

# GEM

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learn together



# #MuseumHour on Reopening Museums

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# What are you most excited about for museums to reopen?

- To see colleagues, interact with visitors and encounter real objects and artwork again
- To be a visitor in museums again.
- To take my children back to museums and learn through them.
- Having people and laughter in our buildings
- To get to start my research proper, and also to see students get into museums when they can.
- To see people enjoying and learning in museums again
- Visiting old favourites and new exhibitions
- Having school groups back in for workshops
- Museums to start hiring again
- Meeting volunteers that we've not seen in person yet
- To be in a building full of interesting stuff
- Museum cake and a trip to the gift shop!

# If you have yet to get back into your museum or heritage site, what are you most nervous about?

- Being given all the necessary information and support from those who have been back for longer.
- Commuting and public transport during peak times
- The exhaustion of going back to work in person full time without any easing-in.
- Learning the new social landscape and interacting with large groups again
- That museums will only be open for a short time, and might be closed again for a subsequent lockdown
- Visitors being hesitant to join on-site education programs
- Having to enforce track and trace with visitors
- Having a good season and being able to stay open

What safety measures would you like to see in your museum, or a museum you might visit? What do you think will work and what is not possible in your museum?

- Museums demonstrated they were safe places last year which made it quite comfortable to be a visitor, we shouldn't 'sanitise' the experience too much.
- Ticketed entry and one-way systems in place for social distancing
- Capacity is really important, ensuring everyone is able to keep a distance from other visitors.
- One way systems, mask wearing, sanitiser stations and ticketing worked really well last time, happy to do it all again.
- Its key to consider how people's needs differ and potential flexible options to accommodate this.
- Confident colleagues to help visitors enjoy their visit are an important safety measure too.
- One way systems can pressure people into moving too quickly
- Have the option for staff to work from home if they feel unwell
- Test-kits for employees and making use of outdoor areas for education / group activities
- Continue digital education formats after reopening
- Spare masks, wipes at touch points and reconsidered staff areas to allow staff to feel safe during breaks.

How do you plan on engaging your audiences in the museum? Are hands on interactives and touchscreens off? Are tours offered? Or will visitors simply roam around?

- Be aware that both staff and visitors have differing experiences during the past year, including furlough, working from home, unemployment and experiencing loss from COVID-19.
- Self led trail packs for families, regular cleaning of touchscreens, socially distanced family activities, and integrated digital content via QR codes.
- Visually appealing community curated displays created by groups during lockdown.
- Thinking of ways to engage that don't involve excessive touching, including trails, tours, costumed interpreters, outdoor events and an immersive atmosphere.
- Working with @\_smartify to engage visitors digitally
- Reduced capacity family sessions and a chronological one way route.
- Museum educators wait in the galleries to engage with visitors individually instead of group tours
- QR codes to access audio-descriptions, with audio material for different target groups
- Self-guided activities like treasure hunts and activity boxes to borrow

# What about education programmes? Are your museums opening back up for school visits right away? What would work best to facilitate formal education in your museum?

- We've started outreach visits to schools and will be booking in workshops at the Museum in June, but we're also continuing our virtual sessions to give schools the option of remote or in-person.
- Our new learning programme will begin to accept school visits in September in line with the new academic year
- We are continuing with our digital sessions until the next academic year.
- Offering both digital and in-person sessions at an outdoor site, with lots of interest from schools for large groups in Sept / Oct
- Interested to see if this encourages schools to visit local museums that they don't need coach travel to visit
- Open for school visits from May half term and running normal workshops but with covid-safe adaptations
- One organisation is opening up a site solely for outdoor educational sessions
- Open for schools but only welcoming one school per slot with employees distanced from students to maintain bubbles.
- Offering on-site visits on request until Summer, then actively promoting from September onwards

What new methods / engagement techniques will you continue to carry over from when your museum was closed?  
What lessons have you learned about your museum moving forward?

- Interesting to see what changes for good and what returns to old ways of working
- There are opportunities to grow as a sector to engage what we've learnt and developed
- Becoming more inclusive in our working practice and visitor experience
- Building a new digital presence, digital innovation has been key
- Appreciating the value of fully engaging with front of house teams and the challenges they face
- Continuing to livestream panel discussions and talks for accessibility
- Discovering the power of social media, online talks and an online shop
- Learning the value of online engagement to create an international audience
- Museums have the amazing ability to evolve and be increasingly creative in touch times – staff are the key to success
- Learnt that you can't do everything or be all things to the audience, embed your values and be authentic
- Wish to continue the supportive spirit that developed between museum teams and visitors as a result of the pandemic

**#MuseumHour** provides a platform for a monthly museum chat, themed around different topics.

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