

Ignore Fail Read Succeed

A design instruction manual for people

Produced by Equalities Team, 2020

North Somerset Council
Town Hall, Weston-super-Mare, BS23 1UJ.

If you would like a copy in an alternative language or format, please telephone the Equalities Team on 01934 634989.

“For... (lots of) people, many of the barriers in the built environment are at a depressingly practical level;

- restrictions on ease of access and movement,
- lack of clarity in way-finding,
- inappropriate attitudes and
- non-existent or non-functioning facilities.

Why, we have to ask, does this go on happening?”¹

[“So, what is normal?”](#)

Jos Boys, University of Brighton¹

¹ An innovative research project looking at how to move teaching on inclusive design beyond its existing limited concepts.

Contents

Getting started

Principles

Building empathy

Ask

Must

What to do

Glossary

References

Appendix

Image credits

Images with a Click me! caption are taken from publications on inclusion.

1 [OXO UK](#)

2 [Microsoft Inclusive Design](#)

3 Image from MA thesis by Karin Ehrnberger made at Konstfack, department of Industrial Design Design Innovation for Gender Equality

4 Artwork by [Tim Etchells](#)

getting started

Here are the essentials.

principles

Public buildings or spaces must always be fully inclusive and designed to be barrier free for everyone.

building empathy

Good design acknowledges the diversity of the users of buildings and places. Inclusive design is a process that involves understanding people as users of buildings and the barriers they face.

ask

It's important to seek the views of all of the [users of buildings and spaces](#). Designers must be aware of how people will interact with the different aspects of a design to ensure its truly inclusive.

must

Do you understand the underlying [legislation or codes of practice](#) driving the need for inclusive design?

what to do

The aim must be to create multi user space, not multi use spaces.

1 Click me!



principles

Public buildings or spaces must always be fully inclusive and designed so as to be barrier free for everyone.

The problem

It's fairly straightforward to arrive at a point where we understand the terms "inclusion" and "barrier-free". In practice it's also easy to design for people like ourselves and some other people. It gets difficult when we design for a lot of other people. As a result, we usually end up with a building or space reflecting our own gender, sexuality, physical ability and way of thinking. That's not inclusion.

We are likely to draw on our own knowledge and experience which will come with its own unconscious biases. What we know, or have learnt, may not actually be enough to fully apply the principle. So, we fall back on a compliance-based approach, arguing "it meets the standards." This isn't enough.



2 Click me!



building empathy

Good design acknowledges the diversity of the users of buildings and places. Inclusive design is a process that involves understanding people as users of buildings and the barriers they face.

Your aim

Designers need to have a greater empathy with clients and user groups. So, whilst we might recognise that many people benefit from a wider door or lift access, what we need to appreciate is that they might also not want to use these things in the same way or even at all. This is usability and is not the same as meeting a technical standard.

There should be a person-centred approach to design. For example; not everyone in a building likes using lifts, but equally not everyone is able to use an escalator or the stairs. How often though is the bare blockwork staircase hidden away, or is the small lift at the far end of the building?



Ann Marie's Istanbul © 2012



Using cafes for work or meetings is now an accepted way of life, (as well drinking coffee).

talking point

Do you walk into a lift, wait and then at your floor walk backwards to get out? Essentially wheelchair users have to. The standard² says its ok. Yet as able people know, its so much easier if you can turn around first.

² [Building Regulations Approved Document M Vol.2 Buildings other than dwellings – see page 34.](#)

3 Click me!



ask

It's important to seek the views of all of the users of buildings and spaces. Designers must be aware of how people will interact with the different aspects of a design.

Fairy tale or reality?³

Many organisations may not have a tradition of asking staff or customers before undertaking any work. Some organisations, however, regularly do market testing. It's a way of life. Design consultation should be seen in the same light.



You won't always know who to contact, how to contact them or what they may be interested in. [Ask us to get started.](#)

Why? Because it will lead to a better design and the need for less costly changes further along in the process if clients and design teams can be encouraged to engage with users in this way.

[Co-design in Peckham](#)

An example of how to harness local knowledge.

talking point

Under the Equality Act 2010 a disabled person has a right to ask for changes to be made to a building. Better to get it right first time.

³ [From Fairy Tale to Reality](#) is a pamphlet published by Involve, promoting practical public engagement.

4 Click me!



must

Do you understand the underlying legislation or codes of practice?

What to look for

Start with the Equality Act 2010. You should not discriminate against someone based on their [Protected Characteristics](#). It requires providers of services, facilities or goods to offer these customers an equal standard of service⁴. They're a good focus on which to base your user research.

Inclusion requires a designer to relate the range of users needs to the available technical guidance to provide the know-how to implement their requirements. National guidance should not be applied as a blanket solution with no thought.

How to use guidance

- Use legislation as your first principles.
- Refer to recent research, eg national associations or local group's work.
- Base your user discussions around what you've learnt and seek their views.

talking point

Avoid using labels – they're for tins of baked beans.



People are far more complex and deserving of a more rounded assessment of their needs. For example; disabled people or people under 21 years of age are not homogeneous groups. In the context of a project they would need to be broken down.

⁴ [Services, public functions and associations.](#)
[Code of Practice 201.1 Equality and Human Rights Commission.](#)



5 Click me!

what to do

Put diversity at the centre of your design solutions. Create multi user space, not multi use spaces.

Your agreement with your client should include the need to plan for diverse users.

Stick to some basic rules. Provide; independence, confidence and certainty.

Find out how people live their lives. Provide for them in a design, e.g. people with dementia or older women. Research the areas your practice regularly works on. Use any reports etc., as a starting point for the next project.

Inclusion is everyone's job. Put awareness of inclusion in everyone's terms of reference.

shopping list

- ✓ Engage specialist access staff on any project involving public access.
- ✓ Include an accessibility audit in any initial survey work.
- ✓ Speak to people using an area, a building or its services. Has research been done already you can use?
- ✓ Prepare Access Statements to define inclusion provision and set out clear project targets.
- ✓ Involve any consultees in the development of designs

Ps...

For when your project is up and running.

Management of premises

Where does it say in the Building Regulations you must design your toilet for disabled people so it can store the vacuum cleaner, the spare toilet rolls and the step ladders for putting up this week's promotion?

When you can show a disabled person the relevant paragraph you can start putting some shelves in too.

This is a frequent complaint of disabled people. Designers need to ensure that buildings are able to adapt and meet the needs of occupiers. Storage can be an issue in many buildings, but more important is maintaining accessibility and having equality of opportunity.

final say

Jeremy Till, of Sarah Wigglesworth Architects and previously Head of the School of Architecture at Sheffield University on architects, their education and life in practice.

“...one cannot cover all aspects of the design of the built environment, but one can set up an ethos in which issues such as inclusion, access, autism, the vernacular, safety (to name just of the few recent surveys) are inculcated as values to be taken seriously. I would say, but then maybe I would, that this is the ethos at Sheffield.

We explicitly refer to the user as a core part of our focus, and in this see the user as diverse (including issues of disability). Our 'mission' is specifically about the social and environmental responsibility of the architect. I argue that the development of this ethos and responsibility can then be applied to the more specialised areas.”

From Guardian article entitled, “Bricks and mortals.”

glossary

Accessible – the feature meets national standards eg an accessible ramp complies with the Building Regulations.

Diversity - appreciating the differences in individuals or communities. Examples of differences could include; gender, age, sex, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or social status. Organisations refer to the value in acquiring a diverse workforce to bring different views to their work.

Equality - is about ensuring everybody has equal of opportunity and is not treated differently or discriminated against because of their personal characteristics.

Unconscious bias – the opinions we hold which we are not aware of and will have acquired during our lives. When we make decisions we do so automatically in a particular way.

Co-design, consultation and engagement.

- Consultation is when people are asked their opinion.
- Engagement refers to when consultation involves a dialogue and someone's opinions and a potential outcome may be discussed.
- Co-design involves people being involved in a design process and directly influencing the outcome and a part of the decision.

Access statement - sets out how a new building or environment will achieve inclusive design standards.

Multi user space – a place that is inclusive allowing everyone to use it in their own way.

Normal – what you would consider as typical, usual or expected. General usage tends to refer to what is perceived by the speaker as the most common opinion or way to do something.

Public building – the areas in a building or an entire building, anyone can freely enter as opposed to being for the sole use of staff, residents or a membership.

Appendix 1: specialist access staff

It's important that a project has a means of accessing specialist equality advice in a way which is proportionate to the scale of the work that is being undertaken.

A dedicated adviser should be appointed for any major project.

Alternatively, smaller scale work should have a readily accessible source of advice a designer or engineer can go to by email or telephone, as may be appropriate.

Where the dividing line falls between major and minor will largely be dependent on the complexity of the work involved, the degree of involvement by equality user groups and of course a designer's own skills and knowledge.

North Somerset Access Officer for Disabled People

Offers accessibility advice on building, places and services for people living and working in North Somerset.

Telephone: 01934 63 4989

Email: equality@n-somerset.gov.uk

National Register of Access Consultants

In their words:

“(It) is an independent UK wide accreditation service for individuals who provide access consultancy and access auditor services. It was set up with government backing to provide a single source for organisations seeking competent advice in relation to inclusive environments and accessibility.”

References and useful reading

1. ["So what is normal?" University of Brighton.](#)
2. [Bricks and Mortals](#), 2002, Moss, S. Guardian Newspapers and Media Ltd.
3. [Services, public functions and associations Statutory Code of Practice](#), 2011. Equality and Human Rights Commission, HMSO.
4. [From Fairy Tale to Reality: Dispelling the Myths around Citizen Engagement](#). Andersson, E. et al, 2013. Involve.
5. [Equality Act 2010](#). HMSO.
6. [Building Regulations 2015 \(as amended\) Approved Document Part M](#) Access for Disabled People. HMSO.
7. [British Standard BS8300:2018](#) Design of an accessible and inclusive built environment. Code of practice. 2018. BSi.
8. [TheAccessOfficer](#) website. <https://theaccessofficer.n-somerset.gov.uk/>, 2019. North Somerset Council.
9. [Design and Access Statements: How to write, read and use them](#), 2006. Design Council.