



# Access Statements

**Technical guidance for house members**

**Robert Parker, August 2017**

Access Statements are an essential element of opening historic houses and gardens to visitors. They give visitors an idea of what they can expect during their visit. These Statements would highlight issues facing visitors bringing young children or those with problems of mobility, hearing and sight so that they can be prepared in advance.

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## 1. Introduction

VisitBritain are committed to raising the quality of tourist attractions and will only market those whose quality is guaranteed to consistently meet and exceed consumers' expectations. An Access Statement is an integral part of the following:

- Visitor Attraction Quality Assurance Service (VAQAS) was launched nationally in 2001. It is a consumer-focused quality assessment service for all types of visitor attractions.
- National Code of Practice for Visitor Attractions has been developed through extensive discussion with representatives of leading attractions, sector associations and updates and replaces the earlier Visitors' Charter.

An Access Statement should allow a potential visitor to make an informed decision as to whether your attraction meets their particular requirements. It is written clearly and accurately and, above all, is an honest description of your current facilities and the services you offer.

See [www.visitbritain.org/writing-accessibility-guide](http://www.visitbritain.org/writing-accessibility-guide) for their advice.

## 2. How to prepare an access statement

The Visit Britain tourism trade website <https://www.accessibilityguides.org> gives detailed guidance on how to prepare an access statement for a range of small, medium and large tourist attractions; including a useful template. NB You will have to register as a user

Visit Britain say that an Access Statement should 'not be viewed as a daunting task' – it is simply a written record of facilities and services that attractions provide so that a visitor knows what to expect. This is not just to give opening times, but a description for the disabled or children. VB advise to start off with a simple statement and add to it over time; though the more details it contains the more use the statement will be to a wider range of potential visitors.

Overleaf is an example of an Access Statement for a Small Attraction; though many details may not be necessary for your attraction, other matters may need inclusion.....only you know your business and its needs.

Finally remember to add the Access Statement to your website.

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## **Example of an Access Statement for Toy Town Museum**

### **Introduction**

We aim to provide an excellent service to all visitors and continually strive to improve. We are a small, volunteer run, museum and have made changes so that as many people as possible can enjoy our history.

We currently offer:

### **Pre-Arrival**

- A basic website.
- Information can be provided in large print.
- We have a fax and email available.
- We are opposite the local bus stop and 10 miles from XXX Railway Station.

### **Arrival & Car Parking Facilities**

- We do not have a car park (town centre location).
- The council pay and display car park is 500 metres from our entrance.
- The route from the car park is along a pavement which is 145cm wide (smooth, flat and level).
- There is a drop off point with a dropped kerb outside the museum (10 minute time limit).
- There is a call button on the wall opposite the drop off point (in front of the steps) if assistance is required.

### **Main Entrance & Reception**

- There are 8 x late 18th century steps to the main entrance (worn & uneven) with hand rails at each side.
- There is a call button at the bottom if assistance is required.

- The main entrance/exit doors are automatic and open inwards (95cm wide).
- There is a side entrance suitable for visitors who cannot negotiate the steps (please press the call button for side gate to be opened).
- Immediately on entering there is a sunken fixed mat with a 2mm threshold either side.
- The route to the side entrance is 95cm wide, 4 metres long with a very slight incline. It is made of levelled concrete.
- The door to the side entrance is 95cm wide and manual (opened and closed by staff).
- Entry is free of charge and there are no barriers or gates to entry.
- There is a portable hearing loop available if required

### **Public Areas - General (Internal)**

- Flooring throughout is old flag stones (some uneven) with no steps or ramps.
- There is a carpet runner (1 metre wide) to follow which avoids uneven areas throughout the main exhibits of the museum.
- There is seating provided at intervals around the museum.
- Lighting is mainly natural, where there is lighting this is even.

### **Public Areas - WC**

- There is one unisex WC available to all – level entry.
- There is one vertical handrail to the left of the toilet and one to the left of the basin.
- There is a horizontal rail next to the toilet (opposite side to transfer).
- Transfer is to the left from seated position (85cm between wall and side of toilet).
- The height of the toilet (floor to seat) is 46.5cm.
- There is a baby changing unit (not in transfer space).
- There is a chair provided.
- There is no alarm call system.

### **Restaurant / Dining Room Bar & Lounges, Take Away & Café**

- Not Available

Laundry, Shop, Treatment Room & Leisure Facilities (inc. Outdoor Facilities)

- There is no specific shop but there are some souvenirs, leaflets and items for sale on a table in the main foyer.
- The table is 72cm high with 70cm clear space underneath.
- Staff take payment in front of the table.

### **Leisure Facilities**

- Not Available

### **Outdoor facilities**

- Not Available

### **Conference & Meeting Rooms, Banqueting, Clubs, Entertainment**

- Not Available

### **Attractions (Displays, exhibits, rides e.t.c)**

- Interpretation boards are all in large text and have pictorial representation where applicable. All are at a maximum top height of 165cm.
- There are articles held in glass cabinets (most are upright). Some of these are vertical and may not be visible if the eye line is below 115cm. There are mirrors above in which the articles can be seen. We also have plans of the articles and pictures beside each display cabinet.
- There is a returnable laminated leaflet available which gives detail of the information and displays in the museum (in large print).
- We have an audio tape of our information (one cassette machine available).
- At the south end of the museum we have one video playing continuously showing the restoration of the museum.
- Lighting is provided to light each display and is directed towards the display or within the display cabinets.

### **Additional Information**

- Service dogs are welcome and we provide a water bowl at the front entrance.

- We operate a no smoking policy. We provide sand bins at the front entrance.
- There is no background music or tannoy.
- Our volunteers have all been trained to use equipment and have attended disability awareness training.

## **Contact Information**

- Telephone: 0999999999
- Email: [museumtown@museum.com](mailto:museumtown@museum.com)
- Website: [www.TownMuseum.com](http://www.TownMuseum.com)
- Address: The Town Square, Quality Town, Qualityshire, QU7 8PC
- Hours of operation: 10am-4.30pm (closed December)
- Taxi-able (accessible taxi): 0999999999
- Local Public Transport: Bus 0999999999 Train 0845999999

## **Future Plans**

- We have plans to purchase more hand rails for the toilet and an alarm call system (Summer 2018).
- We are currently editing our video to include sign language interpretation and text (complete summer 2018).
- We are updating our website which will include accessible features, floor plans and pictures. (January 2019).

We welcome your feedback to help us continuously improve if you have any comments please phone 0999999 or email [townmuseum@musem.com](mailto:townmuseum@musem.com)