

Section of the Access Statement covering areas used by conference delegates.

The National Coal Mining Museum for England

Access Statement

The National Coal Mining Museum for England aims to be accessible to all. The Museum is located on the original Caphouse Colliery and Hope Pit sites, and as such, many of the original buildings have been retained, to illustrate a working environment. As a result, in achieving a balance between authenticity and access, not all areas are easily accessed, particularly by wheelchair users. The bulk of the main Caphouse Colliery site is reasonably level, with tarmac and concrete surfaces between buildings, with pedestrian routes clearly signed. However, there is a section of the site at a considerably lower level that incorporates the Stables, Pit Head Baths and a Education rooms. Access to this part of the site is either via a long sloped road, with a gradient of around 1:12, or a steep and long set of stairs with handrails each side.

There is limited car parking in the lower section, including one disabled-access car-parking space.

There are eleven designated disabled car-parking spaces alongside the main orientation, galleries, shop and restaurant building, and further spaces between that building and the retained colliery buildings around the courtyard. There is level access from these spaces into the main building.

Maximum travelling distance between buildings is approximately 50m on the main site, level to the Lamproom and Underground Tours buildings, and the Steam Winding Room. There is a 10m (approximately) sloped area, maximum gradient around 1:12 to access the 1842 displays. There is a slight slope, approximately 1:18, between the Steam Winding Room, Control Room and Coal Interface Gallery Buildings.

Travelling between the main Caphouse Colliery site and the smaller Hope Pit site can be along a pedestrian route, via the train, or by moving by car to the other site, approximately 350 metres distance. The train service has a ramped access to the platform, with handrails, and one train carriage has been adapted to carry one wheelchair, with assistance from trained staff.

The Hope Pit site is a little more spread out, with the central area reasonably level, a slightly graded tarmac route to the Hope Store, and a tarmac-surfaced wide footpath route, with a gradient of a maximum 1:12 to the Winding Engine building. All routes are surfaced but some areas between buildings are uneven.

The site has clear directional signage and a tactile wayfinder map.

Car parking is available either at the top of the site or adjoining the various buildings, and, whilst there are no designated spaces for disabled people, there is usually the facility to park on the aprons in front of the Hope Garage and Store.

Extra care must be taken when touring the site, especially between what were working buildings, as some surfaces may be uneven in places, partly caused by potential continuing subsidence, with mine workings beneath. Every effort is made to avoid potentially hazardous surfaces, and visitors are advised to stick where possible to clearly even and firm surfaces, not taking short cuts over uneven, unmarked routes.

Guide dogs and assistance dogs are welcome. Any special requirements or queries you may have regarding accessibility, so as to make your visit an enjoyable one, can be discussed in advance of your visit.

CAPHOUSE COLLIERY

The Main Building is single storey, modern build with level entry access, and automatic main entrance doors. It incorporates:

Reception Desk and Shop

The reception desk is directly opposite the main entrance and has a lower section of counter, and a sound induction loop to assist hearing-impaired visitors. At this point are also available a guidebook, with a large-scale coloured map of the site, and audio-tour guide devices.

The audio-tour guide has information about all galleries and buildings that you can visit on site, with reference to number coding in those locations, and has a volume control.

There is good circulation space from the reception desk to the shop area, with most items on display at a reachable height. Staff are available to assist anyone with difficulty reaching items or reading labels, etc.

Toilets in the Main Building

Male and female standard toilets are located in a lobby off the Reception and Shop area.

Café

Accessed from the top level of the Gallery, in turn accessed by ramp and stairs, the café has ample circulation space around the service counter, with a tray shelf at a suitable height for wheelchair users. There is reasonable space between tables, but this could be a little restricting in the centre for wheelchair users and ambulant disabled people with walking aids.

Conferences and Education

The conference facilities are in the main building, with a self-contained level access, having automatic doors. The conference room can be one or divided into three, and has sufficient door width for wheelchair access. An accessible toilet and standard toilets are available close to the rooms. A direct one to one hearing enhancement system is available for conference delegates.

The Learning Curve teaching rooms are accessed from a lobby, with separate route from the main entrance, on a level. There are double doors, both needing to be used to gain sufficient width for wheelchair access. In the teaching rooms, the doors have finger guard strips covering the hinges, resulting in 730mm clear door opening width, a little tight for standard-sized wheelchairs.