

Elizabeth Gaskell's House

Visitor Accessibility Statement



Elizabeth Gaskell's House in Manchester is the former home of the famous Victorian author and her family. It is a Grade II* listed building and was restored and opened to the public in 2014 following Heritage Lottery Funding.

We recommend looking at the website elizabethgaskellhouse.co.uk before you visit.

Location

The House is situated one mile from the city Centre of Manchester and both Piccadilly and Oxford Road Railway stations. The House is on and near to many bus routes, and there is limited free parking on the streets surrounding the House. Bike racks are available for visitors, staff and volunteers to use. These are situated near the basement entrance at the right of the House.

There is no parking on site for visitors, except those with a blue badge who may reserve a disabled parking space in advance of their visit. The disabled parking is accessed via the right-hand gate at the front of the House and visitors are asked to park considerately in the courtyard area as spaces are not marked.

Pathways around the house are all flat or sloped and even. Care should be taken when the surface is wet.

Entry

Visitors can either enter through the main doors at the front of the House, which can be accessed via three stone steps, or via the side entrance accessed via a slope. Visitors coming through the side entrance must ring the bell for the door to be opened, and then should walk through to the main entrance area and hall.

Tickets and hallway

Tickets are purchased from the entrance hall and enable the visitor to visit the House for 12 months from date of purchase. Tickets for open days can be paid by cash or card, although a minimum spend of £5 is requested for card payments. The hall area is paved with level flag stones. The desk is of low level with clear lines of visibility. There may be a short wait to purchase tickets at busier times.

Period Rooms

All visitors are invited to touch and handle nearly all the objects and furnishings in the period rooms – of which there are four. All the period rooms are carpeted and there is plenty of space to access and exit these rooms in a wheel chair. Visitors may also sit on the chairs if they would like. The Morning Room contains three interactive interpretation screens, two of which can be touched to activate.

Lighting has been installed to reflect the style and period of the rooms and may be low level at certain times of the day. Volunteers are on hand to read material or to talk through any questions visitors may have.

There are small baskets in each room containing toys, games and books for children.

Private tours of the period rooms last between 45 minutes to 1 hour and are conducted by volunteers. Bookings must be made in advance and these take place on non-open days.

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Exhibition Room and Seminar Room

The exhibition and seminar room are located on the first floor of the house and can be accessed via the lift or the main stairway. The stairs are carpeted and as the original hand rail is in place we ask that visitors do not lean or put large amounts of pressure against the rails. The stairway is wide and open.

The exhibition and seminar room are both carpeted. Chairs are available in both rooms. The seminar room is used for events, room hire and workshops so may not always be open to the public. The exhibition changes annually.

There are two emergency call panels on the first floor, one is directly outside the lift and second is on the landing at the top of the main staircase.

There is an alternative fire exit accessed via the first floor that takes visitors down a second staircase directly to the basement and through a fire exit door into the courtyard. The area outside the lift is designated as an area of refuge and in the case of a fire, those unable to use the stairs should wait in this area until they are rescued or relieved by firefighters.

Tea Room and Basement

The Tea Room, Servants' Hall and toilets are situated in the basement/lower ground floor. This can be accessed via the lift or stone steps from the hall area. The stairway is narrow but secure hand rails are in place and the edge of the steps are marked in white.

The basement surface is even stone flagged across all areas. The Servants' Hall is used for events, contains dressing up items, has second-hand books for sale and is used as an overflow for the Tea Room. The Tea Room itself sells a selection of hot and cold drinks (including alcoholic drinks), cakes, crisps and biscuits. There is a small shop area to the rear of the tea room and a selection of new and second-hand books are also on sale. All goods can be paid for at the main counter in the tea room. Payment can be taken by cash or card (minimum spend £5 for card payments).

Access is unrestricted and chairs may be moved to accommodate wheel chairs. Mothers are welcome to breastfeed at any location in the House, including the tea room. There is also a small table and chairs for children to use and high chairs are available.

There is a fire exit and direct access to garden from the basement without steps. To return into the House you must return to the front or side doors on the ground floor.

Toilets

Disabled toilets are available on every floor and in the basement, this is shared with a baby change area. Male and female toilets are located in the basement and first floor.

Additional information

Visitors are encouraged to take photographs throughout the House.

Only guide dogs are permitted into the House.

Smoking of any kind is not permitted in the House. Visitors may smoke to the rear of the House near the staff carpark.