

ACCESSIBILITY GUIDE | BIG TOP FESTIVAL | SOUTHPORT 2026
2 - 3 MAY | FREE EVENT



BIG TOP FESTIVAL



2026
SOUTHPORT
Elegantly eccentric



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Accessibility Guide Introduction

Big Top Festival is coming to town and is turning Southport into a stage for some of the best circus performers in the world.

With Incredible acrobatics, spellbinding live shows, a chance to learn your own circus skills and lots of lots of people being very silly, this totally free event builds on the history of Southport as a renowned home for Circus and clowning.

With shows happening across 5 different spaces in the town centre audiences can pick and choose what they watch while exploring the shops, cafes and restaurants.

You don't need a ticket, just grab your family and friends, find your funny bone and prepare to be dazzled!

Big Top Festival is taking place in Southport from **Saturday 2nd to Sunday 3rd May 2026**, between **11am and 6pm** each day.

Estimated Audience Attendance: 10,000 visitors per day.

Southport will be transformed with five open air stages across the town, with some of the world's leading contemporary circus performers joining the best of British talent. The programme will include acts performing at each location across both event days at scheduled times.

The festival footprint includes:

- Market Street (including Southport Market – indoor and outdoor)
- Town Hall Gardens
- London Square (London Street)
- Nevill Street

Please check our [website and FAQs](#) for the latest information and full programme details.

Travel to Southport

Travelling to Southport is accessible and straightforward, with direct train routes from Liverpool and Manchester.

- **By Rail**

Southport Station is a 2-minute walk from the Town Hall Gardens, Market Street and London Square. Nevill Street is around a 5-minute walk. The station offers step-free access, lifts, and accessible toilets (Radar key required).

More info: [National Rail Southport Station Accessibility](#).

Journey planner: [National Rail Journey Planner](#)

- **By Bus**

Local services operated by Arriva and Stagecoach are wheelchair accessible.

Plan your journey: [Merseytravel Journey Planner](#).

More Info: [Accessibility via Merseytravel](#).

- **By Road**

There are two major routes into Southport: one from the north and one from the south. Both start on the M6 motorway. If you're travelling from the north, exit the M6 at junction 31 and head towards Preston. From there, take the A59 and follow the signs.

If you're travelling from the south, exit the M6 at junction 26 to join the M58. After you pass Skelmersdale, join the A570, which will take you all the way to Southport.

Finally, if you're travelling from the east, you should take the M62 or M65 instead.

Car Parking

There will be multiple road closures for this event that may impact parking spaces and availability, please plan your journey ahead and visit our [website and FAQs](#) for the latest information.

Blue Badge holders: Free parking in Pay & Display bays throughout the town centre and dedicated accessible spaces marked as disabled. Blue Badge holders can also use parking places on street where waiting is free but time limited – for example ‘free parking for one hour’ - badge holders don’t have to leave they can stay all day.

More info: [Sefton Council Parking](#).

Locate Blue Badge Spaces: [Blue Badge Parking](#).

*** Please note, the Blue Badge Parking website is an independent website and not operated by the council so we cannot guarantee the content.**

- Most council car parks have disabled bays, level access, and accept contactless payment. If you park in a private car park, please refer to the specific disabled parking T&Cs as they are not always free.
- Ocean Plaza and major retail parks provide wide bays and step-free access.

Car parks within close proximity to the event site:

Tulketh Street – West (PR8 1AN)

Disabled Bays: Yes

Charges:

Free for Blue Badge holders

Price range: £1.00 - £3.50

Payment: Pay & Display, cards, cash, contactless.

Tulketh Street – East (PR8 1AW)

Disabled Bays: Yes

Charges:

Free for Blue Badge holders

Charges: Similar to West (approx. £0.90–£3.50)

Payment: Pay & Display, cards, cash, contactless

London Street NCP (Southport Train Station PR9 0TJ)

Disabled Bays: Yes

Charges:

Please note: this car park is NOT free for Blue Badge holders

Price range: £2.00 - £4.50

Payment: NCP App, card, ANPR system

There are many other private car parks throughout Southport which may be suitable for your visit.

Please check individual car park closing times.

- ***By Taxi***

Wheelchair-accessible taxis are available via local taxi firms, **we always recommend ringing and booking ahead** as many are booking only. On the day availability is not always available.

- Alpha Taxis – 01704 537777
- Central Cabs – 01704 544414
- One Call Taxis - 01704 547000

Where to Stay

Southport offers a range of fully accessible and partially accessible accommodation options. We always recommend ringing ahead; to discuss your needs in detail so that the hotel can make direct recommendations and accommodations. The below list is not exhaustive:

Hotel Name	Rating	Accessible Rooms
Waterfront Southport Hotel	4★	Accessible rooms with interconnecting options, roll-in showers, emergency pull cords: The Waterfront Hotel - Accessibility Tel: 01704 516220
Premier Inn Southport Central	3★	Accessible rooms with wet rooms or lowered baths; all on ground floor: Premier Inn Tel: 0333 0919 817
Travelodge Southport	3★	Wheelchair-accessible rooms with adapted bathrooms; lifts available: Travelodge Tel: 08715 591862
Lord Street Hotel	4★	Fully accessible room available with wet room, shower seat, rails and lift access. May not be fully suitable for wheelchair users due to heights of facilities: Lord Street Hotel - Accessibility Tel: 01704 829027
The Vincent Hotel	4★	Fully accessible room available with additional rooms with walk-in showers: The Vincent Hotel - Accessibility Tel: 01704 883 800

There is also a wide range of B&Bs, Air BnBs and private accommodations across Southport - available to view and gain more information on via the internet: [Google](#), [Air BnB](#), [Booking.com](#). We recommend checking out other hotels and their facilities directly or contacting them individually based on your specific needs – as there may be many other fantastic options available for your stay.

Due to road closures, access to some of these hotels may be affected. Please plan your route ahead of arrival.

Changing Places Facilities

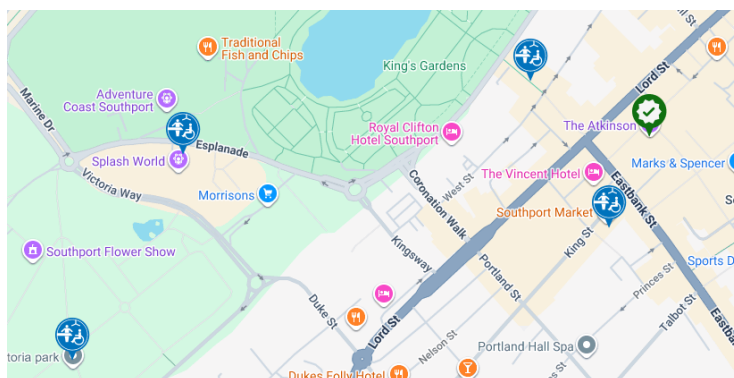


A Changing Places toilet is a larger, fully equipped accessible toilet with a hoist and adult-sized changing bench for people with complex disabilities.

For more information on Changing Places toilet facilities in Southport, and for specific details: [‘Find a Changing Places Toilet’](#)

Southport Market (Market Street)

Day	Opening Hours
Wednesday	10:00 – 22:00
Thursday	10:00 – 22:00
Friday	10:00 – 23:00
Saturday	10:00 – 23:00
Sunday	10:00 – 18:30



Dunes Splashworld (The Esplanade)

Day	Opening Hours
Monday	07:00 – 22:00
Tuesday	07:00 – 22:00
Wednesday	07:00 – 22:00
Thursday	07:00 – 22:00
Friday	07:00 – 22:00
Saturday	09:00 – 16:00
Sunday	09:00 – 16:00

Victoria Park (The Esplanade)

Day	Opening Hours
Monday	09:00 – 16:00
Tuesday	09:00 – 16:00
Wednesday	09:00 – 16:00
Thursday	09:00 – 16:00
Friday	09:00 – 16:00
Saturday	09:00 – 16:00
Sunday	09:00 – 16:00

The Life Rooms (Scarbrick Avenue)

Day	Opening Hours
Monday	09:00 – 16:30
Tuesday	09:00 – 16:30
Wednesday	09:00 – 16:30
Thursday	09:00 – 16:30
Friday	09:00 – 16:30

The Atkinson (Lord Street)

Day	Opening Hours
Monday	10:00 – 16:00
Tuesday	10:00 – 16:00
Wednesday	10:00 – 16:00
Thursday	10:00 – 16:00
Friday	10:00 – 16:00
Saturday	10:00 – 16:00

Overview of Event

Big Top Festival features a full programme of fantastic entertainment taking place across multiple locations.



The full entertainment programme and performance schedule can be found [HERE](#).

Performance areas will feature amplified sound and music, with audio levels varying by act and location. Some performances may include special effects, and a small number of acts may feature fire or low-level pyrotechnics.

Performances take place across a range of locations within the festival footprint. The Town Centre is accessible, with step-free access and level pathways. Some areas may become busy at peak times.

Please note that some performances take place near live roads. Traffic management measures will be in place; however, vehicle noise or movement may still be present in certain locations.

If you have specific questions relating to sound, effects, locations or accessibility, please contact: **Tourism@sefton.gov.uk**

 <p>Level pathways throughout all locations, low fencing in areas, wheelchair accessible entrances and exits to each performance zone are accessible.</p>	 <p>Limited public seating throughout the town centre, such as benches and outdoor seating areas.</p>
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Need Additional Help?

- For more information, including specific road closures, please visit our FAQs page:
[Big Top Festival FAQs](#)
- Stewards will be present at the event and road closure points.
- Staff will assist with accessibility needs.
- Radios and air horns will be used for communication and emergency alerts.