



Empowering *Collections*

Introduction

Revisiting the Museums Association's Empowering Collections report from 2019, we are reminded of the critical and central role which collections play in our institutions and, by extension, in the lives of our communities. Speaking with those who work closely with collections, we can see an increased ambition in how we can most effectively bring diverse perspectives to bear on our collections and a growing confidence in the process – and tremendous value – of co-curation.

The report also highlights the ongoing challenges of resourcing vital work with our collections, and of the value of creating strong partnerships – and of adopting innovative approaches, including through the use of digital technologies. Over the coming period, the Museums Association (MA) will work with the sector to ensure the journey to make our collections empowering, relevant and dynamic is as well-supported and informed as possible.

Overall, this report provides a valuable snapshot of the current position across the sector along with some thought-provoking, and hopefully energising recommendations about how collections can continue to play a pivotal role in our sector and in our communities beyond.

My sincere thanks go to all who have made this important report possible through their hard work, responses, and recommendations.

Steve Miller, *President*

Our research

In 2019 the Museums Association (MA) published the Empowering Collections report which made recommendations that called for museums, funders and policy-makers to work together to ensure that museum collections are empowering, relevant and dynamic.

In 2025 we undertook a research project to revisit the report and update the recommendations to ensure that they meet the needs of the sector and society today.

Throughout the process we captured data in various ways through events, surveys, interviews and online consultation. This research involved over 500 individuals and institutions with a balanced representation of types and sizes of museums, seniority levels of staff and a good geographical spread of museums ensuring representation of all four nations of the UK. Freelance staff and sector support networks were also consulted as were different collections specialities.

Our findings

Overall, the data we gathered paints a picture of a workforce and sector that values its collections as the unique selling point of museums and cares for them in a professional way, adhering to sector standards. There is a clear willingness to open access to collections more and many are already working to democratise collections with their communities. Responses also indicated that decolonisation work is far more common and understood than it was six years ago, although there was still some apprehension about this work in terms of fear of a negative response and how to get boards and leadership to support the work.

A high number of responses talked about the lack of resources for collections work and that there was sometimes a need to choose between back of house collections work and work with communities. Disposal as part of dynamic collections management was understood as an important process, but again many museums stated that they struggle to resource this work.

There was recognition that technological solutions might help with the lack of resources for collections work and respondents wanted to understand more about out how AI could be utilised ethically and effectively in collections management.

Aside from funding, responses were overall positive about the policies, infrastructure and sector-wide support that is currently in place but called for more sharing of collections information within the sector. Respondents felt more networks and work with partners from both within and outside of the sector would support better collections management and use.

Strategic aims *for collections*

Over the next decade, museums need their collections to be:

Empowering

Using collections to explore issues of place and identity, deliver social justice, bring communities together to enhance social cohesion, and foster conversation and reflection.

Relevant

Working with people and communities to better understand how collections can be relevant to them and reflect society.

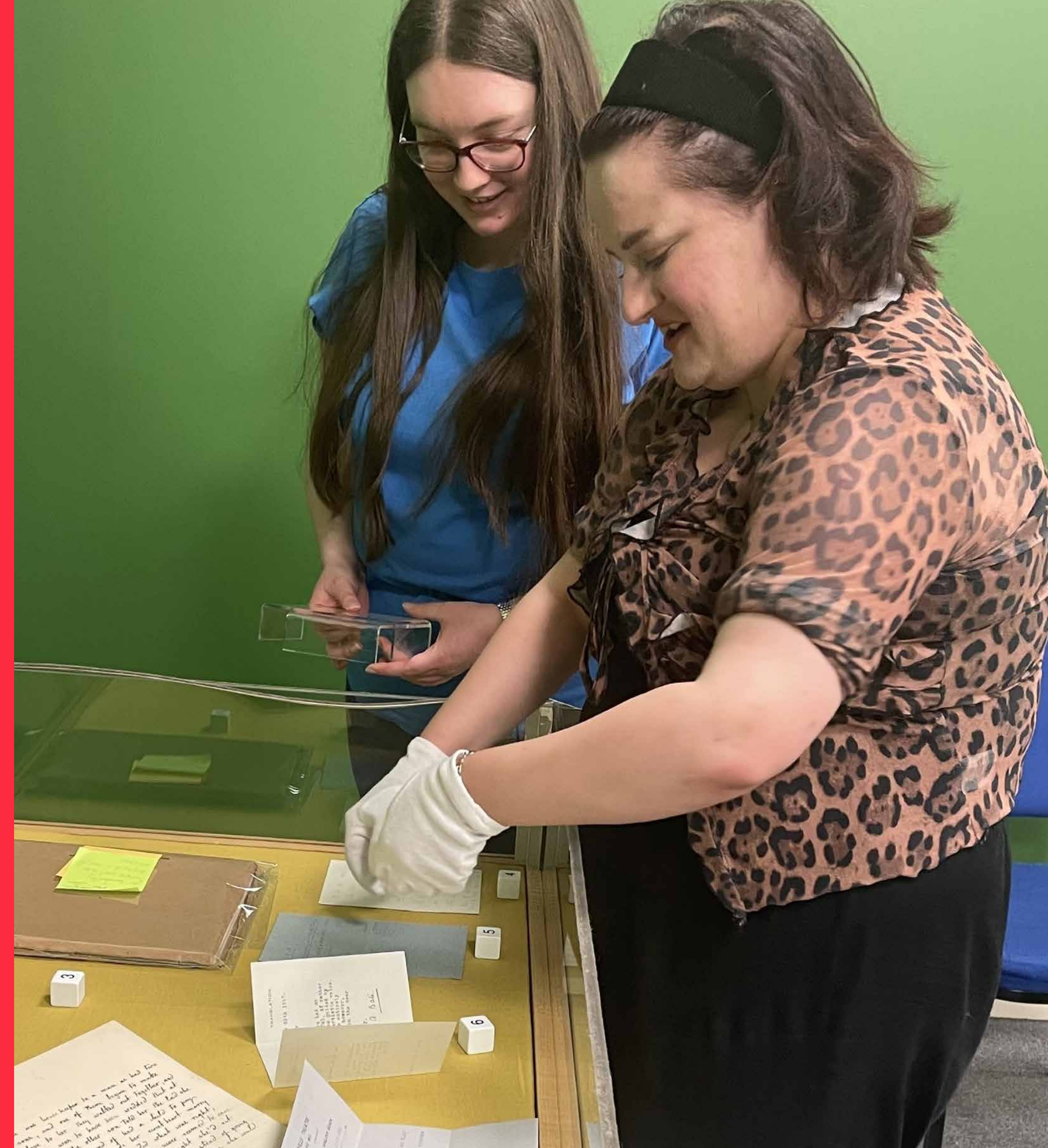
Dynamic

Active collections management including rationalisation, partnership working and knowledge sharing, to support sustainable collections and museums.

To make these aims a reality, museums, funders and sector bodies need to work collectively to:

- maintain and build upon democratised and decolonial approaches to collections work
- ensure that collections deliver public benefit and that the public understand what that benefit is
- improve cross sector working and collaboration between museums and communities to enable better sharing of collections.

Our *Recommendations*



North Lincolnshire Museum

Empowering

Collections have huge potential to empower people. With increasing economic, social and political division and an ongoing climate crisis, more museums than ever are undertaking work that can enhance wellbeing, create better and equitable places to live and work and inspiring engagement, debate and reflection.

Museums can use their collections and the stories they can tell to bring people together, promote understanding and equip people with the facts and information that are relevant to the issues they are passionate about.

Museums should use their collections to empower people to be active participants in our society, giving them the insight and tools they need to design solutions to contemporary problems, challenge injustice and create stronger communities.

We recommend:

01. A democratised approach to collections and displays

In the last six years the sector has made enormous progress in democratising collections work and this should continue and expand. Museums should work towards developing equitable ways of working with collections, recognising their institutional knowledge and supporting communities to challenge assumptions and fill gaps via reinterpretation and strategic collecting.

Museums should embed co-production and community led approaches to updating displays, prioritising those that feature out of date ideas and harmful language.

Back of house collections work should include audiences and communities from the outset, for example, prioritising work with potential for public outputs, building in community knowledge, or inviting public understanding of collections work. Funders should support holistic and inclusive collections work and recognise that back of house functions can support public outputs. Sector bodies should advocate for the role that back of house work can play in unlocking the public benefit of collections in the longer term.

*I think there's
more of a sense of
belonging because
everybody is working
now to democratise
their collections.*

Karen MacKinnon, *Glynn Vivian Art Gallery*

Case study

Birmingham Museums Trust, Citizens' Jury

Birmingham Museums Trust (BMT) launched the UK's first museum Citizens' Jury, giving power to people of the city to answer the question: "What does Birmingham need and want from its museums, now and in the future; and what should Birmingham Museums Trust do to make these things happen?"

It brought together a diverse group, matched to Birmingham's demographics across multiple measures, giving them tools to collaborate, with genuine power to shape the trust's future. The initiative provided a thoughtfully facilitated space where jurors could exchange opinions, experiences, ideas and knowledge.

This was a part of BMT's long-term planning in engaging their communities and giving them a say in the role and actions of BMT. They wanted to encourage active public participation in decision-making, and ensure a museum service positively impacting on Birmingham.



Birmingham Museums Citizens' Jury

Jurors produced 11 roles and 20 recommendations for BMT, directly informing the trust's five-year plan and beyond. Many have committed to working with the museum for an additional 18 months, including contribution to the development of an exhibition about the jury. Participation prompted personal growth, furthered public engagement and a tangible shift in participants' perception of museums, repositioning BMT from a passive repository to an active civic actor.

Case study

Recruiting a Curator of Cultural Narratives at the Thackray Museum of Medicine

Thackray Museum of Medicine is based in the Harehills area of Leeds, one of the most diverse areas of West Yorkshire. There has been a historic divide between the museum and the local community and the museum acknowledged that this was probably because their team don't look and sound like the people who live there. They have a majority white staff and felt that they couldn't fully appreciate the discrimination faced by the local community and therefore authentically tell their story.

They received funding from the Esmée Fairbairn Communities and Collections Fund to recruit a Curator of Cultural Narratives and saw this as an opportunity to show that they were serious about their anti-racism work and that they were committed to including more people in their story.

Projects like Culture Club, where they worked with black owned Sable Studio on a series of club nights at the museum, and Words of Colour, who they supported as a project ally, helped grow their network with organisations who were already doing this work. They also reached out to Culture&. They found this network was key in helping them get the role out to the right people.

They found that being involved in projects such as Curating for Change helped them build their knowledge around inclusive recruitment. For example, they offer video responses for applicants. For the Curator of Cultural Narratives role they redefined what experience and knowledge they were asking for. They knew that to be successful in bringing in more black and brown people into the sector, they were likely going to have look outside of it to find them. Therefore, they didn't ask for museum experience as an essential criterion. Instead, they looked at how they could generalise what was required so that applicants could more readily apply their own transferable skills to the role.

The new curator, Jioni Warner, is settling in well. She has developed her first exhibition on how colonial attitudes to femininity shaped medical advertising and has produced an alternative history audio tour with local charity Getaway Girls. The museum has found Jioni's knowledge invaluable; she has supported their community acquisitions and disposals panel and has helped the marketing team understand how to attract more diverse audiences.



Thackray Museum of Medicine

Her work has helped us see the things we miss and through doing so, helped us make the museum a more welcoming space for black and brown people.

Jamie Taylor, Director of Collections.

02. Diversify the workforce involved with collections

A diverse workforce is vital to unlocking the full power of collections. Collections expertise comes in many forms, both within and outside of the sector. Museums should review their recruitment processes to ensure a diverse workforce and should consider what role community members might play in collections work. If this is partly delivered through volunteering, then museums should ensure that this is not exploitative and that volunteers experience real benefit from this work, including payment for sharing lived experience.

Funders should ensure that posts that they fund are recruited inclusively and remunerated fairly and sector support organisations should help to share best practice and advocate for a more diverse workforce.

03.

A proactive approach to decolonisation

Museums are increasingly confident in undertaking decolonising practice and there has been demonstrable progress in this sphere. However, this momentum needs to be maintained, acknowledging that it is a long-term approach that needs to be embedded and ongoing, especially in those institutions whose roots are intertwined with British imperialism. Some guidance and support for this work has been put in place, but our research revealed that there is still some apprehension about negative responses that are preventing some governing bodies from supporting staff who want to do the work.

The sector should continue to develop this work, share case studies and review best practice to ensure that decolonising practice is carried out thoughtfully and that museums with less experience in this area are supported. Sector bodies and funders can play a role in advocating for decolonisation at a higher level and should look for collaborative approaches to support work being embedded with appropriate support for those undertaking it. Funders should also ensure that any short-term work they fund in this area is embedded in the wider organisation.

Museums are increasingly acknowledging colonial histories and implementing repatriation policies... demonstrating meaningful engagement with affected communities.

Anonymous call for evidence response

Case study

King's Own Royal Regiment Abyssinia Project

In 2022 the Kings Own Royal Regiment Museum (KORRM) received a grant from the Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund to research objects in their collections that were taken during the 19th century expedition to Abyssinia, now Ethiopia, to rescue British and European hostages taken by Tewodros. Many of these objects were thought to have a deep cultural significance for the modern nation.

KORRM engaged Eyob Derillo, a specialist in the history of Abyssinia, and former curator of the Ethiopian collection at the British Library, to evaluate these artefacts and identify those seized after the battle at the fortress at Maqdala. The research project involved collaboration with members of the Ethiopian community and representatives of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, to provide context and cultural perspective on these sensitive items. The project was supported by the Duke of Lancaster's regiment and funded the re-display of the Abyssinia section within the King's Own Royal Regiment Museum.



Kings Own Royal Regiment Museum

By fostering collaboration, inclusivity, and academic rigour, the museum aims to contribute to cultural understanding and historical enrichment, ultimately creating a more nuanced and accurate narrative surrounding the Abyssinia Expedition.

Eyob Derillo

The work also revealed items classified as human remains, contravening KORRM's collecting policies. These were a lock of hair and a piece of blood-stained cloth, both believed to relate to Emperor Tewodros. Following a formal request from the Ethiopian Heritage Authority these items were formally handed back in a Repatriation Ceremony in 2026.

Relevant

To attract new and broad audiences and deliver public benefit, museum collections need to be relevant to people. Many museums are working to connect collections to communities and there's ambition to increase representation in collections. However, there is more work to do to ensure that collections are relevant to audiences who have been systemically excluded from museums.

Museums should work equitably in partnership with communities to develop their collection and to learn new stories about the objects in their collection. By doing this, collections can become meaningful to people and communities, spark imagination and stimulate engaging conversations about contemporary issues relevant to their lives.

We recommend:

04. Greater transparency in collections practice

Many museums seek to understand the attitudes of people towards collections through evaluation, online reviews and having conversations with them. However, audiences usually only see the collections that are on display which means they don't know the full breadth of the collection.

When people understand how and why curatorial decisions are made, it can empower them to challenge the notion of neutrality in museums and to question why some stories are told and others left out. Building public understanding of collections practice can support museums to strategically collect in partnership with their audiences and communities.

Museums and practitioners can support greater transparency in collections practice in a variety of ways such as by putting their acquisitions policy online, communicating rationalisation projects, opening up stores and involving audiences and communities in decision making around back of house work. Sector support organisations should take a leadership role in encouraging museums to increase transparency in collections management.

Funders should support museums to increase back of house transparency and to involve communities in decision making around back of house functions.

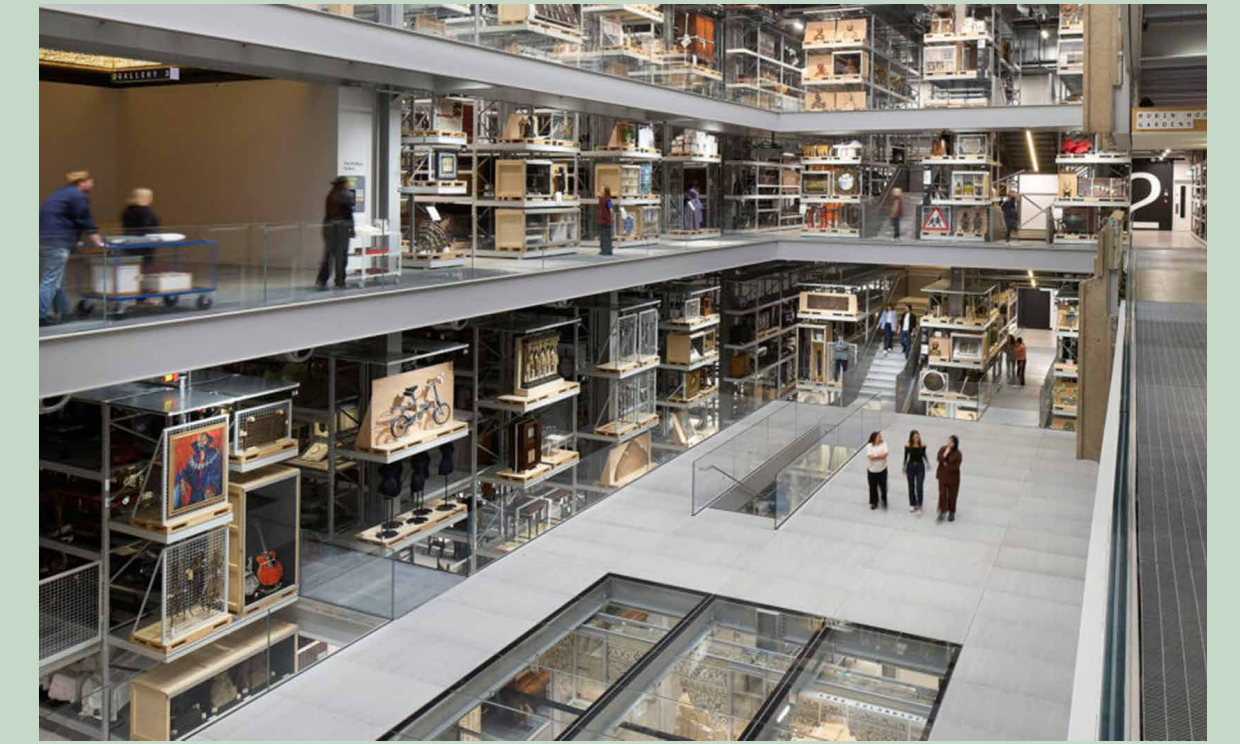
Case study

V&A Storehouse East

V&A East Storehouse offers visitors the chance to explore its previously stored collections now on display in a purpose-built facility situated in part of the former London 2012 Olympics media centre.

Housing more than 250,000 objects, 350,000 library books and 1,000 archives, the V&A East Storehouse was designed by Diller Scofidio + Renfro architectural firm and includes an Order an Object service enabling anyone to book private appointments to get up-close to objects for research or pleasure.

With V&A East Storehouse, the V&A has moved away from carefully moderated, visible storage to accessible storage creating a genuinely self-guided experience, revealing the back of house world of the museum. It's free to access any day of the year without a need to book.



V&A East Storehouse

Inspired by other open stores around the UK such as the Museum of Making in Derby and the Glasgow Museums Resource Centre, everything is displayed as it's stored and provides immediate engagement between visitor and object.

The V&A worked with the V&A East Youth Collective, the local community and creatives to shape V&A East Storehouse. It aims to be used by people locally, throughout the UK and internationally.

05. A considered approach to using digital with museum collections

Digitising museum collections can help museums to connect to new audiences. However, this needs to be done in a strategic and purposeful way that makes the collections come alive. Sharing low quality images without any meaningful context does little to improve the accessibility of museum collections.

It is important to acknowledge that funding is required to do this work and that better resourced organisations will find this easier to achieve than others. Therefore, funders should consider coordinated funding strategies for large scale digitisation and documentation.

Sector bodies should consider creating a standardised policy for digitisation practices and producing guidance on how museums can ethically and responsibly use AI in collections practice.

There is an environmental cost to using digital technologies therefore museums should take a considered approach to online collections that supports efforts to reduce climate impacts.

Our audience has recently been very positive towards our collections online. Because of our rurality, we depend a lot on digital platforms for engagement, consultation, meetings and feedback.

Annie MacDonald, *Nairn Museum*.

Case study

Conflict and Legacy Interpretive Network

Thanks to a grant from the Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund, the Bloody Sunday Trust/Museum of Free Derry was able to collaborate with National Museums Northern Ireland and [Healing Through Remembering](#) to create the Conflict and Legacy Interpretive Network (CLIN).

CLIN is an all-island network of heritage organisations addressing conflict and legacy issues, with the purpose of nurturing a range of views and perspectives on the recent conflict to create greater understanding and inform the debate on legacy and reconciliation. It was set up with the intention that through collaboration and ethical shared remembering, they could produce a more representative recounting of recent history.

As part of the project, they launched a network-wide [digital exhibition](#), with photos of artefacts and audiovisual recordings of network members presenting artefacts from their collections to illustrate their personal narrative of the history and legacy of the 'Troubles' conflict.



Conflict and Legacy Interpretive Network

It has been important to ensure that the historical legacy of the conflict is responsibly and accessibly curated, not just to record history but also play an active role in determining how this history should be collected, interpreted and shared, and inform the debate around legacy and reconciliation in a positive way.

The work of CLIN will continue for at least the next three years thanks to funding from National Lottery Heritage Fund to cover a dedicated development officer from National Museums Northern Ireland as well as development and project costs.

06. Using collections to create social impact, embed knowledge and build legacy

Many museums are doing meaningful work using collections to create social impact including enhancing health and wellbeing, placemaking and inspiring engagement, reflection and debate. Through our research, we heard that museums have ambitions to connect communities with collections even more in the next decade.

Funding in the sector can often be short-term so museums should consider how they can embed outcomes from short-term projects and use them to support long-term goals that create institutional change.

Funders have a responsibility to fund projects that have a strong legacy and are embedded so that knowledge and community ties aren't lost when the funding stops. Sector bodies have a role in advocating for funding schemes that aim to generate long-term outcomes and should promote best practice examples of museums creating social impact.

Collections becoming a meeting point between different external stakeholders is a really critical thing. We're good spaces. We might not always have the resources, but we've got enough space that people can come together around collections and have meaningful contemporary conversations. And I think that's quite exciting.

Ollie Douglas, *Museum of English Rural Life*.

Case study

Whithorn Museum & Building Futures Galloway

Whithorn Museum received funding from the Esmée Fairbairn Communities and Collections fund to authentically build a full-scale medieval carpenter's workshop. This is a two-year skills project to engage excluded young people aged between 14 and 16 who are disengaged from formal education. It is a partnership approach between Whithorn, Dumfries and Galloway Youth Work, the Douglas Ewart High School, and Building Futures Galloway, a youth employability charity focused on providing in-work training to disadvantaged young people, in an area which is remote from colleges and alternative career pathways.

This work builds on a previous project, Whithorn Rebuild, that worked with non-attenders and vulnerable young people from the organisation's local high school to enable them to sample opportunities in heritage construction skills, which are in short supply nationally. Whithorn Rebuild was established as Building Futures Galloway, a separate social enterprise, that now provides a wider range of construction skills for its young apprentices.



Whithorn Museum & Building Futures Galloway

With the carpenters workshop, Whithorn has found a way to sustain their work and to continue to address the problem of youth unemployment locally and regionally, by offering young people an accredited learning in joinery and blacksmithing, while working on a full-scale public project. Many of the young people attending are on part time timetables or are non-attenders often due to difficult home lives or social anxiety.

For the young people, the opportunity the project offers is significant. Pupils with additional support needs are regular attendees and the school have reported improved engagement with other areas of the curriculum. For the 18- to 25-year-olds employed through Building Futures, the programme has enabled them to develop communication skills and confidence as they tutor pupils only a few years younger than themselves.

Dynamic

Museum collections are not static – as we acquire new items, gather new information and undertake rationalisation, the nature of a collection will change. This should reflect changes in society and the world around us, enabling collections to be as relevant and empowering as they can be.

We need to understand what we hold and why we hold it and yet many museums are unable to fully account for the objects they hold and their provenance. Collections information can be inadequate, and stores are often full and include items that don't fit with current collections policies or are duplicated in collections elsewhere. There is an increasing urgency to address this so that museums can justify both the financial and environmental cost of collections storage.

Museums need to be able to make the most of their collections. Partnerships and collaboration can add valuable information and perspectives to collections and ensure that our museums remain trusted and valued institutions in society.

We recommend:

07. Support partnerships and knowledge sharing

Museums need to be able to gather, record and present information and narratives about their collections to understand their relevance. Museums have experienced a significant loss of collections staff and subject specialist expertise as a result of funding cuts over the past fifteen years. To mitigate this, museums need to collaborate more and share information both locally and further afield.

Subject Specialist Networks (SSNs) remain important in this process and should be invested in and championed by funders and sector support organisations. These organisations are often run on a volunteer basis by people with full time jobs and few or no financial resources. Sector bodies should support SSNs to reach the sector by sharing information and details about the networks, making them more visible. Funders should invest in these organisations so that museums can benefit from their collective knowledge and networks.

Non-museum groups such as universities, volunteers, societies, private collectors and community groups should also be recognised as sources of expertise. Valuable collections knowledge can often be held within communities and museums should harness this, capturing multiple perspectives. Organisations such as universities can make good use of the collections data and knowledge held by museums. Museums should add their collections to the Museums Data Service and look for opportunities such as The Distributed System of Scientific Collections UK (DiSSCo) to maximise the potential of the data they hold.

Case study

Marvels & Mayhem, Showtown, Blackpool

Showtown, Blackpool received funding from the Esmée Fairbairn Communities and Collections Fund to enhance understanding and knowledge of the Blackpool Tower Circus Archive. They wanted to uncover the stories behind this collection to inform development of a new museum for Blackpool.

Connecting with the circus community was vital to unlocking the potential of this collection. To begin to build trust with this community the museum invited local retired performers to form a circus community network. They were then able to hold events and workshops where the circus community recorded stories and delivered talks sharing their knowledge. Collections volunteers at Showtown History Centre undertook basic documentation to make the collection accessible for the circus community network who were then able to support research, loan identification collecting and the creation of digital stories and blogs.



Showtown Blackpool Marvels and Mahem

During the cataloguing the team identified material relating to little people performing in the Blackpool Tower Circus and so they also partnered with the charity Little People UK to co-produce new stories and an exhibition, “Through Our Eyes: Little People Beyond the Circus”.

The collection is now documented, rehoused and accessible, and is an internationally important destination for researchers into circus. Building on the research and understanding of its collections that Marvels & Mayhem enabled, Showtown recently secured another internationally significant circus collection. The museum will continue to work with both communities to ensure that collections are relevant and accessible for the people they reflect.

08. Improve funding and peer support for the rationalisation of museum collections

Museums are encouraged to have a comprehensive collections development policy that provides for the disposal of collections as well as their acquisition. Rationalisation is vital to ensure collections are financially and environmentally sustainable. Our research found that regular review and rationalisation of collections is often hampered by a lack of capacity and resources. The research also demonstrated that many museum stores are full and that this is preventing access to collections and risking good quality collections care and management.

Museums should include rationalisation as part of routine collections management and undertake it in a transparent way, highlighting the public benefit of this work. Sector bodies should advocate for the urgency of rationalisation, in light of the climate crisis and should continue to facilitate peer support and sharing of best practice to normalise this work.

Research into the cost benefit of rationalisation should be undertaken to help museums to make a case for this work. Funders should support innovative rationalisation projects that include public input or make a strong case for the resilience of the organisation and the public benefit it provides.

In terms of rationalisation, the mindset and understanding in the sector have advanced, and training to an extent, but it is still too difficult to convince funders of the need to support this vital work.

Anonymous call for evidence response.



Birmingham Museums Trust

09. Explore shared storage solutions

Many collections are still held in unsuitable stores. Our research showed that when this issue is addressed it is usually reactive rather than strategic, for example because a local authority is selling the building or because of an imminent threat of permanent damage to the collection. However, these incidents can provide opportunities for rationalisation and improved documentation. Efficient storage solutions in which multiple museums share the same up-to-date storage facility, or where specific collection types are held centrally could provide enhanced resilience and environmental benefits while also ensuring that collections are well documented and digitised. Sector bodies can use their knowledge to evidence the need for this work, and funders should look to support it.

Cyngor Gwynedd and Bangor University developing shared collections storage in Northwest Wales

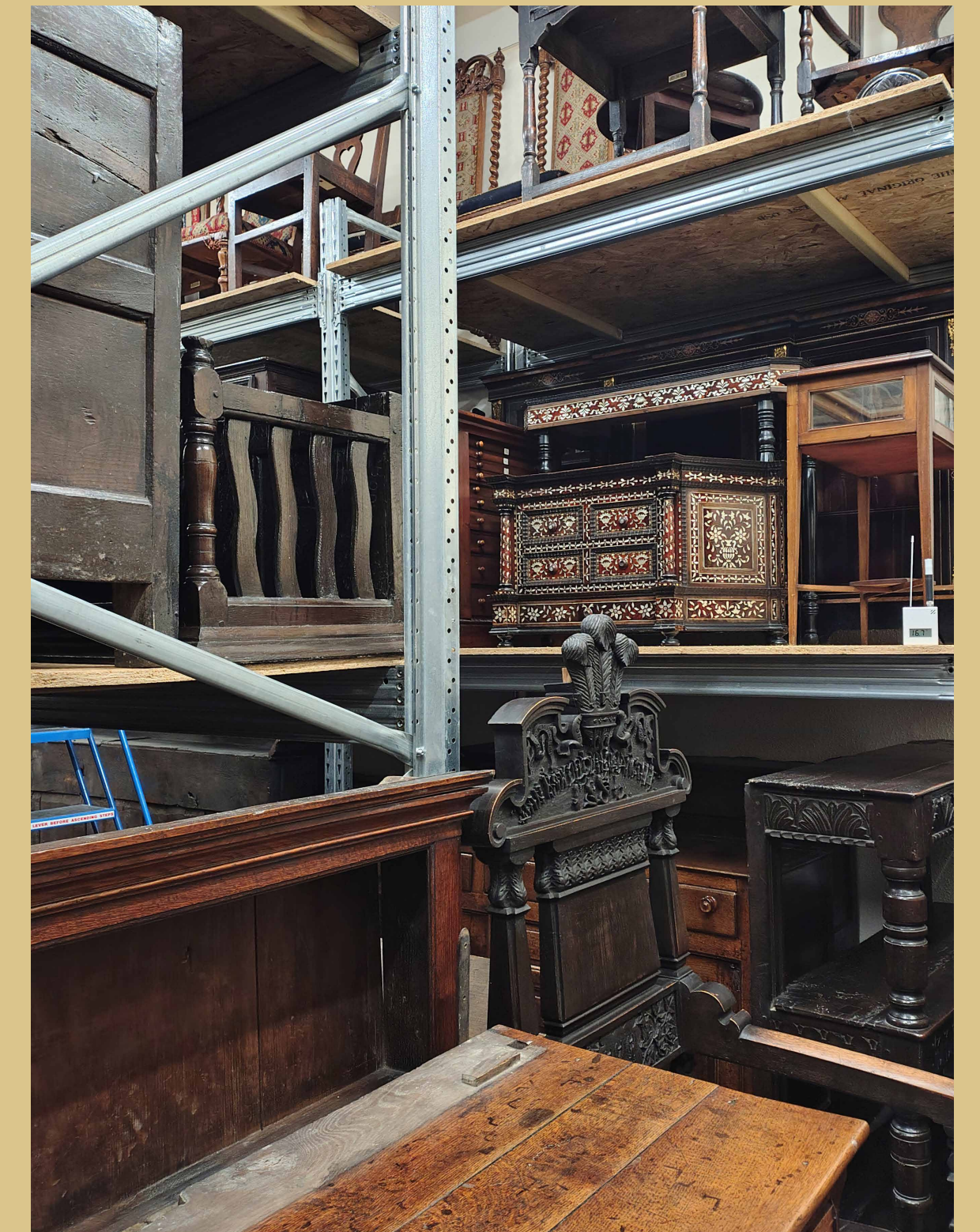
Cyngor Gwynedd and Bangor University work in a formal partnership to provide Storiell, the Museum and Art Gallery in Gwynedd. They have become increasingly aware of the need to improve and create better storage and conservation solutions for the museum collections.

Since 2022 The partners have been scoping potential options to develop a Shared Collections and Conservations Facility with funding from Amgueddfa Cymru. The Partnership, led by Cyngor Gwynedd includes Bangor University, Amgueddfa Cymru, The National Trust, Cadw – Welsh Government, Eryri National Park Authority and The Isle of Anglesey Council. Redundant buildings owned by Bangor University were found to be the best option.

Due to the availability of space in the building and the overall project costs the team are taking a phased approach. Funding from UKSPF enabled them to develop the business case for this.

Initial priority is being given to Cyngor Gwynedd and Bangor University's collections with an option in the future to provide a newbuild extension to accommodate the wider partnership. Having secured funding from the Welsh Government's Priorities for Culture Fund they have progressed our phased approach to RIBA 2 for both partners to develop a shared collections store, conservation facility and emergency storage.

Subject to securing further funding, they hope to progress the plans to RIBA 4 and to realise their plan to develop a sustainable and innovative open collections store and conservation facility for north-west Wales. This would ensure that multiple collections are cared for in the best conditions possible and safeguarded for future generations.



Cyngor Gwynedd

Summary of *recommendations*

Green Power Credit Mansfield Museums



Empowering

Using collections to explore issues of place and identity, deliver social justice, bring communities together and foster conversation and reflection.

Museums

Funders

Sector Bodies

01. A democratised approach to collections and displays

Museums should ensure that their collections work is use-led and speaks to organisational aims and objectives.

Funders should support holistic and inclusive collections work so that collections can be used to their full potential to deliver public facing outputs.

Sector bodies should advocate for the importance of back of house collections work in increasing public benefit in the long-term.

02. Diversify the workforce involved with collections

Museums should diversify their governance and workforce to represent communities and review how their recruitment and volunteer practices can be adapted to ensure relevant expertise in the collections workforce.

Funders should ensure that people who contribute their lived experience are fairly compensated and that inclusive recruitment practice is followed in any work that they are funding.

Sector bodies should promote inclusive recruitment practices and advocate for diversifying the collections workforce.

03. A proactive approach to decolonisation

Museums with the most experience of decolonising practice should share the approaches they have taken, helping less experienced organisations to take the first steps in decolonising practice.

Funders should support organisations to undertake decolonising practice and ensure that the work they fund is thoughtful and embedded.

Sector bodies should advocate for decolonisation and support museums to get leadership buy in.

Relevant

Working with people and communities to better understand how collections can be relevant to them and reflect society.

Museums

Funders

Sector Bodies

04. Greater transparency in collections practice

Museums should share collections practices, such as acquisitions policies and rationalisation projects, publicly and involve communities in decision making around back of house functions.

Funders should support museums to undertake research around public expectations of collections.

Sector bodies should take a leadership role in encouraging museums to increase transparency in collections management.

05. A considered approach to using digital with museum collections

Museums should be intentional when using digital technology for collections purposes, ensuring that it enhances the audience experience, increases accessibility and helps collections to come alive.

Funders should coordinate and connect support for large scale digitisation projects in museums.

Sector bodies should create a standardised policy for digitisation practices and produce guidance on the ethical use of AI for collections work.

06. Using collections to create social impact, embed knowledge and build legacy

Museums should embed outcomes from short-term projects and use them to support long-term goals that create institutional change.

Funders should make sure they support work with a strong legacy so that knowledge and community ties aren't lost when the funding stops.

Sector bodies should advocate for funding that generates long-term outcomes and communicate best practice examples of museums delivering social impact to government and funders.

Dynamic

Active collections management including rationalisation, partnership working and knowledge sharing, to support sustainable collections and museums.

Museums

Funders

Sector Bodies

07. Support partnerships and knowledge sharing

Museums should share collections information widely and should collaborate with both museums and non-museum groups to add to this information.

Funders should take a strategic approach to supporting SSNs (Subject Specialist Networks) and work that enables knowledge sharing between museums and non-museum groups.

Sector bodies should convene SSNs, giving them a space to provide updated contact information and links.

08. Improve funding and peer support for the rationalisation of museum collections

Museums should include rationalisation as part of routine collections management practice and undertake it in a transparent way.

Funders should support rationalisation projects and research that include public input or make a strong case for the resilience of the organisation.

Sector bodies should advocate for rationalisation and facilitate peer support and sharing around rationalisation.

09. Explore shared storage solutions

Museums should think strategically about their stores and use opportunities such as combined local authority services to consider shared storage.

Funders should enable shared storage solutions.

Sector bodies should help evidence the need for and benefits of combining storage and champion museums who undertake this work.

