



Checklist – Accessible & Inclusive Tourism

Self-catering Accommodation



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Introduction

Ensure everyone feels welcome at your self-catering accommodation

To make sure that everyone benefits from a great stay and becomes an ambassador for your accommodation, you need to demonstrate a thoughtful, empathetic approach to the varied abilities of your visitors.

Best practice can help you win repeat bookings and market your accommodation effectively to the widest possible audience. However, factors like poor information, inaccessible infrastructure and inadequate customer service can cause frustration and affect people's enjoyment of their stay.

This checklist is designed to help you assess how ready your accommodation is to provide a welcome for all. You can use it to spot oversights and points of friction in the visitor experience. The information you gather as you work through the checklist will become an asset you can share with potential bookers to help you win business. It will also help you to identify areas where there is room to improve your offer and its appeal to a wide audience.



Use the checklist to:

- ✓ Guide you through the process of evaluating the accessibility of your accommodation's communications, infrastructure and customer service.
- ✓ Identify practical changes you can make (from quick wins to more ambitious changes).
- ✓ Benefit from peace of mind and handy reminders of necessary actions.
- ✓ Maintain standards of excellence.
- ✓ Track your progress as part of a process of continuous improvement.

Please note: This action checklist is part of a wider range of resources provided by Fáilte Ireland, and it is aimed at owners and managers of self-catering accommodation. Use it with other resources, including our [Effective Communications Guide](#) and the food and beverage business access checklist, to make sure that you provide an authentic and inclusive welcome.

For more information, visit the [Accessible and Inclusive Tourism Business Support Hub](#).

Inclusion and Accessibility

The terms 'accessible' and 'inclusive' are often used interchangeably, and they should go hand in hand. However, they have quite different meanings, and it is important to keep both in mind when you are striving to offer a genuine welcome for all.

'Inclusion' means including and accommodating people so that everyone can participate in and enjoy the experiences you offer.

The word 'accessible' means 'easy to approach, reach, use, and understand'.



Accessible

Accessible accommodation is physically, technologically and socially easy to access, and approach, as well as easy to eat, sleep and relax in.



Inclusive

An inclusive accommodation business goes beyond accessibility to actively welcome and accommodate diverse customers and suppliers. It provides equal opportunities for all to enjoy a satisfying and memorable stay, and it can also help people to enjoy time with others, respecting the fact that adjustments may be required to deliver these equal opportunities.

Improving accessibility and inclusion is a continuous and rewarding process. Some of the actions you identify as you work through the checklist will be quick, simple, and affordable fixes. Others – like issues caused by infrastructure or training gaps – may need more time to solve. These more complex actions may also require collaboration with colleagues, managers and other stakeholders, such as suppliers, tour group organisers or disabled people's organisations.

Revisiting the checklist frequently will help you stay actively engaged in this process. It will also ensure that you are regularly renewing your commitment to continuously improve your welcome for all. Use the checklist and the wider resources available through Fáilte Ireland to spur you on and chart your progress!



Checklist – Accessible & Inclusive Tourism

Self-catering Accommodation

Business Name:

Year:



Pre-visit & Booking

To ensure good governance, completion and review of these actions is the responsibility of the person who is the Task Owner.

Use the following options to indicate task status in Completed column: **Y= Yes, N=No, P= Partly or A= Active**

If Action is not completed, use the Notes column to provide more detail.

Action	Task Owner	Completed (Y/N/P/A)	Notes
Does your website include a dedicated section that outlines your accommodation's accessibility features and supports visitors in understanding how you provide an accessible experience? An Access Welcome Guide is a section on your website that provides clear, reliable information about your business's accessibility features, helping visitors with access needs make informed and confident booking decisions. To support you in developing an Access Welcome Guide section on your website, please visit Fáilte Ireland's Access Welcome Guide Hub			
Have you gathered or updated your accommodation's accessibility information in a single document?			
Do you offer your guests a few different ways to contact you (e.g. telephone, email, text message, and the Irish Text Relay service which is available for use by D/deaf people and people with speech impairments).¹			

¹ The Irish Text Relay Service enables people who are D/deaf, hard-of-hearing or speech-impaired, to make and receive calls independently through type and read, type, and speak and type and listen supports. Find out more at [Irish Text Relay Service](#).

Action	Task Owner	Completed (Y/N/P/A)	Notes
When people are making a booking, are they asked 'Do you, or those you are travelling with, have any accessibility requirements?'			
In any follow-up communication, do you provide peace of mind by repeating the information the guest has provided so that they know it has been received and understood? Also, do you provide any details about how you can or can't meet the guest's needs (e.g. by providing a cot for a baby).			
Do you regularly check that information about your accessible facilities on third-party websites and booking channels, as well as local destination sites, is accurate?			
Have you provided your local tourist information office with details about your accommodation's accessible facilities and any recent improvements you have made?			
If you share a guide that provides information on activities and services in your locality, does it include accessible options (e.g. accessible restaurants, cafés, pubs, playgrounds, and attractions)? Consider working with a local tourism group on this project so you can share insights and information.			

Your Website

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Action	Task Owner	Completed (Y/N/P/A)	Notes
Does your website meet the standards set out in the international Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG2)? ² You may need to seek advice from your site designer here, but simple steps towards compliance include providing alternative text for all images. Training in web accessibility is also available via Fáilte Ireland's Business Hub and learniFI (Fáilte Ireland's learning platform), where live learning and self-paced courses are available. ³			
Are the values of accessibility and inclusion clearly reflected in your website's content (text, imagery) and in information you share via third-party websites? How are you making this judgement call (e.g. are you seeking feedback from users)?			

² WCAG 2 Overview | Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) | W3C.

³ Find resources at: [Live Learning](#).

Action	Task Owner	Completed (Y/N/P/A)	Notes
Do you provide detailed and accurate information on rooms and communal areas, along with useful measurements and photos? If you use an Access Welcome Guide section for this information, do you ensure that information provided elsewhere on the site is also clear about accessibility, as not all guests will regard their requirements (e.g. walk-in showers) as accessibility needs?			
Do you provide information on storage options for mobility devices, care equipment, medication, or other essential items? For example, visitors may need to store crutches or a walker or to refrigerate certain medication. To ensure smooth storage and retrieval in staffed accommodation, provide clear answers to the following questions: • Do staff have training, as well as facilities, so they can respond appropriately to related requests? • Do you provide clear signage and clear instructions and/or support so a person can retrieve stored items when needed? • Are there any issues or procedures around the storage of expensive items or equipment?			

Action	Task Owner	Completed (Y/N/P/A)	Notes
Do you provide information on and links to accessible transport options, using the information you have gathered for your Access Welcome Guide? Is this information regularly updated (e.g. when timetables change)?			
Have you ensured that the information you provide about the destination in general is equally useful to all guests (e.g. in a list of restaurants or attractions, do you flag their levels of accessibility, including factors such as suitability for wheelchair users and accessible menus)?			
Do you provide a list of available accessibility equipment and details of reputable suppliers should visitors need to hire specific equipment you do not have? Examples of assistive equipment include ear defenders, walkers, wheelchairs, and air mattresses. Details of reputable care providers will also be helpful.			

Wayfinding & Navigation

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Action	Task Owner	Completed (Y/N/P/A)	Notes
Is clear external signage provided, including to an accessible entrance if the main one does not provide step-free access? Where possible, the main entrance should be accessible.			
Is signage installed at a height visible to wheelchair users?			
Is signage easy to interpret (adequate font size, strong colour contrast, clear symbols)? ⁴			
Do you offer to guide disabled attendees to their accommodation and do you offer an orientation tour?			
Where people have requested additional support in advance, are details, directions or equipment shared discreetly?			
Have you developed a set of standard Emergency Evacuation Plans (EEPs) for the safe evacuation of people with disabilities? Are they reviewed at regular intervals (e.g. twice a year)?			
Do you ask all guests if they require any assistance with evacuation in an emergency? Discuss the standard options available and agree and record any specific arrangements made with individual people.			

4 Centre for Excellence in Universal Design, 'Signage Design', available from [Centre for Excellence in Universal Design](#).

Arrival & External Areas

To ensure good governance, completion and review of these actions is the responsibility of the person who is the Task Owner.

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If Action is not completed, use the Notes column to provide more detail.

Action	Task Owner	Completed (Y/N/P/A)	Notes
If you or a representative are greeting guests on arrival, do you ensure that everyone receives a genuine welcome?			
Do you welcome guests with trained assistance dogs? This is a legal requirement even if you have a 'no dogs/pets' policy. ⁵			
Are water bowls available for use by assistance dogs?			
Are staff trained in assistance animal etiquette (e.g. don't touch, talk to, feed or distract)? ⁶			

⁵ In Ireland, there are four organisations that have accreditation with Assistance Dogs International, Inc. (ADI). These are: Autism Assistance Dogs Ireland, Irish Dogs for the Disabled, Irish Guide Dogs for the Blind, and My Canine Companion – Autism Service Dogs. For more information, visit [Assistance Dogs International](#).

⁶ For more information, see [Guide Dog Foundation](#).

Action	Task Owner	Completed (Y/N/P/A)	Notes
Have you designated an assistance animal relief area, and exercise area, ideally within the grounds of your accommodation or nearby, along with handwash facilities for owners? Have you also provided a biowaste bin and some dog-poop bags or a pooper scooper?			
Do you ensure that external areas are kept clear of obstacles, debris, moss, ice, and fallen leaves and have firm, well-maintained surfaces? Are any permanent features (e.g. statues) securely fixed?			
Do doormats have colour contrast? Due to issues with depth perception, plain black mats can cause a distressing 'visual cliff' effect for people with Dementia.			
Do you support the smooth transfer of accessibility equipment from local providers to your guests, where possible?			
If there are reception areas, bars or shops within or around your accommodation, are there lower counter tops suitable for wheelchair users or people of short stature?			

Customer Service Points (e.g. Reception and Catering Areas at Holiday Parks)

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If Action is not completed, use the Notes column to provide more detail.

Action	Task Owner	Completed (Y/N/P/A)	Notes
Are you, and all staff, aware of and using the inclusive communication strategies set out in Fáilte Ireland's Effective Communications Guide? Helpful strategies include: • Using plain language and non-discriminatory terms. • Adjusting pace and tone to suit the people you are addressing. • Actively listening to and focusing on the people you are communicating with.			
Do you offer to provide an orientation tour to disabled customers and provide help with luggage?			

Action	Task Owner	Completed (Y/N/P/A)	Notes
Do you consider the impact of background music and refrain from playing music in areas where staff interact with customers? Are staff trained to lower the volume on request?			
Do you provide a means of written communication at key service points to assist D/deaf customers, if required? A simple pen and paper or handheld white board and wipeable marker pen will be useful.			
Do you provide written information in alternative formats (e.g. digital, large print and easy-to-read versions, QR code) on request? Is information provided in visual format for guests who cannot read or who may have limited fluency in English?			
Where there is catering available on site, do you provide meals in a visitor's accommodation (on request) for people with disabilities? Do you identify if there is an additional cost for this service?			

Bedrooms

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If Action is not completed, use the Notes column to provide more detail.

Action	Task Owner	Completed (Y/N/P/A)	Notes
Do you provide blocks and adjust bed heights on request to allow for transfer from a wheelchair or the use of a portable hoist?			
Have you considered fire safety for D/deaf guests who may not hear the smoke alarm. Strobe light fire alarms, a vibrating pillow pad and/or a domestic paging system may be appropriate? Do you inform guests in advance about such provisions?			
Do you provide adequate space for people using mobility aids to move in between areas and provide the flexibility to move furniture around? ⁷			
Do housekeeping staff know not to move furniture and personal items in a guest's bathroom or bedroom, as, in most cases, they will have been placed in positions that are accessible to the visitor?			

⁷ Note that the Government of Ireland advises that a 1800mm turning circle is required for wheelchair users and 1200mm minimum circulation space, as per building regulations. See 'Technical Guidance Document M: Access & Use', available from [Government of Ireland](#).

Bathrooms

To ensure good governance, completion and review of these actions is the responsibility of the person who is the Task Owner.

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If Action is not completed, use the Notes column to provide more detail.

Action	Task Owner	Completed (Y/N/P/A)	Notes
Are support rails provided by the shower/bath?			
Do emergency pull-cords hang to the floor and are they regularly tested?			
Are items left where visitors chose to put them?			

Kitchen and Living Areas

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Action	Task Owner	Completed (Y/N/P/A)	Notes
Do you provide clear directional signage within the property and (on request, e.g. for guests with Dementia) do you label kitchen cupboards with their contents?			
Do you provide table blocks to increase table height to accommodate wheelchair users?			
Have you ensured that tables are stable and that seating options with arms are available to provide support for people rising from their chairs?			
Do you provide easy-grip cutlery and beakers?			

Action	Task Owner	Completed (Y/N/P/A)	Notes
In rooms with televisions, do you provide a remote control that allows guests who are D/deaf or visually impaired to access audio descriptions and subtitles?			
Do you provide a step stool to aid access to counters and cupboards?			
Have you ensured that some plates, glasses, and cups are accessible from lower cabinets or drawers?			
Are features like mirrors and other resources set at heights where they are accessible to all?			

Public Toilets & Comfort Facilities (e.g. in Holiday Park Settings)

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Action	Task Owner	Completed (Y/N/P/A)	Notes
Have you clearly indicated the availability of accessible and unisex facilities using signage that uses easily understood symbols and Braille as well as words?			
Where an accessible toilet requires a key or code to gain access (e.g. RADAR key), do you provide clear guidance on the door as to where a key or code can be readily obtained?			
Have you ensured that emergency pull-cords hang to the floor and are regularly tested?			
Do you provide support rails at urinals, toilets, washbasins, and on the back of toilet doors, in line with the government's current technical guidance on access and use of the built environment? ⁸			
Do you clearly indicate the availability of baby changing facilities and baby feeding areas?			

8 See 'Technical Guidance Document M: Access & Use', available from [Government of Ireland](#).

Marketing

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Action	Task Owner	Completed (Y/N/P/A)	Notes
Have you ensured that the marketing channels you use are reaching people with accessibility requirements? For example: • Have you ensured your marketing materials are accessible to people with disabilities, such as those who are blind or have low vision, by including alt text and captions? • Have you mentioned your Access Welcome Guide, or used information about the accessibility and inclusivity of your accommodation, in your online listings?			
Do you ensure that online information is provided in forms that can be read by screen readers (i.e. you do not rely on readers being able to read text on images, and you ensure adequate levels of contrast between text and background).			

Action	Task Owner	Completed (Y/N/P/A)	Notes
Are all print materials designed to meet high standards of accessibility?⁹ • Prepare print materials with care, ensuring colour contrast and legibility. • Avoid using small font for details, such as allergens and consider providing a QR code to link to an online, accessible version of the same information. • Ensure all information (e.g. pdfs) is accessible before sharing it with others.¹⁰			
Do you regularly promote your accessible facilities and services through your communication channels, including social media?			
Do you integrate representation of all disabilities naturally in the imagery and text used in your marketing communications? Avoid representing people with disabilities as heroic when they are simply taking part in your venue's activities.			

⁹ Centre for Excellence in Universal Design, 'Customer Communications Toolkit', available from the [Centre for Excellence in Universal Design](#).

¹⁰ You can easily make sure a PDF is accessible by running Microsoft's Accessibility Checker before you generate or save your document as a PDF. After you've addressed any issues found by the Accessibility Checker, Microsoft 365 will use that information to create accessibility tags in the PDF. For more information, see [Microsoft Support](#).

You and Your Team

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Action	Task Owner	Completed (Y/N/P/A)	Notes
Have you given all staff and people involved in receiving visitors a copy of your Access Welcome Guide so they can see immediately the facilities and services that are available?			
Do all staff wear name badges, and do they make it clear if they can provide specific types of support (e.g. wearing a Dementia-inclusive badge, if they have received appropriate training to show that they can support people with Dementia)?			
Do name badges have a large, clear font and there is an option for them to be worn without the wearer having to operate a clip or pin (e.g. do you use lanyards and/or stickers)?			
Do you regularly check that all staff, including part-time and seasonal team members, have been provided with tips and guidance on inclusive customer service practices, such as inclusive language use? It is important to ensure that everyone receives a copy of Fáilte Ireland's Effective Communications Guide.			

Action	Task Owner	Completed (Y/N/P/A)	Notes
Does the communication in your team reflect best practice (e.g. do you ask a person what is the best way to help, treat each person with dignity, use respectful language, and use the communication channels and strategies that suit each person best)?			
Are relevant staff trained to use the Irish Text Relay Service and are they confident about using it?			
Have you asked your team to make note of questions or issues they encounter in relation to accessibility. You can use the data you gather to: • Improve pre-visit information. • Identify practical changes that need to be made (e.g. improved interior signage) • Identify training needs and information gaps. • Inform inclusive policies and procedures.			
Have you identified a member of staff to be an Accessibility Champion and do you encourage others to be ambassadors for accessibility? An Accessibility Champion is someone who acts as the voice for access and inclusion in your business – they have oversight of all of your accessibility actions and policies (training for Accessibility Champions is available through Fáilte Ireland's Business Hub and learnIFI).			

Action	Task Owner	Completed (Y/N/P/A)	Notes
Do you regularly discuss workplace adjustments with your team?			
Have you ensured that disabled team members have a personal evacuation plan? Are they reviewed at regular intervals (e.g. twice a year)?			
Do you regularly discuss workplace adjustments with your team to ensure you are all responding to each other's needs and identify issues that need to be addressed through more accessible and inclusive policies and procedures?			
Have you identified knowledge gaps and training needs in your team?			
Do you regularly review opportunities for upskilling available through the Fáilte Ireland Business Hub and learniFI? Your Accessibility Champion can track training levels and opportunities for your team.			

Hiring Staff

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Action	Task Owner	Completed (Y/N/P/A)	Notes
If you hire staff, do you ensure that roles at every level of your business, including leadership roles, are accessible to disabled people?			
Are your job adverts and job descriptions accessible and inclusive?			
Do you encourage applications from disabled people?			

Action	Task Owner	Completed (Y/N/P/A)	Notes
Do you post job adverts via inclusive websites such as the <u>Open Doors initiative</u> site?			
Do you provide several ways for applicants to contact you?			
Do you provide an onboarding service so you can learn about your team members' needs and identify ways to help them thrive in their roles? Is there an onboarding manual to streamline the sharing of basic information?			
If you hire seasonal or temporary staff, do you have a strategy and procedures in place to ensure that they understand the importance of, and how to deliver, accessible and inclusive services?			

Feedback & Continuous Improvement

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Action	Task Owner	Completed (Y/N/P/A)	Notes
Do you use a guest survey to gather feedback? Both positive and negative feedback give you opportunities to improve your offer.			
Do you use your findings to update your policies and practices and inform things like training and staff development plans?			
Where requested, do you provide feedback to guests about how you have responded to their queries? Showing that you are willing to listen and learn is a great way to demonstrate a real commitment to providing a welcome for all.			

Action	Task Owner	Completed (Y/N/P/A)	Notes
Have you made 'accessibility and inclusion' a standing item in any meetings with people who help you operate your self-catering accommodation and/or at your end-of-year review?			
Are accessibility and inclusion embedded in your governance practices, through inclusive policies and procedures, and do you monitor progress so you can ensure standards and identify areas for improvement?			

This action checklist is aimed at owners and managers of self-catering accommodation.

Consider sharing the Access Welcome Guide and information you have gathered with your local destination organisation, and agencies or groups that regularly use your venue to help improve the accessibility and inclusivity of events in your area. For training opportunities and further information, visit the [Accessible and Inclusive Tourism Business Support Hub](#), and visit [learnFI](#) for resources, Live Learning and self-paced courses.

