

Parliament Buildings Access Arrangements

There are two main visitor entrances to the Stormont Estate. The Prince of Wales entrance is accessible from the Upper Newtownards Road, and the Massey Gates entrance is accessible from Massey Avenue. The Prince of Wales entrance closes at 6pm so anyone coming to an evening event in Parliament Buildings should use the Massey Gates entrance after 6pm.

At each entrance to the Stormont Estate there is a security hut and a barrier. The security guard at this entrance may ask for identification, so please bring with you a driving licence, passport, ID card or your invitation to an event. You should advise the security guard that you are going to Parliament Buildings.



Security Hut and Barrier

After passing through the barrier, continue up the hill to the roundabout with the statue of Sir Edward Carson in the centre. Carry on past this roundabout heading towards the right hand side of Parliament Buildings. You will then come to a mini roundabout.



Roundabout at Carson's Statue

Turn right at this mini roundabout, taking the third exit. The visitors' car park will be on your left hand side just after you pass through the mini roundabout. There will often be security guards at the entrance to this car park and they may ask you where you are going to. When the Assembly is in session the car park will often be full during peak periods and you will be advised to park elsewhere, such as on the Prince of Wales Avenue.



Entrance to the Visitors' Car Park at Parliament Buildings

After parking your car, you must walk to the glass search facility to the right hand side of Parliament Buildings. There will be several ushers on duty within the search facility. If you do not want to tell the ushers you have autism you can show them an autism alert card. Police officers may also be in the search area but do not worry as they are based in Parliament Buildings and you will often see them here or in the main building.



Search Facility

You will be asked to put your belongings through an X-ray machine – for example, bags, keys, mobile phones, laptops, music players and cameras. You will then walk through an archway similar to those at the airport. Do not panic if the machine beeps as this may be your belt or coins in your pocket. If this happens, the usher will quickly scan you with a handheld scanner.



Going through the Search Facility

The usher will issue you with a card which you must take with you to reception. If you think you would find going through the search facility stressful, you can contact an autism champion in advance to make alternative arrangements. The contact details for autism champions can be found on the Assembly autism webpage.

From the search facility make your way to the front of Parliament Buildings where you will enter through revolving doors or via ramps for disabled access.



Revolving Doors at Main Entrance

At the reception desk one of our ushers will issue you with a visitor's pass. This may involve asking you for your name and having your photograph taken in a matter of seconds using a webcam. The photograph will be deleted from our system after 28 days. If you do not want to have your photograph taken, you can tell the ushers you have autism or show them your autism alert card. If you would like one of the ushers to contact an autism champion, they will be happy to do this for you.

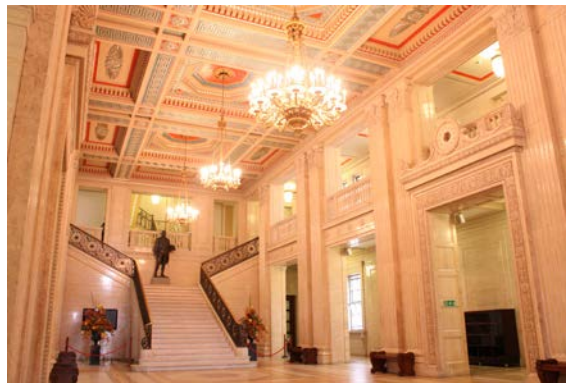
Behind reception is a quiet room which can be used on arrival or anytime during your visit. You can ask the receptionist for access to the room. There are some items in the room to relieve stress, and there is also a television in the room for watching Assembly and Committee proceedings in a quieter location. There are also a number of welfare facilities throughout Parliament Buildings, including accessible toilets, a changing places toilet, a first aid room and a baby-changing room.



Entrance to the Quiet Room

Some other areas within the building include the Great Hall, the Assembly Chamber, the Senate Chamber and Committee rooms. In the Great Hall there are seats along the side, and people will often wait there to meet their colleagues or sponsor.

When the Assembly sits on Mondays and Tuesdays you will occasionally hear the noise of the Division Bells going off to call Members to the Chamber to vote. This may be unexpected but do not be alarmed. There are ear defenders that can be borrowed from the quiet room if you feel this noise would be stressful.



The Great Hall



The Assembly Chamber

In the Assembly Chamber visitors are welcome to watch proceedings from the public gallery on the first floor. There are stairs and lifts to the gallery for visitors, and any of our ushers will be happy to assist in arranging access to the gallery for you. You will need to put belongings and mobile phones into a locker before you go into the gallery. You can collect these when you leave.



The Senate Chamber

There are three Committee rooms on the ground floor and one on the first floor. The layout of each room is similar but the rooms do not look exactly the same. The Senate Chamber is also used for Committee meetings. The cameras on the wall film the Committee meeting so it can be viewed on the internal television system, the Assembly website or on BBC Democracy Live. The seats at the back of the Committee room are a public gallery and anyone can view a Committee meeting when it is in public session. If you would like to watch the Committee meeting, please contact an autism champion in advance to discuss issues such as the agenda and gallery rules and, if possible, to have papers

printed for you in a suitable format. It may be useful to have an autism champion with you on the day as there may be waiting involved as the public gallery can sometimes be full.



A Committee Room

Gift Shop and Post Office

There is a gift shop on the ground floor of Parliament Buildings where you can get tea and coffee. It is also a post office. You are also welcome to take a snack to the quiet room.

Blue Badge parking at the Upper Car Park

Some car parking spaces are available for blue badge holders in the Upper Car Park, which is just beside the building. Parking can be arranged by contacting your sponsor, an autism champion or Usher Services before your visit (contact details are on the Assembly's accessibility webpage).

For access to the Upper Car Park, drive to the main search facility on the right hand side of the building. If you have requested access in advance, your car details will be on the system. Once you pass through the security barrier, make your way to the disabled bay or reserved space at the side of the building. You can access the building via the east, west or front entrances, where you will go through security and be issued with a visitor pass.



Upper Car Park and East Side Entrance

Further information on visiting the Assembly can be found on the Assembly website: <http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/>