Designing Inclusive Public Toilets

Jo-Anne Bichard & Gail Ramster

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Today I will share with you...

- Our background in UK toilet research
- What we mean by access
- Why toilets are important for access
- Why toilets need to be accessible
- Conflicts in provision = conflicts in design
- Public Service > Public Health > Publicly Accessible
- Destination Toilet

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PUBLIC TOILETS RESEARCH UNIT

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Co-leads: Professor Jo-Anne Bichard & Gail Ramster







VivaCity2020

The Inclusive Design of Public Toilets in City Centre's 2003-2006



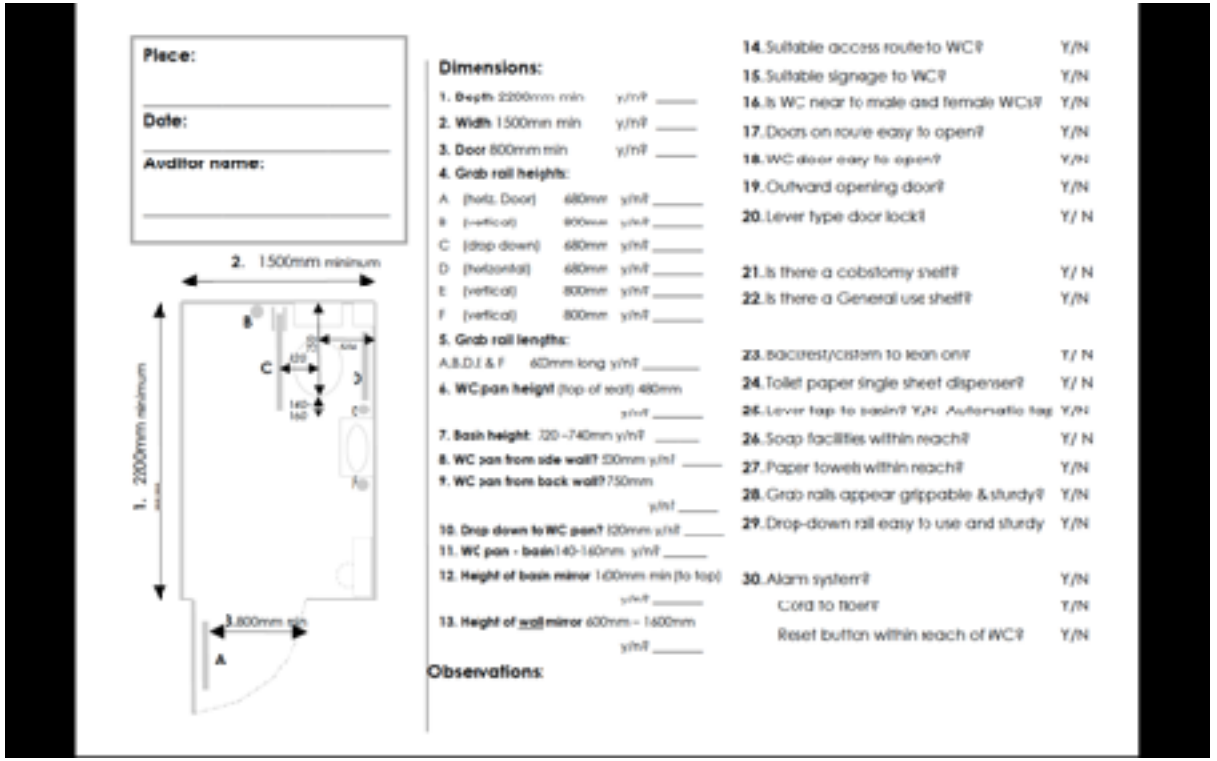




UCL EPSRC

Toilet Audit Tool – 50 Design Features





Place:

Date:

Auditor name:

2. 1500mm minimum

1. 2000mm minimum

3. 800mm min

Dimensions:

1. **Depth** 2200mm min y/n/if _____
2. **Width** 1500mm min y/n/if _____
3. **Door** 800mm min y/n/if _____
4. **Grab rail heights:**
   - A (heli. Door) 680mm y/n/if _____
   - B (vertical) 800mm y/n/if _____
   - C (drop down) 680mm y/n/if _____
   - D (horizontal) 680mm y/n/if _____
   - E (vertical) 800mm y/n/if _____
   - F (vertical) 800mm y/n/if _____
5. **Grab rail lengths:**
   - A,B,D,E & F 600mm long y/n/if _____
6. **WC pan height** (top of seat) 480mm y/n/if _____
7. **Basin height**: 720 –740mm y/n/if _____
8. **WC pan from side wall?** 200mm y/n/if _____
9. **WC pan from back wall?** 750mm y/n/if _____
10. **Drop down to WC pan?** 120mm y/n/if _____
11. **WC pan - basin** 140-160mm y/n/if _____
12. **Height of basin mirror** 1600mm min (to top) y/n/if _____
13. **Height of wall mirror** 600mm – 1600mm y/n/if _____

Observations:

14. Suitable access route to WC? Y/N
15. Suitable signage to WC? Y/N
16. Is WC near to male and female WCs? Y/N
17. Doors on route easy to open? Y/N
18. WC door easy to open? Y/N
19. Outward opening door? Y/N
20. Lever type door lock? Y/ N
21. Is there a cobstorny shelf? Y/ N
22. Is there a General use shelf? Y/N
23. Backrest/cistern to lean on? Y/ N
24. Toilet paper single sheet dispenser? Y/ N
25. Lever tap to basin? Y/N Automatic tap Y/N
26. Soap facilities within reach? Y/ N
27. Paper towels within reach? Y/N
28. Grab rails appear grippable & sturdy? Y/N
29. Drop-down rail easy to use and sturdy Y/N
30. Alarm system? Y/N
    - Cord to floor? Y/N
    - Reset button within reach of WC? Y/N

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Audited 101 accessible (disabled) toilets in England





Audited 101 accessible (disabled) toilets in England





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The Accessible Toilet Resource



UCL

TACT³

Promoting Ageing Continence

Challenging Environmental Barriers to Continence 2009-2012





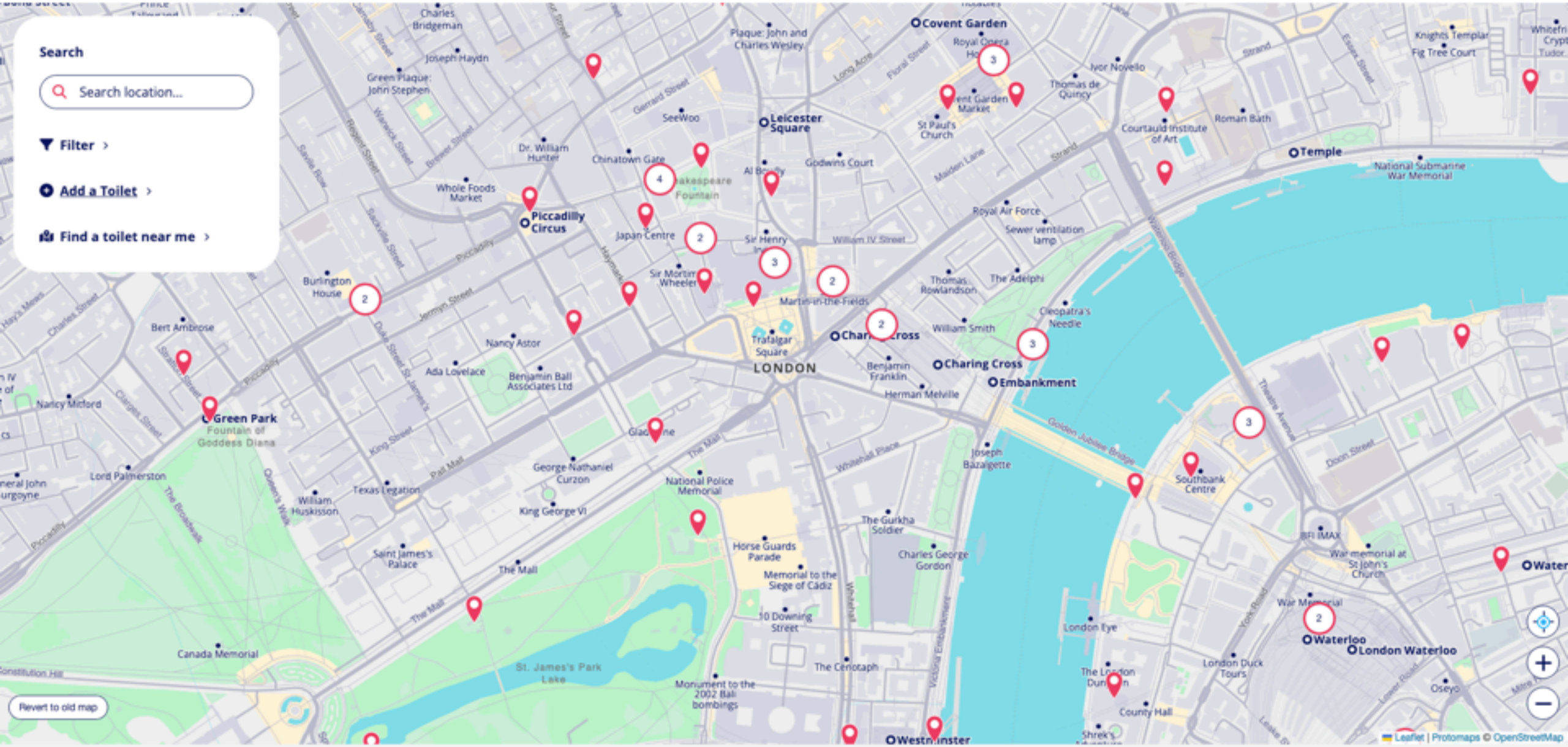


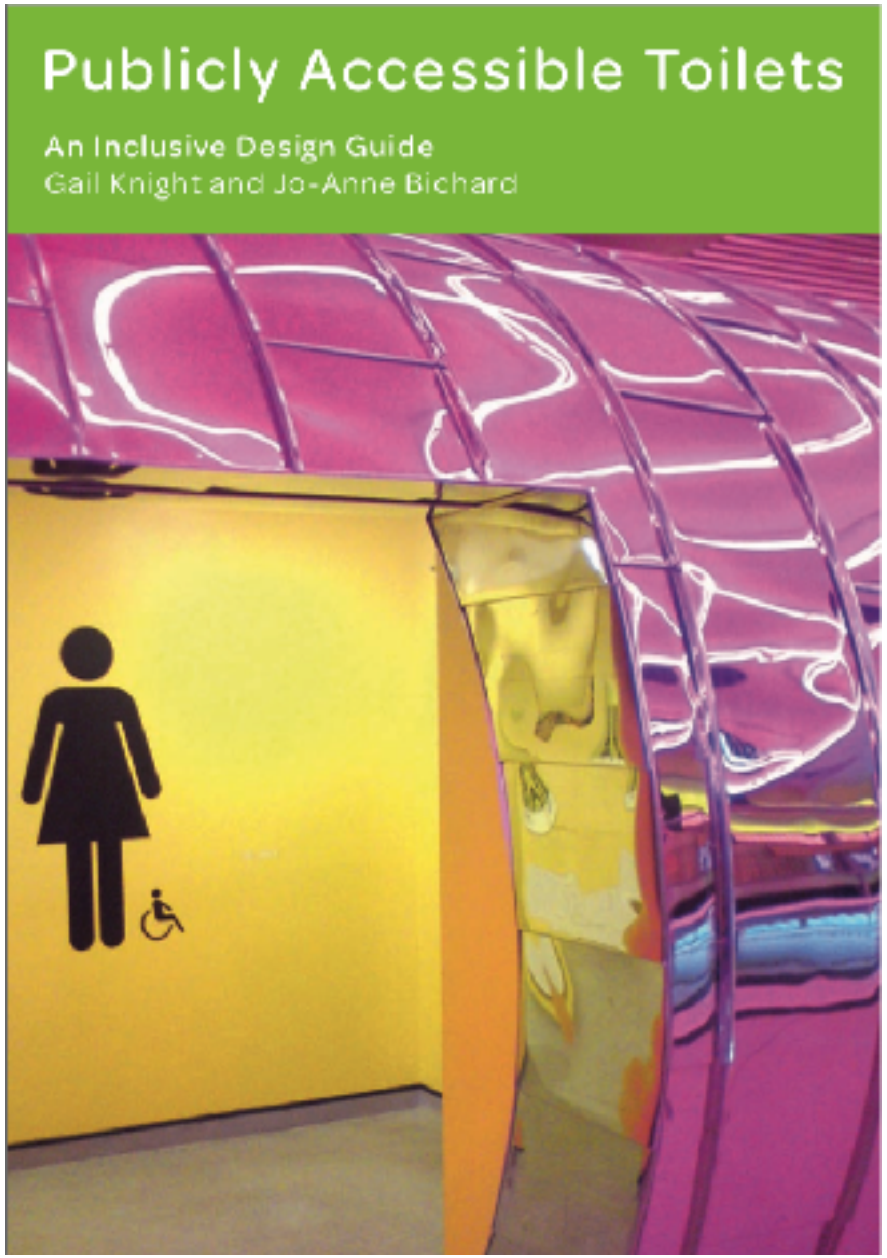
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E·S·R·C ECONOMIC & SOCIAL RESEARCH COUNCIL

nda PROGRAMME

new dynamics of ageing
a cross-council research programme


Search
Search location...
Filter
Add a Toilet
Find a toilet near me
Revert to old map
Leaflet | Protomaps © OpenStreetMap





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Public Convenience Ltd

At Public Convenience we work to improve publicly accessible toilets for everyone - to ensure a public service that meets the public need.

Our project The Great British Public Toilet Map is live and helps people to find 12000+ toilets they can use across the UK.

Visit the website at https://www.toiletmap.org.uk





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TINKLE

Toilets Innovation and New Knowledge Exchange

https://tinkle.rca.ac.uk



RESOURCES

Find published information on toilet design. Our resource bank includes guidance, standards, regulation, toolkits, websites and research.

NETWORK

Connect with our network for expert or peer-to-peer advice. Our network includes experts across many aspects of toilets, available for contact.

LATRINALIA

Our forum, open to all, where you can ask and answer questions, participate in open debate, share new resources, support campaigns and enable research.



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Toilet Consortium

BTA
British Toilet Association
For your convenience

Engaged

A toilet on every High Street

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PiM

Supported by:

Design Council

LEAP

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INCLUSIVE


Children's sink


Wudhu facility

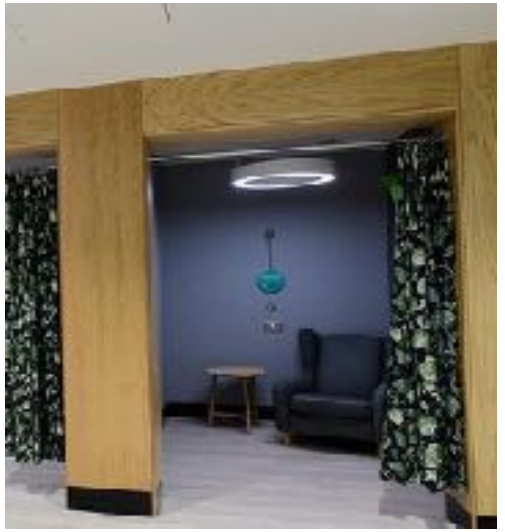

Cubicle with sink




Changing Places facility (Wellcome Collection)

COMMUNITY SPACE





PUBLIC HEALTH



Our research takes a holistic perspective – that you will need to use the toilet the minute you leave the home



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What do we mean by Access - Physical

- Meeting a diversity of body needs when using the toilet
- Disability – not discreet but complex / multiple needs
- Emotional / neurodiversity (space to take a break)



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What do we mean by Access – Social

- Homelessness?
- Gender?
- Families?
- Children?
- Drug users?










Everyone needs the toilet

‘Normal’ aspects of toilet use

- Can need a toilet up to 9 times a day
- Ideally 4-6 times a day for bladder
- 3 times a day – 3 times a week for bowel
- Women, trans men and non-binary people more often due to; pregnancy, menstruation, menopause
- Men, trans women, non-binary people more often due to prostate problems
- UK - 12 million people over age 65
- Ageing = need to go more often + reach facilities faster + may have mobility concerns





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Some need the toilet more then others

- 14 million people bladder condition
- 6.5 million people bowel condition
- These conditions predominately effect women
- Over half UK population women
- Historically less provision then men
- 16 million disabled people (8% use wheelchairs)





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The Current state of UK Public Toilets

- “Public Toilets” owned and operated by district councils & unitary authorities
- Majority of provision in private sector
- Major shift from historically civic public service into private sector



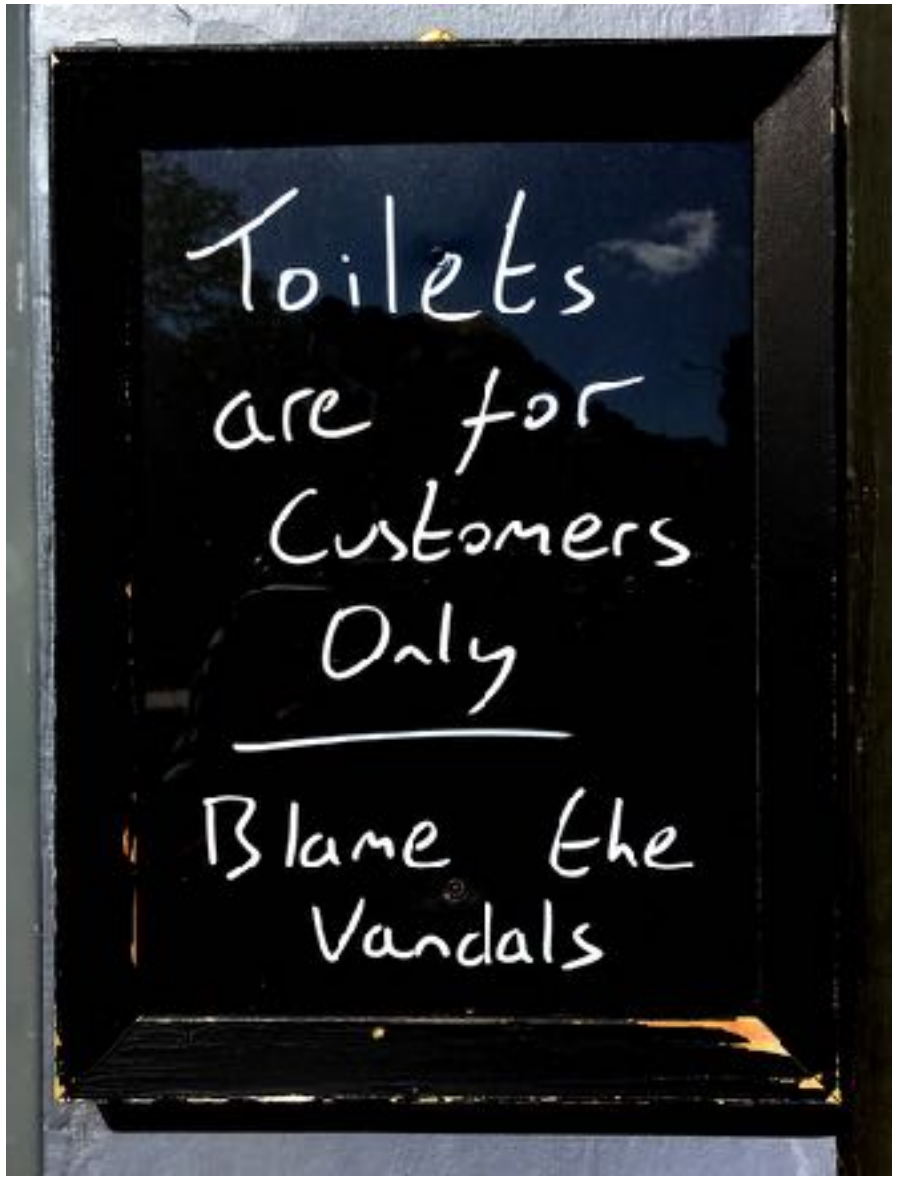


- From **Public Toilets** to **Publicly Accessible Toilets**

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Publicly accessible to who?

- Private providers (train stations, motorway services etc.) offer general access to all
- Many local authorities partnered with private providers offer Community Toilet Schemes.
- Private restrictions to access / provider can deny entry
- Small businesses might not be accessible



Toilets: Vital for Active Economies

- **Earning money.** Mobile workers: delivery drivers, taxi drivers, maintenance workers, community nurses, cycle delivery

- **Spending money.** High streets, travelling to high streets, leisure activities in town and city centres

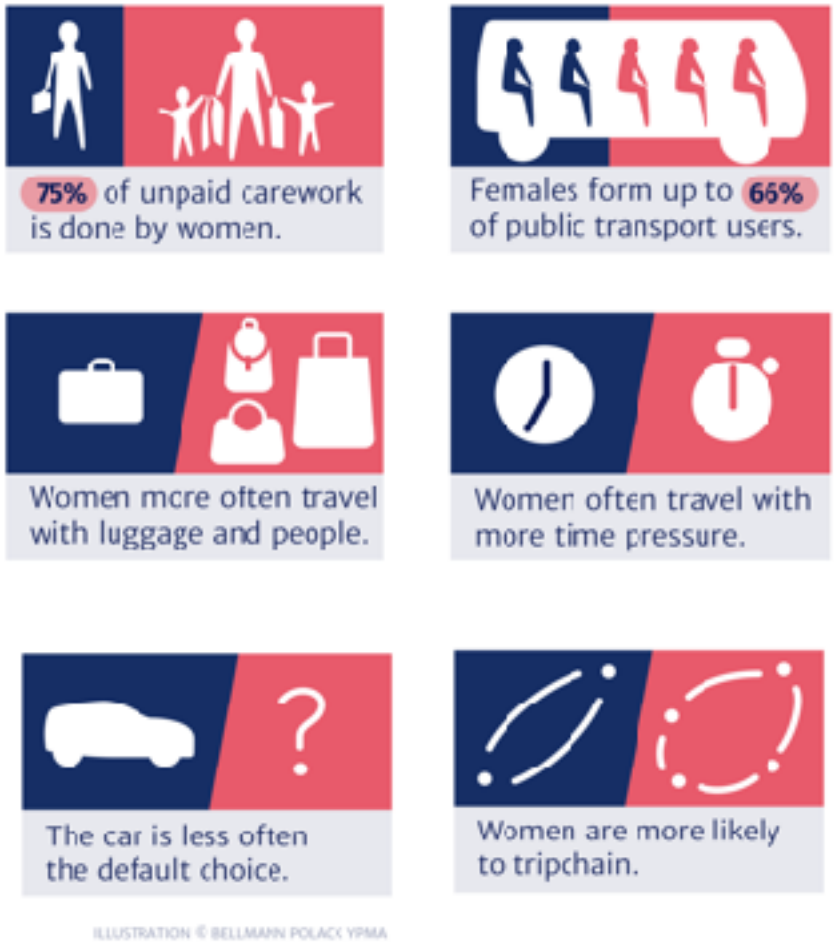


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Toilets: Vital for Active Lives

- Health & Wellbeing; exercise for fun and leisure
- Active travel; walking and cycling
- ‘Trip chaining’; more likely by women*
- Caring (children and elderly) more likely by women*
- Public transport used more by women*

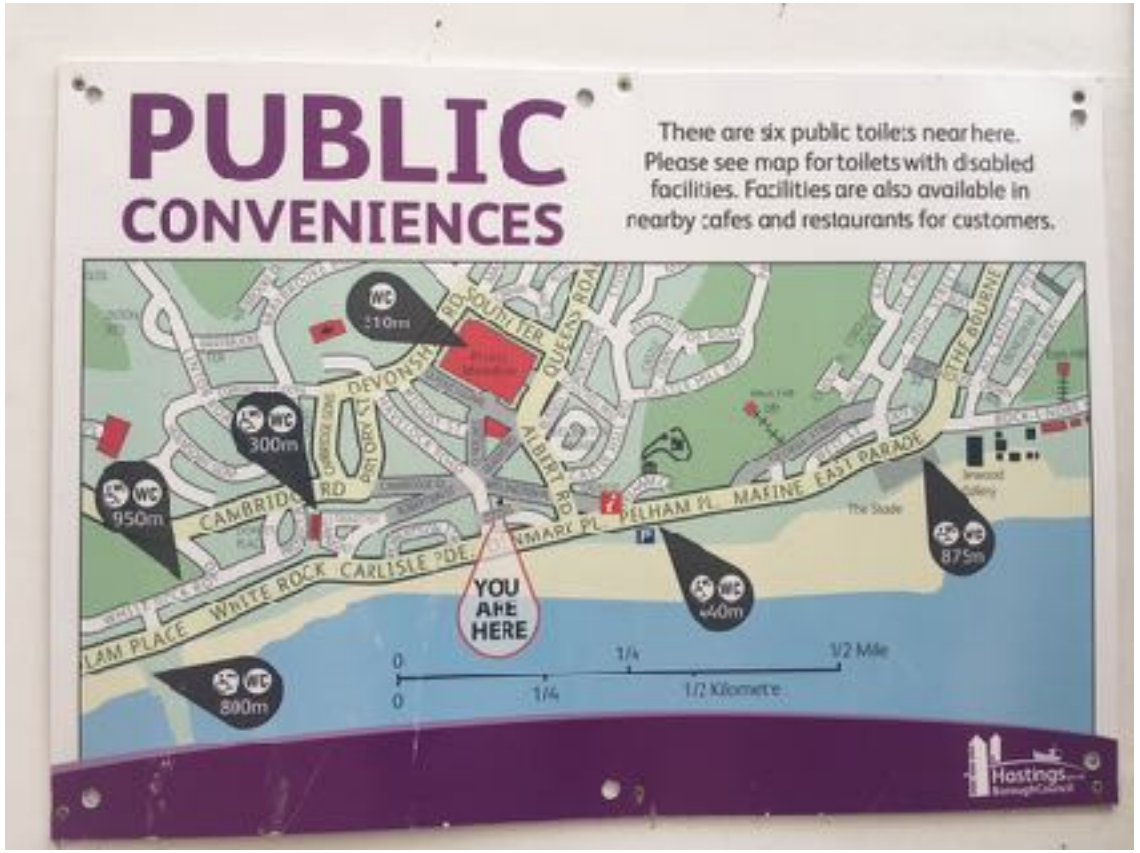
*(World Economic Forum 2020)



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Toilets: Vital for Local Living

- Age / health conditions require frequent access
- Need local toilets on high streets
- From ‘popping out’ to beginning longer journey
- Toilet deserts / postcode lottery
- Limits people's time out of the home
- Prevents people leaving home



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What about the children?

- unicef Child Friendly Cities Initiative
- Make cities more equitable / accessible to children
- Need more child / family toilets
- Go beyond baby-change provision
- Young children need access









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Accessible to all = conflicts in provision

- Toileting – a private act in public space
- Daytime Vs Nighttime provision
- Legitimate Vs illegitimate use
- Dilemma for providers
- Dilemma for designers
- Dilemma for users







Conflicts of provision – Nighttime







Other Activities...







Inclusive Design Vs Design Out Crime





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Conflicts of provision

- Traditional gender segregated design can be difficult for families
- Also, those caring for others of opposite gender
- Pressure on the unisex ‘disabled’ toilets
- Younger people more open to gender neutral provision
- Traditional gender segregated design preferred by many older people





Conflicts of provision – Need to redesign?

- Gender neutral; more then just changing signs on doors
- Users uncomfortable sharing traditional row of cubicles
- Toilets need to be fully enclosed
- Preferably with own wash basin
- Need for redesign to ensure privacy, comfort and security.

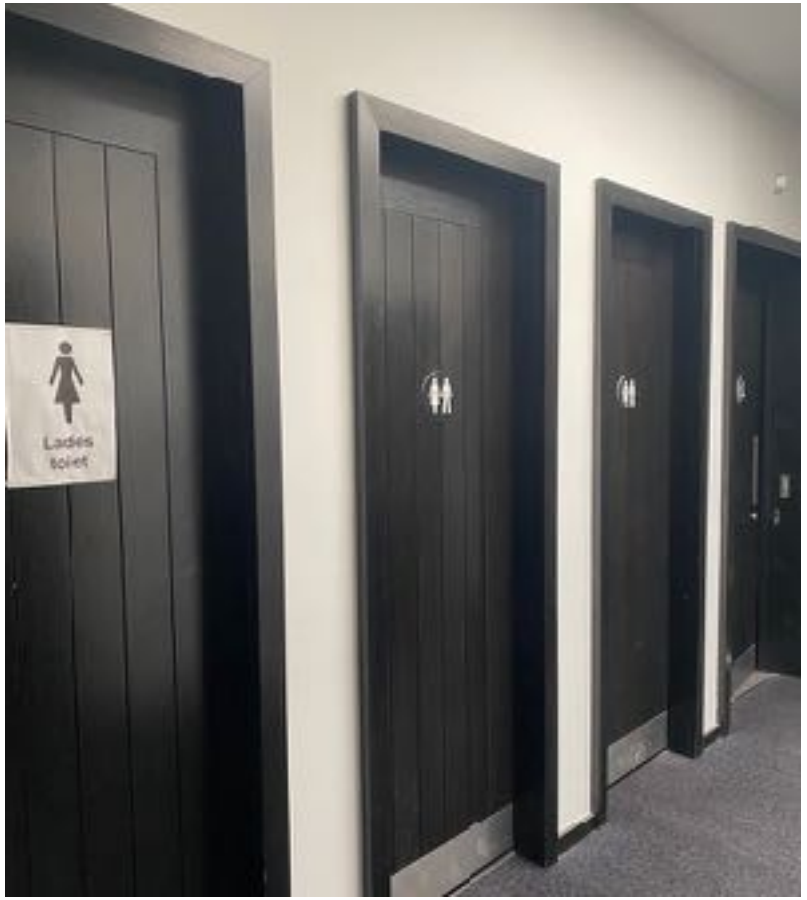






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Conflicts of provision – It’s just a toilet…





Public Service > Public Health > Publicly Accessible

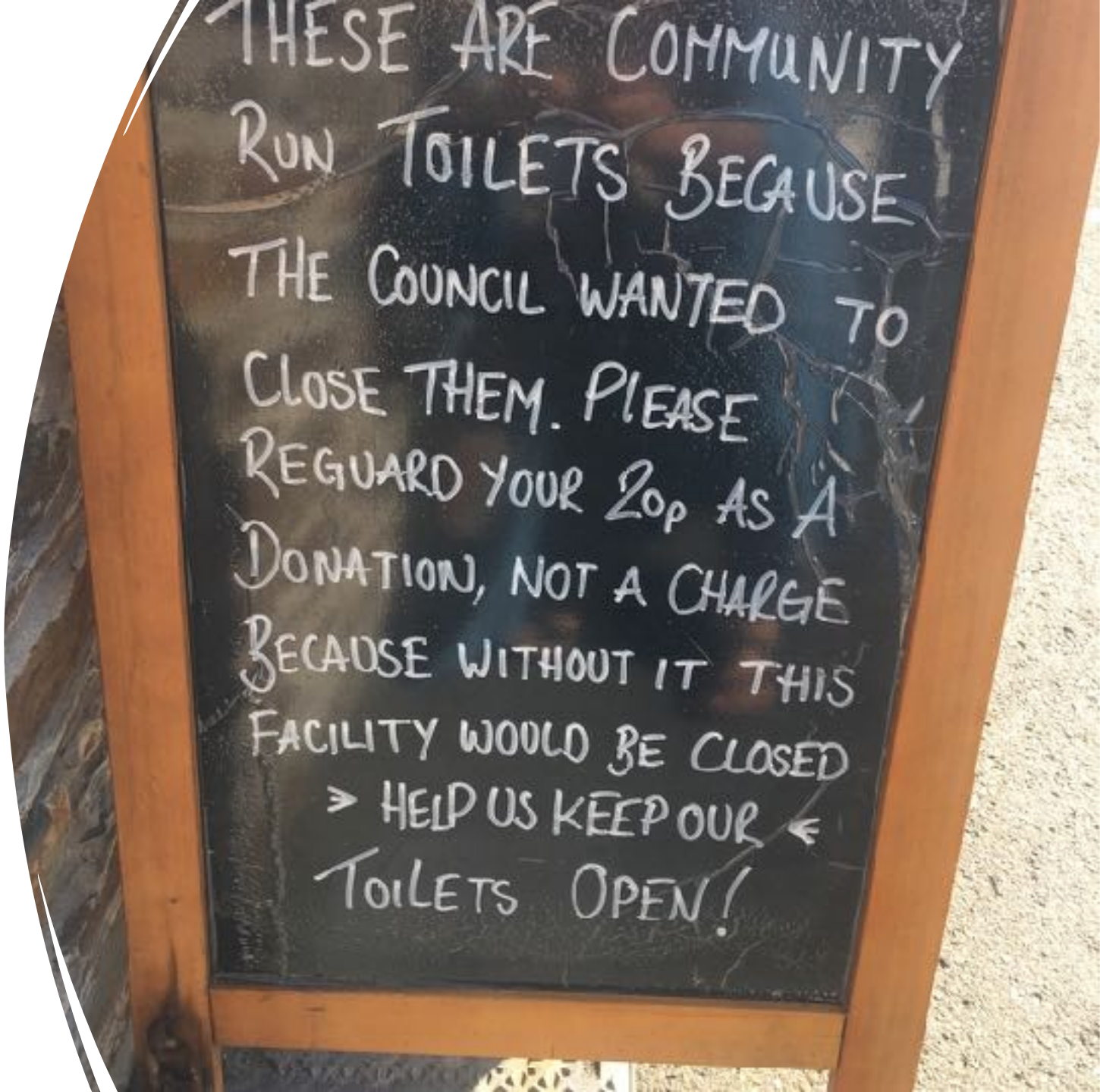
- **Royal Society Public Health** found lack of toilets reduced access to healthy lifestyles and could be linked to obesity
- Lack of provision felt during lockdown
- National closures affected care workers majority were women, many over 50.
- An essential facility for public health infrastructure (handwashing)



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Public Service > Public Health > Publicly Accessible

- Toilets essential to place making
- Levels of provision differ throughout UK
- No legal obligation for authorities to provide public toilets
- No consistent policy across regions
- No agency assuming responsibility or support



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Interior and Exterior











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Destination Toilet



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Designing Inclusive Public Toilets: Wee the people

- To be published by Bloomsbury 2025

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Thank You for your attention

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https://tinkle.rca.ac.uk

ptru-hhcd@rca.ac.uk



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