



SLC Conference 2023 and Roney Powell Awards

Frequently Asked Questions

Contents

SLC Conference 2023 and Roney Powell Awards	1
Frequently Asked Questions	1
General	1
Travel	3
Accommodation	5
Food & Diets	7
Conference Programme	8
Assistance	9
Health and wellbeing	11

General

- **What is included in the booking? And will I get confirmation of my place in the conference?**

Accommodation on Saturday night, as well as main meals and refreshments during the breaks are included in your booking.

If you have booked to stay on Friday or Sunday night, this is at your own cost, although we will still pay for your travel costs.

Anything else such as room service or alcohol you will need to pay for yourself.

You should have received an email from the volunteering team that your space is confirmed.

If you have enquiries, please contact your Engagement Manager or the volunteering team at volunteering@pocklington-trust.org.uk.

- **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 must cancel, please let your Engagement Manager know as soon as possible.

- **What should I pack?**

Please only pack your essentials for the stay. Remember to bring any medication you need and keep it with you. We have a luggage available, but the space is limited, any large suitcases will pose an issue for storage.

- **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 dress 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. If for any reason, they are out of use on the day, alternative access routes will be communicated to you.

NaviLens will also be available during the conference to support navigation. Check out the guide in the delegate pack to find out more.

- **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. Please familiarise yourself with the Fire Signs in this pack, too.

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 (if they haven't already) to book your travel.

- **What happens with my suitcase on the train?**

You are responsible for your own luggage, so only bring what you can easily carry with you.

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

Birmingham New Street.

Unless you are arriving independently (for example on Friday night), you will travel with your fellow SLC members and Engagement Manager/Coordinator to support you.

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

It is about 5-10 minutes by taxi. Whilst the centre is walkable from the station (it takes about 25 mins to walk), we encourage you to get a taxi so as not to get lost.

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

If you are travelling with your SLC on Saturday, transport will be arranged by your Engagement Manager or Coordinator.

If you are travelling independently (on Friday for example), please get a taxi and remember to get a receipt so you can claim the fare back through the Volunteer Expenses Policy/process.

- **What taxi company should I use?**

If you're travelling with your Engagement Manager or Coordinator, then they'll organise the taxi, so you don't need to worry.

If you're travelling independently, then we suggest using 5 Star Cars. Their phone number is 0121 685 1111. You can inform them when you book that you are with the Thomas Pocklington Trust, or Sight Loss Council Conference, or alternatively you can get a receipt to claim this back through the Volunteer Expenses Policy/process. If you use the account, this will be for the one journey between the station and hotel only.

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

Yes, for those that are being driven to the Conference by a Support Worker, you can claim this back at the usual TPT volunteer mileage rate. Please see the Volunteer Expenses Policy for more information.

Please note that there is a clean air zone charge, it is similar to a congestion charge and the charge depends on the car, so you will need

to check beforehand via the website: <https://www.gov.uk/clean-air-zones>. You can claim this charge back in the usual way.

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

The best car park is Millenium Point Carpark, it is only a 5 minutes' walk from Aston Conference Centre and has around 900 available spaces. It is very easy to find through any GPS system, and doesn't need to be pre-booked, attendees will pay on departure. [Millennium Point multi-storey car park | Birmingham City Council](#).

Please ensure you keep the receipt as you will be able to claim this back through the volunteer expense policy.

- **What should I do if I get delayed travelling to the conference?**

If you are travelling independently, please let your Engagement Manager know as soon as possible that you are delayed and what your expected arrival time is.

Accommodation

- **What is the accommodation like?**

You will be staying in a hotel room with en-suite bathrooms. Unless you have asked for a different room, you will be in a standard single/double room. Unless you have booked to share a room with a fellow SLC member or support worker, you cannot bring a guest to share your room.

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

All Sight Loss Council Members have rooms in the same building as the Conference.

Please note Sighted Guide Volunteers are unable to support you to your room. Based on feedback from last year, NaviLens codes have been put in place to support you with finding your rooms. Your Engagement Manager and other TPT staff can also support you.

- **Can I request a different room?**

Rooms have been allocated based on your submitted access needs at the time of booking. If these change before the conference, please let your Engagement Manager know as soon as possible.

Where possible we plan to locate you with your fellow SLC members. For those of you who have paid to stay on the Friday evening please advise your Engagement Manager, it is imperative we know this to ensure you are able to stay in the same room on the Saturday evening. Please feel free to speak to the hotel reception staff if you are unhappy with your room.

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

Yes. Anyone who has noted special access requirements will be accommodated for as best as possible.

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

Please register on arrival. Here you will be given your key and can store your luggage until we are able to access rooms after conference sessions. Sighted Guides can help you move your luggage to the storage room if you need this support.

- **What time is check out?**

You will need to check out of your room after breakfast on the last day of Conference. We have a room where you can leave your luggage until you depart.

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. Any additional food and beverages will be at your own expense.

- **How will the centre know about my dietary requirements?**

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

You will be asked to always wear a lanyard (including the awards dinner) which will show catering that you have special dietary requirements. You will be given this lanyard when you go to the conference registration desk.

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

Yes. You will need to pay for any drinks purchased from the bar.

- **Are all the meals set?**

Saturday lunch, Sunday breakfast and Sunday lunch will be a hot and cold buffet. For hot food, you will go to the serving counters and ask for

what you want which will be plated. Cold food will be self-service. Sighted Guide volunteers will be available to support with this. There is a set menu for the Awards dinner on the Saturday evening and dietary requirements will be catered for separately as part of this. The set menu can be seen in your delegate pack, under arrangements for the Rodney Powell Volunteering Awards dinner. You made your menu choices in August.

- **What are the mealtimes?**

These are set out within the programme and agenda.

Conference Programme

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

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

- **Which sessions do I attend?**

This is set out in the conference agenda. On Saturday, everyone will attend the same sessions. On Sunday morning, you will attend the session relevant to your local project with other members of your Sight Loss Council.

- **Will there be breaks?**

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

On the day, there will be a large print and braille document at the reception, outlining the time and location of workshops.

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

This is up to you and how you learn. We will provide a summary of each workshop as part of the post-event write up.

- **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 at your own risk and responsibility. If you are using technology during a session, please ensure you use earphones to minimise disruption.

- **What happens at the Rodney Powell Volunteering Awards ceremony?**

First, attendees will gather in the bar from 5:45pm to 6:30pm. We will then head to the dining area where you will be directed to your table.

You will be sat with your fellow SLC members. It's important that you sit in your designated space.

We will then have a three-course meal, followed by the award ceremony. Finally, we will end with the entertainment!

Assistance

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

There is a grassy spending area outside the main conference building, this is about 50 steps away.

We will show all guide dog owners where the spend area is.

- **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 guide volunteers available throughout the event. Sighted Guides will not be allocated to individuals for the duration of the conference but will be stationed at key points around the building and will be on hand to support you if you need it.

There will also be members of TPT staff around throughout the conference to offer and aid if needed.

NaviLens codes have also been put in place as an additional navigation aid.

We are exploring a buddy system, where you could be matched with a volunteer in your Sight Loss Council who has attended the conference before and is confident navigating the space. If this is of interest, please speak to your Engagement Manager.

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

We do not encourage anyone to go off site unless it's necessary.

Everything you should need for the weekend should be available onsite. For this reason, TPT cannot aid 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' toilet their dogs.

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

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

Health and wellbeing

- **What if I am ill before conference, should I still attend?**

If you feel unwell before conference, or think you may have Covid, we will kindly ask you to take a test before travelling. Please consider others who may be immunocompromised.

- **What if I become ill during the Conference?**

If you become ill during the Conference, we will have Covid tests available and can provide these for you.

If you do not have Covid symptoms and develop another illness, we will look at what medical support you may require or help you to plan to return home.

- **What if I start to feel overwhelmed during the Conference?**

If you feel like you need to take some time out of the conference to support your wellbeing, please let a member of TPT staff know, they can let your Engagement Manager know. Please also look at the Mental Health Safeguarding document in the delegate pack in advance of the conference.