



Diocese of Hallam

Accessibility and Inclusion Audit Tool

Introduction

The Diocese of Hallam is committed to full implementation of The Equality Act 2010. A person is disabled under the Equality Act 2010 if they have “a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term negative effect” on their ability to do normal daily activities. The legislation requires us to be “anticipatory” –thinking ahead, and about how the needs of our present congregation may develop in the future.

Every parish should ask, “what are the barriers which prevent disabled people from having full active involvement in our parish life?” We must then do all we can to remove those barriers, to enrich us all.

- **Step 1** - Gather a working group that includes a range of people involved in the life of the church... clergy; welcomers; organisers of services and other aspects of church life; those involved in looking after the buildings/ technology; and include disabled people. A separate audit needs to be undertaken for each church covered by your parish.
- **Step 2** - Look through the audit and decide which section to focus on first. You may decide to split into groups to look at the different sections and arrange a date to meet back together.
- **Step 3** - Work through the 5 sections of the audit, responding to each question and noting any comments or action points.
- **Step 4** – Reflect on the outcomes, for example in the Parish Council in a prayerful way and identify what can be achieved in the short, medium, and long term: create an **Action Plan** (see the end of this document) and decide on the first priorities.
- **Step 5** - Review the progress of the Action Plan. Keep on making positive progress and increasing the inclusion of disabled people in your parish. Revisit the audit each year too - make it part of the annual life of your parish.

Name of Parish:	Parish contact person:
Name of the Church premises being audited:	
Name of persons completing the audit:	

Overview: Our Commitment to the Inclusion of Disabled People	Yes	Partly	No	Action Needed
We are committed to the inclusion of all disabled people				
We hold/promote events providing training, advice, and support for those involved in ministry to disabled people				
We invite disabled people to help us assess our ministries and buildings for barriers to participation				
We encourage disabled people to share their gifts and skills through the various ministries of our church community and support their involvement in these ministries				
We ensure that disabled people are encouraged to play an active part within the mass, as:				
Welcomers				
Readers				
Altar servers				
Offertory Procession				
Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist				
Music Ministry				
Candle Snuffers				
Refreshments/ Hospitality				

1. Having a Culture of Inclusion

Question	Response (Yes/No/ Partly)	What could we do next?	Comments/notes
<p>Does the church have an Inclusion Policy: Disabled People? Has this been publicised?</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree and publicise an Inclusion Policy (1) and ensure Inclusion is a standing item on the agenda of Parish Council Meetings. • Ensure website, promotional material, bulletin include your welcome for disabled people, and positive images of disabled people. 	
<p>Does the church have a named and publicised contact for issues related to disability/ inclusion? This/ another person is also able to offer pastoral support. Has this been publicised?</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appoint a named person (or team) with relevant experience/ knowledge. Hallam Formation and Mission (2), and Through the Roof (3) can offer guidance and ongoing support • Ensure contact details and the purpose of the role are publicised widely 	
<p>Do you promote your church's welcoming and positive attitude towards disabled people to the local community? Do you network with local disability services to ensure people are aware of your parish facilities?</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publicise what you are doing to welcome/involve disabled people in a press release locally • Promote accessible features on the church website, promotional materials, Facebook • Include item on 'New Parishioner forms' that allow special requirements to be identified • Celebrate International Day of Persons with Disabilities, in a Sunday mass and promote locally 	
<p>Does your church monitor and review how accessible its activities are for disabled people?</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult disabled people and respond to their comments. • Have a suggestions box to encourage ideas/feedback. 	

Is there a specific budget for making Inclusion related improvements?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have Inclusion as a standing item on Parish Council Agenda; budget and planning meetings. 	
Does your website meet accessibility standards?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact www.rnib.org.uk/services-we-offer/business-services 	
Does your church pro-actively communicate with disabled people or specific interest groups?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research local groups and make contact. • Invite specific groups to church meetings/activities. 	
Does your parish have a positive, 'can-do' attitude towards disabled people? Have parishioners been offered basic disability awareness input?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include <u>Welcoming Disabled People. A Parish Guide</u> (4) on website, have available as a paper copy; reference in Bulletin • Invite a disabled person to speak at a parish meeting about their experience of disability. • Promote diocese-led training on awareness of disability 	
Have clergy; staff; those involved in ministry: e.g., stewards/welcomers, received basic training in meeting the needs of disabled people?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact Hallam Formation and Mission (2) for a Disability Awareness workshop. • See Through the Roof for resources (3) 	
Does the parish have a culture where it is easy for disabled people to ask for help, if required?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be pro-active in consulting disabled people and their carers, ensuring the message that they are valued and welcome is promoted to all. • Reinforce positive ethos through sermons, publicity. 	
Are disabled people able to attend all church activities, including small groups that may meet in individuals' houses?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the needs of disabled people when arranging venues for activities taking place off church premises. 	
Are online services and online groups facilitated in an accessible way?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be aware of access issues for some people e.g., speaker's face lit, plain background, subtitles, links sent to carers 	

2. Arrival and Welcome

Question	Response (Yes/No/ Partly)	What could we do next?	Comments/notes
<p>Is the main/ accessibility entrance easy to find?</p> <p>Is there clear information about where and when services and events take place?</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide additional signage if required. • Give clear information on notice boards, online and in local publicity 	
<p>Is there a suitable solid, level, well-lit surface where disabled people can park or be dropped off?</p> <p>Is there level access/ a dropped kerb to the grounds of the venue?</p> <p>Is there accessible parking/clearly signed?</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult local council, contractor • Obtain quotes. • Ensure disabled people are consulted over any plans. • Carry out appropriate work. 	
<p>Are there procedures in place to provide transport for disabled people?</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree a named person to be transport coordinator • Establish a list of volunteer drivers and publicise availability 	
<p>Is there a ramp or level approach to the entrance door?</p> <p>If the approach is ramped does the ramp have a handrail?</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult local council, architects, builders. • Obtain quotes. • Ensure disabled people are consulted over any plans. • Carry out appropriate work. 	
<p>Do all doors have a threshold less than 15mm high?</p> <p>Is there ramped or level access within all areas?</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate putting in ramps for all thresholds greater than this/ all areas • Portable ramps may be cheaper/ effective • Use an alternate room for activities 	
<p>Are all door wide enough for a person who uses a wheelchair?</p> <p>Can all door handles be reached, opened by a person who uses a wheelchair?</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult local council, contractor • Obtain quotes. • Ensure disabled people are consulted over any plans. • Carry out appropriate work. 	

Question	Response (Yes/No/ Partly)	What could we do next?	Comments/notes
Are any buzzers large/ well-lit, reachable? Do doors stay open long enough?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain quotes, modify • Check timing of accessible door 	
Have contrasting features been added to glass doors to ensure that the glass is visible? Can wheelchair users see and be seen through glass safety panels in external and internal doors?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact local contractor to carry out this work. • Consider including safety panels in all doors. 	
Can doors, handles, handrails, steps, stairs, hazards be seen?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use fluorescent strips/paint to aid those with poor peripheral vision 	
If there are steps/stairs (external or internal), are the sizes of the steps and risers consistent?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider work to remedy this. If not possible, ensure clear signage to warn people. 	
Do all steps (more than single) have a handrail?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact local contractor to carry out this work. 	
Is there a toilet accessible to a person in a wheelchair? Well signed; doors open outwards; grab rails on 2 sides; accessible sink/ taps; emergency cord to the floor; changing facility/ portable changing mat		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult local council, architects, builders. • Obtain quotes. • Ensure disabled people are consulted over any plans. • Carry out appropriate work. 	
Are there toilet, fire exit and other signs in bright pictorial form?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange replacement or additional signage. Most stationery/office suppliers sell these. 	
Is the Entrance and all corridors free from obstructions? Are floor surfaces even and slip resistant?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a 'clear corridor' policy • Consider work to remedy this. If not possible, ensure clear warning signage 	
Is there good quality diffused lighting in all areas used for Parish activities?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check lighting/bulbs regularly. • Install additional lighting if required. 	
Is there a choice of seating available?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some chairs with and some without arms. 	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reserved seating near the entrance, including for those with less visible conditions • Reserved seating for people accompanying person using a wheelchair 	
Can disabled people get out easily in an emergency? If not, is there a refuge area?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult local council, architects, builders. • Obtain quotes. • Ensure disabled people are consulted over any plans. • Carry out appropriate work. 	
If there is more than one floor, is there a working lift, wide enough for a person using a wheelchair, with accessible buttons?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult local council, architects, builders. • Obtain quotes. • Ensure disabled people are consulted over any plans. • Carry out appropriate work. 	

3. Enabling Everyone to be Included

Question	Response (Yes/No/ Partly)	What could we do next?	Comments/notes
Are stewards / welcomers with basic training available to assist disabled people, and their families as required: before, during and after a service/event?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish rota of volunteers to assist with identified needs and promote details of support available on website/ bulletins 	
Are new parishioners shown around the building, including emergency procedures; informed of parish activities		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish this routine within Welcoming 	
Is all written material (e.g., hymn and service sheets, bulletins) accessible to blind or partially sighted people: available in large print (minimum 16-point font size)? In plain, jargon free English? Is written material available in alternative formats e.g. email, website, Whatsapp?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask individuals about their preferred format Have a named contact person to routinely produce large print material Publicise the availability of this service, with welcomers to mention when greeting 	
Is any information on a screen in a suitable font (large) with a plain colour-contrasting background? Are there large print copies or the option to link a tablet to the display?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up a suitable template to be used by all. Routinely produce large print Investigate purchasing tablets to link to screen display Publicise the availability of this service 	
Are procedures in place to obtain Braille if required?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify source of Braille locally for use when required. 	
Is there a PA system checked weekly and serviced annually?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sound-check to be part of weekly set-up. Named person to be responsible 	
Can all speakers' faces be seen clearly (well-lit and free from obstructions)?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Install additional lighting. Rearrange layout. 	
Is there an induction loop, always on; checked and serviced regularly?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Named person to be responsible 	
Are procedures in place to obtain a sign language interpreter if required?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact Caritas Hallam (5) 	

If applicable, is reserved seating made available at the front for people lip reading/people interpreting BSL?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocate a suitable area as necessary 	
<p>Can anyone use Makaton signing for people with learning disabilities?</p> <p>Does the Parish have picture cards/ symbol material available?</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold a list of those with Makaton skills • Seek local training in Makaton – see www.counteveryonein.org.uk. • Get advice on access to symbol support from Hallam Faith and Mission (3) 	
Does the church have appropriate equipment, e.g., a drinking bowl for an assistance dog?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchase suitable equipment. • Ensure stewards are aware of where it is 	

4. Belonging, Faith and Formation, Catechesis

Question	Response (Yes/No/ Partly)	What could we do next?	Comments/notes
Are disabled people involved in ministries and/or leadership roles within your Parish?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be pro-active in encouraging disabled people to use their gifts 	
<p>Is ongoing support offered to disabled people in their roles, and in their faith development?</p> <p>Are clergy and ministers sensitive to adapting the administration of the sacraments to disabled people?</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide informal mentoring or a buddy system as necessary • Consult with individuals as to what is best for their situation, rather than making assumptions on their behalf. • Contact Hallam Formation and Mission (2) 	
Are liturgies and catechesis positive in the portrayal of disabled people, with scripture accounts of healings taught and preached sensitively?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review liturgies, catechesis, teaching and preaching to ensure sensitivity 	
Are catechetical programmes designed with all candidates' needs considered?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult candidate, carers • Adapt, convert, change, and communicate activities so every candidate can join in on an equal basis • Use <u>Welcoming Disabled People. A Parish Guide</u> (4) 	
Are priests and catechists trained to provide faith formation and sacramental preparation for people with learning disabilities?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact Hallam Formation and Mission (2) • Purchase <i>Symbols of Faith</i>, D Klein (6) 	
Is every effort made to include disabled people when planning liturgies, activities?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite disabled people to be involved in designing programmes 	
Does the Parish have access to a database or list of support services, including local mental health services?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify useful contacts to keep in the church office or other central point, with a link on website 	

Are procedures in place that enable disabled people to be involved in your Parish's external outreach/ events? Do you encourage this?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult with disabled people as to how easily they feel able to get involved with ministry to others in the community. Adjust Policy and practice accordingly. 	
Does publicity for events specify they are open to all? Are people invite to discuss any special requirements they need to take part?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check all publicity for Inclusive language, e.g., "...everyone is welcome," "...for all" • Invite people to highlight requirements 	
Do you encourage and support members of your congregation to get involved with mission to and with disabled people?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake mission work that will make use of these people's skills e.g. outreach to local groups, residential homes, special schools. • Get involved with local organisations for disabled people. 	

This Audit Tool has been created from the framework of 'Removing Barriers, 2023 Edition' a resource devised by Through the Roof (1), a Christian charity aiming to support and equip churches and ministries to be able to achieve full inclusion for disabled people. This Audit Tool also draws on the 'Inclusion and Accessibility Audit Tool, 2021', Caritas, Diocese of Leeds. Both Through the Roof and Caritas, Diocese of Leeds have given permission for their resources to be edited, and their generosity is acknowledged and appreciated.

(1) For Inclusion Policy: Disabled People, contact Hallam Formation and Mission. (Currently in Draft from)

(2) Hallam Formation and Mission, Phone: 0114 256 6410 Email: formation-mission@hallam-diocese.com [Formation and Mission - Hallam Diocese \(hallam-diocese.com\)](http://www.hallam-diocese.com)

(3) Through the Roof resources, including Church Disability Toolkit and Disability Awareness Workshop (www.throughtheroof.org)

(4) For Welcoming Disabled People. A Parish Guide, contact Hallam Formation and Mission.

(5) Caritas Hallam [Services for the Deaf - Hallam Diocese \(hallam-diocese.com\)](http://www.hallam-diocese.com) Phone: 0114 2566408

(6) Symbols of Faith: Faith Formation and Sacramental Preparation for People with Learning Disabilities, 2015, D Klein

For more information on the Equality Act and other legislation relating to disabled people, visit <http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/index.htm>

Action Plan for Inclusion and Accessibility

Create an Action Plan and decide on your first priorities

Aim What do we want to achieve?	Recommended Actions How will we get there?	Responsibility Who will be involved	Timescale When will it be achieved?	Notes
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