

Member Briefing

Number: 1192

Title: National Key Scheme

Summary: This briefing provides information on National Key Scheme (NKS), which allows people with disabilities and long-term health conditions to access public facilities across the country.

NKS was introduced in the 1980s by Royal Association for Disability Rights (RADAR) to tackle the misuse of toilet facilities for people with disabilities and long-term health conditions. The scheme was developed because many public toilets had to be kept locked to prevent damage and misuse.

The general feeling within the disability community is that people would prefer to buy a key that would unlock doors to thousands of accessible toilet facilities across the country. They would rather buy a key than see facilities seriously misused and vandalised, which could leave them out-of-action for long periods.

The Council installs NKS locks whenever it needs to because of misuse and vandalism. It means that people with disabilities have appropriate facilities available to them.

As well as being installed in accessible toilet facilities, NKS locks have also been put in urban and country parks and rural locations. This is to restrict access by motorcycles and quad bikes.

NKS is now seen as an appropriate solution, particularly in unmanaged settings where misuse and vandalism can become an issue.

According to RADAR, approximately 7,000 toilets in the UK have been fitted with an NKS lock.

There is currently no local or national eligibility criteria or need to provide proof of disability to buy an NKS key. This can sometimes lead to keys being bought by people who do not require the use of facilities for people with disabilities.

NKS keys can be purchased for £3 from the following locations within the borough. They can also be bought online from a [wider range of sources](#).

DIAL West Cheshire Disability Rights Centre

Hamilton Place, Chester, CH1 2BH

01244 345655

contactus@dialwestcheshire.org.uk

Chester Shopmobility

Frodsham Street Car Park, Chester, CH1 3JH

01244 312626

shopmobility@dialwestcheshire.org.uk



Ellesmere Port Shopmobility

6 Mercer Walk, Port Arcades, Ellesmere Port, CH65 0AP

0151 3551420

shopmobility@dialwestcheshire.org.uk

Northwich Shopmobility

The Information Centre, 1 The Arcade, Northwich, Cheshire, CW9 5AS

01606 288820

office@vrds.org.uk

Winsford Shopmobility

The Dingle Centre, High Street, Winsford, CW7 2AS

01606 557550

office@vrds.org.uk

For further information contact: Graham Garnett, Senior Access Officer

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Responsible Committee, Cabinet Member: Councillor Paul Dolan

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