

# Building Control Access Statements Explanatory Notes

Draft April 2004

## 1 Scope

This document is intended to provide guidance to building and construction industry companies, planning departments and access professionals on the content and scope of 'Access Statements'. Access Statements are required by the Building Regulations Part M 2004 – access to buildings. This guidance was to be provided by the DRC but has not been forthcoming and all new projects should have

Interested parties are invited to comment and propose changes and additions to the outlines provided in these notes and the associated Building Control Access Statement Form.

Additional comments and guidance can be found in the Access Statement Form.

The sections shown in this document are examples illustrating the proposed approach, suggestions for additions or other changes would be welcome together with more general comment.

Comments welcome before placing out for general use.

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## 2 Introduction

This Statement should be used to highlight key issues which would be addressed as detailed proposals are brought forward for the constituent development parcels. These issues include the following:

- The provision of accessible parking spaces throughout the development;
- The availability of lifts within car parks;
- The inclusive design of the pedestrian routes and open spaces, incorporating features such as dropped kerbs, tactile paving and minimising street clutter, traffic claming.
- Accessible housing within each housing development parcel;
- The accessibility of buildings to everyone including disabled people;
- Emergency Evacuation of employees and visitors to the premises.

The Access Statement seeks to demonstrate the Applicant's commitment to the concept of inclusive design, including the needs of disabled people.

Accessibility needs to be a central feature in the implementation of the Application proposal. This will have a positive long term benefit for the whole community. All groups in society benefit from inclusive design at some stage in their lives, parents with young children, elderly people and those who become disabled temporarily due to illness or accident.

An important but often overlooked or poorly considered factor is the evacuation of all users for a premises during an emergency (e.g. fire) situation. The evacuation of Children, Older People and People with Disabilities all require careful planning, personnel training and in some cases special equipment. People who have physical, sensory or perception limitations are often at a serious disadvantage during an emergency and without careful design and planning in advance may place themselves, other evacuees or Emergency Services personnel in danger.

All elements of the proposal should be accessible to disabled people, having regard to current proposed changes to Part M of the Building Regulations (May 2004 and Oct 2004). In some cases a Local Authority may impose more stringent controls related to specific requirements.

### 2.1 Health and Safety

In no circumstances should building and fixture designs pose increased health and safety risks to building users.

Risk assessments should be performed and recorded in any situation where employees or visitors may be placed at risk and the design modified as necessary before submission of the Access Statement.

An risk assessment for the evacuation of disabled employees and visitors in all parts of the project should be made and recorded before preparing the Emergency guidance for the building owner/manager.

These risk assessments should be available on request should any of the approval assessors require them.

Note: I residential properties where employees are expected to work e.g. cleaners/concierge in common areas of shared occupation buildings risk assessment and provisions must meet the Health and Safety at Work Regulations.

## **2.2 INCLUSIVE DESIGN**

"An inclusive environment does not attempt to meet every single need, but by considering people's diversity, inclusive environments can break down barriers and exclusion and will often achieve superior solutions that benefit everyone. Legislation and guidance currently only relate to access provision for disabled people and has tended to result in 'special' provision being made for disabled people rather than their needs being integrated with all other users... The term 'inclusive design' relates as much to the design process as to the final product and just as equally to management, operation and information, bonding user experience with professional expertise...'Inclusive Design' extends from inception, through the planning process, detailed design, construction, occupation, management and operation. Each of these stages will be fully inclusive involving disabled people and other potential consumers in their development and evaluation and management practice"<sup>1</sup>

## **2.3 Lifetime Homes**

Existing building regulations on accessibility could be strengthened by introducing the 'Lifetime Homes' standard - a series of design features to ensure that new or converted houses and flats have flexibility built in at the design stage. Many Social Housing projects already work to these standards, during the Building Regulations Review (ODPM) in 2004 it is expected that these criteria will be extended to all new housing and renovations.

Possible features could include:

- Stairs designed to take a stair lift at a later stage
- Ground floor bedroom/WC
- Ground floor space for installation of a shower if required.

Lifetime Homes standards are a recognised model for the design of accessible housing, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and Habinteg

Lifetimes Homes can be found on <http://www.jrf.org.uk/housingandcare/lifetimehomes/partmandlth.asp> although these are now dated and higher standards now apply still form a good basis for planning. They are designed to achieve accessible and convenient housing particularly in relation to the needs of disabled people and those with restricted mobility, but also for other users. They incorporate design features or standards that add to the convenience of a home and provide for easy adaptation to meet the changing needs which might occur throughout a family's life cycle. The criteria are similar to, but go somewhat beyond the requirements of Building Regulations Part M. Lifetime Homes do not however incorporate the additional space requirements necessary for occupation by wheelchair users. Wheelchair housing therefore requires additional specific design features and space requirements to accommodate the living needs of wheelchair users. In the social sector, many properties are already built to this standard or close to it.

The main features are:

level entry to the principal, or a suitable alternative, entrance  
an entrance door wide enough to allow wheelchair access  
WC provision on the entrance or first habitable storey  
adequate circulation and wider doors within the entrance storey  
switches and socket outlets at appropriate heights from floor level  
level or gently sloping approach from the car parking space to the dwelling, or where this is not possible, easy-going steps  
where a lift is to be provided in flats, a minimum lift capacity and dimensions will be recommended  
where a lift is not provided the common stairs to be designed to suit the needs of the ambulant disabled.

## 2.4 New Projects

In all development proposals, including traffic management schemes, suitable provision for people with mobility impairment should be included. Consideration should be given to:

- Access to public transport,
- Access to route and route distances,
- Choice and positioning of street furniture,
- Layout and construction of crossing facilities,
- Layout and construction of pedestrianised areas,
- Layout and dimensions of footways and footpaths,
- Lighting,
- Parking for vehicles of blue (orange) badge holders, and
- Signing.

New developments will be expected to meet the desired standards. All new developments should be audited to ensure that the needs of all pedestrians, especially mobility impaired people will be met.

Developers will have to demonstrate good reason why desired standards cannot be met on new developments or when providing new facilities within the existing network.

## **2.5 Existing Environment**

Our existing built environment has developed over many centuries and has been designed to differing standards to those expected today.

Existing networks should be upgraded where practical towards these standards during maintenance or improvement schemes. The cost of trying to bring the existing environment up to the standards described in Part M and other relevant documents may be too expensive or beyond the scope of a proposed scheme; in some locations there may not be any space to make improvements. Where new facilities are to be added to the existing network then the absolute minimum dimensions may be the only solution. The maxim 'something is better than nothing' (unless safety is reduced) is a general rule.

Where improvements to the existing highway are proposed then a pedestrian review should be made to assess existing provisions and identify where improvements can be made for pedestrians and mobility impaired people.

## **2.6 Protected Sites**

This section should be completed by the relevant Local Authority to provide the applicable guidance which relates to their region.

### **2.6.1 Heritage Sites**

There are many local variations with regard to protected buildings and Local Authority and Regional Heritage rules will apply.

England – English Heritage

<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/default.asp>

Scotland – Historic Scotland

<http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk>

Wales – CADW – Heritage Wales

<http://www.cadw.wales.gov.uk>

## 2.6.2 Conservation Areas & National Parks

England – the Countryside agency

<http://www.countryside.gov.uk>

Scottish Natural heritage

<http://www.snh.org.uk>

Wales – Countryside Council for Wales

<http://www.ccw.gov.uk>

## 2.6.3 Other guidance

English Tourist Council (accessible tourism)

<http://www.accessibletourism.org.uk/holding.asp?sReferer=/default.asp?>

Countryside Agency (greenways)

<http://www.greenways.gov.uk/site/publications.htm>

## 3 Considerations

### 3.1 Types of mobility impairment

The user groups that need to be considered include:

- Ambulant impaired people with walking aids,
- Ambulant impaired people without walking aids,
- Electric scooter/mobility vehicle users,
- Parents with pushchairs,
- People accompanied by assistance dogs,
- Shoppers with heavy shopping bags
- Visually impaired people with canes,
- Visually impaired people with guide dogs,
- Visually impaired people without aids,
- Wheelchair users,

This list is not all embracing; there are many forms of permanent and temporary mobility impairments that can be experienced by people. Impairments may not be evident because walking aids are not used, but may become apparent when a person encounters a barrier to movement.

Wheelchair and pushchair users have difficulties in negotiating changes in levels. Raised crossing points and dropped kerbs provide for easier access across roads. Even a small step can prevent access along the highway and to buildings, so the provision of ramps has to be considered.

Visually impaired and blind people need information about where they are and need to be sure that they will not walk into street furniture or the carriageway. This can be achieved by considering the layout and colour of street furniture to provide clear routes, strong contrasting colours and providing tactile information where appropriate.

Guide dogs will take their owners around objects, but they still require routes that avoid forcing them to weave in and out of obstructions. Guide dogs have difficulty preventing collisions with overhanging obstacles and so clear headroom must be given or a warning or barrier provided.

Cane users use their canes to feel the area directly in front of them so they do not bump into things. Obstacles overhanging the zone of likely contact require a tapping rail or they will not be detected safely.

People with visual impairments who do not use canes or guide dogs rely on colour and tonal contrasts to provide information on locations of street furniture and hazards.

People with differing disabilities have differing needs, often in direct conflict with each other. An example is the need for a flush kerb for wheelchair or pushchair users which causes problems for visually impaired people who do not know where the kerb line is located.

The solution is to use tactile paving which can cause discomfort for some wheelchair users and people other ailments such as arthritis. Compromises often have to be made to accommodate all users.

Children are often not well considered during the construction and modification design stages of a premises and tend to be marginalised during operations planning. Children whether accompanied by adults or alone need to be considered when designing fixture positions and types in service and display areas. Toilet and changing facilities outside schools rarely take into account the smaller stature of children making it difficult or impossible for them to use the facility unaccompanied. As children are often accompanied by an adult of the opposite sex the design and location of toilet and changing facilities need to take this into account., with the possible provision of a unisex facility.

## 3.2 Mobility

Walking distances were researched in some detail in the late 1980s and, based on the findings from these studies, the following are recommended:

### **Impaired group Recommended distance limit without a rest**

Wheelchair riders (manual)	150m
Ambulatory impaired People using stick	50m
Ambulatory impaired People	100m

without walking aid	
Visually impaired people	150m

(Figures from UK Department of Transport document Inclusive Mobility Ref. TA5/95)

Mobility ranges vary enormously between individuals. Other factors that can affect mobility ranges include weather, topography and obstacles. Note that on distances over 30m disabled people are apt to rest frequently. Regulations suggest that to estimate travel times over longer distances allowance should be made for two minutes rest time every 30 metres.

Pedestrian schemes and new developments should aim to achieve the following mobility range targets if significant numbers of mobility impaired are not to be excluded from parts of the area.

The recommended maximum distances from drop points or disabled persons car parking

- 50m on unprotected routes,
- 100m on covered routes, and
- 200m on completely enclosed routes.

Where there are steeper gradients, the target distances should be reduced. (see recommendations for Ramps in Part M and BS8300) The provision of suitably located seating and resting places can extend mobility distance along with direct, obstacle-free routes.

### 3.3 Continence and Toilet Facilities

Many people especially those who are older or have disabilities suffer from problems with continence. Designers need to consider the mobility information above when public toilet facilities are to be included in the development.

Due to the lack of public facilities many people have their ability to simply take a walk in their housing estate. Others may avoid travel to a town centre or other shopping complex due to this same lack of facilities.

The Continence Foundation figures show that in age groups over 40  
 28.5% of men reported a problem, and  
 38.8% of women reported a problem

these figures include those where continence is a minor problem up to those where continence may be a major factor in deciding whether a particular location is visitable or not. Among people with certain disabilities or limitations and pregnant women the proportions are often much higher than in the population at large.

In the big spending 30 to 60 age groups  
 3.8% of men, and

9.8% of women reported continence as a problem. The proportion rises to 70% amongst groups aged over 65.

In any development project it is therefore highly desirable that at least minimal sanitary facilities are provided. Up rating a basic WC unit to cater for mobility impaired people incurs minimal cost during construction, e.g. –

- grab rails in at least one cubical in each set,
- at least one low level urinal with grab rails, where trough type is not used,
- wash basins at reasonable heights, fitted with vertical grab rails, and lever or sensor operated taps,
- hot air hand dryers,
- a full length mirror where clothing adjustment can be checked
- selection of a balanced colour scheme which provides adequate contrasts

It is suggested that an electronic flush with touch plate operation is used in the WC. This has been found to reduce damage due to vandalism and reduce water consumption. The British Airports Authority reported that the increased cost of these controls paid for it self within six months. This will also help to meet the 'Water Supply (water fittings) Regulations 1999: WC Suite Performance Specifications' issued by DEFRA UK.

### 3.3.1 General Provisions

There do not appear to be any specific requirements for the provision of sanitary facilities on a national basis. In general customer toilet numbers are specified by each Local Authority dependent on the business.

For employee provision the numbers are specified in 'Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations.

The number of WCs etc. provided for different premises is given in BS 6465 sanitary provisions (£80.00 from BSI). However, this standard does not include the requirements for disabled peoples facilities.

The following sections provide guidance derived from a number of sources to aid property managers in assessing their provisions, it does not reproduce the complete set of requirements.

The World health Organisation recommends provision of 1 toilet per 25 people.

#### **In all public toilet facilities**

At least 1 male urinal should be at the lower height and provided with grab rails for use by wheelchair riders.

At least 1 male urinal should be suitable for children and small stature people.

Provision of at least 1 low level WC in both male and female facilities should be considered for the unaccompanied use of children. Where larger numbers of smaller children are likely users (e.g. schools, funfairs, sports grounds etc.) providing WC at a range of heights should be considered.

**Adult/Child Changing facilities**

Due to the potential for ‘accidents’ when people have continence problems it is suggested that,

- Larger complexes catering to the general public should consider providing a suitable changing and washing/shower facility for the unaccompanied use of disabled people.
- Local Authorities should consider providing at least 1 central facility within reasonable walking distance from the main shopping and business centre.

**3.3.2 Sanitary Provision permanent**

Washing facilities must be provided in the vicinity of every toilet, be supplied with hot (40°C) and cold running water, must contain soap and towels or other means of drying hands, must be sufficiently ventilated and lit and must be kept clean.

The table below shows the minimum number of toilets and washbasins which should be provided for staff. As noted above, employers must provide separate toilets for use by men and women unless each toilet is in its own room with a door capable of being secured from inside. Where men and women are provided with separate toilets, then separate calculations should be made for the men's facilities and women's facilities using this table.

**Table 1 Sanitary Provisions**

Number of People at Work	Number of WCs	Number of Washbasins
1-5	1	1
6-25	2	2
26-50	3	3
51-75	4	4
76-100	5	5

Where separate toilets are provided for men and women, the facilities provided for men will usually include urinals as well as WCs. The following table should be used to calculate the number of WCs and urinals required for men when both are provided rather than WCs alone.

**Table 2 Sanitary Provisions at Work**

Number of Men at Work	Number of WCs	Number of Urinals
1-15	1	1
16-30	2	1
31-45	2	2
46-60	3	2
61-75	3	3
76-90	4	3
91-100	4	4

**Source : Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 : Regulation 20/21: ACOP, paragraphs 201-202.**

### 3.3.3 Food Service Locations

If your food premises has more than eight customer seats for consumption of food on the premises there is a requirement to provide customer toilet facilities.

If only one cubical is provided as a minimum it should comply with accessibility standards for the mobility impaired customer.

Where possible these should be separate to those used by staff. They should not open directly to food preparation or service areas. If they are used by both sexes the door must be lockable.

British Standard (BS 6465) for premises catering for various numbers of customers is as follows:-

**Table 3 Sanitary provisions BS 6465**

Total Number of Male and Female Customers	Facilities for Male Customers			Facilities for Female Customers	
	W.C.s	Wash Basins	Urinals	W.C.s	Wash Basins
Up to 100**	1	2	1	2	2
Up to 200	1	2	2	4	4

- **Separate facilities should always be provided so far as is reasonably possible. Where it is not practicable and customers do not exceed 16, a lesser standard of one toilet with hand basin for the premises may be permitted. This concession is not in the British Standard.**
- **A slop sink must be available in each unit.**

\*\*Some slight reduction in facilities may be agreed for smaller premises.

Male and female accommodation should be carefully designed, to ensure privacy and in particular to ensure that urinal areas and wash stations are not visible when inner doors are open. Hand drying facilities must be provided, as previously specified. W.C. compartments, urinal areas, washing areas and lobbies must be suitably ventilated by means of operable windows, or mechanical ventilation giving at least three air changes per hour. The discharge points of any ventilation extract ducts should not be in close proximity to any fresh air inlets to the premises. Suitable self closing devices should be fitted to the doors of all sanitary accommodation and entrance lobbies. The sanitary accommodation must be designed to provide adequate circulation space for the users, and sufficient room for safe and ready access to all the facilities.

### **3.3.4 Sanitary facilities Schools and other Children's locations**

All schools must contain at least a basic number of toilet fittings for pupils, based on one toilet for every 10 pupils under the age of five; one toilet for every 20 pupils aged five and over; one toilet for every 10 pupils in special schools. In each case the figure arrived at should be rounded up to the nearest whole even number. The number may need to be increased in order that it is adequate according to any special requirements which pupils have.

All schools must have separate washrooms for male and female pupils aged 8 and over. In mixed washrooms and in washrooms for female pupils, all toilet fittings should be WCs

In schools where most pupils are under 11, there must be as many washbasins as toilet fittings. In schools where most pupils are 11 or older, washrooms with one toilet fitting should include at least one washbasin and washrooms with two toilet fittings should contain at least two washbasins, while in all other washrooms the number of washbasins should be at least two thirds of the number of toilet fittings.

Nursery schools and schools with pupils under 5 should have one deep sink, shower or bath for every 40 such pupils. Again the figure arrived at should be rounded up to the next whole number.

Changing accommodation, including showers, must be provided for children over 11 taking PE.

#### **Source : Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 : Regulation 3.**

In washrooms for male pupils, at least one third of toilet fittings should be WCs.

#### **Source: DfEE Guidance Document 0029/2000 para 27**

Pupils welfare may be a particular issue when showering or changing ... the welfare of some pupils may demand stringent privacy.

**Source: DfEE Guidance Document 0029/2000 paras 32/33**

### **3.3.5 Sanitary Provision at Hotels etc.**

I. It is essential that there is at least one WC for twenty guests of each sex or a better ratio if it is a requirement of the Local Authority. There should be hand-washing facilities adjacent to each toilet.

II. It is preferred that there is at least one WC for every fifteen guests of each sex.

At least one unisex unit should be provided and at least one cubical suitable for mobility impaired people in each set.

### **3.4 Tactile Surfaces & Guidance**

Tactile surfaces are used to give advanced warning of changes in level, priority or a road crossing to sight impaired people because they can be detected underfoot. Detailed guidance is provided on appropriate surfaces within DETR's '*Guidance on the Use of Tactile Paving Surfaces*', 1998. Tactile paving must only be used for the purposes described within the guidance

In a related manner colour and tactile changes can be used to provide guidance across open areas or provide boundary clues on pathways. (indoors and outdoors).

These are important wayfinding clues for people with visual and hearing impairments misuse of tactile surfaces can lead to confusion and increased hazard to users.

### **3.5 Temporary Works and Site Entries**

When temporary works occur on the highway, the needs of visually impaired people and wheelchair users have to be considered.

- All works in the highway must be carried out in accordance with the requirements of the *New Roads and Streetworks Act 2002* and *Safety at Street and Road Works – A Code of Practice* pages 28-33 '*Work on Footways – Look after Pedestrians*'.

The Access Statement should provide details about the access route design, pedestrian/vehicle diversions and the management of the entry during it's lifespan. Management must include regular cleaning of debris and tracked mud etc.

### **3.6 Emergency Evacuation Provisions**

It is just as important to plan how people will leave a building as for planning how they will enter and use a building, especially during

emergencies. This subsection is not comprehensive and is provided as a brief guide to this complex and important factor in any new building, refurbishment or change of use.

Emergencies requiring personnel evacuation take many forms, regulations concentrate on Fire, however, other cases requiring evacuation must be planned for, e.g.

- Bomb Threats,
- Flood,
- Gas leaks,
- Hostage situations,
- Power cuts,
- Radiation or toxic gas or chemical leaks,
- And others which may apply to a particular work site.

In the event of an emergency there may be a power cut, lifts and escalators are disabled. Escalators may become impassable to most people with disabilities.

Building management i.e. ensuring evacuation routes are not blocked by equipment etc., emergency doors can be used and are not locked while the building is in use, emergency light and communications work, etc. will form the daily management basis for emergency planning.

Selection of appropriate alarms systems (audible, visible and vibratory) can make the difference between a safe evacuation and people left behind or trapped.

Good signage, wayfinding clues and emergency lighting are essential parts of the evacuation process.

Emergency refuges are necessary on every above or below ground level floor. These need to be large enough for the number of people who may need assistance to evacuate from a particular floor, plus sufficient space for those who will provide assistance during the evacuation.

Design of emergency stairs need to cater for the number of people with disabilities who may use that floor. Adequate lighting, handrails, non-skid steps, solid risers, rest platforms are all essential components of an evacuation stairs.

With horizontal evacuation clearly defined routes, doors which are not locked or are interlocked with the alarm system, smoke and fire retardant doors which limit fire and smoke spread all need to be well planned and maintained.

Once the basic factors noted above have been put in place and the number of disabled employees and a provision for visitors has been assessed detailed plans can be made. Employees and regular users, e.g. students in an educational establishment, should have a Personal Evacuation Plan, these are made after the building is in use.

However, planners and designers need to make a generic assessment of the building, it's purpose, contents and likely users

and employees and provide adequate plans which the building occupier will amend once the building is occupied.

See the following for basic information on evacuation and related precautions, there are many others and for certain types of premises there are additional Local Authority requirements.

- Building Regulation Part B 2000 and 2002 European amendments for Fire Emergencies
- Building Regulation Part M – Access to Buildings
- BS5588 and 9999 for guidance on Fire Planning and Evacuation
- The Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations 1997 (Amended December 1999)
- BS EN 3 Fire Extinguishers
- BS 7937: Specification for portable fire extinguishers for use on cooking oil : 2000

## 4 Access Statements

### 4.1 Extract from Building Regulations Part M 2004

#### Access Statements

**0.20** Much of the guidance in this Approved Document is based on BS 8300:2001 'Design of buildings and their approaches to meet the needs of disabled people - Code of Practice'. It is therefore by derivation based largely on the ergonomic studies carried out to support the British Standard. As such, it may appear to be more prescriptive than other Approved Documents in the Building Regulations series. It must always be borne in mind however that the guidance contained in this AD is designed to indicate one way in which the Requirements may be met. There may be other, equally satisfactory, ways of meeting the Requirements. Appropriate solutions to access problems may vary depending on the size, scale, nature and intended use of the building. This may be particularly true when applied to existing buildings where constraints of structure and context may make generic solutions impracticable.

**0.21** To assist building control bodies in making judgements about whether proposals make reasonable provision, therefore, it is recommended that an Access Statement should be provided at the time plans are deposited, a building notice is given or details of a project are given to an approved inspector, and updated to reflect decisions reached on site. It should be noted that guidance on access in the planning system ('Planning and Access for Disabled People - A Good Practice Guide' published by ODPM) recommends provision of an Access Statement to identify the philosophy and approach to inclusive design adopted, the key issues of the particular scheme, and the sources of advice and guidance used. An additional benefit of providing an Access Statement is that it should

set out at the time of the application most of the information needed by a building control body, thus assisting the dialogue between the applicant and building control.

**0.22** An Access Statement provided for building control purposes should be seen as complementary to, and as a development of, the information provided for planning purposes, rather than as a separate document. It may indeed be beneficial to maintain and update such a document as the building work progresses in order to provide the end-user of the building, who may have ongoing obligations under the DDA, with a record of decisions made which had an impact on accessibility, and of the rationale for such decisions.

**0.23** At its very simplest, such a statement might record that the intention of the client, designer or design team ('the applicant') was to comply where appropriate with the guidance in the AD, and to indicate in what respects it was considered appropriate. Where an applicant wishes to depart from the guidance in Approved Document M, either to achieve a better solution using new technologies (e.g. infrared activated controls), to provide a more convenient solution, or to address the constraints of an existing building, the Statement should set out the reasons for departing from the guidance and the rationale for the design approach adopted. Examples of evidence that might be cited to support such an approach might include:

- application of the recommendations in BS 8300 where these differ from the provisions, or are not covered, in AD M;
- results of current validated research (published (say) in the last 5 years);
- outcome of consultations with other parties, e.g. Conservation Officers, English Heritage or CADW, local Access Officers etc.;
- convincing arguments that an alternative solution will achieve the same, a better, or a more convenient outcome.

**0.24** In the case of extensions and material changes of use of buildings other than dwellings, and particularly in the case of historic buildings, such a statement will allow an applicant to identify the constraints imposed by the existing structure and its immediate environment and to propose compensatory measures where full access proves to be impracticable or unreasonable. This will allow for an explanation to be provided and assessed in situations where a less than- fully accessible access route is proposed to an extension, or to a building or part of a building subject to a material change of use; for example, where a sub-leaseholder, in a multi-occupancy building, plans to make a material change of use of the top floor premises into a rooftop-restaurant, but for good reason has been unable to obtain landlord consent to alter the common parts.

**0.25** The Statement will also permit the applicant to identify buildings or particular parts of buildings where it would be either

reasonable for access to be restricted or unreasonable to expect certain groups of people to require access, for example where hazardous materials are handled, or in certain manufacturing processes, or areas where archiving and bulk handling processes are carried out, any of which might create hazards for children, some disabled people or frail elderly people.

**0.26** If, in the case of a relevant material change of use, it is impracticable to make the existing principal entrance or any other appropriate existing entrance suitable for use by particular groups of people, or to provide a new entrance which is suitable, the Access Statement should state why it is not practicable to adjust the existing entrance or provide a suitable new entrance.

**0.27** If, in the case of an extension, it is not intended to provide a fully compliant independent access, and the Limit on Application of Requirement M3 does not apply, the Access Statement should state why a fully compliant independent access is not considered reasonably practicable.

**0.28** Further guidance on Access Statements, from inception of a project to the building in use, is expected to be published by the Disability Rights Commission and will be available on the DRC web site at <http://www.drc-gb.org>.

(Note: as of April 2004 this has not yet been published)

see also

**Office of the Deputy Prime Minister**

*ODPM Circular 11/2003*

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister

Portland House, Stag Place, London, SW1E 5LP

5 November 2003

**The Building Act 1984**

**The Building (Amendment) Regulations 2003**

**New Part M in Schedule 1 to the Building Regulations 2000**

**Other amendments to the Building Regulations 2000**

**New Approved Document giving guidance on Part M (Access to and use of buildings)**

Which gives guidance on timing and changes related to AD Part M 2004

## 4.2 The Use of Access Statements

For all new development and refurbishment projects, the project team shall adopt the principles of the inclusive environment throughout the project's life and shall prepare for each project an access statement.

The access statement shall be more than just a statement that Part M of the Building Regulations and British Standards have been complied with. It should explain how the needs of disabled people and everyone else are incorporated into the general design and

arrangements of the scheme, and how the principle of inclusive design have been implemented into the scheme. The access statement should commence at the project brief stage as an expression of the Organisations intent, and expand as the project develops to encompass planning, design, management and maintenance requirements. The access statement will be used to demonstrate to the various statutory control mechanisms that the Organisation has fully considered access requirements and how it shall meet them and that it recognises its legal duties.

## **5 Content of Access Statements**

The following summarises the main items to be considered when producing an access statement. The scope and detail of the content will vary with the type of building and it's intended users, The standard of guidance which is used as the basis for each item should be indicated in the commentary.

### **5.1 Construction Temporary Provisions**

Where a project will have an impact on the surrounding public walkway and carriageway the statement should include

- Scaffolding which obstructs or spans walkway or road
- Excavations which obstruct the passage of pedestrians or traffic
- Temporary entrance to the site

### **5.2 External Environment**

The external environment is the area outside of the property and its grounds. Consideration should be given to the main routes to and from other facilities and public transport within the site including pathways, obstacles, lighting, signage etc.

### **5.3 Approach to Building**

The approach to the building is the area of land within the curtilage of the property, from the boundary of the site up to the building itself. Consideration should be given to the construction of the pathways and use of various surface materials, dropped kerbs, tactile paving, parking and drop off points.

### **5.4 Entrances**

Entrances should be located in a logical relationship to the accessible routes that serve it. Consideration should be given to signage, lighting, contrast etc. Ideally automated entrance doors should be provided. Where security is required to prevent unwanted access, means of access should be located in a position suitable to all users. Where required reception areas should be strategically

positioned in clear view of the entrance door, well signed and easily identifiable.

## 5.5 Internal Design and Layout

The layout and design of internal spaces should take into account access through or to such areas as:

Corridors	Stairs	Ramps
Handrails	Lifts	Offices
Meeting rooms, class rooms and lecture theatres	Workshops, Sales floors	Accessible WC's Wheelchair and ambulant
Surfaces walking & working	Furnishings and Fittings Seating, tables, service counters	Colour Tonal and Contrast
Alarms and Evacuation	Signage	Lighting
Entrances	Routes to the site	Exits

## 5.6 Emergency Egress

An accessible environment is one in which people not only enter and use safely but one which they can reach a place of safety in the event of an emergency.

Consideration shall be given to the provision of evacuation lifts. Refuge areas should be provided throughout as a back up system regardless of whether or not the lifts meet BS 5588: Part 5 and BS9999.

This has become especially important to designers and building managers since the prosecution of two building managers for 'manslaughter' in 2004 due to lack of provision for evacuating people with disabilities.

Building designers and managers need to consider all types of emergency not just fire. Other hazards such as Risk of Flooding or mud slides, Gas Leaks, on site chemicals, explosions, bomb threats, all need to be addressed in the emergency planning for the building. See 'Emergency Evacuation Provisions' above.

## 5.7 Technology

The use of technology to assist the visually impaired and hearing impaired should be considered including such items as:

- a) Talking information systems
- b) Electronic orientation systems
- c) Induction loops and infrared systems
- d) Audio description devices
- e) Textphones and minicomms
- f) Visual, auditory and Vibrating alarms or pagers)

## 5.8 Companion Dogs

Dogs are widely used by people with a variety of disabilities, e.g.

- Assistance dogs used for fetching and carrying by people with manipulative and ambulatory impairments,
- Guide dogs for visually impaired and blind people,
- Hearing dogs used by people with low hearing and those who are profoundly deaf.

Certain types of business such as

- Hotels,
- Places of Entertainment,
- Schools,
- Shopping Complexes
- Sports Facilities

Need to assess whether they should provide a sanitary facility for these essential animals.

## 5.9 Conclusion

This guidance note has been produced to demonstrate the Organisation's commitment to ensuring that the estate is both open and accessible to all. It is not in itself specific to any one development, requiring that an access statement is prepared for each refurbishment and development project. This should on larger schemes entail the appointment of an access consultant and on smaller schemes be prepared by the Organisation's own staff or consultants.

## 6 Essential Supporting Data

### 6.1 Drawings

#### 6.1.1 All Applications

Plot plan – showing elevations on the site and the related road and walkways, parking and access route

Floor Plan – showing door and corridor widths and room sizes.

#### 6.1.2 Larger and public Buildings

Evacuation Routes and Refuge dimensions and provisions

#### 6.1.3 Information

A. the name, address and contact for the person making the approval where they are using self approvals or using an approved inspector

B. then name address of the designer and constructor

C. the risk assessment for evacuation and the related provisions

#### 6.1.4 Materials

All projects Outdoor Paving and walkway materials.

Care needs to be taken when selecting materials colour, acoustics, texture all need to be considered individually and in combination. Some considerations are

- Sound reverberation – echo's low and high pitched can affect many people with hearing impairments
- Sound or texture clue to changes – i.e. a smooth, crisp sounding walkway giving way to a carpeted seating or waiting area

## 7 Statement Detail

### 7.1 Approval system

While constructors and building operators are required to comply with the accessibility approvals system, obtaining 'Approval' does not imply that the design is safe or is in full compliance with regulation. The building designer and owner retain full responsibility for complying with all relevant Laws, Rules, Regulations, Construction and Operation Standards.

#### 7.1.1 Local Authority

The Local Authority is responsible for appointing a competent person to review accessibility issues related to any planning application.

The Local Authority has the right to reject any application, even if approved by a contractor's 'Approved Inspector', if the design does not comply with the required access and evacuation standards.

#### 7.1.2 Independent Third Party Assessment

The Local Authority should agree and appoint a competent independent reviewer or organisation to audit all Planning Applications Accessibility and Evacuation.

This may be a paid person or company or voluntary person or organisation (e.g. Local Access Group if they have suitably knowledgeable members. Not all groups have members with the range of experience or knowledge necessary to make objective comments and audits.) with sufficient knowledge and understanding of the subject.

### 7.2 Basic Content

All project statements should identify

- Project/Building Owner contact details
- Architect or Agent contact details
- Main Contractor name (contact should be via the Agent)
- Project/Building street address

- Project Type – e.g. Out of Town Hypermarket, Shopping Mall, Corner Shop, Theatre/Cinema, Railway Station, Sheltered Housing Complex, Town House, Bungalow. Etc.
- Emergency Evacuation and Safe Escape
- Topography of location

### 7.3 Larger Projects

- Access to public services, parking and drop zones
- Route and access to the site and building
- Signage and lighting on approach
- Main Entry, Lobby, Enunciator
- Indoor flooring, walls and related colour and materials
- Signage, and Wayfinding
- Lighting as related to area usage
- Door and door furniture design
- Staircase design, materials and colours etc.
- Lifts and elevator designs
- Fittings and Fixtures,
- Air Conditioning
- Toilet and related provisions –(changing rooms, baby changing, showers etc.)
- Emergency Philosophy, Plans, Refuges, Signage, Alarms, Routes, Staircases, Lifts, Lighting, Equipment, Staff Training.

Hospitals and Schools or similar projects need to refer to the particular regulations which apply to these projects.

Sports Stadiums and similar have their own design rules and requirements see Sport England website for information

<http://www.sportenglandpublications.org.uk>

the download is free but is a 2002 document so should be checked against part M 2004 and part B 2000/2002 and BS9999

Note: large projects may consider placing their toilets near a main entrance in order to provide facilities which are opened to the public. An approach to the local authority for a reduction in Commercial Rates could be made to help offset the cost of public access; the lack of public toilets is one of the major reasons many people avoid leaving the house. Incontinence affects 20%+ of the population and many avoid travel or visiting shopping and entertainment areas where there are few or no facilities.

### 7.4 Smaller projects

On smaller projects the detail in which the statement needs to be described is less complex, however the public access consideration for a Public House or small Shop may need to include much of the detail a larger project must include.

## 7.5 Mobility Provisions

All developments need to assess their access in the light of potential users. Increasingly larger powered wheelchairs, electric mobility scooters and other vehicles are being used by people to improve their mobility. The basic design dimensions given in Part M and BS8300 are suitable for a manual wheelchair, lengths and turning circles for other mobility vehicles are often greater than those of the manual wheelchair.

Cycling is being encouraged and provision for these vehicles needs to be considered.

Designers and building operators need to assess their project and it's potential users making suitable changes to design to meet the needs of mobility vehicle riders.

## 7.6 New Housing Developments

### 7.6.1 Estates and multiple

Site layout and elevations

Access to public transport and pedestrian routes

Traffic calming

### 7.6.2 Single Properties

Note1: main floor is the floor where visitors can be expected to spend time.

Note2: housing is preferred to meet life times homes standards. It is expected that this requirement will be included in the 2004 review of Part M

Site elevations and local routes

Distance to bus, train stations and local shopping and facilities

Pedestrian Access from street to main entry

Access from car drive/port or garage to main entry, plus relevant dimensions

Accessible entry

Accessible toilet on main floor

Main floor accessible

Interior door and corridor widths on main floor

### 7.6.3 Flats and multiple occupation

Note1: common shared and serviced areas should comply with Part B and M

Note2: housing is preferred to meet life times homes standards. It is expected that this requirement will be included in the 2004 review of Part M

Site elevations and local routes

Distance to bus, train stations and local shopping and facilities

Pedestrian Access from street to main entry  
Access from car drive/port or garage to main entry  
Accessible entry  
Accessible lift,  
Stair cases  
Accessible toilet, bathing facilities  
Interior door and corridor widths  
Emergency evacuation plans and provisions

#### **7.6.4 Buildings multiple occupation (conversions)**

Emergency evacuation plans and provisions

#### **7.7 Extensions and Refurbishment**

Any building extension or refurbishment should not lower the standard of accessibility of the existing structure.

xxxxx

#### **7.8 Sheltered Accommodation Complexes**

Accessible pedestrian routes  
Accessibility Distance to bus, train stations and local shopping and facilities  
Drop off point  
Car parking  
Main entry, stairs, lifts  
Accessible bath/shower and toilet facilities  
Door and corridor widths  
Kitchen design  
Access to shared facilities  
Panic and assistance calls and services  
Detailed emergency provisions, evacuation provisions and plans

#### **7.9 Health and Care**

Statements which belong to Health Care premises should provide detailed information related to the evacuation of employees, residents/patients and visitors.

##### **7.9.1 Residential & Nursing Homes and similar**

Accessible pedestrian routes  
Accessibility Distance to bus, train stations and local shopping and facilities  
Drop off point  
Car parking  
Access to building – entry, lobby, waiting area, service counter  
Corridor widths, with provision for additional seating where this can be expected  
Door widths to consulting, examination and treatment rooms (including provision for moving beds etc. between bedrooms and

other locations in the building including to bathroom where applicable)  
Seating, examination couch, treatment bed, etc. types and adjustments as applicable  
Colour schemes, surfacing and finishes to floors, indoors and outdoors.  
Residents kitchenette and laundrette facilities (where applicable)  
Bath, shower room design  
Residents lounge and dining areas  
Access to garden, patio areas  
Detailed emergency provisions, evacuation provisions and plans

### 7.9.2 Health Care – GP and Dental Surgeries

Accessible pedestrian routes  
Accessibility to bus and train etc.  
Drop off point  
Car parking provisions  
Signage (including style and content), lighting  
Access to building – entry, lobby, waiting area, service counter  
Corridor widths, with provision for additional seating where this can be expected  
Door widths to consulting, examination and treatment rooms (including provision for moving beds etc.)  
Seating, examination couch, treatment bed, etc. types and adjustments as applicable  
Colour schemes, surfacing and finishes to floors, indoors and outdoors.  
Staff and public toilets and wash facilities  
Emergency provisions and plans

### 7.9.3 Hospitals

These should follow the Department of Health design criteria

See website – <http://www.dh.gov.uk/Home/fs/en>

#### **Example content of Statement**

Site layout and floor layouts  
Accessible pedestrian routes  
Accessibility of bus, train, tram etc. (including sheltered waiting)  
Accessibility of drop off point  
Signage along routes from main roads, and public transport stops.  
Entrance design  
Colour schemes and lighting  
Reception  
Signage and wayfinding (outdoor and indoor) (Note: avoid using specialist terms e.g. ophthalmic, etc. use of standard symbols)

Common Public toilet and changing facilities, including unisex toilet, changing and baby feeding  
Lift design  
Stair designs (Note: open plan stairs should never be used including for main staircases or evacuation routes)  
Waiting area  
Cafeteria area  
Ward and facilities design where special fittings are required e.g. where there are fractures or other mobility impediments what provisions have been made.  
Outpatients design and facilities  
Emergency provisions and plans

For further information see the department of health website - <http://www.dh.gov.uk/Home/fs/en>

## **7.10 Shopping**

See BS5588 and 9999

### **7.10.1 Shopping Malls/Centres**

Site layout and floor layouts  
Accessible pedestrian routes  
Accessibility of bus, train, tram etc. (including sheltered waiting)  
Accessibility of drop off point  
Signage along routes from main roads, and public transport stops.  
Signage within building  
Standards with which occupiers must comply

Emergency provisions, evacuation plans and guidance to operators

### **7.10.2 Out of town shopping**

Site layout and floor layouts  
Accessible pedestrian routes  
Accessibility of bus, train, tram etc. (including sheltered waiting)  
Accessibility of drop off point  
Signage along routes from main roads, and public transport stops.  
Alternative service arrangements (e.g. free home delivery)

Emergency provisions, evacuation plans and guidance to operators

### **7.10.3 Large shops (multi-floor/department)**

Site layout and floor layouts

Accessible pedestrian routes  
Accessibility of bus, train, tram etc. (including sheltered waiting)  
Accessibility of drop off point  
Signage along routes from main roads, and public transport stops.  
Alternative service arrangements (e.g. free home delivery)  
Entrance design  
Colour and lighting  
Service counter and display design  
Emergency evacuation plans and guidance to operators

#### **7.10.4 Small Shops (lock-ups)**

Site elevations  
Accessible pedestrian routes  
Accessibility to bus, train, tram etc  
Entrance design  
Colour schemes  
Service and display design  
Provision for low hearing  
Alternative service arrangements (e.g. free home delivery)

### **7.11 Places of Entertainment**

#### **7.11.1 Public Houses**

Site elevations  
Accessible pedestrian routes  
Accessibility to bus, train, tram etc  
Entrance design  
Seating area design  
Service counter design  
Lighting and hearing impairment provisions  
Toilet and wash provisions  
Emergency provisions and guidance to manager/operators

#### **7.11.2 Café & Restaurant**

Site elevations  
Accessible pedestrian routes  
Accessibility to bus, train, tram etc  
Entrance design  
Seating area design  
Service counter design  
Self service areas, display, drink dispensers, railed area width, pay-point, etc.  
Alternate service for people who cannot carry the tray etc.  
Alternate crockery, cutlery, etc. provisions.  
Lighting and hearing impairment provisions  
Toilet and wash provisions  
Emergency provisions and guidance to manager/operators

### **7.11.3 Theatre & Cinema etc.**

Site layout and floor layouts  
Accessible pedestrian routes  
Accessibility of bus, train, tram etc. (including sheltered waiting)  
Accessibility of drop off point  
Signage along routes from main roads, and public transport stops.  
Entrance, Foyer, information and service desk design  
Waiting area design and seating  
Lighting in all areas  
Stairs and lifts  
Alternate seating arrangements and provisions  
Accessibility of dressing rooms etc.  
Bars and food service areas should comply with the relevant section above.

Emergency evacuation plans and guidance to managers

### **7.11.4 Sports Arenas**

See Sport England website - <http://www.sportengland.org>  
And  
Disability Sport England - <http://www.disabilitysport.org.uk>  
Where detailed guidance for sporting facilities are given.

Site layout and floor layouts  
Accessible pedestrian routes  
Accessibility of bus, train, tram etc. (including sheltered waiting)  
Accessibility of drop off point  
Signage along routes from main roads, and public transport stops.  
Ticket box and entry gate design  
Wayfinding - Signage, lighting, colour and textual guidance  
Seating provisions  
Lifts, escalators, ramps and stair design  
Sanitary facilities (public)  
Changing rooms, practice rooms, sanitary facilities etc. for teams and others.  
Audio visual aids  
Shopping Malls, bars, food service etc. in the arena complex should comply with the relevant sections above.  
Emergency evacuation plans and guidance to managers

#### **7.11.4.1 Other Sport facilities**

Site layout and floor layouts  
Accessible pedestrian routes  
Accessibility of bus, train, tram etc. (including sheltered waiting)  
Accessibility of drop off point

Signage along routes from main roads, and public transport stops.  
Lighting,  
Sanitary and changing facilities  
Spectator seating and routes  
Emergency evacuation plans and guidance to managers

### **7.11.5 Marinas and Boating**

Site layout and floor layouts  
Accessible pedestrian routes  
Accessibility of bus, train, tram etc. (including sheltered waiting)  
Accessibility of drop off point  
Accessible parking  
Signage along routes from main roads, and public transport stops.  
Club house facilities,  
Accessible sanitary, changing, shower, etc. facilities,  
On site routes including safety and rest provisions,  
Remote waiting areas,  
Workshop designs,  
Accessible berthing provisions, including hoists,  
Accessible vessels for hire,  
Accessible passenger vessel design  
Café, bar, shopping should meet the same criteria as shown above.  
Sanitary facilities – toilet blocks changing, shower/bathing, including at remote areas

Emergency equipment and planning, evacuation rescue planning, for all areas.

## **8 Accommodation**

### **8.1 Hotels**

Site layout and floor layouts  
Accessible pedestrian routes  
Accessibility of bus, train, tram etc. (including sheltered waiting)  
Accessibility of drop off point  
Signage along routes from main roads, and public transport stops.  
Entrance call system  
Entrance, Foyer, information and service desk design and equipment e.g. hearing loop,  
Porter etc. service,  
Waiting area design and seating  
Lighting in all areas  
Stairs and lifts

Café, bar, shopping should meet the same criteria as shown above.  
Standard and accessible bedrooms, including en-suite facilities, fittings and fixtures  
Shared facilities e.g. toilets, shower/bathroom, kitchenette, laundrette,  
Other facilities e.g. health suites, sauna, games rooms,  
Waste disposal arrangements  
Outdoor garden design,  
Emergency provisions and equipment, evacuation plans, signage, lighting, routes and stairs.

## 8.2 Boarding Houses

Site layout and floor layouts  
Accessible pedestrian routes  
Accessibility of bus, train, tram etc. (including sheltered waiting)  
Accessibility of drop off point  
Signage along routes from main roads, and public transport stops.  
Entrance call system, key arrangements,  
Entrance, Foyer, information and service desk design  
Waiting area design and seating,  
Common lounges, dining room,  
Lighting in all areas  
Stairs and lifts  
Standard and accessible bedrooms, including en-suite facilities, fittings and fixtures  
Shared facilities e.g. toilets, shower/bathroom, kitchenette, laundrette,  
Waste disposal arrangements  
Emergency provisions and equipment, evacuation plans, signage, lighting, routes and stairs.

## 8.3 Tenting, Caravans and Mobile Homes Sites

Site layout and floor layouts  
Accessible pedestrian routes  
Accessibility of bus, train, tram etc. (including sheltered waiting)  
Accessibility of drop off point  
Signage along routes from main roads, and public transport stops.  
Entrance, Foyer, information and service desk design  
Waiting area design and seating  
Lighting in all areas  
Vehicle and pedestrian access on site, routes, lighting, signage  
Café, bar, shopping should meet the same criteria as shown above.  
Sanitary facilities – toilet blocks changing, shower/bathing, laundrette,

Site, site buildings and fixed caravan emergency arrangement and equipment, evacuation planning.

## 8.4 Bunking and Bunkhouses

This section only deals with buildings which are intended for permanent or long term bunking.

Site layout and floor layouts

Accessible pedestrian routes

Accessibility of bus, train, tram etc. (including sheltered waiting)

Accessibility of drop off point

Signage along routes from main roads, and public transport stops.

Entrance, Foyer, information and service desk design

Waiting area design and seating

Lighting in all areas

Toilet, changing, shower/bathroom,

Dining, kitchenette, laundrette

Emergency equipment, plans, signage, routes, etc.

## 9 Reference

Building Regulations Part M 2004 – Access to Buildings  
Part B 2000– Fire Safety the European

Amendments 2002 should also be consulted.

These are available on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website [www.odpm.gov.uk](http://www.odpm.gov.uk) under Building Regulations and may be freely downloaded.

British Standards can be found on the British Standards website but are often expensive

Continence

Information can be found on <http://www.aca.uk.com>

The Association for Continence Advice website

Or

<http://www.continence-foundation.org.uk>

Joseph Rowntree Foundation

<http://www.jrf.org.uk/housingandcare/lifetimehomes/partmandlth.asp>

Habinteg

<http://www.habinteg.org.uk/>

## Appendix A Definitions

The following meanings apply to terms throughout this Document.

**Access**, approach, entry or exit.

**Accessible**, with respect to buildings or parts of buildings, means that people, regardless of disability, age or gender, are able to gain access.

**Contrast visually**, when used to indicate the visual perception of one element of the building, or fitting within the building, against another means that the difference in light reflectance value between the two surfaces is greater than 30 points. For further information, reference should be made to 'Colour, contrast and perception - Design guidance for internal built environments' - Reading University).

**Dwelling** means a house or a flat ("flat" is defined in regulation 2(1)). However, new blocks of flats built as student accommodation are to be treated as though they are hotel/motel accommodation in respect of space

requirements and internal facilities (see ADM 4.17 to 4.24).

**Level**, with respect to the surfaces of a level approach, access routes and landings associated with steps, stairs and ramps means predominantly level, but with a maximum gradient along the direction of travel of 1:60.

Gradients fall into the following categories

<=1:60 level ground

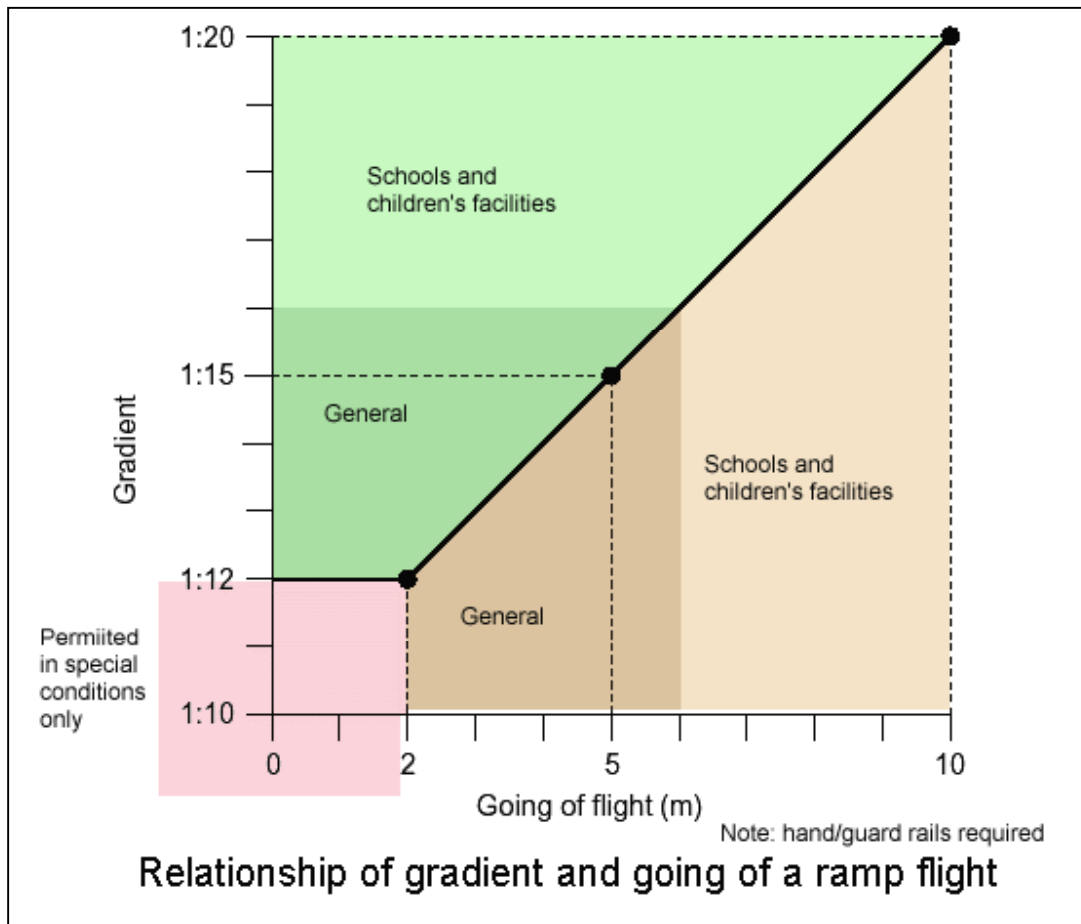
>1:60 <=1:40 inclined as specified for drainage crossfalls

>1:40 <1;20 Inclined

>1:20 <1:15 gentle slope, used for ramped access in schools and is preferred for all other ramps. Level resting places required at specified intervals.

>1:15 < =1:12 steep slop, used for short sections of ramp with more frequent level resting places.

>1:12 should not be used on accessible routes.



**Principal entrance**, the entrance which a visitor not familiar with the building would normally expect to approach.

**Suitable**, with respect to means of access and facilities, means that they are designed for use by people regardless of disability, age or gender, but subject to the usual gender-related conventions regarding sanitary accommodation.

**Usable**, with respect to buildings or parts of buildings means that they are convenient for independent use.

The following meanings apply only to terms used in the sections on dwellings in this Document.

**Common**, serving more than one dwelling.

**Habitable room**, for the purpose of defining the principal storey, means a room used, or intended to be used, for dwelling purposes, including a kitchen but not a bathroom or a utility room.

**Maisonette**, a self-contained dwelling, but not a dwelling-house, which occupies more than one storey in a building.

**Point of access**, the point at which a person visiting a dwelling would normally alight from a vehicle which may be within or outside the plot, prior to approaching the dwelling.

**Principal entrance**, the entrance which a visitor not familiar with the dwelling would normally expect to approach or the common entrance to a block of flats.

**Plot gradient**, the gradient measured between the finished floor level of the dwelling and the point of access.

**Steeply sloping plot**, a plot gradient of more than 1 in 15.