

Steps

What is the problem?

Steps are a potential barrier and hazard for wheelchair users, older people, people with visual impairments and people with buggies

What to look for

- Step risers (height)
- Step treads (depth)
- Visibility – in particular step edges
- Are there any overhanging treads, lips or open risers which might mean a visitor could catch their foot?
- Surface – wet, mossy, slippery
- Condition – are the steps clean and well maintained

What is the solution?

- Identify a step free route that takes in the highlights of your site. Identify possible routes to key facilities such as toilets that avoid steps.
- Where steps cannot be avoided use a temporary ramp. Building a temporary ramp will give you flexibility and allow you to accommodate
- If your steps are taller than the maximum advised or shallower make sure that there is extra help available such as a handrail or securely grab handle, or extra staff available to assist and support.
- If steps are in poor condition, clean and repair to make them as safe as possible

Building new steps

When building new steps do not exceed the ideal riser height (15cm) and exceed the minimum tread depth (30cm). Include handrails or grab rails wherever possible. Make sure that the steps have contrasting edges so they can be easily seen.

Key numbers

15cm

Ideal riser (step height)

30cm

Ideal step tread

17cm

Max riser (step height)

26cm

Min step tread



Widths

What is the problem?

Narrow paths and entrances are a barrier for wheelchair users, people using walking aids including crutches, people with visual impairments using a cane or being guided by a person or dog, people with buggies

What to look for

- Path widths
- Door widths
- Gate widths
- Possible passing points on long, popular paths
- Condition of paths – overgrowing vegetation

What is the solution?

- Record any narrow widths that might prevent access to key facilities such as toilets, class rooms. When planning a visit for people who might be affected by a narrow route check with them how wide routes and entrances need to be.
- Identify a wide route for a visit that takes in the highlights of your site.
- Make sure that overhanging vegetation is kept under control
- Widen doorways, gateways where possible to increase accessibility

Making new paths and routes

When planning a new route or designing a new path you should aim for a minimum width of 120cm. If the path is likely to be popular, particularly for wheelchair users or people using buggies you should include passing points (150cm wide, 200cm long) every 50m.

Paths where possible should be 120cm wide so that for example wheelchair users can chat with a friend.

Key numbers for doorways, gaps and pinch points

70cm

Manual wheelchair user

75cm

Scooter user

95cm

Double stick/crutch user

110cm

Adult with guide dog

120cm

Adult with guide (adult)



Gradients

What is the problem?

Gradients can be a barrier for people with mobility impairments including wheelchair users as well as for people with low strength and stamina such as older people.

What to look for

- Steep paths
- Long paths with consistent climbs even if they are not steep
- Ramps
- Camber (slopes crossing the path)

What is the solution?

- When planning a visit for people who might be affected (older people, people with mobility impairments) route check with them what is required
- Have a **realistic** understanding of how long your route is – distance and time – and tell visitors when you are planning a visit.
- Record any steep gradients (over 1:12) that can't be avoided by an alternative and might prevent access to key facilities such as toilets or class rooms and inform visitors
- Identify a level route for a visit that takes in the highlights of your site or plan a visit that will as far as possible provide an equal experience.
- Provide rest points along the route and wherever possible make sure that visitors know where the next one is (tell them before hand they are every 50m or place each rest point where it can be seen from the previous
- Provide hand rails to help people climb slopes

Making new paths and routes

When planning a new route or designing a new accessible path you should aim for a maximum gradient of 1:12 however even this gradient over a long period will be tiring for many manual wheelchair users and other people with mobility impairments so try to keep the path as level as possible. Provide opportunities for people to take a rest along the path and plan a shortcut to allow people to take a shorter visit.

Key numbers

1:12

Manual wheelchair user

1:10

Powered wheelchair user



Toilets

What is the problem?

Toilet facilities are essential for all visitors and you need to ensure that any limitations of your toilets are understood clearly by you and the visiting group.

What to look for

- Does the entrance have a ramp that has a suitable gradient (if not level with the ground height)?
- Does the toilet door open outwards? If so, is there level ground at the doorway to allow for the door swing.
- Are bolts and latches easy to operate?
- Where are the paper, soap dispenser and towel dispenser located?
- How big is the toilet cubicle? (needs to be a min of 3m x 2.5m to be wheelchair accessible).

What is the solution?

- There is little you can do to adapt an existing toilet cubicle for wheelchair users unless it is a minimum size of 3m x 2.5m.
- Even if you can't make toilets wheelchair accessible, adding grab rails and removing steps, uneven surfaces and trip hazards will help many older people. Good contrast between colour of fittings (sinks, rails, toilet etc) and background walls will help people with visual impairments.
- Toilet block and cubicle entrance widths and cubicle dimensions need to be measured accurately and recorded in the LNFYS website farm descriptions so it can be clearly stated if the toilet is accessible or not and to whom.

Building an accessible toilet

When building an accessible toilet seek expert guidance. There are building regulations (BS 5810) that apply. The Sensory Trust can point you in the direction of building guidance for new accessible toilets.

Key numbers

3m x 2.5m***

Minimum dimensions for wheelchair users

100cm

Minimum door width



Path surfaces

What is the problem?

Pathway surfaces vary enormously in outdoor spaces and will greatly affect whether your chosen route is fully or only partially accessible for people with mobility and visual impairments.

What to look for

- A surface compact enough for wheelchairs tyres, sticks and canes
- Slippery surfaces in dry or wet conditions
- Loose materials on the surface
- Unstable surfaces that move underfoot
- Trip hazards such as broken concrete, depressed grates or manhole covers, small irregularities.
- Encroachment of vegetation on the pathways.
- Sand, loose gravel, woodchips or cobbles as examples of unsuitable surfaces.

What is the solution?

- Identify a route to match the needs of your visitors that takes in the highlights of your site that has compact, stable, non slip and obstacle free surfaces.
- Where surfaces are not ideal consider laying down matting, sweeping the pathways of loose material, mowing grass paths or altering the route.
- Where pathway surfaces change between materials consider giving cues to people who are blind or partially sighted that there is something ahead they need to be aware of.

Repairing or building new pathways

When building new pathways or improving existing surfaces consider using materials from the suitable materials list and refer to the guidelines on gradients and widths. For further information:

http://www.pathsforall.org.uk/cms_uploads/5.2PathSurveyandConstruction-thebasics_1.pdf

Suitable materials

Concrete
Bitumen macadam
Stone
Timber
Brick/paving
Hoggin/self-binding gravel
Mown grass (firm)
Compacted road planings or Tarmac
'Toptrek'

Requirements

Compact/firm
Stable
Nonslip
Obstacle free



Seats & Perches

What is the problem?

Routes without any resting or few resting spots are a barrier to many people with a disability or older.

What to look for

- The distance between rest spots no more than 50m.
- Seats placed where there is something to look at and/or where there is shelter.
- Some seats have arm and back rests to provide additional support and leverage for standing up.
- Surfaces under seats being stable and flush with the pathway.
- Seats set back from the pathway to allow free passage.

What is the solution?

- Identify resting spots along your route that are no more than 50m apart and install suitable seating no more than 100m apart.
- Ensure your rest points are at a point of interest
- Where your route takes in the farmyard it may be practical to use stacking plastic armchairs
- If you are doing activities on route ensure that those that need to sit can do so. Large logs and low walls can be used as resting points.

Building new seats

When building new seats allow for heel space of at least 100mm under seats and use the key numbers above. Allow for the seat to slope slightly to allow for water run-off. In steeper more challenging parts of the route consider placing the seating rest spots within sight of each other so people have something to aim for.

Key numbers

50m max

Between resting/perching spots

100m max

Between spots with good seating

450-520mm

Height of a seat

500-700mm

Height of a perch

350mm

Height of a seat more suitable for a child

