

# Inclusive Spaces and Places

A collaborative  
approach to  
inclusive design



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# What is inclusive design?

Inclusive design seeks to create buildings and environments which welcome everyone, regardless of their characteristics or identity.

It aims to remove the barriers which separate and impede, to enable everyone to participate equally, confidently, and independently in everyday activities.

Inclusive design aims to deliver spaces that are:

- Accessible – without barriers to their use and easily navigable by everyone regardless of their ability or disability.
- Inclusive – accommodating to everyone, accounting for the diverse range of people's needs, characteristics and lived experiences.

Inclusive design is good design for all – not just the people who experience challenges in the built environment. It is about ensuring that spaces and places are welcoming, accessible, and usable for everyone.

# The case for investing in inclusive design

The World Economic Forum cites three key reasons why diversity, equity and inclusion is a greater imperative for the built environment sector than ever before:

- **Moral reasons** – Giving equal access and opportunities to everyone is simply the right thing to do.
- **Legal reasons** – More and more guidance and legislation is being developed to eliminate discrimination and increase inclusivity.
- **Economic imperative** – It is economically beneficial for businesses to develop measures to improve accessibility and inclusivity to engage new customers, staff, suppliers and other partners.



71 % of women in the UK have experienced some form of sexual harassment in a public spaces, rising to 86 % among women aged 18–24.

Greater London Authority, 2018

The number of people who can feel 'left out' by the built environment is growing. In the UK, the number of people identifying as disabled is now higher than the populations of London, Manchester, Birmingham and Leeds combined.

As of 2021, 1 in 4 UK residents are disabled, 1 in 5 are from ethnic minority backgrounds, and 1 in 30 people identify as LGBTQ+. These population groups are amongst the fastest growing in the UK.

While it is challenging to fully measure the impact of poorly designed environments on their users, the available evidence paints a telling picture. Figures from the Business Disability Forum show 43% of disabled people have abandoned a recent shopping trip due to barriers they encountered. But this figure only scratches the surface. Many more people avoid visiting restaurants, offices, or other public spaces where they anticipate a lack of inclusivity, or find themselves forced to leave places that fail to accommodate their needs.

The spending power of groups who can be excluded from the built environment is highly significant (see figures to the right).

The data underscores the need to design inclusively, and demonstrates the opportunity for organisations who do so. In a society increasingly focused on inclusivity, organisations that do not adapt risk rendering their spaces and services obsolete. Delaying investment in inclusive design risks missing substantial economic and social benefits.

£6bn

Pink pound (the spending power of the UK LGBTQ+ community)

£5bn

Black pound (the spending power of the UK ethnic minority community)

£300bn

Purple pound (the spending power by UK households with at least one disabled person)



“

At some point in life everyone will be affected by disability; whether it is you, your friends or family.

People that aren't yet affected don't realise how badly places are designed.

”

# Benefits of inclusive design

Fostering inclusivity in our physical environment are crucial for encouraging wellbeing and a wider sense of belonging.

Creating spaces where individuals feel valued and supports community wellbeing and successful places. Additionally, inclusive design connects people. By opening up spaces and buildings for people who might otherwise feel excluded, inclusive design directly contributes to making vibrant communities.



In the 12 months to March 2022, disabled people were almost three times as likely to report finding access to products difficult than non-disabled people.

ONS, 2023. Opinions and Lifestyle Survey 2022.

# 4<sub>x</sub>

Unlocking a wider array of customers

Inclusive design can quadruple the reach of products and services compared to those that do not incorporate inclusivity.

Centre for Inclusive Design, 2023. The Benefit of Designing for Everyone.



Addressing business ESG objectives

In the US, disability and inclusion corporate leaders saw a 30% higher profit in 2018, escalating to 100% by 2021.

Accenture, 2018 Getting to Equal: The Disability Inclusion Advantage.

# 12%

Attracting and retaining talented employees

Inclusive work environments not only help attract exceptional employees but also help diversify workforces and decision-making processes, with a reported 12% increase in employee performance for diverse teams compared to non-inclusive ones.

Gartner, 2019. Diversity and Inclusion Build High-Performance Teams.

# ££

Enhancing business reputation

In the UK, 46% of consumers are willing to pay more for products from trusted brands, with inclusivity increasingly influencing consumer choices and shaping perceptions of a company's impact.

Salsify, 2021. Consumers Will Pay a Premium for Brands They Trust.

Implementing inclusive design in the built environment early on can prevent costly adaptations, retrofits, and potential legal challenges. The costs of retrofitting can be up to 10,000 times higher than incorporating inclusive design from the start. Therefore, inclusive design is not just a social responsibility but also a strategic business decision that leads to market expansion, enhanced customer loyalty, and significant cost savings.

Centre for Inclusive Design

Future changes in regulations and social attitudes encourage the development of more inclusive environments and organisations may risk creating stranded assets if they do not consider inclusive design as part of their refurbishments and new builds today.



# Barriers preventing investment

Given the case for investing in and improving inclusive design, the next question is 'what is stopping organisations from delivering these improvements?'.

Through engagement with industry experts, several barriers preventing investment have been identified. These barriers are split into two categories: knowledge gaps and wider barriers.

## **Knowledge gaps:**

- Lack of awareness of the benefits of investment
- Lack of awareness of what to invest in
- Lack of awareness of how to involve inclusivity in projects
- Lack of understanding of the lived experience
- Lack of awareness of information, tools and research available for designers
- Lack of awareness of why investment is important

## **Wider barriers**

- Heritage and difficulties repurposing buildings
- Difficulties measuring outcomes

Due to the above and the fact we don't have a fully inclusive culture/ environment, statistics are unreliable.

“

Disabled people adapt to the world rather than the world adapting to them...they often don't have a voice, and this results in them being isolated from the built environment.

Lived experience workshop attendee, 2023

”

# Recommendations

The report concludes with five calls to action for property owners across both existing buildings and new developments.



Strong diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) practices were associated with a 28 percent increase in revenue, double the net income, and a 30 percent boost in economic profit margin, compared with their peer companies that scored lower on DEI practices.

Digital Learning Institute, 2023. The Impact of Accessibility in the Workplace.



## Rationale

## Grosvenor and The Crown Estate's commitment

## Key tools

### Listen to and involve lived experience

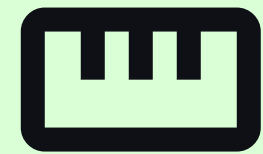
Understand and engage with current and future users of buildings and spaces who have lived experience across a range of characteristics.

“Nothing about us without us” underscores the importance of effective engagement and design reviews involving those who experience barriers to inclusion. Without considering people’s needs and lived experiences, there is no way of ensuring that an environment will create a positive and equitable experience for everyone.

Grosvenor and The Crown Estate have set up an inclusive design panel of people with lived experience to support projects throughout the duration of the development from design through to delivery.

This panel will also be used to consult on works to existing buildings and changes required across their portfolios.

**Guidance document for creating a panel of lived experience:** To support other property owners in creating a panel of people with lived experience, Grosvenor and The Crown Estate have developed a draft governance document that others can adapt for their own organisation to support a fair, inclusive and productive discussion, and a better project outcome.



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## Measure

Measure and understand the level of accessibility for existing buildings and spaces to inform key interventions across your portfolio.

A considerable obstacle to advancing inclusive design is the lack of clarity on investment priorities and performance metrics. Organisations often struggle to start or prioritise improvements due to this uncertainty, even as they recognise the benefits.

Grosvenor and The Crown Estate commit to championing a consistent approach to auditing their commercial portfolios to understand existing levels of accessibility. They will share learnings on the tools and methodologies that can support this to encourage more consistent industry take up.

**Measurement tool to evaluate current levels of accessibility:** Grosvenor and The Crown Estate have created a measurement approach for property owners to use across retail, food and beverage (F&B), office and public realm subsectors to provide a consistent assessment with clear recommendations for how to improve existing buildings and spaces.





## Rationale

## Grosvenor and The Crown Estate's commitment

## Key tools

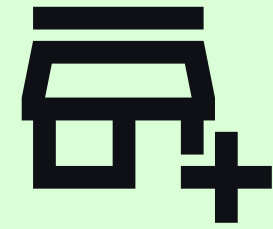
## Communicate

Provide better information on the level of accessibility of existing buildings and spaces so people can feel more confident using them.

One of the greatest barriers for people using spaces is a lack of available information on its level of accessibility for them. To overcome this, better information needs to be provided about commercial spaces to empower and help people understand whether or not they can access a space.

Grosvenor and The Crown Estate commit to continue improving the availability of information about their commercial buildings and spaces through appropriate tools.

**Digital information tools:**  
Grosvenor and The Crown Estate have worked with AccessAble and the Sociability App to provide pre-arrival information across all their core retail streets to ensure people with accessibility and inclusivity requirements know what to expect when visiting these locations.



## Rationale

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## Key tools

### Exceed

Go beyond building regulations by introducing an inclusive design brief, developed with people with diverse lived experiences, to create more rigorous standards for developments of all sizes.

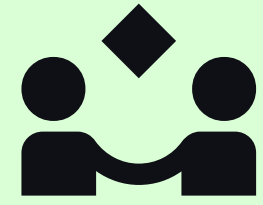
Best-practice inclusive design should address diverse needs beyond physical accessibility and disability, focusing on all protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. It involves engaging with those who have lived experience and goes beyond current regulations to ensure buildings are future-ready.

Grosvenor and The Crown Estate commit to following the guidance outlined in the RIBA Inclusive Design Overlay and complying with an Inclusive Design Brief that goes beyond existing regulation and standards to ensure their buildings are as welcoming as possible for everyone.

They commit to open-source a high-level version of the Inclusive Design Brief document to support others in the industry on this journey.

**Inclusive Design Brief:** Grosvenor and The Crown Estate have created an Inclusive Design Brief, in collaboration with Motionspot, for their new developments. This includes prompts for design teams to use throughout a development project's timeline and includes a list of recommendations which go beyond minimum standards.

**RIBA design overlay:** this overlay provides guidance on implementing inclusive design through each RIBA Plan of Work stage to enable informed decision-making at the right time and in the right order, to enabling the best ways to embrace and excel within inclusion practices.



## Rationale

## Grosvenor and The Crown Estate's commitment

## Key tools

## Collaborate and educate

Work with other industry partners through a community of practice that ensures accessibility and inclusive design are understood and considered across the built environment for both new and existing buildings as well as public realm.

The only way to deliver genuine change across the built environment is through sharing lessons learnt and collaboration between property owners, developers, architects, contractors and consultants.

Grosvenor and The Crown Estate commit to sharing lessons learnt on our projects and working with other real estate companies to champion inclusive design across the built environment.

**Industry working group and community of practice:** to drive collaboration, education and ultimately transformation across the sector Grosvenor and The Crown Estate have set up an industry working group (Accessible and Inclusive Places Industry Group). This group is open to other property owners, developers, architects, contractors and consultants.

