

Kickstart Scheme Evaluation

Museums Galleries Scotland Kickstart Gateway



Introduction

The Kickstart Scheme was a UK Government funded employability programme, that was introduced to tackle the lack of quality opportunities for young people post lockdown. Funding was given to create new jobs for people aged 16-24, who were on Universal Credit (UC) and at risk of long term unemployment. Funding covered 6 months of wages at 25 hours a week. This meant that employers could effectively give opportunities to improve young people's employability. The employers were also given a £1500 payment when their Kickstart Employee began work to help with start-up costs and to support their young person's continuous professional development.

Museums Galleries Scotland (MGS) is the national development body for museums and galleries in Scotland. An important part of our remit is to support and develop the workforce of the sector, as evidenced in the current National Strategy for Scotland's museums and galleries.

Aim 3: Empower a diverse workforce to increase their potential for the benefit of the sector and beyond.

MGS saw the Kickstart Scheme as a call to action for employers to support youth employability in challenging times. Employers have a responsibility to the future workforce to provide opportunity and develop the skills of the next generation. At the start of the Kickstart Scheme employers could only be involved if they were offering 30+ placements. The alternative for an employer would be to go through a 'Kickstart Gateway'. By becoming a Kickstart Gateway, MGS were able to support a group of employers, providing the group had 30+ accumulative placements between them. In order for the sector to take part in the Kickstart Scheme MGS became a Kickstart Gateway and sent out an invitation for heritage sector employers to express interest in offering these opportunities to their communities.

The Kickstart Scheme ran from Jan 2021 with the final participants completing the scheme in October 2022.



MGS As A Kickstart Gateway

To progress as a Kickstart Gateway MGS assigned a project manager and a project officer to it. They managed all administrative processes and dealings with DWP so that museums and galleries could take part.

As a Gateway MGS were required to meet bi-monthly with DWP and a host of other Kickstart Gateways. This was to:

- report on progress
- support each other to fill placements
- to ask any questions around finance, admin, marketing etc.

Through these meetings MGS were able to report back on challenges of the scheme, but also tell success stories, so that our placements and the Kickstart Employees were being recognised for their work.

To support museums and galleries to take part in the Kickstart Scheme MGS topped up the wages of all participants to Real Living Wage (RLW), so that they were all paid a fair amount. This was to meet our commitment as a Real Living Wage Employer, but also to avoid discrimination based on age. We contributed £30,593 from our funding to cover these payments and make sure that this was invested in appropriately. We also received £300 per job start as a Gateway to cover administration costs, this total came to £14,100.

Additionally, MGS decided to pass on to each employer all the employability money relating to each Kickstart Employee. This was a £1500 sum that could be used for startup costs, such as laptops and uniform, but also for the tailored employability of that young person. Some Kickstart Gateways decided to keep a portion of this money and deliver employability workshops to the participants, instead we decided a tailored approach would work better for people.

MGS also provided an optional Employment Advisor service that was delivered as in kind support by MGS staff. This was to support Kickstart Employees through advice around employment and opportunity to reach positive destinations following their placement. Instead of holding employability workshops for participants we listened to their needs and interests through 1-2-1 meetings and tailored our support towards their career goals.



Outcomes Of The Kickstart Scheme

The outcomes we wanted to generate were:

- Support youth employability in a time of crisis as employers
- Support museums and galleries to participate in employability programming
- Show the benefits of a diverse workforce
- Support positive destinations for young people on the scheme
- Promote inclusive recruitment
- Support making reasonable adjustments for employment
- Work with external partners
- Provide an alternative entry route to the sector to recruit new talent through a delivery partner

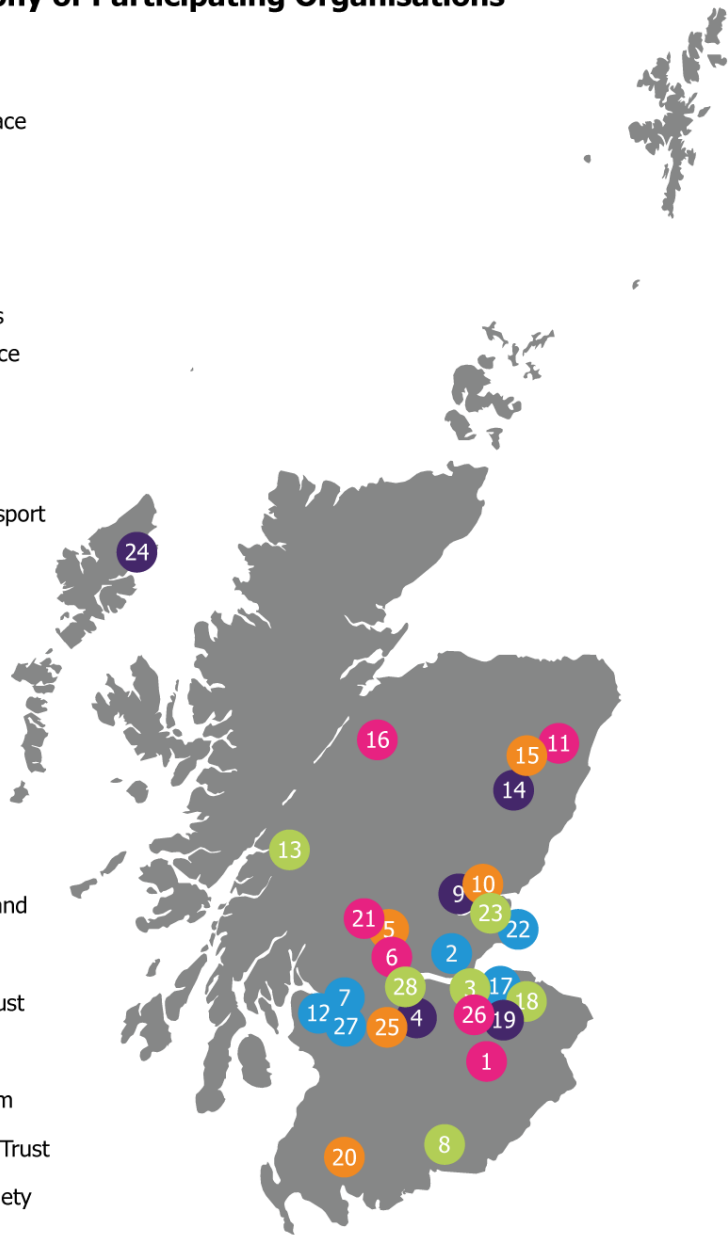
“I’ve realised that I want to work in museums. I never thought about it before, my brain hadn’t even considered it. I just love the environment. Also, my confidence has grown rapidly in the last 6 months. Before this, I wouldn’t have called someone off the cuff or try to set up partnerships like I am now. I don’t second guess myself as much either. ”

Beth Hampton, Dundee Museum of Transport (Kickstart Scheme Employee)

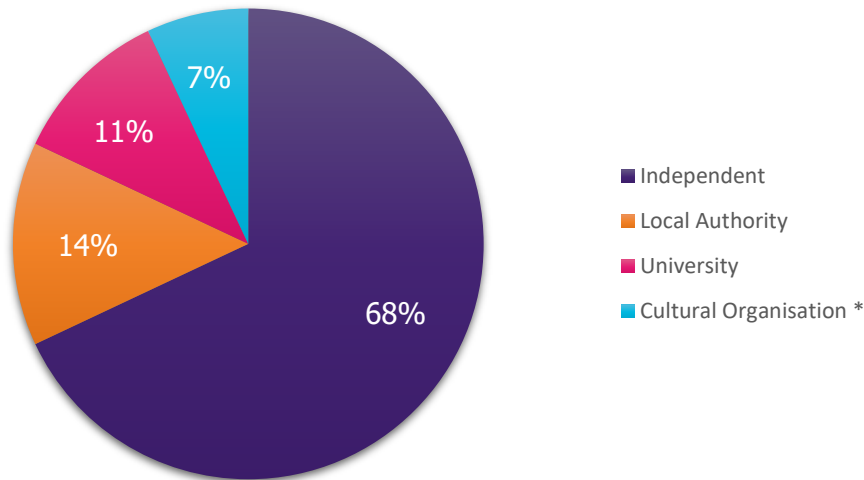


Geography of Participating Organisations

- 1 Abbotsford Trust
- 2 Andrew Carnegie Birthplace
- 3 Art in Healthcare
- 4 Biggar Museum Trust
- 5 Chapter House Museum
- 6 Culture Perth and Kinross
- 7 David Livingston Birthplace Museum
- 8 Devils Porridge Museum
- 9 Dundee Heritage Trust
- 10 Dundee Museum of Transport
- 11 Garioch Heritage Centre
- 12 Glasgow Life
- 13 Glencoe Folk Museum
- 14 Glenesk Folk Museum
- 15 Grampian Transport Museum
- 16 High Life Highland
- 17 Museums and Galleries Edinburgh
- 18 Museums Galleries Scotland
- 19 National Mining Museum
- 20 Robert Burns Ellisland Trust
- 21 Scottish Crannog Centre
- 22 Scottish Fisheries Museum
- 23 St Andrews Preservation Trust
- 24 Stornoway Historical Society
- 25 The Museum of Lead Mining
- 26 University of Edinburgh
- 27 University of Glasgow
- 28 University of Stirling



Participating Organisations by Type



The Recruitment Process

The application route for the Kickstart Scheme positions were by referral through a Job Centre Advisor. After the closing date the employer would receive all applications from those referred. It was important that the application method used by employers was accessible and did not contain a host of essential criteria for the role.

As a result of using accessible application methods through the Kickstart Scheme recruitment the museums and galleries who worked with MGS made changes to their recruitment processes. All the Kickstart Scheme processes needed to be simple and accessible, so it made employers look at their current processes more deeply too. MGS saw changes from lengthy application forms and multiple questions to CV and Cover Letter, pre interview phone calls, open days and audio application as appropriate. MGS supported employers to amend recruitment processes by screening the job descriptions prior to sending them to DWP to go live.

The initial success of the Kickstart Scheme resulted in a drop off in candidates as the Scheme progressed due to those interested now being in placement or employment. This meant that employers became even more flexible with their roles by changing descriptions



so that jobs could be carried out from home. This meant that employers were also able to be more flexible in the geographic areas that they could accept participants from, although this did depend on the role.

When advertising the job opportunities, it was vital to promote them as widely as possible because the positions could only be accessed through the Job Centre. MGS supported this process in each area of Scotland, contacting upwards of 80 different referral partners to inform people about the opportunities and to generate as many applicants as possible. Some of the referral partners contacted are listed below and they were essential in driving the scheme forward:

- Developing the Young Workforce
- Autism Scotland
- Regional Equality Councils
- LGBT Youth Scotland
- Enable Scotland
- Schools / Colleges
- Job Centre Plus
- Routes to Work
- Skills Development Scotland
- Forth Sector
- Community Renewal
- Councils
- Youth Link Scotland
- NHS

“Robyn is an absolute delight to work with. Very amiable, competent at some many things, creative, full of ideas, willing to make suggestions. Her time keeping & attention to detail are both excellent. She has fitted in wonderfully with the team.”

Elaine Edwards, Biggar & Upper Clydeside Museum (Kickstart Scheme Employer)



Jobs Created By The Kickstart Scheme

A vast range of job roles were created by the participating museums and galleries for the Kickstart Scheme. Through the MGS Kickstart Gateway we had 48 placements across Scotland and the different job titles are listed below, some positions had the same title, so listed are the diversity of roles, not each individual one:

- Adlib Administrator
- Admin and Ecommerce Assistant
- Art Collection Assistant
- Assistant Curator
- Collections Assistant
- Collections and Curatorial Assistant
- Digital Assistant
- Digital Content Assistant
- Education Trainee
- Exhibitions Assistant
- Maintenance Assistant
- Marketing and Communications Assistant
- Museum Assistant
- Museum Audience and Engagement Assistant
- Museum Guide and Archive Assistant
- Museum Trainee
- Project Administrator
- Public Engagement Assistant
- Public Events Trainee
- Research Project Support Assistant
- Social Media Assistant
- Trainee Archivist
- Visitor Assistant
- Youth Engagement Assistant

“My placement was Collections and Curatorial Assistant. Within this role I had to opportunity to carry out lots of different tasks. This made me realise that I enjoy the variety of working in a small museum. I am unsure which role I would like to peruse within the sector and would like to try a few more, especially learning and engagement.”

Anon (Kickstart Scheme Employee)



How The Employability Funding Was Spent

The £1500 employability payment was made to each museum and gallery at the start of their Kickstart Scheme placement. We encouraged employers to spend this on tailored employability support for each Kickstart Scheme Employee, after any startup costs were complete.

Some of the training and development that the employability payment supported was:

- Health and Safety Training
- Fire Safety Training
- Collections Management Training
- Customer Service Training
- Website Design Course
- Laptops
- Travel to other museums and galleries
- Driving Lessons
- Conferences
- Marketing Training
- First Aid Training
- Collections Care Courses

Kickstart Employer Surveys

Kickstart Employers were sent a survey at the beginning and end of their placement. We wanted to gather information to evaluate our participation in the Kickstart Scheme. We also wanted to determine the appetite in the sector for employability programming. Employers were asked the following questions:

Start of placement:

- What is your motivation for hosting a Kickstart Employee(s)?
- What are the benefits to your organisation from participating in this?
- What do you hope that your Kickstart employee(s) will gain from the experience?
- Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statement "MGS topping up to a real living wage and acting as a Gateway was a deciding factor in my organisation participating in the Kickstart scheme."



End of placement:

- Would you like to see a sector wide employability programme like this run again?
- Tell us about any barriers you would have to overcome in order to participate in a programme like this again.
- How did your organisation benefit from having a Kickstart Employee(s)?
- What were the benefits of having MGS act as a Gateway (intermediary) for you?

The survey results showed that:

- **100% of respondents** strongly agree / agreed with the statement "MGS topping up to a real living wage and acting as a Gateway was a deciding factor in my organisation participating in the Kickstart scheme."
- **100% of respondents** said they would like to see further sector wide employability programs run in the future.

Reasons for taking part:

- To assist the community/ develop local young people
- To learn from the young person and their viewpoint
- Create sector pathways
- Extending museum workforce capacity

Outcome/Impact:

- Museum was able to open/ open hours extended
- Revitalised the team with energy and enthusiasm
- Injection of new ideas and changes to ways of working
- Able to offer additional services, tours/ resources/ digital output/ social media
- Greater training opportunities for all staff
- Satisfaction in supporting employability in the local community

Benefits of MGS acting as a gateway:

- Removed the burden and time of admin
- Having a support system readily available, giving employer confidence in case of issues
- Individual tailored support for Kickstarter on employability
- Top up payments to Real Living Wage.



“Cameron is continuing to shine. He is open and responsive to new ideas and new ways of working. He finished the woodland path, and brought his Gran to see it at the opening of it at our Midsummer Festival, when it was all lit up in lights. He has also really settled in with the team, and grown in confidence. He used to take his lunch breaks alone, or join in for a bit, but now he is chatting daily with the other apprentices, and organised the team to put away a major wood delivery, and he showed leadership in it.”

Rachel Backshall, The Scottish Crannog Centre (Kickstart Scheme Employer)

Kickstart Employee Surveys

Kickstart Employees were sent a survey at the beginning and end of their placement. We wanted to gather information on the Employees and their experience with the Kickstart Scheme. We wanted to learn about their perception of the museums and galleries sector and what skills they gained during their placements. Employees were asked the following questions:

Start of placement:

- What do you hope to gain from your placement?
- What attracted you to the museum and galleries sector?
- What aspect of your placement role are you most excited about?
- Have you worked in museums and galleries before?
- Have you ever volunteered in museums and galleries before?

End of placement:

- Had you worked / volunteered in the museum and galleries sector prior to this placement?
- Would you consider working in the museums and galleries sector in the future?
- What type of jobs are you most interested in doing in the future?
- Do you think this placement improved your chances of employment?
- How have you benefitted from the placement?
- During the placement, did you feel supported in your workplace?



The survey results showed that:

70% had never volunteered in a museum or gallery before
97% had never worked in a museum or gallery before

Reasons given for taking part:

- To gain general work experience, transferable skills and a museum employability skill.
- To gain experience in museums.
- To gain experience in specific areas of work e.g. digital/graphic design/marketing/events.
- To gain practical experience that was missed out of further education during the pandemic.

Positive Destinations Post Kickstart Scheme

69 Kickstart Scheme placements with funding from DWP were successfully secured. 48 of these placements were filled, with 22 placements not being filled. The reasons for this were various:

- Organisations no longer had the capacity to support the positions.
- Rural locations with no public transport links.
- Lack of unemployment in rural areas.
- Success of Kickstart Scheme diminishing candidate pool.

From the 48 Kickstart Scheme placements:

44 Kickstart Employees completed the programme*.

39 Kickstart Employees (89%) went on to positive destinations**.

40% of the positive destinations being in museums and galleries.

13 Kickstart Employees were retained by their organisations.

* During the programme 4 Kickstart Employees didn't complete their placement. This was due to health and extenuating personal circumstances.

** Scottish Government consider positive destinations to include higher education, further education and employment.



“My personal experience with Kickstart has been an incredibly positive one; after graduating during the pandemic with limited work experience resulting directly from the lockdowns the prospect of trying to enter the Museum or Heritage sectors was particularly daunting. The opportunity to gain both general office work experience and sector specific insight by working as an Administration Assistant at Museums Galleries Scotland has proved invaluable to me and, I hope, my career advancement.”

Gemma Gleed, Museums Galleries Scotland (Kickstart Scheme Employee)

Some of the positive destinations for the Kickstart Employees are below, this list is not exhaustive:

- Marketing Assistant
- Administration
- Archive Assistant
- Collections Assistant
- Coppicing Fellowship
- Curatorial Assistant
- Customer Service
- Events Assistant
- Front of House
- Further Education
- Graduate Traineeship
- Higher Education
- Internship
- Labouring
- Marketing and Communications Assistant
- Modern Apprenticeships
- Museum Assistant
- Self-Employment
- Tour Guide
- Youth Engagement Assistant



MGS Employment Advisor Feedback

As part of the Kickstart Scheme MGS trained 12 Employment Advisors to support the Kickstart Employees on their journey and into positive destinations. This was an in kind offering from MGS as part of the programme and it did not involve the employability payment that was earmarked for the Kickstart Employee. Unlike a traditional mentor, Employment Advisors focused primarily on employability. They met with their assigned Kickstart Employees once a month or more regularly depending on the employee need. Each Employment Advisor covered CV & cover letter support, mock interview / interview support, job searching, application support and conversations around employability, career paths and personal development.

We asked the MGS Employment Advisors:

- Did you enjoy the experience of being an employment advisor?
- Did you enjoy the experience of being an employment advisor?
- Would you like to undertake the role of employment adviser again in any potential future employability programmes?
- Did you feel supported in your role as an employment adviser?
- Please use this space to tell us what worked well in relation to your experience of undertaking the role of employment adviser.
- Please use this space to tell us how your experience of undertaking the role of employment adviser could have been improved.

87.5% said they **enjoyed the experience and would like to be an employment advisor again.**

What went well:

- Valuable training
- Well organised
- Support from Markus and other advisors
- Added value to role
- Personal development
- Online allowed for convenience/ capacity in balancing with other work

Improvements:

- Advisors could have been introduced at the induction stage of the Kickstart Scheme.



Finance

The project was directly funded by UK Government, Department of Work and Pensions. They provided a grant of £1500 for each Kickstart placement to cover startup costs and they also funded the National Living Wage/ National Minimum Wage for 25 hours a week for 6 months.

Real Living Wage:

MGS is a Real Living Wage (RLW) employer, and it is our part of our mission to encourage the sector to become RLW employers. We topped up each National Living Wage/ National Minimum Wage payment to RLW. This approach was supported by 100% of employers stating that MGS topping up to a Real Living Wage was a deciding factor in participating in the Kickstart scheme. During the period of running the Scheme RLW increased from £9.50ph to £9.90ph. In order to ensure the participants were recompensed accordingly we worked with the employers to bring this in effect of January 1st 2022. We then updated our top up / grant payments to match this.

Figures:

- Total startup/ personal development payments (£1500 per placement) received and passed onto employers: **£72,000**
- MGS admin payment, used towards staff costs and top up payments (£300 per placement): **£14,400**
- Total MGS spend (top up to RLW payments): **£31,069**
- Grant/Wage payments received from DWP for participants: **£253,514**
- Total programme cost with Grant from DWP (wage & start up payments), Admin payment & MGS RLW top up payments: **£370,983**

“Being a part of the exhibition class and being able to use my archive knowledge to help the students has really made me feel like I’m giving back in a way, and that I’m synthesising what I’ve been doing into something new that benefits others. It’s made me feel like I know things and am useful, and that’s just nice.”

Scott Fitzsimmons, The University of Stirling (Kickstart Scheme Employee)



Kickstart Scheme Challenges:

- Recruitment in rural areas after the scheme had been running for over 6 months became much more challenging than at the start. At the beginning there was access to a diverse range of candidates, but as the scheme went on and more people became employed and went on to other positive destinations then candidates became harder to recruit. In some rural areas Job Centres had no unemployed candidates on their caseload aged between 16-24. When there was a smaller pool of people then employers tried different methods of recruitment to make the opportunities more accessible.
- The paperwork and processes required by DWP were extremely challenging throughout the Kickstart Scheme. Having regional contacts made a big difference. They helped with queries and got back to us with the information required in a timely manner. They had an extremely challenging role to manage all these Kickstart Gateways and provided invaluable support.
- The administrative process of having multiple different employers sign agreements, processing payments for salaries and employability money, amending agreements with DWP and project management took much more admin time than was covered by the £300 per job start payments we received.

However, the impact the scheme had on museums and galleries and the Kickstart Employees has meant that the benefits far outweighed the challenges.

“Having struggled to find a job during the covid-19 pandemic, I was so relieved when I heard about the Kickstart programme. It gave me hope that if I put my mind to it, I could not only get a job to support myself but also get an opportunity to pursue a new career and get valuable experience in the process!”

Fausteja Eglynaite, The Abbotsford Trust (Kickstart Scheme Employee)

“Our Kickstart employee brought brilliant new energy, enthusiasm, and skills, with a smile for everyone and always willing to learn something new. He built new areas and activities at the museum, and in just 6 months has really put his mark on the place and on our team.”

Anon (Kickstart Scheme Employer)



Conclusion And Recommendations

The Kickstart Scheme was a success and has shown the importance of running similar programmes in the future. It has shown that there is an appetite in the sector to support employability in their local communities.

It was a great opportunity for MGS to work with a new funder (DWP) and get to know how they work. Having now worked with them on this project we would be well equipped to do so again in a more streamlined manner.

Although we would run the scheme again there are also other ways in which to support museums to facilitate employability in their local communities. This could include training museum staff, such as we did for the MGS Employments Advisors. Funding for the Kickstart Scheme placements was a key factor for many museums to get involved, so this would need to be considered if we were to create a legacy programme.

We saw a huge number of positive destinations across the board and people received quality placements, museum's amended their recruitment practice, there was flexibility in management, and people's lives were changed for the better. Although the Kickstart Scheme required a lot of work the value and outcomes from it are high and it had a positive impact on participants' lives.

Recommendations:

- Museums and galleries to continue to participate in employability programming to benefit the community that they serve.
- Museums and galleries to look at their recruitment process and make them as accessible as possible.
- Museums and galleries to work with a range of external partners and see the benefits of diversifying their engagement.
- Museums and galleries to use referral partners and widen the reach of their application processes.
- Museums and galleries to consider a range of different entry routes to positions advertised.
- MGS to consider supporting any future employability programming as appropriate.

"My skills have been nurtured here and I look forward to the exciting times and potential challenges ahead. I have found myself doing things I could never imagine. My experiences here have been like a dream come true."

Kyle Steele, The Hunterian – The University of Glasgow (Kickstart Scheme Employee)

