

National Museums of Scotland Learning and Access Policy 2005-2009



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‘developing and delivering innovative and accessible learning programmes for all’

Learning and Access Policy 2005 - 2009

Introduction

A new Vision for the National Museums of Scotland

‘a world class museums service that informs educates and inspires’

The six museums that comprise the National Museums of Scotland represent a significant resource for learning within the cultural and education sectors in Scotland. In 2003-04, NMS attracted 1.25 million visitors to its museums. This figure includes 150,000 visitors who participated in NMS learning events and programmes, nearly 49,000 of these participants were school visitors.

In 2003-04, a major review of the National Museums of Scotland took place, involving dialogue with staff, volunteers, stakeholders and supporters. This has enabled us to create a new vision and strategy for NMS for the 21st century to create a world class museum service that informs, educates and inspires. NMS’ key priorities for 2005-2009 are:

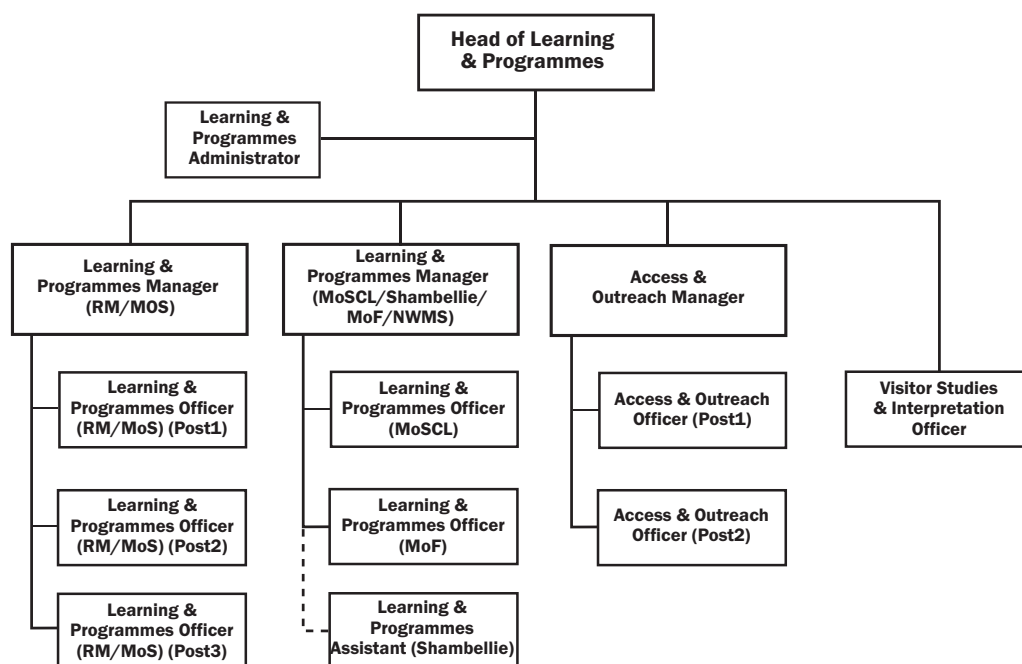
- Enhanced visitor focus across all areas of our operation
- Developing a clear national role
- Enhancing our public services
- Making our collections more accessible for learning and enjoyment
- Working through partnership
- Contributing to the development of overall cultural strategy for Scotland
- Establishing a sustainable dialogue with audiences to understand their needs better

NMS Learning and Programmes: a new approach to delivering learning opportunities across NMS

As part of the NMS review, a department of Learning and Programmes was established in 2003. The department is supported by an increase in funding, over with substantially higher resources and a new remit as follows:

- to make the NMS collections more accessible to a wider audience
- to develop opportunities for audiences to access learning throughout their lives
- to engage with new audiences

Learning and Programmes staff structure



The new department has been supported by a significant increase in investment. NMS has committed to increasing the level of investment in learning programmes to 5% of NMS' non-salary budget and to maintain this level.

Learning and Access policy 2005-2009

The Learning and Access policy reflects the new vision for NMS and the place of learning within the organisation. It sets out strategic objectives for Learning and Programmes for the period 2005-2009 and identifies key development strategies for achieving these objectives. The policy will be reviewed on an annual basis, in line with the planning cycle for the NMS Corporate Plan and budget round, and in consultation with our key stakeholders and user groups.

The Strategic Context

Our Learning and Access policy takes into account the major internal and external factors that will influence development across the National Museums of Scotland between 2005-2009, in particular:

Internal factors

NMS has significant major commitments and projects across 2005-2009 which will be key priorities for Learning and Programmes. These are:

- The development and implementation of a clear national role for NMS, which includes a new Access and Outreach team with a remit to work across Scotland and from 2005, with the new NMS National Programmes and Partnerships officer.
- The development and implementation of the Royal Museum Masterplan, a 'once in a century' opportunity to transform the Royal Museum displays and facilities to enhance the Museum as a resource that will inspire, inform and educate visitors in the 21st century.
- Major development projects for the Museum of Scottish Country Life and Museum of Flight to enhance those museums as visitor attractions and to make the most of our newest acquisition, Alpha Alpha Concorde.
- A proactive role for NMS in supporting the public engagement with science including the implementation by the end of 2005 of 'The Zone', a new interactive science gallery in the Royal Museum.
- The development of an Online museum and of a strategy for digital programmes.
- Achieving targets for visitor participation in learning. NMS has agreed targets with the Scottish Executive for raising total visitor participation across a wide range of target audiences.
- The implementation of new organisational values of investing in our staff, demonstrating excellence in all that we do, encouraging boldness and innovation, providing inspiration and enjoyment, progressing through partnership and encouraging mutual respect and effective working.
- The NMS Change Programme which is working to achieve a change in working practices across NMS to achieve the new Vision for our service in the 21st century

External factors

The Learning and Access policy is informed by current developments in both the museums sector and by developments in formal and informal learning and within the wider cultural environment in Scotland. These include:

- Review of cultural provision in Scotland. A Culture Commission, appointed in 2004 to review the delivery and development of cultural services and resources, will report in 2005. As a key cultural resource and provider, NMS and NMS Learning and Programmes have a central role to play within a new cultural policy and strategy for Scotland.
- Scottish Executive Strategy for Lifelong Learning 2003. This strategy has identified the need for a learning environment in Scotland 'where people demand and providers deliver a high quality learning experience' and where 'people have the chance to learn irrespective of their background or personal circumstances'.
- National Priorities for education and the National Curriculum Review. Two major initiatives for the formal schools sector: the National Priorities for education initiative which seeks to raise attainment and improve standards

and a National Curriculum Review, which is addressing fundamental questions of what the schools curriculum should cover, how and where pupils learn and how to integrate opportunities for education for citizenship and creativity.

- Integration of Social Inclusion Partnerships (SIP's) and Community Planning Partnerships (CPP's). Local authorities now have a statutory duty to work with communities, other agencies, the voluntary and private sectors to engage in community planning. The former SIPs will, where they are working well, become an integral part of the new CPPs. This provides an opportunity for museums to build on their successes in SIP areas and contribute to the new strategic agenda.
- Scottish Executive Science Strategy for Scotland 2003, which includes the specific objectives to promote the awareness, appreciation and understanding of science across society.
- Digital technologies Changing technologies in the museums and heritage sector and the wider formal and informal learning sectors will increasingly affect where, how and what people learn. New opportunities include: the Scottish Schools Digital network, which will create a Scotland wide intranet for teachers and pupils to share resources and information, and new technologies in the classroom which will affect how museums can extend learning programmes and create greater opportunities for self –directed learning through on line and other e learning media.
- Disability Discrimination Act (1995) and Disability Discrimination Bill (2004), which deliver comprehensive and enforceable civil rights for disabled people, prohibit discrimination in the exercise of public functions and promote equality of opportunity for disabled people.
- 'Inspiring Learning for All' framework launched in 2003 by MLA (Museums, Libraries and Archives Council.) This has created a new model for measuring the impact of learning in museums, libraries and archives and includes a new range of generic learning outcomes (GLOS), that can be adapted to measure the learning outcomes of our programmes and events.

NMS Learning and Access Policy

Our mission

‘developing and delivering innovative and accessible learning programmes for all’

Our aspiration

‘NMS will ensure that inclusive educational and learning opportunities are available across its museums and more widely across Scotland. National, regional and local partnerships will inform planning and support delivery of programmes and services. Within this partnership environment, NMS will be recognised as an innovative and effective learning provider, offering a variety of programmes, services and products that meet the needs and demands of visitors and other audiences. Educational programmes and services will be accessible to all through real or virtual channels.’

NMS Learning and Programmes aims to

- be world class in the provision of learning programmes, resources and services
- develop and fulfil a national role for NMS Learning and Programmes which ensures that people across Scotland are able to engage with, enjoy and learn from our programmes and collections
- expand accessible learning opportunities to widest possible range of audiences
- engage with under-represented and /or hard to reach audiences to develop programmes to meet their interests and needs
- ensure that learning is at the heart of all NMS operations
- achieve the highest standards of quality and performance across all our learning programmes

Policy objectives

These strategic objectives are expressed as part of the NMS Corporate Plan (Strategic Aim 2). They represent the key objectives for NMS Learning and Programmes over the period 2005-2009.

1. To expand delivery of life long learning at all NMS museums through planned investment and working through partnerships
2. To widen access and support social inclusion by expanding learning programmes including community outreach activities
3. To develop e learning

Policy principles

The following principles support NMS operational values and will underpin the work of Learning and Programmes staff across all aspects of our operations.

We will:

- Aim for innovative approaches to developing programmes
- Establish and sustain excellent communication links with colleagues and with external partners and audiences
- Promote and work through internal and external partnerships
- Enrich the work of Learning and Programmes teams through 'cross-team' projects
- Monitor and evaluate our programmes, resources and services
- Disseminate best practise across NMS and within the museums education and cultural sectors
- Develop a team culture which supports creativity and staff development and enables staff to share knowledge, experience and information

Strategic objectives 2005- 2009

1. To expand delivery of life long learning at all NMS museums through planned investment and working through partnerships

Current situation

NMS Learning and Programmes has benefited from a 200% increase in budget since 2001. This increased investment in learning programmes and services has enabled us to establish a new framework of staff across all six NMS museums including new staff at MOF and MSCL, a new Access and Outreach team and a Visitor Studies post, thus creating a base from which we can deliver on our remit over 2005 -2009.

Key Strategies 2005-2009

A programme of research into visitor learning to improve learning programmes

Creation of new learning areas/facilities/resources in NMS museums

Expand schools programmes and life long learning programmes across all NMS museums

Establish sustainable partnerships with other cultural and learning organisations and audiences to develop new learning programmes and engage with new audiences

Key Actions 2005-2009

- Annual consultation with stakeholders and user groups to review and refresh the Learning and Access Policy
- Research into visitor learning including i) commissioning and implementing a learning audit to establish school visit trends across all sites (2004) ii) implementing new models for evaluating our programmes to be applied across all sites, based on the ILFA framework
- Agree a programme of visitor research for 2005-2009 to inform the Royal Museum Masterplan, Museum of Flight Development Plan and special exhibition programmes at RM/MOS
- Create new learning centres across NMS Museums, and new experiential Discovery Zones in the Museum of Scotland designed for school and family learning audiences (2005)
- Contribute to the development of *The Zone*, a new interactive science and technology centre for the Royal Museum (2005)
- Further develop NMS learning programmes which contribute to significant, large scale national, UK and international events e.g.: Edinburgh International Science Festival, National Science Week, Edinburgh Festival Fringe
- Develop programmes for different audiences that make use of a wider range of NMS collections across all sites and through outreach' in particular NMS Science and Technology collections
- Develop, agree and establish an Events and Programmes strategy designed to enhance visitor experience and increase numbers of participants in learning programmes across all our sites
- Maintain links with existing partners and relevant external organisations including the National Grid for Learning (NGfL), the Cultural Coordinators in Scotland Scheme, the Scottish Arts Council, the Heritage Education Officers Group and Careers Scotland and identify new partners that can support our policy aims and national remit

2. To widen access and support social inclusion by expanding learning programmes including community outreach activities

Current situation

The NMS Access and Outreach team, established in January 2004, are working across Scotland to build relationships with Social Inclusion Partnerships (SIP's) and Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs) and others in areas of social deprivation and with national organisations/agencies that represent specific target audiences.

NMS have successfully pioneered national outreach learning opportunities to areas of social deprivation and rural areas with limited access to museums collections through Discovery on the Move (DOM), a touring hands on resource launched in 2000. DOM has visited 23 venues in 15 local authority areas across Scotland including schools, community venues, local museums and, in July 2004, a major city shopping mall (The Gyle, Edinburgh), reaching 45,000 people, including schools, community groups, families and people with physical or learning disabilities.

Key Strategies 2005-2009

Increase participation in NMS learning programmes both on and off site by people from target under represented groups (disabled people, people from ethnic minority groups, people from rural areas and people from disadvantaged areas)

Develop community based projects including a new Discovery on the Move

Create partnerships to identify target audiences, develop and deliver projects

Key Actions 2005-2009

- Launch new touring resources in 2006
- Develop a 3 year programme of community led exhibitions to be displayed within NMS galleries and/or the Museum of Scotland special exhibition gallery
- Develop and pilot different 'models' for outreach work that can be rolled out across Scotland and will link groups to create national touring resources, community based projects and sustainable learning resources
- Maintain a strategic approach to partnership building working to position NMS Learning and Programmes as a national provider of learning opportunities across Scotland
- create outreach resources linked to temporary exhibitions and existing successful learning programmes
- identify where we can create touring resources developed by community groups
- enhance opportunities for developing distance learning versions of learning programmes currently offered to on site audiences through video conferencing and online/web based resources
- Evaluate and report on the impact of the Access & Outreach team's work to understand how we can make NMS more accessible overall, outwith specific projects and programmes

3. Develop e-learning programmes

The digital revolution world wide continues to create new opportunities for formal and informal learning audiences to have access to and engage with museum collections. In Scotland all secondary schools and more than three-quarters of primary and special schools in Scotland now have internet access and the percentage of Scottish pupils with email addresses has increased from 16% to 52% in primary schools and from 68% to 80% in secondary schools. A new intranet for schools in Scotland, the Scottish Schools Digital Network (SSDN) is currently being developed which will offer a delivery mechanism for online content from a variety of sources' including Learning and Teaching Scotland, the BBC and cultural organisations across the country. NMS has piloted distance learning programmes and resources through video conferencing, on line exhibitions and other electronic media and since 2003 has made progress towards the development of an On Line museum. NMS Learning and Programmes can exploit on line and other e learning programmes to build audiences across both the formal and informal learning sector. E- learning will to be developed across the three Learning and Programmes teams and in consultation with our virtual users.

Key Strategies 2005-2009

Development and delivery of an e-learning strategy

Develop a pilot programme of on line resources as part of the On Line Museum

Develop a pilot programme of on line exhibitions

Key Actions 2005-2009

- Develop an e learning strategy which takes account of wide range of approaches to e learning, including but not exclusively, on line programmes
- Plan and implement a training programme for Learning and Programmes staff in ICT and e learning
- Pilot a series of e learning projects across 3 Learning and Programmes teams
- Deliver a programme of pilot on line exhibitions to target different audiences
- Develop external partnerships to support e learning projects including the National Grid for Learning and Learning Teaching Scotland