

States of Guernsey disability review: Meeting the needs of disabled islanders

Courts

August 2017

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Introduction

Business Disability Forum (BDF) is a not for profit membership organisation that makes it easier and more rewarding to employ people with disabilities or long-term injuries or health conditions and to serve disabled customers.

Our members employ almost 20% of the UK workforce and, together, we seek to remove the barriers between public and private organisations and disabled people. We provide pragmatic support by sharing expertise, giving advice, providing training and consultancy and facilitating networking opportunities.

The States of Guernsey's Disability and Inclusion Strategy contains an action for the States of Guernsey to commission an audit of the States' employment practices, buildings and services to ensure they meet the requirement of new legislation, new policies and plans. The States has commissioned BDF to assess its current state of readiness for future disability discrimination legislation as both an employer and service provider.

This report for the Royal Court forms part of a series of reports which focus on the extent to which the needs of disabled islanders are currently considered and actively met, in relation to the States many, and varied services.

To this end we:

- Surveyed service area leads
- Held a workshop with service area leads
- Held a focus group with disabled islanders
- Reviewed publicly available online information about the Courts' services.

Appendix A contains a detailed outline of our methodology.

It should be noted that our methodology was limited in scope and far from exhaustive. In this respect, we were reliant on a small number of individuals to represent the work and activities of large and diverse services. We have presented the findings from our research as fairly as we can; highlighting good practice and areas where we think improvements might be made.

Analysis of disability performance: Royal Court

During our review of the States' overall disability performance, we identified the following examples of disability-related practice in relation to the Court.

1. Commitment

The survey asked if each service area had a designated senior individual who has responsibility for leading work on meeting the needs of disabled users of the service. One survey respondent answered positively in relation to the courts and indicated that Dave Le Ray, Client Service Director was the lead.

2. Communication

Website

A review of the Guernsey.gg website identified that much of the States' customer-related information is housed on the its main website. Whilst the architecture of the main site is beyond the control of individual service areas, our review did identify that some services have their own websites.

In order to enable ease of use by users with visual impairments and other disabilities, websites should be built to recognised standards of accessibility (specifically, the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines¹). Where websites have been designed to such standards, it is common practice to reference this on the site. An example can be found on the Visit Guernsey website which contains the following accessibility statement:

'Visit Guernsey is committed to ensuring that its website is accessible to everyone, including people with disabilities. Accessibility guidelines have been an integral part of the design and development process from the outset. We have taken all steps possible to make sure this website is accessible to all'².

A technical audit of the States' various customer-facing websites is outside the remit of our work; however a high level review of the Royal Court³ website identified no such reference. It is advisable therefore that colleagues responsible for the Royal Court website confirm that the site has been designed to be accessible or commission an audit to identify how accessibility and usability might be improved for disabled users. BDF can help with this.

¹ <http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG20/>

² <http://www.visitguernsey.com/content/accessibility> (accessed 14/04/17)

³ <http://www.guernseyroyalcourt.gg/article/1628/Royal-Court-Home-Page>

Providing alternative formats

It is good practice to provide materials in alternative formats when a disabled customer requests them (and it is reasonable to do so). For example, a workshop participant reported that records of court proceedings are now available in audio format, which might make it easier for people with visual impairments or learning difficulties to access the information.

This is good practice. A review of the Royal Court's website identified that there is a charge for copies of CDs containing recordings. When the request comes from a disabled service user, the Court should consider providing the recording for free as a 'reasonable adjustment'. Whilst this is not a legal requirement in Guernsey, it would represent best practice as well as a move toward meeting a potential future legal requirement⁴.

3. Premises

Our review did not involve a technical audit of premises however we did identify that the Royal Court website contains information about accessibility on its website and invites disabled people to request assistance:

'The Royal Court building is fully accessible for wheelchair users. A ramp is available at the entrance to the building. Once inside the building, all public areas, Court rooms and public counters are accessible to wheelchair users.

Public lifts are available to each level of the Royal Court building. Disabled accessible toilets are available throughout the Royal Court building.

If you require assistance of any kind during your visit to the Royal Court building, then please feel free to ask one of our Court Security Officers or Court Ushers at the entry to the building. Assistance can be arranged in advance by emailing the Court Reception.⁵

This is a positive reference. We recommend that leads responsible for customer experience at the Royal Courts confirm that Court Security Officers, Ushers and reception staff are all provided with training and guidance to ensure that they are able to respond to such requests for assistance knowledgeably and with confidence.

Appendix E contains a premises accessibility checklist that can be used by facilities leads to quickly assess both the physical and management / training considerations in relation to ensuring the accessibility of a building.

⁴ <http://www.guernseyroyalcourt.gg/article/3171/Royal-Court-Building---Technology>

⁵ Royal Court <http://www.guernseyroyalcourt.gg/article/1963/General-Information>

Recommendations

We recommend that a senior lead from the Royal Court reviews these recommendations and establishes a working group to take them forward. We have set the recommendations out in an action plan in Appendix C to aid this process.

1. Use the audit and action planning tool in Appendix D to review the Court's practice across the full range of areas where disability is relevant.
2. Review the Royal Court website to confirm it has been designed to be accessible or commission an audit to identify how accessibility and usability might be improved for disabled users.
3. Consider providing audio recordings of court proceedings at no cost when requested by disabled service users as a 'reasonable adjustment'.
4. Confirm that Court Security Officers, Ushers and reception staff are all provided with training and guidance to ensure that they are able to respond to requests for assistance from disabled people knowledgeably and with confidence.

Appendix A

Methodology

The methodology was selected to ensure an understanding of the States of Guernsey, its services and general approach to meeting the needs of disabled islanders.

In summary, there were four key phases to this work:

1. A short survey was disseminated to key service leads by Chief Secretaries. The survey was designed to assess, at a high level, the extent to which the needs of disabled customers are considered at an individual service level. Appendix B contains the full survey.

One respondent indicated that they worked under for the Royal Court

2. BDF facilitated workshops with service leads from each Principal Committee over 21 March and 22 March, 2017. A workshop for service leads working under the Committee for Home Affairs was held on 22 March and was attended by a representative from the Courts.
3. A focus group was held with members of the Guernsey Disability Alliance (GDA) in the evening of 21 March, 2017. The primary aim of the focus group was to develop a greater understanding of the GDA's members' views on the key barriers to inclusion relating to the States' various services and how these might be improved.

In addition to this meeting, we also reviewed a GDA summary of key points made by its members in response to the Community Survey and submitted to the States in December 2015.

4. A review of customer-related information on the States of Guernsey, Signpost.gg and Royal Court of Guernsey⁶ websites

It should be noted that our methodology was limited in scope and far from exhaustive. In this respect, we were reliant on a small number of individuals to represent the work and activities of large and diverse services. We have presented the findings from our research as fairly as we can; highlighting good practice and areas where we think improvements might be made. We hope that each Committee will find the framework of the report and the disability lens we have used in the research to be helpful in supporting them to become disability-smart.

⁶ <http://www.guernseyroyalcourt.gg/article/1628/Royal-Court-Home-Page>

Appendix B

States of Guernsey service leads survey

1. Where do you work?

2. Which Committee does your area come under?

3. What is your job title?

4. What is your name?

5. What is your contact number?

6. What is your email address?

Commitment

7. Is there a designated senior individual who has responsibility for leading work on meeting the needs of disabled users of the service?

Yes

No

8. (If yes) Please give their details (name, job title, email)

9. Is there a plan or strategy to improve the delivery of the service as it impacts on disabled customers/service users?

Yes

No

N/A

Know-how

10. Do you ensure that your public-facing employees are confident interacting with disabled people?

This includes:

Ensuring your employees know what to do in disability-related customer-facing situations; and

Ensuring your employees can access support or guidance on disability-related issues in some way (e.g. through publications, advice or training).

Yes

No

N/A

Services

11. Do you anticipate the needs of groups of disabled customers/service users (e.g. people with hearing impairments, mobility impairment etc.)?

This includes:

Thinking about the barriers that people with common impairments might encounter when accessing your service and removing them in advance.

Yes

No

N/A

12. Do you ensure that disabled people are involved in the development of your services?

This includes:

Involving and consulting with disabled people when designing and improving your services in order to understand and remove any barriers they might face.

You might do this by gathering feedback from disabled service-users or via social media activity asking for feedback and comments on the service.

Yes

No

N/A

Suppliers and partners

13. If elements of your service are delivered by a third party supplier, are they required to demonstrate an understanding and an ability to meet the needs of disabled service users?

This includes:

Being able to identify when disability and accessibility are relevant to a contract; and

Ensuring you have a process for identifying if a potential supplier or partner will be able to deliver an inclusive and accessible product or service.

Yes

No

N/A

14. Please list key suppliers that provide an element of a public service (max 150 words)

Communication

15. Do you ensure your external communication methods are as inclusive and accessible as possible to disabled service users?

This includes:

Being able to provide information and communications in a range of formats for people with a variety of impairments (for example, large print, Braille, subtitles and transcripts with videos); and

Providing at least three ways for people to get in touch with you (for example, telephone, email, real-time British Sign Language interpretation).

Yes

No

Premises

16. Do you ensure your premises are inclusive and accessible to disabled service users?

This includes:

Ensuring your premises are inclusive and accessible to service users with a wide range of impairments – from wheelchair-users and people with visual impairments, to people with autism and dyslexia; and

Where it is not possible to be fully accessible (e.g. heritage requirements) that there are other ways of disabled people engaging with your service.

Yes

No

N/A

Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

17. Do you ensure that your ICT is inclusive and accessible to disabled service users?

This includes:

Making adjustments for disabled service users where your public-facing ICT is not accessible; and

Ensuring you know how accessible your ICT is and having a process for ensuring inclusivity and accessibility are considered during its reviews and maintenance.

Yes

No

N/A

18. How confident are you that your service is currently meeting the needs of disabled customers/service users?

Level of confidence

1 – Not confident

2

3

4

5 – Extremely confident

19. Please can you give more information about the reason for your answer to the previous question?

Appendix C

Recommended Action Plan for the Courts

Recommendation	Lead	Timeframe	Priority
1. Use the audit and action planning tool in Appendix D to review the Court's practice across the full range of areas where disability is relevant.			Medium
2. Review the Royal Court website to confirm it has been designed to be accessible or commission an audit to identify how accessibility and usability might be improved for disabled users			High
3. Consider providing audio recordings of court proceedings at no cost when requested by disabled service users as a 'reasonable adjustment'.			Medium
4. Confirm that Court Security Officers, Ushers and reception staff are all provided with training and guidance to ensure that they are able to respond to requests for assistance from disabled people knowledgably and with confidence.			High

Appendix D

Audit and action planning tool for individual service areas

Service area:				
Named lead with responsibility for improving access for disabled customers:				
Is the service delivered directly to the public? (Yes/No):				
Please describe the main service channels e.g. online, face to face, phone:				
Question	Yes /No	Comment	Action	Who/when
1. Are public-facing employees are confident interacting with disabled people?				
2. Is there a plan or strategy to improve the accessibility of the service for disabled customers?				
3. Do you anticipate the needs of groups of disabled customers (e.g. people with hearing impairments, mobility impairment etc.)?				

Question	Yes /No	Comment	Action	Who/when
4. Do you ensure that disabled people are involved in the development of your services?				
5. Can disabled customers request adjustments to services and is there a procedure for making adjustments in a consistent way?				
6. If elements of the service are delivered by a third party supplier, can suppliers demonstrate an understanding and an ability to meet the needs of disabled service users?				
7. Are external communication methods as inclusive and accessible as possible to disabled customers?				
8. Are premises inclusive and accessible to disabled customers?				
9. Is ICT is inclusive and accessible to disabled customers?				

Appendix E

Premises Accessibility Checklist

It is good practice to have an Access Audit carried out so that you know how accessible your buildings are and are aware of any barriers that someone with a disability might encounter. If you cannot remove these barriers, you should develop strategies or put adjustments in place to overcome them.

This document can be used by a Facilities Manager or a Diversity/HR Professional as an aide-memoire for ensuring accessibility within your premises is maintained.

It should be noted that this checklist does not take the place of a full access audit carried out by suitably qualified professionals.

Arriving at the building Checklist

Physical Considerations

Question	Yes	No
Is the main entrance to your building easy to find? (adequate signage on display)		
If your main entrance is not accessible for all disabled people is it obvious where the alternative entrance is?		
Are your designated parking spaces kept available for disabled people? (e.g. have you made it clear these spaces are not for use by non-disabled people)		
Is the walkway to your building free from pot-holes, weeds or loose paving stones?		
Is the pathway/external ramp kept clear particularly in the winter?		
Is your exterior signage in good order? (e.g. nothing obscuring the signage, not faded, or in good working order if electric).		
Is the exterior lighting adequate?		
If you have a temporary ramp, is it in good order and available for use?		
If you have a buzzer or intercom is it in good working order?		

If you have an entry-phone system with an induction loop, is this in good order?		
If you have automatic doors, are they in good working order?		
Is door matting set into a mat well and not loose?		
If difficulties are experienced, is there a bell for assistance which will be responded to?		

Management or Training Considerations

Question	Yes	No
Are your reception staff trained in assisting disabled people who drive their own cars to the entrance, e.g. can they arrange for the car to be driven to the car park?		
Are your reception or security staff confident in making adjustments for disabled people who cannot use an intercom or entry-phone system? (e.g. due to a hearing or visual impairment)		
Are your reception or security staff confident in assisting disabled people who may have problems opening heavy doors?		

Comments

Inside the building Checklist

Physical Considerations

Question	Yes	No
Is the space between entrance and reception desk clear of obstacles?		
Can people on either side of the reception desk see each other? (e.g. boxes or papers not obscuring the view)		
Is clearance under desks or counters free from clutter to enable wheelchair users to get close enough to fill in forms?		
Is the reception area well lit, to enable people with hearing impairments to lip read easily and people with visual impairments to navigate the areas easily?		
Is your amplifying device or induction loop at reception and is there clear signage advertising this?		
Is your reception seating area tidy and free from obstructions?		
Have you provided Fire Safety and Emergency information in a clearly printed format and have alternative formats available?		

Management or Training Considerations

Question	Yes	No
Are reception and security staff confident in interacting with disabled people?		
Do you ask visitors if they have any requirements before they arrive at your premises?		

Comments

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Moving around inside the building

Physical Considerations

Question	Yes	No
Is there an up to date map of the building layout near the entrance?		
Does the map have a high colour contrast and use an accessible font and size, for the benefit of people with sight problems?		
Is internal signage in good order and lit adequately?		
Is any temporary signage in an accessible size and font? (e.g. sans serif)		
Is floor covering slip-resistant and safely secured to the floor?		
Are corridors well lit?		
Are all automatic doors working?		
Are hold open devices for fire doors in good working order?		
If you have painted recently, have you used distinctive tones or colours to aid orientation?		
Are elevators in good working order?		
Are the floor announcers and visual signals in elevators working?		
Is there an adequate delay on the elevator door closing mechanism?		
Have you ensured a good standard of cleaning and clearance of obstructions in and around all elevator entrances / exits?		
Is the assistance alarm in the WC in good order?		
Are the toilets clean and clear of obstructions?		
Are your amplifying devices or induction loops in good working order, and are they easy to find?		

Management or Training Considerations

Question	Yes	No
Are staff trained to direct and assist disabled people in the case of emergency?		
Are your staff trained to respond to and deal with calls for help raised using the assistance alarm in WC?		
Do staff know how to operate amplifying devices or hearing loops?		

Comments

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Means of escape in an emergency

Physical Considerations

Questions	Yes	No
Are ground floor exit and entrance routes accessible to all, including wheelchair users?		
Are exit routes free from obstructions?		
If some disabled people cannot completely evacuate the building, can they reach places of safety or refuges?		
Are refuges free from obstructions / clutter?		
Are refuges clearly signposted?		
Is your audible alarm system in good working order?		

Is your visual alarm system in good working order?		
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Management or Training Considerations

Question	Yes	No
Do all disabled employees have a Personal Emergency Egress Plan (PEEP)?		

Comments

www.businessdisabilityforum.org.uk

Business Disability Forum is committed to ensuring that all its products and services are as accessible as possible to everyone, including disabled people. If you wish to discuss anything with regard to accessibility of this document please contact us.

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