UCU
University and College Union

'Accessibility as Standard' Checklist: H – Evacuation Routes

Introduction from the Disabled Members' Standing Committee

The Disabled Members' Standing Committee (DMSC) works for 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 is disabled - including members with visible or invisible disabilities and with a hearing impairment, neurodivergent and/or have lived experience of mental illness and/or mental distress[1]. 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 has designed this short review checklist to gather data and anecdotal information on how accessible our education institutions are. Despite legal protections, access and accessibility remain issues that impact 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**.

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[1] As per the social model of disability for more information see Beresford, P., Nettle, M. & Perring, R. 2010 *Towards a social model of madness and distress? Exploring what service users say.* York, UK: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

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 checklist or 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 they can assist you with completing the review.

5. Where data is missing (because reps cannot 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 your institution's Joint Negotiation and Consultation Committee (or equivalent) to pressure your employer to take action.

8. Please share the review's results and recommendations each year with UCU, including sending your completed checklists to eqadmin@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: 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**	**How is this evidenced? Add notes and/or comments here.**
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: _____