

Access Policy

REVISION	REVISION DATE	OWNER	REFERENCE	COMMENT
00	October 2013	Director of Public Engagement	COL-POL-026	New policy to meet Accreditation requirements
01	May 2017	Visitor Services Manager c/o Access Champion	RA-POL-003	Review following 2016 Access Audit
03	May 2019	HVO	RA-POL-003	Reviewed
04	Nov 2021	HVO	RA-POL-003	Reviewed

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Policy Statement

It is part of our ethical duty to do all we can, within the limits of our buildings and affordability, to make our collections, physical or digital, on display and in store, accessible and comprehensible as many people as possible. We recognize that there are many barriers to access at all levels, particularly with a collection of arms and armour, but are committed to removing as many of these barriers as our resources allow, including access to buildings, collections, events, exhibitions, learning; for our staff, volunteers and visitors.

This policy will guide the approach of Royal Armouries to the provision of such access; it applies to all staff, volunteers and third party companies operating within our remit.

User Needs

We understand that different users have different needs and recognise that there are many potential barriers to access. We are committed to offering an inclusive service to all of our users.

There are a number of key barriers to access that we aim to overcome, we have identified key areas of focus below:

- Physical – we will seek to enable people with physical disabilities, the elderly and those caring for others, to access and enjoy sites, services, collections and information
- Sensory – we will seek to enable those with limited sight or hearing to access information using alternative sensory experiences or media
- Intellectual – we acknowledge that different people have different learning styles and abilities and we will take this into account when interpreting our collection
- Cultural – we will seek to reflect the cultural and social diversity of our audiences through our programmes
- Financial – wherever possible we will seek to minimise financial barriers to the use of sites and collections

Access Strategy: Objectives and Forward Plan

Royal Armouries is committed to identifying, evaluating and addressing access issues and will be guided by the outcomes of access audits, user/non-user consultation and work with local advocacy groups.

Royal Armouries will seek to deliver this policy by:

- Complying with the relevant legislation and ethical guidelines (see below)

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- Embedding access into the objectives in the Royal Armouries Strategic Plan
- Creating an Access Specific Action Plan outlining specific needs and projects (as resources allow), with named individuals responsible for realising these aims and a schedule for their implementation. (This working document is located in: G:\05.7 PEG\Access\Access Group)
- Offering disability awareness training for all staff, volunteers and relevant 3rd party contractors
- Continuing RA's 'Dementia Friendly' status through staff awareness and training
- Working with local Access Panels including the Historic Royal Palaces Tower Access Panel to improve access at our sites
- Ensuring that contractors, consultants and outside agencies, working for or with RA, comply with our policies
- Providing websites and other digital services that conform to Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0 AA standards
- Publishing access information relating to each of our sites on our website
- Promoting exhibitions, events and published research relating to the Royal Armouries and its collections by Royal Armouries staff and others; and doing so through a variety of free and paid for media channels
- Granting access to collections and associated information, including images, for the purposes of private study, non-commercial research and education (see the *Collections Access Policy*)
- Considering loans of objects from the collections for the purpose of temporary exhibition, long-term display, research or scientific analysis
- Continuing to improve onsite orientation through accessible signage and written material such as guides and maps in a number of different formats and accessible fonts
- Interpreting collections using a range of different methods, including new technologies and adopting best practise guidance with exhibition text and interactives.
- Developing a more comprehensive interpretive experience for people using predominantly audio and tactile communication
- Ensuring new galleries, exhibitions and activities are inclusive as possible, using a recent access audit for recommended changes.

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- Delivering a programme of educational activities and producing learning materials for both formal and informal learning; to suit a range of incomes, and where possible provide activities free of charge

Limits to Access

- The Tower of London and Fort Nelson are both Scheduled Ancient Monuments, with some consequent physical access restrictions (film of other floors of the White Tower is provided in the basement, which is accessible by lift)
- There are restrictions on access to certain parts of the collections, particularly at the National Firearms Centre, due to the nature of the objects and the controls imposed by UK Legislation and guidance received from the Home Office and the Police
- Unaccompanied children (under 16 years of age) will not be admitted to Royal Armouries sites
- Access to the collections will be balanced with the need to preserve and care for them (see *Collections Care & Conservation Policy*)
- Access to the collections may be affected by the current state of collections information (see *Records Management and Information Policy*)
- Access to site, services, collections and information may be affected by the availability of funding and resources

Legislation, Standards and Ethics

Royal Armouries will adhere to legislation and ethical guidelines relating to access, including:

- Equality Act 2010
- Disability Discrimination Act 2005 (replaced by the Equality Act 2010)
- Public Records Acts 1958
- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Copyright Acts
- Code of Ethics for Museums (Museums Association)
- ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums (International Council of Museums)
- Accreditation Scheme for Museums and Galleries in the United Kingdom (Arts Council)
- Ethical Guidelines 4 – Access (Museums Association)

Other Policies and Guidelines

This policy should be read with reference to the following Royal Armouries documents:

- Equality and Diversity Policy

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- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Education Policy
- RA Ethics Policy
- Customer Care Policy
- Access and Use of the Collections Policy
- Collections Care and Conservation Policy
- Loans In Policy
- Loans Out Policy
- Data Protection Act Policy
- Freedom of Information Act Policy
- Records Management and Information Policy
- Information Security Policy
- Copyright Policy
- Printed Interpretation Design and Artworking Guidelines
- Gallery Design and Interpretation 3d Design Guidelines
- Website Accessibility Statement

Risk

The associated risk of non-compliance of this policy is:

Impact of non-compliance: MEDIUM

Likelihood of non-compliance: LOW

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