

ITAAL – OUR FUTURE IN THE BALANCE

Unfortunately ITAAL has been unable to obtain adequate funding for all the work we had planned and there is a limit on how much can be done by volunteer effort. In April 2004 the Trustees reviewed our planned activities to ensure that we used our available resources as effectively as possible. ITAAL has sufficient general funding for one year to meet its legal requirements as a charity and limited company.

In August 2004 the Trustees agreed the following strategy to secure the future of ITAAL – at least in the short-term:

- **Discontinue work on the UK Directory**
- **Make the Loo Location sheet available to groups wishing to develop local directories**
- **Explore the possibility of ITAAL providing consultancy to service/information providers.**

UK Directory The Trustees regret having to stop work on developing the UK directory, more so because ITAAL was set up particularly to provide site information on loos to enable disabled people to get around more freely – locally, regionally or nationally.

However the Loo Location Sheet that was developed for the English Directory and updated in preparation for the UK work will be made available to groups, organisations and individuals who want to collect consistent information on their local accessible loos.

A Loo Location Sheet information pack has been prepared and is available for downloading from the website or from the ITAAL office. The Loo Location sheet will remain copyright to ITAAL.

We will do all in our power to support those who undertake to produce local or regional information, including encouraging people to produce lists to a consistent design that could be readily incorporated later on in a UK Loo Website, when and if our financial position improves.

Consultancy The Trustees have agreed that over the next eighteen months they will explore the possibility of ITAAL developing a paid consultancy service to service/information providers. A growing awareness of their duties under the DDA means that many providers will be looking for support. ITAAL has developed a comprehensive knowledge base on accessible loos and could offer advice on, for example, what constitutes an ‘accessible’ WC, draw up checklists for inspectors/surveyors and offer training. The Trustees do not believe that this will conflict with work undertaken by local access groups or others working to improve access.

Supporters Group The Trustees have reluctantly decided to introduce a subscription scheme for all Supporters to cover the cost of Privy Counsel, administration and postage and make a contribution to ITAAL’s running costs.

Privy Counsel Our newsletter has become a valued information resource and means of communication. Sufficient funding remains for this issue.

▶▶ However this will be the last free issue. If you wish to continue to receive Privy Counsel you will need to pay the appropriate subscription fee. See accompanying letter. ◀◀

Website This will be our main information/communication source. We are seeking further funding to ensure that regular updating and design needs can be met.



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MONNICA STEWART

It is with great sadness that we report the death of Monnica Stewart in October. Monnica, a retired geriatrician, was a founder member of ITAAL, generous with her immense experience and knowledge, and with great energy and commitment. Her reaction to the feasibility study for the loo directory in 1997 was so enthusiastic and brought a full understanding of the impact of coping with care needs when you are disabled or elderly.

I first worked with Monnica in the 1980s when she was a management committee member of the King's Fund Living Options project, developing comprehensive services for disabled people. Over the last six years she provided a constant source of support to ITAAL, was a wonderful mentor and listener to me as Chair and to Trustees at our meetings, encouraging lateral thinking and always seeming to know someone who could help.

Those of us working with Monnica were often unaware of the wide range of activities she was involved with across the medical, health and voluntary sectors, but none of us could be unaware of her concern for helping people to cope with the more difficult aspects of day-to-day disabled life. She had a wicked sense of humour that came to the fore every time I reported the possibility of ITAAL 'going down the pan' yet again as a funding package was turned down.

Monnica retired as an ITAAL trustee in March 2004 but had kept in touch right up to her death. I just wonder if St. Peter is at this very moment explaining why there is no accessible loo 'up there'!

Diana Twitchin

Small charities face real difficulties in attracting funds and ITAAL is no exception. The past eight months have been extremely difficult with growing concerns about our finances. Ironically, alongside this has been growing enthusiasm and interest in the UK Directory and our work in general. We know only too well that loos continue to be a problem, and for many disabled people little has changed to challenge the question 'Is There An Accessible Loo?'

We hope readers will understand and agree with the decisions that have been made and, very importantly, take up the opportunity to produce your own local loo lists. We will share our experience and help as much as possible.

1st October 2004

This issue of Privy Counsel contains a lot of material – in part due to the delay in sending it out – in part to the wealth of activity relating to that magic date. Many disabled people feel that the implementation of this part of the Disability Discrimination Act marks a real change for the better in terms of access to the community. Others regard it as a small step in the right direction. Whatever you feel, we have the chance to influence service providers and encourage and help them to provide solutions to our access problems.

We should not forget that there is already a great deal of good practice visible in terms of access and the legislation now in force means that the 'ostrich' brigade do have to take their heads out of the sand, listen and act.

We include information on a number of publications aimed at helping service providers meet their responsibilities. Also, go to the The Disability Rights Commission (DRC) website for an update on their campaign *Open4All* and their range of information to help service providers.

Consultation meetings

ITAAL does not normally go out to visit, but under the terms of the funding given by Lloyds TSB we were asked to ensure that Wales was fully represented in ITAAL's work. Welsh contacts asked for face-to-face meetings and these proved to be very positive. They brought together people with a range of disabilities and concerns about accessible loos. It was very helpful to have everyone in the same room talking frankly. See pages ... for full reports.

Personal Experiences highlights a number of issues concerning accessible loos, and we print a portion of the email we receive to demonstrate the range of issues and concerns.

Happily, all is not doom and gloom on the loo front and - particularly with the festive season fast approaching - we are very pleased to be able to pass on a number of 'good news' stories from different parts of the country.

We wish all our readers a very happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

Diana Twitchin

Editor

Two consultation meetings were held in Wales, one in the north and one in the south. Both days were notable for their lively discussion, with much exchange of information, ideas and suggestions for action.

The programme for each meeting was similar. A presentation on the DDA and the implications of 1 October, 2004 was given by Nicky Darton from the DRC at the North Wales meeting and Ann Winfield at the South Wales meeting.

At each meeting, Diana Twitchin outlined ITAAL's history and the purpose of the meetings - to make contacts and get help with logging loos in Wales. She reported that Lloyds TSB were funding both meetings and that Disability Wales were being kept fully informed.

NORTH WALES CONSULTATION MEETING 3 March 2004 Colwyn Bay Leisure Centre

30 people came to discuss the Welsh section of the proposed ITAAL UK Directory, including local councillors and representatives from three local access groups. Tom Jones, Chairman, Conwy County Voluntary Access Group, chaired the day.

The main issues discussed are listed below. We hope local groups will take note of these for future work in the north Wales area and help ITAAL to make further contacts throughout the locality.

Local authority issues

- A councillor reported that local authorities are not legally obliged to provide public toilets. In the Llandudno area the council had been doing an audit of its toilets, and knows that some of these will have to be closed purely because of their age.
- Some local authorities believe that because local businesses are providing loos

this removes their responsibility to do so. This raised a number of issues – e.g. lack of signposting to such facilities; business premises close in the evenings and at weekends; some shops choose to limit use of their loos to their customers.

- Even when public buildings locally provide accessible loos, lack of sign posting means that visitors to the town will not know those loos are there.
- A local conference centre had put a RADAR key lock on the accessible loo because hand towels were being put down the lavatory and blocking it. They thought this was alright because “all disabled people carry a RADAR key”! It was pointed out that an automatic hand drier would have solved this problem and obviated the need for the key.
- A councillor mentioned that they consult the 1000 strong Citizens' Panels. There was audience concern that Citizens' Panels do not have adequate representation from disabled people.
- Councillors expressed concern about adaptations to listed buildings. It was clear that there was urgent need for information about access to listed buildings including examples of good practice elsewhere in the UK. This type of help is available locally to hotels in Llandudno to ensure that access changes were in keeping with the facades of buildings.
- One councillor said that a local information guide was available but the audience responded that this had last been updated in 1991!

Access Group concerns

- All Access group representatives expressed grave concerns about the lack of awareness of local businesses of the implications of 1 October 2004 and so their lack of action.

- Access Groups work with local authorities but there are differences in perception about what they are expected to do and there are communication gaps.
- There were concerns about the running down and closure of old loos in the area.
- Planning process – Access Groups check plans but said the system can break down as building takes place. One Access Chair reported attending major building sites where the planned access provision had been lost as work progressed. One reason for this was sub-contracting within the building phases. There was some audience feeling that this could be intentional.
- Formal inspection on completion. Access Groups are expected to do this but they get no funding to meet any expenses incurred in visiting building sites – big or small. Local councillors get expenses therefore they should have this responsibility. Access Groups reported that they get the blame when building issues are not picked up and followed.

DDA – 1 October 2004 responsibilities

- Several people asked what support local authorities would be prepared to give small businesses so they could meet the 1 October requirements. They felt that some kind of rating relief or small grants would be helpful.
- There should be a local publicity campaign to highlight the importance of 1 October.
 - Some local businesses already carrying out refurbishment were not doing full access audits on their premises – they did not believe they had to do this before 1 October 2004. This seemed a very short-sighted approach. It laid them open to being taken to court as well as having to spend extra money to meet access requirements.

- Reasonableness – there was much discussion as to just what this would mean. This was felt to be a real weakness in the legislation and would mean, yet again, disabled people being the ones to provide evidence of the problems.

Types of accessible loo provision

- There is a significant problem with minimum Part M measurements being taken as the norm, rather than allowing more space wherever possible. The new Part M requirements should help to rectify this problem.
 - Where combined facilities for mothers/babies and disabled people were available locally it was usually to the **minimum** space requirements under Part M. This often resulted in the facility not being suitable for either user and led to tension between the groups.
 - It was pointed out that baby change facilities will also be used by disabled parents so besides the accessible loo, fittings such as height adjustable mountings for the baby table need to be considered.
 - Most of the audience had no problem with accessible loos being universal unisex ones, in some instances shared with mums and babies, provided that the loo was adequately spaced and the fittings in the correct positions.
 - It was recognised that universal unisex provision might be the only possibility for some small business settings, provided it is properly planned and fitted out. Small businesses need to be reassured about this.
 - Taking action about badly designed loos. It was suggested that the ITAAL website and Privy Counsel give details of what individual disabled people can do to get loo providers to understand why their loo is not suitable.
 - There was much concern that RADAR keys are being used on internal

loos e.g. in pubs and as in the aforementioned conference centre. This practice means people have to ask for a key. In one example given, it took a disabled person half an hour to attract attention at the bar to get the key. After 1 October 2004 this would be deemed 'unreasonable'.

- One authority wants to put RADAR keys on access gates in rural areas (e.g. to stop abuse of designated car parking spaces) justifying this by saying 'all disabled people carry these keys'. But all disabled people do not carry such keys. This demonstrates the importance of consulting disabled people properly about access to the countryside.

Premises of religious communities

There is a need for more local support to these groups to make their buildings accessible.

Signposting Direction sign posting to public loo facilities was felt to be poor in this - a tourist area - attracting many thousands of visitors.

Hotel bathrooms Several participants raised issues about bathrooms not being fitted out to BS8300 standard. Llandudno has many hotels, but as far as was known only one (on West Shore) that is at all accessible.

Sanitary equipment One participant reported seeing advertisements for packages of sanitary equipment and fittings stating 'the pack contains all you need for your 'disabled' loo'. She felt that this showed no concern for fitting out a loo as required under Part M, but that businesses short of funds would believe the publicity and purchase the packs. How could one stop this?

Tourism North Wales is a busy tourist area. More contact is needed with the Tourism Information Centres on access issues. Good information about customer facilities should appear in the general tourism literature.

Individual disability needs

- There is a need for greater awareness amongst disability groups themselves, about individual disabled people's needs in relation to accessible loos.
- There is also a need for greater awareness of away-from-home toileting and continence problems that are found in the general population.
- Loos for general use need to be provided at regular intervals within the town and along sea promenades.

Updating the language It was generally agreed that it was not helpful that reference is continually made to 'disabled' loos not accessible loos. While many a 'disabled' loo is just that - a 'disabling' facility! - this helps maintain an old-fashioned perception of disability and does nothing to further awareness of the need or promote action.

ACTION

- ITAAL will produce a record of the meeting for the ITAAL website, Privy Counsel and Disability Wales.
- Diana Twitchin will liaise with Laura Crawford, Editor for the North Wales area for the Welsh Section about actions as a result of this meeting.
- Diana will supply free bulk copies of the Essential Companion to Laura for circulation.
- Discussion on 'How to Complain' had highlighted the need for a Customer Comment Chart regarding accessible loos. Diana will liaise with Bev Burkitt on this.
- ITAAL would keep in touch with the Access Groups present to hear of any action they take as a result of this meeting.

SOUTH WALES CONSULTATION MEETING 30 April, 2004 Shaw Trust Disability Action Centre, Neath

13 participants took part in the second consultation. Apologies were received from Disability Wales and Jenny Randerson, a Welsh Assembly member.

As in Llandudno the discussion ranged over issues concerning provision, design and management of away-from-home accessible toilets, although this time the discussion kept closer to 'loos'.

DDA – 1 October responsibilities

- It is a basic right to access and use toilets
- Need for changing facilities for disabled children and adults
- Requirements to meet different disability needs – space, privacy, carers; colour contrasts
- Who will interpret and decide on what is 'reasonable' - disabled people or providers? This will need to be tested.
- Local authorities have no statutory obligation to provide public toilets. The DRC recently issued a statement that local authorities could not use 1 October as an excuse to close public toilets. Ann drew attention to the media report of 29 April that Torbay Council were closing all their public toilets because they had been rate capped.
- Participants should look at the DRC website and follow progress on the preparation of the new disability bill and lobby on issues of concern to them.

Disability Language

The importance of language came up several times during the day:

- The term 'accessible loos' should be used - accessible loos are used by many in the population who required the facilities they provide. 'Disabled' loos are just that - disabling to users.
- Individual participants had very strong personal preferences on disability language.

Travel/Community

- Rail travel for disabled people is not easy. Loo provision on stations is inadequate.
- Supermarkets have a good record in the provision of loo facilities – a sign that they listen to their customers!
- Local authorities and the business sector need to work together to come up with good practice solutions. Participants suggested helping small businesses by providing rate relief if they are providing a facility for general public use.
- Shop Mobility schemes had made life much easier for many people with walking difficulties.

Design/Management

- Varying requirements within loos – space, cleaning, locking, staff training
- Problems – loo providers' assumptions; lack of awareness; misuse of loos e.g. for storage
- 'Invisibility' of disabled people: they need to get into planning and management positions to raise awareness of access problems and make change happen.
- Direction signposting for toilet facilities is very poor.
- Locked loos (not on RADAR scheme) are a growing problem: it means you have to go and ask for a key.
- Some RADAR loos are being closed because of vandalism or misuse. Others are being closed overnight using a second lock.
- Loos that combine provision for disabled people and mums and babies are often very small with inadequately placed fittings. Many businesses set up this type of facility because 'space costs money'. Some of these loos do have adequate space with fittings placed to suit both set of users, but generally the existing loo has the changing table put in without reference to the needs of the disabled customer. The resulting loo is inadequate for both sets of users.

Reporting inadequate loos

This was a recurring theme throughout the day. So many accessible loos are not

satisfactory but how can you persuade users to report them or make formal complaints? For many disabled people, just living each day is a real challenge and the last thing they or their helpers want is to spend time making a complaint.

Vivacity 2020

ITAAL reported on the Vivacity 2020 research being carried out by London/Sheffield Universities looking at the 24-hour city and user needs

Hospital facilities

Participants expressed concern about the inadequacy of provision of accessible loos within hospitals. One woman described a recent hospital stay where she either had a commode by the bed or used a cubicle with no door that was exactly opposite the doors to the male ward.

Specific Gender v. Unisex loos

Participants were very concerned about the lack of understanding about the use of unisex loos - i.e. a helper might not be of the same sex; women might not want to enter unisex facilities. Some disabled people prefer unisex accessible loos sited within specific gender provision but this shows little understanding of the needs of other disabled people.

Personal care issues

- Continence problems in the general population mean that loo closures are having an impact on many people. The INCONTACT representative tabled copies of the Urgency Card that INCONTACT members can produce to use shop facilities. There is a need for debate between local authorities and business premises on access to toilet provision. Examples were given of shop-window notices saying 'no customer toilets in this shop' or 'the toilets are for customer use only'.

- Whilst local authorities are closing existing public toilets (Audit Commission say 5% a year across the UK) local authorities are now spending a lot of money providing urinals or street 'potties' in town and city

centres to deal with street urination by both men and women especially late at night when pubs close.

- There are public and individual health issues in relation to loo closures – e.g. increase in street urination; disabled people not drinking for several hours so they will not need a toilet when out; lack of hand washing facilities.

- There are also mental health issues – e.g. rising numbers of people who are housebound because of lack of facilities; continence problems not being an issue that is spoken about.

Taking action

Several participants felt that lobbying about loo closures was important and that disability and continence groups should come together to raise awareness. Participants were encouraged to register their concerns on the Save Our Loos website. www.saveourloos.co

Understanding other disabilities

A visually-impaired participant commented that accessible loos were only for wheelchair users: he found the space in accessible loos intimidating and could not find his way around them. The responses to this clarified that while the space is vital for wheelchair users, if the fittings and use of colour contrast were right then he would have fewer difficulties.

Discussion kept coming back to the fact that **one** loo design cannot solve all the issues. It is a major problem, but if more accessible loos are to become available then some compromise has to be accepted. Milton Keynes Shopping Centre is an example of good practice in this regard: they have provided a set of accessible loo facilities with different variations including adult changing space.

Facts and figures

- **Welsh figures** An Impact Study carried out for the National Disability Council prior to the introduction of the DDA showed

that 1.6 million people are covered by the Disability Discrimination Act. Latest figures show that 1 in 4 of Welsh people (22%) have a disability. However participants felt this figure was under reported.

- **Contenance** Participants wanted to know if contenance would be covered by the DDA Part 111 Goods Facilities and Services.
- **Welsh Assembly.** Jenny Randerson of the Welsh Assembly has been collecting information about public convenience provision in Wales and the effect of closures. Participants could contact her with information at Jenny.Randerson@wales.gov.uk. Access Groups in Wales have more direct contact with the Welsh Assembly than perhaps English Access Groups could have with Westminster.
- **Part M of the Building Regulations** Several participants felt that the Part M document was not as helpful as it could be about accessible loos. However, given that no single accessible loo design could 'fit' all disabled people, Part M did provide a basic loo that met a majority of needs.
- **Tourism** There is a need to involve the Welsh tourism industry about these issues. Some discussion took place about the Blue Flag beaches and the lack of toilet facilities for beach users.
- **PAMIS video 'Time for a Change'** This is part of the PAMIS Changing Places Campaign. Jennie Grieve and Ann Winfield have copies. Participants to let Jennie know if they want a copy. Several references were made to the need for accessible loos with adult size changing tables and the need for such facilities to be available in town centres or wherever large numbers of the public meet.

Public awareness and attitudes to disability Participants felt very strongly that awareness and attitudes to disability were poor – disabled people needed to be

more involved in local planning and decisions.

Voluntary/statutory partnerships Several participants raised concerns about the move of responsibility for services from the statutory to voluntary sector and the added bureaucracy this has created for voluntary groups.

Disabled Drivers Motor Club - Jennie Grieve, a Welsh representative for the DDMC, reported that the question of accessible loos had been raised at their recent AGM. Diana Twitchin said that it had been DDMC that printed the article that led to the setting up of ITAAL and they had been very supportive over the years. Indeed as a mobility organisation they were very aware of the importance of service stations and adequate facilities for disabled travellers.

Moving forward

The final session looked at how ITAAL could work with local groups to produce the Welsh section of the UK Directory of Loos. Diana reported that since the Llandudno meeting, ITAAL had had another funding application turned down and as a result the Trustees had to look closely at ITAAL's future. So the Welsh participants would need to identify actions that could be pursued without ITAAL support .

Participants felt that ITAAL would be able to attract contributors to complete Loo Location sheets through the various groups present and their networks. They felt that they could attract local funding for the Welsh section if they continued working in partnership with ITAAL.

Conclusion

Participants felt it had been a useful day. . They will contact people from the Llandudno meeting to share experience and agree action points.

Editor's note

The impetus for the Welsh meetings came from Laura Crawford and Jennie Grieve who provided back up in publicising the meetings and did all the planning work. ITAAL are extremely grateful to them for their support, their local and regional knowledge, their awareness of the 'loo' issues, and the warm welcome they gave us.

POSITIVE ACTION AT WALES MILLENNIUM CENTRE

Trevor Palmer who attended the Neath meeting emailed:

"I run the Disability Advisory Group for the Wales Millennium Centre. Following the meeting I showed the PAMIS video on adult changing facilities in accessible loos to the Project Director and Operations Manager for the Centre. Everyone learned a great deal with the result that an adult changing facility will be installed.

However this will not happen until after the Centre has been officially opened, as the detailed information for the facility was received too late to get it into the building schedules. A suitable facility will be created on the ground floor of the Centre.

All credit due to the Wales Millennium Centre senior management for taking action on this issue. "

THANK YOU – ITAAL & YOUR SUPPORTERS

from Sue Cunningham of the British Toilet Association who has been briefing Welsh Assembly members.

"My thanks to all who responded so promptly to my request for information about accessible loo provision in Wales. This enabled me to present a file of relevant information with details of sources/useful contacts to Jenny Randerson, a Welsh Assembly member. Jenny is a member of

the Equality Committee that is investigating the provision of toilets for people with disabilities. We discussed a variety of items:

- Jenny intends to get issues included on the official agenda
- Some Welsh local authorities are closing public toilets because of concerns about access for disabled people – Jenny needed details of such closures.
- Poor provision of toilets is a tourism issue
- LAs are not obliged to make provision – agreed need for legislation.
- Jenny is considering various ways in which the Welsh Assembly might be able to 'oblige' councils to provide the resources for public toilets.
- Jenny proposed to research relevant powers of the Welsh Assembly and talk to Chair of the Equality Committee.

On a more local level we discussed the major redevelopment planned for part of Cardiff's shopping centre. Jenny intends to find out about proposed public toilet provision in the area.

Our discussion also ranged across various methods of tackling the whole issue of toilet provision. There is a possibility that it could be regarded as a public health issue, which could involve the Assembly's Health Minister."

..... AND OUR CONGRATULATIONS to Sue Cunningham for her British Toilet Association 2004 Special Award for her outstanding contribution to the campaign to raise standards of washroom hygiene and provision over many years. As co-founder of the voluntary group 'All Mod Cons' (predecessor to the BTA), Sue has been campaigning to raise standards for nearly 20 years. Sue has also been a tremendous support to ITAAL since its inception – regularly providing encouragement and boosting morale in the ITAAL office.

SCOTLAND

TALKING WITH SCOTLAND

Early in 2004 Peter Ingram-Monk, a board member of the Scottish Disability Equality Forum contacted us about the Scottish section of the UK Directory and ideas for a partnership with ITAAL.

As our funding problems came to a head in April, discussion went on 'hold' pending the Trustees' deliberations about ITAAL's future. In the light of the decision to stop work on the UK Directory, Peter and his colleagues are now exploring how they can work with Scottish access groups to locate and analyse toilet facilities and ultimately publish a proper guide. They may draw on ITAAL's expertise to help them. The ITAAL Trustees are delighted that this initiative will continue and wish SDEF well with their work.

GOOD PRACTICE IN SCOTLAND

Contact PAMIS for a good example of accessible changing facilities for adults. They have installed a fully accessible loo in their head office in Dundee to be used as an example of good practice and also be available to families living or visiting Dundee. For further details visit www.dundee.ac.uk/pamis or write to PAMIS, Springfield House, 15/16 Springfield, White Top Research Unit, University of Dundee, Dundee DD1 4JE.

INFORMATION

PUBLICATIONS

The following three publications are available from:
Centre for Accessible Environments
70 South Lambeth Road,
London SW8 1RL
Tel 020 7840 0125, fax 020 7840 5811.
www.cae.org.uk

ACCESS TO SERVICE STATIONS

Making goods and services accessible to disabled customers – A guide for service stations.

CAE has published this guide in partnership with the United Kingdom Petroleum Industry Association (UKPIA). It is primarily for service stations, large and small, but will also be distributed widely within the petrol industry. It has been drafted to assist petroleum industry retailers, franchisees and related service providers to understand the implications of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) and respond to their duties under Part 3 of the Act

If your local service station is not fully accessible or needs help in understanding access issues, we suggest you encourage them to contact UKPIA or CAE to get a copy of the guide.

THE GOOD LOO DESIGN GUIDE

**Published by the Centre for Accessible Environments and RIBA Enterprises
March 2004**

The Good Loo Design Guide became a best seller when CAE first published it in 1988. This new edition published to coincide with the implementation of the new Part M document takes an inclusive approach to the provision of WCs that suit as wide a range of users as possible. It gives unembarrassed and factual advice about the planning, design, distribution and management of toilet facilities in buildings.

Contents include

- legislation
- user needs: an inclusive approach
- level of provision: how many - where
- design principles
- layouts
- design detail
- management issues

A recommended read for architects, developers, building control officers and other building professionals wanting to design the enabling environment that disabled people seek. Should be read by

all loo providers before starting to build.
Cost - £20.00
ITAAL were delighted to be involved in its preparation.

DESIGNING FOR ACCESSIBILITY
Published by CAE and RIBA Enterprises
March 2004

A new edition - completely up-to-date and user friendly. A good practice guide based on the 2004 Approved Document M and BS8300: 2001 in the context of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA). Aimed at all those seeking to fulfil their service provider duties under the DDA as well as architects, designers, facilities managers and a range of consumers, including disabled people

**BLADDER AND BOWEL
MANAGEMENT - A Spinal Injuries
Association booklet** – available from SIA,
Suite J, 3rd Floor Acorn House,
387-391 Midsummer Boulevard, Milton
Keynes MK9 3HP – tel 0845 678 6633 or
01908 60419. Cost £5 incl. p & p.
ITAAL is in the Useful Organisations list.

SERVICES

**HOUSE ADAPTATIONS ADVISORY
SERVICE - HAAS**
**New service to help with adapting homes
for disabled and older people.**

Many people need to adapt their homes – including their toilet facilities - to help them live more safely, conveniently and independently as they grow older, or if they have a disability. Many apply for Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs).

CAE with the backing of the Department of Health has established a new design resource, the House Adaptations Advisory Service (HAAS) to help people make the necessary adaptations and find local professionals with experience in designing

for disabled and older people to plan and oversee the work.

The HAAS is a UK wide register of health care professionals, architects, surveyors and other related professionals who have a demonstrable knowledge of the housing needs of disabled and older people. The HAAS database also contains details of members' experience of other small-scale projects such as local churches, village halls and community and day centres. Users of the service are sent a list of all the members in their region free of charge. For further information contact CAE, 70 South Lambeth Road, London SW8 1RL tel 020 7840 0125

**WANT HELP TO TELL LOCAL
SHOPKEEPERS ABOUT ACCESS
post-October 1?**

The Disability Rights Commission website www.drc.gb.org has a whole range of publications aimed at informing businesses about the best way to respond to the changes. Take a look at the *Open4All* Campaign. 'Case studies' booklets focus on methods employed by four small businesses – hairdresser, café, clothes shop and newsagent.

DRC Helpline tel 08457 622633, textphone 08457 622644, email enquiry@drc-gb.org
Post: DRC Helpline, Freepost, Mid 02164, Stratford-Upon-Avon. CV37 9BR

**'UPDATING' THE ITAAL
ESSENTIAL COMPANION**
**Important text amendments – June
2004**

The Essential Companion text has been checked to ensure that the information given is still accurate and relevant. The following amendment page is being

Added to each copy being sent out. We include it here so that readers who already have a copy can add it to their book.

Page 32 – Regulations - Part 2 Planning and Building Accessible Loos -

An updated version of the Approved Document M Access to and Use of Buildings, The Buildings Regulations 2003 came into force in May 2004. This document now supercedes earlier versions and contains major changes regarding loo provision.

Page 33 - Disability Discrimination Act with effect from the 1 October 2004 requires adaptations to physical features of premises that are a barrier or prevent access to services. For further information visit the Disability Rights Commission (DRC) website www.drc-gb.org.

Page 34 – changes of address

Centre for Accessible Environments and National Register of Access Consultants are now both at 70 South Lambeth Road, London SW8 1RL

CAE Tel 020 7840 0125

Fax 020 7840 5811

National Register Tel 020 7735 7845

Fax 020 7735 5811

PAMIS – Springfield House, 15/16 Springfield, The University of Dundee, Dundee DD1 4TE. No change to tel/fax.

Pages 35-37 Examples of loo designs and guidance

Updated versions of Designing for Accessibility and the Good Loo Design Guide were published in March 2004. The diagrams on pages 36 and 37 are superceded by the information in these two books supporting Part M changes. Both books available from CAE.

Page 54 References Regulations – The Approved Document M has been updated May 2004 (see above page 32)

ITAAL has circulated over 4000 copies of the Essential Companion - at least half going to business contacts.

If you would like a free copy please send an A4 stamped (2 x first class) addressed envelope to ITAAL.

RESEARCH

VIVACITY 2020

Jo-Anne Bicard, Research Fellow reports on progress

(See also Privy Counsel Issue 4)

News of our research on inclusive design of public toilets in city centres is beginning to spread, and we are now being contacted by a number of individuals and organisations. So far we have completed five personas with the collaboration of PAMIS and the Urostomy Association. Further focus group meetings have been planned with the Leonard Cheshire organisation, Incontact and care workers for a disabled children's adventure playground. We have also been contacted by individuals outside mainstream disability organisations, who would like to contribute to the research but who cannot, or would prefer not to attend focus groups. To include the widest spectrum of thoughts, opinions and experiences we are conducting one-to-one interviews with these individuals, either in their homes or at a location close to their homes.

The research has also begun its first case study in London's Clerkenwell, an area that currently has no 'on-street' local authority toilets. This situation highlights one of the main issues in the lack of 'public' provision, with responsibility for toileting needs falling to the private sector. Businesses we've spoken to have commented on an increase in non-customer requests for toilet facilities, and consequently many pubs and bars have brought in 'customer only' policies.

The provision of accessible toilets in private businesses highlights the variability in the

size, layout and design of these facilities. Although there does appear to be more accessible provision, some of the facilities on offer would not be considered fully accessible by the research team.

If you would like more information about the research, whether in view of participating in focus groups, interviews, or just to receive a research newsletter, please contact:

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PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

ITAAL receives regular requests for information and help and also reports of 'loo' incidents that raise concerns for disabled people when out and about. Here are some examples.

Public attitudes and verbal abuse

A wheelchair user in the Cardiff area contacted us about the location of unisex loos so that he could more easily support his wife who has Alzheimer's disease, on their twice-weekly trips out. He had recently had to use a facility where the adapted accessible cubicles were within the male and female toilets. He could not take his wife into the male unit, so directed her into the female unit: he was prevented from going with her because of the reaction of other women around. One woman with a small boy grabbed the child and pulled him into the Ladies with her saying 'you are safer in here with me'. He felt he was being labelled as a child molester.

This man was deeply concerned about his wife and his inability to provide her with the background support she needed without declaring her difficulties to 'all the world'.

Contacts in the Cardiff area were able to help with some loo information, and also reassure our enquirer that disability groups across Wales have been raising the need for unisex accessible loos for some time. The story was also passed to Jennie Randerson at the Welsh Assembly, who is collating information on public toilets in Wales.

Verbal abuse of disabled people in loo situations is a common issue here at ITAAL. It is one reason why public toilet facilities need attendants, who can ensure that disabled people and their assistants as well as those with continence problems can access facilities without hassle.

Husband vetoes using 'ladies'

MT of Nottingham wrote: 'I very often find when I am out with my husband that the accessible toilet for women is situated inside the women's toilets. This is very upsetting as I need my husband to assist me and there is no way that my husband will enter the women's toilets! The toilet attendants are usually very obliging but it is too delicate a matter for a stranger to help me.'

Another area which upsets me is when the baby changing facility is in the accessible toilet, making it very difficult to turn a battery-operated chair and still have space for myself and my husband. I realise that babies have to be catered for but a little more room would be helpful.'

Enforced overnight loo stop

BJ had the following experience: "In 2003 I went to a disabled people's toilet by myself on Southend sea front early in the evening. I could get into the toilet alright but I couldn't get out easily because the council had put a heavy spring on the outside door so I couldn't open the door by myself: I was just able to open the door an inch before the spring stopped me opening it further. I could not summon help as there was no alarm."

I was in the toilet overnight for 10 hours. I was not afraid as it was on a bank holiday so I knew somebody would need a loo that day. A family let me out next morning. My PA had reported me missing to the police that night.

When I stopped a police car next morning the officers could not read and understand my communication board, so they called an ambulance - but I was fine. The police officers told my daughter off for letting me out by myself.

Now I am waiting to see if Essex Police get Disability Awareness Training!"

Where are loos with hoists?

BJ passed on a request from a friend in Colchester seeking information on away-from-home toilets with hoists.

ITAAL would welcome information about sites with hoists, even if it is just an address. We can follow up for detailed information. We were delighted to see one in the loo at the Shaw Centre in Neath.

Local initiative on loos

John Taylor from the Cambridge area emailed us with details of his efforts to ensure that accessible loos are available and in working condition. John has sight problems and now has a RADAR key. He is building up contacts with local council officials and JC Decaux (automatic loos) and reports problems he finds. He was able to get the lock taken off a 24hr accessible loo at a bus station that he uses regularly. However problems immediately arose because homeless people began using it to sleep in. The situation is being monitored by the council and police. John is also investigating stations loos across the Cambridge region.

We hope that John will keep us informed about loos in his patch.

English Riviera loos!

TH from Brixham, South Devon emailed to say the accessible toilets in Brixham are very good, large, clean and RADAR key protected. Trago Mills loo at Bovey Tracy gets a 'thumbs up' for having room enough for a large wheelchair and 2 helpers. She did point out that other local loos are not so good - even bad - and that a lot are kept locked, unavailable to visitors. Out of season they are closed entirely.

In praise of Cornwall/Devon

JB of Wiltshire emailed:

"I was in contact with you several years ago and am always interested to read PC.

Having just spent a holiday in Cornwall I was prompted to let you know there are wheelchair accessible loos at the following properties that we visited:

Caerhays Castle and Gardens

The Eden Project

Castle Drogo, Drewsteignton, Okehampton

Lydford Gorge, nr Okehampton

Lanhydrock House, Bodmin,

Pencarrow House, Nr Bodmin

I am sorry I did not take down any measurements but at least these places have made some provision and I was able to manage even though some were rather tight for my outdoor power chair."

Why do I help ITAAL?

SS of Surrey when asked this question responded:

"My 12 year old son is in a wheelchair and needs accessible toilets. One of our bugbears is having to check on the availability of a suitable loo before going out as a family. As a result I am keen to collect any information I can about the whereabouts of loos in readiness. It reduces the stress a little. We were pleased with the ITAAL directory and when we saw the request for help thought we would give back a little of what we have received."

Sussex Parish Loos

GC of Chichester keeps us up-to-date on a range of issues concerning loos, parking and general access within West Sussex. She is supporting a project at the parish church of Sidlesham to provide lavatories within the church building. She says: "There are clear signs that Anglican country parish churches are now planning extensions or repairs and LAVATORIES! As someone who visits family graves regularly and then looks for a convenient bush – I welcome this."

Vandalism and Misuse

MB from Yorkshire emailed: "I was so annoyed when most of the public loos closed in this area of East Yorkshire. We now have a new one in Withernsea, very clean but not all that big, free too. You have to ask the man in charge to open the extra lock they had to put on. A drug addict who held his father's key (? RADAR) was using it with friends to do whatever they do. A few weeks later, three people were found dead in another 'ordinary' loo in the town."

MUSIC FESTIVALS AND OTHER TEMPORARY VENUES (see article in Issue 4)

Brian Catchpoole emailed us with the following 'good news' update:

"I have received a letter from Steve Heap, Festival Director Towersey Festival, the essential part of which says:

'Just a quick note to let you know that after some discussions and budgeting and some thoughts about siteing we have taken your advice and will position a second disabled person's toilet on the main site at Towersey this year to look after the influx of day visitors, clearly some of whom may require the facility. At the moment we are also lobbying the supplier

to ensure that at least one of these units has hot water as well as cold.

Thanks again for your observations and ideas. It is useful to hear from customers, in particular those with special needs.'

This means that in the space of three years we have moved from a single unit for the entire festival, to three spread over two sites. A significant improvement I think you will agree."

FROM THE ITAAL OFFICE

NEW TREASURER

We welcome Leslie Green as ITAAL Treasurer. Leslie came to us via the REACH organisation in January 2004 and has placed a firm hand on the financial helm. He provides a strong sense of security regarding ITAAL finances and sound guidance on raising income.

MONEY MATTERS

As has already been explained, we have had to make some difficult decisions about finance in order to try and make sure that ITAAL's work can continue.

These decisions have been taken after a full review of all fund-raising efforts over the six years ITAAL has existed.

Seeking money to work around the subject of 'loos' does not carry media attention. Indeed it is a side of disability that even many disability groups prefer not to mention - or will talk about only under the banner of 'toilet humour'.

We did consider whether the 1 October 2004 might, in fact, be the right time to close ITAAL. The legislation provides protection to disabled people that should have a profound effect on the provision and maintenance of away-from-home toilets. However, indications from our current work seem to show that there is a continuing role

for ITAAL, hence our efforts to find new ways to keep going! issues.

General fund raising

We regularly receive letters from fund-raising organisations working with charities to improve their income. 'Come and learn how to raise money – it will only cost you £200/£100 for the day.' We sometimes wonder what would happen if ITAAL actually did turn up on one of these days, even supposing we had the money to pay the fee, or the venue was accessible.

ITAAL receives its fair share of letters, emails and telephone calls saying what a good job we are doing and 'how could I help?'. However, the suggestion 'what about helping with raising money' usually results in a list of questions – 'have you done this, approached that', etc. but unfortunately, rarely any offer to actually do these things people so helpfully suggest!

So..... if you feel you'd be willing and able to prove us wrong on this, we would be extremely pleased to hear from you!!.

Perhaps someone out there would produce a Loo calendar – would that bring solvency to ITAAL? Ring Diana on 020 8904 8321 if you have a proposal to raise funds but – please! - only if you are prepared to do the work involved.

The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of ITAAL.

**Next issue of Privy Counsel
Closing date for items
????**

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