

Case Studies

Access and Inclusion

Vol.24 2019



What is GEM?

GEM champions excellence in heritage learning to improve the education, health and wellbeing of the general public.

GEM believes that involvement with our rich and diverse heritage is an enriching and transformational experience that provides distinctive opportunities for learning. We aim to make that learning accessible, relevant and enjoyable for all.

GEM works with its members and collaboratively with other learning organisations across the UK and internationally to:

- champion excellence in heritage learning and participation enabling people to be inspired by, value and enjoy their and other's heritage;
- advocate the power of heritage learning in transforming people's lives to sector organisations, national agencies, funders and government;
- influence sector organisations to deliver excellent learning and participation for their visitors;
- promote and explain the benefits of learning through heritage which is inclusive, sustainable and respectful of communities;
- develop creative partnerships with other organisations to share effective practice in heritage learning and participation;
- research and pioneer innovation in heritage learning and participation;
- inspire and support the work of heritage learning practitioners;
- provide opportunities for practitioners to develop their practice through networking, mentoring and learning together.

Editorial

By Holly Bee, Former Education and Communications Manager, GEM

Welcome to the first digital edition of the GEM *Case Studies*! We are excited to bring you some fantastic practice and advice in this new format, allowing us to reduce our use of paper and carbon emissions for a greener GEM.

This edition of *Case Studies* is a special one, on a topic that has become very close to my heart in my time working with GEM: SEN/SEND-inclusive practice. Many children and adults who engage with museums and heritage sites have **Special Educational Needs** also referred to as **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities**. Making museums more inclusive, particularly regarding physical, sensory and learning barriers, has come up as one of the biggest things on Gemmers' agendas. More and more projects are being developed to engage with special schools and SEND families and there is a huge appetite for CPD and advocacy in this area. Change is in the air and the responses to this call for case studies assures me that we are looking at a real turning point for inclusion.

In this edition, contributors move away from temporary projects and look at how they can work with SEND to generate enduring impact on their partners and practice. They challenge the notion that access is an added extra, speaking up for the cultural rights of marginalised groups, recognising their huge creative potential and our responsibility to make space for it.

In the first part of the publication, some brilliant practitioners share their work. Everything is done in partnership, bringing SEND audiences into the museum as experts and creators, including National Trust Croome's ground-breaking co-production.

Newly developed offers and consultation groups are made sustainable and embedded in the Jewish Museum, Postal Museum and Ashmolean Museum. Camden Arts Centre, Culture Coventry and the River and Rowing Museum, are opening career pathways, making real change for partners.

The second part of the publication shares guidance and opportunities from consultants, campaigners and sector support organisations to help you make your next steps. Alison Bowyer gives expert advice from Kids in Museums. Sam Bowen takes us through the sector-leading work on SEND partnerships in the South East Museum Development Programme (SEMDP). Paul Morrow updates us on the progress of the Cultural Inclusion Manifesto. And Morgan Salisbury and Becky Lyddon address the manageable actions that improve sensory accessibility.

As these amazing Gemmers build more and more momentum for SEND inclusion, GEM continues to support inclusive practice and seek our next steps in this area. We would like to give a shout out to the Disability Collaborative Network for Museums C.I.C., who were our conference access partner and continue to give guidance on this publication and our exploration of potential projects and partnerships, and to all the members that have fed back about this topic.

As I finish my time at GEM and pass on the role of Communications Manager to the brilliant Devon Turner, I'm so pleased to have been a part of sharing this work and this cause. We know the challenges in change-making in the heritage sector, but it is proactive partnerships, practical projects, and passionate professionals that take us forward. I've seen so much of that in GEM and hope that reading these case studies inspires you to get started, keep at it or spread the love. In the words of Sam Bowen in her contribution, "The magic of SEND is not a myth, it is truly beautiful and meaningful, and ALL museums can become SEND-friendly."

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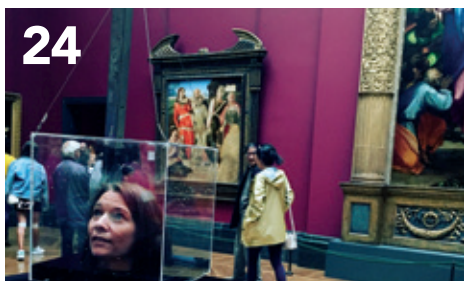
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A Parent's Perspective

Holly Bee, GEM, talks to Joanne Briggs, a mum local to the GEM office, on accessing culture and leisure with a child with SEND.

JB: Hi. My name is Jo Briggs, I'm 49, I'm mum to two girls, one of whom, my younger daughter Anna, is severely autistic. She's nearly 11 and it's her that we're basing our conversation on today.

HB: What are your current favourite things to do with Anna outside of the house?

JB: She's a challenge in that she's a bit of a runner! She likes swimming, she likes the park, she likes trampolining, she enjoys theme parks.

HB: Can I ask what major anxieties you have about taking Anna out?

JB: Her physical strength now is a big issue for me. I'm pretty hard-pushed to keep up with her. And there's also how other people will respond. You can't help being aware that she's not behaving like everybody else's child when you're in somewhere like a museum environment, which is meant to be all civilised and nice and serene.

HB: You've picked up on a really important thing; the perception that museums have to be very serene and sensible.

JB: Yeah. I think a lot of places have cottoned onto the fact that if they want to include children who have got difficulties like Anna, they do need to make it a bit less rigid. If you've got a family like we do, where you've got one neuro-typical child and one not, having a day out where it's just catering to one

is a bit soul-destroying for the other and it's finding that balance.

HB: It sounds like preparation is important for you.

JB: Yes! Knowing where we are is a big help because we can try and stay one step ahead of her. Lots of places will do things like a visual story that you can get beforehand, where you have pictures of what the journey to the place is going to be like, what will happen when you get there. You can get them for almost anything, like trips to the doctors or the dentists. If we're going somewhere she knows, we can call it by name and she'll recognise it. Somewhere completely new, I will try and Google it and show her, at least give her an idea of what she can expect to see when she gets there, and mention it by name quite a lot as well. I will always try and see what facilities they've got, like whether there are access passes or quiet rooms. What the information on their website is like is really important. If there isn't much available, it's off-putting. As for getting out the house, she can be challenging in that if she doesn't want to get dressed she won't and that will take a while, so everything has to be as early as possible, leaving it to the last minute is never a good idea. Basically, there's no predictability with Anna. We've said many times, the only predictable thing about Anna is her unpredictability.

[We talked about holidays, finding Anna's needs in new places to tailor days around her and how "everything for Anna is very heightened". We then talked about a difficult recent experience in which fellow visitors to a park made

Joanne feel very uncomfortable, staring at Anna having a meltdown.]

HB: Do you think that museums need to have more awareness of the needs of families with SEN & SEND children?

JB: I think generally there needs to be more awareness. There is becoming more awareness, but you do still get a lot of people who assume it's down to bad parenting, and you know, it's not, it's really not.

HB: Is there something that the places you visit could do to ease that?

JB: I don't know, I suppose where you have information about wheelchairs and hearing aids, you know "Not all guests are the same"... I'm not wording it very well, but in a nutshell, "if you see a child having a tantrum, don't assume they're being a brat!"

HB: I went to A Midsummer Night's Dream at the Globe Theatre in London recently and before it started one of the staff got up on the stage and said "Just so you know, we've got a school in the audience for children with Tourette's Syndrome, they're very likely to be vocal in the show, but don't worry, we want you to shout, it's a really rowdy performance!"

JB: Yeah, that's really inclusive. But you see reports in the press more often than I'd like to see about children being asked to leave performances because they're getting over-excited and vocal. Places like theatres and cinemas are becoming more accessible, but there isn't really much choice.

“There is becoming more awareness, but you do still get a lot of people who assume it’s down to bad parenting.

HB: There are relaxed hours and mornings at museums and galleries now, with things like special sensory activities. Is that something that appeals to you?

JB: Yes, if you knew there was going to be that slightly higher level of awareness it would make it certainly more comfortable, not just for Anna and us, but for other people that were there as well.

HB: Is there anything particular you’d like to see in these sessions?

JB: Well, ideally staff having a good understanding of the needs of the children, or families even, not just the children. Many times, we’ve taken Anna out and she’s been quite happy, but I’ve been at the end of my tether! I suppose a chill out zone for parents is too much to ask?

HB: Not necessarily! This interview is to find out what you’d like to develop.

JB: Well, definitely awareness in staff, hands-on stuff, rather than just looking. I mean, Anna loves to take things apart, see how they work, and feel things, so sensory activities are good. And “age-appropriate” covers a multitude. Anna can manage Reception age activities on her own, then you’ve got other children her age that could put together a complete circuit board. So you need flexibility. It’s about having things that they can enjoy. A lot of children are very calmed by things like gloop and running their hands through waterbeads and rice. They haven’t got to actually produce something, just being in a space where they can make a mess and not do what was intended with something. It all just comes down to awareness.

HB: And its responsiveness, isn’t it?

JB: Having a dynamic risk assessment.

HB: Can you define that for us?

JB: It’s about being able to do the safest thing possible outside of the plan, if something unexpected happens, and being able to justify why

you’ve done that. [JB co-creates care plans for Anna with any carers and teachers she is involved with.]

HB: What’s her curriculum like at school?

JB: It’s an adapted curriculum. She’s working on P-Levels, which is below Reception level, and she’s going into Year 6 in September. It’s a PMLD (Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties) school, so the curriculum has to be adapted to suit each group of children. There’s 8 in the class and 4 staff, and a higher ratio if they’re outside.

HB: Do they ever do school trips?

JB: Yes, with extra staff. They don’t do them very often and they are highly risk assessed. They’ve been to Leeds Castle recently, which was a big hit, I think it was for a princes and princesses topic, they had to dress up. And they’ve been to Maidstone Museum. That was a huge success, they loved it, they were chiselling fossils to back up a dinosaur topic.

HB: So, to go back a bit, you joked about quiet rooms for parents, what do you think museums could do for you as a parent?

JB: Well, normally if Anna’s doing something, we’re with her doing it. It would be nice if we were able to step back sometimes and let staff lead it, but we know that’s not always going to be possible. Really just the security that they know that she’s a bit different. They’ll know if she’s enjoying it, because if she doesn’t she’ll stop, she’ll walk away, and a lot of people find that frustrating as well.

HB: Although a few educators I know say they love working with children because the feedback is immediate and honest.

JB: Anna does give you feedback in the way she behaves. If she’s had enough of something, she’ll just up and leave. And when she has a meltdown, she isn’t doing it to be difficult or to hurt anyone, it’s her

way of telling us she isn’t happy with the situation.

HB: So do you have any advice for museum staff if they see a meltdown happening, either in a session or front-of-house?

JB: “Is there anything I can do to help?” is a really lovely phrase to hear and isn’t heard very often. It might be something like I need a bit of help getting her shoes off, because if she’s kicking out with shoes on it’s going to hurt me a lot more, so I might say, “Can you grab my bag, keep it safe, keep anyone who’s with me safe, while I sort that.”

HB: If something did go wrong with a visit or session, would you say you couldn’t come back?

JB: No. What might be good is if the deliverer, especially if they could see someone was having a hard time, if they could perhaps speak to the family and ask, “What would make this more inclusive for you?” Just chat with the parents while you’re doing it, talk to me, that’s always the best thing. In the end, we’re the ones who can offer the best advice on our child. But not on everybody’s child. Autism isn’t a one-size fits all. If you’ve met one child with autism, you’ve met one child with autism.

HB: So, to sum up, what would get you to go to a museum or heritage site?

JB: Personally I’d like something that looked a little bit fun and relaxed. If there were hands-on sessions that would be great, but I’d also like to see a little bit in the information to say how they would cope with children with additional needs. I’d be really encouraged to know that staff had had some training. Safety’s always an issue for me, so reassurance around that. Don’t be afraid to talk to parents. I mean, it is hard, it does kind of govern every minute of every day; so it’s about inclusion for everyone, if you include that child you’ve included the family.

Find out more

Joanne recommends BBC’s *The A Word* and *There She Goes* to get some insight into two very different experiences of autism.

Potter and Ponder

'Relevance is the key that unlocks meaning. It opens doors to experiences that matter to us, surprise us, and bring value to our lives' (Nina Simon, *The Art of Relevance*, 2016, p.25)

Putting audiences at the heart

Through HLF-funded projects such as Croome Redefined, we are finding ways to make places innovative and meaningful, allowing new ways of thinking to emerge. *Potter and Ponder* took Croome Redefined to the next level by having an often marginalised audience directing the creative process. A small property team collaborated with 35 children with wide-ranging additional learning and medical needs, along with their teachers, parents and carers, and the arts charity, Outside In, with

funding from the 'Capability' Brown Festival (CBF).

Our objectives were to...

- Create a beautiful, Trust-quality bespoke map of the sensory opportunities in the parkland.
- Put the children at the heart of the co-production process to create a visitor experience that could be enjoyed by all.
- Collaborate with the children as equal experts, not as a token gesture.
- Move our working practices to fit the children's needs.
- Demonstrate courage in collaborating with audiences who experience the world in a different way, helping other Trust places to adopt the *Potter and Ponder* model.

Working in partnership

Meetings were held with staff from four specialist schools to ensure the working methods fully supported the needs of the children and that all staff and volunteers were prepared for their visits to Croome. The children then began coming to Croome to experience the outdoor space. We watched, noted and mapped their moments of joy to discover where the sensory opportunities were located across the parkland. Quite literally hand-in-hand, we set about generating a map of these opportunity points to open up the landscape, telling Croome's story through the highly sensory world where the children live.

Following in the footsteps of 'Capability' Brown, whose first commission was Croome, the children worked expert-to-expert with us, growing in confidence and inspiring us with their achievements.

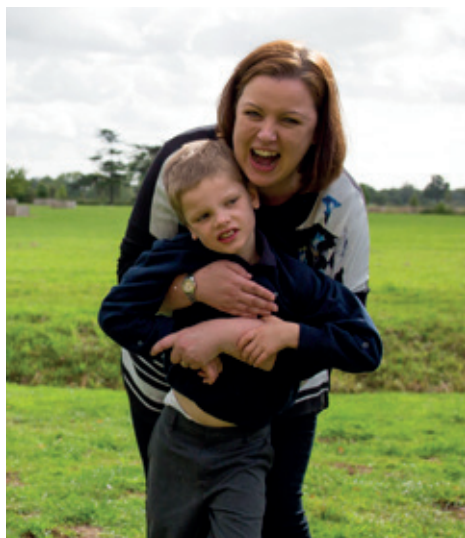
Commissioning an artist

Getting the right artist for the project was essential. We had to find someone who shared some of the children's challenges to act as a real-world mentor. The artists' charity Outside In, advertised our commission through its platform to 2,000 artists and produced a shortlist, whose work was presented to the children for selection.

Teachers used a variety of communication tools and translation methods to understand the choices made by the children, most of whom are non-verbal; tracking



“We watched, noted and mapped their moments of joy to discover where the sensory opportunities were located across the parkland.”



smiles, eye movements, giggles and gestures. Artist William Hanekom was the clear favourite. He visited and illustrated the sensory sites the children had identified. Working with designers Blended Creative, William's illustrations were placed on Croome's site map. Outside In helped us ensure William's own needs were met regarding communication, access and inclusion, he says: "I took interest in the project because of the uncertainty of what children would want out of it. I also wanted to help everyone that visits Croome to find and appreciate the beautiful and peaceful areas."

Sharing the sensory story

We worked with Worcestershire Association of Carers, with a direct reach to over 11,000 carers, to support outreach for *Potter and Ponder*. A hard copy of the map is freely available on site and downloadable from our website, so carers have the opportunity to plan their visit. Since we began, thousands of maps have been given to families and picked up by a wide range of visitors at Croome's reception area; the online



map has around 60 downloads per month. It is seen as a key piece of our mainstream visitor experience. Furthermore, we were proud to receive the 2017 National Educational Initiative Museums + Heritage Award.

The CBF became an integral partner and ambassador, sharing our story across the UK. Ceryl Evans, National Festival Director, says, "The CBF has been very proud to be able to support the project and hope it will inspire other historic landscapes to rise to the challenge."

Key internal support from Tate Greenhalgh, the Trust's National Interpretation Specialist, gave the team confidence and further ambition to share. She says, "This moving project gets my heart thumping because of the determinedly genuine co-creative approach... it teaches us how to make our places uniquely valuable and meaningful."

Development and change

The recent annual visitor figure at Croome is 270,000. We have seen an increase in numbers of visitors with additional needs, including a boost of 600+ new audience family visits in the first five (winter) months. Many of these are now repeat visitors. That's a fantastic return on the original £3,000 spend. In order to support this development, we have installed an accessible toilet with an adult

changing bed and designed a full property training programme for staff and volunteers on meeting additional needs. Members of the team are regularly contacted for advice by colleagues at other National Trust properties keen to co-produce in a similar way, ensuring a legacy across the Trust.

Impact

We worked alongside the children, listened and learnt from them, took our inspiration from their thinking, entered their world, and introduced them to an artist role model who had a profound effect on them and their families. One of the specialist teachers commented, "All too often children with additional needs are the beneficiary of education projects created by others who do not share their challenges. This project is a huge leap forward." One parent said, "This had a really positive impact on me. We don't get many chances to consider a more colourful and fulfilling future for our children, but this project gave us all that opportunity."

Find out more

Potter and Ponder
www.nationaltrust.org.uk/croome/features/potter-and-ponder-a-sensory-experience

Collaboration and Partnership:

Providing meaningful employment opportunities for artists with learning disabilities

Background and aims

Camden Arts Centre's Special Educational Needs (SEN) Schools Programme works in collaboration with young people, teachers and artists. The project addresses the lack of access for people with learning disabilities to creative experiences, learning and careers in the visual arts. In 2016 new schools, teachers and artists were recruited for the project and we began the first year

of our partnership with ActionSpace, an organisation that supports the development of artists with learning disabilities, having built towards this in conversations starting in 2014.

Our project evaluations showed that young people we were working with needed positive artist role models that they could relate to, in addition to options for progression routes and employment within the sector. From 2016 to July 2019, we worked with

Andrew Omoding, as part of a team of 3 artists on the project.

In July 2015 we set up a SEN Access Forum of just under 80 peers from London's galleries, museums, theatres and specialist organisations, so we could have conversations across the sector. Our aim is to increase national recognition of learning-disabled artists and opportunities for professional development, putting access at the heart of our agenda.



Photo credit: Camden Arts Centre, photo © Hydar Dewachi

“Our aim is to increase national recognition of learning-disabled artists and opportunities for professional development, putting access at the heart of our agenda.”

Challenges and changes

Working with Andrew in the artists' team demonstrated how our working structures relied on inaccessible paperwork, emails, written plans and lengthy, talkative meetings. Our meetings became creative, active and responsive, with visual aids, materials, numbered agendas and photographs of the workshop plans. We also requested firmer plans and strictly chaired meetings, to ensure time to pause, reflect and ensure understanding before moving on.

By making the meetings and our structures more accessible for Andrew, we actually made them more accessible and enjoyable for all involved. These small changes had a big impact and are now a fundamental part of the structure of how we work as a team. This working style relies on openness and honesty within how we are communicating and is a priority for all involved in the project, including staff, artists and teachers.

Outcomes

We employed one artist per annum to co-lead the programme in partnership with ActionSpace, employing and providing a platform for the artist to develop and share their work.

In 2019, in addition to leading the SEN Schools Programme, Andrew joined me in speaking at events to share the work we have been doing together, including the Royal Academy Why and How conference, and Lyric Hammersmith's Change of Perspective conference in March.

CAC offered Andrew a month-long residency in our Artist's Studio with

Learning and reflection

- 1. Work in partnership.** We could not do this work without ActionSpace. We understand, appreciate and celebrate our specialist knowledge.
- 2. Normalise practice.** We make everything we do accessible for the artist we work with, whilst also ensuring quality, expectation and opportunity.
- 3. Take time to get it right.** Get to know the artist and their needs before programming them into any activity. Learn from them to make the activity accessible, appropriate and not tokenistic.
- 4. Be open, flexible and honest.** Change can only happen if both partners are open, flexible and honest. Feedback is not criticism, but a learning opportunity.
- 5. Keep a routine.** We keep planning, meetings and workshops to the same day of the week. This provides a secure and stable environment to allow confidence to grow for everyone involved, and consistency is important and useful.
- 6. Create a support plan.** Consider the needs of the artist and the needs and capacity of each organisation. Build in budget for this to ensure sustainability of support.
- 7. Evaluate! Reflect! Communicate!** Regular evaluation meetings and check-ins are vital in ensuring responsiveness and change.
- 8. Don't worry if you make mistakes.** It will happen, you are learning and making changes. Be aware of these mistakes, own them and adapt.
- 9. Share! Share! Share!** Let everyone know you are doing this work. Share your learning, share your challenges, share your celebrations.
- 10. Go back to the drawing board.** This work is ever changing, and you are continually learning. Each artist you work with will have different needs; they will require structures to change in a different way to ensure accessibility and a new support plan.

a two-week Open Studio showcase in June to July 2019. Andrew was granted a Developing Your Creative Practice award from Arts Council England for this residency, which saw him create a series of new ambitious works. We will continue to support Andrew Omoding in his progression routes as an artist within the sector.

Next steps

The 2019/20 academic year will see another shift in the programme, as 3 new artists and 3 new partner schools join the project. We will engage a new artist from ActionSpace, and will work with an external researcher to evaluate this work through a research strand and digital publication, considering value, impact and potential sector learning. Lastly, we will host an access symposium in Spring 2020.

Find out more

Gemma Wright, Head of Education, Camden Arts Centre

www.camdenartscentre.org
Twitter: @gemma_m_wright

ActionSpace

www.actionspace.org

Suggested reading and references:

- *Re-imagine: Improving Access to the Arts, Galleries and Museums for People with Learning Disabilities*, Lemos and Crane
- Cultural Inclusion Manifesto
- *Change of Perspectives*, John Lyons Charity Research Report
- Camden Art Centre's SEN Access Forum is always open for new people to join our conversations.

Creative Bridges:

Teaching work skills in the museum

Background and aims

Only 6% of people with a learning disability are in paid employment; Creative Bridges seeks to change this statistic and enable neuro-diverse people to develop fulfilling professional lives. Creative Bridges, Culture Coventry, uses culture to engage young people (16–25) with a learning disability or barrier to learning to aid transition to independent adult life. 10 participants are referred by three local special schools. The programme runs one day per week at the museum for the full academic year.

Culture Coventry is an independent arts and cultural heritage charitable trust established to manage Coventry's award-winning and accredited museums: Coventry Transport Museum, the Herbert Art Gallery & Museum and the Lunt Roman Fort. The digital team, Herbert Media, runs an accredited vocational learning centre specialising in working with excluded and marginalised young people.

Creative Bridges uses creativity and cultural engagement to develop the necessary skills, confidence, experience and qualifications to prepare young people with learning disabilities for further education, the workplace or volunteering. The focus is learning outside the classroom, working with new people in a professional environment. Each academic year, a group of 10 students achieve Arts Award and an OCN

WMR Level 1 Award in Employability and Development Skills, covering a unit in group work and multimedia. Each group co-produce a film to evidence their skills, inspired by the collection.

When the programme was set up, it also aimed to achieve:

- Enabling participants to act with increasing independence.
- 20% of programme graduates to move into and sustain work.
- 20% to become volunteers.
- 60% to attend further education.

Challenges

The world of work is very unfamiliar to young adults in special schools and results in the vast majority wanting to go into further education rather than a job. The tools for adapting your work skills for neuro-diverse people will only develop with exposure to these groups and the resulting experience over time. You develop teaching skills for that person, at that time for that task only. Each person

“The world of work is very unfamiliar to young adults in special schools and results in the vast majority wanting to go into further education rather than a job.”

is different and therefore staff must feel they are on a journey and equip themselves with a very wide range of techniques which they can apply according to the situation.

Furthermore, traditional feedback methods won't always work. Reflection over long periods can be a challenge; in our experience groups tend to focus on the here and now. We trialled a wide range of techniques to including scaffolded questions, dot voting, zines, rating scales and visuals to support memory and reflection.

Project outcomes

Programme graduates all achieved Arts Award Bronze, 9 achieved Level 1 Award in Employability and Development Skills. 30% of graduates have accepted supported internships and 70% are continuing in education. Outcomes are affected by the personal choice and age of the participant. The project will track those who leave education in the coming years.

The group produced “Love Lost in Space” a sci-fi romance featuring ideas developed in response to a gallery tour of the permanent collection. Learners chose collection objects that could be used creatively, rather than based on the facts or context of the object. A Sikh wedding dress resulted in a love story theme. The Blitz experience sparked the idea of time travel. Mystery play masks led to a theme of masked identity.



Learning and reflection

- Museum staff are well-experienced to develop creative methods that engage young adults to enliven dry subjects (e.g. responsible work practice).
- Museums can act as a conduit for local companies to offer creative briefs for community participation/resolution.
- Museums sites are small enough to act as a stepping stone for anxious learners to gain confidence to access larger sites.
- Staff are rewarded with the joy of unlocking young people's potential and learning about how they can adapt their own skill set.
- Museum interactives extend the sensory rooms offered in special schools to support tactile, experiential learning.



Next steps

The project has highlighted the need bring together departmental expertise to formulate a practical inclusion strategy, to sit alongside our inclusion policy. We are producing a blended learning programme to enable museums to develop work in this area with increased confidence. The training programme will support and respond to the "Open to All" Autism Awareness Access Audit programme commissioned by West Midlands Museum Development to consider in more detail how museums can improve access to collections for visitors with autism.

Find out more

Kerrie Suteu, Creative Media & Digital Manager, Culture Coventry
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Creative Bridges
www.creative-bridges.org
<https://youtu.be/8LluVsSss2g> –
Love Lost in Space

Regional autism access audit programme
<https://mdwm.org.uk>

National discussion of the creative case for diversity
<http://culturalinclusion.uk>



Make it to Market

Background and aims

Through a partnership funded by the South East Museums Development Programme, the River & Rowing Museum worked with students with disabilities on the Henley College Pathways Course to develop art skills and use students' designs on products for retail.

The River & Rowing Museum is an independent museum in Henley on Thames, Oxfordshire, whose galleries explore the sport of rowing, the story of the River Thames, the history of Henley and the art of John Piper. The museum had run projects with SEND groups of primary and early secondary school age but had not worked with post-16 groups.

Henley College Pathways, part of the sixth-form college, offers a curriculum tailored to the needs of students with learning difficulties and disabilities. The Pathways art tutor was looking for ways to enrich the curriculum and was keen to visit for a workshop inspired by the museum's temporary exhibition, *An Earthly Paradise: William Morris &*



the Thames. The idea of using the students' artwork for shop products came following a workshop with the SEMDP project team.

The museum wanted to use the collections beyond a one-off workshop to enhance the curriculum, but also develop students' confidence and pride in their work. For this age group it was important that the outcome was tangible and used in a real-world context.

The students worked with professional artist and museum tutor Camilla Shelley to explore the life and work of William Morris through block and screen printing. The students' designs were used to create a range of products for the museum shop, sold alongside other commercial stock. Students were involved in choosing the final designs and products, as well as displaying the stock.

We aimed to:

- Increase students' skills, knowledge and creativity in printmaking and design, inspired by the work of William Morris.
- Let students have fun and enjoy the creative process.
- Develop students' pride and confidence in their work through creating designs for products to go on commercial sale.
- Start an ongoing partnership between RRM and Henley College Pathways.



- Produce a range of products chosen by the students and featuring their designs.
- Use this project as a practice model for an enterprise project for a museum-SEND group partnership.

Challenges

The project timeframe was very tight and there were external factors limiting the number and regularity of sessions. As a result, there were few opportunities to explore the workshop topic more thoroughly and students found it difficult to pick up where they left off. Evaluation often felt rushed and minimal. Having a fixed deadline for the project meant using product suppliers with short delivery times, which was not necessarily the most cost-effective.



The focus of the project had been on producing commercial products of a similar type to the current shop stock, rather than on specifically sensory products that might appeal to SEND children and their families. This was primarily because sensory products could not be made bespoke with the students' designs. However, museum staff are now more aware of the range of sensory products available and will look to improve the shop offer for this audience in the future.

Outcomes

Students developed their skills in screen printing by working on a larger scale and using different techniques within one piece of work. They showed good recall of Morris' work and techniques beyond the museum visit. The project increased students' confidence in their abilities and the value of their work. They were delighted to see the products that were produced from an amalgamation of their designs – mugs, cards, key rings and magnets – which look professional and sit comfortably alongside the regular museum stock.

The project enabled museum staff to build on their experience of working with SEND groups to take risks in the artistic approach they took with the students. Through the project the museum staff have learnt more about using picture symbols and observation to help with evaluation. The project concept

was embraced by museum staff, particularly the Retail Manager, and has broadened the shop offer. The museum now has a model and tested approaches to running the project again in the future, and the project partners wrote simple guidelines for others planning to run a similar project.

What we learned – top tips!

- Identify opportunities and tools for evaluation from the start of the project. Use the expertise of SEND staff.
- Involve the students in as much of the process as possible. With more time students would be included in using creative software to prepare the designs.
- Be flexible about the artistic outcome that will be used on the products. Bright colours and abstract designs work on products of different shapes and sizes.
- Work with museum retail staff to find out what already sells well and use existing suppliers. Allow plenty of time to order products.
- Include some information with the products to explain the project and the young people involved. This helps to promote the museum's work that isn't always obvious to visitors.

“ We aimed to use this project as a practice model for an enterprise project for a museum-SEND group partnership.



Next steps

Both partners are keen to continue the collaboration and run a similar project in the future. The initial grant provided seed funding to make the products; the aim is to use sales income to repeat the project.

The museum will explore working with the students as an informal youth panel to advise on shop items to appeal to young people and those with SEND, as well as on the type of projects and activities they would enjoy.

Find out more

Helen Cook,
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Read about the project in:
<https://southeastmuseums.org/resource-library/send-in-museums-project>



Post Early

Relaxed mornings at the Postal Museum for autistic and neurodiverse visitors

The Postal Museum are working with Ambitious about Autism to welcome and support autistic and neurodiverse people at the museum. A group of autistic Youth Patrons and a group of parents of autistic children are steering the development of four pilot relaxed morning museum openings, sensory museum resources and tailored pre-visit materials launching August 2019.

Background and aims

Split across two sites in central London with multi-level, interactive exhibitions, the complexity of our museum can make planning a visit especially difficult for visitors with SEND. The Postal Museum includes a unique underground heritage attraction – the Mail Rail ride. The sensory experience of Mail Rail can create an overwhelming environment (underground damp smells, extreme changes in light through the tunnels and AV projection with loud audio). The challenge was to develop a suite of tools to significantly reduce these physical, sensory and cognitive access barriers to our museum, and train all staff to use these tools to better support this audience.

To engage with this audience in a long-term, meaningful manner, we worked collaboratively with the organisation Ambitious about Autism and a group of their autistic Youth Patrons. On a Saturday every other month the group met at the museum.



Each session focused on developing a particular aspect of the offer for people with Autism Spectrum Conditions. We also programmed training opportunities in these meetups to show the Youth Patrons the work that happens behind the scenes at a museum. From archive cataloguing to developing museum tours, the Youth Patrons learned new, transferrable skills whilst making decisions on resources they felt would improve their visit as autistic and neurodiverse people.

We aimed to create:

- Autism Awareness training for museum staff and volunteers.
- Sensory satchels to support and enhance the museum visit.
- Communication cards of key objects and useful phrases.
- A pre-visit film for our website.
- Printable visual stories.
- 4 pilot relaxed morning exclusive openings with adjustments to the exhibition lights and audio.

Challenges

- Keeping the sessions consistent was essential, but a logistical challenge. The sessions were led by the same staff in the same museum spaces, so participants did not have to adjust to unexpected changes. This regular weekend delivery put pressure on core (Mon-Fri) staff time.
- The shooting of the pre-visit film fell in the busy half-term holidays. To mitigate this, filming with the young people started before the museum was open. However, there was crossover which disrupted the filming and impacted on the experience of other visitors.
- There was a tight timeframe to get the resources developed once the steering group had made their decisions. This pushed back the first pilot opening by one month.
- Respecting the direction and wishes of the Youth Patrons sometimes resulted in resources not strictly following museum branding and guidelines. A balance needed to be found, but also clear communication to colleagues about why certain decisions were made in order to fully cater to a target audience.

Outcomes

- Pre-visit visual stories and a film starring and directed by the Youth Patrons (on what to expect from a visit) is available online.
- The four relaxed morning pilot sessions began in August 2019 with a view to develop these into a permanent programme.
- Youth Patrons opted to volunteer on the relaxed morning pilots. Some Youth Patrons have expressed interest in working in the heritage sector following the behind-the-scenes sessions and see the relaxed morning delivery as an opportunity to prepare for future roles.
- Quiet Mail Rail rides, adjusted use of Sorted! play space and tailored activities (such as multisensory storytelling) were available for the relaxed mornings.
- Three different types of sensory satchels catering to different information comprehension levels were designed by the steering group. They contain sensory toys, trails, ear defenders and bespoke communication cards.

Emily Niner, Participation Manager at Ambitious about Autism said, "It has been a real delight being involved in this partnership work and we are yet to find another museum more willing and enthusiastic about making changes and improving their offer for all."

Learning and reflection

- Responding directly to the steering group required flexibility. When researching sensory satchels, the group found that designs sometimes catered to one particular learning style over another. It was decided that we would need sensory satchel options to support different audience needs.
- It was important to empower and build trust for the participants to share their views and point out barriers to accessing our museum. Partnership working with organisations like Ambitious about Autism and taking a collaborative approach was key to this.
- The individual sessions involving the participants with Autism Spectrum Conditions and their families needed to be well-planned. A briefing at the beginning of each session clearly highlighting the aims for that day worked well. Sticking to the shared timings was important.
- To deliver training to all staff members required multiple sessions – additional cost and time that needed to be factored into the project planning.

Next steps

Deliver and evaluate the four pilot sessions and continue building relationships.

- Develop findings into a permanent programme for this audience.



Find out more

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Jeff Koons and the Iffley Academy Project: the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford

Background and aims

Since 2016, Oxford University Gardens, Libraries and Museums (GLAM), which includes the Ashmolean Museum, have been developing an in-depth partnership with the Iffley Academy, a community special academy for children and young people up to the age of 18 with complex special educational needs and disabilities. All students have Education, Health and Care Plans with a range of needs, but primarily the school works with students who have

Moderate Cognition and Learning Difficulties, Autistic Spectrum Condition and/or Social, Emotional and Mental Health difficulties.

The aim of the partnership is to enable all pupils to visit GLAM venues and to participate in project work with each learning team and a range of artists. We aim to raise students' cultural and social capital by introducing them to new places and enabling them to make new relationships with trusted adults through this in-depth and person-centred project. This engenders a sense of "ownership" of the GLAM venues for staff and students, allowing all areas of the curriculum to be taught through access to the diverse collections.

Aims for students:

- Make two visits to the Ashmolean Museum.
- Visit and respond to the Jeff Koons exhibition.
- Meet museum staff from the learning team, also Daniel Bone, Head of Conservation.
- Work with artist Jon Lockhart in school to create Jeff Koons-inspired artworks.
- Work with teaching staff to curate and host their own school exhibition.
- Achieve Discover Arts Award.
- Build confidence, develop new skills and share a new experience with teachers and support staff.

What we did

The project took place through visits to school and the museum. First, we visited the school to introduce students to key objects and the museum building. We took handling objects and students considered what they were, their age and original use.

Next, the group visited the museum, explored different materials and a range of objects and artworks. Students met Head of Conservation, Daniel Bone, and found out about the job of a conservator.

At the next visit to the school, we introduced students to artist Jeff Koons, described some of his other works and worked with jigsaws of objects in the exhibition, looking at materials, design and images.

When the students visited the exhibition, they were excited to see Koons' large scale works, how they played tricks with the mind, the materials he used, and they enjoyed photographing themselves in their reflections. They visited at opening time when the exhibition was quiet, giving students space and time to explore at their own pace. We then visited classical sculpture and prehistory galleries to see related objects which had inspired Koons.

Next, a day at school working with artist Jon Lockhart gave students the opportunity to experiment with materials and make their own artwork using coloured paints, lettuce



“The students liked the idea of becoming Jeff Koons experts and being able to share their knowledge with others toward the end of the project.



spinners and iPads to 3D-scan objects and floating objects in coloured liquid. Students enjoyed creating brightly coloured responses and experimenting with photography and shiny surfaces.

Finally, the class organised a stunning classroom exhibition to share their work with the whole school community. The students were incredibly proud of their work and gave visitors guided tours, had a feedback board and made refreshments of Koons-inspired cakes with tiny silver balls.

Project outcomes

Students:

- Increased confidence.
- Sense of pride both individually and as a class team.
- Knowledge that they can share with others at school and at home.
- Many of them referred to this project in their annual reviews under the “what had gone well for them this year” section and were able to share some aspects of this with parents and staff.
- Further development of their social skills at school and during museum visits.
- A sense of collaboration and shared celebration through the exhibition day.

Museum staff:

- Increased expertise in working with students with a wide range of SEND.
- Added to the developing partnership between Iffley Academy and GLAM.
- Furthered the *Ashmolean for All* strategic plan to make the Museum more accessible and relevant for a wider range of audiences.

Class teachers at the Iffley Academy said:

“The day of the exhibition was very special. One student walked into the room and said ‘Wow, this is great!’ and another said ‘Is this really all our work? It looks so good!’ To see them having a sense of pride in their masterpieces and willingly engaging with the visitors, sharing information they had learned, was an absolute delight and made all the hard work seem worthwhile! It was a wonderful shared celebration.”

“The students liked the idea of becoming Jeff Koons experts and being able to share their knowledge with others toward the end of the project.”

What we learned – top tips!

- Meet the group in their “safe space” at school before they visit the museum.
- Use the in-depth knowledge of teaching and support staff in order to plan for all learners and allow for a “person-centred” approach.
- Keep tasks short and focussed.
- Plan visits to the museum when it is at its quietest, e.g. first thing in the morning.
- Ensure the project work has clear criteria for success that all students can access.
- Adopt a co-curational approach where teachers and museums staff plan together and support each other.
- Be prepared to learn a lot about your museum from the young people themselves.

Find out more

Miranda Millward, Arts Engagement Officer, GLAM
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Clare Cory, Education Officer: Secondary & Young People, Ashmolean Museum
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Ashmolean Museum Learning
www.ashmolean.org/learn

Three steps to get started with SEND

Making your museum or heritage site more accessible and your programmes more inclusive doesn't have to come with a hefty price tag. There are small, low-cost changes that you can make and projects you can pilot that will help to overcome barriers to access and make your organisation more inclusive for everyone. Here are three suggestions that can be implemented at no or relatively low cost, whatever the size of your museum.

Better Online Information

According to Euan's Guide, 95% of people with a disability will search for access information online before visiting. Not being able to find comprehensive, up-to-date information is a massive barrier to access. The 2018 State of Museum Access report, published by VocalEyes, StageText and Autism in Museums, found that around one in five museum websites did not provide any access information. The information provided by many more was only basic and related primarily to people with mobility impairments.

SEND audiences need to feel that your museum is a place that they want to visit, so think about the language and images you use.

One thing almost everyone can do is update their organisation's website to provide comprehensive access information. This should include practical information about the building or site and its facilities, temporary and permanent exhibitions, as well as being welcoming and reassuring. SEND audiences need to feel that your museum is a place that they want to visit, so think about the language and images you use. Make sure this information is in an accessible format and, even better, that your website meets current accessibility standards. Have a look at the WC3 Web Accessibility Initiative for guidance. The State of Museum Access report is free to access and provides a wide range of best practice examples.

Improved Consultation

Consultation is an important part of improving accessibility, but as they tend to be underrepresented as visitors, SEND audiences can miss out. Make sure that any existing methods you have in place to collect visitor feedback are accessible. Think about setting up a dedicated access panel or inviting local SEND family groups for a visit with an opportunity to give feedback. DCN provides guidance on setting up advisory groups.

Many national charities such as RNIB and the National Autistic Society have databases of local groups, if you're not sure who to approach. Your local authority may have a database of local support groups for SEND families.

You could also involve children and young people from your local SEND school through a project like Kids in Museums Takeover Day.

This approach has enabled many museums to make changes to their programming and facilities to become more inclusive and better meet local needs. Hastings Museum & Art Gallery worked with a number of local autism groups to develop its relaxed early opening and coffee morning programme. These have received very positive feedback from local parents. Parc Howard Museum has rethought their approach to the signage and interpretation they produce in-house, following consultation with local groups, switching the font and using a matte finish on laminated signs.

More Collaboration

The stories of disabled audiences are underrepresented in museum collections and exhibitions. Collaborating with a local SEND school, your access panel or another local group can be a way to bring new voices into your museum that speak to different audiences. This could be on a small scale initially, creating new labels for a small selection of objects or developing a display for a community case or display board.

At the Horniman Museum and Gardens, the Access Advisory Group – a group of individuals with lived experience of disability – researched and selected objects for a case in the new World Gallery.

“The stories of disabled audiences are underrepresented in museum collections and exhibitions.



Through the objects they chose and their responses to them, the Access Advisory Group were able to highlight their different experiences of and perspectives on the world and demonstrate the importance of respecting and understanding these points of view.

What comes next?

These are just three of many steps you can take to make your museum, gallery or heritage site more inclusive for SEND audiences. However, using these as a starting point will help to build new audiences and embed collaboration with local SEND schools, families or groups into your work. This will support longer-term change and inclusive working across your organisation.

Find out more

WC3 Web Accessibility Initiative
www.w3.org/WAI/standards-guidelines/wcag

State of Museum Access report 2018
<https://vocaleyes.co.uk/state-of-museum-access-2018>

DCN guidance on setting up a disability advisory group
www.musedcn.org.uk/category/resources/setting-up-a-disability-advisory-group

Kids in Museums Takeover Day
<https://kidsinmuseums.org.uk/what-we-do/takeover-day>

Horniman Museum Exhibition
<https://horniman.ac.uk/visit/upcoming-exhibitions/always-part-of-the-story#image-0>



SEND in Museums:

Meaningful engagement, long-lasting advocacy

How it began: the importance of personal experience

As both a museum curator and education manager for 20 years, I thought I knew all I needed to know about physical and intellectual access, but in truth it wasn't until I became a mum to a child with SEND that I fully understood what that entails. My severely disabled daughter and I have struggled to find "meaningful" engagement within museums and art galleries and at times even faced outright exclusion. We've sat isolated within crowds of children climbing into public art installations that are not wheelchair accessible, been given unachievable instructions in workshops, been made to feel "wrong" when reading text and understanding history has been set above valuing materials, form and sense of place.

8% of children in the UK are disabled, therefore a large number of families like mine feel, at best, on the fringes of the museum world. That's a big problem. Add to that the poor uptake of Changing Places Toilets and the message is less than positive.

I felt angry and disheartened, but as a Museum Development Officer, I was ideally placed to make change.

The pilot

I started with a pilot project locally, linking three museums with three special needs schools over a three month period to create new accessible programming or resources. We also employed an experienced museum learning freelancer, Martin Crowther, to support the pairings. We allowed a lot of freedom for creativity, rather than asking for prescriptive outputs, and their partnerships blossomed quickly and produced a huge range of programme content, accessible interpretation and outreach resources for SEND audiences.

They also developed a wealth of learning and advice which needed to be shared with the sector. Using

this, I wrote the Special Schools and Museums Toolkit. The toolkit takes users through the individual projects and partnerships and shares their learning in practical, applicable language to help you develop your own SEND access.

Expanding the programme

The pilot proved that this type of partnership brokering worked, so, funded by SEMDP, I pushed the project out across the South East and signed up 12 museums and 12 SEND groups.

This time the project aimed to expand on types of SEND group, need, age and organisation. In the end we had learners from babies to





post 16, formal learning from pre-school to college and a large home educator group. The subjects covered ranged from STEM to art, and diverse collections included racing cars, turnip choppers, sculpture and screen printing. Due to the funding conditions, the biggest challenge was achieving 12 separate projects in a three-month timescale.

I worked with Martin Crowther again and supported the partnerships with an initial half-day training meeting, £200 per partner seed funding and a half-day of Martin's time for phone/email support and advice. We left them to shape their partnership, led by the collections, space, and needs of the young people. We put the young people as central to evaluating and recording their experience.

Quite early on in the project, museum staff raised concerns about "selling" SEND to their managers or governance. This was something we had heard before in conferences and knew to be a problem. The project sought to develop museum staff confidence in working with SEND

groups and ultimately give staff the advocacy tools to prove the need and value of working with this audience.

We wanted museum staff in all areas of the organisations to value SEND audiences. The aim was to create commitment to longer term partnerships and developing further resources and infrastructure, including staff training. It was also important that SEND partners felt more confident in visiting museums.

Impact

The project had a profound impact on museum staff, many of whom had not worked with SEND groups before. Special relationships formed between the groups. For example, one museum now hosts their home educator group weekly, and for a great project with the museum shop have a look at Helen Cook's case study in this publication. Real change happened in all 12 project museums and SEND awareness improved.

You can learn more by viewing the 12 case studies available online.

“ We left them to shape their partnership, led by the collections, space, and needs of the young people.

Learning and reflection

Making that first contact to a SEND group is key. If that group is reluctant or cautious it might be because they have had bad experiences in the past and some mending may be needed. Or they may think that a museum cannot offer their group anything. We have 16 case studies in all now that prove that is not the case! I challenge any member of staff to not smile when seeing a child or young person with SEND positively engage with a museum. The magic of SEND is not a myth, it is truly beautiful and meaningful. Enjoyment of objects does not require words, engagement in creative practice does not require an end result, and ALL museums can become SEND friendly.

What next?

The next steps are to work with sector partners to ensure that advocacy for SEND in museums happens at all levels. It should be a national directive, an embedded and well supported audience throughout the sector.

Find out more

SEND in Museums Project, conference and Special Schools and Museums Toolkit

<https://southeastmuseums.org/resource-library/send-in-museums-project>

Sensory accessibility

Community and cultural engagement have become my focus for the past few years, as having an adult Autism diagnosis, and a son with Autism, has had a huge impact on being able to access museums, libraries, and many other mainstream services. I have developed online staff training and am opening up conversations with staff in museums, libraries and other services about how our experiences over the years could influence accessibility. In this article, I will be writing about my experiences of contacting Lancashire County Libraries and the British Museum pre-visit. These were two places that my family had difficulty accessing, and that we very much wanted to visit.

“Sensory overload may also be experienced by those with Dementia, Epilepsy, Down Syndrome, PTSD, Anxiety and ADHD, and even those with no diagnosis.

What does Sensory Accessibility mean?

Everyone's experience of Autism is different, yet having senses turned up, on overload, is experienced by many people with an Autism Spectrum Condition. What does this mean? It means that the sound of an echoey entrance hall in a museum can cause pain inside the ear, bright lights can feel painful or uncomfortable to the eyes, being in crowded places can create sensory overload.

It's not just those with an Autism diagnosis who can experience sensory overload. Sensory overload may also be experienced by those with Dementia, Epilepsy, Down Syndrome, PTSD, Anxiety and ADHD, and even those with no diagnosis. It is estimated that 11 million people live with these conditions in the UK alone, and that doesn't include the carers/ families that may also be cut off from accessing these services. For some, this can lead to avoidance of such places, which can then result in a smaller and smaller circle of cultural and social interaction, having a huge impact on physical and mental health. Difficult experiences of visiting heritage sites, where the person is struggling with hidden challenges, can lead to feelings of isolation and exclusion.

Lancashire County Libraries

My initial query to Lancashire Library Services, about how staff could help my son and I visit the library, was listened to very attentively. Many modern libraries have become thriving cultural centres, with classes, groups and more. This plays an important role in communities but can mean that those who can't tolerate a noisier environment may start to avoid the library, as we experienced. A meeting was set up with staff, and from that the Quieter Hour came about, with beeping scanners turned off and slightly dimmed lights, to help service users whose senses are all turned up. There are also plans to have sensory equipment available to hire, for those that may struggle to access the library during the Quieter Hour. Making these provisions to service has helped us and many other people access the library, increasing social and cultural engagement in the community.



British Museum

Again, with the British Museum, what started with an initial enquiry about how our visit could be achieved became a rewarding two-way discussion about sensory accessibility provision. I was invited, along with many other people nationally, to take part in a survey and Access Forum, both of which will inform the museum's accessibility provision.

Holly Wilson, Programme Manager of the Wolfson Access and Education Programme, is working to develop an ongoing programme for children and adults with learning disabilities, sensory challenges and Autism. Holly is "extremely passionate" about removing barriers for children and adults with SEND, she says: "It's fantastic to be a part of the work being done across the sector to make cultural institutions more inclusive and to see the differences it makes to the individuals and families who visit... [The Wolfson Programme makes it easier for families and individuals to visit the museum, by] working with schools, local organisations and individuals to develop and evaluate pilot activities and resources within the museum". Also, Autism awareness training, delivered by the National Autistic Society, has been added to the staff training programme.

What about the future? Holly says, "The Museum also has plans to introduce a pre-visit guide, sensory maps and early morning events, which will allow people to prepare for their visit and provide the option of visiting



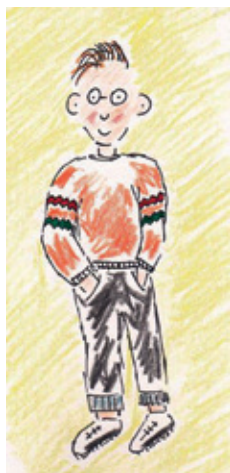
in a quieter, sensory-friendly environment." The longer-term vision is for these initiatives to be embedded into the museum's core offer.

Reflection

These two experiences highlight the passion and dedication across the sector to address isolation and alienation from communities and help increase social interaction and cultural engagement. Speaking personally, this is a lifeline and makes a huge difference to people with hidden Sensory Processing Challenges.

Call to Action!

There is fantastic work in the area of Sensory Accessibility going on in cultural spaces, such as sensory maps, online visual guides, open minded and helpful staff. I am creating a visual resource, Sensory Accessibility: Here's What Works, for people to download and share best practice. I need your help – send me info and photos on what you are doing and showcase your fantastic work to inspire others!



Find out more

Free online Sensory Accessibility training and resources
www.meltdowntracker.com

Morgan Salisbury
meltdowntracker@outlook.com

Creating awareness of Sensory Processing Difficulties



Why create Sensory Spectacle?

I founded Sensory Spectacle in 2014 after working for 5 years in a shortbreaks service in West London, supporting children and young people with additional needs. During this time, I also studied a Masters exploring the autistic sensory world. I began my masters as it became apparent to me while working in this job that very few people understand sensory processing difficulties, how best to support people and how we can ensure people with sensory difficulties can still enjoy trips and outings. I would spend the summer months with the young people taking them on trips and a week long holiday out of London. While planning these trips I began visiting the place in advance, writing risk assessments and preparing documents for my staff to feel prepared for taking the person they were supporting there. This evolved into mapping the

sensory experience. Sensory Maps are something which have become more and more helpful to families and adults with sensory differences. I have found that by having a little knowledge in advance of areas which might be particularly busy or noisy could really help me prepare for outings.

From 2014 this work became Sensory Spectacle. I now spend my time running workshops, speaking at conferences, providing sessions in schools, writing books and working with public settings to help them support SEND, mainly focusing on the sensory aspects. For example, at the Royal Academy I have been documenting the changes in the architecture, lighting, busy times and

areas, as well as the changes this might have throughout the year.

Sensory Processing Difficulties (SPD) is said to impact 1 in 20 people. That's a huge percentage, which means that you are more than likely to have visitors who process sensory information in such a way as to respond to the environment differently. Some might wear head phones or noise cancelling headphones, some people love to touch everything or get messy, and others may be sensitive to light, among other expressions of SPD like covering ears and speaking loudly, squinting a lot, avoiding busy environments, moving constantly, rocking or chewing on things.





Building a sensory map

Providing extra information online about the sensory aspects within your site can be really helpful. Below are some key aspects to highlight.

Specifically, noisy or quiet areas, highlighting busy and quiet times or differences in entrances (if you have more than one).

Technology is one of the big components for people who are sensitive to sound. Technology creates electrical currents, which are essentially high frequency sounds that some find very difficult to tune out, even though many of us don't register them. Therefore, if you have exhibits or areas of your site with a lot of technology (TV screens, digital displays, speakers, tablets,

videos) then highlighting this can be extremely helpful and help to reduce anxiety for some people who are looking to visit.

When I work with settings to consult on their sensory spaces and maps, I encourage them to think about all our senses: smell, taste, touch, sight and hearing – as well as our movement (vestibular) sense, and body awareness (proprioception).

Smell is something that can easily overwhelm visitors – for people who are hyper sensitive to smell it may evoke gagging reflexes, feeling ill, wanting to remove themselves from that particular area, or emotionally responding (just think of the feelings you get when you walk past someone who wears a perfume your grandma used to wear).

Some steps towards sensory accessibility

We want visitors to enjoy their time, so having some information to prepare your families will be a huge support. Here are some things to get you started:

- Share information online to prepare visitors – busy times, entrances, toilets, lockers, parking.
- Have photos of specific areas on your website to prepare for a trip.
- Create a sensory map highlighting areas that are noisy, quiet, bright and dark.
- Consider having sensory sacks available onsite (see my website for more information).

“I encourage them to think about all our senses: smell, taste, touch, sight and hearing – as well as our movement (vestibular) sense, and body awareness (proprioception).”

Find out more

Becky Lyddon, Founder, Sensory Spectacle
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Access for All Trolleys

Background and aims

The Jewish Museum welcomes over 18,000 students a year to study Judaism, British Jewish History and the Holocaust. We regularly evaluate our school workshops and had identified that a key area for improvement was making the sessions more accessible for all learning abilities. We were keen to make our existing workshops more accessible through the availability of resources to support students with additional needs. Looking at the additional needs of pupils currently visiting we found that Autism Spectrum Condition and global delay were the most frequent needs, so we were particularly keen to provide resources for students with these needs. Students with ADHD, dyslexia and visual impairment were also in many workshops, and we found several schools included English as an Additional Language pupils.

We decided to create two Access Trolleys, one for each of our main teaching spaces. Each trolley would contain a mix of resources to cater to different needs. There would also be tote bags which students could put resources in to carry with them whilst they explored different areas of the museum. We also intended to promote the trolleys to teachers through the booking confirmation letter and at the start of each session.

Challenges

One issue was choosing what resources to include. We debated spending money on larger, more expensive

resources that teachers might not be able to bring with them, or providing cheaper, smaller resources that we could purchase more of, but teachers and students could be more likely to bring. We chose a combination to provide a variety of resources.

Another obstacle we faced was finding storage space when not in use. We decided on low trolleys that could be stored under the stage in our auditorium.

We wanted to let teachers know in advance that the trolleys were available and added the trolleys to our booking confirmation letter. However, not a single teacher in our evaluation said they had heard of the trolleys before their visit. We created a webpage on the trolleys with a list of contents, promoted the trolleys in our welcome emails sent to each school before their visit and in our termly teachers' newsletter. Still not a single teacher in our evaluation stated they had heard of the trolley in advance. As a result, our Learning interns speak to teachers when the session begins to promote the trolley. This resulted in the trolleys needing more intern time than anticipated.

Outcomes

The two trolleys were created with a range of resources for students with different needs. Feedback has been positive on the trolleys with teachers saying that it made their visit more accessible or that it showed the museum was more openly accessible to all people.

The trolleys were created with a variety of objects including reading rulers, eardefenders, pencil grips, weighted lapblanket and textured back rest. Information about the trolleys is on our website, in our confirmation letter, teachers' newsletter and welcome emails.

Learning and reflection

Teachers want access resources available even if their students don't need them. For example, one teacher in our evaluation whose school did not use the trolley answered that it still made her feel more confident in her visit and she felt it was necessary to see resources even if they weren't needed.

Different teachers chose different resources as the most helpful for their visit. As one teacher wrote, the most helpful thing seems to be "variety, because special needs are always different."

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The location of the trolleys is really important. After feedback that students were hesitant to go to the front, they are now located at the back of teaching spaces making it more subtle when students collect resources.

We cannot expect teachers leading the group to have been informed about the trolleys in advance by teachers booking the visit. We need to promote them on the day.

Next steps

The trolleys will continue to be available. We are also seeking funding to create a permanent Quiet Space. This can be used as a breakout space where teachers can take any student who needs it and resources from the trolley can be taken into this space.

Find out more

Emma Crew, Jewish Museum
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The Inclusive Access Plan

The inclusive access plan is an initiative born out of the Cultural Inclusion Manifesto. The idea was formulated in part as a consequence of the inaugural conference that took place in October 2018 at the Lyric Hammersmith. The Inclusive Access Plan is at this point in draft form and offers a heuristic solution. It is a starting point that offers a trajectory for real and tangible change.

Rationale

The Cultural Inclusion Manifesto not only seeks to be a space where **best inclusive practice** can be shared across

a number of fields, it also aims to be a platform for **activism**. We want to secure **positive change** by **focusing on solutions** that have real impact on the lives of people with special educational needs. **We will achieve** this by supporting them to tell their stories and effect change by promoting inclusion structurally, attitudinally and on a policy level.

Inclusion is integral to the whole experience; an inclusive approach means the anticipation of barriers and the subsequent mitigation or removal of them. If a venue has a rich inclusive offer, but access to it

is problematic, disabled children and young people will remain effectively excluded.

Access and transport were common themes identified by delegates at the inaugural Cultural Inclusion Manifesto conference. The fact that transport is not embedded into a cultural institution's offer can be incredibly frustrating for those who seek to support disabled children and young people. However, it seems to be a depressingly common experience among teachers and it can be assumed that it is also prevalent for individuals and smaller groups.

This poses a number of questions:

1. Why should a young person with special educational needs, their family or their school have to pay additional money to access a cultural space when their neuro-typical and able bodied peers do not?
2. Why is this not included within the strategic offer of all cultural institutions?

A possible solution?

I propose that each cultural institutions should have available an **Inclusive Access plan**.

1. This document should be clearly written and accessible in a number of formats as well as being effectively sign posted on their website.
2. Cultural organisations should have designated parking for minibuses/cars on-site where possible. When this is not practicable they should work collaboratively with the local council and business to ensure the availability of designated spaces that have easy access to the venue, i.e. reasonable walking distance when pushing a

wheelchair with only a minimum of road crossings.

3. There should be a map that clearly highlights the closest tube/train/bus stops as well as providing relevant information on their accessibility. This should be accompanied by a map detailing how you can access the venue.
4. Cultural organisations should put in place a programme to ensure that all staff have disability awareness training with an initial focus on those who have public facing roles.

This proposal is in draft form and we would very much welcome input from all stakeholders to ensure that it both comprehensive and robust.

Find out more

Cultural Inclusion Manifesto
www.culturalinclusion.uk
See under "Updates" for more detail on the Inclusive Access Plan proposal.



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A large print version is available on request. Please contact the GEM office.

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