

Embracing the Disability Discrimination Act Holiday Accommodation in Northern Ireland

**Equality Commission for Northern Ireland
and
Tourism Northern Ireland**

Aims of the Webinar

By the end of this webinar, you will be aware of-

- **Who are your customers?**
- **The Purple Pound**
- **The Disability Discrimination Act**
- **The Customer Journey**

Business case for accessible tourism

Open to everyone

There are **360,000** disabled people in Northern Ireland who are your potential customers



Providing better access means that your business is more welcoming to everyone. Enabling customers of all ages and abilities to access your services will widen your customer base

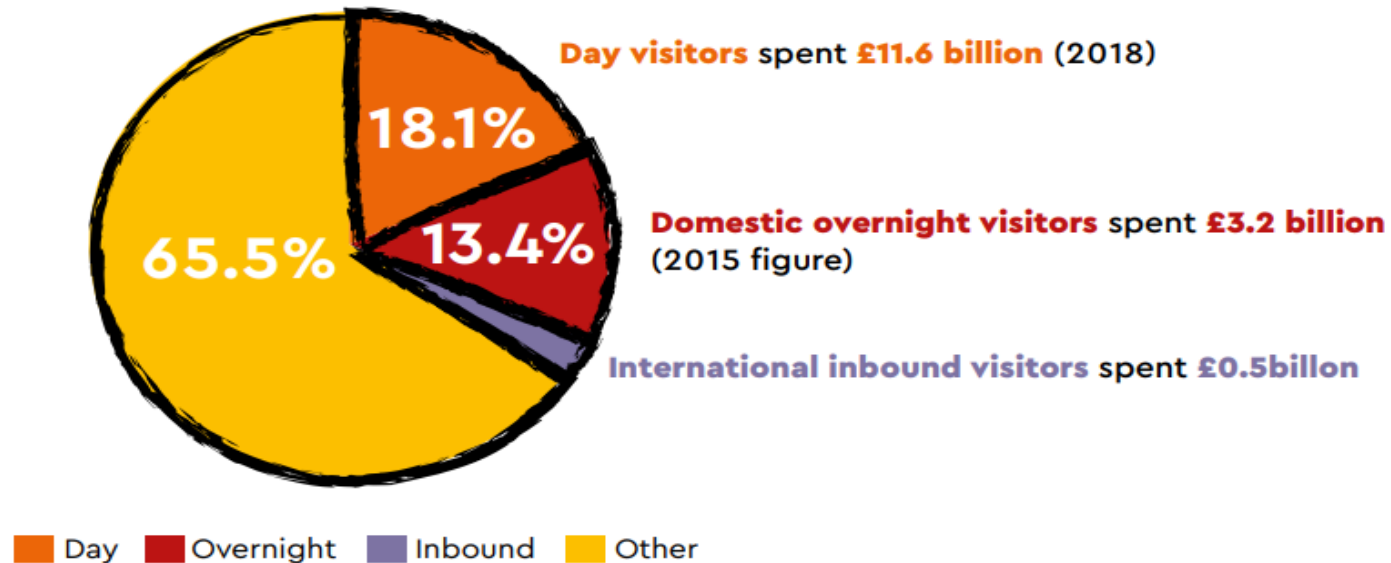
Business Case for Accessible Tourism

Comparative Data

UK	Northern Ireland	ROI	EU
22% have a disability	23% have a disability	14% have a disability	14% have a disability
19% are +65 years	No data	13% are +65 years	19% are +65 years
6% are under 4 years	No data	7% are under 4 years	4% are under 4 years

Tourism-related Spending

Total tourism-related spend by people or groups with disabilities in the UK throughout 2018:



Source: www.visitbritain.org/business-advice/value-purple-pound

Why Access means business?

Become a household name

40% of all households in Northern Ireland include a disabled resident

Disabled customers are more likely to be loyal customers, who may also bring their friends and family, meaning repeat business for you



'Accessible restaurants and pubs which provide excellent customer service will attract disabled people, their friends and families. 18% of disabled customers visit restaurants at least once a week and 22% visit at least two or three times a month'
Pizza Express

**The barriers for people with disabilities
when accessing services
and the
Disability Discrimination Act 1995**

Main Barriers for Disabled People in Accessing Services

- **Attitudinal**
- **Fear**
- **Lack of awareness**
- **Avoidance**
- **Lack of contact and understanding**

ECNI ABC Research 2012

Disability Discrimination

Discrimination can be either deliberate or unintentional and can arise from:

- **Assumptions and stereotypes**
- **Prejudice or fear**
- **Lack of understanding and information**
- **Low expectations**
- **Lack of contact with disabled individuals or groups**
- **Communication barriers**

Equality laws in Northern Ireland

- **Disability Discrimination Act 1995**
- **Sex Discrimination (NI) Order 1976**
- **Fair Employment and Treatment (NI) Order 1998**
- **Race Relations (NI) Order 1997**
- **Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (NI) 2006**

What is a Disability?

- **Cancer, Multiple sclerosis, HIV infection**
- **Any other physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and adverse long-term effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities.**

Who holds duties under the DDA?

Those who provide services to the public-

- **Accommodation**

What is unlawful disability discrimination?

- Refusing to provide any service
- Providing a service of a lower standard or in a worse manner
- Providing a service on worse terms
- Failing to comply with a duty to make reasonable adjustments or to provide auxiliary aids or services

Duty to make reasonable adjustments

- **Policies, practices and procedures**
- **Physical features of premises**
- **Provide auxiliary aids and services**

Auxiliary Aids



What is Considered Reasonable?

No definitive answer – it varies according to circumstances of the service provider

- **Factors can include:**
 - **Costs, convenience and practicability**
 - **Total resources of service provider**
 - **Effectiveness of change**
 - **Financial assistance available**

Adjusting physical features

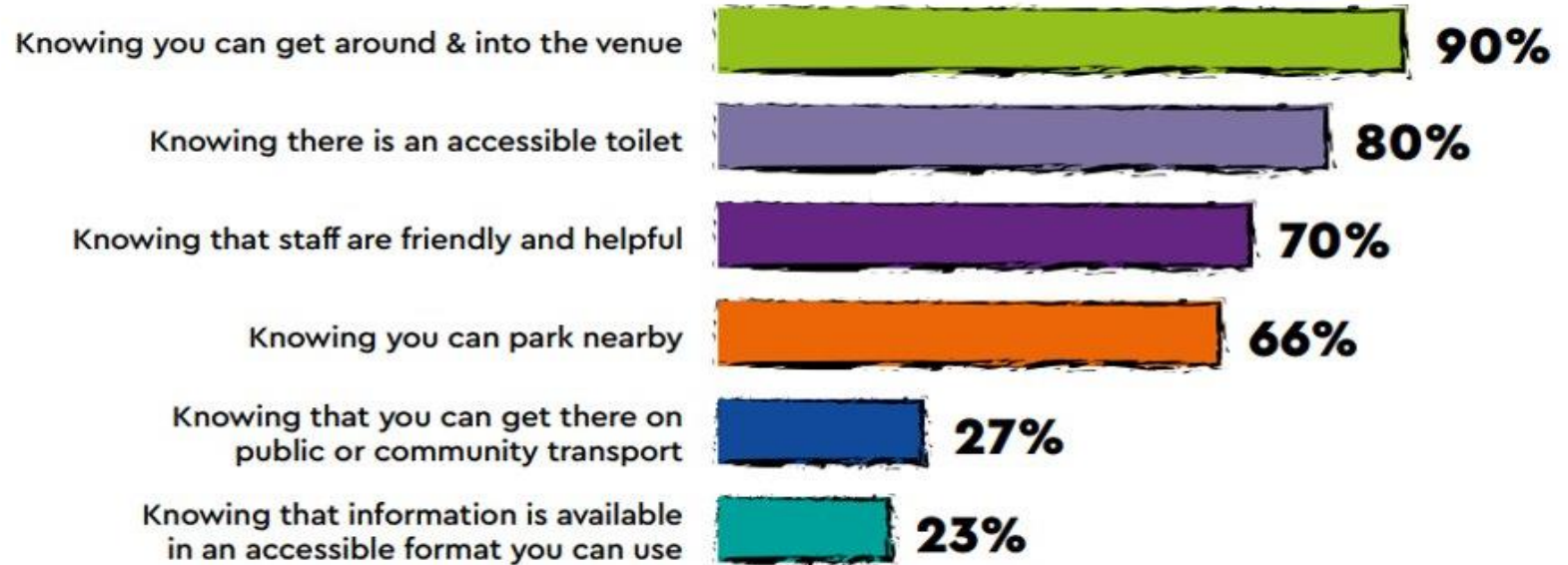
- **removing the physical feature**
- **altering the physical feature**
- **avoiding the physical feature**
- **or providing the service by an alternative method**

What are physical features?

- Steps, stairways, kerbs, exterior surfaces and paving,
- parking areas, entrances, exits, gates,
- toilets, washing facilities,
- light, ventilation, floor coverings,
- signs, furniture, equipment and display

The Customer Journey

What factors influence a person's decision to visit somewhere?



Source: Euan's Guide Access Survey 2015.

The Three Pillars of Accessible Tourism

- **Customer Service**
- **Information**
- **Facilities**

Customer service

You and your staff have a vital role to play in ensuring that disabled customers enjoy their stay.

Training is essential for the provision of good quality service because it-

- can enhance the quality of the **guest experience**
- improve staff understanding of **disabled customers' needs**
- equip you and your staff with the knowledge to better **inform your customers and enhance your customers' experience**

Information

- **Comply with website accessibility (WCAG 2.1)**
- **Provide an option to book an accessible bedroom online through your website**
- **Provide information about local accessible services such as cafes, attractions , tours , theatres , restaurants**
- **Consider a guest's needs when you are corresponding – what works best for them**

Facilities

- **Access Guides can help visitors with specific needs can plan their stay with you**
- **Clear and simple descriptions of your accommodation with measurements and photographs (with accessibility features)**
- **Highlight what facilities your accommodation has and what it has not to enable guests to make informed decisions**
- **Don't forget to include information about aids and equipment**

Journey- Pre-arrival

- **Full and accurate address with postcode** (register on Google My Business)
- **Accessible Car Parking** and information about other travel options
- Information about Motability hire
- **Offering support for booking/ pre-arrival** (telephone, email or web chat)

Arrival

- **Assistance** with luggage
- **Lower counters** at reception
- **Chairs with armrests**
- **Clear signage**
- **Clear unobstructed routes and toilets**
- **Hearing loop** at reception

Facilities during the stay

- Moveable tables and chairs
- Height of beds – twin and double
- Lower level clothes storage
- **Accessibility of bathrooms – handrails and wet rooms**
- Procedures in event of a fire or emergency pull chords

Aids and equipment

- **Subtitle option on TV**
- **Easy to read menus/ large print**
- **Hoists**
- **Plastic plates / cups**

Take Aways

1. **Inclusive and Accessible communication** is essential for customers with disabilities and other customers
2. **Access information about you accommodation** helps customers decide if they will book your accommodation
3. **Access Audit** helps you to identify the barriers for disabled people accessing your service
4. **Policy of inclusive services** is one of the reasonable steps