

# How to choose an accessible meeting place

## Introduction

The experience of group members is more likely to be maximised if they feel at ease, included and safe. It can be hard to engage in a discussion when you are worried about where to find an accessible toilet in a timely fashion. Making sure your meeting place is accessible and comfortable for all members is very important.

## Let's make it happen

### *Things to consider when choosing an accessible meeting place*

- It is wise to choose a venue with as many accessibility features as possible at the planning phase to avoid potential problems in the future.
- Knowing who your members are and what individual needs they may have is useful, however as the group evolves and different members attend you may find your meeting place is no longer suitable for everyone and need to go through the process of finding another space.
- Finding an accessible venue can be tricky as many venues available for hire are not accessible or only have a few access features.
- It is good to think of all possible access needs, including people's physical and sensory access needs.
- Consider a venue that is easy to get to via public transport and also has ample parking with disability bays. It needs to have good signage and be well lit.
- Internally, it needs to have suitable acoustics while excluding unwanted noise which may be overwhelming.
- Internal space needs to allow people to enter, exit and move around the building with ease and safety,
- Including accessible toilet facilities and where, ideally, your meeting can take place on one floor only (preferably the ground floor). While lifts are invaluable for providing access for people with mobility difficulties, it is important to remember that in the event of an emergency they may not be useable or if needed by multiple people may prove inefficient for speedy evacuation.
- Despite the best planning and taking all necessary precautions, emergencies can and do occur. It is important that emergency procedures include how best to assist people with a disability in the event of an emergency and to ensure all exits and assembly points are accessible.

'Accessible' is still a very subjective concept for many. While a ramp may be present, it may be too steep. People without mobility issues may be unaware of a small step or that simply getting in the door does not make a space 'accessible'. When making initial contact with the venue ask questions before going to view it.

# QuickGuide

- What features are accessible?
- Do you have... a ramp, accessible bathroom/toilet, air-conditioning, disabled parking or steps?
- How old is the building? Younger buildings have had to meet more stringent guidelines at construction phase. The older buildings may or may not have had modifications. It is okay to ask they check before you go out to view the space. This can save you wasting time.

When you decide to view a venue consider taking a camera, note-taking material and a measuring tape. Having navigated the built environment and seen many access issues people who use wheelchairs can be good at identifying potential access problems. Enlisting the help of a wheelchair user to view the venue with you may be a great help.

## Printable Venue Checklist

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

### Exterior

- Clearly marked signage (Braille)
- Well-lit accessible main entrance
- Alternative accessible entrance/exit points
- Barrier-free from footpath and carpark
- Accessible route to public transport
- Accessible parking
- Easy open doors (automatic/push button/light/lever handles)
- Doorway width (minimum 850mm)
- Glass doors with contrasting door frames, stickers, or bright signs
- Slip-resistant, level surfaces
- Tactile ground surface indicators that signal stairs and ramps
- Toileting area for service animals

Notes \_\_\_\_\_

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### Interior

- Clearly marked signage (Braille)
- Tactile ground surface indicators
- Easy-to-open, light doors with lever hands
- Wide doorways
- Clearly marked accessible exits
- Wide, barrier-free hallways
- Even, stable, regular, slip-resistant, non-sloped paths of travel
- Clearly marked accessible restrooms

- Well-lit areas

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## Meeting room

- Signs (Braille, simple large lettering, good contrast) that direct attendees to all rooms
- Barrier-free path to rooms
- Seating/tables
- Well-lit room
- Suitable acoustics
- Wide doorway
- Easy open/light doors/ lever handles
- Rooms large enough to allow all persons to move about freely
- Accessible bathrooms in close proximity to rooms
- Proper air circulation with temperature controls

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## Accessible toilets

- Toilet nearby the activity
- Clear signage
- Light door with accessible handles and locks
- Well lit
- Ample room for wheelchair plus support worker
- Grab rails
- No unnecessary objects eg. should not be used for storage
- Accessible basin with reachable tap, soap, towel, and bin.

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# QuickGuide

Co-authored by [WA's Individualised Services](#)

