

HOW TO ASSESS ACCESSIBILITY OF A TOURISM PRODUCT/SERVICE



ACCESS IT

1. WHAT IS THIS GUIDELINE ABOUT?

This guideline summarises practices for all providers of tourism services on how to access the accessibility of their offer (buildings, facilities and services) for each element of the supply chain throughout the whole visitor journey, in order to provide objective and updated information to all customers, including people with disabilities and/or other specific access requirements. This can help visitors to make an informed choice according to their own personal needs, plan their trip and experience a series of accessible services throughout their journey.

2. WHO CAN BENEFIT FROM THIS GUIDELINE?

All tourism providers, ranging from local authorities to small businesses (SMEs), will benefit from learning how to assess the accessibility of their buildings and services and presenting this information to visitors with specific access requirements. This will help them: to increase the pool of potential visitors and the loyalty of existing customers and also to understand better the needs of their customers and improve the accessibility of their offer. All visitors and especially those with specific access requirements will also benefit, by being able to make well-informed choices.

3. HOW TO ASSESS THE ACCESSIBILITY OF YOUR FACILITY AND SERVICES

The goal is to provide objective, reliable and up-to-date information about the accessibility of venues and/or services for visitors with disabilities and/or other specific access requirements.

Businesses must plan an Access Audit to check the accessibility of their facilities and services. This will enable them to monitor and improve their accessibility. Access Audits aim to check the accessibility in terms of approaching, entering and using the environment or the facility for its intended purpose. They can vary according to the type and size of the business, the range of facilities and services offered, and the available resources, which may determine whether to choose an external access consultant or carry out “self-assessments”.

Access audits are carried out according to checklists, which indicate what to measure and describe, covering the different touchpoints of the visitor journey.

The results of accessibility assessments should be presented in an **Access Statement/Guide**. A complete Access Statement/Guide includes information about the access policies of the venue, the physical access, staff training and accessible services.



4. EXAMPLES AND PLATFORMS FOR DEVELOPING AN ACCESS STATEMENT/GUIDE

National Tourist Organisations such as VisitEngland and VisitScotland provide checklists that can be used for auditing purposes. The Pantou Access Statement is another template which is widely used in Europe, with a series of questions for making a “self-assessed” access audit of a building or venue of any kind and the accessible services provided <https://pantou.org/access-statement>.

Following the visitor journey, the main assessment areas are shown in the following diagram (figure 1)



Figure 1. Overview of the Visitor Journey, steps that may be involved and the service “touchpoints” that should be assessed in terms of their accessibility for all visitors.