

CHECKLIST B – VENUE CHECKLIST

This checklist is intended to be used in conjunction with the [Introduction](#) contained in “MAKE YOUR CONFERENCE ACCESSIBLE”

CHOOSING THE VENUE

You need to consider the type of delegates that are to be expected at your conference, and choose the venue accordingly. A conference addressing disability issues, for example, is likely to attract more delegates with disabilities than a conference on a subject unconnected with disabilities. Where a high number of people with disabilities is expected, accessibility assumes a greater importance.

Where a number of wheelchair users or people with mobility impairments might be expected to attend the conference, you need to ensure that there are no barriers within the venue itself that might cause delays or complications. For example, it would be unwise in such circumstances to use a venue that requires delegates with mobility impairments to use a lift to reach the reception area, the conference area or the accessible toilets, as queues of people could quickly result.

Means of choosing an accessible venue

To check the accessibility of a venue, you can:

- visit the venue yourself and use this checklist.
- consult ‘Conferences & Exhibition Venues: a Guide to Facilities for Disabled People’ (second edition 2000) published by RADAR www.radar.org.uk (cost £8). The information in the guide has been provided by the venues themselves. It includes information for each venue listed on disabled parking, the nearest car park, whether the entrance is level, accessibility of meeting rooms, accessible toilets, whether there is an induction loop, accessibility of catering areas and notice needed for special diets, and accessible bedrooms.
- use the VenuesLive search facility to find an accessible venue: www.venueslive.co.uk.
- commission an access audit of one or more possible venues. You can obtain a list of access auditors accredited by the National Register of Access Consultants from www.nrac.org.uk.

Further information about accessibility can be obtained from:

Centre for Accessible Environments

Tel 020 7357 8182
Textphone: 020 7357 8182
Website www.cae.org.uk
Enquiries info@cae.org.uk

Disability Rights Commission Helpline

Tel 08457 622633
Textphone 08457 622644
Website www.drc-gb.org
Enquiries enquiry@drc-gb.org

	Commentary	Space for your notes
<p>CAR PARKING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is parking designated for disabled people (referred to as “designated parking” in this checklist) available on site? • How many designated parking spaces are available and can these be reserved? • Are the designated parking spaces of sufficient width to allow wheelchair users to get in and out of the vehicle (with sufficient space either side of the car and at the rear)? • Is the designated parking clearly signposted? • If designated parking is above or below the reception level, is there a lift from the car park to reception? • If designated parking is in front of or to the side of the hotel, is there level access to the reception? • Do the designated parking spaces and the path to the reception have smooth surfaces? • Is there a phone number that disabled drivers can ring when they get near to the venue to access the designated parking spaces? • Are there any dropping-off points? • Can valet parking be provided? • What assistance can be provided to visitors with mobility impairments if they are dropped off at the entrance? 	<p>Adequate parking needs to be made available for all delegates who are expected to arrive by car, with reserved parking for visitors with mobility impairments.</p> <p>There needs to be a means of marking reserved parking spaces with the name of the user.</p> <p>BS 8300 recommends that designated parking spaces should measure 2.4 m x 4.8 m, with hatching 1.2 m wide at the sides and rear to ensure there is sufficient space to allow the disabled person to transfer from car to wheelchair.</p> <p>The route from the car park to the reception ideally needs to be well signposted, level and smooth. Wheelchairs cannot be propelled manually through gravel.</p>	

<p>ENTRANCE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can disabled visitors enter the building by the same entrance as other visitors? • If not, is there another entrance that is accessible to wheelchair users? • If there are steps, how many are there and is there a hand rail? • If one is needed, is there a platform lift or a ramp suitable for wheelchair users? • If there is a removable ramp, how does a wheelchair user signal that he or she needs assistance? • If reception is above or below the entrance level, is there a lift (other than a service lift)? • What alternative is available if this lift is out of service on the day of the conference? 	<p>The ideal entrance is one that is used by all delegates. However, if wheelchair users or other people with impaired mobility need to use a separate entrance, this should be acceptable so long as the entrance is a reasonable one. Using the service entrance is unlikely to be acceptable.</p> <p>Ideally the main entrance will have automatic sliding doors. If the main entrance has a revolving door, then there should be a large swing door on at least one side of the revolving door, which should be left unlocked during the function.</p> <p>A level entrance is preferable to a ramp. Ramps should not be steeper than 1 in 12, and 1 in 15 is preferable.</p>	
<p>RECEPTION DESK</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the reception desk at a height suitable for people in wheelchairs? • If not, can an alternative desk be used for all delegates? 	<p>The preferred height for a desk or table according to BS 8300 is 760 mm with a minimum height to the underside of 700 mm.</p>	

<p>MAIN CONFERENCE ROOMS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the main conference rooms easily accessible from the hotel entrance and/or the lifts? • Is there more than one lift? • Is the main conference room large enough for the expected number of visitors? • Are the acoustics in the main conference room reasonably good? 	<p>The main conference rooms need to be as accessible as possible, ie not down too many corridors or through heavy doors.</p> <p>Try to avoid a venue with only one lift. What happens if it is out of service on the day of the conference?</p> <p>The main conference room needs to be large enough to allow for good circulation for a wheelchair user, particularly in the aisles. At least two standard chairs have to be removed to provide space for a wheelchair.</p> <p>A room with echoes may cause problems for people with hearing impairments.</p>	
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<p>SYNDICATE ROOMS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are syndicate rooms available?• Are these on the same floor as the main conference room?• Are all the syndicate rooms accessible?• If people need to move between syndicate rooms, are they close together and on the same floor of the building?	<p>If syndicate rooms are to be used, they need to be as near the main conference rooms as possible, and on the same floor.</p> <p>People with hearing impairments may find it useful for small-group sessions to take place in smaller rooms rather than in huddles within the main conference rooms. Plan the day's activities with that in mind.</p> <p>Where some syndicate rooms are accessible and others are not (whether for wheelchair users, people with impaired mobility, people with impaired hearing or any other impairment), it may be necessary to allocate people to specific small groups or workshops on the basis of which rooms are being used for each workshop. This cannot always be avoided.</p>	
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<p>ACCESSIBLE TOILETS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are there genuinely accessible toilets designed for disabled people on the same floor as the main conference hall and syndicate rooms?• If not, are there accessible toilets accessible by lift?• Is there more than one accessible toilet?	<p>There needs to be a minimum of one genuinely accessible toilet available to delegates at all times within convenient distance of the conference rooms. Ideally this should be on the same floor, and immediately nearby so delegates do not waste their time having to reach the accessible toilet.</p> <p>As there is always a risk that a single accessible toilet may be out of action, it is preferable for there to be a minimum of two accessible toilets available to delegates.</p> <p>Where a significant number of wheelchair users are expected, then there need to be more accessible toilets available.</p> <p>The toilets need to be genuinely accessible, not just standard toilets with a wheelchair symbol on the door. For details of what needs to be available, see Checklist C.</p>	
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<p>LIFTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are lift doors (including lifts from the car park) wide enough for a wheelchair? • Is the lift big enough for a large wheelchair and at least one other person? • Are there controls at a height suitable for wheelchair users? • Are there Braille or tactile buttons? • Is there an audio floor indication? 	<p>Part M of the Building Regulations recommends in its Approved Document M the following minimum dimensions:</p> <p>Width: 1100 mm Depth: 1400 mm Door opening: 800 mm Controls: between 900 mm and 1200 mm above floor level, both within and outside the lift car.</p>	
<p>SEATING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the chairs comfortable for sitting for extended periods and do at least some of the chairs have arms? • Can a sofa be provided for people who need to lie down? 	<p>Ideally the conference venue should have some chairs with arms and some without, as people's preferences vary.</p>	
<p>ACOUSTICS AND SOUND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the acoustics in the main conference rooms reasonably good? • Is there an induction loop in the main conference rooms? • Are there induction loops in syndicate rooms? • If an infra-red sound improvement system is to be used, have arrangements been made for the handing out and collection of neck stethoscopes from users? 	<p>A room with echoes may cause problems for people with hearing impairments.</p> <p>If there are no induction loops, you may be able to hire them. Check who will pay the cost of this.</p> <p>Take advice if using a number of induction loops in close proximity, as sound can sometimes be relayed from one loop to another.</p>	

<p>LIGHTING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the level of lighting in the main conference hall and/or syndicate rooms adequate and adjustable? • If the level of lighting is to be reduced during presentations, have alternative arrangements been made for people who rely on interpreters and lip readers? • Are there are flickering light bulbs? 	<p>If the lighting is not adjustable, you may need to arrange extra or alternative lighting. Transitions from dark to light need to be gradual for people with visual impairments, so lights should be dimmed slowly and never turned completely off.</p> <p>Flickering lights, strobe lighting and flash photography can cause problems for people with epilepsy.</p>	
<p>AIR QUALITY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the air quality good in the main conference hall and syndicate rooms? • Is there air conditioning and can it be adjusted if necessary on the day? • What arrangements can be made to make people more comfortable when necessary where there is no air conditioning? 	<p>People’s perceptions of the ideal temperature will vary but a stuffy atmosphere can cause asthma attacks.</p> <p>If the atmosphere becomes too stuffy and there is no air conditioning, the venue may be able to provide fans, or arrange for windows to be opened.</p>	

<p>CATERING FACILITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the room where meals will be served accessible? • Are there any steps to this room? • Is it large enough for several servery points to avoid long queues? • Is it large enough for people to move around when all delegates are in the room? • Is there sufficient room between tables for wheelchair users to move around? • Are the tables of a suitable height for wheelchair users? • Can the room where lunch will be served accommodate some chairs and tables for people who cannot eat standing up? Or can a separate seating area be provided? 	<p>The preferred height for a desk or table according to BS 8300 is 760 mm with a minimum height to the underside of 700 mm.</p>	
<p>DIETARY REQUIREMENTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can the venue cater for people on special diets? • Can all food be labelled? • Can ingredients be labelled to meet the needs of people with allergies? • Is there a reasonable choice of different types of food? 	<p>Some people may prefer food they can eat with their fingers rather than with cutlery. Straws should be available where drinks are served.</p>	

<p>EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are there procedures in place for evacuating disabled people, including wheelchair users, in an emergency? Ask for a copy of the procedures in advance of the conference.• Are there fire alarms that are audible/visible to all?• Will venue staff be available to help evacuate disabled delegates and facilitators, and have these staff had appropriate training?	<p>It is vital to ensure that there are procedures in place for the evacuation for people with mobility impairments, including wheelchair users. These arrangements need to be explained at the start of the conference. Where evacuation of wheelchair users relies on Evac Chairs, there need to be enough seats for the expected number of wheelchair users.</p> <p>If one or more deaf people are likely to be on their own for any length of time, arrangements need to be made to ensure that their safety is taken into account should there be an emergency.</p>	
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OVERNIGHT ACCOMMODATION

- Are there accessible bedrooms for delegates or facilitators who need to stay overnight before or after a conference? You should ask to see an accessible bedroom and check the bathroom facilities, space around the room, and emergency contact arrangements as some accessible bedrooms do not meet the required standard.

If the venue offers its own accommodation, then the organiser will need to check that it offers some accommodation for wheelchair users. It is wise for the organiser to check so-called accessible accommodation personally, rather than relying on third parties' opinions of its accessibility.

Similarly, if accommodation is being arranged outside the venue, a personal inspection is advisable.

If separate accommodation is being used, arrangements need to be made to transport delegates between the conference and the accommodation. Often the simplest way to arrange this is to hire a number of taxis or an appropriately sized minibus or bus (ensuring that this too is accessible).

Where delegates are to make their own way between accommodation and the conference (or, equally, between any two locations), you need to be certain that sufficient time has been allowed (ideally by making the journey yourself, at the same time of day, but bear in mind that people with mobility impairments may take longer to make the journey). It is worth producing specific maps for this purpose, showing routes by car or public transport as appropriate.

<p>GUIDE DOGS/ASSISTANCE DOGS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are guide dogs or other assistance dogs accepted, including in the restaurant, if this is to be used? • Can they have access to water? • Is there an open space for them to exercise? 	<p>It is no longer acceptable for guide dogs and assistance dogs to be barred from restaurants, but the practice is still encountered.</p>	
<p>The space below will allow you to record issues relating to your own conference.</p>		