



DDA

The Issues



The Solution

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1 Executive Summary

There are scores of reference documents and reports available, which describe in some detail the requirements and problems associated with achieving the aims of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995.

Unfortunately none of them provides a solution to property owners, tenants and the professionals who manage property on their behalf.

This document sets out our approach in offering a solution that will assist employers and service providers satisfy the requirements of current DDA, Building Regulation and related statutory responsibilities.

The process comprises 3 stages

1. DDA Audit
2. Execution of Required Works
3. Validation and issue of compliance documentation

Details are provided in the next sections.

2 Scope of Project

For the selected property or properties, the scope of the Project will be established against the relevant aspects of the Disability Discrimination Act at the outset i.e.:

- Part II as employers
- Part III as Service Providers in relation to any public access areas – which may include common areas under Landlord control

The aim of the project is to assess the adequacy of facilities currently in place at the premises and to implement remedial measures as necessary, in full consultation with the client and with Building control approval to ensure an inclusive design/build solution.

This will ensure as far as possible that all persons can enter, circulate and utilise the property and its facilities and services safely.

A sensible balance is of course essential between the needs of people with disabilities, compliance with the law and the quality and efficiency of services provided to customers and staff.

3 Methodology and Scope of Disability Access Solution

3.1 DDA Audit Methodology –Preliminary

Our qualified Access Auditor will carry out a preliminary audit to comprise of an initial drawing review, discussion with the property manager to gain an understanding of the accessibility issues and requirements of both Landlord and Tenants.

We will then conduct a tour of the property, seeking to identify any particular issues of concern with regard to accessibility.

Where appropriate we will prepare an indicative report, for example signage – acceptable/not acceptable.

3.2 DDA Audit Methodology – Detail

Our Auditor will carry out a thorough physical inspection of the selected properties using a standard series of checklists developed by us in line with recognised standards and guidelines. Specific measurements will be taken where appropriate using standard building survey techniques (tape measures, grad level meters etc.) to determine the accessibility of doorways, ramps, heights of control devices from the floor, dimensions of toilet cubicles and accessories and other relevant facilities.

Our report aims to identify the accessible, user-friendly features of a building as well as the access problems. The report will recommend access improvements and give prioritised actions that can be developed through the design process.

Where a physical feature of the premises makes it impossible or unreasonably difficult for disabled people to use a service we will provide recommendations on possible ways of removing such features. Where removal is not reasonable, recommendations on altering the feature or avoiding it will be made.

Where appropriate the recommendations of the Centre for Accessible Environments will be used as a benchmark, with the requirements of the Building Regulations Approved Document used as a minimum for determining the adequacy of physical arrangements within the premises.

It is appreciated that the regulations do not apply to buildings, which pre-date them (unless the property has been modified since), nor does compliance with the building regulations necessarily mean compliance with the DDA.

For this reason other technical guidance will be used as appropriate to provide additional assurance of good practice. The survey will be carried out in line with the Centre for Accessible Environments' protocols of which we are a member and whose courses our auditors have attended.

Other useful sources of information/organisations include: -

- DDA 1995 – Code of Practice, Rights of Access, Goods, Facilities, Services and Premises
- Centre for Accessible Environments
- Employers' Forum on Disability
- Disability Rights Commission
- BS8300: 2001 Design of buildings & their approaches to meet the needs of disabled people, Code of Practice
- BS5588: Part 8:1988 Fire Precautions in the Design, Construction and Use of Buildings – Code of Practice for Means of Escape for Disabled People.

3.3 Prioritisation of Recommendations

Priorities will be marked high, medium or low depending on the possible risk to any person with disabilities and the “reasonableness” of implementation. This will be based on the following criteria.

- Health and Safety
- Alternatives for providing the same service
- Number of people likely to be affected
- Cost of implementation
- Ease of implementation

A timescale for actioning recommendations under each priority will be agreed in discussion with the client.

3.4 Scope

3.4.1 Physical Features

The areas which require detailed audit will be established following the preliminary phase and are likely to be the following in relation to Property Managers and Landlords: -

- . Main entrance
- . Foyer
- . Reception
- . Toilets
- . Lifts and main staircase
- . Lift landings
- . Applicable egress routes, safe refuges, fire escapes and car parks as these are also deemed to be common areas.
- . Any other common areas but excluding space demised to the tenants

OR

- Tenanted areas plus the above on behalf of employers.

3.4.2 Understanding the Need of Disabled Persons

The term disability is used to describe any physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities. The scope of the DDA is therefore potentially very wide and with nearly 9 million disabled adults in Great Britain the different aspects of the built environment, which need to be considered, are extensive.

Most medium to large businesses already make provision for the wheelchair users by installing ramps, wide doorways etc. but the range of disabilities covered by the DDA extends well beyond such basic provision to include for example:

- Manual dexterity
- Physical co-ordination
- Speech
- Hearing
- Eyesight
- Learning or understanding difficulties

The needs of individual disabled people will therefore differ from person to person and the extent of alteration to any property needs to be carefully considered to bring maximum benefit to as many people as is reasonably practicable bearing in mind financial and business costs.

Our expertise in this area has been well established through an impressive track record and client history, highly experienced and qualified auditors from a broad range of technical backgrounds who have undergone training with the Centre for Accessible Environments and professional membership of relevant organisations.

3.5 Schedule of Work

Based on the audit recommendations a definitive schedule of work will be prepared for all elements that need to be addressed in consultation with the client and MLM Building Control Ltd.

3.6 Costings

Against the schedule of work, a competitive firm cost estimate will be provided to execute the necessary work.

3.7 Implementation of the Audit Recommendations

The work will be executed to the agreed specification, cost and timescale.

3.8 Validation of the Executed Work

After completion of the work, the Approved Inspector will carry out an inspection to ensure compliance with all relevant standards.

3.9 Documentation

Relevant documentation demonstrating steps towards compliance with the Act (in respect of the property) and certifying the requirements of building control will be issued to the client.

4 Relevant Experience

4.1 Corporate Memberships – Turner & Townsend

Turner & Townsend is a member of the following organisations:

- Centre for Accessible Environments – Registration No. C1784
- British Safety Council
- RICS
- British Quality Foundation
- Construction Productivity Network (part of CIRIA)
- Previous client lists and references will be supplied on request

4.2 MLM Building Control Ltd

The Building Act 1984 introduced the concept of the Approved Inspector, who would take responsibility for Building Regulation approval, a service customarily provided by local authorities.

MLM Building Control Ltd is now one of a handful of companies granted corporate approval by the Secretary of State who can offer this service to commercial and industrial clients.

4.3 odbworkspace

odbworkspace are designers and contractors operating within the commercial office refurbishment and fitting out markets. We are an ISO 9001 registered Company, Constructionline listed (registration number 46472) and carry all relevant professional indemnity and contractors insurances.

5 Contact Details

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