

Embracing the Disability Discrimination Act

Visitor Attractions and Experiences 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

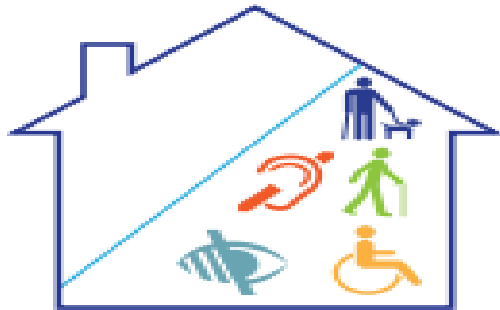
UK	Northern Ireland	ROI	EU
22% have a disability	23% have a disability	14% have a disability	14% have a disability
19% are +65 years	No data	13% are +65 years	19% are +65 years
6% are under 4 years	No data	7% are under 4 years	4% are under 4 years

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**

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?

Service provider is anyone who provides a service to the public or a section of the public-visitor attractions and experiences

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 and Services



What is Considered Reasonable?

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

The factors can include costs, convenience and practicability of making the adjustment, the total resources of the service provider ; the effectiveness of the change making the service more accessible and the financial assistance available . This is not an exhaustive list and the factors will be dependant on all the circumstances of the case

Adjusting physical features

Can you remove the physical feature which makes it impossible or unreasonably difficult for a disabled person to use the service ?

Can you alter the physical feature ?

Can you avoid the physical feature ?

Can you provide the service by an alternative method ?

What are physical features which make it impossible or unreasonably difficult ?

Physical features listed in the legislation are steps, stairways, kerbs, exterior surfaces and paving, parking areas, entrances, exits, gates, toilets, washing facilities, light, ventilation, floor coverings, and displays.

Please refer to the Code of Practice for further information

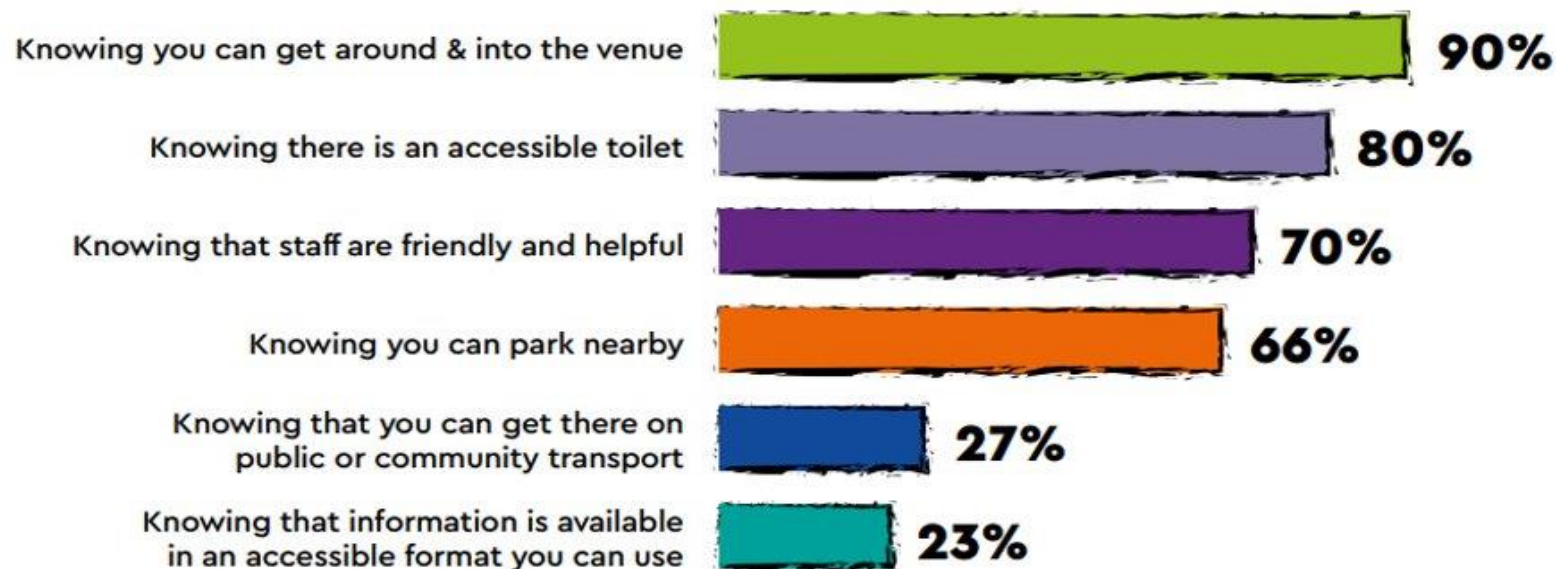
Can a service provider justify less favourable treatment or failure to make a reasonable adjustment ?

In limited circumstances which are listed but some which may be relevant to some of the visitor experiences may be health and safety factors; incapacity to contract or the service provider could not provide the service to the public

The question will be “Was the belief reasonably held ?” or was it based on stereotypical views of disabled people?

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

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

Information

- **Comply with website accessibility (WCAG 2.1)**
- **Provide options for booking attractions online through your website**
- **Provide details about the experience , exhibits or event – seating, where to collect tickets, quiet places**
- **Provide information about BSL/ISL Signed, captioned events or information where to request**
- **Transparent about costs and charges for carers**

Inclusive Communication-Aids and Services

- **JAM friendly**
- **Captioning / Audio Guides**
- **Hearing Loop systems**
- **Wheelchairs/ / buggies**
- **Easy to read menus/ large print / read out**

Facilities

- **Access Guides** can help visitors with specific needs can visit to your attraction, experience (Highlight good practice example)
- **Assistance Dogs** welcome
- **Clear descriptions** of your attraction (information about the attraction and if external – surface/ gradients/ resting places/ lighting/ signage)
- **Highlight what facilities** your attraction/experience has and what it has not to enable visitors to make informed decisions - Quiet spaces/ accessible car parking
- **Accessible Toilets and Changing Places Toilets**

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, offer assistance and enhance your customers' experience**
- accessible feedback and complaints process**

Take Aways

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