

Introduction

This book sets out to give detailed practical information about travel, accommodation, leisure activities and tourist attractions for people with mobility problems. It contains the unique *Good loo guide* covering much of central London.

If you have internet access, there will be updates on www.accessinlondon.org, certainly during the next two or three years, and hopefully for longer.

Those who will find the guide useful include people who use a wheelchair, those who use a stick or crutches, for whom distance is an issue, and those with young children in buggies. They include London residents, day-trippers, people visiting relatives, and, of course, visitors and tourists.

The information here is firmly based on the experiences of disabled people, and virtually every entry has been wheeled into or walked into, and measured and assessed, by one of our survey teams. The information gathering was carried out between 2011 and 2013, and what we present is a straightforward description of the ‘access’.

How the guide is arranged

The guide starts with general information, and a chapter on getting around which provides the basis for visiting. There are chapters on accommodation, on the sights, shops and places of interest inside the north and south circular roads. With the focus on sport, arising from the Olympics, we have included detailed write-ups on London’s major sports grounds. There is only a brief chapter on Entertainment (because good information is available elsewhere), and the key final chapter is entitled the *Good loo guide*.

The descriptions of a number of places of interest outside the north/south circular road are included on our website www.accessinlondon.org where there is also information about London’s open-air markets and on annual events. There is additionally a detailed discussion about the drop in standards of reporting ‘access’ information, under Methodology.

Units and definitions

We have given measurements in centimetres (cm), and metres (m). Although these are the units increasingly being used internationally, many British people, and most Americans, still think in Imperial measures. To convert metric measurements to the more familiar Imperial units, use the following guidelines:

- 10 centimetres is about 4 inches (2.5 centimetres=1 inch)
- 1 metre is about a yard
- 1 litre is about 2 pints
- 1 kilo is about 2 pounds

Steps are listed by number, with + indicating steps up and – indicating down. Occasionally we list them as \pm , in that it depends on which direction you are coming from.

The diagram titled *Design criteria* gives the approximate dimensions of a standard wheelchair. Chairs vary considerably in size so it's worth checking the exact size of yours to relate to the measurements given in the guide. With powered chairs, it's also worth checking its weight as well as adding your own weight, because some platform stairlifts have weight and size restrictions.

Movable chairs and tables

In cafés, restaurants and pubs we have not said each time that the chairs and tables are movable. It is assumed that they are movable, and therefore more convenient for chair users and for others. Where they are not movable, or if the seats and tables are high up or might cause a problem, we have said so.

Toilets

Our definition of a **wheelchair toilet** is one where the toilet is unisex; the door opens outward; the door width (D) is >70cm and the side transfer (ST) space is >70cm.

If the toilet does not quite meet these criteria, but is adapted for a chair user, then we call it an **adapted toilet**, and we give the appropriate measurements and information.

Where the cubicle is INSIDE the womens or mens toilet area, we describe them as being **wheelchair or adapted cubicles**.

Unless specified, the toilet seat is at the standard height of about 45cm.

We are aware of the need for the provision of a higher pan for those with arthritis. As toilets with higher pans are not yet widespread, we have not made a separate category.

Where we have visited and measured D and ST widths, we have included the measurements in the text.

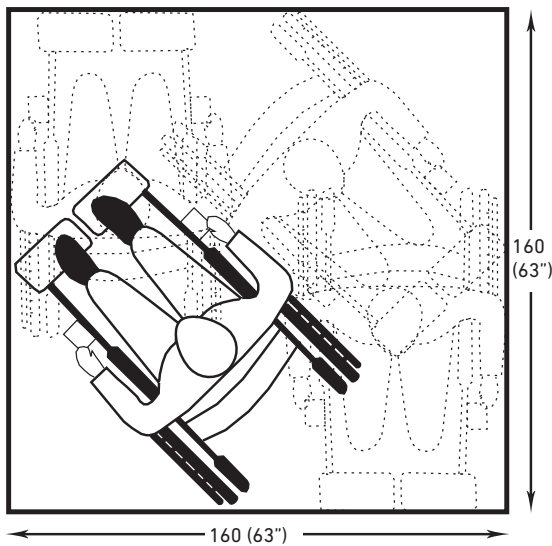
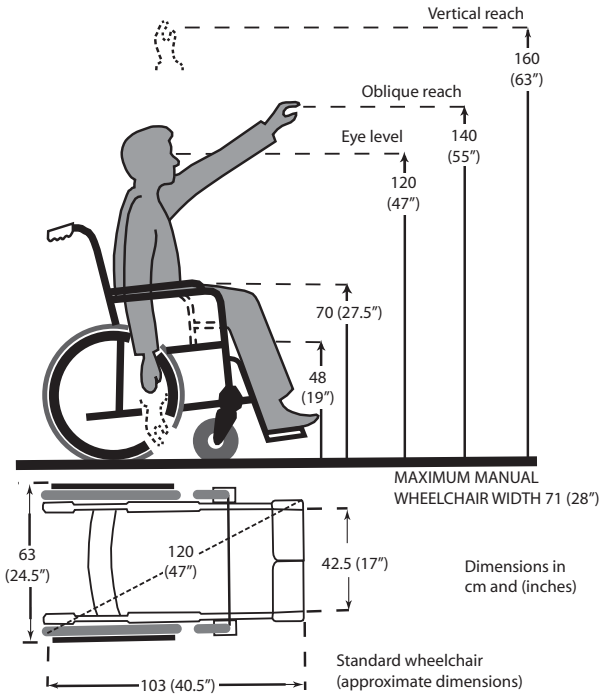
*Where we have not necessarily visited, but have good evidence of the existence of an appropriate toilet, we have referred to it as an **accessible toilet**.* We did not, for example, visit all 147 accessible toilets in the new Wembley Stadium, and we haven't visited all of those on the suburban railway system.

For more information and specifications, see *Designing for Accessibility*, published by the CAE.

The main hassle we came across was the recent trend towards adding BCF to accessible toilets, making them less spacious. In addition it was common to find large nappy disposal bins placed in the ST space. When we drew this to the attention of the management, they nearly all said that they hadn't realised how a chair user might want/need to use the space.

This is an example of the dangers of mainstreaming the management of both facilities and of information, and illustrates perfectly the lack of any detailed

Design Criteria



understanding of different people's needs.

Note the new facilities which are gradually being provided as *Changing places* for people who cannot use standard accessible toilets - with enough space and equipment, including a height adjustable changing bench and a hoist.

See www.changing-places.org.

Lifts

A **lift** (what might be described as a 'conventional' or 'normal' lift) is in a shaft, with sliding doors, and a cabin which can be large or small. It goes up and down between the floors of a building.

A **platform lift** is a rectangular vertical lift, usually to take one chair user at a time. It often bypasses just a few steps - and may be added in a building as an afterthought, to meet DDA requirements. Its door is normally hinged, and will swing open outwards.

A **platform stairlift** goes up stairs at an angle (attached to the wall or banister) and has a platform which can take a wheelchair, and occupant. An electric chair and occupant may be too heavy, and exceed its SWL.

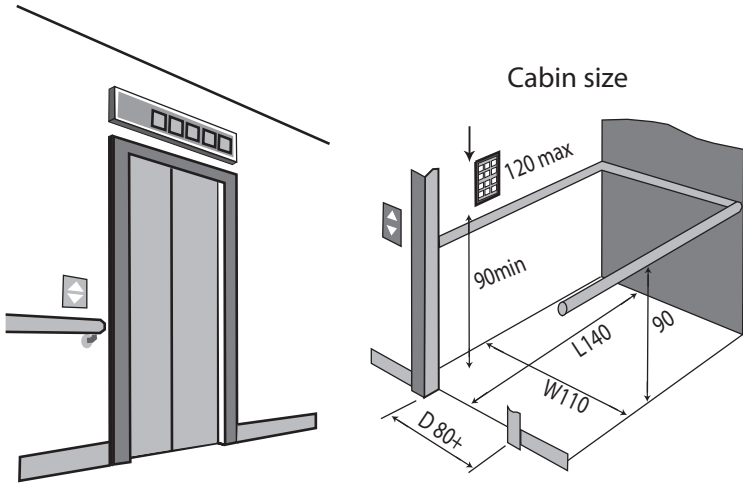
A **chair stairlift** goes up the stairs (attached to the wall or banister) and has a seat into which the passenger has to transfer. This is very useful for many disabled walkers, but for a wheelchair user, their chair has then to be carried up or down the stairs by someone else. It is not often found in public buildings.

For lift measurements, we quote: door width (D), cabin width (W) and cabin length (L). On this basis, you can decide whether the lift is large enough for you to use.

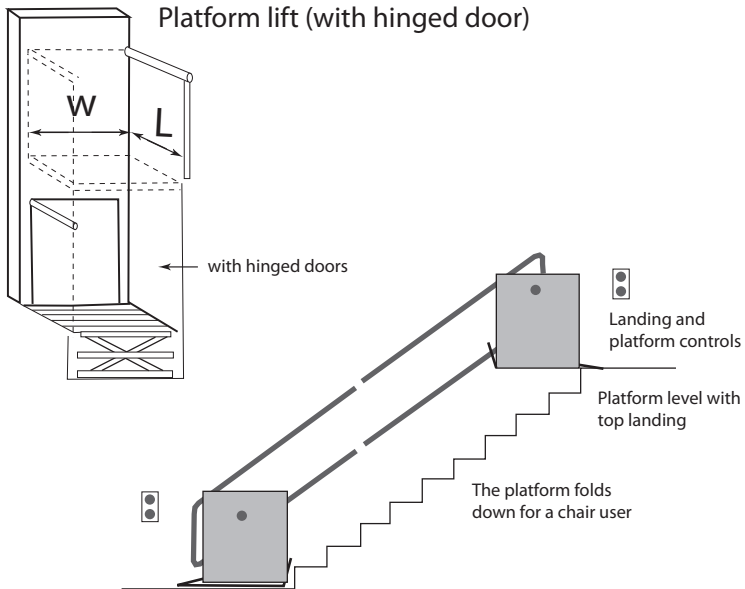
A stairclimber is a free-standing and portable device to which a wheelchair may be attached. The most common one used is a Scalomobile, but there are also some with long caterpillar (tank-like) tracks. These devices usually need two people to operate them, but they can enable a chair user to be helped up or down stairs. We would comment that the only versions we've come across are not very comfortable to use, and that only a few people are willing to operate them.

Why travel ?

If you already have travelitis (the travel bug), then you will know why so many people do it. If you're unsure about it, then perhaps we can encourage you by sharing our experiences. Since the 1970s, when some of our group first wanted to travel, we have been to various parts of France, to Jersey, Norway, Germany and Israel/Palestine, writing guides as we went. Because the group consists of both disabled and able bodied people, we ran into all kinds of barriers and problems that could have been divisive. In practice, we tackled problems together, and found that, given the right information, and with a bit of determination, most



Passenger lift (with sliding doors)



Wheelchair/platform stairlift

A chair stairlift is a variation for a disabled walker
 (with a fold-down chair, not often found in public buildings.)

The different kinds of lifts

things were possible. We gathered this information together on a systematic basis, and have made it available via these Access guides.

Our experiences have been fun, we've learned a lot, and done things that in the normal course of events we'd never have even thought of doing. We do think that 'travel broadens the mind', and in particular it has brought us into contact with many many people. The majority have been interesting, interested and helpful, though occasionally we have met people with attitudes that were more obstructive than a spiral staircase !

Overall it has brought a series of memorable experiences. Each member of the group will have a different tale to tell. We have encountered new cultures, and seen some amazing sights. Even though there may have been a few problems and difficulties, they've been worth it.

Why London ?

There is an enormous amount to do, see and discover in London. The West End is up with Broadway in offering a variety of high class entertainment, and there are museums, galleries, sights and restaurants which match those you'll find anywhere else in the world. There are pageants, street markets, and night clubs. Although accessibility varies, there are enough historical buildings, art galleries and museums with good access to fill any itinerary.

Accessibility is something that has improved enormously during the past ten years, although to counter this there is also more attention to 'health and safety', which sometimes gets in the way of easier access.

You will find that there is an extraordinary mix of cultures and races.

You will also find that things become somewhat frantic during the morning and evening 'rush hour' on the transport system when people are getting to and from work on weekdays.

A brief history

There is no evidence that the ancient Britons settled on the site of what is now London. The Iron Age inhabitants arrived in the south-east of England around 500 BC, and one of their settlement areas was in what is now Heathrow Airport. Londinium grew after the Roman invasion in 43 AD centred on their original London Bridge which was just feet away from its current site. Now on the north side is London's high rise financial district.

After Roman rule, the Dark Ages saw London controlled by Saxon invaders, who were often in dispute with the Vikings for control of the country. This was until 1066 when William the Conqueror took over, changing Saxon England into Norman England.

London grew in both population and prestige, becoming England's most important city. The oldest parts of the Tower of London date from the late 11thC. There was a large palace and abbey at Westminster, where Chaucer and many other famous people are buried. Tudor London saw the reign of Henry VIII, whose story is best discovered at Hampton Court where he lived. The population increased rapidly. During the Stuart period, the bubonic plague hit the city, reaching its peak in 1665 with the Great Plague. London then took another purging, with the Great Fire in 1666. This is said to have been started accidentally by a baker in Pudding Lane, and the site is commemorated by a huge Doric column, known as the Monument. As part of the reconstruction, St Paul's Cathedral and many other famous churches were built.

Other centres grew and flourished outside the walls of the City, in particular to the south in Southwark. Being beyond the control of the City fathers, raffish entertainment went on here, including bear baiting, and performances of plays by Shakespear. In 1676 it had its own Great Fire, which raged for nearly a day destroying hundreds of houses and businesses.

London Bridge was built, initially at a time when the river was wider and shallower than it is now. On one of the bridges, buildings were allowed, to help pay for its upkeep. In the early 1800s a stone bridge was built, to be replaced in 1973 by the current concrete and steel construction.

The effects of the industrial revolution can be seen clearly. There are old power stations in central London. There was extensive development, including the Docklands, towards the east and this area is now being extensively redeveloped. Throughout the Georgian, Regency and Victorian eras, London grew enormously. There was a mixture of elegant housing for the wealthy, much of which remains, and of rat-infested tenements for the poor (well described by Dickens in his many novels). This reflected the success of both traders and industrialists and the human cost of that success. The less attractive parts have been, or are being, extensively rebuilt and redeveloped. The architecture of the times can be seen in many of the remaining buildings, with extensive Victorian development in outer suburban areas.

London became the capital of the British Empire, the world's largest city, and the world centre for banking and trade. Since then its relative importance has declined, but it remains one of the great capitals of the world. We hope that you have an enjoyable visit, and that the information in this guide will be helpful.

London's postcodes

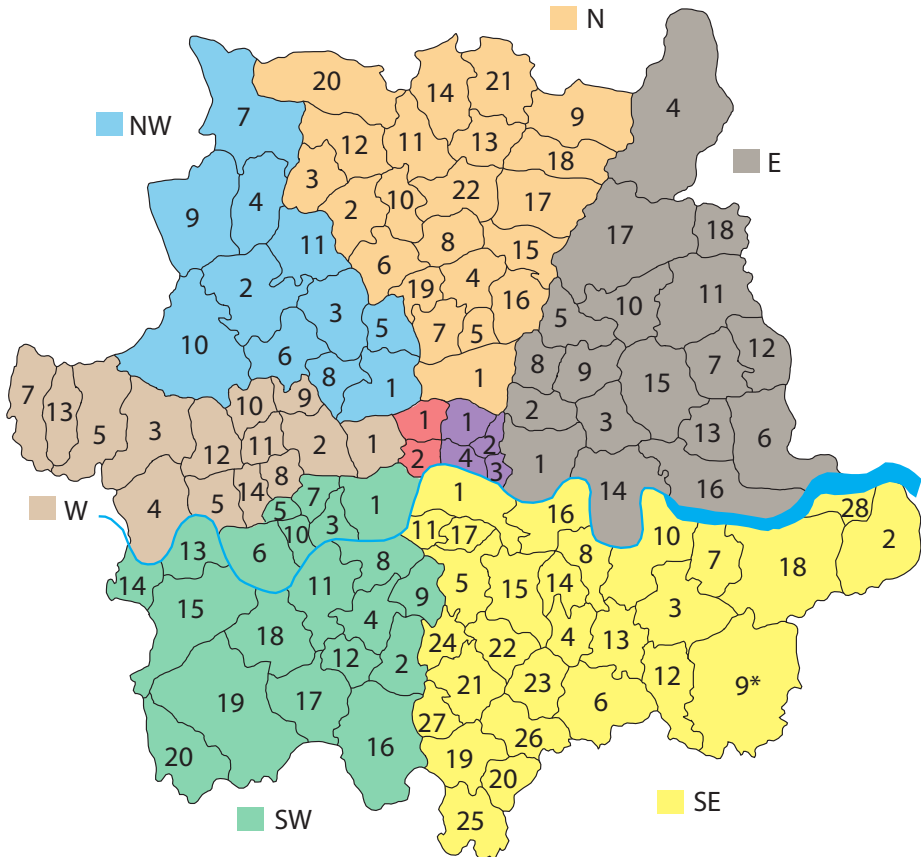
If you're going to get around London, it may be helpful to know something about the way that the postcodes are arranged. They are shown on the map, and as can be seen, it's a complicated arrangement - which has grown and grown over the years.

Apart from the very central areas covered by the WC and EC codes and those designated 1, the rest of the postcodes seem to be somewhat random.

In some areas, the geographical names are organised in alphabetical order. However, the listing is further complicated because some areas have two or more alphabetical series and there appears to be little logic about the order of some of the numbers.

Places in London's outer boroughs such as Harrow, Barnet, Enfield, Ilford, Romford, Bexleyheath, Bromley, Hounslow, Richmond, Croydon, Sutton, Kingston and Uxbridge are covered by parts of twelve adjoining postcode areas (EN, IG, RM, DA, BR, TN, CR, SM, KT, TW, HA and UB).

London postcodes



Prefix area with code, for example *SE9

■ E ■ EC ■ N ■ NW ■ SE ■ SW ■ W ■ WC