

RUSSELL-COTES



HOUSE • GALLERY • GARDEN



Access Policy

Access Policy

Agreed by [*ie Management Committee etc*] on [*Date*]

Review by [*ie 5 years after date*]

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1. Statement of general principles

- 1.1 The Russell-Cotes is committed to the widest possible access to its building, collections and experiences both on-site and online.
- 1.2 We understand that access needs are broad and diverse and can include physical, sensory, emotional, intellectual, cultural, attitudinal and financial needs.
- 1.3 We are committed to meeting diverse needs and embedding an inclusive approach throughout all strategic planning, recruitment (of Management Committee, staff and volunteers) and creative programming.
- 1.4 We will always seek to make appropriate and reasonable adjustments to improve access whilst balancing it with the safety of all our visitors and the security and conservation of our collections, interiors and building (see Collections Care and Conservation Policy).
- 1.5 Where access is not possible, we will create high quality alternatives. Conservation of the historic house and its collection for future generations is always the primary consideration (see Collections Care and Conservation Policy).
- 1.6 We will regularly review progress internally, through user groups and with specialist support (where needed) and monitor best practice.

2. Approach

- Inclusive
- Audience-led
- Collaborative
- Rigorous

3. Framework

- The Russell-Cotes complies with the provisions of the Equalities Act 2010
- The museum works within the BCP Council Equality and Diversity – Internal Governance Framework (See Appendix 1).
- The access policy and plan are informed by audience research and consultation, notably an access review conducted by DOTS Disability in June 2021.
- Access needs of all audiences are considered as part of all decisions taken.

4. Scope

The Policy and Plan cover access to:

- Collections
- Buildings

- Programmes & Activities
- People

5. Areas

We will:

5.1. Physical, sensory and intellectual access

- 5.1.1. Take measures to improve the physical accessibility to the site and around the garden and museum by improving services and signage, removing barriers and improving infrastructure whilst ensuring that the conservation of this Grade 2* listed historic house and the preservation of the unique historic atmosphere is maintained.
- 5.1.2. Wherever physical access is not possible, alternative means to access information and experiences will be provided in as stimulating, appropriate and varied way as possible such as pop-up exhibitions, video tours, digital access, information booklets.
- 5.1.3. Create a multi-sensory experience for everyone visiting the museum.
- 5.1.4. Ensure access for those with sensory impairments, in line with good practice guidelines eg subtitling all videos, providing large print text labels for all interpretation.
- 5.1.5. Provide a high-quality service for those with disabilities through training and awareness for FOH staff and volunteers.
- 5.1.6. Develop programming to meet the needs of those with specific impairments eg touch tours for those with visual impairments.
- 5.1.7. Ensure that our website meets the WCAG AA standards (www.w3.org/WAI/intro/wcag).
- 5.1.8. Provide information and interpretation to meet the needs of all audiences and to inform, entertain and inspire them – whatever their age, ability, and style of learning and engagement.
- 5.1.9. Ensure text used is tailored to the needs of their intended audiences, in line with the museum's style guide.
- 5.1.10. Provide effective wayfinding signage.
- 5.1.11. Ensure that the content and delivery of our learning programmes are tailored to the learning needs of their audiences.
- 5.1.12. Offer opportunities to individuals, schools, colleges, community groups and artists for learning and creativity.

5.2. Attitudinal Access

- 5.2.1. Ensure that our promotional activities present the museum as a welcoming, destination for people who are not regular museum visitors.
- 5.2.2. Ensure that visitors are made to feel welcome by staff and volunteers on arrival and during their whole visit and given the information and support they need to have an inspiring visit.
- 5.2.3. All front facing staff have appropriate training in customer care, diversity and disability awareness.
- 5.2.4. Welcome and support research visits to view collections or for professional development if suitable resources and supervision are available.

5.3. Cultural and Social Access

- 5.3.1. Make the museum, its interpretation and its programmes relevant, engaging, inspiring and welcoming to all visitors by working with our socially and culturally diverse communities and source communities and invite contributions to the interpretation of the collections and the understanding of their cultural significance.
- 5.3.2. Consult and collaborate with community partners to ensure that the museum, its displays, interpretation and programming respect, welcome and connect with visitors from diverse communities
- 5.3.3. Work with partners in the area
- 5.3.4. Work to diversify the demographic profile of staff and volunteers.

5.4. Economic Access

- 5.4.1. Ensure that our museum opening hours are convenient for the widest possible range of visitors.
- 5.4.2. Offer a flexible range of prices and ticket types where possible (while ensuring the museum's financial sustainability).
- 5.4.3. Offer occasional free access for specific audiences in line with the charitable objectives of the founders and museum objectives.
- 5.4.4. Offer concessions where possible, eg for carers, students and those on means-tested benefits.
- 5.4.5. Provide outreach programmes to schools and communities that find it difficult to meet the cost of travel to visit the museum and to reach new audiences.

5.5. Geographic Access

5.5.1. Provide a rich online experience accessible to all at www.russellcotes.com and on social media.

5.5.2. Provide object loans to other museums nationally and internationally.

6. Conservation and Limitations

6.1 The Museum is a Grade 2* listed building. It is a modest-scale Victorian house, with additional galleries. It has fragile painted historic interiors with furniture, paintings, sculptures and objects on open display.

6.2 Access to the museum and its collections is balanced against the need for security and a duty of care for the collections, interiors and building (see Collections Care and conservation Policy).

6.3 We recognise that the nature of the nature of the museum can sometimes make access particularly challenging eg level access, wheelchair access, light levels etc.

6.4 The impact of visitors on the fragility of the house will be monitored (see Conservation Policy and Plan).

6.5 Access to human remains in the collection will only be allowed in compliance with the recommendations of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport's (DCMS) Guidance for the Care of Human Remains, 2005.

Equality and Diversity – Internal Governance and Delivery Framework

Strategic Direction

Equality Action Commission

Role and purpose

An independent working group set up to review effective and long-term inclusivity and engagement primarily with our Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic, customer, residents, staff and visitors

Strategic Equality Leadership Group

Who are they?

- Chief Executive (Chair)
- Cabinet Spokesperson for Equalities
- Chief Operations Officer
- Director of Customer & Business Delivery

What do they do?

Help ensure the Council is meeting its Public Sector Equality Duty by:

- championing the equality, diversity and inclusion agenda across the council and embedding equality in organisational activities
- agreeing and supporting delivery of the Council's Equality Action Plan and supporting policy
- agreeing equality performance measures and targets to improve and monitor progress across the council and in the community
- working with and identifying new opportunities to work with partner organisations, community groups, individuals and representatives from across the BCP council area to improve relations in the community
- reviewing, reviewing and responding to staff and staff network groups, workplace issues and concerns

To present or address specific issues:

- Leader of the Council
- Non administration group member
- Trade Union Representative
- Equality and Diversity Policy Lead
- Staff Network representative
- Community Equality Champion representative
- Equality Action Commission representative

Implementation Groups

Service Unit Equality Champions

Who are they?

- Service Unit representatives, agreed with the Service Director as a recognisable E&D point of contact for the service

What do they do?

- Help ensure that Service Units discharge their responsibilities as defined in the Equality Act 2010
- Attend quarterly E&D meetings and EIA panel meetings
- Report/feedback updates and learning from equality meetings to their service unit
- Keep up to date and share own learning on major E&D issues
- Communicate and help embed E&D policy and procedure in all their service unit activities
- Support/undertake equality impact assessments for service decisions or policy changes
- Monitor and report E&D activity and performance in the service unit
- Ensure equality target/sets are included in service plans
- Make representation to Strategic Leadership Groups as required

Staff Network Groups

Who are they?

- Staff representatives for protected groups

What do they do?

- Provide a safe place for the discussion of issues
- Help to raise awareness of issues within the wider organisation
- Provide a source of support for individual staff who may be facing challenges at work
- Offer a collective voice for the workforce to management
- Make representation to Strategic Leadership Groups as required
- Maintain close communication links with HR
- Set up and maintain communication channels within group
- Understand and contribute to HR policy and procedures

Community Equality Champions

Who are they?

- Officers with a community/role/community safety officers

What do they do?

- Provide a link between Council and groups in community
- Act as a two-way communication channel
- Bring community concerns into the organisation
- Take Council initiatives into the community and promote engagement, participation and consultation

Corporate Support

Policy and Research

- Co-ordinate Strategic Equality Leadership Group and Equality Forums (4 times a year minimum)
- Horizon scan, provide guidance and advice, develop corporate policy and procedure
- Undertake consultation, research and source intelligence

HR

- Provide employee relations support and training

Legal

- Provide legal advice on E&D matters

Communications and Marketing

- Promote E&D activity and events

Index of Documents

- (1) Forward Plan
- (2) Action Plan
- (3) Risk Assessment of Security (*Confidential*)
- (4) Emergency Plan (*Confidential*)
- (5) Collections Development Policy
- (6) Documentation Policy and Plan
- (7) Disposals Plan
- (8) Documentation Procedure
- (9) Loans Policy
- (10) Collections Care and Conservation Policy
- (11) Collections Care and Conservation Plan
- (12) Audience Development Plan
- (13) Access Policy**
- (14) Access Plan
- (15) Interpretation Strategy
- (16) Exhibition Policy