

IMPLEMENTATION TOOLKIT

The Tactile Map Accessibility Toolkit

How to design, make, fit and evaluate a tactile map for a disabled toilet, so a blind or partially sighted person can read the room with their hands. Free to use. You do not need our permission.

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How to use this toolkit

This is a working document, not a brochure. If you run a school, library, leisure centre, surgery or council building, you can take the components in section 2, the placement guidelines in section 3, and the steps in section 6, and fit a map this term. The campaign that wrote this would rather you did it without us than waited for us.

One rule above all others. The light switch and the emergency cord must never be confused. On the map, the emergency cord is a long red line reaching the floor, on a different wall from the switch. In the room, check the real cord actually reaches the floor before you call the job done.

1. What a tactile bathroom map is, and why

A tactile map is a raised-line plan of the room, mounted on the toilet door, that a blind person reads by touch before they even step inside. It is the bathroom equivalent of the tactile maps already used in stations and shopping centres, scaled down to one room.

Why it is needed

A disabled toilet is meant to be the one room a disabled person can use independently. For a blind user it often is not, because no two are laid out the same way and because the controls are not standardised. The flush may be a wall button, a lever, or a sensor. The soap, towel and dryer are wherever the fitter put them. And the emergency cord, which should reach the floor, is frequently tied up or sits next to the light switch, so the two get confused. A sighted person resolves all of this with one glance. A blind person should not have to perform a search every time.

"I believe that basic daily tasks shouldn't require a leap of faith or a compromise on safety. Navigating public spaces independently is a right, not a privilege."

Hayley X., founder.

2. Recommended components

The standard map. Substitutes are fine if they meet the same contrast, height and durability requirements.

COMPONENT	SPECIFICATION	WHY
Material	Brushed or high-quality finish aluminium panel.	Wet-room durable; survives cleaning; no glare under bathroom lighting.
Dimensions	A4 landscape format.	One consistent size and orientation across every site.
Colour	A single universal colour across all site installations.	Visual and tactile consistency from building to building.
Raised lines and shapes	Lines raised at least 0.8mm; minimum stroke width and spacing per RNIB tactile guidance.	Fingers, not eyes, read this. Lines too fine or too close merge under a finger.
Braille labels	Uncontracted (Grade 1) braille, standard cell dimensions, beside each fixture.	Grade 1 is readable by the widest range of users, including learners.
Fixing	Permanent adhesive or screw fixing; tamper-resistant; not a hanging sign.	A map that moves is worse than no map.

Durability note. Swell paper is ideal for a pilot and can be made in-school, but in a heavily used public toilet a routed or photopolymer panel lasts far longer. Pilot in swell paper, then upgrade the sites that prove they are used.

3. Placement guidelines

- **Installed directly on the toilet door.** The map is read before the user steps inside, so the whole room is known in advance.
- **Base of the map 100cm to 120cm from the floor.** Reachable standing or seated; consistent building to building so users learn where to expect it.
- **Landscape orientation, matched to the real-world environment.** The map must correspond with the actual room, so the plan matches the body's position when the door opens. A map drawn from the wrong viewpoint is worse than none.
- **Use the Universal Symbols Library.** All designs must adhere to the symbol library in this reference documentation. When creating custom maps, copy the steps, diagram symbols, and layout structure directly to maintain consistency.
- **Mirror the map to the room.** Left-hand-transfer rooms use the left version; right-hand-transfer rooms use the mirror. Both ship with this toolkit.

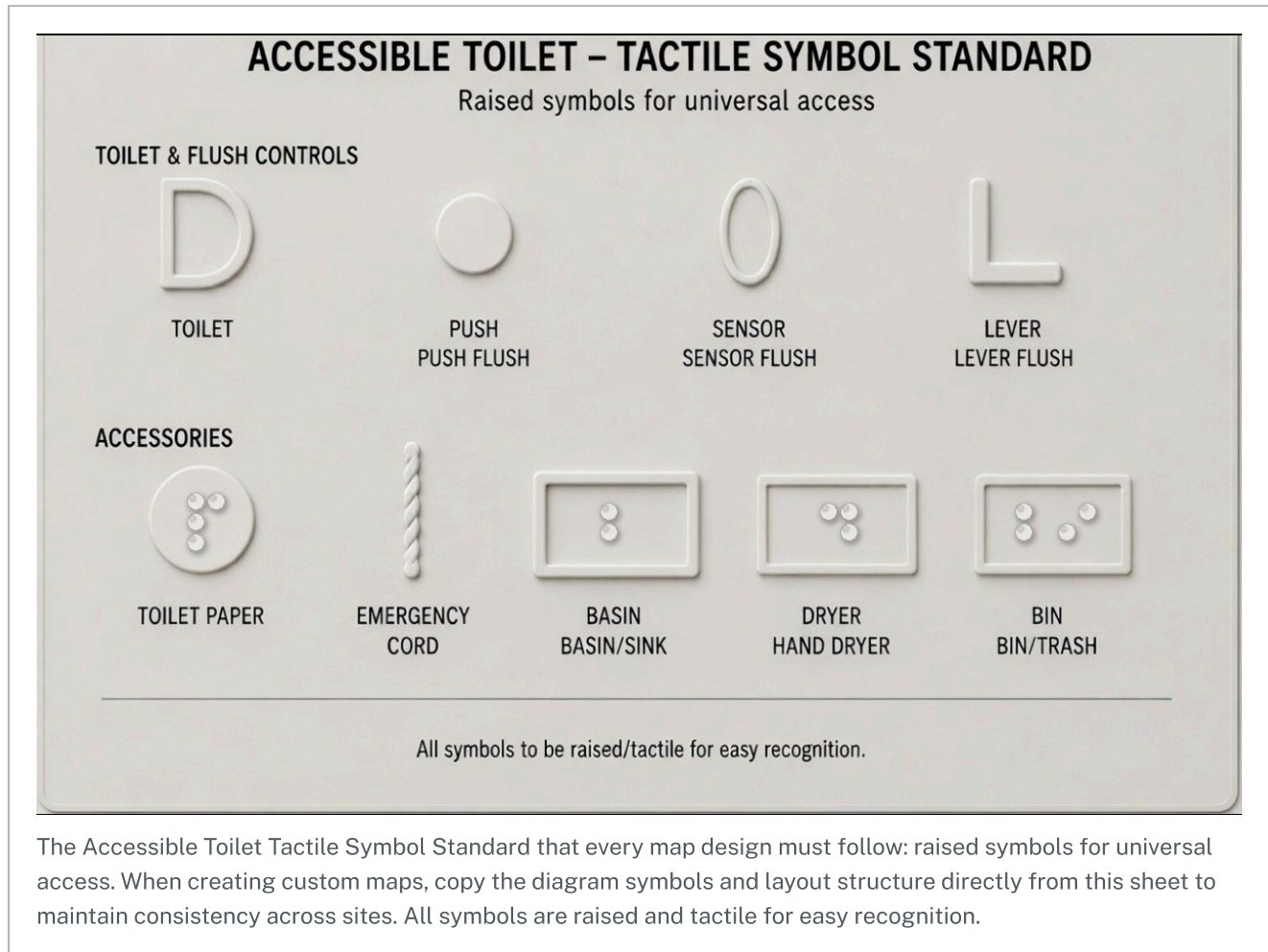
Placement at a glance

SETTING	MOUNTING HEIGHT (BASE OF MAP)	POSITION
School disabled toilet	100cm to 120cm	On the toilet door
Public / town-centre toilet	100cm to 120cm	On the toilet door
Changing Places facility	100cm to 120cm	On the main door

Heights follow the campaign standard (base of map 100cm to 120cm from the floor) and are consistent with reach ranges in BS 8300 and Approved Document M; confirm against the current standards for your building type.

4. Sample labels

Each fixture carries a word in braille. The braille shown is illustrative dot positioning for layout. Final braille must be produced and proofed by a braille reader or an embosser, never eyeballed.



Braille proofing required. The glyphs above show layout only. The toolkit uses uncontracted (Grade 1) braille so learners can read it; an embosser or a braille reader proofs the final cells.

5. Estimated cost

Per map, depending on method. These are estimates from public UK supplier prices for signage and tactile printing, not quotes. Get a real quote before ordering.

Estimated cost per A4 map, by production method (public-price estimates, GBP)

METHOD	EST. COST PER MAP	BEST FOR
Swell paper (microcapsule) on board	£8 to £20	Pilots and small runs; can be made in-school.
Photopolymer / UV raised print	£25 to £60	Durable wet-room installs; sharper raised lines.
CNC-routed or engraved panel	£40 to £90	Public buildings; longest lasting.
Braille label add-on (embossed)	£3 to £10	Added to any base when an embosser is used.

Worked example: one secondary school

ITEM	QUANTITY	ESTIMATED TOTAL
Disabled toilets to fit	4	n/a
Swell-paper maps on board	4 × £15	£60
Fixings and fitting	4 × £4	£16
Spare / reprint	1	£15
Estimated total		≈ £91

Worked example using the public-price estimates above. A whole school can usually be fitted for under one hundred pounds in swell paper. Public buildings cost more because they need routed panels.

6. How to make one, step by step

1. **Measure the room.** Note the door side and swing, the WC position, the basin, soap, dryer and emergency cord. Mark which wall each is on.
2. **Pick left or right transfer.** Choose the matching version of the design so the map mirrors the real room.
3. **Add the labels.** Use uncontracted braille. Proof the braille with a reader or an embosser.
4. **Produce the panel.** Swell paper for a pilot; photopolymer or routed panel for a public building. Follow the raised-line minimums in section 2.
5. **Fit it.** Handle side, inside, map centre at the height in section 3. While you are there, check the real emergency cord reaches the floor and untie it if it does not.
6. **Offer the feedback form.** Put section 8 where a blind or partially sighted user can complete it, in print, braille, or by audio. Never assume; offer.
7. **Check it termly.** Map in place, undamaged, right height, cord still to the floor.

Make it transferable. The aim is that another school or building can do all of this without the campaign in the room. If you needed us, the toolkit has a gap; tell us where.

7. Sample email to administrators

A starting point for the email to a headteacher, facilities manager, or council officer. Replace the bracketed parts. Keep it short; attach this toolkit.

To: [name], [role, e.g. Facilities Manager / Headteacher / Accessibility Officer]

From: Hayley X., Woking High School <info.sightlines@gmail.com>

Subject: A free, standard tactile map for our disabled toilets

Dear [name],

I am a pupil at Woking High School and I run the Tactile Map Accessibility Project, a small campaign that fits tactile maps in disabled toilets so blind and partially sighted people can read the room with their hands. I am blind myself and I read braille.

A disabled toilet is meant to be the one room a disabled person can use independently, but the layout differs in every building and the emergency cord is often confused with the light switch or tied out of reach. A raised-line map by the door fixes that. It carries braille and large print, so it works for braille readers, low-vision users and sighted staff alike.

I would like to ask whether [school / the council] would fit one in the disabled toilets it manages. The design and the fitting guidance are free and attached. For a pilot in swell paper the cost is roughly £15 a map, and a whole school is usually under one hundred pounds. I am happy to walk one site through with you, and to make sure a blind or partially sighted user is consulted on placement.

Could we find fifteen minutes for me to show you the map and the guidance. I can come to you.

With thanks,

Hayley X.

Woking High School

info.sightlines@gmail.com

Replace the bracketed details and the recipient with the real contact before sending.

8. VI-user feedback form

Offer this to a blind or partially sighted person who has used the map. Offer it in their preferred format: braille, or read aloud with answers recorded. Do not assume which they want; ask. This form is the only place the campaign learns whether the map actually helped.

1. Did you notice the map by the door?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Only after I was told it was there

2. Which format did you read?

☐ Braille ☐ Someone read it to me

3. Using the map, could you find each of these without help?

FIXTURE	YES	NO	NOT SURE
The flush	☐	☐	☐
The soap	☐	☐	☐
The hand dryer	☐	☐	☐
The emergency cord (not the light switch)	☐	☐	☐

4. Was the map easy to read by touch? (1 = very hard, 5 = very easy)

1	2	3	4	5
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5. Was anything missing, wrong, or confusing?

6. Would a map like this in other toilets help you? Anything else you want us to know?

Return to info.sightlines@gmail.com or hand to the person who gave you this form. We never publish a response with your name without asking first.

9. Standards and sources

This specification sits alongside, not instead of, the published standards. Where they apply, follow them.

- **RNIB guidance** on tactile and clear-print information (raised-line height, contrast, print size). The base of this standard.
- **BS 8300**, the British Standard on designing an accessible and inclusive built environment, including accessible sanitary provision and the emergency assistance alarm.
- **Approved Document M** of the Building Regulations (England), access to and use of buildings, including the requirement that the emergency pull cord reaches the floor.
- **Equality Act 2010**, sections 20 to 22, the duty to make reasonable adjustments.
- **WCAG 2.2** and the GOV.UK accessibility guidance, applied to the campaign's website.

Population and barrier figures used by the campaign

- RNIB, *In My Way* (2025), a survey of nearly 1,200 blind and partially sighted people across the UK: 61 per cent cannot make all the journeys they want or need to make; only 9 per cent strongly agree they feel safe walking independently in their neighbourhood.
- RNIB, "Key information and statistics on sight loss in the UK": over two million people in the UK live with sight loss, projected to roughly double, to over four million, by 2050; around 340,000 people are registered blind or partially sighted.

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Standard names and population figures are real and cited; cost figures are estimates from public supplier prices. Contact info.sightlines@gmail.com.