



White Paper: Accessibility

International Accessibility Standards:

UNITED KINGDOM

Summary

The Disability Discrimination Act of 1995 (DDA) is an Act of the Parliament of the United Kingdom which has now been repealed and replaced by the Equality Act 2010(EA) in most of the UK except for Northern Ireland. This act consolidate the DDA with the Disability Equality Duty(DDE) which requires public agencies to promote opportunities for the disabled. The DDA and later EA required that by October 2004 all “reasonable adjustments” must be made to ensure that building are accessible. Included in these improvements are signs. The EA is civil rights legislation where legal and civil actions can be enforced against institutions not in compliance. There are two sections in the EA that focuses on signs:

- Auxillary Aids or Services that make it easier to utilise services like tactile maps or larger print
- Overcoming barriers like hard to read or use signs

Like the ADA. The EA is meant to respond to the needs of the blind and visually impaired. The EA is partially prescriptive but also offers recommendations for creating more accessible environments through maps and tactile surfaces. The prescriptive elements of the EA are located in the Regulatory Code title BS8300.

Equality Act of 2010

Scope

- The EA focuses on permanent signs for tactile letters and Braille and signs for legible letter heights and colour contrast.
- The EA also provides advice on tactile maps, audible signs and directional signs.

Braille

- In the UK Grade 1 or Grade 2 Braille can be used. Grade 1 is a form of Braille that complies with the Braille Code, a form of Braille where all letters and numbers are given a Braille equivalent. For more complex signs with lengthier text, Grade 2 Braille, which uses a shorthand approach for words, can be used.
- In the UK a raised leader is used at the beginning of the line of Braille either when the Braille is in a single line or multiple lines.

Visual Characters

- Characters and numbers on signs need to be sized according to the viewing distance and height above ground from which they are to be read, but there is no formal calculation.

Tactile Characters

- Letters and numbers must be raised 0.75mm.
- Upper case or upper/lower case tactile letters can be used on signs.
- Signs must be sans serif or simple serif type and raised characters should be a minimum 16mm in height, but not more than 50mm.
- Tactile letters and numbers on signs should have a width-to-height ratio between 3:5 and 1:1 and a stroke-width-to-height ratio between 1:5 and 1:10.
- All tactile characters as well as the sign itself are encouraged to be rounded or edged.

Sign Height and Location

- Signs should be installed on the wall adjacent to the latch side of the door. Where there is no wall space or a latch side of the door, including at double opening doors, signs should be sited on the nearest adjacent wall.
- Mounting height should be 1525mm above floor level to the centre of the sign. The chosen location for sign should allow a person to approach within 750mm of the sign without encountering protruding objects standing within the swing range of a door.

Colour Contrast

- All signs must have a light background on a dark surface or a dark background on a light surface.
- All sign characters must have a matte or a low gloss

Symbols and Pictograms

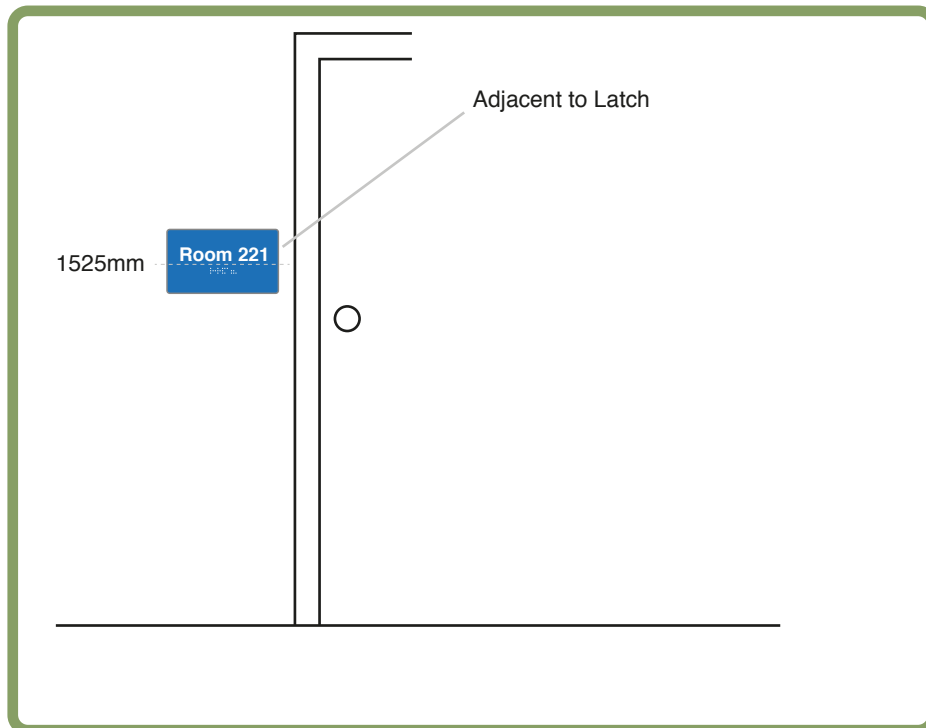
- The use of pictograms is highly encouraged with tactile pictograms used where appropriate
- The international symbol of accessibility must be used to mark accessible areas.
- Equivalent text is required below or to the right of all pictograms.
- Pictograms should be accompanied by the equivalent text description positioned directly below or alongside the pictogram. The border of the pictogram should be a minimum height of 150mm.

Miscellaneous

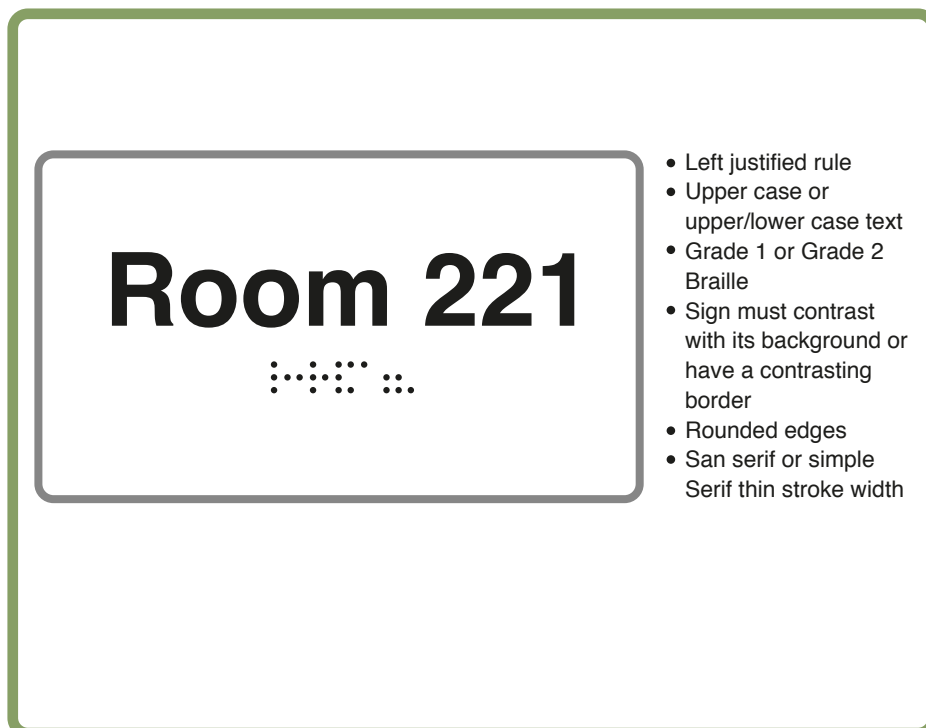
- The EA encourages the use of accessible innovations like tactile maps and detectable surfaces. Many of these innovations are developed or encouraged by the Royal National Institute of the Blind (RNIB).
- On directional signs the EA encourages arrows be placed with the same direction being grouped together.

Design Recommendations

- Organisations like the RNIB can provide recommendations and best practices for accessible environments
- It is advisable to have a professional develop a complete audit of the building's accessibility before beginning a program. The RNIB has staff that conducts audits, and they are conducted by other professional groups as well.
- Use only metric units when working with UK codes. English equivalents are only approximate.
- Grade 1 Braille takes up an amount of space on a sign and can potentially limit the amount of information that can be used. In the UK it can be substituted for Grade 2 Braille.
- Make sure to use the international symbol of accessibility with few changes in design.



Sign height and location



Sign details