

Promoting your accessible tourism business

Having invested in making your tourism business accessible, how do you ensure that disabled customers and those with access needs get to know about you when they are planning holidays and breaks? And, having found you, how do you ensure that they choose your business over others – and that they will want to come back?

There are three simple steps to actively promote your business to travellers and holiday makers with access needs:

- **Information**– tell people what you have and what you can do for them, through the channels where they will be looking.
- **Engagement** - make it easy for your customers to engage with you and get them to tell you what you got right and what you could improve.
- **Inspiration** – inspire your customers not just to use your facilities but to go out and enjoy their experience with you to the maximum – and tell others about it.

Information

Accurate, comprehensive information – that can readily be found – is critical for everyone with access needs when they are planning their holiday or break. So:

- Gather all the information you can about the accessibility of your business and write it down in a clear, concise form that will help tourists and travellers with access needs decide whether your business will be suitable for their requirements. A really great way to do this is to prepare an Accessibility Guide, using the [toolkit](#) that Visit England and VisitScotland have jointly created, which will help you review and record the accessibility of your business in a structured and comprehensive way.
- Remember that:
 - A picture is worth 1,000 words - photographing your accessible features and facilities will be a great help for tourists and travellers with access needs.
 - The more information you can give and show, the more you will inform and help tourists and travellers with access needs.
 - Practical information about things like local accessible parking can be just as useful as the details of your own accessible features.
- Promote the accessibility of your business on your website, social media and advertising.
- Make sure that when people search for accessibility in your destination or area your business is listed with your facilities and services. In particular:
 - Engage with your local Destination Management Organisation (DMO) to see what promotional support they can offer. DMOs are responsible for promoting tourism and travel to and within the destinations they represent and many of them feature accessible businesses on their websites.
 - Consider promoting your property through a specialist accessible tourism planning website, such as [Tourism for All's Travel Planner](#), which is used by tourists and travellers with access needs to plan holidays and breaks in the UK. Promotion through Tourism for All's Travel Planner costs from only £180 per year and the team will help to develop the copy and content for your entry on the Travel Planner, to ensure that it has the maximum impact.

N.B. accessible tourism planning websites are also operated by other organisations.

Accurate, comprehensive information, that can readily be found – it all adds up to making your business highly attractive to travellers and holiday makers with access needs.

Engagement

The easier you make it for your customers with access needs to engage with you – from the start – the more likely it is that they will enjoy their experience and want to come back – and that they will tell others about it. So:

- Make sure that the information you present to customers, through your website or in print, is clear and easy for everyone to read and understand (for customers with a visual impairment, for example). The Government has prepared [useful guidance and tips](#) for ensuring that your information is presented in an accessible way.
- As well as email, provide a telephone number so that people can ring you to ask any questions before they book or come.
- Remember that being willing to ask customers with access needs what they want and how you can help is the best way to ensure that your customers have a great time and will want to come back to your business again and again – and will tell others about it. The two most important times to approach the customer are:
 - When the customer arrives. Make sure that your staff are ready to say 'hello' and to ask the customer the right questions to ensure they have the best experience at your business.
 - When the customer is preparing to leave. Make sure that you ask the customer for their honest feedback on their experience at your business, what you got right and what you could improve. Our **Customer Feedback Template** will help you to gather feedback that will help you improve the welcome and service you give to customers with access needs. It is downloadable from the 'Resources' page in the 'Business Information & Insights' area on our website, in MS Word and PDF formats.

Your staff, their knowledge and attitude – and your willingness to learn from your customers to improve your service – are crucial to engaging with your customers

Inspiration

The more a customer enjoys their overall experience – not just of your business and facilities but of the area round about – the more likely they are to want to repeat it and to tell others about it. So:

- Make sure you know of places in the area where customers with access needs can shop, eat, visit, park and use the toilet and how they can get around. This really can make the difference between just having a holiday or break and having a great experience that the customer will want to repeat. Our **Local Accessibility Checklist** will help you to gather accessibility information about your area into an easily referenced form. It is downloadable from the 'Resources' page in the 'Business Information & Insights' area on our website, in MS Word and PDF formats.
- Make sure that you ask customers with access needs to share with you stories, pictures and feedback, not just about your business but about the area in which you are based and other businesses within it.
- Post these stories, pictures and feedback on your website and social media. This will 'complete the circle', so that these customers' experiences can inspire new customers to come to you in the future.

Help your customers with access needs to turn their holiday experience into their best experience and you will inspire them to return to you and, crucially, tell others just how good you are.