

Hertford Museum Access Policy 2020



HERTFORD MUSEUM

Inspiring Generations

Mission statement

Hertford Museum aims to collect, preserve and interpret evidence of the history of the county town and surrounding parishes in the district of East Hertfordshire for the interest, enjoyment and understanding of the local community and other visitors.

Our definition of access

We believe that all people have a fundamental right to engage with, use and enjoy the service.

We define access as something that is made possible when physical, cultural, social, financial, intellectual, psychological and emotional barriers are removed or reduced.

Our commitment to accessibility

Hertford Museum aims to provide the widest possible access to enable audiences from all sections of the community to enjoy use of the museum.

Our policy is to build accessibility into everything we do to develop and improve the service. Our commitment is long term and our policy is to make continuous improvements as our resources permit.

Our commitment to accessibility extends to our staff, volunteers and work placements as well as visitors.

To eliminate barriers and ensure equality of access we will consider the following forms of accessibility:

- Physical – to enable people with physical disabilities to reach and appreciate every part of the museum service. To take into account the needs of the elderly and of people caring for young people.
- Sensory – to enable visitors with impaired vision or hearing to enjoy the museum's buildings and collections
- Intellectual – We recognise that people have different learning styles and we will provide interpretation in a range of learning styles. We also aim to ensure people with learning difficulties can engage with and enjoy the museums and the collections.
- Cultural – to consider the needs of people for whom English is not a first language, or whose knowledge of English history and culture may be limited.

- Attitudinal / Emotional – to ensure the museum environment and museum staff are welcoming to visitors from all sections of the community. We will also aim to ensure people of East Hertfordshire feel the museum is of significance to them.
- Financial – We constitutionally maintain a free admission policy. When reviewing our charges for activities and other services we will take into account that ability to pay can be a barrier to access.

We aim to provide equal access to our buildings and facilities for all visitors. It must be appreciated that as listed buildings some physical adaptations are impossible to undertake. Nevertheless we are constantly working towards improving the facilities available to visitors with disabilities and will actively try to make our collections accessible even when our buildings are not.

Access to collections

Our curatorial team is committed to increasing public access to the collections and information and to increasing knowledge and understanding of East Hertfordshire's cultural heritage.

We will provide varied means of access to the collections, including displays, handling sessions, publications and events.

To increase access to the collections not on display we offer an enquiry service and physical access to reserve collections for researchers and interested parties.

We will provide levels of information and interpretation to suit a range of audiences and abilities. We will ensure that the presentation and labelling of displays respects a diversity of background.

We will continue to explore new ways of sharing our collections with a wider audience through an imaginative temporary exhibition programme and events programme.

Access to learning

Hertford Museum will provide learning opportunities for different audiences and levels of ability and where possible tailor our programme to the needs of specific groups.

We will provide education programmes to complement our collections and enable schools and groups to gain a deeper understanding. We will continue to be proactive in developing new workshop resources and loans boxes to support changes in the National Curriculum.

We will maintain our working relationships with all Hertford primary schools and continue developing cross curriculum projects with secondary schools.

We are committed to delivering our new reminiscence service and to continue attempting to source funding to support groups for whom the delivery fee may be a barrier.

Access to visitor services

Our front of house staff will assist and welcome all visitors.

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

We aim to provide appropriate signage to suit a range of audiences.

We aim to continue providing the warm welcome and level of visitor support that saw our front of house team win a highly commended award at the 2013 Museums & Heritage Excellence Awards.

Access to communication

We will promote the museums' activities and events using accessible means of communication.

We will provide publicity material on request in alternative formats for a range of needs and languages.

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

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

Reviewing the policy

Information on access will be available via our website, in paper format on request or verbally communicated by our front of house team.

We will review the access policy regularly to ensure it is in line with national guidelines and standards.