

Collections Access Policy

Name of museum:	Scottish Fisheries Museum
Name of governing body:	The Scottish Fisheries Museum Trust Ltd.
Date on which this policy was approved by governing body:	31 July 2023
Policy review procedure:	The collections access policy will be published and reviewed as appropriate and least once every five years.
Date at which this policy is due for review:	2028

1. Introduction

The Scottish Fisheries Museum 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. It recognises that there are many barriers to access but is committed to making all aspects of its activities as fully accessible as its resources allow, including access to buildings, collections, exhibitions, events, and learning activities.

This policy demonstrates the Scottish Fisheries Museum's commitment to providing access to the collections and associated information by:

- providing suitable facilities for public engagement with the collections;
- ensuring that any competing demands of access and long-term care of collection items are managed in accordance with the outcomes of a collection care risk assessment;
- providing welcoming staff and learning opportunities for different audiences;
- creating tailored resources to meet the needs of specific groups; and
- promoting all its activities and collections using accessible means of communication.

This policy forms part of, and is to be used in conjunction with, the Museum's Collections Management Policy Framework.

2. Aims of the Collections Access Policy

The aim of this policy is to provide a framework for maintaining and improving access to the Museum's buildings, facilities, displays, collections, associated information, staff, and knowledge. It does so by addressing the physical, sensory, intellectual, geographical, cultural, attitudinal, and financial barriers to access with the overall aim of achieving equality, diversity, and inclusion.

In implementing this policy, the Museum recognises the limitations of working within a rural setting, A-listed buildings, and finite human and financial resources.

3. Specific Ethical and Legislative Considerations

In providing access to our buildings, collections and services, the Museum will ensure that it complies with the following ethical guidelines and legislation:

- Museums Association Code of Ethics
- Disability Discrimination Act, 2005
- Equality Act, 2010
- PAS 197:2007 Code for cultural collections management.

4. Access Assessment

The Scottish Fisheries Museum will continue to assess, identify, and address access issues by means of internal checklists, access audits, analysis of feedback and working with advocacy groups in order to identify and remove barriers to access wherever possible. Our policy is one of continuous incremental improvement as resources allow.

Regular surveys are carried out with users including on-site surveys and the Museum actively encourages online feedback, both generally and via targeted user platforms such as Euan's Guide. Focus groups have been run with a range of audiences including teachers, families, young people, and adults. We have also worked with external consultants to gather feedback from users and non-users to inform our Audience Development Plan. Projects and programmes are evaluated using both qualitative and quantitative methods as appropriate, and the findings used to inform future actions.

5. User Needs

Our users include online audiences, local, national, and international visitors, members of fishing communities, academics, researchers, artists, families, students, teachers, life-long learners, volunteers, and staff. Our commitment to access is long-term and we aim to enable the widest possible spectrum of people to explore the collections in our care. In achieving this we will identify and take into account users' needs and will actively seek opportunities to engage people with the collections in creative and innovative ways.

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 and its collections;
- **Sensory:** acknowledging and meeting the needs of users with sensory impairments;
- **Intellectual:** recognising that people have different learning styles and abilities and taking an inclusive approach;
- **Geographical:** acknowledging that not all of our users can visit in person and making resources available remotely via digital and outreach activities;
- **Cultural:** recognising cultural differences and seeking to represent varied cultural experiences and issues through our programmes and exhibitions;
- **Emotional / Attitudinal:** ensuring that all visitors feel welcomed and valued;

- **Financial:** minimising or mitigating financial barriers to the use of our site and the collections wherever possible; and
- **Technological:** acknowledging that not all users have access to digital media and providing information in traditional formats.

6. Collections Access

In delivering its policy on access and maximising use of the collections, the Museum will:

- encourage members of all sectors of the community to access and use the collections through our online resources, and print and digital marketing;
- offer physical and/or intellectual access to collections that is appropriate to particular audiences through a diverse public programme of events, learning resources, guided tours, hands-on practical workshops, facilitated sessions, outreach, lectures and public talks, access to reserve collections, research facilities, and loans to other organisations;
- make active use of ICT to improve access through the creation of digital resources and the provision of on-site Wi-Fi;
- commit to providing long-term and temporary exhibitions on a range of topics drawn from the collections;
- actively work with users to include their viewpoints and experiences within our exhibitions and programmes;
- commit to working with disability and access advocacy groups to tailor resources to specific audiences;
- provide basic information in commonly used languages other than English;
- identify objects amongst the collections that can be handled unsupervised and use these to develop our learning collection;
- offer suitable facilities for the study and use of the collections; and
- be guided by sector standards and programmes including Museums Change Lives.

The Museum will ensure that the above aims are translated into actions in its strategic planning and Audience Development Plan. In particular, the Museum undertakes to maintain and build upon its current access provisions:

- our Access Guide is kept under review and is made available on the Museum website, alongside other resources aimed at improving access for all visitors;
- the Museum is fully accessible to wheelchair users either physically or visually. Sight lines of displays are suitable for wheelchair users;
- large print is used for labelling and text panels. Text panels are designed to provide high contrast between text and background. Matt finishes are used to avoid glare. Large print versions of labels are included in temporary exhibitions;
- text is presented at differing levels of complexity to assist intellectual access;
- pre-visit information and a sensory backpack tailored to the needs of neurodivergent visitors and their families is provided;
- information is presented via a range of media including tactile, audio, visual and interactive media to encourage multi-sensory and interactive learning;
- basic information is translated into languages other than English in response to the needs of local communities and visitors;

- Audio Descriptions are being developed for objects on display for blind, partially sighted and visually impaired visitors, guided by Vocaleyes and other charities working in this field; and
- the Museum's interactive displays, communications and activity programmes will be improved for users with ASN, tapping into the resources developed by the ASN community, Autism in Museums, and Kids in Museums among others.

7. Loans

The underlying objective of the Museum's loans activity is to lend objects from the collections to ensure that they are used as fully as possible and available for the benefit of all. Through this activity, we intend to assist others to prepare more comprehensive displays, to broaden learning provision and to provide access to items from the Museum's collections that which would otherwise remain in storage. We will also lend items in order that research can be undertaken that our own staff might not be able to carry out.

To safeguard the collections, we will ensure that the Museum acts in a professional and responsible way when assessing loan requests, in accordance with the Collections Documentation Policy, Collections Care and Conservation Policy, legislation, sector guidelines and Spectrum Standards.

This Policy does not apply to items on loan for conservation purposes or to the loan of items from our learning collection or loan kits.

8. Learning

Learning is a core function of the Scottish Fisheries Museum. It is the Museum's policy to work to produce the best possible learning provision for all users, both in the Museum and elsewhere, endeavouring to develop services that reflect the diverse needs of all the community and are active, creative, enjoyable and interesting. We aim to:

- promote interest, curiosity, enjoyment and understanding of the collections through involvement and participation;
- develop the use of the Museum and its collections as resources for lifelong learning and for self-directed learners;
- ensure that planning for learning is incorporated in all museum projects;
- support the health and wellbeing of participants;
- exploit the potential of digital information and communication technologies to promote greater access to the collections and the history of commercial fishing; and
- provide all relevant staff with information and training in learning issues and practices.

In achieving this, the Museum will take into account current national initiatives and developments in the museums and learning/education sectors such as the Manifesto for Museum Learning and Engagement, Museums Association, 2020 and Space for Learning, The Clore Duffield Foundation, 2015

9. Research

The Scottish Fisheries Museum recognises the core function of research in underpinning its activities. It is committed to supporting research at all levels, both internal and external, and to making public the results of any research. The Collection is regularly accessed by external researchers to further the academic understanding of the development of the Scottish fishing industry. It is one of the Museum's key aims to be an internationally recognised research centre for Scottish fishing and heritage issues.

Research activity primarily involves study of the collections and associated information. It varies from collection investigation and assessment to in-depth studies on collections-related research topics. All types of research are undertaken with a view to benefitting a variety of outputs including enhanced object information, new exhibitions, public programmes, answering public enquiries and creating and improving online and published resources.

10. Public Services

The Scottish Fisheries Museum is committed to providing high quality facilities and resources that will deliver relevant, accessible, and enjoyable experiences to our visitors and other service users. We will take account of user feedback to develop and improve our services across all our public areas, as resources allow, reflecting visitor expectations and in line with VisitScotland criteria. We will provide a welcoming atmosphere to all users, offering a range of appropriate facilities for all the activities we support.