

Top 20 Tips for hotels

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Provide accessible ways for disabled customers to give feedback, acting and responding promptly to comments



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Request information at the time of booking to establish specific requirements



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Provide an 'Access for All' section on your website



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Provide a detailed and accurate Accessibility Guide to promote your accessibility



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Ensure your website meets accessibility standards and all written communication with customers is available in accessible formats



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Provide sufficient accessible parking spaces and drop-off areas



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Provide a step-free entrance



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Ask all your guests if they require any assistance with evacuation in an emergency. Record any specific arrangements



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Offer to show all guests with accessibility requirements to their room and help with luggage



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Always welcome assistance dogs



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1 Provide accessible ways for disabled customers to give feedback, acting and responding promptly to comments

Gather the views of customers with accessibility requirements to help you provide inclusive tourism experiences, such as adding a question on accessibility to any customer surveys. You could also invite a [local access group](#) to visit or, for larger businesses, set up an Access Panel of people with different accessibility requirements. Pay them for their time and expertise.



2 Request information at the time of booking to establish specific requirements

Asking guests at the time of booking "do you, or those you are travelling with, have any accessibility requirements?" can help you make any necessary arrangements ahead of their arrival. It will also reassure the guest that you are keen to understand their individual requirements in order to provide a great experience.



3 Provide an 'Access for All' section on your website

Accessibility information needs to be easy for people to find on websites. Clearly signpost to this section from the homepage; do not hide the link in footer. Remember not everyone with accessibility requirements identifies with the term 'disabled' so use terminology rooted in accessibility and inclusion and avoid disability-focused language e.g. use the term 'accessibility/customers with accessibility requirements' rather than 'disabled/disability/special needs'. Ensure a link to your Accessibility Guide is prominent in this section.



4 Provide a detailed and accurate Accessibility Guide to promote your accessibility

People with accessibility requirements require information on a venue's accessibility to help understand if it will meet their individual requirements. Many are put off visiting a venue if there is no access information on their website. This information can be provided in the form of an Accessibility Guide, a customer-facing marketing document that contains written and visual details of a venue's accessibility, including measurements and photos. The link to your guide should be prominent and easy to find on your website.



5 Ensure your website meets accessibility standards and all written communication with customers is available in accessible formats

All customers should be able to use your website, regardless of their level of experience in using the web or the device/operating system they use. Make sure your designer follows Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG). Offer written communication in alternative formats, such as large print (at least 16 point font, ideally 18), audio or 'easy read'.



6 Provide sufficient accessible parking spaces and drop-off areas

These spaces should be at least 2.4 metres wide with 1.2 metres hatching either side, level, marked out or effectively sign-posted and close to the entrance or in the best possible location. Ensure these spaces are not occupied by staff vehicles or vehicles that are not displaying a Blue Badge. Provide at least one designated parking bay per accessible bedroom and for any staff member who may require it.



7 Provide a step-free entrance

Ensure the main entrance or an alternative signed entrance provides level access suitable for a wheelchair user (without steps or raised thresholds). Ramped access may be permanent or temporary. Where step-free access is provided by a temporary portable ramp, it is important to provide signage to inform customers that a ramp is available, with details of how to request deployment of the ramp e.g. a call bell. Ensure staff know how to use it safely and effectively.



8 Always welcome assistance dogs

Thousands of disabled people rely on an assistance dog for their independence and confidence. Promote the fact you welcome customers with assistance dogs and consider providing water bowls and a toilet area. It would be unlawful to refuse access to a disabled person accompanied by an assistance dog (even if you have a no dogs/pets policy) except in the most exceptional circumstances; find out more in the [Pink Book Online](#).



9 Ask all your guests if they require any assistance with evacuation in an emergency. Record any specific arrangements

One of the biggest concerns for disabled people, particularly people with hearing loss, is safe evacuation during an emergency. Develop a set of standard Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) for safe evacuation of D/deaf and disabled people. Make it part of your arrival process to ask every guest “do you require any assistance in the event of evacuation?” Discuss the standard options available; agree and record any specific arrangements. Find more information in the Supplementary Guide.



13 Provide twin or zip and link beds in designated accessible bedrooms

The flexibility of beds is particularly useful for guests using accessible bedrooms. Disabled guests may be accompanied by a partner, support worker or essential companion and therefore require different bed configurations. If this is not possible, offer a complimentary room for support workers/essential companions and clearly promote this. Interconnecting rooms can also be useful.



10 Offer to show all guests with accessibility requirements to their room and help with luggage

An orientation tour and help with luggage may be particularly useful for guests with accessibility requirements. For those guests identifying themselves as being visually impaired, this should include highlighting any potential hazards e.g. steps or speed bumps on roadways. For guests staying in designated accessible bedrooms there may be additional equipment that can be demonstrated.



14 Provide a ceiling track hoist in at least one room or a portable hoist

In a hotel room a hoist can be used to transfer someone between wheelchair, armchair, bed, toilet and bathing/showering facilities. For some people a hoist is essential in order to stay away from home. A ceiling track hoist is preferable to a portable hoist as it can be safely used with just one assistant to the hoist user. The [use of hoists in guest accommodation guide](#) provides guidance, meaning and practical application in the design, use and management of hoist systems.



11 Provide a hearing loop and test it regularly

Customer-facing points such as information desks, ticket & retail counters and other service counters can be noisy environments, making verbal communication with customers who have hearing loss difficult. A hearing loop is a piece of equipment that allows people with hearing loss to hear more clearly over background noise. Ensure all staff are familiar with any loops provided, that they are regularly tested and signage is positioned where loops are effective.



15 Provide portable equipment so that D/deaf or blind guests can stay in any room

Many hotels have designated accessible rooms that are principally designed to meet the needs of people with mobility impairments. Guests who have hearing loss or visual impairment may not wish to stay in these rooms, e.g. a visually impaired guest may prefer a smaller bathroom, as they find it easier to navigate. Making equipment portable gives both you and the guest choice and flexibility when allocating rooms. Equipment may include a Deafgard fire alarm, a door beacon and alternative versions of in-room information e.g. large print and audio versions.



12 Provide a choice of wet rooms and baths in designated accessible bedrooms

If there is only one designated accessible room, provide an ensuite wet room bathroom with no thresholds. In larger properties, ensure your accessible bedrooms appeal to the widest range of potential guests by providing some accessible bedrooms with an ensuite wet room and some with a bath. The technical guidance for the built environment provides the details to help you plan the layout of accessible bathrooms.



16 Take room service orders via a text-based service to assist D/deaf guests

Only taking room service orders by telephone may not account for the needs of guests with hearing loss. Allow D/deaf guests to order using a text-based service e.g. on their mobile phone.

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Provide accessible toilets and ideally a Changing Places facility

Accessible toilets should never be used as a storage space, the transfer space next to the toilet should be kept clear and the emergency pull-cord should hang to the floor. For people with sensory impairments, ensure the fire alarm has a strobe light and any support rails contrast in colour to the wall.

Standard accessible toilets do not meet the needs of all people with impairments. Where feasible, provide a [Changing Places toilet](#), which has extra equipment and space. If you don't have a Changing Places facility, find out where your nearest one is and include this information in your Accessibility Guide.

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Include images of disabled people in your marketing

Ensure your photography represents the diversity of your customers. Use images of disabled people in general marketing, not just alongside accessibility information. This will inspire and raise confidence to visit and can also help illustrate your facilities in use. You could approach a local disability group or a specialist modelling agency and undertake a photoshoot. Always use disabled people, not people pretending to be disabled, and pay them for their time.

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Train all staff in disability awareness and ensure they are familiar with accessible facilities, services, equipment and evacuation procedures

To be able to confidently serve customers with accessibility requirements, you and your staff need to be disability aware. This training should be provided for all staff on induction and refreshed (for at least those in customer-facing positions) at regular intervals. There are several online and classroom-style courses available specifically for those working in the tourism industry. It is important that staff are familiar with the use and operation of all accessibility equipment such as hearing loops, emergency pull cords in toilets and hoists. Make sure your specialist equipment is regularly tested, always in working order and in sufficient supply.

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Appoint an Accessibility Champion and encourage accessibility ambassadors

Name a champion to lead on developing access for all throughout your business. This may be part of one person's role or split between two or more people – for example, a senior manager or director might be responsible for strategic planning and oversight of day-to-day tasks might fall to another member of staff/volunteer. Incorporate the key areas of focus from the Accessibility Champion Brief into the champion's job description. Then engage accessibility ambassadors across your business to help embed inclusive practices.

These tips were produced by England's Inclusive Tourism Action Group, comprising a range of leading accessible tourism stakeholders who share the vision for England to provide world-class accessible tourism experiences that every person with accessibility requirements can enjoy.