

For information on how to conduct a disability audit contact:
Disability Discrimination Act UK 1995 (DDA) Tel: 07812034533

More information is available from:

Ministry among Deaf and Disabled People, Church House Great Smith Street London SW1P 3AZ 020 7898 1316
info@churchouse.org.uk

Widening the Eye of the Needle, Access to church buildings for people with disabilities. 2nd Edition (£10.95 from Church House Publishing). ISBN 0 7151 7589 0, www.chpublishing.co.uk.

Circular 1994/4 £1 from The Churches Main Committee “Rights of Access for Disabled People, Goods, Facilities and Services”, Elizabeth House, 39 York Road, London, SE1 7NQ, Tel: 020 7898 1861/1878, Fax: 020 7898 1798, email: cmc@c-of-e.org.uk.

“Through the Roof”, Global House, Ashley Avenue, Epsom, Surrey, KT18 5AD. Tel: 01372 749955, Fax: 01372 737040,
email: info@throughtheroof.org and www.throughtheroof.org

Livability, Choices for disabled people at www.livability.org.uk

National Autistic Society information, training, employment support, advocacy: www.autism.org.uk/20594 or
www.nas.org.uk Tel: 0845 070 4004

Causeway Prospects: Christian services, to help people with learning disabilities: www.prospects.org.uk

Churches for All www.churchesforall.org.

L’Arche Community www.larche.org.uk

With thanks to **Alison Webster, Social Responsibility Officer Oxford Diocese**: for her help and information.

01865 208213 or alison.webster@oxford.anglican.org

York Diocese - www.dioceseofyork.org.uk

Rev. Linda Shipp Chaplain among Deaf People
and Disability Officer York Diocese

Whorlton Vicarage, 18 Church Lane, Swainby, Northallerton,
North Yorkshire DL6 3 EA

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Made in the image of
God...



Diocese of York

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995

The Disability Discrimination Act came into force in 1995, and the provisions of part III of the Act place duties on those providing goods, facilities or services to the Public. This means that as ‘service providers’ churches are affected by the requirements of the Act and this in turn means that you are affected.

The purpose of this information leaflet is to alert you and your PCC to the fact that from 2004 you are required to make “reasonable adjustments” to the physical features of your church buildings to overcome physical barriers to access, as well as providing an environment that allows access to anyone with any type of disability.



Large
Print



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In Britain, there are 9.5 million adults who have a recognised disability (Disability Rights Commission, 2006): that is over one-fifth of the adult population. A further 700,000 children have one or more disabilities. 95% of us will experience disability at some time during our life; what if you become disabled and want to continue attending your church, how easy would that be? Paul, the apostle, wrote: **"those parts that seem to be weaker are indispensable."** If we believe that the Christian Gospel is for everyone, then we need to include disabled people in the life of our churches.

There is a wide range of disabilities, some obvious, many hidden. Installing a ramp for a wheelchair does not mean that your church is welcoming to all. Having a loop system installed is not enough if it is not in full working order and switched on for all services/meetings. Having a welcome team is not enough if they don't understand the needs of people with Autism, Asperger Syndrome, or people with learning difficulties.

As we read the Gospel we see that Jesus includes everyone in his love, he makes no distinction between people, all are accepted as equals. "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full" (John 10:10).

There are practical steps we can take to welcome everyone, regardless of ability, but as important is our attitude, we need to look beyond the disability to the individual, to get to know them and appreciate the gifts they bring.

I would encourage you to set up a team to look at all aspects of church life: welcome, worship, baptisms, weddings and funerals. Think about all groups of disabled people, children, the young, the elderly. Invite disabled people to 'check out' the church and give their view on how access can be improved. Encourage one or two people to 'befriend' those who might need help and support to feel fully included in the life of the church.



Please use the following to help you assess the access provided in your church, and to help you to start planning what, if any, changes are needed.

- 1 Place this item on your next PCC agenda.
- 2 Carry out an audit
- 3 Review the audit and draw up a list of reasonable changes.
- 4 Decide priorities and what changes the parish can do itself (e.g. large print books, leaflets)
- 5 Draw up a schedule for making changes.
- 6 Consult your church architect as to the feasibility of proposed changes and costing.
- 7 Consult further if necessary by contacting:
Diocesan Church Buildings Officer
Local Authority Access Officer
Diocesan Disability Officer (Rev. Linda Shipp)
- 8 Apply for a faculty (contact the DAC Secretary to find out if a faculty is required).

The L'Arche Prayer

Father, through Jesus our Lord and our brother, we ask you to bless us. Grant that L'Arche be a true home, where everyone may find life, where those of us who suffer may find hope. Keep in your loving care all those who come. Spirit of God, give us greatness of heart that we may welcome all those you send. Make us compassionate that we may heal and bring peace. Help us to see, to serve and to love. O Lord, through the hands of each other, bless us; through the eyes of each other, smile on us. O Lord, grant freedom, fellowship and unity to all your people and welcome everyone into your kingdom. Amen