

Accessibility Tool Kit

Ross Calladine, VisitEngland

Local Visitor
Economy
Partnership



enjoy Staffordshire
Staffordshire's official tourist board



The Value and Importance of Accessible Tourism for Staffordshire

Ross Calladine, Head of Business Support, VisitEngland & Government-appointed Disability & Access Ambassador for Tourism 19.01.24



VisitEngland

National Memorial Arboretum

About me

- Accessibility and Inclusion Lead at VisitEngland.
- Accessibility specialist, developing initiatives that help tourism businesses and destinations tap into the high value, growing accessible tourism market.
- Led the development of best-in-class accessibility toolkits for tourism businesses and destinations.
- Manages VisitEngland's Accessible & Inclusive Tourism Award, which recognises leaders in the field.
- Convenes England's Inclusive Tourism Action Group comprising leading accessible tourism stakeholders.
- Regularly speaker at national and international accessibility industry events.
- Appointed Disability and Access Ambassador for Tourism by the UK Government in January 2022.



Disability and Access Ambassador for Tourism

The Ambassador role includes:

- making the business case for goods and services being accessible to disabled customers
- using their networks to share good practice and to highlight potential improvements
- encouraging equal employment opportunities for disabled people
- helping businesses to improve their communication with disabled customers
- raising awareness of disability and accessibility issues
- working with other Ambassadors to support systemic change across the private sector

Other DAA's:

- **Airports** - Ann Frye OBE
- **Hospitality** - Kate Nicholls OBE – Chief Executive, UKHospitality
- **Rail** - Caroline Eglinton – Head of Inclusion, East West Railway Company
- **Heritage** - Kim Klug-Miller – Community P'ships Manager, Historic Royal Palaces
- **Countryside** - Debbie North
- **Built Environment** - Jean Hewitt



The National Tourism Agency

A non-departmental public body funded by the UK Government's Department for Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS)

- Our purpose is to drive a thriving tourism industry, creating economic prosperity across Britain.
- **VisitBritain:** Market the nations and regions of Britain overseas to drive growth in international leisure and business tourism
- **VisitEngland:** Lead and enable a sustainable and resilient visitor economy in England
- A key role in facilitating an accessible and inclusive tourism industry
- In support of the Government ambition....



Government ambition

Tourism Recovery Plan

“For the UK to become the most accessible tourism destination in Europe by 2025”

Key measure - increase inbound visits by disabled people by 33% (Tourism Sector Deal 2019)






Science Museum, London

Who?

Who are we talking about?



Please Stand Up!



1 in 4
of the UK population is disabled,
which may affect where they
choose to stay or visit

Family Resources Survey 2021/22, 24% (16 million)

A photograph of a museum gallery. In the foreground, a person is sitting in a wheelchair, looking towards the camera. The background features a large, white aircraft with multiple engines and a tail fin, suspended from the ceiling. The gallery has high ceilings, large windows, and ornate architectural details. A red semi-transparent box is overlaid on the center of the image, containing white text.

Only 7%
of disabled people are
wheelchair users

Who else has accessibility requirements?

People with:

Sight loss

Physical or mobility impairment

Hearing loss and
D/deaf people

Learning difficulty or intellectual disability

Families with young children

Dementia

Mental health condition

Older people

Social/communication impairment/ neurodivergent people
e.g. an Autistic Spectrum condition

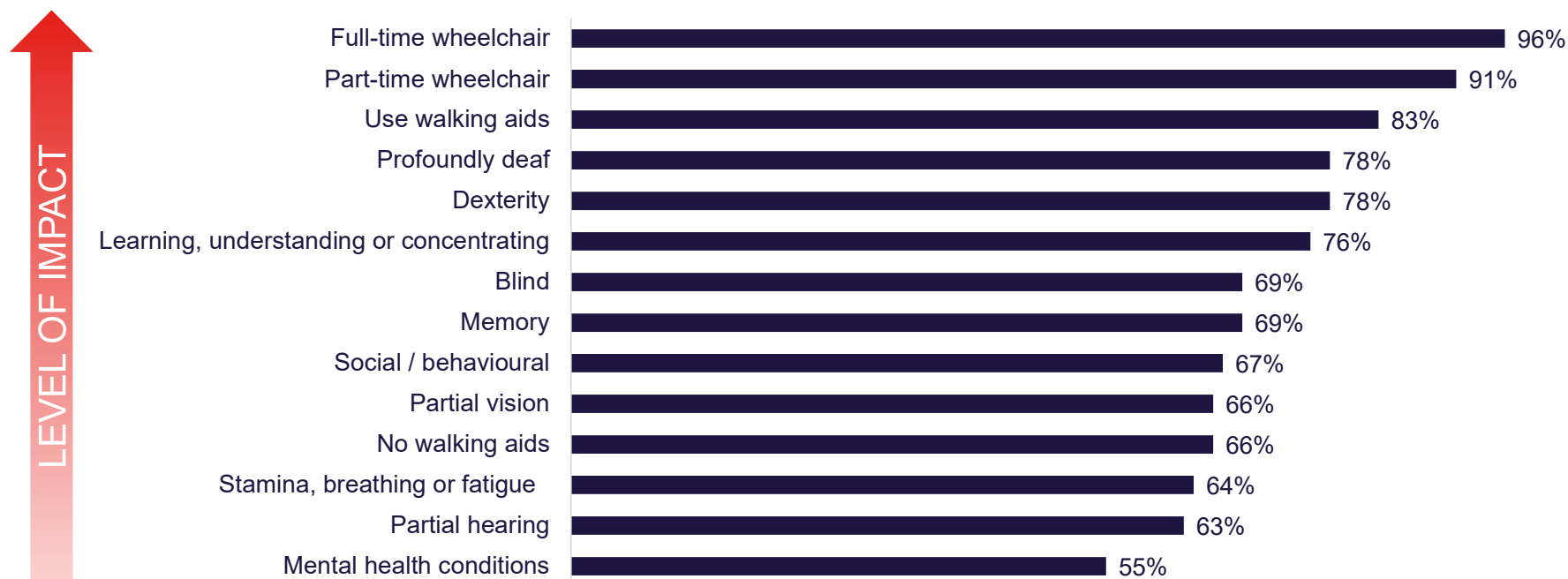
People with dietary requirements

Long-term illness/health condition

And others!

Each impairment has a different level of impact on accommodation choices

% of respondents with impairments saying that their condition has an impact on accommodation choices



Source: NAS study by XV Insight for VisitBritain, May 2022

Base: Blind (39*), Partial vision (140), Profoundly deaf (32*), Partial hearing (172), No walking aids (210), Use walking aids (225), part-time wheelchair (117), Full time wheelchair (56), Dexterity (101) LUC (101), Memory (136), Mental health (429), SBF301, Social/behavioural (107)

* CAUTION: SMALL SAMPLE SIZE

Unique requirements

- When travelling with health conditions, the considerations are complex and multi-faceted
- Each disabled individual typically has two conditions
- The average trip party has two or three different conditions to consider
- People with the same impairments often have different accessibility requirements
- Therefore requirements for each booking from this audience are unique

Average no. conditions mentioned in party

2.4

Average no. disabled individuals in party

1.5

Average no. conditions per disabled individual

1.9



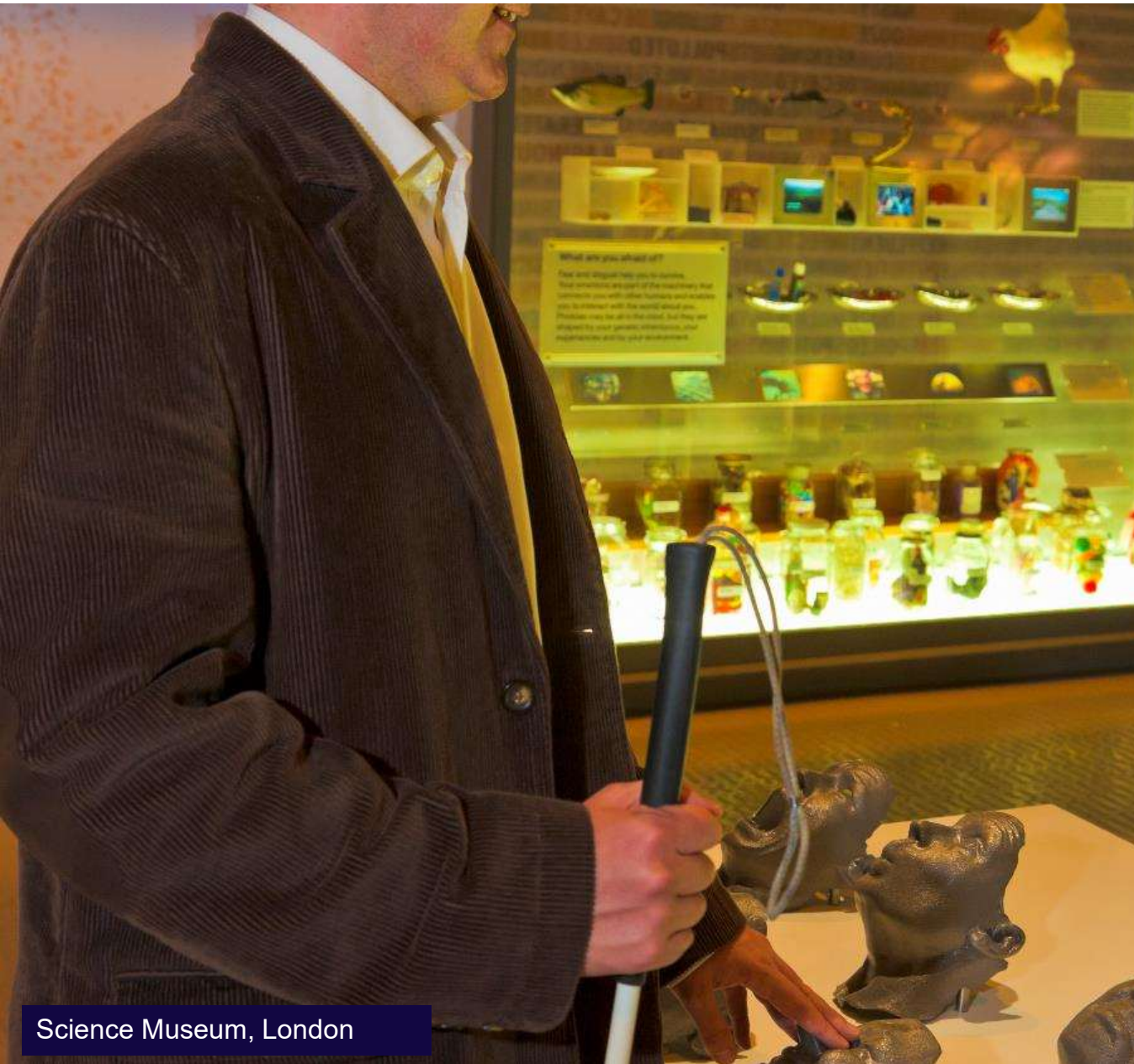
**On average a person
will spend 8 years
disabled in their
lifetime**

The Accessible Tourist Profile

The Accessible tourist is:

- Influenced by previous bad travel experiences
- Sceptical when something is described as 'accessible'
- Anxious that their accessibility needs won't be met
- Impacted by the least accessible part of the trip
- Loyal to companies who meet their accessibility requirements





Science Museum, London

Why?

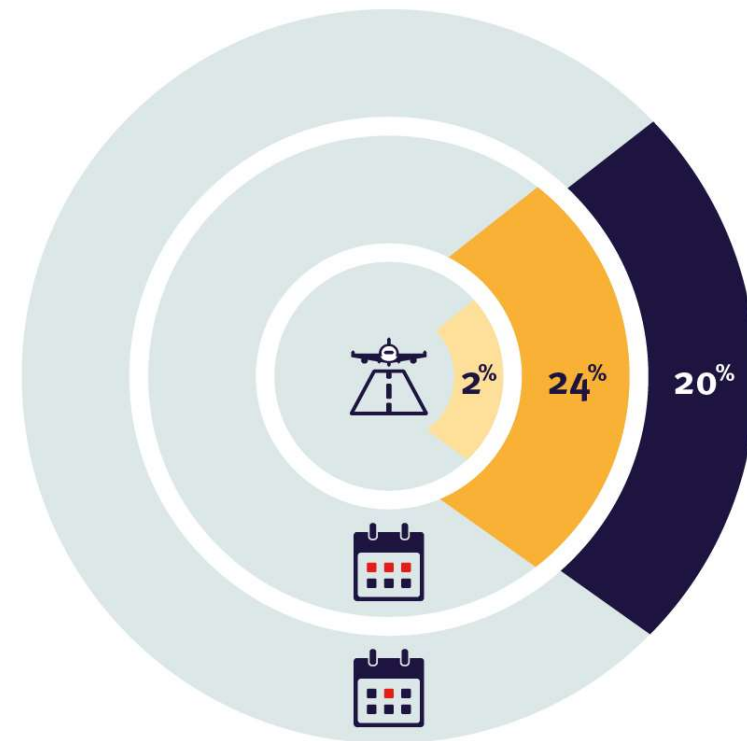
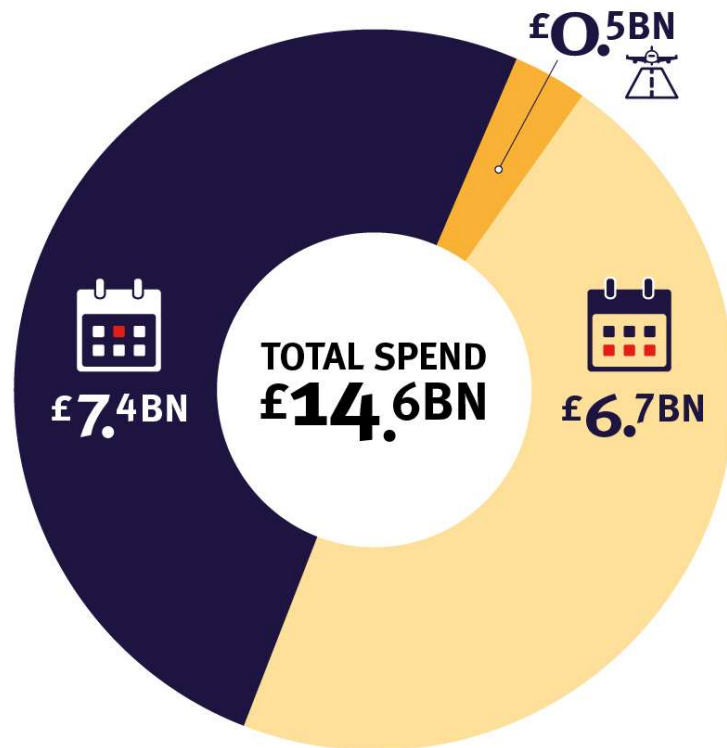
Why is this relevant to tourism destinations and businesses?



“Leaving out 16% of the world’s population should be considered a material risk to all businesses”

The business case

England trips taken by those with an impairment and their travelling companions



Great Britain Day Visitor Survey (July 2022 to June 2023), Great Britain Tourism Survey (July 2022 to June 2023) and International Passenger Survey (2018).

Building the '3 Rs'

- **Revenue**

A valuable market; attracting the spend of someone with accessibility requirements attracts the spend of their entire travelling party, which can really help build your revenue

- **Resilience**

Loyal and repeat customers who stay longer spend more, extend your trading season; being accessible can help rebuild business after the COVID-19 pandemic and build your business' resilience

- **Reputation**

Understanding customer's individual needs and focusing on customer service will get your customers talking positively about you, helping to build a strong reputation



1 in 4

**return to accommodation they visited before
either because it has the specialist facilities
needed and/or it removes the stress and effort of
trying to find somewhere different**

ROI – Hotel Brooklyn, Manchester

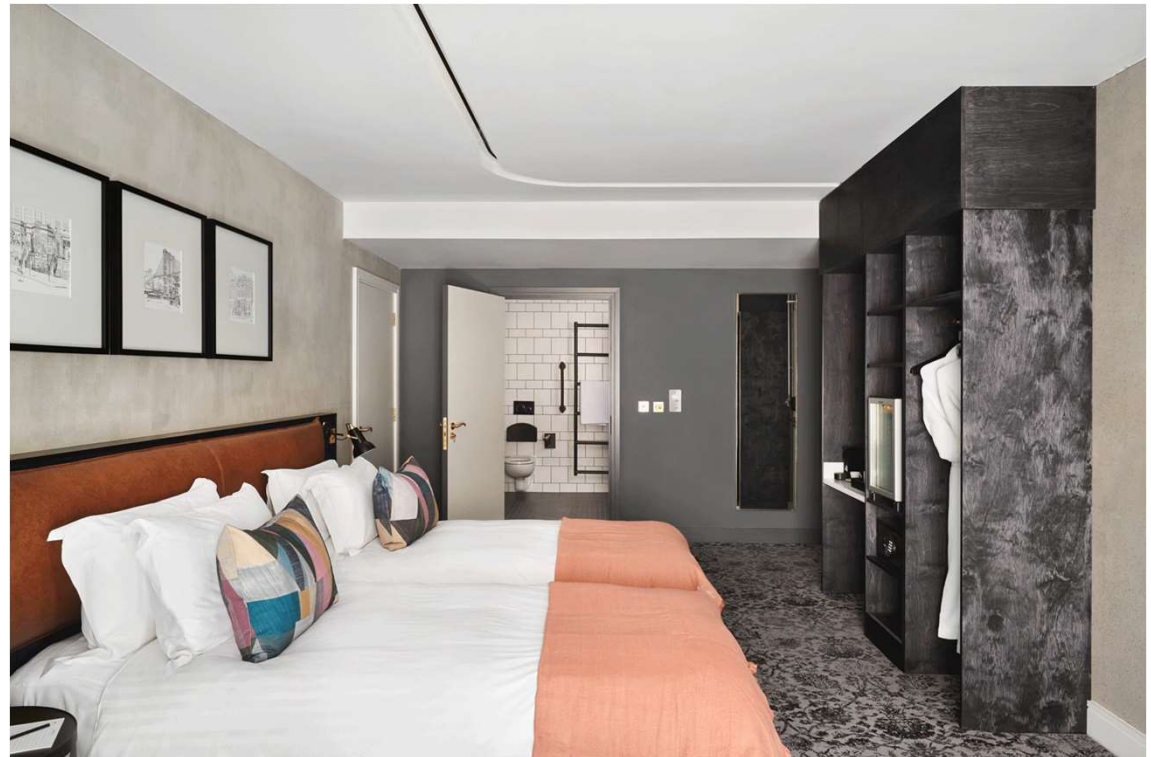
Investment in accessible facilities delivered additional revenues of **£217,000** in its first full trading year.

Rooms with universal appeal

£132,000 additional revenue from the 18 accessible rooms (revenue in excess to that of a standard room, driven by higher occupancy)

Additional event bookings

£85,000 from accessibility related events and events requiring accessibility.



A photograph of a man and a woman walking together on a grassy cliffside. The man is wearing a prosthetic leg and is holding the woman's hand. They are both looking towards the ocean. In the background, there is a blue sea, a small boat, and a green hillside under a cloudy sky.

**Accessibility is an opportunity not
just a responsibility**

**Stay legal, make more money and
feel good by doing the right thing**



What and How?

What is accessible tourism and how do I engage?

A photograph of a museum gallery. In the foreground, a person is sitting in a wheelchair on a glass walkway. Above them, a large white jet with multiple engines is suspended from the ceiling. The gallery has high ceilings, large windows, and ornate architectural details. A red semi-transparent box is overlaid on the center of the image, containing white text.

“Tourism experiences that can be enjoyed by people with physical, sensory and cognitive impairments and others with accessibility requirements”

Three Pillars of Accessible Tourism

Accessible / Inclusive Tourism



Customer

Customer
welcome
and
interaction

Place

Built
environment,
amenities
and services

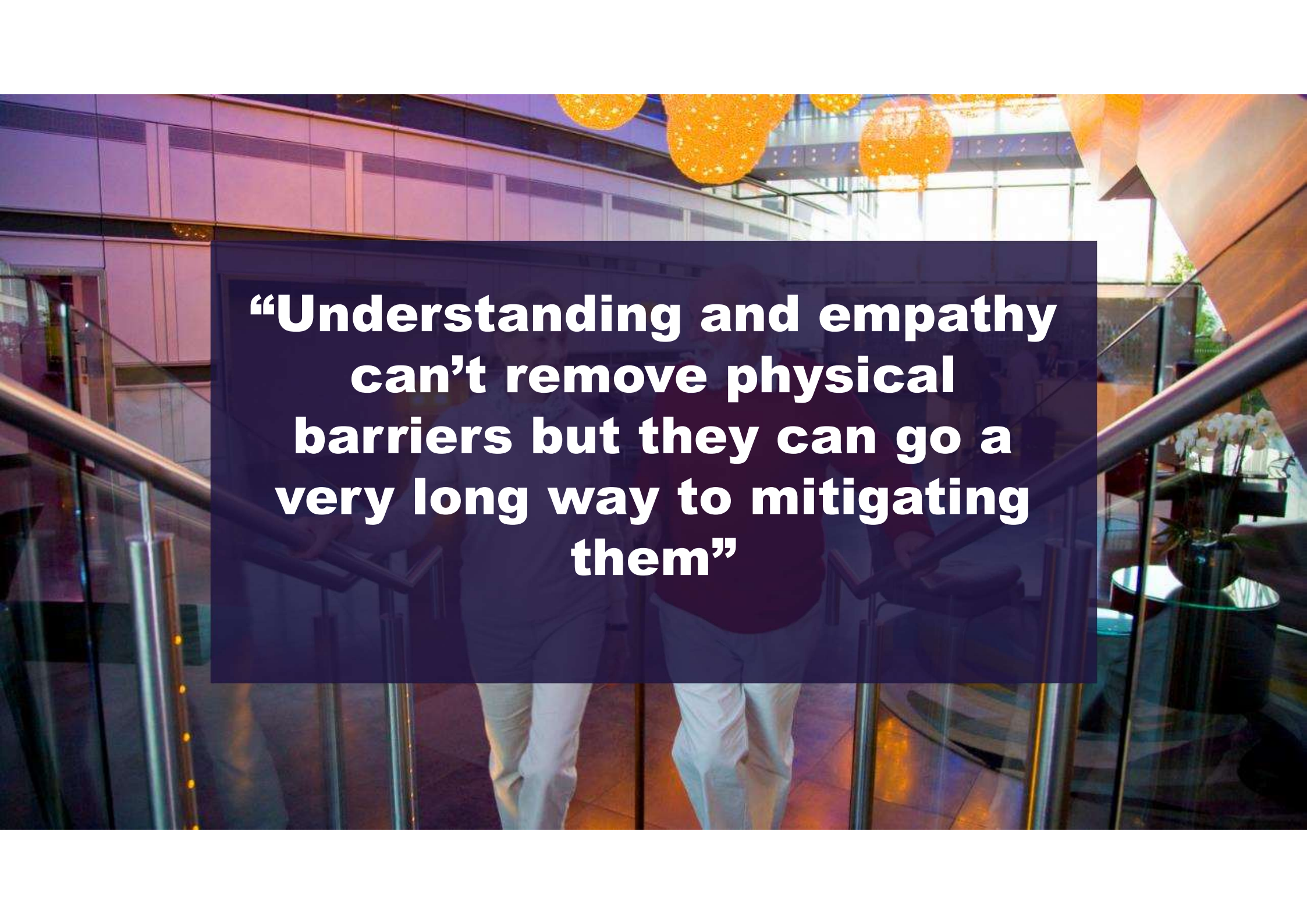
Information

Information,
marketing
and digital
inclusion

Employment

Employment
of disabled
people

Public Realm & Transport

A photograph of a person in a wheelchair on a modern staircase. The person is wearing a dark long-sleeved shirt and light-colored trousers. The staircase has a glass railing and a metal handrail. The background shows a modern building with large windows and several large, glowing orange spherical pendant lights hanging from the ceiling. A dark blue semi-transparent box is overlaid on the center of the image, containing white text.

**“Understanding and empathy
can’t remove physical
barriers but they can go a
very long way to mitigating
them”**

Information is key

- Booking / planning journey is driven by researching facts and opinion to inform a personal choice on suitability
- Most holiday-makers think about requirements and features, rather than access for a particular type of disability
- You should be aware of – and help to provide – the information that people want to know
- Be careful not to make assumptions and prescribe
- Describe accessibility factually to empower customers to make personal choices on holiday suitability
- Provide a Detailed Access Guide by AccessAble

“Don’t tell me what I want, tell me what you have and I’ll make my decision”

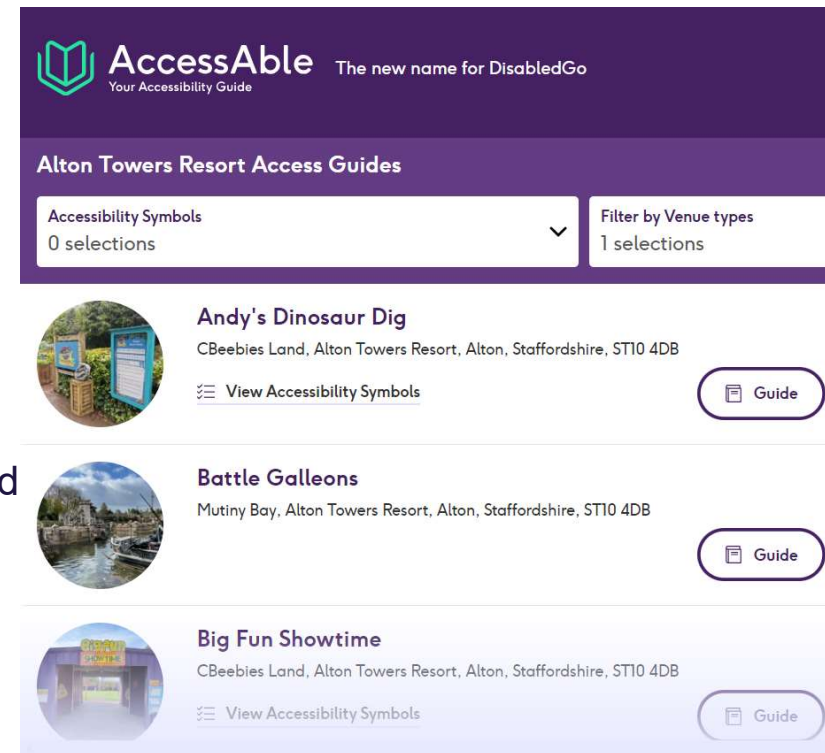
“If I don’t know, I don’t go”



Accessibility Guides

A customer-facing online guide that details the accessibility of a tourism venue so that people with accessibility requirements can make an informed decision as to whether it will meet their individual needs or not

- Today's traveller wants venues to be described factually to empower them to make personal choices
- To drive forward the provision of robust, publicly available Detailed Access Guides for tourism venues across England, VisitEngland is joining forces with AccessAble, a leader in quality accessibility information provision.
- From February 2024, use the new AccessAble portal to book either a Guided Assessment or On-Site Assessment
 - a professional access surveyor will create a quality-assured Detailed Access Guide.
- A discount code will be emailed to all existing users of the current tool.
- All guides will be searchable on AccessAble's website, currently used by 6 million people a year, with businesses also receiving an Access Improvement Report.
- The current tool at AccessibilityGuides.org, will close on 31 March 2024.



The screenshot displays the AccessAble website interface. At the top, the logo reads "AccessAble Your Accessibility Guide" with the tagline "The new name for DisabledGo". Below this, the page title is "Alton Towers Resort Access Guides". There are two filter boxes: "Accessibility Symbols" with "0 selections" and a dropdown arrow, and "Filter by Venue types" with "1 selections". The main content area lists three guides, each with a circular image, a title, a location, and a "View Accessibility Symbols" link. Each guide entry also has a "Guide" button with a document icon.

Guide Title	Location	View Accessibility Symbols	Guide Button
Andy's Dinosaur Dig	CBeebies Land, Alton Towers Resort, Alton, Staffordshire, ST10 4DB	View Accessibility Symbols	Guide
Battle Galleons	Mutiny Bay, Alton Towers Resort, Alton, Staffordshire, ST10 4DB	View Accessibility Symbols	Guide
Big Fun Showtime	CBeebies Land, Alton Towers Resort, Alton, Staffordshire, ST10 4DB	View Accessibility Symbols	Guide



“If I don’t know, I don’t go”

**Quick exercise:
Open your website...**

Hotel Brooklyn: Universal design



<https://youtu.be/lmKYVRvAaHM>

Local good practice

- **Alton Towers** – Changing Places toilets, sensory rooms, ride access pass, Makaton, Access Able Detailed Access Guides
VisitEngland Accessible and Inclusive Tourism Award, Silver 2022
- **Foxfield Railway** – Accessibility & Inclusion page on website demonstrating a warm welcome to all; autism specific info.
- **Foxtwood Cottages** – Archway cottage – ground floor built with ease of mobility in mind, floorplan
- **Peak Wildlife Park** – sensory bags, free essential companion, free wheelchair hire
- **Black Lion Inn** – VisitEngland Accessibility Guide (note upcoming changes)
- **The Tawny** – The Lookout (“accessible, DDA fittings can be added as required, list of options is available upon request.”)
- **Tittesworth Water** – Tramper scooters for hire, inclusive play equipment
- **National Memorial Arboretum** – Hearing loop, Changing Places Toilet, mobility scooter hire, wheelchair accessible land train
- **Hilton (Stoke & St George's Park)** – Accessible room type, bookable on website

Top Tips for businesses

- Train all staff in disability awareness and ensure they are familiar with accessible facilities, services, equipment and evacuation procedures
- Always welcome assistance dogs
- Provide a hearing loop and test it regularly
- Ensure your website meets accessibility standards and all written communications with customers are available in accessible formats
- Provide accessible ways for disabled customers to give feedback, acting and responding promptly to comments.
- Provide sufficient accessible parking spaces and drop-off areas
- Include images of disabled people in your marketing
- Appoint an Accessibility Champion and encourage accessibility ambassadors.
- Provide accessible toilets and ideally a Changing Places facility
- Provide an 'Access for All' section on your website
- Provide a detailed and accurate Accessibility Guide to promote your accessibility.
- Provide a step-free entrance.



New Accessible & Inclusive Tourism Toolkit

- A holistic toolkit with real-life case studies, top 20 tips, actionable checklists and technical guidance for the built environment
- Help to develop tourism businesses that people with a wide range of accessibility requirements can enjoy
- Practical guidance on improving accessibility across the key areas of **Customer, Place, Information and Employment**
- Over 30 charities, trade associations and independent assessors co-produced the content
- Launched 30th Nov. ahead of International Day of People with Disabilities 2023
- Free to access on the Business Advice Hub, part of the new VisitEngland and VisitBritain industry website
- A live resource; Mima will be supporting VE to evolve and update the guidance



New Accessible & Inclusive Tourism Toolkit

Main Toolkit

Holistic guidance with real-life case studies

Action Checklists

Downloadable business-specific actionable checklists to plan and prioritise improvements

Top 20 Tips

Downloadable business-specific top tips

Technical Guidance

Built environment guidance for renovations, conversions, new builds

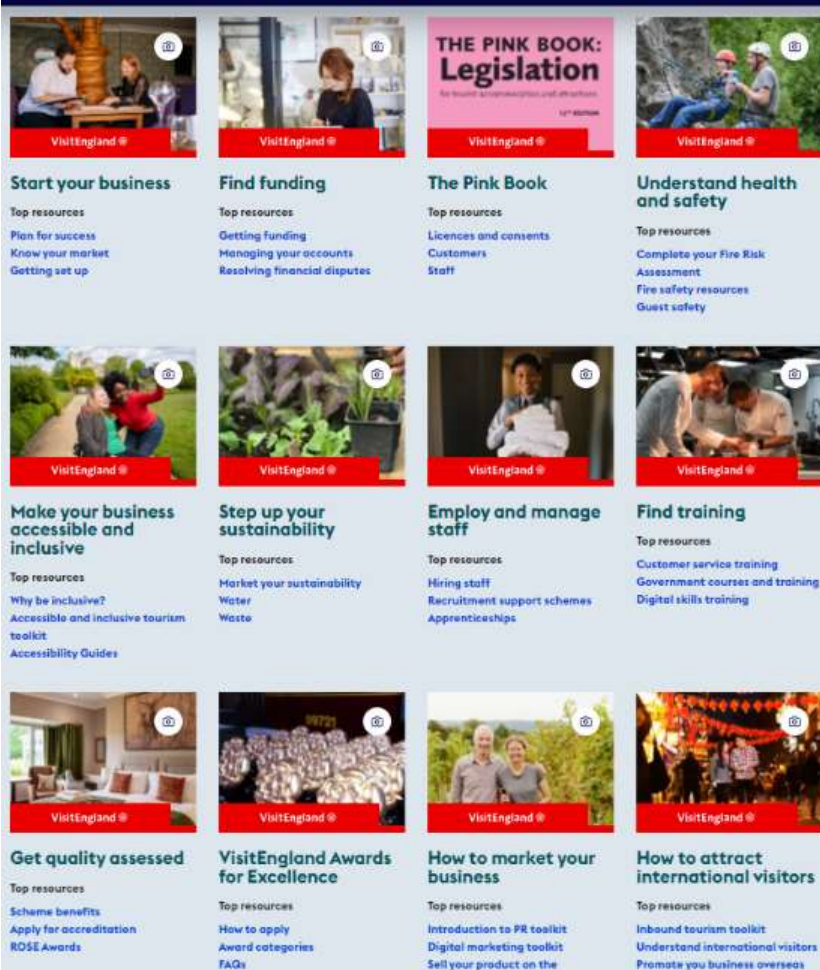


VisitEngland Business Advice Hub

More accessibility tips and other free resources to help businesses to succeed and grow

- Links to external resources
- Sustainability guidance
- Fire Risk Assessment Template
- Digital Marketing Toolkit
- VisitEngland Awards for Excellence
- Pink Book of Legislation (12th edition out now)
- TETTW Inbound Tourism Toolkit
- TXGB
- And much more!

www.visitengland.org/businessadvice



The screenshot displays the VisitEngland Business Advice Hub website, featuring a grid of 12 resource cards. Each card includes a representative image, a title, and a list of top resources. The cards are:

- Start your business**: Top resources include Plan for success, Know your market, and Getting set up.
- Find funding**: Top resources include Getting funding, Managing your accounts, and Resolving financial disputes.
- The Pink Book**: Top resources include Licences and consents, Customers, and Staff.
- Understand health and safety**: Top resources include Complete your Fire Risk Assessment, Fire safety resources, and Guest safety.
- Make your business accessible and inclusive**: Top resources include Why be inclusive?, Accessible and inclusive tourism toolkit, and Accessibility Guides.
- Step up your sustainability**: Top resources include Market your sustainability, Water, and Waste.
- Employ and manage staff**: Top resources include Hiring staff, Recruitment support schemes, and Apprenticeships.
- Find training**: Top resources include Customer service training, Government courses and training, and Digital skills training.
- Get quality assessed**: Top resources include Scheme benefits, Apply for accreditation, and ROSE Awards.
- VisitEngland Awards for Excellence**: Top resources include How to apply, Award categories, and FAQs.
- How to market your business**: Top resources include Introduction to PR toolkit, Digital marketing toolkit, and Sell your product on the...
- How to attract international visitors**: Top resources include Inbound tourism toolkit, Understand international visitors, and Promote your business overseas.

Q&A

For practical guidance, case studies and top tips on
Accessible & Inclusive Tourism visit:

visitengland.org/access

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