**Covid Concerns and Precautions Survey**

**July 2020**

**By Euan’s Guide**

**Contents**

01 Introduction

02 Euan’s Guide

02 VisitScotland

02 Key findings

03 Concerns

05 Precautions

09 Likelihood to visit different types of places

10 Travelling to places

11 Sources of information

11 Providing online activities

12 Next steps for venues

13 Demographics of the survey participants

**Introduction**

Euan’s Guide undertook a Covid consumer sentiment survey to understand domestic disabled people’s intent and concerns around visiting places within the U.K.

Euan’s Guide were approached by VisitScotland to help find out the opinions of disabled people to discover their concerns about travelling again with the lifting of lockdown measures, what would make them feel safer and more confident to take day trips and explore their local area again. The survey was developed in partnership with VisitScotland.

The survey addresses: the concerns disabled people have about visiting places post lockdown; what precautions and actions will make it safer and easier for them to visit; where they plan to go; how they plan for their trip; what activities they would like to see remain available in online formats.

This survey was taken by 450 people from 18 June 2020 to 19 July 2020. More information on the demographics of participants can be found in this report.

**Euan’s Guide**

Euan’s Guide is a charity established to improve disabled access for disabled people. Our review website – EuansGuide.com - was created to make it easier for the 13.9 million disabled people living in the UK to find and share accessible places to go.

A message from Euan MacDonald, Co-founder of Euan’s Guide:

“We hope that the findings of this survey will help ensure businesses consider their disabled access alongside the Covid precautions and make sure that their venue remains safe, welcoming and accessible for disabled people.

“I would like this opportunity to thank everybody who took part in the Covid Concerns and Precautions Survey.”

**VisitScotland**

VisitScotland is Scotland’s national tourism organisation. Its core purpose is to maximise the economic benefit of tourism to Scotland.

A message from Marina Di Duca, Inclusive Tourism Manager at VisitScotland:

“As a tourism board, VisitScotland wanted to find out the opinions of disabled people to discover their concerns and what would make it easier for them to start taking day trips and exploring their local area again. By identifying these concerns and the potential solutions we can all working together to ensure Scotland remains a safe and welcoming place for everyone.”

**Key Findings**

Top Concerns

1. People not respecting and honouring social distancing.
2. Not having access to venue and public toilets when out.
3. Having to queue or wait, particularly if the weather is bad.

Top Requirements

1. Having access to sanitising stations that are at an accessible height.
2. Having an accessible route that disabled people can navigate independently.
3. Having clear markings to ensure people social distance.

**Concerns**

The following shows the concerns that disabled people have about visiting places.

People not respecting and honouring social distancing

82%

Venue toilets and public toilets being shut

72%

Queuing or waiting - particularly in bad weather

59%

Cleanliness of toilets

56%

Having to share lifts with other people

53%

Having to touch doors that other people have touched

53%

Regular cleaning of public places

52%

Venues removing chairs & rest stops

48%

People not wearing masks

48%

More people needing Special Assistance

38%

Not being able to see, understand or fit in defined spaces

37%

Lack of clear instructions or inaccessibility of instructions

37%

The focus on cycling & walking when not everyone can walk or cycle

36%

Concerns around getting to places safely using public transport

32%

Being able to communicate while wearing masks

30%

Overwhelmingly, disabled people are worried about other people social distancing and respecting other people’s personal space. Some of the respondents also noted their concern around not being able to see social distancing layouts or fit in them:

* “I recently needed to visit a large store (through necessity not choice) and at least 50% of the people in the store did not keep the recommended distance or follow the store's, well publicised, Covid rules.”
* “I would like for venues and places to have tactile floor markings (make them slightly raised so I can feel them with my cane.”

While there is a clear desire to see prominent use of face coverings and masks, there are a number of disabled people who are worried to go out because they feel they’ll be challenged for not wearing them. Others worry about communication issues when people are wearing masks:

* “People not understanding disabilities and hidden disabilities and thinking we are just refusing to wear a mask and not following rules.”
* “Whilst I totally agreed with wearing them, I cannot lip read through face masks.”

There is also a big concern around having access to venue and public toilets when out and how safe and clean these will be to use.

**Precautions**

The following shows the measures and precautions that disabled people have said will make it safer and easier for them to visit places.

Sanitising stations that are at an accessible height

84%

An accessible route that disabled people can navigate independently

83%

Maintaining social distancing with the use of clear markings

81%

Visible cleaning rota and improved cleanliness in toilets

80%

Touch free doors

78%

Limiting the number of visitors at any one time

74%

Educate people to keep distancing even with a mask

70%

Using one way systems

68%

Contactless payments

67%

Providing 'quiet' or 'priority' opening times

67%

Making sure there is access to enough accessible parking bays

66%

Providing seating or shelter for queuing

62%

Lifts - restrict number of people

60%

Using screens at tills and information points

58%

Including Covid precautions information in their access information

57%

Having easy ways to request help

56%

Requiring staff and visitors to wear masks

53%

Having cordoned off areas for visitors needing more space

51%

Extra staff to provide Special Assistance / Access Buddy system

50%

Having information on the Covid precautions before they visit

50%

Guarantee that accommodation has been cleaned properly

49%

Contactless orders for food & drink

48%

Reintroduce disposable cups and straws

43%

Extra staff to restrict visitors in different areas

40%

Checking temperatures on arrival

39%

A way to order or reserve in advance

37%

Guaranteed period between accommodation bookings

32%

The survey showed that there is a clear desire for sanitisation stations to remain available and to be at an accessible height (e.g. so that it can be used by a wheelchair user).

People do want to be able to navigate a place independently and would prefer things like automatic doors so that they are touching less surfaces and will not require someone to hold the door open for them.

Cleanliness is of high importance. Participants stated that they were particularly interested in the frequent cleaning of toilets, doors and lifts.

* “Making sure everywhere is clean and sanitiser so safe to use.”

Many people have raised the concern of places using accessible parking spaces for their queue and not providing alternative accessible spaces for disabled people to use:

* “...making sure all [accessible parking] bays are clear & not being used for queues.”

**Likelihood to visit different types of places**

The following shows the intentions to participate in general leisure and everyday activities as lockdown restrictions are lifted.

Leisure venues and activities more or less likely to visit / do as lockdown restrictions are lifted. Net score: ‘more likely’ minus ‘less likely’.

Health Appointments

52%

Outdoor Areas (e.g. beaches, trails etc.)

36%

Predominantly Outdoor Attractions

9%

Outdoor Leisure or Sports Activities

4%

Food and Drink

-12%

Health and Wellbeing Activities

-28%

Overnight Accommodation

-30%

Predominantly Indoor or Covered Attractions

-39%

Entertainment (e.g. theatre, cinema etc.)

-45%

**Travelling to places**

We asked participants how they will travel and what they would need to make it safer and easier for them to travel.

Most participants said that they plan to travel to places by car. These individuals were not concerned about Covid preventative measures when using the car. Some individuals once again expressed the concern around losing parking facilities that are cordoned off. Some people were also worried about a lack of open toilets if they are going on a longer journey.

The majority of people who said they usually use public transport have worries about cleanliness, social distancing, and being told they can’t travel (e.g. if they are not wearing a mask). People who require special assistance worry that this won’t be available. There is a desire for transport operators, particularly train companies and train stations, to provide information on how special assistance will work.

**Sources of information**

Previous research\* tells us that 93% of disabled people try to find disabled access information before they visit. This survey has shown that 56% would like information on Covid precautions shared alongside a venue’s disabled access information.

Participants were asked how they plan to find disabled access and Covid information before they decide to visit somewhere.

I will check their website

78%

I will contact the venue directly

50%

I will use Euan's Guide

50%

I will search the internet

45%

I will ask friends, community groups or other people

28%

\*Taken from the 2019 Access Survey.

**Providing online activities**

As many activities moved online during lockdown, it gave people the opportunity to participate in activities without many of the usual physical and financial barriers:

* “While the rest of the world has locked down my world has opened up through things being available virtually. I dread seeing everything shrink again. It has been nice to feel like a person and member of society for a few months. I hope we’re not forgotten now.”

Participants were asked which of the following activities they would still like the opportunity to participate in virtually / online.

Social Events (e.g. virtual meet ups and discussions)

48%

Watching Movie Releases

38%

Watching Stage Performances

36%

Working Remotely

34%

Cultural Activities (e.g. virtual tours of attractions and museums and online collections)

34%

Completing Educational Courses

33%

Taking Part in Festivals and Events (e.g. live stream of performances and talks)

30%

**Next steps for venues**

* Review the findings of this survey and implement the necessary changes.
* Ensure your Covid precautions don’t negatively impact on your disabled access.
* Consider how you can continue to offer services online. This has helped open up places and opportunities that have previously been inaccessible.
* Share information on your disabled access and your Covid precautions. This information should be easy to find on your website and you can also list it for free on [EuansGuide.com](http://www.euansguide.com/).

We’ll leave you with these comments from participants:

“Before I can make an informed choice regarding whether somewhere is safe to visit, I have to know what precautions and/or restrictions are in place. Access (including accessible parking) and Covid-19 precautions are essential.”

“Disabled access, whilst having improved a lot over the past 30 years (my period of direct experience), is still a long way from ideal. The biggest problem is the lack of information available, which is why websites such as Euan's Guide are indispensable.”

**Demographics of the survey participants**

This survey was taken by 450 participants. 68% of participants identified as a disabled person. Further breakdown of participants can be found below.

Make up of survey participants

Disabled people

68%

Family members or friends of a disabled person

21%

Of retirement age

17%

Unpaid or family carers

13%

Teachers, Social Workers or Healthcare Professionals

6%

Paid carers or PAs

4%

Covid status

Participants who said that they or someone they live with is on the Government list of “vulnerable people”

50%

Participants who said that they or someone they live with is shielding

35%

When out and about, participants are usually...

With friends or family

67%

By themselves

38%

With a carer or PA

21%

With a club or group

3%

Geographic split of participants

England

51%

Scotland

46%

Wales

2%

Northern Ireland

1%

This survey was open to all disabled people, their family, friends, carers and other professionals who work closely with disabled people. To gauge the access requirements of people who took part in the survey we asked which of the following do participants use or have experience of.

Wheelchair

47%

Walking Aid

41%

Hidden Impairment

32%

Powerchair

24%

Autism

21%

Mobility Scooter

20%

Learning Disability

20%

Hearing Aid or Cochlear Implant

15%

Sign Language

11%

Speech Impairment

11%

Dementia

7%

Long Cane

6%

Assistance Dog – Other

6%

Symbol Cane

5%

Assistance Dog - Visual Impairment

4%

PMLD

3%

AAC

2%

Euan’s Guide

CodeBase

Argyle House

3 Lady Lawson Street

Edinburgh

EH3 9DZ

0131 510 5106

[hello@euansguide.com](mailto:hello@euansguide.com)

[www.EuansGuide.com](http://www.EuansGuide.com)

[www.twitter.com/euansguide](http://www.twitter.com/euansguide)

[www.facebook.com/euansguide](http://www.facebook.com/euansguide)

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