



Access Statement for Lancaster Castle

2019

www.lancashire.gov.uk



Due to ongoing construction work in the former prison area of the castle, access for guided tours and events is currently via the Shire Hall entrance. This is situated at the rear of the castle (opposite the Priory Church).

Situated very close to the city centre, Lancaster Castle is still a working building. Public access to the castle is through the Shire Hall entrance situated at the rear of the building (opposite the Priory Church). Large areas of the former HMP Lancaster Castle are at present inaccessible. With the exception of the shop, entry to the buildings is by guided tour only. Tours run regularly throughout the day between 10:00 and 16:00 in summer and between 10:30 and 15:15 in winter (specific tour times vary and are subject to change).

The Crown Court, which forms part of the guided tour, is an active courthouse, and whilst tours always take place, the number of rooms available can be restricted by court activity. Tour times also vary according to the time of year and the day of the week that you visit.

Wheelchair access is severely limited, and there is an interactive kiosk situated in the gift shop (located in the Shire Hall lobby) for anyone unable to take part in a tour. This includes a virtual tour with 360 degree views of the rooms themselves. Unfortunately, the tour route itself is not wheelchair accessible.

Registered carers are admitted to the tour free of charge.

Access throughout the site (and thus on the tour itself) is via uneven floor surfaces. The tour route has changing floor levels and flights of stairs throughout. Tours last approximately 60 minutes. Information sheets can be provided for people who are deaf or hard of hearing, and these are also available in a number of foreign languages for people whose first language is not English (at present French, German, Spanish, Italian, Dutch, Maltese, Japanese, Greek and Chinese).

Pre-Arrival

Lancaster Castle is located in the centre of the city and is sign-posted from junctions 33 and 34 of the M6 motorway.

The castle is situated at the top of a hill, and so all pedestrian routes to the building are via a steep climb. The castle is a five minute walk from the railway station; the bus station is a ten to fifteen minute walk away.

The streets surrounding the castle are a mixture of paving flags, cobbles, and tarmac and are uneven in places.

Arrival and Car-Parking Facilities

There is a car park on site, situated at the rear of the castle, but on most weekdays it is primarily intended for people attending the crown court. However, we will always try to accommodate visitors with mobility problems; limited-mobility visitors are strongly recommended to contact us in advance with regard to car parking. There are also 'pay and display' spaces around the castle perimeter, and other car parks are available within walking distance. 'Blue Badge' holders should consult Lancaster City Council policies in regard to the use of blue badges in pay and display spaces (Tel. 01524 582000).

The aforementioned car park is lit at night by streetlight-style lamps. It is primarily tarmac and generally level, with some cobbles on the lower part of the approach to it. From the car park, it is a short distance to the Shire Hall entrance - the route is tarmacked, with flagstones at the entrance between a small area of cobbles. The other walkways within the castle grounds leading to the Shire Hall entrance are mostly flagged with some tarmac. The width of the Shire Hall entrance is approximately 94cm (37").

The Tour Route

The tour takes in a number of different levels within the building which require the ascent and descent of short flights of stairs. The castle is unsuitable for buggies, prams and wheelchairs. Buggies, prams etc. can be left in a designated spot prior to the start of the tour at the owner's risk. Please ask a member of staff before the tour if you would like to do this.

Baggage and personal belongings cannot be stored on site.

There is seating in most of the rooms viewed on the tour. Some of the rooms visited during the guided tour have a limited number of illustrated display boards which are written in large print supplemented by the use of illustrations and photographs. The same is true for the information panels in A-Wing.

Floor surfaces are a mixture of flagstone, cobbles, tarmac, concrete, wood, vinyl, and short-pile carpeted areas. Floor surfaces are uneven throughout the building.

Areas are well lit, with a variety of bulbs/tubes used including fluorescent, low energy bulbs, LEDs, fibre optics, spotlights and floodlighting.

There are no disabled conveniences on site. There are public toilets (for visitors only) on the first floor of the Shire Hall complex. The toilets are lit by low energy bulbs or fluorescent tubes. The floors are vinyl and the taps are a mixture of standard fittings and push fittings. There are no baby changing facilities on site.

Visitors are alerted to any emergency within the Shire Hall complex via both audible sounders and flashing lights.

The Shire Hall Lobby

The Shire Hall lobby currently acts as the visitor reception area. It contains a ticket desk and gift shop.

There is sufficient space between fixtures and fittings in the shop for wheelchair and pushchair access around the floor area, and staff are happy to assist where possible. Merchandise in the shop is displayed on a variety of fixtures and fittings, including spinners, tables, islands, and bookshelves.

A Wing

A Wing, in the former prison, remains part of the guided tour. Here there is a small exhibition about prison life consisting of panels and objects, with some use of sound effects. Access to A Wing is across the castle courtyard which is adjacent to where construction work is currently taking place. The construction area is segregated from the tour route, but visitors should expect some noise associated with the construction industry whilst in that area.

Additional Information

We are a member of the Visitor Attraction Quality Assurance Scheme (VAQAS).

All Lancashire County Council staff are trained in emergency evacuation procedures and a safety announcement is made prior to the start of all tours.

All Lancashire County Council staff also receive relevant equality and diversity training.

Assistance dogs are welcome, and we can provide water if required.