



# Access News

January 2019

## Welcome to the latest edition of Access News.

It's been a busy time for the Facilities Directorate, in which we have successfully delivered a range of initiatives and improvements to campus projects. This edition provides an update of these projects, along with stories highlighting the University's continued good practice in Equality and Inclusion.

## BEST PRACTICE IN EQUALITY AND INCLUSION

### BSI ISO : 9001 2015 standard

**Residential Services have successfully been certified and registered by the BSI for operating an ISO 9001:2015 Quality Management System that meets that standard.**



The provision of service given to students with disabilities who are resident in University accommodation is included in the scope of our registration. Holding the BSI ISO 9001:2015 standard embeds good management practice in the Service and enables a process for continuous service improvement.



## New British Standards

'Design for the Mind' research recommendations have assisted the BSI with the development of an update for the 2009 BS8300 standard on building access. The BSI's new standards BS 8300-1:2018 and BS8300-2:2018 have now been published. A wide range of inclusive design solution guidance already exists and this standard brings that diverse advice together to provide a definitive source of authoritative recommendations on inclusive and accessible design for the external built environment. The standards are available to view online using the following links BS 8300-1:2018, BS 8300-2:2018

## Gender balance toolkit available and being used

The University's Conferences, Meetings and Events team are providing conference organisers with a toolkit/guide to encourage them to improve gender balance at conferences. The toolkit promotes sourcing speakers and panel members with a 50-50 gender balance. For a copy of the guide contact [enquiries@meetinleeds.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@meetinleeds.co.uk)

## Leodis residences Access win!

Access to steps into Leodis residences has been significantly improved following excellent collaboration between University students, the University Union and the University's Residential Services Team, who came together to lobby Leeds City Council to improve the entrance steps to access areas.

*Before improvement works*



*After improvement works*



## DisabledGo rebrand.

DisableGo website has now become AccessAble. The following testimonial shows how successful the website is. "The website is great. I love that you can select and filter your results. As my mum has limited hearing and vision it's great to be able to find places quickly and easily that I know she will like and not feel anxious at. Thank you AccessAble!"

## New online equality training launched

Launched earlier this year, An Introduction to Equality & Diversity is an introductory module covering the key principles of equality and inclusion. All colleagues can access the training by logging into Minerva, clicking on 'Teach' and selecting 'Organisations' on the left of the screen. It covers the type of behaviours that are expected of all members of our University community, information about equality law, and ways in which we support and promote equality and inclusion at Leeds. Jointly produced by the Equality Policy Unit, Organisational

Development & Professional Learning (OD&PL) and the Digital Education Service, the module incorporates input and feedback from a wide range of colleagues across our University. The module aims to enhance levels of individual and institutional confidence and our ability to deal with equality-related challenges and opportunities. It also explains the potential impact of unconscious bias and how we can recognise and mitigate against it to help achieve the fairness and increased diversity we want to achieve at Leeds. The learning is in a clear, easy to follow format, and includes a range of different activities to test people's understanding and knowledge. It can be completed in around 30 minutes. The module is required training for all staff so it's really important that colleagues take time to complete it.



## Sensory garden at Charles Morris completed

Storm Jameson Court is designed and accredited as 'Access Exceptional' by the Visit Britain National Accessible Scheme. However, whilst the site is home to student and conference wheelchair users, the grounds previously housed fairly simple shrub planting, with little opportunity for engagement. The Residences Team have set up a wheelchair accessible sensory garden, focussed on people assessed on the autism spectrum (ASD). The planting scheme will have year-round interest, and is based on advice received from Buglife's Urban Buzz scheme in York, and the RHS Perfect for Pollinators Plant List. The primary objective of the sensory garden is to improve access to the garden at Charles Morris Hall, thereby ensuring equal access and inclusiveness for all students, staff and visitors. Additional objectives are to promote the well-being of students and visitors with ASD, with the planting scheme prioritised on known benefits. Also to increase biodiversity, by attracting





invertebrates through the planting of species on the RHS Pollinator List. The year-round interest will assist invertebrates, especially the local Tawny Mining Bees located here on campus, and also the bees that live in hives on top of the Laidlaw Library. Additionally, the team are working with the RNIB to highlight the planting of varying textures and to produce supporting guides, delivering tactile and large print versions of hand-held guides which detail what is there to enjoy!

Vibi Rothnie from RNIB charity said: "Finally took a walk to the garden this lunchtime with a partially-sighted friend who loved the stachys and was intrigued." Alem Tamirat, student said: "The most impressive aspect of my visit was the provision of braille on the wooden information plaque. It is also very accessible for disabled students and visitors to get fresh air and sense the flowers. I found it very peaceful and it seems to be well designed, catering well for disabled people. The Braille materials are well written and explanatory about the services in the accommodation. If someone reads this, he/she can easily obtain the necessary information and support to enhance their stay in Charles Morris. It includes very good means of contact - email, phone contact details." The garden was officially opened by Director of Human Resources, Francesca Fowler, in September 2018. The event also heralded the start of National Inclusion Week celebration at Leeds.

## Spending Pens

As a University, we have a duty of care to ensure that reasonable adjustments are made to make our campus as accessible as possible for those with disabilities. Staff, students or visitors with guide dogs

or other assistance dogs will now be able to take advantage of three new spending facilities for dogs, taking the total across campus to four.



## Changes to Parkinson Building's Historic Entrance

The Parkinson steps have been an iconic gateway to the University since the Parkinson building's opening in 1951. Although a major focal point for student and visitor gatherings, the steps are one of the most inaccessible parts of campus. The University is keen to address this and ensure that all visitors, students and staff are able to enter this historic building via the same entrance, have the same experience and be equally inspired. Alongside this, work is also underway to install a lift making it possible for a wheelchair user to enter the building using the main entrance. This work is scheduled to complete early Spring 2019. Improvements to the building's steps will also be completed at the same time and work will be staggered so that access is always available.



Equality and access issues are embedded within our campus developments strategy. Details of the major campus construction and refurbishment projects taking place on campus over the next few years can be found at <https://campusdevelopments.leeds.ac.uk/>

# ACCESSIBLE PROJECTS – MAKING A DIFFERENCE

The £3.5m access works programme commenced this summer and is expected to complete by 2019. It includes a detailed maintenance and external environments work programme and will address issues such as improving way-finding signage, improvements to ramps and some new ramps to replace steps; the provision of new and more accessible pathways and parking bays.

## IMPROVEMENTS COMPLETE AT BEECH GROVE PLAZA

**Beech Grove Plaza is a prominent site on campus and welcomes high footfall throughout the year, as well as being a perfect external seating area for students and staff.**

A programme of improvement works took place to improve access and safety for students, staff and visitors in this area. The area boasts a ramp for wheelchair users, in order to make this easier and safer to use the seating was removed from the ramp and edge protection created by forming new seating to the central area. The existing plaza also had feathered steps, no handrails and no tactile paving at the top or bottom of the steps. Planters have now been added to reduce the feathered steps and additional handrails, in addition to new textured paving at the top and bottom of all steps. Lighting to the handrails has also been incorporated.

The work was conducted in partnership with an external equality consultant and in consultation with Bryan Matthews, a lecturer from the Institute for Transport Studies, who provided valuable guidance on what it's like for a visually impaired person accessing this area.



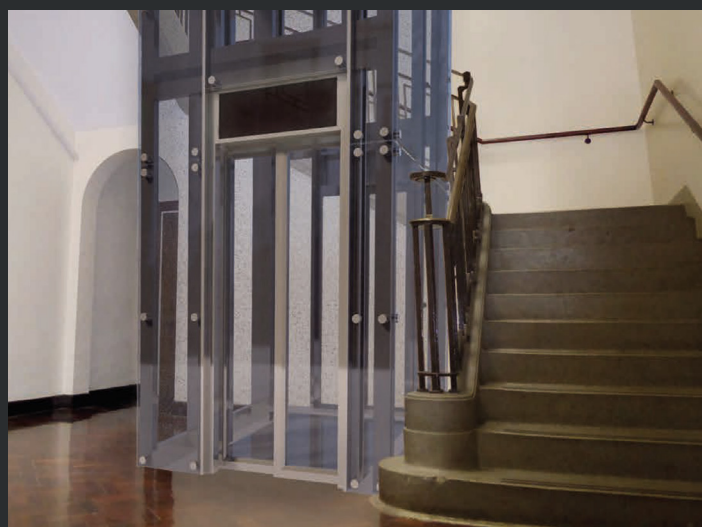
In feedback to the completed work, colleagues Simon Morris and Joanna Canon from Disability Services, commented: “Both Joanna and myself attend the University Campus Access Group and along with other group members raised concerns regarding the accessibility of Beech Grove Plaza.

We had received feedback from staff and students alike identifying specific issues with the space in relation to accessibility. These were taken seriously by the Estates team and acted on as quickly as possible. It was great to see that in the first instance they wanted to fully understand the issues, and consult on the various options regarding potential changes. The result is the most workable solution for the whole University community and rectifies known issues as well as anticipating the needs of future member of the University community. I feel that there is also now a greater understanding of the barriers to spaces, and a desire to create attractive spaces that also feature workable and usable accessible features.

The work undertaken here has provided a learning point for the Estates team, and created lasting links between those involved in the design of spaces and the end users, which should mitigate the need for new spaces to be modified to this level.

## A NEW LIFT FOR THE SCHOOL OF CHEMISTRY

Work is underway to install a lift at the School of Chemistry. This will provide better access to lecture theatres A and B. Completion is expected at the end of January 2019.





## A PROGRAMME OF REMEDIAL WORKS TO IMPROVE EXTERNAL STEPS AND STAIRS ON CAMPUS

The work includes remedial improvements to treads, paving and handrails to the south steps at Stage@Leeds. Staff and students can also expect to see improvements made to the east steps to the Michael Sadler building. South steps to the International Textile Archive. The stairs between EC Stoner and IT Services, adjacent to the Bike Hub. Stairs between the Schools of Maths, Earth & Environment and IT Services. Stairs between the Priestley Building (former Staff Centre), Schools of Maths, Earth and Environment – all of which will improve access to and from Chancellors Court. Handrails have recently been installed at the entrances to Baines Wing and Clothworkers North.



## IMPROVED ACCESS AT SPORTS PARK WEETWOOD

Access improvement work has recently been completed at Sports Park Weetwood and will make the experience much smoother for everyone. A new ramp now takes a disabled user up to the newly installed electronic door into the Bar and along to the new, wheel-chair friendly viewing stand.



## UPDATED CAMPUS GUIDE

Accessible pathways across the University have been surveyed and identified and have been added to the downloadable campus map, making it much easier to identify access routes that are step free. In the future, the map guide will also include new information to make Gender Neutral Toilets easier to locate. More information can be found at: [www.leeds.ac.uk/campusmap](http://www.leeds.ac.uk/campusmap)

Contact us at [esoffice@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:esoffice@leeds.ac.uk) to report an access problem or to provide feedback and future story ideas for this newsletter