

Elgin Museum: Customer Charter 2025

Museum's statement of purpose

The Moray Society, a membership organisation, owns and manages the Elgin Museum. The purpose of Elgin Museum is to conserve and display the objects and archive in its care, to act as a focus for learning and enjoyment for all and to support the appreciation of the natural history, culture and heritage of Moray and to maintain the buildings in its ownership.

To ensure that visitors are at the heart of Elgin Museum's practice, we have agreed a ten-point Customer Charter that aims to deliver world-class customer service and a life-enhancing experience for all our visitors. We recognise that our visitors have choices about where they go and how they spend their time. We will actively seek to understand and address their needs so we may successfully engage the broadest and most diverse range of visitors in our powers. This charter applies to all our customers: visitors of all ages, booked education groups, outreach users, researchers, wedding and corporate hirers, specialist archaeologists and palaeontologists, metal detectorists, and whether physically visiting our Museum, or making indirect contact via our website or through partnership working.

This Customer Charter governs the behaviour of all Elgin Museum staff and volunteers. Everyone has a role to play in putting our audiences at the heart of what we do.

1. We will give our customers a warm welcome

When people choose to visit or contact us, we will make it clear we are pleased. We will show we care. All members of Elgin Museum staff and volunteers, whatever their role, will smile and be friendly, courteous and knowledgeable (including promptly offering to identify the person or source with the answer). Elgin Museum staff will be identifiable and approachable and will offer their help without being intrusive. We will make it clear we are not too busy to listen to questions or comments and ensure that we are not seen to be eating, drinking or using a smartphone or tablet when our role is attending to the customer.

2. We will meet the basic needs of all our customers

In our Museum, customers will have easy access to clean toilets, and space to leave backpacks, coats and pushchairs. We will provide comfortable environmental conditions, a clean and litter free building, and a safe, secure and accessible experience. There will be places to sit, rest and reflect. We will have the knowledge to direct customers to transport services, cafés, restaurants and shops, and other visitor and heritage attractions. Online, we will provide a website that is easy to use, with information on the Museum's accessibility. We will also update our social media

channels regularly. As we are prohibited by Listed Building regulations from installing a lift, we will provide an up-to-date record of displays upstairs.

3. We will make it easy for our visitors to find their way around

In our Museum and on the web, visitors will find well-planned spaces and pages, and clear labelling. Each visitor or group is treated individually. After initial welcome from the Custodian at the desk, the Gallery Assistant on duty will give a brief introduction and orientation and direct the visitor to any area of special interest. The volunteer or staff member will gauge how much the visitor wishes to hear or whether they prefer to be left alone. Simple guides in languages other than English are available to borrow. Anyone with special needs will be sensitively offered assistance to enhance their visit.

4. We will encourage customer feedback, listen to it and act on it

We will provide opportunities for customers to express their points of view, for example, directly to the Gallery Assistant or Custodian, or in the Visitors' Book. We will use our customer feedback to improve the service we deliver, and practise continuous improvement, using all such input to contribute to our Forward Plan.

5. We will give our audiences access to our collections and exhibitions

We are guardians of a vast repository of local heritage and a Recognised Collection of fossils which we hold in care for our customers, now and for the future. We will give people access to this, their heritage. We will design what we offer, whether in our Museum or on the web, so that we welcome people of all generations and backgrounds. No-one will feel excluded. Our audiences will see themselves represented in our exhibits and programmes and on the staff and amongst the volunteers; they will feel that they belong. We will promote our specialist collections among the research and academic communities and facilitate access by specialist groups and university teaching staff. We will work with local and national media and in particular television to bring our collections to a wider audience. We will make every effort to attract sponsorship and donations to continue "free" opening, thus extending our customer base. Our pool of front of house volunteers allows us to open 1 – 4 pm Wednesday to Sunday from April to October inclusive, but we are committed to complying with most reasonable requests for access out with these periods and even at 'unsocial' hours.

6. We will be accurate, reliable and clear

The information we provide in the Museum, on our websites, in our publications, in answer to queries and in conversation will be accurate, reliable and understandable. If we are offering an opinion, we will make this clear. We will respond as near as possible to receipt of enquiries, giving an indication of the time for a definitive answer if that is not immediately possible. We will make every endeavour to have objects identified by our specialist contacts in the shortest time possible. We will be a responsive and knowledgeable location for advice on the reporting of potential Treasure Trove, although items can only be accepted on behalf of the TTU by special arrangement and immediately before a scheduled visit from the Unit.

7. We will make sure that our Museum is a place where you can both have a good time and learn

We will use the Museum space and adjacent hall to provide lectures, events and activities for members and the public. We will strive to fund the post of a paid Learning and Outreach Officer wherever possible to provide a service for young people and their families through school visits, craft and activity sessions, and participation in national events such as the Festival of Museums. Children are our future and deserve special investment. When the paid post is unsupported, the volunteer Learning & Outreach team will endeavour to offer this service.

8. We will maintain the Museum and collections, now and for posterity

The visitor may not be aware of how much goes on behind the scenes, carried out almost entirely by volunteers; this enables the services provided by Scotland's oldest continuously independent Elgin Museum to be maintained. Our Customer Charter extends to a commitment to maintain the Category A listed building, the finance and governance measures to ensure adequate income for salaries, utilities, development, management and care of the collections, all in accordance with Accreditation and Visit Scotland standards.

The Museum, through its membership organisation The Moray Society, is a registered charity (Charity no. SC017546) and a private company limited by guarantee without share capital (Company no. 106529).

9. We will treat complaints with respect

In the unlikely event of a complaint by or about a customer, staff or volunteer we have mechanisms in place to strive for a swift and satisfactory resolution, whenever possible through calm and measured mediation. In our experience, the basis of dissatisfaction is most usually a misunderstanding or misinterpretation.

10. We want all our audiences to have a life-enhancing experience with us

We would like visitors to take away more than memories of an enjoyable visit. We aim to give them a 'light bulb' moment, a sense of awe and wonder, a learning experience that is out of the ordinary and that they refer back to, an insight that helps them make sense of their world through consideration of the past, enhances their lives and inspires them to further seeking after knowledge.