and practices

Disability Discrimination Act 2004 access to goods and services

The DDA requires service providers to anticipate demand and need for their services. Inclusive design anticipates demand and need from the start of the design process. This tends to be more cost effective than incorporating alterations at a later date.

Approved Document M lays down minimum parameters for compliance in respect of physical access only. Approved Document M also recommends the use of Access Statements. New builds are required to comply with Approved Part M building Regulations. Extensions and major alterations to existing non-domestic buildings are also covered by the document.

Changes of use to a building or part of it to a dwelling or flat where previously there was none, hotel/boarding house, institution, public building or a shop are also covered.

It is complementary to **BS8300:2001** but it is not as comprehensive. In some cases Approved Document M contradicts good practice found in BS8300.

A **PEEP** is a Personal Emergency Egress Plan

Carrying out a physical audit – what do you look for?

1. Approach to building
2. Entrance(s)
3. Lighting
4. Floor covering
5. Wall finish
6. Internal doors
7. Stairs
8. Lifts
9. Acoustics
10. Ventilation
11. Assistance dogs
12. Reception desk
13. Furniture
14. Signage
15. Toilets
16. Fire exits
17. Staff facilities

Access to information

Printed documents should be clear type, minimum of 12pt, use Plain English and on matt paper. RNIB produces Clear Print Guidelines

Spoken communication is down to staff training and awareness – but also sometimes position of desks etc don't help

Telephone – Typetalks or Texpone alternative should be available

Internet

Ideally

- web accessibility strategy incorporating a development plan for improvements that is published on the web site.
- comprehensive contact details
- provision of information on the site available in alternative media on request
- contents on the pages that are not in html or another open and accessible standard language are available in alternative formats
- all new layout tables are linearised so that they are correctly read by accessibility software
- identification of the primary natural language of a document
- all pages using layout tables should be linearised
- foreground and background colour combinations, for both images and text, provide sufficient contrast for people who have difficulty recognising specific colours and/ or tones when viewed on a black and white screen
- provide user choice when opening pop ups
- links to other websites should be checked regularly to ensure the link is still live

Service delivery

Staff awareness

Staff training

Consultation with people with disabilities – existing customers as well as non-customers

Consultation with staff

Monitoring and reviewing policies, procedures and practices

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