

ACCESS to Scouting

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA)

Six months ago I circulated over 100 sets of documents to all GSL's in Berkshire to enable groups to carry out an Access Assessment of their meeting place(s). This was in order to identify any restrictions limiting the accessibility for all. From all the groups in the County I have only received 6 written responses and a few verbals! Perhaps you think this exercise was for the benefit of some old codger in the County with nothing better to do

NO – it is for your own good.

If you are accused of not complying with this law your written Assessment and an action plan, will be seen as evidence of an attempt to identify and remove any limitations to all users wanting access to Scouting.

It is a fact that many Scout Groups will not have the financial wherewithal, nor perhaps even the space, to carry out the necessary building work and changes which will become apparent from a thorough assessment. The law is mindful of such circumstances facing charity organisations and makes the point by having a reference to the actions being subject to a “**reasonableness test**” for the body concerned. If the cost is seen to be beyond the current means of the group then at least there will be recognition of what is needed to eventually meet the requirements of the law. As noted in my original letter there are sources of funding which may help but you must know some details, derived from the audit, of what you really need.

Please dig out the documents and plan your Group action as soon as possible.

Peter Scurry,
County Adviser(SN)
31st January 2007