

Tapping into the Purple Pound to drive growth

Ross Calladine, Head of Business Support, VisitEngland & Government-appointed Disability & Access Ambassador for Tourism 25.09.23



VisitEngland

About me

- Head of Business Support at VisitEngland.
- Accessibility specialist, developing initiatives that help tourism businesses and destinations tap into the high value, growing accessible tourism market.
- Led the development of an innovative Accessibility Guides website, spearheaded the production of several guidance booklets.
- Manages VisitEngland's Accessible & Inclusive Tourism Award, which recognises leaders in the field.
- Convenes England's Inclusive Tourism Action Group comprising leading accessible tourism stakeholders.
- Regularly speaker at national and international accessibility industry events.
- Appointed Disability and Access Ambassador for Tourism by the UK Government in January 2022.



The National Tourism Agency

A non-departmental public body funded by the Department for Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS)

- Our mission is to make tourism one of the most successful and productive sectors for the UK economy
- **VisitBritain:** Market the nations and regions of Britain overseas to drive growth in international leisure and business tourism
- **VisitEngland:** Lead and enable a sustainable and resilient visitor economy in England
- A key role in facilitating an accessible and inclusive tourism industry
- In support of the Government ambition....



Government ambition

Tourism Recovery Plan

“For the UK to become the most accessible tourism destination in Europe by 2025”

Key measure - increase inbound visits by disabled people by 33% (Tourism Sector Deal 2019)





Science Museum, London

Who?

Who are we talking
about?



1 in 4

**of the UK population is disabled,
which may affect where they
choose to stay or visit**



Only 7%
of disabled people are
wheelchair users

Who else has accessibility requirements?

People with:

Sight loss

Physical or mobility impairment

Hearing loss and
D/deaf people

Learning difficulty or intellectual disability

Families with young children

Dementia

Mental health
condition

Older people

Social/communication impairment/ neurodivergent people
e.g. an Autistic Spectrum condition

People with dietary requirements

Long-term illness/health condition

And others!

Unique requirements

- When travelling with health conditions, the considerations are complex and multi-faceted
- Each disabled individual typically has two conditions
- The average trip party has two or three different conditions to consider
- People with the same impairments often have different accessibility requirements
- Therefore requirements for each booking from this audience are unique

Average no. conditions mentioned in party

2.4

Average no. disabled individuals in party

1.5

Average no. conditions per disabled individual

1.9



**On average a
person will spend 8
years disabled in
their lifetime**

The Accessible Tourist Profile

The Accessible tourist is:

- Influenced by previous bad travel experiences
- Sceptical when something is described as 'accessible'
- Anxious that their accessibility needs won't be met
- Impacted by the least accessible part of the trip
- Loyal to companies who meet their accessibility requirements





Science Museum, London

Why?

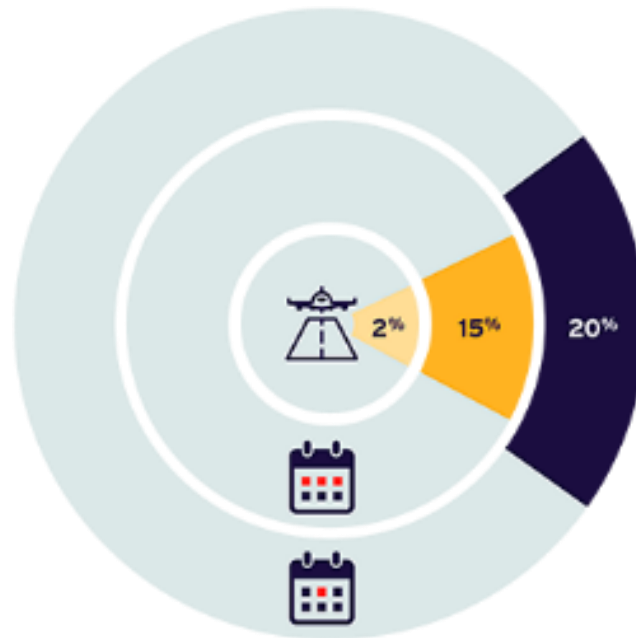
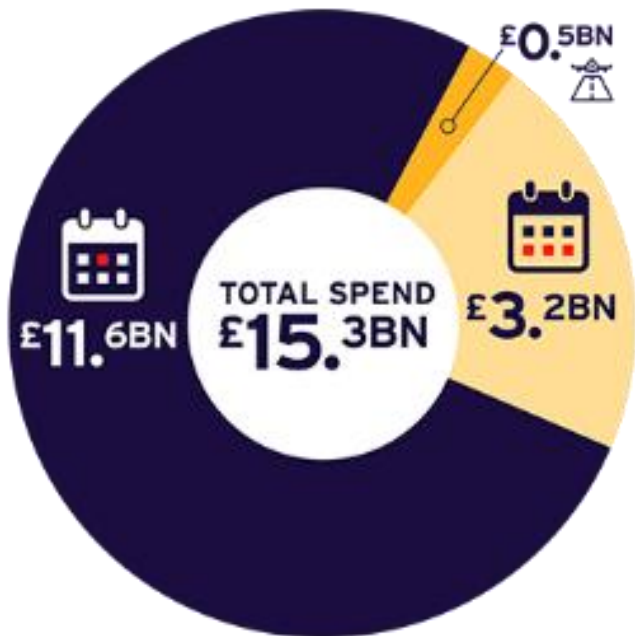
Why is this relevant
to my business?



“Leaving out 16% of the world’s population should be considered a material risk to all businesses”

The business case

England trips taken by those with an impairment and their travelling companions



Building the '3 Rs'

- Revenue

A valuable market; attracting the spend of someone with accessibility requirements attracts the spend of their entire travelling party, which can really help build your revenue

- Resilience

Loyal and repeat customers who stay longer spend more, extend your trading season; being accessible can help rebuild business after the COVID-19 pandemic and build your business' resilience

- Reputation

Understanding customer's individual needs and focusing on customer service will get your customers talking positively about you, helping to build a strong reputation



1 in 4

**return to accommodation they visited before
either because it has the specialist facilities
needed and/or it removes the stress and effort of
trying to find somewhere different**

ROI – Hotel Brooklyn, Manchester

Investment in accessible facilities delivered additional revenues of **£217,000** in its first full trading year.

Rooms with universal appeal

£132,000 additional revenue from the 18 accessible rooms (revenue in excess to that of a standard room, driven by higher occupancy)

Additional event bookings

£85,000 from accessibility related events and events requiring accessibility.



A couple is walking on a grassy cliffside overlooking the ocean. The woman is wearing a purple tank top and white pants, and the man is wearing a dark tank top and grey pants. The man has a prosthetic leg. In the background, there is a blue sea, a small boat, and a green hillside under a blue sky with clouds.

**Accessibility is an opportunity not
just a responsibility**

**Stay legal, make more money and
feel good by doing the right thing**



What and How?

What is accessible tourism and how does my business engage?

A photograph of a museum interior. A large white jet aircraft with a blue and red roundel is suspended from the ceiling. In the foreground, a person in a wheelchair is sitting on a mezzanine level with a glass railing. The background shows a large window with blinds and a blue sign with white text that reads "RICITY THE ENV".

“Tourism experiences that can be enjoyed by people with physical, sensory and cognitive impairments and others with accessibility requirements”

Three Pillars of Accessible Tourism

Accessible / Inclusive Tourism



Customer

Customer
welcome
and
interaction

Place

Built
environment,
amenities
and services

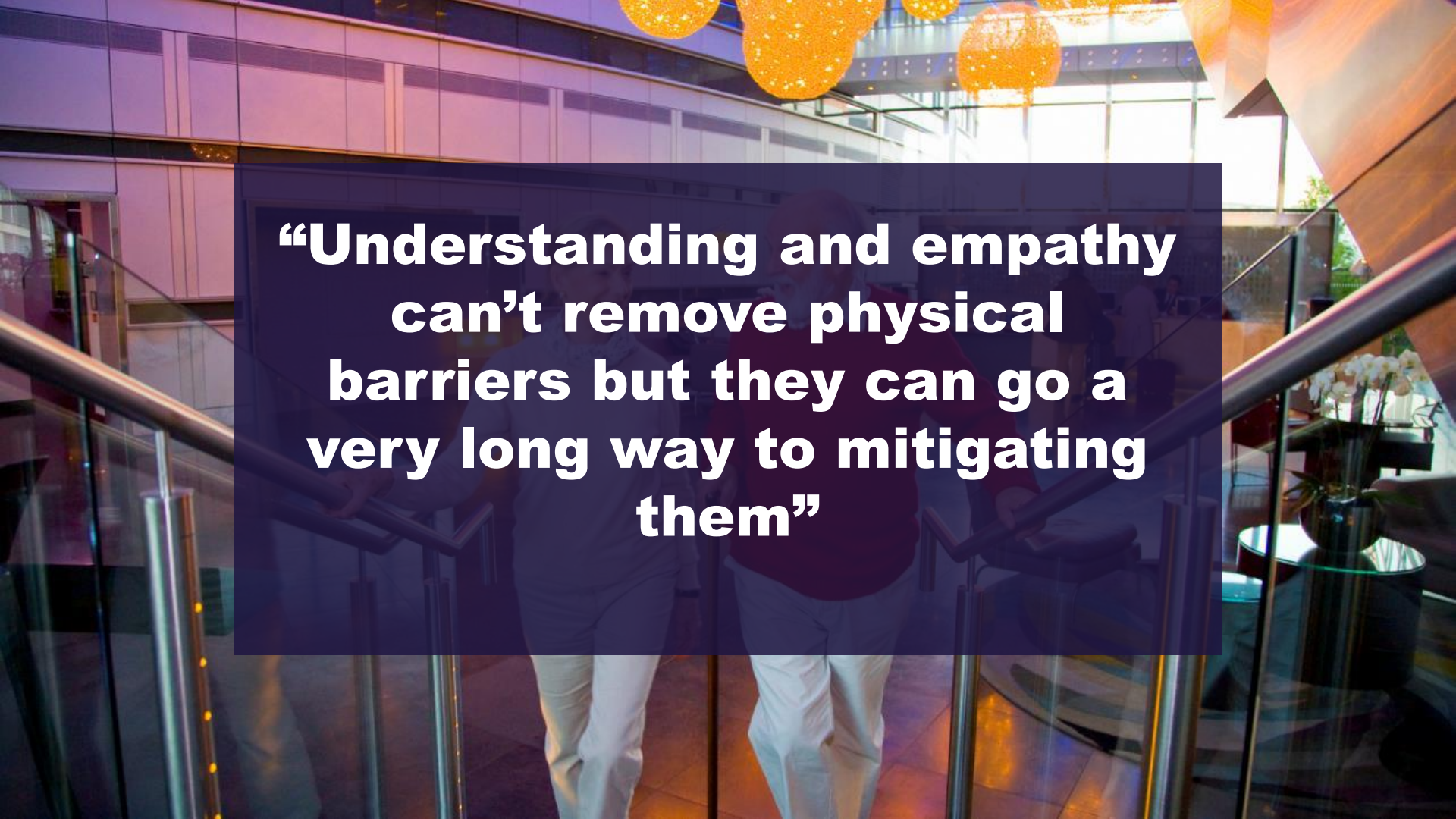
Information

Information,
marketing
and digital
inclusion

Employment

Employment
of disabled
people

Public Realm & Transport



**“Understanding and empathy
can’t remove physical
barriers but they can go a
very long way to mitigating
them”**

Information is key

- Booking / planning journey is driven by researching facts and opinion to inform a personal choice on suitability
- Most holiday-makers think about requirements and features, rather than access for a particular type of disability
- You should be aware of – and help to provide – the information that people want to know
- Be careful not to make assumptions and prescribe
- Describe accessibility factually to empower customers to make personal choices on holiday suitability

“Don’t tell me what I want, tell me what you have and I’ll make my decision”

“If I don’t know, I don’t go”



A scenic coastal landscape featuring a bay with several small boats, a grassy hillside on the left, and a cliffside on the right overlooking the ocean. In the foreground, a man with a prosthetic leg and a woman are walking together on a grassy path, holding hands. A dark blue semi-transparent rectangle is overlaid on the center of the image, containing white text.

“If I don’t know, I don’t go”

**Quick exercise:
Open your website...**

Local good practice

- **Roald Dahl Museum** - accessible loos, hearing loops and BSL smartphone app Signly.
- **Waddesdon Manor** – Changing Places Toilet, accessible shuttle bus, sensory map, Accessibility Guide and floor plans
- **Chiltern Open Air Museum** - off-road wheelchairs and electric mobility scooters available, sensory trail and back packs, concessionary rates for disabled visitors and free essential companion.
- **Countryways at Road Farm** – Care Farming initiative
- **Missenden Abbey** – virtual tour, purpose-built accessible room, with dedicated parking facilities
- **Pipsticks Walks** - walks which are planned to meet individual requirements for people with physical and sensory access needs e.g. offer guided walks which avoid stiles or which follow well-made paths and tracks with limited gradient.
- **A Foot in the Chilterns** - opportunities in the countryside whatever your mobility

Top Tips for businesses

- Train all staff in disability awareness and ensure they are familiar with accessible facilities, services, equipment and evacuation procedures
- Always welcome assistance dogs
- Provide a hearing loop and test regularly
- Ensure your website meets accessibility standards and all written communications with customers are available in accessible formats
- Provide accessible ways for disabled customers to give feedback, acting and responding promptly to comments.
- Provide sufficient accessible parking spaces and drop-off areas
- Include images of disabled people in your marketing
- Appoint an Accessibility Champion and encourage accessibility ambassadors.
- Provide accessible toilets and ideally a Changing Places facility
- Provide an 'Access for All' section on your website
- Provide a detailed and accurate Accessibility Guide to promote your accessibility.



New Accessible & Inclusive Tourism Industry Toolkits

Equipping the visitor economy with the resources and knowledge they require to deliver accessible experiences

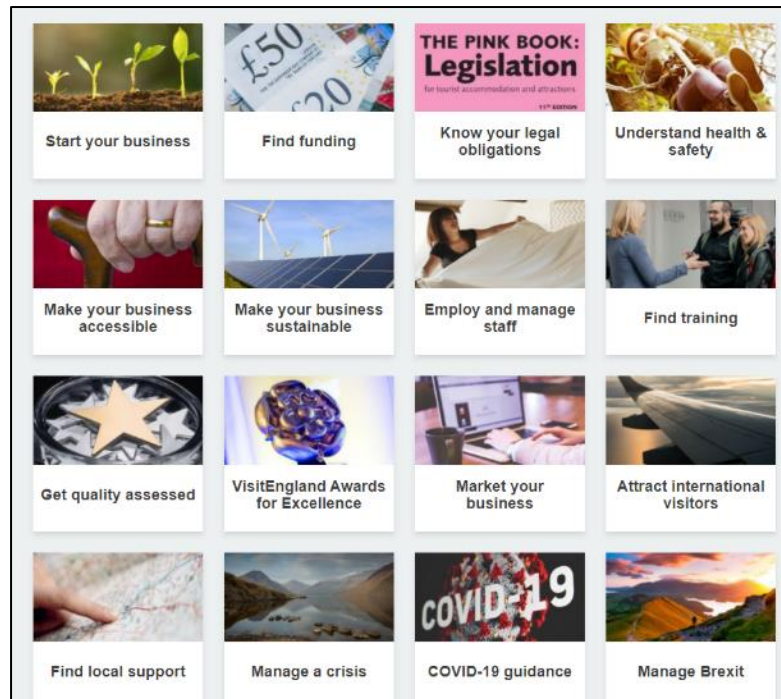
- Consolidate and build on our leading standalone guidance currently available to form holistic toolkits with practical tips and real-life case studies
- Supporting businesses to develop venues and experiences that people with a wide range of accessibility requirements can enjoy
- The Business toolkit will comprise practical guidance on improving accessibility across the key areas of Customer, Place, Information and Employment.
- It will include real-life case studies and downloadable business-specific actionable checklists to plan and prioritise improvements, as well as some more aspirational technical design requirements
- It will be hosted on the upcoming new VisitEngland and VisitBritain industry website, due for launch shortly



VisitEngland Business Advice Hub

More accessibility tips and other free resources to help businesses to succeed and grow

- Links to external resources
- Sustainability guidance
- Fire Risk Assessment Template
- Digital Marketing Toolkit
- VisitEngland Awards for Excellence
- Pink Book of Legislation (12th edition out now)
- TETTW Inbound Tourism Toolkit
- TXGB
- And much more!





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Q&A



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For practical guidance, case studies and top tips on
Accessible & Inclusive Tourism visit:

visitengland.org/access

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