

Museums, libraries and archives and the Skills for Life agenda



Position Statement

Museums, libraries and archives connect people to knowledge and information, creativity and inspiration.

The role of Yorkshire Museums, Libraries and Archives Council is to provide strategic leadership, advocacy and advice, enabling museums, archives and libraries to realise their full impact on the learning, economic, cultural and social well being of the Yorkshire Region.

Museums, libraries and archives have an important role to play in engaging and retaining adult learners, including Skills for Life learners. We define learning as 'active engagement with experience'. The inspiration and stimulation that museums, libraries and archives can offer becomes particularly important when working with free-choice adult learners, especially those who are turned off by formal learning situations.

- Museums, libraries and archives offer a 'special' or non threatening space for learning
- They enable learning to become a personal exploration, directed by the learner
- They introduce learning into the lives of adults in a holistic way, rather than as a separate classroom based activity, and encourage a lifelong thirst for knowledge and learning

We believe the role of museums, libraries and archives in the Skills for Life agenda is as follows:

Signposting

Museums, libraries and archives are often focuses for community activity, and our staff work with the public every day. Front line staff in museums, libraries and archives can, through informal interactions, signpost members of the public to formal learning opportunities leading to progression and qualifications.

Inspiring Learning

Visitors to museums, libraries and archives may come to learn, to do something different, or to have fun with their families. Museums, libraries and archives offer an opportunity to switch people on to learning, and represent an informal introduction to adult learning, with a minimum of commitment or pressure of assessment, which are so often the barriers to adults learning.

Partnership Delivery

Significant work has already been done on the potential to use museum, library and archive resources to directly teach the literacy and numeracy curriculum through mapping of activities and the development of targeted resources.

Working in partnership with adult education providers, museums, libraries and archives offer the opportunity to enrich literacy, numeracy and language courses.

Museums, libraries and archives offer the chance to use emerging literacy and numeracy skills in unique and diverse ways, and broaden a learner's horizons. Use of museum, library and archive resources in skills for life delivery means that provision can become a special and memorable experience.

Workforce development

Museum, library and archive resources challenge Skills for Life practitioners to use diverse and innovative ways to teach the literacy and numeracy curriculum.

For harder to reach learners, the desire to improve literacy and numeracy skills may not be enough. Personal interests, the desire to find out more, and a capturing of the imagination through museum, library and archive resources can be the key to retaining interest and leading to improvement in literacy and numeracy skills.

Skills for Life practitioners offer museum, library and archives expertise in working with diverse audiences, especially around working with adults who do not traditionally visit museums, libraries and archives.

There is still a long way to go for museums, libraries and archives, and a great deal of untapped potential. To find out more, or to get involved, please contact:

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