Universal Design and Service: Opportunities for Destinations & SMEs

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European Network for Accessible Tourism
The winner of the 2022 award for the destination offering the most outstanding visitor experience is…
The most accessible one!
Accessibility development

• Universal Design and Service offers exciting and untapped development opportunities for local businesses and destinations.

• We should see improving accessibility in tourism as compelling, not just a means to an end in itself (a more accessible destination) but also as a ‘tool’ leveraging many other wider benefits.
Business & Destination Benefits

Accessibility

- Improve Quality
- Increase Market Opportunities
- Differentiate
- Repeat Visits & Recommendations
- A Better Welcome
- Seasonality
- Social Responsibility

Changing Markets

- More Competitive
- Create a Unique Selling Proposition
- Improved Financial Sustainability
- Civic Pride

Inward Investment
We all fit into this box we call accessibility!
Maximize the opportunities

- Domestic Visitors
- Business
- Overseas Visitors

Visiting
Friends & Relatives

Education
Local Community
See the market differently

“Accessibility, we try to think of it as the norm, we don’t think of ourselves as an accessible accommodation or an accommodation just for people with disabilities. We just happen to be a holiday cottage that had been adapted and is suitable for everybody”

Sonja Gregory, The Hytte, Northumberland, UK
1. Push/Pull factors + Accessible Information offered at this stage and throughout experience

2. Booking made easy + further information available to confirm decision

3. Travel to destination
   All elements meet access requirements

4. Destination experience
   Accessibility of all elements determines satisfaction

5. Travel from destination
   All elements meet access requirements

6. Recollection of experience determines positive/negative view

Adapted from Lane (2007)
Unlocking the potential

• How can we manage all of these moments of truth that our visitors have in our destinations?
Developing synergy

‘Understanding this interconnectedness and interdependence of individual businesses in the experience of the visitor is essential in order for destinations to grow their market share.’

‘To achieve this understanding may require the leadership of destination managers and marketers, such as regional tourism organisations, local chambers of commerce as well as local governments.’

Dickson & Darcy (2012)
Key role for destinations
We are the champions!
Accessible Tourism

- Information
- Facilities
- Customer Service
Your map through access
To access the tools and resources below click on the text adjacent to each tick box.

Get started

- Watch the Profiting through Accessible Tourism video
  Hear from other tourism businesses.
- Read Easy does it
  Simple, low-cost changes.
- Know the law
- Check out business case studies
  Find out what others are doing.

Be confident - concentrate on these three areas

- Customer service and training
  - DisabledGo (online)
  - Access for All (online).
  - Accessible Travel Made Easy (online).
  - WorldHost Customers with Disabilities (half day).
  - Welcome All (1 day).

- Information, communication and marketing
  - Create an Access Statement
    A description of your facilities & services to inform people with access needs.
  - Join OpenBritain
    A published guide and website used by disabled visitors and tourists.
  - Enter the VisitEngland Awards for Excellence and/or the Cateys
    Promote your business using national accessibility awards.
  - Check your website is easy to navigate
    Does design meet W3C guidelines?

- Facilities
  - Apply to VisitEngland for One Step Ahead and the National Accessible Scheme (Accommodation).
  - Apply to VisitEngland for the Visitor Attraction Quality Assurance Scheme (Attractions).
  - Commission a professional access audit.
Access Statements

Your Access Statement

A description of your facilities & services to inform people with access needs

Four good reasons to have an Access Statement...
- Minimum requirement for VisitEngland accommodation and visitor attraction quality scheme members
- Can help you to meet your obligations under the Equality Act 2010 (replaced the Disability Discrimination Act on 1st October 2010)
- Marketing opportunity, informing your visitors in one concise document
- England’s population is ageing and almost 1 in 5 people are disabled

New user? Start at Step 1...
Please read the terms & conditions before starting

1. Create & print your information collection form
2. Gather your information
3. Complete your Access Statement online
4. Download your Access Statement

www.access.tourismtools.co.uk
England Business Support

www.visitengland.org/busdev/bussupport/access/index.aspx
All about balance

Value to Visitors

Achievability For Businesses
Destination Support
SMEs – Barriers?

- Business doing very well – no obvious reason to make changes.
- Stereotyping - Lack of understanding of range of access requirements.
- Fear - Lack of confidence (what do I say and do?)
- No perceived demand
- And why is there no demand?
  - Because they may not be offering any accessible facilities/services at all.
  - Because they may not be marketing or providing any information about existing accessible facilities/services.
  - Because the destination is not promoting accessibility to attract people with access requirements.
Engaging with SMEs

‘A successful business is an inclusive business’

www.bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/business-sectors/docs/0-9/10-1126-2012-legacy-for-disabled-people-case-for-the-disabled-customer
Report insights

- Main barriers for SMEs – low level of awareness and misconception about disability and access
- Develop positive ‘business opportunity’ messages
- Explain the diversity of the customer base
- Emphasize the benefits to the business – stress financial one
- Relevant information needs to be made available via channels used by them
- Accessibility and inclusivity needs to be integrated in day to day activities of SMEs
- Accessibility-focused events “less effective” would work better if integrated into regular SME event
Visitors  Businesses  Destinations

Win  Win  Win
“The most positive experiences were to be found at properties where there was a high level of customer service and awareness from staff.”

Focus Group:
VisitBritain’s Access Consumer Research