



Access Policy Statement, 2019

Date for review: 2024

“John Wesley’s House & the Museum of Methodism is a place of pilgrimage, a resource centre, and a historic site which interprets history and social issues relating to Methodism and the work of John Wesley. It welcomes Methodist and non-Methodist visitors of all ages, creeds and race from the local, national and international community.”

In keeping with its mission statement, The Museum of Methodism and John Wesley’s House are committed to providing the widest-possible physical, intellectual, social, geographical and cultural access to its buildings and collections. Every user has different needs and our objects are held and displayed for the enjoyment and study for everyone regardless of age, education, income, residence, or personal circumstances.

The Access Policy Statement has been informed by the Curator’s Access and Facilities assessments. It has been written with reference to the heritage stewards, the Museum’s Board of Governance museum visitors and users by way of museum evaluation questionnaires. The policy is ‘open access’, i.e. it is published online on the Museum’s website and it is available for inspection in the Museum, together with the Visitor Charter, the Environmental Sustainability Policy and the Collections Development Policy. A copy is also available in the museum’s heritage stewards’ folder in the museum and in the museum Volunteer Handbook. The Access Policy Statement links closely with the Museum’s Access and Forward Plans.

The Museum aims to:

1. Provide good physical access to the site and collections. Visitors with additional physical needs are catered for by reducing barriers to entering the Museum (e.g. ramps, lift, disabled toilet). Collections are displayed at easy viewing heights with clear, easy-to-read panels, labels and reference guides. The Museum’s signage was reviewed and wholly re-developed in line with DDA guidelines in 2010/11 and the museum refurbished between 2012-16. Where possible, obstacles to physical access were identified and dealt with during the refurbishment works. Any building development and/or new displays will be organised in accordance with physical and intellectual access requirements. Museum opening times and special event details are easily accessible by the entrance gates, in publicity material, the visitor charter, the museum website and social media.

Whilst the museum, Chapel and toilets are fully accessible, the museum acknowledges that the grade I listed John Wesley’s House has some physical access restrictions.

2. Provide intellectual access to the Collections, encouraging the widest possible audience to study and enjoy the site. The museum wants everyone, visitors and non-visitors alike, to have access to scholarship and information about the collection by providing archive material not immediately accessible in the museum displays for further study on the Museum iPads, on the museum website, social media and relevant scholarly publications in the Museum shop.

Any display redevelopments will consider physical and intellectual access requirements, and how access for all can be improved.

3. Encourage visitors of all backgrounds and nationalities to visit, and keep individual and family admission free/by donation only as we realise that an admission fee can be a barrier to access for all.

4. Consult on a continuing basis with as broad a range of users and non-users as possible, through social media, questionnaires, visitor books and comments cards, and arrange periodic consultation for specific interest and/or additional needs groups.

5. Offer individually-tailored tours by trained guides as well as self-guided visits, to take account of differing learning styles and needs to foster understanding, a sense of place and enjoyment.

6. Display the widest-possible selection of relevant objects, always taking into consideration object condition and safety. Where display is not possible or practicable, other ways of making objects available will be considered (e.g. on the museum website, through social media, or the museum ipads).

7. Enable researchers, students and the general public to view the collections not currently on display to access stores and archival collections, including the Archives Room in John Wesley's House by appointment with the Curator, always providing objects and documents are sound and handled by the Curator or designated archive assistants. Specialist handling sessions for individuals and/or groups are offered periodically and/or by appointment, always depending on resources and object condition.

8. Offer free school learning sessions based on a number of themes relevant to the site, including 18th century life, Methodism and health and well-being.

9. Provide free outreach sessions based on the history of the site and our collections. These include handling objects and presentations aimed - in particular but not exclusively - at family, additional needs and older audiences.

10. Offer free, costume re-enactment events in John Wesley's House and themed 'tea rooms' for all ages to encourage engagement with the history and heritage of our site.

11. Actively pursue museum and related industry partnerships which promote access, diversity and inclusion, and ensure the museum has professional support and advice to continually review and improve its service. Links include those with schools, historic house museums (e.g. 'London Shh'), other Methodist and religious museums and sites, as well as local community network groups, such as Islington '11 by 11'.

12. Review and augment written leaflets, publications and other information continually, especially collection and buildings-related leaflets, and continue translating these into languages other than English, as needed. Also, to develop the museum's audio-visual presentation to include languages other than English, Korean and Portuguese as resources permit.

13. Encourage those unable to visit in person (for physical or geographical reasons) to use the Museum website (www.wesleysheritage.org.uk) and the Museum's social media (Twitter, Facebook & Instagram) by keeping these up-to-date and making available information about the museum and collections, an on-line tour of John Wesley's House, full contact details and providing an online shop for museum-related purchases. Also, use social media, as well as comment cards and visitor books in the museum, to encourage feedback and consultation between the museum and (non)visitors.

14. Offer relevant access training for all employees, including volunteers, to carry out their duties to the best possible standard, including making available the policy statement upon joining the museum to each volunteer and keeping a copy in the heritage stewards' folder in the museum.

Our aim is to build accessibility into everything we do to develop and improve our service. Our commitment is long term and extends to our visitors, in person or online, volunteers and staff.

This policy is kept under regular review and will be re-approved by the Governing Body no later than every five years.