

SLC Conference 2021 and Rodney Powell Awards

Frequently Asked Questions

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General

- **What is included in the booking?**

All the accommodation, as well as main meals and refreshments during the breaks. Anything else such as room service or alcohol you will need to pay for yourself.

- **Am I able to cancel my place?**

We would prefer you not to cancel unless you have a health or personal emergency as your place has already been paid for. If you have to cancel, please let your Engagement Manager know as soon as possible.

- **Can I change my room if it is not suitable?**

All of the room allocations are being handled by Conference Aston. Therefore you will need to put the request in to them and their response will depend upon their availability.

- **Is there a dress code for the awards evening?**

We want all our delegates to feel comfortable throughout the Conference and awards. Whilst there is no strict dress code, we recommend people dressing smart/casual.

- **Does the venue have many stairs?**

There are stairs up to the accommodation floors, but there are also two sets of lifts – one by reception as you come into the building and the other to the right of the restaurant and near to the toilets.

- **Will someone show me the fire evacuation procedure from my room?**

The fire evacuation will be explained in your delegate pack. You can also ask the venue to explain it to you when you arrive. For any group sessions the evacuation procedure will be explained at the start of the session.

Travel

- **Who books and pays for my travel?**

TPT will cover the cost of your travel to and from the Conference. Your Engagement Manager will be liaising with you over the coming days to book your travel.

- **Which is the best station to travel to?**

Birmingham New Street. We will make arrangements to transport you from Birmingham New Street to the venue.

- **How far is the Conference Centre from New Street?**

It is about 5-10 minutes by taxi. We suggest you do not try and walk as there are major road-works between the station and the venue.

- **How should we travel between New Street and Conference Aston?**

If you are travelling with your SLC, transport will be arranged. If you are travelling independently, please tell your Engagement Manager and we will try to get someone to meet you. If we cannot do this, please get a taxi and remember to get a receipt so you can claim the fare back through the Volunteer Expenses Policy.

- **If I am arriving by car will my mileage be paid?**

Yes, at the usual TPT volunteer mileage rate. Please see the Volunteer Expenses Policy for more information. Please note, however, that all drivers need to make sure they check they don't need to pay anything for the clean air zone charge. It is similar to a congestion charge and the charge depends on the car, so you need to check beforehand via the website: <https://www.gov.uk/clean-air-zones> .

- **Is there parking available at the venue?**

Yes, as well as surrounding areas. More details are available on the [Conference Aston website](#).

Accommodation

- **What is the accommodation like?**

The rooms are similar to hotel rooms with en-suite bathrooms. Unless you have asked for a different room, you will be in a single room.

- **How far is the accommodation from the conference rooms?**

The accommodation is in the same building as the Conference, on the floors above.

- **Can I request a lower or higher floor?**

We are aiming to put everyone on the same floor, so this may not be possible, but please feel free to speak to the Reception staff if you are really unhappy with your room.

- **Do any rooms have wheelchair access?**

Yes.

- **What time can I check in?**

Any time after 4.00 pm on Friday 8th October 2021.

- **What time is check out?**

You will need to check out of your room by 11.00am on Sunday 10th October 2021.

Food & Diets

- **Can I buy extra food if I get hungry?**

You can pay for additional food yourself if you need it. You will need to do this with the venue directly or an outside food delivery outlet, such as Just Eat or Deliveroo.

Please note that Conference Aston accepts card or contactless payments only. You will not be able to pay cash for anything at Conference Aston.

- **How will the centre know about my diet?**

You will have identified your dietary requirements to us in the booking form. We have shared this with the Conference centre.

- **Is there a bar at the centre?**

Yes. You will need to pay for your own alcohol.

- **Are all the meals set?**

No. On Friday evening, there will be a hot buffet with a choice of foods. Breakfast on Saturday and Sunday will be a hot and cold buffet. For hot food, you will go to the perspex screens and ask for what you want which will be plated. Cold food will be self-service. Saturday lunch arrangements will be the same as breakfast.

There is a set menu for the Awards dinner on the Saturday evening. You will have a choice between the meat option and vegetarian option.

There will be a packed lunch provided on Sunday, for you to take away with you.

All dietary requirements will be met.

- **What are the meal times?**

These are set out within the programme and agenda.

Conference Programme

- **Do I need to attend all of the sessions?**

Yes. They have been put together for your benefit and enjoyment.

- **Can I choose the sessions I attend?**

Yes, you were asked to make a choice of workshops to attend on the Saturday. We will confirm these with you upon arrival. The list is also available as part of the Conference pack.

- **Will there be breaks?**

Yes. Please refer to the conference programme and agenda for when these are scheduled for.

- **Will I need to take notes in the workshops?**

This is up to you and how you learn. The session will be recorded too, for people's convenience.

- **Do I need to bring my laptop/tablet/any other equipment?**

You do not need to, but you can if you wish. This will be your responsibility.

- **If I have booked on to the Yoga session, do I have to bring anything with me?**

Please wear comfortable clothing for this session and bring along a mat or towel to sit/lie on if you have one available. Alternatively, you can use the towels in your hotel room, but please be sure to return your towel to your room afterwards.

Assistance

- **Where is the dog spending area?**

The spending area is outside of the main building, either 100 metres away by the Tesco, or there is a grassy area even closer which can be used. We will show all guide dog owners where to go as you arrive.

- **What expenses will be covered if I'm bringing my own support/guide?**

TPT is covering the cost of attending the conference in full, so this will include the same as it does for volunteers in terms of meals and accommodation. Any room service or alcohol will have to be met by yourself or the guide, apart from what is provided during the Awards dinner.

- **What kind of assistance will be provided?**

There will be trained sighted guides available throughout the event. If you have requested a guide, we will make every effort to identify a guide to support you throughout the event. There will also be guides and members of TPT staff around throughout the conference to offer and provide assistance if requested, to anyone who needs it.

- **Will I get assistance if I want to go off site?**

We do not encourage anyone to go off site unless it's absolutely necessary. Everything you should need for the weekend should be available onsite. For this reason, TPT cannot provide assistance off site unless you are making your way to and from the Conference itself. The only exception to this is to help guide dog owners spend their dogs.

- **Will any assistance be provided at the Awards?**

Yes. Assistance will be provided throughout the whole Conference, including the awards.

Covid related matters

- **What precautions are you taking to keep people safe from Covid at the Conference?**

We encourage everyone coming to the conference in person to take a lateral flow test, where possible. If you test positive, or if you are feeling unwell, you are asked to stay at home. Throughout the Conference itself, there will be antibacterial hand gel available throughout and we encourage people to wear masks, particularly when moving throughout the building. We will be reminding people of our expectations in the final email sent out to you a week before Conference.

- **What about if I am unable to take a lateral flow test before I travel? Or if I need assistance?**

There will be lateral flow tests available at the reception desk at Conference Aston, and there will be assistance available. Please note, if you test positive, Conference Aston will take you to an isolation room where you will need to make arrangements to return home and arrange for a PCR test. You will be assisted with making your return travel arrangements.

- **Do I need to have been double-vaccinated in order to attend Conference?**

No, we do not require you to have been double-vaccinated in order to attend Conference. However, you will be asked upon arrival for your

vaccination status by the reception desk staff. This is solely for track and trace purposes and on the rare occasion you are taken ill with Covid whilst at the Conference, we will provide that information to any medical staff, if their assistance is required.

- **Am I required to wear a mask during the Conference?**

Following government guidelines, you are not required by law to wear a mask during the Conference or Awards. That said, if you feel more comfortable wearing one, then we encourage this.

- **What if I or someone else becomes ill during the Conference?**

If you become ill with Covid symptoms you will need to isolate and arrange a PCR test. A lateral flow test will be done, but these are not always accurate if you are already unwell. You will not be able to attend the rest of the Conference as we also need to protect the other delegates. We will help with organising your travel home.

If you are unwell with anything else, we will provide support to you in your room until you feel better, or help you make arrangements to return home.

- **If covid infection rates soar between now and Conference, will you cancel?**

We will follow government guidelines at all times. If the advice is to cancel all events, then yes, we will cancel the Conference.

If you have any further questions, please ask your Engagement Manager in the first instance, or email info@sightlosscouncils.org.uk.