

The arguments for a Changing Places toilet facility

Overview: In UK today, 13.3million people – one in five of the population – are registered disabled(*).

For the majority of them, conventional wheelchair accessible (Document M) toilets (even when built to the correct specification....) aren't suitable. They need more space, and/or a hoist, and/or a changing bench.

(*) 13.3million people registered disabled: only approx. 1.3million are wheelchair users.

Up to 6million people have continence issues, many of whom are not registered disabled.

The emotional argument:

Without any or all of these 'extras', those 13.3million people either have to:

- go home early,
- face having to use – or lie on – a toilet floor,
- avoid going to a venue or outlet that they think doesn't have suitable toilets, or
- not go out at all.

And the same applies to their **carers**: they either cut a trip short, avoid your venue, outlet, or stay at home.

Businesses have a social responsibility to address all potential customers' needs.

The financial argument:

- Disabled consumers (disabled people and their families) represent a market worth **£249 billion a year** (Department for Work & Pensions).
- Research highlights over **80% have taken their business elsewhere**, to a more accessible provider: (EFD, RADAR)
- Disabled people represent **20% of an average retail business' customer base**. (Atkins Management Consultants for Office of Disability Issues report 2010)
- Businesses that have a better focus on disabled customers have seen an increase in customer base, increased sales and increased profitability. (Atkins Management Consultants for Office of Disability Issues report 2010)
- Disabled people tend to be more loyal to "disabled friendly" organisations.
- Exclude disabled people, and you exclude them, their carers, their families. So the number of people you are excluding is potentially at least double!

The legal argument:

- Under **Equality Act 2010**, providers are required to make 'reasonable adjustments, including to the built environment' to ensure disabled people are not put at a 'substantial' disadvantage. These adjustments should also be made before there is a demonstrated need. NB many businesses still refer to the Disability Discrimination Act: this was superseded by the Equality Act.
- Under **Building Regulations Approved Document M 2013** and the complimentary good practice guidelines of **BS8300:2018 Design of an accessible and inclusive built environment**:
 - disabled people should be able to find and use suitable toilet accommodation no less easily than non-disabled people.
 - Where space is limited, a single, unisex, enlarged accessible WC facility (unisex being a facility that enables one or two assistants of either sex to assist a disabled person) should be provided. (Note, so capable of accommodating up to 3 people and a wheelchair!)
 - In any larger building to which the public have access in numbers, or where visitors may spend longer periods of time, it is desirable that a toilet with adult changing table/shower/with a fixed track hoist (Changing Places).

All it takes as a minimum is an extra 1.6m x 2m floorspace...⁺

⁺ unisex wheelchair-accessible WC 2m x 2.2m/4.4m²; Space to Change 7.5m², Changing Places 12m²