



Access Policy

1. Introduction

The museum is committed to maximising access for everyone, regardless of ability, age, gender, cultural or social background, sexual orientation, faith, language, location or wealth, by minimising or removing barriers that can prevent people from engaging with our buildings, collections, website, social media channels, programmes and staff.

We do everything that we can, within the limitations of our buildings and other resources, to offer the widest, richest, most engaging access for all our users. The museum recognises that access is a complex issue that must be addressed through the actions of the organisation as a whole, and that access provision benefits people generally, not just those with specific needs.

2. Scope

This policy covers provision at Museum of London, Museum of London Docklands and the Museum of London Archaeological Archive, through our website and other online activities, and in other venues where we deliver outreach programmes, eg schools, universities, community venues and so on. This policy relates to access by our users and does not cover access in relation to staff, volunteers, freelancers or contractors.

3. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set out the museum's commitment to maximising access and to identify the ways in which we achieve this across the organisation.

4. Definition of terms

Access

When we refer to access we mean the opportunity to engage with our buildings, collections, content and expertise. There are a number of key barriers to access:

- **Attitudinal** – eg some people may have a lack of interest in, or awareness of, the museum and the subjects and issues it deals with, or our programmes and services
- **Intellectual** – eg some people may find the museum too specialist in its approach to subjects and how they are presented; some may have learning disabilities which affect their ability to engage with the museum; and some may not be able to read or speak English
- **Cultural** – eg some people may feel that the museum is not relevant to them and does not reflect their cultural or social heritage, or their interests
- **Economic** – eg some people may not be able to afford to visit the museum or take part in our programmes

- **Geographic** – eg some people will live too far away to visit the museum
- **Physical/sensory** – eg people with physical disabilities, limited mobility, or hearing or visual impairments may not be able to access the museum, our website, social media channels or programmes
- **Technological** – eg some people may not have access to the internet at home or use a mobile phone.

5. Responsibilities

The Director and the Board of Governors are responsible for ensuring that the museum meets its obligations under the Equality Act (2010) by doing everything reasonably possible to make the museum accessible to the widest range of people.

Heads of department are responsible for ensuring that the work of their colleagues takes into account the need to maximise access by addressing the barriers outlined above.

Every member of staff involved in developing, delivering or maintaining spaces, activities, resources and other services for our users is responsible for making them as accessible as possible.

6. Policy

The museum is committed to maximising access by, for example:

Physical access

- upholding the statutory requirements of the Equality Act (2010) by taking reasonable steps to ensure that policies, practices and procedures do not discriminate against disabled people; by provide auxiliary aids and services which enable disabled people to use the museum; and by removing, altering or circumventing physical barriers within our buildings
- ensuring that lift access is provided to all public spaces
- providing parking spaces for blue badge holders
- ensuring that all our galleries, exhibitions (including individual exhibits), learning spaces (including interactive whiteboards and computers), cafés, cloakrooms, toilets and information desks are accessible to wheelchair users
- providing traditional and motorised wheelchairs
- providing plenty of accessible seating throughout our buildings

Sensory access

- providing front-of-house staff who have the awareness and skills to successfully communicate with and provide a quality service to people with visual or hearing impairments
- following RNIB and Action on Hearing Loss good practice guidelines
- ensuring that exhibitions and galleries use a good range of multisensory exhibits (eg to touch, smell, listen to) and incorporate Braille and tactile images where appropriate
- ensuring that video-based exhibits have subtitles if they use the spoken word and that, budget allowing, key audio-visual exhibits that are central to a gallery or exhibition's main message include BSL as well as subtitles

- offering on request touch tours, BSL and other events that are specifically designed for people with sensory impairments
- providing audio guides for visually impaired visitors where appropriate
- ensuring that our website meets the Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) AA standard

Intellectual access

- following guidelines provided by Mencap
- ensuring that the text used in our galleries, exhibitions, educational resources, publications, website and social media channels is carefully tailored to the needs of their intended audiences, in line with the museum's style guide
- providing effective wayfinding signage and museum maps
- ensuring that the content and delivery of our learning programmes are tailored to the learning needs of their audiences
- providing a tailored programme for special schools and SEN units in mainstream schools and colleges
- running Morning Explorers sessions for children with an Autism Spectrum Condition
- providing museum maps at our information desks in key tourist languages
- providing guides in different languages for exhibitions that have people for whom English is not their first language as a priority audience
- ensuring that information on our website is available in key tourist and community languages

Attitudinal access

- ensuring that our promotional activities present the museum as a welcoming, non-threatening, inclusive destination
- ensuring that visitors are made to feel welcome on arrival and are put at their ease
- creating environments in which people can feel comfortable, valued and able to learn at their own pace and level

Cultural access

- making the museum and its programmes as relevant as possible to London's culturally and socially diverse society

Economic access

- maintaining free entry to both museums and ensuring we are open to the public seven days a week, 363 days per year
- where charges apply, offering a flexible range of prices and ticket types where possible (while ensuring the museum's financial sustainability)
- offering concessions where possible, e.g. for people in receipt of benefits, students and senior citizens
- providing outreach programmes to primary and secondary schools that find it difficult to meet the cost of visiting the museum
- offering small grants to help schools in disadvantaged areas visit the museum through the City of London School Visits Fund

Geographic access

- providing a rich online experience
- providing object loans to other museums nationally and internationally
- producing touring exhibitions and displays in public spaces
- offering a programme webinars and live streams for schools and universities

7. Related policies, legislation and guidance

The Equality Act (2010) bans unfair treatment and helps achieve equal opportunities in the workplace and in wider society. The Act replaced previous anti-discrimination laws and covers nine protected characteristics which cannot be used as a reason to treat people unfairly – age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity/paternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The Act prohibits unfair treatment when providing goods, facilities and services, when holding public functions, in the management of premises, and in education.

A number of organisations provide specialist advice, in particular:

- Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) – see rnib.org.uk
- Action on Hearing Loss (formerly RNID) – see actiononhearingloss.org.uk
- Mencap – see mencap.org.uk
- Web Accessibility Initiative – see w3.org/WAI

The Museums Association's access guidelines provide a useful overview of museums' responsibilities to maximise access in the broadest sense – see museumsassociation.org/policy/guidelines