

TAKING MUSEUMS OVER

Kids in
MUSEUMS



REPORT 2011

children's commissioner's
**TAKE OVER
DAY**

ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND

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TAKEOVER DAY 2011

MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES GET INVOLVED

Kids in Museums successfully partnered with the Children's Commissioner for England to help museums, galleries and heritage sites up and down Britain take part in Takeover Day on 11th November 2011. Young people were offered a unique experience of being in charge in a museum, gallery or historic home, working alongside staff and being given meaningful roles for the day.

Thirty eight heritage organisations welcomed over 500 children and young people into their buildings and gave them the opportunity to takeover. Among many things, children and young people from 7 to 25 curated and reviewed exhibitions, held meetings, gave presentations, created new trails and schools' programmes, tweeted and facebooked, delved into the archives and gave guided tours.

Takeover Day was not just about the impact on the young people in the museum. One of the most recognised outcomes from the day was the thrill it brought about locally, from the large amounts of PR generated, to attracting VIPs, to the word on the community grapevine. There were lots of examples of children bringing their classmates, friends and family back to see what they had done. Children created resources that would be used by visitors in galleries and seen by a global audience on museum websites and social media. We estimate that for each young person that took part, at least ten visitors or potential visitors have been positively affected by their experience.

This high extended to museum staff, with large numbers reporting excitement and enjoyment amongst colleagues not normally involved with young people. And an internal awareness and appreciation of the museum's work with young people developed and grew.

After the event we carried out a survey with all the participating organisations to assess the benefits of taking part and to learn how we could support museums even more next year:

HOW DID MUSEUMS FIND THEIR YOUNG PEOPLE?

Museums and galleries were very resourceful in recruiting young people to take over, in some cases at very short notice. Many capitalised on their existing partnerships with schools and other organisations such as Youth Services and Scouts. Others saw it as the perfect opportunity to make connections with new partners. In some instances museums looked inside themselves and found there were keen young people in their existing youth panels and informal learning networks.

A small number of museums made their approach directly to the young people, using social media, posters, personal invitations and the local press to spread the word. Kids in Museums received requests from schools and individuals who had heard about Takeover Day and wanted to be matched up to a museum.

WHY TAKE PART?

We asked museums why they chose to take part in Takeover Day. Clearly people recognised that this approach to working with young people could help them achieve a number of things. The flexibility of Takeover Day meant that these museums were able to accommodate the activity within existing schedules and provide an experience for the young people that was mutually rewarding. For many it was not about planning an event from scratch, but thinking about how they could do things slightly differently.

OUR SURVEY SAID

71% of museums took part to improve their relationship with school or other young people's group

54% of museums wanted to increase staff awareness of work with young people

OTHER REASONS

Link to current developments at the museum	42%
Create new material or resources	42%
PR opportunity	38%









WHAT WORKED WELL

WHAT MUSEUMS GOT OUT OF IT

For most museums, providing a regular offer for children and young people is important. It's great news that Takeover Day helped over two thirds of participating museums to get to know their visitors better.

Museums identified an average of five different things that their organisation got out of being involved, almost as many as the average number of benefits they identified for their participants. Takeover Day is about giving young people a great experience but is also about helping museums grow and succeed.

We asked museums what they felt their museum got out of the experience

Better understanding of young people's NEEDS & INTERESTS	67%	
ENHANCED the reputation of the museum (PR, VIP involvement, local community)	67%	
NEW / BETTER RELATIONSHIP with a school or other partner	58%	
The young people's CONTINUED INVOLVEMENT with the museum	54%	
NEW IDEAS that the museum will use e.g. for promotion, event, interpretation	54%	
Internal awareness and appreciation of the museum's work with young people	50%	
Practical help e.g. the young people setting up for an event, writing a press release, doing a stock check in the shop	29%	
Enhanced visitor offer created e.g. guided tours, exhibition, performance	25%	

FEEDBACK

Our survey showed that Takeover Day creates lasting relationships between museums and young people. In addition to the 58% of museums who said that Takeover Day had helped them develop or strengthen relationships with partners, over half gave tangible examples of how the young people were continuing to be involved with their museum. These included:

- **The young people joining or helping set up youth panels and recruiting new members**
- **Inviting the young people to apply for work experience placements**
- **Museum staff attending the launch of a school's own museum**
- **Inviting children back to the museum to see their ideas implemented**
- **Children returning with new visitors e.g. family, class**

In one museum a young person was overheard playing the piano by a member of staff and offered a gig playing at the Christmas party.

Takeover Day can bring a fresh perspective and some new ideas. Lots of museums said that new resources such as trails and learning materials had been produced as a result of Takeover Day. Others said that they had come up with the programme for a special event or school workshop. And one museum had been given an idea for a new product line for the shop.

'We are still in contact with the young person who got involved with Takeover Day and we are working out how she can still be involved with the museum, possibly coming in at weekends or during her school holidays.'

'One of the young people that came to Takeover Day came along to our young people's Artforum group.'

'(After Takeover Day) there was discussion of what a youth volunteer programme might look like, and how we could make this sustainable with an ongoing partnership with the school we worked with.'

'We plan to further develop how children can influence decision making practice and how their views can be heard more. We like to believe we are forward thinking in this area yet Takeover Day really gives us a platform to celebrate young views and their interpretation of artworks currently on show.'

museums SAID








WHAT WORKED WELL

WHAT THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE GOT OUT OF IT

Takeover Day achieved many positive outcomes for the young people involved, each demonstrating the impressive impact takeover activities have. Equally impressive is the broad range of outcomes identified, from learning new skills to making possible career choices to changed attitudes towards museums and galleries.

Of the 500 children who took part this year, many were older children and teenagers, an age range often seen as challenging to reach by museums. Takeover Day clearly involved this age group in new, positive ways.

We asked the museums what they felt the young people got out of the experience, based on their feedback to them

ENJOYED THEMSELVES	100% 
Felt like they've made a VALUABLE CONTRIBUTION	88% 
AWARENESS AND APPRECIATION of different roles	79% 
Tried NEW THINGS, learnt NEW SKILLS	75% 
Felt like museums were FOR THEM	75% 
AWARENESS AND APPRECIATION of how the museum operates	71% 
UNDERSTANDING of the collection or the museum's story	67% 

WHAT COULD HAVE BEEN EVEN BETTER

Half of the museums that expressed an interest in Takeover Day went on to take part. So why didn't the others? We asked them for feedback on what would make it easier for them:

- Let museums know about Takeover Day much earlier in the year to allow them to schedule the event into their programme
- Help museums who feel that they need more time to organise their Takeover Day event
- Make the date flexible to accommodate museums with closed seasons or periods of development or restructure
- When choosing the date, try to avoid national events such as Armistice Day
- Help museums who are struggling with staffing issues – a lack of human resources, new to the role or unable to convince colleagues to take part
- Recognise and celebrate that some museums are already doing something similar
- Help museums to find a school or partner

'I really enjoyed doing the research about Herbert Delafield, looking at the sources and thinking about his life was great fun.'

'My mum has been really excited about my day and very encouraging. She is coming with me to the museum exhibition opening tonight. My friends have been curious about what I've been up to as they have not really heard about anyone doing this sort of thing before.'

'I had no idea so much went on in a museum. It is run like a business. It's really interesting.'

'My favourite thing about the day was that I got to overcome my fear and show people things that I know about, and my favourite bits of the gallery.'

'It makes me feel proud of myself, I've never done something like this before.'

'When they first arrived, the group was a little shy, but they have very quickly blossomed. They already feel they have a stake in the museums.'

participants SAID

SUPPORT AND RESOURCES

THE ROLE OF KIDS IN MUSEUMS

Kids in Museums provided support and encouragement in the following ways to help museums plan their Takeover Day: an information sheet/poster, six case studies from Takeover Day 2010, a press release template and a specialist advisor to provide email and phone support to individual organisations.

The resources proved very useful, with each being used by more than 70% of museums. The most used resource was the case studies. Several museums explained that they would have used the resources more fully had they had more time to plan their event.

Of those who used the resources, 97% said they were useful. The most valued resource was the email/phone support, with 41% of users rating it 'very useful'. A quarter of users also found the press release template 'very useful'.

It was clear from comments that museums really valued Kids in Museums' role in championing this initiative nationally, and many felt their involvement in the campaign gave it weight. They appreciated the sharing of examples and ideas, regular communications and updates and support in planning and promoting museums' events.

97% of museums who used the resources thought they were useful

'It was great to have a kind of mother ship for all galleries and museums for this event.'

'The Takeover team were very supportive and very helpful when planning the day. They provided a lot of information and regular communication in the lead up to the day.'

'WE'RE TAKING OVER' PACKS

Museums were also invited to take advantage of the free 'We're Taking Over' packs, produced and supplied by Kids in Museums. Each pack contained stickers, certificates and report proformas for each young person.

The packs were well-used, with each of the items being used by at least 80% of museums. The certificates were the most-used item.

Of those who used the packs, 92% found them useful. The most valued item was the certificate with over a third of users rating it 'very useful'.

There was more enthusiasm for the 'We're Taking Over' packs from museums that had worked with younger pupils i.e. aged ten and under. Many of the comments about the packs expressed feelings by the museum staff and in some cases the young people too, that the stickers and certificates should look different for older children.

Although perceived as useful to some extent by virtually all users, the report proforma was found to be the least useful item in the pack. Some found it a useful debriefing activity whilst others found low literacy skills were a hindrance.

'We did feel that the packs were very successful for the younger participants on the day but that they weren't appreciated in the same way by the young people from the local college. So perhaps a pack for older people would be something to consider next year.'

museums SAID

TAKEOVER DAY 2012

WHAT WILL IT LOOK LIKE?

Takeover Day – Taking Over Museums was a big success in 2011 and this report shows what can happen when museums involve children and young people in a meaningful way. Doing something a little differently brings big benefits to both museums and young people.

The role of Kids in Museums should focus on three aspects of the initiative. Firstly, sharing success stories and encouraging all museums to take part, which may involve communications through the website, emails, regional events, local champions, linking with key agencies. Secondly, supporting museums to create really successful Takeover Day events, providing practical and tailored help to plan and overcome obstacles. Thirdly, helping them to deepen their relationship with young people into an ongoing involvement so that working with young people in this way becomes the norm.



SUGGESTIONS

From this year's feedback, the following considerations should be made:

- The idea of joining in with a national campaign, on a given date, appeals to many museums so Kids in Museums should continue to promote Takeover Day as a celebration of takeover work.
- As well as supporting museums themselves there is a brokerage role for Kids in Museums in terms of partnering schools or groups of young people with a museum for Takeover Day and making strategic links with relevant organisations.
- More notice of the event needs to be given to museums. Now that awareness of the initiative is high, simple 'save the date' communications would suffice as soon as the date is announced.
- Where possible the date should avoid other significant national events.
- The planning resources were well received and can be used again with some minor updating. Both the resources and the specialist advisor should be made available earlier in the process in order to be of maximum benefit to museums.
- Different packs are needed – one for young children and one for teenagers. Some changes to the report proforma are required to make it more flexible and easy to use.
- Museums appreciate the PR support – keep this up, look for new opportunities to communicate and let museums know what we are doing.
- Kids in Museums should also be encouraging museums to make this a regular part of their work with children and young people and leading the campaign for youth participation in the heritage sector. One day is not enough.

Why take part?	Firstly, a positive experience of Takeover Day in 2010 with pupils having the opportunity to consult on a live project and learn new skills. Secondly, it gave staff the chance to work in partnership with the Scout group which would benefit TWAM's wider audience.
Who took part?	Three members of a local Scout group, aged 11-13. A colleague was the District Commissioner so was able to make contact easily. The group were also affiliated with the British Legion and were due to take part in the Remembrance Service the next day which made them ideally placed for working with the theme. TWAM sent information to the Scout group and asked for volunteers. Three were interested and able to make the date.
What did they do?	The scouts joined two learning officers on the Saturday for an intensive day of research, planning and recording, linking the theme of Remembrance to the Soldier's Life Gallery at Discovery Museum, Newcastle. They took over TWAM's bi-monthly podcast Culture Cast producing a special Remembrance Day edition.
How did they spend their time on the day?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listened to examples of other podcasts and discussed what made a good one. • Talked about what they knew about WWI and Remembrance Day and what it meant to them. • Examined original sources relating to a Private who served and died in the war – pictures, postcards home, his medals, death certificate and 'death penny' – to build a picture of what he was like and chart his story. • Drew up a plan of what they wanted to include in their podcast, wrote a script and recorded it, selected and uploaded photos.
What happened next?	<p>The final podcast was uploaded onto the TWAM website and is available for download</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.twmuseums.org.uk/podcasts/index.php/culturecast • <i>YouTube</i> http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e8sUllwEUyU <p>Links with the Scout group have been reinforced and a personal connection made with the individual young people, who said they would definitely like to do more work with the museum and may consider volunteering.</p> <p>Inviting young people to takeover in this way gave TWAM a real insight into how they can approach interpreting WWI for formal school groups. It was so beneficial in helping them understand the needs and interests of their young visitors that they plan to use the same method when developing their next resource, a series of loan boxes for the centenary of WWI.</p> <p><i>'Working with the young people on this project has reiterated the power which objects can have and their ability to change your perspective. We will definitely be planning our future WWI programme with young people from the beginning.'</i></p> <p>Lucy Bemrose, Learning Officer</p>

CASE STUDY 2

MONUMENTS THAT MOVE ME PROJECT

GLASGOW MUSEUMS AND DEPOT ARTS

Why take part?

One of the aims of this collaborative project is to promote Springburn Exhibition Space as a community resource and encourage creative use of the space. The Project Co-ordinator saw Takeover Day as an opportunity to get feedback from young people on the current use of the space, as well as providing a platform for the project's music group to share their songs.

Who took part?

Four young people, aged 16-25, performed and a further 15 attended. The event was advertised on Facebook, on Depot Arts' website, through mail-outs and with posters in the leisure centre where the Springburn Exhibition Space is located. Word of mouth and personal invites were also important ways of communicating with young people.

What did they do?

Held on the evening of Takeover Day, the programme took the form of a drop-in event with a range of creative activities and live performances by the young people of North Glasgow.

How did they spend their time on the day?

- The evening started with performances in the reception area to attract an audience, moving into the exhibition space where the performances continued.
- Time to look at the current exhibition and to handle objects from the Glasgow Cafes' handling kit.
- A facilitated informal discussion about the young people's impressions of the space and what they would like to see there.

What happened next?

Some of the young people who took part in Takeover Day had never visited Springburn Exhibition Space and because of this experience they are now keen to come back again. Being given the opportunity to have their views heard in an enjoyable and informal way really helped them to see that they are welcome and valued as visitors to the exhibition space. All the young people who performed have committed to return in March for another performance event.

The project staff now have a better understanding of the needs of a group of visitors that many museums find difficult to involve. As well as some tangible ideas to improve the exhibition space for younger visitors, the project now has a pool of willing advisors to consult at future stages of the project's development.

'The young people's comments about the exhibition space will be taken on board for a new exhibition happening in the space next August. Some of the young people may even be involved in creating this exhibition.'

Martha Burns Findlay, Project Co-ordinator

CASE STUDY 3

PENLEE HOUSE GALLERY & MUSEUM

PENZANCE

Why take part?	As several galleries were due to be rehung, the gallery saw this as an opportunity to work in a different way with young visitors, to build links with a local school and to raise awareness internally of what the museum can offer children and young people.
Who took part?	Ten pupils from Years 5 & 6. The Education & Outreach Officer emailed a primary school that had visited earlier in the year and they responded by selecting pupils from the Gifted & Talented programme with a particular interest in Art.
What did they do?	The pupils were responsible for curating a gallery, selecting the artworks for display and planning the layout of the room. They also produced labels and a short interpretative film.
How did they spend their time on the day?	<p>Prior to Takeover Day the museum had sent the pupils a list of 50 possible works to be included. The classes made them into a booklet and discussed them in school as well as at home. They selected 20 to be displayed and made labels for them. Having visited the gallery to do a recce and measure up they produced a mock-up of the room and paintings to scale on paper.</p> <p>On the day, they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Met key staff and learned about issues of size, shape, colour and conservation when hanging a gallery.• Refined their plans for the room, further measuring and decided on a final layout. <p>Back at school the pupils made a short film to help visitors understand why they had chosen the particular paintings and also provided the gallery with a visitors' book to record comments.</p>
What happened next?	<p>Over the weekend the gallery staff hung the exhibition according to the pupils' plan and the following week the pupils were invited back with their parents as guests of honour at the opening ceremony, where their certificates were presented by the Mayor. The school and the children were delighted to be involved, bringing the whole of Year 6 to Penlee House to see the exhibition a month later.</p> <p>Staff at Penlee House felt it was a tremendous way to get the community involved in the running of the gallery and have widely publicised the children's takeover efforts on their website and Facebook page. The exhibition has a real buzz about it as visitors appreciate the children's perspective on the pieces and the quality of the children's interpretation.</p> <p><i>'The pupils and teachers from Penpol School who have been involved in this takeover must be congratulated – what they've produced is very very impressive.... I'm quite humbled to read their intelligent, empathetic, personal interpretations of the Newlyn School paintings. BRILLIANT..hope this new innovation continues!'</i></p> <p>Comment from Facebook user</p> <p><i>'I love the way the children have brought the paintings to life!! Incredible achievement. Made my heart sing.'</i></p> <p>Penlee House Gallery and Museum visitor</p>

CASE STUDY 4

NCCL GALLERIES OF JUSTICE MUSEUM NOTTINGHAM

Why take part? The Learning and Access Co-ordinator at the museum saw this as a good opportunity for colleagues in other departments to see the museum through a young visitor's eyes and to raise their awareness of the scope of what the museum can offer young people.

Who took part? Five pupils from Year 6 and three FE students. The museum advertised the opportunities on Facebook and Twitter; via the museum's youth panel, in the local press and through their school connections. Interested young people were invited to apply for a role.

What did they do? The young people took on roles in different museum departments – curatorial, visitor services, marketing, event management – and were given real work tasks to complete as well as giving their thoughts on the museum and suggestions for development.

How did they spend their time on the day?

- Curators – evaluated the museum's permanent exhibition and fed back suggestions of what was needed to change and what could be added to engage young people, spent time in the stores exploring the collection and selecting objects for display, researched their choice and wrote accompanying labels.
- Costumed Interpreter – took on the role of Judge in a performance tour and worked with the Court Usher Interpreter guiding visitors around the site and sentencing many of them!
- Marketing Executive – accompanied museum staff to a meeting at a local hotel to see how they could work more closely together; designed marketing material to promote Easter holiday activities for families and wrote a press release about Takeover Day.
- Head of Enterprise and Operations – arranged the induction plan for a new member of staff, organised the rota for the following month for over 20 staff, conducted a one-to-one with our Corporate Hospitality officer and supervised preparations for the Galleries' very first wedding.

What happened next? Some of the participants who took over the curator's role chose objects to be part of the museum's Object of the Month display. The young people will be involved in the text panels that accompany the objects and will be invited back to see their chosen object go on display. The museum also hopes to get some of the participants involved as advocates for its charity Help a Nottinghamshire Child which raises money to allow schools who otherwise could not afford to visit to come to the museum and take part in educational activities.

The museum is currently working on developing its three year interpretation strategy and the young people are continuing to provide their input into this process. They are helping to develop a new object and archive based education session for students of their age and have given the museum ideas about how they can market to young people.

'Two members of our youth panel feel that the day has given them more of an insight about what we do and allowed them to be more constructive with their participation in the youth panel.'

Carol King, Learning & Access Co-ordinator

CASE STUDY 5

PEOPLE'S HISTORY MUSEUM MANCHESTER

Why take part?

The museum had recently started a volunteer programme and were encouraging volunteers of all ages to come forward. They were also keen for young people to have more involvement with the museum and thought that Takeover Day was a great opportunity to test how they could do more.

Who took part?

One 16 year-old. The Year 12 student, who wanted to study History at university, had recently got in contact with the museum about volunteering so this was an ideal way to kick-start her involvement with the museum.

What did they do?

The young person was invited to take over the role of Learning Officer for the day, researching and creating a new resource for 14-18 year olds and learning about the different departments within the museum.

How did they spend their time on the day?

- Introduction to the museum and its organisational structure, the role of the Learning Officer and meeting other departments within the museum.
- Independent research into the collection, visit to the archives and drafting a self-led trail for young visitors.
- Tour of one of the new exhibitions and learning about how exhibitions are planned and developed.
- Review session with Learning Officer about the day.
- Helping to set up the opening event for a new exhibition to take place that evening.

What happened next?

The Learning Officer has kept in contact with the young person and since Takeover Day she has started volunteering at the museum at weekends and in school holidays. The museum was very impressed with how she researched and developed the trail and have encouraged her to continue working on the resource that she started on Takeover Day.

Although just one person participated in Takeover Day at PHM, the ripple effect is apparent, with the young person returning with her Mum to the exhibition opening night and talking about her experiences with her peers.

'My friends have been curious about what I've been up to as they have not really heard about anyone doing this sort of thing before.'

'I've been quite a few times to the museum recently and wanted to get involved. I've never really understood how museums function or people's various roles. I contacted the museum to see if I could get involved and they told me about Takeover Day. I would love to come back and volunteer.'

Takeover Day Participant

CASE STUDY 6

HORNIMAN MUSEUM LONDON

Why take part?

The Youth Engagement Officer thought that it would be a great way for the museum's youth panel to make a real contribution to the work of the museum and were keen to be part of a national campaign.

Who took part?

Four members of the museum's youth panel aged 16-19. The older members of the panel found it easier to have time off from college approved or juggle their schedules to be able to take part.

What did they do?

The group developed a new visitor trail for the African Worlds exhibition and took over the museum's Facebook and Twitter accounts for the day. The youth panel had always been keen to produce a trail for the museum and this was an opportunity for the museum and young people to try something new.

How did they spend their time on the day?

The young people had spent some time in previous panel meetings discussing the format and content of the trail. They had input from the Digital Media Manager who helped them shape their ideas and give them advice about accessibility and the museum's styling.

On the day, they:

- Split into two teams, taking photos and exploring the collections to come up with questions.
- Tweeted their draft questions to test interest and iron out any ambiguities in the wording (they also Facebooked about the trail but found the response to be higher on Twitter).
- Produced their final version of the trail with the help of the Digital Media Manager.

What happened next?

Thanks to the commitment of museum staff to provide the young people with their time and expertise on the day, the young people understood what would work in the museum and created a simple yet robust resource. The trail is now part of the museum's permanent resource, appearing on their website for visitors to download and in hard copy at the entrance desk <http://www.horniman.ac.uk/visit/displays/display/african-worlds/display-chapter/african-worlds>. Spurred on by seeing their work in use at the museum, the youth panel are looking for more ways that they can enhance the experience for visitors.

The museum is hoping that through the young people's positive experience of taking over the museum, more young people will want to join the youth panel. It has certainly been an empowering experience for the young people, on leaving at the end of the day, one participant asked if there were any jobs available at the museum!

'I would also like to say that working with a smaller group of young people really benefitted everyone all around – it gave them focus and responsibilities were easily delegated and they all felt thoroughly involved.'

Kat Leung, Youth Participation Officer

'The best part was interacting with people who replied on Twitter and Facebook, we were amazed by the number of people who replied!'

Horniman Takeover Day participant

LIST OF MUSEUMS TAKING PART IN 2011

Tate Liverpool
Whitworth Gallery
Manchester Museum
Manchester Art Gallery
Historic Royal Palaces
(Hampton Court Palace only)
North Lincolnshire Museums
(20-21 Gallery, Lincolnshire Museum)
Museum of London
People's History Museum
National Museums Liverpool
Woodhorn Museum & Archive
Eureka!
Falmouth Art Gallery
River and Rowing Museum
Horniman Museum
Wallace Collection
Chase Canvas
Royal Artillery Museum
National Museum of the Royal Navy
The Deep (aquarium)
Pitt Rivers Museum
Wolverhampton Art Gallery
Lewes Priory Trust
Tyne & Wear Museums (Discovery Museum)
Oxford University Museum of Natural History
National Waterfront Museum, Swansea
Penlee House Gallery
Galleries of Justice Museum
Glasgow Museums Resource Centre
(The Open Museum, Depot Arts, Springburn Museum)
Bolling Hall Museum
Ironbridge Gorge Museums
Andover Museum
Lacock Abbey National Trust
National Memorial Arboretum



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