

MUSEUMS
ASSOCIATION

WORKING WONDERS

AN ACTION PLAN FOR THE
MUSEUM WORKFORCE



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Foreword

Since 2008, museums in the UK have experienced perhaps the biggest rate of change since the end of the second world war. The decade prior to that had seen massive expansion, particularly through investment from lottery funds and, in England, through Renaissance. In parallel there were significant initiatives to improve diversity in the workforce, the introduction of free access to national museums and the advent of digital technology and Web 2.0. By 2008, however, many museums across the UK remained dependent on public sector grant-in-aid and there was an assumption that this would continue, albeit at slightly reduced levels. But the scale of budget cuts since then has significantly changed the outlook for all publicly funded museums, while those museums which receive only very limited public funding have been affected in different ways. Some small volunteer-run museums may have seen little financial impact, some museums have flourished as more people holiday at home and others have seen their commercial income hit in line with the economic pressures on the high street.

This context determines the sort of people we need working in museums and the kind of skills they require. Clearly museums are knowledge-based institutions; they need staff (paid or voluntary) who have both expertise in collections and the skill to share it. They must establish effective succession planning and ensure that hard-won information and expertise is shared with succeeding generations. They must aspire to diversity; an inclusive museum will seek to reflect in its stakeholders and workforce the demographics of its audiences. Increasingly, museums have begun to recognise their role in promoting social justice, ensuring engagement in civil society and making a difference in people's lives. These are key skills that a museum professional needs. In the early 2000s, the economic value of culture became a clarion cry and many of the capital developments of large museums were funded on the basis of their contribution to local, regional or national economies. A skillset is required to ensure that museums fulfil this commitment.

Perhaps the biggest change, however, has been change itself. The modern museum professional requires excellent change management and leadership skills, and needs to be adept at recognising and developing new business models in a very different operating environment.

Iain Watson, director, Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums

Chair of the action plan steering group

In 2008 the Museums Association (MA) worked in partnership with Creative & Cultural Skills to produce the Cultural Heritage Blueprint: a workforce development plan for the cultural heritage sector. In the years since the Blueprint was first published, the operating environment for museums and galleries has changed dramatically. This has had an impact on all areas of the sector's work, including workforce development. Therefore, in 2012 the MA updated the Blueprint to reflect current challenges and offer workforce development recommendations that sector bodies could use to inform their plans. The 2012 Blueprint update focuses on museums as a part of cultural heritage, and identifies five key recommendations for workforce development.

Key recommendations for the museum workforce

1. Strengthen leadership and management.
2. Develop business, enterprise and entrepreneurial skills.
3. Open up entry to the sector and diversify the workforce.
4. Commit to Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for staff.
5. Develop sector specific skills.

This action plan is a call for museums, funders and strategic agencies to recognise the challenges that museums and galleries currently face and support workforce and skills development to meet these challenges. Achieving this will require significant changes, both to how we work and how we think about our work. The action plan builds on the 2012 Blueprint by summarising the actions that funders, sector bodies and organisations have committed to in the coming years under the categories listed above.

It describes the climate in which museums now operate and argues for institutions and individuals to step up and lead change in the sector in order to make it fit for the future. In outlining the role of funders and strategic support (as well as the limitations of that support) alongside the stark need for the sector to embrace change, the action plan addresses both strategic bodies and organisations and individuals. It identifies challenges that museums share with other arts and heritage sectors, ways in which organisations can learn from each other and synergies that may bring new efficiencies in public funding. It also points to original approaches that support workforce development and highlights how different parts of the UK are leading practice.

The action plan has been put together by a steering group drawn from the UK museum sector and chaired by Iain Watson, director of Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums (TWAM). Full details of the steering group can be found in Appendix 2.

The cultural sectors in general

Museums are part of the cultural heritage industry, which also includes built heritage, archaeology, conservation and membership organisations. According to UK-wide figures collated by Creative & Cultural Skills in 2012, the cultural heritage sector contributes £5.6 billion to the economy and employs a workforce of 46,620 in primarily non-profit organisations across the UK. These organisations play a crucial role in the tourism economy, with three out of the top five most visited museums in the world located in the UK. The sector's unique qualities make it a key driver for regeneration. It supports the development of cohesive communities and helps to shape local cultural identity.

In a wider context, the cultural heritage sector is part of the creative industries, which according to UK Trade and Industries figures, contribute 6% of the UK's GDP and employ 2.3m people. Museums are increasingly aligned with other parts of the creative industries. Based on the 2012 data gathered by Creative & Cultural Skills, the performing arts and music sectors are significantly larger than the cultural heritage industry (with workforces of 179,290 and 145,520 respectively) and the economic contribution of performing arts, visual arts and music combined is £8.2bn. The arts have similar challenges with diversity; 94% of those working in cultural heritage are white, 95% in the visual arts and 96% in music. However there is a different gender balance in the arts; in music, just 32% of the workforce is female and 44% in the performing arts, compared to 60% in cultural heritage.

Museums and galleries specifically

Museums bring collections and the stories they hold to life, providing opportunities for enjoyment, learning and wellbeing. Their function has evolved over time, from primarily preserving collections for current and future audiences to using and sharing collections to engage with current issues and social agendas, thereby acting as agents of social change. More than ever, it is understood that their key role is to work alongside the communities they represent to collect, care for and share knowledge about material that reflects the rich history of the UK and the wider world.

Context

There are an estimated 2,500 museums in the UK and approximately 1,800 of those are accredited to an industry standard. In terms of governance, museums are classified in the following categories:

- National museums are established and funded by central government through the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), the Ministry of Defence and the UK Border Agency in England; the Scottish Government; the Welsh Assembly Government; the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure in the Northern Ireland Assembly, and the Isle of Man Government. There are currently 73 national museums in the UK. In Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, national museums tend to be by far the largest museum services in terms of employment and size of collections (with the exception of Glasgow Life), and correspondingly they have wider responsibilities to support the museum sector in those nations.
- Local authority museums are owned and run by town, parish, borough, city or county councils and other local authority bodies. They generally house collections that reflect local history and heritage, and sometimes have specialist collections reflecting the interests of founders or major donors.
- University museums are owned and managed by universities and their collections often relate to specific areas of academic interest.

- Independent museums are owned by registered charities and other independent bodies or trusts. They are not usually funded directly by the state but may receive support through government programmes. The National Trust and National Trust for Scotland are included in this group; in England, Wales and Northern Ireland one in every 10 museums is owned by the National Trust. A number of local authority museums have moved to trust status in recent years and receive local authority funds through service level agreements.
- Regimental museums and armouries collate and preserve Britain's military heritage and are often managed by the armed services or by regimental associations.

Museums are funded in a range of increasingly varied ways, including public funding through central or local government; charitable donations; funds from grant-giving bodies and private trusts; income from entry fees; and commercial operations such as shops and cafes. Museums are also exploring new funding streams such as providing commissioned services for local authorities, health bodies and training providers.

The museum and gallery workforce in the UK

The sector's workforce is comprised of both paid and voluntary staff, full-time, part-time and seasonal employees, those on short-term contracts and independent contractors and suppliers. The workforce is predominantly white and has a small majority of female workers. The workforce is highly qualified in terms of formal education qualifications, in many cases to degree or postgraduate level. Career development in the sector, however, is limited due to the small number of job vacancies available. A significant proportion of these tend to be for fixed-term project work and there is an increasing trend towards employing freelance contractors. This makes entry into the sector difficult and low pay an issue for many.

The museum and gallery sector has always embraced volunteering as a means of working closely with communities; as well as providing governance, volunteers often make up the majority of the workforce in smaller museums. Some volunteers are seeking entry to the paid museum profession but they are only one part of the volunteer workforce; there are a range of other motivations for individuals to offer their time and expertise. The government emphasis on community engagement in service delivery is likely to bring more volunteers into museums and it is important to differentiate this trend from the decreasing number of paid staff in museums as a result of major economic changes and reductions in museum funding.

Recent progress

In the last few years there has been significant progress around workforce development in the museum and gallery sector. This has been brought about by the substantial investment in the sector and the need to equip museums with a rapidly changing range of skills. A considerable amount of effort has also been put into raising the profile of workforce development among sector bodies, particularly by the MA and Creative & Cultural Skills. Work has been carried out on a range of workforce development issues, including initiatives to address diversity, leadership and sector specific skills; the creation of new entry routes through apprenticeships and traineeships; and extensive programmes of training and accompanying resources. As a result there is now far better understanding of workforce development needs.

However the world in which museums operate has changed dramatically and will continue to do so. This change in the operating environment means that organisations need to radically reassess their position, their role and their future. For museums to manage and implement that change, they must invest in their workforce to deliver it.

Context

The current operating climate

The environment in which museums are operating has changed significantly since 2008. The pace and scale of change is unprecedented given the 10 years of investment in museums that came beforehand. The policy of cuts that has been implemented since then seems likely to continue. Though opinions vary on how economic and political influences will impact on museums in the next decade or more and how they will differ across the nations of the UK, it is widely accepted that museums, like other cultural organisations, must grasp the urgency of reassessing their role and their future development. In England at least, it is likely that local authorities will continue to shrink and their role will shift towards becoming commissioning bodies. In addition to the drastic reduction in public spending from Westminster outwards, economic uncertainty has multiple social and economic knock-on effects. More organisations across arts and culture are diversifying their income, competing for support from trusts and foundations and looking for major donors and quick wins for commercial success. As the MA's Museums 2020 campaign suggests: "Museums can see it as their core business to make a difference to individuals, communities, society and the environment. This implies more focus on activity and programming, with more varied use of space... Museums could take more risks and be more comfortable with controversy."¹

On the other hand, the society that museums represent is changing too, with the gap growing between rich and poor. Museums have made great strides to work with audiences and be part of communities; to co-produce, to recognise the expertise of partners and lay communities and to measure their success in terms of social impact. There is a greater appetite than ever to participate in heritage: the Taking Part survey in England showed that 74% of adults in England visited a heritage site in 2012 and 52% visited a museum or gallery, up four and three percentage points respectively from the previous year; the Scottish Household survey revealed that museum and gallery visits rose from 26% of the population to 28% in 2011. It is a real challenge now for museums to maintain and build relationships with communities while at the same time becoming more streamlined and commercially aware.

The support structures for museums have changed too. In England, responsibility for museums has moved to Arts Council England. In Scotland, Museums Galleries Scotland (MGS) has transformed into a new development body, while in Northern Ireland, many museums will be affected by local government reform, which will shift their focus towards "citizen-focused services". To varying degrees, every nation has less money to support museums, and is determining how to distribute that funding using national strategies or policies (see Appendix 2 for details).

England has seen the dismantling of regional Renaissance structures and significant changes in the funding available through the programme. There are no longer regional Renaissance teams, which in the past delivered the majority of initiatives that supported workforce development. In place of Renaissance hubs, Arts Council England will support workforce development through Major Partner Museums (MPMs), whose leadership role in relation to workforce development varies, as well as through strategic support funding, the network of museum development providers and commissioned grants like Developing Resilient Leadership and the Creative Employment Programme.

Changes to amounts and distribution of funds to museums has meant that many organisations have altered - or are considering changes to - their governance. Often this means that services that were once funded directly by local authorities are becoming charitable trusts with multiple-year service level agreements from the local authority. This trend has been especially pronounced in Scotland, where there is some concern about the long-term implications of the changes to sustainability in the sector.

The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) now has significantly more money to distribute to the heritage sector. HLF has conducted a thorough review of its strategy in the coming years in light of its increased role within the sector and recently published its priorities for 2013-18. These contain a continued focus on workforce development, as referenced by a second round of Skills for the Future. HLF also emphasises organisational sustainability and resilience and the skills required by the workforce to deliver this.

Museums in the UK now face a period in which they must work out how to reduce reliance on public funding at the same time as placing the public at the heart of everything they do. Some organisations have made more progress than others in creating new business models and thinking afresh about opportunities for cultural engagement. However, the vast majority of museums will have to change and all of them will need to invest in and empower their workforce in order for that to happen.

Context

Amid reductions in staff and funding, workforce development must be viewed as core to the museum to merit investment. One way to understand the strategic role of workforce development, especially with the scale of changes currently facing museums, is through John Kotter's change model². Once an organisation appreciates the urgency of enacting change and creates a vision and strategies, it needs its workforce to understand the vision, buy into it and be empowered to deliver it. For this, the workforce needs the right skills and behaviours.

Inevitably, there are realities to bear in mind. Increased workloads will make it harder for individuals to dedicate time to developing skills and knowledge, while squeezed budgets are likely to mean museums have less money to spend on workforce development in isolation. There will be fewer paid jobs available, so entering and moving around the workforce will be more difficult. The climate in which museums are operating will also have an impact on knowledge and skills; staff reductions mean the potential loss of expertise, while at the same time creating a need for knowledge in new working practices.

In such a period of flux, the real challenge is to look far ahead. Most of the commitments in this plan cover the next two to five years, where funding cycles are known, and many of the innovations cover an even shorter period as they are about testing new ways of working. This document focuses on the activities that organisations, usually networks and funders, have committed to on behalf of the sector. As individuals and individual museums, it is up to us to participate in the programmes that meet our needs, advocate for what works and lobby to fill the gaps. A proactive and mutually supportive attitude is more important than ever during the sustained economic pressure and rapid pace of change that is likely to continue for the coming years.

This action plan includes some more aspirational proposals for workforce development over the next five to 10 years and the scale of change outlined above demonstrates that we must think at least that far ahead. These proposals are realistic within the constraints of economic challenges, but they remain positive in asserting the importance of a resilient and ambitious workforce for the museum sector to evolve and thrive.

References

1. <http://www.museumsassociation.org/download?id=806530>
2. <http://www.kotterinternational.com/our-principles/changesteps/changesteps>

For several years, developing strong leadership has been recognised as a challenge across the museum, heritage and arts sectors. There is increasing awareness that leadership, rather than being about 'charisma', is a set of behaviours and practices that should be fostered throughout an organisation. In 2012, a research report for the Sharing Expertise Group concluded that the museum sector needs to "develop leaders who excel in mobilising people, sites, collections and resources to create great public benefit, combined with shrewd commercial judgment"³.

This echoes Kotter's definition of leadership: "Leadership defines what the future should look like, aligns people with that vision, and inspires them to make it happen despite the obstacles."

A number of high profile programmes, such as the Clore Leadership Programme and the University of East Anglia's Museum Leaders Programme, have been in high demand among individuals and have attracted public or charitable foundation investment. Even though a number of leadership development opportunities have ceased, like the University of East Anglia's Museum Leaders' Programme, many development options for elements of leadership and management remain. In the consultation for this action plan, 58% of online respondents highlighted the importance of improving leadership and management skills and behaviours. But several also commented that it is difficult to choose the right development opportunities and to find respected options, particularly for leadership, that are affordable in terms of both money and time commitment.

Leadership becomes more important in times of crisis. Indeed, many definitions of leadership focus on implementing change – and organisational change relies on a whole team of leaders pulling in the same direction, from governing bodies to senior staff to practitioners. The programmes cited here approach leadership development in different ways, but several of the people who run them identified similar problems. When talking about current challenges facing the museum sector, respondents described managers who were "hard to reach" or "frozen in fear". Yet these are the key individuals that need to engage in leadership development to enable their organisations to survive. Elsewhere, governing bodies may lack awareness of the need for leadership development to empower staff; in some cases they do not share their own skillset with staff at the organisation. Various companies and associations offer advice and board development opportunities. For example, Clore runs a Board Development Programme in England, and the Board Development Agency offers training and consultation across the UK, especially for local authorities and social enterprises. The Civil Society offers consultancy and expert advice to the charity sector.

Strengthen leadership and management

Strengthen leadership and management

The Fellowship of the Museums Association (FMA) is being relaunched in 2013, offering a reflexive professional development structure and qualification to encourage participants to continue developing their personal and professional skills at senior level. The FMA recognises outstanding contribution to the sector; this includes, for example, leading change in an organisation or area of practice. The MA has also partnered with Creative & Cultural Skills to help individuals find the right opportunities for them. The MA's online Find an Event facility has been expanded to offer a listing service for training and development opportunities across the UK, filtered by area of work, date, region and type of event.

Others are also focusing on leadership as they recognise the need for change to deal with the current challenges facing the sector:

- From 2013, MGS plans to roll out action learning sets across Scotland, including those tailored towards emerging leaders.
- The Clore Leadership Programme offers a "ladder of opportunities", ranging from short courses, fellowships and board development. The programme has been named as the new delivery partner for the Developing Resilient Leadership commissioned grant, a £1.8m fund from Arts Council England, which will focus on developing diverse leadership talent based on learning from scoping surveys and evaluation across museums, libraries and the arts in 2013. Learning from this programme should be shared with other schemes, like that of the British Museum outlined below, and with museums, especially MPMs.
- The British Museum is piloting a programme called Fresh Leads where individuals in partner museums can bring new ideas, develop them with the help of peer support and acquire the leadership skills and behaviours needed to put them into action. This focus on ideas gives network participants a sense of purpose and offers people who may not be at the most senior level the opportunity to participate, recognising that leadership behaviours should be spread throughout a successful organisation.
- Re.volution, the peer learning network run by Missions Models Money, is designed to help participants renew their mission, reconfigure their business model and revise their approach to money. The programme offers 'hack' days and provocations on relevant topics, and gives emerging and established leaders self-guided opportunities to build resilience both individually and within their organisation. It spans charities, cultural heritage and the arts, welcoming all voices and so bringing together a range of participants who may have different experiences but share many of the same challenges. The network's initial phase runs until 2014 and Mission Models Money is working out long term funding arrangements. There are a range of networks and development opportunities through which individuals can find the learning style that works for them; for example, the Women Leaders in Museums Network and Directing Change, which are self-funded and managed peer networks.
- At a regional level in England, various groups are addressing leadership and management through knowledge sharing schemes funded by Arts Council England. These include SHARE Museums East in the East of England, funded through the museum development fund; East Midlands Museum Service's Leadership Development Initiative, supported by strategic funding; and Oxford ASPIRE, supported by MPM funding, which offers a national programme but also works within the Berkshire, Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire region.

Many consultation respondents also pointed to external expertise to stimulate leadership development. In examples ranging from the Strategic Change Fund's leadership development programme in Scotland (from 2003-06), which paired museum leaders with mentors from different sectors, to the National Leisure and Culture Forum's Leading Learning programme (ongoing), where mentors are senior local authority staff, the key appears to lie in developing long-term relationships that enable leaders to learn from others with different perspectives.

Management skills are different to those needed for leadership, a point made consistently in consultation responses. Where leadership is about implementing change, good management is about doing the same things well. The sector needs competent management throughout organisations, especially where many individuals have expanding job roles.

Alongside better signposting to training opportunities for management, funders have gradually recognised the need for grants to support improved management and enable organisations to be more sustainable and resilient. HLF's strategic plan for 2013-18 places emphasis on better management of organisations and heritage; this can include specific training as part of a grant application or other mentoring and learning opportunities (see the section on CPD for all staff for more information about approaches to knowledge sharing).

Strengthen leadership and management

National strategies and policies in UK nations also support leadership and management. Going Further, the national strategy for Scottish museums, sets an aim to “develop leadership to inspire and drive change and foster and promote good governance”. The Northern Ireland Museums Policy seeks to “strengthen governance, management and leadership across the museums sector”. One of Arts Council England’s long-term goals for museums and libraries is to ensure “the leadership and workforce in museums and libraries are diverse and highly skilled”, and all arts council grants are assessed against this criterion.

Changes to the museum sector have resulted in greater reliance on project grant funding and this should be used to develop leadership and management skills. For example, both Fresh Leads and projects funded through the MA’s Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund demonstrate that a shared sense of purpose gives emerging leaders opportunity to take responsibility for areas of work, such as making the case for support and advocating for the benefits of a project, or leading and developing teams. Some museums and individuals also use projects to demonstrate organisational leadership within a field. For example, museums that have received grants through the Happy Museum Project, which is funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation and Arts Council England, are leading the sector in showing how museums can have a social impact. On a larger scale, nine museums participating in the Our Museum initiative are using three-year projects to effect organisational change through community engagement.

Conversely, individuals can feel that through employment on projects or working freelance they struggle to plan their career development, especially in terms of opportunities to develop management skills. Similarly, mid-level managers may feel they are stuck and are not motivated to take key decisions to invigorate their career and maximise the impact they have in their jobs. The MA has ambitions to increase support for its members in the midst of their careers. By supporting individuals to tackle key decision-making points mid-career, the MA will support museum professionals to take responsibility for developing the skills they need to manage staff, museums and projects and to negotiate the ever more interdisciplinary nature of museum work.

While funders must continue to recognise and nurture better leadership and management, it is for individuals to step up to the challenges of leadership. There are development opportunities for aspiring leaders and managers, so it is the responsibility of individuals who have vision, and see the need for their organisations to change, to find ways to develop the skills and behaviours that will allow them to implement their ideas.

Support to strengthen leadership and management:

- The MA will relaunch the FMA late in 2013, which recognises individuals who go above and beyond their job role to lead change in the museum sector. It has also expanded Find an Event to help the sector better signpost available training and development opportunities.
- Arts Council England, CyMAL: Museums Archives and Libraries Wales (CyMAL), MGS and the Northern Ireland Museums Council will support leadership and management programmes as part of delivering national strategies and policies.
- HLF will support better management of heritage and organisations through the open programmes Our Heritage and Heritage Grants as well as Catalyst, start-up grants and transitional funding.

Individuals and organisations should think about:

- How current development opportunities can be used by aspiring leaders and managers to create a vision for the future of their organisations. They need to develop the skills and behaviours to implement change.

Areas for concern:

- People in some of the more hard-to-reach parts of the workforce would benefit from support to tackle key decision-making points in their careers, and to build skills and behaviours in management; this includes, for example, mid-level managers, project officers and freelance contractors. In 2013, the MA will investigate how it can provide support for mid-career individuals, and those who work freelance at some point in their career.

References

3. Sharing Expertise: fostering the power of knowledge and understanding in a changing world, Gaby Porter with Anne Murch and Alex Dawson, Sharing Expertise Group, 2012

Throughout the consultation for this action plan, the need to develop business, enterprise and entrepreneurial skills has emerged as the biggest change to the sector in recent years. There is no single definition of what 'entrepreneurialism' means for museums, and organisations must find their own particular opportunities for innovation, fundraising and commercial revenue generation.

The Association of Independent Museums (AIM) defines the challenge as building organisational resilience and states pragmatically: "It's about running a successful and entrepreneurial organisation – something AIM members have many years' experience of. Organisational resilience encompasses good governance, effective constitutional reform, clear and strong leadership and smart commercially-orientated practices that seize and maximise opportunities of all kinds."⁴

Though some hard skills in business administration can be taught, lessons learned from other businesses and governance models shared, the spirit of taking risks to diversify income (i.e. behaviours themselves and an environment that permits them to be tested) is less tangible and therefore needs a different approach. For museums to implement change in terms of diversifying income and becoming more enterprising, they need to radically reassess their role and purpose and develop approaches that allow greater risk taking. This level of change requires understanding and support from leaders and governing bodies of museums, as well as from funders and sector bodies.

Several groups are offering training and development opportunities that teach skills relating to enterprise. Many regional groups and federations have responded to demand from museums for support in this area; for example, in 2012 a cohort of museums in SHARE Museums East worked to develop their forward planning, and in 2013 the network will run a series of events focusing on governance and commerciality.

In Wales, the Welsh Museums Federation has run a number of training sessions on subjects like using Twitter and improving marketing, while its annual conference in 2013 focused on diversifying income. In Scotland, MGS offers business-related formal training courses as part of its National Skills Development Programme. In some apprenticeships and trainee placements, training in business skills is explicitly included in the trainees' development. In recent years, sector agencies have produced useful guidance material, including The opportunity of devolved governance for museums, libraries and archives (Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, 2010), and Choices for Change, An Options Appraisal Toolkit for Local Authorities (MGS, 2010). These documents are online but should be better advertised and indexed in order to be more accessible those most in need of advice.

Independent museums tend to be less reliant on public funding, so it is natural to look to this group for ideas on how to diversify income and become more enterprising. Recognising this, AIM has worked in 2012-13 to produce research studies from independent museums that demonstrate good practice in different business areas; studies so far include the Gazetteer of Advice for Museum Entrepreneurs and Examples of Successful Practice. AIM is also piloting a mentoring scheme (in England only at this stage, as it is funded by Arts Council England) to help museums develop new business models and improve governance.

Develop business, enterprise and entrepreneurial skills

The scheme will include advice on governance issues, fundraising and other forms of income generation, including events and marketing. People working at museums such as Ironbridge Gorge and the Museum of East Anglian Life will act as mentors.

Museums can also learn from the charity sector about fundraising, especially building relationships with major donors and trust and foundations. With so much depending on contacts and building relationships, inevitably museums sense competition for donors with similar interests. And those with less experience of fundraising can benefit from learning from the charity sector about being bold in asking for money and making a case for support. The National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO), and its sister organisations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, the Directory of Social Change, the Association of Chief Executives of Voluntary Organisations (ACEVO) and the Institute of Fundraising all offer training and resources on fundraising and diversifying income. For smaller charities (turnover under £1m), the Institute of Fundraising runs introductory courses for £20.

A spirit of enterprise is harder to encourage and is closely linked to developing strong leadership. For organisations to diversify income they need space and time to try new approaches – some of which may be unsuccessful – and to refine their activities. This requires leaders who are prepared to take risks and funders who are prepared to support new ideas that in some cases may not work. HLF is leading the sector in offering grants in England specifically for heritage organisations to develop new business models (alongside Arts Council England and DCMS grants for arts organisations). Catalyst endowment and capacity building grants were awarded to arts organisations in 2012, and in 2013 endowment grants of £500,000-£1m are available for heritage organisations, along with £5m worth of grants to heritage for building fundraising capacity and £7m of equivalent grants for the arts. In addition, HLF will offer transition grants to previous grant-holders to review their strategies and business plans and where necessary, identify ways of achieving greater sustainability.

Arts & Business works across the UK to develop public and private partnerships to benefit the arts. The emphasis is on a reciprocal relationship where the arts transform business (particularly in terms of community engagement) and business supports the arts through, for example, sharing business expertise as board members for arts organisation. When arts organisations join Arts & Business, membership benefits include access to a 'Board Bank', training courses and mentoring in specific business areas such as fundraising. In Scotland, MGS has a relationship with Arts & Business that gives all MGS members access to these benefits. Elsewhere, AIM has developed a Trustee Portal to link museums with potential new trustees.

Board or staff appointments from the business or commercial sectors can, where the individual is given a real opportunity to share their expertise, stimulate new ways of working and offer fresh perspectives. One consultation respondent cited two examples of museums where the appointment of a commercial director (or equivalent) from business initiated changes to staff structures, training in broader commercial skills and behaviours that stimulated huge improvements in earned income.

On the other hand, another respondent described the appointment of senior staff from commercial sectors as a kneejerk reaction, saying there was a risk that the organisation had understood the need to change but was too reliant on a single external influence to solve the problem, without thinking sufficiently about the long-term future of the organisation throughout its governance and management.

Linking back to leadership, Re.volution offers individual organisations the opportunity to assess and change the way their organisation works. Aspiring leaders and managers can use initiatives like Re.volution to embrace an entrepreneurial approach and start identifying the skills needed for their organisations to evolve.

Develop business, enterprise and entrepreneurial skills

Support to develop business, enterprise and entrepreneurial skills:

- A number of networks will offer training in aspects of business skills over 2013-14 as they are requested by members of the networks; for example SHARE Museums East will focus on commerciality and the National Skills Development programme in Scotland will feature a number of formal training courses addressing business skills.
- AIM should, with funding support, build on its 2012-13 work supporting organisational resilience by disseminating good practice and mentoring to build skills in improved governance, leadership and commercially-oriented practice.
- Through Catalyst, HLF will provide support to the heritage sector (with partner funding from Arts Council England and DCMS for arts) to increase endowments and build fundraising capacity. HLF will also offer transition grants to previous grant-holders who are reassessing their governance and business models. It will embed learning from organisations who receive grants through their online communities.

Individuals and organisations should think about:

- How leaders and managers of museums can embrace an enterprising attitude in order to source or foster the skills needed to make their organisations more entrepreneurial. Participation in self-driven networks like Re.volution or Directing Change can be a great facilitator for this.

Areas for concern:

- For museums to implement change in terms of diversifying income and becoming more enterprising, they need to radically reassess their role and purpose and develop an approach that allows greater risk taking. This level of transformation requires understanding and support from leaders and governing bodies of museums, as well as funders and sector bodies.

References

4. http://www.aim-museums.co.uk/article/aim_e-news_-_special_-_september_2012/

Broadening entry routes to the sector and diversifying the workforce have long been challenges for the museum sector. These issues might be considered a luxury in the current economic climate, with a shrinking market for jobs in museums. However, diversity and the new perspectives it brings make museums relevant. By reflecting its community, an organisation is in a better position to engage broad audiences and to have the creativity to improve services at a time when museums need more than ever to demonstrate their value to society.

Alongside the simple logic that diverse perspectives make museums more innovative, the MA believes that, as public institutions serving and representing the whole of the community, museums have a moral duty to help combat inequality and ensure that all people, whoever they are and wherever they are from, are able to work in our organisations⁵. The final report for the Diversify programme identifies three priorities for action, which are reflected in this section:

- 1. Organisational and cultural change:** for individual museums to adopt an approach to workforce diversity similar to the notable work that has been done with audience development and participation.
- 2. Institutional responsibility:** for boards of individual institutions and museum leaders to take responsibility for diversity, and HLF and national strategic bodies to support the sector strategically with policy and funding.
- 3. Real change to entry routes to the workforce:** a shift to more non-postgraduate routes, which needs to encourage and promote new approaches to internships and volunteering.

It has long been assumed that to enter the museum profession, an individual needs a master's degree in museum studies or a related subject. But for several years, notably since publication of the Tomorrow People report in 2007, the MA and others have campaigned for alternative entry routes to generate a more diverse workforce in terms of gender, wealth, health and ethnicity. With the cost of higher education rising, students have to think about whether to invest their time, money and effort in a course.

Postgraduate university courses work hard to offer a broad base of knowledge of the museum sector and skills for working in museums; many offer structured work experience placements to all students. Course providers have also made changes in recent years to broaden access to their courses and better prepare their students to get a job. For example, at Nottingham Trent University (NTU) and Leicester University, among others, bursaries are offered to widen participation in courses. Last year NTU awarded 15 bursaries to disadvantaged students (based on disability, socio-economic conditions or ethnicity) to undertake their professional certificate and Leicester awarded 20 to students on both distance learning and campus-based courses.

**Open up entry to
the sector and
diversify the
workforce**

Open up entry to the sector and diversify the workforce

Leicester offers a very popular distance learning, part-time master's degree with access routes that do not require individuals to have prior formal academic qualifications. NTU also runs a Syndicate Work Experience Scheme, a social enterprise where students work as paid consultants undertaking projects like visitor studies surveys or documentation and digitisation. For example, one project, supported by the software provider Adlib, involved smaller museums bidding to have NTU students come to the museum to install collections management software and migrate records.

However, the simple fact is that vastly more graduates enter the job market each year than there are jobs available. The Tomorrow People report⁶ found that 529 people were registered on 13 recognised museum studies postgraduate courses in 2005-06. The number of courses and size of some schools of museum studies have since increased, yet only 180 paid jobs were advertised through the MA in 2012 and indications are that the job market is continuing to shrink. That's before taking into account other individuals competing for jobs, like those from apprenticeships or without sector-specific qualifications; or people coming to museums later in their career. One new entrant said: "The museum sector needs to be more honest with its new recruits and tell us from the onset that the chance of a paid position in the field is highly unlikely."⁷

A potential way forward is for museums and higher education (HE) institutions to work more closely together, perhaps through the National Skills Academy (NSA) network described below. Over time this would create opportunities for a stronger employer influence in the skills and knowledge that courses offer and make HE institutions and employers equitable partners in training new entrants to the sector. One consultation respondent remarked that museums should, ethically, take greater responsibility for new entrants to the sector rather than placing all the onus on individuals to navigate options and foot the bill, while another commented that their museum hosts more postgraduate students each year than it has staff but felt the museum did not receive sufficient credit, or enough of the money a student is asked to pay, for its efforts. Working more closely together as a network may, in the long-term, iron out some of these perceived inequalities.

Central to the work of Creative & Cultural Skills is supporting the entry of a broad range of the best candidates to museums and other creative and cultural sectors to help them to thrive. In recent years it has focused on creative apprenticeships as a model of accredited work-based training, encouraging people to enter the sector who may not be able to afford it otherwise. Since 2010, Creative & Cultural Skills has focused on research and policy, and has developed the NSA for creative and cultural as a training and delivery arm bringing together employers and training providers in a network to facilitate pre-apprenticeships (aged 14+), apprenticeships (aged 16-24) and internships (typically shorter placements without an associated qualification).

The NSA expanded into cultural heritage in 2012 and is adapting its model of working to best suit the museum sector. In the consultation, museum respondents reported a sometimes distant relationship with training providers and the NSA could potentially offer a way forward in brokering relationships, creating qualifications where they are needed and guiding employers through challenging issues relating to apprenticeships and other placements; for example, legal requirements or negotiating funding for placements.

In March 2013 Creative & Cultural Skills launched its £15m Creative Employment Programme, supported by Arts Council England. The programme will offer 6,500 apprenticeships and internships to people aged 16-24 across the creative and cultural industries by March 2015.

In 2010, HLF awarded £17m in grants for 800 Skills for the Future work-based training placements and in 2013 it will allocate a further £15m. These placements can be run by a range of museums, heritage organisations and sector agencies. All placements have been vastly oversubscribed and although approaches vary across the scheme, hosts are finding they have much in common. One key difficulty they face is how to ensure that placements support workforce diversity - some felt it was unfair to exclude individuals with postgraduate qualifications from their selection process, while others took a positive action approach to seeking applicants from black and minority ethnic (BAME) and different socio-economic backgrounds.

The programme is still underway and HLF is yet to bring together its evaluation, but it will be interesting to compare approaches and see which has had the greatest impact on, for example, employment rates of participants or diversity. As well as the impact this evaluation will have on future policy and funding, hosts of Skills for the Future placements would benefit from sharing learning as a network to aid their own development in supporting trainees.

The Skills for the Future programme has taken some innovative approaches to funding traineeships across the wider heritage sector. Cultural Co-operation, an arts and education charity that works towards positive social change around racism and religious intolerance, is running Strengthening Our Common Life, which has so far created 12 traineeships in heritage organisations, including five museums. Skills for the Future is well known for offering a range of work-based training options for individuals and for building the capacity of heritage organisations to offer training and share good practice. By enlisting a BAME-led organisation to recruit and place trainees, this example focuses much more explicitly on diversifying the workforce.

Open up entry to the sector and diversify the workforce

The MA's Diversify programme and Smarter Museums offer useful models of working with organisations to build the skills needed to host placements and nurture staff through inclusive working practices, coaching and mentoring. Through this approach, which is discussed more in the next section, people at host organisations develop the behaviours and confidence to work differently, which means culture change at the organisation endures after the placements have finished. Funded projects to broaden entry and diversity tend to be exemplars, with the aim of inspiring change through demonstrating good practice and breaking the routine of recruiting in one's own image. Networks and peer learning could enable Creative & Cultural Skills and HLF to do more with their programmes to embed changed working practices.

The Teaching Museum initiative at Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service began in 2012 as part of the service's MPM grant from Arts Council England. Through this initiative, the service is offering paid, entry-level traineeships working on specific projects and specialisms, with 16 traineeships confirmed to run by 2015. Key parts of the scheme are open recruitment via local advertising, briefing events at the museum and assessment centres.

Importantly, recruitment and training processes draw in existing staff, so the experience contributes to the CPD of all staff and the organisational culture changes towards valuing competency-based assessment and the benefits of a more diverse workforce. This holistic way of changing the museum service's approach to entry, recruitment practice, and training and development is an innovation that much of the museum sector can learn from. Indeed, a comparison of the impact of Skills for the Future placements and the teaching initiative will demonstrate how far museums need to go in changing practice to genuinely broaden entry and diversify the workforce. The teaching model will also be tested in other areas of the arts; the Lyric in Hammersmith is to be the first teaching theatre after its redevelopment. Other organisations are also changing their recruitment practice; for example, English Heritage will work with staff undertaking recruitment to tackle unconscious bias that affects decisions.

The museum sector, like much of cultural heritage and the arts, tends to perceive its entrants as 21 or over, by which time an individual would have at least a first degree or equivalent qualification. But by this stage many of the brightest potential new entrants to the sector may have decided on alternative career paths. Through Creative Choices, Creative & Cultural Skills works to raise awareness of the cultural industries as a career option at a much earlier stage.

A new website, Get Into Heritage will provide information about cultural heritage to young people considering their career options⁸. This sits alongside careers events and support for open days where students of pre-apprenticeship age (14+) visit museums to understand what a related career could entail. Museums should consider how they can work with young people at this point in their emerging decision-making, perhaps by holding events in partnership with other local arts venues. For example, TWAM offers careers workshops to schools and has created a complementary career guidebook aimed at secondary pupils that profiles a number of museum roles and talks about how to get into the profession. This work sits well with areas of work more familiar to museums, like programmes for young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEETs) and or other groups that are targeted to broaden museum audiences.

It is also important to recognise that individuals enter the museum sector at all career stages. In more senior roles new entrants may bring transferable skills and relevant experience in areas like venue management, shared cultural services, education and retail. The Diversify programme included two rounds of management-level traineeships bringing mid-career individuals from other sectors into museums. These placements demonstrated how introducing more interdisciplinary and cross-domain skills and behaviours can invigorate museums.

Museums are more familiar with hiring individuals with expertise from other sectors where they are beginning work in a new area (e.g. digital technologies) and the challenge for museums is to fully integrate the new area of expertise so that the new entrant and existing staff can learn from one another and change ways of working for the better.

Previous research highlighted the need to offer alternative routes into the sector, stimulate culture change in recruitment practice and raise awareness of cultural heritage and the arts as fulfilling career options. However, such efforts have been in place for some time now and this may make it confusing for potential new entrants to decide how to invest their time and money. Research into the most effective entry routes to the museum sector would help those individuals and may also unpick some of the debates that the sector struggles with in terms of employers' relationships with HE courses and apprenticeships. This could align with Creative & Cultural Skills' cultural heritage research looking at current training and skills needs (see the section on developing sector specific skills).

Open up entry to the sector and diversify the workforce

Support to open up entry to the sector and diversify the workforce:

- HLF will offer further rounds of Skills for the Future, awarding £15m in 2013.
- Through the NSA, Creative & Cultural Skills will offer £15m to support apprenticeships and internships across the creative and cultural industries, and will create the Get Into Heritage website to offer careers advice to young people.
- The teaching museum initiative will pilot a holistic approach to training new entrants, using open recruitment to invigorate its workforce. Learning from this model should be shared across the sector, particularly among recipients of Skills for the Future grants.

Individuals and organisations should think about:

- How museums can adopt practices that support diversity in the workforce and allow the workforce to accurately reflect communities, out of both moral duty and business sense. This includes working with young people considering their future career and fostering inclusive, competency-based recruitment practices.

Areas for concern:

- There is an oversupply of people who want to begin a career in museums and efforts to broaden entry routes to the sector have been in place for several years. Funders should consider undertaking research into the most effective entry routes to better guide individuals. The NSA also offers an opportunity to forge more constructive relationships between training providers and employers to support entry to the museum workforce.

References

5. Diversify: reflections and recommendations, Museums Association, 2013
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7. Letters, Museums Journal, March 2013
8. <http://getintoheritage.org/>

CPD is necessary to develop the existing museum workforce. It helps professionals to continue to be motivated and constructive in their roles and therefore it is especially important that employers recognise individuals' needs for CPD at a time when so many people's roles are changing and expanding – due to both the shift in museums to focus more on engagement, digital media and social impact, and cuts to paid staff that mean the roles left behind have a greater breadth of responsibility and need for management skills. The majority of museum professionals are highly committed, as participation in voluntary networks and membership organisations shows, but often individuals manage this by undertaking CPD entirely in their own time.

Employers should do more to recognise the benefits of CPD and allocate time to their staff for job-related learning. This could combine on-the-job development with reflexive practice through, for example, peer networks. Supporting volunteers to undertake CPD is also a good way for employers to recognise the vital contribution of the museum sector's unpaid workforce. CPD should form part of an organisation's strategic priorities in order to invest in staff that can deliver the vision of the museum. It is also increasingly important to create a workforce that can adapt to the scale of change facing the sector.

Consultation respondents reported cuts to training budgets in recent years, which often ruled out more expensive formal training programmes or the possibility of travelling for training. This appears to have helped stimulate more informal, peer-led approaches to CPD that have a raft of benefits for participants and museums.

Increasingly, the museum sector is adopting a wider variety of methodologies for staff CPD: "Cultivating a generous and cooperative environment to excite, inspire, and stimulate rich experiences and conversations."⁴⁹ This approach encourages networks built around a shared purpose, which are sometimes time limited and often instigated by practitioners rather than through a universal, top-down structure. In this environment, CPD can be based around models of coaching and mentoring, buddying with colleagues or action learning sets. These approaches help to build relationships and, in turn, confidence and capability. CPD is often considered in terms of improving skills and knowledge in a given area, but it is also about developing positive ways of thinking and behaving. The more interactive and reflexive the method of CPD, the more an individual gains confidence to implement new skills and behaviours.

Commit to CPD for staff

Research into sharing knowledge commissioned by the MA in 2011 found: “Knowledge... should be: developed by everyone working within museums in any role involving audiences or collections; developed in collaboration with others; shared as widely as possible.” Online provision of resources underpins this approach and provides a forum for advertising events and networking opportunities - but nothing has the same impact as face-to-face relationships.

Regional and local programmes like SHARE Museums East and Oxford ASPIRE (both confirmed until at least 2015) excel in facilitating targeted networks that respond to needs identified by practitioners. Feedback on both programmes suggests that the most important factor for success is the appointment of a coordinator or networker who builds relationships with people in museums in the area to find out what they need and stimulate participation. The on-the-ground and face-to-face nature of this role means that programmes can synchronise with museum development structures and are approachable for people in museums. As CPD is essentially self-guided and focuses on the development needs of an individual, it is vital that networks, even when they are funded on a relatively large scale, are responsive to requests made for specific training. Both SHARE and ASPIRE are funded by Arts Council England, while National Museums Scotland (NMS) runs a partnership network for collections support.

It is vital that the benefits of local programmes are articulated to and valued by funders so they can build on these approaches elsewhere.

It is also useful to bear in mind what the local approach cannot do. The 2011 evaluation of the Turning Point Network¹⁰ can offer lessons. Regional groups were funded by Arts Council England between 2008-12 to identify weaknesses in the visual arts sector and create strategies for change. A key conclusion of the evaluation states: “Overall, Turning Point Network has shown the strong capacity and willingness of an artform to take responsibility for its sector. Regional work has been focused and strategic. However, regionally designed strategies seem to have gaps. It is noticeable that some issues, such as diversity, workspace development, digital opportunities and capital development, have not been prioritised by regional groups and these do not entirely fit into their remit. This suggests that strategic planning will and should always be a partnership with Arts Council England. Turning Point Network has shown the great extent to which this can be an equal partnership.”

Many other networks also offer low-cost training, often by working locally to reduce the burden of travel and time away from the office, or within a subject specialism. The Welsh Museums Federation runs a programme of training days with time built in for networking and sharing experience. The programme is informed both by support from CyMAL to deliver parts of the national museum strategy and by demand from museums in Wales. In this case the federation is the networker that synchronises strategy with grassroots demand. In other cases, practitioners see opportunities to solve a local problem; for example, through an Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund grant to Barnsley Museums, staff identified a scarcity of expertise on working with archaeology collections in South Yorkshire and so created a network to share knowledge. On a larger scale, TWAM delivers a core skills training programme for staff in all roles from museums in North East England. Since 2006, 238 participants have been through the course, which covers basic themes where there is always demand, from handling objects to marketing and audience engagement.

As CPD becomes more local and informal, the opportunity to participate varies across the UK with potential for different networks and trainers to recreate similar resources. Online communities and websites to house and share resources become valuable to back up local solutions to CPD and avoid duplication of effort. The Social History Curators Group (SHCG) has long been active in running events and networking among members UK-wide. To support this, in 2012 SHCG launched firstBASE¹¹, an online, searchable resource of information to identify and interpret social history collections. The key to success is that the information is provided online, but it is known about, used and updated by an active network. With a broader subject base, Collections Link¹² aggregates online resources that support CPD with, for example, materials produced through SHARE Museums East.

Funders increasingly recognise the need to work in this way: for example the MA includes a networking element to all its funded programmes and the Monument Fellowship model of sharing knowledge is entirely based on using interpersonal relationships to share knowledge and enthusiasm for a given subject¹³. A further benefit of interactive CPD, highlighted by the Monument Fellowship model, is that it refreshes skills beyond those explicitly targeted. In the case of Monument Fellowships, many participants commented that they learned research skills and the tools to continue to build their knowledge after the project completed.

Commit to CPD for staff

Other museums and funders are trying out new ways of working to motivate staff. On the first Thursday of each month, MGS and Creative Scotland jointly hold themed Insights and Ideas cafes for colleagues across arts and heritage. NMS also brings together targeted, cross-departmental groups of staff to generate ideas for temporary exhibitions and events - participation offers CPD within working hours and results in ideas and team working that strengthen the organisation and each individual's stake in it.

Formal CPD structures work very well for many individuals, and should be supported by employers where possible. These can range from a work-based qualification like the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) or Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ) - for example, the Conservation Technician's Qualification, a level-3 qualification developed by the Institute of Conservation - to distance learning with higher education providers, to a structure such as the Associateship of Museums Association (AMA) or the FMA, where an individual can set their own development goals, access mentoring or peer support to review progress and find appropriate CPD activities.

The museum sector workforce increasingly relies on freelance support and more people in our sector are choosing to work freelance or independently at some point in their career. Freelancers have unique challenges to maintain their CPD outside a supportive work environment, particularly at a time when competition means up-to-date, broad skills and knowledge are vital. The MA's ambitions to develop a mid-career professional development programme will be designed to suit freelancers. Other agencies and membership organisations offer CPD events and resources (e.g. Engage is very active in offering online forums and networking opportunities), but within museums and galleries few services are tailored to freelancers' needs. In other areas of the arts, where freelance working has been more common for longer, there is better support through, for example, groups such as Axis, Arts Development UK and Sound Sense.

The museum sector has a workforce that is committed, engaged and proactive, and that has embraced working in the varied and reflexive ways outlined here. This is a strong basis on which to build the skills and behaviours that organisations need to manage change in the coming years.

Support to commit to CPD for staff:

- Funders should continue to support emerging models for a) CPD through reflexive practice; and b) regional knowledge sharing networks that stimulate participation and respond to demand, such as SHARE Museums East, Oxford ASPIRE and the Welsh Museums Federation.
- Employers should support their staff to undertake CPD linked to their job and overall strategic priorities. They should encourage participation in regional and specialist networks, peer learning networks and formal professional development programmes. This is particularly important as staff roles are changing and responsibilities expanding.

Individuals and organisations should think about:

- How museums and training providers can share materials online to support CPD beyond their networks and avoid duplication of effort.

Areas for concern:

- The museum sector workforce increasingly relies on temporary freelance support and more people in the sector are choosing to work freelance at some point in their career. The MA will improve the support it offers to freelancers, allied to its ambitions to better support individuals through key decision-making points in their careers.

References

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11. <http://www.shcg.org.uk/firstBASE-home>
12. <http://www.collectionslink.org.uk/>
13. <http://www.museumsassociation.org/collections/21022011-monument-toolkit>

Of all the categories outlined in the Cultural Heritage Blueprint 2012, the recommendation to develop sector specific skills is the most difficult to define. Out of the range of work that museums do – community outreach, digital heritage and engagement, interpretation, education, visitor services, curatorial research and identification skills in different fields, collections care, conservation and much more – it is sometimes unclear what should fall under this term. This lack of clarity can hamper debate about the need to maintain and promote sector specific skills, and leave professionals in some specialisms feeling that their skills and knowledge are undervalued.

The solution lies in understanding the skills needed in the sector and where they are in short supply. In 2013 the British Museum is conducting a survey of its 90 museum partners to find out which skills are being lost from museums and which ones are difficult to recruit. Building on this, Creative & Cultural Skills and English Heritage are conducting a cultural heritage research project in 2013 to look at formal training provision across cultural heritage and compare this to skills areas that employers say they need. This information will be invaluable to shaping future development opportunities both for CPD in the existing workforce and new entrants to the sector. In addition, the intelligence could align with research into effective entry routes to the sector.

The report by the Sharing Expertise Group in 2012 looked at sector specific skills and knowledge. In assessing the nature of expertise that is specific to the museum sector, the report concluded: “Respondents described, and our web and documentary research confirmed, a profound shift towards using knowledge and expertise to support engagement and participation. This was described as a customer-driven imperative; a requirement for public accountability; and a response to very different, and uncertain, conditions in the sector... This shift requires new responses and new skills ‘for the near and far future’.

Our research and consultation suggests that new ways of working are developing which enable others; which provide enough for others to build on; and which draw on external resources, experts and expertises to harness and ‘layer up’ knowledge in multiple ways.”¹⁴

It can no longer be expected, if it ever was, that every museum can have specialist staff in all areas in which it works. Indeed, museum work is becoming more interdisciplinary, with in many cases a greater reliance on generalist staff and managers, and on volunteers. Therefore most museums seek to attain a moderate level of skill and confidence in curatorial specialisms, different forms of audience engagement and digital technologies within a small team. In contrast, larger organisations, especially national museums, have a greater responsibility to maintain in-depth expertise and to share that expertise for the benefit of the sector because it not likely to be held elsewhere. It is not clear how the sector can seek to maintain in-depth sector specific skills in many areas. One possible solution lies in a recently funded project at Royal Albert Memorial Museum to inform the development of a Collections Prospectus, which would highlight collections research priorities for the museum (and potentially for the region) and engage HE institutions to undertake research where it meets mutual areas of interest. This kind of partnership with academia will likely become more important, as will working with lay communities and community partners.

Develop sector specific skills

Develop sector specific skills

Outside the museum sector, Galaxy Zoo¹⁵ offers an example of the power of crowdsourcing from an enthusiast group. In this project, millions of images of unclassified distant galaxies were posted online with a request for support from users to make classifications. In the first year 150,000 people contributed, each making classifications where the final decision was based on the consensus view. In five years the site has developed a loyal following where contributors have progressed to much more complex identification; the project initiates further work based on the findings of its online community.

In most cases, the kind of networks and informal knowledge exchange described in the previous section work very well in building specific areas of knowledge and confidence because they focus on shared experience and mutual support. Similarly, subject specialist networks (SSNs) provide a forum for practitioners in a field to share knowledge between themselves and more importantly with the wider sector. The outward looking, supportive role of SSNs is fundamental as fewer museums have subject-specialist curatorial staff, so it is vital that museums support their staff (including volunteers) to participate.

Arts Council England has committed £300,000 to support SSNs from 2013-15; in Scotland, NMS offers support in kind to SSNs through its partnership work; and MGS will launch a skills development fund in 2013 offering grants of £1,000-£20,000 to enable museums to work in partnership on collaborative skills development programmes.

The Scottish Archaeological Research Framework is a good example of using combined expertise and research within a network. In this case, the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, with support from Historic Scotland, has brought together an online, updateable framework highlighting both current research strengths within Scottish archaeology and areas for future exploration. The number of people who have taken part and their commitment to updating the framework mean it can have a strategic influence on future work and can be used as a basis for sharing expertise between partners in academic, governmental, museum-based, commercial and voluntary archaeology settings. In 2012, the Society of Museum Archaeologists began a similar project in England to look at museums collecting archaeological archives, associated issues for storage and research and future recommendations.¹⁶

The MA has supported knowledge sharing as part of its work on collections since 2005. Work on the Monument Fellowships has formulated a low-cost and replicable model for knowledge sharing, in particular succession planning. Museums should bring this way of working into the mainstream as part of their planning for knowledge management. For example, a focused period of knowledge sharing could be factored into staff restructures to encourage remaining staff to take responsibility for building knowledge, especially in cases where long-serving staff are taking early retirement and years of working knowledge may otherwise be lost. Some consultation respondents felt very strongly that museums have failed to take knowledge management seriously without external project funding. In addition to the methodology that the Monument Fellowship provides, through Effective Collections and the Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund the MA has supported collections research, where the fruits of that research are shared with the wider museum sector and with audiences. This link through from collections specialisms to public outputs, bringing different functions of the museum together, demonstrates the value of specialist skills in helping museums to offer unique experiences to audiences.

Consultation respondents highlighted a need to bring together past resources that support sector specific skills, particularly in England, from now-closed Renaissance regional teams and hubs, and the MLA. The Welsh Museums Federation, which is tasked with delivering parts of the national strategy in Wales, has started work to maximise use of existing resources on subject specialist skills. This includes the development of Rhannu, a section on the federation's website to share knowledge and experience in different specialist fields. Better signposting to disparate material (e.g. that which SSNs and others have posted online) and collating of sought-after older resources would underpin the development of specialist skills and provide a foundation for future investment across the UK.

Develop sector specific skills

The activities described above focus on refreshing and maintaining skills and knowledge, often rooted in collections. While this is vital, these activities don't address the scarcity of access to traditional skills (e.g. conservation of industrial heritage that is no longer in everyday use) or emerging skills needs for an interdisciplinary and adaptive workforce (e.g. new technologies or business development). In its report, the Sharing Expertise Group recommended an investment priority to "expand our conception of 'museum skills' to include new practical and professional skills: including facilitation, coaching and mentoring, creative collaboration and co-creation as well as the more 'traditional' museum skills". The cultural heritage research being undertaken by Creative & Cultural Skills and English Heritage will further unpick these broader definitions of skills needs.

In consultation for this action plan, many respondents singled out new technologies as a fresh skills area for museums. This includes using digital means of communication with audiences and stakeholders (e.g. developing crowdsourced fundraising or online education packs) as well as handling born-digital collections and collections data. This is a skills area that affects most, if not all, museum staff and has a lot in common with other visitor attractions and charities.

Digital and other interdisciplinary skills should be embraced and integrated across organisations to enable change. For organisations that are wary about getting involved with new technologies, the Collections Trust has developed a Digital Benchmarking Tool to help assess a museum's current approach and how it can improve. Funders are also aware of the need to invest in this area; HLF's new digital policy enables investment in standalone digital projects and offers guidance on digital outputs from projects. Arts Council England has launched a Digital R&D fund and is working closely with funding recipients and the independent research and skills charity Nesta to share learning.

Museums can look to other arts and heritage sectors to develop skills in additional areas of growing importance. For example, in 2013 the Arts Marketing Association is launching CultureHive¹⁷, a best practice online resource for marketing and audience development. This resource is supported by training and aims to work with employers to overcome barriers to best practice.

Support to develop sector specific skills:

- Creative & Cultural Skills will conduct cultural heritage research in 2013 to audit training provided in the cultural heritage sector and compare this to the skills needed by employers, particularly those they find difficult to recruit or access. This should inform future investment in sector specific skills, including both traditional skills and those that an increasingly interdisciplinary workforce needs to develop. This could be aligned with research into effective entry routes to the sector and skills that entrants need.
- The MA is seeking funding to continue running the Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund from 2014.
- Funders should bring together past publications and resources on specialist skills online where they are not already available.

Individuals and organisations should think about:

- Putting together knowledge management plans that enable them to understand the skills and knowledge they need and linking this to the CPD they support their staff to undertake. Organisations should use methodologies like the Monument Fellowships to maintain and refresh knowledge.

Areas for concern:

- People in museums have demonstrated their willingness to participate in informal networks and share learning through reflexive practice, but it is clear that such networks should be outward-looking in supporting colleagues and linking to public outputs. Funders and organisations should enable this by supporting (or continuing to support) knowledge sharing networks that contribute to the museum sector and have strong links to public impact, informed by the findings of Creative & Cultural Skills' cultural heritage research.

References

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15. <http://www.galaxyzoo.org/>
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This action plan brings the findings of the *Cultural Heritage Blueprint 2012* together with opinions from consultation respondents and emerging thinking from initiatives such as the MA's Museums 2020 campaign. In doing so, the plan sets workforce development in a strategic context for funders and organisations that are negotiating the scale of change currently facing the sector. It sets out activities that different sector bodies and groups have committed to on behalf of the sector, some of which draw out common issues and potential for future working alongside other areas of arts and heritage. Finally, it highlights emerging good practice from different organisations and groups, especially where the sector can learn from examples in other parts of the UK.

A number of key themes run through discussion and underpin the actions and areas for concern that have been identified.

The climate in which museums operate is changing on an unprecedented scale. The sector is experiencing long-term budget cuts and a culture change to reduce reliance on public funding, combined with a growing need to value and demonstrate the public impact of museums. The pace and scale of this change must be appreciated by everyone working in the sector, so that museums can reassess their position, their role and their future. Armed with a fresh vision, museums need to invest in the people that make up their workforce so that they are flexible, adaptable and able to implement necessary change.

In spite of reduced central support in England and a period of flux in Scotland and Northern Ireland (including the transformation of MGS and local government reform in Northern Ireland), funders and strategic bodies are still offering significant support for workforce development. Competition for funds may be strong and gaps certainly remain, but in each of the five categories of the action plan there are positive actions and opportunities that museums can pursue.

One area in which funders and larger institutions (i.e. national museums and, as they establish their programmes, MPMs) could improve is in coordinating their support for workforce development to ensure that funding programmes complement each other and are easier for museums to navigate. For example, Arts Council England and HLF are both investing in widening entry to the workforce (through Creative Employment and Skills for the Future) and building business and enterprise skills (through the arts and heritage strands of Catalyst), but it is not clear how their programmes influence one another or share learning. Similarly, some national museums incorporate much more workforce development support into their partnership work than others; for example, the British Museum's Fresh Leads scheme or the participation of some nationals in the Sharing Expertise Group. Better coordination and sharing of lessons learned would make things clearer for participants and create greater long-term impact. It is difficult to bring networks that develop from grassroots need, like SSNs and local groups, together into a picture of overall provision for the sector. However, strategic and centrally-funded bodies should share their strategies better to achieve more coordinated support.

Conclusions

With an unprecedented level of change facing the sector, the only real option for individuals and museums is to step up and lead the charge. For museums to survive and thrive, individuals at all levels need to reassess their role and think about how they can build the skills and confidence required to implement change. Programmes offered by funders and strategic bodies are one way forward, but so are the informal, reflexive approaches to CPD outlined in the later sections of the action plan; for example, local networks, buddying and mentoring. Organisations need to value and prioritise workforce development to support change in the sector, but equally, CPD is self-directed and individuals must embrace the opportunities open to them.

While progress is being made on all five of the Blueprint's recommendations, the consultation for this action plan highlighted more divergent views in two of the categories in particular. In the section on workforce diversity, broadening of entry routes is discussed in tandem with the at times seemingly intractable issue of the oversupply of people trying to enter the sector at a time when the job market is shrinking. Also in this section, the action plan highlights opposing views on the role of employers and higher education providers in achieving diversity and fairness.

The NSA offers a way forward to forging better relationships, while the action recommended by this plan to conduct independent research into the most effective entry routes to museums could provide an understanding of the impact of efforts to support broader entry and diversity. These points in particular will need review over the coming two years.

The other problematic area of the action plan is that of sector specific skills, where the nature of skills and knowledge that museums need to access are varied and difficult to pin down. It is clear that these range from highly specialised knowledge (e.g. of a particular collection type) to skills that need to be embedded across museums (e.g. use of digital technologies), as well as skills and trades that are in decline outside museums (e.g. traditional crafts and conservation). However, at a further level of detail, opinions differ about the relative importance of different skills and knowledge, and many people tend to feel that their particular specialism is undervalued.

The cultural heritage research being undertaken by Creative & Cultural Skills and English Heritage, which is due for publication in autumn 2013, should offer new insight into the issue and this section of the action plan will be reviewed in light of its findings. As the consultation and research has shown, people in museums are prepared to work together to share knowledge and skills through, for example, SSNs and partnerships with academia and/or lay communities, so investment in building and refreshing skills and knowledge should be directed by the results of the cultural heritage research.

The steering group for this action plan will be convened again in late 2013 to review the document in light of research and progress. The MA, in partnership with Creative & Cultural Skills, will also remain active in promoting and monitoring the plan over the next two years at least. This will include investigating how the MA can provide support for mid-career individuals and for people who work independently or freelance.

The MA would like to thank the steering group, whose members have generously given their time and wisdom to the action plan and who have committed to many of the actions listed here. Thanks must also go to the individuals who contributed their opinions, examples and case studies during the consultation in order to help develop this action plan.

The Cultural Heritage Blueprint 2012 outlined five key areas for workforce development and recommended a number of specific actions within each area.

Key recommendations for the museum workforce

- 1.** Strengthen leadership and management.
- 2.** Develop business, enterprise and entrepreneurial skills.
- 3.** Open up entry to the sector and diversify the workforce.
- 4.** Commit to CPD for staff.
- 5.** Develop sector specific skills.

Recommended actions

Strengthen leadership and management

- Strategic bodies and funders should prioritise activities and initiatives that support the development of leadership skills.
- The requirement of Arts Council England major grant recipients to provide collective leadership for the sector and act as role models is welcome; it is essential that this produces tangible outcomes for other museums to develop management and leadership skills.
- Leadership programmes should be run in collaboration with the wider arts and creative industries so that museums can share and learn from other sectors; working with small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and the third sector would also bring in new skills and perspectives.
- Boards and governing bodies must be supported to develop leadership skills.
- High quality online information and resources should be developed to support leadership development.

Appendix 1

- Valuable resources created through existing or previous programmes, such as the Cultural Leadership Programme, must be retained and made available in the future.
- The skills needed to manage volunteers should be prioritised and existing best practice around volunteer engagement should be shared widely.
- The need for management skills should be better reflected in existing sector qualifications and there should be more signposting for generic management training.
- Mentoring and peer support are key tools for developing leadership and management skills; organisations and individuals should be encouraged to work with the wider arts and third sector in this area.

Develop business, enterprise and entrepreneurial skills

- Museums must fully engage with schemes like Catalyst to gain the support and knowledge needed to fundraise effectively.
- Ensure the learning from schemes like Catalyst is shared widely across the sector to support all museums.
- Arts Council England major grant recipients and national museums should link with other museums to address these areas of skills and knowledge; independent museums have a strong track record in this area and mechanisms should be found for them to share their experiences.
- Ensure the learning from pilot projects that are currently addressing organisational development is shared across the sector.
- Sector qualifications should include some elements of business and financial management.
- Museums should develop mechanisms to learn from SMEs and third sector organisations; this could include developing specific partnerships to deliver services, short secondments or shadowing opportunities.
- It is essential to develop skills around community engagement, participation and co-production; the creation of tailored training in these skills would be beneficial.
- Guidance on new business models and approaches should be developed, particularly relating to moving to trust status and local authority commissioning; this should complement and not duplicate existing resources.
- Mission Models Money has established a peer network in this area; this could be supported and potentially replicated or extended across the sector.
- This area should continue to be a key focus for museum development officers and Renaissance-funded museum development in general.

Open up entry to the sector and diversify the workforce

- Key action:** The NSA has real potential to support new opportunities for people to enter and train for work in the sector. Museums, galleries and sector bodies must actively engage with the NSA to ensure the needs of the sector are reflected in their work and maximise the opportunities available.
- Create more employer-led work-based entry training opportunities such as apprenticeships and internships.
 - Continue to use Creative Apprenticeships to bring in new entrants.
 - Use the updated National Occupational Standards (NOS) to develop Creative Apprenticeships for a wider range of jobs in the museum and gallery sector such as collections management, education and outreach.
 - Develop best practice guidance for internships and volunteering to ensure that they provide valuable training opportunities and are not exploitative.
 - Museums should be forming partnerships with further and higher education providers to accredit work-based training; Creative & Cultural Skills should provide guidance on how to do this.

Appendix 1

- Ensure there is good career advice for those who want to enter the sector.
- Continue to develop online resources such as Creative Choices and the Get Into Heritage website.
- Investigate running events to stimulate interest from a wide range of people in working in museums and galleries.
- Continue to champion the need for a diverse workforce; ensure that it is understood by those in senior positions and reflected in organisational development plans.
- Reform and improve recruitment practices in order to recruit a more diverse workforce.
- The emphasis on workforce diversity in the criteria for Arts Council England major grant recipients is welcome; the arts council must see this through and ensure it is a priority for all those it funds.

Commit to CPD for staff

- The provision of online training and development resources and opportunities should be improved.
- A large number of resources have been developed in the last few years; they must be retained and shared across the sector.
- A central point or digital platform should be created to signpost these developmental resources.
- The use of online networking and social media as a way of developing and sharing skills and knowledge needs to be improved.
- Museums should form partnerships with higher and further education providers to develop accredited work-based training; Creative & Cultural Skills should provide guidance on how to do this.
- A museum training database listing courses and training should be developed and available online.
- Consideration should be given to the creation of a scheme to support the development of mid-career individuals who have potential and leadership qualities but might not have the opportunity to progress.

- Organisations and individuals should support schemes that encourage the sharing of skills and knowledge; museums should offer support for the development and provision of local training opportunities, through offering rooms free of charge for this purpose, allowing staff to contribute to training sessions etc.
- Funders should be encouraged to include a demonstrable commitment to staff development as a requirement for successful applicants.
- The revised Accreditation scheme reflects the need for organisational commitment to staff development; museums must be supported (through the Museum Mentor programme) to implement this and demonstrate they are fulfilling this requirement.

Develop sector specific skills

- Strategic bodies should be encouraged to continue to invest in the development of sector specific skills and knowledge.
- SSNs need to have a more strategic role in developing and sharing specialist skills and knowledge.
- Basic training in specialist collections must continue.
- HLF should continue to fund programmes that focus on the development of sector specific skills.
- Lessons from existing succession planning initiatives should be shared widely across the sector to inform and encourage others
- Museums should communicate better the collections-related support they can offer to others, like dedicated web pages; national museums have a key role to play in this area.
- Research should be undertaken to identify the specialist skills that are in short supply or at risk, and a set of recommendations should be developed.
- The sector should work with higher and further education providers to look at the development of new qualifications that reflect the skills needs around co-production, participation, community engagement; this could be an area for the NSA to address.

Steering group

Chairperson

Iain Watson, Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums

Association of Independent Museums

Susan Eddisford, Royal Albert Memorial Museum

Arts Council England

Guy Purdey

Creative & Cultural Skills

David Parker

CyMAL: Museums Archives and Libraries Wales

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Caitlin Griffiths

Museums Association Board

Gaby Porter and Rowan Brown

Museums Galleries Scotland

Catherine Cartmell

National Museum Directors' Council

Andy Bodle, Royal Museums Greenwich

Northern Ireland Museums Council

Chris Bailey

Details of consultation

Individual, direct consultation was undertaken with:

Claire Cooper, Missions Models Money

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Hazel Courtley, Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service

Jennie Godsalve, Creative & Cultural Skills

Jilly Burns, National Museums Scotland

Lucy Shaw, Oxford ASPIRE

Neville Stankley, Nottingham Trent University

Nick Poole, Collections Trust

Peter Stott, Falkirk Museums Trust

Rachael Rogers, Federation of Museums and Art Galleries of Wales

Simon Floyd, SHARE Museums East

Tamsin Russell, Scottish Museums Federation

Velma Hather and Mary Ellis, CyMAL: Museums Archives and Libraries Wales

Wendy West, Museums Galleries Scotland

26 responses were received to an online survey and longer written submissions were received from Birmingham Museums Trust, Leicester University and the Collections Trust. An expression of interest to be involved in any work resulting from the action plan was received from Adult Dyslexia Support.

Areas of work specified by those completing the survey include digital media and engagement, curatorial specialisms, museum development, management of museums and consultants.

Appendix 2

Relevant documents

Culture, knowledge and understanding: great museums and libraries for everyone, Arts Council England, 2011: <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/browse-advice-and-guidance/developing-great-museums-and-libraries>

Going Further - The National Strategy for Scotland's Museums and Galleries, Museums Galleries Scotland, 2012: <http://www.museumsgalleriesscotland.org.uk/publications/publication/460/>

Museum Policy for Northern Ireland, Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure, 2011: http://www.dcalni.gov.uk/pdf_version_of_final_museums_policy.pdf

A Museums Strategy for Wales 2010-15, CyMAL, 2010: <http://wales.gov.uk/docs/drah/publications/100615museumstrategyen.pdf>

Cultural Heritage Blueprint: a workforce development plan for cultural heritage in the UK, Creative & Cultural Skills and Museums Association, 2008: <http://www.museumsassociation.org/download?id=18398>

Cultural Heritage Blueprint Update 2012, Creative & Cultural Skills, National Skills Academy Creative and Cultural and Museums Association, 2012: <http://www.museumsassociation.org/download?id=919824>

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