

Killhope, the North of England Lead Mining Museum

Access and Inclusion Policy

2006 - 2011

1. Mission Statement

To interpret and bring to life, for as wide an audience as possible, the lead mining heritage, landscape and history of the North Pennines as a cultural and tourism attraction

We aim to ensure the Museum is widely accessible to all sections of the community, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, religion, sexuality or ability. We aim to reflect the diversity of our communities through our exhibitions, events, education work and facilities.

We believe that all people have the fundamental right to enjoy the Museum's services, and will work towards removing or reducing all the barriers which may prevent this. Killhope Museum places the communities it serves at the centre of its work. Therefore, improving access for all these communities must be seen as essential, not as merely desirable. Wherever possible, we will seek to enable all our users to achieve equal or equivalent physical and intellectual access to all our collections, facilities and services.

2. Introduction

This Access and Inclusion Policy will set out what access provision we currently have, our aims on access, the barriers which are currently preventing us from fully achieving our mission, and the improvements we can make to remove barriers.

This policy will be reviewed five yearly, or as changes in the museum's circumstances require. During the five year period, all new services, facilities and displays will be undertaken with reference to the Access and Inclusion Policy and its recommendations.

Success of the Access and Inclusion Policy and its implementation will be monitored regularly.

3. What is accessible at Killhope?

- Publicity and welcome leaflets are in large and contrast print
- Accessible web content and format
- Inclusive pricing policy
- Reserved spaces for disabled visitor's cars
- Mobility scooter free for visitors use
- Accessible toilets in café and site
- Baby changing facilities
- Pushchair and Wheelchair friendly entrance path
- Automatic entrance doors to Visitor Centre

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- Ramps to upper floors of historical Mineshop building.
- Contrasting trims on all doors
- Wheelchair lift to upper offices Visitor Centre
- All new text and publicity is written in clear, plain English, accessible to those with a lower reading ability, as well as those with limited English.
- Pushchair and wheelchair friendly route around part of the woodland
- Under 7's Play area
- Information staff trained in disability awareness
- Access champion on staff team
- Discounts for holders of Regional Max Freedom card scheme.
- Hearing induction loop to be fitted in near future

4. We recognise that our catchment area contains individuals and groups who, through a combination of factors including unemployment, low incomes, and high crime environments, may face social exclusion.

4.1 As part of our commitment to access for all, we hope to become more representative of all our communities, and to validate their experiences, and so to become more socially inclusive.

4.2 We will develop ways of consulting our local communities to ensure our service is relevant to all our potential users. By developing our interpretation, exhibitions and other services to be accessible to all the communities we serve, we will provide a more accessible and relevant service. By working with groups who are often socially excluded or disadvantaged, we will provide a sense of achievement and empowerment, will make their experiences valued, and will contribute to a sense of community identity and pride.

4.3 Our charging and pricing policy is geared towards making the museum as accessible as possible for families, the unemployed and people with special needs.

4.4 Our induction staff training programmes emphasise the importance of an inclusive approach to all our visitors, matching service to needs.

4.5 We commit to developing our exhibitions with the aim of providing a range of methods of accessing information, including first person interpretation, sound, touch and vision.

Making text in the galleries and on all printed information as clear and understandable as possible.

Aiming to provide written or spoken information in relevant community languages, as resources allow.

Working towards making our site and collections accessible in a variety of ways, including exhibitions, handling objects, and the use of IT.

Maintaining first person interpretation as our primary communication route.

Running events, workshops and education activities both on and off-site to offer opportunities to as broad an audience as possible.

- 4.6 Information on the services and facilities of the Museum, along with access information, will be made available in a number of formats and languages, and through relevant media, as resources allow.
- 4.7 We believe that a welcoming and helpful response on first experiencing the Museum or its services is essential to promoting access. All Museum staff receive training in a number of related areas, as available. The success of the Policy depends on all staff members. All staff will be given copies of the Policy and expected to assist in its implementation.
- 4.8 We will ensure that all outside workers and organisations are aware of the Access and Inclusion Policy and agree to observe relevant guidelines. This will include consultants, volunteers, contractors and groups using the Museum's facilities.
- 4.9 We will abide by all relevant national and local policies and laws. These include the Sex Discrimination Act (1975) and Amendment (1999), Race Relations Act (1976) and its Amendment (2000), Disability Discrimination Act (1995) and Human Rights Act (1998). We will also comply with Durham County Council's Equal Opportunities Policy and Corporate Equality plan. We also adhere to Council recommendations on Clear Print Guidelines and website design.

5. Barriers to Access

There are a number of barriers which may prevent people making best use of the services that we offer. These barriers may be organisational, physical, sensory, intellectual, social, cultural and financial.

An audit of current access provision was undertaken in 2005 and 2006 by user groups, Killhope staff and Durham County Council's access officer. Elements of the audit recorded here refer to the historic site, the mine and woodland area. Barriers identified during all elements of the audits will be taken into account when designing any building or landscaping.

5.1 Physical barriers

The main historic site is a scheduled ancient monument. The woodland is on a steep slope to the south of the historic site. The mine is accessed on foot along a narrow tunnel with water flowing along the floor. The museum's aim is to recreate, as far as is possible, the look and feel of a working nineteenth century lead mine. Path surfaces are often rough and sometimes steep and uneven. The mine is difficult to access for those with walking difficulties.

5.2 **Sensory barriers**

There is no text-phone, and none of the Museum's staff are trained in sign language.

5.3 **Intellectual barriers**

Although all information is presented as clearly as possible, most of it is in written English. There is little available for those with poor reading ability, those whose first language is not English, or those with special needs.

5.4 **Social and cultural barriers**

Killhope Museum does offer its publicity text in French and German as well as English.

5.5 **Financial barriers**

The Museum is situated in a remote rural area with a very limited public transport service, so there is a high car dependency among visitors. Entry charges are required to meet budgetary targets.

6. **Practical Solutions**

6.1 Killhope Museum recognises that maintaining and improving access is a long-term venture, and a continuous process. We will work on improving access in our existing facilities and services as resources permit, and will develop facilities and services in any new building and landscaping with access in mind. We will ensure that the needs of all our users and non-users are central to all future plans and developments.

6.2 As part of Durham County Council, Killhope Museum is committed to the Council's Race Equality Scheme, and its Equal Opportunities Policy which aims to ensure that all those who use the Council's services are treated with respect regardless of race, colour, creed, sex or age. Durham County Council provides equal opportunities in its employment, and as one of the Council's services Killhope Museum provides employment opportunities for all. Durham County Council has a complaints scheme which allows us to answer any access difficulties or issues which are brought to our attention by users. By undertaking consultation with our users we aim to provide a service which best meets their needs. Further consultation with different user groups is planned to help us ensure our interpretation, collections and displays are accessible to as wide an audience as possible.

Training is available through Durham County Council in a number of areas related to access. Disability Awareness, Equal Opportunities, and Diversity training is available, and staff are undergoing training on a rolling programme. Training in specific needs has been undertaken with some members of staff, and most staff have received “Welcome Host” training. All staff are encouraged to be as helpful and welcoming as possible, to provide an atmosphere where all visitors are welcome. A commitment to customer focus as demonstrated by attitude and approach are key factors for consideration in the museum’s recruitment of new staff.

- 6.3 As part of our commitment to access, Killhope Museum has undertaken projects with local groups of children excluded from mainstream education and unemployed young people. Some of this work has been recorded in a regional DVD “Creating Sparks – Why Culture Matters to Children and Young People”. We intend to build on these projects with further work, and by involving local young people in consultation on museum development. Our interpretation aim is to include everyone, including those with no background knowledge of a subject.
- 6.4 We are committed to ensuring the Museum and its services are open to people from all ranges of social and cultural backgrounds. We have worked with a number of groups, including young asylum seekers, local young people and urban young people to establish what they value in the museum and what they would like to see developed. We are aiming to build on this work by working with other sections of the community. By involving local people in developing interpretation in the new building, we will help to make the Museum and its services more relevant and therefore more accessible to a wider audience.
- 6.5 At present, Killhope Museum does not offer its exhibition text or publicity in any language except English, however it is hoped to develop this service by offering parts of the website in other languages. Given a short period of notice, a language line service is available.
- 6.6 Killhope Museum charges for entry and to its events. The museum is situated in a remote rural area with limited public transport access. Its services are therefore largely restricted to those who can afford to travel into the countryside. To help broaden access to those who may be limited financially, we are working with others in the region to improve public transport provision.

Improvements to Access recommended by Access Audits.

Car park/ Accessible Parking

- Improved access i.e. clearer view from entry to Car Park to reserved spaces / lower wall height.
- Additional reserved spaces
- Some Seating on edge of Car Park

Admission Area/Shop

- Induction Hearing Loop in Visitor Centre, Exhibition space and shop

Exhibitions

- Interpretative Audio cassettes for visually impaired
- Large print/Braille interpretation of Mineral and Spar Box Exhibition

Toilets

- Changing facilities for disabled adults

Paths around site

- Handrails to prevent wider wheelchairs tipping off sloping path from V Centre

Signage

- Directional signs using colour- coded symbols as well as written words
- A panel of transcribed text into Braille on each site sign.

Historic Buildings and Site

Ramp to Mine Shop

- Scooter/ pushchair rest at top of ramp to reduce overcrowding in mine shop
- Contrasting nosings on stone steps
- Handrail on low side of ramp to upper floor

Washing Floor

- Improved Signage for independent use

Jigger House

- Some level of Interpretation- audio or multi sensory information boards

Woodland

- Web cam installation at squirrel feeding site to give disabled visitors visual access to squirrels and birds at the feeding station.

The Mine

- Accessible collection of colour underground photographs
- Audio guide
- Virtual tour of the mine

Leaflets

- Large print and Braille leaflets for visually impaired.
- Other Foreign language translation

Attitudinal Access

- Staff to “shadow” other people working in similar interpretative visitor attractions which have made improvements to disabled Access
- Pro actively employing people with disabilities (either paid or voluntary)
- Targeting Hard to reach community groups

Intellectual Access

- Good level of hierarchical information with the main interpretation in easy to understand text using pictures and simple language.

Multi Sensory approach

- Guide and Site Information transcribed into Braille.
- Foreign language translation.
- A dedicated Sensory area in Visitor Centre for those visitors who cant get on site or underground
- Offering free introductory visits or open day to targeted groups.
- Video Conferencing facilities to accommodate groups who cannot travel to Killhope

Policy adopted June 2006

Reviewed June 2010

Next review April 2011