

Leicester City Council's Museums and Galleries Access

Policy 2016-20

This policy covers all aspects of public access for general visitors to the council's museums (New Walk Museum, Newarke Houses Museum, Jewry Wall Museum, Guildhall, Abbey Pumping Station) as well as some aspects of access to collections not displayed in museums. It does not include access to stored collections, collections enquiries or access by researchers working in non-public spaces. These will be covered by a separate policy to be published in 2016.

It applies to all museum visitors whether or not they are local residents.

Leicester's museums and collections are provided for the inspiration, education and use of our visitors and potential visitors. All people and sectors of the community have the right to engage with, use and enjoy museum collections. We are therefore committed to making all aspects of our activities as accessible as we can. This includes our buildings, collections, events, displays, exhibitions, and learning programmes.

The basis of our policy is that accessibility is as much about promoting equality of opportunity as it is about addressing any specific barriers that might prevent people from accessing our sites and collections.

Our commitment to accessibility

We will seek to build accessibility into everything we do, to develop and improve our service. We will make continuous improvements as our resources permit, and will take into consideration feedback from the public.

We will train our staff and volunteers on accessibility issues.

We will consider the following in seeking to eliminate barriers and ensure equality of opportunity for all:

- Physical – We will help people with physical disabilities to engage with and enjoy the museum's buildings and collections, as well as people with mobility difficulties such as elderly people and parents with young children.
- Sensory – We will help visitors with sensory difficulties, vision and/or hearing impairments, to engage with and enjoy the museums and collections.
- Intellectual – We recognise that people have different learning styles and needs and we will provide interpretation in a range of different ways. We will also seek to include a variety of "voices" to add richness to our narrative

content, recognising that our visitors have different perspectives and interests. We aim to ensure people of all intellectual abilities, including those with learning difficulties, can engage with and enjoy our museums and collections. Our aim is to provide a service that is relevant to and reflective of the people of Leicester.

- Language – We will consider the language needs of all our visitors including people for whom English is not their first language.
- Cultural – We recognise that our visitors and potential visitors come from different cultural backgrounds, and include many whose knowledge of English history and culture may be limited.
- Ambience – We will seek to ensure that our museums’ environments, staff and volunteers are welcoming to all our visitors and help them to feel welcome, safe and comfortable.
- Financial – We normally provide free access to all our museums. We charge for certain events and activities but where possible we try to ensure that any charges are affordable whatever the financial circumstances of our visitors and potential visitors.

Buildings

We aim to provide physical access to public areas in our buildings and facilities for all our visitors. However all our sites are historic listed buildings in their own right, and so some physical adaptations cannot be provided. In these circumstances we will try and find other ways to make our collections and the museum experience as accessible as possible.

Collections

We are committed to increasing public access to our collections and information about them.

We will do this in varied ways, including for example displays, handling sessions, publications, talks and events as well as on-line access.

We will seek to provide access to our collections across the city without the need to visit museums, for instance through outreach work using handling collections, “pop up” museums with temporary displays, loans of exhibits to non-museums, and our permanent museum display areas in three libraries.

We will also provide access to our collections beyond our museums and beyond the local authority area for instance through loans, publications, media coverage and on- line services. Our museum websites will provide information about and access to our collections.

We also encourage people to engage with our collections as volunteers, supported directly by the arts and museum service or as members of our various museum supporters groups.

Museum experiences beyond our buildings

We will, where resources allow, develop museum displays in community locations, such as libraries and neighbourhood centres.

We also provide related information on the story of Leicester at Visit Leicester, the city's Tourist Information Centre. Heritage interpretation panels across the city provide on-the-spot information about the Story of Leicester, and displays are provided at other locations such as City Hall.

Learning activities

In addition to our schools' programme, we will provide formal and informal learning opportunities for all age groups, for instance through family activities, events and talks.

Visitor services

Our front of house staff will welcome all visitors and assist them as and when required. They will be available in the galleries to help visitors understand and enjoy the collections.

In our standards of customer care we aim to meet the nationally recognised Visitor Attraction Quality Assurance Standard (VAQAS).

We will consider the comfort and access needs of our visitors by providing, where possible, lifts, accessible toilets, baby changing facilities, access and storage for pushchairs, seating in galleries and on-site wheelchairs.

Whilst aiming to meet the needs of all our visitors, we are disability-friendly, family-friendly and child-friendly venues.

We recognise that our visitors wish to do different things and will often behave in non-typical ways. We will not restrict any activity without a good reason, and this will be explained if the need arises.

We recognise that many visitors come with carers, and the needs of both are important to us.

Communication

We will promote the Service's activities and events using a range of media, to maximise engagement with our diverse audiences.

We will provide a range of ways that people can communicate with us.

We will communicate using plain English, which is free from jargon and appropriate for our intended audience.

We will evaluate our services and projects to ensure they meet the provision of this policy. We will consult users and non-users on new developments, and we will communicate our future plans to them.

Access Statement

Abbey Pumping Station Museum



This access statement does not contain personal opinions as to our suitability for those with disabilities, but aims to accurately describe the facilities and services that we offer all our visitors.

Introduction

The collections of Abbey Pumping Station Museum comprise industrial, technological and scientific items relating to Leicester. The building houses four working examples of Woolf compound rotative beam engines made by Gimson. These can be seen working at selected events.

The extensive grounds and ground floor are accessible for wheelchair users. In addition the Lower Beam Engine House and Switch Room are accessible via platform lift. The museum is available for private hire and is a unique and interesting alternative wedding venue.

We look forward to welcoming you. If you have any queries or require assistance please telephone 0116 299 5111 or email museums@leicester.gov.uk

To find out more about Abbey Pumping Station and for more details about access and links to travel information and maps please visit: www.leicester.gov.uk/museums Or visit our volunteer organisation's website: <http://www.abbeypumpingstation.org>

Pre Arrival

Opening times: Monday to Sunday: 11.00am - 4.30pm (1st February to 31st October)

Closed: 1st November to 31st January except for special events (please see our website for details)

- Admission is free except for special events.
- Abbey Pumping Station is located north of the city centre adjacent to the National Space Centre. Car parking is available on site.
- For full details and maps of how to reach us please see the directions section of our website, alternatively you can plan your journey by car or public transport using www.choosehowyoumove.co.uk; simply enter your postcode and ours, which is LE4 5PX to get directions.
- The nearest railway station is 2.7 miles away on London Road. The numbers 54 & 54A leave from Charles Street and will bring you to Abbey Lane; alternatively taxis are available at the station. If you require an accessible taxi you can book this in advance on 0116 251 5105.
- Outer city centre circular route number 40 clockwise/anti clockwise (Not Sundays) stops at the Thurcaston Road/Abbey Lane junction.
- 'Skylink' service from Leicester to Derby drops off and picks up at the junction of Corporation Road and Abbey Lane.
- Birstall Park and Ride is located adjacent to the A46/A6 junction. Buses leave every 15 minutes and arrive at the National Space Centre approximately 9 minutes later.
- For more details including local bus information please visit Google Maps. To plan your journey to Leicester, please visit Leicester travel pages. All links can be found on our website: www.leicester.gov.uk/museums or alternatively our volunteer organisation's 'Find us' page: http://www.abbeypumpingstation.org/find_us.asp

Car Parking & Arrival

- Abbey Pumping Station Museum has car parking on site including two disabled spaces.

- On event days car parking is available at the adjacent National Space Centre and car parking stewards are available to guide you to the Pumping Station entrance.
- Pathways within Abbey Pumping Station grounds are paved and suitable for wheelchairs.
- The pathway to the main entrance comprises of historical paving slabs which are uneven in places.

Main Entrance & Reception

- The main entrance and reception is on the ground floor. The entrance doors are automatic and measure 60inches/152cm wide.
- There are steps at the front of the building. However, these are only used on special event days and during weddings; there is a platform lift serving the same area.
- The floor area in reception is flat and wheelchair accessible.
- The reception and counter area is used for information and shop purchases. The desk is open with no glass partition and has a low area suitable for wheelchair users.
- On event days there is a complimentary ticket policy for a carer.
- Wheelchairs are available on loan free of charge.

Attractions & Displays

- The main exhibition galleries are situated on the ground floor. There are no steps and it is accessible to wheelchair users. It takes approximately 30 minutes to view.
- The galleries are free-flowing and generally uncrowded. However, on event days they can become very busy.
- The galleries are made up of exhibition panels and cases, freestanding & interactive exhibits and room sets.
- There are video and audio transcripts which cause a degree of background noise.
- The text is variable and doesn't currently meet access standards.
- There are seats available within the gallery.

- There is a hearing loop.
- There is no audio guide.

The Beam Engine House

- There is a platform lift to access the Lower Beam Engine House.
- The upper floors of the Beam Engine House are only accessible by narrow, industrial metal stairways and are unsuitable for wheelchairs, pushchairs and those with mobility problems.
- The top floor can become excessively hot during the summer months which may adversely affect some people.
- There are audio visual displays in the Lower Beam Engine House which have British Sign Language but no subtitles.

The Switch Room

- The Switch room is used as a café on event days and is hired out for functions.
- The room is large and flat with no steps. However, the access route may be unsuitable for wider wheelchairs and mobility scooters as it is quite narrow and uneven and contains a 45° turn.

The Basement

- Our 'Ghostly Engineer' event takes place in the basement. However, this area is inaccessible to wheelchairs or those with mobility problems due to both steep and spiral staircases.

The Main Store

- The main museum store is located in the grounds. It is used on event days for a variety of purposes and is flat and accessible for wheelchairs/pushchairs. However, it can become very crowded during popular events.

The Workshop

- The workshop is used on event days for demonstrations. These are viewed from the outside making it accessible to all.

Public Toilets

- Abbey Pumping Station has a toilet block situated in the range opposite the museum galleries. All toilets are on ground level. There is an accessible toilet with a wide sliding door. There are also male and female toilets but these are situated along a narrow corridor with narrow doorway.
- The accessible toilet has a twist lock, a grab rail and an emergency alarm.
- The sink in the accessible toilet is fitted with a lever tap, mirror and hand drier.
- A baby changing station is also situated in the accessible toilet at an appropriate height for all users.

Additional information

- Assistance dogs are welcome and water can be provided upon request.
- Selected staff have received disability training.
- We have a wheelchair available for use.

Contact Information

- **Address:** Abbey Pumping Station Museum, Corporation Road, Leicester, LE4 5PX
- **Telephone:**01162995111
- **Email:** museums@leicester.gov.uk
- **Web:** www.leicester.gov.uk/museum
www.abbeypumpingstation.org