Easy Read

Creating a public realm for all

The main things in the report –

in short and easy to read words.

Contents list

About easy read

Easy read is writing that uses easy words. This makes the writing easier to understand.

Who is easy read for?

Easy read is for people:

- **who don't read well.**
- **who have difficulty understanding.**
- **who don't see well.**
- **who find it hard to read a lot of words.**

So easy read is for different groups of people.
Some groups will find it easier to read and understand than other groups.

If the easy read words are too easy for you, be patient.
Other readers may find the easy read words are right for them.

About this booklet

	This booklet is from **CIHT**.
	CIHT This is short for the Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation.
	This booklet uses CIHT instead of Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation.
	Some words are in turquoise. These are words people may not know. The first time we use the words they're in **bold**. Then we explain what they mean. After this the words are shown in normal turquoise. The explanations are also in a word list at the back of the booklet (page 63).
	This booklet has a lot of pages, but you don't have to read them all. **Instead, find what you want to read about in the contents list** (pages 3 and 4).

A message from Professor Nick Tyler

My name is Nick Tyler. I led the group of people who helped CIHT write this report.

The group included many **diverse people**.

Diverse people

This means different groups of people. Such as men and women, young and old people, disabled and not-disabled people and people from different countries.

The group's main work was to think about how CIHT could make **public realm spaces** more **accessible** for everyone.

Public realm spaces

These are places that everyone has the right to use. Such as roads and pavements, bus stops, parks and town squares.

Not all spaces are public realm spaces.

Accessibility

If **everyone** is able to use a public realm space, that space **is** accessible.

	If some people, such as disabled people, can't use a public realm space, that space **is not** accessible.
	The report includes new ideas for making public realm spaces more accessible.
	The report talks about where and when readers should think about accessibility. There is also a list of where readers can get more information about accessibility.
	The report has two important messages: • Making accessibility better usually means doing more than just what the rules say **must** be done. • The best people to talk about accessibility in a public realm space are the people most affected by its problems.
	Accessibility work never ends. More can always be done to change things so that everyone can do the things most people take for granted.
	I thank the group and the many other people who helped with this work.

A message from Sue Percy

	My name is Sue Percy. I lead the CIHT. **Equality, diversity and inclusion** are big parts of our plans to keep CIHT successful.
	Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) These are things that must be thought about so that everyone is treated fairly. If they're taken into account, everyone should have the same chance to join in and enjoy a full and happy life. Many people say EDI instead of equality, diversity and inclusion, so we shall too.
	We want our EDI work to help make public realm spaces better for everyone. Treating people fairly helps us all feel better.
	If you work in a public realm space, use this report to understand and respect all the diverse people who use it.
	This booklet cannot include everything. Instead it will help you ask the right questions and tell you where to find more information.

Who and what this booklet is for

	This booklet is for people who plan, build and look after public realm spaces. They should use the booklet to learn about how public realm spaces can affect the lives of some groups of people.
	These groups include disabled people, older people, pregnant women and people with young children. The booklet talks about what makes life difficult for them.
	It shows how important it is for planners and builders to talk to people who use public realm spaces. Not just when a project starts but from its start to its finish. This way everyone learns about the problems other people have in their lives.
	From page 10 the booklet gives extra information about CIHT, EDI and public realm spaces.

What CIHT does

	CIHT is an organisation for people who work in our road and transport systems.
	CIHT speaks for all its members. CIHT members help plan, design, build and maintain the transport infrastructure. Part of their jobs are to make public realm spaces accessible.
	CIHT then keeps its members up to date as experts on road and transport systems.

Introduction

	Everyone has the right to use and enjoy public realm spaces. But some public realm spaces can't be used by everyone because they aren't accessible.
	CIHT believes accessibility should be a big part of planning, building and looking after public realm spaces. Accessibility should be a normal part of the process.
	The report looks at why it can be hard to make public realm spaces accessible.
	For most people, an accessibility problem is just a nuisance. But for some it can mean they can't use a public realm space.
	Older people and disabled people are the biggest groups affected by accessibility problems in public realm spaces. So putting accessibility problems right is good for older people and disabled people.
	But good accessibility helps everyone else too because it makes life easier for us all.

What led to this report

	In January 2024 CIHT asked a group of diverse people to join a **workshop** about accessibility in public realm spaces.
	Workshop This is when a group of people meet to talk about things they know about.
	The workshop included: • disabled men and women • people from disability groups • people who plan, design and look after the UK's road and transport systems.
	During the workshop the group decided what CIHT would study for the report.
	CIHT then asked people to tell them about acessibility problems in public realm spaces. Forty-two people sent replies.
	After another workshop, the first version of the report was shown to CIHT members and to people in the workshop group.

Inclusive design

	Public realm space where people live must be accessible. This is because everyone uses it for things like getting to shops, parking and storing waste bins.
	Work done to make public realm spaces accessible is called **inclusive design**.
	Inclusive design This is a way of planning and building public realm space so that everyone can easily use it.
	The Design Council says inclusive design: • puts people first • takes account of EDI • gives a choice if one is needed • gives people at least two ways to use it • builds spaces anyone can use.
	Inclusive design doesn't end at the design stage. It's used later to make sure public realm spaces **stay** accessible.
	It **always** costs less to design and build for accessibility from the start than to add it later.

What the law says

Accessibility	The law says what **must** be done to make things accessible. But road and transport designers must do more. They must do all they can to make accessibility better.
Equality Act	The main law about accessibility is in The Equality Act 2010.
Public sector equality duty	The Equality Act includes a public sector equality duty. The duty applies to **public sector services**.
	Public sector services These are services paid for by government and local councils.
	Because the road and transport systems are public sector services, the rules in the public sector equality duty apply to them.
Other laws	The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 can also apply if a public sector service has accessibility benefits.
Other guidance	The main booklet includes notes about accessibility for people using the transport system. It's written by the Department of Transport but it isn't law.

What disability means in this booklet

Definition	Disability is usually described in two ways: • Medical model of disability – looks at what someone can't do because of a disability. • **Social model of disability**.
	Social model of disability This treats disability as what happens when something stops a person doing things other people take for granted. For example, a person is disabled if they can't get up a kerb. The kerb is a **barrier**. If the kerb was low, the person wouldn't be disabled because they could get up the kerb.
	Barrier This is something that stops a person doing something they want to do. The barrier is making that person disabled. Barriers aren't always something you can touch. They can also be caused by the way people think or do things.
	When this booklet says disability, it means the social model of disability.

Setting up an inclusive design group

Members	The best inclusive designs for projects are made by design groups that include diverse people that live in the local area. Groups should also include other local people who will use the public realm space. It is important that the group has members who can speak for all the groups of diverse people in the area.
	Local people should join the design group **as soon as possible**. This way the whole group hears what they have to say from the start. Doing this means that the group learns what local people want and what they don't want.
Special needs	And if anyone has special needs, changes can be made so that person can join the group.
Meetings	The group would have many meetings about the project – from it's design, planning and building through to talking about what users think about their new public realm space.

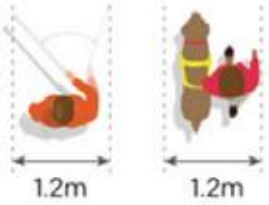
Safety

End of project	Designers must think about how public realm space can be used **safely** when a project ends.
Use	Public realm spaces may be used for many things. Such as street parties, sports, tables for cafes, and footpaths and roads.
Weather	The space can be affected by weather – rain, heat, snow, winds and floods. And it can get too crowded.
Users	Designers need to think about how different groups of people use the space. Such as bike riders, walkers and car drivers. They probably need to hear and see each other. This might also mean keeping them apart.
	Designers must think carefully about all of these and other things so that public realm spaces are safe for everyone to use.

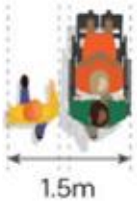
Footpaths

Accessibility	Accessible footpaths **should**: • be wide – see below • be almost flat – a slight slope is needed for rain water to drain away • be solid enough to walk on • be almost smooth • be clear of things that could trip people • be in good condition • be the same from start to finish so people know what's coming as they go along.
	Accessible footpaths **must never** be slippery.
	Places like castles, big old houses and churches are sometimes not accessible. For example, because they have cobbled streets. Their excuse is that modern materials look bad next to old buildings. Even if this is true, there should be a separate accessible way to get to the building so that **everyone** can enjoy visiting it.
Width	Designers work out a footpath's usable width.
	They then take off space taken by things like lamp posts, bus queues and market stalls.

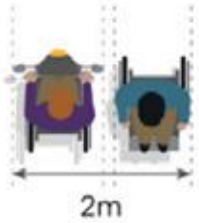
- **1 metre** — minimum width which allows a wheelchair user or someone pushing a double buggy to pass along a footway.



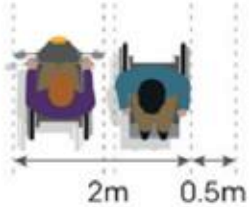
- **1.2 metres** — minimum width which allows a person using a cane, or accompanied by an assistance dog, to pass along a footway.



- **1.5 metres** — minimum width which allows a wheelchair user or someone pushing a double buggy, and someone on foot (either accompanying them to the side) or passing in the opposite direction.



- **2 metres** — minimum width which allows a wheelchair user or someone pushing a double buggy to pass another wheelchair user or double buggy.



- **2.5 metres** – minimum width which allows a wheelchair user or someone pushing a double buggy to pass another wheelchair user or double buggy, allowing 0.5m clearance to face of kerb.

	There are set measurements for the space different footpath users need. For example, the measurements for wheelchair users are shown above - these have come from a report by Transport for Greater Manchester.
Stone/concrete	Stone and concrete footpaths look nice but are often uneven, which can cause falls.

Colour	Footpaths and kerbs shouldn't be the same colour as roads. If they are, some people can't see where one ends and the other begins. And because pavements and kerbs get dirty, they should be cleaned from time to time.
Pictures	It is not good to have pictures on the surface of a footpath. This is because they can upset and confuse some people, such as people who have a **neurodivergent** condition.
	Neurodivergent This describes people whose brains deal with information differently than other people. It includes things like autism and dyslexia.
Kerbs	Kerbs with more than one step (because it is higher than other kerbs) shouldn't be used.
Drains on footpaths	Drain coverings shouldn't be on the footpath. They are dangerous for people using walking sticks, crutches or wheelchairs, and for those wearing high heels.
	If possible, drain covers should be flat and at the same level as the footpath.
	Don't use metal drain channels as they get slippery when wet.

Crossings

Dropped kerbs	At crossings, people need to get down the step from the footpath onto the road. **Dropped kerbs** are used to do this.
	Dropped kerb This is a place between the footpath and the road where the kerb changes from a step to a gentle slope. It makes it easy for wheelchair users to get up and down the kerb.
	It is important the dropped kerb is level with the road surface. If it isn't level, wheelchairs may stop suddenly, or someone may trip up. If dropped kerbs are used they must be on both sides of the crossing. At dropped kerb crossings the footpath should be a different colour and have a **tactile surface**.
	Tactile surface This is a surface that people can feel through their shoes or the wheels of their wheelchair. Tactile surfaces often have small bumps.
Drains at crossings	If drains aren't put in properly they may cause big puddles at crossings.

Continuous walkway crossings	**Continuous walkway crossings** These are crossings where the road is raised to the same level as the footpath. Cars must slow down to go over it. Ideally they should slow down to 4mph and cross one at a time.
	The footpath on both sides of a continuous walkway crossing should have a tactile surface. Being able to feel where a crossing is warns blind people and people who can't see well that cars may be nearby.
	If a project may include a continuous walkway crossing, find out how busy the road is and how fast cars travel along the road.
Pelican crossings	**Pelican crossings** are the safest and most accessible kind of crossing
	Pelican crossings This type of crossing uses traffic lights to stop cars when someone wants to cross. They often have a 'green man/red man' sign and make a noise when it is safe to cross.

	Pelican crossings are good for blind people and people who can't see well. This is because they don't need to hear a car coming to know that it isn't safe to cross. This is important because many people now drive electric cars which are very quiet. Instead, the pelican crossing stops cars and then makes a noise when it's safe to cross.
	Pelican crossings with 'green man/red man' signs give enough time for most people to cross. But if a lot of people need more time to cross, the crossing time can be made longer.
	If needed, pelican crossings can also be set up so that it knows when people are still crossing. It would then keep the green man light on until everyone has crossed.
Colourful crossings	Crossing places shouldn't be colourful. A lot of colour confuses and upsets some people, such as people with neurodivergent conditions, learning difficulties or poor sight. Many of these people also don't like change.
	Drivers may also look at colourful crossings rather than where they're going.

Street furniture

What is it?	**Street furniture** This is the name given to things councils put in public realm spaces. It includes things like seats, shelters, street lights, road signs and traffic equipment.
	Some people say **street furniture** is useful. Others say most of it just gets in the way.
Where should it go?	Street furniture shouldn't get in the way of people using roads and footpaths – usually it's put to the side of the road or footpath. It should stand out and most people should be able to see what it is.
	Planners should put street furniture in the same kind of places in their area. They also need to think about how people will use it.
Staggered barriers	Planners must be careful where they put **staggered barriers**.
	**Staggered barriers** These are sets of fencing that make it hard for cars, motorbikes and pedal bikes to go down narrow alleyways. They are sometimes called kissing gates.

	While staggered barriers stop people going where they shouldn't, they may also stop footpaths being used by those using mobility scooters, wheelchairs and pushchairs.
Lighting	Street lights are mostly to help drivers. They are not good for people using footpaths.
	Bright street lights make people feel safe when they may not be – bright lights mean: • they can be seen by other people • people cannot see far past what's lit up.
	Projects should be careful that: • strong bright lights don't stop people seeing properly • unusual reflections don't confuse people • bright lights don't also make dark shadows.
	People must be able to see what's close up and what's further away. So planners may need to test the project's lighting with people whose eyes are sensitive to light.
	Lighting can also affect some neurodivergent people. So planners need to take account of the effects of things like flickering lights, brightness, colour and where they put lights.

Trees and plants	Trees and plants are very useful: • trees give shelter from the sun • insects and animals live in them • trees help the planet by storing carbon • they help make an area look nice • they help drain away rainwater • they help reduce noise.
	Trees and plants shouldn't be in the way of people using public realm spaces. Also, they shouldn't affect the width of the footway.
	Planners must be careful where trees are put because roots may later damage footpaths. For example, roots can make footpaths uneven and trip people. They may also cause problems for wheelchair and pushchair users.
	Planners need to make sure the right kind of trees are put in the right place. This is because some trees drop their leaves in the autumn which makes surfaces slippery.
Comfort furniture	This includes things like seats, grassy areas, **drinking fountains**, shelters and shade, and toilets.

	**Drinking fountain** This is a small bowl where people can get a free drink of cold water.
	Where possible, public realm spaces should have seats and a small park area where people can rest and be quiet. Spaces may have drinking fountains and shelters giving shade from rain and sunshine.
	Seats should be at different heights to suit both big and small people.
	Many people say they like seats with back rests and arm rests. They also like seats with straight backs which make it easier to get up.
	Seats should be close to lights so that they are lit up when it's dark. This makes them: • easier to find • more comfortable for people using them.
	Seats shouldn't be in the way of passers by, including wheelchair and pushchair users. And there should be space for wheelchair users and guide dogs next to the seats. There should also be a tapping bar under the seats to stop cane users tripping over them.

	Seats should be comfortable in all weather so it's important they're waterproof.
Toilets	Public realm spaces should have toilets and sign posts showing where they are. The toilets should be well looked after and kept clean. And they should always be open.
	Planners should think about having special toilets. For example: • for people who need help lifting themselves • for families • for changing the underclothes of grown ups and children as well as babies. Some disabled people wouldn't go to a public realm space that doesn't have special toilets.

Bikes and electric scooters

When a public realm space for bikes and e-scooters is being planned, the design group should include people who don't use bikes and e-scooters very often.

These people usually have very different ideas to those who use bikes and e-scooters a lot – especially about safety.

If possible, paths for bikes and e-scooters should be 'one-way' because paths where they go both ways are more difficult to cross.

If one-way paths are not possible, there should be signs for people wanting to cross.

All kinds of bikes must be able to use the cycle path, **except motor bikes**. Such as cargo bikes and bikes that are changed so that disabled people can use them.

E-bikes and e-scooters that aren't being used or recharged must be parked properly.

Properly means they should be parked in an area made especially for e-bike parking. This is usually to the side of the cycle path.

	If there's no room there, e-bikes must be properly parked to the side of the footpath. This area should have a different surface that people who don't see well can easily identify. E-bikes not parked properly should be taken away because they block pathways, forcing people into places that may not be safe.
Shared pathways	Many people think **shared pathways** are dangerous because bikes go fast. They are also quiet so people can't hear bikes coming.
	Shared pathways This means footpaths that are used by both bike riders and people who aren't bike riders (such as people out for a walk).
	Because they're fast and quiet, some people don't know when they're coming. Such as people who don't hear or see well and people who can't get out of the way quickly,
	If planners can't avoid a **shared pathway**, they must take care to keep all users safe. The pathway should have lines showing which part is for bikes and which is not. And there should be space in the middle where nobody can go.

Buses

	Many disabled people can only use buses to get out and about. This means planners must take buses into account as an important part of their accessibility plans.
Bus stops	Bus stops should be near places people want to go to. For example, close to the shops. This helps people who find it hard to get about. This is because, after getting off the bus, they don't have far to go to get to the shops.
	Planners should think about how people get on and off buses. If kerbs are built up to the same level as the floor of the bus, it's much easier for people to get on and off the bus.
Bus shelters	Bus shelters should have lights and seats with armrests. The seats shouldn't be the same colour as the shelter. They should also be at different heights to suit both big and small people.

	Bus shelters should be easy for wheelchair users to use. For example, with enough space for wheelchairs and the kerb at the same height as the floor of the bus.
	Bus stops shouldn't get in the way of people using the footpath. To keep the footpath clear, sometimes part of the bus stop goes out into the road.
Bus information	Many shelters have screens showing things like when the next bus is coming. Screens shouldn't flash and should always be clear. Screens that don't work properly can make people ill. For example, a screen that flashes or flickers can make some people have a fit.
	Many people use information at bus stops to find out about changes to bus services. This kind of information should be accessible to as many people as possible. There should be a mix of information that people can: • listen to • watch • read in a leaflet • read or watch on a phone using a QR code.

	Information that people look at should be in big letters that stand out against the background. For example, black letters on a white background.
	Information should always be up to date.
	If possible, people should be able to listen to information at the bus stop.
Bus stop bypasses	**Bus stop bypasses** are getting more common as local councils build more bike paths at the side of roads. Some people call them floating island bus stops.
	**Bus stop bypass** This is a new idea for keeping bike riders safe. Most cycle paths go **in front** of bus stops. Bus stop bypasses are different because the cycle path goes **behind** the bus stop. The bus stop is on an 'island' between the cycle path and the road. Bus stop bypasses are safer for bike riders because they don't need to go into the road to pass buses at bus stops.

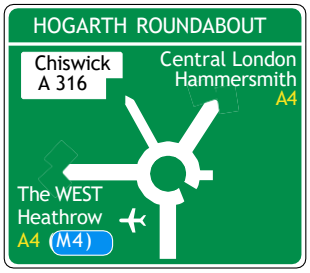
	To get to the bus stop, people must cross the cycle path. But many disabled people don't like this because: • some bike riders won't give way to people crossing the cycle path • people who can't see well often use sound to know when it's safe to cross. This doesn't work with cycle paths because bikes don't make a lot of noise. And getting across cycle paths is even harder if bike riders are travelling both ways on it.
	This problem means that some disabled people are put off using buses. This is bad when buses are sometimes the only way a disabled person can get out and about.
	If a project includes a bus stop bypass, planners must make sure the island is big enough for all the people queuing for the bus. The queue may include wheelchair users.

Wayfinding aids

People often need help to find their way about. **Wayfinding aids** are the things that help them do that.

Wayfinding aids

These are usually signs and maps that show people where to go. Modern wayfinding aids include phone apps like Google maps.



Signs should:

- use letters that are clear and big enough to be easy to read
- look alike – this helps people find them
- have few words. Signs may even include simple pictures.

Signs that include pictures as well as words are good because most people understand pictures. This includes people who can't read and people who don't speak English.

Signs should be repeated along the way so people know they're going the right way.

Planners should talk to and get help from the people who will use their signs. This makes sure the signs will work well for them.

Access

Emergency vehicles	Planners must make sure **emergency vehicles** can always get to every part of public realm spaces.
	Emergency vehicles These are things like police cars, fire engines and ambulances.
	Emergency vehicles can go **anywhere** – even places where other cars can't go.
Public services vehicles	Planners of public realm spaces must think about how **public services vehicles** get into and around the space.
	Public services vehicles These are things like buses, taxis, delivery vans and lorries that collect dustbin rubbish.
Car parking	Many disabled people must still travel in cars. But if they can't park close to their home or the place they're visiting, they may not be able to use that space at all. So projects must have accessible car parking and places for drop off/pick up. Planners must also think about how the height of kerbs may affect disabled people using a taxi.

	Public realm spaces that a lot of people visit, such as shopping streets, should include accessible parking and **blue badge** parking.
	Blue badge This allows people to park anywhere, usually for free. This means people with a blue badge can always park close by.
	Blue badge parking areas shouldn't be more than 50 metres from the public realm space. They should also include space for bigger cars that wheelchair users travel in.
	Accessible parking areas should use dropped kerbs or have no kerb at all so that disabled people can easily get onto the footpath.

Conflicts

Something may be a barrier for one group of disabled people but may help another group. This is called a conflict. For example:

- footpaths made of **tarmac** are smoother for walkers and wheelchair users.

  But wet tarmac is all the same colour, so people who don't see well may not see where the footpath isn't flat and trip up.
- kerbs are a barrier to wheelchair users but are liked by people who don't see well.

Tarmac

This is something made of small stones and tar which, when it cools, sticks together and becomes hard.

There are many more examples in the standard English version of this report.

Conflicts mean there's usually no easy way to make places accessible for everyone.

Project planners should be careful not to think about just one group of disabled people. They should involve all groups of disabled people in decisions about accessibility.

New barriers after a project has ended

	Sometimes new barriers arise after a project has ended. This may happen when there's a change to the public realm space.
Pavement cafes and bars	Eating and drinking outside is very popular. So some cafes and bars put tables and chairs outside, next to the footpath.
	But the tables and chairs may cover tactile surfaces on the footpath. They also stop people who don't see well from getting close to buildings they use as a guide.
	If tables and chairs are put next to a footpath, they should be inside a fence. The fence will stop people moving them into the footpath and getting in people's way. When a fence is used, **all** parts of it must be **inside** the fence, including the posts' bases.
	A licence is needed before tables and chairs can be put next to a footpath. Before giving a licence, local councils must be sure the footpath stays wide enough for everyone using it. For information about the width of footpaths, see pages 18 and 19.

Extra street furniture	Sometimes planners must add street furniture to a footpath after a project ends.
	They should be careful that street furniture doesn't get in the way of people using the footpath. The new street furniture mustn't be a barrier for people who don't see well. Planners should place street furniture where people would expect to find it, just off the main footpath. The colour of street furniture should stand out against things around it. People who don't see well are then able to see it better. If any street furniture has legs, people need to see or feel the legs (such as with a cane).
	Planners should think carefully before putting things like posts and road signs on or near to a footpath. People can trip over these, so there should be good reasons for using them.
Temporary blockages	These are things that get in people's way or block a footpath, but only for a short time. They include wheelie bins, rubbish bags, low-hanging branches, cables and parked cars.

	Some people who don’t see well find their way around using things that are on the street all the time. If these are hidden, such as by rubbish bags, it makes it harder for them to get around.
	Dustbin-emptying days are a problem because wheelie bins and rubbish bags may be put on the footpath. Better recycling and more recycling points would make this better.
	Posts that pop-up to block a road or foot path should always make a warning noise.

Looking after public realm spaces

	It makes no sense to spend a lot of money on a project and then leave it to fall apart. So when a project ends the public realm space must be **maintained** so that it stays accessible.
	Maintained This means looking after something so that it can continue to work well.
Money	It is important that planners know that there will be money to maintain the public realm space. It is better to use cheaper material than use expensive material that can't be maintained.
Bushes and trees 	Plants grow fast and, without proper maintenance, can grow big enough to block footpaths and hide signs. Trees look nice in public realm spaces and most people like them. But if trees aren't maintained properly, their roots can damage footpaths and trip people up. Trees that grow too fast may need replacing.

Footpaths	Footpaths that aren't maintained get bumpy. The bumps can make people trip up. Bumpy footpaths are painful for wheelchair users. And bumps hurt the wrists of people who use a cane because they don't see well. While footpaths are being maintained, signs should show people accessible footpaths they can use instead. Repair work can make footpaths bumpy too. Accessibility must be thought about during repair work. And the proper surface should be added after maintenance work.
Drains	If drains aren't maintained properly, they can cause a flood. This can mean an accessible place becomes **not** accessible. If rainwater stays on the footpath it may cause puddles. When puddles freeze, they become very slippery. So it is very important to make sure rainwater drains off footpaths.
Wet leaves	Wet leaves are slippery so should be removed.
Snow	Clear snow quickly so people can get about.
Street lights	Repair street lights quickly because if they don't work properly people may trip up.

Building work and road works

If building work or road works make a footpath **not** accessible, signs should show people where there's an accessible footpath they can use instead.

But remember, people who don't see well may not see the signs. Signs can also block the footpath and people can trip up over them too.

Even if the building work or road works won't last a long time, all the rules about accessibility still apply to the other paths people will use.

At road works there should be a sign giving the name and contact details of the person or group that asked for the work. This way people can get in touch to report a problem.

Footpaths

Planners should check the work being done to repair or change a footpath. The checks should be made both during and after the work is being done.

This makes sure that the footpath stays accessible.

Pavement cafes and bars	Where tables and chairs are allowed next to a footpath, they should be checked from time to time. The check is to make sure the tables and chairs haven't been moved further into the footpath and are getting in people's way.
When the work is finished	When building work and road works end the footpath should be made accessible again. The materials and quality should be the same as was used before the works. A check should be made to make sure the works haven't made the footpath bumpy.

Public realm space – planner's checklist

	This checklist is for people who plan, build and look after public realm spaces. When designing a project or making changes to a public realm space, planners, builders and maintainers should ask themselves these questions.
1	What do you want the project to achieve? When the project ends, how will you know if it has achieved what you hoped?
2	Does the design include all rules about accessibility shown in this report?
3	Has an **equality impact assessment** been done?
	Equality impact assessment This is work done to find out if something is fair to all groups of people. Such as men and women, old and young people and people whose family came from another country.
	Does the plan affect one group more than another group? What is being done so that the plan doesn't affect one group more than another?

4	If you're changing something because of a problem, what is that problem? Will your changes make another problem? If you're trying to make things better for one group, will this make things worse for other groups?
5	Do you know who may use the public realm space? Do you know their accessibilty needs? Do the people who may use the public realm space know the project's aims?
6	Did you meet and talk to people who don't like the existing public realm space? Has at least one of them agreed to join the inclusive design group?
7	What will you do to get the people who use or may use the space to help in its design?
8	Do different groups have different ideas for the project? What have you done to talk to the groups to find the best way forward?

9	Is the design the best it can be? Have you read all the rules and guides and used these, with other people, to make the design better?
10	Do the people who run the Council support the design for the public realm space?
11	Do the planned changes have the support of local people?
12	Are the planned changes easy to understand?
13	Did you make sure your decision-making evidence was collected from all groups, including people who may not be able to use the public realm space at the moment?
14	Could the change lead to unwanted effects? Such as people getting together to drink alcohol?
15	Do the colour and tactile surface of things differ enough? Such as the footpath and road surfaces and things people could trip over?
16	Where possible, are blue badge and accessible parking spaces within 50 metres of the place disabled people have travelled to?

	Is there a drop off/pick up place for disabled people who can't park nearby?
17	Is there enough room for wheelchair and pushchair users to get past street furniture such as signs and planters?
18	If the design includes a ramp, is it too steep? Would a wheelchair user be able to get up and get down the ramp safely?
19	How much maintenance would be needed to keep footpaths clear of plants and trip risks? Is it likely that that maintenance can be provided?
20	Could the same materials be found in the future if repairs or changes are needed? For example, if a road needs to be dug up, could the right materials be found to put it back as it was?
21	Does the work match what is in the plans? For example, has a problem stopped a dropped kerb being built?

How some problems could be fixed

Rubbish collection days	On the day that rubbish is collected, wheelie bins and plastic bags can block footpaths. This can stop some people getting to where they want to go. A possible fix would be to have a special place where wheelie bins and plastic bags are collected that are away from footpaths. Another possible fix would be to have one or two very big bins for everyone in the area to use. But some disabled people would need help using the bins.
Better record keeping	Councils must keep a record of the number of people that get hurt on their roads. But don't have to keep records about people who get hurt while using their footpaths. We think it would be a good idea if councils kept a record of footpath injuries.
Bus stop suspension	A bus stop is suspended if road works make the bus stop unsafe to use. The bus company puts a cover over the 'bus stop' sign for the time when the bus stop is suspended.

	But covering up the bus stop sign does not help people who don’t see well. They could be left waiting for a bus that won’t stop. A possible fix would be for a speaker to warn people that the stop is suspended. The message could say where the nearest usable bus stop is. But it would need to be quiet so that other people are not disturbed. Another possible fix would be for the bus company to tell disability groups and charities about bus stop suspensions. The group or charity could then tell disabled people. Bus companies could also use social media to warn people about bus stop suspensions.

Accessibility training

	CIHT agrees that people should continue training all through their working lives. If someone's work includes designing or changing public realm spaces, they **must** have accessibility training. If they don't, it may cost a lot of money to make the space accessible to people who were not included at the start.
	CIHT thinks the government should pay for accessibility training for all council workers who design and change public realm spaces. The government could use its grants to get more councils to give their staff accessibility training. For example, only councils with properly trained workers could get grants.
	EDI training is part of the civil engineering degree course. CIHT thinks the EDI training would be better if it included disability awareness training too. CIHT intends to talk to the Joint Board of Moderators about this.

Conclusions

	It is important to get the basics right – if they want to, everyone should be able to get to local shops, schools and services.
	There is no 'one size fits all' design for public realm spaces. Each is different – with different uses and users, in different places and on different kinds of land. Designers must make sure the project includes the needs of the different groups of disabled people. Everyone's needs must be known before a final decision is made.
	The needs of different groups of people can conflict – what is good for one group may be bad for another. So designers must start by talking to as many groups as they can. Talking to groups of disabled people is very important because if their needs aren't known they may not be able to use a space at all.
	Talking to groups early can save a lot of work later. It's important that groups of disabled people get involved early to allow time for them to agree changes they're all happy with.

	Users should be involved at all times – from the project's design through to maintaining the space when building ends. Involving users is important so projects should think about paying them for their time and opinions, especially if their involvement saves the project money.
	Accessibility comes before making a space 'look nice'. If a space is accessible it's likely more people will use it. And making a space accessible shouldn't make it ugly anyway.
	Small changes can make a big difference to many groups of people. For example, a dropped kerb makes crossings much easier for disabled people to use.
	While having street furniture is important, it's more important that it is easy and comfortable to use.
	Designers must look at their project as a whole, bringing the ideas in this report together to make a great public realm space.

	Designers also need to allow for things that shouldn't happen but do, such as people putting plant pots or rubbish sacks on the footpath outside their house. So it is always wise to add a little bit of extra space, if that is possible.
	Once built, something may not work as designers had hoped. So it is important that users get to see and comment on a test area.
	During the building of public realm spaces it is important to inspect and check the work being done. This makes sure projects stay on track as the designer intended.
	Making a space accessible may cost more. But if inclusive design rules are used from the start, money can be saved later in the project. For example, it may cost less to maintain the public realm space – it will certainly cost less than making changes after the project ends.

	Public realm spaces need to be maintained so they work as intended. If designers know that a space can't be maintained they must change their design so that it can.
	If someone's work includes designing or changing public realm spaces, they **should** have training. If they don't, it may cost a lot of money to make a space accessible later.
	During design, a project should be checked from time to time to make sure it is on track.

Recommendations

1	The aim is to involve everyone from start to finish. This is better than just getting high-level advice. Everyone understands the issues of both the user and the designer.
2	People with experience are the best to advise on a project's negative impacts and improvements. Include disabled people and other users early in design. This ensures their needs are met. Businesses should consider paying these advisors. This is important if the company will profit from their advice.

3	If you buy items for use in the public realm or design schemes you should get disability equality training. This includes housing and retail developers.
4	The government should fund training on disability equality awareness for local authority staff. These staff members design and change public areas.
5	See guidance as a floor, not a ceiling. It sets the minimum, not the maximum.
6	Local authorities should aim for consistent design. They should do this within their own areas.

7	The design process should feature an inclusive design review. It lets the designer address feedback by changing the design. The review must not just be a formality. It should delve deeply into the principles in this document. Also, it should take place early in the process.
8	Non-cyclists should help design cycling infrastructure. They provide diverse views, especially on safety.
9	With a business case for a project, consider how it benefits those unable to currently use the space. Also, include all costs, especially maintenance.

10	If there is a good reason to use uneven materials for conservation or history, then give another accessible route. Signs should highlight the route.
11	Install traffic lights at crossings instead of zebra crossings when possible. Lights are easier and safer for people with visual impairments to use.
12	Plans with trees should include consulting with a tree specialist. They will help pick the right tree for the right place. They will also tell you how to look after the tree in the future.
13	When the height between the footway and the carriageway is so great there is sometimes a step in the kerbstones to bridge the gap. This is called a stepped kerb. Stepped kerbs are dangerous for all people, especially at night.

14	When approving licence applications for tables and chairs that are outside. Councils should look at how people use chairs. They should allow chairs to extend further into walkways. This is beyond normal limits. They need to think about how barriers around seating might affect access. They must apply licence conditions for café setups. This is true when conditions are not being met.
15	We need more research into which natural stone performs best in all conditions. And, how to best treat slippery surfaces.

Guidance

	This report gives information about the barriers stopping many people from enjoying public realm spaces. But the report does not suggest the things designers must do to fix their project's barriers. That information is listed in section 16 of the standard English report

Words list

Accessibility	If **everyone** is able to use a public realm space, that space **is** accessible. If some people, such as disabled people, can't use a public realm space, that space **is not** accessible.
Barrier	This is something that stops a person doing something they want to do. The barrier is making that person disabled. Barriers aren't always something you can touch. They can also be caused by the way people think or do things.
Blue badge	This allows people to park anywhere, usually for free. This means people with a blue badge can always park close by.

Bus stop bypass	This is a new idea for keeping bike riders safe. Most cycle paths go in front of bus stops. Bus stop bypasses are different because the cycle path goes behind the bus stop. The bus stop is on an 'island' between the cycle path and the road. Bus stop bypasses are safer for bike riders because they don't need to go into the road to pass buses at bus stops.
CIHT	This is short for the Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation.
Continuous walkway crossings	These are crossings where the road is raised to the same level as the footpath. Cars must slow down to go over it. Ideally they should slow down to 4mph and cross one at a time.
Diverse people	This means different groups of people. Such as men and women, young and old people, disabled and not-disabled people and people from different countries.
Drinking fountain	This is a small bowl where people can get a free drink of cold water.

Dropped kerb	This is a place between the footpath and the road where the kerb changes from a step to a gentle slope. It makes it easy for wheelchair users to get up and down the kerb.
EDI	See Equality, diversity and inclusion.
Emergency vehicles	These are things like police cars, fire engines and ambulances.
Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI)	These are things that must be thought about so that everyone is treated fairly. If they're taken into account, everyone should have the same chance to join in and enjoy a full and happy life. Many people say EDI instead of equality, diversity and inclusion, so we shall too.
Equality inpact assessment	This is work done to find out if something is fair to all groups of people. Such as men and women, old and young people and people whose family came from another country.
Inclusive design	This is a way of planning and building public realm space so that everyone can easily use it.

Maintained	This means looking after something so that it can continue to work well.
Neuro-divergent	This describes people whose brains deal with information differently than other people. It includes things like autism and dyslexia.
Pelican crossings	This type of crossing uses traffic lights to stop cars when someone wants to cross. They often have a 'green man/red man' sign and make a noise when it is safe to cross.
Public realm spaces	These are places that everyone has the right to use. Such as roads and pavements, bus stops, parks and town squares. Not all spaces are public realm spaces.
Public sector services	These are services paid for by government and local councils.
Public services vehicles	These are things like buses, taxis, delivery vans and lorries that collect dustbin rubbish.

Shared pathways	This means footpaths that are used by both bike riders and people who aren't bike riders (such as people out for a walk).
Space	See Public realm spaces.
Social model of disability	This treats disability as what happens when something stops a person doing things other people take for granted. For example, a person is disabled if they can't get up a kerb. The kerb is a barrier. If the kerb was low, the person wouldn't be disabled because they could get up the kerb.
Staggered barriers	These are sets of fencing that make it hard for cars, motorbikes and pedal bikes to go down narrow alleyways. They are sometimes called kissing gates.
Street furniture	This is the name given to things councils put in public realm spaces. It includes things like seats, shelters, street lights, road signs and traffic equipment.

Tactile surface	This is a surface that people can feel through their shoes or the wheels of their wheelchair. Tactile surfaces often have small bumps.
Tarmac	This is something made of small stones and tar which, when it cools, sticks together and becomes hard.
Wayfinding aids	These are usually signs and maps that show people where to go. Modern wayfinding aids include phone apps like Google maps.
Workshop	This is when a group of people meet to talk about things they know about.

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UNIVERSITY OF GREENWICH	University of Greenwich
WSP	WSP

Disclaimer

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