

Technical Guidance

Pedestrian access

Question

Where an external access to a dwelling, provided to meet Approved Document M (England & Wales), is reduced by local obstructions, can an obstructed width less than 900mm be accepted?

Considerations

- Access should be sufficient for people with disabilities, including wheelchair users, to approach and gain access into a dwelling.
- Approved Document M (England & Wales) requires an access to a dwelling to be at least 900mm wide.
- Approved Document M (England & Wales) allows the width of a straight internal corridor to be reduced to 750mm where there are local obstructions such as radiators.
- BS 8300 'Design of buildings and their approaches to meet the needs of disabled people - Code of practice' gives guidance on access design.

Answer

Where an access is provided to meet Approved Document M (England & Wales) it should generally have an unobstructed width of at least 900mm and builders should be encouraged to achieve this, even where there are obstructions.

However, in unavoidable circumstances where the width is reduced by local obstructions such as gateposts, meter boxes, rainwater downpipes, soil and vent pipes, etc. a minimum unobstructed width of 750mm may be accepted provided the obstruction:

- is for a short distance (not more than 1m) and
- only occurs in a straight section of the access route to avoid restricting manoeuvres at changes in the direction of travel.