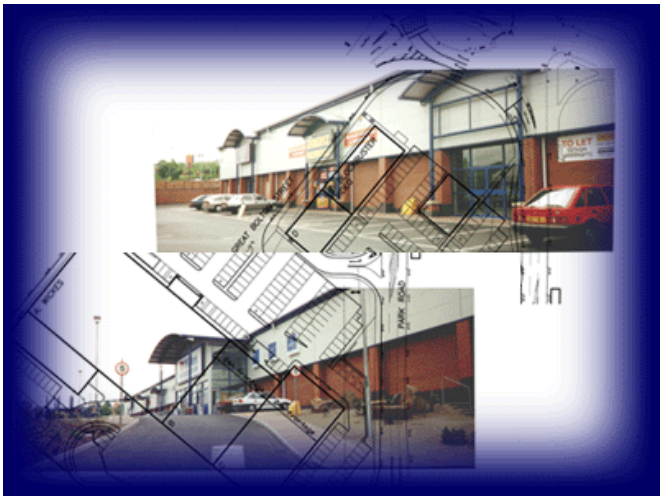
Designing for Diversity



Make design about the individual

North Somerset Council
Town Hall, Weston-super-Mare BS23 1UJ

Produced by Equality and Diversity Team 2012

Contents

Contents 1
Introduction 2
Section One - Principles 3
1 Where to start the design process? 3
2 We can't design for everyone, can we? 4
3 Design Principles to use 4
Summary 5
Section Two – Into practice 6
1 Defining aims 6
2 Specialist staff 6
3 Design process 7
4 Consultation and involvement 7
Summary 9
Section Three - Design advice sources 10
The information that's available 10
How to use it 10
Legislation 11
Appendix one: Inclusive design and project briefs for buildings or places 12
Key Features Checklist 12
Introduction 12
Recommendations for writing inclusive design brief 14
Appendix two: Inclusive design advisers 15
National Register of Access Consultants .....
Centre for Accessible Environments .....
Salford University SURFACE Inclusive Design Research Centre .....
RNIB Access Consultancy Services .....
Appendix three - What the Equality Act 2010 says 17
Public Organisations 17
Private companies in partnership with public organisations 17

Introduction

> "For... (lots of) people, many of the barriers in the built environment are at a depressingly practical level;
>
> - restrictions on ease of access and movement,
> - lack of clarity in way-finding,
> - inappropriate attitudes and
> - non-existent or non-functioning facilities.
>
> Why, we have to ask, does this go on happening?"

Source: So what is normal?

http://www.sowhatisnormal.co.uk University of Brighton

This guidance seeks to overcome this recurring problem.

It has been written in the style of a Code to promote inclusive design as a way of getting at the heart of the issue.

- Section one looks at understanding how you should design and who you are designing for.
- Section two offers advice on putting your design into practice; how's it different when it comes to inclusive design?

Alongside the Key Principles the Code provides:

1. Talking points – issues in current practice
2. Reflections – feedback from people using places and transport
3. Examples - to illustrate the principles

The Code then moves on to offering guidance, but only when it has set out clearly how it should be used.

- Section three lists guidance to assist with design solutions relating to specific people's needs from people with disabilities, to people from minority ethnic backgrounds, carers or parents.

Source: Ann Marie's Istanbul

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Section One - Principles

1 Where to start the design process?

Before launching into looking up standards pause and consider how you design, what are you actually trying to do?

Most designers start with a concept. We're all familiar with concept cars, styles of fashion etc that bear no resemblance to what we buy. The designer will work it up into a detailed design with the concept as the foundation, going on to take account of production methods and practical use. We then decide if it will fit, suit us or if it's affordable. A long way from the concept in many cases.

But to many people it is the detail that matters most. Unless the concept takes account of the detailed requirements of individual people they will require bolt-on extras to make them work.

Ford, OXO (below) and BT are examples of three

companies that actively use inclusive design principles and where the inclusive principles are hidden in the overall design appeal of the product.

Accessibility in the widest sense is not just about acknowledging equality in design, eg a door width or provision of a lift to the first floor. It's also about diversity, acknowledging that also we might not want to do these things in the same way. The concept must embrace all of these things at the outset.

Good design is not about uniformity or working to the concept of the ideal person, place or vehicle.

Example 1

Clothes that focus on "size zero" female models, all of whom are young, encouraged Marks and Spencer's to embark on advertising campaigns that used older models and the "Size 16 is normal" slogan, with a range of models of different ages and appearance. Though not always successful its aims were applauded.

Reflection 1

"Architecture is…designing for people. Making places more accessible and… more 'inclusive' for everyone is obviously a good thing. But that doesn't mean it is a simple thing to do.

It is hard to think about how differences between (people) can or should make an impact on design. It's too easy to just read the technical guidance...on what disabled people 'need' in terms of 'access' and treat this as an add-on (lifts or handrails) to 'normal' building design."*

2 We can't design for everyone, can we?

Yes we can, by following some basic rules we ensure everyone has a foundation on which to work to be able to use a space or mode of transport. A key rule is to not deliberately confuse, to remove boundaries, or change the rules for using spaces etc.

The simple reason for this rule is that we all interact with the built environment and its architecture as a part of our daily lives through a series of learnt actions;

- Expectations based on experience,
- Understanding social conventions or
- Reading situations.

When we don't know what's going on, we don't fit in or if an architect has deliberately confused, we in turn feel confused, uncomfortable and can be very frustrated.

Inclusion is offering flexibility in a design so people can use it in their own way whilst recognising the diverse needs of people who come through your door.

3 Design Principles to use

People using a space need to, independently:

1. Be able to travel to it, arriving outside or reasonably near to the building etc.
2. To be able to enter the place or board a bus
3. To move around a place or operate equipment as required.

Good design will allow people to do these things in ways that suit their own personal needs without making people an exception to a rule that has been only created for example, in a specific building by its architectural rules or a designer's opinion.

There is a useful range of documentation and research papers that helps focus on people's needs. Section 3 identifies some key guidance that will be appropriate for many situations.

The Equality Act sets outs nine groups of people who it's felt have commonly faced being made to feel an exception: to be discriminated against.

Good design should be a reflection of all of the relevant needs. To begin to identify needs, designers should work back from fixed or agreed national regulations derived from legislation before expanding into research papers, importantly guided or tested by customers' feedback.

Talking Point 1

The world is full of examples of buildings designed with a purpose in mind. Places of worship are typical examples with aims and ideals, not only about how the building should be seen, but how it must work. Inclusive design should be sensitive to and able to differentiate, between, different groups in diverse communities.

Example 2

"2.2 children, a Ford Mondeo and a three bedroom semi detached Barrett house…" For a while became the shorthand for describing family life in Britain. In reality it's a multi cultural country with different ways of living or family structures. Our housing must therefore be designed to reflect multi generational families with different views on how the sexes mix.

More bedrooms, larger dining rooms or several lounges are all basic requirements to some people.

Summary

- Need for diversity in design solutions – not multi use spaces but multi user space
- Provide flexibility in how we all relate to places or can use transport
- Stick to some basic rules and provide independence, confidence and certainty
- Find out how people live their lives and provide for them in a design eg younger people, people with dementia or women.

Reflection 2

We might all buy new houses or flats but it doesn't mean we like what we get. We all will take from it what suits us and try to adapt the rest to meet our needs. Problem is this approach doesn't work for everyone.

Just think about one group: 12% of people in UK are carers. They often find they have a range of specialist care equipment in their home that makes a house seem like a hospital. Finding storage space is very difficult. But lack of storage is a very common complaint for everyone.

Aim for multi user spaces not just multi use

Section Two – Into practice

1 Defining aims

2 Specialist staff

3 Design process

4 Consultation and involvement

5 Training

1 Defining aims

Set out in a statement, a description of what the design of the place or mode of transport wants to achieve, how this will be done and key principles or standards it will follow.

Whatever you write it's important to show how the scheme will be inclusive.

Appendix one contains some suggestions about what to include.

In defining the aims of a project invite the people who may use it to come and feed in their ideas about the design you want to create. Don't fix the concept until you know their views.

For buildings or places develop the statement into a Design and Access Statement which over time elaborates on the detailed design explaining the choices that have been made. This will assist you in presenting the proposal when making any development application for planning or building regulation consent.

2 Specialist staff

All designers must be able to call upon specialist guidance to assist in defining aims, detailed design or determining how variations to standards should be applied. An access or inclusive design adviser must be appointed who will be able to:

1. Audit existing buildings, facilities or transport
2. Advise on solutions to access barriers
3. Interpret legislation and guidance to offer design advice in the context of the project aims
4. Support and offer interpretation of users feedback and involvement

Large scale projects must appoint a dedicated person.

Smaller schemes must ensure advice is available and this can simply be making using of the local authority Access or relevant Equality Officer or a retained professional.

Talking Point 2

Does gender matter?

- 75% of bus journeys are undertaken by women.
- Public transport and lack of caring facilities and shopping outlets near employment locations restrict women's access to labour markets.
- Men are more likely to suffer violence in public spaces

Source: Dr Gemma Burgess, Cambridge Centre for Housing and Planning Research

Gender matters

All staff in project teams from building surveyors, or lift engineers to highway engineers should all be familiar with the inclusive design aspects of their area of work.

It is everyone's responsibility in some way.

Appendix two has details inclusive design advisers.

3 Design process

Over and above the allocation of tasks to project team members, there is a need to ensure the intended work of the inclusive design adviser is defined; well documented and clear lines of robust communication are set out. They must be engaged with every aspect and stage of the process of decision-making, the design and its implementation.

4 Consultation and involvement

- Consultation: asking for views

For many organisations there may not be a tradition of consulting users – staff or customers - before undertaking any work. Organisations regularly do market testing. Consultation in the design process should be seen in the same light, i.e. a way of gathering information about the features of the required design.

Designers should always use as their starting point a discussion with the people using buses, train stations or the local library instead of just working to a client's brief in isolation. Better design and the need for less changes further along in the process can result if clients and design teams can be encouraged to engage with users in this way.

The Equality Act (see appendix three) requires providers of services, facilities or goods to offer customers an equal standard of service. Consideration of the design of premises will contribute to this and if it's not addressed may require costly correction works later.

- Moving to involvement: active participation

Staff or customers particularly where they have specific personal experiences of situations eg disabled people may need to be more directly involved in the decision-making process eg an observer on a project team, or a formal consultee on any changes to a design or variations to a standard. (Does a 45 year old designer working on a Youth Centre really always know the needs of a 15 year old in depth?).

Talking Point 3

"The basic principle behind involving community groups in development is that respect for the environment is more easily achieved if those who are affected by that development have helped to create it."

Source: Women's Design Service, (1995).

Customer feedback is vital to good design

Are all public spaces welcoming to everyone?

5 Training

Do nothing is an option often considered as a part of reflective design assessments where a variety of options are considered to assess the quality of the decision being made.

There is no “do nothing option” here.

As daunting as dealing with equality in design may be for some people, solutions to the issues are available off the shelf.

Knowledge is key and with it comes an appreciation of what is required.

Various organisations from academic bodies to national organisations of different equality groups will provide the necessary insights that all designers must acquire alongside the basic training of structures, form and layout.

Reflection 3

“Lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender people are adroit at decoding public spaces. We modify our behaviour to avoid harassment and violence, being vigilant about public spaces and transport, avoiding buses and streets at school going home times… Without this behaviour it is almost certain the rate of homophobic attacks would be much higher. But where areas feel more welcoming, we are able to express ourselves comfortably. So how the environment is managed makes all the difference. The design and management of public spaces and facilities provides practical solutions, and consultation would be a good starting point.”

Deborah Gold
Chief Executive, GALOP

Source: Mintel 2012

Summary

- Define what you intend to do and the standards you want to achieve
- Involve a specialist with detailed knowledge of inclusive design all through the project
- Make sure everyone knows what their responsibilities are.
- Ask people for feedback on your ideas for buildings or open spaces
- Involve building users if there are issues about which you need their expertise

Talking Point 4

Only three in ten pensioners retired when they reached state pension age in the year up to February 2012. This is down from almost 1 out of every two people who retired in the previous year.

Source: Office of National Statistics, Labour Market Reports 2012

Diverse workforces require diverse design

Section Three - Design advice sources

The information that's available

In offering a list of guidance the aim is to promote an intelligent use of guidance and not a simplistic blunt use of a document that's not understood.

Details of a range of design sources are available to download at: http://theaccessofficer.n-somerset.gov.uk/ or available as a separate document.

The database shows a range of material which will vary in relevance and age. Attention is drawn to the fact some may have been superceded by events or later legislation. It has all been listed since older documents may still contain useful information or have historical significance to your project.

A document's inclusion here does not guarantee its accuracy and or significance in a specific field.

How to use it

It recommended that a sequential approach is taken to choosing what to use. The authoritative documents for design will be (in this order):

1. Local Planning policies
   In this area's case its the North Somerset Local Development Framework
2. Approved Document Part M 2004 of the Building Regulations 2010 and other relevant Approved Documents
3. British Standard, BS8300:as amended 2010 on Access for Disabled People (as amended).
4. Outcome of consultations e.g. with the North Somerset Council Access Officer, building users or customers and clients including national organisations eg "Action on Hearing Loss"
5. The results of current validated research (published (say) in the last 5 years)

Where there is a deviation from a quoted standard there must be a full explanation of the design solution.

It will be important in any design and its' supporting statements to show what sources of information have been used and how they are being implemented. See Appendix one: Inclusive design and project briefs

Unisex toilets – one design solution following feedback

Example 3

A school's toilets were designed so as to be unisex, fully enclosed individual cubicles and set out in an open horseshoe arrangement with no wall to the corridor. This arose from feedback that showed in the traditional, closed single sex rooms anti social behaviour led to students avoiding going to the toilet all day.

Public spaces throughout the school are used to supervise smaller scale areas

.

Legislation

Over and above the appendix three brief on the Equality Act, there is a variety of relevant legislation, regulations and duties that apply to the accessibility and usability of buildings. In devising any works you are advised to ensure that your proposals for the site or means of transport comply fully with the appropriate Codes of Practice, to ensure a complete and proper package is formulated.

This design code does not provide links or references for legislation and regulations that may be linked to any of the guidance that is to be found in the spreadsheet.

Designers are advised to contact the regulatory body starting with North Somerset Council to establish what consents may be required.

Key areas include:

- Town Planning – there is a need to address access into and around any building to which the public have access together with dwelling design under the Lifetime Homes standards set out in the Core Strategy
- Building Regulations 2010 – Approved Document Part M addresses the needs of disabled people in both residential and non-residential properties
- Highways Acts (various) – address duties to provide access for all pedestrians around the highway network including design of footways, crossing points and general road safety.
- Licensing – through various local government acts addresses activities such as leisure events, street trading and cafes and the issues of accessibility.
- Specific activities – there are a variety of situations such as marriage venues, or similar locations where public services are delivered in private buildings, etc.

The Equality Act is now about us all – whoever we are or whatever we do.

Appendix one: Inclusive design and project briefs for buildings or places

In preparing a brief for a project some familiarity with the site or building's access issues should be obtained. Ideally an audit will have been undertaken. Any brief and ultimately Design and Access Statement must take into account the following points.

Key Features Checklist

Introduction

Put yourself the position of any visitor or members of staff and look at how they will arrive at the site or building and use all its facilities.

Travel to site

- Car parking
- Drop off point
- Taxis
- Train and bus stops
- Routes to stops and travel distances

Consider if some modes of transport are more inaccessible and so the accessible modes will need to compensate. Eg car parking for disabled people.

Building environs

- Locations and orientation of entrances
- Hard and soft landscaping
- Width/gradients to footways
- Lighting
- Security and management

Building or Structures

- Materials
  1. Construction – walls, doors etc.
  2. Internal floor surfaces.
- Entrances
  1. Approach
  2. Steps and ramps
  3. Door design.
  4. Lifts

References

- Inclusive project management
- Design and Access Statements contained in DCLG Circular 1/2006
- Manual for Streets, DfT 2007
- Inclusive Mobility Guide, DfT 2009
- BS8300:as amended 2010, Access for Disabled People

Consider who needs to use the space or catch that bus.

Means of escape

- Design for independent means of escape
- Provide facilities for physical evacuation, for example, places of refuge, staff training, audio-visual alarm systems.

Signs and wayfinding

- Type and position of signs
- The use of differing tactile materials
- The layout of the building
- Internal décor
- Switches and controls
- Aids to communication.

Housing

See Lifetime Homes guidance produced by Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Movement within building

- Provision of lifts
- Stairs
- Corridor design – widths, changes in level
- Reproduction of key facilities on each floor, e.g. toilets.
  1. Receptions
  2. Specialist equipment. (Fitness equipment, pool hoists)
  3. Activities, eg displays in shops, dance floors in clubs, or changing areas in sports facilities
  4. Staff rooms
  5. Sanitary accommodation and shower facilities.
  6. Changing places toilets
  7. Baby changing and feeding areas

References

- Lifetime Homes
- Final report for signage and wayfinding for people with learning difficulties; BRAC 6/2005, DCLG
- BS9999 Fire safety code of practice for the design, management and use of buildings
- Building Sight, RNIB 1995

Recommendations for writing inclusive design brief

1. Objectives of the project must include goal of seeking to achieve inclusive environment. Emphasis must be on not diluting inclusive design aims to achieve objective of project.
2. Offer definitions of key terms so standard of access understood. Eg a specific British Standard?

   Aim to ensure all design team understand what trying to achieve. Begin with what "inclusive" means to the project.
3. Employment of inclusive design advisor and way will work on project

   Will need to define how will work in project team, responsibilities and lines of communication.
4. Identify through consultation and involvement who would use building and their specific needs and make them aims to achieve within the project. In particular:
   a. Ways of using the building by different groups – what implications does this have (hours of use, use different entrances etc)?
   b. Specific architectural or interior design requirements
   c. Anticipate need for auxiliary aids or equipment – could they be designed out? Or make provision for them to be easily added
   d. Seek to promote independent access and use for everyone
5. Define shape, mass and overall layout of site or building in context of seeking to ensure:
   a. they are not barriers to inclusive design
   b. they will contribute to an adaptable structure and design and do not reply on intervention by Facilities/service staff to make up for design failings
6. Set objective of using construction methods that will assist the future adaptation of the building and its spaces?
7. Promote good transport provision to and from the site, broken down by groups of people looking at type of transport forming a part of project and how it links to other modes or locations – are some more accessible than others and so should be given greater emphasis?
8. Ensure facilities will be provided for specific groups of people or used by specific groups eg: toilets, baby feeding etc
   8. Identify what known about these uses and the people using them
   9. Identify any key features design must include
      a. Levels of security and access control
      b. Relationship between groups of staff or staff and the public
      c. Layout of building eg a reception at the front and operational areas behind security at rear
   10. Ensure inclusive Facilities Management procedures and practices. Approach as a seamless part of design and work to remove any access conflicts.

Appendix two: Inclusive design advisers

There are a number of organisations and academic courses, locally and nationally, which clients or commissioners of designers should be aware of.

1 National organisations

National Register of Access Consultants

http://www.nrac.org.uk/

Fourth Floor, Holyer House, 20 -21 Red Lion Court, London, EC4A 3EB

Tel: 020 7822 8282

Email: info@nrac.org.uk

Centre for Accessible Environments

http://www.cae.org.uk/index.html

Information and training body on the accessibility of the built environment for disabled people. A registered United Kingdom charity.

4th Floor, Holyer House, 20-21 Red Lion Court, London, EC4A 3EB

Tel/textphone: 020 7822 8232

Fax: 020 7822 8261

Email: info@cae.org.uk

Salford University SURFACE Inclusive Design Research Centre

http://www.surface.salford.ac.uk/

Professor Marcus Ormerod

Centre Director
Email: m.ormerod@salford.ac.uk

RNIB Access Consultancy Services

RNIB Access Consultancy Services is a pan-disability, not for profit access consultancy.

http://www.rnib.org.uk/professionals/accessibleenvironments/Pages/accessible_environments.aspx

RNIB Access Consultancy Services, PO Box 173, Peterborough, PE2 6WS
Telephone: 01733 375370

Contact: accessconsultancy@rnib.org.uk

2 Local organisations

Vision North Somerset

Provides advice and support to visually impaired people with a resource centre, hospital services and rehabilitation.

http://visionnorthsomerset.wordpress.com/contact-us/

3 Neva Road, Weston-super-Mare, BS23 1YD

Telephone: 01934 419393

Email: info@visionns.org.uk

Backwell Access Group

Offers disability advice on local Backwell projects and initiatives

Email:c/o equality@n-somerset.gov.uk

Nailsea Disability Initiative

Provides advice to disabled people on range of issues, from access to benefits.

http://nailseadisability.wordpress.com

10, Crown Glass Place, Nailsea. BS48 1RD

Telephone: 01275 812183
Email: team@nailseadisability.org

Weston College

Offering courses in British Sign language

http://www.weston.ac.uk/

Knightstone Campus, Weston College, Knightstone Road, Weston super Mare BS23 2AL

Telephone: 01934 411411
Fax: 01934 411410

Contact: tbc

Crossroads Care North Somerset

Provides advice and support to carers.

http://www.crossroadscare-ns.org.uk

The Carers Centre, 1 Graham Road, Weston super Mare, BS23 1YA

Telephone: 01934 411840

Email: enquiries@crossroadscare-ns.org.uk

Appendix three - What the Equality Act 2010 says

The Act may not contain construction standards, but it's important to designers and their clients since it shapes how they deliver their goods, services or run facilities for their customers. It's also important in relation to their staff.

The Act supercedes previous equality legislation replacing it with a single act that encompasses and extends the previous protection many people will be familiar with.

There are two areas designers need to be aware of.

The Act identifies people by "Protected Characteristics".

There are nine. A person must not be discriminated against - treated worse - because of their Protected Characteristic.

Discrimination is identified in seven different ways, ranging from direct discrimination to victimisation.

Specifically in relation to disabled people there is a need to undertake reasonable adjustments to remove, or avoid any physical barriers to accessing a service.

Public Organisations

The council along with other public authorities - government departments, (eg health authorities, schools, or the police) have additional duties known as the Public Sector Duty. Its requirements expect the council to take a lead in the community and actively work to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

For designers it means the council in undertaking its regulatory and commissioning role will be seeking to ensure that these duties in practice are applied to a range of design situations. They might include the design of public spaces, advice offered as a part of the Planning process or attendance at community consultation meetings.

Private companies in partnership with public organisations

Private companies working for a public body where they are delivering a public service as if they were the public body will be bound by the same duties.

All companies in this role would be approached in the same way, irrespective of the nature of their work so designers would equally be subject to the duties as would waste companies or financial services.