

Diocese of Arundel & Brighton



ACCESS FOR ALL

SUPPORT PACK

Part 1

Inclusion of all

Meeting the requirements of the law

The Church earnestly desires that all the faithful be led to that full, conscious and active participation in liturgical celebrations called for by the very nature of the liturgy.

Vatican Council II— Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy 1963,14

ACCESS FOR ALL

A SUPPORT PACK

PART 1

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Extra copies of Part 2 of this pack, *The Access Audit* are available from
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FOREWORD

Full, conscious and active participation

I am writing to you to ask you to support another programme from the Diocese. This one may at first seem to be unconnected with the first two, *Preparing Together* and *Gathering Together*, but I would suggest that this is not the case. This programme, *Access for All*, encourages *full, conscious and active participation*, is what it says in the tin, and in some way complements *Gathering Together*.

Current legislation requires that all public buildings are to be adapted for use by people with physical disabilities of any sort, whether that is to do with mobility, sight or hearing. The law says that these things must be in place by October 2004 (or that reasonable provision is made by then). That is not far off.

There are a few important points to be made immediately, however.

The first is that this does not mean that we think straightaway of ramps and disabled toilets. It means something else. It means a change of attitude and a change of language. It means that we have to think differently and raise our awareness of people for whom churches are perhaps not as friendly and welcoming a place as they might be. It's not just a question of how people get into church, but what do they find when they get there that will allow them to play as full and active a part in worship as anybody else.

So this process should not be driven simply by what the law demands. It should be driven by a need to feel that we are an inclusive church community, that nobody should feel disadvantaged because of their physical condition. People with poorer sight should have bigger print to read and better light to read it by. People whose hearing is not so good should know that there is a loop system in the church - and that it is switched on. There are lots of other examples listed in this support pack.

Once again I am very grateful to all who have worked on this project, especially the Pastoral Team and our Finance Office. I encourage you to make use of this material as fully as you can and do all in your power to ensure that none of the riches of our liturgy are denied to people just because of their physical, sensory or learning disability.

With my prayers and best wishes for all parishes and communities.

Bishop Kieran Conry
October 2003

CHANGING ATTITUDES; DEEPENING UNDERSTANDING

'You together are Christ's body; but each of you is a different part of it.'

1 Corinthians 12 : 27

'...The parish is not principally a structure, a territory, or a building, but rather the family of God, a fellowship afire with a unifying spirit, a familial and welcoming home, the community of the faithful...'

Christifidelis Laicii 26

Society is being challenged to recognise the social, cultural and civic rights of people with disabilities as equal members of society, and progressively to remove barriers to the exercising of these rights. This has been the result of campaigning action by pressure groups and individuals, as well as growing social awareness of the need for equality of opportunity for all. New legislation, such as the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, has defined the rights of people with disabilities regarding access to goods, services, facilities and opportunities in employment and education which people without disabilities can take for granted.

In the Church too, a shift in attitude and understanding has begun to take place. There is greater awareness in parishes and dioceses of the importance of access and inclusion of all, although the ways in which practical advice, support and assistance are given vary from diocese to diocese. Many diocesan agencies now engage people with disabilities to help develop the services needed, and the services have a different focus and style. There has been an important shift from "doing things *for*" to "working *with*", empowering people with disabilities to make their own choices and discover and use their gifts for the good of the Church as a whole.

One diocese, for example, employs an Advocacy Development Worker, and in another diocese, Parent Advocate Groups are well established. Some dioceses have specialised services for people with hearing impairment, for people with learning disabilities and for other particular groups, usually located within diocesan agencies which provide care services. In other dioceses, there are advisers who are members of the diocesan religious education team or schools' commission and who work with schools and parishes to help them become more inclusive of, and responsive to, people with disabilities. Some dioceses have a pastoral centre from which services are offered, or which provides a base for particular groups to use.

There are also communities, voluntary organisations and associations which bring together people with disabilities, their families and carers, and others. Some of these are Catholic or Christian in origin, such as L'Arche communities, the Association of Blind Catholics (ABC), the Catholic Deaf Association (CDA), and Church Action on Disability (CHAD). In different ways, they express the mission of the Church to include and uphold the dignity of every person. Many more are for people of all faiths and none. All of these are important self-help groups through which information is circulated, needs are met and solidarity is built up. A number of these groups and agencies are listed later in this support pack.

One sign of change in society is the movement to include children with disabilities in mainstream schools, providing appropriate support, rather than segregating them in specialised institutions. Catholic schools have played their part in this movement, and some have given particular priority to responding to children with special needs. Catholic education, with its emphasis on nurturing individual potential and imbuing tolerance and respect, can take a leading part in making plans for greater inclusion work.

This support pack is for everyone who wants the Church, the body of Christ, to grow through a closer communion of all its members. It offers an exciting and challenging opportunity for renewal based on Christ's love and respect for the individual. It does not assume that its message is only for one audience, because the mission of the Church is common to us all. It identifies people with disabilities as a specific part of the Church only insofar as there is a need for each of us to reach out to one another, and in particular to those who may not have felt included in the past. So, people with disabilities, their families and carers, are encouraged to take their rightful place as equal members of the Church, with gifts to bring to its life and mission. What does this mean in practice?

As an exploration of how the Church can value the gifts and contribution of all its members, this pack has been prepared for all who exercise ministry or leadership in Catholic parishes, schools, chaplaincies, dioceses and other settings: priests, teachers, catechists, youth workers, bishops, advisers and others. Their example can show how our growth as the body of Christ means being an inclusive and enabling Church. By increasing awareness of disability, challenging negative assumptions and taking practical measures to improve access and inclusion (as outlined in later sections of this text), all in leadership can promote a process of renewal in which everyone shares.

Working with other Christian Churches

Other Christian Churches are also working to broaden access and participation of people with disabilities in Church life. Our concerns run parallel to initiatives taken in other denominations, including the following:

- The Baptist Union has an organisation called BUILD, the Baptist Union Initiative with people with Learning Disabilities, and has published a report entitled *Against the Stream*. It has a fund which is used to help local churches provide access facilities for people with disabilities and others who need them.
- The Methodist Church has appointed district advisers to work on issues relating to the access and participation of people with disabilities in Church life.
- The Church of England has a Committee for Ministry among Deaf People which has recently produced a report entitled *The Church among Deaf People*, which explores the involvement of deaf people in worship, lay ministry and other areas of Church life.
- The United Reformed Church has produced a pack entitled *Disability: An Introductory Study Pack for People in the Church*.

The Churches can learn from each other and do much together in this area, locally and nationally. Church Action on Disability attempts to help this process, but progress will depend on people taking initiatives in and through various ecumenical structures so that these concerns become part of the main agenda of the Churches working together, rather than a specialised subject. The main purpose of any ecumenical activity or structure - to build up the wholeness of the body of Christ, finding unity within the differences Christians have - is served in a double way through ecumenical work to ensure that people with disabilities can participate fully in Church life.

What is Disability?

We need a reference point to introduce the practical issues dealt with in Part II of this pack, the response section. In particular, there is a need to be clear that people with disabilities do not form one homogeneous group. So, as we consider the practicalities of access and inclusion, we need to keep a range of disabilities in mind.

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 defines a person as having a disability if they have 'a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on [their] ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.' (Clause 1) In applying the law, the assumption is that 'long-term' means the impairment is permanent or expected to last for at least a year. Unfortunately, the term 'impairment' may carry with it certain negative connotations,

suggesting to some that those who are defined as disabled are imperfect or inferior. In seeking to assert the dignity of each individual, this may be one of the attitudes which the Church has to work to change. There are three main categories of disability the law now obliges us to consider:

PHYSICAL DISABILITIES relate to the body and affect mobility and muscle control. Such disabilities affect the individual's interaction with the environment. They either result from genetic or medical conditions (for example, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, polio) or from accidents or war (for example, paraplegia). Some are progressive, so that the degree of impairment will increase (for example, multiple sclerosis). Others remain relatively stable, with the degree of impairment remaining fairly constant (for example, being born with one hand).

SENSORY DISABILITIES affect people's sense of sight, speech and/or hearing and therefore affect how individuals communicate. They share causes similar to those for physical disabilities. However, many of these disabilities arise from relative, rather than acute or total, impairments. For example, a visual impairment does not mean necessarily that a person is blind, simply that their vision is sufficiently impaired as to make it a disabling factor in their lives.

LEARNING DISABILITIES relate to impaired brain function. This term describes a condition in which the brain does not function in an age-appropriate manner. Once more, causes can be genetic, medical or the result of accidental injury.

All these conditions (together with Alzheimer's and other dementias) may also be associated with ageing but this does not mean that ageing itself is a disability. Most of us will experience impairment as we get older and this will be a more significant feature as the age profile of the population rises.

Another consideration, when looking at the practicalities of access and inclusion, is the difference between *an impairment or condition and the difficulties or disability which may occur as a result* of that impairment or condition. The disability which results from an impairment may vary. A person who has become paralysed in an accident, for example, is always going to have that impairment, but the degree of disability which that causes depends on the situation and the aids which he or she uses. If the person is watching television, or reading, or sharing in a discussion group, for instance, the disabling effect of the impairment can be minimal unless and until movement about the room is necessary. Then, using, for example, a wheelchair in a building which has wide doors and ramps, mobility may not present any difficulties. *Thus, the degree of disability experienced by a disabled person relates mostly to attitudes and environment.*

In seeking to get a better understanding of how disabled people feel in certain situations, some people might find it helpful to reflect on a "disabling experience" of their own, such as trying to communicate in a foreign country. The visitor does not become a different person, but ignorance does make communication difficult and indeed may make the affected person *feel* different. Similarly, a hearing person amongst a group of deaf people who are all using sign language may well feel disabled or excluded. Such a sense of frustration, even powerlessness, can mirror the feelings sometimes arising from the disabling effects of an impairment, whether physical or mental.

Our aim is the participation in the Church of people with physical, sensory or learning disabilities. Although each disabled person's condition is different, people with disabilities share a common experience of discrimination and rejection, and of barriers which impede access and participation, resulting in feelings of being marginalised or excluded.

People (including some with disabilities) live with other conditions which may also be excluding (such as poverty) and other kinds of difference through which they may encounter prejudice (such as race). This pack does not deal with these concerns, although there may be parts of it which echo these other experiences.

A principal source document, *Valuing Difference - People with disabilities in the life and mission of the Church*, published by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales shows how the Church is promoting an attitude of respect for each individual and proposing practical action which will help to eliminate discrimination of every kind. The document is now out of print but may be accessed on the Bishops' Conference website

www.catholicchurch.org.uk/resource/vald01

The Bishops' Conference have issued guidance in 2005 on complying with all discrimination legislation, including disability. See "*Diversity and Equality – Guidelines*" also on their website –

www.catholicchurch.org.uk/equality

In our diocese we are quickened in our resolve to bring this about by the need to meet the requirements of the third stage of the Disability Discrimination Act by October 2004. This support pack, in its two parts, will greatly help all our parishes and communities to achieve this.

THE HOUSE OF THE CHURCH – A PLACE CONSECRATED FOR WORSHIP

*Father of holiness and power,
we give you thanks and praise
through Jesus Christ your Son.
For you have blessed this work of our hands
and your presence makes it a house of prayer;
nor do you ever refuse us welcome
when we come in before you as your pilgrim people.*

*In this house you realise the mystery of your dwelling among us
for in shaping us as your holy temple
you enrich your whole Church,
which is the very body of Christ,
and thus bring closer to fulfilment
the vision of your peace,
the heavenly city of Jerusalem ...*

[Preface of the Dedication of a Church in use : Roman Missal]

Church buildings are part of the fabric of our lives. They witness, in a powerful way, to the faith of generations, and are tangible remembrances of the existence and life of the local Church over many years. They remain - whether full or empty - rich 'sermons in stone' drawing the heart and mind to the things of God.

Any theology of church must start first with a recognition of the priority of Church. The building exists to serve the people, and our understanding of the meaning and purpose of the building must in great part be informed by our understanding of the meaning and purpose of the people. The church, then, is a house for the Church.

In the forty or so years since the liturgical reforms of the Second Vatican Council the introduction of the revised rites has had a profound effect on how the liturgy is celebrated and understood. The principal focus, the heart of a church, remains the altar on which the Eucharist is celebrated, and the ambo from which the word is proclaimed. An equally important focus, however, is a renewed sense of the assembly - the people of God gathered together in worship and witness to be transformed for Christ. This assembly, congregated at altar and ambo and filling the worship space, is no less than the Church, the living Body of Christ. Around all these foci, and ordered to them, are other ritual spaces: for the rites of initiation, penance, reconciliation, marriage and holy orders. Additionally, the growth of lay ministry in the rites of the Church has changed our understanding of how the liturgical space is used.

Within the church building areas need to be provided for the whole liturgy to be celebrated with dignity by the gathered people of God. The "full, conscious and active participation" of all the faithful, as required by the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy of Vatican II, must remain a priority at all times - whatever the needs of the assembly.

No two churches are the same. No two parish communities are alike. No two celebrations are identical. There is no 'approved' plan for a new church, no single solution to a church re-ordering, no blueprint which will fit every parish. Within any project there are three aspects to consider: the people, the liturgy, the building. In any decision made as part of the process of change these three must be held in balance:

the people - the composition of the whole community: families, elderly people, commuters, tourists, those with special needs; where they live, their employment, their income and interests; their understanding of themselves as Church;

the liturgy - the requirements set out in liturgical law (in the Introductions to the Rites) for the reverent and graceful celebration of the rites themselves; how the rites are celebrated in the parish; devotional practices;

the building - value as a symbol and sign to the Christian community and wider community; its architectural and historical significance; its function as a place for the gathered community.

Added to these are external factors: finance; legal requirements concerning health and safety, access for people with disability (including in the exercise of ministries), conservation and planning; whether a building is listed or in a conservation area; architectural and heritage considerations. Diocesan policy requires that any major construction or reordering work on a church building needs authorisation from the Art & Architecture Committee of the Diocesan Liturgy Commission. Therefore, advice should be sought at all times and at the earliest opportunity.

As part of the Disability Discrimination Act parishes across the Diocese will be asked to look at their own buildings and worship spaces. It is hoped that this support pack will help in that process – not least in reminding us all that the church building exists to serve the Church, the people of God. Any further advice and support can be obtained from the Diocesan Liturgy Commission or the Art & Architecture Committee of the Commission. Both can be contacted via DABCEC (01293 515666).

Much of the material in this section is taken from "*Consecrated for Worship, A Directory on Church Buildings* ", a working document of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales.

ACCESS AND INCLUSION

'...the parish is to be a place in the world for the community of believers to gather together as a sign and an instrument of the vocation of all to communion, a house of welcome to all and a place of service to all...'

[Christifidelis Laicii 27]

Improving accessibility for people with disabilities means deepening the awareness of the Catholic community about what it means to be an **inclusive community** both at parish and diocesan level.

- Inclusion requires consultation.
- The needs of people with disabilities are mostly the same as the needs of others, everyone needs to be able to hear, see, speak, move, respond and participate.
- Inclusion is also expressed when people with disabilities are visibly present and participating in activities as various as studying theology, membership of the parish council, commissioned ministers of the Eucharist, diocesan employment and in action for social justice.
- Inclusion of people with disabilities has a vital role to play in helping the church to grow as a communion, as a body of people that expresses God's inclusive love for all. Working for unity means breaking down barriers of any kind, whether arising from racism or sexism, or from prejudice about other kinds of difference. A Church that values every kind of difference can be a parable of unity.

The fundamental principle to start from is that of collaboration and dialogue.

Whatever a parish does to improve access and inclusion of people with disabilities can only be effective if they participate in the discussion and planning along with other members of the parish from the start.

The first steps might be

- a conversation about the kind of services and access they need
- an exploration of the contribution they would like to make
- a survey of parish

Other possibilities:

- Raising the profile of disability as an important issue by integrating the theme of valuing difference into homilies on, for example, Christ's respect for the individual.

- Holding a disability awareness day, with invited speakers describing their experience to encourage all members of the parish (or local churches) to reflect on what can be done to ensure access and inclusion of people with disabilities.
- Circulating (and acting on the results of) an access questionnaire to all the different groups in the parish concerning the general level of access for and inclusion of people with disabilities in their particular activity.
- Ensuring that parish services and activities are accessible to all potential users.
- Publishing information about local organisations and contacts in parish newsletters and on Church or hall notice boards.

As a parish grows in commitment to including all its members, and works to extend access and participation, the following kinds of development might take place.

Specific assistance to enable participation - Sign language, cassette recordings etc.

Involving people with disabilities in parish ministry - There could be an effort to increase participation in parish ministries and to remove barriers which exclude or discourage people with disabilities from exercising ministries. *Some of these barriers are physical* such as limited space where communion is distributed, and *some are expressed in attitudes*. In many parishes it will simply not have been considered to ask people with disabilities to take on ministries.

Parish organisations - action could be taken to ensure that people with disabilities are able and welcome to join various groups and activities, e.g., UCM., SVP, J & P, prayer groups, parish councils, youth groups and to provide facilities to enable their active participation, including an accessible venue. Everyone should have an equal opportunity to represent the parish at Diocesan meetings and commissions, or acting as a school governor.

Support for families of people with disabilities - Parishes can do much to support the families of people with disabilities and their carers

- including mutual support groups
- visits and inclusion in parish news
- befriending schemes and respite support and not forgetting those in residential care
- direction towards specialist support where appropriate
- training for listeners and befrienders

Action in the local community - some groups within the parish such as Justice and Peace group or CWL, could find out how effectively the wider neighbourhood community provides access in its facilities and services for those with disabilities- Women's organisations may wish to take an interest in how disability affects women, both directly and indirectly.

A. PERMANENT WHEELCHAIR USERS

- A WHEELCHAIR, like a shoe or a car, is a mobility aid that enables a person to get around.
- Try to talk of 'wheelchair users' and avoid talking about 'wheelchair bound'. If you want to differentiate between people who remain in a chair against those who just use it to get from place to place, use the term 'permanent wheelchair user'.
- When talking to a wheelchair user try to ensure that your eyes are at the same level as his/hers, perhaps by squatting or sitting down. Don't lean on the wheelchair - it is part of the user's personal space.
- Do not grab the back of someone's wheelchair to push him/her along even if you think the person is struggling. If you are concerned, **ask** if help is needed. Many wheelchair users can get around under their own power and prefer to do so.
- People **can** do almost anything in a wheelchair including sailing, climbing, using escalators and dancing. Some want to, others do not — *remember* people are individuals.
- Many people with walking difficulties prefer a few steps to a ramp.
- People may choose not to use a wheelchair for a variety of reasons. Having one discreetly available for use if it is wanted, because distances are greater than anticipated for example, can be a help.

Car Park

- Are parking spaces available for disabled people and clearly marked/signposted?

Access in Church, Hall and Meeting Room

- Are all doors sufficiently wide and easily opened with self-restraining catches?
- Is the Church entrance ramped and lit?
- Is it the front door/same door as used by other parishioners?
- Is the sanctuary ramped with an adjustable lectern?

The hidden message may be that you are welcome but only so far.

Within the Church

- Are some benches shorter so that disabled people can sit with their families/have a choice of where to sit? (*Also useful for parents with prams*).
- Is there sufficient room when receiving communion?
- How inclusive is the invitation to proclaim the gospel - "let us *stand* to greet the gospel!" *or* "let us all greet the gospel"

Inclusion in Ministries and Organisations

Check AUDIT in this pack.

- People may need an invitation and encouragement particularly if they never see anyone else with a disability exercising ministry or being involved in parish meetings and organisations.

Welcome for Children

- Are children with disabilities welcome in the parish?
- Are children in special schools included in parish sacramental programmes or are special arrangements made where appropriate?
- Are they invited to join in the Children's Liturgy of the Word (with their own helper if necessary)?

B. PEOPLE WHO ARE BLIND OR VISUALLY IMPAIRED

- ONLY A VERY SMALL percentage of blind people have no sight. Make sure you do not make assumptions about the extent of a person's impairment. One person who may have a guide dog might use a Braille note-taker, while another will read large print and write his/her own notes.
- When you first meet a blind person, introduce yourself. When you are going to move away, tell them. Do not leave them talking to an open space. Remember, blind people may not pick up body language.
- If someone has a guide dog remember that it is a working animal and should not be petted or shown particular attention. Remember, however, that it too has needs such as for water and toilet facilities.
- When offering assistance to a blind person, allow him/her to take your arm. You should guide rather than push or pull the person. Advise on approaching steps (whether they go up or down) and other obstacles as they occur.
- To help a blind person sit down place his/ her hand on the back of the chair.

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In Church

- Are hymn books, newsletters etc., available in large print? On tape?
- Can the hymn numbers be seen?
- Black on yellow or black on white is clearest for people with visual impairment.

In Parish Centres

- Highlight the ends of corridors by painting the end wall a different colour.
- Colour contrast floors, wall and furniture.
- Avoid glare - use matt surfaces.
- Keep passageways clear of obstructions.
- Highlight the edge of steps.

C. PEOPLE WHO ARE DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING

- MAKE SURE YOU HAVE the deaf person's attention before starting to speak or communicate.
- When talking to a deaf person, find out - if necessary in writing - whether s/he lip reads. If the person does, make sure your face is in the light, look directly at the person, speak clearly, naturally and keep hands, cigarettes, food and drink away from your mouth when speaking. Do not exaggerate lip movements as this may distort understanding. There's no need to shout!
- Facial expressions and gesturing can help deaf people understand you. If difficulties occur use written notes
- Remember someone who uses their eyes to 'hear' (through lip reading) will have trouble taking notes at the same time or watching audio-visual projections etc.
- If you are with a deaf person and an audible warning is given, like the change of platform at a station or a fire alarm, make sure the person understands what is happening.
- Do not make assumptions about what a deaf person will and will not wish to do. For example some deaf people both enjoy and play music.
- If you are with a deaf-blind person write with your finger on the palm of their hand. Don't forget to say who you are.

Lighting in Church, Hall and Meeting Room

- Is there light on the Lectern, Sanctuary, Altar and Celebrant's chair?
- Is the light angled so there is no 'over-hanging' shadow on the Reader's/Priest's face?

Visibility

- Are 'sight-lines' clear? i.e. Reader's/Celebrant's face is not obscured by any microphones?
- At the lectern?
- At the altar? (Remember that candles and floral displays on the altar can affect or intrude on the line of sight for lip-readers.)
- If sign-language is used, make sure that the lectern or book-rest does not 'block' the line of sight for deaf people needing to see the sign language!

Communications

- Are Hymns, specific prayers (e.g. Eucharistic Prayers) clearly listed on a Hymn Board?
- Are important announcements, especially forthcoming services and events, clearly listed on the parish noticeboard as well as in the parish's weekly newsletter?
- Do you share with your Deaf parishioner a synopsis of your Homily just before the Service starts! Even a brief outline of your homily or a list of key-words/concepts will help to alleviate mistakes either in lip-reading or in sign-language interpretation; every little does help.
- Ensure notes are taken of any meeting or input session which can be perused afterwards!

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Sound for Hard of Hearing People

- Is the Public Address system working properly?
- Is the induction Loop working properly?
- Are all points of public speaking covered (Celebrant's Chair, Choir, Lectern, Altar etc.)?
- If using a Radio-Transmitter microphone, are the batteries fresh and fully charged up? Remember to switch it on!
- Regularly check the Loop with a reliable hearing-aid user...(cleaners and others can accidentally knock the settings, so it helps to have them clearly marked for optimum use).
- Have the volume level at a medium to loud level; remember that people with hearing-aids can reduce/adjust the volume on their own hearing-aids if things are too loud for them!

Good Use of the Loop

The user (Priest, Reader) should speak *clearly* and at a *steady pace*.

Music as background is dramatic and popular but hopeless for the hearing aid user as the music drowns out the voice. Try to ensure all background noises are kept to a minimum.

At parish meetings display a notice asking that all mobile phones are switched off as they interfere with the loop system.

Repeat any questions asked from the floor and summarise any comments as hearing aid users will only hear the voices closest to the microphone.

Remember that the loop amplifies all sounds — if you need to cough turn away from the microphone. Do not break the host close to the microphone.

Lighting for Deaf - Blind People

- Is the light clear? i.e. not too diffuse or subdued?

Reading for deaf-blind people

- Does the parishioner use '**BRAILLE**'? Or prefer Large print? Or text in Moon format?
- Give the parishioner a clear note of which songs/readings are being used and the appropriate reference if the actual texts/songs are not readily to hand.

D. PEOPLE WHO HAVE LEARNING DISABILITIES

- PEOPLE WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES or difficulties have themselves chosen not to be called 'mentally handicapped', so that term should not be used. They are also not 'stupid'.
- Learning disabilities cover a wide range of conditions and consequently of abilities. Even within a recognised condition people have very different experiences - sometimes because of the opportunities and support each person may have had.
- It must not be assumed that just because someone has a learning disability s/he lacks the capacity to enter into a valid contract.
- Do not make assumptions about a person's ability in one area of life, based his/her ability in another. For instance a person's condition may mean they have no 'disability' in practical or physical matters, just in academic ones, or vice versa.
- Because the written word may present barriers to people with learning disabilities, pictorial alternatives and simple text are important. Avoid ambiguity or abstract concepts.
- If someone has a learning disability you must be able to give clear, simple instructions if these are needed. You may also need to confirm that the person understands what you mean.
- If someone has difficulty understanding you, be patient and be prepared to explain something more than once, perhaps in a different way.

Welcome for Children

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- Are they invited to join the Children's Liturgy of the Word (with their own helper if necessary)?

Liturgy and Parish Organisations

- Are adults and children welcome in parish ministries -welcomers, altar servers, music ministry etc according to their gifts?
- Are the children invited to join parish groups - cubs, scouts, guides etc.? Young people to join the youth group and the adults the men's society, women's group, Union of Catholic Mothers etc.

Family Support

- Is support available for parents who may need it at particular times?

BASIC PRINCIPLES OF DISABILITY ETIQUETTE AND AWARENESS

Most people want to treat disabled people as they would expect to be treated themselves but are not always sure how to go about it. They may feel worried about offending a disabled person or being snubbed. *Remember*, disabled people are like everyone else. There are differences between everyone so what one person feels is acceptable language or behaviour may be offensive or upsetting to another. However, the following provides some general pointers which should be useful when first meeting with disabled people.

LANGUAGE

It is important not to get 'hung up' on language. It is vital to communicate and you should not let concern about whether you are using the correct terms stop you doing so. If at all possible try to avoid using 'labels' but here are some ideas if a description is needed:

- **'disabled person' or 'person with a disability' are probably the most acceptable general terms to use, recognising that they are people like everyone else.**
- **people are not defined by any condition they might have, so avoid referring to individuals by their condition.**

NOT ACCEPTABLE	ACCEPTABLE
• <i>An epileptic</i>	• <i>A person with epilepsy</i>
• <i>An arthritic</i>	• <i>A person with arthritis</i>
• <i>Deaf and dumb</i>	• <i>A person who is deaf and without speech</i>
• <i>Wheelchair-bound/Confined to a wheelchair</i>	• <i>A wheelchair user</i>
• <i>Mentally handicapped/subnormal</i>	• <i>A person with a learning difficulty</i>
• <i>A spastic (abusive term)</i>	• <i>A person with cerebral palsy</i>

- Refrain from using the word 'disabled' as a noun - 'the disabled'. It depersonalises disabled people, implying that they are part of a homogenous group separate from the rest of society; this is no more the case than with 'the red-haired'.

- Labels are not helpful for anyone, whether disabled or not. For example, the word 'normal' has no real meaning if we are all different. Able-bodied also has little meaning and the opposite of disabled is better termed 'non-disabled'.

For various reasons some words which have been common in the past *should be avoided* and replaced by those above:

- 'victim', 'sufferer' and 'afflicted' all have elements of judgement of the individual's experience or approach to their impairment or condition. They may well suffer or feel they are a victim or afflicted but it is for them to say and no one else to impose.
- 'invalid', apart from its literal meaning of 'not valid', confuses disability with illness. A disabled person may well be the most healthy one in a group.

COMMON COURTESIES

No matter what disabilities a person may have there are some common courtesies that apply to everyone.

- If someone looks as if they need assistance, offer it, but wait for your offer to be accepted before you help. Do not assume you know the best way of helping - listen to any instruction you are given.
- Do not make any assumptions about people's abilities or needs. Don't forget some people have hidden impairments or medical conditions, like epilepsy or a mental health problem.
- If you are not sure how something might affect a disabled person ask him/her for advice.
- Do not stop at someone's outward appearance if it makes you feel uncomfortable, which may be natural. Try to think of the whole person. Avoid staring. Concentrate on what the person is saying not on the way s/he looks.
- Shake hands - whatever form that person's 'hand' may take - as you would with anyone else, *unless* it is obvious the person does not want to (for example, because it may cause them pain). If a disabled person goes to extend his/her hand to you, meet them as it may be difficult for him/her to extend it fully.
- In conversation talk directly to a disabled person rather than through a companion (e.g. a sign language interpreter). Relax and make eye contact – to his/her level, sitting down if necessary.
- Do not be embarrassed about using common expressions, such as 'see you later' or 'I'll be running along then', which may seem to relate to a person's 'disability'.

- Avoid asking personal questions about a person's disability. Talk about the sort of things you would expect someone to talk to you about - What do you do? Where do you work?
- If you are talking to an adult, treat that person like an adult.
- Above all, put yourself in the disabled person's place. Most of the above points are just good manners.
- Do not assume that because a person's speech is not fluent the brain is impaired too.
- If you are with someone who has difficulty talking, be encouraging rather than correcting and be patient rather than speaking for him/her. Take time to try to understand. Do not pretend that you have understood if you have not and do not try to guess. If you have not understood everything, do not be afraid to ask the person to repeat what they have said, or the part you did not get. It may be possible to use pen and paper, depending on the person's other impairments. As a last resort only, try to use a companion or other person to interpret for you.

[Extracts on Disability Awareness from DARAS publication September 1999.]

BARRIERS FACED BY DISABLED PEOPLE

Some of these points are also made elsewhere in the text - but they are presented here from the perspective of a person with a disability.

ATTITUDINAL BARRIERS

These arise from the way disabled people are viewed or treated by other people. This may arise from prejudice, ignorance, lack of education, fear, lack of confidence, indifference and so on. People fail to see the disabled person as an individual, but 'put a label on them' which then obscures the person and his/her attributes.

Attitudinal barriers are set up when people:

- **Make assumptions about disabled people:** making decisions for disabled people rather than finding out from the individual about his/her needs and wishes. For example assuming that a person carrying a 'white stick' will not want to look at a product before buying it. Some factors which contribute to these assumptions are these:
 - Many non-disabled people have had little or no contact with disabled people.
 - They have been 'fed' negative images of disabled people since childhood.
 - They have common misconceptions about disabled people which they do not grasp are myths.
- **Act on stereotype images:** for example, telling a disabled person how 'brave' s/he is or refusing to let premises to someone who has experienced mental illness because 'such people tend to be violent'.
- **Fail to treat disabled people equally:** by being rude, impatient, discourteous or even over-attentive. People may allow their embarrassment to interfere with serving a disabled customer or rush someone who has speech impairment without trying to understand what s/he is saying.
- **Go along with the 'Society of Perfection:** treating, or at least seeing, people who look different as being in some way defective, less than a whole, ideal person - a view compounded by fashion advertising for instance. But what is 'perfection' or even 'normal'?

- **Lack of understanding and awareness** about disabled people and disability. It is important to understand that there are a great many people who have little or no experience of living or working alongside any disabled person. Until recently it was usual for disabled children to be educated in separate schools. This prevented natural early contacts and restricted out of school meetings too. In adult life disabled people are currently three times more likely to be unemployed than their non-disabled peers, thereby reducing the chances of work-place and subsequent social contact.

ENVIRONMENTAL BARRIERS

Environmental barriers exist in a physical world that is often designed without thinking of the needs of disabled people. They are very varied but examples might be:

- **Barriers which prevent the free movement of disabled people from place to place.** These include a lack of accessible transport for wheelchair users and those with mobility-related impairments; the absence of timetables for buses and trains in large print or in easy-to-understand format; announcements only made verbally over loudspeakers; overcrowded buses which put additional stress on people with some mental health conditions; lack of adjacent parking with wide bays.
- **Barriers to free physical access to buildings,** which might include steps to entrance doors and doors which are heavy or awkward; no handrails for people to steady themselves on; no tactile identification to enable people who cannot see to know they are in the right place; voice entry phones which cannot be heard by deaf people or reached by wheelchair users.
- **Barriers which prevent the free movement of disabled people within buildings,** such as poor signage, dim lighting or no colour contrast; lack of wheelchair accessible toilets; cluttered aisles, unmarked obstacles, or just bad design features in handles, switches, etc.
- **Barriers which prevent equal access to services** such as counters or entry phones which are too high; information given only in certain formats such as on a monitor display; no textphones for deaf people; nowhere to sit for people who cannot stand for long; complicated forms to fill in and no provision to complete them in other formats or with help. Lack of information.

WORKING TO REMOVE BARRIERS

As a start some key things to remember are to:

- Appreciate the strengths of disabled people as individuals - rather than their limitations
- Communicate with and involve disabled people in breaking down the barriers

Avoid stereotypes, assumptions, myths and misconceptions. Myths can affect how people behave, even when they know it is only a myth - such as not walking under ladders etc. Myths about disabled people likewise affect the way they are treated. For example:

Myth: Disabled people are dependent and need help.

Truth: Being physically unable to do something does not cause dependency - not being able to fly is solved by using the services of an airline company. Disabled people may require different services and it is only when choice over those services is removed that dependency occurs.

Myth: The expectations of disabled people differ from others.

Truth: Disabled people go to school, work, form relationships, wash, eat, get angry, laugh, cry, have prejudices, plan, dream - like everybody else.

USEFUL CONTACTS

CATHOLIC BLIND SERVICES

To enable persons with a visual impairment, to lead a full and active life within the Church.

Contact: Chairman - Sean O'Donnell, P O Box 10333, Birmingham B13 8XX Tel: 0121 441 5577 Fax: 0121 441 5599

DIOCESAN PASTORAL CARE SERVICE FOR DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING PEOPLE

Director and Chaplain:
The Rev. I. Byrnes

Pastoral Co-ordinator:
Peter Brooker

Deaf Service Office, The Presbytery, 12 Eastgate Gardens, Guildford GUI 4AZ

Tel: (01483) 562704. Fax: (01483) 452206

The pastoral service reaches out to hearing-impaired people by creating an awareness to their needs. Outside the Diocese we work together with the national and regional teams of the RC Service for Deaf People. There are Signed Masses once a month in Horsham.

DIOCESAN SPECIAL NEEDS SUPPORT FOR PEOPLE WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

John McManus 01424 730536

Advice and help for families with members who have learning disabilities. This service can provide a variety of support including sacramental preparation

HAND IN HAND

Julia Harvey 01293 515666

This is an integrated group of adults with and without learning disabilities in the Diocese of Arundel & Brighton. They come together to pray, explore and deepen their faith.

BOOK LIST

As you think about better ways of welcoming people with disabilities into your church you may find useful books from the following list.

Widening the eye of the Needle *John Penton*

A guide for architects and building owners of ways of making adaptations to buildings to improve accessibility for people with disabilities. *Church House Publishing*

Valuing Difference *Catholic Bishops Conference*

www.catholicchurch.org.uk/vald01

Roofbreaker Guides Non-technical guides to adapting your church for people with disabilities

www.throughheroof.org

PO Box 353 Epsom, Surrey KT18 5WS

Tel: 01372 749955

Fax: 01372 737040

Minicom: 01372 737041

Access Audit for Churches *Church Action on Disability*

PO Box 10918

Birmingham

B29 6WF

www.chaduk.org

This document is available in large-print type

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are most grateful to the following bodies for allowing us to merge their excellent work to produce these guidelines and audit:

The Bishop's Conference for England and Wales

The Nugent Care Society of the Archdiocese of Liverpool

The Diocese of Chichester

POSSIBLE SOURCES OF FUNDING

Some parishes have been successful in obtaining grants to help fund improvements to parish buildings. Usually, grantors will grant aid improvements to halls, but demur at giving to a church.

1 -County Councils. The counties and city in our Diocese vary in their ability to help:

East Sussex 01273 481000 General

West Sussex 01243 777399 Lottery Officer

Surrey 01483 459292 extn 225 Village and Community Halls Adviser
 08456 009009 Surrey Lottery Officer

Brighton & Hove 01273 290000 General

If obtaining help is difficult, start with the Chief Executive/Secretary's office for advice.

2 - Local Boroughs. As for the counties start by contacting the Chief Executive/Borough Secretary's office. They can usually direct you to the correct person for grants for providing disabled access to buildings.

3 - National Lottery. There are two possible sources:

Community Fund 01483 462900 (larger grants)

Awards for All 01483 462943 (grants up to £5,000)

The criteria constantly change, so there may be other funds under the Lottery umbrella.

4 - Local Grants. There are local charities that can fund such works. Sometimes local businesses or banks can assist as well.

Diocese of Arundel & Brighton



ACCESS FOR ALL

A SUPPORT PACK

Part 2

ACCESS AUDIT

What to do next

The Church earnestly desires that all the faithful be led to that full, conscious and active participation in liturgical celebrations called for by the very nature of the liturgy.

Vatican Council II— Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy 1963, 14

ACCESS FOR ALL

A SUPPORT PACK

PART 2

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ACCESS AUDIT

This Audit has been adapted from materials developed by Church Action on Disability and the material is used with permission. A fuller version of the Audit is available from CHAD (Church Action on Disability, 50 Scrutton Street London EC2A 4XQ Tel: 020 7452 2085), who also produce an Access Pack, which gives information about access requirements.

Purpose of this Audit

The purpose of this audit is to help your community look at how open it is to people with disabilities. It is for your use. You may want to add categories of activity or even list all the parish organisations and ministries. Each community is a different shape and size - do feel free to add sections to this basic audit.

Perhaps the best way for those who are new to the idea is to think of what people need if they are going to share in the life of the church - and what prevents those needs being met.

The barriers are not just those linked to physical access, such as steps and narrow doors, though they are important. Attitudes are also a barrier if people with disabilities are regarded as 'those whom the church serves' rather than people who want to be fully involved in the life of the church.

Scope of the Audit

The audit consists of a number of questions. Some relate to the buildings and other facilities, some to activities and those who participate in them. Through the questions, it is hoped to establish three things:

- a. Are there any 'barriers' which prevent people with disabilities from getting into the buildings and moving about once they are inside?
- b. Are there any 'barriers' which prevent people with disabilities from participating as they wish in liturgy and other parish activities?
- c. Are there any 'barriers' which prevent people with disabilities from participating in any ministry, task or role to which God is calling them?

"A SUBSTANTIAL PIECE OF LEGISLATION"

It is necessary to grasp that The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) is a substantial piece of legislation.

Its purpose is to ensure that disabled people are treated as nearly as possible the same as anyone else. The Diocese and its parishes are under a legal obligation to meet various requirements. Indeed everyone benefits from improvements in the availability and accessibility of services within the parish.

The first two stages of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 have come into effect - to treat disabled people no less favourably (1996), and to make reasonable adjustments in delivery of services (1999). **The third stage, due by October 2004, is to make reasonable adjustments to the physical features of premises.** This last stage will have the greatest effect on parish premises, and affects all buildings used by the public - churches, halls and presbyteries.

A "physical feature" could be in the building, such as access steps or doorways. But it extends to fixtures, fittings and furniture such as pews, toilets, etc. "Reasonable" is not defined but it means balancing cost and practicability against the importance to disabled people of the physical alteration in question. The access audit provides a systematic process in examining all aspects of parish life in relation to people with disabilities. It is the essential precursor to making any changes in the parish. This Support Pack is directed to helping parishes and other communities as fully as possible in completing the audit, a key step towards the tightly scheduled compliance obligation that now rests on all in the Diocese.

METHOD OF AUDIT

The audit process is in four sections.

Section A "Ministries" and B "Parish Activities" are essentially qualitative assessments.

Section C "Physical Access" and D "Enabling Participation" require an element of measurement.

Both types of audit should be undertaken by a team that includes disabled people. Section A and B can be completed by the team meeting together. Sections C and D require the team to tour around the whole parish site, inside and outside the church and hall. The presbytery should be included if it is used for meetings or interviews.

Audit Form Completion

Extra copies of the forms in this booklet may be made by photocopying. Further copies of the whole audit for other Mass centres etc are available from Bishop's House, Hove Tel: 01273 506387.

Action Required A brief note of the problem and its proposed remedy. The minimum requirements are given below.

Possible Problems Some remedies may be impractical or create other difficulties.

Estimated Cost Some issues have nil cost. More complex remedies, such as disabled ramps and toilets may require professional assessment.

The ability of the parish to implement each modification is classified as 'immediate', 'achievable' or 'unreasonable':

Immediate These are steps which can be taken with little delay, such as the provision of large-print newsletters, Mass books and hymnals, elimination of a small step, painting a contrast-colour line on steps, replacement of worn doormats, etc.

Achievable These are things which can be done in the future - perhaps when money becomes available or a re-ordering takes place. Such steps might include the provision of a hearing-aid induction loop or the provision of a permanent ramp for wheelchairs or handrails on steps. Remember to seek advice.

Unreasonable These are remedies that are felt to be quite beyond the capacity of the parish. Major alterations to a historic building may be unacceptable. Some provisions might be prohibitively expensive.

Timescale Reasonable items should be completed by October 2004. Achievable items should be given an estimated timeframe.

Implementation and Review

Any physical works to parish property must follow the procedures in the Parish Administration Manual Section 7.

The appraisal should be reviewed every two years.

Following the audit process in this pack will ensure, as far as it is possible to tell at present, that the parish has complied with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. This requires "service providers" to implement "reasonable" provision for disabled people by October 2004.

This pack contains a summary sheet which must be completed and sent to the Vicar General. See end.

The summary will indicate key issues raised by the audit and any action steps that need to be taken.

MINIMUM STANDARDS REQUIRED FOR ACCESS TO BUILDINGS - A GUIDE

Car parking:

Dedicated parking spaces should have a hard surface and be a minimum of 3200mm wide by 4800mm deep; they should be marked both on the ground and by a signpost and have a barrier-free route to the building.

Dropped kerbs:

Crossings should have a minimum width of 1200mm and maximum gradient of 1-in-12, surfaces must be flush to both the road and the pathway and no drainage gratings should obstruct the crossover. Tactile markings should be used to indicate the kerb.

Pathways:

Routes should be well lit and have a smooth hard surface with tactile edgings with a preferred width of 1800mm (and a minimum of 900mm). Low planting along the path edge helps to define the route; handrails and side kerbs should be fitted to all ramps and changes of level and gradients should not exceed 1-in-12. Outward-opening doors and windows should be protected by planting or rails but not in a way that reduces the width of the path.

Ramps:

Ramps should be a minimum of 1200mm wide (1800mm is preferred), have a maximum gradient of 1-in-12, and have a maximum sloping length of 5000mm. Any longer ramp should have a respite level every 5000mm, this should be a minimum of 1200mm in length. A ramp with a gradient of less than 1-in-15 can be a maximum of 10000mm in length and have a respite level every 10000mm.

Handrails should be provided on each side of the ramp to leave a clear space of 1000mm; handrails should be a minimum of 1000mm high with a circular rail of maximum diameter of 50mm. Handrails should project a minimum of 300mm beyond the end of the ramp and be carried across respite levels. A 100mm high kerb should be provided at both sides if the ramp is not level with the adjacent ground.

Steps: All ramps should be provided with steps as an alternative. Risers should be a maximum of 150mm high and treads a minimum of 280mm deep. Step nosings should be distinguished in a contrasting colour.

Handrails should be no more than 1000mm above tread level, continuous across landings, and in a contrast colour to the surroundings; they should extend for 300mm beyond the end of the steps. A flight of steps should have a maximum rise of 1200mm; longer flights should have a landing every 1200mm.

Individual floors should be clearly marked with the floor number in a sign of good visibility and repeated by a tactile sign.

Corridors:

All passageways should have a minimum clear width of 850mm; obstructions such as fire extinguishers or other equipment should be recessed and clearly marked. Floor surfaces should not impede the passage of a wheelchair or cause acoustic or visual confusion.

Doors:

All doors should provide a minimum opening width of 850mm. If this width is achieved by using a double-leaved door, both leaves must be free to open at all times. Doors should be fitted with furniture which allows operation from both a seated and standing position and glazed in such a way that through visibility is available when standing or seated. Lobbies should permit a wheelchair to clear one door before approaching another.

Doors should be sited at least 300mm from any side wall to allow wheelchair footplates to clear the door swing. Door furniture should be easily grasped and operated and should be in a colour which contrasts to the surroundings. A full-width handle should be fitted 1000mm from the floor level to the inside of all doors that do not have a closer system.

A door which opens inward to a confined space (such as a toilet) should be configured to open outwards in an emergency. Door closers should have a delayed-action, minimal-pressure, or slow-acting system.

All designated fire escape doors should be wheelchair accessible unless a clearly-signed refuge system is in use. Fire escapes when leaving the building should be to a level platform. If there are steps, a refuge should be provided clear of any escape path.

Toilets:

Specific design standards exist for wheelchair accessible toilets; these should be consulted before any adaptations are made. As a minimum, buildings should provide one unisex wheelchair-accessible toilet; accessible cubicles in gender-exclusive toilets are only acceptable if there is also unisex provision.

Wheelchair-accessible toilets must be kept free of obstruction and not used as storage areas. Volunteers should be trained to respond to alarm calls.

Toilets for use by ambulant people should be clearly signed with either a pictogram or wording with upper-and-lower-case lettering in contrasting colour. All visual signage should be supported by tactile signs. Floors should be of a non-slip material and not cause acoustic or visual confusion; all fittings should be of a contrasting colour to the surroundings. Toilet cubicles should be of sufficient size to allow users to enter, sit and arise without difficulty. All door locks should be fitted with a coin-release indicator bolt.

Seating areas:

Where fixed seats are provided there should be a number of spaces throughout the seating area for wheelchair users.

Front rows of seating should be signed as being particularly appropriate for people with disabilities.

Seating should be located to avoid glare; lighting should be at a good level and flicker-free.

Hearing impairment:

All meeting and reception areas should be fitted with an induction loop system that is constantly in use and is clearly signposted. All speakers should be required to use the system.

If sign-language interpreters are used they should be located in a position that is clearly visible from the seating area and in good lighting. Speakers should be encouraged to speak in a way that is sympathetic to the interpreter's task and to provide notes in advance of the event.

Surfaces should be finished in such a way as to avoid acoustic confusion.

Visual impairment:

Lighting in all areas should be of high quality and set in such a way as to avoid glare or silhouetting. Natural lighting should be shaded where glare occurs and reinforced where dim.

All floors and wall surfaces should be of a sympathetic colour and should avoid visual confusion. Fixtures and fittings should be of a colour which contrasts to the surroundings.

Signs should be in contrasting colours and in upper-and-lower-case lettering.

Visual signs should be supplemented by tactile signs and a tactile map of the building should be provided.

Literature should be available in large-print or audio format. Braille versions are expensive and not appropriate to all but should be available on request.

Literature for general use should not be printed in type smaller than 12-point and should be on paper which provides a good contrast to the lettering.

General considerations:

People with disabilities will generally wish to use a building in as 'normal' a way as possible. This means that the *provisions which are made for people with disabilities should be seen as part of the everyday provision* and not something that is brought out specially when certain people appear.

Induction loops should be in use at all times, large-print literature should be routinely set out, temporary wheelchair ramps should be in place during the whole of the buildings' opening hours. As a 'rule of thumb' it should be assumed that people with disabilities will wish to use the building on *every* occasion.

Finally, if someone with a disability is using the building it is useful if others are available to assist if necessary. However, one should *always ask* if assistance is required and listen carefully to any answer that is given; never assume that help is needed. It is a natural response to seek to help, never allow this to lead to lifting someone as this could result in injury to both parties.

THERE IS HELP AVAILABLE...

Some of the actions that a parish will decide to take as the result of this access audit will affect practices, some will affect attitudes, and some will affect the buildings themselves.

Please be aware that, in every instance, there is assistance available as you seek to create a better welcome for people with disabilities.

The very nature of many of our church buildings can make it very difficult to implement physical changes to meet the needs of disabled people. This can be a real challenge to everyone in a church as we seek to offer a full welcome. The cost of changes can be enormous and it is hard to balance the many calls that are made on a parish's finances. In all of these challenges the vital factor is that of wanting to be inclusive - if we really desire that our church is open to all then, with God's help, we will find ways and means.

Any alterations to the church building require the parish to consult the Liturgy Commission. Any permanent changes to the fabric of listed buildings must have received a faculty from the Historic Churches Committee.

Some changes that might arise as a result of this audit may cost money and churches may need to look for grant-aid to complete a project *Sadly, there are no central or diocesan church funds available for work to create better access for people with disabilities.* However, there are a number of grant-making trusts that may be prepared to assist. Advice on funding can be obtained from your local authority.

Whilst the Diocese prefers parishes to undertake their own access audits and action plans, they may sometimes need the help of an external auditor. You may wish to contact Through the Roof to arrange a visit by one of their auditors at: Through the Roof, Global House, Ashley Avenue, Epsom, Surrey KT18 5AD Tel: 01372 749955.

Some useful contacts at the Diocese:

Listed buildings matters:	Mike State (HCC)	Tel: 01903 856018
For Liturgical issues:	Barbara Hopper	Tel: 01293 515666
For Pastoral issues:	Barbara Wallace	Tel: 01293 515666
For Finance advice:	Fergus Brotherton at Finance Office	Tel: 01273 859705

<u>A.</u> <u>LITURGICAL</u> <u>MINISTRY</u>	Action Required	Possible Problems	Estimated Cost	Immediate or Achievable or Unreasonable – give reasons	Who to Action?	Timescale	Date Completed
Do any of the ministers use wheelchairs?							
Do any of the ministers have other mobility disabilities?							
Do any of the ministers have hearing impairment?							
Do any of the ministers have visual impairment?							

<u>A. NON-LITURGICAL MINISTRY</u>	Action Required	Possible Problems	Estimated Cost	Immediate or Achievable or Unreasonable – give reasons	Who to Action?	Timescale	Date Completed
Do any of the ministers use wheelchairs?							
Do any of the ministers have other mobility disabilities?							
Do any of the ministers have hearing impairment?							
Do any of the ministers have visual impairment?							
Do any of the ministers have learning disabilities?							

<u>B.</u> <u>PARISH</u> <u>ACTIVITIES</u>	Action Required	Possible Problems	Estimated Cost	Immediate or Achievable or Unreasonable – give reasons	Who to Action?	Timescale	Date Completed
Do any of the people with sensory, physical or learning difficulties hold positions of responsibility in the parish and/or its organisations?							
Does the parish arrange special services or activities for people with disabilities?							
Is there a transport and/or escort scheme to assist those who have difficulty getting to parish buildings?							
If there is a transport/escort scheme, does it cover all activities?							

<u>B.</u> <u>PARISH</u> <u>ACTIVITIES</u>	Action Required	Possible Problems	Estimated Cost	Immediate or Achievable or Unreasonable – give reasons	Who to Action?	Timescale	Date Completed
Has any attention been given to the needs of those with sensory, physical or learning difficulties within the Liturgy?							
Has attention been given to the needs of those with sensory, physical or learning difficulties within RCIA or similar meetings?							
Has attention been given to the needs of those with sensory, physical or learning difficulties within other activities?							

<u>B.</u> <u>PARISH</u> <u>ACTIVITIES</u>	Action Required	Possible Problems	Estimated Cost	Immediate or Achievable or Unreasonable – give reasons	Who to Action?	Timescale	Date Completed
Is the parish aware of local groups and centres which support and/or offer facilities to people with disabilities?							
If there are local groups and centres are they supported by the parish?							
Does the parish offer any support for the parents/carers of people with disabilities?							

<u>C. PHYSICAL ACCESS – CAR PARK</u>	Action Required	Possible Problems	Estimated Cost	Immediate Or Achievable Or Unreasonable – give reasons	Who to Action?	Timescale	Date Completed
Are parking spaces reserved in the church car park for those with mobility problems?							
Are the parking spaces reserved in the church car park for those with mobility problems clearly marked?							
Are the parking spaces reserved in the church car park for those with mobility problems observed by other users?							
Are any of the kerbs between the parking area and the building ramped?							

<u>C. PHYSICAL ACCESS – GENERAL</u>	Action Required	Possible Problems	Estimated Cost	Immediate Or Achievable Or Unreasonable – give reasons	Who to Action?	Timescale	Date Completed
Are facilities for people with disabilities clearly indicated somewhere which is visible from the road and in the entrance?							
Are all access routes (corridors, doors etc) wide enough for people using wheelchairs?							
Do you have ramps for <u>all stepped areas</u> – both those leading into the building and internally in all buildings (including sanctuary/altar, stages, choir area, pulpit, preaching/reading area and so on)?							

<u>C. PHYSICAL ACCESS – GENERAL</u>	Action Required	Possible Problems	Estimated Cost	Immediate Or Achievable Or Unreasonable – give reasons	Who to Action?	Timescale	Date Completed
Are floor surfaces even?							
Would any floor coverings present problems to those using wheelchairs?							
Are main access route floors covered in a way which would help those with sight problems identify changes of direction, level, junctions of corridors, doorways etc?							
If there is more than one floor in the building, is a lift or stair lift provided?							

<u>C. PHYSICAL ACCESS – GENERAL</u>	Action Required	Possible Problems	Estimated Cost	Immediate Or Achievable Or Unreasonable – give reasons	Who to Action?	Timescale	Date Completed
Are hand-rails fitted by flights of steps and ramps?							
Is there access to seating with ample leg space near the door for those with difficulties with walking?							
Can a guide dog be somewhere safe and comfortable next to its owner?							
Are the toilets accessible for those using wheelchairs and with other mobility difficulties?							

<u>D.</u> <u>ENHANCING</u> <u>PARTICIPATION</u>	Action Required	Possible Problems	Estimated Cost	Immediate or Achievable or Unreasonable – give reasons	Who to Action?	Timescale	Date Completed
Does any sound system in the buildings provide good, clear sound with adequate voice levels?							
Is an induction loop fitted for hearing aid users?							
If there is a loop system is there a microphone input into the loop system from the choir?							
If there is a loop system is the sanctuary within the loop?							
Is anyone available to provide signed Interpretation?							

<u>D.</u> <u>ENHANCING</u> <u>PARTICIPATION</u>	Action Required	Possible Problems	Estimated Cost	Immediate or Achievable or Unreasonable – give reasons	Who to Action?	Timescale	Date Completed
If there is a signer, does s/he cover all activities?							
If there is no signing available, does someone know the nearest church which offers the facility?							
Is the church well lit?							
Can the face of the preacher/ speaker/reader be seen clearly from all areas of the church/room to aid lip-reading?							

<u>D.</u> <u>ENHANCING</u> <u>PARTICIPATION</u>	Action Required	Possible Problems	Estimated Cost	Immediate or Achievable or Unreasonable – give reasons	Who to Action?	Timescale	Date Completed
If the face of the preacher/ speaker/reader cannot be clearly seen from all areas, are areas which do give a clear view clearly marked?							
Are hymn numbers clearly obvious to everyone in the congregation?							
Are bibles/service books/notices/ hymnbooks and sheets/other leaflets and magazines available in large print and braille and/or on tape?							
Are copies of the homily and pastoral letters made available, even just a synopsis, for those who need them?							

COMPLETION OF ACCESS AUDIT SUMMARY STATEMENT

When you have completed your Access Audit(s) please complete this form and return it to:

The Rev. Mgr. Canon John Hull
Bishop's House
The Upper Drive
Hove, East Sussex
BN3 6NE

Parish		
Address		
Phone		
Parish Priest		
Key areas identified for development		Time scale for completion

PTO

Key areas identified for development

Time scale for completion

This parish has completed an Access Audit of each of its buildings and the activities and services are provided.

Signature of Parish Priest: _____

Date: _____