

# Carmarthenshire Museums

## Access Policy Statement

### (2017-2022)

Governing Body:  
Carmarthenshire County Council

Approval date: month 2017

Review date: month 2020



## **STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

Our vision is to develop exceptional places that preserve and create community memories and inspire wonder, exploration and connectivity with Carmarthenshire's rich heritage and culture.

Our mission is to preserve collections and provide accessible, inclusive, exciting, sustainable services, which promote and facilitate learning, culture, heritage, tourism, regeneration, information, well-being and leisure.

We do this by:

- Caring for and interpreting our collections and historic sites to support discovery, enjoyment and learning.
- Playing an important role in the cultural, economic and social life of the county, and the health and well-being of its residents.
- Celebrating Carmarthenshire and its communities, promoting civic pride and developing a sense of cultural identity, as well as building respect and understanding of others.
- Valuing professionalism, employing experts to deliver services, and promoting opportunities for volunteers to improve and share their specialist knowledge and skills.
- Contributing to the county's tourism economy, creating places where people want to visit and stay.
- Contributing to the knowledge economy by creating and disseminating knowledge through exhibitions, displays, public learning and events, research, and publications.
- Increasingly operating in a digital environment, making collections and information available on line and providing platforms for user-generated content.

## **OUR DEFINITION OF ACCESS**

This Access Policy Statement guides Carmarthenshire Museums' approach to providing access to its collections and associated information.

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

## **OUR COMMITMENT TO ACCESSIBILITY**

Carmarthenshire Museums are committed to providing the widest possible access to museums, collections and services for enjoyment, learning, and research within the constraints necessarily imposed by available resources, as well as consideration for the conservation and security of collections.

This policy has been informed by Carmarthenshire County Council's Strategic Equality Plan 2016-2020, which outlines how the Council will meet its responsibilities under the Equalities Act (2010) and Welsh Language Measure (2011).

Our policy is to build accessibility into everything we do. Our commitment is long term and our policy is to make continuous improvements through a process of audit and review to address access issues, as resources permit.

Our commitment to accessibility extends to staff, volunteers and work placements as well as visitors. We are committed to ongoing training in access issues for staff and volunteers.

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 service. This includes the needs of the elderly and of people caring for young children. Where physical access poses severe challenges (for example, in museums operating from listed historic buildings), alternative arrangements will be made to provide some experience of that part of the collection or service for visitors.
- **Sensory** – to enable visitors with impaired vision or hearing to enjoy and appreciate the museum's buildings, exhibitions and collections.
- **Intellectual** – to enable people with learning difficulties to engage with and enjoy the museum and its collections. To recognise that people learn in different ways and provide interpretation to suit a range of learning styles.
- **Cultural** – to provide all information in Welsh and English; to enable those for whom neither Welsh nor English is a first language, or whose knowledge of Welsh or British history and culture may be limited.
- **Emotional and attitudinal** – to ensure that the museums' environment and workforce are welcoming to all visitors.
- **Financial** – we will take into account that ability to pay can be a barrier to access and offer opportunities for those on lower incomes to access the service, including free admission and free events.

## **MUSEUM BUILDINGS**

We aim to provide equal access to Carmarthenshire County Museum, Parc Howard Museum, the Museum of Speed and our facilities for all visitors. It must be appreciated that some of our venues are listed buildings and therefore some physical adaptations are impossible or very difficult to undertake. Nevertheless we are continually working towards improving the facilities available to visitors and will actively try to make collections accessible, even when our buildings are not, through a policy of bringing the collections to people who have limited mobility or physical disabilities.

## **ACCESS TO COLLECTIONS**

Our staff are committed to increasing public access to the collections and information and to increasing knowledge and understanding of Carmarthenshire's cultural heritage.

We will aim to increase the ways people access collections through physical improvements to displays, lighting and ways information is presented. We will also explore other methods, such as extending opening times, loans to other institutions, displays in other settings such as libraries, exhibitions, handling sessions, outreach activities, and events.

To increase access to collections not on permanent display we offer behind-the-scenes tours, changing exhibitions, and provide digital content for the People's Collection, Art UK, and Stordy Digidol. Access will be balanced with the need to care for the collections, security and by the current state of collections information.

We will improve the levels of information and interpretation available to suit a wide range of audiences and abilities, ensuring all written material is presented clearly in Welsh and English.

## **ACCESS TO LEARNING**

We will provide inspiring and engaging learning opportunities for different audiences and tailor our programme to the needs of specific groups. We will be proactive in identifying underrepresented audiences and, through partnerships with educational and community organisations and initiatives such as Fusion, ensure our activities continue to improve to be enjoyed by the widest possible audiences.

## **ACCESS TO VISITOR SERVICES**

Our Museum Attendant team will receive an induction guided by corporate standards and attend regular training to ensure all visitors receive a warm welcome and offered assistance when appropriate. Our aspiration over the next two years is to increase volunteering opportunities within the galleries to help visitors connect with, learn about and enjoy collections.

We will consider the comfort of our visitors through efforts to improve the quality and accessibility of our toilets; baby changing facilities; access for pushchairs; seating throughout the museums; retail facilities; and availability of refreshments.

We have built improvements to signage, orientation tools and information provided in accessible formats into our 5-year museum development plan.

## **ACCESS TO COMMUNICATION**

We will promote our activities and events using accessible means of communication and in Welsh and English formats. This will include the development of the Museum Service's first website, which will meet web accessibility standards.

We will identify and provide a range of ways people can communicate with us, including making material in alternative formats available on request.

We will evaluate our services and ensure they meet the provision of this policy. In the case of new developments we will consult experts, users and non-users as relevant.