

building *control* northern ireland
GUIDANCE NOTE



Topic: Access to and use of buildings

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'This guidance has been produced as an interpretation of a specific requirement of the Building Regulation for use by Building Control Personnel. There is no legal obligation for Building Control to adopt this guidance.'

Guidance document

Access to and use of buildings

Lifting devices in buildings other than dwellings

**Demonstrating compliance with Regulation R2
to the District Council (and on appeal to the Department)**

Please note that these guidance notes are for advice only and may not cover all situations. Please ensure that they are appropriate for use in your particular circumstances.

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PURPOSE

The purpose of this paper is to guide Building Control personnel and remind designers of the matters to consider when assessing a design or designing a building other than a dwelling which is more than one storey high and under Part R, must have reasonable provision for access (including vertical circulation).

The intention is to highlight matters that are relevant to the requirements of Regulation R2 – **not to provide a comprehensive guide to the provision of a lifting device.**

The question that should always be asked is “within the circumstances of my building what is **reasonable** provision for access”.

This paper considers demonstrating compliance with regulation R2 in two ways:

1. [Following the deemed-to-satisfy provisions given in Technical Booklet R.](#)
2. [Complying by other means.](#)

Note:

- I. District council as referred to within this text includes, City, Borough and District Councils
- II. This paper has been prepared in conjunction and collaboration with the DFP

BACKGROUND

Requirement of Regulation R2 (Access and use)

The requirement of Regulation R2 is for reasonable provision to be made for people to have access to, into, within and to use a building and its facilities.

In line with Government policy this regulation is fully inclusive and embraces all people e.g. wheelchair users, those with mobility difficulties, parents with pushchairs, older people, etc.

Appropriate solutions to vertical access may vary depending on the size, scale, nature and intended use of the building, particularly when applied to existing buildings where constraints of structure and context may make generic solutions impracticable.

Deemed-to-satisfy

The Department has established that the methods and standards given in Technical Booklet R are reasonable levels of provision for the majority of buildings.

Following the provisions of the deemed-to-satisfy route (Technical Booklet R) gives certainty of satisfying the requirements of the Regulations it supports.

The deemed-to-satisfy route is not **mandatory (see Regulation A3 of the Building Regulations)** and this therefore infers that there may be other ways of satisfying the requirements of the Regulations.

FOLLOWING TECHNICAL BOOKLET R (THE DEEMED-TO-SATISFY ROUTE)

Technical Booklet R

The deemed-to-satisfy for Regulation R2 is Technical Booklet R: 2006.

Circulation within a building

To facilitate the movement of people, a building should have sufficient space for manoeuvring, convenient ways of travelling from one storey to another and include features that help people move safely and conveniently through it.

The provisions within Technical Booklet R are, in the main, based on spatial planning requirements that allows wheelchair manoeuvre and design features that make it possible for people to travel independently up to, into and within a building and also enjoy the use of the facilities that are in the building.

Paragraph 4.19 of Technical Booklet R states that “Vertical circulation to any storey above or below the principal entrance storey shall be provided by means of a passenger lift ..”. The Technical Booklet relaxes this where the space within a building is severely restricted by site constraints or the installation of a passenger lift would severely affect the existing accommodation or an existing accessible feature of the building. In these circumstances, the Technical Booklet recognises that a lifting platform, although not equivalent to a passenger lift, may be considered as an alternative option to a passenger lift to provide inter storey access for wheelchair users or people with impaired mobility, either independently or with their companions.

Note: “Whatever lifting device is chosen, internal stairs shall also be provided as an alternative means of vertical access.”

Severely restricted by site constraints

This could include an infill site where the installation of a passenger lift would severely reduce the usable floor area or in an existing building where the construction of the existing floor for example was such that it meant providing a lift well would be impractical, a lifting platform may be considered.

Severely affect the existing accommodation

If the space demand of a passenger lift and its associated landings is disproportionate to the existing accommodation then a lifting platform may be considered.

Severely affect an existing accessible feature of the building

If the provision of a passenger lift would impinge on, for example, an accessible corridor, accessible toilet accommodation etc., then a lifting platform may be considered.

Justification for the provision of a lifting platform

When a designer decides that the solution to vertical access, within the circumstances of their application, is the provision of a lifting platform, the designer must justify to the relevant Council, through reasoned and evidence-based argument, the rationale for its provision in lieu of a passenger lift.

COMPLYING BY OTHER MEANS

The requirement of Regulation R2 is that there shall be reasonable provision for access within the building (this includes vertical circulation). The District Council will judge what is reasonable provision for access based on the circumstances of the individual case, and there may be cases where the provision of any kind of lifting device may not be reasonable.

Justification of access solution by applicant

It is important that designers working outside the deemed-to-satisfy route, demonstrate to the District Council through reasoned and evidence-based argument, that either –

- the solution offered is at least equivalent to the aspirations of Part R of the Building Regulations (NI) 2000 as amended.
- full accessibility is not reasonable within the circumstances of the building
- the circumstances of their building does not allow the full application of the provisions within the Technical Booklet R

Circumstances of building precluding full access

The onus is always on the applicant to justify to the District Council any circumstances which preclude full access. This would best be done in an Access Statement¹. The provision of an Access Statement cannot, in itself, be taken as justification for non-provision of full access but will provide a convenient vehicle by which particular design decisions that do not follow the provisions of Technical Booklet R, may be reasoned and evidenced thus demonstrating that

¹ The Disability Rights Commission (DRC) in GB has produced a guide to Access Statements which may be found at [the DRC Website](#) . An example of an Access Statement proforma may be found at the back of this document.

those design decisions still meet the reasonable provision requirements of the Regulations.

Possible factors for consideration could include:

Listed buildings

- the building is listed or otherwise of historical interest and restrictions have been placed on the project by a statutory body
- a statutory body has indicated that the installation of a lifting device will be to the detriment of the character or otherwise of the building

Site restrictions

- the site is restricted to an extent that the accommodation is severely constrained e.g. facilities would be reduced or already limited space be lost by the installation of a lifting device and would reduce the potential for providing an overall quality service for all people
- the site restrictions impose practical difficulties for providing full access

Proposals for access

- what, if any, alternative solutions to access have been considered
- where the access is existing, what, if any, proposals are there to improve its accessibility

Size/space demand

- the space demand of the lifting device and associated landings and in certain cases, access routes, are disproportionate to the accommodation provided
- alternative locations for a lifting device, to reduce the impact that the provision will have, have been explored

Facilities in the building

- the facilities will be available for use by all people
- no person will be disadvantaged in their use of the facilities provided

Who will use the building?

- who the main users of the building will be
- the extent of access the public will have to the building
- members of the public or staff are not disadvantaged in their use of the building

Disproportionate cost

- not applicable to new build, but may be a relevant factor for extensions and change of use applications, it would be important to note that if it were the only relevant factor, it would not be considered as acceptable.
- Definition: disproportionate cost / expense does not provide a widespread basis to undermine or avoid achieving the objectives in question the expectation is that the action (to achieve vertical access) will be taken other than in 'exceptional' cases.

Please note that the above list is by no means exhaustive and demonstrating any, all or a combination of circumstances may not necessarily satisfy the District Council that the circumstances of the building precludes full access.

OTHER MATTERS TO CONSIDER

Although not part of the scope of this paper the following information may be of benefit to designers –

Building Regulations Appeals

The Building Regulations (NI) Order 1979 currently offers four types of appeal against particular decisions of your District Council. In all cases, except on a point of law, the Department is the Appeals Body and the decision of the Department of Finance & Personnel is final. More information on appeals may be found on the Department's website at - [Building Regulations - Appeals](#)

Disability Discrimination Act

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA), and its supporting regulations sets out, amongst other things, a duty for employers and service providers not to discriminate against disabled people.

It is for the applicant to consider any duties they may have under the DDA and determine how their duties under that legislation are to be met. If, in meeting those duties, structural alterations to the building are required, those structural alterations are to meet the requirements of the Building Regulations and are to be detailed on the plans deposited with the district councils.

Future alterations, extensions or material change of use

For a present-day building regulations application, a District Council may consider that the provision of a lifting device is not reasonable given the circumstances of that application. However, in any future building regulations application made as a consequence of an alteration or extension to, or material change of use of, that building, the District Council will, at that time, consider if those changed circumstances make the installation of a lifting device a reasonable provision to meet the requirements of Regulation R2. The cost of installing a lifting device retrospectively after the initial works have been

carried out could raise any primary installation costs by a substantial amount. This could be as a result of consequential alterations to the plan layout if adequate provision for the installation of a lift at a later date, should it be required, is not considered at design stage.

Access Statements

The reasons for use / submission of an **Access Statement** as part of a Building Regulations application is outlined in the foreword of Technical Booklet R (2006 edition).

A correctly developed Access Statement will provide an opportunity for developers, designers, product providers and managers of environments to demonstrate their commitment to ensuring accessibility in the work they undertake. It will allow them to demonstrate how they are meeting, or will meet, the various obligations placed on them by legislation, and how they will continue to manage accessibility throughout the delivery of the services they provide or the employment opportunities they create.

By considering access issues for all members of society at the earliest opportunity steps can be taken to ensure facilities are suitable for use, and accessible by everyone. The process will also help inclusive design proposals to be fully integrated into the design from the beginning rather than towards the end of the process when only ineffective, compromise solutions can be achieved.

The access statement should clearly identify:-

- The philosophy and approach to an inclusive design.
- ☐ The key issues of the particular scheme.
- The source of advice and guidance used.
- How the principles of an inclusive design have been implemented into the scheme.
- How inclusion will be maintained and managed.

The size and level of detail in the statement is likely to reflect the size and complexity of the proposed development and may therefore vary considerably.

It is clearly the intention of Part R of the Building Regulations to make as much of the built environment as accessible to all as possible.

The requirement of Regulation R2 is that there shall be reasonable provision for access to, into and within the building (this includes vertical circulation). The District Council will judge what is reasonable provision for access based on the circumstances of the individual case, and there may be cases where the provision of any kind of lifting device may not be reasonable.

It is important that designers working outside the deemed-to-satisfy route, demonstrate to the District Council through reasoned and evidence-based argument, that either –

- the solution offered is at least equivalent to aspirations of Part R of the Building Regulations (NI) 2000 as amended.
- the circumstances of their building does not allow the full application of the provisions within the Technical Booklet R
- full accessibility is not reasonable within the circumstances of the building

The onus is always on the applicant to justify to the District Council any circumstances which preclude full access. This would best be done in an Access Statement. The provision of an Access Statement cannot, in itself, be taken as justification for non-provision of full access but will provide a convenient vehicle by which particular design decisions that do not follow the provisions of Technical Booklet R, may be reasoned and evidenced thus demonstrating that those design decisions still meet the reasonable provision requirements of the Regulations.

Therefore, the provision of lifts must be seen as the obvious solution for vertical travel. As there is no floor area rule to be guided by, it is important to recognise that whilst the provision of a passenger lift (or, in certain situations a lifting platform) is

the preferred option, each application should be looked at individually, as each situation will differ in some way.

This is why the concept of Access Statements has been introduced. It is an opportunity for a designer to give a reasoned argument as to why full compliance is not possible in a particular case or where new technologies or alternative solutions are to be used. The obligations of employers and service providers under the DDA should be pointed out to designers wishing to submit Access Statements.

In new buildings, it is hoped that designers will not try to put forward an argument for not fully complying. It is more likely that problems in making a building fully accessible will be put forward for an existing building. This is why, whilst ascertaining what is reasonable in the circumstances of each case must be looked at, it must be remembered that it is the intention of the Building Regulations that all new buildings and existing non-domestic buildings that are materially altered or extended are accessible to all.

Inevitably there will be occasions when reduced standards that are supported by Access Statements will be considered reasonable. These projects may relate to small-scale developments for example, where there may not be adequate space for a full size lift, and a platform lift or some other alternative solution may be suggested. In such circumstances, consideration should be given to special design for landings etc. and refuges if necessary.

The government has inferred that it is not their intention to prevent small development / alteration through the additional financial burden of providing a lift, but this is a difficult reason to substantiate the acceptance of reduced standards. When deciding if a scheme is reasonable, the use of the building must be taken into consideration. If no public access is required on upper floors and it can be demonstrated that work activity precludes persons with disability through a reasoned Access Statement, this may be satisfactory. However, these types of decision cannot be made without knowing the building occupier and usage.

Whatever form of access to floors above or below the ground floor is provided, an ambulant disabled stair should be provided. This guidance is not conclusive, nor is it authoritative in that in those situations a passenger lift is not required. It merely gives guidance for consideration of particular situations.

SUMMARY

In summary, we would draw your attention to the following points –

- Following the provisions of Technical Booklet R (the deemed-to-satisfy route) gives certainty of satisfying the requirements of Regulation R2.
- For designers working outside the deemed-to-satisfy route, it is important to show, through convincing, reasoned and evidence-based argument, that the solution offered is appropriate to the circumstances of their building.

To aid the production of an Access Statement, an example of an access statement template is provided in Appendix 1.

Appendix 1

Access Statement Template

Access Statement Template

Site Address	
Date	
Contact details (Applicant / Agent) Name	
Address	
Postcode	
Telephone	
Fax No.	
Email	

Description of Development

To include description of proposed works. Size of proposed works, building use, number of occupiers, etc. This should include the whole site from its boundaries.

Include direct guidance references to key design attributes in relation to:

- Approach
- Parking
- Entrances
- Horizontal circulation
- Vertical circulation
- Facilities

Key access issues of the design & Nature and impact of environmental and/or other constraints

- Overview of the developer's philosophy regarding access for disabled people and inclusive design. This section must include specific examples of how individual design proposals within the project reflect this philosophy.
- Where environmental factors act to constrain compliance with the relevant design guidance, an explanation of the individual constraints should be included. These may include constraints imposed by an existing structure during an extension, or geographical constraints on new or existing developments
- The responsibility will be on the developer to explain why the relevant design guidance cannot be achieved in any particular situation and to provide material evidence to this effect.
- One alternative solution that has been considered should also be described for each instance in which the design is felt to deviate from the relevant design guidance.

Proposed solutions for overcoming identified constraints

Where deviation from the relevant design guidance is proposed as a solution of how the relevant barrier can be reasonably overcome should be explained

References used:

Technical Booklet R (2006)

Approved Document M (2004):

BS 8300 (2009):

Other (Please elaborate)

Reference to pending legislation may also be relevant.

Sources of advice and consultation

Include references to British Standards

Consultation with planners, conservation officers, access officers etc.

Evidence of consultation with existing/planned building users (where appropriate)

The extent of input from local access groups or local organisations reflecting the views of disabled people

Appendix 2

Example scenarios

Example Scenario

Where an applicant wishes to depart from the methods and standards of building contained within Technical Booklet R, either to achieve a better solution using new technologies to provide a more convenient solution, or to address the constraints of an existing building, the Access Statement should set out the rationale for the design approach adopted.

Examples of evidence that might be cited to support such an approach might include :

- application of the recommendations in BS 8300 where these differ from the provisions, or are not covered, in Technical Booklet R.
- results of current validated research
- outcome of consultations with other parties – eg Access Officers, local Access Groups etc; and
- convincing arguments that an alternative solution will achieve the same, a better, or a more convenient outcome.

In the case of extensions and material changes of use of buildings other than dwellings, and in particular in the case of historic buildings, such a statement will allow an applicant to identify the constraints imposed by the existing structure and its immediate environment and to propose compensatory measures where full access proves to be impracticable or unreasonable. This will allow for an explanation to be provided and assessed in situations where, for example, a less than fully accessible access route is proposed to an extension, or to a building or part of a building subject to a material change of use.

The following examples aim to illustrate how reasoned and evidenced arguments should be presented when dealing with constraints in existing buildings.

Scenario :

Fit out of an existing ground floor/basement retail unit to form a coffee shop.

Description of development :

An existing retail unit is to be converted to a coffee shop. There is a 150mm step at the ground floor entrance and access into the basement area, which houses storage areas and toilets for staff, is via a single staircase. It is proposed to fit out the ground floor (120m²) and the basement area (84m²). The basement will remain mainly as storage, although it is proposed to provide two customers toilets in addition to the staff toilet accommodation.

A 'company' has recently acquired the above premises and proposes to upgrade the accommodation and re-designate its use to a coffee shop. The company is a small retailer with only two existing outlets, this being the third.

The company propose to fit out the ground floor area as a coffee area furnished with loose tables and chairs (48 seats and 16 tables), a server and a display area. The basement area, which can be accessed only by stairs, will be refurbished and will remain as staff/storage accommodation, although it is proposed to install two new toilet facilities for customers.

Key access issues of the design and proposed solutions for overcoming identified constraints :

- **Approach/Entrance:**

The proposal is for the existing shop front to remain. However, following consultation with the Roads Service, agreement has been reached to raise and re-grade the footpath outside the unit to eliminate the obstacle of the single 150mm step at the entrance.

To provide a level area outside the entrance door, the door will be recessed and the original doors reused. The doors provide a minimum clear opening width of a single leaf of 800mm and the doors will be maintained to keep the required opening pressure to a maximum of 20 Newton's.

Existing door furniture will be replaced with pull handles commencing at 800mm above finished floor level (affl), and which contrast in colour and luminance with the door.

- **Circulation:**

The ground floor is level throughout and will be covered with slip resistant vinyl.

- **Counter:**

The counter/server/display unit being installed is 1200mm high due to the reduced space for the server counter and the health and safety requirements for coffee machines. A table service/assistance will be made available to all customers who are

unable to safely carry/collect goods from the counter and transport them to the tables. Loose furniture will be moved by staff as necessary to maintain clear and safe access routes.

- **Staff Accommodation:**

The existing staff accommodation, including staff room and toilet is located at basement level and is accessed via a single staircase only. The provision within the staff area currently meets the needs of all employees who have been appointed to work in the unit. Should a disabled person be employed at the store, the company has a stated policy for identifying individual needs and undertaking reasonable adjustments, as identified in Part II of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

- **Customer Toilets:**

There are currently no customer toilets available in the unit. It is proposed to improve toilet facilities by providing customer toilets at basement level. The accommodation will comprise of two cubicles, one being designed and fitted out in accordance with the recommendations in BS8300:2001 for use by people with ambulant disabilities.

The provision of an accessible toilet at ground floor level has been considered. However, providing this facility would result in the loss of four tables (16 seats), reducing considerably the viability of the premises. The provision of lift access from ground to basement level was also considered. This would result in a similar loss of tables, plus the additional financial cost of the necessary structural alterations and purchase of equipment.

The existing staircase is to be upgraded by providing an additional handrail to the design recommendations of BS8300:2001, with appropriate colour and luminance contrast being provided to the handrail and nosings. Lighting will be improved to meet the recommendations of the Chartered Institute of Building Services Engineers (CIBSE) Code for Lighting.

A notice advising of the WC facilities available in the premises will be provided adjacent to the entrance and on the company's web site.

References used :

- Technical Booklet R 2006
- BS8300

Sources of advice and consultation :

- BS8300 for the purposes of staircase design.
- Chartered Institute of Building Service Engineers (CIBSE) Guide on lighting
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995 in relation to employment of staff

Scenario :

The development of a neighbourhood community centre to include a multipurpose space for performances, craft, sport and recreation.

Description of development :

This is a large community project funded through a number of partners. The site is currently on a derelict piece of green field within a deprived inner city area. The hope is that the centre will become a community focus and will meet the varied needs of the residents. In addition to the drop-in and day-care facilities, one of the main elements is a multi purpose indoor space that needs to serve the sporting, performance and educational needs of the potential users.

The overall intention of the development at [name of site] is to create a community focal point that will meet the diverse needs of the area, and be valued by those who live in the area. The aim is to provide an excellent range and quality of facilities that will be valued by the community and which will be seen as a focal point in encouraging participation amongst the local community.

Designing and managing the facility in an inclusive manner such that it generates acceptance and understanding amongst the people it serves in the multi-cultural, deprived local area is essential.

Ease of use by all potential users, including disabled people, parents and toddlers, older people, and young people, is also considered to be an essential element of breaking down language and cultural barriers.

The nature of the activities to be undertaken at [name of site], together with the diversity of cultures and languages of the people using the facility, will place some unique obligations on the managers of the Centre, both as employers and service providers. These obligations will be addressed by positive actions to maximise participation. These will include, for example, the appropriate communication of information about the site, its facilities and management practices in formats which meet the diverse needs of the population. Where appropriate, the Centre will increase the potential understanding of information with site specific measures, such as increased levels of appropriately designed symbols and pictograms.

Key access issues of the design and proposed solutions for overcoming identified constraints :

Issue
<p>Car Parking: 20 spaces provided on site plus potential for additional parking on street. Council policy is for 5% dedicated for blue badge users. In this development with a greater than average likelihood of use by disabled drivers and passengers, 4 of the 20 bays (25%) will be designated close to the entrance on the eastern façade. One of the designated bays will be suitable for a minibus to park.</p>
<p>Public Transport: Bus stop. Talks with the PTE are ongoing to relocate the bus stop, currently 50m away, to outside the west end of the development. Programmed for next financial year as part of a transport improvement programme.</p> <p>Drop Off Area Situated within the site. Managing the correct use of the area has been identified for inclusion in the management practices programme for the Centre.</p>
<p>Pedestrian Approach: Pedestrian approaches (2 No) from the east and the west. The approach to entrance on the eastern façade is level. Because of the nature of the site and the inability to introduce adequate landscaping, the approach to the entrance on the western façade includes two steps (with no room for an accompanying ramp within the restricted cartilage). Steps will be constructed to meet the standards described in Technical Booklet R.</p> <p>External lighting along all access routes will be design and maintained to meet the standards laid down in BS 5489 and described in 'Inclusive Mobility' (DfT).</p>
<p>Routes to Entrances: All routes will be signposted with signs meeting the recommendations in the Sign Design Guide. The main entrances will be highlighted using colour and luminance contrast and appropriate level of lighting.</p>

Entrances:

The main entrances on the east and west façades will be provided with automatic opening doors activate by proximity controls. Any glass panels and doors will be appropriately identified with two tone manifestation.

The doors fail safe in the open position if the fire alarm is activated. Inspection and testing of the fail safe mechanisms will be cited in Centre's planned maintenance management programme.

Entrances will be level, have flooring of slip resistant materials and be kept free from tripping hazards at all times.

Reception:

The reception area will be designed to maximise inclusion, both actual and perceived. The reception desk, finishes, signage and lighting will all be designed to the latest design guidance described later (Sources of Guidance).

The need for, regular and appropriate staff training will be cited and planned for in the management policies of the Centre.

Horizontal and Vertical Circulation:

The design and selection of materials for finishes will follow, and in many places exceed, the latest best practice guidance in terms of widths of corridors and doors, maneuvering spaces, surface finishes to walls, floors and ceilings, colour and luminance contrast, lighting and the usability of features such as, for example, control panels and switches.

The guidance which has been, and will continue to be followed includes those identified later (Sources of Guidance).

Lifts will be selected which maximise the opportunity of independent use by disabled people, and will be large enough to accommodate most self propelled and electrically powered wheelchairs. The lifts will not be designed to accommodate Class 2 and Class 3 electrically powered scooters. A stock of two self propelled wheelchairs will be kept at reception for use by people visiting the Centre using such vehicles. Information about this will be displayed close to the entrance, in promotional literature and on the Centre's web site.

Signage:

A way-finding strategy will be developed by the Access Consultant which will take into account the multi-cultural, multi-lingual nature of the user base. Wherever possible, written information will be supplemented with pictograms or symbols.

Toilet Facilities:

Male, female and unisex accessible WCs are to be provided on both levels of the Centre. In addition one unisex accessible WC will be provided at mezzanine level. All toilet accommodation will be provided to meet the recommendations of BS8300:2001 and the guidance identified in Technical Booklet R (2006). A choice of left or right hand transfer will be available within reasonable travel distances (less than 40m).

In addition, male and female changing rooms will have an accessible WC. Two unisex accessible changing areas, which are accessed independently from the other changing rooms, will also be provided.

The proposal includes for the provision of a hygiene room, fully equipped with changing bench, electric hoist and peninsular layout WC, and an accessible shower facility. This will enable people using the nearby day centre to take full advantage of the facilities provided, enhancing integration in the community.

Baby Changing Facilities:

Two of the unisex accessible WCs (one left hand and one right hand transfer) will be provided with low level, accessible baby changing facilities. Baby changing facilities for use by non-disabled people will be provided in a separate, dedicated, unisex baby changing facility on the ground floor.

Mezzanine Café

This area will be designed around a flexible seating arrangement. Glass screens between the café and the sports area will be provided with manifestation and protection at low level. Lighting will be designed in accordance with the CIBSE Code for Lighting.

Other Access Features:**Hearing enhancement systems**

Hearing enhancement systems will be fitted at the reception area, the mezzanine café and in the main hall. Induction loops will be fitted in all areas where hearing enhancement is needed, except the main hall which will be fitted with an infra red system. This is on the recommendations of the local community board and after consultations with the local Resource Centre for Deaf People.

Crèche

The crèche will be designed to be as accessible and suitable for use by disabled children (under five years of age). Features, including equipment and books, will be to the best available accessibility standards for the age group.

External play area

The external play area will be surfaced with soft rubber, and the equipment purchased will include items which are challenging, safe and, wherever possible, inclusive.

Learning Rooms

Modular systems of tables will be used and there will be a variety of seating (seat heights and with or without arms). Circulation space between table and chairs will be in accordance with best practice guidance and, because the facilities are moveable, be constantly managed to maintain maneuvering space.

Means of Escape:

All features and materials to comply with Part E of the Building Regulations. In addition a management plan involving the use of Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) will be developed, adopted and regularly tested.

Staff Training:

Staff training in disability awareness, the testing and use of specialised equipment (such as induction loops, personalised lighting and communication equipment) will be undertaken as part of the company's current on-going staff development programme.

The company is committed to undertaking a structured programme of regular reviews of new technologies, constructional developments and training to ensure that the on-going and evolving obligations imposed by the DDA are met.

Sources of Guidance and references used

Advice has been sought from a number of sources. The applicants have worked closely with the local Access Officer prior to formalising the application for planning permission. In addition a Consultant, who is a member of the National Register of Access Consultants, has been commissioned to work with the team and has been involved from the procurement stage. This input was commissioned to ensure that inclusive design principles formed a major element of the project from an early stage.

Main design references used included:

- Technical Booklet R (2006)
- The Approved Document to Part M (2004)
- BS 8300:2001
- The Sign Design Guide (The Sign Design Society)
- Building Sight (RNIB)
- DRC Codes of Practice
- Guidance on Access Statements (DRC)
- Inclusive Projects (DPTAC)
- Planning and Access for Disabled People – A Good Practice Guide (ODPM)
- Inclusive Mobility (Department for Transport)
- The Access Directory (DPTAC)

Consultation:

The project team have carried out extensive consultation with the local community. This has included responses to a questionnaire, an open day at the local library, and a talk at the local neighbourhood forum. In addition the designer has had pre-planning meetings with the Council's Access Officer and the local Access Group. These meetings resulted in a number of minor, but crucial, revisions to the original plans.