

# **National Museums & Galleries of Wales**

POLICY on ACCESS to and USE of the COLLECTIONS  
REVIEWED JULY 2000  
NEXT REVIEW JULY 2005

## **CONTENTS**

INTRODUCTION  
ACCESS TO AND USE OF COLLECTIONS  
MAXIMISING ACCESS  
LIMITED ACCESS  
CHARGES

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

a. Collections are the *raison d'être* of museums; without collections they would not be museums. In the past collections were made largely for their own sake, but today it is recognised that collections are acquired for the knowledge they encapsulate as well as any aesthetic value. Providing access to their collections and knowledge is thus a fundamental duty of every museum.

b. Our collections exist for the advancement of knowledge, an ethos only achievable if objects and specimens are made available for research, education, exhibition, loan and photography.

c. We hold collections in trust for the public, access and use of which is not only for the present, but also for future generations. Access and use must therefore be consistent with the conservation, care and security needs of the object(s) or specimen(s) to ensure their long-term survival.

d. It is our policy to make our collections accessible to all within the reasonable constraints of resources, conservation and security.

### **2. ACCESS TO AND USE OF COLLECTIONS**

a. Access to collections involves providing physical proximity to objects and intellectual use of the information held concerning them.

b. Physical access is provided through display, temporary exhibitions, loans, and access to study and reference collections. Access is available subject to our criteria for care and management of collections being satisfied and in accordance with our requirements given in our Policy on the Care of the Collections, and through the loan of objects or specimens, detailed in our Policy on Loans.

c. Intellectual access involves making available information about objects and specimens through exhibitions, catalogues and other publications in manual and/or electronic formats, photographic media and access to supplementary information about the collection. (See also our Policy on the Documentation of the Museum's Collections.)

d. Members of all sectors of the community are encouraged to access and use specimens, objects or information in our collection.

e. We are committed to providing longer-term and temporary exhibitions of specimens and objects in its collections.

f. We will identify objects or specimens from amongst its collections that can be handled unsupervised. We will also seek to acquire objects or specimens for this purpose (see our Policy on the Acquisition and Disposal of the Collections).

g. We will offer physical and/or intellectual access to collections through outreach programmes, events, activities and lectures.

### **3. MAXIMISING ACCESS**

a. Exhibitions will be advertised widely in publicity material, our website address, the local and national press and other media.

b. Access arrangements to facilities, including educational events, study and reference collections, identification services, library and archive facilities will be governed by departmental Policies on Access and Use.

c. We offer facilities for the study and use of collections. These facilities are open to all, within the normal constraints on access and use.

d. We make no discrimination for access on the basis of physical, sensory or intellectual ability, cultural origin, age or social status, and will seek to widen general access and social inclusion.

### **4. LIMITED ACCESS**

a. Access and use must be balanced against the conservation, care and security of the objects or specimens to ensure their long-term survival. Any request for access that might jeopardise the long-term future of any objects or specimens may be refused, with full reasons offered. However, the opportunity to examine a photograph or replica of the objects or specimens concerned will be granted whenever reasonably possible.

b. In some cases, access to particular objects or specimens of particularly high value, fragility or sensitivity (for instance, type specimens or human remains) will be restricted to students, scholars and others with a demonstrable need to see the material.

c. Access to collections of human remains or objects of specific cultural significance will not be granted when there is reason to suspect that there is intention to trivialise or sensationalise the specimens.

d. It may be necessary to restrict or to keep confidential information regarding the acquisition of a specimen or object (for instance, in order to protect vulnerable sites or in order to respect an individual's request for confidentiality).

e. Access to notes resulting from research carried out by or on behalf of NMGW will be made available within defined periods. (This will not normally be longer than three years after completion of the active collection of specimens/data, regardless of whether or not the work is published.)

f. Access may be restricted by conditions of donation or of loan, and we shall advise enquirers of this.

## **5. CHARGES**

a. Access to or use of longer-term and temporary exhibitions and educational facilities may be subject to charges being levied in accordance with current Museum policy.

b. Access to or use of the study and reference collections and loans is normally free, unless this is required for commercial purposes (for example filming or photography). In such circumstances the Museum reserves the right to levy a fee.

a. Provision of information about collections (for example photographs) may also be subject to charges.