



# Creating Access

## General Recommendations For Services



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## Overview

This document has been created to provide some practical, generalised recommendations to services in order to help them increase their organisations accessibility to young people with disability. The recommendations below are split up into different domains of accessibility to ensure you are taking a holistic approach to implementing changes.

The recommendations below relate to the following areas of accessibility:

- **Physical accessibility** of the service (inside and outside of the service)
- **Informational accessibility** of materials (print and electronic resources)
- **Procedural accessibility** of the service (including policies and processes)
- **Attitudinal accessibility** of the service (including staff attitudes, language and culture)

## How to use this document

Use this document as a starting point to begin having conversations about what the accessibility of your organisation currently looks like. The below generalised recommendations can also help with identifying some initial steps to increase your services accessibility across a variety of domains.

Use this resource in conjunction with the '**Accessibility Action Plan Template**' that's located on the Creating Access website to help your organisation identify actions you wish to implement to increase the accessibility of your service.

On the Creating Access website you will also find a more comprehensive resource called the '**Access Review Template**' which is available for purchase. This is a more complex tool that can help you identify specific gaps in your organisations accessibility, and is beneficial for any organisations who wish to conduct a more thorough self-assessment of their services accessibility.

These additional resources can be found on the Creating Access website at: <http://www.creatingaccess.org.au/>

## Stages 1, 2 and 3 recommendations

Each service is different, and will therefore require different changes in order to address its barriers to access.

To help identify priorities when creating your accessibility action plan and which actions may be easier to implement within organisations, we have framed the recommendations provided in the tables below in stages.

They are:

- **Stage 1** - The recommendations in stage one are quite straightforward, and require little planning or financial input to be implemented by an organisation.
- **Stage 2** - The recommendations require more planning and resources. However, if at this stage a complete solution or change to one of these recommendations is unavailable, it is important that you make realistic plans towards how to address this issue in the future. This can help make incremental progress towards this goal. For instance, if a permanent ramp is not immediately available or realistically able to be installed, a portable or temporary ramp could be installed to address accessibility in the interim.
- **Stage 3** - The recommendations in stage three are larger undertakings, often involving significant changes to infrastructure, or requiring substantial financial resources to be implemented by an organisation.

When considering these recommendations and deciding what to include in your accessibility action plan, ensure it's discussed in consultation with young people with disability, and with ownership at all levels of your organisation. For instance, assigning responsibility to staff members for each of the following categories of accessibility will help foster ownership, accountability and commitment to these changes. Progress under the accessibility action plan should be regularly reviewed, and monitored as part of your organisation's overarching Strategic Plan.

## Physical Accessibility- General Recommendations

Physical access is often seen to relate only to wheelchair access. This is problematic, as physical access must address the needs of young people with a whole range of impairments, including physical, visual, hearing, cognitive and/or mental illness.

The following recommendations are a good starting point to help you consider what changes your service may need to make to ensure physical accessibility.

Stage 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure the path leading from the street to your service is wide, continuous and step free.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure that pathways and hallways inside your service are always clear, and that any obstacles or clutter (such as poles and objects) can be easily located by young people with a vision impairment.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure that stairs have slip-resistant and colour contrast strips on them to increase visibility and prevent falls.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure that all areas have enough room for a young person who uses a wheelchair to enter and turn around. Furniture should not obstruct pathways, doorways or the turning circle of a wheelchair.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Measurements of doorways and corridors should be kept on hand to provide to a young person who uses a wheelchair, when needed.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Install signage with the organisations contact information at the front of the service in case a young person with disability needs assistance entering the venue.</li></ul>
Stage 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Install fire alarms that can be converted into flashing lights or vibrations, ensuring there are audible and visual alarms as a minimum standard.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reposition doorbells, power points and light switches to be at an accessible height for a person using a wheelchair.</li></ul>

- Petition council for a signposted, accessible parking spot outside of the office, including safe curb access nearby for someone who uses a wheelchair to gain access to the footpath/ service.

- Ensure that there are Tactile Ground Surface Indicators (TGSI) prior to stairs or any other changes in level such as ramps.

- Ensure taps are consistent throughout the service: hot on the left, cold on the right. Kitchen or bathroom items such as: sinks, soap dispensers, mirrors and cupboards should also be located at an accessible height.

- Ensure that your Emergency Evacuation Plan is located at an accessible height. It should also be available in a range of formats, such as braille, Easy English, large print and audio recording.

### Stage 3

- Install a hearing loop at your service and ensure staff are aware of the process of setting up a temporary hearing loop for any meetings or events held by the service.

- Review the Disability Access to Premises Standards, which outlines the best approach to accessibility. Ensure that all aspects of physical access abides by these requirements. If required, address the aspects of your service that do not meet these standards.

- Raised tactile lettering or Braille should be used on elevator buttons, and elevators should have an audio system installed, where possible.

- Install automatic opening doors to ensure appropriate access for people using a wheelchair, mobility aids and/or have a vision impairment. In addition, make structural changes to doorways to be larger where needed.

## Informational Accessibility- General Recommendations

Information provided about and within your service should be accessible for all young people. By considering these general recommendations, it is possible to make information more accessible for young people with disability, as well as young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and young people with low literacy.

*Please note: the term 'alternative format' refers to providing a different way of accessing and providing information. This may include: Braille, Easy Read, audio, electronic, plain text or large print versions of information.*

Stage 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that the closest, safest and most accessible form of public transport to your service is detailed in informational materials and on your website.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that you are dispersing promotional information in safe and accessible locations that young people with disability will frequent. For example, in disability services, disability advocacy organisations, doctor's offices, supermarkets, schools, community centres etc.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that electronic information is available in Microsoft Word or html formats to ensure they are accessible to young people using assistive equipment or technology.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that televisions have closed-captioning text and that staff are able to use this function</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Train all staff on how to access and book in AUSLAN interpreters.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include information on your website which outlines how a young person with disability can request resources or information in an alternative format.</li> </ul>
Stage 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include braille on organisational business cards (either individual staff's or a generic organisational business card), so young people with a vision impairment can easily contact the service.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add information to flyers, brochures and the website outlining how young people with disability can contact the organisation to discuss their accessibility needs.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include image descriptions (ALT Text) on all images on website and social media images, to assist young people with a vision impairment using assistive equipment or technology.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include audio recordings of the content available on the website. Captioning should also be included for videos being developed, including transcripts available.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add information to your website on how a young person with disability can access interpreting services such as the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National) and the National Relay Service.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When developing flyers or printed promotional material with photos, ensure the pictures are inclusive of all young people, including young people with disability.</li> </ul>
<h3>Stage 3</h3>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create alternative formats for the organisation’s annual report, strategic plan and accessibility action plan. Have printed versions at the office and accessible downloadable versions on the website.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage with an external organisation to conduct a review of your organisations website and make updates in accordance with the WCAG accessibility guidelines.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure signs at the service made with non-reflective material. Ensure that they are an appropriate size and colour with the font contrasting with the background, and located at an accessible height.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that all information on your website and on forms uses short sentences, clear headings, simple information, succinct definitions, and a legible large print size. Highlight important information by putting it in bold font. Italics should be avoided.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop alternative formats of the services essential intake forms, including consent to share information forms, media release forms, complaint and feedback forms, rules and responsibilities etc.</li> </ul>

## Procedural Accessibility- General Recommendations

The needs of young people with disability should be included within organisational procedures and policies to ensure that they are not discriminated against during or after gaining access to your service.

Use these recommendations as a starting point to help you consider the procedures of your organisation and to ensure they are not unintentionally excluding young people with disability.

Stage 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure that all young people are asked about their accessibility needs upon arriving at your service. This includes if the young person requires a worker or service animal to accompany them into the service.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Where necessary, provide extra assistance to young people who require help filling out forms or providing information to your service.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Staff should take time to build rapport with young people with disability who are entering the service. This will help young people to feel comfortable and will also allow members of staff to become familiar with the body language and facial expressions of individuals.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure staff are informed about how their actions influence young people with disability. This could involve outlining the importance of putting things back in their place, ensuring young people with disability are made aware of any changes in layout, minimising clutter and avoiding excessive noise, among other things.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• When organising an event offsite, use an event accessibility checklist (see link below) to help ensure you are selecting a venue accessible to all young people with disability <a href="https://www.and.org.au/pages/event-checklist.html">https://www.and.org.au/pages/event-checklist.html</a>.</li></ul>
Stage 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Perform an initial review of policies and procedures that need to be addressed. Seek to improve complaints mechanisms, recruitment and selection processes to foster an inclusive culture among staff.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Create a Reasonable Adjustment policy, and ensure that staff are trained in how to create a reasonable adjustment plan for a person with disability.</li></ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The rights of people with disability should be clearly stated in the clients' rights policy. The policy should reflect the <b>United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities</b>.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure the organisation has a formal complaint and feedback procedure, and that staff are trained to support a young person with disability to share their experience in the format that best suits them.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure policies clearly outline your service's minimum requirements for accessibility. Regularly review these and aim to consistently meet and exceed these standards.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that recruitment policies and practices do not discriminate against people with disability. Foster a supportive work environment that emphasises equal employment and inclusivity.</li> </ul>
<h3>Stage 3</h3>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote inclusive service models by ensuring there are not segregated programs and activities specifically for people with disability. Services should be inclusive of all young people, including those with disability with the right supports available.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote active participation of people with disability in formal decision-making processes and consultation across the organisation.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider having a 'chill out' space, where a young person with disability can go to decompress or take a break from loud noises</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Job advertisements should clearly state that people with disability are encouraged to apply. Interview processes should be inclusive and adaptable to accommodate individuals with various support needs. All applicants should be asked if they require any reasonable adjustments in order to participate in the interview.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organisations should seek to have representation of people with disability across its staff and governance frameworks, including the organisations Board of Directors.</li> </ul>

## Attitudinal Accessibility- General Recommendations

No single or overarching change will make your service accessible for all. However, attitudinal changes are incredibly significant in making services more accessible.

As such, the following recommendations can help your organisation become more inclusive in their interactions with young people with disability.

Stage 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure all new staff have participated in Disability Awareness training when commencing with your service.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Support staff to learn more about the Social Model of Disability, including a greater understanding of respectful language.</li></ul> <p>NB: See link for PWDA's language guide for more information. <a href="https://pwd.org.au/resources/language-guide/">https://pwd.org.au/resources/language-guide/</a></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure accessibility and inclusion are standing agenda items in your meetings. Ensure the information identified if passed on to senior management and the Board of Directors for follow up.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Add questions designed to measure the attitudes and accessibility of your service into your Client Satisfaction Survey, and arrange to include these in your annual report to stakeholders.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Include young people with disability and staff in the creation and review of the service's Accessibility Action Plan.</li></ul>
Stage 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure there is representation of staff and young people with disability on internal advisory and working groups. Appropriate payment and compensation for individual's time and contribution should be provided.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure all staff are aware of the complaints and feedback procedures, and regularly communicate this to young people with disability who are accessing the service. There should also be multiple ways that young people with disability can make a complaint or provide feedback, including: phone, email, online forms or in person.</li></ul>

- Arrange further training and skill-building exercises for staff to be held at least annually, to increase their confidence in engaging with young people with disability. Write these into the work plans of staff members.

- Encourage best practice by treating young people with respect, genuinely valuing their voices and opinions. Establish relationships with disability services and disability advocacy organisations, and continue to work in collaboration with these organisations to improve your service and its engagement with young people with disability.

- Make plans to ensure the service keeps up to date with any changes in disability assistive technology. Perhaps assign responsibility for this to a staff member, tasking them to keep abreast of any developments in assistive equipment or accessibility technologies, and notify the governance body of any relevant developments.

### Stage 3

- Conduct a review of your services Accessibility Action Plan each year for continuous improvement opportunities, in conjunction with young people with disability, staff and volunteers.

- Create an Easy Read version of your Accessibility Action Plan that can be distributed amongst your members, networks and community.

- Continually ensure that staff and volunteers are all trained on how to use TTY, hearing loops, closed-captioning, interpretive devices, communication boards and other assistive communication devices.

- Support key staff from across the organisation to participate in training to learn how to create accessible electronic and print documentation, including Easy Read documentation. This will be beneficial for staff within the organisations Communications and Quality Assurance teams, or individuals who create documentation for the organisation.



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