

# Access For All

## 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Note is one of a series of Supplementary Planning Guidance Notes (SPGs), amplifying the development plan policies and other issues in a clear and concise format with the aim of improving the design and quality of new development. The Notes are intended to offer broad guidance which will assist members of the public and officers in discussions prior to the submission of planning applications and assist officers in handling and members in determining planning applications.

## 2 STATUS AND STAGES IN PREPARATION

- 2.1 The Council's SPG Notes are not part of the adopted plan. However, they have been the subject of both a formal Council resolution and public consultation. The Welsh Assembly Government (The Assembly) has confirmed that following public consultation and subsequent Local Planning Authority (LPAs) approval, SPG can be treated as a material planning consideration when LPAs, Planning Inspectors and the Assembly determine planning applications and appeals. This Note was approved by Full Council on June 3rd 2003 for use in development control. A statement of the consultation undertaken, the representations received and the Council's response to these representations is available on request.
- 2.2 The purpose of this SPG is to provide guidance to designers / developers / applicants to meet the needs of disabled people through inclusive design in all types of development. Our towns and cities have not been designed with the needs of disabled people in mind; one person in six in Wales has a disability.

## 3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Disability is defined under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 as "someone who has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on his/her ability to carry out normal day to day activities", (to include physical and sensory impairments, mental health issues, learning disabilities).

It is estimated 1 in 3 of Denbighshire's population have a recognised disability (32,000 people). Improvements benefit many people, including people with prams/pushchairs, elderly people, those with short/long term impairments. Providing an accessible environment benefits society at large.

- 3.2 **Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA)**

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) introduces legislation aimed at ending the discrimination that many disabled people face. It affects virtually everyone who provides facilities information and services to the general public whether paid for or free of charge.

- From October 2004, service providers may have to make reasonable adjustments in relation to the physical features of their premises to overcome physical barriers to access.

## 4 POLICY

- 4.1 This note applies to matters subject to planning and building regulations. Separate guidance is available on other matters and set out under Further reading and information in appendix one.

The following policy and related documents are relevant:-

1. Planning Policy Wales, S4
2. TAN (W) 12 Design, S3 and S5
3. Policy Gen 6 (vi) General Development Considerations
4. British Standards 8300:2001
5. Approved Document Part M of Building Standards
6. Section 76 Town and Country Planning Act

The Council is committed to providing equality of access to all public buildings, education (SENDA), health, community, leisure and recreational facilities, open spaces, services and the wider environment for all sectors of the community.

**5 UDP Policy GEN 6**

Criterion (vi) states

Proposals should.....where appropriate, provide safe and convenient access for persons with disabilities.

In addition to this SPG, Denbighshire County Council is committed through other strategies, policies and advice notes to provide a barrier free environment –

- Access Strategy
- Access for All Advice Note
- Equal Opportunities Policy

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**6 DESIGN PRINCIPLES**

The arrangements for access to buildings can be a material planning consideration and the arrangements for use by the public, which include disabled people, raises issues of public amenity that can be material to a planning application. (Where appropriate the planning authority may impose conditions requiring access provisions for disabled people.)

**6.1 Building Regulations**

Applicants / designers / developers are advised to ensure that, at an early stage in the design process, their proposals will meet the minimum standards set out in Part M of the Building Regulations 1999 (Access and Facilities for Disabled People). Part M of Building Regulations are presently under review.

The regulations require that reasonable provision be made for people with physical and sensory impairments to gain access and use all non-domestic buildings and dwellings. It is expected, however, that Part M will be extended to include existing buildings and change of use. At present new build and domestic use are covered.

**6.2 Means of Escape**

The Approved Document supporting Part B of the Building Regulations 1991 comprises the requirements for fire precautions in a building and guidance on meeting them. Detailed information on means of escape is given in Part 8 of BS5588 Fire Precautions in the Design, Construction and Use of Buildings.

**6.3 BSI 8300:2001**

British Standard BS 8300:2001 is the ‘Design of buildings and their approaches to meet the needs of disabled people, Code of Practice’.

The recommendations in this Standard apply for assessing the accessibility and usability of existing buildings, and where practicable, as a basis for their improvement. This applies to the following types of building.

- Transport and industrial buildings
- Health and welfare buildings
- Religious buildings
- Dwellings and other residential buildings
- Administrative and commercial buildings
- Refreshment, entertainment and recreation buildings
- Educational, cultural and scientific buildings

**6.4** There are instances where a flexible approach is needed, particularly in existing buildings. It is particularly important that provision is matched to the use of the building e.g. aids to communications hearing loop systems in Theatres, accessible changing facilities in leisure buildings.

**7 COMPLIANCE**

It should be noted, however, compliance with Part M does not guarantee the needs of disabled people have been met. Recommendations through the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and BSI 8300 should also be taken into consideration promoting inclusive design to ensure suitable provision for disabled people.

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**8 NON-DOMESTIC BUILDINGS AND THE SPACES BETWEEN THEM**

This covers shops, educational buildings, offices, industrial buildings, community facilities, recreational and entertainment buildings and public toilets.

Development of buildings open to the public, buildings used for employment and education purposes should provide suitable access and facilities for disabled people, as customers, visitors and employees. Applicants should be mindful of the following criteria:

- Reserved extra-wide parking facilities
- Accessible approach to, around and into buildings
- Access to all facilities
- Including fixture and fittings
- Facilities for physical and sensory impaired people

**8.1 Countryside**

Countryside developments should take into account the needs of disabled people. Much can be done to assist disabled people even where ground conditions and gradients preclude many physically disabled people from reaching all areas. The Council encourages imaginative and innovative ways of providing provisions for disabled people,( to include physical and sensory impaired people).

**8.2 Housing**

Where there is clear evidence demonstrated of local need for mobility housing, this will be a material planning consideration in any proposals to adapt existing housing.

Mobility housing is defined as general needs housing modified to a minor extent to make it accessible for disabled people.

- Increasing the range of housing available to disabled people
- Allowing greater scope for visiting by all

The value of purpose-built mobility housing will be greatly enhanced when site access and the use of nearby amenities are also part of the scheme.

Legislation regarding the requirements for the provision of new housing suitable for disabled people, is included in Approved document Part M of Building Regulations and Lifetime Homes standards.

**8.3 Historic Properties**

Disabled people should have easy access to and within historic buildings. A flexible and pragmatic approach should be taken to an integrated review of access requirements for all visitors and users. It is possible to plan suitable access for disabled people without compromising a building's special interest by striking a balance between conservation and access requirements. (See document 8 in appendix one).

**8.4 Traffic Management**

Developments incorporating traffic management schemes or alteration to traffic and parking arrangements shall include suitable provision for disabled people. Consideration must be given to access routes for vehicles of blue badge permit holders and public transport ie, buses and taxis. Consideration needs to be given to the size, location and number of parking bays, and the provision of setting down points for buses and taxis. Dropped kerbs should be 'flush' with the road surface.

**8.5 Pedestrian Environment**

Applicants should be mindful of the following criteria to ensure an accessible barrier-free pedestrian environment:-

Inclusive Design criteria to include:

- the layout and dimensions of footways and footpaths (see Inclusive Mobility DETR)
- the choice, positioning and colouring of street furniture; seats should be provided at intervals along routes where waiting is likely;
- seating should be stable and provided in a range of heights.
- Positioning of bins and lighting not to obstruct the footways.
- the layout and construction of pedestrianised areas to include level and even surfaces

**9. GENERAL GUIDELINES**

The following recommendations are intended to provide general guideline to meeting the needs of disabled people accessing primarily public services taking into account the Disability Discrimination Act Part III Section 21 (October 2004).

Inclusive Design criteria to include:

- External signage (clear, bold colour contrasts and symbols).
- Good outside lighting, around car parks, paths and entrances.
- Designated car parking spaces with markings and driver head height signs.
- A ‘flush’ dropped kerb to level well maintained paths with clear signage, and tactile area where appropriate.
- A ramped or level entrance.
- Handrails on both sides of steep ramps, stairs and steps, with handrails that continue 300mm past the steps.
- An automatic door opening device at the principal main entrance (where reasonably practical)
- External door with a level threshold and a minimum clear opening width of 800mm, with easy to grip handles at relevant height.
- Internal signage (bold clear colour contrasts and symbols)
- Wheelchair user friendly entrance doormat, not coconut matting.
- Good lighting levels throughout the building.
- Sensible use of décor; use bold contrasts of colour to highlight doors, light switches, handrails, stairs, steps, notice boards, telephones etc.
- Accessible reception desk/counter with low level area.
- Induction loop system should be available at all reception points, training and meeting rooms.
- Fire alarms should include audio and visual communication.
- Unisex accessible toilets with all fixtures and fittings, including emergency pull cord.
- Facilities at suitable heights, including IT, telephone, work surfaces, noticeboards
- Lifts to all floors with audio and Braille instructions, relevant heights for fixtures and fittings.
- An accessible level or ramped ground floor fire exit, with clear signage and evacuation procedure, safe refuge points for all upper floors including signage.

## 10. GUIDANCE

Building Regulations include standards of provision for people with physical and sensory impairments. The following notes include some of the requirements of the Building Regulations and British Standards and are intended to provide design guidance for most elements of development.

### 10.1. Car Parking

In the case of all non-residential development, the Council will require that appropriately positioned parking places, adequate in size and number, shall be provided for disabled people duly issued with blue badge permits. The size of each parking place and the level of provision shall be in accord with the Council's parking guidelines.

Applicants should be mindful of the following criteria:-

- Size, number and identification of reserved parking spaces
- Convenience of spaces in relation to buildings
- Access to and from car parking areas
- Flat surfaces
- See appendix 3 for details of parking spaces

### 10.2 Additional information can be found in Appendix 2 and 3 on

- Car Parking
- Entrances, Doors & Lobbies
- Corridors
- External Ramps
- Handrails
- Toilets
- Lifts
- Signposting

**APPENDIX I**

Further Reading and Information

1. Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (Section 76)
2. The Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 (amended 1976)
3. Building Regulations: Approved Document M (1999), updated as appropriate
4. Disability Discrimination Act 1995 Code of Practice
5. British Standards 8300:2001
6. Technical Advice Note 12 – Design
7. Meeting Part M and designing Lifetime Homes (Joseph Rowntree Foundation)
8. Overcoming the Barriers – CADW (Providing Physical Access to Historic Buildings)
9. Building Sight by Peter Barker, Jon Barrick, Rod Wilson – JMU Access
10. Sign Design Guide – JMU Access Partnership
11. Access Audits, - Centre for Accessible Environments
12. Designing for Accessibility, - Centre for Accessible Environments
13. Colour and Contrast – JMU Access Partnership
14. BT Countryside
15. Inclusive Mobility - Department of Transport

**Useful Contacts**

Centre for Accessible Environments (CAE)  
 Nutmeg House  
 60 Gainsford Street  
 London SE1 2NY  
 Tel/texphone 020 7357 8182  
 Fax 020 7357 8183  
 Email [info@cae.org.uk](mailto:info@cae.org.uk)  
 Website [www.cae.org.uk](http://www.cae.org.uk)

JMU Access Partnership  
 C/O RNIB Cymru  
 Trident Court A  
 East Moors Road  
 CARDIFF CF24 5TD  
 Email [jmuwales@rnib.org.uk](mailto:jmuwales@rnib.org.uk)  
 Website [www.jmuaccess.org.uk](http://www.jmuaccess.org.uk)

Disability Rights Commission Helpline  
 Freepost/MID 02164  
 Stratford Upon Avon  
 CV37 9BR  
 Tel: 08457 622 633  
 Texphone: 08457 622 644  
 Email [enquiry@drc-gb.org](mailto:enquiry@drc-gb.org)  
 Website [www.drc-gb.org](http://www.drc-gb.org)

CADW: Welsh Historic Monuments  
 Crown Buildings  
 Cathays Park  
 Cardiff CF10 3NQ  
 Tel: 029 2050 0200  
 Fax: 029 2082 6375  
 Email [Cadw@Wales.gsi.Gov.UK](mailto:Cadw@Wales.gsi.Gov.UK)  
 Website [www.cadw.wales.gov.uk](http://www.cadw.wales.gov.uk)

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 1st Floor  
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 30 Wynnstay Road  
 Colwyn Bay  
 LL29 8NB  
 Tel 01492 534 208  
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 Website [www.rnid.org.uk](http://www.rnid.org.uk)

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## APPENDIX 2

### 1. Entrances, Doors & Lobbies

- Automatic doors generally offer very good access and are a preferable option.
- Entrance doors, especially transparent doors, should be distinguishable by detailing, colour or other features.
- Door closers should be adjusted to the minimum force necessary (guidance recommends 25-30 newtons).
- Entrance lobbies should be light and spacious.
- There should be space at waiting areas for wheelchair users.
- Thresholds should be flush wherever possible.
- For double doors, each door opening to be minimum of external 800mm/internal 750mm
- Vision panel to give minimum zone of visibility from 900mm to 1500mm from floor level

### 2. Corridors

- Width of corridors - without passing bays 1800mm
- with passing bays 1500mm
- provide unobstructed space for approaching doors
- splayed or rounded corners desirable
- on narrow and L-shaped corridors, provide a wheelchair turning circle of 1500mm diameter
- appliances and fittings recessed.

### 3. External Ramps

Ramps and platform / level access are essential to enable wheelchair users and people with pushchairs to overcome level changes, ideally they should be accompanied by steps for ambulant disabled people.

- A gradient of 1:20 is considered 'level'. 1:15 is the maximum on ramps up to 10m long, and 1:12 the maximum on ramps up to 5m long, use only where it is not practicable to use alternative gradients).
- Length of ramp between landings/level areas - 5m - 10m for a 1:15 to 1:20 gradient, less than 5m for a 1:12 to 1:15 gradient
- Surface - non-slip.
- Width - surface width 1800mm preferred, 1200mm minimum (1000mm unobstructed)
- Gradients - 1:20 preferred
- Alignment - slopes should be straight, where any turns on level landings
- Landings - to be level, and clear of any door swing. Top & bottom - 1800mm preferred, 1200mm minimum. Intermediate - 1800mm preferred, 1500 minimum
- Sides - any open edge should have a raised kerb 100mm high
- Handrails - at two levels, both sides, continuous (for ramps more than 2000mm long). Top of upper handrails 900mm above surface of ramp and 1000mm above surface of landing. Top of lower handrails 650mm above surface of ramp and 750mm above surface of landing. Extends 450mm (300mm min) beyond top/bottom of ramp with a closed end.
- See diagram in appendix 3

**4. Handrails**

Handrails give support to people as they negotiate changes of level. They should be securely fixed. To assist visually impaired people, handrails should contrast totally with their surroundings.

- minimum 45mm from side wall/obstacles
- 50mm above bracket
- Easy to grasp (avoid hard metal surfaces externally)

**5. Toilets**

Accessible WC's are essential for the freedom of disabled people. Dimensions relating WC pan to basin and associated fittings and equipment, to wheelchair manoeuvring space, are critical for independent use.

- A separate unisex facility is recommended with a 'minimum' area specification of 1500mm x 2000mm.
- External opening door with a minimum door width of 1000mm wide.
- Provision of an emergency bell system, to include reset button within cubicle.
- An unobstructed space of at least 750mm alongside toilet to aid manoeuvring, (measurable from wall to edge of toilet pan).
- Colour contrasting walls for visually impaired people. There should be a sharp contrast between the main features, equipment and controls.
- Toilets should be located to provide disabled people with the shortest, most direct route.
- Accessible toilets should be situated at ground level, and/or at the same level as other key facilities, such as main entrances, reception and waiting areas, and refreshment outlets.
- A "disabled toilet" is one which is broken. An "accessible toilet" is available for use. Plans and signs should be marked accordingly.
- It is not acceptable, for reasons of hygiene, to allow baby-feeding in toilets. Litter can compromise the health and safety of disabled users.
- See diagram appendix 3

**6. Lifts**

- Lifts should have a minimum internal measurement of 1100mm wide by 1400mm deep.
- Doors to have a clear opening width of 830mm wide (minimum 800mm)
- Controls located halfway along side wall at maximum height of 1200mm to the top button.
- Braille and audio instructions for use of lift
- Height of controls between
- Sufficient circulation space to lift door (approx 1500mm turning circle)

**7. Signposting**

Information should be clear and unambiguous - carefully sited at convenient heights and be readily distinguishable from the background by the use of strong contrast.

APPENDIX 3

# Car parking

Preferred arrangement – gives wheelchair users the choice of transferring on either side of the bay.

Where space is more limited, hatched transfer area is shared between two adjacent bays.

Standard bay, using adjacent footway as transfer area, with flush kerb at junction. Ensure adequate width of footway to avoid obstructing pedestrian flow.

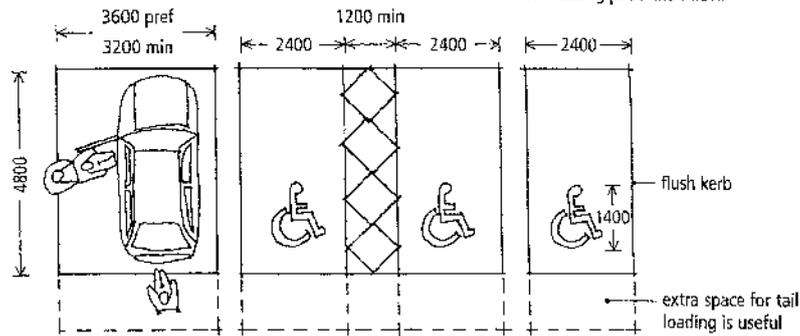
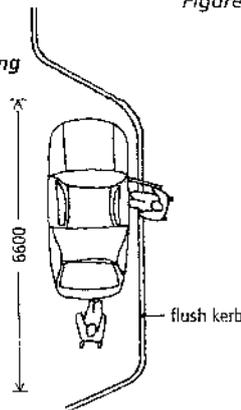


Figure 1 Accessible off-street parking bays

Figure 2 On-street parking



Minimum recommended number of bays in off-street car parks		
Car park used for:	Car park size:	
	Up to 200 bays	Over 200 bays
Employees and visitors to business premises	Individual bays for each disabled employee plus 2 bays or 3% of total capacity, whichever is greater	6 bays plus 2% of total capacity
Shopping, recreation and leisure	3 bays or 6% of capacity whichever is greater	4 bays plus 4% of total capacity

(source: Reducing Mobility Handicaps, Institution of Highways and Transportation)

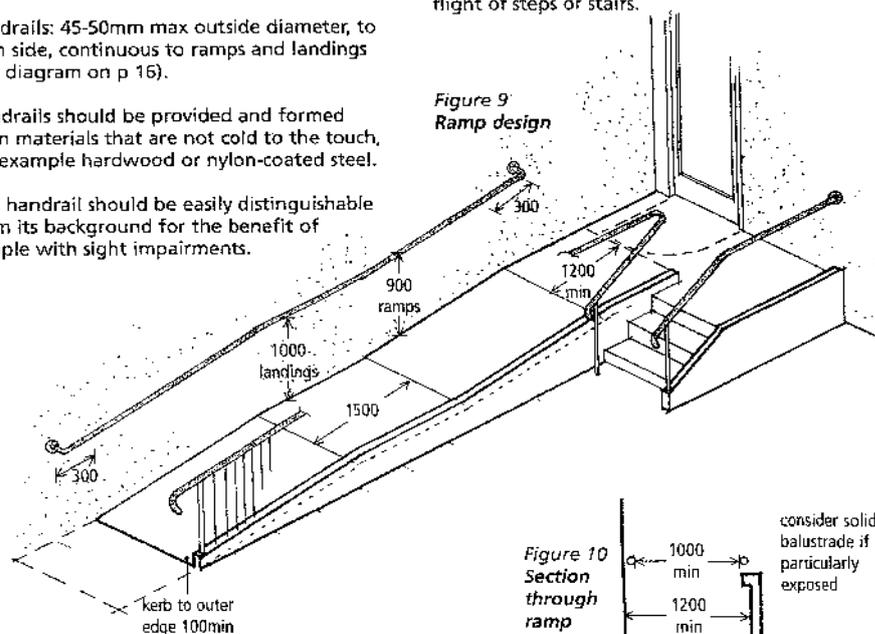
- Larger parking bays are required to allow people with reduced mobility to get into and out of their cars with the minimum of difficulty (see Figure 1).
- The location of accessible bays should be clearly signposted from the car park entrance.
- Bays should be identified as provision for disabled drivers or passengers only.
- Bays should be close to the entrances to the facilities the car park serves – within 50m if uncovered, 100m if covered.
- Bays need to be wide enough for car doors to be fully opened to allow disabled drivers and passengers to transfer to a wheelchair parked alongside and long enough to allow space for tail loading.
- Kerbs between the parking area and routes to buildings should be dropped to give access to wheelchair users.
- The car park surface should be smooth and even and free from loose stones.
- Layout of on-street parking bays is shown in Figure 2.
- All pedestrian routes within the car park should be level.

APPENDIX 3

PERSPECTIVE OF EXTERNAL RAMP

## External ramps

- Ramps are essential to enable wheelchair users and people with pushchairs to overcome level changes, but should be accompanied by steps for ambulant disabled people where steeper than 1:20.
- In Part M of the Building Regulations, a gradient of 1:20 is considered level, 1:15 is adequate and 1:12 is the absolute maximum. The preferred gradient is 1:15 or less. The steeper the ramp, the shorter the length between level landings (see Figures 9 and 11).
- Ensure 1000mm min clear width (see Figure 10).
- Handrails: 45-50mm max outside diameter, to each side, continuous to ramps and landings (see diagram on p 16).
- Handrails should be provided and formed from materials that are not cold to the touch, for example hardwood or nylon-coated steel.
- The handrail should be easily distinguishable from its background for the benefit of people with sight impairments.
- Avoid patterning which simulates steps, such as applied or inserted slip-resistant strips.
- Surface materials should be slip-resistant, firmly fixed and easy to maintain.
- In existing buildings where an extreme level change would require a long, circuitous ramp or where space is limited, a short-rise lift may be appropriate (see p 26 Platform lifts).
- It is not recommended to use corduroy tactile warnings to indicate ramps or lift, as these are properly used to indicate the start of a flight of steps or stairs.



External Ramps

- Recommended gradients 1:20 or 1:15 (only use 1:12 where it is not practicable to use preferred gradients)

APPENDIX 3

WCs

The Part M unisex WC

- Can accommodate a variety of methods of transfer and allows most users to wash and dry their hands while seated on the WC before transferring back to their chair.
- Layout 1500mm wide x 2000mm long minimum (see Figure 29; overall dimensions shown are minimum and could be increased to advantage).
- The dimensions relating WC pan to basin and associated fittings and equipment, and to wheelchair manoeuvring space, are critical for independent use.
- The horizontal rail/backrest to the rear of the WC should be padded if there is no WC lid to rest against. A backrest may not be required if the cistern is low-level.

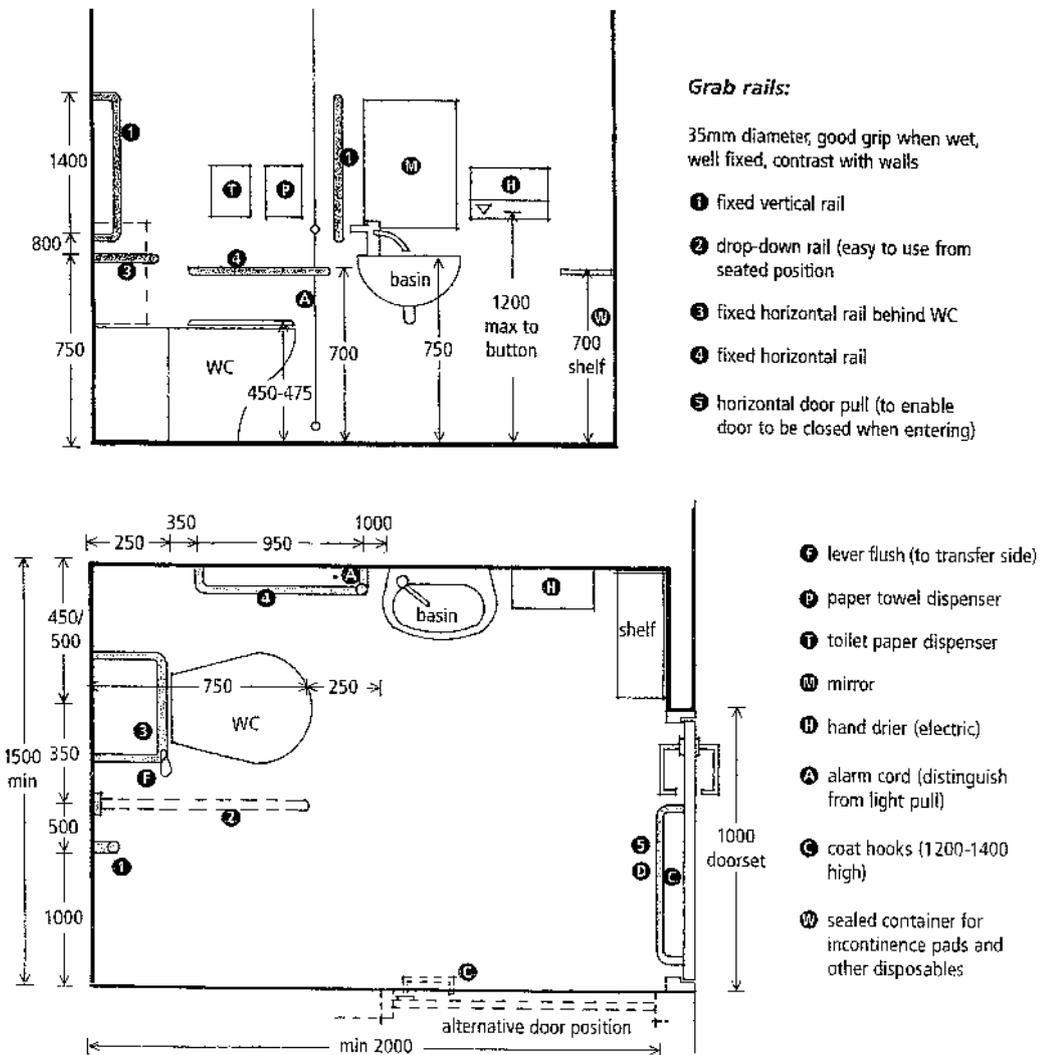


Figure 29 Part M unisex layout WC



## Environment Directorate • Planning & Public Protection Services

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**Planning & Public Protection Services can also be contacted by e-mail [dcc\\_planning@denbighshire.gov.uk](mailto:dcc_planning@denbighshire.gov.uk)**  
**The Building Control North and South Area Teams can also be contacted at the above.**