

# Go somewhere new on Disabled Access Day



Disabled Access Day, the annual national initiative created to raise awareness of the importance of disabled access, will be back for the second time on 12 March 2016.

The event aims to encourage disabled people, their friends and families to visit somewhere new and over 50 venues across the UK, including Westminster Abbey, Tate Modern and The Scottish Parliament, have already signed up with almost six months still to go until the day.

A launch event was held earlier this week at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh with Maureen Watt MSP, Minister for Public Health, in attendance. This marked the beginning of the lead up to the second annual event, building on the 2015 result when over 200 companies and venues took part, including VisitScotland, BT, Caffè Nero, Caffé Concerto and Barclays. The events attracted over 1,000 disabled people and their families, friends and carers.

An overwhelming 94% of disabled people would revisit a venue that has good accessibility, according to a survey carried out by Euan's Guide the main sponsors of Disabled Access Day. With the UK's 12 million disabled people estimated to have a combined spending power of over £200 billion, venues with poor disabled access or information are potentially missing out on gaining a significant amount of revenue.



Venues can take part in the 2016 event by hosting an event or simply opening their doors to show that they welcome disabled visitors and their friends and families. Whether it is a

cinema, hotel or visitor attraction, there are plenty of ways for businesses to get involved. For further information on how to get involved, please visit: <http://www.disabledaccessday.com/get-involved/>

Fergus Ewing MSP, Minister for Business Energy and Tourism, said: "The Scottish Government remains fully committed to ensuring that everyone should have a chance to enjoy all that Scotland has to offer. That is why I am delighted about the launch of Disabled Access Day – an initiative that continues to position Scotland as a country with world-class tourism facilities, offering more choice as well as excellent customer service.

"Last week I announced that the Scottish Government is providing VisitScotland with a further £38,000 to boost the engagement of disabled and older people in the Year of Innovation, Architecture and Design. These funds will support a series of new and enhanced partner projects, each of which will contribute to the wider Accessible Tourism Drive, contributing to the Innovation and Architecture themes of the 2016 year and creating a legacy whose benefits will be felt well into the future as the accessible tourism project rolls-out."

Simon Milne MBE, Regius Keeper of the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, said: "As the number of visitors to our Gardens continues to grow, we are committed to offering the very best welcome to everyone, no matter what their specific needs. Disabled Access Day is a great opportunity for us to invite even more people to visit us and it's an honour for us to be hosting the flagship event in Scotland."

Chris McCoy, Head of VisitScotland's Accessible Tourism Programme, said: "We are delighted to lend our support to next year's Disabled Access Day as part of our ongoing Accessible Tourism Programme. I would encourage businesses to sign up to take part as we look to make this country a fully accessible

destination. Earlier this year, we worked in partnership with the Royal Yacht Britannia and a number of assistance dog charities to demonstrate the invaluable support these amazing animals provide, and we are looking forward to supporting an equally successful event at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh next March.”

A spokesperson for Caffè Nero, said: “Following the success of Disabled Access Day earlier this year, Caffè Nero is delighted to once again be a part of the national initiative created to raise awareness of the importance of disabled access. We welcomed the feedback received last year which highlighted our stores that have great accessibility, along with the stores where change was required to improve. We took on board all of the response we received last year and we now look forward to seeing lots of new visitors in conjunction with Disabled Access Day in March 2016!”

Euan MacDonald, co-founder of the disabled access reviews website, [EuansGuide.com](http://EuansGuide.com), the main sponsor of Disabled Access Day said, “The success of last year’s event has given us a firm foundation to build on. Not only are we raising awareness of disabled access, but also showcasing the venues with good accessibility and highlighting the commercial value held by the UK’s 12 million disabled people and their family, friends and carers.”

For more information on Disabled Action Day, please visit: [www.disabledaccessday.com](http://www.disabledaccessday.com)

Photos courtesy of RGBE and Disabled Access Day.