

# Why Access Means Business

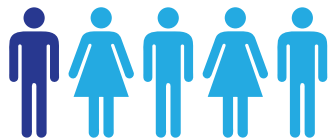
Equality Commission

FOR NORTHERN IRELAND



## Spending power

**£80billion** a year is spent by disabled customers in the UK



**20%** of the population of Northern Ireland have a disability

This includes people with hearing, visual and cognitive impairments as well as people with physical disabilities

## Open to everyone

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



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

## Become a household name

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

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



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

## Growing, loyal market

Accessible business often creates loyal, lifelong customers. People stick with businesses that they trust and know will work for them every time.

This is particularly true for disabled customers. We're all getting older and so the market and need for accessible services and products will only grow in the future.



## Legal duty

Every organisation has duties under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) to make **reasonable adjustments** and remove barriers, as a service provider and employer, in three areas:

- Any provision, criterion or practice (policy)
- Physical features of premises (building)
- Provision of auxiliary aids (access supports)

The aim is to provide equality in service provision and employment for everyone, with the same level of access, dignity and choice.

## Small investment, big profit

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Making **reasonable adjustments** means that the actions you take to make your business more accessible should be relative to the size of your organisation. Many small changes to the way you work, how you present information and your premises, can have a big impact on the number of your customers.

Making sure that your staff can provide great customer service to disabled people can often make the biggest difference of all.

'An insurance company saw a 90 per cent increase in its online sales after upgrading its website to make it fully accessible to disabled people'  
**Office for Disability Issues**

## Access works

Accessible workplaces can increase the efficiency and loyalty of your staff. You'll attract skilled staff including disabled people, making your business stand out as a community leader.

A disability confident and well-trained staff team will provide better customer service and boost your sales. Nominating an Access Champion within your business could work wonders; they can help improve access to your services so you can reach more customers.

'70% of all customers feel more positive about a company if marketing and product information showed a better focus on disabled people's needs'  
**Office for Disability Issues**

## See the potential

- Understand the needs and expectations of a diverse customer base, employee pool and the community you operate within; become disability smart.
- Develop the confidence and knowledge to engage with disabled customers and employees
- Identify and remove barriers to people accessing your goods and services
- Watch your business grow, as you improve access to your services, build a positive employer reputation, strengthen your marketing, and increase the number of your loyal customers