



Essential Companion Policy

At the Lowther Pavilion we take our responsibilities toward disabled customers very seriously. We recognise that in order for some of our customers to take advantage of all that we have to offer they may need support from another person.

As such it is our policy that where this is the case we make available free tickets which will enable a guest to bring a personal assistant or companion with them to support them with their needs.

Example

Customer 1 is a wheelchair user and the layout of the venue they are visiting means that there is no way that they will be able to purchase or carry drinks to the viewing area. Customer 1 has a friend, who has agreed that he will do this for both of them and also help Customer 1 get to the toilet if they need.

Customer 1 will be able to bring a friend with them at no cost.

The only criteria we have for having a free Companion ticket is that a customer has to have another person with them to get the same quality of service as non-disabled people for a reason related to their own impairment.

(This does not apply to short term conditions like broken limbs).

Requesting a free Essential Companion Ticket

Due to the fact that this scheme is potentially subject to fraudulent misuse we have to operate a system to check eligibility for a free ticket. To apply customers need to show appropriate supporting information during the booking process and/or the [“The Access Card”](#).

The Access Card is widely accepted as a form of ID representing the type of disability a customer may face. This also negates any conversation requirement to discuss any disabilities present.

	WHAT IT MEANS	WHAT TO DO
	Customer has difficulty with queuing or standing	Offer to jump queues / find seating. Offer to find somewhere away from crowd to wait
	Customer needs wheelchair accessible facilities	Describe availability of wheelchair accessible facilities and be aware of evacuation procedures.
	Customer has difficulty with distances; perhaps wheelchair user unable to self-propel distances or people with limited mobility	Find short cuts where possible, explain distances involved
	Customer may need urgent access to toilet. May have hidden impairment	Oriente customer with facilities on arrival. Allow urgent access to any toilet no questions asked: including staff / 'disabled' / accessible. Consider options for seating near to facilities if required
	Customer needs assistance dog	Allow use of assistance dog – find a water bowl and let customer know best place for dogs toileting
	Customer needs assistance	Offer assistance / allow additional entry for them to bring their own support. Free +1 ticket policy
	Customer has difficulty with visual information	Give information verbally – be descriptive of routes / additional information and make them aware of availability of further support
	Customer has difficulty with audible information	Make information available visually. Be prepared to be lip read or be able to use pen and paper for communication
	Customer may have other relevant needs	Ask if there's anything else you can do to support customer / anything you may need to be aware of

The Access Card is available to apply for here - <https://www.accesscard.org.uk/> and is the preferred method of validating an essential companion ticket with us at the Lowther Pavilion theatre.

Evidence

If a customer does not wish to apply for an Access Card there are the following forms of evidence we will accept as a substitute in order to access the essential companion ticket.

Any and all documentation must be sent to us via email on boxoffice@lowtherpavilion.co.uk and/or shown to us on booking and event at the Box Office. This will be then destroyed in line with all GDPR guidance after the event.

Please find below a list of documents we take into consideration when considering whether to allocate a complimentary ticket:

- Receipt of the Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or War Pensioners' Mobility Supplement (or government standard equivalent).
 - Receipt of Personal Independence Payments (PIP)
 - Receipt of either the Severe Disablement Allowance or Attendance Allowance.
- War Pensioners' Mobility Allowance or War or Service Disablement Pension for 80% or more disability.
- Blind or partially sighted registration certificate (BD8 or CVI Certificate) or evidence from an eye specialist, for example an optometrist, that the individual would qualify to be registered as severely sight impaired (blind) or sight impaired (partially sighted). (Further advice can be found on the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) website).
- A personal letter from the GP, community nurse or social worker that the individual has a long term impairment or 'disability' and requires assistance.
- Confirmation in writing from Social Services that the individual is included on their Deaf Register, or a letter or report from an aural specialist confirming that hearing loss has been recorded at 70 – 95 dBHL or worse.

The Role of an Essential Companion

By accepting the free ticket your Companion accepts responsibility for providing you with the support you need to attend the event.

This includes being able to provide you with additional assistance during the course of an emergency evacuation.

The staff at the event are unable provide assistance in excess of their typical role and general reasonable adjustments so it's important that, if you need help moving around, your Companion is ready and willing and able to support you with this.

Example

Customer 1 has mild learning difficulties and needs a Companion to help negotiate crowds of people and a friend of his cousin said he'd be his Companion at an event.

Customer 1 needs the toilet part way into the first half but the friend is too engrossed in the event to help them, leaving Customer 1 to ask a Steward to accompany them.

In this situation we would reserve the right to remove the friend from the event. Please read more on what happens if you lose your support.

Young Carers

It is the policy of the Lowther Pavilion that all children under the age of 18 are accompanied by an appropriate adult. We accept that young carers are a much valued and needed source of support but we are only able to accept them under the free Companion ticket scheme where there is no risk of them being left unattended.

If your need for a Companion is something related to a potential deterioration in your condition then a Companion ticket may not be authorised for anyone under the age of 18.

Example

Customer 1 has epilepsy and needs a Companion with them to monitor their condition and provide support if they have a grand mal seizure. Their daughter provides this support for them at home and has come to the concert as their PA.

Customer 1 has a grand mal seizure and loses consciousness for some time. During this time their daughter, even though she is a carer, is not under the supervision of an adult.

If you attend the venue with a Companion under this age or if there is doubt in the absence of valid photo ID we reserve the right to refuse admission. This policy does not apply where there are other adults in the party able to accept responsibility for the young carer.

Contingency – What happens if you lose your support?

It is important that you and your companion are aware of what happens if for some reason you lose your support. If it is felt that your Companion is not providing you with the support you need we reserve the right to eject them from the facility at any time and refuse access under the companion scheme for future events.

We will endeavour to support you with the rest of your visit if this is the case but if we are unable to make appropriate reasonable adjustments to do this and it jeopardises your, or other customers, Health and Safety we may be left with no other option than ask you to leave also. It is especially important that you choose the right support to come with you.

Abusing the system

If we feel that either the disabled customer or their companions are abusing the system we reserve the right to treat the matter as Fraud and look at bringing legal action. Every accessible space taken up by somebody that doesn't need it represents a disabled person missing out.

