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**An Activist's
Guide to
Disabled Members Branches**

**For All CLPs
and
Disabled Activists**

www.disabilitylabour.org.uk

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Who is eligible to join the Branch ?

All members who register with the Labour Party as a disabled member are automatically disability branch members.

You will inevitably get members who've not yet registered with the party, but are disabled and want to join the branch.

Make them welcome and encourage them to register with the party as the more member the branch has, a greater number of delegates can be elected to your CLP general meeting.

This obviously doesn't apply if you CLP has 'all member' meetings.

The branch works in the same way as any other branch and can send in motions, delegates to CLPs, and to Disabled Members Conference.

The branch elects officers, holds meetings which include the AGM.

The executive officers must include:

Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer. At least two of these positions must be held by women.

The officers will also include disability officers from CLPs and up to four other members if required.

The branch works to the same standards and practices as any other branch under the CLP's influence and should be treated the same

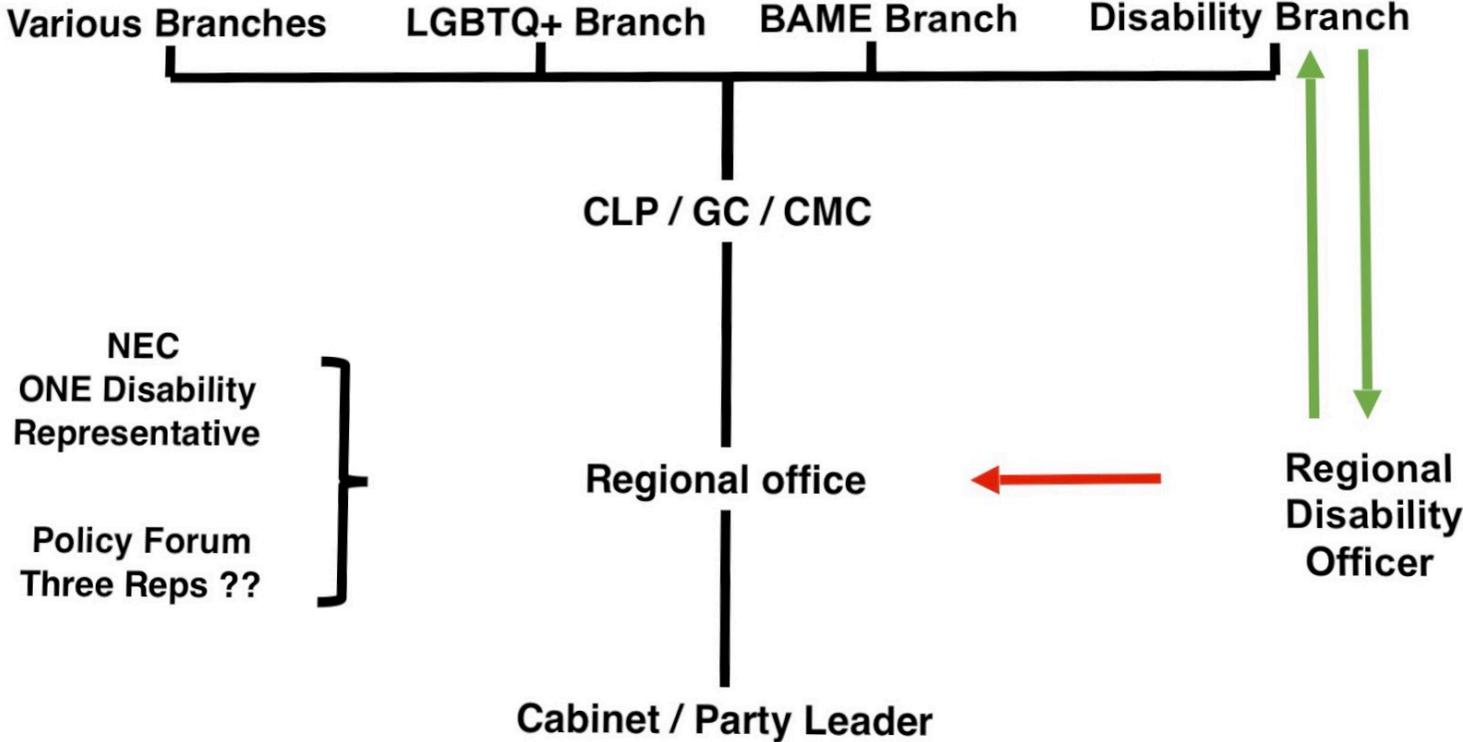
Remember:

The Branch is for disabled members **ONLY**.

Able-bodied CLP Officers should only attend by invitation and not as a regular practice.

Where does the Branch fit in?

Members



Branch Aims & Objectives

Ensure ALL disabled members have a voice and that voice is heard.

Make sure every disabled member feels welcome and confident to join in with all party activities, should they wish to do so.

To use members voices to introduce and contribute to new policy making and feed into local and national policy forums.

To empower and support disabled members to be a full and active contributors to all party activities

To empower disabled members and support them in running for elected office such as

- Officer roles within the party
- Councillors
- MPs

To build professional relationships with disabled voters in the community and to foster a inclusive environment for all new, future and current members.

To work in conjunction with disabled members in neighbouring CLPs in the delivery of the objectives.

Look at how the Branch can work with local Disabled People's Organisations, DPOs.

Think about joint campaigns, look at providing benefits advice via a reputable local service.

Considerations

Who sets up the Disability Branch?

Initially disability officers with assistance from CLPs and Disability Labour.

Where are the meetings held?

They must be held at a totally disabled accessible venue, or online. The venue **MUST** have a toilet which is fully wheelchair accessible.

When are the meetings held?

It is a good idea to hold a sub-committee with a few disabled members to discuss this. A good format would be one meeting a month, alternating between online and a physical meeting - when permitted.

How to access the database of disabled members?

Disability Labour are resolving this with the Labour Party access and GDPR. We will update information as we know more

Initially this should be done via your CLP and ALL members should be contacted and made aware that a disabled members branch is being set up.

Encourage members to register if they self-declare as a disabled person, if they have not all ready done so.

Sending out a questionnaire

Many DOs have asked about sending out questionnaires to understand to needs of disabled members. These can be valuable, but it is NOT ACCEPTABLE to ask members to declare their disabilities. You can ask what Reasonable Adjustments members may need. But it is contrary to Data Protection legislation to ask for or keep information about members medical conditions.

Access Audits

If you are looking a venues for meetings always do a basic Access Audit to check if the venue is suitable. Ask a member who is a wheelchair chair user to go with you so they can check that doorways are wide enough and the loo is fully accessible for wheelchair users. An Access Audit template is included at the end of this guide.

Setting up the Branch

Model One

Your CLP

↓
Disabled Members
From All Branches

↓
= Disability Branch

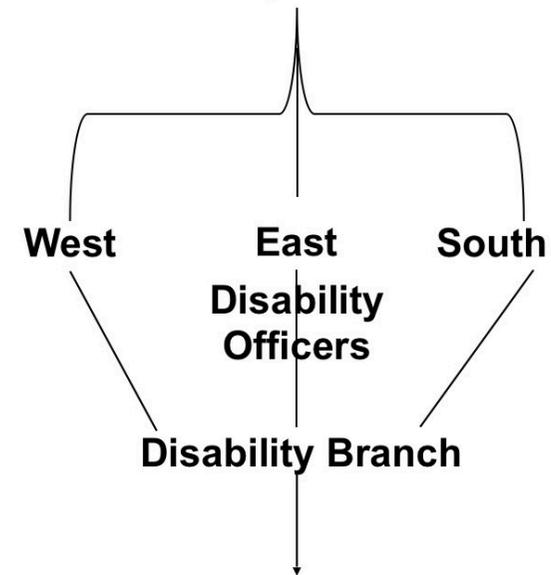
- ↓
- Easier to manage.
 - Funding could be an issue as disability is expensive.

The rules surrounding disabled member branches allow for these to cross CLP boundaries. This means it is possible to set up model one branch and then include disabled members from another CLP.

The rules state such branches should be approved by the NEC's Equality Committee. DL will be asking the Chair for clarification on how requests should be made.

Model Two

Multiple CLPs



- Harder to manage
- More funding as three sources

Funding

A proportion of member subscriptions should be allocated to the disabled members branch by CLPs

It is unclear if this funding is a set amount or a percentage. Disability Labour recommend 20% as the percentage of disabled people in the UK is 21%*

Disability Officers should liaise with their CLP and negotiate the amount for the coming year. This will need to include hire of suitable venue/s and any equipment needed.

For further information see the Labour Party Rule Book 2020, Chapter 16

The disabled members branch can raise and hold funds to support activities within the objectives of the branch.

Disability Labour is in discussions with the General Secretary as to how funding should work

It may be difficult for disabled members to raise enough funds this way so work with your CLP fundraiser to see how they can help.

Other funding options include the NEC Development Fund. This funding allows for inclusion and includes equipment and other assets and resources.

<https://labour.org.uk/about/how-we-work/national-executive-committee/nec-funding-application/>

*DWP Family Resources Survey 2018/19 - 26 March 2020

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/874507/family-resources-survey-2018-19.pdf

Meetings & Equipment

Be flexible, be accommodating, listen to members. In the first few months of setting up you may need to make many changes.

Consider equipment e.g. hearing loop, audio equipment, how to present papers, appropriate formatting and consider a laptop for in-person meetings to enable members who cannot physically present to be able to Zoom in to participate.

Always have one person responsible for making sure those on Zoom are included in the meeting as much as possible.

You may also need a mobile internet / dongle connection if the venue does not have its own WiFi.

Consider if you need people to help run the meeting - setting up chairs, teas coffees.

Think outside the box! For minute taking - use a mind map format, use icons on agendas.

Consider the space of rooms that are to be hired, toilet facilities, seating, lighting.

How and where will any equipment be stored?

Consider how you will manage any travelling or other expenses for your members - travelling whilst disabled is expensive!

Some members may need to be accompanied by a Carer, who may not be a Labour Party member. These Carers **MUST** sign a confidentiality agreement. A model form is included at the end of the guide.

Usually Labour Party meetings should not be held in buildings belonging to religious organisations or on licensed premises. Observing this rule may restrict the number of suitable venues where a Disabled Members Branch can meet.

We would encourage DOs to be flexible in their thinking when it comes to finding appropriate venues. Disability Accessibility must take priority over other considerations.

Forums

Larger more focused meeting - maybe more than one CLP

Possibly 1-2 a year to suit your disability branch

Specific aims and goals

Open up to carers and those with an interest in disability.

Consider you may need help to run this – setting chairs, teas coffees etc.

Guest Speakers will bring in more people, try asking; your local MP, a Shadow Cabinet Minister, local Council Leads for Social Care, Senior local Police Officer, Director of Social Services, your local Mayor. Disabled People Against Cuts - DPAC have lots of local groups and will often send a speaker.

Disability Labour Executive members will always be happy to speak at meetings, especially on Zoom.

Forums can focus on a specific issue e.g.

- Social care provisions
- Transport
- Local Manifesto

Consult with Disability Labour if you need any help and support.

Email: info@disabilitylabour.org.uk

or our Disability Officer Liaison - Mo Peberdy - MoP@disabilitylabour.org.uk

Confidentiality Agreement



Nothing about us, without us

Between:.....

and

.....Disabled Members Branch

I agree not to disclose any details about the meeting I am

attending as a Carer for:.....

This includes, the names or information about anyone else attending the meeting, any campaigns that are discussed or any concerns that are shared by people attending the meeting.

Signed:.....

Dated:.....

Witness:.....

Access Audit Form



Nothing about us, without us

Branch:.....

CLP:.....

Building:.....

Carried out by:.....

Date:.....

A - APPROACH and CAR PARKING

Consider each question from the perspective of each type of disability:

- **Wheelchair**
- **Ambulant**
- **Dexterity**
- **Visual**
- **Auditory**
- **Comprehension**

Tick the Y or N column as appropriate and add notes if necessary

A mark in the 'N' column indicates that the element should be given consideration in an Accessibility Plan

	Y	N	Notes
A1. Is the building within convenient distance of a public highway?			
A2. Is the building within convenient distance of public transport?			
A3. Is the building within convenient distance of car parking?			
A4. Is the route free of kerbs?			
a. If no, are there 'drop kerbs' conveniently placed?			
A5. Is the surface smooth and slip resistant?			
A6. Is the route wide enough for a wheelchair?			
A7. Is it free of such hazards as bollards, litter bins, outward opening windows and doors or overhanging projections?			
A8. Is it adequately lit?			
A9. Is there car parking for people with reduced mobility?			
a. Is the car parking (if any) clearly marked out, signed, easily found and kept free from misuse?			
b. Is the car parking as near the entrance as possible?			
c. Is the car parking area suitably surfaced?			
A10. Is the route to the building kept free of snow, ice and fallen leaves?			
A11. Is the route level? (i.e.. no gradient steeper than 1:20 and no steps)			
A12. Is there a suitable ramp to assist access?			
a. Is the ramp (if any) fixed?			

General notes to block:

B – ROUTES AND EXTERNAL LEVEL CHANGE INCLUDING RAMPS AND STEPS

Consider each question from the perspective of each type of disability:

- **Wheelchair**
- **Ambulant**
- **Dexterity**
- **Visual**
- **Auditory**
- **Comprehension**

Tick the Y or N column as appropriate and add notes if necessary

A mark in the 'N' column indicates that the element should be given consideration in an Accessibility Plan.

	Y	N	Notes
B1. Is there a ramp, with level surfaces at top/intermediate/bottom? (delete those not applicable)			
a. Is it wide enough and suitably graded?			
b. Is the surface slip resistant?			
c. Are the kerbs and edges protected to prevent accidents?			
d. Are there handrails to one or both sides? (delete those not applicable)			
B2. If a permanent ramp (or re-graded levels) cannot be formed (perhaps to a Listed Building) is a portable ramp available?			
B3. Are there (alternative) steps?			
a. Identified by visual/tactile information?			
b. Are there handrails to one or both sides? (delete those not applicable)			
B4. Are ramps and steps adequately lit?			
B5. Are treads and risers consistent in depth and height?			
B6. Are all nosings marked and/or readily identifiable? (delete)			
B7. Are landings of adequate size?			
a. Are they provided at intermediate levels in long flights?			
B8. If safe and convenient ramps and steps cannot be provided is vertical movement by powered means an alternative? see checklist E, sheets 8 and 9			

General notes to block:

C – ENTRANCES, INCLUDING RECEPTION

Consider each question from the perspective of each type of disability:

- **Wheelchair**
- **Ambulant**
- **Dexterity**
- **Visual**
- **Auditory**
- **Comprehension**

Tick the Y or N column as appropriate and add notes if necessary

A mark in the 'N' column indicates that the element should be given consideration in an Accessibility Plan.

	Y	N	Notes
C1. Is the door clearly distinguishable from the facade?			
C2. If glass is it visible when closed?			
C3. Does the clear door opening or one leaf when opened permit passage of a wheelchair or double buggy?			
a. Does it have a level or flush threshold, and a recessed matwell? (delete those not applicable)			
b. Is there visibility through the door/way from both sides at standing and seated levels?			
c. Is there a minimum 300mm wide wheelchair manoeuvre space beside the leading edge of the door to clear door swing?			
C4. Can the door furniture be used at both standing and seated height?			
a. Can it be easily grasped and operated?			
C5. If the door has a closer mechanism does it have			
a. Delayed closure action?			
b. Slow-action closer?			
c. Minimal closure pressure?			
C6. If the door is power-operated does it have visual and tactile information?			
C7. If the door is security-protected is the system suitable for use by and within reach of people with sensory or mobility impairments?			
C8. If there is a lobby, do the inner and outer doors meet the same criteria?			
C9. Do lobby layouts enable all users to clear one door before going through the next?			
C10. Are signs designed and positioned to inform those with visual impairments and wheelchair users with reduced eye-levels?			
C11. Does the lighting installation take account of the needs of visually disabled people?			
C12. Are floor surfaces:			
a. Slip-resistant, even when wet?			
b. Of a quality that is sympathetic to acoustics – i.e. not so “hard” as to cause acoustic confusion?			
c. Firm for wheelchair manoeuvre?			

C13. Are junctions between floor surfaces arranged in a way that avoids presenting tripping hazards and causing visual confusion?			
C14. Is any reception point suitable for approach and use from both sides by people in standing and seated positions?			
C15. Is it fitted with an induction loop?			
C16. For those progressing to other parts of the building is information provided by signs, supported by tactile information?			

General notes to block:

D – HORIZONTAL MOVEMENT AND ASSEMBLY

Consider each question from the perspective of each type of disability:

- **Wheelchair**
- **Ambulant**
- **Dexterity**
- **Visual**
- **Auditory**
- **Comprehension**

Tick the Y or N column as appropriate and add notes if necessary

A mark in the 'N' column indicates that the element should be given consideration in an Accessibility Plan.

	Y	N	Notes
D1. Is each corridor/passageway/aisle wide enough for a wheelchair user to manoeuvre and for other people to pass?			
D2. Is each corridor, etc, free from obstruction to wheelchair users and from hazards to people with impaired vision?			
D3. Do any lobbies allow users, (inc. w.ch. users) to clear one door before approaching the next with minimal manoeuvre?			
D4. Is turning space available for w.ch. users?			
D5. Do natural and artificial lighting avoid glare and silhouetting?			
D6. Do floor surfaces: a) allow ease of movement for wheelchair users? b) avoid light reflection and sound reverberation?			
D7. Do textured surfaces convey useful information for people with impaired vision?			
D8. Are direction or information signs (inc means of escape) a) visible from both sitting and standing eye levels, b) are they in upper and lower case, c) and large enough type to be read by those with impaired vision?			
D9. Are there tactile signs and information for those with impaired vision?			
D10. Is the maintenance of these items checked regularly?			
D11. Is lighting designed to meet a wide range of needs?			
D12. Is sufficient circulation space allowed for wheelchair users?			
D13. Is it maintained clear of obstructions which could create hazards for people with visual disabilities?			
D14. Are seating arrangements/spaces suitable for use by people with visual disabilities?			
D15. Are all areas for assembly/meeting equipped with an induction loop system?			
D16. If the use of an induction loop system is precluded is an infra-red system in place?			
D17. Is the functioning and operation of the induction loop or infra-red system checked regularly?			
D18. Are telephones fitted with inductive loop couplers?			
D19. Is a minicom available for use by people with hearing disabilities?			

General notes to block:

E – VERTICAL MOVEMENT AND INTERNAL LEVEL CHANGE

Consider each question from the perspective of each type of disability:

- **Wheelchair**
- **Ambulant**
- **Dexterity**
- **Visual**
- **Auditory**
- **Comprehension**

Tick the Y or N column as appropriate and add notes if necessary

A mark in the 'N' column indicates that the element should be given consideration in an Accessibility Plan.

	Y	N	Notes
E1. Is the location of any step/stairs/ramp clearly indicated by use of sign/colour/contrast/texture/lighting? (delete those not applicable)			
E2. Does any step/stairs/ramp have a handrail to one/both side(s), a) and do(es) it/they extend 300mm beyond the top and bottom of any flight? (delete those not applicable)			
E3. Is any level change clearly lit?			
E4. Is the pitch (risers & treads) of step/stairs or any ramp consistent, and are nosings clearly identifiable?			
E5. If there are landings are they large enough to permit passing and turning manoeuvres, and are they provided in any long flight?			
E6. Is any short rise within a single storey ramped; if so is the ramped surface indicated, and is it slip-resistant?			
E7. Are all ramp gradients easily negotiated? [Range length 3m max = 1 in 12, 6m max = 1 in 26, 10m max = 1 in 20]			
E8. If a permanent ramp cannot be provided (perhaps a listed Building) can a moveable ramp be made available?			
E9. Are steps available as an alternative to any ramp or ramped surface?			
E10. Where level change is less than a full storey in height is a power-operated system appropriate? (Platform Lift/Stairlift/Lift - see 11, 12 & 13)? (delete)			
E11. Platform Lift (delete) a) Are the controls at both levels identifiable, and reachable from sitting and standing levels? (delete) b) Is the platform adequate for wheelchair use and manoeuvre? c) In the event of a power failure does the platform return to lower level? d) Is the equipment maintained and its operation checked regularly?			

<p>E12. Stairlift (delete)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Are the controls at all levels identifiable, and reachable from sitting and standing levels? (delete) b) Is the platform adequate for wheelchair use and manoeuvre? c) Is approach convenient and safe at all appropriate landings? (delete) d) Does the stairlift have a 'Soft-Start' action? e) When not in use is the platform powered to fold away to avoid obstruction? f) In the event of a power failure does the platform return to lower level? g) Is the equipment maintained and its operation checked regularly? 			
<p>E13. Lift</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Is the lift's location clearly defined by visual and tactile information? (delete) b) Are controls at all floors visible, identifiable and reachable from sitting and standing levels? (delete) c) Is there adequate, unobstructed space at each floor lift entry for wheelchair manoeuvre? d) Does the lift door open widely enough for wheelchair user access? e) Does door operation allow slow entry and exit? f) Do the lift car internal dimensions allow sufficient space for a wheelchair user and carer? (delete) g) Does the car have appropriate support rails? h) Are the lift car controls. inc. emergency call, located within reach of all users and with visual and tactile information? i) Is there audible floor indication? j) Is the lift an 'Evacuation Lift'? (see section J – MEANS OF ESCAPE) k) Is the lift regularly maintained and its functional operation routinely checked? 			

General notes to block:

F - DOORS

Consider each question from the perspective of each type of disability:

- **Wheelchair**
- **Ambulant**
- **Dexterity**
- **Visual**
- **Auditory**
- **Comprehension**

Tick the Y or N column as appropriate and add notes if necessary

A mark in the 'N' column indicates that the element should be given consideration in an Accessibility Plan.

	Y	N	Notes
F1. Do the doors serve a functional/safety purpose? (delete)			
F2. Can they be readily distinguished?			
F3. If glass, are they visible when shut?			
F4. Can people standing or sitting in a wheelchair see each other, and be seen from either side of the door? (delete)			
F5. Does the clear opening width permit wheelchair access?			
F6. On the opening side of the door is there sufficient space (300mm) to allow the door handle to be grasped and the door swung past a wheelchair footplate?			
F7. Is any door furniture/handle at a height for standing/sitting use? (delete)			
F8. Are door/handles clearly distinguished?			
F9. Can the door furniture/handles be easily operated/grasped? (delete)			
F10. If door closers/mechanisms are fitted do they provide the following: (delete) a) security linkage? b) delay-action closure? c) slow-action closure? d) minimum closure pressure?			
F11. Is door/mechanism function checked regularly?			

General notes to block:

G - LAVATORIES

Consider each question from the perspective of each type of disability:

- **Wheelchair**
- **Ambulant**
- **Dexterity**
- **Visual**
- **Auditory**
- **Comprehension**

Tick the Y or N column as appropriate and add notes if necessary

A mark in the 'N' column indicates that the element should be given consideration in an Accessibility Plan.

	Y	N	Notes
G1. Is WC provision made for people with disabilities?			
G2. Do all lavatory areas have slip-resistant floors?			
G3. Are floors easy to distinguish by colour contrast from walls?			
G4. Are all fittings readily distinguishable from their background?			
G5. Are all door fittings/locks easily gripped and operated?			
G6. Can ambulant disabled people manoeuvre and raise and lower themselves in standard cubicles?			
G7. Is provision made for wheelchair users? If so: a) Is wheelchair approach free of steps/narrow doors/obstructions, etc? (delete)			
G8. Is the location clearly signed?			
G9. Is there sufficient space at entry to the compartment for wheelchair manoeuvre and door opening?			
G10. Are the door fittings/locks and light switches easily reached and operated?			
G11. Is there an emergency call system and is someone designated to respond?			
G12. Can the emergency call system be operated from floor level?			
G13. Is the wheelchair WC compartment large enough to permit manoeuvre for frontal lateral/angled/backward transfer, with or without assistance? (delete)			
G14. Are the fittings arranged to facilitate these manoeuvres?			
G15. Are handwashing and drying facilities within reach of someone seated on the WC?			
G16. Is the tap appropriate for use by someone with limited dexterity, grip or strength?			
G17. Are suitable grab rails fitted in all the appropriate positions to facilitate use of the WC?			
G18. Is the manoeuvring area free of obstruction, eg boxed-in pipework/radiators/cleaner's equipment/disposal bins/ occasional storage, etc., and is any difficulty caused by the activity of service contractors?			
G19. 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?			

G20. Are there baby changing facilities available in the toilet? a) If so, is it accessible from a wheelchair?			
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General notes to block:

H – FIXTURES AND FITTINGS

Consider each question from the perspective of each type of disability:

- **Wheelchair**
- **Ambulant**
- **Dexterity**
- **Visual**
- **Auditory**
- **Comprehension**

Tick the Y or N column as appropriate and add notes if necessary

A mark in the 'N' column indicates that the element should be given consideration in an Accessibility Plan.

	Y	N	Notes
H1. Is any servery/counter accessible to all users, including those with hearing impairments?			
H2. If the building has fixed seating are there also associated spaces for wheelchair users and at regular intervals on long routes?			
H3. Is there an accessible space for people to read from, in a prominent position.			
H4. Is it possible for wheelchair users and people with other disabilities to approach and use all vending machines/drinking water dispensers, etc?			
H5. Is it possible for people with disabilities to serve as volunteers?			
H6. Are all fittings readily distinguishable from their background?			
H7. Where there are display stands, bookstalls etc. are they visible/reachable/accessible by people with disabilities?			
H8. In any eating/meeting space do tables, chairs and the layout allow for use by wheelchair users and other people with disabilities?			
H9. Are all relevant locations clearly signed?			

General notes to block:

I - COMMUNICATION

Consider each question from the perspective of each type of disability:

- **Wheelchair**
- **Ambulant**
- **Dexterity**
- **Visual**
- **Auditory**
- **Comprehension**

Tick the Y

A mark in the 'N' column indicates that the element should be given consideration in an Accessibility Plan.

	Y	N	Notes
I1. Is the building equipped to provide hearing assistance?			
I2. Is it clearly signed as such?			
I3. Does it include all areas of the building?			
I4. Does lighting installation of the building take into account the needs of people with visual disabilities?			
I5. Does any sound system in the building provide good, clear sound with adequate voice levels? a. Are there sufficient microphones for all leaders. b. Are they fixed or can they be used flexibly?			
I6. Can the face of speakers be seen clearly from within the building?			
I7. Is there 'braille' information available for people with visual disabilities?			
I8. Is anyone available to provide signed interpretation? a. If so do they cover all activities? b. If not do you know where the nearest venue which offers the facility , or how to contact a signing interpreter?			
I9. Is there an 'audio' version of information about the building available?			
I10. Is there a copy of screen based information for those who cannot raise their head?			
I11. Where there are staff available in the building at information/refreshment facilities, are they trained in communication with people with physical and sensory disabilities?			
I12. Where a payphone is provided does it have a hearing aid coupler?			
I13. Are all relevant locations clearly signed?			

General notes to block:

J – MEANS OF ESCAPE

Consider each question from the perspective of each type of disability:

- **Wheelchair**
- **Ambulant**
- **Dexterity**
- **Visual**
- **Auditory**
- **Comprehension**

Tick the Y or N column as appropriate and add notes if necessary

A mark in the 'N' column indicates that the element should be given consideration in an Accessibility Plan.

	Y	N	Notes
J1. Is there a visible as well as audible fire alarm system?			
J2. Are final exit routes as accessible to all, including wheelchair users, as are the entry routes?			
J3. Is evacuation from upper and lower levels possible using an evacuation lift/platform lift with a protected power supply?			
J4. If people with disabilities cannot evacuate from the building independently are designated and signed refuges available?			
J5. If refuges are available are they equipped with 'carry chairs'?			
J6. Is there a 'management evacuation strategy' for all people?			
J7. Is someone on duty responsible for the evacuation procedure?			
J8. Is the evacuation strategy checked regularly for its effectiveness?			
J9. Are evacuation routes checked routinely and regularly for freedom from combustible materials/obstacles/locked doors?			
J10. Are all fire warning devices and detectors checked routinely and regularly?			

General notes to block: