

ALL SAINTS PARISH CHURCH WATH-UPON-DEARNE
Policy for Disability and Inclusion

DIVERSE NEEDS

Although the term “people with disabilities” is used throughout this document as a useful shorthand, it needs to be understood very broadly. “People with disabilities” are all very different, all very individual. People with the same impairment will have widely differing needs and views. For example, not all deaf people have the same communication support needs; not all blind people can read Braille, not all people with a learning disability regard themselves as “disabled”.

People with disabilities should be able to access our church, not just as members of the congregation, but as people who may contribute to leadership too.

All Saints wants to include people with disabilities fully in the life of the Church, and we are required by law to ensure that we do not discriminate against people with disabilities.

The Equality Act 2010 applies to churches, as “service providers”, and sometimes also as employers, and they are required to make reasonable provision to comply with this legislation. The legislation gives us a very broad definition of the term disability:

“a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on an individual’s ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.”

PHYSICAL ACCESS

All Saints Parish Church is a place where all God’s people can feel welcome and at home. Our concern is not just for the ninety-nine who can find their way in, but for the one who cannot.

All Saints does not exclude or discriminate against anyone but is a liberating place where all can enter (and leave) freely, safely and with thanksgiving.

Disabled people should also be able to enter our church independently, if they choose to do so. Whilst we may think it is kind to offer help to someone in a wheelchair, for example, this may not be appreciated if the person concerned is used to, and prefers, being independent. Attempts to help to wheel a chair user can also be risky for both parties, and help should only be given where it is clearly requested.

GETTING TO CHURCH

Consideration is given to how people get to church. People with disabilities, including those with mental health needs, are among the poorest in our society, and not everyone has a car.

All Saints has a rota of drivers who are willing to give lifts to others in their area, if they know about the need.

For those with disabilities who drive to church, “disabled” car parking is available in the council carpark next to the church. There is also room outside the church if needed but space isn’t marked.

There is level access to the church, clearly signposted, avoiding the steps for wheelchairs and those with visual impairment who might find the steps difficult.

WITHIN THE CHURCH

Wheelchairs – space is allocated in the main body of the church.

Loop System – for those with hearing aids.

Microphones - are used throughout the service and users are encouraged to speak up and speak clearly.

Projector/screen – this is used for some services. Words and images projected onto the screen are clearly displayed, (no text on top of images etc.), and there are also printed copies available for those who prefer them or who cannot see the screen clearly.

Lighting – this has been recently replaced

Toilet – there is a disabled toilet in the St James Rooms, but wheelchair users must go outside to access it. The church is a Grade 1 listed building and we are not allowed to alter floor levels.

Large print – service sheets and pew notices are all available.

Step to the altar – two stewards stand by the step to assist anyone in need. For wheelchair users and any who cannot manage the step the celebrant will take the bread and wine to them.

Assistance dogs are welcome

For the housebound there are pastoral visits including communion.

This policy was adopted at the PCC meeting on...16th March 2021.....

Signed (Vicar of All Saints)

