

4.	Volunteering in Museums and Cultural Heritage in the UK	
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4.1 UK volunteering sector overview¹

Volunteering has a long tradition in the UK and is well-established in many areas, including health and well-being, sport, youth work, and the cultural sector. It is culturally accepted and seen as worthwhile by both the public and Government policy-makers. Volunteering is widely believed to underpin civil society, to be an essential part of a free society and vital for strong, active citizenship. According to the 1997 National Survey of Volunteering conducted by the Institute for Volunteering Research approximately 22 million adults take part in some kind of voluntary activity each year.

Volunteering can, however, also be seen to be old fashioned, or something which is engaged in primarily by older people (indeed, the largest group of people who volunteer is the newly-retired). The CEV UK report, written in 2004, recommends addressing the image of volunteering to make it more attractive towards groups which may feel excluded or which have lower levels of participation, and there are currently a number of initiatives in this area – particularly aimed at attracting younger volunteers, volunteers from disadvantaged backgrounds or more culturally diverse volunteers.²

The UK volunteering infrastructure includes four national agencies, reflecting the four nations of the United Kingdom – Volunteering England, Volunteer Development Scotland, Wales Council for Voluntary Action, and Volunteer Development Agency Northern Ireland – which are funded through a combination of government and corporate sources. The UK Government support for the national agencies is in recognition of the importance of volunteering in helping to create stronger, more active communities.³

At local level, volunteer centres operate in many towns, offering volunteer ‘surgeries’ (drop-in information sessions), promoting a wide variety of volunteer opportunities in the local media, and running volunteer recruitment fairs in local shopping centres. ‘Give something back’ is a common theme.

The CEV report profiles typical UK volunteers: long and short term, employer-supporter, older, professional, episodic, transitional (moving from one phase of life to another – for example from student to graduate seeking relevant work experience, or from full-time parent to ‘empty nester’ with greater leisure time), unemployed and stipended (volunteers who receive a token payment for their work which does not represent its commercial value). In general, volunteers in the UK are people with higher levels of education and higher incomes, however given the recognition of the importance of volunteering to support community cohesion, there are many schemes to diversify and attract ‘non-traditional’ volunteers.

Volunteering has a significant monetary value to the not-for-profit sector in the UK. It is estimated that 1.1 million full-time UK workers would be needed to replace volunteers – at a cost of £25.4billion. In addition, 53% of volunteers add money to their host organisations, by

¹ Sources: 1997 National Survey of Volunteering in the UK www.ivr.org.uk/; CEV datafile United Kingdom 2004 www.cev.be/data/File/UNITED_KINGDOM_updated.pdf.

² For example: ‘v’ and CSV both support youth volunteering. <http://www.wearev.com/>; <http://www.csv.org.uk/>. Millennium Volunteers (1999-2008) was a scheme specifically aimed at young people ages 16-24. ‘In Touch’, at Manchester Museum, works with volunteers from disadvantaged backgrounds.

³ Volunteering England www.volunteeringengland.org.uk; Volunteer Development Scotland www.vds.org.uk; Wales Council for Voluntary Action <http://www.wcva.org.uk/www.wcva.org.uk>; Volunteer Development Agency Northern Ireland www.volunteering-ni.org

raising money or taking part in sponsored events. The *2005 Home Office Citizenship Survey (HOCS)* showed that 44% of those interviewed had volunteered formally at least once in the preceding 12 months.⁴

The economic contribution made by volunteers in the UK means that many organisations are able to carry out work which they otherwise would be unable to do, or to extend into new areas. There is concern, however, that volunteers may replace paid professionals in the delivery of essential services.

The UK Government is increasingly recognising the important role the voluntary sector and volunteers can play in the delivery of public services, such as social care, housing, education and health care. More than 60% of UK charities are already significantly involved in this area. The national volunteer centres welcome this acknowledgement, but they urge the Government to be aware of the implications of public service delivery by the voluntary sector and volunteers, for example the Government must ensure that volunteers are properly trained and supported, and that sums of money are ear-marked for these purposes. Ironically however, two recent government documents on public services scarcely mention volunteers (the “Cross-Cutting” report and the “Future Builders” consultation document) – hence, public services volunteers have been dubbed “invisible volunteers”.⁵

The CEV report identifies a number of themes and issues related to volunteering in the UK including:

- Lack of quality evidence on volunteering
- The failure to adopt consistent definitions of volunteering
- An avoidance of realising the costs of volunteering and of recruiting, supporting and retaining volunteers
- The need to clarify both to the general public and to government and policy-makers the difference between voluntary sector organisations and volunteering organisations.

4.1.1 Legal Framework

On a national level, the Compact on Relations between the Government and Voluntary and Community Sector (or “Compact”) is a framework agreement between the government and the voluntary and community sector which aims to improve the relationship of one to the other to the benefit of both parties.

Four “Codes of Good Practice” accompany the Compact covering

- Black and Minority Ethnic and Community Groups
- Consultation
- Funding
- Volunteering

The Compact supports both government officials and voluntary and community sector workers to make sense of the complicated and difficult issues they have to face. 80% of

⁴ *2005 Home Office Citizenship Survey (HOCS)* quoted by Graduate Prospects, the commercial subsidiary of the Higher Education Careers Services Unit (HECSU). HECSU is a registered charity that supports the work of higher education careers services in the UK and Republic of Ireland and funds major research projects that benefit the higher education careers sector.

<http://www.prospects.ac.uk>

⁵ Dr Justin Davis-Smith, “Where do Volunteers fit in? – *The Brave New World of Public Services*”, *Volunteering Magazine*, August 2003, no. 90.

local authorities have agreed or are developing a Compact with local voluntary and community groups.⁶

It is, however, a nonbinding framework agreement and at local level few Compacts yet exist. Consequently, in spite of joint undertakings set out in the Volunteering Code of Good Practice to strengthen the volunteering infrastructure at local level, this remains extremely weak. There has been no significant increase in local investment and currently about 60 of the 380 local volunteer development agencies are at risk of closure because of a crisis in funding.⁷

At an institutional level, it is considered good practice to have a written policy for volunteering, procedures for recruitment, induction, training and grievance (often mirroring those relating to paid staff), to carry out appropriate police and security checks, and to hold liability insurance which covers the activities of volunteers.

4.1.2 Training

All four UK national volunteer agencies offer a programme of courses promoting good practice working with volunteers, as well as training courses for volunteers themselves. They also signpost people to training offered by other organisations or agencies.

Training in volunteer management is also offered through a number of organisations, agencies and programmes. Lantra Awards (a private national educational body approved to develop and accredit qualifications) offers the Advanced Certificate in Volunteer Management for anyone who regularly supervises or leads volunteers. The certificate aims to develop course participants' management skills while at the same time recognising the special nature and values of volunteering.⁸

Community Service Volunteers (CSV) runs the Institute for Advanced Volunteer Management (IAVM), which offers advanced-level training and services for volunteer managers and volunteer programme managers in the charitable, voluntary, not-for-profit, public and corporate sectors. Topics covered include recruitment, interviewing, screening, risk management, supervision, induction, recognition, evaluation, team-building, strategic planning, change management and building leadership. The programme is supported by an annual residential course.⁹

Professional associations, such as the Museums Association, run occasional one-day courses in volunteer management.

4.1.3 Quality Standards: Investing in Volunteers¹⁰

Investing in Volunteers is the UK quality standard for all organisations which involve volunteers in their work. The Standard enables organisations to comprehensively review their volunteer management, and also publicly demonstrates their commitment to volunteering.

The Standard was developed in the late 1990s and focuses on planning for volunteer involvement, recruiting volunteers, selecting and matching volunteers, and supporting and retaining volunteers. It is managed locally by the lead volunteer development agency of each country of the UK.

⁶ www.thecompact.org.uk

⁷ CEV datafile United Kingdom 2004 www.cev.be/data/File/UNITED_KINGDOM_updated.pdf.

⁸ See http://www.lantra-awards.co.uk/training/training_vrqssummary.aspx

⁹ See <http://www.csv.org.uk/>

¹⁰ Information taken from <http://www.investinginvolunteers.org.uk/>

A free online learning programme, the ‘Investing in Volunteers Toolkit’, helps to prepare organisations for the Investing in Volunteers accreditation through a series of short (5 minute), easy to access modules. Users complete a short registration form and then work through the units at their own pace. The registration process is also free, and there is no commitment to sign up for the full programme.

Achieving the Standards takes up to 12 months. The cost depends on the size and complexity of the organisation.

Getting involved with the Investing in Volunteers Standard may improve the effectiveness of work with volunteers in a structured way; allow the organisation to compare volunteer practice against a recognised standard; minimise potential risks which may arise from working with volunteers; and support the sustaining of volunteers’ motivation.¹¹

The iV website contains case studies for different sectors, including museums. Beamish, The North of England Open Air Museum, decided to work towards Investing in Volunteers in order to demonstrate to its existing volunteers their importance to the Museum, as well as showing potential new volunteers that they would be valued.

Aiming to achieve the standard helped to ensure that procedures were up to date with current practice and to address and amend any gaps. Working towards the Standard showed that practices were mainly good, but it also identifies areas that needed improvement and allowed the museum to do this.

Beamish recommends involving all staff and volunteers in the process; speaking to other organisations who have been through iV; and setting up a working group to support iV.¹²

4.1.4 Accreditation of volunteering in the UK

Where volunteering is seen as a stepping-stone to employment, formal recognition or accreditation may help to articulate and recognise what experiences have been engaged in, skills learned or competencies developed. Some organisations may require volunteers to complete a course of training in order to develop the skills necessary to become a volunteer. The Sainsbury Centre for Contemporary Art (SCVA) in Norwich, for example, requires interested people to complete an accredited 20 week course before joining the team of volunteer guides.¹³

The skills required to be a successful volunteer are also transferable to other spheres, so if volunteering is seen as a route to a paid post, completing a course of study may be useful. Accreditation may also provide a kind of quality control, whereby a relevant level of skills can be demonstrated for legal purposes – for example first aid – or to achieve recognition when working with professional partners.

¹¹ For a fuller list see: <http://iiv.investinginvolunteers.org.uk/Introduction/benefits.htm>

¹² Source: <http://iiv.investinginvolunteers.org.uk/newsviews/casestudies/Arts+And+Heritage/>. Other iV case studies are listed on the website. See also <http://www.beamish.org.uk/Home.aspx>

¹³ The course costs £200, however some bursary places are available. On completion of the course guides are required to commit to guiding on at least one day per month and to attend monthly meetings at the Centre. See <http://www.scva.org.uk/getinvolved/becomeaguide/>

Accreditation is not always seen as positive or necessary. A recent study for the Economic and Social Research Council shows that a large number of volunteers are not intending to use their volunteering as a step towards employment.¹⁴

4.1.5 Young people & volunteering

The Millennium Volunteers (MV) programme was set up in 1999 in preparation for the Millennium and administered by the Government's Department for Education & Skills (now the Department for Children, Schools and Families). MV channelled central government funding into volunteering opportunities for young people aged 16-24. During this eight-year period, over 40,000 were awarded Millennium Volunteer certificates.

Vinspired is a new agency for youth volunteering (ages 16-25) in England.¹⁵ It aims to create a culture where it is natural for young people to volunteer, and natural for organisations to support them in doing so, because the benefits of volunteering are widely understood and celebrated. Young volunteers can search for volunteering opportunities in their local area on www.vinspired.com.

Community Service Volunteers (CSV)¹⁶

Community Service Volunteers (CSV) was founded in 1962 by Mora and Alec Dickson, who also founded Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO). CSV works with volunteers of all ages – from youth volunteering to third age volunteers. They coordinate an annual 'Make a Difference' day, the UK's biggest day of 'hands-on' volunteering.

At the international level, CSV is influential in building volunteer exchanges across the world, developing thinking on voluntary action, facilitating governmental co-operation, exchanging best practice in the voluntary sector, promoting social inclusion, and encouraging active citizenship

One of CSV's main aims is to play a part in the social development of Europe and to encourage active European citizenship, particularly among disadvantaged young people. CSV's European Office provides the secretariat for two networks:

- Volonteuropa, is a European network consisting of more than 1200 organisations, operating in social and civil commitment. Volonteuropa meets annually to exchange know-how and best practice and which campaigns for the inclusion of voluntary and community policy on the European agenda.¹⁷
- Third Sector European Network (TSEN), a lobbying group formed of regional networks of UK voluntary and community organisations which receive European funding. TSEN also occupies a seat on the English National Monitoring Committee, which monitors ESF policy and practice in the UK. CSV is also a member of the European Network of Older Volunteers.

¹⁴ Name of report not given, quoted in Henson, Don, 'Training the Volunteers', *Conservation Bulletin*, Issue 53: Autumn 2006.

¹⁵ See <http://www.wearev.com/>

¹⁶ Information in this section from <http://www.csv.org.uk/>

¹⁷ See <http://www.volonteuropa.org/>

4.2 Volunteering in the cultural sector

4.2.1 Museums, Libraries and Archives

Volunteers are found in every area and level of museum work. Museums may involve volunteers in small numbers or the museum may be entirely staffed by volunteers; boards of trustees (who carry the legal responsibility for institutional governance) are made up of volunteers, as may be the student helpers on a family open day.

Although volunteering is widespread within the UK cultural sector there is no formal network of UK organisations involving volunteers in museums and heritage. Many umbrella organisations include volunteering within their remit. The most significant contribution is made by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA), the UK government's agency for museums, galleries, libraries and archives in England, delivering strategic leadership in England and in each of its regions, and collaborating with partners across the UK. There are parallel bodies in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. According to MLA, there are 55,000 staff and 22,000 volunteers working in museums, libraries and archives in England. Volunteering has similar roots and traditions in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, therefore it is likely that volunteering reflects a similar pattern in those parts of the UK, however specific data to support this has not been collected in compiling this report.

The 2005 report 'Volunteering in Museums, Libraries and Archives', commissioned by MLA, gives a comprehensive overview of the sector in England.¹⁸ The Executive Summary is included in Appendix 5, and only selected statistics are given here. 585 organisations completed the survey (a response rate of 31%); 95% of these involved volunteers in some way. The most common reasons for working with volunteers was to extend the museum's work by doing something which it otherwise would not be able to do, or to engage more effectively with existing and new publics. Just over half of the responding organisations worked with between 1 and 20 volunteers; 6% worked with 100 or more. The main reason why museums did not work with volunteers was that they were unable to employ a volunteer coordinator.

The MLA report highlights the pivotal role of the volunteer coordinator and the importance of this being a securely-funded post. '...Where funding for (volunteer) manager's posts was uncertain, this made planning and programme development difficult.'

Diversity of volunteers, or the lack of diversity, was also a concern. 'Diversity is still an issue and organisations need to look carefully at how volunteers are recruited.'

4.2.2 Volunteering in museums as a route to employment

For recent graduates, volunteering in museums can be an essential first step to a career: building valuable work experience to complement an academic qualification. The Museums Association advises young graduate volunteers to take volunteering seriously: research museums carefully; approach smaller institutions (which are less likely to be overwhelmed with requests for voluntary work); treat volunteering as if it were paid work and make the most of the opportunity.¹⁹

Volunteering as a way into a career may, however, be a disincentive to people from lower socio-economic or minority ethnic backgrounds. Research by Creative and Cultural Skills

¹⁸ Howlett, S., Machin, J., and Malmersjo, G. (2005) Volunteering in Museums, Libraries and Archives, Institute for Volunteering Research. Available to download as a pdf from http://www.mla.gov.uk/website/publications/browse_by_title/v/.

¹⁹ <http://www.museumsassociation.org/>

(CCS) has found that diversifying the museum workforce is being held back by a dependence on volunteering. 'Often a period of volunteering is required in order to gain a foot in the door. This unstructured, unpaid, or low paid work leads to a sector that does not accurately reflect the diversity of society in the UK.'²⁰

4.2.3 Volunteering in museums: information and advice

Other organisations providing guidelines on good practice for working with volunteers in museums include The Association of Independent Museums (AIM) and the British Association of Friends of Museums.

The Association of Independent Museums (AIM) serves independent museums, heritage centres and historical interpretation projects. Their focus paper, 'Working with Volunteers, a guide to good practice' is available from <http://www.aim-museums.co.uk>.

The British Association of Friends of Museums www.bafm.org.uk works both with friends' groups and volunteers: in some organisations the Friends are also the volunteers; in others the Friends have more of a social role (where one pays a fee to join and receives benefits such as invitations to exhibition previews or visits to other museums), and / or a fundraising function. The BAFM publishes a 'Charter & Handbook for Heritage Volunteer Managers and Administrators', available free to its members.

4.2.4 Heritage Volunteering: The National Trust and English Heritage

The National Trust²¹

The National Trust (NT) is the most important cultural heritage and conservation body in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland, with 3.5 million members.²² It is a charity, independent of the UK Government, which protects and opens to the public over 300 historic houses and gardens and 49 industrial monuments and mills. It also looks after a huge variety of countryside and historic sites: forests, woods, fens, beaches, farmland, downs, moorland, islands, archaeological remains, castles, nature reserves and entire villages.

The NT is also the leading cultural heritage organisation working with volunteers – in 2007 there were 52,000 volunteers giving 2.3 million hours of work. This contrasts with just 5,000 full-time paid members of staff (although staff numbers increase with seasonal staff). The NT uses the term volunteer to describe anyone who gifts their time to support the organisation. They may take on a variety of roles and work in a variety of departments but they are all unified by the fact that they donate their time to the organisation on a voluntary basis.

The 'traditional' NT volunteer role is that of room steward, however the opportunities don't stop there. Volunteers are currently involved in roles such as conservation, cleaning, cataloguing, interpretation, research, guiding and administration.

²⁰ http://www.ccskills.org.uk/insight/Entry_to_the_sector.html

²¹ With thanks to Helen Timbrell, Head of Volunteering, the National Trust, for answering the VoCH questionnaire and Mark Crosby, Acting Head of Volunteering, for supplementary information. For further information please see www.nationaltrust.org.uk or www.nationaltrust.org.uk/volunteering.

²² The National Trust for Scotland operates in a very similar way, however it is a completely separate and independent charity. See <http://www.nts.org.uk/Home/>.

Employer Supported Volunteering (ESV) through the NT is for business and public sector employers who wish to make a difference to the environment, while fulfilling their own staff training and development objectives – especially team-building. In 2007, over 50 companies and 2,000 staff took part in ESV.

Another kind of volunteering is Working Holidays. These last between two and seven days and cost from £60 (c. €77) a week including food and hostel-type accommodation. The work takes place outdoors, in groups of around a dozen. Training is given by the group leader. Working Holidays attract volunteers from age 16 upwards, from all walks of life and from all over the world.

The volunteering programme is well-established and continues to develop to meet the needs of the volunteers and the organisation. The work of volunteers was mapped and analysed by the Institute for Volunteering Research in 2004, with a further survey in 2007. This has given valuable data on their contribution, demographic and motivation and helped to inform the Trust's work with volunteers.

The NT believes that the volunteering experience must be seen as beneficial both to the volunteer and the organisation. This includes having clear role profiles, payment of expenses, a nominated line manager, appropriate reward and recognition, etc. The National Trust has Five Essential Standards for Volunteer Management which cover areas like this and which they use to ensure a core standard of good practice in volunteering across the organisation.²³

Each property has a 'key contact' for volunteers; volunteering is promoted to everyone from young people wishing to gain valuable work experience to strengthen their CV, to everyone who would like to learn a new skill or make new friends. All volunteers within the NT should receive a clear induction to their role and to the organisation followed by any training required for their role. In some cases this may be formal and accredited training although it is more likely to be non-accredited. Volunteers can join a volunteer group or attend an annual conference. Some managers of volunteers within the NT have been able to complete the LANTRA certificate in advanced volunteer management.

English Heritage

English Heritage, the UK Government's statutory adviser on the historic environment, is probably best known for the historic sites in its care which are open to the public. It also looks after the historic environment as a whole, including historic buildings, monuments and areas, and archaeological remains. It aims not only to ensure the preservation of historic surroundings for the future, but also to encourage people to appreciate and enjoy heritage today.²⁴

Education volunteering sits at the heart of English Heritage's aim to broaden the range of activities and resources they can offer to education visitors. The involvement of volunteers is designed to increase the number and variety of interactive sessions for education groups as more people are available on site to help to deliver them. English Heritage recruits volunteers age 18 and over to assist site educators with workshops, tours and other activities associated with learning and school visits. All volunteer roles support, develop or deliver site-based education activities. Anyone can get involved in a variety of short term and long term volunteering opportunities. No previous experience is required and all training is given on site. For the volunteer, the benefits of participating in the programme include

²³ The National Trust Five Essential Standards for Volunteer Management is reprinted in Appendix 7.

²⁴ English Heritage www.english-heritage.org.uk

learning new skills, meeting new people and helping to ensure that the historic environment is understood and enjoyed by visitors.²⁵

4.2.5 Volunteering in art galleries²⁶

No specific data, information or guidelines could be found from any umbrella body relating to art galleries and volunteering, however engage, the UK National Association for Gallery Education, has just launched a new programme, Youth Volunteering in the Visual Arts (YVVA), which will support accredited placements for vulnerable and hard to reach young people in visual arts venues. The programme is organised by engage and funded by the Department for Children, Schools and Families in 2008-9 and the National Lottery through Arts Council England in 2009-10. From 2008-10 twenty placements will take place in ten visual arts venues across England.

The programme aims to:

- Develop high quality accredited volunteering placements for young people aged 16-25
- Provide young people, particularly 'hard to reach' young people, opportunities to access the arts
- Develop understanding and appreciation of the benefits of youth volunteering in the visual arts and wider cultural sector

In the first round of the programme four visual arts venues with experience of working with young people will offer volunteering placements to eight vulnerable or hard to reach young people. Each venue will provide accreditation that could lead towards an Arts Award, Diploma in Creative and Media units or pre-entry qualification for Creative Apprenticeships. Galleries will work with local youth support networks or training providers to recruit the young people. A Young People's Advisory group will provide guidance to inform its development.²⁷

4.3 Case Studies

4.3.1 Museum volunteering in the North West region of England: Sharing expertise through the North West Volunteer Co-ordinators' Forum Kerry Beeston, August 2008

This section covers the museums contacted and researched from the North West region of England.

The overall sense gained from initial contact with a number of the museums was that while most museums had volunteers, there was not a specific person who managed them. Where there was a volunteer coordinator it was often not his or her main role within the organisation. The museums which responded to the questionnaire, however, were largely those which had appointed a volunteer co-ordinator or manager to look after all of their volunteers, or for a particular volunteer project.

²⁵ The English Heritage Volunteer Policy document can be downloaded from:
<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/upload/pdf/education-volunteer-policy.pdf> .

²⁶ Within England there is a distinction made between museums and art galleries (art museums with or without a permanent collection), which is less differentiated in Northern Ireland, Scotland or Wales, and virtually unknown in the rest of Europe.

²⁷ www.engage.org

Much information came from a meeting of the newly formed **North West Volunteer Co-ordinators' Forum**, which is made up of individuals working within museums, culture and heritage organisations in the North West region of England, who in some capacity work with or manage volunteers or volunteer programmes. The participants plan to meet every three months to exchange information, ideas and best practice.

Forum representatives agreed that often the position of Volunteer Co-ordinator is an add-on to other responsibilities and not a role in its own right. At the same time, the importance of volunteers and volunteering programmes is growing, not just among 'traditional' volunteers, but also because museums wish to engage more directly with their local communities to increase access or widen participation.

Bolton Museum has recently appointed a new Communities and Volunteers Officer, who will run a new object handling training programme for volunteers. Each programme will run for six months with eight individuals who will volunteer in the museum for one or two hours on Saturdays. The first programme is due to start in Autumn 2008 and will be run in conjunction with Mencap – a charity which supports people with learning disabilities. Successive courses will run in partnership with different charities and organisations.

Although all twelve sites of the **Lancashire Museums** have some involvement with volunteers, they do not have a designated volunteer co-ordinator. Instead, individual museum curators are in charge of their own volunteers. One of their museums at Fleetwood, however, is staffed almost entirely by volunteers.

Salford Museums currently have several programmes involving volunteers. Different museum personnel work with each programme and its volunteers. For example, the Lifetimes Officer looks after the volunteers in the Lifetimes Oral History Project, who collect people's memories and photographs. The Embrace Project, run in conjunction with National Museums Liverpool, has six volunteers, mainly refugees, who attend the programme for half a day per week.

National Museums Liverpool has approximately 250 volunteers across its eight venues, working in many different roles. Liverpool has been European Capital of Culture 2008 and growing awareness about volunteering in culture and heritage has generated more requests for volunteer placements. The volunteers' team at NML has placed 140 new volunteers within the last six months. In 2007 over 360 individuals volunteered within their venues. In April 2008 NML launched its v-involved project, part of the v National Youth Volunteering Programme aimed specifically at 16 to 25 year olds.

Tullie House Museum in Carlisle has 60 volunteers who work in various areas and are mainly managed by the individual curators from the museum. However Community Outreach volunteers are managed by the Community Outreach Officer.

Most of the Forum members agreed that one of the main benefits of working with volunteers was that it enabled them to do things it would otherwise be unable to do. Some volunteer projects enhance community engagement by encouraging participation from people of all abilities and backgrounds.

The main challenge to the organisation was pressure on staff time, especially where a specific volunteer manager was not in place. New volunteer coordinators felt that the Forum had supported the setting up of their post and their induction.

The Forum members were interested in learning more about the legal and administrative side of setting up and running volunteer programmes. They also wanted to have access to

external volunteer training and volunteering organisations, to know more about how to access funding, and to attend training on managing and motivating volunteers. Within a European handbook for volunteer co-ordinators they were interested in having a variety of case studies, along with templates for volunteer agreements, policies, expenses guidelines.

4.3.2 Learning new skills: The In Touch Volunteer Programme

Adele Finley, Volunteer Co-ordinator & In Touch Project Manager, October 2008

In Touch is a volunteer and training programme developed jointly by The Manchester Museum and Imperial War Museum North (IWM North) to target disadvantaged individuals in Greater Manchester. Funded for three years by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and working in partnership with local colleges, the programme offers training in a variety of museum roles, combined with an accredited Cultural Heritage Course with embedded Basic Skills.

In Touch aims to help around 180 disadvantaged individuals access heritage, re-engage with learning and improve their prospects for employment. Through the programme, the museums hope to expand the number of people who volunteer and also to diversify their workforce, to better represent the communities they serve.

The programme brings together two very different museums: The Manchester Museum and IWM North, under the banner of volunteer and community engagement. It offers the opportunity for each museum to further develop and sustain its work with hard to reach audiences, whilst providing the opportunity to share good practice, pool resources and develop a comprehensive, creative and collaborative volunteer programme.

Since 2000 both museums have demonstrated their commitment to life-long learning and community engagement through their volunteer and outreach programmes. The In Touch project has provided an opportunity to build on and further develop the programmes that already existed.

The Participants recruited onto the programme are non-traditional volunteers and/or non-traditional museum goers are from one or more of the following specific target groups:

- long term unemployed
- people with low skills levels and outdated skills
- young people (post 16) at risk of exclusion and/or offending
- asylum seekers and refugees
- single parents
- people with disabilities

Funding for the project was secured from the Heritage Lottery Fund in January 2006. The project was awarded £424,844 until December 2009.

The training programme runs three times a year and participants take part in a 10 week programme, attending two afternoons a week at their chosen museum. The programme covers the history of the museum, the museum building, exhibitions, marketing, education, health and safety, collections, conservation, object handling and *You as a Volunteer*. It also incorporates visits to other heritage sites in the Northwest. Embedded within the training programme is the Basic Skills literacy curriculum..

In addition participants are offered further accredited and non-accredited training in customer care, presentation skills, disability etiquette, refugee awareness and conservation.

Both museums also run workshops on the next step for participants from the Open University, Job Centre Plus, other volunteer venues and advice and guidance services.

Throughout the training and volunteering all out of pocket expenditure such as travel, lunch and childcare are reimbursed. For many participants on the course this is invaluable and is the main factor in them choosing to get involved or not. Additionally the programme does not affect state benefits such as job seekers' allowance or incapacity benefit, because the participants never commit to more than 12 hours a week during training or volunteering (more than this number of hours would adversely affect their benefits).

Once trained participants can begin to volunteer in the museum space. New volunteers are 'buddied' with existing volunteers and staff who support them until they are happy and confident to operate on their own. Ongoing evaluation has shown that peer group and staff support is an essential element of the successful completion of the course and continued volunteering. The roles currently available to volunteers are:

- greeter at the museum door
- gallery helper
- Your History: access to online collections family history research area
- object handler
- cataloguing collections
- education support
- public and outreach events

The impact of the project

Participants have developed confidence, self-esteem, key transferable skills and museum knowledge. Additionally a number of participants have commented throughout 2007 that the course has made them feel less isolated, given them a structure within which to plan their weeks, helped them make friends, made them aware of the opportunities available, motivated them to undertake their own study at local libraries and given them the confidence and optimism to compile a new CV and apply for jobs.

"From this course I have had the chance to build up my confidence in a friendly and stimulating environment, to meet new people and overcome my anxieties about mixing with the public. I have also enjoyed brushing up on my literacy skills and gained a lot of interesting knowledge of both this museum and the places we have visited." (Volunteer, September 2007)

Most of the participants come to the end of the training programme with a strong sense of ownership and pride in the museum: this then motivates them to bring family and friends on visits. It also generates a strong commitment to the role of volunteer.

The Museums have been able to demonstrate greater diversity as participants from the project have begun to volunteer in the museum spaces. Additionally staff have been involved in the delivery of the project either through presenting specific sessions or supporting participants as they begin volunteering. A number of staff have found working on the project inspirational:

"The project has created a more friendly atmosphere on the galleries and has significantly impacted on the visitor experience" (staff member December 07)

“Initially some volunteers scarcely had the confidence to walk through the door. Now I see the same people talking to everyone, speaking up for themselves and playing an important role in the museum” (staff member August 07)

This innovative project offers a sustainable model of engagement, learning and partnership working for museums wishing to engage with hard to reach audiences. Its success is dependent on the partnerships with service providers, community groups and government agencies – without whose support the recruitment of participants would be far more difficult.

The training course is relevant to people’s lives and offers transferable skills, work experience and the chance to develop confidence. Once volunteers complete the training they are welcome to volunteer for as long or as little as they like and many do choose to remain volunteering in the museums.

As a result of the programme a number of volunteers have gone on to further learning at Trafford College and Salford College. We have also successfully supported a number of volunteers back into paid employment.

The future of the programme is dependent on further funding and currently a consortium of interested parties across Manchester has been established to ensure that further funding is available after December 2009.

4.3.3 Volunteering in a university town: Three case studies from Cambridge²⁸

The Fitzwilliam Museum is Cambridge’s most important museum, housing a world-class collection of works of art and antiquities spanning centuries and civilizations, including Egyptian, Greek, Roman and European. It has been described as “one of the greatest art collections of the nation and a monument of the first importance”.²⁹ It was founded in 1816 through a bequest of Richard, VII Viscount Fitzwilliam of Merrion. Today it is a vibrant museum, whose mission is ‘to pursue scholarship and to offer free public access to the collections and to education and information services that enhance the visitors’ experience and inspire learning.’³⁰

The Fitzwilliam Museum has an active and over subscribed volunteer programme with requests for placement from many parts of the world. This programme is managed by the Personnel and Workforce Development Manager (who is also responsible for paid staff). The Friends of the Fitzwilliam Museum also attracts volunteers who are separately managed by the Secretary of the Friends of the Fitzwilliam Museum but who follow very similar principles to those of the museum volunteers and paid staff. Their work complements that of the museum professionals, for example running object handling sessions. Volunteers are recruited, interviewed and managed much the same as paid staff. The museum has both a volunteer policy and handbook. Volunteers also undergo security checks (CRB). Training is offered, and volunteers attend regular staff briefing sessions and ‘bite-sized’ courses on a variety of topics (for example ‘dealing with difficult situations’), held half an hour before the museum opens.

²⁸ With thanks to Margaret Greeves, Head of Public Engagement at the Fitzwilliam, Linda Brooklyn, Personnel and Workforce Development Manager at the Fitzwilliam and Trustee at the Folk Museum, and to Sarah Campbell, Education Officer at Kettle’s Yard.

²⁹ Standing Commission on Museums & Galleries, 1968.

³⁰ <http://www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/index.html>

The Cambridge & County Folk Museum³¹ is an independent museum (not part of the University) which has been open to the public since 1936. It is the only local social history museum in Cambridge with a comprehensive collection representing local village life. The museum has a small core staff and relies heavily on volunteers in all aspects of its work.

The **Young Museum Advocates** scheme linked the Fitzwilliam, the Folk Museum and the Museum of Technology. Ten students from a local community college became voluntary 'cultural advocates.' The group were given behind the scenes tours of all three museums and engaged in projects to encourage people of their own age to visit museums. The scheme offered young people the chance to learn new skills, find out about museum work, and help the museums develop their young people's services.

Much smaller than the Fitzwilliam, though equally well-loved, is **Kettle's Yard House and Gallery**,³² also part of the University of Cambridge. The house was the home of Jim Ede, a curator at the Tate Gallery between 1921 and 1936, who did much to promote modern art and contemporary artists. His collection of 20th century painting and sculpture is displayed informally with furniture, glass and natural objects such as beach stones. Every afternoon (apart from Mondays) visitors can ring the bell and ask to look around the house. The adjoining gallery has a changing exhibition programme of 20th century and contemporary art, which often has a relationship to the work in the house. Both the house and the gallery are free of charge.

Kettle's Yard works with volunteers in a variety of ways: supporting the delivery of artists' workshops, assisting with publicity, researching information for catalogues, running the bar at openings and installing exhibitions. They have a database of over 400 people who are willing to help out, and about twenty regular volunteers. Volunteers receive training in object handling. They are able to attend paying events for free and also receive invitations to private views.

A new project, ReCollections: Kettle's Yard Oral History Archive, will create a resource for encouraging and deepening further engagement with Kettle's Yard and its history. Fifteen volunteers will be trained in oral history techniques and in sound editing. They will interview 40 people who have had an association or have been inspired by Kettle's Yard. Following the interviews the volunteers will edit the sound files and helping to shape the content of the website, as well as continuing beyond the two years of funding to update blogs. One aspect of the website which volunteers will help to develop is a downloadable tour of the house that can be used either onsite or for planning a visit.

A key challenge mentioned by all of the Cambridge museums is retention of volunteers: in a university town there is a high turnover as students move through.

4.3.4 Milton Keynes: Volunteers at the heart of local museums

Milton Keynes, located approximately 50 miles northwest of London is a 'new town', founded in 1967 in order to relieve over-crowded and outdated housing conditions in London. The unique combination of new and old means that Milton Keynes is not a traditional English town. It links three existing towns and 13 villages with new housing estates, business and commercial districts, and a lively shopping and entertainment centre. The town has a population of over 200,000. With well over three-quarters of the population

³¹ <http://www.folkmuseum.org.uk/index.html>

³² <http://www.kettlesyard.co.uk/index.html>

'new' to the area – whether the Milton Keynes 'pioneers' of the late 1960s and early 1970s or more recent arrivals from Eastern Europe and Africa – the town's three museums have an important role in telling the story of the past and shaping views of the present. All three museums – Milton Keynes Museum, Cowper and Newton Museum and Bletchley Park – receive no regular public funding and rely on volunteers for their survival and success.

Milton Keynes Museum³³ tells the story of the development of the locality – from its farming and railway past to the present new town. The museum and its collection were founded by volunteers in 1973, initially to present and preserve the rural way of life which was fast making way for the new town. For its first 21 years the Museum was managed and operated almost entirely by volunteers, with its first full time director appointed in 1984.

Today, Milton Keynes Museum has just two paid members of staff: the director and the volunteer coordinator. Volunteers run virtually all aspects of the museum, including looking after exhibits and preparing displays, helping with school and other group visits, staffing the museum, shop and tearoom, restoring objects, archiving, and computerising the catalogue of exhibits, publicity production and distribution, and gardening and maintenance. Volunteers complete an application form and attend an informal interview. They are welcome to give as little or as much time as they are able, but are asked to make a regular commitment of time where possible. Induction and training are given and volunteers are provided with a copy of the volunteer handbook.

The Cowper and Newton Museum³⁴ is located in Olney, a beautiful and historic market town just outside of Milton Keynes, but within the administrative Borough. It focuses on the lives of and friendship between two famous townspeople: the eighteenth century poet William Cowper (whose home now forms the museum) and Reverend John Newton, a former slave ship captain who became an ordained Anglican priest and committed abolitionist. The museum also tells the story of lace-making in Olney. The museum has a paid custodian and part-time house manager, but all other roles are undertaken by volunteers drawn from the Friends of the Museum, which exists to offer practical help in the day-to-day running of the Museum, including helping in the shop, the garden and with visiting groups.

Bletchley Park National Codes Centre³⁵ During the Second World War Bletchley Park was the location of the United Kingdom's main code breaking centre. Codes and ciphers of several Axis countries were deciphered there, most importantly those of the German Enigma and Lorenz machines. By 1991 the site was largely dilapidated and set to be re-developed as part of the building of Milton Keynes. It was saved from demolition by a group of volunteers who eventually formed the Bletchley Park Trust. Today the museum is entering an ambitious period of restoration and development, with generous grants from individuals and English Heritage. The museum is still largely volunteer-run, with volunteers working in the education, customer services, as room stewards, tour guides and on the project to rebuild the Colossus computer. Volunteers complete an application form and attend an interview.

³³ <http://www.mkmuseum.org.uk/> With thanks to Director Bill Griffiths for meeting with members of the VoCH project in May 2008.

³⁴ <http://www.mkheritage.co.uk/cnm/index.html> With thanks to the Chair of Trustee for meeting with members of the VoCH project in May 2008.

³⁵ <http://www.bletchleypark.org.uk/>

4.4 Resources

Agencies / organisations supporting volunteers in the UK - general

Community Service Volunteers

<http://www.csv.org.uk>

Employee Volunteering UK

<http://www.employeevolunteering.org.uk>

UK Volunteering Forum (UKVF)

www.ukvf.org

Voluntary Sector Skills Council

<http://www.voluntarysectorskills.org.uk>

Volunteer Development Agency Northern Ireland

www.volunteering-ni.org

Volunteer Development Scotland

www.vds.org.uk

Volunteering England

www.volunteeringengland.org.uk

Wales Council for Voluntary Action

<http://www.wcva.org.uk/www.wcva.org.uk>

Museums and Cultural Heritage

Association of Independent Museums

<http://www.aim-museums.co.uk>

The British Association of Friends of Museums

<http://www.bafm.org.uk>

engage – National Association for Gallery Education

<http://www.engage.org>

English Heritage

www.english-heritage.org.uk

MLA the Council for Museums, Archives and Libraries

<http://www.mla.gov.uk>

Museums Association

<http://www.museumsassociation.org>

The National Trust

www.nationaltrust.org.uk/volunteering

Voluntary Arts Network (UK)

<http://www.voluntaryarts.org/>

World Federation of Friends of Museums
Code of ethics for museums friends and volunteers
<http://www.museumfriends.com/codeofethics.asp>

Professional development & training

Each of the four UK national agencies for volunteering offers training for both volunteer managers and volunteers themselves.

Association of Independent Museums
Working with volunteers: an introduction to good practice (Bridget Yates)
<http://www.aim-museums.co.uk/images/cms/focus-papers/focus18.pdf>

Institute for Advanced Volunteer Management (IAVM)
Community Service Volunteers (CSV)
<http://www.csv.org.uk>

Investing in Volunteers
Free online course to assess organisational readiness to achieve liV status
<http://www.investinginvolunteers.org.uk/>

Lantra Awards
http://www.lantra-awards.co.uk/training/training_vrqssummary.aspx

Volunteer Development Scotland
Online learning unit for Volunteers Managers from
<http://www.vdlearningzone.org.uk/welcome/home.htm>

Willing & Able: recruiting, managing and retaining volunteers in museums and galleries
Handbook published by the Queensland Museum & Gallery Service (pdf) (Not European-
but a useful resource)
http://www.magsq.com.au/01_cms/details.asp?ID=21

Research

The European Manifesto on Volunteers
http://www.cev.be/Documents/CEVManifesto_EN_IT_NL.pdf

Institute for Volunteering Research
<http://www.ivr.org.uk/>

CEV – European Volunteer Centre
http://www.cev.be/66-cev_facts_e_figures_reports_-EN.html
Resource – facts & figures about volunteering in Europe

Youth Volunteering

Community Service Volunteers
<http://www.csv.org.uk>

'v'
<http://www.wearev.com/>