SAINSBURY MUSEUM AND ART CENTRE

Sainsbury Museum and Art Centre Access Policy

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SAINSBURY MUSEUM AND ART CENTRE

Introduction

Access Statement

- We believe that all people have a fundamental right to engage with, use and enjoy the Sainsbury Museum and Art Centre.
- The Sainsbury Museum and Art Centre is committed to ensuring that all our staff, along with the building, its collections, exhibitions, marketing and learning programmes are welcoming and accessible to all.
- We are committed to providing the widest possible access. This means aiming to reduce or remove all physical, sensory, intellectual, social, cultural, emotional, technological or financial barriers to visiting the Sainsbury Museum and Art Centre.

Commitment to Accessibility

- This policy is to build accessibility into all that we do to improve and develop what we do at the Sainsbury Museum and Art Centre. It is a long-term commitment: we will make continuous improvements (and seek funding to do so).

- The commitment extends to all staff, volunteers, work placements and visitors. We are committed to ongoing training and continuous professional development in access-related issues for all staff and volunteers.

Strategic Context

Broadening access to our collection is the key to our current and future strategy. Over the last five years we have reviewed physical access to each part of the building, installing a new lift, updating our signage and training all staff to maximise visitor experience.

We have worked with Vocal Eyes and RNIB and attended external accessibility training sessions and conferences. We are part of NCAN, a Norwich-based network of arts-professionals sharing best practice around accessibility and regularly host meetings at the Centre. In February 2023, we became one of the first museums in the UK to introduce an entirely pay as you wish policy for the museum, meaning all our temporary exhibitions can be accessed for free, this includes educational groups.

We adhere to all national and international statutes of law, including specifically, but not exclusively, in relation to access, the Equality Act 2010, the Freedom of Information Act

2000, the UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations 2003.

This policy is consistent with the University of East Anglia's Equality and Diversity Policies.

We are also guided by the Museums Association Code of Ethics for Museums 2015 (which is in line with the worldwide ICOM Code of Ethics revised 2004).

Our Access and Inclusion Planning Group meets every two months to develop and review the Centre's Access Policy and Access plan. The terms and reference for this group are:

- An ethos that demonstrates respect, understanding and sensitivity towards the diverse needs of all audiences and potential audiences
- A policy and planning process which outlines aims, objectives and practices relating to equal access.
- Collections, exhibitions and programme that take all audiences and potential audiences into account, seeking to engage their interest and celebrate their diversity
- To actively consult a diverse range of audiences and potential audiences to ensure that engagement and interpretation provided meet their needs
- Marketing and publicity which identifies, develops and promotes collections and services to all audiences and potential audiences
- To ensure that recruitment, retention and training supports service provision to all audiences and potential audiences
- To be outward looking, proactive and responsive in networking and forming links and partnerships with other domains, agencies and organisations

Barriers to Access

We consider overcoming the following barriers to access:

Physical barriers

We aim to enable those with physical disabilities to access all aspects of the Sainsbury Museum and Art Centre. We also aim to consider the needs of the elderly and those caring for young children.

We are committed to providing appropriate orientation and signage to and within the Sainsbury Museum and Art Centre for all our visitors.

We are committed to providing facilities suitable for those with access needs (including users of wheelchairs and buggies) and all our visitors.

The Sainsbury Museum and Art Centre welcomes guide, assistance, and support dogs in all areas of the museum, provided they are clearly identified as such, are always kept on a

lead, and are supervised and kept under your control throughout your visit and in accordance with our policy.

There are various travel options for getting to the Sainsbury Museum and Art Centre, including bus, park and ride, coach and Beryl bike. We have partnered up with Good Journey to encourage greener

travel and to help make culture accessible to car-free visitors. Car parking is free of charge, accessible parking bays are provided.

A Changing Places toilet is available close by in the UEA New Science Building, which is specifically designed for those with complex physical and learning disabilities, providing the right equipment, more space and a safe and clean environment.

There is information about facilities and access available on our website:
https://www.sainsburycentre.ac.uk/visit-us

Sensory barriers
We aim to include a range of diverse sensory experiences across our whole programme. We aim to enable visitors who are visually impaired or have hearing difficulties to enjoy their experience of Sainsbury Museum and Art Centre, both physically and online. We are committed to providing accessible tours and interpretation for these (and all) visitors. We aim to experiment with different sensory opportunities across our programmes.

For example:

- We have sensory back-packs available in our gallery (available on request from the Main Reception Desk) that include a range of tools to support those that require a little extra sensory support. The packs include a range of items, including ear defenders, dark glasses and Fidgets.
- The Centre has expanded its digital access to the collection via our website and a free app (Smartify) through which content is delivered to handheld devices. All our in-gallery app-based content is also free to use on the Smartify App, which gives instant access to collections information through its in app camera. Content includes digitised collections, podcasts, an audio tour, accessible via the Smartify app striving to digital WCAG AAA accessibility wherever possible.
- In the gallery we have a dedicated team to help people access all of our content. We are conscious of the dangers of digital exclusion and can assist visitors in installing Smartify on their own devices and / or demonstrating how the app can be used.
- There are two curated tours within the Smartify app: A Director-led Living Art tour of highlights from the collection, and a Sharing Stories tour that shares different narratives and research from artists, lived experience and specialist external academic contributions. There is also access to SoundEscapes on the app, pairing ten artworks with new musical commissions.

- Our learning team and volunteer guides are trained to run touch tours and object handling sessions for visually impaired and other visitors
- We provide large-font versions of exhibition text

- Our gallery is always a relaxed environment, but for those that prefer to visit alongside other families we offer Big Sundays on the first Sunday of the month throughout year.

Intellectual barriers

We recognise that people learn and experience the world in different ways. We are committed to providing multiple layers of interpretation in different formats to engage different types of visitors and multiple learning styles. We also aim to ensure that those with learning difficulties can engage with the Sainsbury Museum and Art Centre. We are committed to adopting clear interpretive guidance and an interpretation strategy for use by all staff and visiting curators. Our Living Art handbook and our Smartify App tours and podcasts also facilitate greater access.

Our future programme is centred on questions of universal interest to encourage the widest possible participation. We have asked the public, through civic meetings, online engagement and targeted polling, to tell us the most important questions they would like answered. We have then radically reimagined our programming across collection displays, exhibitions, artist residencies, Sculpture Park projects, publications and public programming to address these questions

Social barriers

We recognise that not everyone feels comfortable to visit a museum or gallery and the Sainsbury Museum and Art Centre is no exception. We aim to ensure that the Sainsbury Museum and Art Centre environment and all staff are welcoming to visitors from all communities. We aim to ensure that the people of Norwich, and especially our most local neighbours, including children and their families, UEA students, school children and young people from the region and beyond feel the Sainsbury Museum and Art Centre is a space for them.

Cultural barriers

We will consider the needs of those for whom English is not a first language, and whose experience of visiting a cultural institution may be limited. Wherever possible we aim to represent the interests, life experiences and culture of diverse communities in our exhibition programmes. We aim to develop particular programmes to break down some of these barriers through our learning and outreach activities.

Emotional barriers

We aim to ensure that the Sainsbury Museum and Art Centre is welcoming to all visitors and that all staff and visitors are equally valued.

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Technological barriers

We aim to use digital technologies and social media to enable greater access to our collections and services, whilst also providing non-digital resources. As highlighted above, our collection can be accessed on our website, with the collection and additional content also available through the free app, Smartify. We have a dedicated team in the gallery to help people access our content and can assist visitors in installing Smartify on their own devices and / or demonstrating how the app can be used.

Financial barriers

The Sainsbury Museum and Art Centre is committed to welcoming everyone to create a relationship with the artworks in its collection. In 2023 the Sainsbury Museum and Art Centre became the first museum in the UK to introduce a universal 'Pay if and What You Can' ticketing system across the whole museum, breaking down the traditional boundary between the collection and temporary exhibition pricing. Visitors are asked to pay only if they can and whatever they want on their way in. They will then be given an access all-areas ticket and map to explore as they like, stopping off at our two restaurants/cafes, free gallery tours, free learning events and shop as they like.

We are also committed to enabling access to our exhibitions at no charge for outreach schools and associated groups and visitors, and for student members from UEA and NUA. We provide guided tours of both our permanent collection and temporary exhibitions free of charge for a more in-depth visitor experience, and in keeping with our ethos, focus on artworks chosen by the visitor. We keep price points for our formal activities at a modest level to encourage participation.

Our Approach

Building

We aim to provide equal access wherever possible to our building and facilities to all visitors. It must be appreciated that being a Grade II* listed building, some physical adaptations are not possible to undertake. Nevertheless, we are constantly working towards improving facilities available to visitors with differing needs and will actively try to make our collections accessible, even where parts of the building are not.

Sculpture Park

We aim to work with the wider university to ensure access to the grounds for those visiting the Sculpture Park. Maps and trails are available.

Access to Collections

The Sainsbury Museum and Art Centre is committed to increasing public access to collections and information and to increasing knowledge and understanding of its exhibitions, collections and other research programmes. We provide varied means of access to collections, including through changing displays, layered interpretation for different audiences, object handling, publications, public programming, learning activities

and events. We are committed to offering opening hours to suit different audiences, and programming at different times of day. We also aim to increase access for all external researchers (including, but not limited to, academics, students and artists) to collections not on display. We have facilities for object viewing of collections in store, as well as using web-based resources, and providing first hand access to staff. We will regularly review balances between access and conservation requirements, ensuring that conservation needs are not a barrier to access wherever possible. Our collections are also fully digitised and available to view on our website and we provide those with access needs with alternative routes through the collections.

Access to Learning

The mission of the learning team is to build relationships between art, people and ideas. Its ambition is to place learning at the heart of the Sainsbury Museum and Art Centre's activity. We provide learning opportunities for different audiences and levels of ability, and tailor our programme to the needs of specific groups. We provide learning programmes for permanent displays and temporary exhibitions to provide interpretation with and for people from a range of backgrounds and abilities. We identify and develop partnerships with a range of other organisations to ensure that our activities continue to cater for the widest possible audiences, and we regularly programme activities with the aim of overcoming specific barriers to access.

Access to Front of House, Security and Volunteer Guides

Our Front of House and Security staff, as well as Volunteer Guides (and all staff), assist and welcome all visitors. They are available at all times to ensure safe access to the collections and to help visitors enjoy their visit while ensuring the security of the collections. We consider the comfort of our visitors by providing accessible toilets, including gender neutral toilets, baby changing facilities, access for pushchairs, seating in galleries and on-site wheelchairs. We aim to provide appropriate signage and navigation tools to suit a wide range of audiences, including in a range of sensory formats. All Front of House and Security staff and Volunteer Guides will receive adequate training in customer care and understanding needs of different audiences.

Access to Marketing and Communications

We promote the activities and events of the Sainsbury Museum and Art Centre using accessible means of communication and provide publicity material on request in alternative formats for a range of needs. We provide a range of ways in which people can communicate with us and undertake evaluation of our programmes and projects to ensure they meet the provision of this policy. We will consult visitors and non-visitors on all significant new developments and will undertake regular audience research to understand our visitors' and non-visitors' access needs and priorities.

Access and Development

The Sainsbury Museum and Art Centre ensures that access is a priority for fundraising, identifying potential financial support from public sector and trust funds as well as corporate

and individual sponsorship. We will seek external funding for priorities determined through this policy and related planning.

Delivery of Policy

We will ensure delivery of our approach in a number of ways including (but not limited) to the following:

- In July 2025 we commissioned a full access audit of the Sainsbury Museum and Art Centre to assess physical and non-physical barriers to access using specific measurable criteria, at a specific moment in time. These criteria are designed to observe the 'user friendliness' of a building from the point of view of disabled visitors or employees and to provide recommendations or suggestions for improvements.
- The resulting recommendations have informed an action of measures for the Sainsbury Museum and Art Centre and the University of East Anglia to address.
- Considerations around inclusivity, access and relevance is at the heart of decision making and is built into the project governance in line with all new projects within the University of East Anglia and the Sainsbury Museum and Art Centre
- Ensuring staff are fully trained and aware of access priorities including through all-staff training on specific themes and being made aware of access policy during new staff induction
- Development of best practice guidance for interpretation, including exhibition text and interactive opportunities
- Consideration of varied audience needs and learning styles in programming, including these in all exhibition planning proposal and development documents
- Development of collections online and website, as well as experimental behind the scenes visits, to enable greater access to collections and activities of the Sainsbury Museum and Art Centre
- Regular consultation with visitors (and non-visitors) to ensure broadest possible access to the Sainsbury Museum and Art Centre, including through working in partnership with UEA and wider organisations

Review of Policy

Information on access is available in different formats on our website and at the main reception desk and security desk. We will review the policy regularly (at least every 5 years) to ensure it is in line with national guidelines and standards.

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Date of endorsement: 09 October 2017

Date of review: October 2022, July 2024, June 2025, February 2026, November 2026