

Access to and use of buildings

This is one of a series of local planning guidance notes amplifying local planning proposals in a clear and concise format with the objective of improving design standards. Our urban environment has not been designed with the needs of all people in mind which can be a disadvantage to some groups, i.e. elderly, disabled, young children, mothers with pushchairs, etc. For many new buildings there are requirements and guidelines set out in Approved Document M of The Building Regulations 2000 and British Standard 8300 and Inclusive Mobility. Service providers must also be aware of duties under The Disability Discrimination Act including provisions which extend beyond the site, and for the provision of fire exit independent egress or fire refuges (Disability Rights Commission example Access Statements and DDA Code of practice (2002) Section 5.45) which covers more than Approved Document M.

The guidance that follows has been prepared and adopted by the Council to foster a better standard of design and to encourage designers and developers to consider the needs of people fully during early design stages.

This guidance cannot hope to cover all areas of design or everyone's needs, but designers are encouraged to discuss their proposals early with Planning or Building Control Officers of the Council. The Council will seek to promote accessibility and facilities for all vulnerable groups. It must be remembered that the following guidance relates to as built minimum standards acceptable by regulation as built, but you are encouraged to consider best practice which may have larger dimensions rather than as as built minimum requirements.

Access Statements

To assist Authorities in making judgements about whether or not proposals are reasonable, it is recommended that an Access Statement be provided with any application where access by members of the public occurs or 3 homes or more. The statement may be a record showing intentions to comply with all relevant standards with an indication as to what principles have been adopted. Access Statements must always be provided where compliance with Approved Document M is not achievable, giving reasons and strategy behind the decisions.

*This leaflet is available
in alternative formats*



Getting There

The following features need to be taken into account:

Car parking

Amounts: 6% of the spaces should be reserved specifically for people with disabilities. A space should be provided for every disabled employee over and above the provision mentioned. If other locations, or the expected use, suggest that a higher percentage of disabled spaces should be included then they must do so to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act. (requirement of the DDA)

Location: Spaces should be located within 50 metres of an accessible entrance and desirably be under cover.

Parking bays: Need to be wide enough to accommodate wheelchair traffic to and from the car. Reserved spaces should be denoted by clear signposting at the entrance and beside the space itself.

Surfacing

Design: Internal and external surfaces should be firm, non slip and well laid. Where changes in direction or levels do occur the path edge should be defined with a colour contrast, textured surface or where appropriate upstand kerb or low rail.



Street furniture: Should be clearly distinguishable from surrounding and be clearly defined. Projecting covers, isolated steps and large aperture gratings are to be avoided. Suitable seating should be provided at maximum of 50m intervals.

Pathways

Dimensions: Pathways should be a minimum of 1.8 metres wide, preferably 2 metres wide.

Movement: Pathways should be installed clear of obstacles; edges should be clearly defined and routes from roads, bus stops and car parks should be installed signposted and well lit. Tactile paving must be installed and with a vertical deviation of 3mm or less (Part M1.13(d)).

Kerbs: Dropped kerbs, flush with the carriageway max upstand 6mm, and which offer a gradient of maximum ratio of 1:10. Use of non slip textured footway surface and pedestrian crossings are advisable.

Entering the building

Changes in levels should be avoided, especially at entrances and exits. Where this is not possible both ramps and steps should be available.

Ramps

Dimensions: Ramps should be 1.8 metres wide (1.5 metres minimum) with 100mm kerb which should be colour contrasting and have a gradient of 1:20. At the beginning and end of a ramp a level platform 1.8 metres long should be provided. On long ramps a level platform of 1.8m x 1.8m to allow for a passing place where it not possible for wheelchair users to see from one end to the other (1.5m otherwise). Tactile paving should not be provided on ramps.



Features: Handrails should be provided on both sides of the ramps. Any entrance should be well lit and ideally protected from the weather.

Steps

Dimensions: Steps should be 1.8 metres wide (1.2 metres minimum). The goings of stairs should be a minimum of 280mm and the risers between 150-170mm. Open risers, or a single step must not be used.

Features: The nosings of steps or stairs should be clearly defined. The approach to a flight of stairs should also be indicated and the actual materials used need to be hard wearing and non slip.



Handrails

Dimensions: Handrails should be located 1.0 metre above a landing and be no more than 900mm above the nosing lines of the steps, and preferably be to the door entrance or at least 450mm beyond the end of the steps.

Handrails should be between 40mm and 50mm in diameter and 60mm from the adjacent wall and be made of an easy to grasp material; they should be continuous yet end in a clearly recognisable manner such as returning to the wall, and be comfortable/not cold to touch.



Doors

Dimensions: Entrance doors should have a minimum clear opening width of 1000mm. Internal doors should be a minimum of 800mm clear opening. Where double doors are used at least one door should be a minimum of 800mm wide.

Types: Revolving and heavy doors are to be avoided. Automatic sliding doors are desirable where hinged doors are required for safety reasons extra care needs to be taken to ensure they are usable by disabled people.

Materials: Glazed doors should be easily distinguishable. Vision panels, must be extended to low level. All doors and furniture to be colour contrasting from surroundings.

In the building

The effort of getting around can be eased if the circulation, displays and facilities are considered at an early stage of design.

Layout

- *Main facilities should be at main entrance level, where if small changes in level do occur they can be dealt with by duplicating stairs and ramps.*
- *Routes from entrance doors to lifts, stairs, enquiry desks and toilets should be clearly defined and unobstructed.*
- *Seating should be generously provided, especially around areas where waiting is likely. It should be of stable construction and be available in choice of heights and with rigid arm rests*
- *Telephones, counters and checkouts should be accessible and usable by disabled persons.*
- *Handrails should be used to assist ambulant disabled people.*
- *Hardwall surfaces that reflect sound should be softened.*
- *Walls, floors, ceiling junctions to be colour contrasting.*

Corridors

Dimensions: Corridors should be 1.8 metres wide with appliances recessed to avoid projecting space.

Features: Splayed or rounded corners are desirable, deep pile carpets are to be avoided as are tiled floors which are not slip-resistant. Colour contrast is required between doors and walls.

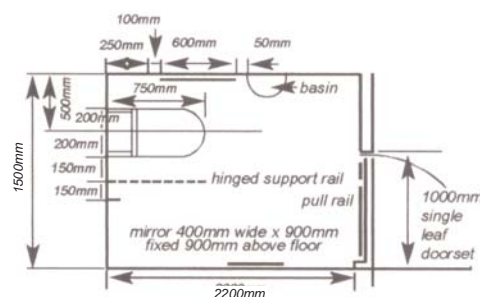
Lifts

Dimensions: Lifts should have minimum internal measurements of 1.1 metres wide by 1.4 metres deep, and

large enough for proposed use. There should be 1.5 metres of unobstructed space in front of the lift entrance and entrance doors should have 900mm of clear opening width (minimum 800mm). Controls should be no higher than 1.2 metres above floor level with tactile symbols.

Toilets

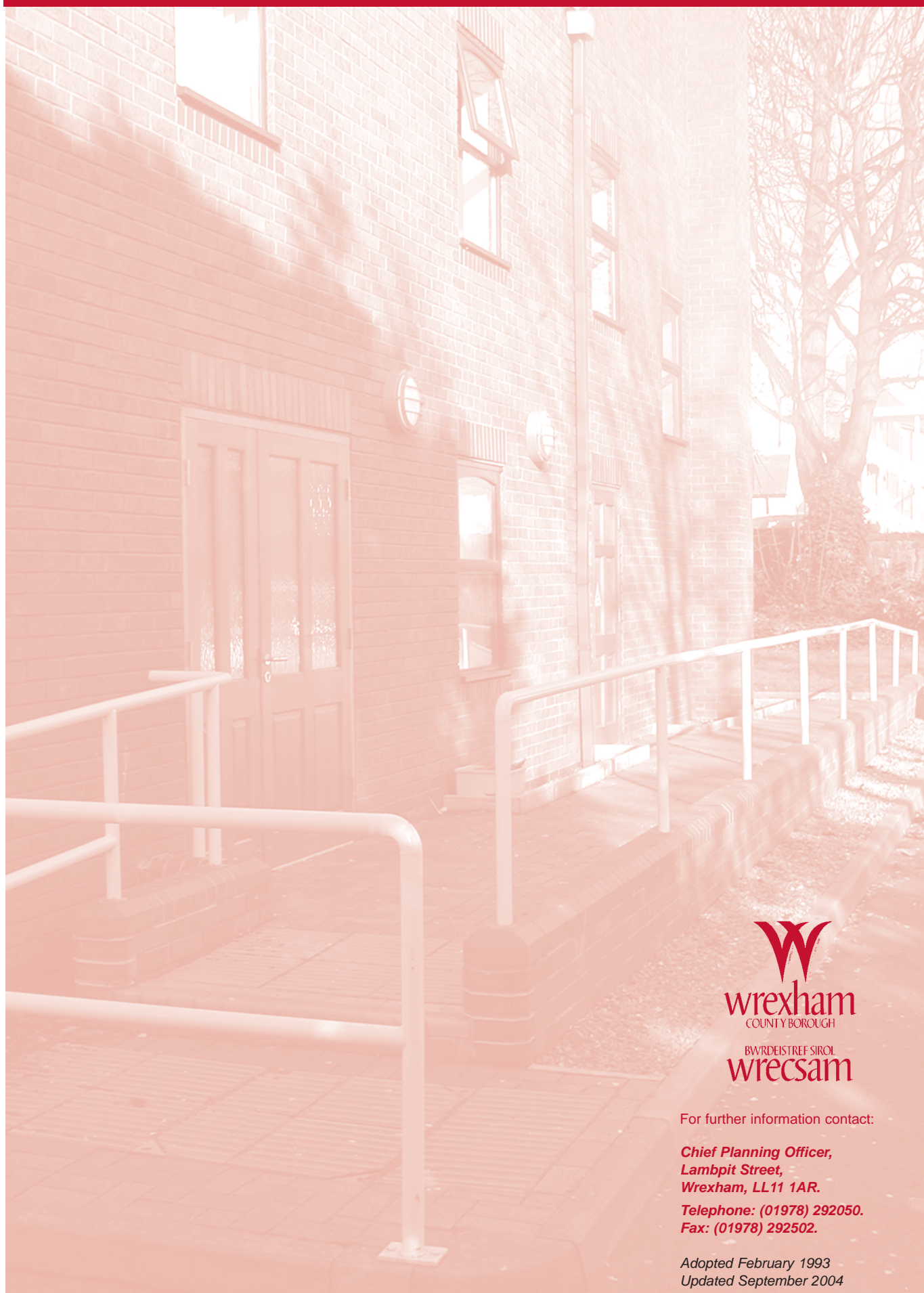
The minimum dimensions of a toilet cubicle should be 2.2 metres by 1.5 metres with a metre wide outward opening or sliding entrance door and have a non-slip floor. Various layouts are suitable.



Signposting

Information should be clear and unambiguous - carefully sited at convenient, readable heights and be readily distinguishable from the background by use of strong contrast. Do not use a combination of red and green.

Standardised symbols should be used where appropriate and raised/embossed symbols/braille located within reach.



For further information contact:

**Chief Planning Officer,
Lambpit Street,
Wrexham, LL11 1AR.**

**Telephone: (01978) 292050.
Fax: (01978) 292502.**

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