

# Motorway services access guides take the guesswork out of journey planning

Highways England has partnered with AccessAble, the UK's leading provider of detailed accessibility information, to help motorists plan where to stop for a break at any one of the 114 motorway service areas across England, for better, safer journeys.

For many years, disabled people and carers using AccessAble have said how much they would value having access guides for motorway services, and what a difference comprehensive accessibility information would make to planning a trip.

The new guides, available online or via the free AccessAble app, are 100 per cent facts, figures, and photographs to help motorists plan their visit. They cover key areas including parking, toilets, petrol stations, shops, and restaurants, with detailed information on everything from staff training and hearing loops, to walking distances and Changing Places.

In addition, the two organisations have worked together to create virtual route guides. This new type of guide, which uses 360-degree imagery, will enable visitors to 'virtually' explore routes to key facilities like accessible toilets and Changing Places, so they can find out exactly what to expect when they arrive.

Highways England encourages everyone to plan their journeys before setting off and for some people this isn't as easy as for others. With disabled drivers representing five per cent of the driving population, the access guides are one of many new services Highways England is introducing to break down barriers and help people reliably plan and feel confident about their journeys.

Highways England Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager, Julian Horsler, said:

We're committed to ensuring our disabled customers can travel safely on our roads. We're making good progress to ensure our roads and services are more accessible and inclusive, and there's lots more to do.

Whatever the nature of your disability, the access guides for motorway service areas take the guesswork out of journey planning, giving you the information you need about facilities along your route.

Lucy Wood, also known as 'The Four-Wheeled Wonder Woman' visited the Roadchef services in Norton Canes to test out the access guides.

Dr Gregory Burke, Founder and Chair of AccessAble, said:

We're delighted to partner with Highways England on this ground-breaking initiative to deliver a world class standard of access information across England's motorway service area network.

It's clear that Highways England share our commitment to user-led service development and improving access and customer experience for the UK's 18 million disabled people and carers.

"The new access guides will not only give people all the information they need to plan a trip but also support Highways England and motorway service operators to see how facilities could be improved in the future."

Disability blogger and National Diversity Awards finalist, Kerry Thompson (pictured) shares her thoughts about the access guides [in this video](#).

In a joint statement, motorway service area operators said:

We have a mutual interest to improve the journey experience for all of our customers and remain passionate about helping customers who have accessibility requirements when visiting our facilities.

The access guides are key to achieving that. We've been delighted to work with Highways England and AccessAble to create a collaborative platform to allow us to engage with diverse customers and communities and further improve access for all.

Anthony Smith, chief executive of transport watchdog Transport Focus, said:

We know from our research looking at the experiences of disabled road users that journey planning is key. We're pleased to see the recommendations we made to Highways England result in this initiative.

These guides will mean road users can plan their journeys with greater confidence and help make England's motorway network more accessible.

All Access Guides are available free of charge on the [AccessAble website](#) and on the AccessAble App.

## **General enquiries**

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact

centre on 0300 123 5000.

## **Media enquiries**

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.