

MJM Access Policy and Plan 2022 - 2026

Introduction

Manchester Jewish Museum is committed to maximising access for everyone, regardless of ability, age, gender, cultural or social background, sexual orientation, faith, language, location or wealth, by minimising or removing barriers that can prevent people from engaging with our buildings, collections, website, social media channels, programmes and staff.

We do everything that we can, within the limitations of our building and resources, to offer the widest, richest, most engaging access for all our users. The museum recognises that access is a complex issue that must be addressed through the actions of the organisation as a whole, and that access provision benefits everyone, not just those with specific needs.

This policy and plan have been developed in consultation with audiences as part of the museum's recent development project. An Access Assessment took place in 2022, bringing together the work which was done throughout the development project with audiences, consultants and other stakeholders between 2017 and 2022.

This policy and plan covers the period 2022 to 2026 and will be reviewed in April 2026.

Scope

This policy covers provision at Manchester Jewish Museum, through our website and other online activities, and in other venues where we deliver outreach programmes, e.g. schools, community venues and so on. This policy relates to access by our users and does not cover access in relation to staff, volunteers, freelancers or contractors.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set out the museum's commitment to maximising access and to identify the ways in which we achieve this across the organisation.

Definition of Terms

When we refer to **Access**, we mean the opportunity to engage with our building, collections, content and expertise. We recognise that there are a number of key barriers to access:

Attitudinal – Some people may have a lack of interest in, or awareness of, the museum and the subjects and issues it deals with, or our programmes and services.

Intellectual – Some people may struggle to understand the museum's approach to subjects and how they are presented; some may have learning disabilities which affect their ability to engage with the museum; and some may not be able to read or speak English.

Cultural – Some people may feel that the museum is not relevant to them and does not reflect their cultural or social heritage, or their interests.

Economic – Some people may not be able to afford to visit the museum or take part in our programmes.

Geographic – Some people will live too far away to visit the museum.

Physical/sensory – Some people with physical disabilities, limited mobility, or hearing or visual impairments may not be able to access the museum, our website, social media channels or programmes.

Technological – Some people may not have access to the internet or a mobile phone and may lack the skills to access digital content.

Responsibilities

The CEO and the Board of Trustees are responsible for ensuring that the museum meets its obligations under the Equality Act (2010) by doing everything reasonably possible to make the museum accessible to the widest range of people.

The Senior Management Team are responsible for ensuring that the work of their colleagues takes into account the need to maximise access by addressing the barriers outlined above.

Every member of staff involved in developing, delivering or maintaining spaces, activities, resources and other services for our users is responsible for making them as accessible as possible and providing parity of experience wherever possible.

Access Plan

An Access Assessment took place in 2022 and was used as the basis for this plan.

We are committed to maximising access to our building, our collections and our programming via the following actions which the access assessment found either to be in place or actioned for development:

Physical Access:

- Lift access is available.
- A wheelchair is available free of charge.
- Free on-street parking exists directly in front of the museum entrance.
- All programming is designed with access in mind from the outset.
- Where possible, we don't programme activity in inaccessible areas of the museum, and if we do, parity of experience is provided for audiences with physical access needs.
- Accessible seating is provided for all events and activities.
- Seating is provided throughout the museum for use by all visitors.
- Information about physical access to the museum is available on our website and contact information is provided so that visitors can ask questions or request arrangements ahead of their visit.
- Up to date information on the closest public transport stops and stations is listed on our website.
- Our Welcome Desk is always staffed and a Duty Manager available to assist visitors or offer advice.
- Free 'Personal Assistant' tickets are provided for anybody who needs to be accompanied for access reasons.

- Accessible toilets are available on both floors.
- Baby change facilities are available on both floors.
- A highchair is available in the café free of charge.
- We provide physical access to our collections through our galleries, exhibitions and programming and researchers can access the collection by appointment in our new Archive Store.
- Access consultants were consulted as part of the development project to ensure the new museum is as accessible as possible in terms of physical access and the other access categories listed below.

Sensory Access:

- Assistance Dogs are welcome.
- Staff and Volunteers are trained to support visitors with sensory needs – an access training needs review will be carried out regularly.
- Transcriptions are available for all audio content on gallery.
- Large print versions of object labels are available.
- Wherever possible, any video content created will have subtitles. A further commitment has been made to ensure capacity and resources are provided to enable this to happen more reliably in future and we will regularly review our success in this area and make changes as needed.
- All fonts used are chosen for their accessibility.
- Our website has been designed to be as accessible as possible. There is a screen reader and users can adjust settings such as size of text, contrast and spacing.

Intellectual Access:

- All text used in our galleries, exhibitions, resources, publications, website and social media channels is designed to be as accessible as possible.
- Signage and wayfinding are designed to be as easy to understand as possible.
- Programming is delivered by skilled facilitators who will adapt content to suit the needs of audiences with diverse learning styles and needs.
- Our website has a 'dyslexia friendly' setting.
- We advertise a 'quieter visit' time for visitors who prefer a less stimulating visit.
- Consultation is currently under way with representatives of our diverse local communities to identify languages which information should be provided in. An introductory guide to the museum will be provided in these languages later this year (2022) once this consultation has been completed.

Attitudinal Access:

- The museum building, staff and volunteers exemplify our welcoming values. We are aware that visiting our museum can be daunting and we do everything we can to make visitors feel welcomed and comfortable.
- Our marketing and communications activities are exciting and engaging and are designed with potential visitors in mind – especially those who might feel that the museum is not for them.

Cultural Access:

- Through the 'Scratch' process, we co-create our work with our diverse audiences, making our programmes more obviously relevant and useful to our target audiences.
- Through our universal themes of Journeys, Communities and Identities we help visitors to draw parallels between their own cultural or religious identities and the Jewish stories we share.

Economic Access:

- We provide free entry to the museum for local residents with an M8 postcode.
- We provide discounted concession tickets to the museum and to our events for young people, students, older people, unwaged people and those with disabilities.
- A family ticket is available and is as flexible as possible to reflect diverse family structures.
- Pricing of all events, activities and products is carefully considered to balance our commitment to access with our needs to be a sustainable museum.

Geographic Access:

- We are committed to creating engaging and accessible digital content through our website, social media and other communication channels.
- Development of all new programming includes consideration of whether inclusion of a digital element is possible.
- We are currently exploring ways to make more of our collection available digitally. Our success in this area will be reviewed regularly.
- We will continue to explore loans that enable people from further afield to access items from the museum's collection.

Technological Access:

- When requested and where possible we are happy to provide physical copies of otherwise digital content such as newsletters etc.
- Programming is developed and delivered with the fact that not everybody has access to certain technologies in mind.

This list of actions will be reviewed regularly to ensure we are continuing to fulfil our commitment to make our museum as accessible as possible and will include consultation with representatives of stakeholder groups. The full access policy and plan will be reviewed at least every five years.

Collections Access

We are committed to making our collections as accessible as possible whilst at the same time maintaining our commitment to the highest standards of collections care. All programming and collections staff are trained in safe object handling techniques, allowing us to provide visitors with regular close contact with the collection safely. Where close contact with important items is not achievable, high quality facsimiles are produced where possible.

The following methods of interpretation are used to connect people with our collection:

- Display of objects in our galleries
- Performative and participatory programming linking to objects and stories from our collection
- Interactive sessions for schools and other booked groups

- Direct access to the collection for researchers through our new purpose built archive space
- Volunteer Guides are in place in our galleries and synagogue to interpret the collections and help provide context
- Creation of digital content through the museum's website, social media channels and youtube

We are working towards making as much of our collection as possible available digitally through our website or a purpose built portal in future and consultation is currently taking place to decide the best method for achieving this aim.

Any enquiries about the collection and requests for access can be directed to curator@manchesterjewishmuseum.com. An enquiry form is available on our website which allows researchers to request access to the collection and make an appointment to use the research space in the archive.

Inclusive Access

Our new galleries were designed using the principle of Inclusive Access. Inclusive Access is defined as:

- Creating a welcoming and positive experience for all
- Is consistent, but not uniform
- Removes physical, sensory and other barriers to our content and spaces
- Maximises user independence
- Is intuitive to use
- Offers choice and flexibility
- Is based on consultation and experience, rather than assumptions about needs
- Uses best practice wherever possible

Related Policies, Legislation and Guidance

The Equality Act (2010) bans unfair treatment and helps achieve equal opportunities in the workplace and in wider society. The Act replaced previous anti-discrimination laws and covers nine protected characteristics which cannot be used as a reason to treat people unfairly – age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity/paternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The Act prohibits unfair treatment when providing goods, facilities and services, when holding public functions, in the management of premises, and in education.

A number of organisations provide specialist advice, in particular:

Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) – rnib.org.uk

Action on Hearing Loss – actiononhearingloss.org.uk

Mencap – mencap.org.uk

Web Accessibility Initiative – w3.org/WAI

The Museums Association's access guidelines provide a useful overview of museums' responsibilities to maximise access in the broadest sense - museumsassociation.org/policy/guidelines

Our new exhibition spaces draw on the following guidance:

- Wellcome Collection Guidelines for Accessible Exhibition Design
- V&A Graphic Design Guidelines
- The Science Museum Accessibility Toolkit
- Smithsonian Guidelines for Accessible Exhibition Design
- Building Regulations Approved Document Part M: Access and Use of Buildings Other Than Dwellings
- CIBSE Guide LG8: Lighting to Museums and Art Galleries (2015)

Additionally, all new members of museum staff are provided with information about access issues and regular training is provided.

Date signed off by museum trustees: 24.03.22

Date for review: 01.04.26