Ripple Effect

An inspiration catalogue for inclusive and accessible aquatic facility design



LOKALE OG ANLÆGS FONDEN

Volume 01



The Danish Foundation for Culture and Sports Facilities works to create sustainable and inclusive meeting places for culture, sport, and outdoor activities in Denmark, Greenland, and the Faroe Islands. Guided by its vision, “Innovative shared spaces for movement, joy, and quality in leisure life,” the foundation supports projects that enhance everyday leisure experiences in physical environments of high-quality. As a foundation, we generate and share knowledge, provide professional guidance, and offer financial support for physical facilities that combine innovative architecture with diverse and engaging activities. The foundation manages public venture capital of approximately 10 million euros per year and operates as an independent expert advisory body under the Danish Ministry of Culture.

Holmens Boulevard 13
5800 Nyborg
loa-fonden.dk



hcma designs buildings, brands, and shared experiences that maximize positive impact. Our mission is to help people thrive – in the built environment, and beyond. Our interdisciplinary team listens with curiosity and care, developing design solutions that include, enable, and connect. This work is driven by a desire for better social and environmental performance outcomes, stewarded across generations. We start each project by asking, “Who is this for”, rooted in our conviction that human connections are essential for healthy, resilient communities.

We are committed to ongoing learning and unlearning from Indigenous Peoples, and working in ways that support truth, reconciliation, and respectful collaboration. This guide is part of that commitment. Its intentions remain open to dialogue, critique, and adaptation in different cultural contexts – especially those led by and for Indigenous people.

400 – 675 W Hastings St
Vancouver BC V6B 1N2
hcma.ca

Maximising positive social impact through accessible and inclusive aquatic facilities

Aquatic facilities are among the few civic spaces where people of all ages, abilities, cultures, and backgrounds can come together: to learn to swim, engage in sport or wellness, recover from injury, or simply have fun. Swimming pools support physical and mental wellbeing in ways few facilities can. Swimming for fitness or leisure can help reduce stress, ease pain and strengthen joints, build confidence, and offer dignity to bodies that aren't always accommodated elsewhere. Aquatic facilities can act as anchors of community belonging, creating natural moments of connection between generations, cultures, and neighbours who meet through shared experiences at the pool.

And yet, these benefits are only realised when people can get through the door and into the water. When an aquatic facility's website is inaccessible for planning a visit, a change room is cramped and overwhelming, a pool deck lacks accessible entry points into the water, or an operational policy unintentionally excludes, the message is pointedly delivered: "This place is not for you."

For many visiting a swimming pool isn't simple. Long before stepping inside the facility, people are forced to weigh whether the space will work for them: "Will I be able to navigate independently? Will I feel safe? Will there be somewhere I feel I belong?"

What should be a straightforward and shared experience becomes a series of calculations – about access, comfort, dignity, and ultimately, deciding whether the effort will be worth it. Small barriers compound; when considered together, multiple minor challenges can make a visit feel exhausting or not worth attempting.

Design is powerful. It can open doors or close them. Inclusive aquatic facility design is not just about ramps, lifts, transfer ledges, handrails, or minimum code compliance; it is also about understanding how buildings and spaces make people feel. It is about creating welcoming, considered, and flexible environments where people feel they belong. Spaces where they feel respected and supported in both their bodies and their identities. This catalogue was created to inspire architects, designers, and decision-makers to design, deliver, and operate aquatic facilities in ways that respond to the wide range of human diversity. To remind us that water has the power to heal, strengthen, and connect – but only if every person can participate with dignity.

By better understanding the experiences of users before, during, and after a visit to their local aquatic facility, we're invited to be more intentional about designing spaces where no one feels out of place.

It is our hope the ripples of positive social impact that come from building meaningfully inclusive and accessible community aquatic facilities will be felt for generations to come – throughout Denmark and beyond.

"A truly accessible aquatic facility means I can meet with my friends and family as an equal."



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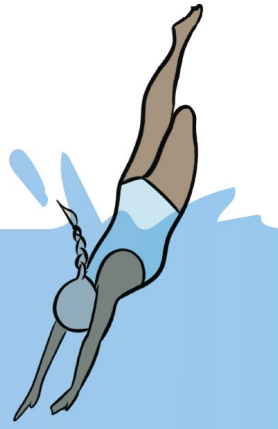
Introduction

AN INCLUSIVE AQUATIC FACILITY IS MORE THAN A BUILDING— IT'S AN INVITATION FOR PEOPLE OF ALL BACKGROUNDS AND ABILITIES TO THRIVE.

Welcome! If you're reading this guide, you're likely looking for ways to make aquatic facilities more accessible, inclusive, and welcoming for everyone.

Each section presents thoughtful design strategies—from accessible digital planning tools and intuitive wayfinding to sensory-friendly environments and community-focused programming. Here, you'll discover practical ideas, visual inspiration, and clear guidance to help create aquatic experiences that support people of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities.

Let's dive in.



Making space for everyone: Why accessible and inclusive pools matter

Aquatic facilities are not just places to learn to swim or engage in competitive sport—they're spaces for exercise, therapy, and play. Vital to civic life, they create opportunities for people to gather, interact, and build shared identity and connections. They provide the context for positive social engagement, helping nurture relationships and belonging.

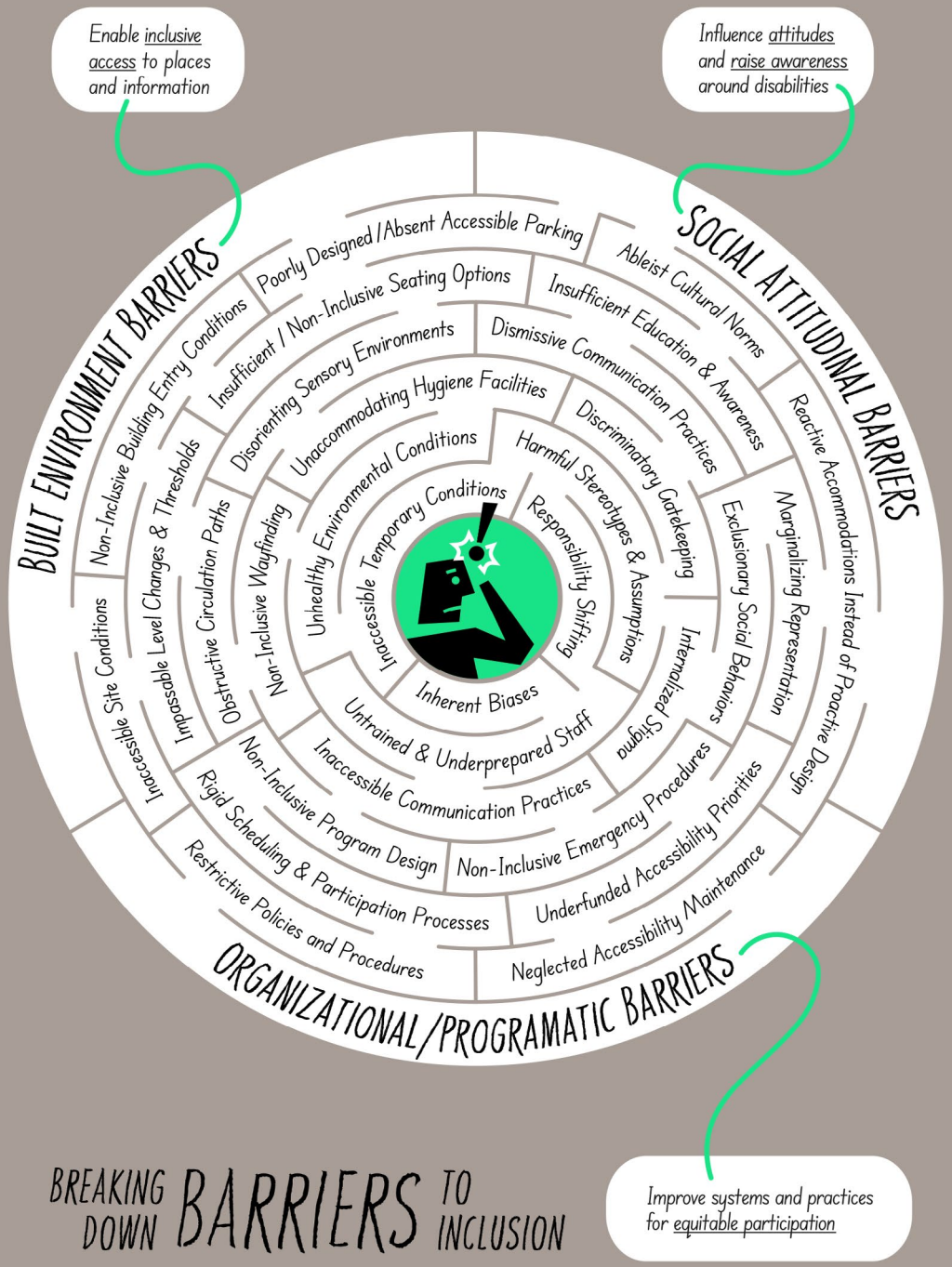
For millions of people with disabilities or sensory differences in Denmark and around the world, barriers to access turn swimming pools into exclusionary spaces. It's a design problem with significant impacts on public health, equity, and social resilience. We want aquatic facilities to be designed to be open and welcoming for everyone, no matter their age, gender, ability, or background.

From a research perspective, the benefits of swimming are well-documented: it improves cardiovascular health, supports muscle tone without joint strain, and boosts mental wellbeing. Time spent in a swimming pool or engaging in aquatic therapy can be life-changing – reducing pain, improving balance, and building confidence in a low-impact environment, as well as allowing people to experience social connection.

Yet, these benefits are only available if people can actually get into the pool. Accessibility features like ramped entries, colour and tactile contrast, and clear wayfinding and signage aren't just helpful – they're essential for making sure everyone can enjoy the water.

And inclusivity goes beyond physical access. Sensory-friendly swims, or women- and girls-only swim times, can help meet specific needs for neurodiverse people or those requiring religious or cultural accommodations. Classes and spaces that are thoughtfully designed to meet needs across a spectrum of age – from the very young through to older adults – can make enjoying pool time a healthy lifelong habit. Applying the principles of universal design can help create inclusive spaces for leisure, health, wellness, sport – and everything in between.

Importantly, inclusivity isn't something that's "nice to have." The benefits are backed by studies showing that when facilities are inclusive, everyone thrives. Removing barriers – or better yet – designing so they don't exist, helps create shared spaces that promote health, reduce isolation, and build stronger social ties. Inclusion considers the way people arrive, engage, and feel in a space. It begins with an awareness of who might be present, who might be missing, and how design responds to a range of needs and lived experiences.



Medical vs. social models of disability

A good "jumping-off point" for understanding how to make aquatic facilities and other community spaces more accessible and inclusive is to consider how disability is currently framed.

Medical model

The medical model of disability views disability primarily as a problem that exists within the individual. It sees impairments – whether physical, mental, or sensory – as conditions that need to be treated, cured, or managed. Under this model, the focus tends to be on what is "wrong" with a person, and what they cannot do as a result of their condition, rather than seeking to provide what the person needs to thrive. The risk with this framing is that it creates low expectations for the lives of people with disabilities, leading to loss of independence, choice, and control. This approach excludes people with disabilities from participating as fully as they could in civic life.

Social model

Developed by disabled people, the social model presents a different way of viewing the world. This model shifts focus from the individual and instead looks at how society creates disabling environments. It argues that people are disabled not by their impairments, but by external barriers such as inaccessible buildings, discriminatory attitudes, or rigid systems. Examples of common physical barriers are buildings without accessible entries or toilets. From this perspective, the solution lies in changing society – removing barriers and designing inclusive spaces – rather than trying to change the person or accepting their limited participation in society.

The social model situates disability in the interaction between individuals and their environment. As architects, designers, and decision-makers, we have an opportunity to positively impact this interaction, significantly reducing experiences of disability.

Sources for information on the medical and social models of disability:
scope.org.uk
doit.uw.edu/knowledge-base/what-are-different-models-of-disability

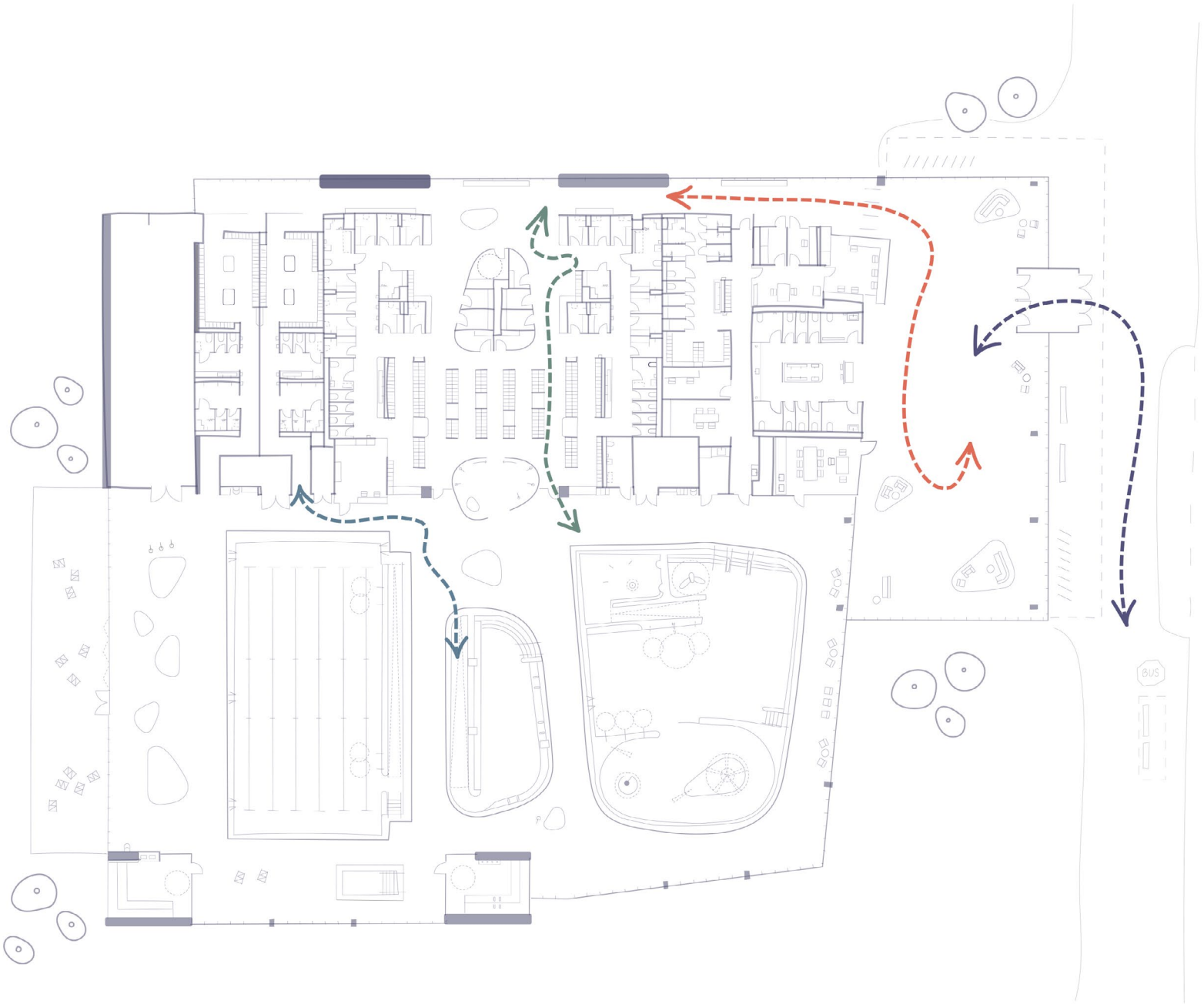
The user journey

This document follows the typical journey of a swimming pool user: planning their visit, arriving and spending time in social areas, getting ready in the change rooms, enjoying the swimming pool and other deck amenities, as well as the reverse journey to get out of the pool and return home.

Of course, the experience isn't always linear. Visitors often move between different spaces during their visits, so the transition between spaces must be thoughtfully considered.

Staff may move through the facility along different paths than visitors, and their spaces must be accessible and inclusive too. Everything from break rooms and offices to circulation routes and service areas should support safe, comfortable, and equitable use.

By exploring the user journey from diverse perspectives, this inspiration catalogue highlights how accessibility and inclusivity both play essential roles in creating a welcoming environment for everyone who uses and works in the space.



Designing with community

Inclusive design embraces people of all ages, needs, abilities, experiences, and backgrounds. Access includes physical, sensory, cognitive, and cultural experiences. Processes that welcome diverse perspectives help ensure the voices of all user groups and stakeholders are heard, and that a broad range of lived experience is meaningfully integrated into the design. Close collaboration with people with disabilities and diverse lived experience – such as gender or cultural diversity – ensures their insight can directly shape both the planning and design process, and its outcomes.

Design strategies in this document are informed by decades of experience designing inclusive and accessible aquatic facilities, as well as post-occupancy evaluations conducted at three indoor and outdoor aquatic facilities with a range of competition, leisure, and wellness amenities. These evaluations were immersive in nature, comprising of facility tours, swim sessions, and group discussions. The evaluation team included individuals with a wide range of lived experience including mobility, dexterity, pain, vision, hearing, and cognitive disabilities, as well as neurodivergence.

These post-occupancy evaluations mirrored the user journey outlined on page 8, beginning with the evaluation team's pre-visit planning, arriving at and navigating the site, using the social spaces and change rooms, swimming in the pools, and then completing the reverse journey of changing and leaving the facility.

These interactive sessions brought together architects, designers, facility staff, people with disabilities, and their personal healthcare assistants or caregivers – resulting in insights into how aquatic facilities can be designed and operated to better meet the needs of a diverse range of community members. Post-occupancy evaluations with people with lived experience of disability are helping to inspire new ways of imagining future aquatic facilities as places that more fully integrate accessibility and inclusivity, remove barriers, and enable everyone to participate and thrive.

Quotes in this document were gathered during post-occupancy evaluations and through further discussion. They are shared alongside the user journey to highlight the importance of integrating authentic lived experience in decision-making.

"When people with lived-experience are meaningfully engaged throughout the design process, accessibility shifts from a checklist to an experience."



Principles of universal design

Many architects and designers will be familiar with the concept of universal design, which is “a design process that enables and empowers a diverse population by improving human performance, health and wellness, and social participation” (Steinfield and Maisel, 2012).

With the social model of disability in mind, applying the principles and goals of universal design can help reduce barriers to access and inclusion. Through universal design, spaces and places can be designed to be truly inclusive: usable by people of all ages, abilities, cultures, gender identities, and more.

The original principles of universal design were created by an interdisciplinary group of experts at North Carolina State University’s Center for Universal Design in the 1990s. They include:

- Equitable use
- Flexibility in use
- Simple and intuitive use
- Perceptible information
- Tolerance for error
- Low physical effort
- Size and space for approach and use

More recently, the University of Buffalo’s Center for Inclusive Design and Environmental Access (IDeA Center) evolved the concept of universal design beyond usability, to include social participation and health. IDeA sought to clarify the principles and provide an evidence-based approach. Each of the revised goals in the illustration is supported by an interdisciplinary knowledge base, including anthropometrics, biomechanics, perception, cognition, safety, health promotion, and social interaction disciplines



Source: University of Buffalo’s Center for Inclusive Design and Environmental Access (IDeA Center)

Setting the scene

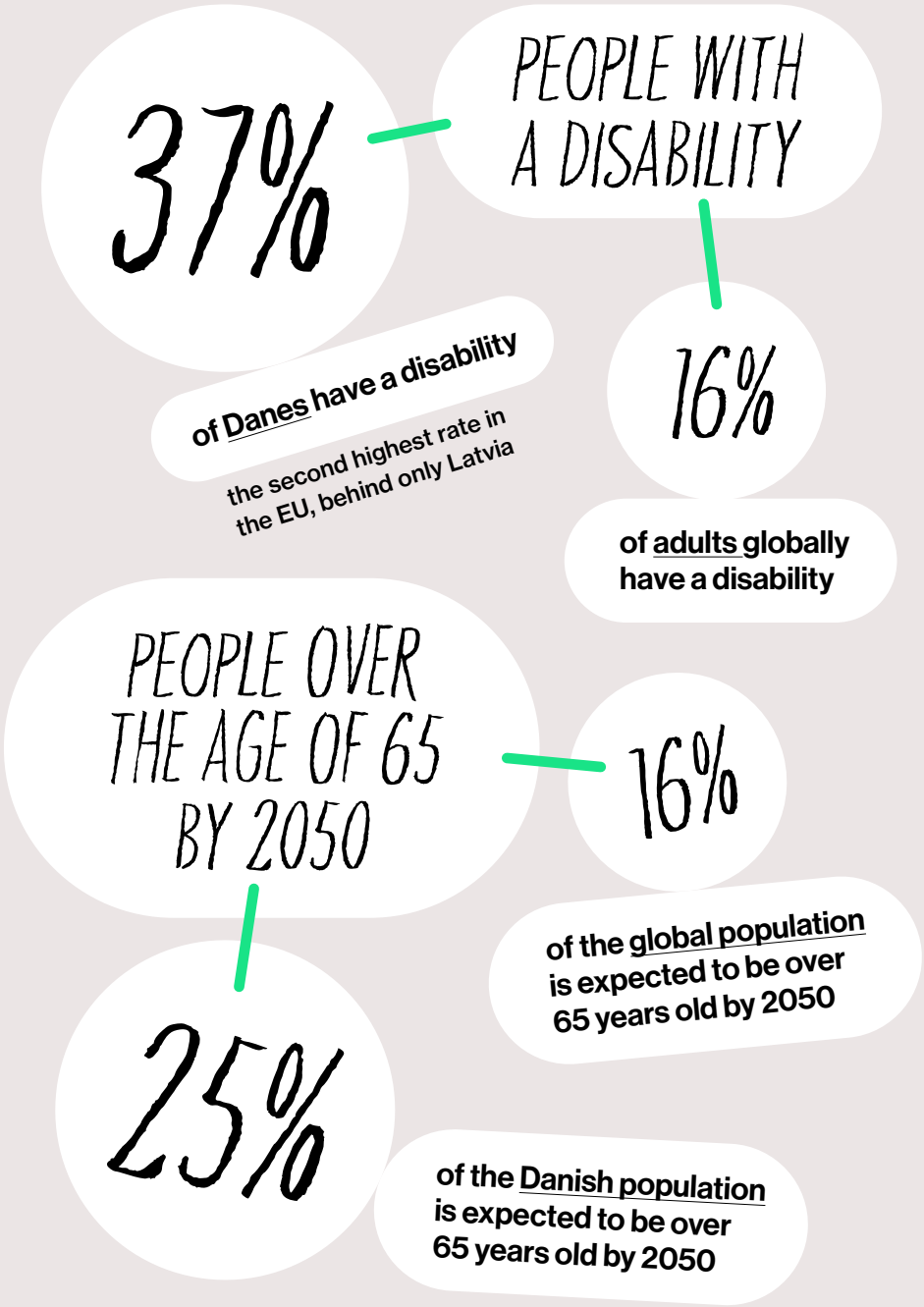
Before we get into specific strategies that can be applied to aquatic facilities to make them more accessible and inclusive, take a moment to consider some key information about pools and people.

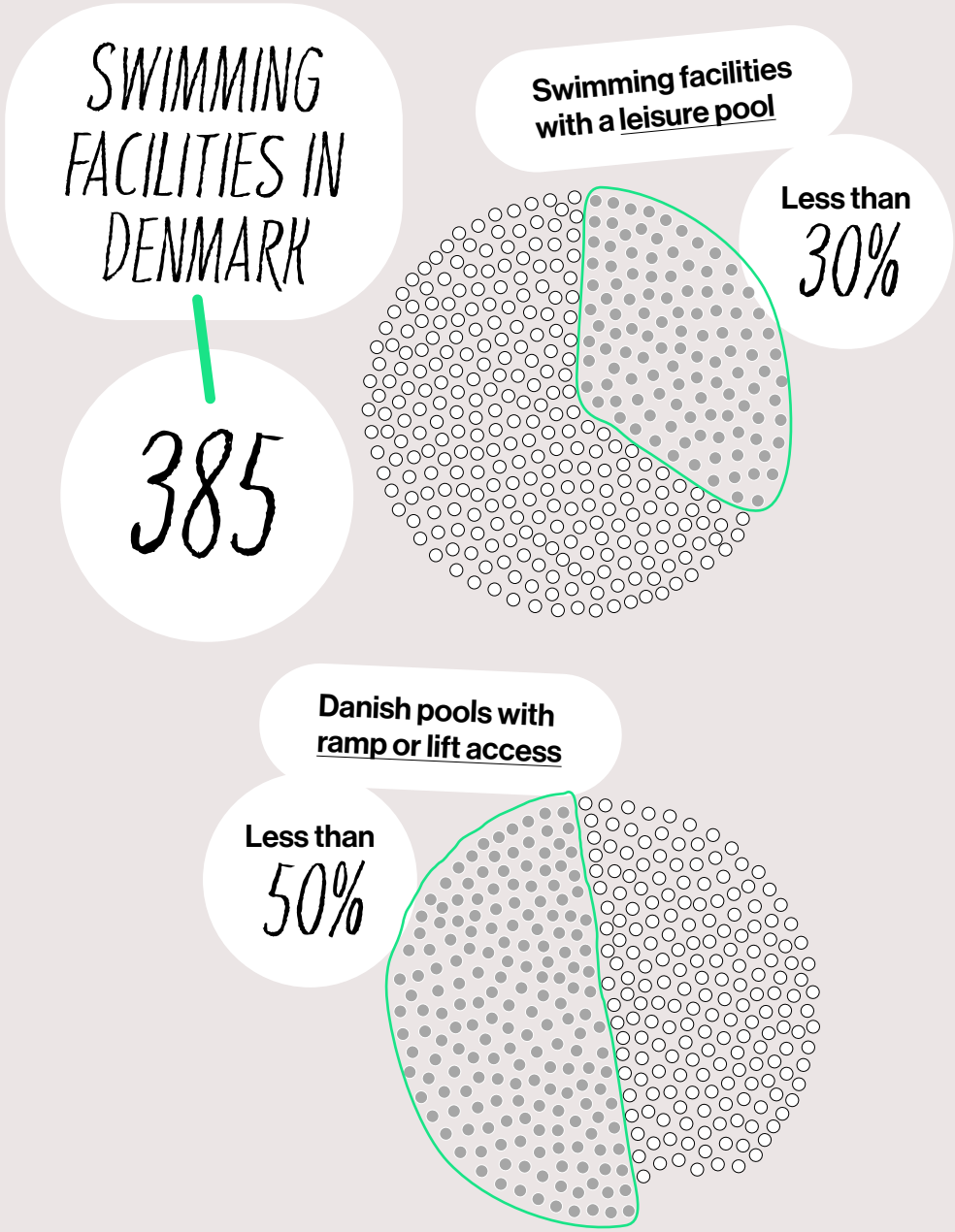
Disability rates in Denmark and around the world show us many people could benefit from making aquatic facilities more accessible. As populations age, accessibility and inclusivity features become increasingly in demand.

Leisure pools

A leisure pool is a swimming pool designed with a greater focus on relaxation, recreation, therapy, fun, and learning to swim, rather than for lap swimming or competitive sport. These pools are characterised by varied shapes, sizes, and depths, and often include features like zero-entry “beach access,” shallow areas, spa jets, water features like slides, sprays, or dumping buckets, and integrated seating – which help to support leisure activities and socialising. Leisure pools operated at warmer temperatures provide opportunity for informal interaction with the water, for longer periods.

The informality of leisure pools can welcome a wider range of demographics, providing spaces for social and casual swimming that typically appeal to more types of people, including young children, families, and older adults. For people with disabilities, leisure pools can offer opportunities for exercise and therapy in a less intimidating and competitive setting than a lap pool. Given the broad range of ways to engage with the water, leisure pools tend to be more inclusive and can accommodate a greater number of users at a time.





Traditional lap pools

Traditional lap pools put the focus on competitive sport, training, and personal fitness. As such, they often narrow the demographic of who can use the pool. Their colder water temperatures limit the use for young children, older adults, and people with disabilities.

Additional flexibility in usage and programming can be achieved by integrating moveable floors and bulkheads, which permit changes in depth and configuration. This allows lap pool tanks to be reconfigured to offer a wider range of uses, often simultaneously, in different parts of the swimming pool. See the diagram on page 53 for swimming pool depth profiles and typical usage.

Outdoor pools

While not the focus of this inspiration catalogue, open-air swimming – whether in outdoor pools, harbour baths, or natural bodies of water – is becoming increasingly popular in Denmark and beyond.

Supporting both leisure and competitive uses, these spaces play an important role in Denmark's swimming culture and in expanding access to swimming opportunities. Outdoor pools should also be designed with accessibility and inclusivity in mind.

Hot pools

Hot pools are valuable for leisure, health, and wellbeing by offering opportunities for relaxation, recovery and social connection. Ensuring accessibility and inclusion, such as through larger pools with ramps and varying temperatures, creates opportunities for everyone to participate and benefit.

"Knowing a pool is accessible lets me focus on my goal activity, not the obstacles around it."



Planning a visit

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES OFTEN PRE-PLAN THEIR VISIT TO PREPARE FOR BARRIERS THEY MAY EXPERIENCE ON SITE AND HELP CONSERVE THEIR ENERGY.

Planning a visit to a local aquatic facility can feel heavier than it should for someone who lives with a disability. When websites lack the key information and descriptive content used by assistive technology like screen readers, they force people with disabilities to spend extra time and energy trying to understand what to expect and how to navigate the space through other means.

Unfortunately, these types of barriers and others are still very common – and can take a toll on people with disabilities. As architects, designers, and decision-makers, we can easily forget a person's journey to the pool begins long before they leave home. The next section explores how we can better understand and improve this experience.



Planning a visit

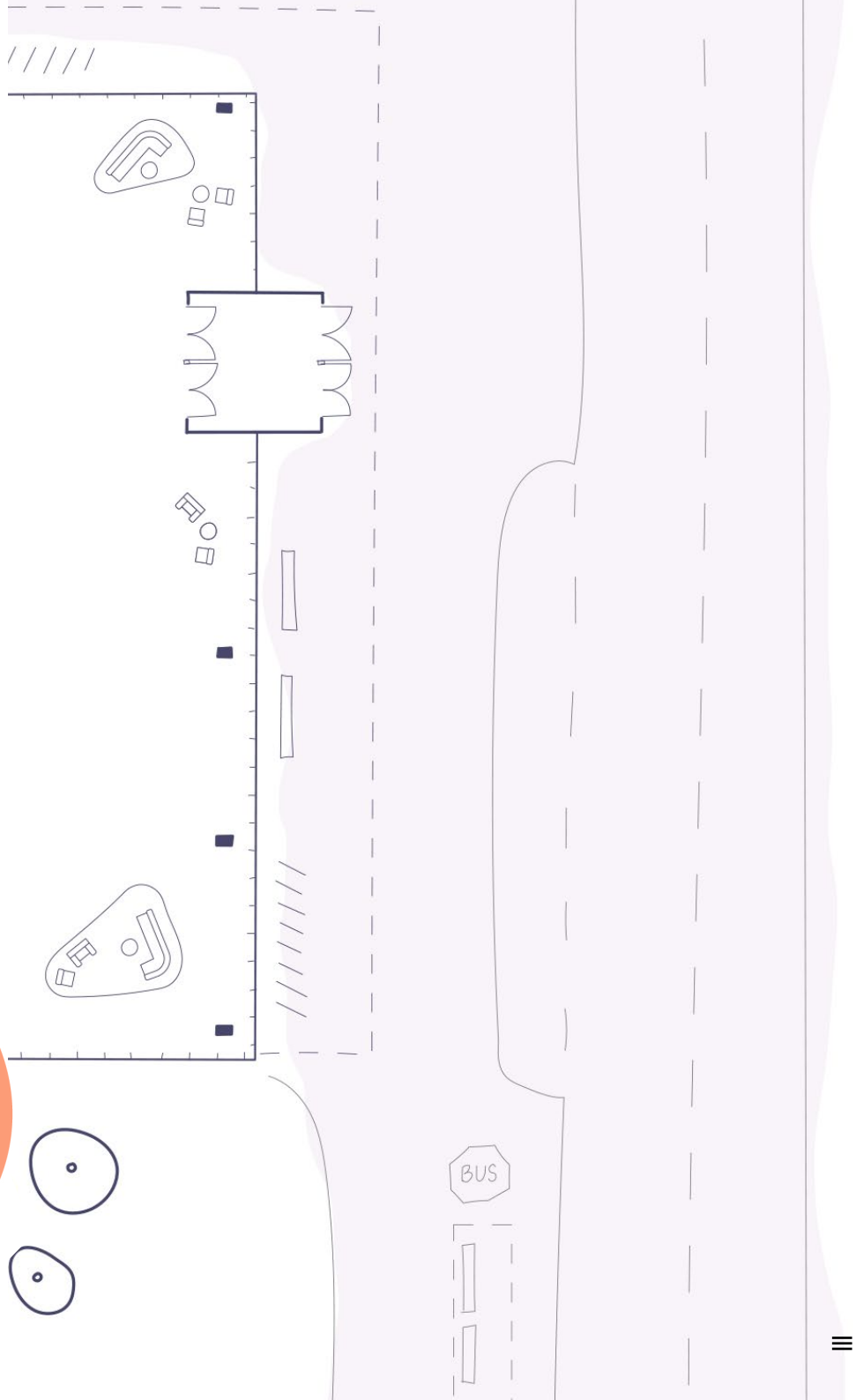
Providing detailed information on the aquatic facility's website helps everyone know what to expect and prepare accordingly. Website design should meet accessibility standards and include visual, text, and audio descriptions for key information.

Presenting information in visual, audio, and text formats ensures everyone can access and understand the content they need. Consider providing the following information on the aquatic facility website:

- An arrival guide, indicating site access points, accessible pathways, travel distances, and building entrances.
- A map that communicates the sensory experiences and respite spaces of the site and building.
- Information about building features and layout, including:
  - Locations of and distances between key spaces, including entrances, reception, washrooms, change rooms, and swimming pools.
  - Descriptions of the change rooms and pool types, including information about accessibility features, physical access to each of the pools and wellness spaces, and the temperatures for each swimming pool, sauna, and steam room.
- Information about accessibility resources and the equipment available on site (e.g. aquatic wheelchairs or sensory kits).
- Contact details for accessibility assistance and information.

Operators should work with navigational system providers to properly identify drop-off zones, accessible parking stalls, and walking distances to ensure people can pre-plan their visit and arrive as close to the entrance as possible.

"Audio navigation makes a big difference. I can just listen to directions and find my way around without needing to ask for help."



Getting to and arriving on site

The experience of travelling to and arriving at the aquatic facility can set the tone for a person's entire visit. Whether arriving by walking or rolling, by bicycle, by bus, by train, or by car, it's important to ensure the arrival process is as comfortable and safe as possible for all modes of travel. This helps set the stage for an enjoyable day at the aquatic facility.

Site arrival

- Where possible, ensure public transport is available to the site and stops are located within an easy travel distance from the entrances.
- Provide bicycle parking near the entrance on a covered, level surface with ample clear space.
- Provide pick-up and drop-off zones near the entrance with clear markings, signage, and curb cuts. Design signage to be visible from both the road and the seating area.
- Designate accessible parking stalls and stalls for families with children or visitors with limited mobility, and locate them close to the primary entry.
- Include covered waiting areas with benches for shade and weather protection.

Pathways and navigation

- Ensure pathways are low-slope and well-defined. Where site grade requires, provide ramps with handrails and guards.
- Consider handrails for long, level, and sloping pathways for stability and navigation.
- Mount additional light fixtures below eye level to improve ground definition and help minimise glare or eye strain.
- Install large and frequent signage from site arrival points.
- Place benches and water fountains at regular intervals along pathways to allow visitors to stop and rest.
- Provide areas for service animal relief along pathways and near the entrance.

Make entries safe and welcoming by providing clear sightlines and bright, even lighting.

To reduce travel distances for visitors with mobility challenges, design direct pathways to entries from site arrival points, and provide rest areas along the way.



Walkerville Civic and Community Centre, Gilberton, Australia

"When there's an open plaza outside, I don't know which way the entrance is. Tactile indicators can allow me to independently get to the door."



Minoru Centre for Active Living, Richmond, Canada

Access aisles with let-downs to sidewalk level for accessible parking stalls should be connected to safe, direct pedestrian paths to the entrance.

Provide colour-contrasting bicycle parking close to the entrance. Give it space so it does not become an obstacle.



For large open areas, provide tactile directional indicators from site arrival to the building entrance. For large sites, provide a tactile map.



Provide places to rest every 5-7 metres along pathways, with enough clear space to accommodate people using wheelchairs, strollers, or for service animals.

təməsewtxʷ Aquatic and Community Centre, New Westminster, Canada

Entrances

Everyone deserves to enter a building in a way that is comfortable and dignified. If it's physically impossible, or if it has taken too much energy in the process, barriers to entry impact a person's ability to meaningfully participate. An entrance is often the first impression of a space—when it feels open and accessible, it fosters a sense of belonging, encourages engagement, and helps reduce challenges for everyone.

Provide entrances that are well lit and offer shelter from the elements. Provide seating nearby for people to rest and wait, ideally within easy view of pick-up and drop-off locations.



Grandview Heights Aquatic Centre, Surrey, Canada



Churchill Meadows Community Centre, Mississauga, Canada

Make primary entrances easy to find with bold, high-contrast signage and distinctive architecture. If there is more than one entrance, consider providing signage with a unique name at each for easier wayfinding.

Entrances should be step-free, with automatic or power-assisted doors, and generous door widths. Narrow, heavy, or difficult-to-operate doors create significant barriers for people with disabilities, older adults, and caregivers with children.

"True accessibility and inclusion in aquatic facilities does more than remove barriers—it affirms dignity, fosters independence, and ensures everyone has the opportunity to participate fully."

Arriving at the swimming pool

A WELCOMING POOL ENVIRONMENT IS ONE WHERE EVERY BODY, EVERY AGE, AND EVERY LIVED EXPERIENCE FEELS ANTICIPATED—NOT MERELY ACCOMMODATED.

Arriving at an aquatic centre for the first time can easily feel disorienting. Without clear reception points, places to rest and socialise, and intuitive signage and wayfinding, older adults, neurodiverse users, and newcomers may struggle to find their bearings. What should be a welcoming threshold instead becomes overwhelming, leaving many unsure where to go or how to begin.

In this section, we explore how thoughtful design can transform entry and social spaces from chaotic transitional zones into places of connection, confidence, and calm.



Arrival zones

1

Entrance

The entrance creates the first impression of a visitor's experience and should be intentionally designed to feel welcoming and accessible, with power-assisted doors and generous widths.

2

Reception desk

The reception area plays a key role in fostering a positive experience at the aquatic facility and helping users navigate the space. Reception should be visible from the entry.

3

Social space

The social space ahead of the pay point can foster inclusion, connection, and a sense of belonging for everyone. It should provide opportunities for socialisation, rest, and play without cost.

4

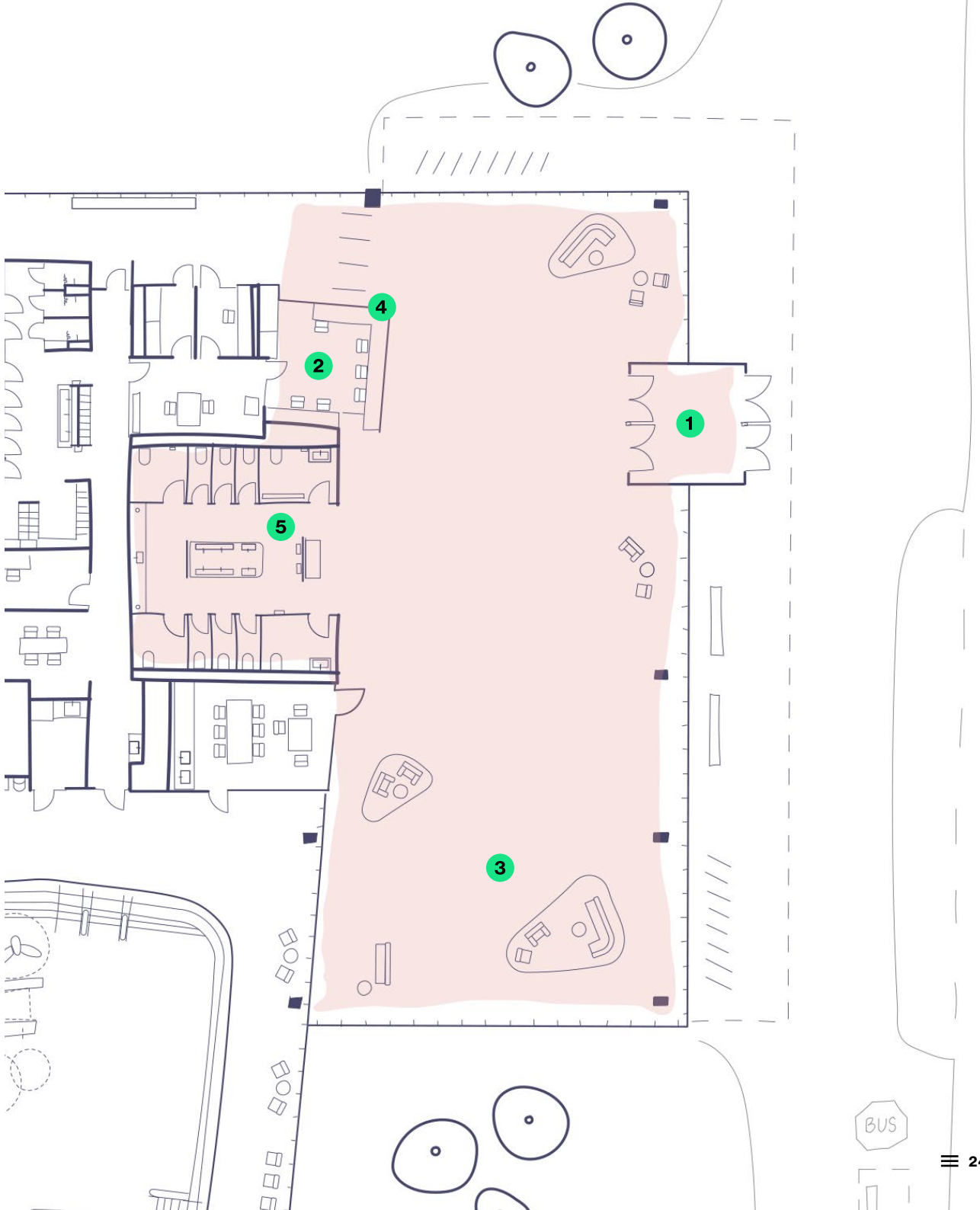
Pay point

The transaction point where users pay to access the pool should be accessible, with turnstiles wide enough to accommodate a variety of body sizes, as well as people with mobility devices, service animals, and strollers.

5

Washroom

Accessible washrooms inclusive of all gender identities should be provided as an essential amenity and located in close proximity to the reception and social zones. These should be located ahead of the facility pay point to ensure that they are free to use.



Social space

One of the areas that offers the greatest opportunity for connection and belonging is the social space ahead of the pay point. It should be designed as a comfortable space, suited to a full range of people and abilities, offering cost-free spaces to rest before or after swimming. A place to observe activities, interact with others, find respite from the weather, read a book, or access free Wi-Fi.

Space planning and zoning

- A well-designed social space should include a thoughtful mix of group and individual zones. Social community areas can foster connection, active participation, and play. Semi-private zones can provide opportunities for retreat, passive overlook, and quiet enjoyment.
- Plan for clear sightlines throughout the social zone to enhance wayfinding, legibility, and safety. Prioritise views to the outdoors to promote wellbeing.
- Flexible, unprogrammed space can allow people to shape how they use and experience the environment.

Amenities

- Washrooms for everyone – regardless of gender identity – should be provided close to the reception area. They should be convenient and visible, with passive oversight from facility staff.
- Include an accessible washroom with child and adult change tables, and with drinking water nearby.
- A breastfeeding/chestfeeding room in the lobby (and on the pool deck) can provide a private space for infant care.
- Provide frequent, stable seating with arm rests throughout the social area; this allows people to rest as they move between different areas of the facility.



təməsewtxʷ Aquatic and Community Centre, New Westminster, Canada



Swimming Pool De Heuvelrand, Voorthuizen, the Netherlands

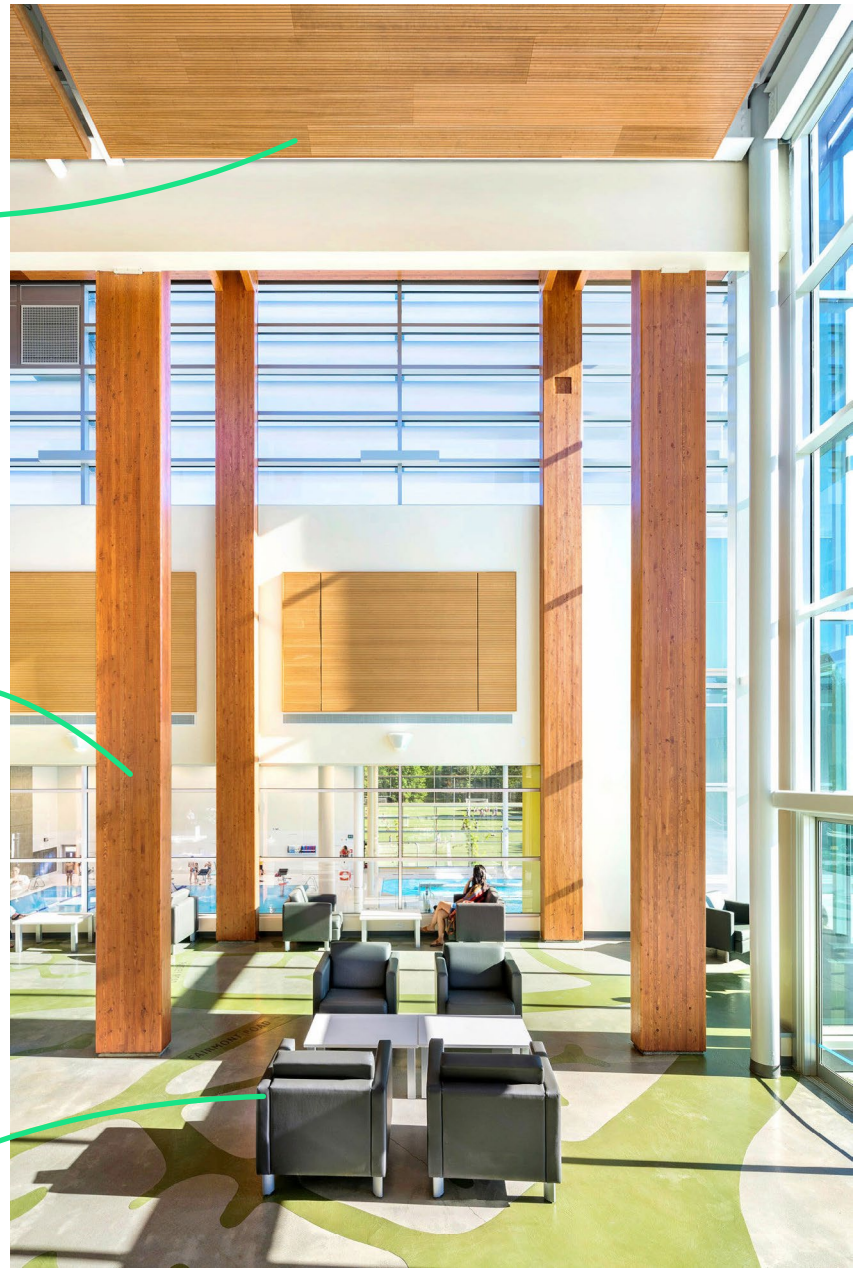
Materiality and lighting

- Avoid reflective and glare-producing materials.
- Specify materials with low or zero volatile organic compound (VOC) emissions. Ensure good ventilation and follow protocols for air quality testing and flush-out to reduce allergies and sensitivities.
- Colour contrast is essential for usability and safety. Contrast helps with depth perception, obstacle detection, and navigation.
- Contrast potential hazards (e.g., visual indicators on steps and glazed areas) and small items (e.g., switches and controls) by at least 60% with adjacent surfaces.
- Prioritise the use of natural light for its significant positive impact on health and wellbeing. Pair this with strategies to mitigate glare, reflection, and shadows. Indirect and diffused lighting can also help to mitigate light sensitivity and sensory overload.

Simple material palettes prevent an overwhelming visual experience. Muted natural colours can be paired with limited use of vivid colours for wayfinding and contrast.

Bold, high-contrast patterns can be overwhelming and confusing for many people, including those with disabilities or sensory sensitivities. Prioritise natural materials, patterns, and forms.

Contrast between large surface areas (e.g., walls, floors, doors) and adjacent surfaces (e.g., furniture, handrails, tactile indicators) should be minimum 30%.



Delbrook Community Recreation Centre, North Vancouver, Canada



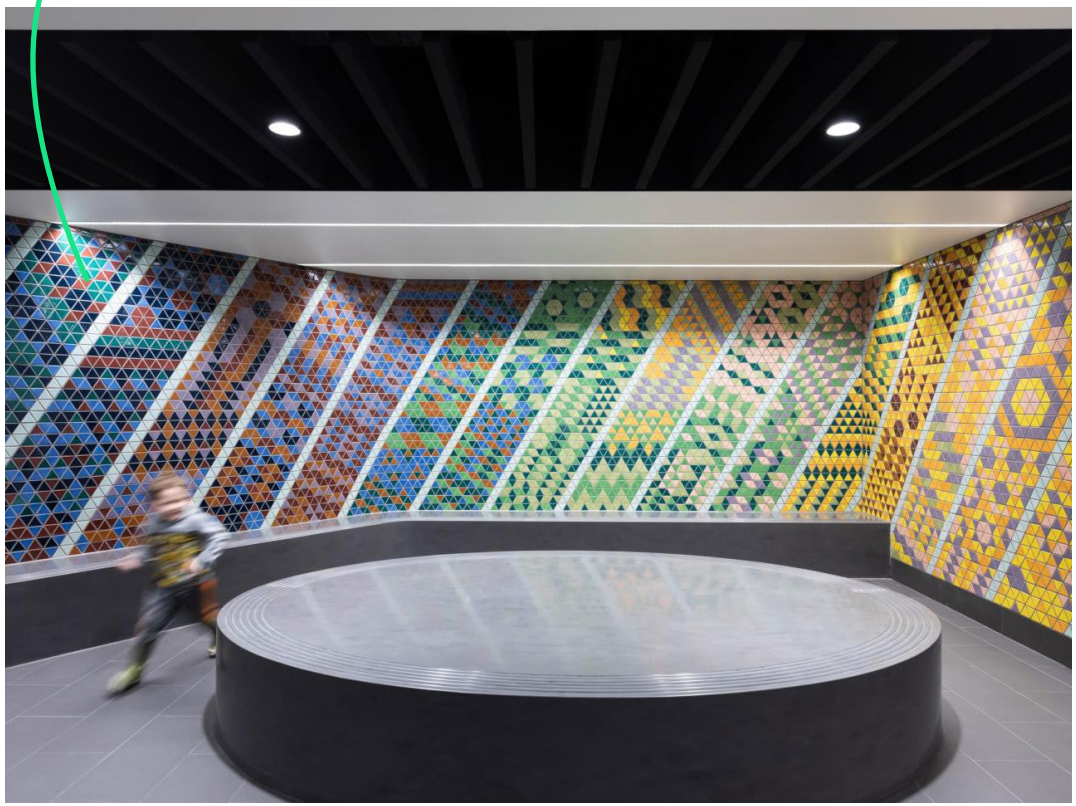
Sportief Recreatiecentrum De Wiltsangh, Nunspeet, the Netherlands

Look for opportunities to include the culture and language of Indigenous Peoples as part of ongoing Reconciliation efforts.



Wii Gyemsiga Siwilaawksat Student Housing, Terrace, Canada

Designing social spaces that celebrate culture and reflect people's stories fosters belonging and strengthens connection to place.



Maple Ridge Leisure Centre, Maple Ridge, Canada

The physical presence of Indigenous culture can be a powerful way to acknowledge the land and territories on which a building resides.

A sensory room can support self-regulation—for people with autism, sensory processing disorder, and others—and offer respite, especially in a busy aquatic facility.



wəkʷaŋəs tə syaqʷəm Elementary School, Vancouver, Canada



Aaniin Community Centre and Library, Markham, Canada

In smaller and existing aquatic facilities where a sensory room may not be possible, including quiet zones and nooks can provide respite in busier social zones. Areas for respite should be included in the social space and on the pool deck.

These spaces provide an adaptable atmosphere than can be calming or gently stimulating, through multisensory features like adjustable light and sound, tactile items, and movement tools.

Reception

The reception desk is a key area of connection and support between the public and staff. Its placement and design should be accessible and approachable, so everyone feels welcome.

- Make sure reception desks have clear, visible and tactile signage.
- Ensure service points are accessible, with audio accessibility and communications enhancement technologies, adequate lighting, and clear signage.
- Pay points should have machines that are easy to reach or are height-adjustable. Offering multiple payment options, along with features such as tactile keypads, Braille or tactile instructions, audio prompts, and simple-to-use controls, further enhances accessibility for all users.
- Rather than a single turnstile, accessible entry gates at control points provide ease of access for a wider range of users.

"If I can't see the reception desk from the entrance this can make me feel overwhelmed. I need to know where I'm going."

Consider adjustable height desks for staff working at reception to provide choice—and accommodate a range of body types and working styles.



Design reception desks at an accessible height across their full length, with appropriate knee clearance—or include a large, integrated area that is accessible. Small accessible areas at the end of reception desks are segregating and should be avoided.

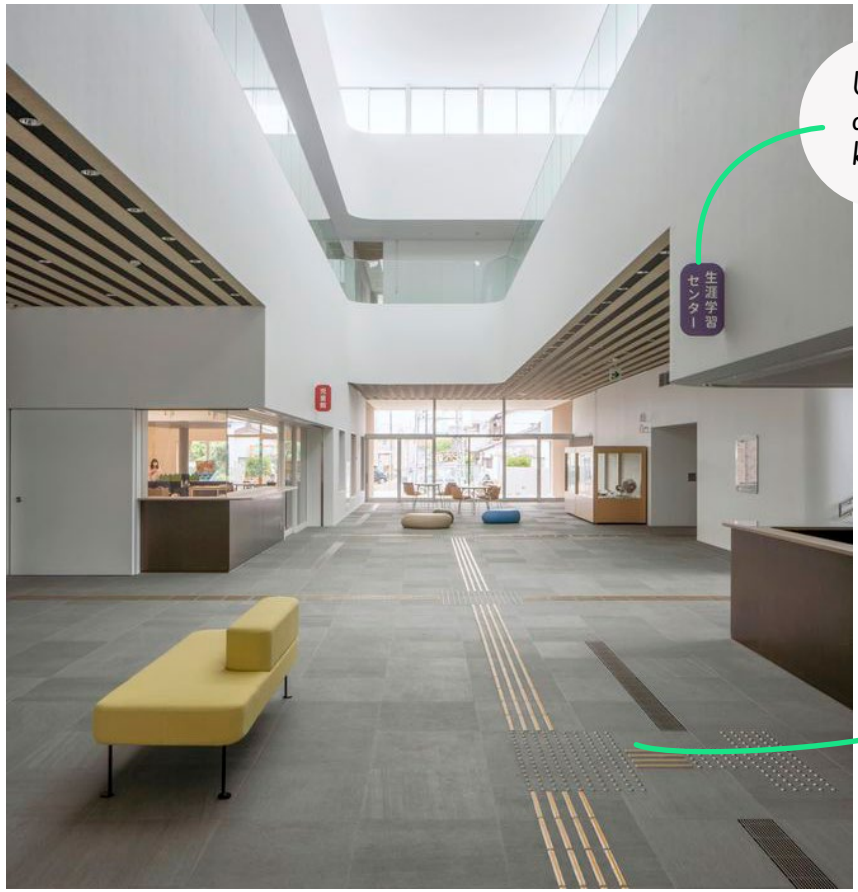
Clayton Community Centre, Surrey, Canada

Signage and wayfinding

Clear, well-placed, and prominent signage and wayfinding features allow people to access spaces safely and independently.

- Install accessible directional and room signage throughout. This includes large, high-contrast type (in sentence case), tactile characters, pictograms, and Braille mounted at an accessible height.
- Signage should be at least 30% contrasted with adjacent surfaces and text information should be contrasted at least 60% with the signage surface.
- A tactile plan of the washroom at the entrance can help people who are blind or have low vision understand the layout. See example on page 41.
- Tactile and audio navigation can be helpful tools for people with visual and cognitive disabilities, but they typically work best when provided together.

"When there's a wide-open lobby, I won't be able to find my way. If there are tactile indicators leading to reception, it's less likely I'll need to ask for assistance."

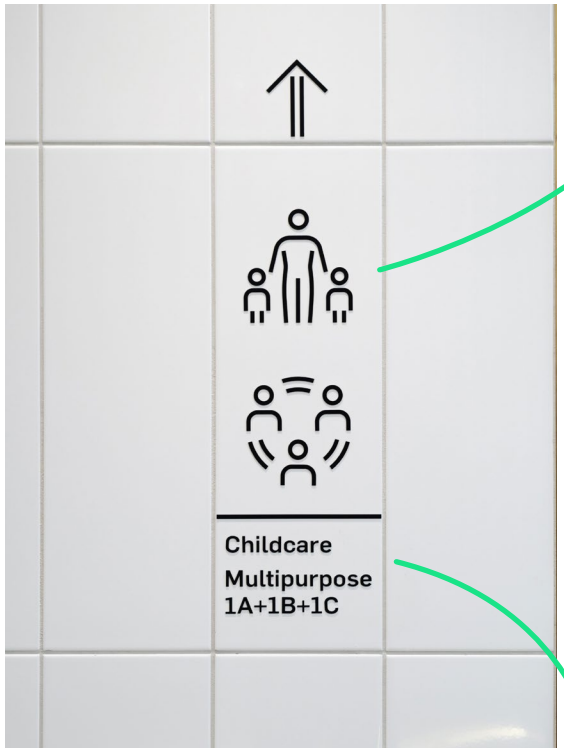


Kozakai Kifukan Community Center
Toyokawa, Japan

Use a range of wayfinding techniques, including colour, materials, texture and lighting to highlight key areas and provide intuitive directional cues.

Tactile floor indicators can act as a continuous wayfinding system, leading to key areas of the facility, and work well paired with audio descriptions on the website or an app.

Pictograms accompanying text can help ensure everyone has access to essential information.



təməsewtxʷ Aquatic and Community Centre, New Westminster, Canada

Signage should be welcoming and clear. Keep wording concise and consider using multiple languages, depending on the cultural context.

Include a tactile map and directory for the facility near the entrance so it's easy to find.



Aspire Leisure Centre, Stanmore, England

Handrails along paths of travel aid navigation and provide support for people with limited mobility.

Getting changed

A WELL-DESIGNED CHANGE ROOM IS NOT AN AFTERTHOUGHT— IT IS A PLACE WHERE PEOPLE DECIDE WHETHER THEY FEEL SAFE, RESPECTED, WELCOME, AND IN CONTROL.

Public changing rooms often leave people feeling exposed and uneasy – they're spaces where people's vulnerabilities can be amplified by confusing layouts, lack of privacy, and a hurried atmosphere. For some – including people who have experienced trauma, those who are gender-diverse, people with disabilities or those who are neurodivergent – these spaces can feel especially unsafe or unwelcoming.

There's much we can do as architects and designers to transform change rooms from places of discomfort and anxiety into spaces that feel secure, dignified, and empowering. This next section outlines ways we can be more intentional about designing for people's diverse needs, emphasising the importance of flexibility and choice.



Change room types

1

Gender-designated change rooms

Gender-designated change rooms are what many designers have typically thought of as “traditional” change rooms, designated for men or women.

2

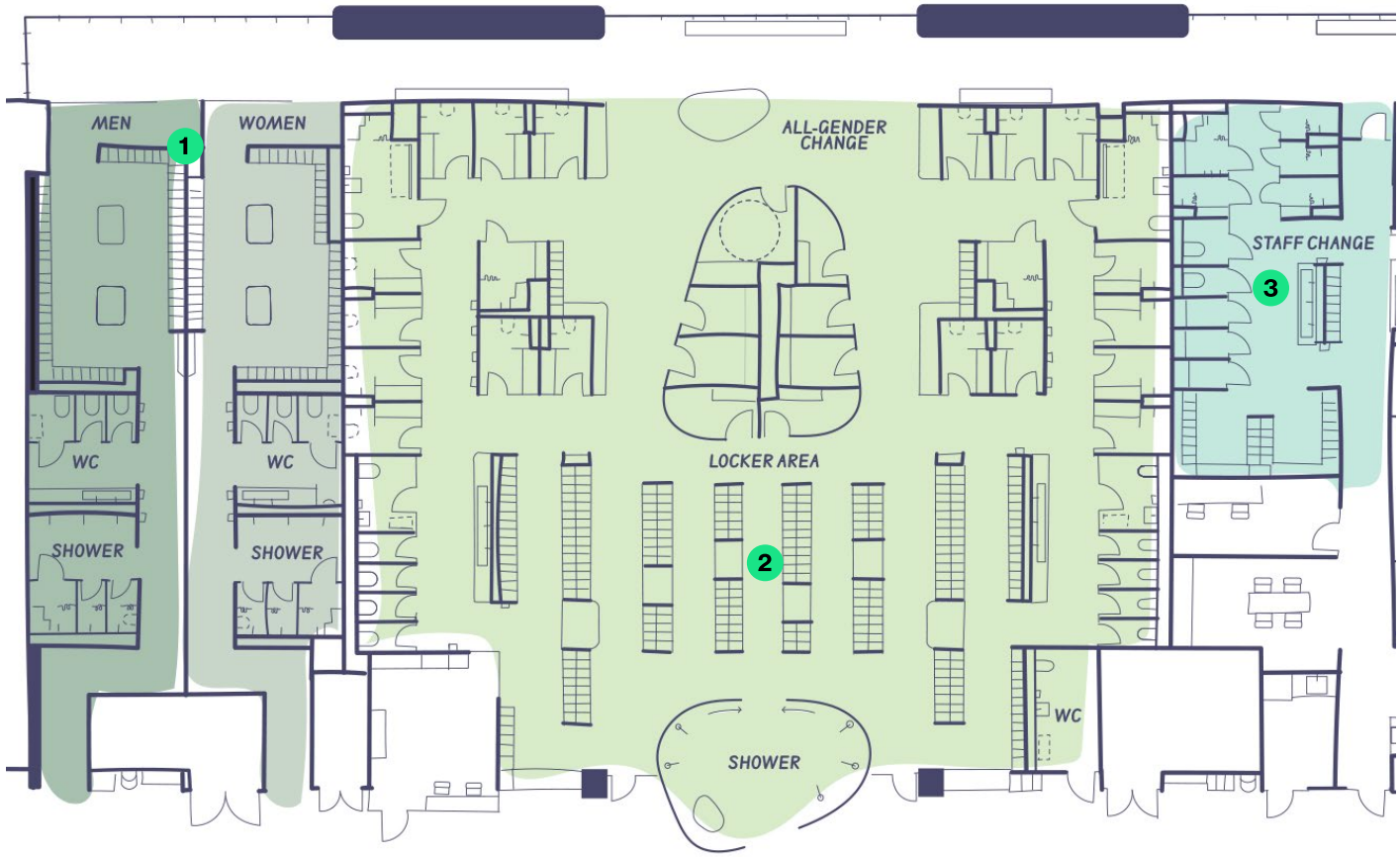
All-gender change rooms

All-gender change rooms are shared spaces, designed for use by all facility visitors. They offer a more inclusive option for transgender and non-binary individuals, as well as for families, groups, parents with children, and people with caregivers of a different gender.

3

Staff change rooms

Staff change rooms are designed to be inclusive for all genders and include accessible facilities.



KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Provide accessible facilities within all change room types.

Providing choice is the most inclusive approach. Offering an all-gender change room alongside gender-designated change rooms provides an option for everyone.

All-gender change rooms

All-gender change rooms offer the highest level of access and inclusion.

While many of the strategies described in this section relate primarily to all-gender change room spaces, some can also be applied to gender-designated change rooms. In all cases, gender-designated change rooms should be designed to be as inclusive as possible.

Key considerations

All-gender washrooms feature toilet, shower, and change stalls with enhanced privacy, alongside a central open area where clothing or swimsuits must be worn at all times, with lockers, benches, and sinks.

Inappropriate use of phones with cameras is an increasing concern in change facilities—particularly in all-gender change rooms. Full-height privacy walls and doors must be balanced with mechanical, operational, and regulatory requirements, and should be considered carefully during design. In some contexts, a small gap at the bottom of stall doors may be preferred for staff monitoring, but eliminating gaps between stalls and at the tops of doors and partitions is essential for privacy and safety.

"I'm not able to shower or change at the pool if there's no option for an attendant or family member of another gender."



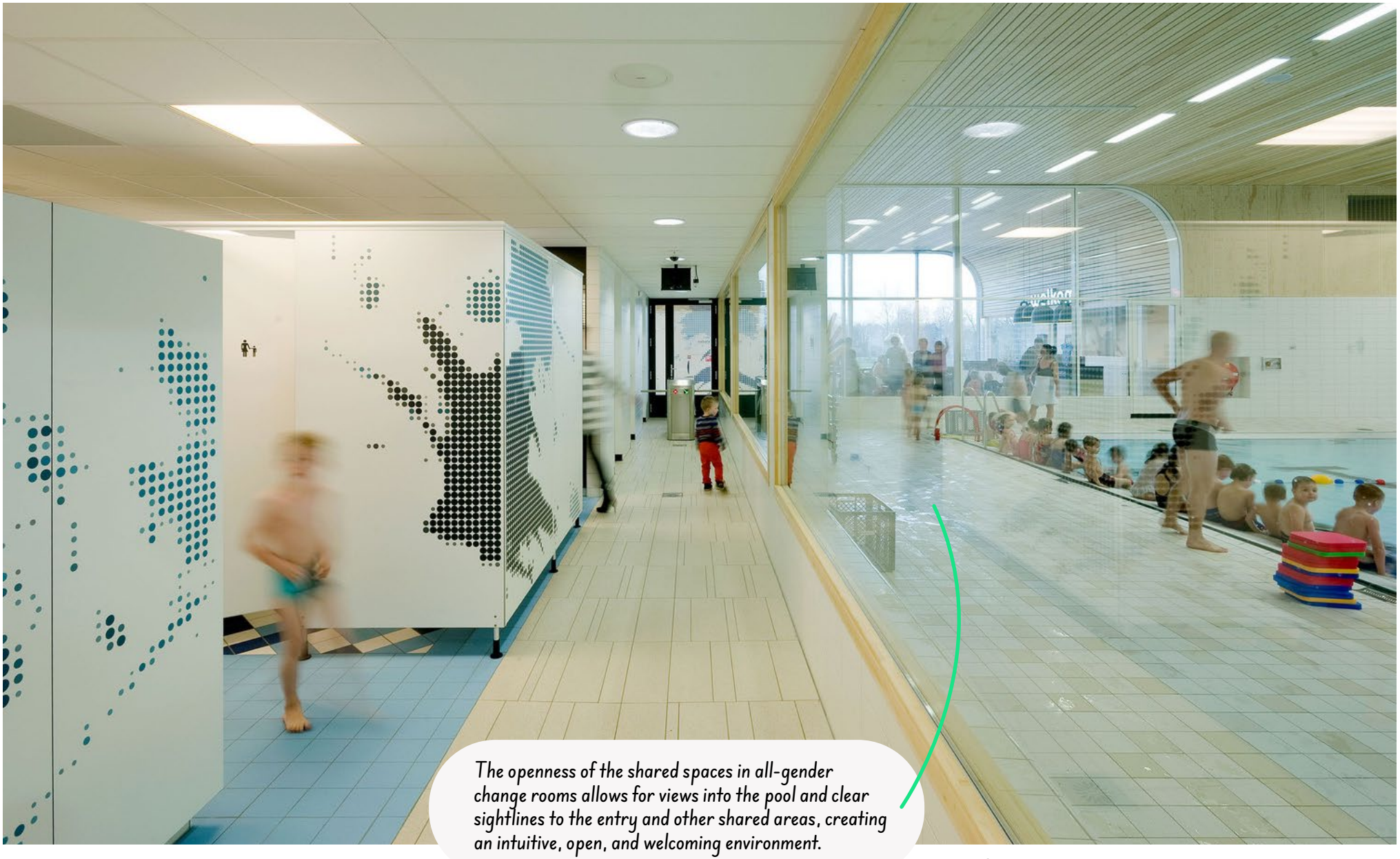
təməsewtxʷ Aquatic and Community Centre, New Westminster, Canada

Gradients of privacy, including openness and sightlines through lockers in the shared areas, allow for ease of navigation and comfort.



Grandview Heights Aquatic Centre, Surrey, Canada

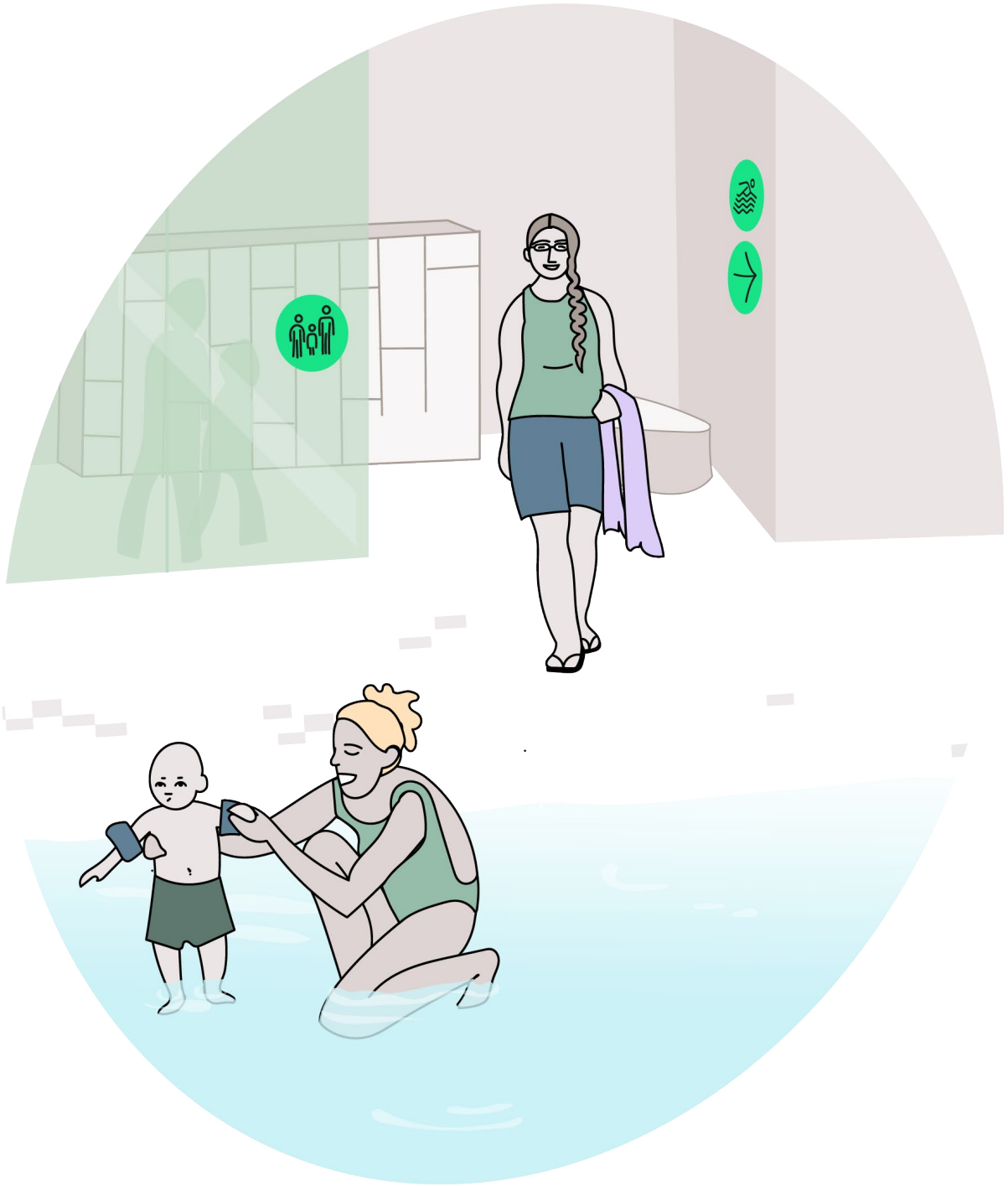
Effective flow—with generous circulation space and multiple entries/exits—provides a sense of safety.



The openness of the shared spaces in all-gender change rooms allows for views into the pool and clear sightlines to the entry and other shared areas, creating an intuitive, open, and welcoming environment.

Swimming Pool De Heuvelrand, Voorthuizen, the Netherlands

"When there are so many options for places to change, it feels more dignified."

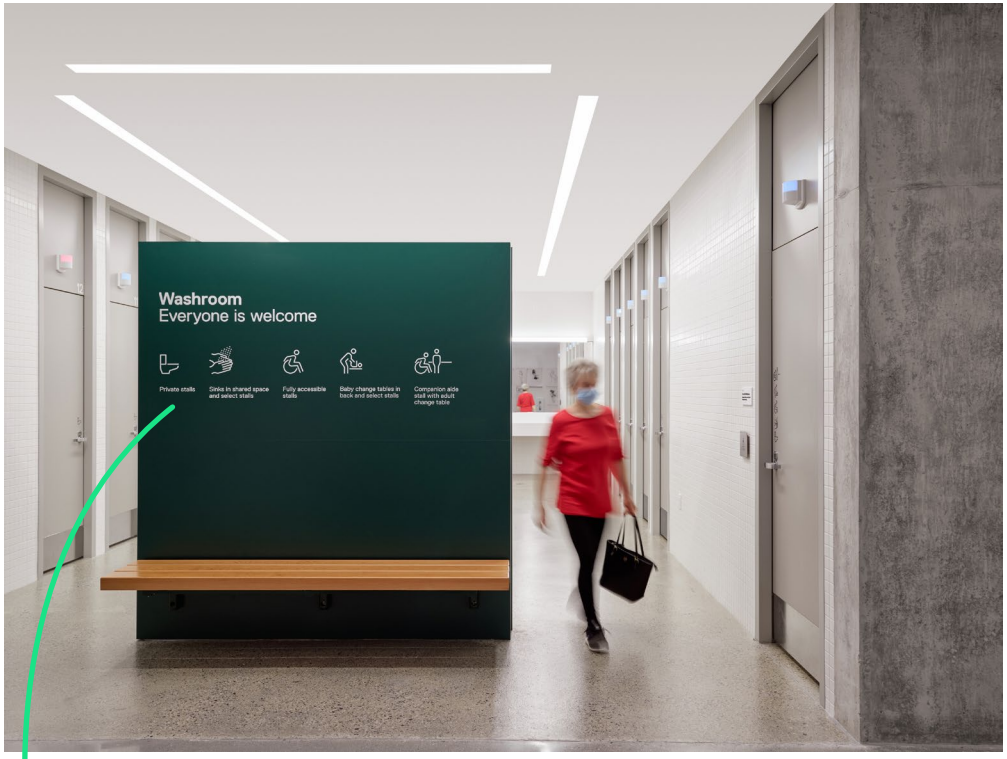


Signage and wayfinding

Clear, accessible, and inclusive signage creates a welcoming environment for everyone, while intuitive wayfinding ensures a smoother experience in the change room.

"I feel much more confident in the change room when it's clear where to go."

Provide directional signage and wayfinding cues within the change room, such as colour. If there are different types of change rooms available, provide directional signage to help people understand where to go.



Clayton Community Centre, Surrey, Canada





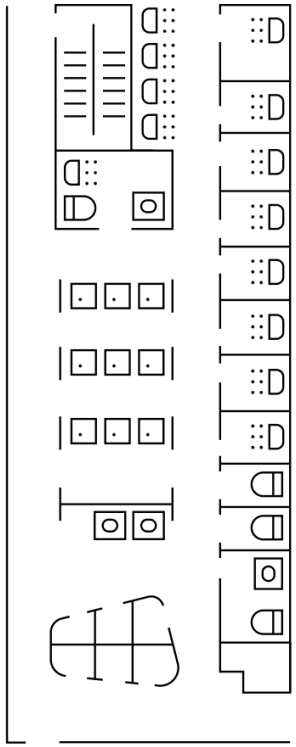
təməsewtxʷ Aquatic and Community Centre, New Westminster, Canada

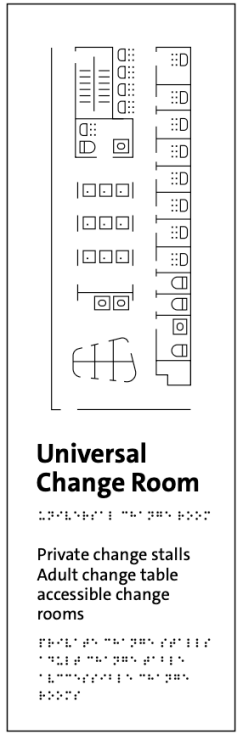
Provide welcoming and inclusive signage that focuses on function, rather than gender identity.

Make signage accessible to as many people as possible. Use high-contrast, tactile characters, icons and Braille, and consider the use of additional languages where appropriate.

Consider providing a tactile plan of the change room at the entrance to help people who are blind or have low vision understand its layout.







Burke Mountain Community Centre, Coquitlam, Canada

Provide handrails along travel paths for wayfinding and stability for those who need it.

Provide tactile indicators that lead from the social space to the change room and out to the pool deck.

Types of spaces within change rooms



1 Fully-accessible private change stalls

Include a shower, toilet, and sink. An adult change table and lift are recommended.

2 Accessible wet change stalls*

Include handheld shower fixtures, shower seat, change bench, and grab bars.

3 Accessible dry change stalls*

Include a change bench and grab bars.

4 Accessible washroom stalls*

Include a toilet and grab bars. Where possible, include a sink in the stall.

Child change tables

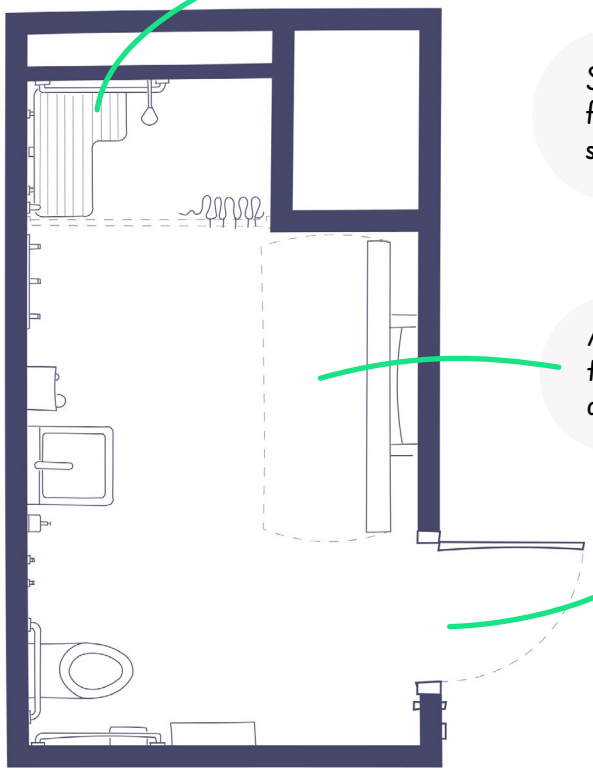
Child change tables and secure seating to support adults with small children in the change areas are an important aspect of inclusivity. Consider providing these amenities in open shared spaces, as well as within dry, wet, and washroom stalls.

***As best practice, add grab bars and accessibility features in as many stalls as possible, regardless of whether local accessibility code requires them.**

Fully-accessible stalls

Providing change stalls with a shower, toilet, and sink reduces navigation and transfers, creating a single room that accommodates all needs in one place. This can be especially helpful for people with disabilities, including those who use mobility devices, are blind, or have low vision.

"I really like to have a toilet in the change room, because I have to do a lot of transferring between my wheelchair. It's nice to have a place where I can also go to the washroom before swimming"



Shower with fold-down bench seat and grab bars.

Showers should have handheld fixtures within reach of the shower seat, and grab bars.

Adjustable adult-sized change table with a hoist and track system, and clear instructions for use.

Automatic door openers.

Stalls should meet or exceed accessibility codes, including clear turning and transfer space, grab bars, and knee clearance under sinks.

Consider sensory-friendly change rooms with no automatic fixtures. Quiet dryers can reduce sensory overload.



təməsewtxʷ Aquatic and Community Centre, New Westminster, Canada

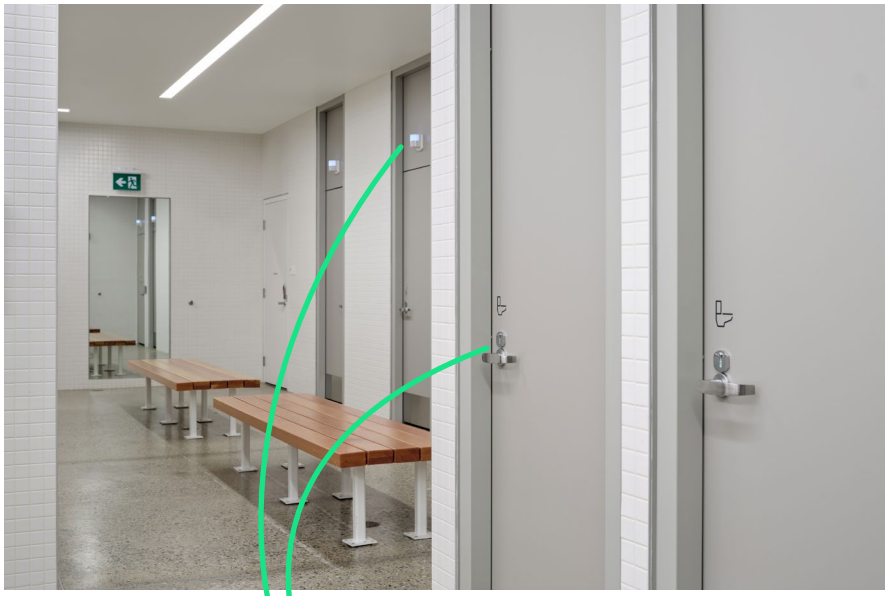
Stall design strategies

All stalls should be designed with accessibility and inclusivity in mind.

In all-gender washrooms, in particular, privacy within stalls should be enhanced with full-height doors and enclosures.

- Design stalls that are large enough to accommodate more than one person, for families and those receiving assistance from caregivers.
- Provide child change tables throughout stall types.
- Include menstrual product dispensers and disposal units in women's, men's, and all-gender change rooms.
- Select stall doors that are lightweight, have easy-to-use levers, or D-pulls.
- Install occupancy indicator locks or lights for stalls to make it easier to know which are available or currently in use.

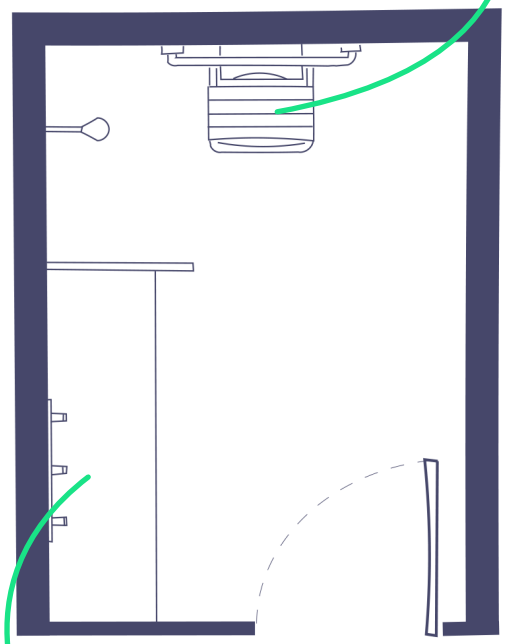
"Grab bars and a bench in the shower make a huge difference for me. With that support, I can use the regular stall safely and don't need to take up the wheelchair-accessible one."



Clayton Community Centre, Surrey, Canada

Stall occupancy indicated at door handles and through lights visible over doors increase comfort and privacy.

Grab bars and folding shower seats in standard-sized stalls can create flexibility for those who could benefit from additional supports but do not require a wheelchair-accessible stall.



Provide benches in all wet and dry change stalls, plus shelves and hooks at heights everyone can reach.

Locker areas

Provide a variety of locker choices. Varied heights can accommodate a range of users. Raised lockers with knee clearance beneath can be provided as an option for people using wheeled mobility devices.

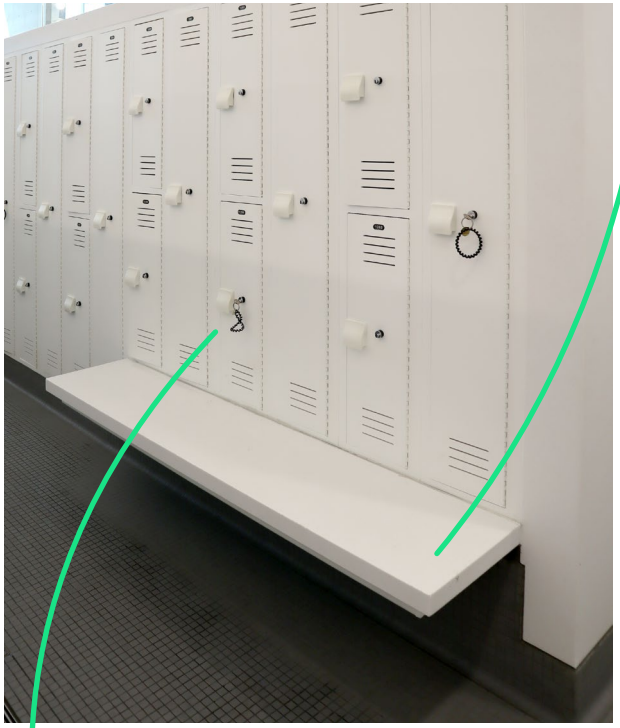
"Since I can't see, it's difficult to distinguish which locker is mine when there are so many. Having a small section of lockers with tactile indicators near the accessible change stall would help me locate my locker independently."

Lockers with benches in front may be preferred for a surface to place belongings.





Minoru Centre for Active Living
Richmond, Canada



təməsewtxʷ Aquatic and Community Centre,
New Westminster, Canada

For people who are blind or have low vision, finding their lockers within the change room can be challenging. Provide high contrast lockers with tactile signage in a dedicated, accessible area of the change room.

Integrating benches ensures pathways are kept clear and barrier-free. Provide seating at regular intervals for rest throughout.

Locker mechanisms should be easy to use without requiring tight grasping or twisting motions, as they can be challenging for people with limited hand strength or mobility.

Fixtures and accessories that are automatic—or easy to operate with one hand—are better for everyone. Sink faucets and soap dispensers that require twisting are especially difficult to use with reduced hand dexterity.

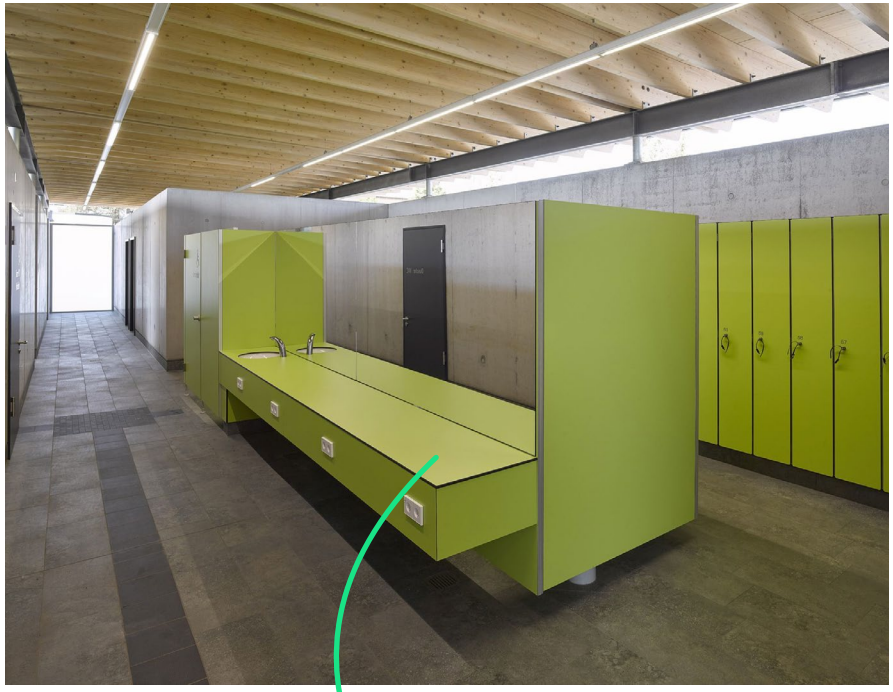


Emerald Hills Leisure Centre, Sherwood Park, Canada

Design for range, with varied dryer and sink heights. Stools for sinks can help make the change room more family-friendly.

Sinks and grooming counters should be accessible with knee clearance, lowered mirrors, outlets, and dryers. Choose quiet dryers to support sensory sensitivities and create a more comfortable environment.

"When there are options for dryer heights, I can easily move my chair under the warm air. Anything that helps me get ready after swimming makes a big difference."



Freibad Panorama-Bad, Freudenstadt, Germany

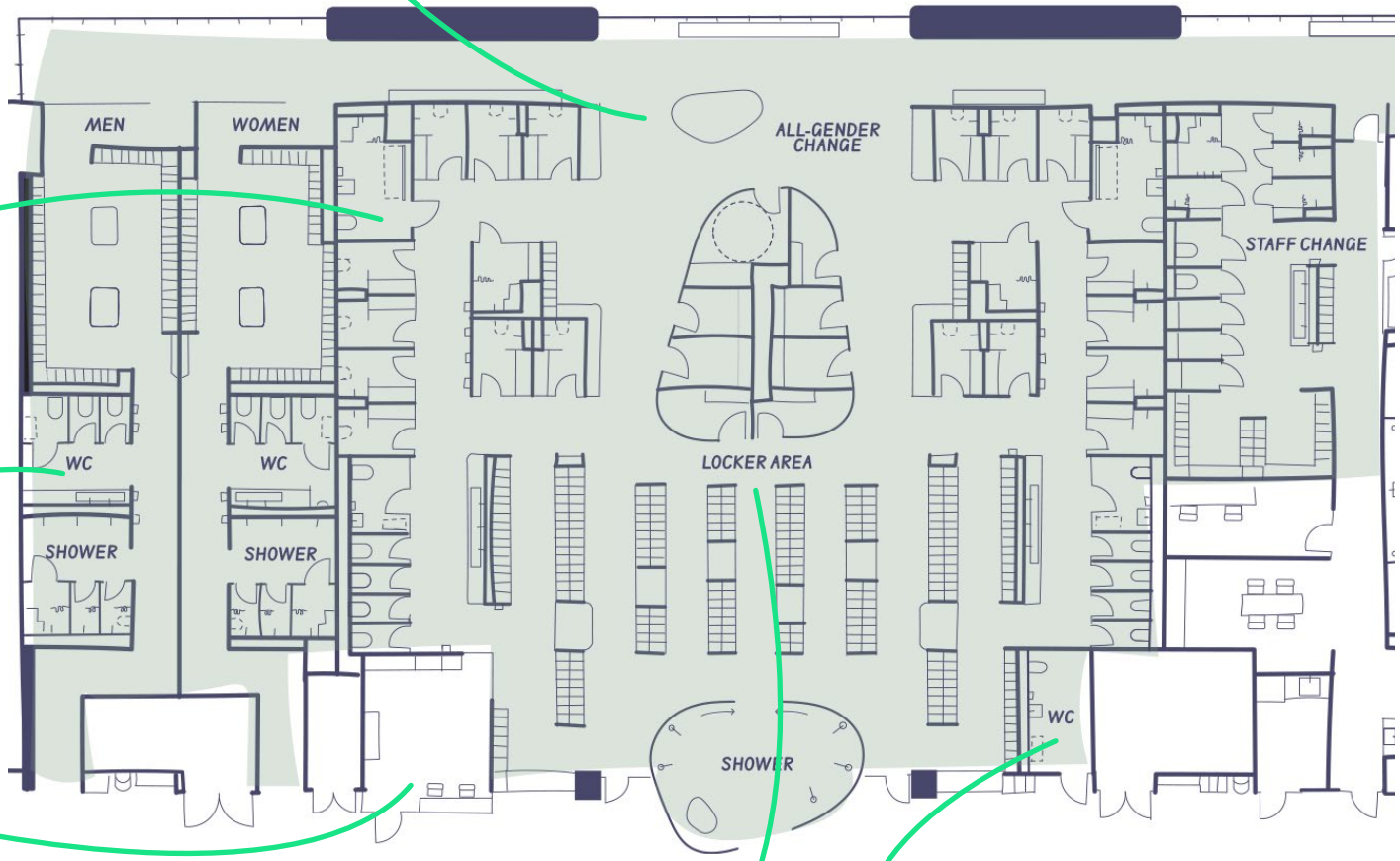
Semi-private areas (e.g., grooming, child change tables) can be created through partial walls and dividers.

Space planning

Effective space planning is vital to creating change spaces that are functional, welcoming, and comfortable for everyone.

Provide large entrance areas to accommodate groups of people and allow for ease of movement for those using mobility devices.

"It is easier for me if the sinks are lined up with the washroom stall. That way, I can walk straightforward from the stall, knowing I'll find a sink and not have to feel around for one."



Place accessible stalls in obvious and easy-to-access locations, with clear signage to indicate their intended use.

Align toilet stalls directly across from sinks. Simple, predictable layouts make navigation easy, especially for people who are blind.

Sightlines from the lifeguard station to the universal change room can enhance safety through passive monitoring.

Where possible, line up lockers with change cubicles for intuitive wayfinding and to make it easier to transfer belongings between spaces.

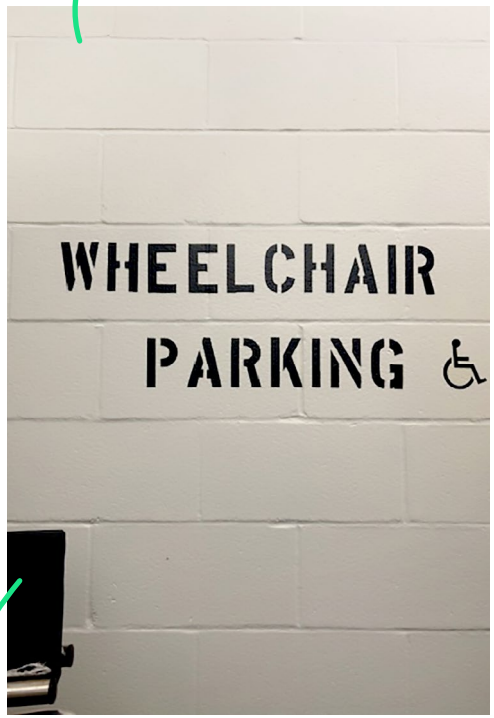
An accessible washroom near the pool deck reduces the need to go back through the change room.

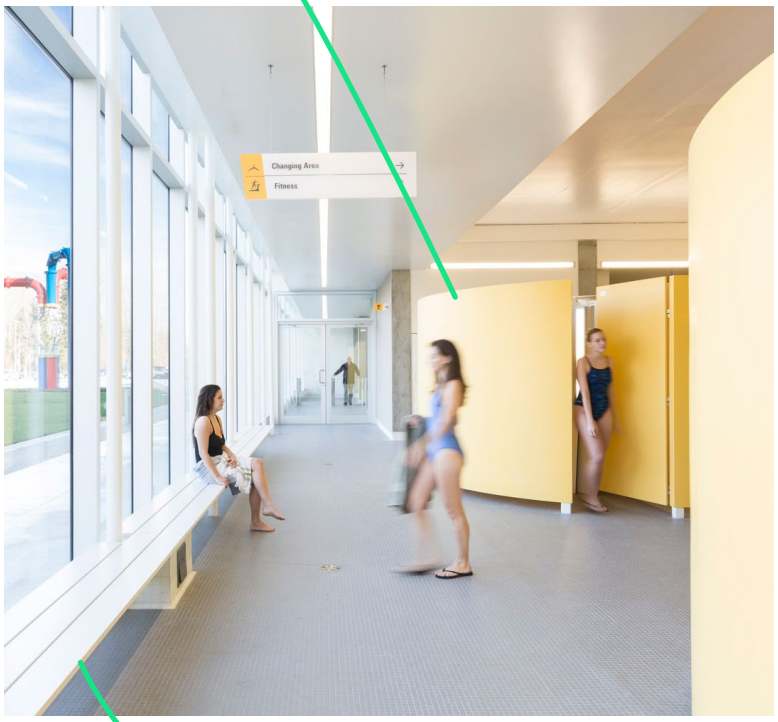
Identify a dedicated area for personal mobility devices. Often, swimmers will transfer from their personal device to an aquatic wheelchair provided by the facility.

Use colour to distinguish stall types and help with intuitive wayfinding.

Make change rooms work better for caregivers and children by including child change tables, toddler seats with hooks nearby, and stools at sinks.

"When the change room isn't designed for parents, it makes taking my children to the pool a much bigger task than it needs to be."





Grandview Heights Aquatic Centre, Surrey, Canada



Delbrook Community Recreation Centre, North Vancouver, Canada

Provide storage space for aquatic wheelchairs and personal mobility devices, so people can access this resource and have space to securely store their device.

Locate benches near change room entrances to give people a place to rest and wait.

Change room materials and environment

Materials, lighting, tactile features, and clear pathways all work together to create change rooms that feel welcoming, comfortable, and easy to navigate.

"Entering a change space with many different options can feel overwhelming for me. Clear pathways and easy-to-follow cues turn a confusing entry into one I can navigate confidently."

Ensure appropriate levels of even light that minimise glare and shadow.

Create notable contrast between walls, doors, floors, and fixtures and use materials that reduce glare.

Tactile elements on the floor leading from entries/exits through the change room support navigation.

Drainage should be designed to prevent wet floors, which can be challenging for neurodivergent people.



Provide handrails along the path to assist with navigation and stability.

təməsewtxʷ Aquatic and Community Centre, New Westminster, Canada

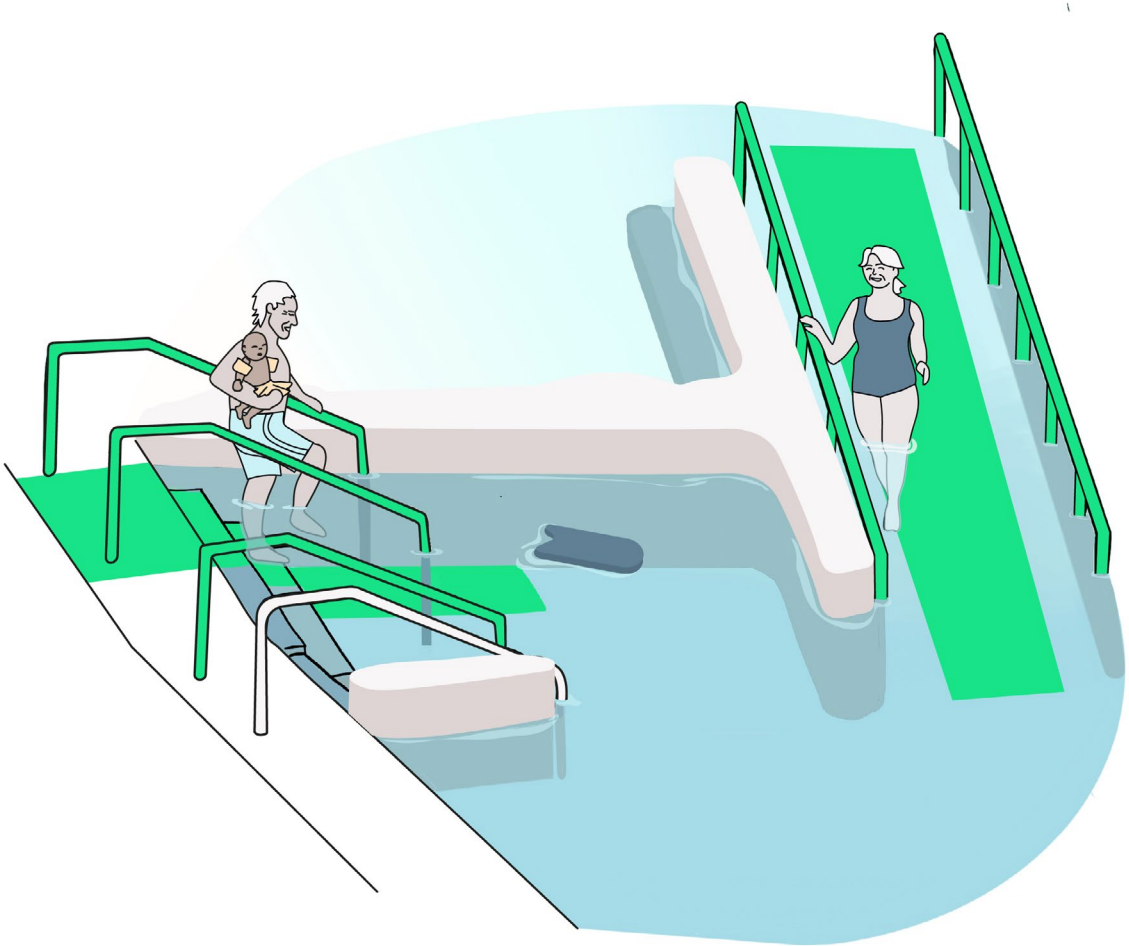
Going for a swim

YOU CAN'T SWIM IN THE POOL IF YOU CAN'T GET IN. BEACH ACCESS, RAMPS, LIFTS, AND STAIRS PROVIDE CHOICE FOR A WIDE RANGE OF PEOPLE—FROM YOUNG TO OLD, AND OF ALL ABILITIES.

At the pool's edge, anticipation mixes with hesitation. Families, older adults, expectant parents, little ones, and people with disabilities all move at different speeds. Without barrier-free ramps, steady handrails, or places to sit and regroup, the simple acts of getting in and out of the water can feel daunting.

An inclusive aquatic facility provides choice and flexibility for a range of activities, as well as diverse ages, needs, abilities, cultural backgrounds, and preferences. Varying swimming pool types and layouts can help support sport and fitness, rehabilitation and wellness, play and social connection.

This next section explores how – through leisure pools, varied water depths, accessible design features, and inclusive programming – thoughtful aquatic design supports safe entry, confident navigation, and joyful participation for all.



Pool types and layouts

1

Leisure pool

Leisure pools offer opportunities for relaxation, recreation, and social interaction – something for everyone.

2

Lap pool

Lap pools typically support fitness activities and competitive sport, but thoughtful design and operating – through moveable bulkheads or inclusive programming – can improve flexibility of use and make them less intimidating for leisure swimmers.

3

Hot pools

Hot pools support relaxation, recovery, and social connection, with jets aiding in pain relief, rehabilitation, and wellbeing.

4

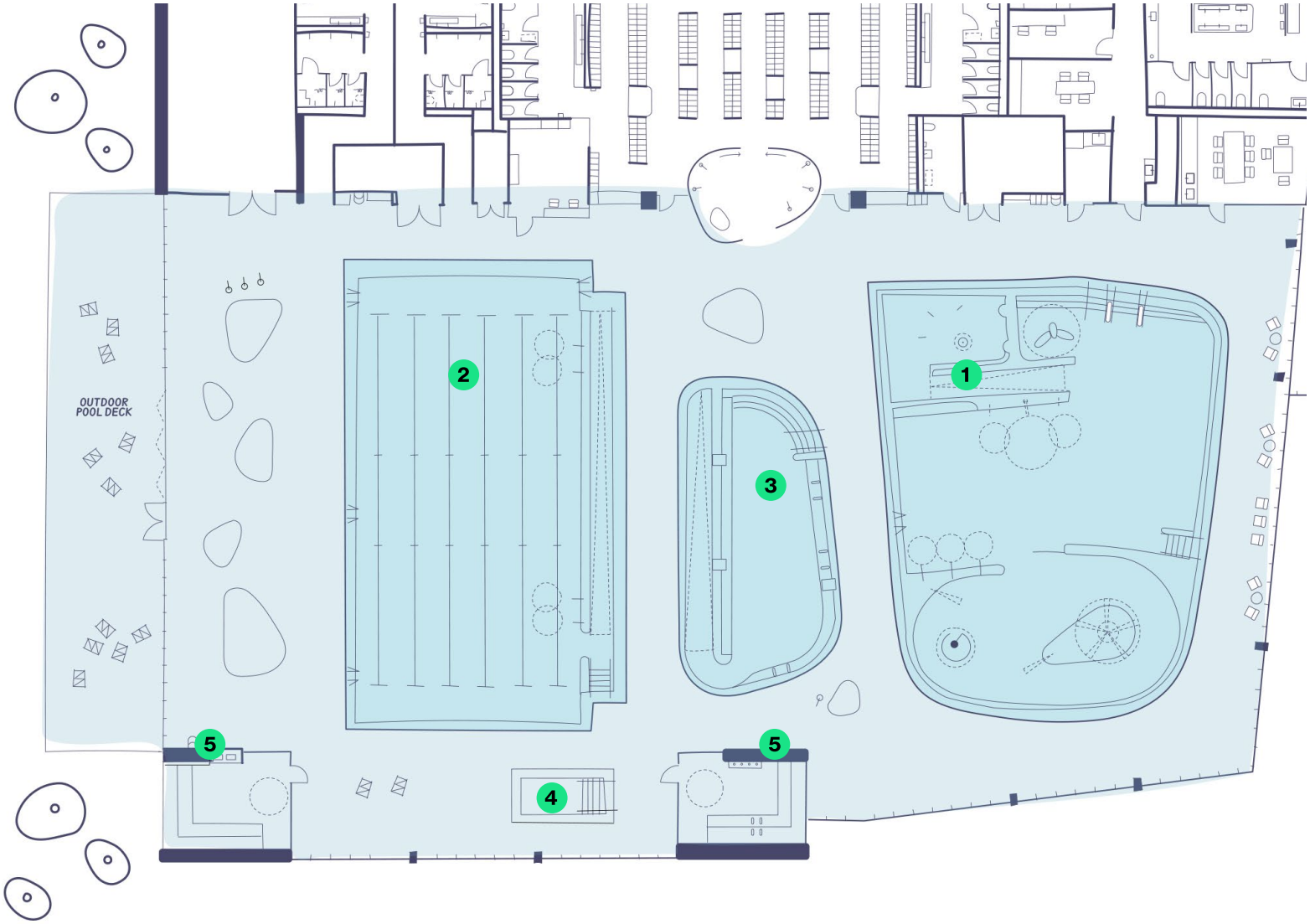
Cold pools

Cold plunge pools promote recovery, and improve health and wellness.

5

Sauna and steam

Saunas and steam rooms support diverse physical, sensory, and social needs, offering accessible, relaxing, and culturally-meaningful wellness spaces. Situate them in a calm, relaxing part of the pool area, away from louder zones.

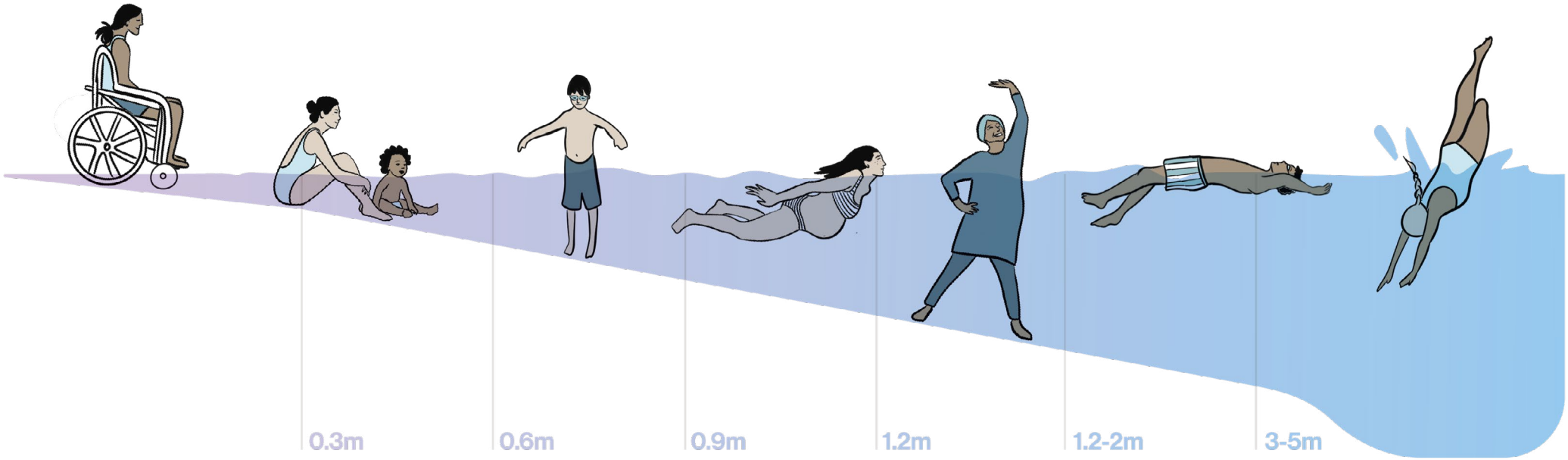


Water depths and activities

Access to different water depths and temperatures is essential for an inclusive aquatic environment. Together, these elements ensure everyone has the opportunity to engage on their own terms.

Shallow zones are not just for children – they should be designed to support a wide range of users. Beach entries improve accessibility, safety and comfort for children, people with limited mobility and non-swimmers, providing warm and shallow water for relaxation, socialising, and learning to swim. The warmer water benefits those managing pain or rehabilitation, and those who need help with temperature regulation.

"Having graduated pool depths is important for people with disabilities to be able to do pool therapy at the height that works for them."



Sitting
Social water area to be enjoyed by everyone – to sit, lie down, and play. Typical features include gentle bubbles and sprays.

Playing
Ideal water depth for teaching and for non-swimmers, with the comfort of feeling your feet on the ground.

Bobbing
Water depth for more confident swimmers, offering experiences of buoyancy, playful pushing off the bottom, and floating.

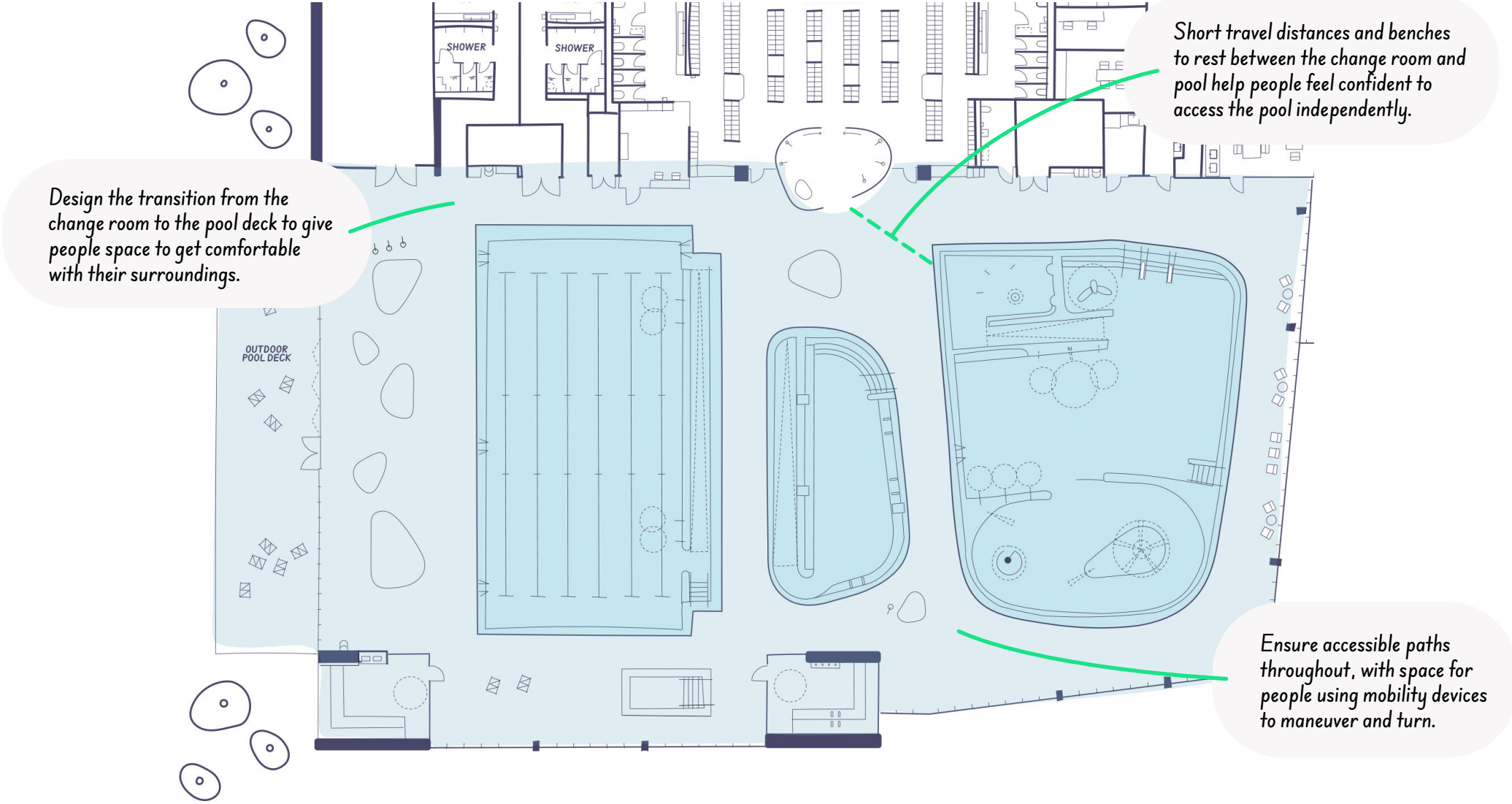
Standing
Typically in mid-torso water depth, ideal for low-impact exercise and walking. Improves blood flow, balance, and stability.

Swimming
Confident swimmers can do flip turns and dive from starting blocks, while deeper water also supports aerobics, therapy, and sports like water polo.

Diving
Water deeper than 3-metres allows for springboards, diving platforms, and slides. Paired with the right accessible features, they can bring fun and joy to everyone.

Space planning

Space planning should be carefully considered through the lens of accessibility and inclusion. A well-planned swimming area accommodates a range of needs, supports safety and independence, and fosters a welcoming, intuitive environment. It can also encourage exploration, build confidence, and promote a sense of belonging.

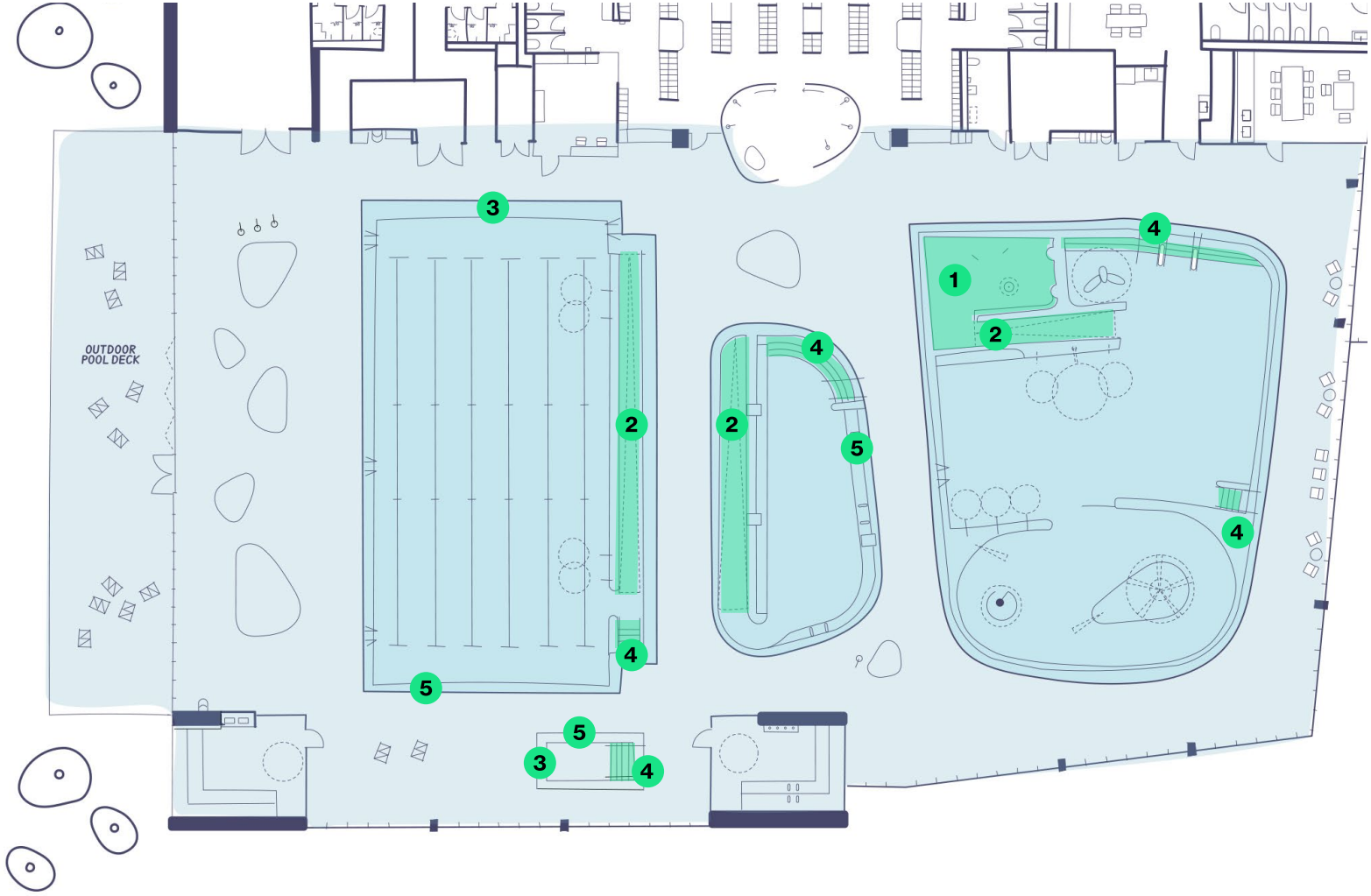


Getting in and out of the swimming pool

Everyone should be able to access the swimming pool in a way that works for them. Pools with only ladders or stairs create barriers that can prevent people from participating at all. While pool lifts offer access, they often fall short in supporting dignity and independence. Multiple entry options – like ramps, stairs, and lifts – make swimming more inclusive. In most cases, a combination of ramps, or beach access and stairs, works best.

"I like that there are several ways to get into the pool – ramp, beach access, and stairs."

1. **Beach access**
2. **Ramps**
3. **Pool lifts**
4. **Stairs**
5. **Transfer Ledges**



Ramps

Ramps typically provide the most inclusive method for entering a pool and can provide access to all types of pool tanks. Compared to lifts, ramps accommodate a higher number for swimmers entering the pool at once, which is particularly beneficial for specialized programs with increased demand.

Although less common, ramps should also be incorporated into lap pools. While their inclusion may require a wider pool or fewer lanes, they are important accessibility features that promote equitable and independent use.

"Ramps with handrails can be the difference between being excluded and being able to participate."



Grandview Heights Aquatic Centre, Surrey, Canada



Killarney Community Pool, Vancouver, Canada

Ramps and beach access

Consider the trade-offs when designing ramps. For many people, a narrow ramp with handrails on either side provides the most effective support. For those entering the pool with a companion or caregiver, a wider ramp may be more useful. Wider ramps in warmer water also create social space for sitting and lounging, and offer areas for younger swimmers and their caregivers to sit and play together.

Beach access refers to a gently sloped, beach-like entry that allows for gradual access to the water. It is an inclusive way for people with mobility disabilities, older adults, and children to enter the leisure pool. Beach access provides a comfortable introduction to the water for new swimmers, helping them build confidence, and serving as key play and social zone for people of all ages.

"I love the beach access. I much prefer pools with a more gradual slope."



Vandhalla Egmont Højskolen Rehabilitation Centre, Odder, Denmark



Remington YMCA in Quarry Park Calgary, Canada



Kiwanis Aquatics Centre, St. Catharines, Canada

Many types of ramp configurations are possible for lap, leisure, and hot pools. Extra-wide ramps with intermediate handrails can allow space for entering the pool while others relax in the shallow water.

Wide areas of beach access allow space for families and children to play, and swimmers to relax and connect.

"People with disabilities, seniors, and others like to use a ramp – holding onto a railing and walking in feeling totally secured. Then you don't need help from an assistant or helper – you can do it yourself."



Wascana Outdoor Pool, Regina, Canada

Handrails, ideally on both sides, help with safe and independent access for people with a range of disabilities.

Provide low slope, slip-resistant surfaces, and colour-contrast where the slope starts and ends.

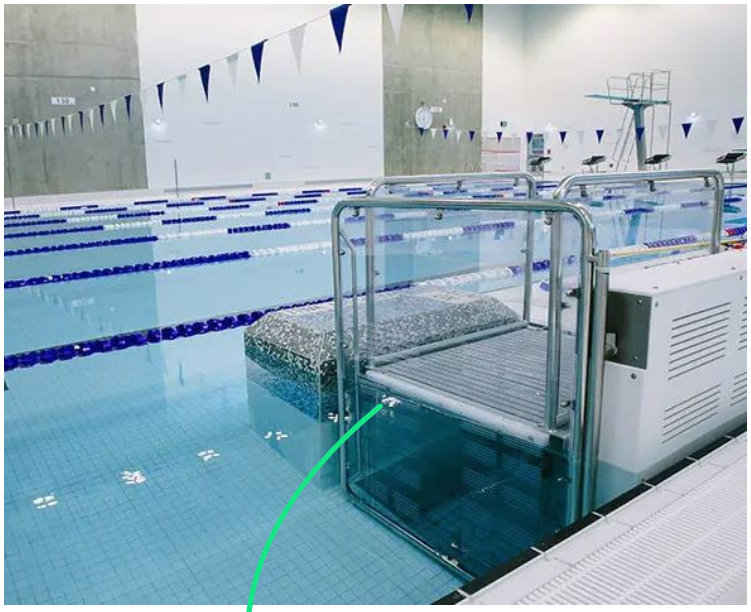
Handrails should extend far enough into the swimming pool that a swimmer is buoyant before letting go – about waist height.

Lifts

While pool lifts expand access, they often fall short in supporting dignity and independence. A few strategies can make them as inclusive as possible. While lifts are sometimes necessary, priority should always be given to the option that offers the most seamless and empowering access.

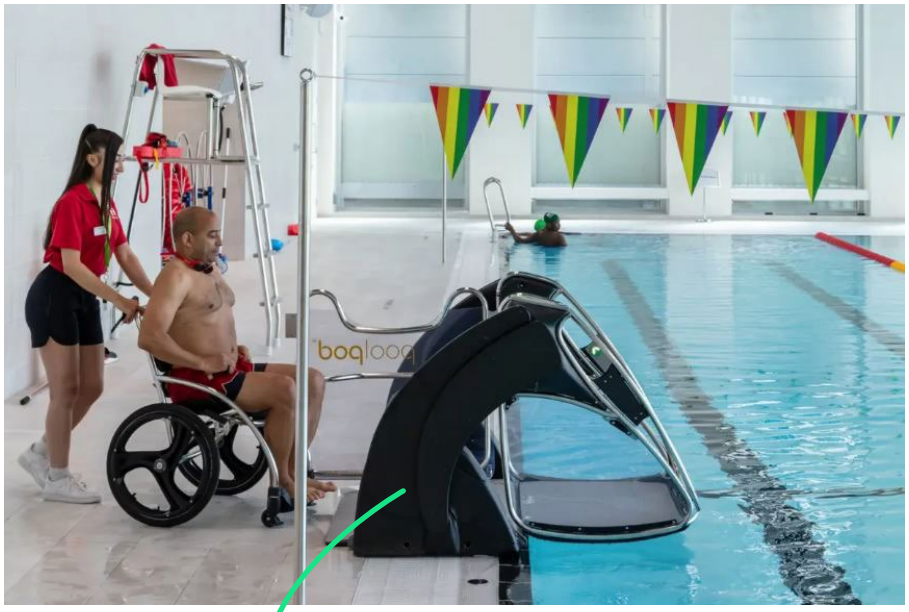
Compared with ramps, lifts reduce how many people can enter the pool accessibly at once and may slow the process. Wherever possible, consider if a ramp can be provided for the pool tank instead of – or in addition to – a pool lift.

"I don't like the chair lifts. I feel like I'm on display for the whole pool and it's frustrating that you need to get help from the lifeguard. It doesn't feel like a dignified access."



Delbrook Community Recreation Centre, North Vancouver, Canada

Platform-style lifts can provide independent access, but potential maintenance challenges should be weighed against the benefits.



Britannia Leisure Centre, London, England

Modern designs offer a more dignified approach than a chair lift, allowing swimmers to remain in an aquatic wheelchair and operate the lift independently or ride with a companion.

"I prefer the stairs, where I feel more stable, but I know that others need a ramp. It's nice to have options."



Stairs

Stairs can be provided as another option for entering the swimming pool; they generally offer a safer, more comfortable alternative to ladders. There are several strategies to enhance their safety and accessibility, as outlined below, benefitting users of all ages and abilities.

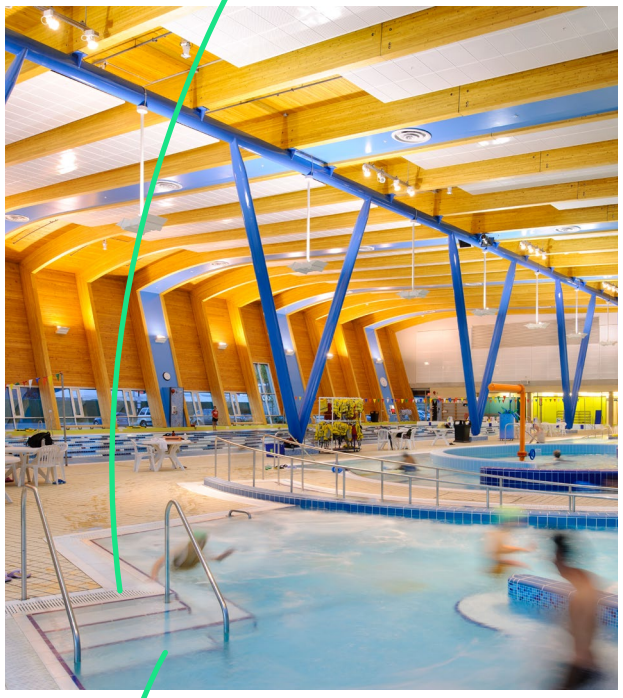
Lap pools often rely on ladders, which suit some users but can exclude others, as they require significant upper body strength. Where ladders are provided, handrails installed at multiple heights provide better leverage for a wider range of ladder users.



Værløse Svømmehal, Værløse, Denmark

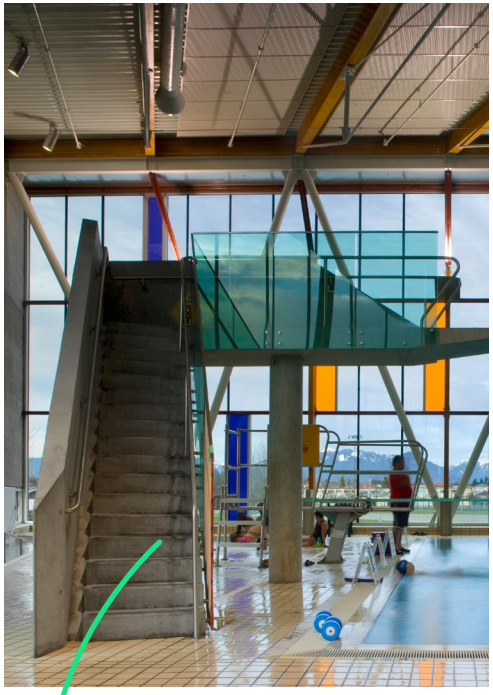
Provide slip-resistant surfaces, handrails, and high-contrast edges to make stairs, ramps, and beach access safer and easier to use.

Design pool stairs with gentle rise and run to improve accessibility and reduce barriers.



Hillcrest Centre, Vancouver, Canada

Stairs near a ramp or beach access give people choice and should be designed so all users arrive at the same place for an equitable experience.



Killarney Leisure Pool, Vancouver, Canada

Stair access to diving boards offers greater safety and comfort than ladders, enabling more people to enjoy the adrenaline experience.

Transfer ledges

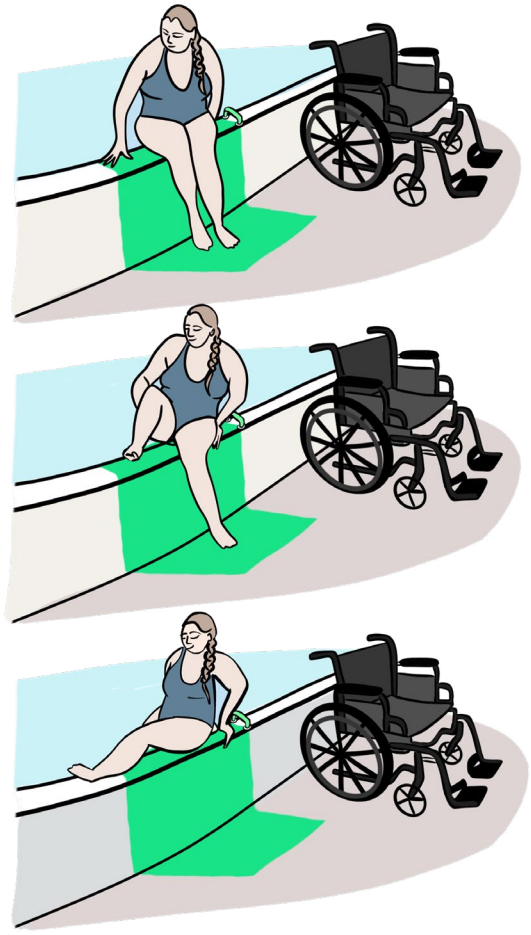
A transfer ledge allows people to transfer – often from a mobility device – onto the pool ledge, and then gradually into the water.

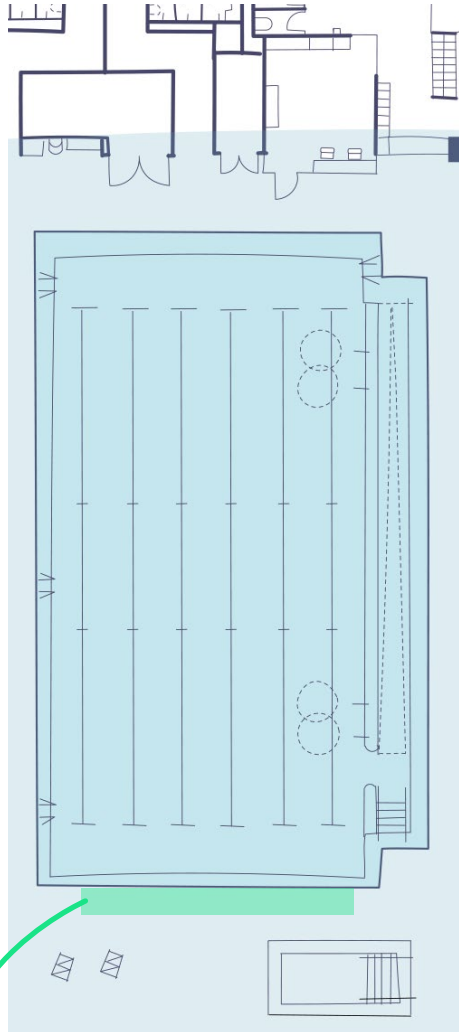
Transfer ledges don't work for everyone as they require upper body mobility and strength. While they provide another option for access, they shouldn't replace a ramp or lift. Typically, transfer ledges work best for hot pools or leisure pools, where the water is shallow and there is seating in the water below the ledge.



Minoru Centre for Active Living, Richmond, Canada

"I find the transfer ledges super convenient. I don't always use them but it's a nice added feature to have."





At the deep end of lap pools, clear deck space for transfer and storage provides another option for getting into the water.



Grandview Heights Aquatic Centre, Surrey, Canada



Grandview Heights Aquatic Centre, Surrey, Canada



təməsewtxʷ Aquatic and Community Centre, New Westminster, Canada

Varying water depths – from zero to 1.2-metres – allow for a range of uses and users, making the warmer water inviting for all ages and abilities.

Seating and ledges in the swimming pool create spaces for pause, relaxation, and social interaction.

Beach access, with handrails into leisure water, provide safe and easy access for young children and adults who need ramp entry.



Northcote Aquatic and Recreation Centre, Melbourne, Australia

Hot and cold pools

Hot pools and cold plunge pools are key areas for relaxation, recovery, and social connection.

Jets and water features can contribute to relaxation and rehabilitation, help relieve pain, and promote general wellbeing.

"Jets and fountains can be great – if they're the right intensity. For people with disabilities and older adults, they could cause injuries if they're too hard."



Grandview Heights Aquatic Centre, Surrey, Canada

Seating with grab rails within the hot pool, at multiple depths helps to accommodate a range of users.

Provide ramps and stairs with guardrails into hot pools.

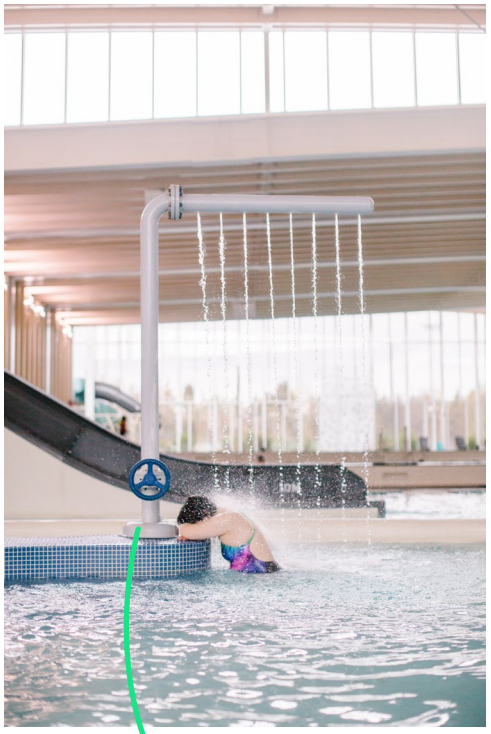


Hillcrest Centre, Vancouver, Canada

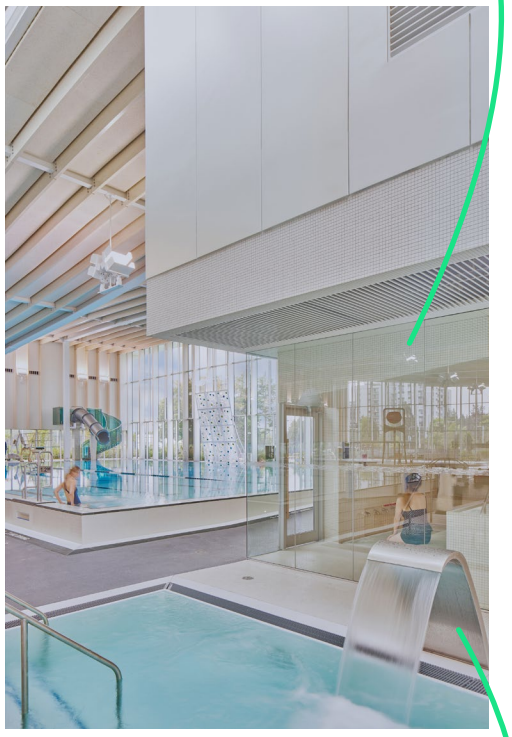
Consider oversizing ramps to hot pools to provide areas for socialisation.

"If the temperature isn't listed for the pool, I don't know if I can use it or not. Sometimes, people with disabilities can only get so hot and it can be overwhelming in terms of energy levels."

Hot pools and cold plunge pools should be located in close proximity to each other and other wellness features like the steam room and sauna.



Minoru Centre for Active Living
Richmond, Canada



Minoru Centre for Active Living
Richmond, Canada

Signage can help people feel safe and confident using the hot and cold pools.

Temperature Guide

Leisure pool	32°C
Hot tub	40°C
Cold plunge	10°C
Lap pool	29°C
Sauna	90°C
Steam	49°C

Provide jets and therapeutic water features with a range of different strengths for relaxation, pain relief, and rehabilitation.

Water features

Water features, lazy rivers, and other playful elements – including climbing walls, informal sports nets, and inflatables – offer a wide range of ways to participate, encouraging joy, movement, and even therapeutic benefits.

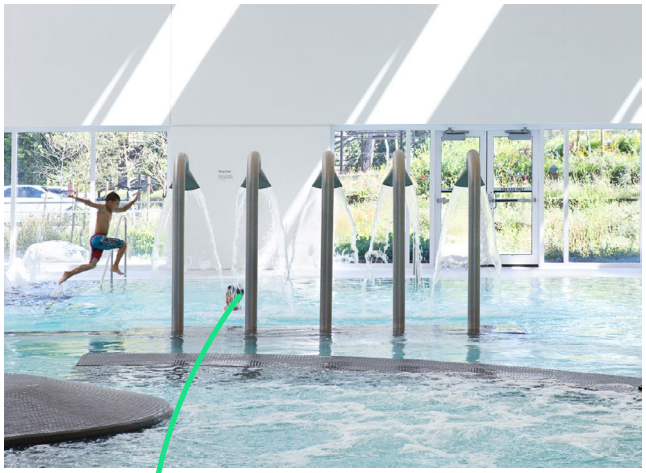
Ensure everyone has the opportunity to engage by including level entries and clear pathways to play areas, as well as a range of ways to engage at different levels.

"Swimming should be fun and accessible for everyone. When some kids are excluded from the water, that sense of not belonging can stay with them."



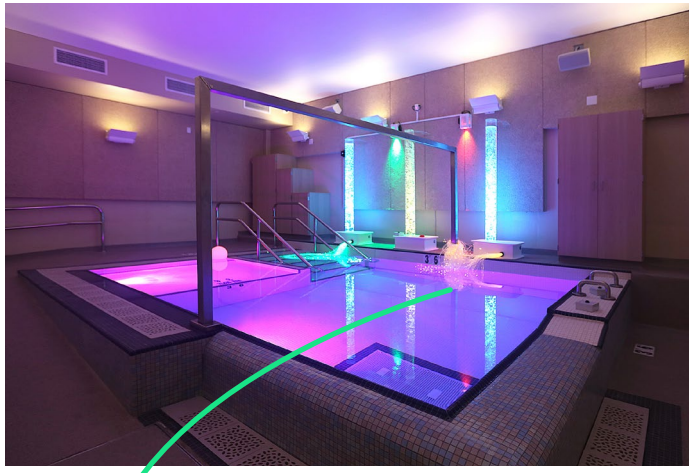
Gunyama Park Aquatic and Recreation Centre, Sydney, Australia

Gentle sprays and interactive play features can engage children during their first water experiences in the beach access zone.



Guildford Recreation Centre, Surrey, Canada

Larger spray features can enhance energetic social spaces, keeping youth active and engaged.



B.E. Smith Family Center, Merriam, USA

Multi-sensory features—like gentle water features, lighting, and tactile elements – support sensory regulation, therapy, and engagement.

Play features

Opportunities for fun should be designed to be inclusive and accessible to everyone. For all swimmers – regardless of age or ability – the opportunity to engage in “risky play” and adrenaline activities can build confidence and independence, offer opportunities for social connection, and support physical development and wellbeing. Flexible water features and play elements that can be easily adapted to individual needs and uses improves access for all.

When water slides can only be reached by stairs, youth and caregivers with disabilities may be excluded from play and shared experiences. Providing an elevator to access slides, along with transfer lifts for getting in and out, removes these barriers and increases inclusion for those who would otherwise be left out.



Vandhalla Egmont Højskolen Rehabilitation Centre, Odder, Denmark

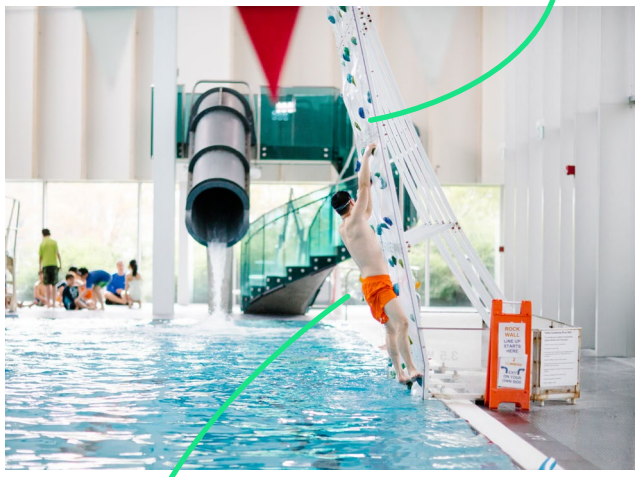
Include elevators to water slides, as well as a lifts at the start and end of the slide.



Hylliebadet, Malmö, Sweden

Shorter and wider slides provide easier access for people with limited mobility, or the ability to experience the slide with a companion.

Choose climbing grips designed to support climbers of varying skill and ability levels.



Minoru Centre for Active Living, Richmond, Canada

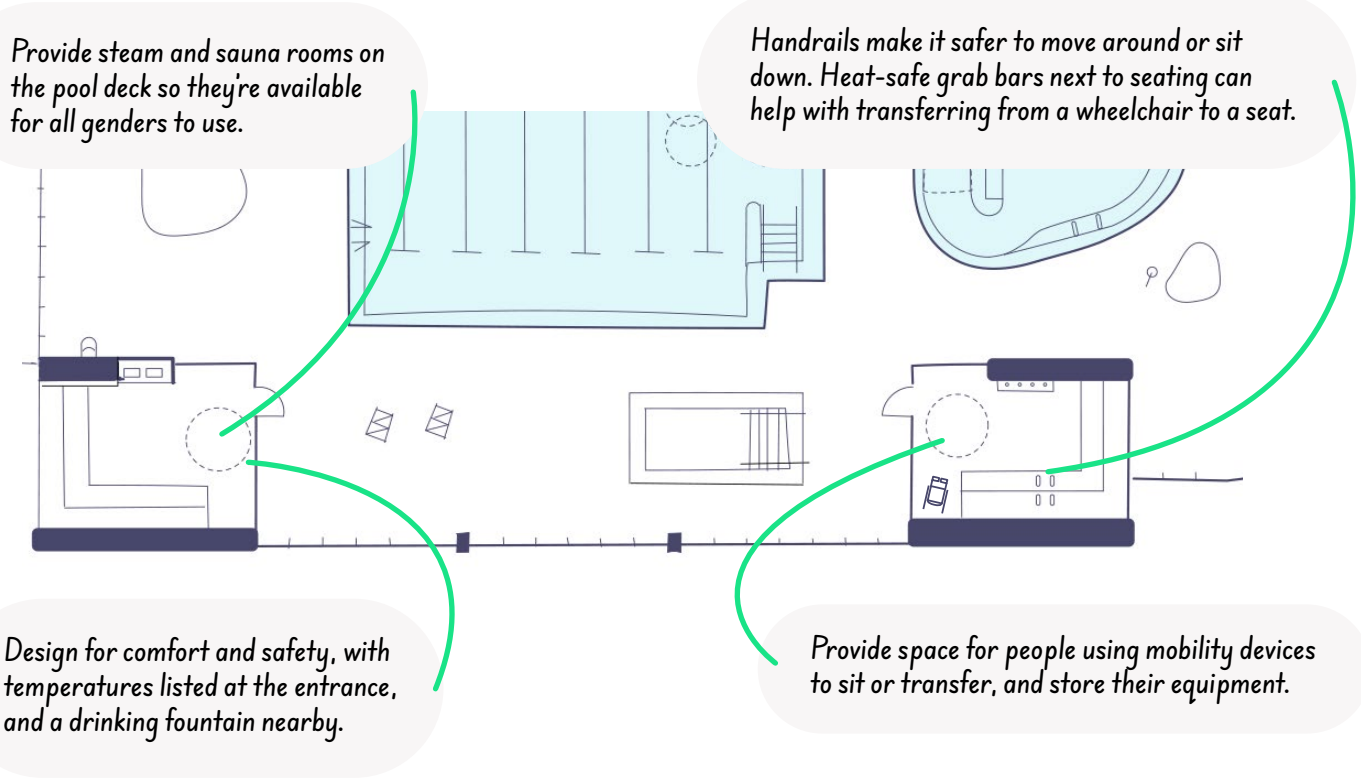
Provide features to engage with youth, including climbing walls and sports nets.

Sauna and steam

When designed and managed inclusively to support varying physical and sensory needs, saunas and steam rooms can play a meaningful role in making facilities more welcoming and accessible to a broader range of users.

Saunas and steam rooms are key for honouring cultural traditions, encouraging relaxation and social connection, and offering non-competitive, accessible spaces for wellness.

"If the sauna is spacious enough, I can sit there beside my personal assistant."



Transfer ledges or foldable seats can provide more accessible options.



Wellsaun Design Project

Using transparent walls in steam rooms – so users can see in and out – can help people feel safer and more comfortable.



Minoru Centre for Active Living, Richmond, Canada

The pool deck

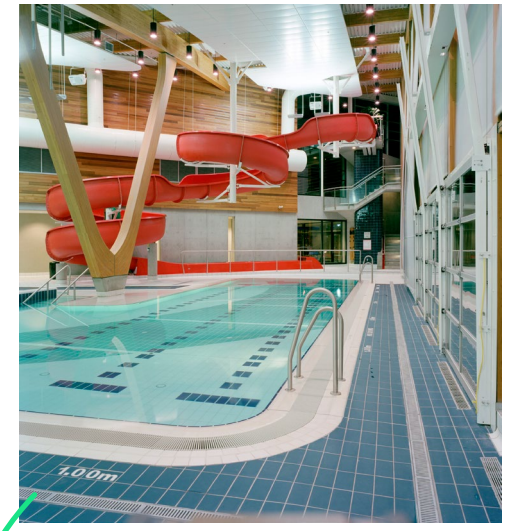
The pool deck serves as a social hub, a meeting place, and a key point for planning and navigating the journey to the swimming pools and amenities. Thoughtful design can ensure it is safe, dynamic, and welcoming for everyone.

> *"When there are a lot of very wide-open spaces, it can be pretty difficult for someone who is blind – especially when there is not any guidance along the ground."*

Navigation and contrast

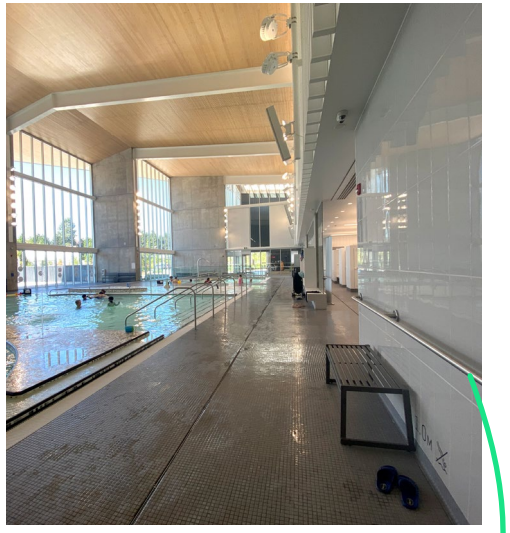
Large, open pool decks provide safe, comfortable access for families, groups, and those using mobility devices, while offering space for social seating and rest. Yet, for people who are blind or have low vision, these open areas can present navigational challenges. Using contrasting colours and materials are critical for safety and wayfinding.

Potential obstacles in the path of travel must be highly contrasted with their surroundings, so they are easier to detect and avoid.



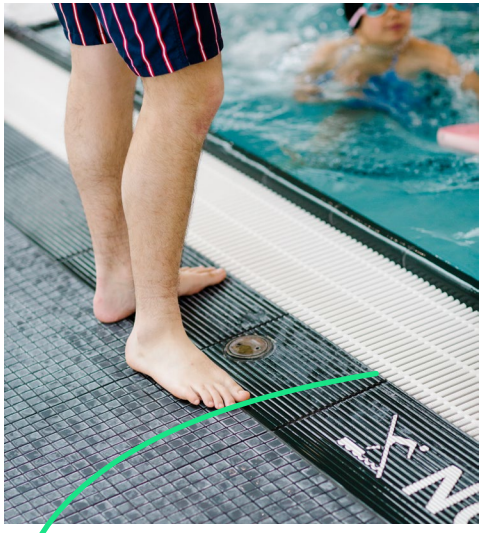
West Vancouver Aquatic Centre, West Vancouver, Canada

Grates and textured tile can act as tactile indicators on the pool deck, leading from the change room to pool entries and other key features.



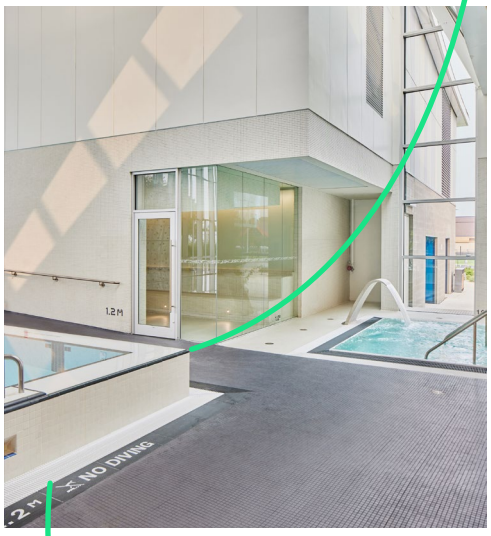
təməsewtxʷ Aquatic and Community Centre, New Westminster, Canada

Where possible, provide handrails along paths to help with navigation and stability for longer routes.



Minoru Centre for Active Living, Richmond, Canada

Design high-contrast edges for swimming pools that signal where the pool deck ends and the water begins.



Minoru Centre for Active Living, Richmond, Canada

Provide colour contrast at walls and floors to help with depth perception and ease of navigation.

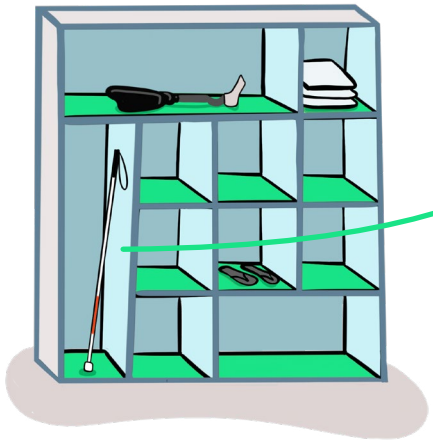
Support amenities and storage

Seating areas play an important role in making the pool deck a welcoming place for leisure, social interaction, and community connection. Many people with disabilities need to pause to rest and prepare before entering the pool, making nearby stable seating essential for accessibility.

Without adequate storage for mobility devices, assistive aids, and personal belongings, safe and independent access can be compromised. Essential items may be left behind because they cannot be accommodated on deck, or they may end up on the deck as obstacles or visual clutter, creating additional safety risks.

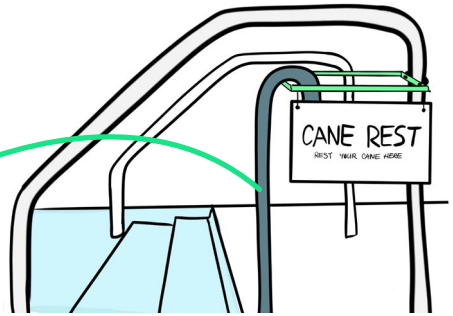
Drinking fountains, quiet or sensory rooms and breastfeeding/chestfeeding spaces further support health, safety, and wellbeing on the pool deck.

"I need stable seating near the pool entrance so I can sit and remove my brace, and somewhere to store it nearby while I swim."



Place lockers and cubbies close to program areas and seating so people can keep belongings like glasses, hearing aids, and braces close by.

Storage for mobility aids at pool entry points allows swimmers to navigate the pool deck and safely store their aids out of the path of travel.



"Having a spot for my cane by all the pools means I can navigate to the pool on my own."

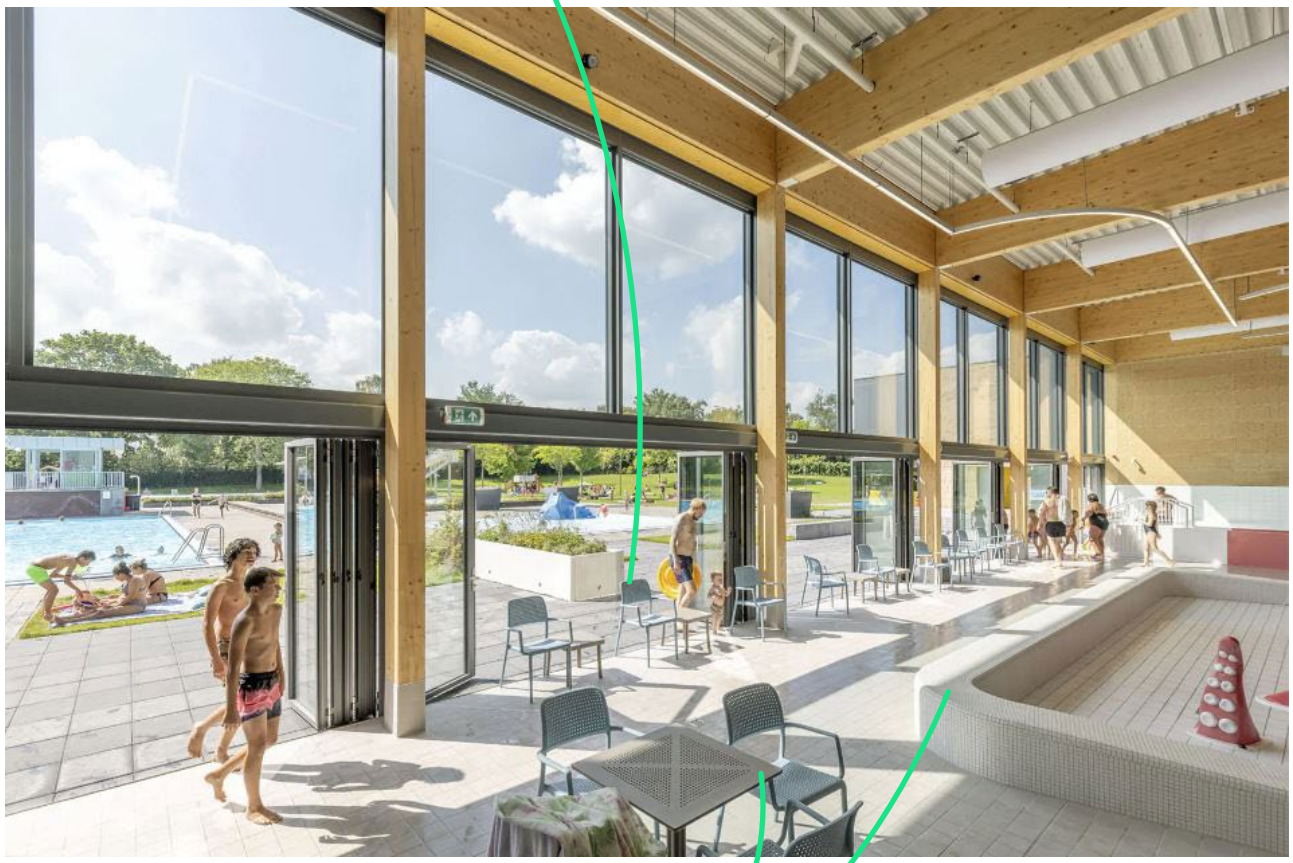


Designated space for wheelchair parking allows people to transfer into the water and keep their device nearby.

Provide firm and stable seating options with armrests on the pool deck for people with limited strength or balance.



Espace Aquatique de Morzine,
Morzine, France



Sports Complex De Sypel,
Harderwijk, the Netherlands

Place frequent seating along the route from the change room to the pool access points, giving swimmers a chance to pause, socialise, or prepare for entry.

A mix of fixed and moveable seating – with and without backrests and armrests – provides options for a wide range of swimmers and caregivers.

Signage and wayfinding

In a busy aquatic facility – full of noise and activity – navigating the environment can be especially intimidating. Clear and intuitive wayfinding improves accessibility and foster inclusion for all users.

Integrated wayfinding strategies, supported by spatial cues and colour contrast, enhance an accessible signage system, which communicates key information through large text, high contrast, and tactile features.

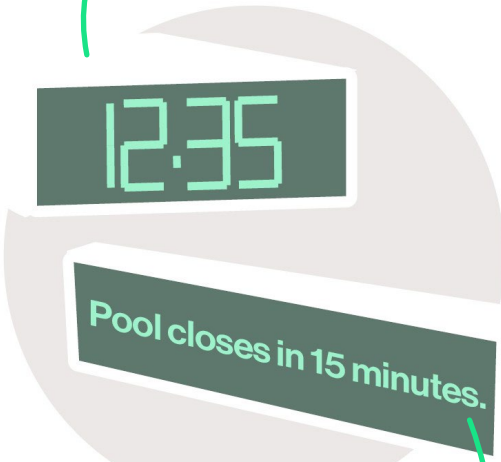
"Since I am deaf and have my hearing aids out when I'm swimming, it's a completely visual experience for me."



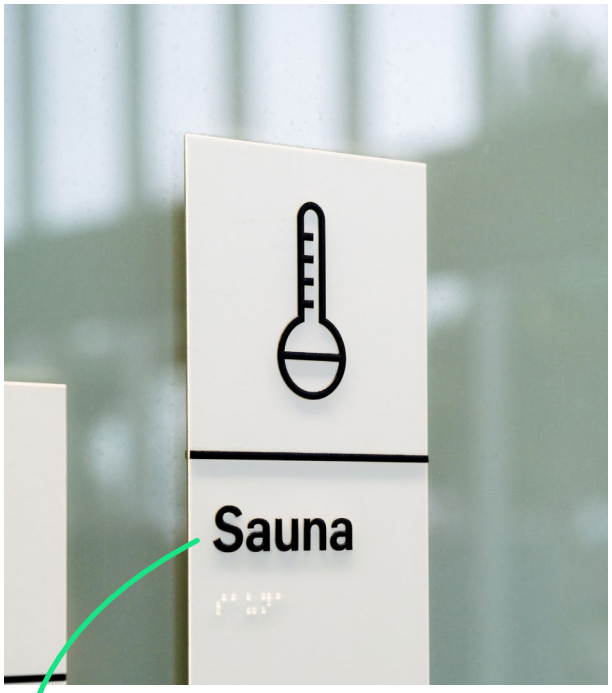
təməsewtxʷ Aquatic and Community Centre, New Westminster, Canada

Provide signs that identify pool temperatures to help people with disabilities and various health conditions decide which pool will meet their needs, before they get in.

Clocks should be large and digital, so they're easy to read.



Provide announcements in visual form, so people who are deaf and hard of hearing also get the information they need.



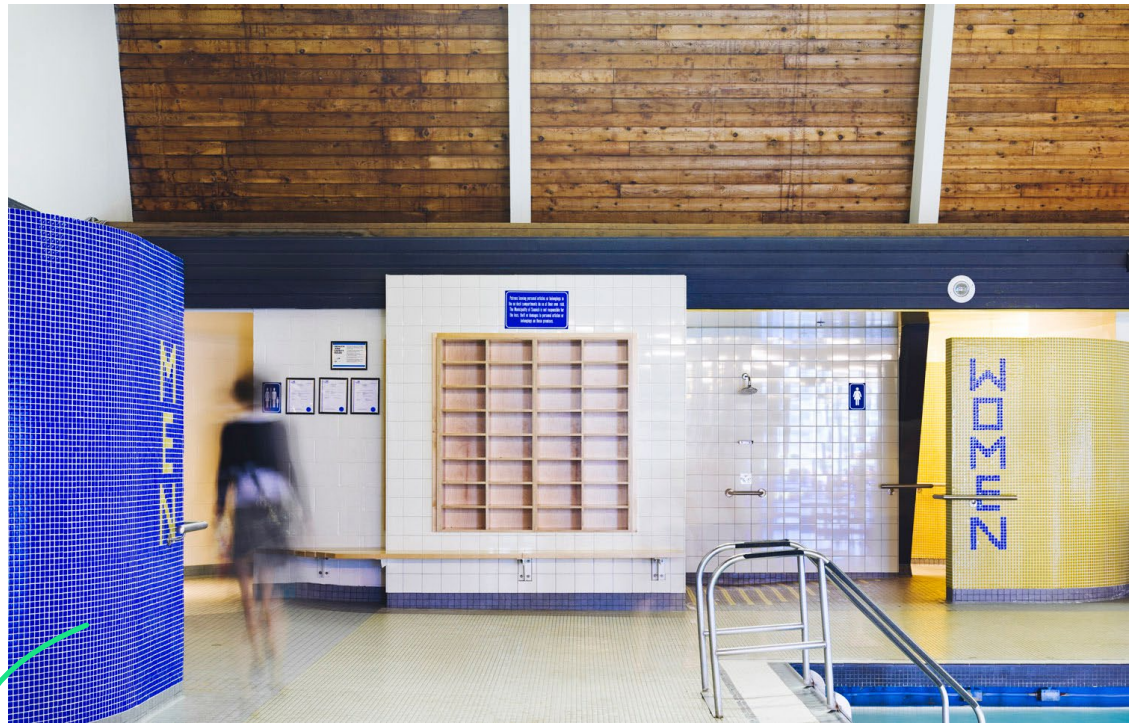
təməsewtxʷ Aquatic and Community Centre, New Westminster, Canada

Include high-contrast tactile signage for all rooms and spaces.



Minoru Centre for Active Living,
Richmond, Canada

Frequent, highly-legible depth markers help people know what works for their comfort and ability level.



Gordon Head Recreation Centre,
Victoria, Canada

Consider how signage, colour, materials, landmarks, and architectural features can be used to support intuitive navigation.

The swimming pool environment

Light, sound, water, and air quality come together to support safe, comfortable and accessible swimming pools. Natural materials, daylight, and views to nature are highly impactful for wellbeing and support a holistic approach to inclusive design.

1

Water and air quality

Clean, well-filtered water and air benefits everyone, ensuring safety, and comfort for all users.

2

Sound

Acoustic design shapes the pool experience creating calmer, more inclusive environments. Good acoustics also ensure important safety announcements can be easily heard above the noise.

3

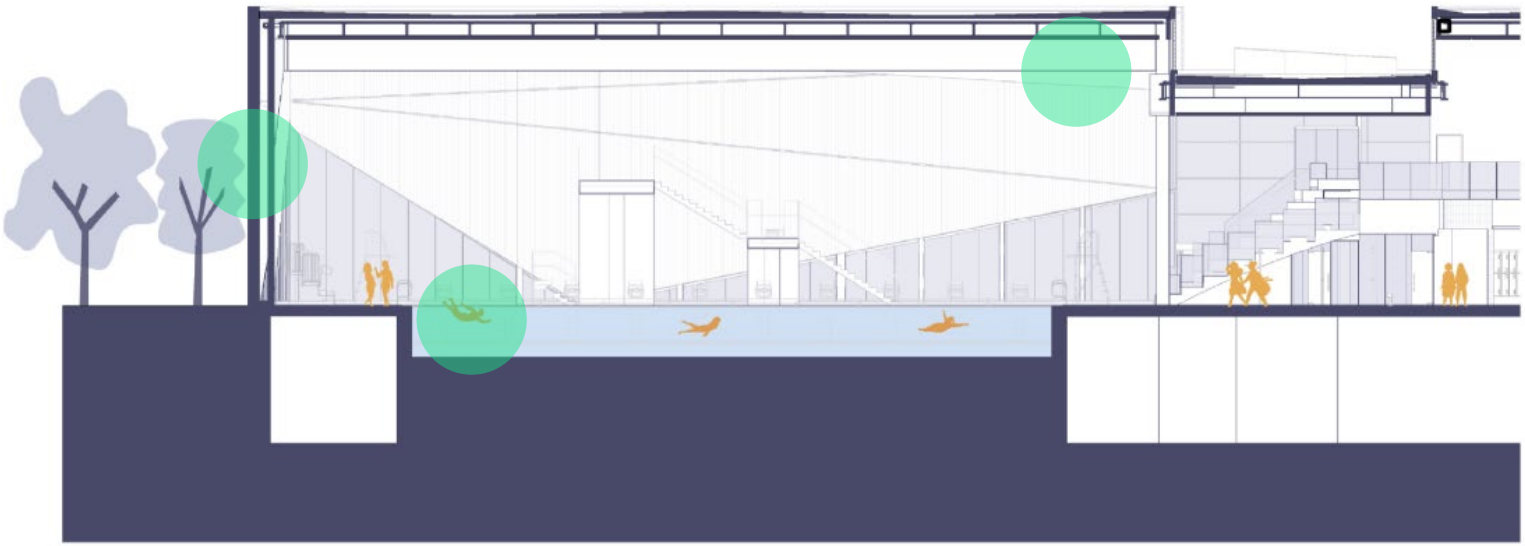
Lighting

Lighting greatly impacts health, wellbeing, and safety, playing a crucial role in inclusive spaces.

4

Bringing the outdoors in

A physical and visual connection to the outdoors supports healthy and mind-friendly environments.



Water and air quality

Clean, well-filtered air and water are fundamental for safety, comfort, and inclusivity. While water quality affects all bathers, it is especially important for people with skin sensitivities or conditions such as eczema. Air quality is equally crucial: poor ventilation can impact staff and swimmers, triggering asthma and other respiratory issues.

Natural ventilation through operable windows or skylights improves air quality, reduces humidity, and supports energy efficiency.



Minoru Centre for Active Living, Richmond, Canada

Innovative filtration and ventilation solutions can significantly improve air and water conditions.

"I have a hard time regulating my body temperature, so going between a hot pool and the surrounding hot air can cause my body to react. When the air feels fresh and it's a smooth transition, I don't have that reaction."

Showers

Showering before entering the pool is essential for maintaining water quality and reducing the amount of chlorine needed. Provide inclusive, accessible showers near the pool deck entrance, so all swimmers feel comfortable using them before getting in the water. Refer to pages 43-44 for more information on accessible showers.



Use clear signage that encourages swimmers to shower thoroughly with soap before entering the pools.

Sound

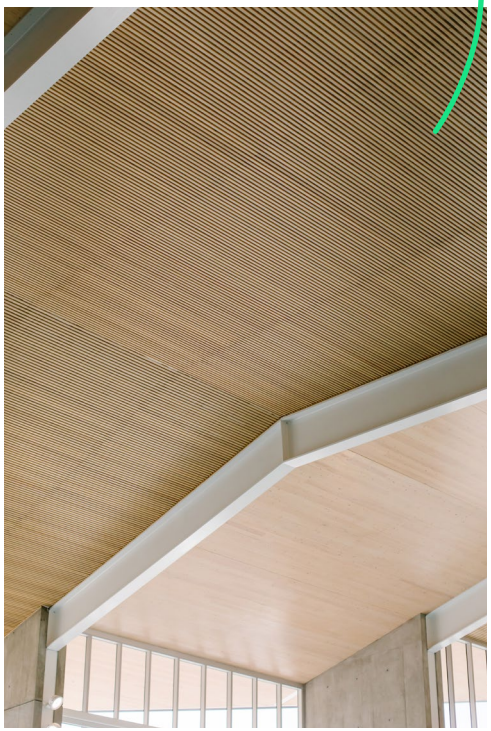
Acoustics shape how we experience space. Aquatic facilities are often noisy, with hard surfaces where sound waves readily bounce, resulting in sound carrying between busy play areas and quieter zones. Thoughtful acoustic design helps create calmer environments.

Lighting

Lighting significantly impacts health, wellbeing, and safety – key factors in creating inclusive and welcoming environments. Bright, even lighting is essential – particularly for those with vision disabilities.

"When the space has a lot of natural light, it makes it a lot easier to communicate in."

Design with acoustics in mind, including acoustic finishes, baffles, wood slats and acoustic panels.



təməsewtxʷ Aquatic and Community Centre, New Westminster, Canada

Indirect lighting can improve comfort; adjustable systems offer the flexibility to adapt lighting conditions throughout the day.



Freemen's School Swimming Pool, London, UK

Systems for privacy can include curtains to screen the pool from viewing areas.

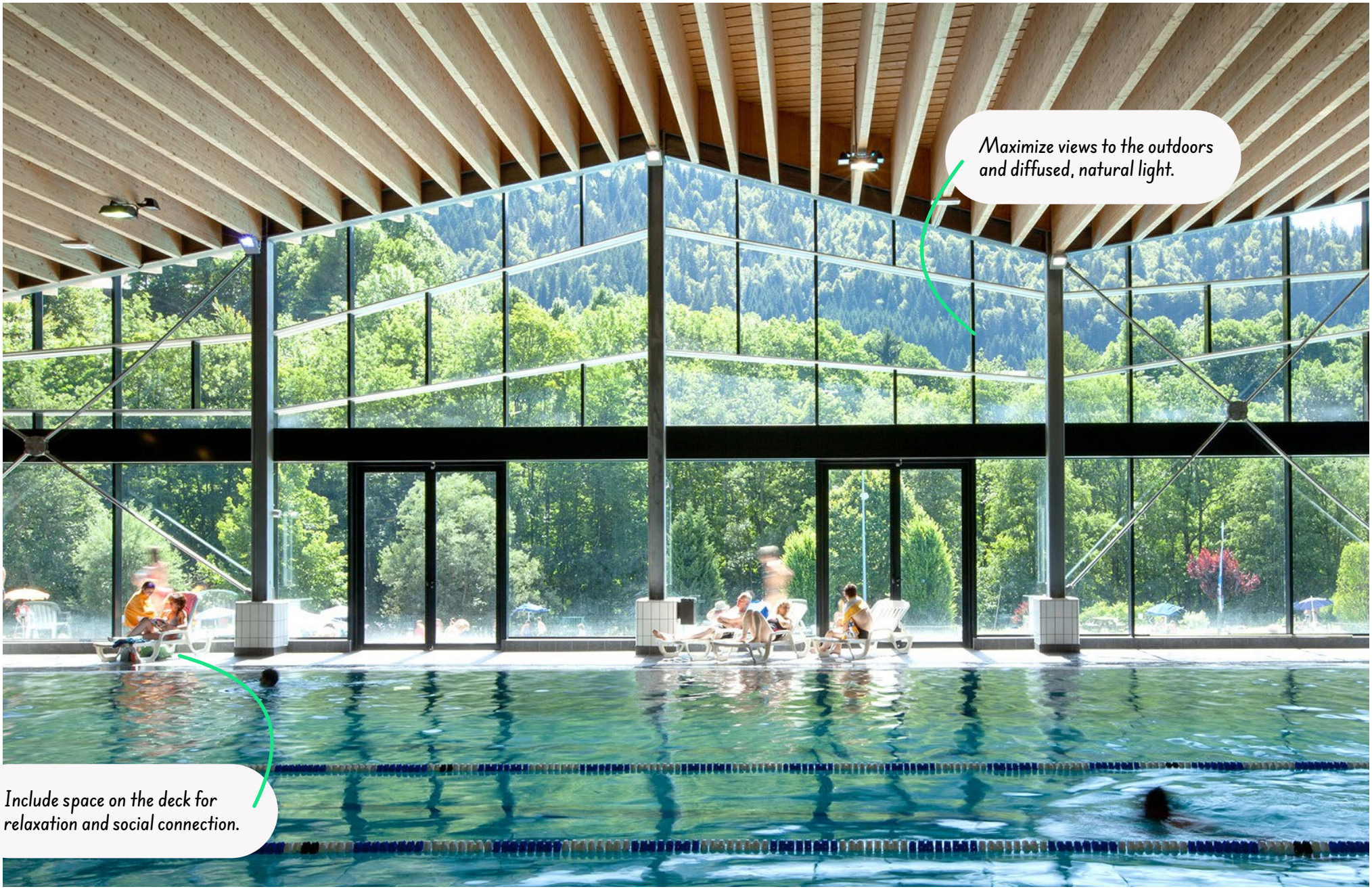
Natural daylight can greatly enhance wellbeing, but it should be managed with strategies to reduce glare and ensure a consistent, comfortable environment for all swimmers.



Minoru Centre for Active Living, Richmond, Canada



University of British Columbia Aquatic Centre, Vancouver, Canada



Espace Aquatique de Morzine, Morzine, France

Connection to nature

A physical connection to the outdoors – through views, natural materials, and forms – can contribute to health, wellbeing and a mind-friendly environment.

Outdoor areas adjacent to the pool deck provide an opportunity for swimmers to step into fresh air and natural light, offering a unique sensory experience.

Sightlines between outdoors and indoors should be balanced with privacy considerations that allow for specialised programming, such as women- and girls-only swims.



Consider viewing angles. Design solutions such as lower-level screening or blinds can provide privacy when needed.

Freizeitbad Stegermatt, Offenburg, Germany

"Getting into the pool area can be a cognitively confusing journey. If the main entry point is constricted and crowded it's hard to know where to go."

Fostering belonging

When aquatic facilities are run with care and kindness, they become places where people love to be. Small acts—a friendly hello, sensitive programming, or a clean and organised space—make it easier for everyone to feel welcome and included.

The way an aquatic facility is operated can quietly shape whether someone feels welcomed or marginalised. Water that's too cold, rules that feel intimidating, or programmes that overlook cultural, sensory, or privacy needs can turn a hopeful visit into a lonely one.

Yet, when staff offer helpful care, inviting temperatures, inclusive schedules, and choices that honour comfort and dignity, the water becomes a place to breathe, belong, and build community – not just a place to swim.

This section explores how aquatic facility operations can nurture inclusion, confidence, and meaningful participation.



Programming and resources

Every community is unique, and programming should reflect the lived experiences and needs of its members. Dedicated, adaptive programming and resources are essential when it comes to reducing barriers to swimming, and fostering a sense of belonging and inclusion at the pool.

1

Resources

Provide resources for visitors and staff, such as sensory kits and aquatic wheelchairs. These resources should be accessible without assistance whenever possible.

2

Sensory-friendly swim times

These swim times support people who benefit from a lower-stimulus environment. Creating calm conditions is key: reduce lighting levels, turn off loud or unpredictable water features and automatic fixtures (e.g., hand dryers), provide dedicated sensory-friendly break rooms, and make sensory kits easily available.

3

Private swim times

These swim times offer comfort and safety for people who may feel uncomfortable or unable to attend regular sessions for cultural, religious, or personal reasons. Women- and girls-only, and trans and gender-diverse swims can create safe, welcoming, and supportive environments. Ensure privacy by screening sightlines from adjacent indoor spaces and from the exterior. To support participation, consider offering low-cost programmes, free entry for support persons, or on-site caregiver support (e.g., child or older adult care).

4

Targeted programming for other user groups

Programming for other groups, such as older-adults-only or teens-only swims, allows activities to be tailored to their specific needs. Young adults may find it difficult to engage in louder or more active play when navigating rules intended for older adults or very young children. Conversely, older adults may feel overwhelmed or nervous when the pool is loud or crowded with young families.

Likewise, dedicated swim times or private areas for people who are non-swimmers or have a fear of water can reduce anxiety by creating a calm and safe environment for gradual exposure and training.

"I feel safe exercising at the pool when there are dedicated times for seniors and people with disabilities."

Design, engagement, and evaluation

Design for staff

Accessible and inclusive design is often overlooked in staff spaces. When we assume that no staff members have – or will ever have – disabilities, we reinforce attitudinal barriers.

In many community buildings, public needs are prioritised, while staff needs are treated as secondary, despite staff spending the most time in the facility each day. Priority should be given to accessible, sensory-friendly support spaces for staff – such as break rooms, laundry areas, and lifeguard stations – as well as inclusive, accessible change rooms for all genders.

By challenging assumptions about who may be disabled, we can reframe accessible design as something that benefits everyone. Designing well from the outset reduces the need for later adjustments.

Engagement

Involving staff and community advisory committees brings valuable expertise into the design process. Early and continued engagement helps establish a shared vision and common goals, leading to more inclusive outcomes. When the people who will use the space have a voice in shaping it, they gain a sense of ownership, can identify needs and experiences that might otherwise be overlooked, and help ensure the facility genuinely reflects community values and priorities.

Evaluation

Post-occupancy evaluations provide opportunities to gather feedback from community members and staff, while maintaining ongoing dialogue with facility operators. These evaluations help determine how the space is functioning in practice, whether design goals are being met, and what lessons can inform future projects. Methods such as surveys, interviews, and observations should focus on lived experience. Conducting evaluations periodically over the lifespan of an aquatic facility can reveal how community needs and usage patterns evolve over time – and how these changes may affect the intended design outcomes.



Your Active New West Public Engagment Event

Operations and Maintenance

Spaces can be designed to be inclusive, but they require ongoing commitment through day-to-day operations to remain truly inclusive in practice. Training staff – the people who operate the building and serve as the primary point of contact for users – on "the why" behind inclusive design decisions is essential to ensuring these features are respected and maintained over time.

When staff understand how design supports a diversity of users, it helps prevent accessible features from being unintentionally compromised – for example, wheelchair seating areas being blocked by storage bins, or accessible service counters becoming cluttered while inaccessible counters remain clear. Similarly, broken automatic door operators or accessible shower heads that are not promptly repaired can quickly render aquatic facilities unusable for many people with disabilities. Operational changes made after opening – such as adding rules or behavioural signage, or placing refuse bins in circulation routes – can also undermine inclusivity if accessibility is not carefully considered.

Ongoing operational and maintenance decisions are therefore critical to keeping inclusive design features functional and effective. Prompt maintenance, staff awareness, and clear, consistent communication between operators and visitors all play a vital role in ensuring spaces continue to function as intended.

- Ensure accessibility features are regularly inspected and maintained.
- Equip staff with specialised training in disability awareness and cultural competency.
- Consider offering tours to demonstrate accessible facilities and resources for people with disabilities, helping first-time visitors feel confident and comfortable coming to the pool.
- Consider carrying out post-occupancy evaluations with persons with lived experience one, three and five years after the facility has opened to see how things are working, and if any improvements can be made.



təməsewtxʷ Aquatic and Community Centre, New Westminster, Canada

Summary

INCLUSIVE AQUATIC SPACES DON'T HAPPEN BY ACCIDENT— THEY HAPPEN BY CHOICE. WHEN WE BUILD POOLS THAT WELCOME ALL, WE STRENGTHEN THE BONDS OF COMMUNITY AND REMIND OURSELVES THAT BELONGING IS CREATED THROUGH THOUGHTFUL DESIGN AND INTENTIONAL PRACTICE.



At its core, this catalogue champions something deeply human: the right for everyone to move, connect, and feel at home in the water.

It is our hope that we have left you with inspiring design strategies to create spaces where a first tentative dip isn't filled with fear or confusion, but relief. Where arrivals feel calm, changing rooms honour dignity, and swimming pools invite participation rather than hesitation.

Aquatic facilities are some of our most valuable civic spaces. They are vital pieces of social infrastructure – places for health, rehabilitation, cultural expression, learning, and joy. They are also significant public investments, often designed to serve communities for 50, 60, even 70 years. When we get them right, their value compounds across generations; when we don't, barriers are embedded for decades. Inclusive and accessible design is not an added feature – it is imperative for maximising social, operational, and economic return over the full life of a facility.

This guide is a call to action. For architects, designers, operators, and decision-makers: to be intentional, to challenge assumptions, and to design aquatic environments that truly belong to everyone.

We know this work is never finished. We continue to listen, learn, and evolve – guided by individuals with lived experience, by post-occupancy evaluations, and by the communities these places exist to serve.

We invite you to continue the journey with us.

Photo Credits

Introduction

2. təməsewtxʷ Aquatic and Community Centre, New Westminster, Canada. Architect: hcma architecture + design. Photography: Mariel Nelms.

Planning a visit

17. Walkerville Civic and Community Centre, Gilberton, Australia. Architect: JPE Design Studio. Photography: Sam Noonan.
18. Minoru Centre for Active Living, Richmond, Canada. Architect: hcma architecture + design. Photography: Hubert Kang.
19. təməsewtxʷ Aquatic and Community Centre, New Westminster, Canada. Architect: hcma architecture + design. Photography: Mariel Nelms.
20. Grandview Heights Aquatic Centre, Surrey, Canada. Architect: hcma architecture + design. Photography: Ema Peter Photography.

    Churchill Meadows Community Centre, Mississauga, Canada. MJMA Architecture & Design. Photography: Scott Norsworthy.

Arriving at the swimming pool

25. təməsewtxʷ Aquatic and Community Centre, New Westminster, Canada. Architect: hcma architecture + design. Photography: Mariel Nelms.
26. Swimming Pool De Heuvelrand, Voorthuizen, the Netherlands. Architect: Slangen + Koenis Architecten. Photography: Marcel van der Burg.
27. Delbrook Community Recreation Centre, North Vancouver, Canada. Architect: HDR. Photo courtesy of HDR © 2017 Ed White Photographics.
28. Sportief Recreatiecentrum De Wiltsangh, Nunspeet, the Netherlands. Architect: Slangen + Koenis Architecten. Photography: Marcel van der Burg.
29. Wii Gyemsiga Siwilaawksat, Terrace, Canada. Architect: hcma architecture + design. Photography: Brit Kwasney, www.britkwasneyphoto.com.

    Maple Ridge Leisure Centre, Maple Ridge, Canada. Architect: SHAPE Architecture. Photography: Ema Peter Photography.
30. wəkʷanəs tə syaqʷəm Elementary School, Vancouver, Canada. Architect: hcma architecture + design. Photography: Andrew Latreille.

    Aaniin Community Centre and Library, Markham, Canada. Architect: Perkins&Will. Photography: Kayla Rocca.
31. Clayton Community Centre. Surrey, Canada. Architect: hcma architecture + design. Photography: Double Space/Younes Bounhar.
32. Kozakai Kifukan Community Center, Toyokawa, Japan. Architect: Yasuyuki ITO / C+A Coelacanth and Associates. Photography: ToLoLo studio.
33. təməsewtxʷ Aquatic and Community Centre, New Westminster, Canada. Architect: hcma architecture + design. Photography: Railay Fawkes.

    Aspire Leisure Centre, Stanmore, England. Architect: Foster + Partners. Photography: Nigel Young.

Getting changed

37. təməsewtxʷAquatic and Community Centre, New Westminster, Canada. Architect: hcma architecture + design. Photography: Mariel Nelms.

    Grandview Heights Aquatic Centre, Surrey, Canada. Architect: hcma architecture + design. Photography: Ema Peter Photography.

38. Swimming Pool De Heuvelrand, Voorthuizen, the Netherlands. Architect: Slangen + Koenis Architecten. Photography: Marcel van der Burg.

40. Clayton Community Centre. Surrey, Canada. Architect: hcma architecture + design. Photography: Double Space/Younes Bounhar.

    təməsewtxʷ Aquatic and Community Centre, New Westminster, Canada. Architect: hcma architecture + design. Photography: Railay Fawkes.

41. Burke Mountain Community Centre, Coquitlam, Canada (render). Architect: hcma architecture + design.

43. təməsewtxʷ Aquatic and Community Centre, New Westminster, Canada. Architect: hcma architecture + design.

44. Clayton Community Centre. Surrey, Canada. Architect: hcma architecture + design. Photography: Double Space/Younes Bounhar.

45. Minoru Centre for Active Living Richmond, Canada. Architect: hcma architecture + design. Photography: Hubert Kang.

    təməsewtxʷ Aquatic and Community Centre, New Westminster, Canada. Architect: hcma architecture + design.

46. Emerald Hills Leisure Centre, Sherwood Park, Canada. Architect: MJMA Architecture & Design + MTa. Photography: Shai Gil.

    Freibad Panorama-Bad, Freudenstadt, Germany Architect: 4a Architekten Stuttgart. Photography: David Matthiessen.

48. Grandview Heights Aquatic Centre, Surrey, Canada. Architect: hcma architecture + design. Photography: Ema Peter Photography.

    Delbrook Community Recreation Centre, North Vancouver, Canada. Architect: HDR.

49. təməsewtxʷ Aquatic and Community Centre, New Westminster, Canada. Architect: hcma architecture + design. Photography: Railay Fawkes.

Going for a swim

56. Grandview Heights Aquatic Centre, Surrey, Canada. Architect: hcma architecture + design. Photography: Ema Peter Photography.

    Killarney Community Pool, Vancouver, Canada. Architect: hcma architecture + design. Photography: Martin Tessler.

57. Vandhalla Egmont Højskolen Rehabilitation Centre, Odder, Denmark. Architect: Cubo Arkitekter + FORCE4 Architects. Photography: Martin Schubert.

    Remington YMCA in Quarry Park, Calgary, Canada. Architect: GEC Architecture. Photography: David Troyer.

    Kiwanis Aquatics Centre, St. Catharines, Canada. Architect: Perkins&Will. Photography: Tom Arban.

58. Wascana Outdoor Pool, Regina, Canada. Architect: hcma architecture + design. Photography: Kristopher Grunert.

59. Delbrook Community Recreation Centre, North Vancouver, Canada. Architect: HDR. Lift project designed by WTI. Photography: Claudette Carracedo.

    Britannia Leisure Centre, London, England. Architect: FaulknerBrowns. Photography: © Diane Auckland / Fotohaus Ltd.

60. Poirier Sport and Leisure Complex, Coquitlam, Canada. Architect: hcma architecture + design. Photography: Martin Tessler.

61. Værløse Svømmehal, Værløse, Denmark. Architect: Nøhr & Sigsgaard. Photography: God Adgang & Rene Kristensen.

    Hillcrest Centre, Vancouver, Canada. hcma architecture + design. Photography: Hubert Kang.

    Killarney Community Pool, Vancouver, Canada. Architect: hcma architecture + design. Photography: Martin Tessler

62. Minoru Centre for Active Living, Richmond, Canada. Architect: hcma architecture + design. Photography: Hubert Kang.

63. Grandview Heights Aquatic Centre, Surrey, Canada. Architect: hcma architecture + design. Photography: Nic Lehoux.

64. Grandview Heights Aquatic Centre, Surrey, Canada. Architect: hcma architecture + design. Photography: Ema Peter Photography.

65. təməsewtxʷ Aquatic and Community Centre, New Westminster, Canada. Architect: hcma architecture + design. Photography: Mariel Nelms.

66. Northcote Aquatic and Recreation Centre, Melbourne, Australia. Architect: Warren and Mahoney. Photography: Tom Roe.

67. Grandview Heights Aquatic Centre, Surrey, Canada. Architect: hcma architecture + design. Photography: Nic Lehoux.

    Hillcrest Centre, Vancouver, Canada. hcma architecture + design. Photography: Hubert Kang.

68. Minoru Centre for Active Living, Richmond, Canada. Architect: hcma architecture + design. Photography: Hubert Kang.

69. Gunyama Park Aquatic and Recreation Centre, Sydney, Australia. Architect: Grimshaw Architects. Photography: Peter Bennetts.

    Guildford Recreation Centre, Surrey, Canada. Architect: Revery Architecture. Photography: Ema Peter Photography.

    B.E. Smith Family Center, Merriam, USA. Architect: SVPA Architects Inc.

70. Vandhalla Egmont Højskolen Rehabilitation Centre, Odder, Denmark. Architect: Cubo Arkitekter + FORCE4 Architects. Photography: Egmont Højskolen.

    Hylliebadet, Malmö, Sweden. Architect: PP Arkitekter.

    Minoru Centre for Active Living, Richmond, Canada. Architect: hcma architecture + design. Photography: Hubert Kang.

71. Wellsaun (design project). Designer: Paula Smolka.

    Minoru Centre for Active Living, Richmond, Canada. Architect: hcma architecture + design. Photography: Hubert Kang.

72. West Vancouver Aquatic Centre, West Vancouver, Canada. Architect: hcma architecture + design. Photography: Gary Otte.

    təməsew̓txʷ Aquatic and Community Centre, New Westminster, Canada. Architect: hcma architecture + design.

    Minoru Centre for Active Living, Richmond, Canada. Architect: hcma architecture + design. Photography: Hubert Kang.

74. Espace Aquatique de Morzine, Morzine, France. Architect: Fabrice David Architecte. Photography: Fabrice David Architecte.

    Sports Complex De Sypel, Harderwijk, the Netherlands. Architect: Slangen + Koenis Architecten. Photography: Marcel van der Burg.

76. təməsew̓txʷ Aquatic and Community Centre, New Westminster, Canada. Architect: hcma architecture + design. Photography: Railay Fawkes.

77. Minoru Centre for Active Living, Richmond, Canada. Architect: hcma architecture + design. Photography: Hubert Kang.

    Gordon Head Recreation Centre, Victoria, Canada. Architect: hcma architecture + design. Photography: Hubert Kang.

78. Minoru Centre for Active Living, Richmond, Canada. Architect: hcma architecture + design. Photography: Hubert Kang.

    təməsew̓txʷ Aquatic and Community Centre Water Quality Campaign. Designer: hcma architecture + design.

79. təməsew̓txʷ Aquatic and Community Centre, New Westminster, Canada. Architect: hcma architecture + design. Photography: Mariel Nelms.

    Freemen's School Swimming Pool, London, England. Hawkins\Brown. Photography: Jack Hobhouse.

    Minoru Centre for Active Living, Richmond, Canada. Architect: hcma architecture + design. Photography: Hubert Kang.

80. University of British Columbia Aquatic Centre, Vancouver, Canada. Architect: MJMA Architecture & Design + Acton Ostry Architects. Photography: Shai Gil.

81. Espace Aquatique de Morzine, Morzine, France. Architect: Fabrice David Architecte. Photography: Fabrice David Architecte.

82. Freizeitbad Stegermatt, Offenburg, Germany. Architect: 4a Architekten Stuttgart. Photography: Uwe Ditz.

Fostering Belonging

87. Your Active New West public engagement. Designer: hcma architecture + design.

88. təməsew̓txʷ Aquatic and Community Centre, New Westminster, Canada. Architect: hcma architecture + design. Photography: Mariel Nelms.

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Ripple Effect

An inspiration catalogue for inclusive and accessible aquatic facility design

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