

Access Audits FAQs

The Church Access Project is a Cloudesley initiative in partnership with Islington Deanery and the Diocese of London. This document provides further information about the Cloudesley-funded access audits which form part of this project.

What is the purpose of the audit?

Each eligible Church of England Church will be able to apply to Cloudesley for an access audit to be carried out by the Centre for Accessible Environments (CAE). The purpose of your free access audit is to establish how well your church building performs in relation to access and ease of use by a wide range of potential users, including people with mobility, cognitive and sensory impairments. Once the audit is completed, you will receive an audit report with recommendations about how to improve the accessibility of your building.

Participating in the audit process makes you eligible to apply to Cloudesley's Church Access Fund for funding towards some of the identified works. It could also act as an evidence basis for applications to other funders.

What does the audit cover?

As is customary with any access audit, the user journey is the basis of the audit trail and CAE will commence with the external approach routes, including availability of local accessible transport routes, accessible parking and dropping off points, where these exist. Normally the access audit will encompass public areas only and areas such as roof area, locked storage, plant rooms etc. are generally not included in the audit unless specifically requested. The list below outlines some of the features that are considered part of an access assessment or audit:

- External Environments and Approach – access to the church, signage and wayfinding, entrances, door furniture, etc
- Horizontal circulation - corridors, circulation areas, etc
- Vertical circulation – lifts, stairs, ramps, handrails, etc
- Facilities – seating, refreshment areas, etc
- Sanitary facilities - accessible and general WCs, wash facilities, etc
- Means of escape - accessible escape routes, evacuation arrangements, alarms, etc
- Lighting
- Acoustics
- Finishes - walls, ceilings, decor, slip resistance, visual/tactile properties, etc

- Fixtures – display of notices, etc
- Wayfinding - signage, pathways, tactile clues, warning surfaces, tactile/audio maps
- Information/communication - induction loops, PA systems, etc
- Displays – exhibit displays; tactile displays; information texts & signage, etc.

Who are the auditors?

The auditors are from the Centre for Accessible Environments: <https://cae.org.uk/>

When are the audits and how do I book a slot?

The Church Access Project runs from 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2025. You can book an audit once your church feels it is ready to take things forward from 1 July 2022 up to 31 March 2025. When the time comes, please contact Kevin or Catherine, whichever is your usual Grants Manager, and they will connect you with the auditors to book a date for the audit.

How long does the audit take and who needs to be there?

In most instances, it is expected that the audit visit will be between half a day and a full day, depending on the size of the church.

On the day, the auditor should be shown around the church by someone who is familiar with the church. This may be the vicar, administrator, church warden, or other suitable representative of the church.

We need to cancel our audit – is that possible?

If a church cancels within 5 days of the agreed audit day, Cloudesley will be charged £400. As such, please make every effort to go ahead with the audit once into this 5 day period. If you think it won't be possible to go ahead, please contact Cloudesley to see if we are able to support with the visit.

Which buildings are being audited?

The auditors will survey the church building and the church hall, if the church has one that is used for worship purposes. Buildings which are not used as places of worship (such as schools and rectories) are not included. The general rule is that if the building is usually

eligible for Cloudesley grants, it will be included; if not, it won't. An appendix giving more detailed advice on the scope of the audit can be found at the bottom of this document. If you are unsure, please do just contact Cloudesley and we can clarify.

Is it one audit per church or one per parish?

A separate audit will take place for each church in parishes with more than one church.

What will happen on the day?

The auditor will meet someone in the morning at the church. The audit will take between half a day and a full day on site to complete, depending on the size of the church. The auditor will need access during this time to all areas to take photographs and measurements. The auditor will ask some questions about the church.

Who is paying for the audit?

The audit costs will be paid in full by Cloudesley; you are not required to contribute financially. However, it is expected that the participating church will make available sufficient time and input to ensure that the audit can proceed as smoothly and efficiently as possible.

What do I need to do in advance of the audit?

In advance of the audit, you will be asked to provide floor plans of the church and any other areas to be audited. If you don't have access to a floor plan, please let Cloudesley know as we may be able to help with this. The auditor will also want to know when the last refurbishment took place (if relevant) and if the building is Listed.

What happens after the audit?

After the audit is complete, the auditor will write up the report. The report will be provided in an Excel format (unless another format is requested). This will allow you to comment on the recommendations in the draft before the final version is issued. You will also have the

opportunity to discuss what is recommended with the auditor after the report is issued. The report will be provided approximately 2-3 weeks after the audit takes place.

We suggest you then consider the audit report at an appropriate meeting, for example, at the PCC/DCC. The PCC should agree which recommendations they want to apply for funding from the Church Access Fund to take forward.

Who will see the audit report?

Copies of the audit report for each church will be sent to the church itself, Cloudesley, and the Diocese of London.

What kind of recommendations is the report likely to make?

An access audit generates an action plan of items or features which require adjustment or improvement, and these are prioritised for action. The report will highlight priority areas for short, medium or longer term programme planning and whether these are critical, important or to achieve best practice. This includes physical features, but will also consider management procedures such as emergency evacuation.

Will Cloudesley fund the work identified in the audit?

Grant funding towards some of the works identified in the audit reports, which come within scope of Cloudesley's Church Object, will be made available through the Charity's Church Access Fund. The Fund will offer grants of up to £10,000 and is non-competitive, meaning all eligible churches will be able to receive one grant each on the condition that the project meets the eligibility criteria.

The Fund will be open to applications from 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2025. The audit reports will form the basis of applications to this grant funding stream, with the PCC/DCC or buildings committee considering which of the recommended works they wish to pursue. At application stage, it will be expected that the church will have received a quote for the work planned and will be ready to proceed with the proposed work as soon as a grant is confirmed. For more information, please read the Church Access Fund guidelines.

For larger projects that require more funding, churches should apply through the standard Spring and Autumn rounds.

My church has already had an access audit. Do we have to have another one to access the Church Access Fund?

If your church has undertaken an appropriate professional access audit in the last five years, you will not need to have another audit to be eligible for the Church Access Fund. Please contact Cloudesley before applying and provide the access audit report.

What is the difference between the Cloudesley-funded CAE Access Audit and the 360 Accessibility Audit? Do I need to do both?

The Diocese of London's 360 Accessibility Audit is a useful tool for any church that is exploring accessibility and Cloudesley strongly encourages churches to engage with it. The scope of the 360 Audit is wider than that of the CAE Access Audit and is tailored to churches, taking in areas such as Theology and Spirituality, and the Church Community. The CAE Access Audit is more focused on the building and the user experience. The 360 Audit is a self-audit, which you undertake yourself as a church, whereas the CAE Access Audit will be delivered by expert auditors who can then provide you with specific advice and recommendations on your church building(s). As such the CAE Access Audit can complement the 360 Accessibility Audit and in particular, could help you to progress Sections 1-5 of the 360 Audit.

Where can I get more information?

Please feel free to contact Kevin or Catherine about the Church Access Project.

You can find all the information about the Church Access Project here:

<http://www.cloudesley.org.uk/grants/support-for-islington-churches/church-access-project/>

Details of the Diocese of London's 360 Accessibility Audit, which includes simple and low cost things you can do right away, can be found here:

<https://www.london.anglican.org/support/ministry-and-vocations/disability-ministry/downloadable-resources/the-360-accessibility-audit/>

More information about Centre for Accessible Environment's Audits can be found here:

<https://cae.org.uk/our-services/access-auditing/>

Access Audit Scope Guidelines

Cloudesley’s Church Object specifies that funding must go “toward the upkeep and repair of the fabric of, and the maintenance of services, in ...churches of the Church of England in the area of the London Borough of Islington”. The scope of our funding is therefore limited and not all parts of the churches can be supported. Access Audits funded by Cloudesley will need to reflect these limitations.

Feature	In scope?
Church building	Yes
Toilets	Yes (if the toilets are intended for use by those attending church services)
Kitchen	Yes (if used for refreshment of those attending church services)
Boundary wall that does not affect access	No
Boundary wall or path that affects access	Yes
Church steps	Yes
Church halls	Only if the hall is being used for worship – Cloudesley can advise on each case
Churchyards/gardens	No (apart from the paths to access the church)
Outdoor signage	Yes
External lighting	Yes (in context of access)
Car parking	Yes (in context of access)
Other buildings on church land	No (unless used for worship)
Crypts	Yes

As a rule of thumb, if a feature enables the access to the church building, then it will likely be eligible. So for instance, the path across the churchyard to the church would be eligible as it is a key part of access to the church building, but the churchyard at large would not be

eligible if its features do not hinder access to the church. Cloudesley can advise if you are unsure whether something is in scope or not.