

Leicestershire County Council
Culture Leicestershire

Museum Access Policy 2025-2030

Contents

Section 1	Introduction
Section 2	Scope
Section 3	Purpose
Section 4	Definition of terms
Section 5	Responsibilities
Section 6	Policy statements
Section 7	Related policies, legislation, and guidance
Section 8	Policy review date

Section 1

Introduction

- 1.1 Leicestershire County Council museums form part of the Council's wider cultural offer, which includes Leicestershire Libraries. Together as [Culture Leicestershire](#) we have a shared vision, with a distinct mission and purpose as museums.

Vision

- 1.2 Create space to spark imagination, celebrate communities & enhance wellbeing

Mission

- 1.3 Work to shape Leicestershire as a place with a rich and distinctive history that values its heritage, engages its communities, welcomes those who visit the county and works together to ensure a future for the past.

Purpose

- 1.4 The purpose of Leicestershire Museums is to safeguard the future of the rich and irreplaceable natural and human heritage of Leicestershire and to provide an accessible, engaging, innovative, sustainable and responsive service of the highest quality.

Section 2

Scope

- 2.1 The policy covers user access to all our sites and services.
- 2.2 Our Heritage and Museum sites are Bosworth Battlefield Heritage Centre, 1620s House and Garden at Donington le Heath, Harborough Museum, Charnwood Museum, Melton Carnegie Museum.
- 2.3 Our collection facilities are The Collections Resources Centre; The Eastern Annexe (County Hall); Unit 1, Stephenson's Court; Unit 8 Riverside Court, Measham; Snibston Colliery Park.
- 2.4 Our microsites, social media platforms and other online activities.
- 2.5 Our outreach activity delivered in other venues e.g. schools, universities and community venues.
- 2.6 The 'Culture to You' service, delivered in peoples in homes has a separate policy.

Section 3

Purpose

- 3.1 The purpose of this policy is to state our commitment to increasing access to our services and resources by identifying how we will provide an accessible, engaging, innovative, sustainable, relevant, and responsive service of the highest quality.
- 3.2 Leicestershire County Council invests in creating a culture where people of all backgrounds and experience feel appreciated and valued. It is committed to achieving equality of opportunity in service delivery, volunteering and employment.
- 3.3 Discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, maternity and pregnancy, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation (or any other unjustifiable criterion) will not be tolerated.

Section 4

Definition of Terms

- 4.1 When we refer to access, we mean the opportunity to engage with our service through our buildings, collections, content, events, and expertise. We have listed the key barriers to access below, with an example to illustrate how they could be experienced.
 - **Attitudinal** - e.g. Some people may feel museums are not relevant to them and our service does not reflect their lived experiences.
 - **Cultural** - e.g. **Some people may feel that our collections do not reflect their communities, social and cultural heritage, or interests.**
 - **Economic** - e.g. Some people may not be able to afford to visit our sites or have access to the internet.
 - **Geographic** - e.g. **Some people may not be able to visit our sites due to their location.**
 - **Cognitive** - e.g. Some people may find our stories, and the way that we tell them, difficult to understand.
 - **Physical**- e.g. Some people with physical disabilities, limited mobility, hearing or visual impairment may not be able to access our sites, activities, websites, or social media channels.
 - **Sensory** - e.g. Some people may experience sensory discomfort when visiting our sites and might need alternative information or need to experience them in an alternative way.
 - **Technological** - e.g. Some people may not have access to the internet and therefore are excluded from our digital content.

Section 5

Responsibilities

- 5.1 The Museum Service reviews performance, policies, and procedures through the County Council's governance and reporting structure. Cabinet is responsible for the executive functions and decisions of the Council.
- 5.2 The Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee scrutinises the executive functions and decisions of the County Council in respect of the Adults and Communities Department. Together they help ensure the Museum Service, the Department and the Council meet their obligations under the Equality Act (2010) and the associated Public Sector Equality Duty.
- 5.3 This will include removing and/ or minimising disadvantages, taking steps to meet the needs of different people and encouraging people from protected groups to participate in society.
- 5.4 The Head of Service is responsible for ensuring service managers work with their teams and colleagues to maximise access by addressing the barriers outlined above.
- 5.5 The council requires all its employees to behave in ways that promote equality and are non-discriminatory. This applies to the way they behave to members of the public in the delivery of services and to other employees in the course of their work. We provide front of house welcoming training and follow best practice guidelines from Visit England.
- 5.6 Employees should participate actively in measures introduced by the council to ensure that there is equality of opportunity and non-discrimination.
- 5.7 Should employees, through the course of their employment, be found to have caused or encouraged discrimination, this will be regarded as a particularly serious offence, rendering them liable to disciplinary action.
- 5.8 Our service carries out regular evaluation with audiences and consults stakeholders on any proposed changes to services. We are committed to improving our understanding of our non-users to help ensure the broadest possible access to our facilities, services, and collections. We are developing an audience data strategy which will improve our ability to make informed decisions, based on robust audience data.
- 5.9 Leicestershire County Council has a Corporate Equalities Policy and Action Plan, this is disseminated through Departmental Equality Groups, which focus on addressing areas for improvement and reviewing Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs). These may be carried out on council services to assess how services are provided to individuals and different sections of the community. An EIA may highlight areas for improvement and set out those improvements could be achieved. We will seek out all funding opportunities to make improvements where they are identified.

Section 6

Policy Statements

- 6.1 We are committed to maximising access and will uphold the statutory requirements of the Equality Act (2010). We will do this in a number of ways, including, but not limited to:

Attitudinal access

- 6.2 We will strive to remove barriers to our service created due to a lack of understanding, misconceptions or bias.

- 6.3 We will do this by:

- Engaging with a range of communities and groups to understand potential barriers, including those where there are low levels of engagement.
- Ensuring our choice of language is inclusive, accessible and appropriate
- Working with communities on Cocurated projects.
- Fully embedding our corporate values of Positivity, Trust & Respect, Flexibility, Openness & Transparency.
- Providing training that supports our staff and volunteers to effectively communicate and engage with different types of visitor.
- Ensuring our activities and platforms do not use negative stereotypes or reinforce misconceptions.
- Our sites are breast feeding friendly.

Cultural access

- 6.4 We recognise that our service and the stories that we tell may not reflect the cultural experiences, heritage and interests of all the communities of Leicestershire and therefore we will strive to reflect our communities better. We want to be a relevant and welcoming place for everyone.

- 6.5 We will do this by:

- Evaluating and identifying areas where we can improve the relevance of our museums, collections and the stories we tell, to communities who are not currently well represented.
- Working in a collaborative way with specific groups and communities to remove cultural barriers and make sure that our museums, collections and stories we tell are more representative.
- Ensuring our staff and volunteers receive training and resources to support them to identify and overcome cultural barriers to accessing our services and providing welcoming spaces.
- Consulting with specialist user groups and organisations to make sure that we are doing things in the right way.

Economic access

- 6.6 We recognise that entry and activity charges can prevent some audiences from accessing of our service, so we will ensure we offer a variety of

programmes, activities and price points to make it easier for these audiences to engage with us.

6.7 We will do this by:

- Charnwood Museum, Harborough Museum and Melton Carnegie Museum are free to enter.
- Bosworth Battlefield has a temporary exhibition space.
- Bosworth Battlefield and 1620s House and gardens at Donington le Heath take part in Heritage Open Days each year with free access.
- Offering a variety of prices within our retail and refreshment offers.
- Offering a range of prices for our programming of events and activities.
- Providing community offers.
- Offering free activities and resources on site and online.
- Delivering sessions in schools through Creative Learning Services.
- Creating a flexible 'pay as you go' offer on resources for schools.
- Museums are free for self-led visits for schools' groups.
- Access to collections at stores are free by appointment.

Physical access

6.8 Physical access to our service makes an important contribution to people's health and wellbeing and we will take all reasonable steps to ensure our venues and the buildings we operate are accessible. We work in historic buildings and landscapes which means we are committed to putting in place measures for those that cannot access fully the buildings.

6.9 We will do this by:

- Providing accessible seating throughout our galleries.
- Ensuring our sites and facilities are wheelchair accessible where possible.
- Providing alternative engagement opportunities when access is difficult.
- Providing high quality online content for those who cannot leave their homes.
- Engage in projects such as 'Culture to You' where collections go out to homes.

Sensory access

6.10 We will consider sensory needs when developing our services and designing our buildings and strive to provide alternative and additional methods of engagement for those with sensory access requirements.

6.11 We will do this by:

- Providing services in alternative formats.
- Considering sensory requirements in the design of our buildings, exhibitions and engagement.
- Striving to consult on sensory requirements with users and non-users and working with specialist organisations.

- Providing quieter spaces with less sensory engagement for those who need it.
- Providing access to objects suitable for handling at our sites, in schools and community venues.
- Providing training for staff and volunteers.

Cognitive access

6.12 We recognise that not everybody thinks, learns and understands in the same way and we will try to provide a variety of ways to provide access to the programmes and information we provide which cater for a range of audiences and needs.

6.13 We will do this by:

- Providing signage and information that is accessible to a broad range of visitors.
- Using best practice standards and guidelines (including the Museums Style Guide and MENCAP guidelines) to ensure the text we use in exhibitions, educational resources, publications, websites and social media channels meet the needs of our intended audiences.
- Providing a varied informal and formal learning programme for schools.
- Providing lifelong learning events such as author talks and family learning events such as theatre performances and trails.
- Using technology and interactivity and providing information in other formats to help people engage with our displays and exhibitions.
- Consulting with specialist user groups and organisations to make sure that we are doing things in the right way.
- Working in a collaborative way with specific groups to make sure that our stories are told in ways that are engaging and effective.
- Providing information to researchers and access to the collections.
- Providing information in different languages where possible.

Geographic access

6.14 We will make the most of our existing network of buildings and acknowledge some sites will be difficult for some of our audiences to access in person. We will seek to provide offers that allow audiences to engage in different ways.

6.15 We will do this by:

- Providing a varied and engaging temporary exhibition programme so our objects and stories are available in different locations.
- Online exhibitions and content through our microsites.
- Loaning objects to other museums and galleries nationally and internationally, and receiving loans from other museums and galleries, enabling Leicestershire residents to see things that they would not normally be able to see.
- Providing quality online experiences and resources which enable people across the world to engage with our collections and stories.

- Continuing to develop our learning programme for schools, colleges and universities.

Technical access

6.16 New technologies, including tools which use artificial intelligence (AI) are providing new ways for us to interpret our sites and collections, tell our stories and engage with our audiences. However, we recognise lack of access to technology, poor content and systems and applications that do not meet access standards create new barriers for audiences and we are committed to avoiding this. We will be transparent about when AI is used to support interpretation and work in line with the County Council's AI policy.

6.17 We will do this by:

- Making our websites and mobile applications accessible, in accordance with the Public Sector Bodies Accessibility Regulations 2018 (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2).
- Ensuring that our onsite Wi-Fi provision allows our users to engage with our digital interactives and content on their own specialist devices if required.
- Commitment to increasing access to our expertise and resources for those that cannot access our digital offer. This could include activities and events, written and phone based engagement, face to face visit
- Sharing our technological learning and practice with other heritage and community organisations.
- Offering a range of communication methods, including print, phone and face to face interaction, in addition to digital and online means.
- Providing choice of platforms to engage with our services which use caption videos ALT Text and subtitles.

Section 7

Related policies, legislation, and guidance

7.1 Government

- The Equality Act 2010 (2023 update)
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2023/1425/introduction/made>
- Accessible communication formats
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inclusive-communication/accessible-communication-formats>
- Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018.
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/accessibility-requirements-for-public-sector-websites-and-apps>

7.2 Leicestershire County Council

- Leicestershire County Council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2024--2028 <https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2024-10/equality-diversity-and-inclusion-strategy-2024-2028.pdf>
- Working together for the benefit of everyone, Leicestershire County Council's Strategic Plan 2024-2026 <https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2025-01/LCC-Strategic-Plan.pdf>
- International WCAG 2.1 AA accessibility standard <https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/about-the-council/equality-and-diversity/equalities-policy-statement>

7.3 **Museum and Heritage Service**

- Collections Management Framework
- Collections Development Policy

7.4 **Guidance**

- Autism East Midlands Environmental Audit
- Kids in Museum Audit
- Museums assessed and content on www.accessable.co.uk
- Association for Accessible formats <https://www.ukaaf.org/>
- Expertise advice from SENsory Atelier
- Arts Council Investment Principles <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/lets-create/strategy-2020-2030/investment-principles>
- [Access policy – Collections Trust](#)

Section 8

Policy Review Date

8.1 To be reviewed by 30 November 2030.