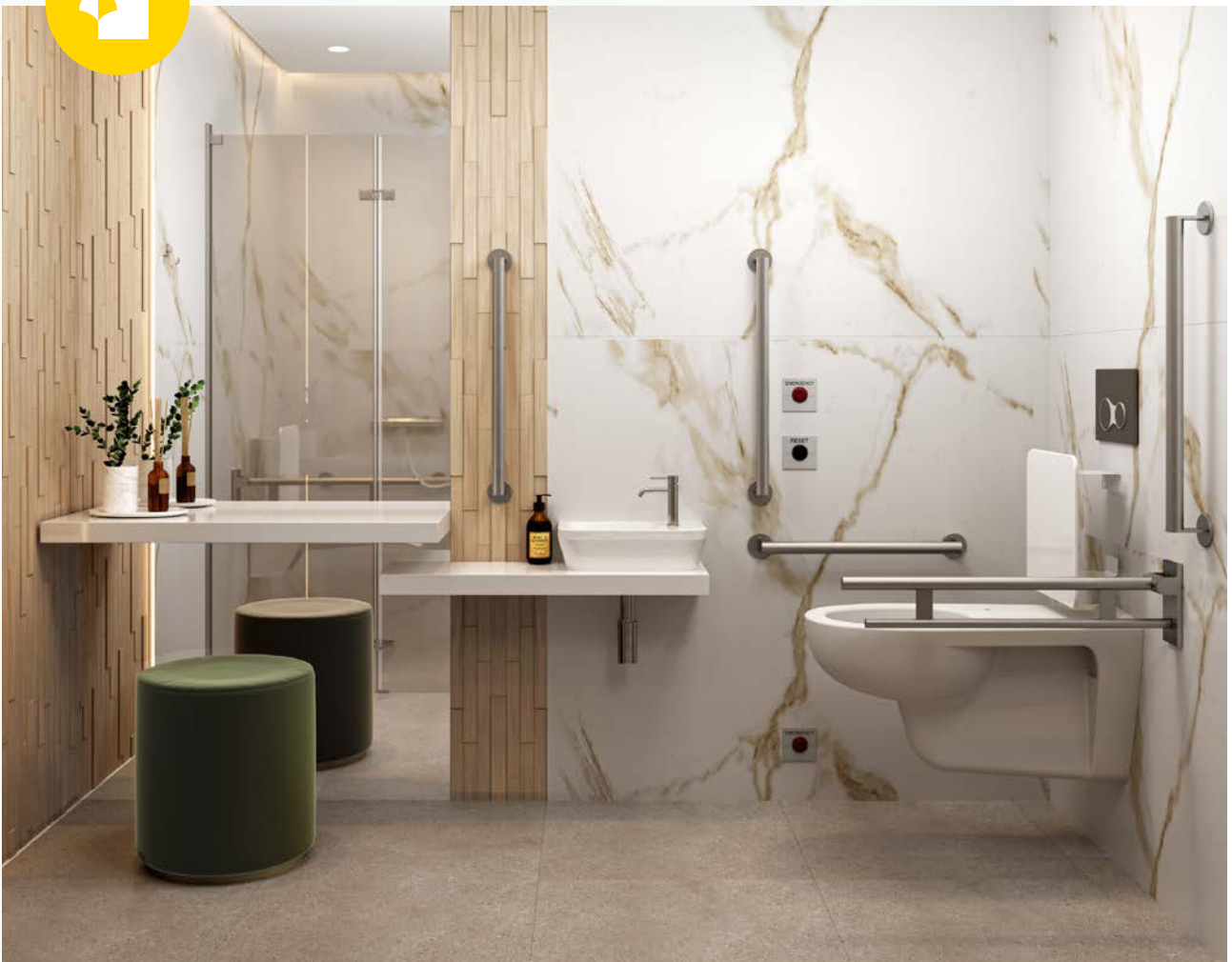


# Designing Stylish Accessible Toilets



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# Foreword

Traditionally, commercial wheelchair accessible facilities have tended to look second best in their design. This results in clinical spaces that jar with the otherwise beautiful interiors of a public building, restaurant, or office block, and is a missed opportunity for organisations to significantly improve the quality of the user experience and sense of inclusion for disabled people.

Over the last 10 years Motionspot has worked with hundreds of progressive businesses to create design-led wheelchair accessible toilets that are as stylish as the rest of the building. We also encourage our clients – whether they are architects, interior designers, surveyors, construction companies, facilities managers, or business owners – to design for the myriad of physical, sensory, and cognitive needs of the 92% of disabled people<sup>1</sup> who are not wheelchair users. Plus, the UK's aging population means that there are an increasing number of people living with conditions such as dementia and changes to eyesight and perception, that need to be considered as part of the design process.

We hope this document will inspire you to create your own stylish accessible toilet facilities.



**Rebecca Hillier**  
Senior Key Account Manager

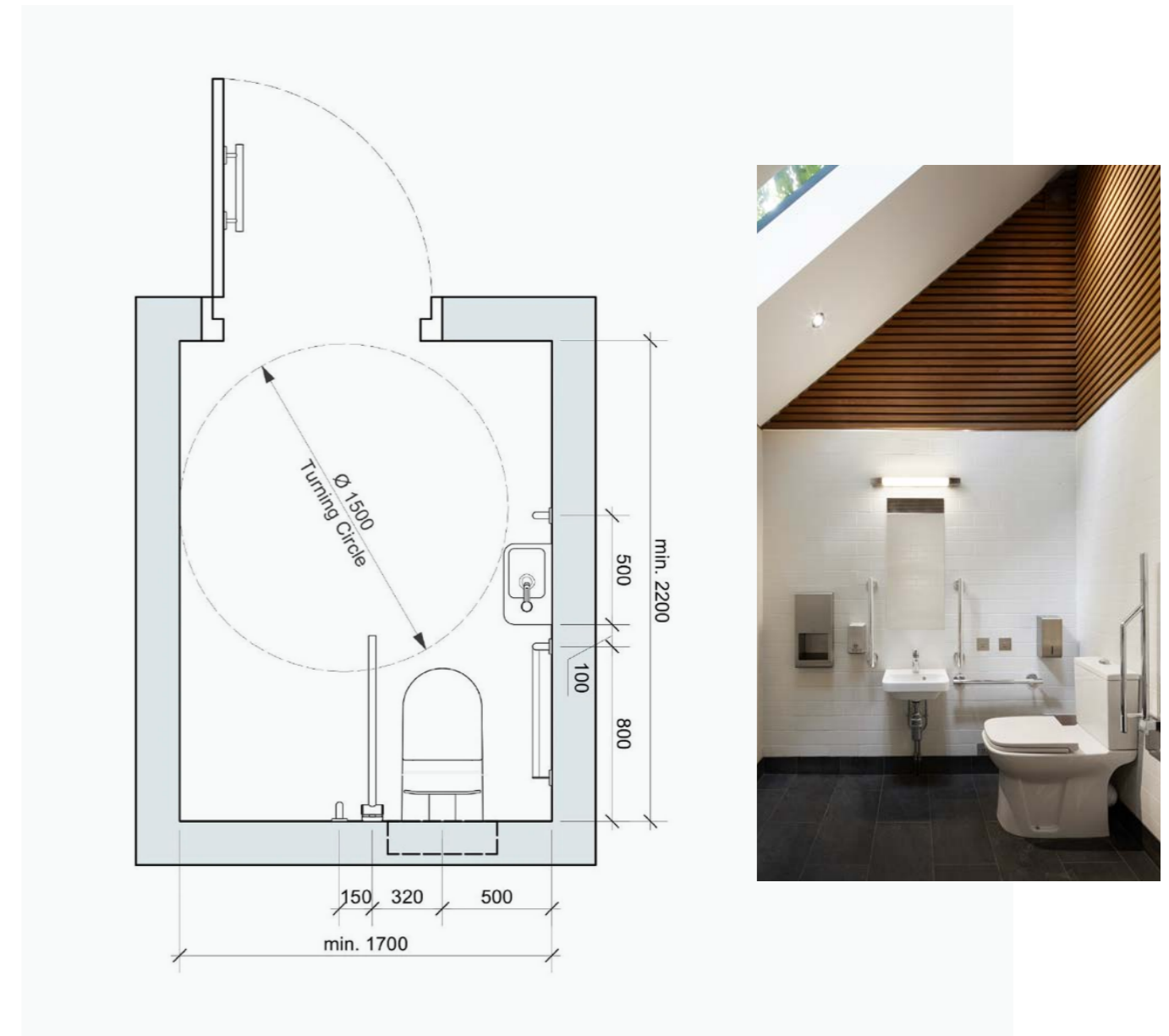
1. Source: CSR Europe, 'Disability: facts and figures' 2007

## One.

# What makes an Accessible Toilet?

All commercial buildings are legally required to adhere to Document M or 'Doc M' building regulations, meaning that everyone can easily access that building including its toilet facilities. Doc M accessible toilets should include an outward opening door, 1,500mm turning circle of clear floor space, strategically selected and positioned fixtures and finishing touches including a full length mirror, and clothes hooks at two heights.

The British Standards Institute's BS 8300 best practice guidelines for designing accessible and inclusive environments go above and beyond the legal requirements outlined in Doc M and strive to improve accessible design into mainstream design, rather than having specific features and facilities designated as 'accessible'.



## Two.

# Wheelchair Accessible Toilet Essentials – In detail

### Grab Rails

There should be a systematic approach to the placement of supportive wall fixed and hinged grab rails around the toilet and basin. These should be based on common physiological strengths, weaknesses and how someone would typically use the space, both with and without the support of a carer. Motionspot offers wall fixed 400mm and 600mm grab rails and an 850mm hinged option. See [here](#). Supports should be easy to see and clearly contrast with the wall finish.



### Toilets

When space allows, the presence of separate toilet cubicles, clearly signed as either right or left-handed transfer is recommended. Where there is only space for a single cubicle, a right-handed solution is more universal as this is the statistically dominant side for strength and mobility.

A toilet should have a projection of 700mm-750mm and be positioned at a height of 480mm to the top of the seat to allow for wheelchair transfers. When using a concealed cistern, a sleek and subtle backrest which provides trunk support is required. An easy to reach and easy-to-use flush plate is also a must. See [here](#).



### Basins

Hand rinse basins should be positioned 140-160mm from the toilet edge and at a rim height of 720-740mm so that they can be easily reached whilst on the toilet. To avoid creating a barrier, the basin should not project more than 250mm in front of the toilet, which is why smaller handrinse models are used in this location with taps positioned on the near side of the toilet. See Motionspot's range of basins [here](#).

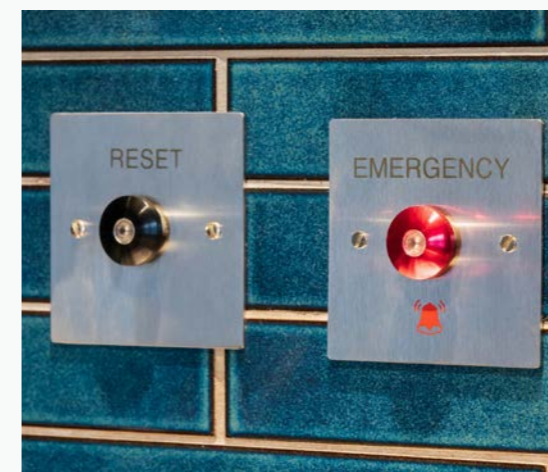
A second full-size basin is not technically a requirement, but is often incorporated, especially in hotel bathrooms where it is beneficial to have a larger basin bowl for personal hygiene tasks. They must have 700mm clearance underneath. Wall mounted basins are often chosen to accommodate this, and ideally there should be space to rest elbows on either side and in-built handgrips for additional support as can be seen [here](#).

### Taps

Taps should be easy-to-use with a palm or clenched fist and require only a quarter turn to operate. The temperature markings should be easy to identify and easily controlled to avoid the risk of scalding. A thermostatic mixing valve (TMV) is recommended to limit the water temperature to 43 degrees. If a mixer tap is not possible, ensure individual lever taps are clearly marked with hot and cold. Motionspot's taps, bottle traps and click clack basin wastes come in a choice of matt black, chrome and satin steel finishes. See [here](#). Sensor taps may be beneficial to people with limited hand function. If used, they should be positioned in-line with the waterspout so that use is intuitive.



### Emergency Push Button Alarms



Traditional emergency pull-cord alarms are often tied up out of reach of wheelchair users or people of short stature, which could result in a serious problem for someone in an emergency. They can also be pulled by accident when mistaken for a light switch, plus they are extremely difficult to clean. A push button alarm system is a good alternative to the pull cord. Motionspot manufactures a BS 8300 compliant push-button call alarm, mounted on a stainless-steel plate. It is waterproof, features a simple, illuminated activation-in-emergency button which can be depressed with a palm, elbow, or other body part. It is also waterproof so can be positioned in the shower, and the buttons are available in different finishes including satin steel and matt black. See [here](#).

### Three • Wheelchair Accessible Toilet Essentials – An overview



Easy-to-use taps

Basin with  
knee-clearance

Floor-wall  
contrast



Emergency  
push button  
alarms

Wall mounted  
grab rails

Easy-to-use  
flush

Backrest

Long-projection  
toilet

Hinged  
grab rails

**Four.**

# Designing The Small Details

For spaces to be truly inclusive, the full spectrum of disability needs to be considered. This includes mental illness, cognitive, intellectual, and sensory perception disabilities, as well as physical disabilities and those that are invisible and undiagnosed. Design strategies for creating universally accessible toilets include:

### Wayfinding and signage

Directional signage to the facilities throughout the building in mixed-case, sans serif letters that contrast well against their background.



### Entrance doors

Make doors easier to locate by creating visual contrast between doors and their surrounding finishes. Use automatic door systems or lever style handles and locks on lightweight doors that can be operated with a fist or elbow to enable independent use.



### Acoustics

The noise produced by hand dryers can be problematic for people with noise sensitivities. Paper towels are recommended, but if dryers are used, locate them away from entrances and cubicles and reduce their decibel level.



### Visual noise

Avoid overly bold patterns because certain designs distort distance perception and create visual discomfort. Instead choose patterns comprising of calming tones that are similar in Light Reflectance Value (LRV) and avoid closely repeating geometric or stripy shapes.



### Visual contrast

Ensure key surfaces such as walls, floors and ceilings contrast sufficiently with one another so that people can better assess the extent of a space. Note that matt finishes are generally easier to process than gloss.



### Lighting

Good, well distributed lighting with minimal glare helps people to distinguish between features. Always avoid strobe lighting and specify lights and lighting controls that are flicker free. Lighting controlled by timers with extended on-times will allow people to use the space for extended periods with inactivity i.e. without movement.

### Usage instructions

These should be provided for sanitary equipment that is not intuitive to operate, such as hands-free sensors.



### Hooks and shelves

These are important to hold belongings while changing or carrying out hygiene procedures. So that they are reachable from seated and standing positions hook heights should be 1,050mm and 1,400mm and shelves 720mm and 740mm. A colostomy bag shelf beside a toilet should be positioned at 850mm above the floor.

### Mirrors

These should be positioned so that someone seated or of short stature can see their face as well as a standing taller person.

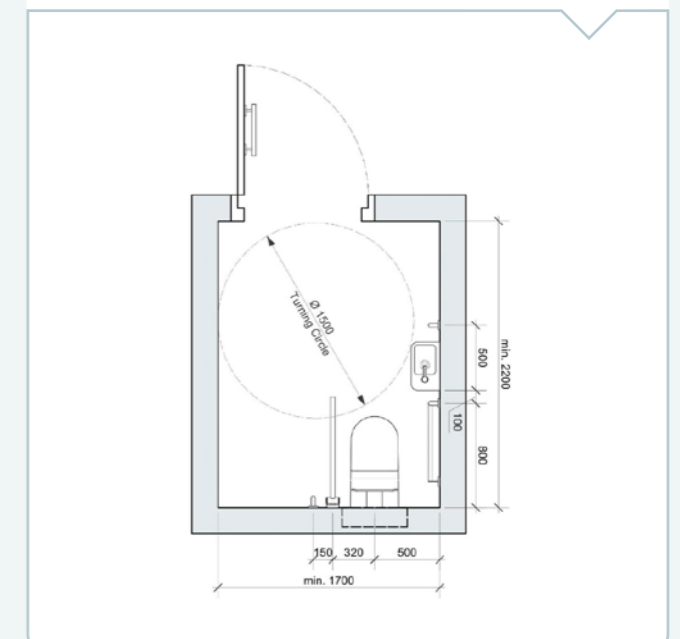


### Sense of security

This can be achieved by adequate separation between cubicles, solid full-length doors with robust privacy locks with emergency release, and emergency alarms that are both audible and visible.

### Space

Optimum facilities for neurodivergent groups including those with proprioception, dexterity, and coordination differences will have more clear space to move around in.



## Five •

# How to Create Beautifully Accessible Toilet Facilities


To discuss your requirements, the Motionspot team can review plans, offer recommendations, and put together tailored specifications that meet your specific design intent. Motionspot has also developed a range of design-led 'Doc M' product packs which come in a range of finishes, are supplied with technical drawings specifying layout and fixing positions in accordance with Part M requirements, and are delivered direct to site for easy installation.


Additionally, if you would like to improve the understanding of your team, Motionspot runs CPDs providing valuable inclusive design insights, overviews of access regulations, best practice guidelines, real-life examples and much more.

Speak to one of Motionspot's access experts to discuss your requirements or book a CPD by emailing [team@motionspot.co.uk](mailto:team@motionspot.co.uk) or calling [020 3735 5139](tel:02037355139).

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