



Less Able Mystery Shop Tuesday 8th November 2011

**Shops visited by Julie and Maggie.
Julie has sight and mobility issues.**

Robert Dyas Hardware store

Entry

The doors were both wide open and it was level access from the pavement. Full glass doors clearly marked.

The aisles in the store were easy to negotiate and uncluttered.

Staff

When approached a member of staff advised that although there were no signs they had a 'pack' behind the counter for people with sight issues. The pack contained an assortment of magnifying glasses and pens that were easy to grip. Staff informed that they do have Disability Awareness training.

The store also offers a delivery to car service.

Changes recommended

Replace warn hearing loop sign at the checkout and put up a sign advising sight aids are available. Install a bell on the entry door.

Disable Friendly?

Yes

Argos Catalogue store

Entry

Automatic doors. Good signage on the doors. Full glass doors clearly marked. No trip hazards

The store was very spacious and very easy to move around.

The catalogues were very hard to read but there was 1 lower desk for wheelchair users.

Staff

Staff were approached at the Customer Service desk and they were very helpful. No aids were available but staff were happy to get a variety of goods so we could see them before we brought them.

Changes recommended

Better signage at the catalogue desks and perhaps the purchase of a sight aid.

Disable Friendly?

Yes

Lakeland Cookware shop

Entry

Slope up from the pavement and the doors were wide open. No trip hazards in the door way. Full glass doors **NOT** clearly marked.

The shop was easy to move around and the floor clutter free.

No disabled signs were on display in the shop, but they did have a drop checkout desk.

Staff

The member for staff approached could not tell us what procedures they had in place to assist disabled customers.

Changes recommended

Clear signs on the entry doors and at the desk. Disability Awareness training for staff. Purchase of sight aids. Bell on the entry door

Disable Friendly?

Yes

Café O'Tuga Food and beverage

Entry

Level access from pavement, full glass doors clearly marked. The doors were manual but easy to open and remained in place once opened.

No disabled signs on display.

The Café was a little tricky, if you were in a wheelchair, to manoeuvre around and a post would make access to the toilets tricky.

Staff

The staff member approached was very helpful and said the staff would happily read out the menu on request.

Changes recommended

Easy to read menus, signs on entry door and tables rearranged to allow easy access to toilet. Install a bell on the entry door.

Disable Friendly?

Yes, but not wheelchair friendly.

Laughing Stock Joke shop

Entry

Level access from pavement, full glass doors clearly marked. The doors were open and once inside a purpose built ramp takes you to the shop floor.

No disabled signs on display.

The shop was easy to manoeuvre around.

Staff

The staff were very helpful and keen to help in anyway they could.

Changes recommended

Install disabled friendly signs and bell on the entry door.

Disable Friendly?

Yes

Jellibon Sweet shop

Entry

Level access from the pavement, full glass doors clearly marked. The door was already open and there were no trip hazards.

No signs were displayed.

Staff

The staff member was very helpful and the till display was very clear and fairly large.

Changes recommended

Install signage and a bell on the entry door.

Disable Friendly?

Yes

Deli-Café Food and beverage

Entry

There were two steps to negotiate to enter the building. No bell but a sticker on the door advising aid available. A ramp was available but needed to be brought out by a member of staff. Plenty of tables suitable for disabled customers. Access to the toilet was slightly restricted.

Staff

The staff member we spoke to was very helpful and advised that all foods available were on display.

Changes recommended

Slightly move the sofa to allow easy access to the toilet and to have a bell on the entry door.

Disable Friendly?

Yes

Shops visited by Christine and Yvonne both with mobility issues

Bakers Butchers Butchers shop

Entry

There were two steps to enter the shop no ramp or sign to say that they were disabled friendly. The open access door was more than wide enough for wheelchair use. Limited space between the shop window and the meat counter but sufficient for wheelchair use.

Staff

The Manager informed us that all staff were trained in disability awareness and very sensitive about this. Their present disabled customers usually shouted from the bottom of the steps and staff would then go and assist them. Exiting the business was the same and entering by two steps down no emergency exit. All the staff were extremely friendly.

Changes recommended

Partly Disability Friendly but could be improved upon with the following recommendations which they were willing to adopt.

1. Displaying a Disability sign and a bell near the bottom of the steps.
2. They are looking at ways to install a ramp but they have come up against a few problems as they don't own the land directly beyond the steps.
3. They are looking into an alternative area to place a ramp.

The quickest and cheapest way to become Disability Friendly was to install a bell and a Disabled sticker.

Disable Friendly?

Partially Disability Friendly

Holland and Barrett Health shop

Entry

Level access from street, there were manual double doors although one of them was open and wide enough for wheelchair access. Staff said they would always open the other door if need be. There was enough room to move around the shop, but not notice saying help was available.

Staff

The staff said they were aware of disability issues and they have several customers who are disabled. The emergency exit was clearly displayed at the back of the shop and was visible from entering the store and help would be given to members of the public to evacuate the building. Staff very friendly.

Changes recommended

Partly Disability Friendly but could be improved upon with the following recommendations which they would need to speak to their Area Manager

1. Display a disability sign.

The quickest and cheapest way to become Disability Friendly was to install a bell and a Disabled sticker.

Disability Friendly?

Yes

W H Smiths Stationery Shop

Entry

There are two entrances one with manual doors the other were automatic. The double automatic doors were wide enough for wheelchair use. Mobility was rather limited just inside the automatic doors and felt that the aisles could be just a little bit wider. The Manager was guided by Head Office on the floor displays. There were no notices saying that staff were there to help.

Staff

Spoke to the Manager and told us that Disability Awareness was part of their staff induction. The manager told us that they could move the cardboard displays to help access and help members of the public access items on the top shelves. Lack of visible signs for the emergency exit from front of store or in the middle, suggest hanging notices. Again access could be difficult in vacating the premises.

Changes recommended

Partly Disability Friendly but could be improved upon with the following recommendations.

1. Needs to display disability badge on doors. Manager asked if Cottsway could provide these for them.
2. Suspend Emergency Exit signs throughout the store.

Manager would be willing to do the above but was governed by Head Office on their floor displays.

The quickest and cheapest way to become Disability Friendly was to install a bell and a Disabled sticker.

Disable Friendly?

No

Cargo Household goods

Entry

Entry is by automatic doors although there are manual ones as well. Not sure if staff would open the non manual ones as we weren't wheelchair users. There were some items that a chair user would not be able to access and this shop had a 1st floor and lift access was visible. No notice informing customers that assistance was available.

Staff

Spoke to the Deputy Manager and were told that all staff were trained in disability awareness, and that staff were there to help. The emergency exit was clearly marked. The staff were very friendly.

Changes recommended

Partly Disability Friendly but could be improved upon with the following recommendation but they need to speak to Head Office before anything can be done.

1. Would put up Disability signs and asked if Cottsway could supply them

There was more stock than normal in the store due to the Christmas displays and usually more room to move about. The staff were very friendly.

The quickest and cheapest way to become Disability Friendly would be to install a bell and a Disabled sticker

Disable Friendly?

Yes

Shops visited by Molly and Jason in a manual and electric wheelchair

Waterstones **Book Shop**

Entry

Level access from the street. The doors were propped open and although full glass they were clearly marked. No trip hazards. Emergency exits clearly marked. Good clear view of all the store.

Able to move around with ease.

Staff

The staff were very helpful and will find books for you and reach the higher shelves.

Changes recommended

None

Disable Friendly?

Yes

Mountain Warehouse **Clothing Store**

Entry

Level access entry from the pavement no trip hazards. Manual doors propped open. There were lots of clothes on rails but still easy to get around. Shop on two floors but without a lift. Emergency exit had a step down.

Staff

Very helpful staff. There was a computer in a back room that the staff were happy to bring out for customers to view stock online. Staff member advised that although there was a step down from the emergency exit and with staff help chair users would be able to manage as only small

Changes recommended?

None

Disable Friendly?

Yes

Cinema

Entry

Automatic, press button. Fairly easy but double doors made access slightly more difficult it might help if opened in opposite direction to one another. Both sets of double entry doors open outwards, the best way for emergency mass evacuation. Plenty of room, in the foyer, to move around in a wheelchair. Two of the five theatres had facilities for wheelchairs at the lowest level.

Staff

We were not asked if we needed any assistance.

Changes recommended?

Signs clearly indicating how to get help, especially at busy times.

Disable Friendly?

Yes