EXPERIENCE Marazion & Penzance
Initial Accessibility Guidance

Contents

Overview

This document provides initial guidance and resources relating to accessible design from the Access Cornwall team.

The team are happy to provide support for the project throughout the design phase as required.

Our team includes staff and volunteers with a range of disabilities and accessibility needs, including individuals who are wheelchair users, vision and hearing impaired, autistic and dyslexic.

The following sections outline key areas of helpful accessibility information which might be of use to the design team. We hope the information is helpful and useful to you. Please do contact us if you would like to discuss any of this at hello@accesscornwall.org.uk or on 01326 231993.

Online and planning information

The key thing to note is that one of the major barriers to any kind of activity or trail for those with accessibility challenges, is the lack of important information available to help individuals who live with those challenges and their carers, family and friends to be able to plan a visit.

It is therefore very important that information such as distance from parking places, accessible toilets or parking spaces, or sensory information about loud unexpected noises, lighting, level access and steps etc is well documented and clearly available in several different formats (digital and print, written and visual, audio, for example) so that people can check if they can in fact access the activity and if they will be able to use it and enjoy it.

It's helpful to be aware of this throughout the process.

Website and digital information

The other thing to consider is that if there is a website with information about the project, it is helpful if this is accessible itself. This is partly about being compliant with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines, but also about using resources and getting input from users about how accessible it is.

Is the website compliant?

Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) international standards for accessible website.

Accessibility: WCAG2 at a Glance (source W3C)

Perceivable

- Provide text alternatives for non-text content.- do all pictures have Alt text descriptions? Not always)
- Provide captions and alternatives for audio and video content. - are there written descriptions as alternatives to video and images (done very well, something for content editors to consider)
- Make content adaptable; and make it **available** to assistive technologies. (e.g. downloadable docs that can work from text to talk software)
- Use sufficient contrast to make things easy to see and hear.

Operable

- Make all functionality keyboard accessible.
- Give users enough time to read and use content.
- Do not use content that causes seizures e.g. flashing lights, rapidly changing images (see guidance below).
- Help users navigate and find content.

Understandable

- Make text readable and understandable.
- Make content appear and operate in predictable ways.
- Help users to avoid and correct mistakes.

Robust

- Maximize compatibility with current and future technologies.

Website accessibility plugins

We use a plugin called Userway, for example, which has numerous features including text enlargement, choice of contrasts or dyslexia friendly fonts and text to audio functionality. Other examples of similar resources include ReciteMe and WP Accessibility Helper. You can either use these, or take ideas about good practice from them when designing your own resources.

https://reciteme.com/
https://userway.org/
https://accessibility-helper.co.il/

Digital content that may cause seizures

Flashing or rapidly moving images, such as gifs or images, or flashing lights in videos, but also striped or some patterned static images can cause seizures. You need to be aware of some sounds too. There is a more detailed explanation here:
https://developer.mozilla.org/en-US/docs/Web/Accessibility/Seizure_disorders

Essential facilities to consider

When creating the trail or considering location of key points, it's helpful to consider the geographical location and distances in the context of important accessibility facilities. Put it simply, if the trail has no accessible toilets or parking, for example within a half hour journey, a lot of people simply won't be able to use it. There's a limit to what can be changed of course, but it might have a bearing on where you choose to locate elements or the way you design the overall experience.

Accessible toilets
How near are these to the trail, and how long are they open for? If, for example certain elements are only relevant at night, many accessible toilets are closed then. Accessibility is also about mums to be, parents of young infants who need baby changes will also need facilities if they want to enjoy what you make for them.

Parking
Is there accessible parking available near to the trail? Is there level access, are surfaces hard, or gravelled, are they uneven? Consider people who don't use wheelchairs but who are mobility impaired and use walking frames or sticks, or those walking with young toddlers. It won't matter to them that the surfaces are flat, level and even if the distance is simply too far.

Public transport
Is the trail realistically accessible to people who rely on public transport? Bus times have been changed and reduced quite significantly in recent months, so it's worth checking. There is of course a bus station and a train station located very closely to the Penzance to Marazion walkway.

Lighting
Lighting in poor weather, and outside the main daylight hours is important to those with vision mobility impairment and sensory sensitivities. What's it like at night? Can lighting help to make steps more visible?

Signage

It will be the case that there are regulations around signage you can use. It will be helpful to people if there are digital and printed maps available, or if the trail route is accessible via a website or app. Also consider using symbols or images for those who cannot easily read (including people with learning differences such as dyslexia, learning disabilities, or those with vision impairment).

This technical guide here may be helpful in producing accessible signage:
https://www.wayfinders.ie/accessibility-part-m-compliance/

Key things to consider:
- Use sans serif fonts where possible
- Don't make signs all caps
- Use off white background with black text or dyslexia friendly colour combinations if possible
- Use tactile effects such as embossing where possible (some printers provide the design service for this).
- Make sure that the font size is as readable as possible for those in wheelchairs, with vision impairment etc
- Use pictograms or symbols.
- Keep signs simple.

Mobility impairment

A few things to consider.

- Only 7% of people with disabilities are wheelchair users, and even then there are big differences. Depending on whether the wheelchair user is in a manual chair, mobility scooter or wheelchair suited to rougher terrain, the widths, maneouverabillity and surfaces it can cope with will differ. General guidance is that smooth hard surfaces, and width of 1m for the wheelchair plus another 1m fo another chair to pass or carer or companion to walk beside is required for an entrance or a walkway.

- Consider distances and time taken to cover them for those with mobility impairments. Seats along the way or at points of interest are helpful.

- Think about heights. Can someone using a wheelchair, or a smaller person reach things, can someone who cannot bend or move flexibly read or reach things?

- It is helpful to add photos of slopes and physical impediments into the accessibility statement rather than telling people slopes using ratios.

- Temporary ramps, such as rubber kerbside ramps or portable ramps might be useful in testing or trying out how things work, that way they can be tried and moved based on feedback from people using or testing the trail.

Vision impairment

Things to consider:

- Tactiles surfaces can be helpful to guide people to points of interest or alert them to hazards.
- Lighting is important, how even is it, does it cast shadows
- Can signage be seen and read easily and can images or symbols help those who cannot easily read signs?
- How much audio or other sensory content can be added to make elements more accessible to those with vision impairment?

Hearing impairment

Things to consider:

- Providing content in a visual way, such as subtitled videos or images - could you understand and enjoy the content if your hearing was taken away?
- You can save time subtitling content by using software such as HappyScribe or Otter A.I. which will create a written transcript of a voice recording.
- Some people who are profoundly deaf do not communicate in the English Language, British Sign Language is structured differently so they may be unable to read subtitles. You might consider producing video translation for key content for those who use British Sign Language. You can also signpost to online services which offer BSL translation for approximately £50 per hour.
- If you have audio content, is it possible for these points to be located in quieter areas that make it easy for people with hearing impairment to access that content. You cannot always account for the sound of the sea of course, but you might want to consider areas such as bus or train stations, or areas where road traffic is very noisy, for example.
- How much other sensory content such as tactile or olfactory content can be added to make content more accessible and meaningful to those with hearing impairment?

Two of our Accessibility Reviewers trying out a nature trail at Bosinver Farm Cottages

Sensory processing & neurodiversity

Individuals who are neurodiverse have different neurological traits to the more common neurology found in the majority of the population who are neurotypical. Neurodiverse individuals are on what is known as the Autism Disorder Spectrum - diagnosed conditions include a wide variety of challenges including dyspraxia, dyslexia, Tourette's Syndrome, OCD and ADHD.

But while these diagnosis highlight a wide variety of challenges, it is also important to consider that many individuals also have unusual talents that arise from their neurodiversity. For example, Albert Einstein and Steve Jobs were both widely believed to be neurodiverse. Increasingly, many people who are on the ASD spectrum do not therefore like to label themselves as disabled but rather as 'different' point out that failure to make adaptations in the modern 'neurotypical' drive world is the main reason they face challenges in day to day life.

A simple way to understand this is that there are more right handed people than left handed people. Left handed people may struggle to use items such as tin-openers and scissors because these are most commonly made and designed for people who are right handed. Their inability to use these implements is not due to their incompetence but rather a design issue. No-one would consider saying a left handed person was 'disabled'. This is a modern global narrative on the ASD spectrum which is very helpful to consider when designing interactive experiences.

Other individuals on the ASD spectrum, however, have greater challenges, particularly around communication and social interaction and executive processing.

A large percentage of people who are neurodiverse (and people with learning disabilities) also have sensory processing sensitivities, which means they are either over or under responsive to sensory input such as sound, visual, tactile or olfactory stimuli. Other sensory issues relate to movement, balance and coordination.

You can find more information at these websites:
https://www.sensoryintegrationeducation.com/
https://www.geniuswithin.org/what-is-neurodiversity/

Things to consider:
- People who are neurodiverse often enjoy engaging with the sensory aspects of nature and find the natural environment offers a greater sense of freedom and fewer restrictions than more formal environments. There are many studies clearly demonstrating the beneficial impact of this.
- Natural spaces also offer children and adults alike, plenty of opportunities to find quieter spaces or to engage in activities which help to balance sensory needs.

- Highlight any sensory benefits or aspects on the trail. Those with sensory processing sensitivity may at different times need more or less sensory input, and understanding what to expect and where to find extra sensory simulation or understanding what might provide too much can help them to regulate their sensory input.
- Make sure instructions are very clear and simple. Many autistic individuals have rigid thinking and are very focused on rules and detail of information.
- It might also be helpful to have some photos of different parts of the trail, or even a video walk through (at heightened speed) to help people see what it looks like and familiarise themselves with it.
- If certain elements of the plan include play equipment, consider a review of how accessible any play equipment is.
  https://www.rickhansen.com/sites/default/files/2020-03/sch-35913-guide-creating-accessible-play-spacesen2020web.pdf

Visual stories and videos

Visual stories or videos are often helpful for both adults and children who are neurodivergent or have learning disabilities. The reason this is helpful is that individuals who have these challenges may often find new an unfamiliar places overwhelming, particularly if they are dealing with sensory processing issues while exploring new areas and experiencing the sights, sounds and anxiety of breaking routines and travelling to new places. Having a glimpse of what to expect beforehand not only makes them excited to enjoy it (and possibly

encourages them to plan a trip) but it also helps them to feel more confident and comfortable the first time they try a new experience.

Further resources:

Videos from the National Austistic Society
There are some helpful videos from the National Autistic Society which can help you to understand challenges that individuals on the ASD spectrum face during what many might consider normal day to day experiences.

▶ Can you make it to the end?
▶ Make it Stop.

Visual stories

Visual stories | Children and Families | Hampshire County Council

YouTube
You might also want to consider using a YouTube channel with all the videos you have
- it makes it easier to share the videos and embed them into different media platforms
- Youtube videos can be automatically subtitled.

Sensory Processing resources and training
https://www.sensoryintegrationeducation.com/

Understanding neurodiversity
https://www.geniuswithin.org/what-is-neurodiversity/

Learning differences & disabilities

We use the two different terms learning differences and disabilities because in some respects neurodiverse individuals who may have a learning difference such as dyslexia, for example, are faster at learning some things and highly intelligent.

The term Learning Disabilities, using criteria set out by MENCAP generally refers to a person who has a reduced intellectual ability and tends to take longer to learn and may need support to develop new skills, understand complicated information and interact with other people.

Some individuals who are dyslexic for example, may have learning disabilities too, but others may be highly intelligent, they simply struggle to read written words.

Things to consider:

- Learning differences and difficulties may mean people struggle to read things. Using straight forward language, avoiding jargon and anacronysms where possible helps -- in fact it helps most people.
- Using images, symbols and videos can be really helpful in communicating your product, service or information about your premises to individuals.
- Individuals who are dyslexic may (but not always) find it helpful if you use:

   - Sans fonts
   - Strong contrast in text.
   - Dark font on a light background is generally easier to read (some prefer it the other way around, see contrast switching software such as Userway in section 1).
   - Don't make signs all caps.
   - Use off white background with black text or dyslexia friendly colour combinations if possible.

- Visual stories can be very helpful for people who have learning disabilities to help them familiarise themselves with an area or experience before they set out to try a new activity.
- Knowing when a place is likely to be quieter is also helpful as people with learning disabilities can often feel overwhelmed by new people, crowds, noise etc.
- Sensory features can really enrich an experience for individuals with learning disabilities.

FURTHER RESOURCES

Online accessibility support

https://reciteme.com/
https://userway.org/
https://accessibility-helper.co.il/

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Accessible signage
https://www.wayfinders.ie/accessibility-part-m-compliance/

Accessible equipment hire services
You might want to add this to your accessibility statement and information but there are a few places that you can now hire equipment.

For wheelchairs that are suitable for rougher trails, the beach and even going into the sea and also portable hoists that partner with these:
Enable Accessibility https://www.enableaccessibility.org.uk/

Tramper wheelchairs for rougher terrain Countryside Mobility How to Hire | Countryside Mobility

Accessible play
What is an inclusive soft play area -- this page offers advice on ways to update existing facilities so they're more inclusive for all kids.
It includes what play equipment can be added, the value of quiet areas and setting play things out to allow for different social opportunities and also information on sensory stimulation.

https://www.softplay.com/blog/what-are-inclusive-indoor-playgrounds/

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Information on accessible places to visit:
www.accesscornwall.org.uk provides detailed accessibility information on local attractions, places to eat and visit around Cornwall
Regular visitors to Cornwall can apply to become reviewers.

NEXT STEPS

Our next task is to plan and deliver accessibility training sessions to local businesses. This is currently scheduled for November.
We will also be available to support the design team with questions and site visits within the agreed scope of work as the design process progresses.
In addition we can promote the project on our website and social media, subject to the approval of all relevant parties.

If you have any questions please get in touch.

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