

Tips for creating an inclusive hotel experience

Hotels staff typically pride on creating a pleasing experience for guests. These tips can support you in creating a more inclusive customer service experience for guests who are blind or have low vision.

Hotel reception

Getting to reception

- If a guest is in the foyer and appears to be lost, check if they need assistance. State your name and position when approaching them.
- Some guests may let you know before arriving at the hotel that they are blind or have low vision. If so, be vigilant and check if they require assistance upon arrival.

On arrival at reception

- Avoid requesting a driver's licence as part of any security checks. The guest should be able to provide other forms of ID.
- Guests can provide their signature for any paperwork. As the paperwork is inaccessible, check if the guest is okay with having your hand guide their index finger to the signature spot.

Room key card

Key cards are entirely smooth. Therefore, there is no way for a guest who is blind or has low vision to identify which side is correct.

- Speak with the guest about creating a marker on the card to enable them to identify the correct way to use the card. For example, either place tape, cut the edge, or punch a hole in a key corner of the card.

Tip:

To avoid any contact, make a small indent where you would like them to sign. The guest will be able to locate it and sign the paperwork.

Hotel rooms

Getting to the room

For a guest who is blind or has low vision, providing verbal directions and clearly describing the environment is critical.

- Check if the guest would like your assistance to reach their room.
- Use the button selection menu inside the elevator to describe where the guest can find essential parts of the hotel such as their room, reception, the restaurant, and ground floor. For example, 'there are three columns of buttons in the elevator. First, the ground floor button is the middle button. Second, your room is on level seven and this button is three from the top'.

Tip:

The most effective way to reference the elevator buttons is to use the closest corner from the bottom.

Finding the room

Guests require clear verbal descriptions to find their room independently. To support them please:

- Find the closest reference point to their room, such as the end of the corridor. For example, 'your room is four doors from the end of the aisle'.
- Describe any door features, such as where the room number is and where the swipe card goes.



Orientation in the room

For any guest, the room is the key feature of their stay. For one who is blind or has low vision, being comfortable in their space is critical, and employees play a crucial role in creating this experience.

Hotel rooms

Guided room tour

- Offer to show the guest the various areas of their room, such as where they can find the bathroom, fridge, table, refreshments, spare towels, etc. If there is anything hazardous, such as a balcony, please let them know.
- Some guests may prefer to separate their hotel amenities such as soap, shampoo, and conditioner. Check if they'd like any support with arranging these items.
- Offer to demonstrate the room phone and the key buttons to reach support. A key button is 'reception', which is likely the central number the guest will use to access other hotel areas such as restaurant bookings and room service. Be open to the guest using reception for support.

Remember there are so many things for the guest to remember, so a level of understanding goes a long way.

Technology in the room

Touchscreen technology is a significant part of our lives. However, most touchscreen devices have been built without considering the needs of guests who are blind or have low vision and are therefore inaccessible to them. Hotel staff play a key role in supporting guests to understand what technologies are in the room.

- Describe where the heating and cooling is, the current temperature, and where the guest can find the buttons to change the temperature. If the air-con is controlled by a touchscreen interface, offer to put small pieces of tape on the edge of the touchscreen, opposite the buttons for on and off and changing the temperature.
- Offer a basic orientation of the TV remote, such as the buttons for on and off, volume, and channel changes.
- Offer to provide a paper copy of the room service menu if it is usually only available on the in-room TV.



Other information

Guests who have a dog guide

Guests who use a dog guide will be interested to know of any spots their dog can relieve themselves.

Be ready to suggest any patches of grass close to the hotel.



QR codes

QR codes have become part of everyday life. While QR codes are a convenient way for businesses and others to obtain information, they can be challenging for people who are blind or have low vision. Here are some suggestions to offer guests:

- Place the code on a flat surface instead of a vertical surface to check in.
- If the guest prefers to scan the code and would like to know where they can find the code, keep the instructions clear and straightforward.

For example, 'the code is at three o'clock on the desk in front of you'. As the QR code requires exact scanning, check if the customer would like help finding it.

