

## **New Changing Places Disabled Toilet Opens**

Work has been completed on a state-of-the-art toilet and changing room in the Reading Town Centre.

The new facility in Broad Street Mall will be available to disabled residents, their families and carers from Monday 26<sup>th</sup> March, with the official opening ceremony on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> April.

Thanks to a £44,000 grant from Reading Borough Council, disabled residents will be able to enjoy a facility which boasts specialist equipment, such as an overhead hoist, shower trolley, adjustable height wash basin, and an Aquaclean toilet. Access to the toilets will be via an automated door system which can be opened by a remote key fob.

The project to deliver the plush new facilities in Broad Street Mall is part of the national 'Changing Places' campaign to get more facilities suitable for toileting and changing disabled people available across the UK. There are other 'Changing Places' facilities in Maidenhead, Newbury, Bracknell and Basingstoke.

Reading Borough Council officers consulted widely on the new facility with user groups such as the Reading Families Forum, the Physical Disability and Sensory Needs Network, The Access Forum and the Carers Strategy Group.

Reading Borough Council's Lead Member for Education and Children's Services, John Ennis, said:

"I am delighted for disabled residents in Reading— they will now have suitable and accessible toilet and changing facilities available to them in the town centre.

"The project is a prime example of what effective partnership work between the Council and local residents can achieve."

Chair of the Access and Disabilities Working Group, Cllr Pete Ruhemann, said:

"The new toilets and changing rooms in Broad Street Mall are fantastic for disabled members of our community.

"As I have said before, disabled residents in Reading have been pushing for facilities like these in the town centre and I am happy we have delivered, with the help of Broad Street Mall, who have been fantastic partners in this project"

Centre Manager of the Broad Street Mall, Steve Fawke, said:

"We are really pleased to have been able to facilitate such a project and my sincere thanks goes to Reading Borough Council for giving us the opportunity

to work with them. This facility will make a real difference to both users and their carers giving them an opportunity to enjoy what Reading has to offer.”

Local resident and parent of disabled daughter, Emma Byrne, said:

“We’re delighted to have these new facilities in Reading. It will make it much easier for me to help my daughter when she needs the toilet. Having all the extra room means we do not have to struggle in a cramped cubicle and the hoist and bed means that she won’t have to lie on a dirty floor to get changed.”