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**Tips for businesses - what can I do to improve my access?**

**What sort of changes should I be considering in order to comply with the law and offer a more accessible service?**

It's important to remember that the Government estimate disabled people's annual spending power at £80 billion. Offering an accessible service opens up a potentially valuable market. A more accessible service almost always benefits other customers as well - older people and parents with young children often find physical adjustments improve the quality of their service, whilst all customers can benefit from clear signage and information presentation designed for people with visual or hearing impairments.

Adjustments are not always very expensive, but can make a big difference. You should try to consider all the aspects of access, and talk to your disabled customers to find out what their needs are, but here are just a few of the steps you could consider:

1. **Make sure you talk to disabled customers to find out how you can improve access**. Think about different types of disability (including, for example, physical or mobility impairments, hearing or visual impairments, learning difficulties or long-term illnesses) and how best you can make your premises accessible to all.
2. **Ensure that staff are trained in working with disabled customers** - many problems can be overcome simply by making certain that staff know what they should and shouldn't do when serving a disabled customer.
3. **Try to ensure that there is level access to your premises**, or if there are steps consider investing in a permanent or portable ramp.
4. **Find out about your responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010.**
5. **Make sure that your check-out is accessible** and that Chip and PIN terminals are moveable to be accessible for disabled customers.
6. **Try to ensure that changing rooms, if applicable, are accessible** and well signposted. Use contrasting colours and symbols to point the way to facilities, as well as looking to fit grab rails or other features to aid access.
7. **Make sure that staff are trained in Chip and PIN procedures**, and are also knowledgeable and competent in processing alternative types of card payment, such as chip and signature.
8. **Think about the layout of the shop floor/venue** to make sure that it is possible to move around inside the shop, without being blocked by narrow aisles or obstructions.
9. **Consider contacting the local council to ask for adaptations** like a dropped kerb on the pavement outside the shop if this would help people gain access. Where possible provide disabled parking spaces.
10. **Make doors easy to open**. Doors that require considerable force and only open one way can be difficult for some disabled people to use - easy access to the premises will encourage more disabled customers in.
11. **Plan accessibility into any future refurbishments**. If you are redecorating or rebuilding any part of the premises make sure that access requirements are factored in. It will be cheaper to build them in than to have to add them later.