



Access News

Summer Edition

Welcome to the second edition of Access News.

This edition provides a focus on the University's Access Partners, Turner & Townsend, an update on campus-wide projects currently underway, and details of Residences Equality and Inclusion training day. By reading these stories – we hope you are reminded that we all contribute towards improving physical accessibility on campus for students, staff and visitors – if you have ideas on how the Facilities Directorate (Estates, Campus and Commercial Services, Residences and Sustainability) can continue to make improvements, let us know!

Working with partners to understand access requirements

Access Consultants, Turner and Townsend are providing advice and guidance to the University Estates Team on ways to improve the physical campus environment to reasonably meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. Advice has covered work to existing environments along with new schemes.

Access News met with Richard Dryden (pictured below), Associate Director at Turner & Townsend, to discuss access related matters at the University.



Tell us more about your role as an access consultant

An access consultant's role is wide and varied. It is most commonly known that we audit existing properties and comment on where improvements can be made, but our role also covers:

- Undertaking design appraisals on new schemes to assist with ensuring they are fully accessible for all, from day one of occupation;
- Writing design specifications specific to end-user needs for architects and designers to follow when they are designing buildings;
- Assisting with developing policy and procedures;
- Consultation with end-users to assist with ensuring that their needs are understood and captured in ongoing improvements;
- Delivering training; this may be disability awareness training/understanding of disability legislation/undertaking audits.

The University of Leeds campus is vast and complex, how well are we doing to improve access across campus?

The University of Leeds is taking a considered approach to improving access to both curriculum and services, which should be applauded. There are short-term plans to address specific issues, and longer-term plans to improve access across the whole of the campus – again with the focus being driven by access to curriculum and services.

Working with partners

Tell us more about a complex project at the University that you've been involved in.

The most complex is the current 2016 re-audit of the entire campus. The campus was last audited in 2008 and based wholly on Building Regulations requirements. The re-audit will be based on a contemporary understanding of the Equality Act, with recommendations based on 'reasonableness'. This will assist with focusing attention where it is truly needed and provide the University with realistic solutions to be addressed within a tangible programme.

What should the University take account of during construction and refurbishment projects?

It's often much easier to provide for good access and inclusivity whilst undertaking new building projects than it is to manage the limitations of the existing estate in a way that that will solve all problems. Where access has been improved, but can't realistically be provided to 100% of the estate, it should still be possible to put in place changes to the way buildings are operated to ensure that access can be provided to at least 100% of the curriculum and services.

This type of focused approach to the management of access, undertaken in tandem with improvements to the built environment, will have a greater impact and in a shorter time.

Useful contacts at the University

Disabled Assessment and Support Unit
www.leeds.ac.uk/ses
Equality Service
equality@leeds.ac.uk
Occupational Health Service
wsh@leeds.ac.uk

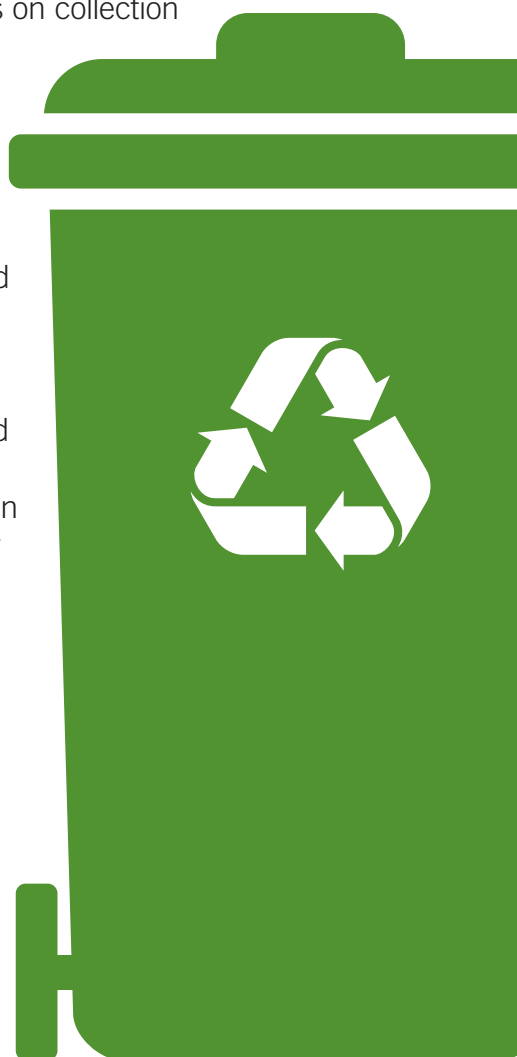


Blind and partially sighted people are often affected by obstacles on pavements.

Parking on pavements can either restrict the available width for a blind or partially sighted person, or simply cause an impact hazard. Please ensure you do not park on pavements and please discourage workers/contractors and delivery services from doing so. Parking on pavements is, of course, illegal as is parking near to a junction and at dropped-kerb access points.

Wheelie bins and general waste can be trip hazards. Please be considerate and only place bins and waste on the pavement on collection day. Guide dogs are a fantastic help but, confronted with a bin or bags in the way, the dog will guide it's handler around the obstacle and, if necessary, into the road. For everyone trying to use the footpath, especially those who are visually impaired, having to zig-zag along a pavement to avoid obstructions can be highly disorientating, frustrating and dangerous. In addition, please tie up all bags properly and place them on top of bins on collection day. Glass bottles, drinks cartons and slippery food items are all hazards, especially to blind and partially sighted people.

Please help to make the paths and pavements around the University and in your street safer for everybody.



Equality and Inclusion training for Residential Service team members

Colleagues in Residential Services recently participated in an Equality and Inclusion Training event. Jo Hynes, Assistant Director of Residential Services, talks more about the day.

“Residential Services run one of the best student accommodation portfolios in the UK. The accommodation we operate is a key enabler for recruitment and delivery of an excellent student experience. We plan to maintain, sustain and further develop the quality of the portfolio, so that it will meet all future expectations of our students.

We also have to deliver services that will differentiate what we do, keeping our students, their parents and others talking about how good the service is that they receive. Our student residences must be well designed, secure, convenient to use, conveniently located and, above all, they need to provide students with an opportunity to live in, and be part of, a really sociable and inclusive community.

One of our values is that we'll work to meet individual needs to provide an equal and excellent service”.

In February, 40 colleagues in Residences took part in a one-day Equality and Inclusion training event. The aim of the day was to provide staff with an opportunity to develop their knowledge and understanding, to assist them to deliver even higher standards of service, in line with our equal service value.

The day covered a range of topics connected to Equality and Inclusion:

- Claire Dole, a disability awareness trainer, spoke about challenging misconceptions and raising awareness about disability.
- Chris Warrington, Head of Student Support, and Jeanette Hannah, Mental Health Advisor, provided information to staff about services available for those who are in need of support, information about crisis pathways and the referral processes.
- Angela Dean, Residence Manager – Charles Morris Hall, gave a talk on providing an equally excellent arrival and living experience for all students.
- Julie Jennings, Occupational Health Therapist, and Mike Leonard spoke about student induction and how to make effective reasonable adjustments.
- Richard Dryden, Turner Townsend Access Consultant, gave valuable insight into providing better understanding about access in the built environment, and requirements under the Equality Act 2010.
- Yorkshire Care provided a demonstration of care equipment, which they supply and maintain, to adapt accommodation to make it more accessible.
- Workshops covered undertaking Equality and Impact Assessments, and Customer Service Guide development.
- Team members from the University's Equality Policy Unit were on hand to answer questions and provide delegates with information about their role.

Feedback from staff that attended the event was very positive and Residential Services plan to develop and repeat the event for others working in the Facilities Directorate.



ACCESSIBLE PROJECTS – COMPLETED SCHEMES

Over recent months a variety of work has been completed to improve access to facilities on campus. The length of each project varies greatly due to a number of reasons, including the time taken for building regulations or listed building consent and scheduling work around teaching timetables to ensure disruption is minimised.

GREAT HALL LIFT

Investment £120,000, February 2016 - March 2016

The Great Hall is one of the most iconic and historic buildings on campus, with its red brick architecture and Grade II listing. Access within the building however was considered to be restrictive and its lift was deemed to be poor, due to its small car size. Following a review to consider making improvements, a decision was taken to upgrade the lift within the existing shaft, to make it more accessible.



BODINGTON CHAMBER (PARKINSON BUILDING)

Investment £50,000, July 2015 - October 2016

Following feedback from wheelchair users that the access and use of Bodington Chamber was difficult, a review was undertaken by the University's Access Consultants, Turner and Townsend. Automation of the doors and removal of fixed seating within the chamber, along with an upgrade to the existing toilet facilities adjacent to the room, were all key recommendations that have been implemented.

<http://campusdevelopments.leeds.ac.uk>

SCHOOL OF ENGLISH

Investment £45,000, May 2016 - July 2016

Following the installation in 2014 of a lift in the School of English, it was identified that the existing access, via a platform lift to the front of the building, was still not going to provide adequate access to meet student and staff expectations. Improvements were put in place and the lift was relocated to the disabled entrance to the rear of the building. The new position of the lift now facilitates access to the central teaching space, as well as the entrance to the internal lift.

MAURICE KEYWORTH

Investment £30,000, March 2016 - May 2016

Improvements to the office space on the lower ground floor have taken place recently at Maurice Keyworth, which serves students and staff of Leeds University Business School. An additional fixed ramp has now been installed to connect the rear entrance to the lower level; this provides full provision for all building users to access the offices on the lower ground floor.



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