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# Museum Access Information

Guidelines 2016

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# Introduction

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**These guidelines are designed to help improve the access information provided by museums, in particular for blind and partially sighted people. They are published alongside 'State of Museum Access 2016: A survey of UK museum access information for blind and partially sighted visitors', a report which shows the range in provision of access information for deaf and disabled visitors across the UK.**

There are many examples across the UK of museums, galleries and heritage sites welcoming, and providing good opportunities, for blind and partially sighted visitors to experience their venue and collections. There is evidence that museums in general are considered to have 'good' accessibility for disabled people, compared to other categories of public building.<sup>1</sup>

However, there are still many UK museums that have no access information on their website, and as a result will be losing visitors, reputation and revenue, and may also be in breach of the Equality Act 2010.

A disabled person considering a visit to a museum may have been prompted to do so by a review, personal recommendation, leaflet or email, but they – or a companion – will be highly likely to check the museum's website as part of their decision and planning process.<sup>2</sup>

The absence of useful information lowers people's confidence that barriers to access will be addressed at the venue itself, and they may not make the visit, feeling excluded from the museum's target audience.<sup>3</sup>

VocalEyes believes that blind and partially sighted people should have the best opportunities to experience and enjoy arts and heritage, equal to the rest of the population.

While only 3 in 10 museums do not provide any information for a blind or partially sighted person planning a visit, we know that there is more work to do. You can make a difference by including disabled people in your target audience with welcoming, up-to-date access information online.

These guidelines are intended for staff that are responsible for, or can influence visitor information on museum websites, marketing and/or social media.

We appreciate that budget and staff capacity varies hugely across museums, and with the challenging economic climate, training or access budgets can be small or non-existent. However, awareness and effort to provide information and communicate with disabled visitors costs little or nothing, and can make a huge difference.

## Process 1: Map the visitor's journey

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The museum visitor's journey begins before they cross your threshold, with awareness, motivation and decisions on when and how to visit. It is useful to map out different 'visitor journeys', noting every stage in fine detail; what information might be required, and which barriers may be encountered.

For example, Aisha visits the Castle Museum website using text-to-speech software to find out how she can get to the museum using public transport, and whether she can access the new exhibition.

Can she find this information easily, and in the detail she needs? Her guide dog is welcomed, but does she herself feel welcomed and equipped to visit? Is she given someone to contact so she can ask for more information? She also wants to find out if there is a café and a shop to buy a birthday present for the friend she's meeting there. If she does decide to go, then she will spend money at the museum and tell her friends (sighted and blind) about it afterwards.

Take a look at your museum's website. Could it answer Aisha's questions? Do you think Aisha would visit your museum?

## Process 2: Consult disabled visitors

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These guidelines give some general pointers on improving your access information, but in the end, the content depends on your venue. The best way of discovering what you need to include will come from talking to disabled visitors.

We recommend involving disabled people in a consultative process, so you can get first-hand and local experience and insight.<sup>4</sup> A good place to start is with local groups. RNIB Sightline Directory ([sightlinedirectory.org.uk](http://sightlinedirectory.org.uk)) is a database of services for blind and partially sighted people, and includes details of local groups.

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# 1.1 The access page

## Keep it in a logical place

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We recommend that a dedicated 'Access Information' webpage is placed in a logical section (Visiting) and is easily navigated to from the home page. For smaller museum websites with a single visiting page, a clearly headed section of the page is sufficient.

Some museums locate access information within the Learning, Facilities, General Information or Our Policies sections of the website; none of these are intuitive places for a visitor to look.

There are three types of access information relevant to a visitor:

- **Information relating to accessing the building.**
- **Access resources and programmed events within the venue.**
- **Accessibility features of the website itself.**

Each type should be covered, though the information and options for accessibility of the website itself should be in a separate section, with a link to and from the access information in the visiting section.

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## Information, policies and statements

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Your organisation may be required to have, and publish an access policy or statement.<sup>5</sup> These are often internal management documents, and not the same as visitor access information.

- **Write your access information for the intended public readership.**
- **Do not title a document or page of useful practical information a ‘Policy’ or Statement’; visitors will be less likely to read it, assuming it does not contain relevant information for them.**

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## Welcome people

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In our survey of museum website access information, we found that many sites are negative or impersonal in tone, focusing solely on highlighting the barriers to access (for example steps, low light levels, uneven surfaces, lack of accessible information).

While it is important to identify and acknowledge barriers, we recommend two key rules:

- **Start with a welcoming message**, and always consider the audience when writing the information.
- **Do not make assumptions**. Provide clear factual information, including distances. Let the reader decide if the museum is accessible to them.

If you keep these in mind, the reader will know that you are making a genuine effort to include disabled visitors, and are keen to address the barriers. The opening welcome section is also a good place to offer personal assistance, if you have front-of-house staff who are trained in disability awareness and guiding.

If your museum charges for entry, you should also provide details of your concessions scheme with relation to disabled visitors. Providing a free ticket for a personal assistant, support worker or companion is a form of reasonable adjustment that can enable a disabled person to attend your venue.<sup>6</sup>

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## Formats

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### Video

Some venues use videos to convey information about access. While it can be helpful to show visitors film footage of the site before they visit, this is likely to be inaccessible to a blind user.

Ensure content is not exclusively presented in visuals: transcribe and describe information. More detailed guidelines for web videos can be found in Section 2.1 below.

### Downloadable document

We recommend additionally providing your access information in a document format that can be downloaded from the access information page.<sup>7</sup>

This is useful for people to print out, and for screen reader users, who can download the document and not have to repeatedly navigate back to the page.

Many museums also provide a link to their Access Policy or Statement, but remember, these documents are primarily internal, and not a substitute for proper information written for visitors, about any current barriers to access and the resources and programmes to help overcome them.

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## 1.2 Access contact

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Alongside comprehensive access information online, we recommend providing a dedicated point of contact for access-related enquiries and bookings.

This reassures people that the person dealing with their enquiry will be trained, knowledgeable, and that there will be continuity to any exchanges over a series of emails or phone calls.

### **We recommend that you:**

- Provide a dedicated email address (access@) rather than the generic info@.
- Include a phone number and postal address on the access page.
- Avoid use of a contact form, particularly those using CAPTCHA technology that require deciphering visual information, which are often inaccessible, particularly to blind and partially sighted people.
- Respond to enquiries as promptly as possible, ideally within 5 working days.
- Ensure staff answering public enquiries by email or phone are briefed fully on known barriers to access in the museum, and the resources and programmed events which may be of use and interest to the visitor.

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## 1.3 Directions and orientation

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Most museums include information on how to locate their physical site within their website's visiting section, from a simple address, to details for different modes of transport, and an embedded Google Map.

We recommend providing directions and orientation information, within your access information page along with a larger version map, which is further simplified and of higher contrast than embedded Google Maps.

### **Directions and orientation for blind and partially sighted people.**

#### **Address the following aspects:**

- Accessible parking.
- Taxi / car drop off for visitors.
- Nearest public transport stations or stops.

Give detailed description from each of the above locations, right up to the information desk (do not stop at the front gate/entrance).

#### **When writing a description, consider the following questions:**

- What distance is each section of the journey?
- Are there any landmarks on the way? e.g. 'you will pass a statue of Sir Harry Smith'.
- How many steps are there? Do they go up or down and turn to the right or left? Is there a handrail, what side is it on? Is it continuous?
- Does the ground surface change? e.g. from pavement to gravel.
- How busy is the route?
- Does the light level change? e.g. as you come into an entrance hall.

- Does the noise level change significantly? What is the source of the noise? e.g an introductory film.
- Is there street furniture on the route, such as benches, posts and signage?

This is also an opportunity to describe your museum venue, in terms of the approach, façade and general layout, to give the visitor a sense of the space generally.

Some of the best museum access pages have good images of entrances and gallery spaces, which help people anticipate whether access will be an issue for them. A photograph is also useful when a person with a visual impairment is trying to find the venue. However, written description, or a recorded audio version is best for blind and partially sighted people.

To get it right, consult and test with real visitors. Write a draft, ask your access panel to review, and revise. You could invite a local blind or partially sighted organisation to visit and try out your description and suggest improvements.



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## 1.4 Sections for specific groups

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Many websites only reference physical barriers to access, but your access information needs to consider the wide range of impairments and barriers.

Following general information such as getting there, and contact information, you should have sub-sections with details for different audiences. While many people do not want to be labelled, those using text-to-speech reader or screen magnification software will be more likely to find the information relevant to them if well sign-posted.

Some access information might need to be repeated in two or more sub-sections, for example, information about noise or light levels could be useful for blind or partially sighted people who are D/deaf, deafened or hard of hearing, or people with autism.

Section 1.5 provides further details on what to include for blind and partially sighted visitors, but other organisations can help advise on meeting the needs of other audience groups. Here are a few, but this list is not comprehensive.

- **Museum Disability Cooperative Network** ([musedcn.org.uk](http://musedcn.org.uk))  
A group of committed museum professionals working with academics, groups, specialists, curators and managers to share knowledge to break down barriers for disability in the cultural sector.
- **National Autistic Society** ([autism.org.uk](http://autism.org.uk))  
The UK's leading autism charity.

- **National Register of Access Consultants** ([nrac.org.uk](http://nrac.org.uk))  
An independent UK wide accreditation service for individuals who provide access consultancy and access auditor services.
- **Shape Arts** ([shapearts.org.uk](http://shapearts.org.uk))  
Provides opportunities and support for disabled artists and cultural organisations to build a more inclusive and representative cultural sector.
- **Stagetext** ([stagetext.org](http://stagetext.org))  
Making theatre and culture accessible to deaf, deafened and hard of hearing people.
- **Signed Culture** ([signedculture.org.uk](http://signedculture.org.uk))  
Supports and promotes British Sign Language access to the arts in the UK.



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# 1.5 Information for blind / partially sighted people

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## Guide dogs

It is good to welcome guide and assistance dogs, but additionally consider whether you can offer a bowl and water, and identify a spending area if practical. You could also provide somewhere to leave the guide dog where it can be looked after if the owner has been offered personal assistance round your venue.

## Resources

There are a range of visual impairments, and only a small proportion of people with sight loss have no sight at all. Several options to support partially sighted people can be implemented at low cost.

Make sure these resources are publicised on your website, and that front-of-house staff and those responding to phone or email enquiries are aware of them and how to access them. Interactions with staff can make or break the experience for blind and partially sighted visitors. Access resources are dependent upon well-informed and disability-aware staff to render them effective. The best designed resource can remain unused if staff do not tell people about it, or are unable to provide descriptive and wayfinding information to visitors to enable them to locate it.

## Large Print

Large Print is defined by the RNIB as being Arial font sized 16 point or higher. Large Print versions of publications are not only essential for people with visual impairments (75% of partially sighted people and 36% of blind people can read large print), but also useful for people with learning disabilities, dyslexia and problems with co-ordination or manual dexterity.

- It costs little to produce Large Print versions of labels and texts in-house. Have a copy available as near to the gallery as possible. Think about ease of carrying – break the texts down into logical chunks rather than having one heavy volume.
- Do not create Large Print versions by enlarging a standard print document using a photocopier, as the image quality is will not be good enough.
- Proofread Large Print versions to ensure that headings and paragraph text are not separated by page breaks.
- If you are promoting a Large Print version of a leaflet or a brochure ensure that this is clearly displayed in text that also conforms to Large Print standards.
- Have the Large Print as near to the beginning of the exhibition as possible so it is easy to find.
- If you are providing Large Print information on a regular basis for exhibitions, be consistent about where it is located so return visitors know where to find it.
- You can provide a downloadable digital file of labels and panel text online which visitors can read before their visit, by changing the font size or listening using text-to-speech software.

## Braille

There are around 20,000 fluent braille readers in the UK and many more people are able to use braille labelling and signage. It is an important element of many blind people's lives, and is adapting to new technology, in the form of refreshable e-braille readers.

Braille has two levels:

- **Grade 1** is a letter by letter translation. It can be read by all braille readers, and should be used for single words, for example tactile instructive signs.
- **Grade 2** uses contractions for common words. It takes up less room and is quicker to read. It should be used for longer texts.

Some considerations:

- Braille takes up more room than other text. One page of text translates to between two and three pages of braille.
- Be prepared for Some editorial changes. For example, the structure of a document might need to be clarified, a table of contents added or visual references described.

## Tactile images

Tactile images are a means of conveying non-textual information to people who are blind or partially sighted, and may include representations of pictures, maps, graphs, diagrams, and other images. A person with a visual impairment can feel these raised lines and surfaces. However, tactile images should always be offered as part of a wider interpretive toolkit, with textual information delivered in braille, audio or Large Print, or by a live guide.

**Tactile maps** are useful for giving blind or partially sighted visitors the opportunity to understand a site, its scale and its general layout, even if they are not used as navigational aids during the visit.

There is a skill in interpreting tactile maps and they are not a replacement for assistance from staff; it cannot be assumed that someone can navigate independently using a tactile map.

## Audio-described tours

Regular, scheduled, audio-described, or verbal description tours of galleries, exhibitions or heritage sites are one of the best means of making your venue accessible to blind or partially sighted visitors. Tours can be delivered by a trained member of staff, volunteer or a professional audio describer, either independently or together with a curator or subject expert.

The benefits of a live tour compared to a recorded guide can include providing a more social experience, and giving attendees the opportunity to ask questions and have descriptive conversations with the guide.

A tour can be combined with touch / handling sessions, using objects from the collection, facsimiles, models and / or raised drawings.

To ensure that this opportunity is accessible to as many people as possible, you could offer personal assistance, in the form of staff or volunteers trained in visual awareness and guiding who can act as sighted guides during the tour.

More information on how to set up touch tours can be found in *Shifting Perspectives* (RNIB, 2011).<sup>8</sup>

## Recorded audio-descriptive guides

A regular audio guide is not necessarily accessible to blind and partially sighted people – both in terms of the content, and the physical device.

Audio-descriptive guides are scripted by professional audio describers. They can also include detailed orientation, guiding the blind or partially sighted visitor from one stop to the next. For some visitors, this means that they can enjoy an independent visit.

As with all museum visitors, blind and partially sighted people have different preferences. In contrast to a programmed live audio described tour, a recorded audio guide has the benefit of being available at any time to suit the visitor.

We recommend providing a range of methods by which to access recorded audio description, including:

- **A handheld device with physical button keypad**  
You should keep several of these (depending on your visitor numbers) charged and ready for use at the information desk.<sup>9</sup>
- **App for iOS and Android**  
An app designed for sighted visitors can be made accessible, using the operating system's built in text-to-speech functionality. If you are providing touch screen devices to blind or partially sighted visitors who may have little or no experience of using touchscreen devices, then a very simplified interface is recommended.

- **Mp3 files** that a visitor can download from your website and/or SoundCloud on to their own device in advance of their visit. We recommend providing both the tour as a single file with all tracks stitched together, and individual tracks as a playlist.<sup>10</sup>

We advise publicising any recorded descriptive guide, and downloadable audio, in your access page – do not assume a visitor will find this information from the gallery information page. Publicise the guide within the museum, and throughout your marketing, in large print.



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## 2.1 Websites

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An accessible website not only ensures the largest number of people can reach the content, but may in itself attract more visitors: there is a direct link between improved website accessibility and search engine rankings: your site will receive more click-throughs from visitors who had not planned to visit your website when they made their initial search.

The website code, content and design can all contribute, or be a barrier to accessibility. In many cases, different people inside or outside the museum will have the ability to control each aspect. This section is intended as an introduction to some of the barriers that are faced by blind and partially sighted web users, and should be useful to anyone who creates web content, or is responsible for commissioning it.<sup>11</sup>

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## Text

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Digital technology means that text is more accessible than ever to blind and partially sighted people. Many blind people access text on computers or smartphones through text-to-speech software, such as JAWS for Windows, Voiceover on Apple and Talkback on Android phones and tablets.

As well as speaking text out loud, this software aids navigation of websites through audible and vibration feedback to the device. Magnification software is also frequently used by partially-sighted people.

Common barriers to web text accessibility for blind and partially sighted people:

- **Text too small.**  
This can usually be overcome using browser controls. If websites are well-coded, users can increase text size, or magnify the whole page. A good default text size of 16 point is best practice.
- **Text placed on top of images or patterns.**  
This can make text difficult to read for people with a range of visual impairments. Text should be on plain colour only.
- **Low contrast between text and background.**  
It is important that there is sufficient contrast between text and background. An accessible website should allow the user to change the background / font colour. Yellow on black, and white on black are both popular among visually impaired people.

- **Text-as-image.**

Text-to-speech only works when the text is 'live' (that is, rendered in HTML), and not represented within an image. The latter is sometimes used for marketing images such as exhibition branding which uses a purely graphic 'lock up' across print, email and website. Unless the text is included live elsewhere on the web page or email, it will be inaccessible to screen-reader users.



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## Images

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Large, clear images of museum artefacts, and details and views of museums and heritage sites will be welcome to partially-sighted website users.

A small proportion of web users with low levels of sight will access the web browser solely through text-to-speech software, which uses a piece of text called the 'alt (for alternative) attribute' to stand in for the image. The alt attribute is a piece of code that is used to describe an image's content. For example, the alt attribute of an image of a balloon would be expressed alt="balloon". A person listening to the content of the page using text-to-speech software will hear "image of balloon".

Below are some brief guidelines intended for web content authors and editors in a museum context. Writing the alt attribute should be an editorial responsibility, not a technical one.

### Keep it short and concise

Good alt text is short, ideally under 8 words. It should convey the visual information of the image but not go into detail. Museum Victoria in Australia has some good examples in their crowd-sourcing initiative, Describe Me. For example, while 'Porcelain sugar bowl shaped like a cottage' is right, 'Sugar bowl shaped like a cottage with windows, flowers, thatched roof and a door. The lid knob is the chimney' is too long.<sup>12</sup>

Generally, there is no need to use the phrase 'image of ...' or 'graphic of ...' to describe the image. However, in a museum context it may be relevant to identify the medium of the work represented, for example 'line drawing of a nude male figure'.

## Context is everything

The appropriate alt attribute is dependent on the other text on the page. If the image has a caption or is discussed in the text around it, the screen-reader user will also hear that information, and the alt attribute has less work to do.

You do not need to repeat information; just make sure that somewhere between the caption, discursive text and alt attribute you cover enough information that means not seeing the image does not mean the reader is disadvantaged.

For example: if the image caption includes the name of the artist, title, materials and size, then the alt attribute can briefly describe the work, e.g.

‘full length portrait of a young man’

‘geometric shapes on a white background’

‘embroidered yellow and green dress’

‘archaeological remains of a Roman villa’

## Decorative images

If the image is purely decorative, and serves no other purpose than to be aesthetically pleasing, then leave the alt attribute blank, or empty, thus: alt="".

## Icon graphics

A link with the text ‘Download the funding application form’ followed by a PDF icon would generally need an alt attribute ‘PDF File’. However, if there were multiple documents on the page, a screen reader user navigating through the links would hear “PDF file, PDF file, PDF file...”

Alternative text within the link should identify the specific document.

## Graphs and infographics

These should have an alt attribute such as ‘graph showing increase in museum visitor numbers in Victorian England’, and you should also provide the graph data in text format elsewhere.<sup>13</sup>

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## Video

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Film can be made accessible to blind and partially sighted people through the addition of an audio track with Audio Description (AD) that describes visual information that a blind and partially sighted person needs to know to make sense of the film.

Many cinemas are equipped with a system that delivers AD through a headset, which is provided when you collect your ticket. AD is also available on TV, with most major broadcasters (BBC, Channel 4 and Sky) providing AD on 20% of their programmes. VOD services, such as Netflix are also beginning to provide AD.

However, the main platforms for video online, such as YouTube and Vimeo, which many museums use as channels for their video, do not offer the means to add a secondary audio track that AD requires.

We recommend:

- Ensuring that video is not the sole medium through which that particular information is conveyed.

- Considering elements of the film that can easily be made more accessible through changes to the script, for example:
  - People speaking should be introduced, or introduce themselves verbally, as well as being identified by caption.
  - Locations and visual aspects are referred to verbally, and described if relevant to the film.
- With successful implementation these changes can make a huge difference to blind and partially sighted people, yet will not be noticed by people for whom they are not needed to make sense of the video.
- Providing a description in text form that can be read before or after or instead of watching/listening to the video itself. The British Council's Disability Arts International website contains videos with links to Audio Descriptions: <http://www.disabilityartsinternational.org/films/>.



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## 2.2 Email marketing

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To meet basic accessibility requirements, an HTML email message must:

- **Have a descriptive subject line.**  
The subject line should be meaningful, descriptive and concise. People rely on subject lines to determine whether an email message is relevant to them.
- **Maintain a logical reading order for screen-readers.**  
Use heading elements (<H1>, <H2> etc.) to ensure hierarchy is conveyed to screen reader users.
- **Include sufficient contrast between text and background colours.**
- **Provide alt text for images.**
- **Have meaningful link text, which informs the reader as to what will display when the link is followed and is often used for navigation purposes by screen readers.**
- **Use concise HTML.** Superfluous code can impact load times and produce unwanted results in email clients and accessibility devices.
- **As with any other written text, avoid lengthy paragraphs and ensure clear spacing.**
- **Not rely on text represented within an image.**

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## 2.3 Social Media

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Many blind and partially sighted people use, and are active on social media. Publicise your access resources and events using the same channels as you do all your events. For those blind and partially sighted people that do not use social media, their families and friends may do.

**To make sure your social media posts are accessible, remember to describe images:**

- **Twitter** lets you provide descriptions for images shared, of up to 420 characters, in addition to the regular 140 characters within the Tweet itself. For full instructions read the support page: <https://support.twitter.com/articles/20174660>
- **Facebook** can generate a description of a photo using object recognition technology. People using screen readers on iOS devices will hear a list of items a photo may contain as they swipe past photos on Facebook, for instance, “Image may contain three people, smiling, outdoors.” We recommend not relying on this, but using words to convey the message.

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## 2.4 DisabledGo.com / Euan's Guide

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**DisabledGo.com** and **Euan's Guide** are websites that specialise in detailed access information for public buildings and places of interest. Museums should supplement their own access information with a link to their venue on one or both of these sites, and if there is no listing for them, work with each organisation to get your venue reviewed. Both websites are well-used, and your presence there will be sure to encourage disabled visitors.

### **DisabledGo.com**

Established in 2000, DisabledGo.com has surveyed over 125,000 'places to go' and the website has over 1 million users every year. Each access guide is created from a survey completed by a trained assessor using a pan-disability template that asks up to 1000 questions of any one building.

The survey has been designed in consultation with over 800 steering groups of disabled people and collects objective and quantitative information, overlaid with factual descriptions and photos. This produces an online, free to use, comprehensive access guide that provides the essential information to give disabled people the knowledge they need to confidently visit a museum.

DisabledGo.com currently publishes over 646 access guides to museums and galleries. These have been funded by Local Authorities, Universities, or the museums themselves.

As a direct client of DisabledGo.com venues benefit from having world class access information that can be integrated into their own website, have it published widely on DisabledGo.com partner websites, and promoted by their social media team.

DisabledGo.com is highly accessible, and uses Recite technology to enable the access guides to be read aloud in over 50 different languages. If there is currently no guide for your museum, and you would like to explore DisabledGo.com producing, publishing and promoting an access guide for you, contact [barry.stevenson@disabledgo.com](mailto:barry.stevenson@disabledgo.com).

## Euan's Guide

In 2013, Euan MacDonald, who is a powerchair user, and his sister Kiki, created a website ([euansguide.com](http://euansguide.com)) where disabled people, their families and friends could write disabled access reviews of places they had visited. The website now has thousands of disabled access reviews and listings submitted by disabled people.

There are hundreds of museums and galleries listed and reviewed on Euan's Guide. Reviews can be excellent endorsements, and many people have visited new attractions and venues based on a review they have read on Euan's Guide. It can be very reassuring to read about another disabled person's experience beforehand, and it takes away the uncertainty when visiting somewhere new.

Search for your museum on Euan's Guide to see if there is a review of your museum; if not, you can list your museum's disabled access information on the site.

Euan's Guide will encourage reviews for your museum, share any relevant events such as touch tours with their social media followers who have an interest in accessibility. Listing on the site will give you access to features such as adding events, photographs and responding to reviews. You will also receive a newsletter with top tips, reviewer insights and more each month.

To list, go to [euansguide.com/venues](https://euansguide.com/venues) and follow the steps on screen. They do not charge venues to list or use the site, and you can edit the information you provide at any time.

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# Practical checklist

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## Access information

- ✓ Located within the Visiting section.
- ✓ Include a welcome to disabled people.
- ✓ Includes a contact specifically for access enquiries.
- ✓ Includes headed sections for different audiences, for example wheelchair users, blind and partially sighted people, D/deaf people, people with ASD, etc.
- ✓ Links to access events, e.g. audio-described, captioned or BSL.
- ✓ Link to DisabledGo and/or Euan's Guide for your venue.

## For blind and partially sighted people

- ✓ Guide dog welcome.
- ✓ Guide dog water bowl and/or spending area information.
- ✓ Descriptive directions and orientation.
- ✓ Offer (trained) personal assistance.
- ✓ Access resources information (large print, braille, magnifying glass, tactile/raised images and map).
- ✓ Other resources (AD / touch tours, recorded AD guides).

## Website, email marketing and social media content

- Is the text accessible?
- Appropriate alt text for images?
- Is the information in video captioned, and described?

## Print marketing and publications.

- Is the text accessible?
- Publicity for accessible resources?

## Notes

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1. In the 2015 Access Survey carried out for Disabled Access Day and Euan's Guide, museums and art galleries scored equal first with hospitals and healthcare, when respondents were asked which of 13 categories would they rate as having 'poor' or 'good' accessibility. 17% of respondents rated museums and art galleries as 'poor' and 59% as 'good', compared to 22% and 55% for cinemas and theatres, and 29% and 26% for concert halls and live music venues. [disabledaccessday.com/media/20290/2015-theaccesssurveyresults.pdf](http://disabledaccessday.com/media/20290/2015-theaccesssurveyresults.pdf).
2. 82% of respondents to the 2015 Access Survey carried out for Disabled Access Day and Euan's Guide ([disabledaccessday.com/media/20290/2015-theaccesssurveyresults.pdf](http://disabledaccessday.com/media/20290/2015-theaccesssurveyresults.pdf)) said that they used a venue's website when finding out the information they needed to plan a visit.
3. The 2015 Access Survey carried out for Disabled Access Day and Euan's Guide supports this, with 95% of respondents stating that they had tried to find disabled access information about a venue before visiting it and 54% stating that they avoided going to new places if they could not find relevant access information.  
A survey carried out by Attitude is Everything ([attitudeiseverything.org.uk](http://attitudeiseverything.org.uk)) of Deaf and disabled people in the North East in 2015 backs this up: 60% of respondents said that they had been put off considering events they would otherwise have loved to have gone to because of a lack of access information

4. See Kristina Veasey, Involving Disabled People in Access Audits – A Destination Zones Toolkit for Best Practice, Accentuate ([visitbritain.org/sites/default/files/vb-corporate/Images/Business-Advice-Hub/involving\\_disabled\\_people\\_in\\_access\\_audits.pdf](https://visitbritain.org/sites/default/files/vb-corporate/Images/Business-Advice-Hub/involving_disabled_people_in_access_audits.pdf)).
5. As part of the Accreditation process museums are asked if they are members of a Quality Assurance Scheme. These schemes encourage visitor attractions to take steps to be more accessible and communicate about their provision. VisitScotland has an Access Statement Toolkit ([scotland.tourismtools.co.uk](https://scotland.tourismtools.co.uk)) and VisitEngland has a requirement for visitor attractions to have an access statement ([visitengland.com/plan-your-visit/access-all/accessible-england](https://visitengland.com/plan-your-visit/access-all/accessible-england)).
6. Equality Act 2010 states that service providers, including museums and heritage sites, have a duty to make reasonable adjustments, i.e. positive steps to remove barriers a person may face because of their disability. The Citizens Advice Service provides a useful guide ([citizensadvice.org.uk/discrimination/what-are-the-different-types-of-discrimination/duty-to-make-reasonable-adjustments-for-disabled-people/](https://citizensadvice.org.uk/discrimination/what-are-the-different-types-of-discrimination/duty-to-make-reasonable-adjustments-for-disabled-people/)).
7. For guidelines in developing accessible PDFs, see: [gov.uk/service-manual/user-centred-design/resources/creating-accessible-PDFs.html](https://gov.uk/service-manual/user-centred-design/resources/creating-accessible-PDFs.html). However, we recommend providing a document in Microsoft Word, as well as PDF, which can be very inaccessible for people using magnification software. The quality can be highly pixelated when enlarged and difficult to read.
8. Zoe Partington and Amy Morgan, Shifting Perspectives (RNIB, 2011). PDF download: ([g3ict.org/download/p/fileId\\_854/productId\\_175](https://g3ict.org/download/p/fileId_854/productId_175)).

9. Audioguide companies such as Acoustiguide, Antenna International and ATS Heritage can lease or sell you suitable devices for delivering Audio Descriptive tours, and we recommend contacting them directly.
10. The Natural History Museum ([nhm.ac.uk/visit/facilities-and-access.html](http://nhm.ac.uk/visit/facilities-and-access.html)) and British Museum ([britishmuseum.org/learning/access/egyptian\\_touch\\_tour.aspx](http://britishmuseum.org/learning/access/egyptian_touch_tour.aspx)) have good examples of audio-described gallery tours on their websites.
11. For good guidelines for developing accessible services online, see the Government Digital Service [gov.uk/service-manual/helping-people-to-use-your-service/making-your-service-accessible-an-introduction](http://gov.uk/service-manual/helping-people-to-use-your-service/making-your-service-accessible-an-introduction).
12. [describeme.museumvictoria.com.au/examples](http://describeme.museumvictoria.com.au/examples).
13. For a good guide for tables in web pages, visit [webaim.org/techniques/tables/data](http://webaim.org/techniques/tables/data).

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## Who are VocalEyes?

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**VocalEyes is a UK charity dedicated to increasing opportunities for blind and partially sighted people to experience and enjoy art and culture, at theatres, museums, galleries and heritage sites and the finest of historical and contemporary architecture.**

We support the museum and heritage sector with research, advice, consultancy, training and audio description for tours, audioguides and apps. Please contact us if you want to find out more about how we can help your venue.

[vocaleyes.co.uk](http://vocaleyes.co.uk)

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Supported using public funding by

**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**

