

Torpoint Town Council

Employee Accessibility Policy

Approved: DD August 2025 • Next review: DD August 2026

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Scope: All employees, job applicants, contractors and volunteers engaged by Torpoint Town Council.

This policy should be read in conjunction and reference to:

- **Torpoint Town Council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy.** (Torpoint Town Council, 2023a)
- **Torpoint Town Council's Equal Opportunities Policy** (Torpoint Town Council, 2024b)

Policy Statement

Torpoint Town Council is committed to equality of opportunity and to eliminating discrimination on the grounds of accessibility to employment within the organisation. We will take a proactive approach to accessibility in all areas of employment including:

- Recruitment
- Terms and conditions.
- Working arrangements
- Training.
- Promotion.
- Facilities.
- Communications.
- The digital workplace.

The Town Council operates in accordance with its legal duties and obligations under the Equality Act 2010, and recognises the responsibilities it has to its employees under Public Sector Equality Duty.(Torpoint Town Council, 2024a)

Legal Framework

This policy is made in accordance with the principal UK laws and duties that apply to English local authorities and employers:

- Equality Act 2010
- Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 Equality Act)
- Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) Accessibility Regulations 2018
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974

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- UK GDPR & Data Protection Act 2018
- Building Regulations – Approved Document M (Part M)

Commitments

We will:

1. Make reasonable adjustments promptly once informed of an employee's need.
2. Apply the Public Sector Equality Duty in employment decisions.
3. Ensure all Torpoint Town Council premises are accessible.
4. Deliver accessible digital services.
5. Protect health & safety for disabled employees.
6. Handle disability/health data lawfully and with integrity.
7. Train managers and HR staff appropriately and to the required standard.
8. Monitor and report on disability representation within the organisation.

Roles and Responsibilities

- Full Council / Chair: overall responsibility for policy adoption and ensuring employment responsibilities are met and maintained.
- Clerk / Responsible financial officer and member with responsibility to HR : policy implementation.
- Line Managers: respond to reasonable adjustment requests.
- Employees: inform employer of needs or adjustments.
- Data Protection Officer: advise on data compliance.

Procedure For Reasonable / Workplace Adjustments

1. Request received from employee / Occupational Health report recommendation received.
2. Acknowledgement of request by employer.
3. Assessment carried out with employee's consent and with their input. (This may require Occupational Services input if not already done)
4. Decision & recording of outcome.
5. Implementation of adjustments
6. Agreed Review period (This is based on the individuals needs and not a standard or defined period).
7. Appeal/complaint process. **See Torpoint Town Council's Complaints procedure**(Torpoint Town Council, 2024a)

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Recruitment and Selection

See **Torpoint Town Council's Recruitment and Selection Policy** (Torpoint Town Council, 2022) for full details.

Specific Accessibility criteria for recruitment and selection is as follows:

- Accessible adverts and recruitment processes in place.
- Guaranteed interview for disabled candidates whom meet the job roles essential criteria.
- no unlawful health questions before offer of employment.
- If successful, make offer and make individual reasonable adjustments for candidates.
- Consider the use of positive action to fill vacancies.

Workplace Adjustments — Examples

(not exhaustive and should always be person centred)

- Adapted equipment
- Assistive technology
- Flexible working
- Alternative furniture
- Relocation
- Job role porting where an existing vacancy would allow employment retention.
- Moved to an alternative vacant role which better suites the employee's accessibility needs and allows them to remain employed.
- Accessible formats
- PPE adjustments
- Mentoring
- Additional leave

Workplace adjustments can be instigated by the employee or by their line manager (if they are linked to the agreed reasonable adjustments for the individual). Any mutually agreed workplace adjustments must be regularly reviewed to ensure that they are still effective and required by the employee.

Any workplace adjustments offered as a reasonable adjustment does not represent a repeal or replacement of any conditions of employment, or an amendment of the Town Council's HR policies or processes. Reasonable adjustments and any workplace adjustments offered

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or implemented are person centred and does not constitute a requirement for all employees to have access to the same adjustments.

Reasonable adjustments should not be regarded as a permanent change to an employee's working terms or conditions, unless the situation deems it necessary to do so. In which case, the decision should be formalised and recorded as a mutually agreed addendum to the employee's terms and conditions of employment. This will remove the need to regularly review such adjustments as they are deemed essential for the employee to remain in employment. This does not prevent the employee from asking for further requests or recommendations for reasonable adjustments in the future.

Guidance and assistance can be gained from UK Government [Access to work scheme](#) (DWP, 2023)

Digital & Communication Accessibility

- Internal and public-facing systems must meet Web Content Accessibility (WCAG) standards
- Accessible formats provided on request.

Premises, Meetings and Events attended by employees

The Town Council is committed to meeting all legal and defined criteria according to current UK legislation for Building regulation. Below is a summary of our legal responsibilities to building access within Town Council premises where employees are expected to enter and work. *Please note that some exceptions may apply, and where this is the case, it must be documented and advertised:*

1. Reasonable provision must be made for people to— (a) gain access to; and (b) use, the building and its facilities. Access to extensions to buildings other than dwellings
2. Suitable independent access must be provided to the extension where reasonably practicable. Sanitary conveniences in extensions to buildings other than dwellings
3. If sanitary conveniences are provided in any building that is to be extended, reasonable provision shall be made within the extension for sanitary conveniences.

(UK HM Government, 2024)

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Communication aids to for those with an impairment of hearing or sight should be installed within the following buildings or areas:

- Performance areas.
- Civic Council Chamber building where the public may meet or attend on officers or members.
- Meeting rooms or those used as such.
- Reception areas.
- Library and Community Hubs.
- Public information points (within buildings).
- Town Council run external areas with fixed footings, which may be used for performance, entertainment, meetings and events (Such as Benodët Park).

A permanent induction loop is considered best practice in larger spaces, but in smaller meeting rooms for example, a good quality, high performance portable induction loop is considered acceptable. **Please note: BS 8300 takes precedence over Building Regulations 2010 Part M** ([See Appendix 1](#))

The Town Council will ensure that it always offers its employees:

- Accessible meeting spaces.
- Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEP's for emergency evacuation).

Data Protection and Confidentiality

Please read in conjunction with *Torpoint Town Council's Data Protection, Plus Document Retention & Disposal Policy*. (Torpoint Town Council, 2023b)

Information regarding any protected characteristic of employees is treated in line with current UK legislation and Information Commissioners guidance. In particularly:

- Special category data handled lawfully.
- secure storage.
- retention in line with Council policy.

Training and Awareness

Torpoint Town Council recognizes that its staff deserve to have faith in its leadership and management. Therefore, disability and accessibility awareness training are mandatory for

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all staff with line management and Human Resources responsibilities which, shall be refreshed every two years.

Monitoring, Reporting & Improvement

To ensure that the Council is accountable and continues to ensure it is meeting its obligations to employees. The council will:

- Publish equality data under the *Public Sector Equality Duty* (PSED).
- Ensure it reviews adjustments in line with individual plans.
- Keeps and reviews and **Annual Accessibility Plan** for all Town Council owned or operated facilities.

Complaints and Support

Please see Torpoint Town Council's Complaints policy (Torpoint Town Council, 2024a)

[Grievance procedures; contacts for EHRC, ICO, HSE; HR support available.](#)

Accessibility Officer

Accessibility & Reasonable Adjustments Officer: [\[Name / HR lead\]](#)

Email: clerk@torpointtowncouncil.gov.uk

Phone:

Appendices

1. *BS 8300*

BS 8300 is a **British Standard** that provides guidance on how to design buildings and their surroundings so they are **accessible and inclusive for disabled people**.

It's officially titled:

BS 8300-1:2018 & BS 8300-2:2018 – Design of an accessible and inclusive built environment

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The standard is split into two parts:

1. **BS 8300-1:2018** – *External environment*
Covers the design of external spaces like streets, car parks, landscaping, public realm areas, and approach routes to buildings.
2. **BS 8300-2:2018** – *Buildings – Code of practice*
Covers internal building design features, such as entrances, circulation spaces, sanitary facilities, signage, acoustics, lighting, and means of escape.

Purpose

- To help architects, designers, and planners meet the needs of people with a wide range of disabilities.
- To align with UK legislation, such as the **Equality Act 2010**, ensuring no one is discriminated against in accessing or using a building or facility.
- To encourage **inclusive design**, meaning spaces work for everyone — not just those who meet minimum legal requirements.

Common applications

- Public buildings like town halls, libraries, sports centres.
- Housing developments and residential complexes.
- Streetscape and transport hubs.
- Refurbishment projects where accessibility improvements are needed.

If you're creating an **employee accessibility policy** or a **building accessibility audit** for a UK town council, BS 8300 is one of the main technical standards you'd reference alongside the Building Regulations (Approved Document M).

If you'd like, I can give you a **concise checklist** of BS 8300's main requirements so you can apply it easily. That would make it more practical than reading through the full 300+ pages.

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2. BS 8300 Practical Checklist

Part 1 – External Environment

1. Car Parking

- At least **5% of parking spaces** should be designated accessible bays, located **close to the entrance**.
- Bays should be **3.6m wide** (2.4m space + 1.2m side transfer zone).
- Clear signage and level, firm surfaces.

2. Approach Routes

- Routes should be **step-free**, wide enough for two wheelchairs to pass (**minimum 1.5m width**).
- Surfaces should be firm, slip-resistant, and well-drained.
- Gradients: **max 1:20 preferred, 1:12 absolute maximum** with landings.

3. External Steps & Ramps

- Ramps must have handrails both sides and contrasting edges.
- Steps must have contrasting nosings and tactile warning surfaces.

4. Signage & Wayfinding

- Clear, consistent, and visible signs with good contrast and large text.
- Use of tactile and Braille signs where appropriate.

5. Lighting

- Even, glare-free lighting along approaches and entrances.

Part 2 – Internal Environment

1. Entrances

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- Level or ramped access.
- Automatic or easy-to-open doors with clear opening width **minimum 1m** for main entrance.
- Clear vision panels in doors.

2. Reception Areas

- Low-level counter section (**max 760mm high**) for wheelchair users.
- Induction loop for people with hearing aids.

3. Circulation Spaces

- Corridors at least **1.5m wide** (1.8m preferred in busy areas).
- Turning spaces for wheelchairs at regular intervals.

4. Lifts

- Minimum size to accommodate a wheelchair: **1100mm x 1400mm**.
- Controls at accessible heights (900–1200mm from floor).

5. Stairs

- Consistent rise and going; contrasting nosings.
- Continuous handrails on both sides.

6. Sanitary Facilities

- At least one unisex wheelchair-accessible WC on each floor open to the public.
- Dimensions: **1500mm x 2200mm minimum**.
- Grab rails, emergency alarm, outward-opening door.

7. Signage & Information

- Consistent fonts, high contrast, tactile/Braille where necessary.

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- Audible as well as visual information in key areas.

8. Lighting & Acoustics

- Avoid glare and sudden light changes.
- Good sound insulation and hearing enhancement systems in meeting rooms.

9. Means of Escape

- Evacuation lifts or suitable refuge areas (minimum **900mm x 1400mm**).
- Visual and audible alarms.

3. Suggested Reasonable Adjustment Request Form

Name: _____

Department: _____

Role: _____

Date: _____

Please describe the adjustment(s) you are requesting:

Reason for the adjustment:

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Signature: _____ Date: _____

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