



Museum Development North West

2019-20 Annual Report



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Foreword

Michael McGregor

The Robert Woof Director, Wordsworth Grasmere

In her foreword to last year's report Isabel Wilson, Senior Manager, Museum Developments at Arts Council England, reflected that despite a year of great achievement, many museums were facing real challenges to their sustainability: 'All are having to adapt.'

None of us could have envisaged that, 12 months later, society as a whole is having to adapt to a world turned upside down. COVID-19 has brought grief and suffering, along with economic and social disruption, on a global scale. In the midst of everything, this report is a timely reminder that museums in the North West did so much in 2019-20 to enrich people's lives and make the world a better place.

Many have talked about this crisis as a wake-up call to change the way we do things, to think about the world differently. Whilst this is certainly the case, it's important to recognise - as this report does - that there were many good things that museums were doing pre-COVID; things that they should continue doing to ensure that people can sustain a sense of meaning and purpose.

I marvel continually at how much Museum Development North West achieves with such a small but dedicated team. This report documents a year of tremendous achievement, much of it focused on the fundamentals: sharing information building networks, brokering partnerships, distributing grants, raising and maintaining standards. The team has also supported the vital work of museums in caring for and enhancing their collections, developing audiences and improving environmental sustainability. At an individual level, much has been done to enhance the health and wellbeing of museum professionals and offer opportunities for professional development. And let's not overlook what a friendly and obliging team they are! A huge thank you to Kaye, Lynsey, Alex and Abdullah.

In closing, I'm reminded of the Chinese proverb: 'A crisis is an opportunity riding the dangerous wind.' As we face perhaps the most dangerous wind we've experienced in our lifetime, seizing that opportunity will be immensely challenging, but (literally) vital for museums everywhere.

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Introduction

'Through promoting excellence, innovation, partnerships and organisational sustainability our aim is to help museums to become resilient in challenging times.'

MDNW team, 2014

This report details the investment and delivery of the Museum Development North West (MDNW) programme in 2019-2020. It shows the impact of our work in the museums sector across the five counties of the North West. Museum Development is funded by Arts Council England (ACE) over four years; 2019-20 is year two of a four-year funded cycle.

The significant roles of MDNW are to:

- Assess real priorities for the sector
- Identify barriers that prevent raising performance of the sector
- Build capacity and resources for those museums that can attain excellence in meeting the particular and diverse needs of the communities they serve
- Provide regional leadership and act as 'first responders'

This is achieved through:

- Identifying where to direct support through knowledge of the sector
- Building trust and personal relationships through face-to-face meetings, such as site visits, with key personnel
- Targeting funding, resources and governance development in ways that set 'staging posts' for museums to improve their offer

Our focus areas have been:

- Supporting museums to use their collections
- Developing partnerships and networks
- Organisational resilience and environmental sustainability
- Workforce development

The team



In 2019-20 the Museum Development team comprised three full time staff, one part time and a freelance post, managed by the Manchester Partnership and Cumbria Museum Consortium:

Kaye Hardyman, Museum Development Officer (North)

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Goals

All of MDNW's work falls under one of ACE's five goals as set out in their ten-year strategic plan, 'Great Art and Culture for Everyone', www.artscouncil.org.uk/about-us/our-mission-and-strategy.¹

Goal 1: Excellence is thriving and celebrated in the arts, museums and libraries

Goal 2: Everyone has the opportunity to experience and to be inspired by the arts, museums and libraries

Goal 3: The arts, museums and libraries are resilient and environmentally sustainable

Goal 4: The leadership and workforce in the arts, museums and libraries are diverse and appropriately skilled

Goal 5: Every child and young person has the opportunity to experience the richness of the arts, museums and libraries



¹ From 2020 onwards this has been replaced by a new strategy for 2020-30, Let's Create <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/letscreate>

Museum Development overview

In the funding period 2018-22 MDNW's remit is to support the Accredited museums, and those officially working towards Accreditation, which are not national museums, National Portfolio Organisations, National Trust or English Heritage properties. In April 2019 110 fully Accredited or working towards museums came within our remit.

In 2019-20 the MDNW team delivered a series of projects and programmes to react to the needs of museums within our remit. Below is a summary of the activities we carried out against ACE's five goals.

Goal 1: Excellence is thriving and celebrated in the arts, museums and libraries

- Provided site-specific advice and visits
- Shared information and updates through forums and networks
- Developed relationships with key partners to support the regional sector
- Provided support for collections management, including working with Collections Trust on the Banish the Backlog programme
- Continued to provide advice and support around collections development and use, specifically through industrial heritage, numismatics and natural history networks
- Offered follow up bespoke support to museums that participated in 2018-19's Collections care & management programme
- Used our Collections health check to measure the progress of museums on our collections programmes
- Rolled out the second phase of our contemporary collecting project and published an accompanying toolkit

Goal 2: Everyone has the opportunity to experience and to be inspired by the arts, museums and libraries

- Supported museums contributing to Dippy's Natural History Adventures
- Supported Cumbria Museum Directors' Group on an ACE National Lottery Project Grant for a programme inspired by Ruskin
- Worked with the Museum Development Network (MDN) and The Audience Agency to develop and start the delivery of Audience Champions national pilot programme
- Ran an Age Friendly Museums Showcase event and published an Age Friendly Museums Toolkit
- Ran In Your Customers' Shoes programme to improve the visitor experience

Goal 3: The arts, museums and libraries are resilient and environmentally sustainable

- Awarded 11 project grants through our Sustainable Improvement Fund
- Changed our annual funding fair to concentrate on new funding streams from major funders
- Carried out our fourth regional benchmarking survey
- Continued our roll out of Carbon Literacy training
- Launched our two-year Organisational health & wellbeing programme
- Supported museums to adapt to the revised Accreditation standard

Goal 4: The leadership and workforce in the arts, museums and libraries are diverse and appropriately skilled

- Delivered workforce development programmes responding to the needs of the sector
- Provided funding to support attendance at national conferences
- Worked with external partners to develop and complement workforce programmes
- Delivered the fourth Emerging Leaders programme
- Established the first network of New to the sector programme participants

Goal 5: Every child and young person has the opportunity to experience the richness of the arts, museums and libraries

- Continued to work with Curious Minds as partners in many of our Goal 5 programmes
- A partner in the 'Hope Streets' Kick the Dust-funded HLF project which received funding in 2018
- Delivered our second Family Friendly programme
- Hosted a student from Manchester Metropolitan University as part of our paid work placement programme delivered in partnership with Curious Minds

Financial report

1st April 2019 – 31st March 2020

MDNW income

Core grant (ACE)	£320,150
Various small grants, earned income and underspend	£26,007
Total	£346,157

MDNW expenditure

Goal 1	£195,818
Goal 2	£23,693
Goal 3	£42,549
Goal 4	£22,558
Goal 5	£5,969
Sustainable Improvement Fund	£37,708
Total	£328,295

Underspend carried over to 2020-21 **£17,862**

MDNW contact and support

The MDNW team has provided support and advice to museums across the North West reflecting individual and area needs. Our aim has been to help museums to become resilient in challenging times through promoting excellence, innovation, partnerships and organisational sustainability.

The team's time is split between face-to-face contact, continuing support through email and phone, attending meetings with other partners, as well as developing and delivering programmes of work to support organisations and the workforce.

In 2019-20 the MDNW team²

- supported individuals from one of our priority museums **293** times, and supported individuals from a non-priority museum 128 times
- supported priority museums **325** times, and non-priority museums 124 times
- directly delivered or brokered **38** training sessions attended by **542** delegates
- offered **46** grants, ranging from Sustainable Improvement Funds to bursaries enabling staff and volunteers to attend conferences

'We have received support and advice from MDNW in documentation, natural history and digital skills over the period covered. We have already expanded our digital programme, placed more emphasis on natural history collections and begun to tackle our documentation backlog. MDNW are a powerful force for museum development and advocacy in the North West region and what they achieve with such a small team is nothing less than miraculous'

Museum response to benchmarking survey 2019

² Figures provided by MDNW for Evaluation of Museum Development Programme Summary Report, DC Research, February 2020

Communications

The MDNW blog is our primary way of communicating with the North West museum sector. All our information and news is published on the blog; anyone signed up to the blog automatically receives an email with the latest posts, and updates are shared via Twitter.

The blog is used to share information on training opportunities from the team as well as from other organisations, job opportunities, publications, MDNW's Sustainable Improvement Fund, information and contact details of the team, sources of funding, regional and national news and case studies. Further resources are continually being added. You can find us at:

<http://museumdevelopmentnorthwest.wordpress.com>

In 2019-20 MDNW our blog had an average of 5,032 views per month and we have 2,628 followers on Twitter. The blog is updated regularly and we have published over 3,000 posts.



Museum Development North West

A programme delivered by The Manchester Partnership and the Cumbria Museums Consortium

[ABOUT US](#) [MDNW 2019-22 PROGRAMME](#) [TRAINING](#) [FUNDING SOURCES](#) [JOBS & TRAINEESHIPS](#) [PUBLICATIONS](#) [ACCREDITATION](#) [SUSTAINABLE IMPROVEMENT FUND 2020-21](#)

JANUARY 15, 2020

Sustainable Improvement Fund 2020-21

We are pleased to announce that the next round of our Sustainable Improvement Fund is now open. The Fund (SIF) is a major part of the Museum Development North West Programme (MDNW). This Programme embraces Arts Council England's five

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You are following this blog, along with 3,592 other amazing people ([manage](#)).

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The MDNW Twitter account is also popular with over 2,600 followers. Through this MDNW can share information quickly. You can follow us at **@MuseumDevNW**.

National Museum Development programme

MDNW is one of nine regional Museum Development providers in England. From 2018 these providers have been reporting to ACE on nationally agreed objectives to ensure consistent reporting across the Museum Development programme and to capture and measure the impact of the programme across the country. Reporting data includes pre- and post-workshop information, programme evaluation, project information and our benchmarking survey.

The Museum Development Network (MDN) has developed three workshop evaluation surveys that have been adopted by all Museum Development providers. One captures the immediate impact of the workshop attended, the second captures the long-term impact on attendees of the workshops and programmes we deliver, and the third captures the long-term impact of our programmes on organisations as a whole. This nationally consistent approach allows us to measure our impact whilst supporting us to achieve our nationally agreed objectives around workforce development.

This year's benchmarking survey was sent to all Accredited museums in the region and had a return rate of **45%**; the report based on the findings is available on our blog. ACE have carried out a review of the survey; changes will be made from 2020 onwards.

The Museum Development Officer (North) sits on the MDN Committee. We also sit on a number of subgroups within the MDN looking at how the Museum Development programme nationally can work better together.

We have supported our Museum Development colleagues by serving on the judging panels of the Hertfordshire Association of Museums Awards, and have run workshops commissioned by other Museum Development regions.

ACE has commissioned DC Research to carry out an evaluation of the Museum Development programme across England until 2022. This aims to understand the impact of ACE's investment in the programme. As part of the 2019-20 phase, a survey of museums has been carried out as well as interviews with a number of museums. MDNW were also required to complete data forms to capture the reach and quantitative information about our programmes. Some of these statistics are reported on page 10.

Sustainable Improvement Fund

The Sustainable Improvement Fund (SIF) is a major part of the MDNW programme, and underpins ACE's five strategic goals set out in 'Great Art and Culture for Everyone' to drive development and deliver sustainability, resilience and innovation in museums in the North West.

In 2018-19 we altered the criteria to ensure there was no duplication with ACE's new National Lottery Project Grants and kept the same criteria for 2019-20. SIF is a fund to which museums can bid for grants for materials or support to make small but significant changes with simple projects based around collections, audience development or environmental sustainability to complement the programmes of work we delivered in 2017-19. The 11 projects funded were:

<p>British Deaf History Society, Warrington, develop an audience development plan and test audience engagement activities</p> <p>Cheshire West & Chester Council (Grosvenor Museum, Weaver Hall Museum & Workhouse, Stretton Watermill, Lion Salt Works), develop an audience development plan across the service, enable staff to understand current and potential audiences better</p> <p>Englesea Brook Chapel & Museum of Primitive Methodism, near Crewe, purchase of mannequin</p> <p>Judges' Lodgings, Lancaster, improvements to Welcome Gallery</p> <p>Lancaster City Council (Lancaster City Museum, Lancaster Maritime Museum, Cottage Museum), develop an audience development plan and support staff training in gathering audience data</p>	<p>Mersey Fire & Rescue Service Heritage and Education Centre, Bootle, purchase of PA equipment to improve accessibility of exhibitions</p> <p>Nantwich Museum, purchase of roller racking for collections store</p> <p>National Waterways Museum, Ellesmere Port, work with artist to develop events and activities exploring links between the museum's collections and plastic pollution in UK's waterways</p> <p>Prescot Museum, Knowsley, purchase of humidifier to improve environmental conditions and secure loans</p> <p>Quaker Tapestry, Kendal, pilot workshops to inform future programming</p> <p>Warrington Museum of Freemasonry, environmental improvements to display cases</p>
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Sustainable Improvement Fund: case studies

Cheshire West & Chester Council, Audiences Matter (£4,875)

20 staff across West Cheshire museums worked with audience development consultant Marge Ainsley to make better use of data to start to embed audience development into the culture of the service. Staff workshops led to the development of a common vision, putting audiences at the heart of it. Early successes saw an increase in family activities during half-term as a result of focused effort to use Facebook and Marketing Cheshire channels for event promotion, and the trebling of numbers at a comedy night.



Mersey Fire & Rescue Service Heritage and Education Centre, Bootle Purchase of PA system (£3,250)



Through participation in MDNW's Age Friendly accessibility programme Mersey Fire identified sound levels as an area of concern in the museum. Funding was given for PA equipment to improve sound on guided tours. Voice recording equipment was also funded to capture first hand knowledge from retired firefighters. The PA system also provides a mechanism to play the recorded oral histories.

Warrington Museum of Freemasonry Textile display and lighting upgrade (£2,933)

Funding was awarded to improve display by replacing fluorescent lighting with LED spotlights in display cabinets and to reduce carbon footprint and costs. Following conservation advice a large plan chest was also upcycled to provide extra display space for mixed textile aprons and other masonic regalia.



Accreditation support

MDNW is contracted by ACE to deliver Accreditation technical advice to give support to Accredited museums and those officially working towards Accreditation. Technical advice provides guidance based on the content of the Accreditation guidance documents to:

- New applicants and returning participants preparing a return
- Provisionally Accredited museums
- Museums which may require a significant change review

From April 2019 the role of Accreditation Adviser was subcontracted out to Jennie Pitceathly as a freelance contract. In November 2018 ACE relaunched the Accreditation scheme and North West museums began submitting returns from May 2019. During the year we:

- Delivered direct support to **33** museums to help them complete their Accreditation returns
- Delivered direct support to **7** museums with provisional status to help them complete their Accreditation returns
- Delivered direct (remote) support to **5** museums working towards Accreditation
- Delivered direct (remote) support to **13** organisations considering submitting an eligibility questionnaire/first application to the scheme
- Ran **1** training day specifically for non-Accredited museums thinking of applying to the scheme
- Participated in **2** discussions with ACE around roll-out of the 2018 Accreditation standard
- Worked with Museum Development Yorkshire (MDY) and Museum Development North East (MDNE) to coordinate **2** workshops for mentors across the North
- Ran **1** training day for museums submitting an Accreditation return
- Offered individual support to museums in the first seven batches who received an invitation to submit a return

In addition many of the development programmes run by MDNW support museums to achieve or maintain Accreditation, directly or indirectly.

Supporting collections

Re:collections contemporary collecting programme

Last year three museums piloted our Re:collections contemporary collecting programme which resulted in our contemporary collecting toolkit³. These museums are now delivering their projects; in 2019-20 another six museums, of differing sizes and scales, began working with contemporary collecting curator Jen Kavanagh to use the toolkit as the basis to develop their own projects.

Museums received a site visit and advice from Jen and will receive seed funding in 2020 to start implementing their projects. For 2019-20 each participating museum was additionally supported by a mentor from either People's History Museum or National Justice Museum, Nottingham.



Collections care & management programme

As a follow-up to the 2018-19 Collections care & management programme, this year we commissioned Lancashire Conservation Studios to conduct site visits at museums that requested extra support. The visits were to give the museums site-specific advice on a particular area of collections care and management with a report outlining the advice and recommendations following the visits. Some of the visits have taken place with others scheduled for later in 2020-21.

Collections health check tool

From 2018 we asked all museums participating in our collections programmes to complete a collections health check tool at the start of the programme so we could establish a baseline of where they were. The tool is based upon Spectrum 5.0 primary procedures and Benchmarks in Collections Care self-assessment checklist. From 2019 onwards, as museums complete six month or year-long collections programmes, we have been able to measure their progress against the health check.

3

https://museumdevelopmentnorthwest.files.wordpress.com/2019/07/mdnw_contemporarycollectingtoolkit_july2019.pdf

Numismatics

The Museum Development Officer (South) continues to sit on the Money & Medals Network (MMN) steering group at the British Museum. The work the Grosvenor Museum in Chester has done with its numismatics collections through previous MDNW/MMN support features in a forthcoming publication by MMN, 'Approaches to numismatic displays in museums across England'. In the 2020-21 round of SIF funding, allocated at the beginning of April 2020, one of the museums which took part in numismatic collection reviews in 2016 has received further funding to bring in expertise to understand and interpret a newly-acquired Roman hoard.

Industrial heritage network

We have run an informal industrial heritage network with Historic England's Industrial Heritage Support Officer (IHSO) since 2014. In summer 2019 the existing industrial heritage network become one of the official regional Industrial Heritage Networks, regional umbrella organisations providing free peer-to-peer support to industrial heritage sites, coordinated by the IHSO at <https://industrialheritagesupport.com/industrial-heritage-networks-ihns/>.

Meeting Point3

In 2019-20 we continued to work alongside Arts&Heritage to support them to deliver their Meeting Point3 programme. Arts&Heritage are an ACE-funded Sector Support Organisation working to improve museums' skills through working with artists. From the North West, Port Sunlight Village Trust and Warrington Museum & Art Gallery were selected to work with artists to reinterpret their collections and spaces.

Working with Collections Trust

In 2016 Collections Trust began their outreach support offer for each region in England with funding support from ACE. In the North West we have divided up their offer between workshops open to all, and the Banish the Backlogs closed programme to work in-depth with a cohort of museums on tackling their documentation backlogs.

In 2019 we carried out evaluation with delegates from our previous Banish the Backlogs programmes, and delegates from 2018-19's Collections care & management programme, to determine what support was most useful to them for 2019. From this feedback four workshops were run with Collections Trust; two of them about legal aspects of disposal were opened up beyond the cohorts to all museums in the region, and used the expertise of Janet Ulph, Professor of Law at University of Leicester.

Collections Trust also ran stand-alone workshops on Spectrum 5.0 and documentation procedures manuals, and contributed to our workshop for museums preparing an Accreditation return. In total, 69 different museums attended one or more of the workshops run jointly this year between MDNW and Collections Trust.

In March 2020 MDNW and Collections Trust jointly held our 'Use It Don't Lose It – Banish the Backlogs' conference showcasing the achievements from some of the museums who worked to tackle their documentation backlogs to enable them to make more of their collections, highlighting how tackling backlogs is a crucial core element of a museum's function that underpins its ability to deliver on its purpose through the exhibitions, events, outreach and everything else the museum does. This conference was the first in a series of events comprising our new Enriching Collections programme; the rest of the programme will run later in 2020 and into 2021.

We will continue working with Collections Trust in 2020 to run an online offer of training.

Developing audiences

Audience development

In 2018-19 we surveyed North West museums (except national museums and National Portfolio Organisations) to gauge what audience data they collect, the systems they use, how effective they find them and their support needs in this area. The return rate of the survey was **61%** and we have been using the data from this to develop our support to meet some of the training needs highlighted in the survey.

In 2019-20 MDNW partnered with The Audience Agency and Museum Development teams across England to deliver the Audience Champions programme, starting in January 2020. Supported by ACE, this 12-month programme aims to help participating museums to develop a data-driven approach to audience development using Audience Finder. 12 museums across nine organisations from the North West are involved in the pilot. Due to coronavirus the timescales for this programme have changed and we will continue to work with these museums into 2021.

Industrial heritage audience engagement programme

In 2018 we took six museums that had attended many of the industrial heritage workshops we had run since 2014, and worked with them on a bespoke audience engagement programme. After attending a series of workshops, each museum was able to apply for seed funding and in 2019-20 tested their ideas or developed their projects which included developing new resources and handling boxes for school groups, commissioning support for developing an outline interpretation strategy, developing strategic audience development plans and training staff.

Cultural tourism

Ruskin 200

We funded the Cumbria Museum Directors' Group, led by Brantwood, to submit a successful ACE National Lottery Project Grant application for a countywide Continuing Professional Development programme for Accredited museums and other cultural and education partners in Cumbria. The programme focuses on sharing experiences on delivering programmes to promote health and wellbeing of visitors. The timescales of this have changed due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Dippy's Natural History Adventures

To follow on from earlier Natural Sciences Collections reviews and a Geology, Botany and Entomology workshop, we have supported eight museums through workshops and funding to develop engagement activities with natural science collections on the themes of biodiversity and sustainability.

These activities are part of the fringe events for the display of the Natural History Museum's (NHM) Dippy in Rochdale. The fringe activities are featured in the 'Natural History Adventures' marketing produced by NHM. Originally scheduled for spring 2020, there are hopes to reopen Dippy in Rochdale at a future date.

The museums involved were:

- Blackburn Museum & Art Gallery
- Gallery Oldham
- Victoria Gallery & Museum, Liverpool
- Tameside Museums
- Bolton Museum
- Warrington Museum & Art Gallery
- The Whitaker, Rossendale
- Touchstones Rochdale

Between them, they developed 27 new engagement opportunities including exhibitions, events and talks intended to be delivered during Dippy's visit.

Wirral Memories

We provided Wirral Museums Service with seed funding to develop their ideas and work up a successful application to ACE National Lottery Project Grants. In *Wirral Memories* they will work with National Museums Liverpool to develop locally relevant content for the award-winning *My House of Memories* app. As well as developing Wirral-specific content the project will train up to 40 people working in care settings through *House of Memories'* dementia awareness programme. This training will enable those workers to provide person-centred care to support those living with dementia and their carers. Care workers will experience how to use memory activities and resources including the *My House of Memories* app to support people living with dementia to share their life stories. Williamson Art Gallery & Museum will pilot monthly ageing well cafes. Volunteers, who have received the training, will support visitors to use the *My House of Memories* app.

Flooding

As part of the wider flood risk and defence review work carried out since 2016, we commissioned BRE Scotland to write a publication as a guide for all museums to assess their own risk of flooding; the publication is in draft form and is due to be published in 2020-21.

Wellbeing & the visitor experience

Age Friendly accessibility programme

The six museums that participated in our Age Friendly accessibility programme in 2018-19 received seed funding in 2019-20 to help them implement some changes to improve their services for older people. Two of the museums featured as case studies in our Age Friendly Museums North West: Showcase Event in September 2019 that was supported by the Age Friendly Museums Network with funding from The Baring Foundation.

The Age Friendly Museums Toolkit was launched at the event and published on our blog⁴. The publication comprises the Age-Friendly Standards self-assessment checklist from the Family Arts Campaign with some modification to make it more bespoke to the museum sector and aims to support museums to think about their offer for older people.

In Your Customers' Shoes programme

In 2019-20 we worked alongside Museum Development teams in Yorkshire and the North East to deliver our first collaborative programme that saw museums from across the North assessed by other museum professionals. The museums were assessed on everything from their websites and ease of access to their offer. We worked with 36 museums in total, 19 of which came from the North West.

⁴ <https://museumdevelopmentnorthwest.wordpress.com/2019/09/19/new-mdnw-age-friendly-museums-publication/>

Environmental sustainability

Carbon Literacy

MDNW has been working with the Carbon Literacy Trust since 2016 to deliver Carbon Literacy training in the region; in 2020 we retained our status as a Carbon Literate Training Organisation.

In addition to the Carbon Literacy workshops open to all North West museums, run either by us or our network of trainers across the region, this year we also:



- Were commissioned by West Midlands Museum Development to run a Carbon Literacy day for their museums
- Ran a Carbon Literacy day for Museum Development staff and ACE staff from across the country
- Talked about Carbon Literacy and the climate emergency at ACE's national museums' meeting in summer 2019
- Met with staff from National Museums Wales and advised on how to roll out Carbon Literacy in their organisation
- Wrote an article on Carbon Literacy for the ICOM Canada newsletter
- Made our training materials available to Birmingham Museums Trust to use for their own staff and volunteers

Another seven staff, from Link4Life, Port Sunlight Village Trust and MDNW were trained up this year to deliver Carbon Literacy, taking the total to 21 across the region. Since 2016, nearly 350 people have attended workshops run by our trainers or us.

In autumn 2019 Youth Focus North West invited us to attend a Youthforia event, the North West Youth Forum of young people who are part of democratic representation structures from all 23 North West local authorities and all Members of the UK Youth Parliament. We talked to their Pioneers of Sustainable Hope (POSH) Ambassadors about our role in the museum sector and the opportunities for them to work with museums to enhance their roles. The POSH members are tasked to develop a sense of citizenship and responsibility for the natural world, create programmes of sustainable living education and create local campaigns and charters that impact on local policy and practice.

Ignition Project

We brokered introductions between the Ignition Project and museums in Greater Manchester. The project, based at the Royal Horticultural Society Bridgewater but comprising 12 partners from Greater Manchester's local government, universities, non-governmental organisations and business, aims to address the climate change emergency by investigating how it can fund the delivery of more nature based projects that will help make us less vulnerable to climate change. In its first phase the project is consulting with the public on how it values Greater Manchester's parks, woodlands and other green spaces. Four of the public workshops were hosted at Manchester Museum, Portland Basin Museum, Gallery Oldham and Bury Art Gallery. The information from these workshops will be used to determine how to invest in improving and increasing green spaces, and establishing the business case for making these investments. For more information on the project see #IgnitionGM or #GMGreenCity on Twitter.

MDNW's carbon footprint

In 2019-20 our own carbon footprint of car travel was **1.4 tonnes CO2e**, a decrease from 1.8 tonnes CO2e in 2018-19. **72%** of our travel was conducted on public transport.

Partnerships

We could not deliver our programmes without our partners and contributors. Many are outlined throughout the report, but others are included below.

National Portfolio Organisations

We rely on the expertise of staff in other National Portfolio Organisations (NPO) to provide input and advice into many of our workshops. In addition to the other Sector Support Organisations, such as Collections Trust, who work with us, staff from the NPOs that manage us (the Manchester Partnership, Cumbria Museum Consortium) contributed £12,000 worth of expertise to the programme in 2019-20.

Demystifying funding programme

We took a break from our funding fair and delivered a programme focusing on specific grant streams. The three elements of the programme were a seminar, surgeries with funders and project development support. The seminar saw ACE, Art Fund, Association of Independent Museums (AIM) and the National Lottery Heritage Fund give information on the application process. The surgeries allowed attendees to have a more in-depth conversation with funders; project development support was provided by the North West Development Network.

Organisational health & wellbeing programme

Working with ABL Health, the programme is assessing the participating museums' policies and procedures, HR practices and health and wellbeing initiatives. At the end of the programme it is hoped the participating museums will have initiated new ways of working to support better staff retention, reduce sickness and increase wellbeing amongst the workforce. The programme was originally due to be completed in autumn 2020 but due to coronavirus will finish in summer 2021.

Finance special interest group: North

This is a new network established in partnership with AIM, MDY, MDNE and the Charity Finance Group. Focusing on financial strategies, the purpose of the group is to give advice and guidance to independent museums that have dedicated finance personnel.

Workforce development

Open training

Workshops are programmed on an annual basis but we ensure we are also able to develop responsive sessions based on feedback. We try to spread the sessions across the region to give everyone the opportunity to attend some of our workshops. This year we combined our basics and responsive programmes to deliver a session on social media essentials and our ever-popular bid-writing workshop.

Feedback on our training programmes this year has included:

'Jennie was fantastic - really knowledgeable, yet patient, and guided the group through the material expertly' – attendee at Introduction to Accreditation workshop, March 2020

In 2019-20 we ran **38** workshops for regional museums across all our programmes, attended by **542** delegates representing 74 museums and services.

Feedback from the courses show:

- 91% of delegates that completed the survey said that the workshops completely, or mostly met, their learning expectations
- 95% of delegates that completed the survey rated the speakers as 'Excellent' (62%) or 'Good' (33%)
- 91% of delegates that completed the survey felt that the workshop they attended was well organised
- 86% of delegates said that they will do things differently as a result of the workshop they attended

We use the expertise of a range of consultants and companies to deliver our open training programme; the high quality content and delivery from these contributes to the continued success of these workshops.

Conference funding

In 2019-20 MDNW allocated nearly £3,000 to support 13 people to attend national conferences such as those run by the Museums Association, AIM and Collections Trust.

Leadership & development programmes

Emerging Leaders

During the year we ran our fourth Emerging Leaders programme, with 10 participants from across the region developing their leadership skills over a six-month period. The programme comprised six workshops that focused on leadership styles, coaching, influencing and personal resilience.

Succession planning

In 2019-20 we worked with three museums on succession planning as a continuation of the programme delivered in 2018-19, and supported them by ensuring they were prepared to continue their work in light of losing a number of long-standing members of their workforce. The support consisted of workshops and meetings in which the future of the museums were discussed, forward plans were created and job descriptions developed.

Supporting networks

North West Volunteer Managers' Network

Chaired by Esther Lisk-Carew from the Pankhurst Trust, the North West Volunteer Managers' Network continues to be self-managing with financial support from MDNW.

Visitor Teams Management & Development Network

We continued to work alongside The Whitworth and Manchester Museum to coordinate the regional Visitor Teams Management & Development Network. The aim of the network is to bring together those working in Visitor Teams in museums to discuss best practice, share ideas and develop partnerships.

Northern Volunteer Pass

Working in partnership with MDNE and MDY, the Northern Volunteer Pass is the biggest scheme of its kind in the country. It is a mutually beneficial partnership between participating museums and entitles volunteers to free entry (and/or additional benefits where advertised) at participating museums across the North. The total number of participating museums is currently 164 with 50 of those in the North West.

New to the sector

As with all of our long-term workforce development programmes we continued to support the 2018-19 cohort of the New to the sector programme by offering them financial support to continue their learning in a self-led manner.

Children & young people

Curious Minds

We have continued to work with Curious Minds as the Bridge organisation for the North West to deliver the majority of our work around children and young people.

'Hope Streets' Kick the Dust programme

MDNW is a partner, alongside Youth Focus North West, in the Hope Streets programme, led by Curious Minds and funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund as part of the Kick the Dust programme. Participating museums are The Atkinson, Cheshire West & Chester Council museums, Lancashire County Museums Service, Bolton Museum and Tullie House Museum & Art Gallery.

Hope Streets is a five-year project to transform the way museums work with young people. By working in partnership, the project will test, refine and embed new models of youth engagement and leadership; to locate the heritage sector at the heart of young people's services and young people at the heart of heritage. The face-to-face elements of the programme have been put on hold due to coronavirus, but digital elements are still being delivered in summer 2020.

University placement programme

We continued our University placement programme in collaboration with Curious Minds and Manchester Metropolitan University with a placement of our own. Third year photography student, Victoria Smith, began a six-month paid placement with us in early spring photographing events, museums and collections. She will continue her placement from September 2020.

LUMEN marketplace event

In February 2020, the University of Leicester held its work placement marketplace in which students on the MA Museums Studies course are able to meet museums offering work placement opportunities. We understand it can be difficult for museums to take the time to attend such events, and after the success of last year in which all the placement opportunities we went with were taken up, we attended for the second time with opportunities from museums that had participated in our programmes.

SMILE network

In 2019-20 we continued to financially support the SMILE network along with NWFed and GEM. Led by Bolton Museum, SMILE is a series of events which occur at least once a year in museums or other cultural learning venues to provide the opportunity to share ideas and expertise about science learning with museum educators, managers and curators.

Family Friendly programme

The Family Friendly programme was repeated in 2019-20, supporting another seven museums. The museums undertook a self-assessment of their offer using a toolkit developed as part of the programme. They also recruited families to undertake assessments of the museums to highlight areas for improvement and could apply for funding to implement the recommendations from the reports. Contributors to the programme included People's History Museum, Mansfield Museum, Kids in Museums and Family Arts Campaign. The toolkits were developed to complement the Kids in Museums Manifesto and Family Arts Standards and will be made available on our website in 2020.

Images:

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Front cover – Bolton Museum, Natural History Adventures workshop, courtesy of Victoria Smith 2020
p3 from top – Gallery Oldham; Victoria Gallery & Museum, University of Liverpool; Port Sunlight Village Trust; Tameside Museums Service

p5 from top – Shirley Collier, Emerging Leaders programme; MDNW funding fair, People's History Museum; Michael Whitworth, Carbon Literacy training, Curious Minds; Heather Lomas, Collections care & management programme

p6 Blackburn Museum & Art Gallery, Natural History Adventures workshop, courtesy of Victoria Smith 2020

p14 SIF projects from top, Lion Salt Works, courtesy of Catherine Mailhac 2018; recording oral histories, Mersey Fire & Rescue Service Heritage and Education Centre, Bootle; before and after lighting, courtesy of Warrington Museum of Freemasonry