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Visiting Places of Interest

This fact sheet is produced to help you find out about the many places of interest you can visit. This fact sheet can help with the different accessibility issues you may have when visiting such places as well as the help and services that can be offered to you.

Visiting Places of Interest

Places such as museums, galleries and historical buildings have different things to offer disabled people and it's always a good idea to make plans before you go.

Accessibility

Most places of interest now have websites which show the buildings accessibility and any special equipment available. Tours, lectures and workshops for people of all ages and abilities are also available.

Below is a list of some things you may wish to ask before you visit any place of interest (continued on page 2):

- ▶ Signed tour for people who are deaf
- ▶ Information about access in different parts of the building

- ▶ Travel and parking information
- ▶ What assistance is provided and whether advance notice is required
- ▶ What alternative formats information is provided in
- ▶ Details about services and events specifically targeted at disabled people

There have been changes made over the last few years that affect procedures, practices and physical access to buildings. Some of these changes are:

- ▶ Guides and tours for people with learning disabilities
- ▶ Staff training to raise awareness of people's different requirements
- ▶ Exhibition guides in different formats such as audiotape and Braille

Technological advancements have helped make information for disabled people much easier. These include:

- ▶ The description of museums and archive collections for blind or visually impaired visitors
- ▶ Symbol systems for people with learning difficulties
- ▶ The use of technology, for example, online videos delivered in British Sign Language

Also places of interest are now starting to include dyslexic users' needs in their planning and the way they display and promote their collections.

Some useful links to good places to visit are below:

www.24hourmuseum.org.uk

www.nationaltrust.org.uk

www.english-heritage.org.uk

www.cadw.wales.gov.uk

www.historic-scotland.gov.uk

Blind or Visually impaired visitors

Most places of interest are radically improving accessibility all the time.

Information in alternative formats and other aids

Types of accessories and aids that places may offer can include audio guides, large print leaflets and magnifying glasses.

Tours and Guides

Many places of interest, especially larger museums and galleries often give tours for blind or the visually impaired. You may have the option to have a one-to-one tour or just go as part as a group. Give several days notice as bookings are usually very busy.

Audio Guides

Audio guides are now quite common, usually given in the form of a portable CD player. There are also some guides that are made specifically for blind or visually impaired visitors. You may also have the layout of the building explained to you beforehand to help you find your way around.

Tactile Pictures and Diagrams

There has recently been an increased interest in the production of tactile pictures and diagrams. These pictures can be very useful aids in understanding an object whether it be 2D or 3D. The main benefit of a tactile is to give the visitor an impression of the shape and contours of an object or the composition of a painting for example.

The Dog Rose Trust works with museums and galleries to explore the use of tactile exhibits and plans. The website has a list of sensory and audio pieces of art and notable buildings.

www.dogrose-trust.org.uk

Deaf or Hearing Impaired Visitors

Getting in Contact

Many of the larger galleries and museums have joined BT's TypeTalk service so that all members of staff or visitors can communicate by phone with you if you cannot use a voice telephone.

There is also the option to find information by e-mail, brochures or websites. You may also have the option to buy tickets through the website of the place you wish to visit.

For more information on TypeTalk follow the link below:

www.rnid.org.uk/information_resources/communicating_better/typetalk

Lectures, Talks and Events

Things to ask for when booking a guided tour are to see if they have portable induction loop or sound enhancement systems. Also make sure to ask if events are in British Sign Language (BSL) or interpreted into BSL.

Due to finances, it is unlikely that most museums or galleries can have a BSL interpreter at every event. You will most likely be given a list of selected talks that offer this service or give notice so that an interpreter can be arranged.

Subtitles or Captions

Subtitles or captions may be used when audio-visual equipment is used. Some lectures or talks may be supported by a palantypist. This is someone who will type every word that is spoken which then appears on a computer screen. You may receive a summary of what is being said instead of the whole dialogue.

Visitors with a Learning Disability

Information and signage in simple and alternative formats

On top of what help has been given above those with more severe disabilities can get further information below.

Most larger museums, galleries and buildings now have visual and tactile signs and easily understood symbols. Routes should be clearly marked and there should be easy identification of what each room in the building is for - with clear ways in and out.

Tours and Guides

You may be given a short introductory talk about the museum or gallery in plain English and this may be delivered via an audio-guide. An audio-guide which is normally a portable CD or audiotape player can also help those with dyslexia or who are not confident readers. Those who don't have English as a first language may also find audio-guides helpful. Some places also run interactive workshops on top of one-to-one or group tours.

This fact sheet is one of a series, providing information and advice on a number of topics.

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