



Access Statements

This information note has been prepared by the Wrexham County Borough Council Planning Department and is intended as interim guidance until the Welsh Assembly Government has finalised its own guidance. It should not be treated as definitive, but is intended to assist applicants in producing statements. Applicants should be aware that there may be further issues which should be included in their statement.

Available in accessible formats on request



Purpose

An access statement is intended to show how a particular site or development provides for the needs of people with reduced mobility, but should also consider those with sensory or learning disabilities.

The principal aim of preparing a statement is to make applicants think about their proposal and how people will be able to get to, use and move through the development on equal terms regardless of age, gender or disability.

The preparation of the statement is not principally about making a record of the facilities/features of the development on the site or the area (although this is clearly what it will do).

It should ideally be commenced before the design or layout of the scheme has been advanced beyond its earliest stages so that amendments can be incorporated easily into the scheme.

Requirement

Access statements are now required by law for most planning applications. You are reminded

that approval of your scheme does not necessarily mean that your scheme will fully comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act.

Coverage

The statement will not generally cover the internal arrangement inside buildings (these are covered by Part M of the Building Regulations) although, it may be valuable to highlight any particular merits or to explain the reason for any deficiencies.

The statement must cover the area immediately around the development (eg. approaches from the road or layout of the car park).

The statement will need to consider the area within which the development is situated (eg. approaches from public car parks, bus stations, location of post offices/public toilets)

Length

The length may vary from a few sentences to an extensive report. There is no minimum or maximum prescribed length. The amount of detail will depend on how complex the application is.

Content

The following notes are not intended to include all those matters which should/could be included, they are intended to encourage thought. You should not assume that limiting yourself to the list below will be adequate in all cases.

Example 1 - A Housing Development

- Is the parking readily accessible from the front door?
- is it flat, is it wide enough to allow car doors to open fully?
- Can a person get past parked cars to enter the property?
- Is the private garden area usable by people with limited mobility?
- Could someone with restricted mobility get from the site to a bus stop or a community hall?
- Is tactile paving provided?

Example 2 - A Change of Use to a Restaurant

- How far is it to the parking area?
- How many disabled parking spaces are provided?
- how easy is it to get from the parking to the tables?



- What gradient, slopes, distances, kerbs are in the vicinity?
- Could you get there by public transport?
- If you went in an accessible minibus, could you stop and unload safely?
- Are the signs clearly legible to people with limited sight?

Example 3 - Other Uses

Some development may not be likely to be used by disabled people and the statement should reflect the reasons behind this. However don't forget that some uses, sports facilities for example, may still need to be accessible to people with a temporary disability.

Example 4 - Industrial Development

- Is the disabled car parking area close to the entrance, if there is a separate staff entrance is it close to both?
- Are all facilities accessible to everyone? e.g. canteen or wash facilities
- Is any signage clearly legible?

Example 5 - Outline Applications

- What design features would be included in the detailed submission?
- Is the location relative to shops, bus stops, gradients, appropriate?



Further advice is contained in the Disability Rights Commission publications called "Access Statements" and "Planning, Buildings, Streets and Disability Equality" which can be viewed on their website www.dotheduty.org.

The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) produce a short guide on how to write access statements available to download from www.cabe.org.uk.



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