



**HERITAGE  
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## **Museums Galleries Scotland**

**Skills for Success Programme  
Evaluation Report 2018 – 2019**

**Funded by The National Lottery  
Heritage Fund**

**December 2019**



**Museums  
Galleries  
Scotland**

Supporting Scotland's Museums



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## Executive Summary

# Museums Galleries Scotland Skills for Success Programme 2018–19

## The Programme

The Skills for Success programme, funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, offered non-graduate learners the opportunity to undertake a one-year paid placement in 16 host museums and galleries throughout Scotland. It set out to address workforce issues, including a lack of diversity and lack of accessible entry and progression routes identified in 'Going Further – the National Strategy for Scotland's Museums and Galleries'.

Learners worked towards an SVQ3 in Museums & Galleries Practice, and were supported by a supervisor in the host museum, a mentor, an assessor and Museums Galleries Scotland staff. In addition, the management learners undertook a six-day Institute of Leadership & Management (ILM) accredited leadership programme.

### Skills for Success in numbers

**20** learners took part in the learning placement at entry level (19 completed)

**2** learners completed a management level placement

**£15k** stipend was paid to learners

The Skills for Success programme was awarded the Creative Choices Award at the 2019 Creative & Cultural Skills Awards

## Impact

The impact on those involved has been significant with most host organisations, participants and mentors reporting valuable experiences and substantive impact:



### On participants

- ✓ New qualifications and skills gained
- ✓ Improved understanding of the sector and routes to employment within it
- ✓ Improved employability
- ✓ Increased confidence



### On mentors & supervisors

- ✓ New mentoring skills
- ✓ Experience in supporting people with additional support needs
- ✓ Networking opportunities
- ✓ Additional capacity

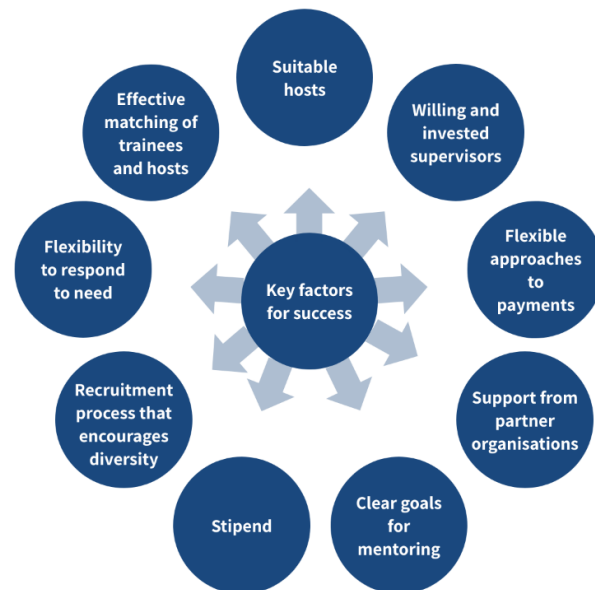


### On host organisations

- ✓ Fresh perspectives and new ideas
- ✓ Additional short-term capacity
- ✓ Experience of alternative approaches to recruitment
- ✓ Experience of how to support work-based learning

New approaches have been trialled through the programme and there has been important learning for MGS, host organisations and the sector more widely about what works best in supporting learners with more complex additional support needs, or different experiences to those who would traditionally have applied to work in the sector.

A number of key factors for success were identified.



## Legacy for the sector

Sectoral experience in recruiting and supporting a diverse workforce has grown

Grown capacity and skills to support work-based learning

12 learners retained in employment in the sector

MGS has become an Assessment Centre and can deliver SQA qualifications

Increased understanding of the benefits of a more diverse workforce

## Challenges

A number of challenges were identified through the evaluation which are important points for consideration by the wider sector.

- ⊗ Lack of appropriate or sustainable job opportunities following completion
- ⊗ Lack of awareness of and too few entry routes into the sector
- ⊗ Appropriate support mechanisms for learners with additional support needs not available within some host organisations

## Recommendations

- 1** Continue to disseminate the learning from this programme across the sector.
- 2** Continue to adapt recruitment practices to ensure that these are inclusive and fit for purpose, and explore opportunities to open up new entry and progression routes.
- 3** Continue to improve support mechanisms for staff and ensure these are robust and inclusive, working with partner organisations where appropriate.
- 4** Explore opportunities to offer the SVQ Level 3 in Museums and Galleries Practice as widely as possible.
- 5** Continue to build capacity to support work-based learning.

## 1. Introduction and Evaluation methodology

### 1.1 Introduction

This report sets out the findings from the evaluation of the Museums Galleries Scotland (MGS) Skills for Success Learning Programme (the Programme), which ran from August 2018-September 2019. The programme, which was funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF), enabled non-graduate learners from a range of backgrounds to undertake a one-year paid placement in museums and galleries throughout Scotland, with 20 individuals taking part in an entry-level learning placement and two undertaking management-level placements.

Learners worked towards an SVQ3 in Museums & Galleries Practice, and were supported by a supervisor in the host museum, a mentor, an assessor and MGS staff. In addition, the management learners undertook a six-day Institute of Leadership & Management (ILM) accredited leadership programme.

The Programme addressed the aims outlined in 'Going Further – the National Strategy for Scotland's Museums and Galleries', which recognises the need to address workforce issues facing the sector including a lack of diversity in the workforce; a lack of accessible entry and progression routes; the development of an accredited work-based learning culture in museums sector organisations; and the need to tackle vital skills gaps. The programme addressed MGS's desire to provide an alternative route of entry into the sector.

The programme also fits with the aims and objectives of the National Lottery Heritage Fund and with Museums Galleries Scotland outcomes, as outlined below:

#### 1.1.1 NLHF

- People will have developed skills
- People will have learned about heritage
- More people and a wider range will have engaged with heritage

#### 1.1.2 MGS

- A new range of quality skills available to the museum sector based on identified skills gaps
- The diversification of skills available to the heritage sector
- A workforce that is better equipped to meet the sustainability challenge
- A more inclusive culture in Scottish Museums and Galleries
- An improved culture of learning and development in Scottish Museums and Galleries which better supports work-based learning

### 1.2 Policy Context

The museum and galleries sector recognises the need to cultivate and retain core heritage skills such as curatorship. In addition, the industry is increasingly recognising a need to prioritise the development of multi-skilled employees with business skills across all levels. Research undertaken to inform the Character Matters report confirmed that there is a need for a more diverse, flexible workforce, which can bring new skills, energy

and ideas to reinvigorate the sector. It also found that there is a need for improved collaboration in sharing resources, knowledge and ideas in order to support future visions for the sector.

The museums and galleries sector remains a highly desirable and sought-after employment industry in the UK, with lots of competition over roles; however, the industry has consistently faced challenges with a lack of diversity, narrow hiring practices, lack of entry routes, and minimal progression opportunities. As part of this research, we undertook a literature review examining these contextual factors, which found that despite many attempts by organisations within the sector to address these gaps, insufficient progress has been made in the industry over the last decade. The Skills for Success Programme, building on three previous programmes, sought to address these issues.

Our full literature review is provided in Appendix 1 of this report.

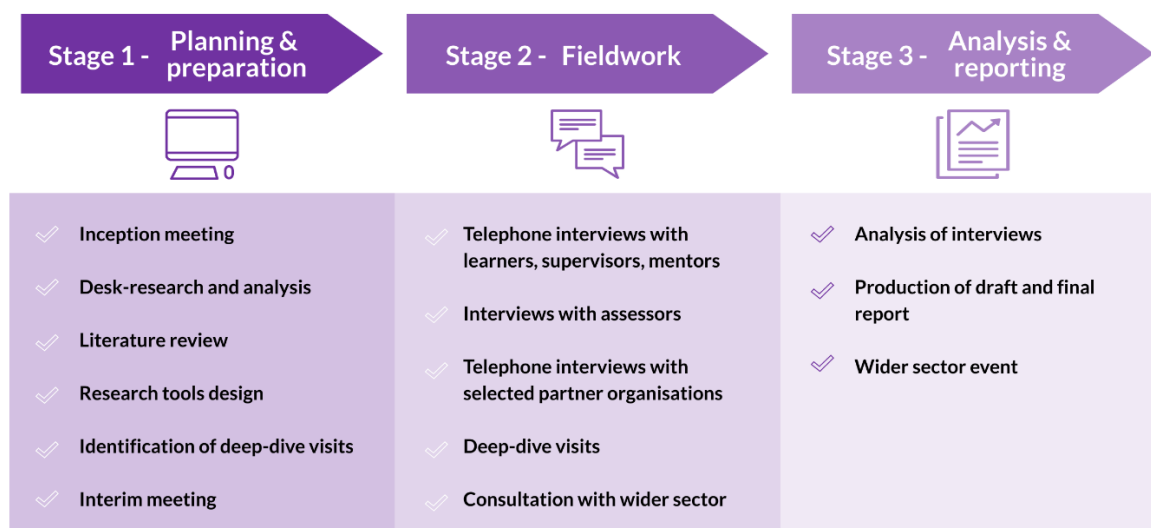
### 1.3 Evaluation scope and methodology

MGS commissioned Blake Stevenson to undertake a summative evaluation of the Programme, which ran from August 2018-September 2019. The methodology applied took account of a number of key considerations:

- The need to ensure that the programme was evaluated across three levels:
  - Individuals: learners, supervisors, mentors, assessors
  - Organisations: partner organisations, host museums, training providers, MGS as the National Development Body, NLHF as Funders
  - The wider museums/heritage/cultural sectors.
- The requirement for the evaluation to take place within an eight-week timeframe, which ran from the beginning of October until the beginning of December;
- Involvement of the wider sector in the research; and
- How to capture the social and economic impact of the programme.

The following diagram (Figure 1.1) illustrates the three-stage approach that was applied.

**Figure. 1.1 Methodology**





Whilst all learners, supervisors, assessors, and mentors were invited to take part in the research, a number chose not to and a small number did not respond to our requests to take part in the evaluation. Over the course of the evaluation, we were able to engage the following people in the research (see Table 1.1):

**Table 1.1 Numbers of consultees by stakeholder group**

Group	Numbers consulted during evaluation	Percentage of total
Learners	16	72.7%
Supervisors	18	64.3%
Mentors	13	59.0%
Assessors	5	80.0%
MGS staff	6	100%
Workshop facilitator/ Case officer	3	100%

The findings from the evaluation are outlined in the chapters that follow.



Skills For Success Learners  
Photo Credit : Rob McDougall



## 2. Programme Overview

Skills for Success was a one-year work-based learning programme for non-graduates of any age, that built on the success of MGS's previous programmes in developing future leaders of a sustainable museum sector. It comprised of two strands – an entry-level strand, and a management-level strand. In this chapter, we describe each of the programme components and the support mechanisms offered to learners, and explore the extent to which these were effective.

### 2.1 Recruitment process

Building on lessons learned from previous iterations of the programme, MGS introduced a new recruitment process for this round which aimed to reach wider and be more inclusive than previously. This round of the programme was seen as an opportunity to learn about potential new recruitment practice which could inform wider practice in the sector.

The process applied for this round involved a number of stages including advertising the opportunity through a wide range of routes, submission of an application form and video, shortlisting, and assessment days.

#### *2.1.1 Advertising the opportunity*

MGS sought to reach further with its advertising process than it had previously, with the intention that this would attract a more diverse range of applicants. MGS staff created job adverts for the learner placements and distributed these via a range of channels including through host museums; Goodmoves; Indeed; S1 Jobs; Social Media; Creative Scotland; and a range of other media. Additionally, MGS worked closely with 37 referral partners who shared and promoted the programme. Referral partners included local authorities, schools, colleges, libraries and third sector organisations and included organisations such as Autism Initiatives, Enable Scotland, LGBT Youth Scotland, NHS 'The Works' and Life Skills.

#### *2.1.2 Selection criteria*

The Skills for Success selection criteria focused on personal qualities identified in the Character Matters Report as important to the sector. The recruitment specification also took account of the basic requirements of the programme, as shown in Table 2.1.

**Table 2.1 Entry and Management level learner recruitment specification**

Learner requirements	Entry level learner		Management level learner	
	Essential	Desirable	Essential	Desirable
Qualification	National 4 in English and Math's or equivalent SCQF qualification		National 4 in English and Math's or equivalent SCQF qualification	
Work Experience	Transferable skills gained from volunteering, school activities, participating in clubs, interests, etc.	Demonstrate work-based transferable skills and experience	2-3 years in supervisory management role	Experience in the following areas: Business, entrepreneurial, digital
Knowledge/empathy	A desire to work in the sector and some demonstrated interest in the sector		A desire to work in the sector and some demonstrated interest in the sector	
Skills	Good communication Good interpersonal skills Listening Working in a team Managing own activities Ability to combine work and study towards a qualification	Decision making management	Good communication Good interpersonal skills Listening Working in a team Managing own activities Ability to combine work and study towards a qualification	
Technical Skills	Able to use Microsoft Office or equivalent and communicate by email		Able to use Microsoft Office or equivalent and communicate by email	
Personal qualities	Conscientiousness Optimism Motivation Self-efficacy Persistence Curiosity Creativity The ability to learn The ability to collaborate		Conscientiousness Optimism Motivation Self-efficacy Persistence Curiosity Creativity The ability to learn The ability to collaborate	
Additional requirements	Anti-social hours may be required on occasion. Travel required.		Anti-social hours may be required on occasion. Travel required.	

### 2.1.3 Selection process

The selection process was conducted in two stages. MGS short-listed applicants based on their submission of a short written application and a video. This stage was used to assess whether the applicant met the minimum criteria and possessed the characteristics listed above. In total, MGS received 178 applications and shortlisted 99 individuals for the second stage of the recruitment process.

The second phase of the selection process involved assessment days which were held across five locations: Pier Arts Centre, Hugh Miller's Birthplace Cottage & Museum, Aberdeen Maritime Museum, Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum and City Art Centre.

The assessment locations reflected the geographical spread of the host organisations. The process involved a group exercise, 'Make a Museum', which was designed to highlight candidates' strengths within a group setting and one-to-one interviews with members of staff from the host organisations. Following the interviews, host organisations made the final selection of their learner.

All 22 learning placements were successfully filled following the assessment day.

Overall, the process was successful – it reached a wider group of applicants than previously, it resulted in a more diverse group of learners, and it was widely felt to be more inclusive than processes used for previous programmes of this nature, and more widely in the sector. There is valuable learning from its successes.

The majority of learners enjoyed the process because they could "have some fun with it" and felt that it enabled them to show their creativity. One learner commented that "having the opportunity to do a video is a really good way to show who you are". Most of the learners were positive about the assessment day and particularly enjoyed the opportunity to meet other participants. One trainee commented that the assessment day was "one of the best ones I have done – short, simple and relevant to the programme", while another commented that "the assessment day was good fun, in particular the activities were great".

Many of the supervisors felt that the new process was creative and innovative. Supervisors found the group activities interesting and welcomed that it provided them with a chance to gain insight into the candidates' personalities and see how they interacted in a group. One supervisor, for example, thought that the group activity was an excellent way of seeing how the learners approached a task and as a result of the experience has "started adding a little practice element at some interviews now".

Unsuccessful participants (contacted by MGS for feedback) were also positive about the experience, with one commenting, for example, that "I honestly had a really positive experience about the whole process, it was clear and concise what was expected of me throughout".

A small number of concerns were raised about the process, and these are important considerations for future recruitment practice in the sector:

- Whilst most learners enjoyed the process of creating a video, others were more anxious about found it challenging.
- A small number of the learners found the assessment days stressful – with one person describing it as "very overwhelming", and another finding it challenging from a sensory perspective, and it may be that assessment days are more suited to some target groups than others.
- Some supervisors expressed some concerns that the process may have put some people off applying.
- One supervisor also raised concerns about the volume of noise and how those with additional needs coped with the format.
- There were some issues around the level of information about candidates made available to supervisors ahead of the assessment days, which MGS is aware of as a point of learning for the future. This is helpful feedback which MGS has already taken on board.

Importantly, most host organisations felt that the process led to them selecting a learner who fitted well within their organisation and who benefited from the learning opportunity.

## 2.2 Learner profile

The recruitment process outlined above resulted in 22 learners being selected to take part in the programme. As already noted, the process aimed to recruit more diversely than previous programmes had achieved. MGS wanted to ensure that the programme reached out to as wide a pool of applicants as possible, so that the programme could offer opportunities to people who may not otherwise have considered a career in the museums galleries sector, or who would have been unable to find employment in the sector through the usual routes.

The table below gives an overview of learners by a number of key characteristics including age (at the point of application), ethnicity, and geography (by home postcode at the point of application and by SIMD).

**Table 2.2 Learner profile**

	Numbers of learners	Percentage of learners
<b>Age (N = 22)</b>		
19 - 24	13	59.1%
25 - 29	4	18.2%
30 - 34	3	13.6%
35 - 39	2	9.1%
<b>Ethnicity (N = 22)</b>		
White Scottish/ White British	20	91.0%
Asian/ Asian Scottish/ Asian British	1	4.5%
Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Group	1	4.5%
<b>SIMD (N = 21)<sup>1</sup></b>		
1 - 3	8	38.1%
4 - 6	8	38.1%
7 - 10	5	23.8%

When compared with previous iterations of this programme, this group is significantly more diverse across this range of characteristics which is a positive step forward. For example, previous programmes had fewer participants from minority ethnic groups and in this cohort, the proportion of black and minority ethnic (BME) participants (2, 9%) was greater than across the Scottish adult population (which was 4.6% in 2018<sup>2</sup>).

In addition, previous programmes had fewer participants with additional support needs, and reached fewer people living in SIMD areas 1-2 . Feedback provided through the evaluation indicates that a significant number of the learners in this round had

<sup>1</sup> One learner postcode was located in England, therefore could not be included in the SIMD calculation

<sup>2</sup> <https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/About/Surveys/SSCQ/SSCQ2018>

(sometimes extensive) additional support needs which again contrasts with previous programmes.

### **2.3 Management of the programme**

MGS led the development, management and implementation of the programme. A full-time programme manager was appointed to oversee delivery on a daily basis, and other staff provided support for a range of other roles including human resources (HR), communications, finance and digital support.

During the course of the year, similarly to the previous programmes, MGS staff delivered support, learning and networking opportunities for learners, supervisors and mentors. This included being the point of contact for everyone involved, organising the workshops and events, and being responsible for monitoring and evaluating the learning outcomes of the programme (i.e. collating and analysing all supervisors' monthly reports).

In addition, MGS trained two of its staff to become SVQ assessors to enable them to begin to build capacity in-house for managing the SVQ themselves in future (meaning that an external provider would no longer need to be contracted) and to build a pool of assessors who have sector expertise.

The vast majority of learners, supervisors and mentors all confirmed that they felt able to contact MGS at any time if they had any issues or concerns during the programme. Most learners were very positive about the support received from MGS - interviewees described the MGS team as being "tremendously supportive" and "fantastic at supporting everyone" and any issues seem to have been ironed out as the programme bedded in.

Likewise, supervisors were positive about the support and communication from MGS. Most reported that they received effective communication when it came to programme details and monthly reports, and received the support they needed on a range of issues. A small number reported feeling that communication could have been improved in some instances, such as inclusive conversation between learners, MGS and supervisors, but these instances were isolated.

### **2.4 Host Organisations – selection and role**

The 22 learners were placed in 16 host organisations across Scotland. Opportunities to become a host organisation were promoted through a number of different channels including MGS's website, e-bulletins, contact lists, social media and organisation visits. In addition, MGS staff to a pro-active approach to encouraging museums to take part in the programme which helped to ensure a good range of organisations applied.

Interested organisations were required to submit an application form detailing why they would like to host a learner, a draft-learning plan, the supervisory structure their learning placement focuses on, and the specific skills the learner would develop within each. Shortly after the application deadline, applicants received a visit from a member of the internal host recruitment group, assessed the suitability of the placement, and met with the supervisor.

The table below (see Table 2.3) lists the 16 host organisations involved in the learning placement programme and the type of learner placement that they offered.

**Table 2.3: Host organisations**

Host organisation	Learning placement
Aberdeen Art Gallery and Museums	Marketing & Development Learner Collections and Interpretation Learner
The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders' Museum	Museum's Collections and their role in Exhibition Design
City of Edinburgh Council	Learning and programmes Manager Learner Digital Management Learner
David Livingstone Centre	Learning and Outreach Learner Curatorial and Community Engagement Learner
Dumfries and Galloway Council	Collections Learner
Glasgow Life	Digital Interpretation Learner Curatorial Learner Open Museum Outreach and Volunteering Learner
Live Borders and Trimontium Museum	Learning & Interpretation Learner Learning, Interpretation and Social Media Learner
National Museum of Scotland	External Relations Learner
Hugh Miller's Birthplace Cottage and Museum (The National Trust for Scotland)	Museums Engagement Learner
Pier Arts Centre	Pier Arts Centre Programme and Engagement Learner
Renfrewshire Leisure	Visitor Studies & Community Engagement learner
The Scottish Crannog Centre	Engagement Learner
Scottish Fisheries Museum	Collections and Engagement Learner
Scottish Maritime Museum	Learning and Access Learner
The Hunterian, University of Glasgow	Education and Engagement Assistant
University of Stirling	Documentation Learner

As shown above (see Table 2.3), the host organisations ranged in nature and size which meant that learners had varied opportunities for their learning placement. Most hosts offered one learning placement opportunity, but a few organisations supported two learners. MGS undertook significant development work ahead of the application deadline which helped to encourage organisations from a range of areas to take part (see Figure 2.1).



**Figure 2.1: Location of host museums**



### *2.3.1 Matching of learners and hosts*

Learners were shortlisted for host organisations based on preferences indicated in their application form and suitability to the opportunity being offered. Shortlisted applicants were given the opportunity to take part in assessment days with those host organisations and, as previously described, final selection was made by the host organisations.

Most learners reported having had a positive experience in their host organisation and felt that the host was able to provide the opportunity for development that they had hoped for when they applied, and the level of support that they needed. Many of the learners spoke positively of being “treated as part of the team” which enabled them to network with their colleagues and learn from them as well as from staff directly involved in the programme.

However, a small number of learners had less positive experiences. One person described how they were left to determine their own workload and did not feel like they were really being ‘trained’. Another commented that they were frequently left on their own to determine their workload and struggled to get the contact or support needed from their supervisor “I felt more like an employee than in a learning placement”. Others encountered challenges with host museums going through refurbishment or going through a significant funding change which impacted on the level of attention and support they received. This had an impact on a number of factors, including the tasks that they were asked to do, the structure of the programme and the availability of their supervisor.

Feedback from hosts about the suitability of their learner to the organisation and the learning opportunity was similarly mixed. Most were very positive about the experience overall and felt that the match with their learner was good, and that the learning placement had been successful and met expectations on both sides.

A small number of supervisors reported facing more challenging situations than had been anticipated. These were related to challenges faced in supporting learners with significant additional support needs – and were due to a mix of lack of organisational capacity and experience to meet these needs, and on occasion supervisors lacking the experience to provide the support required.

This suggests that there are some lessons to learn about the readiness of some of the host organisations with regards to readiness in terms of the status of the organisation and its ability to support a learner with more extensive support needs. We return to these issues later.

## **2.5 Role of Supervisors**

Throughout the programme, the supervisors, based in host organisations, were responsible for the day-to-day supervision of the learners, the implementation of the learning plan and ensuring the learner had the opportunities and experiences to meet the requirements of the SVQ3 in Museums and Galleries Practice. Each learner had a named supervisor within their organisation.

The majority of learners were very positive about the support they received from their supervisor. Learners noted the value of knowing who to talk to in the organisations, and

to having monthly meetings to discuss progress. A small number of organisations had two named supervisors for one learner, to ensure they could offer appropriate capacity and support needed for the learner, and to enable them to offer a mix of experiences. This seems to have worked effectively – “it gave me access to a good mix of roles to create a more rounded experience”.

A small number of learners did not get the level of support that they required however. They reported that their supervisors were “too busy” and “didn’t really have the time”. This meant that they frequently had to determine their own workload to keep busy. MGS set out clear expectations for host organisations with an emphasis on this being a learning opportunity with all of the associated support requirements, and it is therefore unclear why insufficient support was available from hosts in these instances.

## 2.6 Role of Mentors

All learners were matched with a mentor during their learning placement. The mentor provided additional support to aid the development of the learners. The mentor role was intended to be significantly different to that of the supervisors, giving the learners an opportunity to tap into the wider knowledge and networks of their mentor, and provide support to the learners during the transition into work or further learning at the end of the programme.

All mentors undertook the role in a voluntary capacity, with travel expenses able to be claimed. Learners were matched to a mentor based on an application form they completed detailing the type of mentor they would prefer, information about their personality type, their interests and experiences.

The mentoring programme began with a two-day training session run by the Museums Association - one session for learners which focused on how to get the most out of the mentoring support, and one session for the mentors about the role of mentors. Both groups reported finding the training interesting and educational and it gave the majority of them a fresh and different perspective of the role of the mentor. The training was held two months after the learning placement started and some mentors and mentees fed back that they would have preferred this to have taken place earlier.

Mentors were also given the opportunity to attend a second mentor support training session six months into the programme.

Experiences of the mentoring support varied. Most learners met with their mentors between two and four times during the yearlong programme with the majority finding the experience beneficial – “it was a really fantastic experience”. Learners appreciated having someone who was in a different organisation, “it was really good to have someone external - someone to share your ideas with, get a new perspective”, as well as from a different department which enabled them to have insight into another part of the sector.

Some mentors, however, felt that their mentees did not benefit as much as they could have from their mentoring relationship because they were unsure how to make best use of the support available. Some learners confirmed that they found the idea of a mentee-led programme “very confusing” and felt that it could be a bit frustrating that the mentor could not provide them with more advice - “I wanted to ask her a lot of questions as she was in a very senior role but she couldn’t give me any”. Others had challenges reaching their mentor - “I tried to reach out but they never responded –that

was a big problem”, or because communication slowly stopped during the year. Other learners felt that the mentoring support was unnecessary because they had a strong support system in their host organisation.

These experiences of mentoring support mirror experiences on other programmes. The success of mentoring is very dependent on the relationship between the mentor and the mentee being a strong one, and of people understanding the additional benefits that mentoring can bring. The programme had a range of different support mechanisms additional to the mentoring (e.g. MGS and supervisors) and it may be the case that the mentoring was an additional layer of support which some did not feel they needed. For others, the mentoring was a valuable additional component.

## 2.7 Learner Stipend

The programme was very clearly and intentionally developed as a learning programme, meaning that while learners undertook the work-based learning, they were not workers or employees. There were two main reasons for this – one was to ensure that hosts understood it was a learning programme and not just a lever to bring in additional capacity; the other was that the status of the programme as a learning programme meant that MGS could offer a tax-free bursary to participants.

Learners each received a £15,000 tax-free bursary from MGS. The level of stipend was set at the same level as the previous two learning placement and internship programmes that MGS has run. The bursary was set at a level that was intended to enable participants to cover living costs.

MGS considered the stipend to be an important factor in encouraging applications from people who would not be able to afford to undertake unpaid volunteering and work experience and/or undertake a degree, which has historically been seen as a pre-requisite to gaining jobs in the sector.

Most learners confirmed that the stipend was an important deciding factor when applying for the programme, stating that they “wouldn’t have applied if it was unpaid”. Only two of the learners’ stated that they would have applied if it had been unpaid, however, they stated that the bursary made them feel valued and part of the team.

## 2.8 Content of the learning placement

### 2.4.1 SVQ

The SVQ (Scottish Vocational Qualification) is a national work-based award that officially recognises that the awardee has the skills, knowledge and experience to do their job. The SVQ Level 3 in Museums and Galleries Practice was a new qualification developed by MGS in 2015 and is the framework for learning during the learning placement. To complete the SVQ Level 3 in Museums and Galleries Practice, the learners had to complete six mandatory units (see Table 2.4) and three optional units (see Table 2.5).

**Table 2.4: SVQ mandatory units**

Mandatory units
Understand the Sector in which you Work and the Wider Creative and Cultural Context
Take Responsibility for your Work in a Creative and Cultural Organisation and Self-Evaluate
Plan and Implement your Professional Development in the Creative and Cultural Industries
Assist Customers, Visitors or Audiences in Getting the Best from their Experience of a Creative and Cultural Organisation
Provide Specific Information on a Collection for a Cultural Heritage Organisation
Contribute to the Care of Items within a Cultural Venue

**Table 2.5: SVQ optional units**

Optional units
Assist with Learning for a Creative and Cultural Organisation
Support the organisation of Events and Exhibitions
Deliver Community Engagement for a Creative and Cultural Organisation
Evaluate the Customer, Audience or Visitor Experience of a Creative and Cultural Organisation
Prepare for and Deliver Guided Tours for Visitors to Cultural Venues
Deliver Interpretation for Exhibitions or Displays for a Creative or Cultural Organisation
Catalogue Objects and Collections within a Cultural Venue
Contribute to the Design of Exhibitions and Displays in Cultural Heritage Organisation
Contribute to the Build of Exhibitions and Displays in a Cultural Heritage Organisation
Protect Cultural Heritage through Conservation
Inspect and Monitor Conservation Needs of Cultural Heritage
Develop and Maintain Information Systems for a Creative and Cultural Organisation
Photograph Items for Records
Manage Online Engagement
Develop Learning Resources for a Creative and Cultural Organisation
Work with Volunteers in a Creative and Cultural Organisation
Recruit and Place Volunteers
Plan, Organise and Monitor Volunteering Activities
Support the Development of Volunteers' Knowledge, Skills and Competence
Assist with Marketing for a Creative and Cultural Organisation
Assist in Securing Funding for a Creative and Cultural Organisation
Evaluate volunteers' contribution to strategic goals

Each learner was appointed an assessor to guide the assessment process, and offered support and guidance throughout the SVQ. The assessor and learner met on a pre-arranged basis every few weeks. Learners reported mixed experiences with their

assessor. The six learners who had MGS-trained assessors had positive experiences and found the SVQ processes straightforward. Having an assessor familiar with the museums sector seems to have been advantageous – both because they were more knowledgeable about the content of the work, and they were more readily available to support the learner. This also enabled the learners to progress through the modules easily and quickly.

Learners who had external assessors had less positive experiences – stating, for example, that it was often difficult to get in touch with their assessor. One learner noted that the “assessor was always too busy; I had to wait for her. She cancelled and rearranged a lot”, which was echoed by a number of the other learners interviewed. The learners found this particularly difficult when they needed guidance at the start of the programme, had a query or wanted to move onto the next stage of the qualification.

The learners were not able to start the qualification until a number of months after they started their placement – this varied between learners depending on various factors, such as placement start date. Some learners also had challenges reaching their assessor to “unlock the course” which caused them unnecessary delays in starting the qualification. Furthermore, some learners fed back that the way in which they had to present their evidence changed halfway through the year. This resulted in the learners having less time than intended to complete the SVQ, and some learners felt that this made the process feel rushed. Some also found the OneFile system that the SVQ ran on challenging to navigate and would have welcomed earlier instruction on how to use it.

All supervisors had access to the SVQ units via email and on SharePoint but some nevertheless seemed to find it difficult to understand what was required of their learners.

All of these challenges are important learning for the future, but are also largely likely to be resolved with the shift away from using an external provider in future (we return to this issue later).

The majority of learners and supervisors felt that the SVQ modules were appropriate for the museums sector and reflected the work that the learners undertook on a day-to-day basis but it seems to have been easier for learners in some organisations to gather the evidence needed for each of the mandatory units. One supervisor, for example, said that they felt that “some of the core objectives were set a bit high for small organisations”, observing that all museums work differently depending on the size of the organisations or even depending on the time of year. This resulted in them having to help the learner think about alternative ways to meet the objectives.

The SVQ does not seem to have been a particularly strong motivation for learners applying to the programme. The majority felt that it was a positive part of the programme and confirmed that it was “good to have something credible” and “something to show for the year” but most did not seem to see it as an essential component.

Following on from the programme, the learners have found the SVQ to be beneficial when applying for jobs; the SVQ has allowed the learners to show potential employers the practical experience they have accomplished during the learning programme and to stand out amongst the applicants that have degrees. There have already been examples of some learners being asked to show evidence of having completed the SVQ at interviews following the learning placement which suggests that it is already being recognised as an important qualification by the sector.



In total, 18 learners completed the SVQ. Of the remaining four, one learner did not complete the placement and was therefore also unable to complete the SVQ; another completed the placement but struggled to achieve the SVQ due to health issues; and two other learners are completing their SVQs in their current workplace.

#### *2.4.2 Leadership programme*

In addition to undertaking the SVQ qualifications, the two learners in the management strand attended a six-day accredited leadership programme developed by Social Enterprise Academy. This programme was also offered to supervisors and mentors.

The programme involved the learners being introduced to a number of different leadership theories, concepts and models as well as introducing them to non-directive techniques to encourage a coaching culture in their organisation. It gave them an opportunity to create a shared leadership language and approach to management, and to widen understanding of the individual strengths and contributions that were being brought to the learners' teams. Additionally, it allowed the learners to invest time in identifying and developing their leadership strengths.

In addition to the two learners, 14 supervisors and mentors attended the leadership programme. Of those that were interviewed for this evaluation, the majority said that the leadership programme was excellent, and encouraged them to "start looking at things differently and the way they manage people".

All attendees who completed the leadership programme received an SCQF level 9 in Leadership and Management and became members of the professional body of ILM.

#### *2.4.3 Workshops*

MGS also gave learners the opportunity to attend 10 one-day training workshops delivered by external providers. The workshops, all held in Edinburgh, covered a variety of topics including strategic contextual information, sector awareness, project management, community engagement, volunteer management, digital skills, collections care and employability skills.

Most of the learners found the workshops to be insightful and relevant to their work experience. One or two learners did not find some of the workshops directly relevant to their learning placements but still found value in them as a learning experience - "only some weren't particularly relevant to my learning placement but was still good to learn". The workshops provided the learners with the opportunity to learn more about the sector as well as some finding them beneficial as a means of filling gaps in their learning for the SVQ.

Learners also valued the chance to network with the other learners and share experiences. An interviewee from one of the external workshop facilitators shared how important it is to network with those in the sector and that it was "great to see the confidence and relationships develop over the year".

#### *2.4.4 MGS Events*

MGS ran three events during the course of the year for the learners and supervisors: a launch event was held to introduce the programme and give all those involved in the programme an opportunity to meet; a careers event mid-way through the year to provide advice on career development; and a celebratory event to mark the end of the programme and provide learners with the opportunity to showcase their work.

The events were regarded positively and provided an excellent networking opportunity for learners and supervisors. One evaluation participant suggested that it may have been beneficial to have had the careers event at both the start and end of the programme.

In addition to the core events, the learners were invited to attend MGS' parliamentary event at the Scottish Parliament and network with people from across the sector.



Learner, Alasdair presenting work to Lucy Casot, MGS CEO, and Fiona Hyslop, Culture Secretary at celebration event  
Photo Credit : Rob McRob McDougal

### 3. Outcomes delivered by the Skills For Success Programme

This chapter explores the impact that the Skills for Success learning placement programme had on the individuals involved in the programme, the organisations and the wider sector. In relation to individuals, we explore the impact on the learners, but also on supervisors, and mentors involved in the programme.

In addition, and as noted in Chapter 1, there are a number of outcomes the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Museums Galleries Scotland aimed to achieve through the Skills for Success Learning placement Programme including creating a more inclusive culture, and developing skills and diversification of skills available to the heritage sector. We explore the extent to which these aims were met in this chapter.

#### 3.1 Impact on Individuals

##### *3.1.1 Impact on learners*

Overall, the programme had significant positive impact on the majority of the learners that participated in the learning placement and a number of key outcomes were delivered including new skills being developed, improvements in confidence, and improved employability skills.

##### *Impact on skills development*

Through the SVQ, workshops and other training opportunities, and as a result of the hands-on experience they gained during their time with host organisations, the learners developed a range of soft and sector-specific skills including skills in:

- administration
- customer service
- project management
- marketing (including social media)
- handling objects
- teaching
- caring for collections
- designing packs, and
- presentation skills.

The majority of the learners had the opportunity to undertake a wide range of tasks during their learning placement, such as creating displays, undertaking guided tours and marketing for the museum. By the end of the programme, some learners, for example, had put together permanent displays or were handling social media tasks without supervision. These were tasks that they did not expect to be involved in when starting their placement but were described as positive, practical experiences which they felt would stand them in good stead in applying for permanent posts.

##### *Impact on knowledge and understanding of the heritage sector*

The programme provided an opportunity for the learners to gain a deeper understanding of the heritage sector and the range of opportunities that it offers with regards to career choices. The learning placement allowed the learners to increase their knowledge and understanding of how the sector works; learn about the types of jobs that are available in the sector and get a better sense of particular areas of interest for their future career. One supervisor, for example, commented that their learner realised that they would prefer to work in the education department rather than the curatorial department and as a result the host organisation was able to adjust the emphasis of the learning placement to address this area of interest. The increased understanding of the range of opportunities available within the sector was important learning and gave the learners valuable insight for seeking future employment within this, or another sector.

#### *Impact on confidence and wellbeing*

The majority of learners described a growth in their confidence as a result of taking part in the programme. For example, one learner said that the programme “exceeded my expectations, my confidence has grown greatly”; other learners stated that they were setting up displays and programmes themselves by the end of the programme - “I was confident enough to be able to do that”. One workshop facilitator also commented on how much the learners’ confidence grew over the year, individually and collectively, and how this was evident in the group work during the workshops.

Furthermore, a number of the learners faced significant personal challenges whilst undertaking the learning placement, and the support that they were given has been positive in helping them to better articulate their additional support needs and seek appropriate support.

#### *Impact on employability*

Across the board, feedback from learners, supervisors and assessors indicates that there was a positive impact on learners’ employability skills, and as a result their employment prospects. The data that is currently available indicates that most of the learners have moved into positive destinations on completing the learning placement. Of the learners whose destination immediately following the programme is known:

- Fourteen are in employment, 12 of whom are working in the sector;
- Two are volunteering in the sector
- Two are unemployed and looking for jobs in the sector; and
- One is unemployed.

Those that now successfully have a job in the sector have a variety of roles, such as learning assistants, Engagement and Marketing and collections. The learners stated that the programme provided them with the opportunity to get their foot in the door and to develop the skills they needed to pursue a job in the sector.

The two learners who are employed but not working in the sector have secured roles as an apprentice on a television network and in a university.

This is an increase from the previous Skills for the Future Programme where by the end of the programme, of those that were reported, eleven learners were in employment, nine of whom were working in the sector.

Not all of the jobs acquired by learners are full-time or permanent posts, and so there remains a question about the sustainability of the destinations, but these are positive first steps towards a more sustainable career within the sector.

This is a significant achievement for a programme of this size, and is well in excess of job outcomes on many employability programmes. It is a real success for the programme.

#### *Impact on networking skills*

The Skills for Success programme enabled the learners to experience a wide range of networking opportunities through the workshops, MGS events and events held within their host organisations.

The learners valued the networking opportunities that were available to them.

The programme itself, along with the additional workshops and events that MGS held, provided the learners with the opportunity to “develop relationships with the other learners”. One learner explained that this was beneficial not only because it allowed them to share their experiences with each other during the programme, but they have also kept in contact since the programme has finished through a social media group.

Learners also reported developing strong relationships with the members of staff at their host organisations and attended many networking events within their organisation.

#### *3.1.2 Impact on supervisors*

The majority of the supervisors interviewed highly valued the experience of participating in a learning programme that aimed to bring diversity into the sector, with all supervisors reporting that they had positively gained from taking part in the programme.

Some supervisors were supporting a learner for the first time and so the programme was an opportunity to learn what was involved in doing so. Some initially found it challenging to manage an individual who had not worked in the sector before, but most were able to quickly adapt.

Some supervisors underestimated the amount of time that would be required to support a learner and a few did struggle to be as available for the learner as they wanted to be. However, the majority of supervisors stated that the benefits of having the learner there, once they were familiar with the organisation, certainly outweighed the costs (of staff support time).

Some supervisors had learners with extensive support needs and some found this challenging to manage. For some of them, this affected their own wellbeing. For example, one supervisor stated that the programme “caused me a lot of stress and a loss of productivity”, although they also emphasised that they had found it rewarding to learn to help someone with their challenges. This suggests a need within the sector to be better equipped to support employees with additional needs. We return to this later in the report.

As already noted, supervisors were offered the opportunity to attend a six-day leadership course. All of those that we interviewed stated that the course was a great opportunity for development. One supervisor went as far as to state that the leadership course “changed her life” because she “learned so much about behaviour, understanding change and people” and could apply it to her career.

The additional capacity created by having a learner within the host organisation was highly valued by all supervisors and it directly impact on their own workload. By having an additional member of the team, most of the supervisors were able to focus on other tasks, or support the learner to undertake tasks which would not have taken place otherwise. One supervisor stated that his learner “was instrumental in a lot of projects – having an extra pair of hands was amazing!” another supervisor noted that “If he hadn’t been there we would have struggled”. This was not a primary driver for the programme – which was focused on creating learning opportunities for people who may not otherwise be able to access employment in the sector – but was significant added value gained from the programme.

### *3.1.3 Impact on mentors*

As described in Chapter 2, mentors were largely positive about their experiences of the programme. The mentors found the training that MGS provided extremely valuable and gained new understanding about the role of a mentor within a programme such as this.

Some mentors described benefits they experienced from being involved as a mentor, including it being a “good opportunity to learn mentor principles”, satisfaction from being able to pass on their knowledge of the sector to the learners, and expand their network. In addition, some mentors described developing other skills such as learning how to balance their own workload with being available for the learner.

## **3.2 Impact on organisations**

The 2018-19 iteration of the Skills for Success programme involved 16 host organisations providing learners opportunities across various departments including curatorial, marketing, digital media, learning and development, collections and interpretation, and community engagement. The learning placement allowed host organisations to provide real and substantive experience of working in the heritage sector, along with networks and potential employment opportunities. In return, learners were able to provide host organisations with fresh perspectives, additional capacity, and use their previous experiences from outside the sector to further develop and improve the organisation’s processes.

Most host organisations felt their learners made a positive impact during their learning placement, with many venues offering their learners temporary or long-term contracts as employees after the conclusion of the programme.

### *3.2.1 Impact on host organisations*

Most host organisations reported positive experiences with their learners and indicated a willingness to hosting another cohort of learners in the future (although some emphasised that they would not wish to do so immediately – with one describing supporting a learner as “intense” and “exhausting”). Many supervisors stated that their learners were easily integrated into the workplace and that they were treated as “proper employees”, not people managed by MGS.

The most common benefit noted by supervisors was that the learners brought different ways of thinking and “fresh perspectives” to the host organisations, for example around the use of social media. One supervisor commented that it was useful having new people in the organisation with fresh eyes, who “questioned what you were doing” and



could make suggestions for new ways of doing things. Host organisations also reported appreciating the different ideas and attributes that learners with work experience from outside the sector brought. One supervisor stated that they “realised the value that non-graduates are able to bring to our workforce, and that a degree is not essential”.

### *3.2.2 Challenges experienced by host organisations*

A few host museums reported that their learners were frequently absent. As the host organisations made concerted efforts to involve them in their day to day business practices, the learner’s absence meant that incomplete tasks had to be reassigned to other staff members. One supervisor, for example, stated that their learner was frequently absent due to anxiety, and that the organisation had to “bend the rules” for the learner to work from home despite their own staff not being permitted to under the organisation’s policy.

Some supervisors struggled to know how best to manage the frequent absences which suggests that these may not be challenges which some of the host organisations were used to managing. MGS encouraged flexibility to be applied, to take account of health challenges being faced by some of the learners. Some of the organisations were well placed to respond flexibly, and this, combined with MGS’s support to learners, resulted in a 95% completion rate on the programme.

However, experiences within this programme suggest that not all organisations within the sector are as well placed to address some of the barriers faced and may need to adapt their systems to ensure that a more inclusive recruitment practice, and retention of employees with additional support needs, is possible in future.

### *3.2.3 Impact on host organisation capacity*

For many of the host organisations - having an additional team member created additional capacity in two ways - it freed up some of their permanent staff’s time to undertake other tasks, and in addition, many of the learners were able to initiate and deliver their own projects during their learning placement that the venue would not have been able to undertake otherwise.

Many supervisors stated that they were confident in giving learners tasks normally assigned to “trusted staff”, and that “we needed their contributions so badly”. There are some great examples of the added value that the learner brought to the organisations, including:

- Due to the extensive research they had done, a learner was able to fix several errors in new exhibition panels.
- Another learner started a podcast for their museum that the venue has since continued and embedded into their digital media content.
- One learner was responsible for an acquisition in the museum, and made core contributions in changing signage for the facilities in the museum to be more LGBTQ friendly.

However, some supervisors seem to have been surprised by the level of support required by some of the learners and felt that this outweighed the additional capacity

created, despite it having been made clear by MGS at the outset that the emphasis of the programme was on offering a learning opportunity - "the amount of my time required in directing their work was more than expected, and a lot of support was needed for them to take up opportunities offered to them compared to someone else at their level". Others found that their learners lacked core employability skills. Another supervisor stated that they felt "overwhelmed" with trying to complete their own workload alongside ensuring their learner had sufficient support. This again suggests a lack of experience within the sector about the requirements of delivering work-based learning, the amount of staff time that may be required to provide support, and the support available to existing staff within the host organisations to do so.

#### *3.2.4 Increased understanding of how to support additional needs in the workplace*

The diversity of the 2018-19 cohort of learners included diversity in terms of health and additional support needs. While many of the learners had very positive experiences despite their need for additional support, the work structure and practices of some host organisations were unsuited to supporting learners with additional needs, with several supervisors reporting that they would have liked more training or resources in this regard. (This does raise an important question about these host organisations ability to support staff who may have similar support needs.)

This resulted in important learning in some host organisations, with one supervisor, for example, noting that their experience of supporting the learner led to important conversations within the organisation regarding visibility and diversity, and the museums sector's ability to support employees with additional needs – "we have learned that the sector's infrastructure is not up to scratch to support people with additional needs, who would be able to work given the right conditions".

#### *3.2.5 Impact on organisations' understanding of how to support younger employees*

Some host organisations were matched with learners who had just completed school and who had no work experience. This seems to have been a surprise to some of the host museums and resulted in them having to adapt the support that they gave. For example, one supervisor stated that "we expected candidates to be more doing a career change, with previous work experience, whereas the people who were selected for our placement were very young". This meant that their training needs were more extensive than they had expected.

Many supervisors stated that it was their first time line managing young people or a school leaver, and that they gained valuable experience in learning about the needs of someone who has not undertaken a degree. One supervisor, for example, noted that their experience of employees that join the sector with a degree tended to be that they were "more proactive and used to deadlines", and that they had not "fully appreciated the difference coming into the workforce not having had that experience".

This may also indicate a need for an early-stage employability course offering more basic office skills to be offered within the sector, additional to the SVQ 3 in Museums and Galleries Practice.

### **3.3 Impact on the wider sector**

As outlined in our introduction to this report, the Skills for Success Programme aimed to impact on the wider sector in relation to quality and diversity of skills available to the sector, developing a more sustainable workforce, creating a more inclusive culture within the sector, and continuing to improve on the culture of learning and development in Scottish museums and galleries, particularly in relation to work-based learning.

These aims are ambitious, and the Skills for Success programme is a relatively small intervention which can only be expected to have had a limited impact. Nevertheless, as highlighted earlier in this chapter, there is evidence that the programme has had a substantive impact on participating host organisations, and in addition has had some influence on understanding and practice beyond these in the wider sector. This was acknowledged through the national Creative Choices Award presented to MGS earlier this year which celebrates those who have shown continued excellence in breaking down the barriers to entry in the creative and cultural sector.

We explore the nature and extent of impact on the wider sector below.

### *3.3.1 Recruiting more inclusively within the sector*

The museums and galleries sector continues to face challenges with respect to the diversity of the staff working in it (in large part due to the traditional and expensive routes into it) who do not usually represent the diversity of audience they are trying to attract. This is due in part to financial constraints, the size of the sector and the stability of the workforce (particularly in senior positions) which means that there is little scope for progress and high levels of competition for positions. An important element of this programme was to build on developments within the sector to address this lack of diversity.

Previous evaluations of MGS's internship and learning placement programmes have also highlighted the need for a wider cultural change and a shift in attitudes. This continues to be the case, however feedback during this evaluation suggests that inroads are being made.

Ensuring that alternative approaches to recruitment continue to be prioritised is key to this. As discussed earlier in this chapter, the learners recruited to this programme were significantly more diverse than in previous iterations of the programme and exceeded expectations. Achieving this diversity was in large part due to the revised recruitment process – both in terms of its reach and its approach.

There is important learning from this which should be widely shared with the sector. It has demonstrated how more inclusive recruitment practices can be applied within the sector and the effect this can have and has contributed to the growing recognition across the sector of the need for diversification. One evaluation participant observed that "it exposed people to our sector who may not otherwise have considered it as a career route." and another emphasised that "job descriptions shouldn't limit who can apply".

### *3.2.2 Change of attitude towards recruiting more inclusively*

The programme has again made inroads in relation to changing staff in the sector's attitudes towards recruiting more inclusively/diversely and grown awareness of the benefits this can bring. Some host organisations noted that simply having someone in the office who had entered the workforce through a different route and was able to make substantive contributions to the organisation's work was important for other employees to see:

*Little steps like having the learner in an open-plan office helped to influence staff's perceptions.*

*In our organisation, it resulted in more tolerance of employees towards entry-level, non-graduate employees – it reinforced that not all posts require an employee with degree-level qualifications.*

*It increased awareness of the benefits of offering different routes into the sector.*

### *3.2.3 Supporting employees with additional needs*

Some of the learners selected to take part in the programme had complex additional support needs and the programme provided valuable experience to supervisors and host organisations of supporting these needs. Hosts each had their own systems of support and some of these were more comprehensive and effective than others. This is another important area of learning for the sector.

The “non-employee” status of the learners affected the range of support available to learners in some of the host organisations – although this should not have been the case. In others, the support needed would not have been available to staff either and a few participants in the evaluation noted concern about the level of support available more generally to staff across the sector in relation to health and wellbeing.

This inconsistency in capacity across the sector to provide the support required is important to acknowledge as a sector and to build on. During this programme, MGS was able to provide substantive support to learners in-house, but even this was not sufficient for some of the needs identified and MGS liaised with external partners to ensure referral pathways were available to learners. This took significantly more time and resource than had been anticipated at the outset.

It is important that future programmes of this nature factor in more substantive ad hoc and flexible support for participants and there was important learning that developing relationships with external partner organisations (for example, third sector organisations that are able to provide support with mental health issues) is an effective way of ensuring the necessary support mechanisms are in place for sectoral staff.

### *3.2.4 Impact on quality and diversity of skills in the sector*

The learning placement was developed to address gaps in skills within the sector and the SVQ which was offered to the learners is an important and tangible way of the sector supporting work-based learning at entry level. Offering the SVQ as part of the programme has resulted in significant increases in employability and skills levels amongst the participants (as already discussed) and has given participants an accredited qualification to bolster their CVs.

A review of the SVQ is pending next year (when it will have been in existence for five years). This is an opportunity to review whether the qualification continues to meet needs or requires to be adapted in some way. Feedback from a small number of consultees suggests that some updating may be required and this is a good opportunity to ensure that it is fit for purpose within the sector moving forward.

A significant number of the learners have been retained within the sector at the end of the learning placement, meaning that the skills and experience they have acquired have also been retained within the sector.

### *3.2.5 Impact on capacity*

Skills for Success has provided short-term additional capacity to the sector, and this was identified as one of the main reasons that some host organisations were keen to apply to the programme. The sector continues to be under financial strain, and funding for additional activities is limited. The Programme provided host organisations with an additional full-time post for the duration of one year. This was highly valued by the host organisations and enabled them to undertake new work which would not have taken place otherwise.

This had a positive short-term impact but was not intended to become a longer-term resource available to the participating host organisations. While some of the hosts were keen to retain their learner after the programme completed, the majority confirmed that the post had ceased to exist again at the end of the learning placement. However, the fact that 12 of the learners have been retained within the sector is a hugely significant outcome for the programme.

In addition, some supervisors also noted that having had the additional capacity did help them to create the case for more capacity going forward which they felt was a positive outcome.

### *3.2.6 A more sustainable workforce*

The programme contributed towards ensuring that the sector has a more sustainable workforce in a number of ways:

- It contributed towards diversifying the workforce and working towards the sector having a workforce which better reflects its audience (or the audiences that the sector aspires to attract).
- It has upskilled a group of people formerly outside the sector and given them skills and qualities specific to sector needs.
- It has retained most of these people within the sector in other posts following the end of the programme.
- It has trained staff within the sector as SVQ assessors meaning that the SVQ can be delivered in its entirety through MGS in future without the need for external assessors, and as a result can be offered at minimal cost to staff across the sector.
- Through the focus on supporting additional needs, and encouraging learners to talk about issues facing them, and as a result of the lessons learned within host organisations about how to support these needs, it has contributed towards the workforce being better-supported and more confident.

### *3.2.7 Building on a culture of work-based learning*

It is widely recognised within the museums and galleries sector that work-based learning is an important factor in ensuring that the workforce is fit for purpose in the future. The Programme has built on its earlier successes in increasing the opportunities available to undertake work-based learning, even if the numbers of learners that could be supported through the Programme continued to be relatively small.

The Programme has been an important way of demonstrating how work-based learning can be delivered within the sector. Learning from this and understanding what works

best in which settings is critical. This Programme has again led to greater awareness of the types of support that entry-level employees may need to undertake work-based learning and the Programme has result in some new support mechanisms being put in place. It has also sparked further interest and discussion around the range of entry routes into the sector and the need for work-based to address identified skills gaps.

We understand MGS's experience of this programme has contributed to discussions that are currently ongoing with Glasgow College and Glasgow Life about the potential to develop a framework for work-based learning centred on skills gaps identified in previous research undertaken.



Skills for Success Learners, Lucy Casot Fiona Hyslop Megan Braithwaite of National Lottery Heritage Fund  
Photo Credit : Rob McDougal



## 4. Value for Money Assessment

### 4.1 Scope of the value for money assessment

In addition to evaluating the programme model, and its impact, we also undertook an assessment of value for money provided by the Programme. Examining value for money in a qualitative evaluation such as this is challenging. It can be difficult to isolate implementation costs and prove a direct causal link between the programme and the outcomes delivered by it, in isolation from other factors which may have had an influence.

We have undertaken this value for money assessment pragmatically, on the basis of the available information including:

- MGS's running costs of implementing and managing the programme
- The level of the stipend paid to learners
- The staffing levels required to deliver the programme centrally, and
- Consideration of the time input of supervisors in host organisations.

We have considered these costs in relation to the outcomes delivered by the programme and made an assessment of the value for money that has been delivered.

### 4.2 Costs of implementation

Museums Galleries Scotland received a total grant of £535,000 from NLHF. By the official end of the programme at the end of December 2019, MGS will have claimed £482,540. These costs include staffing and other direct costs including the bursary paid to learners; costs associated with an external provider for SVQ assessment and verification; recruitment costs, publicity and promotion, evaluation, and equipment and materials. An overview of spend to date is outlined below (see Table 4.1).

**Table 4.1: Spend to date**

Cost Heading	Agreed Cost (£)	Costs to date (£)	Remaining spend (£)
New staff costs	70,933	69,071	1,862
Recruitment	10,814	5,810	5,004
Training for staff	4,524	3,572	952
Publicity and promotion	440	5,069	-4,629
Paid training placements (learner bursaries)	325,000	323,125	1,875
Evaluation	12,000	12,400	-400
Travel for staff	26,950	10,906	16,044
Full Cost Recovery	24,859	24,859	0
Contingency	21,490	0	21,490
Travel and expenses for volunteers	10,500	1,490	9,010
Other costs (activity)	21,970	15,973	5,997
Equipment and materials (activity)	2,680	3,165	-485
Professional fees relating to any of the above (activity)	32,000	36,000	-4,000
VAT	17,340	13,060	4,280
<b>Total</b>	<b>581,500</b>	<b>524,500</b>	<b>57,000</b>

#### 4.2.1 Other costs

As the programme was classed as non-business activity, the income that MGS received from NLHF negatively affected its overall recoverable VAT position. This amounted to approximately £86,000 over Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the grant. This is not something that could be added to the budget of future projects but given the significant impact on the organisation, it is certainly an element that should be taken into consideration in both assessing the current project and considering future projects.

Mentoring costs are not factored into the costings above. A number of members of staff within MGS and within host and partner organisations were involved in providing mentoring support to learners. As already described, mentoring support was offered on a mentee-led basis meaning that there was no prescription in relation to the number of hours involved. Our interviews with mentors showed that there was significant variation in the nature and level of take-up of mentoring by the mentees, with some learners choosing to engage only very occasionally with their mentor, and some doing so much more regularly (including once a month in the case of one learner). Hours spent mentoring a learner were not recorded, and so we are unable to attribute a value to the mentoring support, but this is an additional cost to MGS (in terms of staff time) which has been factored into our consideration of value for money.

### 4.3 Value for money assessment

Overall, the running costs of the programme have been relatively low for a programme of this size. Based on the costings outlined above, the cost per learner was around £24,000. The largest part of these costs was for the learner stipend. Paying for internships is considered to be good practice, and feedback through the evaluation suggests that without the stipend, only two of the learners would have been able to afford to take part so this was a significant and important cost factored into the overall costs.

The staffing and other costs associated with delivery were reasonable especially relative to the substantive outcomes delivered by the programme (and already outlined in detail elsewhere in this report) and given the (unanticipated) extent of health and wellbeing support required by some learners.

It should also be noted that the time input required by the delivery of the SVQ was reported to be significantly less than in previous iterations of the programme, as this is now well-established, no time was required for developing the qualification, and factors of delivery such as assessment were more streamlined than previously due to existing expertise within MGS.

There is an unknown cost associated with mentoring within MGS. As the mentoring supported was provided during working hours, these costs would ideally have been monitored to ensure that they were manageable within existing workloads (and sustainable if future programmes were to include a mentoring component). However, our sense is that in the case of most learners the time spent providing mentoring support was relatively low and so this is unlikely to have been a substantive additional cost to the programme. We also factored the skills development opportunity that this offered to staff into our considerations.

A further factor considered in relation to value for money was the value of the learners to the host organisations. Each host organisation had the benefit of one (or more) full-time equivalent members of staff. The only cost to host organisations was a one-off contribution of £750 per placement, and the time spent by supervisors and other staff in supporting the learner while they were undertaking the learning placement (although this should not be underestimated and was more significant than anticipated in some of the host organisations as already highlighted. The host organisations did not have to make any contribution towards the learner stipend.

Most organisations highly valued the additional capacity the learner gave them, and the value of work being undertaken by the learners was in some cases reported to have exceeded the value of the stipend paid.

In the section below we give an overview of the added value that the programme has provided.

#### **4.4 Added value**

The programme delivered significant added value to the sector including:

- Upskilling 22 learners most of whom have gone on to gain employment in the sector. They were given skills and experience relevant to skills gaps in the sector – this was positive for the sector, and has improved the employability of the learners (including giving them transferable skills should they leave the sector)
- Built staff capacity to train and support entry-level employees

- Project activity undertaken in host organisations that would not have taken place otherwise due to constrained capacity, and demonstrated the value of having additional capacity
- Increased awareness of additional support needs and in some organisations adaptations to approaches to support, and systems have been made
- Learning from a more inclusive recruitment process and how this can impact on the diversity of the workforce
- Positive shifts in attitudes in sector towards recruiting through a different route, and people without an under-graduate or post-graduate qualification
- Built staff skills within MGS in mentoring and SVQ assessment, and
- Grew the capacity of the sector to support work-based learning

Taking account of the costs incurred for implementation, and the range of positive outcomes and added value delivered, the programme has demonstrated good value for money.



Markus Offer Project manager with creative choices award  
Photo Credit : Rob McDougal

## 5. Conclusions and recommendations

The Skills for Success programme has successfully built on the progress made by the previous three learning placement programmes implemented by MGS since 2011. It has made some important advances in practice and thinking, and has had a significant positive impact on the individuals involved – both the learners and those involved in delivery. It has been well-managed by MGS and has delivered value for money.

### 5.1 Programme delivery

New approaches have been trialled through the programme and there has been important learning for MGS, host organisations and the sector more widely about what works best in supporting learners with more complex additional support needs, or different experiences to those who would more traditionally have applied to work in the sector. These include:

- The benefits of applying a more inclusive and creative approach to recruitment
- The benefits of diversifying the workforce which can lead to fresh thinking and new approaches
- The need to ensure that additional support needs are identified early on and that organisations have the mechanisms in-house (or know referral routes to partners) to support these needs
- Growing the capacity to support and assess SVQs in-house ensures a better and more bespoke quality of support, and potentially a higher rate of completion, than if this support is outsourced

Through this evaluation, a number of key factors have been identified in relation to successful delivery of a programme of this nature (see Figure 5.1):

## Figure

### 5.1 Key factors for success

### 5.2 Impact of the programme

As outlined in depth in Chapter 3, the programme has had a substantial impact on those involved. While a small number of learners found taking part in the programme challenging (mainly due to issues in their personal life), the majority had a very positive experience and gained new skills, understanding of the sector, grew in confidence and improved their employability. The vast majority of them moved into employment within the sector at the end of the learning placements and this is a very positive outcome.

The programme also impacted on the mentors, supervisors and other staff involved in delivery. They spoke of learning new skills in relation to mentoring, supporting learners with additional support needs (some of which were complex), being encouraged to view their workplace and the way in which they work differently as a result of having someone with fresh thinking and new experiences in the organisation, being given the opportunity to network with colleagues from other parts of the sector taking part in the programme, and having the additional capacity to enable them to undertake additional tasks.

### 5.3 Challenges arising

Whilst the benefits of the programme were significant, the programme also highlighted a number of challenges which remain within the sector. The programme confirmed for many learners their interest in working in the sector, however the jobs they have moved into are largely short-term posts. A lack of sustainable job opportunities within the sector remains a significant challenge to those entering the sector for the first time, such as these learners, but also for those wishing to progress within the sector and there is no short-term solution to this challenge.

There were gaps in support for learners on the programme, some of which were a result



of the learner not having employee status, but mostly which were a result of the appropriate support mechanisms not being available at all within some of the host organisations. Inconsistency in the type and level of support for additional support needs is a challenge which the sector must address if it is to diversify its workforce further, and ensure that its existing workforce is best supported.

#### **5.4 Legacy from the programme**

The programme only supported 22 learners, but it has left behind it an important legacy for the sector.

The programme created additional short-term capacity within the host organisations which was welcomed across the board, and which led to additional and innovative activities being undertaken. While the capacity was not retained at the end of the programme (and there was never an intention that it would be), it helped some staff to make the case for additional capacity in future within their departments, and most importantly led to 12 learners gaining employment within the sector.

It has provided important learning in relation to how to recruit and support a more diverse workforce; and in relation to key factors for success in the delivery of a similar programme in future. In addition, it has influenced attitudes towards a more inclusive approach to recruitment and helped the sector to see the benefits of a more diverse workforce and of work-based learning, particularly for (but not restricted to) entry-level posts.

In very practical terms, it has grown the capacity of MGS to deliver the SVQ Level 3 in Museums and Galleries Practice and other SQA qualifications by becoming an Assessment Centre. Due to the upskilling of MGS staff and assessors in other parts of the sector, MGS will no longer need to contract with external providers to offer the qualification across the sector, and assessment will be more bespoke to the sector in future. In addition, former learners are being encouraged to train as assessors to pass on their learning from taking part in Skills for Success.

Furthermore, legacy projects are already in the planning stages and include opportunities being explored with Glasgow College and Glasgow Life to create a vocational framework which will address skills gaps in the sector.

This is a significant legacy for the sector and one which is important to build upon.

#### **5.5 Recommendations**

As the current Skills for Success programme has come to an end, and there is no plan currently to deliver a further iteration of the programme imminently, the recommendations below are high-level recommendations arising from the research which will inform future practice in the sector.

##### **Recommendation 1**

MGS should continue to disseminate the learning from this programme across the sector.



**Recommendation 2**

The sector should build on the learning gained through this programme and continue to adapt its recruitment practices to ensure that these are inclusive and fit for purpose. In addition, it should continue to explore opportunities to open up entry and progression routes within the sector.

**Recommendation 3**

The sector should continue to improve its support mechanisms for staff, particularly staff with health-related issues, and ensure that these are robust and inclusive. Working with partner organisations may be an effective way of providing some of this support.

**Recommendation 4**

MGS should continue to explore opportunities to offer the SVQ Level 3 in Museums and Galleries Practice as widely as possible across the sector to both existing and new staff. This should include continuing to upskill staff within the sector to be assessors.

**Recommendation 5**

Building on the progress made through the Skills for Success programme, the sector should continue to build its capacity to support work-based learning, taking account of the learning from the challenges faced by some of the host organisations participating in this programme.



Learner Ellen and Supermisor Mike at The Crannog Center  
Photo Credit : Rob McDougal

## 6. Appendices

### Appendix 1: Literature review

The UK boasts some of the greatest arts and heritage collections in the world, with all of the top ten visitor attractions in the UK being museums, or attractions that include museums and galleries as part of their primary offering.<sup>3</sup> Since the 1940s, most arts and heritage organisations in the UK have operated based on a mixed funding model, with income supplied through public subsidy, private investment and earned revenue.<sup>4</sup> The arts and heritage industry in the UK has enjoyed a long period of high levels of public investment over the last 20 years which has continued to cultivate a vibrant and successful arts scene. Museums and galleries across the UK have continuously expanded their visitor base and have reached out to new audiences and local communities, with almost half of all museums reporting a year on year increase in visitor numbers.<sup>5</sup>

However, with regards to its workforce, the museums and galleries sector has faced consistent barriers and challenges relating to diversity of employees, biased or narrow recruitment pools, and lack of progression opportunities. Despite numerous attempts by the sector to introduce more pathways and inclusive programmes, there has been minimal progress in diversifying the workforce. More recently, there is also a growing trend in organisations preferring to hire employees with broader, more business-related skillsets. However, museums are finding it difficult to balance the introduction of this new operating model with the retention of specialist staff, and this is contributing to the loss of specialist skills and knowledge, such as curation and interpretation.

#### Current workforce

The creative industry is booming in the UK and has been one of the most consistent and highest growing sectors. Since 2011, the number of jobs in the creative industry has increased by 30.6 per cent, compared to the UK average of 10.1 per cent during the same period.<sup>6</sup> However, the museums and galleries sub-sector has experienced the opposite trajectory, being the only sub-sector aside from publishing to experience declining employment rates since 2011. The museums and galleries sub-sector experienced a 7.8 per cent drop in employment rates in 2017-18, and has dropped 2.5

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<sup>3</sup> The Mendoza Review: an independent review of museums in England  
<[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/673935/The\\_Mendoza\\_Review\\_an\\_independent\\_review\\_of\\_museums\\_in\\_England.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/673935/The_Mendoza_Review_an_independent_review_of_museums_in_England.pdf)>.

<sup>4</sup> House of Commons (2010-11) Funding of the arts and heritage  
<<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmselect/cmcomeds/464/464i.pdf>>.

<sup>5</sup> Museums Association (2017) Museums in the UK: 2017 report  
<<https://www.museumsassociation.org/download?id=1221931>>.

<sup>6</sup> DCMS Sectors Economic Estimates 2018: Employment <<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/dcms-sectors-economic-estimates-2018-employment>>.

per cent overall since 2011.<sup>7</sup> Scotland in particular has experienced a harsh decline in employment rates within the sub-sector suffering a 52.3 per cent drop since 2011.<sup>8</sup>

Museums and galleries across the UK have been successful in their efforts over the past few years to reach new audiences and expand their visitor base. However, in recent years, the museums sector has experienced substantial upheaval in staff cuts, leading to experienced staff being forced out of the sector and lack of recruitment opportunities. Publicly funded museums are increasingly reporting year on year decrease in staff numbers, with 26 per cent of local authority museums, 55 per cent of national museums, and 58 per cent of independent former local authority museums reporting staff cuts.<sup>9</sup>

## Issues affecting the Museums and Galleries Workforce

Employment in the museums and galleries sector is highly competitive and is held in high esteem across the UK, however, policy makers and commentators recognise that the creative and cultural industries are not the most accessible labour markets. Various recruitment practices in the sector actively negate the chance of social mobility for young workers as entry routes generally requires highly educated backgrounds, considerable volunteering experience and unpaid work, as well as already established networks within the industry.<sup>10</sup> Currently, 88 per cent of the museum workforce hold a first degree or higher, and 59 per cent hold a second degree (including PhDs). It is a starkly overqualified industry when compared to the general UK population where only 38 per cent of adults hold degree level education.<sup>11</sup>

Employment in the UK museums and galleries sector is also highly skewed towards individuals from more advantaged socio-economic backgrounds, and this imbalance has continued to grow in the past five years. The increasing and unspoken requirement to engage in unpaid work as an entry point into the sector, along with the majority of candidates boasting high levels of formal qualifications with private education backgrounds suggest that the sector is only recruiting from a "narrow strata of society".<sup>12</sup> In 2014, 73 per cent of employees in the museums and galleries sector were from the more advantaged bands 1 to 4 on the National Statistics Socio-economic classification (NS-SEC), growing to 79 per cent in 2018.<sup>13</sup> A survey commissioned by the Arts Council England and MGS in 2016 also confirmed the industry's preference for individuals from advantaged socio-economic backgrounds, with over 20 per cent of participants having attended fee-paying schools, compared to the UK average of 7 per cent.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> DCMS Sectors Economic Estimates 2018: Employment.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Museums Association (2017) Museums in the UK: 2017 report.

<sup>10</sup> Creative and Cultural Skills, Building a Creative Nation: Evidence Review  
<[https://ccskills.org.uk/downloads/Building\\_a\\_Creative\\_Nation\\_-\\_Evidence\\_Review.pdf](https://ccskills.org.uk/downloads/Building_a_Creative_Nation_-_Evidence_Review.pdf)>.

<sup>11</sup> BOP Consulting (2016) Character Matters: Attitudes, behaviours and skills in the UIK Museum Workforce.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> DCMS Sectors Economic Estimates 2018: Employment.

<sup>14</sup> BOP Consulting (2016) Character Matters: Attitudes, behaviours and skills in the UIK Museum Workforce.

Volunteers have always played an important role in the museums sector, however, due to loss of public funding venues are becoming increasingly more reliant on volunteers in lieu of paid employees.<sup>15</sup> One in five of employees in the museums workforce are volunteers.<sup>16</sup> The Museums Association are aware of cases where volunteers have been used to replace paid staff, or recruited for management roles that require high levels of experience and responsibility.<sup>17</sup> The ongoing reliance on volunteers to run a professional museum or gallery not only closes up entry routes into the sector but also becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy for the venue itself. As museums and galleries become reliant on volunteers, they are then faced with a shortage of specialist skills and knowledge, with volunteer-run institutions increasingly reporting difficulties in recruiting candidates with the requisite experience and commitment required for key management roles.<sup>18</sup>

It has been long and well acknowledged that there is a lack of diversity within the UK museums sector workforce, particularly with regards to ethnicity. The issue of workforce diversity in museums not only affects its staff, but also minimises the museum's relevance to the diverse communities they serve, and undermines initiatives to open museums up to more diverse audience groups.<sup>19</sup> Despite long-standing attempts by the industry to introduce more diversity into the recruitment pool through positive action programmes such as *Diversify* (1998 to 2011),<sup>20</sup> learning placements and apprenticeships. In 2014, the Transformers: Radical Change in Museums programme was launched to encourage values-based change for museum professionals, institutions and their stakeholders, including promoting social justice, challenging prejudice, fostering discussion around areas of discrimination, and providing a platform for representation that accurately mirrors the needs of communities.<sup>21</sup> MGS funded seven places in the Transformers development programme for mid-career museum professionals in Scotland.<sup>22</sup> However, despite these long-standing programmes and initiatives, progress has been stagnant. The survey commissioned by the Arts Council England and MGS in 2016 showed that 92 per cent of surveyed museum employees were white, compared to 86 per cent of the general UK population, and only 5 per cent of employees considered themselves as having a disability, compared to 14 per cent of the UK population.<sup>23</sup> Art Council England's 2018 diversity report found that only 4 per cent of staff employed by their Major Partner Museums and 11 per cent of staff

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Museums Association (2017) Museums in the UK: 2017 report.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Museums Association (2018) Resource launched to help museums diversify their audiences <<https://www.museumsassociation.org/news/08062018-open-up-launch>>.

<sup>20</sup> Museums Association, Diversify: Overview <<https://www.museumsassociation.org/workforce/diversify/diversify-overview>>.

<sup>21</sup> Museums Association, Valuing Diversity: The Case for Inclusive Museums <<https://www.museumsassociation.org/download?id=1194934>>.

<sup>22</sup> Museums Galleries Scotland, Transformers: Radical Change in Museums <<http://www.mgsblog.org/skills/transformers/>>.

<sup>23</sup> BOP Consulting (2016) Character Matters: Attitudes, behaviours and skills in the UK Museum Workforce.

employed among National Portfolio Organisations were from black or minority ethnic backgrounds.<sup>24</sup>

In December 2015, BOP Consulting with The Museum Consultancy were commissioned by Arts Council England and Museums Galleries Scotland, along with the Museums Association and the Association of Independent Museums to undertake research on the attitudes, behaviours and skills needed by the museum workforce over the immediate future. This study produced the *Character Matters: Attitudes, behaviours and skills in the UK Museum Workforce* (Character Matters report).<sup>25</sup> This report found that for many individuals from a diverse background, the day to day experience of working in museums, particularly in middle-management, can be exhausting and leads to consistent psychological and emotional challenges.<sup>26</sup> Individuals from diverse backgrounds reported frequently being required to demonstrate and articulate how they have achieved their position on merit, explain issues of identity and cultural heritage to colleagues, and deal with unconscious bias on a daily basis.<sup>27</sup> Despite the progress in opening new entry routes to diversify the museums workforce, retention of employees with diverse backgrounds in the middle management bracket remains an issue.

Overall, the UK creative industries continues to be dominated by white males from privileged backgrounds, however, the gender balance amongst museums and galleries sector presents an exception. On average the UK creative industries employ 63 per cent males, and 37 per cent females.<sup>28</sup> However, the museums and galleries sub-sector boasts 34 per cent males and 66 per cent female employees.<sup>29</sup>

### **Pathways, training and qualifications opportunities**

The museums and galleries sector's lack of diversity has also been exacerbated by narrow entry pathways and the various recruitment practices of individual organisations. The heritage sector remains a highly attractive employment prospect with fierce competition, allowing employers the luxury to select only the most experienced or over-qualified candidates for entry-level roles, and overlook applicants who have come through alternative entry routes or have other sector qualifications.<sup>30</sup> The Character Matters report conducted a study of a sample of 59 museum job adverts over the course of five months in 2016. It found that 69 per cent of adverts specified a first degree-level education, and a further 10 per cent demanded post-graduate qualifications. Only 30

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<sup>24</sup> Arts Council England (2018) Experimental Culture: A horizon scan commissioned by Arts Council England <[https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/Experimental\\_Culture\\_report\\_190318.pdf](https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/Experimental_Culture_report_190318.pdf)>.

<sup>25</sup> BOP Consulting (2016) Character Matters: Attitudes, behaviours and skills in the UIK Museum Workforce.

<sup>26</sup> Museums Association, Valuing Diversity: The Case for Inclusive Museums.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> DCMS Sectors Economic Estimates 2018: Employment.

<sup>29</sup> Office of National Statistics (2018) Annual Population Survey, Employment Rate by Gender (Working age).

<sup>30</sup> BOP Consulting (2016) Character Matters: Attitudes, behaviours and skills in the UIK Museum Workforce.



per cent of adverts stated that they would consider equivalent industry experience in place of formal qualifications.<sup>31</sup>

The museums sector is oversubscribed with new graduates, pushing many organisations to raise their minimum standards as a quick method to reduce demand and application levels. However, the *Character Matters* report also found that HR managers often insist on formal qualification as it is the safest way to avoid accusations of discrimination, and that some local authorities still aligned their pay grades to levels of formal qualifications held.<sup>32</sup> Some managers may also feel that traditional academic qualifications are important for collection care and interpretation, resulting in the heritage sector being an out of reach career prospect for many.<sup>33</sup>

There is wide recognition amongst the industry that entry routes into the sector need to be broadened to allow a more diverse workforce, however, salaries remains a key barrier. Remuneration is not the main draw card or key concern for the standard art and heritage studies graduate. Salaries across the museums sector are relatively flat and average, with 49 per cent of the industry earning between £18,600 and £30,600 per annum.<sup>34</sup> However, given the high levels of education most museum employees hold, the museums' workforce is on average paid lower than in other comparable sectors.

Another commonly recognised issue regarding the museums and galleries industry is the lack of progression routes and career development. Due to funding cuts, many organisations now have a tendency to freeze posts and salaries, which means there is little incentive for individuals to upskill as there is nowhere for them to progress. In 2016, one study found that although 71.5 per cent of the workforce had engaged in training or CPD, over 62 per cent of employees had remained in the same role for the last three years, with 76 per cent not being given any additional responsibilities.<sup>35</sup> The proportion of employees in permanent roles or holding long-term contracts is also significantly higher amongst mid-age ranges compared to young workers. For employees aged 35-44, 83 per cent hold permanent or long-term contracts, compared to only 48 per cent of employees aged 16-24. Furthermore, 15 percent of the sector remaining in the museums industry for over 20 years, leaving very few positions for new graduates or younger workers to progress into.<sup>36</sup>

## Skills gaps

The *Character Matters* report found that there is a need for a more diverse, flexible workforce which can bring new skills, energy and ideas to reinvigorate the sector. It also found that there is a need for improved collaboration in sharing resources, knowledge and ideas in order to support future visions for the sector.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Museums Association, *Valuing Diversity: The Case for Inclusive Museums*.

<sup>34</sup> BOP Consulting (2016) *Character Matters: Attitudes, behaviours and skills in the UIK Museum Workforce*.

<sup>35</sup> BOP Consulting (2016) *Character Matters: Attitudes, behaviours and skills in the UIK Museum Workforce*.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

The museum and galleries sector recognises the need to cultivate and retain core heritage skills such as curatorship. However, the industry is increasingly recognising a need to prioritise the development of multi-skilled employees with business skills across all levels. In order to allow museums and galleries to operate as effective and commercially sound businesses, employees need to possess relevant business skills such as financial and business planning, events management, fundraising and donor relationship management, marketing, and digital media skills.<sup>38</sup> A survey commissioned by Creative & Cultural Skills (CCS) in 2013 found that 68 per cent of employers believe that the ability to balance specialist and general business skills will be the most desirable skills set in the future.<sup>39</sup> The museums and galleries sector currently face a skills-gap in developing and retaining employees with real depth in specialist skills, who also possess the ability to multi-task and apply knowledge in areas other than one's own.

Digital technologies are creating a shift within the museums and galleries sector as they are being used more and more as an avenue to develop audience engagement and interaction, distribute marketing and communications, as well as assist with collections management. As a result, there is a strong feeling throughout the industry that digital fluency should be pervasive, and that employees will need to obtain the corresponding skills to effectively manage these technologies.<sup>40</sup> The Sector Skills Assessment for the Creative Industries in the UK found that "digitisation is demanding ongoing professional development across many parts of the Creative Sector at higher rates than ever before".<sup>41</sup> In a 2015 survey of the arts and cultural sector, 51 per cent of the 900 organisations surveyed stated that digital technology was important or essential to their business model and generating revenue.<sup>42</sup> Museums have reported themselves as late adopters of digital technology and less digitally engaged compared to the overall creative sector, therefore, it is important for organisations to have sufficient strategic skills in managing digital change across their organisation.<sup>43</sup> However, 36 per cent of creative industry organisations have reported that they do not feel they have the "in-house skills, IT systems or expert advice to meet their future plans for digital work", and will need to invest heavily in training programmes or new staff.<sup>44</sup>

## Future of the industry

Despite being a highly revered and long-standing sector, there is very little literature on future-proofing and developing the museums and galleries industry. There is also a particular lack of discussion on the effect of new technologies such as artificial

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Creative and Cultural Skills (2013) The Creative and Cultural Industries: Cultural Heritage 2012/13 <<https://ccskills.org.uk/supporters/advice-research/article/the-creative-and-cultural-industries-cultural-heritage-2012-13>>.

<sup>40</sup> BOP Consulting (2016) Character Matters: Attitudes, behaviours and skills in the UIK Museum Workforce.

<sup>41</sup> Creative and Cultural Skills (2010) Sector skills assessment for the creative and cultural industries <[https://ccskills.org.uk/downloads/1321190183-CCSkills\\_UK\\_SSA\\_2010-11.pdf](https://ccskills.org.uk/downloads/1321190183-CCSkills_UK_SSA_2010-11.pdf)>.

<sup>42</sup> Nesta (2015) Digital Culture: How arts and cultural organisations in England use technology <<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/Digital-Culture-2015-Final.pdf>>.

<sup>43</sup> BOP Consulting (2016) Character Matters: Attitudes, behaviours and skills in the UIK Museum Workforce.

<sup>44</sup> Nesta (2015) Digital Culture: How arts and cultural organisations in England use technology.

intelligence and machine learning on employment in the sector, and how the workforce will need to adapt.<sup>45</sup> There have been huge advancements in the automation of manual jobs in the past two decades, and white collar jobs are increasingly being affected. Artificial intelligence now presents a dangerous potential in rendering 47 percent of occupations obsolete in the coming decades.<sup>46</sup> The rise of new technologies does not present a specific danger to the museums sector, as creative jobs were deemed at “low” risk of automation. However, the complete lack of engagement with the topic is a huge gap in future-proofing the museum sector as there are large amounts of support occupations within the creative industries that may be impacted.<sup>47</sup>

Following publication of the Character Matters report in 2016, the UK Museums Workforce Steering Group was established in 2017 to identify future workforce needs for the museums and galleries sector at the individual, museum and sector level. The Steering Group published the *Character Matters Delivery Plan 2018-2020*,<sup>48</sup> which documents commitments made by each member organisation and recommendations for other sector organisations to appropriate and prioritise over two years. All member organisations of the Steering Group will be required to report on the diversity profiles of their workforce and other HR processes to show how they are diversifying their workforce by March 2020. The delivery plan builds on the recommendations provided in the Character Matters report and includes the following three key aims:

1. Develop effective recruitment: to create a diverse and skilled workforce fit for purpose for the next 10 years;
2. Develop attitudes, behaviours, skills and knowledge: to support individuals to develop themselves to deliver inspiring, relevant and prosperous museums;
3. Develop organisational culture: to create the conditions to support individuals and achieve a diverse, skilled workforce.<sup>49</sup>

There are a number of further entry programmes targeted at diversifying the future museums and galleries workforce across the UK. Some prominent ones include the following:

- MGS is funded by Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and has been developing ‘entry to the workforce’ programmes since 2011. The MGS ‘Skills for Success’ programme is their biggest learning programme to date, providing 20 entry level and two management level non-graduates from diverse backgrounds with one year paid placements in 16 museums across Scotland.<sup>50</sup>
- In Wales, Museums Archives and Libraries (MALD) is working with CCS with funding from HLF to deliver the Fusion Programme. The programme provides 33

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<sup>45</sup> BOP Consulting (2016) Character Matters: Attitudes, behaviours and skills in the UK Museum Workforce.

<sup>46</sup> Art World (2017) Going to Art School Could Help Save Your Job From the Robots <<https://news.artnet.com/art-world/arts-degree-jobs-automation-963125>>.

<sup>47</sup> Creative and Cultural Skills (2015) Building a Creative Nation: The Next Decade <[https://ccskills.org.uk/downloads/CCS\\_BUILDINGACREATIVENATION\\_WEB\\_SINGLES.pdf](https://ccskills.org.uk/downloads/CCS_BUILDINGACREATIVENATION_WEB_SINGLES.pdf)>.

<sup>48</sup> UK Museums Workforce Steering Group (2018) Character Matters Delivery Plan 2018-2020 <<https://www.museumsassociation.org/download?id=1251126>>.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Arts Professional, Breaking into the museum sector <<https://www.artsprofessional.co.uk/magazine/314/case-study/breaking-museum-sector>>.



twelve month training placements in the heritage sector targeted at young people not in employment or education and living in disadvantaged communities.<sup>51</sup>

- As part of Arts Council England's 25 year Creative Talent Plan, a pilot programme is being delivered in Leicester City to provide cultural education to differing groups of children and young people. Learning from this pilot will be used to develop a new national creativity scheme for all young people to ensure a pipeline of talent into creative industries across the UK economy.<sup>52</sup>
- The Museums Association is administering the Transformers Programme, which provides development opportunities for 27 mid-career museum workers across the UK. MGS funded seven places under this programme for mid-career museum professionals in Scotland.<sup>53</sup> The programme was designed to support participants to test out new ways of working that would help to create more diverse, resilient and adaptable organisations. Projects include developing training programmes to help learning staff embrace commercialism as part of their work, and projects to increase community-led decision making within museums.<sup>54</sup>

In addition there are a wide range of Scottish Government policies that should contribute to supporting future progress of the issues highlighted in this review. The Fairer Scotland Action Plan was launched in 2016,<sup>55</sup> and contains 50 concrete actions to reduce poverty and tackle inequality, including reducing widening access to university and significantly increasing the number of young people getting industry experience whilst still in school. Skills Development Scotland published its Equalities Action Plan which details actions to be undertaken to improve the participation of disabled and Black Minority Ethnic groups and care leavers in Modern Apprenticeships, as well as addressing gender imbalance within the uptake of occupational frameworks.<sup>56</sup> The Scottish Strategy for Autism was launched in 2018, with an objective to assist people with autism participate in all aspects of community and society, including transitioning successfully from school into meaningful educational or employment opportunities.<sup>57</sup>

## Conclusion

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<sup>51</sup> Welsh Government (2018) Fusion Creating Opportunities Through Culture: Delivery in 2018-19 <<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-06/fusion-programme-report-2018-to-2019.pdf>>.

<sup>52</sup> De Montfort University Leicester: DMU teams with Arts Council England to help find Britain's best creative talent <<https://www.dmu.ac.uk/about-dmu/news/2017/february/dmu-teams-with-arts-council-england-to-help-find-britain's-best-creative-talent.aspx>>.

<sup>53</sup> Museums Galleries Scotland, Transformers: Radical Change in Museums <<http://www.mgsblog.org/skills/transformers/>>.

<sup>54</sup> UK Museums Workforce Steering Group (2018) Character Matters Delivery Plan 2018-2020.

<sup>55</sup> Scottish Government (2016) Fairer Scotland Action Plan <<https://www.gov.scot/publications/fairer-scotland-action-plan/>>.

<sup>56</sup> Skills Development Scotland, Equalities Action Plan [https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/media/40691/2869\\_sds\\_equalities\\_action\\_plan\\_digital\\_v7.pdf](https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/media/40691/2869_sds_equalities_action_plan_digital_v7.pdf).

<sup>57</sup> Scottish Government (2018) The Scottish Strategy for Autism: Outcomes and Priorities 2018–2021 <<https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-strategy-autism-outcomes-priorities-2018-2021/>>.

The museums and galleries sector remains a highly desirable and sought-after employment industry in the UK, however, the industry has consistently faced common complaints of lack of diversity, narrow hiring practices, lack of entry routes, and minimal progression opportunities. Despite many admirable attempts by organisations within the sector to address these gaps, this literature review has shown that little progress has been made in the industry over the last decade.

The challenges for the museums and galleries sector going forward remains unchanged. The industry must continue to find different avenues to recruit a more diverse workforce into the sector, including people with broader skillsets such as business acumen and digital fluency, whilst still being able to retain and specialist skills such as curatorship and interpretation.



Learner Elliot at the Scottish Maritime Museum  
Photo Credit : Rob McDougal

## Appendix 2: Research tools

### Learner Questions

#### *Before the learning placement*

1. Before you got involved in the MGS Skills for Success Learning placement Programme, what were you doing?
2. How did you find out about the Skills for Success Learning placement Programme?
3. What was your motivation for applying for the learning placement programme?
4. How important was it that the learning placement was paid? If it had not been a paid learning placement, what difference would it have made to you?

#### *Your experience of the learning placement*

5. How did you find the application process for the learning placement? Is there anything in particular that you liked or disliked about the process?
6. Did you have an induction as part of your learning placement?
  - a. If yes, how helpful was it?
  - b. If no, what would have been helpful?
7. Was having a named supervisor during your learning placement programme beneficial?
  - a. If yes, how was it beneficial? Did they support you in developing your skills/enhance your learning placement?
  - b. If no, how could it have been improved?
8. Did you have a mentor?

If yes:

  - a. How often did you talk/meet?
  - b. What kind of support did they give you?
  - c. Did you find having a mentor beneficial?
  - d. How could the mentoring support be improved?
9. What was your experienced of working towards the SVQ3 in Museums & galleries?
  - a. Where there any particular challenges you faced?
  - b. Did you find the qualification relevant to your work experience?
10. (Management-level only) How find you find the six-day accredited leadership programme?
11. Did you take part in any training or workshops?
  - a. If so, which training/ workshops?
  - b. Were the training/ workshops in line with your learning objectives?

12. Did you face any particular challenges during your learning placement?
  - a. If yes, what were the challenges and how did you overcome these challenges?
13. Which element of the learning placement programme that you enjoyed most?
14. Which element of the learning placement programme that you enjoyed the least?

### ***After the learning placement***

15. Overall, did the learning placement meet your expectations?
  - a. If not, what could have been improved to meet your expectations?
16. By the end of the learning placement did you develop any skills originally outlined?
  - a. If not, why do you think this is?
17. Did you develop any additional skills that weren't in your learning plan?
18. Did you experience any additional benefits from a personal or professional point of view?
19. What have you done since completing the learning placement programme?
20. (if they are working) Did completing the learning placement help you find your job?
  - a. In what ways?
  - b. Have you applied any of the skills you developed during your learning placement in your job?
21. (if they are not working) What do you hope to do in the future?

### ***Outcomes for your host organisation and the sector?***

22. How do you think the learning placement benefitted the organisation you were based in?
23. Do you think the learning placement programme has had a positive impact on the sector and the way it is perceived by those looking to start a career in the sector?

### ***Overview***

24. Would you recommend this type of learning placement programme to others? Why/why not?
25. Overall, what worked well about the learning placement programme? What (if any) improvements that could be made?
26. Do you have any final reflections about your involvement in the programme?

## Supervisor Questions

### *Background*

1. Please describe your professional role at your organisation
2. Before you got involved in the MGS Skills for Success Learning placement Programme, how did your museum recruit entry-level staff?
3. Have you previously been involved with any other learning placements/internships? If so, what were they?
4. How did you hear about the Skills for Success Learning placement programme and why did you apply to be a supervisor?
5. Can you briefly describe your role as a supervisor in the learning placement programme – did your experience match what was defined when you applied?
6. Were you made aware of one of the aims of the programme which was to recruit learners from diverse backgrounds – e.g. without a degree, from a lower social-economic background etc.
  - a. Do you think this was achieved?
7. How clearly was the programme explained to you? Was it delivered as described?

### *The programme*

8. Did you have any role in the recruitment of the learners?
  - a. If so, how well managed was this process from your perspective?
9. Did you attend the Supervisor Skills Development Programme (supervisor training days)?
  - a. If so, how was the training event? Was the training event relevant to the learning placement programme?
10. How did you find monthly reporting process?
11. Did the learning programme reflect the skills needed in your organisation?
  - a. Did the learning programme provide an effective means of reflecting on the progress of learners? If not how could it have been improved?
12. Did any difficulties arise during the learning placement?
  - a. If so, how were these addressed by MGS?
13. Did you have any access to any training/development opportunities during the learning placement programme?
  - a. If yes, did you attend any? Please name the course and what you thought to the course

14. Did you have a greater opportunity to network, as a result of participating in the programme?

### *Satisfaction*

15. How satisfied were you with the support you received during the learning placement programme?
16. Was your role as the supervisor valued by the learner and by your organisation?
17. Did you feel that having a learner added value to your organisation?

### *Benefits/costs*

18. What were the main benefits of being involved in the learning placement programme?
- a. Did having a learner enable the organisation to undertake different/higher level of tasks?
19. What were the main costs for the organisation? (e.g. supervision time)

### *Longer-term influence of the programme*

20. Did the learner introduce any new skills or approaches into your organisation?
- a. If yes, what were these and how will they benefit your organisation?
21. Has it changed any of your internal systems in terms of training, review or staff development? Can you explain how?
- a. To what extent has it succeeded in changing attitudes to the recruitment of new entrants?
22. Have any changes taken place as a result of the learning placement?
23. Are you more or less likely to recruit learners in future as a result of your experience?
24. What have you personally learned or gained as a result of your involvement?

### *Overview*

25. Do you feel that the MGS Learning placement has contributed to creating a more diverse workforce in your sector?
26. Do you have any final reflections about your involvement in the programme?

## **Mentor Questions**

### ***Background***

1. Please describe your professional role at your organisation.
2. How did you hear about the Skills for Success Learning placement programme and how did you apply to be a mentor?
3. Why did you decide to get involved as a mentor?
4. Can you briefly describe your role as a mentor in the learning placement programme – did your experience match what was defined when you applied?
5. Were you made aware of one of the aims of the programme which was to recruit learners from diverse backgrounds – e.g. non-graduates, from a lower social-economic background etc.
  - b. Do you feel that this was achieved?

### ***Mentoring***

6. Did you attend the mentoring training days?
  - a. If yes, was this beneficial?
7. How often did you meet your learner and how did this take place? (E.g. face to face, email, phone etc.)
8. How long did you support your learner for?
9. Do you think both you and the learner made the most of the mentoring opportunity?
10. In what ways (if any) do you feel that the mentoring support benefitted the learner?

### ***Satisfaction***

11. Did you face any challenges as a mentor?
  - a. If yes, how did you overcome these challenges?
12. Did you require/receive any support from MGS during your mentorship?
  - a. If yes, how satisfied were you with the support you received
13. Would you recommend this type of programme to other people you know who might be interested in being a mentor?

### ***Influence of the programme***

14. Did the programme allow you to learn/develop your skills? (e.g. mentoring skills/organisation)
  - a. If yes, what have you personally learned or gain as a result of involvement?

- b. What do you feel the learner gained from their involvement in the learning placement programme?

***Overview***

15. Were there any particular benefits and/or costs experienced within your organisation from being involved with this learning placement programme?
16. Do you feel that the MGS Learning placement has contributed to creating a more diverse workforce in your sector?
17. Do you have any final reflections about your involvement in the programme?



Learner Sarah and Supervisor Diana at GoMA  
Photo Credit : Rob McDougal



## Stakeholder Questions

### *Background*

1. Can you please describe your professional role at your organisation
2. What is your relationship with MGS?
3. Can you tell me about how/ why your organisation decided to get involved with the learning placement?
4. Can you briefly describe your role within the learning placement programme

### *The programme*

5. How did you find the learners responded to the workshops?
6. What are your perceived strengths and weaknesses of the having the learners partake in the range of workshops

### *Overview*

7. Do you feel that the MGS Learning placement Programme has succeeded in creating a more diverse workforce?
8. Do you have any final reflections about your involvement in the programme?



3 Boroughloch Square, Edinburgh EH8 9NJ

0131 667 2919

[www.blakestevenson.co.uk](http://www.blakestevenson.co.uk)