**Museums Association Submission to the Young People and the Arts Consultation**

1. **About the Museums Association**

The Museums Association (MA) is a membership organisation representing and supporting museums and people who work for them, throughout the UK. Members include all types of museums, from small volunteer-run locals to large nationals, and people working in all types of roles, from directors to trainees. Founded 125 years ago, in 1889, the MA was the world’s first professional body for museums. We lead thinking in UK museums with initiatives such as *Collections for the Future*, *Sustainability and Museums, Museums 2020* and, most recently, *Museums Change Lives*. We receive no regular public funding.

1. **About Museums Change Lives**

Museums Change Lives is the Museums Association’s vision for the increased social impact of museums. <http://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-change-lives>

It demonstrates that museums can be ambitious about their role in society and that all museums, however they are funded and whatever their subject matter, can support positive social change.

Many museums already do this and others have as yet untapped potential. The MA believes that as public expenditure continues to be cut, it is more important than ever that musuems have a strong sense of social purpose.

Museums Change Lives explores impacts under three headings: [Wellbeing](http://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-change-lives/web-resource/wellbeing), [Better Places](http://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-change-lives/web-resource/better-places) and [Ideas and People](http://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-change-lives/web-resource/ideas-and-people). It aims to enthuse people in museums to increase their impact, encourage funders to support museums in becoming more relevant to their audiences and communities, and show organisations the potential partnerships they could have with museums in order to change people’s lives.

1. **Response to Young People and the Arts**

The MA welcomes the consultation paper Young People and the Arts. The MA has long been a proponent of cultural learning and the role that museums and galleries can play in developing learning opportunities for people of all ages.

Many museums in the UK were founded with educational missions and museums have led the way in developing formal and informal learning programmes, projects and activities. There is evidence that museums can engage young people in learning and purposeful activity when schools and other formal education settings have failed, and that participation in museum learning opportunities can improve attainment in a range of subjects.

Visiting museums and engagement with the collections not only fosters learning and enjoyment in young people but can also contribute to creating a sense of identity and place.

In general the MA would like to see more synergy between education policy and cultural policy, especially in areas such as the curriculum.

It is also important to look to other areas of the UK for best practice in cultural policy. For example in Wales, Baroness Kay Andrews’ Culture and Poverty report examines how cultural and heritage bodies can work more closely together to broaden access to, appreciation of and participation in culture in ways that contribute to reducing poverty.

In Scotland the curriculum is dependent on outside classroom learning, which can help encourage visits to cultural institutions.

Specific responses to questions in the consultation document as they pertain to museums are as follows:

**Education**

2. How can every child have opportunities to participate in the arts and culture provided by workshops and other events in partnerships with cultural organisations and artists?

We would support the idea of every child having the opportunity to visit a gallery or museum in their local area at least once every academic year or term.

5. How can after-school clubs use arts and culture activities that offer quality, choice and affordability?   
Museums and galleries often have dedicated learning spaces that could be used outside of school hours to provide before and after school learning opportunities or space for after-school clubs.

7. & 8 How do we improve careers guidance to ensure young people understand the full range of careers in the arts and heritage sectors, and the kinds of qualifications and experiences involved in pursuing them? Should careers guidance advisors provide more information and education about careers in the arts and creative industries? What other coordinated measures might help young people in disadvantaged areas engage with the arts in higher education?

Museums and galleries could work with local schools, colleges and careers advisors to provide information and work experience opportunities.

**Local authorities**

9. How can local authorities use their leadership role to support young people and the arts? Should every local authority lead on developing a strategy for local arts and culture with a particular focus on the inclusion of young people?

A local strategy for inclusion would be useful as would a commitment to maintaining levels of funding and support for museums and galleries, which have been particularly hard hit by budget cuts.

11. How can local authorities widen access for young people to the arts and cultural activity that they support through their cultural, and local development roles, including making best use of libraries and cultural spaces, and empty premises?

Museums and galleries could be encouraged by local authorities to provide dedicated space for young people with safe opportunities to do homework, learn new skills and socialize.

12. What responsibilities should be placed on organisations receiving public money?

Should it be a clear condition for organisations receiving Arts Council funding to demonstrate how they will extend opportunities to young people and publish progress towards these objectives year on year? What more could be done to ensure these opportunities to engage with young people are spread across the country?

Should every arts organisation of national importance which receives public money offer a certain number of paid internships for local young people from disadvantaged backgrounds?

Organisations receiving public money should provide services that are accessible to all young people. Simple indicators could be used to measure progress. A strategy towards a more equal distribution of funding and opportunities across England would be welcome.

16. How can trustees/board membership structures support arts and cultural learning?

All boards of publicly funded organisations could have one trustee with specific responsibility for cultural learning. It is also important that this responsibility is reflected at senior management level.

17 & 18. How can we build on best practice in arts and cultural heritage organisations to ensure every child from all backgrounds and from across the country has the opportunity to be inspired by the full range of excellent art forms and cultural experiences? How can we build on best practice in arts and cultural heritage organisations to ensure every child from all backgrounds and abilities and from across the country has the opportunity to participate in excellent arts and cultural projects?

Local provision of services near to where young people live and go to school is vital. Supporting and ensuring adequate funding of local and regional museums and galleries is fundamental to guaranteeing that all young people have access to rich cultural experiences. However, funding alone is not enough. Museums and galleries need to be publicly committed to providing accessible cultural learning opportunities and to engaging with all young people in their local communities, not just those that already visit. Sharing best practice and highlighting centres of excellence in engaging young people might be one way of doing this. Clusters of cultural organisations could provide an integrated cultural offer to young people as well as sharing expertise and skills between organisations in areas such as engagement and learning.

We would be happy to expand on any of these points.

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