

V&A Dundee

Access Policy

Review procedure:

We will review the access strategy annually to ensure it is in line with national guidelines and reflects updates to strategy and best practice.

Date at which this strategy is due for review: July 2027

Reviewed by: V&A Dundee Access Group

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1. Our Commitment

V&A Dundee aims to provide the widest possible access to its museum, exhibitions, activities and services to enable audiences from all sections of the community to enjoy use of the museum. As a design museum, we are committed to designing for all our audiences and providing a welcoming, accessible and engaging environment for everyone.

Our commitment is to consider access in everything that we do, building it into all planning for the future of the museum.

Recent estimates show that 16.8 million people in the UK have a disability, representing 25% of the territory's total population. However, in Scotland specifically, this figure increases to 28%. Dundee residents may be at an even higher risk of developing a chronic illness or disability, as almost 8% said that their general health was 'bad' or 'very bad.' This is notably worse than surrounding councils such as Fife (6.7%), Perth and Kinross (4.9%) and Angus (5.6%).

The most common type of disability people in Scotland reported having is physical disability (9.7%). This was followed by being D/deaf or having impaired hearing (7.1%), having a learning disability or developmental disorder (5.5%) and being blind or partially sighted (2.5%). On top of this, 21% of people have a long-term illness, disease or condition which requires treatment, such as epilepsy or diabetes.

Data taken from the [Family Resources Survey 2024](#) and [Scotland's Census 2022](#).

V&A Dundee recognises the importance of engaging with all people in our community and beyond, being accessible to all.

Our commitment to accessibility extends to our staff, volunteers, contract partners and interns as well as visitors.

We are committed to ongoing training in access for staff and volunteers.

2. Our Definition of Access

V&A Dundee believes that everyone has a fundamental right to engage with and enjoy our spaces and objects. However, we recognise that the museum has barriers to access and that our audience is a diverse group of people with a wide variety of needs.

At V&A Dundee we are committed to achieving equal access for all visitors, striving to remove barriers to access. This is an ongoing commitment, supported by an Access Group that has identified further changes that will be made, including as part of the 2028 capital project to reimagine the visitor welcome and Scottish Design Galleries.

We have identified that our main barriers to access may be:

- **Physical** – We recognise that physical barriers can prevent people from fully accessing and enjoying the museum experience. We aim to ensure that people with physical disabilities, older people, and those caring for others, including children and young people, can reach and appreciate all aspects of the museum.
- **Sensory** – We recognise that visitors with visual or hearing impairments, as well as neurodivergent visitors who may experience sensory overwhelm, can face barriers when engaging with our spaces. We aim to ensure that everyone can enjoy the museum's building, exhibitions and activities.
- **Intellectual** – We recognise that people have different learning styles and abilities. We will provide interpretation using a range of approaches and aim to ensure that people with learning difficulties can engage with and enjoy the museum and its collections.
- **Attitudinal** – We understand that people with access needs often encounter barriers created by attitudes and assumptions within the venues they visit. We recognise that staff attitudes play a vital role in ensuring everyone feels welcome, respected and safe. We are committed to fostering an inclusive culture and equipping staff with

the confidence and understanding needed to respond positively and appropriately to visitors with access needs.

- **Cultural** – We recognise that cultural and language differences can create barriers to access. We aim to consider the needs of people for whom English is not a first language, as well as those who may have limited knowledge of Scottish history, design and culture.
- **Financial** – We recognise that the ability to pay can be a barrier to access. We will seek to provide opportunities for people on lower incomes to access the museum and participate in its activities.

We are aware that other barriers to access may exist within the museum, on our website, en route to the museum and in the wider community and we will identify and take account of these in our planning wherever possible.

3. Staff and Training

Accessibility is the responsibility of everyone who works at V&A Dundee, including staff, volunteers, interns and contract partners.

V&A Dundee is an equal opportunities employer. All staff will receive equal opportunities in recruitment, employment and training. We are committed to recruiting staff from diverse backgrounds and providing a welcoming and supportive working environment for all people.

All V&A Dundee staff undertake training in areas of equalities awareness and equality legislation appropriate to their role. This training will be refreshed annually or on the amendment of legislation or this strategy.

All staff complete EDI training modules on an annual basis.

V&A Dundee actively works to appoint contract partners with whom we have shared values and who are committed to equality and diversity. Equity, diversity and inclusion guidelines are included in briefs for contracts.

4. Museum Building

Up-to-date information can be found on the accessibility pages of our website: <https://www.vam.ac.uk/dundee/info/accessibility>. These pages are regularly reviewed and updated.

We aim to provide equal access to V&A Dundee and our facilities for all visitors. V&A Dundee has been designed and built in-line with current building regulations and best practice and is a modern, accessible venue, however we recognise that not all aspects of the building and experience will be accessible for everyone.

Where there are barriers to physical access, we will ensure that alternative experiences are available such as up-to-date images for all visitors unable to access the space. We are working to increase the variety of interpretation methods available to visitors, including large-format text and digital interpretation.

V&A Dundee is committed to providing a safe environment for all. Procedures are in place for the safe evacuation of all users and staff in an emergency as outlined in our Emergency Plan.

All activities taking place in the museum or facilitated by museum staff are risk assessed by a competent person. V&A Dundee adheres to all current health and safety guidelines and legislation. Staff are made aware of their responsibilities in the induction process.

Seating is provided throughout the museum and surround outdoor spaces either in the form of permanent in-built benches, and café furniture or fold out stools which are able to borrow.

We ensure the comfort of our visitors by providing accessible toilets, a changing places facility, baby changing facilities, access for pushchairs, seating in galleries, quiet room facilities, lifts to all floors and on-site wheelchairs.

Appropriate signage and navigation tools to suit a range of audiences are provided, including a range of sensory formats and languages.

Hearing loops are installed at the welcome information desk, our café counters, back of house reception and in the auditorium and learning spaces.

We also welcome assistance dogs throughout the museum and provide water bowls and dog-relief areas. We regularly consult with visually impaired users and advocacy groups to ensure continuous improvement of these services.

5. Travelling to the museum

We commit to promoting a range of accessible transport options and making this information publicly available on our website.

There are a number of public, council owned car parks across the city and within 650 metres of V&A Dundee. However, there is no dedicated car park for the museum. There is public parking directly adjacent to east side of the museum on South Crichton Street (the Tay Road bridge side of the museum) which offers nine spaces, and six access parking spaces solely for people who are Blue Badge holders. This car parking area can also be used as a ‘drop off’ and ‘pick up’ point for visitors to V&A Dundee. Blue Badge holders can park free of charge and without time limit.

There are multiple bus routes that stop nearby including the Ember routes from Glasgow and Edinburgh, and Dundee train station is 200 metres from the museum. Seating is provided on the route from the car parks to the Museum entrance.

6. Access to Visitor Services

We aim to ensure V&A Dundee staff are trained and available to assist and welcome all visitors.

Our visitor assistants are available in the galleries to help people understand and enjoy the collections. Visitor assistants are also positioned in the foyer areas to assist with welcoming and wayfinding. The

information desk at the main entrance is staffed during Museum opening hours to offer assistance and information.

All V&A Dundee staff receive training and will be made familiar with this strategy. All users of the museum are treated with equal respect within an inclusive atmosphere and are welcomed according to their individual needs.

Training includes but is not limited to autism awareness, guiding for visually impaired customers, dementia friends and general disability awareness training.

7. Access to Collections

As V&A Dundee is a non-collecting museum, this does limit our ability to provide access to collections, as we do not have a collection of our own to share. We do, however, provide a varied means of access to our exhibitions, including displays, handling collections, outreach sessions, publications and events.

We provide levels of information and interpretation to suit a range of audiences and abilities. We also ensure that the presentation and labelling of displays respect a diversity of voices, backgrounds and viewpoints.

V&A Dundee provides accessible tours in a range of formats including BSL, audio description and touch tours. Our audio guides contain audio content only in English for the moment, though we aim to offer additional languages.

8. Access to Learning

V&A Dundee provides learning opportunities for different audiences and levels of ability and tailor our programme to the needs of specific groups.

We provide education programmes for all our temporary and permanent displays to interpret the collections for people from a range of backgrounds and abilities.

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

V&A Dundee is committed to ongoing development and evaluation of our learning offer to ensure the widest possible reach and to ensure it is catering for the needs of our audiences.

9. Access to Communication

We endeavour to promote our activities and events using accessible means of communication.

Information for potential visitors explaining our opening times, services, and access to our collections is available in person, by telephone, via email, social media and on our website.

We will ensure that our website and all new digital products meet WCAG 2.2 AA as a minimum, our legacy systems are improved wherever feasible, content is designed for clarity, readability, and inclusive communication and procurement processes include accessibility requirements.

This includes websites, ticketing journeys, digital interactives, and online learning resources. Access information is also available through all the above channels, and we will ensure that V&A Dundee also lists all relevant access information on disability-information websites such as the Euan's Guide and AccessAble

10. Collaboration with Disabled People and Communities

To ensure our work is relevant and inclusive, we will aim to work in partnership with:

- Disabled people and D/deaf communities
- Neurodivergent visitors
- Local and national access organisations
- Artists, designers, and creative practitioners with lived experience

We will involve groups in planning, testing, and evaluating exhibitions, communications, digital platforms, and visitor experiences.

11. Audit and Ongoing Improvement Procedures

V&A Dundee conducts an annual audit of all access facilities whilst reviewing the strategy. Results of this audit will be shared across all departments and will be used in the development of improvement action plans.

V&A Dundee encourages feedback on the accessibility of the museum through several channels including consultation with local access groups, visitor surveys, and visitor feedback forms. We actively monitor feedback from sites such as Euan's Guide and use these reviews to ensure continuous improvement and refinement of the experience of our visitors. This information is collated and reported to department Directors on a regular basis.

We will continuously evaluate all our services and projects to ensure they meet the provision of this strategy and we will consult users and non-users on all new developments. This policy is reviewed annually, and where appropriate, on the occasion of any changes to legislation.

V&A Dundee conducts annual audits of all access facilities whilst reviewing the organisation's strategy and approach to access in the museum.

V&A Dundee encourages feedback on the accessibility of the museum, including regular staff consultation, visitor surveys and visitor feedback. We also work with local access groups and actively monitor any feedback related to access in the museum.

We continuously evaluate all of our services and projects to ensure that they meet the provision outlined in this strategy and we will consult users and non-users on all new developments.

This policy is governed by V&A Dundee's Access Group, and they are responsible for holding all members of the museum's community, including staff, to account regarding the implementation of this policy. The Access Group includes Directors who are in turn accountable to the museum's Board.

12. V&A Dundee Access Group

The role of the Access Group is to coordinate and strengthen accessibility practice across V&A Dundee. It aims to build shared knowledge and understanding across teams, increase transparency of work in progress, identify barriers and develop internal standards.

The group focuses on internal systems and organisational readiness, including:

- Operational accessibility (visitor experience, ticketing, staff training)
- Exhibitions and interpretation workflows
- Digital and communications accessibility
- Policies, documentation, and inclusive language
- Building and facilities issues
- Capital project accessibility
- HR support and training
- Designing the structure and remit of the future external Access Group

The group is advisory, however individual team members are all involved in delivery of projects across V&A Dundee, and will act as Access Champions in their day-to-day roles.

Membership of the group comprise:

- Visitor Experience
- Learning
- Exhibitions
- Digital
- Communications

- Facilities
- People

Appointed members are responsible for engaging and representing their specific areas and by being Access Champions. An Access Champion is an individual who spearheads, promotes, and embeds accessibility, inclusion, and equality for disabled people. Acting as a driver for change, they work to remove barriers, influence strategy, monitor progress and foster a 'can-do' culture, ensuring our programme, service and environment is accessible to all.

Membership is rolling, reviewed annually, with members nominated by department Directors.