

# DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION ACT 1995

**Have you made the adjustments you should have made by 1999 yet?**

**Have you prepared an action plan to improve your access for the disabled to goods, services and facilities?**

From October 2004 where a physical feature or obstacle makes it impossible or unreasonably difficult for disabled people to make use of services or facilities a service provider (anyone offering a service i.e. shops, hotels, theatres, post offices, banks, surgeries etc) *must* take reasonable steps to:-

- Remove the feature/obstacle (or)
- Alter it so that it no longer has that effect (or)
- Provide a reasonable means of avoiding it (or)
- Provide a reasonable alternative method of making the services available

Therefore it makes sense for service providers to plan ahead by taking any opportunities which arise, or bringing forward plans to make alterations to their premises to benefit disabled people **before** the October 2004 deadline and thereby complying with the Act.

There is a *duty* to provide auxiliary aids or services if this would enable (or make it easier) for disabled people to make use of any services offered to the public. However the auxiliary aid should not hinder access for the able-bodied.

*e.g. A community centre is accessible by two raised steps. It provides a suitably chosen portable ramp, which helps disabled people with a mobility impairment to enter the premises safely.*

This is an auxiliary aid which is suited to the requirement of those people and complies with the Act.

**Furthermore, it is *unlawful* for a service provider to discriminate against a disabled person by failing to comply with a duty to make reasonable adjustments when the effect of that failure is to make it impossible or “unreasonably difficult” for the disabled person to make use of services provided to the public.**

Failure to comply with the Act can result in a claim against the service provider for failure to make adjustments to assist use of the services by a disabled person.

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Access Groups acting as local pressure groups are currently pressing local authorities and communities to improve access to buildings. They are actively involved in checking buildings and building plans.

For further information please visit [www.disability.gov.uk](http://www.disability.gov.uk)

For Access Groups contact: Radar, 12 City Forum, 250 City Road, London, NW1 020 7250 3222.

**GENERAL INFORMATION  
& MAILSHOTS**