

'Accessibility as Standard' Checklist

Introduction from the Disabled Members' Standing Committee

The Disabled Members' Standing Committee (DMSC) works on behalf of all our members from Further Education to Higher Education, Prisons, Adult and Continuing Education and academic-related, professional services staff and researchers.

One in four members are disabled - including members with visible or invisible disabilities and with a hearing impairment, neurodivergent and/or have lived experience of mental illness. The DMSC recognises that access barriers within our workplaces result in members facing difficulties in delivering their professional skills whilst taking an intersectional approach to equality, for all members of our union.

The Disabled Members' Standing Committee have designed this short review checklist to gather data and anecdotal information on how accessible our education institutions are. Despite there being protections in law, access and accessibility remain an issue that impacts Disabled members both individually and collectively. This checklist aims to increase accessibility in our workplaces, including within physical buildings and virtual learning environments, so that we see 'accessibility as standard'.

The checklist is especially useful for Health & Safety and Equality reps. It helps to improve accountability for accessible workplaces locally as well as providing data that feeds into UCU's national campaigns and forms a basis for branches to pressure employers to act.

The Annual Day of Action for Disability Equality in Education (which usually takes place during Disability History Month) is a cornerstone of the DMSC's work. The DMSC welcomes feedback from members and branches about how we can collectively improve access and inclusion in our workplaces: **Nothing About Us, Without Us.**

How to use the 'Accessibility as Standard' checklist:

1. Health & Safety and Equality reps may wish to conduct the review together.
2. You may complete the entire checklist or choose to undertake one or more sections.
3. Ideally, the review should be conducted at the same time every year (i.e., at the beginning of each academic year)

4. Inform the lead for Health and Safety and the Joint Negotiation and Consultation Committee (or equivalent) at your institution about this checklist so that they can assist you with completing the review.
5. Where data is missing (because reps are unable to find the required information), inform the lead for Health and Safety, and your branch committee.
6. When you have completed the checklist, discuss the results with your branch committee. You may wish to include some recommendations or priority areas for attention.
7. Please share your results and recommendations each time it's conducted with the Joint Negotiation and Consultation Committee (or equivalent) at your institution to put pressure on your employer to take action.
8. Please share the results and recommendations of the review each year with UCU including sending your completed checklists to egadmin@ucu.org.uk.

How to complete the checklist

Instructions: Please specify the location you are auditing, for example:

A. Doors and entrances including reception				
Area	Reception	Y	N	Notes / Comments
A01	Is the reception point fitted with an induction loop?	✓		Notices displayed to inform visitors

This checklist, which is not exhaustive, should be answered about how accessible your institution is concerning workers with visible and non-visible disabilities and those with a hearing impairment, neurodivergent and/or a mental health condition. The checklist is divided into the following sections and branches are encouraged to complete, it in full, or to choose an area, for example, if disabled members have raised issues around 'Information' and access, then branches should use that checklist to support engagement with employers. The checklist covers the following sections:

- A. Working conditions
- B. Information
- C. Virtual learning environment
- D. Fixtures and fittings
- E. Doors and entrances including reception
- F. Ramps, steps and floors
- G. Lavatories
- H. Evacuation routes
- I. Car parking
- J. Auditory / visual
- K. Support

This checklist is not intended to be a representative sample, it will allow branches to analyse the data to feed into local and national equality campaigns. If you have any suggestions on how this checklist can be improved, please contact the DMSC via Sharon Russell (srussell@ucu.org.uk).

‘Accessibility as Standard’ Checklist: A - Working Conditions

A. Working conditions are the physical and psychological conditions that workers are exposed to while working.				
Area		Y	N	Notes / Comments
A01	Are workloads designed to be flexible to accommodate the pace at which a Disabled or Neurodivergent person works?			
A02	Are workloads designed to reduce stress and anxiety, that may lead to sensory overload for some Disabled and Neurodivergent people?			
A03	Are additional aids provided to support time management such as extended time to complete tasks, extra reminders and notices, flexibility and patience from others?			
A04	Are communal areas/work spaces designed to absorb and interrupt sound such as portable dividers and/or desk dividers?			
A05	Are noise-cancelling headphones provided for Disabled and Neurodivergent people who may be sensitive to sound?			
A06	Does the workspace accommodate adequate storage space to avoid clutter?			
A07	If fluorescent lighting is installed, does it include variable lighting options?			

Completed by: (Equality Rep) _____

Date: _____

(H&S Rep) _____

Date: _____

‘Accessibility as Standard’ Checklist: B - Information

B. Information should be accessible to all				
Area		Y	N	Notes / Comments
B1	Is the building equipped to assist people with hearing impairments?			
B2	Is there a tactile plan or diagram of the building?			
B3	Are there large-print versions of information about the building/activities available?			
B4	Is there an ‘audio’ version of information about the building available?			
B5	Are maps of the building and other areas available to help people navigate around the facility?			
B6	Where a payphone is provided does it have a hearing aid coupler?			
B7	Are all relevant locations (toilets, lifts, canteens, libraries, reception etc.) signed?			
B8	Are there clear instructions on how to use the lift?			
B9	Are communal areas fitted with an induction loop? This includes staff work rooms, canteens, lecture halls etc.			

‘Accessibility as Standard’ Checklist: B - Information

B. Information should be accessible to all continued				
Area		Y	N	Notes / Comments
B10	Where there are staff available in the building at information/refreshment facilities, are they trained in communication with people with physical or sensory impairments, and with neurodivergent people?			
B11	Does institutional policies and procedures address support/protection for disabled staff? For example, policies/procedures for inclusive and accessible meetings?			
B12	Was the branch involved in the development of these policies/procedures?			
B13	For those progressing to other parts of the building is information provided by signs, supported by tactile information such as a map or model?			

Completed by: (Equality Rep) _____

Date: _____

(H&S Rep) _____

Date: _____

‘Accessibility as Standard’ Checklist: C - Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)

C. Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) refers to how inclusive the provision is including curriculum and accessibility design				
Area		Y	N	Notes / Comments
C01	Is the technology used compatible with common software platforms (Google, Microsoft, Android, iOS)?			
C02	Is the technology used compatible with assistive technology used by staff and students such as speech-to-text, screen readers or text-to-text?			
C03	Does the technology allow the user to, for example, change colours, contrast, size of text etc?			
C04	Are there guidelines for students and staff on using the VLE platform?			
C05	Are staff and students trained in the use of the VLE platform?			
C06	Is there an accessibility statement for the VLE platform used?			
C07	Does the technology abide by the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.1)?			

Completed by: (Equality Rep) _____

Date: _____

(H&S Rep) _____

Date: _____

‘Accessibility as Standard’ Checklist: D - Fixtures and Fittings

D. Fixtures and fittings consider whether they pose a hazard or are inaccessible for disabled and Neurodivergent workers				
Area		Y	N	Notes / Comments
D01	If the building has fixed seating are there also associated spaces for wheelchair users and at regular intervals on long routes?			
D02	Is it possible for wheelchair users and other Disabled people to approach and use all vending machines/drinking water dispensers, etc?			
D03	Are all fittings readily distinguishable from their background?			
D04	Where there are display stands, bookstalls etc. are they visible/reachable/accessible by Disabled people?			
D05	In any eating /meeting space, do tables, chairs and the layout allow for wheelchair users and other Disabled people?			
D06	Are there handrails on both sides of the stairs?			
D07	Are door fittings/locks and light switches easily reached and operated?			

‘Accessibility as Standard’ Checklist: D - Fixtures and Fittings

D. Fixtures and fittings consider whether they pose a hazard or are inaccessible for disabled and Neurodivergent workers continued				
Area		Y	N	Notes / Comments
D08	Are emergency call systems accessible?			
D09	Is equipment/furniture accessible?			

Completed by: (Equality Rep) _____

Date: _____

(H&S Rep) _____

Date: _____

‘Accessibility as Standard’ Checklist: E - Doors and entrances including reception

E. Doors and entrances including reception				
Area		Y	N	Notes / Comments
E01	Is the door distinguishable from the façade?			
E02	If glass, is it visible when closed?			
E03	Is there clear visibility through the door from both sides at standing and seated levels?			
E04	Can the door be easily opened on both sides?			
E05	Does the door have an opening/closing mechanism on both sides?			
E06	If the door has an opening /closing mechanism, does it have a delayed closure action?			
E07	If the door is power-operated, does it have visual and tactile information?			
E08	If the door is security protected, is the system suitable for use by and within reach of people with sensory or mobility impairments?			
E09	Are signs designed and positioned to inform those with visual and mobility impairments with reduced eye levels?			

‘Accessibility as Standard’ Checklist: E - Doors and entrances including reception

E. Doors and entrances including reception continued				
Area		Y	N	Notes / Comments
E10	Does the lighting take account of the needs of people with visual impairments?			
E11	Is the reception point suitable for approach and use from both sides by people in standing and seated positions?			
E12	Is the reception point fitted with an induction loop?			

Completed by: (Equality Rep) _____

Date: _____

(H&S Rep) _____

Date: _____

‘Accessibility as Standard’ Checklist: F - Ramps, steps and floors

F. Ramps, steps and floors should not pose a hazard to users				
Area		Y	N	Notes / Comments
F01	Thinking about access to buildings, are there handrails to one or both sides?			
F02	If a permanent ramp (or regraded levels) cannot be formed (perhaps to a listed building) is a portable ramp available?			
F03	Are ramps and steps adequately lit?			
F04	Is there step-free access to the building?			
F05	Is the flooring level?			
F06	If there is a ramp, are the surfaces level?			
F07	Are there kerbs? And if so, are there edges protected to prevent accidents?			

Completed by: (Equality Rep) _____

Date: _____

(H&S Rep) _____

Date: _____

‘Accessibility as Standard’ Checklist: G - Lavatories

G. Lavatories				
Area		Y	N	Notes / Comments
G01	Is WC provision made for Disabled people?			
G02	Do all lavatory areas have slip-resistant floors?			
G03	Are they easy to distinguish by colour contrast from walls?			
G04	Are all fittings readily distinguishable from their background?			
G05	Are all door fittings/locks easily gripped and operated?			
G06	Is provision made for Disabled people using wheelchairs?			
G07	Is the location signed?			
G08	Is there an emergency call system and is someone designated to respond?			
G09	Can the emergency call system be operated from the floor level?			

‘Accessibility as Standard’ Checklist: G – Lavatories

G. Lavatories continued				
Area		Y	N	Notes / Comments
G10	Is the wheelchair WC compartment large enough to permit manoeuvre for frontal lateral/angled/backward transfer, with or without assistance? (delete)			
G11	Are the fittings arranged to facilitate these manoeuvres?			
G12	Are handwashing and drying facilities within reach of someone seated on the WC?			
G13	Is the tap appropriate for use by someone with limited dexterity, grip or strength?			
G14	Are suitable grab rails fitted in all the appropriate positions to facilitate the use of the WC?			
G15	If there is more than one standard layout WC compartment provided, are they handed to offer a left-sided approach and a right-sided approach?			

Completed by: (Equality Rep) _____

Date: _____

(H&S Rep) _____

Date: _____

‘Accessibility as Standard’ Checklist: H - Evacuation Routes

H. Evacuation routes are vital for all Disabled and Neurodivergent people to fully access safe routes in an emergency				
Area		Y	N	Notes / Comments
H01	Is there a visible as well as audible fire alarm system?			
H02	Are exit routes as accessible to all, including wheelchair users, as are the entry routes?			
H03	If Disabled people cannot evacuate from the building independently are designated and signed refuges available?			
H04	If refuges are available are they equipped with ‘carry chairs’?			
H05	Is there a ‘management evacuation strategy’ for staff, students and visitors and are staff trained in evacuation procedures?			
H06	Is the evacuation strategy checked regularly for its effectiveness?			
H07	Are evacuation routes checked routinely and regularly for freedom from combustible materials/obstacles/locked doors? (delete)			
H08	Are all fire warning devices and detectors checked routinely and regularly?			
H09	Are Disabled staff/students provided with a Personal Evacuation Plan (PEP) and are these reviewed?			

Completed by: (Equality Rep) _____

Date: _____

(H&S Rep) _____

Date: _____

‘Accessibility as Standard’ Checklist: I - Car Parking

I. Car parking				
Area		Y	N	Notes / Comments
I01	Is the building within convenient distance of car parking			
I02	Is the route marked/found?			
I03	Is the area free of hazards such as bollards, litter bins etc?			
I04	Is it adequately lit?			
I05	Is it identifiable by visual, audible and tactile information?			
I06	Is the car parking near the entrance as is possible?			
I07	Is the car parking area suitably surfaced?			
I08	Is there a policy for illegally parked vehicles?			
I09	If yes, is it enforced?			

Completed by: (Equality Rep) _____

Date: _____

(H&S Rep) _____

Date: _____

‘Accessibility as Standard’ Checklist: J - Auditory / Visual

J. Relating to auditory and visual aids to support disabled workers				
Area		Y	N	Notes / Comments
J01	Are communal areas/work spaces designed to absorb and interrupt sound such as portable dividers and/or desk dividers?			
J02	Are noise-cancelling headphones provided for Disabled and Neurodivergent people who may be sensitive to sound?			
J03	If fluorescent lighting is installed, does it include variable lighting options?			
J04	Is the building equipped to assist people with hearing impairments?			
J05	Is there an ‘audio’ version of information about the building available?			
J06	Where a payphone is provided does it have a hearing aid coupler and is it height suitable for all users? <i>NB: A hearing aid coupler works like a hearing loop by making a wireless magnetic connection to the hearing aid.</i>			
J07	Are communal areas fitted with an induction loop? This includes staff work rooms, canteens, lecture halls etc.			
J08	Are all relevant locations signed?			
J09	Is any servery/counter accessible to all users, including those with hearing impairments?			

‘Accessibility as Standard’ Checklist: J - Auditory / Visual

J. Relating to auditory and visual aids to support disabled workers continued				
Area		Y	N	Notes / Comments
J10	If the door is power-operated, does it have visual and tactile information?			
J11	If the door is security protected, is the system suitable for use by and within reach of people with sensory or mobility impairments?			
J12	Are signs designed and positioned to inform those with visual and mobility impairments with reduced eye levels?			
J13	Does the lighting take account of the needs of people with visual impairments?			
J14	Is the reception point fitted with an induction loop?			
J15	For those progressing to other parts of the building is information provided by signs, supported by tactile information such as a map or model? / reword			
J16	Are the locations of toilets signed?			
J17	Is there a visible as well as audible fire alarm system?			
J18	Are car parks identifiable by visual, audible and tactile information			

‘Accessibility as Standard’ Checklist: J - Auditory / Visual

J. Relating to auditory and visual aids to support disabled workers continued				
Area		Y	N	Notes / Comments
J19	Are car parks adequately lit?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Completed by: (Equality Rep) _____

Date: _____

(H&S Rep) _____

Date: _____

‘Accessibility as Standard’ Checklist: K - Support

K. Support (physical/technical) provided for members				
Area		Y	N	Notes / Comments
K01	Where there are staff available in the building at information/refreshment facilities, are they trained in communication with people with physical or sensory impairments, and with neurodivergent people?			
K02	Thinking about the toilets, is there an emergency call system and is someone designated to respond?			
K03	In regards to evacuation from the building/area, is there a ‘management evacuation strategy’ for staff, students and visitors and are staff trained in evacuation procedures?			
K04	Where there are induction loops, are staff trained/know how to use them?			
K05	Are staff trained and informed to assist with access requirements?			
K06	In spaces such as toilets and lifts, is there an emergency call system and is someone designated to respond?			

Completed by: (Equality Rep) _____

Date: _____

(H&S Rep) _____

Date: _____