



Disabled Access Guidelines

This policy has been written by the LTA Safe And Inclusive Tennis Team. It's approved by the LTA's CEO, Executive Team and Board.

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Introduction

The rate at which disabled people are taking up sports has accelerated significantly over the past few years, particularly since the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. This means that increasingly there is a need to address inclusive design and accessibility in sports venues. Tennis is a major sport in this respect and many facilities need to be enhanced to accommodate both the upsurge of interest in the sport and the demographic changes in the number of disabled who are participating or seeking to do so in the future.

Unless the right type of design guidance is provided, new and existing facilities will not meet these demands and the sport will become less attractive or even discriminatory. The purpose of this document is to set out the obligations on sports venues in relation to the accessibility of their venue for disabled people, provide guidance on how best to satisfy these requirements and examples of best practice so that disabled players at all levels can take up and develop and thrive in their chosen sport. This is especially important when venues apply for funding from the LTA as we will give greater consideration of renovations or new building projects if plans submitted consider a minimum standard of accessibility to disabled people.

Scope

This document explains the importance of design and management of a tennis centre in terms of both meeting building regulations and satisfying obligations under the Equality Act 2010. It is intended as guidance and should not be considered as a definitive statement of obligations for all circumstances. Further professional

advice should be sought to determine legal, planning and other more detailed requirements where necessary. Supporting design guidance can also be obtained from qualified and chartered professionals, such as NRAC registered inclusive design and access consultants as well as architects and surveyors.

Statutory Requirements

All new tennis facilities and extensions or refurbishment works to existing facilities should meet or exceed the standards set out in the current Building Regulations. The Building Regulations Part M 'Access and Facilities for Disabled People' was published in 1999 and reissued in 2004. The 'Approved Document M Volume 2 – Buildings other than dwellings' (AD M) was revised in 2015 and this gives detailed guidance on how the Building Regulations Part M can be met.

AD M can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/access-to-and-use-of-buildings-approved-document-m>

Sport facilities are not covered in any detail in Part M or AD M. The AD M specifically refers to 'Accessible Sports Facilities' (a 'Sport England' publication) for many of the key design criteria associated with tennis facilities, such as:

- Door widths;
- Audience and Spectator facilities; and
- Sanitary Accommodation (WC's, showers, changing areas).

A copy of 'Accessible Sports Facilities' 2010 (and other guidance notes) by Sport England can be found at <https://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/design-and-cost-guidance/accessible-facilities/>

The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 (the EA) became law in October 2010. It replaced over 80 separate pieces of legislation (such as the Disability Discrimination Act 1995) to ensure consistency in providing for equality and protecting against discrimination in the provision of services by service providers, such as tennis clubs (whether public or private membership) and local authorities (see our FAQ ‘Who is a service provider?’ for more information). The EA requires service providers to make adjustments in advance, by anticipating the needs of visitors, guests and customers including players, coaches and spectators at tennis centres. The EA also applies in an employment context so any service provider who employs staff will need to ensure that they comply with the EA in relation to their staff members as well.

The EA makes discrimination against disabled people illegal and includes a requirement that service providers make all ‘reasonable adjustments’ to remove barriers that make accessing services more difficult or impossible for disabled people (see our FAQ ‘What is the definition of a ‘disabled person?’’ for more information).

It is important that service providers are aware of their obligations under the EA, particularly when designing new facilities or refurbishing existing facilities. Compliance with the AD M and the Sport England/EFDS guidance will help service providers comply with their duties under the EA to a certain extent; however as set out below there may be additional ‘reasonable adjustments’ that can be made.

The Building Regulations in the context of the Equality Act 2010

Compliance with AD M does not necessarily mean that a service provider has complied with the EA. Certain exemptions under the Building Regulations mean that providers of services, public authorities and associations are exempt from having to alter or remove a physical feature that complies with the ‘objectives, design considerations and provisions’ set out in the AD M for a period of ten years (from the day works were completed). Whilst this means that designing to the standards set out in the AD M gives some protection against having to make (further) alterations for up to ten years, it is not a blanket exemption from duties under the EA since consideration still needs to be made for those elements that are outside the scope of AD M. Whilst a new ramp may satisfy the requirements of the AD M, a service provider may be required to make further changes if these would be considered to be reasonable adjustments under the EA, such as for example addressing lighting on the handrails or surface features. Ultimately, what is ‘reasonable’ for a tennis venue to achieve under the EA will also depend on other factors (see FAQ’s ‘What is a ‘reasonable adjustment?’’).

Design Principles

There is a wide range of disabilities that need to be considered in order to make a venue fully accessible. Venues need to consider disabilities other than those related to mobility, including visual, hearing and learning difficulties.

Service providers need to take into consideration how the general public (whether players or spectators), can access a venue as well as how staff needs can be accommodated. It is wise to plan for accessible elements of construction from when the first design concepts for a building are tabled, whether for new build, re-building, refurbishment or when planning to make alterations or adjustments. Having to make retrospective changes can be costly, time-consuming and inconvenient. When a tennis venue has already been built and is not compliant of AD M, it's important for its owners to plan ahead any refurbishing work towards making it accessible and to advertise access issues. For example: if a venue does not have accessible courts, or toilets or parking this needs to be made public so that disabled visitors can plan ahead their visit or choose to go somewhere else. Additionally it's important to demonstrate how the venue will work towards becoming more accessible over a period of time.

Consultation

It is always advisable to consult with the potential users before carrying out any building works or refurbishments. The feedback from disability access groups and users can be invaluable in ensuring that resources are used effectively and efficiently to provide an environment that meets the standards and expectations.

For existing facilities, it is advisable to undertake an access audit to determine the current levels of accessibility offered and to determine what can and should be achieved. (Refer to FAQ section for further information). Some typical issues encountered by users with different disabilities are as follows:

Mobility

- Problems often encountered by wheelchair and semi-ambulant users are:
- Inaccessible entrance, toilets and changing facilities;
- Corridors and doorways that are too narrow or obstructed;
- Changes in level i.e. steep ramps, kerbs, thick carpeting; and
- Being forced to use a very slow platform lift which causes long queues when wheelchair tournaments take place

Visual

Problems that could be encountered are:

- Poor use of visual contrast which hinders navigating around the centre independently, identifying their location and general comprehension of the layout;
- Poor illumination due to low level lighting, glare and reflections;
- Poor signage; and
- Poorly written information, unclear directions.

Hearing

Difficulties that may be encountered include:

- Hard surfaces which could lead to a confusing and noisy environment;
- Insufficient visual information (notices, signage) which results in restricted independence; and
- Poor staff communication (for example reception staff looking down on their computer instead of facing customers, mumbling, eating while talking, covering one's mouth).

Learning difficulties

People with learning difficulties may have a combination of other impairments such as mobility or visual.

Design and Management Guidance

The following is intended as a summary of the principal design and management provisions that should be considered for tennis venues when designing new or when making alterations or adjustments within existing facilities. Further detailed guidance can be found on the Sport England website (see link provided in Statutory Requirements) and in BS8300:2009+A1:2010 Design of buildings and their approaches to meet the needs of disabled people. (referred to as BS8300). See also Other Resources.

Parking and setting-down / pick-up

- Accessible car parking bays should be signposted and located as close to the main entrance as possible. They should be monitored to ensure that they are only used by Blue Badge holders (or the EU / international equivalent).
- A standard accessible car parking bay is 3.6m wide, however providing the safe transfer zone on both sides (total width 4.8m) will allow players to have better access around the vehicle (particularly if transporting a tennis chair). To maximise the space, the 1.2m safe transfer zone can be shared between adjacent bays.
- When designing new car parks, ensure that they are flat and the surface is even and firm.
- On shared vehicle / pedestrian routes, avoid having steep humps for traffic calming from accessible parking to the facility entrance or provide suitable gaps to allow wheelchair access. If there is a pavement, ensure the drop kerbs are wide enough and of a sufficiently high standard (i.e. preferably no higher than 5mm for each level change) to accommodate the small castors of sports chairs.
- Step-free, level access on a firm and wide surface should be provided from the parking to the main entrance. If the parking is more than 50m away from the entrance this should be mentioned in the venue's access statement and website.
- Castors on modern wheelchairs are smaller than they used to be and those on tennis wheelchairs necessarily small to facilitate changing direction. Smooth surfaces from the car park and throughout the venue are needed to allow ease of movement.
- The setting-down / pick-up point should be indicated with signage, preferably covered and as close to the entrance as possible. It should be adequately long to allow for access to the rear of the vehicle.

Access from car park to entrance

- Accessible routes should be at least 1.8m wide to allow for wheelchair users, stick users, guide dog users and those with buggies or prams to pass one another.
- They should be smooth, non-slip, level as far as possible or with Part M compliant ramps and steps as detailed in AD M.
- Ramps and steps should have two handrails.
- Ramps should never be steeper than 1:12. They should be no more than 2m long if 1:12, 3m maximum if 1:13, 5m if 1:15 etc. Less steep than 1:20 is always preferable, in which case they do not need the handrails (nor visual contrasting to the ramp surface).
- The accessible routes should have height clearance under any structures, canopies or foliage of at least 2.1m.
- Accessible routes should be clearly marked (see Signage).

Entrance

- The entrance should be visually obvious on approach, with good visual contrast and glare-free lighting.
- It should have a level area immediately in front of the entrance doors.
- Entrance doors should have an effective clear width (ECW) of at least 1200mm and ideally be fully automated. The requirement for all new public buildings is 1000mm ECW, however if refurbishing an existing building and the full door width cannot be achieved, the width must be maximised as far as possible. For all cases where the ECW is less than 1200mm, automated or power-assist doors are advised, in particular with automatic sliding doors.
- There is a requirement for door opening forces to be no greater than 30N to 30o and 22.5N to 60o. In practice this is very difficult to achieve and is further reason to provide automated or power-assist doors.
- There should be a level threshold (15mm maximum overall, with small 'steps' of no more than 5mm each) and a level entrance mat (that is not coir).
- The entrance lobby doors (inner and outer) should allow 2m minimum space between the door swings (unless both sets are automated). It is advisable to minimise the number of doors that need to be opened manually.

Reception

- The reception desk should have a hearing induction loop for hearing aid users which is regularly checked and its presence indicated by this sign:



- The desk should also have a lower section 760mm above floor level for wheelchair users and those of short stature.
- If applicable, at least one turnstile should provide a 1200mm minimum ECW.

Sports Chair Zones

Wheelchair Tennis background

Wheelchair tennis started in humble surroundings on an American public court in May 1976. Since then, wheelchair tennis has grown to such an extent that in 1998, the IWTA was formed to represent wheelchair tennis governing bodies across the world and is governed by the ITF. Professional wheelchair players have as much as an active calendar as those on both the ATP and WTA tours. In 1986, the French Open had its first wheelchair event, followed in 1992 by wheelchair tennis becoming a full medal sport in the Paralympics in Barcelona. Further information on wheelchair tennis can be found at www.itfwheelchairtennis.com and www.tennisfoundation.org.uk/physically-impaired-tennis

What is a Sports Wheelchair?

Rather than thinking of it as just a chair to move around in, it is more a piece of athletic equipment, offering the player specific mobility options to help facilitate their game. As you can see from the diagrams below, the camber of the wheels on the sports chair are much wider than the day chair. This provides more mobility and a stable base for the player to move around the court. Invariably, the base width of the sports chair (measured from the outside edge of the wheels) can reach up to 1200mm (diagonal critical measurement from front castor to back castor by the anti-tip bar could be more)

against that of 800mm for a day chair. When building new or enhancing existing facilities, access to the courts, corridors, and changing rooms will need to accommodate for the additional width of sports wheelchairs. The additional width also requires an enhanced management policy to keep routes and circulation spaces clear.



Diagram courtesy of Sport England

It is also important to understand that once off the court, most wheelchair tennis players will transfer to a standard wheelchair for getting around the building. Indeed, over recent years it has been recognised that especially when dealing with the larger wheelbases (1200mm is not unusual) it is neither practical nor necessary to design every area inside a centre to the wider standard, but instead to concentrate resources more effectively.

The approach is to identify sports chair ‘zones’ in which a need is established for the wider and more stringent standards of ‘Accessible Sports Facilities’ 2010 to be applied. Areas outside of this zone can follow the more general guidance of ‘Accessible Sports Facilities’ 2010 and AD M.

In identifying these zones, the following are key considerations:

- Whilst players clearly need to have suitable access to take their sports chair onto the court, to change ends between games, access ‘time out’ or refreshment areas between games / training

sessions and to reach a place of safety in an emergency for example, it is less important to provide the full accessibility for a sports chair to reach every other area, however prioritising these other areas correctly will make the most of resources when considering access in and around the centre.

- Access to a place of safety (or to a safe refuge) during an emergency evacuation, access to a suitable WC and to wheelchair storage facilities are likely to be the most important provisions to make and these should normally be included in the zones.
- Wheelchair tennis players often have to push their own sports chair from car parking / setting-down point onto the courts. Therefore, the route should also facilitate the potential difficulties involved with a wheelchair user having to push their sports chair in front of them, so for example level, smooth access and automatic doors would be a considerable benefit in these circumstances.
- Facilities such as showers, changing rooms, refreshment areas, spectator spaces and other parts of the centre are likely to be far less critical when considering designing for full access sports chair zones but still need attention.

Having identified the sports chair zone(s), the following should be applied:

- Corridors should be 2.5m with a minimum of 2m where passing places can be provided that are at least 2.5m long and 2.5m wide, and no more than 5m apart.
- Ramps should be a minimum of 2.5m wide

- Internal lobbies should allow at least 2m between door swings.
- The ECW in doorways should be at least 875mm for a single leaf, with potential to provide at least 1200mm ECW by opening a further (half) leaf. Note that doors on holdbacks linked to the fire alarm are the most suitable provision in most circumstances, however assistance may be required by staff for when the doors release in an emergency.
- Fire emergency routes for disabled and non-disabled players and visitors should be rehearsed and findings included in fire evacuation plans. If some emergency routes are inaccessible disabled users affected should be notified and measures taken to assist their safe evacuation during an emergency.
- Lifts should be provided with 1200mm ECW doors. They should be at least 2m wide x 1.4m deep to accommodate two wheelchairs.
- Unisex accessible WC's should be at least 1850mm wide x 2200mm deep (with a power operated door set to provide 1200mm ECW).
- Safe refuges should be at least 1.2m x 1.5m.
- A secure area for the storage of wheelchairs (both standard and sports) should be provided.

On-court

- There are a number of different surfaces available for the tennis courts, some are less suitable than others and clay should not be provided in new facilities intended for wheelchair tennis.
- Acrylic is considered to be the best wheelchair tennis surface.
- Where there are more than 5 courts, at least 2 should be acrylic (or possibly high quality macadam).
- There should be at least 1200mm between court net posts for sports wheelchair access, and as some chairs are wider there should be a space of at least 1500mm ECW available for players to change ends.
- Floodlighting columns should not interfere with the required spaces.
- Nets should have suitably located and easily identifiable openings. They should not be too heavy or difficult to open for players to pass through them or to retrieve balls from.
- The minimum run-back* (6.4m) and side runs (3.6m at court field edges, and 4.27m between courts that are not separately enclosed) should be adhered to, as the play in wheelchair tennis involves allowing two bounces and uses a larger area than standard play.
- *See LTA Indoor Courts Building Brief <https://www.lta.org.uk/globalassets/venue/support-your-venue/documents/indoor-tennis-structure-guidance.pdf>

Non Sports Chair Zones

- Corridors should be 1.8m wide and a minimum of 1.5m only where passing places can be provided that are at least 1.8m wide.
- Ramps should be a minimum of 1.5m wide.

- Internal lobbies should allow at least 1.57m between door swings.
- The ECW in doorways should be at least 800mm for a single leaf. Note that doors on holdbacks linked to the fire alarm are the most suitable provision in most circumstances, however assistance may be required by staff for when the doors release in an emergency.
- Lifts should be provided with 800mm ECW doors. They should be at least 1.1m wide x 1.4m deep.
- Unisex accessible WC's should be at least 1500mm wide x 2200mm deep.
- Safe refuges should be at least 900mm x 1400mm.
- Ensure emergency alarm cords in all accessible sanitary provisions reach all the way down to the floor and that a reset button is available.
- Provision of changing facilities should cater for both the individual/independent user and small groups during public sessions. Ideally a separate accessible WC should be incorporated.
- Consider the proximity of the changing areas to the activities within the building. Storage areas for mobility aids such as wheelchairs and scooters are a useful addition and should be conveniently located.

General access within a facility

- Be mindful of the strength of door closers. Lighter doors benefit young children, older people as well as parents with prams and any player carrying equipment.
 - Anti-finger trap hinge guarding is helpful where there could be children.
 - When providing seating, ensure there is a variety with different seating heights. 350 – 550mm AFL, with most around 450mm (compressed cushion height), as well as having a selection with arms. At least some should be able to be easily moved around and have clear visual contrast against the walls and floor. They should be kept out of circulation routes.
 - WC's, showers and changing facilities
 - A unisex accessible changing room with shower, WC and fixed bench seat requires a width of 2700mm x 2200mm deep. See Figure 18 in 'Accessible Sports Facilities'.
- ### Signage
- Use only the correct and approved ISO or BS signage (Fire Exits and safety signage) where this is required.
 - Use only well-recognised symbols for other signage such as for WC's, accessible WC's, stairs, lifts and other facilities.
 - Symbols are the preference, but these should always be provided along with text.
 - Decide a theme (see guidance below) and make this consistent throughout the building, including in the heights / locations on the walls / doors.
 - Sign content should be short and simple.
 - Decide on any tactile signage (including Braille) to be provided. Note that priority should be given to public parts and to the most frequently used amenities such as WC's.

- Tactile signage should always be designed by a specialist. It should be located at 1400mm – 1700mm above floor level.
- Text and symbols should visually contrast with the back plate of any sign board (and this should visually contrast with the wall if applicable). For example, visual contrast is provided by blue on yellow, black on white, black on pink or yellow, etc.
- Text should be in a sans-serif font and with only capitalised text for the opening letter. Do not capitalise whole words or sentences as THEY ARE VERY DIFFICULT TO READ FOR MANY.
- The smaller text height of 15 – 25mm should be used only for close-up viewing (lower case ‘x’ height measurement).
- Medium text height of 50 – 100mm should be used for intermediate distance signs, such as from a few metres away across a corridor (lower case ‘x’ height measurement).
- All other signage, including external signs should be larger.
- Symbols such as for the WC’s should be at least 100mm tall.
- Room signage should be placed next to the room doors, unless it is a WC, in which case it should be on the door.
- Text signs should be left justified unless arrows are included, in which case the arrow should be on the side indicated and the text justified to this side.
- Provide a non-reflective (matt) finish to the sign and ensure the lighting is glare-free and adequate for all the conditions expected.

Wheelchair spectators (indoor centres)

- For spectator areas for up to 600 people, the venue should be designed to allow for 6 wheelchair spectators. At least 1% must be permanently designed in (the remainder can be provided by having removable seats). Each space should be 900mm wide x 1400mm long, with 900mm width access route to each. Please refer to AD M and BS8300 for further details, and for venues with over 600 spectator capacity.
- Note that spectator seating on upper levels should always incorporate the main handrail to be slightly higher than usual and with a clear viewing panel below, so that a good view is provided from 800mm to 1200mm above floor level for people seated (whether in a standard seat or wheelchair) and safety is maintained.

Emergency exit routes and procedures

A Fire Safety Risk assessment is required under current legislation, and this must provide a clear strategy for evacuation of all building occupants without external support from the Fire Brigade.

A General Emergency Egress Plan (GEEP) for visitors and a Personal Emergency Egress Plan (PEEP) for staff should be in place to accommodate anyone who cannot independently exit the building to reach a place of safety.

See ‘Fire Safety Risk Assessment – Means of Escape for Disabled People (Supplementary Guide)’ <http://www.communities.gov.uk/>

publications/fire/firesafetyassessmentmeans

The correct use and locations of evacuation chairs and safe refuges should be supported by a suitable fire strategy, which may require trained staff to assist with implementation. These matters are vital in terms of safety and must be addressed. Staff may need to assist with communication during an emergency, with wayfinding, assisted evacuation or with doors if they release on the fire alarm sounding as they could become a barrier.

It is always preferable to have visual as well as audible indication of an emergency evacuation being necessary. If no visual alarms are installed, for example in WC's and showers, then Fire Wardens duties should be ensured to cover all these areas in a 'sweep' of the building on the alarm sounding. Sometimes having additional light switches outside of a potentially locked WC or shower can provide an opportunity for someone inside to be alerted, but this must be provided alongside a suitable fire strategy that must also be effectively communicated.

Consideration should be given regarding the incorporation of suitable emergency escape routes including the use of any lifts and stairs, especially as most lifts will become unusable in a fire.

The final fire exit doors may need to have a horizontal bar, a lever handle or a lever push pad fitted.

Please also refer to BS9999, Part M of the Building Regulations and BS8300 for further guidance.

Programme and promotions literature

- Use plain English and jargon-free

language as much as possible.

- Use visual contrast to the text and any symbols.
- Ensure left aligned text.
- Use sub headings and short paragraphs.
- Use bullet points and lists.
- Do not underline URLs.
- Use short, concise single idea sentences.
- 12pt size minimum.
- Clear font such as Arial or Verdana.
- Do not use BLOCK CAPITALS.
- Avoid slashed constructions, for example 'a and/or b'.

First Aid

Ensure First Aid equipment and personnel contact details are advertised, accessible and accurate.

Accessibility of website

No facility can claim to be fully inclusive without an accessible website to showcase facilities and to communicate any existing access issues in advance. A digital access audit will help you make sure your website is accessible to all and is effective in communicating your services.

It's worth considering registering your facility with ClubSpark, the British Tennis online platform to providing tennis venues with the opportunity to create a website and take bookings and payments online. This will help you to reach a wider audience. For more information go to:

<https://clubspark.lta.org.uk/>

Your FAQs answered

What is the definition of a ‘disabled person’?

The Equality Act 2010 defines disability as a ‘physical, sensory or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person’s ability to carry out normal daily activities’. This extends to people with cancer and HIV and mental health issues. “Long term” means that the adverse effect last or has lasted a minimum of 12 months or is permanent. Protection is also granted on the grounds of the other protected characteristics, such as gender, age, religion, race, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, sex and sexual orientation.

Who is a service provider?

A service provider is anyone who provides a service to the public such as leisure and sports centres/clubs, libraries, shops and theatres.

How will it affect me?

If you are a service provider you are required to make all ‘reasonable adjustments’ to remove barriers that make accessing goods or services more difficult or impossible for disabled people. Such adjustments may involve:

- Policies, procedures and practices;
- Physical features of the environment; and
- Auxiliary aids.

‘Reasonable adjustments’ are defined in the next FAQ. Compliance by making adjustments beyond those required in regulations represents a ‘best practice’

policy and will ensure good quality staff and customer relations. There is no enforcement agency but individuals can take legal action if they feel they are being discriminated against in any way, including (but not only) when ‘reasonable adjustments’ are not made. In this age it’s very easy for people to voice complaints on social media, so it’s worth considering how inclusive your provisions are, as your reputation could be affected.

What is a ‘reasonable adjustment’?

There is no definitive single answer to this: The phrase is used by the law to provide some level of flexibility and to allow alternative solutions in different situations. Without intending to be exhaustive, the following are some of the factors which might be taken into account when considering what is ‘reasonable’ under the Equality Act 2010:

- Whether taking any particular steps would be effective in overcoming the substantial disadvantage that disabled people face;
- The extent to which it is practicable for them to take such steps;
- The financial and other costs of making the adjustment;
- The extent of any disruption which taking the steps would cause;
- The extent of the providers’ financial and other resources;
- The amount of any resources already spent on making accessibility related adjustments;
- The availability of financial or other assistance such as Access to Work.

I don't need to do anything: my facility already meets with Part M of the Building Regulations

If your facility meets with Part M of the Building Regulations through the Approved Document M then you are already part of the way there, however these regulations only define the minimum statutory requirements for people with mobility, visual and hearing impairment and (as acknowledged in AD M) they are limited in their scope for accessible sports facilities. Providers of Sports Facilities should instead refer to the Sport England/EFDS publications and guidance notes including 'Accessible Sport Facilities' and the 'Access Audit Sheets', which can be downloaded from their website (see next FAQ). BS8300 is also likely to be useful; this can be purchased from the BSI website <https://www.bsigroup.com>.

How can I find out whether I need to alter any part of the facilities?

If you are considering building a new facility or undertaking work at an existing facility, whether it be maintenance, an extension or alterations, it is advisable to undertake an access audit to assess the level of existing provisions. Sport England have produced a document entitled 'Access for Disabled People: Audit Sheets' (downloadable at this link: <https://www.sportengland.org/media/4246/accessible-sports-facilities-audit-check-list-october-2012.pdf>) which provides a starting reference point for any tennis facility provider looking to improve accessibility.

If you would prefer an access auditor or access consultant to undertake the audit on your behalf, then it is advisable to contact someone who has knowledge in this specific area, such as an NRAC registered auditor or

consultant. See <http://www.nrac.org.uk/> for a list of registered auditors and consultants. Be wary of any unregistered professionals who may claim to help you with "DDA compliance" as no such thing exists: The DDA has long since been superseded and the Equality Act 2010 is not prescriptive on specific dimensions or shapes of built environments but requires 'reasonable adjustments'.

Where can I get training for coaching people with disabilities?

There are courses available for tennis coaches highlighting awareness regarding coaching disabled people. Further information on this and an application form can be obtained from the Tennis Foundation www.tennisfoundation.org.uk

What are Changing Places facilities?

The Changing Places Consortium launched a campaign for Changing Places WC's on behalf of the thousands of people with profound and multiple learning disabilities and their carers, and the many other disabled people who cannot use standard accessible toilets. These are toilets with enough space for disabled people and their carers, and the right equipment, including a height adjustable changing bench and a hoist. An approximate minimum size of 3.5m x 2m or the equivalent floor space 7m² is required and generally larger 3m x 4m is recommended, in particular for new build. The provision is generally best practice. These facilities should be provided as additions rather than alternatives to accessible WC's.

Further information including design layouts and templates is available at: <http://changing-places.org/>

Should I produce an accessibility statement for my website?

The short answer is yes!

It can help you to meet your legal obligations under the Equality Act 2010

It provides essential information for people with access needs

It is a marketing opportunity to broaden the appeal of your business

Unless accessibility information is clearly available, visitors may choose to go elsewhere.

An access auditor or access consultant can do this for you.

Alternatively, you may be able to produce your own accessibility guide using a free online tool available at: <http://www.access.tourismtools.co.uk/>

Additionally, you can use the Sport England guidance notes including their 'Access Audit Sheets' (found online here: <https://goo.gl/FRKXGv>) to draw out the key accessibility features that your venue provides. It is equally important if not more so to identify any shortfalls at this point, where you also have the opportunity to say how the staff can assist visitors to overcome any barriers.

Examples of Access Statement

When you have read through this LTA guidance, you should be working towards being able to state the following in your access statement:

“We are working towards being fully inclusive. We endeavour to arrange events so they are as inclusive as possible. However, we would appreciate your co-operation in

meeting specific requirements and ask that you inform us immediately if you require additional facilities or any other personal requirements.”

(insert examples from VisitEngland - There is a template for sports venues. The site can be accessed now via www.visitengland.org/accessibilityguides.)

I'd like to host an inclusive event at my venue, what can I do?

Whilst ultimately what you are obliged to carry out in terms of 'reasonable adjustments' will depend on a number of factors, here are a few further tips to assist in providing a more inclusive welcome and experience for disabled visitors:

- Make sure all areas of club or venue feel safe and are well lit, including parking and approaches.
- Display a sign stating that you're an inclusive venue where everyone is welcome and if people wish to bring a support worker they can.
- Display Fair Play signage and have Fair Play booklets around (they're currently being rebranded and will be available from April 2017 but in the meantime, you can view and encourage the principles from the LTA 'Fair Play' initiative – see the video <https://www.lta.org.uk/play/the-basics/fair-play/>
- Make sure service animals are welcome, for example assistance dogs: have a bowl of water handy for them and know where their owner can be directed to take them outside to 'exercise'.
- If you organise an event with food, ensure

- it has a variety of foods, that at least some of them are easy to eat with one hand and don't require too much chewing (for example small canapes). Ensure that there are some straws available for drinks as well as mugs or glasses with handles. Indicate clearly which are vegetarian, dairy, or meat based dishes. Having some thick-handled cutlery that is easier to hold is also advisable.
- Consider events that promote attendance of a variety of communities and what you can do to make everyone feel welcome. For example, you could host a tennis

taster session for women and make a free crèche available during that time.

- When organising events give as much notice as possible and alert people of any issues well in advance (for example limits on parking, sports chair access, accessible showers) so that people know the situation in advance and can seek the appropriate support from staff / support workers.

If you would like to find out more information about accessibility, please email the Safe and Inclusive Team at the LTA at: safeandinclusive@lta.org.uk

Other Resources

BS 8300:2009+A1:2010

Design of buildings and their approaches to meet the needs of disabled people. Code of practice (purchasable from British Standards Institute <http://shop.bsigroup.com/ProductDetail/?pid=000000000030217421>)

Equality Act 2010 Codes of Practice: Equality and Human Rights Commission:

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en>

Sport England Website (publications and guidance on accessible sports facilities to help designers, building owners and operators meet design and operational obligations):

<http://www.sportengland.org>

English Federation of Disability Sport website links - including

'Access for All: Opening Doors - A guide to support your sports club to improve physical access for disabled people': <http://www.efds.co.uk/how-we-help/>

Tennis Foundation's leaflet:

Open your doors:
<http://www.tennisfoundation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/tennis-foundation-open-your-doors-be-an-inclusive-venue.pdf>