

Access Policy

Princes Hall Access Policy 2012

Access Policy

Rushmoor Borough Council is committed to meeting its statutory obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and to ensuring that everyone who uses the Council's facilities are provided with services which are equally accessible by all people.

The Council's aim is to make the Borough a better place in which to live and work, and aims to promote the provision of environments that are safe, convenient and enjoyable for use by everyone.

The Council supports and welcomes the involvement of the Rushmoor Access Group, an independent body, in providing advice and guidance on access issues relating to goods, services and facilities provided in Rushmoor, including those provided by the Council itself.

As a service provided by Rushmoor Borough Council, the Princes Hall is firmly committed to enabling all our patrons to participate in our events equally and with dignity and respect.

In order to further this commitment, the Princes Hall has adopted the Access Policy set out in this document. For the purposes of this policy, "disability" is to be understood in the broadest sense of the word and covers all disabilities coming within the scope of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

Key Aims

The key aims of this policy are to ensure that:

1. All our patrons are able to access any event that is taking place at the Princes Hall.
2. Patrons with a disability are not treated less favourably for a reason relating to their disability than others to whom that reason does not apply.
3. All reasonable steps are taken to creating a 'barrier free' environment and the Princes Hall will ensure that improved access to the built environment will be comprehensively addressed.
4. All reasonable steps are taken to change practices, policies or procedures, which make it impossible or unreasonably difficult for patrons with disabilities to use any of our services or facilities.
5. All reasonable steps are taken to provide auxiliary aids and services to enable and assist patrons with a disability in making use of our services.

6. Information deemed 'helpful' by Rushmoor Borough Council would be available in alternative formats. Information not available in an alternative format from the date of production will be made available in the appropriate format within 48 working hours of a request.

7. Patrons with a disability therefore feel as valued and experience the same high levels of satisfaction with our services as our other patrons.

REALISING OUR AIMS

Set out below are some of the ways in which we have sought to realise our key aims.

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1. Access to the Theatre

1.1 Staff

Trained and motivated staff not only perform better in their jobs, but are crucial to our success.

The Council is committed to providing training opportunities for personal development.

The Theatre Manager has overall responsibility for looking after our patrons' interests and should be your first point of contact if you have any queries regarding this policy.

1.2 Parking

The Princes Hall has accessible parking bays close to the entrance that are available for any patrons who hold a blue or orange disabled badge. These bays have a limited availability and are only offered for use if unoccupied. An additional car-parking permit is required to use the space located within the staff car park to the side of the building, which can be obtained from the Box Office on the day of the performance.

In addition to the two bays, there are accessible parking spaces on street near to the Princes Hall. The next nearest car parks are Princes Gardens, High Street and The Wellington Centre. Level access is available to the Princes Hall from all car parks.

All accessible spaces are located on the same level as an entrance to the Princes Hall.

Any transport is left at the owner's own risk and Princes Hall cannot take responsibility for loss or damage

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Please note that, due to health and safety reasons, our staff members are unable to assist patrons with disabilities in and out of their transport or mobility equipment.

The following organisation may be of assistance with transport to the Princes Hall:

DIAL-A-RIDE 0845 6024 118

1.3 Those who need additional assistance to view shows and events

The Princes Hall recognises that some customers with disabilities may require somebody to be present in order to assist them access their services and facilities. For the purposes of this document and theatre policy, this person / assistant / carer shall be known as an 'Essential Companion'.

We are happy to offer free or reduced price seats to Essential Companions to enable our customers with disabilities to visit the theatre.

We offer a free ticket for an Essential Companion attending with a person with a disability who receives the **higher rate** of the Disability Living Allowance - Care or Mobility Component, the **higher rate** of Attendance Allowance, the **enhanced rate** of the Personal Independence Payment - Daily Living or Mobility Component or holds a **Certificate of Visual Impairment**.

...a 50% price reduction on an adult / top price ticket for an Essential Companion attending with a person with a disability who receives the **middle rate** of the Disability Living Allowance - Care Component, the **standard rate** of the Personal Independence Payment - Daily Living Component or the **lower rate** of Attendance Allowance

Please note: If you are in receipt of any other benefit, we regret that you do not qualify for this scheme.

The membership scheme is not open to or intended for those who simply require a companion / friend or require assistance with transportation to the Princes Hall.

An 'Essential Companion' is somebody who is able to help the person with a disability to use and enjoy the services of the Princes Hall, as well as ensuring their safety, wellbeing and enjoyment.

The 'Essential Companion' should familiarise themselves with the layout of the Princes Hall and the location of services. They should liaise with Princes Hall staff if the person with a disability requires assistance and take instructions should there be a need to evacuate the building. The 'Essential Companion' is required to attend to the needs of the person with a disability at all times whilst on the premises.

As the Princes Hall is a publicly funded organisation, we require either the person with a disability or their appointed representative to complete the attached form and provide proof of entitlement.

For Individual Membership the 'Essential Companion' free ticket will be provided on a 1:1 bases. For Group Membership we can offer an 'Essential Companion' free ticket on a 1 companion per person (1:1), a 1 companion per 2 people (1:2) or 1 companion per 4 people (1:4) bases dependent on the needs of the person/ people with a disability.

All tickets are subject to availability at the time of booking. The Princes Hall reserves the right to review the availability of tickets within the scheme, to review a member's eligibility and to revoke that membership following review.

We will endeavour to process your application within 10 working days of receipt and, if you are successful, will advise you of your unique ECS number which should be quoted when booking your Essential Companion ticket. You will not be able to reserve or purchase any free or discounted Essential Companion seats until we advise you of your ECS number. Free or discounted Essential Companion concessions cannot be applied retrospectively to tickets already purchased.

All tickets are subject to availability at the time of booking. The Princes Hall reserves the right to review the availability of tickets within the scheme, to review a member's eligibility and to revoke that membership following review.

Once successful, you will need to renew your membership every 3 years, (subject to the continuation of this scheme).

There may be the occasional shows for which this benefit may be suspended. For instance, the Princes Hall may have been fortunate enough to attract a major artist to the venue who would normally only play much larger theatres and, to make the show work financially, some sort of charge for all Essential Companion tickets will have to be made.

1.3.1 Other Options

However, if you don't qualify for the 'Essential Companion Scheme', other options are available to you:

Certain seating preferences can be kept on record to ensure that when booking you are offered the most appropriate position for your needs. i.e. aisle seats, close to the front, etc.

A steward can be made available to assist you with access from your drop off point outside the theatre to your seat.

2. Inside the Theatre

2.1 General Access

There is access to all floors via the main lift. The main accessible / level entrance is located on the ground floor under the main steps, and has direct access to the lift.

All of our stairs have handrails except those in the auditorium. During the summer months decorative flower planters are placed at regular intervals on the outside handrails of the main exterior steps. The centre handrail remains unaffected.

The use of motorised mobility scooters or larger motorised wheelchairs in the busy public areas of the theatre may pose a hazard.

Patrons with a disability who are unable to access shows and events in the main auditorium at the Princes Hall by other means must inform the Box Office at the time of booking or (where tickets have not been pre-booked) immediately upon arrival.

Patrons with a disability who are unable to access meetings and functions in any part of the building at the Princes Hall by other means must inform the Administration Reception at the time of booking or immediately upon arrival.

Our staff will be able to provide those customers with information regarding the safe use of their scooter in the Princes Hall. Customers who do not need to enter the Princes Hall on their mobility scooter are able to park them outside under the main steps. If available the Princes or Tichborne Suite can be used for mobility scooter parking, 32amp sockets would also be available for mobility scooter recharging. Any equipment is left at the owner's own risk and Princes Hall cannot take responsibility for loss or damage.

Accessible toilets are available on the ground floor, within the main male and female toilets. An additional unisex accessible toilet is also available on the first floor, from the right hand side of the main auditorium

2.2 Princes, Tichborne & Edinburgh Suites

The Princes and Tichborne suites are located on the Ground Floor, there is level access via the main accessible / level located under the main steps

The Edinburgh Suite is located on the 2nd Floor. There is access to all floors via the main lift.

All of our stairs have handrails

2.3 Main Auditorium

The terraced and balcony seating within the auditorium is of the traditional raked style with steps to each row. Customers with mobility difficulties may wish to avoid this area. Level access is however available into the stalls seating and the back row of the balcony.

For shows and staged events the Princes Hall provides six dedicated spaces for wheelchair users, which are located in the stalls area of the auditorium, adjacent to an emergency exit. Additional seating is provided next to these spaces for an 'Essential Companion' and then other members of the group (if any).

The Princes Hall reserves the right to refuse admission to any customer where it is believed by the Duty Manager that, at such time, admission would contravene the conditions of the licence and / or pose a higher than acceptable risk to public safety.

Patrons who require particular seating arrangements in order to accommodate difficulties they may have in attending performances should contact the Box Office on 01252 329155 or email princeshallboxoffice@rushmoor.gov.uk.

Patrons (and their 'Essential Companions') are welcome to visit the Princes Hall prior to attending a performance in order to familiarise themselves with the buildings layout. These visits can be arranged by contacting the Box Office on 01252 329155.

The Box Office is briefed on the style of performances in case either a patron or their 'Essential Companions' require further information as to its suitability for that patron prior to deciding whether to book. Information is offered in good faith. However please be aware that the creative elements of a live performance may not have been finalised at the time of booking and may even be changed during the performance day.

Warning notices advising of the use of stroboscopic lighting effects and pyrotechnic explosives are displayed in the main foyer on the day of the performances concerned. Audible announcements before the start of each show will also be made.

3 Further assistance for those with impaired hearing

All Box Office clerks are trained in type talk in order to facilitate the booking of tickets or other services by patrons who have impaired hearing.

3.1 Hearing-aid systems:

The Main Auditorium of the Princes Hall and selected areas of the building have Hearing-aid systems installed to help those with impaired hearing.

3.1.1 Main Auditorium

The Main Auditorium of the Princes Hall has a 'Radio Audio Enhancement' system installed.

All seats in the Main Auditorium are able to access this system via radio pendant receivers.

The radio pendant receivers are available and can be collected from the Box Office before the performance commences, subject to availability. No fee is charged for the use of these receivers, but please notify the box office staff when booking if you require the use of this system. Your hearing aid will need to be switched to the "T" option to use this system. If your hearing aid does not have this option please ask a member of our staff and we will assist where possible.

For loud music concerts this system may not be suitable. The Box Office is able to provide advice as to whether our system may be suitable in respect of any particular show.

3.1.2 Princes, Tichborne & Edinburgh Suites

A portable 'Radio Audio Enhancement' system is available for use within the Princes, Tichborne & Edinburgh Suites, subject to availability. Please notify the Administration Office if this system is required.

The radio pendant receivers are available and can be collected from the Box Office before the meeting / function, subject to availability. No fee is charged for the use of these receivers. Your hearing aid will need to be switched to the "T" option to use this system. If your hearing aid does not have this option please ask a member of our staff and we will assist where possible.

3.1.3 Box Office Counter

A hearing 'Induction Loop' system is available at our Box Office counter. This requires you to switch your hearing aid to the "T" option.

Our systems are regularly checked to ensure that they are operating correctly. However, in the unlikely event that you experience any difficulty, please report the matter to a member of staff.

3.2 Signed Performances:

The theatre also arranges signed interpreted performances of selected shows from time-to-time. Details of these shows may be obtained upon request from the Box Office and will be included within the seasonal brochure and on the theatre's website.

4. Further assistance for those whose sight is impaired

A seat space can be made available for the use of guide/assistance dogs, and we will be happy to provide a bowl of water on request. Please advise the Box Office at the time of booking, so that suitable arrangements can be made.

Large print versions of our 'What's On' brochure are available on request from the Box Office.

Large print versions of these documents, as well as of those programmes that are produced in-house, are also available with advance notice to the Box Office.

5. Your comments

We regularly review this policy as well as the facilities we provide to patrons with disabilities, in order to ensure that all our patrons feel welcome at the Princes Hall.

We greatly appreciate any suggestions you may have about how we could improve your access to, and enjoyment of, the Princes Hall and its facilities.

Comment cards are obtainable from our staff upon request and are also available in large print. Alternatively comments can be made via email to the manager

david.phillips@rushmoor.gov.uk

or by post to

David Phillips, Cultural Services Manager

The Princes Hall, Princes Way, Aldershot, Hampshire, GU11 1NX