

New guidance for reopening of museums, galleries and the heritage sector

- Guidance on heritage buildings and attractions will help get the nation's much loved heritage sector back up and running
- Timed tickets, cashless payments and social distancing will be in use at attractions and museums

New guidance, published today, will outline how museums, galleries, heritage attractions and historic buildings can begin to reopen to the public, paving the way for an economic boost to the sectors.

Guidance for the heritage sector has been published by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport in collaboration with Historic England and guidance for museums has been published by the National Museum Directors' Council with DCMS support. Both will outline the processes and facilities that businesses and organisations must put in place before reopening so that staff and visitors can be kept safe.

The guidance is specifically for heritage attractions, those running businesses from historic and listed buildings, and those working to conserve and protect heritage assets.

The sector-specific guidance for museums and galleries enhances existing guidance, including advice for working in labs and research facilities, reopening gift shops and cafes and managing visitors.

Providing the conditions of the guidance are met, the wider sector is currently expected to open from 4 July 2020.

The guidance makes clear that the following measures should be considered to allow for safe reopening:

At museums:

- Timed tickets may need to be pre-booked to reduce the number of people entering an exhibition or site at one time.
- Clearly communicated one way routes and spaced queuing systems may be introduced to manage the flow of visitors.
- Regular cleaning regimes should be intensified during the day and beyond opening hours.
- Access to audio guides may need to be reviewed, with museums considering new formats for the content such as apps that can be accessed on personal devices or quarantine periods for public handsets.
- Specialist training may need to be provided for roles impacted by the new guidance, for example Front of House staff managing new operating conditions or for roles where social distancing is difficult to maintain.
- Shops and cafes will need to reopen in line with guidance for food businesses and retail spaces and should encourage visitors to pay via

contactless methods where possible.□

At heritage sites:

- One way systems, clear floor markings and a queue management system should be in place where needed to maintain social distancing measures at all attractions and help to limit contact between both staff and visitors.
- Organisations will also encourage contactless payments throughout.
- Booking procedures should be reviewed and pre-booking could be introduced at heritage attractions to reduce the number of visitors in locations at the same time.□

All sites will be instructed to produce risk assessments and review their cleaning regimes, however deep cleaning and social distancing systems, including floor markings are all required to be completed in a way that does not damage the historic fabric of the buildings.

Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden said:

Our museums, galleries and heritage attractions are world-class and this guidance will help get these sectors back up and running. It will not only pave the way for beloved institutions to welcome back visitors but also support important preservation to protect our historic buildings and ancient artefacts.

The reopening of these sectors will help to boost local economies all over the country and ensure our national heritage is safe and open for all.

National Museum Directors Council Chair Sir Ian Blatchford said:

We welcome the guidance from DCMS to allow for the safe reopening of our galleries to the public and the collaborative spirit in which the museum guidelines were developed, drawing on expertise from colleagues across our sector. All museums are keen to resume their vital role at the heart of communities but, as our guidelines recognise, the timing of re-opening will depend on local context, conversations with partners and a careful assessment of each museum's ability to open its doors in a safe and financially sustainable manner.

Duncan Wilson, Historic England's Chief Executive, said:

This guidance aims to help businesses in the heritage sector get back up and running in a way that is safe for workers, volunteers

and visitors. As is the case for many others, the heritage sector and people's livelihoods have been greatly affected by the COVID-19 outbreak. We hope that this guidance will help businesses in the heritage sector find new ways of working during these difficult times.

This guidance will be for organisations in England. Organisations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland should adhere to the advice of the devolved administrations at all times.

The guidance is part of the government's clear, phased approach to recovering from the coronavirus pandemic, as outlined in the Prime Minister's roadmap.

Read the guidance in full

[Guidance for people who work or volunteer in heritage locations](#)

[NMDC Good Practice Guidelines on Opening Museums After July 4th](#)