

Site Name: Millbrook Local Housing Office
Site Address: 81 Cumbrian Way
Millbrook
Southampton
SO16 4AT
Tel: 023 8078 8816
Fax: 023 8052 8199
Email: gateway@southampton.gov.uk

Millbrook Local Housing Office Access Statement

Prepared by:

Communities and Regeneration

Southampton City Council

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This Access Statement is available in other formats on request

Background

Southampton City Council DDA compliance project

Southampton City Council made a commitment to increasing the accessibility of its services in 2004 in line with the 2004 DDA Part III duties. £1.5million was approved for a 3-year project. High priority sites for action were derived from a detailed process of access auditing, a prioritisation exercise and consultation. The high priority sites are predominantly those with the most direct public access and/or use by disabled people. Sites have been action planned by the DDA project team and relevant Site Managers, covering physical access, communications and policies and procedures. The process consists of three stages (see over):

Stage 1: Mapping and Access Auditing

- Map sites: ascertain priorities/site status
- Approach Service Managers, arrange and conduct audit
- Audit written up and entered onto DDA database
- Full audit report generated

Stage 2: Action Planning

- Barriers to access identified from Access Audit and entered onto Action Plan
- Action Plan Meeting Held
- Action Plan version 2 produced
- Surveyor draws up schemes and liaises with Service Manager

Stage 3: Completion

- Work commissioned (where applicable)
- Customer care and communications issues addressed by Service Managers.
- Final access statement/access management plan/service access position statement written.

Millbrook Local Housing Office

Local Housing Offices are responsible for the following services: payment of rent; rent arrears management; dealing with neighbour nuisance; letting of properties; tenancy queries; abandoned vehicles; empty property management; access to other council services. Millbrook Local Housing Office covers the areas of Millbrook and Redbridge.

More information can be found at: www.southampton.gov.uk

Constraints

The access audit and action planning process for this site identified a number of barriers to access (action points) for disabled people. These were:

- a) No marked car parking spaces at roadside
- b) Reception counter height
- c) Fire alarm audible only
- d) Height of public telephone
- e) Height of fire alarm call point
- f) Front entrance gradient ramp and no level landing at door.

All of the action points listed a – e above have been successfully addressed, in line with access standards. Action point (f) however remains, to some extent, a barrier to access.

- f) Front entrance gradient ramp and no level landing at door.

The entrance ramp and landing has been altered to provide compliance with access standards, however handrails have not been installed.

In line with Disability Rights Commission issued guidance, the project team considered the reasonableness of not removing this barrier by referring to:

- whether taking any particular measures would be effective in overcoming the difficulty that disabled people face in accessing the services in question
- the extent to which it is practicable for the service provider to take the measures
- the financial and other costs of making the adjustment
- the extent of any disruption which taking the measures would cause

- the extent of the service provider's financial and other resources
- the amount of any resources already spent on making adjustments
- the availability of financial or other assistance.

It has been decided it is not safe to alter this access barrier to comply with access standards because:

- the installation of handrails would cause a great barrier to access for Disabled People than not installing handrails.

All other barriers to access have been successfully eliminated from this site; it is only the absence of handrails which may remain a barrier to access. However reasonable alternative provision is in place in order to carry out transactions or enquiries related to this service. Other accessible locations exist in which housing related business takes place. Furthermore transactions and enquiries can take place via email or the website or over the phone. Home visits are also available on request.

An alternative venue for carrying out Local Housing Office business is Gateway:

Gateway

Ground Floor

Civic Centre

Civic Centre Road

Southampton

SO14 7LY

Email: gateway@southampton.gov.uk

Telephone: 023 8083 2166 -

Disabled Persons access to Gateway via ramp or through the North Block of the Civic Centre

As an alternative to visiting Gateway, Council tenants can also make rent payments via:

- the telephone 023 8083 2990
- on line: www.southampton.gov.uk/payments
- Standing Order or Direct debit
- Credit card or debit card by telephoning any local housing office and details can be taken over the phone.
- At the post office by Girobank although there is a charge for this at the post office
- At the bank via a bank giro slip
- Cheques by post to any LHO or civic centre

Repairs can be reported by:

- Ringing the Actionline freephone number 0800 5 191919 select option for council housing repairs
- On line: www.southampton.gov.uk/housing/repairs
- Email- housing.repairs@southampton.gov.uk
- Fax: 023 8052 8199

Home visits can also be arranged by contacting the Local Housing Office.

Professional Advice

The DDA project team consists of a number of technical professionals, including:

- Building Control Surveyors and Access Officers of Southampton City Council
- Property Services Surveyors of Southampton City Council

The team is also able to draw on the knowledge of the Inclusion Manager, Linda Haitana, an expert in anti-discrimination strategies and policies.

Guidance followed

In addition to the professional advice obtained from the above named persons, the following sets of guidance have been adhered to when carrying out work to increase the standard of accessibility of this site:

- BS8300:2001. Design of buildings and their approaches to meet the needs of disabled people – Code of practice.
- Approved Document Part M: Access to and Use of Buildings. (2004).
- Designing for Accessibility: Centre for Accessible Environments and Royal Institute of British Architects.
- Sign Design Guide: A guide to inclusive signage. Joint Mobility Unit Access Partnership and the Sign Design Society, Peter Barker and June Fraser.
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Disability Discrimination Act 2005

Consultation

The decision not to alter the remaining barriers to access which exist in Millbrook Housing Office was reached through consultation with local disabled persons groups and access professionals. The full DDA Project Team consists of representatives from local disabled persons groups and council officers. The full team meet regularly and include representatives from:

- Southampton Centre for Independent Living (SCIL)
SCIL is an organisation of Disabled People who work to the social model of disability. SCIL work campaign for disability Equality and provide user-led services.
- Southampton Action for Access (SAFA)
SAFA are an access group which works to improve access to facilities and services in Southampton and its surrounding area.

From the inception of Southampton City Council's DDA compliance project disabled persons groups have been consulted. At the meetings progress is

updated and attendees consulted on the next steps of the project. Indeed this Access Statement has been developed in consultation with these groups.

This Access Statement was developed as follows:

1. Draft access statement produced
2. Consultation with Access Officers
3. Consultation with SAFA and SCIL
4. Approval of Access Statement by SAFA and SCIL

For more information please contact;

Communities and Regeneration Division

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Access Officer

Building Control

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Civic Centre

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SO14 7LY

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Email: building.control@southampton.gov.uk

Fax: 023 8083 3200

Minicom: 023 8083 2798

Photographs of this site are available on request.