Closed Captions are available for this webinar.

- Click on the “CC” button to enable them.
- After selecting Closed Caption, you will see the captioning at the bottom of your screen.
- If you need to adjust the caption size, click on the arrow next to stop/start video and choose Video Settings.
- Click on Accessibility.
- Move the slider to adjust the caption size.
Accessibility in a post-COVID world?

Steven Mifsud
Director

Steve Dering
Chief Operations Officer
Introduction – Accessibility

• This session has live captioning
• It will be recorded and the slide deck available after the event
Introduction – Steven Mifsud

• Established Direct Access in 2004
• Access Consultant for UNESCO World Heritage Sites City of Bath and Palaces of Westminster
• Working on refurbishment programs with the Harris and Blackpool Winter Gardens
• Access Consultants for 150 Museums as part of West Midlands Museums
Introduction – Steve Dering

- Joined Direct Access in 2017
- Masters in Occupational Safety & Health
- Worked on curation and programming for Expo 2020 Dubai for two years – designed to ADA standard
- Part of the IAAP examination body for new Access Consultants
Aim of today

By the end of the session, you will hopefully have a greater understanding of:

• Access Audits – what their purpose is and examples
• How to implement the action plan
• The implications of COVID19 and accessibility considerations
• The purpose of and how to create Access Guides
People Who Benefit From Inclusive Museums

- Physical Impairment
- Hearing Impairment
- Families
- Neuro Diversity
- Elderly
- Temporary Injuries
- Pregnant Mothers
- Fatigued

Direct Access
Museums need to consider their accessibility across the **whole** spectrum of disability not just those with a mobility impairment
Equality Act 2010

Equality Act is UK legislation.

Building standards are referenced in British Standards BS 8300 and Part M of Building Regulations
Americans with Disabilities Act is 30 years old this year. Building standards are referenced here.

 Defines a person with a disability as a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activity.
Smithsonian Guide

Based on ADA, the Architectural Barriers Act 1968 and Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Useful resource that sets out the Smithsonian’s standard for accessible exhibition design.
Part of our work in Dubai was to benchmark the new Dubai Universal Design Code with international standards.

ADA was strong in several areas.

Limited information on technology due to age of ADA.
Accessibility Audits
Accessibility Audits

Access Audits look at established buildings and services to make recommendations on accessibility.

Accessibility Audits then will result in an ongoing action plan to achieve facilities that will be inclusive for all via retrofitting and by providing services in alternative ways.
What Is Audited? – Premises and Facilities

- Physical aspects of the building or environment
- Use of the building including any alternative provision for access to premises and services
- Building management issues
Some Examples from Access Audits
Car Parking

[Image of a parking lot with designated handicap parking spaces and a sign indicating parking is for disabled badge holders only.]
External Ramps
External Steps
Entrances
Reception Areas / Gift Shops
Internal Doors
Corridors and Surfaces
Internal Steps
Lifts / Platform Lifts
General Restrooms
Accessible Restrooms
Facilities

Please touch!
Lighting
Acoustics
Means of Escape
Prioritized Action Plan and Implementation
Action Plans – Should be Updated

Here in the UK we use Action Plans to help keep focus on what we want to achieve:

• **Quick wins** should be immediately implemented

• Long term items should be considered as part of **future refurbishments**

• Many items will not be responsibility of museum i.e. approach
### Action Plans

The access audit action plans are prioritized via a coloured traffic light system and have estimated costs such as –

- **N** – None
- **M** – Minimal
- **OG** – Ongoing Maintenance
- **ST** – Structural Change

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<tr>
<th>Action Taken</th>
<th>Cost</th>
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### Example Action Plans

**Priority A**

1. The accessible parking space is not marked out. A bay should be clearly marked with the appropriate hatched zones in accordance to BS8300.

2. There is an induction loop provided to the reception desk to accommodate hearing all users who struggle when there is background noise. This was tested using my own hearing aids and this appeared to be working well.

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<td>The existing designated accessible parking should be clearly marked out at least 2.4m wide by 4.0m long plus a 1.2m side transfer zone at the sides and end of the bay.</td>
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**Priority B**

1. The school is located near public transport options and there is a car park available which may be used on request.

2. Options on how to arrive at the school should be clearly illustrated on literature and on the website.

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<td>The information regarding the site on the internet should be fully accessible for persons with reading difficulties through enlargement capability and screen readers, combined with synthetic speech or Braille displays. A clearer and logical design that includes written explanations for visual or audio content. Test and graphics should be easily understood without use of colour.</td>
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3. The ramp provided to the side of the school (out of the main hall) has handrails which are of exposed metal making them cold to touch.

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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The handrails should be coated with non-slip or a suitable alternative to ensure that they are not cold to touch.</td>
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**Gathered by:**

- Provide a minimum facility and ensure staff are trained in how to use the facility.
- Ensure that the school is accessible in relevant literature and on the internet.
- Non-accessible ramps should have exposed metal handrails.
- The handrails should be coated with non-slip or a suitable alternative to ensure that they are not cold to touch.
- Options on how to arrive at the school should be clearly illustrated on literature and on the website.

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**Specific Recommendations**

1. The handrails should be coated with non-slip material.
2. The information regarding the site on the internet should be fully accessible for persons with reading difficulties through enlargement capability and screen readers, combined with synthetic speech or Braille displays. A clearer and logical design that includes written explanations for visual or audio content. Test and graphics should be easily understood without use of colour.

---

**Action Taken**

- **N** – None
- **M** – Minimal
- **OG** – Ongoing Maintenance
- **ST** – Structural Change

---

**References**

- BS8300: The Design of Buildings to Meet the Needs of Disabled People.
- WCAG 2.0: Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 (WCAG 2.0).
- Tactile Indicators: The Use of Tactile Indicators for Wayfinding in Building Environments.
Encouraging clients to be Pro-Active not Re-Active

• By frequently reviewing the action plans, this illustrates that the museum or art gallery is a pro-active service provider

• An Action Plan illustrates an ongoing journey to achieve inclusion
COVID19 in UK

Museums in lockdown since March

- Some reopened July 4
- Some plan to reopen in September or 2021
- Masks became mandatory for all Museum visitors in England since Saturday August 8 except for people with disabilities
- Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have different agendas
COVID19 tips - Restrooms

• If some restrooms are closed for hygiene reasons or ease of COVID19 management, try and keep an accessible restroom open. Alternatively available on request.
COVID19 tips - Sanitizer

• Sanitizer dispensers should not be placed higher than 44 inches if the reach depth (counter) is more than 20 inches but not more than 25 inches in depth.

• Where there is nothing on the floor to obstruct access to the hand sanitizer dispenser, it needs to be no higher than 48 inches from the floor (and not lower than 15 inches)

*ADA Section 308 - Reach Ranges*
COVID19 tips - Sanitizer

• When mounting a dispenser on a wall, the soap dispenser cannot protrude more than 4 inches from the wall.

• Dispensers should be able to dispense soap or hand sanitizer with the use of one hand and should not require tight grasping, pinching, or twisting of the wrist. The force required to activate the pump cannot exceed five pounds.

• The Smithsonian recommends a solid contrasting color between items and background.

ADA Section 308 - Reach Ranges
COVID19 tips - screens

- Perspex screens
- Avoiding glare
- If some desks or kiosks are closed, keep the accessible one open
- Assistive listening devices (ADA Section 706)
COVID19 tips - tactile

- The ADA does not override state or local laws designed to protect public health and safety, except where such laws conflict with ADA requirements
- There is no rule book at the moment for tactile maps or objects
- Increased use of audio guides and apps
- Paper tactile maps for deafblind
COVID19 tips - tactile

- If sections or areas of your Museum that houses tactile models is closed, inform people online and/or detail hygiene cleaning programme

- Highlight to visitors with disabilities accessible features that could be unavailable so they can make an informed choice about visiting
COVID19 tips – Temporary signage

• Follow best practice guidelines
  • Upper and Lower Case
  • Sans Serif font
  • Pictorial
  • Contrast with background with either light characters on a dark background or dark characters on a light background
COVID19 tips – Service Dogs

• Guide dogs for the blind are trained to go directly to the entrance. If someone cannot see the queue they cannot instruct the dog to wait or to social distance

• Dogs are service animals under titles II and III of ADA
COVID19 tips – Social distancing and queues

• If a one way system is introduced that changes an access route then a policy must be developed to facilitate disabled access
• Routes must be clearly signed for non-verbal visitors who may have difficulty asking for directions
• Any changes should be detailed on your website
• People with autism in particular may find changes challenging
COVID19 tips - masks

• Masks can create challenges for Deaf and hard of hearing visitors – consider clear masks
• Face shields not recommended by CDC *
• Try written communication or a phone app eg: Ava, Otter Voice

* www.cdc.gov
Considerations for Wearing Masks as at 08/10/2020
COVID19 tips - masks

• If a visitor refuses to wear a face mask, organisations can ask “are you unable to wear a mask because of a disability?”

• If yes, engage the individual to identify an alternative method of service that keeps employees and other visitors safe.
The most accessible venue in the world is no good if people do not know it is accessible.

People with disabilities plan visits – are there restrooms? Can I communicate with staff? Are there quiet periods?
Easy Access Guides

Advance information:
- Accessibility for Wheelchair Users
- Facilities for those with a Hearing Impairment
- Facilities for those with a Vision Impairment
- General Information
- Noisy and busy areas such as shops and cafés
- Quieter times to visit
- Parking entrances and exits
- Location of restrooms
Why Guides Are Important

54% of people with access requirements avoid going to new places if they cannot find information about accessibility (Euan’s Guide Survey)

63% of businesses do not promote their provisions for those with access requirements – meaning that a lot of potential visitors are missed.

Furthermore, with a globally ageing population, those with accessibility requirements are likely to represent an even larger section of your potential customer base. Between 2006 and 2015 there was a 31% uplift in the number of domestic trips taken by the 55+ age group, so an Accessibility Guide helps to future proof your venue.

(UK figures)
No diversity group is excluded from disability and it is the only minority group that you can join:

The approximate number of people with disabilities in the United States: 56 MILLION

That is 19% of the U.S. population

The approximate percentage of U.S. families that have at least one member with a disability: 30%

The approximate percentage of U.S. families that have at least one child with a disability: 10%

It is estimated that 30% of veterans have a disability
Easy Access Guides

• Should be updated and reviewed frequently including temporary changes
• Have fresh photos
• Indicate if areas are being refurbished
• Indicate whether staff have had disability awareness training and/or ASL
• Whether there is information in audio, ASL and large print
• This should be downloadable from your website
Different formats

- Standard guide
- ASL guide
- Black/white guide
- Cream – dyslexia
- Large print
- Audio
Some Direct Access Quick Basic Tips

• **Provide Touch Tours** – Consider building a 3D model of the objects for visitors to feel and explore. Touch tours work for everyone and are very popular; particularly for children.

• **Space** - Great to have a space beneath the tables on which objects sit making it easier for wheelchair users to get closer to the display.

• **Lighting** - Keeping objects protected from light exposure is vitally important in terms of conservation. Consider for exhibits with low level lighting, a button which increases the lighting level for 30 seconds, perfectly balancing conservation with accessibility.
Some Direct Access Quick Basic Tips

• **Self Guided Tours**— Some visitors, often wheelchair users and visually impaired people, might find it difficult to read the signage accompanying exhibits. A great solution is to provide a large print printed guide as a spiral bound booklet. This explains the journey a visitor makes and the exhibits and displays a visitor can see.

• **Autism** - Simple steps like advising when your museum is quiet can be helpful for people planning a visit. Sometimes people with autism need a quiet space to relax, an empty meeting room would be an ideal place for this. You may also need to adjust your lighting and audio levels and it is best to consult with local groups to see what would work best.
Some Direct Access Quick Basic Tips

• **Induction Loops** – A helpful piece of equipment to have but to be effective they need to be accompanied by signage telling visitors that they are available and be regularly tested. Giving staff training in ASL is a great way to invest in their professional development and it is something that visitors will certainly appreciate.

• **Information** -Take a look at everything your venue has from leaflets to signage. Are audio versions of leaflets available? Do you have large print versions of menus in the café? Is there an ASL video which welcomes visitors to your museum and tells them what to expect?
Some Direct Access Quick Basic Tips

• Promote! Promote! – Accessible facilities aren’t much use if you don’t tell people about them! 95% of people with disabilities will search for information about disabled access online before visiting a venue for the first time. Does your venue have information available about its disabled access?
Post-pandemic visit
Thank you!

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Steve - stevedering