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museums for everyone

Case studies to support museums to increase the diversity of their visitors

Written by

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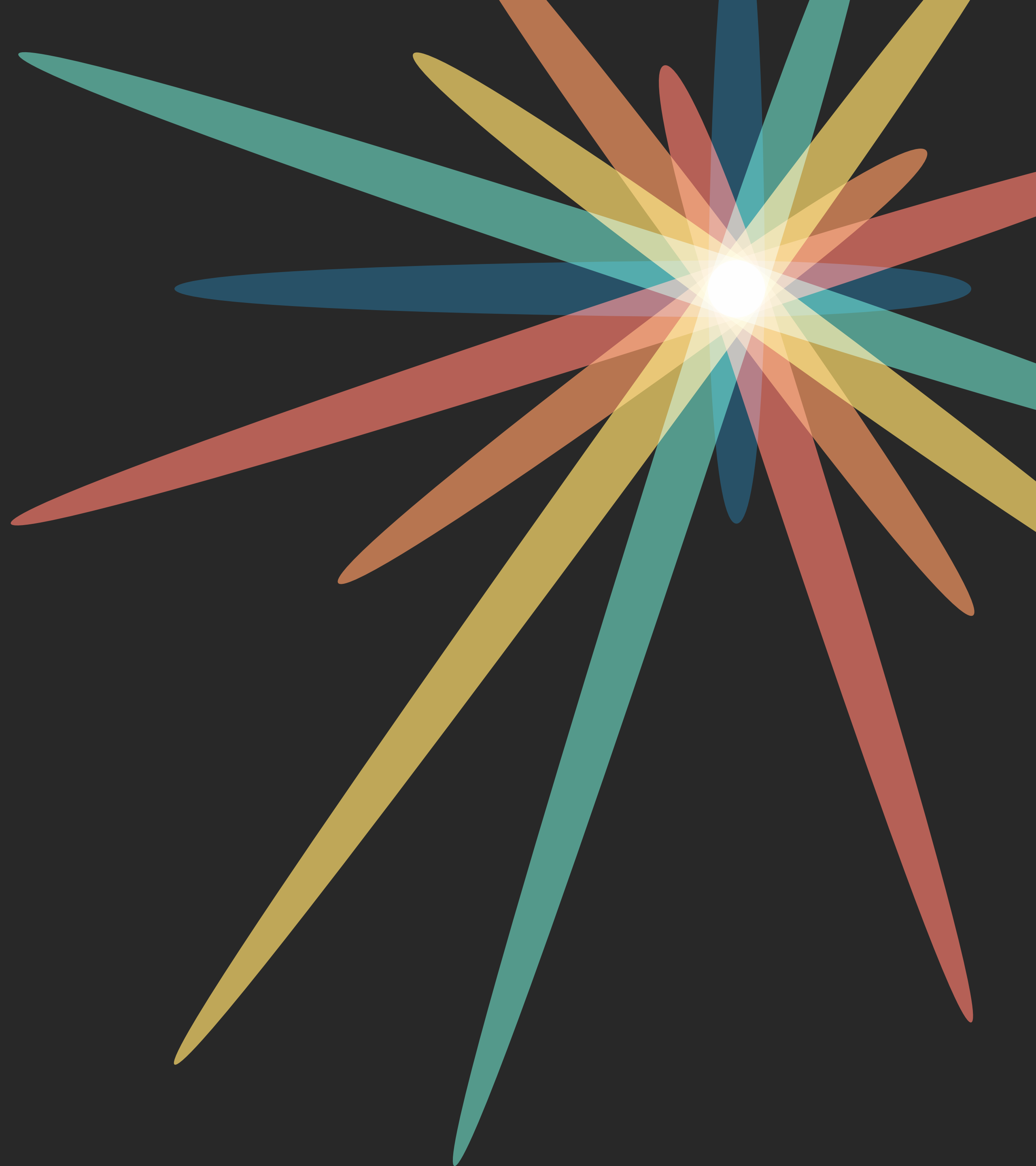
20 museums across all four countries of the UK

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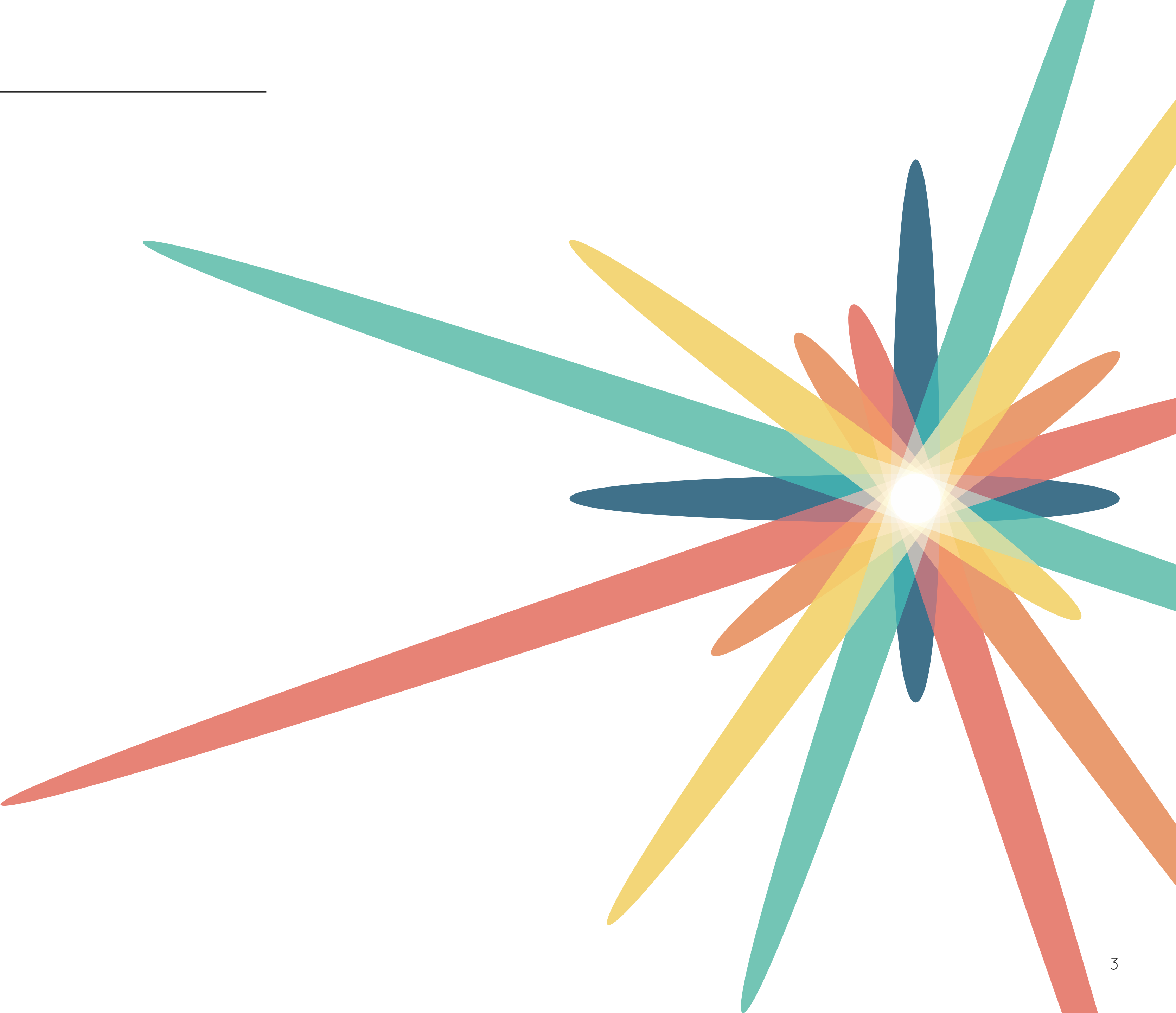
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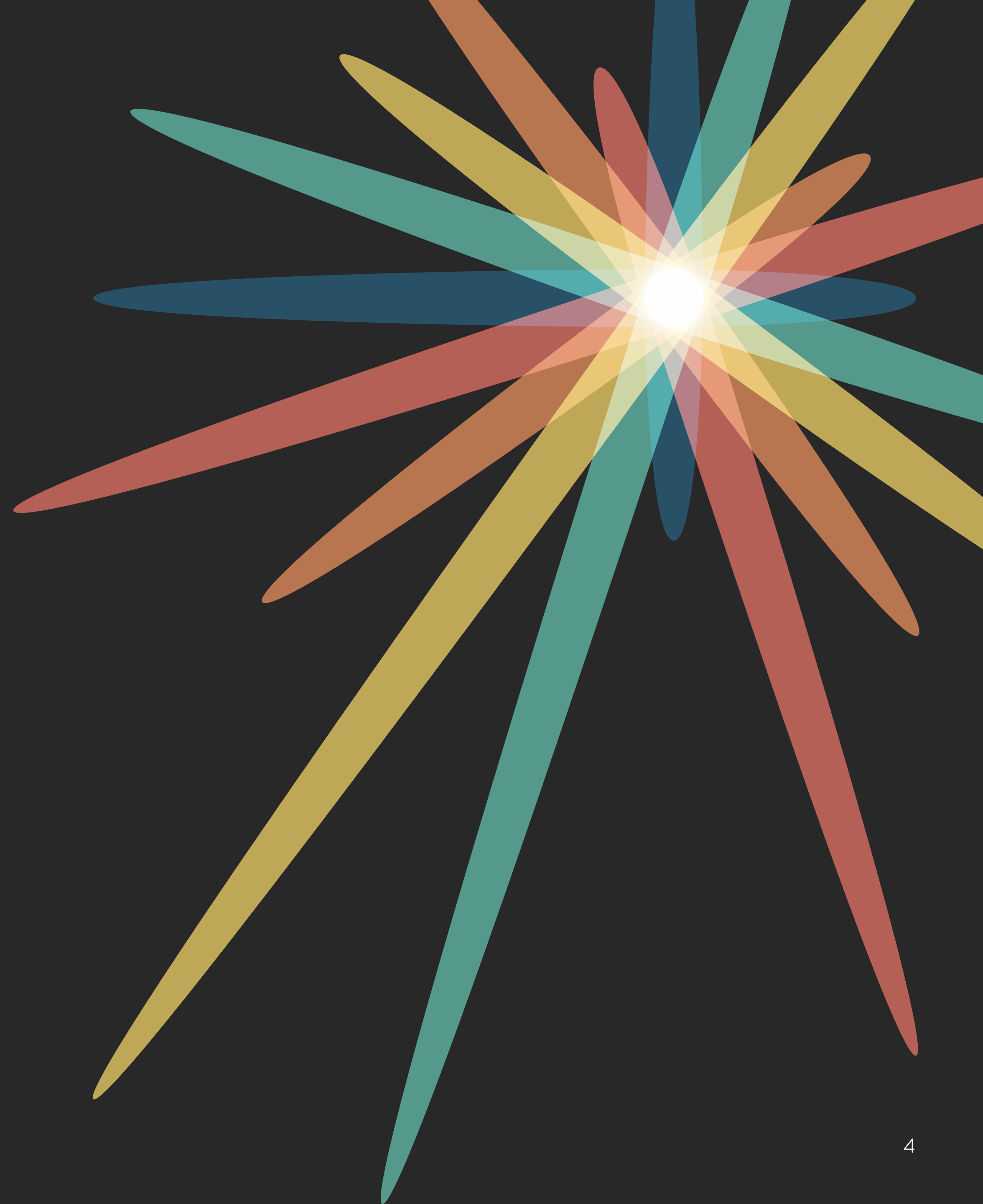
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Case study: Amgueddfa Cymru National Museum Wales

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Case study: Amgueddfa Cymru National Museum Wales

Amgueddfa Cymru comprises of seven national museums across Wales and the National Collection Centre. The family of museums comprises: National Museum Cardiff, which is in the civic centre of Cardiff and showcases the National Art and Natural Science Collections; St Fagans National Museum of History, which is currently undergoing a £30m redevelopment; The National Waterfront Museum Swansea, which tells the story of industry in Wales; Big Pit National Coal Mining Museum and National Roman Legion Museum both located in southeast Wales; National Wool Museum located in west Wales; National Slate Museum located in north Wales. Amgueddfa Cymru is a bi-lingual organisation and is funded by the Welsh Government.

Why equality, diversity and inclusion are important to the National Museum Wales

The drive for diversity and inclusion at Amgueddfa Cymru was further developed when David Anderson became Director General in 2010. In 2012, Amgueddfa Cymru developed a new vision that encapsulates the commitment to diversity and inclusion:

‘Inspiring people, changing lives ...Inspiring people through our museums and collections to find a sense of well-being and identity, to discover, enjoy and learn bilingually, and to understand Wales’ place in the wider world.’

The context for diversity and inclusion is different across each of the seven museums they oversee, both in terms of what is possible and also in terms of what is needed by the different communities local to each museum.

Authenticity is a key value for the museum and this has underpinned how Amgueddfa Cymru have developed an approach that is right for their collections, their communities, and their vision. Ensuring that the values are lived across the museum (not just written on paper) is crucial to achieving change. Making the vision values active and central to decision making also helps prevent the focus on inclusion being lost, if, for example, a particular member of staff leaves or is no longer driving it forward. Involving and getting buy-in from across the team in new strategies and developments has been a core part of this approach.

‘We want our work to have impact far beyond our sites, helping to create a thriving economy and a healthier, happier and more sustainable Wales ...over the next ten years we want to turn the museum experience inside out, creating a new culture of public participation, allowing visitors to immerse themselves in our collections, developing inspiring stories and creating a catalyst to change their aspirations for the future. Our collections belong to the people of Wales and we will work with them and all our visitors to create new exciting narratives, engendering an environment of



Image courtesy of Amgueddfa Cymru-National Museum Wales

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public debate and ensuring that everyone who engages with us is made to feel welcome and leave inspired to learn more about the world around them.’

What they do that’s special

- While they focus on engaging people across a mix of the protected characteristics, reaching those from lower socio-economic groups is of particular importance. For example, they worked with refugees across Cardiff and Newport to create a reconstructed ‘Refugee House’. The participants chose every element of it to represent their stories. This was then used as a talking point to spark discussion between the participants and others engaging with the exhibition. This practical development of an exhibit broke down barriers to engagement for both the refugees and the museum, and both learnt about one another.
- Janice Lane, the Director for Gallery Development and Visitor Experience, is leading exploration of new ways to engage visitors with the museums and collections building on experience of engagement and audience development initiatives she was involved in within previous roles (Glasgow Museums and Brighton & Hove Museums). Involving people in how they work is central to extending inclusion and engagement not just through targeted projects but also across their general services

for visitors. They have been piloting ways of doing this through the redevelopment work at St Fagans and are extending this approach across their other museums. They are currently developing a new visitor experience strategy, and are trying out new ways of working to test how they can improve the visitor experience across areas such as orientation, marketing, programming and visitor services.

- They established a Diversity Forum to help inform the redevelopment of one of their seven museums, St Fagans, and this forum is now informing other areas of work, specifically around the collecting of under-represented objects and histories from BAME, LGBTQ+ and disabled communities.
- Marketing work focuses on identifying key influencers e.g. local community representatives, or digital influencers such as key bloggers on specific topics, to help them connect with the groups they want to engage. A key learning from this has been to think about what might motivate the influencers and to build relationships with them (don’t assume they will instantly love what you do and represent you well!). This is an area they hope to expand further in the future.
- They work hard to avoid making assumptions about people based on who they are (e.g. not treating all young people the same). But instead

they are continuously seeking to improve their understanding of why they might come, their attitudes, values and motivations, and to use this insight to inform their communication across different audiences.

- Relationships with key partners and community groups are reinforced by staff across the team visiting them and getting to know them e.g. curator, learning manager, designer, marketer etc. Connecting with and building relationships with participants and partners helps to inform their work and build trust.

How they achieve it

- Programming has shifted from the traditional model (where there is often tension between collections and visitor engagement), to an interdisciplinary approach. Programme meetings include staff from curatorial, front of house, visitor experience, marketing, etc. In order to do this most effectively, you have to incorporate this from the beginning of the decision and development process. This enables inclusivity and diversity to be designed in as a core element of exhibitions, not just as activities that might take place alongside. It also increases understanding of how elements of the work might link together to provide pathways for those wanting to experience more; and identifies and maximises partnerships that might enhance the experience. E.g. working with Flying Start to

enhance Early Years provision; working with Age Cymru and the Alzheimers Society to establish dementia friendly services.

This interdisciplinary approach has been key in shaping the programme which is now helping to drive repeat visits for the Museums.

The programming approach seeks to balance activities that will challenge and bring new thinking to the Museums, with those that will capture the imagination / interests of different groups.

Taking an evidence-based approach is very important to Amgueddfa Cymru. Challenging their own assumptions and using evidence to make decisions helps to minimise unconscious bias in planning and decision making.

- They evaluate and audit their work on a regular basis to give them benchmarks upon which to set goals for deeper engagement with specific groups. Data capture is about who is attending, but also why – motivations and satisfaction levels. This evaluation informs strategies and policies, helps them challenge any assumptions they’re making about what might be relevant, and enables them to set clear priorities for the coming year.

Case study: Amgueddfa Cymru National Museum Wales

New work in progress includes:

- an Equalities Policy
- a review and update of the Community Engagement Strategy
- a new visitor experience strategy
- All staff play a key role in taking forward values and vision. It is important to have buy in across all levels – of course ownership and leadership from senior management and trustees is essential. But it is also key to ensure that an organisation's middle management have the confidence and skills to turn the vision into real values and ways of working on the ground and across different teams. This is particularly important in a large organisation, which is also working across a large geographic area. Amgueddfa Cymru is finding ways to better support middle management and involve them in development of new projects or new strategic directions, in order to benefit from and recognise their knowledge and expertise, and encourage ownership and input into the future direction and to raise confidence in driving forward new initiatives.
- They have reviewed how they recruit and identified key competencies to support the values and vision. This has led to recruiting or promoting people who have demonstrated a passion and enthusiasm for inclusion and diversity. This has brought new thinking and

skills into Amgueddfa Cymru which in turn has led to more genuine connections with key groups and individuals. For example, their Community Engagement and Participation Manager, Owain Rhys, is representing Amgueddfa Cymru on several committees such as Black History Month Steering Committee, and Cardiff and the Vale LGBT Forum. Other members of staff are representing the Museum on groups such as Ely Learning Partnership and Swansea City of Sanctuary, giving back and thinking about ways in which the museum can help their agenda to develop a two-way relationship. This approach takes time and commitment, but is reaping rewards in terms of the number and range of people who now seek out the museum as a potential partner / collaborator.

- The Museums work in partnership with many different associations and advisory bodies to inform and shape their learning and to help them reach and support new groups. For example, they worked with the Down's Syndrome Association to develop a new volunteering initiative. This was a project initiated by the Head of Visitor Services at National Museum Cardiff. This has had impacts for the volunteers, and provided great opportunities for the Visitor Services team to learn about how to best welcome and engage visitors with Down's Syndrome.

- They are also a lead partner on national projects such as Fusion, a Welsh Government initiative which encourages and empowers people to take an active part in the arts, culture and heritage, transforming their confidence and motivation, helping them to gain the skills, experience and qualifications to help them find work. It also supports learning for all ages, and works to improve their physical and mental health and wellbeing. This connects Amgueddfa Cymru to third sector charities, to communities and to other arts and cultural organisations, as they work together to explore how culture might help tackle the impacts of poverty across Wales.
- They have also been part of UK wide projects aimed at diversifying audiences and making museums inclusive and participatory, such as Our Museum funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, and the Museums Association's Transformers programme, sharing and learning with other museums, and developing a network of support.

Examples of what they've achieved

- Through Our Museum, funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, their volunteers at St Fagans: National Museum of History have significantly diversified from predominantly white, female, middle class, retired. The profile is now approximately 50% male and 40% unemployed. This was achieved through working closely with community partners with expertise in volunteering, such as the WCVA (Welsh Council Volunteering Association), and adopting a networked approach through influencers and partners to build relationships with new volunteers. This was also associated with HLF funding which enabled a large refurbishing project based on participatory ways of working.

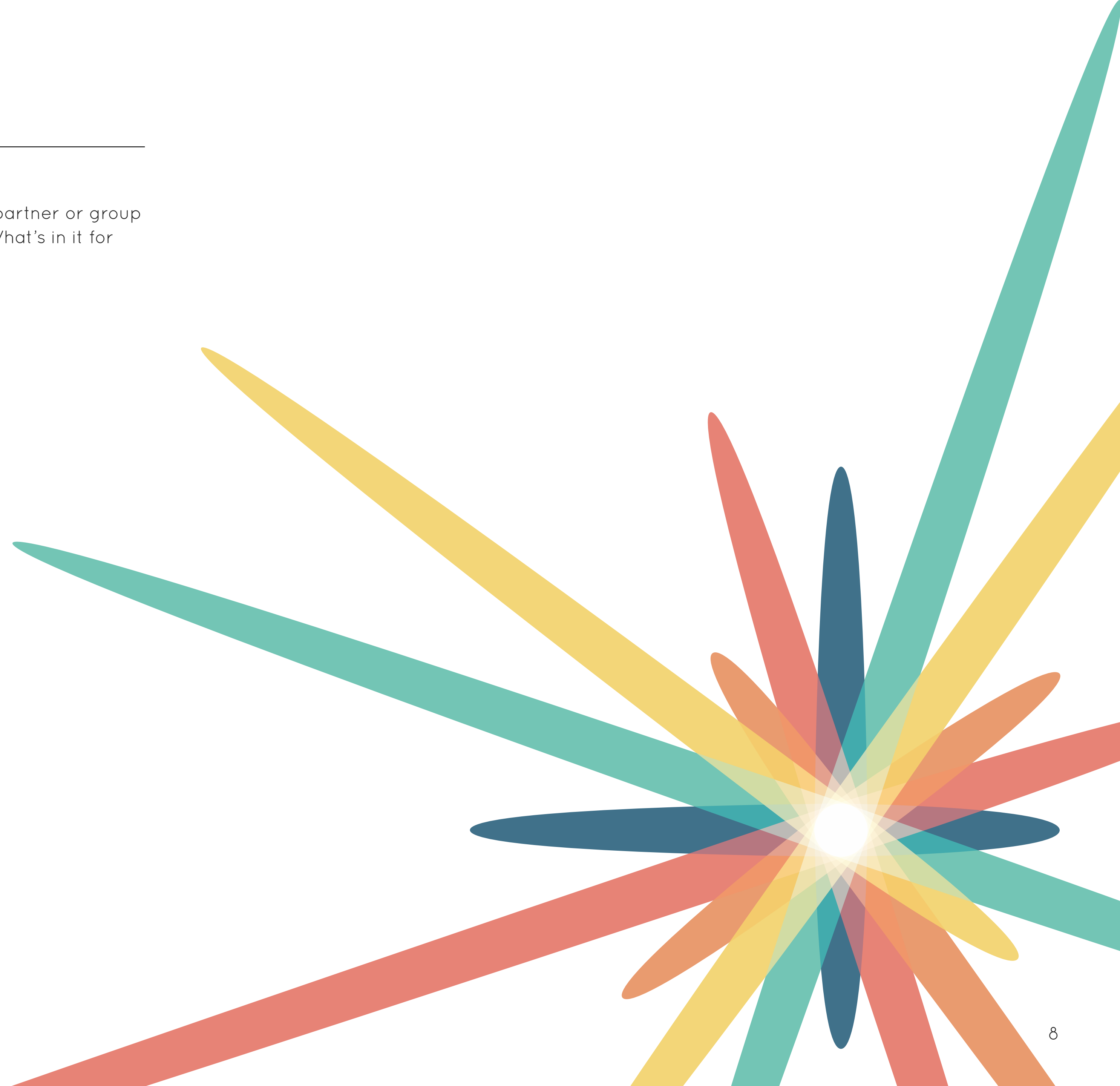
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Questions Amgueddfa Cymru, National Museum Wales asks

- What is the museum for? Why does it exist?
What is it seeking to achieve and who for?
- Why are we collecting? Why is this art / object
important? And who to?
- How might you [member of staff / volunteer]
contribute to achieving this?
- Why are we still doing X? Is this still relevant to
what we want to achieve? Is it still relevant to
the people we want to engage?
- Where is the evidence? Are we challenging our
assumptions and avoiding our own unconscious
bias?
- How do our skills and expertise need to adapt
and evolve to respond to a changing world?
E.g. digital development and training for staff to
enable those across the museum (including both
Welsh and English speaking staff) to contribute
to conversations online; interdisciplinary training
for staff to enable them to respond to changing
legal landscape (Welsh Government's Wellbeing
of Future Generations Act which encompasses
legal duties in ways of working to enhance
inclusion, well-being, sustainability and cultural
engagement across public services, Welsh
Language Standards)

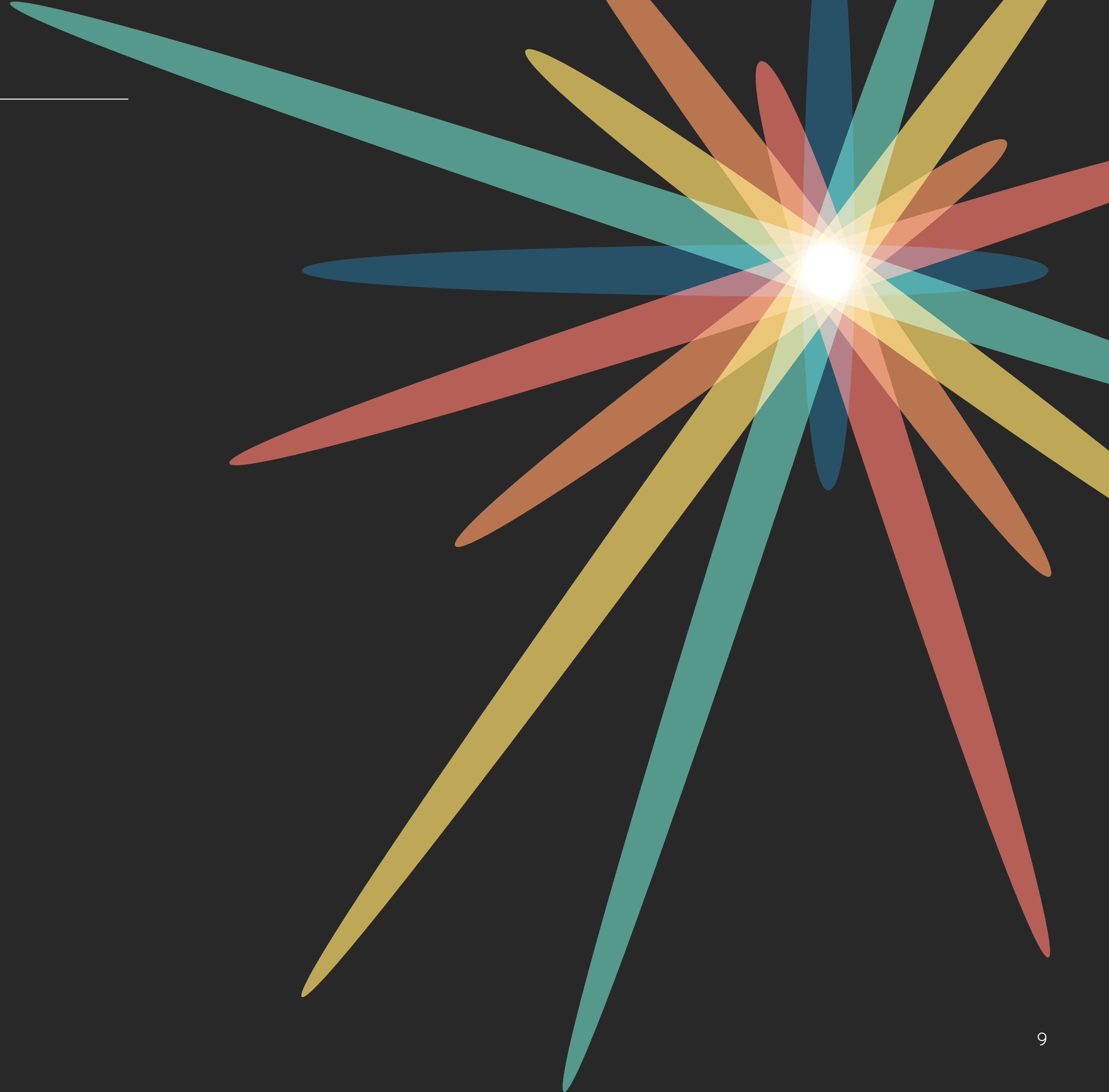
- Why are we inviting a specific partner or group
or individual to get involved? What's in it for
them?

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Case study: Beamish

Why equality, diversity and inclusion are important to Beamish

Originally the game-changing vision of Frank Atkinson, Beamish is an open-air, living museum in County Durham that tells the story of everyday life in the North East of England during the 1820s, 1900s and 1940s. Over the next five years the numerous attractions which include a town, a working farm, shops and period transport will be further enhanced by 'Remaking Beamish', an £18M project that will take the museum forward into living memory. The scheme includes a 1950s town and farm, a dedicated centre for older people and people living with dementia in a block of Aged Miners' Homes, and a Georgian Coaching Inn offering overnight stays.

The Beamish team is currently working to a 12-year vision set out in their "Development and Engagement Plan 2013 – 2025" (DEP). The DEP returns to Frank Atkinson's founding vision for the museum, setting out the importance of telling the story of time periods in living memory, and developing an even more sustainable museum for future generations to enjoy.

Purpose:

'A living, working museum that uses its collections to connect with people from all walks of life and tells the story of everyday life in the North East of England'

Beamish's three guiding principles:

1. **Putting the visitors first in everything we do.**
2. **Genuine community engagement – enabling participation in the making of the museum, creating enduring connections.**
3. **Self-reliance – an entrepreneurial spirit looking for new opportunities to grow and reach more people.**

The core purpose of Beamish is tangible on a visit: everything is set up to reflect the history and identity of local people from all walks of life in an authentic way. Here everyday life is celebrated.

Respect for the visitor is extremely high and their needs come first at Beamish. All staff and volunteers are dressed in period costume to give an authentic experience of the North East through time. Visitors don't just learn about the region's history – they become immersed in the sights, sounds and even tastes of the past.

Rather than labeling people, Beamish staff often talk about engaging with a geographical community. Here diversity means inclusion through authenticity of the collections and experiences and, **'making sure we don't miss any stories because of the make-up of the staff.'** A large percentage of staff come from the surrounding area (27% are from Stanley, an area facing multiple layers of deprivation) and 7% identify as 'having a disability'.

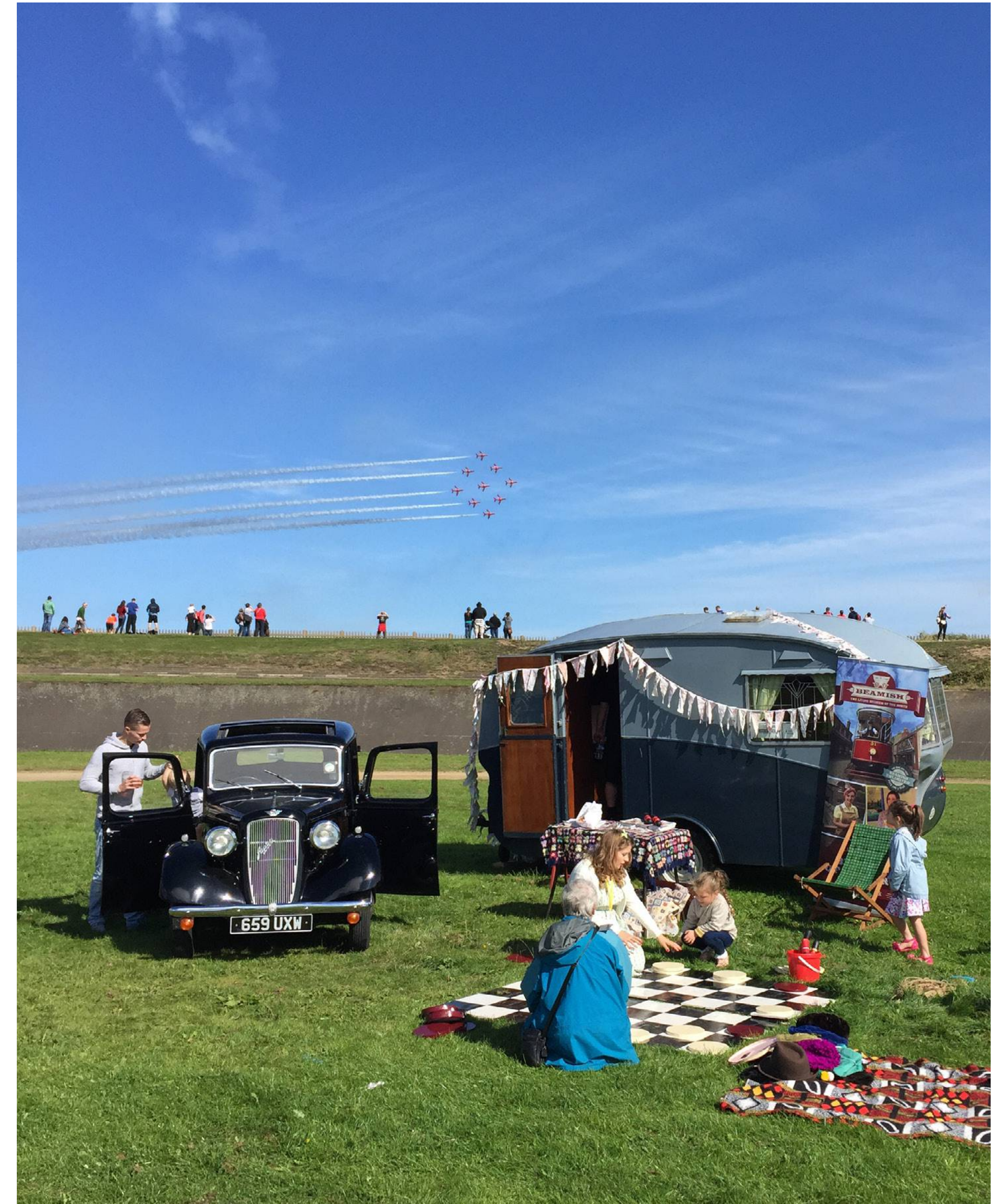


Image courtesy of Beamish Museum

Case study: Beamish

What they do that's special

'Traditionally museums employed people who loved things, not people...'

- Beamish has successfully challenged the typical middle-class museum visitor profile. Guided by entrepreneurial director Richard Evans since 2008, visitor numbers have grown from 297,000 (2008/09) to over 750,000 (2016/17) and now 53% of the Beamish audience hail from the social category C2DE, with the DE category increasing by 7% in the last year.
- Community ownership also shows up in the books. In 2016/17 over half their income came from admissions and the rest from trading (retail and catering) activity, making the museum independently successful and self-reliant.
- 'It's theirs'. Reflecting immense respect for the local people they serve, the collection is community driven: everything – from a teacup in an Edwardian home to the six Hetton Cottages – comes from local people. **'Every day on average we get donations from about ten people'**.
- Of the 4 million objects at Beamish, 90% are on permanent display but it's clear that the people behind the objects are the most important thing: visitor knowledge and input is highly valued. **'We collect stories as well as objects'**.

How they achieve it

- Internally, underpinning numerous success strategies is a strong sense of purpose, positivity and freedom. This results in a high degree of pride and ownership among staff and they expect their visitors to feel entitled to this too. Individual strengths and passions are encouraged to emerge as in the case of the keen animator whose skills were put to use in creating short films for the museum's various social media platforms. Staff are free to suggest something new, have a go and take a risk. If things occasionally fail, **'It's ok, learn from it, keep tweaking'**.
- Fun is a word the Beamish team use a lot: **'it's not like school, it doesn't have to be like, "You WILL learn while you are here"'**.
- **'It's not about panels'**. They have more than 500 volunteers and a significant number of them are 'Engagers', costumed members of the team who help bring the visiting experience vividly to life by engaging visitors with stories via facts, memories, answering questions and activities. Engagers are led by the visitor, so they take care to read the visitor well. A staff member can also be an Engager, the idea being, you shouldn't be able to tell the difference, so it's **'one joined up team'**.
- They have thought carefully about how to help all visitors gain as much access as they want: once a visitor has bought an annual Beamish

Unlimited Pass they can visit as many times as they want. Subsidised bus rates are also available – entry is 25% off for visitors who travel to the museum by bus.

- Exhibitions are permanent so Beamish keep things fresh by ensuring there's always a reason to come back. Adding new attractions has paid off, and has been one of the most significant factors for motivating new and repeat visits, in addition to the seasonal festivals and events that are programmed throughout the year.
- They make sure they are visible in local communities by setting up stalls and installations including a 1950s living room and caravan, in **'places where people are'** such as local heritage fairs, shopping centres and Metro stops.
- Building responsive partnerships is key as is **'getting the right people, getting the right approach'**. They believe that quality comes from relationships built with community leaders and their groups. **'Our strongest and best projects have happened when people approach us'**. Once a project has ended they also aim to leave groups with skills and resources to support them going forward. These include community exhibitions, talks, loan objects and importantly, a contact at the museum so they are not lost in a faceless system.

Questions Beamish asks

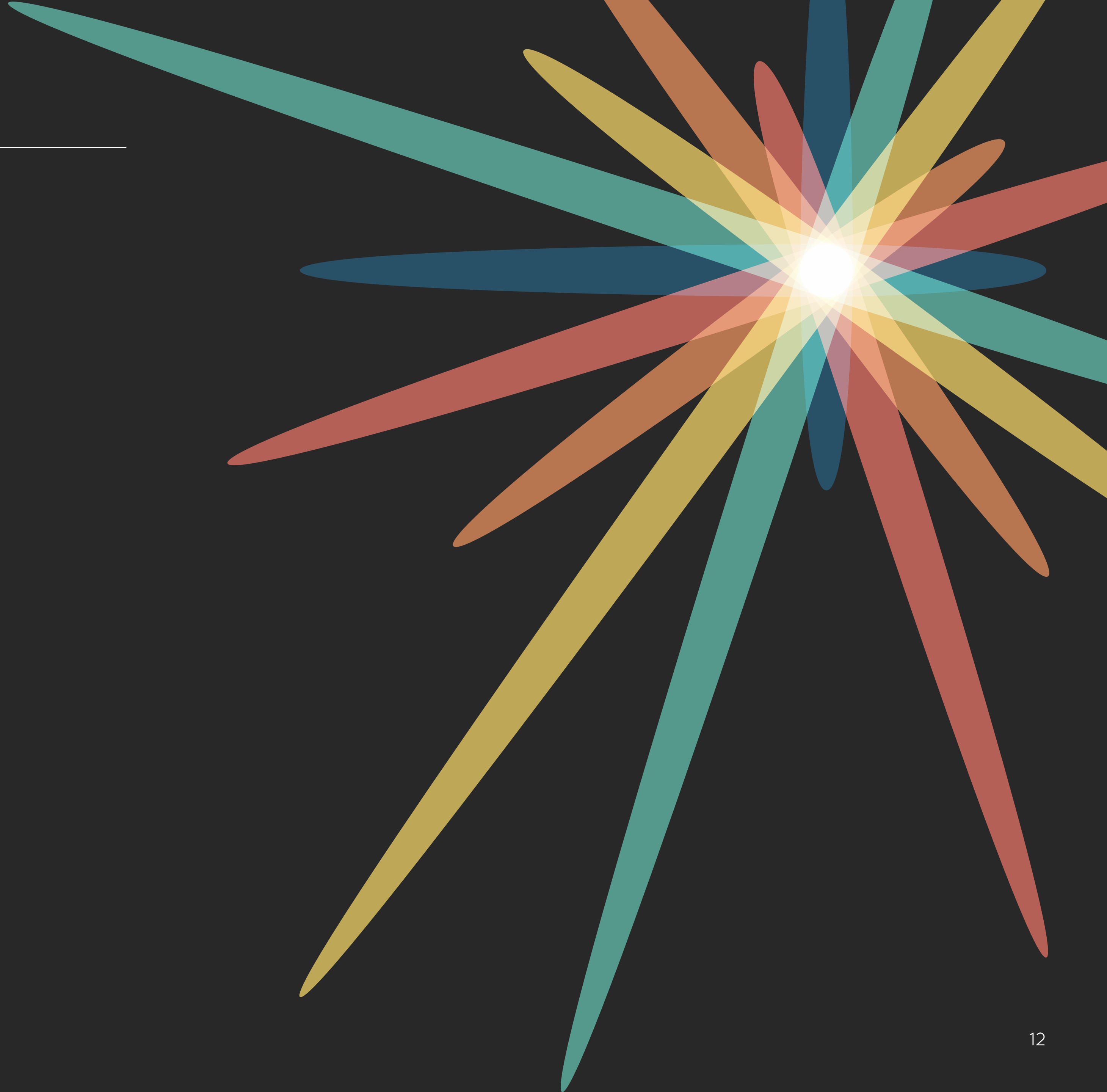
- What are we really about?
- Who are we really here for?
- What's the story in this community?
- How do our visitors want to experience their own museum?
- What else can we do to improve their experience?
- How can we make people feel at home?
- What are we individually passionate about and how will that help us deliver an even greater experience for our visitors?
- Why not?



Case study: Black Country Living Museum

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Case study: Black Country Living Museum

Why empathy and curiosity are catalysts for change

The Black Country Living Museum is an open-air museum of historic buildings relocated from their original sites, set in 26 acres of reclaimed industrial land at the heart of the Black Country, 10 miles west of Birmingham. Collections and costumed demonstrators portray a living experience of 300 years of the area's life, with a focus on 1850-1940.

Local people are passionate about Black Country history and there are many stories that still need to be told at the Museum. Their recent award from the National Lottery of £9.8m towards their £21.7m project **'Forging Ahead'** gives them a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to research stories and buildings related to the 1940s-60s including the impact of migration on industrial and social structures.

The Museum's Strategic Audience Development Manager, Glenis Williams, has a multi layered approach to project management, knowing your audience, setting clear objectives and choosing the best techniques; all important elements in getting results.

Having worked in the arts for 20 years and as someone who identifies African Caribbean she wanted her story to be reflected in the Museum's narrative. The Industrial Revolution and the British

Empire has such a broad reach and crosses so many boundaries where people moved to the Black Country from all over world. These hidden histories are important components in telling the Black Country story in its entirety.

What they do that's special

'As the UK experiences increasing diversity our Museum has a role in creating community cohesion and exploring issues of social segregation and intolerance of the 'other' by bringing communities together across social and cultural boundaries.'

17% of people in the Museum's catchment area are from BAME groups but this demographic needs to be better reflected in the Museum's visitor profile (currently at around 6%). She is championing creative ways to increase how these groups are included on all levels through representing new layers of Black Country history, starting with the question: **'If you have never visited this Museum why would you go?'**



Image courtesy of Black Country Living Museum

Case study: Black Country Living Museum

Tried and tested strategies

- Local involvement and participation: seeking out people to help broker new relationships with local groups and overcoming initial resistance by talking with them about what matters to them.
- Know your audiences: who are they, who could they be and what do they want?
- Being flexible: adopting a broader and more representative take on the area's past by telling different stories through its collections and activities.
- Reaching out: creating new pathways aimed at increasing inclusion through different types of entry points by working with a broader range of volunteers who act as ambassadors for the museum.

Examples include

- **‘Sorry! No Coloureds, No Irish, No Dogs’.** Commissioning this play as the means to explore difficult issues on experiences of migration. The title comes from a boarding house poster from the 1950s. 300 people attended, encouraged by the community steering group who contacted local networks. The audience included Museum senior managers and board members.

- Two community advisory panels have been set up. 26 members in total represent many different viewpoints and needs, bringing new voices into the conversation.
- At regular meetings, they input into BCLM Audience Development Strategy and the CEO attends occasionally so he can listen to their views.
- New resources are being developed such as a new access map.
- Untold stories are being collecting through **BCLM: Forging Ahead** – an oral history project that will record local people's experiences of migration working in partnership with a number of community organisations.
- Sparking off new connections through the Museum's collections: a Festival of Light showed off the Museum's collection of historical lights in a community procession with traditional entertainment from Dhol drummers and artistic installations. Six diverse local groups, for example, the British Sikh School, worked together for the first time to showcase paper lanterns in a procession through the Museum.
- Raising awareness of increasing inclusion in the Museum through regular fortnightly cross- departmental meetings with curatorial, learning, operations and volunteers teams.

- Training opportunities for staff and volunteers: British Sign Language, Sight Loss training, Audio Descriptive tours and Dementia-Friends training.

All of this resulted in

- **‘Sorry! No Coloureds, No Irish, No Dogs’** attendees will be invited back to support projects this year including Migration Stories.
- Opportunities to continue to connect with six diverse communities groups that have taken part in the development of the Festival of Light.
- BCLM will trial new opportunities for audiences to get involved, such as Twilight Fridays evenings offering different activities each time to foster repeat visits.
- Revised entry prices with essential carers admission.
- Collecting evidence on audience demographics by working with ALVA, Audience Finder and Bluegrass Research.

Case study: Black Country Living Museum

How they achieve it

'We start by recognising that the idea of heritage is fluid and history is made up of layers that are interconnected. What we think of as 'quintessentially English' alters how society is made up over time. As a Museum, we need new narratives that reflect and debate such societal change.'

- Bespoke marketing and development projects that get the message out there: **'this museum is here for you'**.
- Engaging the support of the CEO and DCEOs through regular meetings and updates.
- Commitment to a strong and robust outreach programme establishing a healthy relationship with community groups and stakeholders.
- Breaking down the organisational silos that inhibit diversification through effective advocacy and communication, **'once there's a willingness to learn, you're halfway there.'**

Questions Black Country Living Museum asks

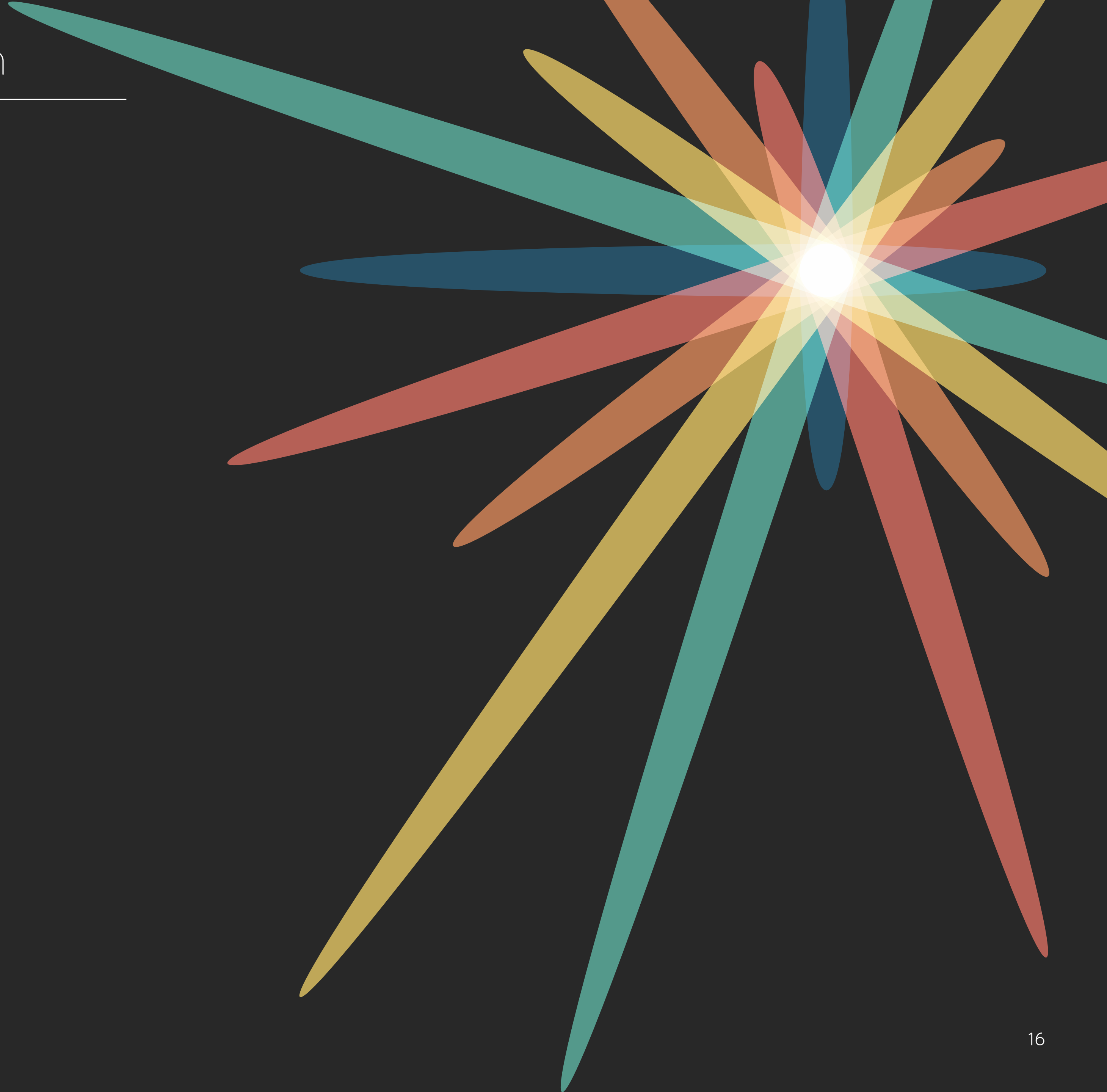
- Does a deficit model of broadening diversity really sustain new and different dialogues on under-represented strands of history?
- Who in the museum is influencing what stories it tells?
- Who holds the pen that tells the stories? Who holds the power to influence others? Who has authority to take risks, challenge new ways of working to drive change?



Case study: Cardiff Story Museum

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Case study: Cardiff Story Museum

Why equality, diversity and inclusion are important to Cardiff Story Museum

Cardiff Story Museum opened in 2011 to provide a museum to tell Cardiff's story for the very first time. From day one of the project to set up the Museum, they made sure the Cardiff community were in the driving seat. They were starting from scratch, and didn't have a collection at the start of the process, so they worked with the people of Cardiff to identify what stories to tell. People told them that they wanted to see multiple viewpoints and perspectives. Not just the good bits, but all sides of Cardiff.

They developed a powerful vision and mission that was shared by the team and guided their development. This includes:

'...it will be loved by its communities...an inclusive, exciting and inspirational resource; bringing people together to help them discover more about themselves, each other and about Cardiff, through social interaction and learning.'

The Museum seeks to create a collection for and from the diverse Cardiff community and most of the collection has been donated. They interpret through stories – an individual's memories, stories handed down through the generations, plus from archival material. Multiple viewpoints of the same object are shared through touchscreens.

What they do that's special

- The people of Cardiff are developing the museum that's right for them informed by public consultation, co-created events, focus groups, advisory panels etc. Everything in the museum, from the fonts they use, to the activities they run, to the type of relationship they have with their visitors, is informed and shaped with the people of Cardiff.
 - They spend a lot of time **'in their hood'**. Visiting different people in environments where they feel comfortable. Investing time in getting to know people and understanding what's important to them.
- 'Everything we do or plan we know is wanted because we ask, we listen, and then we act'.**
(Victoria Rogers, Museum Manager)
- Partnerships with other cultural organisations and with many community groups enable them to create specific, relevant events that reach out to people across Cardiff and indicate that **'this is for you'**.
 - They take time to build trust and relationships with community groups off site and then **'invite them back to ours'** and encourage them to invite others.



Image courtesy of Cardiff Story Museum / Amgueddfa Stori Caerdydd

Case study: Cardiff Story Museum

- They have set aside a part of the museum as a **‘City showcase’**, a space for community groups to create their own exhibits with facilitation and support from a staff member. They advertised the first couple of opportunities, but since then have not needed to, a diverse mix of people are coming to them and its booked up until 2019.
- Interpretation shares multiple viewpoints. Games and interactive exhibits encourage people to think about what Cardiff means to them e.g. there is a **‘create your city’** game and front of house staff encourage people from a broad mix of backgrounds to work together to create their ideal city.
- The Museum does not just exist for those who visit the building. To reach those who can’t come to the Museum (particularly those living in Cardiff ‘Southern Arc’ or ‘Community First areas’ – areas of deprivation in Cardiff) they regularly create and tour exhibitions. For example, an exhibition sharing stories from the people of Cardiff during the First World War has now toured across library branches throughout the country, reaching over 49,000 people.
- They are currently developing a **‘guerrilla museum’** – a set of trailers that come together to create a temporary exhibition space that appears in your local area for a short period of time. (A bit like a 19th Century Circus!) This will enable them to create a satellite museum that

is always on tour, that breaks down barriers of access to the museum by bringing it to local communities. Displays, exhibitions, and content will be co-created in partnership with those communities.

How they achieve it

- They have adopted a community-centred ethos. Communities shape the Museum.
- They only recruit people who believe in this ethos and share their values.
- There is a small team (9 part-time Front of House staff, plus 6 others at the time of writing). One person is focused on community outreach, but engaging the community is a key part of every role.
- They see community outreach and collections as **‘two-sides of a coin’** and they therefore work closely together.
- It takes enormous tenacity and dedication from Victoria Rogers, the Museums Manager, and her team to drive this forward and keep the initial vision and ethos alive.
- The front of house team has been trained and encouraged to listen out for what people need and are interested in and they feed this back to the team within regular meetings to enable the organisation to continue to learn and improve.

- Engagement is not just something Victoria thinks about in relation to the public. She also considers how to maintain a relationship with funders and other stakeholders. Infographics, a booklet sharing qualitative feedback, and stories of impacts are examples of ways in which they keep them up-to-date.

- They think about how they can support and enable their partners. Often helping them to secure money to run programmes e.g. they are working with learning disability support organisations such as Cardiff People First to create a programme that enables adults with learning disabilities to engage with museums.

Examples of what they’ve achieved

- When the Museum first opened in 2011 the visitor profile tended to echo the stereotype museum visitor with the majority being female, over 55, and retired. However, when analysing feedback at the end of 2016 it’s clear that this profile has really changed. While the majority are still female (69%), by programming regular families work and keeping in touch with families through initiatives such as the ‘Dinky Dragons’ club, they now have 62% of visitors under the age of 44, including 11% under the age of 16.
- In addition, the Museum visitor profile by ethnicity is now also more representative of the local area. The 2011 census cites that 15% of the population are BME. Cardiff Story has

shifted the profile of its visitors from 7% BME in 2011 to 17% in 2016 with a further 19% stating either ‘mixed – other’ or ‘other ethnicity’ on their form. Again, this has been down to reinforcing messages that the Museum is relevant. Building positive, ongoing relationships with community organisations, sharing relevant stories throughout the galleries, ensuring their photos and marketing materials feature a diverse mix of people (they did a call for people from across their programmes to visit on a specific day to have their photo taken), and renting out space for a diverse mix of community groups to use e.g. Diverse Cymru are a regular client, which enables them to entice participants into other parts of the Museum.

- Cardiff Story has been successful at reaching a diverse mix of volunteers, but learnt that time and resource is needed on an ongoing basis to ensure that the volunteer programme can be managed in a way that makes it sustainable and maintains the interest and relevance for the volunteers. A push to diversify volunteers using HLF funding in 2013 attracted 94 new volunteers. 24 of these were young people not in education, and 15 were BME.
- A group of 11 – 18 year olds were recruited as volunteers to advise the Museum on how to make the Museum more relevant for people their own age. They worked with the learning and outreach officer and also created their own exhibition, put on their own event, and collected an object for the Museums collection.

Case study: Cardiff Story Museum

Questions Cardiff Story Museum asks

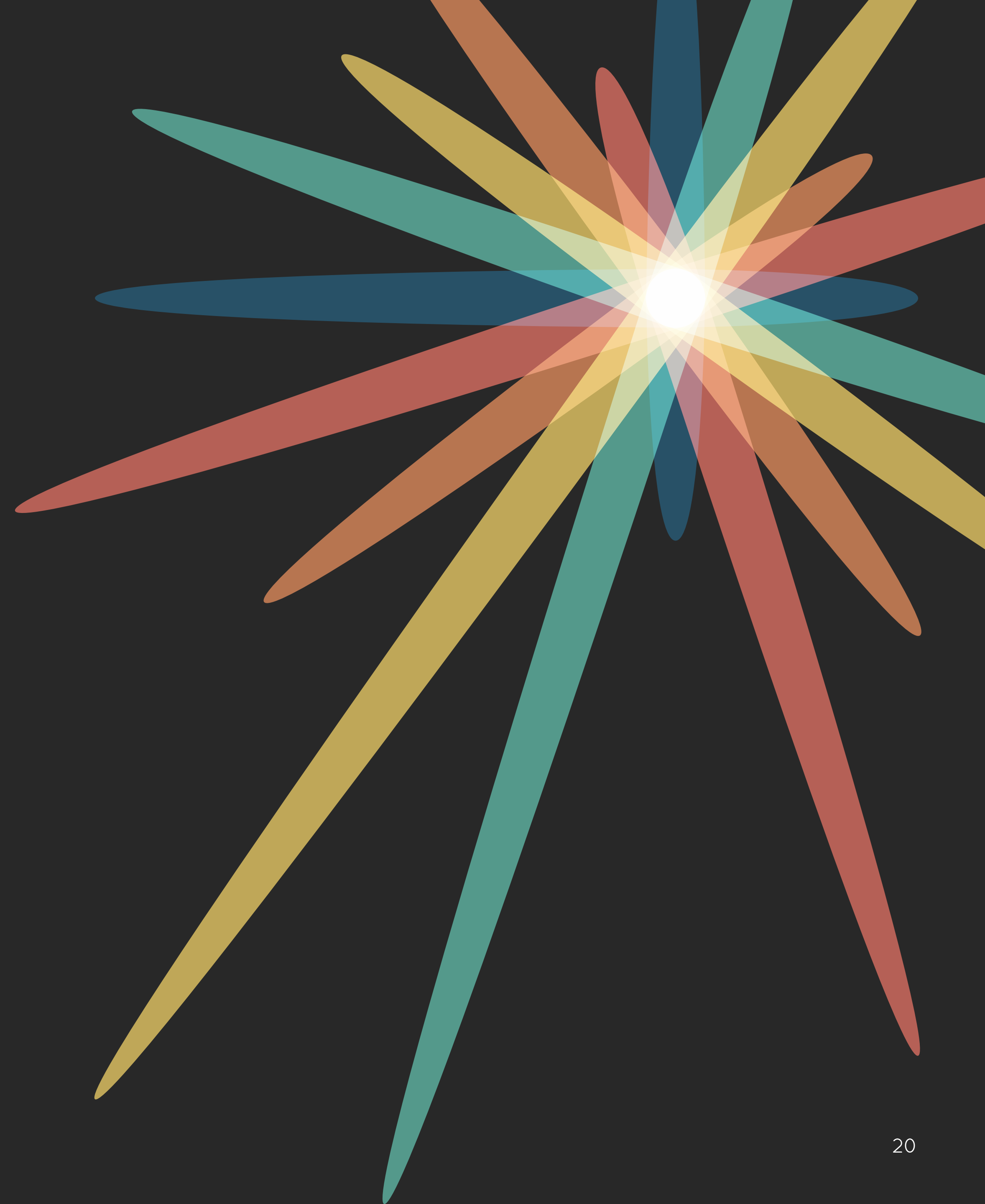
- What does [insert group] want the Museum / exhibition / project to say about Cardiff? What would they advise best represent their story?
- How can we create opportunities to become a local habit for people? A space that feels theirs?
- How might we involve and engage the Council and other key stakeholders and maintain their enthusiasm for the project?
- Influence lies in visibility – how might we become more visible within X community? Who on social media can help us reach the people we'd love to see in the museum? Who are the gatekeepers and influencers that we might build a relationship with?
- Who owns the story? Whose take on an image or object do we tell? How might we share multiple viewpoints to avoid our own (or others) unconscious bias? This has been particularly valuable as an approach when telling stories that might feel uncomfortable today e.g. LGBT history, ensuring that the context of the time is shared through archive material and curatorial expertise, memories from the people of Cardiff (or stories passed down) are shared, and views of how things are moving forward now are also represented.
- Do our priorities or targets need to change to develop a programme on the communities' terms and develop something meaningful for them?
- What are we avoiding doing because we don't think it's 'innovative' enough in comparison to others? Creativity and innovation should be relevant to your museum, your context, your communities.
- How do we create inclusive spaces that are easy to navigate? Do people feel comfortable and safe here? How might we make it feel welcoming to those returning on their own after they've had a facilitated visit as part of our outreach work?



Case study: Colchester + Ipswich Museums

OPEN UP
museums for everyone

Contents



Case study: Colchester + Ipswich Museums

Why embracing new attitudes is diversifying visitors to Colchester + Ipswich Museums

Colchester + Ipswich Museums has a mission to **'create a museum service that is a source of pride, inspiration and fun'**. Merging 10 years ago in 2007, their aim was to fashion a joint museum service to treasure. Now the stories of their collections, including a designated collection of archaeology of international significance, are being told through new ways of working, making them more relevant to wider and diverse communities.

From experience, Colchester + Ipswich Museums knew that diversity is not a short-term venture. It cannot be limited to projects and delivered solely through project-funded posts, needing instead to be embedded at the core of the organisation's culture. This meant a rethink of what increasing diversity involves and recognising that it would go beyond simply increasing the representation of different identity groups on the staff. It requires a more holistic approach, flexibility and openness to the varied outlooks and perceptions brought by different identity groups.

What they do that is special

Colchester + Ipswich Museums recognised that the same old ways of doing things produces the same old results. Cultivating new talent

brings with it new attitudes, which are essential to adapting and achieving their mission. The inspiration to change was galvanised through 'The Training Museum', a stimulating workforce transformation programme supported by Arts Council England. This unlocked new perspectives, as well as a new sense of passion about how they could break the mould, by opening up different routes into the museum sector. They defined what they needed to do:

- Value the attitudes, insights and perspectives brought by new, diverse voices on the museums' team and make sure their voices and views influence action.
- Focus on how these diverse voices can, and do contribute to achieving the museums' vision and goals.
- Empower staff by putting in place structures that enable the exchange of ideas, encourage individuals to take the initiative and welcome constructive suggestions on doing things differently.
- Understand that different perspectives bring challenges and that paradigms need to be reconsidered.
- Expect that everyone in the museum is fully on board with understanding and delivering the services' diversity agenda.



Image courtesy of Colchester + Ipswich Museums

Case study: Colchester + Ipswich Museums

- Build an organisational culture that makes best use of people's knowledge and skills and supports them to learn more and develop.

The Training Museum is a service-wide initiative instigated by Colchester + Ipswich Museums Manager, Bill Seaman. As Museums Project Officer, Lib Fox is supporting the task of expanding the diversity profile of the organisation, reaching out to new trainees and volunteers, and in turn – new audiences. Some Museum staff initially challenged the new approach:

‘Why do we need diversify when we have so many skilled people in our workforce?’

Changing established patterns however, led to positive results

‘Initially, some of the new strands of work made other staff nervous. Our first cohort of trainees brought energy and enthusiasm however; they wanted to learn and to challenge. This resulted in others taking stock and wanting to share their experience, which made them feel empowered. They could also develop, as the trainees brought in different kinds of experience and expertise.’

How they are achieving diversity

Changing the workforce

- Changing the profile of the workforce through rethinking recruitment: for the traineeships, Colchester + Ipswich Museums introduced a new strategy and procedures that move away from traditional application forms. Rather than assess candidates on particular skill sets, video interviews allowed them to share what they liked about museums and what they would change. The organisation actively welcomes people they think can make a difference and received 250 applications in the first year of traineeships.
- They are building a different kind of team that gives opportunities to people they think will add value. Traineeship applicants did not need to have research experience or degrees. Instead it was important for them to have good communication skills, different ideas and the courage to question the ways things are done. They received training in a wide range of areas to develop transferable skills.
- Recruiting trainees and staff that bring in new skills and connections, from making films about the collections to organising events and displays of objects. One example of the latter involved new links being made with the local Chinese community.

- Taster days and sharing opportunities with partners who work in youth employment to make young people aware of the opportunities in the museum sector.

New plans and activities to engage diverse visitors

- Reducing silo working by creating new ways to respond to the collections. Colchester + Ipswich Museums brought together the learning and curatorial departments, so that they reflect a more diverse range of experiences and stories.
- Backing new ways of working through CIMOVATION – an internal grants scheme that any staff member can apply to. Colleagues are encouraged to look at the area in which they work and find **‘not another thing to do, but another way to do things.’**
- Creating audience diversity plans for each of the six museums in the group, with decisions on programming for diverse visitors influenced by new staff and trainees.
- Advisory groups are being established involving gatekeepers who are the routes to diverse communities.
- Meeting the needs of local communities so they can make a difference, for example by providing EAL classes, events for homeless families.

- Events for young people created by the trainees, e.g. a rap night and a vintage-themed summer fete. Both welcomed new audiences who enjoyed the space and the attention given to them by the museum.

- All staff briefings and workshops to share visitor feedback and involve wider teams in shaping future plans.

Overall the results are rewarding

- Entrenched attitudes of existing staff have faded, supported by Culture Change training sessions delivered by an external provider in 2014, with a follow up in 2015.
- Visitor composition is reasonably representative of the demographic of the two towns.
- The volunteer base has increased and is more diverse in certain ways e.g. age.
- It has been rewarding to see the personal development of the trainees, the majority of whom had no previous museum experience. Longitudinal research is conducted by an external evaluator during and beyond their traineeships.
- Colchester + Ipswich Museums has benefited from the new ideas, knowledge and perspectives the trainees bring, as well as the

Case study: Colchester + Ipswich Museums

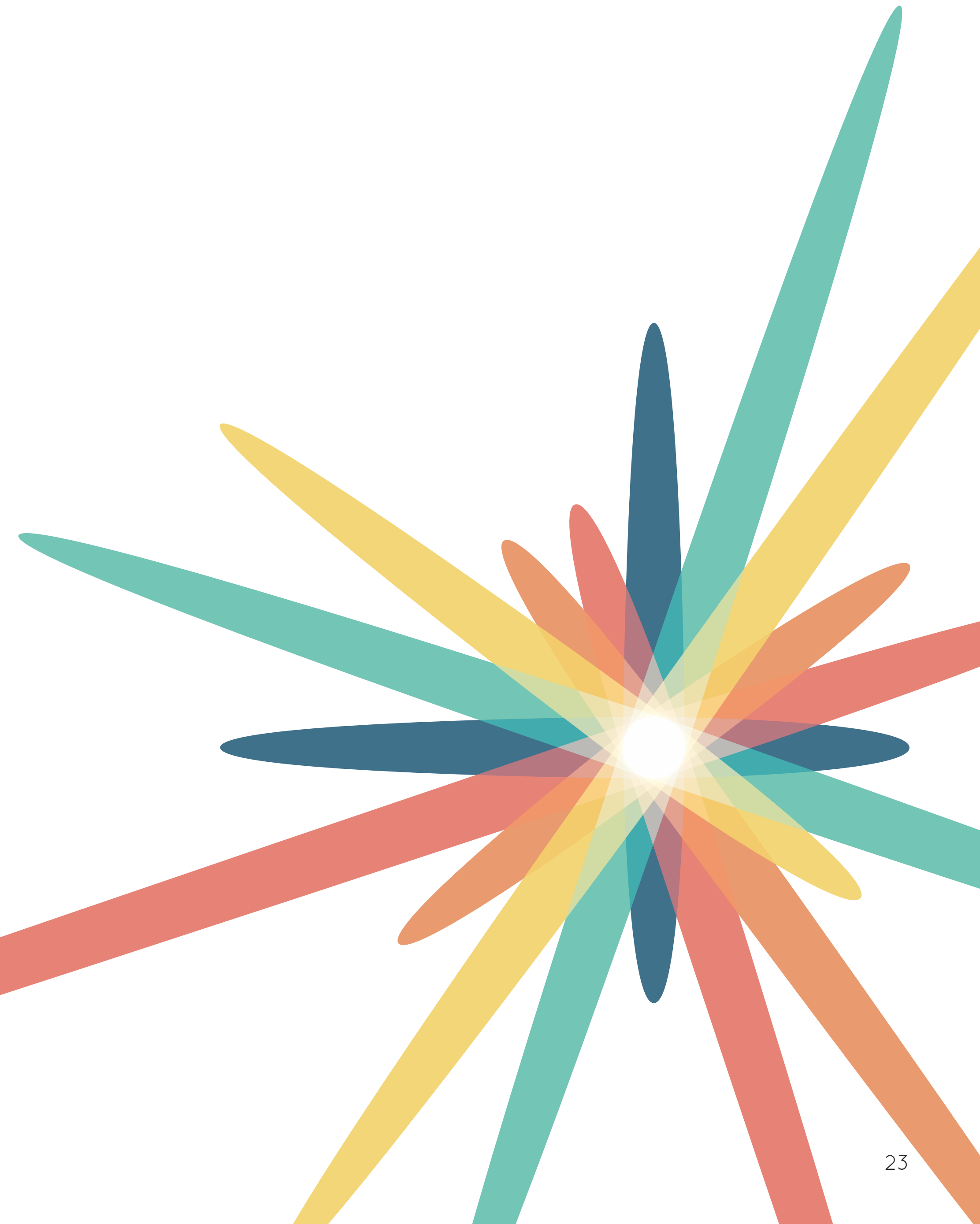
ways they challenge the basic assumptions the organisation makes about museums, programming and visitors. This is impacting on programming and leading to improved organisational procedures, strategies and practices.

‘The focus on diversity has to be constant, in order to maintain the momentum and continue the shift in organisational thinking and practice.’

Questions Colchester + Ipswich Museums ask

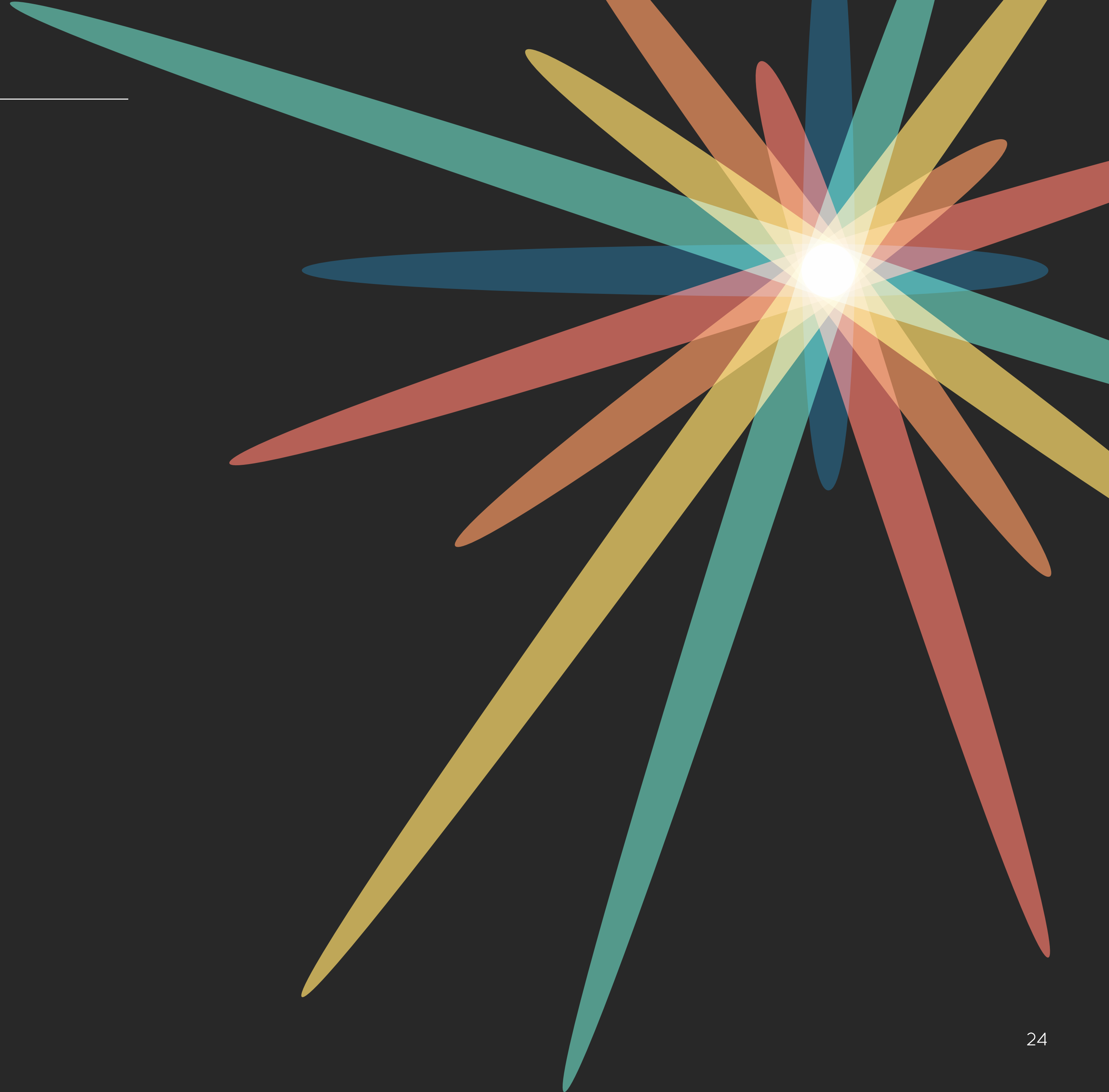
- How do we balance creating new connections between collections and communities and delivering our social agenda with a more business-like ethos toward income generation?
- Who is missing out on what we do?
- How can we encourage others to recognise a broader understanding of diversity and that it is not just skin deep?

Colchester+Ipswich
Museums



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Case study: Derby Museums

Why developing a compelling shared vision is important to Derby Museum

Derby Museum and Art Gallery is at the heart of the city centre. Its vision is for people to discover their place, in the world. A major feature is its collection of Joseph Wright paintings. Derby Museums is creating a new museum, the Silk Mill, as a Museum of Making. This celebrates Derby's rich industrial history and looks to empower makers through an inspirational environment.

Derby is a multi-cultural city; 20% of its population is BAME and Derby Museums' Director, Tony Butler, is very conscious that many local people feel that **'museums are not for them'** (this is borne out in non-user research conducted in 2016). He is aware that most museums have norms and behaviours that are increasingly not shared: this is the situation he intends to change.

As the Founder of the Happy Museum, Tony believes in the capacity of museums to:

'Reshape the relationship between humans and objects to explore people's stories through their relationships with each other as well as their things ... Museums are connectors between people, objects and the environment in which they exist and it is this complex relationship which they should seek to portray.'

'The barriers to more diverse audiences, which museums by and large failed to break down,

are overwhelmingly social and cultural. Our local research has shown that those on low income or with fewer qualifications are quite happy to spend money on leisure, such as going to the cinema, parks or theme parks. They won't come to a museum as this activity is not endorsed by their peer group or is not considered something that they would habitually do. This will take years to change.'

What they do that's special

- In-depth thinking about who their Museum is for and ensuring that it is relevant to their lives and histories.
- Creating social capital and social diversity through building networks, friendships, developing skills and stimulating the sense of place and heritage: others endorse and support this agenda through help in kind. Supported volunteering can be a great way to give agency and assist vulnerable individuals to live more independently.
- Helping people to discover their place in the world and combine local with global citizenship.
- Counteracting the sense of alienation from museums that many people feel by reducing the 'intellectual baggage' that presents collections in obscure ways that limit their interaction with audiences.



Images courtesy of Derby Museum and Art Gallery

Case study: Derby Museums

- Adopting a style of leadership that is open and collaborative so control and responsibility resides with the team: informal rather than hierarchical. All the team take part in social and well-being activities.
- Changing the institutional culture, staffing structure and ethos and not being precious about cultural value. Derby Museums has specialist curators but they are expected to be flexible and collaborate with the public. Co-production is a key feature in their job descriptions. The organisation is project led, with cross-disciplinary teams including those in learning, audiences, and commercial. Showing public benefit is everything.
- Designing and delivering programmes with the public so that they suit their desires and needs.

How they achieve it

- Recognising that for all their efforts to change, museums are still shaped by intellectual and cultural privilege. **‘The culture needs to change and the first step is to name the problem: the gap between users and non-users of museums needs to be bridged. The first step is to understand the unequal distribution of cultural capital. This is a class issue – and you have to start somewhere.’**
- Making the Museum a comfortable space where people feel they have a right to be: **‘the first five minutes in the Museum space makes**

or breaks the experience of a new or reticent visitor. So we invest a lot in how our front of house team welcomes visitors.’

- Embedding processes that open up the Museum to diverse audiences. e.g. thinking about the audience experience before creating the product: putting themselves in the mindset of people they don’t know when planning exhibitions and activities through Empathy Mapping: this has worked well with refugees.
- Acting on conversations and research with non-users: e.g. they identified the Museum was not reaching Asian audiences. This led to the exhibition on the Music of Courtly India. This celebration of Indian culture saw an increase in Asian audiences and the forming of new connections
- Emphasising attitudes and empathy over tokenistic representation. Reflecting the broader lived-in interests of people rather than being limited by segmentation or a deficit model focused on under-represented groups, or specific niche targets.
- Ensuring there is a balance between the need to generate income and to create cultural and social capital through audience development: they describe the Museum as a social enterprise.
- Making new connections with people in parts of the city that do not engage: for example, by

taking objects from the collections to different types of places to see how people interact with them.

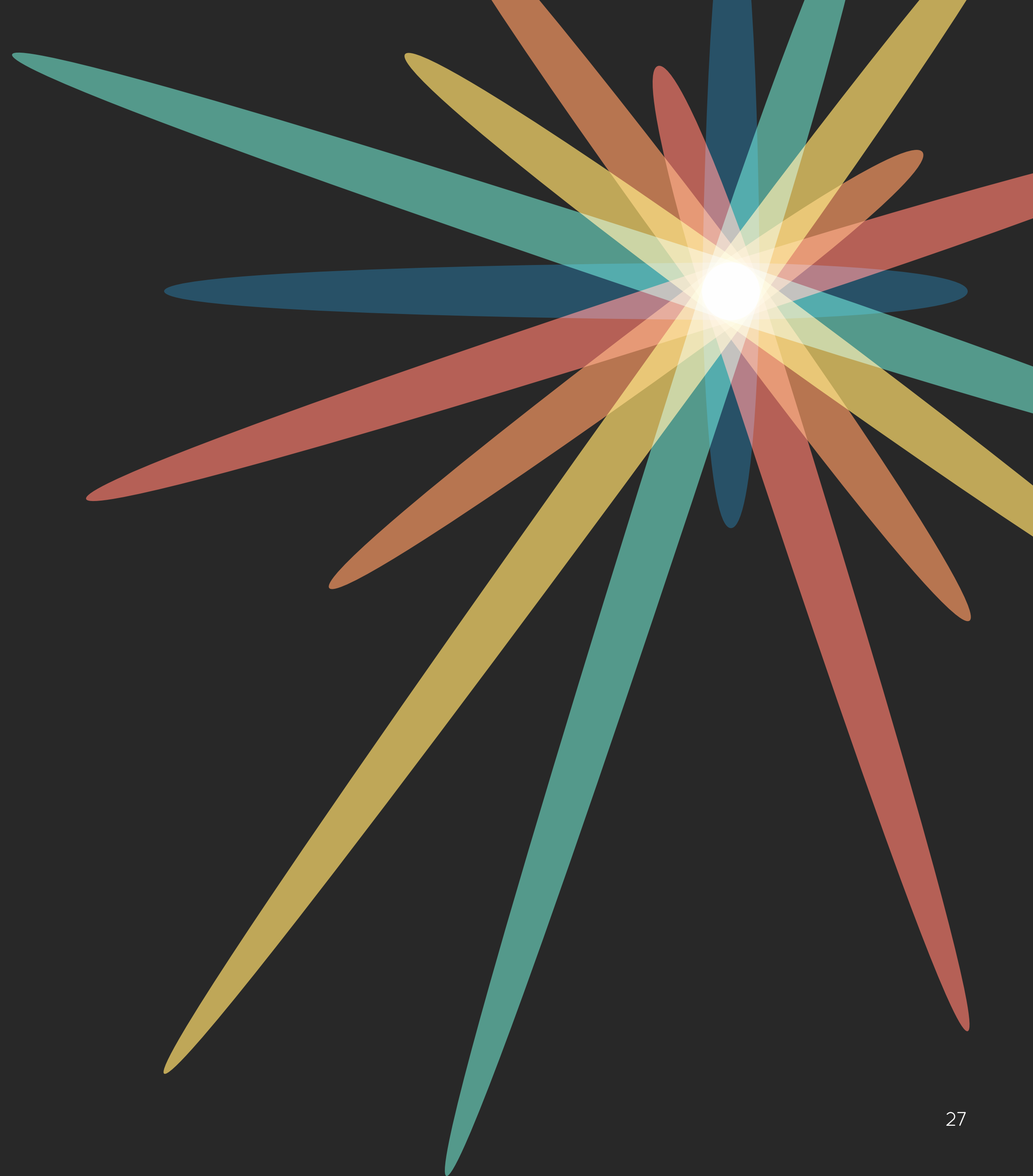
- A new approach to staff training based on ideation sessions and project labs centred on the audience experience.
- Overcoming resistance by demonstrating and communicating success.

A question Derby Museums ask

- How do we ‘unteach’ the practices in museums that are limiting audience diversity?



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Case study: Glasgow Women's Library

Why equality, diversity and inclusion are important to Glasgow Women's Library (GWL)

Glasgow Women's Library (GWL) is the only accredited museum dedicated to women's history in the UK. It was founded to celebrate the lives and achievements of women and to act as a catalyst to eradicate the gender gap that contributes to widespread inequalities in Scotland.

'GWL's vision is of a world in which women's historical, cultural and political contributions to society are fully recognised, valued and celebrated by all.'

From its origins as a wholly volunteer organisation, GWL has flourished into an award-winning museum and is a Recognised Collection of National Significance. Impressively, without losing any of its focus on communities and with equalities embedded at its core.

It's not about **'how do we make a collection relevant to a diverse society'**, it's about **'creating a space for women to develop social, cultural and economic capital and become active in learning about, and getting involved in, histories of women.'**

What they do that's special

- They developed permanent collections with the community and their lending library has been entirely donated by women of a diverse mix of backgrounds. There are now more than 20,000 books and 30,000 archival items, and the collection has been recognised as a collection of national significance.
- Approximately 50% of the annual programme is curated by the team and 50% by submitted ideas from a diverse mix of partners. There is a form on the website for people to submit suggestions for programmes or events they'd like to run.
- BME Women's Project Development Officer, Syma Ahmed, promotes lifelong learning, arts and creative opportunities for BME women and celebrates the success and achievements of BME women in Glasgow through capturing and compiling their life stories and preserving them at GWL.
- A project exploring the histories of women migrating to Glasgow started by inviting women to create models of the houses they'd left behind. An exhibition was produced including the women's models and significant items that they brought with them from their



Muslim Women's Reading Group. Image courtesy of Glasgow Women's Library

Case study: Glasgow Women's Library

homelands and lent to the library. This sparked much discussion and exploration between different cultures. The poet Jackie Kay was so inspired by this project that she wrote new poems about the women's stories which were then published and shared widely.

- Partnerships with influencers, such as Jackie Kay, and other inspirational women such as renowned writers, film makers, zine makers, artists etc. help the team to find creative ways to make ideas meaningful to people today.
- A lot of their work is focused on working with volunteers to unearth hidden histories. For example, they supported women to research the stories of the women who lived, worked and died in the First World War Belvidere Fever Hospital. Enabling them to comb through the archives, meet people who remember the hospital, and create a dramatic performance piece to mark the lives of the women they discovered.
- They focus on raising ambition and creating a fast-track route to meaningful cultural experiences. For example, rather than just providing basic literacy events (which is an important part of what they do), they also think about how they might help people write a play, or share their story.
- There are many initiatives within GWL supporting different women and enabling them to access their work e.g. a Muslim women's

reading group, a young critics group, and a BAME collective of women creatives from all over Scotland who connect through GWL and help curate events.

- They work with 80 – 100 volunteers each year. Volunteer involvement is considered at the start of every project, by the whole team. They ask people what they want to get out of volunteering and find out what makes them tick.
- Individuals determine their own identity and they invite people to add their perspectives and their stories to ensure that they remain relevant to people today.
- GWL sits within an area that is in the top 5% for highest levels of deprivation in Scotland. They work hard to ensure their local community feels that this is their space. People drop in for free. Many events are just £2.
- They get out and meet the people they want to engage in places that are meaningful to them e.g. through poetry readings in fish and chip shops, and they provide guided tours of the library in community languages.

How they achieve it

- GWL is a values-led organisation. Equality, diversity and inclusion are intrinsic, non-negotiable values. They underpin every aspect of GWL's work. They consider alignment to their values with staff, board and volunteer recruitment and ensure that they are shared beliefs and commitments throughout.
- The team, led by Adele and Sue, but with active input from all, have developed an Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion action plan (EDI) together. This provides an evidence-based snapshot of involvement with GWL and highlights where priorities for action lie. It sets out objectives, strategies, and risks to monitor.
- Everyone is valued. GWL is a warm, welcoming place. Volunteers have been encouraged to join the board or staff team over time and are then mentored by an existing board member to ensure their voice is heard. It starts at home within the team. They ask people what needs to change and are open and responsive to their answers.
- Learning is continual, for all: they hold an induction and refresher training session called **'This is who we are'**, sharing and exploring their values – new staff are joined by new board members and volunteers during the same session, showing that all are valued and encouraging input and interaction throughout the organisation.

- They constantly strive for improvement so they never stop learning. The team recently undertook external training to enable them to plan how those with multiple disabilities e.g. deaf and blind, might discover and engage with their work.
- Monitoring and evaluation informs future plans. Every event and project they ask people to fill in a simple form to capture data e.g. postcodes (to track socio-economic diversity) and protected characteristics. They ask people to sign-in to track those dropping in for free. Baselines from these statistics, plus those of the mix of staff, board and volunteers inform their EDI action plan and their programme for the next year.
- They discuss any tricky situations that arise as a team and have three EDI reflection meetings a year to review targets and consider what needs to be changed.
- They also monitor the impact of their work on people with case studies informing future activity.

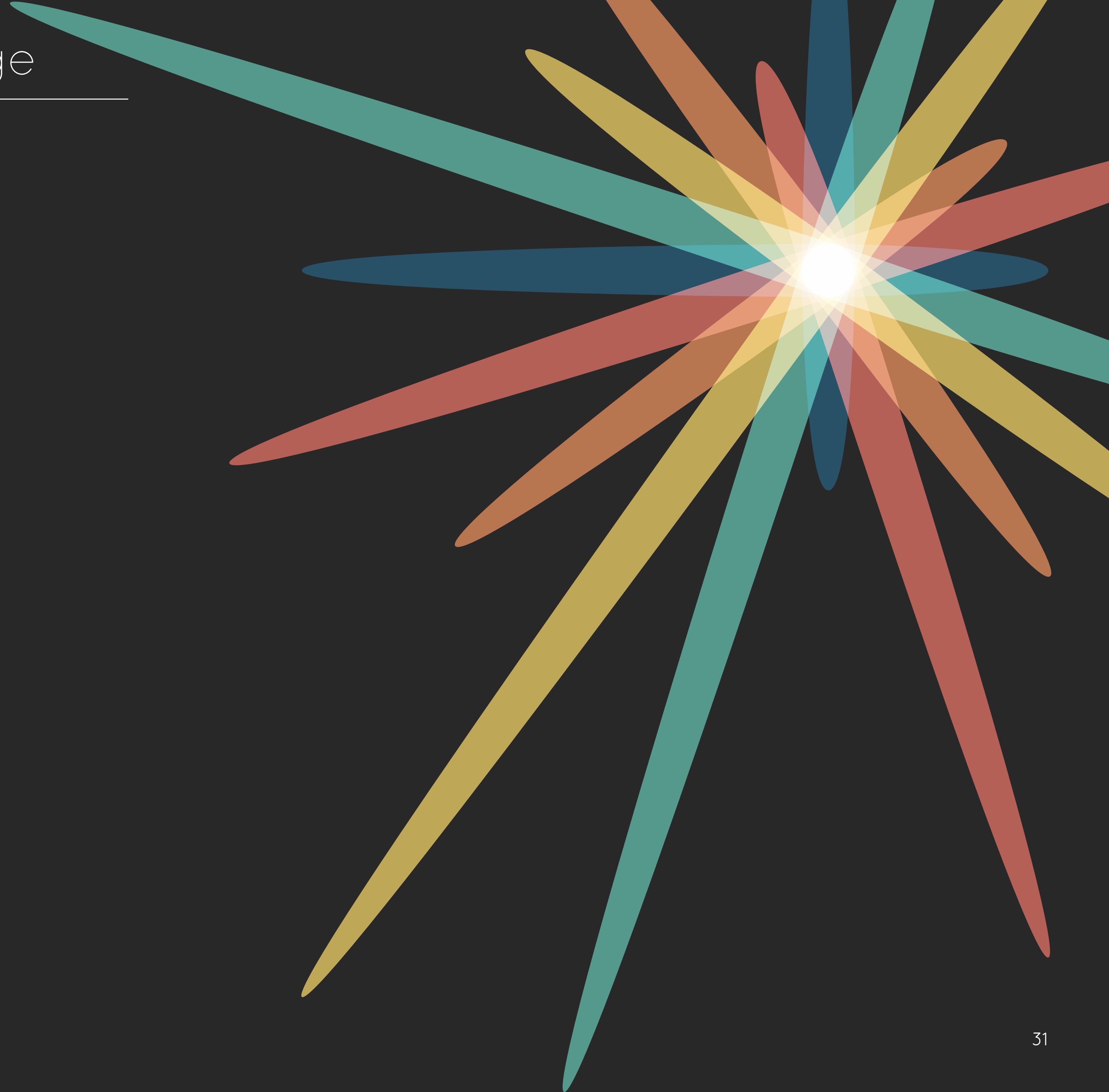
Case study: Glasgow Women's Library

Questions Glasgow Women's Library asks

- Who are we as an organisation?
- What does each individual need to participate in our work?
- How might we create space, and fast-track a route for people to have meaningful cultural experiences whatever their background and despite how people might perceive their potential?
- What might motivate [insert name] and what might they be frightened of?
- Who are we working well with and who are we missing?
- Who is the easiest to ignore (not who is the hardest to reach)?



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museums for everyone



Case study: Museum of Cambridge

Why equality, diversity and inclusion are important to the Museum of Cambridge

The Museum of Cambridge is a small, independent museum, with a big heart.

Two years ago, a new Director, Lorna O'Brien, was appointed. Lorna has a background in learning and interpretation and has a deep commitment to social inclusion. She started by recruiting new staff to lead a key project that the Museum had just received funding from Cambridge City Council for – **'Capturing Cambridge'**. This project, discovering and sharing social history stories across the region, sparked the start of a renewed focus of what a small, local museum could be:

'We exist as a place where people discover and celebrate the diverse stories of Cambridge, its surrounding area and its people.'

In a city dominated by its internationally renowned university it is easy to make assumptions about Cambridge. While many of the population do have high levels of education and income, this is not the full picture. Like any city, there are pockets of deprivation, and many people and communities that exist alongside the stereotype who are easily forgotten.

The Museum of Cambridge therefore seeks to provide a voice for local people, connecting a diverse mix of people across Cambridge and

Cambridgeshire, and enabling them to tell their own stories:

'I'm not useless ...I created art today.'
(powerful feedback from a local participant)

What they do that's special

- The Community Engagement Manager, Hilary Cox-Condron, works with minimal resources, but manages to reach and engage an enormous number of different people and groups by taking a can-do, experimental approach. Finding groups she wants to work with, identifying what's relevant to them, and putting ideas quickly into action to demonstrate that she has listened and responded.
- The team establish friendships, partnerships and projects with people across Cambridge.

Examples include:

- Working with local groups and residents to tell the Cambridge LGBT history through personal stories and exploring safe and un-safe spaces across the city.
- Being part of a multi-partner project working with children receiving pupil premium funding embedding arts and culture into their experience to improve lives.
- Shared Heritage, Shared Humanity: an ongoing project working closely with migrant



Image courtesy of Museum of Cambridge

Case study: Museum of Cambridge

and refugee groups to connect through the Museum's collection.

- Setting up pop-up exhibitions and memory cafés at local events, festivals and old people's homes to reach specific groups who may not think a museum is for them.
- Appointing community editors for their website.
- Opening up the downstairs room as a free drop-in community space in the Museum every Friday.
- On-going collaboration with Rowan – an arts organisation for adults with learning disabilities – from drawing workshops within the Museum, supporting their artwork through their shop, hosting exhibitions and partnering on their heritage project.

The Chairman of Cambridge United recently introduced Hilary for a talk she was giving. He described her as **'community glue'**.

- The community engagement programme evolves around national awareness dates. This provides a simple way to ensure they cover a broad, diverse mix of topics and people, without needing to spend huge amounts of time planning. This also enables them to tap into conversations already taking place and to generate PR stories to maximise use of their limited marketing time and budget.
- The team develop programme that clearly

states **'this is for you'**. They focus on **'opening doors'** and **'providing space.'** Despite having limited room to actively collect (the museum is housed within a 17th Century timber framed coaching inn), they have found an innovative way to create space for an evolving mix of people and objects. They created a **'community cabinet'**, a space that is regularly taken over by different individuals or groups to enable them to share things that inspire them from the museum's collection, and to bring in significant items or collections of their own. Different groups need different amount of support in doing this, but they always help facilitate conversation, using items within the community cabinet to spark discussion and connections between diverse groups of people.

How they achieve it

- Lorna brought a new mindset to the museum. She showed courage and vision in appointing a team of people who have not necessarily come up through traditional museum routes, but who do have the skills, local connections, curiosity, and passion for enabling others to tell their stories.
- **'We need to recruit the right people, who are able to make the right connections. People who can go in to different communities and be respected and understand the sensitivities involved.'**
- Staff described the vision of the museum

focusing on community inclusion as being a core reason for applying to work there. People within the small team do this work **'for the joy of it.'** This personal alignment to the vision, and individual passion and dedication to bring it to life have been key to making this work. Community-focus is not just a value written on paper, they really believe it.

- They focus on getting out and making connections. They seek to become part of the community, getting to know lots of people without necessarily having an agenda. Taking part in others activities, participating in local fairs, festivals, and markets, posting on community Facebook groups set up by others, taking boxes of things from the collection to groups who can't physically visit the museum to spark memories and discussions, etc.

'I get involved in lots of arts and social justice events. People know I'm genuine.'

- They 'actively listen'. Finding the community they want to work with first and talking to them to find out what interests them. This might be done informally, it might be through 'memory workshops', or by inviting people to walk around the museum with them and tell them what needs to change. It can also be through more formal routes such as taking part in steering groups led by partner organisations.
- They then consider how they might connect people's interests and experiences with their

collection and develop initiatives and events to bring the two together. Creativity and imagination are key.

- The Museum of Cambridge is people focused. They describe themselves as being **'resident-led'**. They never assume they know the answer about how best to involve someone, **'the answers are in the community.'** People are invited in for tea and cake and to meet the team. **'People get to know us personally. We like people. We like to have fun.'**
- As a small museum with limited time and budget they always want to do more than is physically possible! They therefore think about how they might connect people with one another and encourage them to create projects – the museum might host the end result, or it might simply act as the relationship broker. They see themselves as **'facilitators'**, they are a **'safe space'** for people across the community to make their own.
- The Museum of Cambridge charges entry fees. So to make sure they are accessible to all they have a time credit scheme, offer free entry for specific groups / individuals, provide drop-in opportunities, and free evening events.

Case study: Museum of Cambridge

Questions Museum of Cambridge asks

- Who is telling the story? What might we do to enable [insert name / group] to share their story?
- How might we change people's perceptions of what a 'museum' is through use of all the senses – music, sense, smell, touch (not just sight)?
- Who in our local area might we make friends with?
- What do we need to ask to find out how we can become more relevant to [insert name or group]?
- How can we open doors and create a quirky, fun, space where a diverse mix of people can feel like they belong, where it reflects who they are?
- How might we help people to make our space their own?

Museum *of*
Cambridge

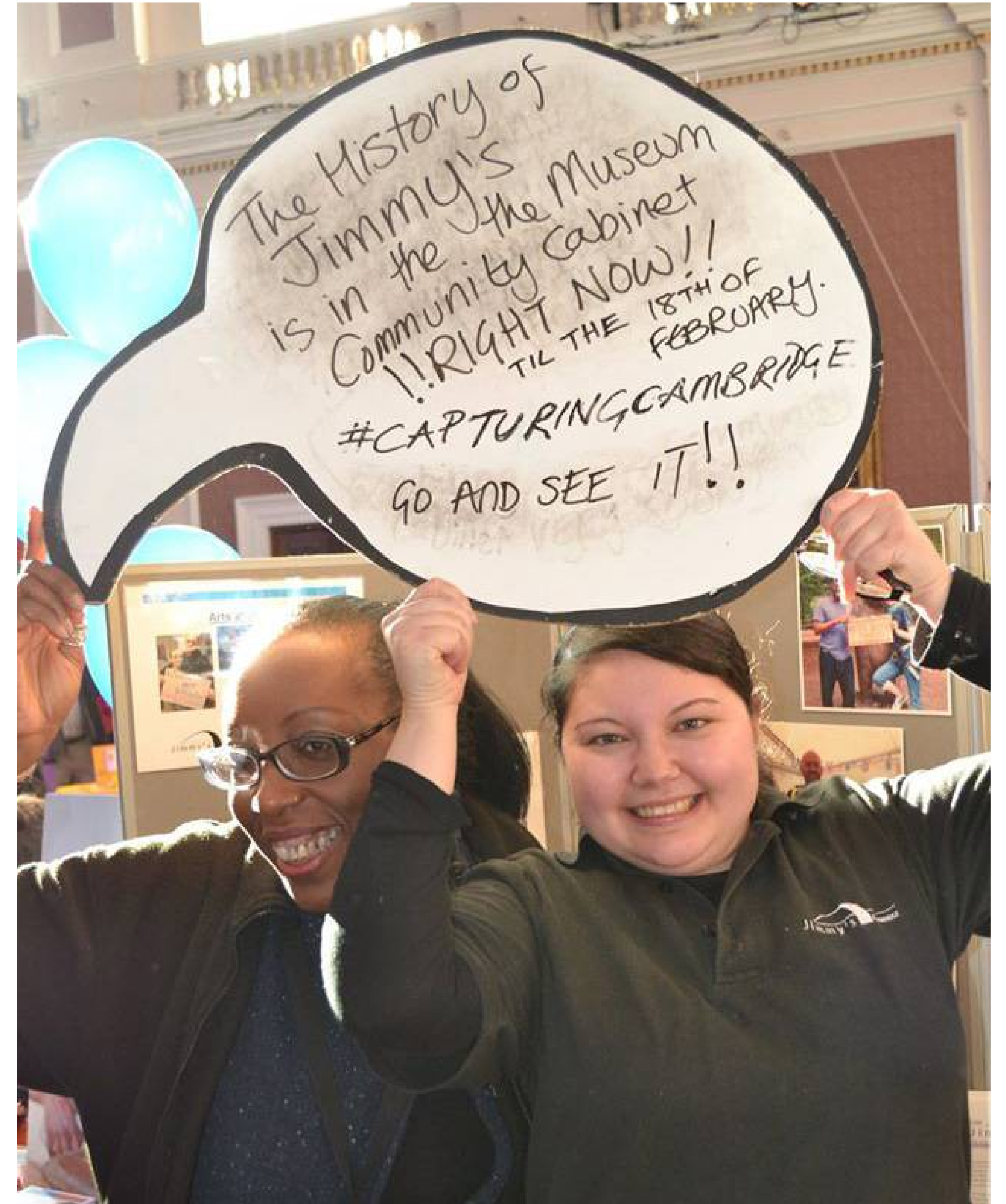
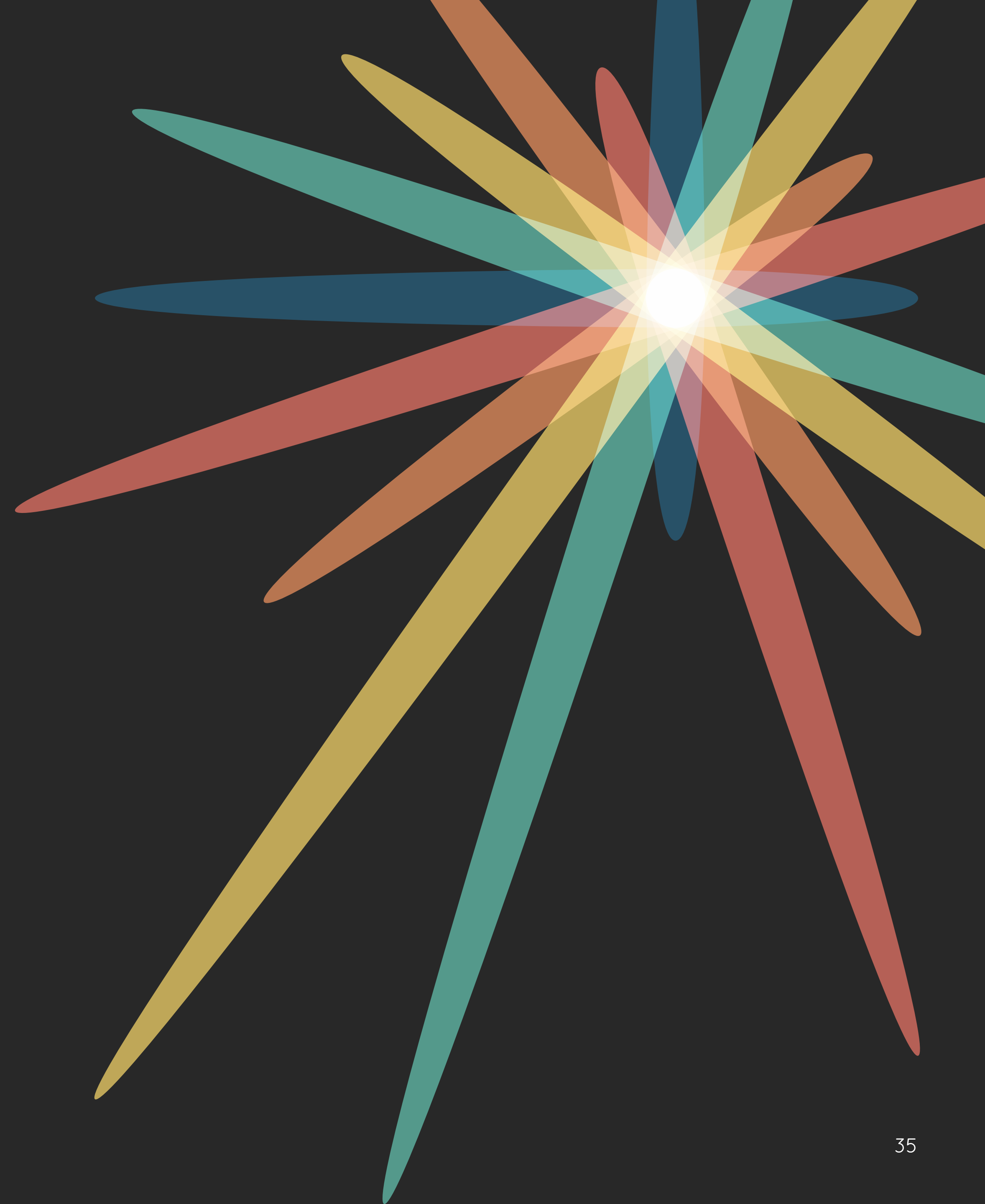


Image courtesy of The Museum of Cambridge

Case study: National Museums Liverpool (NML)

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Case study: National Museums Liverpool (NML)

Why equality, diversity and inclusion are important to NML

‘We want to refocus the portrayal of history away from just the great and the good towards the voices of the many’

National Museums Liverpool, the only national museum service in England based entirely outside London, consists of seven museums, Museum of Liverpool, World Museum, Merseyside Maritime Museum, International Slavery Museum, Walker Art Gallery, Lady Lever Art Gallery and Sudley House. Led by internationally recognised human rights advocate David Fleming, diversity is firmly embedded in their Vision:

‘To be the world’s leading example of an inclusive museum service’

In line with their focus on making a real difference, NML measure and share their impacts and methodologies nationally and globally. In 2017 they reported having quadrupled visitor numbers since 2000 and reported providing an annual contribution to the local economy of £53m and more than 1,200 jobs. In 2015/16 of the 2.8 million visitors, 28% hailed from the less advantaged categories NS-SEC 5-8.

What they do that’s special

‘Museums are experts at recording and caring for people’s memories’

- Their celebrated ‘House of Memories’ project, referred to in the Prime Minister’s Challenge on Dementia, has to date engaged more than 11,000 health, housing and social care workers. Creating an estimated £12.6m in social value, it is now a nationally, and soon to be internationally, used model supported by the Department of Health and other strategic national health partners. The programme connects carers with a range of resources including objects, workshops and an app – all of which support connection with the cared for person. They pay attention to detail: differences in memories from a cultural, geographic and age basis are all catered for. Originally a workforce model, the focus has now shifted to family carers. The project has also influenced their approaches to marketing to older audiences and has forged new income streams.

‘We don’t just talk about it, we act upon it. But we take great consideration before we put it out’

- NML describes itself as a ‘campaigning museum service’. Not only do they regularly champion issues that many might consider sensitive or controversial but they instigate real



Image courtesy of National Museums Liverpool © Robin Clewley

Case study: National Museums Liverpool (NML)

change in the communities they serve. Just two of numerous examples include:

- Their successful campaign to stop shops in close vicinity to the International Slavery Museum at Albert Docks from selling ‘golliwogs’.
- Creating a groundbreaking Trans heritage project with local group Homotopia, about Liverpool born April Ashley, attended by 930,000 visitors. The associated debates and discussions are welcomed, **‘It’s challenging but we don’t shy away from it’**.

- They have also founded a number of national and international change-making networks such as Happy Older People (HOP) and the Social Justice Alliance for Museums (SJAM).
- NML is the first museum to become a third-party reporting centre: a safe place where individuals can report hate crimes and call the national support line. Schools also regularly approach NML to participate in their issue based education offer, exploring themes around identity, human rights, and migration.

How they achieve it

‘Understand your local community, if you are a lone voice, you won’t get very far’

- NML continually look for new strategic

partnerships and income streams, thinking both strategically and experimentally. They actively search for new partners, comparing the many layers of social and state infrastructure, from the DCMS to community influencers, to the layers of an onion. They aim for actual and virtual connection at all levels via ‘massive networking’ and are part of numerous forums, networks and steering groups such as Dementia Action Alliance.

‘We don’t want museums to be inclusive because they have been told to be, but because they want to be’

- Positive partnerships are forged inside the organisation too such as the Diversity Working Group, a cross-departmental team who look at how to address and respond to key issues and a BME Staff group which came out of the need to support staff during challenging times during the development of the International Slavery Museum.
- In line with the belief that **‘museums are here for the benefit of the visitors’**, is the view that, **‘The story comes first’**. They make sure content is relevant and accessible, for example, the hugely popular Museum of Liverpool was created in consultation with over 10,000 local people – including children and disability access groups – and is about the everyday person, the diversity of the city and its global

significance. The content covers a broad range of subjects such as the womens’ movement, trade unions, sport and LGBT and Irish histories. The museum also houses Little Liverpool, a hands-on gallery specifically designed for children under six. Low-income visitor figures are continuing to rise here.

- They aim to engage with every local school and over the last ten years the number of school children visiting NML has grown by 77%. In a catchment area where social deprivation can span generation after generation, they take care to research and actively target schools with high pupil premium: schools where for example, numbers of free school meals or asylum seekers are high, aiming to ‘bridge the cultural gap’ via work with schools, social workers, local authorities and the like.
- Training and apprenticeship opportunities have included the Creative Apprenticeship programme targeting young adults from lower socio-economic groups who showed enthusiasm and aptitude without needing degree level education.
- Finally, they strongly believe that free admission is a major driver for being an inclusive and diverse museum service and this underlines their whole ethos, mission and approach as an organisation.

Questions National Museums Liverpool ask

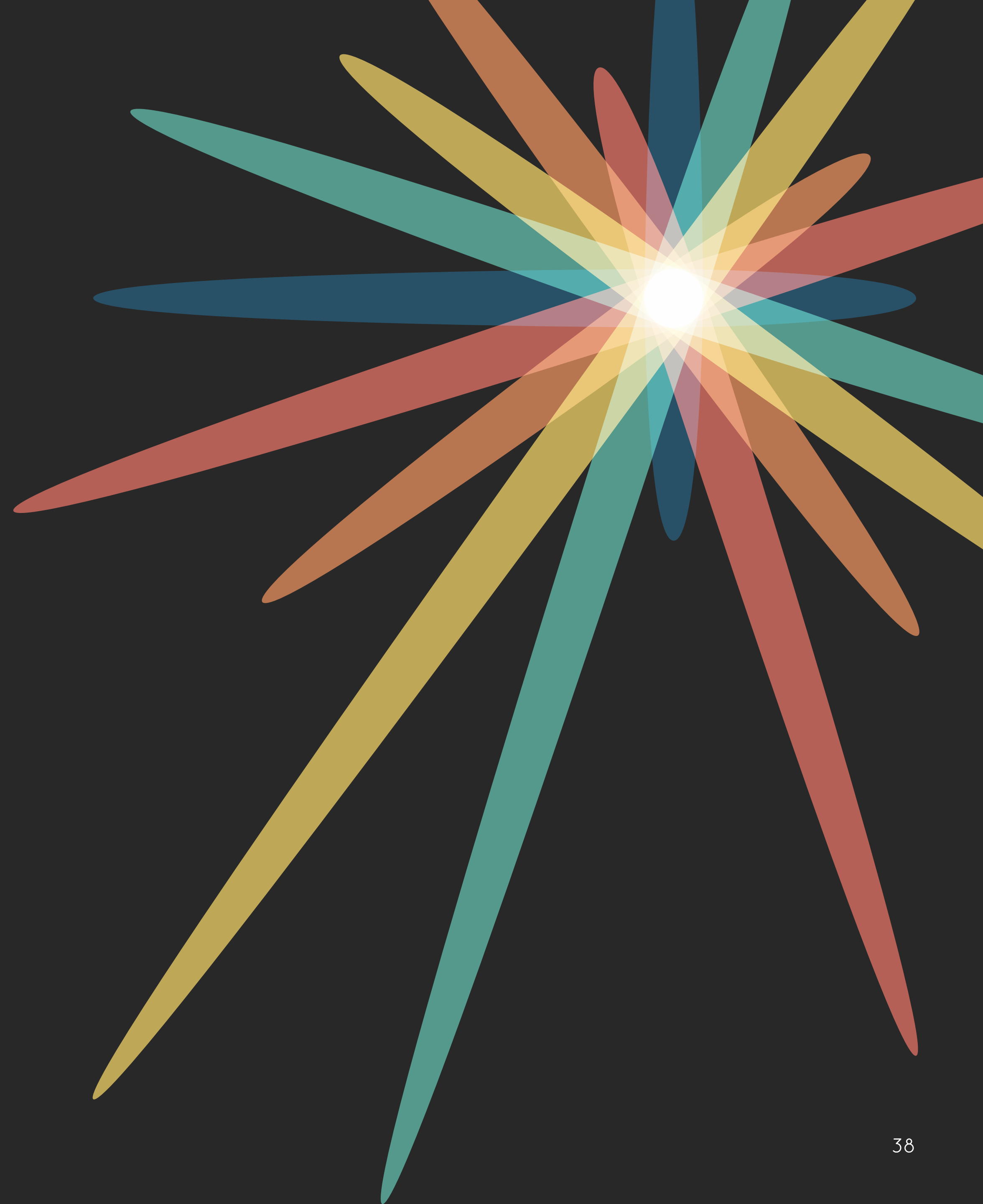
- How can NML make a measurable difference to this community?
- What story is this community most interested and invested in?
- What are the local strategic needs and where would our partnership help?
- Do our staff feel they have to or do they want to?



Case study: National Museums Northern Ireland (NMNI)

OPEN UP
museums for everyone

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Case study: National Museums Northern Ireland (NMNI)

Why equality, diversity and inclusion are important to NMNI

National Museums Northern Ireland has decades of expertise in building relationships that make a lasting difference. Spanning three open-air and indoor sites – the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum, the Ulster Museum and the Ulster American Folk Park – they firmly believe that **‘everybody has an absolute entitlement to benefit from museums’** and work hard to make that access for all a reality.

Economic and social impact are embedded in their corporate strategy: they have a strong commitment to tackling poverty and social exclusion, using well thought-through fundraising, community programming and targeted outreach to develop more first-time attenders, a more representative audience profile and ultimately a shared positive future for all.

What they do that’s special

- For the past five years, they have worked in partnership with the Education Authority and Urban Villages, (a Northern Ireland Executive initiative which develops specific areas where there has been a history of deprivation and community tension). NMNI’s wide range of Positive Change projects include, engaging teenage boys in the transport collection (including a thrilling hands-on experience of a DeLorean car and a real flight in an aeroplane) and, taking art and objects out into community groups and libraries.
- ‘Positive Outcomes for Families and Schools’, their award-winning pre-school and primary school parental engagement programme has delivered 6,000 points of engagement over the past four years. The project focuses on early intervention via literacy and numeracy based activities aided by museum ‘resident’ Berkeley Bear. In 2016/17, 1,800 parents and children from the top 25% most deprived areas in NI, took part.
- **‘Explore, Engage, Enjoy’.** When the Ulster Museum re-opened in 2009 with an emphasis on providing a hands-on experience of international art, history and natural sciences, the percentage of C2DE attenders rose from 23% to 46%, a testament to three years of close work with local communities.
- **‘You can reach all segments of society through schools’.** Their Craft in Mind programme enables parents from inner city schools to engage in traditional crafts and skills such as rag rug making and embroidery. The programme has boosted mental well-being, self-esteem and confidence to such an extent that many of the participants have now gone on to become award-winning volunteers.



explore/engage/enjoy

Positive Change for People and Communities



Image courtesy of National Museums Northern Ireland (NMNI)

Case study: National Museums Northern Ireland (NMNI)

How they achieve it

- **‘Identify the people who can make a difference’.** They choose partners carefully and focus on developing good long-term relationships by building trust, genuinely valuing the skills and experience of their partners and making sure the partnership is mutually beneficial. ‘Live and Learn’ was a six year, Big Lottery funded programme delivered in partnership with Age Concern and Age NI providing over 20,000 learning opportunities for older people who would not normally visit a museum, with the learning now embedded in the museum’s everyday practice. ‘Treasure House’, another Big Lottery enabled programme was delivered over five years with Clanmill Housing Association to provide social and learning opportunities for older people.
- NMNI are skilled at thinking creatively about fundraising, for example helping smaller organisations to apply for Awards for All funds has led to an extra £60k in income. They are one of the few museums in the UK that receive funding from Big Lottery, who have to date supported them for a cumulative total of 14 years.
- They take a strategic, opportunistic and persistent approach and do their homework. For example, they looked at NISRA statistics then targeted their education resources accordingly in the top 25% areas of deprivation. They undertake ‘environmental scanning’ to understand the various infrastructural policies, identifying key networks, players and champions and looking for where the museum can be a resource and be helped in return through endorsements, funding and partnerships.
- They maximise opportunities to build new relationships and profile by putting time and effort into documenting their projects well and making their successes known. Initially this was done through simple PDFs created in-house which were sent out to their mailing list and even handed out at government meetings and this has now progressed to professionally produced videos. They also make time to enter awards (and win them!).
- They think about addressing barriers at all levels, for example by offering free transport and hospitality for targeted groups, discretionary free family tickets for selected groups and subsidy for teachers to enable them to take days out of school. They also carefully consider which staff members will be right to work with different groups and their Community Engagement Initiative funded by the HLF enabled training of six staff in community engagement. As a result, curatorial staff interest in public engagement is growing and they enjoy sharing their knowledge.

Questions National Museums Northern Ireland ask

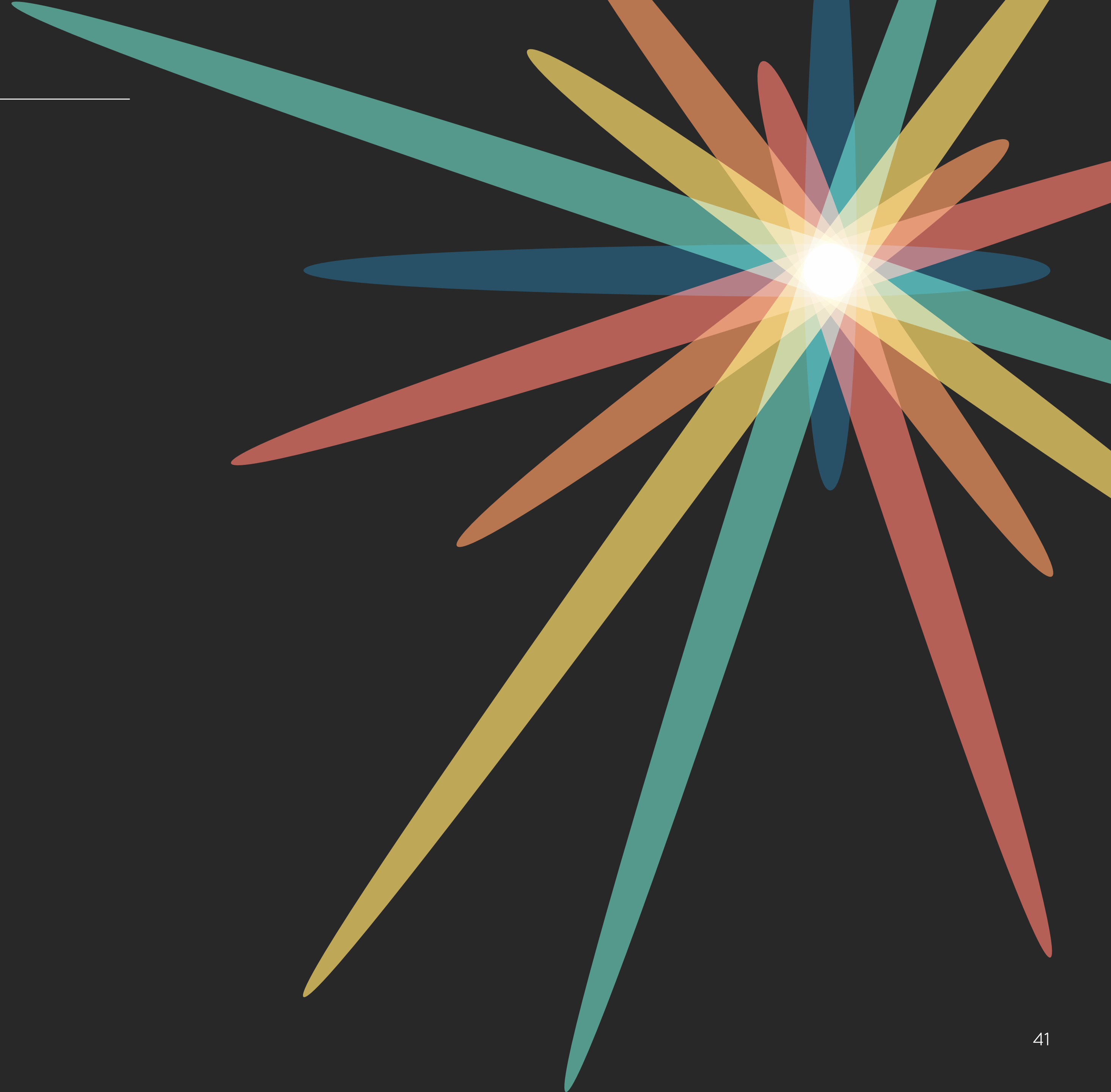
- Which other sectors might need our resources for community building and well-being work?
- How can we help our project partners to get the outcomes they want?
- In what other ways can we source the funds we need to make a difference?
- What barriers to visiting do those in deprived areas face and how can we address them at every step of the way?



explore/engage/enjoy

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museums for everyone



Case study: V&A

The V&A case study was developed with a young volunteer who is at an early stage of his career. He was put forward for the AIM project by the V&A on the basis of his deep commitment to opening up the Museum to diverse audiences and as the opportunity for in-depth exploration of the issues that matter to him. The case study represents a perspective of how someone at this career stage perceives diversity and inclusivity in a major organisation.

Why is ‘radiating the inside out’ through putting meaningful value propositions into action important to the V&A?

As the world’s leading museum of art, design and performance, the V&A’s strategic goal is to be **‘a book with its pages always open.’**

Its vision is to make the Museum matter to more people and to provide all visitors with the best quality experience and optimum access to its collections.

It aims to recognise and remove the barriers which people from all backgrounds may face in accessing its collections and services, and to integrate equality and diversity into everything that it does so that all aspects of the Museum – staff profile, collections, audiences, programmes and events – reflect the social diversity of the 21st century.

The title Victoria & Albert also leads some audiences to think this Museum is about Queen

Victoria or that its collections are only of British objects. There are other issues: for example, none of the Museum’s twenty greatest treasures have been made by a woman; the core audience tends to be middle-aged wealthy women, leading to perceptions that it is ‘snobby’.

Ruben Salgado Perez, Gallery Assistant, is a Volunteer Diversity Champion and LGBTQ Guide, and wanted to be a Pioneer in this programme because he wants to play a part in how the Museum develops the visitor experience for more diverse audiences.

What they do that’s special

- A ‘hot ticket’ museum through brave immersive temporary exhibitions that make people see their collections in a different light: these have a huge impact on audience numbers and profile.
- World class scholarship is shared through the public programme.
- Diversifying its collections – by bringing in topics such as architecture and digital.
- Put visitors with every kind of identity at the heart of the experience.
- Not telling people **what not to do** but being helpful and engaging.

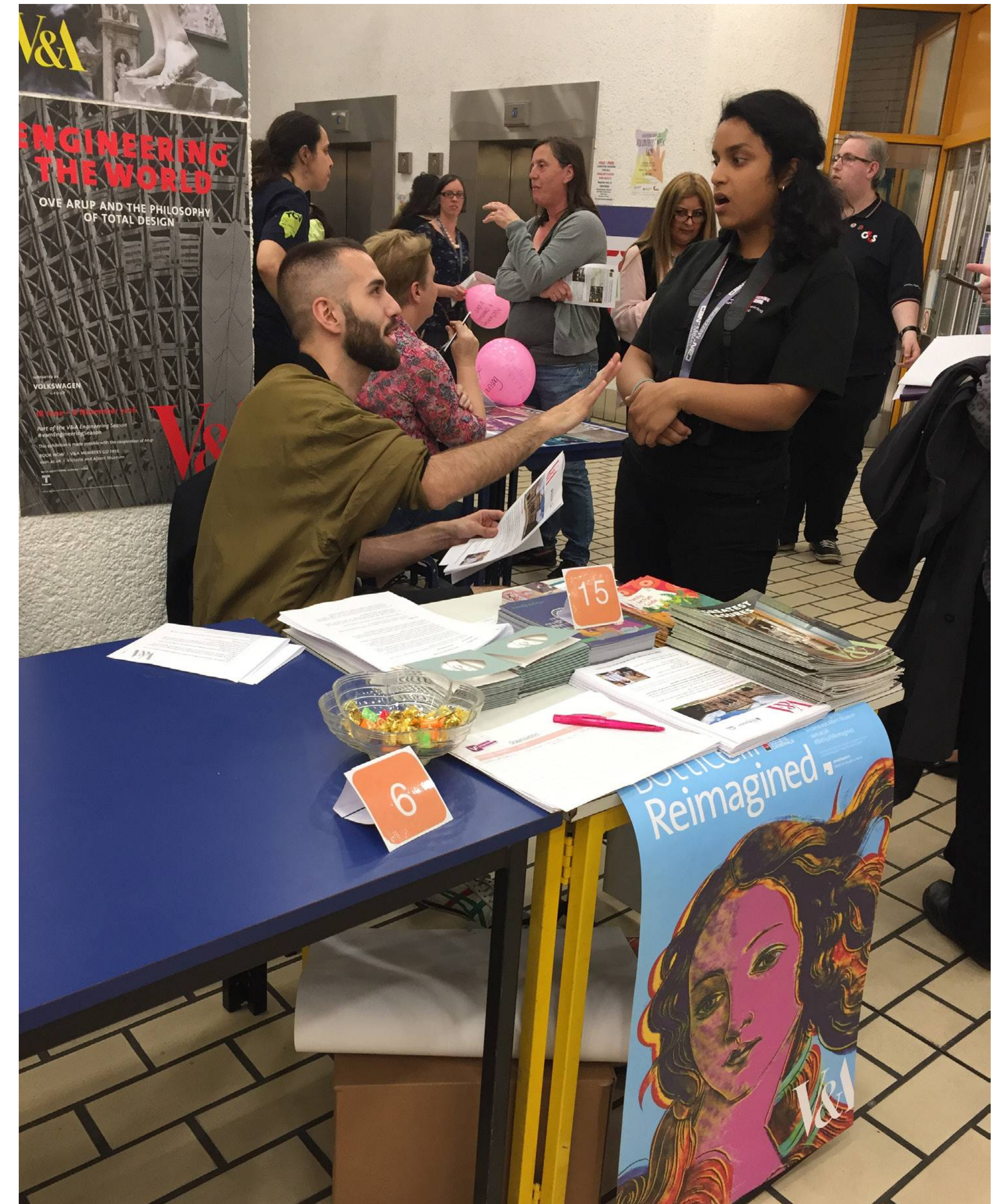


Image courtesy of Ruben Salgado Perez, V&A

Case study: V&A

- Learn from commercial attractions that are better at presenting **‘a public face’**: museums are having to shift because the public are **‘raising the game.’**

How they achieve it

They start by recognising the barriers they need to address, for example:

- Fear of crossing the threshold of a very grand and daunting building that’s seen as only for ‘posh people’.
- Young people felt it was **‘a museum for old people’** – it wasn’t a **‘cool place to be’** and they couldn’t admit they had visited to their friends.
- Much of the collections are by artists known only to specialists: when parents take their children to a museum they want to be able to answer their questions: **‘how will I explain this to my children?’**
- Marketing’s priority is the paid programme so it is difficult to get attention for the free events that are targeted at broadening diversity.
- Some audiences are confused by the name and what the Museum is about .
- Signage and wayfinding in the Museum can be confusing to new and diverse audiences.

- Rethinking brand to address opinions that **‘this museum is not for me’**.

And then:

- Focus on **‘what community means to the V&A – there is no one approach and the Museum needs to be sensitive to the needs of all those coming through its doors: there is lots of goodwill that can be channelled.’**
- Clear policies and plans for audience diversification, supported by realistic levels of investment, resourcing and training: the next step is a diversity action plan.
- Moving from being highly departmentalised to cross-departmental working groups so staff and volunteers can look at new ideas for interacting with audiences; planning exhibitions and projects (e.g. the LGBTQ group introduced training for front of house staff on avoiding ‘labelling people’) and more staff are getting involved in events such as Lates.
- Relabelling the entire collection to make it more inclusive: moving beyond the dominant narrative to tell the stories of the objects from different perspectives in simple terms.
- Investing in priority groups through opportunities and projects: many are focused on creating respect for other people’s cultures. Decisions over which audiences to prioritise are often led by funding and activity is currently

directed toward East London, including refugees; care homes; mental health groups; offenders; families and adults in areas of deprivation.

- Emphasising the importance of building long-term connections in all projects through community partnerships.
- Working with specialist companies such as Chickenshed Theatre that celebrates diversity and inspires change to develop pop-up family programmes.
- Not making assumptions about which audiences will be interested in which topics: e.g. Japanese people will not necessarily come to a Japan exhibition.
- When first time visitors do come into the Museum they make sure that they see **‘people like us’** and they feel represented in the offer.
- Training volunteers to be Diversity Champions and diversifying the volunteers: **‘institutions can change by simplifying recruitment and application processes’** – although recruiting some apprentices with no qualifications met with some resistance and some of the older volunteers with entrenched attitudes can resent the new ones. 26% of new volunteers are BAME and 4% have a disability – both figures exceed targets.

- Sharing the learning with each other; as an educational institution; creating a community of practice through its CPD for museum professionals, and by broadening access to the collections in new satellite museums in East London and Dundee.

- Staff feel empowered and that they have autonomy on what they choose to focus on.

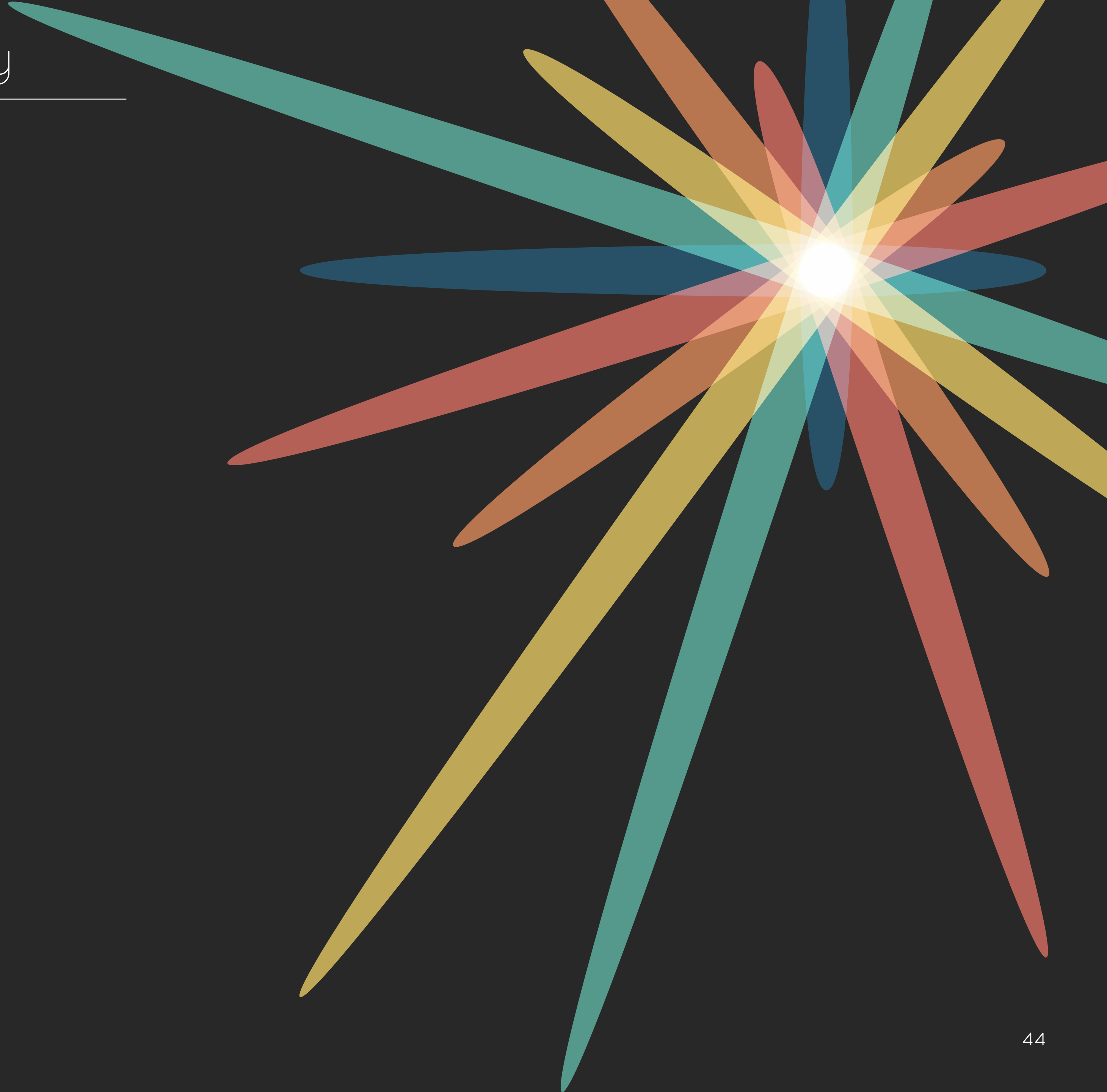
Questions V&A asks

- Should broadening diversity be tackled from ‘bottom up’ or ‘trickle down’?
- How can everyone in the Museum address diversity on a daily basis that goes beyond the public programme?
- What one thing could we do to improve the experience of new and diverse visitors?
- How can we create new ways to measure the diversity of our visitors?
- How to encourage senior management to work effectively on diversity across all areas/ departments of the Museum?



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Case study: Whitworth Art Gallery

Why inviting people in is important to the Whitworth Art Gallery

It always has been. The Whitworth first opened its doors in 1889 to **‘people of all social classes’** as the gallery in the park that counteracted the malaises of inner city life. Its founding vision was to be a place **‘for the perpetual gratification of the people of Manchester’**.

When Maria Balshaw took over as Director of the Whitworth her first action was to take down the wall dividing the Gallery from the Park that surrounds it. This action illustrates how the organisation started a process of transformation in its relationship with its audiences, based on values and a culture of openness, inclusion, playfulness and honesty.

The Head of Learning and Engagement, Esme Ward, is a Clore Fellow and in developing her role she is determined to bring in and share different perspectives on engagement, social purpose and inclusion into the organisation and sector. She sees this as a long-term process that requires commitment, confidence and ‘holding your nerve’ – short term projects are not the route to diversifying audiences.

What they do that’s special

- Ensuring diversity stays at the core of the organisation’s DNA by challenging assumptions; valuing difference and being fascinated by what makes people distinct.

- Recognising that the whole organisation is on a shared journey and openness to new ideas is essential.
- Adopting a more hopeful way of working by learning from other sectors and striving to move forward by encouraging leadership across every level.
- Sought new and imaginative ways to work collaboratively across Manchester, for the benefit of audiences (part of the strategic vision galvanising it in difficult economic times).
- Shifting the parameters: the deficit model of broadening diversity by looking at who is missing focuses on ‘filling the gaps’ in audience make-up, instead, the Whitworth views diversity as an asset and an impetus for creativity that opens up new perspectives, **‘you never know what people can bring to the museum’s space when you put them together with collections.’**
- Making their mark on Manchester so the Whitworth has a real and visible role in place-making through collaboration and partnerships, including music and other cultural organisations (Esme is Strategic Lead for Age Friendly Culture across Greater Manchester). As part of the University of Manchester, the Whitworth shares its commitment to social responsibility and addressing broader city issues such as ageing, mental health and social cohesion.



Image courtesy of The Whitworth Art Gallery

Case study: Whitworth Art Gallery

- Making the Whitworth a **‘people place’** where strangers gather and everyone finds meaning. Visitors are placed at its heart and the organisation consistently thinks up new ways to shift how it works to achieve this.
- Being a good neighbour by investing in engagement with local people. It makes the Park a focal point for activities targeted at different groups and involves them in the Gallery’s work: these activities are free and important to engaging family audiences.
- Living a different day: **‘the language of consultation is not good enough. We need to take time to think how we work with people.’** Whilst closed, staff spent a day a week in a partner organisation (e.g. Sure Start, a primary school etc.) to see things from another angle. **‘Working in a building all the time can take up all the energy and get too comfortable.’**
- Using the Park to reach new audiences: two-thirds of Park users hadn’t ventured into the Whitworth. The Cultural Park Keeper and staff work across Park and Gallery, take our work inside out and bring the outside in. It’s a great opportunity to find good reasons for inviting them in, for example, with pop-up picnics, Whitworth welly walks etc.

How they achieve it

- Rethinking the received wisdom: **‘we assumed that challenging contemporary art would alienate some audiences – who turned out to be the**

most enthusiastic, especially local families. We were concerned that one group – such as young families and babies – would disturb the 40% of our audience who look for reflection. We got round this through conversations and directing people to different areas of the Gallery that met their needs.’

- Being brave by doing more things with their visitors and being out in public.
- Knocking on doors: developing their sense of how people connect by going out into the community to talk with elders, gatekeepers, churches and businesses.
- Shifting the relationship: Whitworth visitors are starting to ask what can we do for the Gallery? Not what can the Gallery do for us.
- Being relevant by responding to the needs of diverse groups, for example:

–EAL classes: museums are great social and creative spaces for language acquisition and this is a priority in their work with refugees and some local residents in Moss Side.

–‘Danger: Men at Work’: addressed older men as a traditionally under-represented audience within cultural participation, exploring their place in society. Manchester has the second lowest male life expectancy in England, significant BAMER populations, high levels of pensioner poverty, ill health and disability.

–Young people: offering headspace and **‘a place to think differently’** with training, support and new ways to empower them by creating opportunities for peer-led work and a platform for their creativity and talent.

–‘New North and South’: a partnership project with arts organisations from the North of England and South Asia, with co-commissions, exhibitions and intellectual exchange to celebrate shared heritage across continents.

- ‘A diagonal slice’ to bring together a cross-section of staff from across the whole organisation to find solutions to the big issues.
- Training based on secondments and partnerships so staff see first-hand how people in other organisations work and learn new ways to do things.
- Recruiting people because they are interested and enthusiastic about people and art, rather than for having a degree – through open days, new advertising channels – and setting up new posts, such as the Cultural Park Keeper.

Questions Whitworth Art Gallery asks

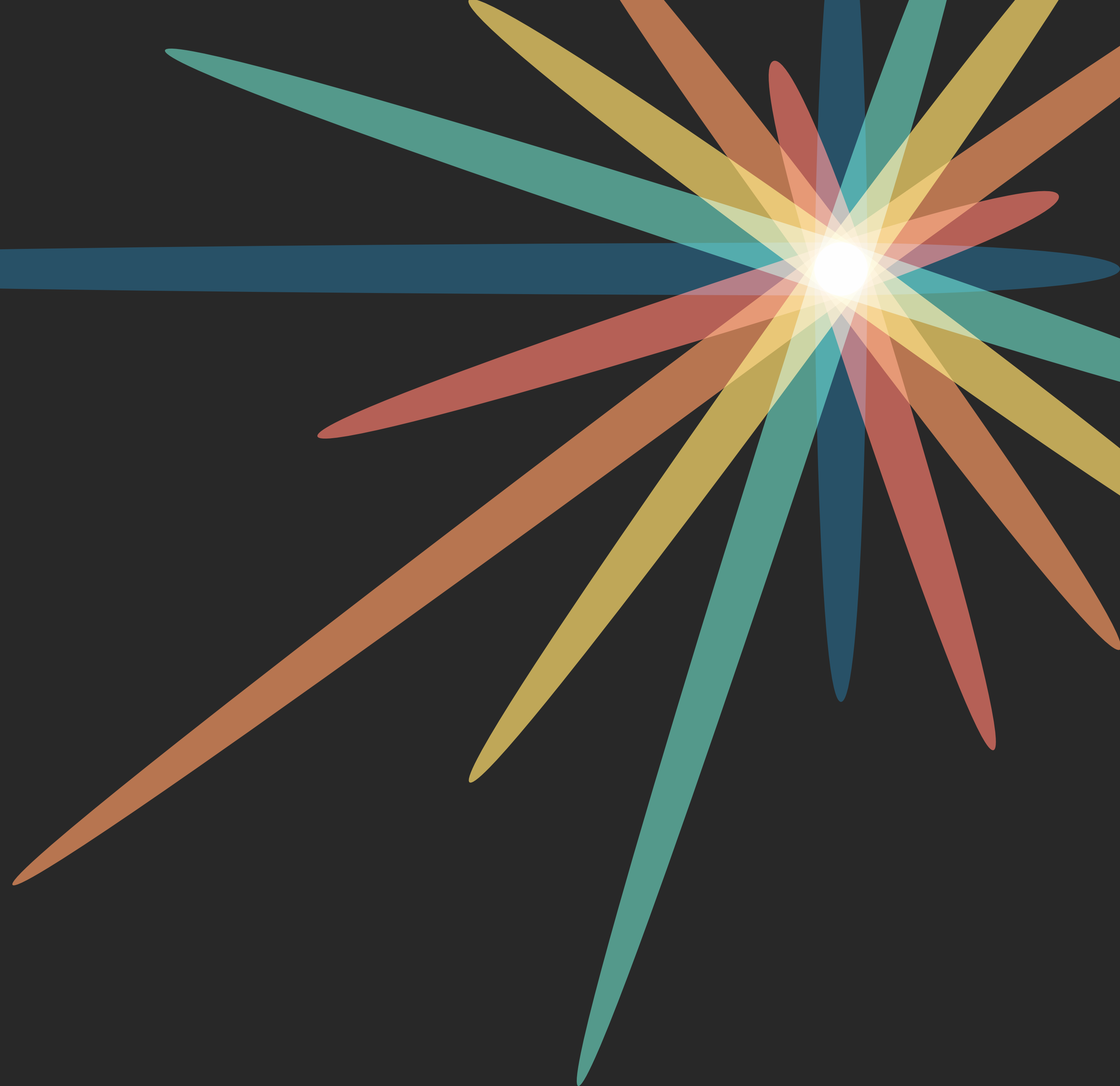
- Do we need a new language for identifying people as our current means are often alienating and the result of the deficit model?
- How can we be part of the broader civic conversation? What does our city need the Whitworth to be and how will we address this? Place for reflection, social space, creative place? Where does the museum start and end?
- How can we be more relevant?
- What are the key lessons we can learn from others, particularly from outside the sector, about equity and inclusion?
- Try it. Test and learn. What’s the worst that could happen?
- What if?

the Whitworth

Partners

This guide was commissioned by a steering group of partners from across the UK museum sector:





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