

# One step ahead

THE STANDARD TO HELP YOU ACCOMMODATE  
OLDER AND LESS MOBILE GUESTS



VisitEngland™

# Welcome to One step ahead

## What is One step ahead?

This standard isn't about disability – it's about helping you provide a more accessible business.

The standard has also been developed to help tourism businesses prepare for the fact that we are all living longer. Baby boomers may be getting older and may need a little extra help getting around, but they still have money to spend.

Achieving this standard will open your business to a wide range of potential visitors – those who are less mobile, families, elderly guests. Practically all your visitors will benefit in one way or another.

One step ahead is for Serviced, Self-Catering, Hostel and Campus accommodation; Holiday, Touring and Camping Parks; and Caravan Holiday Homes. It is the mobility entry level standard (M1) of the National Accessible Scheme (NAS) and is based on the needs of older and less mobile visitors – those who can happily climb and descend a flight of stairs but who will benefit from a few added services and facilities around your business.

## Did you know?

Even if your business has steps to the front door or no ground floor bedrooms you can still achieve this standard.

Also, along with your public areas, only one bedroom and bathroom have to be accessible for you to meet this level.

## You didn't know? Then read on...

The perception is that accessibility is all about ramps and wide doors – it's not. This standard shows that providing and improving accessible facilities and services needn't be difficult and won't cost you the earth. You probably meet 80% of the standard already.

Barriers to access are often about attitude and service – which are easy to rectify. Making sure you and your staff are confident to look after all visitors is therefore the perfect starting point to you achieving this level.

## Your key benefits of participation

- ❑ **'Stand out from the crowd'** by using the logo in your marketing (see back cover).
- ❑ **Tips and advice** from one of our specialists who will visit your business.
- ❑ **Increase your business's exposure**
  - Searchable by accessibility rating on **enjoyengland.com** and **visitbritain.com**
  - Listing in the next edition of the official guide book, *Open Britain* (previously *Easy Access Britain*)
  - Searchable on **tourismforall.org.uk** – the UK's central source of holiday information for visitors with access needs.

## ❑ Action Plan

The assessment can help you to identify other things you can do.



**We are seeing an increase in less mobile and disabled guests year on year. Our VisitEngland National Accessible Scheme ratings have helped us 'stand out from the crowd' and have offered reassurances to our guests prior to arrival.**



*Carol Emerson, Elms Farm Cottages, Lincolnshire. East Midlands Gold Winner 'Access for All' 2008.*

### Benefits for your visitors

Visitors are increasingly looking for reassurances up front. Extra ratings and awards show your customers that you care about quality and strive to stay one step ahead of the competition.

Visitors will spend twice as long searching and planning a holiday or short break than they do when considering a mortgage! For older and less mobile visitors this process is even more in depth because they need to be sure that they will be able to get around your business easily and enjoy the whole visitor experience as all your guests do.

Showing a commitment to quality and accessibility will give your business an advantage over others. Little extra touches will result in your guests recommending you to friends and visiting you again.

### So what are you waiting for?



Just take these three easy steps...

**Step 1** Take 15 minutes to read through the standard. This will give you a clear indication of what is required. You may be surprised that it's not as difficult to achieve as you thought.

**Step 2** Use the checklist on pages 10-11 to walk around your business and check where you already meet the standard. At the same time note any changes required and add to your action plan.

**Step 3** Waste no time and call Quality in Tourism on 0845 300 6996 to start the application process and advise you of the fees. Operators participating in this standard will need to follow the VisitEngland code of conduct available from Quality in Tourism.



# Before your guests arrive



- ❑ Ensure emergency escape procedures are in place for all guests. Identify clear actions for you and your staff to assist less mobile guests.

*"Why not ask your local fire officer about getting less mobile guests out in the event of an emergency?"*

- ❑ Are you confident in dealing with all visitors? You and your staff will need to have received some form of training on how to welcome all types of visitors e.g. Welcome All.



- ❑ Make sure all external and internal routes are free from obstacles (or can be moved on request). Routes should have firm, well maintained surfaces e.g. Tarmac, concrete.
- ❑ The designated accessible bedroom, bathroom and all public areas need to be clutter free, with any potential hazards removed.
- ❑ Lighting inside and outside your business must be evenly positioned (non glare) so guests can identify any obstacles in the dark – e.g. car parking, routes to the entrance, corridors and public areas.
- ❑ Let visitors know exactly what you have! Your access statement needs to be put on your website and be available on request.

*"Use the template on **www.visitengland.com/accessstatements** to make sure you are providing all the information required."*

*"When you commission a new website or upgrade, make sure your designers are familiar with WAI's web accessibility guidelines – **www.w3.org.uk**."*

# On arrival



- ❑ Make sure someone is on hand to offer assistance with luggage when requested.
- ❑ If you don't provide a car park, a dropping off point close to the main entrance (within 50 metres) needs to be made available and clearly signed. Where you do provide a car park, a reservable space with a width of 2.8 metres and within 50 metres of the main entrance is required. The accessible entrance needs to be clearly signed.
- ❑ Remember, designated disabled bays should not be used by staff or delivery drivers!
- ❑ At registration, a seat is needed for guests less able to stand. It will be appreciated by all tired guests after their journey.
- ❑ On arrival offer your guests a tour of relevant facilities. Don't forget to offer an additional key for the accommodation when there is more than one guest.
- ❑ Guests should be made aware of the evacuation procedures, if appropriate. For guests that may require assistance in the event of an emergency, keep a written record of their location on site.
- ❑ In larger businesses, signage to locate facilities needs to be clearly visible. In all businesses the fire evacuation point/s must be clearly identified.

**It's not all about wheelchairs! With One step ahead, you are talking about those who are a little less mobile. The changes you make for them will generally improve accessibility for many other guests.**

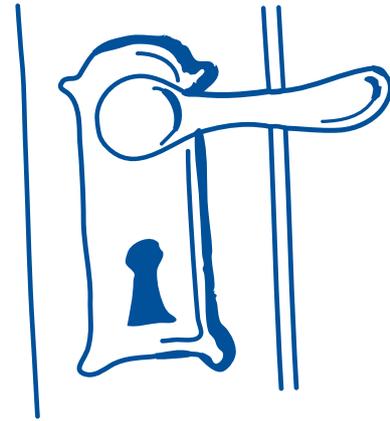
**Yes, it takes a bit of time to think things through but most of the alterations needed cost very little at all. And when the assessor visits, you benefit from their ideas and professional experience as well.**



*Tony Barnfield, The Nurse's Cottage Restaurant with Rooms, Hampshire. South East Gold Winner 'Access for All' 2008.*



# Around your business



- ❑ One flight of stairs to reach accessible bedrooms and public areas is fine to meet this standard. But for guidance, the width should not be less than 750mm (approx. 2ft 6ins) and the depth should be more than the height. You can have steps to other parts of your business. A spiral staircase is unlikely to meet this standard.

If your accessible bedroom and all public areas are on the ground floor, then the standard for stairs will not apply.

- ❑ If two or more flights of steps lead to the accessible bedroom or public areas a lift is required.
- ❑ Provide at least one handrail next to the steps or stairs (both sides are better) that's easy to grip. There should be enough space for a firm grip but your arm shouldn't easily slip through.
- ❑ If you provide a ramp, the gradient shouldn't be too steep e.g. no steeper than 1:8. If it is steeper, steps are also required. The ramp must be slip resistant and requires raised edges. On a permanent ramp, a handrail is required.
- ❑ Doors can often be barriers to many of us, particularly heavy doors. Make sure doors are easy to open and close. Handles on doors and drawers need to be simple to operate with minimal twisting.

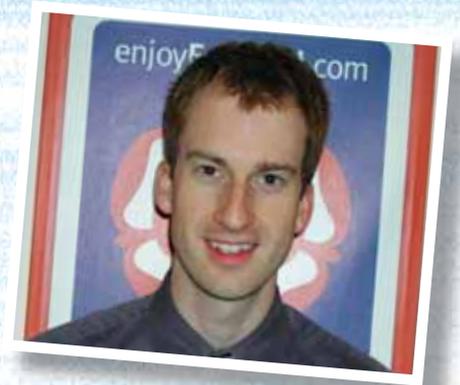
*"Regularly maintain doors to ensure they operate easily."*

- ❑ Rugs can look good, but they can be slippery underfoot and guests could trip. Rugs and mats should be avoided if not sunk into the floor.
- ❑ Tables need to provide support and be stable for people rising from their chairs e.g. a leg on each corner. Centre supports, if sturdy, will also provide the appropriate support.
- ❑ A selection of chairs with and without arm-rests provides choice. At the very least, place one chair with arms in accessible bedrooms and public areas.
- ❑ Are you or any of your staff available to offer assistance to guests? There needs to be someone who can help out, if requested.
- ❑ Where you provide public telephones make sure they can be easily reached and at least one has a seat/perch.

*"If you provide a telephone in the accessible room a large button one would be useful."*



# Your accessible bedroom/s



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- ❑ Ensure the bed has a firm surface and is not less than 450mm high (approx. 1ft 6ins). Folding, sofa or bunk beds are not acceptable within this standard.
- ❑ Ensure the bedroom provides clear space to walk around without bumping into furniture. Can the windows be easily reached by your guests and are they simple to open and close?
- ❑ Remember to provide a remote control for televisions in accessible rooms and public areas.

*"Subtitles provided by Teletext are useful!"*

- ❑ When positioning mirrors make sure they are easy to use while standing and seated to provide flexibility for your guests.

*"If a hairdryer is provided it should be near the mirror."*

- ❑ Where you offer tea and coffee facilities in bedrooms and/or kitchen areas provide a cordless kettle at table level and close to an electric socket.

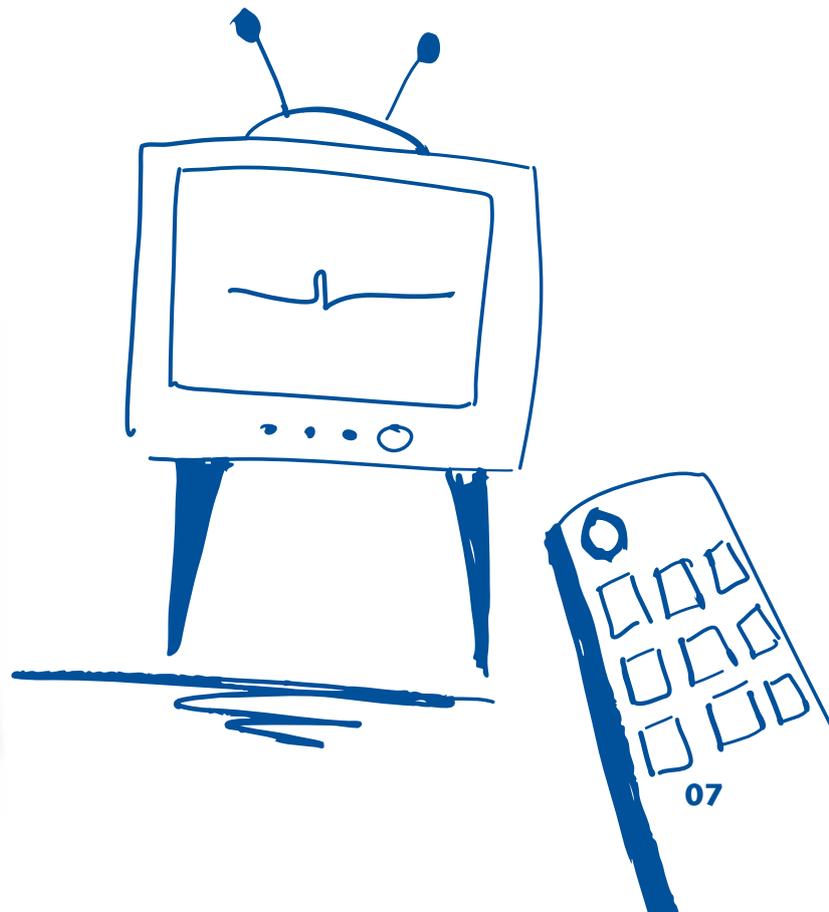


**Over one quarter of the UK population has a long-standing health problem or disability.\* One step ahead can help you reach out to a wider market and grow your business. Signing up to One step ahead demonstrates that your business is serious about delivering excellent experiences to all visitors.**

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Ross Calladine, Accessibility Project Manager, VisitEngland

\*Source: Eurostat research 2003

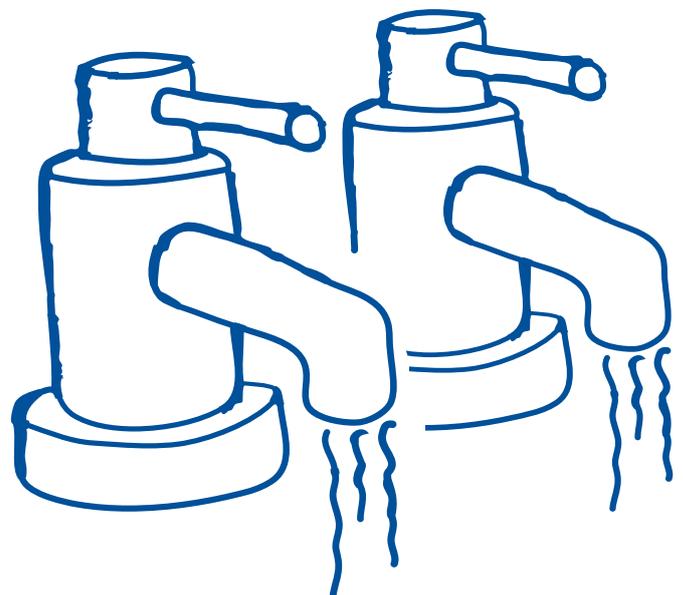


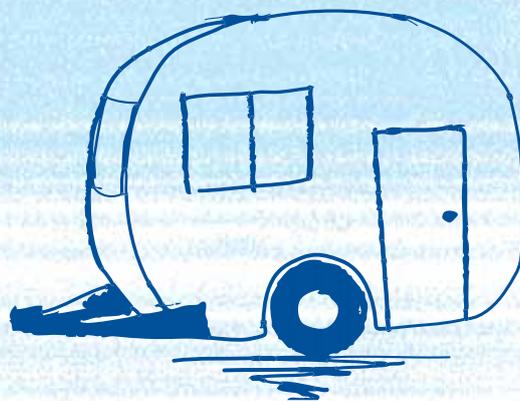
# Your accessible bathroom/s



- ❑ Where an ensuite is not available the allocated bathroom must be close by on the same floor.
- ❑ The floor surface needs to be non-slip (wet or dry) and a slip resistant bath/shower mat provided.
- ❑ If there is a bath, a horizontal or angled support rail, minimum 450mm (approx. 1ft 6ins) in length (integral bath handles are fine) is needed, attached to the wall. In addition, a vertical rail positioned close to the tap end will assist your guests getting in and out of the bath.
- ❑ Where you provide a separate shower, the shower tray must not be higher than 190mm (7.5ins) above the floor. To aid support provide a horizontal, vertical or angled rail close to the shower attachments. If you provide a bath and separate shower then a grab rail is only required in the shower.
- ❑ If the shower temperature cannot be controlled, it should be limited to 41°C.
- ❑ Remember to provide a shelf or soap dish for toiletries which can be reached whilst in the shower, whether standing or sitting.
- ❑ Provide lever taps or lever attachments on the washbasin and bath and ideally the shower too. See [www.yourablesshop.co.uk](http://www.yourablesshop.co.uk) for suitable fixtures from only £5.50.
- ❑ Remember to position a clothes hook in a convenient place.
- ❑ Make sure you have a toilet seat height raiser available on request.

*"You could consider sharing equipment like toilet seat height raisers with other accommodation businesses."*
- ❑ Where public toilets are available they should be kept unlocked (or a key provided to guests).
- ❑ Provide a fixed horizontal support rail beside the toilet to assist with sitting and standing.
- ❑ Position the toilet paper holder and a shelf or level surface within easy reach of the toilet. (If possible provide toilet paper that can be taken with one hand e.g. a tissue dispenser.)





# Self-Catering, Caravan, Camping Parks

For Holiday, Touring, Camping Parks, Caravan Holiday Homes and Self-Catering accommodation – what else do you need to think about?

- Make sure you provide a fire blanket positioned between the cooker and the exit. So it can be easily reached it should be no more than 1400mm (approx. 4ft 7ins) above the floor.
- Provide lever taps or lever attachments on at least one sink/washbasin.

- If you have touring pitches, at least one should have a 2.8 metres plus parking space and be within 100 metres of a facilities block.
- Accessible caravans should also have a 2.8 metres-wide parking space close by.
- Where there are speed bumps en route to facilities and services, make sure there is a gap between the end of the speed bump and side of the road so that people can easily pass by.

## Do you think your business could provide more facilities?

This standard is based on the needs of older and less mobile visitors. If you are able to provide facilities for visually impaired, hearing impaired and/or wheelchair users then you should request a copy of the main NAS standards booklet. Call Quality in Tourism on 0845 300 6996.

## What to do if you're building from scratch

Building from scratch presents a great opportunity to open up your business to a much wider market.

If you are building new accommodation it will be subject to the requirements of Approved Document M building regulations. These requirements concern access to and use of buildings. A useful guidance document can be sourced from [www.planningportal.gov.uk](http://www.planningportal.gov.uk).

You can find more information and guidance by using the NAS standards booklet, which identifies standards for wheelchair users, visually impaired visitors and guests with hearing difficulties. To request a copy call 0845 300 6996.

## Ideally... other steps you could take

- Provide a dropped curb at the entrance to your business.
- Stairs and steps to be closed in with a height of no more than 190mm and depth not less than 250mm (approx. 7.5ins and 10ins).
- Door widths and space between furniture to be no less than 670mm – up to 850mm is best (approx. 2ft 3ins to 2ft 10ins).
- Provide a bathing board or seat – a free-standing bath stool is fine.
- Have a shower stool available.
- If you are fitting support rails and want to know the best height etc or you would like more ideas of additional improvements you can make, contact Quality in Tourism for the main NAS standards booklet. Call 0845 300 6996 or download at [www.visitengland.com/nas](http://www.visitengland.com/nas)

# One step ahead

## Your checklist

Use this summary version of the standard to walk around your business and check where you already meet One step ahead.

### Before your guests arrive



- Emergency evacuation procedures and actions recorded
- Access training programme in place
- External routes free from obstacles (or can be removed when required)
- External route with firm, well maintained surface
- All public areas free from clutter
- External lighting evenly positioned (non glare)
- Access statement completed – info on services and facilities
- Dropping off point
- If car park – reservable space width 2.8 metres and less than 50 metres (100 metres if covered) from entrance
- Accessible space and entrance clearly marked

### On arrival

- Seating available at registration
- Tour of facilities offered and additional key to room/unit when two or more guests
- Evacuation procedures communicated to guest (if appropriate)
- Written record of guest's location and specific needs



- Accessible facilities clearly signed and fire evacuation points identified (if appropriate). Clear short words and sentences
- Entrance lighting evenly positioned
- Doors easy to open and handles easy to operate (easy grip, minimal twisting)
- Unobstructed routes
- Assistance with luggage available

### Around your business

- Maximum one flight of stairs to reach accessible bedroom and public areas
- Width of stairs/steps – minimum 750mm wide
- Depth of stairs/steps should be more than height
- Handrail next to stairs/steps, enough space for firm grip but not to allow arm to slip through
- If ramp – no steeper than 1:8; steps required if steeper
- If permanent ramp – handrail and raised edging required
- Lighting evenly positioned
- Routes free from obstacles (or can be removed when required)





Doors easy to open and handles easy to operate (easy grip, minimal twisting)

Rugs removed if required

Sturdy tables e.g. leg at each corner

At least one chair with arms (a selection is best)

Assistance available for guests throughout their stay

Remote control for public televisions, if provided

A public phone easily reached with somewhere to sit



### Accessible bedroom/s

Doors easy to open and handles easy to operate

Rugs removed if required

Bed height not less than 450mm

Wardrobe and drawers easy to open

At least one chair with arms

Clear space around furniture or ability to move on request

Remote control where television provided

Lighting evenly positioned

Mirrors positioned for use when standing and sitting

Kettle (where provided) at table height and close to socket

Evacuation notice (where applicable) clearly positioned



### Accessible bathroom/s

If no ensuite, bathroom to be on same floor

Doors easy to open and handles easy to operate

Floor surface non slip with non-slip bath/shower mat

Horizontal rail above bath (minimum 450mm) and vertical rail towards taps (if no separate shower with support rail)

Shower tray not higher than 190mm

Grab rail by shower attachments

If shower temperature cannot be controlled, limit to 41°C

Shelf or soap dish in shower – reached from standing or sitting

Lever taps or attachments on washbasins and bath (shower if possible)

Clothes hook in convenient space

Toilet seat height raiser available

Horizontal support rail attached to wall beside toilet

Toilet paper and shelf in easy reach of toilet



### Self-Catering, Caravan, Camping Parks

Fire blanket in easy reach towards exit

Lever taps or lever attachments on at least one sink/washbasin

Touring pitches – at least one with parking space 2.8 metres wide and less than 100 metres from facilities block

A parking space for each accessible caravan – 2.8 metres wide and close by

Gap between end of speed bumps and side of road

## More sources of information...

- Approved Document M – Access to and Use of Buildings [www.planningportal.gov.uk](http://www.planningportal.gov.uk)
- Guidance on emergency evacuation is also available for free [www.communities.gov.uk/firesafety](http://www.communities.gov.uk/firesafety) and the management procedures outlined in BS5588 part 8 – means of escape for disabled people
- For more information on lighting look at the Chartered Institute of Building Services Engineers [www.cibse.org](http://www.cibse.org)
- Use RNIB guidelines on signage and symbols [www.rnib.org.uk](http://www.rnib.org.uk) or Sign Design Guide by RNIB Access Consultancy [www.jmuaccess.org.uk](http://www.jmuaccess.org.uk)
- The Disability Discrimination Act [www.equalityhumanrights.com](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com)
- Information provider for consumers and tourism businesses to help disabled and older people to travel [www.tourismforall.org.uk](http://www.tourismforall.org.uk)
- Welcome All – a one day course explaining the importance of providing great customer service to customers with disabilities as well as knowledge about how to do so [www.welcometoexcellence.co.uk](http://www.welcometoexcellence.co.uk)
- Information on how to write an access statement, including a standard template to help you structure the statement [www.visitengland.com/accesstatements](http://www.visitengland.com/accesstatements)
- Easy does it - simple, low cost changes to benefit you and your visitors [www.visitengland.com/easydoesit](http://www.visitengland.com/easydoesit)



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