

Historic Royal Palaces  
TOWER OF LONDON

# Access guide

## Visiting the Tower of London



Compiled with the help  
of the Tower Access Panel

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## Enquiries and contact details

**Tower of London**  
Visitor Services  
London  
EC3N 4AB

**Information Line:** 0844 482 7777  
**Ticket Hotline:** 0844 482 7799  
**Type Talk:** 18001 0844 482 7777  
**Visitor Services:** 020 3166 6266

**F:** 020 3166 6265  
**E:** VisitorServices.TOL@hrp.org.uk

[www.hrp.org.uk/toweroflondon](http://www.hrp.org.uk/toweroflondon)



## Access and inclusion

The Tower of London welcomes all visitors and tries to make everyone's day out successful and enjoyable. However, the Tower is a historic building with difficult stairs and passageways and wheelchair access is limited. There are a large number of steps throughout the Tower with cobbles laid in some of the roads.

Although many of the towers have limited access, the Jewel House is completely accessible to all visitors.

The Tower of London is committed to improving access and its facilities for visitors with disabilities.

We welcome your comments whether from individuals or from access groups on the services, programmes and facilities we provide.

It would help us to know how useful you found this guide and what improvements we might make to future editions. Please contact the Visitor Services team.

## Opening times

The Tower of London is open every day except 24, 25, 26 December and 1 January.

### Summer (1 March – 31 October)

**Sun – Mon: 10.00 to 17.30**

**Tue – Sat: 09.00 to 17.30**

Last admission at 17.00

Buildings close at 17.30

### Winter (1 November – 28 February)

**Sun – Mon: 10.00 to 16.30**

**Tue – Sat: 09.00 to 16.30**

Last admission at 16.00

Buildings close at 16.30

The Tower closes entirely one hour after last admission.

We recommend you allow at least 2 to 3 hours for your visit.

At busy times, queues are likely to form at the Tower. If visiting during school holidays, or in the summer, please allow extra time to fully explore the Tower.

## Admission charges

Admission charges are available on our website or by contacting our information line.

Concession prices include disabled visitors and helpers are admitted free of charge.

Guide dogs and other recognised assistance dogs are welcome at the Tower.

Moat access: Please ask a Yeoman Warder for assistance, dog bins are provided.

## What to see

Throughout its long history the Tower has served as a royal palace and fortress, prison and place of execution, an arsenal, royal mint, menagerie and jewel house. Today, London's great royal fortress is home to some of the most potent symbols of British History: the Yeoman Warders, Ravens and Crown Jewels. The Tower is also home to the Royal Armouries collection which includes armours of Henry VIII.

Although many of the towers have limited access, the Jewel House is physically accessible to all visitors.

### Inside the Tower

#### Access ratings for the buildings

Access to various parts of the Tower is rated as follows:

**Access 1** Ramped entrance/exit.  
Displays on one level.

**Access 2** Some steps.  
Displays on different levels.  
Uneven surfaces.

**Access 3** Large numbers of steps.  
Spiral staircases.  
Small doorways.  
Displays on different levels.



## Jewel House <sup>Access 1</sup>

The Jewel House occupies the whole of the ground floor of the Waterloo Barracks.

The western half contains a 'Hall of Monarchs' in the style of St George's Chapel in Windsor, and three video theatres showing parts of the 1953 Coronation and high definition pictures of the regalia. The videos last 2-3 minutes each and there is no commentary to the videos, although background music is played during them. The eastern half is the Treasury, containing the Crown Jewels.

If you need to you can ask a member of staff to take you directly to the Treasury, where the Jewels are displayed. There is a moving walkway ('travelator') on which you walk to view the Crown Jewels. The speed varies depending on how busy the Jewel House is. Jewel House Wardens are more than happy to stop the travelator for wheelchair users.

**Access:** No steps, minimum doorway/aisle width 1.02m.

**Surfacing:** York stone or wooden blocks; both smooth.

**Note:** The Jewel House Wardens have tactile raised 2D images of the Crown Jewels for visually impaired and blind visitors, available on request. Ask one of our warders, who will be happy to help.



Jewel House



Crown Jewels  
- at the Jewel House

## The Chapel of St Peter Ad Vincula <sup>Access 2</sup>

**Only accessed as part of a Yeoman Warder Tour.**

Tudor chapel containing monuments to residents of the Tower, and also its prisoners, including those executed on Tower Green.

**Access:** 4 steps down to entrance, total drop 30cm. 1 step up at doorway with a rise of 5cm. Wide aisles, plenty of seating.

**Surfacing:** threshold carpets, stone flooring which is uneven in parts.

## The Constable Tower <sup>Access 2</sup>

As part of the Fortress experience, the Constable Tower now contains a model that reconstructs the Tower of London in the middle of the Peasants' Revolt, 1381. From the scene of the break-in to the execution of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Simon Sudbury, the Constable Tower tells the story of the only time the royal fortress was ever breached.

**Access:** down 6 steps with a total fall of 1.06m and doorstep of 8cm. Minimum access width 69cm. Inside steps of 10cm rise to enter side rooms.



Chapel St Peter  
Ad Vincula -  
Caterpillar Chair



White Tower.

## White Tower <sup>Access 3</sup>

The stone keep, built on the orders of William the Conqueror as a fortress and palace, now houses part of the collection of the Royal Armouries.

There are four floors of displays and some remaining features of the Norman palace, including the chapel, well, fireplaces and lavatories (garderobes).

To enter the White Tower, you climb 11 wooden steps to the first landing, 12 wooden steps to a second landing, and then 13 wooden steps, all with handrails on both sides and plenty of room to pass. This leads up to a final 5 stone steps into the entrance of the building.

There are not many places to sit down immediately in the entrance hall.

There are steep and narrow spiral steps to reach other floors.

There is a lift to the basement level with access to the White Tower shop and the basement galleries. Please ask a Yeoman Warder stationed on Tower Green for assistance.

## White Tower (continued) Entrance Floor

Access  
3

The 'ground'/entrance floor is reached via a wooden flight of steps. This area recreates the original Norman entrance.

**Access:** 41 steps, wood and stone, with a total rise of over 5.8m up to the entrance. Minimum doorway width 1.78m. Arches between galleries with a minimum width 1.04m.

**Surfacing:** uneven stone flooring and wooden floorboards. Some steps have handrails, some do not. Handrails can be on either side and in some cases are made of rope.

## 1st & 2nd Floors & Basement

Access  
3

The Chapel of St John and Medieval Great Hall.

There is a 'Hands on History' exhibition on the second floor (see page 14).

**Access:** A trip around the upper floors and basement of the White Tower involves a total of 206 steps, some irregular and very steep, including a spiral staircase of 101 steps and a total rise and fall of over 37.5m. Minimum doorway width 84cm.

**Surfacing:** stone and wooden floors and steps.

There are wardens on each floor, who will be happy to tell some of the incredible stories involving the White Tower and its history. There is a handling collection in the basement of the White Tower.



## EXHIBITION - WHITE TOWER Dressed to Kill: Henry VIII

Access  
3

**April 2009 – January 2010**

A stunning new exhibition in the iconic White Tower.

Come and discover a slim, handsome Henry VIII with a lust for weapons and sport.

Marvel at the flexibility of his armour, take a look behind the scenes of a jousting tournament, learn about the chivalry and pageantry of the times and uncover the stories hidden in the famous painting of the Field of the Cloth of Gold.

**Attention:** exhibition contains flashing lights and images

**Note:** Access to almost all parts of the White Tower involves a considerable number of stairs. From the ground floor visitors can choose to leave the White Tower or carry on up. If you do choose to see more, you will have to see all the displays on all the floors before coming to the exit again. From the ground floor visitors are able to reach the basement of the White Tower via a lift.

Please contact the Yeoman Warder stationed on Tower Green for assistance.



## Bloody Tower

Access  
3

This tower is traditionally where the 'Little Princes' were thought to have been imprisoned. The tower contains lower and upper chambers and workings for a portcullis. The chambers contain room settings and displays on Sir Walter Raleigh's imprisonment and on the disappearance of the two princes. The upper floor leads outside to Raleigh's Walk with views over the Thames.

**Access:** A trip around this tower involves a total of 55 steps with a total rise and fall of 11.13m. The floors are connected by a very narrow, steep and worn spiral staircase. Minimum doorway size 51cm wide and 1.80m high.

**Surfacing:** very worn stone flooring, polished wood floor with asphaltting on Raleigh's Walk.

## Medieval Palace

Access  
3

Part of the old Royal Palace, built by Henry III and Edward I containing a reconstruction of the king's bed chamber, including three towers, Lanthorn, Wakefield and St Thomas's.

The video presentation is not audio described nor does it have BSL interpretation. Both videos have subtitles.

**Access:** use the steps in Water Lane – you will then travel eastwards via several staircases to the end of the south wall walk – from there you have the option of returning to ground level via stone staircase or carrying on along the east wall walk.

Number of steps – 24 up to entrance



## The Wall Walk <sup>Access</sup> 3

This is a walk around the inner wall of the Tower with views over the River Thames, the City and the rest of the castle. It passes through four wall towers: the Salt Tower has many prisoners' inscriptions; the Broad Arrow Tower; the Constable Tower and the Martin Tower, which contains the exhibition 'Crowns & Diamonds', a history of the Crown Jewels.

The Tower was known for its formidable defences, but a rabble of peasants managed to successfully attack in 1381 – find out how they succeeded in breaching the walls.

You will be watched from the battlements by a metalwork garrison. Get up close to the life size metalwork soldiers and their weapons on the wall walks inside the Tower.

There is also a medieval shooting gallery under St Thomas's Tower. Peer through the gate and imagine what it was like to be a medieval soldier working in this cramped but beautiful space.

**Access:** is from the steps ascending near the Queen Elizabeth II archway. There are some narrow, steep spiral staircases and some handrails. There is a total of 162 steps with a total rise and fall of 30cm. Minimum doorway width 56cm.

**Surfacing:** wooden and stone steps. Iron spiral staircase. Concrete and tarmac outside.

## EXHIBITION - WATERGATE <sup>Access</sup> 3 Torture at the Tower

The Torture at the Tower exhibition brings together replicas of instruments of torture, known to have been used at the Tower over the centuries, such as the rack, the Scavenger's Daughter and manacles.

Original stonework surrounding the remains of the Plantagenet kings' private entrance to their Royal Palace, the bottom of Henry III's spiral staircase to his private apartments and the large guardroom for the soldiers protecting the watergate.

**Access:** is via a total of 61 steps with a total rise and fall of 10.67m. There are handrails but the stairways can be both narrow and winding.

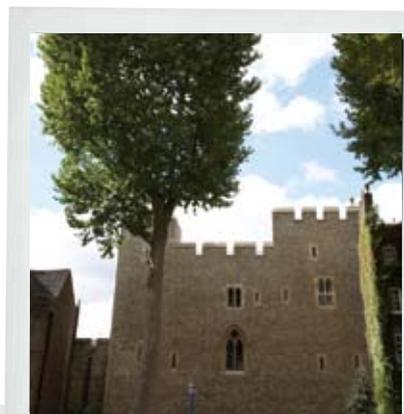
**Surfacing:** a combination of concrete, stone and wood floors.



Metalwork soldiers –  
The Wall Walk



Torture at the Tower



Beauchamp Tower

## Beauchamp Tower <sup>Access</sup> 3

**Displays:** Medieval wall tower. The walls, especially on the first floor, have Tudor prisoners' inscriptions.

**Access:** Upper and lower chambers connected by spiral staircase. A total of 80 steps with a rise and fall of 15.23m. There is a handrail beside steps into the tower. Minimum doorway width 70cm.

**Surfacing:** stone flooring and polished wood.



Tudor prisoners'  
inscriptions on walls

## Outside the Tower

### Ticket booths/ Group Tickets

Electronic signage at the top of each kiosk indicates which one is open. There is a lowered counter at the top kiosk on the hill, although this may not always be open. Should this be the case, there is a partially lowered counter at the first till point in Group Tickets, or go to the Welcome Centre. Please note the Welcome Centre only accepts payment by credit or debit card. All ticket points have induction loops.

### Welcome Centre

The Welcome Centre can be found on Tower Hill (see map on inside back cover). We strongly recommend a visit, to help plan your time with us, before you enter the Tower. Come here to hire one of our free wheelchairs (first come first served basis) and to pick up your complimentary maps and daily programme to help locate parts of the Tower you wish to visit, events on the day, and location of facilities.

Our trained staff will answer any queries on access and on planning your day. Inside there is a short video giving an overview of the Tower and its history, including information and stories on its most famous residents.

Children can pick up fun filled trails from here, as well as collect a few special gifts!

## Outside the Tower (continued)

### The Wharf

This is on the south side of the Tower and goes from the main gates to Tower Bridge. Entry is free for all and it is open from 8am to sunset.

The Wharf gives tremendous views of the Tower and explains the relationship between the Tower and the Thames – which was an important way of entry into the Tower. Visitors to the Wharf can see Traitors' Gate, where prisoners were brought in, and the now empty moat. The views include HMS Belfast, City Hall and Tower Bridge. Near the main gates, you can find the Tower shop and a Paul kiosk selling drinks and light snacks. At the east entrance near Tower Bridge, there is a café with covered seating.

The area is cobbled and in parts uneven and difficult to walk on. There are paved areas on both sides, although not continuously for the whole length of the Wharf. There are parts that do not have dropped kerbs.

There are plenty of benches along the Wharf.

### Gun salutes on the Wharf

There are two locations in London where royal salutes occur – Hyde Park and the Tower of London. At the Tower, this happens on the Wharf near to Paul's kiosk. About 45 minutes beforehand, the Wharf is closed and all visitors move to the area in front of the Tower shop. This is a small area and can become crowded. The best places to view if you do not mind crowds are by the shop, or inside the Tower, on the bridge near where the Yeoman Warder tour starts (entrance fee payable). Other good vantage points, and less crowded are on Tower Hill and on Tower Bridge.

The area is searched by sniffer dogs before the Honourable Royal Artillery Company arrive with the guns. If you are close to the guns, the noise is very loud. The number of rounds depends on the occasion but can be as many of 62. Dates of the gun salutes can be found on our website.



Traitors Gate

## Getting here

### The Tower of London is within travel zone 1

#### Bus

Bus Routes: 15, 42, 78, 100, RV1, some have wheelchair access. Bus stops are within walking distance of the Tower.

#### Underground

Circle/District lines to Tower Hill. The nearest station with full access to street level is London Bridge. (Northern & Jubilee lines and national rail services)

#### Train

Fenchurch Street or London Bridge stations. Both stations are fully accessible to street level.

#### Docklands Light Railway (DLR)

Tower Gateway Station is located adjacent to Tower Hill station. This station is fully accessible to street level.

#### Thames Boat Services

The majority of river boats are accessible and most new river craft have dedicated wheelchair spaces.

For further information please call

**020 7941 2400**

Or visit Transport for London's website [www.tfl.gov.uk](http://www.tfl.gov.uk)

### Parking

There are no parking spaces within the Tower of London, but you can be dropped off or collected at Lower Thames Street, which is a 2 minute walk to the Tower.

The Tower of London is within the congestion charging zone.

There are some disabled bays available in the coach park on Lower Thames Street. There are charges.

For detailed information on prices and opening times please contact:

The City of London Corporation

**020 7332 3053**

Or alternatively you can email:

[car.parks@corporationoflondon.gov.uk](mailto:car.parks@corporationoflondon.gov.uk)

There is a National Car Parks site (pay and display) on Mansell Street, just off The Minories; however this is a 10+ minute walk (approx. 1000 metres) to the Tower.

Follow directional signage to the main entrance of the Tower.

### Contact information

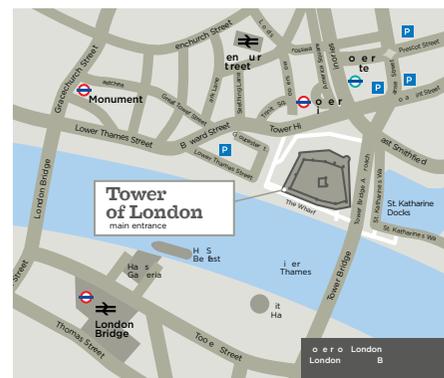
Transport for London (24 hour) access information: **020 7222 1234**

[www.tfl.gov.uk](http://www.tfl.gov.uk)

**Text Phone:** 020 7918 3015

**E:** [travinfo@tfl.gov.uk](mailto:travinfo@tfl.gov.uk)

In addition please visit [www.describe-online.com](http://www.describe-online.com) which is designed to help visually and mobility impaired people find their way around the London Underground. It provides textual narration from every transport point to the Tower of London.



## Getting in

Tower Hill is a vehicle free zone.

Tickets are available to purchase from the main ticket kiosks on Tower Hill. Information to help you plan your visit is available from the Welcome Centre.

All our ticket boxes are fitted with induction loops: hearing aid users should switch to the T position. Staff are trained to help any visitor with disabilities.

Staff in the Welcome Centre can help with detailed routes and orientation information for all visitors. There is a plan on pages 14/15 with details of wheelchair routes around the Tower.

Wheelchairs are available to borrow (no charge) from the Welcome Centre. Please note there are a limited number on a first come, first served basis. Wheelchairs are hired out at visitors' own risk.

## Facilities

### Lifts

There is a lift available in the White Tower. It takes visitors from the ground level to the basement only. There are also lifts within the Education areas of the Tower (for booked sessions only). These have spoken announcements and tactile buttons, some with Braille.

### Caterpillar chair

A motorised chair for access into the Chapel of St Peter ad Vincula is available. Please ask the Yeoman Warder giving your tour.

### Seating

There is a wide range of seating available, with and without backs and arms all around Tower grounds.

### Ramps

There are ramps located at the New Armouries cafe and near the Medieval Palace shop.

### Volunteers

Tower volunteers (subject to availability) can be available to guide and help visitors around facilities and attractions. Please contact Visitor Services for more information.

### Toilets

#### Outside the Tower

There are public toilets situated in the coach park, on Lower Thames Street. These toilets have full disabled access.

#### Toilets

##### Inside the Tower

There are toilets available at the rear of the Jewel House. Access to these is over a cobbled surface.

There are also toilets (no wheelchair access) located in the following areas:

To the rear of the Jewel House.

At the side of the Cradle Tower.

There are disabled toilets in all educational areas and within the New Armouries Café.

There is clear signage to the toilets.



## Enjoying your visit

### Yeoman Warder Guided Tours

The guided tours are included in the ticket price and start at Middle Tower. They last for approximately one hour.

These tours can get very crowded at peak times. Please ask us if you require any advice on this.

BSL tours with a qualified signer are available on a regular basis.

BSL interpreters can be recognised by blue branded shirts worn and badge.

Please see our website at [www.hrp.org.uk](http://www.hrp.org.uk) for more details.

Should you wish to bring your own interpreter; tours can be arranged 48 hours in advance of your trip.

The tour is accessible for all visitors with an alternative route detailed on pages 14/15 for those not able to use the steps. The Yeoman Warder will wait for you to re-join the group, whenever possible.

Yeoman Warders carry portable induction loops. Hearing aid users should switch to the T position.

Please contact the Visitor Services department if you

are interested in finding out more.

### Personal tours

Descriptive tours of the Jewel House and White Tower are available for blind and visually impaired visitors with raised image cards available to assist in the explanation.

Please make yourself known to a member of the warding staff should you wish to undertake one of these tours or contact Visitor Services to book in advance (strongly advised).

Sessions for children and adults with learning disabilities from school and community groups are available.

### To book, please contact the Royal Armouries on:

**T:** 020 3166 6660

**F:** 020 3166 6678

**E:** [penny.strivens@armouries.org.uk](mailto:penny.strivens@armouries.org.uk)



### Audio Guide

Discover the Tower with one of our audio guides and experience five different tours - choose stories about the Normans and before, and the Medieval Palace, find out more about imprisonment and execution inside the Tower and be dazzled by the Crown Jewels. Finally, allow our Resident Governor and Chief Yeoman Warder tell you what it's really like to live inside a Royal Fortress.

Audio guides are available to hire throughout your visit. They can be purchased at the Beefeater shop. There is a step up into the shop. Prices are £4 adults, £3 concessions.

The tours are available in English, French, German, Spanish, Italian, Japanese, Russian, Chinese (Mandarin) and Korean.

The guides have headphones and a neck strap making them easy to carry. The sound can easily be controlled and they have an easy readable display. Many of the guides have an induction loop facility.

## Further Information

### Written Information

A **large print access and facilities guide** is available from the Welcome Centre.

**Guidebooks** are also available to borrow in English, French, German, Spanish, Italian, Japanese and Russian – please ask a member of the Welcome Centre team for further information.

Our **Daily Programme** detailing the tours, costumed events and exhibitions taking place during your visit is available from the Welcome Centre. The programme is also available to download from our website and can be adjusted to a suitable size.

Many of the **costumed events** are supported by written materials which provide an overview of the event. Please ask a costumed interpreter or a member of the Welcome Centre team for a copy. Copies are also available in large print.

### Information Boards

There are a number of low level information boards situated around the Tower which describe the immediate area.

### Magnifying Sheets

Visitors who find it difficult to read the captions and exhibit information can borrow magnifying sheets from the Welcome Centre and White Tower Information Point. Place them approximately 2 cm above the wording and look through to see the text magnified.

### Handling Points

Visitors who are wheelchair users and the visually impaired are welcome to attend our Handling Point in the basement of the White Tower. Information about the White Tower is available in Braille and tactile format. Please use the lift or staircase at the back of the White Tower to gain access. (See page 6 for details).

### Hands on History

Top floor of the White Tower

Come and visit the Royal Armouries' exciting interactive exhibition, allowing you to get to grips with 1,000 years of Tower history. Feel Norman power by yourself – handle swords, maces (clubs with attitude!) and axes.

Test your archery skills and experience for yourself the sights and sounds of a medieval battlefield – from inside the helmet! Sign up for knight's school – using 21st century technology, practise your skill with sword and lance and learn more about the armourer's craft.

Meet a modern Fusilier and see the challenges he faces in today's warfare.

### Eating

The New Armouries Café housed within the Tower's walls offers visitors a wide range of hot meals, freshly made sandwiches and salads.

There is ramped access to the café.

Tables and chairs are not permanently fixed and once inside there is level access to the service.

There is also a covered area for picnics and outside eating on the Wharf near our Tower café.

There are a number of kiosks selling pastries, sandwiches, drinks and icecreams within the Tower and on the Wharf.

### Staff

If you require assistance whilst visiting the Tower a member of staff would be happy to help.

## Parents' survival guide

### Accessing the Tower

To avoid the dangerous road crossing, take the underpass and follow the signs onto Tower Hill.

### Footwear

Visits include plenty of walking on uneven, cobbled surfaces. Please wear comfortable shoes.

### Suitability

Please be aware that parts of the Tower, including the Torture exhibition and sections of the Yeoman Warder tour can seem frightening or scary to young children.

### Picnic

Areas are available in the Moat (during summer months) or around the Tower. There are plenty of benches and two water fountains are available. Baby food and a special children's lunch box are available in the New Armouries restaurant.

Download our guide for families with children on the autism spectrum from our website or pick up a copy from the Welcome Centre.

### Bags & Pushchairs

Parts of the Tower are not pushchair friendly and many of the surfaces are cobbled. There are several places to leave pushchairs around the Tower, however this is at owner's risk. Pushchairs are not able to be taken into the White Tower. There is a buggy park located next to the Salt Tower.

The Tower of London is not able to offer any cloakroom/left luggage facilities.

### Babycare

There are unisex babycare changing facilities in the New Armouries café. Please ask a member of staff for details.

There is also a female only babycare facility in the Brick Toilets behind the Jewel House.

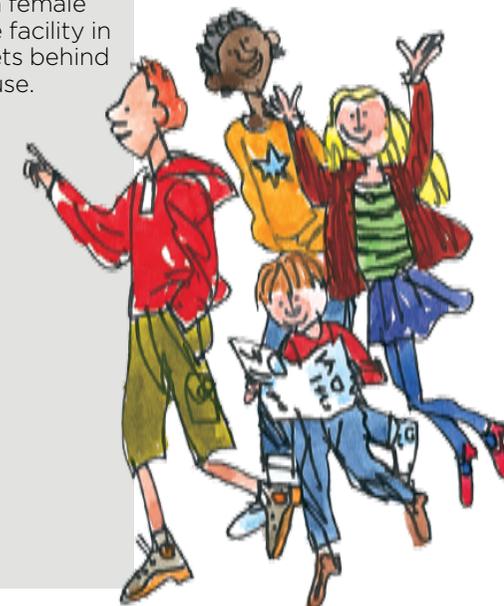
## Emergency

### First Aid or Lost Children

If any child becomes detached from their party, please let a member of staff know as soon as possible. Lost children are usually taken by a Yeoman Warder to the Byward Tower until they can be reunited with their family or group.

Please ensure that children understand that if they become lost they should ask a uniformed warder for help.

If anyone requires First Aid, please contact the closest uniformed warder.



◀ Lift here for map underneath.

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Top floor of the White Tower  
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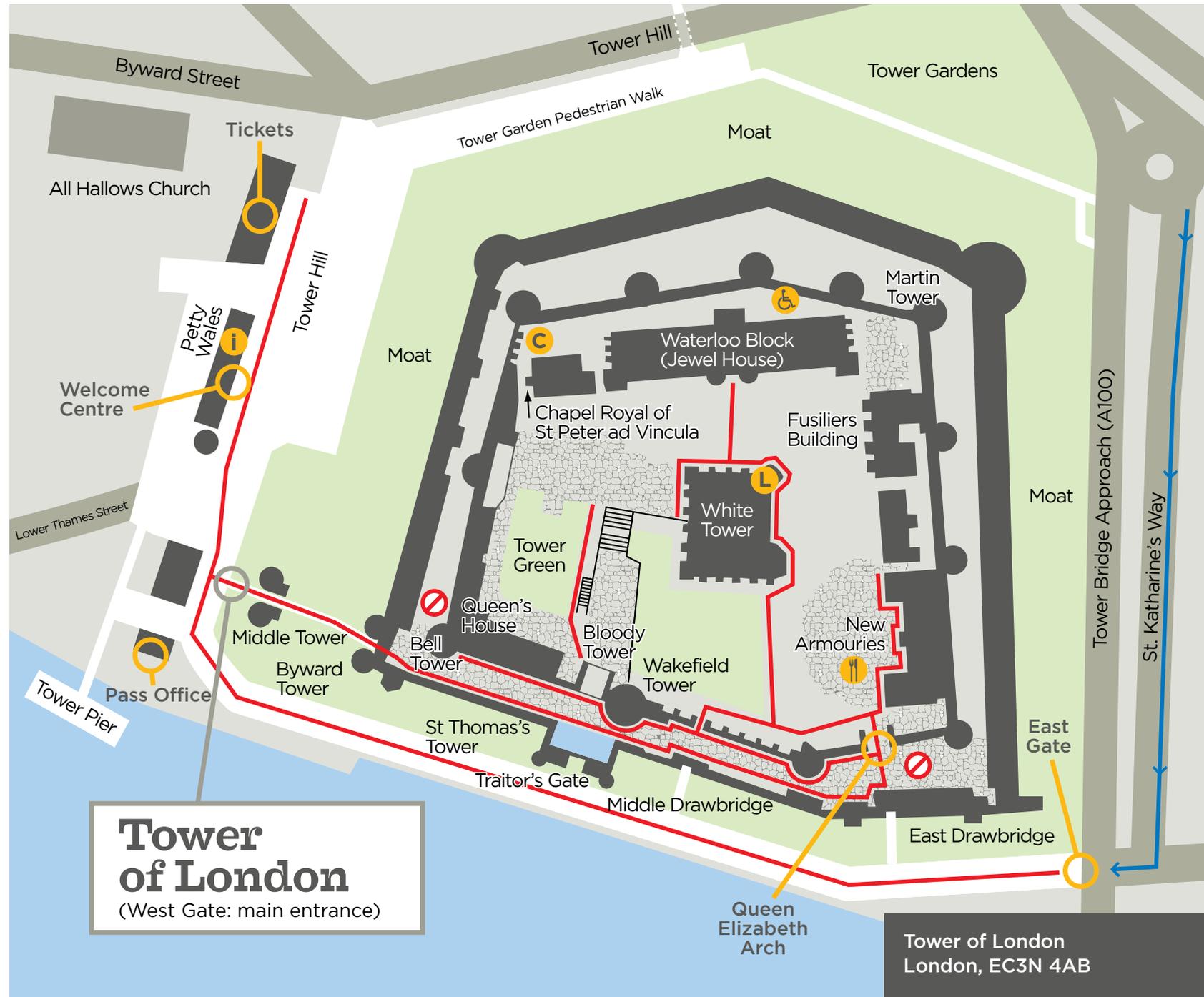
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**Key**

- Preferred routes for access users
- Cobbled or difficult surfacing
- Caterpillar Chair
- Lift
- No access to public
- Disabled Toilet
- Restaurant
- Information

**Tower of London**  
(West Gate: main entrance)

Tower of London  
London, EC3N 4AB



## Historic Royal Palaces TOWER OF LONDON

The Tower of London was opened to all in the reign of Queen Victoria. At the same time many parts of the castle were returned to their medieval appearance and form. We are proud to use Victoria's royal coat of arms to show that continuity, with elements in its design that go back almost a thousand years.

The pattern for the Tower is the south face of the White Tower, the silver-grey stone of the ancient Norman keep and an enduring symbol of the nation's story.

Historic Royal Palaces receives no funding from the Government or the Crown, so we depend on the support of our visitors, members, donors, volunteers and sponsors.