# BRITISH MUSEUM

# MUSEUM FUTURES 2019 – 2021



PROGRAMME EVALUATION REPORT

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Cover photographs (clockwise from top left): Year 1 trainees at the British Museum; Y3 trainees in Liverpool; Y2 trainee Tullie House; Y3 trainee British Museum; Y2 trainees at Hastings Museum and Art Gallery.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Museum Futures programme has made significant achievements in terms of all its key objectives: recruitment practice, skills development and dissemination of learning.  Despite the exigencies of the pandemic, a range of high quality on the job learning was delivered primarily by supervisors in museums across the four nations, and a significant number of qualified trainees are now employed in the sector. Learning has been identified which could further strengthen future programmes in terms of recruitment practice, selection of museum partners and supervisors, placement design and the qualification, as well as some broader points about sector development.

## INCREASING THE DIVERSITY OF THE HERITAGE WORKFORCE

Overall, the Museum Futures programme achieved almost all of its targets for increasing the diversity of the heritage workforce however, across all years of the programme, supervisors have reported mixed success in recruiting trainees from target groups specific to their museums.

Beyond the programme's specific diversity targets, its approach to inclusive recruitment has also demonstrated the potential for these practices to increase workforce diversity across a wider range of measures.  Early indications are also that the Museum Futures programme is playing a part in increasing workforce diversity in the sector over the longer term, with at least 50% of trainees remaining in the sector after their placement.

Museum Futures recruitment experiences have strengthened the relationship between some partner museums and their local communities, although not all partners have experienced these benefits.  The Museum Futures recruitment approach has had wider impacts for many partner museums in changing some of their usual recruitment practices to encourage greater workforce diversity.

## PROVIDING TRAINING AND ENABLING SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Most of the programme's targets for delivering training to participants have been met.  Where targets have not been met, this has primarily been as a result of changes to the programme and to organisational capacity during the pandemic. Feedback on training events and on on-the-job training for trainees indicates that these have generally been delivered to a high quality standard. Broadly speaking, trainees have found mentoring, peer networks and the support of the Programme Manager to be positive parts of the programme which have contributed to the development of their knowledge, skills and experience in a range of ways.



*Year 3 trainee completing a condition report*

Training for supervisors, assessors and mentors were secondary to the programme's main purpose but feedback from the Diversity and Inclusion training offered by Creative Access indicates that attendees (mainly Y2 and Y3 supervisors) found this to be highly useful in helping them to create accessible placements that were suited to their trainees' needs.

Although almost all trainees have gained their Cultural Heritage Diploma, though their experiences of working towards the qualification have been mixed.  There has been significant development of trainees' digital, museum and employment skills through the design of the traineeship, quality of training, quality of networks and relationships trainees developed.  The flexibility and commitment of supervisory staff and Programme Manager have contributed very positively to successful outcomes.

Levels of digital awareness have grown within partner museums' staff, though as no development activity was planned for them, there has been little growth in their digital skills.  The majority of supervisors' management skills have also developed as have those of their colleagues.

## BUILDING SECTOR CAPACITY AND DISSEMINATING LEARNING

Partner museums were representative of broad museum types and the programme's flexibility allowed all to participate equally.
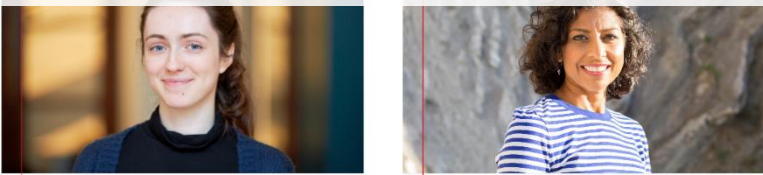
Overall there has been considerable change in their capacity to deliver training, though it has come in unexpected ways, sometimes unintentionally and often imperceptibly.

The range of training resources available has increased and



*Y2 trainee is interviewed by Museums Journal about her traineeship*

PEOPLE

Working life | Becca Clayton, Museum Futures trainee

'There has been a mad rush to produce as much content as possible'

PEOPLE — LEARNING AND ENGAGEMENT

'We need to understand the impact of the digital shift on under-served communities'

these are being reused. Developing on the job learning for trainees has had a positive influence on the development of other internal learning opportunities.  The pool of qualified assessors to support the Cultural Heritage qualification has also increased significantly.

There is evidence of internal, informal sharing of digital learning and externally of talking about digital projects and new routes into museums.  The British Museum's Programme Manager has coordinated activity and has been a focal point both for dissemination and enquiries.  Other dissemination has been more ad hoc.  All sharing of learning has been adversely affected by the pandemic.  There may be a gap in the conference market regarding the wider application of digital awareness and literacy.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## ABOUT THE PROGRAMME

The Museum Futures programme was a 3-year Skills for the Future programme run by the British Museum and supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF).  The programme aimed to give a diverse group of young people the chance to receive paid vocational training for a year at museums across the country, culminating in each trainee completing a Level 3 Cultural Heritage qualification.  The focus of the vocational training for the programme was digital heritage.  Specifically, the programme aimed to recruit trainees with natural digital talents who:

- Were between 18 and 24 years old;

- Had not started or completed an undergraduate degree;

- Did not have a post-graduate qualification or more than 6-months prior work experience in the sector (paid or voluntary).

The programme also supported museums to recruit trainees from particular demographic groups which may be under-represented in their workforces.

During the course of the 3-year programme, it was intended that 27 traineeships would be completed, with 8 in Year 1; 9 in Year 2 and 10 in Year 3, and the aims of the programme were to:

- Increase the diversity of the heritage workforce;

- Increase the range and diversity of work-based training to develop skills, in particular in digital data-management, preservation, access and engagement;

- Meet identified skills shortages in the sector;

- Increase the capacity of the sector to deliver training and share good practice.

In actual fact, 25 traineeships were completed, with the number of traineeships for Y3 being reduced from 10 to 8 as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.  This shift enabled the British Museum and partner museums to offer placement extensions to the Y2 trainees whose early placement experience had been significantly disrupted by the pandemic.[1]

## TRAINEES AND PARTNER MUSEUMS

In line with targets agreed at the outset, across the three years museum partners were successfully recruited from each of the English regions, as well as Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.  The target to recruit partners from the Greater London Boroughs was not achieved.  In Y3 the reduced number of traineeships taking place that year impacted on ability to achieve this remaining target.



*Y3 trainees on a visit to Culture Perth and Kinross*

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[1] In the end, six trainees extended their placement and three did not due to personal circumstances and organisational uncertainty (one host museum starting redundancy consultations and another putting the trainee's main projects on hold).

Partner museums reflected the range, though not the proportion, of different constitutional types across the devolved nations (see Appendix 1, Figs 1-3).

## EVALUATION AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

Evaluation was planned at the start of the project with the aim of both demonstrating outcomes and also allowing in-programme improvement. For this reason, in Y1 and Y2 in-depth Recruitment Reports were prepared after each recruitment round, and an interim cohort evaluation was prepared after Y1 to inform the recruitment and programme design for subsequent years. The purpose of this Programme Evaluation Report is to explore how effectively the programme has met its aims across all three years of the programme, to establish both the strengths of the programme's design and management, and to identify unexpected outcomes and areas for consideration in the future design of such programmes.

The evaluation tools used to collect evidence were:

- Two trainee skills surveys conducted annually at the start and end of each year to track skills development;

- Three trainee discussion groups, held annually in person and by Zoom;

- Two e-surveys and three semi-structured in-depth telephone and Zoom interviews conducted annually with supervisors at partner museums;

- Two e-surveys for mentors;

- Analysis of programme information and records kept by the Programme Manager.

## THE PANDEMIC AND ITS IMPACT

The outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic in March 2020 and the national response impacted considerably on the delivery of years 2 and 3 of the programme. All museums closed to the public, many staff (but not trainees) were furloughed, which impacted on the ability of supervisors to meet with trainees, to programme diverse work for them and in many cases even to allow them into their museum buildings. Delivery of the traineeship, and all evaluation



*Y3 trainees attending a museum tour after museums reopened in May 2021*

activities, pivoted quickly to remote/online. In-person activity was resumed as quickly as the partner museum, supervisory staff and individual trainees felt able, but each person's experience was different.

Whilst it has not always been possible to separate out the pandemic as a factor affecting impact and outcomes, both the evaluation team and the delivery teams have sought to go beyond Covid as a limiting factor and establish the authentic underpinning drivers of success and failure, so that there is genuine transferable learning from the programme despite the moment in history during which it was delivered.

# AIM 1: INCREASING THE DIVERSITY OF THE HERITAGE WORKFORCE

## HAS MUSEUM FUTURES MET ITS TARGETS FOR INCREASING WORKFORCE DIVERSITY?

### A. RECRUITMENT APPROACH

The Museum Futures programme was designed to provide training opportunities for a wide range of young people to work in the museum sector, and to open up careers in museums to young people that are currently underrepresented in the museum workforce. The programme sought to attract young people who may not have considered a career in museums previously, in particular those from groups who may have been discouraged from working in the sector by traditional recruitment criteria and practice. Specifically, the programme's approach to recruitment sought to increase the accessibility of the traineeships in the following ways:

- The programme set targets for recruiting and selecting trainees from particular groups, namely young people between the ages of 18 and 24; people without an undergraduate degree and without more than 6 months prior work experience in the sector;

- Roles were advertised through community partner organisations local to each museum, as well as through the usual channels (e.g. museum website; social media);

- Museums ran taster events (onsite for Y1 and 2, then virtual for Y3) to give prospective applicants a greater understanding of the organisation and the role. See Appendix 3 for attendance data and selected feedback from taster events;

- Museums held group interviews as well as individual interviews to assess key skills and potential.

Whilst the programme Training Plan refers to a 'positive action' approach to recruitment, for the purposes of this report, we use the terminology 'inclusive recruitment' as an alternative. This is for three reasons:

1. Whilst the programme contained aspects of positive action (e.g. in setting recruitment targets for under-represented groups), these were applied flexibly in practice (e.g. accepting some candidates outside the target groups, dependent on circumstance).

2. Of the target groups, only one of these (age) is a Protected Characteristic under the Equality Act 2010, whereas educational level is not. In its strictest sense, 'positive action' only applies to people with protected characteristics.

3. Most importantly, the programme went beyond positive action targets to attract people from under-represented groups, using the range of initiatives outlined above.

### B. PROGRAMME RECRUITMENT TARGETS

Overall, the Museum Futures programme has achieved its targets for increasing the diversity of the heritage workforce.

The table below outlines the programme's achievements against its diversity targets for each cohort and across the 3 years.

| Target/criteria | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Programme achievement |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 50% of **applications** should be from target groups<br><br>Fully met for Y1 and Y2.  Partially met for Y3. | | | | |
| a.   Age 18 – 24 and qualification of L5 or below | 53% | 50% | 24% | **36%** |
| 65% of **individuals shortlisted** should be from target groups<br><br>Fully met for Y1 and Y2.  Partially met for Y3. | | | | |
| a.   Age 18 – 24 and qualification of L5 or below | 82% | 66% | 31% | **59%** |
| 60% of **trainees recruited** should be from target groups<br><br>Fully met for whole programme. | | | | |
| a.   90% of trainees should be between 18-24 | 100% | 89% | 100% | **96%** |
| b.   at least 60% of trainees will not have started or completed an undergraduate degree (L5 or below) | 88% | 89% | 50% | **76%** |
| c.   100% of trainees will be without post-graduate qualifications and more than 6 months' prior work experience in the sector (FT or equivalent, paid or unpaid) | 100% | 100% | 100% | **100%** |

It is notable that in Y1, all targets were fully met and in Y2, the only target that was marginally missed was the age target for trainees (in real terms this equates to only one trainee being outside the age bracket).

In Y3, all targets except one relating to educational level were met.  During this year, the programme received at least 400 applications – a higher level than previous years.  Of the 400 diversity monitoring forms received, 252 respondents (63%) reported an educational level of 6 (honours degree or equivalent) or above.  This probably reflects the wider Covid employment market in 2020/21, in which proportionally more people with higher qualifications were struggling to find employment at a level commensurate with their skills – and so were applying for roles at lower levels as a means of securing employment in an unstable market.

Overall, the Museum Futures programme has clearly demonstrated its intention to meet diversity targets and has generally succeeded, in spite of factors beyond the control of the British Museum and partner museums.

Having said that, it is worth noting that in the programme training plan, there is some ambiguity about the educational level targets.  Here, trainee recruitment targets for educational level are expressed in relation to 'undergraduate degrees' and 'postgraduate qualifications,' which captures the programme ambition to support people with lower educational qualifications to train in the sector.  However, it does not address the fact that across the UK, there are a range of equivalent qualifications at each of these levels (e.g. degree apprenticeships; L6 NVQs); nor does it outline the programme's intention towards these equivalent qualifications.  This raises the question of whether the intention of the programme was specifically to recruit people who had not gained a *university* education (and should therefore include people with an equivalent level of qualification gained outside a university setting (e.g. a vocational

qualification); or whether the intention was to recruit people with an overall lower level of educational qualification (regardless of the type of qualification).

Furthermore, the term 'undergraduate degree' can be misunderstood in relation to qualification levels, since a L5 qualification would include a foundation degree, whilst a L6 would include an honours degree. As a result, it was not fully clear which qualification level should be used to measure how well the programme achieved its recruitment targets. Overall, the programme as a whole and this evaluation have used L6 as an 'undergraduate degree,' since an honours degree is probably most widely understood to be an undergraduate qualification. However, it's interesting to reflect that if L5 had been used instead, only 36% of applicants across the programme would have been aged 18-24 *and* with a qualification of L5 or below (vs. 79% at L6 or below).

The Programme Manager sought to respond to these challenges by creating a Monitoring Form using qualification levels (and including Scottish and Northern Irish qualification levels, as well as English) to ensure equality of access to the programme across people with the same level of qualifications.

## c. LOCAL RECRUITMENT TARGETS

Across all years of the programme, supervisors have reported mixed success in recruiting trainees from target groups specific to their museums.

As well as the overall recruitment targets, each museum was invited to identify further diversity targets specific to their context. Across all years, most museums did identify specific local targets, although some chose to focus solely on the programme's diversity target demographics (see table below for details).

| Target area | Museum |
|---|---|
| Person local to the museum | Y1: The Garden Museum; MEAL; SWHT<br>Y2: BMT; The British Museum; The Horniman Museum; Hastings Museum & Art Gallery; Derby Museums<br>Y3: SWHT; Fitzwilliam Museum; Museum of Cardiff; The Atkinson |
| Ethnicity | Y1: NML<br>Y2: BMT; The Horniman Museum; Derby Museums; Bristol Culture<br>Y3: The British Museum; Culture Perth & Kinross; SWHT; Fitzwilliam Museum; Museum of Cardiff; MEAL |
| Socio-economic status | Y2: TWAM; Tullie House; Hastings Museum & Art Gallery; Bristol Culture<br>Y3: Fitzwilliam Museum; MEAL; The Atkinson |
| People with additional support needs | Y2: Hastings Museum & Art Gallery; Bristol Culture<br>Y3: Culture Perth & Kinross |
| People from a particular local community | Y1: Norfolk Museums<br>Y2: Derby Museums |

During the programme, museums did not set these as 'hard targets' (i.e. with each museum seeking to appoint an individual fulfilling all these criteria in addition to the programme criteria), but rather as a guide for targeting recruitment activity locally and an aspiration to recruit someone who fell into one or more of their particular target groups.

Most did not assess against these targets in the shortlisting or selection process, not least because they would not see individual monitoring data (these forms were sent to the British Museum and were anonymised). However, anecdotally, supervisors across all years have reported mixed levels of success in recruiting trainees from their particular target demographics.

### D. THE IMPACT OF INCLUSIVE RECRUITMENT ON WIDER MEASURES OF WORKFORCE DIVERSITY

Beyond the programme's specific diversity targets, its approach to inclusive recruitment has also demonstrated the potential for these practices to increase workforce diversity across a wider range of measures.

Figure 4 in Appendix 2 compares the percentage of Museum Futures applicants and trainees from different demographic groups against the percentage of the National Portfolio workforce and the percentage of people of working age in the UK in these groups.

In comparison with the National Portfolio workforce, it is clear that the Museum Futures programme has been successful in attracting and recruiting a higher proportion of people from a range of under-represented groups.  Indeed, in general, the proportions of applicants and trainees in these groups across the programme has been in line with or higher than the percentage of people of working age in each of the groups.  Whilst the numbers in the programme are relatively small, this demonstrates the potential for increasing the diversity of the sector's workforce through targeted employment initiatives.

### E. THE IMPACT OF THE PROGRAMME ON LONGER TERM WORKFORCE DIVERSITY IN THE SECTOR

Early indications are that the Museum Futures programme is playing a part in increasing workforce diversity in the sector over the longer term.

Whilst initial recruitment diversity targets are an important measure of the programme's success, the employment and career choices that trainees make following the completion of their traineeship are perhaps a better indicator of the programme's longer term potential impact on the diversity of the workforce in the sector.  As of November 2021, more than half of all trainees had chosen to continue their careers in the cultural sector, either in museums or wider cultural sector organisations, or through relevant higher education courses:

- **Out of 25 trainees, six were still employed with the museum where they did their traineeships**, in a range of casual, full- and part-time roles.  These were as varied as Retail Assistant, Visitor Experience Assistant, Documentation Assistant and Digitisation Technician;

- **Four were working with other museums,** either on a freelance or employed basis, in roles including Collections Care Assistant, Creative Practitioner, Creative Community Fellow, Digitisation Trainee and Duty Officer;

- **Four were undertaking further education qualifications with a cultural, creative or historical focus** (e.g. Film Theory and Practice; Archaeology; Cultural Heritage);



*Y3 trainee who founded the Perth's Women project, aimed at increasing recognition of the achievements of local women.*

- **Five were working in organisations in the wider creative, cultural and/or community sectors** (including a film company, library, garden and gallery visitor attraction; and youth and community action charities), and **two in the retail and leisure sectors;**

- **Some were undertaking additional voluntary roles in the sector**, for example as a trustee at their museum or on the Kids in Museums youth panel.

There have also been examples of the Museum Futures programme having a tangible positive impact on increasing workforce diversity in the longer term in the wider sector, through sharing and expanding good practice in the recruitment and management of traineeships and other programmes for under-represented groups.  These examples include:

1. NMS successfully applied for Kick the Dust traineeship funding.  Their positive Museum Futures experience along with their previous experience as a Teaching Museum was a catalyst for running future traineeships for under-represented groups.  They were also able to set up bursary payments and offer trainees a Cultural Heritage Diploma through the British Museum Centre.

2. YMT shared their Museum Futures experience with Museum Development Yorkshire who have been remodelling internship recruitment to better attract people from under-represented groups.

3. The British Museum's 2019 National Programmes conference focused on equality and diversity, with the Museum Futures Programme Manager leading a session on entry routes into the sector.

4. The British Museum Programme Manager has met with people from different organisations developing a range of programmes to share expertise to help shape these programmes, including:[2]

   a. Bridging the Gap (The National Archives);

   b. Curating for Change (in partnership with Accenture and NML, including offering trainees the option of earning a Cultural Heritage Diploma through the British Museum Centre);

   c. Portable Antiquities Scheme (changing recruitment practices for Headley Trust internships);

   d. Derby Museums (sharing recruitment resources for an NLHF trainee bid);

   e. National Portrait Gallery (for National Programme trainees);

   f. Imperial War Museum (Second World War & Holocaust Partnership Programme: Digital Internships).

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[2] Bridging the Digital Gap (The National Archives); Curating for Change (in partnership with Accenture and NML); Paid internships (Imperial War Museum); Next Gen Curators informal mentoring network (being trialled with Goldsmiths; Roehampton and the Horniman Museum); Kick the Dust (NMS)

# What impact has inclusive recruitment had on museums?

## A. Impacts on relationships between museums and local communities

> Museum Futures recruitment experiences have strengthened the relationship between some partner museums and their local communities, although not all partners have experienced these benefits.

All museums advertised the Museum Futures traineeships to community partner organisations locally. Most museums contacted some community partners with whom they already had existing relationships as well as some organisations with whom they had no previous contact. In general, the role of community partners was to advertise the traineeship to their own networks, using posters, social media and direct referrals.

In Y1, several supervisors noted that their museums did not have strong community partner links prior to the Museum Futures programme, so did not have many existing relationships to 'tap into' and found it difficult to generate a partnership in isolation (i.e. with the traineeship being the only focal point). Whilst most supervisors felt that advertising via community partners had been important in attracting applicants from the target demographic, some noted that this process would be likely to be more effective if the museum had a longer-term, more sustainable relationship with community organisations (e.g. through ongoing projects etc).


MEAL's Instagram advert for Y3 traineeships

By comparison in Y2 and Y3, a number of museums involved their Education, Learning or Community participation teams in advertising the traineeships with community partners. The involvement of these teams had a positive impact on sharing information about the traineeships, since having existing networks made for easier and better distribution of information. Furthermore, advertising with organisations where there was an ongoing partnership – and maintaining contact with traineeship applicants as a part of that commitment – resulted in some museums growing and deepening relationships both with partner organisations and with community members directly in different ways, outside the traineeship. Examples include:

- **Promoting and offering alternative voluntary opportunities to unsuccessful applicants:** In Y2, the Horniman Museum offered up to 20 volunteering opportunities to unsuccessful applicants, whilst Tullie House engaged 3 unsuccessful applicants in voluntary roles in their curatorial team and Hope Streets project. In Y3, NFM had a follow-up call with all unsuccessful interviewees, resulting in four people starting voluntary roles at the museum;

- **Encouraging unsuccessful applicants to apply for different paid roles:** In Y2, one applicant to Derby Museums was subsequently recruited to a casual Front of House role, whilst TWAM offered to commission one applicant to produce some graphic artwork;

- **Engaging in further partnerships for other projects:** In Y1, the Garden Museum advertised a further traineeship role with one of their Museum Futures community partners, whilst in Y3 NFM's engagement with Reform Radio (a new contact) led to NFM including them in a recent funding bid related to podcasting;

- **Engaging community partner representatives with the museum:** In Y1, NML recruited the head of the Kuumba Imani Community Centre as a museum trustee.  Whilst working with the centre on Museum Futures was not directly linked to the appointment, it did contribute to NML building the relationship with the centre over time.

Where museums have not been able to pursue further partnership opportunities or follow-up with unsuccessful applicants, this tended to be due to lack of capacity.

In terms of strengthening museum relationships with their communities, the taster events have also been broadly successful simply by being an opportunity for community members to explore the museum as a potential employer.  Anecdotally, most supervisors can cite examples of taster session attendees going on to apply for the traineeship, and attendees who responded to the taster event feedback questionnaires also overwhelmingly rated themselves as likely to apply for the traineeships, having attended the event (see Figure 6, Appendix 3).

## B.   IMPACTS ON MUSEUMS' WIDER RECRUITMENT PRACTICES

The Museum Futures recruitment approach has had wider impacts for many partner museums in changing some of their usual recruitment practices to encourage greater workforce diversity.

The programme's approach to inclusive recruitment was different to partner museums' usual practices.  Whilst some had used aspects of the approach before, for most it was a significant departure.

Some supervisors thought that their involvement in the programme was unlikely to change their museum's wider recruitment practices.  Where this was the case, the main factors tended to be a lack of capacity to run more complex recruitment activity; a larger organisation and/or more standardised recruitment processes which were managed through an HR department and which they were unable to influence.  However, several museums have changed aspects of their approach to recruitment as a result of their involvement with the programme.  These have included:

- Using community partner organisations for advertising other roles (e.g. Garden Museum, The Horniman Museum);

- Feeding experiences of Museum Futures recruitment into museum bodies for developing workforce diversity (e.g. NML, RPM Brighton, SWHT, The Fitzwilliam Museum);

- Reviewing job descriptions and person specifications to ensure criteria such as qualification levels are not listed as 'essential' when this is not necessary for the role (NMS, YMT, Tullie House, NFM);

- Using/planning to use alternative application formats, taster sessions, group interviews or alternative assessments for other roles (NMS, MEAL, Derby Museums, The Horniman Museum, TWAM, Bristol Culture, MEAL, The Fitzwilliam Museum);

- Exploring options for future apprenticeships and roles for young people (NML, British Museum, SWHT, BMT).

A number of supervisors commented that the Museum Futures project was one part of a growing organisation-wide awareness about increasing workforce diversity, so whilst it had not, by itself, caused changes in practice, it had contributed to the bigger picture.  Some supervisors also said that, whilst organisation-wide practices might not change, involvement in Museum Futures would affect how they themselves approached aspects of recruitment in future, for example in giving them the confidence to explore avenues they may not otherwise have (e.g. apprenticeships, other traineeships).

## WHAT HAS BEEN LEARNT FROM MUSEUM FUTURES RECRUITMENT TO INFORM FUTURE PROGRAMMES AIMED AT INCREASING WORKFORCE DIVERSITY IN THE SECTOR?

The Recruitment Reports for each of the three years of the Museum Futures programme included specific recommendations for improvements to recruitment and selection processes and practices, many of which were adopted by the British Museum for future years of the programme.  In terms of wider programme learning, the following key themes emerged from this evaluation:

### Programme design

1. **Set recruitment targets that are meaningful for small-scale programmes**

When dealing with fewer than 10 trainees each year, a target of 90% of trainees being aged 18-24 is almost meaningless.  In Y1 and Y2 of Museum Futures, if only one person had been outside the age bracket, this would have resulted in the programme missing its target (as the percentage achievement would be around 88% each time).  Therefore, a target set at 90% in these circumstances actually requires *all* trainees to meet the criteria, and does not create the flexibility in recruitment criteria that it was presumably put in place to achieve.

2. **Consider embedding inclusive recruitment criteria into recruitment processes**

For Museum Futures, whilst there were target groups for recruitment, there were no mechanisms to prevent people from outside the target groups submitting an application.  In Y3, this resulted in a particularly high proportion of applicants having an educational qualification of L6 or above (63%), for a programme targeting those with a qualification of L5 or below.  If application forms were designed to include eligibility checks and prevent applications from people outside the target groups, this would create a more level playing field for all applicants and result in all traineeships being awarded to people from target groups.  Likewise, if museums had more rigorously applied diversity criteria at each stage of the recruitment process (e.g. shortlisting), this could also have helped to redress the impact of the labour market trends that ran counter to the programme's recruitment objectives.

3. **Ensure non-core recruitment tools are designed to take into account organisational capacity**

The Museum Futures framework stipulated that museums would offer volunteering opportunities of up to one day per person for prospective applicants, to avoid those who had been unable to undertake longer term unpaid placements being disadvantaged during the recruitment process.  However, whilst many partners already offered volunteer opportunities outside the programme, few had the capacity to provide one-off days for prospective applicants in addition to their usual volunteer offer and at the same time as running a new and different style of recruitment campaign for the traineeships.  This type of issue could be avoided by focusing on core recruitment activity in future programme design.

### Museum recruitment

4. **Consider building in 2+ year traineeship commitments**

Some Museum Futures partner museums have been involved in Y1 and Y3 of this programme (e.g. MEAL, SWHT).  The Programme Manager is clear that this can bring real benefits in terms of

building partner museums' knowledge and expertise in recruiting and managing trainees from target groups, providing more opportunities for embedding recruitment and management practices that support a more diverse workforce.

Trainee recruitment

5. Ensure the definition of target recruitment groups is clear in relation to educational level

For future programmes – and indeed across the sector as a whole – it may be useful to stop using the shorthand of 'undergraduate' and 'postgraduate' degrees to refer to educational level, but to use the terminology of qualification levels more accurately and consistently. This would help to ensure that target groups are more clearly defined, as well as encouraging museums to think more broadly about the range of qualifications that candidates may bring to their work.

6. Build more time for the recruitment process to support deeper engagement with community partners and prospective applicants

Some supervisors from each year commented that – had there been more time – they would have liked to have engaged more meaningfully with community partners and/or prospective applicants. For some, this would have involved seeing applicants directly in community settings, for others it would have been working more closely with community partners to encourage referrals to the programme.

7. Collect consistent data about how effective different recruitment methods are for attracting target groups

It is difficult to assess how effective the Museum Futures taster events have been in attracting people from the target groups for the traineeship, since demographic data about attendees' age, educational qualifications and experience in the heritage sector were only collected in the Y2 taster event questionnaires. More consistent data collection across all recruitment practices could help museums make better evidence-based decisions about which practices are most effective for attracting target groups.

8. Help museums to manage expectations about application quality – and provide extra support to applicants for the application process

Some museums from each year commented that some applicants without university education seemed to struggle to answer questions in the application form to an acceptable level, making it difficult for museums to assess their potential for the role. Whilst it is beyond the scope of this evaluation to understand the factors involved here, it seems likely that some museums may have had expectations about application quality which were founded on a historical precedent of most applications for roles coming from people with a university education. Some individual applicants without a university education may also have had less experience and knowledge of the requirements for completing application forms and what employers in the sector may be looking for.

By offering training for museums (e.g. in what to expect from the application process and how to assess application quality in different ways) and additional support for applicants (e.g. in how to demonstrate the skills and experience needed for the role), programmes like Museum Futures could help to reduce the mismatch between organisational and individual expectations of the application process.

# AIM 2: INCREASE THE RANGE AND QUALITY OF WORK-BASED TRAINING TO DEVELOP SKILLS IN THE HERITAGE SECTOR

## HAS MUSEUM FUTURES MET ITS TARGETS FOR DELIVERING TRAINING?

The Museum Futures programme has a range of targets for delivering training to those involved during the three years of the programme. Most of these targets have been met. Where targets have not been met, this has primarily been as a result of changes to the programme and to organisational capacity during the pandemic.

The programme training targets are shown in the table below (adapted to reflect the reduction in Y3 traineeships as a result of the pandemic).

| Target/criteria | 2019 - 21 |
|---|---|
| 25 traineeships over 3 years (8 in Y1; 9 in Y2 and 8 in Y3) | Achieved |
| All trainees to complete the Level 3 Cultural Heritage NVQ | Almost achieved (23 out of 25) |
| 25 mentors trained over 3 years | Partially achieved (15 trained) |
| 9 assessors trained over 3 years | Partially achieved (6 trained) |
| 25 supervisors given qualification framework training | Achieved |
| At least 25 people offered Diversity Awareness training | Achieved |

The number of assessors and mentors trained has matched the ongoing needs of the programme in reality, even if the initial targets were only partially met. For example, only 7 mentors were trained in Y1 because one trainee already had a mentor externally to the programme. Furthermore, no mentors were trained in Y2 because mentoring relationships were not formally set-up for trainees. In the context of organisational and individual uncertainty in 2020, it was not possible to guarantee the support needed for mentor relationships.

This report does not address the extent to which delivering these targets has increased the range of work-based training in the sector, since it was outside the scope of the evaluation framework to undertake a survey of pre-existing levels of work-based training across the sector.

Rather, the following sections focus on the quality of training provision and key learning to inform future programme design.



*Y1 trainee recording audio for a podcast*

## TO WHAT EXTENT DID MUSEUM FUTURES DELIVER HIGH-QUALITY TRAINING?

### A. WHAT TRAINING WAS PROVIDED FOR TRAINEES?

Throughout the programme, trainees and their museums have developed and hosted peer training events for each cohort.  In Y1, these were onsite, but in Y2 and 3, they shifted to virtual, with some onsite opportunities returning in Y3, in line with changing Covid-19 regulations.

In addition to the programme's regular training sessions, most museums also encouraged trainees to access other external training events to enhance their learning during their placements.  Many supervisors noted that this was particularly important during Y2, when trainees were not able to work onsite.  The increasing accessibility of virtual training during this time led to trainees attending training on topics as diverse as Google Analytics, web coding and digital rights management.  Furthermore, the British Museum has also provided additional training for some trainees in relevant areas for their work.  For example, in Y1 the Senior Photographer, Dudley Hubbard visited MEAL and the Garden Museum to help trainees and partner museum staff set up new object photography studios.  The Programme Manager also coordinated opportunities for cohorts to learn from one another (e.g. by inviting previous trainees to speak to new cohorts).

Since trainees' exposure to external training was varied depending on individual and organisational circumstances, the following sections of this report focus on evaluating the quality of the core aspects of their traineeship – namely the regular peer-led training events and the on-the-job training (i.e. their placement) and mentoring provided for all trainees.

### B. TRAINING EVENTS FOR TRAINEES

Feedback on training events for trainees indicates that these have generally been delivered to a high quality standard.

Selected trainee feedback about training events is summarised in Appendix 4.  Across the programme, trainees found the following aspects of their training sessions most useful:

- Specific training content;

- Learning about the wider sector (whether that be in the form of a tour/visit, external speakers, finding out how other museums deal with particular issues or understanding more about other trainees' roles and projects);

- An opportunity to discuss topics and network with trainees and museum employees.

In all years, the majority of trainees (at least 85%) rated the training sessions as being at the right amount and at the right level.  Indeed, these ratings improved with each cohort, from 85% to 94% for being the right amount and from 86% to 97% for being at the right level.  This indicates that learning about the success factors for high quality training was effectively transmitted between the years, not least by the Programme Manager, who often supported partner museums and trainees with training design.

Trainees consistently rated training sessions highly in terms of relevance to them and being a good use of time (over 90% positive ratings for each cohort across the year, see Appendix 4).  This is somewhat higher than ratings the for whether the training would make a difference to their work during their placement. (responses ranged from 72 – 80% saying the training would make a significant difference or some difference for each cohort).  This indicates that trainees may not always have been able to apply their

learning in their placements.  There are likely to be a number of factors influencing this.  In particular, the focus of trainees' placement work would not necessarily have given them the opportunity to apply learning (i.e. not all traineeships involved all aspects of digital work covered by the training sessions).  It is notable that Y2 and Y3 trainees were less positive than Y1 about the opportunity to use their learning in their placements, which may reflect:
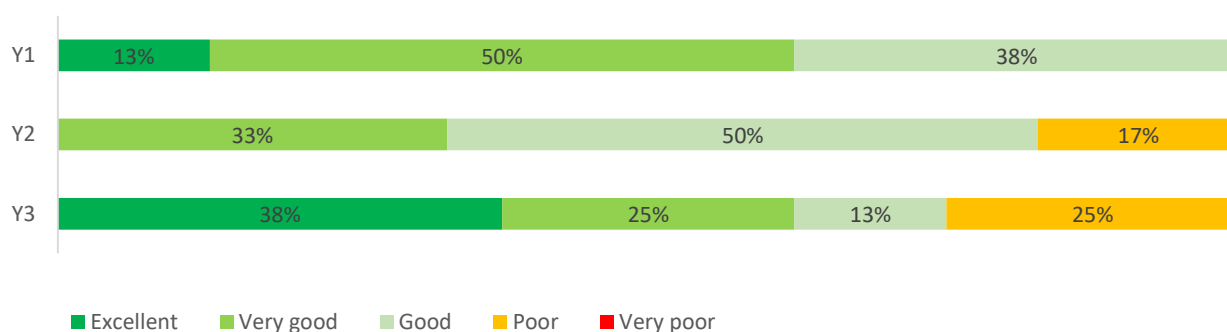
- The challenges of partially working remotely during the pandemic and lacking opportunity to apply skills at work;

- The fact that Y2 trainees were the first cohort to use virtual training tools for these sessions and were learning how to use these tools in the early stages of the pandemic.  Over 80% of Y2 trainees said that they had found it difficult to put their session together.

## c. ON THE JOB TRAINING FOR TRAINEES

Feedback on on-the-job training indicate that placements have generally been delivered to a high quality standard.

Trainees generally rated the design of their placement roles relatively highly (see chart below) and have felt supported by their supervisor.

HOW WOULD YOU RATE THE OVERALL DESIGN OF YOUR ROLE AT THE MUSEUM?

| | Excellent | Very good | Good | Poor |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Y1 | 13% | 50% | 38% | |
| Y2 | | 33% | 50% | 17% |
| Y3 | 38% | 25% | 13% | 25% |

■ Excellent  ■ Very good  ■ Good  ■ Poor  ■ Very poor

Where trainees rated role design poorly in Y2 and Y3, they perceived a lack of planning by their museum, resulting in them feeling like 'an afterthought', without meaningful activities that clearly contributed to the museum's work.  The trainees reporting this experience in Y3 also shared in common concerns about their physical presence in the museum and the negative impact this had on their engagement and sense of belonging.  Whilst one did not have a desk or work area, the other wasn't able to be in their museum until August and found this particularly difficult as someone who prefers to learn by doing.

As part of the evaluation, trainees were asked about what a good placement looked like in relation to role design and supervision.  A summary of the key themes from their responses is outlined in the table in Appendix 5.  It is clear that across the cohorts, trainees have particularly valued variety in work and projects, with those who had the opportunity to work with teams across their museum rating their experience highly.  Conversely, across the cohorts, some trainees would have liked more clarity and structure to their roles, particularly at the start of the placement but also more generally, whilst a number of trainees felt 'under-used' at some points in their traineeship as a result of having more odd jobs or repetitive tasks than they had hoped.  The mixed experience of Y2 trainees (with some being able to spend time in their museum and others not) also highlighted the importance of practical, hands-on experience for developing core museum skills during the traineeship.

Those trainees reporting higher levels of satisfaction with their role tended to be those who also reported that they had a positive relationship with their supervisor.  For some, this enabled regular feedback on progress, for others it helped them keep focused on how to evidence their qualification at work, and for others it enabled them to work dynamically with their supervisor to identify potential new areas of work and interest during the placement.  Several trainees noted how important their supervisor had been in enabling them to get involved in work across the museum, for example, by using internal networks to make introductions.


*Y1 trainee documenting photography collections*

Conversely, those who were less positive about their supervisor relationship were also less positive about the design of their placement overall, with some trainees commenting that their supervisors seemed to lack the time to provide the support they needed, or had 'big' roles that meant they were often not present or available for the trainee.

The significance of the supervisor relationship was also recognised by most Museum Futures supervisors. Reflecting on their experiences, some supervisors from all three cohorts commented on the challenges they had experienced in providing on-the-job training and supervision for their trainees, such as:

- Lacking digital expertise themselves: meaning that their trainee's work had to be self-led or supported by other members of their team;

- Difficulties finding capacity in their role to support their trainee: sometimes this was as a result of the scope and scale of their own role in general, whilst sometimes it was the result of them needing to respond when unexpected circumstances arose (e.g. redundancy situations);

- Difficulties in remote supervision during home-working phases of the pandemic;

- Difficulties in task allocation during the pandemic, working with shifting organisational priorities. In Y2 in particular, most trainees reported that more than 50% of what they had actually done in their placement had been different to what had been planned at the start of the year.

### D.  MENTORING FOR TRAINEES

Broadly speaking, trainees have found mentoring to be a positive part of the programme which has contributed to the development of their knowledge, skills and experience in a range of ways.

These have included:

- Supporting trainees' work through providing a space to discuss projects as well as wider workplace issues and through sharing specific expertise/training with the mentee;

- Developing trainees' awareness of the sector through sharing the mentor's own experiences and/or taking trainees on visits to heritage sites;

- Supporting career development, through exploring career options and helping with job applications;

- Developing trainees' networks though introducing mentees to new people and groups to support their learning and development.

### E. NETWORK SUPPORT FOR TRAINEES

The networks and relationships that trainees developed during their placements contributed positively to their learning, development and wellbeing during the programme.

Peer and programme-level support was designed into Museum Futures from the outset and trainees have clearly recognised the benefits of this approach. When each cohort was asked about the networks and people who were part of their traineeship, and the contribution that these had made to their learning, they identified two key points:

- The benefit that trainees have felt from being part of a group, particularly in the first two years;

- The impact of the Programme Manager particularly in years 2 and 3.
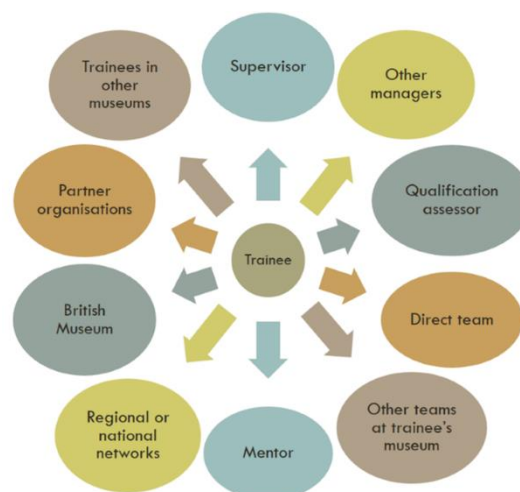
In Y1, trainees identified the benefits of being part of the Museum Futures cohort: sharing top tips on how each of them was coping with the qualification and technical expertise to help each with their own workstream (e.g. podcasting); as well as overlapping with other trainees at their host museums, which allowed them to learn from others at the start, and then pass on knowledge to new starters towards the end of their traineeship.  In Y2 trainees again identified the benefits of their group work, in particular trainees' presentations which gave the opportunity to understand a wider range of things than any one trainee had been involved in.  Their regular meetings also helped develop their coping skills.

For the first year's cohort, the Programme Manager's support had been felt primarily through her role as a qualification assessor.  The qualification was new to all trainees and all supervisors, all of whom valued the Programme Manager working out what constituted "evidence" for the qualification as well as the support given to individual trainees and their supervisors.  This appreciation was felt equally strongly in Year 2 when trainees identified the Programme Manager as "the glue that holds everything together", noting in particular her willingness to chat and help with job applications.  In Y3, trainees explained that the Programme Manager had done "more than her job", shown personal care for their wellbeing and really helped with their development.  Several thought she was a second supervisor for them, not just a coordinator for the programme.
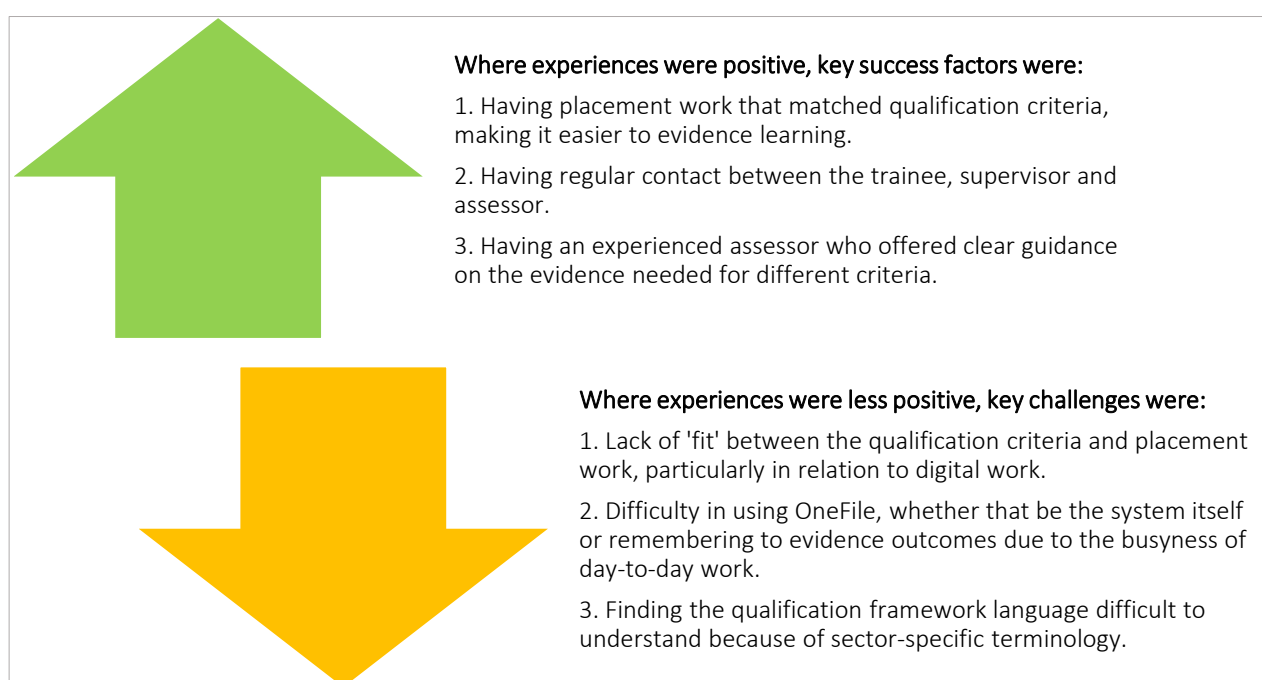
Factors which appear to underpin the success of the Programme Manager are her knowledge (which grew with each year as she provided continuity across all 3 years), her approachability, her willingness to deal with each person on their own terms and her personal concern for them, particularly during periods of lockdown.

## F. TRAINEES' EXPERIENCE OF WORKING TOWARDS THE CULTURAL HERITAGE DIPLOMA

**Although almost all trainees have gained their Cultural Heritage Diploma, their experiences of working towards the qualification have been mixed.**

23 out of 25 trainees have gained their Cultural Heritage Diploma. Of the two trainees who did not complete their diplomas, one started an apprenticeship rather than extending their placement in Y2, whilst a combination of organisational and personal factors made it difficult for the latter to finish on time. Instead, they focused on completing units that may be useful for their CV and future goals. Across the programme as a whole, 23 trainees have achieved the full diploma (60+ credits), one achieved at least 5 certificates (36 credits) and one achieved two certificates (16 credits).

Trainees and supervisors from all years of the programme were asked about their experiences of working towards the qualification and the key themes from their responses are summarised below:

**Where experiences were positive, key success factors were:**

1. Having placement work that matched qualification criteria, making it easier to evidence learning.

2. Having regular contact between the trainee, supervisor and assessor.

3. Having an experienced assessor who offered clear guidance on the evidence needed for different criteria.

**Where experiences were less positive, key challenges were:**

1. Lack of 'fit' between the qualification criteria and placement work, particularly in relation to digital work.

2. Difficulty in using OneFile, whether that be the system itself or remembering to evidence outcomes due to the busyness of day-to-day work.

3. Finding the qualification framework language difficult to understand because of sector-specific terminology.

From a whole programme perspective, there have been three key challenges in relation to how the qualification has interacted with trainee's placements:

1. **The sector specific terminology, jargon and use of complex language was at odds with the programme's inclusive approach to making roles in the sector more accessible.** Whilst terms such as 'cultural heritage' may be a widely used shorthand for people with experience in the sector, some trainees noted that this sort of terminology can be confusing for people who have never worked in this area before. As a result, the qualification framework has not felt accessible for some trainees, creating barriers for them in understanding the work they need to do to gain the qualification.

2. **For trainees who wanted to apply to university after the traineeship, the Cultural Heritage Diploma was not listed in the UCAS tariff table until May 2021**, so was not eligible for tariff points for trainees from years 1 and 2 of the programme (although it was still recognised by university admissions). This may have created a further potential barrier to the accessibility of the sector, making it more difficult for trainees with work experience in the sector to choose a career path in the sector that required higher education.

3. **The qualification is not fully reflective of modern working practices in museums and heritage, in particular digital skills (i.e. the focus of this Museum Futures programme).** There are currently no units specific to digital skills and many units appear to be written as though digital technology does not exist. For example, in some of the conservation units, the criteria relate to conserving physical objects, without reflecting the fact that museums and galleries often have born-digital artefacts and items as well (e.g. digital photographs or artworks). This has made it difficult for some trainees – particularly those with the most digital focus in their roles – to relate their work to the criteria.

## G. THE QUALITY OF OTHER PROGRAMME TRAINING

Training for supervisors, assessors and mentors were secondary to the programme's main purpose. As a result, it was agreed that the scope of the evaluation framework would not include a qualitative assessment of training for all of these stakeholders. However, feedback from the Diversity and Inclusion training offered by Creative Access indicates that attendees (mainly Y2 and Y3 supervisors) found this to be highly useful in helping them to create accessible placements that were suited to their trainees' needs.

Training for staff included mentoring training, conducted by Arts Emergency in Y1 and Y3. Supervisors received informal training and resources provided in the main by the Programme Manager. In Y2, a freelance trainer was contracted to host an in-person workshop on supervision for supervisors. In Y3, the programme manager led this training online and supervisors also took turns facilitating a monthly supervisor meeting. As this was outside the scope of the evaluation framework, the quality of this training was not assessed.

A freelance assessor trainer was contracted for all three years, to train and assess the six assessors that were working towards their own assessor award through the programme. Again, this training was not assessed as part of this evaluation.

Diversity and Inclusion training was offered in two sessions with Creative Access in 2019 and 2020. These were mainly attended by Y2 and Y3 supervisors but assessors and other partner staff were invited to attend as well. In total, 25 people attended these two training events. Combined feedback from 14 attendees across the two sessions is show in the charts below:
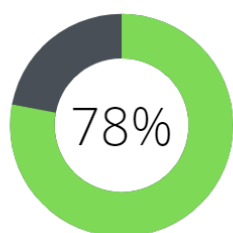
**78%** of respondents said the training was relevant to them.
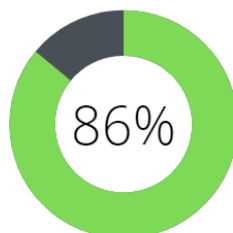
**86%** of respondents said the training was a good use of their time.

**100%** of respondents said the training would make a difference to how they would work.

Those attending the training noted that it had been particularly useful for reflecting on their own behaviour (e.g. unconscious bias); thinking about how they could make the work environment as inclusive as possible; and providing tools to help support trainees (e.g. ways to promote mental wellbeing or manage difficult situations). Some attendees also mentioned how useful it had been to hear from a previous trainee during the session, giving insights into their experiences.

## What has been learnt from Museum Futures to inform the design and delivery of on-the-job training for future programmes?

### Placement design

1. **Encourage museums to be clear about the case for diversity**

A number of partner museum supervisors found it difficult to articulate the benefit that they hoped to achieve from having a trainee from a diverse background. The most common response was the hope for having someone who could bring a different perspective, ask difficult questions and challenge common practice. If partner museums were clearer about what they hoped to achieve through having a trainee from a more diverse background during the museum recruitment phase, this may help them to take a more rigorous approach to traineeship role design, enabling trainees to make an even greater contribution to their museums.

2. **Ensure all museums have a clear role profile and task list for trainees, to provide engaging and meaningful work throughout their placement**

Where Museum Future trainees rated their placement design poorly, many of the issues they encountered (lack of meaningful work at times; too many errands; lack of opportunity to work on a variety of projects and with people across the museum) could have been addressed with better role design. Although the pandemic did make this more difficult for Y2 and Y3 of the programme, this learning is significant for any type of role, whether it is onsite, remote or blended.

### Supervisor selection

3. **Ask partner museums to review supervisors' roles for the duration of the placement, to ensure they have enough capacity to support trainees**

A number of supervisors (mostly in Y1 and Y2) noted that they had anticipated that having a trainee would increase their team's capacity and productivity, but had since realised that their trainee needed more and/or different support to other employees, which meant that they (the supervisors) had had to use more of their own capacity to provide this. Some trainees also noticed that their supervisor seemed stretched and not to have the time to provide the support they needed.

Given the fundamental role that the supervisor relationship plays in a successful placement, requiring partner museums to release sufficient capacity for supervisors to manage trainees could help to ensure that trainees have a consistently higher quality experience of supervision.

### Cultural Heritage Diploma

4. **Work with the awarding body to make the Cultural Heritage Diploma more accessible and more reflective of modern museum practice**

This could help to make it easier for future trainees to access the qualification and ensure the qualification criteria are more easily matched to trainees' placement activities.

# Aim 3: Meet identified skills shortages in the heritage sector

## To what extent has the Museum Futures programme developed skills for trainees?

### a. Digital skills

There has been significant development of trainees' digital skills through the design of the traineeship, quality of training and the quality of networks and relationships trainees developed.

At the start of the programme, evaluators and the British Museum identified a range of digital skills that trainees might expect to develop through their involvement in the programme. These are detailed in Appendix 6 Fig 10. Each cohort of trainees assessed their skill levels at the start and end of each year to measure changes in skills levels.

### i. Outcomes

Across all the digital skill areas assessed and across all three years, there was an average increase in each individual skill of between 10% and 50%. Figure 10 in Appendix 6 shows the average increase in each skill area by cohort. The digital skills that trainees developed the most were:

- Keeping up to date with developments in digital technologies *and* understanding how data should be looked after to meet legal standards (Y1);

- Understanding how to use digital technologies to connect with museum audiences (Y2);

- Understanding the different ways museums use digital technologies (Y3).

Trainees gave numerous examples in focus groups of how they had developed their skills. In Y1, these ranged from hands on "doing" such as developing a podcast, to signing up to newsletters, and attending conferences. In Y2, following rapid development of online connectivity trainees again developed their skills through practical tasks such as creating a lockdown exhibit in museum gardens, including public call out for digital media/lockdown photos, as well as through attending the training sessions led by trainees. In Y3, examples were shared of using digital databases to do data cleaning, add new data, update existing data and upload images.

Supervisors believe that trainees have been able to apply their existing digital skills as well as their newly acquired ones through their placements (see Appendix 6, Fig 13). There is ample evidence from supervisors and trainees of how trainees have applied their digital skills, ranging from updating Google Cultural Institute pages of host museums sites to creating resources to get people outside and experiencing culture safely during Covid. This



*Y3 trainee assisting with digitisation at MEAL*

in turn has allowed some trainees to develop a better understanding of the challenges of engaging certain audiences.  For example, a Y1 trainee observed visitors touching interactives on a screen to improve where to place buttons and info as part of a content creation strategy.  Their skills development also allowed some trainees to provide technical support for other museum teams to enable digital service provision to continue during lockdown (e.g. when the Collections Online system went down).

II.　　　BARRIERS TO TRAINEES' DIGITAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

The areas where skills have developed less were sometimes those in which trainees already felt skilled.  In Y1 and Y3 the "gap" between the most and least developed skills for the cohort as a whole narrowed, which means that trainees felt more equally skilled across the 8 different aspects of their digital skills than they did at the start of the programme.  In Y2, even though there was skills development across all eight skills, the gap between the least and greatest developed skill grew.  This is partly explained by the very large increase in trainees' understanding of how to use digital technologies to connect with museum audiences, which may also have been related to the pandemic and the need to switch rapidly to digital delivery of all services.

As well as this positive effect, there has also been a negative effect from Covid.  In some cases, working from home limited the variety of tasks on offer and learning suffered as a result.  Trainees also felt the impact of the reduced range of tasks when trying to evidence their learning for their qualification with several noting that being in the museum made it easier to carry out the range of tasks as well as having the evidence of doing that.

Communication with supervisors was hard for some trainees, particularly during the pandemic.  Despite exceptional effort by some supervisors others struggled to dedicate sufficient time to managing, communicating with and supporting their trainees.  The lack of physical space in a few cases has also impacted on trainees being known, and feeling welcomed/as though they belonged.

The choice of the qualification – in cultural heritage rather than purely digital skills – may also have been a barrier to trainees' digital skills development.  It has directly influenced the nature of host museum placements: one trainee was supervised by a Marketing Officer but none were placed in retail or marketing teams even though both these functions are also heavily dependent on digital technology and many of the core underpinning concepts and skills are common to all applications.  Where modules were not well developed or adapted to digital delivery, digital skills acquisition may not have been prioritised and types of acceptable evidence may not have been clear.

**B.  CORE MUSEUM AND EMPLOYMENT SKILLS**

There has been significant development of trainees' core museum knowledge and employment skills. The design of the traineeships has equipped trainees well and they have used all aspects of it to maximise their learning.  The choice of qualification and the flexibility and commitment of supervisory staff and Programme Manager have also contributed positively to successful outcomes.

At the start of the programme, evaluators and the British Museum identified a range of core museum skills and employment skills that trainees might expect to develop through their involvement in the programme.  These are outlined in Appendix 6 Figs 11 and 12.  Each cohort of trainees assessed their skill levels at the start and end of each year to measure changes in skills levels.

## I.    OUTCOMES

The results of the initial and final assessment of trainees' core museum skills (see Appendix 6, fig 11) show that in each skill area across all three years there was an increase in ability, of between 8% and 40%.  Core museum skills that trainees developed the most were:

- Knowing how objects from museum collections are used by staff and the public (Y1);

- Using museum policies and procedures (Y2);

- Being able to handle objects from museum collections safely (Y3).

The self-assessment of employment skills (see Appendix 6, fig 12) shows that the skills trainees developed the most were:

- CV writing and interview skills (Y1);

- Reviewing and improving your work (Y2);

- Being organised and communicating well (Y3).

### IMPACT OF TRAINEESHIP DESIGN

Much of trainees' learning about core museum business has derived from their practical tasks, and from being able to gain multiple perspectives on a task.  The freedom to move between departments and increasing autonomy during the year enabled trainees to learn from these different perspectives.

The mix of training types has also contributed to the development of trainees' understanding of museums and gave them varied ways of learning, for example by listening, reflecting, doing, testing, researching and sharing.  Some tasks also enabled trainees to combine aspects of learning, for example, working alongside volunteers on collections care tasks gave trainees opportunities to develop their knowledge of how to engage different audiences as well as of collections management, and a Y3 trainee's training event gave her the opportunity to explore the impact of museum governance structures on organisation and processes.



*Y1 trainee cleaning statues for the Art UK digitisation project*

In year 1, even though there was skills development across all core museum skills, the gap between the least and greatest developed skill grew.  This may reflect the nature of some of the skill areas and the likelihood of trainees' exposure to them (e.g. Understanding how to conserve and care for museum collections) as well as the nature of the work undertaken by trainees at their museums. As trainees did not have prior museum work experience, collections management systems were new to most of them and this was an area of development identified by most supervisors.

Despite the pandemic impact, in years 2 and 3 the "gap" between the most and least developed core museum skills, for the cohort as a whole, narrowed which means that trainees felt more equally skilled across the 10 different aspects of their museum skills than they did at the start of the programme.

### Role of supervisors

Many supervisors were quick to understand the importance to their trainees of being motivated by the work and established early on where their interests lay and then matched tasks accordingly. For example, in Y1, the NMS trainee audited the firearms collection, in Y3 a trainee who had expressed interest in LGBTQ issues was able to promote the museum's activities on social media during LGBT History month. Another placed at the NFM developed an interest in Asian football and managed Twitter threads on the subject. One museum initially hoped that their trainee would carry out core marketing tasks and build capacity, but replanned the work once it became evident that the trainee's interests lay elsewhere.

Supervisors made considerable efforts to ensure that trainees had a quality learning experience. For example, in Y2 the British Museum organised online skills training on object handling and packing. Prior to this interactive video session all trainees received nitrile gloves, acid-free tissue paper, a plastic container with lid, Tyvek, and polyethylene foam in the post!

### Impact of the Qualification

The choice of a Cultural Heritage Diploma qualification has directly and positively influenced the nature of host museum placements and the work/on the job learning that trainees have undertaken. All trainees bar one have been placed in digital content/curatorial/learning teams and roles giving them an immersion into these core museum disciplines. Although the fit between their work and the qualification modules was not straightforward, it appears that the qualification has in part enabled trainees' breadth of learning. Flexibility on the part of supervisors and proactivity on the part of trainees has underpinned success in this area.

### II.      Barriers to trainees' core and employment skills development

The practical opportunities available to all Y2 and Y3 trainees were affected by the pandemic as museums closed and access to stores and equipment ceased. The different dates on which museums decided to readmit staff to buildings, and approaches taken to social distancing resulted in highly differentiated experiences. For example, in Y3 one trainee was able to work two days a week from May onwards in her museum store whereas another trainee entered his host museum building only twice in the whole year of his traineeship.

Inevitably, during Covid some trainees struggled, particularly whilst working on a limited range of tasks from home, to evidence their learning for their qualification. There is however considerable evidence that most supervisors and assessors tried to support their trainees to do this.

Not all trainees felt that assessors were advising consistently and some trainees also felt uncomfortable being asked to provide feedback about their assessor as their anonymity was not guaranteed. This meant that valuable learning about how to improve the implementation of the assessment process may have been lost.

The areas of least employment skill development are different for each of the three cohorts. Although in all areas across all three years there was skills development, in year 1, the cohort's average skill in Building Trust between Colleagues dropped during the year. Some trainees experienced challenging environments in which to develop their skills. One Y2 supervisor described the culture in her organisation as "a bit slap dash" with a tendency for colleagues to behave "randomly" which she suspected led to her trainee feeling overwhelmed. In Y3, a trainee of colour described being told by a volunteer that there

were no black people where their host museum is located.  Whilst most supervisors were able to offer support in such cases, not all trainees felt supported.

## WHAT HAS BEEN LEARNT FROM MUSEUM FUTURES ABOUT TRAINEES' SKILLS DEVELOPMENT TO INFORM FUTURE PROGRAMMES?

### Cultural Heritage Diploma

A different choice of qualification may have made the development of digital skills and the identification of evidence of them easier, however, this could have been to the detriment of the cultural heritage aspects of the traineeship.  Further development of the cultural heritage qualification modules to better reflect the digital competencies needed could address this.

### Placement design

1. **Identify the essential skills upfront**

The programme intended to create a network which would develop and share "essential digital skills, tools and workflows".  These were not agreed in advance of the programme and shared with host museums.  The range of tasks that each trainee undertook therefore depended on the needs and existing skill level of their host museum.  Agreeing the minimum digital skillset in advance in future would inform the choice of museum partner, influence the individual traineeship content and provide trainees with a more holistic skillset.

2. **Inform supervisors upfront about qualification requirements**

The qualification has driven the breadth of experience but also been experienced as cumbersome, by trainees.  Better integration of placement design and qualification criteria would help but would require supervisors to know enough about the qualification at the recruitment stage to be able to design a balanced placement accordingly.

3. **Introduce a joint digital project for trainees**

As ownership and responsibility for meaningful work were important for trainees' engagement, a useful additional feature for future traineeships could be a digital project which trainees could work on – and own - jointly.

### Partner museum selection

The approach taken by this programme – in some cases putting digitally skilled trainees into less digitally progressive organisations – is qualitatively different to apprenticeships, where the individual is placed in an expert organisation to learn a particular trade.  This has had some downsides (e.g. lack of expertise to support trainees' digital work) but has also provided wider benefits through the trainee bringing digital expertise and challenging the organisations.

## To what extent has the Museum Futures programme developed skills for supervisors?

### c. Digital skills

Levels of digital awareness have grown within partner museums' staff.  No barriers to digital skills development were identified by supervisors but as no development activity was planned for them, there has been little growth in their digital skills.

Almost all supervisors commented at the start of their traineeship year that levels of digital skill were very mixed across their organisations.  This was in part due to the age of the workforce, and their exposure to digital technology both at home and at work.  The Digital Attitudes and Skills in Heritage (DASH) survey 2020[3] also suggests that the way people considered their digital skills is heavily influenced by their role.  Supervisors also noted prevailing cultural norms within both their own museum and museums at large meant appetite and support for digital upskilling were lacking, at all levels.  Supervisors for all three years rated their own digital skills at the start of the project above average (at about 3.5 on a 5-point scale where 1 was low and 5 was high) and higher than those of others in their organisation, by between 8% and 26%.  The subjectivity of self-assessment was clear - some supervisors had a background in website or app development, whereas others had become proficient in finding digital solutions via internet research – and there was no calibration of the ratings.

### I. Outcomes

The great majority of supervisors reported that their own digital skills had not changed *as a result of the traineeships*.  In Years 2 and 3, the impact of the pandemic was acknowledged to have driven digital upskilling across organisations, albeit in a chaotic and unplanned way.  Several museums had already started taking steps to develop digital literacy and a digital approach throughout their organisations, for example in two museums a Digital Transformation project was underway, with various



*Y3 trainees in discussion with the British Museum Public Affairs Manager during a network training session.*

strategies deployed to introduce staff to concepts, train them in the use of applications and then transfer ownership of processes to those teams.  In two other museums, a centralised digital team had been dismantled and all teams expected to work digitally rather than relying on the hub and spoke model of a centralised team of "fixers".  These changes were either already in train when the traineeship started or moved rapidly from planning to execution because of the pandemic, but none of them were influenced by the traineeship itself.

However, levels of digital *awareness* amongst the wider workforce in most of the partner museums have increased.  In some cases the Museum Futures programme has demonstrated new possibilities in terms of digital thinking, Having a digitally-skilled person (trainee) working with non-digital colleagues increased colleagues' understanding of how their work can be enhanced by the application of digital skills, even if

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[3] DASH survey results 2020 by Tabetha Newman, Helen Beetham and Stuart Church of Timmus Limited for The National Lottery Heritage Fund, licensed under Creative Commons

those skills are practised by others.  Trainees also cascaded their learning to staff and volunteers by shared ideas learned at training days (SWHT, British Museum) and in some specific instances digital upskilling by the trainee of museum staff has also taken place (e.g. hard coding of video subtitles at CPK and film-editing at The Atkinson).  In some museums, having a trainee focussing on digital work has spurred others on and ignited (or reignited) their interest.  For example, in Y3 the trainee at SWHT championed digital events in meetings, advocating for the digital audience by sharing feedback from events, and flagging up how it helped the museum achieve outreach targets.

## D. MANAGEMENT SKILLS

The majority of supervisors' management skills have developed as a result of hosting the traineeship.  Although development has been organic, it has been significant.  No barriers were identified by supervisors; managers have learnt primarily by doing.  A wide range of other outcomes are also evidenced, including the development of colleagues' supervisory skills.

### SUPERVISOR TRAINING

Supervisors attended training comprising a debrief of the trainee recruitment process, a discussion of induction plans and remote training, and a presentation on the role of trainee supervisor with coaching and management tools and tips.  In Y2 and Y3 they were also offered Diversity and Inclusion training.

For some supervisors the traineeship was their first experience of line management, for some it was the first time they had supervised a trainee (as opposed to an employee or volunteer) and some had purposefully sought a new management challenge.  One or two had recently had leadership training and one had signed up for training knowing that she would be hosting a trainee.  Some supervisors had received no management training so were managing their trainee based on their own experience (good and not so good) of management.

### OUTCOMES

Supervisors assessed their management skills shortly after their induction to the programme.  In year 1, they assessed these as slightly below the midpoint (2.9) and in years 2 slightly above it (3.2 and 3.5).  In years 1 and 2 their assessment of these skills was slightly lower than their assessment of their digital skills, but in year 3 they assessed both their digital and management skills equally.

There was development of supervisors' management skills in depth and breadth, with the traineeship offering supervisors both a wide range of management functions and some specific issues to deal with.  Supervisors were involved in placement design and planning, communicating widely across their organisations and in some cases negotiating successfully for trainees to have a wider experience, as well as monitoring trainees' development and giving them feedback.  They also developed their skills in management the delivery of digital projects, particularly during the pandemic.  For some, these were new activities and in at least one case, it appears that whilst a supervisor has learnt a lot about their own managerial development needs, this might have been at the expense of the trainee's positive experience of the traineeship.

At least half the partner museum supervisors report that the traineeship provided some of their colleagues with supervisory experience.  In some cases this was because a museum took a pluralist approach to line management, though much was pandemic-driven, for example because of furlough arrangements.  In several museums, supervision was changed during the year in order to provide more hands-on support or specific support around technical expertise and chronic mental health issues.  One supervisor took parental leave during the traineeship, some left their role and their museum entirely.  As

trainees became more involved in projects across museums a wider range of people took on supervisory roles and grew in confidence as a result.

### RESOURCEFULNESS AND FLEXIBILITY

Supervisors have had to be resourceful when finding themselves facing new management issues.  The nature of the traineeship, with the focus being on the development of the trainee rather than on their output meant that these supervisors felt it their responsibility to be flexible and resourceful, though this was not without its stresses.  In one museum, someone with technical skills provided day-to-day supervision for a trainee whose skills were primarily creative.  He had to think differently as a result of working with the trainee, learning to let go and allow someone else to do things differently from how he might have done it.


*Y1 trainees practising film production skills with the British Museum Broadcast team*

Some supervisors have reported reflexivity as a result of supporting trainees, for example becoming better at managing their own workload as a result of guiding trainees in workload management, and wellbeing improvements as a result of awareness of responsibilities towards trainees (The Atkinson, SWHT).

### SUPPORTING A WIDER RANGE OF NEEDS IN THE WORKPLACE

Some of the specific issues facing supervisors were associated with trainees being younger and with less life experience than other members of the workforce: supporting trainees to become more confident was key, through informal mentoring as well as providing very regular feedback.  Other issues pertained to the nature of the working environment; as a core criterion for this traineeship was that trainees should have little or no prior museum experience, more supervisory support was needed to address trainees' lack of experience in working in an office-based, team environment (as opposed to a customer facing role in, say, retail).

Supervisors across all three years reported the challenges of supporting trainees with diverse needs, including neurodiversity (a sub-category of organisational diversity and inclusion that seeks to embrace and maximise the talents of people who think differently[4]).  One supervisor in Y3 was able to source software to support a trainee with dyslexia and adapted her communication methods to meet the trainee's needs.  It is likely that Museum Futures trainees may be more neuro-diverse given that traditional entry routes to museums have favoured, particularly through recruitment practices, those who are neurotypical.

The incidence of mental ill health amongst young people was higher than amongst the rest of the population pre-pandemic.  According to research undertaken by Mind in April 2021[5], around a third of adults and young people said their mental health had worsened since March 2020, and 88% young people said loneliness had made their mental health worse during the pandemic.  Given these statistics, it is probable that Museum Futures trainees required greater levels of support than older generations in the workplace towards the end of the programme.

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[4] Definition from CIPD's Guide to Neurodiversity, published February 2018 and accessible from https://www.cipd.co.uk/knowledge/fundamentals/relations/diversity/neurodiversity-work

[5] https://www.mind.org.uk/coronavirus-we-are-here-for-you/coronavirus-research/ accessed 19 January 202

### The role of the Programme Manager

The Programme Manager has been key in providing advice and support to supervisors and in helping them develop their management skills. She also performed a bridging role between trainees and supervisors. During the pandemic she became pivotal in helping ensure consistency between approaches taken to the supervision of trainees, despite each host museum making their own, localised decisions about furlough, buildings access and programming. Furthermore, she has been key to enabling some trainees to remain on the programme, providing confidential advice and support to both trainees and supervisors.

### Deeper thinking about management

There is evidence to suggest that the experience of supporting someone very new in the sector, has led supervisors to reflect more deeply on what it means to be well managed (TWAM). Some report that in explaining to their trainees the way their organisation operates (the unwritten rules) or how to follow a particular procedure, they have thought more critically about why their organisation operates as it does. Others have said that they have developed a range of different methods for explaining particular core museum skills. There has been recognition of a wider range of starting points and the possibility of managing people as individuals according to their needs, for example building in more time and additional systems familiarity sessions (Bristol Culture). For some there is a perception that trainees may need this (and that other members of the workforce would not); to an extent trainees' lack of knowledge therefore appears to be legitimised by the particular focus of this traineeship (i.e. without previous museum experience or level 6 qualifications). For others there is a realisation that all new starters would benefit from knowing that they are welcome to ask questions. One supervisor felt that their trainee's productivity was a direct result of the quality of her wider relationships, so facilitating this earlier could benefit younger or less experienced people in future.

## What has been learnt from Museum Futures about staff's skills development to inform future programmes?

**Define digital competencies for the sector**

Without a clear baseline or an agreed understanding of what digital skills are, it is challenging to assess the extent to which they have been developed. The creation of a clear set of competencies for use in the sector would strengthen sectoral understanding. This finding is reinforced by those of the recent Digital Attitudes and Skills in Heritage (DASH) survey (see Appendix 7).

**Organisational upskilling**

Digital skill development by partner museum staff was anticipated but not planned. No barriers to development were identified but very little upskilling took place. That which did was down to individuals within organisations who sought out digital skills training, or to the effects of the pandemic. By contrast there was significant raising of digital awareness amongst staff. Behaviour change theory suggests that action is preceded by contemplation and determination and that these are pre-requisites for change[6]. Future projects to increase digital skills (i.e. behaviour change) across the workforce could benefit from an initial whole organisation focus on digital awareness (i.e. contemplation and determination).

**Partner museum and supervisor selection**

Because of the wider range of challenges that trainees may present, supervisors require strengths in relationship building, and people management, as well as task focus and technical skill. Some trainees might have benefitted from being managed by staff who had more experience of these or who had received formal management development. In order to avoid investment in the programme being undermined by poor line management, it would be worth considering whether having more experienced/better trained supervisors should be a prerequisite for organisations when taking on traineeships.

**Resources to support supervisors**

There may be a need for more resources, including software, to support neurodivergent people in the workplace and to raise supervisors' awareness of the challenges and possibilities associated with neurodiversity.

There may be a need for more resources to support future supervisors in accessing professional guidance on mental health. Post pandemic these may be easier to source than previously.

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[6] The Transtheoretical Model (Prochaska & DiClemente, 1983; Prochaska, DiClemente, & Norcross, 1992) is an integrative, biopsychosocial model to conceptualize the process of intentional behaviour change.

# AIM 4: INCREASE THE CAPACITY OF THE SECTOR TO DELIVER TRAINING AND SHARE GOOD PRACTICE

## HOW WELL DID THE PROGRAMME ADDRESS CAPACITY ACROSS THE SECTOR?

Partner museums were representative of museum types and the programme's flexibility allowed all to participate equally. Staff shortages, workload, time and juggling priorities are all barriers to further capacity building.

Partner museums were representative of the English regions, the devolved nations and with a mix of urban and rurally located museums. They were also a range of "types" and scales including national museums, local authorities and charitable trusts. Additional training partners, though small in number, were also drawn from across the country (Arts Emergency is London based but other external training was provided through regional museum development organisations). Mentors were drawn from a range of organisations nationally though primarily based locally to the museum and trainee in question.

The programme's flexibility allowed for museums of different types and scales to participate successfully. The benefits were different according to each museum's context. No museum identified their constitutional basis as a factor which either enabled or impeded their ability to participate in and benefit from the traineeship. Supervisors from museums of all sizes identified staff shortages and lack of time as barriers to greater capacity building.

## WHAT IMPACT HAS THE MUSEUM FUTURES PROGRAMME HAD ON THE CAPACITY OF THOSE INVOLVED TO DELIVER TRAINING?

### A. EVIDENCE OF CAPACITY BUILDING

Overall, there has been considerable change in the capacity of partner museums to deliver training, though it has come in unexpected ways, sometimes unintentionally and often imperceptibly. The range of training resources available has increased; there are indications that these are being reused internally and there is an intention in some areas to offer training externally. Training capacity has increased in other ways too and for other reasons:

- The process of training others has allowed those with prior knowledge and skill to hone their understanding of their own competency and become more confident in training;

- The process of developing on the job learning for trainees has had a positive influence on the development of other internal learning opportunities;

- The pool of qualified assessors to support the Cultural Heritage qualification has increased significantly.

### RANGE OF EXISTING TRAINING (I.E. PRE-TRAINEESHIP)

Most supervisors are aware of and have undertaken training to support their own professional job roles (e.g. training in use of Collections Management Systems), but otherwise are largely self-taught either on the job, online or from elsewhere and lack formal training in wider or more basic applications. Awareness of digital training is often dependent on networks and newsletters but provision of training is very patchy.

Much focuses on digital outputs (e.g. digital storytelling) and it is much harder to find training for managing digitised or "born digital" collections.

### I.    OUTCOMES

#### RANGE OF TRAINING OFFERED DURING PLACEMENTS

Records maintained by the Programme Manager show a wide range of training has been offered by staff at partner museums, primarily though not exclusively by supervisors.  This has been supplemented by external training provided by sector agencies and private training providers and online training for example Google's Analytics Academy, UCL's 'Culture, Health and Wellbeing: An Introduction' and the Harvard University/ EDX course 'CS50: Introduction to Computer Science'.

#### INCREASE IN NEW TRAINING ON OFFER

When asked about the extent to which the range of training on offer in the sector had increased, all supervisors bar one responded "very little" or "to some extent" and half said that they had not developed training specifically for this traineeship.  Similarly, supervisors reported little re-use of training either internally or outside their organisations.

We conclude that supervisors felt they were generally deploying skills that they already had, and/or content which reflected their existing expertise, and so were unlikely to identify the training as extending the range of what was on offer.  In Y2 and Y3 most supervisors reported that because of the pandemic, their on-the-job training plans had suffered and that they had also been focussed on pivoting to provide some level of public access to museum services with no focus on provision of training to the wider sector.

However, there is evidence that the process of training a trainee and turning implicit knowledge into explicit training and developing organisational practices and approaches has increased training capacity, particularly where either the training session or the process involved has also been documented.  There are also examples of new resource creation, re-use of training materials, intention to share new training more widely and a demonstrable impact on other internal learning opportunities.

#### INCREASE IN TRAINING RESOURCES AND WIDER USE

A number of new resources have been created, by supervisors and by trainees themselves.  This was partly facilitated through the design of the placement which ensured that this happened (otherwise it would have been a "nice to have" but not a priority).



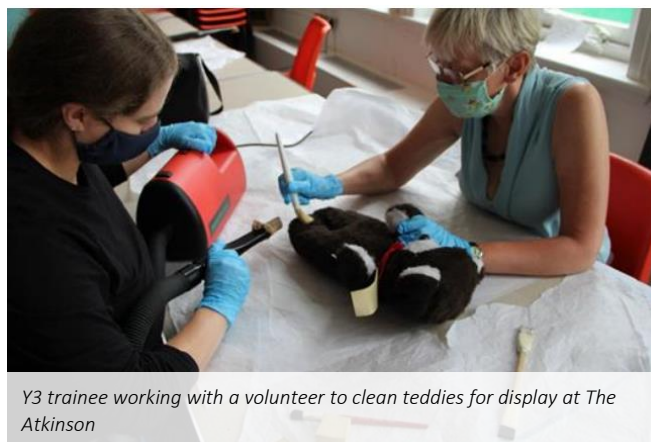*Y2 trainees taking part in virtual collections skills training*

New resources tended to result from the training days held later in the year, when trainees could leverage all their new skills in planning and delivering stimulating content in a range of ways.  The resources developed as a by-product of the training days are very cost effective, many are interactive and some can be delivered online.  In different ways they are being re-used or made available to others both within host museums and more widely in the sector:

- The British Museum (Y1) put together a training session on film-making which they have repeated for the Endangered Material Knowledge programme (programme for creating digital repository of endangered activities and knowledge across the globe);

- At Brighton (Y1) the supervisor was able to "road test" new training about online behaviour and analytics with the trainee as part of her learning about social media, and is now using this with other museum colleagues and considering using it in the digital curating module of a Masters in Curating at the University of Brighton that he also teaches on;

- At Bristol Culture (Y2), the supervisor and trainee developed a course on data visualisation, which has now been rolled out for other staff including marketing and interns;

- South West Museum Service is planning on using Bristol Culture's Y2 trainee's work on the Google Arts and Culture Platform as part of the regional training offer, to help smaller museums with digital engagement;

- At SWHT (Y3) the trainee adapted her digital exhibitions training for delivery to the National Archives 'Bridging the Digital Gap' trainees and it will be used again in the future for internal staff.

In many cases trainees have also delivered training either as part of their workstream or as part of their exit from the museum (e.g. training volunteers in digital photography).  This handover or cascade of knowledge strengthens capacity.

IMPACT ON OTHER INTERNAL LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

The majority (88%) of supervisors felt that the experience of training a trainee had influenced the development of other work-based learning opportunities in their museums (see Appendix 6, Figure 14).  Supervisors have built their confidence to facilitate internal learning and to do so using different methods.  Some have reflected on team development and actively sought out and shared opportunities with their staff team as a result of the focus on training. They have created new resources, re-used and adapted them for remote delivery internally


*Y3 trainee working with a volunteer to clean teddies for display at The Atkinson*

and report improved take up of training by colleagues and a more diverse internal training offer.

Several supervisors report changing internal processes, for example altering the structure of future volunteering opportunities to provide greater benefit for the museum and for volunteers, who previously spent one day a week in different departments but in future will have a more specific aim/project.  Some also reported having a greater capacity to offer opportunities to younger volunteers including those on Kickstart apprenticeships (Atkinson and SWHT, Y3) and one reported that her museum was keen to develop a traineeship for a young digital photographer rather than hiring freelance photographers in future (BMT Y2).  One supervisor felt that the traineeship had validated the role of on-the-job training as the quickest/more efficient/greatest ROI tool for upskilling staff (Lisburn, Y2).

PEOPLE TRAINED AS QUALIFICATION ASSESSORS

Trainees were supported across the three years in their qualification by qualified assessors.  Two of these had previously qualified through the Learning Museum (the British Museum's previous Skills for the

Future project) and they continued to develop their skills whilst assessing Museum Futures trainees (Sarah Gore, Norfolk Museums Service; Michael Olden Royal Pavilion and Museums, Brighton).  In addition, an impressive six further staff earned an assessor Level 3 qualification, Assessing Competence in the Work Environment.  This has measurably increased the pool of assessor staff for this particular qualification, as well as increasing regional access to such colleagues, as they are geographically spread across the country:

- Jo Rooks, Museum of East Anglian Life, Stowmarket;
- Naomi Salinas Burton, The British Museum, London;
- Jess Starns, The British Museum, London;
- Roz Bonnet, Bristol Culture/ SW Museum Development;
- Gabrielle Heffernan, Tullie House, Carlisle;
- Liz Stewart, National Museums Liverpool.

The training has increased recipients' capacity to support trainees' learning and, to an extent, to deliver training.

## II.    BARRIERS TO INCREASING TRAINING CAPACITY

Throughout the programme, the main barrier to building training capacity has been capacity itself!  In Y1 supervisors noted that more time was required to support a trainee than an employee, and in some cases this was more time than supervisors had initially anticipated, particularly where trainees' needs and, in some cases, poor mental health only became apparent once the traineeship was under way.

During the pandemic staff and organisational capacity were further reduced through furlough, staff shortages (illness, isolation) and the prioritisation of core operation/survival activities rather than capacity building activities.  In addition, some trainees became anxious and then required more support than before, and some staff who were also more anxious may have been less able to provide that support.

Two museums in Y3 have undergone restructure which has drawn the focus away from building capacity through the traineeship, and has resulted in a smaller team than at the start of the traineeship.

Lack of budget was a constraint for some; training could have been outsourced, or formalised, if the supervisor had had a training budget.  For others, limitations of IT infrastructure and hardware made it difficult to work on particular tasks remotely, leading to a loss of productivity and reduction in capacity.  In several cases, the projects that had been planned could not take place for internal reasons so the anticipated benefit in terms of capacity could not be realised.

## What has been learnt from Museum Futures about increasing the sector's training capacity to inform future programmes?

### The importance of increasing organisational capacity

The anticipation of a temporary increase in their organisation's general capacity through having a trainee underpins most organisations' willingness to take part in programmes such as this. As reported elsewhere, a better understanding of the time commitment, allocation of time and selection of appropriately skilled supervisors should ensure a net increase in capacity in future which will in turn ensure a strong pool of potential museum partners.

### Organisational approach to (and understanding of) capacity building

There is a perception that capacity building is about increasing the (human) resource rather than purposefully increasing the capacity, through training and development, of the existing (human) resource. Furthermore, the increase in staff's training capacity was something of a by-product of the traineeship rather than a focus. The change in such capacity may be hard to spot and is not necessarily recognised by partner museums. Therefore there is a risk that it is not capitalised upon. For capacity increases to be consolidated, a whole organisation approach – and a shared understanding - might be needed.

### Further development of the Cultural Heritage Diploma

A better developed qualification could address training capacity as it would stipulate learning outcomes required for digital skills to be developed and could act as a blueprint for wider staff training.

Supervisors from this programme are in a strong position to make recommendations to address outstanding gaps in the qualification in a number of areas, including security of digital assets and digital collections (existing collections and digitally born artefacts). The online Museum Futures Summit planned for March 2022 could be an opportunity to run a scoping workshop on this subject.

The programme has raised a wider sector capacity issue as it is perceived by some as having equipped more people for curatorial/collections roles in the sector than for purely digital roles. As curatorial roles are already over-subscribed the sector is likely to lose trainees after having invested in them. This issue could be addressed in part through the development of a digital pathway for the qualification.

## TO WHAT EXTENT HAS LEARNING FROM THE PROGRAMME BEEN SHARED WITH THE WIDER SECTOR?

### A. EVIDENCE OF DISSEMINATION OF LEARNING

There is evidence of internal, informal sharing of digital learning and externally of talking about digital projects and new routes into museums. The British Museum's Programme Manager has coordinated activity and has been a focal point both for dissemination and enquiries. Other dissemination has been more ad hoc. All sharing of learning has been adversely affected by the pandemic. There may be a gap in the conference market regarding the wider application of digital awareness and literacy.

Throughout the programme, a range of stakeholders has created content about the traineeships. Although the pandemic has reduced some of the more traditional dissemination routes, the majority of supervisors were aware of some kind of dissemination of information about the programme. Approximately 50% of the content they were aware of was published to raise awareness of the programme, mostly for recruitment purposes. The other half covers a wider range of functions including advocacy with funders and communities, and sharing learning in order to improve or create future opportunities. Approximately half the material produced has been coordinated by the Programme Manager and the British Museum.

### I. OUTCOMES

Material produced by trainees included blog posts (BM site, Museum Futures, host museums' websites) as well as podcasts, YouTube content and social media posts. Some have blogged or written specifically about their experience as trainees, whereas others have authored articles about museum objects and activities. Trainees used their own Insta and Twitter accounts to profile themselves and their work in



*Y2 trainee sharing her traineeship experiences on social media*

museums, and to promote articles and blogs hosted on websites. They were interviewed for articles in Museums Journal and on the Museums Association website. Trainees were set a goal of joining two networks, which has given them a sector outlet for dissemination of learning. They have attended and presented at museum conferences in person in Y1 and online in Y2 and Y3, (British Museum National Programmes Conferences, Museums+Tech conference). The have also engaged at a national level, for example two trainees have been panel members of Kids in Museums Youth Panel and have acted as judges for their Family Friendly awards.

Supervisors at partner museums have been very active internally, both raising the profile of individual trainees to increase internal support and buy-in, and sharing learning about the process of hosting the trainee. Some have engaged with their local community (Derby Y2) and indirectly raised awareness of the traineeships through articles in local press (Y2 Tullie House). Some have used the relationship with BM as a form of endorsement to raise profile with their local authority (Hastings Y2) and others have used

their traineeships as case studies in funding bids (Derby). Those supervisors who are involved with regional and national museum networks or agencies have shared learning about the impact of trainees and digital upskilling (Brighton Y1, Bristol Y2). One of the mentors for the programme was interviewed by the Association for Heritage Interpretation and others have shared experiences and best practice about hosting trainees at recruitment events (e.g. Fair Museum Jobs held an online Careers Summit Nov 20 (Tullie House, Y2)).

The Programme Manager has played a central role in creating content to be shared, requesting this from others and creating opportunities for sharing. At the end of each year, she has organised a Celebration Event for trainees and their supervisors as well as others involved more widely, to celebrate trainees' achievement, and discuss informally the traineeship. She is organising an online Summit, for March 2022, in which learning from the programme can be shared more widely with the sector. Proposals for other conference sessions have also been put forward by trainees collaborating together, and by the Programme Manager and one of the evaluators.

## II.    BARRIERS TO DISSEMINATING LEARNING

A barrier identified by one supervisor but applicable to all is that as each museum has hosted only one trainee, so any dissemination relates to one identifiable individual. Furthermore, some of the learning from this programme is sensitive.

Some of the apparently obvious outlets for dissemination of learning about a traineeship styled as *digital* are actually too tech-heavy for this traineeship. One supervisor feels that this traineeship has been less about technical skill and more about digital literacy and its impact on capacity and capability, and that there are relatively few fora for this to be presented and explored.

In at least one other museum there is substantial learning about supporting diversity but no obvious outlet for this to be more widely and overtly shared although it is informing new projects.

## WHAT HAS BEEN LEARNT FROM MUSEUM FUTURES ABOUT THE DISSEMINATION OF LEARNING TO INFORM FUTURE PROGRAMMES?

### The importance of capacity and clarity of expectation regarding dissemination

Informal and somewhat ad hoc dissemination of information and learning has taken place, and all stakeholders – trainees, supervisors, wider staff – have played a part in this. The most purposeful dissemination and sharing has been coordinated by the Programme Manager at the British Museum. This emphasises the importance of this central role and of the explicit requirement in the job role to create opportunities for sharing learning.

A more focussed approach to dissemination and clearer expectations of partner museums would enable greater learning to take place from future programmes.

### A need for dedicated moderated online space for disseminating learning

The pandemic has changed some of the more traditional dissemination routes, possibly permanently. A dedicated online space with content moderation for sharing about traineeships in general and about digital upskilling in particular could add value for the sector.

# APPENDIX 1: PROGRAMME PARTNER INFORMATION

Figure 1: Map showing distribution of museum partners (in red), mentors (green) and those organisations which both hosted trainees and provided mentoring (in blue)



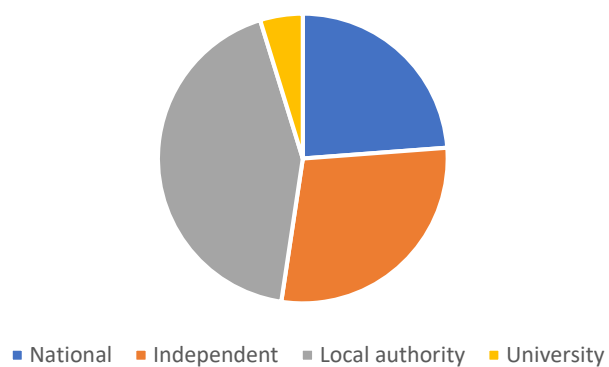Figure 2: Types of museum partners, by constitution/funding source



■ National ■ Independent ■ Local authority ■ University

Figure 3: Host museums years 1 to 3

| Museum | Year |
|---|---|
| The British Museum, London | 1 |
| The Garden Museum, London | 1 |
| Liverpool Museum, part of National Museums Liverpool (NML) | 1 |
| Norfolk Museums Service (NMS) | 1 |
| The South West Heritage Trust (SWHT) | 1 |
| Royal Pavilion Museum Brighton (RPM Brighton) | 1 |
| York Museums Trust (YMT) | 1 |
| Museum of East Anglian Life, Stowmarket (MEAL) | 1 |
| The British Museum, London | 2 |
| Birmingham Museum Trust (BMT) | 2 |
| Bristol Culture | 2 |
| Derby Museums | 2 |
| Hastings Museum & Art Gallery | 2 |
| Horniman Museum and Gardens | 2 |
| Irish Linen Centre & Lisburn Museum | 2 |
| Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery | 2 |
| Tyne and Wear Museums and Archives (TWAM) | 2 |
| The British Museum, London | 3 |
| Culture Perth and Kinross (CPK) | 3 |
| The Atkinson | 3 |
| The Fitzwilliam Museum | 3 |
| Museum of Cardiff | 3 |
| Museum of East Anglian Life (MEAL) | 3 |
| National Football Museum (NFM) | 3 |
| South West Heritage Trust (SWHT) | 3 |

# APPENDIX 2: WORKFORCE DIVERSITY INFORMATION

Figure 4: Table showing the proportion of Museum Futures applicants and trainees from different demographic groups, compared to the proportion of the National Portfolio workforce and proportion of working age people in the UK in those groups in the period 2019 – 20.

| Demographic | Y1 %s | | Y2 %s | | Y3 %s | | National Portfolio workforce 2019-20[7] | Working age UK 2019-20 (ONS) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Applicants | Trainees | Applicants | Trainees | Applicants | Trainees | | |
| LGBTQIA | 33% | 25% | 27% | 22% | 34% | 63% | 8% | 2% |
| Having a disability | 24% | 0% | 26% | 22% | 23% | 12% | 7% | 22% |
| BAME background | 30% | 25% | 30% | 33% | 28% | 25% | 13% | 17% |
| From a household in receipt of state benefits | 29% | 25% | 38% | 33% | 46% | 38% | N/A | N/A |
| Parents did not attend university | 50% | 63% | 60% | 66% | 51% | 50% | N/A | N/A |
| Attending a state (i.e. non-fee paying) school | 83% | 100% | 81% | 66% | 74% | 75% | N/A | N/A |

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[7] Data taken from *Equality, Diversity and the Creative Case: A data report 2019-20*, Arts Council England, 2020.  The report notes high levels of unknown data for ethnicity, disability and sexual orientation, so figures may not be entirely representative.  Indicators of socio-economic status are not included within the report, so comparative figures are not available here.

# APPENDIX 3: MUSEUM FUTURES TASTER EVENTS

Figure 5: Attendance at taster events

| Y1 | BRITISH MUSEUM | MEAL | SWHT | RPM BRIGHTON | YMT | GARDEN MUSEUM | NML | NMS | | TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 21 | 13 | 13 | 10 | 1 | 8 | 12 | 23 | | **101** |
| Y2 | BRITISH MUSEUM | BMT | BRISTOL CULTURE | TWAM | TULLIE HOUSE | HASTINGS MUSEUM | HORNIMAN MUSEUM | IRISH LINEN CENTRE | DERBY MUSEUMS | TOTAL |
| | 19 | 9 | 15 | 27 | 25 | 14 | 12 | 16 | 35 | **172** |
| Y3 | BRITISH MUSEUM | CULTURE P&K | SWHT | FITZWILLIAM MUSEUM | MUSEUM OF CARDIFF | MEAL | THE ATKINSON | NFM | | TOTAL |
| | 53 | 14 | 15 | 15 | 10 | 13 | 21 | 35 | | **176** |

Figure 6: Responses from the Taster Event questionnaire to the question "After the taster event, how likely are you to apply for a Museum Futures traineeship?"



- ■ Extremely likely  ■ Very likely  ■ Somewhat likely  ■ Not so likely  ■ Other
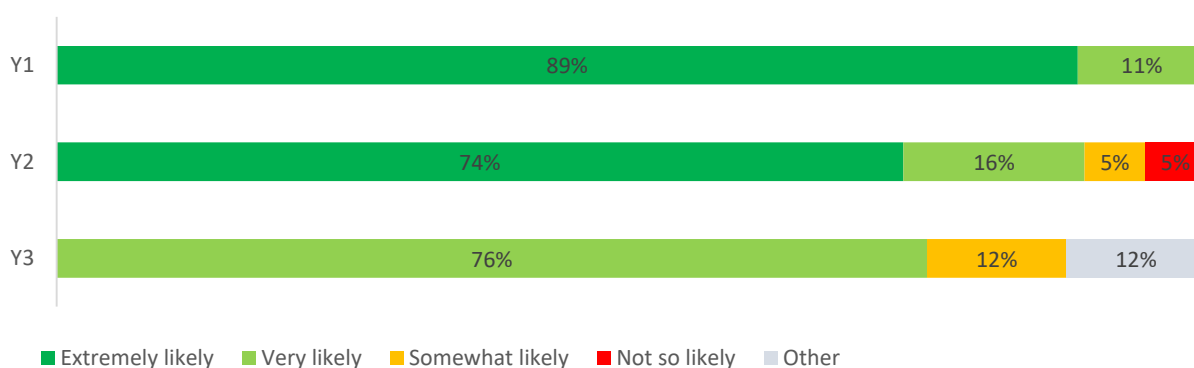
NB: Y1 data is from the British Museum taster day only (other museums did not seek feedback). Y2 and Y3 data is from all museums.

# APPENDIX 4: PEER-LED TRAINING EVENT EVALUATION DATA

The charts below summarise selected responses from all three cohorts to the evaluation questionnaires that were sent out after each peer-led training session.
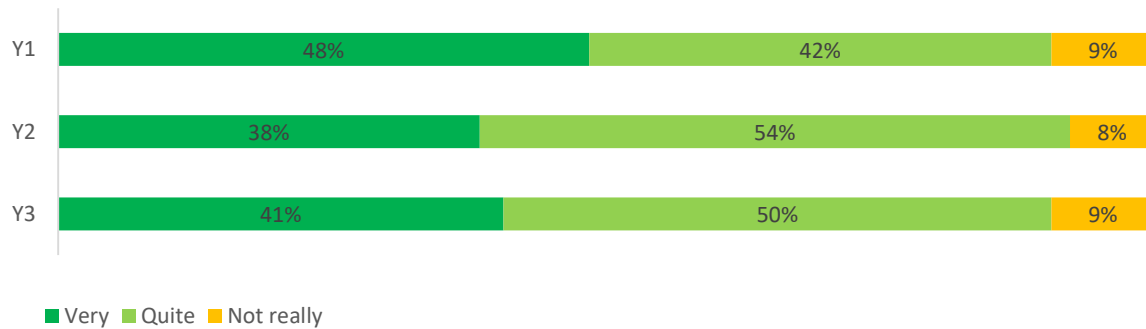
Figure 7: Was the training relevant to you?

| | Very | Quite | Not really |
|---|---|---|---|
| Y1 | 48% | 42% | 9% |
| Y2 | 38% | 54% | 8% |
| Y3 | 41% | 50% | 9% |

■ Very  ■ Quite  ■ Not really

Figure 8: Was the training a good use of your time?

| | Very | Quite |
|---|---|---|
| Y1 | 85% | 15% |
| Y2 | 56% | 44% |
| Y3 | 88% | 13% |

■ Very  ■ Quite
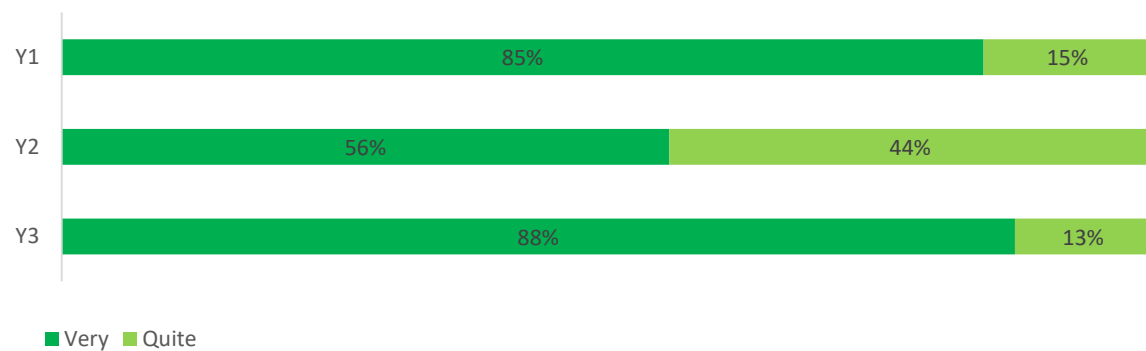
Figure 9: To what extent do you expect your learning from the training session will make a difference to how you work during your placement?

| | Significant difference | Some difference | Not much difference | No difference |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Y1 | 25% | 55% | 14% | 6% |
| Y2 | 13% | 60% | 25% | 2% |
| Y3 | 6% | 66% | 25% | 3% |

■ Significant difference  ■ Some difference  ■ Not much difference  ■ No difference
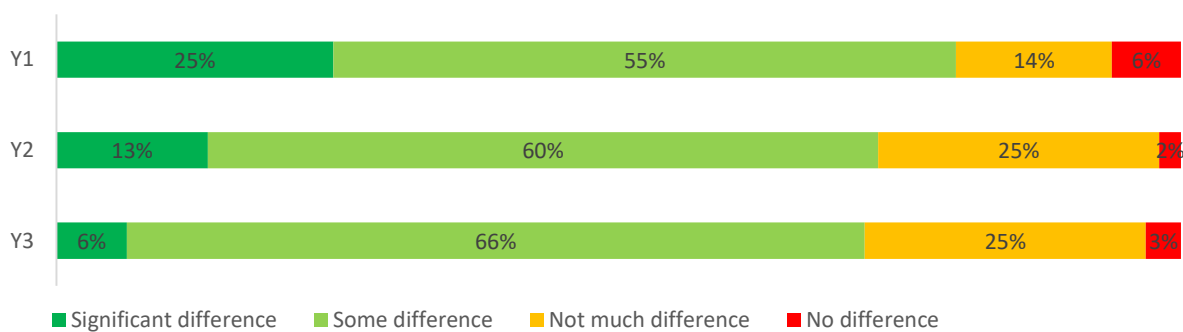
# APPENDIX 5: TRAINEESHIP DESIGN FEEDBACK

## SUMMARY OF KEY THEMES FROM TRAINEE DISCUSSION GROUPS ABOUT WHAT FACTORS ARE IMPORTANT IN GOOD PLACEMENT DESIGN

- A clearly defined role and structure for the placement (i.e. with projects planned throughout the year).

- Having an accurate role title (i.e. one that describes their actual tasks and responsibilities).

- Tasks which give trainees a sense of personal responsibility and of making a meaningful contribution to the museum's work.

- A variety of work, both in terms of project focus and the ability to work with people from across the museums.

- Structured induction and museum-based training, helping trainees to feel at home with their museum's people and processes.

- Having roles and tasks included in the role that align with the requirements of the Cultural Heritage qualification.

- Minimising fluctuations in levels of work by ensuring trainees always have something they can do (e.g. when waiting for others to respond or in quiet times during big projects).

- Having the opportunity to pursue your own interests, including exploring opportunities outside the placement team/department.

- Regular meetings with and feedback from supervisors.

# APPENDIX 6: SKILLS CHANGES AND IMPACT OF TRAINING DURING THE PROGRAMME

Figure 10: Comparison of the change in average level of digital skills during the traineeship by cohort.
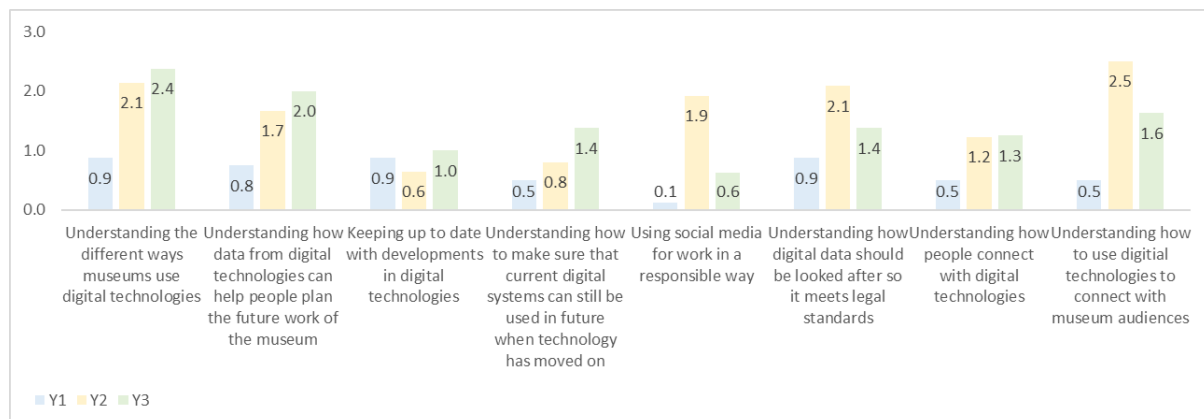


Figure 11: Comparison of the change in average level of core museum skills during the traineeship by cohort.
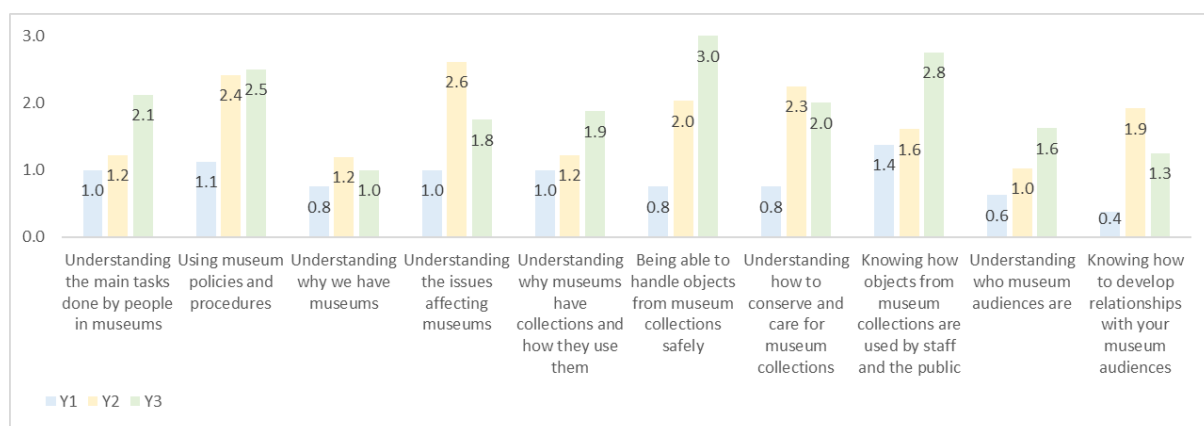


Figure 12: Comparison of the change in average level of employment skills during the traineeship by cohort.
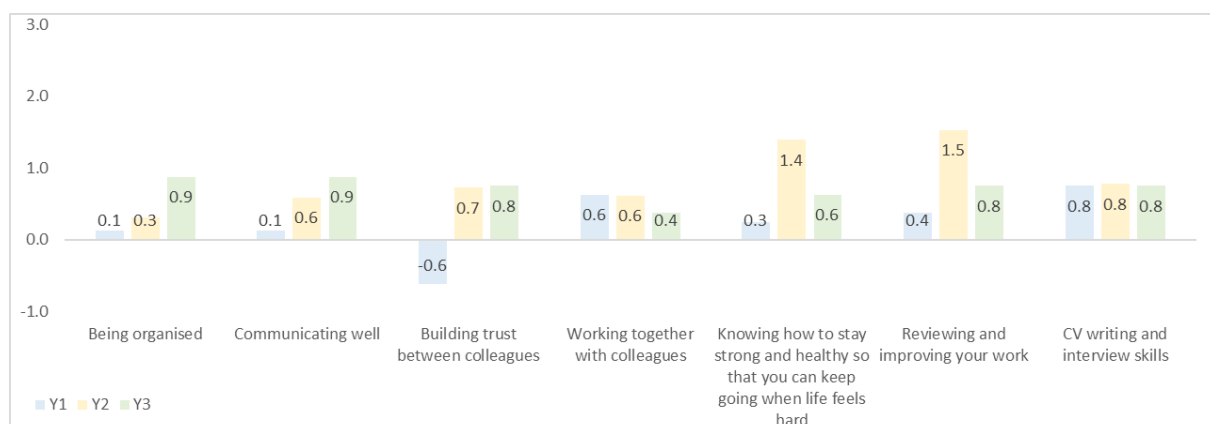
Figure 13: Supervisors' view of trainees' application of skills, all years
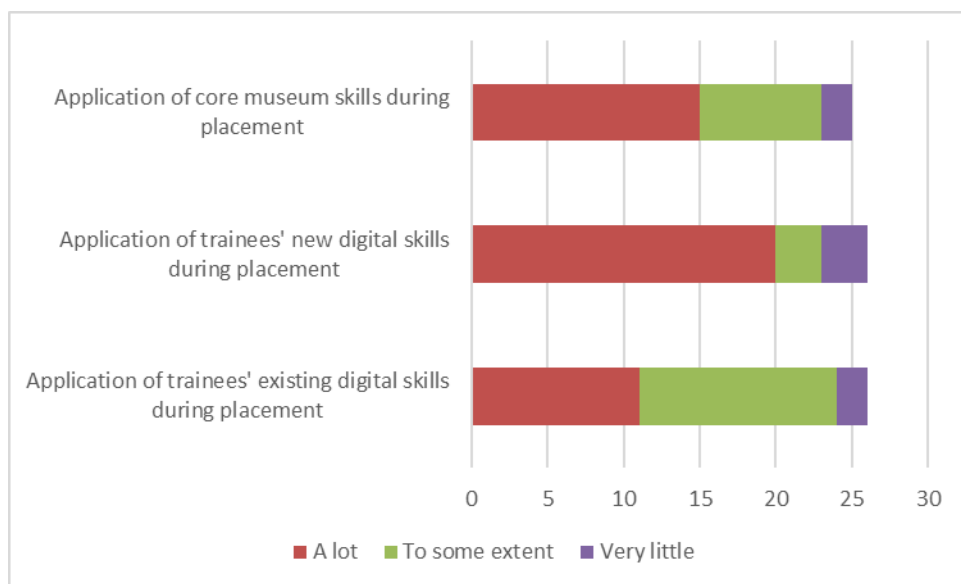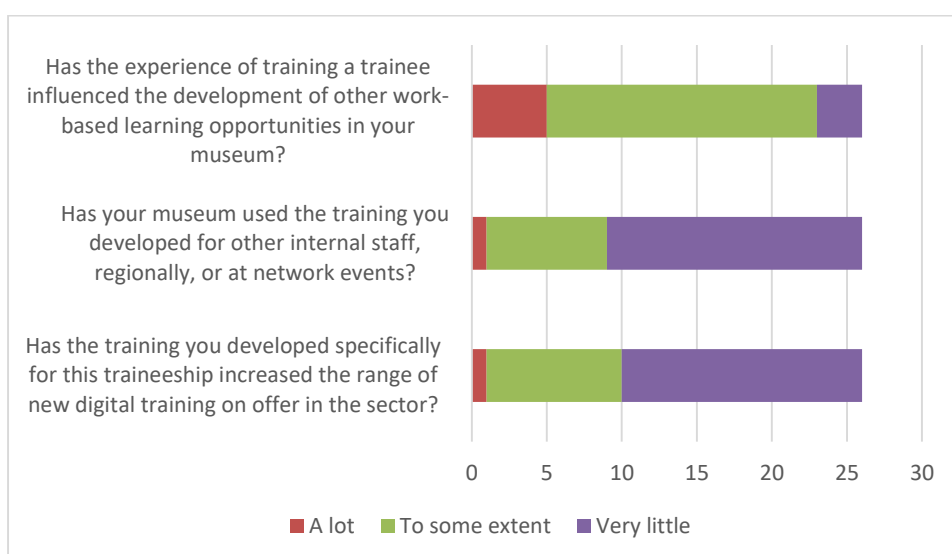


Figure 14: Supervisors' views on impact of developing training internally, all years

## APPENDIX 7: KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE DIGITAL ATTITUDES AND SKILLS IN HERITAGE (DASH) SURVEY 2020

# Key findings

The DASH (Digital Attitudes and Skills in Heritage) survey aimed to better understand the attitudes and skills of people working in UK heritage, and to learn more about the organisational support they received in relation to using digital technologies. Data from this survey, carried out between April and July 2020, revealed that the way people considered their digital skills was heavily influenced by their role. Listening to the experiences of people in different roles allowed organisational issues and opportunities to be viewed from different perspectives, and we therefore found it of value to summarise data for volunteers, trustees and staff separately.

We collected data from a broad and diverse set of 4,120 people working across UK heritage, representing organisations from all UK countries, regions, organisation sizes and sub-sector areas. We are confident that the data summarised here are an accurate and authentic representation of the breadth of digital attitudes and skills of people working and volunteering in the UK heritage sector, and as such are of interest to all those working across heritage. Summary statistics are most likely to reflect smaller heritage organisations as 63% of DASH data came from people in organisations with fifty or fewer employed staff.

Across all roles (volunteer, trustee and staff), attitudes to digital were mainly positive and seen through a pragmatic lens. Technology was considered useful, but people tended to focus their interest only where it could offer clear and tangible gains to them in role. The level of digital skills was relatively high, especially for employed staff and in relation to activities such as video conferencing, but confidence in using social media or collaborative digital platforms was lower. Volunteers rated their digital skills as lower than trustees or employed staff.

Many participants lacked awareness of key issues such as accessibility and copyright. Whilst access to online resources would be of use in relation to these kinds of issue, numerous people reported a lack of personal, face to face support and interaction as a barrier to learning more about ways to use digital. They wanted opportunities to share practice and swap skills with others working in similar circumstances.

# Recommendations for the heritage sector

The results from this analysis lead to the following recommendations for organisations:

- Organisations would benefit from embedding conversations about digital into recruitment and appraisal and identifying the digital skills that their volunteers, trustees and staff have (eg via skills audits, internal surveys)
- People want to know what 'good' digital skills look like in the context of their role; it would help for organisations to discuss expectations with their staff, trustees and volunteers, and identify examples of best practice in these roles
- Many people working in heritage are looking for support from other people and not access to resources. They want to talk, share, and be mentored by others working in their context. The creation and support of local and sub-sector communities of practice would provide a useful mechanism that enables these interactions
- Organisations should consider creating a digital action plan that identifies their digital priorities. Start small: this living document can grow and evolve through time. What's important is to begin having conversations about where digital can add value

For those supporting the sector, we recommend that:

- Heritage organisations are supported to develop skills regarding accessibility, licensing and strategy, and training should be focused in particular on content development and use of social media
- Role and context are the lens through which people understand digital skills and practices, so an appreciation of typical user groups and their needs would help to engage people with the support available, for example via suggested roadmaps through content
- The creation of new types of voluntary role that attract digital enthusiasts could help engage and support heritage organisations. This support could be offered remotely, allowing rural organisations to benefit from skills more available in metropolitan areas