Pubs are for everyone
Why being accessible is important.
Having just witnessed yet another successful Paralympics, there is no better time to champion accessibility, and no better place to do so than in the home of hospitality – the Great British pub.

I am delighted to introduce the 2016 British Beer and Pub Association accessibility guidance, which presents best practice for pubs and highlights the easy adjustments that can be made to improve accessibility. Such adjustments are often simple and inexpensive, yet they make a significant difference to those with access needs. Accessibility is not simply about physical access to the pub, but rather it is about creating the best experience for all who visit and encouraging visitors to return. Staff training is therefore key and should act as the foundation for an accessible venue. Excellent customer service can go a long way.

In addition, people with health conditions - and their companions - spend £12bn annually on tourism in England. Pubs, therefore, have an opportunity to enter this market through engaging proactively with accessibility. Tourists also view pubs as a uniquely British institution and the time has come to ensure that pubs can be enjoyed by all who visit.

This guidance is a positive step in promoting access for all. Let’s embrace the legacy of the Paralympics and ensure that equality and accessibility remain key themes for the future.
Pubs and Accessibility

As a quintessentially British institution, pubs are the home of hospitality and continue to play a vital role in local communities up and down the country. Renowned for exceptional customer service, it will come as no surprise that pubs are increasingly working hard to improve accessibility for customers.

Although most pubs are small businesses and can be restricted in adapting historic or listed buildings, an ever increasing number of licensees and pub companies are ensuring that pubs are accessible through innovative and creative adjustments. Whether it’s a quiet drink with friends, a three course meal, an evening of live music or a local quiz night, these adjustments are ensuring that the much loved British pub can be enjoyed by all.

Pubs will already have many customers with access needs, even if it is not immediately obvious.

Attracting the business of someone with access needs also attracts the spend of their entire party and this can open up a significant opportunity for pubs. It is important to ensure that parties with accessible needs feel comfortable at every stage. Accessibility does not end with physical access to the pub. It is about creating the best experience for everyone who visits. This guidance will outline many easy options for pubs in order to meet these requirements.

The economic case

A majority of those who require accessible services and features are disabled, but this extends beyond gaining entrance to an establishment, with only one in eight using a wheelchair. Many more have other visual, hearing or mobility impairments. In fact, one in six people in the UK have an ‘activity limiting health problem' or disability and this equates to a significant market that businesses are able to tap into with improved accessibility.

People with health conditions – and their companions – spend £12bn a year on tourism in England.

• In 2015, nearly one in five tourism day trips in England were taken by people with an impairment and their travelling companions, spending £8.5 billion.

• In 2015, 18% of all overnight trips by British residents in England were taken by those with an impairment and their travelling companions, worth £3.2 billion.

• Over half a million people with a health condition or impairment visit England from abroad each year, spending around £0.3 billion.

(Statistics provided by VisitEngland- https://www.visitengland.org/access)

Further research conducted by VisitBritain illustrates that visitors with access needs are more likely to take longer trips and tend to be very loyal.

A full overview of accessible market can be found on the VisitEngland/VisitBritain website: The Purple Pound
The Equality Act 2010 consolidates previous anti-discrimination laws into a single Act and legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and wider society.

Those with a disability are protected from discrimination under the Act. Discrimination can be direct or indirect and includes harassment and victimisation. Within the remit of the Act, disability is defined as a physical or mental impairment that has a ‘substantial’ and ‘long-term’ negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities.

Beyond protection from disability discrimination, the Act ensures that employers are obligated to make ‘reasonable adjustments’ to avoid putting those with a disability at a disadvantage in the workplace. What is reasonable will depend on circumstance, and cost is taken into consideration. Adjustments, therefore, will not incur an unreasonable cost and will take into account any further practical limitations, such as the age or design of a building.

Reasonable adjustments can include providing a particular piece of equipment or making structural modifications to aide an individual, as well as incorporating changes to policies and practices to assist those with a disability. Those providing a service should also consider taking reasonable steps to determine whether someone is disabled, for example asking if anyone in a party has access needs.

You can find further guidance on the Equality Act at https://www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance
Top tips for the pub sector

- Name an access champion or ensure that a colleague takes responsibility for developing access. Use the Champion Brief at www.visitengland.org/access

- Train all customer facing staff in disability awareness and ensure they know how to use accessible facilities, services and equipment available.

- Speak with disabled visitors and local access groups to understand access needs and respond to feedback accordingly. Consider getting an audit of current access facilities from an access advisor.

- Produce an Accessibility Guide using the free tool from VisitEngland and VisitScotland. Ensure you link to your guide clearly from your website and it is marketed effectively.

- Consider the layout of your establishment to account for access needs, especially in any future refurbishments. Move furniture where appropriate to allow for easy access to the bar or toilets.

- Try to make physical entry to your venue as easy as possible. Use ramps to ensure that access to the pub is level and think about contacting the local council to request a dropped curb.

- Think about purchasing specific equipment to assist those with access needs, for example hearing loops and large print menus.

- Signpost different areas of your venue as clearly as possible, in particular disabled toilets.

Several of our Top Tips have been informed by England’s Inclusive Tourism Action Group.
With pubs as the home of British hospitality, staff training is central to ensuring access for all. A warm welcome from knowledgeable and well-trained staff goes a long way and should form the foundation of any access adjustments.

Whilst physical adjustments can be costly, staff training is easily implemented with little cost input. Whether it is reading menus aloud or simply providing a welcoming smile, staff should have the confidence to meet the needs of disabled customers.

Training in accessibility is an invaluable way to ensure that staff are able to effectively respond to the needs of each and every customer.

Tourism for All has created an e-learning tool designed to provide training in welcoming disabled customers both by distance or self-learning, or through on-the-job or guided training courses. Please visit www.tourismforall.org.uk/Training.html for full information.

National disability organisation DisabledGo have developed a practical disability equality course in partnership with Visit England. The course covers topics such as appropriate language and how to provide assistance. It is all about helping businesses provide the best customer service. Visit www.disabledgo.com/tourismtraining.

“A warm welcome from knowledgeable and well-trained staff goes a long way and should form the foundation of any access adjustments.”
Six key features for an accessible pub:

1. **Access ramp at door (removable)**
   ‘A removable ramp is an effective way to make physical entry as easy as possible and could be shared with other retail outlets nearby’

2. **Hearing loops on bar**
   ‘Providing hearing loops at the bar ensures a greatly improved experience for those with hearing needs’

3. **Large print menus**
   ‘Providing large print menus will make the ordering of food and drink easier for many’
4. **Accessible toilet with disability sign on door**

   ‘An accessible toilet is a welcome addition to any pub and will be a key factor in attracting those with accessibility requirements’

5. **Staff – ensuring that staff are trained to meet the needs of disabled customers**

   ‘It is vital that staff have the confidence to meet the needs of disabled customers and are able to use access-related equipment’

6. **Layout – make sure the path to the bar/toilet is clear of obstacles and easy to navigate**

   ‘An easy adjustment is to think about the layout – are the routes to the bar and toilet easy to navigate? Try to remove any obstructions’
People with access needs will require information on a pub’s accessibility to help understand if it will meet their individual needs as a potential customer.

Many are put off visiting a pub if there is no access information on their website and may choose to go elsewhere. Writing an Accessibility Guide (formerly an Access Statement) is therefore an easy way to attract customers.

An Accessibility Guide is a thorough yet concise description of a venue’s facilities and services, specifically in relation to individuals with accessibility requirements. This means not just wheelchair users but people with hearing loss, visual or mental impairment, visitors with pushchairs, older people and more. The guides enable these people, their family and friends to make informed decisions as to where to stay and/or visit in view of their requirements.

Publishing an Accessibility Guide can act as a marketing opportunity to broaden the appeal of your pub. Producing a guide will help you to appraise your venue’s accessibility, an area where you have legal obligations under the Equality Act 2010. Furthermore, a guide can also be used by staff as a handy reference document when dealing with enquiries. A full guide on writing this important document can be found on the BBPA website – www.beerandpub.com/access

From the end of 2016, you will be able to produce and publish an Accessibility Guide using a new website provided by VisitEngland and VisitScotland, accessed via www.visitengland.org/access

“Employers are obligated to make ‘reasonable adjustments’ to avoid putting those with a disability at a disadvantage in the workplace”
DisabledGo.com is an industry specialist in this area, providing access guides for venues throughout the UK, and with a database of over 125,000 ‘places to go’. Each access guide is created from a survey completed by a DisabledGo trained assessor. The survey collects objective and quantitative information, overlaid with detailed descriptions and photos and provides the essential information to give disabled people the knowledge about the facilities and access of a pub. The access guide can then be integrated into your own website, and is published on the DisabledGo database and partner websites. Please contact DisabledGo if you are interested in acquiring an access guide.

**Find out if DisabledGo.com has already published an Access Guide to your venue?**

DisabledGo publishes over 3000 access guides to pubs in the UK. These have been largely funded by Local Authorities. Please visit [www.disabledgo.com](http://www.disabledgo.com) and search for the Pub name and location in the search bar. Once you have discovered your DisabledGo.com access guide, this can then be used on the Pub’s own website. Please contact enquiries@disabledgo.com for more information.

“People with health conditions – and their companions – spend £12bn a year on tourism in England.”
Case studies
The Cleveland Bay Hotel, Redcar – Enterprise Inns

The Cleveland Bay Hotel is situated close to the coastline in Redcar, North East England. It is the winner of the 2015 Enterprise Community Heroes Award for the North East.

The licensees, Russ and Sarah, have transformed the venue from closure to a hub for community activity and are leading the way when it comes to access needs. Considerable investment has been made to ensure that the pub caters for the elderly and those with access needs. Ramps, steel hand rails and an increase in external lighting are just three of the adjustments that have been made. They also fought to get the pavement and curb edging repaired, something that previous landlords had not been able to achieve. Yet aside from the physical adjustments, Russ and Sarah have gone above and beyond for those with access needs by allowing for the premises to be used as a regular meeting place for Redcar education and development - helping people with mental and physical disabilities integrate and enjoy normal everyday life. Darts, pool and line dancing are all activities provided on a regular basis for those with a disability. The tenants have also received assistance from Enterprise Inns to ensure that customers have a dedicated disabled toilet.

The Pilot – Fullers

The Pilot pub and hotel is located in Greenwich, close to the O2 arena with views of Canary Wharf from the accommodation.

The top tip given by the licensee, Eduardo, on accessibility is to keep adjustments in mind when refurbishing your pub. This is exactly what Eduardo did when he created step free access to the main bar area and dining room during the last refurbishment. On top of this, Eduardo ensures that two easy access parking spaces are always available in the car park and an accessible toilet is available. The Pilot ensures that its website clearly states these accessible facilities, with an option to take a 360 degree tour of the venue, so that potential customers can make an informed decision.
Case study
Changing Faces

Changing Faces began its work nearly 25 years ago supporting people who have a distinctive appearance find a way to live the lives they want.

They want to see a world in which anyone with a disfigurement can go into a pub with their friends and be accepted on equal terms. So what does good service mean for customers with a disfigurement? Changing Faces has provided some useful tips to cater for these customers:

• If in doubt, ask a simple and open question like, ‘Can I help you?’ There are many medical conditions that may affect a person’s appearance. Some customers may need a straw to be able to enjoy their drink. Certain medical conditions may affect their balance, the way they hold a drink or the way they walk, but that doesn’t necessarily mean they are intoxicated. Don’t make assumptions about your customer’s condition. Ask open questions instead.

• Make eye contact. Look your customer in the eye (or at the bridge of their nose if that feels more comfortable – it has the same effect). Don’t go to the other extreme and stare - just make normal eye contact as you would with any other customer.

• Be respectful. You might have to manage your response – it’s natural to feel surprise when someone looks noticeably different. Never draw attention to your customer’s appearance. If they mention it, listen to what they say and use similar language.

• Remain calm. Don’t panic if you get it wrong. For example, if a customer’s condition affects their speech, politely ask them to repeat if you don’t understand. You could also apologise and say you really want to get their order right, so would it be ok to write it down. Remember, they will be used to having to persevere to be understood.

“I have Facial Palsy and it’s usually a nightmare ordering drinks across a crowded bar. But a group of us, all with Facial Palsy, met up recently at a pub in Manchester city centre.

We’ve met there on several occasions and the bar staff are fabulous. They don’t look at us quizzically or stare - all the usual reactions. They smile and engage with us, making us feel so welcome, and there’s not a hint of awkwardness about our appearance. Full marks to them!!!”

SHERRY
Providing Access for All, including the Purple Pound infographic -
www.visitengland.org/access

Disabled Go, detailed access guides and database for venues with access facilities -
www.disabledgo.com/search-places-to-go

Tourism for all, the UK voice for accessible tourism -
www.tourismforall.org.uk/

Tourism is for everybody, a Tourism for all sponsored movement of individuals, businesses and policy-makers acting together to improve the experience for disabled tourists and travellers in the UK -
www.tourismisforeverybody.org/

Please contact us if you would like a copy of this booklet in large print/plaintext.

― Accessibility does not end with physical access to the pub. It is about creating the best experience for everyone who visits.‖
Getting the order right is made easier for customer and staff alike.