



Access policy

June 2023

Name of museum:

**The Nicholson Museum & Art Gallery
The Nicholson Institute
Leek
Staffordshire Moorlands ST13 6DW**

Name of governing body:

Staffordshire Moorlands District Council
Moorlands House
Stockwell Street
Leek
Staffordshire Moorlands ST13 6HQ

Date on which this policy was approved by governing body:

Insert date.

Policy review procedure:

This policy will be reviewed every five years.

Date at which this policy is due for review:

Insert date.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The Nicholson Museum & Art Gallery is committed to and believes that people of all backgrounds have the right to engage with, use and enjoy the collections and services it provides. It endeavours to make all aspects of the museum and gallery, its exhibitions, displays, events and activities as fully accessible as resources allow for the benefit of visitors, staff and volunteers.

1.2 It is recognised 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.

1.3 The aim is to maximise access for everyone regardless of ability, age, gender, cultural or social background, sexual orientation, faith, language, location or wealth by removing or minimising barriers that can prevent people from engaging with our collections, exhibitions, events, learning programmes, buildings and staff.

1.4 The purpose of this policy is to set out the museum's commitment to maximising access and to identify the ways in which this can be achieved.

2.0 Policy

2.1 The museum is committed to increasing public access to collections and information associated with those collections to increase knowledge and understanding of the cultural heritage of the Staffordshire Moorlands.

2.2 Sustainable access to collections will be the aim and any competing demands of access and the long-term care of collection items will be managed in accordance with the outcomes of a collections care risk assessment.

2.3 Staff will be welcoming and will aim to develop learning opportunities for different audiences, different levels of ability, tailoring programmes to meet the needs of specific groups as necessary.

2.4 Promotion of all activities and collections will use accessible means of communication.

2.5 The museum will adhere to all national and international statutes of law, including specifically in relation to access, but not exclusively the Equality Act 2010, Freedom of Information Act 2000, Data Protection Act 2018 and the Disability Discrimination Act 2018.

2.6 This policy is consistent with Staffordshire Moorlands District Council's Equality and Diversity Policy and follows national standards, ethical codes and best practice guidelines including, but not exclusively BS 8477:2007 Code of practice for customer service and PAS 197:2009 Code of practice for cultural collections management.

2.7 In order to maximise access and eliminate or reduce barriers the following aspects will be considered:

2.7.1 **Physical:** take all reasonable steps to ensure that policies, practices and procedures do not discriminate against disabled people, the elderly and those caring for young people by removing, altering or circumventing physical barriers. For example:

- providing accessible seating.
- ensuring facilities are wheelchair accessible where possible.
- signposting the nearest parking for blue badge holders.

2.7.2 **Sensory:** consider sensory needs when developing services and designing content for displays and exhibitions and strive to provide alternative methods of engagement for those with additional sensory access requirements. For example:

- providing information in alternative formats where possible, e.g. large print, braille.
- working with specialist organisations to achieve best practice e.g. RNIB, RNID.
- incorporating multi-sensory exhibits if possible (e.g. touch, smell, listen).
- providing designated quiet times.
- appropriate training for front-of-house staff.

2.7.3 **Intellectual:** acknowledge that people have different learning styles and try to provide a variety of approaches which cater for a range of audiences and needs. For example:

- using best practice standards and guidelines (including the Museums Style Guide and MENCAP guidelines) to ensure text used in exhibitions, educational resources, publications, websites and social media channels meet the needs of our intended audiences.
- using clear signage.
- providing information in other languages when possible.
- considering the allocation of resources to develop a varied learning programme for schools, SEN schools and units.
- evaluating interpretation.

2.7.4 **Cultural:** we acknowledge and recognise cultural differences and seek to represent varied cultural experiences and issues through our programmes and exhibitions. For example:

- identifying areas where the relevance of the museum can be improved to communities not currently represented.
- collaborating with specific groups and communities to remove cultural barriers.

2.7.5 **Emotional / Attitudinal:** to remove barriers created by a lack of understanding, misconceptions, or bias to ensure that all visitors feel welcomed and valued. For example:

- engaging with communities and groups to understand potential barriers.
- ensuring activities and platforms do not use negative stereotypes or reinforce misconceptions.

2.7.6 **Financial:** we will aim to minimise financial barriers to the museum and art gallery and the collections and wherever possible. For example:

- maintaining free admission.
- offering free activities when possible.
- where charges are applied offering a flexible range of prices if possible.
- considering the allocation of resources to develop outreach programmes to schools and community venues.