

# Disability Access Audit – a guide to begin the conversation before a Site visit

## Definition of disability

The definition of “disability” (which includes mental health challenges) in the Equality Act is much broader than we often think:

“a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.”

Please note that this document gives general guidance regarding physical accessibility, and is designed to assist the conversation around Disabled access to and within our church buildings.

A small group should collaborate on working through these areas – rather than leaving it to one person. The group could comprise people with lived experience of disability; people with leadership responsibility for different areas of church life, and the incumbent or minister.

**Church building:**

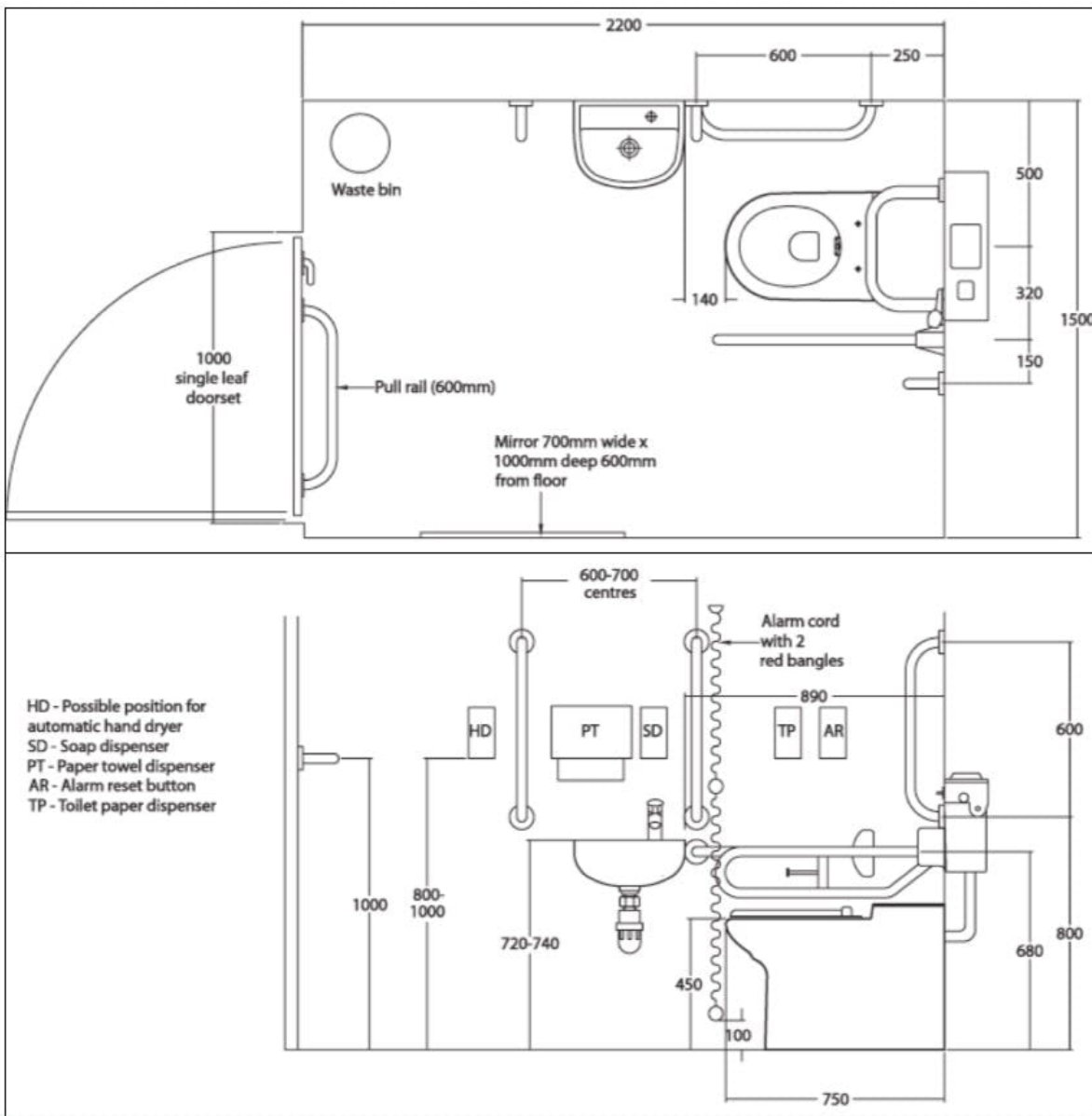
**Date:**

**Who has been part of this Audit:**

1	<b>Introduction:</b> reason for this Audit
2	<b>Purpose:</b> what do we hope to achieve from this Audit
3	<b>Describe this church /parish in general:</b> the community, the congregation(s), and church user groups
4	<b>Current issues / concerns / projects:</b> what have you noticed, what plans do you have

5	<b>Finding your church:</b> eg how does someone know where your building is, can it be seen from the roadside, are there clear directions on your website/in a parish magazine...
6	<b>Car parking:</b> eg what provision is there for people who come by car/bike/motorbike, how do they get from there to the main door...
7	<b>Notice boards and signage:</b> is there a main noticeboard, can it be seen clearly, is the information up to date, are there contact details for the leadership and safeguarding officer...
8	<b>Approach to the church:</b> can you describe the main path/access to the building, is it lit, is there a slope and/or steps, what are the surfaces under foot made of...
9	<b>Entrance:</b> can the main door be seen clearly, are there steps/slopes/handrails, does it allow easy access for wheelchairs/push chairs/ assistance dogs, are there people/welcomers present at every service/event...
10	<b>Lighting:</b> what lighting does the building have (external and internal), are there any missing patches, are the bulbs in good order (no flickering/ buzzing)...
11	<b>Hearing loop:</b> does the building have a hearing loop (T-loop), does it work(!) does it cover the whole worship space...

12	<b>Seating &amp; flooring:</b> do you have fixed or moveable seating, where would a wheelchair/powerchair user sit, are the seats on a raised section or flush with the floor level, what surfaces are on the floor (flagstones, wood, carpet etc)...
13	<b>Moving around inside the building:</b> are there any 'pinch points' where traffic flow slows down, are there floor level changes, steps into the Vestry, could a wheelchair user access the Altar, font, lectern, pulpit...
14	<b>Printed and screen-based materials:</b> during services do you use books/handouts/screens, how do these include people with sight loss, do you have large print available...
15	<b>Toilets:</b> do you have toilets, where are they, are there signs to show where they are, how are they accessed, is there a 'disabled' toilet, are there baby-change facilities...
16	<b>Kitchen:</b> how is the kitchen accessed, where is it located, how are people served refreshments...
17	<b>Church hall and other related buildings:</b> have you done a similar audit on your other buildings, what needs improving/amending/upgrading...



Disabled toilet floorplan looking down from above

Disabled toilet floorplan looking through from the side

Image from <https://www.moreability.co.uk/help-advice/2018/08/disabled-toilet-size>

<https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/barrier-free-belonging>

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For legislation and guidance around ramps: [Wheelchair Ramps Regulations - UK Building regulations regarding ramps Disabled Access Regulations DDA Compliant Ramps \(wheelchair-ramps.co.uk\)](#)

\*Source acknowledgement does not indicate company endorsement