



Quality Standard

# National Accessible Scheme

Thank you for requesting further details about increasing accessibility for guests who are mobility, hearing or visually impaired. This information pack will guide you towards increasing accessibility which is now expected by consumers and required as part of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995. It will also show you the considerable business and other benefits this and membership of the National Accessible Scheme will bring.

For a quality service you can trust



Marketing **English** Tourism

VISIT  
BRITAIN

## ● What other businesses say about Accessibility

### Self-Catering Accommodation, Cornwall

*"We have a two-bedroom cottage with disabled access, we're registered in the National Accessible Scheme and we've been pleasantly surprised by the number of bookings," says the owner. "In our first year of business, families with a disabled or elderly person have accounted for 35% of our bookings. What's more, most of them have told us that they would recommend our accommodation to others."*

This owner is so pleased with bookings that he is looking at building a second cottage for up to four guests.

### B&B, Wiltshire

This is a B&B with a ground-floor bedroom and large en-suite with a wheel-in shower. *"This has helped a wide range of guests, including disabled people," says the owner'. "We've been able to accommodate older guests who prefer not to climb stairs, guests with heavy luggage and a guest with a broken leg."*

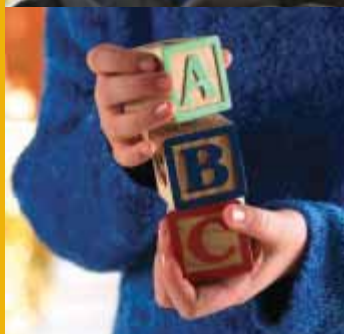
*"We have a lot of loyalty among our guests, some of whom have returned many times and become friends. The National Accessible Scheme has helped people to identify what we have on offer."*

### Country House Hotel & Restaurant, Somerset

*"By having a National Accessibility Scheme rating, we've been able to explain what we can offer potential disabled guests," says the hotel's owner. "They know what to expect before arrival and it's worthwhile in this respect alone."*

One Salisbury-based guest, a wheelchair user, says: *"There's a large bedroom on the ground floor, with an en-suite bathroom that accommodates a wheelchair and has a wash basin with a clear space underneath."*

*"The proprietors run a friendly and competent hotel and there's always at least one of them on hand to help with any problem."*



## ● Something to think about...

### Is your answer to any of these questions "YES"?

Then you could benefit from more accessible facilities by using the National Accessible Scheme criteria as well as your guests, including those who may suffer from reduced sight, hearing or mobility.

Keep reading this information pack to see measures that you can take...

### Accessibility is not necessarily just about wheelchair access

- Q** Do you find it hard to read some signs from a distance?  
**A** You could benefit from clearer signage written with a larger font
- Q** Have you ever found it hard to determine which tap is hot or cold?  
**A** You could benefit from clearly visible hot and cold indicators on taps
- Q** Do you often wonder which floor the lift has arrived at?  
**A** You could benefit from audio and visual floor level indicators
- Q** Do you ever go to pull open a door and find it's a push?  
**A** You could benefit from clearer signage around doors
- Q** Do you worry what would happen if the lift broke down?  
**A** You could benefit from well trained staff who know the evacuation procedure for guests with impairments
- Q** Have you ever been out walking and felt the need to sit down and couldn't find a seat?  
**A** You could benefit from seats appropriately placed around grounds and building
- Q** Have you ever thought you were at the bottom of the stairs but still had a step to go?  
**A** You could benefit from clearer marking on top and bottom steps
- Q** Have you ever broken any limbs which hindered your ability to carry out every day tasks like flushing the toilet?  
**A** You could benefit from many of the NAS criteria e.g. seat risers, accessible flush handle, grab rails, wide corridors, wide doors
- Q** Do you ask for directions and only catch the first part and rely on signage for the rest?  
**A** You could benefit from clear signage at regular intervals
- Q** Have you found it hard to hear someone speak above background music or noise?  
**A** You could benefit from seating away from areas of noise and quieter or no background music
- Q** Do you find the small print used for the fire evacuation notices hard to read?  
**A** You could benefit from larger, clearer font types
- Q** Do you find the restaurant menu too hard to read?  
**A** You could benefit from larger, clearer font types
- Q** Do you find spotlights too bright or direct  
**A** You could benefit from even, soft and diffused light
- Q** Do you find Teletext/Ceefax useful on televisions?  
**A** You may welcome the provision of subtitles which would provide access to other Teletext/Ceefax services
- Q** Have you had an operation which temporarily limited your ability to do every day tasks?  
**A** You could benefit from many criteria e.g. larger toilet cubicles, wide aisles and doors, grab rails, seat risers, accessible items in bathroom and bedroom, walk in shower etc
- Q** Have you ever had heavy luggage or a push chair to lift up steps?  
**A** You could benefit from ramps with resting places as an alternative to steps

**Accessible Environments are accessible to all**

## Why make your facilities more accessible?

- People with disabilities are not a separate 'niche market'. Instead, they are a significant part of the UK tourism market.
- More than a quarter of all tourism trips are taken by people over 55, the age group most likely to benefit from increased accessibility. With a growing ageing population across Europe, this market will grow.
- The elderly and people with families will benefit from increased accessibility.
- Wheelchair users make up only approximately 5% of disabled people.
- By making your premises more accessible it may also help guests with heavy luggage push chairs, trolleys, cases etc.

### It's good for your business

- It makes good business sense. The market is growing – there are over 10 million disabled people in the UK – a huge market. In England alone, over 2.7 million disabled people regularly travel. This represents a great business opportunity
- Disabled people usually travel with friends, family or carers, which brings in additional revenue. They frequently book well in advance and often return on a regular basis once they find the organisation with the facilities to meet their needs
- Around 14% of Europeans have some form of disability. Added to this are the many millions of people who, through age or circumstance, have some sort of special requirement when staying away from home
- Research shows that disabled people like to take a holiday in a mainstream environment given the right facilities. Many also have the financial means to do so
- The market is changing – over 55's take more holidays in the UK and often travel out of season, which reduces peak-season pressures, spreads demand more evenly and lengthens operating seasons. Within the next 20 years a large proportion of the population will be over 60 years of age and making your facilities more accessible can only help this market as well.

### It's good for your guests

- Increases the opportunity for guests with access issues to stay away from home
- Improves the quality of the stay
- Provides a more user-friendly environment, ensuring greater guest satisfaction
- Gives potential guests confidence in choosing your accommodation
- Provides wider benefits for all guests.

### It's a DDA requirement

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) (1995) places duties on providers of goods, services and facilities not to discriminate against people with disabilities.

Like everyone else, tourism providers must take reasonable steps to change practices, policies and procedures to make their facilities and services accessible to disabled people.

Tourism providers should also provide auxiliary aids (such as installing an induction loop) to make it easier to use a service. Where a physical feature is a barrier to service, providers must find a reasonable alternative method of delivering that service.

The final stage of the DDA states that tourism providers also have to take reasonable steps to remove, alter or avoid a physical feature that makes it impossible or unreasonably difficult for a disabled person to use a service. This applies to all disabled people, whether, for example, they are a guest, visitor or employee.

**ACT NOW!** By addressing accessibility issues you may be seen as having taken reasonable steps to comply with the DDA.

The National Accessible Scheme (NAS) is one of the most widely accepted ways of improving access and quality. Meeting the standards **will not** guarantee compliance with the DDA, nor will it meet every particular need in every situation, but it will go a long way in assisting the tourism industry to provide a more accessible environment and, most importantly, offering customers an informed choice. Joining the National Accessible Scheme is a way of showing consumers and other interested parties that you can provide a certain level of accessibility and you have considered the needs of disabled guests.

## Towards the National Accessible Scheme – So what should I do now?

Participation in the VisitBritain (VB) National Accessible Scheme gives you the benefit of a nationally recognised rating that you can use to promote the facilities available for guests and enables you to provide information on which potential guests can make an informed decision.

You may feel that you need to have more information before you make the decision about applying for assessment under the VB National Accessible Scheme. The following details the five stages that you can carry out yourself to help determine where you should go from here.

### Stage 1 NAS Self-Survey (identify problem areas)

- Advisory visits are also available which will help provide you with more information and help in achieving the various levels in the mobility, hearing and visual impairment standards. Contact the number on the back of the criteria booklet if you wish to arrange an advisory visit. There is a charge made for this service but many operators have found the benefit of these visits far outweighs this cost.

To help you move towards joining the National Accessible Scheme and official accessibility ratings, you can carry out your own audit using the NAS self-survey in the information pack.

The audit will help you identify the current situation throughout your organisation in relation to the National Accessible Scheme requirements and what, if anything, needs to be changed to achieve the various levels in the mobility, hearing and visual impairment standards. The self-survey can then be used as an action plan for work to be completed and is a way of highlighting dates for completion and costs associated with the work.

If you feel you can achieve a higher level the relevant self-survey tables are available by post or can be downloaded from [www.visitbritain.com/quality](http://www.visitbritain.com/quality). Your initial pack will include self-surveys for levels 1 and 2 for guests with mobility impairment and one for guests with hearing and visual impairment. The self-survey forms will also provide a working document together with an action plan, access statements, training records and participation in NAS that can be viewed if your access policies are ever questioned.

**ACT NOW!** See what you need to do by filling out the NAS Self-Survey in this pack. (If you do not have a copy please contact the number on the back of the criteria booklet).

**National Accessible Scheme Self Survey**  
 Hearing H1 and H2 and Visual V1 and V2  
 H1 & V1 are minimum requirements. H2 & V2 are recommended requirements

National Accessible Scheme Self Survey

| Item                  | Present situation |  | Proposed future development |  | Date |
|-----------------------|-------------------|--|-----------------------------|--|------|
|                       |                   |  |                             |  |      |
| Address               |                   |  |                             |  |      |
| Details of location   |                   |  |                             |  |      |
| Type of building      |                   |  |                             |  |      |
| Service provided      |                   |  |                             |  |      |
| Public accommodation  |                   |  |                             |  |      |
| Bedroom accommodation |                   |  |                             |  |      |

## Stage 2 Prepare your Action Plan

You can use the self-survey information to prepare an action plan. The action plan helps identify how to overcome access problems in your organisation through physical changes, staff training and other measures. It can also help to distinguish between urgent measures and low-cost improvements carried out as part of regular maintenance (such as redecoration or routine replacement of furniture and fittings). This will help to spread the cost of improvements over time.

Many measures to increase accessibility are common sense. Simple changes to layout, better signage and information, and better training will not break the bank. Many actions will, as already stated, benefit other customers such as the elderly or families with pushchairs. For examples of this, see our quick-tips section on page 7, 'Easy Ways to Improve Access and Quality', or our 'Have you thought about' section on page 8.

For something else to get you thinking along the right lines, see the 'Key Criteria Checklist' section (see page 10) and the questions people with disabilities might ask you about the accessibility of your property.

A very important aspect of accessibility is staff awareness. As part of your action plan you should consider providing training to help ensure that staff have the right attitudes and feel confident to welcome and assist disabled people. Disability equality training such as those courses offered by the regional tourist boards builds awareness and understanding and improves the experiences of staff and disabled people alike. Find out more in the 'Welcome All' section on page 6. For contact details e.g. of disability organisations, product suppliers, please refer to the back of the NAS Standards booklet enclosed.

## Stage 3 Produce an Access Statement (plan of implementation)

- Be cautious about taking advice from, or having an access audit completed by, individuals or companies that are not approved. Always check that access consultants are qualified to give you advice. Ask for references if necessary.

Tourism for All may be able to help with this (contact details at the back of the NAS standards booklet)

This is produced for the benefit of potential customers and shows a commitment to accessibility. The statement can set out your aspirations and will be a statement of intent based on any work to be carried out, as identified in the action plan.

The information from your action plan together with your access statement can be used in your marketing. You may also wish to include diagrams showing the layout and dimensions of the property so that potential guests can assess its accessibility for themselves. These could also feature on a website if you have one. Photos on your the website of your accessible kitchen, accommodation and bathroom (as applicable) are also useful.

**ACCESS STATEMENT**

**THE QUALITY STANDARDS  
LEISURE COMPLEX**  
1 The Street, Anytown, Anyshire, England

At The Quality Standards Leisure Complex we are committed to providing accessibility for all our guests. We currently offer:

- Designated drop-off and collection lay-by. Parking is reserved near to the main accessible entrance.
- Automatic main entrance door approached up six wide stone steps with highlighted nosing and rails on both sides.

### Stage 3 Produce an Access Statement (plan of implementation) continued

An access statement (not to be confused with the access statement produced for building purposes) should be a clear, well presented document available by various methods e.g. website, brochure, correspondence, conference packs etc, and should detail precisely and accurately what is provided around the property that may help with accessibility. It is a way of highlighting to all what is provided currently, what is in development and any future plans. It will enable a potential visitor to make a decision as to how your property meets their needs.

To aid guests, keep the statement as concise as possible, maybe with the use of bullets or numbers. Ensure that the statement is updated regularly with any developments completed or planned.

Mis-information on an access statement could be the difference between an enjoyable holiday/visit and a disastrous one for a guest. Wales Tourist Board have examples of access statements viewed on [www.wtbonline.gov.uk](http://www.wtbonline.gov.uk)

#### Examples of items and information that you could put in your access statement:

- Public transport provision
- Parking facilities and drop off points
- Porterage service for luggage or cars
- Steps to entrances
- Automatic or revolving doors
- Ground floor level throughout
- Provisions made for changes of level on ground floor
- Numbers of storeys and lift positions
- Lift features e.g. talking, braille, tactile, signage, emergency procedure
- Braille, tactile signage
- Facilities provided in accommodation e.g. teletext TVs, cordless kettles
- Accessibility of leisure facilities
- Alternative access to building
- Accessible information: menus, brochures, information, website.
- Staff training
- Colour contrast of floor, walls, doorways and furniture
- Details of adapted accommodation
- Policy of acceptance of service dogs
- Room service provision e.g. 24 hours
- Waitress service provision
- Well lit corridors
- Mobile phone network availability
- Equipment hire e.g. hoist, wheelchair
- Availability of interconnecting rooms
- Location of accessible accommodation and other facilities.

## Welcome All

### Stage 4 Training of Staff

**ACT NOW!** For details of your nearest 'Welcome All' course, please contact your regional tourist board.

- Here's what one participant has said:  
"By attending 'Welcome All', I recognised that many disabled people have an independent spirit, and we now have the confidence to know when to help and when to step back. I have the confidence and awareness to welcome and cater for guests with special needs."  
Anne Strobel  
Cleeve House Hotel, Devon

Consider training all staff in disability awareness for example: the 'Welcome All' one-day training course provides practical advice and guidance on providing better service to customers with disabilities and specific needs.

You don't have to attend a 'Welcome All' course to be in the National Accessible Scheme, but it's a valuable guide to best practice and we do ask for evidence of some staff training in the form of a certificate to join the National Accessible Scheme.

Led by video training exercises, 'Welcome All' covers sensory, mobility and learning disabilities, and focuses on a staff member's responsibility for effective communication, enhancing accessibility and delivering high quality service to customers with special requirements, which is a major part of making your business accessible.

'Welcome All' also ensures that participants are aware of the Disability Discrimination Act and the National Accessible Scheme.

Successful completion of the course is marked by the award of a certificate and a badge.

**NB** 'Welcome All' is a full day course where lunch and refreshments are provided and there is a charge for attendance.

## Stage 5 Join the National Accessible Scheme (market your accessible facilities)

- Advisory visits are available before the assessment is carried out and can determine solutions to your plan of implementation.
- The assessor will notify you when your assessment takes place of the current levels achieved against the standards and, if you wish, give advice about how a higher level of accessibility can be achieved.
- You will gain a nationally recognised rating that can be used as part of your marketing.
- The rating gives confidence to potential guests that they have the information on which to make an informed choice of accommodation.

**ACT NOW!** To apply to join the NAS, complete the NAS application form enclosed and post to the address supplied.

Benefits of participation in the National Accessible Scheme:

- The NAS is a straightforward, easy-to-understand property accessibility rating system. It is designed to encourage accessibility improvements and help people with impairments to make an informed choice
- Through the NAS, people with impairments can be sure that the facilities they book are the facilities they find
- On applying to join the NAS, your facilities will be assessed to establish your current rating. If you wish, assessors can identify areas that would need attention to achieve a higher rating
- NAS accessibility assessments carried out by VB can be organised to take place at the same time as your quality assurance assessment, which reduces costs and any disruption to your business. A list of assessment fees is enclosed
- Choice of levels to work towards and each individual operator is able to choose what level of accessibility they want to market themselves to
- Once your facilities have been assessed and you are part of the NAS, you can use your accessibility ratings in your marketing. You should also inform the charity Tourism for All of your improved facilities (see the enclosed NAS standards booklet for contact details)
- Assessment every three years (if already assessed annually under National Quality Assurance Standards), cost is minimal for this length of participation and the marketing opportunities it offers
- Aids compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act.

## Easy ways to improve accessibility and quality

**ACT NOW!** Do you fulfil some of the requirements already and could you implement the other points quickly?

Many businesses can easily increase accessibility through simple, low-cost additions or alterations. Some can be done while replacing equipment or refurbishing. Here are 20 top tips:

- 01 Check if public telephones are fitted with inductive couplers so that people who use hearing aids can use the handset. Most modern phones have this facility
- 02 Ensure that at least some telephones are available with large buttons and a flashing light when the phone rings. These phones are easier for people with arthritis, dexterity problems and visual impairments
- 03 Have a portable 'vibrating alarm' available on request for guests who may have difficulty in responding to an audible fire alarm
- 04 Specialist equipment required by guests with a disability is often available locally for hire through Social Services, the Red Cross or Disability Information Advice Line (DIAL). Have this kind of information readily available in case of queries
- 05 Ensure that there is at least one copy of any menus available in large print and offer to read the menu if appropriate
- 06 At a reception/entrance desk, paper and pen should be available for guests with hearing difficulties to write things down



## ● Easy ways to improve accessibility and quality (cont.)

- 07 Use large-print guest information and registration forms
- 08 Accept working or service dogs in bedrooms and public areas & have information on local vets, parks (with dog walking areas), pet shops etc
- 09 Use coloured glassware, crockery, cutlery and jugs to make it easier for visually impaired people to see what they are using
- 10 When changing signage, incorporate clear typeface, contrasting colours, non-reflective and well-lit information. Tactile and Braille information should be at a height that can be reached
- 11 When decorating, ensure that door surrounds/frames are in contrast with the wall and door and that there is contrasting door furniture. Ensure that all steps are distinguishable through contrasting brightness
- 12 Where there is not a low reception desk, ensure that a low desk is made available, kept free from clutter, and that reception staff approach the guest rather than leaning over the desk. The use of a clipboard for registration purposes is another alternative
- 13 Avoid an all-white finish in bathrooms and public toilets. Provide coloured towels where there is white furniture so that visually impaired guests can find them more easily
- 14 Ensure that blocks are available for raising the height of beds
- 15 Trim any overhanging plants or hedges along pathways
- 16 If appropriate to your reception/entrance area, display a 'sound your car horn for attention' sign
- 17 When talking to a wheelchair user, try to have your eyes at a similar height to theirs by crouching or sitting close by, don't lean on the wheelchair as this is part of the user's personal space
- 18 If someone looks as if they need assistance, offer it, but wait for them to accept before you help
- 19 Go on a disability-equality training course. Greater awareness and sensitivity to the needs of disabled visitors enhances the tourism experience for providers and guests alike
- 20 Guests with disabilities are individuals like everyone else. Don't make assumptions about their abilities or needs.

## ● Have you thought about.....

**ACT NOW!** By addressing accessibility issues you may be seen as having taken reasonable steps to comply with the DDA.

- Producing a list of local suppliers of equipment e.g. Electric wheelchairs, hoists, wheelchair shower chairs and commodes
- Producing a list of local pet shops, vets and parks with dog walking areas for assistance dogs
- Advertising services for dogs: bowls, blankets, baskets, food etc so that the guest does not have to bring these items
- Producing all literature in larger print, easy to read fonts (e.g Arial, Size 14 font) with a good contrast of colours
- Producing an audiotape of your menu, room information and other useful information
- When replacing or updating equipment consider the needs of all e.g. phones with large buttons or text facility, lifts with audio, visual and tactile indicators and mirrors on far side of lifts to help independent wheelchair users reverse

## ● Have you thought about.....continued

- Producing emergency evacuation notices in large print
- Producing a list to help your staff who may get queries on the facilities you provide
- How you would safely evacuate, guests with mobility, hearing and visual impairment. Are all staff aware of the procedures for doing this? Consider siting rooms designated for use by guests with disabilities on lower floors for this reason
- Providing auxiliary aids. The requirement for these was introduced in October 1999 by the DDA 1995 e.g. Flashing fire alarms in bedrooms, inductive couplers in public phones, induction loops at reception and in conference facilities, TV's offering subtitles, raised pip on No. 5 on the telephone
- Find out where Braille can be produced for you
- On menus have one available in Braille saying 'this is a sample menu demonstrating the wide choice available throughout the year – your waiter/waitress will be pleased to read today's menu'
- Designated parking bays could be temporary but continually check who is parked in these spots
- Lowering your public phone for ease of use
- Providing stools/chairs around facilities so that guests can sit if they tire easily
- Writing directions that do not include visual milestones, e.g. get to the orange house and turn left
- Alert staff to the fact that guests may have learning disabilities and not to treat these guests less favourably as this may be viewed as discrimination
- Providing a signature guide (piece of metal to highlight where to sign credit cards/ cheques etc)
- Where you provide more than one accessible facility, one could provide for a left transfer and one for right transfer from wheelchairs e.g. to beds and WC's
- Reviewing pricing policies to accommodate guests travelling with carers, especially those who may not be part of their family
- Zip link beds are more flexible for all and would prevent carer (who may not be a partner) having to buy an additional room, which may be viewed as discriminatory
- Ensuring that a least 1 in 20 bedrooms are accessible (as a guide & from BS 8300:2001)
- Providing a full length mirror beside a 900mm high electric socket in bedrooms
- When referring to guests with disabilities, refer to the person first, then the disability e.g. guest in room 3 who is blind rather than the blind man in room 3. Using words such as blind, deaf, visually impaired, seeing, watching television are acceptable words in conversation
- Providing extra reading lamps in bedrooms for moving where required
- Fitting curtain closing poles to curtains or rails or providing lower cords to open and close curtains by
- Providing a brightly lit section of the restaurant
- Providing a large button telephone that may help all

## ● Have you thought about.....continued

- Providing seating away from windows which may cause glare
- Providing a level entry shower instead or as well as a bath - 80% of respondents in a Holidaycare survey said they prefer a level entry shower to an accessible bath
- Provide allergy-free accommodation which is non smoking and contain allergy free fittings and materials as this is an increasing market
- Avoid making your accessible facilities look like a hospital ward. This can be done through careful choice of colour (avoid all white finishes) and materials. There are some very modern fittings now available
- Considering or involving disabled guests and staff in your decision making processes
- If you provide keycards for entry into accommodation consider putting tape on one end to show the direction of arrows/swipe for visually impaired guests. Where a metal key is also available this would be preferable
- Staff being trained to ask 'How can I be of assistance to you?' if they are not sure of individuals needs
- Any member of staff who takes reservations to ask 'Do you have any requirements for your stay/visit?' to all guests reserving rooms/restaurant table/facilities.

## ● Key Criteria Checklist

Hearing-impaired guests might ask about:

**ACT NOW!** Can you answer these sorts of questions about your facilities? How many can you answer positively?

- **Acceptance of service dogs\***. The proprietor may not be able to accept animals of any kind, perhaps due to allergies of the family or staff, and this should be made clear beforehand
- **British Sign Language (BSL)** capabilities
- **Equipment** such as TV with Teletext and Ceefax, text telephone, phone with induction loop and vibrating or flashing fire alarms. A duplicate key should be available so that a travelling companion can gain access to the room. Induction loops in reception & conference rooms could be easily fitted
- **Mobile phone network coverage** in your area, or a landline that can be used in an emergency
- **Lifts** If there is a lift, are there illuminated floor buttons and 'lift coming' indicators? Is there a way of calling for help that doesn't include the ability to hear
- **Emergency evacuation** arrangements should be discussed early on, preferably at the time of booking or registration
- **Lighting** should be even & diffuse to aid lip reading without shadows.

Mobility-impaired guests might ask about:

- **Acceptance of service dogs\***. The proprietor may not be able to accept animals of any kind, perhaps due to allergies of the family or staff, and this should be made clear beforehand
- **Mobile phone network coverage** see above
- **Access**. For example, is the property's access road level and smooth and how close is the setting down point and parking, to the property? Is there a dropped kerb at a setting down point? Are there any steps and how wide are corridors and doors?
- **Lifts**. For example, how wide are lift doors, how large is the lift and can the controls be used from a seated position? Is there a mirror on the back wall to aid reverse exit?
- **Emergency evacuation arrangements** see above
- **Bedrooms**. For example, which floor are they on? How are they laid out? Can beds be raised? Is there a hoist? How do you charge for carer accommodation? Can all main sockets, light switches and alarm cords be reached from a seated position?
- **Bathrooms**. For example, does the bathroom have a wheel-in (level access) entry to the shower or bath? Is there a hoist? Is there a fold-down shower seat and can taps and grab rails be reached from a seated position? Is the temperature of hot water thermostatically controlled?

## ● Key Criteria Checklist continued

Mobility-impaired guests might ask about:

- **Kitchen facilities.** Is there access to a lowered worktop, sink and hob and are there large-handled kitchen utensils or adapted cutlery? Is there a microwave at an accessible height?
- **Toilets.** Are there public accessible toilets? What is provided in them? Which side do you transfer from to use the toilet? Is the accessible toilet locked?

Visually-impaired guests might ask about:

- **Acceptance of service dogs\*.** The proprietor may not be able to accept animals of any kind, perhaps due to allergies of the family or staff, and this should be made clear beforehand.
- **Availability of information** in formats such as large print (size 14 or greater & uncomplicated font e.g. Arial) or Braille
- **Your website's availability** in text-only form
- **Emergency evacuation arrangements** (as above)
- **Lighting** Is a reading lamp available? Is lighting even, soft and diffuse so as to not cause confusion?

\* Service dogs is a term that covers any working dog e.g. Hearing dogs for the deaf, Guide dogs for the blind, Epilepsy dogs, Assistance or support dogs for people with mobility impairment, etc.

## ● So what do accessible facilities cost?

Providing more accessible accommodation does not have to cost a fortune. The simplest and cheapest of measures is to provide menus and information in large print such as Arial font minimum size 14 (recommend larger). At a basic level this could be done on your own computer. Even the provision of specialist equipment does not have to cost a lot, just see the examples below:

- |   |        |                           |         |
|---|--------|---------------------------|---------|
| ● Under pillow vibrating pads                       | £12.50 | ● Talking microwave       | £200    |
| (one or two of these could be available on request) |        | ● Support rails           | £11.00  |
| ● Vibrating alarm clock                             | £18.00 | ● Vibrating warning alarm | £64.00  |
| ● Tactile marking fluid                             | £4.00  | ● Audio cassettes         | £1.50   |
| ● Perching stool                                    | £40.00 | ● Portable induction loop | £140.00 |

*NB all prices are approximate at the time of printing; please contact suppliers for further information*

**So what are you waiting for – Go on make a difference!**  
Your guests will appreciate your facilities and keep coming back!

## ● Start now!

By taking action to address accessibility issues, you will be seen as having taken steps to comply with the DDA.

You can start straight away with some of the quick, easy low-cost measures outlined. You can then take this further by applying to join the NAS, the UK tourism industry's highly regarded and widely accepted accessibility rating system.

Increased accessibility is a worthwhile goal – for you and your guests. By working towards & participating in the NAS you'll be moving towards compliance with the DDA. Importantly, you'll also get more business and greater professional and personal satisfaction along the way.

Ensure that any work or measures taken towards providing a more accessible environment are documented and kept safely together. Also include all quotes that have been obtained for work to be done, planned improvements and target dates you are working towards etc and any other relevant information which shows you are trying to provide accessible facilities.