



Press Release

Embargoed until 9am Thursday 21st October

Curating for Change, a ground-breaking work placement programme for D/deaf and disabled curators in museums, launches today thanks to an award of £950,900.00 from The National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Today Screen South, through its pioneering Accentuate Programme, has received a National Lottery Heritage Fund grant of £950,900.00 for an England-wide heritage project that aims to be transformational for the museum sector. Made possible by money raised by National Lottery players, **Curating for Change** will provide a landmark Fellowship and Traineeship programme which includes fully funded paid work placements with mentoring and training opportunities for D/deaf, disabled and neurodivergent people wanting to pursue a career within museums. Fellows and Trainees will be hosted by more than 20 partner museums from across England and each Fellow will have space to research and curate a range of new exhibitions and events for more than 240,000 visitors across 9 locations. This is the first time that such a significant range and calibre of museums have come together to create a network of activities that will begin to tackle the under-representation of disabled people in our museums.

Currently there are 14.1 million disabled people living in the UK. 19% of working age adults are disabled (Family Resources Survey, 2018-19). Disabled people are more than twice as likely to be unemployed as non-disabled people (ONS Labour Force Survey, April to June 2020). The inequalities are further accentuated within the museum sector workforce, with only 4% defining as D/deaf or disabled. **Curating for Change** will start to address the significant gap in access and employment across the heritage sector which, to date, had been largely ignored.

The rich and diverse history of D/deaf and disabled people is rarely exhibited in museums, with few objects in collections reflecting the history of disabled people. Without D/deaf, disabled and neurodivergent people in curatorial roles, the challenges are significant in terms of telling authentic narratives that relate to disability history. In addition, there are barriers in the ways in which disabled people experience museums. Exhibitions and displays are predominantly designed for 'normal' bodies, with minimal consideration given to how D/deaf, disabled and neurodivergent people will navigate and/or experience them.

This vital funding from The National Lottery Heritage Fund will enable the Accentuate Programme to establish this new project, embedding change within host museums, that will in turn, generate learning and actions to be shared more widely across the sector. It will also provide a much-needed platform for D/deaf, disabled and neurodivergent curators to demonstrate their skills and unique insights, encouraging a new lens through which to consider heritage narratives and ways to engage audiences.

Based within the organisation Screen South, the Accentuate Programme creates landmark projects for D/deaf, disabled and neurodivergent people across the cultural sector.

Esther Fox, Head of Accentuate, says "We are so excited that with thanks to National Lottery players' support, we can at last tackle the huge problem of the under-representation of D/deaf and disabled people in our museums - both as staff, and in the collections and the stories that are told. We are privileged to be working with a whole range of wonderful museums to bring about this change. From small community museums such as Hastings Museum and Art Gallery to large Nationals including the Museum of Liverpool and the National Railway Museum York, part of the Science Museum group. There is a commitment from right across the sector to improve equity and representation and **Curating for Change** will deliver the activities that will make this change a reality."

Stuart McLeod, Director London & South at The National Lottery Heritage Fund, said:

"We are delighted to support Curating for Change, a ground-breaking Fellowship and Traineeship programme for D/deaf, disabled and neurodiverse people who are looking to pursue careers in curation at museums across England.

Thanks to money raised by National Lottery players, the project will enable D/deaf, disabled and neurodiverse people to access tailored work placements and specialist training opportunities within 20 partner museums; the learning gained from this programme will also support wider strategic work aimed at bridging the significant gap in access and employment across the museum and wider heritage sector."

Notes to editors

About Screen South and the Accentuate Programme

Screen South is a cultural development agency with digital creativity at its heart. We focus on promoting new ideas, engaging audiences, delivering excellence and opportunity for all.

Accentuate is a specialist programme within Screen South delivering ground-breaking opportunities for D/deaf, disabled and neurodivergent people to participate and lead in the cultural sector.

<https://screensouth.org/>

<http://www.accentuateuk.org/homepage>

@Curating4Change

@Accentuate_UK

@ScreenSouth

About the Museums and Sector Organisations Involved

The following museums and sector organisations will be hosting placements or supporting activities and creating a nationwide network as part of Curating for Change:

- National Railway Museum (part of the Science Museum Group)

- Thackray Museum of Medicine
- Museum of Liverpool
- Black Country Living Museum
- Pitt Rivers and Ashmolean Museum (joint placement)
- Bristol Culture
- Hastings Museum and Art Gallery
- The Historic Dockyard Chatham
- Cumbria Museum Consortium
- Kettle's Yard and Sedgwick Museum of Earth Sciences (joint placement)
- North Hertfordshire Museum
- Nottinghamshire Museums (Wollaton Hall)
- Imperial War Museum
- The Horniman Museum
- Colchester and Ipswich Museums
- The Museum of English Rural Life
- The British Museum
- The Museum of London
- The Museums Association
- AIM
- The University of Leicester Research Centre for Museums and Galleries
- DASH Arts
- Vocaleyes
- Museums DCN
- Arts and Heritage
- Culture Health and Wellbeing Alliance

About The National Lottery Heritage Fund

Using money raised by the National Lottery, we **inspire, lead** and **resource** the UK's heritage to create **positive and lasting change** for people and communities, now and in the future. www.heritagefund.org.uk.

Follow @HeritageFundUK on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) and use #NationalLotteryHeritageFund

Since The National Lottery began in 1994, National Lottery players have raised over £43 billion for projects and more than 635,000 grants have been awarded across the UK.

Further information

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