

## Church Accessibility Symbols

Welcome to the Church Accessibility Symbols pages. These symbols have been developed for use across the Church of England and comprise an icon-based, accessibility self-assessment tool for church use in online and printed signage.

This project was spearheaded by the Diocese of Derby as part of the work of the Committee for Ministry of and Among Deaf and Disabled People (CMDDP), through the Disability Project 2024.

### **Who are these symbols for?**

These symbols are for all church visitors, and especially useful to those with specific access needs or requirements. The icons are intended to outline the accessibility features of churches, their services and events in advance of a possible visit.

The symbols enable churches to begin a process of assessing how accessible their buildings are, and making this information clearly available to their congregation and the wider public.

The symbols can be used to signpost and advertise church facilities and access clearly and quickly. They can be used in a number of ways, including printed flyers, noticeboards, digital communications and websites.

The following pages outline the symbols available, allowing users to determine clearly the accessibility of a church. Each symbol is shown with a set of criteria which need to be met in order to qualify to use the symbol: these notes will help you identify whether or not your church buildings and services meet the criteria.

### **Acknowledgements**

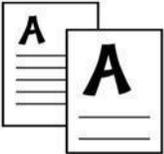
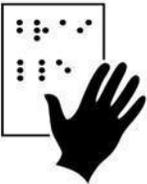
Thanks to the team at DIAG, the Diocese of Derby, The Diocese of Lichfield, The Diocesan Disability Advisors Network, the Church of England, Through the Roof, participating parish churches and the independent designers for making this possible. We are grateful to all who have been involved in making this a reality.

### **Legal notice**

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Symbol name	Symbols	Further guidance and eligibility criteria
<b>Accessible parking</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there a clearly marked Accessible Parking Bay, with a level and firm surface, within 150m of the church entrance?</li> <li>• Is it wide enough for a wheelchair at the driver or passenger side?</li> <li>• Is there enough wheelchair space at the boot area?</li> <li>• Is there a dropped kerb within 30m of the church entrance?</li> <li>• Is there an accessible pathway to the church entrance?</li> </ul>
<b>Accessible toilet</b>		<p>Is there a toilet with accessible, step-free access:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A doorway of at least 900mm and a clear floor space with a turning circle of 1500mm for a wheelchair to enter and turn round?</li> <li>• A minimum transfer space to the side of the WC pan of 850mm?</li> <li>• An 1100mm space in front of the WC pan for front transfers? Handrails each side of the toilet?</li> <li>• A lowered washbasin and handdrying facilities within reach of a person seated on the WC?</li> </ul> <p><b>Guidance:</b> Fully accessible toilets should also have an emergency pull-cord at which reaches the floor, is not positioned in a corner, and a procedure to deal with an activated alarm. The fittings and décor should feature strong colour contrast.</p>
<b>Accessible drop-off point</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there a drop-off point within 30m of the church entrance, with a firm and level pathway in between?</li> <li>• Is the space clearly marked as a drop-off point?</li> <li>• Is it wide enough for a wheelchair at either driver or passenger side?</li> <li>• Is there enough space at the boot area for a wheelchair?</li> </ul>

<p><b>Wheelchair available</b></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there a wheelchair available for use within the church?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Step-free access</b></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there step-free access from the entrance to the seating area, communion distribution points, font and any other public areas?</li> <li>• Is the aisle width in excess of 1500mm?</li> <li>• Is there space for a wheelchair within the pews/seating area?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Accessible lift</b></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there an accessible lift?</li> <li>• Does it have space for a wheelchair user and companion?</li> <li>• Is the lift at least 1100mm wide and 1400mm?</li> <li>• Does it have level entrance and exit areas of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 900mm wide x 1500mm for straight access, or</li> <li>○ 1500mmx1500mm if the wheelchair user needs to turn to enter the lift?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Ramp</b></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there any ramped or sloping areas with a gradient of 1:20 to 1:12?</li> <li>• Are the ramps equipped with handrails either side?</li> </ul> <p><b>Caution:</b> a gradient of 1:12 may only be used for distances of up to 2 metres in length, and gradients steeper than this are not recommended for wheelchair use.</p>
<p><b>Hearing Loop</b></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there an induction hearing loop?</li> <li>• Is it regularly serviced, available and switched on for each service?</li> <li>• Is a hearing aid loop tester regularly used to check the level of sound and that the loop works in the prescribed area?</li> <li>• If not, do you regularly ask someone with a hearing aid to help check these issues?</li> <li>• Are microphones tested before each service?</li> <li>• Are they always used by those leading worship and preaching?</li> </ul>

<p><b>British Sign Language</b></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there regular BSL-interpreted services?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Large Print</b></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are large print (18-24 pt) Orders of Service, hymns and other printed sheets available?</li> <li>• Can documents be made available digitally in advance to allow users to reformat them to the right size for them?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Assistance Dogs Welcome</b></p>		<p>The 2010 Equality Act Requires that assistance dogs be allowed in public spaces. Can you provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Space for dogs to lie down?</li> <li>• Drinking water?</li> <li>• Guidance on where to exercise dogs?</li> <li>• Training for your stewards and helpers on how to avoid distracting assistance dogs when they are working?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Braille</b></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can a Braille-user access the service and facilities within the church buildings?</li> <li>• Are Braille orders of service, hymns and Bibles available?</li> <li>• Is there Braille signage for toilets, refreshment areas, entry and exit?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Public Transport</b></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the church within ¼ mile of a train station or 150m of a bus stop where the route is functioning on Sundays?</li> </ul>

<p><b>Steps and/or uneven surfaces</b></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there any external or internal steps or uneven surfaces within public spaces?</li> </ul> <p><b>Note:</b> although this is not an accessibility feature, this information is important to know in advance, for those who use mobility aids and wheelchairs.</p>
<p><b>Hidden Disabilities</b></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is your church a supportive, inclusive environment for those with hidden disabilities?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Quiet Space</b></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there a designated peaceful space, in comfortable surroundings, available for those who need or wish to be quiet?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Neurodivergence Inclusion</b></p>		<p>Neurodivergence includes autism, ADHD, dyslexia, dyspraxia, Tourettes and many other differences.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is your church a supportive, inclusive environment for neurodivergent people?</li> <li>• Is the use of sensory aids understood and accepted (including noise cancelling headphones, dark glasses, fidget spinners)?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Defibrillator</b></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there a defibrillator nearby?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Dairy-free</b></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are dairy-free options available on request?</li> </ul>

<p><b>Mental Health Awareness</b></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does your church make adjustments for, involve and support people living with mental health challenges?</li> <li>• Is mental health discussed in services to reduce stigma and improve awareness?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Disability Representative</b></p>		<p>Do you have an appointed Disability Representative who is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equipped to respond to and implement accessibility needs?</li> <li>• Part of existing groups and committees, such as the PCC?</li> <li>• Aware of or willing to learn about the diversity of disabilities and access needs?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Sight-impaired friendly</b></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are steps clearly marked with a contrast line, and clearly visible?</li> <li>• Are obstacles such as columns or pews well lit or well contrasted?</li> <li>• Are all walkways clear of obstacles?</li> <li>• Are any other obstacles clearly visible or signed?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Makaton</b></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are Makaton symbols and signs used within the church?</li> </ul>

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