



# **Keats House Access Policy**

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Keats House is provided by the City of London Corporation as part of its contribution to the cultural life of London and the nation

## **Introduction**

Keats House is committed to maximising access for all, regardless of ability, age, gender, cultural or social background, sexual orientation, faith, language, location or wealth, by minimising or removing barriers that can prevent engagement with our buildings, collections, programmes, staff, marketing collateral, website and social media channels.

We seek, within the limitations of our buildings and other resources, to offer the widest, richest, most engaging access for all our users; and we recognise that access must be addressed through the actions of the organisation as a whole as well as at a local level, noting that access provision benefits people generally, not just those with specific needs.

## **Policy review procedure**

This policy was approved by the Culture and Heritage Committee in October 2016. We will review the policy every three years to ensure it is in line with national guidelines and standards, and we will incorporate actions that arise from this policy in its three year forward plan. The policy will next be reviewed in October 2019.

## **Our definition of access**

Keats House recognises there are many barriers to access at all levels of its service. However, it respects that all people have a fundamental right to engage with, use and enjoy the service. The House defines access as something that is made possible when physical, cultural, social, financial, intellectual, psychological and emotional barriers are removed or reduced.

## **Our commitment to accessibility**

Keats House aims to provide the widest possible access to its buildings, collections and services to enable audiences from all sections of the community to enjoy use of the House. Keats House is committed to providing access to services to enable independent use wherever possible.

Our policy is to build accessibility into everything we do to develop and improve the service. Our commitment is long-term and our policy is to make continuous improvements as our resources permit.

Our commitment to accessibility extends to our staff, volunteers and work placements as well as visitors and other users. We are committed to ongoing training in access issues for staff and volunteers.

To eliminate barriers and ensure equality of access we will consider the following forms of accessibility:

1. **Physical** – to enable people with physical disabilities to reach and appreciate every part of the service, taking into account the needs of the elderly and of people caring for young people;
2. **Sensory** – to enable visitors with impaired vision or hearing to enjoy the House and its collections;
3. **Intellectual** – to recognise that people have different learning styles and provide interpretation through a range of learning models, ensuring those with learning difficulties can also engage with and enjoy the House and its collections;
4. **Cultural** – to consider the needs of people for whom English is not a first language, or whose knowledge of English history and culture may be limited;
5. **Attitudinal / emotional** – to ensure the House's environment and staff are welcoming to visitors from all sections of the community; and
6. **Financial** – to recognise that ability to pay can be a barrier to access and offer opportunities for those on lower incomes to access the service.

### **Keats House (the building)**

While we aim to provide equal access to Keats House and our facilities for all visitors and users, it must be appreciated that, as a listed building, some physical adaptations to the House are impossible or very difficult to realise. Nevertheless we will constantly work towards improving the facilities available to visitors with disabilities.

### **Access to collections**

Our staff are committed to increasing public access to the collections and information, and to increasing knowledge and understanding of John Keats and our world-class collection:

- We will provide varied means of access to the collections, including displays, educational sessions, guided tours and events;
- We will provide levels of information and interpretation to suit a range of audiences and abilities, ensuring that the presentation and labelling of displays respects a diversity of backgrounds; and
- We will develop our handling collections to improve sensory access and to foster different approaches to learning in the House; and
- We will develop a programme of loans to enable new audiences to see the collection on display and to improve access to items currently in storage.

### **Access to learning**

Keats House will provide learning opportunities for different audiences and levels of ability and tailor its programme to the needs of specific groups where possible.

We will identify and develop partnerships with a range of educational and community organisations to ensure that activities continue to cater for the widest possible audiences.

### **Access to visitor services**

Our staff and front-of-house volunteers will assist and welcome all visitors. They will be available in the House to help people understand and enjoy the collections:

- We will consider the comfort of our visitors by providing accessible toilets, baby changing facilities, large print guides and seating in the House; and
- We will develop appropriate signage and navigation tools to suit a range of audiences.

### **Access to communication**

We will promote our activities and events using accessible means of communication:

- We will provide a range of ways that people can communicate with us, including telephone, email, post and social media; and
- We will evaluate all our services and projects to ensure they meet the provision of this policy and we will consult users and non-users on new developments.