

LEARNING NETWORK NZ



Accessibility Report from site visit (18.8/2010)

Approachability:

The building is situated off the main road (Lincoln Rd) and 5mins to the western motorway, therefore a 1-2km walk to the local bus route, and is within a small block of existing retail outlets that is part of a larger redevelopment project meant to cope with the growth for the entire west Auckland area.

The landscape is entirely flat throughout and the block of shops is two-storied, with the office in question within the top floor of offices and meeting room facilities and accessed via an internal lift. The ground surface is slip resistant, has no loose or uneven materials that could be called 'hazardous', and there are no gradients that would not comply.

There is an 'access park' located directly outside, with a compliant curb ramp to mount the curb and use the footpath, and there is a fully compliant 'swing door' entry which accommodates the ISA Symbol alongside (International Symbol of Access). The door stands out from the glass wall to the front of the building, with frosting on the door to further increase that entrance visibility, and the surrounding glass has the 'visibility strips' to ensure that this does not become hazardous.



There is a 'free-standing' sign that is placed immediately outside the entrance doorway, which could create an obstacle for some and a trip hazard for others, and thought could be given to its eventual relocation.

Accessibility:

The main entrance door on ground level swings out and has a door hold-open device, with a 30mm threshold (20mm is preferred) which 'could be a trip hazard' for some who have a visual impairment, and there are 'no' loose mats to impede your path of travel.



The internal lift is immediately inside the entrance foyer (non slip tiles on the floor of the foyer), which is easily operated by one hand from a wall switch at a reachable height (1000mm above the floor), and requires 'two doors' to be open and closed (one swing and one slide) before it will travel. There is room for one wheelchair and possibly two that stand each trip, with Braille on the buttons and a telephone inside (emergency), and there is direct-stick carpet on the floor and a continuous handrail within.

There is a 'fully compliant' stairwell as the primary access route (includes another set of stairs used as the 'fire exit' for the upstairs tenants), which has 'direct stick' carpet tiles that continue throughout the entire second floor level, and the entire access route is well visible and has no projections or hazards that could impede a persons travel.



The 'entire' second floor would be considered as 'accessible', with the internal route throughout all areas easily navigated by myself while in an 'outdoor' power-chair without any difficulty, and 'both' training seminar rooms are easily usable by a small group that included several wheelchair users and others.

The access route is well sign posted throughout, starting with the "ISA" symbol at the entrance door, including the lift and how to safely use it, and identifying the accessible features within (ie: reception, toilet, emergency exit etc) for all users.

Usability:

The second floor access route includes a "reception" area (which has split level for 'wheelchair' and 'ambulant' access), and a "waiting" area set off to the right side of the reception space where seating is provided.

There is a lot of clutter on 'top and around' the reception area, which could create an environment that has limited usable space or potentially 'unseen' trip hazards.



There are **“toilets”** including a separate ‘access’ cubicle (which is also the designated cubicle for males, as the centre is dominated by female users), with the accessible toilet spacious and having the required features to meet minimum compliance (with only the toilet pan which is small in size (and located too close to the cistern to allow a recline for the seat lid) and lack of a ‘raised’ flush buttons, causing any concern for independent use by mobility impaired users.



There is also a **“kitchen”** area which is used by all the tenants (not what you would call an ‘access kitchen’, but with relocating some of the electrical appliances and ensuring that the bench area is clear of clutter, it could become more usable by any disabled staff member/visitor), with all trainee visitors using the kitchenette environment opposite the reception area.



The **“training/meeting rooms”** are certainly accessible (but cluttered at present) and have all the features you would require for most meetings, with some thought possibly needed around the rearrangement of the furniture etc, if a disabled facilitator required the wall-mounted white boards and other electronic equipment?

The **“office”** space in question is a short distance from the lift/reception area (10mtrs?), is small in size (three desks maximum?) but totally usable by most impaired users who are likely to visit/work within this space, and is directly opposite the kitchen area and it has the toilets & fire exit either side.

The ‘direct-stick’ carpet tiles continue through the office also, the room has a heat pump that is operable by a portable hand-held remote, and the room is well ‘lit & ventilated’ from both artificial lighting and a generous window that overlooks the rear tenant car parking area.



Directly outside of the office door is a 'shared' printer/fax/copier that is accessible and also usable by many impaired users, and there is a 'instant' café machine on an access counter top which is also available to increase the kitchens access options.



Summary:



It is my opinion that this is a 'very' accessible environment for many impaired users, as there are no 'hazards or projections' that interfere in the accessible journey from 'arrival outside to eventual destination within', and the environment within (when I visited) was encouraging from a disabled visitors perspective as the building staff within were most accommodating and welcoming, and the environment was warm and friendly.

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