

A photograph of four people (two men and two women) sitting on a wooden fence. They are all eating ice cream. The background shows a scenic view of a coastal town and hills under a hazy sky. A large pink triangle is overlaid on the bottom half of the image.

Visit Isle of Wight
**VISITOR ECONOMY
CONFERENCE**

How can Isle of Wight businesses be more inclusive and benefit from the purple pound?

Ross Calladine, Accessibility and Inclusion Lead, VisitEngland & Government-appointed Disability & Access Ambassador for Tourism; Neil Chapman, Managing Director, Hovertravel 01.02.24



VisitEngland

About me

- Accessibility and Inclusion Lead at VisitEngland.
- Accessibility specialist, developing initiatives that help tourism businesses and destinations tap into the high value, growing accessible tourism market.
- Led the development of best-in-class accessibility toolkits for tourism businesses and destinations.
- Manages VisitEngland's Accessible & Inclusive Tourism Award, which recognises leaders in the field.
- Convenes England's Inclusive Tourism Action Group comprising leading accessible tourism stakeholders.
- Regularly speaker at national and international accessibility industry events.
- Appointed Disability and Access Ambassador for Tourism by the UK Government in January 2022.



Government ambition

Tourism Recovery Plan

“For the UK to become the most accessible tourism destination in Europe by 2025”

Key measure - increase inbound visits by disabled people by 33% (Tourism Sector Deal 2019)





Who?

Who are we talking about?



1 in 4

**of the UK population is disabled,
which may affect where they
choose to stay or visit**



Only 7%
of disabled people are
wheelchair users

Who else has accessibility requirements?

People with:

Sight loss

Physical or mobility impairment

Hearing loss and
D/deaf people

Learning difficulty or intellectual disability

Families with young children

Dementia

Mental health condition

Older people

Social/communication impairment/ neurodivergent people
e.g. an Autistic Spectrum condition

People with dietary requirements

Long-term illness/health condition

And others!

Unique requirements

- When travelling with health conditions, the considerations are complex and multi-faceted
- Each disabled individual typically has two conditions
- The average trip party has two or three different conditions to consider
- People with the same impairments often have different accessibility requirements
- Therefore requirements for each booking from this audience are unique

Average no. conditions mentioned in party

2.4

Average no. disabled individuals in party

1.5

Average no. conditions per disabled individual

1.9



**On average a person
will spend 8 years
disabled in their
lifetime**

The Accessible Tourist Profile

The Accessible tourist is:

- Influenced by previous bad travel experiences
- Sceptical when something is described as 'accessible'
- Anxious that their accessibility needs won't be met
- Impacted by the least accessible part of the trip
- Loyal to companies who meet their accessibility requirements



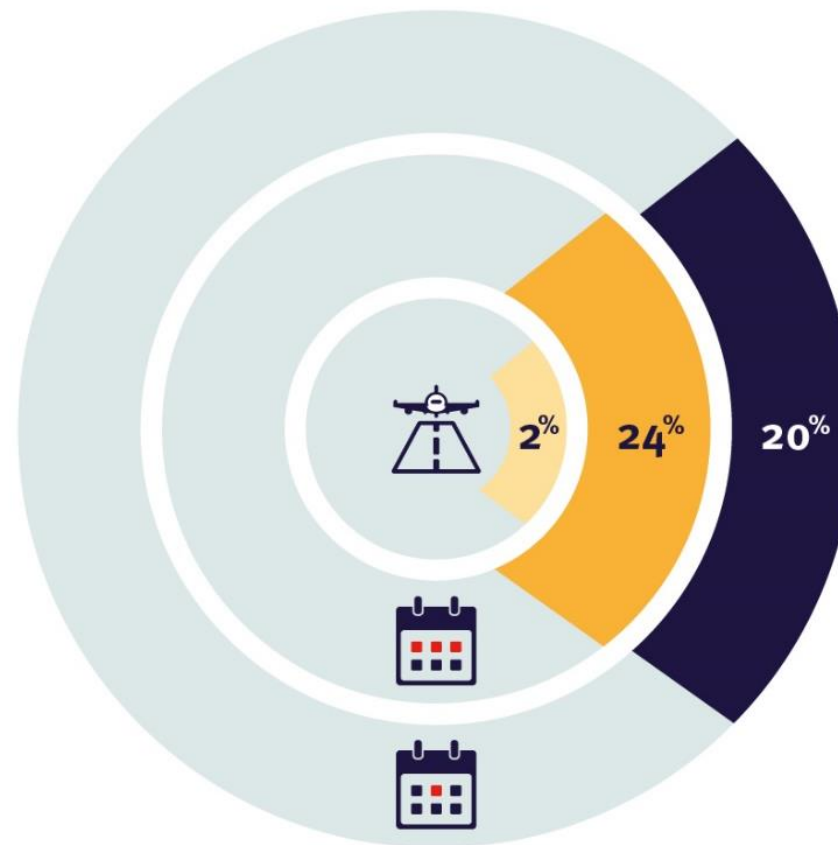
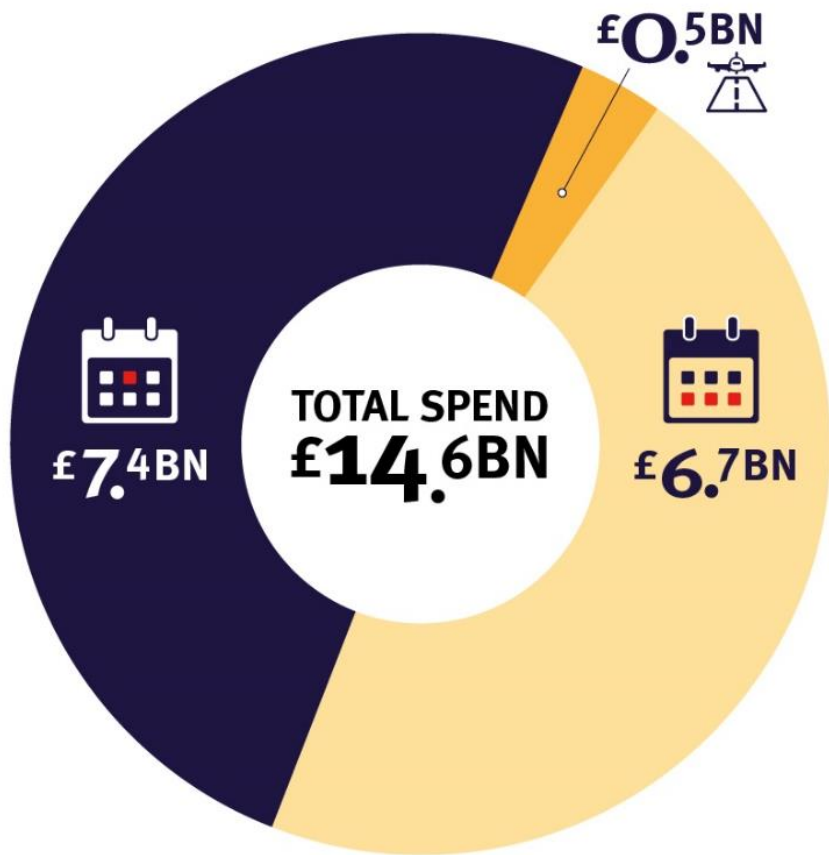


Why?

Why is this relevant to tourism destinations and businesses?

The business case

England trips taken by those with an impairment and their travelling companions



Building the '3 Rs'

- **Revenue**

A valuable market; attracting the spend of someone with accessibility requirements attracts the spend of their entire travelling party, which can really help build your revenue

- **Resilience**

Loyal and repeat customers who stay longer spend more, extend your trading season; being accessible can help rebuild business after the COVID-19 pandemic and build your business' resilience

- **Reputation**

Understanding customer's individual needs and focusing on customer service will get your customers talking positively about you, helping to build a strong reputation



1 in 4

**return to accommodation they visited before
either because it has the specialist facilities
needed and/or it removes the stress and effort of
trying to find somewhere different**



**Accessibility is an opportunity not
just a responsibility**

**Stay legal, make more money and
feel good by doing the right thing**



What and How?

What is accessible tourism and how do I engage?

“Tourism experiences that can be enjoyed by people with physical, sensory and cognitive impairments and others with accessibility requirements”

Three Pillars of Accessible Tourism

Accessible / Inclusive Tourism



Customer

Customer
welcome
and
interaction

Place

Built
environment,
amenities
and services

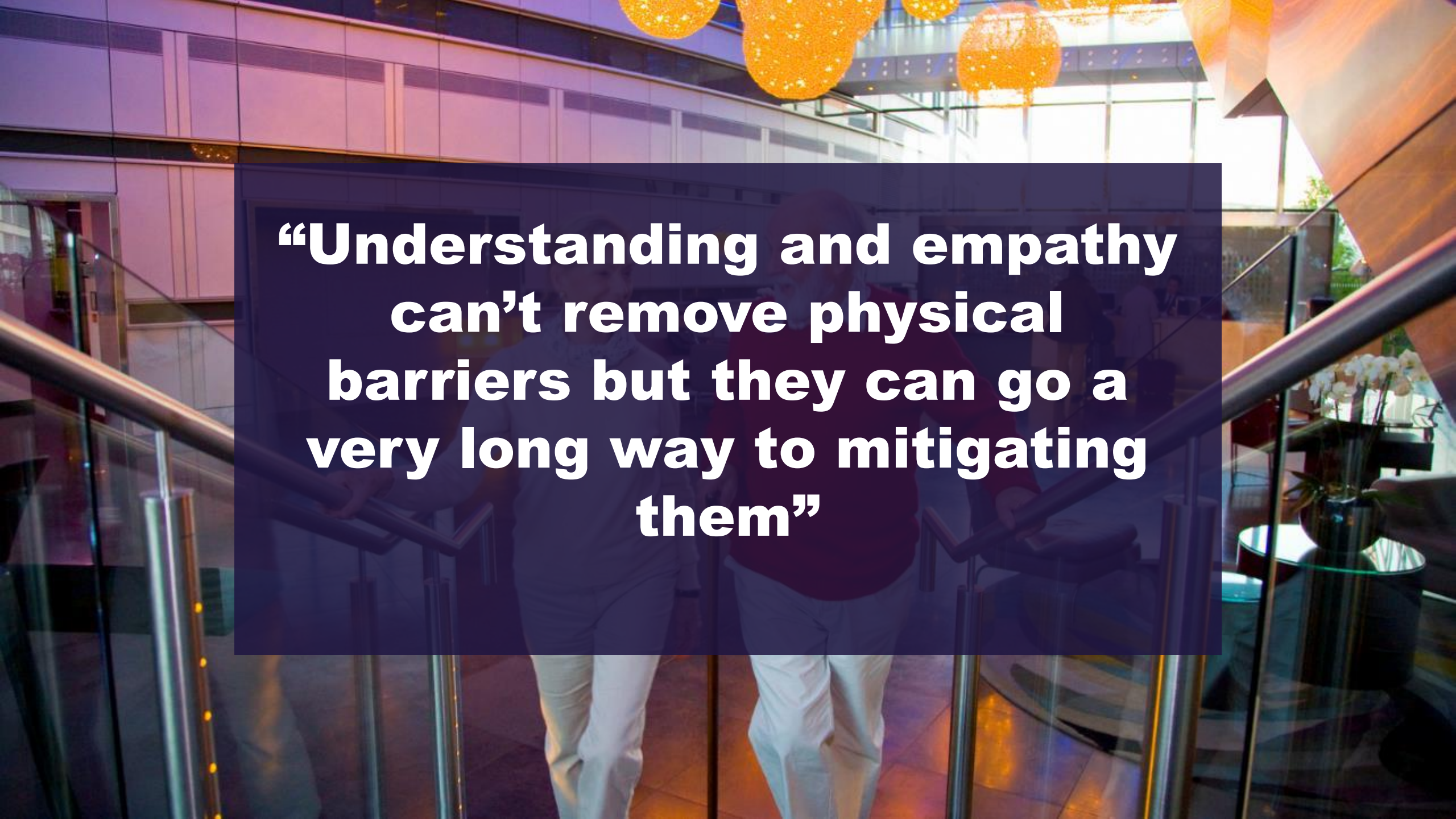
Information

Information,
marketing
and digital
inclusion

Employment

Employment
of disabled
people

**Public Realm
& Transport**

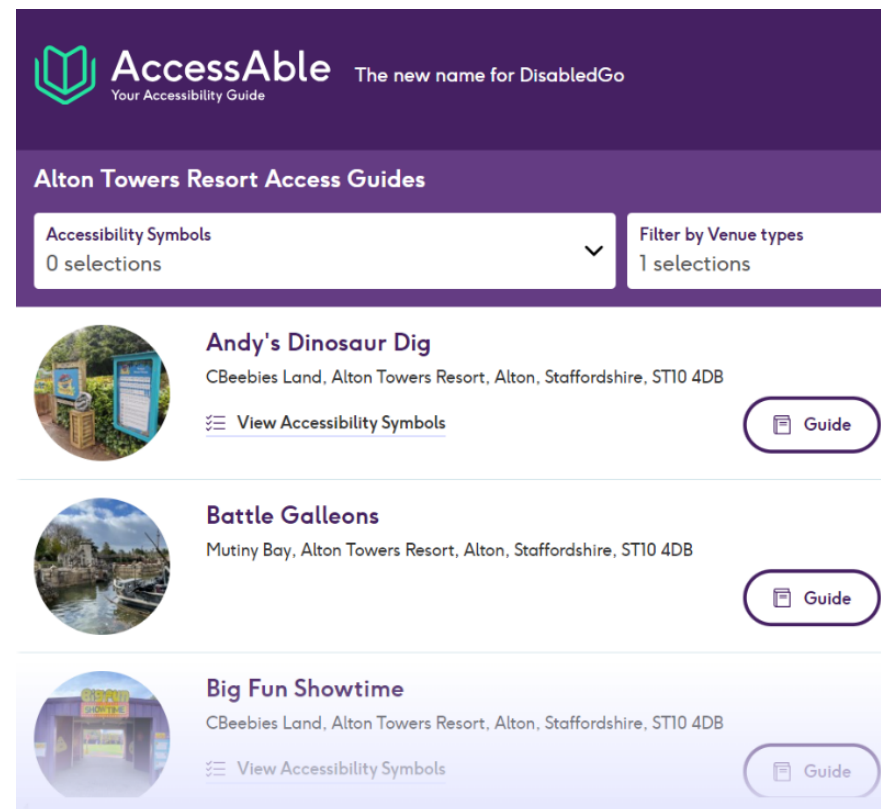
A modern interior space featuring a glass and metal staircase. The ceiling is adorned with several large, glowing orange spherical pendant lights. A dark blue semi-transparent text box is centered over the image, containing a quote in white, bold, sans-serif font. The background shows a person in a white shirt and light-colored pants walking on the staircase.

**“Understanding and empathy
can’t remove physical
barriers but they can go a
very long way to mitigating
them”**

Accessibility Guides

A customer-facing online guide that details the accessibility of a tourism venue so that people with accessibility requirements can make an informed decision as to whether it will meet their individual needs or not

- Today's traveller wants venues to be described factually to empower them to make personal choices
- To drive forward the provision of robust, publicly available Detailed Access Guides for tourism venues across England, VisitEngland is joining forces with AccessAble, a leader in quality accessibility information provision.
- From February 2024, use the new AccessAble portal to book either a Guided Assessment or On-Site Assessment
 - a professional access surveyor will create a quality-assured Detailed Access Guide.
- A discount code will be emailed to all existing users of the current tool.
- All guides will be searchable on AccessAble's website, currently used by 6 million people a year, with businesses also receiving an Access Improvement Report.
- The current tool at AccessibilityGuides.org, will close on 30 June 2024.



The screenshot displays the AccessAble website interface. At the top, the logo reads "AccessAble" with the tagline "Your Accessibility Guide" and "The new name for DisabledGo". Below this, the page title is "Alton Towers Resort Access Guides". There are two filter boxes: "Accessibility Symbols" with "0 selections" and a dropdown arrow, and "Filter by Venue types" with "1 selections". Three venue listings are shown, each with a circular image, the venue name, address, and a "Guide" button. The first listing is "Andy's Dinosaur Dig" at CBeebies Land, Alton Towers Resort, Alton, Staffordshire, ST10 4DB, with a "View Accessibility Symbols" link. The second is "Battle Galleons" at Mutiny Bay, Alton Towers Resort, Alton, Staffordshire, ST10 4DB, with a "Guide" button. The third is "Big Fun Showtime" at CBeebies Land, Alton Towers Resort, Alton, Staffordshire, ST10 4DB, with a "View Accessibility Symbols" link and a "Guide" button.

Top Tips for businesses

- Train all staff in disability awareness and ensure they are familiar with accessible facilities, services, equipment and evacuation procedures
- Always welcome assistance dogs
- Provide a hearing loop and test it regularly
- Ensure your website meets accessibility standards and all written communications with customers are available in accessible formats
- Provide accessible ways for disabled customers to give feedback, acting and responding promptly to comments.
- Provide sufficient accessible parking spaces and drop-off areas
- Include images of disabled people in your marketing
- Appoint an Accessibility Champion and encourage accessibility ambassadors.
- Provide accessible toilets and ideally a Changing Places facility
- Provide an 'Access for All' section on your website
- Provide a detailed and accurate Accessibility Guide to promote your accessibility.
- Provide a step-free entrance.



New Accessible & Inclusive Tourism Toolkit

- A holistic toolkit with real-life case studies, top 20 tips, actionable checklists and technical guidance for the built environment
- Help to develop tourism businesses that people with a wide range of accessibility requirements can enjoy
- Practical guidance on improving accessibility across the key areas of **Customer, Place, Information and Employment**
- Over 30 charities, trade associations and independent assessors co-produced the content
- Launched 30th Nov. ahead of International Day of People with Disabilities 2023
- Free to access on the Business Advice Hub, part of the new VisitEngland and VisitBritain industry website
- A live resource; Mima will be supporting VE to evolve and update the guidance



New Accessible & Inclusive Tourism Toolkit

Main Toolkit

Holistic guidance with real-life case studies

Action Checklists

Downloadable business-specific actionable checklists to plan and prioritise improvements

Top 20 Tips

Downloadable business-specific top tips

Technical Guidance

Built environment guidance for renovations, conversions, new builds

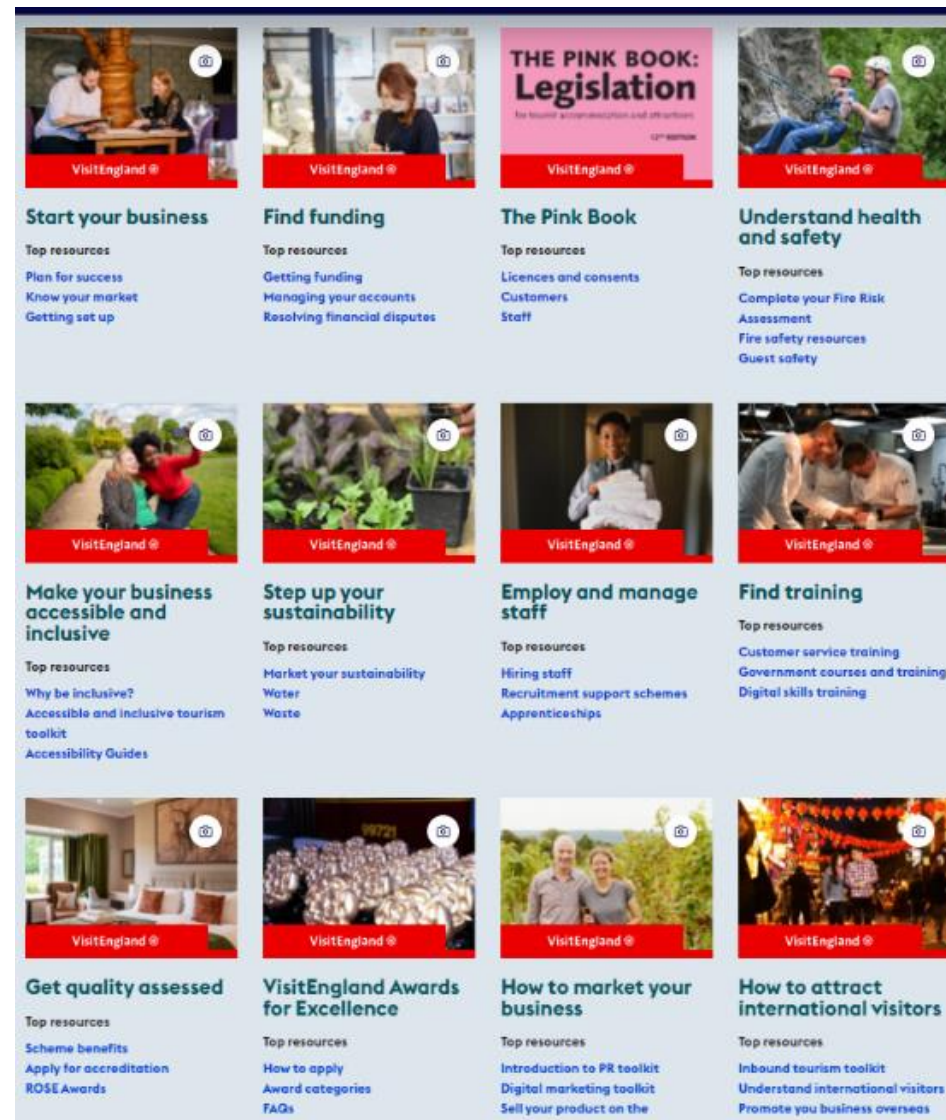


VisitEngland Business Advice Hub

More accessibility tips and other free resources to help businesses to succeed and grow

- Links to external resources
- Sustainability guidance
- Fire Risk Assessment Template
- Digital Marketing Toolkit
- VisitEngland Awards for Excellence
- Pink Book of Legislation (12th edition out now)
- TETTW Inbound Tourism Toolkit
- TXGB
- And much more!

www.visitengland.org/businessadvice



The screenshot displays the VisitEngland Business Advice Hub website, featuring a grid of 12 resource cards. Each card includes a representative image, a title, and a list of top resources. The cards are arranged in three rows and four columns.

Card Title	Top Resources
Start your business	Plan for success Know your market Getting set up
Find funding	Getting funding Managing your accounts Resolving financial disputes
The Pink Book	Licences and consents Customers Staff
Understand health and safety	Complete your Fire Risk Assessment Fire safety resources Guest safety
Make your business accessible and inclusive	Why be inclusive? Accessible and inclusive tourism toolkit Accessibility Guides
Step up your sustainability	Market your sustainability Water Waste
Employ and manage staff	Hiring staff Recruitment support schemes Apprenticeships
Find training	Customer service training Government courses and training Digital skills training
Get quality assessed	Scheme benefits Apply for accreditation ROSE Awards
VisitEngland Awards for Excellence	How to apply Award categories FAQs
How to market your business	Introduction to PR toolkit Digital marketing toolkit Sell your product on the
How to attract international visitors	Inbound tourism toolkit Understand international visitors Promote you business overseas

For practical guidance, case studies and top tips on
Accessible & Inclusive Tourism visit:

visitengland.org/access

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Our Journey – Access for all

Hovertravel – VIOW Conference – Thursday 1st February 2024



Our Passion for Service

*'to continually develop our services through
our community, partnerships
and sharing best practices'*

this will ensure ... 'Access for all'

Accessibility - our journey

- Our People – a team of passionate people
- Hovercare - Brand Identity, with clear objectives
- Creation of Hover Care Leaders & Ambassadors
- Training, Learning, Listening and sharing from customers, stakeholders & specialists
- Meeting the statutory requirements ... but its is about *going further*



Reach out to the Community & Industry

- Community Engagement
- User Group - HUG
- NHS Trust
- Sharing best practices
- Charities' involvement



Involve the teams

- Get involved
- Sharing & learning from feedback
- Listening to ideas
- Involve in training
- HoverCare is our framework for innovation
- HoverCare is part of quality management system



Events; Try Before you Fly



'Try Before You Fly'

11th June
10:00 - 11:00



We don't always get it right

Appalling for wheelchair users



I always used the hover for mainland trips until the new craft was brought in. The ramp for wheelchair users is ridiculously steep and any wheelchair will tip backwards. I have 'anti tips' on my manual chair and the steepness pushed my wheelchair even beyond the anti tips, luckily my husband behind me caught the chair as it tipped backwards..- Hovertravel's solution? A member of staff will push you onto the craft. Humiliating and a mockery of independant travel (I also have no push handles on my wheelchair, interesting how they'd manage that). A powerchair would never manage it. No restraints were used for my chair on board and there is only provision for one wheelchair at a time, demonstrated by the member of staff who nodded at another chair user in the queue and said "only one of you people can come on". I just love being referred to as "you people" - Not. I will now be using other means carriers to cross the Solent despite a longer journey.

But the feedback can be so rewarding

Fantastic service!



This review is especially helpful for those who have or use the following: **Wheelchair**


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Overview

I would like to say a huge thank you to all of the staff at Hovertravel for making my crossing to visit friends on the Isle of Wight so smooth!
I struggled with understanding the timetables ensuring my bus and everything correlated so I called and dealt with a lovely girl on the phone who gave me all of the timings etc. even ones for my bus to ensure I got the right one and covered me for any delays etc.
Upon arrival there was electric doors so no hassle trying to open doors etc. the counter was a good height for my wheelchair and the staff were all so helpful.
I had someone even carry my bags on for me, direct me up the ramp onto the Hovercraft and they radio'd to the other side to get them to help me off again!
I couldn't have had a smoother crossing, much better than when I used Wightlink in the past would thoroughly recommend.



Lawrence Tippins  recommends Hovertravel Ltd. 

August 21 · 

A caring service very good with disabled pasengers



First class

I would just like to say how grateful I am at the fantastic service we received from the hover staff on Friday evening, we just missed the 8pm hover so had to wait for the 9pm, my husband struggles and they were so kind even made him a cup of tea to warm him up. This is more than good service these guys went above and beyond their job description. We will never hesitate to travel with you.

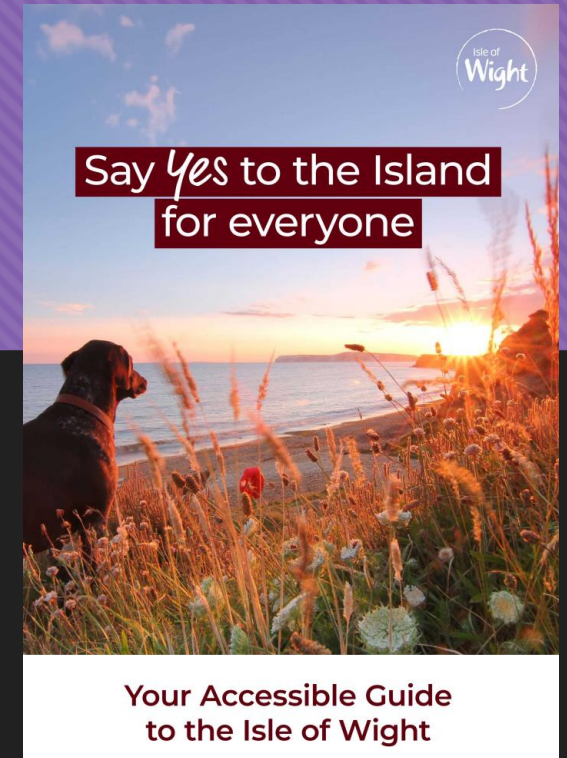
[Read less](#) ▲

 **EUAN'S**
DISABLED ACCESS REVIEWS
EuansGuide.com

Brilliant, thank you for taking the time to write back. That's exactly what I wanted to know thank you so much. He is Autistic so I read what that gentleman had written on your website and I loved it. It makes me happy to know one day when he's an adult he will be able to travel with you, on his own if he chooses to do so. You have this care in place, I found it wonderful and helpful to read. Thank you for being inclusive of all needs.

How can we work together on the island

- Focus your business ensuring its accessible for all, where ever possible.
- Treat accessibility as customer service.
- Develop a Inclusive thoughts in all we do
- Information – say what you have, not what you haven't – VIOW accessibility guide.
- Become a Sunflower Member – do the training online – its free !
- Dive in and learn from others and some great organisations and charities on the island.
- Don't be afraid to make a mistake.
- Enjoy the feedback when it works.



The benefits of the Accessibility market

- Greater service with reduced mobility
- Greater confidence in travelling by those with reduced mobility
- Improved the profile of the business in the community and beyond
- Greater confidence in our staff
- Giving the company a clear structure and focus in this area of the business
- Increase in sales

Go for it Join us on the journey

- We were very proud to be accredited by the DFT as of a status of 'Leader – Inclusive Transport Leaders scheme' since 2020, but our work continues to ensure the accessibility of our transport & destinations is available for all.
- Love to hear how we can welcome all those with hidden and reduced mobility to our Island.
- Neil Chapman – Managing Director; neil.chapman@hovertravel.com
- **Thank you** ... Like to share best practices with Hovertravel – get in touch.

Q&A