

Corporal Mark
Reid's next challenge
is touring England



At your service

Your business case and
guide to improving
accessibility for customers



VisitEngland™

Now more than ever before, you want to run an effective and efficient business. Your limited time and available cash have to add value and put more money in the bank. Because that's what business is all about, right?

Imagine yourself in the television programme Dragons' Den

Standing in front of the investors you put forward a pitch for a small investment in your tourism business.

You: I run a small tourism business which, with your investment, I believe I can grow by 25%.

Investor 1: 25%? How are you going to do that?

You: I want to make the business more accessible - it's a big market – 11 million people in England and there are even more from abroad.

Investor 1: So you're saying roughly one in every five people in England has an impairment? That's a lot of wheelchair users.

You: Wheelchair users are only one part of the market. There are many more people with less obvious disabilities such as poor vision, hearing loss and learning disabilities.

Investor 2: OK, so it's a large market. What about the income potential?

You: Overall it's worth over £2 billion a year to tourism businesses in England. I'd like a share of that.

Investor 2: What do you propose?

You: I've achieved quite a lot already, at little or no cost to the business. For example, I've completed an access statement using a free online tool provided by VisitEngland.

Investor 2: I can see you've looked into this market carefully. What comes next?

You: Pretty much everything I've investigated will increase my opportunities to win more business. First off, I want to make my website more accessible which will also increase my Google ranking. I want to put in a ramp which will be good for elderly people or anyone using crutches or pushing a buggy.

Investor 1: Benefits for older people and children as well - I'm impressed.

Investor 2: What about competitors? What can you tell me about them?

You: Most businesses don't see the potential. They wrongly assume you always need to have a lift or make huge investments. They don't realise how many of their customers have access needs.

Investor 1: Sounds like a wise investment to me – I'm happy to invest!

In the beginning

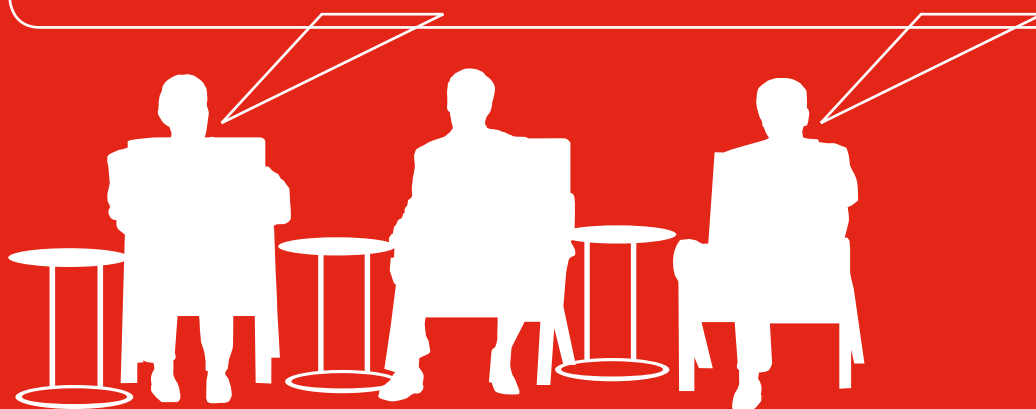
Imagine being offered a loyal, growing market which makes you stand out from your competitors. Be honest; you'd be interested in that market wouldn't you? So why do many tourism businesses overlook improving their accessibility?

There are many reasons for businesses to become more accessible. This booklet is a starting point to guide you. To reap the business benefits outlined here forget your assumptions. Be open to the opportunities available to you. Gain confidence and a share of this lucrative and growing market.

Hungry for business?

Disabled people have the desire, the means and the time to travel. Travelling can be for leisure or business. Nothing new there then. The main difference is that disabled people tend to stay longer than average (3.6 nights as opposed to 3 overall) and to spend more than average (£173 compared to £168 overall)¹. Many prefer to travel at off-peak times.

¹UKTS 2009 www.visitengland.com/access



A market for winning...

Most people love travelling – age and disability generally don't change that. What does change is the need for careful planning. Visitors with access requirements need to know that certain facilities are available – accessible parking; a grab rail by the toilet. They can't afford to leave anything to chance.

When you invest in general visitor facilities such as flat screen TVs you mention it – on your website, in your leaflet, maybe even on your Twitter feed. So if you have a vibrating pillow alarm clock or a hearing loop system, it makes sense to promote them too. These facilities may be the deciding factor between you and your competitor.

AN ACCESSIBLE BUSINESS:

- Recognises the size of the market and its value.
- Makes itself attractive to the widest range of potential customers.
- Sees customer loyalty and profits grow.



Bottom Line

1. Use large print (minimum 14 font) and typefaces such as Arial or Verdana when writing about your facilities and services.
2. Show that you welcome assistance dogs by requesting a free window sticker - 01844 348100.

Q. How much do international visitors to England with a health condition or impairment spend each year?

A. £300million²

²Estimate based on doubling of 6 month provisional figures from the International Passenger Survey (Jan-Jun 2010 inclusive)



"We learnt British Sign Language without realising it would gain us extra business. We now welcome many guests with a hearing impairment. I would advise any tourism business to consider making their premises more accessible."

Pauline Roberts – Atlantis Holiday Apartments – Torquay



...Or a market for losing

Don't lose out. Let's talk numbers. People with impairments tend to be accompanied by partners (50%), children (20%) or companions (20-25%)³ which increases the number of visitors and creates extra revenue. In England there are 11 million disabled people – around one in five people⁴. This includes an increasing number of service men and women.

£2bn

Add to that people who are not included in the official figure, such as those with broken limbs, a bad back or those recovering from surgery. Or the potential market of at least 78 million American and 75 million European disabled visitors, friends and family⁵. With a market this large the range of potential access needs is huge. It is beyond the scope of most small businesses to meet every access need and cover every eventuality. So what can you do to enjoy a share of this **market worth over £2bn?**

³UKTS 2009 www.visitengland.com/access

⁴Health Survey for England 2001

⁵www.realising-potential.org/case-studies/industry/the-travel-industry.html

⁶DCMS Taking Part Survey 2007/08

Your visitors' needs and expectations are changing, so small adjustments that make your business more accessible may benefit far more people than you imagine.

Bottom Line

1. Find three no cost business improvements that you can action in the next 30 days from the 'Easy does it' business guide – www.visitengland.org/improveaccess
2. Disabled people, like everyone else share their experiences. Every month 4.5 million people in the UK use TripAdvisor – what are they saying about your business?

Q. Approximately what percentage of UK residents with a limiting disability do not take a holiday that lasts at least a week each year?

A. 50%⁶

"You need to look regularly at how visitors use your attraction and ask: if we changed something how would it improve the visitor experience? There are benefits for everyone."

Dr George Muirhead,
Locomotion: The National Railway Museum at Shildon



What's driving accessibility?

What makes you decide to invest in particular facilities? Customer feedback? Legal obligations? Your own experience? Why did you decide to offer vegetarian options? Because your customers weren't prepared to accept only a cheese omelette and moved to your competitors who already offered more imaginative options? Your disabled customers' ability to travel, to enjoy and to share experiences has escalated and with it their expectations of businesses like yours.

AN ACCESSIBLE ATTITUDE:

- Always asks - never assumes.
- Sees the person not the disability.
- Understands that accessibility and quality go hand in hand.

Bottom Line

1. Watch the VisitEngland video featuring businesses from around the country talking about their experiences in improving accessibility www.visitengland.org/improveaccess
2. Check page 15 for your starting point to improve accessibility.



About us

Kim and Terry Lord run The Ramblers, a six bedroom VisitEngland 4 star guest house near Mablethorpe on the Lincolnshire coast.

We speak to all our visitors and soon pick up if there's anything we can provide which will improve their stay. For example, some visitors with arthritis find a full size kettle too heavy so we provide travel kettles as an alternative.

To accommodate one person's condition we were asked to move the bedroom furniture around. We didn't make an issue of it and rearranged the room to suit. Now that visitor stays with us four times a year and we've welcomed two other families directly from her recommendation. It cost nothing, just 10 minutes of our time but our business gained over £1,000 from that one satisfied visitor.



"Access statements I have read focus on access for people with reduced mobility. I need information for people who are deaf: induction loops, captions on videos, subtitled TV, BSL signers etc."

Access to tourism: disabled people's views, 2010

60 is the new 40

We may try to resist but ultimately we're all getting older. By 2025 more than a third of the UK's population will be over the age of 55⁷. Older people may be surfing the internet and bungee-jumping but they still benefit from more accessible accommodation, attractions and restaurants. They may welcome a large print menu, more places to sit down or a support rail next to the toilet, even if they'd never dream of asking for it.

The Generation Game

The make-up of 'family groups' is changing and it's imperative your business recognises this. It is common to see extended families travelling together. They may include different generations and different access needs.

Increasingly grandparents are becoming the main carers for children. Over 13 million grandparents act as the chauffeur for a holiday or short break and they clock up 3.8 billion miles per year⁸.

BARRIERS ARE BAD

- TVs without subtitles can exclude deaf people from enjoying television.
- Lack of space to move is a problem for wheelchair users, pushchairs and suitcases alike.

Q. Which of the following celebrities have a learning disability?

Tom Cruise/Cher/Whoopi Goldberg

A. All of them

13m

Bottom Line

1. Make sure you appeal to older visitors – can you provide a magnifying sheet/magnifying glass or a spare pair of reading glasses?
2. Small changes make a difference – lever taps on sinks can be easier for all customers to use.
3. Check your policies are flexible e.g. can you fast track those unable to stand in queues?
4. It's an opportunity for off-peak business – are you offering incentives or packages with other businesses to capture this market?

⁷Office for National Statistics

⁸Sky Motoring, 2009

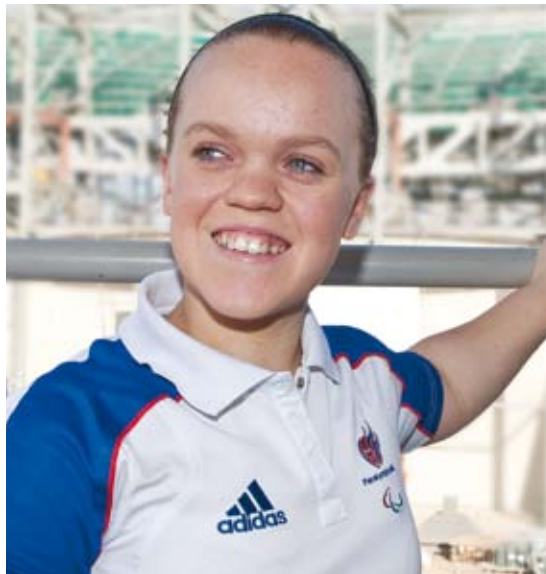
The world is watching

We don't always associate disabled people with sport but that's changing. In 1948, the UK started the world Paralympic movement. The British Paralympic team's success in 2008 brought it to our attention and this will increase when we host the **London 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games**.

These events bring a media magnifying glass that extends beyond sport to focus on our heritage and culture as well as our warmth of welcome, customer service and facilities. Are you ready to show the world how accessible and welcoming you are?

ADJUSTMENTS ARE GOOD

- They are as simple as large print menus or hypoallergenic bedding.
- They are quickly recognised and rewarded on TripAdvisor or Facebook.



Bottom Line

1. Make sure you are at ease and confident with disability – sign up for disability awareness training.
2. Check out the key skills and knowledge templates devised for your front line staff and management team – www.visitengland.org/improveaccess



2012

Q. Approximately what percentage of disabled people use a wheelchair?

A. 8%⁹ (Only!)

⁹Cited in Disability in the UK, 2010 (DoH/Papworth Trust)

"Accessible restaurants and pubs which provide excellent customer service will attract disabled people, their friends and family. 18% of disabled customers visit restaurants at least once a week and 22% visit at least two or three times a month."

Pizza Express



Where can I find...?

Every journey begins with information. Inaccurate or non-existent information is unhelpful at best, damaging at worst. If someone looks for a business where there's room to manoeuvre a wheelchair or buggy or where the menu accommodates dietary requirements – will they find you?

"I always find out essential information such as level access and availability of cabs before I go, mainly via the internet."

Access to tourism: disabled people's views, 2010

ASSUMPTIONS ARE BAD

- "It's too expensive and I never have disabled customers" – are you sure?
- "It's irrelevant because the law doesn't apply to me" – the Equality Act 2010 applies to all tourism businesses.

Bottom Line

1. Make information easy to find, welcoming and inspiring – have your web developers followed the World Wide Web Consortium guidelines? (W3C) www.w3.org/WAI
2. Check information is Accessible, Accurate, Available, and Appropriate. Would your access information pass a Vischeck test? www.vischeck.com



"All investments in greater accessibility have repaid themselves within one or two years. And the recent update of access information on our website repaid itself in three months."

Magnus Bergland – Scandic Hotels.

Your map through access

To access the tools and resources below visit
www.visitengland.org/improveaccess



www.visitengland.org/improveaccess

This booklet has been produced on behalf of the DCMS Accessible Tourism Stakeholder Forum for the 2012 Games. It builds on and updates information and statistics set out in *Accessible tourism: making it work for your business*.

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The Forum was set up in 2008 to bring stakeholders in the tourism industry together to help drive forward work to improve tourism for disabled visitors.

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