

## **1. AIM OF THE POLICY**

The aim of this policy is to set out the strategy for access to Lifelong Learning. It provides a framework to develop and embed this within the service.

## **2. WHAT WE MEAN BY LEARNING**

*Learning is what people do to make sense of the world.*

## **3. THE ROLE OF LEARNING WITHIN THE MUSEUM SERVICE**

A core role of the museum is to provide a dynamic learning environment and access to the collections for all, promoting and supporting a culture of lifelong learning in the City of Stoke-on-Trent. By learning we mean an active responsive exchange, not a one way transmission. Without access to the collections learning cannot take place. In this strategy learning implies access for all.

## **4. OUR AIMS**

### **4.1. Lifelong learning**

to promote lifelong learning, formal and informal, for staff, users and non users, whether facilitated or self directed.

### **4.2. The learning environment**

4.2.1. to create inspiring, accessible and dynamic learning environments and opportunities

4.2.2. to understand the learning needs of our users and non users

### **4.3. Working with others**

4.3.1. to develop fruitful learning partnerships

4.3.2. to work with other community and education service partners such as schools, artists, libraries, family support, Children and Young People's Services, The Regent Theatre, The New Vic Theatre, The Mitchell Arts Centre, disability groups and social care providers such as looked after children and vulnerable children

4.3.3. to work with diverse community groups

### **4.4. Making our collections accessible**

- 4.4.1. to ensure access to collections is facilitated in a range of multi layered ways for a wide range of users
- 4.4.2. to explore the social and educational potential of our collections
- 4.4.3. to provide subject expertise and authoritative information
- 4.4.4. to continue to carry out and initiate research
- 4.4.5. to make innovative use of existing and new technologies
- 4.4.6. to research and evaluate new ways to interpret our collections
- 4.4.7. to ensure that specialist staff have protected time to keep abreast of change in their field
- 4.4.8. to involve communities in interpreting our collections

#### **4.5. Exhibitions and galleries**

- 4.5.1. to let the audience voice be heard through shared interpretation of exhibits
- 4.5.2. to provide inclusive learning activities to facilitate these aims, taking into account a range of learning styles, physical and mental abilities

#### **4.6. Formal education**

- 4.6.1. to respond to the needs of the schools of Stoke-on-Trent and neighbouring authorities by providing a range of active and thought-provoking activities which support the National Curriculum
- 4.6.2. to continue to work with the primary schools in Stoke on Trent and, whilst currently working with more than half of the secondary schools in the authority, aim to engage with all of them.
- 4.6.3. to address and respond to new developments in education, e.g. the changing focus of the National Curriculum for primary schools for 2014 and Every Child Matters
- 4.6.4. to ensure that all relevant staff members have the opportunities to learn about changes in the sector
- 4.6.5. to provide CPD for learning professionals outside the museum service, including teachers, to enable them to gain better access to the collections in addition to increasing their understanding of the power of museums as a learning tool

#### **4.7. Innovation and technology**

- 4.7.1. to work with the digital team to ensure that new technologies are used to maximise access to learning
- 4.7.2. to continue to inspire new and existing audiences through developing new and innovative ways of providing access to collections
- 4.7.3. to provide accessible learning opportunities for staff, museum sector colleagues and service users, with a focus on improving access to affordable digital technologies

#### **4.8. Reaching out**

- 4.8.1. to use the museums' collections to provide meaningful outreach and community engagement opportunities
- 4.8.2. to identify and respond to the needs of a broad spectrum of social groups, making use of the Generic Social Outcomes framework
- 4.8.3. to continue to consult with communities to ensure an improving, inclusive service, which is accessible to all
- 4.8.4. to integrate outreach and site based work
- 4.8.5. to ensure that outreach staff have the opportunity to keep abreast of new developments in social inclusion and community engagement

#### **4.9. Planning for evaluation**

We will structure and evaluate the work of the Museums Service by using Inspiring Learning for all and other techniques as appropriate.

#### **4.10. The Museums service as a Learning organisation will**

- celebrate learning
- support members of staff in their own learning
- see learning as integral to its work
- will be responsive to the needs of the City of Stoke-on-Trent

### **5. OUR RESPONSE TO LOCAL AND REGIONAL AGENDAS**

- 5.1. Our museums' objectives are in line with **Stoke-on-Trent City Council's vision: *Excellent services, valued by customers.***
- 5.2. The museum service can be a valuable resource in fostering Community Cohesion.

### **6. OUR RESPONSE TO NATIONAL AGENDAS**

- 6.1. The policy takes account of the need to be in touch with and respond to relevant national agendas:
- 6.2. **Cultural Entitlement**  
The museums service should play an active role by continuing to work with the primary schools in Stoke-on-Trent and whilst currently working with more than half of the secondary schools in the authority should strive to increase that to all secondary schools.

**6.3. Sandford Award for Heritage Education Manifesto**

We are signatories to this manifesto and will aim to ensure that Museum learning is recognised as an essential cultural and educational asset young people in formal learning. We have achieved the award for The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery and for Gladstone Pottery Museum. This award will be renewed every five years.

**6.4. Inspiring Learning for All (ILfA)**

The use of ILfA should be ongoing. This strategy is underpinned by Inspiring Learning for All and the generic social outcomes in order to:

- 6.4.1. structure and evaluate the work of the Museums Service by using Inspiring Learning for all
- 6.4.2. act upon the results of this evaluation and review
- 6.4.3. integrate outreach and museum-based work to enrich learning experiences for all
- 6.4.4. work in partnership with other community service partners such as arts, libraries, family support and education
- 6.4.5. support the learning needs of members of staff
- 6.4.6. be responsive to the needs of the City of Stoke-on-Trent

**7. THE MUSEUMS SERVICE, STAFF AND LIFELONG LEARNING**

We will provide learning opportunities for all ages within the museums service. This will be developed by fostering collaboration between existing teams, both core and externally funded staff, working on the ACE Strategic Fund bid (Connecting with Collections, Inspiring Interpretation) and Stoke-on-Trent Councils Mandate for Change.

**8. VOLUNTEERS**

Across the two sites of the museum service volunteers play very different roles. We will share experiences across the sites to ensure that there is a two way exchange of learning between volunteers and paid staff who will work alongside each other. We will value the role of volunteers in making our collections more accessible to our visitors and enhance their learning experience.

## **9. OUR AUDIENCE - USERS and NON USERS; INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL**

We will continue to consult with our users through surveys on the [stoke.gov.uk/museum](http://stoke.gov.uk/museum) website and in the galleries.

- 9.1.** Links with other teams in the council will assist us in the identification of non user groups. Links already made in the course of previous events and exhibitions will be revisited. Access and Learning will work closely with audience development. We will support non users so that they can become 'supported users' and hopefully some will move to become regular visitors
  
- 9.2.** Non users will become users and our service will become increasingly inclusive

## **10. PARTNERSHIPS**

We will continue to seek to form partnerships both with those within the City Council such as schools, Children and Young Peoples Services and libraries and those beyond, such as the theatre, community groups, educational institutions, industry and other museums, including nationals such as the Natural History Museum with the Real World Science Partnership.

## **11. LEARNING ACTIVITIES**

- We will provide learning activities to suit our visitors who range widely in terms of age, interests and the level at which they want to interact with our collection.
- We will consult with our visitors to find out what they would like from us.
- We will continue to evaluate and develop our existing provision for schools, families, expert visitors and seek new groups.
- We will continue to develop our formal education offer for schools through consultation with teachers through a series of inset days.
- We will continue to learn from each other.
- We will bear in mind how people differ in how they learn and how they like to interact with people and objects. To this end education and outreach staff will have involvement in exhibition and event planning where they will share their knowledge about areas, such as learning styles, with others.
- We will strive to achieve the status of a learning organisation.

## **12. SHARING SKILLS**

- 12.1.** We will incorporate skills sharing in our planning and work by learning from the best practice of others and sharing our successes with others both within and outside the museum service. We will use the PDR system to plan to share our skills across the service and outside it. We will incorporate evaluation of these learning experiences into our planning.
- 12.2.** It is the aim of this strategy to foster the growth of the museum service as a learning organisation in the broadest sense.