



# **UK Covid-19 Inquiry hearing centre in Scotland**

**Edinburgh International  
Conference Centre (EICC)**

## **Public User Guide**

**January 2024**

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## **UK Covid-19 Inquiry hearing centre Scotland**

The hearing centre for the UK Covid-19 Inquiry in Scotland is based at the Edinburgh International Conference Centre (EICC).

This guide is designed to help navigate you in your visit to the hearing centre, how to get there, what to expect when you arrive and take you through the areas within the building, the facilities, and some of the processes in place.

## The Edinburgh International Conference Centre



### About the venue

Located in the heart of Edinburgh, the Edinburgh International Conference Centre (EICC) is a multi-purpose events venue. The facilities include a series of adaptable auditoria, spacious reception areas and suites. Construction on the EICC began in March 1993 and opened in 1995. The EICC is a company with a single shareholder, The City of Edinburgh Council. In partnership with NHS Lothian, the EICC was Edinburgh's main vaccination centre during the pandemic.

The EICC is situated at The Exchange, 150 Morrison Street, Edinburgh, EH3 8EE - [EICC](#) - and is a short walk from [Festival Square](#) and [Haymarket Station](#).

## Travelling to the EICC

### By Bus

Edinburgh's main bus terminal is located at St Andrews Square. Bus connections stretch right across the UK. For details of these routes, please visit: [www.nationalexpress.com](http://www.nationalexpress.com) or [www.citylink.co.uk](http://www.citylink.co.uk).

For information on local bus services throughout Edinburgh visit [www.lothianbuses.com](http://www.lothianbuses.com)

### By Train

Edinburgh has two railway stations:

- Waverley Station, which is 1.3 miles from EICC, is the city's main railway station and has direct routes to many cities across the country, including over 25 daily departures from London.
- Haymarket Station, which is just 0.4 miles from EICC, is a stop for many commuter and some UK train routes.

Please ensure that you check with your rail network provider to find out if your train will stop at Haymarket or Waverley.

For more information on the rail network within the UK, please visit [East Coast](#), [National Rail](#) or [Trainline](#).

### By Tram

Edinburgh Trams run between the Airport and York Place every 8-10 minutes between Monday to Saturday and every 12-15 minutes on the Sunday. The closest tram stop to the EICC is at

Haymarket Station. [Please visit Edinburgh Trams website for more details.](#)

**Walking to EICC from Haymarket Station** - When exiting Haymarket Station head right (east), towards the pedestrian crossing. Walk straight up Morrison Street for a few minutes and you will find the EICC on the left hand side.

## **SEStran**

For further advice on alternative modes of transport [www.sestran.gov.uk](http://www.sestran.gov.uk)

## **From Edinburgh Airport by Bus**

The Airlink 100 operates a frequent bus service (every 10 minutes at peak times) between Edinburgh Airport and the City Centre, with designated stops en route. The service starts at 04.30 and runs until 00.22, with the journey taking 20 minutes. Tickets cost £4.50 single and £7.50 return. Delegates are advised to disembark at Haymarket Railway Station and to follow signs for EICC on foot (5 minute walk). See city centre map for directions. [Edinburgh City Centre](#)

The N22 bus also departs from outside the Airport entrance and runs every half an hour through the night until the Airlink service starts again. For more information about these services visit [www.flybybus.com](http://www.flybybus.com).

## **From Edinburgh Airport by Taxi**

There is a taxi service from the airport to the City. You'll find official airport taxis at the taxi rank outside the terminal building

(follow the signs within the airport). It costs approximately £15 to get a taxi from the airport to the city centre and the journey takes 20 minutes depending on the time of day.

## **Travelling to Edinburgh by Car**

The EICC is right in the centre of Edinburgh. The main entrance is 150 Morrison Street. For directions from your home or office visit [www.multimap.com](http://www.multimap.com) and input EH3 8EE for the destination postcode.

## **Parking near the EICC**

There are many car parks in close walking distance to the EICC. Please access the following links for further details:

- [National Car Parks \(NCP\)](#) in central Edinburgh
- [Sheraton Hotel Car Park](#) located 150 metres from the EICC, with limited accessible parking spaces
- [Semple Street Car Park](#) located 300 metres from the EICC
- [Spaces near EICC available via yourparkingspace.co.uk](http://yourparkingspace.co.uk)

## **Cycling**

There are bike racks which can accommodate ten bikes, at the main entrance on Morrison Street, and spaces for a further twenty bikes at the racks behind the Atria One office building next to the EICC. For nearby routes, take a look at [Edinburgh's cycle paths](#), many of which run close to the EICC.

## Accessible access to the EICC

The EICC is a modern, purpose-built and fully-accessible events venue and can be reached by several routes with plenty of accessible travel options to choose from. The venue has been designed to be inclusive to people of all abilities and their team has received full Equality and Diversity Training.

## Accessible Parking near the EICC

Dedicated accessible parking spaces are available in the following facilities:

- [Sheraton Hotel Car Park](#) located 150 metres from the EICC, with limited accessible parking spaces
- [Semple Street Car Park](#) located 300 metres from the EICC
- [Castle Terrace NCP Car Park](#) located 650 metres from the EICC

In addition there is on street parking on Morrison Street near the EICC's main entrance and in surrounding streets, such as Gardner's Crescent, which is free and without a time limit for Blue Badge holders.

Visitors from outside the European Union can apply for Blue Badge status for the duration of their visit. They should contact the City of Edinburgh Council with as much notice as possible via their [Request a Blue Badge webpage](#)

Please note that you should not park

- In bus lanes during the hours of operation
- In cycle lanes



- On single or double red lines during the hours of operation or in a dangerous section of the road
- On zig-zag pedestrian crossings at school entrance
- In bus stops

## **By Bus**

Several local buses stop at Lothian Road, which is approx. 300 metres from the EICC. Additionally, Lothian Buses service No. 2 stops just a few metres from the main entrances of the EICC.

All Lothian Buses are easy access, they are equipped with:

- Low entrances that can “kneel” to kerb height to give step free access where possible.
- Retractable boarding ramp for wheelchair access.
- Completely flat areas on the lower deck (with no internal steps).
- High visibility handrails.
- A dedicated wheelchair space.
- Drivers who are specially trained to help customers enjoy the full benefit of their buses.

## **By Taxi**

The EICC benefits from a reserved drop-off area where taxis and cars can park temporarily, directly outside the venue’s two entrances. The taxi rank is situated at the front of the EICC where there is a dropped kerb. Taxis can be booked at the EICC’s Concierge Desks.

The EICC preferred taxi supplier is Central Taxis. All Central Taxis are wheelchair accessible. They offer a mix of 5-seater TX Hackney cabs, 6-seater Mercedes M8 taxis and Peugeot E7

taxis each of which is supplied with a wheelchair ramp, seatbelts and additional safety anchors. All drivers have completed training in Wheelchair Access and Disability Awareness.

## **By Train**

The closest train station to the EICC is Haymarket. The station is accessible and is less than 500 metres from the venue.

Waverley Station is one mile from the EICC. All entrances to the station are step-free. Further details can be found in [Waverley Station's accessibility guide](#).

## **By Tram**

[Edinburgh Trams](#) stop directly outside Haymarket Station, which is the closest tram stop to the EICC. The trams provide frequent connections from the city centre to Edinburgh Airport.

## **On Foot**

The approach to the EICC from Lothian Road is flat with a gentle slope down towards the two main entrances - the Strathblane and the Lennox. From this direction you will arrive at the Lennox entrance first.

Arriving from Haymarket Station to the venue, after the step-free pedestrian crossing the pavement slopes upwards – from this direction you will arrive at the Strathblane entrance first.

## Arrival at the EICC - venue access

### Strathblane entrance



Entrance for the public is through the Strathblane Hall entrance on Morrison Street. Members of the public will need to pass through the standard security checks where a full body check via a walk-through metal detector and a bag search via a security check equipment will be done. This will apply to anyone entering the building at all times.

The EICC entrance, the Strathblane entrance, has automated sliding doors which are operated by a push button from the outside and by a sensor from the inside. During an event these doors are manned with security who can offer assistance if required.

There is a disabled access on the left hand side of the Strathblane Hall as you enter the building.

The venue allows for visitors to queue inside the building.

On arrival at the hearing centre, named individuals (visitors) with a confirmed seat reservation email will inform the ‘front of house’ staff who will direct you accordingly.

Visitors will be issued with a 'Visitor' lanyard, and must be worn at all times when inside the Hearing Centre, and handed back to the ‘front of house’ staff when leaving the building at the end of their day at the hearings.

## **Seat reservations**

There will be at least 15 seats available in the public gallery in the hearing room available for reservation. Seats in the viewing room will be available on a ‘first come, first served’ basis, in person, on the day of the hearing.

The reservation form is available for anyone to use in order to reserve a seat in the public gallery in the hearing room and can be accessed [on our website](#).

Members of the media are not permitted to use this booking system and must contact [media@coronaviruspublicinquiry.org.uk](mailto:media@coronaviruspublicinquiry.org.uk) and the Inquiry’s Media team if they wish to attend the hearings.

Link to the seat reservations will be available to use at least one week before a hearing week and will be released on a weekly rolling basis. If a hearing date is not visible on the reservation form it is likely the reserved seating is full for that date. Seat reservations close midday on the day before the hearing is scheduled for.

The reservation form allows the individual to book for themselves, or on behalf of others, for the week ahead. Block

bookings for multiple individuals must be avoided. It is advisable to reserve a seat only if you can attend.

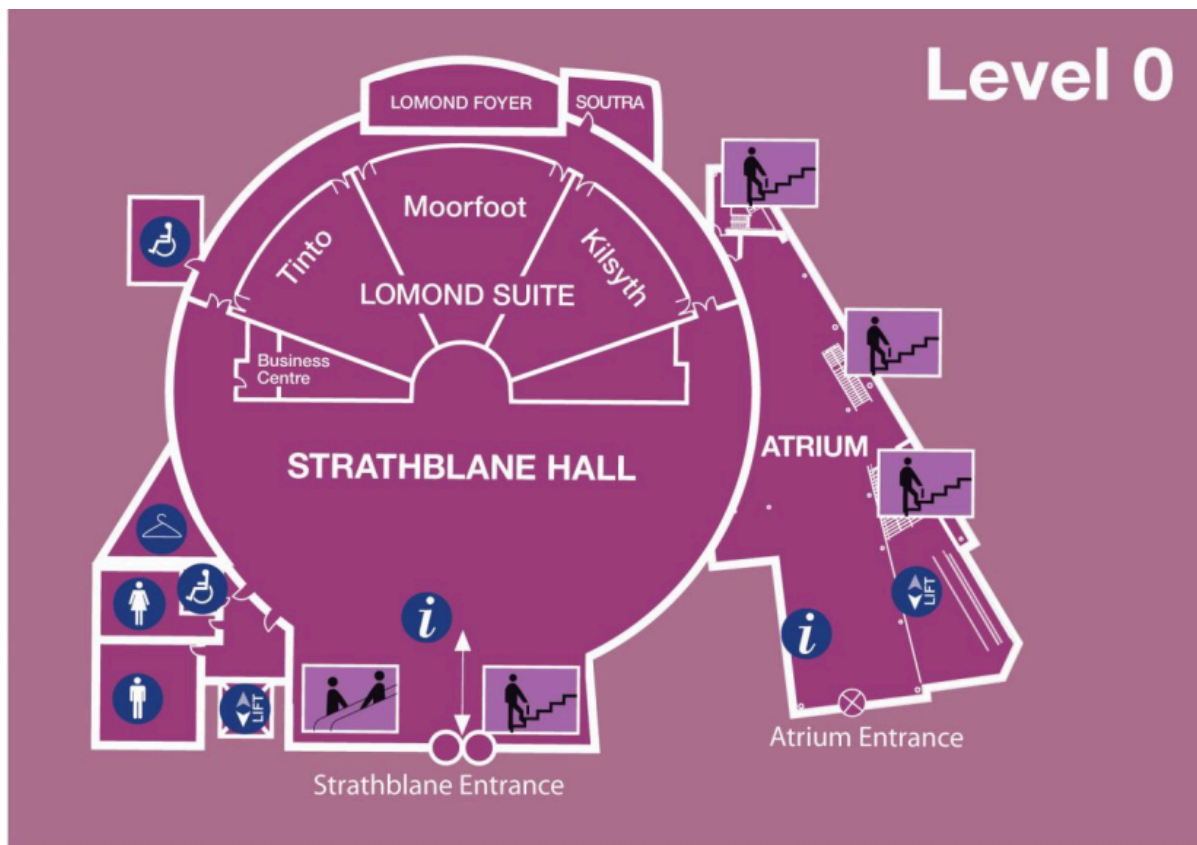
Reservations should only be made for dates that the named individual is going to attend. It is strongly advised and appreciated that if you cannot attend and have reserved a seat, please cancel as soon as possible by emailing the Inquiry at [operations.team@covid19.public-inquiry.uk](mailto:operations.team@covid19.public-inquiry.uk) which allows others the opportunity to attend.

Confirmation of seats notification will be sent through by email (from [operations.team@covid19.public-inquiry.uk](mailto:operations.team@covid19.public-inquiry.uk)) if you have requested a seat reservation.

If a particular day is full, the email will not confirm the booking but will suggest booking another day or taking advantage of the seats available on the day only.

# Finding your way around the venue building

## Ground Floor - Strathblane Hall



Strathblane Hall - This is the main entrance foyer where you have lifts available on either side of the hall, one immediately to your left near the main entrance and the other on your right towards the end of the hall.

- There are two sets of stairs adjacent to the lift locations and one escalator by the entrance.
- Information points at the Strathblane entrance and at the Atrium entrance.
- Accessibility to the venue is the Strathblane entrance with flat floor entry into the hall and the viewing room.
- Toilets are located on the left as you enter Strathblane Hall.

- Hot drinks stations will be available, accommodating soft seating areas with cafe style tables and chairs.
- Within the Strathblane Hall, is The Lomond Suite (where the evidence will be given), comprising the Business centre, Tinto, Moorfoot and the Kilsyth and where you will find the Covid19 Memorial displayed.

Tinto & Moorfoot - Hearing Room - access is through the Moorfoot door. The Hearing room has a public gallery with theatre style seating capacity available for live and on-screen evidence and one screen for transcript.

Kilsyth - Viewing Room - This room has theatre style seating and facilitates on-screen evidence feed and transcript with a three minute delay to the main hearing room.

There will also be access to a multi faith room, a support room and an open area where individuals can watch the hearing proceedings in a more informal space, or for use during breaks in the hearing. An emotional support team is available throughout the day.

## Hearing room schedule and etiquette

During the first week, hearings will run from Tuesday to Friday between 10:00 and 16:00 and doors to the hearing rooms open an hour before the hearing starts.

In the following two weeks, hearings will run from Monday to Thursday between the same times. With no strict timings, there will be two short breaks during the day and an hour's lunch break, subject to any changes.

The Hearing schedule can be accessed on our [website](#) and [twitter](#) for updates.

When sitting in the hearing room, please be considerate and respectful of those around you. You can hold images of loved ones in the hearing room (printed or laminated only) and the Inquiry kindly asks that you hold these images on your lap and refrain from raising them any higher to avoid obstruction to others in the room.

Water is available in the foyer and can be taken into the hearing room - no other food and drink may be consumed in the hearing room.

Devices with recording or filming technology including mobile phones are not permitted to be used in the hearing room. If there is a need to access your devices, you can do so by leaving the hearing room quietly and discreetly whilst the hearing is running.

Please note that filming and recording of the Inquiry will be taking place throughout the duration of the hearing and



broadcasted live via YouTube (with a three minute delay). Anyone within the hearing room may be captured on camera in the background, or while cameras are panning the room. If you do not wish to be filmed, it is recommended that you hear the evidence in the viewing room and not book a seat for the hearing room.

The viewing room doors will be open at the same time as the main hearing room doors where you can have hot drinks, eat and use your electronic devices.

You can leave the hearing centre during the day and return at any time, with your lanyard on you. On your return, you will need to show your lanyard and go through security again. If you are leaving the centre for the day please return your lanyard to the 'front of house' team.

## Security process in place

All visitors attending the hearings must go through a security arch each time when entering the hearing centre from the outside. Please allow extra time to go through security during the busy times.

Going through security checks, may include emptying your pockets and hand searching or using a handheld scanner.

If you're wearing a head covering for religious or cultural reasons, you will be informed how this may be searched by the security staff.

Prohibited items such as guns, firearms, knives or other weapons are not allowed into the building at any time. You will be reported to the police if you attempt to take a weapon into the hearing centre.

Other items that may be used as weapons, even if considered to be harmless are listed below. The list is inexhaustive.

- Blades - such as scissors, penknives and razors.
- Other sharp items - such as knitting needles or darts.
- Glass - perfume bottles, photo frames, drinking bottles.
- Metal items - cutlery, toys, screwdrivers, hammers and nails, chains, umbrellas, crash helmets.
- Syringes - unless prescribed.
- Alcohol - solvents and other potentially harmful substances.
- All photographic, audio and video recording equipment, whether digital or analogue with the exception of mobile phones which you cannot use in the hearing room.

- Liquids that are not drinks or prescription medicine - such as oils, perfumes, other body products, lighter refills, vaping items, glues, etc.

You cannot take any of the above into the hearing room, security will confiscate these from you and issue you with a receipt which you will use to collect the item on your way out of the building.

Items that you may have on you whilst in the building are:

- Mobile phones - should be switched off or put on silent in the hearing room and not permitted to capture any proceedings or recordings.
- Hand sanitiser - you will be asked to use this in front of security staff to prove it is not a harmful item. Hand sanitiser stations are available throughout the hearing centre.
- Drinks - Unopened drinks in cartons and cans, drinks in a bottle, flask or cup with a lid - these cannot be made of glass. If your drink is opened, or in a flask or cup, you'll be asked to drink some to prove it is not harmful.
- Medication - Prescription medicines that have details on to prove this is a valid prescription, and any information will not be recorded or shared.

Please inform the Inquiry if you require reasonable adjustments during security checks when attending the centre via [operations.team@covid19.public-inquiry.uk](mailto:operations.team@covid19.public-inquiry.uk)

## **In an Emergency**

- In the event of a fire, the fire alarm will activate and make a 'two tone' sound.
- EICC staff will direct hosts, delegates/clients to the assembly points using the nearest emergency exits, and assist delegates at these locations until the 'all clear' signal is given.
- EICC Staff shall assist any person who requires additional assistance, these persons will be conveyed to the "Temporary Waiting Areas" within the protected staircases and their attendance at that location recorded within Security Control and if necessary, passed to Fire & Rescue Service on their arrival.
- Security Officers shall ensure the security of the building in the event of an evacuation to confirm that no one re-enters the building until the 'all clear' signal is given.

## **First aid**

EICC team members and all duty managers onsite are first-aid trained. Contact any EICC staff team member if you require first-aid assistance.

## **Emotional support**

Attending the hearing centre in person to experience such proceedings may be challenging and trigger difficult and upsetting memories, emotions, and sensory responses.

The Inquiry aims to implement a trauma-informed approach acknowledging that the impact of Covid 19 has been widespread and caused trauma on individual, group, and community levels.

To make the hearings more accessible, and reduce barriers to attending in person, trained counsellors are available during hearings to provide support. If you cannot locate a counsellor please approach the Inquiry staff to assist.

There is a support room at the hearing centre available for use by the counsellors when privacy and discretion is required. Please be mindful that when speaking to counsellors outside the support room, complete privacy cannot be guaranteed.

If you are concerned about the immediate safety of yourself or someone else at the hearing centre, please alert a member of the Inquiry staff or security team who will assist you.

If you would like to share feedback about your support experience at the hearing centre please let us know at [operations.team@covid19.public-inquiry.uk](mailto:operations.team@covid19.public-inquiry.uk).

Alternatively you can write to us at: FREEPOST UK Covid-19 Public Inquiry.

We understand that attending the hearing centre can be impactful in a number of ways. Please look at the Inquiry website where you will find contact information for a number of

organisations that offer a range of types of support, advice, and services.

Samaritans are available 24/7, and are free to call on 116 123.

## Commemoration

As part of our efforts to recognise and acknowledge the human impact of the pandemic, and to ensure it remains at the heart of proceedings, commemoration panels (memorials, the tapestry and poetry) will be on display in the public areas.

## Covid Policy

The Inquiry aims to reduce the risk of Covid-19 transmission whilst hosting its hearings, read the [Covid Policy](#) for more details.

### The EICC's process towards the Covid Policy

In line with the Scottish Government Guidance, the EICC places the Health Safety and Wellbeing of delegates, visitors and team members as a top priority and is embedded within the daily business.

The EICC will continue to monitor the Scottish Government's guidance and will update arrangements as required with any additional changes that may be required. The following principles will continue to be applied across EICC operations. The EICC will:

- Maintain a vigilant approach to managing the risks of infection transmission.
- Continue to apply appropriate protective measures, such as encouraging vaccination uptake to those who are eligible and using face coverings where appropriate.

- Make adaptations to operations and workplace practices identified by risk assessment.
- Follow the staying at home guidance for staff if they are displaying symptoms and encourage clients and delegates to do likewise. In addition, hybrid and flexible working patterns will be implemented where appropriate to allow staff options to continue working if concerned about infection.
- Continue to display 'Stay well' signage across the EICC site in both public and staff only locations.

A Respiratory Infections Risk Assessment has been undertaken by the EICC and is reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

EICC have

- numerous sanitising stations strategically placed in and around the building. Toilets/washrooms are all clearly signposted around the building.
- a stringent cleaning regime in place, with a focus on toilets, communal areas, hard surfaces and high touchpoints.
- sanitising kits available for the cleaning of keyboards, microphones, screens and lecterns after every speaker's/performer's session.

The vast majority of the ventilation at the EICC is provided by a substantial air conditioning system. The system is electronically controlled and monitored and is effectively used to ensure a non-circularly supply of fresh air throughout the building, including the main conference halls and auditorium so far as is reasonably practicable.



## **Key Contacts at the EICC**

- Edinburgh International Conference Centre - Telephone +44(0) 131 300 3000 - [www.eicc.co.uk](http://www.eicc.co.uk)
- UK Covid-19 Inquiry Operations Team - [operations.team@coronavirus.inquiry.gov.uk](mailto:operations.team@coronavirus.inquiry.gov.uk)

## **Secure Wifi access**

Username is C19Inquiry\_Guest and password is C19EICC