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 programs.

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.
Guildhall Museum
Access Statement

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
Leicester is very privileged in having one of the best preserved timber framed halls in the country, dating back six hundred years. The Guildhall is a Grade1* listed building situated in the heart of Leicester’s City Centre next door to the Cathedral.

The Guildhall has had many uses and lives. The Great Hall itself was built in about 1390. Today, The Guildhall is best known as an excellent performance venue attracting acts from across the country and as a museum where visitors can step back in time and visit the Victorian cells, Medieval Hall or visit the Medieval exhibition

The Guildhall hosts a regular events programme including comedy, music, theatre and seasonal children’s events. The Guildhall is available for private hire and an historic and atmospheric venue for weddings & civil ceremonies.

The Guildhall is accessible on the ground floor only for wheelchair users. The entrance leading to the Museum is cobbled. The entrance doors are automatic and the Medieval exhibition is situated in the modern Visitor Centre on the ground floor, easily accessible for wheelchair users.

We look forward to welcoming you. If you have any queries or require assistance please telephone 0116 253 2569 or email museums@leicester.gov.uk

To find out more about the Guildhall and for more details about access and links to travel information and maps please visit: www.leicester.gov.uk/museums

Pre-Arrival
Opening times: Monday-Sunday, 11.00am - 4.30pm.
Closed: Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, Boxing Day, New Year’s Eve, New Year’s Day
Free admission

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 LE3 5FQ to get directions.
The nearest railway station is a 10 minute walk away on London Road. Taxis are available at the station. If you require an accessible taxi you can book this in advance on 0116 251 5105

The Guildhall is located in Leicester City Centre next to Leicester Cathedral.

The Guildhall is located in the heart of the city centre, within walking distance of most car parks. The nearest car park is The Lanes which is a 5 minute walk away.

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

Car Parking & Arrival

The Guildhall Museum has no car park and therefore no accessible parking. Guildhall Lane is pedestrianised. Please call 0116 223 2148 for further details.

Visitors can be dropped off on Peacock Lane directly behind the Museum, the easiest access from Peacock Lane is either through St. Martins car park which is on Peacock Lane, just behind the museum (even surface)

There is a cobbled path leading to the entrance to the Guildhall, wheelchair users or people with limited mobility may experience slight difficulty with access on the cobbles.

The entrance doors are large and automatic and are very accessible; they are 50 inches /127mmm in width.

There are no steps leading to the museum or on any of the ground floor. The Guildhall has partial accessible entrance to the ground floor only.

Main Entrance & Reception

The main entrance and reception leads to both the Guildhall and the Medieval exhibition, which are both situated on the ground floor, the area is well lit with spot lights.

The floor area in reception and most of the ground floor is made of stone.

There are no steps to the Medieval exhibition or to the ground floor of the Guildhall Museum which is wheelchair accessible

There is a seat available in the reception area.

The reception and counter area is used for information, shop purchases and tickets for upcoming shows. The desk is open with no glass partition and has a low area suitable for wheelchair uses.

There is a complimentary ticket policy for a carer.

There is no hearing loop system or audio guides.

There is a wheelchair loan available for inside the museum.
Attractions & Displays

Medieval Galleries: The exhibition is situated on the ground floor only and there are no steps. It is accessible for wheelchair users; it takes approximately 30 minutes to view and consists of two rooms.

The entrance to the exhibition is 111 cm/42 inches with two doorways leading to the second room 31 inches/80 cm. The exhibition is viewed through 2 rooms with the final exit leading to the Courtyard.

The exhibition is made up mostly of information panels, artefacts, touch screens and a video with adjustable sound. There is a mix of sound from the video noise. The exhibition is well lit with spot lights and a window in each room.

The exhibition and interpretation boards are made up of text, images and some artefacts.

There is the White Rose Café (St Martins House) which is accessible through Reception.

The rest of the Guildhall is accessible to the right of the reception area through to the courtyard; the door is 800 mm/31 inches. These rooms are wheelchair accessible.

The courtyard is has stone paving which is uneven, there are no steps and the paving stones have been raised for wheelchair access into the main building.

From the courtyard the Mayors Parlour, Great Hall and Cells are accessible. There are no displays and consist of beautiful historic rooms to view.

The Mayors Parlour is the first room to view, it is accessible for wheelchair uses the door is 800 mm and the flooring is flat and made of wooden floor boards.

The Great Hall is a large Medieval room to the left of the Mayors Parlour and has a stone floor again there are no obstacles or interpretation panels. However, as we are a busy venue the room may occasionally be set up for a wedding/performance or have a temporary exhibition. Please call the site and staff can inform visitors of any issues with regards to access.

Cells are access through the corridor leading to the toilets, they are Victorian cells and are fairly dark with some interpretation panels and artefacts.

The Library is the only room not accessible to wheelchair users or for people who have difficulty climbing stairs.

Public Toilets

The Guildhall has one accessible toilet and male and female toilets are all situated on the ground floor next to the reception area.

The door leading to the toilets from reception area is not automatic and some wheelchair uses may require assistance with opening the door. The width is 800 mm/31.5 inches. The staff at reception are more than happy to assist if there is any difficulty.

The toilets are also accessible through the courtyard.

The accessible toilet does not require a lock it 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.
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: The Guildhall, Guildhall Lane, Leicester, LE1 5FQ
Telephone: 0116 2532569
Email: museums@leicester.gov.uk
Web: www.leicester.gov.uk/museums