



## **Creating an accessibility area on your website**

If you have a website, you should include information about accessibility. This should be on your Facebook page as well.

The 'A Church Near You' site also gives you the opportunity to include some access information – step free, accessible toilets, hearing loop etc.

Visit: <https://www.achurchnearyou.com>

You could also provide access information for the 'See around Britain' website. This has pictures and access information for a growing number of public buildings across the UK.

<https://seearoundbritain.com/>

You could also explore the services offered by AccessAble. These include carrying out an inspection and audit of your building and including this in a growing data base of access information for UK public buildings and spaces. You could then link to this information from your website. (There is a fee for AccessAble services)

<https://www.accessable.co.uk/>

This information will help disabled people judge whether your building and its facilities meet the access standards they require and whether you are offering resources and an environment that supports people with sensory impairments or who are neurodivergent.

You need to be open and honest about your building and what you offer. It is far better for a disabled person to know about any challenges to access that they might encounter before they attend, rather than being frustrated and find they are excluded or marginalised when they do.

It would be helpful for many disabled people if you could publish the liturgy and hymn/song words you will use for a service in downloadable form on your website 48 or 24 hours before the service. This will enable blind people to produce braille, audio prompts or a large print display on a tablet. Those who are Deaf or hard of hearing can familiarise themselves with the words to aid lip-reading or to make signing/interpretation easier for helpers. Those with a reading disability can familiarise themselves with the service so they can more confidently take part.

Those who are neurodivergent can also know what will be in the service to enable them to process the experience more easily.

It is also helpful for many if printed sermon notes or text can be made available beforehand or at least during the service.

Your access information should include pictures and brief descriptions of your building and its facilities and what a person should expect when they join you for worship. Short videos are also helpful. Include 'alt text' on pictures and brief descriptions of videos as well.

You should include:

1. Finding the Church

Your location and any issues about travelling to your site.

2. Parking

Information about street parking or your carpark and the location of any blue badge priority parking bays. How easy is it to get from the parking space to the Church?

3. Using public transport

Information about nearby buses and bus stops. If there is a nearby rail or tube station, does this have step free access? Where is the nearest accessible step-free station?

4. Getting from public transport to the Church

Information about the routes from bus stops and stations. How far are these? Can they be navigated by a wheelchair or guide dog user? Include pictures or a film of the route and describe any busy junctions or difficult road crossings.

5. Getting into your building

What are the paths and approach routes like? How far is it? Is it step free? Are their ramps to negotiate? Do steps have handrails? Can your doors be opened by a wheelchair user without assistance? Will someone be on duty outside before a service?

## 6. Inside the building

What will a person find once inside? Is there a welcome team on duty? Do people need to collect books or leaflets? Is your building warm in winter or do people need to wrap up to keep warm? What is the route from your entrance into the worship/meeting area? Is this step-free?

## 7. Accessibility resources

Are there large print books and leaflets? Are any displays on a screen also available on paper in large print? Are any areas more brightly lit to help people who are visually impaired? Is there a hearing loop? Does the lighting enable leaders/preachers faces to be seen by lipreaders? Do you have a sound system? Are there places where it is easier to hear than others? Are your liturgy and hymn/song words downloadable from your website before the service?

## 8. Seating

Are there pews or chairs? If pews, is there a step up into them? Do some chairs have arms? Do pews have runners or cushions? Can you offer extra cushions? Do you have any seating specifically designed to help people with mobility or sitting/standing difficulties?

## 9. Wheelchair space

Where can a wheelchair user be during the service? Are there spaces within the body of the congregation so people can sit with family and friends? Be honest if this is difficult and they will find themselves isolated at the back or in a prominent position.

## 10. Assistance dogs

Assure people that assistance dogs are welcome. Is there space in the pews for a dog? Can you provide a bowl of water and a rug? Is there an area of the Churchyard that it would be easy and convenient for a dog to use?

## 11. Before the service

Is it noisy as people talk and catch up? Are people encouraged to sit quietly? Is music playing? Is the organ loud?

## 12. During the service

What is your usual pattern of services? When do children leave for groups? Reassure people that it is okay to sit throughout if standing is difficult. How is Communion distributed and how can a person ask for assistance or to receive in their seat? Is the route to the rail or distribution point step free? Is gluten free bread and non-alcoholic wine available?

## 13. Quiet space

Is there a creche for younger children? Is there a quiet space for young people and adults who might need to take time out during the service?

## 14. After the service

Is there loud organ or other music as the service ends? Is there coffee? Where is it served? Can it be accessed easily? Do you cater for food allergies? Do people sit or stand? If standing is normal, are there a few chairs and tables available?

## 15. Toilets

Are there toilets? How are these accessed? Can toilets be accessed discretely during the service? Is there an accessible toilet? Provide a picture of your accessible and other toilet facilities.

Your building will not be perfect and is probably not fully accessible. Your statement must be honest and state clearly when access is not possible for wheelchair users or others with restricted mobility. If you don't have a hearing loop and don't provide large print say so, but state your intention to provide these in the near future if this is going to be possible.

The 360 Accessibility Audit tool will provide a framework for reviewing your building and the access resources you provide, the language you use in worship and communications, the welcome and environment you offer, and the theology and spirituality you preach.

The 'Quick Wins' section provides suggestions of things you can do to improve accessibility that will not be expensive and often take just a small adjustment in your admin or set-up processes.

Advice and support is available from the Diocesan Disability Ministry Enabler, [john.beauchamp@london.anglican.org](mailto:john.beauchamp@london.anglican.org).

When you have created an accessibility area on your website, please email the Diocesan Disability Ministry Enabler so we can keep a record and highlight good practice. ([john.beauchamp@london.anglican.org](mailto:john.beauchamp@london.anglican.org))

#### Note

The words 'disability' and 'disabled' are used to refer to all people who experience barriers to full belonging and participation in society due to their embodiment. This can be due to physical or sensory impairment, learning disabilities, mental health challenges, chronic illness, neurodivergence and more. Although many people may not think of themselves as 'disabled,' the barriers they experience restrict their ability to fully participate in society and so 'disable' them. In line with the Social Model of disability, disability is not centred in a person's body or mind but is an experience that some people have as they attempt to live and operate in a society that favours certain body-mind types and disadvantages others.