



Hexham Old Gaol Access Plan

This plan uses the VAQAS access plan template as a basis. It includes information from surveys and advice provided by Disability North, and members of Action for Differently Abled People in Tynedale (ADAPT), and information from museum staff and general visitors. All staff have received disability awareness training.

Hexham Old Gaol is the earliest recorded purpose-built prison in England, and opened in 1333. It was used as a prison until the 1820s.

The displays explore crime and punishment through the ages, and the lives and times of the Border Reivers, local families who lived, feuded and fought along and across the English-Scottish border in Tudor times.

Information and any pre-visit enquiries should be directed to tel: (0191) 277 2422 or email: info@hexhamoldgaol.org.uk.

Location

The Old Gaol is in the town centre, behind the Market Place and close to Hexham railway and bus stations. There are brown and white signs and black finger posts around the town which direct visitors to the Gaol.

The Old Gaol does not have a car park. There is a short stay pay and display car park in the Market Place but numbers are limited. The main town car park is approximately 300 metres away at the bottom of the hill.

There is a coach dropping off point outside Hexham Abbey, and level access from there to the Old Gaol.

There are two disabled parking bays in the Market Place.

Site Access

There is a ramp as an alternative to the 4 steps with a handrail to the entrance door. There is a press button to open the glass door. The door opens outwards. The door is wide enough for a wheelchair or a double buggy.

Admission charges apply. Well-behaved dogs are welcome at no charge. Carers do not pay an admission charge.

Physical description

Flooring on the ground floor is stone in the reception area, with a wooden floor in the display room. Floors in the other rooms are stone. There is a wooden ramp down into one of the top rooms. There is a glass lift to take visitors between the floors and allow a view of one of the dungeons. There is seating provided at intervals around the museum. Artificial lighting is used throughout.

Interpretation boards are all in large text with illustrations. There are objects displayed in upright glass cases. There are costumes to try on and a mirror for visitors to see how they look with the costumes on. A general guide is available for visitors.

There is a tactile map of the Borders, showing where Reiver families were located in the 1500s.

There is a film on the top floor, exploring a Reiver raid and the feuding between families.

Visitor Services

We acknowledge that different users have different needs, and are committed to providing an inclusive service. We are always open to comments from visitors and representatives of particular interest groups.

There isn't a public toilet within the gaol but the nearest Changing Places fully accessible toilet to the Gaol, is situated in Tesco Hexham Extra which is calculated to be a 6 minute walk away. There are standard accessible toilets closer to the gaol approximately 300 metres away on the main town centre car park, Wentworth Car Park.

There is a wheelchair accessible glass lift to take visitors between the floors, and this allows visitors to view one of the dungeons.

The Old Gaol has an induction loop system covering the reception desk and all audio and audiovisual presentations.

There is a quiet hour in operation between 10.00 and 11.00 on the last Sunday of each month.

Ear defenders are available from the reception desk.

The museum collections that are not on display are stored at Woodhorn Museum.

Information is provided in large print, French and German.

General Visitor Information

Telephone: (0191) 277 2422 or

Email: info@hexhamoldgaol.org.uk.

Website: www.hexhamoldgaol.org.uk

Postal address Hexham Old Gaol, Hallgate, Hexham NE46 1XD

Hours of operation

- April to end October, open Wednesday to Sunday
- During Northumberland school holidays, open daily 10.00am – 4.00pm, last admissions 3.30pm.
- November to March closed.