



**R N I B**

See differently

# Key Principles of Inclusive Street Design

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## Introduction

Walking is key to getting exercise, staying connected with family and community, getting to work, and accessing key services such as healthcare. For those unable to drive, walking is likely to be the main means of transportation, and in combination with public transport is essential for independence.

These Key Principles of Inclusive Street Design will help ensure our streets are as accessible as possible. Inclusive design is better design for everyone: people with sight loss, other disabled people, older people, carers with children, and ultimately for all who wish to use our streets. By working together, we can make our streets truly inclusive.

### Supported by:

- Guide Dogs
- Thomas Pocklington Trust
- Visionary
- Macular Society
- Glaucoma UK
- Rehabilitation Workers Professional Network
- Sense
- Scope
- Brake
- Disability Rights UK
- People First



## Inclusive street design checklist

Use this quick checklist to test the accessibility of your street designs:

1. Are all pavements, walkways and routes pedestrians would use kept free for pedestrians only – i.e., are they always separated from vehicles by a detectable kerb (minimum 60mm upstand)?
2. Are there enough pedestrian-only routes to take people safely from the start to the end of their walking journeys (for example, from shops or residential areas to public transport)?
3. Do roads and cycleways have accessible, signal-controlled crossings so pedestrians can cross safely?
4. Do all pavements, walkways and routes pedestrians would use have clear and unobstructed pathways at least two metres (6.6 feet) wide?
5. Are transport hubs like train stations, bus stops, and community facilities easily accessible for everyone?
6. Is access for disabled people travelling in cars or taxis maintained on pedestrianised or low-traffic routes?
7. Do new designs or proposed changes comply with existing guidance on accessibility? For example, do they provide good colour contrast and is tactile paving correctly installed in a way that minimises potential negative impact on wheelchair users.

8. Have new designs or proposed changes been consulted on, and undergone Equality Impact Assessments?
9. Have any accessibility issues highlighted in the consultation or Equality Impact Assessment processes been resolved?
10. Have all local people been informed of changes made to their local area, including those who need information in different formats?

**If you answered no to any of the questions, your street may exclude some pedestrians. Refer to the Key Principles of Inclusive Street Design below to see what is needed to make your street accessible.**

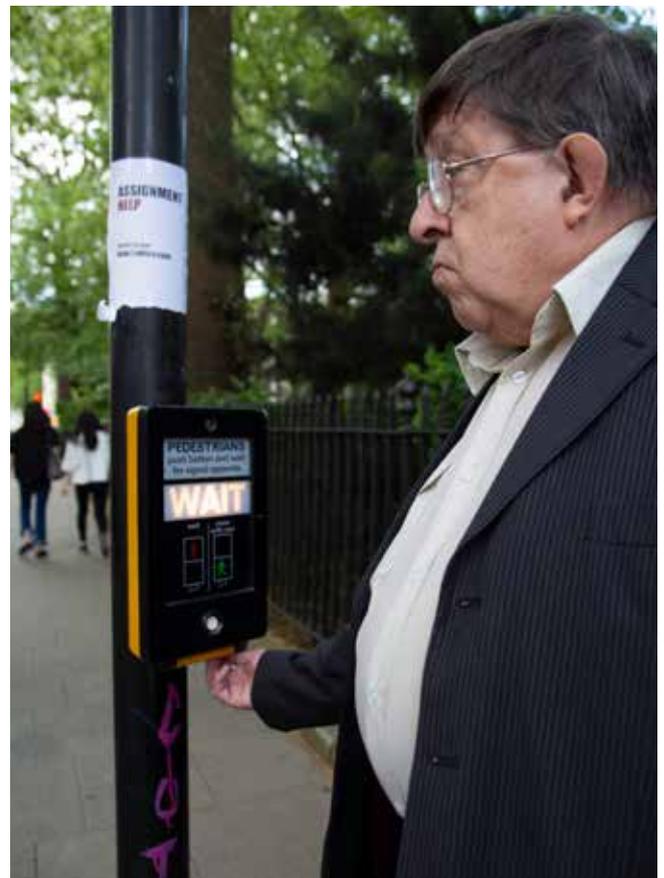


## 1. Pedestrians and moving vehicles must be kept separate

- Pavements and pedestrian areas must be kept for pedestrian use only. Pedestrians include people walking, wheelchair users and mobility scooter users.
- Mixed-use areas – where pedestrians and vehicles, including bikes and e-scooters, use the same area at the same time – are not inclusive. Any areas where pedestrians and other road users need to negotiate right of way are not inclusive and can be dangerous. Mixed-use areas include shared spaces, toucan crossings, Copenhagen crossings, and bus stops where passengers have to cross a cycle track to access the bus. Pedestrians need enough logical and connected pedestrian-only routes to take them safely from the start to the end of their walking journeys.
- Street designs, including junctions, need to be easy to understand and safe to use for all pedestrians.

## 2. Crossings must be accessible

- The most accessible crossings are signal-controlled, with push-button boxes allowing pedestrians to request traffic to stop. Dropped kerbs and red blister tactile paving help people with sight loss work out where these crossing points are. Signal – controlled crossings use sight, sound and touch (green man, beeping sound, and rotating cones underneath the push button boxes) to let pedestrians know when it's their turn to cross.
- Zebra crossings and courtesy crossings are much less safe for pedestrians who cannot negotiate with approaching vehicles they may be unable to see, hear, or move away from.



- Crossings which create level surfaces or continuous footways (like Copenhagen crossings) are not safe or accessible. These extend the appearance and feel of a pavement over a road, or a junction where sideroads join onto a main road, creating a level surface by removing detectable tactile features, such as upstanding kerbs, meaning pedestrians cannot always tell when they are in an area where vehicles may be moving.
- There need to be sufficient accessible signal-controlled pedestrian crossings over roads and cycleways in the right places: these are particularly important along key routes to essential services e.g., transport hubs, shops, offices, hospitals, schools, and community facilities such as parks.
- The increase in quiet electric vehicles is creating new challenges for people with sight loss, so accessible crossings are needed in lower traffic flow areas as well as busier areas.

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### 3. Kerbs must be detectable

- Detectable kerbs are needed to separate areas for pedestrians from all areas where vehicles are moving, including cycleways and roads.
- A detectable kerb should have a high contrast to surrounding area so it can be easily seen or recognised by a guide dog.
- Research tells us that the minimum detectable upstand for people with

sight loss to feel underfoot, or with a white cane, is 60mm (2.4 inches), but the more detectable essential safety features are the better they work. The standard upstand height for kerbs in the UK is 120mm (4.7 inches).

- Detectable kerbs need to be lowered to a dropped kerb at all pedestrian crossing points. The kerbs need to be fitted with blister tactile paving in red for controlled crossings and any contrasting colour that's not red for uncontrolled crossing.

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### 4. Pavements must be clear and clutter-free

- Pedestrians need clear uncluttered routes. UK Government guidance (Inclusive Mobility) recommends a clear path two metres (6.6 feet) wide, to allow space for two wheelchair users to pass one another.
- Any obstructions, particularly to the building line or kerbs, should be minimised (e.g. by instead making use of road space).
- The location of any street furniture should also be consistent and in accordance with local licensing, which should be robustly enforced.
- Street furniture or obstructions with sharp edges and irregular shapes are particularly hazardous. Where obstructions cannot be moved, bright colour and high-contrast materials can make them as safe and detectable as possible.
- Don't let vehicles park on pavements or walkways.

- Street designers and national and local policies should prioritise mitigating the negative impact on pedestrians of street obstructions both temporary (such as wheelie bins, pavement furniture and advertising boards) and permanent (like bollards, electric vehicle charging points and benches). For example, bin collectors can be alerted to streets where residents on the sight loss registers live and ensure that bins are returned to specific areas to lessen obstructions or make them more predictable if unavoidable.

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## 5. Transport hubs and community facilities must be accessible

- Pedestrian-only walking routes, detectable kerbs and accessible signal-controlled crossings are important everywhere but should be particularly prioritised along routes to transport hubs and community facilities. Transport hubs include train stations, bus stops, tram stops, and taxi ranks.
- Bus stops that require pedestrians to cross a cycle lane (which go by names including bus stop boarders, Copenhagen bus stops, floating bus stops and bus stop bypasses) render buses inaccessible to many people who otherwise rely on bus travel. Existing bus stops of this design should be redesigned so people have an accessible way to cross live cycleways when getting on and off the bus. RNIB is encouraging and

participating in research and trials to find solutions to this issue.

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## 6. Access must be maintained for people needing to travel by car or taxi

- Some disabled people rely on cars or taxis, so safe access for these needs to be possible, even in low traffic routes and areas which have been pedestrianised. Safe access could include simple and accessible processes for vehicle access exemptions, safe drop-off and pick-up points, and clearly marked taxi ranks.

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## 7. Accessible consultations must be carried out

- Councils have a legal requirement to follow Government guidance on street design and accessibility as it applies in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Any street or public realm designs must fully comply with this guidance in the absence of exceptional circumstances.
- Councils, planners and designers should check thoroughly as to how their new designs or proposed changes align with the Key Principles of Inclusive Street Design in this document before progressing to public consultation and development. This will ensure the designs are as accessible as possible from the beginning.

- It is a legal requirement that public consultations on any new street and public realm proposals run by or on behalf of councils must be accessible.
- An informed understanding of the range of access needs of those with protected characteristics, including age, parenthood and disability – including the distinct needs of blind and partially sighted people – will improve designs at the development stage and help avoid lengthy public consultations and expensive retrofitting at later stages.
- Meaningful engagement with disabled people is not just about meeting minimum accessibility requirements but can include organising site visits and opportunities for feedback from local disabled people from the earliest stage of design.

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## 8. Equality Impact Assessments must be conducted

- It is a legal requirement that councils assess the impact of all their schemes, under the Public Sector Equality Duty (Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998; Equality Act and Scottish Specific Duties in Scotland). Councils can show compliance by completing an Equality Impact Assessment and an accessibility audit.
- It is a legal requirement that any accessibility issues mentioned in consultations or Equality Impact Assessments must be acknowledged

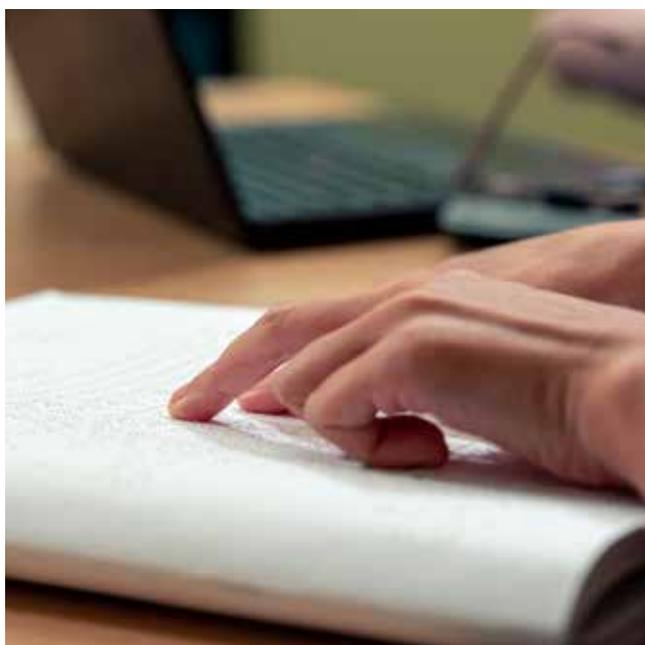
and addressed wherever possible before proposals are implemented.

- Designs or proposals which do not meet the Key Principles of Inclusive Street Design outlined in this document should not be developed.

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## 9. Changes must be communicated to all local people

- It is a legal requirement to consider the accessibility of any notices, newspaper adverts or published plans to inform local people of changes to their area.
- People who live in the local area must be informed of the proposed changes in accessible formats (e.g., audio files, telephone calls, tactile maps, photographs, braille, large print).
- Councils need to liaise with local groups and organisations to inform about and publicise any changes. This includes publicising the availability of consultation documentation in accessible formats.



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