

GLASGOW CONVENTION BUREAU

Media Release: 6 July 2023

Glasgow Convention Bureau partners with AccessAble and the Royal College of Nursing to launch the city's first access guide for conference organisers and delegates.



According to the latest ICCA (International Conference & Convention Association) research published in spring 2023, one of the recently added asks from international associations is the inclusion of Diversity, Inclusion and Equity into the requirements of a conference host city.

In addition, new research by disabled access charity Euan's Guide shows that 72% of disabled people have found accessibility information on a venue's website to be misleading, confusing or inaccurate. When responding to the 2022 Euan's Guide Access Survey, 74% of participants reported having experienced a disappointing trip or having had to change plans due to poor accessibility.

It's clear that first-hand experiences and peer-to-peer reviews are a trusted source of information for disabled people when planning their visit.

The Glasgow Convention Bureau worked with Emma Muldoon, an accessible travel & disability writer who writes under 'Simply Emma' who said: "I think it's important for resources such as the AccessAble guides to be made available to delegates and conference organisers because AccessAble's surveyors visit all venues in person and are trained on a methodology of data collection that has been designed in constant consultation with disabled people. It's not about saying if somewhere is 'fully accessible' because that doesn't exist. As disabled people, we all have different needs. It's about providing factual data so we can make an informed choice – our choice. It's about autonomy. This means conference organisers can now confidently offer detailed, accurate accessibility information to disabled delegates using AccessAble's Access Guides."

To respond as a city, Glasgow Convention Bureau partnered with AccessAble and the Royal College of Nursing to launch the city's first access guide for conference organisers and delegates.

Aileen Crawford, Head of Tourism & Conventions said:

"In Glasgow we have listened to the needs of our clients by working with AccessAble and the Royal College of Nursing to offer accurate and robust access information on our venues and hotels. These guides allow delegates with bespoke needs to make informed decisions to positively impact their conference experience."

Glasgow's AccessAble online resource gives delegates with access requirements detailed information on over 30 venues and services across the city, including the Scottish Events Campus and on-site hotels, the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall, visitor attractions and the Universities of Glasgow, and Strathclyde. The audit of these hotels and venues enables delegates to search the facilities and services available at each site; such as whether hearing loops are available, the standard light levels, counter heights, ramps and clarity of written information available on signs and menus.

The Glasgow Convention Bureau AccessAble guide: <https://www.accessable.co.uk/glasgow-convention-bureau>

David Livermore, Director of Business Development at AccessAble, said: "We were delighted to work in partnership with Glasgow Convention Bureau and the Royal College of Nursing to create Access Guides to venues in Glasgow. The Guides are the first to consider the access needs of delegates planning their visit to Glasgow. The AccessAble website and App will enhance the experience for everyone, giving people access to crucial detail on the go. We hope that other organisations will look to follow Glasgow Convention Bureau's example and partner with us in our mission to enable disabled people to have greater freedom in exploring conference destinations."

Steven Jenkinson, Events & Venue Services Manager, Royal College of Nursing said:

"The RCN represents around half a million nurses around the UK from diverse backgrounds. We want to ensure that that diversity is represented at our Congress and as such accessible venues and accommodation are key to making our delegates feel welcome and included at

our event. Conducting an accessibility audit ahead of the event allows us to plan and means we can meet the needs of our delegates or make adjustments to ensure their visit is as easy and enjoyable as possible.”

Kathleen Warden, Director of Conference Sales, SEC Glasgow **said**: “It’s really important to everyone at the SEC that the venue and its events are accessible to as broad an audience as possible. We’ve worked hard to make the venue itself easily accessible for visitors with mobility difficulties and work closely with ‘Attitude is Everything’ who improve disabled people’s access to events and have developed a Charter of Best Practice in the UK – of which we have a Gold Award.

In terms of visitors with sensory needs such as hearing or sight impairments, we have also been working hard to provide options for different formats that meet these needs. This includes everything from event signage to content, including print and digital displays, but also captioning generation and access to sign language expertise right here in Glasgow.”

Access for all is a key pillar of Glasgow’s Sustainable Tourism and Conference Action Plan because more conference organisers and meeting planners are keen to ensure their meeting is inclusive. This was acknowledged by the local hosts of the World Science Fiction Convention, confirmed to the SEC Glasgow in August 2024.

Professor Esther MacCallum-Stewart, Chair of the World Science Fiction Convention said: “Worldcon 2024 has embedded accessibility into our work from the beginning, as it is of key importance to our members, and important for achieving equitable experiences for all. We're delighted that this initiative will help us plan 'A Worldcon for Our Futures' in Glasgow in 2024”

ENDS

The following images and links are supplied for media use:

- Emma’s photos
- WeTransfer link to download a short video here: <https://we.tl/t-IEs4X4O1en>

Notes for editors:

About Glasgow Convention Bureau at Glasgow Life

Glasgow is one of the world’s leading conference destinations and business tourism contributes significantly to the city’s economy. In the 2022/23 financial year, Team Glasgow won 255 new international and UK conferences through to 2027 worth £107 million. Glasgow Convention Bureau is the city’s primary point of contact for conference organisers, working with partners on more than 100 bids for major UK and international conferences each year. www.glasgowconventionbureau.com

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