



**National
Autistic
Society**

Women and Girls Conference

**Quincentenary Building
Surgeons Quarter
Edinburgh**

Wednesday 11th September 2019

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Introduction to this guide

Why have the National Autistic Society produced this guide?

We wanted to ensure that all delegates have as much information as possible ahead of the conference to allow for planning and preparation, this guide was also designed to provide autistic delegates and speakers with as much sensory information as possible from an autistic perspective to allow for managing expectations and planning around known needs.

This guide will 'walk' you through the Quincentenary Building that is being used for the conference, as well as giving key information on toilet facilities, lifts/stairs and transitioning between rooms.

An explanation about terminology

The language we use is important because it embodies and can therefore help change attitudes towards autism. To reflect the findings of research, the National Autistic Society has begun to increase the use of the term 'autistic' – particularly when talking about and to adults in that group. We may also use 'on the autism spectrum' as another way of describing people on the autism spectrum.

Within this guide we will use the language that the venue uses to describe rooms, facilities and floors of the building as this will reflect the wording on the signs in the building.

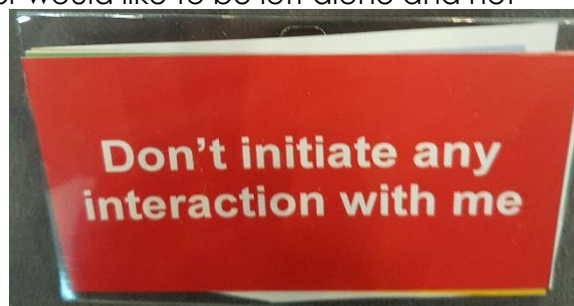
Autism Access Information

Please see below for details about the specific accessibility arrangements we have made for autistic delegates at the conference. If you have a specific requirement that is not listed, please contact us on conference@nas.org.uk and we will do our best to meet your needs.

Interaction badges

You can request these when you register or at any other time during the conference. These allow you to indicate how you would like to interact with other delegates:

- **red** badges indicate that a delegate or speaker would like to be left alone and not have contact initiated
- **yellow** badges indicate that people who are already known to the delegate/speaker may approach and initiate conversation
- **green** badges indicate that the delegate/speaker is open to anyone initiating conversation
- **purple** badges will be displayed by delegates who are offering themselves as support to others (there may be none of these on display – please seek out a staff member if you need assistance)



We will ask other delegates to respect the badges, but please be aware that we cannot enforce this.

Seating and reservation signs

We will have seats reserved for autistic delegates, if you don't like to be near people or need to be able to get out easily. You can choose to sit in these or use any other available seat if you prefer.

Reservation signs will be available if you want to reserve a particular chair to sit in or if you need to be able to leave your chair and come back to it later. You can request these when you register, or at any other time during the conference from one of the NAS staff.



Questions for speakers

If you prefer not to ask questions aloud, you can leave written questions in advance of the session and we will pass them onto the Chairperson or the session speaker. We cannot guarantee that they will select your question to answer, however. Please leave your written questions at the registration desk at least 1 hour prior to the applicable session.

Staff

The National Autistic Society conference staff and volunteers will be wearing **purple** polo shirts with our new spectrum logo in white on both sides



Travel to the venue

Surgeons Quarter is situated at the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh, approximately 10 minutes' walk from Edinburgh Waverley Station

From Edinburgh Waverley - taxi

Exit Waverley via the Market Street exit, a taxi rank is located just outside the station - a taxi to Surgeons Quarter would cost around £5.00 normally.

From Edinburgh Waverley - walking

Exit Waverley via the Market Street exit, take a right and then 1st left onto Cockburn Street and follow the road/hill until the top.

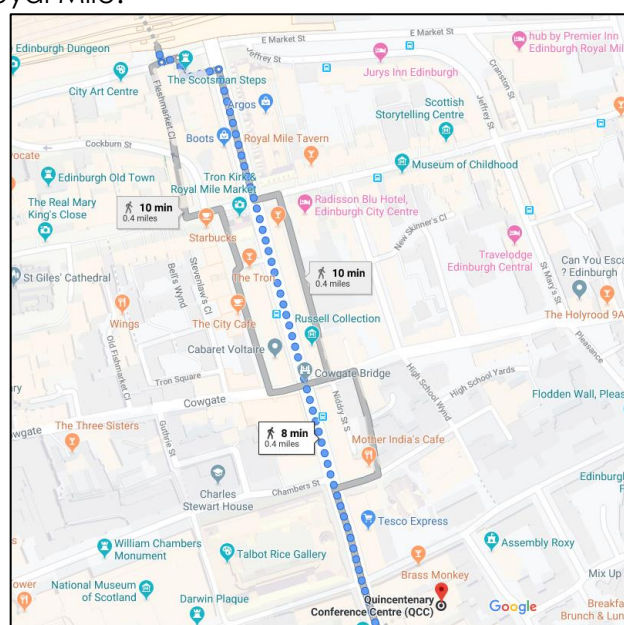
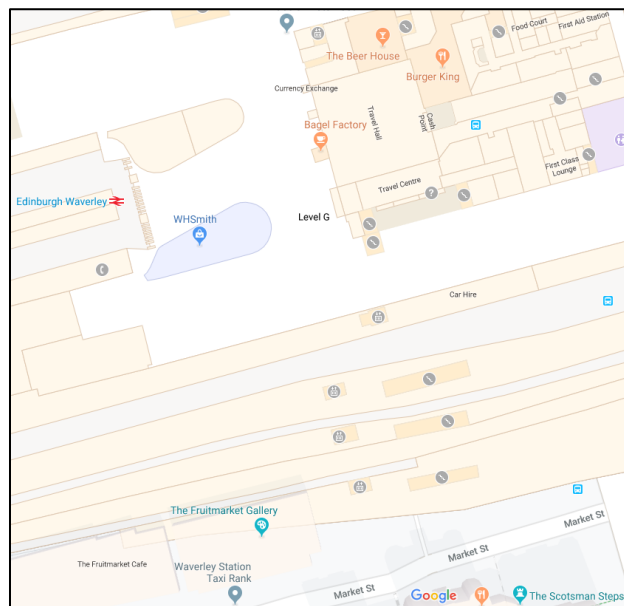
Take a left of the top of Cockburn Street onto The Royal Mile.

At the 1st set of lights, take a right onto South Bridge and continue along this route until the College is on your left on Nicolson Street, opposite the Festival Theatre.

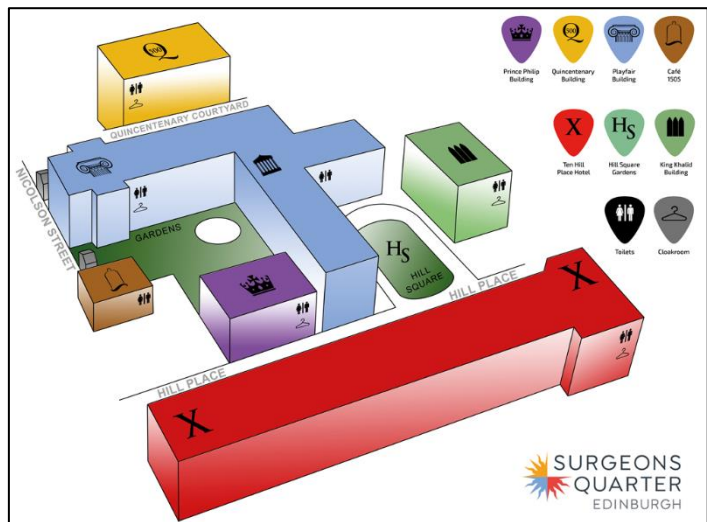
Surgeons Quarter Entrance

The entrance to Surgeons Quarter is on Nicolson Street; there are two gate entrances, the one on the left in the picture is the quickest one to use for the Quincentenary building, however this gate is sometimes kept locked as it is not step-free.

The gate to the right of the structure in the picture is a flat surface entrance denoted by a golden emblem on the pavement outside.



Once through the main gate there is a path to the left that leads by the front of the Playfair building (blue) and turns right in to the Quincentenary Courtyard (yellow) where the conference is being held.



Directly outside the Quincentenary building is a courtyard area with covered seating that can be made use of during the day as a quiet space (this area is not far from the busy main road however) or as additional seating during the refreshment breaks.

Quincentenary Building Entrance

The Quincentenary building can be accessed either via stairs or a long ramp, both options have metal circular banister-rails and are uncovered until the main entrance lobby is reached.



Ground Floor

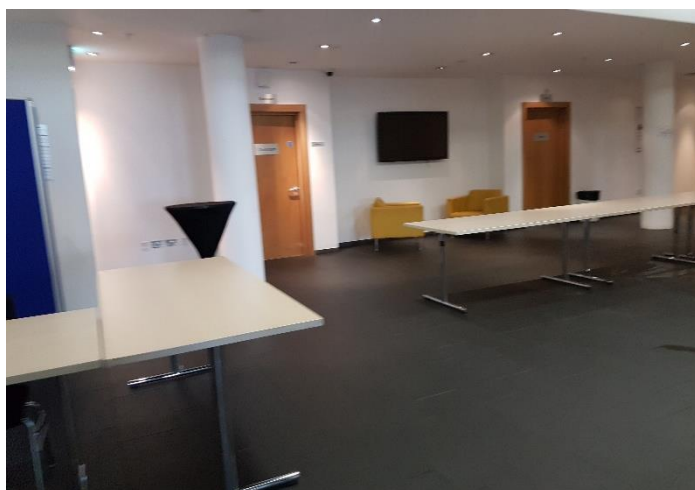
Inside the building there are two floors the conference is using; the ground floor and the 1st floor.



Reception Area (Registration)

The entrance to the building is via glass double doors that are manual push/pull doors – these will be propped open during registration and the refreshment breaks.

Inside the Reception Area there will be the registration desks staffed by NAS employees who will provide delegates with the conference pack. There are two sets of toilets accessible from the Reception Area (please see the Facilities section for more information on the toilets)



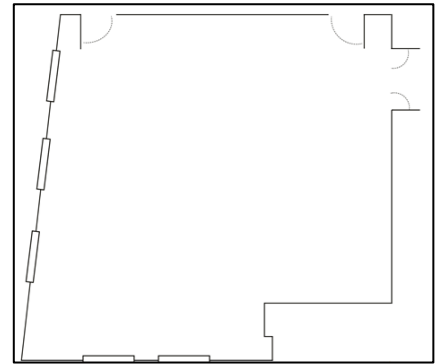
The lighting in the Reception Area is small ceiling spotlights, with some natural lighting from the external glass doors. The flooring is a dark grey tile, with the décor being neutral shades and light wood doors/tables.

The furniture layout for the Reception Area will be different on the day to how it is pictured here and there will be large pull-out stands to signal where delegates should go for the different sessions.

GB Ong Room (Catering and Exhibition)

The largest of the three rooms on the ground floor, directly to the left on entrance to the building.

The room is fairly square in design, with three large external windows on the far side (with a view out to pipes and vents for the below ground level room), three very small windows along the back of the room and an additional four ceiling height windows above with shades.



The lights are dimmable ceiling hanging softened strip lighting with some ceiling spotlights around the edges of the room and the carpeting is a burnt-orange type colour, with a broken vertical stripe pattern.

The main exhibits will be set up in this room along with the refreshments and catering for lunch.

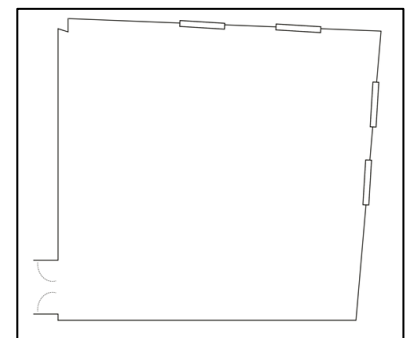


Tausend Room (Stream B)

In the far right corner of the building on entry, a square room with the same carpeting and dimmable lights as the GB Ong room. Two large windows to the side of the room with two narrow high windows at the back provide some natural light but can be covered by shades for presentations.



The lectern is at the front of the room to the right side of the screen (from the audience perspective) away from the door. There are two columns in the room near the side walls that do not obstruct views of the screen from the seating.



Wadsworth Room (Quiet Room)

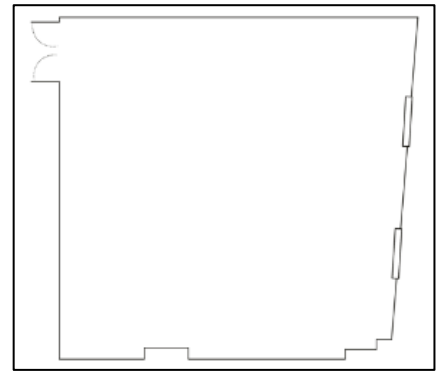
In the near right corner of the building on entry, a square room with the same carpeting and dimmable lights as the GB Ong and Tausend rooms.

Windows are all small, high level ones with shades, the furnishing will be pushed to the sides to allow flat surface space in the centre of the room is delegates wish to lay on the floor.



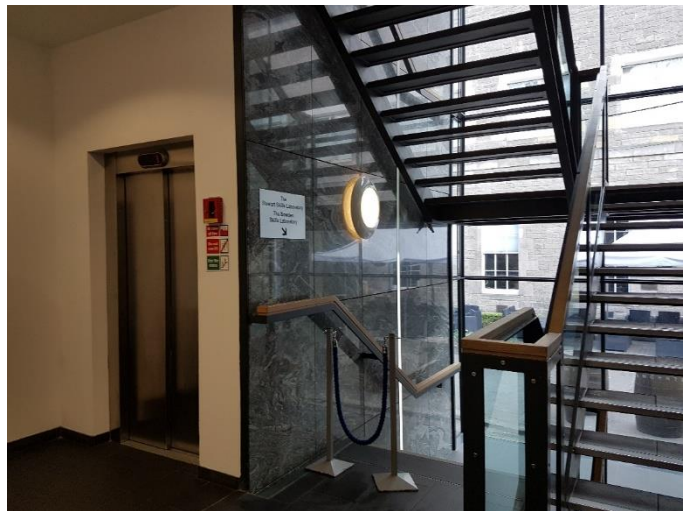
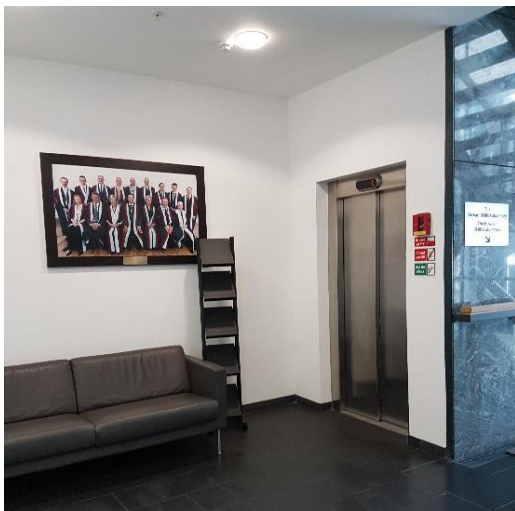
There will be a small lunch selection in the quiet room during the lunch break for delegates who

do not wish to use the main catering space (the GB Org room).



Access to First Floor

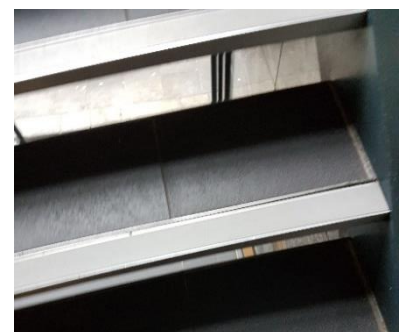
Access to the first floor is via stairs or a lift, there are two sets of stairs – one at the front of the building beside the lift, a second at the back of the building which is the emergency exit set (complete with evacuation chair)



Stairs

The stairs are open riser (no vertical support between the steps) with a white nosing on grey tread colour scheme. The handrails are flat wooden with a glass baluster underneath.

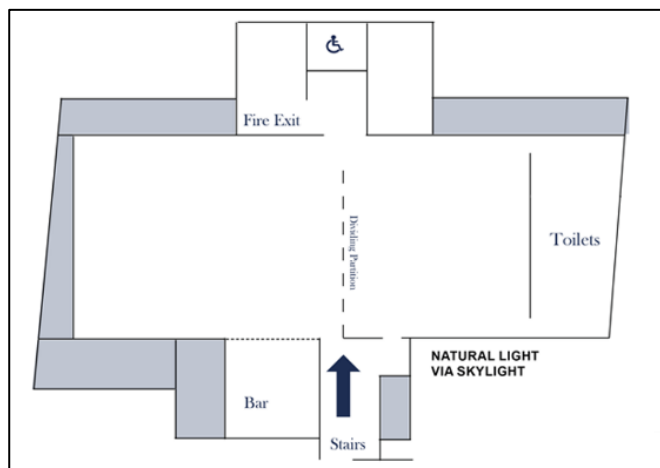
The stairs are in a glass front stair well facing out to the courtyard area outside.



Lift

The lift is a small-medium size lift with metal panel on the sides and a mirrored back wall. The handrail is in line with the lift buttons approx. 1/3rd up from the floor,

The lift exits on the first floor along a short corridor to the Wolfson Hall.

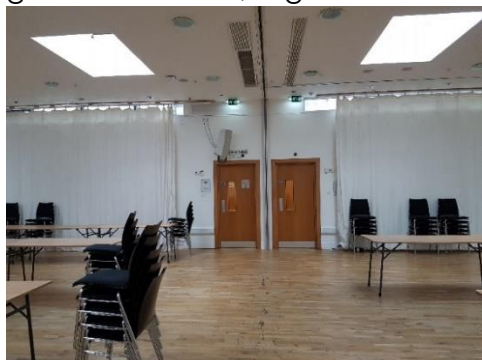


First Floor

Wolfson Hall (Plenaries, Stream A)

A large space with a pale wood sprung floor, the hall can be divided into two spaces with a flexible dividing wall.

At the back of the right hand half there are doors to gendered toilets, a gender neutral disabled cubicle is situated the other side of the hall next to the fire escape stairs.



The lighting is ceiling panel with additional large and small spotlights that can be used. There is some natural lighting via high windows on the side that can be covered with white curtains.



Facilities

The toilet facilities in the Quincentenary building are gendered facilities, with a gender neutral disabled cubicle on each floor.



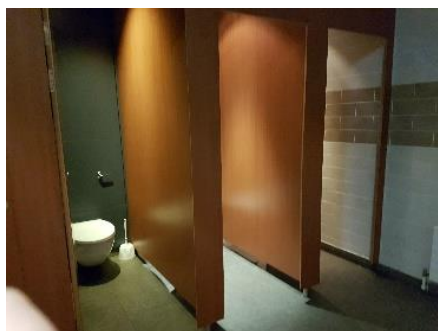
On the first floor there are "gents" to the far right of the hall and "ladies" to the near right of the hall on entrance from the lift/stairs; these facilities are remaining gendered for the duration of the conference.



The "ladies" facilities on the ground floor will be marked as gender neutral for the duration of the conference as these contain only cubicles, whilst the "gents" will remain marked in gender terms.

Gender Neutral toilets

The gendered toilets and gender neutral toilets are of the same colour scheme as the disabled toilets, with light wood used for the cubicles and a dark green/grey coloured back wall.



The toilets are all handle flushes, there are silver basic hand dryers outside the cubicles along the back wall,

The sinks are white porcelain embedded into

a black unit along the right hand wall, with single temperature taps and wall mirrors above the soaps.



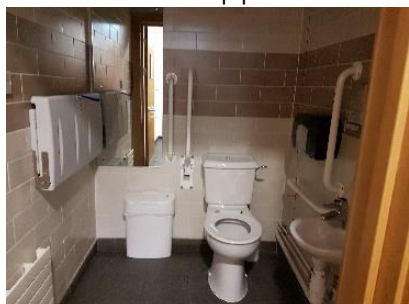
We are unable to guarantee the presence of paper towels for hand drying (so delegates can avoid using the hand dryers).

Disabled toilets

The disabled toilet on the ground floor and first floor are very similar, both are wide cubicles with supports next to the toilet on left and right sides, dual supports above the sink and a single temperature tap.

The toilet handle is a metal push down paddle.

The colours are neutral colours; cream and light brown tiles, with the cubicle on the first floor having a window with cream coloured blind.



Frequently Asked Questions

For more general questions about the conference, including pricing, content and speakers please contact conference@nas.org.uk

Q) Where is the reserved seating for autistic delegates and do I have to sit there?

A) There will be reserved seating around the edges of the room and some at the front for speakers. You do not have to use this seating, it is completely optional to autistic delegates.

Q) Will the audience be allowed to clap speakers or will there be a rule about using the BSL applause ('flappause') only?

A) We encourage all our audiences to be mindful of the sensory needs of others and advocate for the use of BSL applause, however we cannot control the audience response and there are autistic speakers who want the auditory applause for sensory input.

Q) What happens if I have a sensory overload during a talk?

A) Please feel free to use whatever communication method works best for you:

- There will be a conference phone on the day that you can call or text if you need help, this number will be given out at registration
- If you are able to get out of the room yourself then please make your way to the Quiet Room
- Find one of the NAS staff in branded purple t-shirts or anyone displaying a light purple "Ask Me For Help" interaction badge

We will do our best to help you at the time but please think carefully when planning your day and have sensory aids or stim toys with you if this normally helps

Q) Can I leave the conference venue for a break during the day?

A) Absolutely, just make sure you take your lanyard with you so staff know you are a conference delegate

Q) I need a support worker with me at all times, can they sit in the seats reserved for autistic delegates or do I have to sit elsewhere?

A) Yes, they can sit with you in the reserved seats, however we would ask all support workers to consider the needs of the other delegates when choosing seats in those areas

