



## 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.

We raise all our own funds and depend on the support of our visitors, members, donors, sponsors and volunteers.



# Access guide

## Visiting the Tower of London



Compiled with the help  
of the Tower Access Panel

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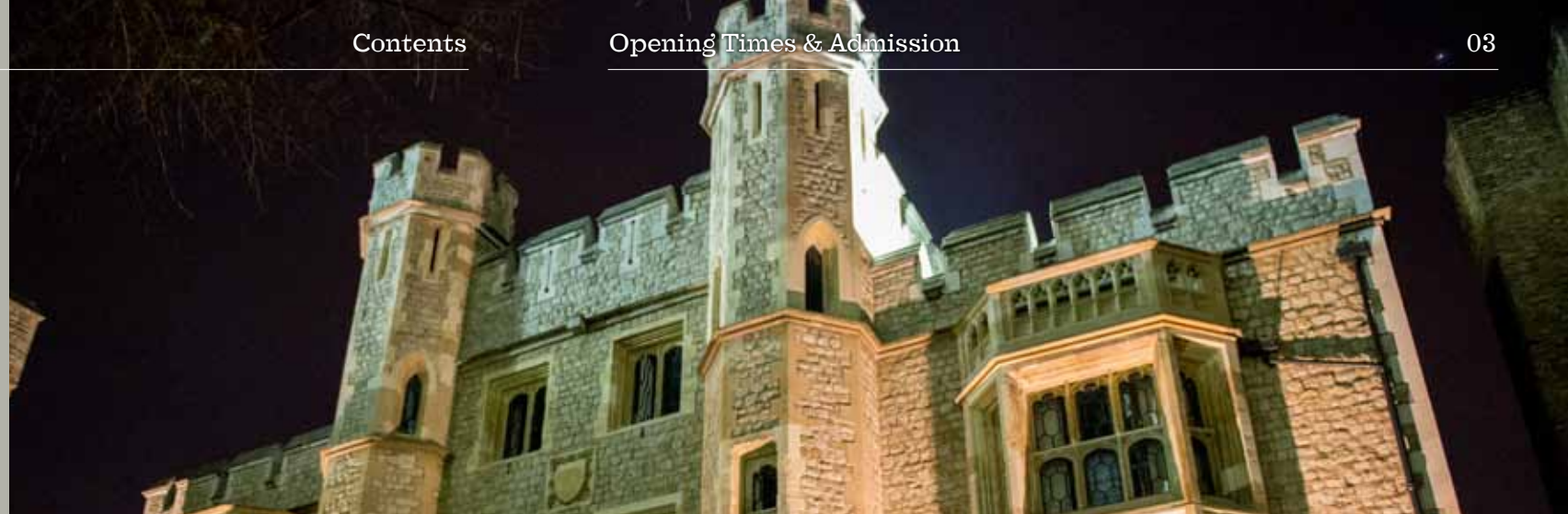
## Enquiries and contact details

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

**Information Line:** 020 3166 6000  
**Ticket Hotline:** 020 3166 6000  
**Type Talk:** 180001 020 3166 6000  
**Visitor Services:** 020 3166 6266

**E:** [VisitorServices.TOL@hrp.org.uk](mailto: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. We are committed to improving access and facilities for visitors with disabilities.

However, the Tower of London is an 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 surfaces and pathways.

Guide dogs and other registered assistance dogs are welcome at the Tower. Please ask a Yeoman Warder for assistance in accessing the moat – dog bins are provided.

## 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: 10.00-17.30**

**Tues-Sat: 09.00-17.30**

Last admission at 17.00

Buildings close at 17.30

**Winter (1 November – 28 February):**

**Sun-Mon: 10.00-16.30**

**Tues-Sat: 09.00-16.30**

Last admission at 16.00

Buildings close at 16.30

The Tower closes 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 updated regularly and are available on our website or by contacting our information line.

Visitors with disabilities are eligible for admission at the concession rate. A carer/accompanying adult is given entry free of charge.

We welcome comments from individuals and 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 Visitor Services.

## What to see

The Tower of London is a 1,000-year-old castle that protects the Crown Jewels. Throughout its long history, it was a secure fortress, a royal palace, and an infamous prison. Kings and queens demonstrated their power from here, shaping society and influencing our world. Today within the walls of this mighty fortress you can see the spectacular displays of the Jewel House, the Tower's Mint and the Royal Armouries (including the armours of Henry VIII). Meet the Yeoman Warders, who have guarded this castle for centuries, and the Tower's symbolic guardians — the Ravens.

### Inside the Tower

Although many of the towers have limited access, the Jewel House, housing the Crown Jewels has level access.

#### Access rating 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.

### Jewel House **Access 1**

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

The crowns and ornaments displayed here are enduring symbols of royal authority, used by kings and queens during the coronation ceremony and on important state occasions.

The first half of the exhibition contains an introductory room displaying portraits of monarchs and two large rooms presenting three high definition video projections showing the regalia, an animated coronation procession and footage from the 1953 Coronation. These have background music but no commentary. The second 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 Crown Jewels are displayed. There is a moving walkway ("travelator") alongside the Crown Jewels. Jewel House Wardens are more than happy to stop the travelator for wheelchair users.

There is a platform lift at the end of the moving walkway which allows you to access the raised platform to spend more time viewing the Crown Jewels. It is not suitable for mobility scooters. Please ask a member of the Jewel House team to use the lift.

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

**Surfacing:** York stone or lino, 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 Wardens, who will be happy to help.

### The Chapel of St Peter ad Vincula **Access 2**

**Only included as part of a Yeoman Warder tour.**

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

**Access:** 4 steps down to entrance, total drop of 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 Tower's Mint - Coins and Kings **Access 2**

For over 500 years the Tower's Mint provided a secure location for kings and queens to control the production of silver and gold coins. Coins and Kings is situated to the left of the main entrance on Mint Street. It occupies the ground floor of a former Mint building. Braille and large print guides of the exhibition text are available from Warders. The exhibition space is quite narrow and small, but wide enough for wheelchairs. Those in wide wheelchairs may need to retrace their tracks through the exhibition to exit via the entrance. It is not suitable for mobility scooters.

**Access:** No steps, minimum doorway/aisle width 1.03m.

**Surfacing:** Uneven wooden floorboards.

### White Tower **Access 3**

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 palaces, including the Chapel of St John, 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 very many places to sit down immediately in the entrance hall.

There are steep and narrow spiral steps to reach other floors. Some handrails are wide and flat. The White Tower in total has 247 steps.

**There is a lift to the basement level with access to the basement galleries and White Tower shop. This is on the north side of the White Tower, opposite the entrance to the Crown Jewels. Please ask a member of staff in the area for assistance.**



Crown Jewels  
- at the Jewel House



the Jewel House

## White Tower (continued)

### Entrance Floor

Access  
3

The 'ground' 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 is 1.78m. Arches between galleries have a minimum width of 1.04m.

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

### 1st & 2nd Floors & Basement

Access  
3

The Chapel of St John and the Medieval Great Hall.

There is an interactive 'Armoury in Action' on the second floor (see page 14).

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



White Tower

## Bloody Tower

Access  
3

The Bloody Tower tells the story of three high status prisoners. The entrance contains workings (with sound effects) for the portcullis below. The lower room contains a room setting and displays on Sir Walter Raleigh's imprisonment. The upper floor presents the disappearance of the two princes (Edward V and his younger brother Richard). It 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 11.1m. The floors are connected by a very narrow, steep and worn spiral staircase. Minimum doorway size is 51cm 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 bedchamber and presence chamber. It includes three towers – St Thomas's, Wakefield and Lanthorn.

Two videos are presented in these towers. Both have subtitles, but they are not audio described, nor do they have BSL interpretation.

**Access:** Use the steps in Water Lane, you will then travel eastwards via several staircases to the end of the south battlements. Once there, you will have the option of returning to ground level via a stone staircase or carrying on along the east battlements.

24 steps up to the entrance of the Medieval Palace.

### EXHIBITION - BRICK TOWER

Access  
3

#### Royal Beasts

Kings and queens housed wild and exotic animals at the Tower from the reign of King John in the early 1200s to the 1830s. Most were diplomatic gifts and trophies from wars and exploration. Lions, elephants, and polar bears, were kept here at the Tower as status symbols of Royal power.

The exhibition is great for families and features multi-sensory displays and interactives.

**Access:** Path from the exit of the Martin Tower, leading to a total of 8 steps into the exhibition. When exiting the exhibition, there is a wide wooden staircase consisting of seven steps. The route then continues around the north battlements.

**Surfacing:** The exhibition space consists of flat wooden flooring.

## The Battlements

There 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 on the walls, the Broad Arrow Tower, the Constable Tower and the Martin Tower. The Martin Tower contains the exhibition 'Crowns and Diamonds', a history of the making of the Crown Jewels.

The Tower of London 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 and personal to the life size metalwork soldiers and their weapons on the battlements inside the Tower.

**Access:** There are some narrow, steep spiral staircases and some handrails along this entire route. There is a total of 162 steps with a total rise and fall of 30cm. Minimum doorway width is 56cm.

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



## Beauchamp Tower

Medieval wall tower. The walls especially on the first floor have intricate Tudor prisoners' inscriptions ('graffiti').

**Access:** Upper and lower chambers connected by a spiral staircase. A total of 80 steps with a rise and fall of 15.2m. There is a handrail beside steps into the tower. Minimum doorway width is 70cm.

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



## Outside the Tower of London

### Ticket booths/Group Tickets office

Digital signage on the top of each ticket kiosk indicates which one is open. There is a lowered counter at the top kiosk, although this may not always be open. There is a partially lowered counter at the first till point in the Group Ticket office.

### 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 before you enter the Tower.

Come here to hire one of our free wheelchairs (first come, first served basis) and to pick up free maps and leaflets, events on the day and where to find facilities.

Our trained staff will answer any queries on access and on planning your day. Inside the Welcome Centre is a short film giving an overview of the Tower. The desk has a lowered section for wheelchair users and an induction loop is fitted.

Children can pick up fun filled trails from here too! Ask for a lost child wristband when you collect your trail.

## Outside the Tower (continued)

### The Wharf

This is on the south side of the Tower from the main gates to Tower Bridge. Entry is free for all from 0800 to sunset. Please note that we reserve the right to close the Wharf at short notice.

The Wharf gives great views of the Tower and explains the relationship between the Tower and the River Thames, which was an important entry into the Tower. Visitors to the Wharf can see Traitor's 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 of London shop (accessible entrance at the rear of the building) and a kiosk selling drinks and light snacks.

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. Some parts do not have dropped kerbs.

There are plenty of benches along the Wharf.

### Gun salutes on the Wharf

Gun salutes take place on the Wharf to welcome state visitors or to mark important royal occasions.

There are two locations in London where royal salutes occur - Hyde Park and the Tower of London. At the Tower this takes place on the Wharf. 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 (admission ticket required). Other good vantage points which are less crowded are on Tower Hill and on Tower Bridge.

The area is searched by sniffer dogs before the Honourable 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 as 62. Dates of the gun salutes can be found on our website.



## Getting here

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

#### Bus

Routes: 15, 42, 78, 100 and RV1. Most have wheelchair access. Bus stops are within 5 to 10 minutes walking distance of the Tower.

#### Underground

Circle/District lines to Tower Hill, which has lift access to street level.

#### Train

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

#### Docklands Light Railway (DLR)

Tower Gateway station is located close to Tower Hill underground. This station is fully accessible to street level.

#### Thames Boat Services

Most river boats are accessible and the majority of new river craft have dedicated wheelchair spaces.

For further information please call **020 7941 2400** or visit **www.tfl.gov.uk**



#### Parking

There are no parking spaces at 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, which are charged for. For detailed information on prices and opening times please contact **car.parks@corporationoflondon.gov.uk**

There is a National Car Parks site (pay and display) on Mansell Street, just off the Minories. This is a 10-15 minute walk (approx. 1000 metres) to the Tower though.

In addition, please visit **www.describe-online.com** which is designed to help visually and mobility impaired people find their way around 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 our team in the Welcome Centre.

All our ticket boxes are fitted with induction loops.

Staff in the Welcome Centre can help with detailed routes and other 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 is a limited number on a first come, first served basis. Wheelchairs are used 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. Lifts have spoken announcements and tactile buttons.

### Seating

A wide range of seating is available with and without backs and arms throughout the Tower.

### Ramps

There are ramps located at the New Armouries café and near the Ravens shop.

### Volunteers

Our volunteers (subject to availability and advance notice) 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. There are charges for using the non-accessible toilets.

### Inside the Tower

There are accessible toilets

- At the rear of the Jewel House
- Near the Salt Tower

Access to these is over cobbled surfaces. Non-accessible toilets are also available at the Cradle Tower and the rear of the Jewel House.

Toilets with access are in all educational areas and within the New Armouries café.

## Enjoying your visit

### Yeoman Warder guided tours

The guided tours are included in the ticket price and start near the entrance. They last for around 45 minutes. These tours can get very crowded at peak times. Please ask us if you require any advice.

The tour is accessible for most visitors. A route is detailed on pages 14/15 for those not able to use the steps. You will be able to re-join the Yeoman Warder tour before it enters the Chapel of St Peter. The Chapel has some steps to enter.

Please contact Visitor Services if you require any further information.

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

The BSL interpreter will be visible by a blue high visibility vest with 'BSL interpreter' on the back.

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

### Descriptive tours

Descriptive tours of the Crown Jewels and White Tower are available for blind and visually impaired visitors. Please contact Visitor Services before your visit to check availability and book one of these sessions.

### Audio guide

Our standard audio guides incur an additional cost advertised on site. Audio guides are free for visually impaired visitors with a tour specifically for our blind and partially sighted visitors (English language only).

The guides have a neck strap making them easy to carry. Sound can easily be controlled and they have an induction loop facility.

## Emergency

### First Aid or lost children

If any child becomes separated from their party, please let a member of staff know as soon as possible.

Lost children are usually kept with the member of staff until they can be reunited with their family or group. All our front of house team are contactable by radio, so please ask any member of staff if you get separated from your child.

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

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



## Further Information

### Written information

A large print **access guide** is available from our Welcome Centre.

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

Our **Today at the Tower leaflet** details the tours, costumed events and special activities taking place during your visit. Collect from the Welcome Centre or when you buy your ticket. You can also download from our website and it can be adjusted to a suitable size.

### Information boards

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

### Magnifying sheets

Visitors can borrow magnifying sheets from the Welcome Centre. Place them approx. 2cm above the wording.

### Handling points

Our handling point is in the basement of the White Tower. Please ask a member of staff to assist in using the lift or staircase at the entrance opposite the Jewel House.

### Armoury in Action

Interactive exhibition – White Tower

Armoury in Action invites families to explore the building of the White Tower and the history of arms and armour at the Tower. Through a mixture of historic objects, audio visual displays and interactives meet the people on site and learn about their skills and weapons. Can you build a Tower to last a thousand years? Come and try your hand as an archer, armourer, artilleryman, cavalryman or gun designer.

### Eating

The New Armouries café inside the Tower offers visitors a wide range of hot meals, freshly made sandwiches and salads.

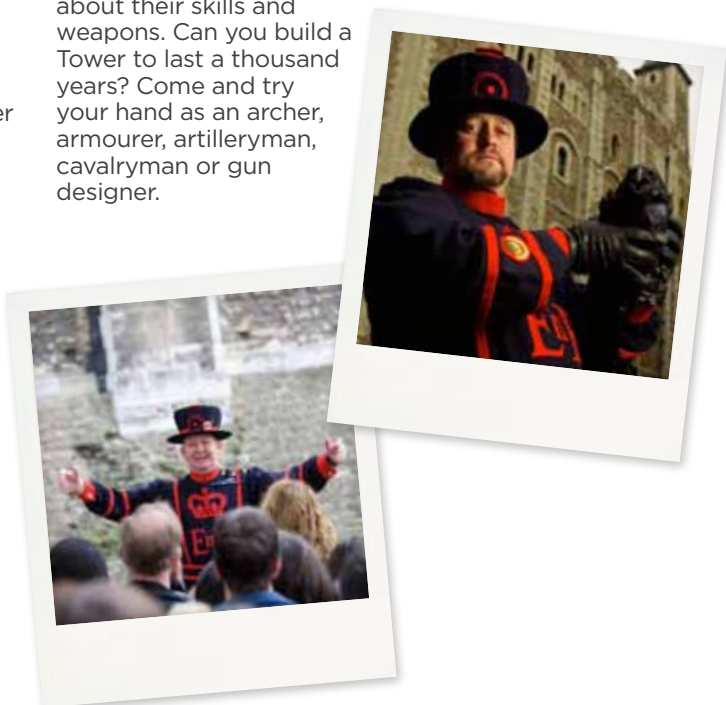
There is ramped access to the café.

Tables and chairs are not permanently fixed. Inside there is level access.

There are a number of kiosks selling pastries, sandwiches, drinks and ice creams in the Tower and on the Wharf.

### Staff

If you require assistance while visiting the Tower, any member of staff will be happy to help.



## Parents' survival guide

### Accessing the Tower

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

### Footwear

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

### Guidance

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.

### Picnics

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

### Visitors with Autism

The Tower of London is a busy place with lots of visitors which can be noisy and overwhelming. Visitors can experience a quieter visit by arriving at opening time before the Tower fills up with other visitors. The quietest time of the year is November, early December and January weekdays. The busiest times of the year are Easter Weekend, the summer holidays and Christmas. Queuing times for the Crown Jewels and other exhibitions can be up to 90 minutes on very busy days.

You can check the website for updates on any daily activities, including gun salutes, you may encounter on your visit. Please also check the website for details of catering in our café and 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 and pushchairs

Parts of the Tower are not pushchair friendly and many of the surfaces are cobbled. We have three buggy parks available (£1/€1 returnable deposit to use). Items are left at owner's risk.

- Under the White Tower entrance stairs
- By the Middle Drawbridge
- By the Salt Tower

### Left Luggage

The Tower of London does not have any cloakroom/left luggage facilities.

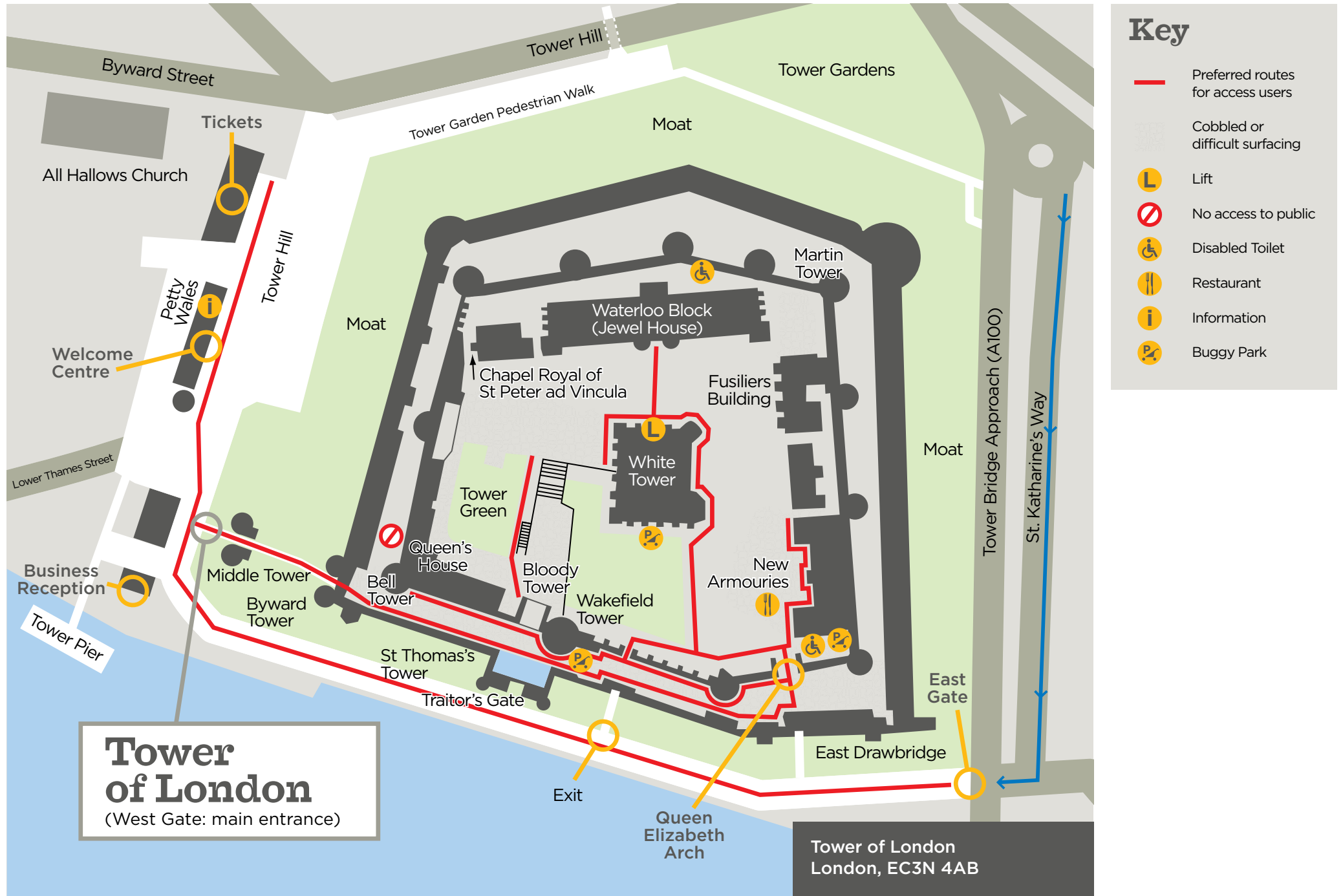
### Babycare

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

There are also facilities in the accessible toilets at the Jewel House exit and at the Salt Tower.

◀ Lift here for map underneath.





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

Tower of London  
London, EC3N 4AB