

# Gaining Access

**Evaluating the level of accessibility for the disabled in various facilities throughout the Borough of Merton.**

Sponsoring Agency: London Borough of Merton

Submitted to:

Project Advisor: Bland Addison, WPI Professor

Project Co-advisor: John Delorey, WPI Professor

On-Site Liaison: Ernest Obumsele, Monica Wambu

Submitted by:

---

Julian Dittami

---

Lee Pappas

---

Michael Cross

Date: 30 June 2007

---

Professor Delorey

---

Professor Addison

## **Abstract**

This project examined building accessibility available to the disabled throughout the Borough of Merton, England. Research involved learning about individual disabilities that affected mobility and identifying buildings that were used frequently by the disabled or were needed by the disabled. These buildings were assessed for the renovations they had or didn't have for disabled access. The team designed a website for building accessibility evaluations as well as "Awareness Plaques" to be placed on public buildings to indicate the types of facilities available for the disabled. Both the website and plaques are intended to increase awareness about issues of disabled accessibility in the Borough of Merton.

## **Executive Summary**

Our team was given the task to evaluate and document the public and private buildings used by the disabled throughout the Borough of Merton and then compile this information on a web link on the Council's homepage. To have a successful project it was necessary to complete the objectives that follow:

- 1 Determined what facilities in the Borough of Merton the disabled desire to visit the most and/or need to visit.
- 2 Determined which Council buildings needed to be assessed.
- 3 Identified difficulties that the disabled experience when accessing these buildings.
- 4 Determined the degree to which Council Buildings meet accessibility needs of the disabled.
- 5 Obtained List of Renovations completed on Council Buildings.
- 6 Visited each site and documented these renovations using photography so they could be updated on the Merton Council's database.
- 7 Determined the level of accessibility of the locations identified in the first objective.
- 8 Created a web link that shows the facilities that have been identified and assessed for their level of accessibility through interviews with the disabled.
- 9 Designed Awareness Plaques to be placed on each building that is assessed.

We conducted various phone interviews using contacts that were given to us by out liaison. These contacts were people who lived in the Borough who have agreed to participate in Merton council questionnaires. Through these interviews we were able to

determine what facilities our team should evaluate as well as what issues people with disabilities face in terms of accessibility. From the accessibility problems that we had identified we then created a checklist of renovations and accommodations that we would look for when visiting these facilities.

While making these evaluations of accessibility renovations at each facility, our team took a picture of the entire building as well as key renovations that we felt would be useful for the web link. All of the evaluations that were completed were then typed in a bullet style format including what the building had in terms of accessibility features, not what it lacked in such features. These evaluations and the pictures were then sent to the web design team in order to be reformatted for the web link.

When discussing the web link with the design team we decided it would be good to have a virtual map of the Borough containing tube stops and symbols for all the facilities in their proper location. If these symbols are clicked a new link will open up with accessibility as well as pictures of each facility that we took. We hope that this web link will be useful for disabled people in the Borough of Merton so if they have plans to go to a cinema, they can go onto the web link and see what accommodations there are for disabilities.

Aside from the web link, our team proposed a few other ideas that could be continued after our stay in Merton. We proposed measures to enhance public awareness about the access of the disabled to public and private facilities, putting an emphasis on the fact that many facilities, not just in Merton but also throughout London, are not disabled accessible. One idea we are proposing is that all of the libraries in the Borough of Merton will contain a logbook of all building evaluations that we have completed so it

can easily be added to in years to come. This log book would come in Braille as well as in regular type. The second idea we are proposing are “awareness plaques/stickers.” These would be put on a building that has been evaluated in case people with disabilities were not aware of the assistive technologies providing access to the buildings for the disabled they could see what the building has for accommodations. On the bottom of the sticker would be the web address for the project site so if they wanted more information it could be easily obtained. Our team also hopes that this will enhance awareness throughout the Borough among people who do not have disabilities to emphasize that accessibility is an important issue for all of us.

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Title Page.....	i
Abstract.....	ii
Executive Summary.....	iii
Table of Contents.....	vi
Authorship.....	viii
List of Tables.....	ix
List of Figures.....	x
1.0 Introduction.....	1
2.0 Background.....	5
2.1 History of London	
Post WWII.....	7
2.2 Disability Discrimination Act .....	8
2.3 Jobcentre Plus.....	9
2.4 Disabilities.....	10
3.0 Methodology.....	12
3.1 Council Centre.....	13
3.1.1 Physical Observation.....	13
3.2 Frequented Areas.....	14
3.2.1 Current Status of Accessibility for	
Identified Areas.....	14
3.2.2 Interviews.....	15
3.2.3 Physical Observation.....	16
3.3 What Other Boroughs are Doing.....	16
3.4 Aides for the Disabled.....	17
3.5 Building Public Awareness.....	18
3.6 Summary.....	18
4.0 Results.....	20
5.0 Conclusion.....	46

Laws were Broken, Hearts were Broken, and Noses were Broken.....	50
References.....	53
Appendices	
Appendix A: [Description on sponsor].....	55
Appendix B: [What is an IQP & how does your project qualify as an IQP?].....	57
Appendix C: [Phone Call Interview Results].....	58
Appendix D: [Letter used for accessing facilities in order to complete evaluations].....	60
Appendix E: [Phone call questions].....	61
Appendix F: [Description of disabilities].....	62
Appendix G: [Awareness plaque/sticker].....	69
Appendix H: [Typed evaluations for hard copy].....	70
Appendix I: [Possible renovations].....	84

# **Authorship Page**

Introduction: Lee

Background: Julian, Mike

Methodology: Mike

Results: Julian

Conclusion: Julian

Summary of IQP: Lee

References: Mike

Our entire team all participated in the editing of all sections



# **LIST OF TABLES**

Table 1: 2005 Employment Statistics in UK  
p. 7

Table 2: 2005 Disabilities Statistics in the Workplace in UK  
p. 8

# **LIST OF FIGURES**

Figure 1: White walking stick  
p. 10

Figure 2: Symbol cane  
p. 10

Figure 3: Long cane  
p. 11

Figure 4: Guide Dogs  
p. 12

Figure 5: Ramp and Stairs with Landing  
p. 16

Figure 6: Slope of Ramp  
p. 16

Figure 7: Curb Ramp  
p. 16

Figure 8: Wooden Ramp  
p. 17

Figure 9: Handrail Heights  
p. 17

Figure 10: Wheelchair Lift  
p. 18

Figure 11: Wheelchair Lift  
p. 18

# 1

## Introduction

People with disabilities have been overlooked, intentionally or not, in various aspects of life including access to public buildings. They face more accessibility challenges than the rest of the population in their day-to-day activities and deserve to have equal rights when it comes to accessibility. The idea that the disabled have been overlooked is clearly seen in the way older buildings were constructed as is evident from the fact that most older buildings are built to have no ramps are created with stairs to the entrances and no ramps for example.

Access to buildings for the disabled is still a major concern in large metropolitan cities such as London. In 1995, the Disability Discrimination Act was enacted to create equal right for all those with disabilities. The act made it a law that all buildings had to begin renovations to accommodate those with disabilities. Some facilities needed only minor revisions while others that were constructed immediately after WWII still need of extensive changes. At this time there were no building codes that catered to the disabled. Currently in the London Borough of Merton, many buildings have not received the necessary modifications to accommodate those with disabilities. Many of these buildings date back to before WWII, so they have many access features that do not meet the needs of the disables and to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act of 1995 they must be renovated to meet current standards. This is a big problem because these old building are hard to renovate and cost a lot of money. Many of the buildings are not accessible to people with disabilities including hearing impairments, visual impairments as well as

walking disabilities. The lack of accessibility of such buildings raises ethical issues that are addressed in the Disability Discrimination Act of 1995.

The Borough of Merton has drawn up a current list of renovations completed on all the Council Buildings in the area, although the information has not been compiled into a common database. Without a common database with up-to-date information, the local Council does not know which facilities are accessible for people with the three major types of disabilities. Currently, with exception of Council buildings, the majority of privately-owned facilities have not met the regulations set forth by the Disability Discrimination Act. The borough council is only responsible to make renovations to their facilities, but they are obligated to oversee the wellbeing and welfare of the residents in Merton wherever they are in the borough. Our team has been asked to assess the level of accessibility for Council buildings as well as facilities that people with disabilities visit on a regular basis.

The ultimate goal for our project is to ease day-to-day activities for the disabled throughout the Borough of Merton by giving people a database where they can view the level of accessibility of each facility. The project will also ultimately increase public awareness about issues regarding equal access to buildings in the Borough of Merton. For us to increase public awareness we have developed the idea of Awareness Plaques. A proposed design for the plaques can be found in Appendix G. These plaques can be placed on each building that we assess. The plaques will have a description of what the building contains in regard to access for those with disabilities. Our team hopes that this idea will inform the disabled about access facilities and bring positive attention to the owners of buildings with such facilities as well as the public. We hope that if a building

is not accessible it would bring pressure upon the owner to renovate their building such that the disabled will be able to access it so that the disabled will have greater access. These plaques would be a reminder of both the ethical and economic gains that arise from providing the disabled with access to commercial establishments; in brief, businesses without them are losing customers. In order to achieve our ultimate goal we have broken it down into specific objectives. These objectives are as follows:

- Objective 1- Speak face to face with disability groups to determine what areas in the Borough of Merton the disabled would desire to visit and/or need to visit (such places might include hospitals or the Civic Centre).
- Objective 2- Review list of renovations that have been completed on the Council Buildings in regard to accessibility for the disabled
  - Take pictures of each renovation so they can be used as a visual reference and can be clearly identified.
  - Take the photos along with relevant renovations and include them in the common database.
- Objective 3- Determine the degree of accessibility of the places identified in our first two objectives
  - Detect ease and difficulties that the disabled experience when entering buildings

This project includes information about which buildings provide adequate services for the disabled, which has been gathered and documented on a single database for ease of use by the disabled. The completion of this project will benefit the disabled residents to and visitors of Merton. By doing this we hope to inform them about the

current status of accessibility of buildings we evaluated. The use of Awareness Plaques will also inform the general public about the issue of disabled accessibility through the use of Awareness Plaques. In turn, we hope the accessibility database and Awareness Plaques will improve the way of life for those with disabilities throughout the Borough of Merton by making their day-to-day activities less troublesome.

## 2

### **Background**

The accessibility of buildings for the disabled in and around London is affected by a number of factors ranging from lack of relevant codes during their construction to limited funding for renovations. These inadequacies in construction may keep the disabled from going to local business areas and government buildings and in turn can make them feel discriminated against. The British Parliament passed the Disability Discrimination Act in 1995 (DDA) to address the needs of the disabled. It set standards for how building owners, constructors and employers should accommodate those with disabilities in various settings from residential to work. Many boroughs are now trying to bring their buildings up to the standards stated by this act since while the whole country needs to meet the requirements set by the DDA. In this section, we will be looking at what has previously been done in regards to accessibility for the disabled.

Handicap accessibility throughout London is determined by the way buildings were and are constructed since these factors range from the lack of relevant codes during construction to limited funding for renovations. Due to the fact that building codes did not take the disabled into consideration during reconstruction they were not accommodated. The lack of accessibility may keep the disabled from going to local business areas and government buildings which in turn would cause feelings of discrimination.

The issue of limited mobility is a complex one with many different limitations, such as being on crutches, in a wheelchair, or even using a cane. In order to accommodate the needs of a person who has limited mobility many different methods

must be used to establish access to the areas in the Borough of Merton. The purpose of exploring many methods is not only to accommodate the disabled, but also to meet building codes and space restrictions that come into play.

We carried out research in the 2001 Census and the 2006 community organizations directory to gain information since these sources helped us to identify whom we needed to contact and what other boroughs have similar disability issues like Merton's community.

Up to this point we have made reference to three different types of physical disabilities that limit access: mobility, hearing, and visual. All people who have one or more of these three disabilities require their own specific needs when it comes to accessibility. There is no simple solution to meet all of these needs since they all require different forms of assistance. Simply meeting requirements set forth by the DDA that take on these issues will not solve that problem of accessibility for the disabled. The DDA was set forth to give equality to the disabled so they can interact and participate in day to day activities. Just allowing access to a building for the disabled does not address the problems that occur once they are in it. In order to meet their needs each specific disability must be examined separately. In the following chapter we will discuss methods to identify the best ways to develop accessibility to public areas in Merton for people with mobility, visual and hearing disabilities.

Aside from focusing on the three specific disabilities and the regulations currently in place by the DDA our team needed to find out why the facilities were constructed lacking key accommodations for the disabled. In our research we began to look at



London post WWII since this is a point in time where there was major reconstruction due to the war.

## 2.1

### History of London Post WWII

The city of London, with over two thousands years of history, has witnessed a parade of monarch each bringing with them changes in public policies and standards. The city of London has grown to be rather extensive covering upwards of 600 square miles of land with over 7 million inhabitants. During World War II, London was attacked repeatedly by Luftwaffe bombing raids which destroyed much of the city. This led to the construction of high-rise flats to accommodate all these people and were constructed after the war in response to the urgent need of housing in turn they were constructed so rapidly, that the needs of the disabled were overlooked. There were no building codes directly associated with the disabled in place at that time which meant that buildings lacked full accessibility.

As shown on the Merton web site (2006), during WWII Merton was hit extremely hard by bombing raids as well. After the war new estates were constructed at Phipps Bridge, Pollards Hill and High Path in Wimbledon. The damage from the war was still felt through slow reconstruction and food shortages that lasted well into the 1950s. Together, the successful redevelopment schemes and the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II marked the beginning of a new era for England.

According to the Merton web site (2006), Merton was created in 1965 when several boroughs of London joined together. These included Mitcham, Wimbledon, and

the Merton and Morden Urban District. These were all previously part of the Surrey area. The largest commercial center in Merton now is Wimbledon, with Mitcham and Morden close behind.

## 2.2

### Disability Discrimination Act

In 1995, the British Parliament passed the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) to improve the quality of life for those with handicaps. This includes better housing, financial aid and other such services to those with disabilities (Merton Council, 2006). Currently all of London is trying to comply with these new codes, including Merton. Within the DDA, there is one section that discusses the discrimination of the disabled, having to do with accessibility in buildings. This is covered in Section 13, Discrimination in Relation to Letting of Premises, in which it states:

(1) It is unlawful for a controller of let premises to discriminate against a disabled person-

(a) who is a person to whom the premises are let; or

(b) who, although not a person to whom the premises are let, is lawfully under the letting an occupier of the premises.

(Disability Discrimination Act, Section 13, 2005)

Merton is not the only area that has to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act. Almost all government buildings and most public facilities in the United States have been renovated to accommodate the needs of the disabled by using such methods as installing chairlifts, elevators and ramps. Though expensive, in London there are

government-funded agencies that will help pay for the renovations such as Jobcentre Plus in London.

## 2.3

### Jobcentre Plus

One group in the U.K. that is taking a proactive approach towards improving access in London for those with disabilities is Jobcentre Plus. This government organization helps with the financial aspects of renovating a building. They also give advice and information to those with disabilities and to those who employ the disabled. Through Access to Work (AtW), Jobcentre Plus pays a grant to the employer for any additional costs that might arise from any employee's disabilities (Jobcentre Plus, 2007).

The way that Jobcentre Plus works is:

- If a company has a new employee with a disability, the grant will pay for 100% of the modifications to the building.
- If the employee is a current worker, then Jobcentre Plus will pay for 80% of the first 300 pounds (Jobcentre Plus, 2007).

Jobcentre Plus also promotes the recruitment of people with disabilities. Through Jobcentre Plus, one can contact the Disability Employment Adviser (DEA) in order to employ a person with a disability. This group may be one that would be useful to send a hard copy of our final project to so they would be able to keep it in their office. That way when people with disabilities came into their facility they would be informed the accessibility database created by this project and it would be another way for the disabled to be informed about accessibility in Merton.

Up to this point we have discussed three different types of physical disabilities. For a more detailed description about these disabilities see Appendix F. All people who have one or more of these three disabilities require their own specific needs. There is no simple solution to meet all of these needs since they all have different requirements to establish building accessibility. Simply meeting requirements set forth by the DDA will not solve the problem of accessibility for the disabled. Just allowing access to the building for the disabled does not address the problems that occur once they are in the building. In order to meet their needs we will have to assess each specific disability separately. In chapter 3 we will discuss how to best evaluate the level of accessibility for public areas in Merton regarding people with mobility, visual and hearing disabilities. Next we will discuss disability statistics in order to get an idea of the impact people with disabilities have on the Borough as well as the country. These statistics suggest that there is a significant number of disabled people living in the Borough and there is a huge economic value to having facilities accessible to them.

## **2.4**

### Disabilities

In the UK, there are almost 9 million people with some form of disability, and around 1.5 million of those live in the city of London. Out of this, roughly 800 thousand are part of the work force. According to the 2001 census in the Borough of Merton almost 13 percent of the population has a disability. Many of these people developed their disabilities over time, instead of having them from birth. People with certain degrees of disability receive incapacity benefits. Since they cannot work, this could cost the UK roughly £12 billion per year, as it did in 2004 (London First, 2007). According to

the UK's office for National Statistics' Labour Force Survey (2005), nearly 1/5 of the working aged population is disabled. This number has grown since 1998 from roughly 6.2 million people to approximately 9 million. Almost half of these people are not in the work force. This is an enormous difference from the 16% of able-bodied persons in the UK who are without work. Though the disabled are sometimes not able to find employment or are just incapable of doing work, this does not mean that they do not want to work; almost 30% said that they would like to work if they could find suitable jobs. Along with researching the three disabilities our team looked into ways to enhance accessibility through various renovations. The information pertaining to building renovations can be found in Appendix I.

After completing our background research our team discovered that many facilities in the Borough of Merton lack accessibility for the disabled. We found various ways to accommodate and meet the needs for the visual, hearing and mobility impaired. Our next step was to begin developing methods to determine what facilities needed to be evaluated and what issues people with disabilities faced while accessing these buildings. The methods to these issues can be found in the following chapter.

### 3

## Methodology

Our goal for this project was to ease the day-to-day activities of the disabled by giving them a database about the levels of accessibility of the buildings throughout the Borough of Merton. In order to achieve this goal, we used various methods of research to obtain relevant information including:

- Questionnaires
- Interviews
- Physical Observations

We used these three methods to help us complete the objectives listed below in chronological order leading to the completion of our goal.

- Determined what areas in the Borough of Merton the disabled desire to visit the most and/or need to visit
- Determined which Council buildings needed to be assessed
- Identified difficulties that the disabled experience when accessing these buildings
- Determined the degree to which Council buildings meet accessibility needs of the disabled
- Obtained List of Renovations that were completed to Council buildings
- Visited each site and documented these renovations with photographs so they could be updated on the Merton Council's accessibility database.
- Determined the level of accessibility of the locations identified in the first objective

- Designed a web link that shows the facilities that have been identified and assessed for their level of accessibility through interviews with the disabled.
- Designed Awareness Plaques to be placed on each building that is assessed

## **3.1**

### Council Centre

Council Centres are some of the most frequented sites in the Borough of Merton for all people including those with disabilities. There are many Centres throughout the Borough, ranging from leisure centres to the registry of births, deaths and marriages. Over the past five years, these buildings have been under renovation in order to create a more user-friendly environment for the disabled as well as others. All of these renovations are currently documented but not available to the public. Our team first determined which Council buildings we would evaluate. We met with Tony Skilbeck, the Properties Liaison Manager, in order to obtain the list of completed renovations to all Council Centres throughout the Borough of Merton. He helped us to identify which Council buildings we should assess for the disabled people of Merton.

### **3.1.1**

#### Physical Observation

We identified which Council buildings to evaluate and reviewed the documents containing all of the completed renovations. Our team then visited each site taking pictures of each renovation and wrote a brief description about it. We also determined if

the renovation that was installed was helpful or not based on its location, usefulness and practicality. All the information we gathered was given to Ernest Obumsele and a web design team, who worked with us to create a link for the Council's homepage.

## **3.2**

### Frequented Areas

Our first objective was to identify the buildings that the disabled need to visit, such as post offices and banks, as well as places they would like to visit: sporting venues and libraries to grocery stores, etc. In identifying the buildings the disabled visited, we established which buildings were visited the most frequently or which had the greatest priority.

### **3.2.1**

#### Current Status of Accessibility for Identified Areas

Our team met with Jo Spencer, the coordinator of the Disabled Alliance in Merton; though she mainly deals with mental disabilities, she also has contacts with people with physical disabilities and talks with them on a day-to-day basis. She was able to help us figure out which buildings to focus on and in doing so, narrow down our list of buildings to the ones that we should pay attention to the most. After completing our interviews in the second week, we moved on to our next objective. Here we began evaluating the level of accessibility of buildings identified through our personal interviews and phone calls with the disabled.



We wanted to know what sort of accessibility these buildings have for those who need or are interested in using the buildings. It was important not only to evaluate these buildings for one specific disability, but for all three that we covered-hearing and visual impairments and limited mobility. As will be discussed below, we used interviews and physical observation to collect our data.

### **3.2.2**

#### Interviews

Data that was crucial for identifying which buildings have or do not have adequate accessibility for the disabled came from interviews with those people who have disabilities. The best way our team found to gather these data was by conducting personal interviews with the disabled. Since our team was working for the Council of Merton, we had access to a list of people in the Borough who have disabilities and who had agreed to take part in any Merton consultations. The Merton Council asked many members of the Borough if they would be willing to take part in consultations and created a list of these people and their numbers for reasons such as ours. We compiled a list of twenty-five people in the Borough and called them with a questionnaire where we received ten responses. The feed back we received from these interviews can be found in see Appendix C.

### **3.2.3**

#### Physical Observation

After completing our interviews with the disabled, our team identified buildings that the disabled want to visit. Our team then went to each one of these identified sites and began to evaluate their level of accessibility. Through our interviews, we gathered information on which buildings the disabled want to visit as well as what issues, such as the absence of lifts or hearing loops, they face while entering or going through the facilities. At each facility, we went through a checklist of accessibility features and determined what the buildings had or did not have. Every renovation that the buildings contained was photographed and a brief description recorded. This description contains where the disabled assistive technology is located and whether or not it serves its purpose well. For instance, if there is a lift, can a wheelchair fit into it, or if there are signs throughout the building, are they made with Braille and large print.

### **3.3**

#### What Other Boroughs Are Doing

The Diversity and Community Engagement Officer, Ernest Obumsele, informed us that other parts of London were currently addressing the same issue of disabled access in and around different boroughs through a variety of different means including web sites such as DisabledGo. We contacted these boroughs through the Merton Council Centre to find out if they were dealing with buildings similar to the buildings we had examined.

We took ideas from these contacts and included them with our own. This benefited our team, as well as other Boroughs by initiating the development of a universal strategy to document and publicize accessibility renovations for the disabled.

We contacted two or three other boroughs dealing with the same issues of accessibility by the fourth week and a council member to share our ideas and possible solutions.

### **3.4**

#### Aides for the Disabled

We gathered data on each disability and information on what these three disabilities (hearing, visual and mobility) needs to have access to a building so that we could determine which buildings lack adequate facilities for each disability. In order to enhance public awareness on this issue of accessibility for the disabled in civic and private buildings, we needed a way to get the team's inventory of building accessibility for the disabled into the public view. Public awareness is important because once people see how accessible or inaccessible different places are they will be more willing to resolve this problem. Our team developed possible methods to promote greater awareness. A map, available in multiple media, would be helpful primarily to those with disabilities so they can be made aware of the current status of accessibility for certain buildings throughout the Borough of Merton, but will also call these issues to the attention of the general public.

## 3.5

### Building Public Awareness

Our team wanted to make sure that our research was available to the public. Simply having a link to a web address does not mean that every person in Merton will know about the database or have access to the database through the internet. We presented copies of the evaluations, in a notebook, of this project to the local libraries so that those who do not have access to the Internet will be able to use our research. The idea of awareness plaques will help the public realize what the Council and the residents are doing to improve the accessibility throughout the Borough. They will have a short brief description of the building and the accessibility options associated with it. We hope that people with disabilities who may be entering these facilities will stop and look before they go in. It will also remind the storeowners that they are missing business and people may be turned away simply because they cannot access their facility.

## 3.6

### Summary

Through interviews and phone surveys, we were able to create a checklist of places to visit and what disabled access to look for while we are there. From this, we were able to determine which buildings lacked the proper accessibility options and which ones had adequate services and even those with exceptional service.

It was imperative for our team to interview people with disabilities in order to clearly identify specific issues they face when gaining access to facilities as well as which

buildings they frequent. To accomplish this task we took advantage of a list of phone numbers given to us by our liaison, consisting of people with disabilities that have agreed to participate in surveys, which are issued by the Merton Council. The telephone protocol questionnaire that our team documented before we made the phone calls can be found in Appendix E. Through our phone interviews, we gained knowledge about what facilities people with disabilities wanted to visit as well as which buildings have little or no accommodations regarding accessibility. This in turn allowed us to narrow down the buildings we needed to evaluate. The complete list of interview protocols can be found in Appendix C. In order for our team to gain access to the facilities our liaison typed up a letter containing a short description of our project. This letter can be found in Appendix D.

## 4

### Results

The evaluations we conducted consisted of twenty-three buildings in which we determined what accommodations each facility offered to those with disabilities. We found that many of the buildings contained some renovations regarding accessibility and in the facilities where accessibility was limited, a trained staff member was assigned responsibility to assist disabled people. Many of the buildings we evaluated were renovated recently with hearing loops and lifts in order to meet the laws set forth by Disability Discrimination Act of 1995.

People with disabilities must carry out most of the same life activities as anyone else. Problems accessing facilities arise for disabled people in most life tasks, such as shopping, leisure, and work. Aside from the facilities that we identified through phone interviews, we also took into consideration other places that the disabled would need to go at some point in their life, such as the registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages, as well as police stations. From the answers we received during our phone interviews we expanded our original locations to include hospitals, churches and cinemas. In setting up our assessments we created a simple check list of accommodations our team was looking for since this check list covered accommodations for hearing, vision, and mobility. The evaluations listed below indicate what our team was looking for in terms of accessibility, found on the right of the chart. If the facility contained a specific accommodation for the disabled, we placed an X in the left hand column; if it did not apply, for example there is only one floor thus need for the lift or if the renovation was

not available in the building, the box was left blank. We left the box blank when the renovation was non-existent because when listing facilities that were available to aid the disabled on the accessibility web site we were only concerned with what the facility contained. The assessments are listed in the following order: Council Buildings, Leisure Centres, Churches, Libraries, Recycling Centres, as well as a general category containing a Cinema, Hospital, police station, shopping centre and the Registrar of Births Deaths and Marriages.

## 1.0: Council Buildings

### 1.1: All Saints

	What our team assessed in terms of accommodations dealing with accessibility issues for the disabled.
X	Are there people in the facility willing to escort the disabled around the building?
X	Are there ramps or chair lift anywhere in the facility?
X	Any automatic door openers in or around the building?
	Is the reception desk at a level suitable for wheelchairs?
X	Is there a lift located in the facility?
	Can a wheelchair fit in the lift?
	Are the lift buttons low enough to reach if you are in a wheelchair?
X	Are there disabled stalls?
	Are the hallways too long?
X	Are there disabled friendly exits?
	Is there Braille specifically placed for use anywhere outside the entrance of the building?
	Is there any sort of reception signage?
	Is there Braille in the lift, specifically on the buttons?
X	Is there horn strobes located in the facility in the event of an emergency?
	Is there Braille for the bathroom?
	Are there obstacles in the hallways that might obstruct the visually impaired or deny a wheelchair access?
X	Is there a hearing loop in the building?
	Are there people that know sign language?
	Is there any means of communication for the hearing impaired?
	Are there flashing lights in case of emergency?

#### Other Accommodations:

- Dining room will be renovated to become a holding area for the disabled to safely be evacuated out of the facility in case of an emergency. This renovation will be completed this year.
- They have a mobile loop system.



## 1.2: Chaucer Centre

	What our team assessed in terms of accommodations dealing with accessibility issues for the disabled.
X	Are there people in the facility willing to escort the disabled around the building?
X	Are there ramps or chair lift anywhere in the facility?
	Any automatic door openers in or around the building?
X	Is the reception desk at a level suitable for wheelchairs?
X	Is there a lift located in the facility?
X	Can a wheelchair fit in the lift?
	Are the lift buttons low enough to reach if you are in a wheelchair?
X	Are there disabled stalls?
	Are the hallways too long?
X	Are there disabled friendly exits?
	Is there Braille specifically placed for use anywhere outside the entrance of the building?
	Is there any sort of reception signage?
	Is there Braille in the lift, specifically on the buttons?
X	Is there horn strobes located in the facility in the event of an emergency?
	Is there Braille for the bathroom?
	Are there obstacles in the hallways that might obstruct the visually impaired or deny a wheelchair access?
X	Is there a hearing loop in the building?
	Are there people that know sign language?
	Is there any means of communication for the hearing impaired?
	Are there flashing lights in case of emergency?

### **Other Accommodations:**

- Hearing loops are installed in most all conference rooms.
- The computers use a larger print for those with slight visual impairments.
- A new lift will be installed by the end of the summer.
- Disabled friendly exits are located at both front and end of the building.

### 1.3: Vestry Hall

	What our team assessed in terms of accommodations dealing with accessibility issues for the disabled.
X	Are there people in the facility willing to escort the disabled around the building?
X	Are there ramps or chair lift anywhere in the facility?
X	Any automatic door openers in or around the building?
X	Is the reception desk at a level suitable for wheelchairs?
X	Is there a lift located in the facility?
X	Can a wheelchair fit in the lift?
X	Are the lift buttons low enough to reach if you are in a wheelchair?
X	Are there disabled stalls?
	Are the hallways too long?
X	Are there disabled friendly exits?
	Is there Braille specifically placed for use anywhere outside the entrance of the building?
	Is there any sort of reception signage?
X	Is there Braille in the lift, specifically on the buttons?
X	Is there horn strobes located in the facility in the event of an emergency?
	Is there Braille for the bathroom?
	Are there obstacles in the hallways that might obstruct the visually impaired or deny a wheelchair access?
X	Is there a hearing loop in the building?
	Are there people that know sign language?
	Is there any means of communication for the hearing impaired?
	Are there flashing lights in case of emergency?

#### **Other Accommodations:**

-The stairs are equipped with white stripes for people with slight visual impairments. It allows them to see the steps with greater ease.

-Two evacuation chairs have been ordered.

#### 1.4: Civic Centre

	What our team assessed in terms of accommodations dealing with accessibility issues for the disabled.
X	Are there people in the facility willing to escort the disabled around the building?
X	Are there ramps or chair lift anywhere in the facility?
X	Any automatic door openers in or around the building?
X	Is the reception desk at a level suitable for wheelchairs?
X	Is there a lift located in the facility?
X	Can a wheelchair fit in the lift?
X	Are the lift buttons low enough to reach if you are in a wheelchair?
X	Are there disabled stalls?
	Are the hallways too long?
X	Are there disabled friendly exits?
	Is there Braille specifically placed for use anywhere outside the entrance of the building?
X	Is there any sort of reception signage?
X	Is there Braille in the lift, specifically on the buttons?
X	Is there horn strobes located in the facility in the event of an emergency?
	Is there Braille for the bathroom?
	Are there obstacles in the hallways that might obstruct the visually impaired or deny a wheelchair access?
X	Is there a hearing loop in the building?
	Are there people that know sign language?
X	Is there any means of communication for the hearing impaired?
	Are there flashing lights in case of emergency?

## 2.0: Leisure Centres

### 2.1: Canon Leisure Centre

	What our team assessed in terms of accommodations dealing with accessibility issues for the disabled.
X	Are there people in the facility willing to escort the disabled around the building?
X	Are there ramps or chair lift anywhere in the facility?
X	Any automatic door openers in or around the building?
X	Is the reception desk at a level suitable for wheelchairs?
X	Is there a lift located in the facility?
X	Can a wheelchair fit in the lift?
	Are the lift buttons low enough to reach if you are in a wheelchair?
X	Are there disabled stalls?
	Are the hallways too long?
X	Are there disabled friendly exits?
	Is there Braille specifically placed for use anywhere outside the entrance of the building?
	Is there any sort of reception signage?
	Is there Braille in the lift, specifically on the buttons?
X	Is there horn strobes located in the facility in the event of an emergency?
	Is there Braille for the bathroom?
	Are there obstacles in the hallways that might obstruct the visually impaired or deny a wheelchair access?
X	Is there a hearing loop in the building?
	Are there people that know sign language?
	Is there any means of communication for the hearing impaired?
	Are there flashing lights in case of emergency?

#### **Other Accommodations:**

-Pool hoist

-The changing room is wide enough for wheelchairs.

-Ramp in the sports hall for wheelchair access.

-There is wheelchair gait which when you scan yourself into the facility it allows the people to access the facility.

## 2.2: Wimbledon Leisure

	What our team assessed in terms of accommodations dealing with accessibility issues for the disabled.
X	Are there people in the facility willing to escort the disabled around the building?
X	Are there ramps or chair lift anywhere in the facility?
X	Any automatic door openers in or around the building?
X	Is the reception desk at a level suitable for wheelchairs?
X	Is there a lift located in the facility?
X	Can a wheelchair fit in the lift?
X	Are the lift buttons low enough to reach if you are in a wheelchair?
X	Are there disabled stalls?
	Are the hallways too long?
X	Are there disabled friendly exits?
	Is there Braille specifically placed for use anywhere outside the entrance of the building?
X	Is there any sort of reception signage?
	Is there Braille in the lift, specifically on the buttons?
X	Is there horn strobes located in the facility in the event of an emergency?
	Is there Braille for the bathroom?
	Are there obstacles in the hallways that might obstruct the visually impaired or deny a wheelchair access?
X	Is there a hearing loop in the building?
	Are there people that know sign language?
	Is there any means of communication for the hearing impaired?
X	Are there flashing lights in case of emergency?

### **Other Accommodations:**

- Pool hoists

### 2.3: Morden Leisure and Park Pool

	What our team assessed in terms of accommodations dealing with accessibility issues for the disabled.
X	Are there people in the facility willing to escort the disabled around the building?
X	Are there ramps or chair lift anywhere in the facility?
X	Any automatic door openers in or around the building?
	Is the reception desk at a level suitable for wheelchairs?
	Is there a lift located in the facility?
	Can a wheelchair fit in the lift?
	Are the lift buttons low enough to reach if you are in a wheelchair?
X	Are there disabled stalls?
	Are the hallways too long?
X	Are there disabled friendly exits?
	Is there Braille specifically placed for use anywhere outside the entrance of the building?
	Is there any sort of reception signage?
	Is there Braille in the lift, specifically on the buttons?
X	Is there horn strobes located in the facility in the event of an emergency?
	Is there Braille for the bathroom?
	Are there obstacles in the hallways that might obstruct the visually impaired or deny a wheelchair access?
X	Is there a hearing loop in the building?
	Are there people that know sign language?
	Is there any means of communication for the hearing impaired?
	Are there flashing lights in case of emergency?

#### Other Accommodations:

-Hoist in pool

-Changing area for disabled

-Emergency evacuation plan where members of staff search every room before they leave the facility.

### 3.0: Churches

#### 3.1: Holy Trinity Church

	What our team assessed in terms of accommodations dealing with accessibility issues for the disabled.
X	Are there people in the facility willing to escort the disabled around the building?
X	Are there ramps or chair lift anywhere in the facility?
	Any automatic door openers in or around the building?
X	Is the reception desk at a level suitable for wheelchairs?
	Is there a lift located in the facility?
	Can a wheelchair fit in the lift?
	Are the lift buttons low enough to reach if you are in a wheelchair?
X	Are there disabled stalls?
	Are the hallways too long?
X	Are there disabled friendly exits?
	Is there Braille specifically placed for use anywhere outside the entrance of the building?
X	Is there any sort of reception signage?
	Is there Braille in the lift, specifically on the buttons?
X	Is there horn strobes located in the facility in the event of an emergency?
X	Is there Braille for the bathroom?
	Are there obstacles in the hallways that might obstruct the visually impaired or deny a wheelchair access?
X	Is there a hearing loop in the building?
	Are there people that know sign language?
	Is there any means of communication for the hearing impaired?
	Are there flashing lights in case of emergency?

### 3.2: Queens Road Church

	What our team assessed in terms of accommodations dealing with accessibility issues for the disabled.
X	Are there people in the facility willing to escort the disabled around the building?
X	Are there ramps or chair lift anywhere in the facility?
	Any automatic door openers in or around the building?
	Is the reception desk at a level suitable for wheelchairs?
X	Is there a lift located in the facility?
X	Can a wheelchair fit in the lift?
	Are the lift buttons low enough to reach if you are in a wheelchair?
X	Are there disabled stalls?
	Are the hallways too long?
X	Are there disabled friendly exits?
X	Is there Braille specifically placed for use anywhere outside the entrance of the building?
	Is there any sort of reception signage?
X	Is there Braille in the lift, specifically on the buttons?
X	Is there horn strobes located in the facility in the event of an emergency?
X	Is there Braille for the bathroom?
	Are there obstacles in the hallways that might obstruct the visually impaired or deny a wheelchair access?
X	Is there a hearing loop in the building?
	Are there people that know sign language?
	Is there any means of communication for the hearing impaired?
	Are there flashing lights in case of emergency?

#### Other Accommodations:

- Trained staff are always willing to escort the disabled when they arrive.
- An entry phone for people in wheelchairs since there are no automatic doors.
- The doors are not automatic but you must buzz to be let in so some one will always open the door for anyone.
- There is a ramp into the main area of the church.



#### 4.0: Libraries

##### 4.1: Donald Hope Library

	What our team assessed in terms of accommodations dealing with accessibility issues for the disabled.
X	Are there people in the facility willing to escort the disabled around the building?
	Are there ramps or chair lift anywhere in the facility?
	Any automatic door openers in or around the building?
X	Is the reception desk at a level suitable for wheelchairs?
	Is there a lift located in the facility?
	Can a wheelchair fit in the lift?
	Are the lift buttons low enough to reach if you are in a wheelchair?
	Are there disabled stalls?
	Are the Hallway's too long?
X	Are there disabled friendly exits?
	Is there Braille specifically placed for use anywhere outside the entrance of the building?
	Is there any sort of reception signage?
	Is there Braille in the lift, specifically on the buttons?
X	Is there horn strobes located in the facility in the event of an emergency?
	Is there Braille for the bathroom?
	Are there obstacles in the hallways that might obstruct the visually impaired or deny a wheelchair access?
X	Is there a hearing loop in the building?
	Are there people that know sign language?
X	Is there any means of communication for the hearing impaired?
	Are there flashing lights in case of emergency?

##### **Other Accommodations:**

- An automatic door is going to be put in by the end of the fiscal year.
- A lower reception desk is going to be put in soon.
- The hearing loop does not work but is going to be fixed.

#### 4.2: Mitcham Library

	What our team assessed in terms of accommodations dealing with accessibility issues for the disabled.
X	Are there people in the facility willing to escort the disabled around the building?
X	Are there ramps or chair lift anywhere in the facility?
X	Any automatic door openers in or around the building?
X	Is the reception desk at a level suitable for wheelchairs?
	Is there a lift located in the facility?
	Can a wheelchair fit in the lift?
	Are the lift buttons low enough to reach if you are in a wheelchair?
X	Are there disabled stalls?
	Are the hallways too long?
X	Are there disabled friendly exits?
	Is there Braille specifically placed for use anywhere outside the entrance of the building?
X	Is there any sort of reception signage?
	Is there Braille in the lift, specifically on the buttons?
X	Is there horn strobes located in the facility in the event of an emergency?
	Is there Braille for the bathroom?
	Are there obstacles in the hallways that might obstruct the visually impaired or deny a wheelchair access?
X	Is there a hearing loop in the building?
	Are there people that know sign language?
X	Is there any means of communication for the hearing impaired?
	Are there flashing lights in case of emergency?

#### Other Accommodations:

- Computers are in place for the disabled to use.
- There are large print books.
- Audio books are also available.

#### 4.3: Morden Library

	What our team assessed in terms of accommodations dealing with accessibility issues for the disabled.
X	Are there people in the facility willing to escort the disabled around the building?
X	Are there ramps or chair lift anywhere in the facility?
X	Any automatic door openers in or around the building?
X	Is the reception desk at a level suitable for wheelchairs?
X	Is there a lift located in the facility?
X	Can a wheelchair fit in the lift?
X	Are the lift buttons low enough to reach if you are in a wheelchair?
	Are there disabled stalls?
	Are the hallways too long?
X	Are there disabled friendly exits?
X	Is there Braille specifically placed for use anywhere outside the entrance of the building?
	Is there any sort of reception signage?
	Is there Braille in the lift, specifically on the buttons?
X	Is there horn strobes located in the facility in the event of an emergency?
	Is there Braille for the bathroom?
	Are there obstacles in the hallways that might obstruct the visually impaired or deny a wheelchair access?
X	Is there a hearing loop in the building?
	Are there people that know sign language?
	Is there any means of communication for the hearing impaired?
	Are there flashing lights in case of emergency?

#### 4.4: Pollard Shill Library

	What our team assessed in terms of accommodations dealing with accessibility issues for the disabled.
X	Are there people in the facility willing to escort the disabled around the building?
X	Are there ramps or chair lift anywhere in the facility?
X	Any automatic door openers in or around the building?
X	Is the reception desk at a level suitable for wheelchairs?
	Is there a lift located in the facility?
	Can a wheelchair fit in the lift?
	Are the lift buttons low enough to reach if you are in a wheelchair?
X	Are there disabled stalls?
	Are the hallways too long?
X	Are there disabled friendly exits?
	Is there Braille specifically placed for use anywhere outside the entrance of the building?
X	Is there any sort of reception signage?
	Is there Braille in the lift, specifically on the buttons?
X	Is there horn strobes located in the facility in the event of an emergency?
	Is there Braille for the bathroom?
	Are there obstacles in the hallways that might obstruct the visually impaired or deny a wheelchair access?
X	Is there a hearing loop in the building?
X	Are there people that know sign language?
X	Is there any means of communication for the hearing impaired?
	Are there flashing lights in case of emergency?

#### **Other Accommodations:**

- Shelves are going to be lowered in the near future.
- Isles are going to be widened in order to accommodate those in wheelchairs.
- There are books on tape as well as books containing large print for those with slight to intense visual impairments.

#### 4.5: Wimbledon Library

	What our team assessed in terms of accommodations dealing with accessibility issues for the disabled.
X	Are there people in the facility willing to escort the disabled around the building?
X	Are there ramps or chair lift anywhere in the facility?
X	Any automatic door openers in or around the building?
X	Is the reception desk at a level suitable for wheelchairs?
	Is there a lift located in the facility?
	Can a wheelchair fit in the lift?
	Are the lift buttons low enough to reach if you are in a wheelchair?
	Are there disabled stalls?
	Are the hallways too long?
	Are there disabled friendly exits?
	Is there Braille specifically placed for use anywhere outside the entrance of the building?
X	Is there any sort of reception signage?
	Is there Braille in the lift, specifically on the buttons?
X	Is there horn strobes located in the facility in the event of an emergency?
	Is there Braille for the bathroom?
	Are there obstacles in the hallways that might obstruct the visually impaired or deny a wheelchair access?
X	Is there a hearing loop in the building?
	Are there people that know sign language?
	Is there any means of communication for the hearing impaired?
	Are there flashing lights in case of emergency?

#### **Other Accommodations:**

-There is a self check-out screen located near the exit.

#### 4.6: Raynes Park Library

	What our team assessed in terms of accommodations dealing with accessibility issues for the disabled.
X	Are there people in the facility willing to escort the disabled around the building?
X	Are there ramps or chair lift anywhere in the facility?
X	Any automatic door openers in or around the building?
X	Is the reception desk at a level suitable for wheelchairs?
	Is there a lift located in the facility?
	Can a wheelchair fit in the lift?
	Are the lift buttons low enough to reach if you are in a wheelchair?
X	Are there disabled stalls?
	Are the hallways too long?
X	Are there disabled friendly exits?
	Is there Braille specifically placed for use anywhere outside the entrance of the building?
	Is there any sort of reception signage?
	Is there Braille in the lift, specifically on the buttons?
X	Is there horn strobes located in the facility in the event of an emergency?
	Is there Braille for the bathroom?
	Are there obstacles in the hallways that might obstruct the visually impaired or deny a wheelchair access?
X	Is there a hearing loop in the building?
	Are there people that know sign language?
	Is there any means of communication for the hearing impaired?
X	Are there flashing lights in case of emergency?

## 5.0: Recycling Centres

### 5.1: Recycling Centre Amenity Way Morden

	What our team assessed in terms of accommodations dealing with accessibility issues for the disabled.
X	Are there people in the facility willing to escort the disabled around the building?
	Are there ramps or chair lift anywhere in the facility?
	Any automatic door openers in or around the building?
	Is the reception desk at a level suitable for wheelchairs?
	Is there a lift located in the facility?
	Can a wheelchair fit in the lift?
	Are the lift buttons low enough to reach if you are in a wheelchair?
X	Are there disabled stalls?
	Are the hallways too long?
	Are there disabled friendly exits?
	Is there Braille specifically placed for use anywhere outside the entrance of the building?
	Is there any sort of reception signage?
	Is there Braille in the lift, specifically on the buttons?
	Is there horn strobes located in the facility in the event of an emergency?
	Is there Braille for the bathroom?
	Are there obstacles in the hallways that might obstruct the visually impaired or deny a wheelchair access?
	Is there a hearing loop in the building?
	Are there people that know sign language?
	Is there any means of communication for the hearing impaired?
	Are there flashing lights in case of emergency?

#### **Other Accommodations:**

-People do not have to get out of their cars for the trained staff member to take care of their recycling.

## 5.2: Wimbledon Transfer Station

	What our team assessed in terms of accommodations dealing with accessibility issues for the disabled.
X	Are there people in the facility willing to escort the disabled around the building?
	Are there ramps or chair lift anywhere in the facility?
	Any automatic door openers in or around the building?
	Is the reception desk at a level suitable for wheelchairs?
	Is there a lift located in the facility?
	Can a wheelchair fit in the lift?
	Are the lift buttons low enough to reach if you are in a wheelchair?
X	Are there disabled stalls?
	Are the hallways too long?
	Are there disabled friendly exits?
	Is there Braille specifically placed for use anywhere outside the entrance of the building?
	Is there any sort of reception signage?
	Is there Braille in the lift, specifically on the buttons?
	Is there horn strobes located in the facility in the event of an emergency?
	Is there Braille for the bathroom?
	Are there obstacles in the hallways that might obstruct the visually impaired or deny a wheelchair access?
	Is there a hearing loop in the building?
	Are there people that know sign language?
	Is there any means of communication for the hearing impaired?
	Are there flashing lights in case of emergency?

### Other Accommodations:

- People do not have to get out of their vehicles. Trained staff member will assist the disabled people with their recycling needs.
- Staff is trained to help disabled clientele.



## 6.0: Other Facilities

### 6.1: Wimbledon Odeon Cinema

	What our team assessed in terms of accommodations dealing with accessibility issues for the disabled.
X	Are there people in the facility willing to escort the disabled around the building?
	Are there ramps or chair lift anywhere in the facility?
X	Any automatic door openers in or around the building?
X	Is the reception desk at a level suitable for wheelchairs?
X	Is there a lift located in the facility?
X	Can a wheelchair fit in the lift?
X	Are the lift buttons low enough to reach if you are in a wheelchair?
X	Are there disabled stalls?
	Are the hallways too long?
X	Are there disabled friendly exits?
	Is there Braille specifically placed for use anywhere outside the entrance of the building?
	Is there any sort of reception signage?
X	Is there Braille in the lift, specifically on the buttons?
X	Is there horn strobes located in the facility in the event of an emergency?
	Is there Braille for the bathroom?
	Are there obstacles in the hallways that might obstruct the visually impaired or deny a wheelchair access?
X	Is there a hearing loop in the building?
	Are there people that know sign language?
X	Is there any means of communication for the hearing impaired?
	Are there flashing lights in case of emergency?

#### Other Accommodations:

- All staff is fully trained to help people with disabilities.
- A noise sounds to notify you when the doors are opening.
- Voice speaks in the elevator to let you know what floor you are on.
- Infrared two-way channel system that is similar to hearing loops.
- Audio description provides a running commentary throughout the movie.
- Three designated theatres within the Cinema provide subtitles for the films.

## 6.2: Nelson Hospital

	What our team assessed in terms of accommodations dealing with accessibility issues for the disabled.
X	Are there people in the facility willing to escort the disabled around the building?
X	Are there ramps or chair lift anywhere in the facility?
	Any automatic door openers in or around the building?
X	Is the reception desk at a level suitable for wheelchairs?
X	Is there a lift located in the facility?
X	Can a wheelchair fit in the lift?
X	Are the lift buttons low enough to reach if you are in a wheelchair?
X	Are there disabled stalls?
X	Are the hallways too long?
X	Are there disabled friendly exits?
	Is there Braille specifically placed for use anywhere outside the entrance of the building?
	Is there any sort of reception signage?
	Is there Braille in the lift, specifically on the buttons?
X	Is there horn strobes located in the facility in the event of an emergency?
	Is there Braille for the bathroom?
	Are there obstacles in the hallways that might obstruct the visually impaired or deny a wheelchair access?
X	Is there a hearing loop in the building?
	Are there people that know sign language?
X	Is there any means of communication for the hearing impaired?
	Are there flashing lights in case of emergency?

### Other Accommodations:

- The hallways are long but a handrail is located throughout the building along the walls.
- Disabled parking is located in front of the building.

**6.3: Wimbledon Police Station**

	What our team assessed in terms of accommodations dealing with accessibility issues for the disabled.
X	Are there people in the facility willing to escort the disabled around the building?
X	Are there ramps or chair lift anywhere in the facility?
X	Any automatic door openers in or around the building?
	Is the reception desk at a level suitable for wheelchairs?
	Is there a lift located in the facility?
	Can a wheelchair fit in the lift?
	Are the lift buttons low enough to reach if you are in a wheelchair?
	Are there disabled stalls?
	Are the hallways too long?
	Are there disabled friendly exits?
	Is there Braille specifically placed for use anywhere outside the entrance of the building?
	Is there any sort of reception signage?
	Is there Braille in the lift, specifically on the buttons?
X	Is there horn strobes located in the facility in the event of an emergency?
	Is there Braille for the bathroom?
	Are there obstacles in the hallways that might obstruct the visually impaired or deny a wheelchair access?
	Is there a hearing loop in the building?
	Are there people that know sign language?
	Is there any means of communication for the hearing impaired?
	Are there flashing lights in case of emergency?

**Other Accommodations:**

-People who are arrested with disabilities have an escort at all times.

#### 6.4: Sava Centre

	What our team assessed in terms of accommodations dealing with accessibility issues for the disabled.
X	Are there people in the facility willing to escort the disabled around the building?
X	Are there ramps or chair lift anywhere in the facility?
X	Any automatic door openers in or around the building?
X	Is the reception desk at a level suitable for wheelchairs?
X	Is there a lift located in the facility?
X	Can a wheelchair fit in the lift?
X	Are the lift buttons low enough to reach if you are in a wheelchair?
X	Are there disabled stalls?
	Are the hallways too long?
X	Are there disabled friendly exits?
X	Is there Braille specifically placed for use anywhere outside the entrance of the building?
X	Is there any sort of reception signage?
X	Is there Braille in the lift, specifically on the buttons?
X	Is there horn strobes located in the facility in the event of an emergency?
X	Is there Braille for the bathroom?
	Are there obstacles in the hallways that might obstruct the visually impaired or deny a wheelchair access?
X	Is there a hearing loop in the building?
X	Are there people that know sign language?
X	Is there any means of communication for the hearing impaired?
X	Are there flashing lights in case of emergency?

#### **Other Accommodations:**

-Disabled parking is located in the front of the building.

**6.5: Register office for Births, Deaths, and Marriages**

	What our team assessed in terms of accommodations dealing with accessibility issues for the disabled.
X	Are there people in the facility willing to escort the disabled around the building?
	Are there ramps or chair lift anywhere in the facility?
	Any automatic door openers in or around the building?
X	Is the reception desk at a level suitable for wheelchairs?
X	Is there a lift located in the facility?
X	Can a wheelchair fit in the lift?
X	Are the lift buttons low enough to reach if you are in a wheelchair?
X	Are there disabled stalls?
	Are the hallways too long?
X	Are there disabled friendly exits?
	Is there Braille specifically placed for use anywhere outside the entrance of the building?
	Is there any sort of reception signage?
	Is there Braille in the lift, specifically on the buttons?
X	Is there horn strobes located in the facility in the event of an emergency?
	Is there Braille for the bathroom?
	Are there obstacles in the hallways that might obstruct the visually impaired or deny a wheelchair access?
X	Is there a hearing loop in the building?
	Are there people that know sign language?
	Is there any means of communication for the hearing impaired?
	Are there flashing lights in case of emergency?

**Other Accommodations:**

- Portable hearing loop
- People are always escorted by a member of staff.
- There is a virtual tour on the home page.
- Evacuation chairs are located in the facility in case of an emergency.

While filling out these evaluations at each facility we took pictures of accommodations that have been made to resolve accessibility issues faced by those with disabilities. All types of renovations were photographed, including disabled parking spaces and bathrooms. A picture of the entire facility itself was also taken so the building

could clearly be identified and is the first picture displayed on its own individual web link of the main web site which contains the virtual map and clickable links. The respective pictures were placed with the corresponding evaluations. The evaluations were put in a bullet style format typed on the computer only including what the facility was equipped with in terms of accommodations for the disabled. The pictures were then sent to the Web design team in order to be reformatted and placed as a link of the Merton Council web site which would include the typed out building accessibility evaluations we sent to our liaison in order to create individual web links for each building.

The final product of our evaluations and photos is a web link attached to Merton Council homepage, which when opened will display a virtual map of the entire Borough of Merton. Since we evaluated multiple libraries, council buildings, and leisure centres the map contains specific symbols for each genre of building. The map of the entire Borough of Merton includes tube stops so the viewer may be able to locate the facility with ease. When a mouse is dragged over the icon that represents a specific facility, the name will appear in a dialog box letting the reader know the name of the facility.

Along with the map, on the left side of the web page we have included a tabular list of all of the facilities we evaluated which are available as clickable links. When either of these links is clicked a separate web page specifically designed for that facility will appear. Each individual site contains our evaluations and photographs regarding accommodations made for disabled visitors that we found while evaluating the facilities. In case someone with a visual disability is using the site there is a voice-activated system that the web team has uploaded in order to instruct them how to operate the web links.

Along with the creation of a web page, the team sought to enhance public

awareness with two other deliverables. We felt this project should not only assist those with disabilities but also promote greater awareness for the Borough as a whole. First, hard copies of this project including our building evaluations will be placed in the libraries throughout the Borough and they will be available in Braille. The typed up version of this delivery can be found in Appendix H. Second, we have also proposed "awareness plaques" or stickers that could be placed outside the facilities that we have evaluated so the public will be aware of how the facility has accommodated the needs of those with disabilities. We hope this will generate pride among building owners who have made accessibility renovations and encourage store owners who have not renovated to make the necessary changes to their facilities. These plaques or stickers will also inform the public that people with disabilities are in large numbers, approximately 10 percent, throughout the Borough.

We hope that the solutions we have proposed will improve the quality of life for all disabled citizens and visitors of and to the Borough of Merton. Our liaisons have informed us that this web link is something that will continue to grow over time and one day all public facilities will be included on this site.

## 5

### **Conclusion**

Here in the United Kingdom our team has encountered many new solutions to problems that we originally felt only had one way to fix. For instance, at the start of the project our team hypothesized that people with visual impairment could only find their way around an unfamiliar facility by using some sort of map in Braille. For the people with hearing impairments we thought they needed some written or visual guide, which would have included options such as a translator who knew sign language or hearing loops.

After conducting our evaluations of facilities we found that most buildings did not contain Braille throughout the building or offer translators. This was due to the fact that a lot of them were older buildings that could not easily be renovated. It was necessary for the building owners to find new ways to accommodate those with disabilities that our team had not encountered in facilities in the U.S. The most common response from facility management was having a personal escort for the disabled people who visited their shops, libraries, and even cinemas. On the other hand, we did encounter some renovations we were expecting, such as lifts and hearing loops, which were prominent in a lot of buildings. The hearing loops were installed due to the strict regulations set forth by the Disability Discrimination Act of 1995.

After evaluating facilities such as libraries, shopping centers, cinemas, and leisure centers, our team has found that no matter how the building is equipped the best solution to dealing with the disabled is an escort. However, this does raise the issue of whether



the disabled are denied self-sufficiency and independence by such escorts. To be totally self-sufficient the person would not need any sort of personal assistance but would also be free to accept it if it were offered. A disabled person who is independent might prefer living in an environment where they did not require assistance and might be offended in have to use a personal escort. In all facilities that our team assessed, we were told that a trained staff member would have to accompany the disabled person not because it is a requirement of the law but because this practice is viewed as an acceptable method to solve accessibility issues in the culture of England. Since the physical environment of modern London does not, in fact, provide equal access to all human beings, having a personal escort proves to be indispensable and may explain why a person with a disability would not be offended by having someone walk them through a facility.

One issue we discussed with facilities managers was how the disabled, specifically people with visual and hearing impairments, would be notified in an emergency situation. A lot of the facilities contained fire alarms but no sort of flashing lights so that a person with a hearing impairment could be warned of an alarm. Most of these problems are taken care of due to the fact that there usually would be an escort with the disabled person. In the unlikely event that there was no escort with the disabled person in the facility a pre-determined evacuation plan is set in place. One specific example is the Leisure Centre in Wimbledon, where no member of the staff is allowed to leave the building until they have checked every room. All members of staff are assigned an emergency evacuation plan where they have to take action immediately after an alarm sounds. The plan consists of each member of the staff checking a room in order to locate any people left behind, which is superior to emergency plans in the United States. In the

event of an emergency there are usually designated people to help, but it would appear in general to be every man, woman, and invalid for him-self opposed to the organized evacuation plans found throughout Merton. Having a plan where the employees accept a greater responsibility where they are person is willing to risk their life to save the life of another is very different than the United States. In England the word to describe individuals like this are employees for they are only doing their job the way they have designed their evacuation plans.

Older buildings in Merton accommodate people with disabilities by using personal escorts, but newer facilities have been constructed with assistive technology for the disabled. Two buildings we evaluated that were recently constructed are the Odeon Cinema and the Sava Centre. Both of these facilities are new and are top of the line when it comes to new technology to assist those with disabilities.

The Odeon Cinema contains three screens for movies that have headsets and subtitles for those with hearing impairments, as well as a new type of hearing loop that does not restrict the individual to sit in a particular seat. This allows mobility for the person to sit anywhere in the cinema that they chose so they do not feel restricted or discriminated against.

The Sava Centre is probably the most advanced facility that we evaluated. It catered to every disability in every possible way. This facility has persons who can sign, it contains elevators to every floor, Braille throughout the facility, along with emergency lights and horns.

Even though both of these facilities have catered to many if not all the possible needs that a person with a disability might require, we still found that a personal escort

would be necessary for the disabled while visiting the facility. There is always an escort for the disabled. No matter where we went, even if the building has top of the line renovations, there still would be an escort for the disabled as such a practice is very much a part of the English social service culture.

Our team was extremely surprised to see what the newer facilities contained in terms of renovations when compared to the older buildings that we had also evaluated. The renovations in the newer facilities are due to the strict regulations set in place by the Disability Discrimination Act requirements that are continually being implemented not only in the Borough of Merton but the entire country. These requirements make it possible for people with disabilities to be able to become more self-sufficient. After experiencing various ways of accommodating the disabled, our team began recognize renovations such as ramps and lifts but also for the smaller things such as personal escorts which we are not accustomed to. We recognized that our project had truly international dimensions, when ideas we had learned through in the United States became infused with practices we encountered on the street of Merton.

**Laws were broken, Hearts were broken**  
**And**  
**Noses were broken**

Our stay in London was very eventful and fast paced. We saw all of the major sights to see: Big Ben (which is actually St. Stephen's Tower), Parliament, Westminster Abby, St. Paul's Cathedral, Buckingham Palace (even the gardens), British Museum, History Museum, Science Museum, National Army Museum, Imperial War Museum, Royal Observatory, Prime Meridian, Tower of London, London Eye, Cleopatra's Needle or as we like to refer to it as The Thimble, and Soho. For the relaxing part of our stay in London, we spent a great deal of time in St. James's Park, Hyde Park, and Battersea Park. The majority of our time was spent in St. James's Park however. We frequented this park so much that we had a real football sent to us so we would have something to do while we were basking in the sun. One thing that we discovered was that the weather in London is not good for getting a tan. The weather of England has to be the most sporadic in the world, and that is including New England weather. It can go from being sunny and hot to cloudy and cold then to rain all in about 20 minutes.

As for getting around in London, we got our moneys worth out of our "tube" passes. There were many times at the beginning of our trip in London where we had no idea where we were going so we would just get on a bus no matter what direction it was going in. After a couple of minutes at looking at our map, we would realize that we were going in the total opposite direction that we were supposed to and we would get off and turn around. There was one time that we felt that we were at the end of the line so

we felt that we would just stay on the bus and it would eventually turn around, bad idea. The bus never turned around and we ended up going a lot farther than we expected to go.

Some of the culture that we experienced was not so good. For example if you ask for directions and you are American, any English person will point in one direction and say “you go five minutes down the road and take a left.”

London may have had its high points, but the highlights of the trip were our “holidays” out of the city. We traveled to Rome, Dublin, Edinburgh, and one of us will continue in Amsterdam. While we never traveled as a complete group, the trips were once in a lifetime experiences. The gothic nature of Edinburgh, the eternal grandeur of Rome, and the cosmopolitan mixture that is Dublin all made our weekends the best. The culture of Rome though out of all the cities we have been too was the best. The rich history alone is immense. While there, we saw the Coliseum, the Roman Forum, St. Peter’s Basilica, the Sistine Chapel, the Fountain of Trevi, the Vatican Museums, and the Spanish Steps. Our nightly routine in Rome after a days worth of sight seeing would be to go to a local market and purchase fresh mozzarella, prosciutto, fresh bread, an of course wine. There is no other place on the face of the earth where it is impossible to have a bad meal. The food we had consisted of pizza with various toppings, sandwiches, and most important pasta. Our trip ended with us walking along a highway to have the best meal of our lives only to walk back to the airport to find out that we could not sleep in it. Because of this, the only place to sleep was on the sidewalk. It was defiantly an interesting experience.

Our last couple of weeks in London have been quite boring compared to the previous weeks. Those couple weeks mostly consisted of nightlife and afternoons in the

park. Our favorite nightlife spots would have to be Zoo bar and O'Neil's. We have had many a fun nights at these spots. The stories that we could tell from these bars would probably be as long if not longer than our IQP report.

As for our project, we have had an ok experience since it started out slow due to lack of communication. Once the project got rolling we found it easy to evaluate the building and find the information that we were looking for. Many of the people that we dealt with were very kind and helpful while our liaisons were very helpful and accommodating. We were very excited with the fact that our website was actually going to help people out although in the end we were very disappointed with the final product. It seems as if there was either a lack of communication or just a lack of motivation on the part of our liaisons to make a good website. The final product was not at all what we were looking for and it was quite disappointing that the web site did not meet the specifications that we discussed with our liaisons and the web team. We were also very disappointed that no one showed up to our final presentation. It seemed that our presentation was done for nothing because of the lack of interest in our presentation.

## References

Citizens Information Board. (2007). Mobility training for people with visual impairments. Retrieved April 12, 2007, from [http://www.citizensinformation.ie/categories/travel-and-recreation/transport-and-disability/mobility\\_training\\_for\\_people\\_with\\_a\\_visual\\_impairment](http://www.citizensinformation.ie/categories/travel-and-recreation/transport-and-disability/mobility_training_for_people_with_a_visual_impairment)

Information on people with visual impairments.

Cotler, S., & DeGraff, A. (1976). Architectural Accessibility for the Disabled of College Campuses. Albany, New York: State University Conduction Fund.

Designs of ramps and other handicap utilities.

Gatfield, A, J. (1976). Building Regulations of England and Wales. London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office.

International Building Codes.

Jobcentre Plus. (2007). Access to Work. Retrieved April 8, 2007, <http://www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk/JCP/Customers/HelpForDisabledPeople/AccessToWork/index.html>

A company that helps pay for renovations in order to accommodate people with disabilities.

London Borough of Merton. (2007). Diversity & Community Engagement Team, London Borough of Merton. Retrieved March 25, 2007, from Merton web site <http://www.merton.gov.uk/>

We used this document in order to obtain a mission statement for our report and to better understand the Borough of Merton's goals for now and the future.

London First. (2007). Disability. Retrieved April 11, 2007, from [http://www.london-first.co.uk/improving\\_london/disability.asp?L2=199](http://www.london-first.co.uk/improving_london/disability.asp?L2=199)

Improving accessibility for the disabled within London.

Shaw Trust. (2004). Disability and employment statistics. Retrieved April 13, 2007, from <http://www.shaw-trust.org.uk/page/6/89/>

Statistics on people with disabilities.

Tiresias.org. (2006). Hearing Impairment and Deafness. Retrieved April 10, 2007, from <http://www.tiresias.org/guidelines/hearing.htm>

Information on hearing impairments and deafness

U.K. Parliament. (1995). Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (c.50). Retrieved March 25, 2007, From Goggle <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts1995/1995050.htm>

Disability discrimination laws needed.

U.K. Parliament. (2005). Disability Discrimination Act 2005 (c.13). Retrieved April 8, 2007, From <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/20050013.htm>

Disability discrimination laws needed.

U.S Government. (2002). American's with Disabilities Act 1990. Retrieved March 25, 2007, From Goggle <http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/reg3a.html#Anchor-Appendix-52467>

Standard building codes, necessary for implementing construction.

How Stuff Works. (2007). How Guide Dogs Work. Retrieved April 26, 2007, From <http://people.howstuffworks.com/guide-dog3.htm>

Description of guide dogs, including pictures.

Royal National Institute of the Blind. (2007). Revolutionary Advantage Symbol Cane. Retrieved April 26, 2007, From [http://onlineshop.rnib.org.uk/display\\_item.asp?n=11&c=33&sc=89&id=2450&it=1&l=3&d=0&print=yes](http://onlineshop.rnib.org.uk/display_item.asp?n=11&c=33&sc=89&id=2450&it=1&l=3&d=0&print=yes)

Source of image of a symbol cane.

Lions Clubs International. (2005). White Cane. Retrieved April 26, 2007, From [http://www.lionsclubs.org/JA/content/vision\\_services\\_whitecane.shtml](http://www.lionsclubs.org/JA/content/vision_services_whitecane.shtml)

Source for images of a white cane.

Pappas, John. (2007). Estimated cost of Elevator installation. (We are not sure how to site this) Asked on April 18, 2007, Over phone.

Elevator cost estimate.

Pennsylvania College of Optometry. (2006). Long Cane. Retrieved April 26, 2007, From [http://www.pco.edu/acad\\_progs/grad/om/om\\_photo/gs\\_om\\_28.jpg](http://www.pco.edu/acad_progs/grad/om/om_photo/gs_om_28.jpg)

Source for an image of a boy using a long cane to explore.



## **Appendix A**

### **Description of Sponsor**

The London Borough of Merton, formed in 1965, recently implemented a plan to improve the community life. This represents the second phase of community planning for the Borough of Merton. The current community development project was launched on June 14, 2006. This effort, which will cover the period 2006-2015, addresses a wide variety of areas (Merton Council, 2006). The idea presented therein will help shape Merton into a safer and stronger community. This comprehensive proposal benefits citizens of all ages and focuses attention on crime, community action and unemployment.

The Borough is currently trying to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) passed in 1995. This act mandates that all those with disabilities should be allowed access to all buildings in the city. Already the Borough of Merton has made considerable progress in its efforts to improve the community and meet the regulations of the DDA. Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG's) were implemented to help disabled people meet the cost of upgrading their current homes and facilities (Merton Council, 2006). The Merton Racial Equality Partnership run by Director Frank Anti, and Racial Equality Officer Shamusideen Olugunna addresses concerns of racial discrimination. Notably, this is a government funded volunteer organization. Their mission includes equal opportunity for all, elimination of discrimination, and promotion of racial interaction.

Merton also works closely with the younger and elderly community. The Merton Youth Service has sponsored many youth centers in the surrounding areas. Services offered to the elderly range from residential and nursing care to travel passes for women over 60 and men over 65 (Merton Council, 2006). These passes give the elderly access to

busses, “tube”, and trams in London. These services are only a few among many others that contribute to making Merton a more pleasant community for all to live in.

Despite this community development in Merton there are still issues that need to be addressed. Perhaps the most important one is public safety. The Council’s goal is not only to see a decrease in crime but also to educate others on how to prevent it (Merton Council, 2006). The Borough’s workers make it their responsibility to ensure that businesses and work places are constructing fire escapes and emergency plans in case of an accident.

Unemployment is high in Merton. Consequently to help people find jobs, the Borough lists numerous “job centers” on their web site to alert citizens to available employment opportunities (Merton Council, 2006). These “job centers” address the special needs of individuals who are handicapped. Recently a scheme called the “New Deal for Disabled People” was implemented to give a direct benefit for individuals according to their particular disability.

All of these programs that are in place have been quite successful in helping to shape the future of Merton. In 2010 the committees responsible for this plan will evaluate the progress and submit a report to the community (Merton Council, 2006). If this evaluation receives positive feedback, the Borough will be on its way to living up to its responsibilities in fulfilling Merton’s need to become a better place to live for everybody.

## **Appendix B**

### **What is an IQP and how does this project qualify?**

According to the Worcester Polytechnic Institute web site (2007), the Interactive Qualifying Project (IQP) is one of the three major qualifying projects that all WPI students must complete before graduating. The IQP challenges students to deal with a problem that exists between science and social structures. Both of fields are studied to meet and improve human needs. This in turn allows students to realize how their careers will have an effect on society. These projects typically are proposed by agencies or organizations since the projects are done in teams of three or four students.

Students are paired from all disciplines since creating a diverse range of knowledge ranging from engineering experience to humanities and arts. The IQP provides opportunities for professional experience which is unique among technical institutions (WPI, 2007). Currently WPI is the only college that offers a program of this importance.

This project was given a problem that is both technical and social in nature. We found ways to improve the standards of accessibility for the handicapped to buildings in the Borough of Merton. This project gave us extremely useful, real world experience and helped us learn to work together well in groups, playing to each other's strengths. It also helped us learn to work outside our comfort zones and forced us to think about things in ways we never have before.

## Appendix C

### Phone call interview results.

#### First Interview

- a. Local buildings/facilities visit regularly
  - i. Does not visit regularly
- b. Any difficulties
  - WPLI** i. Morden tube station
    - 1. Lift is closed and can not get down to the trains due to crutches
- c. Which buildings should we visit first
  - i. Cinema
  - ii. Morden tube
  - iii. Churches

#### Second Interview

- d. Local buildings/facilities visit regularly
  - i. Library
  - ii. Shopping centres
  - iii. Hospitals
- e. Any difficulties
  - i. Lots of stairs and no lift at hospitals
    - 1. Hard to get around, low energy
- f. Which buildings should we visit first
  - i. St. George's Hospital

#### Third Interview

- g. Local buildings/facilities visit regularly
  - i. Does not go out
- h. Any difficulties
  - i. N/A
- i. Which buildings should we visit first
  - i. N/A

#### Fourth Interview

- j. Local buildings/facilities visit regularly
  - i. Tube station
  - ii. Shopping Centre
- k. Any difficulties
  - i. None
- l. Which buildings should we visit first
  - i. No idea

#### Fifth Interview

- 1. tube station, libraries, hospital
- 2. hard to move around (wheelchair)
- 3. libraries or tube

#### 6th

- 1. pubs, shopping centres
- 2. hard to get up and down stairs
- 3. churches

#### 7th

- 1. cinema, tube
- 2. N/A
- 3. tube

8th

1. shopping centre
2. difficulty walking around buildings
3. hospitals, churches

9th

1. Does not go out regularly
2. N/A
3. shopping centres, libraries (maybe)

10th

1. pubs, hospital
2. N/A
3. No idea

## Appendix D

Letter used for accessing facilities in order to complete evaluations.

### CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S DEPARTMENT

*Ged Curran – Chief Executive*

**Diversity and Community Engagement  
London Borough of Merton  
Merton Civic Centre  
London Road  
Morden SM4 5DX**

(To whom this may concern,

*Direct Line:* (contact1)  
*Fax:* (contact2)

*My Ref :* (myRef)  
*Please Ask For:* (AskFor)  
*Your Ref:* (YourRef)

*Date:* 11 June 07

### **Disabled Access and Public buildings**

We are students from Worcester Polytechnic Institute located in the United States, here on behalf of the Merton Council working on a project to improve disabled access.

Our project entails assessing disabled access in selected buildings and venues throughout the Borough of Merton. We are focusing on council buildings, leisure centres, libraries, hospitals, and shopping centres. Our team will be documenting the disabled access adjustments made to accommodate people with disabilities such as ramps, hearing loops, automatic doors etc.

Our supervising officers in Merton Council are Ernest Obumselu (0208 545 3896) and Monica Wambu. Both officers work in the Civic Centre in Morden where our project is based. Our final project will be a web link on Merton council's web site and will allow people with disabilities an opportunity to view the level of accessibility for each facility.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Julian Dittami  
Lee Pappas  
Michael Cross  
Ernest Obumselu  
Monica Wambu

## **Appendix E**

### **Phone call questionnaire**

We are calling on behalf of the Merton Council. Our records show that you are on the residence panel and have agreed to participate in Merton Consultations. Do you have time to answer a few short questions concerning disability access in the Borough of Merton. (Wait for them to answer) This should only take 5 minutes.

- 1 What facilities in the Borough of Merton such as libraries, movie cinemas, pubs, shops etc. do you like to visit?
- 2 What facilities in the Borough of Merton such as food shops, Council Centres, etc...do you need to visit?
- 3 Do you experience any difficulties getting in and around the buildings that you need or want to visit?
- 4 What facilities do you visit on a regular day-to-day basis?

Thank you for your time. Your input will help us to better assist the needs of the disabled.

(If they have any complaints, take their name, we have their phone numbers, and tell them that we will send a complaint file forward and they will be called back within the next few days concerning it)

## **Appendix F**

### **Description of disabilities**

#### *Visual Impairment*

A Visual Impairment is one of the most difficult impairments to have. Mobility training is very crucial to people with vision impairments. Some people have visual impairments which allow them enough residual vision to be mobile. Others with no vision require some aid to function in society. Mobility training is offered to develop skills required to move around safely with vision impairments. Two mobility aids that are commonly used for those with visual impairments are White Canes and Guide Dogs.

There are three different types of White Canes that are readily available. White walking sticks are used as an indicator. This provides an indicator that the person holding the cane has a visual impairment. The white walking stick does offer physical support.

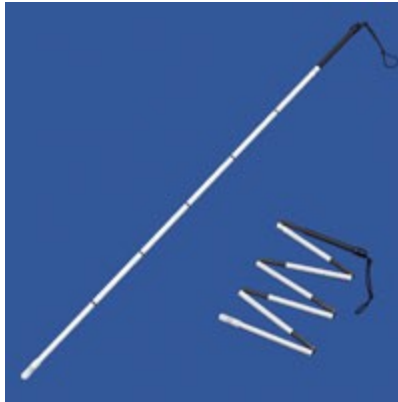


**Figure 1: White walking stick  
(Lions Club, 2007)**

A symbol cane is primarily used to let others know that the person holding the cane has a visual impairment and may be in need of assistance. The symbol cane is not



for physical support or mobility aid. Figure 1 is a picture of a white walking stick. In Figure 2 a symbol cane is displayed. This symbol cane can also be broken down into a small compact cane for storage.



**Figure 2: Symbol cane**  
(RNIB, 2007)

Finally the long cane is a mobility device that is used to locate potential hazards while walking. The cane is swept in an arc (typically the width of their body) from one side to the other, lightly skimming the ground. The use of such a cane does require training. Figure 3 shows how the long cane can be used to avoid hazards and to navigate through rough terrain. This task is being completed with relative ease by a young boy.



**Figure 3: Long cane**  
(PCO, 2007)

Guide dogs are also extremely helpful for aiding those with visual impairments. Certain types of dogs are bred specifically for guiding the visually impaired. These breeds include Labradors, Golden Retrievers, and German Shepherds. Figure 4 shows the three different guide dogs listed above (Golden Retriever-far left, Yellow Labrador-middle, German Shepard-far right).



**Figure 4: Guide Dogs**  
(How stuff works, 2007)

An organization that deals with training for the visually impaired in Ireland is the National Council for the Blind in Ireland (NCBI). The NCBI supplies orientation and mobility training services. They teach the blind how to move around indoors and outdoors without inflicting self injury. There are multiple individual mobility training programs provided by the NCBI:

- Teaching a person to maximize use of residual vision
- Body spatial and environmental awareness
- Use of sensory clues
- Orientation and mobility skills within the home, work, college or other everyday routes the person would like to become familiar with
- Road safety awareness and independent travel skills (Citizens Information, 2007)

Not only does the NCBI offer training to the visually impaired, but they also offer the same programs for those who deal closely with the visually impaired such as

families and friends. These programs offered by the NCBI are free of charge. They offer free symbol canes, white walking sticks and long canes free of charge. In order to obtain a guide dog it would cost 10 Euro per week.

Those with vision impairments have a far harder time than most when trying to get into buildings because they cannot see where the entrances and exits are. If there were an emergency in the building, they would have an even harder time getting out of the facility because everyone else would be trying to get out at the same time.

Understanding the difficulties experienced by a person with a visual impairment will allow us to find solutions to suit their needs. We have discussed numerous methods that those with visual impairments are currently using to complete their daily tasks. The Borough of Merton's layout, infrastructure and service position create accessibility problems for the disabled, which, if changed, would no longer pose such problems for the handicapped.

### *Hearing Impairment*

According to Tiresias (2007), a web site dedicated to supplying information and technology to those with disabilities, hearing impairments vary just as much as any other physical disability. It is the second most common disability and is generally not noticeable. In the UK alone, some sort of hearing loss affects roughly 9 million people. It is thought that almost 4 million people could be using some form of hearing aid. Hearing impairments are not always formed at birth. Only about 3 in 1000 children are born with hearing loss. As people get older, their hearing deteriorates, and by age 70, the chance of having hearing problems is up to 70%.

Those who are born without hearing are referred to as pre-lingually deaf, and those who lose their hearing over time are called post-lingually deaf. There are two main types of deafness in addition to being pre or post lingual (Tiresias, 2007). A conductive loss is an impediment of sound hitting the sensory receptor. This can be caused from something as simple as wax buildup in the ear and simple surgery can solve this problem. The other form is known as sensory-neural loss. This type does not just lessen the volume of noise the person is hearing, but also distorts the sounds, making it harder to understand.

The levels of deafness vary depending on the amount of decibels one is capable of hearing. The various degrees of impairments are mild hearing loss, with the person not able to pick up between 25 and 40 decibels (dB), moderate hearing loss, 41-70 dB, severe hearing loss, 71-90 dB and profound hearing loss, 96+ dB (Tiresias, 2007). Those in the severe and profound loss groups have trouble following conversations even with the use of hearing aids, sometimes leading the person to depend almost entirely on written words. One common form of communication used by hearing impaired persons is lip-reading, though this is not a very useful form of communication since only about 30% of what is said can be seen (Tiresias, 2007). Another form of communication used is sign language, but there are disadvantages to using it. One needs training to learn it and then they can only communicate in this manner to those who also know sign language.

There are many different products available to those with hearing loss to help them in their daily lives. There are devices that attach to the phone or alarm clock that amplify the volume and pitch so that it is audible. There are specially made phones that help with hearing loss. There are even indicators that go off to let you know when certain

sounds are happening, such as a doorbell, baby crying or even a smoke alarm (Tiresias, 2007).

When studying any physical impairment it is necessary to understand what causes each disability. We discussed above what the causes of different hearing impairments are. While the hearing impaired lack the ability to perceive sound, they have adapted and found a new way to communicate. This form of communication is sign language. Sign language can be incorporated into helping those with hearing disabilities gain better access to the buildings.

### *Limited Mobility*

There are different types of limited mobility; these range from a person using a cane to a motorized wheelchair. The one thing that all of these handicaps have in common is that they limit accessibility to buildings. In order for these people to access buildings there must be different forms of entrances. These can be anything from ramps, handrails, elevators and chairlifts to new wheelchair technology.

The issue of limited mobility is a complex one. There are many different forms of limited mobility. Being on crutches or in a wheelchair or even using a cane are all different forms of limited mobility. In order to accommodate the needs of a person who has limited mobility we must look for multiple methods to allow them equal access to the areas in the Borough of Merton. Some methods such as ramps and handrails may seem like they are strictly for those in wheelchairs. Using ramps or handrails can be extremely helpful, not only to a person in a wheelchair, but also to someone with crutches or a cane.

**Appendix G**  
**“Awareness Plaque/sticker”**



## **Appendix H**

### **Typed Evaluations for hard copy**

#### **ALL SAINTS**

The building has all of the following installed:

Mobility:

- 1 Ramps
- 2 Automatic doors
- 3 People to help
- 4 Disabled accessible stalls in the bathrooms
- 5 Disabled accessible exits

Hearing:

- 1 Hearing loops
- 2 Mobile loop system

#### **VESTRY HALL**

The building has all of the following installed:

Mobility:

- 1 Ramps
- 2 Automatic doors
- 3 People to help
- 4 Lowered reception desk
- 5 Wheelchair accessible lift
- 6 Lift has low buttons
- 7 Disabled accessible stalls in the bathrooms
- 8 Disabled accessible exits
- 9 Short hallways

Hearing:

- 1 Hearing loops
- 2 People to help

Visual:

- 3 Braille in lift
- 4 Horn alarms in case of emergencies
- 5 White stripes down sides of hallways



## **CHAUCER CENTRE**

The building has all of the following installed:

Mobility:

- 1 Ramps
- 2 People to help
- 3 Lowered reception desk
- 4 Lift
- 5 Disabled accessible stalls in the bathrooms
- 6 Disabled accessible exits

Hearing:

- 1 Hearing loops
- 2 Computers have large print

Visual:

- 3 People to help
- 4 Horn alarms in case of emergencies
- 5

## **CIVIC CENTRE**

The building has all of the following installed:

Mobility:

- 1 Ramps
- 2 Automatic doors
- 3 People to help
- 4 Lowered reception desk
- 5 Wheelchair accessible lift
- 6 Lift has low buttons
- 7 Disabled accessible stalls in the bathrooms
- 8 Disabled accessible exits
- 9 Short hallways

Hearing:

- 1 Hearing loops
- 2 People to help
- 3 Means of communication
- 4 Video Screens

Visual:

- 5 People to help
- 6 Braille in lift
- 7 Horn alarms in case of emergencies
- 8 Clear hallways

## **DONALD HOPE LIBRARY**

The building has all of the following installed:

Mobility:

- 1 Lowered reception desk
- 2 Disabled accessible exits

Hearing:

- 1 People to help
- 2 Means of communication

Visual:

- 1 Reception signs
- 2 People to help

They are fixing the following:

- 1 Automatic doors
- 2 Hearing loops

## **Mitcham Library**

The building has all of the following installed:

Mobility:

- 1 Ramps
- 2 Automatic doors
- 3 People to help
- 4 Lowered reception desk
- 5 Disabled stalls in bathrooms
- 6 Disabled accessible exits
- 7 Short hallways

Visually:

- 8 Reception signs
- 9 Clear hallways
- 10 Door signs
- 11 Large print books

Hearing:

- 12 Talking books
- 13 Hearing loops
- 14 Computer for better communication

## **MORDEN LIBRARY**

The building has all of the following installed:

Mobility:

- 1 Automatic doors
- 2 People to help
- 3 Lowered reception desk
- 4 Lift
- 5 Wheelchair can fit into elevator
- 6 Lift buttons lowered
- 7 Disabled accessible exits

Hearing:

- 1 Hearing loops
- 2 People to help

Visual:

- 1 Braille outside of entrance
- 2 People to help
- 3 Horn alarms in case of emergency

## **WIMBELDON LIBRARY**

The building has all of the following installed:

Mobility:

- 1 Ramps
- 2 Automatic doors
- 3 People to help
- 4 Lowered reception desk
- 5 Ramp to higher level
- 6 Short hallways

Hearing:

- 1 Hearing loops
- 2 Self checkout screen

Visual:

- 1 People to help
- 2 Clear hallways

## **Pollard Shill Library**

The building has all of the following installed:

Mobility:

- 1 Ramps
- 2 Automatic doors
- 3 People to help
- 4 Disabled stalls in bathrooms
- 5 Disabled accessible exits

Visual:

- 6 Reception signage
- 7 Door signs
- 8 Large print books

Hearing:

- 9 Talking books
- 10 Hearing loops
- 11 Person that knows sign language

They are fixing the following:

- 1 Lowering shelves
- 2 Widening aisles
- 3 Computers being put on adjustable tables
- 4 Large print on computers

## **RAYNES PARK LIBRARY**

The building has all of the following installed:

Mobility:

- 1 Ramps
- 2 Automatic door
- 3 Lowered reception desk
- 4 Disabled accessible exits

Hearing:

- 1 Hearing loops
- 2 People to help
- 3 Flashing lights in case of emergency

Visual:

- 1 People to help
- 2 Horn alarms in case of emergency
- 3 Doors signs
- 4 Clear hallways

## **HOLY TRINITY CHURCH**

The building has all of the following installed:

Mobility:

- 1 Ramps
- 2 Doors are open
- 3 People to help
- 4 Disabled accessible stalls in bathrooms

Hearing:

- 1 Hearing loops
- 2 People to help

Visual:

- 1 People to help
- 2 Braille in bathroom
- 3 Door signs

## **QUEEN'S ROAD CHURCH**

The building has all of the following installed:

### Mobility:

- 1 Ramps
- 2 People to help
- 3 Lift
- 4 Wheelchair can fit into lift
- 5 Low lift buttons
- 6 Disabled accessible bathroom stalls
- 7 Disabled accessible exits
- 8 Ramp for main area of church
- 9 Entry phone for wheelchair

### Hearing:

- 1 Hearing loops
- 2 People to help

### Visual:

- 1 Braille outside entrance on buzzer
- 2 Automatic doors, have to be buzzed in
- 3 Horn alarms in case of emergencies
- 4 Braille for bathrooms
- 5 Door signs

### Other additions:

- 1 Always escorts available

## **CANONS LEISURE CENTRE**

The building has all of the following installed:

Mobility:

- 1 Ramps
- 2 Automatic doors
- 3 Lowered reception desk
- 4 Lift
- 5 Wheelchair can fit in lift
- 6 Disabled accessible stalls in bathroom and changing rooms
- 7 Disabled accessible exits
- 8 Pool hoist
- 9 Wheelchair gait
- 10 Ramp in sports hall

Hearing:

- 1 Hearing loops
- 2 People to help

Visual:

- 1 Automatic doors
- 2 People to help
- 3 Horn alarms in case of emergencies

## **MERTON LEISURE**

The building has all of the following installed:

Mobility:

- 1 Ramps
- 2 Automatic doors
- 3 People to help
- 4 Disabled accessible stalls in bathrooms
- 5 Disabled accessible exits
- 6 Pool hoist

Hearing:

- 1 Hearing loops
- 2 People to help
- 3 Flashing lights for emergencies

Visual:

- 1 Door signs

## **MORDEN POOL**

The building has all of the following installed:

Mobility:

- 1 Ramps
- 2 Automatic doors
- 3 Hoist in bathroom
- 4 Changing area designed for disabled

Hearing:

- 1 Hearing loops
- 2 People to help
- 3 Members of staff searching for people during emergency

Visual:

- 1 People to help
- 2 Horn alarms in case of emergency
- 3 Clear hallways



## **NELSON HOSPITAL**

The building has all of the following installed:

### Mobility:

- 1 Ramps
- 2 People to help
- 3 Lowered reception desk
- 4 Lift
- 5 Wheelchair can fit in lift
- 6 Low buttons in lift
- 7 Disabled accessible stalls in bathroom
- 8 Rails on sides of hallway

### Hearing:

- 1 Hearing loops
- 2 People to help
- 3 Means of communication

### Visual:

- 1 People to help
- 2 Signs throughout building
- 3 Horn alarms for emergencies
- 4 Door signs

### Other additions:

- 1 Disabled parking in front of building

## **ODEON CINEMA**

The building has all of the following installed:

### Mobility:

- 1 Automatic doors
- 2 People to help
- 3 Lowered reception desk
- 4 Wheelchair accessible lift
- 5 Disabled accessible bathroom stalls
- 6 Disabled accessible exits

### Visual:

- 1 People to help
- 2 Horns in case of emergencies
- 3 Speaking lift

### Hearing:

- 1 Hearing loops
- 2 People to help
- 3 Means of communication

### Other Modifications:

- 1 Always have a carer with the individual
- 2 All personnel trained with staff
- 3 Infrared 2-way channel system covering whole screen, works like hearing loops
- 4 Audio description through headsets
- 5 Subtitles on screens 2, 3, 4

## **SAVA CENTRE**

The building has all of the following installed:

### Mobility:

- 1 Ramps
- 2 Lifts accessible by wheelchair
- 3 Automatic doors
- 4 Persons to help those with disabilities
- 5 Lowered reception desks
- 6 Disabled stalls in the bathrooms
- 7 Disabled accessible exits
- 8 Disabled parking in front of building

### Visual:

- 9 Braille outside entrance
- 10 Reception signage
- 11 Map of facility in Braille
- 12 Braille in bathrooms
- 13 Door signs

### Hearing:

- 14 Hearing loops
- 15 Person who knows sign language
- 16 Video screens
- 17 Flashing lights in case of emergency

## **REGISTER OFFICE FOR BIRTHS, DEATHS, MARRIAGES**

The building has all of the following installed:

Mobility:

- 1 Lowered reception desk
- 2 Lift
- 3 Wheelchair can fit into lift
- 4 Easily accessible lift buttons
- 5 Disabled accessible stalls
- 6 Disabled accessible exits
- 7 Evacuation chairs

Hearing:

- 1 Portable hearing loops
- 2 Hearing loops at reception
- 3 Flashing lights in case of emergency
- 4 New loop upstairs
- 5 Always escorted by a member of staff
- 6 Virtual tour on homepage

Visual:

- 1 Raised lettering in lift
- 2 Horn alarm in case of emergency

## **RECYCLING CENTRE AMENITY WAY, MORDEN**

The building has all of the following installed:

- 1 Disabled Accessible Bathrooms
- 2 People to help
- 3 Do not exit vehicles, they have trained staff to help those with disabilities

## **WIMBLEDON TRANSFER STATION**

The building has all of the following installed:

- 1 Disabled Accessible Bathrooms
- 2 People to help
- 3 Do not exit vehicles, they have trained staff to help those with disabilities

## **WIMBLEDON POLICE STATION**

The building has all of the following installed:

Mobility:

- 1 Ramps
- 2 Automatic doors
- 3 People to help

Visual:

- 1 People to help
- 2 Horns in case of emergency

Hearing:

- 1 People to help

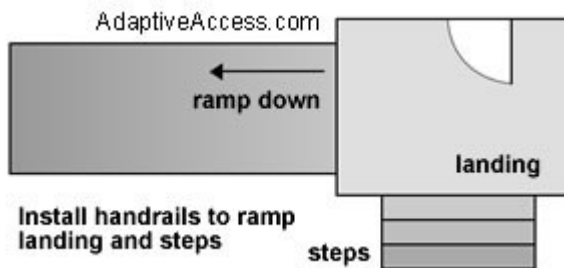
Other details:

- 2 Everyone arrested will have an escort at all times

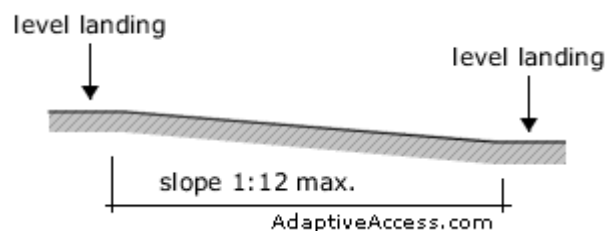
## Appendix I

### Possible renovations

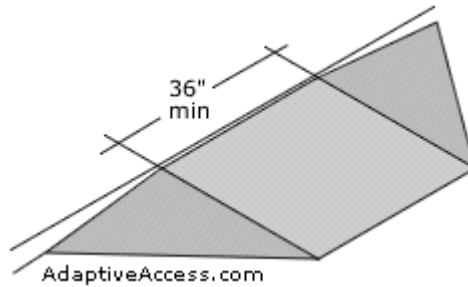
There are many possibilities in terms of renovations in order to accommodate the disabled which range from ramps to hearing loops. Ramps can be made of many different materials. Various styles of ramps are shown below in Figures 5 and 8. For ramps there are many guidelines and codes that need to be followed. If these codes are not followed, then the ramps can be hazardous to all who use them. All structural modifications shown in the figures below meet the minimum standards for building codes in the United States (Adaptive Access, 2007). Figure 6 shows the maximum slope required for a newly installed ramp. Figure 7 is an example of a curb style ramp. Again we see that there is a minimum width required for installation. These restrictions play a big role when making renovations since it is required that there is adequate space for the mechanism to meet slope and width constraints.



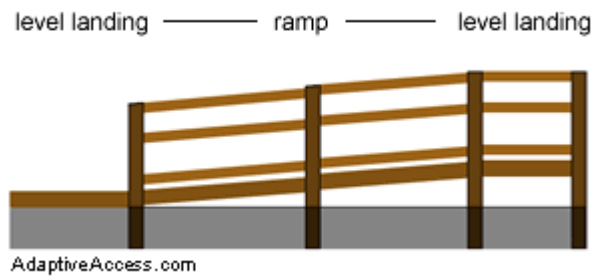
**Figure 5: Ramp and Stairs with Landing**  
(Adaptive Access, 2007)



**Figure 6: Slope of Ramp**  
(Adaptive Access, 2007)

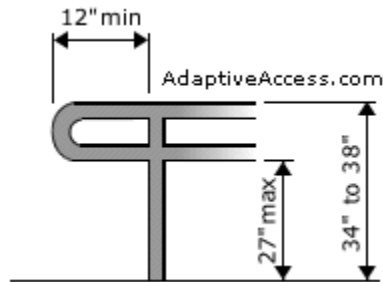


**Figure 7: Curb Ramp**  
(Adaptive Access, 2007)



**Figure 8: Wooden Ramp**  
(Adaptive Access, 2007)

Handrails are also an imperative addition to a ramp or flight of stairs. These offer help to those who are not in a wheelchair. They offer better stability while walking up and down stairs and ramps as well as protecting people from falling off the sides. There are codes in place that regulate the handrails, but they were not put in initially to aid those with disabilities. These codes vary depending on where you live. Figure 9 is an example of a handrail that meets the minimum requirements' for the United States (Adaptive Access, 2007).



**Figure 9: Handrail Heights**  
(Adaptive Access, 2007)

One option that can be used as an alternative to an elevator is a chair lift. These provide, in some cases, a portable, low-cost alternative to elevators. There are many different types of lifts that range from lifts that go up stairs to one that works vertically. One example of a wheelchair lift is shown in Figure 10. This chair lift is designed for moving a person in a wheelchair up a single flight of stairs. In some cases, it is not cost effective to put in a chairlift if the building is more than two stories high. A chair lift is designed to bring a person in a wheelchair up a flight whereas an elevator is intended to carry people up numerous stories (Adaptive Access, 2007). In Figure 11 there is a picture of a man using one style of chairlift to move from one floor to the next.



**Figure 10: Wheelchair Lift**  
(Adaptive Access, 2007)



**Figure 11: Wheelchair Lift**  
(Adaptive Access, 2007)



Elevators will always be the most accessible option in getting up and down a building, but they are not the most feasible in many cases. Elevators can cost upwards of US \$60,000 to purchase and have them installed (John Pappas, 2007). Another fact to keep in mind is that with all the old buildings, simply removing sections to install such equipment could ruin the aesthetic and historical value of the building.

The issue of limited mobility is a complex one. There are many different forms of limited mobility. Being on crutches or in a wheelchair or even using a cane are all different forms of limited mobility. In order to accommodate the needs of a person who has limited mobility we must look for multiple methods to allow them equal access to the areas in the Borough of Merton. Some methods such as ramps and handrails may seem like they are strictly for those in wheelchairs. Using ramps or handrails can be extremely helpful, not only to a person in a wheelchair, but also to someone with crutches or a cane.