

A white line graphic starts at the top center, descends steeply to the right, then curves slightly upwards and to the right, ending at the top edge of the page.

# **CHARGING FOR ADMISSIONS AT PROPERTIES IN CARE**

## **Pricing Framework**

**AUGUST 2024**

# INTRODUCTION

Historic Environment Scotland (HES) welcomes domestic and international visitors to Properties in Care (PiCs) across Scotland. We value and appreciate our visitors, and provide access to the PiCs. Our aim is 'to make it possible, and increasingly easy, for anyone to engage with and enjoy Scotland's Properties in Care both now and in the future'<sup>1</sup>.

Our vision is to ensure that Scotland's historic environment is cherished, understood, shared and enjoyed with pride, by everyone. Through the PiCs, HES is the largest provider of visitor attractions in Scotland, and is a key player in the Scottish tourism industry.

HES cares for the PiCs on behalf of Scottish Ministers and operates them under the Historic Scotland (HS) visitor brand. We receive a proportion of our funding from Scottish Government. Income, which is raised from commercial activities - including admission charges - provides the majority of HES's funding.

## BACKGROUND

For ease of understanding, the following terms and acronyms are used throughout this document:

**Historic Environment Scotland (HES):** is the Non Departmental Public Body (NDPB) with charitable status that is charged by Scottish Ministers with managing and caring for Scotland's 336 Properties in Care as part of its role as lead body for the historic environment.

**Properties in Care (PiCs):** form a portfolio of sites managed by Historic Environment Scotland on behalf of Scottish Ministers. Together they represent over 5,000 years of Scotland's history. The PiCs are legally defined and protected. The PiCs are also referred to as properties and sites.

**Historic Scotland (HS):** is the visitor-facing brand through which the sites are marketed. The HS brand is used at the properties and in relation to the associated membership offer. Historic Scotland is part of Historic Environment Scotland.

**Access:** is used as defined in the [Access Policy](#) for Properties in Care and their Associated Collections (2016) as: The ability of anyone to engage with Properties in Care and their Associated Collections.

**PiCs and their Associated Collections** are a precious national asset. They are legally protected for current and future generations. You can review relevant legislation in our [Historic Environment Legislation](#) section or by following the links in section 1.2 below.

# ADMISSION CHARGES

## Why we charge for admission

The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 (as amended) states that:

*“...the Secretary of State and any local authority shall have power to make such charges as they may from time to time determine for the admission of the public to any monument under their ownership or guardianship by virtue of this Act or (in the case of the Secretary of State) to any monument otherwise under his control or management”.*

HES looks after over 300 Properties in Care, the majority of which are free to everyone. The decision to manage admission through charging at a PiC is the result of assessing a number of criteria including the conservation needs of the property, its potential commercial contribution and how the site is managed and interpreted for visitors.

By staffing sites we can provide our visitors with higher quality experiences, while promoting the understanding and enjoyment of Scotland’s built heritage. Charging for admission to visit some of the PiCs contributes significantly towards the conservation and maintenance of the entire collection of properties for both present and future generations.

This document should be read alongside the [Managing Access to our Properties in Care](#) policy.

## Where we charge for admission

We currently charge for admission at over 70 (can vary) of the 300 (plus) PiCs. Information about admission charges and opening times for each PiC is stated on their dedicated webpage, which can be found within [Visit a Place](#).

## What we charge for admission

Our admission pricing framework<sup>1</sup> is based on a four-year rolling set of admission prices to allow for effective planning with our key trade partners with a principle that we commit to prices a year in advance. Our admission prices for staffed PiCs are grouped into price bands which broadly reflect the market demand and visitor offer at each site.

Each four-year plan will generally include inflationary increases every second year for each price band loosely linked to compound inflation and rounded to the most appropriate price point. These adult price points will then filter through to our other ticket categories (concession and child), Family ticket prices and Gift Aid prices.

The price points in each price plan will reflect up to date benchmarking against a variety of visitor attractions across the UK of varying locations and sizes to ensure that our admission prices are within appropriate levels. Monitoring of our value for money scores is a further factor in the setting of admission prices.

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<sup>1</sup> As approved by the HES Board in August 2018

Each plan will include any step-changes in pricing as a result of visitor facing investment and other related opportunities which may mean that sites move between price bands and the maximum level of the price band may change.

Admissions pricing may be used to help manage operational issues; this may include further introductions of differential pricing between walk-up and advanced online sales channels and variable/dynamic pricing.

When the visitor experience is restricted at sites, we will apply a tiered approach to price reductions broadly in line with the extent of the impact. For relatively minor restrictions that may involve one area of a site we will reduce the admission price by one category (for example the adult price becomes the concession price, and the concession price becomes the child price). More significant disruption would lead to a 50% price reduction across all categories and for extreme restrictions the admission fee may be removed altogether. All proposed price reductions must be agreed in principle by the Marketing & Engagement Strategy & Planning Team with reductions of 50% or more for the Top 3 sites requiring Director approval.

Each four-year admissions price plan is brought back to the HES Board for review and approval every two years.

### Where we do not charge for admission

At the majority of PiCs we do not charge for admission, and these 260 (plus) sites are generally accessible to the public, subject to occasional restrictions.

Plans to introduce admission charging at sites that are currently free will be detailed in each price plan for the HES Board to agree. This will also apply to any sites where there is a plan to remove charging.

We do not currently charge at ecclesiastical sites that continue to operate as working churches, such as Glasgow and Dunblane Cathedrals.

### Donations

At some of the PiCs, which are free to visit, we do ask for donations from visitors. These funds are used towards the conservation and maintenance of the sites.

At Glasgow and Dunblane Cathedrals and St Serf's Church, there is a suggested donation that is reviewed each year as part of our admissions review. At some other sites we operate a simple voluntary donations model (with no suggested amount). Find out how you can [support our work](#).

Ends.



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