

EASTBOURNE THEATRES

Essential Companion Scheme

Why does the scheme exist?

The *Essential Companion Scheme* exists to enable all patrons to equally participate, with dignity and respect, in Eastbourne Theatres events. The purpose of the scheme is to ensure the safety and enjoyment of the *Scheme Member*.

Who is the Essential Companion Scheme for?

The scheme is offered to those who require a companion to assist them in accessing the facilities at Eastbourne Theatres. (Hereafter called the *Scheme Member*.) Most, but not all, Scheme Members have a disability as defined by The Equality Act 2010*.

Who is the Essential Companion Scheme not for?

This scheme is not open to, or intended for, those who simply require a companion to assist with transportation to and from the venues, or to keep them company. The scheme is not offered to anyone who can cope independently in a public venue.

What is the role of the Essential Companion?

The *Essential Companion's* primary role is to assist the *Scheme Member* with mobility or guidance, to enable them to use and enjoy the services at Eastbourne Theatres. The *Essential Companion* is expected to attend to the needs of the *Scheme Member* at all times whilst on the premises.

How should an Essential Companion prepare?

The *Essential Companion* should familiarise themselves with the layout of the relevant theatre and the location of services. They should liaise with Eastbourne Theatres staff if special assistance is required, and take instructions should the need to evacuate the building arise.

What does the Essential Companion scheme offer?

The scheme offers members the opportunity to obtain one ticket, free of charge, for the *Essential Companion*.

How do I join?

The applicant, or their appointed representative, must complete and sign the *Essential Companion* application form (available on the Eastbourne Theatres website or from the Box Office). Please return completed forms to Eastbourne Theatres. NB The contact details on the form should be those of the *Scheme Member*, not of the *Essential Companion*.

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Important Policy for Wheelchair Users

It is accepted that a wheelchair may be used to assist your access to and around the venue and we accept that it may be preferred for you to transfer to a theatre seat.

However if you are transferring to a theatre seat, you will need to be independently capable of leaving the venue in the event of an evacuation, without access to your wheelchair.

If you cannot fulfil this, in line with health & safety, risk assessments and following advice from the Fire Safety Officer, Eastbourne Access Group and East Sussex Disabilities Association, we have to insist that you remain in your wheelchair and if available we will relocate you to a wheelchair position.

For wheelchair positions please reference the seating plans on the rear of our Seasonal Brochure or Eastbourne Theatres website www.eastbournetheatres.co.uk.

Once the completed form has been returned, unless you hear from us within the next two weeks please assume you have been accepted on the scheme and your box office records will be updated, Eastbourne Theatres will only correspond with you if we require further information or you have been declined.

If you require assistance in completing this form, or would like more information, please contact the Box Office on 01323 412 000.

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Essential Companion Scheme

Title _____ Forename _____ Surname _____

Address _____

Town _____ Postcode _____

Telephone Number _____

Email Address _____

1. What would the Essential Companion be doing for you?

Please give as much information as possible

By signing below the applicant, or their appointed representative, declares that they have read the explanatory document, and will adhere to the guidelines of the Essential Companion Scheme.

Signed _____ **Date** _____

Print Name (if representative) _____

Eastbourne Theatres reserves the right to review a member's eligibility, and to revoke membership following review. A false application could lead to civil proceedings and/or prosecution under the Fraud Act 2006.

It is the Scheme Member's responsibility to communicate any change in circumstances.

Completed forms should be returned to: Box Office, Eastbourne Theatres, Congress Theatre, Compton Street, Eastbourne, East Sussex BN21 4BP. Thank you.