ACCESSIBILITY REPORT FOR AUNGIER ST. LIBRARY

Prepared by: Damian Gordon, Edel Gallagher, Rachael Agnew, Jennifer Dean, Riona Fitzgerald, Bilal Javed, Michelle Lalor, Jazheel Luna, Alice McEvoy, Courtney O'Mahony, Claudia Rivera, Helen Vahey, Mary Walsh

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary

Overall, the level of accessibility of Aungier Street Library is both commendable and noteworthy. There are many aspects of this environment that are highly accessible and are suitable for students with a range of special needs. Below is a table listing the notable accessible features, the notable potential barriers, and the notable inaccessible features.

KEY ACCESSIBLE FEATURES
- The doorways are sufficiently wide
- There is no saddle threshold sticking up in the doorway
- The windows are controllable manually
- The Bin Management is excellent
- The display screens are sufficiently large
- The PCs are adjustable in terms of position and orientation
- The photocopiers and the recycle bins are easy-to-use
- The desks and aisles are accessible.
- There is a lift and stairs between floors.
- The library is a calm, relaxing, restful environment, that should be promoted as an oasis for anyone who is feeling stressed, or has anxiety.

KEY POTENTIAL BARRIERS
- The fluorescent lights may present challenges, and need monitoring.
- Lighting levels around the library should be monitored.
- The Kick-Step stools should be monitored.
- The carpets may retain chewing gum and other detritus.
- All instructions, posters and fixed displays should be checked as dyslexia-friendly.
- The air vents should be monitored for puckering.
- Desks with rounded edges are preferable to those with square corners.
- Desks that are height adjustable could be considered at key PC stations.

KEY INACCESSIBLE FEATURES
- Some of the Self-Service devices may not be easily accessible.

I. Scope of Evaluation

This report looks at the accessibility of the Aungier Street Library, and it does not consider the overall accessibility of the Aungier Street building. There may be wayfinding issues in locating this specific room that are beyond the scope of this report, but are worth considering, for example, having a tactile map of the Aungier Street building at the reception desk, or an audio guide. The range of disabilities considered in this report is limited to:

- Visually impairments

- Hearing impairments

- Mobility impairments

- Cognitive impairments

When considering cognitive impairments, issues such as Dyslexia, Dyscalculia, Dyspraxia, Dysgraphia, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Anxiety Disorder, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and Central Auditory Processing Disorder (CAPD) were considered. Additionally, students with a range of heights, English language skills, and cultural backgrounds were considered.

The reviewing process consisted of three separate visits to Aungier Street Library, each for approximately 30 minutes, on the following dates and times:

- 7th March 2024, 6:30pm-7:00pm
- 14th March 2024, 11:00am-11:30am
- 25th March2024, 3:45pm-4:15pm

The reviewer brought a range of measuring instruments to each of these reviews, but did not use a test wheelchair or any devices to simulate impairments.

2. Reviewers' Details

The key reviewer is this process was undertaken by Damian Gordon, who has an extensive background in accessibility of both on-line and bricks-and-mortar environments. He has worked closely with a number of disability organizations, in a number of roles, including: in an advisor capacity, on research projects, training on undertaking training and teaching, to advocate for legislative change, and working to help fund-raising. Organizations include the Centre for Excellence in Universal Design, the National Council for the Blind of Ireland, Arthritis Ireland, the Aging Well Network, the National Disability Authority, and the Central Remedial Clinic. He has undertaken over thirty (30) assessments of both buildings and rooms to test for accessibility issues (focusing on mobility, cognitive, and sensory impairments).

Other key contributors to this report are: Edel Gallagher, Rachael Agnew, Jennifer Dean, Riona Fitzgerald, Bilal Javed, Michelle Lalor, Jazheel Luna, Alice McEvoy, Courtney O'Mahony, Claudia Rivera, Helen Vahey, Mary Walsh.

Two key references that were used as part of this review were:

- "Technical Guidance Document M - Access and Use" for Building Control, from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Ireland. https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/78e67-technical-guidance-document-m-access-and-use/

- "Creating Inclusive Learning Opportunities in Higher Education: A Universal Design Toolkit" By Sheryl Burgstahler, Harvard Education Press.

3. Library Ingress and Egress

To access the Aungier Street Library, there are two sets of double doors to pass through. All four of the doors are well-hung and swing smoothly. They are easy to operate.

The doorway are sufficiently wide for both manual and automatic wheelchairs. The minimum recommended accessible doorway width is 35-40 inches, which these doorways far exceeds that requirement. Also, there is no saddle threshold that could be challenging for manual wheelchairs.

There are a few notices on the doorway that have essential information on them, and there is no problem with the content as it is, however, it is important to regularly prune the notices to prevent information overload for some potential library users.

The overall atmosphere in the library is an oasis of calm and relaxation (apart from the exams period), so it might be worth considering getting a door wrap (like the one below on the left[1]) with a calming image (like the one below on the right[2]).

Sample Door Wrap[1]

Sample Image for Door[2]

It is clear that every effort is made to create a wonderful atmosphere of peace and harmony in the library, therefore, it is a shame that the outer doorways don't reflect that calmness in some way, either as a door wrap, or in some other way, with a sign saying something like "*If you need to relax for a few minutes, please come in*".

Once the library user has passed in through the doorways, they are greeted with a silver turnstile gate, with access for wheelchair users as well as other users. The width of the wheelchair access turnstile is well in excess of the required size, and there is no saddle or other occlusions on the floor that would cause problems for wheelchair users. This is an excellent layout, and should be commended.

[1] https://www.schoolspiritlab.com/door-graphics.html
[2] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wicklow_Mountains#/media/File:Glendasan_River,_Wicklow_Mountains.jpg

On the silver pedestals of the turnstiles, there are arrows printed out on a sheet of paper, and although the meaning of them is clear in the context, it is always advisable to include instructions with arrows, either with some text (e.g. "Scan your card here"), or better yet, a cartoon or image depicting the card tapping process.
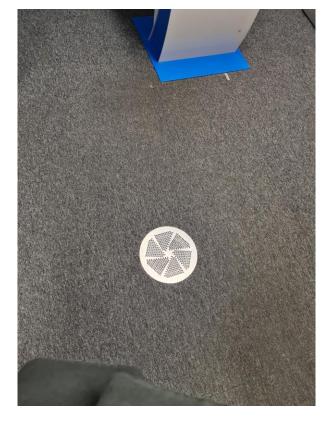
Once the library user is past the turnstiles, they are in the library, they may either go to the left of a set of blue chairs (which is a narrow route), or to the right. If they go to the right there is a wide entrance that should provide no navigation challenges for library users, and there is excellent wayfinding.
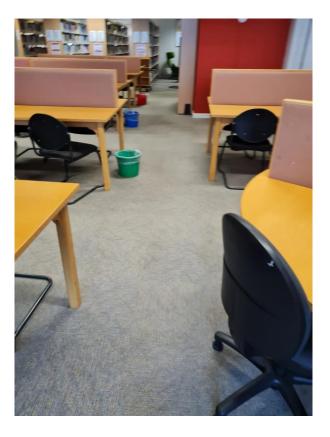
4. The Library Floor

It is notable that there are directional arrows on the floor, these can be extremely useful for some library users, but should be monitored and updated as the library layout evolves. Another feature on the floor is a series of circular, silver air vents. These are very useful in a library, but the specific structure of these air vents means that it is possible that the outer edges can become puckered up, if a heavy weight is pressed into the centre of the vent (e.g. if a cart filled with books is rolled over the middle of the vent), and this can result in a significant trip hazard, and a potentially serious problem for wheelchair users. A regular check on all vents is advised, simply by shuffling along the floor; or alternatively a rubber edge could be added around all of these vents.
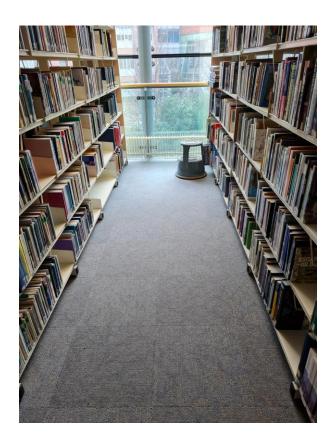
A particularly noteworthy and commendable aspect of the accessibility of the library is the bin management, which is exemplary. The bins are well-maintained and situated very well in terms of location. The choice of small, light-weight bins is extremely apposite, which make them easy to move for all users, including wheelchair users. The choice of primary colours make them easy to identify. On the three separate inspections of the library, all of the bins were situated well, and not were moved to such an extent that they represented a barrier for navigation.

Also worth noting is that the Kick-step stools management is almost perfect also. Having visited the library on three separate occasions (in the morning, afternoon, and evening), only one stool was ever halfway up the aisle which could be a potential barrier for a wheelchair user as they are relatively heavy and can be difficult to steer for a wheelchair user, so could potentially be a barrier from accessing the rest of the aisle if it is left in the aisle. Given the number of stools in the library, this is an excellent achievement. It is always worth staff having an occasion scan of the footstools to ensure that they are parked as far down the aisle as possible.

5. Key Activity Rooms

5.1 Training Room

The Training Room is superb, everything one could hope for in an accessible training room, including the fact that all switches and power supplies are easily accessible by users of a range of heights and wheelchair users. The light levels in the room are excellent, and there is sufficient navigation between each of the rows of desks to enable easy navigation. All signs are in font types and sizes that they are clearly readable by all types of users. The PC screens well-configured and well-maintained. An excellent room configuration.

5.2 Presentation Room

If the Training Room is superb, the Presentation Room is outstanding. It has a circular, modular desk in the middle, and desks and monitors around the edge of the room, creating a clean, relaxed environment. The switches and power supplies are easily accessible by users of a range of heights and wheelchair users, and there is an additional section of the room for wheelchair users. The light levels in the room are excellent, and there are fans in the room to keep things cool. The presenters' podium is very good, easily usable by presenters with a range of heights, and all the connectors on the podium are clearly labelled, and easy-to-use. This is an exemplary, accessible room.

5.3 Computer and Printing Room

The Computer and Printing Room is equipped with a range of devices, including photocopiers, recycling bins, computers, and Self-Service Library Borrowing and Returning stations. Considering the photocopier first, it is fully accessible, easy-to-use and wheelchair accessible. Similarly, for the recycle bin, it has a large capacity, but is of sufficient height whereby people of a range of sizes and wheelchair users can easily access it.
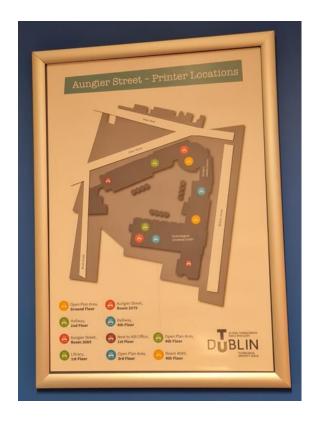
The computers are on non-slip desks, and they are adjustable in terms of position and orientation on the desks, and are therefore sufficiently accessible. The chairs, whether they have wheels or discs, are easily movable if necessary. The Self-Service Library Borrowing and Returning station is a very useful service, but may be difficult for shorter people or wheelchair users to access the screen. However, for each person who is able to use this service, that is one less person who will need to be assisted by library staff, and therefore the library staff will be more freely available for those people who cannot use the technology, so even if the service itself is not fully accessible, it does help increase the human resources available to people who need them. These same comments apply to all of the other Self-Service Systems.

The text signage in this room is large and easy-to-read, and includes good visual and textual content. Some are framed, as pictured below, and they provide useful information. The large majority of text in these signs are using a *Sans Serif* font which is great for students with dyslexia.

6. Some Potential Accessible Considerations

Many of the rooms are lit with fluorescent lights; when these lights begin to malfunction, they can flash intermittently which is a concern for students with photosensitive epilepsy. They can also sometimes either emit a periodic clicking sound or a continuous whine, when malfunctioning, which can be distressing for students with Central Auditory Processing Disorder (CAPD) and other auditory challenges.

The floor is covered with carpet, which is generally good for wheelchair users, but should be monitored as it may retain chewing gum and other detritus.

As time goes on, new signs and notices will be added around the library, it is important to ensure that all instructions, posters and fixed displays are dyslexia-friendly.

7. Celebrating the Accessibility of the Library

The library is an extraordinarily accessible environment and is an exemplar of how to create a student-friendly setting. Some notable features include the following:

- The accessible pod chairs and lightweight tables are great.
- The book display near the entrance is welcoming and friendly.
- The signs are well-maintained and easy-to-read.
- The Wellness Corner is simply great.
- The windows are manually operated, and easy-to-use.
- There are many desks with round corners, which are more wheelchair-friendly.
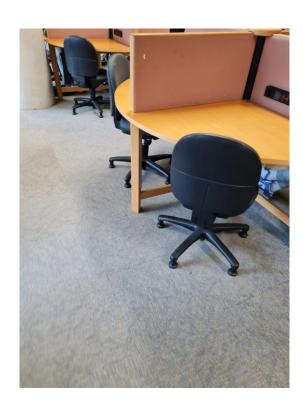
Wellness Corner
This Way

8. Key Recommendations

The key recommendations of this report are:

- To ensure that all signs, notices, and the content displayed on the screens are dyslexia-friendly and don't trigger photosensitive epilepsy episodes.
- To check the locations of the bins and the Kick-Step Stools.
- To check the air vents for puckering and bending
- To ensure that chairs are pushed into the desks as much as possible.
- To undertake an annual review of the accessibility of the library, to monitor issues such as signage and displays, to monitor the audio levels within the room, to monitor the carpet, and to test the controls, screens, and other equipment.
- To consider adding Braille signage and a tactile map of the room.

Appendix A: Principles of Universal Design

Principle 1: Equitable Use

The design is useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities.

- 1a. Provide the same means of use for all users: identical whenever possible; equivalent when not.
- 1b. Avoid segregating or stigmatizing any users.
- 1c. Provisions for privacy, security, and safety should be equally available to all users.
- 1d. Make the design appealing to all users.

Principle 2: Flexibility in Use

The design accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities.

- 2a. Provide choice in methods of use.
- 2b. Accommodate right- or left-handed access and use.
- 2c. Facilitate the user's accuracy and precision.
- 2d. Provide adaptability to the user's pace.

Principle 3: Simple and Intuitive Use

Use of the design is easy to understand, regardless of the user's experience, knowledge, language skills, or current concentration level.

- 3a. Eliminate unnecessary complexity.
- 3b. Be consistent with user expectations and intuition.
- 3c. Accommodate a wide range of literacy and language skills.
- 3d. Arrange information consistent with its importance.
- 3e. Provide effective prompting and feedback during and after task completion.

Principle 4: Perceptible Information

The design communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the user's sensory abilities.

- 4a. Use different modes (pictorial, verbal, tactile) for redundant presentation of essential information.
- 4b. Provide adequate contrast between essential information and its surroundings.

- 4c. Maximize "legibility" of essential information.
- 4d. Differentiate elements in ways that can be described (i.e., make it easy to give instructions or directions).
- 4e. Provide compatibility with a variety of techniques or devices used by people with sensory limitations.

Principle 5: Tolerance for Error

The design minimizes hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions.

- 5a. Arrange elements to minimize hazards and errors: most used elements, most accessible; hazardous elements eliminated, isolated, or shielded.
- 5b. Provide warnings of hazards and errors.
- 5c. Provide fail safe features.
- 5d. Discourage unconscious action in tasks that require vigilance.

Principle 6: Low Physical Effort

The design can be used efficiently and comfortably and with a minimum of fatigue.

- 6a. Allow user to maintain a neutral body position.
- 6b. Use reasonable operating forces.
- 6c. Minimize repetitive actions.
- 6d. Minimize sustained physical effort.

Principle 7: Size and Space for Approach and Use

Appropriate size and space is provided for approach, reach, manipulation, and use regardless of user's body size, posture, or mobility.

- 7a. Provide a clear line of sight to important elements for any seated or standing user.
- 7b. Make reach to all components comfortable for any seated or standing user.
- 7c. Accommodate variations in hand and grip size.
- 7d. Provide adequate space for the use of assistive devices or personal assistance.

Appendix B: Accessibility Checklist for Library

☐ Check the doors and noticeboards to ensure that there isn't an excess of notifications which could cause information overload.

☐ Check the floor vents for buckling or puckering.

☐ Check the bins to make sure that they aren't causing any blockages.

☐ Check the Kick-step stools to make sure they are at the end of the aisles.

☐ Push chairs into desks if they are sticking out too far.

☐ Annually monitor the signage and notices for wear-and-tear.

☐ Monitor the lighting levels in the library.

☐ Monitor the audio levels in the library.

☐ Check carpets and other floor coverings for chewing gum and other detritus.

☐ Regularly test the controls, screens, and other equipment.