

DIGNIFIED ACCESS



BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE WORKPLACE
Our Commitment to Inclusion Impact

2025



Addressing the complex issue of dignified access in workplaces led us to reflect on our approach. Should we create an exhaustive study, or share our journey—our learning, growth, and actions?

As the title suggests, we've chosen the latter. While many reports already exist, we believe our valuable contribution is an honest and transparent account of our experiences. By sharing the lessons we've learned from Access4you—a company that assesses, certifies, and qualifies the accessibility of built environments—and the actions we've implemented, we aim to inspire change and foster a deeper understanding of creating dignified spaces for all.



BETTER BEGINS NOW.

Cushman & Wakefield will never settle for making change later when the world needs practical changes now. That’s why we believe that a better future begins now. We proudly create a better future by bringing inclusion to the core of everything we do in commercial real estate and beyond.

1

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES ARE ALWAYS DEPENDENT ON OTHERS.

TRUTH

Many individuals with disabilities live fully independent lives, relying on adaptive tools, technologies, or personalised support systems when needed. Independence looks different for everyone and is not determined by the presence of a disability. With the right resources and accommodations, people with disabilities can—and do—thrive autonomously, proving that dependence is not a given, but a misconception rooted in outdated stereotypes.

2

DISABILITIES ARE ALWAYS VISIBLE.

TRUTH

70-80% of disabilities are invisible¹. These can include chronic illnesses, mental health conditions, and neurological differences—conditions that often lack visible signs but are deeply impactful. Just because a disability isn't immediately apparent doesn't mean it isn't real or significant. To put this into perspective, the World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that 16% of the global population—over 1 billion people—live with a disability.²

5

DISABILITIES ONLY AFFECT OLDER PEOPLE.

TRUTH

Disabilities can arise at any stage of life, whether through genetic factors, accidents, illnesses, or other circumstances. In fact, 80% of disabilities arise between the ages of 18 and 64.³ They do not discriminate by age—children, teenagers, adults, and seniors can all be affected. This reality underscores the importance of building inclusive and accessible environments that support individuals at every phase of life, ensuring that no one is left behind.

6

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES ALWAYS WANT OR NEED HELP.

TRUTH

Most individuals with disabilities value their autonomy and typically seek assistance only when absolutely necessary. A simple yet powerful way to show respect is to ask before offering help—this acknowledges their independence and avoids overstepping personal boundaries.

3

DISABILITIES MEAN LIMITED CAPABILITIES.

TRUTH

A disability does not define or limit a person's intelligence, talents, or potential. Across academics, the arts, sports, and countless other fields, individuals with disabilities have consistently demonstrated extraordinary achievements. In fact, many excel in their chosen paths, often overcoming additional barriers to reach their goals.

4

USING ASSISTIVE DEVICES SIGNIFIES WEAKNESS.

TRUTH

Tools like wheelchairs, prosthetics, or hearing aids are not symbols of limitation—they are instruments of empowerment. These devices enable greater independence, mobility, and participation in daily life, showcasing the resilience and strength of those who use them. Far from being a sign of weakness, assistive technology is a testament to the determination and adaptability of individuals overcoming challenges.

¹<https://post.parliament.uk/research-briefings/post-pn-0689/>

²<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/disability-and-health>

³Disabled Living Foundation

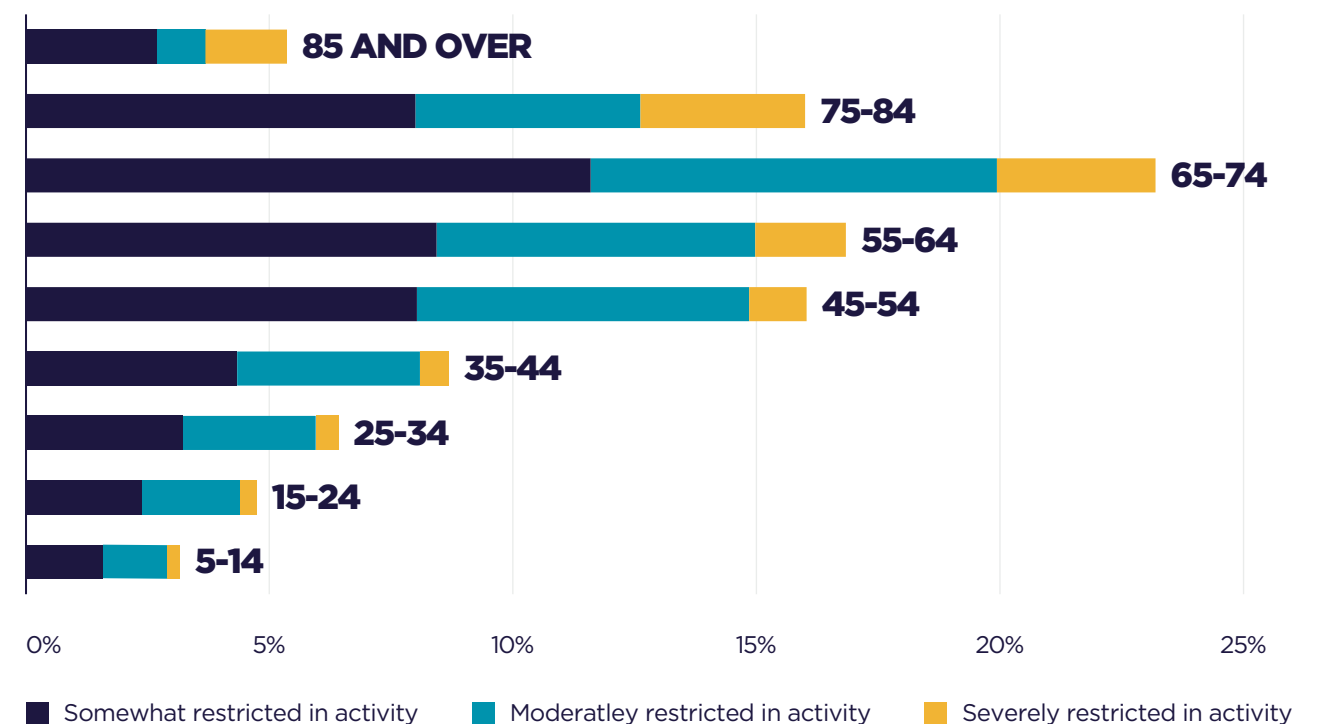
DISABILITY IS NOT AN INDIVIDUAL LIMITATION - IT IS A SOCIETAL CHALLENGE.

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities highlights that barriers, not impairments, hinder full participation in society. This reality makes Dignified Access an essential part of the Social pillar of ESG, calling for environments where everyone—regardless of ability—can contribute, thrive and be valued.

Disability can affect anyone. It is not exclusive to a small group but a shared human experience, whether through illness, injury, or aging. More than 25% of today's 20-year-olds will experience a disability before retirement, and by 2030, Europe's elderly population will surpass those under 20. Many people with disabilities once lived without barriers, proving that accessibility is not just a need for a few—it is a fundamental societal issue.

The numbers are clear: 1 in 6 people globally⁴ - 1.3 billion individuals- live with a disability, and in Europe⁵, 1 in 4 adults is affected. In Hungary⁶, 22% of people aged 15+ report some form of disability, yet only 3% explicitly identify as having one, revealing a gap in recognition and inclusion. As disability prevalence increases with age, it affects 31% of those aged 45-64, and only 40% of individuals with activity restrictions are employed.

AGE DISTRIBUTION OF INDIVIDUALS WITH ACTIVITY RESTRICTIONS (PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL RESTRICTED) IN HUNGARY



Source: HCSO, 2022 Hungarian Census

Despite this, Hungary's employment rate for persons with disabilities aged 20-64 was 48% in 2021, close to the EU average, with the highest employment rate among those with hearing impairments (61%). However, these numbers highlight a major untapped potential. By removing physical, cultural, and institutional barriers, businesses can expand their talent pool and strengthen their workforce. Employing persons with disabilities is not just about social responsibility—it drives economic growth, increases tax contributions, and enhances overall well-being and equity.

Hungary's Act on the Rights and Equal Opportunities of Persons with Disabilities supports equal access, while the Hungarian Building Code sets standards for physical accessibility, ensuring spaces can be approached, entered, used, and exited safely and independently. However, true inclusion goes beyond compliance. Dignified Access is about designing environments that actively empower individuals—whether they are persons with disabilities, parents with strollers, individuals recovering from injuries, or seniors with mobility challenges.

A commitment to barrier-free, inclusive spaces is not only a legal and ethical obligation—it is a strategic advantage. Investing in accessibility strengthens communities, unlocks economic potential, and builds a more sustainable, equitable future for all.

⁴WHO estimates (2023)

⁵Council of the European Union

⁶Fogyatékossgal élők foglalkoztatása Európában és Magyarországon - Oeconomus

THE CHALLENGE AHEAD: WHERE DO WE BEGIN?

Creating inclusive environments begins with a single, crucial step: understanding the current state of physical accessibility. Before any meaningful changes can be made, we must identify the barriers that exist in our physical spaces, processes, and attitudes. This is where an Accessibility Audit comes in—a comprehensive evaluation that serves as the foundation for meaningful and impactful change.

To take this first step, we partnered with Access4you⁷ to conduct a comprehensive review of our workplace. Their expertise and certification process provided us with reliable, actionable insights into how we could improve accessibility. Upon completing the audit, we received a comprehensive report, certification, and a strategic development plan, guiding our next steps.

⁷[Access4you](#)



ACCESS4YOU INTERNATIONAL is a social impact company recognised by GRESB and WELL, dedicated to advancing social sustainability. It assesses, certifies and qualifies building accessibility across various real estate sectors, providing reliable accessibility information for 8+1 disability groups, including wheelchair users, the elderly, the blind, the deaf, people with cognitive impairments, and those with assistance dogs. Based on the level of inclusion according to Access4you's criteria, each assessed location is awarded one of the following Access4you qualifications: Certified, Bronze, Silver, or Gold. Access4you not only helps individuals plan their visits but also supports businesses in enhancing inclusion and accessibility, while helping them achieve their ESG goals through certified, credible social sustainability data.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE WORKPLACE AUDIT REPORT:



FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS:

- Add contrasting markings on the first and last steps of staircases (in office building).
- Install contrasting markings at eye level on glass surfaces and doors (across all spaces).
- Use tactile floor markings at key locations, such as from the entrance to the reception (in both office building and workplace environments).
- Remove tripping hazards, such as curled carpet edges (both in office building and within own workplace).



FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH HEARING IMPAIRMENTS:

- Provide sign language interpreters or integrate smart devices with CONTACT sign language services when communication is required (both in office building and within own workplace).
- Install mobile induction devices or fixed hearing loops in meeting rooms, reception areas, and any other locations where communication is needed (within own workplace).



FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH COGNITIVE DISABILITIES:

- Use clear signage and wayfinding systems with pictograms to assist navigation (both in office building and within own workplace).



FOR WHEELCHAIR USERS:

- Ensure the main entrance is fully accessible, with secondary entrances only used if the primary entrance cannot be adapted (in office building).
- Provide adequate space (150x150 cm) in front of all entrances, lifts, and accessible restrooms (in office building).
- Position card readers and reception desks at accessible heights, with sufficient knee clearance, especially in areas where registration is required, (both in office building and within own workplace).



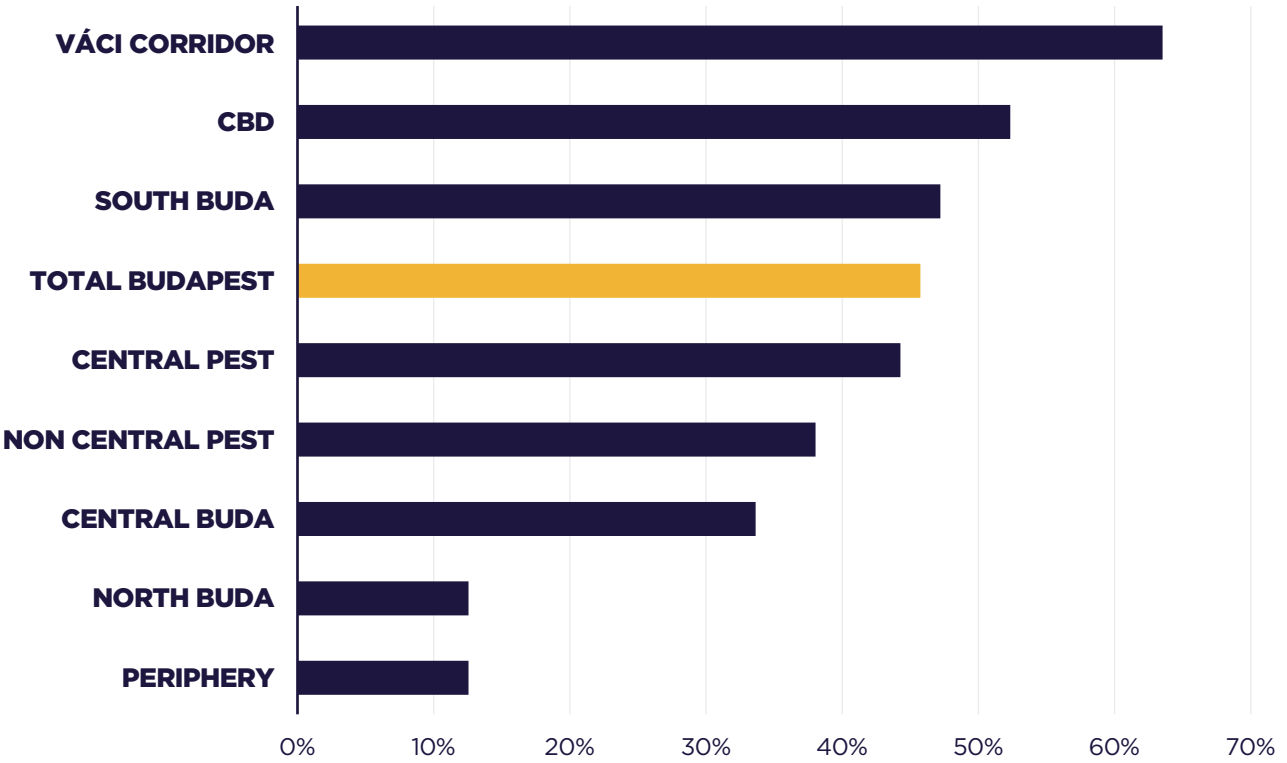
As previously mentioned, we have embarked on our journey toward creating an inclusive workplace by requiring Access4you certification for our office space. Although assessing office spaces for accessibility remains relatively uncommon in the Budapest office market, our research has revealed that many buildings are already meeting accessibility standards, as the data clearly demonstrates.

ACCESSIBILITY ACROSS BUDAPEST'S OFFICE MARKET

NEARLY 50% OF BUDAPEST'S OFFICE SPACE IS CERTIFIED BY ACCESS4YOU, ENSURING THEY MEET THE MINIMUM ACCESSIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR AT LEAST ONE OF THE 8+1 DISABILITY GROUPS. THIS IS AN IMPORTANT MILESTONE THAT REFLECTS THE GROWING COMMITMENT TO INCLUSIVITY IN THE CITY'S REAL ESTATE SECTOR.

The Váci út Corridor leads the way, with 64% of its office buildings certified. This is not surprising, as the area is home to purpose-built office developments that are designed with modern accessibility standards. The Central Business District (CBD) follows closely, with 52% of its offices certified. This high percentage is likely due to the CBD's central location, which offers excellent public transport accessibility, making it easier for individuals with disabilities or mobility challenges to navigate the area.

SHARE OF A4U CERTIFIED STOCK IN TOTAL SUBMARKET SIZE



Source: Cushman & Wakefield Research, BRF

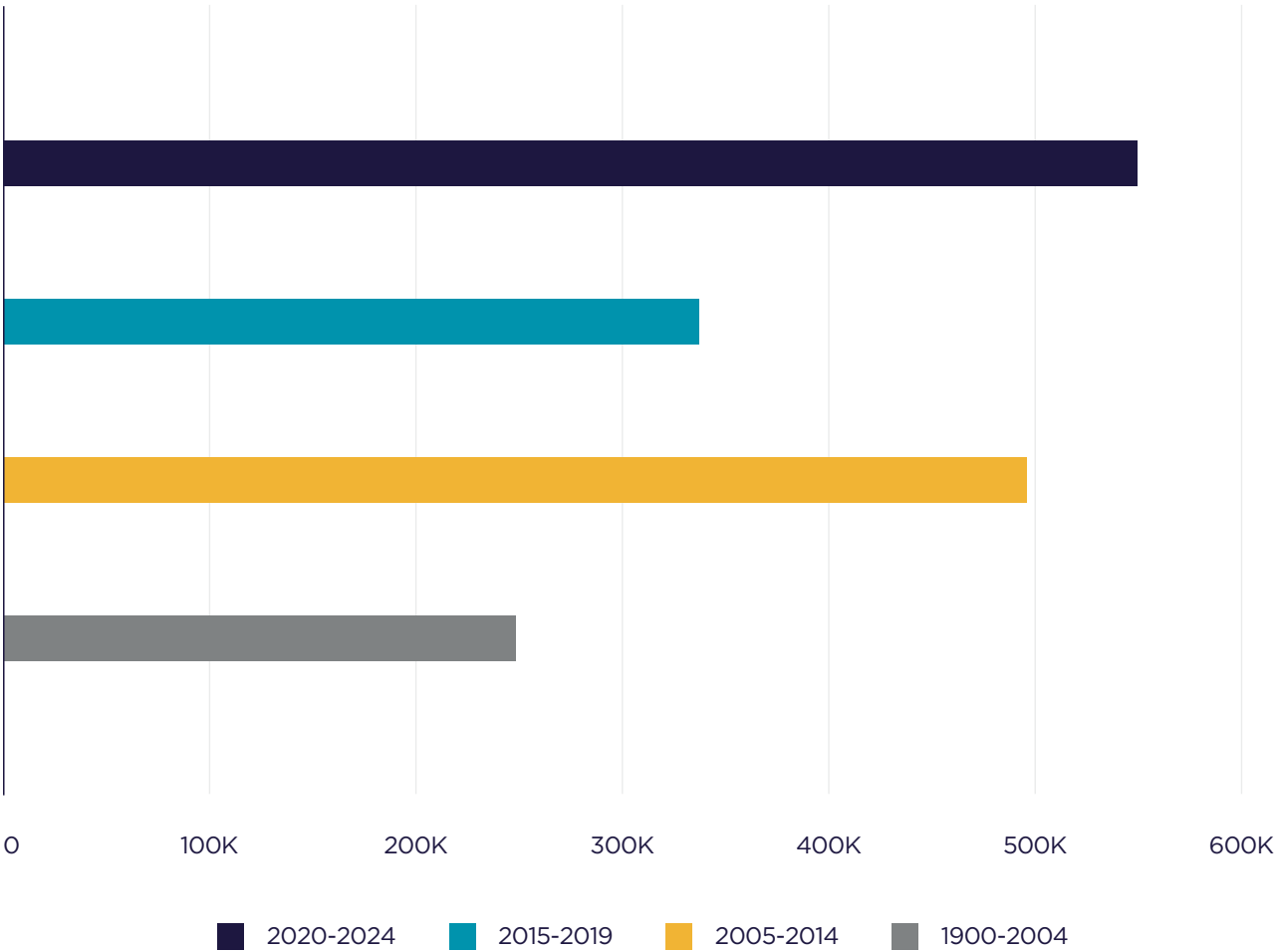


ACCESSIBILITY BY BUILDING AGE

WHEN EXAMINING ACCESSIBILITY BY AGE GROUP, THE DATA REVEALS THAT THE NEWEST OFFICE BUILDINGS (CONSTRUCTED AFTER 2020) ARE THE MOST ACCESSIBLE. THIS REFLECTS THE INCREASING EMPHASIS ON INCLUSIVE DESIGN IN RECENT YEARS, AS DEVELOPERS AND ARCHITECTS PRIORITISE ACCESSIBILITY FROM THE OUTSET.

The second most accessible group comprises buildings constructed between 2005 and 2014. This is partly due to the sheer volume of office developments built during this period, which coincided with a boom in the real estate market. Many of these buildings were designed with forward-thinking principles, incorporating accessibility features that remain relevant today.

TOTAL SIZE OF A4U CERTIFIED STOCK BY BUILDING AGE GROUP



Source: Cushman & Wakefield Research, BRF

ACHIEVING TRUE INCLUSIVITY MEANS NOT ONLY RECOGNISING THESE SUCCESSES BUT ALSO DISPELLING COMMON MYTHS THAT CAN HOLD US BACK.

MYTH #1

ACCESSIBLE SOLUTIONS ARE EXPENSIVE OR COMPROMISE DESIGN

A common misconception is that creating accessible environments is costly or results in less visually appealing designs. In reality, accessible solutions can be both cost-effective and aesthetically pleasing.

Thoughtful design integrates features like ramps, tactile flooring, and contrasting markings seamlessly into the overall aesthetic, enhancing functionality without sacrificing style. In modern construction, elements such as wider doorways or accessible restrooms are standard, proving that inclusivity and design excellence can go hand in hand.

MYTH #2

THE JOURNEY TAKES TOO LONG

Another myth is that creating accessible environments is a lengthy and overwhelming process. In reality, our audit, assessment, and reporting process took less than a month. While achieving full accessibility requires commitment and planning, it doesn't have to be daunting. Starting with small, actionable steps—such as conducting an Accessibility Audit or making cost-effective changes like adding contrast markings or adjusting furniture heights—can make an immediate impact. Incremental improvements accumulate over time, paving the way for a fully inclusive environment.



COST CONSIDERATIONS FOR ACCESSIBILITY IMPROVEMENTS

THE ACCESS4YOU AUDIT OF OUR OFFICE SPACE REVEALED COMMON ISSUES IN REFURBISHED OFFICE BUILDINGS, SUCH AS WHEELCHAIR ACCESS THROUGH SEPARATE ENTRANCES, CARD READERS PLACED TOO HIGH, AND RECEPTION DESKS LACKING KNEE SPACE.

We also recognised the need for contrasting graphics on glass doors for individuals with visual impairments and the installation of induction loops in meeting rooms and reception areas to support those with hearing impairments.

According to Access4you, the average cost to achieve a higher certification level - beyond basic mobility-related accessibility - is approximately €10,000 per access point, depending on complexity. This includes costs for tactile signage, glass markings, step indicators, induction loop systems, and online sign language services. Specifically, features such as tactile signage and glass markings are typically charged per linear metre, while induction loop systems (for the hard of hearing) involve a one-time cost, and online sign language services (for the deaf) include both an initial device cost and an annual service fee. Moreover, a comprehensive signage and wayfinding system is essential for individuals with cognitive impairments.

Modern purpose-built offices typically meet high mobility standards; however, multi-floor office spaces or those with multiple access points may require additional adjustments to achieve full accessibility.



THE BIGGER PICTURE

While there are costs associated with making spaces accessible, these investments are minimal compared to the long-term benefits. Accessible design not only ensures compliance with legal and ethical standards but also enhances the overall functionality, improves safety, and elevates the overall appeal of a space.

We already know that physical accessibility is just the beginning. Keeping this in mind, we have begun to expand the concept of dignified access beyond physical spaces, with a focus on education, collaboration, feedback, and inclusive hiring practices to create a truly inclusive environment.



EDUCATION BUILDING AWARENESS AND EMPATHY

We recognise that fostering inclusivity requires a cultural shift, and to achieve this, we are committed to implementing training and awareness programs that help everyone understand the topic and interact respectfully with individuals with disabilities. These programs focus on educating staff about various types of disabilities and the unique challenges individuals may face, as well as teaching clear and respectful communication strategies to ensure all voices are heard and valued.



COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS LEARNING FROM EXPERTS

To ensure our efforts align with best practices, we have begun partnering with advocacy organisations, disability service providers, and community groups.

These collaborations will offer invaluable expertise and insights, guiding us in the development of effective access measures and ensuring that our initiatives are impactful.



CONTINUOUS FEEDBACK LISTENING AND ADAPTING

We understand that inclusivity is an ongoing journey. To stay responsive and improve continuously, we have implemented feedback mechanisms to gather input from individuals with disabilities and support networks. This feedback allows us to regularly assess the effectiveness of our initiatives and make adjustments based on real-world experiences and evolving needs.



LEADING THE WAY

ACCREDITED ACCESS4YOU AUDITORS

To further promote accessibility, we are proud to announce a strategic partnership with Access4you and the accreditation of four colleagues as Access4you auditors. These individuals, along with existing and new partners, will play a key role in championing accessibility within Hungary's real estate industry, ensuring that inclusive design becomes the standard. Their expertise will help us—and others—create spaces that truly embody the principles of dignified access.



INCLUSIVE HIRING PRACTICES

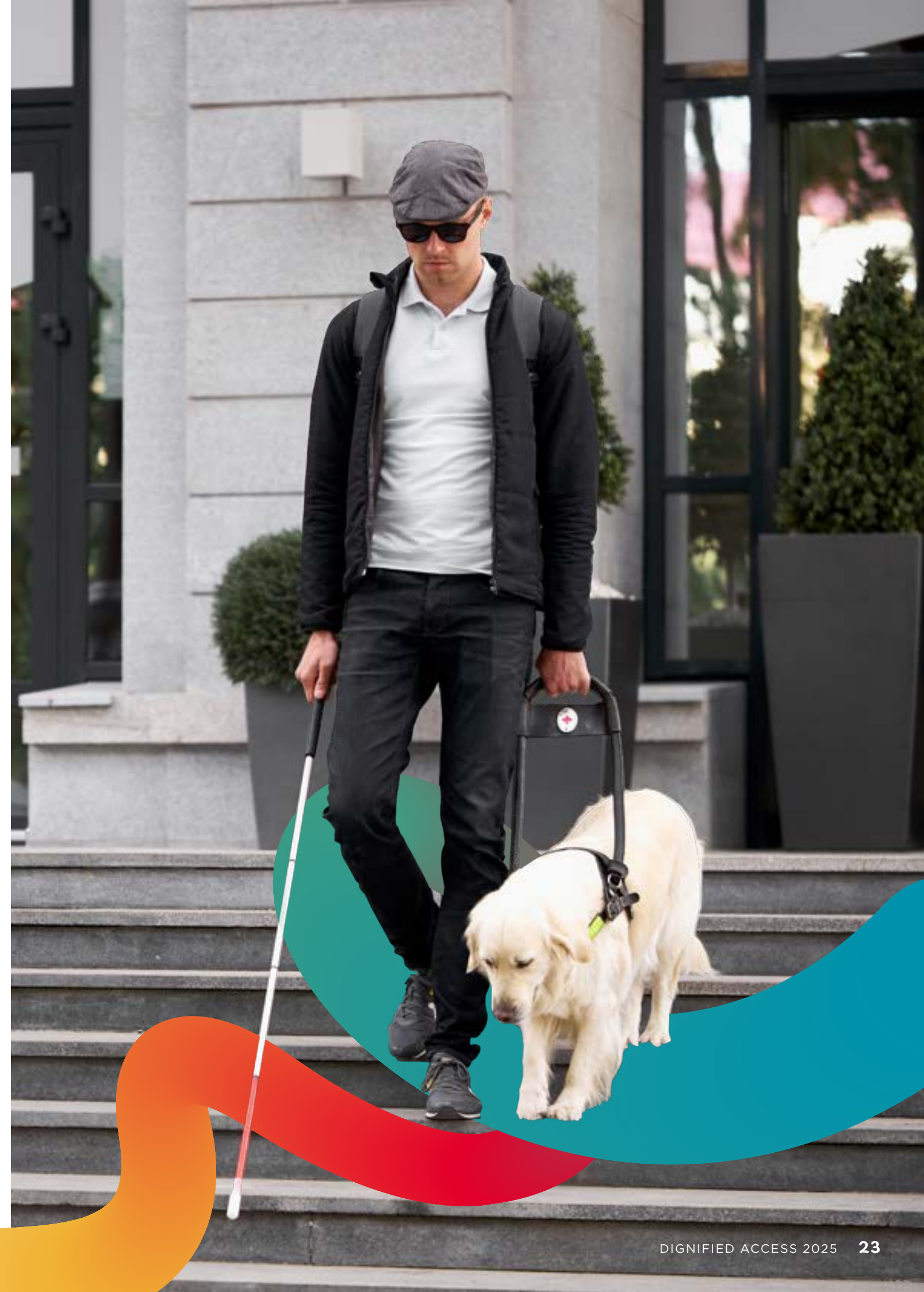
CREATING OPPORTUNITIES

We are committed to promoting inclusive hiring practices, ensuring our recruitment process is accessible and equitable for individuals with disabilities. The comprehensive accessibility insights from the audit provide actionable recommendations that we can implement immediately. Additionally, our approach includes accessible job postings and application processes, inclusive interviews, unbiased evaluations, and partnering with disability organisations to attract and support talented individuals.

OUR JOURNEY TOWARD CREATING AN INCLUSIVE WORKPLACE HAS BEEN ONE OF REFLECTION, LEARNING, AND ACTION. ADDRESSING DIGNIFIED ACCESS HAS TAUGHT US THAT INCLUSION IS NOT A ONE-TIME ACHIEVEMENT BUT AN ONGOING COMMITMENT TO UNDERSTANDING AND REMOVING BARRIERS—BOTH SEEN AND UNSEEN.

By prioritising accessibility in our physical spaces, collaborating with experts, and fostering a culture of empathy and awareness, we are shaping an environment where individuals feel empowered to engage, contribute, and thrive. We've learned that inclusive design benefits not just individuals with disabilities but everyone, creating workplaces that are more functional, equitable, and welcoming.

Yet, this is only the beginning. We are committed to continuously evolving, guided by feedback, collaboration, and a shared belief in the power of inclusion. As we move forward, we hope our efforts inspire others to join us in creating a world where dignity, equity, and belonging are not aspirations but everyday realities.



TESTIMONIALS

The Accredited Partner Program is one of the strategic pillars of our operations. They are the evangelists for growing our social impact. They don't just talk about it; they actively engage in sales and certification activities themselves.

We are very proud that Cushman & Wakefield, a global commercial real estate services leader, has joined our mission, having decided to become our partner after a very positive client experience.

BALÁZS BERECS

FOUNDER AND CEO OF ACCESS4YOU
WHEELCHAIR USER SINCE 2005

I'm proud to lead this important journey and to kick off our collaboration with Access4you. Cushman & Wakefield's global commitment to inclusion impact is unwavering, we are dedicated to making a tangible and lasting impact on disability inclusion—both within our organisation and across the industry.

For us, dignified access is about more than just meeting compliance standards – it's about creating spaces where all individuals can succeed. I'm committed to driving this change, and ensuring we create meaningful, lasting impact.

GERGELY PADOS

MANAGING DIRECTOR
CUSHMAN & WAKEFIELD HUNGARY



WHETHER YOU'RE DESIGNING A NEW SPACE OR EVALUATING AN EXISTING ONE, THIS GUIDE WILL HELP YOU IDENTIFY KEY AREAS TO FOCUS ON. TO HELP YOU GET STARTED, USE ACCESS4YOU'S FREE ACCESSIBILITY CHECK. THIS TOOL WILL GUIDE YOU THROUGH EVALUATING YOUR OFFICE SPACE AND IDENTIFYING AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT.

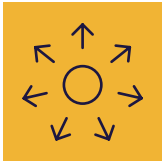
CLICK TO ACCESS FORM

KEY AREAS TO CONSIDER



ENTRANCE ACCESSIBILITY

- Ensure barrier-free access for wheelchair users and individuals with prams.
- Install tactile walking surface indicators for visually impaired individuals.
- Enhance entrance visibility using distinct colours, contrast, or shapes to make it easily identifiable.



INTERNAL CIRCULATION

- Maintain clear, wide pathways (minimum 120 cm) and doorways (minimum 80 cm).
- Use contrasting markings on stairs and glass surfaces for better visibility.
- Ensure elevators are spacious (minimum 90x120 cm cabin size) and have wide doors (minimum 80 cm).



SERVICE POINTS AND FACILITIES

- Make reception desks and counters accessible to wheelchair users.
- Install hearing loops and provide sign language support for individuals with hearing impairments when communication is required.
- Ensure barrier-free toilets and diaper-changing facilities are available.



WAYFINDING AND SIGNAGE

- Use pictograms and directional signs for easy navigation.
- Mark rooms and services with clear, universally understood symbols.



INCLUSIVE DESIGN FEATURES

- Allow assistance dogs in the building.
- Provide ample seating for relaxation and waiting areas.
- Ensure security gates and access systems have wide passages (minimum 80 cm).

DISABILITIES CAN BE CATEGORISED INTO SEVERAL GROUPS BASED ON THE NATURE OF THE IMPAIRMENT. BELOW ARE THE MAIN CATEGORIES:



PHYSICAL DISABILITIES

Mobility impairments that impact movement, chronic pain or fatigue that restrict physical activity, and dexterity challenges that affect fine motor skills.



SENSORY DISABILITIES

Visual impairments, such as partial sight, blindness, or conditions like macular degeneration. Hearing impairments can range from mild hearing loss to complete deafness. Additionally, speech and communication disorders encompass conditions that affect an individual's ability to speak effectively.



INVISIBLE DISABILITIES

Chronic illnesses and conditions, such as diabetes, multiple sclerosis, or Crohn's disease, which may not be visibly apparent. They also encompass neurological disorders like epilepsy, migraines, or neuropathy.



COGNITIVE AND INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES

Learning and developmental disabilities, as well as challenges related to memory or concentration.



MENTAL HEALTH CONDITIONS

Disorders such as anxiety and depression, as well as psychiatric disabilities.



TEMPORARY DISABILITIES

Short-term impairments resulting from injuries or surgeries, as well as pregnancy-related conditions that may temporarily affect mobility or energy levels.



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ABOUT CUSHMAN & WAKEFIELD

Cushman & Wakefield (NYSE: CWK) is a leading global commercial real estate services firm for property owners and occupiers with approximately 52,000 employees in nearly 400 offices and 60 countries. In 2024, the firm reported revenue of \$9.4 billion across its core service lines of Services, Leasing, Capital markets, and Valuation and other. Built around the belief that Better never settles, the firm receives numerous industry and business accolades for its award-winning culture.

For additional information,
visit www.cushmanwakefield.com.

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