

The KCC Group guide to:

Creating an access strategy for your building

Develop customised, integrated
access plans for projects across
all sectors



Tailored access strategies for projects across all sectors

The purpose of an access strategy is to allow you to detail the “how” and the “why” of your access plans in terms of ‘how’ they will function and comply with building regulations, and ‘why’ you are choosing this particular approach for a project. In this guide we take you through the process of creating customised, integrated access strategies for projects across all sectors, including healthcare, education, retail, hospitality and commercial, to name a few.

Whether you are designing a brand-new healthcare facility or planning a refurb on an existing hotel, your access strategy should be at the forefront of the initial planning stage. At KCC Group, we work with designers and architects to create bespoke access strategies that meet building standards and expectations. This is not a one-size-fits-all approach. Instead each project is looked at individually, because ultimately different types of buildings have different needs. For example, a hospital build is going to have different access requirements to a hotel – in a hospital, they’ll need to restrict access to certain areas such as drug storage areas or intensive care units or a psychiatric ward for example. In a hotel, we look at bedroom locking systems, restricted access to staff areas and how to link it all into the Building Management System (BMS).

To commence the process you must first analyse the access requirements of your project. Part of this comes down to experience, part of it down to compliance with building regulations and requirements and part of it comes down to common sense.

Visualisation is key

Visualisation is a key part of designing an access strategy. It helps you to get a feel for how the access will work, look and be used by people with disabilities.

Take a look at the building as a whole – starting with the front of the building – how do you get in? who needs to get in? You will then need

to move inside the building- to the reception area or lobby and again, depending on the building in question, there is going to be access requirements here too. Finally, you’ll need to look at the greater building area, ie. different floors, corridors, etc and identify the individual access requirements for all of these.

Using a typical healthcare project as an example, we can break down the building externally and internally to create a suitable access and automation strategy.

External access requirements

When thinking about access and automatics for the external of a building, there are a few different elements that need to be considered, such as the needs of those who will be using the entrance and exit points. In the case of a hospital, you can assume that is a mix of patients, visitors and staff. The front entrance is in this type of building generally a universal access point, accessed by all of the above so the door should be simple to use and operate efficiently whilst meeting the building standards and the design brief.

The security needs of the building also need to be taken into consideration – is there a need for security? Does the door need to function freely 24 hours a day or should access be restricted after visiting hours? In this type of project, the most likely scenarios is that you will need to create timed systems that work around the specific requirements of the hospital building.

The level of usage of a buildings’ entrance can vary dramatically – For example, a commercial office development may have busy times of day but in general the footfall going through the entrance is relatively low, whereas in a hospital environment, there could be a steady flow of people entering and exiting the building all day long. Therefore the usage of a main entrance of a hospital is generally going to be extremely high, so the choice of motor needs to be fit for purpose and the access control system needs to work in tangent with the requirements of the door system in question.

Aesthetics also play a major role in the external access control strategy in terms of the entrance system selected. The main entrance is the first experience people have of a building and needs to set the tone.

While this often comes down to the architect or designer’s personal preference or design intent, we work with clients to advise on the most aesthetically-pleasing, yet functional solution, whether that be a sliding door system or a revolving door, for example.

When designing an access strategy it’s imperative that you ensure the access and automation systems chosen are compliant with both Part M of the building regulations for accessibility and European standard EN16005:2012 for automation.

Another very important element to consider as part of the access strategy is Fire Safety. Does the main entrance need to be an escape door also?



You’ll also need to be aware of the overall energy performance requirements of the building. The façade of the building will need to meet certain insulation and energy ratings therefore you’ll need to identify the most appropriate entrance system that will meet the these performance requirements whilst providing efficient access.

Most multiple-occupancy buildings will also require an internal access strategy. It is important to assess the requirements of each door individually, looking at it from the point of view of access needs, security needs, compliance, energy requirements, aesthetics, level of use, type of user and function.

Is it part of the smoke evacuation plan for the building? At KCC Group, we liaise very closely with the project architect and engineer in this regard to ensure the automation or access control systems link into the smoke escape system, meaning they will automatically open if the fire alarm goes off to allow smoke and heat to escape as quickly as possible. Special doors such as security doors require electric locking systems and can be case-specific. Again, our team would liaise with the Project team and fire consultant to ensure these are fully compliant and fit for purpose.

Access requirements within the building

Internally, a hospital building will again have many different access and automation requirements. Generally there will be double fire doors intermittently along the corridor, and then either single doors off into offices or double doors off into more corridors. It would often be the

case that the double doors within this type of building require swing door operation to allow hospital trolleys or equipment to pass through easily and efficiently. These corridor doors might also require a hold-open device to allow for high levels of footfall to pass through but can then be linked to the BMS to automatically close in the event of a fire or even just after certain hours. Part of this can be dictated by Part M of the Building Regulations, but there is also a certain degree of what is convenient to the end user for ease of access.

Internal doors may also require an access control system, such as a fob or swipe card, to restrict the flow of traffic in and out of the area to staff or specific personnel. Certain areas will require push-pad automation for wheelchair access. Other areas, such as a drug storage room, might require a restricted access system whereby access can be monitored and recorded by management.



In healthcare settings where hygiene and infection control are of paramount importance, hermetically sealed and cleanroom doorsets, designed specifically for healthcare environments, can be fully automated to allow for hands-free access.

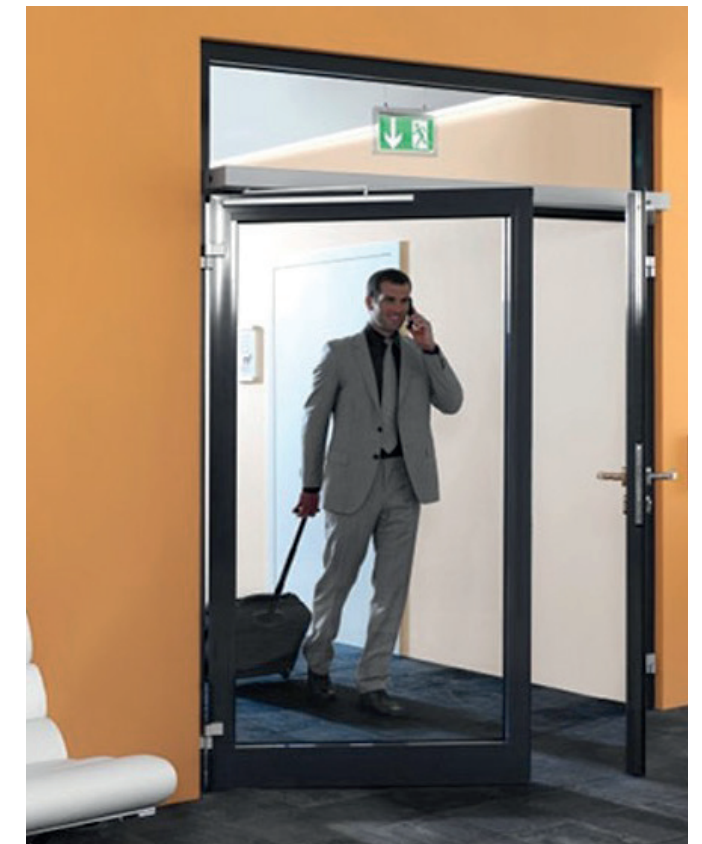
Other sectors such as the hospitality industry can have quite different requirements for their internal access control systems. For example, in hotels and guesthouses, specialist hospitality locking systems are often specified to provide safe, secure and reliable access to bedrooms.

These can either be simple stand-alone devices, or fully integrated online systems which work with both booking software (with remote check-in available via smart devices) and Building Management Systems (lifts, carpark barriers and main entrances can be integrated



to locking system) to ensure the guest's experience is as seamless as possible. Additionally, event log on locks gives full traceability.

At KCC Group, we are able to provide complete peace of mind to all our customers through our countrywide support network with technical expertise and on call engineers available to deal with any issues that may arise with your access control systems 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.



Top 5 considerations when designing your building's access strategy

In the world of building design, accessibility is always a hot topic. Not only do we want our buildings to be accessible for people with disabilities, we also want them to be safe and comfortable places that everyone can use every day. This means designing them in such a way that users can easily get around without worrying about stairs or having doors that are too small for wheelchairs.

Here are our top 5 considerations for developing an effective access strategy for your next building project.

1 How many people will be using the space?

The more people who will be using the space, the more access features you'll likely need (e.g., automatic doors, hold open devices etc). Additionally, different people within the same building may require different access rights to different spaces depending on the type of building user they are (e.g. employees, patients, visitors etc).



2 What are the security requirements?

A small office building that only opens between 9am and 5pm on weekdays, won't need as many access features as a large multi-occupancy building that is open 24/7. Depending on the building type, additional security requirements such as restricted access to certain areas within it or after visiting hours maybe be necessary. Look at installing timed systems that work around the specific requirements of the building.



3 Are there any hazards in the space?

If there are hazards present (e.g., chemicals), then you'll want to include safety measures such as restricting access to certain areas or to certain people, as well as alarms or signs in order to make sure everyone stays safe while they are accessing that area.

4 Is your building compliant with regulations?

Consider the needs of people with disabilities and other mobility issues, as well as those with visual and hearing impairments. To make sure your access strategy meets both building standards and expectations, ensure that the access and automation systems chosen are compliant with both Part M of the building regulations for accessibility and European standard EN16005:2012 for automation.



5 What are the fire safety requirements?

Ensure the automation or access control systems are fully integrated with the building's fire strategies. For example, if the main entrance is also an escape door and part of the smoke evacuation plan, linking it to the fire safety system will ensure the doors will automatically open if the fire alarm goes off to allow smoke and heat to escape as quickly as possible.

Traditionally KCC Group were known as an ironmongery supplier but over the years we have grown the business to provide a vast array of products across several different business units, which has allowed us to provide our clients with 'solutions' not just 'products'.



**Contact KCC Group for support with the
access strategy on your next project**

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