

Hampshire County Council Arts and Museums Service Access Policy Statement 2013-2018

1 Vision

- 1.1 As set out in the 'Connecting Communities to Excellence (2012-2015)' Strategic Plan, the vision for the Hampshire County Council Arts and Museum Service is:
'To deliver a nationally excellent and innovative cultural offer, that engages and inspires people living, working and spending time in Hampshire'
- 1.2 This Policy supports that vision and makes clear the Service's commitment to enabling access to its museums, collections and services.

2 Commitment to access

- 2.1 Hampshire County Council Arts and Museums Service aims to provide the widest possible access to its museums, collections and services to enable audiences from all sections of the community to enjoy them. We will remove as many physical, intellectual and cultural barriers as practicable within the limits of budgetary, legal and planning considerations.
- 2.2 Our commitment to accessibility extends to our staff, volunteers and visitors and is subject to continuous improvement. We are also committed to ongoing training in access and equalities issues for staff and volunteers

3 Ethics and legislation

- 3.1 This policy has been written in line with [Hampshire County Council's equality objectives](#) which focuses on three priority areas:
- **Scrutinising and improving access to services** - treating all people fairly, providing equality of opportunity and gaining the business benefit of opening up our services to the widest possible community
 - **Our workforce** - ensuring that its profile reflects best practice in recruitment and that through open and honest dialogue with our staff we develop a culture of inclusion and openness
 - **Base service development on sound knowledge and evidence about the needs of the community.** We feel this is best achieved through further work to embed Equality Impact Assessment in our planning and decision-making process

3.2 Hampshire County Council has a Public Sector Equality duty under the Equality Act 2010. The general duty requires public bodies to pay due regard, in the exercise of their functions, to the following three aims:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

4 Access and Equality Assessments

4.1 The Service is committed to assessing, identifying and addressing access and equality issues. In 2010, a comprehensive programme of Access Audits was carried out across the Service's portfolio of museum sites. The findings and actions from these audits are being addressed at an individual site-level as evidenced in site-level service plans. The process of repeating the access audits for all of the sites is planned for 2014. All development projects also consider access issues at the outset and ensure that the new facilities are designed to be fully accessible.

4.2 As part of Hampshire County Council, the Service has a statutory duty to demonstrate that it has assessed the impact that policies, decisions and procedures might have on age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, race, religion and belief, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership or sexual orientation. These Equality Impact Assessments also produce action plans for improvement.

5 User Needs

5.1 The Service recognises that there are potentially many different barriers to accessing its museums, collections and services. To eliminate these barriers and ensure equality of access, we will address the following forms of accessibility:

- Physical - to enable people with physical disabilities to enjoy all elements of the collections through accessible exhibitions, displays, websites and publications.
- Sensory – to enable visitors with impaired vision or hearing to enjoy the museum sites and collections.
- Intellectual – We acknowledge that people have different learning styles and we will provide interpretation and information about collections in a

- range of learning styles. We also aim to ensure people with learning difficulties can engage with and enjoy the museums and the collections.
- Cultural – We will consider the needs of people for whom English is not a first language or whose knowledge of English history and culture may be limited.
 - Attitudinal/Emotional – To ensure the museum environment and the museum staff are welcoming visitors from all sections of the community. We will also aim to ensure the people of Hampshire feel the museums are of significance to them.
- 5.2 We will also use future Access Audits, Equality Impact Assessments and additional consultation with users to ensure that future developments meet the needs of users and address the barriers to participation.

6 Reference to other policies

- 6.1 The main reference and guide to the Service’s work in areas of access and equalities are the Departmental Equality Objectives which was approved by Culture, Communities and Business Services Departmental Management Team on 14 March 2012.
- 6.2 Further information about access to the museum collections, can be found in the Hampshire County Council Arts and Museums Service Collections Development Policy 2013-2018.

7 Document availability

- 7.1 In order to ensure our services are accessible to everyone we provide information in [alternative formats and languages](#) on request.

Approved:	Approval pending at 25 April 2013 Executive Member Culture and Recreation Decision Day
Date of next review:	March 2018