



National  
Museums  
Scotland



# SCOTLAND 365 REPORTING



# BACKGROUND

**National Museums Scotland** and **Young Scot** have worked together as consortium partners of Scotland 365 since 2017. Funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the project set out ambitions for young people to take the lead in shaping how Scotland's heritage should be interpreted and displayed to future audiences and to increase the ambition, scale and quality of youth engagement across the organisation.

In 2019, National Museums Scotland commissioned Sherbert to undertake a consultation, engaging with a representative sample of 500 young people across Scotland. The survey aimed to support NMS in developing their understanding of the spectrum of relationships young people have with heritage and factors affecting this. Throughout this research, the varying motivations of young people to engage in the museum and heritage sector were observed and four segments were applied, relating to young people's interest.

## — **Culture Seekers - Interested in heritage and a museum person**

Heritage is important to this group and they appreciate the role that museums play in protecting heritage – it is about further strengthening engagement and giving them a reason to visit more frequently, keeping things fresh and letting them know what's on and where to visit, plus bringing stories and heritage to life.

## — **Connection Seekers - Interested in heritage but NOT a museum person**

This group are interested in heritage but don't connect with museums currently – they are primarily seen as educational spaces and not for them. They want museums to really bring heritage to life and tap into interactive elements to stimulate their thinking.

## — **Entertainment Seekers - NOT interested in heritage but is a museum person**

This group like museums but connection with heritage is not important to them. They are looking for inspiration, fun and excitement from museums. Things that 'wow' them and stretch their minds, but in a fun way rather than a challenging way.

## — **Inspiration Seekers - NOT interested in heritage and NOT a museum person**

This group is the least engaged with both heritage and museums. They are looking to be entertained with 'wow' experiences they can't get elsewhere. Tech and interactivity are important elements to engage this group in exhibits.

The outputs of this research supported an understanding of the range of engagement needs within the 16–25-year-old population. This helped to build project aims around the different target audiences, and to ensure final project outputs would be reflective of the varying needs and desires of these groups.

In order to explore the outputs with and for young people NMS recognised the need for the creation of a national youth engagement team to work alongside a group of 16 – 25 year olds who identify with some of the motivation segments as highlighted. This is one workstream of a wider Scotland 365 programme of work.

# INTRODUCTION

Over the past 12 months, the Scotland 365 Youth Engagement Team have been working in collaboration with National Museums Scotland (NMS) and supported by Young Scot, and a range of other partner organisations, to transform the way NMS engage and collaborate with young people.

**OVER 60 YOUNG PEOPLE  
ATTENDED ACROSS TWO  
SESSIONS AND VIA  
PHONE INTERVIEWS.**

The Youth Engagement Team (YET), a core group of volunteers aged 16-25 from across Scotland, worked closely with NMS staff through our YSHive co-design process enabling them to share their experiences, lead conversations, develop their own ideas, and drive change as part of decision-making.

86 applications from young people across Scotland were received to join the project, representing young people across 26 local authority areas. A selection process was held in January 2021 to provide young people with an introduction to the project and to understand the applicant volunteers better. Over 60 young people attended across two sessions and via phone interviews. A final core group of 32 young people were selected to form the Youth Engagement team.

Early in the process, five workstreams developed into the formation of five project sub-groups: Dedicated Visitor Experience project, Meaningful Engagement project, Youth-focused Marketing project, National Museum of Flight site-specific project and Organisational Sector Development project. NMS staff members pitched project sub-groups to the Youth Engagement Team, where the young people self-selected a group of interest and were then divided into five project sub-groups.

Therefore, most of the activity was undertaken as part of project sub-groups, but a focus remained on ensuring opportunities for the wider YET to collaborate as a larger group and share learning.

Throughout the project the young people worked closely with museum staff, which has provided important knowledge and context for the young people and developed youth engagement and co-design skills for staff members. Staff provided groups with essential context-setting and an understanding of organisational processes and practices.

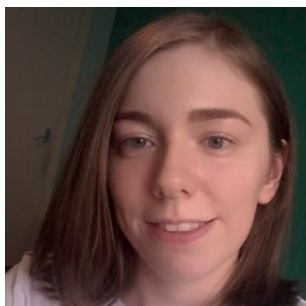
A small group of the YET self-selected to become Young Evaluators. This group were interviewed and 3 selected to work in a paid role alongside Research Scotland to support with robust evaluation of the project.

This report provides insight into the overarching process and key activity throughout, detailing idea development, the creative process, external collaboration, and final outputs. It also provides recommendations for change based on the young people's engagement and learning from the process, calling to action NMS and the wider sector to implement meaningful change based on the ideas shared.

# YOUTH ENGAGEMENT TEAM

32 young people from across Scotland were selected to join the project and work together over a 12-month period.

## YOUNG PEOPLE BIOGRAPHIES

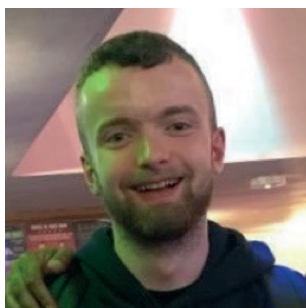
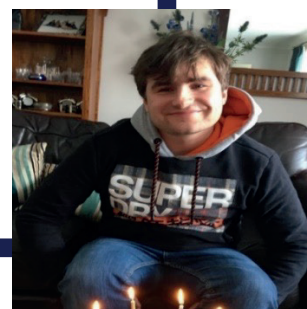


### Amy, Glasgow

I wanted to get involved because I would love to work in a museum or archive, and I thought this would be a good way to gain some experience. Meeting new people was another reason for wanting to take part.

### Ryan, Aberdeenshire

I got involved with the project because I really want to work as a curator and work in museums to help design exhibits and this will help me get into both the art and museum industry and want to create interesting exhibits and help get more people my age excited about museums.



### Jacob, Dundee

I am really passionate about engaging young people in culture and heritage. Museums and Galleries need engagement in order to survive and continue their work for years.



### **Rebecca, Aberdeenshire**

I have a huge interest in the museum sector and using the creative industries to get more young people involved in and find an interest in history and culture.

I also wanted to meet with like minded people who share my interests.

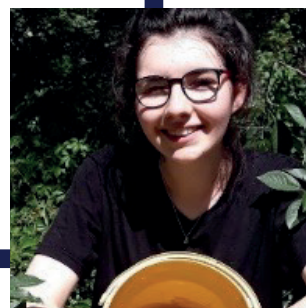


### **Beth, St. Andrews**

I am a student of History and Social Anthropology and hope to work in museums in the future. I think that making history exciting and accessible to young people is so important, and I'm excited to work towards this as part of the project!

### **Hannah, West Lothian**

I've always had an interest in History and I'm currently studying Heritage at University. I grew up visiting museums with my family. They're such a big part of my life and it's always sad when people see them as boring or simply don't have an interest in them. I want to volunteer my time to this project to help introduce and build on new ideas to help Museums appeal to young people. Plus, it's always a bonus to make new friends.



### **Eleanor, Aberdeenshire**

It looked like a brilliant opportunity to learn more about youth engagement in museums. I strongly believe in democratising museum spaces and thought it would be good to see how it was being done at NMS.

My last job was working as an LGBTQ+ Outreach Champion for the Museum of Youth Culture, and I found it really rewarding. I got to input on making their collections and their museum practices more inclusive and accessible for LGBTQ+ young people. I wanted to develop the skills I learnt with them whilst meeting other young people who feel the same way as I do.

## Eireann, Edinburgh/Dundee

I've always been interested in heritage, culture and history, and the National Museum is a place which has nurtured these interests since I was young. So this opportunity looked like an exciting chance to help the museum engage and inspire my age group and also perhaps the next generation of young people, as well as an interesting project for myself to enjoy being involved in.

I study film and I've focused a lot of my work on Scottish screen culture so I thought there might be an opportunity to tie in my interest in Scottish cultural heritage on and off screen with this project.



## Eden, Perthshire/Aberdeen

I'm currently studying law, but graduated last year with a degree in Anthropology and Philosophy. My love and interest in other peoples cultures and perspectives is something I still find incredibly fascinating and something I didn't want to abandon! I feel like museums are so crucial to the storytelling of the lives of people and of times and are something that young people can really benefit from and want to be a part of encouraging more!

I also hope that parts of this project can reshape how we display and discuss other peoples cultures on their behalf, and by perhaps doing that can make museums more engaging and lively to young people.

## Jessica, Falkirk

I got involved in this project as I love learning about our History and Heritage. History has always been my passion during High school and I love to learn from our past. I would also like to meet new people as I don't really get to do that often! This experience is a great way to gain experience and confidence in order to prepare me for the future.



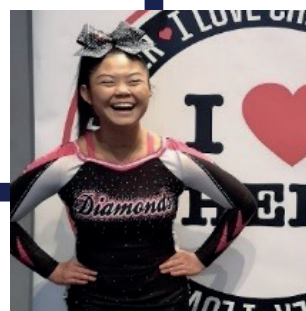


### **Kat, Irvine**

I'm an art student and I was learning about the careers available for those kinds of skills, and a careers adviser sent me the application for this when I mentioned I would love to learn more about the types of jobs and work goes into museums. I took this opportunity to learn more about what goes on behind the scenes to make museums an experience.

### **Kenya, Leith**

I got involved with the YET to represent me at the museum and to pave the way for others traditionally and currently ignored by the heritage sector.

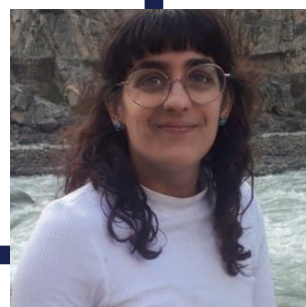


### **Brontë, Dunoon**

I spent a lot of my life being dragged around arty galleries and museums. At some point I realised that I not only really enjoyed these experiences but also got a lot out of them. And that many people aren't so lucky to have had these experiences. I hoped that being involved in this project that I could help to change this.

### **Amna, Glasgow**

Museums have always been spaces that I enjoy, have interacted with and wanted to work in. I also believe, however, that they should be democratised, more inclusive and socially engaged in their practice. This project seemed like an excellent way to experience those principles in action and see the effects they can have whilst developing and gaining useful skills.





### **Briony, Fife/Glasgow**

I think museums are a vital aspect of society that we are unfortunately in danger of losing. Museums and heritage have always been of great interest to me, but to spark this in young people who aren't already enthusiastic about museums and heritage they need to be modified to engage them. Having undergone massive cultural and technological shifts over the past couple of decades, only fellow young people have the necessary instinctive understanding of what will intrigue our peers. The opportunity to contribute to this and meet new, like-minded people was not one I could miss!

### **Charlotte, Glasgow**

I want to find out if a career in museums would be right for me, so I want to get some real-life experience of working in a museum environment, a chance to talk to people in different roles, seeing the different aspects of making a museum work, and what are the issues and debates currently pushing museums forward. I'm looking forward to getting other young people's perspective on all these questions!



### **Charlie, North Lanarkshire**

I got involved as it links well with my undergrad degree in digital media and information studies, would allow me to explore what its like to work within the museum sector and also in the hope of meeting some new people.

### **Chiara, Glasgow**

I am a current undergraduate student in fine art, and much of my studies focus on public engagement with heritage and arts facilities- so this project seemed right up my street! I'm really keen to learn more about how museums could organise their collections to increase accessibility, and I would love to know more about the archival work that goes on behind the scenes at NMS.



### Justin, Edinburgh

I like museums and I feel safe there. Everything is at a standstill like the film - Night at The Museum - and it comes alive depending on one's imagination.



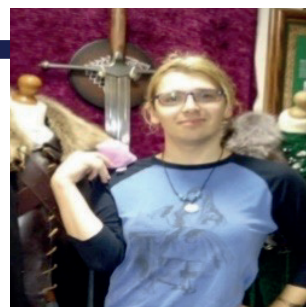
### Sofia, Edinburgh

I got involved in this project because I am passionate about making cultural spaces accessible to young people. In my experience many cultural spaces still feel inaccessible to young people both as member of the audience as well as for the ones seeking opportunities to develop a career in the cultural sector. As a young expatriate and non-native speaker, I am particularly motivated in challenging the economic and linguistic barriers that contribute to the cultural elitism I faced and perceived. I see this project as an amazing opportunity for valuable personal and professional development while fulfilling my desire to contribute to the creation of a more accessible cultural space.

### Ivy, Dunfermline

I'm passionate about history and museums, I joined the project to help make a positive difference and raise interest, awareness and engagement to the fantastic places of historical and cultural heritage.

As well as this, I thought it would be a brilliant way to build my confidence during the lockdown, learn new skills and make some new friends.



### Alix, Kilmarnock

I wanted to get involved with the project as it seemed like a great opportunity to step out of my comfort zone and try something I'd never done before. I've always been interested in museums as there's so much to see, do, and learn and I wanted to take the chance to be able to contribute to the museum experience so hopefully other people would be able to get the same enjoyment from visiting museums as I do.



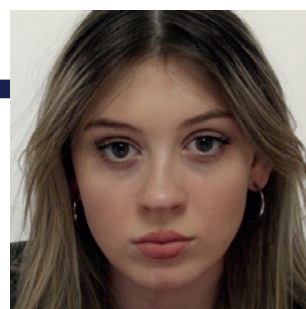


## Colin, Glasgow

In January 2021, a family member shared a post advertising Scotland 365 online. Knowing my interest in all things culture and heritage, they knew I would jump at the chance. My background is in history, which I studied at Undergraduate and now Postgraduate level. Over the years, I've seen how keen young people can be to take part in heritage and museums but also that they often don't feel catered to in the sector. With this project, I saw a chance to make a real practical change and help NMS staff engage with young audiences in the process.

## Jess, Dunfermline

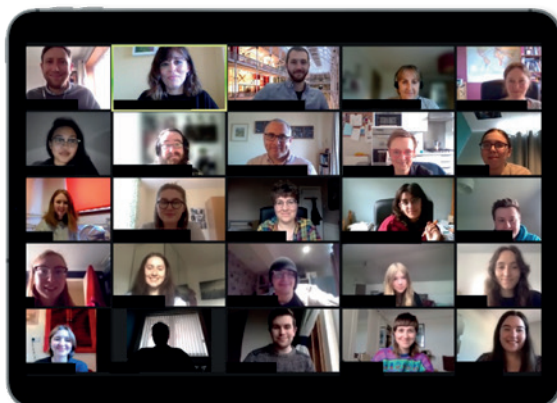
I am motivated by creating an environment where young people can engage with their heritage and the museum in a non-threatening way. The Scotland 365 project helped me not only to be apart of this but also to gain experience and skills in a museum environment, helping with my future prospects.



Throughout the project some young people stepped back from involvement, therefore not all young people who took part are represented in the Biographies, but will be attributed in the acknowledgements.

## THE YOUTH ENGAGEMENT TEAM HAVE:

**COLLECTED A TOTAL OF 890 VOLUNTEER HOURS!**



**ATTENDED 26 SESSIONS!**

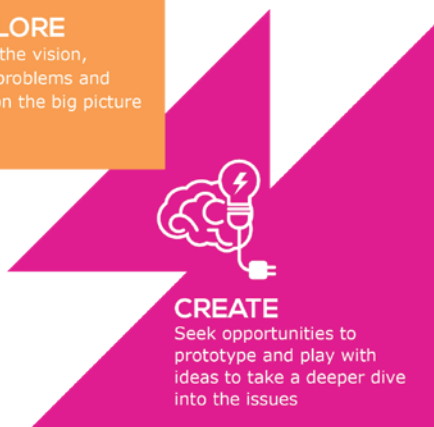
**AND TAKEN PART IN 2 WEEKEND-RESIDENTIALS!**

## PROCESS

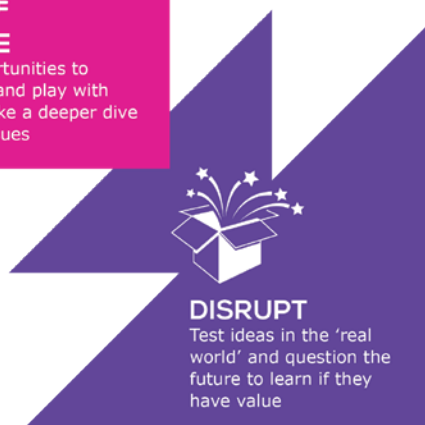
The Scotland 365 Youth Engagement Team (YET) were led through Young Scot's YSHive co-design process designed to build their knowledge and understanding of the sector, before developing creative solutions and testing out the real-life potential of these with wider groups of young people and stakeholders.



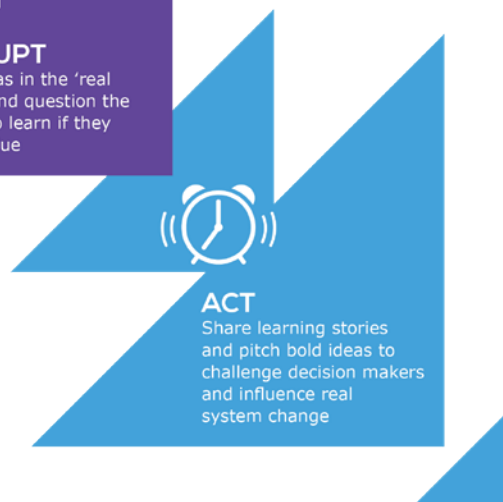
**EXPLORE**  
Frame the vision,  
probe problems and  
question the big picture



**CREATE**  
Seek opportunities to  
prototype and play with  
ideas to take a deeper dive  
into the issues



**DISRUPT**  
Test ideas in the 'real  
world' and question the  
future to learn if they  
have value



**ACT**  
Share learning stories  
and pitch bold ideas to  
challenge decision makers  
and influence real  
system change



## EXPLORE STAGE, MARCH 2021- JUNE 2021

During the first Explore stage, the group developed their understanding of the museum and heritage sector and young people's experiences and engagement.

Utilising the outputs of the Sherbert consultation, the groups were supported to further define their objectives based on "how might we" questions developed during an earlier research stage. These questions set out to probe how a change could take place (for reference, these five "how might we questions" are included at the beginning of each project overview) and encouraged thinking around identifying the problem and framing their vision. Groups also began to tweak the "how might we" questions to best represent the aims of the project team in their current context.

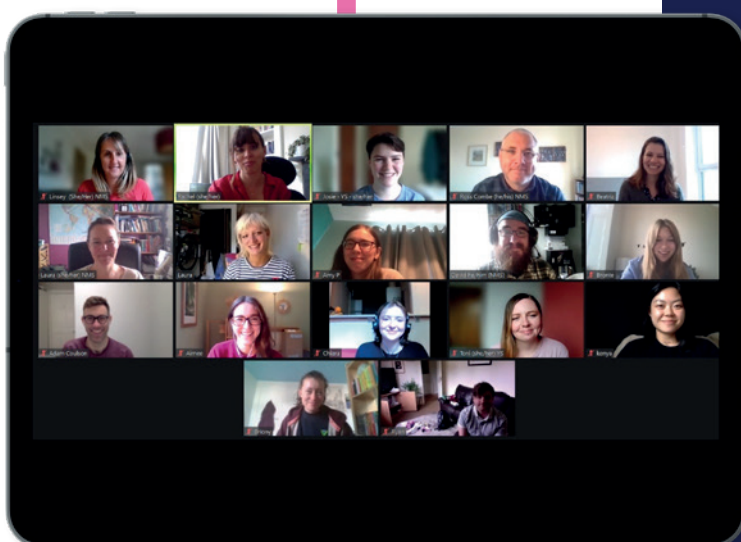
Further research and mapping activities helped the groups to better understand the current landscape and probed the challenge of engaging young people across the museum and heritage sector.



Activities included empathy mapping to further understand the nuances of the target audience, exploring behaviour change theories to dig deeper into the possible barriers and challenges to engagement and developing project plans to understand opportunities and timelines.

The groups met monthly online during this phase. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions, this meant in-person engagement wasn't a possibility during the initial stages.

All of the workshop sessions involved collaborative working with NMS staff members, connecting project groups with relevant and skilled staff members to support young people's knowledge development of the sector. In turn, this started to build skills and confidence within NMS staff members to work collaboratively with the Youth Engagement Team and better understand the young people's needs.



**FURTHER RESEARCH AND  
MAPPING ACTIVITIES HELPED THE  
GROUPS TO BETTER UNDERSTAND  
THE CURRENT LANDSCAPE  
AND PROBED THE CHALLENGE  
OF ENGAGING YOUNG  
PEOPLE ACROSS THE MUSEUM  
AND HERITAGE SECTOR.**

## CREATE STAGE, JULY 2021-OCTOBER 2021

Based on the knowledge gained during the first phase, the Create phase encouraged creative thinking and solution-focused activity and discussions.

Project groups were encouraged to take part in brainstorming and idea generation activities to kick-start the creative process. A 'blue-sky' thinking approach was adopted during the early parts of this stage, to ensure ideas weren't limited or bound by strict guidelines.

An interactive and collaborative 'Jam' residential weekend was delivered in September with a focus on prototype development, honing-in on the previous idea generation which took place throughout July and August. Across the weekend, the Youth Engagement Team (YET) worked together with NMS staff to develop tangible outputs relating to their project areas. They were supported to use tools such as storyboarding to visualise the different parts of their prototype/experience and start to think deeper about the logistics and functionality of concepts.

After the residential, project groups worked with different partner organisations to further support and refine their prototype ideas.

**External organisations included:** an independent researcher, Dr Brieghe Nugent, a user experience consultant (UX designer) Sam Gogolak, an evaluation expert Brandy Frazier, a marketing campaign agency, Bright Signals and artist Lu Williams, Grrl Zine Fair.

## DISRUPT STAGE, NOVEMBER 2021 - JANUARY 2022

To understand the real-life potential of prototypes, this phase is designed to test and critically evaluate ideas further. By testing ideas with other groups, this helps to better understand the surrounding context and the ability to provide practical solutions.

This stage allowed the YET to better understand the needs of young people and the sector, and to make refinements to the prototypes based on these needs. Activity here included evaluation surveys shared with attendees of a pilot escape room event held at National Museum of Flight, testing prototype ideas to wider groups of young people during a co-design session and creating surveys shared online to collect feedback on visitor experience concepts.

## ACT STAGE, FEBRUARY- MARCH 2022

Reflection and learning are key components of this stage of delivery. The YET and staff started to consolidate their learnings into clear and defined recommendations and calls to action for the wider museum and heritage sector. This stage ensures that the work and activity delivered over the previous several months can be shared wider and encapsulates the young people's vision.

A final residential weekend was delivered in February, with the aims to reflect on the process and learning and distil their learnings into a recommendation report to share with the sector. This report supports the core objectives of the Act stage and will enable the YET to voice their ideas and to influence real change within the organisation and wider sector.

## PROJECT OVERVIEWS AND PROTOTYPES

Each project group worked within the framework of the YSHive co-design process, moving through the different stages and utilising different tools and opportunities at each stage. An overview of each project group's work is provided over the next section including:

- The initial challenge and framing the vision
- Key activity and moments of note throughout to understand the final prototype development
- Showcasing prototypes
- Moving forward and next steps



## DEDICATED VISITOR EXPERIENCE

**How might we...create and offer a dedicated visitor experience for 16 – 25-year-old Inspiration seekers?\***

This project group's aims centred around creating an engaging experience for those young people who aren't currently motivated to attend museums or heritage sites. This meant tapping into a target audience which is known to be challenging to engage with, and previous methods of engagements might have had limited or un-sustained success.

This however meant an opportunity to explore inventive and creative solutions and to work collaboratively with staff to identify new ideas and explore untouched avenues.

**\*Young people who are not currently motivated to visit museums/heritage sites now or in the future.**

## KEY ACTIVITY/ HIGHLIGHTS

### RECURRING THEMES AND PRIORITY AREAS

Through desk research and exploration workshop sessions, a couple of key themes dominated early conversations and remained important to the group's objectives throughout, ensuring that young people's needs, and interests would be at the heart of an engaging visitor experience.

### ACCESSIBILITY

Discussions here reflected on development of an autism resource, enhanced signage and posters, and utilising opportunities for trails to align with accessible themes, i.e., disability month in November. However, the group wanted to be mindful about not isolating other groups by creating an experience that focuses on one accessibility need over another.

### FASHION

This theme engaged the full project group from the beginning. The group members spoke of the range of opportunities that existed here, from collaborating with young Scottish based designers to exploring how the body could become part of an immersive 'exhibition. They also spoke about a Hidden History theme, relating to stories or voices that may have been excluded previously from traditional exhibition spaces, to explore multiculturalism through the lens of fashion.



## KEY ACTIVITY/ HIGHLIGHTS

### IDENTIFYING A FOCUS AND MISSION STATEMENT

During this stage the young people met with key museum staff including the Principal Curator of Contemporary Design, which informed their approach and gave insights into considerations which lead to such design in the museum. The group settled on the fashion gallery as a key area for development to take forward. It supported the group's intention to build an immersive, engaging, and accessible experience with a sense that fashion has instant relatability for the target audience.

**“TO CHALLENGE THE  
PERCEPTIONS  
OF THE MUSEUM  
THROUGH THE LENS  
OF FASHION AND THE  
BODY”.**

### DEVELOPING CONCEPTS AT THE RESIDENTIAL

Ideas discussed included creating seating areas, collaborating with local artists to create a 'removable tattoo' experience to intertwine fashion and art concepts, accessibility, and fashion, and creating a digital experience which starts before they enter the museum and continues during their visit. The initial concept elements included:

#### — The Hook

An app that allows users to 'try on' certain pieces from the fashion gallery (think Snapchat filters etc), take photos of themselves wearing the pieces and learn more about them as well as more about the fashion gallery itself.

#### — The Fashion Gallery Experience

An accessible and interactive experience which supports engagement with existing objects in the space and offers new activities to engage in; a virtual fashion show projection in the gallery of photos generated from 'the hook', a personalised Spotify playlist generated from scanning a QR code; revamped seating with a patchwork of fabric inspired by pieces on display with headphone jacks & chargers, a pop-up printable temporary tattoo parlour designed by local artists that celebrate objects in the museum.

### WORKING WITH UX CONSULTANT, SAM GOGOLAK

This project group created a brief to commission a UX Designer to move through a user centred design process. To support bringing concepts to life, the project group worked with a Customer Experience designer to move through a user-centred design process from discovery to concept proposal. Using tools such as market research surveys, contextual enquiry and rapid brainstorming the group enhanced their understanding of their user needs and explored what elements potential users would want to see in an interactive experience. This feedback was analysed to understand trends in their stories and what made for an engaging, memorable, and positive experience. Feedback from the research led to the development of three interactive visitor experience concepts.

Engagement with Sam allowed the young people to understand ethical, practical and technical design elements and helped maximise learning and skills development for the group.

## KEY ACTIVITY/ HIGHLIGHTS

### CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT

To capture the discussions and research, concepts were developed ensuring that there was a tangible experience for the user at the core of each offer. For all three concepts, there was an element of adaptability and futureproofing so that the software developed for touch screens could be applied to different content/subjects, allowing the museum to either scale the interactives or move them to other parts of the museum over the years.

#### Regal Rebel:

A visual history of tartan's cultural influence – Particularly as a sign of rebellion, along with a “Make your own tartan” activity, which allowed for exporting the tartan in an illustrated digital look book that could be shared on social media and incentivise peers to come to the museum.

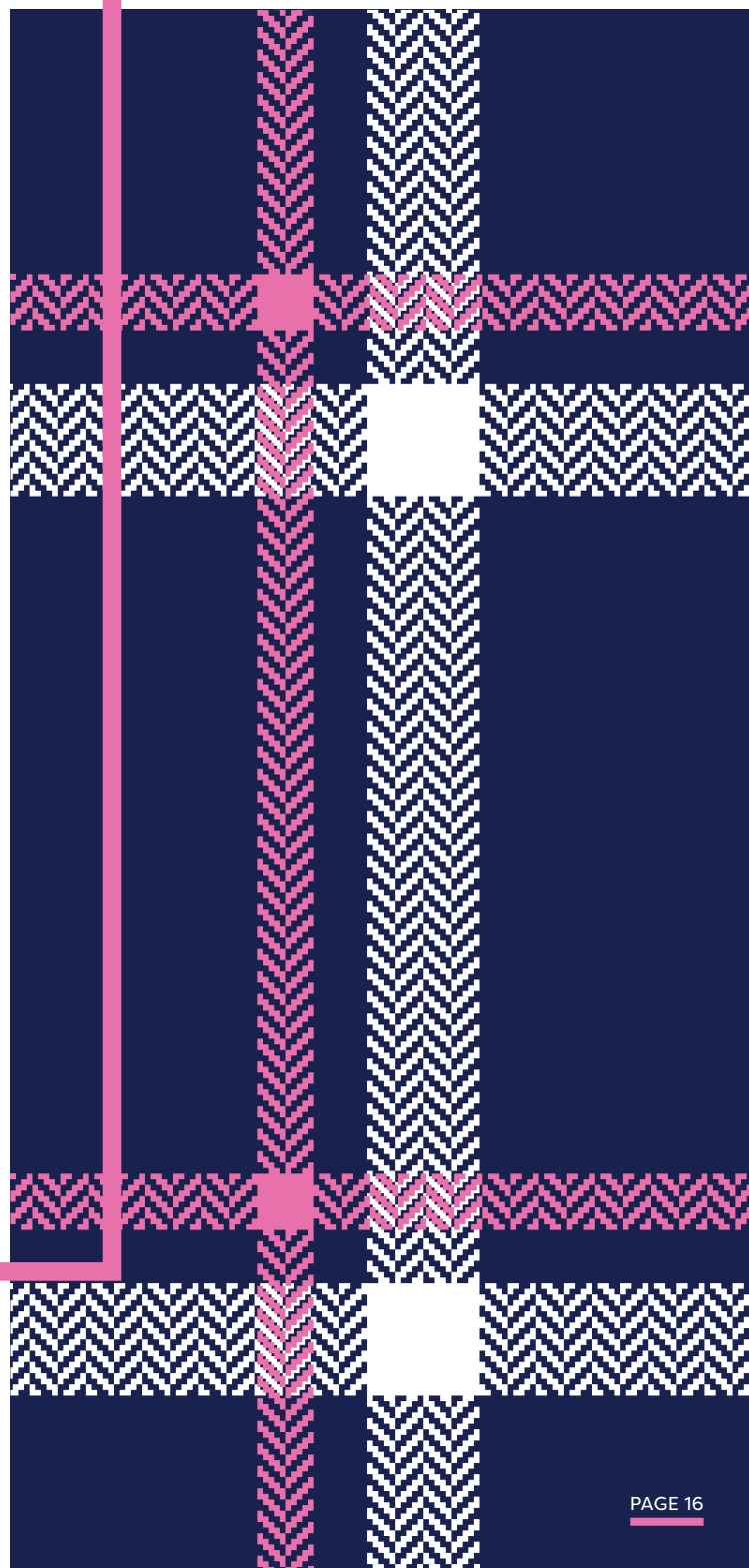
#### Mood: Swatch & Sketch

This concept turned touch screens into sketch books which would support users to learn about the creative process through selecting colours, fabrics, and forms. Objects in the museum and Scottish settings could be incorporated to link the interactive to the museum and to Scotland. Designs could be exported and shared via social media, incentivising peers to come to the museum and make their own.

#### Facts and Figures: Fashion quiz

This relied on inspiration from British quiz shows and pub quiz culture. Questions could be updated frequently, in collaboration with fashion students, and span a range of general knowledge to gallery-specific topics. Scores could be exported and shared to social media to encourage museum visits and fun, healthy competition among peers.

### “MAKE YOUR OWN TARTAN”



## THE PROTOTYPE – REGAL/REBEL

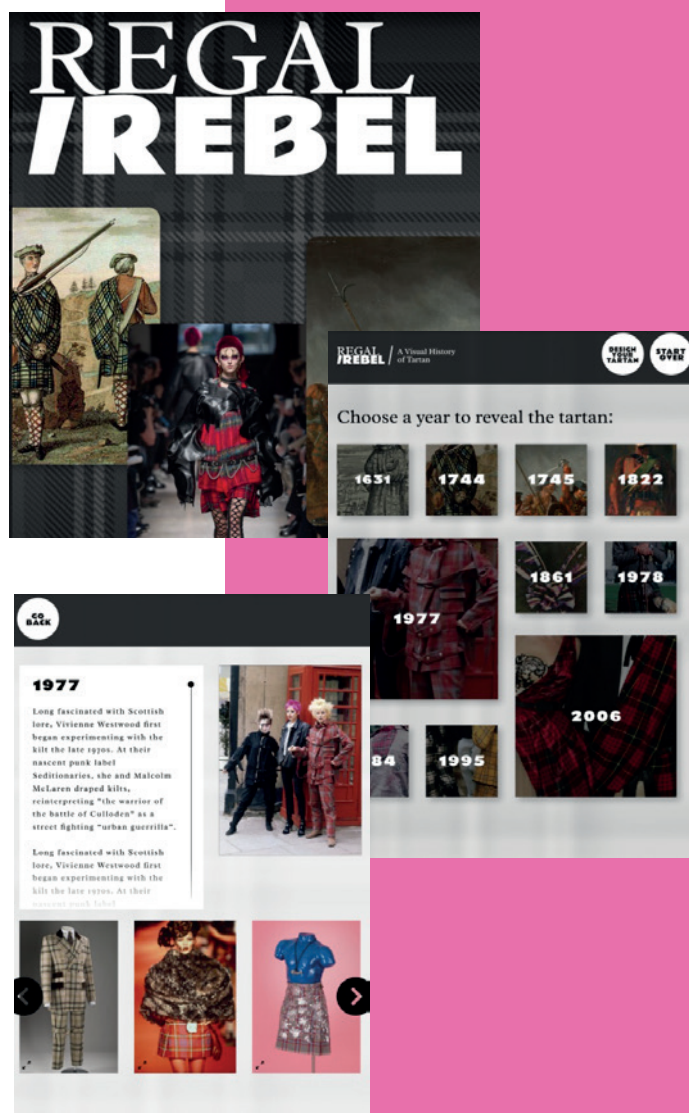
- Ultimately, the Regal/Rebel concept won most votes among the entire group of young people and among 40 responses received from the targeted “inspiration seeker” audience. This concept won with 55% of the vote.
- Elements from the previous be your own fashion designer concept were also intertwined during final development, to create a ‘design your own’ tartan activity. Using base and accent colours to develop a unique tartan swatch, which can then be named and shared via social media channels.
- Tartan ‘through the years’ as another interactive touchpoint to share information about changing styles and changing cultural relevance of tartan throughout the years.

The concept delivered basic wireframes illustrating the essential interactions for the concept.

### REFLECTIONS AND MOVING FORWARD – THE REGAL/REBEL

Concept to undergo further consideration with staff members, as part of understanding how to embed elements of the wider co-design process. Elements around accessibility, practicalities and integration will remain part of the discussions.

Ultimately, this prototype gave a useful insight into the need for museum spaces to integrate refreshable and adaptable spaces where young people can project themselves, explore their identities and feel that they can take some form of ownership on the space.

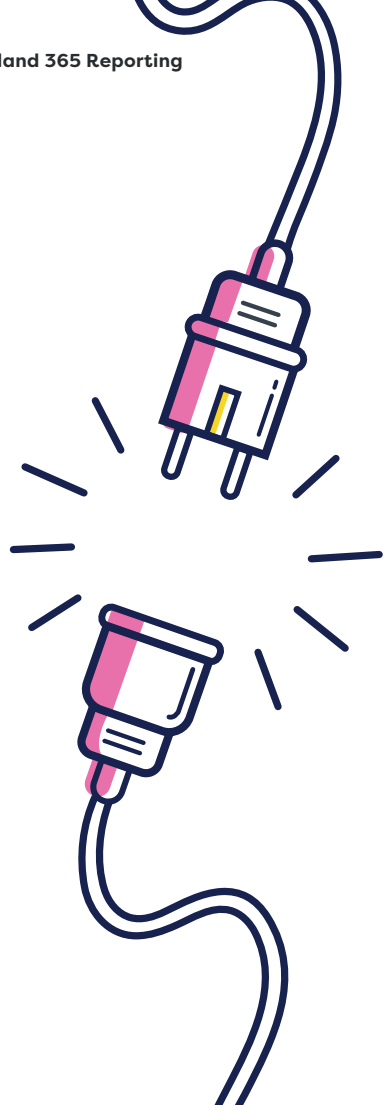


### PROJECT-GROUP REFLECTIONS

Throughout the process, the young people developed their knowledge and skills of co-design, heritage and the museum, honing insights and establishing an understanding of the wider context their project sits within. Through engagements with internal staff, external organisations and wider groups of young people, insights have been strengthened to represent a range of views and needs.

With this, the Dedicated Visitor Experience project-group highlight some key reflections and priorities related to their project aim to consider moving forward.

- Create an accessible and safe experience for all young people to engage; inclusion and accessibility to be at the heart of NMS decision-making
- Offering training and development for visitor experience staff on engaging with young people. As an initial aim for the programme, young people believed this was an essential element to support the above goal of creating a safe and welcoming environment
- Continue to update and refresh the exhibition space, with young people consistently involved in this process



## NATIONAL MUSEUM OF FLIGHT

### Setting the challenge

How might we... design and potentially pilot an event/ experience at the National Museum of Flight that encourages \*Connection Seekers to engage with the museums and heritage?

The group's aim was to develop and coordinate an engaging pilot event experience at National Museum of Flight for young people who weren't already engaged in the museum sector. This meant an experience would have to tap into other relatable elements to draw up interest within the target audience group.

**\*Young people interested in heritage but been put off museum spaces by negative past experiences)**

## KEY ACTIVITY/ HIGHLIGHTS

### IDENTIFYING THE TARGET AUDIENCE AND CHALLENGES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE ATTENDING THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF FLIGHT

The group started to explore the potential challenges with accessibility and the museum site, citing distance, cost, and lack of transport links as logistical challenges. They also spoke about whether young people see themselves represented in the museum exhibits currently, and how the group could support to build that connection with their event experience.

### DEVELOPING THREE EVENT CONCEPTS

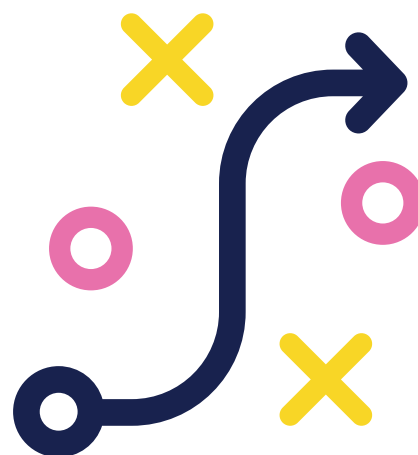
The Create phase saw the group develop creative ideas to engage young people in the National Museum of Flight. Based on the previous exploration, the group wanted to create a bespoke but fun experience that would have a draw to attract young people from a wide geographical area. A day's site visit supported the team to learn more about the historical significance of the site and its collection. This informed decision making in brainstorming event ideas with the unique selling point of the museum as a venue.

Further relying on experiences of the group, research and engaging with the wider Youth Engagement Team, three clear ideas started to form. An outdoor cinema, a murder mystery and an Art Installation were narrowed down as the top concepts.

## KEY ACTIVITY/ HIGHLIGHTS

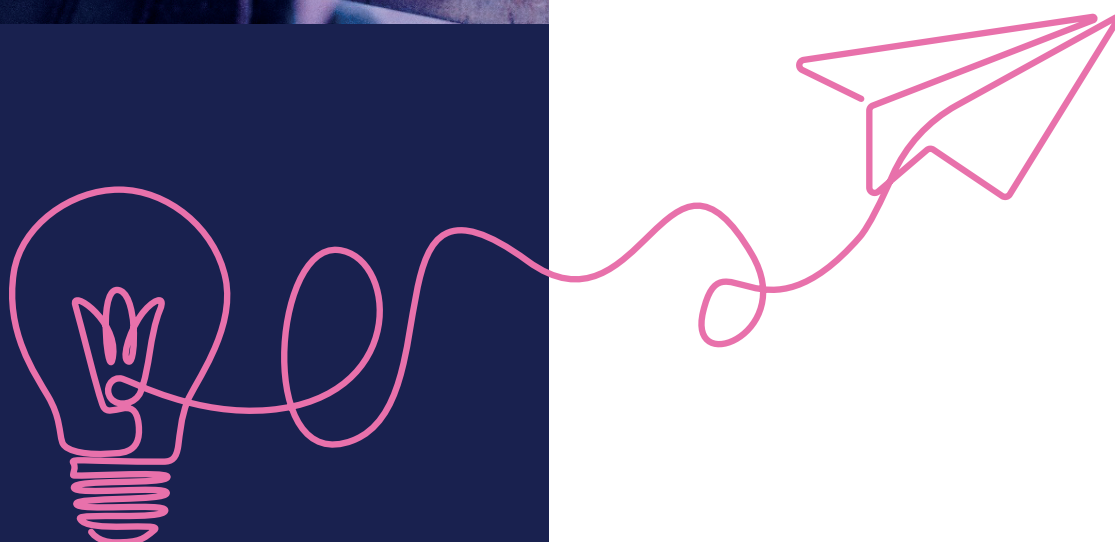
### COLLECTING FEEDBACK FROM THE WIDER YET TO INFORM FINAL CONCEPT

The project group shared the three concepts with the rest of the Youth Engagement Team to decide on an idea to take forward. From there the murder mystery concept evolved into an escape room themed immersive experience. A test/demonstration of the 'escape room' was delivered during the September residential weekend to collect feedback and helped to refine their ideas. The key feedback showcased the need for the experience to be hands on, high quality and to have a sense of jeopardy.



### PLANNING AND DELIVERING A PILOT EVENT

Collaboration between NMS staff from the Sites and Events team and from young people was key throughout the course of the project, but particularly when it came to planning. Due to pandemic restrictions it meant there were museum spaces that weren't accessible, and the young people relied on staff to understand the museum space, its capabilities and potential. In this light, NMS staff supported the logistics and internal planning, whilst young people helped steer the ideas and concept development.





## THE PROTOTYPE - A PILOT ESCAPE ROOM EVENT

A pilot event was delivered at the National Museum of Flight site with an external escape room organisation delivering activities across outdoor and indoor areas of the museum. A brief for the event was developed in partnership with young people and staff, and an external events company was commissioned. A targeted group of young people were invited to test out the experience and share their feedback. In total 29 young people from Napier University, Edinburgh College, Granton Youth, The Bridges and the YET attended.

### Features of the prototype:

- Interactive outdoor puzzles stationed at several areas around a large, grassed area
- Indoor timed 'breakout' room activity
- Opportunity to explore the site between escape room sessions
- Lunch and transport provided to support accessibility and a well-rounded experience

### WORKING WITH AN EVALUATOR TO DEVELOP ROBUST EVALUATION PROCESSES

An external evaluator developed pre, during and post event evaluations, in partnership with the young people. These surveys identified initial expectations, experiences on the day and how effective the event was as a signal of longer-term engagement.



## SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK

Feedback from the event was overwhelmingly positive with “fun” and “interesting” the most common words used to describe the experience, many attendees also noted that the level of challenge was pitched just right for the outdoor experience. Areas of development included connecting the theme of the escape room more to the National Museum of Flight environment, the weather and outdoor element in winter was uncomfortable for some, and the indoor experience was not as challenging for a few attendees. Many of the attendees noted they had been surprised and engaged by how much the National Museum of Flight had to offer and would come again – with a side note that accessibility of location, travel time and cost of entering the Museum was a significant barrier.

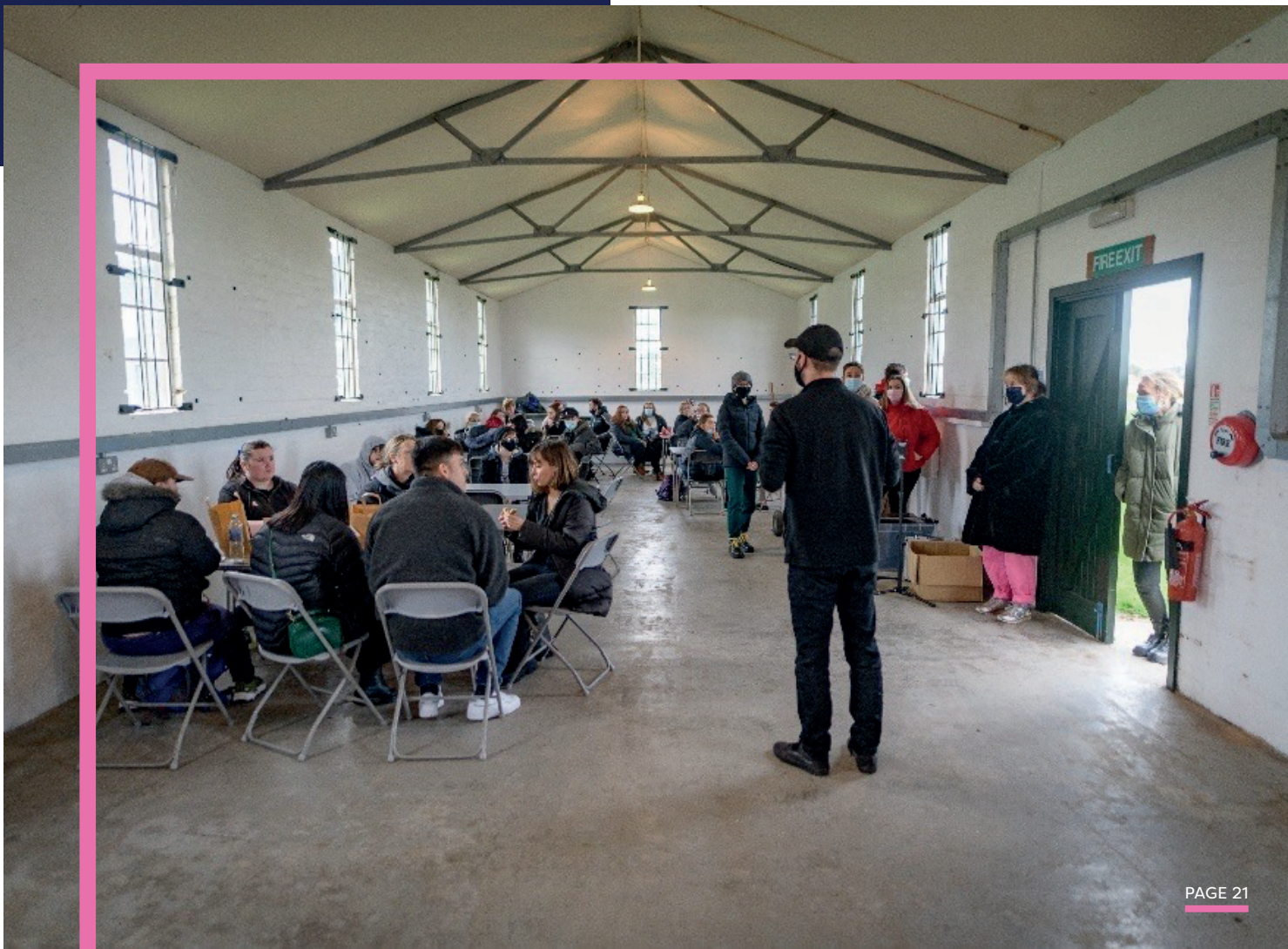
This evaluation also supports the idea that having the opportunity to learn more about the National Museum of Flight through participating in an experience like an escape room (or another event such as an outdoor cinema), would positively impact young people’s perception of the museum, would create opportunities for also exploring the exhibits and site, and could encourage return visits.

## MOVING FORWARD

This prototype has successfully been developed into a programmed event, which NMS Events staff are leading on to take place during August 2022. An external company has been commissioned to support delivery.

The project group reflected on the opportunities moving forward and identified priority areas to take into the full implementation. Priority areas include:

- Ensuring the ‘escape room’ atmosphere remains a focus as this was rated highly by attendees and is a key factor in experience satisfaction. There should be a balance struck between the ‘drama’ of the experience and autonomy of moving about the space.
- Logistics and travel remain a challenge to access the site. A focus should remain on how to provide an accessible experience from start to finish for the young people.
- Promotion and social media presence to create a buzz and get people talking about the experience





## PROJECT-GROUP REFLECTIONS

Throughout the process, the young people developed their knowledge and skills, honing insights and establishing an understanding of the wider context their project sits within. Through engagements with internal staff, external organisations and wider groups of young people, insights have been strengthened to represent a range of views and needs.

With this, the National Museum of Flight site-specific project group highlight some key reflections and priorities related to their project aim to consider moving forward.



- Emphasise the museum selling points in a youth friendly way. Think about the possibilities of combining food, culture, music, and events to create unique experiences for young people
- Develop a bespoke events programme targeted at young people.
- Consider an in-house youth events team, with young people 16-25 included.
- Consider accessibility aspects for young people, including opening hours and transport, and work to bridge the barriers identified for young people throughout the process.
- Opportunities for subsidised travel and admission would improve accessibility for young people from a variety of backgrounds and financial circumstances.

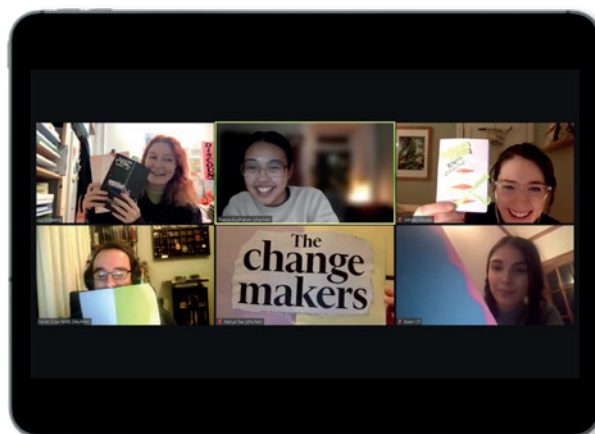
# MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT

## SETTING THE CHALLENGE

How might we...encourage young people to engage with us on a more regular basis and explore and prototype new ways to inspire repeat engagement with NMS for twenty-something \*Culture seekers?

This group set out to understand how to inspire repeat engagement in those young people already highly engaged and therefore help to nurture a reater sense of connection to the museum.

**\*Young people who identified as being highly motivated to visit museums and engage with heritage learning)**



**Identifying key theme areas** – During the Create phase the project group identified key themes to take forward, which formed the basis of future discussions and engagements. Theme areas identified:

- **Youth community** – connecting to the project’s core objectives, creating a sense of community was top priority for the group. Encouraging a sense of ‘collectiveness’ with young people and an ability to get involved with programming opportunities.
- **Social space** – aligning to the first area, the group wanted to highlight opportunity to tap into the fun and social aspects of the museum. If young people feel welcome and relaxed in the space, more regular engagement is likely to follow.
- **Career Development** – development and progression opportunities felt like an essential element of a strategy for the project group, ensuring value is offered for the young people’s time and an ability to be recognised based on longer-term involvement.
- **Reach and Accessibility** – ensuring that the museum offers a place that accommodates the needs of all young people was another top priority, the group wanted the museum to engage with a variety of different young people and through different formats; digital and in-person.
- **Institutional change** – the group were hopeful to implement a strategy that would nurture a sense of openness and learning, with a place for young people to get involved with topics that are important to them and for NMS to build youth voice into its core practices.

## KEY ACTIVITY/HIGHLIGHTS

**Name development** – This project sub-group had initially been titled “Loyalty Schemes”, however, during the early Explore workshop sessions the young people realised through discussions and interrogation of the brief, that this didn’t fully communicate their aims. Therefore, a decision was taken to re-name the sub-group to Meaningful Engagement, to communicate the long-term ambitions of inspiring repeat engagement in a meaningful way.

**Research sharing/Exploring the sector** – From undertaking research into other sector initiatives, the group started to highlight key challenges and opportunities in recognising best practice for youth engagement in the heritage sector. The group spoke widely about potential to further engage culture seekers, and to tap into the opportunity to allow young people to develop social networks, professional skills, and more tailored experiences, as well as tapping into social media to facilitate a continuous conversation.

- **Developing case studies to showcase best practice** – During the Create residential weekend the project group started to develop case study formats which would represent each of the theme areas to showcase what's been done well across the cultural and heritage sector and what learnings can be taken forward.
- **Conducting case studies and interviews** – Three groups were identified to conduct interviews with. Organisational staff and young people were engaged with from each of the following:

#### Dundee V&A

#### National Museum of Wales

#### Gallery of Modern Art (GoMA)

- **Findings from the case studies** – Outputs from the case studies provided the project group with an understanding of the opportunities that exist. An overview of findings from these engagements shared below:

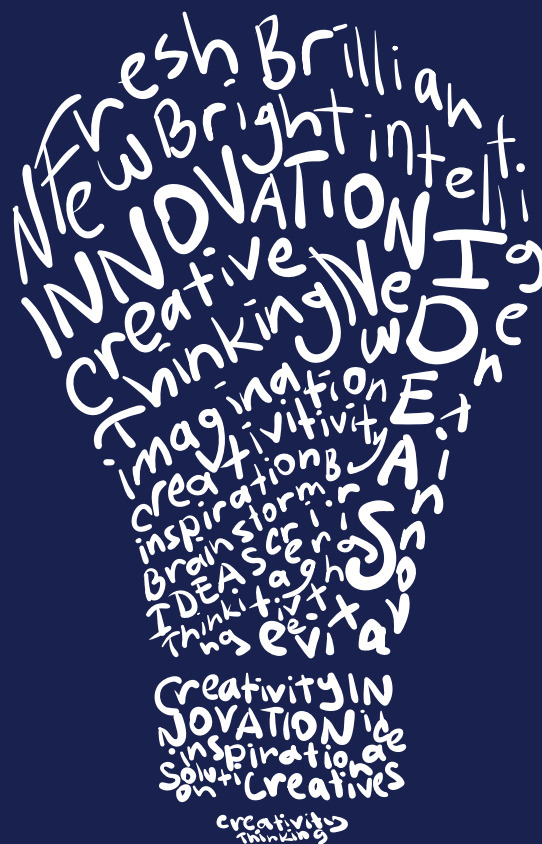
Each organisation had a clear and dedicated youth engagement focus. They had the scope to establish good networks with schools or youth organisations, understood and had processes in place to engage with young people, and could readily highlight the benefits to these engagements

Social opportunities were present regularly and consistency with an open-door policy for young people.

Young people had access to a physical space that is 'theirs' to show exhibitions. The young people enjoyed the autonomy of this and the ability to collaborate with staff to work with artists, acquire objects and co-curate, learning skills throughout. The opportunity to interact with all aspects of the museum, such as the practicalities of delivering an exhibition was emphasised by all as important for skills development. This also allowed an element of 'shadowing' staff members to help further develop skills.

Engagement with young people was viewed as being mutually beneficial to the young people and organisations. Young people were regarded as bringing fresh thinking and contemporary knowledge, inspiring the museums to communicate differently and think carefully about the messages they want to promote. For example, young people playing a key role in decolonising the collection. It was felt that having young people involved makes the collections more relevant to all and figures published by GoMA showed that from 2019 to 2020 there was a 7% increase in young peoples' attendance.

In practice, these case studies reinforced the young people's initial discussions and showcased how achievable they were, seeing similar ideas being actioned in organisations nationally and beyond.





## THE PROTOTYPE – A YOUTH COLLECTIVE MANIFESTO

Based on the case study outputs, the project group developed their youth manifesto. This manifesto promotes an opportunity for long-term engagement with young people, which is more than just a 'youth club', it's mutually beneficial to both the museums and the youth collective- with the collective having access to exhibition space, control to decide themes of exhibitions and collaborated with staff. Skills like accessioning objects, co-curating and engaging with artists means the collective could be exposed to the realities of having an exhibition - with the museum reflecting the collective in key decision-making.

### Some proposed features of the youth collective:

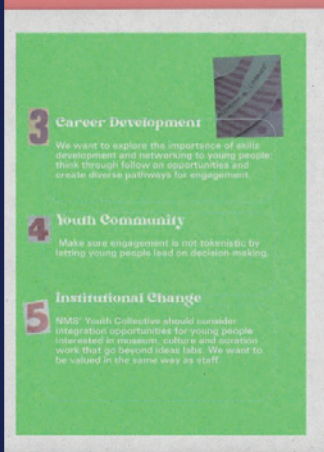
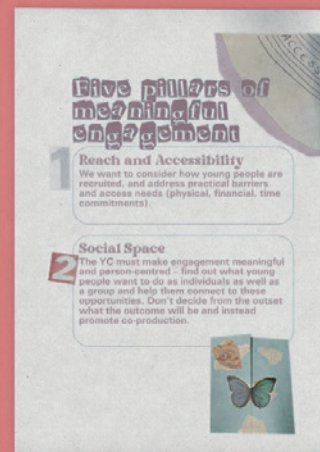
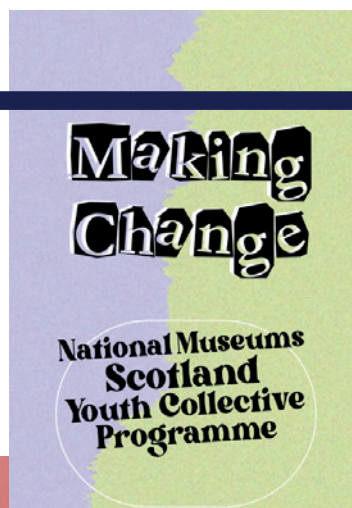
Social and fun elements such as group WhatsApp, and curated Spotify playlists. Generally, a comfortable social space where young people can gather, discuss ideas, study, and research, collaborate, and contribute to museum work

Integration opportunities for young people interested in museum, culture and curation work which go beyond ideas labs, valued in the same way as staff

Alumni network for those who have been part of the Youth Collective. Sustained relationships and building communities are some of the best ways to get work opportunities and sustain cultural practice

Mentorship access to museum staff across a variety of roles. Understanding the unique conditions young people face today which can cause barriers to working in museums, arts, culture and heritage

An understanding of the unique conditions young people face today which can cause barriers to work in museums, arts, culture, and heritage. Informed by young people's consultations.



## PROJECT-GROUP REFLECTIONS

Throughout the process, the young people developed their knowledge and skills, honing insights and establishing an understanding of the wider context their project sits within. Through engagements with internal staff, external organisations and wider groups of young people insights have been strengthened to represent a range of views and needs.

With this, the Meaningful Engagement project-group highlight some key reflections and priorities related to their project aim to consider moving forward.

Dedicated youth voices in the format of a panel supported by dedicated staff members

Continued support from the museum to develop and nurture young people by providing resources and skills development opportunities to culminate into paid opportunities in the sector.

## YOUTH FOCUSED MARKETING

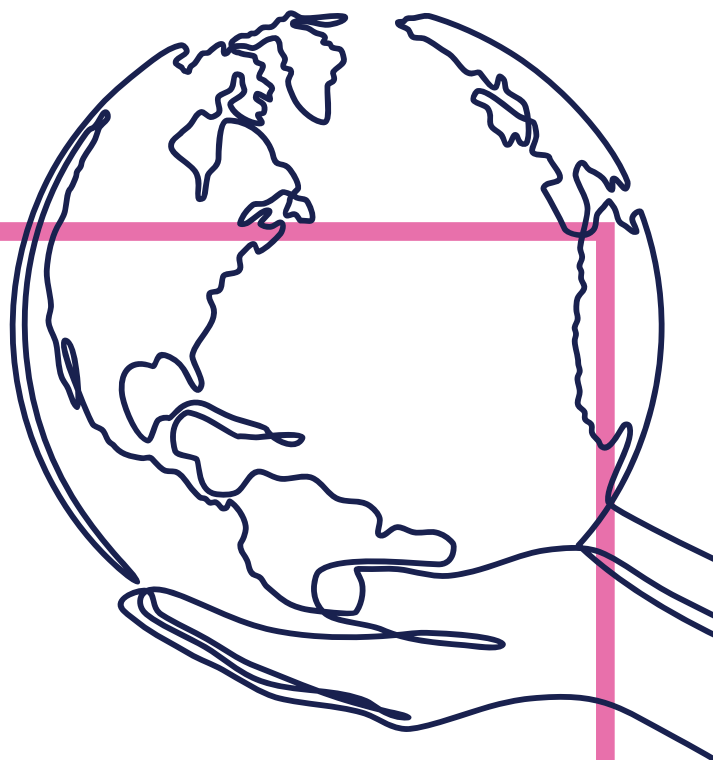
### Setting the challenge

How might we... promote what the museum offer(s) to  
\*Fun seekers so that they see NMS as a place for them?

The group renamed the segment from Inspiration Seekers to Fun Seekers as it is a better description of what the target audience are looking for in terms of museum experience. The group also perceived that the museums current offline and on location offerings would not meet the criteria to motivate Fun Seekers to visit.

**\*Young people who are not currently motivated to visit museums/heritage sites now or in the future.**

**THERE WERE LOTS OF SUGGESTIONS ON HOW TO BRING THE CURRENT CLIMATE CONFERENCE AND CLIMATE CRISIS DISCUSSIONS TO LIFE**



## KEY ACTIVITY/HIGHLIGHTS

### Exploring themes

With a wide project aim, this meant there were several different opportunities and routes the group could focus on. This initially meant that choosing a focal point was challenging, discussions with other project groups also highlighted the opportunity to promote and market their potential outputs, such as supporting the promotion of an event at the National Museum of Flight.

### Initial exploration of ideas focused on a few theme areas:

- **Lates** – a refresh of the museum ‘Lates’ concept, which saw a late-night interactive offer provided by the museum with successful results in attracting different audiences. It was discussed at several points in the process, with the project group keen that a reintroduction would be exclusively for the 16–25-year-old target audience, to offer a bespoke experience. They spoke about opportunities to involve Universities and College’s and promote to their networks
- **COP26** – There were lots of suggestions on how to bring the current climate conference and climate crisis discussions to life; offering a tour related to sustainable and environmentally linked objects, engaging with youth activists to promote and embed youth voices and to coordinate a Lates event with climate change as a topic.
- **Gamification** – To add an interactive game-like element into current displays was a popular suggestion, with QR codes on object displays which links to an interactive activity or game. Discussions here referred to the social/competitive element and the uniqueness of the offer.

## REFINING A FOCAL POINT

To develop a general marketing campaign to engage the target audience of fun seekers.

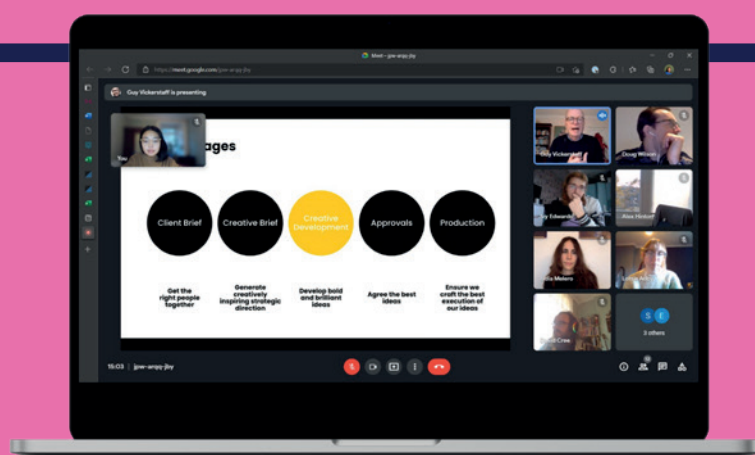
During the Create phase of the process the project focal point started to take shape. It was decided to develop a campaign to enhance and expose the variety of opportunities already on offer at the museum, which would allow for a focus on the marketing campaign itself and remove the need to rely on other events or activities. It was agreed that utilising expertise from an external marketing agency was essential to work towards a final output. The young people co-wrote a brief to be shared with the agency outlining the aims and continued to work closely with the agency for the rest of the project, taking part in fortnightly meetings to work on campaign development and refinement.

## WORKING WITH A MARKETING AGENCY TO DEVELOP CAMPAIGN IDEAS

From sustained engagement with the marketing agency, the young people, in their role as 'clients', were able to communicate their vision and offer a continuous feedback loop. Three final concept ideas were pitched by the agency to the young people, based on the young people's ideas and learnings from the process.

Top priorities for the campaign were around capturing audience attention instantaneously, and to ensure there was an interactive element to draw people in.

- **Reframed** – This concept presented a way to reframe engagement based on concepts familiar to the target audience group, using festivals, magazines, and pop culture to recreate marketing assets. Taking inspiration from online fashion platforms to represent collections in a relevant digital way and using festival access pass lanyards to draw attention to the museum.
- **Find Your Thing** – Connecting with the target audience's self-discovery, this concept suggests that everyone has an item in the museum that connects with them. Suggested ways of interacting would be via an online personality test to create a personalised tour itinerary, or Spotify algorithm to connect your most listened tracks to a relevant object.



- **Meet the Real Influencers** – Shining a spotlight on some of history's most influential figures via a current cultural lens, this concept will incorporate elements from exhibits to highlight a cultural or social issue that will resonate with the audience. A suggested interactive element would be to create verified social media profile of historic figures, and post content around their stories in their voice.
- **Wider feedback and testing** – The concepts were also shared with a group of wider Young Scot volunteers, collecting feedback about the campaign idea that resonated most with wider groups. Feedback showed "find your thing" as the most relatable and captured instant attention.
- **Refinement and final campaign idea** – Based on the testing, and young people's own insights, they worked with the marketing agency to refine the "find your thing" campaign and merged elements from the "meet the real influencers" concept into final campaign development.



## THE PROTOTYPE – FIND YOUR THING

The key motivation behind the final concept is to help young people via key exhibits to understand themselves and the world better.

'Find Your Thing' encourages young people to visit the museum to discover stories from history that resonate with them today. Thereby creating an emotional and meaningful connection with their lives.

Relying on social and cultural themes to promote the concept visually; sustainability, gender identity and feminism as suggested themes to engage with.

Promotion routes suggested as visually striking posters to capture attention and a film to accompany messaging, featuring young people on their journey on the streets of Edinburgh towards the museum.

Following on, an activation tool at the museum and online would be created to help the audience find their thing at the museum. The activation tool will be an interactive quick quiz, followed by an object-matching stage and finalising with a QR code they can scan to get a tailored tour aligned with their interests. This activation will be on an interactive screen or on tablets at the museum entrance.

### PROJECT-GROUP REFLECTIONS

Throughout the process, the young people developed their knowledge and skills, honing insights and establishing an understanding of the wider context their project sits within. Through engagements with internal staff, external organisations and wider groups of young people insights have been strengthened to represent a range of views and needs.

With this, the Marketing project-group highlight some key reflections and priorities related to their project aim to consider moving forward.

See more digitisation of collections including the use of 3D scanning and printing, interactive objects online and access to objects otherwise not on public display

Expand reach to an online audience; increase social media development and presence



## ORGANISATION AND SECTOR DEVELOPMENT

### Setting the challenge

This project group, originally started with an overarching aim to explore the development of a long-term youth engagement strategy for National Museums Scotland and the heritage sector, therefore tapping into areas of best practice across the organisation and the sector. They were tasked with the following:

“How might we...empower young people in influencing/shaping policy and create opportunities for youth voice to be embedded in organisational culture?”

### KEY ACTIVITY/HIGHLIGHTS

**Initial exploration** – During the early Explore stage, the group started to discuss the possibilities in understanding internal and external structures and where opportunities might arise. The group acknowledged the need to speak to a range of internal and external stakeholders and use evidence and data to understand current policies around youth engagement in the sector. Some initial ideas about where the project might lead included:

The potential to dig deeper into NMS’ presence at a local level and how needs are met locally.

The opportunity to influence other museums in the sector, with a suggestion of a final output in the form of a manifesto.

**Exploring the landscape** – The project group started to scope the current processes in place to identify what change was needed. Initial discussions captured a range of opportunities to engage with internal and external staff, and the question of where to focus efforts. Because of the possible scope of the project, group members noted the slow-moving nature of initial discussions.

It was agreed by all the young people and staff to narrow the focus to exploring either internal (organisational) or external (sector) themes due to time constraints. To support with the organisational development element, an opportunity arose to collaborate with staff on a re-fresh of the Discoveries Gallery space. The group felt this aligned to the project aim, and a way to test out collaborative working through a tangible process.

The aim for young people’s involvement was to take part in the interpretation process, embedding young people’s perspectives into object interpretation. The group therefore realigned their ‘how might we...’ question for the new challenge presented to them.

“How might we...collaborate with 16 – 25-year-olds on the development of a case/object interpretation as part of the Discoveries Gallery refresh and use the learning from this action project to inform our Youth Engagement Strategy?”

**“HOW MIGHT WE...  
EMPOWER YOUNG PEOPLE  
IN INFLUENCING/SHAPING  
POLICY AND CREATE  
OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH  
VOICE TO BE EMBEDDED IN  
ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE?”**



## CHOOSING A FINAL OBJECT

After further discussion as a project group, and with some input from the wider team working on the Discoveries Gallery, the group decided to take forward Object 3, Jean Jenkins Musical Instruments. The initial offering was a collection of instruments, which the group had to narrow to one object choice. They decided on the rabab due to its origins as a Pashtun folk instrument to its present-day status as the national instrument of Afghanistan, and the development of woman and girls' opportunities to play it. Along with the story of Jean Jenkins herself, the group felt connected to the range of themes and strands the object represented, with a modern-day cultural significance, and that this significance would cross over to interest wider groups of young people.



A young Afghan woman plays the rabab, Afghanistan National Institute of Music, Kabul, 2016

© Photo by Robert Nickelsberg/Getty Images

## THE PROTOTYPE - FINAL LABEL DRAFT

During a face-to-face, interactive, full-day session, a draft object label was developed. Relying on creative tools such as storyboards to support development, and curatorial and exhibition staff's expertise in the area, helped guide the group to develop a final draft text for interpretation.

Considerations about the object label ranged from word count to structure and accuracy of information included. In terms of themes, the young people focused on a few different threads:

- **Instrument origins** – It's introduction to Afghani courts in the 19th Century and the Pashtun people, modern Pashtuns are found in Pakistan and Afghanistan
- **Cultural norms** – The significance of women playing the rabab – the acknowledgment of gender specific roles including musical instruments vs western ideas?
- **Contemporary musical influences** – Rabab adapted and exported to become sarod in India
- **Jean Jenkins** – A nod to the collector's extensive travel

The group chose to represent the object visually with a modern-day image of a young woman playing the rabab at the Afghani National Institute of Music, representing a shift in cultural norms.

Based on the above themes and considerations, young people drafted an object label which was then edited and finalised by the Curation and Exhibition staff.

### The rabab

Originally a classical instrument common across central and south Asian cultures, the rabab became popular in the mid-20th century, and rabab music was broadcast widely on radio stations across Afghanistan and Pakistan. By the 1970s, the rabab had become the 'national instrument' of Afghanistan, played exclusively by men.

Music was banned during the Taliban regime (1991-2001), but in 2010, the Afghanistan National Institute of Music was established and women were encouraged to play the rabab, marking a new era in Afghani musical traditions.

When the Taliban returned to power in 2021, music was censored once again and musicians faced an uncertain future.

#### Jean Jenkins

This rabab was collected in Afghanistan in the 1970s, by Jean Jenkins. She travelled extensively collecting musical instruments and recording local musicians. Although acquired in Kabul, the materials and simple construction of this rabab indicate possible origins across the border in Pakistan.

A team of young people (aged 16-25) wrote this label in collaboration with National Museums Scotland

**Reflections** – A final reflection session was delivered with key staff and young people, to evaluate the collaborative working and opportunities/challenges within the process.

The young people felt inspired and engaged by the range of skills sharing from staff members and enjoyed the regularity of monthly meetings. They shared challenges around not meeting in person often and finding it difficult to stay connected with communications outside meetings. In terms of learning they spoke positively about how their understanding of museum processes has developed, and they felt included as equal stakeholders in the process.

Staff members spoke highly of the engagement with young people, finding it a valuable process to step outside 'normal' ways of working to have their expertise challenged and listen to voices outside of the sector. They discussed some initial fears and worries about the process being overcome, but a challenge remained around limited parameters to work within.

General feedback from both parties noted the tight timelines, which sometimes impacted the young people's ability to meaningfully engage.

Moving forward – Along with feedback discussions, an in-depth survey about the process has been undertaken to further understand learnings of the process. Using this engagement as an initial pilot to support a re-imagining of the Interpretation process.

The newly refreshed Discoveries Gallery will reopen in Summer 2022 and the exhibition will include the chosen object and accompany object label.

## PROJECT-GROUP REFLECTIONS

Throughout the process, the young people developed their knowledge and skills, honing insights and establishing an understanding of the wider context their project sits within. Through engagements with internal staff, external organisations and wider groups of young people insights have been strengthened to represent a range of views and needs.

With this, the Organisational and Sector Development project group highlight some key reflections and priorities related to their project aim to consider moving forward.

More time and flexibility to allow process to happen in a meaningful way

Encouraging a culture of adaptability, to allow staff members to learn and develop new ways of working

Support staff development and training across the organisation



## RECOMMENDATIONS

To support each of the project groups to share their learning and opportunities for change, the Youth Engagement Team have compiled recommendations for the National Museums Scotland (NMS) and the wider museum and heritage sector.

These recommendations are based on the YET's insights gained throughout the 12-month process, relying on their experience and variety of engagements with other young people and stakeholders.

The recommendations have been highlighted under theme areas to support discussions around next steps and implementation.

### PROCESSES AND FUNDING

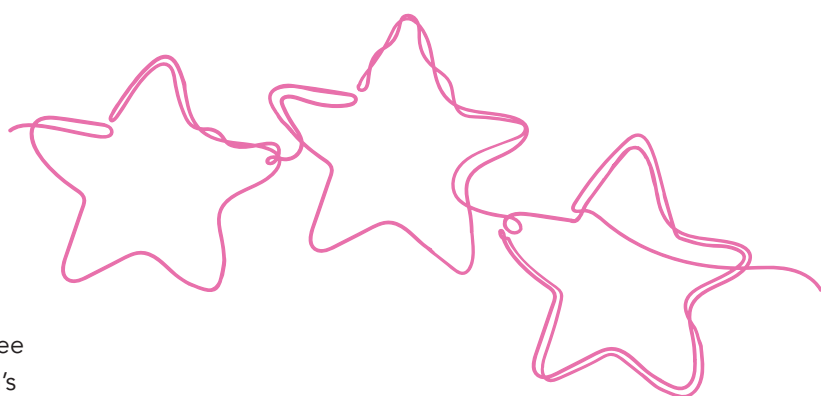
Underpinning all recommendations is the ability to provide a sustained offer to young people and embed a youth engagement approach within the National Museums Scotland current processes.

- Provide dedicated and continued funding and time to embed young people into the heart of their agenda. There is the potential to start to involve young people in the funding process with, for example, participatory budgeting and challenge standard decision-making processes.
- A clear understanding of current provision to young people, ability to identify gaps in need and have actions to fill these gaps.
- Create an action plan for youth engagement to align efforts across NMS sites and departments and to support all staff to understand the process. Start to build the learnings from projects and previous engagements into this action plan.
- Continue to build on partnership working, utilising connections and skills from partner organisations engaged in Scotland 365,
- Create dedicated youth engagement roles to oversee youth engagement in NMS, enhancing the museum's skills and capabilities to engage with young voices.

### CHANGE AND FLEXIBILITY

Engaging with young people in a voluntary capacity and as visitors requires a level of adaptability and understanding of the changing needs and capacity of young person groups. The Youth Engagement Team reflected on some of their own experiences within the project and considered flexible and adaptable processes as one of their top priorities.

- Ensuring institutional flexibility to understand the gaps between young people's needs and the museum's timescales and operations. Realistic and flexible timelines to be implemented in future projects to allow for meaningful engagement. The longer the lead in time encourages more flexibility within the process and less delivery pressure. Young people have more opportunity to bend elements of the process to suit their needs and availability.
- National Museums Scotland continues to embed a culture of openness and change, challenging ideas within the institution and the wider sector, to further enhance the voice of previously underrepresented groups and to dissolve as many social, economic and cultural barriers as possible.
- Embracing creative and freelance methods to further support development opportunities in the sector, to continually challenge perspectives and be responsive to innovation in the sector.





## DECISION MAKING AND ACTION

Throughout the project, staff and young people have worked collaboratively, using a co-design approach to build trust and develop solutions. To ensure each stage of the process is meaningful, decision-making opportunities are key to ensure young people continue to have the opportunity to implement change.

- A continued commitment to embedding co-design approaches into the museums processes. Engaging young people as equal partners from the beginning, sharing power and recognising the value of co-design methodologies in developing more relatable offers to the target audience.
- Identify and provide opportunities for young people to take part in decision-making processes in a range of areas across the organisation, to ensure youth voices are represented in a range of spaces, and young people can start to see action from their input.
- Ensure decisions are evidence and evaluation driven, and informed by engagements with young people.
- Use project outcomes to inform decision-making across all levels of the museum. All departments to share learning about youth engagement and develop a robust evaluation process to understand the impacts on young people directly engaged.
- Consider how the museum can build young people's feedback into interpretation and content development processes.
- National Museums Scotland should actively engage in open dialogue with a variety of young people across all levels of the organisation to inform decision-making based on current needs of young people, and can be representative in their approach.

## CULTURE, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Developing and sustaining a youth engagement approach requires a culture which promotes diversity and inclusion, along with instilling a sense of belonging and safety for young people.

- A youth committee at the heart of this change; young people steering the direction and development of this work. Showcasing young people's ideas as the mechanism behind change will encourage other young people to see themselves represented in the museum.
  - The engagement with young people needs to be relevant, fun, social and mutually beneficial. A focus on interactivity and developing connections will support sustained and valuable engagement.
  - A personalised and adaptable approach implemented to support with inclusivity and interaction. Mixed methods and formats of working to ensure that engagements are supporting the needs and interests of all groups of young people.
  - Embedding power-sharing at delivery level by ensuring representation of young people matches representation of staff. Establishing an equal ratio of young people to staff members supports young people to feel included in the decision-making process, and more comfortable to represent their ideas.
- Encouraging community outreach with digital inclusivity and flexibility of session times and dates, along with a sustained approach to engaging youth voices from a wide geographical area.
- A monitoring, diversity and evaluation framework to capture and understand the range of voices engaged with across the museum. This will help to establish what voices are engaged and where opportunities for development exist. It will help to instil a personalised approach, and a feedback loop for young people to share openly.

## EVALUATION/WIDER REFLECTIONS

Throughout the course of the 12-month project there have been a host of successes, learnings, and opportunities for development moving forward.

An initial time delay, due to COVID-19 restrictions, meant a shift in some timelines and a focus on ensuring outputs could be delivered before deadlines. At times this meant activity was fast-moving and a challenge for young people to engage in every opportunity along with their own life commitments. Because of the range of activity on offer, young people's skills development and opportunity for learning was maximised. Staff engagement was high, which created a sense of respect and interest from the outset, with young people noting how inspired they felt by this.

Predominantly digital delivery meant opportunities for all young people to engage in an accessible way, diminishing the need for regular travel and engagements could take place on a regular and at times ad-hoc basis. However, many staff and young people noted the initial challenge in collaborating in a creative way through a screen. When opportunities for face-to-face engagements were possible in the current context, every action was taken to support this taking place. Two face-to-face residencies, and a handful of project group sessions took place beyond September 2021.

This supported rapport building between staff and young people and interactive collaboration. It also allowed activity to be delivered at a faster pace with a sense of action and urgency that was challenging to instil via digital delivery methods.

Due to Covid-19 challenges, project delivery was delayed, and timelines reworked. Initial timelines had provided more scope and opportunity for development and integration of young people's ideas, during each phase. With the timeline rework, there was an acknowledgement of the possible impact on final project outputs and an understanding that timeframes did not allow for full implementation to take place.

**“STAFF ENGAGEMENT WAS HIGH, WHICH CREATED A SENSE OF RESPECT AND INTEREST FROM THE OUTSET, WITH YOUNG PEOPLE NOTING HOW INSPIRED THEY FELT BY THIS”**





## FEEDBACK FROM YOUNG PEOPLE

Young people were overwhelmingly positive about the opportunity to collaborate with staff members. Many noted the impact this had on their professional interest in the sector and feeling more connected to industry opportunities. The group also enjoyed the social aspect of getting to know like-minded peers and highlighted in-person meetings as the most enjoyable moments. The group also discussed the array of learning opportunities on offer, with skills development and knowledge gained from interactions with staff a positive for many of the group and an increased understanding of the wider sector.

The most common challenges cited by the young people were digital engagement, 'Zoom fatigue' and the time commitment needed. The initial few months of the project were fully delivered online, which meant that interaction was limited to a screen and many young people noted the initial challenge of connecting to each other and the project motivations. Some young people noted the amount of activity was sometimes difficult to engage in during busy periods of their life. Another member noted that this had a knock-on impact on other group members, with more pressure on just a few group members to complete project tasks.

**“LIKED INDEPENDENCE  
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**“FELT OWNERSHIP AND  
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TO”**

**“UNDERSTANDING THE  
INDUSTRY BETTER”**

**“ZOOM TIME I FOUND IT  
QUITE HARD TO ENGAGE  
WITH AFTER A WHILE”**

**“QUITE A LOT OF MEETINGS  
WHICH MEANT SOME  
DROPPED OUT”**



## FEEDBACK FROM STAFF

Enjoyment of hearing young people's ideas, observing new perspectives and being involved in a creative process were all top highlights shared by staff members. Several staff also noted their understanding of co-design processes had been enhanced and how this contributed to richer project outputs. They also spoke about the positive opportunity to work with other colleagues across departments and the shared motivation to improve as an organisation.

Staff spoke about the drop-off in youth engagement at points in the process as a challenge, paired with limited face-to-face engagement sometimes contributing to a feeling of lost momentum. They also shared that timelines, capacity, and general internal support of the process as recognisable challenges during the process, and considerations to iron out before future engagements to take place.

**“THE COMMITMENT OF YOUNG PEOPLE OVER A DIFFICULT TIME AND BRINGING SUCH ENERGY AND FUN TO THE PROCESS”**

**“WANTING TO BE SUPPORTIVE BUT STAFF NOT BEING ABLE TO BE FULLY FLEXIBLE DUE TO OTHER COMMITMENTS”**

## SUGGESTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Staff and young people were aligned on many future development suggestions, such as ensuring a blended model for project delivery i.e. offering the opportunity to be involved remotely and in-person, which would support a range of young people from different geographical areas to get involved. They also spoke about ensuring a sense of accomplishment with action being taken in some format, even if full implementation can't take place straight away.

Young people were particularly vocal on the opportunity to provide further information and guidance on pathways and a further recognition as volunteering being the first step for some into a future career in the sector.

Ultimately, there was a sense that the project has supported potential development of a framework for youth engagement. Staff and young people felt that there was real opportunity to build upon these learnings and to take forward a commitment to embedding youth voices in a long-term meaningful way.

**“YOUTH ENGAGEMENT AS PART OF PLANNING AND POLICY RATHER THAN AN ADDITION. IT SHOULD NOT BE SEEN AS A NICE BONUS, RATHER AN INVESTMENT IN THE FUTURE OF THE MUSEUM”**



## Young Scot

Caledonian Exchange  
19A Canning Street  
Edinburgh  
EH3 8EG

[youngscot.net/news](http://youngscot.net/news)

[info@youngscot](mailto:info@youngscot)



@YoungScot



YoungScot

