



## Help for Visually Impaired People

The Diocesan Board for Social Responsibility is working on a series of papers aimed at helping parishes become more aware of disabled people and their needs in our churches. This is the first paper in this series, which is intended to encourage parishes to maintain a high awareness of the needs of disabled people.

### **At least one person in fifty five is visually impaired**

More information is also available from the Royal National Institute for the Blind in their leaflet "Visually impaired people in church". Write to RNIB Customer Services, P O Box 173, Peterborough, PE2 6WS (Tel: 0345 023153)

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### **Approach to Church and Hall**

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#### **Are directions signs**

- ☆ Clear to and from the car park?
- ☆ Facing oncoming traffic and pedestrians?
- ☆ Few and to the point?
- ☆ Free of obscuring branches?
- ☆ A contrasting colour?
- ☆ In large plain lettering?
- ☆ In pictorial symbols?
- ☆ Tactile as well as visual?
- ☆ Illuminated?
- ☆ Causing obstruction or hazard?

#### **Are Notice Boards**

- ☆ As listed above and protected from direct sunlight which the glass could reflect obstructing vision?

#### **Is the route from the farthest part of the car park to the building entrance**

- ☆ Well lit?
- ☆ In good repair and level?
- ☆ Free of obstructive vegetation and protruding ground level signs, litter bins etc?
- ☆ Are seats and litter bins in contrasting colour?
- ☆ Are path edges, steps and kerbs clearly marked, kerbs lowered and drains and gullies flush and offset
- ☆ Are paving slabs closely laid? (Maximum gap is 5mm)

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### **The Building**

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Is the entrance obvious with contrasting wall and door furniture?

Is there a good outside light above the door?

If there are glass doors is there a decorative feature to make the door visible?

Are thresholds and mats flush with the floor?

Is there an "eye-sign" poster at the entrance to indicate provision for visually impaired people?

#### **At the entrance**

- ☆ Is there a welcome and appropriate support?
- ☆ Is there a well displayed plan of the building?
- ☆ Is there literature in large print?

## Do Welcomers know

- ☆ Where the lighting is best for reading?
- ☆ How to offer an arm?
- ☆ To introduce those sitting near?
- ☆ Is the interior well lit, toilets clearly signposted, use made of bold symbols and contrasting colours
- ☆ Are in all posters signs and notices
  - in bold black lettering using upper and lower case letters on a white or yellow background, at eye level?
  - safely accessible to scrutiny from a few inches?

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## Worship

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Are guide dogs welcome in all parts of the church Buildings including the communion rail?

Are hymn books, prayer books, service books and sheets available in large print and braille? If not, are the words of hymns and psalms for the service available on a separate sheet in large print?

Is the first line of each hymn announced as well as the number?

Are the hymns and psalms of the day made available in advance to visually impaired regular church attenders?

If an overhead projector is used, are visually impaired people sitting in the best seats for seeing the screen? If other visual aids are used, are they passed around?

Are visually impaired people encouraged and helped to participate fully in the service?

- ☆ reading lessons,
- ☆ leading intercessions,
- ☆ taking offertory?

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## Church Life

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Are visually impaired people in the parish and in the congregation known to the PCC, Church Officers and the Visiting/Pastoral Team?

Are they able to get to church, church meetings and events without having to ask for a lift each time?

Can they get to funerals of long term residents of the parish?

Are they encouraged to offer their gifts and skills in all areas of church life? eg fund raising, church outing, standing for election to representative bodies?

Is your parish magazine/newsletter available in large print (size 14 point font or larger) or on audio tape? Are visitors available to read these publications aloud?