

# BiCon 2014 Access Report

## Table of Contents

<b>Arriving at BiCon.....</b>	<b>1</b>
Accessing the venue by Own Car.....	1
Accessing the venue by Train and/or Taxi.....	1
BiCon Reception.....	3
<b>Accommodation.....</b>	<b>4</b>
All Saints Court.....	5
Trinity Close.....	9
<b>Conference Venue.....</b>	<b>9</b>
Basic Information.....	9
Navigating the Venue - Please read if you have visual, balance, or mobility impairments!....	10
Smoking and Non-Smoking Areas.....	12
Emergency Information.....	12

## Arriving at BiCon

### Accessing the venue by Own Car

Leeds Trinity University campus has enough parking spaces available for all BiCon attendees. The South car park is closest to the accommodation in All Saints Court, and is less than 5 minutes walk from the halls. Assistance with baggage will be available at BiCon Reception for people who require it.

A number of disabled spaces with extra room alongside for wheelchairs *etc* are available in each car park, for **Blue Badge holders only**. If you require disabled parking facilities but do not hold a Blue Badge, it *may* be possible for BiCon to liaise with the venue to provide you with a parking pass, given sufficient notice.

### Accessing the venue by Train and/or Taxi

Leeds station is fully accessible. If ramps and/or luggage assistance is required, it is best to book this a minimum of 24 hours in advance. East Coast Trains may be contacted by [telephone or text relay service](#) and will also [call you upon request](#).

The majority of East Coast mainline trains (including trains to and from central London) come in on the central platforms, so it is possible to exit the station without needing to use lifts or escalators.

You have four options for reaching BiCon by train:

### 1) Take the train to Leeds, then get a taxi directly to the venue.

There is a taxi queue outside the station and a number of wheelchair-accessible cabs are available. Note that there are **several different styles of accessible cab**, some bigger than others. As the taxis available in Horsforth village are not wheelchair-accessible, we would recommend taking a taxi from Leeds station if you cannot easily wheel uphill with your luggage.

A taxi from Leeds railway station to Leeds Trinity University campus costs in the order of £15 and takes approximately 20 minutes.

There is a dropping off point in the **North car park** immediately in front of BiCon Reception.

### 2) Take the train to Horsforth, then walk to the venue.

Trains from Leeds to Horsforth leave every half hour and take approximately 15 minutes. At Leeds station, you will need to take an escalator or lift up to the footbridge, then back down again when you reach the correct platform.

Horsforth station is fully accessible, and even has an accessible toilet locked with a Radar key. The ramps from the platforms up to the main road are however a little on the steep side and may prove a challenge for users of manual wheelchairs travelling alone. There is a handrail on one side of the ramp for trains going to Leeds, and a handrail on both sides of the ramp for trains coming from Leeds.

Be aware that walking from the station to the venue is **up a gentle hill**. Also, the pavements on one side of the road are too narrow even for a person with a suitcase. If you are using a wheelchair or other assistive device and you find yourself **on the same side of the road as Horsforth Cricket Club** (the west side), cross the road at the pedestrian crossing. You will need to cross back again when you reach the venue.

### 3) Take the train to Horsforth, then take a taxi to the venue.

[Abbey Cars](#) are the local taxi firm. We have not used them and cannot recommend their service. However they were friendly on the phone and have a good website! It is possible to pre-book a car **online**, which is useful if you are deaf or hard of hearing. It is also possible to pre-book a car by phone, or to call upon arrival at the station. The station postcode is **LS18 5NL**, and Leeds Trinity University postcode is **LS18 5HD**.

Please note that Abbey Cars **do not** have vehicles with ramps, so **cannot** take wheelchair users in their wheelchairs. They do however have a variety of size of car and can accommodate groups with suitcases, and can take folded wheelchairs or other assistive devices. The website suggests a price of £5 for the journey, which will take only about 5 minutes.

### 4) Take the train to Horsforth, then take a bus to the venue.

There exists a bus, [the 97](#), which is a low-floor accessible bus. However it does not leave from outside the railway station. You would need to turn right as you exit the station and walk west to the roundabout to pick it up. We are not certain of the location of the bus stops and this may not be practical. It is probably better to use a taxi if you cannot walk uphill or are easily made dizzy by traffic.

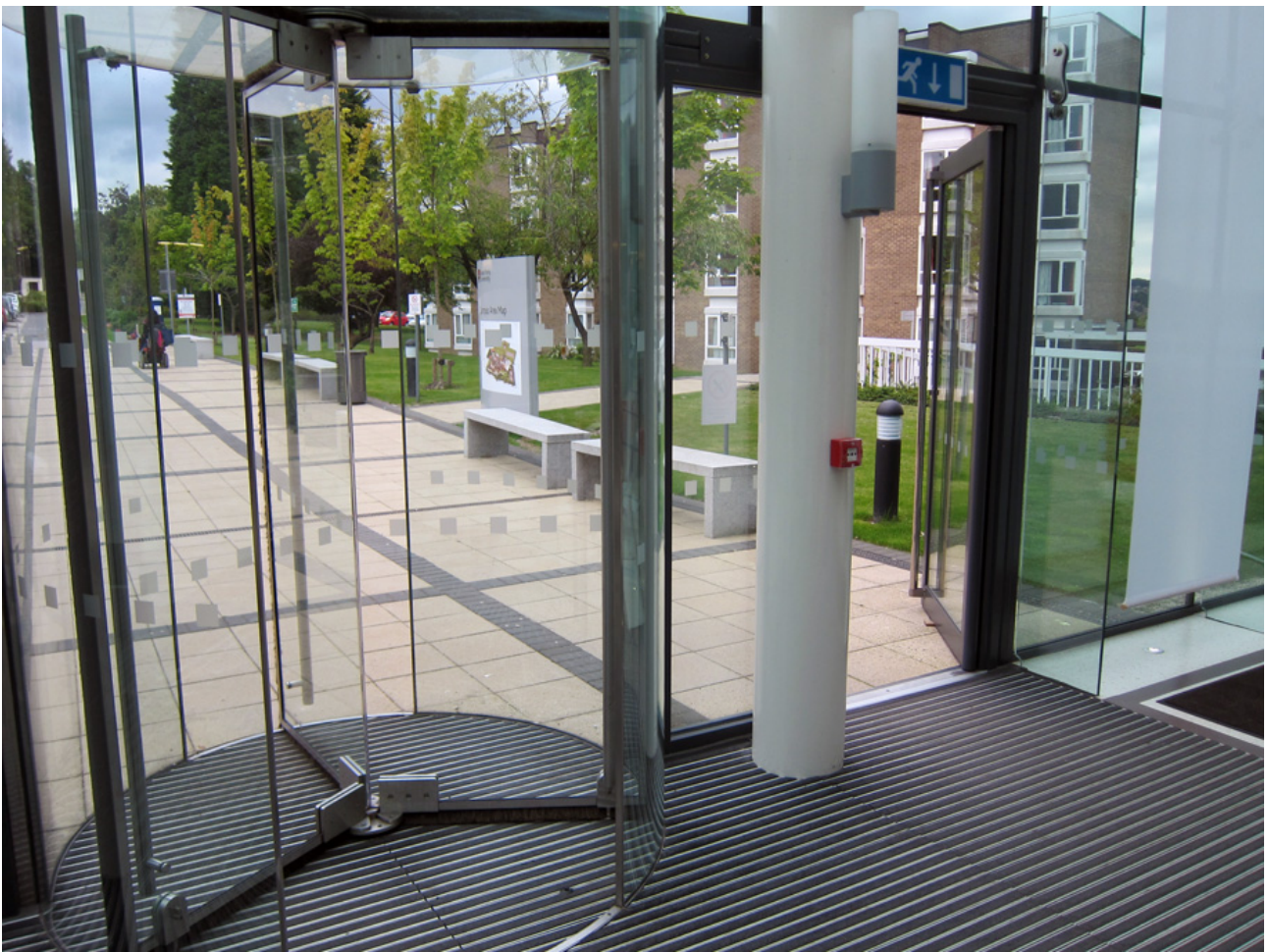
## BiCon Reception

Entering the **North Car Park**, you see a building which is labelled “Main Entrance Reception”. This is where the BiCon Reception will also be housed.

A **dropped kerb** allows easy transfer from the car park to the pedestrian walkway. The area contains a large number of concrete benches for resting upon, however these do not have backs. There is **low-level lighting** along the edges of the walkway.

On the left, about halfway between the car park and the reception building, is a large **Campus Area Map**. It has a large, clear “You are here” sign! Wheelchair access points, Disabled parking areas, and Smoking areas are all clearly marked.

The reception building has three doors. The left door is a wide manual door. The centre door is a manual revolving door. The right door is **power-assisted** for physically-impaired users, with a push button which opens the door.



The BiCon Reception will most likely be immediately inside the doors, in an area with **excellent natural lighting**.

The chapel is on the right as you enter and will be accessible for BiCon attendees who require quiet time or spiritual space. It is up 5 stairs, which have handrails on each side. It is possible to hold both handrails at once. There is also a platform lift.



The main Leeds Trinity University Reception is also on the right, at ground level. A small coffee bar is on the left.

There are a number of pillars supporting the building which may cause visual discomfort in some attendees. To alleviate this, we have suggested that the Infozone boards are placed in this area.

## Accommodation

We looked at All Saints Court and Trinity Close. There are **stairs** from the main conference area down to the accommodation blocks and the Dining Room/Bar. The first set of steps have handrails on both sides, although it is not possible to get support from both sides at once. The second set only has a handrail on the left-hand side.



All of the stairs feature **abundant tactile paving**. There is also a wheelchair ramp immediately next to the stairs.

## All Saints Court

The majority of BiCon attendees will be housed in All Saints Court. This is a modern building, built for the September 2011 intake to current Building Regulations, and considering the requirements of Equality Act (2010).

It has **one lift** to all floors. This is not overly large, big enough for a wheelchair user plus baggage or one or two friends.

Each floor is **colour-coded** to aid navigation. A large coloured wall panel by the lift on each floor allows you to check quickly where you are. We tested these colours with a program designed to simulate colour blindness, and have found that the majority of people should be able to distinguish them readily.



The rooms are arranged into small flats with five rooms per flat, plus a large kitchen/dining area. There are **two flats** on each floor.



## Accessible Bedrooms

All accessible rooms have **two spyholes**, one at standing height and one at sitting height. They also have two sets of coat hooks. Storage space has been well designed so that the majority of it may be reached by a person sitting down, and there is plenty of room to manoeuvre a wheelchair or walking frame.

It is possible to get a fridge put in your room for **medication only**. You must allow several weeks for BiCon to liaise with the venue if you require this.

Accessible rooms have **strobing fire alarm alerters** in both the room and the bathroom. The venue also has **vibrating pillows** available to connect to this system for alerting you when asleep.

There are two styles of accessible room, which differ according to **bathroom** design:

5 rooms have **very large** accessible bathrooms with **baths** plus shower attachment. Depending on your ability level, it may be possible to take a mobility device into the room, sit on the seat next to the end of the bath, and slide in. These bathrooms have **twin handrails** for the toilet, one each side, and also **twin grab rails** either side of the sink.





17 rooms have accessible “**wet room**” style bathrooms, with flat floors that allow a wheelchair user to roll right into the shower. The showers include a **flip-up shower stool**, with a number of grab rails on the wall. These bathrooms have a single handrail for the toilet, and also twin grab rails either side of the sink.

If BiCon attenders require a carer with them 24 hours a day, it is possible to arrange a camp bed in any of the 5 rooms with very large bathrooms. Otherwise, a carer will be put into an adjacent bedroom within the same flat.

All rooms, both accessible and standard, have **abundant natural light** and windows which can be opened easily using only one hand.

Standard rooms have a small bathroom with a flat floor, a toilet, sink, and shower area.

### **Kitchen**

The kitchens in accessible flats are particularly impressive since they feature a full kitchen at standing height, and also a **mini-kitchen** designed for **seated use**. Both full and mini-kitchens feature an electric hob, microwave, oven, sink and food waste bins. The mini-kitchens also have a cupboard on wheels which can be moved easily.

There is both a large **fridge** and a large **freezer**.



This picture shows the mini-kitchen for seated use on the left, and main kitchen on the right:



This picture shows the mini-kitchen alone:





## Trinity Close

This will be used predominantly for **families with children** or people requesting a **quieter area**. It is about 5 minutes away from the Bar at normal walking pace. These rooms are arranged in flats of six spread over two floors.

There are **no lifts**, but some accessible rooms are available on the ground floor of certain flats.

It is possible for wheelchair users or people using walking assistance to visit their friends in Trinity Close, since there are abundant dropped kerbs on the pavements, and level access through the front door.

However, it is **difficult to exit** Trinity Close to the main road in a wheelchair. There is a barrier preventing cars from entering the Trinity Close car park without permission, and the pavement to the left is **not wide enough due to two bollards**, while the pavement on the right has **no dropped kerb**. Users of other types of mobility device should be able to fit between the two bollards.

## Conference Venue

### Basic Information

The majority of conference rooms are on the first floor. This is up two short flights of stairs since there is a Mezzanine Level in between the ground and first floor.

There is unfortunately only **one lift** up to the first floor, and it can only take one wheelchair user plus one or two friends, or four to six people if everyone is standing.

A standard Men's and Women's toilet is available adjacent to the conference rooms on the first floor. Since this is entirely within our space, we have suggested that these toilets will be **gender-neutral**.

A further Women's toilet is available on the ground floor by the stairs and close to the lifts. Both Men's and Women's toilets are available on the second floor, immediately above the toilets on the first floor.

Unfortunately, the only wheelchair-accessible toilets are on the ground floor. Due to the possible congestion with only one lift, we have suggested that BiCon has **long breaks between sessions**, of at least 20 minutes.

We tested the **acoustics** within the auditoriums and conference rooms and found them to be very good, without echoes. Both auditoriums have a **microphone amplification system** which we will request that BiCon uses. The larger auditorium also has a projector which not only couples to a computer, but also allows projection directly from ordinary paper.

The **lighting** in the auditoriums is good. It is also excellent in the Conference Suite AG32/33, which combines plentiful natural light with additional lighting. This is likely to be where BiCon has refreshments and quieter evening social space for attenders, e.g. the games room.

Unfortunately, the conference rooms on the first and second floors are lit by **fluorescent strip lighting**, and the presence of pillars may cause visual stress in certain rooms. The worst room was AF34. The adjacent rooms AF35 and AF36 are much better lit, in our opinion.

## Navigating the Venue - **Please read if you have visual, balance, or mobility impairments!**

Upon leaving BiCon Reception, you continue past the Students' Union. There are two wide stairs **without handrails**. They are particularly problematic when leaving the venue to return to Reception since there is **no tactile warning** and **very little visual warning** of their existence.



Therefore, we would recommend that people who are **visually-impaired** and/or have **balance impairment** should instead use the wheelchair access ramp. The ramp is shallow and has a **handrail at both sides**. It is possible to hold both handrails at the same time.

You will then reach a pair of doors. The door on the left is marked with a wheelchair symbol and is **wide enough** for a wheelchair user to get through. It also requires less force to open than the door on the right. However, **a pillar immediately behind** means you cannot reverse in order to open the door! We have recommended that BiCon mark the pillar at both walking and wheelchair eye height, since it is beige and easy to miss.

A user of a wheelchair or wide assistive device will need to position themselves **in the centre** of the two doors, and open the left door with their **left hand**, before swinging into the gap. If this is not possible for you, you will need someone to help.

There is then a long ramp in front of you, again with **handrails on both sides**. However there are no passing places, so ensure that no one is going down before you start to go up! On the right-hand side are approximately 6 stairs. The stairs have handrails on both sides, however it is not possible to receive support from both sides at once.



At the top of the stairs and ramp is an **accessible toilet**. The door to this toilet opens right-handed. There are grab rails around the toilet and basin. However, although there is sufficient space to put a wheelchair on the right of the toilet and transfer directly, the pull-down grab bar is **between the wheelchair and the toilet**. Therefore attenders who cannot stand at all will require assistance.





There is an **additional accessible toilet** down the corridor which starts immediately opposite the lift, but we did not examine it. It is by the Media Centre.

The presence of stairs means that it is non-trivial for a person who cannot manage stairs to go from the conference areas to the accommodation without going back to Reception. It is possible, but you need to **go through the Auditorium** and out the other side. You may then travel down a sloped corridor and out of the South Entrance.

Evening entertainments - the bar and disco - will be held in the Dining Room. There is a marked Access Route from the main conference areas to the Dining Room. However, this requires the use of **slow platform lifts** and it is honestly easier to go outside the main building and around that way.

## **Smoking and Non-Smoking Areas**

All buildings are Non-smoking throughout.

There is **designated Non-smoking outdoor space** available. The pretty central courtyard is enclosed on all four sides by the Conference Suite, but is open to the sky.

There are Smoking areas by the South and East car parks. The smoking area in the East car park is by the Bar, and the smoking area in the South car park is near the All Saints Court accommodation. There is also a Smoking area in the centre of Trinity Close.

Further Smoking and Non-smoking areas may be designated by BiCon.

## **Emergency Information**

There are **evac-chairs** by lifts in All Saints Court accommodation.

Accessible toilets and bathrooms have **emergency pull-cords**. Accessible rooms also have strobing fire alarm alerters. Vibrating pillows are available upon request to awaken attenders in the case of a fire alarm.

Kitchens are provided with **fire blankets** and an **emergency telephone**.

Emergency Exits are clearly signposted. However, these signs are very high up, above the top of the doors, so wheelchair users will need to look up.

Prepared for BiCon 2014 by  
Helen-Louise Windsor  
and  
Steph Scott