

EQUALITY & DIVERSITY POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Wessex Museums brings together four museums across Dorset and Wiltshire: Poole Museum, Dorset County Museum, The Salisbury Museum and Wiltshire Museum. The partnership is committed to promoting the values of a just, inclusive and cohesive society and we take seriously our responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010. In all we do as a partnership, we will seek to remove barriers to participation, create opportunities for engagement and meet the needs of all people.

This umbrella policy sets out the equality and diversity objectives for the partnership in support of our partnership strategic aims. It also provides the overarching definition and principles for equality and diversity for the partner organisations and is supported by individual equality and diversity policies and action plans in each of the partner museums and for the Wessex Museums Trust; the partnership's registered charity.

DEFINITIONS

Equality is about ensuring that every individual has an equal opportunity to make the most of their lives and talents, free from prejudice and discrimination.

Diversity is the complex mix of individuals and groups who together make up society. A variety of traditions, values, attitudes and beliefs influence everyone's identity and the identity of society around them. These influences may relate to ethnicity, faith, gender, sexual orientation and intellectual and physical ability, but might equally include health status, locality, educational, economic and social background.

We recognise that there can be no fair society if some groups remain disadvantaged because of their legally protected characteristics: age, disability, gender, race/ethnicity, religion and belief, marriage/civil partnership, maternity/paternity, sexual orientation or gender reassignment. Equally in our region, we recognise that there are groups in our localities that face isolation and unfair discrimination who fall outside of these protected characteristic groups (e.g. military and rural communities).

Given the current economic climate and significant public spending reform we recognise that many of our most vulnerable groups will face additional challenges during the next few years.

OUR AMBITION

We will inspire more people to explore and enjoy the outstanding art and heritage of the region and to understand its significance to their lives. We will share the amazing story of the region in new and exciting ways and make a major contribution to the cultural, social and tourism economies of Dorset and Wiltshire.

EQUALITY & DIVERSITY OBJECTIVES

Equality and diversity is woven throughout our partnership strategic aims. Our partnership objectives for equality and diversity support our strategic aims and specifically focus on three key areas:

Governance & Leadership:

- We will work to embed and integrate equality and diversity at every level of our organisations, through specific and regular equality and diversity policy review and action planning.
- We will raise awareness and actively promote the values of equality and diversity through the appointment of board level Diversity Champions and by providing training opportunities for trustees.
- We will work strategically to diversity our organisations by putting in place practical steps, including reviewing our recruitment and selection practices, which will ensure that our governance and leadership is reflective of our local communities.

Workforce

- We will ensure that staff and volunteers feel included in the work of the partnership and our partner organisations, leading to a sense of wellbeing.
- We will ensure that our existing workforce (staff and volunteers) are champions of the values of equality and diversity, and understand how it relates to their roles. We will provide training and support as needed to ensure that this is the case, and include equality and diversity in all staff job descriptions and volunteer role profiles.
- As a partnership we will actively seek to diversity our workforce and provide equality of opportunity through our recruitment practice.
- We will ensure that staff pay awards do not unfairly discriminate against individuals based on their protected characteristics.

Audiences

- We will develop a better and more detailed understanding of our audiences and our local demographics, in order to identify our underrepresented audience groups.
- We will actively work alongside our local communities, including those from protected characteristic groups and those who are isolated for other reasons (e.g. rural, military), to

understand their barriers to our museums, and to make our museums relevant for them; including through co-production and contemporary collecting.

- We will seek to work with a more diverse range of children & young people, particularly those who are hard to reach, engaging them in meaningful opportunities, particularly through outreach, digital projects and family learning.
- We will improve our collections management, including through digitisation and conservation, to facilitate and broaden equal access to our collections.
- We will bring innovative and exciting programming to the region and extend the reach of our museums collections in the UK and abroad through major exhibitions, in order to reach new and more diverse audiences.