

## Accessing York's Heritage & Cultural Offer

### York Minster

The majority of the Minster is accessible with ramps in places. However until 2016 the building is undergoing a period of transformation, so those requiring step free access are recommended to check beforehand for accessibility on the day of a proposed visit.

#### On Arrival:

- Designated Disabled car parking (Very limited space by Chapter House, phone ahead)
- Hard surfaced car park
- Level/ramped wheelchair access to entrance (Ramped access to West Door at present.)
- Level/ramped wheelchair access into venue (Level)
- Concessionary fee for wheelchair user (No charge for wheelchair user)
- Concessionary fee for carer (Carer's pay to enter Minster only as the Tower is not accessible)
- Easy access around ground floor/area of site
- Wheelchair access to gardens/grounds

#### Toilets:

- Wheelchair accessible toilet/toilets
- Grab rails in toilet
- Easy access to wash basin and hand dryer/towels
- Wheelchair turning space in accessible toilet
- Space for right transfer to toilet
- Room for carer/carers in accessible toilet

#### Cafe/Shop:

- Level/ramped access to shop
- Level/ramped access to cafe/tearoom (No cafe/tearoom)
- Wheelchair accessible picnic area (None seen)

#### Other:

Assistance dogs are welcome, and wheelchairs are available for loan/hire. In certain areas a hearing loop can be made available, given advance notice. The Minster also offers special access to exhibits for the visually impaired, and guided tours can be provided.

### **Fairfax House**

Fairfax House covers two floors with access to the first floor being via a staircase. Due to the character of this Grade 1 listed building, disabled access is limited and only possible with assistance at a ground floor level. Visitors are encouraged to telephone in advance of their visit with their requirements so that staff can endeavour to assist them.

There is a drop-off point for guests immediately outside the main entrance and a handrail for the steps up to the entrance.

Information can be made available in audio format, and there is an audible alarm system. There is also clear signage throughout the attraction e.g. colour contrast, large letters, pictograms.

### **Barley Hall**

Barley Hall is a reconstructed medieval townhouse and leads to some restrictions for those visitors with mobility and access difficulties.

Although there is access to the ground floor, the Great Hall features a raised threshold at the doorway. The first floor, on which the Parlour, Gallery, and Chambers are located, is accessed via a staircase, which some guests may find a little steep. Unfortunately, there is no lift to the first floor.

There is a second fairly steep staircase down to the buttery, pantry and classroom, although the classroom can be accessed externally. It is advisable that small children are looked after when using the staircases.

Visitors are encouraged to telephone in advance of their visit to discuss their access requirements. Vehicles cannot park close to the Hall. The easiest access is from Swinegate / Grape Lane where you can park before 11am and after 4pm from Monday to Friday, before 10.30am and after 4.30pm on Saturday, and before 12pm and after 4pm on Sunday.

Barley Hall has one male and one female toilet. Unfortunately, the Hall does not offer separate toilets for disabled guests or permanent baby changing facilities at this time

### **Castle Museum**

On Arrival:

- The venue does not have its own car park, but there is a car park for public use within approx 200m (Castle Car Park).
- The car park is located at the front of the venue.
- There is a ramp to access the main entrance.
- The reception desk is low height.

Inside Access - North Building:

- There is no level access to the building. There is a moderate ramp to the left within the entrance together with 9 clearly marked steps with a handrail

Inside Access - South Building:

- There is no level access to this building. There is a steep ramp to the right as you enter the building with a level landing at the top. There are also 15+ clearly marked steps with handrails on both sides.

The Museum exhibits cannot be audio described and there is no tactile signage or hearing assistance system. However, concessions and touch tours are available. There is also a wheelchair to borrow, which needs booking in advance

Toilets:

- There are accessible unisex toilets within both buildings but they are not for the sole use of disabled people. The toilets all have level access and there is pictorial signage on or near the entrances.
- The toilets in the south building have lateral transfer space with wall mounted grab rails on both sides.
- In the north building the transfer space is on the right and support rails are fitted.

Cafe/Shop:

Within the Restaurant Bar there is ample room for a wheelchair user to manoeuvre, and the menu is clearly written on the wall.

## **Yorkshire Museum**

The Yorkshire Museum is housed in a building on the old St. Marys Abbey site within the museum gardens.

On Arrival:

- Level/ramped wheelchair access to entrance (Ramped)
- Level/ramped wheelchair access into venue (Level)
- Concessionary fee for carer (Carer get's in free (but be sure to ask))
- Easy access around ground floor/area of site
- Wheelchair access to gardens/grounds (Botanical Gardens separate area to visit)
- Wheelchair access to other floors
- lift controls at accessible height

Toilets:

- Wheelchair accessible toilet/toilets
- Grab rails in toilet
- Easy access to wash basin
- easy access to hand dryer/towels
- Wheelchair turning space in accessible toilet
- Space for left transfer to toilet
- Room for carer/carers in accessible toilet

Cafe/Shop:

- Level/ramped access to shop
- Level/ramped access to cafe/tearoom (Tea/coffee machine available in shop)
- Accessible counter/cutlery if self service
- Sufficient wheelchair access to tables

Other:

Assistance dogs are welcome, and wheelchairs are available for loan/hire. A hearing loop is available in the theatre, and the Museum offers special access to exhibits for the visually impaired, and wheelchair access to interactive exhibits.

**Art Gallery**

The gallery is currently closed for major redevelopment and will reopen in 2015 with 60% more gallery space, a new Centre for British Studio Ceramics and improved access arrangements. Prior to the ongoing renovation work, the Art Gallery had a stair lift to the upper gallery and an accessible toilet.

**National Railway Museum**

The National Railway Museum in York is a large site which is mainly on one level. In the few areas where it is not, facilities have been put in place to enable all visitors, whatever their ability, to access the huge variety of interesting exhibits and memorabilia stretching back 300 years.

The Great Hall and other exhibition rooms have many huge and ancient Railway engines in, some of which have been ramped to provide access up to the cab. There is also a small road train that runs every half an hour from the Museum into York Centre which is fully accessible at the rear.

On Arrival:

- Designated Disabled car parking (hard surfaced car park)
- Concessionary fee for wheelchair user (Free entrance to all)
- Level wheelchair access to entrance into venue
- Wheelchair access to gardens/grounds

- Wheelchair access to other floors via lift with controls at accessible height

Toilets:

- Wheelchair accessible toilet/toilets
- Grab rails in toilet and easy access to wash basin and hand dryer/towels
- Wheelchair turning space in accessible toilet
- Space for left transfer to toilet (near entrance)
- Space for right transfer to toilet (upstairs in 'works')
- Room for carer/carers in accessible toilet

Cafe/Shop:

- Level/ramped access to shop and cafe/tearoom
- Accessible counter/cutlery for self service
- Sufficient wheelchair access to tables
- Wheelchair accessible picnic area

Other:

Assistance dogs are welcome. Wheelchairs are available for loan/hire, and wheelchairs have access to the land train via the rear carriage. There is also special access to exhibits for the visually impaired.

**York Dungeon**

The York Dungeon welcomes guests with disabilities, together with their helpers and carers. The majority of the facilities are designed to be fully accessible to disabled guests. However it is situated in a Grade 2 Listed building leading to some restrictions for guests with mobility scooters.

Navigating around the Dungeon is mainly via level pathways. However due to the nature of the attraction some floor surfaces are uneven. Access is also gained via low gradient slopes and specialised stair lifts (restrictions apply) to the various levels of the attraction. The York Dungeon tour lasts approximately 70 minutes, of which most you are required to stand.

For safety reasons they can only accommodate one manual wheelchair user at a time, so wheelchair users are advised to book in advance to prevent any delays in starting the tour. In case of an evacuation, there are two flights of stairs both with stair lifts (Max weight 120kg/ 18.8 stone) and guests must be able to transfer from wheelchair to stair lift unaided by Dungeon staff.

The York Dungeon is not considered suitable for those suffering from claustrophobia.

The York Dungeon experience is largely delivered by actors and voiceover audio, often in low light levels. Therefore guests with low vision or visual impairment and/or hearing difficulties may struggle to experience the attraction fully, and may have difficulty navigating around the facility. However a helper or carer is welcome to accompany a disabled visitor to assist, without charge.

Only one carer can receive free entry per disabled guest, and York Dungeon also requires documentary proof of disability i.e. blue/orange badge, DLA letter or doctor or physician letter. Disabled guests are encouraged to prebook online or via the contact centre to avoid general admission queue lines and to book a time slot allocation.

Where appropriate, York Dungeon's website also provides access information relevant to specific sections of the tour e.g. the Dick Turpin Drop Benches - The drop benches are to give the illusion of hanging and give a sudden movement; wheelchair users must be able to transfer un-aided into and out of the ride seats. The benches are not suitable for visitors with:

- Heart complaints or pacemakers
- Back or neck complaints
- Broken limbs or have had recent surgery
- Pregnant guests
- Have a condition that may result in injury or complication from quick movement

On Arrival:

Unfortunately the Dungeon does not have any designated parking. The nearest car parks to the York Dungeon are Castle and Piccadilly which both have disabled parking bays.

Toilets:

The York Dungeon has fully accessible toilets. Toilets are located after the third show inside the Dungeon i.e. after leaving Guy Fawkes, down the stairs before entering Ghosts. A disabled toilet is situated by the Lost Roman Legion Labyrinth.

Other:

Assistance dogs are welcome in the York Dungeon; however, due to health and safety regulations they are not permitted to ride on any rides with the guest. A member of the party must be with the dog at all times, and there are loud noises, mist effects and smells (good and nasty) that may be?

### **Jorvik Viking Centre**

A tour of the main exhibition lasts approximately 14 minutes and takes you around a 'realistic' Viking village with all the smells and sights. Visitors travel round the main exhibition in a pod. Each pod has a hearing loop to listen to the commentary. A large print transcription of the ride commentary is available, as is a Braille guide for the Artefacts Alive gallery. Guide dogs are welcome in the centre, although the ride may make some dogs nervous.

Wheelchair users are advised to book in advance, as each pod can only accommodate one wheelchair at a time. A wheelchair is placed on a movable platform at the front of the pod, and headphones are provided for the wheelchair user to listen to the commentary. On arrival, a wheelchair user may also be asked a number of questions to ensure their maximum participation in the tour.

Once the tour is finished, wheelchair users can continue into the rest of the centre, where there are many other exhibits to see. However if they want to go into the shop, which all other visitors exit through, they need to exit the building and then re-enter through the main door on the street.

Some of the exhibits are in the basement which can be accessed via a lift - the area is quite dim although the floor is lit up underneath and this may disorientate some people. It is suggested that visitors who suffer from claustrophobia, speak to a member of staff about visiting downstairs, prior to paying.

#### On Arrival:

- Designated Disabled car parking in nearby Piccadilly Car Park (hard surfaced car park)
- Concessionary fee for wheelchair users, but pre-booking is necessary
- Level wheelchair access to entrance and easy access around the area of the site
- lift with controls at accessible height

#### Toilets:

- Wheelchair accessible toilet/toilets
- Grab rails and easy access to wash basin and hand dryer/towels
- Wheelchair turning space in accessible toilet
- Space for left transfer to toilet
- Room for carer/carers in accessible toilet

#### Cafe/Shop:

- Level/ramped access to shop (Ramped access)

Other:

Assistance dogs are welcome although some aspects of the ride may make them nervous. Wheelchairs are available for loan/hire, and the Centre offers special access to exhibits for the visually impaired.

**Ghost Walk Tours**

These are offered via a few companies and many offer tours that are accessible for wheelchair users, some for a small concession fee.

**York Wheel**

The Wheel is wheelchair accessible as long as patrons are accompanied by a travelling companion or a member of staff.

**York River Boat Trips**

Wheelchair users should be sure to book on 'The River Duchess', one of the many boats in the fleet owned by York Boat, as it is the only one with a disabled access toilet on board. The boat is wide and fully accessible with tables and chairs down the length of its inside bar area. For those who are able, there is seating outside up on top, but for those unable to make it up there, there is a small seating area to the front of the boat which provides outside space for a wheelchair user to enjoy the good weather.

Inside by the bar area is a toilet which has left hand transfer, through a bi-fold door, and although the space is on the tight side, with a little manoeuvring, access is possible.

On Arrival:

- Designated Disabled car parking in nearby public Car Parks at St George's Field & Castle (both hard surfaced car parks)
- Ramped access at King's Staith Landing
- Concessionary fee for wheelchair users and Carers
- Pre-booking is necessary for wheelchair users to ensure 'River Duchess' is available on the day of your choice
- Easy access around ground floor of boat

Toilets:

- Wheelchair accessible toilet/toilets
- Grab rails in toilet and easy access to wash basin and hand dryer/towels
- Room for carer/carers in accessible toilet
- Measures to improve the space to side transfer are scheduled

Cafe/Shop:

- Level access to bar serving drinks & snacks



- Accessible counter and sufficient wheelchair access to tables

Other:

Assistance dogs are welcome.

### **City Screen York**

The cinema suggests that advance booking is a good idea to enable staff to be ready to provide assistance if required. All areas of the building are accessible to customers with limited mobility, including wheelchair users. Wheelchair spaces or seats in any particular part of the auditorium can be reserved and accompanying carers are eligible for a free ticket.

The Box Office and bar all have adapted counters and accessible levels for transactions, and in the event of a fire, wheelchair users and other mobility-impaired patrons will be evacuated by trained staff using evacuation chairs placed at, or near, the top (or bottom if in the basement) of staircases.

For visually impaired customers, guide dogs are welcome, and an aisle seat can be reserved. Alternatively a guide dog can be cared for by a member of staff for the duration of the performance. Large print menus and film schedules are also available on request. All stair rails have embossed tactile aids underneath which indicate the number of steps approaching each level. Three bumps mean that you are on the third step from the landing, two that you are on the second step etc.

For customers with impaired hearing there are induction loop facilities at the Box Office and infrared facilities in all three screens. The Box Office can provide receiving equipment to use the infrared system. Customers are asked for a credit card or a £5.00 deposit for the equipment, which is fully refunded on its return at the end of the screening. Certain performances carry subtitles and these are clearly indicated on the weekly listings flyer and in the free weekly email newsletter.

There is a lift to the right as you enter the main foyer, which serves all floors and the basement areas. The lift is fitted with a voice commentary and tactile aids and it has a telephone to contact a member of staff in an emergency.

On Arrival:

- Setting down is best done by drawing alongside the cinema in Coney Street. This can be done Monday to Friday before 11.00am and after 4.00pm; Saturday before 10.30am – and after 4.30pm; and Sunday before 12.00noon and after 4.00pm.

- There are also parking spaces in St Helen's Square, Parliament Square and Davygate for orange-badge holders.

#### Toilets:

- The main customer toilets are in the basement, which include a separate fully accessible toilet.
- There is an additional toilet for people with disabilities on the top floor next to the entrance to the lift.
- An emergency call-point is provided in the disabled toilets should assistance be required.

### **Reel Cinema**

The REEL Cinema website contains no information on the disabled access and facilities at each Reel Cinema. Instead it suggests that cinema goers contact their local REEL Cinema for details.

### **National Centre for Early Music**

The National Centre for Early Music is completely flat-floored throughout making it an accessible building for wheelchair users with or without an accompanied helper. The National Centre for Early Music has a state-of-the-art induction hearing loop to ensure good quality of sound.

There are two designated disabled car parking spaces in the adjacent car park, an entrance ramp and disabled toilet facilities. The Centre also has a copy of a Braille map of York City Centre, produced by the Royal Institute for the Blind, which visitors are welcome to consult.

Their website is also made more accessible as it offers viewers the option to increase the size of the text, translate the site into other languages, and to have the site read aloud.

### **The Barbican**

York Barbican's runs an Access Scheme which entitles patrons with disabilities to concessionary ticket prices. Where patrons with disabilities need a carer to assist and attend an event, the combined cost is equivalent to the full cost of one ticket. Patrons with disabilities are also asked to provide their access requirements so that where possible, they can be seated appropriately.

York Barbican has step-free access into the auditorium, meeting rooms, restaurants and bars, and the first floor is accessible via a lift. Wheelchair spaces are located on Balcony Level in the 'slips' and in Stalls on either row A or row AA, whichever is the front row. Level access seating is located on Balcony row A and Stalls rows A, AA and BB (where rows AA and BB are

present). Each row B and above on both Stalls and Balcony involves 2 shallow steps.

Priority Accessible Seats are available to book for those who require level access. These seats also have extra leg room and are suitable for those with assistance dogs or who normally require an aisle seat.

The Barbican offers a wheelchair loan service (subject to availability) to help patrons to and from their Priority Access seats, and can be requested when booking tickets. However this does not include staff assistance and anyone borrowing a wheelchair must be able to use it independently or have the assistance of a carer or companion.

There is a hearing enhancement system in the auditorium and the monthly diary is available in alternative formats (large print and audio). Hearing and assistance dogs are welcome throughout the building and auditorium, and dog mats are available on request. Aisle seats can also be requested.

On Arrival:

- Disabled parking spaces are available at nearby Q-Park Kent Street. A parking voucher for the car park can be bought in advance for the reduced York Barbican rate of £5.00, valid from 3.00pm on the day of the concert until 9.00am the following morning. There are 4 disabled parking bays for Blue Badge holders in Q-Park Kent Street which are available on a first come, first served basis on the day.
- The main entrance/Box Office entrance of York Barbican has level access from the piazza on Paragon Street. The ground floor foyer spaces are all level access. There is a lift to the upper level (Balcony) and the lift has voice announcements and raised lettering on the control panel.

Toilets:

- An accessible toilet is available on both floors of the Barbican

Cafe/Shop:

- All bars and the Box Office have low level counter positions.

### **Grand Opera House**

York Grand Opera House is a member of the Ambassador Theatre Group (ATG). Each of their 39 theatres has an Access Champion who is dedicated to ensuring that theatre goers with disabilities have a successful and enjoyable visit to the theatre.

They have developed Visual Stories for patrons on the autistic spectrum to improve their visit to the theatre. These Visual Stories are intended to help

prepare any new visitors for the experience of visiting a theatre and to familiarise them with their surroundings – see Visual Story for York Grand Opera House at Annex B.

Detailed information about each theatre's wheelchair spaces, accessible toilets, lift services and general accessibility is provided via each theatre's website in the 'Access' section.

Theatre goers are asked to explain their particular access requirements when booking tickets via the dedicated Access booking line and to specify if they are able to transfer or need a wheelchair space.

Patrons are recommended to arrive 30 minutes before a performance starts and to notify a member of staff if assistance is required. They recognise that many patrons are more comfortable transferring from their wheelchair to a theatre seat to watch a performance. They therefore ask that patrons let them know the type of chair that they will be transferring from to ensure the theatre is able to store it during the performance.

Each theatre also offers an 'At Seat Service' for any patrons with Access requirements. Front of House staff will take orders for drinks, ice cream, merchandise or kiosk items to be brought to the patron's seat, both before the performance and during the interval, and this free service can be requested on arrival.

Guide dogs are welcome in all ATG theatres and can be catered for. Patrons are asked to inform a member of staff about their dog at the time of booking to ensure that they are booked into the most appropriate and spacious seat.

Audio Described Performances – This is where a verbal commentary is given through infra-red headsets to assist patrons who are visually impaired. Headsets are collected on arrival at the theatre from a member of staff in the foyer. They explain how the headset works and set it to the correct channel.

A trained Audio Describer sits in a box at the back of the auditorium with a view of the stage and conducts the description live. An introduction is given prior to the show. During silent intervals in the show (e.g. when there is a scene change and no dialogue), verbal commentary describes the setting, costumes, characters, facial expressions, body language and action. The description does not interfere with the performance but fills in the gaps.

Captioned Performances -These are similar to television subtitles and give patrons who are deaf, deafened, or hard of hearing access to live performance. Captions can also be useful for those whose first language is

not English. The actors' words appear on display units at the same time as they are spoken or sung. These display units are placed in the set, next to the stage, or in the auditorium, and display speakers' names, sound effects and off-stage noises.

Most ATG theatres also have Sennheiser infra-red sound amplification systems installed, and offer two types of Hearing Enhancement Aids to support this system:

- Induction Loop Necklace – these are suitable for patrons already wearing a Hearing Enhancement Aid. Sound is amplified by putting the necklace around your neck, and switching hearing aids to the 'T' setting.
- Headsets – these amplify sound through earpieces similar to regular headphones. This is suitable for patrons without a Hearing Aid. Personal headphones can be worn if preferred.

Necklaces and headsets are collected from the theatre's cloakroom, which are normally situated in the theatre's main foyer. Theatre staff may request some form of deposit or identification when audio equipment is collected and this is returned on return of the equipment.

BSL interpreted / Signed performances – these are signed performances for the benefit of patrons who use sign language. Trained British Signed Language (BSL) signers usually stand to one side of the stage and interpret the script used by the performers at the same time as it is being performed.

Not all shows have Audio Described / Captioned / Signed performances - those that have are identified within brochures and online. The Access team is also aware when these performances are scheduled and are able to assist with booking requests, via the dedicated Access booking line, by email to the theatre's Access Champion, or in person at the Box Office. They can also advise on the best seats to book to ensure the best sight lines.

Each theatre's Access Champion can also provide additional resources, which might range from a synopsis of the show in CD format, a large print or Braille cast list, to an audio programme. Dependent on availability, these can be sent to patrons prior to the performance.

Upcoming Assisted Performances at York Grand Opera House:

- Captioned - Mon 22 Dec 2014 6:30pm Cinderella
- Audio-Described - Sat 20 Sep 2014 2:30pm York Stage Musicals present Sister Act

- Relaxed Performance - Mon 29 Dec 2014 2:00pm Cinderella

ATG also offer Touch Tours and Orientation Visits at all of their theatres. Touch Tours give patrons who are visually impaired the opportunity to go up on stage and touch parts of the set and any major pieces of scenery, props and costumes. This is to help audience members to immerse themselves in the imaginary world presented on stage. Not all shows have Touch Tours. But each theatre's Access Champion can advise on those that have and take Touch Tour bookings.

An orientation visit enable patrons to have a tour of the theatre prior to their visit, ask any questions, and learn a bit more about what they can expect from the theatre environment. They cover a typical patron's 'journey' from booking and collecting tickets to visiting the auditorium, the bars, chill out areas and accessible toilets. They are especially beneficial for patrons who use a wheelchair, for groups with additional requirements, for patrons on the autistic spectrum, or for those who are going to attend a Relaxed or assisted performance. They are usually organised on an ad hoc basis and can be arranged for individuals or groups depending on their needs. The majority of Orientation Visits will be arranged between 10am and 6pm on weekdays. It is possible to arrange visits at alternative times but if it's prior to a performance it means other audience members would be in the theatre at the time.

### **Theatre Royal**

The Theatre Royal considers providing 'Access for All' an essential part of what they do and their mission as a theatre. They welcome all theatre-goers and provide an extensive range of services, and concessions for patrons with disabilities.

There are 6 wheelchair spaces in the stalls in the Main House and 4 in The Studio. There is no wheelchair access to other levels but there is an accessible toilet. There is also a wheelchair lift to The Studio and Café Bar, and there is wheelchair access and a wheelchair lift in the De Grey Rooms.

The Main House has a radio-based hearing aid system, and The Studio is fitted with an infra-red hearing aid system. Patrons are asked to inform the Box Office if they require these service when booking tickets.

### **Audio Description, Signed and Captioned Performances**

Audio described, captioned and sign interpreted performances are available for most performances in the Main House with pre-show Touch Tours also available. These can all be booked in advance through the Box Office and they recommend that tickets for Audio Described performances are booked at least 24 hours in advance.

In addition, audio described and large print brochures are available, and guide dogs are welcome - the Theatre provides a 'dog sitting service' and water bowls.

Upcoming Assisted Performances at the Theatre Royal:

- Audio Described - Sat 7 Jun, 2:30pm & 7:30pm - Morecambe
- Audio Described - Sat 12 Jul, 2:30pm & 7:30pm - A Taste of Honey
- Audio Described - Thu 21 Aug, 2:30pm & 7:00pm & Sat 23 Aug, 2:30pm & 7:00pm - The Wind In The Willows
  
- Signed Performance - Sat 30 Aug, 2:30pm - The Wind In the Willows
  
- Captioned - Sat 23 Aug, 2.30pm - The Wind In the Willows

**Abbreviations:**

ATG – Ambassador Theatre Group

BSL – British Sign Language