



Information for neurodiverse families

The Box

About this resource

We want all our visitors to have a great time at The Box. If you are a parent or carer visiting with someone who is neurodiverse you will find this information helpful in advance of your visit.

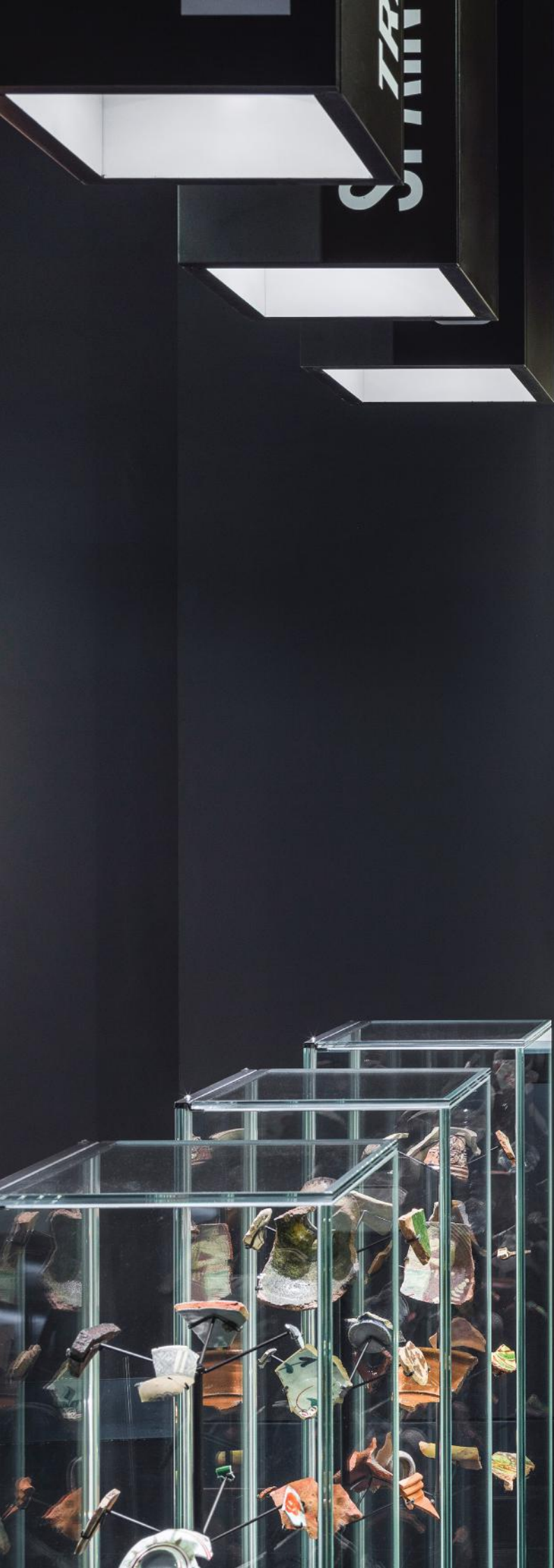
Ahead of time

Check out our **Visiting The Box** social story together. It contains lots of photographs and some key information to help everyone feel prepared.

Our Access and Families pages on our website **www.theboxplymouth.com** and our Facebook, Twitter, Instagram channels have the most up to date information on what you can expect during your visit. You can also watch lots of content about our galleries on our YouTube channel -

www.youtube.com/c/theboxplymouth





Arriving

One of the first things visitors encounter when they arrive at The Box is our friendly team at our Welcome Desk. They are on hand to provide you with advice and information so you can tailor your visit to suit your needs.

You can pick up a map from the Welcome Desk. We have lots of signage around our building as well as our staff and volunteers who can help you find your way. Also available from the Welcome Desk are our Family Trails. Some are thematic and take you into just a few of our galleries and others take you across all the spaces at The Box. The trails will encourage you to work together as a family, finding answers, spotting what's on display, drawing and asking big questions about the world around us. Ask our team for more information.

Useful information

Baggage

Please ask at the Welcome Desk for the location of our lockers. There is a small buggy park for visitors near our main toilets.

Toilets

Our main toilet facilities (men's, women's, disabled, baby change and changing places) are all available on the ground floor just past the Kitchen & Bar. There are other toilets, including gender neutral, near the shop and located near the Active Archives gallery on the first floor. All of our toilets have automatic hand dryers which are quite loud.

Wheelchairs and motorised scooters

Wheelchairs and motorised scooters are available to borrow free from our Welcome Desk. To check availability and reserve these please email **theboxenquiries@plymouth.gov.uk** in advance of your visit

Quiet times and spaces

There are no designated quiet spaces for families with additional needs at The Box. Families who prefer a quieter visit are advised to book admission for early morning or late afternoon when our galleries are typically quieter.

If you need a break during your visit you may find the space adjacent to the shop and underneath the ships badges a good place to head to. This area looks out onto Tavistock Place and is spacious and bright. It is typically quieter than elsewhere in the building and within easy reach of the Welcome Desk and our entrance and exit. If you are in need of some fresh air, there is seating outside on Tavistock Place. St Luke's Church, just across from our main building is one of our gallery spaces which usually shows work from our contemporary art programme. It is often quieter than other spaces at The Box and has a particularly calming atmosphere.

Extra help and support

We are aware that some visitors may be wearing a Sunflower Lanyard, use a Jam Card or ear defenders. Our staff and volunteers are aware of this and are on hand to support all visitors who need additional help. If there is something we can do to help or support you please let us know.



1875-1876
The crest of the 1st Battalion, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment), was designed by the artist John D. B. and was first used in 1875. It was a shield-shaped crest with a crown at the top and a central emblem of a lion. The crest was used by the 1st Battalion, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment) from 1875 to 1876.



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On the Ground Floor

To get to our galleries you will pass under our large figureheads which are suspended from the ceiling. You will then head past the Kitchen & Bar and through our shop. You may spot a changing display of contemporary art near our main entrance too.

Our shop sells scented candles and soaps which you may be able to smell as you pass through. The Kitchen & Bar is busier and noisier at peak times.

You will now arrive in North Hall. There is usually contemporary art on display here which may change each time you visit. Sometimes this can be touched and sometimes it can't. Signs and a member of our team in this space will be able to advise you.

There are lots of galleries leading off from North Hall that you can explore. They include:

Port of Plymouth

On entering the Port of Plymouth gallery you will see a large audio-visual projection of Plymouth and its relationship to the water through time. There is seating here but it is quite dark and loud. You can choose to sit and watch the 6 minute film or continue through into the second part of the gallery.

As you go through the door you will be met by a large projection of film from our archives. You can also hear audio of people's experiences of working in the Dockyard. In this gallery you can have a go on our clocking in machine and look through our periscope. You will continue through this gallery into 100 Journeys.

100 Journeys

Each case tells the story of different people who have journeyed from and to Plymouth. There is lots to see here but the gallery is very dark. A large globe lights up the centre of the space and is surrounded by touch screens. You can find out even more about some of the stories of the people in this gallery through the touch screens. Visitors may touch the screens but cannot touch the globe. Exiting 100 Journeys, you will return to North Hall.

Mammoth

Our Mammoth gallery showcases our natural history collections. Visitors are often struck by the size of our life sized female woolly mammoth. In this gallery there is lots of film and audio. You may hear people's voices as you journey through the space. There is also a large display of over 4,000 insects (including beetles and spiders) and includes a microscope interactive which you can look through too. At the far end of the gallery there is a large glass display of pickled sea creatures. Most of our visitors are fascinated by both the insect and pickle displays, but you might like to pre-warn your group so they know what to expect.

On leaving the Mammoth gallery you will re-enter North Hall. From here you may choose to take the stairs to the first floor or return to the Welcome Desk to use the lift.



On the First Floor

There are a number of galleries to explore on the first floor. These include:

Our Art

Our Art showcases our fine and decorative art work. It is usually a relatively quiet space and quite light. There is seating in the centre of the gallery for you to sit and enjoy the art on display.

Photo Album

Photo Album displays photography from our collections as well as displays created with local communities. The gallery changes often and touch screens are available help you find out more about what's on display.

Temporary exhibitions

Our temporary exhibitions change regularly.

Please see **www.theboxplymouth.com/whats-on** for information about what's on.

Media Lab

This gallery showcases the best of our moving image and photographic collections. A large screen covers 3 walls of the gallery and plays a 10 minute compilation of films from our archive which includes both audio and subtitles. You can sit here and watch for a while. On the other side of the gallery a display of multiple TV screens plays more films. There is also a small 'TV Studio' where visitors can have a go at reading the news from an auto-cue. This is particularly popular with families and on occasion you may have to wait to have a go during busier periods.

Active Archives

In Active Archives you can see examples of the records that The Box looks after and find out about the stories they tell. You can get a better view of the Figureheads and our Ships Badges and a range of touch screens can help you discover more about the history of your area. Toilets are conveniently located just off the middle and both ends of this gallery.

Cottonian Research Room

The Cottonian is both open as a gallery showing fine art and furniture from our collection and closed as a research space for people accessing our archives. Check with the welcome desk on arrival to find out whether the Cottonian is open during your visit.

You can return the way you came or use the lift or stairs which lead you back down to the Kitchen & Bar and main entrance and exit.



Inside and out

We can tell an awful lot about the way an animal lives just by the way it looks.

Animals with skeletons on the inside are called vertebrates, and their skeletons can tell us about their lifestyles. Humans have long legs and shorter arms than gorillas because of the different way they move. Monkeys have even longer arms to swing in trees. We might look different, but there are similarities in our skeletons that show our evolutionary links.

Birds are one of the most beautiful and diverse vertebrates on the planet. Features we can see on the outside gives clues to how they live. Beak shape and size have evolved for eating certain types of foods. Brightly coloured feathers are normally found in males to attract a female, whereas duller colours are very good for camouflage.

Discover more about the secret lives of animals in our evolution interactive!



Other things to note

The Box Kitchen & Bar

We serve a range of food options and cater for a broad range of dietary needs. There is a special menu for children, highchairs are available and baby food and milk can be warmed on request. The Kitchen & Bar is busier during peak periods – so you may wish to book a table in advance. More information on this can be found here **www.theboxplymouth.com/food-and-drink**

Shop

There is something for every age and taste in our carefully curated shop. This also includes a range of children's gifts as well as 'pocket money' toys.

Tavistock Place

Seating is available on the expansive paved area outside The Box known as Tavistock Place. The Little Box also sells a range of seasonal food and drink. Sometimes you might see contemporary art work on display here or encounter our regular food market or other seasonal activities.

Don't miss St Luke's church

St Luke's church is a temporary exhibition space that showcases our changing programme of contemporary art. Situated opposite the main building, the former church is often a quiet and contemplative space away from the hustle and bustle. Check our website to find out more about what's on during your visit.

What's on

We run a range of activities for families including free drop in sessions during school holidays and bookable workshops and events at key times of the year. We welcome all families to these sessions which are inclusive by design. Check our website and social media for the latest ahead of your visit.

What else to expect

Our programme changes often, so there is usually something different to see each time you visit. Sometimes we have to close galleries at short notice to make changes to what is on display, for maintenance, conservation reasons or for private events.

While some visitors enjoy packing everything into one trip to The Box, there is so much to see and do that other visitors prefer to return to see more another time. Directional arrows are in place to support social distancing but in most places you will be able to visit the galleries in the order of your choosing. You might find this helpful if there is a particular subject area that will be of interest, or if you need to limit the time of your visit.

We welcome lots of people to The Box who can sometimes be a bit noisy when they are having fun – if you visit on a weekday you might encounter a school visit, if you visit on a weekend there may be other families enjoying our galleries too.

Next steps

We hope that this information will help you prepare for a visit to The Box. If there is anything else that would be helpful to you, please contact **theboxenquiries@plymouth.gov.uk**

To book your tickets please visit

www.theboxplymouth.com/plan-your-visit

We look forward to welcoming you to The Box soon.

Visit our website:
theboxplymouth.com

