

Quick Access Checklist for Volunteer based Museums

(based on MLA Access for All Self-Assessment Toolkit)

Introduction

This checklist is not definitive; there are always more things organisations can do to improve their services and practices. What follows however is a series of questions for you to consider so your organisation is as positive as possible in serving the widest range of people.

Quick Checklist

1. Does your museum have a policy that relates to equality, people with a disability or people from a variety of backgrounds?
2. Are all volunteers aware of your access or equalities policy? How do you ensure this?
3.
 - a. Has the museum carried out a disability access audit?
 - b. Was it a self-completion exercise or did you commission experts ?
 - c. Did you involve or consult people with a disability in the audit ?
 - d. Did the audit include policies, public spaces, services, information and publicity, and volunteer recruitment and support ?
4. Have volunteers been given training or guidance on disability equality or awareness training ?
5. Are volunteers recruited openly so that people with a disability feel they could apply to volunteer in the museum? (eg through volunteer bureaux/advertising) Are there any barriers to people volunteering? If so, are they minimised?
6. Do you have volunteers who are disabled ? If so, are their specific needs accommodated as far as possible within the organisation and is suitable support provided from the management of the organisation? How do you know they are happy with the level of support you provide ?
7. Do you have visitors or groups of visitors who are disabled ? If so, are their needs reasonably accommodated ? How do you know they are happy with the level of service you provide ?
8.
 - a. Is all printed text in public literature and publicity written in plain English and of a size and style that makes it accessible to a wide range of people?
 - b. Do your publicity leaflets, etc include information about access for people with a disability?
9. Do you promote your service to a wide range of organisations and people, including people/organisations that support people with a disability?
10. Do you provide special services for people with a disability ?
11. If you have a website, does it meet recognised web accessibility standards or do you have plans to ensure it does ?
12. Does your museum have
 - Designated parking spaces nearby for people with a disability
 - Accessible toilets
 - Seating available in public areas
 - Emergency procedures to assist disabled people that is regularly tested
 - Obstacle free walkways and routes around the museum
 - Adequate colour and tone contrast to enhance orientation and visibility
 - Clear signs and guidance
 - Displays with a variety of ways to engage with collections – eg. tactile or hands-on displays, audio interpretation or large print/Braille labels

What to do next ?

Once you have answered the questions honestly,

1. Research

- Consult other volunteers in your organisation to see if they have different views
- Consult with or observe your visitors to see if they have different views
- If possible, and if you have not already done this, try to involve people with a disability in these consultations

2. Prioritise

- Develop a list of actions you think you should and could reasonably do as an organisation to improve your service where necessary
- Arrange them in priority order and establish resources, a timetable and a lead person to champion the work
- Ensure that, if the main trustee body has not already been involved in the process, they are aware of this area of work and support it fully

3. Undertake improvements

- Ensure that the list of agreed actions are understood and supported by all relevant people in your organisation
- Research how the improvements are best achieved using, if applicable, existing sources of advice including the MLA
- Undertake improvements
- Check they work for the benefit of people with a disability by consulting them again (and make any necessary adjustments)
- Celebrate your achievements either internally or with outside agencies whichever is most applicable

4. Review

- Review your equalities or access policy within an agreed timescale eg. every 5 years
- Ensure when you undertake visitor research or observation, you consider the needs of people with a disability too. Ensure any complaints and visitor comments inform this process too.
- Actively seek the views of your volunteers who have a disability to ensure that your volunteer staff are adequately supported
- At a regular time, eg. every 3-5 years, go through the checklist again to see what further improvements your museum can make to ensure all people can appreciate your displays, services and information.

Useful Resources

MLA Disability Portfolio – your museum should have received a copy of this in the past. The full MLA Access for All Toolkit is also now available on

http://swfed.org.uk/images/resources/Users_Visitors/access_for_all_toolkit.pdf