

ELEVATOR 



## **Inclusive Tourist Guiding**

**Handbook for Guiding People with Special  
Access Requirements**

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**INCLUSIVE TOURIST GUIDING | HANDBOOK FOR GUIDING PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL  
ACCESS REQUIREMENTS**

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## Chapter I

# Introduction

This Handbook is a learning material focused on **Inclusive Tourist Guiding**.

Its creation was initiated by the tourist guides, who meet **tourists with access needs** more and more often in their work, as their number is growing mainly due to the ageing population. Training offers on this topic are weak or completely absent in most countries.

Inclusive (or also accessible) guiding is based on the concept of **Accessible Tourism**, that endeavours to improve tourist destinations, products and services so that they are accessible to all people regardless of their age, abilities, permanent or temporary limitations and impairments.

**Inclusive Tourist Guiding** is a common guiding service that meets the needs and abilities of the clients and is accessible, enjoyable and easily understandable for as many individuals as possible. It doesn't specifically target only people with disabilities, but generally people who have access needs associated with problems with mobility, sight, hearing, perception, attention, comprehension etc.

The entire tourism industry is moving towards becoming more accessible and inclusive and tourist guides play an important role in this effort, since they are representatives of the cities, regions and countries in the area of their qualification and have a strong impact on overall success of the tour and satisfaction of the visitors. Inclusive tourist guiding is also the way to maintain and improve the quality of the guiding offers, which have been seriously threatened by the deregulation of professional tourist guiding at European level.

An inclusive tourist guide doesn't have to be an expert in disabilities. But he or she should be an 'expert' in customer service and giving all the customers a friendly welcome. He or she understands that all people are unique in their abilities. He or she approaches visitors with an open mind asking them the simple question: 'How can I help you?'. In this way, the tourist guide can open up for a conversation and give the visitors an opportunity to respond, advising exactly what their requirements are, so that the guide can tailor the service, as far as possible, to the client's expectations.

The aim of this Handbook is to raise awareness of the access needs of various visitors and improve the ability to adapt guided tours and make them more accessible and inclusive. It can be used as self-learning material or as supporting training material within educational programmes for tourist guides.

Although this Handbook is addressed to mainly to tourist guides, it may also be useful for other professionals who provide information, accompany tourists during their journey, design the itinerary, provide basic assistance, etc. like tour managers, tour escorts, staff of travel agencies, tourist information centres and others.

It is expected that the learner or user of this handbook has a basic knowledge of general tourist guiding activities and methods, which are not addressed in this publication or are mentioned only briefly. In this publication you will learn:

- Who are visitors with access requirements and what are the most common access needs;
- How to prepare for an inclusive tour and adapt it to visitors with access requirements;
- How to customize communication and guiding to the clients with access requirements;
- How to adapt other services and solve unforeseen situations;
- How tourist guides can evaluate their inclusive guiding efforts.

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## Chapter II

# Visitors with Access Requirements

### 1. Introduction

Abilities and characteristics of people change as they advance from childhood to old age and can vary considerably among individuals, whatever their age. All people can experience limitations to their activities due to a combination of possible impairments or health conditions and barriers such as personal and environmental factors. Although some impairments are minor in nature, combinations of impairments can impose significant limitations, as is often the case in ageing. While not all older persons have impairments, the rate of disability or limitations is highest among this demographic group. Also, children with impairments can have specific requirements, not forgetting they have general needs and preferences that are similar to those of other children.

Remember that **70% of disabilities are hidden** – we do not necessarily see them, so make no assumptions.

Although every client has their own personal set of needs and requirements, it is possible to anticipate how to cater appropriately for each person by knowing certain common impairments and limitations that customers may have and the consequences of such conditions. This section gives a systematic overview of the broad ranges of different access requirements people can have. This is not an exhaustive list nor does it reflect everything that a person may experience - it is only indicative of what you might expect.

### 2. Visitors with Motor Impairments

Motor impairment is the partial or total loss of physical faculties that include walking, balance, holding and manipulating objects, pulling, pushing, lifting and reaching. Many activities involve simultaneous use of more than one of these skills.

Catering for the access needs of visitors with motor impairments may require a “barrier-free” environment, building adjustments and special equipment or installations. Nevertheless, it is a very varied group differentiated by the type and scope of their impairment.

#### Walking, Balance and Stamina

Problems with walking can have different scope. For some people, walking on the level or up or down gradients or stairs is difficult. Some people may have a limited range of motion, other may not be able to move on foot independently at all.

People with impaired sense of balance, reduced stamina and coordination are typically older people but also include children. This can be manifested in not being able to walk a long way or even stand up for long time, becoming tired quickly, moving slowly etc. They may be more likely to slip and fall down and injure themselves.

- They may use supporting walking aids such as a mechanical or electric wheelchair, crutches, walker/rollator, walking canes.
- They may need seating where they can stop frequently, to rest, regain strength or catch their breath.
- They may only manage short distances.
- They may not be able to manage steps and may need ramps or lifts.
- Support handrails on both sides of a ramp or staircase may be necessary for many users, for safety and support.
- Uneven surfaces or loose walking surfaces may be difficult or impossible to cross.
- Non-slip floor surfaces are also important.
- Availability of walking aids, wheelchairs or scooters for rent or loan may be necessary in specific venues.
- They may need another person to help them walk.

### Handling Objects - Dexterity and Manipulation or Operation of Objects

Motor difficulties do not involve only legs but also arms, hands or even finger movements. These can be manifested in not being able to manipulate or grasp objects, combine movements, turn the wrist, lift objects etc. People with reduced motor or dexterity abilities may also have difficulty holding objects, carrying bags and other items or opening doors, etc. They may use their forearm and elbow to make gross movements, such as opening doors. They may also have difficulty in handling coins, turning handles, using taps or manipulating equipment.

### Reaching

The reach range is dependent on the height of the person, their ability to use their arms and balance, strength and mobility of the upper body.

A 'comfortable reach range' has been defined as one that is appropriate to an activity that is likely to be frequent and in need of precise execution and that does not involve stretching or bending from the waist.

Having things within easy reach is particularly important for those with more severe mobility limitations. Telephones, desks and counters, electrical and other service controls, taps, door handles, window catches and furniture should be positioned within reach.

For wheelchair users, the reach range is limited depending on the seated position. Where reach is across a desk or counter the range is limited by the presence or design of the wheelchair's arms. The wheelchair itself should be accommodated by having table-tops at a suitable height and space for the wheelchair user's legs to be positioned under a sink or table-top.

## 3. Visitors with Sensory Impairments

Having an impairment in one or more senses – vision, hearing, touch, taste and smell - reduces a person's ability to perceive, understand and act in various situations. Typically, when one of the senses is missing or impaired, an individual learns, to some extent, to



'compensate' for a disability by developing the use of the remaining senses. However, this may not always be the case.

Especially people who lose one of the senses later in life may find their activities severely restricted, whilst those who, for example, have been blind or deaf since birth may have learned skills that help them to communicate, orientate themselves and carry out their daily activities in an independent manner and find their way.

It cannot be assumed that a person with a sensory impairment can function independently and many individuals will have another person - a companion, helper or assistant to help them, especially when travelling and when coming to unfamiliar surroundings for the first time.

People with sensory impairments may use specialised assistive technologies to help them communicate with other people, read or interpret visual or auditory messages, orientate themselves and move around.

## Vision

Vision problems can vary from complete blindness to different degrees and types of sight limitations. Those with impaired vision may use other senses, such as touch, hearing and smell in order to comprehend the environment.

Walking, negotiating changes in level, moving over rough ground and around obstacles can be difficult. People with vision impairments are exposed to several types of dangers, including injuring themselves by walking off paths, tripping on steps, bumping into unmarked objects or hurting themselves on hot or sharp objects, edges and surfaces. If the problem of vision is combined with balance problems the individual is exposed to higher risks, including colliding with objects, slipping and falling.

Visitors with vision impairment (not only blind person) may use a cane to detect obstacles on a route. Some may use a guide dog (service animal) to assist them in way-finding, negotiating road crossings and warning them of dangers.

Their access needs will vary according to the person's level of sight and will be related mainly to the access to information, safety of movement and orientation in an unknown environment.

- In general, for people with vision impairments, the less complex environments and services are, the better.
- Sounds, such as splashing from water fountains or changes of walking surfaces, and smells from fragrant plants can provide cues for orientation which may help people with vision impairments when moving through a building or in outdoor spaces.
- Information in Braille or raised text may be useful, mainly for blind persons.
- People with vision impairments may need more verbal information and more detailed description, with greater accuracy.
- Audio messages can be a good way of informing about the facilities, fire procedures etc.
- Adequate tactile and/or audible warnings should be present wherever there may be a hazard for those who have vision impairments.

- Evacuation procedures that are based only on visual indications will not be perceived by blind individuals or may not be perceived by persons with visual impairment and therefore additional warnings need to be given by audible and/or tactile warnings.
- Entering and leaving different means of transport, such as small boats and motor vehicles can be difficult and assistance may be required.



Figure 1. Tactile aids for visitors with vision impairment - Model of the Ljubljana Castle (Slovenia), Tactile path on the floor in the Slovene Ethnographic Museum in Ljubljana (Slovenia), Tactile version of paintings with legend in Braille in Gallery of Art in Ostrava (Czech republic), Photo by Municipality of Ljubljana and Kazuist

## Hearing

Hearing impairment is one of those hidden impairments, invisible at a first glance. It may include partial hearing loss or complete deafness. The strength, pitch and intensity of sound that can be perceived vary from person to person.

Their access needs will be related particularly to the communication and access to information.

People who are born with a hearing impairment or deafness communicate mostly using sign language. Sign languages used by the Deaf community vary from country to country, so it is important to know which sign language Deaf visitors use for interpretation purposes. Those who are born with a hearing impairment may also have difficulty in writing and speaking because of the difficulty they have experienced in acquiring language.

The majority of people with hearing difficulties acquire hearing impairment later in life. This means they are unlikely to be proficient at sign language. They make themselves understood mostly in a signed form of their native language or in writing. They have often maintained their ability to speak so they are capable of communicating with hearing people relatively well. Some individuals are able to lip-read. Some people use a hearing aid.

- Verbal announcements given by public address systems may not be heard or understood correctly.
- Verbal communication is especially difficult in noisy environments, which disturb the person's hearing abilities.
- The acoustic qualities of rooms will affect the ability of a person with hearing difficulties to understand language.
- To be able to lip-read a good overhead lighting is needed.

- Hearing loop systems which provide amplified sound directly to a person's hearing aid can be useful in reception areas and ticket sales points to improve verbal communication between staff and customers with hearing difficulties.
- Some people may have difficulties also in reading written information, especially in a foreign language and may prefer to see ideograms (pictograms) and drawings to understand and communicate.
- Evacuation procedures that are based only on acoustic alarms will not be perceived by deaf individuals or may not be perceived by persons with hearing impairment and therefore devices with light signalling that can indicate different important signals (smoke detectors, fire alarms etc.) are needed.

## Touch

People with an impaired or reduced sense of touch include those who may have nerve damage, paralysis or missing limbs. They can have problems in sensing any kind of objects that they have to interact with.

Some people may not be able to feel anything with the lower part of their body and legs, others may also have a loss of feeling in the hands and arms and upper body.

Lack of feeling can affect the ability to use a touch screen or other devices that need to be perceived partly by touch.

Guests who lack the sense of touch or feeling may be at risk of injury from objects that are very sharp, very hot or very cold, as they do not react to them on contact.

## Smell and Taste

Although these may be considered two different categories, people who lack a sense of smell and taste can experience similar problems linked to their lack of sensory perception.

The main dangers associated with lack of sense of smell/taste are in failing to react to toxic chemicals, other dangerous airborne pollutants or smoke from a fire.

## 4. Visitors with Cognitive Impairments / Learning Difficulties

People with a cognitive impairment do not have an ability to learn and understand as most people do, to process information at the same speed or in the same way as others and may therefore find it difficult to follow instructions, to understand where they are, to identify people or to behave in an appropriate manner in a given setting. This can lead to dangers of disorientation – getting lost – and the possibility of becoming separated from others.

Memory loss is a form of cognitive impairment. Guests who have this characteristic may be confused if they are not often reminded or assisted. They can be more anxious and may not follow complicated information or long instructions. This may lead to problems of acting inappropriately in a given situation.

- Those with cognitive problems may need assistance and simplified, well-structured information to enable them to be safe and to enjoy a visit.
- It is better to use signs, symbols and pictograms than rely on printed word.

- 'Easy Reading' is a form of writing that has been developed to inform people with learning difficulties in a simpler way.

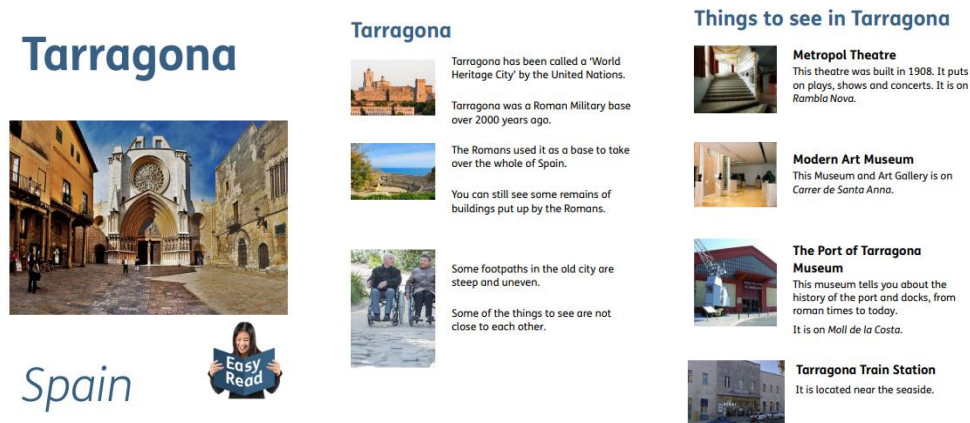


Figure 2. Example of information in Easy to Read format

Source: Visit4u Routes, Output of Visits4u project coordinated by Centre for Accessible Environments, London, UK, <http://www.visits4u.eu>

## Mental Abilities

Mental faculties include those processes that are carried out in the mind of the individual. They include cognition, intellect, interpretation, learning and memory. To provide a good guided tour experience for these visitors, all means of communication should have an immediate impact and be easily understood.

- They may need clear and repeated instructions with simple wording, so as to follow a tour successfully and safely, and to keep with the group.
- Older people may have limited memory and some find it difficult to absorb new information.
- They require both audible and visual messages that are concise, easy to understand and relatively frequent.
- Way finding plans or maps should clearly indicate the person's position in the building or facility, and should not include extraneous information.
- Along a route, way finding cues should be considered, that are easy to follow, e.g. tactile, graphic and audible signs or drawing attention to architectural features.
- It can be helpful to combine text information with universally recognisable symbols, such as graphics (pictograms, etc.) that are in accordance with international standards



Figure 3. Examples of standardized pictograms according to the ISO 7001 Public information symbols (toilets, accessible facility/accessible toilet, museum, slope or ramp access, elevator, accessible elevator, stairs, emergency exit, information)

## 5. Other Visitors

Visitors with access requirements form a very wide group. These include not only visitors with disabilities but also seniors, children, people with a variety of chronic diseases and other issues.

### Ageing Adults

The life span within the human population is increasing. More and more people now expect to maintain an active economic and social life with a variety of suitable leisure options in both the public and private domains as they age. However, many human faculties are in marked decline as we grow older.

Familiarity with a particular environment can be a valuable aid to independent activity as we age, while many older people enjoy travel, experiencing new places, people and cultures.

Seniors have a strong need to get enough information: detailed information about the place itself, the transportation, the services provided and the surrounding area, incl. information about availability of health care. They can be afraid to move around alone in an unfamiliar place.

Tourist guides and other group leaders may use badges, colourful clothing or other identifying props/marks to help members of a group keep together and to identify anyone who may stray from the group.

Old age is not a disease but seniors are more likely to suffer from a chronic illness. Consideration should also be given to a possible worsening of hearing and visual perception and potential problems with physical faculties. An accessible environment is important to them.

### Developing Child

An element of risk is an essential part of a child's development. However, it is important to ensure that the tourist venues and environments are safe for children.

- Areas where there is motor traffic, station platforms or where pedestrians encounter mixed traffic (including bicycles) are a hazard for small children.
- Places with unguarded open water present a hazard for small children and those who cannot swim.
- Places that are high up should be adequately guarded to prevent falls.
- Guarding walls and barriers should not encourage small children to climb on them.
- Windows and doors on upper floors and in supervised areas should have secure fastenings that small children cannot reach.
- Parents and guardians should supervise young children to ensure they do not become separated from the group or lost.

Children have a specific perception and attention span requiring adapted communications and a suitable programme. Children under the age of 7 like to play, repeat, they are curious, but they have a short attention span. Children under 11 like to learn new things and engage in activities and they have a longer attention span.

## **Diversity of Stature - People of Very Large or Very Small Stature**

People who are very tall or short, big or small, have different capabilities in terms of their reach and often their general mobility may be affected too. Smaller people can have difficulties in negotiating levels or steps and seeing (due to other people standing in the way).

Larger people may have difficulty in sitting or moving in confined spaces. Those who are grossly overweight may have difficulty in going up or down steps.

These guests may be exposed to danger in emergency situations because of their lack of ability to move easily or quickly, especially in case of evacuations.

## **Speech Impairments**

Speech impairment includes both lack of ability to speak (dumb) and people with dysarthria. Both categories of impairment can imply difficulties when holding a conversation with others. They may be misunderstood and this may lead to the danger of not being able to alert service personnel or another individual when needing help or when there is a danger.

Some people with speech impairments use sign language to speak to other people and they may also use assistive devices to enhance or supplement their speech, either with a keyboard or another communication device.

Pictograms may also serve as a medium of communication for those who lack speech.

Having paper and pencil handy can help to overcome communication problems for this group, in many situations.

## **Not Understanding the Language**

People who do not read and write the local language have difficulties due to not recognising the written or spoken word and possibly symbols of a language.

They may not understand the meaning of speech or text and this can give problems and dangers such as not understanding warnings, directions or written instructions.

## **Allergies and Other Sensitivities**

Some people are highly sensitive to certain substances in the environment, in foodstuffs or by direct skin contact which cause allergic reactions. The type and degree of allergy varies between individuals and can range from mild irritation to poisoning with severe debilitating conditions and even death.

Allergic reactions may be due to plants, hair of animals, food, chemicals and materials such as nickel and latex.

Contact allergy is caused by contact with the skin or by breathing in certain chemicals which the body then reacts to.

Environmental allergens include dust (often associated with carpets), building materials, smoke and flowering plants.

Allergic reactions can include running nose and eyes, and breathing problems which in acute circumstances can restrict activities of a person. Their reactions may be similar to those of the person who is lacking in stamina.

Where meals and drinks are included in a tour, guests should be asked to inform the group leader and/or catering outlet if they have food allergies.

## **Epilepsy**

Epilepsy is a neurological disorder characterized by epileptic seizures. Individuals' reactions to the seizure may differ. The seizures which occur with sudden loss of consciousness can cause problems because the person can get hurt fainting, falling or hitting inappropriately any object. It would be ideal to prevent the fall, something which is not always possible.

The seizure mostly lasts a few minutes and stops spontaneously. When the person regains consciousness, they can be confused, disoriented, have difficulty in speaking, or may not be lucid and do not realise what happened.

Generally, people with epilepsy need regular and sufficient sleep, rest, enough liquids, avoid overheating, avoid situations and places that may trigger the seizures (lack of sleep, tiredness, change of climate, stress, places with bright and flashing lights, etc.).

## **6. Conclusions**

In this chapter we have divided into categories the main kinds of impairments or needs people might face during a trip, while touring. The purpose of this long list was to let you understand what are most typical needs that your customers might have during a trip. Nonetheless you have always to remember that every person is unique, and he or she will have particular abilities, impairments, and needs, depending on his or her strength, education, culture, health, age, personality and preferences, like anyone else. You will always have to be ready to adapt your knowledge and your skills to the people you have in front of you to satisfy their needs and offer them the best possible service.

## **7. References**

CEN-CENELEC Guide 71, (2014) Guide for addressing accessibility in standards. Edition 2, 2014-12. [www.cen.eu](http://www.cen.eu)

ICF, the International Classification of Functioning, World Health Organization, 2001, <http://www.who.int/classifications/icf/en/>

## Chapter III

# Preparation for an Inclusive Guided Tour

## 1. Introduction

This section includes basic recommendations on how to prepare for a tour and how to make a tour inclusive.

Once you receive an order or the tour is assigned to you, you have to prepare for the tour well. Individual preparation for each tour is a very important part of guiding and a basic prerequisite of a good guided tour.

A tourist guide's preparations for a tour will not usually be as extensive as those of a tour manager or a tour escort. But even if you will only spend a short time with a group, providing 'only' interpretation, you need to familiarize yourself with the composition of the group, check the physical accessibility of the tour and tailor the route and its itinerary to the needs and abilities of the visitors.

Inclusive guiding includes having a professional attitude and understanding. That is why you should start the preparation by taking a look at your attitude towards clients with access needs, which can significantly influence their experience. Consider how to make a tour enjoyable for as many individuals as possible. Good customer service is about meeting and even surpassing the expectations of your guests.

## 2. Preparation for the Tour

### Information about Visitors

As a tourist guide, you need to know who you are going to guide. The more information you have about your customers, the easier it will be to give them what they need and provide a guided tour with satisfied customers.

Awareness of the composition of the group is important for a good planning and smooth implementation of the tour. It enables modification of the programme and routes, influences the style and content of interpretation and approach to the participants. It allows you to prevent conflicts, avoid unpleasant situations and cope with unforeseen situations.

#### **What should you know about the group**

- How many people are in the group?
- Is there some leader in the group with whom I directly communicate?
- How old are the persons in the group?
- Does anybody have any specific access needs or health problems? Are their abilities limited somehow?
- Are there only some visitors with access needs or does the whole group have some kind of specific access needs?



- Do they know each other or is it a group of 'strangers'? Are there any solo travellers?
- In case of mixed groups, including one or two persons with specific access needs, do other participants know that they have a person with specific needs in their group?
- How many carers (if any) accompany the group?
- What prior experiences of guided tours or museum visits does the group have? Are they used to these experiences or is it something new for them?
- What expectations do they have about the guided visit?

### **How to get information about participants' access needs before the tour**

Information about access needs should be a standard part of an application when a tour is booked. In practice, however, it often happens that a tourist guide gets this information at the meeting point or during the tour.

The problem may be with understanding of a phrase 'specific access need' or 'special needs'. When you ask directly: 'Is there someone in the group with a disability or health problem?', you usually get the answer 'no' or 'not that I am aware of'. Ask an intermediate, the person who booked the tour or a tour escort to check this.

Some clients may be offended by a direct question about disability or health, though this is not the case in every situation. Try to have a discussion with them and agree the service that suits them best. Describe what you need to know. People then usually start to speak more openly about their needs and start to describe the real situation, what they can do or can't do. To know what to ask, it is important to have basic knowledge of different impairments.

Examples of questions to identify access needs before the tour:

- Is there someone in the group with reduced mobility?
- Can these people walk up and down stairs, steep hills or manage long distances? What distances can they manage to walk?
- Does anyone use a mobility aid (e.g. manual wheelchair, electric wheelchair, mobility scooter, walker, cane, crutches)?
- Is there someone in the group with hearing or sight difficulties?
- Do any of these people travel with an assistance dog?
- In the case of persons with hearing difficulties or Deaf persons, can they lip-read? Do they use a hearing aid?
- Has someone trouble with understanding or learning difficulties?
- Do they travel with a carer or assistant?
- Has anyone a long-term illness that may affect their participation in the tour? (E.g. do they need to use the toilet frequently).
- Are there some dietary requirements?

### **Information about Programme and Place of the Tour**

When the group consists of persons with a certain disability, it can be assumed that the programme was already adapted to their abilities and needs. In practice, you will normally meet mixed groups with participants who have different access needs and others without access needs. In both cases it is recommended that you pay attention to the programme with respect to the abilities of participants and check its feasibility before the tour. Check if all

facilities and paths within the tour are accessible (including toilet, gift shops, etc.). Plan the route carefully and prepare a detailed time schedule for the intended itinerary. Consider all activities.

Besides the general information about the places you will visit, you should know:

- Where is the meeting point? Is there enough space for the whole group? Are there any access barriers?
- What is the exact route of the tour? What are the distances between places? Are there any access barriers on the route or at the entrance?
- Where and how often are the rest stops? Are the break places suitable for everyone?
- Are there public toilets available? Are they accessible?
- What are the access conditions of places and facilities? Are there any barriers in the places we intend to visit?
- How much are the entrance tickets to different facilities? Are there some discounts or free entrances for some groups (persons with disabilities and their carers, seniors, children)? Do persons with disabilities have to present a “Disability Card”?
- What are the evacuation and emergency procedures?
- Is there a hospital and/or pharmacy near the venue of the visit?
- Are there any rental services or repair shops that can service mobility aids (e.g. wheelchairs) or sensory aids near or at the venue?
- What is the planned duration of the tour?

Keep in mind that many activities with persons with access needs may take more time due to the slower walking pace, poor orientation in space, longer times needed for viewing objects/places, more detailed interpretation, more frequent rest stops etc.

### **How to check accessibility**

Do not rely on information found on websites. If it is stated that the facility is accessible, it is still necessary to check what that means.

If a full Access Statement or Access Guide of the facility is not available, you should check it by yourself. You can use your own checklist or use the checklist from Annex 2. There are many useful tools on the web to measure and record the access conditions of a venue – see the examples mentioned in Annex 2. Generally they are conceived for their owners, but they can help you to gather the required information about accessibility of a facility.

Other tips are:

- Use a map, if necessary draw the path. Help yourself with modern technology and identify potential obstacles such as: road works, closed passages, etc.
- Identify risks such as: street crossings, stairs, heavy traffic, crowded places, etc.
- Check if assistive technology is working (for example lifts).
- Don't forget to check the environment inside the buildings. Sometimes entrances are OK, but there is no accessible toilet inside.

### 3. Adaptation of the Tour

Inclusive tour allows full participation of persons with access needs in the tour on an equal basis with other participants. To adapt the tour you need to know persons abilities and environment. When you encounter any disharmony (barriers) between the abilities (needs) and environment, then it is advisable to adapt the programme or the route, so that all participants can participate in it and enjoy it.

Potential barriers may include architectural barriers in buildings and outdoors, information and communication barriers, transport barriers etc.

Of course, not all the barriers can be removed or avoided by the tourist guides. Making tour accessible is very often about finding suitable compromises e.g. change the route, change the schedule, prepare alternative programme etc.

You also have to take into account that individual's abilities may be very diverse and that the differences between abilities of two persons with the same impairment may be significant. What may be an obstacle for one person may not be to another. Some individuals may want assistance while others may not.

If there are barriers which you cannot remove or you are not sure if or how they should be adapted, always consult this situation with the customers in advance, so that they can evaluate the accessibility of the tour themselves and prepare for it (e.g. with appropriate aids or equipment) or choose some other solution.

#### Visitors with Motor Impairments

##### Most common barriers

- Architectural barriers such as steps, staircases without handles, bumpy surfaces (e.g. with cobblestones), slippery surfaces, narrow passages, doors or pavements, high thresholds (more than 2 cm), steep routes and ramps, high pavements without kerb ramps ('dropped kerbs') at pedestrian crossings, too narrow lifts etc.

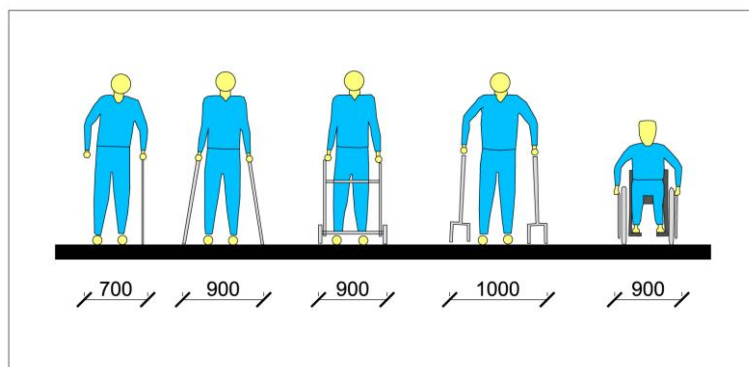


Figure 4. Minimum clear width of passage ensuring non-collision (mm)

Source: KAZUIST, Accessible Tourism in a Nutshell

- Lack of accessible toilets
- Prolonged standing and lack of resting places where visitors can sit
- Inaccessible buses (high floor buses without a ramp)

- Information placed too high, which persons in wheelchairs cannot read
- High counters or showcases with exhibits
- Fixed seats and tables that are too low to accommodate a person using a wheelchair

### **Tips on how to adapt the tour**

- If possible, choose the route without barriers, with flat terrain and firm surface, with availability of accessible toilets.

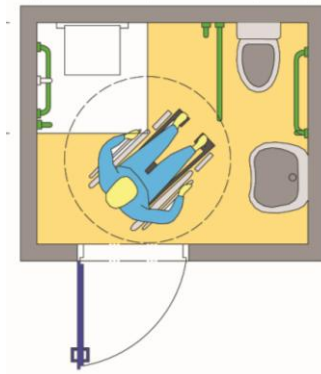


Figure 5. Accessible toilet, Source: Kazuist, Accessible tourism in a Nutshell

Accessible toilet cabin should have:

- Doors wider than 80 cm opened outwards
  - Enough space to turn around with the wheelchair (manual wheelchairs require a turning circle of at least 120x120cm and preferably 150x150cm)
  - Support handrails beside the toilet (preferably on both side)
  - Toilet seat at height of 46-48 cm
  - Safety alarm
- Estimate the time needed for the tour and check with the group if they are able to follow it. Otherwise adjust it or find a compromise.
  - If there are people with reduced mobility in the group adjust the time of the visit to them. Don't exclude them if they are slower, unless they ask for it.
  - Choose points where you can stop easily and, if possible, also sit for some time.
  - Consider sitting possibilities, especially at points where a long explanation of the surroundings is foreseen.
  - Plan breaks as necessary at places that are suitable for everyone.
  - If you have mainly wheelchair users in the group, you might consider having a portable chair with you so you speak to them at the same level. It helps make everyone equal – however, it is not obligatory and it is not always appropriate.
  - Check if it is possible to rent or loan wheelchairs or some other walking aids at the venue.
  - Always take into consideration health and safety issues. For example, if the path is inappropriate for wheelchair users, because they think it is too bumpy for them, don't push to cross it, but find different solutions.

### **Tourist guide's experience**

At the archeological site of Delphi (Greece) they have a wheelchair and a special path for wheelchair users, but you must warn the responsible authorities several days in advance and also, if the disabled person takes the wheelchair, he won't follow the rest of the group, which isolates him and makes him feel different.

The choice in such a situation is hard. Either you have to divide the group, which is the worst possible solution, or choose for the whole group one of the accessible or barrier-free routes.

You must always decide on the basis of a specific situation and place - how big is the difference between the two routes, how many and what barriers are on the barrier route, whether they can be overcome with the help of the group - and the group's attitude.

## Visitors with Vision Impairments

### Most common barriers

- Architectural barriers such as pillars along the path, bumpy surfaces, low ceilings or doorways, narrow passages, suspended or protruding objects (e.g. advertising stands, flowerpots, branches extending to pavements), staircases without first and last steps visibly marked in contrasting colours across the width of the steps, interior design which is low in contrast
- Lack of orientation system and tactile guidance system
- Inaccessible presentation of information (small letters, complicated graphics, decorative fonts which visitors cannot read, unavailability of information in alternative formats)
- Bad contrast of the text and the background or of the doors and the wall
- Loud sounds (especially those unexpected) or excessive noise limiting orientation

<i>Image background</i>	<i>Colour typeface</i>							
	black	white	violet	blue	turquoise	green	yellow	red
black		(+)	(+)	(-)	(+)	(+)	(+)	(-)
white	(+)		(+)	(+)	(-)	(-)	(-)	(+)
violet	(+)	(+)		(-)	(-)	(-)	(-)	(-)
blue		(+)	(-)		(+)	(-)	(+)	(-)
turquoise	(+)	(-)	(-)	(+)		(-)	(+)	(-)
green	(+)	(-)	(-)	(+)	(-)		(-)	(-)
yellow	(+)	(-)	(+)	(+)	(+)	(-)		(-)
red	(-)	(+)	(-)	(-)	(-)	(-)	(+)	

Figure 6. Examples of good (+) and bad (-) contrasts of font and background, Source: Kazuist  
Source: Kazuist, Accessible Tourism in a Nutshell

### Tips on how to adapt the tour

- Estimate the needed time and check with a group if they are able to follow it. Otherwise adjust it or find a compromise.
- Choose a simple path, let it be easy to orientate. Try to choose paths with tactile routes and warnings on the floor.
- Plan breaks as necessary at places that are suitable for everyone.
- Check in advance if it is possible to touch some objects in the exposition.
- If there are any objects to touch, smell or listen, include touching, smelling and listening in the guided tour; if not, prepare things that the visitors can touch, smell or listen.
- Ask the person what format of information they prefer and make sure that you can provide all key information in large print (16 point and higher, simple font without decoration – e.g. Arial, Tahoma or Verdana, 1,5 spacing between lines of text), audio

or in Braille on request. If you do not have the information in alternative formats, then offer to read it through with them.

- Use smart phone, tablet or digital camera. On these you can enlarge photos of objects, which are too small or cannot be approached by partially sighted visitors.
- If audio guides are available, check if the interpretation (description) is adapted to the needs of persons with vision impairments, i.e. with descriptive interpretation describing what other visitors can see.
- Dress yourself with strong colours which could be well identified by people with reduced vision.
- Adapt your interpretation, follow the principles of communication with persons with vision impairments explained in the next chapter.

## Visitors with Hearing Impairments

### Most common barriers

- Information and communication barriers: receiving and understanding verbal information or complicated written texts (with long sentences and unknown words)
- Orientation in space limited by the field of vision (greater vulnerability)
- Noisy environment, bad acoustics in the room
- Bad lighting
- Lack of hearing (induction) loop systems – the special sound system used by people with hearing aids. It provides a magnetic, wireless signal that is picked up by the hearing aid when it is set to ‘T’ position.



Figure 7. Designation of places equipped with a hearing loop

Photo by PREMIKI

### Tips on how to adapt the tour

- When visitors have some ability to hear (are not deaf), plan to use guiding headphones.
- Check whether the place you are visiting has a special video guide with subtitles or interpretation into the relevant sign-language.
- Check if there is an induction loop available at places along the route and remind guests who use a hearing aid to switch their aid to ‘T’ to use it. Check if there are video guides available with sign language interpretation.
- Prepare basic and important information in the written form.
- Prepare a note pad and pen for case of any difficulty in communication. Prepare short texts and various pictograms in advance.

- Check if visitors use sign language and which one, maybe you can learn a few welcome signs – good morning, thank you, good bye etc.
- Adapt your interpretation, follow the principles of communication with persons with hearing impairments explained in the next chapter.
- Plan the route so that its greatest benefit is visual.

## **Visitor with Cognitive Impairments/Learning Difficulties**

### **Most common barriers**

- Information and communications barriers - perception and understanding of information, problems with reading and writing.
- Lack of information in 'Easy to Read' format.
- Activities requiring concentration.
- Orientation in unknown space, ability to get alone to the meeting point.

### **Tips on how to adapt the tour**

- Plan a route that is easy to follow, without the risk of injury.
- If possible choose quiet places for the communication.
- Estimate the needed time and check with a group if they are able to follow it. Otherwise adjust it or find a compromise.
- Choose especially visually attractive places of sightseeing, do not choose sights where there is a risk of injury.
- Plan breaks if needed; check if break places are suitable for everyone.
- Establish with the carers the best way of communicating with the clients to keep the attention of the audience and, possibly, what should be avoided etc.
- Prepare things that they can touch or smell. Choose visually attractive things.
- Prepare a 'handout' to keep which uses pictograms, graphic symbols or pictures of the most important objects/ sights.
- Adapt your interpretation, follow the principles of communication with persons with cognitive impairments/learning difficulties explained in the next chapter.

## **Visitors with Other Difficulties**

### **Tips on how to adapt the tour**

- If it is possible choose the route where public toilets are available.
- Estimate the time needed and check with the group if they are willing to follow it. Otherwise find a compromise.
- Plan breaks as necessary; check if break places are suitable for everyone.
- Get information about any food intolerance in the group. Allergies could be very specific, so take care to collect the exact information.
- Sometimes long-term illnesses are also connected with reduced mobility, hearing, sight or cognitive problems. Check if you have to take other issues into consideration.

## Seniors

### Tips on how to adapt the tour

The following tips come from the seniors themselves and their expectations from a trip for seniors. They can serve as an inspiration for successful organisation and implementation of inclusive guided tours.

- More tourist guides (at least 2) for a group – it gives the possibility to divide tourists into smaller groups according to their tempo or strength or for the reason of dealing with unforeseen situations such as nausea, medical treatment, shortening of the route, an early return to the hotel, etc.
- True, clear and precise information about the degree of difficulty of the programme (duration, walking distance, height difference, surface, stairs, time spent in a vehicle and on foot, possibility of rest along the route, temperature and climatic conditions) in the description of the programme before buying the trip.
- Clear description of the programme and timetable at the beginning of the tour and its repetition during the tour, including safety instructions and instructions for emergency situations (pass the memo card with emergency contact or address of a meeting point and time, check of forgotten things or equipment).
- Flexibility in customising programme according to the composition of the group or weather conditions.
- Adjust the length of the programme and the interpretation to the participants, to limit the content of the information and data in the presentation, and, if necessary, repeat them during or at the end of the presentation, not to overtax participants with information.
- Choose standard or superior accommodation and high-quality transport without overnight transportation.
- Assist in overcoming language barriers (help with a translation even in common situations such as a purchase).
- Include in the programme more frequent toilet breaks, refreshments and plenty of free time also for regeneration (wellness, sleep).
- Adjust the timetable (tourists get up and go to sleep earlier, need longer time for eating, dressing, toilet, taking medication and moving).
- Get advice on specific seniors' travel problems (stress, incontinence, relationships within the group, overestimation of physical strength, sudden health deterioration, etc.).
- Deal with complaints from participants sensitively and give cautions carefully (they may behave negatively to criticism from the Guide).
- Listen to participants patiently and respond empathically, communicate more intensively than with a regular group.
- Create an environment for the involvement of participants with various restrictions (dietary, health, etc.).





Figure 8. Illustrative photo from Delphi by FEG-ENAT

## 4. Conclusions

Making a tour inclusive means its adaptation to the customers' needs and abilities. It usually requires adaptation of the route, interpretation, number of breaks, time for the tour etc. Considering accessibility allows everyone to participate fully and independently in the tour.

Regardless of the specific needs you will have in a group, there are some general, useful tips to make a tour more accessible that are appropriate for all type of customers:

- Choose accessible routes.
- Inform about barriers in advance.
- Respect tempo of the group.
- Participants with disabilities usually don't travel alone, they are often accompanied by a carer (often a family member). Don't be afraid to ask carers in the group to help you.
- Always ask a disabled person how you can help – do not assume that you know best.
- Don't be afraid to ask customers with access needs for additional information about their abilities.
- Provide clear and comprehensible information in accessible and usable formats appropriate to different kinds of impairments - sign language, simple language, audio format, different font sizes, Braille code, Easy to read format etc. You will learn more about accessible communication in the next chapter.
- If the barriers are not big and can be overcome with some assistance, offer your help, but only if the person wants you to help him/her e.g. take a wheelchair up/down a single step. Respect if they reject help.
- If the barriers are too big or frequent and there is no other solution (e.g. alternative route) then agree an alternative solution with the participant.
- Identify evacuation procedures and paths in advance.

Experience is the best teacher - As in every situation also in the case of guiding for persons with specific needs practice will help you providing a better performance. Of course we have to follow some instruction and use them as much as possible, but a guide should always be prepared for questions that are not directly connected to guiding, for sudden unexpected obstacles and other surprises like a diabetic who may faint or client who has an epileptic seizure. Such eventualities are also possible.

Always have a backup plan!

## 5. References

Project T- guide 2014 <http://www.accesstraining.eu/?i=t-guide.en.home>

Project APP TOUR YOU, ERASMUS + 2016-2017 [www.apptouryou.eu](http://www.apptouryou.eu)

Pantou, European Accessible Tourism Directory [www.pantou.org](http://www.pantou.org)

## Chapter IV

# Inclusive Communication and Guiding

## 1. Introduction

This section focuses on specific issues relating to communication and guiding visitors who have specific access requirements. Guiding visitors and interpreting the cultural and natural heritage is the main task of the tourist guide's profession. Communicating with customers who may have any specific access needs requires some focused techniques in order to make the visit a worthwhile and complete experience for everybody.

Moreover, we should consider a group where the visitors are mixed, meaning that people with any specific need are enjoying the tour together with others who may or may not have specific access requirements. Thus the tourist guide has the hard task to 'speak' to everybody and make all tourists understand the cultural explanations, follow the tour and make the most of the visit.

## 2. Effective Communication

The biggest challenge for a tourist guide when guiding tourists with or without specific access needs is communicating effectively to show the beauty of a place, to give important information and to thrill the tourists.

Verbal (spoken) communication is fundamental in guiding, but non-verbal communication (facial expressions, gestures and other body signs, eye contact, physical distance between the communicators) is also important.

Without pretending to be complete in this context, we present, below, the following basic axioms of communication techniques, to provide an understanding of the background to the tips and advice to guide people with specific access needs.

1. It is **impossible not to communicate** - our way of presenting ourselves or of behaving is already a communication to those around or facing us, even if not a word is spoken.
2. Visual contact is the most powerful means of communication. Thus, a **good visual contact** with our interlocutor is beneficial for communication because it transmits to him/her a sense of security and interest.
3. The simplicity of language is a core of an effective communication, therefore the **language should be simple**, with the use of analogies, illustrative and straight to the point.
4. Communication is based on welcoming, on personal involvement, on the responsibility, empathy, trust and on **listening**. In communications and relations, listening is fundamental. It is half of the dialogue.

Regardless of the type of client, your communication should be:

- pronounced at an adequate volume and speed, repeating important information
- comprehensible - understood by all visitors, adapted to the abilities of comprehension
- adequate - adapted to objective and subjective conditions, i.e. to climatic and acoustic conditions, tiredness and mood of visitors, their interest in interpretation,

So, in one word, even without taking into consideration any access needs, as a guide, you have to be 'accessible' i.e. easy to understand and friendly!

### 3. Basic Vocabulary for Disability

The language you use has great impact on the way people with disabilities feel and are perceived in society. It is not only a matter of 'etiquette' or political correctness: you need to be aware of the meaning behind the words you use. Disrespectful language can hurt people, it makes them feel excluded from society and can be a barrier for their full participation.

Not all people with disabilities, however, may use the terms themselves - but that does not mean that a non-disabled person should use a term that might imply disrespect.

#### General Rules when Talking about Disability

##### Persons first

Say 'person/people with disability' rather than 'disabled person' or 'the disabled'. A person is not defined by their disability – they are a person before anything else.

##### No euphemisms

Many people with disability do not like terms like 'physically challenged' and 'differently abled'.

##### Nothing special or super

People with disabilities, like every person, can be talented, and have great skills and ability, but it is not their disability making them 'courageous', 'brave', 'special' or 'superhuman'.

##### Nothing tragic

Don't dramatize; disability is a fact of life, they are not 'afflicted', or 'suffer' from any disgrace. Don't pity people because of their disability.

##### Talk positively

A 'wheelchair user' can participate in the life of the society thanks to the wheelchair, so he is not 'confined to a wheelchair' or 'wheelchair bound'. The same goes when defining specific services or places like 'accessible parking space' rather than 'handicapped parking'.

##### Simply 'disability'

To avoid forms like 'handicapped', 'differently-abled', 'cripple', 'retarded', etc. use just 'disability', or 'person with disability'.

**The others are not ‘normal’, just without disabilities.**

When talking about people without disabilities, it is okay to say ‘people without disability’. But do not refer to them as ‘normal’ or ‘healthy’. ‘Normal’ is not the opposite of ‘disabled’.

Finally, you will discover that the best way is to **call people by their name!**

**The Right Vocabulary for Disability**

Even if all terms are not accepted by everyone, and there is therefore not a term which is 100% safe from criticism, the following table offers a number of non-respectful and generally considered respectful terms, according to the type of disability.

This should help you avoiding mistakes and misunderstanding and to communicate with people with disabilities in the most positive way.

Disability	Disrespectful Language	Respectful Language
Motor Impairment	Handicapped, Physically Challenged, Special, Deformed, Cripple, Gimp, Spastic, Wheelchair-bound	Wheelchair user, Person with mobility or physical disability
Blindness or Vision Impairment	Sightless, Invalid	Blind; Vision Impaired; Person who is blind; Person with vision impairment
Deafness or Hearing Impairment	Invalid, Deaf-and-Dumb, Deaf-Mute	Deaf or hearing impaired, Deaf person; Person with hearing impairment
Speech Impairment	Dumb, One who talks badly	Person with a speech or communication impairment, Speech impaired
Learning Difficulties	Retarded, Mentally retarded, Slow, Brain- Damaged, Special, Handicapped	Learning disability, Learning difficulty, Cognitive disability, Person with learning or cognitive disability

**4. Specifics of Communication with Visitors with Access Requirements**

**General Useful Tips for Communication**

Before considering again, as in the previous chapters, the general groups of needs of people with disabilities, let us keep in mind some relevant communication and behavioural ‘best attitudes’, which are always good to have:

- **Be creative** when you describe. Let people use the 5 senses, like touching or smelling things. Use available tools and aids like maps, photos, smart phones or tablets. Tell stories; it is always a good way to gain the attention of your group.

- **Be patient.** Try to understand the needs of the individual. Wait for the last person before starting to talk, unless some persons ask you not to wait for them. Give people enough time to move around, to see and then go forward to the next spot.
- **Be natural.** Don't be afraid to talk to persons with a disability. At the same time don't feel you have to talk to every disabled person you see to prove you are not awkward around them. Don't be afraid to ask questions about their disabilities or to be too personal when trying to understand better their specific needs. Don't be afraid of saying something wrong. For example, it is OK to say: We will have a walk down the hill (to wheelchair users).
- **Be inclusive.** Include tourists with special needs in the group, trying not to create separate areas. Talk directly to the person, not through any companion or carer. Maintain visual or sound contact with the clients.
- **Be polite.** Show the person the same respect that you would expect to be given to you. Always use respectful communication forms to the person, which means do not treat him or her in a childish way or giving a generic 'you' i.e. 'you disabled people'.
- **Be helpful.** Offer help but don't be intrusive. Do not be patronising to the person you are helping. Welcome the person with a helpful attitude which displays a willingness to serve in a friendly and courteous way.
- **Be flexible.** Take into account basic physiological needs – toilet breaks, rest, drinking regime. If it is a walking tour, set the tempo of the walk according to the slowest participant. Speak loudly so that your group can hear you, but not with such intensity as to bother other visitors (groups).

### Tips for Communication with Visitors with Motor Impairments

- People with mobility impairments do not, usually, require any simplified language in cultural descriptions. Do not confuse them with people with learning difficulties. Speak to them as to anyone else.
- It is alright to use expressions like 'running along' when speaking to the wheelchair user. It is likely the wheelchair user expresses things the same way.
- In case of wheelchair users, ask the other participants to let them stay directly in front of the guide, thus allowing for a better view of what is being described.
- When speaking with a person who uses a wheelchair, sit or crouch at the person's level if the conversation will be an extended one.
- When interpreting, consider the participant's field of view, ensuring he or she can see what you are showing.
- Remember that the wheelchair or crutches are part of person's personal space. Do not touch or push their aids without their permission.
- Inform about available aids at the venue, such as a lift, wheelchair etc.
- Be prepared to assist if necessary but never lift a person in or out of the wheelchair. If you are not familiar with handling a wheelchair, ask the customer for instructions.

### Tourist guides' experience and tips

- Once I had somebody with a walking stick during a visit to the Acropolis. According to the rules of the Acropolis, the lift should be used only by people with a wheelchair. Taking that into account and also because I didn't want to treat him as a disabled person, I didn't tell him there was a lift. Nevertheless, they tried on their own to use the lift and the responsible let them use the lift. At the end of the visit they complained that nobody told them there was a lift.
- At places like museums, where exhibits are placed in high-sided horizontal showcases, use a mirror and set it over a showcase, so that it is above the eye level of a person in a wheelchair. With the right inclination the client can see the exhibits well.

### Tips for Communication with Visitors with Vision Impairments

- When you meet people who have vision impairment, always address them by name and introduce yourself by name.
- Don't shout. People with vision impairment are not deaf, speak at a normal level.
- Remember that people with vision impairment cannot rely on the same visual cues as people without vision impairment. Make sure you verbalise any thoughts or feelings.
- Describe what you see. Use a specific language when describing the environment, any museum's exhibits, paintings etc. Provide a description with as much detail as possible of the shape of an object, on the images represented in the painting, on the structure of a hall or a building; identifying artistic points of interest.
- Allow the tourist to touch objects, floors, walls, whenever possible, and to feel the surroundings by scents of plants, furniture and other items. Try to involve as many senses as possible, especially touch and hearing. If you want the blind person to touch something, tell him what it is and guide him with your hand.
- Allow enough time to explore mock-ups, if available, and/or any tactile maps or representations of the building you are visiting.
- Warn about unexpected strong sounds such as loud music, to prevent sudden fright.
- Be precise in your words. Don't use words 'this' or 'there' – this is not information. Instead of 'there' use a descriptive method like "5 metres in front of us is a tower".
- Don't be embarrassed or self-conscious about using phrases with verb 'see', such as 'As you can see, See you later, Nice to see you, I've never seen anything like it'. People with visual impairments don't take it as offensive.
- Tell a person with visual impairment if you need to leave their presence. This ensures that the person will not be embarrassed by speaking to an empty space.
- If a person is accompanied by a guide dog, do not pat it, feed it or otherwise distract it while it is in a harness. A dog in a harness is working.
- Respect a person's cane. Leave it within the person's reach; it is vital to their security and the ability to move.
- When walking, respect the tempo of the group. Inform about direction and obstacles on the route like 'now we are turning left/right', 'there is a step down/step up' (only saying 'a step' is misleading), there is narrow space, head-level obstacle, lower ceilings, etc.

- When helping, allow a person to hold on to your arm. It's not proper to grab a person with sight loss and manhandle him or her in order to help.



Figure 9. Tactile reproduction of the painting, 'Mona Lisa' by Leonardo Da Vinci. From 'Touch the Prado' exhibition, 2015. With the permission of Pablo Blazquez Dominguez/Getty Images.

### Tips for Communication with Visitors with Hearing Impairments

- Try to have them in the first row of the group so that those who are able to lip-read may follow your description more easily.
- If needed, gain the person's attention before speaking. Try a gentle tap on the shoulder, a wave or some other visual signal to gain attention.
- Stand in a place where there is good lighting on your face.
- Look directly at the person while speaking.
- Make sure your mouth is visible. Remember not to cover your mouth with your hand or any other object as you talk. Do not eat, smoke or chew gum.
- Don't exaggerate your mouth movements, as this will make it more difficult to lip-read, just speak clearly, not too fast or slow.
- Keep your volume up and natural. Don't shout.
- Use short but complete sentences. It is not necessary to speak in a childlike way. Highlight the main word of the sentence. Use facial expressions in relation to the theme of the speech.
- Use simple language, use words that are easy to understand, no jargon or technical terms.
- Written explanations are OK, but try to avoid writing many words to be understood. Write words like personal names, locations or unusual words, where lip-reading is very difficult.
- If available, provide the customer with hearing impairments with a sheet containing the description of the area you are going to describe to the whole group, to make it easier for him or her to follow you.
- If a visitor asks you to repeat a statement, repeat it just as you originally said it. A person might understand only half of the words, and he is missing the other half.
- Try to involve participants with hearing impairments in the discussion within the group so that they do not feel isolated.
- Do not be afraid to ask the person to repeat something if you do not understand their speech. Don't pretend to understand if you don't.
- If a person is doing translation into sign-language, be sure they can follow your speech.



**Tourist guides' tip.** How to improve communication with visitors with hearing impairment: Female tourist guides can help themselves using an intense coloured lipstick. Intensely coloured lips enables lip-reading, as the mouth is easier to see.

### Tips for Communication with Visitors with Learning Difficulties

- Carers who know the group members will be able to tell you before the tour starts what can be expected to happen during the tour. Be aware of the needs of individual guests if they are not accompanied by a carer and maintain close contact with them.
- Before starting to talk, ensure you have the person's attention. Try using their name, eye contact or ask the question to engage group's attention.
- Use a simple but professional language (simple words, short sentences easy to understand). Avoid talking using abstract concepts, acronyms, metaphors or puns.
- Talk slowly and clearly, repeat key facts and ideas.
- Do not introduce too many different topics.
- Relate the content to the experience of the group by using practical examples, expressions, images or toys that remind of familiar things and circumstances (e.g. letting a teddy bear talk for you or with you can help keeping their attention), films, comics, video games, objects, models, reconstructions, as much as possible connected to their everyday life.
- Use story-telling techniques and role-playing to make your presentation livelier.
- If appropriate, use the additional tools or materials you have prepared for the group (e.g. pictograms, objects that can be touched, smelled; enlarged pictures and representations; basic information hand-outs in larger print that can be read more easily than small-print labels). This will help you communicate more efficiently.
- Remember that your body language is important, as people with learning difficulties often rely on visual cues.
- Adopt an interactive approach, asking questions and involving participants in conversations.
- Be careful not to treat adults and adolescents like children.
- Continually 'scan' the group during the tour. This can help you detect signs of stress, nervousness or boredom and will help to adjust to the situation.
- Respect direct personal questions or hugs from participants.
- Be guided by the carer to decide if any form of intervention is required and what form it should take and ask for their assistance, when facing difficult reactions, you feel you cannot handle.



Figure 10. A tourist guide at the British Museum guiding a group of young people with learning difficulties. Photo by Efi Kalampoukidou (FEG-ENAT)

## 5. Conclusions

It is, at the same time, quite easy to follow all the tips and advice presented above and quite difficult to be natural and relaxed, without having personal experience of guiding a group where one or more members have specific access requirements. People with specific access needs can be very demanding but at the same time very understanding.

Experience will help you understand more and more about how you can be more effective in your guiding. You will have the possibility to find your own technique and to use the best available tools and instruments to help you and your clients during the visits.

In most cases you will guide mixed groups, with only few people with some (and maybe different or combined) specific needs. Your ability has to be in paying attention to everyone, trying to arrive at a compromise between the needs of each person, at the same time respecting the rights and the dignity of all. Issues, arguments, dissatisfaction may always occur but your experience will help in solving all possible problems.

## 6. References

Project T- guide 2014 <http://www.accesstraining.eu/?i=t-guide.en.home>

Project APP TOUR YOU, ERASMUS + 2016-2017 [www.apptouryou.eu](http://www.apptouryou.eu)

Pantou, European Accessible Tourism Directory [www.pantou.org](http://www.pantou.org)

Enhancing your interactions with people with disabilities, American Psychological Association, <http://www.apa.org/pi/disability/resources/publications/enhancing.aspx>

## Chapter V

# Other Services and Activities

### 1. Introduction

This chapter focuses on other services and activities that may be a part of a tour.

From the visitor point of view a tour doesn't involve only services of tourist guides, especially when it is a longer (multi-day) tour. Visitors often buy the whole tour package which may include other services like transport, accommodation and meals. These services are usually arranged by complementing professions in relation to tourist guiding but influence the overall experience and satisfaction of the visitor with the tour. That is why they are mentioned in this Handbook.

This chapter can be useful also for tourist guides, as their profession is not only about guiding visitors and interpreting the cultural and natural heritage of an area for which they are qualified. They communicate and provide information to the customers before a tour, when they confirm their request or order and prepare the offer. They may cooperate with other providers of tourism services – for example with drivers if it is a bus tour. Sometimes they also have to solve unforeseen and unpleasant situations. All these activities are included in this chapter.

### 2. Providing Information

Information about a tour should also contain information about its accessibility for visitors with access needs. With appropriate information each person can decide if the tour is suitable for them and they can prepare better for the tour.

#### Information Provided Before the Tour

The offer of a guided tour should contain basic information such as date, time, language, programme, included entrance fees, instructions for visitors, mandatory equipment, general conditions and information about accessibility and potential risks.

#### Examples of information about accessibility of a tour

- Accessibility and difficulty of the route and visited places – architectural or physical barriers, entrances, elevation difference, stairs, surface and length of the route and difficulty of the terrain, cramped conditions, difficulties in orientation, large numbers of people, traffic, noise, high or low temperature, flashing lights, etc.
- Programme of the tour - places of the beginning and of the end of a tour, duration, possibility to shorten the route, number of accompanying persons, possibilities to rest, required physical condition (physical difficulty of the programme)
- Age or health restrictions

- Accessibility of services included – accessibility of transport and level of comfort, availability of alternative transport, accommodation including equipment, availability of dietary meals
- Availability of medical care
- Availability of mobility or sensory aids.

Provide alternative methods for customers to contact or book your service (e-mail, telephone). For longer or demanding programmes, it is advisable to arrange an information meeting before the tour.

### Information Provided at the Beginning of the Tour

At the beginning of the tour participants should get information about the programme, schedule, places to be visited, meeting points, instructions for emergency situations (escape procedures, what to do if lost or delayed) and safety instructions. It is advisable to repeat important instructions.

It is also good to provide participants with the tourist guide's mobile phone number and explain how to get in touch with you if they are in an emergency or become separated from the group. Explain to the tourist how you will alert them if there is an emergency.

## 3. Tourist Guiding on Bus Tours

On bus tours, a great part of the tour is conducted inside the coach, which often presents barriers such as high stairs and narrow aisles. Tourist guides must make sure that they know in advance certain basic information connected with the transport service of the tour:

- Special requirements of the members of the group
- The exact number of the travellers
- What kind of coach they will use (how many seats, if there is a ramp or lift for wheelchairs, space in the baggage area for wheelchairs etc.)
- If there is a toilet on board.

These basic facts will help you to prepare for the tour and to adapt the interpretation and the way information is given to the visitors.

### Specifics of Bus Tour for Visitors with Motor Impairments

- Check in advance the accessibility of the coach. There are coaches that have a platform lift or ramp at the back door that lifts up the wheelchair.
- In the case of a coach or minivan with no ramp, the wheelchair user must be able to transfer to a regular passenger seat. If assistance is required to make a transfer it is preferred that the guest has their own companion or personal assistance to ensure a safe transfer. The wheelchair is stored in the baggage compartment and given to the companion of the person with the impairment.
- The guide should work together with the driver to try to facilitate the access to the coach for people that have mobility problems. The driver should lower down the front part of the bus at every stop, so the steps going up and down are not too high. In any

other case, the driver could assist the visitors when entering or leaving the coach by giving them his hand. The driver should also be responsible to store the wheelchair at every stop and open up the baggage compartment to give it to the companion of the person with the access requirement.

- On occasions, the members of a group may try to help the companion of a person with a wheelchair, trying to lift it up in the bus. The guide should ask politely that the members of a group should not do that, despite their good intentions, unless they are asked to do so. Companions of people with wheelchairs are trained to do that in a safe way, as every other intervention can prove dangerous.
- Persons with walking canes or crutches should sit either in the front seats or in the seats in front of the back door, so they can have an easy access to the exit and they don't feel they hold up the rest of the group.
- Choose rest stops where the toilets are located on the ground floor of the establishment, so people with mobility impairments do not have to go down steps in order to use toilets.
- If you have persons with access requirements that won't visit a site at all because it is inaccessible to them, you can give a big part of your explanations inside the coach, and also show them some pictures so they don't feel that they missed a lot. This way you will also save time at the site visit and you won't leave them for a long time on their own.

### **Specifics of Bus Tour for Visitors with Vision Impairments**

- When the tourist guide is talking inside the coach, even though there is no direct visual contact between the guide and the passengers, he or she should turn back several times and address him or herself directly to the group, trying to make the contact more personal and direct and trying to attract the passengers' attention. Try to have visitors with vision impairments in the seat behind you since it will be easier to talk to them also personally, if this is required (e.g. give a detailed description).

### **Specifics of Bus Tour for Visitors with Hearing Impairments**

- If the group uses audio guide headsets, you can use them inside the coach for people who have hearing impairments.
- Inside the coach, you can use a wireless microphone that will allow you to move and to have a more direct eye contact with all the passengers.
- When you have people with hearing impairments, try to have them in the seat behind you since it will be easier for those who can lip-read to understand you.
- For people who are deaf, you can prepare either a written text to hand over with the most important elements of your narration and with practical advice, or project in the screen of the coach in a PowerPoint Presentation the main elements of your explanations so as facilitate their understanding.
- You also have to be prepared to repeat some information individually, face to face to visitors with hearing impairment.

## Specifics of Bus Tour for Visitors with Other Impairments / General Tips

- In case you have a large mixed group of people with different requirements (e.g. limited stamina, mobility or hearing requirements), you can give the general information about the site to be visited inside the coach where the climatic and acoustic conditions are better and leave for the site the comments and the specific descriptions of the monuments.
- Ask the coach company in advance if the coach you will use has a toilet, and if it does, ask if the passengers can use it. (Often the toilets on the coaches are not used; it may depend on the practices of the travel agency).
- Announce in advance the itinerary you will follow and advise the group how much time there will be between the rest stops for toilet visits, advising them at the same time to use the toilets at each stop for precautionary reasons.
- Make sure that the coach is not completely full (even though sometimes this is hard). Try always to leave some seats empty, in case of large or overweight people who cannot fit in one confined seat and who will inevitably occupy two seats.
- In case of children, for reasons of security, don't allow them to sit in the front seat, as it is dangerous and always make sure that they are wearing their seatbelt.
- Ask in advance if any of the guests suffers from travel sickness, especially if you know that the road is winding. Have them sit in the front seat so they don't get nauseous, and be prepared by having a bag next to them if necessary.
- The coach should be clearly marked. Where it is possible, you should ensure that the driver does not move off before everyone sits down and that he stops at a safe, well-arranged place.
- People travelling with a carer should sit next to each other.
- When you finish a tour and if the situation is appropriate, make sure that visitors (especially blind persons) took all their belongings.
- Participants may need your help with getting on and off.



Figure 11. Buses adapted for the transport of people with motor impairments and other difficulties, Photo by Kazuist

## 4. Accommodation and Meals

### Accommodation

Families with children, people with disabilities and seniors should be accommodated first, in preferred room types, especially if they require accessible rooms.

### Restaurants

You may need to accommodate various requirements, depending on the type of limitations your clients have.

Persons with mobility impairments will need a facility with an accessible entrance, accessible route of passage, and accessible toilet. Facilities with tables that are high enough to allow the wheelchair (arms) to go underneath and with more space between tables are also recommended.

Participants with visual impairments may need assistance with entry and orientation in the restaurant and with a choice of a meal. Upon arrival describe the space, help them with taking off their coats and finding a free place at the table. Inform them who is sitting with them at the table. A blind person doesn't need a help with the meal, just tell him or her how the food is arranged on the plate.

Catering for people with hearing impairments does not require special measures, only slight assistance when ordering.

Seniors should have regular breaks for refreshments (food).

For many visitors, you may face a variety of health restrictions and special dietary needs. It is good to know this in advance and inform the restaurant manager that they can prepare menus accordingly and to check with the staff possible allergens in the menu.

## 5. Unforeseen Situations

### Guide Dogs not Allowed to Enter Some Buildings

Guide dogs should always be allowed to enter any part of the premises including restaurants, bars and lounges, even if, normally, dogs are not allowed to enter. These dogs are highly trained and need no special care other than that provided by their owner.

Do not permit guide dogs being banned in any of the visited places. You can avoid this situation by giving notification in advance.

### Emergency Situations

Tourist guides sometimes have to solve problematic situations such as diseases and injuries of the participants, the loss of a participant, etc. All these situations place increased demands on their organisational skills, operative decision making, as well as on their actions.

Persons with disabilities and seniors may present increased risk of possible health problems and injuries.

In case of **illness or injury** of a participant, the tourist guide must provide first aid, call the doctor and arrange transport to the hospital. In the case where, during the trip, a client will need medical care, the doctor will want to know whether and what medications he or she is taking. That is why it is good to recommend clients, who use any medication or have specific health problems, that they have with them in addition to the drugs also information about these difficulties. This can greatly speed up the start of a proper treatment. If the information is not available you must contact relatives directly or through a travel agency, to find out what problem the client has.

Especially for older participants, a client may forget to take regular medication or the change of environment and physical strain may cause complications such as dehydration, fainting, confusion, mood swings etc. The tourist guide has to pay attention to tiredness or any sign of health problems or difficulties of the participants.

It may happen that client will not be able to continue the tour for various reasons. Talk to him or her and agree the next steps – whether they need a doctor or just a rest. Call a taxi that takes the client to the meeting point or back to the hotel. If the client insists that he or she will be with the group all the time, you need to adapt the tempo or route, explain the situation to the other participants and ask them for their understanding.

## Conflicts and Complaints

The tourist guide should be able to prevent conflicts and, if they arise, he or she must solve them. Possible conflicts with some participants should be solved outside the group.

In mixed groups including people with disabilities, you may encounter prejudice, fear of the contact with persons with disability (people don't know how to behave), communication barriers among the group or even unwillingness of other participants to share provided services together with persons with disabilities. Lack of respect towards people with disabilities may be a big problem which you cannot permit. If such a situation happens, you have to be prepared to talk with the participants and explain the situation.

However, a professional guide should always treat all clients equally and maintain a positive and relaxed atmosphere among the group.

**Complaints about different aspects of the tour** (and possibly the tourist guide) are the most common problems the guide has to solve. Sometimes they are caused by unrealistic expectations of the participants, such as that a guide will accompany them even during their free time because they are afraid to walk around alone. Handling complaints requires patience and diplomacy. General recommendations:

You can avoid many complaints by providing information about the route and programme before the tour.

In inclusive guided tours you can face the complaints related to the unexpected changes (adaptation) of the route and programmes.



Listen to the customer carefully, try to empathize with his or her situation and remain as calm as possible. If the fault is on your side, make your apologies and offer a possible solution (elimination of the problem, some compensation). If you are not able to solve the problem on the spot, note the client's name, address and phone number and pass the information to the organiser of the trip or to whom the complaint relates. It is in the interest of everyone to accommodate the customer.

## 6. Conclusions

The more you know, the more you want to learn. But at the same time, the best way to learn is to experience and to learn from mistakes. Every situation is different from another and it is not possible to anticipate the right solution for every particular need or event.

Nevertheless, this chapter should have helped you in understanding the basic, open approach you should have to do your job and become an inclusive tourist guide.

The last aspect which will help you a lot in improving your skills will be the evaluation of your customers and your own performance in managing the tour, which will be presented in the last two chapters.

## 7. References

Project T-Guide 2014 <http://www.accesstraining.eu/?i=t-guide.en.home>

World Tourism Organization, Manuals on accessible tourism,  
<http://ethics.unwto.org/content/accessible-tourism>

## Chapter VI

# Evaluation of Guiding Services

‘If you don’t listen to your customer you can’t understand what the customer needs. If you don’t understand what the customer needs you can’t deliver excellent customer service.’

Trisha Bennett – Training Consultant

It is important to gather feedback after making a guided tour, especially one that involves people with accessibility requirements. Using the feedback constructively can help develop your personal skills through continued learning and, most importantly, contribute to improving the experience of your future customers.

Research has shown that when tourists are satisfied with the services offered to them, they are more likely to return and give a recommendation to other potential customers. In case of persons with specific access needs this is even more evident.

**Two key questions** should be considered in the evaluation with regard to accessibility:

1. What did you do well in meeting the accessibility requirements of your customers?
2. What could you do better in meeting their accessibility requirements?

Question 1 reinforces what you are getting right and helps give you confidence that you are delivering what your customers need.

Question 2 helps you improve your offer in the future.

**Other points** that you should consider as a standard part of your evaluation of the tour and the feedback you collect are:

- Accept criticism from the customer openly, positively, politely and constructively.
- Provide the customer with information they need, respecting confidentiality.
- Regularly assess whether the customers’ needs and expectations are being consistently met, if goals have been achieved.
- Consider if your goal, workload and programmed guided tour has been realistic or whether you, the group and the organisers have been either stressed or tired or bored.
- Use your influence and authority towards the owners or managers of the museum, monument, etc. to ensure that customers’ needs and expectations are being met and, where possible, exceeded.
- Use your influence to negotiate and agree alternative solutions when customer needs and expectations cannot be met.
- Collect feedback from customers to ensure that their access requirements and alternative solutions are being provided to the customers’ satisfaction (See sample feedback form in Annex 1).
- Seek and use opportunities to develop the working relationship with the customer.
- Give appropriate feedback to all relevant parties.

- Check if the work has been carried out efficiently, not just personally by you, but also when delegating work to other tourist guides or support persons.
- Deal effectively with targets and goals set by potential, new or regular customers so you are better prepared to exceed their expectations.
- Consider what are your strong or weak points, what would you like to achieve within the next months and what training or studying you may need to develop further.
- After you have guided persons with specific access needs make some notes about the experience you had. Remember that general information can be very useful but it doesn't mean that those suggestions will work for everybody. At the same time, some specific 'tricks' you will pick up or learn during guiding can be very useful for you and a valuable resource of information also for other groups.

## Chapter VII

# Evaluation of Your Knowledge

### 1. Introduction

Now it is your turn. Test your achievements and answer the following questionnaire. It will help you in assimilating the content of this Handbook.

After the questionnaire you will find a number of 'real cases' and you will have the chance to imagine how you can solve those problems, how you would react in those situations. You will feel more comfortable in solving them when they occur in reality.

### 2. Questionnaire

#### 1. People with sensory disabilities are those who:

- A. Have a lack of sensitiveness
- B. Cannot understand simple phrases
- C. Have visual or hearing impairments
- D. Demonstrate feelings of pathological resentments
- E. Are well disposed towards others

#### 2. In case a tourist who uses a wheelchair wants to visit the Roman Forum in Rome, we must be sure that he:

- A. Brings an assistant with him
- B. Has received accurate information about the condition of the route
- C. Goes when the climatic conditions are favourable
- D. Chooses to go during low season
- E. Reinforces the wheels with suitable tyres

#### 3. How can we help a person with visual impairments?

- A. Giving him the White Stick
- B. Giving him a hand
- C. Providing an information video
- D. Asking how he prefers to be helped
- E. Providing a projection system of images

#### 4. A tourist facility is accessible when:

- A. A wheelchair user can get in
- B. A guided group of blind people can get in
- C. People with disabilities with an assistant can get in
- D. Service animals are allowed in the reception
- E. Everybody can get in and use the different areas and functions

**5. In case there is a customer with a wheelchair in my group, I would refer to him as:**

- A. A disabled person
- B. An invalid person
- C. A customer with specific access needs
- D. Handicapped
- E. A person assisted by the social services

**6. In order to communicate in a correct and effective way with a person with a disability, it's necessary to:**

- A. Talk to the assistant
- B. Use a friendly voice and nice words
- C. Be careful in the choice of words used
- D. Be professional, available and polite
- E. Ask for help by a social mediator

**7. In case we talk to a person with hearing impairments, we should:**

- A. Talk in a very loud voice
- B. Be in a place with good lighting
- C. Go and find an interpreter as soon as possible
- D. Make gestures
- E. Provide an audio file for iPhone with instructions

**8. The following are tools that can be used to help people with sight impairments:**

- A. Induction loops
- B. Telescopes
- C. Tactile maps
- D. Walking sticks
- E. Ramps

**9. The following are tools that can be used to help people with learning difficulties:**

- A. Induction loops
- B. Telescopes
- C. Tactile maps
- D. Walking sticks
- E. Easy to read descriptions

**10. In the group of 10 people you are guiding there are 2 older people with mobility impairments:**

- A. I offer them a different tour
- B. I tell one of their companions to take care of them
- C. I wait for them to arrive to start my guiding
- D. I will give them my hand to help
- E. I will bring two portable chairs to offer them

**11. The following tip should help you avoiding unforeseen situations:**

- A. No flexibility in customising the programme according to weather conditions.
- B. To adjust the length of the programme, interpretation and amount of information to the visitors.
- C. To choose cheap accommodations to be accessible to all people.
- D. Do not help with a translation in common situations such as a purchase, you shouldn't be too personal.

**12. In the group of 10 people you are guiding there are 2 persons with dietary requirements:**

- A. I offer them a different tour
- B. I tell one of their companions to take care of them
- C. I wait for them to arrive to start my guiding
- D. I make sure I know a restaurant where it is possible to get the food which is good for their requirements
- E. I expect to stop many times to let them drink some water.

**13. In the group of 10 people you are guiding there are 2 older people, 3 persons with learning difficulties, 1 blind person and 1 deaf person:**

- A. I give up, and tell them to find another guide
- B. I tell one of their companions to take care of them
- C. I wait for them to arrive to start my guiding
- D. I offer them a different tour
- E. I do my best to make the best experience for everyone, knowing that I will have to make some compromises.

**14. Accessible tourism is:**

- A. Tourism for people with sight impairments
- B. Tourism which can be afforded by poor people
- C. Quality tourism
- D. Tourism for older people
- E. Tourism for people with disabilities.

**15. What do I have to learn to work with people with disabilities?**

- A. A set of rules that are always working
- B. I have to be flexible and learn from experience
- C. I need to study the national laws on accessibility
- D. I need to learn some informal care techniques
- E. I need to have a relative with some disabilities.

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Correct answers: 1) C; 2) B; 3) D; 4) E; 5) C; 6) D; 7) B; 8) C; 9) E; 10) C; 11) B; 12) D; 13) E; 14) C; 15) B.

### 3. Case Studies

The following case studies are taken from real life situations that happened to tourist guides.

#### **Instruction for individual learners**

Read the following situations and try to figure out if something can be done before, to avoid the situation, or if you can find a good solution once the situation occurs.

Remember that, in cases like these, there is no single right answer or solution, but with the knowledge you have gained reading this Handbook and with some time to think about it, you can formulate your own solution, also using your good sense. In practice you always have to solve the situation with regard to the place, composition of the group and character of the client, but differently.

#### **Instructions for trainers (group training courses)**

Choose the situations that suit you best and introduce them to your students (you can adjust them to your place or experience). Give them a short time for the individual preparation (or they can work in pairs). Let them present their proposals including argumentation. Discuss their proposals and search for the solution together. Recommend, what to do or not to do in a chosen situation. In this way, students will be actively involved and they remember better what they should do when guiding tourists with access needs.

#### **Situations**

- 1) A client has booked a private guided walking tour of the historical city centre for group of students. At the meeting point you find out that there are 2 wheelchair users and the group insists that they want to stay together during the whole tour. Part of the route runs along stone stairs and there are also narrow steep streets with historic pavement (cobblestones) on the route. How do you cope with this situation?
- 2) You are guiding a multi-day sightseeing tour in your region. In the group you have a mother with daughter with multiple disabilities. The girl is 12 years old with motor and cognitive impairment (she cannot walk, uses a wheelchair, her attention is unstable and understands only simple verbal instructions). Mother cares for the daughter, you try to help them as much as you can. As you already spend the fourth day together, the girl gets the confidence in you and responds positively to your presence. Like her mother. During the all-day visit to the city you have a 3-hour break in the programme (free time). After explaining to the group where, how and what they find, you find out that the mother has gone and left you the girl. You try to call her, but she does not take the phone. What are you going to do?
- 3) You are guiding a full day trip to the Christmas markets by bus. During the bus ride you are interpreting. After a two hour drive, at the first stop, you find out that you have two persons with hearing impairment (deafness) in the group. They are disillusioned with the fact that they gave this information to the travel agency and they do not understand that you didn't know about it. How do you solve this situation?

- 4)** You are at a congress event with a group of foreign clients. A 60 year old client suddenly falls unconscious. You call the ambulance service and accompany her to the hospital. When she comes to consciousness she is confused and unable to tell you whether she uses any medication or is treated for any disease. In her handbag, she has no medicine or written information about the used medication. She is a foreigner and does not know your national language, so you have to be available as an interpreter all the time. Examinations reveal that the cause of collapse was dehydration. How would you deal with this situation? Can the tourist guide do anything to avoid such a situation? What do you do with other clients while you are in the hospital?
- 5)** A client booked a half-day walking city tour for 5 persons. When you arrive at the hotel you find out that this is family with 3 children aged 7 to 11 years. Parents require adapting a tour for the children. What can you do to meet this request? What specifically should you adapt? How would you prepare for the tour if you had this information in advance?
- 6)** You are guiding tourists in the castle. Today you are guiding a mixed group of 14 people, who do not know each other. There are 4 German speaking visitors and 1 visitor with hearing impairment in the group. The visitor with hearing impairment lost hearing in adulthood and does not use sign language. He can understand written text. How will you work with the group?
- 7)** You are guiding a group of seniors at a cultural sightseeing tour (combination of bus and walking tour). They want to see all the places of interest during the tour and don't want to reduce their demands, though obviously physically and temporally, the programme is unrealistic. At the end of the tour, some participants complain that the guide did not show them all sights listed in the offer. The tour was organised by a travel agency. How do you solve this situation?
- 8)** One of the participants of the guided tour to the natural heritage area overestimates his condition and is not able to continue the tour. You are in the middle of the circle route in the national park. What do you do?
- 9)** In a 3 hour long guided tour to the archaeological site you have one client with limited mobility. His walking pace is slower than the rest of the group, which causes conflict – most of the group is disgruntled as they have to stop and wait too often. From the previous conversation with the client you know, that he does not want to be excluded from the group and miss your interpretation. How do you solve this situation?
- 10)** You offer a guided tour of local museums for groups. One visitor with vision impairment (nearly blind) guided by a dog wants to join the group and take part in this tour. How do you adapt your interpretation or itinerary of the tour? What do you have to check and prepare before the tour?



# Annexes

## 1. Sample Feedback Form for Evaluation of Guiding Services

To be filled in by participants in the guided tour and/or assistants.

### 1. How friendly and communicative was the tourist guide throughout the tour?

Not very friendly	1	2	3	4	5	Very friendly
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### 2. How comfortable did you feel with the tourist guide?

Not very comfortable	1	2	3	4	5	Very comfortable
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### 3. Was the itinerary suitable for you?

Not very suitable	1	2	3	4	5	Very suitable
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### 4. Did the tourist guide respond flexibly to your needs?

Inflexibly	1	2	3	4	5	Very flexibly
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### 5. How well were your specific needs (level of language, attention span, suitable communication techniques) taken into account?

Not very well	1	2	3	4	5	Very well
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### 6. How familiar was the tourist guide with accessibility features and facilities at the site? (ramps, lifts, handrails, parking, toilets, touching objects)

Not very familiar	1	2	3	4	5	Very familiar
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**7. What did your tourist guide do particularly well in meeting your personal needs / requirements?**

**8. What could the tourist guide do to improve your experience in respect of your personal needs / requirements?**

Thank you for your feedback.

## 2. Accessibility Checklist

The following checklist should help you in preparing your tour with a group of people, especially if there will be some persons in the group with specific access needs. It is not very detailed, as you will always have this Handbook to help if you need specific information, but it is a tool to remember what you need to take into consideration, which information you might get in advance from your group or about the places you will be visiting.

If you then need to know what are the most important features related to the kind of disabilities of the people in the group, you can review chapters II. to V.

If you need to get information on the accessibility of the venue, you might use 'PANTOU Access Statement' questionnaire, developed by ENAT, the European Network for Accessible Tourism for <http://pantou.org/>, the European Accessible Tourism Directory. You can also find its online version on <http://www.apptouryou.eu/index.php/your-facilities/add-a-new-facility>. You will need to register for free and then you will be guided throughout the filling of the questionnaire. Although this tool serves mainly hotels and restaurants, you can get valuable information and experience from it.

### GENERAL OVERVIEW OF VISITORS

How many people are in the group?	
Is there a leader in the group to whom I directly communicate?	
Which age(s) are in the group?	
Does anybody have any specific access needs or health problems?	
Are there only some visitors with specific needs or does the whole group have some kinds of specific access needs?	
Do they know each other or is it a group of 'strangers'? Are there any solo travellers?	
In case of mixed groups with one or two persons with specific needs, do other visitors know that they have a person with specific access needs in a group?	
How many carers (if any) accompany the group?	
What prior experiences of guided tours/ museum visits does the group have? Are they used to these experiences or is it something new for them?	
What expectations do they have from the guided visit that must be fulfilled?	

### VISITORS WITH MOTOR IMPAIRMAENTS

Check which kind of motor impairment they have and possible assistive devices they use (e.g. wheelchair, rollator, walking stick)	
Check the accessibility conditions of the planned path (routes, facilities)	
Check if there are possibilities to sit and rest along the route	

Check if there are accessible toilets along the route	
Re-calculate the path to allow more time (slower than usual)	
Are most people using a wheelchair? Bring a portable chair	

### **VISITORS WITH VISION IMPAIRMENTS**

Are there any suspended or overhanging obstacles?	
Are there tactile guidance paths and floor signalling / hazard warnings?	
Estimate slower guiding times	
Try to find the easiest and straightest paths	
Check for mobility obstacles before the tour	
Check if there are objects to touch or tactile tools - who offers them, and if they are reachable / accessible	
Wear colourful clothing (to aid contact with people with reduced sight)	
Is there a guide dog? Make sure it is accepted everywhere (it should be by law)	
Preview stops for tourists and for a guide dog	

### **VISITORS WITH HEARING IMPAIRMENTS**

Plan slower times to make yourself understood	
Check in the path if there are spaces that are well illuminated to talk to the tourists	
If people are partially deaf, check availability of headphones	
Check if there is an induction loop available at some places (e.g. reception areas and museum shop checkouts) and remind guests to use it	
Check if in the group there is a sign language interpreter	

### **VISITORS WITH COGNITIVE IMPAIRMENTS / LEARNING DIFFICULTIES**

Adjust the timings	
Plan longer breaks	
Plan a route that is easy to follow	
Check which communication technique is better for the group (ask carers/responsible persons)	
Check if tourists are able to read	
Check if it is possible to ask questions to the group	

Check if there are things that can be touched or smelled	
Prepare a handout with pictograms, symbols, drawings	
Use large print formats	

### **VISITORS WITH DIETARY NEEDS / ALLERGIES / OTHER DIFFICULTIES**

Check if there are people with reduced stamina – preview frequent breaks	
Check which kind of allergies people have	
Check that environments of the tour are not dangerous for the clients' allergies	
Check if restaurants serve food that is suitable for clients' dietary needs	
Check with clients if what is offered is acceptable to them	

### **VISITORS WITH AGE REQUIREMENTS**

Check if there are older people	
Check if there are infants or very young kids	
Check what are the needs of older people and young kids' parents or carers	
Adapt the tour route to the age of the participants	
Adapt the content of your explanations to the age of participants	

### **ACCESSIBILITY CHECKS**

Check the access conditions of transportation and vehicles	
Check the access conditions of all venues	
Check the access conditions of all external paths	
Check the access conditions of accommodations	
Check the access conditions of restaurants/bars	
Do you find reliable information? Is it up-to-date? Who has checked it?	
If not satisfied, check it yourself (use available tools)	



**ELEVATOR Project I02. INCLUSIVE TOURIST GUIDING**

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