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**Conduct access surveys in your community to improve access for disabled people**

**What is the Need?**

Every day, disabled people have difficulties with things like going shopping, visiting the cinema, using the bank and post office and even playing in their local playground because facilities and services haven't been designed or provided in an accessible way. We can all take action to improve access.

**Access survey instructions:**

1. **Equipment for access surveys:**

* Cameras/smart phones (to show areas of poor access and to document your access survey)
* Clip board and pen
* Access Pack:
* Access survey templates
* Reasonable adjustment tips for businesses
* Template letter for good access, template letter for bad access

1. **Decide what you would like to conduct an access survey on:**

You can use the survey templates provided or create your own. It is helpful to speak to disabled people in your community to ask about anything they have access problems with. If possible, it is helpful to conduct the access survey with disabled people too. Options could include:

Transport – are there talking buses, a ramp or raised kerb for disabled people including wheelchair users to board and alight trains and buses, do people park their cars on pavements? Are the crossings easy to use? Are there enough safe places to cross the road? Are there blue badge parking spaces?

Streets – is there clear differentiation between the curb and the road? Are there dropped kerbs for wheelchair users to cross safely, is there a lot of litter or bins in the street, do businesses have A boards or seating areas outside? Are there uneven surfaces, overhanging branches or holes in the pavement?

Shops and businesses – are the aisles narrow, are ramps available on steps and stairs for wheelchair users, do lifts serve all floors? Are the payment points easy to reach? Is there help available for people who need it? Are they assistance dog friendly? Do the staff know how to support a disabled person? Are counters and cashpoints in banks at the right level for a wheelchair user? Are there hearing loops available?

Sports and leisure venues - are theatres and cinemas wheelchair friendly? Do they have designated spaces for wheelchair users? Are sporting venues easy to access for disabled people? Does the local swimming pool have equipment to assist disabled people to access the pool e.g. hoists? Do they have audio description? Do the lifts ‘tell you’ what floor you are on?

For visits to businesses, leisure centres etc you should contact them to let them know you would like to conduct an access survey and feed back your findings and recommendations. For transport services etc you should make contact to find out who to feed back to.

1. **Feedback to businesses and services:**

Write up your findings and recommendations to send to the business/service. You can use the template letters as a guide. There is also a letter for those with good access. You can also send them the tips sheet to help them understand and make the changes. If it is a public service/facility, you can write to the council and you can also write to your MP.

**Equality Act and reasonable adjustments – short guide:**

The Equality Act says that disabled people should enjoy equal access to any service or product offered to the public.

Even with this law in place, people are still being treated unfairly and lots of shops and services still have things like steps, confusing signs, and information in small print that can stop disabled people from being able to gain access and be included.

Reasonable adjustments are changes an employer or someone providing a service has to make so that disabled people can do something, like getting into a shop to do their shopping or a bank sending information in the best way for them to use, like in large print or in easy to read words.

Whether or not a change is ‘reasonable’ will vary from case to case, but factors like the ones below may be taken into account:

* the cost of making the change
* how practical it would be
* how much disruption it would cause

More information [here](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/private-and-public-sector-guidance/organisations-and-businesses/businesses/creating-reasonable-adjustments-disabled-people)

Remember to let us know what you are doing by sharing your activity on social media (@LeonardCheshire)