

Sun, sea & step-free access

Your guide to accessible coastal breaks in England

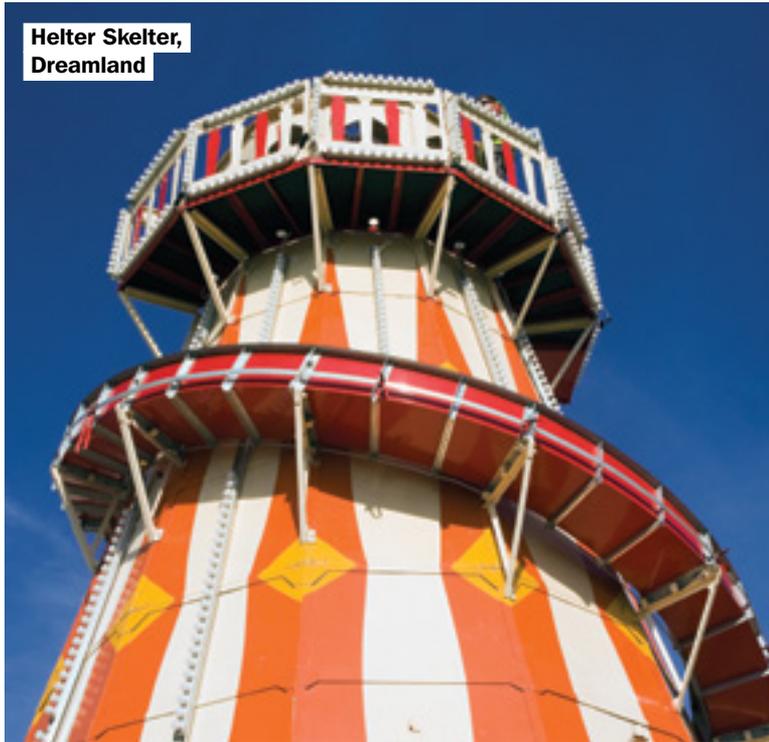
It's so easy to plan a getaway with our guide to some of the most accessible English breaks by the sea. Thanks to VisitEngland's Access For All project a selection of attractions and hotels across Margate and Brighton & Hove have undergone an 'accessible

reinvention'. The result is welcome news to the disabled traveller; warm, disability-savvy staff, mobility, hearing and visual impairment ratings for hotels and improved accessibility to the best attractions in the area. It's brilliant by the seaside...



Retro Revival

Firmly back on the cultural map, fall for Margate's unique old-school charms



Helter Skelter,
Dreamland



Photo: Thanet Tourism, Britain on View, Rod Edwards

Powell-Cotton
Museum

There's a real buzz in Margate right now, and you should make sure you get in on it. This grand old seaside resort has undergone huge cultural regeneration, and today, there's a fresh and spirited vibe – although under the surface you'll still find that warm and welcoming retro twist. Yes, this candy-striped loving town on the East Kent coast is buoyant with artistic energy. It's a real cultural melting pot fusing traditional seaside charms and golden sandy beaches with world-class art, a hip café culture and vintage shops.

The Isle of Thanet is rich in history, and Margate's Old Town celebrates that but adds a funky twist. The streets are lined with chic eateries and laid-back cafés peppered with traditional fish and chip shops. And just as it embraces diversity in its atmosphere, the town is fully committed to extending the warmth of its welcome to anyone with accessibility requirements.

The acclaimed **Turner Contemporary Gallery** has led the new generation creative charge. Supported by former local Tracey

Emin, its 2011 reopening marked the start of Margate's rebirth. It showcases historic and contemporary art by international artists which has included JMW Turner, Constable and Van Dyck as well as Emin herself and Grayson Perry. And it's a striking structure; the stark white angular lines are cutting-edge cool, but give a nod to the surrounding coastline's chalky cliffs. Next month the Risk exhibition opens; exploring the risk factor in key artistic movements from abstract expressionism, to post-minimal sculpture and performance art; it's a hot ticket. There are seven accessible parking spaces outside the gallery and two wheelchairs are available to hire. Plus, audio descriptive tours and multi-sensory objects are available for exhibitions free of charge.

After a dose of culture indulge your thrill-seeking side at **Dreamland Margate**. The original 16-acre pleasure park has been reinvented by award winning designer Wayne Hemingway MBE. Soon to open is The Scenic Railway - the country's oldest rollercoaster - restored to its Grade II listed timber clad glory. The Crazy Mouse is a hectic waltzer/rollercoaster hybrid and the tea-cup rides have been given a Wedgwood makeover. Staff are decked out in vintage Levi's 501's and T-Shirts adorned with high-octane logos like 'scream if you want to go faster.' Wander round the fairground games or enjoy an outdoor sing-a-long movie. Fast Track passes allow you to queue jump on 5 of your favourite rides.

Get your natural history and green-space fix at the **Powell-Cotton Museum & Quex Park**. In the coastal village of Birchington-on-Sea just west of Margate, this estate is home to the fascinating Powell-Cotton Museum. Named after the family dynasty that owned it, the museum

TURNER CONTEMPORARY

turnercontemporary.org,
01843 233 000

DREAMLAND

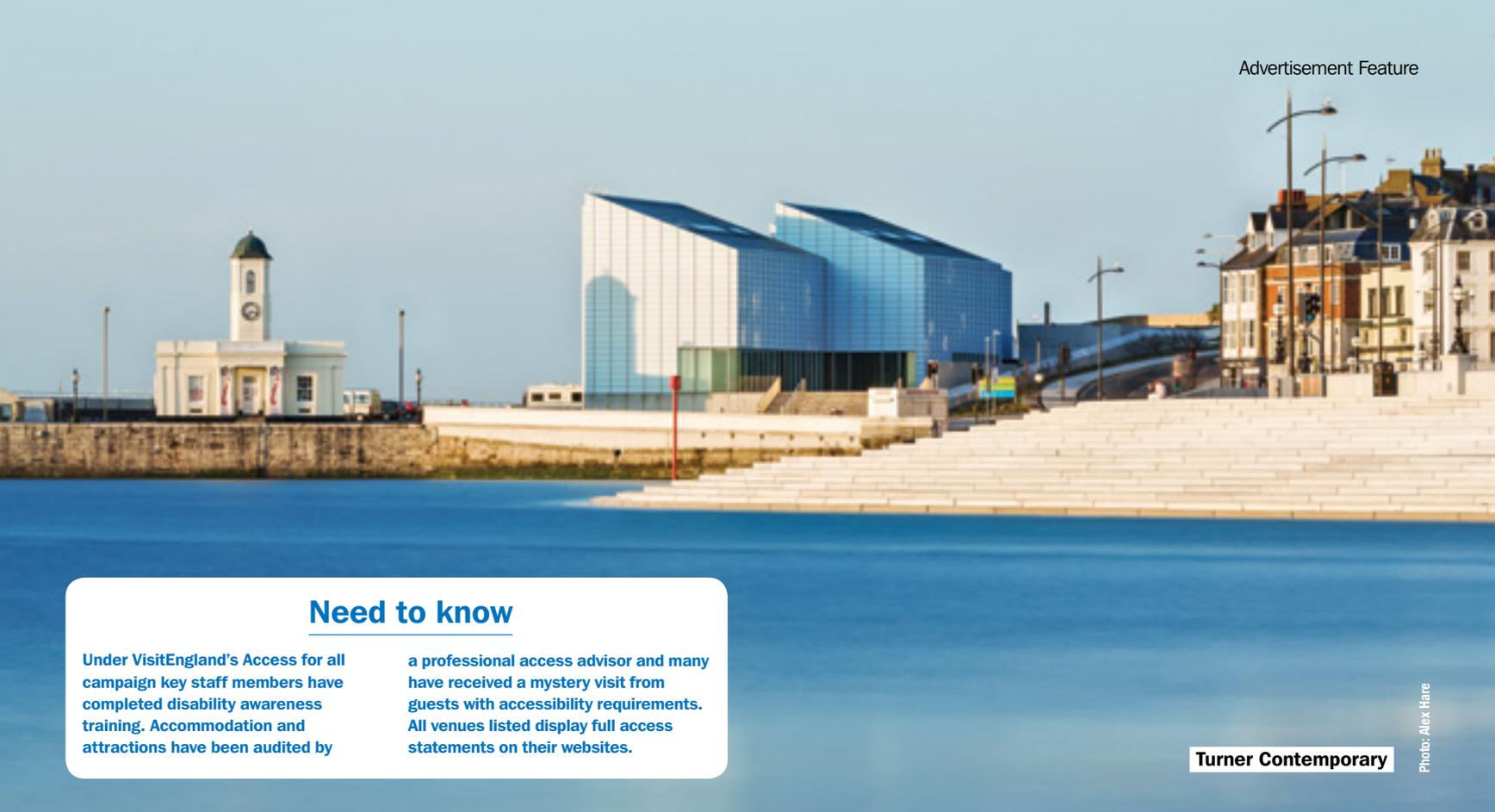
dreamland.co.uk,
01843 295 887

POWELL-COTTON MUSEUM & QUEX PARK

quexpark.co.uk,
01843 842 168

MARGATE MAIN SANDS

visithanet.co.uk/beaches-bays,
01843 577 577



Need to know

Under VisitEngland's Access for all campaign key staff members have completed disability awareness training. Accommodation and attractions have been audited by

a professional access advisor and many have received a mystery visit from guests with accessibility requirements. All venues listed display full access statements on their websites.

Turner Contemporary

Photo: Alex Hare

houses a unique collection of natural history, ethnography and fine and decorative arts. Its dioramas (mounted animals against backdrops of their natural habitat) are a rarity and real highlight. And the new interactive gallery is an excellent choice for families; housing a series of fun and informative exhibits that puts you at the centre of the action. Infrared hearing loop systems are available for talks or guided tours. And two wheelchairs can be hired on-site.

And of course, a trip to Margate wouldn't be complete without some time spent right on the golden-hued

sand. **Margate Main Sands** is a timeless beach destination with tidal pool, traditional rides and access for all, thanks to the beach wheelchairs that can be booked in advance. Hire a deckchair and work on your tan by day and at dusk take in the sublime colours of the seascape and horizon over a picnic supper. Make up your own mind if Turner was right when he branded Margate's skies "the loveliest in Europe." Events are hosted throughout the summer months here, like the RIBA Sandcastle Challenge and the family-friendly seashore safaris.



Quex House

Photo: Thanet Tourism, Britain on View, Rod Edwards



Margate Main Sands

Photo: Thanet Tourism

FOR MORE INFORMATION GO TO
**VisitKent.co.uk/plan-your-visit/
 access-for-all**

OR CALL **01227 812 900**

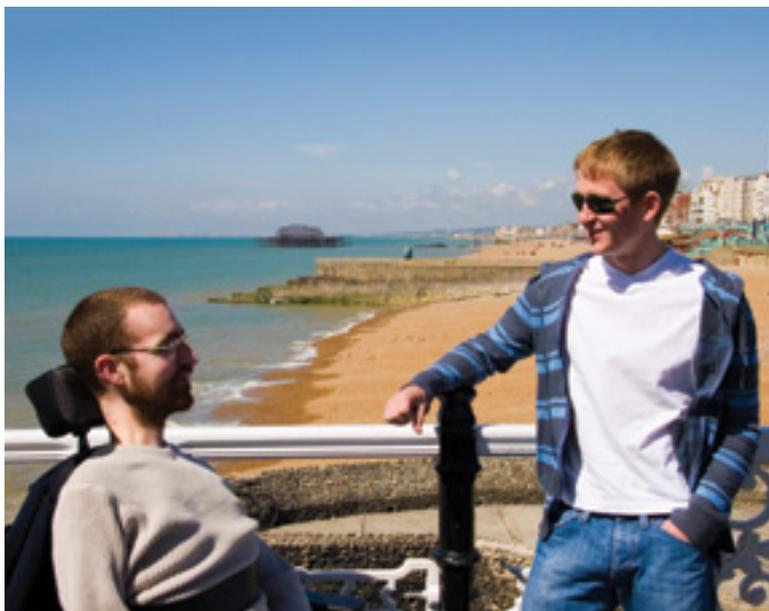


Photo: Adam Bronkhorst

The Royal Pavilion

Only in Brighton

The city by the sea's inimitable free spirited identity is open to everyone



If you fancy dipping your toes in Brighton's colourful, eclectic waters, there's some seriously good news. The coastal city's sites and key attractions are more than well prepared for you and your family and friends if you're disabled or have any accessibility requirements. And with many facets to its cultural personality, there's truth in the "there's something for everyone" saying here. Visit and you'll find a host of quirky boutiques in The Lanes, bold street art and a vibrant, bohemian café culture in the North Laine, juxtaposed against the curved white façades of imposing Regency architecture.

The Royal Pavilion sits at the heart of the city. Built for George IV, this nineteenth century Chinoiserie style palace is a symbol of Brighton's love of the left-field. Inside, the Music Room ceiling adorned by 26,000 gold plaster cockleshells is sheer visual spectacle. The ground floor is accessible to wheelchair users and has an audio-visual room. Audio tours,

tactile and sign language interpreted tours are available to book in advance.

In the Royal Pavilion Garden you'll find **Brighton Museum & Art Gallery**; home to weird and wonderful artefacts fusing art and history. The Willett Gallery houses a large pottery, fossil and natural history collection, while in the Performance Gallery you can take a look behind the scenes at masks, puppets, sets and costumes. All areas are accessible for wheelchair users. There is a hearing loop at the information desk and shop, tactile/braille maps are also available.

Change the pace entirely at **Sea Life Brighton**. Situated right on the seafront next to Brighton's iconic pier – and with easy accessibility – this is the world's oldest aquarium and an excellent spot to take the kids or grandchildren. New for 2015 is the Jurassic Seas exhibit, where you can feed a deadly Plesiosaurus using state of the art technology, meet Charlie the resident Snakeneck Turtle and see the mighty Megalodon



Turtle at Sea Life Brighton

– the most powerful aquatic predator from prehistoric times.

Fancy exploring around Hove? No problem. **Brighton and Hove buses** operate a fleet of 280 accessible low floor buses that are wheelchair friendly and run 24 hours a day. Plus, they have free Wi-Fi and talking bus stop announcements with visual displays, so you can relax and enjoy the seascape scenery. From the stop at North Street/ Old Steine, near Sea Life Brighton take the the 1 or 1A towards Hove and arrive in just 15 minutes.

The **Hove Museum & Art Gallery** is a treasure trove of toys, art and cinema. This majestic Victorian villa was where the first British film was shot in 1898. Learn about film making in one of two interactive galleries. And 'Wizard's Attic' is packed to the rafters with toys throughout history; from Pierotti portrait dolls to *Star Wars* figures, all set to the snores of the elusive wizard.

Preston Manor is an elegant seventeenth century historic house which underwent substantial Edwardian remodelling by its upper class family owners; the Stanfords; who became one of the biggest landowners in Brighton. Take a tour around to immerse yourself in the 'Downton' style upstairs/ downstairs life at the manor. Both tactile and sign language interpreted tours can be booked to view all 20 rooms.

When the sun goes down, Brighton's cosmopolitan credentials don't disappoint. Indulge in some award-winning cuisine at one of its many notable restaurants and then head to a live performance at the **Brighton Dome**. This premier multi-arts venue presents over 600 events annually spanning classical and contemporary music, theatre, dance, comedy, literature, visual arts and film. The Grade I listed Dome setting is pretty special too. There's three accessible performance venues here; the Concert Hall, Corn Exchange and Studio Theatre with Sennheiser and T-loop systems in the auditoria and bar areas. You can also opt for sign language interpreted and STAGETEXT captioned performances, relaxed performances and touch tours.

The **Brighton Centre** is the place to catch the hottest stars; from rock gods to high-profile comedians.

It also hosts public exhibitions on the wider cultural arts. This year's eclectic programme includes live dates from Duran Duran, Years & Years, Reeves and Mortimer and Harry Enfield and Paul Whitehouse. There are accessible viewing platforms for wheelchair users, a low level counter and induction loop in the box office and accessible lifts and toilets.

Overall, both public and private organisations in Brighton and Hove are fully committed to making the city as accessible as possible to each and every visitor. And it really shows. You can even download a map detailing locations of dropped kerbs in the city centre. Plus, it also displays photo-routes; indicating step-free access to the key attractions.



Brighton Museum & Art Gallery

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a professional access advisor and many have received a mystery visit from guests with accessibility requirements. All venues listed display full access statements on their websites.

FOR MORE INFORMATION GO TO

VisitBrighton.com/plan-your-visit/accessibility

OR CALL **01273 290 337**

ROYAL PAVILION

brightonmuseums.org.uk/royalpavilion, 03000 290 900

BRIGHTON MUSEUM & ART GALLERY

brightonmuseums.org.uk/brighton, 03000 290 900

SEA LIFE BRIGHTON

visitsealife.com/brighton, 08714 232 110

BRIGHTON & HOVE BUSES

buses.co.uk/information/accessibility-buses-wheelchairs.aspx, 01273 886 200

HOVE MUSEUM & ART GALLERY

Brightonmuseums.org.uk/hove, 03000 290 900

PRESTON MANOR

Brightonmuseums.org.uk/prestonmanor, 03000 290 900

BRIGHTON DOME

Brightondome.org, 01273 709 709 for tickets, 01273 261 541/525 for access enquiries

BRIGHTON CENTRE

Brightoncentre.co.uk, 01273 292 695

Where to Stay

Check in with confidence – these addresses offer great accommodation and are committed to offering you a warm welcome. Arrive, then kick-back and relax

Brighton & Hove



Prices from £69
per room per night



JURYS INN

In the New England Quarter, next to the mainline train station, the modern style Jurys Inn is a stone's throw from the restaurants and vintage shops of the North Laine. There are three en suite accessible rooms on each of the four floors. Brightonhotels.jurysinns.com, 01273 862 121



Prices from £79
per room per night



THE OLD SHIP HOTEL

Steeped in fascinating history, this Georgian seaside property near the Brighton Centre was where the Prince Regent held his wild birthday party in 1819. Today, it fuses contemporary style with its original 17th century roots. Enjoy private dining in the 400 year old cellars to immerse yourself in its historic spirit. Two accessible rooms have facilities for older and less mobile guests and a Deafgard vibrating pillow alarm is available. thehotelcollection.co.uk/hotels/old-ship-brighton-hotel, 01273 329 001



Prices from £69
per room per night



HILTON BRIGHTON METROPOLE

This elegant Victorian hotel commands seascape vistas. The Salt Room serves British seafood cooked in a charcoal oven on a chic covered terrace. Schmoo by the Sea is the onsite spa. Choose from eight accessible rooms, all adaptable to guests with visual impairment. Five have facilities for wheelchair users and all are fitted with emergency pull cords. Hilton.com/brightonmet, 01273 775 432



Prices from £109
per room per night



THE WATERFRONT HOTEL

In the centre of the action, this hotel backs onto The Lanes and is a short distance to the Brighton Centre and mainline station. It's a luxurious address with lots of facilities; including Otium Health Club with heated swimming pool, Promenade Restaurant and impressive atrium. All public areas are accessible via lift access from the car park. thehotelcollection.co.uk/hotels/brighton-waterfront-hotel, 01273 206 700

Margate



Prices from £70
per room per night



BOTANY BAY HOTEL

This stylish coastal retreat perches on the cliff-tops at Kingsgate, overlooking one of the country's most spectacular beaches - Botany Bay in Broadstairs - with its glorious golden sands stretching over 200 metres. Inside all 30 en suite rooms take inspiration from their coastal setting; featuring sand and aqua-hued colour palettes. Two rooms are adapted to allow easy access and a Deafgard vibrating pillow alarm is available. botanybayhotel.co.uk, 01843 868 641



Prices from £120
per room per night



SANDS HOTEL

If amber-hued sunsets and alfresco drinks sound good to you, this is the place to do it. Directly overlooking Margate Sands, this gorgeous boutique hotel is within easy reach of the Old Town and Turner Contemporary Gallery. Book into the designated accessible bedroom with en suite wet room and wheel-in shower. sandshotelmargate.co.uk, 01843 228 228



Prices from £40
per room per night



SMITHS COURT HOTEL

This small, family-run hotel has 41 rooms ranging from single and double to twin and executive rooms and three family suites. Located in the Cliftonville area of town, it offers accessible facilities and a room with lowered surfaces, wheel-in shower and hand rails. smithscourt.co.uk, 01843 222 310

A full access statement giving detailed information on accessibility can be downloaded from each hotel's website.

The Accessibility Key: Decoded

Understanding VisitEngland's National Accessible Scheme

Use this handy, at-a-glance guide to decipher if a hotel is likely to meet your level of accessibility needs. Accommodation that displays any of the official logos has been independently assessed against demanding criteria. Assessed properties may have facilities such as handrails, ramps, level-access showers, hearing loops and colour contrast. Ratings are split into three categories; mobility impaired and older people, visually impaired and blind people and hearing impaired and deaf people.



Older and less mobile guests

Suitable: If you can climb a flight of stairs, but banisters or grip handles would make it easier.



Guests with hearing loss

Suitable: If you have a slight hearing difficulty, are deaf, wear a hearing aid or have hearing loss.



Part-time wheelchair users

Suitable: If you have problems walking or can walk a maximum of three steps, or need to use a wheelchair some of the time.



Visually impaired guests

Suitable: If you have difficulty reading small print, are registered blind, have poor sight or are visually impaired.

As everyone's accessibility needs are unique, please do check your individual requirements can be met before booking.

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VisitEngland™

GO TO

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AccessforAll](https://www.visitengland.com/AccessforAll)

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