

# DOORS OPEN DAYS 2021

## HERITAGE IS ACCESSIBLE! 20 Top Tips

Below we've compiled 20 top tips for making your venue more accessible. These tips cover accessibility both in your venue itself and online. We hope you find them useful!

The information in **yellow** refers to online tips, **green** is for your venue building and the tips in **blue** work for both your website and venue.

'Heritage Is Accessible! 20 Top Tips' was prepared by Diana Kukharenko and Marianne Bell. This work was undertaken during a placement with the Scottish Civic Trust for the 'Methodology of Art with Work Placement' Junior Honours course in the School of Culture and Creative Arts, University of Glasgow 2020-21.

**H - Here to Help.** It is hard to make venues accessible to all, but it is important to keep learning and do our best to improve. No matter the size of the venue there's always something you can do! Make sure you are continuously considering accessibility issues and communicating with your visitors to provide the best help you can.

**E - Events.** If you can't accommodate all accessibilities on a regular basis, consider hosting inclusive events. These can be done annually or even monthly, depending on what the venue and budgets allow. This can include online as well as in-person events.

**R - Refreshments.** **1.** If your venue doesn't have a cafe, having water to hand can make a difference in certain situations. **2.** Providing a space where visitors can have snacks that they brought with them can be helpful, especially for visitors with children.

**I - Information.** Make sure your information is easy to understand, avoid using complex language and keep your sentences short. Have a few members of staff read it to ensure that different audiences can access your information.

**T - Toilets.** 1. Have the measurements of your toilets to hand at the venue and displayed clearly on your website for wheelchair users to know. Even better, take pictures of your accessible toilet alongside the measurements to make this information as clear as possible. 2. Gender-inclusive toilets greatly contribute towards the inclusivity of your venue. 3. Baby changing facilities, if you have them tell them! This is a very useful facility for mothers.

**A - Assistance Dogs.** Assistance dogs should be welcome at all venues, have a water bowl to hand in case they get thirsty!

**G - Generations.** Have you got activities for all ages? Try to have some resources that include children such as games or colouring in. Interactive activities that get older generations involved are equally valuable.

**E - Easy Access.** 1. Try to make sure that all routes through your venue are wheelchair friendly. A width of 1.2m is the minimum for wheelchair use, with 1.7m allowing two wheelchairs to pass, or walkers to comfortably pass a wheelchair user. If this is not possible, make sure you let people know! 2. A map of your venue is always useful for people to have. This can be on your website for people to download or at the entrance to your venue.

**I - Inclusivity.** As well as making sure your venue is accessible, it needs to be inclusive to all communities and minorities. The majority of venues are welcoming to all, however, it is also important when possible to represent stories of communities that might have been overlooked or otherwise marginalized.

**S - Subtitles.** If you have videos playing in your venue or on your website, try to upload subtitles for those who may not be able to hear or understand your audio. Even better, translate the information from the video into different languages and have these translations printed out next to the video in the venue or available as a download on your website. If this isn't possible for you, a good alternative is to have a synopsis to accompany your video so people have an idea of what it's about. This can also be translated.

**A - Accessible Website.** Ensure that text and the colour of your website can be altered to suit the needs of everybody. AbilityNet is a great resource for guidance on accessible

technology. W3C's Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) offers an excellent resources section plus Web Content Accessibility Guidelines and Checklists.

**C - Chairs.** There should be seating throughout your venue in case anybody needs to rest, these can be portable chairs that are easily stored away.

**C - COVID-19.** **1.** Make sure that you provide hand sanitiser and that it is on a low-level accessible counter. **2.** Clear floor markings help maintain social distancing. Keep an eye on your capacity, there should be 2 metres between visitors at all times so knowing the capacity of your venue within these restrictions can help maintain control.

**E - Education.** Providing resources for teachers makes heritage more accessible to the younger audience. Recently, online teaching has had to take centre stage so providing online resources is a great way to adapt to the changing times!

**S - Signage.** Information on signs should be clear, in large font (at least 14 point) and accessible colours. Avoid italics and underlining.

**S - Schedule.** It's a good idea to have a schedule to meet the needs of different visitors. This could include quiet time for those who don't like being in crowded places or tactile tours for those who would benefit from a more hands on experience in your venue.

**I - Induction Loop.** Induction loops can be an expensive investment, however they help relay audio information to those hard-of-hearing. For a bigger venue, a more cost-effective solution might be purchasing a portable induction loop and providing a personal guide assistant to help overcome background noises or distance from the guide.

**B - Box.** Providing sensory boxes can help children in general but especially those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). Sensory boxes are a great cost-effective way to help kids learn in a fun manner that engages all of their senses, and can also be a tool that allows them to have a break and relax.

**L - Let people know!** Having easy to find accessibility information on your website means that potential visitors can come prepared, knowing what facilities you have. Let people know as much as you can, this can include information about facilities you do or do not have. Some notes on parking and public transport are useful.

**E - Engage!** Good access is not just about good facilities. Invite feedback from visitors who may have tips of their own to make your venue more accessible. Have a comments book or section on your website that invites visitors to share their thoughts.