

Eden Valley Museum Trust

Access Policy

Our definition of access

Eden Valley Museum Trust (EVMT) recognises access as the removal of all barriers to the learning from, and enjoyment of, the Museum whether they be, physical, cultural, social, financial; and that these barriers are removed, reduced, or overcome, where this is practically possible given the constraints of its Grade II listed building and finances.

Our commitment to accessibility

EVMT have a long term commitment to achieve the highest level of access to the Museum collections possible.

Our commitment to accessibility extends to staff, volunteers and work placements, as well as visitors.

Our policy is to build accessibility directly into everything that we do. In order to eliminate barriers and ensure equality of access, EVMT consider the following forms of accessibility:

- **Physical accessibility** – the ability of people with physical disabilities to reach and appreciate as much of the Museum and its collection as possible. The needs of the elderly and of people caring for young children are considered as physical access issues.
- **Sensory accessibility** – whether those with impaired vision or hearing can enjoy and appreciate the museum's building, exhibitions and collection
- **Intellectual access** – whether people with learning disabilities can engage with and enjoy the museum and its exhibitions.
- **Cultural access** – the needs of people for whom English is not a first language, or whose background knowledge of English history and culture may be limited.
- **Emotional and attitudinal access** – whether the Museum environment and the Museum staff are welcoming to visitors from all sections of the community.

How we maintain access

The Museum is housed in a Grade II listed building of medieval origin with direct access from Edenbridge High Street and free parking nearby. Within the limitations imposed by the fabric of the building, we aim to enable the broadest spectrum of users from all backgrounds to engage with, learn from and enjoy the Museum's facilities as our resources permit.

We are constantly working towards improving the facilities available to visitors with disabilities and will actively try to make our collections accessible, even when our buildings are not.

Folder versions of current and past exhibitions are available to view on the ground floor for those who have difficulty with stairs. The Museum's website is fully accessible to disabled people.

We aim to provide varied means of access to the collections, including displays, handling sessions, publications and events. We will continue to provide and develop levels of information and interpretation to suit a range of audiences and abilities.

We will ensure that the presentation and labelling of displays respects a diversity of background.

We aim to provide appropriate signage and tools to suit a range of audiences.

We will provide additional access to our collections through an enquiry service, web based resources and access to staff.

We will continue to develop our handling collections and loans.

The rights of future generations to enjoy access to our present collection are safeguarded by high standards of collection care and, where necessary, by restrictions on handling, or exposure to light, moisture or other harmful environmental conditions.

We aim to identify and develop partnerships with a range of educational and community organisations to ensure that our activities continue to cater for the widest possible audiences.

The Museum is open to the public, free of charge, four days a week and at other times by arrangement.

Our front of house staff assist and welcome all visitors. They are available in the galleries to help visitors to understand and enjoy the collections.

The Museum shop always stocks a range of low cost souvenirs.

We will consider the comfort of our visitors by providing, where possible, accessible toilets, baby changing facilities, access for pushchairs, seating in galleries.

We will promote the Museums' activities and events using accessible means of communication.

We provide a range of ways that people can communicate with us.

We will evaluate all of our services and projects to ensure they meet the provision of this policy and we will consult users on new developments.

We regularly review our achievements and make plans for further progress.

We will review the access policy regularly to ensure it is in line with national guidelines and standards.