

ACCESS POLICY

1	Our Mission	V1
1.1	To maintain a Library and Reading Rooms and to provide a distinctive and memorable programme of activities which inspires, informs and provides enjoyment to members and visitors of all ages and abilities.	
1.2	To be a leading centre for study by developing and enabling access to our rich collections and archives, collaborating in scholarly research and creating outstanding displays.	
1.3	To engage and inspire diverse audiences with excellent learning and engagement opportunities that encourage discovery, spark imaginations and offer life-enhancing experiences.	
1.4	To participate in Exeter's cultural networks and be at the heart of the creative, social and economic development of Exeter as a City of Culture.	
1.5	To be a leader in the independent library sector and actively champion the development of subscription libraries.	
1.6	To ensure the DEI is sustainably resourced and managed for the benefit of future generations.	
2	Our Definition of Access	
2.1	We believe that the DEI has something to offer everyone and that many more people could enjoy the collection and its setting.	
2.2	Although we recognise that there are many barriers to access across the DEI, not least the fact that it is a subscription library, we are dedicated to improving access by adopting best practice for the benefit of all our members, visitors and staff.	
2.3	We define access as something that is made possible when physical, sensory, financial, intellectual, emotional and cultural barriers are removed or reduced.	
3	Our Commitment to Accessibility	
3.1	This Policy supports our mission statement by providing a framework that strives to include all our members, visitors, potential members and visitors, volunteers and staff.	
3.2	We aim to widen access to our building and collection to enable audiences to enjoy and engage with the DEI Library and Reading Rooms.	
3.3	We aim to provide independent use wherever possible by removing as many barriers to access as may be feasible within the limits of budgetary, legal and planning considerations.	
3.4	We are committed to developing a programme of activities and events that are designed to provide inspiring lifelong learning and engagement opportunities to involve groups from a wide range of backgrounds and all sectors of our community.	
3.5	We will also regularly consult with our potential members in order to shape our provision to ensure it is meeting their needs.	

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4	To eliminate barriers and ensure equality of access we will consider the following forms of accessibility:	
4.1	Physical: We aim to provide equal access to our building, collections and facilities for all members and visitors wherever possible and to keep all equipment and facilities in full working order.	
4.2	As a Grade II* listed building in a conservation area, some physical adaptations are impossible to undertake. Nevertheless, we are constantly working towards improving the facilities available to members and visitors with disabilities and will actively try to make our collections accessible even when our buildings are not, via our outreach programme.	
4.3	Sensory: We aim to enable visitors with sensory impairments to access the Library and its collections.	
4.4	We aim to provide the means for all members and visitors, whether through an independent visit or by coming along to a facilitated session, to gain an understanding and appreciation of the DEI. We are committed to adopting best practice in the display and interpretation of our collection and setting for people with sensory impairments.	
4.5	Intellectual: We are committed to increasing public access to the library and collection in the broadest sense. We shall endeavour to provide learning opportunities for different audiences and levels of ability and tailor our programme to the needs of specific groups.	
4.6	We aim to provide information and interpretation using a range of different learning styles and formats appropriate to the needs of a wide range of members and visitors. We will provide learning opportunities and programmes to accompany our temporary displays and to interpret the collections for all of our visitors.	
4.7	As well as our learning programmes, we shall strive to provide varied means of access to the collections, including exhibitions, displays, facilitated sessions, publications, events and digital resources.	
4.8	For people unable to visit the DEI, we shall aim to provide, where possible, online and digital access to our collections, displays, exhibitions and learning programmes/teaching materials by using digital technologies e.g. social media, podcasts and apps.	
4.9	Cultural: When devising content for learning programmes and resources as well as other communications such as marketing and interpretation panels for our displays, we shall consider the needs of people whose knowledge of history and culture may be limited and for whom English may not be a first language in addition to the needs of the 'expert' audience.	

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4.10	Emotional: We shall aim to ensure that the staff, volunteers and environment of the library are welcoming to all visitors. Our office and library team will be available to provide assistance and information and to enable enjoyment of the building and its collections.	
4.11	We shall consider the comfort of our members and visitors by providing, where possible, accessible toilets, facilities for parents and carers, suitable seating in the libraries and clear access through the building. We aim to provide appropriate signage and navigational tools to suit a range of members' needs and to allow visitors to enjoy an independent visit.	
4.12	Financial: We aim to offer several membership options to suit a range of incomes and needs. When reviewing our subscription, we shall take into account that ability to pay can be a barrier to access.	
3.13	We aim to offer our learning and engagement programmes free of charge in some cases and to offer a regular opportunity for visitors and potential members to view the Library.	
5	Action Plan	
5.1	Through an ongoing process of regular audit and review, we shall assess, identify and address existing access issues as resources permit, and include them into our access plan. We also aim to build accessibility into all areas of our work. This commitment extends to our members, staff, volunteers and visitors.	
6	Employment and Training	
5.1	The DEI aims to become an equal opportunities employer. We aim to ensure that our employment practices do not discriminate against people on the grounds of age, gender, sexuality or disability. We are committed to ongoing training in access issues for staff and volunteers and we consult specialist organisations and other experts on ways to improve awareness and training.	
6	Consultation and Monitoring	
6.1	The Project Monitoring Committee will represent and champion access issues and build in access requirements to our sustainability planning.	
7	Reviewing the policy	
7.1	We will review the access policy annually, or when major changes take place at the DEI.	
8	This policy has been written in line with the Equality Act 2010.	