

The Scotch Whisky Experience



Access Guide 2024



The Scotch Whisky Experience Access Guide 2024

This Access Guide aims to accurately describe the facilities and services that we offer all our visitors.

The Scotch Whisky Experience, 354
Castlehill, The Royal Mile, Edinburgh
EH1 2NE

Grid Reference: NT 25422 73516

For full information on visiting us,
please see our website:

www.scotchwhiskyexperience.co.uk

Tel: 0131 220 0441

Email:

info@scotchwhiskyexperience.co.uk

The Scotch Whisky Experience is a five-star visitor attraction at the top of Edinburgh's Royal Mile, where we've been inspiring visitors to Edinburgh about the joys of Scotch whisky for over 35 years.

Whether you take a tour, visit our shop or restaurant, or enjoy an event or tasting here, we guarantee a sensational experience.

The Scotch Whisky Experience is accessible for wheelchair users and those with specific access needs. We will do our best to create an enjoyable visit for everyone and

welcome enquiries in advance of your visit.

If you require any further information about specific access or need advice on planning your visit, please do contact us on +44 (0)131 220 0441 or email

info@scotchwhiskyexperience.co.uk .

If there is anything we can do to provide any further information within this Access Guide, please do contact us and we will be happy to offer our assistance.

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Introduction

The Scotch Whisky Experience is a five-star visitor attraction, open every day of the year except Christmas day, offering a range of tour experiences, tastings, restaurant, whisky shop, and private events. We are located within the Old Town of Edinburgh and UNESCO world heritage site, beside Edinburgh Castle at the top of the Royal Mile, which is a steep, cobbled hill.

We are a member of VisitScotland's Quality Assurance Scheme and are

proud to be a five-star attraction. We are also a GOLD member of the Green Tourism Business Scheme.

Our building and our tours have been designed with easy access for mobility impaired visitors and wheelchair users. We have 18 languages on offer on our tour by form of a touch-screen audio mobile device with a personal induction loop. We also have British and American sign language. We have a hearing loop available at all public till points.



Getting here

Pre-Arrival

For full details and a map of how to reach us, please refer to our website at:

<https://www.scotchwhiskyexperience.co.uk/plan-your-visit>

Alternatively you can plan your journey by car or public transport using a journey planning website such as www.travelinescotland.com or www.theaa.com/routeplanner; simply enter your postcode and ours, which is EH1 2NE.

Train

- The nearest railway station is Waverley Station (0.6 miles away). There are taxi ranks located outside of the railway station and these are accessible by lift.
- For information about the accessibility of the station see:

- <http://www.nationalrail.co.uk/stations/EDB/details.html>
- There are taxi ranks located outside of the railway station on the Market Street exit, and these are accessed by lift.
- To ensure an accessible taxi, please pre-book by calling City Cabs (www.citycabs.co.uk) at 0131 228 1211.
- We do not offer a collection service.

Bus

- There are no buses that go directly to The Scotch Whisky Experience, however there are many stops in the surrounding area.
- For information about city bus ticket options see www.lothianbuses.com/tickets/ticket-options
- Buses 3,5,7,8,14,30,31,37 and 49 all cross over, and stop on North Bridge; it is a 0.4 mile walk to The Scotch Whisky Experience.
- For more information about the accessibility of city buses see

www.lothianbuses.com/about-us/community/accessible-buses

- Edinburgh tour buses stop at the bottom of Castlehill, which is just a short walk from The Scotch Whisky Experience.

Tram

- Edinburgh also offers a tram service, which stops 0.5miles from The Scotch Whisky Experience. For information about city tram ticket options see <https://edinburghtrams.com/tickets/ticket-options>
- For more information about the accessibility of city trams see

<http://edinburghtrams.com/community/tram-access>

- Edinburgh Trams offer transport to and from Edinburgh Airport

Taxi

- If you require an accessible taxi, this can be booked in advance with City Cabs (0131 228 1211)

Drop off point

- To access The Scotch Whisky Experience customers can be dropped off at our front entrance. From April to October there is restricted vehicular access to Castlehill; however, drop offs and pick-ups will be allowed for disabled visitors.
- All streets that lead to the Scotch Whisky Experience are on an incline. The streets are cobbled and are uneven in most places. The pavement is flush with the road, so there is no kerb. The

route with the gentlest incline is along the Lawnmarket.

Car Parking

- There is no parking onsite however there is an NCP car park on Castle Terrace with 750 spaces, 6 of which are blue badge disabled bays. The NCP car park is 0.4 miles from the main entrance of the Scotch Whisky Experience. There are intercoms located at the entrance, exit and pay machines if assistance is required. There is on-road parking around the site as well, however this is paid by the hour.

- The surface from the car park to the entrance of the Scotch Whisky Experience is a mix of both paved and cobblestones. Depending on the route one takes it is either an incline, or steps.
- The lighting in the NCP car park is new LED lighting. Street lights light the route to the Scotch Whisky Experience.



Arrival

To access the Scotch Whisky Experience people can be dropped off at our front entrance. From April to October there is restricted vehicular access to Castlehill.

There is no intercom or call button required to gain access to the building during opening hours. There

is a hearing loop in place for hard of hearing visitors once they are at any of the till points (such as in the shop, or at the reception).

The main entrance to the Scotch Whisky Experience is level, and therefore a ramp is not required.

The entrance door is an automatic sliding door and does not require manual opening.



- The entrance door to the Scotch Whisky Experience is 84 cm or 33 inches wide.
- There is no alternative level access entrance to the Scotch Whisky Experience.
- The walkway to the reception has a small incline.



- There is a projected image onto the flooring at the far end (please see above image). This is using Gesturetek technology which is an interactive floor design with special effects and is an engaging full-body interactive experience that immerses users. If your child /

or any adult in your party would find the moving image a problem, please turn right when you get into the building and enter our box office area by going through our Whisky Shop.

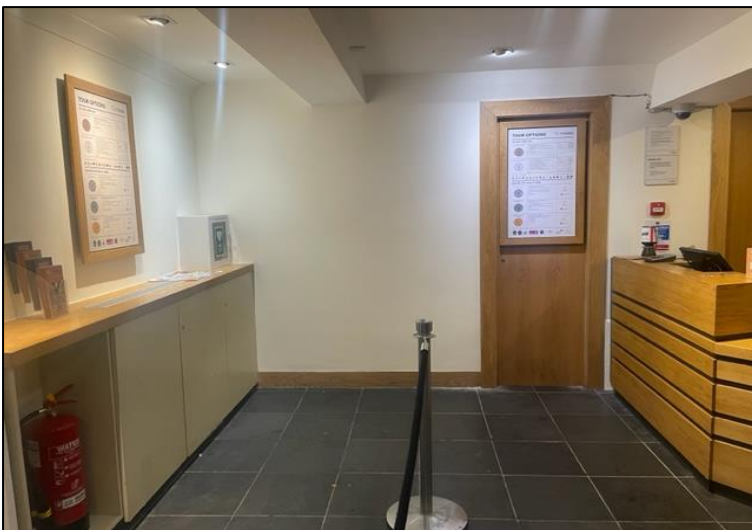
- The flooring is stone.

Main Entrance, Reception, and Ticketing Area

- The reception is on the ground floor.
- This area is level throughout.
- There is bench seating available in this area should it be required.

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- The floor is made of tile.
- The area is well and evenly lit by ceiling spotlights.
- There is a low counter desk area suitable for wheelchair users.



- There is no glass divide at reception, therefore assistance can be given to those lip reading.
- Essential companions go free when accompanied by a full paying customer. (Excluding whisky and Glencairn glass). To include the whisky and glass this will be full price.
- There is a hearing loop system at till points.
- There is clear directional signage throughout the attraction.
- There is also a touchscreen providing information in 20 languages at the reception.



The Tour

- Door widths vary throughout the tour with the narrowest width being 83cm or 32.5 inches. There are no doors that customers will have to push open throughout their tour. The exception to this is the accessible toilet, however you may notify any of our team who will assist you with the door.

- Our tour has seating available in all areas.
- The tour floor surfaces vary between tile, wood, and marble.

Languages available

- The tour is available in 20 languages** including British Sign Language and American Sign Language and are delivered by an audio-visual handset. It is also available in 7 further languages in subtitles: English, Dutch, French, German, Italian, Spanish and Swedish.



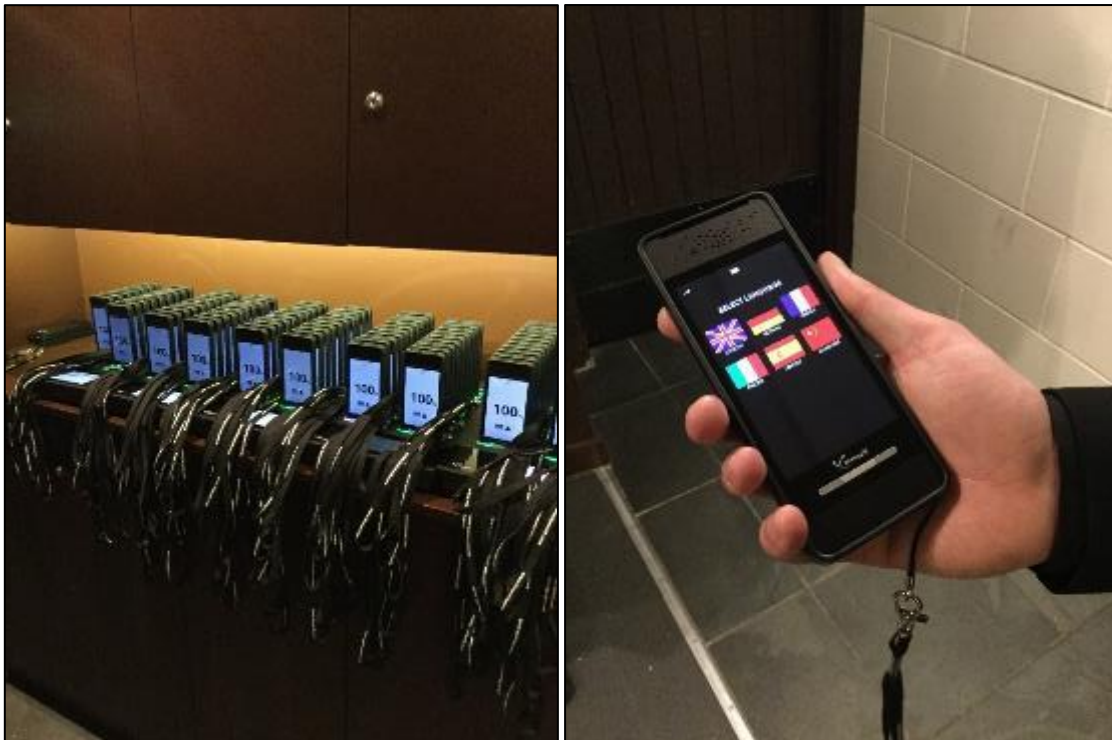
***** We are working with Deaf Action Scotland to translate our brand new tour experiences into BSL and ASL. These new areas cover the first 15 minutes of the tour, the remaining 35 minutes is already available in both BSL and ASL via our media device. In the meantime English transcripts are available for the new areas. For French, German, Spanish, Italian, Dutch and Swedish a combination of transcripts and subtitles are available.***



Handsets

Customers are given an Iphone style handset. This comes with a lanyard for easy use and can be placed round the neck. The audio can be listened to like on a phone handset, however for hard of hearing customers, we recommend that you bring earphones with you if you have some. We do have a couple of sets

for use if you do not have your own.
Please ask your guide. These devices
have a Hearing Aid Optimised (HAO)
speaker within them.



Personal induction loop

We have six personal induction loops available for visitors who require to hear via their own hearing aids.

Please request one of our digital guides and then a personal induction loop can plug into this. The personal loop hangs around the user's neck and transmits to their own hearing aid. This is available for all the languages we offer.



First part of the tour:

The tour starts adjacent to our box-office. You will enter 'Origins' where your tour will start. The tour guide will be waiting for you on arrival to this space and once all customers have entered, the main tour narrative will begin. There is a short ramp on entry to this area.



The following areas are presented through a combination of your live guide and an overhead soundtrack of our “Spirit of Whisky” a more theatrical and dramatic voice in

comparison to the warmth of your live guide.

Origins

The entry into this area is through a double door (photo above) with a width of 186cm / 73 inches. The flooring is a hard-wearing resin, in a non-slip grey colour. The tour guide stands on a colour changing platform. In this area, the landscape and weather of Scotland is shown in an immersive experience on 3 walls and the flooring is also projected onto. The scenery changes as the show progresses and there is a thunderstorm with changes to the

lighting. There is lightening sound with visual effects. One of the effects shows barley swirling in the air. It is a three-dimensional, immersive experience. The show also explores the underground, where near darkness occurs. The speed of transition between graphics is quite fast. The exit is lit, via a double door of 186cm / 73 inches / single door measurement is 100cm / 39 inches.

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The Art of Whisky Making



This area has bench seating with a 50cm gap between benches. There is space for two wheelchair users at either side of the front bench. The benches are of varying heights, with the front bench being 45cm from the

floor. The flooring is a slip resistant vinyl with a dark oak finish. This area is guide-led where they tell the story of Scotch with visual storytelling.

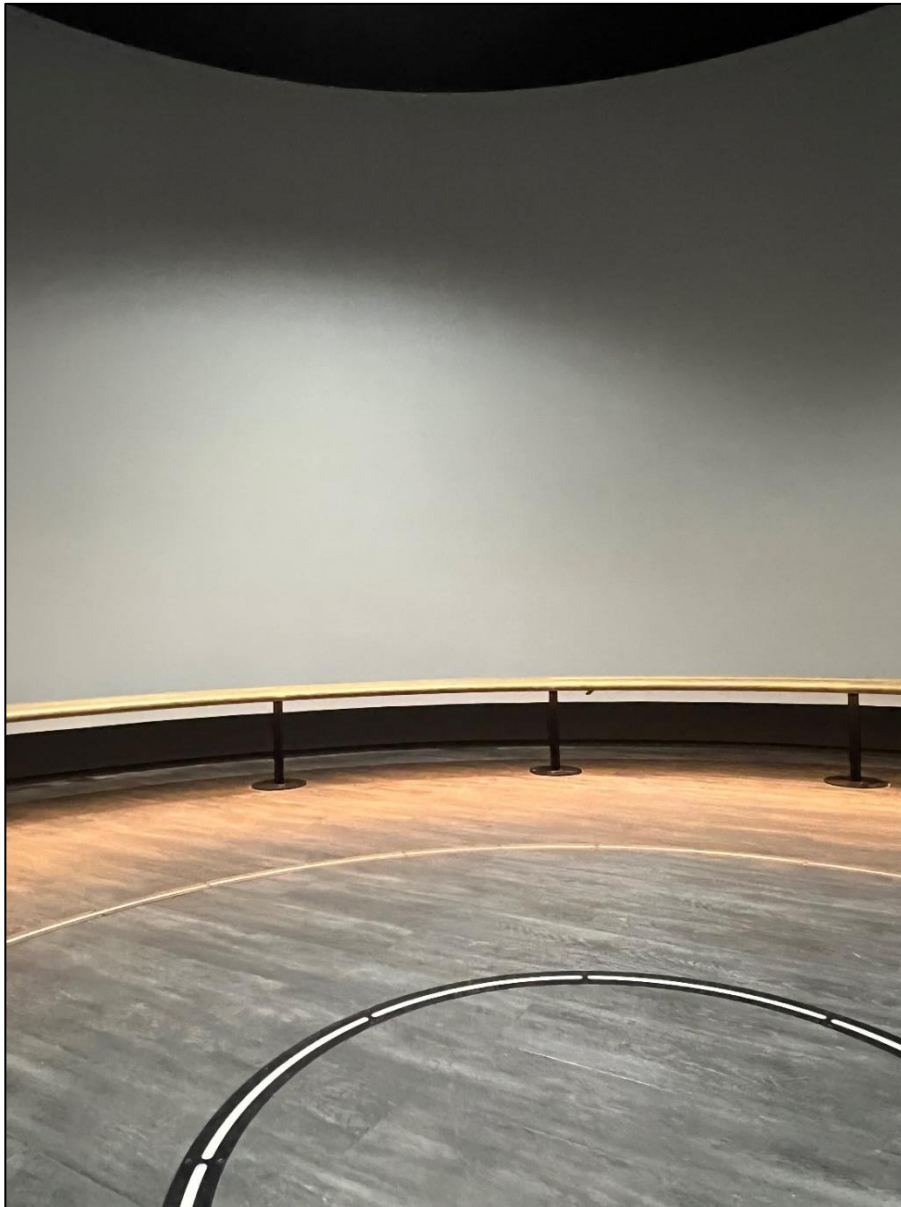
Within the presentation the guide will mention the 'Heart of the run' and an area of the room will light up on the right to show the spirit safe. When this area is not lit up, there is a mirrored effect. This is explained in the audio description too.

There is a sculpture in this area which incorporates audio and visual effects.

Maturation



As you move through into the next area, you will be seated, with space for two wheelchair users. The door into this space is 132.4cm / 52 inches.



The flooring is a charred oak effect vinyl with a plank effect. There is LED lighting on the floor in the shape of a circle. This is not raised, the floor is

even. TYou are seated within a mock barrel on bench seating with a height of 45cm / 18 inches. The room gives the sensation of being inside an enormous whisky barrel and the walls (staves) of the barrel change from being staves to showing how the barrel is fired and charred, with flames projected onto the barrel walls. There is also representation of the barrel filling up with spirit and starting the maturation process. The visual effects are large scale and dramatic (swirling visual) with audio effects and moving images.

The above areas all have level access and seating throughout. The exit door width from this area is 85cm / 33.5 inches.

Angels at Work



This is a corridor display which takes you to the stairway to the next area.

The flooring in this area is a non-slip Forbo vinyl floor in natural oak effect. The doorway to exit this area is 125.2cm / 49 inches.

To access the next part of tour, this is accessed by stairs or the lift. There are two flights of stairs to climb.

The first with 16 steps, the second with 14 steps.



There are exhibition panels which can be read before entering The Sense of Scotland Room which explain the 'life of a cask' and how barrels are made in the cooperage. The font size can be seen in the image below, but our tour guide is always available in this area to

provide the information described on the panels.



The Sense of Scotland Room



The Sense of Scotland Room has a 180° screen which has an audio-visual presentation. Customers are seated throughout the presentation on the wooden benches shown in the photographs. There is space for two wheelchairs within this area too. The language devices can also be used. The tour guide giving the presentation in this room wears a microphone. There is music to accompany the presentation on the screen, so the sound of the tour guides voice is increased.

Within The Sense of Scotland Room, visitors are given a postcard with a

map of Scotland and the whisky producing regions are highlighted by a 'scratch and sniff' and colour coded mechanism. On this card, infographics, and text as well as colour has been used. High contrast colours have been used and thick lines to enable those with a sight impairment to be able to distinguish between the regions. Research has gone into the colours and pantones used so that those with a colour impairment will hopefully be able to understand and differentiate between the regions.

The Blender's Sample Room



The Blender's Sample Room is the next area on tour which is accessed from The Sense of Scotland Room via a widened doorway. Customers are seated throughout. There is space for two wheelchairs in this room. There is a visual film, and the tour guide also

wears a microphone to project the volume of their voice over the presentation. The language devices can also be used here. The room is dimly lit as can be seen from the photograph. Coloured spot lighting is used which is projected onto the bench in front of you as part of the presentation.

The Diageo Claive Vidiz Scotch Whisky Collection





The next area on the tour is accessed through a widened doorway from The Blender's Sample Room. The Diageo Claive Vidiz Scotch Whisky Collection is a room with floor to ceiling bottles of whisky lit by led lights. This part of the tour is not seated; however, a seat can be requested if required. A tasting is

conducted in this area. The flooring in this area is marble.

The McIntyre Whisky Gallery and Bar

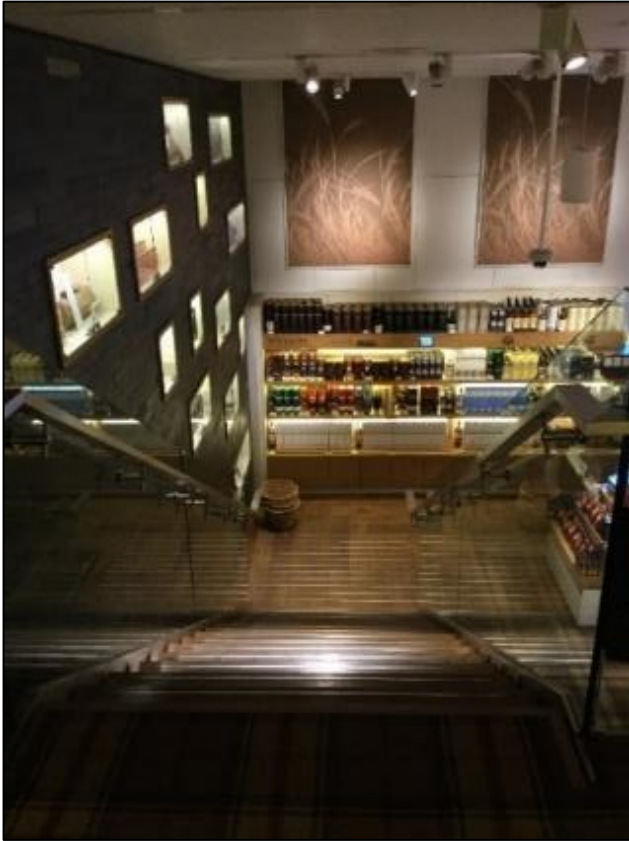


The tour ends in the McIntyre Gallery and Bar. This is a large, brightly lit area with wooden flooring and seating. There are two steps up to a viewing gallery showing views to the south of Edinburgh. The rest of the

area is a flat surface. There is a lowered section at the bar.

Exiting the tour

To exit the McIntyre Gallery there is a set of stairs down to a mezzanine level in the shop, or the lift can be taken to the ground floor. From the mezzanine level (here there are liqueurs, blended and grain whisky for sale) there are 16 steps down to the shop and ground floor exit.



The Shop

The flooring within the shop is both carpet and wood.

- There is level access to our shop which is located on the ground floor and does not require steps nor a lift to access.

- There are two entrances to the shop. The main entrance door is 120 cm or 47.2 inches wide while the side entrance is 84 cm or 33.1 inches wide.
- The shop covers two floors, with a small mezzanine level only accessed by stairs. Our staff are available should customers require assistance regarding merchandise from the mezzanine level. The shop has ample room between fixtures for a wheelchair or pushchair, and staff are available should customers require assistance navigating

between fixtures throughout the shop.

- There is a low counter desk area suitable for wheelchair users.
- Merchandise is displayed well on shelves up to a height of 188 cm or 74 inches.
- There is low level background music playing as well as whisky-related noises which come from the wonder wall audio visual feature.
- There is a hearing loop system available at the till points with clear signage.

- Staff are available for assistance if required.



Amber Restaurant and Bar

Amber Restaurant and Bar can be accessed from the ground level by 18 stairs, or by lift.



- The door width to access Amber Restaurant is 86 cm or 33.9 inches wide.

- There is a slight incline into the restaurant, which you enter by means of a ramp.



- There is ample room to access tables by wheelchair or pushchair, and assistance is available if required.



- There is a variety of seating in Amber Restaurant. Customers can choose either high or low tables, easy chairs, tub chairs, bench seating or bar stools. The clear height underneath the high tables is 83.5 cm or 32.3 inches. The clear height underneath the low tables is 73 cm or 28.7 inches.
- Amber Restaurant is well lit.

- The floor surfaces in Amber Restaurant are a combination of Amtico and textured vinyl.
- Amber Restaurant with advanced notice can cater to all dietary needs. There are vegetarian and gluten free options on the menu for customers – these would not need to be pre-selected – as well as information on the 13 officially recognised EU allergens. We also provide soya milk for coffee, tea, and hot chocolate.
- Amber Restaurant offers table service; however, customers may order drinks at the bar.

- An A4 magnifying sheet can be provided for reading menus, and staff are also happy to read and explain menus to customers if required.
- The crockery in Amber Restaurant is white, while the tables are made of wood. White tablecloths are used for private events.



The Amber Restaurant Whisky bar is adjacent to the main restaurant and serves nearly 500 Scotch whiskies. There are tables and chairs to sit at and bar seats.

- The nearest WCs and accessible WCs to Amber Restaurant are

located beside the main entrance to the restaurant.

Public Toilets

- There are public WCs on both the 1st floor and on the lower ground floor.
- There is a unisex accessible WC on the lower ground floor.
- The accessible WC is accessed by either a set of stairs or the lift. In total, there are 18 steps leading to the WC from the ground floor.
- The door to the accessible WC is 80 cm or 31.5 inches wide.

- There is clear space to the left side of the WC for a wheelchair, and this space is 78 cm or 30.7 inches wide.
- The height of the WC from floor to seat is 48 cm or 19 inches high.
- There are horizontal grab rails located to the left of the WC.
- There are baby changing facilities here.



Changing Places toilets nearby
are located at:

- [National Museum of Scotland](#)
- [The Booking Office \(JD Wetherspoon\) – Edinburgh Waverley Station](#)

Lift

- The lift provides access to most floors of the Scotch Whisky Experience. It cannot access the mezzanine level of the shop. It serves the restaurant, reception, tour, bars and event and office spaces.
- The entry door to the lift is 80 cm or 31.5 inches, and the lift is 140 cm or 55 inches deep.
- There are both audio and visual announcements informing visitors of the floor they have accessed.
- The buttons in the lift do have raised lettering; no braille is used.

- There is a mirror located on the left-hand side of the lift.
- The lighting in the lift is LED spotlights.
- The flooring in the lift is a PVC nonslip.
- There is no background music played in the lift.



Event spaces

The Castlehill Room



The Castlehill Room is a bright, airy room and is used for dinners, whisky tastings, and our Scotch whisky training school.

The Castlehill Room is carpeted throughout. With natural daylight and spot lighting. The nearest accessible toilet to the Castlehill

Room is on level -1 which can be accessed easily in the lift.

The Blender's Room



The Blender's Room has wooden flooring. With natural daylight and spot lighting. The nearest accessible toilet to the Castlehill Room is on level -1 which can be accessed easily in the lift.

Break-out space

The break-out space next to both The Castlehill Room and The Blender's Room has seating and toilets for guests use.

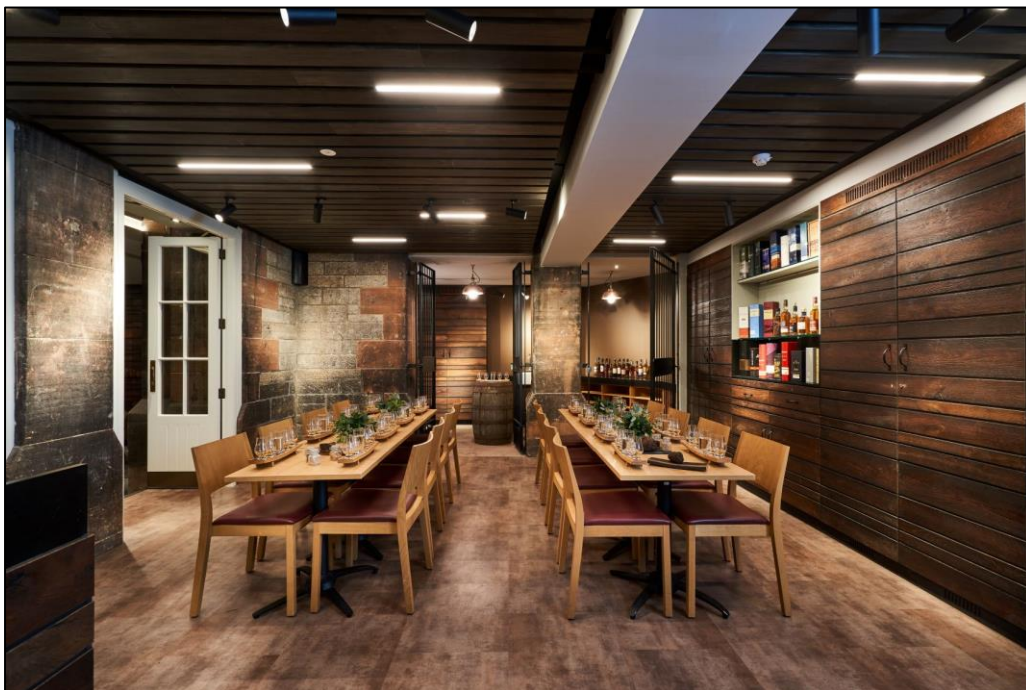
Whisky Bonds

The Whisky Bonds are located on level -2. There is lift access to this level.

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Whisky Bond 1



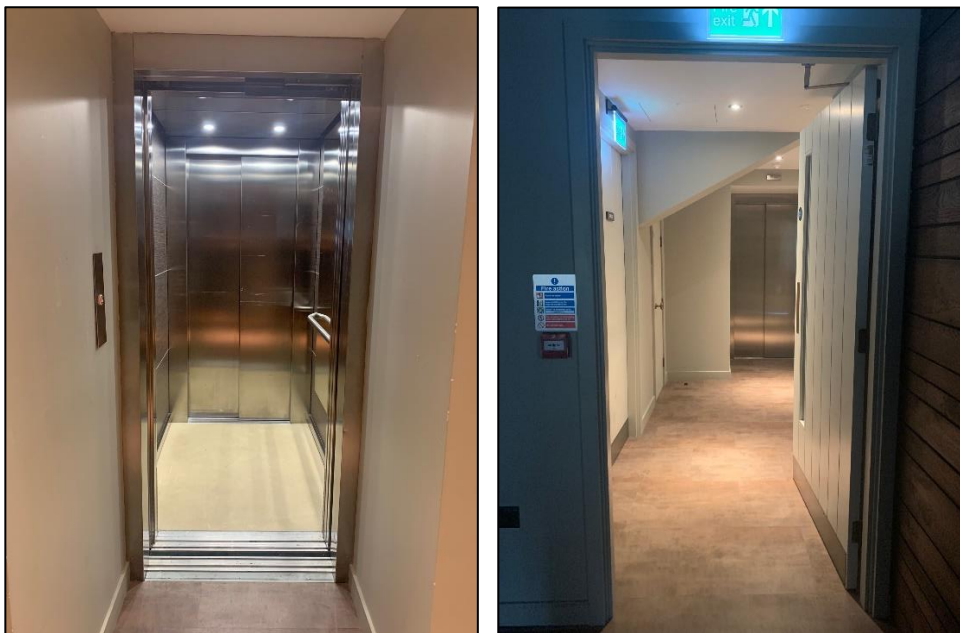
Whisky Bond 2

Stillhouse Suite



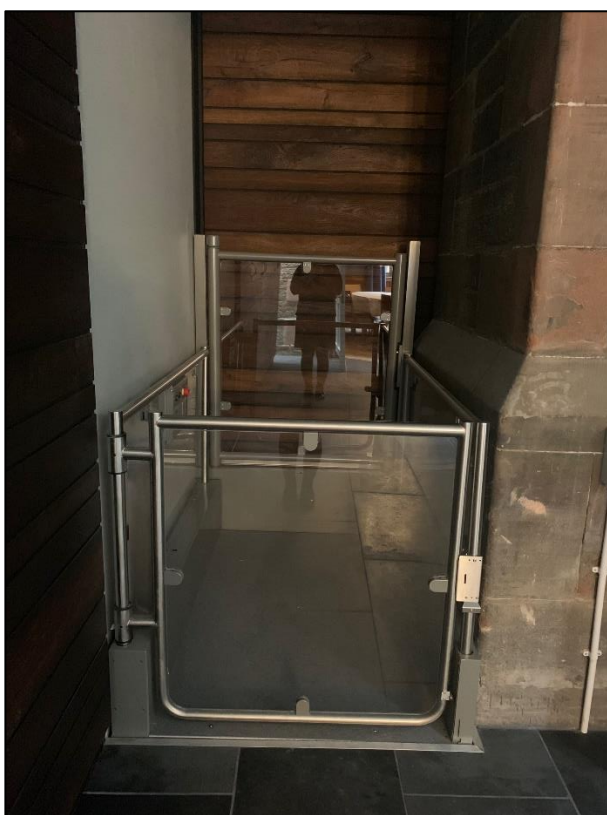
The Stillhouse Suite is accessed through the Whisky Bond. The width of the door is 101 cm.

Lift Access to Whisky Bonds & Stillhouse Suite



The door width on entry from the lift to the Whisky Bond is 96 cm. Within the Whisky Bond there is 3 steps for access to the lower level & The

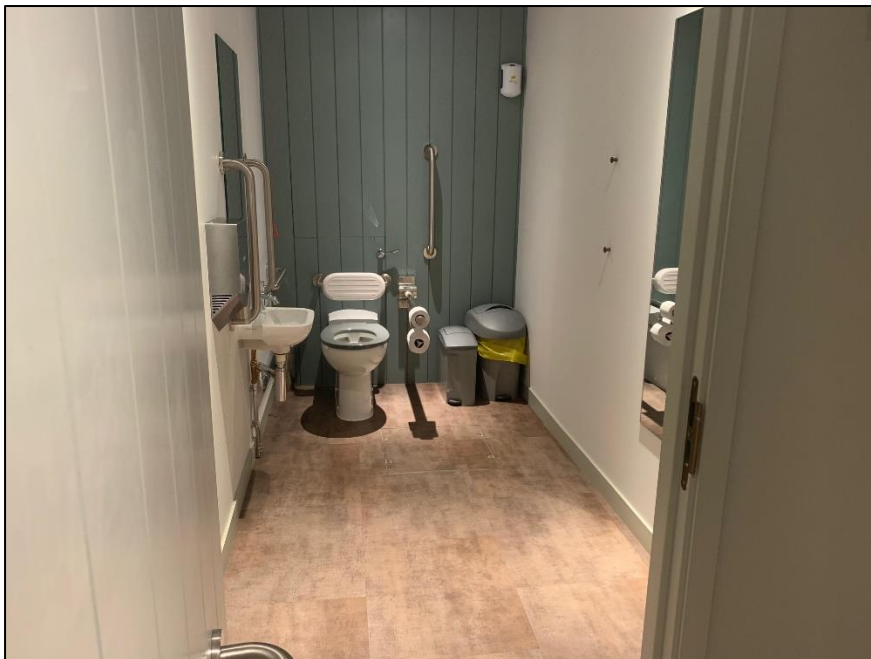
Stillhouse Suite. There is an internal lift here.



The width of this indoor accessible lift door is 120 cm.

Accessible toilet -2

There is an accessible toilet on level - 2.



The width of the accessible toilet door is:

- Door frame to door – 86 cm
- Door frame to bar – 83 cm
- Bar to floor – 67 cm
- Height to toilet seat – 48 cm

Additional Information

Wheelchairs and mobility scooters

Wheelchairs can be used throughout the building. We do not have an area where a mobility scooter could be charged. We have one manual wheelchair which can be borrowed.

Hidden impairments – We welcome those with hidden impairments. If it is your preference to visit at quieter

times, let us know and we can advise you when would be best to visit.

Assistance Dogs

We welcome assistance dogs and can provide water bowls for them. Please ask staff for assistance.

Signage

Signage throughout the building is created with black text on a white background. Font size varies, and pictograms are used where useful.

Magnifier sheet

We have a full-page (A4) magnifier sheet available in our shop and bars, ideal for magnifying small text on

whisky bottles or menus. If you wish to borrow it, please ask our staff.

Staff training

Staff are currently participating in the disability awareness training offered by VisitScotland. In addition, some of our senior members of staff have received further accessibility training.

First Aid

There are a number of staff trained as first aiders. There will always be a first aider on-site.

Smoking

Smoking is not permitted in any area of the business.

Local Accommodation providers

Details of local accommodation and their access statements are available at www.visitscotland.com .

Fire alarm

There are fire action notices at each fire alarm call point which detail what to do in case of an evacuation. In case of an evacuation, all customers inside the Scotch Whisky Experience will be led to safety by a member of the team.

Future Plans

The disability awareness online training by VisitScotland will be added to an employee's induction programme.

Our Senior Specialist Tours and Tastings Manager is currently completing a British sign language course and we hope to be able to then teach our visitor assistants in basic sign language.

Accessibility training is offered on rotation. We recently ran a course on how to work with people with dementia and hope to run another

training course soon on this with newer members of staff.

Recent Reviews

Please have a read of some of our recent accessibility reviews here:

[Euan's Guide](#) [Silver Travel Advisor](#)

[The Rough Guide to Accessible Britain](#)

[Simply Emma](#)

Contact Information

Address: The Scotch Whisky
Experience
354 Castlehill
The Royal Mile
Edinburgh
EH1 2NE

Telephone: 0131 220 0441

Email:

info@scotchwhiskyexperience.co.uk

Website:

www.scotchwhiskyexperience.co.uk

Grid Reference: NT 25422 73516

Hours of Operation: Standard Tour
Hours – 10am to 5.30pm (Platinum
Tour 5.45pm). See [website](#) for
seasonal opening times.

Local Accessible Taxi: City Cabs
0131 228 1211

Local Public Transport:

<http://lothianbuses.com/>

<http://edinburghtrams.com/>

<http://scotrail.co.uk>

Electric car charging points:

<https://chargeplacescotland.org/>