

ABERDEENSHIRE HERITAGE

ACCESS POLICY

Commitment to Access

- 1.1 Aberdeenshire Heritage understands that there are many barriers to access at all levels of the museum service. However, we believe that all people have a fundamental right to enjoy the service we provide.
- 1.2 We define access as something which is facilitated when physical, cultural, social, financial, intellectual, psychological and emotional barriers are removed or reduced.
- 1.3 We acknowledge that our responses will entail enthusiasm and a commitment of resources, and will be founded on a genuine partnership with our stakeholders.
- 1.4 Our commitment is long term and our ultimate aim is to achieve optimum levels of access to the museum service's collections and independence of use of the service's public facilities for the widest spectrum of people.
- 1.5 Admission without charge to the public is an important expression of the service's commitment to facilitate access to our museums and reserve collections. This principle will continue to be upheld by the service as a fundamental value.

Procedures for Access

- 2.1 A small proportion of Aberdeenshire Heritage's collections are on regular display at the service's various museums. Access to the Reserve Collections at Mintlaw must be made by appointment, either by telephone, letter or email.
- 2.2 Aberdeenshire Heritage has certain sensitive material in its collections. Viewing of these can be accommodated for *bona fide* researchers only and must be made by appointment in writing.
- 2.3 Such appointments will not be unreasonably withheld but persons wishing to see certain objects will be offered appointments when

appropriate museum staff are available and an appointment may not be possible at short notice.

- 2.4 References will be sought from the *bona fide* researcher prior to visit.
- 2.5 The *bona fide* researcher will be required to sign in upon arrival at reception and be supervised by staff. All bags and jackets will be checked in at reception. The researcher will be allowed to take only a pad of paper and a pencil into the viewing room.
- 2.6 Any requests to see further material will normally require a further appointment (unless the request refers to easily accessible social history material and staffing levels at Mintlaw allow continued supervision of the researcher).
- 2.7 Photographs can be ordered upon request at exit.
- 2.8 The museum service reserves the right to refuse access to vulnerable material in the interests of its safe preservation. Where the field of study can be pursued using the resources of public or university libraries or the purchase of currently available books the museum may at its discretion direct the student or researcher to those sources.

Online Collections

- 3.1 Aberdeenshire Heritage is committed to providing a high-quality, user-friendly website, which provides a source of information about the museum service, including opening times, services offered and background to the collections. It is Aberdeenshire Council policy to ensure that this information is accessible (both in terms of web technology and in terms of plain English) and regularly updated.
- 3.2 Aberdeenshire Heritage's policy is to regularly update the content of the website to ensure all information displayed is current and relevant. In addition, Aberdeenshire Heritage intends to make the museum service's corporate documents & policies available on the website.
- 3.3 Aberdeenshire Heritage's policy of making its collections accessible extends to the online ADLIB catalogue, which makes information about all the items which are currently catalogued on ADLIB available via the web. If possible, images are displayed alongside the record.