

Building Control Officer of the Council for that area.

Access and Highland Council

The Highland Council is committed to improving access to its own properties. A planned programme of disability access audits and improvement work is targeting premises the public may need to visit whether to pay their Council Tax, speak to staff about a particular service, or attend leisure or community facilities. Local Access Panels have provided valuable assistance with this work.

Contacts

To discuss access to buildings at the design stage or while a building is under construction, contact your local Disability Access Officer who will be one of the Building Standards Officers in the Planning and Building Standards Office. Details are in leaflet 1 of this series.

Disability Access Panel contacts:

Caithness Access Panel, Telford House, Williamson Street, Wick KW1 5HN (tel 01955 609962; email Fiona@cvg.org.uk)

Sutherland Access Panel, PO Box 30, Rogart IV28 3YH (tel 01408 641444, email shirley@escf2.fsnet.co.uk)

Ross & Cromarty Access Panel c/o Ross-shire Voluntary Action, Thorfin house, Bridgend Business Park, Dingwall IV15 9SL (tel 01349 861956, email enquiries@rc-access.org.uk)

Inverness Access Committee c/o SCVO, Fairways House, Fairways Business Park, Inverness IV2 6BB (tel 01463 238004, email inverness.access@tesco.net)

Nairn Access Panel c/o Liz Bow, 2 Moss-side Drive, Nairn (tel 01667 452208, email nairnap@supanet.com)

Badenoch and Strathspey Disability Access Panel via telephone to 01479 810004.

Skye and Lochalsh Access Panel c/o Liz Macleod, Victoria Cottage, Hedgefield Road, Portree IV51 9HF (tel 01478 613361, email slccforum@yahoo.co.uk)

Lochaber Access Panel via email to enquiries@lad.org.uk.

If you are interested in contacting or joining your local Disability Access Panel, please contact the Secretary of the Panel. Details are available from the address above or from:

Equal Opportunities Officer, The Highland Council, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness IV3 5NX
Tel 01463 702094
equal.opportunities@highland.gov.uk

The Disability Rights Commission has a wealth of information on legislation and good practice, contact:

DRC Helpline, Freepost MID02164
Stratford upon Avon CV37 9BR
Telephone: 08457 622 633
Textphone: 08457 622 644
Fax: 08457 778 878

If in any doubt, please contact your local Planning and Building Standards Office; details of locations given in Leaflet 1.

To request this information in an alternative format, e.g. large print, Braille, computer disc, audio tape, or suitable language, please contact George Boyd at 01463 702564.

This series of leaflets is intended to give you some general advice and guidance on the planning and building control system; they are not a definitive guide to the law. Please note that this series is being added to on a regular basis.

John D Rennilson, Director of Planning and Development

The Highland Council
Planning & Development Service

Leaflet
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Access and Inclusive Design

Slighe is Dealbhachadh Com-pàirteach

Planning & Building Standards
Help & Advice Leaflets

Disability in Scotland

In Scotland estimates show:

- Nearly 1 million adults have a disability – about one in five of the population.
- 180 000 people have serious sight problems.
- 729 000 people have a form of hearing loss or deafness.
- There are 18 000 adults with learning disabilities.
- One in four people will experience a mental health problem.

Disability Discrimination Act 1995

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) introduced new laws to end the discrimination faced by many disabled people. It protects disabled people in the areas of:

- **employment;**
- **the provision of goods, facilities and services;**
- **the selling or letting of land and property; and**
- **education.**

The DDA has been introduced in stages since 1996. From 1st October 2004 important sections of Part 3 of the Act, which covers Access to Goods, Facilities, Services and Premises, came into force. Service providers now have to consider how to deal with physical features that make it difficult for disabled people to use their service. . This may mean making “reasonable adjustments” to the way services are provided.

Access and Inclusive Design

The DDA is about improving access to services not buildings. However, it must be recognised that the legislation may affect building owners and people using or visiting buildings where services to the public are provided.

One way to ensure that access for disabled people is improved is by adopting an ‘inclusive design’ approach. Inclusive designs can be used by everyone, and are not only about addressing the needs of disabled people. Older people, families with small children, carers, friends or relatives who accompany disabled people would all benefit from improved access. Buildings and spaces have a major contribution to make in ensuring socially inclusive communities.

This approach recognises:

- An increased public awareness of the rights and needs of disabled people;
- The requirements of new legislation, including the DDA;
- The variety and extent of disabilities, including hidden disabilities;
- There is an increasing number of older people in the community;
- Physical barriers also affect people with toddlers or children in prams.

Access and Design Standards

The British Standards Institute produce a Code of Practice, BS8300: 2001: *Design of Buildings and their Approaches to Meet the Needs of Disabled People*. This document explains how to design the built environment to make it fully accessible and gives detailed guidance on:

- car parking provisions, signage, setting down points and garaging;
- approach routes to and around all buildings;
- Entrances to and interiors of new buildings;
- Minimum standards for horizontal and vertical

- movement within buildings; (e.g. corridors and stairs);
- Minimum dimensions and layouts of facilities for sanitary provision;
- Positioning door handles or buzzers, electrical switches, etc.

Access and Building Regulations

Since 1985 The Building Standards (Scotland) Regulations have required that all new, altered, extended or converted buildings used by the public must be accessible to disabled people. Where sanitary facilities are provided for the public then independent disabled facilities must also be provided. These Regulations apply to all buildings the public may visit or occupy. However, whereas the regulations are applied only to new or altered buildings, the DDA applies to both new and existing buildings.

Amendments to the Building Regulations in 2000, introduced a new requirement for dwelling houses to be accessible for disabled people. The change is to make dwellings more visitor friendly and also require less adaptation should an occupant become disabled, ideally accommodating peoples’ physical design needs throughout their lives.

Disability Access Panels

Disability Access Panels exist in the eight areas of Highland Council. These are volunteers concerned about disability issues who meet on a regular basis. They are interested in buildings at the design stage where their valuable expertise can contribute to improving disabled access facilities and arrangements to buildings. Each Disability Access Panel in Highland has access to advice and guidance from its own dedicated Disability Access Officer, normally the Principal