

Firstsite

Host Your Next Event at Firstsite



Image credits: Firstsite, 2024, Photography by Jayne Lloyd

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Firstsite

Anything but ordinary

Our striking crescent-shaped building, designed by award-winning architect Rafael Viñoly, offers a range of stunning, unconventional and flexible spaces to entertain and inspire.

Motivate your team. Celebrate milestones. Create memories in Essex's most imaginative venue. Book your event today!

Make a Difference With Every Booking

We are a registered charity. Every event you host with us can help fund free exhibitions and creative projects for the local community – including free meals and art activities for families during the school holidays.

Book your event now!

01206 713 700

venuehire@firstsite.uk

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Michael Landy, Essex Man (after Collet), 2021. Based on an original drawing by Edward Collet. Installation view, Michael Landy's 'Welcome to Essex', Firstsite, 2022. Photography by Jayne Lloyd

Why choose Firstsite?

Escape the ordinary conference room

Host your event in an iconic space that sparks creativity and leaves guests talking.

Choose spaces that work for you

Host anything from team sessions to private parties with our flexible mix of indoor rooms and green outdoor areas. Book a single space or combine them into a tailored package that fits your needs.

Expert support to bring your event to life

Our team works with you to plan, set up, and deliver a seamless event, whether you're welcoming ten guests or two hundred. Not sure which space to choose? Tell us your vision, and our team will match you with the ideal setting.

Accessible spaces

Accessible throughout, with a hearing loop in our cinema and function rooms, and step-free access to all areas of the building.

Take over the whole venue

Need the whole venue to yourself? Hire our entire building on Mondays (when closed to the public) and enjoy full use of every space, facility, and amenity.

Give your guests something to talk about

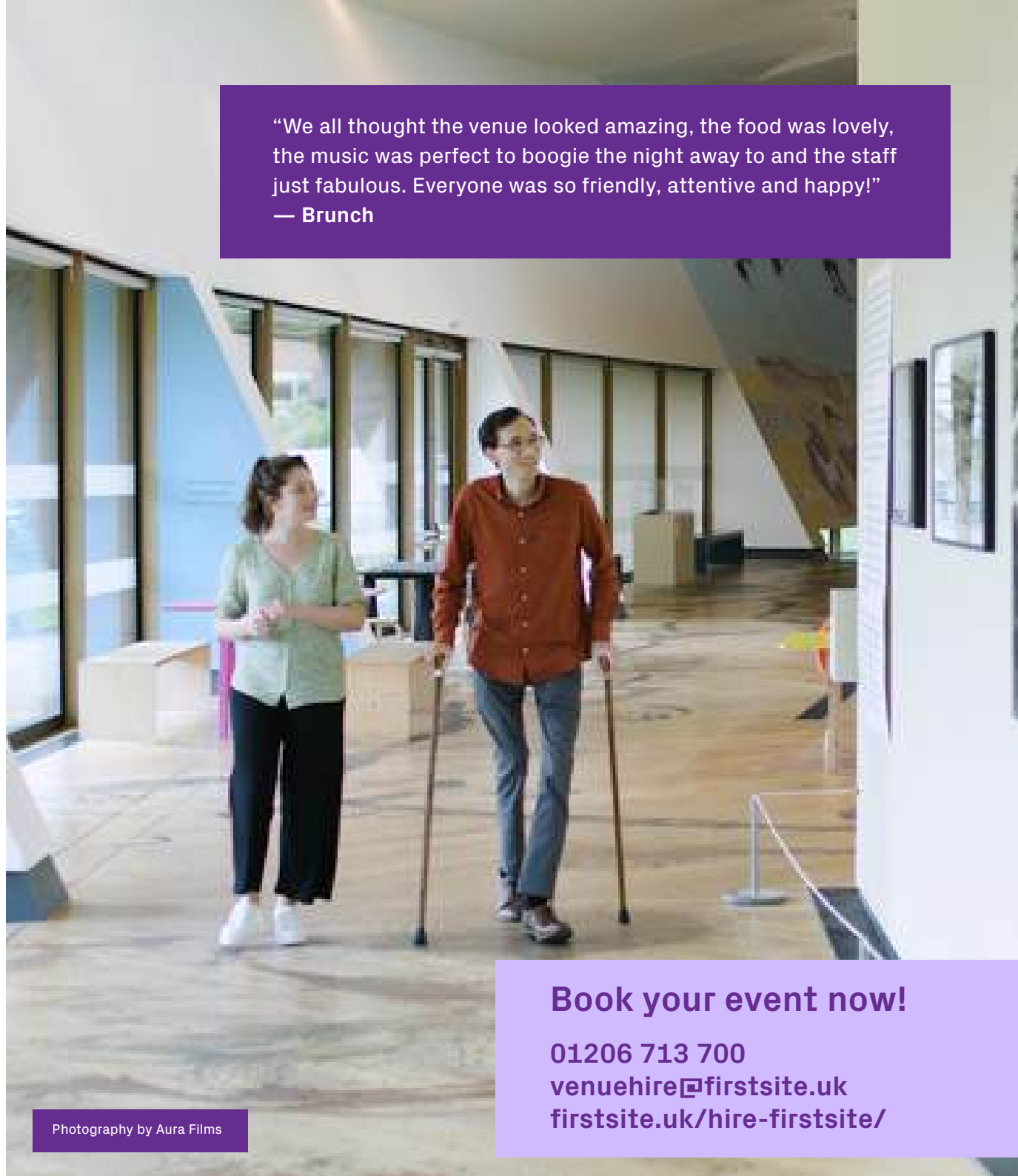
Add depth and inspiration to your event with access to our free exhibitions and striking Roman mosaic - a unique backdrop that sparks conversation.

Make travel simple

We are right in the centre of Colchester with great transport links and nearby parking - making attendance simple for every guest.

"We all thought the venue looked amazing, the food was lovely, the music was perfect to boogie the night away to and the staff just fabulous. Everyone was so friendly, attentive and happy!"

— Brunch



Photography by Aura Films

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Corporate Events

Make an impact with standout events in our bright, modern spaces, indoors and out - all with natural light and leafy views. From executive meetings to product launches, we offer flexible layouts, accessibility throughout, and a setting that elevates your brand.

Perfect for:

- Exhibitions & Trade Shows
- Award Ceremonies & Product Launches
- Networking & Corporate Parties
- Conferences, Seminars & Workshops
- Team Away Days & Executive Meetings



Image credits: 1. Firstsite, 2022, Photography by Jayne Lloyd



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Celebrations & Private Hire

Celebrate in style at our striking building - a stunning, flexible space for everything from private parties to large-scale festivals.

We proudly welcome all communities, hosting events like Holi, Pride, and the Colchester Bangladeshi Women's Association's Eid Festival. Whatever the occasion, we'll help you make it truly yours.

Perfect for:

- Cultural Celebrations
- Birthdays & Milestones
- Proms & Graduations
- Baby Showers & Gender Reveals
- Weddings & Engagements
- Exclusive Private Gatherings



Image credits: 1.-2. Firstsite, 2022, Photography by Jayne Lloyd



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Exclusive Multi-Space Hire & Bespoke Packages

Create a truly unique event with full access to our building or a tailored mix of spaces. From Studios and Meeting Rooms to our Cinema and outdoor areas, you can combine spaces to suit your needs. Ideal for large-scale events or custom experiences.

Enjoy the buzz of a lively, public venue during the week, or opt for total privacy with exclusive Monday hire when we're closed to the public.

Perfect for:

- Large-scale corporate events and conferences
- Multi-day festivals and exhibitions
- Exclusive hire for private events or celebrations
- Custom-designed events with flexible space combinations



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Unique offer

Elevate your away day by combining team-building with exclusive cultural experiences - from private cinema screenings to exhibition visits.

By Day

Spark creativity with a tailored daytime experience: workshops, guided gallery tours, or relaxed sessions on our scenic lawns.

By Night

Add a premium touch with a drinks reception and a standout evening activity, like private cinema screenings, or bespoke events in our function suite (subject to availability).

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Image credits: 1. Firstsite cinema, 2024, Photography by Aura Films 2. Elsa James: It Should Not Be Forgotten Opening Celebration, 2025, Photography by Jayne Lloyd

TV, Filming, Photography

With shoots from the BBC and Channel 4 under our belt, our striking venue offers a standout backdrop for film, TV, and photography projects.

Featuring award-winning architecture, natural light, and a mix of contemporary indoor and outdoor spaces, our venue delivers both visual impact and practical functionality. Whether you're filming a feature, capturing campaign content, or staging a creative shoot, we've got you covered.

Our experienced team works closely with production crews to support smooth scheduling, quick turnarounds, and the flexibility needed for even the most complex shoots.

Find out more!

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Image credits: 2. The Antiques Roadshow at Firstsite, 2024, Photography by Jayne Lloyd

Meeting Rooms

Professional, flexible, and fully equipped - our Meeting Rooms are ideal for everything from board meetings to training sessions.

Perfect for:

- In-person and hybrid meetings
- Professional sessions and day delegate
- Workshops and roundtable discussions
- Breakout spaces for larger events
- Courses and training facilities

Capacity & Facilities

Each room comfortably seats 15–20 people (boardroom style) and includes:

- Large screen & A/V options, including integrated webcam, mic and speakers
- Hybrid meeting tech
- On-site technical support
- Refreshments available
- Automated blackout blinds to allow for lighting to be adapted for presentations

Need more room? Hire both Meeting Rooms and connect them via an internal door to create a larger, seamless space.

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Image credits: 1-3. Firstsite, 2022, Photography by Jayne Lloyd

Studios

Our bright, flexible studios overlook the leafy [D Lawn](#) and adapt easily to your event needs. Use them as two separate spaces or combine them into one large venue by removing the dividing wall.

Perfect for:

- Talks and panel discussions
- Creative workshops and daytime activities
- Team away days and corporate meetings
- Networking events and private exhibitions
- Celebrations, parties, and special occasions
- Galas, black-tie, and evening functions
- Social events and informal gatherings
- Smaller outdoor activities or green space workshops ([D Lawn](#))

Capacity & Facilities

- Up to 60 people per studio
- Up to 150 when combined (depending on layout)
- Full natural light and access to the [D Lawn](#)
- Sinks and running water in each studio
- Customisable layout with tables, chairs, and lectern on request
- Add extra impact with our nearby [Meeting Rooms](#) and the spacious outdoor [D Lawn](#) – perfect for breakout sessions, networking, or open-air activities
- Technical support available on request

Contact us now!

Book a site visit today to explore our layout options and design the best setup for your event.

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“We all thought the venue looked amazing, the food was lovely, the music was perfect to boogie the night away to and the staff just fabulous. Everyone was so friendly, attentive and happy!”

— Brunch



Image credits: Firstsite, 2022, Photography by Jayne Lloyd

Cinema

Host high-impact events in our fully equipped, professional-grade cinema. Whether you're planning a private screening, awards night, or large-scale presentation, this space offers an immersive experience for every guest.

Perfect for:

- Lectures and guest speakers
- Private screenings and film festivals
- Ceremonies and awards
- Large scale presentations
- Panels and discussions

For larger events, combine the Cinema with nearby Meeting Rooms or Studios for breakout sessions or support spaces. Our spacious Foyer is ideal for arrivals, networking, and post-event gatherings.

Capacity & Facilities

- Seats 186 guests + 4 wheelchair bays (no fixed seating)
- 6-metre tab-tension screen
- Digital hearing loop
- DCP connection with tech support available
- HDMI input (front and rear of the Cinema)
- Optional on-site AV technician support

Contact us now!

Book a site visit to explore how the Cinema can be tailored to your event needs.

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Image credits: 1. EA Sustain Festival, 2023. Photography by Lucy J Toms 2-3. Firstsite cinema, 2022. Photography by Jayne Lloyd

Foyer

Our eleven-metre-high foyer is a popular hire space. This versatile space has room to host stalls and structures and creates a unique hire space to make your event unforgettable.

You can also book the curved walkway, which leads from the foyer down to our galleries, to provide extra space for your event - this is especially popular for large fairs or markets, allowing for additional room for stalls.

Perfect for:

- Markets and fairs
- Exhibition and trade shows
- Networking events
- Festivals

Capacity & Facilities

- Flexible capacity depending on layout
- Multiple power points throughout the space
- Optional stage available
- Furniture available on request (6ft trestle tables*, chairs*, coat rails, lecterns)
- Technical support available during your event

*Subject to availability

Contact us now!

Book a site visit to explore the space and plan the best setup for your event.

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Image credits: Firstsite, 2022, Photography by Jayne Lloyd

Mosaic Space

A vibrant, versatile space that inspires creativity and connection. Featuring free exhibitions and a stunning Roman mosaic, this area benefits from natural light, organic flow of visitors, and a lively atmosphere - Ideal for fairs, pop-ups, and drop-in events looking to engage a wide audience.

Perfect for:

- Workshops and activity groups
- Clubs and society gatherings
- As an add-on space to the Studios or the Foyer

Capacity & Facilities

- Flexible capacity depending on event layout
- Customisable layout
- Available as a standalone space, in combination with other areas, or as an extension to [the Foyer](#)
- Additional outdoor spaces: Middle Balcony, Berryfield Lawn
- Other amenities available on request include: uncovered tables and chairs (round and trestle, various sizes), coat rail, lectern, flipchart and pens, colouring activities and pencils, AV equipment (TV, speaker, microphone and stand)



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Berryfield Café

Available for private hire Thursday to Saturday evenings after 5pm, Berryfield Café offers a stylish, adaptable space complete with a private bar and balcony access. Customise your layout with optional extras to suit your event's vibe.

Perfect for:

- Informal networking and social gatherings
- Private dining and VIP events
- Drinks receptions and interactive displays
- Performance-based events and exhibitions
- Networking evenings and casual meetings

Capacity & Facilities

- 100 standing (depending on the event layout)
- Flexible layout
- Private bar
- Balcony access
- Breakout space available - suitable for a dancefloor and DJ
- Other amenities available on request include: uncovered tables and chairs (round and trestle, various sizes), tablecloth hire, coat rail, lectern, flipchart and pens, AV equipment (TV, speaker, microphone and stand), and technician support.

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“Everything went very smoothly – the food was great, the staff were lovely and very helpful and the space was (as always) fantastic.”

— **CARA (Centre for Action on Rape and Abuse)**



Image credits: 1-3. Firstsite, Photography by Jayne Lloyd

Berryfield & D lawn

The Berryfield lawn behind our building incorporates a large terrace area and lawn suited to larger outdoor events and al fresco entertaining.

Nestled beside the [Studios](#), the D Lawn provides a leafy, open-air space that's perfect for fresh-air activities and relaxing breaks.

For bigger events, easily transition between outdoor activities and indoor breakout spaces like [Meeting Rooms](#) and [Studios](#) to keep your guests comfortable and engaged.

Perfect for:

- Large festivals and outdoor events (Berryfield lawn)
- Outdoor performances and exhibitions
- Casual social events or outdoor networking

Capacity & Facilities

- Flexible capacity depending on event layout and type
- Outdoor power supply available
- Additional amenities available on request include: use of picnic benches, uncovered tables and chairs

Contact us now!

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Image credits: Firstsite, Photography by Jayne Lloyd



Venue Hire Prices

VAT excluded

Single space hire (small)	Room capacity	Per hour (1–3 hrs)	Half day (4 hrs)	Full day (9am–5pm)
Meeting Room 1	20 seated boardroom	£15.00	£45.00	£90.00
Meeting Room 2	15 seated boardroom	£15.00	£45.00	£90.00
Berryfield Café, Breakout space (Free Community Hire for 1.5 hours)	20-25 seated	£15.00	£45.00	£90.00
Single space hire (medium)	Room capacity	Per hour (1–3 hrs)	Half day (4 hrs)	Full day (9am–5pm)
Studio 1 or Studio 2	60 standing per studio	£35.00	£105.00	£210.00
D Lawn	500 approx.	£35.00	£105.00	£210.00
Mosaic Space (Outer)	100-150 standing	£35.00	£105.00	£210.00
Single space hire (large)	Room capacity	Per hour (1–3 hrs)	Half day (4 hrs)	Full day (9am–5pm)
Studio 1 & 2 combined	120 seated, 150 seating	£60.00	£180.00	£360.00
Cinema	186 seated (inc. 4 wheelchair bays)	£60.00	£180.00	£360.00
Foyer	190 standing approx.	£60.00	£180.00	£360.00
Berryfield Café (After 5pm Thu–Sat only)	64 seated approx, 80-100 standing	£60.00	£180.00	£360.00
Berryfield Lawn	3000 standing approx.	£60.00	£180.00	£360.00
Exclusive Monday Hire (8:15am–6pm)	n/a	n/a	n/a	From £3000

Entire indoor building capacity: 3000 approx.

Additional Services

Standard rates

Service	Per hour	Half day (4 hours)	Full day (8 hours)
Evening surcharge (10pm–11pm)	£150.00	n/a	n/a
Evening surcharge (10pm–12am)	£250.00	n/a	n/a
Technical support – Cinema (3 hrs min, 1 hour setup and 1 hour packdown must be booked either side)	£45.00	£170.00	£330.00

Full day and evening single space hire (Available Thu-Sat)

	Space is booked for 8:15pm – 22pm
Studios Combined or Cinema or Foyer or Berryfield Café after 5:30pm	£600.00
Studio 1 or Studio 2 with D Lawn	£350.00
Meeting Room or Mosaic Space Inner or Mosaic Space Outer	£150.00

Security must be added for any event involving alcohol. Pricing for additional services such as DJ, Bar, etc. available on request.

Multiple space hire and package options available – bespoke quotes on request.



Day Delegate Packages

Berryfield Package

For groups of 10 people minimum

Duration	Price (pp)	Includes
Half Day (4 hours)	£35 + VAT	Tea, coffee, tap water & biscuits on arrival Lunch option: sandwich platter & crisps
Full day (9am-5pm)	£55 + VAT	Tea, coffee, tap water & biscuits on arrival Lunch option: sandwich platter & crisps Unlimited tea, coffee & tap water

All packages include:

Room layout prepared to your specification
Complimentary stationery, flipchart/whiteboard & pens
Video conferencing equipment + setup help

Lionsart Package

For groups of 10 people minimum

Duration	Price (pp)	Includes
Half Day (4 hours)	£45 + VAT	Unlimited tea, coffee, tap water & cakes on arrival Lunch option: sandwich platter & crisps Afternoon biscuits + still/sparkling water
Full day (9am-5pm)	£65 + VAT	Unlimited tea, coffee, tap water & cakes on arrival Lunch option: sandwich platter & crisps Afternoon biscuits + still/sparkling water

Catering

Food & Drink for Your Event

Our team can provide welcome drinks, set up a private bar, or tailor a drinks menu just for your event. You can also set up a bar tab or offer guests a dedicated drinks station in your event space.

For food, we work with trusted local partners to offer everything from light bites to full meals. Choose from hot or cold buffets, sandwiches and pastries, bowl food, or a bespoke sit-down menu. We're happy to help design something unique - like an outdoor hog roast or themed catering - based on your needs and budget.

Need something extra special? We'll work with our catering partners to tailor food and drink to your event, budget, and dietary needs.



Berryfield Café

Open Tue-Sun: 10am-5pm, our Berryfield café is perfect for breaks, catch-ups, or informal meetings.

[See our menus](#)

Book your event now!

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Image credits: 1-2. Firstsite, Photography by Jayne Lloyd

Accessibility

Step-free access:

Firstsite is situated on street level with step-free, single level access throughout.

Wheelchair use:

One wheelchair is available (on a first come, first served basis). Our cinema has four wheelchair spaces and the front row also has step-free access.

Hearing support:

Digital hearing loops are accessible in our cinema, meeting rooms, and Studio spaces.

Toilets:

We have toilets across the building, including three accessible ones. There are also baby changing facilities.

Parking and drop-off:

There is a drop-off point for cars and coaches, accessible from Lewis Gardens – cars can pull in front of the bollards for a maximum of 5 minutes.

Four accessible parking bays are available next to the Firstsite entrance, accessed via Queen Street. These are allocated on a first come, first served basis.

Assistance dogs:

Assistance dogs are welcome throughout the building.

Maps:

A braille map of our building is available from our Welcome Desk.

What to tell us when you get in touch

What your event is:

Let us know what kind of event you're planning (like a talk, wedding, film, festival, or workshop). Tell us what you want to happen on the day – do you need one big room, smaller spaces, or a mix?

When it is:

Please give us the date and time you'd like to book. If you're flexible, let us know a range of dates.

How many people are coming:

Let us know how many guests you expect. This helps us find the best space for you.

What equipment you need:

Do you need things like microphones, speakers, screens, or projectors? Tell us what you need and we'll help set it up.

Do you need food or drinks?

If you'd like catering, let us know. Share your preferences, and we'll provide menu options.

Any special requests or licensing needs:

If your event needs anything special—like outdoor activities, different seating setups, or extra services—just let us know. If you're planning a film screening or performance, tell us if you need help with licences.

FAQs

How do I know which space is best for my event?

When you get in touch, tell us what kind of event you're planning, how many people are coming, and if you have any special setup or equipment needs. We'll help you choose the best space.

What is the capacity of your spaces?

Our spaces vary in size. Small meeting rooms can hold up to 20 people, and larger outdoor areas like Berryfield Lawn can hold up to 3,000. Just let us know how many people you expect and we'll recommend the right space for you.

Can we use our own suppliers?

We prefer you to use our trusted suppliers, but you can bring your own if we approve it first. You'll need to give us the name, company, and details of what they'll be doing, along with any required documents.

Do you provide technical equipment and support?

Yes, we can provide things like Wi-Fi, microphones, speakers, and screens. Tell us what you need (for example, a microphone for Q&As or a screen for a presentation), and we'll help get everything set up.

Do I need to handle licensing for films or performances?

If you're showing a film or hosting a performance, let us know if you're arranging the licence yourself. If not, we can help with that - just be aware that there may be an extra cost.

How much does it cost to hire a space?

Prices depend on which space you book, how long you'll need it, and what kind of event you're planning. Tell us your event details (e.g. the date, space requirements, and whether you need any additional services like catering or technical support), and we will provide a personalised quote.

Do you provide catering for events?

Yes, we offer catering for many types of events. Let us know what kind of food and drinks you're looking for, and we'll send menu choices and prices.

What if I need to cancel or change my booking?

Our cancellation policy will be in your booking agreement. If you need to change or cancel your event, just get in touch - we'll do our best to help.

Who will be my main point of contact on the day?

There will always be a Duty Manager in the building. If you need help, go to the Reception desk and a team member will contact them for you.

Can I bring my own decorations or banners?

Yes, but please let us know in advance what you'd like to bring. You can't attach anything to the walls, floors, or ceilings, but we can provide boards or other options to help you display your materials. Be sure to share full details of your event before booking so we can support you.

Contact

We would love to talk to you about hosting your event at Firstsite, please contact our Venue Hire team for further information.

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Location

Firstsite, Lewis Gardens, High Street,
Colchester, Essex, CO1 1JH.

Your visit

Bus

Nearest bus stop - Queen Street Stop Jc
(64, 64A and 65). 10-minute walk from
Colchester's bus station on Osborne Street.

Rail

Colchester Town Station - 5 min walk.
Colchester mainline station - 25 min walk.

Parking

Limited number of accessible parking spaces.
Nearest car park is Priory Street .

Firstsite

