



NORTHAMPTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Northampton Museums & Art Gallery Access Policy

Equality Impact Assessment

The Council strives to ensure equality of opportunity for all both as a major employer and as a service provider.

The Access Policy has been equality impact assessed to ensure fairness and consistency for all.

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Version 2		
Version 3		
Version 4		

Northampton Museums and Art Gallery Access Policy

1. Introduction

Northampton Museums & Art Gallery (NMAG) is committed to, and believes that all people and sectors of the community have a fundamental right to engage with, use and enjoy the collections and services it provides.

NMAG is committed to ensuring that all aspects of its museums' activities are fully accessible to all sectors of the community by removing or reducing any physical, sensory, cultural or intellectual barriers to access.

NMAG adopts the social model of disability which recognises that disability is the loss of opportunity to take part in mainstream activities due to physical, social, attitudinal, information or communication barriers. The problem is not with the individual.

2. Scope

This policy covers provision at the Council's premises at NMAG, Abington Park Museum, museum stores, our digital presence, and all aspects of service provision. It also covers venues where outreach programmes are delivered.

3. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework for maintaining and improving access to the Council's museum's buildings, facilities, displays, collections, associated information, staff and knowledge. It does so by recognising that there are many barriers to access at all levels with the overall aim of achieving equality, diversity and inclusion.

This policy applies to the provision of our services to all users both in person and online. It includes access to exhibitions, events, activities, resources and access to collections and collections knowledge.

4. Definition of Terms

In the context of this policy, access means the opportunity to engage with our buildings, collections, content and expertise. There are a number of key barriers to access:

Physical access – ensure that those with physical disabilities have access to and are able to appreciate all parts of the museum. To ensure that the needs of the elderly and those caring for young children are also considered as potentially having physical access requirements

Sensory access – to ensure that those with sensory impairments are able to fully participate in the activities taking place in the museum’s buildings, exhibitions and collections

Intellectual access – we recognise that our users have different learning styles and we will use and develop appropriate interpretation methods taking into account their varying needs and preferred styles of learning when creating content to enable them to fully engage with our services

Cultural access – we will give consideration to the needs of those for whom English is their second language or whose knowledge of museum subject areas may be limited

Social access - ensuring that people from any background, regardless of education, belief, culture or age are able to access our services

Emotional and attitudinal access – ensure that all sections of the community feel welcomed and included

Economic access – we recognise that provision may need to be made to ensure that people of all income levels are able to participate the services we provide

5. Responsibilities

The Council’s Cultural Services Manager is responsible for ensuring that NMAG adheres to the Equality Act (2010) by carrying out everything reasonably possible to ensure access to NMAG is available to the widest range of people.

Managers need to ensure that all staff are aware of and take into account the need to address the barriers outlined above. They have a responsibility in providing services to increase access by reducing where possible these barriers.

Everyone involved in developing, delivering or maintaining spaces, activities, resources and other services for our users is responsible for making them as accessible as possible. This includes not only staff but others working for the NMAG (e.g. designers, artists, contractors, session leaders) and volunteers.

6. Policy

NMAG is committed to maximising and /or improving access by:

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 providing auxiliary aids and services which enable disabled people to use the services we provide; and by

removing, altering or circumventing physical barriers within our physical environment.

- NMAG staff to be aware of parking facilities for blue badge holders.
- NMAG creates a safe environment by implementing the Council's Health and Safety Policy and through the training of its staff, including risk assessments. (Is this relevant?)
- NMAG is committed to providing an accessible digital presence that gives online visitors full access to its digital resources.
- The museum environment is accessible for wheelchairs and buggies at NMAG and to the ground floor at Abington Park Museum (APM)
- There are lifts to all levels of the building at NMAG. Listed status at APM does not allow this at present.
- There are wheelchair accessible toilets, baby changing facilities and seating
- At our events and activities provision is made for users with a range of physical disabilities e.g. at APM where possible activities will be provided on the ground floor, at NMAG there is access to all activities on the ground floor and via lifts to other locations.

Sensory access

- Assistance dogs are welcome in all museum buildings.
- Hearing enhancement systems are fitted in key areas, at NMAG e.g. main reception, shop, café servery. Central Hall (events/conferencing space) and The Studio (workshop/event space)
- The museum service makes provision for users with needs relating to their condition or impairment e.g. cognitive impairments e.g. dementia
- The museum service ensures that the presentation of displays follows best practice guidelines as laid down in the 'Style Guide: a guide for gallery text at Northampton Museums and Art Gallery'. This guide is DDA compliant.

Intellectual access

- Users have different needs and the museum service is committed to an inclusive approach that recognises a range of different learning styles and needs
- Public programming utilises a wide range of approaches appropriate to users - these include online and downloadable resources, print and digital marketing, formal and informal learning resources, guided tours, hands-on practical workshops, facilitated sessions, outreach, lectures and public talks, access to collections, research facilities, loans to other organisations, temporary exhibitions.

- Where practicable the museum service aims to tailor workshops to people with a range of abilities, including those with special educational needs.
- The museum service offers a range of formal learning opportunities to schools and colleges which take place both on and off site.
- 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 users, in line with the 'Style Guide: a guide for gallery text at Northampton Museums and Art Gallery' This guide is DDA compliant.
- The museum service aims to support students from universities and higher education institutions through a range of methods including but not exclusive to lectures and workshops.
- The museum welcomes research visits to view collections off display by appointment, if suitable resources and supervision is available.

Cultural access

- Making the museum and its programmes as relevant as possible to our culturally and socially diverse users

Social access

- The museum aims to attract new users from low and non-user groups through developing new activities, programmes and outreach activities.
- The museum offers a range of volunteering opportunities through an open and inclusive recruitment process.

Emotional and attitudinal access

- All members of staff receive Equalities training. Induction for staff with public-facing roles also includes access awareness.
- All public facing members of staff have appropriate training in customer care and an awareness of the possible barriers and access issues associated with using our services.
- The museum seeks opportunities to work in partnership with other organisations to ensure ongoing improvements to the services we provide.
- Museum staff offer a programme of education sessions and resources that are suitable for a range of users with differing needs.

Economic access

- Admission to the NMAG and APM is free. An option is retained for charging for some temporary exhibitions, though this will only be under exceptional

circumstances, not the norm. Consideration is given to the setting of fees and charges for events and activities in relation to museum users' financial situation.

- Offering concessions where possible e.g. for students, senior citizens and registered carers and companions.
- Provision of outreach services for schools where travel to the museum is cost prohibitive for them.

7. Related Policies, Legislation and Guidance

The museum works within the relevant legal framework. Those relevant to this policy include:

Equality Act 2010

Disability Discrimination Act 1995 & 2005

BS8300 Design of buildings and their approaches to meet the needs of disabled people (Updated 2018)

BS 8477:2007 Code of practice for customer service

PAS 197:2009 Code of practice for cultural collections management

PAS78 Guide to good practice in commissioning accessible websites and meets WCAG standards

Freedom of Information Act 2000

Style Guide: a guide for gallery text at Northampton Museums and Art Gallery