

Writing an Access Statement for your business - An easy reference guide

What is an Access Statement?

An Access Statement is a written, clear and accurate, and above all honest description of your current facilities and the services you offer, to enable a potential visitor to make an informed decision as to whether your business meets their particular access needs.

From April 2007 you will be required to prepare an Access Statement, as part of your quality grading assessment with VisitBritain. Thereafter, you will need to present an Access Statement annually to your quality assessor at the time of your quality assurance visit.

Q “Why are VisitBritain making this change to the quality assessment visit?”

A Customers today demand a high quality of service. Informing guests about your property and services, so that they can understand more about what you have to offer them and how their needs can be met, is a matter of quality. An Access Statement will therefore enhance the quality of service you offer for all your customers and is also an essential and valuable marketing tool.

The purpose of this guidance is to help you prepare and write your Access Statement. You may already be familiar with writing an access statement, or it may be that this is something completely new to you. In either case the documents, template and advice provided may give you some new ideas or help guide you through the whole process of what it is you need to consider and include in your statement.

This guide includes:

- An introduction – to help you with understanding access statements – what it is, why you need one, who it is intended for, how to write one, and where to publish it. (Click on the attached file below)
- A standard template which you can use to help you structure your Access Statement. It gives help and suggestions with items to consider including
- **Sample Access Statements** – Examples of access statements using the template
- **More help and advice** - Downloadable self surveys and National Accessible Scheme criteria
- Further contacts – for any extra help regarding accessibility you may need (Click on the attached file below)

Don't forget accessible accommodation is not just about providing access for people in wheelchairs. Many of those who have rights under the Disability Discrimination Act do not choose to use the term 'disabled' about themselves. Indeed under DDA the law protects people of all ages with mobility and sensory impairments, learning disabilities, mental health issues and progressive conditions e.g. Cancer, AIDS, from discrimination. It can cover people with heart disease, diabetes, severe disfigurement, depression, schizophrenia, dyslexia, epilepsy and Down's syndrome. By providing an access statement you can help all of your guests who have a specific access requirement. We recommend that before using the template you may find it helpful to have a look at the sample access statements to give you an idea of what your Access Statement may look like.

Within the template there are many suggested items to consider putting in your access statement, you are not required to cover everything that is contained in the 'suggested things to consider and describe' for each section. These are merely suggestions and you must use your judgement as to what information your guests/visitors need about your business. Remember to listen to your guests and what they ask about, this will give you some good hints of what to include in your access statement. Finally, remember to keep your statement simple, clear and concise.

If you have any comments about the information, documents and template provided please email QAD@visitengland.org. We value your comments and will read your emails and action where appropriate but cannot always guarantee a personal response.