



A GUIDE
FOR DISABLED PEOPLE
TO

BANK
AND
BUILDING SOCIETY
PREMISES AND SERVICES

IN
HEREFORD CITY
Spring 2011

Hereford Access For All
Registered Charity No. 703050

President: J.E.H. Lawes

This access survey was carried out by members of 'Hereford Access for All' Committee during the Summer and Autumn 2010. It is intended as a helpful access guide for disabled residents and visitors plus, where applicable, their carers or personal assistants.

Committee members are all unpaid disabled volunteers who have researched as many City Centre establishments as possible (not all agreed to take part).

Our intentions in undertaking this access survey have been entirely positive. That is to say we do not just set out to look for problems and hope that in our comments we have faithfully recorded everything that is positive about disabled access at any branch premises.

In almost every case there is a comprehensive statement available on-line about the particular Bank or Building Society's policies and practices regarding disabled access. Some services, e.g. lip readers, sign language interpreters, might need to be booked in advance require up to two weeks notice to be given. The general consideration is that if you have special needs for assistance, whatever they might be, then bring them to the notice of Branch staff as early as you can so that your particular situation can be provided for if possible.

There is a significant concern arising from our access survey with regard to design and, in some cases, the positioning of A.T.M. or "cash machines" where such are available.. This is an issue for wheelchair users in particular. It seems that face-on access might be problematic due to wheelchair footrests plus the fact that sideways-on access involves difficulties over viewing the screen and lack of security over PIN numbers. For the visually impaired a machine may have features recommended by RNIB built into the technology. Some machines might also have a card insert point lower than the manufacturer's recommended height. Should you need help to operate a machine then do ask Branch staff.

However, to optimise equality and independence for disabled customers A.T.M. machines need to have universal accessibility designed in and 'Hereford Access for All' Committee will pursue that objective.

**Banks and Building Societies
Hereford City- 2010**

Name	Page Number
Abbey National (Santander)	4
Alliance and Leicester	5
Barclays	6
Britannia	7
Cheltenham and Gloucester	8
HSBC	9
Lloyds TSB	10
Nationwide	11
NatWest (1)	12
NatWest (2)	13
Principality	14
Royal Bank of Scotland	15

**Abbey National plc;
8-9 Broad Street, Hereford, HR4 9AF
Telephone: 0845 765 4321**

(Now part of the Santander Group)

www.santander.co.uk

Details	Comments
Access to Building	Level with automatic doors
Internal Area	Long and narrow
Height of desks, tables and counters	Information desk is high. No tables in the public area for writing. No low-level counters.
Space between fixtures	Adequate but not good.
Cash machine access/security	Inside. Normal height. No obvious security and poor access. Tucked away.
Availability of staff for advice	Not good
Staff attitude –training?	Training not apparent in the staff's attitude
Signage-visual guide	None
Loop system?	None apparent- though Santander state that all branches have loop systems fitted at their counter.
Leaflets	Santander state that choice is provided as to how "leaflets" are presented e.g. large print, Braille, audiotape and PC disk. Just ask a member of staff.
Auxiliary Aids	RNID's Typetalk . Santander advise that, if you need help seeing their forms etc., request one of their handy magnifying sheets, clipboards or cheque writing templates.
Privacy regarding consultation?	Screened off areas – but not soundproofed.
Any problems specific to these premises?	Plenty of room if "quiet" but access is difficult everywhere if busy. Large armchairs down main wall are restrictive.
General comments	Barrier at counter is portable and could be widened.. Few staff available on floor. The Information desk is not always manned and is high. No obvious queuing system and there is no designated counter for wheelchair users. The arrangements are confusing and with no obvious help available.

Alliance and Leicester plc
20/21 High Town, Hereford, HR1 2AB
Branch telephone: 014342 268494

(Now part of the Santander Group)

www.santander.co.uk

Details	Comments
Access to Building	Level. Doors have power assisted means of entry and exit
Internal Area	Spacious. Adequate room to reach counters. Comfortable seating. Good visibility.
Height of desks, tables, and counters	Good. Special two level provision for writing. Plenty of room in order to access counters.
Space between fixtures	Wide
Cash machine access/security	One machine. Wheelchair users need to position sideways on. Security reasonable. Screen clarity may be a problem for some.
Availability of staff for advice	Staff available. May have to ask at counter if no one else in foyer.
Staff attitude - training?	All aware of the need to treat all customers equally.
Signage—visual guide	Not necessary. Only two positions. Clearly visible.
Loop system?	Hearing display sign at counter positions
Any advice leaflets or publications?	Readily available
Large print? “Easy Read” Format? Including Account Statements	Santander state that choice is provided as to how “leaflets” are presented e.g. large print, Braille, audiotape and PC disk. Just ask a member of staff. RNID’s Typetalk . Santander advise that, if you need help seeing their forms etc., request one of their handy magnifying sheets, clipboards or cheque writing templates
Any problems specific to these premises?	None, but they say that they have few disabled customers.
Privacy re consultation?	Consultation areas are provided. For more confidential discussions private rooms available.
General Comments	These premises have been comprehensively and well refurbished and create a sense of a modern, and light environment. Excellent facilities. One concern relates to the display screen on the ATM but further feedback from other wheelchair users might be justified to ensure fair comment. Favourably impressive overall.

Barclays Bank plc
1-3 Broad Street, Hereford, HR4 9BH
Telephone: 0845 755 5555

www.barclays.co.uk

Details	Comments
Access to Building	The pavement outside slopes to the road. Lift available but the key is kept at reception. Not ideal.
Internal Area	Spacious
Height of desks, tables, counters	Suitable. The number one position is lower for disabled customers. Low shelf for signing etc.
Space between fixtures	Wide enough
Cash machine access/security	See under "General Comments"
Availability of staff for advice	Always someone on duty at reception post.
Staff attitude - Training?	Disability awareness is part of staff training i.e. to treat all customers alike.
Signage - visual guide	Nothing specific
Loop system?	Yes. Sign at counters
Any advice leaflets or publications?	No
Large print? "Easy Read" Format? Including Account Statements	Yes- on request. Large print and Braille are available. See also under "General Comments"
Any problems specific to these premises?	Wheelchair users have to notify their need for the lift to be operated.
Privacy re consultation?	Good. Secure rooms available for interviews.
General comments	With regard to cash machine access and security both internal and external ATMs are difficult for wheelchair users. As is the case with most Banks and Building Societies their cash machines were not designed for easy access. Wheelchairs have to be positioned "sideways on". This makes concealing Pin numbers difficult. In general Barclays Bank is committed to breaking down barriers with regard to disabled access.

Britannia Building Society
 52 Broad Street, Hereford, HR4 9AB
 Telephone: 08714 329003

(Now merged with the Co-operative Bank)

www.britannia.co.uk

Details	Comments
Access to Building	Chairlift available
Internal Area	Lots of space
Height of desks, tables, counters	Low counter available for wheelchair users.
Space between fixtures	Plenty of space
Cash machine access/security	No cash machine
Availability of staff for advice	Special advisors with whom one can make an appointment.
Staff attitude—training?	Good. Staff do have training.
Signage—visual guide	Satisfactory
Loop system?	Portable loop available if required.
Any advice leaflets or publications?	Yes. Leaflet available entitled “Meeting all our customers’ needs” which details a range of services geared to “taking care of your individual needs “
Large print? “Easy Read” Format? Including Account Statements	If you have difficulty reading their literature Britannia can provide you with a choice of Braille, large print or audio versions.. All branches also have magnifying equipment & signature templates and if you need other support completing forms then “just ask”.
Any problems specific to these premises?	One has to wait for the chairlift to be set up.
Privacy re consultation?	Yes
General Comments	Very helpful. In addition to the access services available which have already been detailed above Britannia also offer the following: sign language interpreters lip speakers and note takers - ask when you make an appointment. Britannia are always happy to come and visit you at home. See advice leaflet for full details.

Cheltenham and Gloucester plc
59 Commercial Street, Hereford,
HR1 2DJ
Telephone: 01432 355241

www.cheltglos.co.uk

Details	Comments
Access to Building	Excellent. All services can be provided at Ground Floor level. If necessary a disabled customer can be served behind the counter area.
Internal Area	No problem. There are two interview areas, both accessible. One has a door (completely private.) Table heights OK.
Height of desks, tables, counters	No problem. Varying height surfaces are available. See "General Comments" for further information.
Space between fixtures	No problem.
Cash machine access/security	No machine.
Availability of staff for advice	Staff always available.
Staff attitude - training?	Staff undertake 1-2 hours study/training (with test) annually with reference to disability related legislation. This is organised centrally.
Signage - visual guide	There is a sign for the hearing induction "mini loop" system at both the entrance door and the counter.
Loop system?	Available both at the counters and also in the office plus portable version with headphones.
Any advice leaflets or publications?	A leaflet "Access to our services" is available which addresses the diverse requirements of people with disabilities.
Large print? "Easy Read" Format? Including Account Statements	Yes. This does include bank statements. New customers will be asked about this when opening an account. C&G branches can also provide a template to make it easier for you to sign standard forms and can also provide a bank note gauge.
Any problems specific to these premises?	None
General comments	Suitable disabled toilet available. Also, if required, staff will bring papers to a customer and with a suitable surface to write on.

HSBC
35 High Town, Hereford, HR1 2AQ
Telephone: 08457 404 404

www.hsbc.com

Details	Comments
Access to Building	Automatic door to fairly steep ramp.
Internal Area	Partially open-plan ground floor. A more enclosed first floor.
Height of desks, tables, counters	One low shelf on ground floor. Upstairs there are low tables and wheelchair user friendly counters.
Space between fixtures	Reasonable. Awkward around the consultation areas..
Cash machine access/security	Very close together and very overlooked. Difficult for wheelchair users to get close to the machines.
Availability of staff for advice	Staff always available
Staff attitude - training?	No specific training.
Signage - visual guide	On view
Loop system?	Yes
Any advice leaflets or publications?	All relevant advice is included within general notices/ information.
Large print? "Easy Read" Format?	Yes
Including Account Statements	
Any problems specific to these premises?	Ramp is difficult for a manual wheelchair user. In addition to that the lift is extremely small.
Privacy re consultation?	Cubicles are not easily accessible for wheelchair users. Too close together and one could be overheard.
General comments	Friendly and helpful staff. However, the layout of these premises leaves a lot to be desired for wheelchair users.

Lloyds TSB
8 High Town, Hereford, HR1 2AE
Telephone: 0845 3000 000

www.lloydstsb.com

Details	Comments
Access to Building	Good. Level access and automatic doors. The outside access is level also.
Internal Area	Spacious and plenty of room for manoeuvring.
Height of desks, tables, counters	Counters a good height. No tables other than at consultation points. Information desks a little high but not impossible. (see 'General comments')
Space between fixtures	Space between barrier and tellers counters quite restrictive. Difficult to pass. (see 'General comments')
Cash machine access/security	Cash machine at low level. Only security is the distance between machines.
Availability of staff for advice	Very good. There are always staff around for help.
Staff attitude - training?	Staff extremely helpful and also courteous.
Signage - visual guide	The general signage is visible, but no signage to indicate any help or services for wheelchair users. (see 'General comments')
Loop system?	Yes
Any advice Leaflets or Large print? "Easy Read" Format? Including Account Statements	No. However, detailed information about the access services which are available for their disabled customers can be found Large print and Braille statements available. Also a correspondence service that allows Lloyds TSB to send out letters in Braille and large print. Note gauge and large print cheque book also available.
Any problems specific to these premises?	No
Privacy re consultation?	Yes. There is a room at the back of the Bank plus a lift to the upstairs rooms.
General comments (1)	On their website Lloyds TSB provide details of services for customers with visual and hearing impairments (e.g. they can arrange to provide RNID signers free of charge.) Plus details about access to branch facilities.
General comments (2)	(a) Wheelchair user customers can use the tables at consultation points if not in use. But, specific writing points at a suitable height for wheelchair users are not available. (b) Wheelchair user customers can use teller point seven if staffed as this point can be accessed without going through the barrier. (c) Apparently Head Office will not permit special signage in case it confuses the non disabled general public.

Nationwide
10/11 Commercial Street, Hereford,
HR1 2DB
Telephone: 0845 2660506

www.nationwide.co.uk

Details	Comments
Access to Building	Automatic doors
Internal Area	Space available
Height of desks, tables, counters	Counter is high but desk available at low height.
Space between fixtures	Roomy
Cash machine access/security	Yes
Availability of staff for advice	Yes
Staff attitude—training?	Knowledgeable Plus .also In various areas they are specialists.
Signage—visual guide	Clear signs and large print available.
Loop system?	Yes
Any advice leaflets or publications?	All publications can be ordered in large print, Braille, audio cassette or CD. Your local branch will arrange this for you.
Large print? “Easy Read” Format? Including Account Statements	To order an account statement or any other Nationwide literature in an alternative format please telephone 08457 30 20 10 or textphone 18001 0800 37 80 01. If you prefer, you may order literature by completing their accessibility order form.
Any problems specific to these premises?	None
Privacy re consultation?	Yes
General comments	On their web site the Nationwide state that they are committed to ensuring that all their products and services are easily and equally accessible to all of their members. Most branch facilities include staff trained in disability equality. Hereford Branch staff were very helpful. Just make your needs known to them. The Nationwide web site also includes full accessibility details with reference to members with mobility difficulties and hearing impaired and speech impaired members.

NatWest (1)
12 Broad Street, Hereford , HR4 9AH
Telephone: 0845 301 9761

**(NatWest is a member of the
Royal Bank of Scotland Group)**

www.rbs.com

Details	Comments
Access to Building	Mobile ramps available. System activated by use of "Please ring for assistance" bell at front entrance.
Internal Area	Lots of space
Height of desks, tables, counters	High counter but lower tables.
Space between fixtures	Plenty
Cash machine access/security	Cash machine inside the bank which is OK.
Availability of staff for advice	Yes
Staff attitude—training?	Staff very helpful. All are trained.
Signage—visual guide	Cashier sign. Also main doorway sign for loop system.
Loop system?	Hearing loop available at counter position. In addition there is also a portable induction loop that is available for use in interview rooms.
Any advice leaflets or publications?	Potential customers are asked about any "special needs" e.g. large print documents when they are opening an account. In addition the NatWest brochure "Helpful Banking" is available in accessible formats. (also see "General comments")
Large print? "Easy Read" Format? Including Account Statements	Customers with visual impairments can be provided free of charge with statements and correspondence in Braille, large print or on audiotape. Brochures are also produced in the same formats. PIN numbers are provided in Braille.
Any problems specific to these premises?	No
Privacy re consultation?	Wheelchair accessible ground level interview rooms available where possible.
General comments	Details about access services are available on the NatWest/RBS website. Also ask for a copy of the NatWest brochure "Access - Our services for customers with disabilities".

NatWest (2)
12 Broad Street, Hereford , HR4 9AH
Telephone: 0845 301 9761

**(NatWest is a member of the
 Royal Bank of Scotland Group)**

www.rbs.com

Details	Comments
Access to Building	Automatic doors. Flat access.
Internal Area	Reasonably spacious and wheelchair user friendly.
Height of desks, tables, counters	Wheelchair user friendly.
Space between fixtures	More than adequate.
Cash machine access/security	Cash machine inside with adjoining low table and wheelchair turning space. Also not too overlooked.
Availability of staff for advice	Usually staff at the desk.
Staff attitude—training?	Incorporated within their general customer service.
Signage - visual guide	On view. Wherever possible NatWest Bank/RBS is committed to easier access for everyone. This policy includes layout and signage designed with suitable colour contrast to assist partially sighted customers.
Loop system?	Yes. Hearing loop available at counter position. In addition there is also a portable induction loop that is available for use in any interview rooms
Any advice leaflets or publications?	“Access - Our services for customers with disabilities” Brochure.
Large print? “Easy Read” Format? Including Account Statements	Customers with visual impairments can be provided free of charge with statements and correspondence in Braille, large print or on audiotape. Brochures are also produced in the same formats. PIN numbers are provided in Braille.
Any problems specific to these premises?	None encountered.
Privacy re - consultation?	Yes. Rooms available. Bank policy is for wheelchair accessible ground level interview rooms to be available where possible.
General Comments	Easily accessible. Very friendly staff including management. (see also “General Comments” under NatWest (1) page 31).

Principality Building Society
2 St. Peters Square, Hereford, HR1 2PG
Telephone: 01432 273039

www.principality.co.uk

Details	Comments
Access to Building	Seriously problematic. The front door is quite heavy and lacks any automatic opening mechanism. No catch even to hold the door open. It took two of us to get the wheelchair user through!
Internal Area	Small public space. Leaflets displayed on the wall could well be beyond reach for a wheelchair user. It could be difficult for a wheelchair user to join a queue.
Height of desks, tables, counters	Main counter and the fixtures height could be a problem for some. No low writing surface in main public area. The Manager's office desk made available to us.
Space between fixtures	Tight!
Cash machine access/security	No machine.
Availability of staff for advice	Just normal customer service. If there is a need then the staff will assist.
Staff attitude—training?	No formal training made available but staff are committed to assist when needed.
Signage—visual guide.	A sign for the hearing induction loop service displayed at counter but nowhere else.
Loop system?	Portable loop system.
Any advice leaflets or publications?	None
Large print? "Easy read" Format? Including Account Statements	When needed by any customer large print documents including account statements can be arranged via the Principality HQ.
Any problems specific to these premises?	Staff are very friendly, helpful and concerned about access issues. On the Principality web site with reference to this Branch the term "full access" is used. It is not easy to justify this.
Privacy re - consultation?	Reasonably accessible and private room is available.
General comments	Even on their website there is only minimal reference to disability issues. (See under "site accessibility".)

Royal Bank of Scotland
21 Broad Street, Hereford, HR4 9AP
Telephone: 01432 357264

www.rbs.co.uk

Details	Comments
Access to Building	Pavement OK. One step at entrance. Ramp is available - service is operated by ringing bell. Bell push button on either side of doors.
Internal Area	Access to positions is easy. Shelf level and access at the positions is high.
Height of desks, tables, counters.	Shelves are too high for wheelchair users to write on. Tables nearby are suitable.
Space between fixtures	OK
Cash machine access/security	Machines outside. Branch Manageress states that these are adequate for wheelchair users. RBS on line accessibility policy indicates that, where possible, newer cash machines have been installed at a height which is suitable for wheelchair users.
Availability of staff for advice	For advice ask at counter positions.
Staff attitude - training?	Staff are aware of the need to assist. Part of RBS normal training sessions.
Signage - visual guide	Branch premises only cover a relatively small area so major signage is not required.
Loop system?	At both counter and consultation areas.
Any advice leaflets or Publications?	Some available. More on order.
Large print? "Easy Read" Format? Including Account Statements	The RBS accessibility policy states that, for customers with visual impairments special services are provided free of charge i.e. statements and general correspondence in Braille, large print or on audiotape. Brochures in same formats plus PIN numbers in Braille.
Any problems specific to these premises?	Only that there is a step at the main entrance.
Privacy re consultation?	Yes. Several rooms available which are wheelchair accessible. This accords with the RBS on line policy with regard to accessibility.
General comments	Within the limited area available the Bank has made what provision it can. Shelves are high for wheelchair users but writing tables are available if needed. A pleasant area with helpful staff.

This access guide could not have been compiled without the co-operation of the staff of those establishments who agreed to take part. 'Hereford Access for All' would like to thank everyone who kindly assisted us - also including Herefordshire Council's Diversity Officer.

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