

# Disability Access Assessment

The Campus, Highlands Road,  
Weston-super-Mare

7<sup>th</sup> December 2017.

## Introduction

This survey was undertaken using floorplans supplied by The Campus and took the form of a physical visit to the site. The areas that were assessed are marked in red.

The operation and running of The Campus is subject to the Equality Act 2010 and in particular, the Public Sector Equality Duty which has a specific set of requirements for the council services operating from the building.

The guidance term “accessible” is used in this report where the feature referred to complies with the standards found in:

- British Standard BS8300:-1:2018 Design of an accessible and inclusive built environment Part 1: External environment – Code of practice.
- British Standard BS8300: - 2:2018 Design of an accessible and inclusive built environment Part 2: Buildings – Code of practice

Information on the Actions is in Appendix one. Other relevant physical design standards and guidance are listed in Appendix two and can all be found on the council access website [TheAccessOfficer.](#)

## External areas

The building sits within its own plot and has on site car parking and drop off space with a large open forecourt.

### Car parking

Adequate car parking is provided for disabled people in close proximity to the entrance. The bays comply with the required layout standards for parking for disabled people.

There is an accessible route from the bays to the nearby footway with a dropped kerb marked in white. The pathway across the vehicle route is marked out in a zebra crossing style.

The bollards protecting the route are concrete and do not contrast with the surrounding footway. They should be provided with a yellow coloured band at least 150mm wide around the top.

There is a need to maintain a level of enforcement for these bays to avoid their misuse by able people given the proximity of the centre to the local shops and services and the variety of services offered at the Campus.

The collection and drop off of children at the neighbouring schools dominates the car parking area outside the building given the number of minibuses and cars.

## Actions

Need to highlight bollards.

Monitor usage of bays.

## Pedestrian access to the site

The large open forecourt is evenly paved overall and readily accessible for mobility impaired people.

A number of trees are placed around the perimeter of the forecourt which are not distinguished by tree grills or any other paving. More concrete bollards have been placed at the crossing point over Highlands Lane. Again, these have no distinguishing features or manifestation.

The open character of the forecourt, with no distinguishing textures or features, could create difficulties for visually impaired people finding their way into the building. For visually impaired people approaching from the shopping centre and using the crossing there is the tactile paving and shore line created by the hedge. When the area is busy this may create difficulties if there is only one reference point. The bike racks may cause an obstruction with bikes protruding into a visually impaired person's route.

The bins should be moved over as they potentially lie in a disabled person's path.

The route across the frontage of the building from the schools also is obstructed near the building entrance by bikes.

Unfortunately, the lighting in the forecourt surface does not contribute to the wayfinding around the building.

The route from Bransby Way is highlighted by worn yellow dots and footprints. Again, the route along Bransby Way is marked by boundary hedges with a clear cue point as to where the route along the frontage lies. However, the yellow markers are not readily identifiable due to their size and the paint fading. There is a need for tactile paving to provide an outer shoreline along the front of the building. The raised pedestrian platform on Bransby Way offers a good crossing point for many disabled people, but lacks any tactile paving to enable visually impaired people to locate it. The surrounding paving and footway relies on the proximity of a lamp column and a grass verge to identify its location.

## Interior

### Main entrance

The entrance has automatic doors with a lobby which have a 1.5m clear opening width, arranged in a drum design. The doors and façade are glazed from ground level to ceiling with a dark brown frame. Overall, they are acceptable, but the manifestation on the door glazing should be improved. It must

## Actions

Need to highlight bollards with coloured band around the top at least 150mm wide.

Forecourt area should be reviewed and wayfinding improved.

Move bins to new location.

Highlight or move.

Note.

Assess as a part of general forecourt wayfinding review, see above.

Apply coloured manifestation.

have two coloured bands, each one at least 150mm wide and located at heights of 1050mm and 1500mm.

The panic “Stop button” is prominent and located at a height of 1050mm.

The glazed screens on either side are protected by furniture and plants.

The flooring by the main entrance is blue and clearly contrasts with the rest of the interior which is a wood laminate design. The entrance is generally accessible though it lacks any tactile definition, e.g. soft floor covering to enable visually impaired people to locate the door easily.

### Layout of public space

The space and furniture is generally well laid out with furniture contrasting well with the walls and floors. There is adequate contrast between the walls and floors, particularly with the use of a dark skirting board and also the doors within the walls.

Some of the chairs should be provided with armrests.

There are no adjustable height desks.

Speakers are provided throughout the building for the public address system, but no visual readout or display is provided as an alternative for sensory impaired people.

### Vertical circulation

#### Lift

The lift is of minimum floor size and is capable of accommodating most wheelchairs and some scooters. A key issue though is that any first floor meeting involving a number of people needing to use the lift will result in a very restricted standard of access.

The door has a minimum clear opening width of 800mm which is the minimum size required. It makes audible announcements.

The control panel is uniformly coloured grey. The alarm call button is at the top of the control panel, 1100mm high from the floor. It is near the top of the recommended reach range and so will be difficult for some disabled people to operate.

The lift is not fire rated and its use poses issues for the means of escape for disabled people from the upper floor, see below.

### Actions

Need to main protection provided by furniture, etc.

Consider improving wayfinding on ground floor.

Improve furniture and provide adjustable height desks.

Need visual display.

Note.

Note.

Address as part of fire risk.

The call buttons are located 1m high on the wall outside the lift, well within the reach requirements, but they have no colour contrast.

The landing on the first floor is 1500 mm deep and uses up the full width of the walkway between rooms at first floor level. Mobility impaired people waiting to use the lift could block the walkway. (At ground floor level it is located in the open entrance door area and has adequate waiting space).

### Stairs

The door to the upper floor is heavy and difficult for some people to open. If there is no opportunity to ease the door closer and make it easier to open then consideration should be given to some form of powered opener.

The door has been constructed with a dark grey frame which whilst it contrasts with the floor is not identifiable within the whole glazed frame enclosing the stairwell. There is a need to consider providing a false contrasting coloured architrave or strip around the door frame. The door handle is identifiable and of a suitable size and height. The glazing should be provided with manifestation to the same specification as in the paragraph describing the main entrance above.

Look at easing force needed to open door or consider automatic opening.

The manifestation should be improved, again as commented on above.

### Reception and Food Counter

The main reception desk, serving visitors and library users, has a desk height of 770mm and a recess underneath 500mm deep. It is an even, uncluttered colour. The food counter is the same height, but lacks the recess. It has a projecting 200mm deep shelf which is workable for the transactions currently undertaken.

The reception desk lacks an induction loop for hearing impaired people which needs to be resolved. Previously, it was stated that a portable one was available.

### Public space computers

These are all on desks 1100mm high and all of the computers have a standard keyboard, mouse etc. None of the desks are adjustable. There were no signs offering alternative equipment.

### Actions

Add contrast around buttons.

Note.

Consider powered opening mechanism.

Add coloured manifestation.

Improve opening.

Improve manifestation.

Note.

Provide induction loop.

Provide adjustable height desk and assistive hardware

## Vending machines

These are generally inaccessible for many disabled people having all the features at unacceptable heights, difficult to identify, or too heavily sprung features.

## Ground floor toilets

Approach and lobby area outside toilets is wide and provides plenty of space. Unfortunately, this is used as a storage area with the potential for obstructions for disabled people.

## Disabled person's toilet

This is generally acceptable apart from the use of the space for a baby changing facility. This should be found an alternative location as it compromises the use of the toilet by disabled people if it occupied by able people changing babies. A specialist separate accessible space must be found, particularly in a building of this size.

The door closer should be removed as this is an obstruction for many disabled people and replaced with self-closing hinges which are easier to operate and will assist a disabled person when seeking to open and close the door.

The standard design alarm cord that has been fitted is often ineffective for many disabled people, located as it is to one side of the cubicle. Such a position would not be of any assistance to a disabled person nearer the door or anywhere on the other side of the cubicle. Consideration should be given to installing a cord around the perimeter of the cubicle located, approximately, 100mm above the floor level.

## Single sex toilets

These are generally unsuitable for many disabled people lacking in space and having a heavy door closer on the entrance.

A parent or carer wishing to assist a child of same sex would have difficulty in the space available.

## Library

The library entrance security barriers are an acceptable width apart, but the ends are thin and pale in colour. They are difficult to distinguish against the background of the library and need to be highlighted with a bright contrasting colour, as at other libraries.

## Actions

Replace machines. Put interim notice on machine offering staff assistance.

Address storage issues.

Move baby changing facility to own specific area.

Change door closer.

Review.

Note.

Add manifestation.

The equipment for borrowing books etc., is the standard type offered at other libraries. It requires some disabled people to be provided with assistance.

The shelving is all in clear blocks and easy to use. The aisle widths measure between 1300mm and 1750mm and should be maintained at these widths to allow space for all users. Areas with pinch points of 1m wide should be looked at again. Signage for finding books is clear.

The computers are located on pale, grey desks with a uniform surface and no patterned surface. The chairs have armrests and brightly coloured backs. There are no adjustable height desks, or an alternative mouse or keyboard with large keys and more simple style layout. A fixed raised bench is available, measuring 1100mm high.

The children's area has appropriate low furniture, but this could be a hazard for visually impaired people. It is multi coloured and easier to identify.

The library does not appear to have a portable induction loop.

## Upper floor

The walkway around the atrium is 1500mm wide and adequate to allow people to pass, but it is less than the required 1800mm width found in the BS 8300-2:2018. The lobby areas to each of the recessed conference room entrances provides passing space to make the reduced width workable.

The walkway has both a lower and upper, contrasting yellow handrail to assist mobility impaired people. The walls and floor adequately contrast and the areas are well lit.

The light switches are located at a height of 1200mm which is at the top of the recommended reach range and likely to cause problems for some disabled people.

## Actions

Note.

Improve desks, hardware and seating.

Need for an induction loop system.

Note.

Note.

## Signage

The signs on the conference doors are very effective, but some of the other signs, whilst having suitable sized lettering, are extremely reflective due to the lighting levels.

## Conference rooms – first floor

These are generally well laid out and offer flexible space with accessible electrical controls including the lights switches which are set at 1050mm above the floor level.

The rooms do not have induction loops for hearing impaired people.

The room doors are large, but relatively easy to open and are acceptable. The purple and white style of the room signs is clear and legible

## First floor toilets

The single sex toilets are constrained and lack space. The entrance door is only 750mm wide and made hard to open by the closer mechanism. The toilet cubicles and the area for the urinals is very limited.

The disabled person's toilet is incorrectly laid out. A vertical handrail alongside the sink should be horizontal and positioned next to the toilet to assist people to stand. A large toilet paper unit has been fitted alongside the toilet which could obstruct the correct location of some missing handrails. (See above British Standard). It contains a fold down baby changing unit which is not acceptable. This should be in a separate space so as to ensure the toilet facility is freely available for disabled people.

The alarm is lost in the corner and is practically unusable except in limited circumstances. It should be located slightly forward of the toilet pan to meet the standard.

All the toilets provide good visual contrast between the fittings and walls and the walls and floors for visually impaired people.

## Office

The office is relatively cramped with three people using it. It has a clear central floor space, but would be difficult for anyone with a wheelchair or walking aids to use easily.

## Means of escape

Reference is made to the council Health and Safety Team Fire Risk Assessment and the recommendations relating to provision for disabled people.

## Actions

Bring all signage up to required standards.

Provide an induction loop system

Note all issues with toilets and seek to improve features where possible within scope of space.

Move to baby changing facility to a separate area.

Move alarm. Note comments on ground floor toilet for disabled people.

Note.

Address listed issues.



## Staff training

General disability awareness training should be provided for all staff, including dementia awareness through the free Dementia Friends

## Children's Centre

### Entrance and reception

The Centre has a large sliding automatic entrance door which provides immediate access into a storage area for prams and bags etc. The door has good coloured manifestation whereas the glass panels have only grey manifestation which does not work well. The addition of a large poster makes the glazing identifiable.

The door operation control is not clear, being narrow and silver in colour and located on the door frame. This is in the form of a push panel which is located at a height of 1100mm which is at the top of the height range for many disabled people.

The immediate lobby area has a cloak rack and waiting area. Space is needed for wheelchair users and carers buggies.

### Reception – office area

The reception point is a simple window in the corridor wall accessing the office area behind. The lower limit of the window is 730 mm from the floor level and a shelf is provided for visitors use. The glass window does not have any manifestation. There is no call button etc. A desk is located in the office abutting the window.

The office area contains a number of desks and is relatively cluttered, but has scope to be accessible. Currently there is a 1m wide aisle between desks.

### Circulation areas

The main corridor is 1500mm wide and generally free of any obstructions. There is good colour and tonal contrast between floors, walls and the doors.

All rooms and spaces have electrical sockets at a height of 500mm from the floor and other switches etc., set a height of approximately 1100mm.

The doors to rooms all have a clear opening widths of 850mm which is narrowed by finger protectors. All doors have lever handles.

## Actions

Review staff training and book time.

Note.

Look at highlighting control.

Note. Remove one chair to create space.

Note.

Note.

## Kitchen

The units and work surfaces are all at standard heights and in a standard layout. There is no manifestation to the external door except for the door lock signs.

## Hall or play area

The space is open and unrestricted.

The external doors have a clear opening width of 860mm. They have dark grey frames and do not contrast well with the side glazed panels within the façade.

The doors have a 25-30mm high threshold on the outside which will be a barrier to any wheelchair user. The external kitchen door is the same.

## External play area

This is also generally an open and level space. It has raised planting beds, but a grassed area with some play features that may be inaccessible to some children with walking aids. One area is on a raised platform.

External gates to the side road have a clear opening width of 1200mm with a wide pull handle and Yale lock. The pull handle is 1600mm above ground level which would be inaccessible to some disabled people.

## Other issues

There is a need for an induction loop to be available at the reception and also in the main hall or play space. A small portable loop would be acceptable at the reception desk but it's unlikely the same size system would work in the hall. The issue should be investigated by the Centre and provision made that fits the usage of the spaces.

## Actions

Note and be aware of how to improve access by altering units

Provide coloured manifestation to glazing

Put in place ramp to overcome high threshold.

Consider revising space to provide level or ramped access throughout.

Note and consider altering gate mechanism.

Provide an induction loop.

## Appendix one: Recommendations on actions.

There are a number of actions that are a high priority and easy to achieve.

1. The main action for the building is the application of manifestation to glazing and features to improve accessibility primarily for visually impaired people, but also people with a range of other impairment.

It can be achieved by applying acetate film either bought as fairly standard lines or dots or in the form of a graphic design reflecting the building's use.

2. I would also highlight the provision of ramped access to the Children's Centre doors where there is a high threshold.
3. A third issue is the improvement of the vending machine service to either offer staff support or to replace them.
4. Induction loops are needed as an urgent issue at a number of locations.
5. Correct handrails are required in the disabled person's toilet.
6. Undertake disability awareness training for staff including awareness of people living with dementia.

## Appendix two: sources of other design guidance

North Somerset Access Equality Policy, 2013.

This document sets out North Somerset Council's policy for achieving accessible buildings, spaces and transport for everyone. It also addresses the related theme of accessible information. It provides a framework for the Council's decision-making.

Inclusive project management, CABI, 2004.

A detailed practical guide on how to manage a project team in accordance with inclusive design principles, looking at how aims are set project staff are recruited and the management of information during the life of a project.

North Somerset Disability Design Guide, 2013.

Summary of good practice on access for disabled people.

Building dementia friendly communities: A priority for everyone, Alzheimer's Society 2013.

The report sets out a definition of a dementia-friendly community and pinpoints 10 areas to concentrate on for communities working to become dementia friendly.

An alternative age-friendly handbook, Age friendly Manchester, 2014.

This handbook provides practitioners with a series of ideas and concepts around age-friendly practice. Small-scale actions and interventions are identified together with methods for involving older people directly in the design of their environment.

All documents are available on [TheAccessOfficer](#) website.