



‘ACCESS FOR ALL’ TOOLKIT

Enabling inclusion for museums, libraries and archives

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1. INTRODUCTION: THE 'ACCESS FOR ALL' TOOLKIT

This toolkit aims to help museums, libraries and archives make access for everyone an essential part of their culture and practice.

The Toolkit

- is a self-assessment tool for use in museums, libraries and archives and to promote access for all;
- enables the sector to audit good practice and identify areas for improvement;
- consists of a tool, *Access for All*, for measuring general accessibility, followed by additional checklists for specific groups;
- underpins MLA's *Inspiring Learning for All* framework, with each theme in this toolkit relating to one of its four principles: 1. People; 2. Places; 3. Partnerships; 4. Policies, Plans, Performance;
- can be used to provide evidence linked to the requirements of MLA's Museum Registration scheme;
- can be used to support other standards such as the Standard for Access to Archives;
- demonstrates a public library's commitment to the inclusive service envisaged in *Framework for the Future*;
- can be used to demonstrate the need for access improvements and to chart progress for funding and other purposes.

The *Access for All* Toolkit enables a museum, library or archive to examine goals and key factors which are essential for an organisation that aspires to include everyone. Once these have been assessed, areas for improvement can be identified and action points drawn up and monitored.

The general *Access for All* self-assessment exercise should be used first, to avoid repetition. Then move on to the additional checklists, which deal in greater depth with the requirements of particular groups of people.

The first two *Access Checklists* will be:

1. *Access for Disabled People*
2. *Access for People from Ethnic Minority Groups*.

Additional checklists, relating to the needs of other groups who may also experience barriers to accessing collections, services and facilities, will be added to the Toolkit in due course.

This toolkit has been produced by Caroline Lang building on the draft social inclusion toolkit developed for MLA, in 2003, by the Information and Management Research Institute (IMRI) at the University of Northumbria.

1.1 WHY USE THE ACCESS FOR ALL TOOLKIT?

There are many sound ethical, legal and business reasons for improving access for the widest possible audience and organisations themselves will benefit in many ways from doing this:

- it helps to promote equality of opportunity and social justice and to tackle social exclusion;
- legislation requires it, all organisations who provide a public service are subject to the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (see <http://www.disability.gov.uk/dda/>) and the general duty to promote racial equality under The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 (see <http://www.hmso.gov.uk/acts/acts2000/20000034.htm>);
- it also makes sense in terms of audience development and for economic reasons;
- accessibility is important to large numbers of potential users, for example there are an estimated 8.6 million disabled people in the UK, as well as many older people.

Individual organisations using the Toolkit will need to consider what the following mean for them:

Ethical principles – what the organisation considers to be the right thing to do.

Legal requirements – of the Race Relations Act, the Disability Discrimination Act, amongst others.

The 'business case' for improving access for everyone – being inclusive gives competitive advantages such as innovation, flexibility, funding and income generation opportunities and broader perspectives.

Using the *Access for All* self-assessment toolkit will enable organisations to develop effective strategies for examining current performance, identify areas for improvement and develop more accessible and inclusive policies and practices.

Each regional museum, library and archive agency has staff who support the development of access and learning. Your regional agency may offer training, networking and other opportunities to help museums, libraries and archives in using this Toolkit (see details of regional agencies at <http://www.mla.gov.uk/action/regional/regionsmap.asp>).

1.2 BARRIERS TO ACCESS AND INCLUSION

Research in all three domains shows that that our collections and services are currently under-used by identifiable groups of people, for example people from ethnic minorities, disabled people, young people and people on low incomes. Many museums, libraries and archives recognise that their regular users (both internal and external) and those who benefit most from their services are only a small proportion of the diverse population they would like to engage with.

Access and inclusion can be improved by identifying the barriers which prevent participation and developing strategies to dismantle them. Barriers may be physical, sensory, intellectual, attitudinal, cultural, social, financial, technological and so on. They are to do with such things as the culture and environment of the organisation and the perceptions of users and potential users, as well as more concrete factors.

By dismantling these barriers museums, libraries and archives can become places of enjoyment, learning and inspiration for many more people.

It is important to recognise barriers that may prevent some people from using the services of museums, libraries and archives.

This is a widely accepted list of the barriers faced by many people, with some questions relating to overcoming them.

Barriers*	Questions to consider
Physical / Environmental	Are buildings, stock and collections, activities, physically accessible to everyone? Is the building in the best location to meet everyone's needs? e.g. older people, wheelchair users, young children and carers, people living in isolated locations.
Sensory	Can they be used by people with hearing or visual impairments? What adjustments need to be made?
Intellectual	Do people who do not have extensive background knowledge or people for whom English is an additional language feel excluded? Can they be used by people with learning disabilities?
Cultural	Are the interests, life experiences and culture of the whole community reflected and represented?
Attitudinal	Is the museum, library or archive welcoming, especially to new users? Do people feel confident in using it? Do staff have an open attitude to diversity? Are we focusing on people - our users and potential users?
Financial	Do any charges made deter people on low incomes? Can families, pensioners, unemployed people and others on low incomes afford our services?
Technological	Does our use of ICT and new media, such as websites, facilitate access for everyone? Do we exploit new technology to enable greater access?

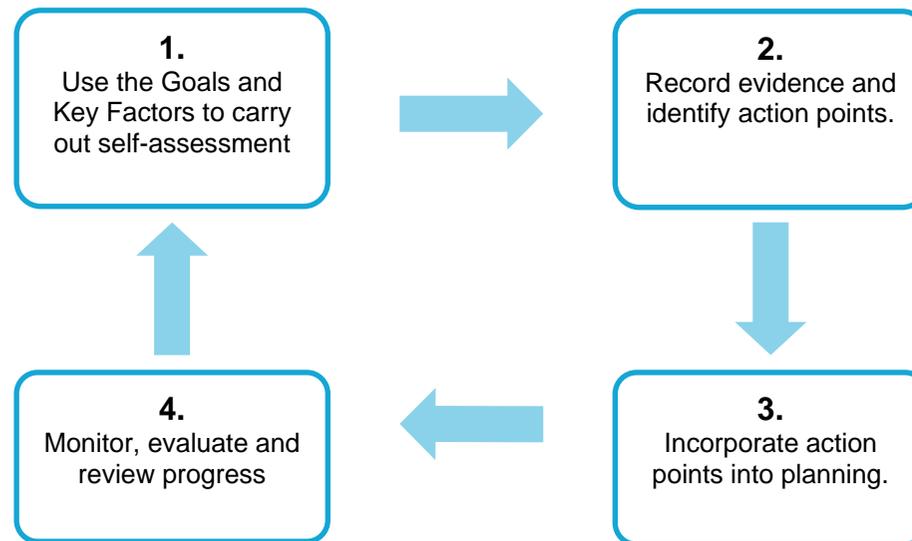
*see MLA's Disability Portfolio for ways to overcome physical, sensory, and intellectual barriers, in particular <see http://www.mla.gov.uk/action/learnacc/00access_03.asp>.

Access to the following is also crucial:

Access to	Questions to consider
Information	Are our services marketed effectively to all potential users? Do we provide equal access to all our resources? Is information provided in alternative formats, Plain English, community languages etc?
Decision-making	Are users and potential users consulted? Do we value their input and work in partnership to develop services and facilities that are wanted?
Employment	Do we follow employment law and actively promote equal opportunities in recruitment and staff development? How far does our workforce reflect the diversity of the community?

1.3 HOW TO USE THE TOOLKIT

An accessible organisation involves everyone, staff who deliver the service, volunteers, middle and senior managers. It is therefore preferable for the Toolkit to be completed by a range of people with a senior staff member taking overall responsibility. Completing the toolkit in this way is useful because of the process and involvement of people in doing this as well as for filling in the responses. It is suggested that a process similar to the one outlined below be adopted.



- The toolkit has 7 goals (what you want to achieve) and a series of key factors showing actions your organisation could be taking to achieve the goal.
- There are three options for responding to each statement: tick Y 'yes', WT 'working towards' or N 'no'. Score these 2,1, or 0. A self-assessment summary sheet is included on page 17.
- Note evidence for the responses as you go along, some examples are provided (you may want to clear these boxes, to provide more space, when you download the Word version of the toolkit for completion).
- When you have completed the toolkit add up the score, this can be used as a baseline for measuring improvement.
- With colleagues, identify areas for improvement and action points using the responses. A summary sheet is included on page 18.
- Keep a copy of the self-assessment to refer back to when reviewing progress.

The toolkit indicates where each goal relates to the four Principles from the *Inspiring Learning for All framework*. The toolkit can be used alongside it or independently. Learning Opportunities – formal and informal – provided by an organisation should be equally accessible to all users and potential users.

1.4 INTRODUCING THE THEMES AND KEY FACTORS

Each Section has:							
A Goal	Key Factors	Responses and Score			Evidence	Areas for Improvement	Action Points
		Yes=2 [Y]	Working Towards=1 [WT]	No=0 [N]			

There are many factors that contribute to being an accessible organisation. The Toolkit covers those which are thought to be essential.

An accessible organisation will:		See <i>Inspiring Learning for All</i> section
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> have an ethos that demonstrates respect, understanding and sensitivity towards the diverse needs of all users and potential users; 	Goal 1 Ethos	Policies Plans, Performance (Section 4)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> have a policy and planning process which outlines aims, objectives and practices relating to equal access; 	Goal 2 Policy and Planning	Policies Plans, Performance (Section 4)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> develop collections, stock and resources that take all users and potential users into account, seeking to engage their interest and celebrate diversity; 	Goal 3 Collections	Policies Plans, Performance (Section 4)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> actively consult a diverse range of users and potential users to ensure that services provided meet their needs; 	Goal 4 Users and Potential Users	People (Section 1)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> have marketing and publicity processes that identify and promote its collections and services to all users and potential users; 	Goal 5 Marketing and Publicity	People (Section 1 & 2)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure that its recruitment, retention and training supports service provision to all users and potential users; 	Goal 6 Staffing and Training	Places (Section 2)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> be outward looking, proactive and responsive in networking and forming links and partnerships with other domains, organisations and agencies. 	Goal 7 Partnerships and Networking	Partnerships (Section 3)

2 THE SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOLKIT

2.1 DETAILS OF ORGANISATION AND PEOPLE COMPLETING THE TOOLKIT

Name of Organisation:		
People completing Toolkit	Name	Role
	Lead:	
1 st Review date (e.g. Annually)		
Next Review date:		

2.2 SEVEN GOALS AND KEY FACTORS FOR ASSESSMENT

1: ETHOS (See *Inspiring Learning for All* Section 4, Policies, Plans, Performance)

Goal: An ethos that demonstrates respect, understanding and sensitivity towards the diverse needs of all users and potential users.						
Key Factors		Y=2	WT=1	N=0	Evidence	Areas for Improvement
This is demonstrated by :						
1.1	a mission/vision statement, agreed by the governing body, which specifically mentions commitment to access, diversity and inclusion				mission statement	
1.2	an internal culture and procedures that support and encourage the widest possible access and participation				consultation with and involvement of all staff; equal opportunities monitoring and training	
1.3	the active involvement and encouragement of senior management and/or the organisation's leaders and governing body or elected members				member of management team responsible for access issues gives regular briefings	
1.4	the active involvement of users and potential users				regular and ongoing consultation	
Action Points:						

2: POLICY AND PLANNING (see *Inspiring Learning for All* Section 4, Policies, Plans, Performance)

Goal:

A policy and planning process which outlines aims, objectives and practices relating to equal access.

Key Factors		Y=2	WT=1	N=0	Evidence	Areas for Improvement
The organisation has:						
2.1	a policy outlining aims and objectives relating to equality of access				policy document; business plan	
This policy and related plans address the following:						
2.2	meeting relevant legal duties, e.g. the Disability Discrimination Act, Race Relations Act, amongst others				programmes for meeting the requirements of relevant legislation	
2.3	the physical environment				location; buildings; facilities for disabled people	
2.4	the intellectual environment				language; labelling; interpretation; signage	
2.5	other potential barriers to users				staff training; representation of diverse communities; pricing; web accessibility	
2.6	resources to promote and support access for all				core or prioritised funding; a range of funding sources; appropriate staffing	
2.7	research / evidence-gathering relating to users and potential users				community profiling; surveys; awareness of the priorities of key local partners	
2.8	programmes, activities and events				appropriate input into event planning; education service provision; reader development activities	
2.9	periodic review				consultation with users; plans for sustainability	

Action Points

3: COLLECTIONS AND STOCK (see *Inspiring Learning for All* Section 4, Policies, Plans, Performance)

Goal: Collections/ stock/ resources that take all users and potential users into account, seeking to engage their interest and celebrate diversity.

Key Factors		Y=2	WT=1	N=0	Evidence	Areas for Improvement
The organisation has:						
3.1	a policy for collections/ stock/ resources that specifically addresses issues of access, diversity, inclusion and relevance				collections policy; stock policy	
The collecting/ stock selection policy:						
3.2	takes into account the diverse needs (including learning needs) of users and potential users				book stock in community languages; contemporary collecting; design and interpretation of exhibitions and displays	
3.3	provides for research into those aspects of stock and collections that represent different communities				increased representation of people from diverse backgrounds	
3.4	provides ways to engage all its users and potential users, promoting a sense of identity and affording opportunities to celebrate diversity				community participation in selecting material; events which appeal to a wide range of people	
Action Points						

4: USERS AND POTENTIAL USERS (See *Inspiring Learning for All* section 1, People)

Goal: To actively consult a diverse range of users and potential users to ensure that services provided meet their needs.

Key Factors		Y=2	WT=1	N=0	Evidence	Areas for Improvement
The organisation has:						
4.1	knowledge of the diverse profiles of users and potential users through a variety of quantitative and qualitative data				local authority statistics; census data; community profiling; surveys and focus groups of internal and external users	
4.2	an understanding and appreciation of the diverse nature of its users' and potential users' needs				feedback from consultation with ethnic minority community groups	
4.3	systems and structures that enable users' and potential users' participation				regular meetings of disabled users group	
4.4	a monitoring and evaluation process that focuses on outcomes for users				mechanisms to ensure that services provided meet the needs of users and potential users	
Action Points						

5: MARKETING AND PUBLICITY (See *Inspiring Learning for All* section 1, People)

Goal: Marketing and publicity which identifies, develops and promotes collections and services to all users and potential users.

Key Factors		Y=2	WT=1	N=0	Evidence	Areas for Improvement
The organisation's:						
5.1	marketing and publicity address access, inclusion and diversity issues				marketing plans	
Marketing and publicity deals with:						
5.2	identification of potential users				data on target audiences; market segmentation; mailing lists	
5.3	promotion of services to a broad range of users through a variety of media, talks, visits and outreach activities				contacts with community press, disability press and local radio; promotional material for outreach work	
5.4	increasing participation from groups who are under-represented in user profile				publicity material developed in consultation with minority groups, using alternative formats and community languages	
5.5	consultation with relevant local, regional and national bodies				Local Authorities; Learning and Skills Councils; community fora	
Action Points						

6: STAFFING and TRAINING (see *Inspiring Learning for All* section 2, Places)

Goal: To ensure that recruitment, retention and training supports service provision to all users and potential users.

Key Factors		Y=2	WT=1	N=0	Evidence	Areas for Improvement
The organisation has:						
6.1	a statement or policy about staffing and training that addresses access, diversity and inclusion issues				training and development policy; equal opportunities policy	
Staffing policy deals with:						
6.2	the role of Boards, Trustees, governing bodies				composition of governing body reflects diversity	
6.3	all staff, paid and voluntary				staffing profile reflects diversity of the community	
6.4	recruitment				job descriptions that promote awareness of access issues; appropriate placing of advertisements	
6.5	training and development				customer care; disability and racial equality training available to all staff	
6.6	retention and support				inclusive promotion and development opportunities; appropriate risk assessment and training opportunities	
Action Points						

7: PARTNERSHIPS and NETWORKING (see *Inspiring Learning for All*, section 3, Partnerships)

Goal: To be outward looking, proactive and responsive in networking and forming links and partnerships with other domains, organisations and agencies.

Key Factors		Y=2	WT=1	N=0	Evidence	Areas for Improvement
The organisation has a statement which:						
7.1	makes an active commitment to developing partnerships that promote access, diversity and inclusion				policy or statement	
7.2	actively develops partnerships within the community				a range of community partnerships with faith groups, voluntary and community organisations and elders' groups	
7.3	is proactive and responsive in forming links and partnerships within the sector at appropriate levels				a range of sector partners including other museums, libraries and archives, arts organisations, regional agencies and national bodies	
7.4	appreciates the value of engaging in links and partnerships with other organisations engaged in access and inclusion and integrating with their strategies				a range of external partners such as schools, colleges, local authorities, regional bodies, community groups, voluntary organisations and individuals	
Action Points						

2.3 SELF-ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

Goals and Key Factors		Response			Goals and Key Factors		Response		
		Y	WT	N			Y	WT	N
1. Ethos					5. Marketing and publicity				
1.1					5.1				
1.2					5.2				
1.3					5.3				
1.4					5.4				
2. Policy and Planning					5.5				
2.1					6. Staffing and Training				
2.2					6.1				
2.3					6.2				
2.4					6.3				
2.5					6.4				
2.6					6.5				
2.7					6.6				
2.8					7. Partnerships and Networking				
2.9					7.1				
3. Collections and Stock					7.2				
3.1					7.3				
3.2					7.4				
3.3									
3.4									
4. Users and potential users									
4.1									
4.2									
4.3									
4.4									

2.4 ACTION POINTS SUMMARY

Goals and Key Factors	By Whom	By When	Goals and Key Factors	By Whom	By When
1. Ethos			5. Marketing and publicity		
1.1			5.1		
1.2			5.2		
1.3			5.3		
1.4			5.4		
			5.5		
2. Policy and Planning			6. Staffing and Training		
2.1			6.1		
2.2			6.2		
2.3			6.3		
2.4			6.4		
2.5			6.5		
2.6			6.6		
2.7					
2.8			7. Partnerships and Networking		
2.9			7.1		
3. Collections and Stock			7.2		
3.1			7.3		
3.2			7.4		
3.3					
3.4					
4. Users and potential users					
4.1					
4.2					
4.3					
4.4					