

# Access to the Museum & Gallery Collections

East Dunbartonshire Leisure & Culture Trust

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 As stated in the Museum Mission Statement<sup>i</sup>, East Dunbartonshire Leisure and Culture Trust (EDLC) Museums Service celebrates the rich and diverse heritage of the area by providing access to collections, quality exhibitions, events, educational programmes, and activities for both local audiences and visitors regardless of age, ethnic origin or ability.
- 1.2 We are committed to increasing public access to the museum & gallery collections, and information associated, to increase knowledge and understanding of these objects and the cultural heritage of East Dunbartonshire. We recognise that there are many barriers to access at all levels but are committed to making all aspects of our activities as fully accessible as our resources allow.
- 1.3 East Dunbartonshire Council is committed to the principles of equality, diversity, and human rights for all.<sup>ii</sup> The Council works to ensure due regard is given to eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity by removing or minimising disadvantage, and fostering good relations between different groups.

## 2. AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of this policy is to guide EDLC Museums Service's approach to providing access to the collections and associated information. The overarching objectives are to:

- Maintain the collection in line with the Care & Conservation Policy, in order to provide access to the cultural heritage and history associated with the local area.
- Ensure that appropriate physical access to each of our venues with exhibition space is available and fulfil our obligations under the Equality Act (2010)<sup>iii</sup>
- Provide access to a wide range of learning opportunities for all, from pre-school and formal education to lifelong and family learning.
- Utilise a variety of interpretative methods to exhibit the collections and be considerate of varied audience needs and learning styles in programme planning.
- Provide high quality exhibitions and events that are accessible to all.
- Promote partnerships with internal colleagues, the wider community, and external agencies.
- Promote all our activities and collections using accessible means of communication.

### 3. PREMISES

- 3.1 The museums service comprises the Auld Kirk Museum, Lillie Art Gallery, and Kirkintilloch Town Hall Heritage Centre. The museums service welcomes all visitors to these venues and is committed to implementing fully its obligations under the Equality Act (2010).
- 3.2 Entry to these venues and access to collections and associated information is free. The Lillie Art Gallery and Auld Kirk Museum are generally open to the public at the following times: Tuesday - Saturday 10.00 – 13.00 & 14.00 – 17.00. Access is limited during exhibition change over periods, and during some events. Kirkintilloch Town Hall Heritage Centre is open to the public Monday – Thursday 10.00 – 16.00. Public Entry outside general opening hours may be arranged by appointment.
- 3.3 The Auld Kirk Museum has storage at the Barony Chambers, Peel Cottage and off-site at Donaldson Crescent, Kirkintilloch. The Lillie Art Gallery has two on-site stores. Where possible, and appropriate, access to the museums service's collections in storage at any of these sites will be granted by appointment. Access to collections and supervision will be at the discretion of the Museums Collection Officer. Where physical access to a storage area is problematic alternative arrangements may be made to provide some experience of, or access to, objects held in storage.

### 4. TYPES OF ACCESS

- 4.1 We wish to enable access to our collections for education, research, and enjoyment by all within the reasonable constraints of resources, conservation, and security.
- 4.2 The Museums Service recognises that users have different needs, and we are committed to reducing barriers to both physical and intellectual access to our collections. Front-of-House staff will welcome and assist all visitors according to their needs.
- 4.3 The Museum is committed to enabling access to collections objects, physically and digitally, in accordance with the Collections Care and Conservation Policy. We define access as something that is made possible when physical, cultural, social, sensory, intellectual, financial, emotional, and attitudinal barriers are removed or reduced.
- 4.4 To eliminate and reduce barriers and ensure equality of access we will consider the following aspects of accessibility to our services and collections:
  - a. **Physical**

The Museums Service will ensure that appropriate physical access to each of our venues with exhibition space is available:

    - The entrance to the main exhibition areas in each of these venues is all on one level, with access available via ramp or can be accessed with a lift at Kirkintilloch Town Hall,
    - Display cases are at a variety of heights and exhibitions installed with consideration given to a range of potential audiences.

#### b. Digital

Digital access to our collections will also be available:

- The Museum offers free online access to information and images of more than 4,000 objects (approximately 35% of the collection). Access to the online catalogue is via Axiell Collections. The Museum is committed to the continuing digitisation of the remainder of the collections.
- The Museum also seeks to extend its reach to online audiences by providing information about the collections on other online platforms as resources permit. Collections which are accessible through ArtUK.org will be added to when resources allow.
- Alt text will be included where possible on images used on social media.

#### c. Sensory

We aim to build into all aspects of the services activities a wide range of different sensory experiences:

- Large print interpretation is available for most temporary exhibitions and printed introduction guides are available on selected subjects
- Audio loops are fitted at the Auld Kirk Museum & Kirkintilloch Town Hall Heritage Centre
- There is adjustable lighting available for the Lillie Art Gallery
- The Museum has an extensive handling collection for use with group visits and outreach.

#### d. Cultural

We acknowledge and recognise cultural differences and seek to represent varied cultural experiences and issues through our programmes and activities. We aim to ensure that all visitors feel welcomed and valued.

- The Museum responds to the needs and sensitivities of audiences from diverse cultural backgrounds, including source communities, inviting contributions to the interpretation of the collections and the understanding of their cultural significance.
- The Museum aims to attract new stakeholders from non-user groups through developing new activities, programmes, and outreach activities

#### e. Intellectual

Users have different needs, and the Museum is committed to an inclusive approach that recognises a range of different learning styles.

- Where practicable the Museum aims to tailor workshops to people with a range of abilities, including those with special educational needs.
- The Museum aims to make a range of interpretation available. This includes labels and panels, printed guides and catalogues, online collections databases, film, sound and oral recordings, paper-based activities, information maps, trails, plus a range of special events.
- Education resources and activities are designed to incorporate a variety of communication & learning styles.

## 5. LOANS

- 5.1 EDLC Museums Service is committed to providing the widest possible access to its collections.
- 5.2 We will consider all requests for loans carefully and respond to them promptly. We will agree to loan requests within our available staff and resources.
- 5.3 In the first instance requests should be discussed with the Museum's Collection Officer who will assess the viability of the loan including the provision of appropriate environmental conditions, and the required insurance and security standards.
- 5.4 All loans will be approved by the Cultural Services Manager.
- 5.5 Significant sized or valued Loans will be approved by EDLC board of directors.

## 6. INFORMATION & ENQUIRIES

- 6.1 The Museums Service undertakes to provide, as widely as possible, information about its facilities, services and collections.
- 6.2 Access to collections data for the general public will be available via the online catalogue. Where capacity allows, collections enquiries from other museums, researchers and the general public will be addressed by the museum staff.
- 6.3 Museum staff have a duty of care to protect sensitive or confidential collections information, in accordance with legal regulations. All public requests for information will be considered in terms of compliance with the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, Data Protection Act 2018, General Data Protection Regulation 2018, and the Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations 2004. Requests will be reviewed for confidential data, such as donor information, environmental information, or site details, on a case-by-case basis, and in accordance with applicable legislation and any legal agreements or conditions of gift.

## 7. LIMITATIONS

- 7.1 Access to the collections will be balanced against the care and management of collections.
- 7.2 The Museum is a Category A listed building, the Barony Chambers is Category B, and as such sometimes require specific consideration. Current and future building projects will take into consideration to provide appropriate physical access for all visitors. Expert advice will be sought wherever necessary.
- 7.3 Where physical access is problematic, alternative arrangements may be made to provide some experience of, or access to, the collections while balanced against the need for security and a duty of care for the collections (see Collections Care and Conservation Policy). Access to each venue can be restricted due to closures for exhibition change over, however it is endeavoured that only one venue is shut at a time.

- 7.4 Access is sometimes constrained by the necessity to work within available resources and financial limitations. The Museum Service will utilise an access plan, which will be regularly updated to ensure access issues are identified and addressed.

## Review Information

Review date: September 2023

Reviewed by Jennifer Binnie (Museums Collection Officer)

Approved by Esmee Smith (Heritage & Arts Team Leader)

Previous version: Access Policy (2015)

Next review date: September 2024

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<sup>i</sup> Museum Mission Statement section 1.1

<sup>ii</sup> <https://www.eastdunbarton.gov.uk/equality-and-human-rights> [accessed 2023-10-25]

<sup>iii</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents> [accessed 2022-09-14]