

Visiting us:

Sensory issues guide for people
with autism



The Welsh Parliament is the democratically elected body that represents the interests of Wales and its people.

Commonly known as the Senedd, it makes laws for Wales, agrees Welsh taxes and holds the Welsh Government to account.

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Introduction

We hope that your visit to the Welsh Parliament is comfortable.

Before you arrive, we want to let you know that there may be some things that could cause distress.

The Welsh Parliament has three buildings - the Senedd, the Pierhead and Tŷ Hywel. You will only be allowed into some areas if you are with a member of our staff.

Security

The Senedd and Ty Hywel have a security procedure in place.

You must go through a security check. You must follow the instructions of the security staff.

If you, or someone in your party, is on the autism spectrum and finds queuing or security checks difficult, please ask to speak to security staff who may be able to arrange that you go through the security search quickly.



You should allow enough time to go through the security checks.



The security area is a noisy space that can get busy and often involves queuing.



You will be asked to put your bags through an x-ray machine and all metallic and electrical items – keys, coins, cameras, laptops, tablet devices, mobile phones etc. – must be removed from pockets and put into your bag or a tray provided.

Your items will be returned to you on the other side of the machine.



You will also be asked to remove your coat if you are wearing one.



You will also be asked to remove your belt if you are wearing one.



You will be asked to walk through a metal detecting arch which makes a beep if it detects something metal. If that happens, staff will use a hand-held detector and move it around your body to find out what set off the alarm. The detector should not touch your body. The detector will make a noise to show what set off the alarm. Often a watch or metal belt buckle will have caused the alarm to sound.



Sounds

Our buildings can host a range of events and activities so they can be very busy and noisy.



When the Senedd sits on a Tuesday and Wednesday, you can expect to hear the noise of the Call to Plenary bell at 13.20 and 13.25 in the Senedd and Tŷ Hywel to call Members to the Siambwr to vote.

If you are hyper sensitive to sound, you may wish to plan your visit to avoid the Call to Plenary bell.



The fire alarm is tested: in Tŷ Hywel every Monday at 9.00; in the Senedd on a Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday morning at 8.30; in the Pierhead every Monday at 9.30.

If the fire alarm sounds at any other time, a member of staff will tell you what to do.



The lifts make noise - they speak and make a high-pitched sound when you reach the level you were going to.



There is a noise as the windows open and close automatically. This is done to maintain a constant temperature in the building.



The sound of the food trolley as it is pushed across the slate floor can echo very loudly throughout the building. It sounds like a banging of crockery such as plates and cups.

Spaces

Our buildings have some features which you may want to avoid or be aware of during your visit.



Some people with sensitivity to heights may feel dizzy when looking over the balconies in each of our buildings.



The sides of the lift in the Senedd are glass and fully see-through which might make you uncomfortable if you find heights distressing.



There can be a big contrast in light as you go into some rooms. In some rooms, the light might change while you are in the room.

Touch

Our buildings have lots of different textures such as wood, stone, and metal which you might want to touch during your visit.



You might see some art on the walls. You are not allowed to touch the art.



Shaking hands with people is a common practice which may be expected. You can let us know if you do not want to shake hands.

Other facilities

The design of our estate is an exemplar in terms of accessibility for all.



We have a range of toilet facilities to meet the different needs of people visiting the building.



Our Changing Places facility in the Senedd includes an adult changing bed, hoist and accessible toilet with right and left transfer space.



We have wheelchair accessible toilets in the Senedd and Ty Hywel.



Our baby changing room in the Senedd also has an accessible toilet.



We have loop systems for people who use a hearing aid.

If, while you are visiting the Senedd estate, you find that you need somewhere quiet, please speak to a member of staff who will take you to a quiet room, where you can sit and rest until you feel better.

If you would like further information about events taking place on the day of your visit, arrange a pre-visit at a quiet time or would like to talk about any sensory issues you may have, call the Information Line on **0300 200 6565** or email **contact@senedd.wales**.

Contact us

Do you have any questions, or want to find out more about our work?

Get in touch using the details below or visit us in Cardiff Bay to speak to someone in person.



www.senedd.wales



contact@senedd.wales



0300 200 6565



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