



Wicklow County Council
COMHAIRLE CHONTAE CHILL MHANTAIN

CAPITA SYMONDS

DISABILITY ACT 2005
BLESSINGTON TOWN CENTRE
WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL
ACCESSIBILITY AUDIT

ACCESSIBILITY AUDIT REPORT

**Blessington Town Centre,
Wicklow County Council**



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MARCH 2008

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Capita Symonds was commissioned to carry out a Disability Access Audit on Blessington Town Centre.

The Disability Act 2005, Part 3, places duties on public bodies to ensure that their services are accessible to people with disabilities.

Part 3 requires public bodies to ensure, where reasonable and appropriate, their services are available to people with disabilities via integrated access.

Further to this, public bodies must ensure that all communications and literature are provided, as far as practicable, in an accessible format upon request and electronic information should be compatible with adaptive technology.

Part 5 of the Disability Act 2005 requires the making of reasonable alterations to the workplace premises and the provision of suitable technical or organisational supports so as to reasonably facilitate the employment of disabled persons by the body, and, to support existing employees with disabilities in the performance of their duties.

The requirements of the Act are determined by the requirements of disabled people and it can be anticipated that the requirements will change and be extended in the future. The guidance provided in this report therefore is to comply with the current Approved Codes of Practice, which is subject to constant revision.

Whereas the audit generally refers to the requirements of the Disability Act 2005, it also includes comments on other health and safety issues that were observed during the inspection.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

The survey was undertaken without the opening up of any structures, fixtures or fittings and no assessment has been made as to the suitability of electrical or mechanical services.

For the purposes of this report, the definition of “disability and “access” are as defined in the Disability Act 2005.

The audit recognises the different requirements for staff / visitor areas alike, and suitably provides recommendations for both parties. The audit has been carried out with reference to Part III of the Disability Act 2005 and prioritised as follows:-

Priority 1 High – Short Timescale Implementation - This will involve the immediate Health and Safety issue or severe barrier/hazard to access. This category may contain reasonable adjustments which overcome physical barriers to access. Physical alterations to service properties which fall under Section 26 & 27 of the Disability Act 2005. This priority is used where elements make the provision of service impossible or unreasonably difficult. Issues requiring auxiliary aids are also categorised as high.

(Sections 26, 27 & 28 the Disability Act come into operation on 31 December 2005).

Priority 2 – Medium Timescale Implementation - Preferable Work to be programmed within the next few years (This relates to the Disability Act to provide “practicable and appropriate adjustments” to the physical features of premises to overcome physical barriers to access for disabled people).

Changes to meet ‘Best Practice’ guidelines, which if not undertaken may result in action under the Disability Act 2005. This relates to items which do not prevent disabled access to services but which can be adapted to increase or enhance accessibility.

Priority 3 Refurbishment – Long Timescale - Refurbishment Work/Minor Works - These are items that would not be reasonable to implement as a high priority and should be undertaken during the next refurbishment of the area. This will allow for additional costs to be minimal as they should be used in conjunction with works required to be carried out in that specific area.

Priority 4 Maintenance/Management – Ongoing Maintenance/Management
This relates to items which do not prevent disabled access to services but which can be adapted to increase or enhance accessibility through ongoing maintenance regimes or through management initiatives/ changes.

3.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

4.0 ACCESS AUDIT

5.0 POLICY, PROCEDURES AND TRAINING

This section is separate from the other parts of the checklist and audit but nevertheless is strictly related to the Disability Act 2005. This line of questions can identify where management procedures can be improved or changed to help in the advancement of a more equal environment for all. The information below was gleaned from the office managers' questionnaire and identifies any shortfalls in Disability Awareness training.

Comments

No comments in this instance

Recommendations

No recommendations in this instance

6.0 HEALTH AND SAFETY ISSUES

This section deals with any additional health and safety issues our auditors noticed during the inspection of premises. Although no formal health and safety audit was taken of the property, auditors are advised to raise any issues they feel appropriate.

Comments

No comments in this instance

Recommendations

No recommendations in this instance

7.0 REFERENCES

BS 8300:2001 (Incorporating Amendment No.1) – Design of buildings and their approaches to meet the needs of disabled people.

NDA “Buildings for Everyone”

Department For Transport – “Guidance on the use of Tactile Paving Surfaces”

This report is produced and issued entirely without prejudice, and on the basis of disabled people requiring access to the building or site. In this context, disabled people include those with mobility, hearing and visual impairments or other disabilities such as dexterity, learning, mental illness, speech, continence or physical co-ordination. Provisions for disabled people will invariably assist other groups such as children, parents with children, pregnant mothers, older people and those with cultural and language differences.

Dated:

Auditors Signature:

Approved By (Director):

Brian Taggart
Director
Health & Safety Access Consultancy

APPENDIX I

Photographs