

Museums, health and well-being: case studies

NMDC submission to the All Party Parliamentary Group for Arts, Health and Wellbeing Inquiry Call for Practice, August 2016

Introduction

Museums make a significant contribution to the creation of peaceful and prosperous communities and an environment for people to be healthier and happier. Museums are able to have this impact and thus create the means to improve health and well-being by utilizing the unique assets of their buildings, collections and staff expertise.

People stay healthy through social connection, and reduce pressure on health services if they feel welcome in a civic institution or are able to make a positive contribution to their community. A museum building is a sociable and egalitarian place open to people of all ages and backgrounds. The act of visiting museums has a positive impact on health and well-being – they are warm and welcoming, safe and trusted spaces (and in many cases free of charge to visit). The objects in museum collections, interpreted by skilled staff, can stimulate memories, help people make sense of a confusing world, provide joy and inspiration and the start for a conversation. These have been shown to positively affect mood, self-worth and a general sense of well-being.¹

Museums also work in partnership with specialist organisations such as charities, care providers and community groups to devise specific projects and programmes to draw people back into society and improve their mental and physical health. Museum health and well-being projects deliver demonstrable benefits in key areas including improving mental health, public health, and tackling isolation and alienation.

About the NMDC

The National Museum Directors' Council represents the leaders of the UK's national collections and leading regional museums. A full list of our members and further details about our work can be found here: www.nationalmuseums.org.uk/members

During the course of this Inquiry the All-Party Group has already received evidence from the Manchester Museums Partnership and the British Museum – both NMDC members – as part of a roundtable meeting in February 2016.

This submission includes further case studies from across NMDC's membership that illustrate the many ways in which museums make a positive contribution to the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities around the UK:

1. Glasgow Life: *Burrell for Blokes / The Craft Collective*
2. Imperial War Museum North, Manchester Museum, Museum of Science & Industry: *If: Volunteering for wellbeing*
3. National Galleries Scotland: *Photovoice: Living in Recovery*
4. National Maritime Museum Cornwall: *The Cornish Gig Project*
5. National Portrait Gallery Access and Community programmes
6. RAF Museum: *Making the RAF Museum autism friendly*
7. Science Museum: *Early Birds*
8. The Wallace Collection: *The Wallace Collection Loan Boxes*

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¹ Arts, Health and Wellbeing Beyond the Millennium: how far have we come and where do we want to go?, a report by the RSPH Working Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing, June 2013, p.53

1. Glasgow Life: Burrell for Blokes / The Craft Collective

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Project details:

This project was born of many facilitators' experiences of delivering creative adult sessions which provide an extra layer of interpretation to our collection. It was noted that the majority of participants to these sessions are women, with men a noticeable absence. The Burrell Collection Learning and Access team piloted a session in October 2012 as part of the Luminate: Scotland's Creative Aging Festival (www.luminatescotland.org) called 'Burrell for Blokes', aimed at targeting male visitors who wish to be creative. We did this by ensuring the subject matter and creative activities were attractive to men.

Participation at this Burrell for Blokes and subsequent sessions had been consistent resulting in a number of repeat and regular visits. However our feedback was that although they enjoyed sessions where they learned a new skill each time, that they would like some sort of session that allowed them to build up skills over a prolonged period and have a bigger communal outcome, thus the idea for the Craft Collective was instigated.

In order to fully deliver this project to its full potential it was decided that we would apply for a Small Project Grant from Museums Galleries Scotland (MGS) as well as a contribution from the venue budget. The total cost was £4,400. In August we found out this was successful (with MGS contributing 77%) and since then have been in planning for the group forming and starting on the work. The first session was on October 10th 2014 and finished in March 2016.

In addition to the support from MGS we worked with carpenters from the Gal Gael Trust:
www.galgael.org

The outcomes set at the beginning of the project were:

- More men (young and old) engaging in creative activities allowing them to flourish in their personal, family and working lives.
- Participants learning about our objects in a fashion which is relevant to them.
- New skills gained for learning and access staff from working closely with carpentry tutors.
- A greater understanding of how to engage with men in a creative museum environment where traditionally they would not engage.
- Increased understanding of the craft behind the object.
- A reproduction piece of furniture that would then be used for various user groups who need more than a visual museum experience and need to touch and experience the object.

Description of arts activity:

The Craft Collective is a project targeting an adult audience, focussing on the large amount of medieval furniture in the Burrell Collection.

The group learned the history of furniture making by examining the design, materials, techniques and tools used by medieval carpenters. The skills learned were then be applied to cooperatively recreate reproduction wooden furniture decided upon by the group. The group focused on a C17th oak cradle. Items created will then be used in future educational activities such as enhancing formal education workshops and informal sessions with families and groups with sensory impairments which will allow participants to really experience the object.

Project participants:

To recruit participants we produced a leaflet with all required information. The flyer did at no point state that it was only for men as we were keen to be inclusive, however we wanted to show that men were very welcome which we did by carefully choosing images which

reflected men engaged in creative activity. These flyers were sent to places where men tend to congregate, to established groups for men (e.g. in churches and Men's Sheds) and in all Glasgow Museums. We also posted on many forums and used social media. The participants self-selected themselves to attend the sessions and we started with a group of 17 – mostly men with a few women from various ages and situations – retired, young, employed and unemployed.

Project management:

The project was managed by the Learning and Access curator but delivered by the venue learning assistant with freelance carpenters.

Evaluation:

The project finished with 2 ladies completing the reproduction oak cradle which was not our target audience or who we intended to work with in terms of evaluating the process. Throughout the time period of the sessions many men engaged and we achieved the outcomes we set at the beginning of the process.

In over 40 sessions we engaged with up to 21 different participants who attended at different times. Counting repeat visits this project resulted in 377 museum visits, each visit lasted a minimum of 3 hours meaning that the participants achieved a total of 1,131 hours spent creatively working with our objects and learning new skills. Skills included: creating blueprints, measuring and cutting wood, creating wood joints as would have been done without screws and glue, carving and many more carpentry related skills. Soft skills that were a result of the facilitation style employed by the facilitators were decision making, compromise, peer learning, team work and developing problem solving skills.

As well as learning from the freelance carpenters the participants learned from each other. They all brought different levels of skill and you could often see an older retired gentleman sharing his skills and experience with a younger unemployed gentleman who was deep in concentration and soaking up the learning. This fostered an air of respect and we found that this peer learning was the best way for the participants in this group to learn. In addition our learning assistant gained many skills in carpentry and joinery and has continued developing his skills after the end of the project. These skills will be invaluable as we explore making and makers in the programme for the Burrell Collection in the future.

2. Imperial War Museum North, Manchester Museum, Museum of Science & Industry:
If: Volunteering for wellbeing

Contact details:

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www.volunteeringforwellbeing.org.uk

Project details:

if: Volunteering for wellbeing is a life changing social learning programme, which uses the heritage assets of Imperial War Museum (IWM) North, Manchester Museum, Museum of Science and Industry (MSI) and partnership venues to support participants into learning and volunteering and away from social and economic isolation. Funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, the three year project (2013-2016) is now in its final year and has engaged with over 230 people. The main aims of the project are to transform the lives of the participants we engage, develop consistency and quality in volunteering practice across Greater Manchester and robustly evidence the impact of heritage volunteering.

This is one of the first projects of its kind in the North West, drawing together multiple heritage venues and working across sectors to collectively achieve improvement, consistency and quality in volunteering practice as a key route to transforming wellbeing.

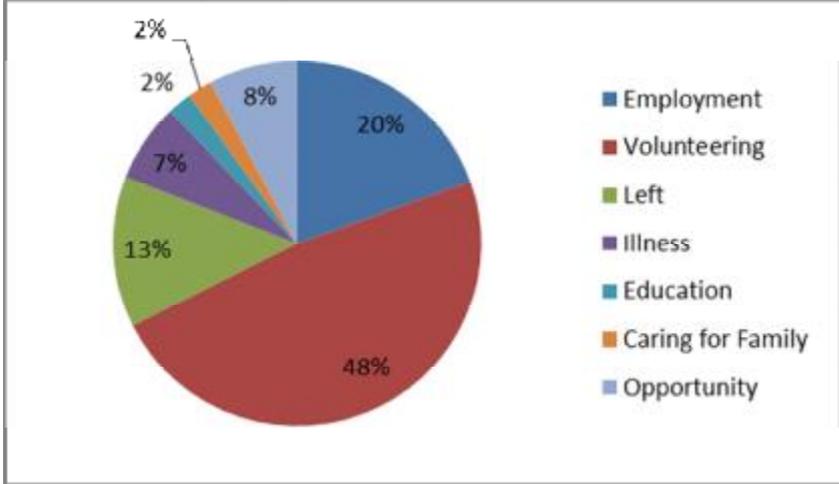
Description of arts activity:

Learning opportunities form the core of this project, which includes a varied range of accredited training courses, volunteering placements at partners venues, volunteer-to-volunteer mentoring and the chance to visit and learn from a range of national and local heritage venues. In addition to these core activities, we have developed an enrichment programme that complements individuals learning through art classes, mindfulness, photography sessions, visits to the theatre and the project has set up a volunteer choir. On completion of the course individuals are offered voluntary placement at one of our 6 partner venues. Our trained volunteer team provide excellent customer service within our galleries; they deliver object handling, support art & craft activities and guide visitors through our unique venues.

Project participants:

IWM North, Manchester Museum and MSI run a combined total of 5 cohorts per year, recruiting 75 participants across the venues. Recruitment is targeted towards individuals with non-severe mental health issues, long term unemployed, young people, over 50s and ex-service personnel. We work with agency staff and support workers from the following organisations to recruit participants: Job Centre Plus, Greater Manchester Youth Network, Valuing Older People, The Poppy Factory and Combat Stress.

Destinations of participants were as follows:



Project management:

The project is funded by a Heritage Lottery Fund grant of £528,700 which covers three years of delivery from June 2013 to December 2016. Project roles and responsibilities:

- IWM Senior Responsible Officer has responsibility for overseeing and ensuring the successful delivery of the programme reporting to IWM Director-General and to the museum's Board of Trustees.
- Programme Heads are responsible for the management of the programme on behalf of the SRO.
- The Volunteer Programme Coordinators at IWM North, Manchester Museum and Museum of Science and Industry are responsible for the day-to-day project management.
- Volunteer Placement Assistants at IWM North and Manchester Museum are responsible for supporting volunteers in their training and progression routes at partner venues.
- Paid traineeship at IWM North and Manchester Museum.

Evaluation:

An innovative programme of evaluation has been developed to evidence how the programme contributes to individual wellbeing, society and the wider economy. The evaluation process is a blended approach, combining Social Return on Investment (SROI), National Accounts of Wellbeing research, and Quality Adjusted Life Year (QALY) values. Envoy Partnership was commissioned to conduct a three-year impact evaluation.

Methodology includes:

- Quantification of Social Return on Investment (SROI)
- Measurement of well-being change
- Stakeholder engagement
- Observed participant behaviour
- Qualitative depth interviews including local services/referrers
- Tracked case studies
- Quantitative research and annual surveys of a broad sample of the learners.

The independent SROI estimate, from three years of data and longitudinal tracking of participants' outcomes, is approximately £1.97 million so far in added social and economic value. Compared to the total amount of £557,200 invested, this represents approximately £3.50 total social and economic return on every £1 invested.

A portion of this value has impacted on local care services, housing tenure, and central government spending i.e. jobseekers allowance, health and care support.

Evaluation demonstrated that participants recruited onto the programme have consistent low wellbeing starting points of 4 out of 10, compared to national average scores which generally fall in the range of 6.5-7 out of 10. At the end of the programme those score increase to align with the national average (see figure 1 below). The sustained improvement after three years illustrates how the project is a life-changing social learning programme and an exemplar in tackling wellbeing inequalities.

The project evaluation demonstrates learning that museums and galleries can be key settings for social prescribing, in order to catalyse improvements in health recovery, cognitive ability, rehabilitation, social integration, reducing isolation, and enhancing a sense of community identity or belonging. They can be great facilitators of tackling social needs which include preventing and breaking vicious cycles of low self-belief, isolation, exclusion, demotivation, depression and rejection for many participants.

Participant outcomes and learning from the project have been so significant and at sufficient scale that Central Manchester CCG (Clinical Commissioning Group) are piloting referring appropriate patients through selected GPs. This presents a highly innovative and joined-up solution to achieving local wellbeing outcomes, whilst alleviating resource pressures on health and care services.

3. National Galleries Scotland: *Photovoice: Living in Recovery*

Contact details:

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www.nationalgalleries.org

www.ed.ac.uk/arts-humanities-soc-sci/research-ke/support-for-staff/knowledge-exchange-resources/ke-projects/utilising-photovoice

Project details:

National Galleries of Scotland (NGS) collaborated with partners to work with a small group of people affected by alcohol-related brain disease. The project was a knowledge exchange partnership between the University of Edinburgh, National Galleries of Scotland, Rowan Alba, a charity working with the homeless, and Serenity Café, a café for those in recovery from addiction. NGS staff worked with academics from the University as well as a creative writing expert and several post-graduate students.

Photovoice is an innovative method of engaging with marginalised groups where participants use cameras to document their lives and use the images together with accompanying stories to inform others in relation to public health issues. University of Edinburgh researchers wanted to use Photovoice in order to understand participants' experiences of their alcohol-misuse recovery and make appropriate policy recommendations.

The project began with photography workshops at the Scottish National Portrait Gallery and tours of the Taylor Wessing exhibition (with Rowan Alba) and Ponte City (with Serenity Café). Using Photovoice members of Serenity Café and Rowan Alba were given cameras to select and reflect on how the environment impacts on their recovery from addiction. Digital photography was the medium used to document participants' own stories and experiences drawn from sessions exploring image, identity and the stories found in the paintings and photography at the Portrait Gallery.

Their work was celebrated in an exhibition at the Scottish Parliament and Serenity Café in June 2015, which highlighted themes identified by the participants including peer support, alternative obsessions and the importance of having structure. The exhibition was accompanied by an Parliamentary event, and the project was mentioned in a Parliament debate on alcohol policy the following day, achieving the aim of reaching policy makers with the findings of the project.

The project engaged with key stakeholders and those on the recovery journey, using Photovoice to explore the potential of this methodology in understanding how the environment and location of alcohol outlets impacts and influences recovery and ultimately alcohol health outcomes. It also brought together both positive and negative factors from within the home and outside environments that have an impact on recovery.

The project won the NMAHP (Nursing, Midwifery and Allied Health Professionals) Award for Innovation in Research in 2015. It received coverage in the Scottish press and a short film about it is in the process of being made. The groups have since visited the galleries for tours and continue to take photographs.

Evaluation:

The methodology used by this team is innovative and still being developed. Working with a hard to reach group who have had difficulty in 'finding a voice' they have used a multi-dimensional approach and have been successful in creating a partnership network which is not only productive in research terms but fits with the vision of the kind of groups the NHS would like to work with.

4. National Maritime Museum Cornwall: *The Cornish Gig Project*

Contact details:

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nmmc.co.uk/2016/03/maritime-museum-project-sees-valiant-boatbuilders-launch-gig/
www.facebook.com/BigGigProject/

Project details:

Title: Build a Cornish Pilot Gig with Disabled and Veteran Service Personnel (subtitle: *The Great Big Cornish Gig Project*).

Aims and objectives

- Teach Armed Forces Wounded Injured and Sick (WIS) personnel and veterans new skills through the construction of a traditional 6-oared Cornish pilot gig.
- Explore possible boat adaptations acceptable to the Cornish Pilot Gig Association, thus enabling disabled rowers to compete in the sport of pilot gig racing.

Funding

- Cost of project: £100,000
- Principal sources of funding: Armed Forces Community Covenant; Arts Council England; Cornwall Museums Partnership; Peter Harrison Foundation; a number of smaller contributions from national and local organisations and individuals.

Purpose of the project

The project concentrated on teaching new skills and abilities to Forces personnel trying to adapt to civilian life after exposure to hugely stressful situations during their time in the military, while at the same time instilling a sense of pride and worth in the participants, which would bolster their self-confidence and encourage them to deal with the difficulties they faced. It was felt that the construction of a pilot gig would deliver these goals and would also demonstrate that the popular sport of gig racing can be open to a wide range of disabled athletes.

In April 2016 the boat was presented to Help for Heroes on the Isles of Scilly, in time to take part in the World Pilot Gig Championships, following an "Epic Row" by some of the participants from Falmouth to Scilly.

Project participants:

Initially a team of 10 participants, with varying physical and mental problems, selected with guidance from Help for Heroes, underwent training in basic woodwork and tool skills. After this preparatory period the group started work on the gig build.

Project management:

Differing levels of ability and mobility were managed through the construction of many separate components, ensuring that every participant was involved in practical work on the boat. There were three workshop days a week, and one day for a programme of offsite waterborne activity.

NMMC personnel received professional guidance, together with a briefing from the Help for Heroes occupational therapist and consultant psychologist, to ensure that the working environment and daily tasks did not provide undue pressure on the participants.

The project contained a large proportion of flexibility which allowed participants to become involved for varying amounts of time, including those only able to join the project for shorter periods. The employment of a professional boat builder and team ensured that the boat would be completed on time and participants would receive some meaningful tuition.

Evaluation:

Approximately 40 Wounded in Service participants benefitted from the project, their ages ranging from early 20s to mid-50s. One participant described the project as life changing and signed up to a boat building course as a direct result.

Feedback from visitors, the media and evidence from the project Facebook page, which was seen some many thousands of times on a regular basis, indicate that the project proved hugely popular. It also enabled the Museum to engage with a range of organisations, funders and individuals who would normally be out of reach. The list includes a number of other charities, military decision makers and individuals who have offered their free time and money to make the project work.

The final element of the project, the row to St Mary's, provided another opportunity to engage with members of the public.

5. National Portrait Gallery: Access and Community programmes

Contact details for all programmes:

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1) *Magical Journeys* Hospital programme

www.npg.org.uk/learning/access/hospital-schools.php

Project details:

Magical Journeys is a 3-year project providing creative arts activity for young people in London children's hospitals. This National Portrait Gallery project is developed in partnership with Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital, Evelina London Children's Hospital at St Thomas', The Royal London Hospital at Whitechapel and Newham University Hospital. The National Portrait Gallery has been working in close partnership with children's hospitals in London for 15 years, sharing the inspirational stories of men and women in the Collection and providing access to free, high quality arts activities.

Magical Journeys provides much needed arts activity during school holidays when the hospital school is shut and activity for the young people is limited. Workshops are delivered during the summer holidays and throughout the year during winter, Easter and half-term holidays. Over the year we engage on average 500 young people and their families in approximately 55 workshops.

Aims and objectives:

- To provide much-needed creative arts provision for young people in children's hospitals specifically during the holidays when there is no hospital school provision.
- To increase creative and cultural participation for young people and their families whilst in hospital and encourage the development of art, creativity, visual literacy skills, ideas, literacy and communication.
- To enhance health, wellbeing and happiness through engaging with the creative arts. Providing enjoyment, fun and active participation as respite from often long-term clinical conditions.
- To engage new, hard to reach audiences beyond the Gallery with the Gallery's Collection.
- To broaden our work with hospitals and engage the wider community, encouraging hospital staff, families and young people to visit the Gallery independently or as self-directed visits and to increase access to the family programme.

Funding sources:

Currently the project is funded by Developments in Literacy Trust UK and the Aman Foundation UK. Previously the programme has received funding from the 29th May 1961 Charitable Trust, CHK Charities Limited and PF Charitable Trust.

Description of arts activity:

- A multi-disciplinary art activity-based approach has been developed with artists, musicians, storytellers, photographers - including painting, sculpture, animation, photography, music, poetry/creative writing/storytelling. This has allowed for a greater variety of activity for children attending workshops over multiple days.
- Interesting and dynamic workshop ideas have been developed by the freelancers, drawing on their area of specialism and expertise.
- The activity ideas are flexible enough to be explored in a range of contexts, from working individually with children and young people, to working with larger groups – all tailored to how long the individual can stay for and to different ages and abilities.

Project management:

The project is managed by the Access and Community Manager with assistance from an Assistant who works two days a week. Freelance artists are booked to deliver the workshops in hospitals. There is no cost to participants.

Evaluation:

The Gallery commissioned a specialist consultant to deliver external evaluation of Magical Journeys to fully explore and understand the impact of the project on young people in hospital as well as, their families and our partner hospitals. The aim was to support the Gallery to review the project objectively, look critically at the benefits and challenges of the project, and support its future development and direction. Evaluation took place between March – September 2015.

Objectives of the evaluation:

- To gain a greater insight into the benefits and impact of the project.
- To fully understand the value of the project to the young people, their families and our hospital partners.
- To quantify the challenges of working in clinical settings.
- To understand the benefits of engaging young people creatively.
- To collect greater qualitative evidence to share with our partners and funders.
- To use the feedback/results to develop and make improvements to the programme.
- To share participation practice with sector colleagues and demonstrate a model of practice that arts organisations could undertake for working with their local hospitals and children's units across the country.
- To evaluate whether the project is reaching a wider group of children who have not previously visited the Gallery.

Key outcomes to date:

- This project provides much needed creative arts activity and stimulus during the school holidays.
- As the project takes place during the holiday period many families (siblings as well as parents and children) work together creatively with the artists. The workshops have gone some way to normalise the young people's hospital experience and encourage play and fun with their families.
- Collaborative project advisory including our hospital partners – both on programme development and evaluation.

Impact and value for participants:

The evaluation uncovered a strong set of findings which demonstrates the impact and value of the project. These are summarised below:

Patients:

- Physical, cognitive, social and emotional benefits.
- Improved interaction between patients.
- Improved hospital experience even if they were undergoing stressful treatments.

Families:

- Patients and their families sharing stress-free and pleasurable time, co-creating positive and creative experiences and memories of their time in hospital.

Hospital staff:

- Staff value the presence of the artists and the beneficial impact of the programme on the patients, describing it as positively distracting, relaxing and enjoyable.
- Staff are motivated by the opportunity to collaborate with the Gallery team to help maximise the benefits to the patients and their families.

Artists:

- The artists look forward to delivering the sessions, sharing their knowledge and using their skills to create sessions that participants are immersed in so they forget about being in hospital and their treatment.
- The artists develop their workshops to ensure the activities suit all ages.
- The artists value the opportunity to make a difference to the patients and their families.

2) Creative Spaces

www.npg.org.uk/learning/access/accessible-programme-and-resources/creative-spaces.php

Project details:

Creative Spaces is an eight week programme which runs twice yearly in the spring and autumn. It is an opportunity for adults with learning disabilities to work with professional artists, try new processes and use the Gallery's collection as a resource for creating artworks. The Gallery works in close partnership with two local organisations, The Westminster Society for People with Learning Disabilities and Action Space to select ten participants for each programme. Participants are selected following the submission of an application for their place on the programme, a process which encourages the commitment of those who really want to learn and benefit from this experience.

The programme has been running for four years and over this time the Gallery has engaged 80 adults.

Aims and objectives of the project:

- To provide an on-site creative arts space for learning disabled adults.
- To engage learning disabled artists with the Gallery and its Collection through creative art sessions.
- For participants to explore their practice, develop their skills.
- The Gallery to provide support and introduce new approaches and techniques within the area of portraiture.
- Create a programme of creative participant led sessions led by the Gallery.
- To work with key specialist partners to reach a new audience.
- To foster confidence in the development of ideas and approaches with the participants.

Funding sources:

Creative Spaces is supported by the Lord Leonard and Lady Estelle Wolfson Foundation (as part of their support to Access programmes onsite at the Gallery).

Description of arts activity:

Two artists are booked for each programme who lead four sessions each, this offers participants a chance to engage with a range of media and different styles of art. During each session the group will visit a particular display or look at the permanent Collection, they will then spend the rest of the session creating work in response in the Education Studio. Activities have included photography, sculpture, printing, creating props (e.g. ruffs and collars) and creating a group backdrop influenced by a display.

At the end of the eight week programme the group host a mini exhibition in the Education Studio.

Project management:

The project is managed by the Access and Community Manager with a workshop assistant supporting the lead artist and group. For those adults that need it, support workers also come to the sessions but this is funded by their personal care plan. There is no cost to participants.

Evaluation:

Informal evaluation is undertaken by the workshop assistant during each session as well as conversations with support workers and centre managers at each organisation.

Questions such as the following are discussed with individuals:

- Before I came to the gallery I thought...
- Favourite thing about the session
- I want to do more...
- Things that they didn't like about the session
- Observations during session

Responses from participants have included the following:

- *'I liked everything. Sketching and drawing hot and cold, picture of the queen, drawing upstairs and painting.'* Participant also gestured with a 'thumbs-up'
- *'It's so fun.'* Participant points to final collage.
- Unprompted, during clay modelling T said *'I'm enjoying myself.'* Another participant said *'me too.'*

Comments from artist facilitators, carers and staff from the partnership charities:

- *'He was curious, anxious about new places. New places can be difficult but he enjoys coming.'* Carer on behalf of participant.
- *'People say she doesn't commit to volunteering and other programmes. But she is the first to arrive at the gallery for Creative Spaces and has attended all the sessions.'* Staff from WSPLD observation about one participant.
- *'He is more excited this week, more drawing and painting. He is smiling more this week. I think he enjoyed it.'* Carer on behalf of non-verbal participant.

Outcomes to date:

- Some participants have attended other events at the NPG, after developing confidence through coming to the gallery.
- The participants felt proud and a sense of achievement in the art works produced.
- Participants have developed lasting friendships.
- Carers have been surprised with the abilities and capabilities of the adults they support.
- A previous participant came and co-lead a session to her peers.

3) *The Drawing Room*

<http://www.npg.org.uk/learning/access/accessible-programme-and-resources/drawing-room-events.php>

Project details:

The Gallery offers a free programme of monthly artist-led drawing workshops for audiences with disabilities called *The Drawing Room*. These workshops take place on the last Monday of each month 13.00 – 15.00 and are open to all abilities. All art materials are provided.

The programme has been running since 2012 and was established as a progression route for *Creative Spaces* participants.

Aims and objectives of the project:

- Free drop in session for individuals to be signposted to if they've been involved in another programme at the Gallery (e.g. *Creative Spaces* participants having finished an 8 week programme).
- No booking required.
- Sessions facilitated by artists experienced at working with different access audiences.

Funding sources:

There are no sources of funding for this project; costs instead come from the Access and Community core budget. This includes the costs of delivering the programme with professional artists and materials costs.

Description of arts activity:

- Workshops explore drawing in its broadest sense – e.g. drawing with wire, Ipad technology, and different dry materials.
- The Drawing Room provides a social space in which adults with disabilities participate in creative making sessions in front of the Collection in a supportive environment.

Project management:

The project is managed by the Access and Community Manager with support of the Access and Community Assistant. Workshop assistants support the lead artist and group.

Evaluation:

No formal evaluation is currently undertaken with this programme, although qualitative data is collected during conversations with participants.

6. RAF Museum: *Making the RAF Museum autism friendly*

Contact details:

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Project details:

Aim of the project

The Royal Air Force Museum is committed to improving its offer to audiences and we are continuing to work to make our sites and collections accessible to all.

Museums, in general, feel confident in providing physical access; there's often more information and guidelines available to help put into place provisions for visitors, staff and volunteers. It is not always as easy to know how to provide for visitors with more hidden disabilities. This is why it is so important for museums and galleries to build working relationships with organisations who work for, or with, people with disabilities, and even more important to listen to the views of people with disabilities.

Background to the project

In December 2013 one of the Museum's Education Officers met with representatives of the National Autistic Society at the TES Special Needs Show in Islington. They were looking to expand their Autism Access Award (now Autism Friendly Award) programme to include museums and galleries and asked if the Royal Air Force Museum would like to be the pilot (pardon the pun). We started the process in January 2014 and achieved the award in June 2014.

The project

Although led by the Access and Learning Department, making the Museum more autism friendly has required support and contributions from all departments.

As part of the project we created a dedicated quiet space that can be used by visitors who may need to take time out from possible sensory overload. We have also developed an autism friendly museum trail which can be downloaded from our website, along with advice on quiet and busy times and spaces: www.rafmuseum.org.uk/london/plan-your-day/accessibility.aspx

We provided autism awareness and general disability awareness training to Museum staff and volunteers and we have 'access champions' in the front of house team.

The adaptations made the Museum more autism friendly as well as helping us become the first heritage organisation to be awarded the Autism Access Award.

To ensure that 'access' is embedded in all future developments at the Museum, we have set up an Access Advisory Group including staff, representatives from stakeholder organisations and people with disabilities.

Partnerships

The achievement of gaining the award led to an interest from other organisations in the heritage sector and an increased sharing of experiences and knowledge between venues. It has also led to the setting up of the multi-museum venture, the Disability Co-operative Network.

Gaining the award also opened doors to working with other external organisations, and we have developed a very successful partnership with 'Ambitious About Autism'.

We began working with Ambitious College in November 2014, with a view to providing work placements for their students with more severe and complex autism lasting for between 4-6 weeks. The first placement started in February 2015.

We worked closely with Ambitious College to devise a work placement that would be beneficial to the student and to us. The placements have been so successful that our most recent student stayed for a further 3 weeks after completing his initial placement.

While at the Museum the student is supported by up to 2 staff from the college. The placement involves preparing materials that are used in our formal learning session at the museum. We make sure that the student knows how they are used and how helpful the work they are doing is to the department.

We have learned a lot working with the staff and students of Ambitious College; that we are able to provide meaningful experiences for students with severe and complex needs and seeing how the staff interact with the students, and learning from specialist staff, helps us to improve our offer in general. It is a relationship that we hope will continue to grow stronger and which will lead to building new relationships with other external organisations in the future.

New developments

Although the Officer who started the project has now left the Museum, responsibility for leading this initiative is now embedded in the Access and Learning team. We are developing new schools activities aimed at pupils with a range of moderate to severe needs including autism. A new 'Sensory Story Time' workshop for younger pupils is already being run and has proved an immediate success. Within weeks of the first session we had a school booking the activity on the recommendation of another teacher.

Evaluation:

Evaluation for the project is still on-going but winning the Autism Access Award has definitely raised the profile of the RAF Museum. Since July 2014 the accessibility page of the Museum website has been looked at by 7,814 individuals and viewed a total of 9,421 times. This clearly demonstrates that accessibility is an important issue to our visitors, potential visitors, volunteers and staff.

7. Science Museum: *Early Birds*

Contact details:

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Science Museum, Science Museum, Exhibition Road, London SW7 2DD
www.sciencemuseum.org.uk/visitmuseum/plan_your_visit/events/other/early_birds_event

Project details:

Over 700,000 people in the UK are on the autism spectrum. Together with their families around 2.8 million people's lives are touched by autism every single day. Without access to engaging and entertaining resources many children with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD), and their families, feel isolated and excluded.

Early Birds creates an opportunity for children with ASD to participate and contribute as equal and valued visitors to the Museum. Taking place on particular Saturdays across the year, the Museum opens early at 8.30am and some of the galleries remain available exclusively to booked Early Birds guests until 11.15am. As well as exploring some of the galleries, guests can enjoy a selection of fun workshops and exciting demonstrations. By opening early, limiting the numbers of visitors per session, and adjusting the environment in the Museum, we will ensure that it is as comfortable and accessible as possible.

Visitors are given a private museum experience, with many of the noisy exhibits switched off, and with tailored activities that cater for different interests, abilities and ages Early Birds provides a means for engagement for the whole family. As well as providing a rich and stimulating experience for children and their siblings, one of the most important aspects of the events is our ability to engage with the adult parents and carers and provide a safe and supportive environment for them.

Early Birds is funded by The Lord Leonard and Lady Estelle Wolfson Foundation (£104,000 for 2014-2016).

Project participants:

Early Birds is open to any families with children who have ASD and there is an open booking process. Typically, around 1,000 visitors per annum take part in the Early Birds programme.

Project management:

We run 5 Early Birds events per year on Saturday mornings when public transport to the museum is least stressful. Each event involves around 20 members of staff being available to run activities and every member of staff across all teams must undergo our Autism Awareness training, which we developed with the assistance of the National Autistic Society. A Social Story for the museum is also available for families before the event.

Evaluation methods and findings:

The event is extremely well received by the visitors; they really appreciate this type of event as, for a lot of the families attending, it is the only opportunity they have to visit the museum. The event is successful for a variety of reasons, mainly: the museum being less busy and less noisy than usual during the event, the activities put on by the Science Museum team, and also the way the staff make all the families feel included and at ease.

'We think it's fantastic! It makes such a difference to be able to access the museum when it's quiet and calm for the children. Massive thanks, you do a great job!'

8. The Wallace Collection: *The Wallace Collection Loan Boxes*

Contact details:

Edwina Mileham, Community and Access Events Officer: edwina.mileham@wallacecollection.org
The Wallace Collection, Hertford House, Manchester Square, London W1U 6BN
www.wallacecollection.org
www.wallacecollection.org/ms/learn/special-projects/out-of-the-frame-loan-box-project/

Project details:

"I used to go to galleries and museums but not now; it has been wonderful to see it [the Wallace Collection] brought to me and I've learnt a lot. Visits out are rare; the loan box project enables us to go to places without going." Care home resident, Norfolk.

In 2012-2013 the Wallace Collection was awarded funding from NIACE through CLIF (the Community Learning Innovation Fund) to develop a series of resource boxes to loan out to care homes outside London with the aim of providing access to the museum to older people.

Why we did the project

We have a very popular outreach programme for older people in London called "Out of the Frame" and we received requests for resources to be lent to care homes as way of extending their engagement with the museum. We also felt that as a national museum we have a responsibility to make our collections as accessible as reasonably possible to people who live in United Kingdom. The loan box project gave us an opportunity to expand our reach outside of London, particularly to those who are no longer able to visit the museum.

What happened

We created six themed 'loan boxes' to be lent to care homes and day centres as an innovative way to facilitate an experience of the museum. They were specially designed to be a stimulus for discussion and appreciation so that care home staff and volunteers could deliver their own sessions with residents.

Each themed box contained reproduction images such as an eighteenth century portrait of Madame de Pompadour and a seventeenth century Indian dagger. Handling items were commissioned or sourced to accompany the works of art, such as a copy of a doublet worn by Sir Robert Dudley in his portrait. A booklet for each theme was written and an iPad with relevant digital content was also included.

We provided care staff and volunteers with training to deliver art and heritage workshops using the loan boxes. Residents where appropriate were given the opportunity to visit a local museum, and 'Family and Friends days' were held to share the project with the wider community.

Costs

We were awarded £46,460 from CLIF:

Staffing costs: researching, delivery and evaluation strategy	£18,600
Development and design of booklets for loan boxes	£10,700
ipad training for staff	£400
Handling items and reproduction images	£8,100
iPads and Laptop	£4,200
Staff travel expenses	£3,800
Trips to museums	£300
Participant and volunteer expenses	£400

Project participants:

Initially we worked with two care homes in London to develop and pilot the boxes; we invited fifteen care homes and day centres in Norfolk, Buckinghamshire, Bath, Bristol and Somerset to participate and partnered with the charity Alive! based in the south west of England to deliver

the project. Over 350 participants and 29 volunteers joined the project. 83 'Out of the Frame Loan Box' sessions were delivered by Wallace Collection or Alive! presenters. Care staff and volunteers were empowered to run over 49 self-directed activities with the boxes.

Project management:

The project was managed by the Community and Access officer, who was the main contact for the care home and other partners and was supported by a team of community freelancers who also contributed to the project's content, evaluation, training and delivery.

Evaluation:

The project was evaluated using a number of different capture methods to measure the aims and objectives of the project and to contribute to one of CLIF's key themes, 'learning for social and economic wellbeing'. The findings culminated in a final report:

www.wallacecollection.org/ms/learn/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2016/08/CLIF-13273-Final-report-website.pdf

The methods used were the following:

- Logo book observation sheets.
- Interviews with residents and staff at the beginning and end of the project.
- Regular email and phone correspondence.
- Postcard feedback cards.

Our evaluation of the project showed the following:

- Revived interest in the arts and in some cases a brand new interest.
- It inspired new conversations, stimulated memories, has given learners confidence in expressing their views on art and history.
- Generated an enjoyment in being a part of the project.

The project has shown there is a real interest in the arts, but it also opens up other subjects for learning, for example history, social history and current affairs. It has allowed residents to participate rather than just listen and has given them an opportunity to voice their opinion; therefore feeling valued and boosts their confidence. The project has highlighted that there is a real hunger for art based activities in care homes.

The success of the project has been its legacy. The loan boxes have been incorporated into our community programme. We are still working with many of the care homes outside of London and have new homes joining the scheme from Wiltshire, Leicestershire and London. We have a thriving relationship with the charity Alive! who have created their own 'Ultimate Wallace Collection box' which they offer as a part of their menu of workshops to care homes settings in the South West of England.

We are particular proud of our continued partnership with Corton House, a care home in Norwich. They are an example of the importance of making the collection accessible to people beyond the boundaries of London. Corton has continued to have almost a monthly session delivered by a Wallace freelancer and supported by the activities manager. These sessions attract not just residents but also the tenants who live in the sheltered housing; this is something the home has been trying to achieve in their activities for many years. These workshops have been voted by residents as one of the top 3 activities offered by the home. This summer we supported them in putting on their own exhibition using objects owned by residents alongside reproductions of their favourite Wallace Collection objects.

We continue to have requests for loan box training from a variety of different organisations including staff from the Porthaven Care Homes Group. The project has the potential to keep growing and we hope to train other care home staff and volunteers to use our resources to provide access to the museum to people who may not be able to visit the collection independently.