

# #ServeAlex

## Guidelines for licensees and door staff on dealing with unusual-looking faces

Changing Faces is the UK's leading charity for people and families who are living with conditions, marks or scars that affect the appearance of their face or body. Facial Palsy UK supports people across the UK affected by facial paralysis from any cause.

These guidelines have been developed to help licensees and door staff in pubs, bars, clubs and restaurants deliver excellent customer service and ensure that all customers are treated fairly and with understanding and respect, as enshrined in law by the Equality Act 2010.

There are five key points to remember.

1. **Don't make assumptions:** There are a range of medical conditions and disabilities that can cause someone to have an unusual-looking face, including scars, growths, asymmetry, facial paralysis and birth conditions. Don't make assumptions about a customer's fitness to be served based on their appearance alone.
2. **Don't patronise:** A person with a visible difference won't usually have a learning difficulty, so be careful that you don't speak to them in a manner that suggests they are lacking understanding or sight or hearing impaired.
3. **If in doubt, ask:** If someone's appearance or demeanour makes you think they might be under the influence, the best way to find out is to talk to them. Explain your concern: if they have a medical condition or disability, they will be very likely to tell you. However, don't ask for 'proof', as this can be humiliating and offensive.
4. **The law is on their side:** The Equality Act 2010 makes it an offence to discriminate against someone because of their disability or severe disfigurement. This includes protection from harassment and victimisation, and breaches can lead to big fines.
5. **Finally ... make them feel welcome:** Pubs and clubs can be daunting places, especially if you've not been before. Do all you can to make sure that all your customers feel welcome and appreciated. Your customer with a medical condition might appreciate a quick smile and "How's your evening going?", and feel welcome and appreciated – and make sure they return!

Changing Faces and Facial Palsy UK recognise that this can be a challenging issue to deal with, and they are there to help with questions and can provide training and development to assist licensees, managers, door staff and others to ensure all staff act within the guidelines.

For further information, please contact

Changing Faces  
Facial Palsy UK

[changingfaces.org.uk](http://changingfaces.org.uk)  
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