

Overview

The British Standards Institution (BSI) worked together with the Disability Rights Commission (DRC), latterly the Equality and Human Rights Commission, and VisitBritain to develop a Publicly Available Specification (PAS) that standardizes the accessibility and services offered by large hotel premises and hotel chains to disabled people or people with a long-term health condition in the UK. The PAS provides information for large hotel premises and hotel chains seeking to meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995.

PAS 88 – Guidance on accessibility of large hotel premises and hotel chains contains principles of good practice based upon the duty to make reasonable adjustments and to ensure services are accessible to disabled people as contained in the DDA 1995 as amended 2005.

If you are using hotel services and would like assurance regarding hotel policies and services for disabled visitors, you can ask the hotel staff whether they are operating in line with the guidance given in PAS 88.

PAS 88 can be purchased from www.bsi-global.com/en/shop.

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995

Under Part 3 of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 hoteliers have a duty to ensure that access to their hotel facilities and services for disabled people is as close as is reasonably possible to the standard normally offered to the public at large. Since the DDA came into force in December 1996 it has been unlawful to discriminate against disabled customers by:

- refusing service;
- providing a lower standard of service;
- providing the service on worse terms;
- failure to make reasonable adjustments.

The law uses the phrase 'reasonable adjustment' to allow different solutions in different situations. Service providers are required to make reasonable adjustments to policies or procedures that would otherwise make it unreasonably difficult for disabled customers to use their service, for example adjusting a no dogs policy to allow a customer to enter the premises with an assistance dog.

Since October 2004, where a physical feature makes it impossible or unreasonably difficult for disabled persons to access goods or services, all businesses are now required to take reasonable steps to:

- remove the feature; or
- alter it so it no longer has that effect; or

- provide a reasonable means of avoiding the feature; or
- provide an alternative method of making the service available.

However, the **Code of Practice – Rights of Access: Services to the public, public authority functions, private clubs and premises 2006** does say that what is reasonable may vary according to the:

- type of services being provided;
- nature of the service provider and its size and resources;
- effect of the disability on the individual disabled person.

It is also unlawful for hotels to pass on any cost of a reasonable adjustment to disabled visitors. Where reasonable adjustments have been made to ensure that a certain facility or service is accessible for a disabled visitor this should be provided on a complimentary basis as part of a hotel's general expenses.

What PAS 88 covers?

PAS 88 provides guidance for hoteliers in the following areas:

Access strategies

Involvement of disabled people in planning

Staff training

Accessible formats for information and websites

Transport provisions

Car parking

Access routes to and around buildings

Entry and exits to premises

Movement around floors or levels

Entrance hall and reception

Check-in

Corridors and passageways

Movement between floors and levels

Interior features and design

Communal areas

Lavatories and changing facilities in public areas

Accessible bedrooms

Accessible bathrooms

Public telephones, public internet access and vending machines

Leisure facilities

Retail outlets, coffee shops and amenities

Surrounds and gardens

Check-out

Conferencing, banqueting and entertainment

What if I have query?

In the event that you are unhappy with the accessibility provisions in a hotel you should first raise the problem with the hotel. It is best if this is done at the time that the problem occurs. If the problem has not been dealt with to your satisfaction you should write to the manager. If a satisfactory conclusion is not reached the Equality and Human Rights Commission helpline can give information and guidance on disability discrimination and what to do if you think you may have been discriminated against. They can also provide you with a copy of PAS 88.

If you have a query about equalities or discrimination you can also check their range of publications on their website: www.equalityhumanrights.com. If you think you may have been discriminated against, check their Your Rights section.

You can contact the helpline by telephone, textphone, letter, email or fax. If you are a British Sign Language user or have a learning disability, and would prefer to contact them face-to-face, they can arrange a videophone call with you.

Below you will find the helpline addresses and contact numbers available to you. If, however, you wish to submit an enquiry please use the web enquiry form.

England

Equality and Human Rights Commission Disability helpline England

Freepost RRLG-GHUX-CTR

Arndale House

Arndale Centre

Manchester

M4 3EQ

Telephone: 08456 046 610

Textphone: 08456 046 620

Fax: 08456 046 630

9am-5pm Monday to Friday, except Wednesday 9am-8pm

Wales

Equality and Human Rights Commission helpline Wales

Freepost RRLR-UEYB-UYZL

1st Floor

3 Callaghan Square

Cardiff

CF10 5BT

Telephone: 08456 048 810

Textphone: 08456 048 820

Fax: 08456 048 830

9am-5pm Monday to Friday, except Wednesday 9am-8pm

Scotland

Equality and Human Rights Commission helpline Scotland

Freepost RRLG-GYLB-UJTA

The Optima Building

58 Robertson Street

Glasgow

G2 8DU

Telephone: 08456 045 510

Textphone: 08456 045 520

Fax: 08456 045 530

9am-5pm Monday to Friday, except Wednesday 9am-8pm

The recognition of good practice in hotels is a critical step in removing the barriers disabled people face in going about their daily lives. Disabled people, their families, friends and colleagues can now be reassured that they can expect access to large chains comfortably, not have to plan minutiae of detail in advance, justify their impairment-related requirements in a crowded lobby or be turned away on arrival due to lack of access.

Baroness Jane Campbell, Equality and Human Rights Commission

The guidance given in PAS 88 builds on the substantial work provided in the National Accessible Scheme and provides additional practical advice which will be useful to accommodation operators, especially the hotel sector. The help and advice available in PAS 88 will guide large hotels and hotel chains who are unsure about the provision they should be making for disabled people and will enable consumers to be more confident that their needs will be catered for if a hotel is following the advice in the PAS 88. It is an invaluable tool.

Jeremy Brinkworth, Quality General Manager, VisitBritain

The British Hospitality Association was very pleased to be able to work with its key hotel members on PAS 88. We are delighted to encourage all hotels to do everything possible to make it easier for those with any kind of disability to book and stay at a hotel. The guidance that PAS 88 gives is invaluable. It will, I know, be of great benefit to both hoteliers and their guests by making hotels more accessible to all.

Bob Cotton, Chief Executive of The British Hospitality Association

PAS 88 has been developed to help hotel companies extend a welcome for all guests and to meet their ongoing obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act. It explains ways of achieving this in association with British Standards, the Building Regulations and guidance from tourism authorities in the United Kingdom. It should be considered a useful tool as part of this process.

Brian Seaman, Tourism for All

Whitbread Group plc takes the equal treatment of all of our guests very seriously indeed. We believe that the new PAS will be of great assistance to ourselves, and the hotel industry in general, in our continual efforts to improve the service we provide to our disabled guests.

Shaun Ross, Whitbread Group plc



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