

**Great Western Society Ltd**  
**Didcot Railway Centre – living Museum of the Great Western Railway**  
**Access Plan, 2020 to 2025, version 1**

## **1. Introduction**

The Accreditation Standard<sup>1</sup> requires us to have plans to maintain, and where possible to improve:

- the physical, sensory and intellectual access to our collections
- information about our collections
- access to the buildings housing our collections

The GWS Board approved the revised Access Policy in July 2020. This Access Plan outlines priorities for action based on the Access Policy and recommendations of the latest access assessment.

This Access Plan supports the aims of the GWS Business Plan, 2020 – 2025:

- Aim 1 - Improved brand and engagement
- Aim 2 - Learning central to all we do
- Aim 3 - Engage and inspire our visitors
- Aim 4 - Heritage to inspire future generations
- Aim 5 - Protecting and sharing our environment
- Aim 6 - Fit for the future

The Action Plan highlights how each action supports these aims.

The Access Plan could be included in the Business Plan but it has been agreed to keep the Access Plan a separate document for now as, although there will be areas it crosses over with the Audience Development Strategy, there will also be areas specific to both where there is no overlap.

## **2. Access Plan**

The Access Plan is structured around the Accreditation Guidance<sup>2</sup> which requires the plan to outline procedures for:

- Public access – including how we provide information on what is and is not available for public access; and how we provide access to collections, both on display and in store, and to information on the collections
- Research – our procedures for handling research enquiries
- Access to professional advice for our organisation – where we access support, obtain advice and help

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<sup>1</sup> Accreditation Standard, November 2018, Arts Council England

<sup>2</sup> Accreditation Guidance, March 2019, Arts Council England

- Training for our workforce – how we ensure everyone is aware of access requirements

The tables below indicate the lead department for each action.

## 2.1 Dismantling barriers to public access - general

Action	Responsibility	Aim
Develop new and innovative ways to engage people with different access needs with the collection.	L&E/GWT <sup>3</sup>	4
Encourage and act on feedback from visitors.	VE&M	3
Review the Signage Policy and Schedule to ensure compliance with current accessibility guidance.	CE&D/BS/VE&M	1
Develop a fully accessible and engaging programme of accessible activities.	L&E	3
Develop an interpretation strategy that sets out how we provide information on what is and is not available for public access; and how we provide access to collections, both on display and in store.	BS/GWT	6
Review displays to improve accessibility of the collection to the public.	L&E/VE&M/BS GWT	3
Review accessibility guide to ensure access information is clear.	BS	1
Commission access audits for all new developments to ensure accessibility is designed into all new buildings.	CE&D/BS	6

## 2.2 Physical access

We recognise the need to ensure that visitors with limited mobility can access the collection and activities.

Action	Responsibility	Aim
Ensure that maintenance priorities comply with our Maintenance Works strategy, which ensures the maintenance of safe walking routes.	CE&D	3
Implement safe procedures for using the Stairclimber and train staff in its safe use.	VE&M	1

<sup>3</sup> See the Glossary of terms on page 6 for SMT members' titles

<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Aim</b>
Develop accessible trail for visitors with reduced mobility (as per GWR Customer and Communities Improvement Fund grant funding).	BS	3
Continue to improve accessibility to existing buildings when considering maintenance.	CE&D/O	1
Develop a maintenance plan for our wheelchairs to ensure they can be used safely.	O	1
Review seating around the Centre to provide resting places for visitors with reduced mobility.	CE&D/O	6
Develop plans to improve accessibility to our carriages, including an accessible coach.	O (C&W)	3

### 2.3 Sensory access

We recognise the need to ensure that visitors with hearing or visual impairment can access the collection and activities.

<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Aim</b>
Review good practice on improving displays and publicity for visually impaired and hearing impaired visitors, including use of large print and subtitles.	L&E/GWT	1
Develop on request tours and events that are specifically designed for people with sensory impairments	L&E/VE&M	3
Ensure DRC website meets appropriate standards for web accessibility.	VE&M	1
Ensure that future video-based exhibits have subtitles if they use the spoken word and that, budget allowing, key audio-visual exhibits include BSL as well as subtitles	GWT	3

### 2.4 Intellectual access

We recognise that some visitors and users may have learning difficulties which affect their ability to engage with the museum; and some may not be able to read or speak English.

<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Aim</b>
Develop a programme of guided tours for all abilities, including specialist enthusiasts and general interest.	L&E	3

<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Aim</b>
Ensure text used in displays, exhibitions, educational resources, publications, website and social media channels is carefully tailored to the needs of their intended audiences.	GWT/L&E/BS	1
Review the need for tailored programmes for special schools, and sessions for people on the autistic spectrum or with dementia.	L&E	2
Consider the provision of materials in a range of languages.	BS	1
Ensure brand guidelines are developed in line with accessibility standards.	VE&M	1
Ensure accessibility of electronic and written publications.	All	1

## **2.5 Attitudinal and cultural access**

We recognise that some users may lack of interest in, or awareness of, the Centre and our collections, our programmes and services, or feel they are not relevant and do not reflect their cultural or social heritage

<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Aim</b>
Develop a training programme to welcome all visitors and put them at ease.	VE&M/L&E	2
Provide safe areas for visitors on the autistic spectrum	CE&D/O/VE&M	3
Continue to develop consultation arrangements with local and other community groups, including the Didcot Access Group, to ensure display and interpretation meets their needs.	L&E/BS	1

## **2.6 Technological access**

We recognise that some users may not have access to the internet at home or use a mobile phone.

<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Aim</b>
Ensure that alternative channels are available for visitors with limited technology, including telephone enquiries.	VE&M	1

## 2.7 Economic access

We recognise that some users may not be able to afford to visit the Centre or take part in our programmes.

Action	Responsibility	Aim
Develop a flexible range of prices and ticket types where possible, while ensuring the Centre's financial sustainability, including concessions for those on benefits, students and carers.	VE&M	1
Develop an outreach programme to schools that find it difficult to meet the cost of visiting	L&E	4
Work with the local community to support people who may not be able to afford admission charges.	L&E	3

## 2.8 Geographic access

We recognise that some users may live too far away to visit the Centre.

Action	Responsibility	Aim
Explore ways of making the collection accessible to people who cannot physically visit the Centre, including developing online access to the collection, more focused geographic messaging of memorabilia around specific villages and stations and a virtual DRC	GWT/L&E	1
Review the potential for loans to museums in a wider geographical area.	GWT	1
Develop displays in public spaces and at local, national and community events	VE&M	1

## 3. Research

We welcome researchers and will review procedures for handling research enquiries to ensure the collection is accessible to all. We are also developing our potential to become a lead body for providing digital access to our GWR archive.

## 4. Access assessment

A full Access Audit was carried out in April 2006 and reviewed in 2008 and recommendations were incorporated into the business plan. In 2019 as part of the Stairclimber project, funded by GWR's Customer & Communities Improvement Fund, we commissioned Lord Consultants to carry out a review of physical access and to advise us on the development of an accessible route for visitors with reduced mobility, which has been incorporated in this Plan.

## **5. Training**

We will provide training in access matters for our Directors, staff and volunteers, including covering access in the induction programme.

We will ensure that Visitor Services Team members are aware of visitors' access needs and the facilities available

## **6. Approval and Review**

The Access Plan will be reviewed as part of the monitoring and evaluation cycle for the Business Plan and progress will be included in quarterly reports to the Board on delivery against the aims. The Access Plan will be reviewed annually to ensure it continues to support the business plan.

The Access Plan was discussed and approved by the Senior Management Team on 17 December 2020

## **Glossary of terms**

BS	Business Support
C&W	Carriage & Wagon
CE&D	Civil Engineering & Development
GWT	Great Western Trust
L&E	Learning & Engagement
O	Operations
VE&M	Visitor Experience & Marketing