WEST KENT GARDEN *of* ENGLAND

NORTH KENT GARDEN *of* ENGLAND

Peer Eco-Systems

How Making your Experience Accessible, can Increase your Customer Reach

EUROPEAN UNION European Regional Development Fund

Interreg
France (Channel / Manche) England
EXPERIENCE

Welcome to Visit Kent Peer Ecosystems

How Making your Experience Accessible, can Increase your Customer Reach

Session Format

- Why is Accessibility important?

- The Purple Pound

- Accessible Kent

- Guest Speakers: AccessAble

- Breakout Session

- Summary and Close

Why is Accessibility important for the Visitor Economy?

➢ A 'moral' duty to cater for all members of the community

➢ Improves customer experience

➢ Attracts a wider customer base

➢ Encourages repeat business

➢ Increases bookings and sales

VISIT KENT
BUSINESS
GARDEN of ENGLAND

The Purple Pound

£

Total spend: £15.3bn
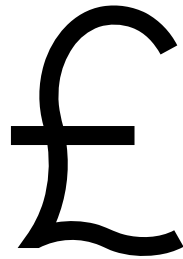
Day visitor
spend: £11.6bn

15% of all domestic
overnight trips in 2015

20% of all day visit in 2018

Data source: VisitBritain/VisitEngland 2015 & 2018

VISIT KENT
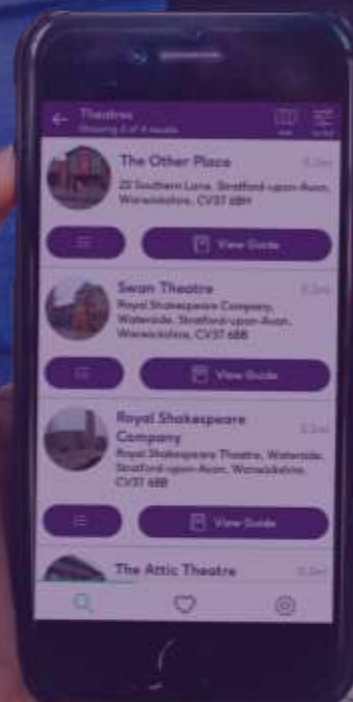BUSINESS
GARDEN of ENGLAND

Accessible Kent

- Business support – FREE access guides & e-learning platform

- Review of visitkent.co.uk

- Photography

- Accessibility influencer activity

+125,000 venues

Surveyed so far...

2.7 million

Unique Users 2021 YTD

350+ partners

Public & Private Sector Clients
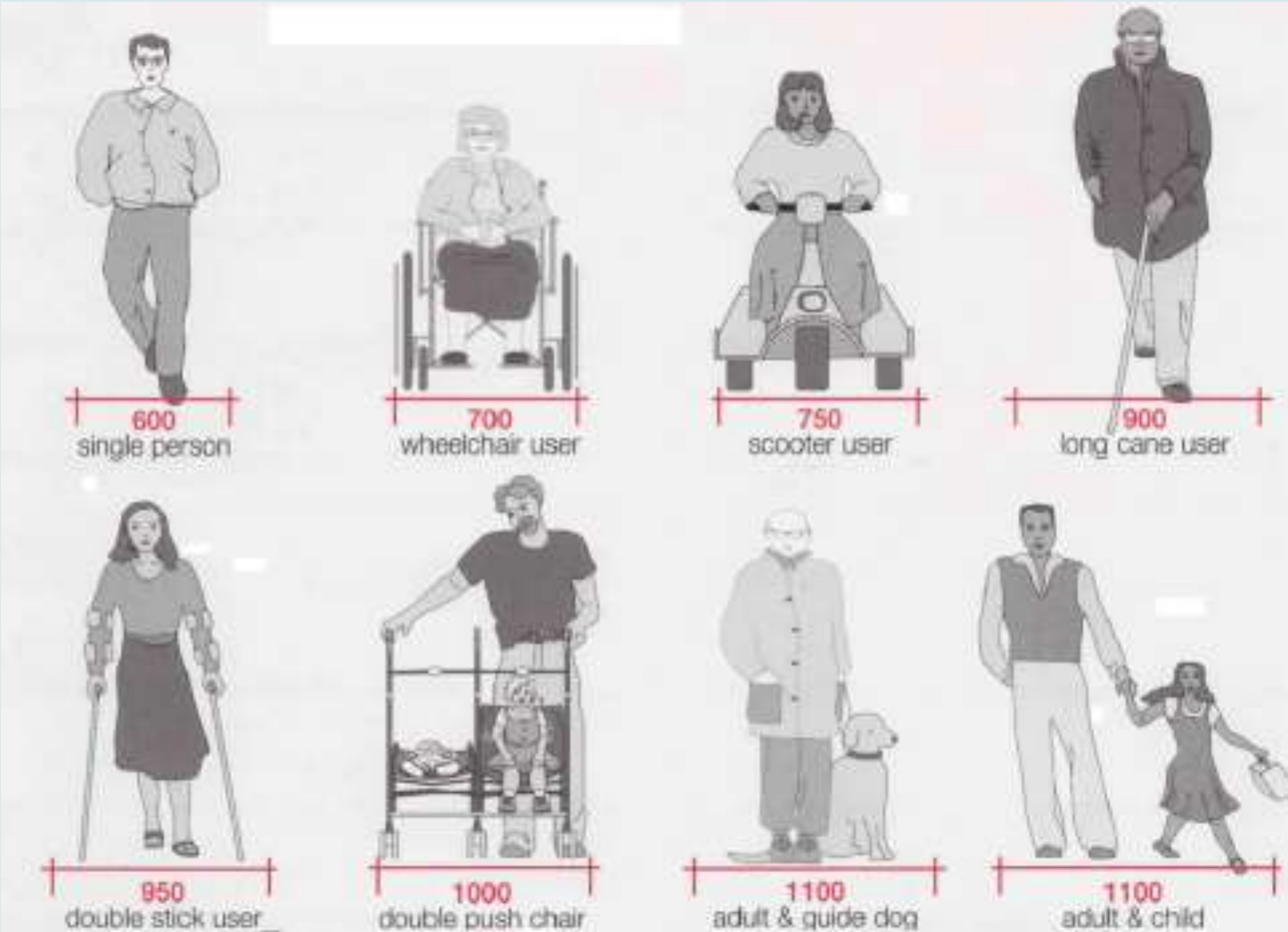
4.8 million

Webpage Views 2021 YTD

AccessAble

Search for accessible places to go

Information

How can a disabled person find out about a space before they use it?

Welcome

How is a disabled person supported on arrival?

Space

How can the space be more inclusive?

Manage expectation through information Improvements to the physical space

The support as people arrive

Thinking about disability

Thinking about disability

| 600 | 700 | 750 | 900 |
| single person | wheelchair user | scooter user | long cane user |

| 950 | 1000 | 1100 | 1100 |
| double stick user | double push chair | adult & guide dog | adult & child |

Thinking about disability

1200
adult & helper

1250
1750
wheelchair user & helper

1000-1675
scooter user

1500

2000

2000
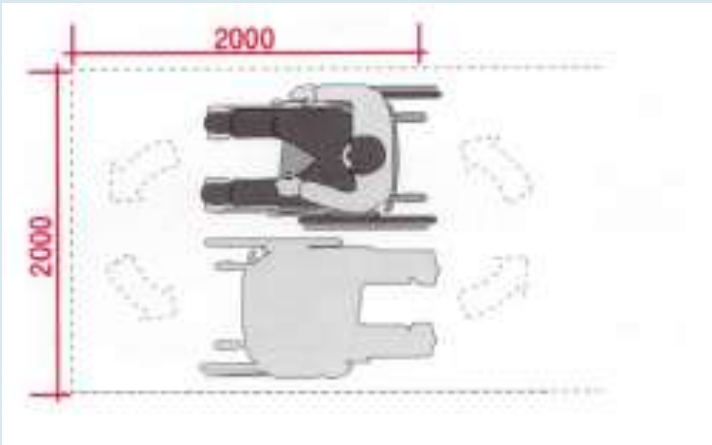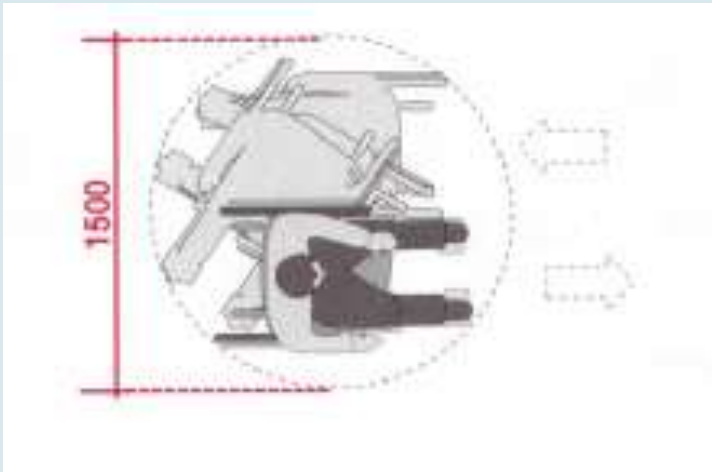
People who have mobility impairments

Can walk on the level and negotiate suitably graded steps providing that convenient handrails are provided

Barriers may include:

Ramps and changes of level

Lack of handrails

Long flights of stairs

High thresholds

Narrow doors

Fixtures & fittings may be difficult to reach

Lack of seating

People who use wheelchairs

750,000 people use wheelchairs
Different sized wheelchairs (& scooters)
Have different strengths and reaches

Barriers may include:
Steps/stairs or any change in level
High thresholds and water barriers
Narrow and or heavy doors
Poor signage
Entry systems
Fixtures & fittings may be difficult to reach

People who are deaf and hearing impaired

1 in 7 have significant hearing loss
71% of the over 70's have hearing loss due to aging
4 million would benefit from hearing aids, only 2 million use them

Barriers may include:

Poor signage

Door entry systems/intercoms

Poor lighting

Frequently used doors without vision panels

Lack of contrast nosings on steps/stairs

May benefit from sound enhancement systems

May need visual indicators

People who are blind and visually impaired

Over 2 million visually impaired people in the UK
18% have no sight at all, others have residual vision
3% read Braille

Barriers may include:

Poor signage

Door entry systems

Poor lighting

Steps and ramps

Lack of good colour contrast

Instructions/notices in small decorative fonts

Hazards/obstructions

People who have dual sensory impairment

- (DeafBlind) Approximately 24,000 affected, 250,000 if elderly people are included

- DeafBlind Manual sign language

- Road Crossings – revolving cone

- White cane, 4 red bands

- Wayfinding by Olfaction – eg. Sensory Gardens

Neurodiversity

The infinite variety in the human brain regarding sociability, learning, attention, mood and other mental and sensory functions, which can collectively be grouped as neurotypical, neurodivergent and neurodegenerative.

- Autism
- Phobias
- Depression
- SAD
- Obsessive-compulsive disorder
- Self harm
- Schizophrenia

- ADHD
- Anxiety, paranoia
- Dementia
- Personality disorder
- Eating disorders
- Bereavement/Grief; stress;
- Pre-menstrual syndrome

Neurodiversity

Includes people with dyslexia, autism and learning difficulties. Could also include people with dementia and other mental health problems.

Barriers may include:

Poor signage

Door entry systems can be confusing

Poor lighting

Lack of good colour contrast

Instructions/notices that are difficult to read/understand

Hazards/obstructions

Noise

Benefits of an Accessible Business

A **new demographic** – rarely targeted through current marketing strategies

Compliance and legal protection – improving facilities isn't a 'nice to have' it's an essential part of everyday business

Reduced customer complaints by managing expectations

Increase footfall to the business – targeting the **Purple Pound** and the **17 million disabled people and carers**

Increased market share and revenue – disabled customers are loyal and high spending

Adaptations and improvements have already been made – but how have you told people or **celebrated what you have**?

Future proofing business – by 2030 over 25% of the UK's population will be over 65 and almost half of these people will have a disability

Make sure you include **accessibility information** on your website

Ensure **emergency alarms** in toilets, fitting rooms, changing rooms or hotel rooms are untied and within 10cm from floor level - this will allow a person who has fallen to reach them

Think about the **accessibility of printed materials** like menus, could you make the print larger or clearer - could a member of staff read it aloud on request?

When decorating think about how **colour contrast** might help visually impaired people

Consider **providing a seat** for people who may find it hard to stand for long periods

If you have stepped access, look at how you can **remove or reduce** this barrier

Use **simple, clear and consistent signage** to show where services are located

If you have counters look at **installing a lowered one**, if this isn't possible have clipboards available

PAY HERE
TOILETS and
CHANGING
ROOMS

Invest in **disability equality and awareness training** for your team

If you have an accessible toilet, consider make sure it is **not used for storage and that a wheelchair user can wash and dry their hands easily**

Think about whether **wheelchair users can reach /use fittings** (e.g. shelves, mirrors, coat hooks, wash basins and toilet flushes)

If you play background music consider how **sound levels** might affect those with hearing impairments, autism or dementia

If you have a hearing assistance system (loop or infrared) **make sure your team know how to use it and that it is regularly maintained** - if you don't have one look at whether this is possible

Ensure that aisles and walkways are kept as clear as possible and **consider how someone using a wheelchair, walking sticks or an assistance dog would get around**

Shaping the experience

Providing a great service to disabled people –

- We are all unique – don't make assumptions about a person's ability or the help they might (or might not) need.

- Providing a great service to disabled people, is just about providing a great service.

- Train staff and volunteers, providing confidence and skills in their engagement.

- Early, open and honest communication.

Access Begins Online

4 out of **5** people

...check access information before going to a new place.

81%

...of these people will check the venues own website first.

Only... **14%** ...find what they need!

And of those that do find information via that website...

80%

... of info provided is inaccurate leading to misinterpretation and a poor experience, highlighting the importance of detail and objectivity with access information.

Accessibility Impact

We are more likely to visit if access information is available.

We feel anxious about visiting a place for the first time.

We would not visit a place if it did not have access information.

98%

9 out of 10

76%

Source – Accessibility and You Survey 2018
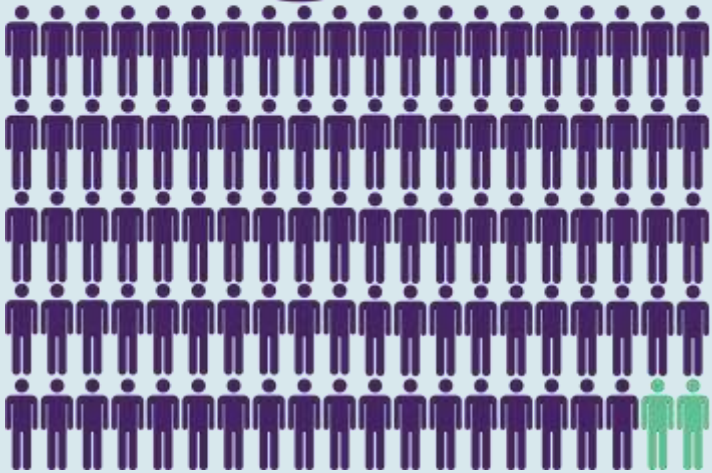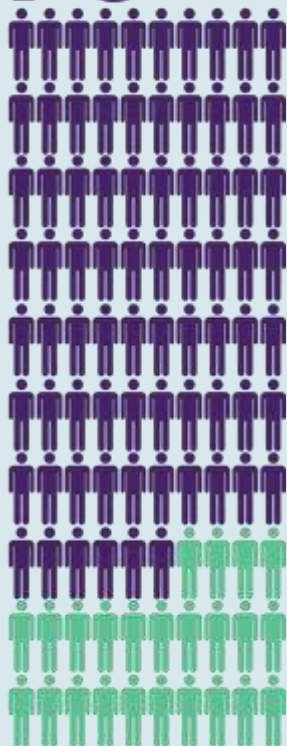
Accessibility Impact

67% ...of respondents had experienced discrimination due to a lack of accessibility.

77% ...of disabled people left places where accessibility was not what they expected.

36% ...had experienced good staff awareness.

……and finally

Accessibility is a complex issue and relies on both physical factors (such as distance from home), travel facilities and socio-cultural factors (such as people wanting to go somewhere and feeling comfortable there). These social factors are generally less obvious but often very significant in determining the quality of visitor experience

Barriers preventing or dissuading use are diverse and interrelated. Physical barriers are interwoven with social and economic issues such as appropriate information, transport, wealth/poverty, social isolation, accompaniment, personal security, low expectations, management/staff attitude and discrimination. Barriers can prevent access but often they simply put people off bothering to make a visit, particularly for people who have to make more effort to go out.

(David Croft 2004)

AccessAble
Your Accessibility Guide

Key Learnings

➢ There are many different types of impairment

➢ Making adaptions to your experience doesn't need to expensive

➢ Allow people to make their own decision about what they can or cannot do

➢ Provide clear information

➢ Make sure all your staff are educated and comfortable in dealing with your visitors

➢ Working with the accessibility market opens your business up to new audiences

Breakout session – how it works

➢ **Confidentiality** – what is discussed in the session will not go outside the breakout rooms. This section of the virtual event will not be recorded for this reason.

➢ **Commitment -** participants should commit to participate

➢ **Equal time -** Everyone should have time to speak

➢ **Listening** - everyone should ensure they listen to others and respect their viewpoints

➢ **Challenge** - it is helpful to challenge thinking and ideas, but criticisms and judgements should be avoided

➢ **Safe Space** - the group should be a safe space in which people can discuss their strengths and weaknesses openly

Breakout Session

Analysis/Questions

➢ How accessible is your experience/business?

➢ What key target markets would you like to be able to support with more accessibility?

➢ Have you had any customer feedback about your accessibility – good or bad?

➢ Identify any businesses that have implemented accessibility features (or WOULD implement if you they haven't done so)?

    ➢ How did you research the feature/legislation/requirements?

    ➢ Did it require capital purchase?

    ➢ How did you get funding/support to fund it?

    ➢ How did you manage the install?

    ➢ What were the challenges during the implementation?

    ➢ What is the response from customers?

    ➢ Have you had interest from any new groups?

    ➢ How have you communicated it to your customer base?

➢ What would you have done differently if you designed your service from scratch?

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Session Summary

FREE Access Guides for Venues

- A **factual and objective guide** stating what to expect on arrival

- **Guidance report** to help understand how and where to make improvements.

- **Promotional opportunities** with a window sticker and listings

Go to visitkentbusiness.co.uk for more information

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