

Access Policy

STATUS: Approved

August 2023/August 2024

Policy Owner: Head of Heritage & Collections

Date approved:

Next Review Date: August 2027

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set out The Royal Institution's (the Ri) commitment to maximising access to the Ri's building (including Michael Faraday Museum), activities and collection and to identify the best ways in which to achieve this across the organisation.

2. Scope

This Access Policy relates to all the services, activities, facilities, collections and online content of the Ri.

3. Context

This policy is created in line with the Arts Council England (ACE) Museum Accreditation Scheme. An approved Access Policy is both good practice and a requirement of Museum Accreditation. Museums participating in the scheme must have an approved Access Policy by its governing body. It should cover how people can gain access to the building, its collection and activities and how the organisation shares information about the collection with people.

4. Governance and Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the Board of Trustees to agree and approve the creation and maintenance of this policy. A record of the approval minute must be maintained and supplied to Arts Council England (ACE) during the Accreditation resubmission.

5. Policy statement

This policy supports the Ri's statement of purpose by providing a framework that strives to include all visitors, potential visitors, clients, volunteers, and staff. The Ri aims to make its buildings and collections accessible, by removing as many physical, intellectual, or cultural barriers to access as practically possible within the limits of legal, budgetary, and planning considerations.

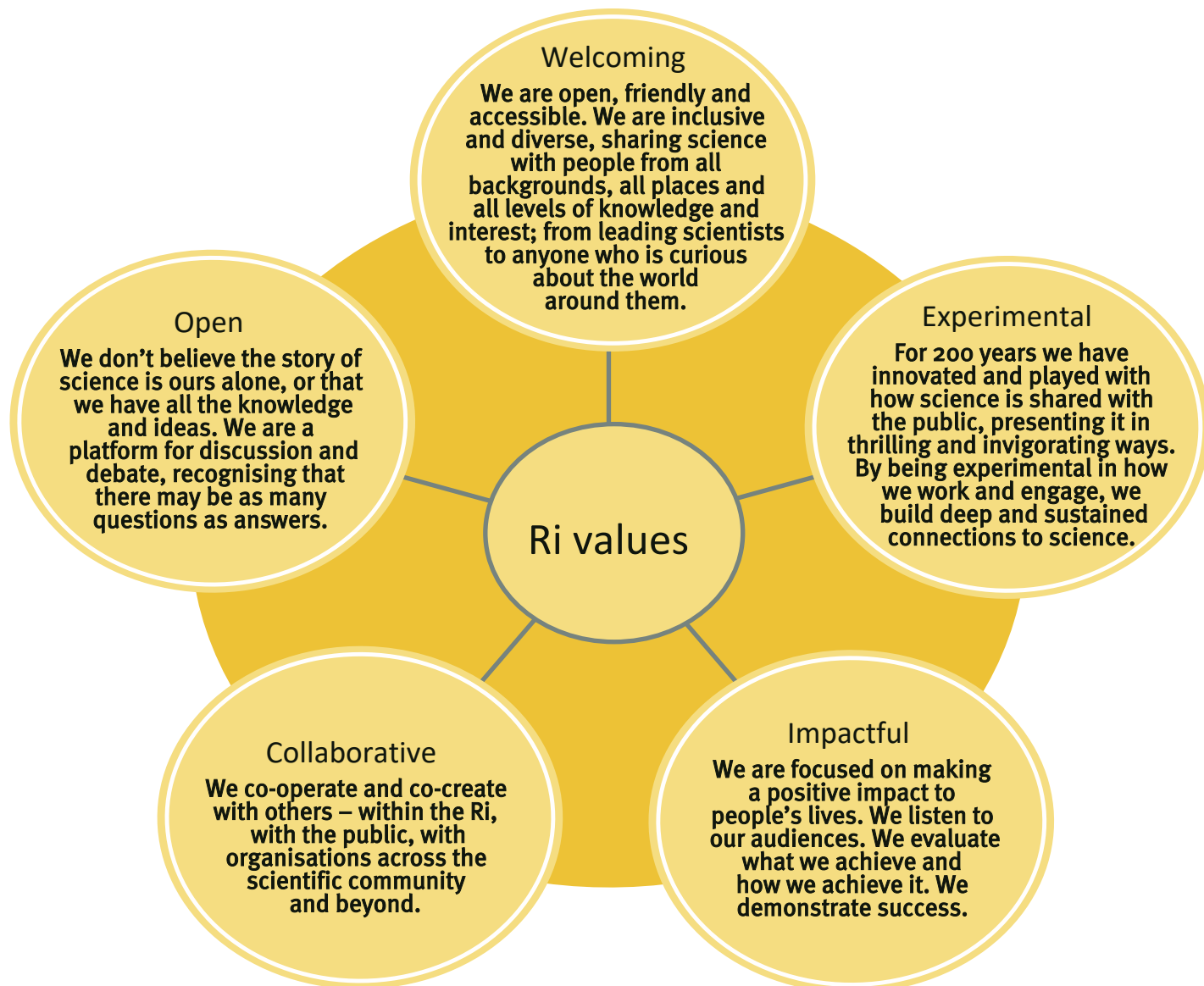
5.1 The Ri's 2023-2028 Strategy has access at its core:

5.2 We are committed to an audience-first focus, believing there should be equitable access to science and that people's desire to engage with science and scientists should be nourished. This belief is set out in the Institution's Vision, Belief and Mission:

5.3 Our vision
Science is for everyone.

5.4 Our belief
Science transforms lives and underpins the modern world – from health to the latest technology, the environment, and the furthest reaches of our universe. Science is part of culture, but not everyone has the same opportunity to engage. The Ri believes there should be equitable access to science, and that people's desire to engage with science and scientists should be nourished.

- 5.5 Our mission
The Ri is a charity that brings the public and scientists together to share their interest and passion for science. We empower people to explore and get involved. We are a home for science and everyone is welcome.
- 5.6 The development of our Access Policy is underpinned by the establishment of key organisational strategy values (2023-2028):



5.7 Key organisational strategic aims and objectives:

- To create a space for scientists and the public to explore science together.
- Providing platforms for the public and scientists to interact and shape each other's views.
- To drive deeper engagement with science and the Ri.
- Involving our audiences and providing opportunities to move along an engagement journey.
- To enable more people to engage with science through the Ri.
- Growing our audiences, reaching new and more diverse audiences, making science more accessible, and making the Ri more open, accessible and welcoming.
- To enable science to be shared in engaging ways.
- Being a home for science communication and demonstrations and supporting teaching and practical skills for STEM.

- To inspire students to have a future with science.
- Providing inclusive experiences of science for students of all ages and showcasing the relevance of science in our lives.
- To build on the Ri's heritage of scientific discovery, demonstrations and pioneering public engagement.
- Preserving and interpreting our collection for future study and enjoyment and to enable wider and deeper engagement, while communicating the Ri's continuous traditions of discovery and engagement.
- To shape a thriving and sustainable Ri.
- Enhancing our financial stability, creating an empowering, inclusive and diverse workplace and reducing our environmental impact, while maximising our operational effectiveness.

5.8 The Access Policy is critical to the fulfilment of these objectives.

6. Policy detail

6.1 The Royal Institution is committed to understanding who its visitors/users and non-visitors/users are so that we can understand their needs and provide access to the building, facilities, collections and services.

6.2 The Ri is committed to developing and diversifying its audiences and will regularly consult and evaluate its services, using this information to ensure that, where feasible, the needs of the audiences are met.

6.3 Building and associated services

The Ri seeks to provide all visitors with access to the building, making alternative provision where required and feasible, within the constraints of Grade One Listed Building status. It ensures that current and future building projects provide appropriate physical access for all visitors. Expert advice is sought where required. Some of the facilities we provide include:

- All entry points into the building have level access, with a lift available for easy movement to upper and lower floors.
- Emergency refuge points are located throughout the building.
- Stools – available throughout the lower ground floor museum space. Visitors are welcome to bring their own folding stool.
- Assistance dogs are welcome.
- Adapted toilets and baby changing rooms are located on the ground floor. First aid points are located throughout the building.
- Induction loops at desks, in conference room facilities, and for theatre talks and films.
- Information for potential visitors explaining opening times, services and access to the collections is available on our website, social media and by telephone/email.
- Priority seating signage
- Sunflower Lanyards
- Ear defenders
- Anti-glare glasses
- Onsite wheelchair
- Evac+Chair 900H

6.4 Collections Access

6.4.1 The Ri focuses on making its collections accessible for the inspiration, learning and enjoyment of all; to display, interpret and make accessible the heritage and history of the Ri through exhibitions, displays, events and education programmes.

- 6.4.2 The Ri curates and conserves the collections it holds in trust, ensuring their preservation for future generations and is committed to their continued access.
- 6.4.3 The Ri is committed to increasing public access to the collections and information and to increase knowledge and understanding of the heritage and collections of the Royal Institution.
- 6.4.4 The Ri provides access and interpretation to the collections through permanent displays, temporary exhibitions, loans, events, activities, web/social media development, archive reading room booking and tours. The provision of access is balanced against the appropriate care and management of the collections.
- 6.4.5 Development of a separate and detailed Collections Information Policy and an Ri Interpretation Strategy will further inform visitors/users about the Ri's collection and set out the levels of access and restrictions for the diverse users of the collection. The Collections Information Policy will be concerned with both the physical and intellectual access to the collection by the various groups of users.

7 Safety in the building

- 7.1 The Ri takes account of the needs of all visitors in all our safety procedures. It is the policy of the Ri to enable all occupants of the building to be evacuated at the same time in an emergency.
- 7.2 The Ri provides staff trained in responding to emergencies, including fire safety, and first aid incidents. This provision is regularly tested and updated by the Facilities Team.

8 Information and signage

- 8.1 The Ri aims to provide information throughout the building, in forms that are accessible to all visitors, employees and tenants.
- 8.2 The Ri considers the needs of visitors when preparing and presenting activities, collections information and interpretation, signage, and online content.
- 8.3 The Ri ensures that all information and communication (including leaflets, labels, website, social media, newsletters) follow good practice and the Ri's style guide.
- 8.4 Some of the further resources we provide include:
- Large print versions of the floor plan – available from Front of House
 - Large print label guide – available from Front of House
 - Wayfinding information and maps around the building for ease of movement

9 Digital Access

- 9.1 We provide digital access to our programmes, collections and resources on and offsite in the following ways:
- Through our website/social media channels
 - Digital content made available through the medium of film and audio content on our website and through YouTube.
 - Wi-Fi throughout the building
- 9.2 At the Royal Institution, we are committed to making our website accessible to everyone.
- 9.3 Our website has been built to conform to WCAG 2.0 (level AA) wherever possible, although multi-media content may conform to a lower standard. This means users should be able to:

- change colours, contrast levels and fonts
- zoom in up to 300% without the text spilling off the screen
- navigate most of our websites using just a keyboard
- navigate most of our websites using speech recognition software
- listen to most of our websites using a screen reader (including the most recent versions of JAWS, NVDA and VoiceOver)

9.4 We aim to provide closed captions alongside all Ri-produced videos. If users require further advice on making their devices easier to use then the Royal Institution recommend accessing AbilityNet (<https://abilitynet.org.uk/>)

9.5 Our text size can be adjusted via options in the browser's 'View' or 'Page' menu. This can also be done via a keyboard:

- PC users: Select 'Ctrl' and '+' or '-'
- Mac Users: Select 'Cmd' and '+' or '-'

9.6 Some of the resources on the website are available to view or download in Portable Document Format (PDF) and Microsoft Word.

9.7 Users need Adobe Acrobat Reader to read PDF files, which can be downloaded for free from the Adobe website.

10 Learning with the Ri

10.1 The Ri delivers a wide range of learning programmes for different audiences, designed to suit different levels of knowledge, backgrounds, interests, and learning styles.

10.2 The Ri is committed to continually upgrading its programmes to extend the reach and audience participation. Consultation therefore takes place with specialist organisations, educational professionals and other museums and galleries, and the Ri's own visitors/users, on the best and most practical ways of improving intellectual access.

10 Customer Care

10.1 All Ri staff and volunteers are involved in implementing this policy and assisting in welcoming all visitors, users, clients and participants.

10.2 All users of the Ri and its building will be treated with equal respect within the inclusive atmosphere and welcomed. Wherever possible the Ri will provide signage and navigation to suit a range of needs and will respond to requests made by users regarding information required in alternative formats, as resources allow.

10.3 The Ri is committed to providing a safe environment for all. It has procedures for safe evacuation for all users and staff in an emergency and also has a detailed child and adult safeguarding policy and procedure.

11 Employment and training

11.1 The Ri ensures that its employment practices do not discriminate against people with disabilities and maintains a system for monitoring and reviewing procedures. Equality and diversity awareness forms an integral part of mandatory training for all staff.

12 Assessments

12.1 A comprehensive Access Review was conducted - May 2013.

12.2 A Building Access Audit was conducted by EMBED on behalf of Purple - February 2023. An internal working group, led by an Ri Director was established in January 2024 with the remit of 'Making the Ri more welcoming' - the aim of the group is to look at improving and implementing change throughout the building and Ri activities.

13. Relevant/ linked policy, procedures, or forms

The Access policy informs, and is informed by, the following Ri Policies:

Child Safeguarding policy and safeguarding procedures
Adult Safeguarding policy and safeguarding procedures
Health and Safety policy
Data Protection policy
Flexible Working policy
EDIA policy
Social Media policy

14. This policy is required to be reviewed at least every 3 years.
If there are significant changes to the Ri's premises, facilities, activities and provision of information/interpretation this policy should be reviewed and updated accordingly. This is a working document.