

An Open Welcome Accessibility in Pubs Guide (Accessible Version)



Table of Contents

03	Forward
05	Introduction
06	Disability in Britain
	Disability Facts
	Disability Visitors
	Legislation
09	Promoting your Accessibility
	Online Information for Your Pub
	Producing an Accessible Guide
13	Employing Disabled People
	Case Study: Cabbage Patch
	Case Study: Butterfly Project
	Reasonable Adjustments
	Employer Commitments
	Neurodiversity at Work
20	Staff Awareness
	Community for Everyone
	Assistance Dogs in Pubs
	Narcolepsy
	Hosting Inclusive Events
30	Physical Spaces
	Accessible Toilets
	Best Practice and Case Studies
	Dementia Friends
	Electric Vehicles Chargers
38	Next Steps for Pubs
40	Links and References
41	Contributors

Foreword



Stephen Timms MP, Minister for Disability

I am delighted to see the BBPA championing accessibility and inclusion across the pub sector. Pubs are important places of business and also vital centres of community life.

This guide arrives at a crucial moment. With one in four people in the UK living with a disability, Britain's pubs need to be welcoming and accessible to all. Disability touches the lives of millions across the UK. This guide presents an opportunity to recognise the needs of disabled customers and staff, and to celebrate the value of their contribution to our society and economy.

What sets this guide apart is its practical approach. Through real-world case studies and examples of best practice, it offers publicans and pub companies clear, actionable steps to improve accessibility, whether that means providing staff training, installing accessible infrastructure, or embracing the talents of disabled colleagues.

The guide highlights that even small adjustments can make a world of difference. For example, accurate accessibility information online enables disabled customers to make informed choices and feel confident in visiting new hospitality venues.

Accessibility is not simply a matter of compliance. It is a matter of dignity, respect and good business sense. The guide makes clear that inclusive practices allow pubs to open their doors to a wider audience and to welcome new customers. Many disabilities are invisible, and assumptions or a lack of information can easily exclude people.

Pubs are the beating heart of British hospitality. They are places where communities gather, friendships are forged and memories are made.

By embracing accessible and inclusive practices, pubs can ensure that everyone feels welcome and valued. This guide offers practical steps and inspiration for publicans and staff to make their venues truly open to all.

I commend the BBPA for this important work.

Introduction



James Dixon-Box, UK Government Disability & Access Ambassador for the Hospitality Industry

There's nothing quite as iconic as a British pub. It's something that tourists from all over the world come to experience. So many of my happiest memories throughout my life include family gatherings or nights out with friends and colleagues at some of our best pubs. They are at the social heart of our community and offer a welcoming environment that everyone can be a part of.

More than 1 in 5 people in the UK have a disability and we have a duty to ensure that they can create those same memories and experience that same sense of community. If we ignore this duty, we risk alienating, not only disabled members of the community, but their friends and family too. The customer will have a poor experience and you will lose out on business. This guide has been put together to share some of the amazing best practice that is in place in pubs and bars all over the UK. Taking time to think about the experience of our disabled customers has the potential to transform your business and win one of the most loyal customer bases out there.

After all, our industry is all about being welcoming.

Disability in Britain

Disability Facts

- There are an estimated [16.8 million disabled people](#) in the UK
- [£446 billion](#) per year combined spending power of disabled people and their families
- [15% of the UK is neurodivergent](#):
 - 45% of pension-age adults
 - 23% of working age adults
 - 11% of children

"An additional 800,000 disabled working-age adults are now out of the labour force, compared to 2019." (Source: Keep Britain Working)

"Many disabilities are not visible. A quarter of disabled people report being accused of faking impairment or not being disabled." (Source: [Scope](#))

Did you know that [78% of disabled people](#) in Britain are not confident about visiting new places when thinking about accessibility?

Disabled Visitors

The Purple Pound

The Purple Pound is the combined spending power of disabled people and their families and is valued at approximately £446 billion per year to the UK economy.

The true size and value of this market is often underestimated and as such represents a vast and often untapped market for businesses that adopt accessible and inclusive practices.

Recognising and meeting the needs of disabled customers is not only the right thing to do but also makes strong business sense. Disabled customers often visit businesses with carers or larger groups.

By adopting accessible and inclusive practices, businesses can open their doors to a wider audience and ensure everyone feels welcome and valued. (Source: [UK Parliament](#))

According to VisitEngland, in 2024 the accessible tourism market was valued at £14.6 billion.

Trips taken by those with an impairment and their travelling companions accounted for:

- **1.9%** of all inbound trips in England in 2023
- **23%** of domestic overnight trips in England in 2024
- **20%** of tourism day visits in England in 2024

The spend from trips taken by those with an impairment and their travelling companions made up **21% of domestic overnight** trip spending in England in 2024.

“Disability-inclusive companies significantly outperform their peers, with leading firms seeing 28% higher revenue, double the net income, and 30% greater economic profit margins, plus benefits like innovation, talent attraction, and better market understanding, demonstrating that disability inclusion drives tangible business success.” (Accenture)

Legislation

The Equality Act 2010

The law protects people from discrimination in the workplace and wider society. Under the Equality Act, employers and organisations have a legal responsibility to ensure disabled people can access jobs, education, and services without barriers. This is known as the 'duty to make [reasonable adjustments](#)'

Expanding the legal definition

Previously, a person was considered disabled if they had:

"A physical or mental impairment which had a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day- to-day activities".

New addition as of 2024 includes a person's ability to participate fully and effectively in working life on an equal basis with other workers. So employers must now assess whether an employee's impairment affects their ability to work effectively which broadens the scope of who may be considered disabled. A formal diagnosis is not required; what matters is whether an impairment affects a person's ability to work or access services.

Being a Disability Confident Employer

"The Disability Confident scheme has been developed by business, the government and disabled people's representatives to help employers make the most of the talents disabled people can bring to your workplace. It's free to join and as a member you will have access to information, support and guidance, to help you tap into this huge talent pool."

To find out more and to sign up, visit [Disability Confident employer scheme](#)

Promoting your Accessibility

Technology has made the world more accessible. Visibility is everything so make sure you always have up to date accessibility information for your pub online. If disabled customers can't find accessibility information, e.g. step-free access, they'll go elsewhere.

According to [The Euan's Guide Access Survey 2024](#):

- 78% of respondents are not confident about visiting new places when thinking about accessibility.
- 70% will visit somewhere new if they feel welcomed by staff or the venue seems to care about accessibility.
- 62% say they avoid going to a venue if it hasn't shared its disabled access information.

Thousands of people use [Euan's Guide](#) every week to decide where to go, so if your pub is not listed, you are not getting in front of your potential audience.

When the disabled access review charity Euan's Guide was founded, its goal was to make the lives of disabled people much easier by creating a resource they could use to find access information and reviews.

It is free and easy to use and provides visibility in the UK's largest disabled access review site.

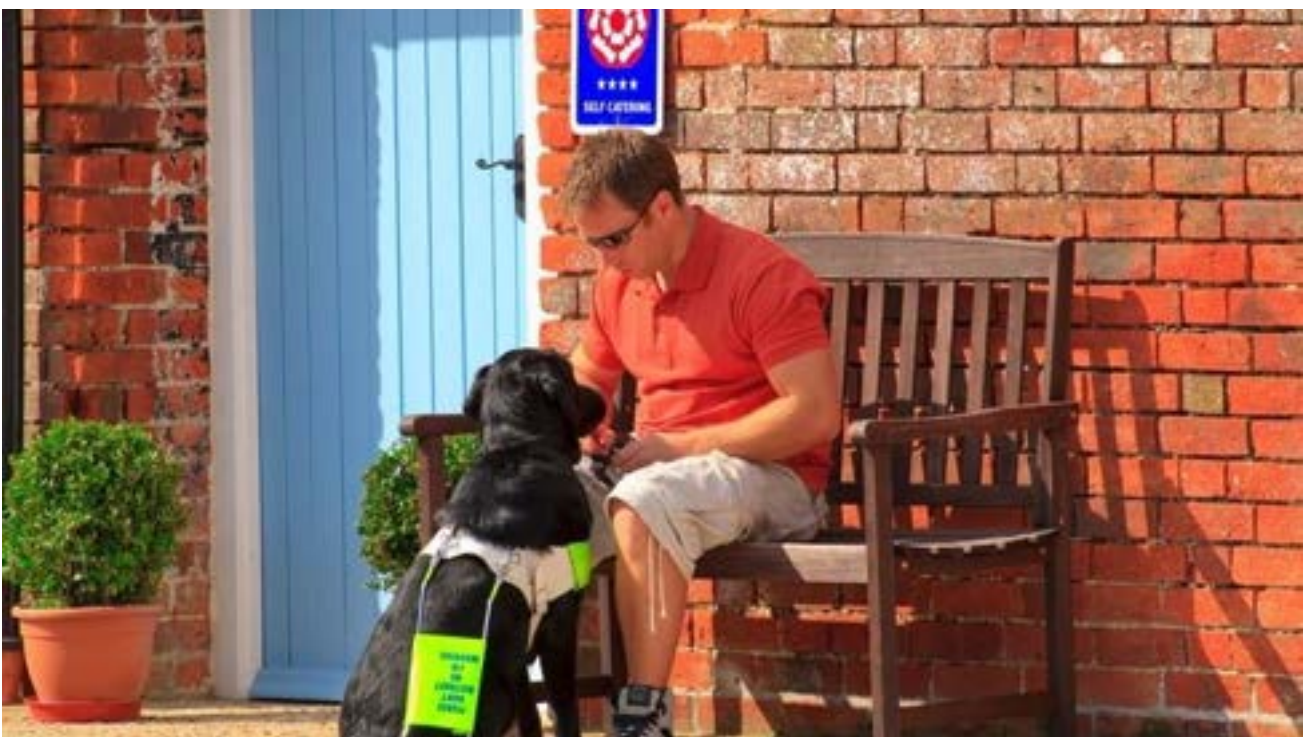
Online Information for Your Pub

VisitEngland suggest a number of simple yet effective ways which you can make your pub more accessible to everyone within the community.

[Please find the checklist here](#)

- **Request information when booking to establish requirements.**
Having an additional question in online booking process which asks "do you, or those you are travelling with, have any accessibility or dietary requirements?" can help you make any necessary arrangements ahead of their arrival. It will also reassure the customer that you are keen to understand their individual requirements in order to provide a great experience.
- **Provide an 'Access for All' section on your website.** Accessibility information needs to be easy for people to find on websites. Clearly signpost to this section from your homepage; do not hide the link in the footer. Remember not everyone with accessibility requirements identifies with the term 'disabled' so use terminology rooted in accessibility and inclusion and avoid disability-focused language e.g. use the term 'accessibility/customers with accessibility requirements' rather than 'disabled/disability/special needs'.
- **Ensure your website meets accessibility standards and all written communication with customers is available in accessible formats.**
All customers should be able to use your website, regardless of their level of experience in using the web or the device/ operating system they use. Make sure your designer follows Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG). Offer written communication in alternative formats, such as large print (at least 16 point font, ideally 18), audio or 'easy read'.

- **Provide menus in different formats.** Provide menus in different formats, such as digital, large print and easy-read versions with accompanying images. Ensure staff have the confidence to read these out, if required (for example, finding out if the customer would like a starter, and asking if there is a type of food they'd like to eat first is preferred, rather than reading the whole menu item by item).
- **Take orders via a text-based service to assist D/deaf guests.** Only taking orders orally may not account for the needs of customers with hearing loss and D/deaf customers. Allow customers to order using a text-based service e.g. via their mobile phone or using an app.



VisitBritain/Pawel Libera/Tourism For All

Producing an Accessibility Guide

Accessibility Guide for Customers

People with accessibility requirements want detailed and factual descriptions of venue accessibility, in the form of an Accessibility Guide, to empower them to make personal choices. An Accessibility Guide describes and visually shows the layout of each area of your pub, following the route a visitor will typically take from arrival, entering and getting around.

To support tourism businesses to provide robust Accessibility Guides, VisitEngland and VisitScotland have joined forces with AccessAble, a leader in quality accessibility information provision.

An AccessAble Detailed Access Guide is created by a professional-access surveyor and includes:

- Descriptions of all areas of a venue
- 100s of pieces of accessibility information, including measurements and photographs
- Added to a searchable public database on AccessAble's website

Find out more about [AccessAble Detailed Access Guides](#)

Accessibility Guide for Staff

Pub companies can develop their own internal guidance with clear, practical resources which will help employees feel confident and supported by their managers.

Fuller's Neurodiversity in the Workplace guide is an excellent example of this.

A guide supports pub managers with practical tips on how they can help an employee who has accessibility issues, for both new joiners and existing staff.

Employing Disabled People

The value of disability inclusion in the workplace

1. Employing disabled people creates a workforce that reflects community diversity, while affirming their entitlement to equal treatment and the removal of barriers to work.
2. The workplace benefits from additional skills for instance the ability to use British Sign Language (BSL).
3. Encouraging applications from those living with disabilities will increase the number of high-quality applicants available.
4. Having a disabled member of your team will increase the confidence of team members around disabled people.

Case Study: Cabbage Patch

Stuart Green of the Cabbage Patch in Twickenham has been employing young adults with intellectual disabilities for 25 years so they get work experience and build in confidence.

Stuart says:

"I set out to provide work experience for those with intellectual disabilities in a friendly, flexible and supportive environment. It proved so successful the jobs became permanent. I give individuals tasks suited to their condition and that work for the business. At lunchtimes we're busy for a couple of hours. One employee only wants to prep vegetables, so he comes in for three hours on Thursdays – and peels and preps potatoes and veg for Sunday lunch. He's brilliant at it

and it makes my business more productive. That releases another chef with different skills to do something else. The employees are treated and paid the same as everyone else. They wear a uniform, get bonuses and are much loved team members.”

Case Study: Butterfly Project

The Butterfly Project was founded in 2009 as an alternative, forward thinking, community focused and socially adventurous support provision for adults with learning difficulties, autism and associated support needs. Through their support hub they offer a huge array of activities and sessions aimed at developing life skills, gaining independence and work experience ultimately leading to paid employment. [Find out more here](#)

Clyde’s Journey at the Queen’s Head, Barns Green

Clyde’s involvement at the Queen’s Head began through the [Butterfly Project](#), initially supporting coffee mornings as part of a group work experience. Over time, Clyde’s role evolved into regular paid work during the busiest periods on Friday evenings, where he took on responsibilities such as collecting glasses, serving food, and taking orders. The transition from volunteering to paid employment was supported by clear communication with the pub’s team and the local community, ensuring everyone understood how best to support Clyde and make the most of his strengths.

At first, Clyde needed assistance with understanding aspects of the role such as his shifts and annual leave, with colleagues like Ben providing lifts to the rural pub and helping explain tasks. As Clyde grew more confident, he became a valued member of the team, known for his positive attitude and ability to connect with customers. His journey from cleaning and coffee mornings to regular paid work highlights how, with a little support and

understanding from staff, individuals can thrive in inclusive workplaces. Clyde's story demonstrates that employers do not need to make extensive adjustments to create meaningful opportunities, and his presence has inspired both staff and customers, reinforcing the value of inclusive employment in the hospitality sector.

"I love working with people and having fun, I really enjoy serving beer, using the till and the training"

Clyde



Reasonable Adjustments

Reasonable adjustments are changes employers must make by law (Equality Act 2010) to remove or reduce any disadvantage a disabled person faces at work. Employers should make sure policies and practices do not put disabled people at a disadvantage.

The costs of making reasonable adjustments to accommodate disabled employees are often low and easy to implement.

Acas gives employees and employers free, impartial advice on workplace rights, rules and best practice. They also offer training and help to resolve disputes. [Find out more about Acas here](#)

Reasonable Adjustments are tailored to each individual and can include changes to the workplace, working arrangements, ways of doing tasks, or providing equipment and support. What counts as 'reasonable' depends on whether the adjustment removes the disadvantage, is practical, affordable, and does not compromise others' health and safety; employers do not have to change the fundamental nature of a job. Employers must pay for the adjustments, though support such as Access to Work grants may help with costs. Find out more about [Access to Work](#) on GOV.UK.

Some examples of Reasonable Adjustments from Acas include:

- Distributing work differently within a team or someone's breaks more evenly across the day
- Physical space changes - ramps, clear walkways, lighting, etc.
- Flexible shifts and regular breaks
- Trial shifts as an alternative to job interviews
- Adapted or specialist equipment- accessible tills, noise reduction tools, screen readers

Ensuring that reasonable adjustments are applied effectively is essential, as disabled employees who do not receive adequate support are significantly more likely to encounter conflict in the workplace.

[According to ACAS](#), **68% of employees whose disabilities affect their daily lives experience conflict, compared with 41% of employees without disabilities**, which underlines the importance of strengthening inclusive practices to create a fair and supportive working environment.

A reasonable adjustment will depend on the circumstance of each individual case, and includes a number of factors:

- 1.** Is the adjustment practical to make?

2. Does the employer have the resources to pay for it?
3. Will the adjustment be effective at overcoming or reducing the disadvantage in the workplace?

Employer Commitments

Helpful Checklist of Employer Commitments from License Trade Charity:

- ✓ **Good Practice:** Explore diverse recruitment channels to include individuals with varied abilities and aptitudes.
- ✓ **Communication:** Use straightforward language and clearly outline expectations, tasks and deadlines. Provide information in multiple formats. Be patient and allow time for processing and encourage clarification.
- ✓ **Adjustments:** Offer flexible work arrangements, such as staggered start times for quieter commutes. Modify workspaces, like providing noise-cancelling headphones or access to quiet areas.
- ✓ **Legal Considerations:** Employees do not have to disclose a disability, and not all neurodivergent people will identify as disabled. However, neurodivergence may still meet the legal definition of disability under the Equality Act 2010. This means employers have a responsibility to avoid discrimination and to remove barriers through reasonable adjustments.

Keep Britain Working

The BBPA has pledged its support for the Government's Keep Britain Working initiative, joining the vanguard to help tackle the growing challenge of ill-health and disability in the workforce.

Led by Sir Charlie Mayfield, the programme recognises that economic inactivity is holding back growth and driving up welfare costs, with 800,000 fewer people in work since 2019 and a projected rise of 600,000 more by 2029 if trends continue. The initiative recognises that employers must be

part of the solution and highlights the particular challenges faced by some employees with disabilities, including a lack of effective support and a culture of fear around disclosure. By joining Keep Britain Working, BBPA is stepping up to help change this narrative and ensure our sector plays a leading role in building inclusive, supportive workplaces.

Neurodiversity at Work

Neurodiversity describes the natural differences in how people's brains behave and process information. [You can find out more about it at Acas](#)

Some well-known types of neurodivergence include but are not limited to:

- **Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD):** ADHD can affect a person's ability to concentrate, manage time, stay organised, and follow instructions, though many also experience periods of strong hyperfocus and bring high creativity and energy to their work.
- **Autism:** affects how people communicate and interact with the world and can influence how someone interprets language, manages sensory input, or navigates social situations.
- **Dyslexia:** mainly affects reading, writing, and how someone processes information, and is often described as a learning difficulty. A dyslexic person may read or write more slowly, find it hard to concentrate or remember information, or struggle with spelling. Many also have strong problem-solving abilities, excellent verbal communication skills, and strengths in tasks involving spatial awareness and creative thinking.
- **Dyspraxia:** affects movement and coordination and is sometimes known as developmental coordination disorder. A dyspraxic person may have poor balance, take longer to complete certain tasks, or struggle with pronouncing some words, while often having strong verbal communication skills and a creative approach to problem-solving.
- **Dyscalculia:** affects a person's ability to understand and work with numbers and is sometimes described as a specific learning difficulty

with maths. Someone with dyscalculia may find it hard to perform calculations, recognise numerical patterns, or manage tasks involving measurements or time, while often excelling in creative thinking, verbal communication, and problem-solving in non-numerical contexts.

Licensed Trade Charity produced an excellent [guide to help managers build successful neurodivergent teams](#)

Case study by [ACAS](#)

Sasha is autistic and works in a bar. When the bar becomes very loud and busy, Sasha uses noise-reducing earplugs and focuses on tasks like glass washing and restocking. Sasha has a strong interest in preparation and stock control, which many colleagues find tedious, making Sasha highly valued by the team.

Be aware: Being neurodivergent will often amount to a disability under the Equality Act 2010. This law gives rights and protections to disabled employees.

Staff Awareness: Making your pub a Community for All

To provide the best service, you and your staff need to be aware of different disabilities and understand how to support customers with a range of accessibility needs.

We remember those amazing customer experiences when we have them. Often it's the small things that count the most; the feeling that we are being treated as individuals. For some customers small adjustments, such as a staff member reading a menu out loud, adjusting ingredients in a dish or offering table service, can make all the difference.

Pubs are people places. Customers want a warm welcome, and staff working in pubs want to provide this. But sometimes gaps between customer expectations and service delivery can arise. This is where good training comes in. It helps staff understand different customer needs, how best to respond – and provide the great customer service that we want them to have.

With pubs at the heart of British hospitality, it is important to ensure that all staff are trained to understand the importance of having an open and accessible venue for all customers.

Training should focus on a number of key issues, including:

- Helping staff to serve disabled customers in a friendly and confident manner.
- The importance of disabled customers to the UK tourism and hospitality industry.
- What the law says about providing service to customers with disabilities.
- The different types and levels of impairment and how these will impact on their needs.

- How language and terminology can cause embarrassment or distress.
- How staff can provide high quality service to customers with a range of visible and non-visible disabilities.
- Things staff should remember in their role when they are welcoming or assisting disabled customers.
- The use and operation of all accessibility equipment in the venue such as hearing loops, emergency pull cords in toilets and hoists.
- Make sure your specialist equipment is regularly tested, always in working order and in sufficient supply.

Community for everyone

There are simple changes that can be made to ensure that everyone feels welcome in a pub.

- **Inclusive marketing and imagery.** Use images that reflect the diversity of your customers, including disabled people. Disabled people should be represented in your general marketing, not just alongside accessibility information. This will inspire and raise confidence to visit and can also help illustrate your facilities in use.
- **Allow guests to choose their table location.** Offer the ability for customers to reserve tables in specific areas or choose their seating location. An area away from noise and other customers may be useful for people with hearing loss or neurodivergent customers. Be prepared to accommodate requests for a quieter table or for a table near the toilets.
- **Ensure colour contrast in pubs.** Assist blind or partially sighted customers by ensuring that doors or door frames contrast in colour to the adjacent wall and floor and that door handles contrast in colour to the door. Ensure crockery contrasts with the table linen or surface e.g. avoid using white crockery, white linen and clear glasses all together on a table setting.
- **Provide accessible tables and chairs.** Ensure tables are stable and provide support for people rising from their chairs. Provide a selection

of seating. Backrests are always recommended to provide support (stools can be inaccessible for some people). Armrests should also be provided on at least half of all seating to provide additional support for those who require it. If you provide outdoor picnic benches, ensure some of these are accessible to wheelchair users.

Access Champion

Within your team also consider nominating an access champion. They would:

- Take the lead on accessibility and act as a point of contact for both customers and staff.
- Receive extra training on accessibility and inclusivity – which they can then pass on to other team members.
- Carry out regular checks of facilities such as toilets, alarms and entrances.
- Help keep online access information up to date on your website and your Euan's Guide listing.
- Be the person other staff can go to for advice, in the same way that a first aider supports health and safety on site.

Business Disability Forum (BDF)

BDF have a range of free resources designed to help businesses ensure products and services are accessible for disabled people.

[Access BDF's free resources here](#)

Find out more about BDF and sign up to the [BDF newsletter](#)

BDF works with over 600 organisations employing over 5 million people in the UK, and a further 16 million people worldwide, by providing advice, guidance, support, consultancy and training aimed at helping businesses to become more disability-smart.

BDF help effect changes in business practices, products, services and policies that positively impact the life experiences of disabled people, and also benefit business.

BDF are the leading business membership organisation in disability inclusion. They are trusted partners, working with business, Government and disabled people to improve the life experiences of disabled employees and consumers, by removing barriers to inclusion.

Assistance dogs in pubs

Assistance dogs are not pets and should not be treated in the same way as a pet dog. Always welcome assistance dogs in pubs.

Assistance dogs support disabled people in a wide variety of ways, such as guiding a person with sight loss, alerting a person with hearing loss, or supporting a person who is neurodivergent by interrupting potentially harmful behaviour.

Assistance dogs can be instantly recognisable by a harness or jacket, though, the law does not require the dog to wear a harness or jacket to identify it as an assistance dog. You can find more information about the variety of assistance dogs, by visiting [Assistance Dogs UK](https://www.assistance-dogs.co.uk/)



The Law:

People who use assistance dogs are protected under the Equality Act 2010. They must not be treated unfavourably because of their disability. For this reason, it will almost always be unlawful for a pub, hotel, restaurant, or shop to apply a “no dogs” policy to assistance dog users. Refusing access to an assistance dog could amount to disability discrimination.

Top tips for pubs

- Assistance dogs should not be restricted to specific areas of the pub or to a pet-friendly area. Working assistance dogs are considered an auxiliary aid trained to give their owners independence and should not be treated the same as pets.
- The law surrounding access for disabled people is anticipatory. As a pub you should consider the needs of disabled people, including assistance dog partnerships, and ensure your pub is prepared for any necessary reasonable adjustments prior to customers accessing your service.
- Some, but not all, assistance dog users will carry some information about the assistance dog and the training organisation if applicable. Again, this is not a legal requirement and assistance dog handlers should not be refused a service simply because they do not have this information.
- Assistance Dogs UK offer both training for staff and policy support for organisations that want to ensure their business is accessible and inclusive for assistance dog handlers. [Find out more here](#)

There are currently approximately six thousand active guide dog memberships which have been highly trained by [Assistance Dogs UK](#) member organisations. However, not all assistance dogs are trained by Assistance Dogs UK member organisations. The largest assistance dog organisation in the UK is currently Guide Dogs UK with approximately 3,200 guide dog owners.

Guide Dogs UK can support you in making your premises more accessible for people with sight loss with their [Sighted Guide Training](#)

Narcolepsy

Not Tired, Not Topsy - It Could Be Narcolepsy

Pubs are social, energetic spaces filled with laughter, conversation, and emotional moments all of which can trigger narcolepsy symptoms. A lack of awareness could easily lead to misunderstanding, for example, mistaking a cataplexy episode for intoxication or rudeness. Proper understanding ensures that staff respond sensitively, maintain the person's dignity, and prevent unnecessary distress or escalation.

Narcolepsy Type 2 is defined by Excessive Daytime Sleepiness (EDS), where individuals experience sudden, overwhelming tiredness even after a full night's sleep. People may fall asleep unexpectedly while sitting or talking. In a pub setting, this behaviour may seem unusual, but it is medical, not intentional, and should be met with understanding. Wake-promoting medication can help but does not fully prevent episodes.

Narcolepsy Type 1 includes the same excessive daytime sleepiness as Type 2 but is also accompanied by cataplexy: a sudden, brief loss of muscle control triggered by strong emotions such as laughter, excitement, anger or grief. During an episode, the person may collapse or appear to be having a stroke, with changes in facial expression, slurred speech or sudden limpness. They may even seem to act inappropriately, as their tongue can protrude or their body go limp. In reality, the person remains fully conscious but temporarily unable to move or speak. These episodes typically last only a few minutes, and the best response is to keep them safe, avoid touching or shaking them, and allow them to recover naturally and calmly.

More information on Narcolepsy can be found on the [Narcolepsy UK website](#)

Case Study: Narcolepsy + running a pub

Jodie has lived with narcolepsy since the age of 13 but was only diagnosed eight years ago with a **strong case of Type 1 narcolepsy**, which includes cataplexy. Just before starting medication, she was experiencing up to 50-60 cataplexy attacks a day, making daily life and work extremely difficult. Support from Narcolepsy UK and her neurologist helped her regain stability and confidence, enabling her to pursue a demanding career in hospitality. With that renewed confidence and a deep passion for the pub, Jodie took on The King's Arms during lockdown. Drawing on her strength and support network, she achieved remarkable success, which gave her the confidence to go onto managing multiple venues.

"Running a pub is full-on and fast-paced. Balancing that with narcolepsy takes planning and plenty of support.

People don't always recognise the condition, so symptoms like suddenly needing to sleep can lead to misunderstandings. For me, the key has been openness. I talk to my team, suppliers and customers about it so everyone understands. That honesty has created a really supportive environment where I can manage my health and still lead the business successfully." **Jodie, The King's Arms**

"In 2021 Jodie reached out concerned about our publican moving on and offered to help with odd jobs. Instead, I asked if she'd ever considered running the pub. She was open about her health challenges, but she had the spark we were looking for. At our second meeting I slid the keys across the table, and the rest is history. Hospitality is 365 days a year, so it suits Jodie

well – and we're not bothered if she misses the odd meeting for a nap! Jodie is a hospitality rockstar."

Richard, North & South Leisure Pub Company

Jodie's success with her pubs is rooted in strong support networks. Her staff, many of whom are close friends, know how to step in when she needs to rest. She also receives exceptional backing from her pub group, which checks in regularly and offers hands-on help when needed. Practical measures include having a designated safe space such as a separate room with a sofa or comfortable chair where she can nap during episodes. This arrangement is replicated across her venues and ensures she can manage symptoms without leaving the premises. She encourages a culture where staff with Narcolepsy or other conditions can "tap out" for short breaks to manage stress or health needs, reinforcing that flexibility benefits everyone.

Awareness supports safer and more inclusive workplaces. Pub staff with narcolepsy may need flexibility with shift patterns, access to short rest breaks, or a supportive environment that acknowledges their medical condition without judgement. By fostering understanding and making small adjustments, pub operators not only comply with the Equality Act 2010 but also demonstrate leadership in promoting accessibility and inclusion.

Practical Tips for Publicans and Staff

It's easy in a busy pub environment to mistake a medical episode for someone having "one too many". Conditions like narcolepsy or epilepsy can cause sudden sleep or collapse, which might look like intoxication at first glance.

Jodie shared that she always contacts venues ahead of time when attending events, letting security know about her condition to avoid misunderstandings. Pubs can take a similar proactive approach by encouraging customers to share accessibility needs in advance and training staff to check discreetly any customer that appears to be intoxicated before

acting. A few extra seconds of care can prevent harm and create a safer, more inclusive environment for everyone.

Below are other steps which can make pubs more inclusive for staff and customers with narcolepsy or similar conditions:

- **Create a safe space:** Provide a quiet area with a sofa or armchair for resting during episodes or mental health breaks.
- **Educate staff:** Train teams to recognise signs of narcolepsy and other conditions to avoid misinterpreting symptoms as intoxication.
- **Respond calmly:** Approach individuals gently and check their wellbeing before taking action. Never eject someone without confirming the situation.
- **Encourage openness:** Foster a culture where employees feel comfortable disclosing conditions and asking for help.

Jodie's story demonstrates that with understanding, practical adjustments, and strong support, people living with narcolepsy and similar conditions can thrive in hospitality and create welcoming spaces for all.

Hosting Inclusive Events

Creating community through inclusive events

In creating a genuinely open and welcoming space for all, one practical way for pubs to build community is by hosting events that bring adults with disabilities together in a safe, social and supportive environment. Such initiatives not only strengthen staff awareness of diverse needs but also demonstrate how inclusive practice can be woven naturally into everyday hospitality. Below is an example of exactly this in action, drawn from Manchester.

Meet N Match

The [Meet N Match Project](#) offers a variety of inclusive events for adults with learning disabilities or autism, including discos, club nights and pub nights.

Alongside this, they also run a friendship and dating agency. Both elements of the project create opportunities for people to go out and socialise in a safe place. The Tank & Paddle in Manchester Printworks holds a monthly pub night and currently has attendance of up to 20 participants every month.

The project currently runs two other monthly pub nights using the same concept - one is held at The Rose & Crown in Clitheroe, and the other is at The Links in Lytham St. Anne's - and they will be opening another Manchester-based monthly event in 2026.

Meet N Match has a continuing positive impact on the community, not only by creating social opportunities but also promoting the venue itself as a safe space for vulnerable adults to meet and socialise. Many friendships that have been formed at the venue will then regularly meet up outside of the event.



Spring
into action

FREE

For people 18+ with a learning disability and autistic adults

MANCHESTER PUB NIGHT

Thursdays, 6:30pm - 9:00pm

2025 Dates
January 9th, February 6th, March 6th, April 3rd, May 1st, June 5th, July 3rd, August 7th, September 4th, October 2nd, November 5th, December 4th

Our social events are a great way to meet new people and enjoy a night out in a safe environment.

Tank & Paddle Printworks
Corporation Street
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Physical Spaces

“Inclusive design is most effective when it is considered early in a refurbishment or new build. Planning accessibility from the outset helps pubs avoid costly retrofits, reduce operational and legal risk, and make better use of space. Well-designed, accessible environments attract a wider customer base, encourage repeat visits, and support long-term commercial performance, while creating places that work better for everyone.” **Motionspot**

Simple, Effective Ways to Make Your Pub Accessible to Everyone:

Step free access

- Provide step-free access into and around the pub wherever possible. This may include a built-in or removable ramp.
- Entrances should be wide, simple to navigate, and free from unnecessary obstacles.
- Ensure there is sufficient circulation space inside the pub, including level access to any accessible toilet.

Hearing loops at the bar

- Install hearing loops at the bar to support customers who use hearing aids or have hearing loss.
- Make staff aware that a hearing loop is available and ensure it is clearly signed.

Accessible menus

- Provide large-print menus using clear, simple fonts.
- Consider offering menus in alternative formats, such as braille or digital versions.
- Staff should also be willing to read menus aloud if requested.

External access and arrival

- Where possible, provide an accessible parking bay close to the entrance.
- Work with your local authority to improve access routes, such as dropped kerbs.

Bar height and service

- Consider providing a lowered section of the bar to allow wheelchair users to order and pay comfortably.
- If this is not possible, offer alternatives such as table service or portable card machines.

Colour contrast and lighting

- Use good [colour contrast](#) on signage, doorways, steps, and key features to support people with visual impairments.
- Ensure lighting is even and glare-free, particularly around entrances and emergency exits.

Accessible parking and drop-off

- Accessible bays should be at least 2.4m wide, with 1.2m hatched zones on either side.
- Bays should be level, clearly marked, and located as close as possible to the entrance.
- Do not allow these spaces to be used by staff or non-Blue Badge holders.

Accessible toilets

Accessible toilets are one of the most searched for facilities on [Euan's Guide](#) and often make or break a visit.

[Euan's Guide Access Survey 2024](#) found that:

- 73% of people have come across an accessible toilet they were unable to use.
- 77% have avoided going somewhere because they couldn't find information about an accessible toilet.

If an accessible toilet is also a mixed-use facility, for example also used for baby changing, make sure that nappy bins, supplies and cleaning products are stored safely and that the baby changing table is folded away when not in use so that it does not block transfer space or access.

Red Emergency Cord

Cords are meant to hang freely to the floor so they can be reached by someone sitting or lying on the ground. Unfortunately, the red emergency cord is all too often tied up, shortened or missing – putting disabled people at risk when they are unable to reach the cord to call for help. Euan's Guide provide [Red Cord Cards](#) which are a free resources that helps ensure red cords hang correctly and safely. The cards easily slide onto the cord and feature text which explains why they must hang freely.

Changing Places

[Changing Places Toilets](#) (CPT) are life-changing for people with complex needs and their carers. Standard accessible toilets do not meet the needs of all people with impairments. Where feasible, provide a Changing Places Toilet, which has extra equipment and space. If you don't have a CPT facility, find out where your nearest one is and include this information in your Accessibility Guide or online.

The Changing Places Fund provides capital funding for organisations and local authorities to install CPT.

Did you know? Over a 1/4 million people in the UK need Changing Places Toilets to enable them to enjoy the day-to-day activities which many of us take for granted.

Best Practice & Case Studies

Top tips for making spaces accessible for all from [Motionspot](#)

- 1. Audit and design support:** Consider engaging an access and inclusive design consultant to review your existing building and advise during the design or refurbishment phase.
- 2. Online information:** Develop an Accessibility Guide that includes clear, honest information about access in your venue. This helps customers plan their visit with confidence.
- 3. Staff training:**
 - How to meet the needs of disabled guests and visitors, at the very least knowing where accessible toilets are located and how to provide access quickly and respectfully, keeping toilets clean.
 - Who is entitled to use an accessible toilet, including people with hidden disabilities.
 - The importance of keeping toilets clean, clear, and unobstructed.
- 4. Clear toilet signage:** Use recognisable words and symbols to label toilets. Where possible, label sensor taps, flushes, and hand dryers to support people with dementia, learning disabilities, or cognitive impairments.
- 5. The right facilities:** Provide practical features e.g. hooks, shelves, and well-positioned mirrors, to support a wide range of access needs. Unisex accessible toilets allow support from carers or partners of a different sex.

Designing beautiful accessible spaces

Motionspot is an award-winning access and inclusive design consultancy that supports venues to create spaces that work for disabled people while maintaining high-quality design. By involving people with lived experience and considering accessibility early in the process, Motionspot helps organisations create environments that are practical, dignified, and welcoming for everyone.

Case Study: Award-Winning Accessible Design in Pubs and Hotels

Motionspot has worked with hospitality venues on major refurbishments to embed inclusive design across public and customer-facing spaces, without compromising style or character. Projects have focused on improving entrances, reception and bar areas, circulation routes, toilets, seating layouts, and wayfinding, alongside considered use of lighting, colour contrast, and acoustics. Early design input helped ensure spaces were intuitive to navigate, comfortable to use, and welcoming for people with a wide range of access needs. These projects demonstrate how planning for accessibility from the outset can deliver inclusive environments that enhance the customer experience, protect dignity, and provide long-term commercial value.

Dementia Friends

Alzheimer's Society's Dementia Friends initiative is all about increasing people's understanding of dementia and inspiring everyone to make a difference for people affected by the condition in their communities. Everybody who lives in England, Wales, Northern Ireland, Guernsey and Isle of Man can become a Dementia Friend. Many people living with dementia often feel isolated and left out because dementia is still so misunderstood. This lack of understanding can make it harder for people with the condition to stay independent and feel connected to their communities.

These 3 easy steps can make your pub more inclusive for customers with dementia:

Step 1. Encourage all your staff to become a Dementia Friend.

You can email DementiaFriends@alzheimers.org.uk to request a trained volunteer to come and deliver a free one hour Dementia Friends Session for your staff. Book onto a virtual Dementia Friends Session on the [Dementia Friends website](#) or sign your pub up to our route for organisations.

Step 2. Conduct a dementia-friendly environmental audit.

Visit [Alzheimer's Society](#) to help you consider simple practical changes you can make such as clearer signage, better lighting and large print menus. You can find more on [accessible website design here](#)

Step 3. Display dementia support information in your pub

Signpost staff and customers to vital dementia support services such as Alzheimer's Society's National Dementia Support Line on 0333 150 3456.

Testimonials

"This information and knowledge gained from becoming Dementia Friends was a reminder of the daily effects of dementia, and how compassion, empathy, and awareness are crucial in all environments."

"What really struck me was how just a little more understanding, empathy, and knowledge can make such a difference. It's easy to feel overwhelmed or worry about saying the wrong thing, but the session helped me feel more confident and compassionate in those moments."

Dementia-Friendly Checklist

- ✓ **Signage.** In bold with good contrast between text and background. High contrast between the sign and surface it is mounted on allowing the person to recognise it as a sign. Eye level and well-lit. At key decision points for someone who is at the building for the first time

- ✓ **Navigation.** People with dementia use “landmarks” to navigate their way around, both inside and outside. The more attractive and interesting a landmark, such as a large painting, the easier it is to use.
- ✓ **Lighting** Entrances well-lit, making use of natural light where possible.
- ✓ **Flooring.** Avoid highly reflective floors as they can cause confusion. Bold pattern carpets can cause problems with perceptual problems.
- ✓ **Quiet Space.** A place for someone who might be feeling anxious or confused.

Find more resources at [Dementia-friendly business guide](#)

Electric Vehicles Chargers

Many disabled drivers are early adopters of electric vehicles (EV), however according to [Euan's Guide](#):

- 49% of those who have used a public charger say cables are too heavy or not suitable.
- 62% report poor surrounding access such as missing dropped kerbs.

By 2034 [2.7 million drivers or disabled passengers](#) are expected to be reliant on public charging infrastructure. A majority will be dependent on on-street parking to park and charge.

Current government requirements for charging infrastructure do not include specific accessibility regulations for disabled people; however, best-practice standards do exist.

It is imperative that public charging infrastructure is made accessible for disabled people wherever possible as it is a lifeline.

There is currently no information service provider of accessible UK EV charging points.

To make sure that your pub is accessible for disabled drivers with electric cars ensure:

- ✓ Enough space around bays for wheelchair users
- ✓ Cables, screens and payment systems are within reach.
- ✓ Clear signage, lighting and level access to the pub entrance.
- ✓ Include details about charging points and accessibility in your online information. Accuracy in portraying your EV charging is key.

Helpful tip: When installing EV chargers, choose models that comply with the [British Accessible EV Charging Standard: BSI PAS 1899:2022](#)

This standard covers physical environment, location and placement.

Next Steps for Pubs

This Guide highlights a range of ways in which pubs and pub companies can introduce more accessible practices and improvements for customers and staff.

Whilst we recognise that some of the featured examples may require significant investment, time, or planning, others are more straightforward and low-cost. No two pubs are the same, and many face physical constraints due to the historic nature of their buildings – and that’s perfectly understandable. Likewise, we know that things like full staff training on disability awareness or hiring team members with lived experience won’t always be possible for every pub. While not every venue will be able to meet every standard, what matters is making steady progress towards greater accessibility.

1. Accurate Online Information. Ensure your pub’s accessibility details are clear and easy to find online. Include specifics on parking, entrances, toilets, and any step-free routes, with photos where possible. Transparency matters, even if you lack certain facilities, state that openly so customers can plan ahead. Listing your venue on platforms like Euan’s Guide can attract a wider audience and position your pub as a trusted destination for guests with specific accessibility needs, ensuring they know those needs are fully catered for.

2. Creating an Accessibility Guide. Develop a clear, honest guide outlining your venue’s accessibility features, supported by photos where possible. This helps customers make informed decisions and reassures them of your commitment to inclusion. Internal guides can also provide managers and staff with practical advice on adjustments, communication strategies, and inclusive practices, embedding

accessibility throughout your business. You can find helpful [guidance on Marketing your accessibility in the VisitEngland Toolkit](#)

- 3. Staff Training and Access Champion.** Invest in staff awareness so your team feels confident welcoming disabled customers. Training should cover practical topics like guiding visually impaired guests, understanding non-visible disabilities, and the correct use of emergency cords. Appoint an “Access Champion” to keep information updated, check facilities regularly, and act as a go-to person for accessibility queries. Even small steps, such as reading menus aloud or offering table service, can make a big difference.
- 4. Inclusive Recruitment.** Encouraging applications from disabled people and neurodivergent individuals helps create a workforce that reflects your customer base and brings valuable skills and insights into your business. To make interviews more accessible and reduce barriers, consider offering flexible formats like video calls, allowing extra time for responses, and providing questions in advance. Ensure interview spaces are physically accessible and free from distractions, and train interviewers to use clear language and avoid assumptions. Consider signing up to become a Disability Confident employer.
- 5. Investment in Accessible Infrastructure.** Where possible, plan for physical improvements during refurbishments. Priorities include step-free access, ramps, lowered bar sections, accessible toilets, and clear signage with contrasting colours. If space allows, consider a Changing Places Toilet facility. For outdoor areas, provide accessible parking and level paths. When investing in EV charging infrastructure make sure there is sufficient space for wheelchair users and cables are within reach. These upgrades enhance customer experience and can future-proof your business against costly retrofits.

Links and References

- [Acas Reasonable Adjustments](#)
- [Acas Understanding neurodiversity](#)
- [Accenture Getting to Equal: The Disability inclusion advantage](#)
- [ADUK: Community and Corporate Sighted Guide Training](#)
- [Alzheimer's Society: Dementia-friendly environment checklist](#)
- [Alzheimer's Society: Dementia-friendly resources](#)
- [Assistance Dogs UK](#)
- [BDF Disability Essentials](#)
- [BDF Newsletters](#)
- [Business Disability Forum](#)
- [Changing Places: What are Changing Places Toilets](#)
- [Euan's Guide Access Survey 2024](#)
- [Euan's Guide Safer Toilets](#)
- [Euan's Guide Website](#)
- [Gov.UK Disability Confident Employer Scheme](#)
- [Licensed Trade Charity: Empowering Neurodiversity in the Workplace](#)
- [Meet N Match](#)
- [Motionspot: Inclusive Spaces that welcome all](#)
- [Narcolepsy UK](#)
- [Ricardo - Electric Vehicle Charging infrastructure for people living with disabilities](#)
- [Scope - Disability Facts and Figures](#)
- [Tourism for all](#)
- [UK Parliament: Accessibility of products and services to disabled people](#)
- [Value of Purple Pound](#)
- [VisitEngland Accessible and Inclusive Tourism Toolkit](#)
- [VisitEngland Food & Beverage Action Checklist](#)
- [WebAIM: Contrast Checker](#)

Contributors



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