



SENDaWelcome

How inclusive are you?

A resource guide for businesses



Introduction

We want to make our local community a better place for people with Learning Disabilities and for people who are Autistic. Our work makes our community a better place for everyone.

Ask yourself: If I were disabled would I feel welcome here?

Investing in accessibility is not just a moral and legal obligation, but a smart business decision. Here are some benefits:



Increase your customer base

Disabled people represent 24% of the population.



Enhance your reputation

75% of disabled people and their families walk away from UK businesses due to poor accessibility or customer service. An inclusive environment gives a positive public image not only to those with a disability but to friends, family and care givers.



Financial benefit

The spending power of people with disabilities, the 'purple pound' is estimated to be worth around £249 billion annually in the UK. Don't miss out on potential customers. Accessible businesses can also reduce costs associated with legal disputes.



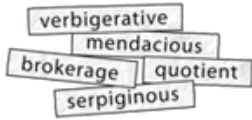
Future proof your business as accessibility standards evolve

References:
commonslibrary.parliament.uk/
and [Wearepurple.org.uk](https://wearepurple.org.uk)

Top tips for easier to read information



Use a picture next to text. Don't put writing over a picture.



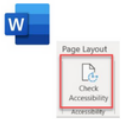
Use simple language, not jargon, abbreviations or difficult words



Use bullet points



Use a white or yellow background



Use Microsoft Words accessibility checker to find ways to improve your document

Text Choices

- Use a simple font like Arial, Helvetica or Verdana
- Make your font size 14 or bigger
- Use lower case not CAPITALS
- Make sure there is lots of space around each sentence
- Do not underline words or use italic fonts
- Make sure the writing lines up with the left side of the paper.

Give plenty of time

- Give time for people to take in the information.
- Give information in advance if possible

Further resources

abilitynet.org.uk How to make documents accessible.

Photosymbols.com What is Easy Read?

changepeople.org How to make documents accessible.



Inclusive Employment

Only 5.6% of people with a learning disability between the ages of 18 and 64 are employed.

Benefits of being a disability confident employer:

- Having a diverse skill set within your team
- Boost employee engagement and morale
- Give your company a competitive advantage
- Bring new approaches to tackling problems
- May have higher commitment to the job



Speak to us if you have a volunteer or paid opportunity for an Autistic person or a person who has a Learning Disability. We can help to make connections.

References:
fingertips.phe.org.uk

Further resources

[Beyondautism.org.uk](https://beyondautism.org.uk)

Tips on how to make interviews accessible and how to make adjustments to the work environment for people with Autism

[Onefrontdoor.org.uk](https://onefrontdoor.org.uk)

They offer help to fill vacancies, networking opportunities and general advice in making adverts accessible

[InclusiveChange.co.uk](https://inclusivechange.co.uk)

Offer advice/ consultation and often have free training for businesses to help identify and eliminate barriers, fostering inclusivity, where diversity is celebrated and everyone feels valued.

[Sixteencoop.co.uk](https://sixteencoop.co.uk)

Support for employer and new employees with Disabilities. They can provide job coaches to ensure success.

[Weworkforeveryone.org](https://weworkforeveryone.org)

Support for employers to increase diversity in the workplace.

Environment

Your space probably needs to cater for a wide range of access needs. Here are our top tips:

- List your site on [AccessAble.co.uk](https://www.accessible.co.uk). This is a planning tool for people wanting to visit your business
- Build a relationship with your customers to learn about their specific needs
- Have different ways of contacting you so people can discuss their access requirements
- Consider offering and advertising quieter times where music is turned down and bright lights are dimmed
- Consider having a quiet space with accessible seating that can be made a priority area
- Undertake an accessibility survey to identify areas to improve
- Have easy read signs with pictures
- Have a range of seating, crockery/cutlery and space between aisles so that wheelchairs can get through
- Have an accessible toilet

Further resources

[VisitBritain.org](https://www.visitbritain.org)

A guide to making your business inclusive and accessible. A tourism focus, but great advice.

[disabilityinc.org.uk](https://www.disabilityinc.org.uk)

Accessibility surveys and consultancy service.

[ACS.org.uk](https://www.acs.org.uk)

‘Welcoming Disabled Customers’ a guide for making shops inclusive. The advice works well for restaurants too.

[Euansguide.com](https://www.euanguide.com)

Tips on making your business accessible

A window sticker like this and a battery operated doorbell can be welcoming and inviting.



Communication

Top tips for communicating with a person who has a Learning Disability:

- Talk to the person, not the person who is with them
- Speak slowly and clearly, use your usual tone of voice
- Use accessible language by avoiding long words or jargon
- Be attentive: Listen carefully and wait for the person to finish speaking
- Be patient, it may take some people longer to respond
- Be kind, someone might ask you to repeat what you have said
- Ask questions that require short answers or a nod of the head
- Repeat what you've understood and if you are unsure check the person has understood
- Reduce background noise and distractions as far as possible
- Use facial expressions and hand gestures
- Try using positive non-verbal communication like smiling, using a soft tone of voice, calm gestures and a relaxed body posture

“Kindness costs nothing”

Further resources

Gov.uk

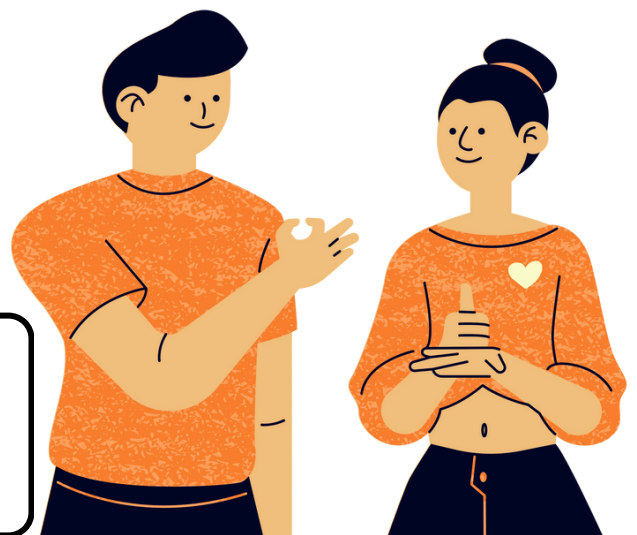
Guidance: Inclusive language: words to use and avoid when writing about disability

learningdisabilities.org.uk

Helpful tools and resources including a guide on communicating with and for people with learning disabilities.

mencap.org.uk

Watch the video ‘Do you see me?’ lots of resources available.



Support and training for your staff

Supporting your team starts with fostering an inclusive environment:

- Write an inclusive pledge
- Embed accessibility in your policies and procedures
- Raise awareness of hidden disabilities by using the 'any disability' symbol. Shown here



Your Team:

- Train staff, there are lots of local organisations that provide free and low cost training. See resources below.
- Ask people with Learning Disabilities for their feedback
- Be an inclusive employer

“Knowledge changes everything”

Have you thought about having an 'Accessibility Champion'?
Someone who is responsible for embedding accessibility throughout the business



Further resources

[VisitBritain.org](https://www.visitbritain.org)

Accessibility Champion:
A tool kit for businesses

disabilityinc.org.uk

Consultancy and training that has been developed by people with lived experience

autism.org.uk

Often have free training available on eventbrite

[Scope.org.uk](https://www.scope.org.uk)

Support for businesses for disability inclusion

Inclusive design means better design for everyone

I worked in a pub for
15 years because they
understood me

I like to show people what I
can do when people see past
my anxiety and learning
disability

I like when people
slow down and take
their time with me

I like it when signs are
simple and clear

Everybody is different,
we all need different
things

“Nothing about us without us”

The best advice we have is to ask people with a disability how accessible your business is.

If you would like support from people with lived experience to make your business a more inclusive please contact us at:
mycommunitybristol@gmail.com

This document was made with thanks to the My Community Bristol Project.



No one should be
excluded because of
a disability

