How to Support Persons with Disabilities:
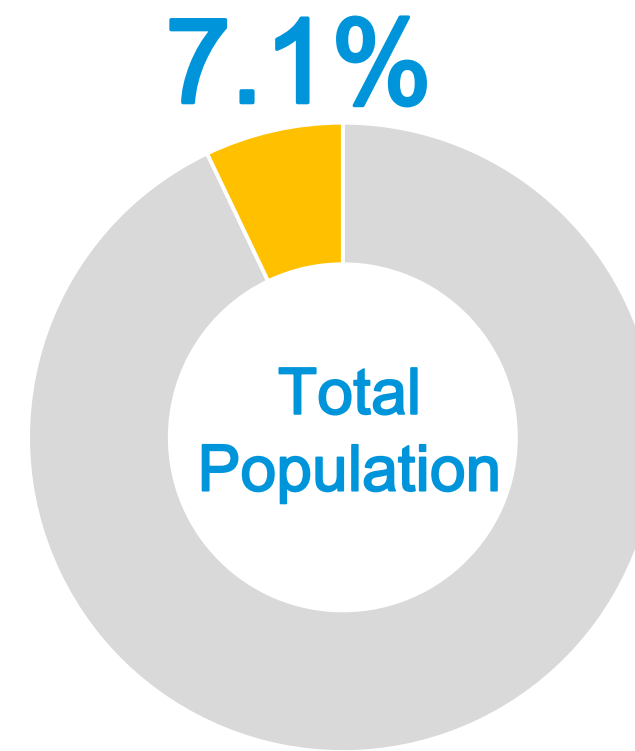
Practical Guide on Universal Design for Catering Services
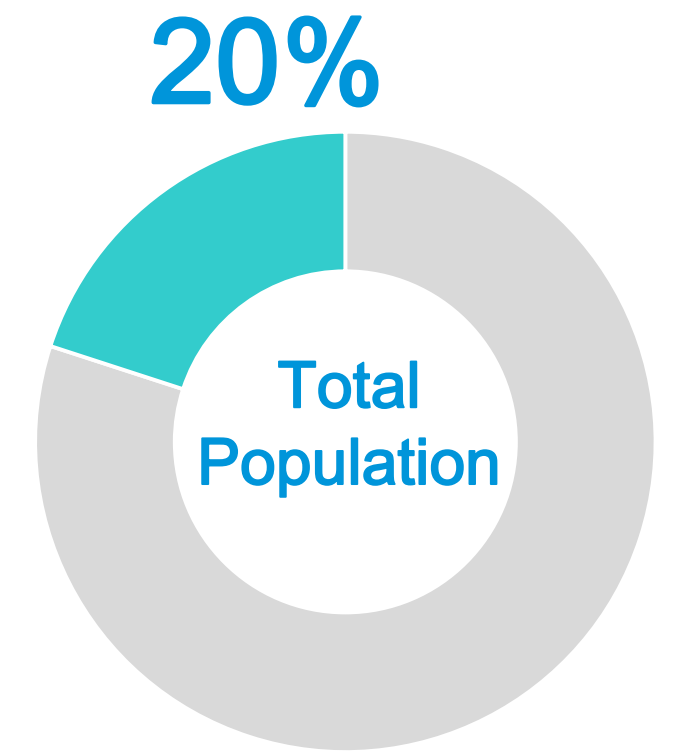
Press Conference

30 October 2023

Background

There are around **534,200 persons with disabilities** (PWDs) (including persons with multiple disabilities) and **1,451,500 elderly persons** in Hong Kong

7.1%

Total Population

PWDs

20%

Total Population

Elderly Persons

However, little attention has been paid to the **accessibility of goods, services and facilities provided by restaurants**. Common problems include

- wheelchair-inaccessible entrance
- fixed seats that are unfriendly to wheelchair users
- narrow aisles
- dark lighting for those with low vision

Objectives

- Although there are existing guidelines on universal or barrier-free designs in Hong Kong, no holistic guideline is available.

- To offer an **easy-to-read practical guide** for the catering industry in order to create an accessible dining environment would benefit diners with diverse needs
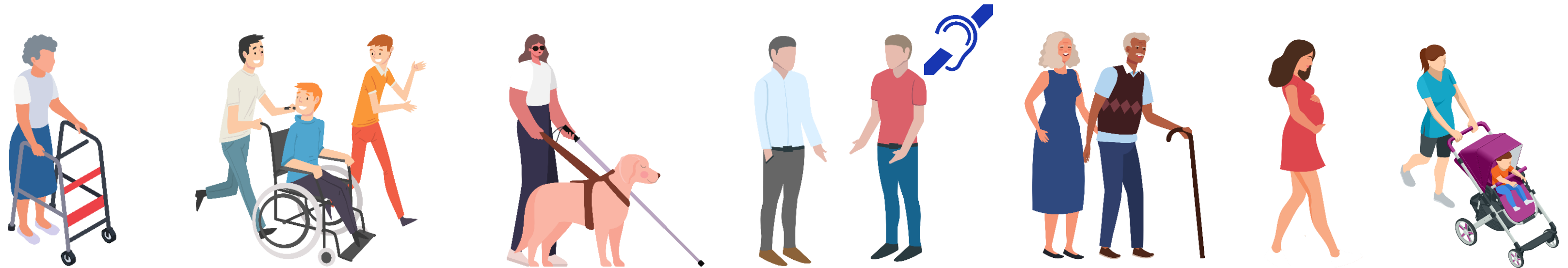
- Even though this toolkit is not a legally binding document, it serves as **a starting point for good practices** to enhance the quality of catering services for people with different needs.

Right to Accessibility

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)

- State Parties shall take appropriate measures to ensure PWDs to live independently and participate fully in all aspects of life on an equal basis with others
- State Parties shall also ensure that facilities and services provided by private entities that are open for the public are accessible

Disability Discrimination Ordinance (DDO)

- Under sections 6, 25 and 26 of the DDO, it is potentially unlawful for catering service providers to discriminate a person with a disability by refusing him or her access to the premises; in the terms or conditions or manner of provision of goods, services or facilities

Barrier-free Design

- **A process of retrofitting by removing or replacing physical barriers** for PWDs and accommodating their needs

- Mainly focuses on specialised features for providing an accessible environment for PWDs
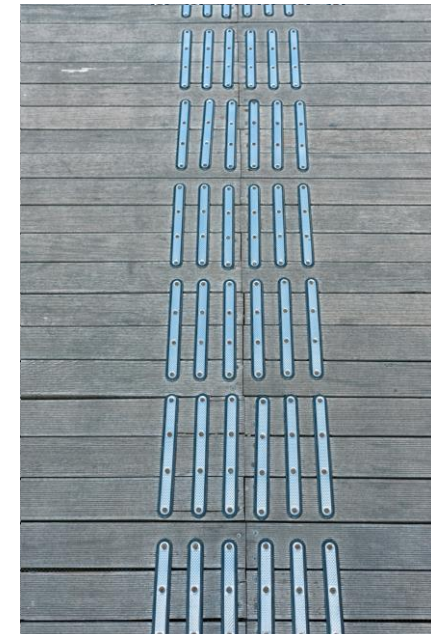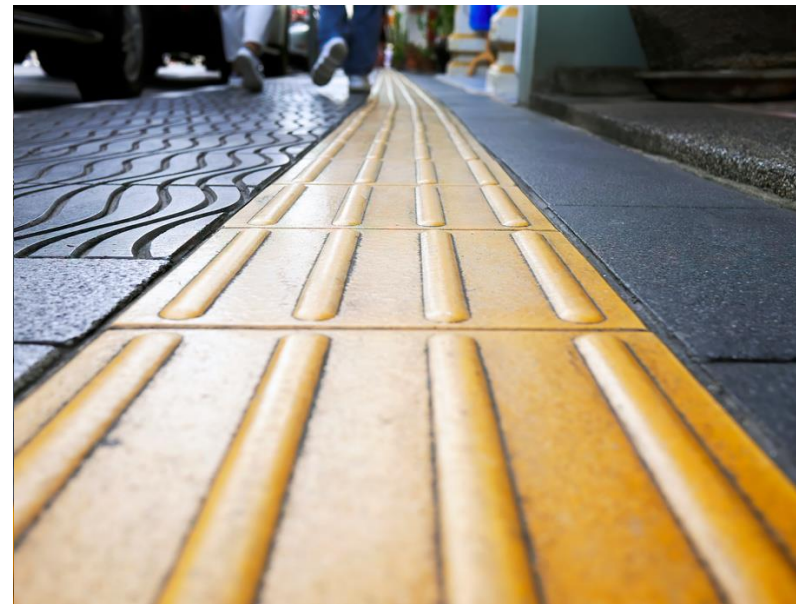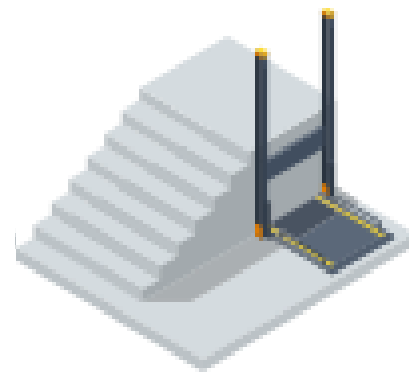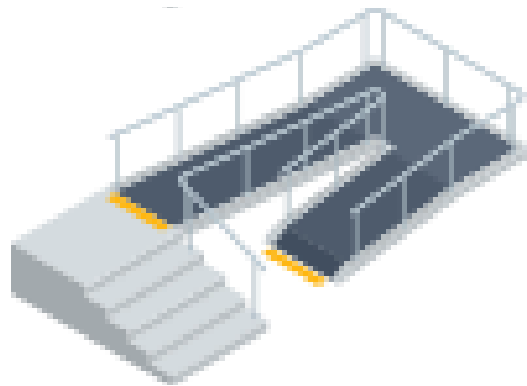
- In Hong Kong, the technical requirements are prescribed in the *Design Manual: Barrier Free Access (2008)*. Currently, most new buildings or alterations and additions to existing buildings in Hong Kong comply with accessibility standards.

Universal Design

- A **user-centred design** to meet the needs of the **widest spectrum of users**, regardless of age, ability and status in life.

- Article 2 of the CRPD,

  '*Universal design* ' *means the design of products, environments, programmes and services to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaption or specialised design.*

- Universal Design takes into account the changing needs that are experienced by everyone as we grow from infancy to old age. We may also experience different kinds of illness or disability, whether temporary or permanent, throughout our lives. Some families may experience parenthood. Universal Design offers **a variety of design arrangements so that everyone can live safely and independently and lead a life of dignity**.
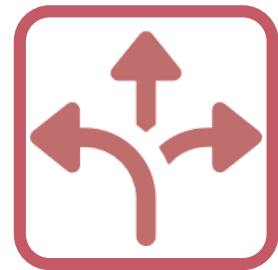
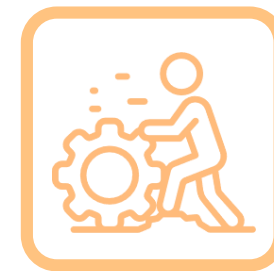# The Principles of Universal Design

Perceptible Information

Equitable Use

Tolerance for Error

Flexibility in Use

Low Physical Effort

Simple and Intuitive Use
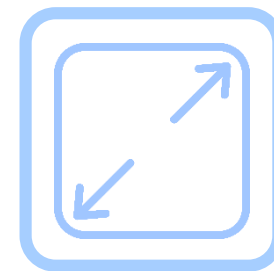
Size and Space for Approach and Use

North Carolina State University (1997). The Principles of Universal Design, Version 2.0, Retrieved from https://design.ncsu.edu/research/center-for-universal-design/

General Principles

- Accessible designs do not necessarily mean complicated renovation.

- Simple no-cost or low-cost modifications can also quickly improve access.

- Moreover, the availability of accessible services can effectively improve the accessibility of the restaurant, for example, the adoption of technology or devices that supports accessible design.

Structure of the Guide

Placing Order

Action Plan
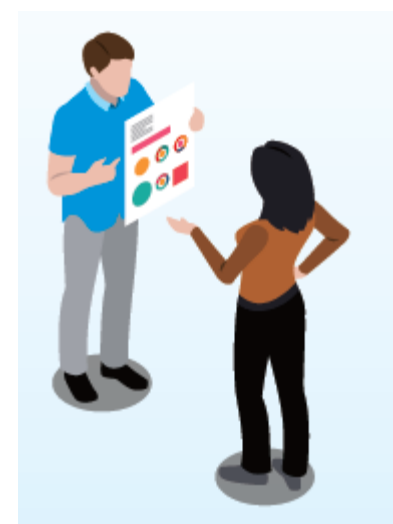
Accessibility Checklist
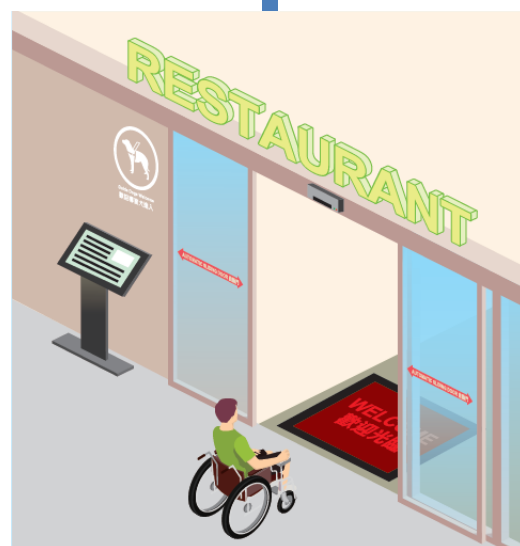
Entering the Restaurant
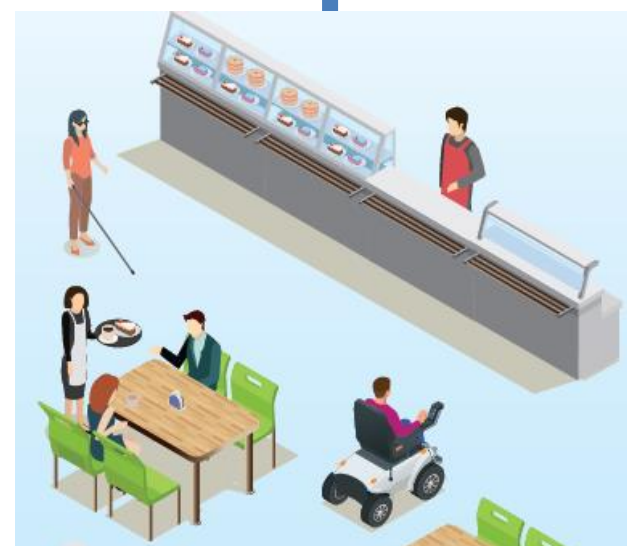
Dining Environment
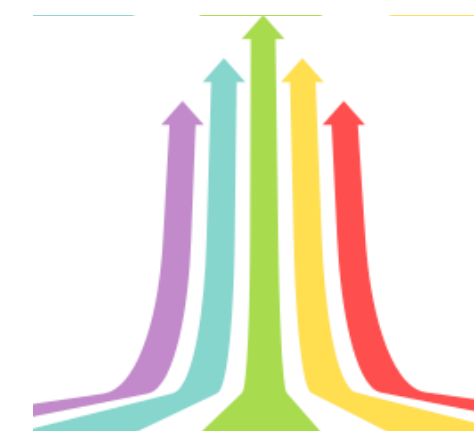
Way Forward

ENTERING
THE RESTAURANT

Entering the Restaurant

Accessible facilities:

- Use automatic doors to replace manually operated door
- Door handles should be operable with one hand

- Use ramp to replace stairs
- Portable ramp can be used in consideration of limited space
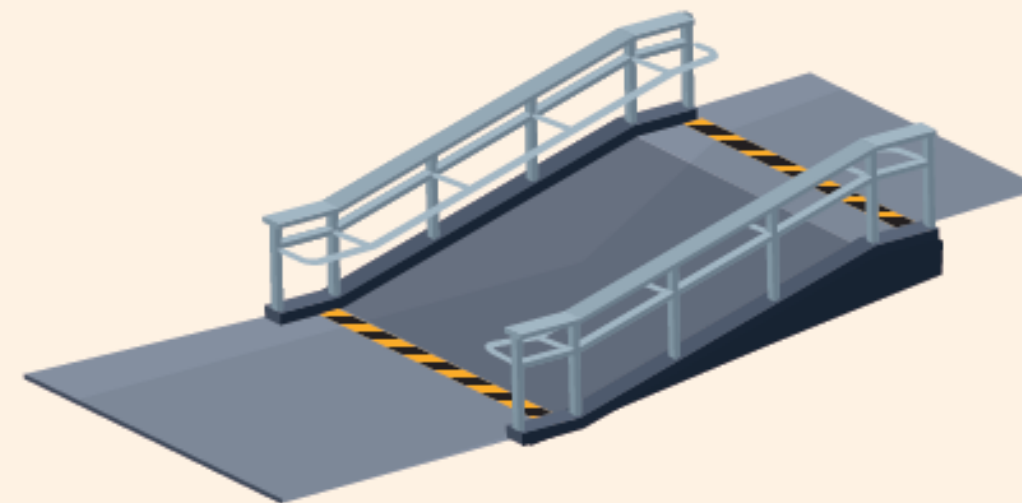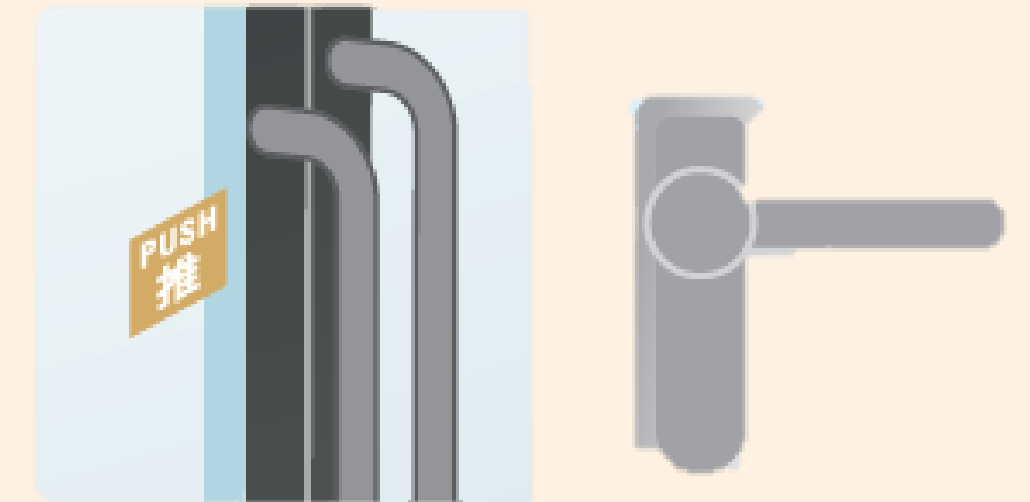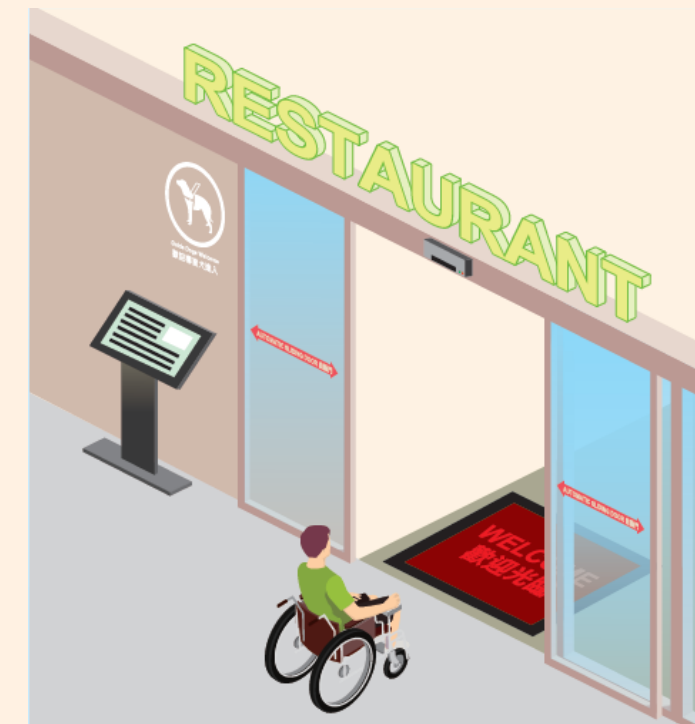
Entering the Restaurant

Accessible services:

- Upload business information online
- Provide accessibility training for staff
- Provide accessible self-service ticketing system
- Reserve waiting area with seats
- Allow access of guide dogs and guide dogs in training
- Sufficient space for guide dogs to rest adjacent to their users or trainers

Guide Dogs Welcome
歡迎導盲犬進入
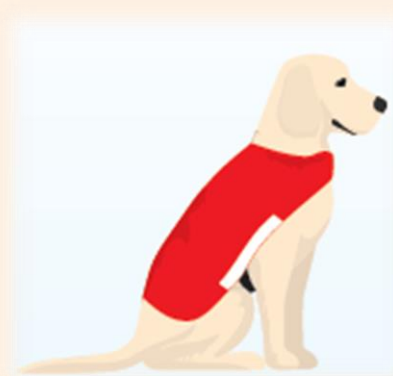
Placing Order
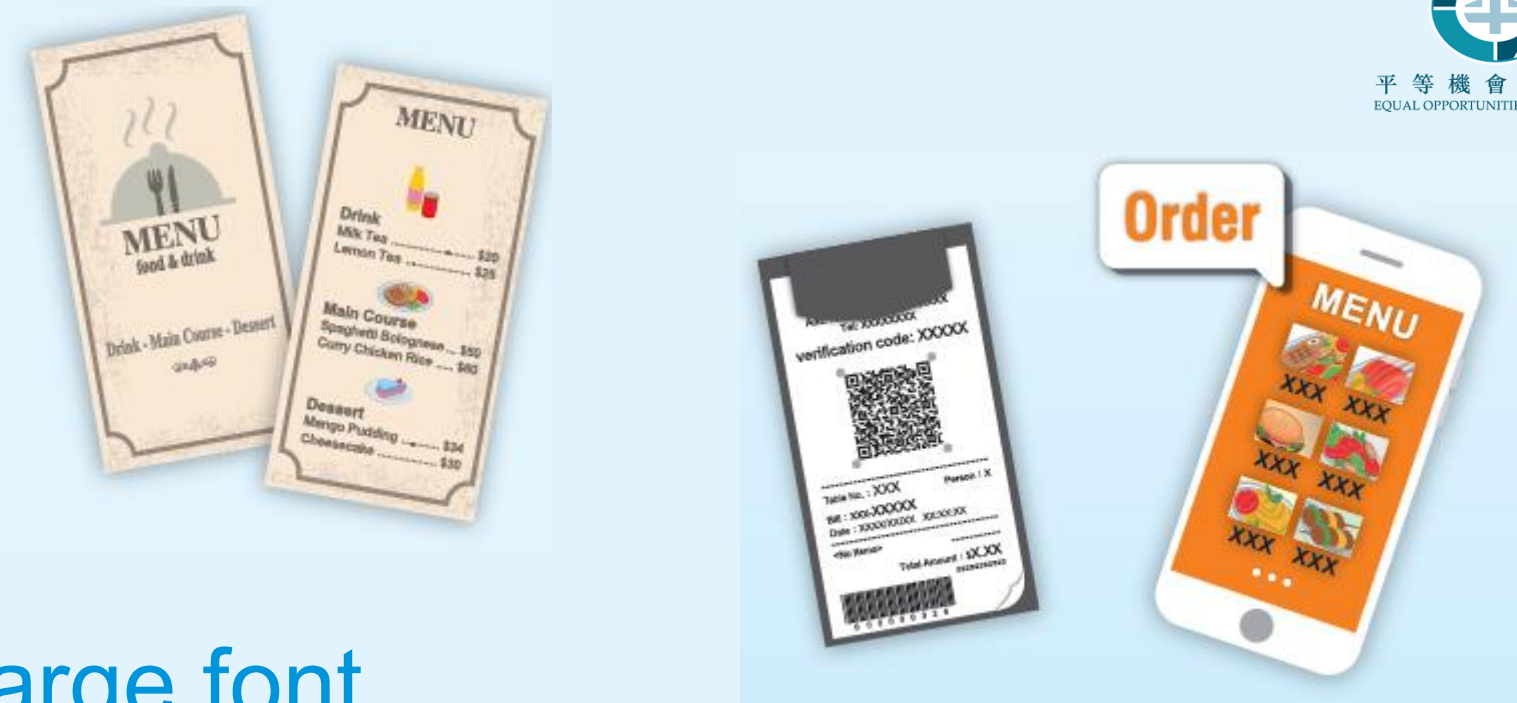
Accessible services:

- Physical menu should be designed with large font size and in adequate colour contrast
- Use images to support the text on menu
- Provide digital menu and ordering service
- Indicate QR code position by braille print
- Digital ordering system should support accessible design
- Provide accessibility training for staff on sensitivity to the needs of PWDs

Do you need food delivery to your table?

Placing Order

Self-service
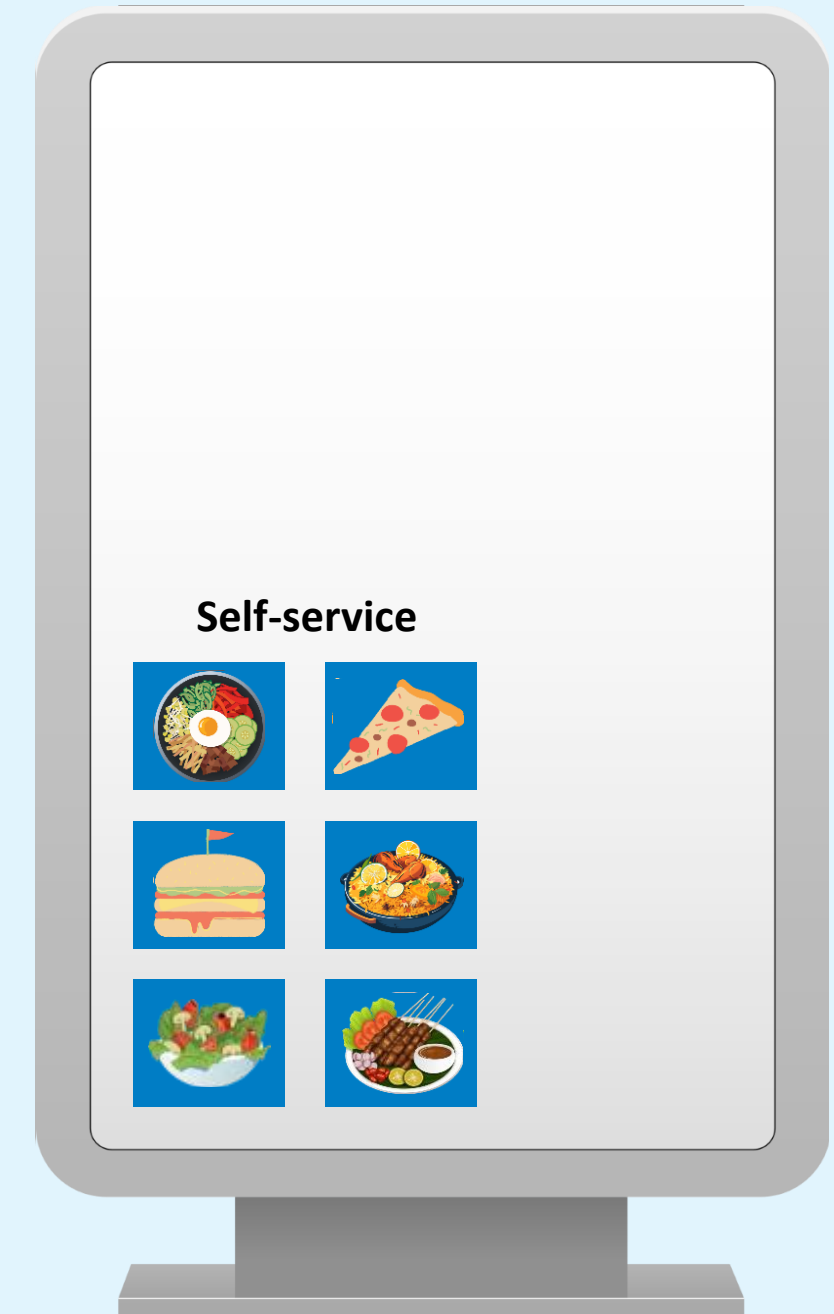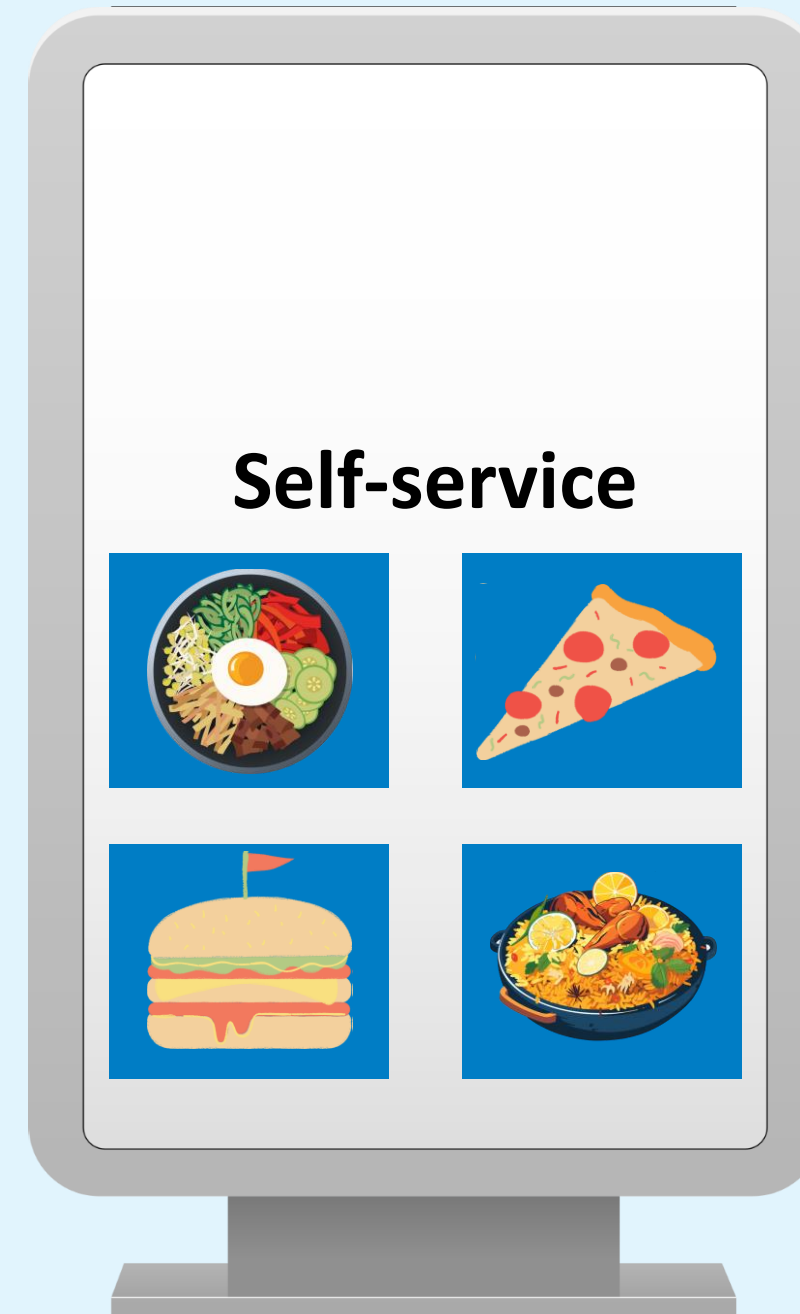
Placing Order

Accessible facilities:

- Passageway with adequate width
- Lower service counter for wheelchair users
- Digital display board showing order number with large font size and in adequate colour contrast
- Audible calling or wireless waiter caller with flash, buzz or vibration

Min 800mm

Max 900mm

Recommended Practices

1050-1500mm
Width of Access Route

Height of Table
Max 750mm

Priority Seats

Height of Chair
450-500mm

DINING
ENVIRONMENT

平等機會委員會
EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES COMMISSION

For All Users

EXIT 出口

MENU
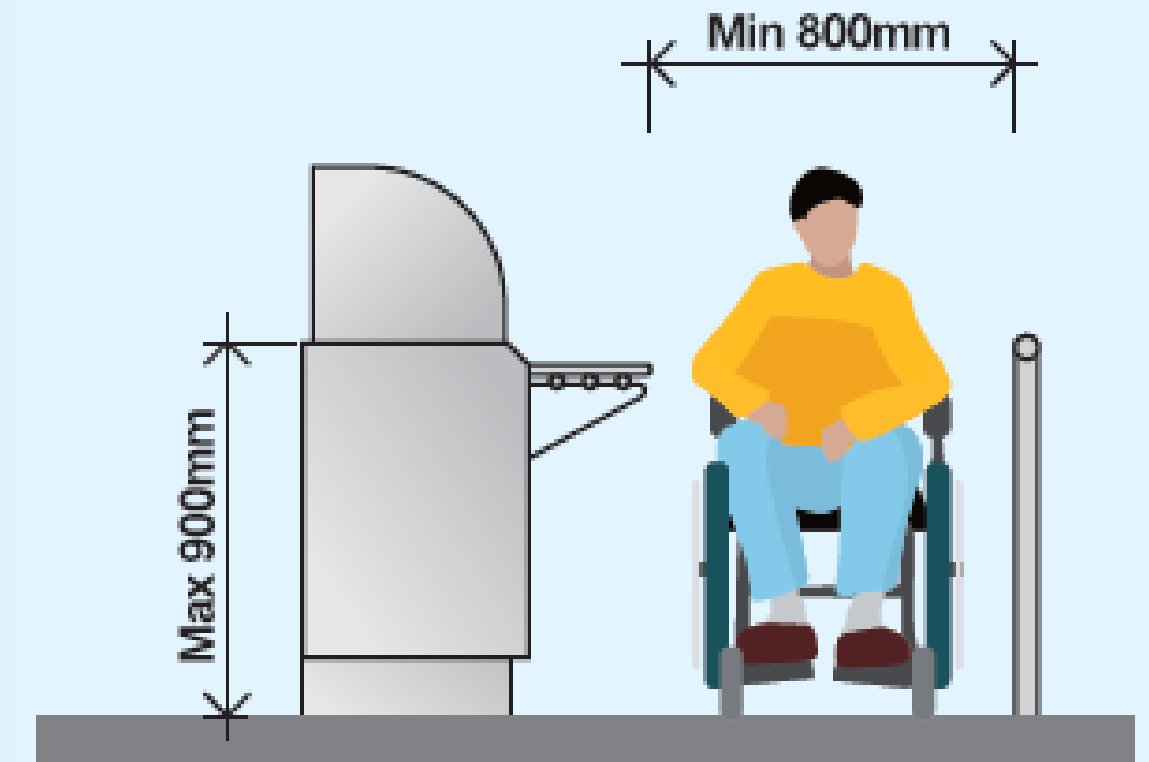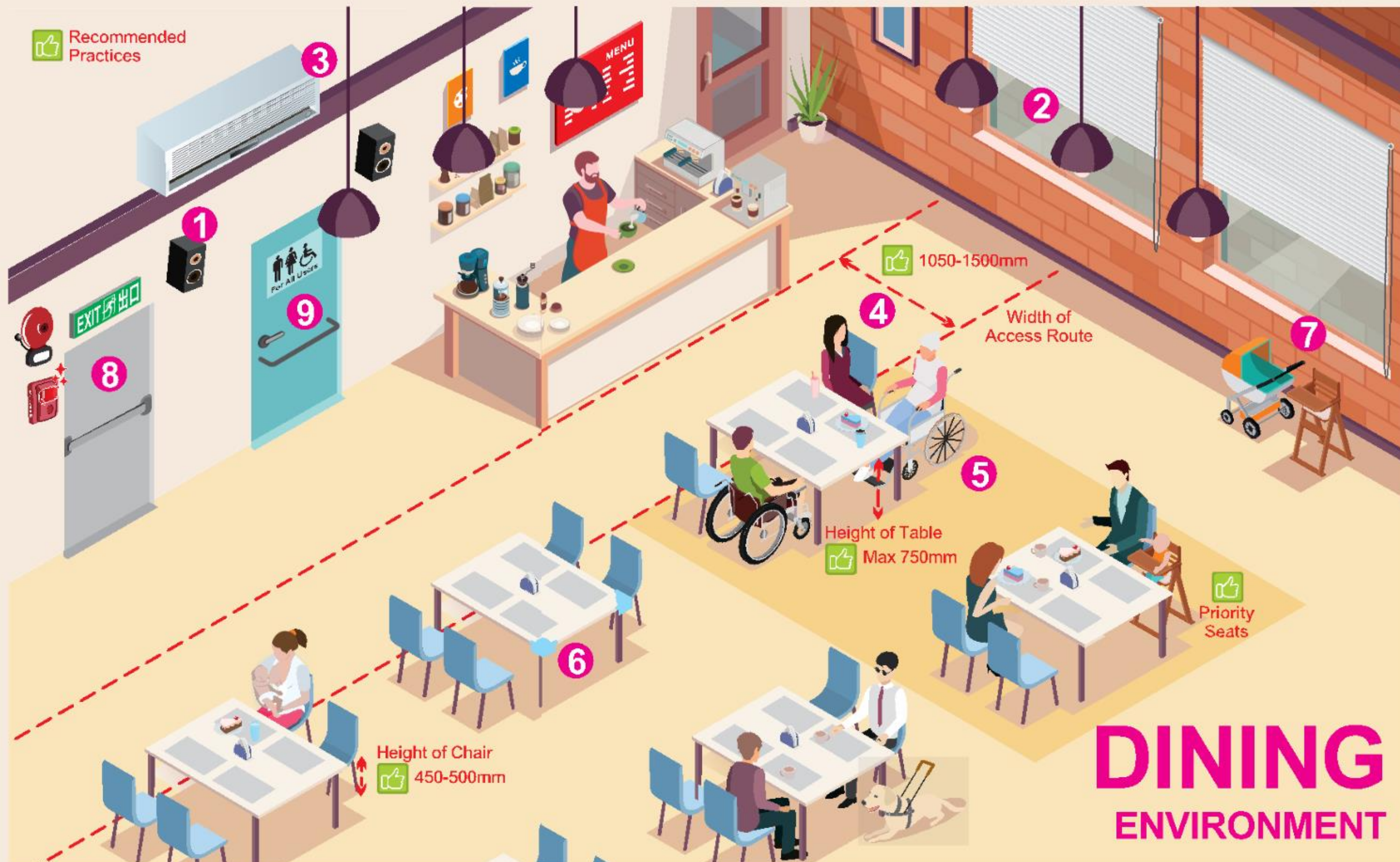
Dining Environment

Seating arrangement:

- Place moveable tables and seats near the main passage to cater people with different needs (e.g., wheelchair users, families with baby)
- Tables with clear knee space
- Table holes for holding mobility aids
- Priority seats near the entrance for staff to be aware of the needs of different customers

Height of Table
Max 750mm

Dining Environment

Accessible facilities:

- Adequate illumination

- Maintain optimal room temperature

- Aisle is free from obstruction

- Storage space for parking mobility devices or baby prams

- Visual fire alarm system to alert PHIs to fire hazard

- Unisex accessible washroom for caregivers of either sex to assist the user
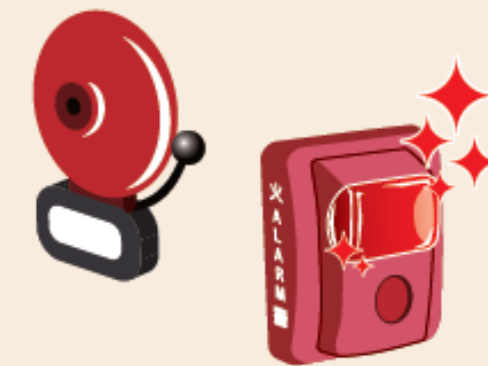
Action Plan

1. Review and identify accessibility barriers

2. Take small and easy steps to implement changes that are inexpensive

3. Formulate plan to enhance accessibility

4. Let customers know accommodation provided

5. Get feedback from customers

6. Set aside budget for upgrade existing facilities and staff training

Way Forward

- Provide food menu that cater for different racial groups (e.g., indication of halal or vegan food)

- Provide family-friendly facilities, such as child-friendly tables and seats, baby chairs and children's activity corner

- Create a breastfeeding-friendly environment by providing clean space or nursing covers, and train staff members to treat them in a supportive way

- Choose food delivery platform which comply with accessibility standards

ACCESSIBILITY CHECKLIST

No Cost | **Low Cost** | **Medium Cost**

• Customer Service
▶ Staff assistance

	No Cost	Low Cost	Medium Cost
Post business information online, such as address, opening hours, types of accessible facilities (e.g., portable ramp), menus and way(s) to order takeout (if applicable)	✓		
Provide accessibility training for staff		✓	
Provide different means of reservation service such as telephone, internet or instant messaging application (if applicable)		✓	
Allow access of guide dogs	✓		
Display "Guide Dogs Welcome" stickers	✓		
Be aware of the needs of customers	✓		
Let customers know that they can ask for assistance	✓		
Alert other staff about the needs of PWDs in food pick-up	✓		
Speak directly to PVIs instead of their companions to show your respect	✓		
Prepare pen and paper for communication	✓		
Answer questions about menu item ingredients to reduce the risk of food allergy	✓		
Offer food delivery to the table upon request	✓		
Provide various ways for customers to give feedback	✓		

▶ Menus

	No Cost	Low Cost	Medium Cost
Large and clear font	✓		
Adequate colour contrast	✓		
Avoid italic, script and highly decorative font	✓		
Clearly display the name and price of all items	✓		
Use images to support your text	✓		
Accessible ordering services through tablet, mobile phone app or QR code			✓
Indicate position of QR Code by braille print		✓	
Retain physical menu, order form and verbal food ordering options		✓	
Food menu that cater for different racial groups		✓	
Simple version of the menu (e.g., with photos of food)		✓	

• Built Environment
▶ Access

	No Cost	Low Cost	Medium Cost
Step-free and level access			✓
Fastened carpet or floor mat	✓		
Carpet should not cover the tactile guide path (if applicable)	✓		
Waiting area with seats		✓	
Accessible self-service ticketing system			✓
Signage showing the location of the nearest lift (if applicable)	✓		
Door			
Entrance doorways of adequate width			✓
Sufficient clearance at doors	✓		
Colour contrast on door frame		✓	
Provide marking on glass doors		✓	
Automatic door operated by motion sensor or manual large button control			✓
Door handles shaped for easy grasping with one hand		✓	
Door handles installed at a height that is convenient for wheelchair users to manoeuvre		✓	
Avoid using door threshold		✓	
Doors are light to open	✓		
Door closer with an adequate closing period		✓	
Ramp			
Built-in Ramp			✓
Portable Ramp		✓	
With stable, firm, slip-resistant and durable surface		✓	
Warning strips at the ends of the ramp		✓	
Area connecting the ramp should have sufficient space for wheelchair to operate and turn			✓
Unobstructed	✓		
Provide assistance bell or contact information for customers to ask for assistance		✓	

▶ Passageway

	No Cost	Low Cost	Medium Cost
Unobstructed paths of travel	✓		
Warning stands should be placed in visible location without blocking the main passageway	✓		
Keep the passageway clean and dry	✓		
Passageway of adequate width			✓
Stable, firm, slip-resistant and durable surface of passageway		✓	

► **Facilities**

	No Cost	Low Cost	Medium Cost
Self-service Area			
At least one service counter should be set lower			✓
Cash registers displaying the bill amounts		✓	
Clear indication or instruction of payment methods and cashier location		✓	
Self-service kiosk with "accessibility mode", keypads, earphone jacks and "press for assistance" button and clear floor space			✓
Simple and easy-to-understand design with adequate colour contrast for self-service ordering system			✓
Avoid glare on the screen of self-service kiosk	✓		
Avoid using stanchions, replace them by floor markings		✓	
Food service counter, cutlery counter and seasoning counter to be reached from seated position			✓
Provide mugs with handle, straight and bendy straws to those who need them		✓	
Cooler with sliding door			✓
Digital display board with large order number in contrasted colour			✓
Audible calling for food pick-up			✓
Wireless waiter caller with flash, buzz or vibration		✓	
Provide order list for checking		✓	
Environment			
Music at acceptable level	✓		
Adequate illumination	✓		
Shaded fluorescent light fittings		✓	
Shield bright, natural lighting sources		✓	
Optimal room temperature (i.e. 20°C to 26°C)	✓		
Keep emergency exits clear	✓		
Audible and visual fire alarm			✓
Dining Area			
Set up priority seats			✓
Place moveable tables and seats near the main passage		✓	
Lightweight movable seats		✓	
Seats with suitable height and back support		✓	
Tables of wheelchair friendly height and with clear knee space			✓
Height-adjustable tables			✓
Cover sharp edges and corners of furniture		✓	
Keep dining tables uncluttered	✓		
Table hole for mobility aids		✓	

	No Cost	Low Cost	Medium Cost
Storage space for mobility aids or baby prams	✓		
Sufficient space for guide dogs to rest	✓		
If carpet is used, use carpets with firm surface			✓
Provide baby chairs		✓	
Set up children's activity corner			✓
Provide space for breastfeeding or nursing covers			✓

► **Washroom**

Unisex accessible toilet	At least two grab rails on the wall next to the water closet
Well-placed and clear signage	One folding grab rail on the other side of the water closet
Avoid misuse of accessible toilet	Automatic or lever-type flushing
Accessible toilet with an adequate internal dimension	Wash basin with knee space
Door that opens outwards or sliding door	Automatic or lever-type tap
Doorway of adequate width	Mirror at an inclined angle
Grab rails on both inner and outer surfaces of the door	Emergency call bell
Push-type or lever-type door handle	Audible and visual fire alarm
Water closet with appropriate height	Location plan of nearby communal washroom (if applicable)

Seminar

- To explore the wider adoption of accessible technologies in restaurants settings (e.g., ticketing system, self-service ordering kiosks, delivery services, etc.).

Seminar on "Application of Accessible Technology in Catering Services"

Date: 22 November 2023

Time: 3pm to 4:30pm

Location: Central

Registration: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/EOCseminar

Universal Design Award Scheme 2024/25

- To enhance public awareness and understanding of the importance of Universal Design (UD)

- To honour organisations which have integrated UD principles into their premises

- To motivate the wider community to increase accessibility for all (including but not limited to PWDs, elderly, carers, pregnant women and family with children)

- To provide a platform for sharing of good practices and innovative approaches in creating an inclusive environment

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Universal Design Award Scheme 2024/25

Eligibility

Those with direct involvement in the construction or management of a premise are welcome to apply

- Property Owner
- Developer
- Property Management Company
- Tenant (e.g., restaurant owner, shop owner)

Application Categories

- Shopping Malls and Retail Spaces
- Office Buildings and Office Spaces
- Restaurants
- Buildings and Sites With Recreational, Sports or Cultural Purposes
- Revitalised Sites

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EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES COMMISSION

Universal Design Award Scheme 2024/25

Assessment Criteria

- A comprehensive checklist of inclusive design components
- Can also describe innovative design or service

Application

Application details will be announced in January 2024

For more info:
Website: https://www.eoc.org.hk/en/udas
Email: UDAS@eoc.org.hk
Tel: (852) 2511 8211

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