

Legislative Council Panel on Welfare Services

Equal Opportunities Commission's Formal Investigation Report on Accessibility in Publicly Accessible Premises

Purpose

This paper briefs Members on the Government's response to and follow-up action on the Formal Investigation Report on Accessibility in Publicly Accessible Premises ("EOC Report") released by the Equal Opportunities Commission ("EOC") on 7 June 2010.

Background

2. Under the Disability Discrimination Ordinance (Cap. 487), it is unlawful to discriminate against persons with disabilities in relation to the provision of means of access to any premises that the public is entitled to enter or use. In 2007, EOC commenced a Formal Investigation to examine the progress made on the realisation of a barrier-free environment for persons with disabilities, in particular on accessibility to publicly accessible premises. For the purpose of the investigation, EOC conducted access audits on 60 publicly accessible premises owned or managed by the Hong Kong Housing Society, The Link Management Limited, the Housing Authority ("HA") and eight Government departments, namely Civil Engineering and Development Department ("CEDD"), Department of Health, Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, Government Property Agency, Home Affairs Department, Hongkong Post, Leisure and Cultural Services Department and Transport Department ("TD")

3. The EOC Report has made 23 recommendations on the improvement of accessibility, connectivity and interface with surrounding environment and user-friendly management practices for publicly accessible premises. For details of these recommendations, please see page (vi) to page (x) of the Executive Summary of the EOC Report at **Annex A**.

Task Force Led by Labour and Welfare Bureau ("LWB")

4. To co-ordinate Government's response to, and follow-up action on, the EOC Report, LWB has convened a Task Force comprising representatives of stakeholders within the Government. Membership of the Task Force is at **Annex B**.

5. In drawing up the response to, and follow-up action on, the EOC Report, the Task Force has examined not only the Government and HA premises identified by EOC, but also about 3 900 premises and facilities under the management of Government departments and HA which have a frequent public interface. In addition to the eight Government departments identified in the EOC Report, the Task Force has examined premises managed by six more Government departments, namely the Chief Secretary for Administration's Office, Hong Kong Police Force, Immigration Department, Judiciary, Labour Department and Social Welfare Department. In addition, TD, Highways Department ("HyD") and CEDD have also explored practical ways to improve accessibility of their facilities, including 158 public transport interchanges ("PTI")/Public Light Bus ("PLB") termini, 611 footbridges/subways, 187 public piers/landing steps and roads for persons with disabilities

Major Follow-up Action

6. The Government's response to, and follow-up action on, each of the 23 recommendations in the EOC Report is at **Annex C**. Major follow-up actions are elaborated below.

Retrofitting Programme

7. To draw up the retrofitting programme for upgrading the barrier-free facilities in existing Government premises and facilities, relevant departments have made assessments on premises and facilities under their management which have a frequent public interface on the basis of the latest Design Manual: Barrier-Free Access 2008 published by the Buildings Department which sets out the obligatory design requirements and recommended design requirements for barrier-free access to building. TD, HyD and CEDD will also schedule their programme of providing barrier-free facilities, e.g. tactile guide paths, dropped kerbs, tactile warning strips, etc. for PTI/PLB termini, public piers/landing steps, footbridges/subways and roads to enhance accessibility of persons with disabilities. Having regard to operational requirements, technical feasibility and time required for the retrofitting works, we have worked out a consolidated retrofitting programme for these premises and facilities as follows –

- (a) 3 306 Government premises/facilities (85.1%) will be retrofitted before 30 June 2012;
- (b) 386 Government premises/facilities (9.9%) will have retrofitting works completed by 30 June 2014 having regard to such factors as patronage, extent of improvement works involved, plan for major renovations, operational requirements, technical constraints, etc.; and

- (c) 193 Government premises/facilities (5%) will not be retrofitted because of imminent plan of decommissioning or disposal, e.g. West Wing, Central Government Offices and Murray Building, insurmountable technical constraints, e.g. the Mount Davis Service Reservoir Sitting-out Area located on a slope with a steep and restricted access road, and buildings with structural constraints for the provision of manoeuvring space in corridors for wheelchairs etc.

A breakdown of the number of premises and facilities is at **Enclosure to Annex C**.

8. In tandem, the Housing Department (“HD”) has also devised a retrofitting programme to improve the accessibility of the properties under its management. Most of the improvement works at 155 public rental housing estates (including 43 public transport interchanges managed by HD), 23 commercial centres and 119 carparks will be implemented by 30 June 2012. To strike a balance between the progress of improvement works and service interruption and nuisances to tenants, HD will schedule some of the improvement works for completion by 30 June 2014. To tie in with HD’s lift modernisation programme, a small proportion of improvement works will be completed by 2016-2017.

9. Meanwhile, HyD will also accelerate its retrofitting programme for the provision of barrier-free access (lift or ramp) at public footbridges and subways without such access or alternative at-grade crossings, where technically feasible. Up to now, out of a total of 283 such facilities, HyD has completed investigation of 123 facilities, of which 67 were found feasible for lift/ramp retrofitting works. The retrofitting works for 22 have been completed so far and the remaining will be completed by phases before 2016. As regards the remaining 160 footbridges and subways to be studied, with the experience gained in the first phase of the programme, HyD has recently commenced investigation of all items. In order to further shorten the time of project delivery, it is also actively considering the feasibility of taking forward the retrofitting works for all feasible items in batches, with a view to completing the majority by around 2016-17 and the remaining (e.g. those involving public objections or are technically complex) by around 2017-18. If this course of action is found feasible, the Administration will consult the Legislative Council (LegCo) on the detailed programme and seek funding approval from LegCo as soon as practicable.

Appointment of Access Co-ordinators and Access Officers

10. Similar to the appointment of Green Managers and Gender Focal Points in individual bureaux and departments, an Access Co-ordinator to co-ordinate accessibility issues will be designated within individual bureau or department. In addition, an Access Officer will be appointed for each venue to –

- (a) conduct regular audit checks and take timely follow-up action as required to ensure the provision of suitable barrier-free facilities without undue alterations or obstructions to the barrier-free access;
- (b) offer assistance to persons with disabilities in access to the venue and using the services and facilities therein;
- (c) serve as the first point of contact on accessibility issues at the venue;
- (d) make recommendations to Departmental Access Co-ordinator on improvements of barrier-free access and assistance rendered to persons with disabilities at the venue;
- (e) make available information to persons with disabilities about the accessibility of the venue, e.g. on website and/or displaying suitable notices in the venue;
- (f) review operational practice and procedure periodically for emergency evacuation of persons with disabilities from the venue under his/her management;
- (g) handle public enquiries and complaints regarding accessibility issues for the venue; and
- (h) provide suitable guidance to venue staff and raise their awareness on accessibility issues.

The Access Co-ordinator will be responsible for co-ordinating the appointment of, and provision of suitable training and guidance for, their departmental Access Officers.

11. In collaboration with EOC and the Civil Service Training and Development Institute (“CSTDI”), the Task Force will co-ordinate training on accessibility issues to Access Co-ordinators. To raise staff awareness and understanding of accessibility issues, persons with disabilities will be invited

to share their needs and difficulties in access to Government premises and facilities and their suggestions for improvements at workshops and seminars. At the departmental level, Access Co-ordinators will arrange suitable training for their Access Officers, in collaboration with EOC and CSTDI as appropriate. Such training will cover practical guidance on handling accessibility issues, assistance to persons with disabilities having regard to the operational circumstances of individual departments and venues, and proper ways to help persons with disabilities to evacuate from the venue in case of emergency.

12. The mechanism for the appointment of Access Co-ordinators and Access Officers will be promulgated by a circular by the end of 2010. Individual bureaux and departments will issue departmental circulars to set out the related arrangements in their bureaux and departments.

Way Forward

13. It is the Government's established policy objective to provide a barrier-free environment for persons with disabilities with a view to enabling them to access to premises and make use of the facilities on an equal basis with others, thereby facilitating them to live independently and integrate into society. We will take forward the retrofitting programmes and other initiatives as set out in **Annex C** and will continue to work closely with EOC, the Rehabilitation Advisory Committee, the rehabilitation sector and the community in building towards a barrier-free and inclusive society.

Labour and Welfare Bureau
December 2010

Formal Investigation Report: Accessibility in Publicly Accessible Premises



平等機會委員會
EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES COMMISSION

June 2010

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

1. Since the Government introduced the first Design Manual: Access for the Disabled 1984, significant strides have been made in legislative and administrative measures to improve accessibility to the built environment for persons with disabilities ("PWDs"). Yet in spite of these changes, PWDs continue to face a multitude of physical, attitudinal and operational barriers to gaining access to premises, services and facilities.
2. Using as benchmark the Design Manual: Barrier Free Access 1997 ("DM1997") and Final Draft Design Manual Barrier Free Access, published in 2006 ("FD2006", which substantively became the Design Manual: Barrier Free Access 2008 ("DM2008")), the Equal Opportunities Commission ("EOC") conducted a formal investigation ("FI") to ascertain the status of accessibility in a sample of publicly accessible premises as well as the policies and practices on providing barrier free access by the owners and managers of these premises.

Accessibility: beyond the entrance

3. Accessibility can mean many different things and physical barriers are only the visible obstacles. Full accessibility means an uninterrupted path of travel to or within a building providing access to all required goods, services and facilities. It also means the ease with which the facilities are used and connected. Unfortunately, owners and managers tend to approach accessibility in a fragmented fashion and it is not uncommon to find PWDs able to enter a building but not able to access the amenities inside due to other physical and operational barriers.

Dignified access

4. There is no reference to equal and dignified access in any of the building laws and design manuals. However, the concept of dignity should be understood in the context of universal human rights, which includes the right to non-discrimination. These rights impose the legal standard of minimum protection necessary for human dignity. Article 1 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities makes clear that the purpose of the Convention includes promoting respect for the inherent dignity of PWDs.

Limitations of the Design Manuals 1997 and 2008

5. The DM1997 and DM2008 are issued under the Buildings Ordinance (Cap 123) (“BO”) and are important in providing for minimum standards necessary for a barrier-free environment. However, they also have significant compliance limitations as presently, the provisions of the BO do not apply to buildings belonging to the Government or buildings upon any land that is vested in the Housing Authority (“HA”). This means the BO and its subsidiary legislation, including the design manuals, also do not apply to government and HA buildings.
6. The BO and building regulations have no retrospective effect, which also means the DM1997 and DM2008 do not apply to old buildings and government buildings. Thus, it is difficult in practice to enforce standards in old private buildings, government buildings, or properties once belonged to and now divested from government holdings.

Terms of Reference

7. The FI examined means of access to or use of certain premises owned or managed by the HA, Hong Kong Housing Society (“HKHS”), The Link Management Limited (“The Link”) and various Government departments. It included:
 - a) identifying 60 publicly accessible premises (“Target Premises”);
 - b) identifying the difficulties encountered by PWDs in respect of physical access to and use of related facilities in the Target Premises;
 - c) evaluating whether and how the requirement of non-discriminatory accessibility have been achieved or improved in public buildings;
 - d) identifying the improvement works carried out in 3 public housing estates since the EOC's previous survey conducted in 2000;
 - e) considering how alteration works and changes in policies and practices can improve accessibility; and
 - f) Identifying measures to enhance attitude/mindset of building professionals and the general public in relation to the requirement of providing non-discriminatory access to premises.
8. The list of Target Premises comprised 17 public housing estates; 9 shopping centres

located in public housing estates; 2 car parks located in public housing estates; 5 food markets; 7 library and cultural facilities; 3 community hall/centres; 5 government offices; 5 government clinic and health centres; and 7 leisure and miscellaneous premises of swimming pools, post offices, piers, holiday villages and sports grounds.

Methodology

9. Key activities of the investigation encompassed:

- a) conducting an access audit of Target Premises to examine four aspects of accessibility: physical barriers and compliance level with DM1997, physical barriers and compliance level with FD2006, operational barriers and attitudinal barriers;
- b) eliciting information from the owners and managers of Target Premises to the audit findings as well as on their policies, guidelines and practices in regard to providing barrier free facilities;
- c) holding focus groups discussions;
- d) seeking views and submissions from stakeholders; and
- e) reviewing relevant literature on the subject matter.

Summary of Main Findings

10. At the time of conducting the audit, DM1997 was the prevailing code. FD2006, effectively the draft of DM2008, was an enhancement of DM1997. In this respect, failure to comply with standards laid down in DM1997 would certainly mean non-compliance with DM2008. For ease of demarcation, the EOC had used standards in the DM1997 as reference. The access audit in each category of Target Premises audited found that:

- a) Housing estates – although not directly comparable due to the age of construction, post-1997 estates generally provided better access facilities that complied with the design standards, such as in site entry point and lifts reaching all floors. Notably, post-1997 estates did not outperform older estates across all fronts, such as in the design features of facilities.
- b) Shopping centres in public housing estates – post-1997 centres provided better access facilities with higher compliance level of design standards while pre-1997 centres provided facilities that either partially met the requirements of DM1997

or not at all.

- c) Car parks in public housing estates – the two sites audited provided at least one accessible car parking space located near accessible entrances but neither had installed accessible lifts. Facilities for people with low vision were generally insufficient.
- d) Food markets – post-1997 markets provided better access to facilities such as lifts, toilets, visual fire alarms and Braille tactile layout plans. Notably, none of the post-1997 markets provided all the key access facilities in full compliance with DM1997 (and with DM2008 as well).
- e) Cultural facilities (public libraries, sports stadium, town halls, museums) – all were pre-1997 constructions and none provided all the key access facilities in compliance with DM1997. One museum provided overall the greater range of access facilities that fully complied with DM1997.
- f) Community hall/centres – variations were found in the provision of major access facilities with the oldest site, built in late 1960s, providing the least range of key access provisions.
- g) Government offices – age of construction ranged from mid-1980s to 2000 but an older site provided the highest number of access facilities that fully met DM1997. Operational barriers found were believed to be caused by a lack of maintenance and staff awareness (such as location of tactile guide paths), obstruction to passage, height of facilities, and misuse of accessible toilets and accessible parking spaces.
- h) Government health clinic/centres – age of construction ranged from late 1950s to 2002 but post-1997 sites provided only marginally better access facilities that fully complied with DM1997. Notably, even the newest centre built in 2002 did not provide all key access facilities in full compliance with DM1997.
- i) Leisure and other facilities – the age range and the type of building are by far the greatest in this category with the oldest being a listed heritage building of more than 100 years old and the newest constructed in 2006. Only one sports ground provided fully accessible entrance to the premises while other sites provided entrances that partially met DM1997. The site with buildings of heritage value did not provide any accessible entrances for wheelchair users.
- j) Review of accessible facilities in 3 public rental housing estates surveyed by the EOC in 2000 – only limited improvements were observed in all 3 sites even though some of the requisite improvements would not cause undue hardship, such as signage,

handrails to steps, or voice announcement system for lifts. Age of sites varied from 1970s to 1990s but newer sites provided better access to both premises and facilities therein. Notably, the situation has not improved significantly for persons with hearing and visual impairment or for people with mobility difficulties.

11. Focus Groups

- a) Focus groups were organised comprising persons with mobility difficulties, visual impairment and hearing impairment, who were disproportionately affected by accessibility problems and their views were considered particularly relevant. The information given was largely anecdotal but concurred with the audit results on gaps in provisions of access facilities. Operational and attitudes issues were raised as important components of providing accessible premises.

12. Other findings on operational and attitudinal factors

- a) Operational factors related primarily to policies, procedures and practices that governed the provision of services and facilities. Key operational barriers identified in the audit related mainly to the lack of information on how and where PWDs could get assistance, misuse of facilities, poor consideration of obstructions to accessible routes and use of facilities, lack of maintenance, no formal guidelines and procedures on dealing with emergency evacuation of PWDs, and limited information on accessible facilities for PWDs in printed materials or on the Internet.
- b) The attitudes and awareness of staff who worked in the Target Premises contributed critically to the successful implementation of operational policies, procedures and practices. Interviews conducted with representatives of Target Premises found that while the majority showed a general understanding of the needs of PWDs and knowledge of access facilities in their premises, they and their staff members had not undergone any training on the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Ordinance (“DDO”). It was also found that most representatives did not have a high awareness of the need for training of their staff or on how to evacuate PWDs from their premises in emergencies.

13. Responses from owners and managers of premises

- a) These stakeholders were contacted for their responses to the audit findings as well as information on their organisational policies, guidelines, practices, funding arrangement and technical support in respect of providing and maintaining barrier

- b) In response to the shortfalls identified in the audit, the most common reasons put forward were the age of the building (constructed before the relevant design manual was promulgated), topography, structural constraints and technical difficulties. The problems that were easy to rectify and requiring less resources were dealt with quickly. Structural or technical changes involving more resources were placed under renovation or retrofitting plans but few stakeholders gave time schedules for these improvement works or feasibility studies.
- c) Information from government bureaux and departments indicated a uniform policy to provide a barrier free environment that comprised access to all types of premises, services and facilities. Reference was often made to the standards promulgated in the Building Regulations and design manuals in improving or developing existing facilities.

Conclusion

- 14. Overall, Target Premises built after 1997 provided better physical access and showed higher compliance level with DM1997 and DM2008 although the situation was far from satisfactory. One of the common shortfalls found was non-compliance with the DM1997 and DM2008, which owners and managers attributed to the construction of the premises before the DM1997 was promulgated. In contrast, PWDs believed the insensitivity or indifference of owners and managers to their needs and concerns were also partly to blame for the shortfalls.

Recommendations

Policy recommendations in respect of government

- 1. The Government should:
 - a) Develop an overarching policy on building an inclusive society that adopts the principle of universal design and is connected to the Government's sustainable development and "Care for the Elderly" agendas.
 - b) Develop a corporate disability strategy for addressing accessibility issues in Hong Kong followed by a rolling action plan with time lines and designated funds in budgets to finance capital and improvement works. The Chief Secretary for Administration ("CS") to be responsible for monitoring the implementation of the

action plans.

- c) Set up a high-level central co-ordinating body, headed by the CS, to develop policies and practices on promoting universal access to public spaces, buildings as well as services owned and operated by the government and public bodies.
- d) Amend the Buildings Ordinance (Cap 123) (“BO”) by:
 - (i) removing current exemptions of buildings belonging to the Government or buildings upon any land that is vested in the HA from the provisions of the BO;
 - (ii) codifying “dignified access” by providing exact measurements, size and dimensions to be incorporated into building laws and regulations as well as design manuals and guidelines relating to accessibility.
- e) In the area of research and development:
 - (i) take a lead in working with relevant industry and research institutions on initiating research and development (“R&D”) projects that examine the extensive incorporation of universal design into the design of new buildings;
 - (ii) proactively assess the applicability of technological advancements to addressing accessibility problems in Hong Kong; and
 - (iii) keep abreast with latest accessibility design innovations to identify cost-efficient design solutions to accessibility problems in existing buildings.
- f) Adopt and promote the **best practicable option** rather than most cost-efficient approach in resolving accessibility issues to facilitate independent living of PWDs and provide them with dignified access.
- g) Consider overseas experience in taking steps to harmonise different requirements and standards in various design manuals and the DDO.
- h) Set up a clear access policy and strategy for monuments, historic buildings and heritage sites. Relevant government agencies, such as the Antiquities and Monuments Office and the Tourism Commission, should work in partnership to proactively seek solutions to accessibility problems at these sites.
- i) Develop strategies to prevent or minimise difficulties in compelling private owners and managers to carry out improvement works in future divested premises. Divestment agreement should be transparent and open to the public so that external parties can monitor and review progress.

- j) Be proactive in raising public awareness on disability issues, the needs and experiences of PWDs as well as the concepts of equality, non-discrimination, inclusiveness, acceptance and independent living. These topics should also be covered by General Studies for primary schools and Liberal Studies for secondary schools.

Policy recommendations in respect of other owners and managers

- 2. Owners and managers of premises should:
 - a) Develop a corporate disability strategy for addressing accessibility issues within their purview and devise a rolling action plan for implementation with funds set aside to finance improvement works and disability services.

Operational recommendations in respect of government

- 3. Accessibility issues that could be addressed more promptly by government departments and public bodies without requiring policy changes or incurring significant cost:
 - a) Prior to the setting up of a central co-ordination body and as an interim measure, the government department with the largest area under its management should take a lead in addressing current shortfalls.
 - b) Government departments and public bodies should appoint an “Access Advisor” to provide assistance to PWDs in accessing premises under their ownership and management as well as services and facilities that they provide.
 - c) The Government should issue guidelines that give practical advice to government departments on access to services and facilities for users with disabilities.
 - d) The Government should issue guidelines for other public and private sector owners and managers on:
 - (i) consulting with stakeholders before improvement works are carried out;
 - (ii) conducting impact studies after improvements works are completed;
 - (iii) conducting periodic audits of their own premises and the key issues that need to be included; and
 - (iv) conducting detailed examinations of operational issues with the view of

identifying and eliminating barriers.

- e) The Government should set up a resource centre to provide information and advice to private owners and managers on the standards of design for accessible premises and the built environment.

Operational recommendations in respect of other owners and managers

- 4. Owners and managers are recommended to:
 - a) Conduct periodic audits of their own premises and devise a timetable and action plan for improvement works.
 - b) To address operational and attitudinal issues, provide regular training to staff and contract workers on accessibility issues and the needs of PWDs as well as give information on applicable laws and potential legal liabilities.
 - c) Consult stakeholders before any improvement works are carried out and follow up with impact studies after the works are completed.

Technical recommendations

- 5. Owners and managers should rectify accessibility issues identified in the Audit by taking the following actions:
 - a) Devise a timeframe for rectifying key accessibility problems and a financing plan to identify funds that could be set aside, such as from the capital budget, as well as other possible revenue sources.
 - b) Review and improve access provisions to meet the standards of the latest DM2008 as well as any relevant standards in guidelines published by the Transport Department and Highways Department. Special attention should be given to provisions for people with visual and hearing impairment.
 - c) Include in operational policies as well as regular staff training the procedures and practices for evacuation of PWDs.
- 6. Implement main recommendations for each of the building categories, namely, public housing estates ("PRH"), PRH shopping centres, PRH car parks, food markets, library and cultural facilities, community hall/ centres, government offices, government clinics

and health centres, sports venues, swimming pools and post offices.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 About a quarter of a century ago, the Government introduced the Design Manual: Access for the Disabled 1984, the first set of formal guidelines on the provision of access and facilities to private buildings for persons with mobility disabilities. Since then, this design manual had been twice revised and building regulations amended correspondingly to lay down the minimum accessibility standards for private buildings.

1.2 In 1995, the Government enacted the Disability Discrimination Ordinance (“DDO”), (Cap. 487), to prohibit disability discrimination in various fields including access to premises and access to goods, services and facilities.

1.3 More recently in August 2008, the application of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (“CRPD”) has been extended to Hong Kong by Central Government. This instrument provides comprehensive protection of the rights of persons with disabilities (“PWDs”) and sets out the obligations on States Parties to promote, protect and ensure the rights of PWDs. An important tenet of the CRPD is that States Parties must take steps to create an enabling environment so that PWDs can enjoy real equality in society, such as taking measures to ensure accessibility of the physical environment. In the context of Hong Kong, the government has a duty to implement the provisions of, and promote compliance with, the CRPD.

1.4 In addition to the above, other government departments have also produced working guidelines and research reports focusing on specific aspects of accessibility. For example, the Transport Department (“TD”) published the Transport Planning and Design Manual while the Architectural Services Department (“ASD”) published the Universal Accessibility – Best Practices and Guidelines in 2004. Various studies revealed that external space was the least developed area in the application of accessible design in Hong Kong.

1.5 The combination of minimum accessibility standards, good practice guides as well as legislation prohibiting disability discrimination should form a strong basis for improvements to access facilities. Yet, as evidenced by complaints made to the Equal Opportunities Commission (“EOC”) and issues raised by organisations that represent PWDs, accessibility remain as much a live issue today as it was 25 years ago. Persons with particular types of disabilities, such as locomotor or sensory disabilities, continue to face a multitude of physical, attitudinal and operational barriers to gaining access to premises, services and facilities. Physical barriers continue to exist even in places where measures have seemingly been

taken to improve access features.

1.6 This Formal Investigation (“FI”) set out to gauge the status quo concerning accessibility in a sample of public premises via an audit exercise, which measured the access features against design standards set out in building regulations. It also enquired with owners and managers of these premises to ascertain their current policies and practices in providing barrier free access and their plans on addressing the shortfalls identified in the audit.

1.7 Although accessibility issues will affect PWDs disproportionately, the beneficiaries of barrier-free access are not limited to only those who have need of such facilities. Everyone stands to gain from an environment that is planned according to the general principle of respecting individual human needs, whether the individual has a disability or not.

Terms of Reference

1.8 On 8 December 2006, the EOC announced its intention to conduct an FI under section 66 of the DDO. The investigation examined the means of access to or use of certain premises within housing estates, commercial centres, car parks, buildings and offices built, owned or managed by the Housing Authority, Housing Society, The Link Management Limited and the Government. It made specific reference to the legal requirements of providing accessible facilities to PWDs in a non-discriminatory manner, and to promote equality of opportunity between PWDs and persons without a disability. To this end, the investigation included:

- a) identifying a selection of certain publicly accessible premises for the purposes of the FI (“Target Premises”);
- b) identifying the difficulties encountered by PWDs in respect of physical access to and use of related facilities in the Target Premises;
- c) evaluating whether and how the requirement of non-discriminatory accessibility have been achieved or improved in public buildings/estates where universal design concept has been incorporated in the design;
- d) identifying the improvement works carried out in the Target Premises since the EOC's survey conducted in 2000¹ and, where applicable, the reasons accounting for the failure to effect the recommended improvement works identified in the same project;

¹ The EOC conducted a checkwalk entitled “The Accessibility of People with Disabilities in Public Housing Estates” in 2000.

- e) considering how alteration works and changes in policies and practices can improve accessibility; and
- f) Identifying measures to enhance attitude/mindset of the building professionals; and the general public in relation to the requirement to achieve non-discriminatory access to premises.

1.9 The investigation employed various methods to collect quantitative and qualitative data including an access audit of the Target Premises and invitation of responses from the owners and managers of these premises, focus groups discussion, invitation of views and submission from stakeholders, and a literature review of relevant documentations.

CHAPTER 2 THE ACCESS AUDIT

The Exercise

2.1 The Access Audit (“Audit”) was essentially a fact-finding exercise whereby assessments were made of the accessibility situation in 60 sites (“Target Premises”). The Environmental Advisory Service (“EAS”) of Rehabaid Society was commissioned to conduct the Audit with the following objectives:

- a) to identify and examine the general situation of physical access to and use of related facilities in the Target Premises;
- b) to identify and examine the difficulties encountered by PWDs in respect of physical access as well as access to facilities;
- c) to identify improvement, if any, made in respect of three public housing estates (namely Cheung Ching Estate, Tai Wo Estate and Siu Sai Wan Estate) where EOC had conducted a “check-walk” in 2000; and
- d) to identify ways to improve and eliminate the difficulties identified in the Audit.

Target Premises

2.2 The list of Target Premises for auditing was drawn up by the EOC covering the following categories with the number in each category presented in brackets (see Appendix A for the full list with names of places):

- a) public housing estate (17);
- b) shopping centre located in public housing estate (9);
- c) car park located in public housing estate (2);
- d) food market (5);
- e) library and cultural facilities (7);
- f) community hall / centre (3);
- g) government office (5);
- h) government clinic and health centre (5); and
- i) leisure and other facilities: swimming pool, post office, pier, holiday village and sports ground (7)

2.3 The Target Premises were distributed across Hong Kong with 22 located in the New Territories, 21 in Kowloon, 16 on Hong Kong Island, and one on Lantau Island. A breakdown of the management organisations of these premises is at Table 2a below:

Table 2a: Management organisations of target premises

	Category of Premises	Management organisation	No. of premises managed
a)	Housing estate (17): PRH estate TPS estate TPS estate	HA IO/HA HKHS	13 3 1
b)	Shopping centre within public housing estate (9)	HA The Link	3 6
c)	Car park in public housing estate (2)	The Link	2
d)	Food market (5)	FEHD	5
e)	Library and cultural facilities (7): Library Stadium Town Hall Civic Centre Museum	LCSD LCSD LCSD LCSD LCSD	2 1 1 1 2
f)	Community hall / centre (3)	HAD	3
g)	Government offices (5)	GPA	5
h)	Government clinic and health centre (5)	DH	5
i)	Leisure and Other Facilities (7): Swimming pool Holiday village Sports ground Post office Pier	LCSD LCSD LCSD HKP TD	2 1 1 2 1
Total			60

Table 2a Abbreviations

DH	Department of Health	IO	Incorporated Owners
FEHD	Food and Environmental Hygiene Department	LCSD	Leisure and Cultural Services Department
GPA	Government Property Agency	The Link	The Link Management Limited
HAD	Home Affairs Department	PRH	Public Rental Housing
HA	Hong Kong Housing Authority	TPS	Tenants Purchase Scheme
HKHS	Hong Kong Housing Society	TD	Transport Department

Checklists for the Audit

2.4 The EOC had specified that the researchers conducting the Audit should draw up checklists with reference to:

- a) The Design Manual: Barrier Free Access 1997² (“DM1997”), issued by the Building Authority (“BA”) under the Buildings Ordinance (Cap 123) (“BO”) to provide guidance on barrier-free provisions to practitioners of the construction industry. New buildings and alterations or addition of existing buildings were required to comply with the requirements of the DM1997, unless exempted by BO.
- b) Consultative Study on the review of the DM1997
 - i. At the time of the tendering process for this Audit survey in early 2007, the BA was in the process of consulting the public on the Final Draft Design Manual Barrier Free Access, published in 2006 (FD2006)³. This revision was to enhance design requirements taking into account advancements made in building technology, improvement in quality of life of the general public and increasing community awareness of the needs of PWDs.
 - ii. Although not a final version for gazetting, the EOC was aware the FD2006 was the result of detailed discussions amongst stakeholders. The EOC considered it would be of interest to also survey the Target Premises against key standards in FD2006 to ascertain how these premises fared. It transpired that following the public consultation exercise, only a few minor changes were made to the final Design Manual: Barrier Free Access 2008 (DM2008)⁴ that came into operation on 1 December 2008. The results from this checklist can reasonably be used as references when considering the type of improvements that could be made.
- c) Universal Accessibility: Best Practices and Guidelines, issued by the Architectural Services Department in 2004.

² Available online at www.bd.gov.hk/english/documents/code/e_bfa.htm.

³ Available online at www.legco.gov.hk/yr05-06/english/panels/ws/papers/ws0109cb2-771-3e.pdf

⁴ Available online at www.bd.gov.hk/english/documents/code/e_bfa2008.htm/

- d) Any relevant and updated local and overseas references of the same subject matter, including the views of PWDs.

2.5 Based on the above specification, the EAS developed four checklists that set out to assess the physical, operational and attitudinal barriers in the Target Premises:

- a) Checklist(1) – physical barriers (DM1997): the checkpoints on this list corresponded with the requirements of DM1997.
- b) Checklist(2) – Physical barriers (FD2006): the checkpoints on this list corresponded with the requirements proposed in FD2006, which eventually became DM2008.
- c) Checklist(3) – Operational barriers: the design of this form was based on the experience of EAS with general local and overseas practices in conducting access audit. This checklist aimed at examining the operational barriers that might exist in various aspects of management of facilities and services, such as policies, practices and procedures of the providers (see Appendix B for the checklist).
- d) Checklist(4) – Attitudinal barriers: this was aimed at ascertaining the general awareness of management organisation staff of the needs of PWDs when communicating with and in providing services and facilities to them. Very often, the EOC has found that accessibility problems were created from a lack of awareness of the rights and needs of PWDs rather than a conscious effort to exclude PWDs. Hence, attitude and mindset play an important role in ensuring those responsible for providing accessible premises, services and facilities are aware and sensitive to the needs of PWDs in order to make the changes (see Appendix B for the checklist).

2.6 As regards the areas to be covered in each premises, it was noted that some of the Target Premises varied considerably in usage, design and layout, such as the differences between a food market and a library. However, for consistency reasons, the EOC agreed with the EAS that the Audit could adopt the general approach for accessibility audits, which usually covered the four areas as follows, and randomly select typical physical features for survey:

- a) approach to the site;
- b) access to entrance(s) of the premises;
- c) access to the facilities on the premises that are open to the public; and

d) egress from the premises.

2.7 The dimensional criteria used in the audit were largely based on the requirements in DM1997, which was in force at the time of audit, but reference was also made to FD2006 for requirements that were not provided in DM1997, such as car parks, low level urinals, shower facilities, tactile guide paths, warning strips and so forth.

Applicability of the Requirements in Design Manuals

2.8 It is important to note pursuant to section 41 of the BO, buildings belonging to the Government or buildings upon any land that is vested in the HA are exempted from the provisions of the BO. This means the BO, including its subsidiary legislation and the requirements in the design manuals, do not apply to government and HA buildings. Likewise, the newly operational DM2008, which is based on FD2006, also does not apply to government and HA buildings.

2.9 In the context of this Audit where the majority of the Target Premises belonged to government buildings, they are not subject to the requirements of the DM1997 or DM2008. The exemption notwithstanding, the EOC considers the two design guides and the standards set out therein still serve as useful reference points for the Audit. In any case, the fact that government buildings are exempted does not mean that those premises could not adopt the design standards in the design manuals. Indeed, the audit findings and the responses from government bureaux and departments show that the government's overall policy is to refer to the standards promulgated in Building Regulations and design manuals, such as the DM1997, and adopt these for existing and new facilities

2.10 In regard to divested HA properties that are now owned and managed by The Link, such as car parks and shopping centres located within housing estates, those are now classified as private sector properties.⁵ Likewise, TPS housing estates are considered private sector properties even though HA still retains a share of ownership in those estates.

2.11 As stated earlier, private buildings and private building works come within the purview of the BO, including related regulations and design manuals. This means existing properties owned by The Link and TPS housing estates are subject to the BO except that the BO has no retrospective effect. Hence, only structural alterations or additions made to existing buildings, change of use of building, or new building works would be subject to the

⁵ See paragraph 1.3 of Technical Notes issued by Rating and Valuation Department (www.rvd.gov.hk/en/doc/statistics/15_technotes.pdf)

BO. Ordinarily, the building plans for such works would be submitted to the BA for approval. In respect of properties owned by The Link and TPS housing estates, the BA has delegated its power to the HA to approve building plans for substantial construction and alteration works. These building plans are audited by the Independent Checking Unit (ICU) of the HA to ensure compliance with the BO before approval.

2.12 Some alteration and additional works do not require approval from the HA if these are minor in nature and do not involve the structure of the building. For example, the construction of a ramp or tactile guide path does not require any approval from HA, which also means the HA will not be able to ensure those facilities are constructed in compliance with the BO and standards laid down in the design manuals.

Applicability of the Provisions of the Disability Discrimination Ordinance

2.13 The Disability Discrimination Ordinance, (Cap. 487) (“DDO”), provides that it is unlawful to discriminate on the ground of disability in providing access to or use of premises that the public, or a section of the public, can enter or use. The DDO applies to both public and private sector buildings.

2.14 The DDO has no retrospective effect but if the provision of access presently operates to discriminate against PWDs on the ground of disability, the DDO can still apply to buildings that were constructed before the DDO took effect in 1996 or to buildings that have been approved by the BA.

Fieldwork

2.15 The EAS visited the Target Premises between June 2007 and February 2008 to conduct the site surveys.

2.16 Each audit report recorded the current situation with regard to specific physical elements, noting problems and suggesting recommendations on improving access and usability. In general, only those items that have fallen below an acceptable standard and/or in contravention with the current relevant building obligatory requirements were noted in the reports.

2.17 During each site survey, the EAS interviewed representatives of the Target Premises in order to identify any operational and attitudinal barriers in the provision and management of services and facilities.

2.18 An individual report was prepared for each site surveyed and before finalisation, the findings of the audit were given to specific groups for feedback. These groups, representing persons with visual impairment and mobility difficulties, provided comments on gaining access and using the Target Premises and related facilities. Their comments were then reviewed and verified on site as necessary for incorporation in the access audit report.

2.19 A final audit report was compiled summarising the key findings from the inspections of the 60 Target Premises.

Information and Comments from Owners and Managers of Premises

2.20 As stated in earlier paragraphs, the EOC believed it was important to involve the owners and managers of the audited premises and listen to their views on the accessibility situation in premises under their management. To this end, the EOC contacted these stakeholders during the auditing process to seek information on their policies, guidelines and practices in regard to providing barrier free facilities. After the EAS completed its audit and submitted the reports on individual sites, the EOC wrote to the owners and/ or managers of the Target Premises as well as Government Bureaux with copies of the relevant audit reports to seek their comments and views as follows:

- a) comment on any identified shortfalls against the standards in DM1997 and/or FD2006;
- b) any immediate or future plans to improve current shortfalls in standards based on the revised standards set out in the new DM2008;
- c) in respect of facilities that currently met the standards in DM1997, any plans to improve these by raising the standards to those set out in DM2008;
- d) any limitations that restricted improvements in individual sites; and
- e) any staff training programmes in place to ensure facilities were not misused.

2.21 All the stakeholders responded to the EOC and these are presented in chapter 16.

CHAPTER 3 INTRODUCTION TO THE ACCESS AUDIT FINDINGS

Definition of Assessment Notations and Symbols

3.1 The data collected in the audit is statistically analysed. In order to present the general situation of accessibility in the premises surveyed, major access provisions under the design manuals were selected to produce illustrative and quantitative comparison among premises visited within the same category as summarised in Table 3a below.

Table 3a: Major access provisions under the design manuals in each category of premises

		Housing Estate	Shopping Centre	Car Park	Food Market	Cultural Facilities	Community Hall/Centre	Government Offices	Health Centre	Leisure/ Others
1	Accessible site entry point/ entrance	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
2	Accessible flat units	○								
3	Accessible lift	○	○	○	○	○	○*	○	○	○*
4	Accessible toilet		○		○	○	○	○*	○	○*
5	Accessible parking space	○	○	○				○*		○*
6	Accessible service ¹ counter		○	○ ¹		○	○		○	○*
7	Visual fire alarm		○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
8	Adequate accessible signs ²	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
9	Tactile guide path		○			○	○	○ ³	○	○*
10	Braille tactile layout plan ⁴		○		○	○	○			○*
11	Assistive listening system					○	○		○	
12	Accessible common areas ⁵	○	○		○	○	○	○	○	○
13	Accessible seating space					○*				○*
14	Accessible aisles				○					
15	Visual display board								○	
16	Accessible Pool									○*

Note to Table 3a

*If applicable

¹ Although accessible service counter is not a requirement for car parks in DM1997, FD2006 and DM2008, it is considered desirable for car parks to have shroff counters that are user friendly to drivers with disabilities.

² Provision of signs is considered adequate when assessed against the obligatory requirements in DM1997 and DM2008.

³ FD2006 and DM2008 do not require offices to install tactile guide path but it is considered necessary for government offices due to the high frequency of visits by the public.

⁴ Provision of Braille tactile layout plan when layout plan for the use of the public is provided.

⁵ Provision of access to common areas in buildings/facilities is important, as it enables PWDs to move around the premises unhindered and gain physical access to services and facilities available in the premises.

3.2 Based on Table 3a, each Target Premises was assessed against the availability of major access provisions and whether these helped in practice to provide access to PWDs. The assessment of each category of premises is set up in tabular format, accompanied by pie chart illustration, where the symbol 'Y' denotes a particular major provision has been provided, 'P' denotes the major provision is partially provided and 'N' denotes no major provision has been provided. Bar charts are provided at the end of each category of premises to show the performance in terms of access provisions for premises built before and after 1997. Table 3b below shows the definition of assessment notations in each major assess provision.

Table 3b: Definition of assessment notations

	Major Access Provisions		Definition of notations
1	Accessible site entry point/ entrance	Housing Estates	Y – at least one accessible site entry point provided and such path/ramp/dropped kerb complied with obligatory requirements of DM1997 and DM2008 (road/ street excluded) P – at least one accessible site entry point provided but such path/ramp/dropped kerb did not fully comply with obligatory requirements of DM1997 and DM2008 (road/ street excluded) N – no accessible site entry point provided (road/street excluded)
		Other premises (excl. housing estates)	Y – at least one building entrance point provided and such path/ramp/dropped kerb complied with obligatory requirements of DM1997 and DM2008 P – at least one building entrance point provided but such path/ramp/dropped kerb did not fully comply with obligatory requirements of DM1997 and DM2008 N – no accessible building entrance point provided

2	Accessible flat units (Housing Estates only)		Y – all flat entrances complied with obligatory requirements of DM1997 and DM2008 P – part of the flat entrances complied with obligatory requirements of DM1997 and DM2008 N – none of the flat entrances complied with obligatory requirements of DM1997 and DM2008
3	Accessible lift	Housing Estates (lift service to all floors)	Y ^{HE} – all residential floors served by at least one lift P ^{HE} – part of the residential floors and/ or towers served by at least one lift N ^{HE} – no lift facility provided
		All premises (design features of lifts)	Y – at least one accessible lift provided and the design features complied with obligatory requirements of DM1997 and DM2008 P – at least one accessible lift provided but design features did not fully comply with obligatory requirements of DM1997 and DM2008 N – no lift facility provided
4	Accessible toilet		Y – facility provided and it complied with obligatory requirements of DM1997 and DM2008 P – facility provided but it did not fully comply with obligatory requirements of DM1997 and DM2008 N – no facility provided and DM2008
5	Accessible parking space		Y – facility provided and it complied with obligatory requirements of DM1997 as well as the dimensional criteria in DM2008 P – facility provided but not accessible by wheelchair users (based on dimensional criteria reference in DM2008) N – no facility provided
6	Accessible service counter		Y – facility provided and it complied with obligatory height requirements of DM1997 and DM2008 P – facility provided but it did not comply with obligatory requirements of DM1997 and DM2008 N – no facility provided
7	Visual fire alarm		Y – facility provided and it complied with obligatory requirements of DM1997 and DM2008 P – facility provided but it did not fully comply with DM1997 and DM2008 N – no facility provided and DM2008
8	Adequate accessible signs		Y – signs provided and complied with obligatory requirements of DM1997 and DM2008

		P – signs provided but not fully compliant with obligatory requirements of DM1997 and DM2008 N – no signs provided
9	Tactile guide path	Y – facility provided and it complied with obligatory requirements of DM1997 and DM2008 P – facility provided but it did not fully comply with obligatory requirements of DM1997 and DM2008 N – no facility provided
10	Braille tactile layout plan	Y – facility provided and it complied with obligatory requirements of DM1997 and DM2008 P – facility provided but it did not fully comply with obligatory requirements of DM1997 and DM2008 N – no facility provided
11	Assistive listening system	Y – facility provided and it complied with obligatory requirements of DM1997 and DM2008 P – facility provided but it did not fully comply with obligatory requirements of DM1997 and DM2008 N – no facility provided
12	Accessible common areas	Y – all of the public areas accessible by PWDs P – part of the public areas accessible by PWDs N – none of the public areas accessible by PWDs
13	Accessible seating space	Y – facility provided and it complied with obligatory requirements of DM1997 and DM2008 P – facility provided but it did not comply with obligatory requirements of DM1997 and DM2008 N – no facility provided
14	Accessible aisles	Y – all aisles in food market accessible PWDs (i.e. clearance of 750mm width was provided) P – part of the aisles in food market accessible by PWDs
15	Visual display board	Y – facility provided N – no facility provided
16	Accessible pool	1(1) – number of accessible pool (total number of pool)

Legend:

Y – Provision provided in full compliance with DM1997 and DM2008

P – Provision provided that partially complied with DM1997 and DM2008

N – No such facility provided at all against DM1997 and DM2008

N/A – Provision not required under DM1997 and DM2008

3.3 It is noteworthy that of the 60 sites audited the majority was built before the introduction of DM1997. Table 3c below provides a breakdown of the 60 audited premises by the age of the premises and their corresponding owner and/or managers.

Table 3c: Breakdown of premises by age of premises and corresponding owners/managers

No	Name of Premises	Type of Premises	Year Built	Owner/Manager
1	Wah Fu (I)	PRH Estate	1967	HA
2	Oi Man	PRH Estate	1974	HA
3	Cheung Ching	PRH Estate	1977	HA
4	Wo Che	PRH Estate	1977	HA
5	Yue Wan	PRH Estate	1977	HA
6	Tai Hing	PRH Estate	1977-80	HA
7	Pak Tin	PRH Estate	1978	HA
8	Kai Yip	PRH Estate	1981-83	HA
9	Tung Tau (II)	TPS Estate	1982	HKHS
10	Siu Sai Wan	PRH Estate	1987-97	HA
11	Yiu On	TPS Estate	1988	HA/IO
12	Tai Wo	TPS Estate	1989	HA/IO
13	Kwai Hing	TPS Estate	1991	HA/IO
14	Tsz Lok	PRH Estate	1995	HA
15	Fu Tung	PRH Estate	1997	HA
16	Tin Yuet	PRH Estate	2000-02	HA
17	Hoi Lai	PRH Estate	2004	HA
18	Oi Man	Shopping Centre	1975	The Link
19	Tai Hing	Shopping Centre	1977	The Link
20	Cheung Ching*	Shopping Centre	1978	HA
21	Pak Tin*	Shopping Centre	1979	HA
22	Siu Sai Wan	Shopping Centre	1989	The Link
23	Tai Wo	Shopping Centre	1989	The Link
24	Fu Tung	Shopping Centre	1997	The Link
25	Tsz Wan Shan	Shopping Centre	1997	The Link
26	Hoi Lai*	Shopping Centre	2005	HA
27	Kwai Hing Estate	Car Park	1991	The Link
28	Tsz Lok Estate	Car Park	1995/6	The Link
29	Bowrington Road Market	Food Market	1979	FEHD
30	To Kwa Wan Market	Food Market	1985	FEHD
31	Sai Ying Pun Market	Food Market	1999	FEHD
32	Luen Wo Hui Market	Food Market	2002	FEHD
33	Tai Kok Tsui Market	Food Market	2005	FEHD
34	Lek Yuen Public Library	Library	1977	LCSD
35	Tai Hing Public Library	Library	1978	LCSD
36	Queen Elizabeth Stadium	Sports Stadium	1980	LCSD
37	North District Town Hall	Leisure/Cultural	1988	LCSD

38	Sai Wan Ho Civic Centre	Leisure/Cultural	1990	LCSD
39	Flagstaff House Museum of Teaware	Leisure/Cultural	Around 1840/part-listed buildings (1984 ¹)	LCSD
40	Space Museum	Leisure/Cultural	1980	LCSD
41	Tsz Wan Shan (South) Estate Community Centre	Leisure/Cultural	1968	HAD
42	Cheung Ching Estate Community Centre	Leisure/Cultural	1982	HAD
43	Lek Muk Shue Community Hall	Leisure/Cultural	2004	HAD
44	To Kwa Wan GO	Government Offices	1984	GPA
45	Tuen Mun GO	Government Offices	1985-6	GPA
46	Queensway GO	Government Offices	1986-7	GPA
47	North District GO	Government Offices	1987	GPA
48	Cheung Sha Wan GO	Government Offices	2000	GPA
49	Shau Kei Wan Elderly Health Centre	Health Centre/Clinic	1950s (1998 ²)	DH
50	Sai Ying Pun Chest Clinic	Health Centre/Clinic	1959	DH
51	Yau Ma Tei Elderly Health Centre	Health Centre/Clinic	1960s (1998 ³)	DH
52	Lam Tin maternal and Child Health Centre	Health Centre/Clinic	1988	DH
53	Fanling Integrated Treatment Centre	Health Centre/Clinic	2002	DH
54	Tai Wan Shan Swimming Pool	Leisure/Others	1977	LCSD
55	Morrison Hill Swimming Pool	Leisure/Others	1986	LCSD
56	Lei Yue Mun Park and Holiday Village	Leisure/Others	1988/listed buildings	LCSD
57	Kwai Chung Sports Ground	Leisure/Others	1979	LCSD
58	Sham Shui Po Post Office	Leisure/Others	1978	HKP
59	Yuen Long Post Office	Leisure/Others	2002	HKP
60	Pier 5	Leisure/Others	1997	TD
	Piers 7 & 8	Leisure/Others	2006	TD

Note to Table 3c

¹This site was converted into a museum in 1984.

²This health centre began its operations in the building in 1998.

³This health centre began its operations in the building in 1998.

Table 3c Abbreviations

DH	Department of Health	IO	Incorporated Owners
FEHD	Food and Environmental Hygiene Department	LCSD	Leisure and Cultural Services Department
GPA	Government Property Agency	The Link	The Link Management Ltd
HAD	Home Affairs Department	PRH	Public Rental Housing
HA	Hong Kong Housing Authority	TPS	Tenants Purchase Scheme
HKHS	Hong Kong Housing Society	TD	Transport Department
HKP	Hong Kong Post		

CHAPTER 4 PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATES

Audit Findings

4.1 The Audit surveyed 17 housing estates of which the oldest was built in the late 1960s and the latest built in 2004. The scale of these estates varied from three residential blocks in Fu Tung Estate to 20 blocks in Tung Tau (II) Estate.

4.2 Among the 17 housing estates, 13 were public rental housing managed and maintained by the Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA). With the remaining four, namely the Yiu On Estate, Tai Wo Estate, Kwai Hing Estate and Tung Tau (II) Estate, some blocks have become part of the Tenants Purchase Scheme (“TPS”) where tenants have become private owners by purchasing their properties. The four TPS estates were managed by the Incorporated Owners (“IO”) of the estates, which appointed property management companies to run daily operations. Of the four estates, the Hong Kong Housing Society (“HKHS”) was appointed to manage Tung Tau (II) Estate while private management companies were appointed in the other three estates. Housing Authority (“HA”) was one of the many owners in relation to TPS estates.

4.3 Table 4a below provides a status summary of the 17 housing estates in selected key access provisions:

Table 4a: Status summary of the 17 housing estates

No	Name	No. of block	Year built	(A) ¹ Accessible site entry point	(B) ² Accessible lift Reaching all floors Design features		(C) Accessible parking space	(D) Adequate accessible signs	(E) Accessible flat units	(F) ³ Accessible common areas
HE1	Cheung Ching	8	1977	Y	p ^{HE}	P	Y	P	N	P
HE2	Fu Tung	3	1997	Y	Y ^{HE}	P	Y	N	N	Y
HE3	Hoi Lai	12	2004	Y	Y ^{HE}	P	Y	P	Y	Y
HE4	Kai Yip	6	1981-83	Y	p ^{HE}	P	Y	P	N	P
HE5	Kwai Hing**	4	1991	Y	Y ^{HE}	P	Y	P	N	P
HE6	Oi Man	12	1974	Y	p ^{HE}	P	N	P	N	P
HE7	Pak Tin	12	1978	Y	p ^{HE}	P	N	P	P	P
HE8	Siu Sai Wan	12	1987-97	Y	Y ^{HE}	P	Y	N	N	P
HE9	Tai Hing	7	1977-80	Y	p ^{HE}	P	N	P	N	P
HE10	Tai Wo**	9	1989	Y	Y ^{HE}	P	N	P	N	P
HE11	Tin Yuet	5	2000-02	Y	Y ^{HE}	P	Y	P	N	P
HE12	Tsz Lok	11	1995	Y	Y ^{HE}	P	Y	P	P	P
HE13	Tung Tau (II) *	20	1982	Y	Y ^{HE}	P	N	P	N	P
HE14	Wah Fu (I)	12	1967	P	p ^{HE}	P	N	N	P	P
HE15	Wo Che	13	1977	Y	p ^{HE}	P	N	P	P	P
HE16	Yiu On**	7	1988	Y	Y ^{HE}	P	N	N	N	P
HE17	Yue Wan	4	1977	Y	p ^{HE}	P	Y	N	N	P

Legend:

Y – Provision provided in full compliance with DM1997 and DM2008

P – Provision provided that partially complied with DM1997 and DM2008

N – No such facility provided at all against DM1997 and DM2008

N/A – Provision not required under DM1997 and DM2008

* Tenants Purchase Scheme estate managed by HKHS

** Tenants Purchase Scheme estate managed by IO/HA

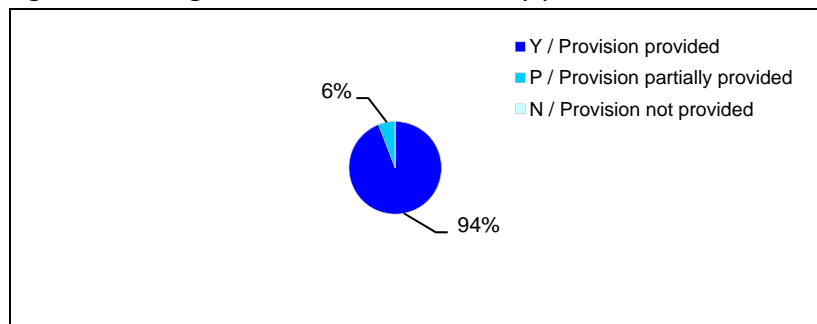
¹ Assessment excluded roads/streets based on provisions in DM1997 and DM2008.

² Accessible lifts were assessed for two aspects: the left column provides information on whether the lifts reached all the floors in the block; and the right column provides information on the design features of the lifts and their compliance with DM1997 and DM2008.

³ Accessible common areas of housing estates referred to accessibility to external common areas at ground and/or podium level.

4.4 For ease of reading, the findings for each selected major access provision are presented graphically with pie charts to show the accessibility status in the 17 housing estates.

Fig.4a: Housing estates--Accessible entry point

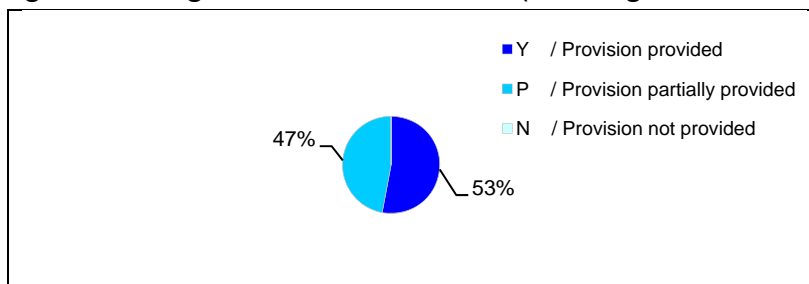


Observation:

- i. All 17 housing estates had at least one accessible site entry point with 94% (16) in compliance with DM1997 and DM2008 and one partially in compliance.

Note: Assessment of accessible site entry point excludes interfacing roads/streets based on provisions of DM1997 and DM2008.

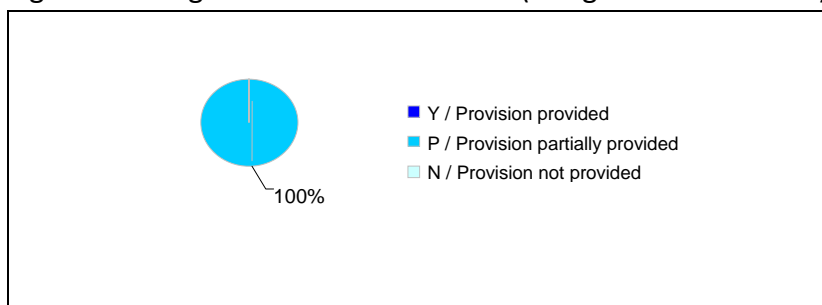
Fig.4b: Housing estates--Accessible lifts (reaching all floors in the blocks)



Observation:

- i. Slightly over half the estates (53%) provided at least one accessible lift that served all residential floors but 8 (47%) estates only provided accessible lifts that served part of the residential floors/ towers.

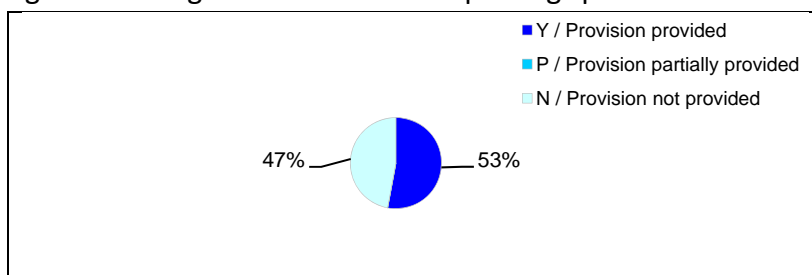
Fig.4c: Housing estates--Accessible lifts (design features of lifts)



Observation:

- i. All the estates surveyed provided at least one accessible lift but none complied fully with DM1997 and DM2008 in all major aspects

Fig.4d: Housing estates--Accessible parking space

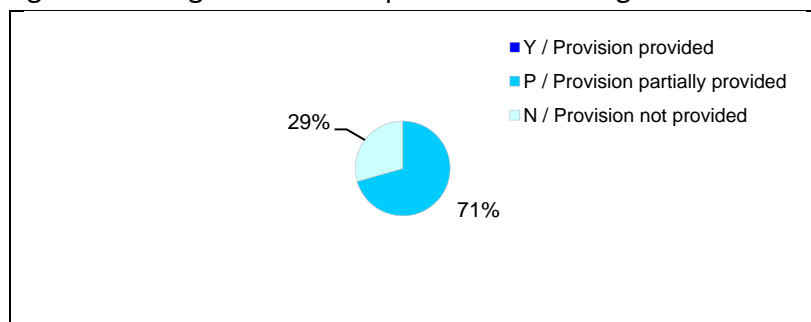


Observations:

- i. 53% (9) of housing estates provided at least one accessible parking space that complied with DM1997 as well as the dimensional criteria in the DM2008.

- ii. However, close to half, 47% (8), did not provide any accessible parking space at all.

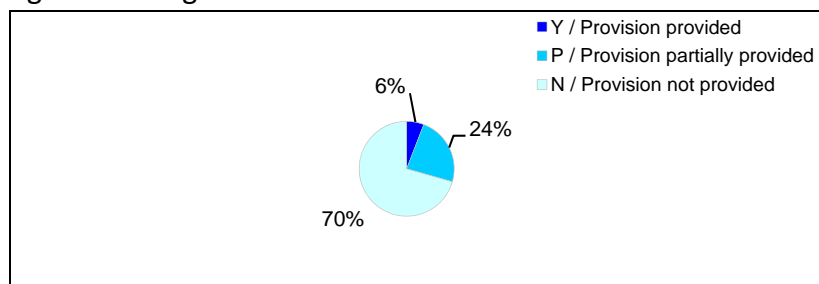
Fig.4e: Housing estates--Adequate accessible signs



Observations:

- i. Of the 17 housing estates, 29% (5) did not provide any accessible signs.
- ii. 71% (12) that provided accessible signs only partly complied with DM1997 and DM2008.

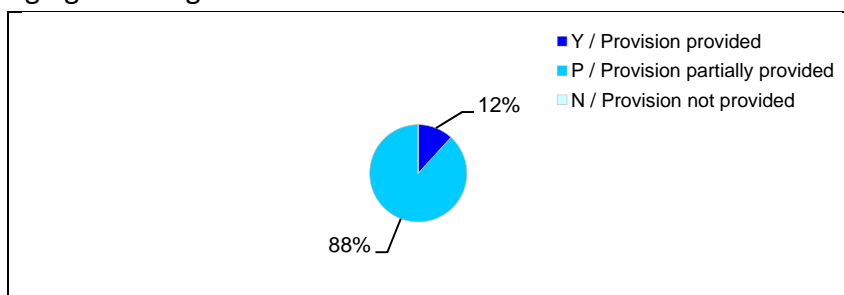
Fig.4f: Housing estates--Accessible flat units



Observations:

- i. As high as 70% did not provide any flat entrances that complied with DM1997 and DM2008.
- ii. Only 1 housing estate provided accessible entrances at all flats that complied with DM1997 and DM2008 while 24% (4) provided accessible entrances only at some of the flats.

Fig.4g: Housing estates--Accessible common areas



Observation:

- i. Only 2 (12%) estates provided fully accessible common areas while the rest provided partially accessible common areas.

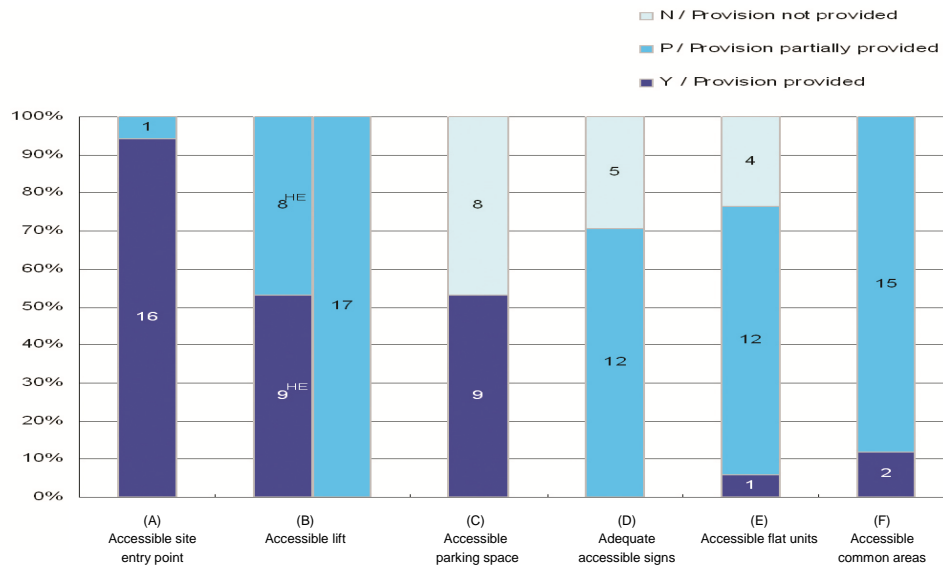
Note: accessible common areas on housing estates refer to accessibility of external common areas at ground and/or podium level.

4.5 To summarise, the audit results across the selected access provisions in housing estates are illustrated in Table 4b and bar chart Fig.4h below:

Table 4b: Availability of selected access provisions in housing estates

	(A) Accessible site entry point	(B) Accessible lift		(C) Accessible parking space	(D) Adequate accessible signs	(E) Accessible flat units	(F) Accessible common areas
Y/ Provision provided	16	9 ^{HE}	0	9	0	1	2
P/ Provision partially provided	1	8 ^{HE}	17	0	12	4	15
N/ Provision not provided	0	0 ^{HE}	0	8	5	12	0

Fig. 4h: All housing estates (17)



4.6 Based on audit results, housing estates built after 1997 generally provided better access facilities than the estates built before 1997. Table 4c as well as the bar charts in Fig.4i and Fig.4k below show the status of accessibility in 14 housing estates that were built before 1997 in comparison with the 3 housing estates built after 1997.

Table 4c: Summary of audit findings in pre-1997 and post-1997 housing estates

	Build pre- or post- 1997	(A) Accessible site entry point	(B) Accessible lift		(C) Accessible parking space	(D) Adequate accessible signs	(E) Accessible flat units	(F) Accessible common areas
Y / Provision provided	Pre-1997	13	6 ^{HE}	0	6	0	0	0
	Post-1997	3	3 ^{HE}	0	3	0	1	2
P / Provision partially provided	Pre-1997	1	8 ^{HE}	14	0	10	4	14
	Post-1997	0	0 ^{HE}	3	0	2	0	1
N / Provision not provided	Pre-1997	0	0 ^{HE}	0	8	4	10	0
	Post-1997	0	0 ^{HE}	0	0	1	2	0

Fig.4i : 14 Housing estates built before 1997

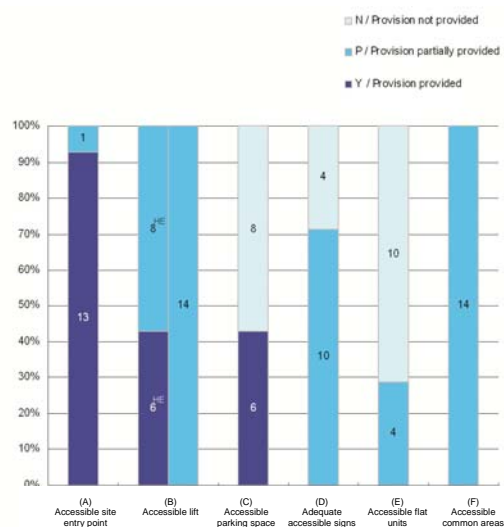
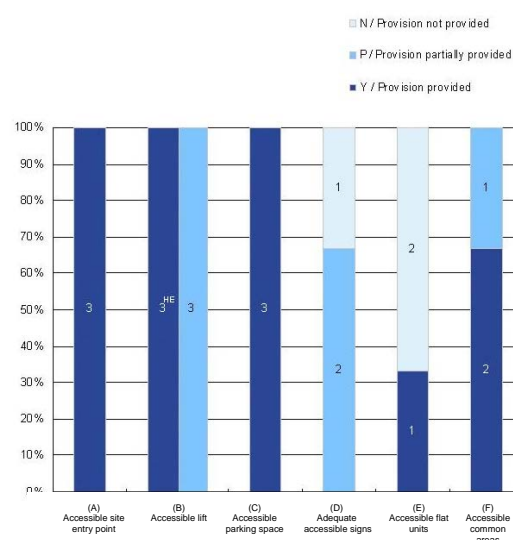


Fig.4k: 3 Housing estates built after 1997



Observations

4.7 Among the 17 housing estates audited, only three were built after 1997 (“newer estates”). Due to the age gap between these estates and those built before 1997 (“older estates”), which ranges from 2 to 37 years, it may not be meaningful to directly compare their access facilities. Existing structural limitations in some older estates mean that these would find it difficult to develop or change certain existing facilities short of rebuilding from scratch, such as providing lifts that reach all floors within a residential block.

4.8 Although not intended as a like-to-like comparison, the newer estates generally provided greater access facilities that met the standards in DM1997 compared with the older estates. Rather disappointingly, however, the newer estates did not outperform the older estates across all fronts, such as in the design features of lifts and the provision of signage for PWDs. The following are some of the observed differences between the two:

- All three newer estates had accessible site entry point that complied with DM1997 compared with 93% (13) of older estates.
- 67% (2) of newer estates had fully accessible common areas compared with none on the older estates.
- All newer estates provided accessible lifts that reached all the floors compared with 43% (6) of older estates.

- d) There was no difference between older and newer estates on design features of lifts in that they only partially complied with DM1997 and thus with DM2008.
- e) Newer estates also did not perform better in the provision of accessible signs with only 67% (2) providing signage but not in full compliance with DM1997 (and thus DM2008) compared with 71% of older estates.

CHAPTER 5 SHOPPING CENTRES IN PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATES

Audit Findings

5.1 It is often a characteristic of public rental housing estates to find shopping centres located within the vicinity. This is the result of the policy of HA to provide ancillary facilities in public housing estates to meet the daily needs of residents, including retail facilities, transport facilities, schools, social service centres and car parks. As these facilities are set up to provide essential services to residents, it is important that all residents are able to gain access to them.

5.2 In this Audit, nine shopping centres located within housing estates were surveyed. Six of these were managed by The Link and three by HA. These centres were named variously as shopping centre, commercial complex and commercial centre but were essentially the same type of premises providing retail facilities. For the purpose of this audit, they are all grouped under one title of 'shopping centres'.

5.3 Table 5a below provides a status summary of the nine shopping centres in respect of selected key access provisions:

Table 5a: Status summary of the nine shopping centres

No	Name	No. of storey	Year built	(A) Accessible entrance	(B) Accessible lift	(C) Accessible toilet	(D) Accessible service counter	(E) Accessible parking space	(F) Visual fire alarm	(G) Adequate accessible signs	(H) Tactile guide path	(I) Braille tactile layout plan	(J)1 Accessible common areas
SC1	Cheung Ching*	4	1978	P	N	N/A	N/A	N	N	N	N	N	N
SC2	Fu Tung	4	1997	Y	P	P	N	N/A	N	P	N	N	P
SC3	Hoi Lai*	2	2005	Y	Y	P	N	Y	Y	P	Y	N	Y
SC4	Oi Man	3	1975	P	N	P	N	N	N	P	N	N	P
SC5	Pak Tin*	8	1979	P	P	P	N/A	N	N	P	Y	N	P
SC6	Siu Sai Wan	5	1989	P	P	P	N	N	N	P	N	N	P
SC7	Tai Hing	2	1977	P	N	P	N/A	N/A	N	P	N	N	N
SC8	Tai Wo	4	1989	P	P	P	N	N	N	P	N	N	P
SC9	Tsz Wan Shan	8	1997	P	P	P	N	Y	Y	P	N	N	P

Legend:

Y – Provision provided in full compliance with DM1997 and DM2008

P – Provision provided that partially complied with DM1997 and DM2008

N – No such facility provided at all against DM1997 and DM2008

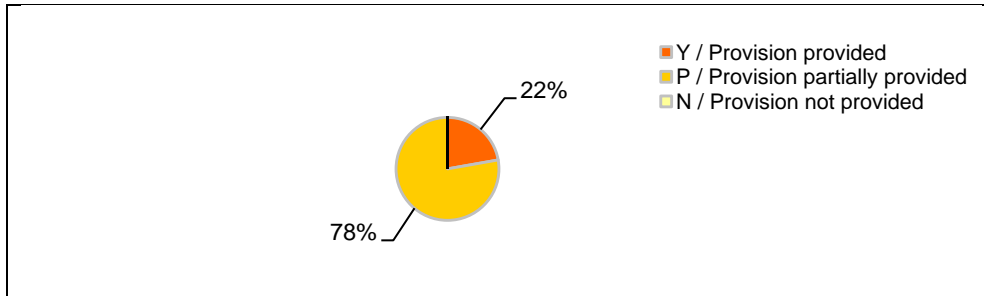
N/A – Provision not required under DM1997 and DM2008

¹ Accessible common areas of shopping centres referred to accessibility to retail shops.

* This indicates a shopping centre under the management of HA. Those without the asterisk are managed by The Link.

5.4 For ease of reading, the findings for each selected major access provision are presented graphically with pie charts to show accessibility status in all nine shopping centres.

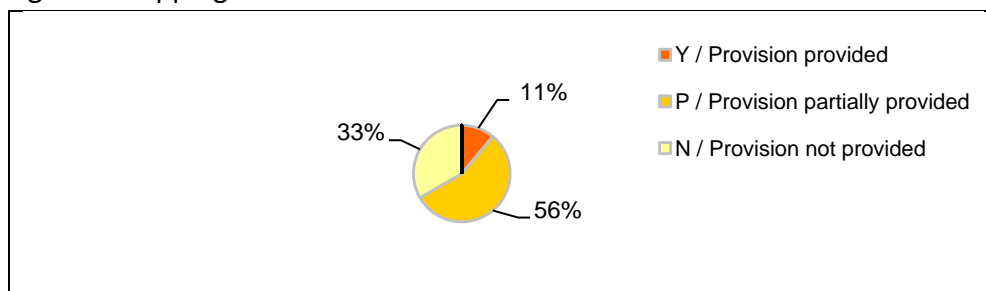
Fig. 5a: Shopping centre-- Accessible entrance



Observation:

- i. Only 2 centres (22%) provided entrances that complied fully with DM1997 and DM2008 while the remaining 7 (78%) provided entrances that only partially met the requirements in DM1997 and DM2008.

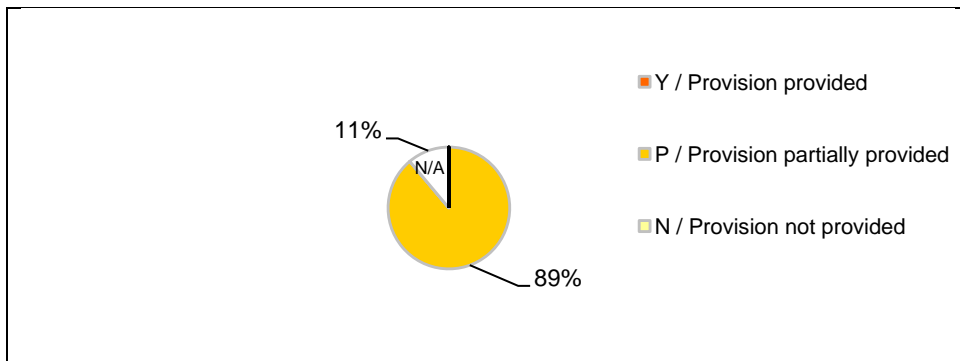
Fig. 5b: Shopping centre-- Accessible lifts



Observations:

- i. Accessible lift facility that complied with DM1997 and DM2008 was only found in 1 centre (11%).
- ii. 5 (56%) provided accessible lifts that did not fully comply with DM1997 and DM2008 while 3 (33%) did not provide the facility at all.

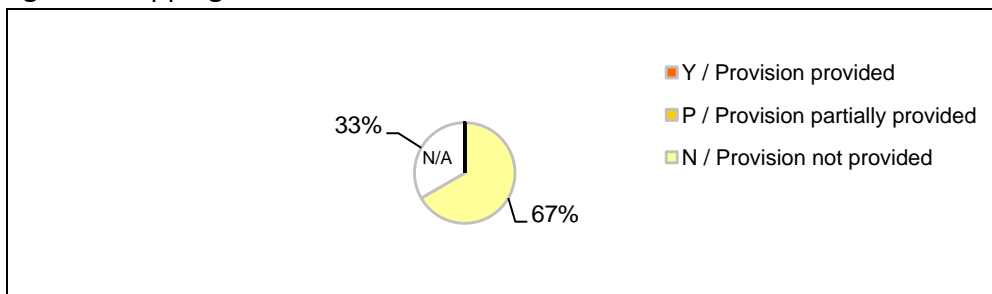
Fig. 5c: Shopping centre-- Accessible toilet



Observations:

- i. 8 centres (89%) provided accessible toilets but these did not fully meet with DM1997 and DM2008.
- ii. In 1 centre, the provision of accessible toilet was not a requirement under DM1997 and DM2008 (no toilet was provided in that centre).

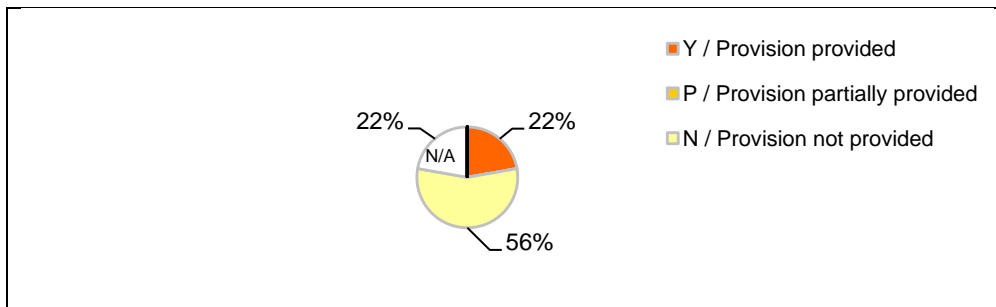
Fig. 5d: Shopping centre—Accessible service counter



Observations:

- i. 6 centres (67%) did not provide accessible service counters in compliance with DM1997 and DM2008.
- ii. In 3 centres, the provision of accessible service counter was not a requirement under DM1997 and DM2008.

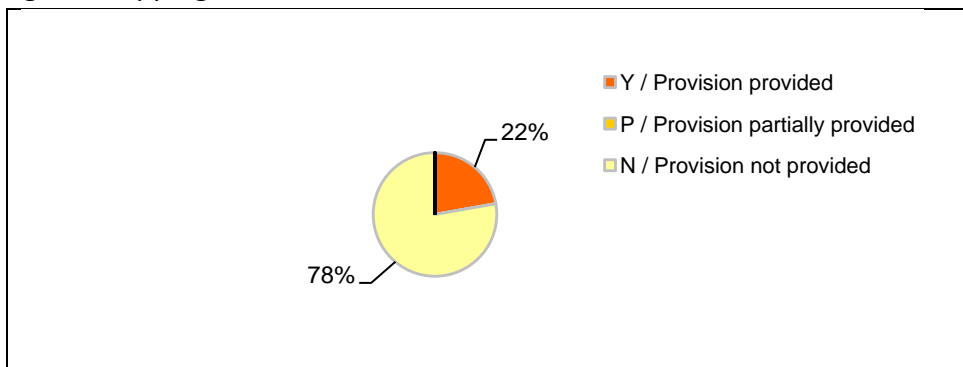
Fig.5e: Shopping centre-- Accessible parking space



Observations:

- i. Only 2 centres (22%) provided at least one accessible parking space in compliance with DM1997.
- ii. 5 centres (56%) did not provide any accessible parking spaces at all while this facility was not required in the 2 remaining centres.

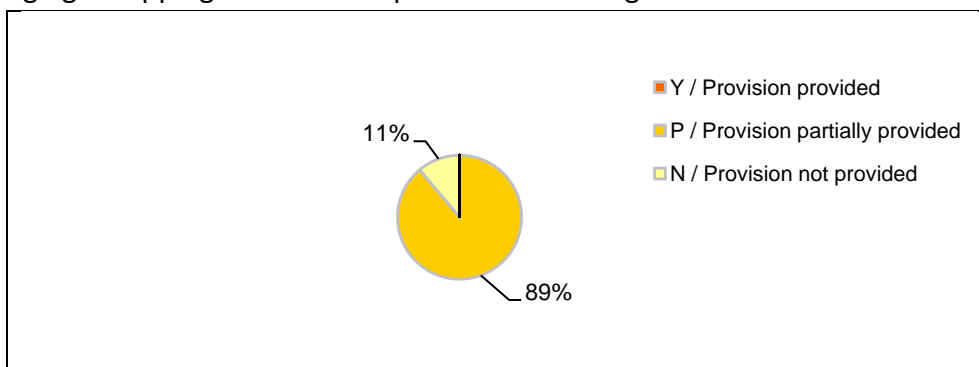
Fig.5f: Shopping centre-- Visual fire alarm



Observation:

- i. 2 centres (22%) provided visual fire alarm systems that complied with DM1997 and DM2008 but the majority did not provide any such facility.

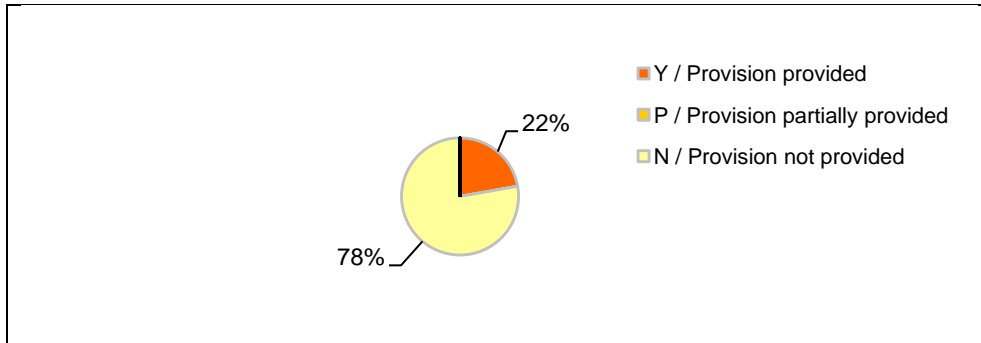
Fig.5g: Shopping centre-- Adequate accessible signs



Observation:

- i. 8 centres (89%) provided accessible signs but these did not fully comply with DM1997 and DM2008 while 1 had not installed any accessible sign.

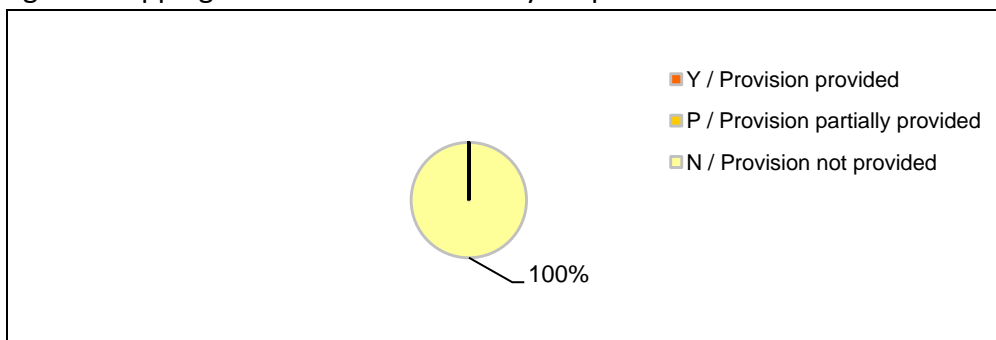
Fig. 5h: Shopping centre--Tactile guide paths



Observation:

- i. The majority of centres did not provide any tactile guide path and only 2 (22%) provided the facility in compliance with DM1997 and DM2008.

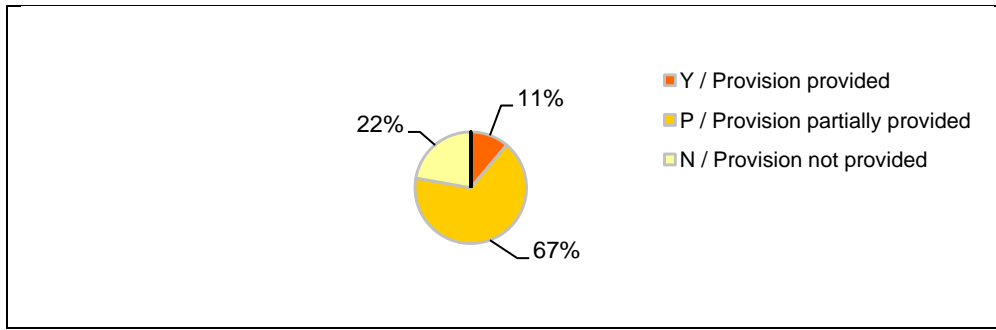
Fig. 5i: Shopping centre--Braille tactile layout plan



Observation:

- i. None of the centres provided Braille tactile layout plan, irrespective of whether they provided layout plans or not.

Fig. 5j: Shopping centre-- Accessible common areas



Observations:

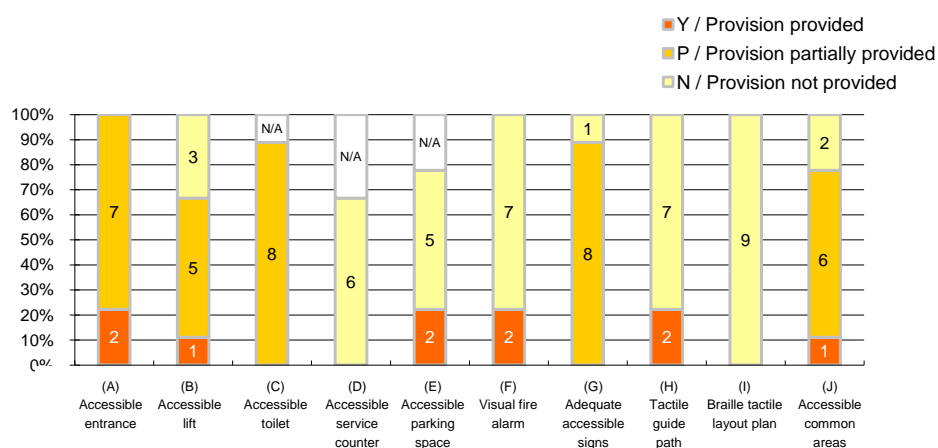
- i. Only 1 shopping centre had fully accessible common areas in compliance with DM1997 and DM2008 while 6 (67%) provided partially accessible common areas.
- ii. In the remaining 2 (22%), the common areas were not accessible at all to PWD and hence also hindered their access to the shops in the premises.

5.5 To summarise, the audit results across the selected access provisions in shopping centres are illustrated in Table 5b and bar chart in Fig. 5k below:

Table 5b: Availability of selected access provisions in shopping centres

	(A) Accessible entrance	(B) Accessible lift	(C) Accessible toilet	(D) Accessible service counter	(E) Accessible parking space	(F) Visual fire alarm	(G) Adequate accessible signs	(H) Tactile guide path	(I) Braille tactile layout plan	(J) Accessible common areas
Y / Provision provided	2	1	0	0	2	2	0	2	0	1
P / Provision partially provided	7	5	8	0	0	0	8	0	0	6
N / Provision not provided	0	3	0	6	5	7	1	7	9	2
N/A	-	-	1	3	2	-	-	-	-	-

Fig.5k: All shopping centres within public rental housing estates



5.6 Based on audit results, shopping centres built after 1997 generally provided better access facilities than those built before 1997. Table 5c as well as the bar charts in Fig.5l and Fig.5m below show the status of accessibility in six pre-1997 shopping centres in comparison with the three post-1997 centres.

Table 5c: Selected access provisions in pre-1997 and post-1997 shopping centres

	Built pre- or post-1997	(A) Accessible entrance	(B) Accessible lift	(C) Accessible toilet	(D) Accessible service counter	(E) Accessible parking space	(F) Visual fire alarm	(G) Adequate accessible signs	(H) Tactile guide path	(I) Braille tactile layout plan	(J) Accessible common areas
Y / Provision provided	Pre-1997	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
	Post-1997	2	1	0	0	2	2	0	1	0	1
P / Provision partially provided	Pre-1997	6	3	5	0	0	0	5	0	0	4
	Post-1997	1	2	3	0	0	0	3	0	0	2
N / Provision not provided	Pre-1997	0	3	0	3	5	6	1	5	6	2
	Post-1997	0	0	0	3	0	1	0	2	3	0
N/A	Pre-1997	-	-	1	3	1	-	-	-	-	-
	Post-1997	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-

Fig.5l : Six shopping centres within housing estates built before 1997

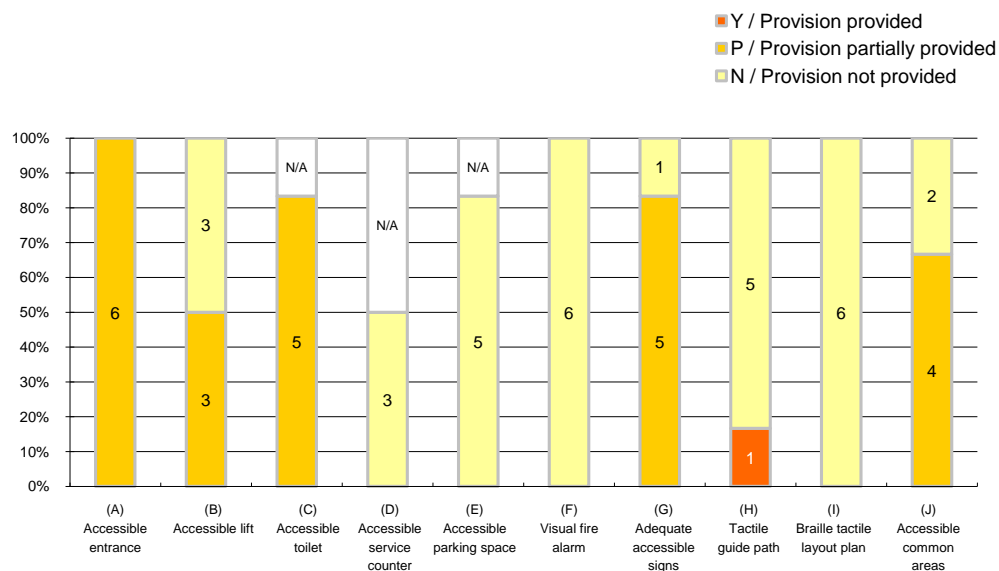
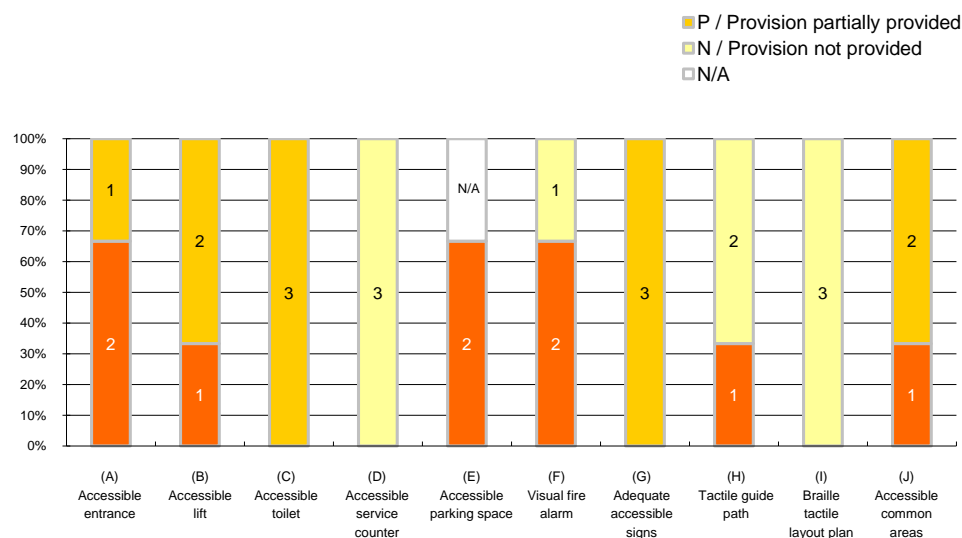


Fig. 5m: Three shopping centres within housing estates built after 1997



Observations

5.7 Based on audit results, the shopping centres built after 1997 provided more access facilities with greater compliance level of DM1997. The following are some of the observed differences between the centres built before and after 1997:

- a) Among the pre-1997 centres, only one centre was able to fully meet the requirements according to DM1997 in one specific access area: the provision of tactile guide path. Otherwise, the pre-1997 centres had either only provided

facilities that partially met the requirements of DM1997 or not at all. Given the importance of the ancillary facilities on offer in these premises, the status of access in shopping centres is an area of concern. Meeting DM2008 is an even more remote possibility.

- b) As regards the post-1997 centres, it is disappointing to find that at least two (67%) had not performed more significantly in the provision of accessible lift, accessible toilet, accessible signs and accessible common areas.
- c) Two of the post-1997 centres provided fully accessible entrances in compliance with DM1997 (and DM2008) in contrast with all six pre-1997 centres providing partially accessible entrances only.

5.8 The above bar charts show that a higher proportion of the shopping centres built after 1997 offers more up-to-standard and desirable access facilities in the areas of accessible lift, accessible parking space, visual fire alarm and accessible common areas. However, no significant improvements were found in the areas of provision of accessible entrance, accessible service counter, accessible signs and Braille tactile layout plan. Improvements in access provisions of the accessible toilets were noted in the premises built/renovated after 1997. However, enhancements are needed to some of the features, such as the fixing level of door handle, door opening force and fixing levels of various grab rails in the toilets, to fully comply with the obligatory requirements of DM1997 and DM2008.

5.9 There is a considerable age span between shopping centres with the oldest, Oi Man, dating back to the mid-1970s and the latest, Hoi Lai, completed in 2005. It is not surprising to find more barrier free facilities at the newer sites but there is an expectation that the facilities should be fully compliant with DM1997. Hence, it was rather disappointing to find that barrier free facilities in the shopping centre did not comply fully with DM1997, such as the features inside accessible toilets and the lack of adequate signage.

CHAPTER 6 CAR PARKS IN PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATES

Audit Findings

6.1 In the list of Target Premises, there were two car parks located in public housing estates, namely the Kwai Hing Estate and Tsz Lok Estate. The former was built in 1991 and is now a TPS estate while the latter was built in 1997, and both car parks have been acquired and now managed by The Link.

6.2 Table 6a below provides a status summary of the two car parks in selected key access provisions:

Table 6a: Status summary of the two car parks

Car park No.	Name of Estate	No. of storey	Year built	(A) Accessible entrance	(B) Accessible lift	(C) Accessible service counter	(D) Accessible parking space	(E) Visual fire alarm	(F) Adequate accessible signs
CP1	Kwai Hing Estate	5	1991	Y	N	N/A	Y	N	Y
CP2	Tsz Lok Estate	8/Phase I 2/Phase II	1995 1996	P	N	N	Y	N	P

Legend:

Y – Provision provided in full compliance with DM1997 and DM2008

P – Provision provided that partially complied with DM1997 and DM2008

N – No such facility provided at all against DM1997 and DM2008

N/A – Provision not required under DM1997 and DM2008

Observations

6.3 As the sample size was too small, data collected from the two car parks is considered insufficient for carrying out quantitative analysis and comparison.

6.4 Each car park provided at least one accessible parking space and these were all located on the ground floor. However, no accessible lifts were installed in either car park.

6.5 In both car parks, the accessible parking spaces were located near the accessible entrance at the rear of the buildings. This means wheelchair users would need to use the driveway at the end of the ramp to reach the exit. Relocation of the accessible parking space

to the opposite row is recommended to avoid potential accident in the overlapping of paths for wheelchairs and vehicular routes.

6.6 Outside the shroff counter in Tze Lok car park, there was a level difference of 100mm between the road and pavement that prevented wheelchair users from accessing the shroff. Excessive force was required to open some staircase doors.

6.7 The facilities relating to staircases and ramps were insufficient for people with low vision, such as insufficient colour contrasting nosing, substandard handrails and absence of tactile warning strips.

6.8 No dropped kerb along the accessible route to and from the rest of the estate was provided.

CHAPTER 7 FOOD MARKETS

Audit Findings

7.1 There were altogether five food markets in the list of Target Premises. The oldest, Bowrington Road Market, dated back to the late 1970s while the newest, Tai Kok Tsui Market, was built only in 2005. All five markets were located in commercial premises managed by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department.

7.2 Table 7a below provides a status summary of the five food markets in selected key access provisions:

Table 7a: Status summary of the five food markets

No	Name	No. of storey	Year built	(A) Accessible entrance	(B) Accessible lift	(C) Accessible toilet	(D) Visual fire alarm	(E) Adequate accessible signs	(F) Braille tactile layout plan	(G) Accessible aisles	(H) ¹ Accessible common areas
FM1	Bowrington Road Market	2	1979	P	P	P	Y	P	N	P	Y
FM2	Luen Wo Hui Market	2	2002	P	P	P	Y	P	Y	Y	Y
FM3	Sai Ying Pun Market	3	1999	P	P	P	Y	P	N	P	Y
FM4	Tai Kok Tsui Market	2	2005	Y	Y	Y	Y	P	Y	Y	Y
FM5	To Kwa Wan Market	2	1984	Y	N	N	N	P	N	P	Y

Legend:

Y – Provision provided in full compliance with DM1997 and DM2008

P – Provision provided that partially complied with DM1997 and DM2008

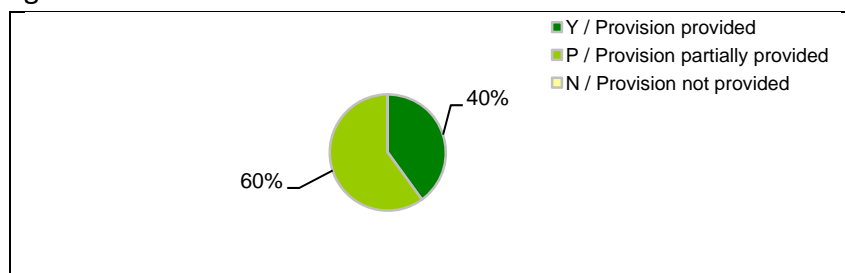
N – No such facility provided at all against DM1997 and DM2008

N/A – Provision not required under DM1997 and DM2008

¹ Accessible common areas in food market refer to accessibility to food stalls.

7.3 For ease of reading, the findings for each selected major access provision are presented graphically with pie charts to show accessibility status in all five food markets.

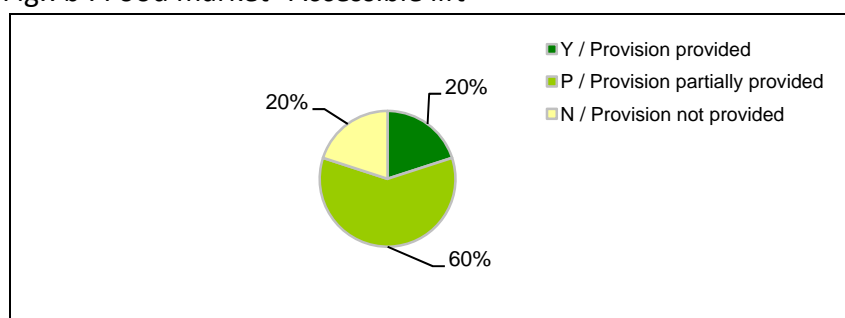
Fig.7a: Food market--Accessible entrance



Observation:

- i. 2 (40%) markets provided at least one entrance that complied fully with DM1997 and DM2008 while the remaining 3 (60%) provided at least entrances that only partially complied with DM1997 and thus DM2008.

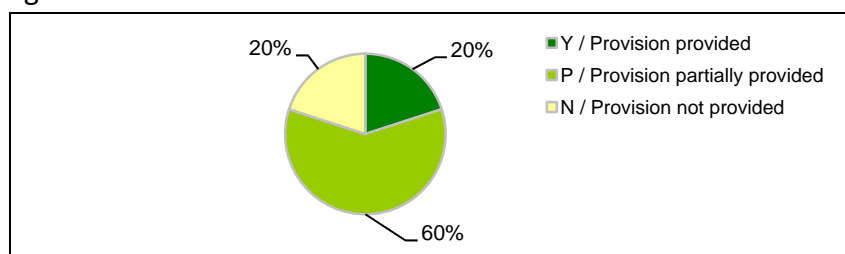
Fig.7b : Food market--Accessible lift



Observations:

- i. 1 (20%) market provided at least one accessible lift that complied fully with DM1997 and DM2008 while 3 (60%) provided lifts that complied partially with DM1997 and DM2008.
- ii. 1 (20%) market provided no accessible lift at all.

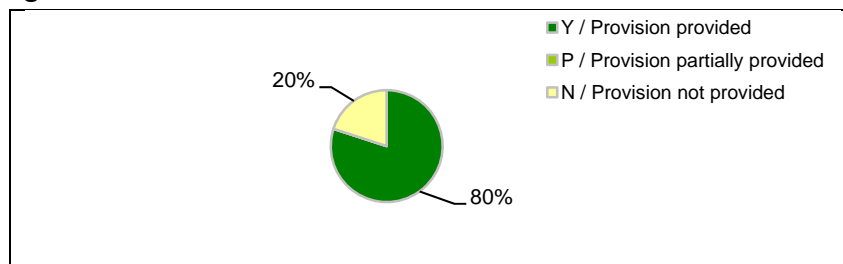
Fig.7c: Food market--Accessible toilet



Observations:

- i. 1 (20%) market provided accessible toilets in full compliance with DM1997 and DM2008 while 3 (60%) provided accessible toilets that only partially complied with DM1997 and DM2008.
- ii. 1 (20%) market provided no accessible toilet facility at all.

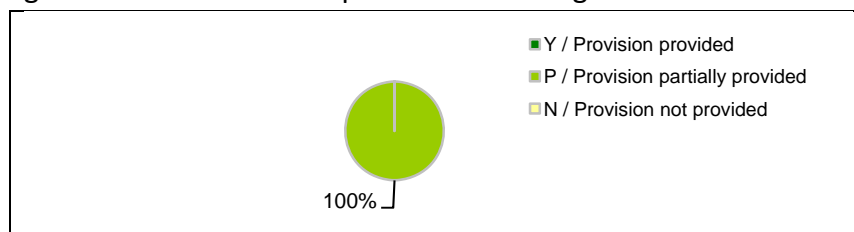
Fig.7d: Food market--Visual firm alarm



Observation:

- i. Most markets (80%) provided visual fire alarm systems that fully complied with DM1997 and DM2008 with only 1 (20%) that did not provide the facility at all.

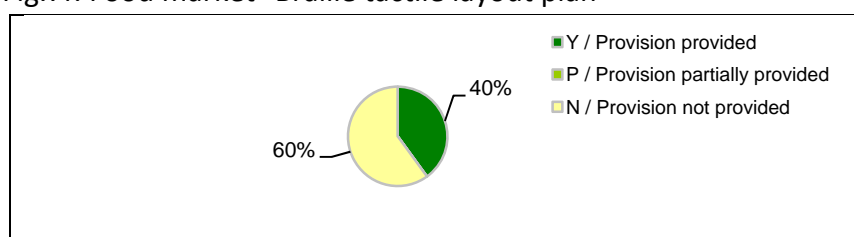
Fig.7e: Food market--Adequate accessible signs



Observation:

- i. All the markets provided accessible signs but none was in full compliance with the requirements of DM1997 and DM2008.

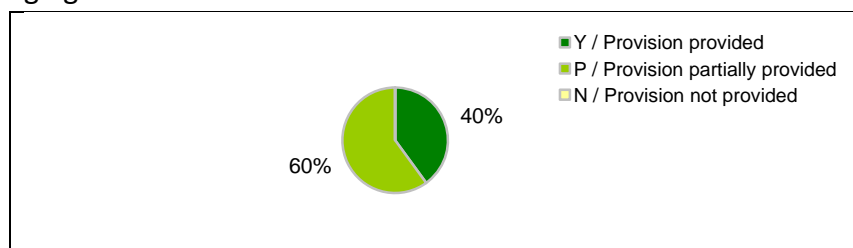
Fig.7f: Food market--Braille tactile layout plan



Observations:

- i. 2 (40%) markets where layout plans were available provided Braille tactile layout plan as well.
- ii. In the 3 (60%) that did not provide any layout plan, Braille tactile layout plans were also not available.

Fig.7g: Food market--Accessible aisles

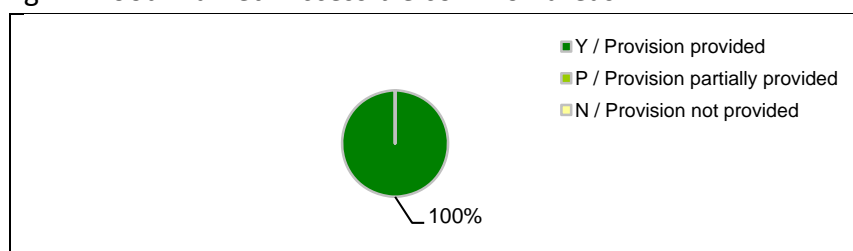


Observations

- i. 2 (40%) markets provided fully accessible aisles while 3 (60%) provided with partially accessible aisles.

Note: Aisles were considered accessible if there was a clear width of not less than 750mm between the opposite grocery display areas.

Fig.7h: Food market--Accessible common areas



Observations

- i. All the markets provided fully accessible common areas.

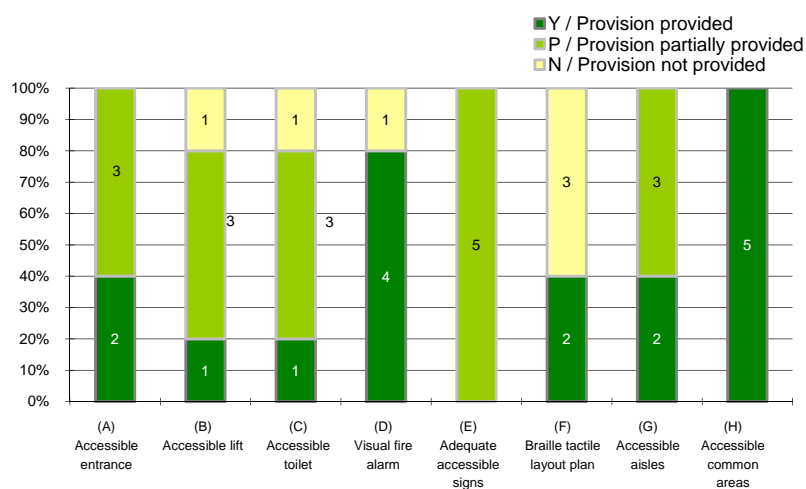
Note: Accessible common areas of food markets refer to common areas that allowed accessibility to all the food stalls in the market.

7.4 To summarise, the audit results across the selected access provisions in food markets are illustrated in Table 7b and bar chart in Fig.7i below:

Table 7b : Availability of selected access provisions in food markets

	(A) Accessible entrance	(B) Accessible lift	(C) Accessible toilet	(D) Visual fire alarm	(E) Adequate accessible signs	(F) Braille tactile layout plan	(G) Accessible aisles	(H) Accessible common areas
Y / Provision provided	2	1	1	4	0	2	2	5
P / Provision partially provided	3	3	3	0	5	0	3	0
N / Provision not provided	0	1	1	1	0	3	0	0

Fig.7i: All Food Markets



7.5 Audit results reveal that the three food markets built after 1997 provided overall better access facilities than the two built before 1997, as illustrated in Table 7c and the bar charts in Fig.7j and Fig.7k below.

Table 7c : Summary of audit findings in pre-1997 and post-1997 food markets

	Built pre- / post- 1997	(A) Accessible entrance	(B) Accessible lift	(C) Accessible toilet	(D) Visual fire alarm	(E) Adequate accessible signs	(F) Braille tactile layout plan	(G) Accessible aisles	(H) Accessible common areas
Y / Provision provided	Pre-1997	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	2
	Post-1997	1	1	1	3	0	2	2	3
P / Provision partially provided	Pre-1997	1	1	1	0	2	0	2	0
	Post-1997	2	2	2	0	3	0	1	0
N / Provision not provided	Pre-1997	0	1	1	1	0	2	0	0
	Post-1997	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0

Fig.7j: Two food markets built before 1997

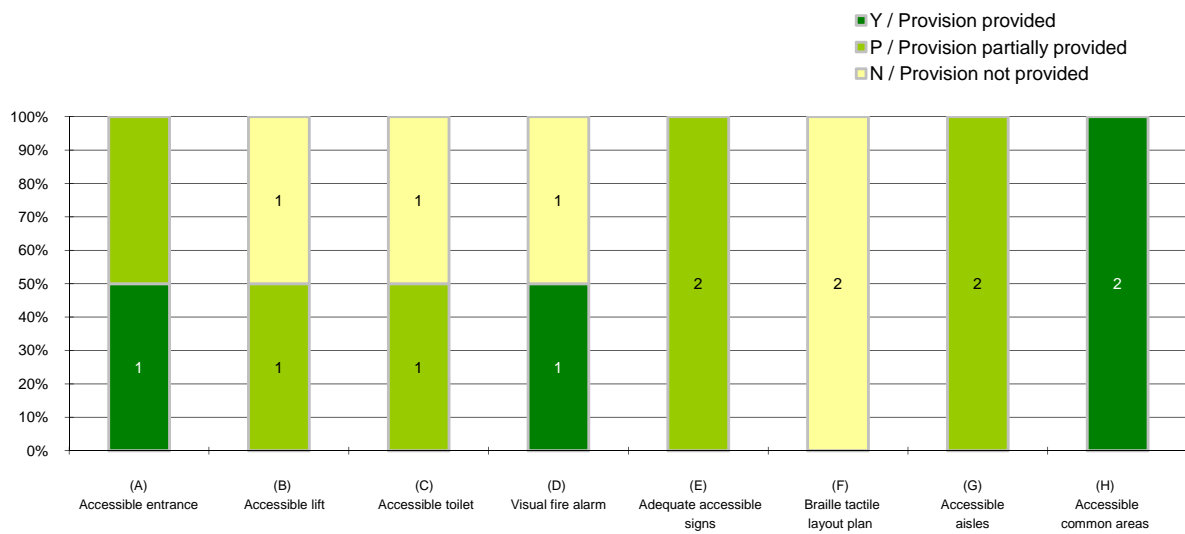
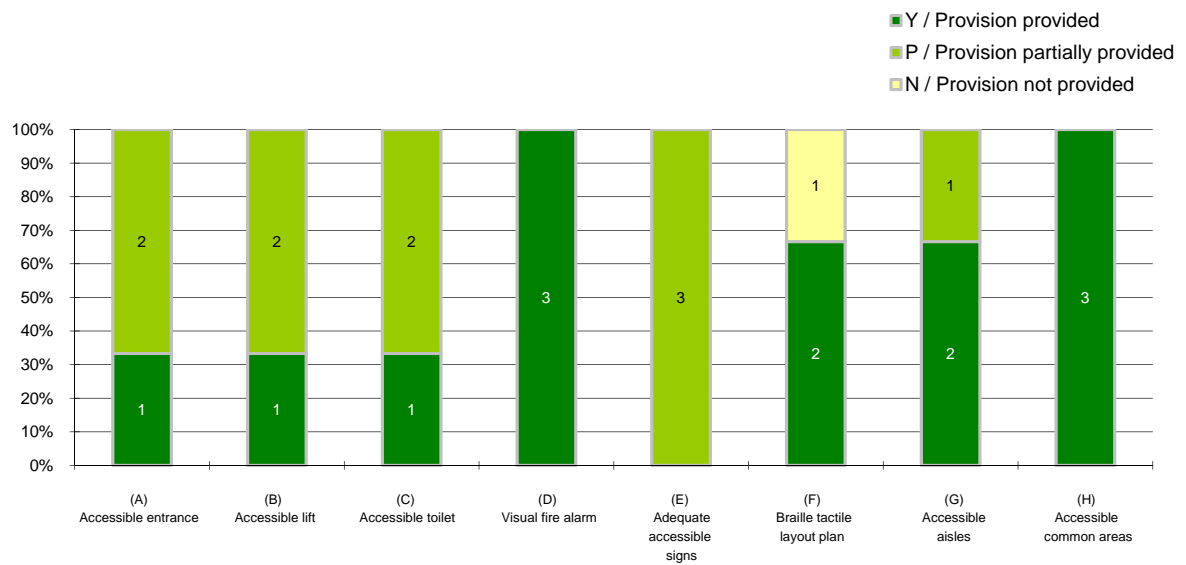


Fig.7k: Three food markets built after 1997



Observations

7.6 Based on audit results, it appears that the pre-1997 food markets provided better access than the markets built before 1997, such as in the provision of accessible lifts, accessible toilets, visual fire alarms and Braille tactile layout plans. However, no significant improvement was found in the provision of accessible entrances and accessible signs.

7.7 It is noteworthy that despite the large time gap between older and newer markets, none of the post-1997 markets provided all the key access facilities in full compliance with DM1997, and accordingly DM2008.

CHAPTER 8 CULTURAL FACILITIES

Audit Findings

8.1 The audit surveyed seven cultural facilities comprising two public libraries, one sports stadium, two town halls and two museums. All the facilities were built before 1997 with the oldest facility being Lek Yuen Public Library, built in the late 1970s, and the newest being Sai Wan Ho Civic Centre, built in 1990. All these facilities were managed by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department.

8.2 The four tables below provide a status summary in each category of facility in selected key access provisions.

Table 8a: Status summary of the two public libraries

No	Name	No. of storey	Year built	(A) Accessible entrance	(B) Accessible toilet	(C) Accessible service counter	(D) Visual fire alarm	(E) Adequate accessible signs	(F) Tactile guide path	(G) Assistive listening system	(H) ¹ Accessible common areas
CF1	Lek Yuen Public Library	1	1977	P	N/A	Y	Y	N	N	N	P
CF2	Tai Hing Public Library	1	1978	P	P	Y	Y	P	N	Y	P

Legend:

Y – Provision provided in full compliance with DM1997 and DM2008

P – Provision provided that partially complied with DM1997 and DM2008

N – No such facility provided at all against DM1997 and DM2008

N/A – Provision not required under DM1997 and DM2008

¹ Accessible common areas of libraries refer to accessibility to aisles and use of relevant facilities.

Table 8b: Status summary of stadium

No	Name	No. of storey	Year built	(A) Accessible entrance	(B) Accessible lift	(C) Accessible toilet	(D) Accessible service counter	(E) Visual fire alarm	(F) Adequate accessible signs	(G) Tactile guide path	(H) Assistive listening system	(I) ¹ Accessible common areas	(J) Accessible seating space
CF3	Queen Elizabeth Stadium	11	1980	Y	P	P	N	Y	P	Y	N	P	P

Legend:

Y – Provision provided in full compliance with DM1997 and DM2008

P – Provision provided that partially complied with DM1997 and DM2008

N – No such facility provided at all against DM1997 and DM2008

N/A – Provision not required under DM1997 and DM2008

¹ Accessible common areas in stadium refers to accessibility to facilities that are open to the public.

Table 8c: Status summary of town hall and civic centre

No	Name	No. of storey	Year built	(A) Accessible entrance	(B) Accessible lift	(C) Accessible toilet	(D) Accessible service counter	(E) Visual fire alarm	(F) Adequate accessible signs	(G) Tactile guide path	(H) Assistive listening system	(I) ¹ Accessible common areas	(J) Accessible seating space
CF4	North District Town Hall	3	1988	N	P	P	N	Y	N	N	N	P	P
CF5	Sai Wan Ho Civic Centre	3	1990	P	P	P	N	N	P	N	N	P	P

Legend:

Y – Provision provided in full compliance with DM1997 and DM2008

P – Provision provided that partially complied with DM1997 and DM2008

N – No such facility provided at all against DM1997 and DM2008

N/A – Provision not required under DM1997 and DM2008

¹ Accessible common areas of town hall and civic centre refer to accessibility to available facilities open to the public.

Table 8d: Status summary of the two museums

No	Name	No. of storey	Year built	(A) Accessible entrance	(B) Accessible lift	(C) Accessible toilet	(D) Accessible service counter	(E) Visual fire alarm	(F) Adequate accessible signs	(G) Tactile guide path	(H) Assistive listening system	(I) ¹ Accessible common areas	(J) Accessible seating space
CF6	Flagstaff House Museum of Teaware	2	1984 (Partly listed)	P	P	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	P	N/A
CF7	Space Museum	2	1980	Y	P	P	Y ²	Y	P	Y	P	P	P

Legend:

Y – Provision provided in full compliance with DM1997 and DM2008

P – Provision provided that partially complied with DM1997 and DM2008

N – No such facility provided at all against DM1997 and DM2008

N/A – Provision not required under DM1997 and DM2008

¹ Accessible common areas of museums refer to accessibility to available facilities open to the public.

² Rating for the main information service counter only.

Observations

8.3 As the number of sample(s) in each type of cultural facility premises was too small, data collected were considered to be insufficient for carrying out quantitative analysis and comparison.

8.4 Based on audit findings, none of the premises provided all the key access facilities under survey in full compliance with DM1997 and DM2008. The Space Museum overall provided the greater range of access facilities that fully complied with DM1997 as well as access facilities that partially complied with DM1997. With the exception of North District Town Hall, the other six premises provided at least one accessible entrance to the building although only two were in full compliance with DM1997. With the North District Town Hall, access to the premises could only be gained from an adjoining building.

CHAPTER 9 COMMUNITY HALL AND CENTRES

Audit Findings

9.1 There are altogether three community hall/centres in the list of Target Premises. The oldest community centre surveyed, Tsz Wan Shan (South) Estate Community Centre, dated back to the late 1960s while the newest, Lei Muk Shue Community Hall, was built in 2004. All the community hall/centres were under the management of the Home Affairs Department.

9.2 Table 9a below provides a status summary of the three community hall/centres in selected important access provisions:

Table 9a: Status summary of the three community hall/centres

Code	Name	No. of storey	Year Built	(A) Accessible entrance	(B) Accessible lift	(C) Accessible toilet	(D) Accessible service counter	(E) Visual fire alarm	(F) Adequate accessible signs	(G) Tactile guide path	(H) Assistive listening system	(I) ¹ Accessible common areas
CH1	Cheung Ching Estate Community Centre	6	1982	P	P	P	N/A	N	P	Y	N	P
CH2	Lei Muk Shue Community Hall	1	2004	Y	N/A	P	Y	Y	P	Y	P	P
CH3	Tsz Wan Shan (South) Estate Community Centre	6	1968	Y	N	N	N/A	N	N	N	N	P

Legend:

Y – Provision provided in full compliance with DM1997 and DM2008

P – Provision provided that partially complied with DM1997 and DM2008

N – No such facility provided at all against DM1997 and DM2008

N/A – Provision not required under DM1997 and DM2008

¹ Accessible common areas in community centres refer to accessibility to facilities that are available and open to the public.

Observations

9.3 Due to the small sample size, data collected from the community hall/centres is considered to be insufficient for carrying out quantitative analysis and comparison to reflect the overall accessibility situation in these premises.

9.4 The data collected show variations in the provision of major access facilities in the three community hall/centres. All the premises surveyed provided at least one accessible entrance. Perhaps not surprisingly, the oldest Tsz Wan Shan (South) Estate Community Centre, had the least range of key access provisions, while the newest, the Lei Muk Shue Community Hall, provided the widest range of access provisions. However, upgrading in some areas in the older buildings need not be costly or restricted by the building structure, such as installation of visual fire alarm and signage.

CHAPTER 10 GOVERNMENT OFFICES

Audit Findings

10.1 Five government offices were audited with the oldest in To Kwa Wan dating back to the mid-1980s and the newest, Cheung Sha Wan, built in 2000. All five premises were managed by the Government Property Agency and their contracted out property management firms.

10.2 The Table 10a below provides a status summary of the five government offices in selected key access provisions:

Table 10a: Status summary of the five government offices

No	Name	No. of storey	Year built	(A) Accessible entrance	(B) Accessible lift	(C) Accessible toilet	(D) Accessible parking space	(E) Visual fire alarm	(F) Adequate accessible signs	(G) Tactile guide path	(H) ¹ Accessible common areas
GO1	Cheung Sha Wan Government Offices (CSW)	15	2000	Y	P	P	Y	Y	P	Y	Y
GO2	North District Government Offices (ND)	6	1987	Y	Y	P	N/A	Y	P	Y	Y
GO3	Queensway Government Offices	6 47	1986-1987	P	P	P	N/A	P	P	P	Y
GO4	To Kwa Wan Government Offices (TKW)	11	1984	P	Y	N/A	N/A	N	P	P	Y
GO5	Tuen Mun Government Offices (TM)	10	1985-1986	P	P	P	N/A	Y	P	N	Y

Legend:

Y – Provision provided in full compliance with DM1997 and DM2008

P – Provision provided that partially complied with DM1997 and DM2008

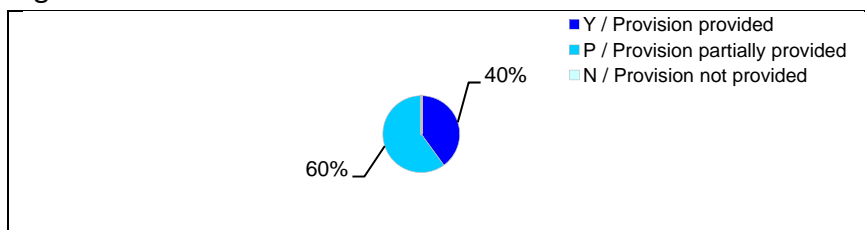
N – No such facility provided at all against DM1997 and DM2008

N/A – Provision not required under DM1997 and DM2008

¹ Accessible common areas of government offices refer to accessibility to tenancy offices open to the public.

10.3 For ease of reading, the findings for each selected major access provision are presented graphically with pie charts to show accessibility status in all five government offices.

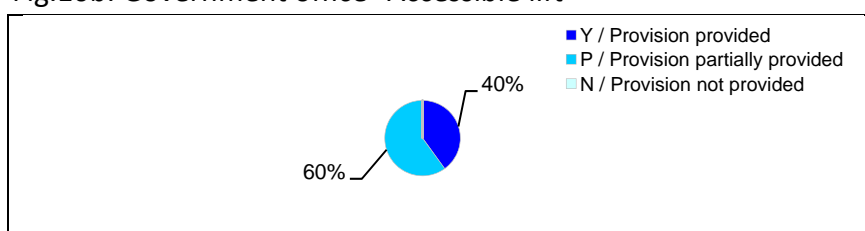
Fig.10a: Government Office--Accessible entrance



Observation:

- i. 2 (40%) offices provided at least one entrance that fully complied with DM1997 and DM2008 while the rest provided entrances that only partially complied.

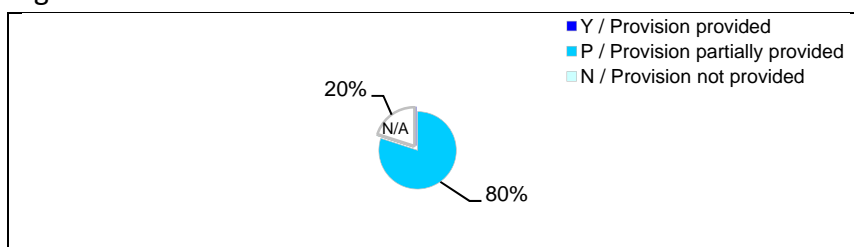
Fig.10b: Government office--Accessible lift



Observation:

- i. 2 (40%) offices provided at least one accessible lift that fully complied with DM1997 and DM2008 while the rest provided accessible lifts that only partially complied.

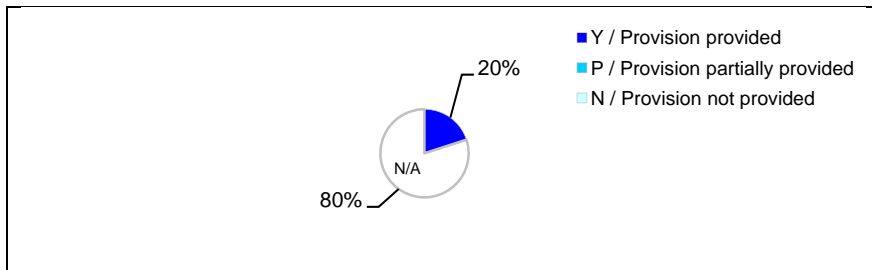
Fig.10c: Government office--Accessible toilet



Observation:

- i. This facility was not required under DM1997 and DM2008 in one premises while the other 4 provided accessible toilets that partially complied with DM1997 and DM2008.

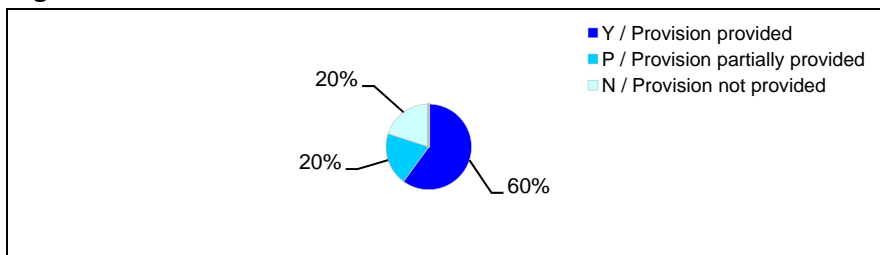
Fig.10d: Government office-- Accessible parking space



Observation:

- i. In 4 offices, accessible parking space was not required under the DM1997. In the 1 office where accessible parking space was required, the facility was fully compliant with DM1997.

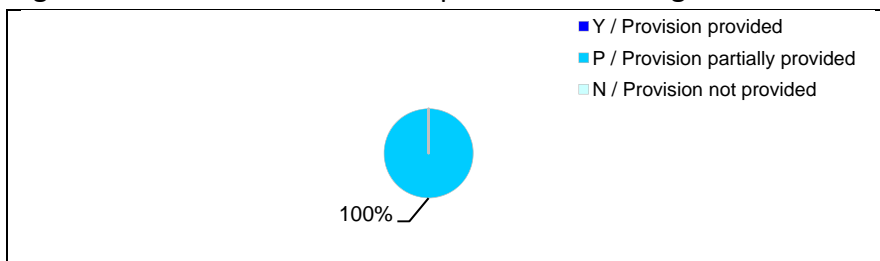
Fig.10e: Government office --Visual fire alarm



Observations:

- i. 3 (60%) offices provided fire alarm systems that fully complied with DM1997 and DM2008 while one provided a system that partially complied.
- ii. 1 office did not provide the facility at all against the requirements of DM1997 and DM2008.

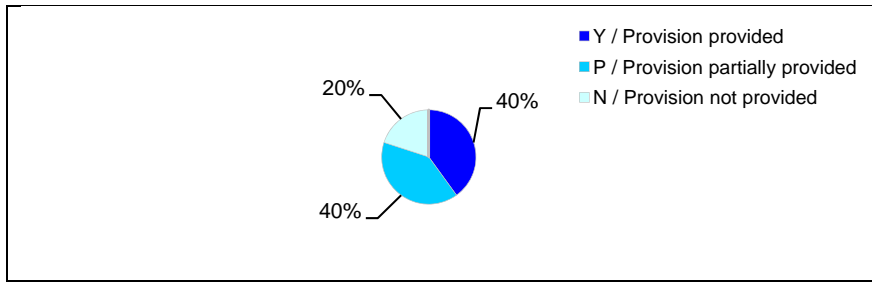
Fig.10f: Government office--Adequate accessible signs



Observation:

- i. All the offices provided accessible signs but none was fully compliant with DM1997 and DM2008.

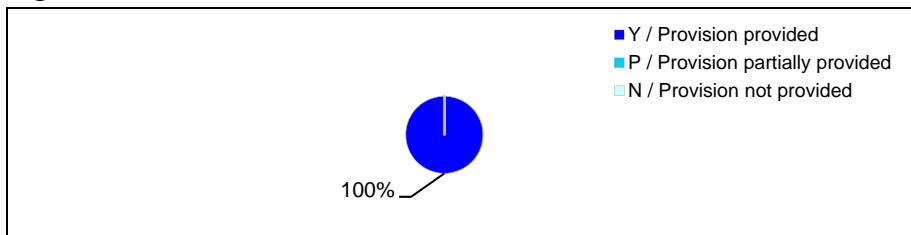
Fig.10g: Government office--Tactile guide path



Observations:

- i. 2 (40%) offices provided tactile guide path in full compliance with DM1997 and DM2008 and two provided the facility that partially complied.
- ii. 1 (20%) office did not provide the facility at all.

Fig.10h: Government office--Accessible common areas



Observation:

- i. All offices provided fully accessible common areas in compliance with DM1997 and DM2008.

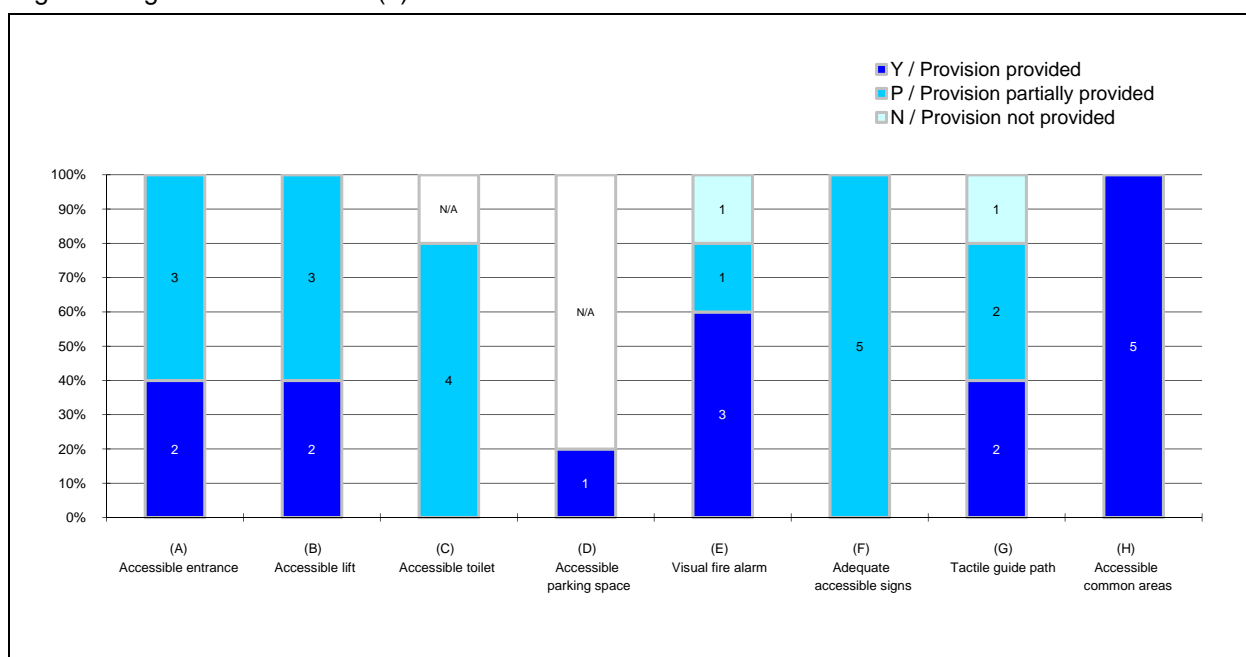
Note: Accessible common areas of government offices refer to accessibility to tenancy offices open to the public.

10.4 To summarise, the audit results across the selected access provisions in government offices are illustrated in Table 10b and bar chart in Fig.10i below:

Table 10b: Availability of selected access provisions in government offices

	(A) Accessible entrance	(B) Accessible lift	(C) Accessible toilet	(D) Accessible parking space	(E) Visual fire alarm	(F) Adequate accessible signs	(G) Tactile guide path	(H) Accessible common areas
Y / Provision provided	2	2	0	1	3	0	2	5
P / Provision partially provided	3	3	4	0	1	5	2	0
N / Provision not provided	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0
N/A	-	-	1	4	-	-	-	-

Fig.10i: All government offices (5)



Observations

10.5 North District Government Office (ND) provided the highest number of access facilities that fully met the requirements of DM1997 and DM2008 despite being 13 years older than Cheung Sha Wan Government Office (CSW), built after 1997.

10.6 Queensway Government Office provided fully accessible common areas but all other facilities only partially complied with DM1997 and DM2008. Next to follow were the two government offices in To Kwa Wan (TKW) and Tuen Mun (TM), which were only marginally

better with two access facilities, including common areas, that fully met the requirements of DM1997 and DM2008.

10.7 The Audit team also observed some operational barriers that were believed to be caused by lack of maintenance and staff awareness. Examples included:

- a) Tactile guide paths: guide path placed very close to the wall surface posed potential collision hazards to people with visual impairment when using handrails (CSW); obstructions caused by a post placed in the path of travel (CSW); part of the guide path being covered by a carpet (CSW); guide path blocked by a chair (ND, TKW); and loose pieces of tactile warning strips found (Queensway, CSW).
- b) Obstruction to passage: escape staircase stacked packed with empty boxes and garbage (CSW), guard post located too close to tactile guide path (CSW), adhesive tape for fixing carpet peeled off rendering potential tripping hazard (ND).
- c) Height of facilities: suggestion boxes mounted too high (SCW, Queensway); door bell too high (Queensway, TKW); door opening button too high (Queensway, TKW). The suggested height for these facilities should be 1200mm or lower.
- d) Service counter: height of counters too high and should be lowered to 750mm or below (Queensway, TM).
- e) Colour contrasting: no colour contrasting markings on glass door (Queensway, TM).
- f) Misuses: storage facility found inside accessible toilet (Queensway); accessible parking space occupied by another vehicle (Queensway)

CHAPTER 11 GOVERNMENT HEALTH CLINIC/CENTRES

Audit Findings

11.1 Five government clinic/health centres were audited with two premises dating back to the late 1950s. The more recent premises built was Fanling Integrated Treatment Centre, built in 2002. All the premises were managed by the Department of Health.

11.2 Table 11a below provides a status summary of the five health clinics and health centres in selected key access provisions:

Table 11a: Status summary of the five health clinic/centres

No	Name	No. of storey	Year built	(A) ¹ Accessible entrance	(B) Accessible lift	(C) Accessible toilet	(D) Accessible service counter	(E) Visual fire alarm	(F) Adequate accessible signs	(G) Tactile guide path	(H) Assistive listening system	(I) Visual display board	(J) ² Accessible common areas
HC1	Fanling Integrated Treatment Centre	1*	2002	P	Y	P	Y	Y	P	Y	N	Y	Y
HC2	Lam Tin maternal and Child Health Centre	1*	1988	P	Y	P	N	Y	P	N	N	N	Y
HC3	Sai Ying Pun Chest Clinic	1*	1959	P	P	P	N	Y	P	N	Y	N	Y
HC4	Shau Kei Wan Elderly Health Centre	1*	1958	P	Y	Y	Y	N	P	N	Y	N	Y
HC5	Yau Ma Tei Elderly Health Centre	1*	1998	P	P	P	N	Y	P	N	Y	N	Y

*inside multi-storey building

Legend:

Y – Provision provided in full compliance with DM1997 and DM2008

P – Provision provided that partially complied with DM1997 and DM2008

N – No such facility provided at all against DM1997 and DM2008

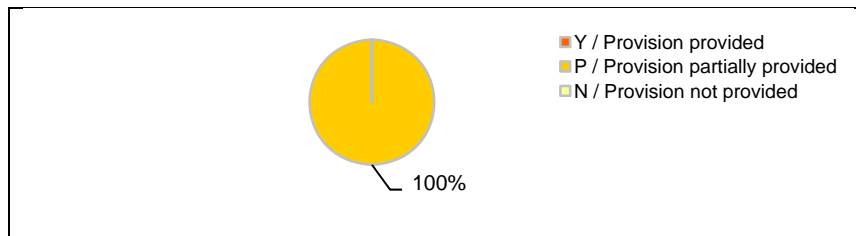
N/A – Provision not required under DM1997 and DM2008

¹ Accessible entrance in this case refers to the entrance of the building.

² Accessible common areas of health centres refer to accessibility to waiting areas and consultation rooms.

11.3 For ease of reading, the findings for each selected major access provision are presented graphically with pie charts to show accessibility status in all five health clinics and health centres.

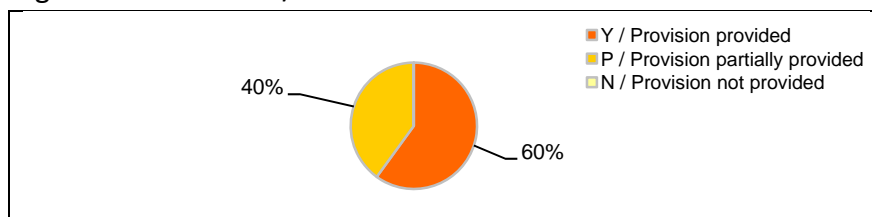
Fig.11a: Health clinic/centres--Accessible entrance



Observation:

- i. All health centres provided entrances that only partially complied with DM1997 and DM2008.

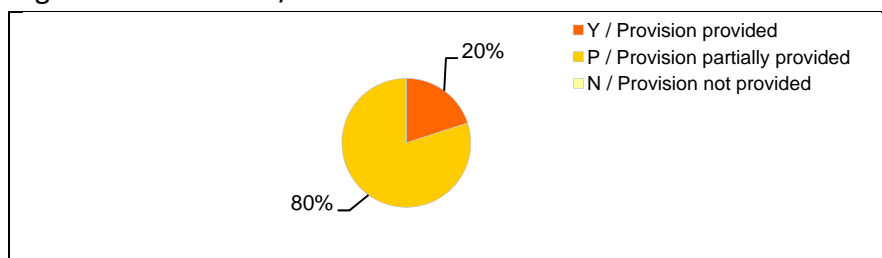
Fig.11b: Health clinic/centres--Accessible lift



Observation:

- i. 3 (60%) centres provided accessible lifts that fully complied with DM1997 and DM2008 while the remaining 2 provided accessible lifts that only partially complied.

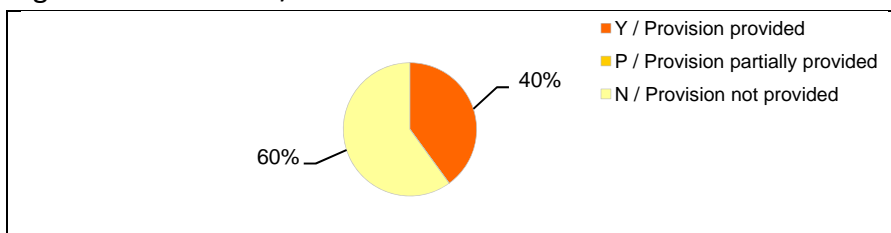
Fig.11c: Health clinic/centres--Accessible toilet



Observation:

- i. 1 centre provided accessible toilet facility that fully complied with DM1997 and DM2008 while the majority (80%) provided accessible toilets that only partially complied.

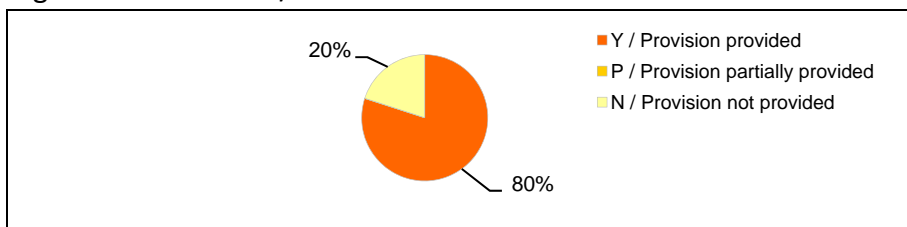
Fig.11d: Health clinic/centres--Accessible service counter



Observation:

- i. All centres provided an information service counter but only 2 (40%) provided accessible service counters in compliance with DM1997 and DM2008 while the rest did not provide the facility at all.

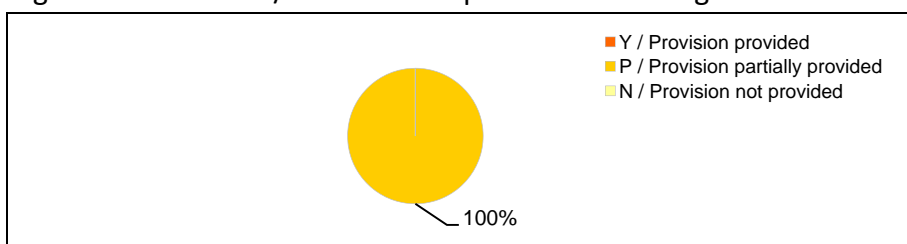
Fig.11e: Health clinic/centres--Visual fire alarm



Observation:

- i. The majority of centres (80%) provided visual fire alarm systems with only 1 that did not provide the facility at all.

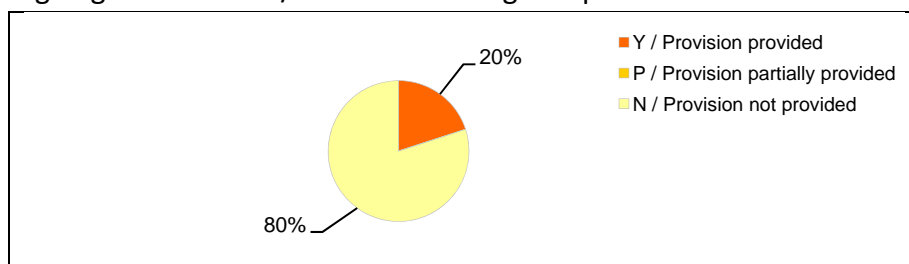
Fig.11f: Health clinic/centres--Adequate accessible signs



Observation:

- i. All the centres provided accessible signs but none was fully compliant with DM1997 and DM2008.

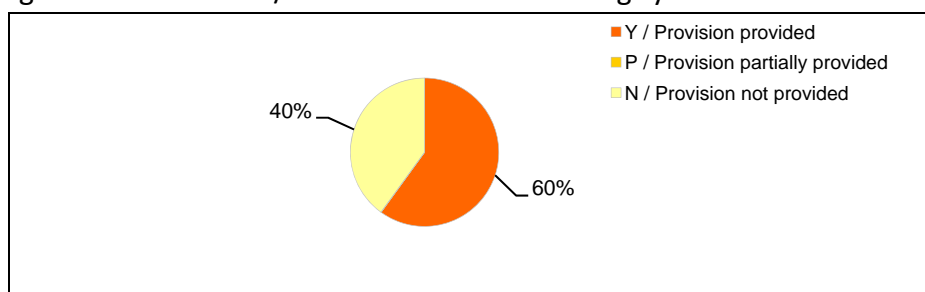
Fig.11g: Health clinic/centres--Tactile guide path



Observation:

- i. 1 centre provided tactile guide path in full compliance with DM1997 and DM2008 while the majority (80%) did not provide the facility at all.

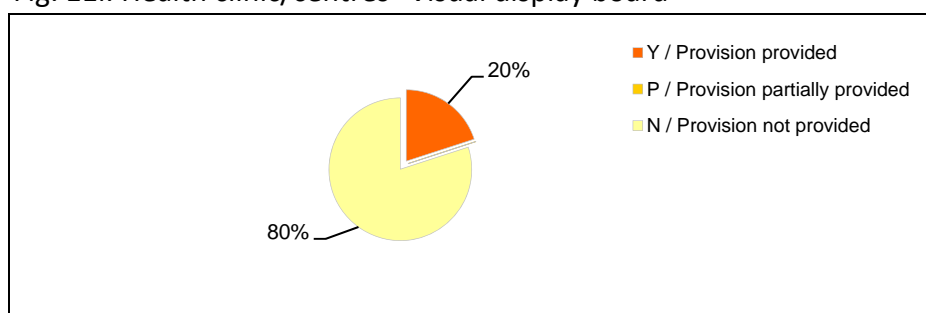
Fig. 11h: Health clinic/centres--Assistive listening system



Observation:

- i. 3 (60%) centres provided assistive listening systems that fully complied with DM1997 and DM2008 while 2 did not provide the facility at all.

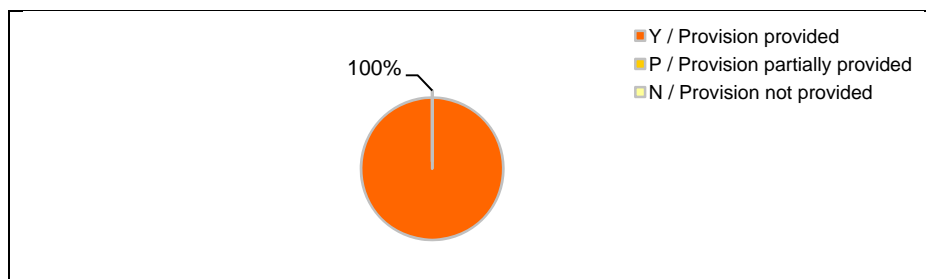
Fig. 11i: Health clinic/centres--Visual display board



Observations

- i. The majority (80%) did not provide visual display boards with only 1 centre providing the facility in full compliance with DM1997 and DM2008.

Fig.11j: Health clinic/centres--Accessible common areas



Observation:

- i. All the centres provided fully accessible common areas.

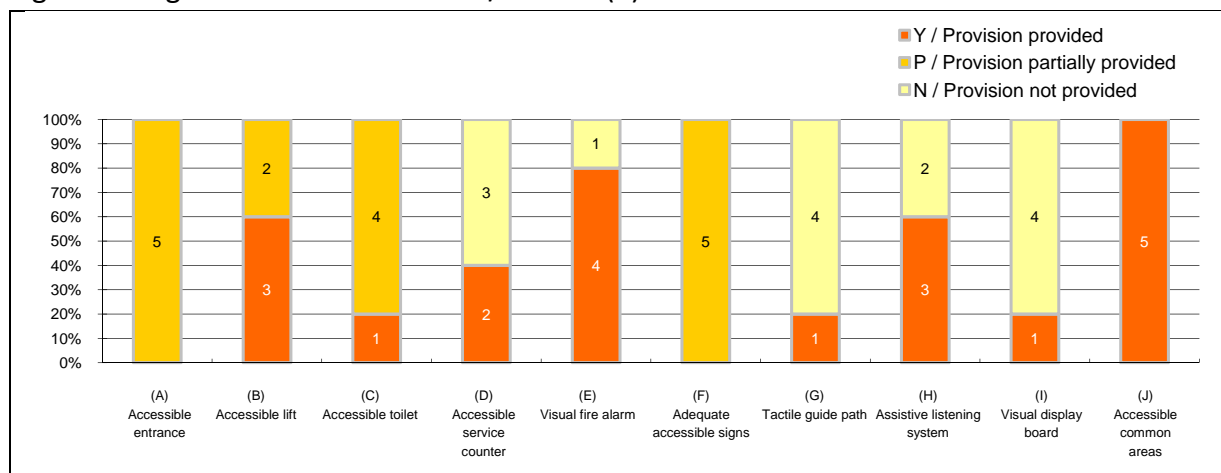
Note: accessible common areas in health centres refer to accessibility to waiting areas and at least one consultation room.

11.4 To summarise, the audit results across the selected access provisions in health clinic/centres are illustrated in Table 11b and bar chart in Fig.11k below:

Table 11b: Availability of selected access provisions in health clinic/centres

	(A) Accessible entrance	(B) Accessible lift	(C) Accessible toilet	(D) Accessible service counter	(E) Visual fire alarm	(F) Adequate accessible signs	(G) Tactile guide path	(H) Assistive listening system	(I) Visual display board	(J) Accessible common areas
Y / Provision provided	0	3	1	2	4	0	1	3	1	5
P / Provision partially provided	5	2	4	0	0	5	0	0	0	0
N / Provision not provided	0	0	0	3	1	0	4	2	4	0

Fig. 11k: All government health clinic/centres (5)



11.5 Audit results reveal that the health centres built after 1997 provided overall better access facilities than those built before 1997, as illustrated in Table 11c and the bar charts in Fig.11l and Fig.11m below:

Table 11c: Health Clinic

	Built pre- / post- 1997	(A) Accessible entrance	(B) Accessible lift	(C) Accessible toilet	(D) Accessible service counter	(E) Visual fire alarm	(F) Adequate accessible signs	(G) Tactile guide path	(H) Assistive listening system	(I) Visual display board	(J) Accessible common areas
Y / Provision provided	Pre- 1997	0	2	1	1	2	0	0	2	0	3
	Post- 1997	0	1	0	1	2	0	1	1	1	2
P / Provision partially provided	Pre- 1997	3	1	2	0	0	3	0	0	0	0
	Post- 1997	2	1	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
N / Provision not provided	Pre- 1997	0	0	0	2	1	0	3	1	3	0
	Post- 1997	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	0

Fig.11l: Government health clinic/centres built before 1997

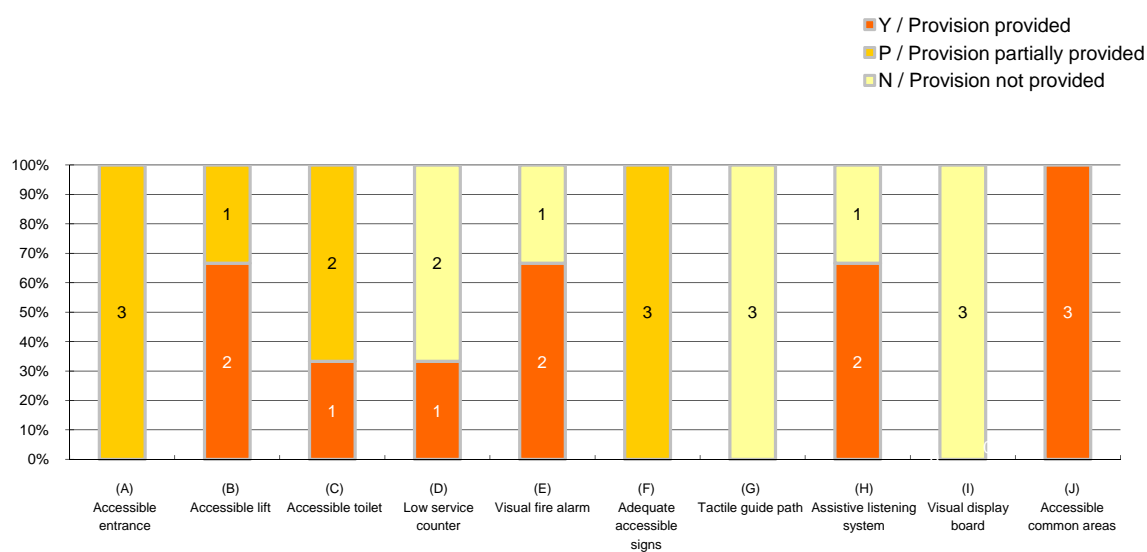
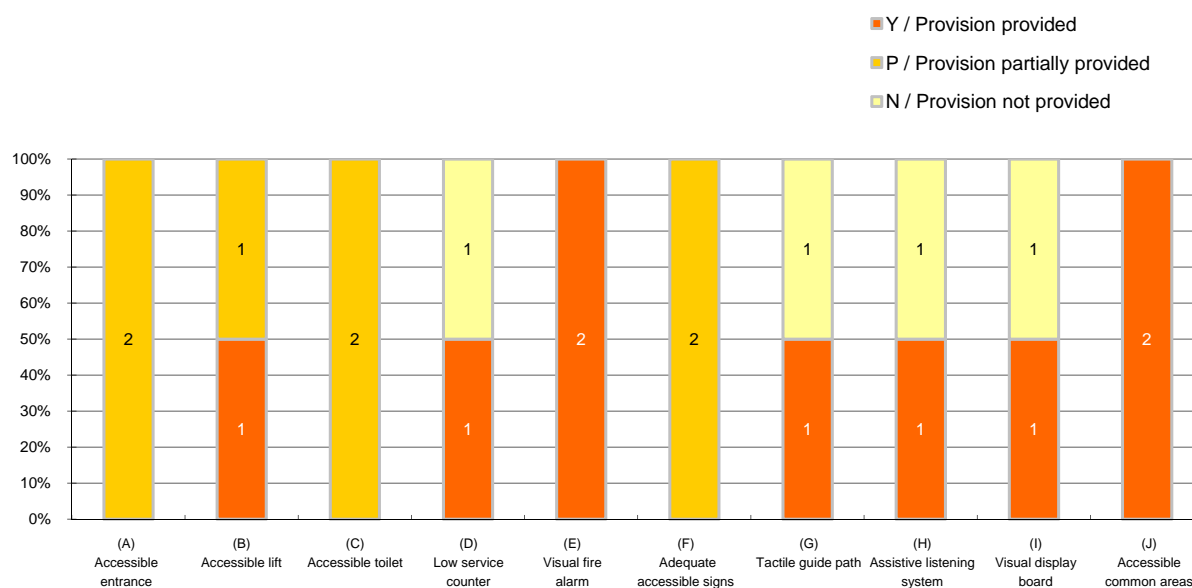


Fig.11m: Government health centres built after 1997



Observations

11.6 The audit results show that health centres that were built after 1997 provided only marginally more access facilities that were fully compliant with DM1997 and DM2008 in respect of tactile guide path and visual display board. In other categories, the post-1997 centres did not perform better, despite a construction time gap of at least 40 years between some of these premises. This is particularly surprising in the provision of access to buildings where none of the post-1997 centres provided fully compliant accessible entrances.

11.7 It is noteworthy that even the newest centre, Fanling Integrated Treatment Centre, did not provide all the key access facilities in full compliance with DM1997 and DM2008.

CHAPTER 12 LEISURE AND OTHER FACILITIES

Audit Findings

12.1 The audit surveyed seven leisure and miscellaneous facilities comprising two swimming pools, one holiday village, one sports grounds, two post offices and two piers (grouped as one facility). The oldest premises on the list was Lei Yue Mun Park and Holiday Village with its listed heritage buildings dating back more than 100 years while the most recent were piers 7 and 8 located in Central and constructed in 2006.

12.2 These seven premises were managed respectively by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, Post Office and Transport Department.

12.3 The five tables below provide a status summary in each category of facility in selected key access provisions.

Table 12a: Status summary of the two swimming pools

No	Name	No. of storey	Year built	(A) Accessible entrance	(B) Accessible toilet	(C) Visual fire alarm	(D) Adequate accessible signs	(E) Tactile guide path	(F) Accessible pool (s)	(G) ¹ Accessible common areas	(F) Accessible seating space
L01	Tai Wan Shan Swimming Pool	2	1977	P	P	Y	P	N	1(9)	P	N
L02	Morrison Hill Swimming Pool	2	1986	P	P	Y	P	N	1(4)	P	N

Legend:

Y – Provision provided in full compliance with DM1997 and DM2008

P – Provision provided that partially complied with DM1997 and DM2008

N – No such facility provided at all against DM1997 and DM2008

N/A – Provision not required under DM1997 and DM2008

1(1) – number of accessible pools (total number of pools)

¹ Accessible common areas in the premises refer to accessibility to facilities open to the public.

Table 12b: Status summary of park and holiday village

No	Name	No. of storey	Year built	(A) Accessible entrance	(B) Accessible lift	(C) Accessible toilet	(D) Accessible service counter	(E) Visual fire alarm	(F) Adequate accessible signs	(G) Tactile guide path	(H) Assistive listening system	(I) ¹ Accessible common areas
L03	Lei Yue Mun Park and Holiday Village	1 to 3	1988/listed buildings	P	N	P	N	P	P	N	N	P

Legend:

Y – Provision provided in full compliance with DM1997 and DM2008

P – Provision provided that partially complied with DM1997 and DM2008

N – No such facility provided at all against DM1997 and DM2008

N/A – Provision not required under DM1997 and DM2008

¹ Accessible common areas in the premises refer to accessibility to facilities open to the public.

Table 12c: Status summary of sports ground

No	Name	No. of storey	Year built	(A) Accessible entrance	(B) Accessible toilet	(C) Accessible parking space	(D) Visual fire alarm	(E) Adequate accessible signs	(F) ¹ Accessible common areas	(G) Accessible seating space
L04	Kwai Chung Sports Ground	1	1979	Y	P	Y	N	P	P	N

Legend:

Y – Provision provided in full compliance with DM1997 and DM2008

P – Provision provided that partially complied with DM1997 and DM2008

N – No such facility provided at all against DM1997 and DM2008

N/A – Provision not required under DM1997 and DM2008

¹ Accessible common areas in the premises refer to accessibility to facilities open to the public.

Table 12d: Status summary of the two post offices

No	Name	No. of storey	Year built	(A) Accessible entrance	(B) Accessible service counter	(C) Visual fire alarm	(D) Adequate accessible signs	(E) Tactile guide path	(F) Assistive listening system	(G) ¹ Accessible common areas
L05	Sham Shui Po Post Office	1	1978	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N
L06	Yuen Long Post Office	1	2002	P	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y

Legend:

Y – Provision provided in full compliance with DM1997 and DM2008

P – Provision provided that partially complied with DM1997 and DM2008

N – No such facility provided at all against DM1997 and DM2008

N/A – Provision not required under DM1997 and DM2008

¹ Accessible common areas in the premises refer to accessibility to facilities open to the public.

Table 12e: Status summary of the Central Pier

No	Name	No. of storey	Year built	(A) Accessible entrance	(B) Accessible lift	(C) Accessible toilet	(D) Accessible service counter	(E) Visual fire alarm	(F) Adequate accessible signs	(G) Tactile guide path	(H) Assistive listening system	(I) ¹ Accessible common areas
L07	Piers 7 & 8	3	2006	P	P	Y	N	Y	P	Y	N	P
	Pier 5	2	1997	P	N	P	N	N	P	Y	N	P

Legend:

Y – Provision provided in full compliance with DM1997 and DM2008

P – Provision provided that partially complied with DM1997 and DM2008

N – No such facility provided at all against DM1997 and DM2008

N/A – Provision not required under DM1997 and DM2008

¹ Accessible common areas in the premises refer to accessibility to facilities open to the public.

Observations

12.4 Due to the small sample size of each type of leisure facility, data collected from these premises is considered to be insufficient for carrying out quantitative analysis and comparison.

12.5 Apart from Kwai Chung Sports Ground which provided fully accessible entrance to the premises, most provided entrances that complied partially with DM1997 and DM2008. Sham Shui Po Post Office provided a single entrance which was stepped and therefore inaccessible to wheelchair users. Lei Yue Mun Park and Holiday Village contained listed buildings of heritage value but some of the buildings did not provide accessible entrances for wheelchair users. All other premises were accessible with provision of at least one accessible entrance.

CHAPTER 13 REVIEW OF CURRENT SITUATION AGAINST ACCESSIBILITY SURVEY IN 2000

Introduction

13.1 In 2000, the EOC conducted an accessibility survey on three public rental housing estates and related commercial complexes, namely the Cheung Ching Estate, Tai Wo Estate and Siu Sai Wan Estate.⁶ As part of this formal investigation, these three estates were included in the list of 60 Target Premises so as to identify improvements made to accessible provisions since the earlier survey.

13.2 The three estates were built in different decades with Cheung Ching Estate built in the 1970s, Tai Wo Estate in the 1980s and Siu Sai Wan Estate in 1990s. With the exception of Tai Wo Estate, which is now a TPS estate and therefore considered a private sector property, the other two are still under the ownership and management of HA.

13.3 In respect of related commercial complexes, only Cheung Ching commercial complex is still owned by HA whereas the other two are now owned by The Link.

Summary of findings

Cheung Ching Estate

13.4 Improvements:

- a) one accessible parking space provided in compliance with DM1997;
- b) the widths of ramps now compliant with DM1997; and
- c) fire alarm call points in external areas and selected blocks selected for survey were accessible to wheelchair users.

⁶ The EOC conducted an Accessibility Checkwalk on these housing estates with the assistance from The Hong Kong Polytechnic University.

13.5 Partial improvements:

- a) tactile warning strips were provided on most, but not all, ramps and steps;
- b) more dropped kerbs provided but not all conformed to standards;
- c) handrails were provided to stairs and ramps but did not conform to standards; and
- d) some ramps were steeper than the obligatory design requirement of 1:12 stipulated in DM1997 and DM2008.

13.6 No improvements in areas where it appeared the facilities could reasonably be provided but were nonetheless unavailable:

- a) no dropped kerbs at island platforms at bus terminals;
- b) inadequate display of signs in prominent positions and some signs were identified by symbols that were not international symbols for access for PWDs as stipulated in DM1997 and DM2008;
- c) no Braille signs on handrails or Braille markings on lift control buttons; and
- d) no Braille maps provided.

13.7 No improvements in areas where it was considered the provisions might cause hardship:

- a) no detection device for re-opening lift doors;
- b) height of lift control buttons not compliant with standards;
- c) no voice announcement for lift arrival and travelling direction at lift entrance;
- d) no lift access to market located on first level of commercial complex, which could be accessed by stairs only;⁷
- e) thresholds to domestic flat entrance were higher than 25mm (DM2008 further lowers standard to 20mm); and
- f) the estate was located on a steep slope and access between various blocks on the estate was inadequate.

⁷ The housing estate and commercial complex are in the same building. Since the audit, the HA has confirmed that it will install a lift in the complex in due course.

Cheung Ching Commercial Complex

13.8 Partial improvements:

- a) dropped kerbs were provided but not all conformed to standards; and
- b) a ramp to provide access from the podium level to the third level of the commercial complex was under construction at the time of the audit.

13.9 No improvements in areas where it appeared the facilities could reasonably be provided but were nonetheless unavailable:

- a) no tactile warning strips on steps and staircases;
- b) inadequate display of signs in prominent positions and some signs were identified by symbols that were not international symbols for access for PWDs as stipulated in DM1997 and DM2008;
- c) no Braille signs on handrails;
- d) no Braille map provided; and
- e) most shops had stepped entrances.

13.10 No improvements in areas where it was considered the provisions might cause hardship:

- a) no direct access for PWDs to restaurants located on fourth level of commercial complex, which could be accessed by stairs only.⁸

Tai Wo Estate (TPS)

13.11 Improvements:

- a) a ramp provided on ground floor lift lobby for access to public transport;
- b) fire alarm call points in external areas and selected blocks selected for survey were accessible to wheelchair users; and
- c) the width of bollards selected for survey conformed to standards.

⁸ See note 7 above.

13.12 Partial improvements:

- a) some ramps were steeper than the obligatory design requirement of 1:12 stipulated in DM1997 and DM2008.

13.13 No improvements in areas where it appeared the facilities could reasonably be provided but were nonetheless unavailable:

- a) no dropped kerbs on island platforms at bus terminals;
- b) no tactile warning strips on ramps, steps and staircases in external areas;
- c) handrails to ramps or steps not in compliance with standards in areas such as diameter, height and extension;
- d) inadequate display of signs in prominent positions and some signs were identified by symbols that were not international symbols for access for PWDs as stipulated in DM1997 and DM2008 ;
- e) no accessible parking space provided by The Link; and
- f) no Braille signs on handrails.

13.14 No improvements in areas where it was considered the provisions might cause hardship:

- a) no tactile warning strips on staircases in housing blocks;
- b) no detection device for re-opening lift doors; and
- c) thresholds to domestic flat entrance were higher than 25mm (DM2008 further lowers standard to 20mm).

Tai Wo Shopping Centre

13.15 Partial improvements:

- a) the gradient of some ramps were steeper than the obligatory ratio of 1:12 in DM1997 and DM2008; and

- b) facilities in accessible toilets improved but not all complied with standards, such as the addition of an emergency call bell that was located too low in height.

13.16 No improvements in areas where it appeared the facilities could reasonably be provided but were nonetheless unavailable:

- a) handrails to ramps or steps not in compliance with standards in areas such as diameter, height and extension;
- b) no tactile warning strips on ramps, steps and staircases;
- c) no voice announcement in lifts;
- d) inadequate display of signs in prominent positions and some signs were identified by symbols that were not international symbols for access for PWDs as stipulated in DM1997 and DM2008 ;
- e) no Braille signs on handrails;
- f) no Braille map provided; and
- g) some shops had stepped entrances.

13.17 No improvements in areas where it was considered the provisions might cause hardship:

- a) no detection device for re-opening lift doors; and
- b) no voice announcement in lifts.

Siu Sai Wan Estate

13.18 Improvements:

- a) dropped kerbs provided and conformed to standards.

13.19 Partial improvements:

- a) some ramps were steeper than the obligatory design requirement of 1:12 stipulated in DM1997 and DM2008; and

- b) accessible parking space provided but the car park itself, owned by The Link, was not accessible to wheelchairs users.

13.20 No improvements in areas where it appeared the facilities could reasonably be provided but were nonetheless unavailable:

- a) no dropped kerbs at island platforms at bus terminals;
- b) no handrails to some ramps, steps and staircases while some existing handrails were not in compliance with standards in areas such as diameter, height and extension;
- c) no tactile warning strips on most of the ramps, steps and staircases in external areas;
- d) inadequate display of signs in prominent positions and some signs were identified by symbols that were not international symbols for access for PWDs as stipulated in DM1997 and DM2008 ;
- e) no Braille signs on handrails;
- f) no Braille maps provided;
- g) some fire alarm call points not accessible to wheelchair users; and
- h) no cover to a drainage channel along a footpath, creating trip hazards.

13.21 No improvements in areas where it was considered the provisions might cause hardship:

- a) no tactile warning strips on staircases in housing blocks;
- b) no detection device for re-opening lift doors;
- c) no voice announcement in lifts; and
- d) thresholds to domestic flat entrance were higher than 25mm (DM2008 further lowers standard to 20mm).

Siu Sai Wan Shopping Centre

13.22 Partial improvements:

- a) facilities in accessible toilets improved but not all complied with standards, such as the addition of an emergency call bell that was located too low in height.

13.23 No improvements in areas where it appeared the facilities could reasonably be provided but were nonetheless unavailable:

- a) no tactile warning strips on ramps, steps and staircases;
- b) handrails provided at ramps, steps and staircases were not in compliance with standards;
- c) no voice announcement in lifts;
- d) inadequate display of signs in prominent positions and some signs were identified by symbols that were not international symbols for access for PWDs as stipulated in DM1997 and DM2008;
- e) no Braille signs on handrail;
- f) no Braille map provided; and
- g) some shops had stepped entrances.

13.24 No improvements in areas where it was considered the provisions might cause hardship:

- a) no detection device for re-opening lift doors; and
- b) no voice announcement for lift arrival and travelling direction at lift entrance.

Observations

13.25 Overall, only limited improvements have been made to all the estates and commercial complexes since the Checkwalk in 2000. While it is understood that some improvement works may be difficult due to cost and structural constraints, it is plainly obvious that some improvement works could reasonably be carried out without causing undue hardship, such as signage for PWDs, handrails to ramp and steps; voice announcement in lifts, Braille maps, to name but a few.

13.26 It is particularly disappointing that despite the difference in the years of construction, i.e. from 1970s to 1990s, the more recently constructed buildings do not

provide better access to premises and to facilities within the estates. For example, Siu Sai Wan estate and related shopping centre were built in 1990s but do not provide more accessible facilities. Even where facilities are provided, they are not compliant with the standards set out in DM1997 and DM2008.

13.27 Based on current situation, the accessibility situation has not improved significantly for persons with hearing impairment, visual impairment or mobility difficulties.

13.28 In regard to the lack of dropped kerbs in external areas that are owned by the Government and under the purview of Highways Department and Transport Department, any improvement works would necessarily require liaison and co-ordination between the HA and the relevant departments. In view of the increasing number of accessible buses servicing housing estates and a corresponding increase in the number of passengers with disabilities, it is suggested that HA could be more proactive in leading that liaison role to improve the current situation.

CHAPTER 14 FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Introduction

14.1 An important principle of providing an inclusive environment is to design access facilities from the users' point of view, and to continually improve on these facilities through ongoing evaluation. The views of the users are critical for ensuring the facilities perform the functions for which they were designed. Following this principle, the EOC organised a series of focus group discussions with persons representing particular types of disabilities to elicit their views and feedback on their experiences of accessibility. Through these discussions, the EOC gained insights into the experiences and sentiments of persons with disabilities ("PWDs") in accessing housing estates as well as various types of public buildings. The information gathered from these discussions, which included participants' suggestions for improvements, provided input for the assessment of the audit results and lent different perspectives on how to improve accessibility in the future.

14.2 Based on the profiles of complainants who had lodged accessibility complaints with the EOC in the past and the types of accessibility issues raised by non-governmental organisations ("NGOs"), it seems that persons with mobility difficulties ("PMDs"), persons with visual impairment ("PVIs") and persons with hearing impairment ("PHIs") are disproportionately affected by accessibility issues. Hence, focus groups representing persons with these disabilities were selected for this part of the investigation.

14.3 Invitations to participate in the focus groups were sent to NGOs that represented or catered to the needs of persons with the three types of disabilities. A total of 27 PWDs from major disability groups participated in these discussions (see Appendix C for the list of NGOs that participated in the focus groups).

14.4 The number of participants was relatively small but they relayed experiences and views that represented the majority of persons with similar disabilities. The views and empirical data collected in this process provided additional information and perspective for the EOC to assess the effectiveness of current access facilities in the types of premises audited.

14.5 In later parts of this chapter, the accessibility issues encountered by PWDs represented in the three focus groups are outlined, which include physical barriers as well as operational barriers and attitudinal issues. An overview of these accessibility issues is

presented in Tables 14a-14c for ease of reference followed by a summary of proposed improvements to the status quo and expectations of the focus group participants.

Public Housing Estates

Persons with mobility difficulties

14.6 PMDs who participated in the focus group comprised mostly of wheelchair users with a few individuals who used walking aid. The mobility challenge they most frequently encountered in daily life was changes in level, that is, vertical height transitions between adjacent surfaces or along the surface of a path. This might be in the form of one or more steps, a few inches' difference in levels between the pedestrian pathway and the shop, or the absence of a lift to reach different floors in a building. PMDs also reported that insufficient wheelchair manoeuvring space was a common problem, or to find facilities especially designed for them to be non-compliant with access standards and thus generating a different kind of frustration.

14.7 Open area

- a) PMDs expressed that the provision of ramps in public housing estates had increased over the years and become a common feature in newly built estates. Ramps could help PMDs negotiate differences in levels although not all the ramps could achieve this purpose. Some ramps were clearly not built in compliance with the standards in DM 1997. Problems encountered included the gradients of ramps being too steep, or that the lower ends of the ramps were too close to the road, both presenting risks to wheelchair users. In situations where construction work had existing ramps out of use, the temporary pathways provided were often not barrier-free. Occasionally, ramps had even been removed following public complaints about ramps obstructing pedestrian pathways.
- b) Floor tiles with coarse surface were difficult and hazardous because wheelchair users needed to use more strength to manoeuvre over them and people using walking aid were more prone to tripping over uneven surface.
- c) On some public housing estates, PMDs had difficulties buying daily necessities or using the facilities in adjacent estates in the same way as other residents

because the pathways connecting the two estates were not free of barriers, such as the existence of steps.

14.8 Shopping centres

- a) Shopping centres were common in public housing estates but while more provided lifts now than before, these facilities did not necessarily address the access needs of PMDs.
- b) PMDs reported it was not uncommon for the lifts to be located in areas that could only be reached by passing through fire exit doors. These doors were often heavy, possibly because of their function as a barrier to passage of smoke and fire. PMDs using a walking aid could only use one hand to open these doors while wheelchair users had to attempt it in a sitting posture. They often found it difficult to push or pull open fire exit doors and had to wait for passers-by to assist. The wait could be long because these parts of the buildings tended to be less frequented by the public.
- c) Doors also generally posed a problem for entry into buildings or the shops inside the buildings. An example would be a double-wing glass door at the building entrance that had insufficient clear opening width for a wheelchair to pass through and the wheelchair user being unable to push or pull open the two double-wing doors simultaneously. Another example could be found in restaurants and shops installing doors that were too heavy for PMDs to use.
- d) Inside shopping centres, stepped entrances to some of the shops posed further access challenge to wheelchair users while other difficulties were found inside specific types of shop: level difference was commonly found at supermarket entrances resulting in wheelchair users having to call for staff assistance to enter the premises; the aisles in restaurants were too narrow for wheelchairs to pass because the tables were too close to each other; service counter in banks and LCD monitors of ATM were not located at a level suitable for use by wheelchair users; and the lack of leg space at ATM machines also posed difficulties for wheelchair users.

14.9 Transport

- a) Many bus routes serviced public housing estates with bus terminals being located within the estates. Bus operators have increased the number of low floor buses, making it possible for wheelchair users to use their services. However, boarding areas for wheelchair users were not provided at all bus stops/terminals. Even where boarding space was available, this was sometimes blocked by parked buses, lamp posts or garbage bins. Sometimes the bus drivers did not stop at all at the boarding area, or failed to lower the boarding ramp onto the pavement or boarding area.
- b) One wheelchair user shared his experience that on one occasion, he learned after parking his car on the first floor of a car park that the building was accessible only by stairs. He had to use the roads inside the car park to reach the ground floor in order to leave and enter the building, which he considered to be a dangerous alternative.

14.10 Accessible toilets

- a) Accessible toilets were more commonplace in shopping centres but not all were built according to standards in DM 1997. Examples included a accessible toilet with such limited space that not even a small wheelchair could fit; or the toilet door opened inwards and made it impossible for a wheelchair user to close the door once inside the cubicle. Locking of accessible toilets frequently occurred and PMDs in need of the facility had to find a management company staff to unlock the doors.

14.11 Human factor or resource concerns

- a) PMDs generally found it difficult to contact the appropriate person or organisation to request special facilities or express their concerns about access issues. Even if they succeeded in making known their requests or views, the responses were not always satisfactory. One PMD claimed he had requested facilities for PWDs be provided in his public housing estate but was told there was insufficient resource to do so. He was eventually offered a property in another estate and although it was not his wish, he had to move in order to gain better access in and around the estate. Another PMD found the staff and engineers who handled his access request were unaware of the standards stipulated in DM 1997.

Persons with visual impairment

14.12 Open area

- a) PVI stated that they understood pillars and bollards were sometimes constructed in housing estates to prevent hawkers from trading inside the sites. However, their numbers as well as their differing heights and widths created obstacles for PVI when moving around the estates. One PVI claimed the gaps between some pillars and bollards were so narrow that they posed challenges even to those without visual impairment.
- b) Tactile guide path was intended to guide PVI along a route but, if poorly planned, could operate to be restrictive rather than facilitative.
- c) With the divestment of HA properties to The Link, PVI were concerned about the planning and connectivity of tactile guide paths from housing estates to ancillary facilities. In a housing estate where the shopping centre was now owned and managed by The Link, suggested installation of a tactile guide path from the estate to the centre was rejected by The Link.
- d) Concerns were also expressed that tactile guide paths positioned too close to walls or with obstacles placed in the path of travel could prove hazardous to PVI.

14.13 Shopping centres

- a) When using lifts without any voice announcement, PVI were unable to ascertain if they have reached their destination. Conversely, some lifts equipped with voice announcement were of no help because the speakers were installed in inappropriate places making the announcement inaudible. One example was given where the voice announcement system was destroyed by other users who claimed the noise was disturbing. In another case, the system was turned off after complaints were received from members of the public about its noise level.
- b) Escalators were an alternative facility for moving around the buildings but most did not provide any audible signals. Hence, PVI could not ascertain if the facility were available or when using it, if they have reached the next floor. PVI expressed that the lack of audible signals for escalators was due to a widely held

belief that it was unsafe for PVIs to use such facilities.

- c) With some stairs, the edge of each step would be painted with a contrasting colour to make it easier for PVIs to see. This function was sometimes lost when the stairs were not repainted after the colour has faded.
- d) Construction work underneath staircase could pose risks to PVIs who could not see any alert signs or the cordon used to close off the area even if these were available.

14.14 Others

- a) PVIs also mentioned the following concerns about public housing estates: low volume of fire alarms, inadequate lighting in public areas, and different volume levels of audible traffic lights.

14.15 Human factors and resources concerns

- a) PVIs were of the view that employees of estate management offices did not understand their needs and lacked sensitivity in dealing with the problems they highlighted. One PVI commented that even senior civil servants who were supposed to understand the technical aspect of access facilities lacked the sensitivity. He gave the example of a chief architect who failed to understand the significance of colour contrast between a pedestrian pathway and tactile guide path.
- b) One representative of an NGO explained that the efficiency in improving facilities sometimes depended on the relationships between PVIs and estate managers. Some PVIs expressed concerns that they sometimes received no response at all to their complaints of access problems.

Persons with hearing impairment

14.16 Communication

- a) Communication posed the greatest challenge for PHIs. Often PHIs used faxes to communicate with estate management offices but this mode had its limitations. Numerous factors at the receiving end could affect this communication, such as fax machine being turned off, or the machine was out of paper. Further, senior PHIs were more likely to have difficulties with writing and could not make use of

fax machines to communicate.

- b) PHIs expressed that they commonly experienced difficulties communicating with security guards. When they visited a particular building, the security guard would enquire where they wanted to go. PHIs with limited speaking ability found it hard to give clear replies and had sometimes been refused entry into premises.

14.17 Facilities

- a) Concerns were expressed that the lights on fire alarms were not visible from outside residential units and posed potential risks to those PHIs who could not hear the alarm.
- b) Unlike those who could make verbal enquiries with passers-by, PHIs relied heavily on signage on their first visits to premises. The lack of clear signage on public housing estates made it difficult for them to find their way around the estates.

Selected Public Premises

14.18 Libraries

- a) A wheelchair user claimed that in one library where a stair climber was installed to give access to all floors, wheelchair users have found it embarrassing using the facility due to its noisy operation. It disturbed the quiet environment and drew attention to the users.
- b) Some libraries did not provide accessible main entrances and wheelchair users had to enter through rear entrances. Apart from the inconvenience of calling staff to open the rear entrances, it could also disturb others using the library. One example given was in one library, wheelchair users entering from the rear entrance had to pass through a students' study area before they could go onto the main areas of the library.

14.19 Hospitals

- a) An upper floor accessible toilet in a public hospital was located next to a staircase, placing wheelchair users at risk of falling down the stairs.

- b) The signage for facilities for PWDs in one hospital was insufficient.
- c) PHIs could not tell if their names had been called when they waited their turns to enter the consultation room.
- d) PHIs claimed they could not book medical appointments by telephone due to their limited speaking ability. They would go directly to the hospital to try and book their appointments because they could lip-read and were more able to communicate verbally with hospital staff face-to-face. However, some hospital staff have refused to make the arrangements and insisted they had to book by telephone.
- e) PVIs claimed the lack of tactile guide path and directional instruction in some hospitals made it difficult for them to find the way to their destinations.

14.20 Cultural and recreational venues

- a) The absence of lift service to reach all floors including the backstage area was a concern for PMDs.
- b) PHIs relied on writing when booking sports venues at the service counters and this would take more time than communicating verbally. They found that venue staff sometimes showed impatience, especially when there was a long queue of people, and would like these staff to be more sensitive to their difficulties.
- c) PVIs claimed that the bollards and railings in parks, or floodlights that protruded out of the ground, posed obstacles for them as they negotiated their way around the parks.
- d) PVIs claimed that in one building where various government departmental offices were based, only one lift was equipped with a voice announcement, which showed the government paying lip service only to their needs.

Overview of Accessibility Issues

Table 14a: Physical barriers

Persons with mobility difficulties	Persons with visual impairment	Persons with hearing impairment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ramps with gradient not compliant with standards or located too close to roads - Coarse surface of floor tiles - Barriers on temporary pathways - Lifts located in places that can be reached only through passing heavy doors - Double-wing doors with insufficient clear opening width - Doors at shopping mall entrances were too heavy - Stepped entrance at shops - Aisles inside shops in markets too narrow - Stands erected at supermarket entrances blocked entry to premises - Design features of ATM did not cater to the needs of wheelchair users - Service counter in bank too high for wheelchair users - Accessible toilets did not comply with standards - No lifts provided in car parks - Lifts in some libraries did not reach all floors - Main entrances of some libraries not accessible - Accessible toilets in one hospital located too close to staircase - No clear signage in hospital on facilities for PWDs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Obstacles created by many pillars and bollards in housing estates and the narrow gap between some of them posed challenges even to those without visual impairment - No voice announcement in lifts - Inaudible voice announcement in lifts - No audio signal provided for escalators - Poor or no connectivity between tactile guide paths - Tactile guide path positioned too close to walls - Contrasting colour on edge of steps on stairs had faded - Inadequate lighting in public areas - Low volume of fire alarms - Different levels of volume of audio traffic lights - Construction work underneath staircase - No tactile guide path in hospitals - No directional instruction to service counter in hospital - No colour contrast and railings on the staircase of a cultural venue - Obstacles in parks caused by bollards, railings and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fire alarm is not visible from outside residential units - Lack of visual display board in hospitals to call patients to consultation rooms

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lifts in some cultural venues did not reach all floors and backstage - No boarding areas for wheelchair users at bus stop/terminus - Barriers, such as steps, found on pedestrian pathways connecting adjacent estates 	<p>floodlights protruding out of the ground</p>	
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Table 14b: Operational barriers

Persons with mobility difficulties	Persons with visual impairment	Persons with hearing impairment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Boarding areas at bus stops and terminuses blocked by parked buses, lamp posts and garbage bins - Bus drivers not stopping at boarding areas - Boarding ramps on low floor buses not lowered onto pavements or boarding areas - Accessible toilets locked - Ramps obstructed by construction work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tactile guide path blocked 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of effective communication channels with estate management office of public housing estates - Unclear signage to show directions

Table 14c: Attitudinal issues

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Persons responsible for building facilities for PWDs were not aware of the standards in design manuals - PWDs were unaware of appropriate complaint channels - No response received after complaints lodged by PWDs - Members of the public complained about the inconvenience created to them by facilities installed for PWDs - Lack of coordination between different owners or managers of premises on the same public housing estate - Government only paying lip service in providing facilities for PWDs - Sensitivity on the part of estate management employees in communicating with PHIs

Expectations and Proposed Improvements

14.21 General expectations of focus group participants

- a) The estate management staff of public housing estates and the engineers should be familiar with the standards stipulated in design manuals.
- b) Better coordination between The Link and the estate management office of public housing estates.
- c) The views of users should be taken into account when planning and providing special facilities for them.
- d) Public education was needed on the special needs of PWDs and assistive facilities.
- e) The provision of special facilities for PWDs should take into consideration the environment.
- f) Owners and managers of premises should make complaint channels and processes transparent and be responsive to complaints and requests.

14.22 Proposed improvements from PMDs

- a) Provide facilities such as ramp, accessible toilets, boarding areas at bus stops and terminals.
- b) Ensure accessible facilities comply with the standards set out in design manuals.
- c) The design of doors, that is, their width and height as well as opening force, should enable PMDs to open them independently.
- d) Aisles inside markets and shops should be wide enough for wheelchair users to pass through.
- e) Remove obstacles that obstruct the use of accessible facilities.
- f) Clear signage to show the location of access facilities for PMDs.
- g) Lifts should reach all the places that the public could access.

14.23 Proposed improvements from PVIs

- a) Provide accessible facilities to cater to the needs of PVIs, such as tactile guide paths, voice announcement and Braille buttons in lifts, colour contrasting paint on stair railings and steps.
- b) Replace button panel for entering security code with smart card system for entry to buildings.
- c) Remove obstructing railings, bollards, and ground floodlights in parks.
- d) Install loud speakers in parts of lifts where announcements could be heard clearly.
- e) Regular inspection and maintenance of special facilities of PWDs.
- f) Tactile guide paths in adjoining buildings or facilities should be connected.
- g) The plan for tactile guide path should take into consideration the external environment.
- h) Increase the volume levels of fire alarms.

14.24 Proposed improvements from PHIs

- a) Visual fire alarm be provided inside their residential units
- b) Estate management offices of public housing estates to provide effective communication means in addition to telephones.
- c) Clear signage to show directions.

14.25 In the process of finalising the full investigation report, a further focus group meeting with disability groups was held where participants were briefed on the initial findings and response from owners/managers of premises. It was the common consensus of the group that more funding should be provided to improve accessibility. Equally important were the general awareness and mainstreaming of accessibility into design, planning, and government policy. A high-powered body to co-ordinate the efforts and monitor the progress of accessibility in government-owned or run premises should be set up. Some participants considered the Commissioner for Rehabilitation could assume such co-ordination role. Disability issues should be incorporated into the school curriculum to give young people a proper perspective. Participants were of the view that all built environment and public areas in new government projects, such as West Kowloon Cultural District, must be made fully

accessible.

Observations

14.26 The information collected from the focus groups is largely anecdotal but appears to be reflective of the reality once it is compared with the audit results on current gaps in the provisions of access facilities. It was also important to ascertain the types of non-technical factors that interfered with the provision of access facilities, such as operational and attitudes issues. Last but not least, by hearing directly from focus group participants on their proposed improvements, the implementation of any of these proposals would likely be appropriate and meet the actual needs of the users.

CHAPTER 15 SUMMARY OF OTHER FINDINGS

15.1 It has been stated in earlier parts of this report that the barriers to access to the physical environment and the infrastructure derive from difference sources, including building laws and design codes, available resources, culture, attitudes and operational issues. Hence, as part of this audit, the EOC considered that it would be useful to ascertain if and how operational and attitudinal factors of the management organisations affected accessibility.

Operational Issues

15.2 The operational factors that may affect access relate primarily to policies, procedures and practices that govern the provision of services and facilities. The importance of these factors is sometimes overlooked because the focus on accessibility tends to be centred on the technical aspects of design standards and requirements. Yet operational factors could be critical in either ensuring or hindering access to premises. For example, it is not uncommon to find accessible toilets used as additional storage space in Hong Kong, or objects being placed carelessly in certain parts of the premises to obstruct wheelchair manoeuvring. Another example may be the refusal to admit a blind person and his/her guide dog into a restaurant because animals are prohibited from the premises. From these examples, it is plainly obvious that these types of obstacles could be easily removed with the implementation of considered policies and procedures that are sensitive to the needs of the users with disabilities.

15.3 This part of the audit was not intended to be a detailed and exhaustive study of potential operational barriers in addition to the sizeable audit of the status of access in 60 premises. Rather, the aim was to identify the types of operational barriers that might exist and to highlight these to service and facility providers so that they could take a broader view of access and look beyond compliance with standards in the DM1997 and DM2008.

15.4 The following were key operational barriers that were identified in the audit:

- a) locked accessible toilets with no display of information on how to seek assistance;
- b) accessible toilets transformed into storage space;
- c) objects put inside accessible toilets which obstructed wheelchair manoeuvring;

- d) no leg space under wash hand basin in accessible toilets;
- e) lack of for breast-feeding facilities in premises that would attract families, such as shopping centres ;
- f) inadequate signage in premises for persons with disabilities (“PWDs”);
- g) inconsistent or inappropriate sign design and misplacement of signs;
- h) tactile guide paths and warning strips hidden under carpets;
- i) obstacles placed on tactile guide path;
- j) warning strips made of slippery materials located outdoors;
- k) fading colour or coating wearing off on contrasting anti-slip tapes;
- l) lack of formal guidelines and procedures on dealing with evacuation of users with disabilities during an emergency; and
- m) lack of information on facilities for PWDs in printed materials or on the websites of the premises or services.

Staff Awareness

15.5 Policies and procedures are unlikely to be successful and sustainable in the long term if the actual practices of those who should approximate the intended procedures do not understand the purpose of such procedures and the underlying principles of the policies. In other words, staff members play a key role in identifying and removing operational barriers on a day-to-day basis. This is particularly so for staff in government and public organisations that provide a multitude of essential services to the public, such as housing, health, education and social services, to name but a few.

15.6 In this regard, training to raise the awareness of staff on disability issues and the rights of PWDs is of paramount importance and more so for government and public organisations. It is a first step in nurturing positive attitudes in staff towards PWDs and helping to increase their sensitivity and responsiveness to the needs of PWDs. This would hopefully reduce the incidence of discrimination against PWDs in accessibility as well as improve and enhance the socially responsible image of the organisations concerned.

15.7 There are situations where improvements to access may be subject to factors outside the control of the owners and/or managers of the premises, such as the limited alterations

that may be made to listed buildings on heritage sites. However, this does not mean no change and improvement could ever be made but only perhaps that more imaginative solutions are required to ensure PWDs enjoy some level of access to and around those premises. For example, it may mean that more movable access facilities are required for listed buildings if the structures could not be changed. Or perhaps it is possible to bring the service to the people by using satellite offices or moving certain types of services to premises that are accessible to PWDs.

15.8 For this part of the audit, interviews were conducted with representatives of the Target Premises to gauge how these organisations promoted the awareness of disability in staff. The observations from these interviews were included in the individual access audit reports and in the audit checklists.

15.9 The majority of representatives interviewed demonstrated a general understanding of the needs of PWDs and knowledge of access facilities that were currently available in their premises. Overall, they were also positive about continual improvement of access facilities. The representatives from HA and The Link in particular demonstrated clearer and stronger intention than others in improving access to their premises and facilities. Some representatives, such as those from the Department of Health (“DH”), showed greater awareness of the needs of PWDs.

15.10 It was observed that managers in a few premises/facilities were less cooperative in assisting the audit team with the site surveys. This included the property management contractors managing some public housing estates under the Tenants Purchase Scheme.

15.11 From the interviews, it was found that the majority of representatives interviewed and their staff members had not undergone any training on the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Ordinance.

15.12 It was also found that save for the HA and the DH, most of the other representatives did not have a high awareness of the need for training of their staff or on how to evacuate PWDs from their premises in case of emergency.

CHAPTER 16 RESPONSES FROM OWNERS AND MANAGERS OF PREMISES

Introduction

16.1 The owners and managers of the 60 audited premises are key stakeholders in providing and maintaining barrier free facilities. Their policies and practices are of great importance for assessing the current situation and ongoing improvements of such facilities. As part of this investigation, these stakeholders were contacted for information on organisational policies, guidelines, practices, funding arrangement and technical support in respect of providing and maintaining barrier free facilities. Their views were also sought on the role of the organisation in providing such facilities and any improvement plans as well as their communication with relevant parties on accessibility issues.

16.2 On completion of the physical audit, the stakeholders were contacted again for their comments on the audit findings. In each audit report contains a range of recommendations aimed at improving existing facilities to bring them in line with the requirements of DM1997. Photographs were provided in the reports for clarity so that the access issues would be immediately visible to the readers. The stakeholders were invited to comment on the shortfalls identified in individual sites against the requirements in DM1997 and FD2006, and on measures that had been or would be taken to address these shortfalls and bring the standards in line with the FD2006 (at the time, DM2008 had not yet been finalised and gazetted and hence we relied on FD2006). They were also asked to advise the EOC on any limitations in carrying out improvement works and provide information on training programmes to raise the awareness of staff on the use of facilities by persons with disabilities (“PWDs”).

16.3 All the stakeholders responded, with varying levels of details, to the invitations for information and comments. The following were reasons put forward for shortfalls identified in the audit: most of the premises audited were constructed before the DM1997 was promulgated and the rest before FD2006 came into existence; topography (such as difficulty in improving facilities in a housing estate built on a slope); structural constraints or technical difficulties; and the premises were historic building where the original design did not cater to the needs of PWDs and changes now were subject to requirements for heritage conservation. As expected, the problems that were easy to rectify and requiring less resources were dealt with quickly, such as moving an obstructing queuing post from the path of travel of a tactile guide path. In the main, structural or technical changes that involve more resources were

placed under renovation or retrofitting plans but few stakeholders gave time schedules for the works to be carried out. In some cases, the absence of clear timelines is understandable if the works are subject to feasibility studies, funding approval, or approval by a separate decision-making body. But even in those cases the EOC is of the view that some undertaking may still be given in regard to timelines for submitting proposals to relevant decision-making or funding bodies for consideration. Instead, some stakeholders give only a general undertaking to carry out improvement works in future renovations. The general nature and the absence of timelines do not convey a strong commitment to improve current accessibility problems, especially where they relate to works that do not appear problematic in terms of technicality or cost. Some government departments were able to give undertakings to carry out improvement works within 2009, which seems reasonable and provided a time frame for monitoring progress.

16.4 Based on information provided by government bureaux and departments, there appears to be a uniform policy to provide a barrier free environment for access to all types of premises, services and facilities. To this end and where possible, the Government refers to the standards promulgated in the Building Regulations and design manuals in improving or developing existing facilities. In the following segments, the information provided by the stakeholders is set out under each organisation. Where the same information has been provided by government bureaux and their executive departments, this would only be presented under the respective policy bureau segment to avoid duplication. In some cases where the provision of facilities in one premises involve several departments, such as the facilities at the piers in Central, the responses of individual departments may refer to the works of other departments. Again, to avoid duplication, only the response from the department directly responsible for the works is set out.

Labour and Welfare Bureau

16.5 Policy and practice

- a) It is the Government's rehabilitation policy objective to promote the full integration of PWDs into society. The office of the Commissioner for Rehabilitation ("C for R") is set up under the Labour and Welfare Bureau to facilitate government-wide efforts in achieving this objective.
- b) The Rehabilitation Advisory Committee's Sub-committee on Access ("RAC-ScA") is the Government's advisory body on the special needs of PWDs in regard to building design, external environment, transport facilities and access to

information technology and related media. Through this Sub-committee, the C for R assists the Development Bureau and the Transport and Housing Bureau as well as their executive departments in obtaining the views and feedback of PWDs on barrier free access in buildings and public transport facilities.

- c) The Labour and Welfare Bureau subvents the Environmental Advisory Service of the Rehabaid Society to provide specialised information and advisory services to government departments, hospitals and voluntary agencies on the provision of barrier free facilities and the design of accessible buildings.
- d) The Social Welfare Department, similar to other government departments, is responsible for ensuring provision of reasonable access to PWDs in premises it owns or manages.
- e) The Architectural Services Department (“ASD”), in collaboration with other government departments responsible for managing individual premises, will continue to carry out access and facility modification works in their service venues. Since 2006 to the time when making its response to EOC, a total of 37 improvement projects have been completed in leisure and cultural venues to provide suitable access and facilities for PWDs. Improvement works have also been carried out in 50 post offices, 34 police stations and 56 public clinics and health institutions.
- f) The RAC-ScA has also conducted reviews on access facilities to government venues and made suggestions to ASD and concerned departments on improvements to prioritised venues. For example, in May 2008, the Government has earmarked some \$68 million for the project to improve access to facilities at 130 government venues.

Transport and Housing Bureau

16.6 Policy and practice

- a) It is the policy of the Bureau, the Hong Kong Housing Authority (“HA”) and the Housing Department (“HD”) to provide and create a barrier free living environment for PWDs mainly in public rental housing (“PRH”) estates and ancillary facilities owned by HA.

- b) In respect of transport, the Government is committed to providing a barrier free and accessible street environment to PWDs to enhance their ability to move around at will and facilitate their integration into the community.
- c) The Bureau, together with its executive departments, have applied the DM1997 for all building contracts tendered out since April 1998. In planning and designing their projects, they also observe other relevant government guidelines including the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines issued by the Planning Department, and the Transport Planning and Design Manual (TPDM) issued by the Transport Department ("TD"). Any alteration and addition works for existing properties would also follow the DM1997.
- d) From 2001 to 2007, HA carried out a comprehensive improvement programme aimed at improving barrier free access in all existing PRH estates. Facilities including ramps, handrails, dropped kerbs and signage were installed in PRH estates in compliance with the obligatory design requirements stipulated in DM1997. Apart from facilities in common areas, within-flat facilities for households with PWDs were also provided on request, such as alteration of toilets in residential units for wheelchair users. The programme cost some \$20 million and covered 151 PRH estates.
- e) A programme aimed at improving accessible facilities for tenants with visual impairment (TVIs) covering both PRH and Tenants Purchase Scheme (TPS) estates took place from 2006 to 2008. It involved installing tactile warning strips for stairs and ramps, tactile guide paths, voice synthesisers [voice announcement] inside lift cars, tactile marking and Braille on call buttons inside lift cars, Braille on letter boxes, and tactile marking and Braille on ground floor door entry phone and combination lock panels.
- f) Measures have also been put in place to enhance the communication between TVIs and estate management offices. The offices keep a list of needy residents, such as TVIs or persons with other types of disabilities and elderly households for each and every estate. In case of emergency such as suspension of electricity or water supply, frontline management staff will contact the residents in need to give them first hand information. In respect of TPS estates, the IOs will be encouraged to take similar measures so that tenants could enjoy the same services.

16.7 Role in public housing

- a) The Bureau, HA and HD strive to observe the same accessibility standards for alteration and additions to existing estates as well as new developments to enhance accessibility for PWDs subject to site constraints. The role of HA, with the executive assistance of HD, provides public housing to those in need. Subject to the approval of HA, which is responsible for funding access facilities, HD will provide technical support and collaborate with other relevant parties in tackling accessibility issues, including to plan, design, construct, manage and maintain barrier free facilities owned by HA.
- b) Specific role in PRH estates
 - i. The HA owns PRH estates and takes a full role in ensuring barrier free access and facilities to and around the estates.
- c) Specific role in TPS estates
 - i. HA owns the unsold flats of TPS estates and is one of the co-owners of the common areas. The rights and obligations of HA and respective owners are set out in the Deed of Mutual Covenant (“DMC”). HA pays management fees according to management shares provided in the DMC.
 - ii. The Incorporated Owners (“IO”) of TPS estates, where HA is represented, is generally responsible for providing and maintaining barrier free access and facilities within the estates.
 - iii. Upon the sale of estates under TPS, HA sets up a management fund for the estates by injecting a one-off contribution equivalent to \$14,000 per residential flat, irrespective of whether they are sold or not. The fund is used for major maintenance works for the common areas and facilities as considered necessary by the IO, including repair and replacement of lifts, doors, railings, floor rails, and any other major works that are required to maintain the estates in a good and serviceable condition.
- d) Specific role in divested properties owned by the Link Management Limited
 - i. In 2005, the divestment exercise of properties owned by HA, including retail and car park facilities, was completed. The Link Management Limited (“The Link”) is the owners of premises and facilities divested to them and is responsible for funding, implementing, managing and maintaining facilities for barrier free access within the divested properties.
 - ii. The Independent Checking Unit (“ICU”) of HD performs building control function under the delegated authority of the Building Authority on properties

owned by The Link. The ICU processes The Link's submissions for additions and alterations, and advises on licensing applications according to the requirements of the Buildings Ordinance ("BO") and related regulations in connection with accessibility. The ICU adopts the same standards as those for private buildings controlled by the Buildings Department ("BD"), including the standards regarding accessibility.

16.8 Role in transport

- a) Transport Department ("TD") co-operates closely with the Highways Department ("HyD") in providing a barrier free travelling environment. TD sets the requirements for the design of barrier free transport-related facilities while HyD is responsible for the design, construction and maintenance of pedestrian paths (including pedestrian footways, footbridges and subways) in accordance with the requirements set by TD and a Transport Bureau Technical Circular issued by the then Transport Bureau.
- b) TD has published the Transport Planning and Design Manual ("TPDM") that provides guidelines on the design of barrier free transport facilities for planners and designers to follow. It was last updated in 2001 and will be updated from time to time to tie in with the development of public transport design to meet the needs of PWDs. To ensure new public transport interchanges ("PTIs"), ferry piers or new projects relating to transport services carried out by works departments⁹ comply with the requirements under TPDM, TD plays a monitoring role to vet the technical schedules of these projects at design stage. If works departments encounter technical difficulties in complying with TPDM, they need to seek TD's advice and propose alternative arrangements with justifications. If necessary, works departments may also need to consult groups that represent PWDs.
- c) Apart from new projects, the Government has been retrofitting traffic facilities and public transport infrastructures (including footbridges) to cater to the need of PWDs. Over the years, the Government has spent over \$2.6 billion to carry out such enhancement projects. Furthermore, TD plans to review the design of some 30 PTIs in 2008 and 2009 for improvements. HyD has also started another phase of study on the provision of access facilities for PWDs at existing footbridges as well as subways to review the suitability of carrying out retrofitting works for

⁹ Works departments in this context refer to Architectural Services Department, Civil Engineering and Development Department, Electronic and Mechanical Services Department, and Highways Department.

remaining existing footbridges and subways where access facilities were found to be inadequate.

- d) TD and works departments will assist in seeking funds for new projects of transport infrastructures or retrofitting works of existing transport-related facilities under their purview in the Public Works Programmes.

Government Property Agency

16.9 Role, responsibility and practice

- a) The Government Property Agency (“GPA”) is responsible for management of government joint-user office buildings and quarters. These premises are designed by ASD, its works agent, in compliance with the then statutory requirements, including those related to barrier free access.
- b) For new government joint user office buildings or quarters which are capital works projects, facilities provided in the buildings are funded from the capital works vote approved by the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council.
- c) With the assistance of ASD, on-going upgrading works are carried out to provide barrier free access facilities in existing buildings as far as practicable through incorporation in renovation or refurbishment projects. The upgrading works are usually funded from the relevant block votes for refurbishment or minor building works which are administered by committees with delegated authorities from the Financial Secretary. For specialist government buildings outside GPA’s purview, improvement works for provision of such facilities may be proposed by the corresponding departments who can bid funds from appropriate block votes for refurbishment or minor building works.
- d) As the project proponent for new joint-user government offices projects, it is GPA’s policy to provide barrier free access and facilities in compliance with current statutory requirements. ASD and Electrical and Mechanical Services Trading Fund (“EMSTF”) provide technical support and are responsible for design, construction and maintenance of the facilities.
- e) ASD will include barrier free facilities when carrying out refurbishment, alteration and improvement works after considering the feasibility, practical constraints and conditions of existing buildings, and in consultation with the corresponding

Building Management Committees in which GPA is represented. Priority is usually given to those buildings with high public patronage.

- f) GPA's Property Management Agents ("PMAs") are responsible for monitoring the condition of the barrier free facilities or properties under its management. They report defects to GPA's maintenance agents, that is, ASD and EMSTF, and monitor the progress of follow-up actions. GPA will also refer requests for improvement on barrier free access and facilities to these properties received from time to time to the maintenance agents for consideration and implementation.

16.10 Response to audit findings

- a) As most of the recommendations in the audit related to improvement works, GPA referred the audit findings to its work agents, ASD and EMSTF, for their consideration. Where the shortfalls related to the operation of the facilities under the control of relevant user departments, GPA has informed respective user departments to take necessary follow up actions. GPA has also requested its PMAs to reinforce training of their staff with a view to providing better assistance to PWDs and using barrier free facilities properly.
- b) GPA would request ASD and EMSTF to consider carrying out barrier free access upgrading works as recommended in the audit reports as far as practicable at the same time when carrying out other improvement works, in order to minimize disturbance to the user departments and visiting public.
- c) GPA would liaise with user departments of joint-user buildings under its purview to facilitate their proposed improvement programmes.
- d) GPA has already urged its PMAs to reinforce training to their staff and inform respective user departments in government joint-user office buildings to ensure proper use of barrier free facilities.
- e) One direct response received from a PMA concerned operational barrier in Cheung Sha Wan Government Offices. A queuing post that previously obstructed the tactile guide path that led to the public enquiry service counter would be relocated.

Hong Kong Housing Authority

16.11 Role, responsibility and practice

a) PRH estates

- i. HA has applied DM1997 to all new development since 1998 and the requirements have been incorporated into the relevant HD Design Guides and Master Details to align standard practices for public housing projects. HA also makes reference to the Practice Note for Authorised Person and Registered Structural Engineers No. 247, issued by BD, and the TPDM, Volume 6, issued by TD.
- ii. To keep PWDs abreast of HD's updated policies and important messages, information leaflets on "Services for the Disabled" are issued to tenants. In addition, publicity pamphlets and periodic estate newsletters are recorded at regular intervals and delivered to the households with TVIs.

b) TPS estates

- i. HA attends the management committee meetings of the IO and strives to convince the committee to obtain the consent of the IO in improving accessible facilities for PWDs.
- ii. Under the Building Management Ordinance, Cap. 344, and the DMC, the HA as one of the owners is bound by the decisions of the IO. Hence, if HA is unable secure consent from the IO to any improvement works to facilities, it may arrange external transfers of its tenants who live in the unsold flats.

c) Divested properties

- i. The representatives of HD and The Link meet regularly to discuss various issues, including accessible facilities. Through these meetings, HA strives to convince The Link to address its corporate social responsibilities in providing accessible facilities for PWDs.

16.12 Response to audit findings

- a) The audit surveyed 14 PRH estates and three commercial complexes owned by HA, and three TPS estates. Among the 14 PRH estates, seven contain retail and car parking facilities divested to The Link.

- b) HA stated it would carry out works to the following items but no details were given on the type of work planned or time frames for implementing the changes:
 - i. dropped kerbs; railings; ramps; stairs; tactile warning strips in external areas; voice announcement for floor arrivals inside lift cars; various general provisions in external areas such as signage, Braille and tactile maps; and adjustment or replacement of main entrance door hinges to ensure doors open without difficulties.
- c) HA considered the following works impracticable to retrofit due to site constraint in existing structures and estate layouts but would consider integrating these works in future renovations or replacement programmes with no proposed time lines given:
 - i. lower threshold to domestic flat entrances to below 25mm only in accordance with the needs of certain tenants, such as the elderly and PWDs, or as advised by their therapists;
 - ii. provide turning space of 1.5m x 1.5m at the dead-end of corridors;
 - iii. provide audible signals for travelling directions of lifts at lift lobbies, detection device at the height of 500-600mm to reinitiate re-opening of lift doors, and lift control buttons at 900-1200mm; and
 - iv. increase illumination level to 85 lux for corridors or stairs and 120 lux for lift lobbies.

The Link Management Limited

16.13 Role, responsibility and practice

- a) The Link acquired certain properties from HA in November 2005 of which some were built before the introduction of DM1997.
- b) As owner of premises and facilities divested to them, The Link is responsible for the funding, implementation, management and maintenance of facilities for barrier free access within those premises.
- c) The Link explained that some of its retail and car parking facilities were not fully compliant with DM1997 or FD2006 because those were built before the design manuals were introduced. However, it stated its intention was to provide proper

access and equal treatment to PWDs and the elderly with minimum barrier. It undertook to consider rectifying shortfalls and enhance access facilities wherever possible in compliance with the latest barrier free design requirements.

16.14 Response to audit findings

- a) In response to the audit reports on its six shopping centres and two car parks, The Link's overall approach appears to be that rectification will either be carried out now if possible or be considered for future renovation works.
- b) In respect of car parks, The Link commented as follows:
 - i. any alteration to the location and size of accessible parking bays would breach the agreed Assignment Plan and agreed number of car park bays;
 - ii. there might be hardship in replacing all existing handrails on staircases and steps to comply with standards but The Link would consider rectifying the situation along with the schedule of its renovation plan;
 - iii. for hardship reasons, improvements to the gradient of ramps would be included when undertaking major renovations;
 - iv. the height of shroff counter was difficult to rectify but staff at these counters will render necessary assistance;
 - v. tactile strips or colour contrasting nosing tiles would be installed according to its renovation plan and appropriate signage arranged where required;
 - vi. dropped kerbs to be provided when major renovations were undertaken and in the interim, arrangements such as a removable ramp might be provided; and
 - vii. door-closers to be adjusted or replaced so that no excessive force was required to open doors but if this was not possible, the problem with heavy doors would be rectified in future renovations.
- c) In respect of shopping centres:
 - i. a bucket placed under wash basin in one accessible toilet had been removed;
 - ii. the following to be arranged: directory for access ramps; colour contrast on glass doors to make them visible (some had been carried out already to increase contrasting visibility); replace door knobs with lever door handles

on accessible toilets and add folding grab bar inside toilet cubicles; warning guardrail under escalators;

- iii. the following to be replaced or rectified in due course: drain covers; width of exit doors; height of door handles; projecting nosing at steps and raised traction strips; height of emergency call bell inside accessible toilets; and move flushing control on water closet ("WC") to be mounted on the wide side of cubicle;
- iv. The Link would liaise with lift service contractor and consider installing audible signal for accessible lifts; adjusting height of essential lift buttons; installing detective re-open device on lift doors; and providing handrail inside lift cars;
- v. currently under consideration were: increasing level space beyond the door swings area; installing visible fire alarm system; installing tactile guide paths and signs at certain [unspecified] locations; and providing at least one accessible parking space at Oi Man shopping centre;
- vi. for hardship reasons, the following might be considered in major renovations: provision of half landing at each 10 metres horizontal run; Braille and tactile layout plan at directory (on this point, The Link also informed its staff was always at the service counter to render assistance);
- vii. for hardship reasons, the replacement of existing handrails might be considered in future renovations;
- viii. the following might be considered according to renovation schedule: tactile strips or colour contrasting nosing tiles at dropped kerb, staircases and steps; tactile and colour signs for accessible toilets; reposition WC against the wall next to wash basin to create more space on the wide side of cubicle for wheelchair users;
- ix. door-closers to be adjusted or replaced so that no excessive force was required to open doors but if this was not possible, the problem with heavy doors would be rectified in future renovations;
- x. improving the gradient of ramps might be difficult for hardship reasons and some of the ramps identified were only for loading and unloading purposes;
- xi. providing access between the car park and Oi Man shopping centre might be difficult for hardship reasons and The Link added that an alternative route for the two buildings already existed;

- xii. the height of service counters would not be adjusted because there was always staff at the counter to provide assistance;
 - xiii. a feasibility study was currently being conducted on providing lift facilities in Oi Man Shopping Centre;
 - xiv. in respect of the problems found in male and female toilets, such as the height of urinals, WCs and wash basins, and the steps in front of urinals, The Link commented that accessible toilets were provided within near distance in most cases; and
 - xv. in regard to stepped entrances to shops, The Link claimed where the shortfalls were within tenants' premises, it had to liaise with them to arrange rectification. In the meantime, The Link would advise tenants to provide movable ramps or render assistance to PWDs. In other cases, stepped entrances would be rectified subject to hardship considerations.
- d) On staff training and awareness, The Link made a general point that it would continue to educate its staff to maintain their awareness level for providing non-discriminatory services to end-users and ensure that they acquired formal knowledge and overview of the Disability Discrimination Ordinance ("DDO").

Hong Kong Housing Society

16.15 Role, responsibility and practice

- a) The Hong Kong Housing Society ("HKHS") managed the Tung Tau (II) Estate, a TPS estate, on behalf of the IO. The estate was formerly a PRH estate and became a TPS estate in 2002. HKHS has an advisory role to the IO on matters relating to accessible facilities and the provisions of the DDO with the decision-making powers resting with the IO.
- b) On barrier free access, HS explained its role and practices as a management agency was to be aware of the relevant DDO provisions and latest requirements on accessible facilities. It would keep the IO informed of accessibility issues, address any concerns the IO may have and recommend improvement works to the IO for its approval. Whether improvement works could proceed would be subject to considerations of various factors including approved budget for the estate, approved resource of HKHS under the Service Agreement and scope of service, public consultations and its feedback.

16.16 Response to audit findings

- a) HS stated that, subject to approval by the IO and budget availability, upgrading works such as erection of directional signs, minor repairs of nosing tiles or anti-slip strips, adjustment and minor rectification of smoke doors and main entrance doors at lobby entrances could be implemented in the financial year 2008-09.
- b) The IO would be advised of the latest barrier free requirements for lifts and ramps but it would be at their discretion on whether to approve such works. Larger scale improvements would require resolutions being passed at Annual General Meetings or Extraordinary General Meetings and this would incur additional management expenses.
- c) In response to the suggested improvements, HS would recommend the following for the consideration of the IO:
 - i. where applicable in respect of access route, elevated walkways and external steps and staircases – provide handrails and tactile warning strips to ramps and staircases; adjust gradient of ramp to no more than 1:12; provide adequate colour contrasting nosing for staircases; provide adequate landing space for ramps;
 - ii. provide lifts to serve all floors of residential blocks;
 - iii. provide the following facilities in lifts: detection device to initiate re-opening of lift doors, voice announcement inside lift cars as well as in lift halls to indicate travelling directions, and essential lift control buttons;
 - iv. provide the following facilities to escape staircases in residential blocks: raised directional sign on handrails, handrails extended beyond the first and last nosing of steps, tactile warning strips, and colour contrasting nosing;
 - v. reduce the current width of the surface channel gratings; and
 - vi. reposition the height of the fire alarm call point to a lower point.
- d) In respect of the other areas of concern identified in the audit, HS commented as follows:
 - i. not all ramps in the estate were of barrier free access because some were for general use only;

- ii. main entrance doors could be adjusted to make them easier to open but a smaller door opening force would increase closing speed, create loud noise on door closing, and could become a safety hazard;
 - iii. the height of lift call buttons would be adjusted as soon as practicable;
 - iv. would recommend the IO to provide Braille and tactile maps on the layout of the estate;
 - v. would recommend the IO to provide accessible signs posted at accessible site entry points, ramps and non-accessible site points;
 - vi. low lighting level of internal residential corridors would be reviewed and adjusted if necessary;
 - vii. damaged or worn out anti-slip materials on floor and chipped nosing tiles on steps would be replaced by on-site fitters of HS;
 - viii. owners and tenants were responsible for lowering the threshold of their own flat entrances but they would be advised not to extend the thresholds onto common areas;
 - ix. in respect of empty bays at ground level that served as passageways connecting residential blocks and ancillary facilities but were not all free of barriers due to steps, the HS did not encourage the use of empty bay as access but gave no explanation;
 - x. ancillary facilities such as the elderly centre, clinic, kindergarten and retail outlets were owned and managed by either the HA or The Link; and
 - xi. problems relating to dropped kerbs and bus terminals were outside the purview of the estate.
- e) As part of HA's programme to improve facilities for PVI on both PRH and TPS states (see paragraph 16.6 d. above), HA arranged to install for free voice announcement in lift cars, visitors' telecommunication system for individual buildings, and tactile guide paths on the estate. The maintenance cost of these facilities will be borne by the IO.
- f) HS stated its estate management staff were aware of their obligations under the DDO and would act accordingly. In addition, contact telephone numbers have been posted in main lobbies of buildings for use by PWDs in case of need. In future, HKHS would include PWDs in the future regular fire drill exercises.

Transport Department

16.17 Role, responsibility and practice

- a) Following the review of the TPDM, PTIs and ferry piers constructed thereafter are provided with suitable facilities according to the TPDM for use by PWDs. These projects fall within Public Works Programme and are funded under the Capital Works Reserve Fund ("CWRF"). The TD will provide justifications to facilitate fund-seeking for the projects. If the project is approved, funds from CWRF will be allocated to works departments to implement the project. Relevant maintenance departments will also apply for funding for future maintenance at the same time. Since accessible transport facilities are standard provisions in PTIs and ferry piers, separate funding application is not required. Once the project is completed, different maintenance departments will take over the maintenance and repair responsibilities of different parts of those premises and facilities.
- b) In providing accessible transport facilities, TD will arrange for PWDs to visit the sites of major PTIs and ferry piers to facilitate better understanding of the new facilities, such as to Lok Ma Chau PTI and the new pier for Star Ferry before they were commissioned.
- c) There are established division of responsibilities among maintenance departments for PTIs and ferry piers. In general, ASD is responsible for maintaining the structure of government buildings of PTIs and ferry piers. The Civil Engineering and Development Department ("CEDD") handles the feeder system of ferry piers, while the Electronic and Mechanical Services Department ("EMSD") is responsible for the electrical and mechanical installation of ventilation systems of PTIs as well as lift and ramp facilities in ferry piers. HyD is responsible for road surface, traffic and lighting facilities within PTIs including dropped kerbs, tactile warnings strips and tactile guide paths. These departments conduct maintenance inspections according to their own schedules or upon receipt of reports to carry out repair works. In case of unallocated public piers, TD will co-ordinate the improvement works with the maintenance departments. For ferry piers that have been leased to ferry operators, the operators will report defects to relevant maintenance department for action. Any report received by TD from the public on defects in facilities will also be forwarded to maintenance departments for rectification.

- d) TD set up a Working Group on Access to Public Transport by People with Disability (“Working Group”) in 1993 to gauge the opinions of PWDs and ensure accessible transport facilities meet their needs. Members include organisations that represent persons with different types of disabilities and public transport operators from rail, bus and ferry services. The Working Group provided a regular forum for PWDs and public transport operators to discuss transport issues affecting PWDs. TD is also a member of the Subcommittee on Access under the Rehabilitation Advisory Committee, which also offers comments from policy angle on accessible transport facilities. The deliberations at the Subcommittee meeting and information provided by PWDs would be taken into account when updating the design standards in TPDM, as in the case of the 2001 review which resulted from discussions with PWDs.
- e) In the TPDM, it recommends the height of dropped kerbs to be 15mm¹⁰, which differs from the obligatory requirement of 10mm in DM1997.¹¹ TD explained it has set the recommended height at 15mm after consultation with concerned organisations that represented PWDs in 2001 and has adopted this standard since then. It is aware of the difference between the two design manuals and has drawn this to the attention of BD during the review of DM1997 in 2006. The new DM2008 now promulgates the same standard as the TPDM by setting the level change to be no more than 15mm as an obligatory design requirement.¹²
- f) TD takes the view that even with facilities that had been designed and constructed before the TPDM was updated in 2001, these could still be retrofitted to the latest design and standards by phases. It has liaised with maintenance departments to review those facilities and the retrofitting works mainly comprise provision of tactile guide paths, dropped kerbs and crossing facilities. These are not complicated works and could be absorbed in the budget without any need to seek separate funding. Where facilities cannot be retrofitted to latest TPDM standards due to site constraints but alternative designs may be available, TD will liaise with the maintenance department and consult with PWDs for comments.

¹⁰ Section 8.4.2.2 of the TPDM recommends that on the immediate approach to all at-grade crossings, 15mm high dropped kerbs with ramps should be provided across the full width of the crossing.

¹¹ Section 4.3.1 of the DM1997 set out that a 10mm level change shall be provided at every interface of dropped kerbs and vehicular areas.

¹² See section 21(d) in Division 6 of the DM2008 on dropped kerbs.

- g) TD advised that based on its contact with PWDs, they appear more concerned with the facilities at PTIs. Hence, TD focuses its improvement plans on PTIs, in particular the major ones close to railway stations where utilisation rate is higher. It plans to review some 30 PTIs in 2008 and 2009 for improvements.

16.18 Response to audit findings

- a) In respect of the various problems identified in the audit, TD responded as follows:
 - i. HyD was expected to carry out improvement works to gradient level of the sidewalk access to Pier 5 lower deck entrance in the first half of 2009.
 - ii. ASD has been requested to provide adequate contrasting colour bollards against background and it planned to carry out improvement works within 2009.
 - iii. Entrances to retail shops in Piers 7 and 8 and displays inside shops:
 - (1) The shops concerned were located in the Central Terminal Building and subleased by Star Ferry to its tenants. According to Star Ferry, the height thresholds of shop entrances were provided at 27mm to 40mm. These thresholds were important in preventing flooding under heavy rainfall and deck washing. Wheelchair users who wanted to patronise the shops were currently well attended by the tenants.
 - (2) The windowsills of the shops were not originally designed for displaying exhibits. According to Star Ferry, the displays were housed in the showcases designed and tailor-made to fill up space at the windowsills of the Central Terminal Building. With the fixed height of the windowsills, it would not be feasible to rearrange the exhibits to a lower level.
 - iv. ASD planned to carry out improvement works within 2009 to the following facilities in Pier 5: internal staircase, WCs, accessible toilet, access issues with the emergency egress.
 - v. In respect of the WCs in Pier 7, ASD explained that improvement works might involve closure of the toilet, which would inconvenience potential users. ASD suggested incorporating the improvement works in future substantial refurbishment work of the toilet.

- b) In respect of the emergency egress at Pier 7, the audit recommended that the opening force should be adjusted to comply with DM1997. The CEDD made the following observations with reference to DM1997 and DM2008:¹³
- i. The requirement of door closing devices with maximum opening force for internal doors and exterior doors applied to doors on accessible routes to enable PWDs, wheelchair users in particular, to enter and leave any room unaided and without undue difficulties.
 - ii. Accessible routes should be provided from a prominent point or points on the lot boundary, which was accessible to a public street or pedestrian way, directly to at least one entrance which was commonly used by the public or to a point directly adjacent to one entrance which was commonly used by the public and to an accessible lift.
 - iii. The emergence egresses in Pier 7 audited were emergency escape routes with stairs leading to the lower deck and would only be used in emergency. They therefore would not form part of the accessible routes.
 - iv. ASD would confirm with CEDD on whether the doors complied with the standard at pier opening in November 2006 and if the reply was affirmative, ASD would take follow up action.
- c) CEDD stated that non-slip nosings in contrasting colour have been provided for steps to staircases at Piers 7 and 8 as well as Central Terminal Building before pier opening in November 2006. Recent site inspection has found wear and tear at the nosing and Architectural Services Department (“ASD”) as the maintenance department has been requested to take follow up action.
- d) In response to the recommendation for an assistive listening system with international sign:
- i. The current facility comprised an amplifying speaker system installed at ticketing booths in Pier 5 to facilitate communication between customers and ticketing staff. In view of financial losses incurred and the present

¹³ Section 4.7 of the DM1997 sets out the requirements to enable PWDs, wheelchair users in particular, to enter and leave any room unaided and without undue difficulties. As obligatory design requirements, paragraph 4.7.1 sets out that the door opening force for exterior and interior doors should not be more than 30 N and 22 N respectively. These requirements remain unchanged in the new DM2008 at paragraphs 37 and 43 in Division 10 on doors. In Division 4 of the DM2008 on access route, paragraph 11 sets out the obligatory design requirements for the provision of access route.

operating environment, New World First Ferry had no plans to install an induction loop system but would keep the recommendation as a useful reference for future service enhancement.

- ii. According to the Star Ferry, at least one staff was on duty behind the turnstiles at the entrance of Piers 7 and 8. Pier staff could conduct effective face-to-face communication with passengers with a hearing impairment. As automatic token machines were in place at the entrances, there was no need for Star Ferry to open the manual turnstile at the ticketing counter, hence no information counter in fact existed at the entrance of Piers 7 and 8.
- e) ASD had already installed a visual fire alarm at Pier 5 in September 2008.
- f) ASD and Star Ferry would jointly carry out improvement works to the signs at Piers 5 and 7 within 2009.

16.19 TD presented the following actions taken to address operational barriers:

- a) The ferry operator has removed obstacles that blocked the signage and assistance requesting button at Pier 5.
- b) In response to the recommendation that traction strips should not cover the entire width of boarding ramps, TD stated that grooves were currently provided to the boarding ramp at the lower deck of Pier 5 for wheelchair passage.
- c) The Star Ferry has formulated policies and operating procedures to provide non-discriminatory services to end-users, and a briefing on these would be given to all staff and new recruits.
- d) The New World First Ferry would keep staff informed of the latest statutory requirement and ensure provision of quality service to visitors with special needs.

Architectural Services Department

16.20 Role, responsibility and practice

- a) ASD is the works agent responsible for maintenance of government buildings and assist the management departments to upkeep the premises to suit their operational requirements.
- b) To raise public awareness of universal accessibility (“UA”), ASD has published two research reports, titled “Universal Accessibility – Best Practices Guidelines” and “Universal Accessibility for External Areas, Open Spaces and Green Spaces”, which are both available on its website. ASD also participates in local and international conferences for knowledge sharing and to keep abreast of latest developments and technologies in accessibility.
- c) ASD puts its research work into practice by applying UA in both new and existing government building projects.
- d) New government building projects
 - i. For all new government building projects procured by ASD, the aspect on UA will be thoroughly considered at the outset of the planning stage, using the department’s design guidelines and a checklist devised for the purpose. Compliance with these documents is overseen by a design vetting committee of the department. In general, all new building projects will be designed to meet the mandatory requirements of the barrier free design manuals statutorily prevailing at the time. Wherever practicable, more stringent barrier free standards than the mandatory ones will be adopted.
- e) Existing government buildings
 - i. ASD will work together with management departments to include barrier free facilities as far as practicable when carrying out refurbishment, alteration and improvement works to existing buildings.
 - ii. To further enhance the accessibility of government buildings for PWDs, ASD has long been working closely with the Working Group established under the RAC. The RAC regularly identifies and selects a list of government buildings for ASD, in collaboration with the relevant management departments, to carry out modification works to provide appropriate barrier free facilities.

16.21 Response to audit findings

- a) The audit was carried out with reference to DM1997 and FD2006. Most of the government buildings selected for audit were either constructed or designed before the promulgation of the DM1997 and all were completed before the

existence of FD2006. Throughout the years, ASD has been continuously conducting improvement works to provide barrier free facilities in these buildings as far as practicable in order to eliminate the pitfalls. Some of the pitfalls identified in the audit were either not obligatory requirements specified in DM1997 or related to FD2006 which were not yet promulgated. Some other shortfalls were related to the operation of the facilities under the control of the management departments.

- b) ASD intended to rectify current shortfalls in existing buildings as far as practicable to meet the requirements of the new DM08 and would work closely with management departments to achieve this objective in future works.
- c) ASD identified the following limitations or difficulties encountered during improvement of barrier access facilities in existing buildings but stressed in spite of this it would still try it best to work with management departments on improving access for PWDs:
 - i. Inadequate space – space might not be available or released by management departments for providing barrier free facilities to fully comply with prevailing standards. For instance, the provision of handrails with 300mm extension might reduce the circulation space of the staircase enclosure, possibly leading to contravention of fire safety requirements.
 - ii. Structural constraints – the construction of ramps for PWDs, stair lifts or door openings were sometimes obstructed by the presence of ground beams, structural columns and other built-in facilities. Extensive structural alteration and services diversion might either be technically unfeasible or considered impracticable by management departments.
 - iii. Encroachment into common areas and outside the site boundary – some external barrier free facilities, such as tactile flooring and ramps, might encroach into common areas or sometimes fall outside the site boundary of the buildings. For leased buildings located in private lots, management departments might not succeed in obtaining agreement from the building owners for execution of improvement works beyond the leased areas.
 - iv. Work in historic buildings – due to the historic value of graded historic buildings and the requirements on heritage conservation imposed by the Antiquities and Monuments Office (“AMO”), it might not be feasible to carry out extensive alteration works to include all required barrier free facilities in these buildings.

- d) ASD has scheduled training sessions to assist its staff in familiarising themselves with the latest requirements for barrier free access. It has also invited the BD to conduct briefing sessions for ASD staff on the DM2008. Copies of these design manuals were available to staff who could access these easily either in its library or on the intranet.

Civil Engineering and Development Department

16.22 Role, responsibility and practice

- a) CEDD explained there are basically two types of barrier free access facilities it maintains in the following premises:
- b) Franchised and licensed ferry piers
 - i. These are managed and operated by the respective ferry operators under the overall management of TD. The planning and design for ferry piers are done in consultation with various parties. The types of vessels allowed to use the particular pier are specified in TD's Conditions of Licence for the operation of the ferry service.
 - ii. In the segment on "Standards for Ferry Piers" in TPDM, Volume 9, Chapter 7, paragraph 7.5.1.5 provides that "The Port Works Division is the authority on the structural design of ferry piers, while the architectural layout is governed by the requirements of Transport Department and other concerned parties."
 - iii. Although not specifically stated in TPDM, the requirements of TD would appear to be aimed at providing barrier free access. The typical ferry pier has access ramps for passengers, and the passengers would board the vessel via a gangplank which raises or lowers to suit the tide levels. However, TD should be consulted to confirm whether these facilities apply in all cases.
- c) Public piers
 - i. A public pier can take the form of either a finger pier or public landing steps (formed within the seawall). In respect of the landing steps portion of these piers, no particular provision appears to have been made in past years to the needs of PWDs. Access to and from the vessels in both types of public pier is gained via a staircase down to the boarding level of the particular vessel.

There is no impediment to access onto the main hardstanding areas, including the pier deck and catwalk.

- ii. Unlike ferry piers, public piers are available for use by as many vessels as possible, ranging from small to very large, and of varying shapes. Allowance also has to be made for constantly varying tide levels. For these reasons, landing steps are essential at public piers and it would be impractical to provide complete barrier free access.

16.23 Response to audit findings

- a) CEDD explained that the piers in Central in the audit report comprised Piers numbers 5, 7 and 8, all of which were constructed by CEDD. As a general point, the access facilities at all three piers were designed and approved by BD in the 1990s before the implementation of DM1997.
- b) In respect of the various problems identified in the audit, CEDD responded as follows:
 - i. Access to Star Ferry Piers 7 and 8 lower deck entrance – CEDD claimed the gradients of existing access to Piers 7 and 8 lower deck entrances were at about 1:12 in compliant with DM1997. The gradients only slightly exceeded 1:12 in a few local locations near Pier 7 but those were still less than the maximum gradient of 1:10 allowed for in TPDM. In addition, an alternative access to the lower deck entrance via the passenger lifts at the Central Terminal Building and Piers has also been provided for the use of PWDs.
 - ii. Access to upper floors of Piers 7 and 8
 - (1) The steps of staircases were now fitted with colour contrasting nosings to be maintained by ASD; and outstanding tactile warning strip at ground level of Central Terminal Building had also been installed.
 - (2) Escalators were not obligatory requirements under DM1997. It is suggested that the provision of adequate contrasting colour bollards should be followed up by ASD.
 - (3) The lift that caused concern was a service lift located near the middle of Central Terminal Building and not designed for use by PWDs. Passenger lifts were provided at either side of the building and at Piers 7 and 8. In accordance with DM1997, these lifts provided Braille and tactile lift

buttons as well as audible signal at lift entrances to indicate lift car arrivals and directions of travel.

- c) The detection device provided in the passengers lifts in Piers 7 and 8 were checked following the audit findings and found to be working properly. The device could initiate re-opening of the lift doors at a height of 500-600mm.
- d) The various access issues found in the emergency egress at Piers 5 and 7 would be followed up by CEDD, ASD and TD.
- e) The signs at Piers 7 and 8 were checked and found to be working satisfactorily before the piers came into operation in November 2006. The maintenance of signage would be followed up by ASD, TD and ferry operators.

Department of Health

16.24 Role, responsibility and practice

- a) In respect of existing clinic premises and in planning new clinic projects, the Department of Health ("DH") would request ASD to incorporate barrier free facilities in the works in accordance with the latest design manuals.
- b) For any improvement plans on barrier free facilities, DH will liaise with ASD on the funding arrangement for the necessary works and request the department to carry out the works as soon as funding is secured.
- c) DH requests its Service Heads to remind frontline staff of clinics and service units to render appropriate assistance to clients with disabilities.

16.25 Response to audit findings

- a) DH referred the EOC to the comments provided by ASD, which covered the general conditions and current positions of all government premises including the five premises under DH (see paragraphs 16.20-21 under the segment on ASD).
- b) To raise staff awareness, staff were reminded by their Service Heads to render appropriate assistance to clients with disabilities as well as through sharing, briefing and guidance from time to time to ensure barrier free facilities were not misused.

- c) DH stated it has all along been making every endeavour to meet the major objectives of the government's rehabilitation policy to create a barrier free physical environment to facilitate the integration of PWDs into the community. It would continue to work with ASD in planning and carrying out improvement works to barrier free facilities in clinic premises in order to meet the latest standards as far as practicable.

Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

16.26 Role, responsibility and practice

- a) Food and Environmental Hygiene Department ("FEHD") places great importance on barrier free access in its premises and facilities and aims to comply with relevant statutory requirements and enhance its facilities to PWDs in existing or new premises. Its work agent, ASD, provides FEHD with expert advice and necessary technical support. Upon their advice, FEHD would include the necessary funding for barrier free facilities in the project costs. If major works are involved, FEHD needs to consult with affected parties, such as sitting tenants or existing users on the scope and timing of the work.
- b) In planning new FEHD facilities, ASD will design the buildings and project scope in compliance with statutory requirements including the DM1997. Where appropriate, FEHD will request additional barrier free access facilities taking into account the type of users, such as additional signage and alarm signals. ASD will implement and monitor the project while FEHD inspects the site upon completion. Subject to public feedback, further refinement of barrier free facilities may be considered and implemented after the facility is opened for public use.
- c) In regard to improvement works, ASD will examine the site and advise FEHD of the technical feasibility subject to space availability and site constraints. For example, accessible toilet for PWDs may be installed under a refurbishment programme. If there are significant constraints, FEHD and ASD will discuss the best available option. Once the scope of improvement is confirmed, ASD will implement and monitor the project.
- d) ASD carries out scheduled maintenance for FEHD premises once every few years. FEHD will request ASD to include basic provisions where technically feasible, such as tactile guide paths, ramps, handrails and signage.

- e) FEHD had planned to conduct a survey 2008 on its public markets built prior to mid-1990s to ascertain whether and how barrier free facilities might be provided in those premises, including any current facilities that are not compliant with DM1997.

16.27 Response to audit findings

- a) In respect of the various problems identified in the audit, FEHD responded as follows:
 - i. The five food markets audited were all designed and constructed before the promulgation of DM1997 but FEHD would take all practical steps to try to meet its aim of providing barrier free access to its premises and facilities. It would continue to work with ASD to carry out improvement works when the venue or facilities were due for refurbishment or upgrading so as to meet prevailing standards. Where practicable, it would make its best efforts to carry out the works early, particularly those that were not dependent on site constraints, such as providing directional signs with the international symbol for accessibility at main entrances as well as other inaccessible entrances that give direction to accessible entrances; and providing colour contrasting marking to top of bollards positioned in front of escalators to alert persons with visual impairment.
 - ii. In respect of the new DM2008, FEHD stated it would continue to work with ASD to meet the latest prevailing standards when carrying out refurbishment, alteration or improvement works.
 - iii. At some sites, the constraints caused by space availability or building structure would restrict improvement works as recommended by the audit. Examples of difficulties were given in respect of providing accessible toilet in To Kwa Wan Market; and repositioning the automatic sliding doors at Centre Street entrances to Sai Ying Pun Market to allow more landing space. Hence, any improvement or enhancement works on these sites would have to be dealt with in the longer term.
 - iv. To promote awareness of equal opportunities and enhance staff's understanding of various anti-discrimination laws, FEHD has added a link to the EOC on its Intranet as a related site for staff's easy reference. It has also organised training programmes to enhance staff's general awareness on requirements under the respective ordinances. On a daily basis, staff

stationed in market premises would give necessary assistance to market goers including the elderly, children and PWDs. They would patrol different parts of the markets regularly including accessible toilets to ensure the facilities were properly managed and used.

- v. The FEHD stated it would also implement administrative measures to ensure the proper use of existing accessible provisions to foster a barrier free shopping environment in all FEHD markets.

Home Affairs Department

16.28 Role, responsibility and practice

- a) The overall policy of Home Affairs Department (“HAD”) is to enhance its facilities in community halls and centres to meet the needs of PWDs. It seeks the assistance of ASD in improving the level of accessibility in existing premises, such as installing ramps at entrances for easier access by wheelchair users and signal announcement systems in elevators for users with visual impairment.
- b) The Headquarters of HAD and 15 out of its 18 District Offices (“DO”) are located in government joint-user office buildings. GPA is the portfolio manager of those buildings and it relies on ASD to help maintain a barrier free environment at all government offices. The three remaining DOs are situated in leased premises where barrier free facilities, such as accessible toilets, are provided in common areas to accommodate the needs of PWDs. Some of HAD’s sub-offices are located in community centres where other non-government organisations (“NGOs”) are also housed.
- c) ASD is the works agent of HAD, and HAD seeks funds to carry out improvement works within its offices. HAD works closely with ASD to keep the matter under constant review and to strive for further improvement.
- d) Community halls
 - i. HAD is responsible for the provisions and management of community halls, which are used for various types of community, social and civic activities as well as serving as temporary shelters for people in need during natural disasters, emergency situations and inclement weather. At the time of services, it currently managed 51 community halls and strived to enhance

accessibility of these premises by seeking technical advice and assistance from ASD.

- ii. When planning new community halls, ASD provides professional input to ensure the halls are designed and built in accordance with DM1997 as well ASD's internal document "Best Practices and Guidelines on Universal Accessibility".
- iii. Under the new District Minor Works ("DMW") programme beginning 2008-9, funds for improvement, renovation and upgrading works will be provided in the DMW block vote under the control of the Director of Home Affairs. Under the new mode of service delivery, District Councils ("DCs") will have great involvement in managing community hall facilities. Where appropriate, District Officers will follow the recommendations and advice of ASD on any proposal to install barrier free facilities in community halls and submit proposals to DCs for consideration, and implement the proposals after obtaining their endorsement.

e) Community centres

- i. There are currently 38 community centres and each contains a community hall as well as a welfare block that houses some of HAD's district sub-offices and activities centres run by NGOs. ASD acts as HAD's work agent and technical advisor for improvement works in these premises.
- ii. ASD provides funding for renovation and upgrading works in HAD's sub-offices and common areas while beginning 2008-9, the DMW provides funding for enhancement works for community hall facilities, such as multi-purpose halls, conference rooms and activity rooms.
- iii. The government no longer builds new community centres.

16.29 Response to audit findings

- a) HAD's response incorporated the comments from Wong Tai Sin District Office, Kwai Tsing District Office and Tsuen Wan District Office:
 - i. ASD would be asked to make minor improvements, such as installing a grab bar inside a toilet and providing tactile signs for toilets.

- ii. For major improvements such as provision of ramp and accessible facilities backstage, ASD would be asked to conduct a feasibility study to see if it were viable to upgrade existing facilities to meet the shortfalls;
 - iii. Some community centres were built years ago when there was no requirement to provide accessible facility for PWDs, such as Tsz Wan Shan (South) Community Centre and Cheung Ching Community Centre. There might be technical difficulties in improving existing facilities to meet prevailing standards in view of the outdated design and the limitation of the layout of the CCs. Nevertheless, ASD would still be asked to conduct feasibility studies to see if the recommendations could be taken forward.
 - iv. Regular briefings could be provided to the staff of the Community Centres to ensure proper use of the existing facilities.
- b) The following were comments made by Wong Tai Sin District Office on the shortfalls against DM1997 and FD2006:
- i. No designated car parking space for visitors with disabilities – there was currently one parking space for 14-seaters vehicle and three parking spaces for private vehicle for use by the centre’s tenants and HAD staff on operational grounds. Since parking spaces were not open to visitors, there was no need to provide designated car parking spaces for visitors with disabilities.
 - ii. ASD would be asked to conduct a feasibility study on providing ramp access, lifts, fitting special warning strips on staircases and handrails, and providing low level urinal in male toilets as well as wash basins in both male and female toilets.
 - iii. The accessible toilet was not used due to sub-standard design, such as the width of the door did not allow entry by wheelchair users. ASD has been requested to rectify the problem.
 - iv. Lack of tactile signs for toilets – ASD would be asked to take up the improvement work.
 - v. Lack of visual fire alarm – HAD would conduct a feasibility study provision of visual fire alarm during fire service system upgrading exercise in due course.
 - vi. HAD staff were regularly trained to maintain their awareness in respect of the DDO.

Hongkong Post

16.30 Role, responsibility and practice

- a) The Hongkong Post (“HKP”) is a trading fund¹⁴ department and finances all capital and recurrent expenditure internally. Its Planning and Development Division is responsible for providing and maintaining barrier free facilities, drawing on technical support from ASD. The requirements of barrier free facilities have been built into the criteria for the search for new post office premises and related fitting out brief.
- b) HKP rents commercial premises through GPA, who negotiates with the landlord on necessary modifications to comply with barrier free requirements. HKP also works with ASD in translating its standard fitting out brief to include barrier free facilities.
- c) In 2002, HKP worked with ASD in a project spanning three years costing \$13 million in improving barrier free access and facilities in 36 post offices. Since that project, HKP has taken every opportunity of renovation or relocation of existing post offices to improve these facilities. Beginning 2007, HKP has embarked on a 10-year programme to improve existing post office premises, including barrier free facilities, subject to no physical, structural or lease restrictions.

16.31 Response to audit findings

- a) HKP agreed with the audit results on its two post offices (POs) as well as the recommendations except in relation to providing low level service counter (see paragraph 16.31(d)(i) for reason).
- b) With the assistance of GPA and ASD, the latest requirements of barrier free facilities would continue to be built into the criteria for the search of new PO premises and related fitting-out brief. These latest requirements have already been built into the renovation work of existing PO premises under a 10-year programme the HKP has embarked on since 2007, except where there were physical, structural or lease restrictions.

¹⁴ Trading Fund is an accounting entity within the Government establishment to manage and account for the operation of a government service and is funded by the income generated. The Post Office Trading Fund was established on 1 August 1995. (Source: Hongkong Post website at www.hongkongpost.com)

- c) In respect of the physical barriers at main entrances identified in the audit, HKP responded as follows:
- i. The recommended installation of an accessible ramp would be studied taking into account site constraints. As regard the suggested provision of a portable ramp at the entrance of Sham Shui Po (SSP) PO, HKP considered it impracticable given the size and weight of a portable ramp.
 - ii. In regard to providing a level landing at the bottom of an accessible ramp, HKP would conduct a feasibility study extending the ramp at the entrance to the public hall of the PO Box section without causing congestion in the public hall, or further extending the ramp to the public passage outside the office without objection from other relevant bureaux or departments.
 - iii. The extension of handrails was feasible and improvement work would be included in the planned renovation of SSPPO and Yuen Long (YL) PO.
 - iv. The provision of tactile warning strip to the accessible ramp at the YLPO was feasible and improvement work would be included in the planned renovation of YLPO.
 - v. The provision of tactile warning strips to steps and tactile guide path in the counter hall of SSPPO was feasible and improvement works would be included in the planned renovation of SSPPO.
 - vi. It would be feasible to fit nosing strips of high contrasting colour to the steps of main entrances to replace stainless steel nosing currently in use.
- d) In respect of accessibility issues identified in other parts of POs, HKP responded as follows:
- i. The HKP had no plans to lower its service counters from the existing height of 1,000mm (from floor level) to the recommended 750mm, as this would cause difficulties to both customers and its staff during normal operation. The existing height at 1,000mm would not constitute a barrier to PWDs using its counter service, such as wheelchair users, as its staff would reach out to customers to offer assistance in case of need.
 - ii. The lowering of the fire alarm break glass unit in SSPPO was feasible and would be included in the planned renovation work.
 - iii. The provision of an induction loop system accompanied by relevant signs was feasible and these would be included in the planned renovation work.

- iv. Staff would be reminded to keep the visual display board in operation.
- v. Providing signs at main entrances to indicate locations of accessible entrances as well as for signification purposes would be feasible and would be included in the planned renovation work.
- e) HKP would further study the suggestion of providing Braille and tactile signs on stamp vending machines and posting boxes and put these on trial at the SSPPO and YLPO first.
- f) It would be feasible to maintain staff awareness of providing services in a non-discriminatory manner, as briefing on the proper use of barrier free facilities were being conducted at frontline briefing and classroom training.

Leisure and Cultural Services Department

16.32 Role, responsibility and practice

- a) All venues of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (“LCSD”) built after 1997 are in compliance with DM1997. For venues built before 1997, improvements for compliance with the requirements of DM1997 will be carried out in future renovation or alteration works insofar as the geographical environment, architectural conditions, technologies and resources permit. For new premises and facilities to be built, LCSD will ensure compliance with prevailing barrier free standards or adopt even more stringent standards where practicable. As a general policy, LCSD will continue to improve existing facilities of venues.
- b) Presently, most LCSD cultural venues provide facilities that address the needs of PWDs, such as handrails, ramps, lifts, and tactile-Braille markings and voice announcement installed in some lifts. Other examples include:
 - i. yellow colour strips added to stair nosing and the height of reception counter adjusted in the Hong Kong Heritage Museum;
 - ii. accessible toilet and wheelchair space in auditorium are available in most venues;
 - iii. PWDs are given priority in reserving parking space at these venues or appropriate arrangements for picking up and setting down will be made as required;

- iv. some Internet workstations in 30 public libraries are installed with special aiding devices to facilitate users with a visual impairment to browse the Internet and read text by touch;
 - v. the Cultural Centre's Concert Hall and Grand Theatre are equipped with infra-red transmission system while the auditoria of Kwai Tsing Theatre and Yuen Long Theatre as well as some major public libraries are equipped with an induction loop system;
 - vi. most museum exhibitions organised by LCSD provide guide maps, leaflets or audio guide service with some major museums also offering special guided tours to the public, including PWDs.
- c) In preparation for the 2009 East Asian Games, improvement projects to provide additional facilities for PWDs will be carried out in 12 games venues from 2007 to 2009 so that PWDs could participate in the competitions and sports activities. LCSD has met with NGOs representing PWDs to discuss barrier free facilities in the improvement works and will include their suggestions as far as possible.
 - d) LCSD has completed improvement works projects in 26 leisure venues and plans to improve facilities for PWDs in 51 leisure venues in the coming five years. It has also completed improvement works in 10 cultural venues in 2007/08 and plans to carry out further improvement/upgrading works in 14 cultural venues/facilities from 2008 to 2010.
 - e) LCSD organises training workshops for staff to raise their awareness of the needs of PWDs, reinforce the concept of equal opportunities, and enhance service and communication skills through courses such as basic sign language courses.

16.33 Response to audit findings

- a) In respect of the access problems identified in the audit, LCSD gave the most detailed response as summarised below and presented under each site visited.
- b) Lek Yuen Public Library (LYPL) and Tai Hing Public Library (THPL)
 - i. At LYPL, the feasibility of carrying out improvement works to the main entrance and installing an induction loop system at the service counter would be explored.
 - ii. At THPL, the following facilities have been added or improved: a permanent ramp with handrails has been installed at the main entrance with signs that

alert wheelchair users the portable ramp had been replaced; opening force of entrance doors no longer exceeded 30N.

- iii. At THPL, international signs would be provided at the circulation counter to indicate the availability of an induction loop system.
- iv. At THPL, water tap in accessible toilet has been replaced with level control handle. Other recommended improvements to meet the standards in DM1997 and DM2008 were subject to a feasibility study by ASD.
- v. At both, the provision of adequate leg space for wheelchair users at the service counter and self-service book borrowing and renewal service would be considered in future improvement works.
- vi. At both, arrangements would be made to replace signs with non-glaring material.
- vii. At LYPL, ASD and HyD would be consulted on the feasibility of relocating and/or modifying the book drop-off box.
- viii. At LYPL, reconfiguration of furniture layout would be arranged to provide wider circulation path.
- ix. At both, wider aisles between bookshelves could be provided with reconfiguration and replacement of bookshelves, or upon re-provisioning of the library premises.
- x. Signs informing visitors to contact library staff for assistance would be posted.
- xi. At THPL, all movable objects placed inside the accessible toilet that might encroach into wheelchair manoeuvring space have been cleared.
- xii. Staff training would be arranged from time to time to maintain general awareness of staff on how to respond to the needs of PWDs, and staff would be nominated to attend related training courses.
- xiii. Requirements in the new DM2008 would be studied in detail and appropriate measures be taken to meet the requirements under feasible conditions.
- xiv. Arrangement would be made with ASD, EMSD and HyD to study the feasibility of upgrading facilities to meet the standards in the DM2008.
- xv. The factors restricting improvement works for this site were cited as follows: physical constraints caused by building design and physical structures that could not be removed; securing permission of property owner or management for the works; any works requiring longer time might not be

feasible because these could only be carried out on library closing day on Monday; and availability of funding including additional staffing resource required for monitoring the works.

c) Queen Elizabeth Stadium (QES)

- i. The QES underwent major renovation works in early 2008 and had addressed almost all the shortfalls identified in the audit. For a few shortfalls that could not be rectified on a permanent basis due to physical constraints, equivalent facilities were provided as far as possible. As regards the shortfalls not covered in the 2008 major renovation, ASD maintenance team has been engaged to continue exploring improvement programmes in phases.
- ii. In summary, improvement works had been carried out in the following areas:
 - (1) various accessible facilities added at main entrance including a set of auto doors for PWDs for step-free access between the outside areas to inside of main entrance;
 - (2) ramp at main entrance rebuilt;
 - (3) main circulation staircase removed and replaced with elevator to provide free-step access between the entrance and the lobby;
 - (4) colour contrasting nosing and handrails added to staircase located next to ramp;
 - (5) tactile warning strips added to escape staircase;
 - (6) provision of unisex accessibility toilets on all floors;
 - (7) provision of low wash basin in all toilets and low level urinals in male toilets;
 - (8) colour contrasting nosing tiles provided to steps inside the basement toilet;
 - (9) the passenger lift, which could be used as an accessible lift when needed, now provided voice announcement and emergency alarm push in lift cars;
 - (10) after renovation and seating configuration, wheelchair platforms and wheelchair zones were now in use providing 14 wheelchair and minder seats for 3-side end stage area and 22 wheelchair and minder seats for central stage area;

- (11) opening force of interior doors rectified to not exceed 22N and door handles replaced with lever handles;
- (12) low level counters added to information counter and box office;
- (13) induction loop system installed;
- (14) artificial plants added to the space below escalators with headroom less than 2000mm to prevent accidental access;
- (15) signs displaying the International Symbol for Access have been posted to show PWDs access through the auto doors at the main entrance and around the site; and lower drinking fountains provided for wheelchair users;
- (16) auto display panel and Braille map now installed;
- (17) new leaflets for visitors would be available at the information counter and new information relating to access and facilities would be uploaded on the website;

iii. The following shortfalls were not yet rectified:

- (1) handrail extension only partially provided for some circulation staircases and improvement programmes would be considered in phases;
- (2) due to physical constraints, extension of handrails for the backyard areas including escape staircases could not be provided as part of the 2008 major renovation project but improvement programmes would be further explored in phases with ASD;
- (3) improvements to facilities in accessible unisex toilets would be considered in phases with ASD;
- (4) feasibility of installing handrails to the steps inside the basement toilet would be explored with ASD; and
- (5) accessible toilet could not be provided inside the VIP Lounge due to space constraints but equivalent facilities were available nearby the Lounge on the same floor.

iv. Internal training and coaching sessions were regularly conducted and staff members were nominated to attend courses on how to respond to the needs of users with disabilities.

- v. The venue management ensured upgrading works of accessible facilities complied with latest standards as a continuous and on-going process. The ASD maintenance team and other relevant departments continued to be engaged to explore improvement programmes whenever necessary.
- vi. Fire drills and contingency drills organised annually involved training of providing assistance to patrons with disabilities. Staff were also arranged to take relevant courses provided by LCSD or Civil Service Training and Development Institute, and regular internal operational meetings would include topics on the proper use of facilities and responding to PWDs.

d) North District Town Hall

- i. On this site, only the auditorium, foyer, box office, function rooms, supporting administration office and back staircases were managed by LCSD. The public areas, toilet facilities and staircases were under the management of HAD and recommended improvements would be referred to HAD for comment.
- ii. In respect of the areas managed by LCSD, the following responses were given:
 - (1) ASD has scheduled to rebuild the ramp in the auditorium foyer in 2009 at a 1:12 gradient, and LCSD would submit other recommended improvements to ASD for consideration, such as provision of extended handrails and tactile warning strips.
 - (2) With existing space, building a ramp from back staircases to the stage might be difficult and subject to technical advice from ASD because the ramp would either be too steep or it would reduce the space for a fire exit in the audience area if the requirement of 1:12 gradient were to be met.
 - (3) ASD would be asked to carry out a feasibility study on improvement works to back staircase, such as provision of tactile warning strips to landings, extension of handrails, colour contrasting nosing added to steps, and raised directional signs on handrails.
 - (4) ASD would be asked to carry out feasibility study on improvement works to backstage facilities, on creating at least four wheelchair spaces in the auditorium, and on lowering the box office service counter.

- (5) Opening force of the doors of dressing rooms would be adjusted to not exceed 22N.
 - iii. LCSD might consider including information on access and facilities for PWDs in its monthly programme leaflets for North District Town Hall as well as on its website.
 - iv. The Training Section arranged courses for staff from time to time to maintain the general awareness of staff on how to respond to users with disabilities, and staff would be nominated to attend.
 - v. LCSD would work closely with ASD to study the latest requirements in the DM2008 and take appropriate measures to meet those requirements as far as possible. ASD would also be asked to conduct feasibility studies on upgrading existing access problems to the latest standards in DM2008.
- e) Sai Wan Ho Civic Centre
- i. ASD has been asked to explore the possibility of building a ramp at the main entrance for coming major internal renovation project tentatively scheduled for 2010/11.
 - ii. The following improvement works would be arranged:
 - (1) install tactile guide path from entrance to reception counter, toilet and lift zone;
 - (2) install tactile warning strips, handrails and adequate colour contrasting nosing to steps at main entrance;
 - (3) install tactile warning strips to the head and foot of ramp at accessible entrance;
 - (4) install tactile warning strips to head and foot of internal ramps;
 - (5) install adequate colour contrasting nosing and tactile warning strips to top and bottom landings to staircases;
 - (6) install adequate colour contrasting nosing to escape staircases and tactile warning strips to staircase landings;
 - (7) eliminate level difference between the exit door of Cultural Activities Hall and rear escape staircase landing;
 - (8) facilities in accessible toilet, such as providing lever door handle, folding grab rails, emergency call bell and grab rail;
 - (9) opening force of the doors would be adjusted to not exceed 22N;

- (10) install tactile signs for male and female public toilets; and
 - (11) reposition the signs for PWDs at eye level in conspicuous locations and all signs to use the International Symbol for Access.
- iii. Due to insufficient space and site limitation, it was considered structurally unfeasible to provide more wheelchair manoeuvring space at bottom landing at the accessible entrance. In addition, the provision of handrails to the ramp would be considered subject to a positive outcome from the feasibility study to be conducted by ASD.
 - iv. For internal ramps, provision of handrails on both sides of ramps and extending handrails beyond heads and feet of ramps would be considered subject to positive outcome of feasibility study by ASD. As regards providing more landing space at both the head and feet of ramps and to adjust the gradient to not exceed 1:12, these improvements works were structurally unfeasible due to insufficient space and site limitation.
 - v. For staircases and escape staircases, provision of extended handrails would be considered subject to positive outcome of feasibility study by ASD.
 - vi. ASD would be asked to include the following in the major renovation project tentatively scheduled for 2010/11:
 - (1) install one low level hand basin in male/female toilets and one low level urinal in male toilets;
 - (2) create at least four wheelchair spaces in the auditorium;
 - (3) lower service counters;
 - (4) provide induction loop system with a sign placed in a conspicuous location; and
 - (5) provide visual fire alarm system.
 - vii. ASD was asked to consider the following for possible inclusion in the major renovation project tentatively scheduled for 2010/11 subject to positive outcome of feasibility studies:
 - (1) improve facilities backstage, such as accessible dressing facilities, wider door clearance and removal of door threshold;
 - (2) increase door clearance on doors but there might be constraints due to insufficient space in some cases; and

- (3) provide accessible music room without a door threshold but this might involve structural constraints.
 - viii. ASD would be asked to explore the feasibility of providing the following to the accessible lift: detection device to initiate re-opening; voice announcement inside lift cars to indicate floor destinations; and audible sound in lift lobby to indicate directions of lift travel.
 - ix. The service provider of the public pay telephones would be asked to consider lowering the position of one telephone.
 - x. Provision of maps and directory for visitors that included information on access and facilities would be considered after the tentative major renovation in 2010/11 because the locations and layouts of some facilities might change. This applied to information on the website and pamphlets for the same reason.
 - xi. Staff were made aware of how to provide services to PWDs in a non-discriminatory manner through classroom training arranged by the Training Section, daily coaching and instructions. They would also be nominated to attend relevant training courses organised by the Training Section.
 - xii. ASD would be asked to carry out the improvement works as recommended by EOC during the coming major internal renovation project tentatively scheduled in 2010/11 if found feasible.
 - xiii. LCSD would work closely with ASD to study the latest requirements in DM2008 and take appropriate measures to meet those requirements as far as possible. ASD would also be asked to conduct feasibility studies on upgrading existing access problems to the latest standards in the DM2008 when planning the major renovation for 2010/11.
 - xiv. Physical constraints such as insufficient space and site limitation might restrict improvement programmes and any of such works would be subject to further study by ASD.
- f) Flagstaff House Museum of Tea ware
- i. The museum is the oldest surviving Western architecture in Hong Kong and has been declared a monument under the Antiquities and Monuments Ordinance, Cap. 53. It was built in the 1840s as the office and residence of the Commander of the British Forces in Hong Kong and was converted into a museum in 1984. Similar to all historical buildings, the shortfalls in accessible

facilities on this site are due to the historic design of the premises, which does not cater to the needs of PWDs. Much staffing, resource and time have been, and would continue to be, vested to further improve on-site facilities. However, a more in-depth study is required before any alterations are made due to the complexity and fragility of the historic fabrics. Alterations must be duly endorsed by relevant departments, such as the AMO, ASD and EMSD and a permit granted under section 6 of the Antiquities and Monuments Ordinance before they could be carried out.

- ii. The building of a permanent ramp access at the main entrance was already in progress. As regards improvements works to the two temporary ramps connecting the different levels of the verandas, further advice on their feasibility would be sought from ASD and AMO.
- iii. ASD and AMO would be asked to advise on the feasibility of providing the following:
 - (1) adjust opening force of entrance door to not exceed 30N;
 - (2) provide extended handrails with raised directional sign and tactile warning strips to staircase in the New Wing as well as adequate colour contrasting nosing to steps;
 - (3) provide voice announcement inside lift car of accessible lift in the New Wing to indicate floor destinations and audible sound in lift lobby to indicate directions of lift travel; detection device inside lift car to initiate re-opening to be lowered; and provide Braille and tactile designation on the jambs on both sides of the lift entrance; and
 - (4) provide visual alarm system in both the main and new buildings.
- iv. ASD would be asked to advise on the feasibility of providing a lower level reception counter.
- v. With the upcoming change of display and gallery layout scheduled for May 2009, the following would be carried out:
 - (1) adjust the gradient of the ramp access leading to the reading area to 1:12;
 - (2) remount the display board in the gallery to a lower height and provide text in larger font; and

- (3) lower the desk station in the corridor on the ground floor.
- vi. Funds have been allocated to the following and works would begin once the tendering procedures have been completed:
 - (1) build a unisex accessible toilet;
 - (2) lower the height of the wash basin in male and female toilets;
 - (3) build at least one low level urinal with grab rails on either side in the male toilet; and
 - (4) provide tactile signs on toilet entrances or adjacent walls to indicate whether the toilet facility was intended for males or females.
- vii. The service provider of the public pay telephones would be asked to consider lowering the position of one telephone.
- viii. Guided tours for smaller groups of visitors with special needs were now available.
- ix. The following recommended provisions would be further considered:
 - (1) portable induction loop system;
 - (2) tactile or Braille descriptions for exhibits;
 - (3) tactile or Braille maps and directory as well as in large print;
 - (4) audio tapes;
 - (5) the exhibits on upper floors to be displayed via computer 3D models stimulating the first floor museum space as well as the entire collection;
 - (6) subtitles on all videos shown; and
 - (7) information on the museum website on access and facilities.
- x. Staff were regularly briefed to maintain their level of awareness of access facilities and on providing services in a non-discriminatory manner. They were also encouraged to attend course on the DDO. Full support and encouragement were also given to staff to attend training related to the upgrading of service for PWDs.
- xi. Advice from ASD, AMO and EMSD would be sought on the feasibility of upgrading access facilities to the standards promulgated in DM1997 and DM2008.

- xii. In regard to factors that might restrict improvement works, the provision of a lower reception counter at the K.S. Lo Gallery or New Wing might involve large scale dismantling and construction work, which would cause undesirable disturbance to visitors such as dust and noise. It would also have an adverse impact on the business of the Lok Cha Tea House located adjacent to the counter in question. The possible adverse impact on the business of the tea house would invite serious complaints from the contractor, which would be undesirable to the government.

g) Hong Kong Space Museum

- i. Subject to technical viability and availability of funds, the following recommended improvement works would be conducted by ASD:

- (1) extended handrails at main entrance;
- (2) remove projecting nosing on steps to avoid tripping hazards; and
- (3) provide leg space for the low level information counter.

- ii. ASD has been asked to carry out the following improvement works:

- (1) adjust opening force of doors to not exceed 30N;
- (2) provide wider clearance for one leaf of double doors at rear entrance;
- (3) extend tactile guide path to lift zone and nearest accessible toilets and in the interim period, house staff and security guards would provide assistance;
- (4) provide tactile warning strips to top and bottom landing of steps near the main entrance;
- (5) lower the height of the ticketing counter and in the interim period, ticketing assistants and security guards would provide assistance;
- (6) provide extended handrails to grand staircase as well as tactile warning strips at top, bottom and half landings of the staircase; in the interim period security guards would provide assistance;
- (7) provide extended handrails to staircase leading to the Space Station and provide tactile warning strips at top and bottom landings of the staircase; in the interim period security guards would provide assistance;
- (8) adjust opening force of internal doors leading to the toilets to not exceed 22N;

- (9) add at least two more wheelchair seats to the existing two in the Lecture Hall;
 - (10) provide tactile signs on toilet entrances or adjacent walls to indicate whether the toilet facility was intended for males or females; and
 - (11) replace external stainless steel tactile tiles with tiles made of other non-slip materials.
- iii. The museum has planned to renew the exhibition halls by 2011 and the following would be included in new interior design for the halls with staff providing assistance in the interim period:
- (1) accessible service counter for exhibition visitors;
 - (2) provide extended handrails to the steps leading to the Manned Spaceflight with tactile warning strips at both top and bottom landings of the staircase and the riser height not exceeding 175mm;
 - (3) provide tactile display control buttons in the Hall of Astronomy and rearrange exhibits to enable wheelchair users to reach or to view the exhibits;
 - (4) provide a removable seat in front of exhibits in the Hall of Space Science, and mount exhibits at a lower level with text descriptions in larger font and higher luminous contrast;
 - (5) provide a viewing area for visitors with special needs in the Manned Space Flight section so they could view the activities taking place in the enclosed space as well as consider providing facilities for visitors with visual impairment to experience the activities;
 - (6) modify some of the fixed seats in the front row of the 40-seat theatre so they could be removed when necessary for wheelchair users; and
 - (7) subtitles to new videos introducing exhibits would be considered.
- iv. Subject to feasibility study by EMSD and availability of funds, the following recommended facilities would be provided to the accessible lift:
- (1) voice announcement inside lift car to indicate floor destinations;
 - (2) audible sound in lift lobby to indicate directions of lift travel; and
 - (3) lower detection device inside lift car to initiate re-opening to be lowered.
- v. The following improvement works have already been carried out:

- (1) most balustrades in the museum have been replaced with alternative design or wired mesh without blocking the sight line of visitors;
 - (2) staff have been briefed to ensure sufficient space between the retractable belt stanchions for wheelchair access;
 - (3) induction loop system at the information counter and box office; and
 - (4) information on access and facilities uploaded on the museum website.
- vi. A minimum of four wheelchair seats would be provided in the Space Theatre after completion of renovation in mid-2009.
 - vii. The provision of a ramp in the Lecture Hall would be subject to a feasibility study by ASD.
 - viii. ASD has been asked to carry out the following improvement works to the accessible toilets as part of the alteration project for the foyer toilets that took place from November 2008 to January 2009:
 - (1) lower the position of the emergency call bells;
 - (2) reposition the location and height of the folding grab rail;
 - (3) provide grab rail on the internal face of toilet doors;
 - (4) lower the height of wash basin; and
 - (5) provide at least one low urinal in the male toilet with vertical grab rails on either side.
 - ix. The following works were now in progress:
 - (1) provide directional signs to indicate the location of ramp access; and
 - (2) provide signs in lift lobby using the international symbol for access to inform visitors of the availability of the accessible lift facility.
 - x. The service provider of the public pay telephones would be asked to consider lowering the position of one telephone.
 - xi. As far as possible, the museum would try to provide auxiliary aids and facilities such as tactile or Braille maps and directory as well as in large print and audio parts.
 - xii. Briefings and meetings regularly conducted with staff to advise them on how to assist PWDs, including instructions given from time to time on proper use of facilities. They would also be nominated to attend relevant training courses organised by the Training Section.

xiii. Advice from ASD would be sought on the feasibility of upgrading access facilities to the standards promulgated in DM1997 and DM2008.

xiv. Restrictions to improvement works included budget constraints, space limitation, technical difficulty or the infeasibility of the works; and lead time for planning and incorporating improvement programmes into renovation or renewal projects.

h) Tai Wan Shan Swimming Pool (TWSSP)

i. As a general point, the TWSSP has been implementing improvement works from time to time in past years to facilitate access for swimmers with disabilities.

ii. ASD conducted a site visit at TWSSP in October 2008 and would conduct a feasibility study regarding the recommended improvement works in the following areas:

- (1) ramp access at main entrance;
- (2) access to all pools;
- (3) internal ramps with accessible facilities, such as tactile warning strips, handrails, and safe gradient;
- (4) steps and staircases with accessible facilities, such as tactile warning strips on landings, extended handrails; and adequate colour contracting nosing;
- (5) access to spectator stand with accessible facilities, such as tactile warning strips on landings, extended handrails, and adequate colour contracting nosing;
- (6) adequate number of wheelchair space in spectator stand;
- (7) access to the canteen and sun deck;
- (8) accessible toilets cum showering/changing rooms at pool deck to include accessible facilities, such as low level wash basin with grab rail; low level emergency call bell inside accessible toilets; grab rail on inner face of the accessible toilet cubicle; and flushing control at the wide side of toilet cubicle;
- (9) grab rail inside accessible shower units
- (10) low level hand basin inside male and female toilets/changing rooms;

- (11) low level urinal inside the male toilet with long handrails mounted on either side;
 - (12) baby changing facilities in all toilets and changing rooms subject to sufficient space;
 - (13) low level enquiry counter;
 - (14) lever handles on doors;
 - (15) relevant signs with the international symbol of access to give directions to the accessible entrance and signifying the accessible entrance;
 - (16) signs placed at appropriate locations for identification and signification;
 - (17) provide tactile signs on toilet entrances to indicate whether the toilet facility was intended for males or females;
 - (18) provide tactile signs on the door of the accessible toilet cubicle;
 - (19) mount hair dryers and level control at a lower level;
 - (20) a pool lift that could be operated without assistance from both the deck and water levels; and
 - (21) provide sloped entry to at least one of the public pools to enable unassisted access to the pool by PWDs.
- iii. Staff have been briefed on providing assistance to PWDs on use of facilities. Training programmes would continue to be provided to maintain staff's level of awareness on providing services in a non-discriminatory manner to patrons. Training would also be arranged from time to time to enhance staff awareness of how to cater to the needs of PWDs.
 - iv. ASD conducted a site visit at TWSSP in October 2008 and would conduct a feasibility study on upgrading access facilities to the standards promulgated in the DM1997 and DM2008 before devising a time frame for implementation. Any site constraints would be identified by ASD in its feasibility study.
- i) Morrison Hill Swimming Pool (MHSP)
 - i. In the past, MHSP has undertaken numerous improvement works in response to suggestions made by the Hong Kong Sports Association of the Physical Disabled and individual swimmers with disabilities, such as accessible changing rooms and installation of a pool lift. ASD conducted a

site visit at MHSP in October 2008 and provided initial comments detailed below.

ii. The following improvement works would be included in the scope of the coming annual overhaul in May and June 2009:

- (1) provide extended handrails to both sides of ramp at the entrance with tactile warning strips at top and bottom landings;
- (2) provide tactile warning strips on the landings of ramps inside the premises with extended handrails;
- (3) adjust the gradient of the ramp outside the indoor training pool to not exceed 1:12;
- (4) provide tactile warning strips to landings of steps and staircases with extended tubular handrails as well as adequate colour contrasting nosing to steps and staircases;
- (5) provide the following in the spectator stand: adequate number of wheelchair seats, tactile warning strips on the landings of steps and staircases inside the spectator stand; extended handrails to at least one side of the steps and staircases; and adequate colour contrasting nosing on steps and staircases;
- (6) provide baby changing facilities in all toilets and changing rooms;
- (7) provide low level hand basin in male and female toilets;
- (8) provide low level urinal inside male toilet with long handrails mounted on either side and remove step in front of urinals;
- (9) provide signs with the international symbol of access and placed at appropriate locations for identification and signification;
- (10) provide tactile signs on toilet entrances to indicate whether the toilet facility was intended for males or females; and

iii. The following improvement works would be subject to feasibility study by ASD:

- (1) convert existing staircase into a standard ramp to replace the original ramp leading from outdoor teaching pool to toddler pool (RP6), which could not be modified to have gradient meeting 1:12 requirement because of site constraint;

- (2) install electrical platform for wheelchairs to provide access to the canteen, which would then enable a ramp to be provided for wheelchair users to access the spectator stand;
- iv. The following improvement works to accessible toilets inside changing rooms would be included in the scope of the coming annual overhaul in May and June 2009 and 2110 according to the work schedule of ASD:
 - (1) wheelchair manoeuvring space;
 - (2) low level emergency call bell;
 - (3) folding grab rails;
 - (4) grab rail on inner face of the accessible toilet cubicle;
 - (5) raise the level of toilet bowl;
 - (6) lower door handles;
 - (7) lower hand basin; and
 - (8) replace tap handles with level handles.
- v. The procurement and installation of hair dryers at a lower level would be carried out as soon as possible.
- vi. Works were being carried out to explore the availability of an unassisted pool lift which could feasibly be installed at the indoor training pool as well as the feasibility of constructing a sloped entry at the outdoor teaching pool.
- vii. Staff training has been arranged from time to time maintain staff awareness on how to cater to the needs of PWDs and briefing has been given on providing assistance to PWDs in facilities. Training would also be arranged from time to time to enhance staff awareness of how to cater to the needs of PWDs.
- viii. ASD would be asked to study the feasibility of upgrading access facilities to the standards promulgated in DM1997 and DM2008.
- ix. Restrictions to improvement works included:
 - (1) operation and time constraints because works could only be conducted during annual overhaul in May and June of each year;
 - (2) physical or site constraints due to building design and setting of the venue; and
 - (3) availability of resources because additional funding might be required.

j) Lei Yue Mun Park and Holiday Village

(Block 25 in the village is a Grade I historical building.¹⁵)

i. ASD would conduct a feasibility study on the following recommended improvement works:

- (1) provide dropped kerbs to sidewalk inside the premises;
- (2) provide ramps with access features such as gradients not exceeding 1:12 and at straight configuration, extended handrails; tactile warning strips on landings, and proper landing at the top and bottom of ramps;
- (3) provide extended handrails and tactile warning strips to external steps;
- (4) provide at least two accessible rooms; and
- (5) repair chipped nosing to prevent tripping hazards.

ii. The following improvement works would be carried out to steps and staircase subject to availability of resources:

- (1) tactile warning strips on landings;
- (2) extended handrails to at least one side of steps or staircases;
- (3) adequate colour contrasting nosing;
- (4) remove projecting nosing on steps; and
- (5) provide the following access features to escape staircases: raised directional sign on handrails, extended handrails; tactile warning strip at top and bottom landings, and adequate colour contrasting nosing on steps.

iii. ASD would be asked to provide the following:

- (1) lower the height of existing baby changing facilities;
- (2) provide low level hand basin in male and female toilets and changing rooms;
- (3) provide low level urinal in male toilet with long handrails mounted on either side;

¹⁵ Grade 1 historical buildings refer to buildings of outstanding merit and every effort should be made to preserve them if possible (source: Antiquities and Monuments Office website at <http://www.amo.gov.hk/en/built3.php>).

- (4) provide following access features to accessible toilets: repositioning wash basin, grab rail, emergency call bell and long grab rail, flushing control on wide side of toilet cubicle, back support such as seat lid, folding grab rail, and grab rail on inner face of accessible toilet cubicle;
 - (5) improve opening force of doors to not exceed 22N for internal doors and 30N for external doors;
 - (6) replace the drain grating with slots at 20mm; and
 - (7) extend the distance between the bollards rather than move bollards away from the ramp, which could not be done for reason of operational needs.
- iv. ASD would be asked to recommend alternative methods to overcome the level difference in doorways.
- v. Arrangements would be made to the following:
 - (1) provide signs with the international symbol of access and placed at appropriate locations for identification and signification;
 - (2) provide tactile signs on toilet entrances to indicate whether the toilet facility was intended for males or females;
 - (3) check all facilities including those for PWDs, such as folding grab rails, and to request ASD to maintain those facilities;
 - (4) provide suitable type of disposal bins and locate these in appropriate areas in the accessible toilets;
- vi. ASD and EMSD would be asked to provide an induction loop system at the service counter.
- vii. Staff training has been arranged from time to time maintain staff awareness on how to cater to the needs of PWDs and briefing has been given on providing assistance to PWDs in facilities. Training would continue to be provided to maintain staff awareness of providing services in a non-discriminatory manner to patrons.
- viii. ASD would be asked to study the feasibility of upgrading access facilities to the standards promulgated in DM1997 and DM2008.
- ix. Restrictions to improvement works included:

- (1) physical or site constraints due to building design and setting of the venue; and
- (2) additional funding required for improvement works as well as additional staffing to monitor such works; and
- (3) some of the buildings were graded historical buildings, which meant any major alternation or modification works related to the graded buildings must be supported with the approval of AMO.

k) Kwai Chung Sports Ground

- i. LCSD would consult with ASD on the feasibility of carrying out the following improvement works:
 - (1) alter gradient of ramp at the entrance on Hing Shing Road to 1:12;
 - (2) improve access to ball courts, such as the provision of tactile warning strips, adequate colour contrasting nosing and handrails to steps and staircases; and to provide steps or a ramp to address level difference on one location in the ball courts area;
 - (3) provide access for PWDs to spectator stand and adequate colour contrasting nosing to steps and staircases;
 - (4) provide accessible shower and changing facilities;
 - (5) provide baby changing facilities in all toilets subject to availability of space;
 - (6) provide low level wash hand basin male and female toilets and changing rooms, and a low level urinal in male toilets with handrails;
 - (7) provide low level counter at food kiosk and if feasible, funds would be sought for this facility on expiration of the current catering contract; and
 - (8) provide tactile signs for male and female toilets.
- ii. In regard to accessible toilets, ASD would be asked to adjust the height of emergency call bell and wash hand basin, provide folding grab rails and grab bars, and relocate flushing controls to wide side of the cubicles. The recommendation of a unisex accessible toilet would be considered for future major renovation.
- iii. ASD would be asked to rectify the height of emergency call bell in accessible toilet and relocate the flushing control to the wide side of the cubicle.

- iv. The venue staff would arrange for signs with the international symbol of access to be displayed and locate them at appropriate locations for identification and signification. They would also place signs at the entrance without accessible features and the main staircase to inform visitors of the location of accessible entrances.
- v. Arrangements would be made to re-paint worn out sign and conduct maintenance work regularly, and to provide an additional portable ramp for exiting certain parts of the premises.
- vi. The folding grab rail in the public accessible toilet has been repaired and maintenance work would be conducted regularly.
- vii. Staff have been briefed on providing assistance to PWDs in using the facilities. Training would continue to be provided to staff to maintain their level of awareness of providing services in a non-discriminatory manner.
- viii. LCSD would liaise with ASD on the feasibility of upgrading current facilities to meet the requirements of DM2008.
- ix. Factors, such as site constraints, availability of funds, and prolonged closure of the facilities, might limit improvement works at this venue.

CHAPTER 17 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Observations in Brief

Overview

17.1 An accessible built environment facilitates inclusion and participation, providing people with independence and the means to pursue an active social and economic life. For PWDs, accessibility is especially important for achieving greater independence, participation and social inclusion. In this regard, this formal investigation (“FI”) has provided a useful opportunity for the EOC to examine the status of accessibility in a range of publicly accessible premises where many acts of daily life take place.

17.2 There is a general consensus that access to the built environment as well as services and facilities has improved over the years although the pace has been painfully slow. The FI findings and feedback from PWDs also show that the improvements are inadequate and piecemeal, indicating a lack of co-ordination and strategic development within government in accessibility planning. There is still a tendency to associate accessibility with disability even though PWDs are not the only people to experience difficulties. Hong Kong has a rapidly growing ageing population and the incidence of disabilities is strongly correlated to age. The population will require assistance and support to maximise their mobility. Poor accessibility affects everyone including the family and friends of PWDs and the elderly. There is still much for the Government to do in terms of promoting and fully implementing the universal design concept in all its development projects to ensure the improvements to accessibility are achieved in an integrated manner.

Accessibility: beyond the entrance

17.3 Accessibility can mean many different things and physical barriers are only the visible obstacles. In other words, getting through the door is a means to an end and not the end itself. Full accessibility means an uninterrupted path of travel to or within a building providing access to all required goods, services and facilities. Unfortunately the experience of many PWDs show that owners, managers and providers of service and facilities tend to approach accessibility in a fragmented fashion. Hence, it is not uncommon to be able to enter a building but not be able to access the amenities inside due to other physical and operational barriers.

Dignified access

17.4 From time to time, the EOC receives complaints from PWDs about not being to access premises on an equitable or dignified basis. For example, PWDs having to enter premises through the back door, or to use cargo lifts because those were the only accessible lifts in the building. There is currently no express reference to equal and dignified access in any of the building laws and design manuals, or accessibility guidelines issued by various government departments. The Disability Discrimination Ordinance (“DDO”) also does not specify “dignified access” in its text but the concept of dignity should be understood in the context of universal human rights, which includes the right to non-discrimination. These rights impose the legal standard of minimum protection necessary for human dignity. In the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (“CRPD”), Article 1 makes a direct reference to dignity by stating “The purpose of the present Convention is to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their *inherent dignity*.” In this regard, human dignity is a fundamental principle and should underpin all provisions of accessible facilities.

Application of the DDO

17.5 Accessibility problems may be dealt with under DDO but the DDO does not specify specific technical compliance standards. The focus of the DDO is on non-discrimination in access to premises, which may not be analogous with “best” or “equal” means of access. For example, there may be conflicting views on whether a ramp is the best means to resolve level differences, or whether a stair lift or stair climber would be equally effective. The costs of these facilities could vary significantly but all are currently considered accepted means of access.

17.6 Further, the DDO provides an unjustifiable hardship defence where owners and managers may avoid liability if they could show that any alteration to premises in order to provide access would impose unjustifiable hardship on them. Unless the case is decided before a judge, the argument over what constitutes hardship and whether it is unjustifiable are difficult issues to assess and settle. This grey area is often the focal point in complaints handled by the EOC.

Compliance-based or complaint-based model

17.7 Hong Kong currently has a mixed compliance and complaint-based model for addressing accessibility issues. Compliance measures have produced little results in many cases. An example can be found in the three public rental housing estates and related commercial complexes that the EOC had previously audited in 2000 (see Chapter 13 for details). Only limited improvements were observed with newer premises built in the 1990s not featuring better access to premises and on-site facilities. For PWDs who reside in these estates, taking action against either the Housing Authority or The Link could prove difficult since neither seems to have liability under current building laws. Lodging a disability discrimination complaint with the EOC may also not produce a satisfactory outcome since under the DDO, the owner or manager may in some circumstances be able to claim unjustifiable hardship as a defence against making any improvements.

17.8 With this state of affairs, it is clear that both compliance-based and complaint-based measures have a role to play in resolving accessibility issues. Equally clear is the need for Government to strengthen laws and regulations on building design and standards to address gaps and weaknesses in the current legislative regime.

Legal framework and guidelines

17.9 The legal framework and accompanying design manuals on accessibility standards for private buildings as well as their strengths and shortcomings have already been discussed in Chapter 2. Although building laws do not apply to government and HA buildings but, together with the design manuals, serve as important reference tools and an overarching policy framework for government.

17.10 Article 9 of the CRPD sets out a range of measures that governments should take to address accessibility issues. In addition, according to the United Nations International Plan of Action on Ageing, first endorsed in Vienna in 1982, governments should adopt a multigenerational and holistic approach to integrating “age” and promote a society for all age, which includes providing a barrier-free and age-integrated built environment supporting all-age access and multigenerational encounters. The legal regime in Hong Kong currently covers some of the measures set out in the aforementioned international instruments but considerable gaps still exist. There are no formal monitoring mechanisms to assess the progress with improving accessibility, no law to compel public or private actors to disseminate information or provide training, and the conflicting requirements of building standards and the DDO, with its defence of unjustifiable hardship, remain unsolved.

Audit findings

17.11 This audit has provided a broad overview of the status of major access provisions and lent valuable insight into the policies and practices of owners and managers of the premises audited. Physical access to government premises has generally improved with post-1997 premises showing higher compliance level with DM1997 and DM2008. However, there is still a long way to go to resolving accessibility problems for persons of varying abilities and disabilities. The difficulties are more pronounced where the premises/facilities are managed and maintained by assorted government departments, such as in identifying the responsible department(s) for a particular area, or in negotiating and co-ordinating change that involves more than one department.

Limitations of the design manuals 1997 and 2008

17.12 The design manuals are important in providing for minimum standards necessary for a barrier-free environment but has the following limitations:

- a) Non-applicability to old buildings and government buildings, which means there is greater incentive to address problems in new building first.
- b) Some minor interior fitting-out works are not covered and there are ambiguities surrounding certain types of external works.
- c) Design guidelines for interfacing roads and streets of premises are managed by government departments other than the Buildings Department.
- d) No coverage on operational considerations in provision of services in premises.
- e) Non-retrospective effect of the Building Ordinance and building regulations makes it difficult to enforce the standards in the design manual in old private buildings or government buildings. Similar enforcement difficulties arise when public premises are spun off as private or divested properties.

Divesting – a driving force or deterrent in effecting changes?

17.13 Once public properties have been divested and classified as private sector properties, it is hardly surprising that the new owners, such as The Link or the IO of TPS estates, would give more weight to financial considerations when deciding on improvement works. Combined with the non-retrospective effect of building laws, it would be difficult to enforce

changes in divested properties or TPS estates, a view borne out by the investigation findings. In the focus group meeting with persons with visual impairment, the problem with a lack of planning and connectivity of tactile guide paths running from public housing estates to ancillary facilities owned by The Link was raised. In some cases, NGOs representing PWDs have suggested to The Link to install tactile guide paths from the estate to the centre but this was refused.

Accessibility Checkwalk 2000

17.14 The findings from the revisit of premises previously audited by the EOC deserve considerations because the two audits show clearly how very little improvements have been made in spite of the improved legal framework and clearer standards. Though the sample comprised only six premises, the main shortfall here is similar to other premises: construction of premises took place before the promulgation of the DM1997. Further complicating the situation are the changes to ownership since 2000, with some premises now divested to The Link and one estate has become a private TPS estate. This means an accessibility issue may need to be addressed by more than one party.

Expectations and shortfalls

17.15 One of the common shortfalls found in the audit was non-compliance with the DM1997 (see Table 17a below for a list of the major areas of non-compliance commonly found). The reason frequently put forward for this shortfall is that the premises were constructed before the DM1997 was promulgated. This means any major change will inevitably be subject to structural and technical viability. However, the audit findings have also revealed that considerably more could be done with no such limitations and little hardship implications. The EOC is of the view that limitations in facility alteration should not be used as a general explanation for any inaction on improvement works. Further, even with the limitations in mind, owners and managers should take a more proactive approach to improve accessibility incrementally by conducting their own audits and identifying the shortfalls followed by an improvement plan within a defined time frame.

Table 17a: Common major areas of non-compliance with DM1997 and DM2008

	Major Physical Features	Common Major Non-compliance with DM1997 and DM2008
1	Ramps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - lack of handrails on both sides - gradient too steep - lack of/ improper tactile warning strips - lack of adequate landing space at top and bottom of ramp
2	Steps/ Staircase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - lack of handrail - lack of/ inadequate colour contrasting nosing - lack of/ improper tactile warning strips
3	Handrails	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - improper height - lack of 300mm long horizontal extensions at top and bottom of ramp/ steps - lack of Braille signs
4	Dropped kerbs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - exceed 10mm level difference between the edge of dropped kerb and driveway - obstruction at dropped kerbs
5	Doors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - force of opening exceeds 22N (internal) and 30N (external) - clear width less than 750mm - improper door handle level
6	Accessible toilets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - improper position of flushing control - lack of/ improper position of emergency call button - lack of handrail on inner face of door - lack of/ improper position of folding grab bar - lack of/ improper position and length of grab rails - size too small
7	Accessible lifts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - lack of/ improper audible signals - lack of voice announcement - improper level of detection device - lack of Braille signs
8	Signs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - lack of signs - improper position of signs - lack of tactile sign for male and female lavatories - improper colour of signs - improper pictogram
9	Accessible service counter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - lack of accessible service counter
10	Braille and tactile layout plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - lack of Braille and tactile layout plan where layout plans for the use of the public is provided

17.16 Irrespective of how much improvement has so far been undertaken by owners and managers, PWDs clearly find the current situation and the shortfalls far from satisfactory based on their experience of using the audited premises. The shortfalls for PWDs were mainly on a lack of accessible facilities, non-compliance with standards in the DM1997 and DM2008 as well as insensitivity or indifference of owners and managers to their needs and concerns. It may not be feasible to make all public premises fully accessible due to constraints imposed by structure, for example, but it does not seem unreasonable to expect

owners and managers to set out the improvement works that would be carried out over a certain period of time.

17.17 From PWDs' point of view, any barrier that exists is a daily reality and impacts on their full participation in society. Often the responses given for not carrying out improvement works do not adequately explain the reasons why, which concur with some of the findings in this investigation. It also concurs with the experience of the EOC in handling accessibility complaints. It must be said, however, that some shortfalls are impossible to meet for structural reasons, such as in one case involving lifts that did not service all floors. As a solution, the tenant was offered a transfer although this was not without negative consequences, the main one being the severance of the social network that the tenant had built over time. This network had enabled the tenant to perform many daily activities and was also a source of emotional support.

17.18 Facilities that help one group may be viewed as a disadvantage by another, such as in the example cited by focus groups vis-à-vis voice announcement systems in lifts on public housing estates. On occasions, these systems have been switched off due to complaints from residents about noise nuisance. Whether the sound level constituted nuisance is yet to be determined and it is possible that the quality of sound proofing on housing estates was partly to blame, but switching off the system altogether is hardly a sensitive response and defeats the purpose of providing the facility in the first place.

17.19 After obtaining the responses of owners and managers to the audit findings, follow-up discussions took place with focus group members and they highlighted additional issues for consideration, namely:

- a) The anti-drugs campaign spearheaded by the Chief Executive in 2009 presents an example of how the handling of issues involving a multitude of government departments could be tackled by the Government.
- b) The principle of universal design should be adopted for urban renewal programmes.
- c) Civic education is important to promote better understanding of the needs of PWDs and concept of non-discrimination.

Technological Innovations: research and development

17.20 Technology plays a vital role in the lives of PWDs and the elderly by providing them with scientific developments that have practical use in everyday life. It goes beyond making things easier – it makes them possible. At the individual level, assistive technology enhances functions and enables individuals to participate in society in meaningful ways. Technological innovations also benefit PWDs at the systemic level by providing access that enhances community integration and promotes equal opportunities. Access to technology can be increased by incorporating principles of universal design into the built environment, information technology and telecommunications, and transportation.

17.21 Technology has enormous potential for resolving some of the current accessibility problems but there does not appear to be any significant government-initiated or funded research and development (“R&D”) into using technology to improve accessibility for PWDs. This in spite of the fact that at least one key enabling technology, radio frequency identification (“RFID”), is ubiquitous in Hong Kong and has been receiving active support from the Government.¹⁶ Thus, on one hand Hong Kong prides itself as the world leader in the use of smart card technology, which uses the RFID technology, but on the other lags behind in extending the application of RFID-enabled technology to other areas, such as supporting the navigation of persons with visual impairment (“PVI”) and assisting their way-finding and access to services and facilities.

17.22 Taking the RFID as an example, it has been more than 20 years since research in the area of navigation assistance systems for PVIs began with various prototype systems developed in the process. For example, the SESAMONET (Secure and Safe Mobility Network)¹⁷ Project uses RFID passive transponders, i.e. micro chips, to create a path guiding a PVI through a location. The RFID path does not need any electric power supply and can be easily installed in areas such as town centre or buildings. Another system that has been under development by the Visualization and Interactive Systems Group (VIS) of the University of Stuttgart is the TANIA (Tactile Acoustical Navigation and Information Assistant) system with RFID technology.¹⁸ It was originally developed to provide PVIs with a navigation device which can be used independently indoors and outdoors, without any pre-installed

¹⁶ As can be seen by the funding support provided to Hong Kong RFID Centre by the Innovation and Technology Commission.

¹⁷ See http://silab.jrc.it/SESAMONET_doc.php for more details.

¹⁸ See <http://www.vis.uni-stuttgart.de/eng/research/proj/sfb627/asbus/> for more details.

infrastructure. The system has now been extended with an RFID reader to initialise the user's location more accurately to be used for recognising tagged objects.

17.23 To harness technology and the latest developments, the Government should not wait for companies or research institutions to generate R&D projects and apply for government funding, such as from the Innovation and Technology Fund. The Government should actively seek to work in partnership with industry, research institutions and professional organisations in initiating R&D projects that explore technological solutions to current accessibility problems. In some cases there is no need to reinvent the wheel but, rather, to find ways to build on latest developments. For example, the test run of the TANIA system, which provides location-based navigation advice or warnings acoustically or in Braille when the user enters a corresponding space, has proved valuable especially in places where crossings and placements of columns are similar to a labyrinth for people who are blind. This could potentially be useful for a densely populated and noisy urban environment such as Hong Kong. In addition, the Government should actively explore green technology, such as RFID, which helps reduce electronic waste and contribute to the conservation of the environment.

Recommendations

17.24 In the light of the FI findings, the EOC concludes with three main sets of recommendations: policy, operational and technical. These recommendations suggest policy directions and strategies that are aimed at facilitating change in respect of how accessibility issues are being addressed in Hong Kong.

Policy recommendations in respect of government

17.25 The Government has a duty to take care of needs beyond the reach of market forces and plays a critical role in improving accessibility for all its citizens. For these reasons, the Government should:

- a) Develop an overarching policy on building an inclusive society that is connected to the Government's sustainable development and "Care for the Elderly" agendas. This policy should adopt the principle of universal design and address accessibility issues for all persons and not only PWDs, since everyone at some point will experience some degree of mobility difficulties. For example, the Government should adopt universal design in all its urban renewal programmes, hence development projects such as the West Kowloon Cultural District should

follow this policy direction from inception to ensure that the needs of all, including PWDs, are fully mainstreamed and addressed in the new facilities.

- b) Develop a corporate disability strategy for addressing accessibility issues in Hong Kong to include measures that will have a significant impact on improving accessibility in the built environment, such as legislative proposals to address identified lacunae. To implement this strategy, a rolling action plan with time lines should be devised with designated funds in the operating budgets to finance capital and improvement works. The Chief Secretary for Administration (“CS”), whose role is to ensure coordination in policy formulation and implementation across policy bureaux, should be responsible for monitoring the implementation of the action plan.
- c) Set up a high-level central co-ordinating body, headed by the CS, to develop policies and practices on promoting universal access to public spaces, buildings as well as services owned and operated by the government and public bodies. Such a high level body will be able to co-ordinate improvement works across government departments and handle accessibility issues in premises that are managed by more than one maintenance department, such as housing estates and adjoining bus terminals, piers and various types of leisure facilities. This body could also develop large-scale improvement schedules, such as a timetable for remedying accessibility problems at bus terminals located in or close to public housing estates.
- d) Amend the Buildings Ordinance (Cap 123) (“BO”) by:
 - (i) removing the current exemptions of buildings belonging to the Government or buildings upon any land that is vested in the HA from the provisions of the BO. This will have the effect of extending the application of the BO as well as its subsidiary legislation and the requirements in the design manuals to government and HA buildings;
 - (ii) codifying “dignified access” by providing exact descriptive measurements, size and dimensions to be incorporated into building laws and regulations as well as design manuals and guidelines relating to accessibility.
- e) In the area of R&D, the Government should:
 - (i) take a lead in working with relevant industry and research institutions on initiating R&D projects that examine the incorporation of universal design into the design of new buildings so as to take account of the needs of all users, including PWDs, from the outset;

- (ii) proactively assess the applicability of technological advancements to addressing accessibility problems in Hong Kong; and
 - (iii) keep abreast with latest accessibility design innovations to identify cost-efficient design solutions to accessibility problems in existing buildings.
- f) Ensure that public premises provide access to PWDs on an equal and dignified basis. In practice, this means the Government should adopt the ***best practicable option*** rather than most cost-efficient approach in resolving accessibility issues to facilitate independent living of PWDs and provide them with dignified access. The Government should also promote this approach to other owners and managers of premises.
- g) The Government should consider harmonising the difference in requirements and standards between various design manuals and the DDO by studying overseas models, such as in Australia. The Australian paradigm is potentially suitable because the DDO is modelled on the Australian Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (“DDA 1992”). Operational since 2002, the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport (“DSAPT”) in Australia were formulated under the DDA 1992 and have harmonised the requirements of the DDA 1992 with the standards for accessible public transport and premises. The DSAPT establish minimum accessibility requirements to be met by providers and operators of public transport conveyances, infrastructure and premises and provide them with certainty about their obligations under the DDA 1992. Compliance with relevant requirements of the DSAPT will provide operators with protection from a complaint of unlawful discrimination. More recently, Australia has completed a similar harmonisation exercise with the requirements of the Building Code of Australia and those of the DDA 1992. The finalised Disability (Access to Premises – Buildings) Standards contain the harmonised requirements which will come into operation in May 2011.
- h) Set up a clear access policy and strategy for monuments, historic buildings and heritage sites. Relevant government agencies, such as the Antiquities and Monuments Office and the Tourism Commission, should work in partnership to proactively seek solutions to accessibility problems at these sites, such as researching into good practices elsewhere. For example, the English Heritage in

the U.K. has published a guide on access to historic buildings¹⁹ with suggestions on overcoming problems posed by the age of the site and fragility of the fabrics.

- i) Article 9(2)(b) of the CRPD provides that states parties should ensure private entities that offer facilities and services which are open or provided to the public take into account all aspects of accessibility for PWDs. Given the difficulties in compelling private owners and managers to carry out improvement works to divested premises, the Government should develop strategies to prevent or minimise these difficulties in future divested properties. An example may be the inclusion of provisions in the divestment arrangement that require the new owner to carry out access audits after the property is divested and commit to a timetable to rectify any problems identified in the audit. In addition, there may also be a clause that lists out accessibility problems that the new owner must rectify within a certain time frame after the property is divested. The divestment arrangement should be transparent and open to the public so that external parties can monitor and review progress.
- j) Be proactive in raising public awareness on disability issues, the needs and experiences of PWDs as well as the concepts of equality, non-discrimination, inclusiveness, acceptance and independent living. Public education is an important part of social change and these topics should also be covered by General Studies for primary schools and Liberal Studies for secondary schools so that youngsters are exposed to these ideas and realities at an early age. This will go some way in enhancing better understanding between PWDs and persons without disabilities as well as addressing their sometimes conflicting needs.

Policy recommendations in respect of other owners and managers

17.26 Similar to the recommendation for government at paragraph 17.31(b), it is recommended that owners and managers of premises should:

- a) develop a corporate disability strategy for addressing accessibility issues within their purview and devise a rolling action plan for implementation. They should also introduce a fixed item in their budgets to finance any improvement works and disability services or, if this is not financially viable, to identify funding sources to support these works.

¹⁹ *Easy Access to Historic Buildings* by English Heritage, available online at: <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/publications/easy-access-to-historic-buildings/easyaccess2004.pdf>

Operational recommendations in respect of government

17.27 There are accessibility issues that could be addressed more promptly by government departments and public bodies that do not require policy changes or incur significant cost, as detailed below:

- a) Prior to the setting up of a central co-ordination body and as an interim measure, the department with the largest area under its management should take a lead in addressing current shortfalls. For example, the Housing Authority should take the lead in negotiating with the Transport Department and Highways Department for improvements to bus terminals in or around public housing estates.
- b) Each government department to either appoint an existing staff or hire a new staff to be an “Access Advisor” be responsible for providing or arranging for and co-ordinating assistance and guidance to PWDs in accessing premises under its ownership and management as well as services and facilities that it provides.
- c) The Government should issue guidelines that give practical advice to government departments on access to services and facilities for users with disabilities. These could help address operational barriers, such as the height of information shelves or queuing systems.
- d) The Government should issue guidelines for other public and private sector owners and managers on:
 - (i) consulting with stakeholders, where practicable, as a matter of good practice and to promote acceptance of change before improvement works are carried out;
 - (ii) conducting impact studies after improvements works are completed;
 - (iii) conducting periodic audits of their own premises and the key issues that need to be included, such as an action plan for improvement works with timelines, including for conducting feasibility studies and submitting proposals to committees for approval; and
 - (iv) conducting detailed examinations of operational issues with the view of identifying and eliminating barriers.
- e) The Government should set up a resource centre to provide information and advice to private owners and managers on the standards of design for accessible

premises and the built environment. This could include a database on good examples of accessible premises and design solutions.

Operational recommendations in respect of other owners and managers

17.28 Owners and managers are recommended to:

- a) Conduct periodic audits of their own premises and devise a timetable and action plan for improvement works, including timelines for conducting feasibility studies and submitting proposals to committees for approval.
- b) Provide regular training to staff and contract workers, such as property management companies, to address operational and attitudinal issues. Such training should focus on accessibility issues and the needs of PWDs as well as giving information on applicable laws and potential legal liabilities. It may be useful to consult agencies representing PWDs to design the course content as well as to invite these agencies to assist with delivery.
- c) Where appropriate and practicable, to consult stakeholders before any improvement works are carried out and follow up with impact studies after the works are completed.

Technical recommendations

17.29 In respect of the accessibility issues identified in the Audit, the EOC recommends the following to be rectified by owners and managers of premises:

- a) To devise a timeframe for rectifying key accessibility problems that have been identified in the respective audit of their premises. They should provide a financing plan to identify funds that could be set aside, such as from the capital budget, as well as other possible revenue sources.
- b) To review and improve access provisions to meet the standards of the latest DM2008 as well as any relevant standards in guidelines published by the Transport Department and Highways Department where external works related to roads/ streets are involved in the premises. Special attention should be given to provisions for people with visual and hearing impairment, such as signage design and arrangements.

- c) To include in operational policies the procedures and practices for evacuation of PWDs. These should be included in regular staff training, and volunteers with disabilities may be used in regular fire drill exercises.
- d) The main recommendations for each of the building categories are generally summarized below.
 - i. In respect of public housing estates (PRH), HA is recommended to:
 - (1) Liaise with the Transport Department and Highways Department to ensure the paths from bus terminuses to all residential blocks are accessible by PWDs.
 - (2) Improve signage system to assist visitors in locating site access points.
 - (3) Ensure existing accessible lifts are in compliance with the DM2008 and provide lift access in residential blocks where possible.
 - (4) Improve entry doorways to tenancy units so that they are accessible to wheelchair users.
 - (5) Provide designated accessible car parking spaces for visitors / residents with disabilities.
 - (6) Ensure common areas, including those for leisure activities, are designed and constructed to be accessible to users with disabilities.
 - ii. In respect of PRH shopping centres, owners and managers are recommended to:
 - (1) Incorporate as soon as possible accessible lifts in all shopping centres and commercial complexes that are more than one storey high.
 - (2) Ensure main entrances of shopping centres are accessible to wheelchair users.
 - (3) Improve signage systems to help locate accessible entrances, toilets and lifts and other access facilities.
 - (4) Provide accessible service counter together with assistive listening system in all the shopping centres if an information service counter is available.
 - (5) Provide visual fire alarm system as soon as possible to meet relevant obligatory requirements.
 - (6) Provide tactile guide paths in all shopping centres leading to the information counter, accessible lifts and accessible toilets.

- (7) Provide Braille and tactile layout plans where a layout plan directory is available in the shopping centre.
 - (8) Alleviate difficulties in using doors by PWDs by checking and adjusting the force required to open internal and external doors, some of which were found to be too heavy in the audit.
 - (9) Provide facilities for infants and children inside shopping centres, such as baby changing facilities and toilet and hand-washing facilities for children.
 - (10) Explore the removal of stepped entrances at shop fronts and consider the installation of alternative facilities, such as extending a common platform in front of a row of shops and constructing a ramp at the end of the platform, use of movable ramps, or use of lifting platform.
 - (11) Improve access as soon as possible to all common areas open to the public.
- iii. In respect of PRH car parks, owners and managers are recommended to:
- (1) Provide adequate signage at entrances to indicate locations of designated car parking spaces.
 - (2) Provide an accessible service counter at the shroff office together with an assistive listening system.
 - (3) Ensure the size of designated car parking spaces should not be less than 2500mm X 3500mm in line with the requirements in DM2008.
- iv. In respect of food markets, owners and managers are recommended to:
- (1) Provide accessible lifts to service all floors open to the public.
 - (2) Provide accessible toilets where there are toilets provided for patrons without disabilities.
 - (3) Provide visual fire alarm system.
 - (4) Ensure the aisles inside the premises are no less than 750mm wide.
 - (5) Provide Braille and tactile layout plan where a directory layout plan is available.
 - (6) Provide adequate signage to indicate locations of accessible entrances, accessible toilets and accessible lifts if available.

- v. In respect of library and cultural facilities, owners and managers are recommended to:
 - (1) Provide accessible entrance on the ground floor of North District Town Hall.
 - (2) Provide an accessible service counter together with an assistive listening system where there is an information counter and/or ticketing counter.
 - (3) Provide visual alarm system.
 - (4) Provide tactile guide path to indicate the locations of information counters, accessible lifts and accessible toilets.
 - (5) Provide adequate signage to indicate locations of accessible entrances and other accessible facilities.
 - (6) Ensure all common areas and facilities open for public use are accessible to PWDs, including being given the same opportunity to view displays and participate in activities offered by museums.
 - (7) Upgrade facilities in all local museums to ensure these could be used by persons with hearing or visual impairment, or with mobility difficulties.
 - (8) The provision of library and cultural facilities often involve direct contact with the public and hence front-line staff should be trained adequately on disability awareness and on providing services in a non-discriminatory manner.
- vi. In respect of community halls/centres, owners and managers are recommended to:
 - (1) Provide accessible lifts to service all floors, accessible toilets, and visual fire alarm system.
 - (2) Provide tactile guide path leading to the information counter and other accessible facilities.
 - (3) Ensure all common areas open to the public are accessible to PWDs.
- vii. In respect of government offices, owners and managers are recommended to:
 - (1) Provide visual fire alarm system.

- (2) Provide adequate signage to indicate locations of accessible entrances and other accessible facilities.
 - (3) Provide tactile guide path at ground floor lobby leading to accessible and/or the service counter if available.
 - (4) Provide an accessible service counter inside each tenancy office where there is a service counter.
- viii. In respect of government clinics and health centres, owners and managers are recommended to provide an accessible service counter where an information counter is available as well as visual fire alarm system, assistive listening system and visual display boards.
- ix. In respect of sports venues and swimming pools, Leisure and Cultural Services Department is recommended to consider the following:
 - (1) Provide adequate signage to indicate locations of accessible entrances and other accessible facilities.
 - (2) Ensure all common areas open to the public are accessible to PWDs.
 - (3) Provide designated accessible seating space in spectator stands.
 - (4) Ensure PWDs could reach different water depth levels in swimming pools.
- x. In respect of post offices, Hongkong Post is recommended to consider the following:
 - (1) Provide accessible front entrance to Sham Shui Po Post Office.
 - (2) Provide at least one accessible service counter in all post offices.
 - (3) Provide tactile guide path in all post offices leading to the information counter.
 - (4) Provide assistive listening system in all post offices.

Conclusion

17.30 The context in which improvements are undertaken, including available resources, culture, attitudes and legislation, will have an impact on the opportunities for and constraints to improving access to both new and existing premises. Since the first design manual in 1984, the Government has taken steps in the right direction to ensure that human rights and equal opportunities issues are being considered alongside technical interventions, but there is considerable distance to go towards achieving fully accessible built environments. Thus far the pace of change has been slow, and it is unfair to expect PWDs to go on waiting for improvements without any concrete plans and timetables. The policy recommendations from this investigation will help stakeholders develop a framework and build capacity for improving accessibility that embraces universal design as its core value, infusing every aspect of their policies and procedures as well as assessment and accountability to help achieve the goal of barrier-free access for all.

APPENDIX A

LIST of 60 TARGET PREMISES IN THE ACCESS AUDIT

Public Housing Estate

1. Cheung Ching
2. Fu Tung
3. Hoi Lai
4. Kai Yip
5. Kwai Hing
6. Oi Man
7. Pak Tin
8. Siu Sai Wan
9. Tai Hing
10. Tai Wo
11. Tin Yuet
12. Tsz Lok
13. Tung Tau (II)
14. Wah Fu (I)
15. Wo Che
16. Yiu On
17. Yue Wan

Shopping Centre Located in Public Housing Estate

1. Cheung Ching Commercial Complex
2. Fu Tung Shopping Centre
3. Hoi Lai Shopping Centre
4. Oi Man Shopping Centre
5. Pak Tin Commercial Complex
6. Siu Sai Wan Shopping Centre
7. Tai Hing Commercial Centre
8. Tai Wo Shopping Centre
9. Tsz Wan Shan Shopping Centre

Car Park Located in Public Housing Estate

1. Kwai Hing Estate
2. Tsz Lok Estate

Food Market

1. Bowrington Road Market
2. Luen Wo Hui Market
3. Sai Ying Pun Market
4. Tai Kok Tsui Market
5. To Kwa Wan Market

Cultural Facilities

1. Lek Yuen Public Library
2. Tai Hing Public Library
3. Queen Elizabeth Stadium
4. North District Town Hall
5. Sai Wan Ho Civic Centre
6. Flagstaff House Museum of Teaware
7. Space Museum

Community Hall/Centre

1. Cheung Ching Estate Community Centre
2. Lei Muk Shue Community Hall
3. Tsz Wan Shan (South) Community Centre

Government Office

1. Cheung Sha Wan Government Offices
2. North District Government Offices
3. Queensway Government Offices
4. To Kwa Wan Government Offices
5. Tuen Mun Government Offices

Government Clinic and Health Centre

1. Fanling Integrated Treatment Centre
2. Lam Tin Maternal and Child Health Centre
3. Sai Ying Pun Chest Clinic
4. Shau Kei Wan Elderly Health Centre
5. Yau Ma Tei Elderly Health Centre

Leisure and Other Facilities

1. Tai Wan Shan Swimming Pool
2. Morrison Hill Swimming Pool
3. Lei Yue Mun Park and Holiday Village
4. Kwai Chung Sports Ground
5. Sham Shui Po Post Office
6. Yuen Long Post Office
7. Central Pier

APPENDIX B

ACCESS AUDIT CHECKLISTS ON OPERATIONAL AND ATTITUDINAL BARRIERS

Access Audit Checklist(3) – Operational Barrier

Date of Access Audit _____

Name of Building _____

Address _____

Name of Auditor _____

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Car Parking
- 2.0 External Routes
- 3.0 Street Furniture
- 4.0 Entrances/ Entrance Doors
- 5.0 Internal Surfaces
- 6.0 Internal Ramps/ Steps/ Handrails
- 7.0 Counters and Service Desks
- 8.0 Signs
- 9.0 Building Management
- 10.0 Information
- 11.0 Websites
- 12.0 Evacuation

Access Audit Checklist(3) – Operational Barrier

Name of Building: _____ Floor Level: _____

Departments/Sections/Wards: _____ Location/Room: _____

1.0 Car parking

	Yes	No	N/A
1.1 Is there accessible car parking spaces?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.2 Are ticket machines accessible?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.3 Is shroff office accessible?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.4 Is entry controls accessible?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.5 Are car parking bays level, smooth, even and free from loose stones?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.6 Are routes adequately lit?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2.0 External Routes

	Yes	No	N/A
2.1 Signage and landmarks to aid orientation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.2 Are vehicle and pedestrian routes clearly distinguished?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.3 Path surfaces suitable? Material _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.4 Planting kept well trimmed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3.0 Street Furniture

	Yes	No	N/A
3.1 Bollards at least 1000 high and visually contrasting with background?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
chains and ropes linking bollards avoided?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.2 Items of street furniture visually contrasting with background?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.3 Seating provided on long or inclined routes?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4.0 Entrances / Entrance Door

	Yes	No	N/A
4.1 Alternative accessible entrance(s) clearly signed from main entrance?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.2 Signage incorporates the International Symbol for Access?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.3 Weather protection provided?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.4 Outward-opening doors adequately guarded?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.5 Alternative gate access provided in conjunction with turnstiles?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.6 Doors and/or frames visually contrasting with wall?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.7 Glazed doors: markings for safety and visibility?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.8 Revolving doors: supplemented by an adjacent accessible door in regular use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Access Audit Checklist(3) – Operational Barrier

5.0 Internal surfaces

	Yes	No	N/A
5.1 Floor surfaces slip resistant?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.2 Floor and wall surfaces free of confusing glare and reflection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.3 Bright, boldly patterned floors avoided?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.4 Busy or distracting wall coverings avoided?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6.0 Internal ramps/ steps/ handrails

	Yes	No	N/A
6.1 Ramp easily identifiable or clearly signed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.2 Steps easily identifiable or clearly signed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.3 Lighting adequate and well positioned?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.4 Are handrails continuous along ramps, stair flights and landings?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.5 Are handrails visually contrasting with the background?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

7.0 Counters and service desks

	Yes	No	N/A
7.1 Counter height to suit seated and standing users?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.2 Sufficient space to write or sign documents on counter?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.3 Adequate lighting to counter?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

8.0 Signs

	Yes	No	N/A
8.1 Are directional signs provided for accessibility of people with disabilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.2 Signs in a logical position? At an appropriate height? Not obstructed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.3 Signs easily identifiable against their background?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.4 Adequate visual contrast between text and signboard?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.5 Suitable text style?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.6 Symbols used to supplement text?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.7 Signs well lit? Signboard surface minimizes glare and reflection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.8 Tactile signs used where appropriate and positioned at a suitable height?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

9.0 Building Management

	Yes	No	N/A
9.1 Carparking: designed spaces not used by non-disabled drivers?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9.2 External routes, including steps and ramps, kept clean, unobstructed and free of surface water?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9.3 Doors closers and door ironmongery maintained?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9.4 Horizontal circulation: space provided for wheelchair manoeuvre not			

Access Audit Checklist(3) – Operational Barrier

	obstructed by furniture, deliveries, storage and so on?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9.5	WCs not used as unofficial storage areas?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	waste bin not positioned in transfer area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9.6	Temporary signs provided when required?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	temporary signs removed when no longer required?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9.7	Induction loop or other hearing enhancement systems regularly checked to ensure equipment fully operational and effective?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	staff trained in using the equipment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9.8	Emergency evacuation alarm regularly checked?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	WC assistance alarm regularly checked?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	staff fully trained in response procedures?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9.9	Cleaning and polishing do not render slip-resistant surfaces slippery?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9.10	Information readily available on the accessibility of the building?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9.11	Building management procedures and policies regularly reviewed and updated?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

10.0 Information

		Yes	No	N/A
10.1	Is information available in a range of formats, including:			
	clear print?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	large print?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Braille?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	telephone services?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	audio tape?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	digital (e.g. disk, CD ROM)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10.2	Is the information readily available?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

11.0 Websites

		Yes	No	N/A
11.1	Has the website been designed including the following:			
	is there effective tonal contrast between text, graphics and background?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	is there a text alternative to audio and image files?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	are unnecessary moving graphics avoided?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	are video sequences captioned, or is a link provided to a transcript of the audio and video content?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11.2	Does the design of the website offer the flexibility for individual users to adjust text and colour settings using their own browser?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11.3	Is the web designer familiar with international guidelines on web accessibility?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Access Audit Checklist(4) – Attitudinal Barrier

Date of Access Audit _____

Name of Building _____

Address _____

Name of Auditor _____

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Communication Services
- 2.0 Awareness of the need of people with disabilities

Name of Building: _____ Floor Level: _____

Access Audit Checklist(4) – Attitudinal Barrier

Departments/Sections/Wards: _____ Location/Room: _____

1.0 Communication Services

		Yes	No	N/A
1.1	Are staff aware of or given training in the diversity of communication needs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.2	Are any staff trained and/or qualified to provide communication services?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.3	Is there a procedure for arranging communication services, when required, including:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	sign language interpreters?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	communication support workers?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2.0 Awareness of the needs of people with disabilities

		Yes	No	N/A
2.1	Are staff aware of the needs of people with disabilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.2	Are staff delivering positive responses in assisting the people with disabilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.3	Are staff trained to deal with emergencies?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.4	Is there any staff training related to accessibility available? If so, how often?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Remarks

[illegible]

APPENDIX C

LIST OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS THAT PARTICIPATED IN FOCUS GROUPS

1. 1st Step Association
自強協會
2. Direction Association for the Handicapped
路向四肢傷殘人士協會
3. Hong Kong Blind Union
香港失明人協進會
4. Hong Kong Federation of Handicapped Youth
香港傷殘青年協會
5. Hong Kong Federation of the Blind
香港失明人互聯會
6. Hong Kong Lutheran Social Service
香港路德會社會服務處
7. Hong Kong Rehabilitation Powe
香港復康力量
8. The Hong Kong Society for the Blind
香港盲人輔導會
9. The Hong Kong Society for the Deaf
香港聾人福利促進會
10. Rehabilitation Alliance Hong Kong
香港復康聯盟
11. Retina Hong Kong
香港視網膜病變協會

APPENDIX D

GLOSSARY AND ABBREVIATIONS

GLOSSARY

Accessible Lift

A lift with the appropriate provisions that allows any person to use independently in order to reach the different levels of a building.

Accessible Service Counter

A public enquiry or service counter with the height of the counter's upper surface at a suitable level for wheelchair users.

Accessible Toilet

Toilet and water closet cubicles properly designed for use by wheelchair users and those with ambulant disabilities.

Assistive Listening System / Induction Loop System

A system which enables sound signals that are amplified in volume be transmitted to persons with hearing impairment without interference from background noise or excessive reverberation.

Attitudinal Barriers

Behaviours that are, consciously or subconsciously, dictated by negative attitudes or ideologies towards persons with disabilities, whether from prejudice, ignorance, misunderstanding or stereotypes, that restrict or obstruct full participation in society for persons with disabilities.

Braille

A system of using embossed dots for recording which enables persons with visual impairment to read and write through the sense of touch.

Braille Map, Tactile Layout Plan/Map

A layout plan/map with embossed dots and other features enabling persons with visual impairment to read the representation of visual images in an environment through the sense of touch, to know their location and find the way.

Dropped Kerb

A ramp built on a footpath or pavement to accommodate the change in level towards vehicular areas.

Opening Force / Door Opening Force

The force used to push or pull open a door.

Operational Barriers

Policies, procedures or practices are often laid down from the perspective of persons without disabilities, with the execution of such, it sometimes directly or indirectly, restricts or obstructs persons with disabilities in access to premises, services and facilities.

Sensory Disability

Disabilities that affects a person's sight and / or hearing.

Stair Lift

A lift to allow wheelchair users to travel between the highest and lowest levels of a staircase.

Stair Climber

An electrical ambulatory device fitted with rotating wheels and with provisions that allow wheelchair be attached to it. The device can be pushed or pulled up or down a staircase to transport a wheelchair user between the highest and the lowest level of the staircase.

Tactile Guide Path

A standardized pattern applied to or built onto walking surfaces through the combined use of tactile directional tiles / blocks, positional tiles / blocks and tactile hazard warning tiles / blocks for way finding and orientation for persons with visual impairment

Tactile Warning Strips

A standardized pattern applied to or built onto walking surfaces through the use of tactile hazard warning tiles / blocks to warn persons with visual impairment of certain construction features.

Traction Strips

Strips with an abrasive surface placed on road or steps to reduce the risk of slip or fall.

Universal Design

The design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialised design.

Visual Display Board

A board which displays the relevant information announced by the public address system.

ABBREVIATIONS

ASD

Architectural Services Department

AMO

Antiquities and Monuments Office

BO

Buildings Ordinance (Cap. 123)

C for R

Commissioner for Rehabilitation

CEDD

Civil Engineering and Development Department

CRPD

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

CS

Chief Secretary for Administration

CWRF

Capital Works Reserve Fund

DCs

District Councils

DDO

Disability Discrimination Ordinance (Cap. 487)

DH

Department of Health

DM1997

Design Manual: Barrier Free Access 1997

DM2008

Design Manual: Barrier Free Access 2008

DMC

Deed of Mutual Covenant

DMW

District Minor Works

EMSD

Electronic and Mechanical Services Department

EMSTF

Electronic and Mechanical Services Trading Fund

FD2006

Final Draft Design Manual Barrier Free Access, published in 2006

FEHD

Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

FI

Formal investigation

GPA

Government Property Agency

HA

Hong Kong Housing Authority

HAD

Home Affairs Department

HD

Housing Department

HKHS

Hong Kong Housing Society

HKP

Hongkong Post

HyD

Highways Department

IO

Incorporated Owners

LCSD

Leisure and Cultural Services Department

NGOs

Non-government organisations

PHIs

Persons with hearing impairment

PMAs

Property Management Agents

PMDs

Persons with mobility difficulties

PRH

Public Rental Housing

PTIs

Public transport interchanges

PVIs

Persons with visual impairment

PWDs

Persons with disabilities

R&D

Research and development

RAC-ScA

Rehabilitation Advisory Committee's Sub-committee on Access

RFID

Radio frequency identification

TD

Transport Department

The Link

The Link Management Limited

TPDM

Transport Planning and Design Manual

TPS

Tenants Purchase Scheme



平 等 機 會 委 員 會
EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES COMMISSION

地址Address : 香港太古灣道14號太古城中心三座19樓
19/F, Cityplaza Three, 14 Taikoo Wan Road
Taikoo Shing, Hong Kong
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網址Website : <http://www.eoc.org.hk>

**Task Force to Co-ordinate Follow-up Action on the
Recommendations of the Equal Opportunities Commission's
Investigation Report on Accessibility in Publicly Accessible Premises**

Membership List

Convenor: Deputy Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare)

Members: Representatives from-

Architectural Services Department

Buildings Department

Chief Secretary for Administration's Office

Civil Engineering and Development Department

Department of Health

Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Government Property Agency

Highways Department

Home Affairs Department

Hongkong Post

Hong Kong Police Force

Housing Department

Immigration Department

Judiciary

Labour Department

Leisure and Cultural Services Department

Social Welfare Department

Transport Department

Commissioner for Rehabilitation

Equal Opportunities Commission
Formal Investigation Report on Accessibility in Publicly Accessible Premises

Government's Response and Follow-up Action

<u>Item</u>	<u>EOC's Recommendation</u>	<u>Response</u>	<u>Follow-up Action</u>	<u>Target Date of Completion</u>
<i>Policy Recommendation in Respect of Government</i>				
1	Develop an overarching policy on building an inclusive society that adopts the principle of universal design and is connected to the Government's sustainable development and "Care for the Elderly" agendas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It has all along been the policy objective of the Government to provide a barrier-free environment for persons with disabilities with a view to enabling them to access, on equal basis with others, to premises and enjoy the facilities and services therein. ● Building (Planning) Regulations (B(P)R) under the Buildings Ordinance (Cap 123) (BO) prescribe the design requirements to ensure that reasonable barrier-free access and facilities are provided on premises to meet the needs of persons with disabilities. B(P)R applies to new buildings or alterations and additions to existing buildings. The Design Manual (DM) was published by the Buildings Department (BD) in 1984 which set out both the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To reaffirm the Government's strong commitment to continuously enhancing the barrier-free access to Government premises, the LWB will issue a General Circular to set out the Government's overall policy, and the role and responsibilities of individual Government bureaux and departments on accessibility in publicly accessible premises for compliance by all Government bureaux and departments. In this regard, LWB has convened a focus group to prepare the draft circular with the participation of the relevant bureaux and departments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Issue the General Circular by end of 2010

<u>Item</u>	<u>EOC's Recommendation</u>	<u>Response</u>	<u>Follow-up Action</u>	<u>Target Date of Completion</u>
		<p>mandatory requirements as stipulated under B(P)R, as well as a set of recommended design requirements, i.e. best practice options beyond the statutory requirements, for barrier-free access and facilities. B(P)R and DM were amended in 1997 and 2008 to introduce improved design requirements to address the needs of persons with disabilities in the light of advancement in building technology and the rising expectation of the community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● While B(P)R is not applicable to buildings belonging to the Government and Housing Authority (HA), the Disability Discrimination Ordinance (Cap. 487) (DDO) stipulates that notwithstanding any provision in any other Ordinance, a public authority which has the power to approve building works, which includes the Director of Lands, the Building Authority (BA), HA and the Director of Architectural Services, shall not approve building plans, whether for a new building or for the alterations or additions to an existing building unless the public authority is satisfied that reasonable access will 		

<u>Item</u>	<u>EOC's Recommendation</u>	<u>Response</u>	<u>Follow-up Action</u>	<u>Target Date of Completion</u>
		<p>be provided for persons with disabilities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In this regard, it has been the established policy for the Government and HA to comply with the prevailing requirements in DM, and where practicable, achieve standards beyond the statutory requirements in the provision of barrier-free facilities. The Architectural Services Department (ArchSD) and the Housing Department (HD), which are responsible for the design and construction of Government buildings and public housing respectively, have put in place internal administrative monitoring and vetting mechanism to ensure that all their newly constructed buildings meet the statutory requirements. ● The standards and guidelines stipulated in the latest version of the DM, i.e. the "Design Manual: Barrier Free Access 2008" (DM 2008), has adopted the concept of "dignified access", e.g. provision of disabled lift at the main entrance, provision of unisex accessible toilet with separate 		

<u>Item</u>	<u>EOC's Recommendation</u>	<u>Response</u>	<u>Follow-up Action</u>	<u>Target Date of Completion</u>
		access. The Government will continue to adopt the same concept in future review of DM.		
2	Develop a corporate disability strategy for addressing accessibility issues in Hong Kong followed by a rolling action plan with time lines and designated funds in budgets to finance capital and improvement works. The Chief Secretary for Administration to be responsible for monitoring the implementation of the action plans.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● All new Government buildings with construction commencing after 1 December 2008 will have to meet the mandatory requirements as set out in DM 2008 and wherever practicable, achieve a standard beyond the statutory requirements. For renovation of existing Government buildings, ArchSD will work with the management departments of the buildings concerned to include facilities for barrier-free access as far as practicable. ● As regards upgrading the barrier-free facilities in existing Government buildings to meet the latest design standards, ArchSD carries out improvement works every year to upgrade the barrier-free facilities of Government premises that are frequently visited by persons with disabilities. In implementing the improvement works, ArchSD will consult the Sub-committee on Access of the Rehabilitation Advisory Committee (RAC) which comprises, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To draw up the retrofitting programme for upgrading the barrier-free facilities in existing Government premises and facilities, relevant departments have made assessments on premises and facilities under their management which have a frequent public interface on the basis of DM 2008 published by the Buildings Department which sets out the obligatory design requirements and recommended design requirements for barrier-free access to building. <p>TD, HyD and CEDD will also schedule their programme of providing barrier-free facilities, e.g. tactile guide paths, dropped kerbs, tactile warning strips, etc. for PTI/PLB termini, public piers/landing steps, footbridges/subways and roads to enhance accessibility of persons with disabilities. Having regard to operational circumstances, technical feasibility and time required for the retrofitting works, we have worked out a consolidated retrofitting programme for these premises and facilities as follows –</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Please refer to Enclosure

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		<p>amongst others, persons with disabilities, representatives from the rehabilitation and special education sectors and professionals. Since 2000, \$72 million has been spent on improving the access and facilities of 147 Government premises.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Individual Government departments will also upgrade the barrier-free facilities in venues under their management. For instance, since 2006, LCSD has completed 133 improvement projects in its cultural and recreational venues, including improvements to 13 venues for the 2009 East Asian Games. ● For public housing estates, HD has applied the "Universal Design" concept in all their new buildings since 2002 to provide a safe and convenient living environment for different categories of tenants, including the persons with disabilities. HD has also commenced building improvement works in stages to improve the barrier-free facilities of existing buildings since 2001. Improvement works including provision of ramps, dropped kerbs, 	<p>(a) 3 306 Government premises/facilities (85.1%) will be retrofitted before 30 June 2012;</p> <p>(b) 386 Government premises/facilities (9.9%) will have retrofitting works completed by 30 June 2014 having regard to such factors as patronage, extent of improvement works involved, plan for major renovations, operational requirements, technical constraints, etc.; and</p> <p>(c) 193 Government premises/facilities (5%) will not be retrofitted because of imminent plan of decommissioning or disposal, e.g. West Wing, Central Government Offices and Murray Building, insurmountable technical constraints, e.g. the Mount Davis Service Reservoir Sitting-out Area located on a slope with a steep and restricted access road, and buildings with structural constraints for the provision of manoeuvring space in corridors for wheelchairs etc..</p> <p>A breakdown of the number of premises and facilities is at Enclosure.</p>	

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		<p>tactile guide paths, signs, voice synthesizers inside lift cars, tactile markings and Braille letters to call buttons of lifts, door phones and combination locks panels at building entrances have been implemented in 155 public housing estates.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● For new public transport and road facilities, TD will entrust HyD to provide barrier-free access according to the "Transport Planning and Design Manual" (TPDM). TD has also put in place a regular programme to improve existing public transport facilities where conditions permit, such as installing dropped kerbs and tactile guide path. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● While the above action plan has covered Government premises which have a frequent public interface and the common facilities of joint-user buildings, individual bureaux and departments may continue to forward their requests for improvement works for other Government offices to ArchSD as and when required in accordance with the established mechanism for minor works projects. ● In tandem, HD has also devised a retrofitting programme to improve the accessibility of the properties managed by the HD. Improvement works at 155 public rental housing estates (including 43 public transport interchanges managed by HD), 23 commercial centres and 119 carparks will be completed by 30 June 2012. To strike a balance between the progress of improvement works and possible service interruption and nuisances to residing tenants, HD will schedule some of the improvement works for completion by 30 June 2014. To tie in with HD's lift modernisation programme, a small proportion of improvement works will be completed by 2016-2017. 	

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Meanwhile, HyD will also accelerate its retrofitting programme for the provision of barrier-free access (lift or ramp) at public footbridges and subways without such access or alternative at-grade crossings, where technically feasible. Up to now, out of a total of 283 such facilities, HyD has completed investigation of 123 facilities, of which 67 were found feasible for lift/ramp retrofitting works. The retrofitting works for 22 have been completed so far and the remaining will be completed by phases before 2016. As regards the remaining 160 footbridges and subways to be studied, with the experience gained in the first phase of the programme, HyD has recently commenced investigation of all items. In order to further shorten the time of project delivery, it is also actively considering the feasibility of taking forward the retrofitting works for all feasible items in batches, with a view to completing the majority by around 2016-17 and the remaining (e.g. those involving public objections or are technically complex) by around 2017-18. If this course of action is found feasible, the Administration will consult the Legislative Council (LegCo) on the detailed programme and seek funding 	

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			approval from LegCo as soon as practicable.	
3	Set up a high-level central co-ordinating body, headed by the CS, to develop policies and practices on promoting universal access to public spaces, buildings as well as services owned and operated by the government and public bodies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At present, individual departments will co-ordinate with relevant departments on projects which straddle beyond their areas of responsibilities as and when required. For example, HD will liaise with TD in the provision of barrier-free facilities in public transport interchanges in public housing estates while LCSD will liaise with TD and HyD on provision of barrier-free access in the public transport and road system in the vicinity of leisure and cultural facilities. A focus group comprising relevant departments has been convened to review and suggest further improvements to the existing co-ordination mechanism. The agreed arrangements will be incorporated into the General Circular mentioned in item 1 above. In tandem, individual bureaux and departments will issue departmental circulars and operational guidelines to ensure timely and co-ordinated efforts in the provision of barrier-free facilities. Relevant bureaux and departments will regularly review the effectiveness of their established co-ordination mechanism and take prompt follow-up action to resolve issues identified with relevant parties as and when required. The Task Force will keep an overview of the implementation progress of the retrofitting works and the effectiveness of the Government-wide efforts in promoting universal access in Government premises. The Task Force will submit regular reports on the implementation progress of the retrofitting programme to the CS. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please refer to item 1
4	Amend the Building Ordinance ("BO") by (i) removing current exemptions of buildings belonging to the Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please refer to item 1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please refer to item 1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please refer to item 1

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	(ii) or buildings upon any land that is vested in the HA from the provisions of the BO; and codifying "dignified access" by providing exact measurements, size and dimensions to be incorporated into building laws and regulations as well as design manuals and guidelines relating to accessibility.			
5	In the area of research and development: (i) take the lead in working with relevant industry and research institutions on initiating research and development projects that examine the extensive incorporation of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Government is committed to the study and promotion of best practices in architectural design for accessibility in Government buildings. ArchSD has completed two research studies, namely "Universal Accessibility - Best Practices and Guidelines" and "Universal Accessibility for External Areas, Open Spaces and Green Spaces" in 2004 and 2007 respectively. Applications of the recommendations made in the studies would be included as far as practicable in new building projects and in renovation of existing Government buildings by ArchSD. ● Regarding the application of new technologies such as Radio Frequency Identification (RFID), Secure & Safe Mobility Network (SESAMONET), Tactile Acoustical Navigation and Information Assistant (TANIA) to address accessibility problems in Hong Kong, ArchSD has approached the Innovation & Technology Commission (ITC) on the possibility of collaboration in examining the applicability of these technologies. 		Ongoing

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	<p>universal design into the design of new buildings;</p> <p>(ii) proactively assess the applicability of technological advancements to address accessibility problems in Hong Kong; and</p> <p>(iii) keep abreast with latest accessibility design innovations to identify cost-efficient design solutions to accessibility problems in existing buildings.</p>	<p>The Government is prepared to explore the application of these technologies in the Hong Kong environment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To address the user needs and accessibility issues in housing estates, HD has kept abreast with the latest technological advancements and consulted user groups from time to time. Examples include new lighting control system which strikes a balance between energy conservation and mandatory illumination required by DM 2008 and tactile guide path system with multi-sensory map to assist visually-impaired persons to travel independently within the housing estates. ● To make full use of technological advancement in resolving accessibility issues in Government premises, professional staff of relevant Government departments have kept abreast of the latest accessibility design innovations through attending seminars, exhibitions and close monitoring of the market development. Besides, with a view to exchanging views on design solutions and sharing of experience on the accessibility issues, they have established, and will continue to enhance, communication channels with persons with disabilities groups and rehabilitation NGOs. 		
6	Adopt and promote the best practicable option rather than most cost-efficient approach in resolving accessibility issues to facilitate independent living of persons with disabilities and provide them with dignified access.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Please refer to item 1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Please refer to item 1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Please refer to item 1

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7	Consider overseas experience in taking steps to harmonise different requirements and standards in various design manuals and the DDO.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● TD and BD have jointly conducted a review with a view to harmonising the requirements and standards in the TPDM and DM 2008. TD will introduce minor revisions of the TPDM to tie in with the requirements under DM 2008 and the two remaining minor differences will be revisited upon the next review of DM 2008 where applicable and practicable. ● ArchSD has made due reference to these manuals and overseas experience in development of the universal design guidelines as mentioned in item 5. ● HD has also developed universal design guidelines for public housing flats and incorporated the applicable standards and requirements of these manuals into their design guidelines. ● These departments will maintain close liaison amongst themselves to ensure that their design guidelines are harmonised and compatible. ● We will further examine the implications of incorporating the design standards in DDO having regard to overseas experience. 		Ongoing
8	Set up a clear access policy and strategy for monuments, historic buildings and heritage sites. Relevant government agencies, such as the Antiquities and Monuments Office and the Tourism Commission, should work in partnership to proactively seek solutions to accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Government has a clear strategy for the provision of barrier-free access to heritage buildings, i.e. declared monuments and historic buildings. Preservation of heritage buildings should have full regard to other important community needs. ● Heritage buildings were built a long time ago. Understandably the then building regulations were different from the current requirements under the BO. The Antiquities and Monuments Office (AMO), under the policy purview of the Commissioner for Heritage's Office (CHO) of the Development Bureau, works closely with BD in facilitating compliance of the design of and arrangement for access to heritage buildings when considering proposals for alteration and addition works to or adaptive re-use of these buildings. In principle, they should meet the current standards and requirements under the BO and to the satisfaction of BA. For the very 		-

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	problems at these sites.	<p>few occasions where full compliance with the requirements of BO has proved infeasible or will seriously damage the heritage value of the heritage buildings, CHO and/or AMO will consult BA and work out reasonable and practicable alternatives for discussion with stakeholders (e.g. the private owners of heritage buildings) with a view to facilitating equal access by persons with disabilities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In implementing the above, CHO and AMO are generally guided by the requirements under BO. When considering whether reasonable access will be provided, BA will consider in accordance with section 84(2) of the DDO by taking into account whether it is practicable to provide such access and whether providing such access would impose unjustifiable hardship on the person seeking approval. BA will consider individual applications on their own merits and take into account the advice given by the Advisory Committee on Barrier-Free Access which comprises members from the industry, representatives from Government departments concerned and representatives of persons with physical disability, visual impairment and hearing impairment. ● Furthermore, BD has commissioned a consultancy study for adaptive re-use of and alteration and addition works to heritage buildings in compliance with the building safety and health requirements of the BO. The consultancy is targeted for completion in early 2011. In the meantime, BD has promulgated an interim edition of the "Practice Guidebook on Compliance with Building Safety Requirements for Adaptive Re-use of and Alteration and Addition Works to Heritage Buildings under the Buildings Ordinance". The Guidebook recommends practicable measures to strike a balance between compliance with the design requirements and minimising interference with heritage buildings. ● AMO provides advice to other relevant departments on proposals that concerns compliance of heritage buildings with access and design requirements. AMO together with CHO have established close working relationships with all relevant departments including BD and through these standing consultation arrangement, any alteration works and revitalisation proposals under their purview as well as heritage 		

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		conservation initiatives in discussion with the building owners will be considered having due regard to the need for facilitating barrier-free access.		
9	Develop strategies to prevent or minimize difficulties in compelling private owners and managers to carry out improvement works in future divested premises. Divestment agreement should be transparent and open to the public so that external parties can monitor and review progress.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● HD will take account of the EOC's recommendation on divestment strategies and drafting of divestment agreements, and endeavour to incorporate into the divestment agreement condition clauses to require private owners and managers to carry out improvement works in divested premises to meet with prevailing requirements on barrier-free provisions in future divestment of properties. 		-
10	Be proactive in raising public awareness on disability issues, the needs and experiences of persons with disabilities as well as the concepts of equality, non-discrimination, inclusiveness, acceptance and independent living. These topics should also be covered by General Studies for primary schools and Liberal Studies for secondary schools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● From 2002-03 to 2008-09, the Government has allocated over \$13 million on public education and publicity campaigns to promote support for and integration of persons with disabilities into the community. LWB, in collaboration with the RAC, spearheaded promotional campaign for the Hong Kong Rehabilitation Programme Plan (RPP) and forged tripartite partnership of the business sector, the rehabilitation sector and the Government in providing equal opportunities for persons with disabilities and facilitating their integration into the community. Territory-wide publicity activities were also launched to support the World Mental Health Day and International Day of Disabled Persons (IDDP). ● To tie in with the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in HKSAR, LWB has substantially increased the annual allocation for public education activities from about \$2 million in 2008-09 to over \$12 million in 2009-10 and 2010-11. 		Ongoing

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have also been actively promoting barrier-free environment through continuous public education programmes. For example, the Sub-committee on Public Education on Rehabilitation under RAC has, since 2003, adopted “Working towards an inclusive and barrier-free society for persons with disabilities” as one of the themes for its annual public education programmes. From May 2008 to January 2009, RAC visited all the 18 District Councils to promote the RPP. In the course of the visit programme, RAC solicited the support of the District Councils in the promotion and provision of barrier-free facilities in their respective districts. In the coming year, RAC will continue to promote the building of a barrier-free environment. Meanwhile, the concepts of equality, non-discrimination, inclusiveness, etc. have already been incorporated in the school curriculum. 		
<i>Policy Recommendations in Respect of Other Owners and Managers</i>				
11	Develop a corporate disability strategy for address accessibility issues within their purview and devise a rolling action plan for implementation with funds set aside to finance improvement works and disability services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please refer to item 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please refer to item 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please refer to item 2
<i>Operational Recommendations in Respect of Government</i>				
12	Prior to the setting up of a central co-ordination body and as an interim measure, the government department with the largest area under its management should	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please refer to item 3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please refer to item 3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please refer to item 3

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	take a lead in addressing current shortfalls.			
13	Government departments and public bodies should appoint an “Access Advisor” to provide assistance to persons with disabilities in accessing premises under their ownership and managements as well as services and facilities that they provide.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● The Government welcomes the recommendations. Similar to the appointment of Green Managers and Gender Focal Points in individual bureaux and departments, an Access Co-ordinator to co-ordinate accessibility issues will be designated within individual bureau or department. In addition, an Access Officer will be appointed for each venue to –<ul style="list-style-type: none">(a) conduct regular audit checks and take timely follow up action as required to ensure the provision of suitable barrier-free facilities without undue alterations or obstructions to the barrier-free access;(b) offer assistance to persons with disabilities in access to the venue and using the services and facilities therein;(c) serve as the first point of contact on accessibility issues at the venue;(d) make recommendations to Departmental Access Co-ordinator on improvements of barrier-free access and assistance rendered to persons with disabilities at the venue;(e) make available information to persons with disabilities about the accessibility of the venue, e.g. on website and/or displaying suitable notices in the venue;(f) review operational practice and procedure periodically for emergency evacuation of persons with disabilities from the venue under his/her management;(g) handle public enquiries and complaints regarding accessibility issues for the venue; and(h) provide suitable guidance to venue staff and raise their awareness on accessibility issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● The mechanism for the appointment of Access Co-ordinators and Access Officers will be promulgated by means of a circular by the end of 2010.	

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		<p>The Access Co-ordinator will be responsible for co-ordinating the appointment of and provision of suitable training and guidance for their departmental Access Officers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In collaboration with EOC and the Civil Service Training and Development Institute (CSTDI), the Task Force will co-ordinate to provide at the central level general training on accessibility issues to Access Co-ordinators. To raise staff's awareness and understanding of accessibility issues, persons with disabilities will be invited to share their needs and difficulties in access to Government premises and facilities and their suggestions for improvements at workshops and seminars. At the departmental level, Access Co-ordinators will arrange suitable training for their Access Officers, in collaboration with EOC and CSTDI as appropriate. Such training will cover practical guidance on handling accessibility issues, assistance to persons with disabilities having regard to the operational circumstances of individual departments and venues, and proper ways to help persons with disabilities to evacuate from the venue in case of emergency. 		
14	The Government should issue guidelines that give practical advice to government department on access to services and facilities for users with disabilities.	● Please refer to item 13	● Please refer to item 13	● Please refer to item 13
15	The government should issue guidelines for other public and private sector owners and managers on (i) consulting with stakeholders before improvement works	● Please refer to item 13	● Please refer to item 13	● Please refer to item 13

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	<p>(ii) are carries out; conducting impact studies after improvements works are completed;</p> <p>(iii) conducting periodic audits of their own premises and the key issues that need to be included; and</p> <p>(iv) conducting detailed examinations of operational issues with the view of identifying and eliminating barriers.</p>			
16	The Government should set up a resource center to provide information and advice to private owners and managers on the standards of design for accessible premises and the built environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● DM 2008 published by BD and the two research studies by ArchSD mentioned in item 5 have already been uploaded on the internet. The Environmental Advisory Services (EAS), operating under the Rehabaid Society with Government's subvention, also provides advisory service to the owners of private buildings and facilities. EAS is a community based architectural consultancy service which provides specialist information and consultation service on the design and modification of buildings, urban services and amenities in respect of the environmental needs of persons with disabilities, including persons with physical disability, sensory disability (including the partially sighted), mental illness and intellectual disability, and also of the elderly. ● The service is staffed by architectural professionals complemented by occupational therapists and physiotherapists of the Rehabaid Centre. Advisory services are 		-

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		provided free for clients with disabilities, Government departments and voluntary agencies, while project management services, as required, are charged on a cost-recovery basis.		
<i>Operational Recommendations in Respect of Other Owners and Managers</i>				
17	Conduct periodic audits of their own premises and devise a timetable and action plan for improvement works.	● Please refer to item 2	● Please refer to item 2	● Please refer to item 2
18	To address operational and attitudinal issues, provide regular training to staff and contract workers on accessibility issues and the needs of persons with disabilities as well as give information on applicable laws and potential legal liabilities.	● Please refer to item 13	● Please refer to item 13	● Please refer to item 13
19	Consult stakeholders before any improvement works are carried out and follow-up with impact studies after the works are completed.	● Please refer to item 13	● Please refer to item 13	● Please refer to item 13

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<i>Technical Recommendations</i>				
20	Devise a timeframe for rectifying key accessibility problems and a financing plan to identify funds that could be set aside, such as from the capital budget, as well as other possible revenue sources.	● Please refer to item 2	● Please refer to item 2	● Please refer to item 2
21	Review and improve access provisions to meet the standards of the latest DM2008 as well as any relevant standards in guidelines published by the Transport Department and Highways Department. Special attention should be given to provisions for people with visual and hearing impairment.	● Please refer to item 2	● Please refer to item 2	● Please refer to item 2
22	Including in operational policies as well as regular staff training the procedures and practices for evacuations of persons with disabilities.	● Please refer to item 13	● Please refer to item 13	● Please refer to item 13

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23	Implement main recommendations for each of the building categories, namely, public housing estates ("PRH"), PRH shopping centres, PRH car parks, food markets, library and cultural facilities, community hall/centres, government offices, government clinics and health centre, sports venues, swimming pools and post offices.	● Please refer to item 2	● Please refer to item 2	● Please refer to item 2

**Number of Government Premises/Facilities to be Retrofitted
Breakdown by Management Departments**

Department	Class A Item ¹		Class B Item ²		Class C Item ³	
	Number		Number		Number	
Chief Secretary for Administration’s Office	0		0		4	
Civil Engineering and Development Department	1		0		0	
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department ⁴	652 ⁵		68 ⁶		15	
Hongkong Post	79		46		0	
Home Affairs Department	93		1		0	
Department of Health	49		58		2	
Leisure and Cultural Services Department – Cultural venues	102		1 ⁷		5	
Leisure and Cultural Services Department – Leisure venues	1083		14 ⁸		142	
Government Property Agency	106		0		2	
Transport Department	Office	6	Office	15	Office	0
	Pier/Landing Steps	209	Pier/Landing Steps	0	Pier/Landing Steps	1
	PTI/PLB Termini	120	PTI/PLB Termini	38	PTI/PLB Termini	10
	Footbridge/Subway ⁹	471	Footbridge/Subway ⁹	140	Footbridge/Subway ⁹	0
Labour Department	77		0		6	
Social Welfare Department	165		0		0	
Judiciary	4		5		3	
Immigration Department	25		0		1	
Hong Kong Police Force	64		0		2	
Sub-total	3 306 (85.1%)		386 (9.9%)		193 (5%)	
Total	3 885					

Note:

- ¹ Class A items will be retrofitted by 30 June 2012.
- ² Class B items will be retrofitted by 30 June 2014.
- ³ Class C items are not recommended to be retrofitted because of imminent plan of decommissioning or disposal or refurbishment, insurmountable technical constraints, etc..
- ⁴ 231 aqua privies that are to be converted into flushing toilets under a phased conversion programme and 76 other facilities, including public markets and public toilets that have been included in other refurbishment programmes are excluded from the table as barrier-free facilities will be incorporated during the conversion/refurbishment works where feasible.
- ⁵ Assuming sufficient land/space is available for the provision of accessible toilets.
- ⁶ Assuming early consensus can be reached with stakeholders e.g. market stall lessees.
- ⁷ The renovation programme including improvements works on accessibility planned for Tsuen Wan Public Library will be completed by mid-2015.
- ⁸ The retrofitting works of 10 items will be completed beyond 30 June 2014 due to the construction of MTR Shatin to Central Link.
- ⁹ Transport Department and Highways Department will install tactile warning strips at the top, bottom and landings of ramps and staircases and at lift entrances at 611 public footbridges/subways. The installation of lift and ramp in footbridges/subways will continue to be handled in a separate retrofitting programme carried out by Highways Department.