



Royal Pavilion & Museums, Brighton & Hove

## **Access Policy Statement 2017 – 2020**

### **Introduction**

Royal Pavilion & Museums (RPM) is committed to, and believes, that all people and sectors of the community have a fundamental right to engage with, use and enjoy the collections and services it provides. We recognise that there are many barriers to access but are committed to making all aspects of our activities as fully accessible and inclusive as our resources allow, including access to buildings, collections, events, exhibitions, learning and engagement - and to our staff and volunteers as well as visitors.

RPM is committed to increasing public access to collections and information associated with those collections, to increase knowledge and understanding of the items the Service holds and the cultural heritage of Brighton & Hove.

### **Vision, Mission and Objectives**

RPM's vision is to build a resilient organisation, outstanding for its vibrancy and relevance, renowned for its digital innovation, and inspiring a powerful sense of shared ownership. Our work will be driven by creative collaborations with our local communities and partner organisations to reach new and more diverse audiences.

In achieving this, our museums will have meaningful and dynamic roles relevant to, and supporting the needs of, diverse audiences including local citizens, national and international visitors, and online users.

RPM's mission is to use its unique buildings, collections and knowledge to connect people to the past and help them understand the present in order to positively influence their future.

We aim to inspire, illuminate and challenge our visitors and virtual users. We do this by caring for and interpreting our outstanding collections and historic sites to support discovery, enjoyment and learning.

RPM aspires to help people to contribute to a socially just and environmentally sustainable future while making Brighton & Hove a fantastic place to live, work and visit.

The Objectives for our 2017-20 Service Plan are:

- Connecting people to museums to change lives; supporting learning, well-being and creativity through programmes; and transformation of spaces into environments for 21st Century learning.
- Developing and caring for cultural resources for present and future generations.
- Building a co-operative, sustainable and resilient organisation that supports the wider sector.
- Developing and engaging with staff across the Service to deliver change.

### **Policy context**

RPM will adhere to all national and international statutes of law, including specifically in relation to access, but not exclusively the Equality Act 2010, Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998.

As a Local Authority Museum Service, RPM's Access Policy Statement is consistent with Brighton & Hove City Council's Equality and Diversity Policy Statement and Strategy (2017), and it's Corporate Plan 2015-19. The Council's current objective under the Equality Act 2010 is to achieve excellence in its equality practice by 2020, as measured by the Equality Framework for Local Government. This objective covers all aspects of its work, all its services and everyone protected by the law.

Brighton & Hove City Council is also committed to meeting its Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010, which requires the Council to show how it has paid conscious attention to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out all of its activities. Furthermore, in 2015 an independent Fairness Commission was set up to explore how to make Brighton & Hove a fairer and more equal place to live and work. The findings of the Commission influence how the Council's budgets are spent 2015-19 to tackle inequality and increase opportunities.

We will follow national standards, ethical codes and best practice guidelines concerning equalities and inclusion.

### **Types of access**

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

To eliminate and reduce barriers and ensure equality of access we will consider the following aspects of accessibility to our services and collections:

- Physical: enabling people with physical disabilities, the elderly and those caring for young people to reach and appreciate every part of the Service, its buildings and its collections.
- Sensory: to build into all aspects of the Service's activities a wide range of different sensory experiences. This encompasses interpretation accessible to those with limited sight or hearing.
- Intellectual: we acknowledge that people have different learning styles and we will provide interpretation taking into account people's varied needs and preferred learning styles by adopting clear interpretive guidance.
- Cultural: we acknowledge and recognise cultural differences, including language, and seek to represent varied cultural experiences and issues through our programmes, exhibitions and events, offering them in various languages where possible and appropriate.
- Emotional / Attitudinal: to ensure that all visitors feel welcomed and valued.
- Financial: we will aim to recognise and minimise financial barriers to the use of sites and the collections, and associated activities products and commercial facilities, wherever possible

### **How RPM will deliver the policy**

Brighton & Hove City Council's Equality and Diversity Policy Statement and Strategy sets out five areas of focus:

- Open and equitable services
- Inclusive employer
- Services that understand our diverse population
- Strong and fair leadership
- Effective partnership working to reduce inequality

RPM will actively contribute to the promotion of equality and inclusion in all five areas in a number of ways including but not limited to:

- Carrying out Equality Impact Assessments of our services, sites and projects.
- Further developing our community engagement and outreach activity; building on our commitment to establish a diverse volunteer base and to making volunteering opportunities as accessible and responsive as possible to the different needs of our volunteers; and extending targeted volunteering pathways for harder to reach groups.
- Ensuring varied and sustainable access to collections and that any competing demands of access and long term care of collection items will be managed in accordance with the outcomes of a collections care risk assessment.
- Providing welcoming staff and treating all visitors with equal respect, and addressing the comfort, ease and safety of all visitors.

- Promoting our sites, activities and collections – and providing information and signage - using accessible means of communication.
- Adopting best practice guidance for interpretation including exhibition texts and interactives.
- Consideration of varied audience needs and learning styles in programme planning including events, and informal and formal learning on- and off-site.
- Consideration of access issues, barriers and priorities at each of RPM’s five sites through their individual Site Development Plans with appropriate action plans; and providing an Access Statement for each of our sites.
- Continuing regular consultation with our audiences and non-users to ensure the broadest possible access to our facilities, services and collections. We will ensure that contractor, consultants and outside agencies working for, or with LMG adopt and observe our access policies.

This Access Policy Statement links to the following RPM documents:

- Collections Development Policy (2013)
- Community Engagement Strategy (2013)
- Manifesto (2016)
- Audience Development Strategy (2017)
- Equalities Action Plan (2017)
- Interim Forward Plan (2017)
- Staff Learning & Development Plan (2017)
- Volunteer Policy (2017)

RPM’s Leadership Team will be responsible for the implementation of this Policy Statement. It will be reviewed every three years.