

Improving accessibility for disabled people

A guide to resources for service providers

Auxiliary Aids and Services

~ Ensuring Accessibility for All ~



Introduction

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (**as amended**) requires businesses and organisations to make reasonable adjustments when providing goods, facilities and services to the public and with regard to the provision of employment opportunities.

Reasonable adjustments include making resources available to enable disabled people to access goods, facilities and services, or to gain access to or retain employment.

Guide to this Document

This document is designed to signpost organisations, including businesses, to resources that may improve the accessibility of their services or employment for disabled people.

Such resources include portable ramps, chairs to rest on, wheelchairs to assist movement within a space, hearing loops, sign language interpreters and accessible information formats such as Braille, audio tape and large print. Due to the pace of technological change, in particular in relation to digital technology, new resources regularly emerge. Businesses and organisations are required to keep themselves informed about such developments, which is best done by engaging with disabled people and their representative organisations.

The Commission does not and cannot endorse or recommend any of the resources referenced in this document.

Those using this document are strongly advised to check that the resources listed are fit for purpose. The costs of the resources may be requested from each supplier. If you provide the types of resources listed in this document and want to be included in the document, please let us know.

A Guide to Resources

Alternative formats

People with learning disabilities, sight impairments or hearing impairments will often require information to be provided in accessible formats in order for them to access the information. It is therefore recommended that all information is presented in a clear and concise manner and in appropriate font type and size (sans serif and minimum 12pt but preferably 14pt).

Organisations can often provide information in alternative formats in-house, at minimal cost. This can include the provision of information in large print and in specific font types. Other tasks may require external specialist support.

For guidance on the provision of information in alternative formats please refer to The UK Association for Accessible Format's (UKAAF) guidance on 'The provision of accessible format materials for print-disabled people' www.ukaaf.org/general-guidance/#G002
The UKAAF helps businesses and organisations understand how to meet the needs of print impaired customers and how to source and provide accessible formats like large print, audio, Braille and more. They also provide a directory of transcription suppliers.

Refer to the following link for dyslexia-friendly text formatting: www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk/page/text-formatting-best-practice

When sending large files to suppliers, for example a video format to be captioned, it is worth checking if the company prefers it to be sent via a service such as 'drop box' or 'we transfer'.

Let your customers know that the provision of alternative formats is available and let them know how they can obtain them.

Format	Notes	Example transcription supplier contact details
Braille	You need to take into account the confidentiality of information you are translating into Braille.	<p>Visual Access NI Ltd North City Business Centre, 2 Duncairn Gardens, Belfast BT15 2GG</p> <p>Telephone: 02890 755 005 Email: mail@visualaccessni.co.uk Web: www.visualaccessni.co.uk</p> <hr/> <p>Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) Telephone: 01733 375 370 Email: businesslink@rnib.org.uk Web: www.rnib-business.org.uk</p> <hr/> <p>A2i Transcription Services Ltd Unit 4, Montpelier Central, Station Road, Bristol BS6 5EE</p> <p>Telephone: 01179 440 044 Email: info@a2i.co.uk Web: www.a2i.co.uk</p> <hr/> <p>Maghaberry Braille Unit 28 Old Road, Lisburn, Co. Antrim BT28 2PT Telephone 028 92614550 Email: maghaberrybraille@hotmail.com</p>

Format	Notes	Example transcription supplier contact details
<p>Audio (tape, MP3, CD)</p>	<p>It is important to clarify how you can best meet someone's audio need for example, a customer may have a preference for CD rather than MP3.</p>	<p>Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) Telephone: 01733 375 370 Email: businesslink@rnib.org.uk Web: www.rnib-business.org.uk</p> <hr/> <p>Visual Access NI Ltd North City Business Centre, 2 Duncairn Gardens, Belfast BT15 2GG</p> <p>Telephone: 02890 755 005 Email: mail@visualaccessni.co.uk Web: www.visualaccessni.co.uk</p> <hr/> <p>A2i Transcription Services Ltd Unit 4, Montpelier Central, Station Road, Bristol BS6 5EE</p> <p>Telephone: 01179 440 044 Email: info@a2i.co.uk Web: www.a2i.co.uk</p>

Format	Notes	Example transcription supplier contact details
<p>Large print and high contrast print</p>	<p>You are advised to follow the UKAAF guidelines-see above</p> <p>Standard large print is a clear Sans Serif font and enlarged font size. When producing for individual customers it is good practice to ask their preferred font size and any contrast specifications.</p> <p>Avoid printing on bright white paper, as this is highly reflective. Pale yellow paper with black text is standard practice for good contrast.</p>	<p>Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) Telephone: 01733 375 370 Email: businesslink@rnib.org.uk Web: www.rnib-business.org.uk</p> <hr/> <p>A2i Transcription Services Ltd Unit 4, Montpelier Central, Station Road, Bristol BS6 5EE</p> <p>Telephone: 01179 440 044 Email: info@a2i.co.uk Web: www.a2i.co.uk</p> <p>Visual Access NI Ltd North City Business Centre, 2 Duncairn Gardens, Belfast BT15 2GG</p> <p>Telephone: 02890 755 005 Email: mail@visualaccessni.co.uk Web: www.visualaccessni.co.uk</p>

Format	Notes	Example transcription supplier contact details
<p>Plain English</p>	<p>To ensure your business information is written in plain English you can prepare documents with the use of free guidance: www.plainenglish.co.uk/free-guides</p>	<p>Plain English Campaign PO Box 3, New Mills, High Peak SK22 4QP</p> <p>Telephone: 01663 744 409 Email: info@plainenglish.co.uk Web: www.plainenglish.co.uk</p>
<p>Easy-to-read guides</p>	<p>Cost depends on length of document, complexity of information and target audience.</p>	<p>A2i Transcription Services Ltd Unit 4, Montpelier Central, Station Road, Bristol BS6 5EE</p> <p>Telephone: 01179 440 044 Email: info@a2i.co.uk Web: www.a2i.co.uk</p>

Format	Notes	Example transcription supplier contact details
<p>Electronic Format (HTML or plain text)</p>	<p>HTML refers to the way web pages and email templates are coded so that text is formatted and images are added. Plain Text is regular text, with no formatting options such as bold, italics, underlines, or special layout options. The later may be more accessible for customers who use assistive technology to read content.</p>	<p>This could be handled internally if for example you are formatting an email. For further information please refer to 'Change the message format to HTML, Rich Text Format, or plain text' via www.support.office.com</p>
<p>Captioning for videos</p> <p>(Open and Closed)</p>	<p>Your company will need to decide if you want open or closed captioning.</p> <p>Open Captioning (OC) = Time coded captions burned into the video file, visible to all viewers.</p> <p>Closed Captioning (CC) = Timecoded captions which can be turned on or off by the viewer.</p>	<p>Voice Box Ltd 1st Floor, 220 High Street, Swansea SA1 1NW</p> <p>Telephone: 01792 450 979 Email: hello@voiceboxagency.co.uk or sian@voiceboxagency.co.uk Web: www.voiceboxagency.co.uk</p>

		<p>Take Note Ltd Three Tuns House, 109 Borough High Street, London SE1 1NL</p> <p>Telephone: 0207 9281048 Email: bookings@takenotetyping.com Web: www.takenotetyping.com</p>
		<p>Ai-Media 6 Hay's Lane, London SE1 2HB</p> <p>Telephone: 0203 763 6312 Email: coordinators.uk@ai-media.tv Web: www.ai-live.com</p>
<p>Audio description for videos</p>	<p>You may wish to consider if you have an accent request when requesting audio formats.</p>	<p>Voice box Ltd 1st Floor, 220 High Street, Swansea SA1 1NW</p> <p>Telephone: 01792 450 979 Email: sian@voiceboxagency.co.uk Web: www.voiceboxagency.co.uk</p>

Website and Digital Accessibility

Making your website accessible for your customers with disabilities makes good business sense. You should make it accessible to a wide range of people including; those using assistive technology to navigate your website and those with visual impairments, cognitive impairments, learning disabilities and specific conditions such as dyslexia.

The W3C is the Internet governing body and its web accessibility guidelines can be found on its website: www.w3.org

The Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.0) help ensure that web sites are designed and built to meet the needs of disabled people and address issues including:

Service	Notes	Example supplier contact details
Basic assessment of website accessibility without accreditation or bespoke service	<p>Website size plays significant role in determining the likely cost of a basic website accessibility review.</p> <p>A basic assessment will identify areas that can be improved upon.</p> <p>Additional costs are usually incurred if changes are made to the website.</p>	<p>Plain English Campaign PO Box 3 New Mills, High Peak, Skipton SK22 4QP</p> <p>Telephone: 01663744409 Email: info@plainenglish.co.uk Web: www.plainenglish.co.uk</p>

	Website accessibility accreditation can be sought.	Shaw Trust – Accessibility Services Telephone: 0300 123 7005 Email: accessforall@shaw-trust.org.uk Web: http://webacc.shaw-trust.org.uk
Website accessibility auditing and mobile app auditing	An accessibility review can be sought in respect of mobile apps.	Royal National Institute of Blind People RNIB Business Telephone: 01733 375 370 Email: businesslink@rnib.org.uk Web: www.rnib-business.org.uk

Communication Services

BSL = British Sign Language
 ISL = Irish Sign Language

All interpreting services generally need to be booked in advance. For Irish Sign Language Interpreters times will need to be planned well in advance due to limited number of Irish Sign Language (ISL) interpreters available.

You can access freelancers independently by contacting 'The National Registers of Communication Professionals working with Deaf and Deafblind People' (NRCPD). Telephone: 01913 831 155 or via the web: www.nrcpd.org.uk

Alternatively, you can refer to the Association of Sign Language Interpreters (ASLI) directory via the web: www.asli.org.uk or Telephone: 01604 320 834 for further advice.

Service	Notes	Example supplier contact details for booking
Sign Language Interpreters (BSL / ISL)	When an interpreting service is required for three hours or more, you may wish to consider using two signers in order to provide rest periods for the signers. This will also depend on the complexity of the interpreting task being undertaken.	Action for Hearing Loss Harvester House, 4-8 Adelaide St, Belfast BT2 8GA Telephone: 0845 685 8000 Textphone: 0845 685 8001 Email: communication.services@hearingloss.org.uk Web: www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk

		<p>Hands that Talk 116 Main Street, Dungiven BT47 4LG</p> <p>Phone: 0287 7742 776 Textphone: 0791 2210 803 Email: info@handsthattalk.co.uk Web: www.handsthattalk.co.uk</p>
<p>Lipspeakers and Deafblind Interpreters</p>	<p>It is important to ask the customer how you can best meet their needs prior to booking.</p>	<p>The National Registers of Communication Professionals working with Deaf and Deafblind People (NRCPD) c/o Mersey House, Mandale Business Park, Belmont, Durham DH1 1TH</p> <p>Telephone: 01913 831 155 Textphone: 07974 121594 Email: enquiries@nrcpd.org.uk Web: www.nrcpd.org.uk</p> <hr/> <p>Action for Hearing Loss Harvester House, 4-8 Adelaide St, Belfast BT2 8GA</p> <p>Telephone: 0845 685 8000 Textphone: 0845 685 8001 Email: communication.services@hearingloss.org.uk Web: www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk</p>

<p>Speech to Text Reporters (STTRs)</p> <p>Real Time Captioning</p>	<p>This service is a live verbatim (word for word) account and highly specialised.</p> <p>Most STTRs calculate their fee on a case-by-case basis.</p>	<p>Action for Hearing Loss Harvester House, 4-8 Adelaide St, Belfast BT2 8GA</p> <p>Telephone: 0845 685 8000 Textphone: 0845 685 8001 Email: communication.services@hearingloss.org.uk Web: www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk</p>
	<p>This service can on occasions be offered remotely via a secure internet connection. In this case you will need a device connected to the Internet and an audio source where spoken words are converted into text.</p> <p>A transcript of the captioning is usually provided.</p>	<p>Association of Speech-to-Text Reporters (AVSTTR) Email: enquiries@avsttr.org.uk Web: http://avsttr.org.uk</p>
		<p>121 Captions Suite 3808, PO Box 6945, London W1A 6US</p> <p>Phone: 020 8012 8170 Email: bookings@121captions.com Web: www.121captions.com</p>
		<p>Ai-Media 6 Hay's Lane, London SE1 2HB</p> <p>Telephone: 0203 763 6312 Email: coordinators.uk@ai-media.tv Web: www.ai-live.com</p>

<p>Electronic note taking</p>	<p>This can also be known as speed text. This is not verbatim. The operator condenses the language, thus transmitting the meaning of the points discussed (summary), not word for word transcription.</p> <p>This service can be provided remotely over the internet and onsite.</p> <p>A transcript is usually available at the end.</p>	<p>Action for Hearing Loss Harvester House, 4-8 Adelaide St, Belfast BT2 8GA</p> <p>Telephone: 0845 685 8000 Textphone: 0845 685 8001 Email: communication.services@hearingloss.org.uk Web: www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk</p>
		<p>121 Captions Suite 3808, PO Box 6945, London W1A 6US</p> <p>Phone: 020 8012 8170 Email: bookings@121captions.com Web: www.121captions.com</p>

Wheelchairs and Seating

Seating is important for providing comfort and supported rest breaks, especially for customers with reduced mobility.

It is important to check that a wheelchair can be used to access your business. Always check specifications with suppliers such as asking overall wheelchair width, folding ability (to enable storage or transport) and overall weight when comparing models. This will assist in working out if you have space within your business environment for the wheelchair to move including practicalities like fitting through doorways. Standard seat size is 18”.

Ask suppliers about assembly and demonstration of use and any charge for this.

Check warranty and maintenance requirements with suppliers.

Consider training customer contact staff regarding set up, manual handling, storage and maintenance.

Please note: You may notice fire evacuation chairs are not listed below. Given the risks, please liaise with your responsible fire officer and consult your local fire service for further advice regarding the recommendations for your business.

Auxiliary Aid	Notes	Example supplier contact details
Standard Seating	It is best practice to provide mixed seating such as with and without arm rests and seating at a reasonable height to assist customers getting on and off chairs.	Moffett & Sons Ltd Seymour Hill Industrial Estate, Dunmurry, Belfast BT17 9PW Tel: 02890 301 411 Email: enquiries@moffett.co.uk Web: www.moffett.co.uk

Transit wheelchair	This type of wheelchair relies on the constant assistance of another person to push.	Ability Matters Ltd 2 Apollo Road, Boucher Road, Belfast BT12 6HP Telephone: 02890 687827 Email: info@abilitymattersni.co.uk Web: www.abilitymatters.co.uk
		Disability Needs Unit 3, 1 York Road, Belfast BT15 3GU Telephone: 028 9074 5333 Email: sales@disabilityneeds.com Web: www.disabilityneeds.com

Auxiliary Aid	Notes	Example supplier contact details
Self-propelled wheelchair	<p>This type of wheelchair enables the person to self-propel.</p> <p>Self-propelled is the preference over a transit wheelchair given that it allows customers to have independent use, if appropriate.</p>	Disability Needs Unit 3, 1 York Road, Belfast BT15 3GU Telephone: 028 9074 5333 Email: sales@disabilityneeds.com Web: www.disabilityneeds.com

Training Type	Notes	Example training supplier contact details
Self- propelled wheelchair		<p>Ability Matters Ltd 2 Apollo Road, Boucher Road, Belfast BT12 6HP</p> <p>Telephone: 02890 687827 Email: info@abilitymattersni.co.uk Web: www.abilitymatters.co.uk</p>
Deaf and disability awareness training	Belfast location	<p>Action for Hearing Loss Harvester House, 4-8 Adelaide St, Belfast BT2 8GA</p> <p>Telephone: 03332 405 658 Email: access.solutions@hearingloss.org.uk Web: www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk</p>
Ensuring your communications are accessible	Tailored training	<p>Beyond Disability Training Disability Action, Portside Business Centre, 189 Airport Road West, Belfast BT3 9ED</p> <p>Telephone 02890 297880 Email: careyannclarke@disabilityaction.org Web: www.disabilityaction.org</p>

Auxiliary Aid or service	Notes	Example supplier contact details
Textphone	<p>Combined textphone and telephone with an inductive coupler.</p> <p>Given the advancement of smartphones and apps, some companies now offer a text phone number option to their customers as an alternate means of contact.</p>	<p>Connevans Telephone: 01737 247571 Textphone: 01737 644016 Email: info@connevans.com Web: www.deafequipment.co.uk</p> <hr/> <p>Action for Hearing Loss Harvester House, 4-8 Adelaide St, Belfast BT2 8GA</p> <p>Telephone: 03332 405 658 Email: access.solutions@hearingloss.org.uk Web: www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk</p>
Next Generation Text (NGT) Previously known as BT Relay Service	<p>The Next Generation Text (NGT) Service was previously known as Text Relay (also known as TextDirect or Typetalk).</p> <p>Text to voice relay service that enables communication to or from a textphone enabling deaf, hard of hearing and speech impaired people to communicate with your business. Inform customers if you welcome calls via NGT/Text Relay.</p>	<p>For more information on how to use this service please refer to Next Generation Text (NGT) Service.</p> <p>Telephone: 0800 7311 888 Textphone or NGT Lite app: 0800 500 888 Web: www.ngts.org.uk/textrelay</p>

<p>Signage – supporting assistance dogs</p>	<p>Staff should be aware of the procedures to support guide dogs such as spending areas, provision of dog bowl and display of signage so that customers are aware assistance dogs are welcome.</p>	<p>For more information on supporting assistance dogs within your business setting please refer to: www.assistancedogs.org.uk</p> <p>To order assistance dogs sticker/signs, available free of charge send request via the 'contact us' tab on their website.</p>
<p>Tactile Images and maps</p>	<p>Design and production of tactile images and maps, individually tailored to meet each client's needs</p>	<p>Royal National Institute of Blind People RNIB Business</p> <p>Telephone: 01733 375 370 Email: businesslink@rnib.org.uk Web: www.rnib-business.org.uk</p>

Ramp type	Notes	Example ramp supplier contact details
<p>Small rise threshold ramp</p>	<p>These are designed for small lip door thresholds.</p> <p>They come in a range of material types (fiberglass, rubber, aluminum).</p> <p>Costs vary and depend on size of product, height required and brand of products.</p>	<p>Access Needs Unit 7 CIDO Business Complex, Carn Drive, Craigavon, Co. Armagh BT63 5WH</p> <p>Telephone: 02838 398 877 Email: sales@accessneeds.co.uk Web: www.accessneeds.co.uk</p> <hr/> <p>Enable Access Marshmoor Works, Great North Road, North Mymms, Hatfield AL9 5SD</p> <p>Telephone: 02082 750 375 Email: sales@enable-access.com Web: www.enable-access.com</p>
<p>Door threshold ramp</p>	<p>These ramps may be appropriate where there is a door threshold and the surface height differs on either side.</p>	<p>Access Needs Unit 7 CIDO Business Complex, Carn Drive, Craigavon, Co. Armagh BT63 5WH</p> <p>Telephone: 02838 398 877 Email: sales@accessneeds.co.uk Web: www.accessneeds.co.uk</p>

		<p>Enable Access Marshmoor Works, Great North Road, North Mymms, Hatfield AL9 5SD</p> <p>Telephone: 02082 750 375 Email: sales@enable-access.com Web: www.enable-access.com</p>
<p>Folding portable ramps</p>	<p>These ramps can be referred to as 'suitcase' style ramps - they may fold up to enable carry away.</p>	<p>Access Needs Unit 7 CIDO Business Complex, Carn Drive, Craigavon, Co. Armagh BT63 5WH</p> <p>Telephone: 02838 398 877 Email: sales@accessneeds.co.uk Web: www.accessneeds.co.uk</p> <hr/> <p>Enable Access Marshmoor Works, Great North Road, North Mymms, Hatfield AL9 5SD</p> <p>Telephone: 02082 750 375 Email: sales@enable-access.com Web: www.enable-access.com</p>

Hearing Enhancement / Assistive Listening Systems

This specialised technology enables your customers using hearing aids to hear clear and intelligible sound over background noise when their hearing aid is set to a 'T' (Telecoil) setting.

Any system needs to be regularly checked and tested to confirm it is working and staff need to be trained on how to use the system. It is good practice to have signage which indicates that you have an induction loop system in place.

The design and configuration of a room set up will depend on a number of environmental factors such as room measurements and surround materials that may cause interference with the system. Given the complexity of these systems, it is recommended that your business situation and environment is discussed with a specialist supplier to enable a professional assessment of your business and your customers' needs.

Auxiliary Aid Type	Notes	Example supplier contact details
<p>Portable 1:1 Loop (briefcase style)</p> <p>Portable loop (handheld and wearable)</p>	<p>Portable loops should be used with caution given that this may not be an effective solution to improve communication.</p> <p>This is the preferred system over a portable loop. E.g. reception desks and at shopping tills.</p>	<p>Professional Audio NI (LTD) Unit 30 North City Business Centre, Duncairn Gardens, Belfast BT15 2GG</p> <p>Telephone: 028 9020 1400 Email: sales@proaudioni.co.uk or info@professionalaudioni.co.uk Web: www.professionalaudioni.co.uk</p>

<p>Counter Loops (fixed/installed)</p>	<p>There are a range of configurations available that can be supplied, fitted and tested</p>	<p>DJ Kilpatrick & Co Ltd 12 Dargan Crescent, Belfast BT3 9JP</p> <p>Telephone: 028 9037 0416 Email: sales@djkilpatrick.co.uk Web: www.djkilpatrick.co.uk</p>
<p>Room Loops (fixed/installed)</p>		<p>MGA Communication 55 Antrim Rd, Ballynahinch BT24 8AN</p> <p>Telephone: 0289 756 5614 Email: sales@mgacom.co.uk Web: www.mgacom.co.uk</p>
		<p>Univox Audio Unit 22 Martlesham, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire AL7 2QF</p> <p>Telephone: 01707 339 216 Email: writeto@univoxaudio.co.uk or kenh@univoxaudio.co.uk Web: www.univoxaudio.co.uk</p>
		<p>Action on hearing loss Telephone: 01733 363 922 Email: technical.services@hearingloss.org.uk Web: www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk/soundsolutions</p>

<p>Induction Loop sign</p>	<p>To inform customers of the hearing enhancement system you have in place.</p> <p>For guidance on placement specific to assistive listening devices seek guidance from a specialist.</p>	<p>Action on Hearing loss Telephone: 03330 144525 Textphone: 03330 144530 Email: solutions@hearingloss.org.uk Web: www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk/shop</p>
<p>Tester device for hearing loop</p>	<p>To enable you to monitor and test your induction loop systems and pick up faults or ensure functionality.</p>	<p>Action on Hearing loss Telephone: 03330 144525 Textphone: 03330 144530 Email: solutions@hearingloss.org.uk Web: www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk/shop</p> <hr/> <p>Univox Audio Unit 22 Martlesham, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire AL7 2QF</p> <p>Telephone: 01707 339 216 Email: writeto@univoxaudio.co.uk or kenh@univoxaudio.co.uk Web: www.univoxaudio.co.uk</p>

For more information and advice?

Action on Hearing Loss

www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk

Alzheimers Society

www.alzheimers.org.uk/northernireland

Assistance Dogs UK

www.assistancedogs.org.uk

Disability Action

www.disabilityaction.org

Dyslexia Action

www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk

Disabled Living foundation

www.dlf.org.uk

National Register for Access Consultants (NRAC)

www.nrac.org.uk

Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB)

www.rnib.org.uk

The National Autistic Society

www.autism.org.uk

UK Association for Accessible Formats (UKAAF)

www.ukaaf.org

World Wide Web Consortium

www.w3.org