

Everybody Welcome?



A Guide on How to Make Your Church Disability Friendly



CMWDT

EVANGELISE EQUIP EDUCATE

Christian Ministries with Disabled Trust

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Introduction

In New Zealand, people with disabilities make up 20% of the population. That is a total of 760,000 people. (Statistics taken from the New Zealand Census, 2001).

66% of this group have a physical disability. The majority of these people have more than one disability.

You may not be aware of this large group of people.

Our starting point is that we as a Christian ministry who work with people with disabilities, do not think this group is present in the church and in church life proportionate to their percentage in the general population.

Many of these people are not able to attend church because of the barriers they face getting to and into the church.

This booklet is about how you can make your church friendly towards people with disabilities, and therefore to all people.

We are urging churches to make a commitment to include people with disabilities in all aspects of church life.

Churches are not expected to produce a perfectly accessible church, as this may be nearly impossible. We would just like you to be open to ideas and change.

Thank you for obtaining a copy of "Everybody Welcome?", We pray that it will be a valuable resource in your church, and a starting point in making everything you do friendly to all people.

Karen Jack

Compiler and Author of "Everybody Welcome?"

This booklet is distributed by the Christian Ministries with Disabled Trust.

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1. What is a “disability”?

A disability is an impairment that limits a person’s major life activities, or the management of various essential aspects of life. The stereotype of disability involving people using a wheelchair represents only a very small percentage of the disabled population.

Generally speaking, disabilities can be separated into the following five main areas:

- 1) Physical impairment
- 2) Visual impairment
- 3) Hearing impairment
- 4) Intellectual impairment
- 5) Mental illness

These are the sub group headings we have used throughout the booklet. You can find further definitions of these in the Appendix, on page 32.

Disabilities may exist from birth, or be acquired throughout one’s lifetime from medical conditions or accidents. Many are age-related. Some are temporary, while others are permanent. Some are visible, and others are not. All impairments are therefore quite varied. We need to be mindful that there are now more people in our communities with disabilities than ever before. And in the future this will be a growing population. This is mostly due to advances in medicine, the result being that people survive at birth and now live longer. So as you can see, disability in its widest sense is not age-specific, gender-specific or culturally specific.

Not one of us on this planet can guarantee that we will not be affected by disability at some point in our lifetime. In fact it is highly likely we will be if we live to an old age.

2. Why should I make my church disability friendly?

To answer this question we need to ask some more questions.

1. What does God think about people with disabilities?

Our starting point is that God made all people in His image (Gen 1:27). This includes people with disabilities. God loves everyone (John 3:16). "Everyone" therefore must include people with disabilities. 1 John 3:1 tells us that God loves us so much, that He calls us His own children! People with disabilities are His children too, and He values and loves them as much as any other person (Luke 12:6-7). Because God loves and values all people, we should too (John 13).

In Exodus 4 we see a discourse between God and Moses. Moses was telling God that He could not possibly use him because he had a speech impediment i.e. a disability. God's response tells us a lot about how He sees people with disabilities. He says *"Who makes mouths?...Who makes people so they can speak or not speak, hear or not hear, see or not see? Is it not I the Lord?..."* Here God clearly states that sometimes He makes people with disabilities.

Although people may judge others on their outward appearances, God judges us by our thoughts and motives (1 Samuel 16:7). God sees what is on the inside, and we should try and look at people the same way. In God's eyes, people with disabilities are not at all inferior to people who are able bodied, therefore we should not see them as inferior either. People with disabilities are equal in every way to the non-disabled.

People with disabilities are some of the poorest and most disadvantaged socially in our society and around the world. Proverbs 22:22-23 shows God's heart for the poor. It states that He defends them and He will protect them. People with disabilities can suffer from low self-esteem and loneliness. They also may have to deal with the very real issues of loss, grieving and rejection. They need God. As Christ would do, we should esteem those who suffer from low self esteem, loneliness, grief and rejection.

2. Would Jesus want my church friendly towards people with disabilities?

The answer is a resounding "YES"! Jesus would want our churches accessible to all people. Jesus died for everyone (2 Cor 5:15). The good news of salvation through His death is for everybody (Romans 3:23). John 3:16 says *"For God so loved the world that He sent His Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life"*. This is an inclusive faith, excluding nobody. God desires that not one person should perish (2 Peter 3:9).

Through the parable of the Great Banquet in Luke 14, Jesus speaks of inviting people with disabilities to join in on the blessings of the Kingdom of God. They are welcomed to Heaven. **If God values people with disabilities enough to have them included in His family in heaven, would He not also desire that people with disabilities should be included in His Kingdom on earth?** Consider this—a church not providing access to people with disabilities, is rejecting people with disabilities.

"The problems of disabled people will not be solved by more government programmes or better health care, but by the redemptive power of Jesus Christ demonstrated in His people. We need to remind ourselves again that His strength is made perfect in our weakness." Billy Graham.

3. Does having a disability mean less potential to have a personal relationship with God?

The answer is no, of course not. In the spiritual area people with disabilities are no different from able-bodied people. God wants all people to live fulfilling lives with a purpose and a plan (John 10:10; Jeremiah 29:11). Jesus speaks of being the good shepherd who has come so that His sheep may have abundant life. Often people with disabilities can become like sheep without a shepherd.

It was Jesus' command to make disciples of every nation by teaching them His commands (Matt 8:19). Teaching requires that the recipient of the information can understand what is being taught. Hearing impairment prevents the recipient from hearing the sermon. Intellectual impairment prevents the recipient from understanding the message if it is too complex.

It is essential to find alternative means to effectively teach people with a range of disabilities in a way that they will understand.

(Think about this - by simplifying the message, this will mean that everybody else will be able to understand the message more easily, and it will be more memorable as well.)

4. What does legislation state about accessible churches?

The Building Act 1991 requires that "reasonable and adequate provision is made for people with disabilities to carry out normal activities and processes" in any buildings where the public are admitted with or without payment.

This includes churches, chapels and places of public worship. However, many church buildings were built before the Building Act of 1991 was legislated and therefore are not legally bound by it.

Any church buildings erected or modified after this date must meet the requirements of this Building Act, and the Building Regulations of 1992. These regulations state that people with disabilities must be able to carry out normal activities, functions and processes within buildings. No building consent will be granted for the alteration of an existing building unless the Territorial Authority is satisfied that the alteration will meet access and facility needs of people with disabilities as is reasonably practicable.

The Human Rights Act is also legislation that the church needs to comply with. It is actually unlawful and discriminatory for service providers (which includes churches) to treat people with disabilities less favourably than others for a reason related to their disability.

Conclusion

We have seen that God values all people the same, that Jesus includes people with disabilities in His Kingdom, and legislation states we should have accessible churches. As far as legislation is concerned, we believe that church accessibility should be viewed as a moral responsibility, rather than a legal liability, ultimately benefiting the church and the kingdom of God.

Perhaps the only thing holding you back from pursuing a disability accessible church is the thought of the cost of the physical modifications, and a lack of knowledge about what would make your church more disability friendly.

These barriers are easy to remedy. Read on to equip yourself with this knowledge.

3. Is your church friendly towards people with disabilities?

The absence of people with disabilities in the church often goes unnoticed – a matter of little concern to many. Perhaps one of the reasons for this is that many churches in New Zealand were built more than 30 years ago. This was in an era in which fewer people with disabilities survived. Also a number of people were accommodated in institutions and did not get out to go to church. For these reasons only a few churches are friendly towards people with disabilities.

People often forget that if barriers to participation exist, people with disabilities are less likely to view attending church as a viable option. This will in turn limit the demand and expectations, and you may not see the need for disability friendly churches

Attitudes, Structure, and Communication are three barriers that people with disabilities can encounter when attending a church. Lets now look at the three barriers :-

a) **Attitudinal barriers:**

People with disabilities may feel judged as lesser human beings by the congregation, and are therefore left out of aspects of church life. This barrier of wrong attitudes towards people with disabilities is subtle, and requires the greatest understanding of the issue, and a greater degree of education and work to overcome. It is the people's attitudes that make a real difference. If a church genuinely wants to be inclusive of people with disabilities, it will find a way around any practical challenges. The essential attitudes towards people with disabilities are love, acceptance, compassion and understanding.

b) **Structural barriers:**

People with disabilities often cannot get into or around the church building. Structural barriers include a lack of accessibility and usability to facilities necessary for church involvement. Areas requiring access and usability include all church buildings used by the congregation. These may include the toilet, the kitchen and the pulpit. Structure is the most visible barrier. It is also the easiest barrier to understand, and perhaps the most expensive to counteract. When done well, the modifications can be invisible, and will be a benefit to all.

c) **Communicational barriers:**

People with disabilities may not be able to benefit from the worship and/ or the message, because they cannot hear the worship or message, or understand it. This can be because of the complexity of the message or the way the message is presented. Though the methodology may have to be adapted for each person to understand, the basics of the Christian faith such as concepts of sin, repentance, forgiveness and salvation can still be taught in an understandable way.

Are you interested in making your church more disability friendly? If the answer is yes, the following pages give you some hints on how to go about this. Refer to chapter six on how you can audit your church and start the process to being disability friendly.

4. Helpful Hints

**How to be inclusive of
people with disabilities**

General

When you think about ministering to a person with a disability, you may have emotions of fear and anxiety because of your lack of experience, and your desire to be effective.

Feeling helpless does not mean that you are helpless.

We recommend the following:-

- Remember that the person with a disability is a person. Counselling them will be very similar to counselling anyone else. Equip yourself with the knowledge of how to communicate with the person. Their caregiver should be able to give you some advice. Consider whether you will need someone else there to help interpret for you. But make sure you are talking to the person, not the interpreter.
- Ensure you have a positive attitude towards people with disabilities. If you hold the belief that people with disabilities are a liability, you will inevitably communicate this to the individual, the family and the congregation.
- Ask the Holy Spirit for guidance.
- Try to use language that shows respect, and that emphasizes the value of the person. Consider the following:

Don't Say	Do Say
"If your faith had been stronger, you would have been healed long ago."	"I am not sure why God has not healed you. There are some things we may not find out this side of heaven. But I do know this. We can always trust God to do what is best for us."
"There's always somebody who is worse off. Just think about the man in this morning's paper!"	"You have experienced an incredible loss. I am so sorry."
"God must have had a reason for this tragedy happening to you and your family. But, God never gives us more than we can bear."	"I don't understand what God is doing in this. I will pray that you will feel God's sustaining love and comfort."
"You must be very special parents."	"I am not sure why God has allowed you to have a child with a disability, but I do know He will help you face anything you may go through in life."

There are some things that you may think are true, but they may not be helpful in the early stages of the grieving process

- Help guide people through the valleys. Often there is anger and resentment toward God and others. There may also be sensations of guilt, unworthiness and despondency, which demand patience and encouragement. Do not try to defend God – He is the sovereign Lord of the universe, He doesn't need defending!
- Make sure you follow-up on whatever help you offer, and do what you say you will do. (People with disabilities may well have had many promises broken by well-intending people).

Supporting the grieving:

- Call in at the hospital as you are able. If appropriate, and you're able to, offer to be a third party in meetings with medical people, and learn what decisions are to be made by the family. Learn all you can about the disability.
- Share with the family your own initial and genuine feelings of fear. More than likely, they will match the family's initial feelings too. This will help to effectively identify with them and share their grief.
- Suggest guidelines on moral decisions, but realise the final decision is left with the family. Just listen.
- Be aware of and sensitive to the grieving process.
- Give the whole family attention – not just the people with the disability or just their parents. Siblings may feel left out. Include everyone.
- Try not to adopt a self-protecting response – i.e. offering words of concern initially, but moving away because it feels uncomfortable. Pastoral care should be ongoing and regular – being there is very important. The family will need ongoing support.
- However, accept your limitations. You will not be able to “fix” the situation. Don't try and meet all the family's needs yourself, because you will need support and help too. Bring in other people to help as appropriate to the need and situation.

Inclusive language

Language is important when talking to anybody, and this includes people with disabilities. The most important aspect in your language is your attitude that will come across in the words that you use. There are some words you can choose that will convey a positive message when communicating with a person with a disability. Be aware that appropriate language does continue to change over time. The simplest way to know which language is best, is to ask the person themselves. The following are guidelines only. Generally speaking, the language below shows respect, dignity and puts the emphasis on the person, rather than the disability. A good point to remember too, is that the tone of your voice also conveys a positive or negative attitude.

- The important thing is not to reinforce negative images and stereotypes associated with disability. In general, people with disabilities are not worried about the words that you use, but rather the attitude you express towards them.
- Don't worry about using expressions such as "See what I mean?" with someone who is blind, or "Let's go for a walk" to someone in a wheelchair. These are part of our everyday language and are not offensive.
- Choose language that affirms, rather than degrades. People with disabilities would rather dwell on their strengths than their weaknesses. They do not want pity, or to be unduly glorified for "courageously" coping with everyday life.
- Some people may have difficulty with speech and this may mean conversation with them is limited to daily needs. Try to discuss a range of topics such as weather, family, sports, news, entertainment and hobbies. This makes for a much more interesting conversation for both parties.
- More often than not, people with disabilities do not want to be asked personal and intrusive questions.

Do use	Don't use
"Person with a disability"	"Handicap" "Retard" "Cripple" "Crip" "Invalid"
"Wheelchair user" "Uses a wheelchair"	"Wheelchair bound" "Confined to a wheelchair"
"A person with (condition)"	"Suffering from..." "A victim of..." "Crippled by..." "Arthritic" etc...
"Intellectual disability" "Learning disability"	"Mentally retarded" "Mentally handicapped"
"Hearing impaired" "Hard of hearing"	"Dumb mute"

God has created every person with different abilities and equipped each Christian with unique spiritual gifts. Therefore people with disabilities have skills and abilities to contribute to society and to God's work also. Encouraging people to use their abilities will help them to grow in spiritual maturity .

Aspects of Church life that people with disabilities could be involved with include :-

- Taking part in the decision making about modifications to the buildings
- Giving their testimony
- Reading scriptures
- Leading a home group
- Serving in the kitchen
- Being in the worship team
- Filling the glass of water for the speaker
- Collecting items left in the pews after services
- Collecting the tithes and offerings
- Preaching
- Praying
- Assisting with communion
- Greeting at the door
- Helping with crèche, Sunday school or youth group
- Typing
- Visiting people
- Fundraising
- Phoning
- Policy development
- Writing poetry or short testimonies for newsletters



Some ways people in the church can show God's love to people with disabilities

- **Practical assistance:**
Shopping, housework, meals, financial management, transport, washing, ironing, minor repair jobs, gardening, washing windows...
- **Making something for them:**
Knitting, sewing, mending, alterations, baking, a meal ...
- **Teaching people to use their own skills - employment or recreation:**
Gardening, sewing, knitting, embroidery, music, computing...
- **Phone-calls:**
Give them a vital link to the world outside their house.
- **Visiting and encouraging:**
Allow plenty of time, and check when it is convenient to visit. Offer to read their mail out to them, or update them with the news. If conversation tends to focus on self-pity, redirect the conversation away from themselves and onto others.
- **Providing hospitality:**
Invite them over for a cup of tea, take them out for a meal or a drive, have them to stay overnight in your house...
- **Praying with them:**
Invite people to pray for your needs or the needs of the church and its members. Even those with speech impairments can be heard by God.
- **Contribute material things or financial aid:**
Living on an Invalid's Benefit leaves very little over to spend on luxuries or even necessities.
- **Put people in contact with relevant health and disability agencies.**
- **Invite people to social and recreational activities.**
- **Babysitting:**
Allow caregivers to have an evening out every now and then.
- **Assist with finding meaningful employment:**
This will do more for their dignity, self esteem and personal development than you'll ever know. You could also let them know of night courses of interest to them.
- **Write a letter:**
Send literature you think they would like. Encourage them to write letters of encouragement to others as well.
- **Be an advocate:**
Assist on their behalf as they seek housing, employment, social activities...
- **Provide transport to medical appointments and church.**

5. Hints for specific disabilities

As you attract and encourage people with disabilities to come to your church, it will be helpful to know how to most effectively meet their needs.

On the following pages are some hints for specific disabilities. It may be helpful to reflect back on these pages whenever someone with a new disability attends your church.

Attitude

- Remember the needs of caregivers and family members who miss out on church – perhaps someone could take over the care-giving every now and then to enable them to get to church.
- **Be creative when considering church related practices such as baptisms and communion. For example, have the option of communion in their seat rather than kneeling at the front of the church. Take communion to those who find it difficult to carry the emblems.**
- Hold doors open and be courteous, respectful and allow dignity.



Structure

- Provide sign-posted mobility parking spaces close to, and with no barriers to the accessible entrance.
- Provide a transport roster that rotates among a pool of trained drivers. You could consider providing a van with a wheelchair lift.
- All internal and external access needs to be level or ramped and have light-weight doors.
- Provide handrails to assist those using the steps or ramps.
- Provide seats near the entrance for people who have difficulty walking.
- Provide seats with arm rests for people who find it difficult to stand from a chair.
- Wheelchair accessible toilets are essential.
- People who use wheelchairs, or people who cannot stand for long, may wish to sit where they can see what is being presented on the screen, even when people around them stand up. This may not necessarily be the front - remember to give people choice. An alternative is to have some printed copies of the songs.
- People in wheelchairs do not necessarily want to be sitting in the middle of the aisle drawing attention to themselves – remove a chair so they feel part of the congregation and can sit with their friends and family without standing out.
- Have some spare straws and non-slip place mats in the kitchen.



Communication

- If people are unable to attend church, take music, singing or sermons on audio cassette to their home weekly and offer communion at home. Mention them at public meetings, prayer meetings or home groups so people are aware, and do not forget about them. Invite them to write something for the bulletin like a testimony or poem.
- Have home groups or prayer groups in accessible homes for those with mobility difficulties.
- **Use the international symbol on all literature to indicate that you provide facilities for people with mobility impairments.**



*"Some people move with difficulty or slowly.
But there are others that move too fast to be aware of the world they live in."*

Anon



Attitude

- Arrange a rotating transport roster, or put them in contact with church members who live nearby.
- Assign a person as a guide for them each week - to sit with them and assist them. Let them know when to stand up and to sit down.
- When leading them around, allow them to take your elbow - walk slightly in front of them.
- Ask them if there is someone in particular they would like to sit next to, or introduce them to folk sitting nearby.
- Offer to go to their home on a regular basis and read their mail to them.
- Do not touch the guide-dog if it is wearing a harness as it is working and you could distract it from doing its work.

Structure



- Maintain good lighting for people with partial sight.
- Keep corridors clear. Advise them if furniture has been moved.
- **Provide colour contrast on foot-paths and steps — i.e. white paint on the edges.**
- Make sure there are no projecting signs or overhanging branches etc.

Communication



- When greeting, say who you are and shake their hand, or touch their shoulder. Make sure they know you are talking to them, and announce when you leave.
- Provide information in alternative formats to ordinary print. These could include large print, audiocassette, Braille or on floppy disc.
- Provide large print songs and prayers. Photocopies of acetates are perfect.

Bold Arial font size 16 shown here is usually adequate.

- For printed material, black on white or black on yellow is best. Matt finish is better than glossy.
- If showing something to the congregation, describe it either at the time, or after the service.
- **Use the international symbol on all your literature to indicate that you provide facilities for people with visual impairment.**

*“Some people are physically blind,
but many people in the church are blind to people around them in need.”*
Anon

Attitude

- One to one conversation is preferred over talking in larger groups.
- Be aware that people who are deaf tend to be very direct in conversation – they may not have learnt how to be subtle, as those with hearing have learnt.

Structure

- Provide seating near the front of the church for those who lip-read, or near loud speakers for those who are hard of hearing.
- **Good clear signposting means that people don't have to ask for directions.**



Communication

- Provide the main points of the sermon, message or announcements on PowerPoint or on overheads. Use pictures to illustrate the sermon point.
- Supply a written sermon that can be followed, or ask someone next to them to write things down if necessary.
- Supply an "induction loop" for those using hearing aids, and test it regularly. Ensure everyone speaking uses the microphone.
- Be aware that background noise can make it difficult for those who use a hearing aid.
- **Provide Sign Language interpreters within the service or at a separate service. Interpreters must have a good understanding of the Bible.**
- If people are lip reading, try not to turn away from them or put your hands near your face or speak too quickly.
- Try not to have a bright source of light directly behind the person speaking – this puts a shadow on the speaker's face, and makes lip reading difficult or impossible.
- Give as many non-verbal cues as possible by using gesture and facial expression.
- Contact people at home by facsimile or e-mail.
- **Use the international symbol for deaf facilities on all your literature and also signs outside your church.**



*"Some people are physically deaf.
But some people in God's family ignore the cries of others."
Anon*

Attitude



- Treat adults as adults, and children as children. Include each person in a group that is appropriate to their age wherever possible – they will learn by observation and copying.
- Treat them as you would anyone else. The more you expect of them, the more they will give.
- Consider the length of service. Often people with Intellectual disabilities have a shorter attention span.
- **Assign a personal helper for the service.**
- Provide a transport roster with members who live nearby.
- Be patient if individuals are noisy or moving around when it seems inappropriate. Remind them gently of what the appropriate behaviour would be.
- Make an extra effort to include people with intellectual disabilities in social activities, but do not feel hurt if they do not respond as expected.

Communication

- Have home-groups or separate services.
- Provide information that is simple, clear, concise and focuses on a single subject. Use repetition and simple language.
- Try speaking in five minute segments backed up by dramas or action songs with a similar point to reinforce. Use vivid examples and visual aids if possible – use all the senses to aid retention.
- **Include songs with repetitive or simple choruses. This is a great way to learn scripture.**
- Make simplified notes in bullet points so that they can go over the sermon in their own time, or in the future, and understand it.



- **Sign post facilities using pictorial signs as well as words – this also benefits non-English speaking people.**

“Some people learn more slowly or in different ways. Some people in the church learn quickly and easily, but sometimes choose not to learn.”
Anon

Attitude

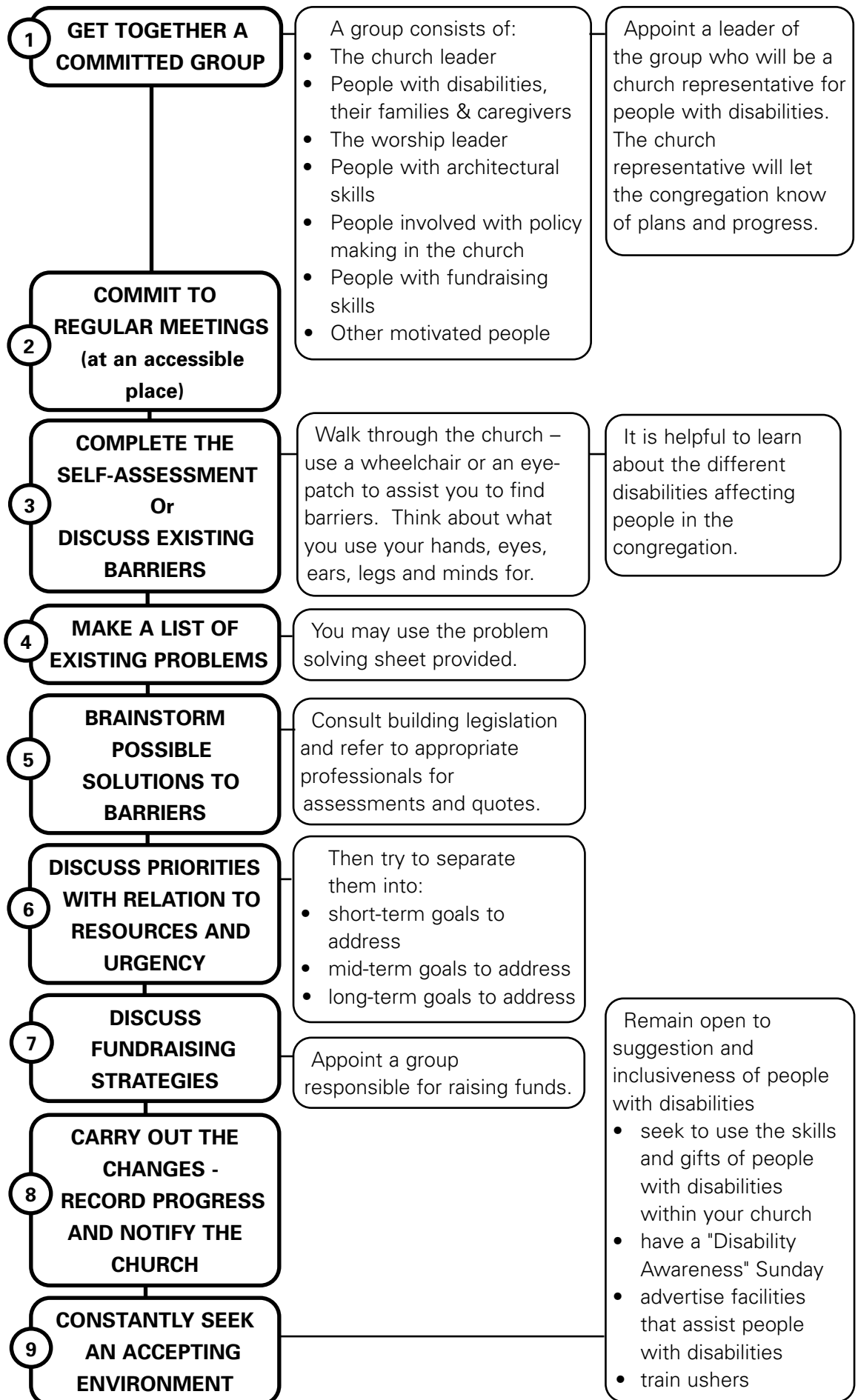
- People with mental illness often find life hard and people give up on them frequently – be there for them for the long haul.
- Encourage church attendance - often their condition causes lack of motivation and low confidence or anxiety about being in a large group of people.
- Accept that people with mental illness may have mood swings, so be prepared for inconsistent responses. Don't be discouraged.
- Show acceptance, affirm these people as special to God, as we all are. Encourage and work with them so that they find strength in God to carry them in their situation. Assist the depressed person or person with low self esteem to praise God even in their low time, and help the elated "high" person to keep a sense of perspective.
- Think of people with mental illness as a potential resource in the church. This will help them to feel included. Fit tasks to their capacity and confidence level.
- Remember that mental illness is not weakness or failure, but an illness or disability.
- Be prepared for anger that has no obvious basis. Try not to take it personally. Avoid lecturing, arguments, blame and acts that increase tension.
- Recognise that low empathy may be a symptom of the mental illness.

Communication

- Groups that meet in people's homes are an ideal place of contact for someone with a mental illness. Newcomers should be introduced to the group as soon as possible at each meeting.
- A willingness to take phone calls from people with mental illness is very helpful. You may find it necessary to introduce some boundaries and agree to a contract on frequency and duration of calls.
- Establish a team of people from the church willing to visit people with mental illness in their own homes on a regular basis. If the person is withdrawn, then initiate relevant conversation, but do not expect rational discussion at all times. If they are having difficulty with reality or they believe delusions, be simple and truthful. Ignore the false beliefs rather than argue.
- If you're not sure what to do that will help – always ask the person.
- If they are having trouble concentrating, then be brief and repeat yourself. If they become over-stimulated or agitated, limit the input and allow them to change the subject or location. Remain calm if they become fearful.
- A drop-in centre staffed by experienced counsellors and those who have recovered from mental illness will be a non-threatening environment for people with mental illness. This will help overcome loneliness and isolation.

6. Auditing the Church

Audit process



(The aim of this questionnaire is to point to areas where action may be needed. It is not intended as a basis of criticism, and is not to be sent back to CMWDT).

1 Approximately how many people in your church have a disability (visible/hidden)?

0 – 5 5 – 10 11 – 20 21 – 50 51 – 100 101+

List the people with disabilities:

Visual Impairment	Hearing Impairment	Physical Impairment	Intellectual Impairment	Mental Illness

3 Which of the above groups is the most dominant in numbers?

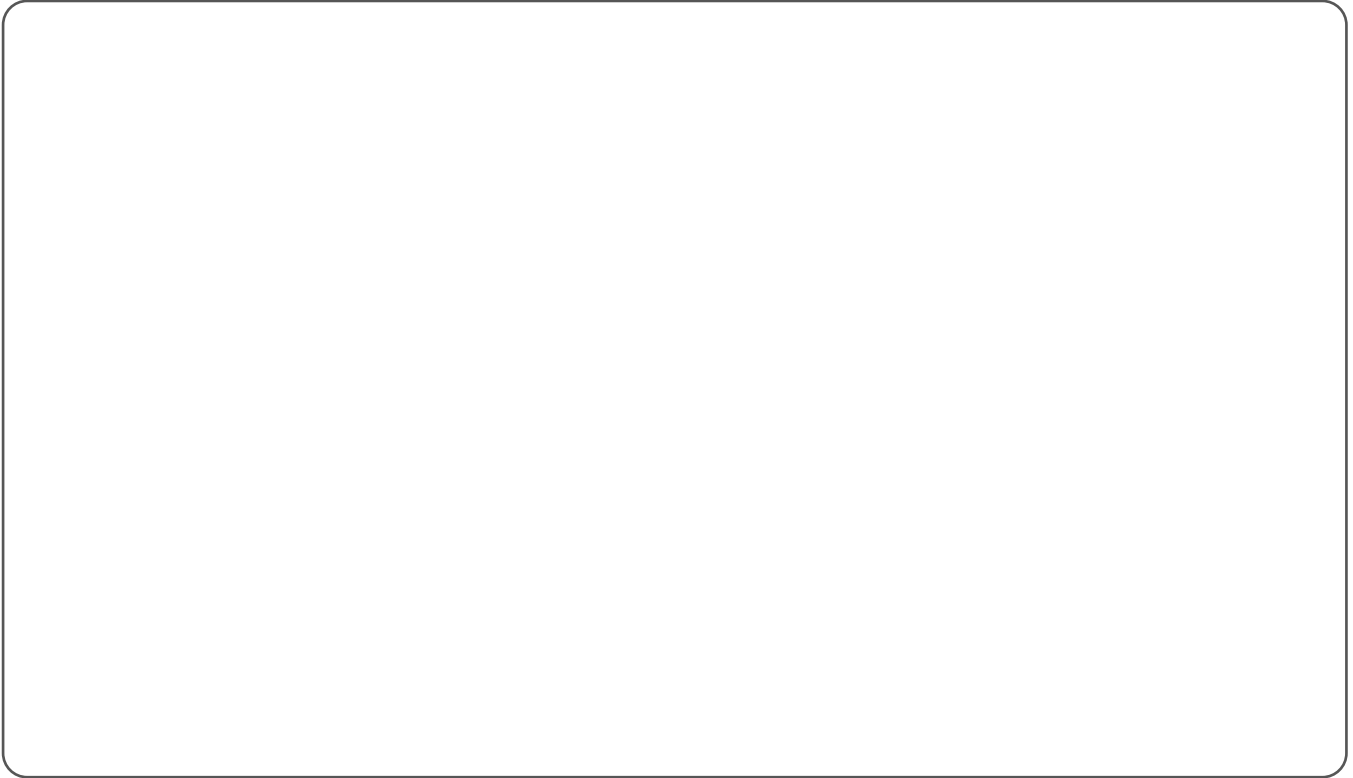
(This is to help you if you wish to provide services for a particular group, or if you wish to prioritise areas to be addressed)

4 How does the church family in general feel about people with disabilities?

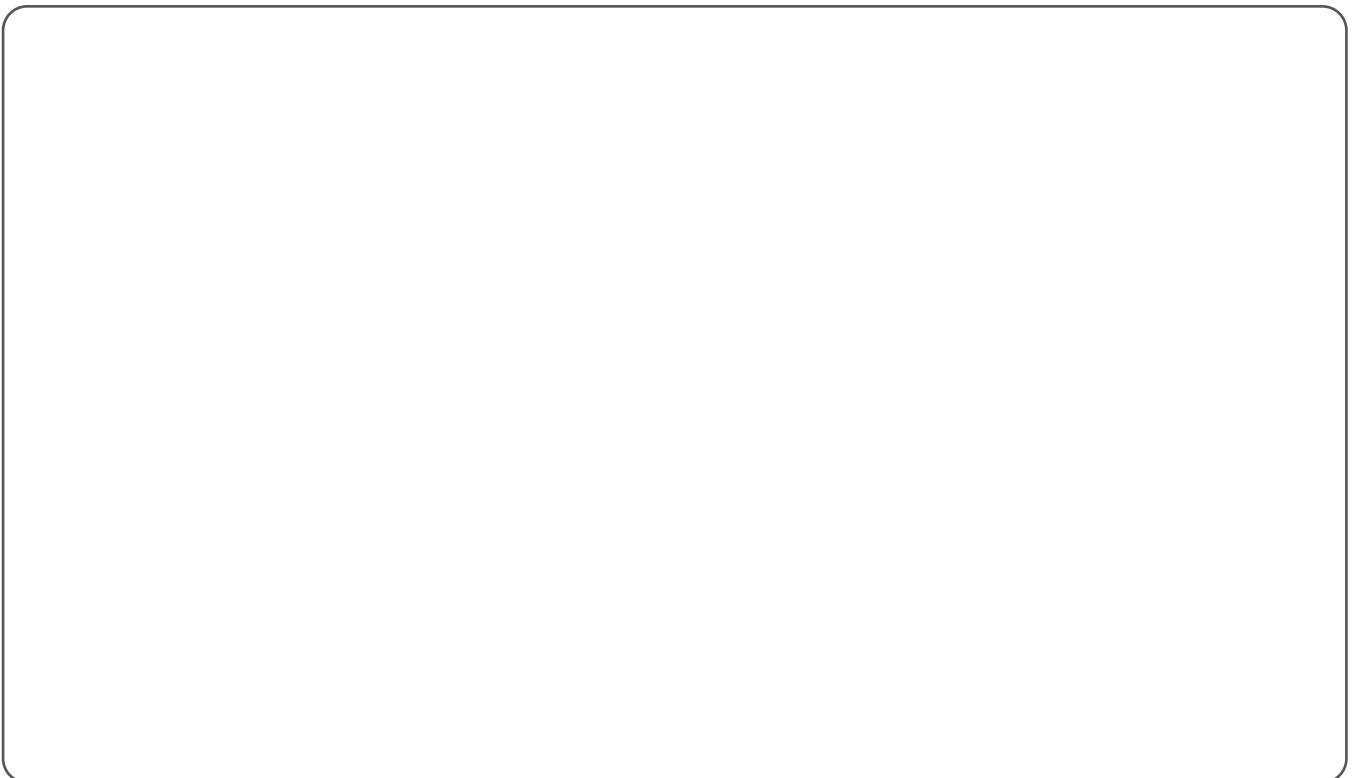
(This is to give you an idea of which attitudes to build on and those that need to be addressed)

Positive	Negative

- 5 List all the church buildings, or any places accessed by the general congregation for aspects of church life.
(This is to give you an idea of which buildings need to have wheelchair access)



- 6 List all the different services, and ministry areas that the church runs.
(This is to give you an idea of ministries that people with disabilities could be involved in)



Church Assessment

- Attitudinal barriers

Yes No Could be improved

1 Does the spiritual leader display a loving attitude towards people with disabilities?

2 Do you think that people with disabilities would feel comfortable with approaching the appropriate people in the church to discuss their individual needs?

3 Are people with disabilities encouraged to use their spiritual gifts and to be involved in all aspects of church life? (i.e. not just attendance)

4 Do people with disabilities feel welcome to attend and join in church activities?

5 Is any help offered through a transport and/or escort scheme to help those who have difficulty getting to and around the church building?

6 Does the church offer any support for those who care for family members with disabilities?

If so, what support is offered ? (write below)

7 Is there a group of people willing to visit people in their homes on a regular basis?

8 Are alternative methods available for church related practices such as water baptism and communion?

9 Are people with disabilities referred to with respect and individuality?

10 Are youth with disabilities welcome in the church youth group ?

11 When a person with a disability asks for prayer, are they asked what they would like prayer for; (rather than assuming it is for healing)?

12 Would the church consider offering any financial assistance when necessary to people with disabilities?

13 Are members of the congregation willing to initiate conversation, include and welcome people with disabilities?

14 Is the church aware of local groups and Centres that support and/or offer facilities for people with disabilities?

(refer to page 33 for a list of possible contacts).

Church Assessment

- Structural barriers

		Yes	No	Could be improved
1	Are parking spaces reserved for those with mobility impairments? <i>(refer to page 30 for specifications)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Are they clearly marked?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Do they allow for side access to a vehicle?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Is it relatively flat between the car parks and the entrance to the church? (curbs, steps)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Do you have ramps or lifts for all stepped areas? <i>(refer to page 28 for appropriate ramp specifications)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Leading into the church and related buildings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Internally in all buildings (including stages, pulpit...)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	Are handrails fitted beside flights of steps on both sides?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	Are all doors and corridors within the church buildings wide enough for people using wheelchairs? <i>(refer to page 30 for dimensions of wheelchair users)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Are they kept clear and uncluttered?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Can doors be opened reasonably easily?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	Are turning circles at bends in corridors and doorways wide enough to allow wheelchair users to manoeuvre? <i>(refer to pages 28-30 for dimensions involving wheelchair users)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	Are the toilets easily accessible for those using wheelchairs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Are they unisex, allowing for assistance?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Are they well signposted pictorially?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Do they have lever taps, big locks and usable flushers?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Do they have usable rails and soap and towel dispensers?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	Are floors covered in a way that those using wheelchairs or those with limited sight will not encounter any difficulties?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	Are there places within the body of the church where people using wheelchairs can be?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	Is there access to seating with ample leg space near the door for those with mobility impairments?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10	Are higher chairs with armrests available to be used?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11	Is there adequate colour contrast between floor and walls and doors?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12	Is contrast shown on steps and footpaths to indicate the edge, and difference in height?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13	Are walkways free of projecting signs or branches?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Church Assessment

- Communicational barriers

		Yes	No	Could be improved
1	Is the church well lit?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Are the following church materials available in large print, Braille, and/or audio cassette? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bibles • Sermons • Hymns/Songs • Bulletins/Notices If so, are people aware of these options? (Yes / No).	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
3	Does the present sound system provide good clear sound with adequate volume?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	Is an induction loop fitted for hearing aid users? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is it checked regularly and maintained? 	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
5	Do you have Sign Language interpreters for all church activities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	Can microphones/pulpits be moved and used by someone seated?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	Has attention been given to the needs of people with intellectual disabilities within services and activities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	Are services and messages presented: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbally? • Visually? • Dramatically? • Musically? 	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
9	Are all signs clear and pictorial?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10	Are a variety of mediums (facsimile, e-mail...) available for members with disabilities to keep in contact with the church?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11	If you supply the appropriate mobility, sight or hearing facilities, are the internationally recognized symbols shown on church literature, advertisements and outside church?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Problem solving sheet

(Photocopy as many as you need, putting each problem on a separate sheet.)

What is the problem?

-

What are the factors involved?

-

What are some possible solutions?

-

What seems to be the best solution?

-

What steps are required to bring about the solution?

-

7. Information on specifications

The following information has been used with permission from the NZS4121:2001, "New Zealand Standards for Design for Access and Mobility – Buildings and Associated Facilities".

The information selected is only a small part of the standards

Further copies can be purchased from :-

Standards NZ,

Private Bag 2439,

Wellington.

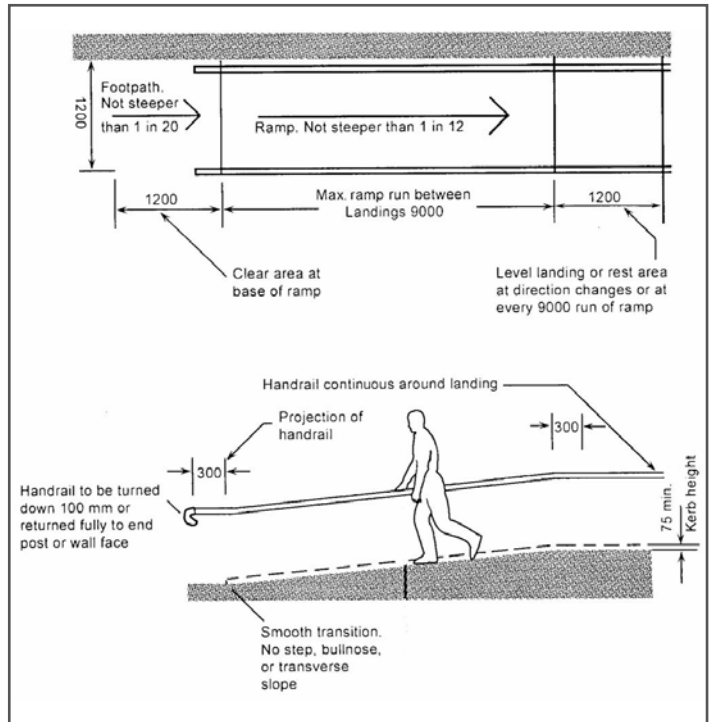
Phone: 0800 735 656

Web address: www.standards.co.nz

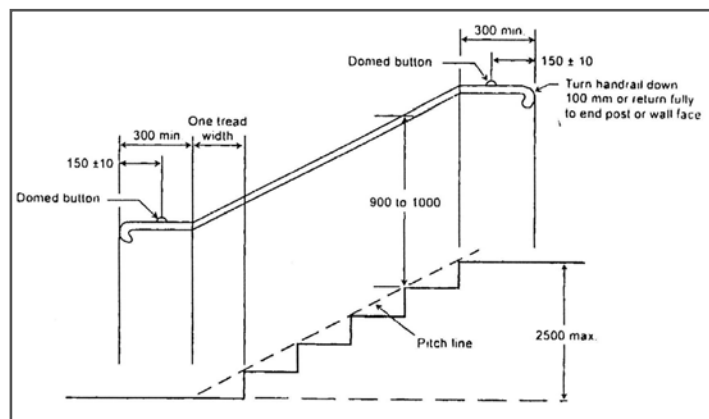
These minimum standards are accepted as meeting compliance with the NZ Building Code 1991. Best practice may exceed these standards.

- The minimum clear width of a footpath should be 1200 mm. Corridors should also have a minimum width of 1200mm.
- The accessible entrance should be made into the main entrance of the building.
- Accessible entrances should be sign-posted.
- All ramp, stair and footpath surfaces should be slip-resistant.
- The maximum gradient of a ramp is 1:12. Less gradient than this is even better.
- Ramps should be avoided if possible to have level access.
- Ramps and steps should have handrails both sides.
- The total rise of any flight of steps should not exceed 2500 mm.
- Projecting nosing on stairs can cause people to trip.
- Steps should have a maximum step height of 180 mm, and minimum step depth of 310 mm.
- Door handles should be between 900 and 1200 mm above the level of the floor. Lever door handles are most beneficial.

Ramps

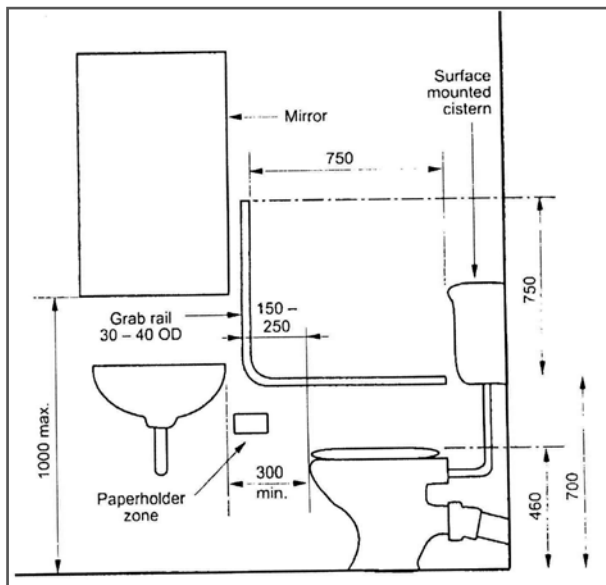


Steps and handrails



Refer to NZS 4121:2001 section 10 for further details on specifications

Accessible toilet dimensions



The design of toilet facilities is intended to provide for unaided use by a person with a disability.

- An outward opening door or sliding door is preferred for toilet cubicles.
- Accessible toilets need to be provided where people with disabilities can access them.
- Accessible toilet cubicles may contain parenting facilities.
- Accessible toilets should be well signposted with the international symbol for access facing the direction of the facilities.

Lever tap



- In buildings with fewer than 300 occupants, one all gender toilet is sufficient. The benefit of an all gender toilet is the ability of a helper of the opposite gender to assist.
- The minimum dimensions of a toilet compartment are 1900 mm by 1600 mm.

Large push flush

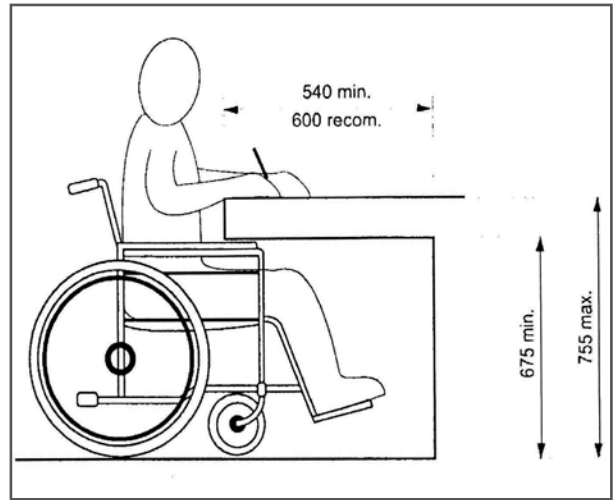


- Door handles, locks, flushing control and taps, should be lever type, which is beneficial for those with limited coordination/ and or strength of their hands/arms.
- The position of handrails is extremely important and should be complied with.
- Mirrors, soap dispensers and hand towels should be within easy reach of people in wheelchairs.
- The force required to open doors should not be in excess of what is necessary for the function of the door.

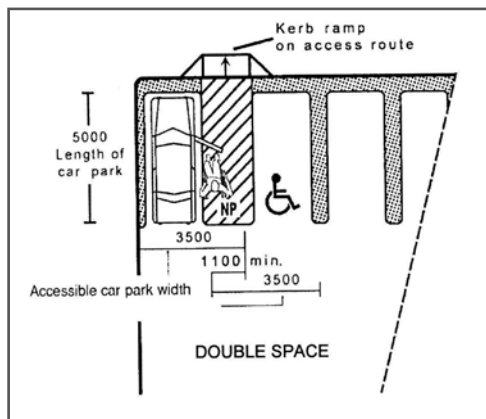
Refer to NZS 4121:2001 section 10 for further details on specifications

Public counter

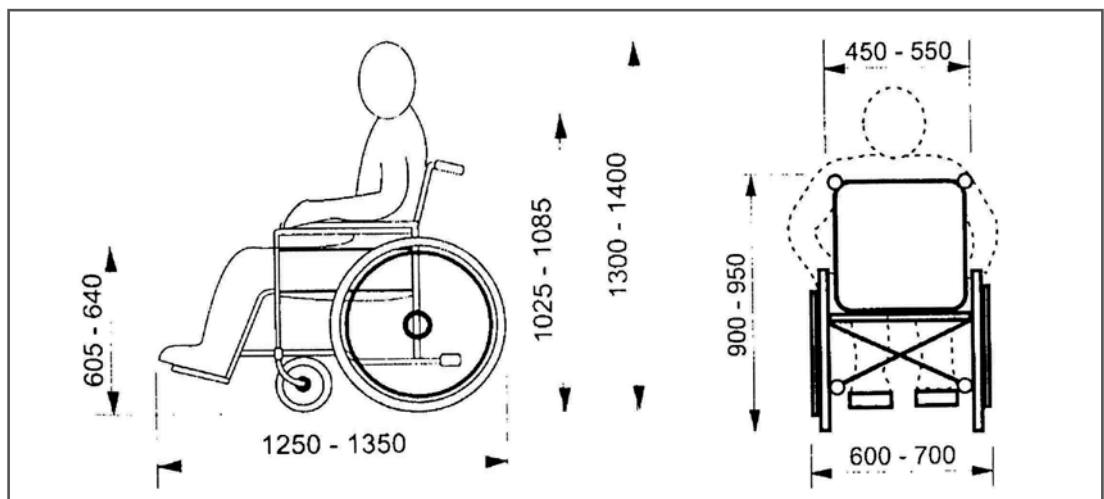
- Public counters should have at least one space that can be used by people within wheelchairs.
- Hanging signs should have a minimum clearance of 2000mm above the ground.
- The optimal chair design has a seat height of 400-450 mm, and has armrests.
- Mobility car-parks should be provided and clearly signposted.
The route between the car-park and the building entrance should be free from obstacles.



Parking



Wheelchair user dimensions



8. Appendix

Cerebral Palsy

Damage to the brain prior to or during birth, or in childhood due to accident or infectious disease. This leads to varying disabilities of physical movement, speech and intellect. Individuals can range from requiring full assistance to being fully independent. There are three types: Spastic (muscles are very tight), Athetoid (involuntary movements), Ataxic (poor balance, unsteady gait, low muscle tone).

Dementia

A pathological reduction in brain function resulting in a range of cognitive deficits including impaired judgment and memory.

Down Syndrome

A congenital disorder caused by a chromosomal defect characterised by slow physical development, cognitive deficits and a number of physical abnormalities. Often accompanied by heart disease and vision defects.

Epilepsy

Many types varying from seizures lasting a very short period of time with the person appearing to be dreaming, to seizures where there is loss of consciousness accompanied by twitching and thrashing movements, followed by extreme tiredness.

Head Injury

Can result in a wide range of physical, mental and emotional symptoms, including walking difficulties, lapses of concentration/memory and inappropriate behaviour.

Hearing Impairment

Separated into two groups – those with little or no useable hearing described as Deaf, and those who have some or much of their hearing described as Hearing Impaired.

Hemiplegia

Full or partial paralysis of one side of the body due to disease, trauma or stroke.

Intellectual Impairment/Disability

Ranging between severe to mild disorders in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in: understanding or using spoken or written language that may affect the person's ability to think, listen, spell or perform mathematical calculations.

Mental Illness

Including a vast range of conditions - some temporary, like depression or a breakdown secondary to stress, others long-term such as Schizophrenia, Manic Depression and Personality Disorders which are usually controlled with treatment. Other conditions include Phobias, Obsessions, Hysteria and Dementia.

Multiple Sclerosis

A disorder of the brain occurring in adulthood, with diverse symptoms such as coordination difficulties, bladder and bowel disturbances, decreased mobility, fatigue and double vision. The disease may go into remission or continue a steady deterioration.

Muscular Dystrophy

A progressive and serious loss of use of muscles. Individuals can vary from being independent to requiring full assistance

Osteoarthritis

Wear and tear on joints due to age. Often very painful.

Paraplegia

Paralysis of the lower half of the body, including partial or total loss of function of both legs, often as a result of a spinal injury.

Parkinson's Disease

A chronic disease of the brain principally affecting older people characterized by tremors and muscle rigidity causing slowness of movement, shuffling gait and impaired speech.

Physical Impairment

Any restriction of mobility or function with limbs or organs.

Polio

A virus affecting the spinal cord and brain stem causing paralysis of muscles.

Rheumatoid Arthritis

Inflammation and swelling in various joints leading to stiffness and pain.

Stroke (CVA)

A sudden interruption of blood supply to the brain resulting in damage to brain cells. This often leads to hemiplegia and difficulty with speech.

Spina Bifida

Congenital malformation of the spinal cord, usually resulting in paraplegia.

Quadriplegia/Tetraplegia

The paralysis of the body involving partial or total loss of function in both arms and legs.

Visual Impairment

Varying from low vision involving significant useable vision to total blindness.

Christian Ministries with Disabled Trust

- Aimed at equipping people with the skills to reach their potential and further the Kingdom of God through evangelism and education. Runs various ministries and services including support groups, drop-in centres, church services and educational seminars.
PO Box 13-322, Onehunga, Auckland
Phone/Fax: (09) 636 4763
Email: cmwdt@clear.net.nz
www.cmwdt.org.nz

Disability Resource Centre Auckland Inc.

- A Disability Information Centre for people in Auckland.
14 Erson Ave, Royal Oak, Auckland
Phone: (09) 625 8069
Fax: (09) 624 1633
www.disabilityresource.org.nz

Enable Information

- A national disability information and referral service.
PO Box 4547, Palmerston North
Phone: 0800 171 981
Fax: (06) 952 0022
www.enable.co.nz

New Zealand CCS

- Provides services and support for people with physical disabilities.
PO Box 24 327, Royal Oak, Auckland
Phone: (09) 625 9378
Fax: (09) 625 6177
www.ccs.org.nz

National Foundation for the Deaf

- Provides information and support for people with hearing impairment.
Phone: 0800 867 446
Fax: 0800 3323 4357
www.nfd.org.nz

Royal New Zealand Foundation for the Blind (RNZFB)

- Provides information and services for people with visual impairment.
9 Maunsell Rd, Parnell, Auckland
Phone: 0800 243 333
Fax: (09) 355 6919
www.rnzfb.org.nz

Standards New Zealand

- Provides the NZS4121:2001, "New Zealand Standards for Design for Access and Mobility – Buildings and Associated Facilities". These are the minimum standards and are accepted building Code 1991.
Private Bag 2439, Wellington 6020
Phone: (04) 498 5990
Fax: (04) 498 5994
www.standards.co.nz

Telecom Special Needs Team

- Provides relevant products and services to assist communication by phone lines.
Phone: 123 or 0800 114 104
Fax: 0800 106 665
TTY: 0800 105 554

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- Access Audit for Churches;* (2001), (6th Ed), Church Action on Disability, England
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Standards New Zealand
- Disability Resource Manual;* Christian Blind Mission International, Australia
- Roofbreaker Guides; (2002);* Through the Roof; England

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Karen Jack
Compiler and Author of "Everybody Welcome?"



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