



Access2books

Self-Assessment Accessibility Checklist for Libraries

Provided by Access2books Limited, a charity working to improve disabled children and adults reading, learning, social development, and relationship through the provision of accessible books that can be shared.

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Introduction

A challenge facing disabled people who want to read books whether by themselves or with their friends and families is access to their local library services. Using their library services is highly impacted by the accessibility of the service and the availability of books in their preferred format.

Access2books produces a dual format version of children's picture story books that is currently available in over half the libraries in UK. Our aim is to assist libraries expand their current range of books to their disabled community and remove the barriers that stop or hinder many to take part in your service.

The checklist provided here is a tool to help you think about and plan ways to improve your disabled community's use of your library service. The two most common reasons why they do not take part is: a) lack of information in a format that is accessible to them, and b) books not in a format they can use.

One way to review the accessibility of your library is to follow the journey of a disabled person using the service, for example:

- How do you acknowledge accessibility at policy level?
- How do you find out about your community's access requirements?
- How do they get to know about your books and services?
- How do they get to know about your library service or communicate with your library?
- How do they get to and use your facilities within your library?
- How do they take part in your library service?
- How do they give feedback or comments on your library service and books?

What follows is a checklist based on the above sequence of questions, which will support you to review and make plans to improve disabled people's use of your library.

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Policy

How do you acknowledge access for disabled people at the policy level?

Does your policy include:

- An accessibility action plan,
- Budgets specifically assigned to access and accessible books,
- Designated coordinator for disabled people's access,
- Suppliers to provide accessible services,
- An access audit of your library and services?

Comments and actions:

Staff Training

Have your staff at every level received training on including disabled people in your library service?

- Disability Equality training – social model of disability
- Equality Act training – legal obligations and duties under the Act
- Communication and publicity of accessible books

Comments and actions:

Consulting your community

How do you find out about your community's access requirements?

To establish the demographic population and their access needs to your library services, do you consult with:

- Local and national organisation of and for disabled people,
- Schools – mainstream, SEN and Sensory Support Services,
- Social Services for disabled people,
- Disabled members of your library and their families,
- Organisations related to literacy for all,
- Demographic research data for your community?

Comments and actions:

Communicating to your community

How do they get to know about your library service or communicate with your library?

Do you provide accessible:

- Promotional literature directly to the community?
- In-library posters, displays and exhibitions?
- Instructions on how to get to and use your services?
- Accessible methods for disabled people to communicate with you?
- Feedback and complaints procedures?

Comments and actions:

Buildings, Facilities and Public Spaces

How do disabled people use your facilities within your library?

Do you provide:

- Designated parking spaces nearby for disabled people,
- Accessible toilets,
- Seating available in public areas,
- Emergency procedures to assist disabled people,
- Obstacle free walkways, aisles and corridors,
- Handrails on walls and both sides of staircases,
- Easy access to all levels in public areas and staff areas,
- Colour or tone contrast to enhance orientation and visibility,
- Induction loops or other sound enhancement systems,
- Clear signs using giant print, Braille and symbols?

Comments and actions:

Library services

How do they take part in your library services?

Are your collections, displays and services accessible to disabled people in the following ways:

- Easy to navigate the library with clear and accessible signage and labels,
- Book collections that represent the disabled population,
- Books in a range of accessible formats on display,
- Accessible reference library, lending service and help desk,
- IT and computers with assistive technologies,
- Access to library services via telephone, email and social media accessible to disabled community?

Comments and actions:

Learning and Outreach

How do disabled people who are unable to attend your library take part in your library service?

Do you use various approaches to learning and outreach for disabled people?

- Work with schools or centres where young disabled people go,
- Form links with groups and organisations of disabled people,
- Mobile and outreach services usable by disabled people,
- Remote access to services for disabled people?

What other approaches do you use?

Comments and actions:

And finally...

How do disabled people give feedback or comment on your library service and books? Do you provide:

- An accessible complaints procedure and forms,
- Alternative means of communicating feedback or complaints,
- Update disabled people on outcomes of complaints?

Comments and actions: