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Renaissance East of England  
Stepping Stones Evaluation  
Final Report

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## **1. Executive Summary**

The Stepping Stones evaluation process has revealed that the project has had a profound effect on those taking part, and to a large extent worked extremely well for young people to transform their attitudes and mindset, feelings of confidence and self-worth, and crucially, propensity to continue into employment or training.

The experience has done this in a number of ways:

- I. For many this was their first experience of full-time employment, and the very fact of having to be organised and timely has a significant impact and proves to the young people themselves that although daunting, they are able to commit to and hold down a full-time job. In addition, having a purpose and reason to get up each day, and a regular, productive routine, gives participants energy, enthusiasm, more meaning in their lives and a propensity to feel more positive about their future.
- II. The responsibility and confidence that is placed in the young people is equally transformative. Many of them go on a journey, from very low-esteem, low self-confidence, and in some cases, feelings of despondency or depression that can accompany long periods of unemployment, to feeling confident, valued, and with high self-worth, self-belief and a positive 'can-do' mindset. This is a side-effect of the sense of achievement they experience from being given a 'proper job', with specific expectations, that makes a significant contribution to the museum and its visitors.
- III. The technical skills and training that accompanies the experience of working within the museum also make a significant impact, ranging from administrative skills, to health and safety, software and IT to marketing and PR. The young people are keen to add these to their CVs to support the overall work experience, and these are felt to add to a belief that future employers will be attracted by the training and certificates acquired.

Many of the young people have benefitted a huge amount from the way they have been welcomed, nurtured and mentored by staff within the museums. Aside from the skills they have learned, they have enjoyed excellent professional working relationships, in many cases an extended social network, which only adds to the feelings of confidence and self-esteem.

The experience of unemployment can prompt people to feel like second class citizens, or judged negatively by their peers, and the experience of working in the museum challenges these feelings and leads to a more positive social life per se. On a rational level, the money they earn in working enables the young people to re-join their friends and peers in social activities.

The young people all indicate that the experience of working in a museum environment has provided some very specific advantages that would be lacking in any other working environment. The range of skills and activities is extremely broad, and many have benefitted from this to the extent that they feel very optimistic about applying successfully for all kinds of jobs once their time at the museum comes to a close.

On a general level, there is also a sense of real pride in being in a learned, cultural environment, and around artefacts and exhibits of note, that provide interest and pleasure to a spectrum of visitors.

In many cases, the experience has exceeded expectations. Many young people, excluding those with prior experience of working, studying or volunteering in the museum sector, had expected the experience might be boring, academic or lacking in business experience. Such expectations have been confounded, and some of these positive messages have been taken back into the community with participants persuading their friends and peers of the benefits of using or volunteering for the museums.

Many were amazed at the sheer breadth of activities taken on in their museums, and considered themselves fascinated by the work of the museums, and the variety and high quality of the outputs for members of the public. This has helped many consider new and varied ideas for their future careers or training opportunities.

Participants were extremely reluctant to leave their museums and felt they had made a significant contribution, bringing a fresh view of things, and in many cases from the perspective of those who do not know about or visit museums. Many have made strong social bonds with staff and intend to maintain a close connection with the museum, either through visiting or volunteering in future. To this extent, it is very clear that the experience has dramatically changed the way many participants view museums per se.

This in turn has been beneficial to visitors to the museum, enabling changes, improvements and an increase in what the museums are able to achieve, how they communicate and interact with young people in the wider community. One of the key benefits appears to have been that those with no knowledge or prior experience of the museum sector are able to look at these organisations with fresh eyes, a lack of preconceptions, and also with a view about what young people like themselves, and within their peer group, may want or need from the museum environment to engage them.

All who took part in the evaluation felt that the museum environment lent itself perfectly to the Stepping Stones project, and the task of up-skilling young people in unemployment, due to the extraordinary breadth of work and skills available with the one organisation, and the nurturing, supportive atmosphere. This element should not be underestimated, and the evidence suggests that the museum environment may be unique in being able to take in young people, some of whom are at a real low point, or have very limited work experience, and in a very short time give them the means to thrive and prosper.

The experience has also helped museum staff develop their management and mentoring skills. It was evident that museums were able to lend themselves extremely well to the task of mentoring and developing the skills and confidence of young people – as one respondent put it: *“Museums are universities waiting to happen and this is the first leg of that.”*

Through the evaluation process, it became clear which elements comprise ‘best practice’ for both participants and host museums, as follows:

- I. A defined project and responsibilities that runs throughout their time at the museum worked well to provide a clear sense of purpose and challenge. This drives a sense that these are real jobs with a value to the museum, and not some kind of work experience. Young people are also able to take ownership of these specific projects and work to see them completed within their time at the museum.
- II. Running alongside specific projects or tasks, working across a range of areas or being exposed to different disciplines within the museum environment also worked extremely well to gain the maximum breadth of experience for the young people, and ensure that they are able to take a wide range of skills into play as they seek future employment.

Positioning of the scheme, for both host museums, museum staff and the young people, is essential. The project was most effective for those who fully understood that these jobs were indeed designed as a 'stepping stone' back into the job market and workforce. It is very important for museums to reinforce this idea as it can be easy for the young people to hope that maybe they can stay on if they do well. It is also important that all staff who come into contact with the employee understand this rationale and support the concept of helping them gain the widest possible experience to help them back into the job market.

## 2. Background

Stepping Stones is an East of England Renaissance programme looking at how museums can meet the needs of those who are out of work by building confidence and developing transferable skills. The programme explores the role of museums as a 'stepping-stone' to employment by providing experience of the world of work through short-term job placements and apprenticeship opportunities. The programme is not intended to provide long-term jobs within the sector but rather to equip young people to apply for jobs more widely.

The programme is funded by Renaissance (an MLA programme) and the national Future Jobs Fund\*. Renaissance East of England bid to the Future Jobs Fund on behalf of a partnership of museum services across the region. It was successful in the very first round securing £195,000 towards the programme and was as far as we know the only museum-led bid.

The Stepping Stones programme has created 32 extra jobs (i.e. in addition to the usual staff complement) for unemployed young people in 24 museums (2 in partnership with an archives and local studies centre and a library) across the region. The museums have offered a diverse range of job opportunities including front of house, retail, catering, learning and outreach, collections care, marketing, design, events and site maintenance all designed to develop a broad range of skills.

The programme started in December 2009 and will finish in June 2011. Most of the jobs were for a 6-month period but 7 were offered as 12-month or 18-month apprenticeships where the young person is attending a local college on day release. Their apprenticeship courses include the new Creative Apprenticeship for museums, Customer Care, Business Administration and Farming linked to a rural museum site.

Young people were recruited to jobs in partnership with Jobcentre Plus who had to confirm the eligibility of the young people for the Future Jobs Fund scheme. They came from a wide range of backgrounds with very differing levels of qualification and previous work experience. For some this was their first experience of paid employment.

The museums undertook to mentor the young employees identifying training and development opportunities, encouraging them to keep 'learning logs' and helping them to update CVs. In return they have benefited from extra capacity and development opportunities for line managers and mentors. They have also gained a new perspective on their service from young people most of whom had no previous contact with their museum.

See Appendix 1 for a list of project partners.

NB The term 'museums' used in this report includes the two archives and local studies centre and library partners.

*\*The Future Jobs Fund (FJF) was announced in 2009. By the end of March 2011 the existing bids will have funded over 100,000 jobs, mainly aimed at 18–24 year olds who have been out of work for six months and claiming Jobseeker's Allowance.*

### 3 The Evaluation Project

The evaluation project related to the jobs / apprenticeships strand of the Stepping Stones programme.

An internal evaluation framework for this aspect of the project has been developed as an integrated part of the support package offered to participants. The young people involved undertake an initial development interview and an exit interview with museum staff; they will also have an ongoing support plan and their own learning log. Where permission has been given by the participant, this data has been analysed as a part of the overall evaluation process and the findings included in this report.

#### 3.1 About the Evaluation Report

This document represents this final report on the findings from the evaluation process. It includes an analysis of records kept by mentors within the host museums, such as Initial Personal Development Interviews, Personal Development Support Plan, Learning Log and Exit Interviews, as well as the findings from online, face to face and telephone interviews with the participants, conducted by Matt Dobbin from Discovery East, the research agency appointed to conduct the evaluation.

#### 3.2 Objectives

The overall objectives for the research are to evaluate the outcomes of the jobs/apprenticeships programme for both young people and host museums. For young people, specific objectives are to explore;

- To what extent do participants gain in confidence in areas that relate to their ability to progress to and remain in employment or further training;
- To what extent do participants gain transferable skills that will enable them to progress to employment or further training;
- To what extent do participants develop life skills in a work environment that will better enable them to progress to and remain in employment or further training;
- What if any additional outcomes have there been for participants, for example, expanded social networks, improved mental health;
- What factors within a museum setting contribute to the outcomes for participants.

#### 3.3 Methodology

In order to fully evaluate the experience of participants and the outcomes from the Stepping Stones project, we adopted a three stage approach using a number of techniques:

- I. At an initial stage we ran a briefing session with staff from host museums, both to introduce the evaluation process and to hold a focus group discussion to evaluate the Stepping Stones project from the perspective of the museums. The findings from this stage of the process are reported in Part 2 of this report.
- II. The second stage was to contact each of the young people participating by letter, introducing Matt and Discovery East, explaining the purpose of the evaluation process, and inviting each of young people to log into an online forum that had been developed specifically for this purpose. The Thinking Shed works like a social network site (Facebook) but designed specifically for research. We sent a link and password so respondents could login and share

their views and experiences, but without having to reveal their identities to one another, beyond being fellow participants in the Stepping Stones programme. This is a means of communication familiar and comfortable to many young people, meaning they were inclined to be open and honest in their views. In addition, it allowed respondents to define their own subjects for discussion, and enabled us to follow up on these insights in next stages of evaluation process.

- III. The third stage of the evaluation was to meet face to face with 20 participants in May and June 2010, across four locations: Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse; Chelmsford Museum; Wardown Park Museum and The Fitzwilliam Museum. These took the form of one to one interviews, each lasting 30 minutes. These allowed us to build a rapport with the young people and a deeper exploration of the experience, impact and outcomes of the jobs and apprenticeships.
- IV. The final stage comprised follow-up telephone interviews with each respondent to explore how things have changed once the jobs have come to a close. This focuses on the outcomes and the impact of the Stepping Stones project, how these carry through into the 'real world'.

This process ensured we were able to gain maximum insight and understand the 'journey' young people experience, and move them from being 'responders' to 'engagers'. Rather than acquiring brief snapshot of their views and opinions at a single moment in time, we were able to extend our touch-points and reap the benefit of the additional level of engagement. In addition, the findings from one stage were then used to feed into content for the next.

Participation was entirely voluntary, and extended to all participants. It should be noted that some chose not to take part in some elements of the evaluation, and four left the process early, one having secured another job and three for other reasons, and were therefore unable to take part.

#### **4. The Nature of the Sample**

Of the 32 who took part in the project, 21 took part in the evaluation. There was a broad mix of types of young people taking part in the Stepping Stones project. These segment broadly into three typologies:

##### ***Low Attainers***

A number of young people taking part in the Stepping Stones project tended to have a low level of educational attainment and in some cases, a more troubled background and start to their adult life. This ranged from being expelled from school; difficult family relationships and home life; little or no experience of employment; or being in trouble with the police / having a criminal record.

Understandably, many of the young people within this group tended to have lower aspirations and in spite of a willingness to work, described a situation where they felt opportunities for future employment were either very limited or non-existent.

By their own admission, they had limited awareness, knowledge or interest in the museum sector, and described the experience of working in a museum as a revelation. In many cases, the expectation had been that working in a museum would be 'boring', but in contrast, the actual experience had been that museums are varied and interesting, with many facets and a more modern, refreshing approach than had been expected. In addition, for many, working in close proximity to highly knowledgeable people with a passion and expertise in a particular field, had a very positive effect and seemed to open the minds of the young people to new ideas and diverse topics of interest. This in turn, had the effect of opening their minds to consider a wider range of future job opportunities.

In many ways, this group had the most to gain, being the least likely to find work, they were genuinely surprised and delighted to have been selected by the museum and conscious that this was their 'big break', brought real enthusiasm and determination to succeed. They went on a similar journey to other young people, growing in knowledge, confidence and self-belief, with a more positive view of the world of work, and of their future per se, but perhaps covered a greater distance due to their initial starting point.

##### ***Struggling Graduates / Educational Attainers***

This group were a mix of graduates and those who had achieved well at school or college. They tended to have a strong work ethic and have role positive models within peers and family for employment.

In some respects, the experience of unemployment hit this group the hardest. They had 'done the right thing' by studying hard, and found it hard to reconcile to the idea of being out of work. They also tended to find themselves in a 'Catch 22' situation where they were deemed over qualified for the lower skilled jobs available, and yet too inexperienced for graduate positions within the sectors or areas of their studies. This hit many all the harder for the substantial debts they had accrued in order to study in the first place. Some within this group had experienced a real drop in confidence and self-esteem, and in some cases feelings of depression.

While the jobs within museums did offer many within this group a degree of confidence, and broke the cycle of depression, for many it was more that the practical work experience and skills they were able to gain would help them open doors and gain future employment.

*"I was doing a degree in fine arts for the last 3 years. I graduated last year and moved back in with my parents, but I just couldn't find any entry level jobs. Was even applying to shop jobs, but they wouldn't take me because I was over qualified."*

*"My degree was in furniture making and my plan when I went to uni was to do the degree, buy a workshop and make the furniture for the rest of my days, but at uni I realised that wasn't such a realistic plan. I tried to get into a workshop, sent off applications, but to no avail. It is so hard to get a starting position in the furniture making industry. I was on JSA for about 7 months, and had to keep reassuring myself that I am a good furniture maker. What I have appreciated from this is knowing that there is something else that I have found and really enjoy, I could really see myself working in the sector. It doesn't feel like a compromise, it has actually made me expand my horizons and made me realise that there is something beyond working with wood that I enjoy and am good at."*

### ***Museum Sector Hopefuls***

There were a small number of the young people who were looking specifically to work in the museum sector. They had all experienced unemployment and therefore, shared many of the same feelings of the other groups.

Many had volunteered in the past in the museum sector and were far more familiar with the way museums operate. For these participants, the experience helped them to build on what they knew and extend their skills beyond what would have been possible were they volunteering.

Some, however, were sceptical that the experience would help them achieve their ambition of working within the museum sector, given the shortage of work in this area and high level of competition. To some extent, there is a risk that this sub-group will be the most disappointed if on leaving work, they are unable to secure a position within the sector and findings suggest that they may to some extent to be replicating experience already gained through their studies and voluntary experience.

It should be noted that it was never the aim of the project to encourage young people into work within the museum sector, but inevitably, there was a degree of self-selection, with Jobcentre Plus potentially putting forward those who had expressed a particular interest, and this was well beyond the control of the project organisers.

## 5. Main Findings

### 5.1 The Experience of Unemployment

The experience of unemployment was similar for many across the sample and could be characterised as a cycle of negativity and depression. The longer the period of unemployment continued, and the more job applications that were unsuccessful, so the respondents tended to find that they would apply for work with the expectation that they would not succeed, and in some cases stop applying altogether. The experience also fed a belief that the lack of work experience and workplace skills would continue to be a significant impediment to successfully applying for work.

*"Before coming to the museum I was looking for a job, but couldn't get one because I didn't have any experience. I did painting and decorating at college, but left because they didn't have the money for resources."*

*"I would be thinking that I would just get rejected from jobs because of not having enough experience."*

*"I did a humanities degree and graduated with a 2:1. When I came out it was like a constant holiday to start with, but then it got me down – constantly applying for jobs and them not even getting back to me. I was unemployed for 8 months, which felt like a long time."*

*"I had £21k debt and people were getting back to me and saying that I was over qualified."*

The effect of unemployment was intensely personal for many, who saw it as a reflection of their place in society, and as a result it could be very damaging to self-esteem and self-confidence.

*"I was going out of my mind, losing confidence... I was intensely bored and a bit embarrassed because people have an opinion of people on the dole and it's not always right."*

*"I didn't want to be on the dole, not enough money and just sitting around. It was annoying because my friends had jobs and cars."*

*"I was completely demoralised by the time I got this job, about 1 ½ years after quitting uni. I felt worthless because I had dropped out, and try to keep it quiet even now."*

*"I had really bad depression, I do suffer anyway, but it was the first time in my life that I didn't have anything to wake up for – no college or work, nothing to do with my time, I was miserable."*

*"I was alright to start off with, but then I started drinking. If you don't need to get up in the morning it doesn't matter if you have a hangover. I think there is a big correlation between unemployment and depression, because it's like saying that you don't have enough worth."*

Those who took part came from all walks of life and in many cases, had no intention or desire to work within the museum sector, and yet when the opportunity unexpectedly arose, many saw within it the potential to get out of the cycle of unemployment. In many cases, the feedback suggests that this opportunity came just at the right time help people who were having a terrible time and feeling trapped by their circumstances.

*"I think you can imagine how you feel after 7 months of JSA, after having lived on my own at Uni, then having to move back home with my parents. I was getting £50 a week and was stuck at home, nowhere to go, nothing to do, applying for jobs and not hearing anything back."*

The experience of working within the museum was transformational, challenging this mindset and giving the young people a sense that they would return to the workforce with something of real value to offer future employers, as evidenced by the following comments:

*"Before the project started I was really down, I didn't have anything to do, I spent all my time applying for jobs and not getting anywhere, I was really depressed, I didn't think I could really do a job. Having been here for about 5 months everything has changed, it's brilliant, and hopefully it will just propel me into going far. It has proved to me that I can do all this work."*

*"I had to move back home with my parents when I was unemployed, everything went wrong for me, someone crashed into my car and I had no money, and so when I had the opportunity for this job I was really quite excited. I didn't think I would get the job though and I was really surprised and pleased when I did."*

*"I studied beauty therapy for two years, then I went and did hairdressing and more beauty. I had been looking for a job for ages in beauty, but couldn't find anything. The person at the Jobcentre mentioned this and explained it a bit, and I thought it sounded excellent."*

## 5.2 Initial Awareness of Stepping Stones

Many became aware of the Stepping Stones jobs and apprenticeships through their Jobcentre Plus caseworkers. The response to hearing about these was extremely positive, although for the reasons mentioned in the previous section, many were also doubtful that they would be successful in their application.

*"I walked into job centre one day and they told me that there was a fantastic opportunity for me, so applied straight away."*

*"My advisor at the job centre got to know me, this came up and I think she thought it was something I would like to do. Apparently other apprentices were put on it without them knowing what it really entailed, that sort of thing happens quite a lot at the job centre, but I think the success of it depends on how much you put into it and I tried hard."*

### 5.3 Application and Interview Process

Reactions to the application and interview process were mixed, and this was felt to be very dependent on the experience of Jobcentre Plus.

There were some who were provided with a thorough brief by their contact at jobcentre plus, who were supported in the application process and arrived at the interview stage aware and prepared.

For many, however, this was not the case, and they were given scant information about the jobs prior to being contacted or attending the interview, in spite of the fact that all museums provided full job descriptions to Jobcentre Plus. For those with more confidence or higher educational attainment, this had less of an effect and they were able to cope with the experience.

*"I sent off an application form that the lady in the jobcentre gave me, was surprised when it came back. I had to go and have an interview – that was my first interview, I didn't think I was going to get it, but an hour later they rang me up. I thought I had mucked up the interview....it could have been a bit easier, but I suppose they are just treating it like a normal interview process."*

*"When I went for the job I didn't know anything about it, so maybe they could explain more about what you would be doing, I just thought it was a 6-month shop thing."*

Some, however, felt undermined by the lack of communication, information or support from Jobcentre Plus, and this was manifest in feeling very nervous and out of their depth in the interview itself. It is also worth noting, that for some young people, they had never completed an application form or a CV before, and the request for these was a significant challenge.

*"She (Jobcentre Plus case worker) mentioned doing some admin work and the fact I would be working different people and doing a variety of things... If they had told me what I would be doing then I wouldn't have been quite so nervous. I was so scared about the interview, but the people at the museum made me feel so comfortable and welcome. I had never even been to that museum before."*

*"I was getting to the point where I would have accepted anything, then this came up. I was nervous, because I didn't know what it entailed."*

Overall, young people found the interview process very positive, and it was evident that staff adapted this for the needs of the individual, supporting those who were struggling or felt out of their depth.

### 5.4 Working in the Museum

#### 5.4.1 Initial Expectations

It was clear that the experience of working in a museum had exceeded expectations for many young people. The assumption had been that the nature of the work and the museum environment would be 'dull', 'boring', 'dry', 'academic' and 'limited' in scope. This also tended to reflect how all but those who had studied or volunteered in the museum sector, had had very little interaction previously, and very little awareness about what museums do. The standard frame of reference for most young people was school visits to museums when they were very young.

These expectations were entirely confounded and the young people delighted with what they found at museums.

*"I never thought it would be like this when I first got the job, I thought it would be more boring, doing more research, it is completely different to what I expected, I never thought I would be doing any building. That is what I enjoy the most."*

*"There is such a wide variety of things to do, so many aspects to it. It's not just a museum, it's a shop, a café, a business. I thought I would just be sat in a room logging items, I didn't realise there was such a wide range of things to do, and they have let me have so much freedom to do what I think needs to be done in the museum."*

#### **5.4.2 Job Role and Responsibility**

The job roles vary widely, and those that are considered to have the best outcomes for the young people are where they are given a sense of responsibility, or that play to their particular interests or skills. This helped them integrate with other staff and believe that they are doing a 'proper job', rather than a form of work experience. This in turn builds the confidence of the young people who find themselves able to take on even more varied tasks and responsibility.

*"I have a project that is my responsibility, to widen the school base by creating a new mailing list. Because I have a fine art background I also do a lot of photography for them. I also write press releases for kids events, put out listings on internet sites, organised the whole of their marketing images library because it was a bit of a state, and sometimes do little mock ups for designers."*

*"I have been given a whole exhibition to do by myself, I've never had that much responsibility given to me before. I like that. It makes me feel like I have got a role, and I'm not just a dogsbody."*

*"Recently someone donated about 400 items, I was given the task of going through them and cataloguing them all. This is the first time I have handled a whole collection from start to finish, I like that because I am left to get on with it... I don't feel like I am on work experience, I feel like I am doing a job, not being supervised all the time."*

In terms of 'best practice', those who had a specific task or project, or a main role or function, benefitted the most from the experience. In addition, those who were able to work periodically within new or different parts of the museum also gained confidence from the extension of their skill set. The main suggested improvement from some of the young people who had been more focussed on one particular role or area, was to be allowed to do this, even on an ad hoc basis.

*"The main thing is experience, because without that you can't get a job. It would be good if there were different choices in different parts of the museum too. If I could have done different things that would have made it better."*

#### **5.4.3 Interaction with other Staff**

Many young people felt they had been welcomed into the host museum and staff worked hard to help them thrive and achieve the best experience.

*"I have become part of the furniture, but also think people always aware that I'm not there very long. I am getting along with them all really well though."*

*"It has been really good. From the first moment they just accepted me and they gave me responsibility straight away with this schools project. It's nice to be trusted and not be treated like a child anymore."*

It is worth noting, however, that for some young people this was a daunting experience and in spite of a generally nurturing atmosphere, they still felt intimidated or unsure whether they could or should make comments or suggestions.

*"Sometimes I feel I shouldn't say things because I am so junior here."*

*"Most people have been lovely and treat you as an equal, but it can feel a bit like you are a permanent work experience person."*

*"It is always an unknown going into a workplace, but once you know what you are capable of, you can just go in and face it, and I feel like that now, like I can overcome the problems with certain people. I am feeling more confident in meetings and am starting to feel more assertive. I used to have opinions in meetings, but not want to voice them, because I was worried people would think 'who are you?', but now I have started to say things"*

This sentiment extends to the workplace, and some participants indicated that while they felt they would be able to contribute to a particular task or area of work, they were reticent about voicing this or appearing to speak out of turn. This emphasises the importance of setting clear parameters for young people at the outset and in a sense, giving them the permission and opportunity to voice their ideas or volunteer to help.

Very few felt they had come up against any difficulties within the museum environment or among museum staff. One or two, however, did feel intimidated by some of the more senior museum staff, or that their views would not be valid as they were so young and inexperienced, or had come into the museum through what might be viewed an unorthodox route. Some also felt that there might be resentment that they were being handed the opportunity on a plate, where others had had to work or study hard to achieve a position within their museum.

*"I think it can depend on the attitudes of your colleagues. I have been here since January and have started to learn that there are struggles in relationships between back and front of house, and also with the curatorial team and everyone else. The attitude towards me felt personal for a while, and came up more when I had to send emails round asking about people's education for my course, people talked about how hard they had to work to get in and all these opportunities that are around today, not sure if it was directed at me, but felt like it. Overall though, I think there have only been one or two people who seem to have a problem with me."*

*"One person won't deal with me directly. When I was asked to do some emailing people wouldn't get back to me and I would worry about it, and then find out that the person had*

*just gone over my head and emailed my boss their reply instead, I don't think that would happen if I was a regular team member."*

This reinforces the need to ensure that all staff in the host museums understand the purpose of the jobs and apprenticeships, and help the mentors support this overall objective. The most successful cases are those young people who feel they are as valid in their role as permanent staff, and this gives them the confidence to grasp the opportunities and make a genuine contribution to the work of the museum. In addition, there is a case for ensuring that the participants are given a professional sounding title that provides them with a more equal footing within the workplace.

*What could be done to improve the experience: "Just to try and get rid of that feeling that we are different to everyone else, even being referred to as 'the new person' rather than 'the apprentice'. We have a new person started and he doesn't know I am an apprentice, he just knows that I was there before him, so there is a different level of respect and it feels nice."*

#### **5.4.4 The Impact on Social Lives**

Many young people felt they had benefitted on a social level from the experience. This was both in the sense that they felt more confident, upbeat and sociable, and therefore more inclined to mix with their own friends and peers (not least because they had some money to enable this), but also in widening their social network to include others within the museum.

*"The people I work with are great and are making my apprenticeship even more special and I have made lots of nice friends here."*

Many also suggested that they would seek to maintain their links with the museum, both on a social level and in an informal way to continue to benefit from the support and guidance of colleagues and mentors.

#### **5.4.5 Skills Gained**

Many of the young people who took part in the evaluation were both surprised and delighted by the range of skills that they learned 'on the job' and also through training and courses provided by the host museums. There is no question that the Stepping Stones project has delivered extremely successfully on this key objective.

Learning so many new skills had the effect of increasing confidence per se, but also increasing the belief among the young people that they will be more attractive to future employers. Crucially, for those who have been taught new skills, they are more inclined to widen the range of future jobs or careers they would consider.

*"I've never done that much graphic design before and it is interesting. It has made me think that I might be able to go into graphic design or architecture."*

*"I'm doing a lot of computer stuff, getting back into Excel, other programs that companies use. It's great to get into the workplace and work with a team. I also help out with education sometimes, my photography skills have got better too, and also creative writing skills for children's press releases, it is a lot of fun."*

*"She (mentor) trained me on the till and taught me EPOS stock manager system. Loads of people like me would love a chance like this."*

*"I am doing a computer course too, that will go on my CV. This has given me experience, can go for retail jobs and say that I have used a till, and I can get a reference from here when I apply for jobs."*

*"I have gained a load of different qualifications that I never thought I would achieve in life, and it has helped me that much more for when I do go out for my next appointment. All those qualifications have opened up so many more opportunities for me and the skills helped me in life."*

*"There have been different bits of it that I can use when applying to different jobs, but also have been doing photography and design, so hoping to go and do an MA in art design and the book afterwards, so it will be great to have a portfolio of stuff that I can show."*

*"Working in a team, communicating with different departments, working across so many different sites because you have to constantly multi-task, it's constantly on the go."*

*"One day I am hoping to have my own building company, so this definitely helps build up my experience."*

*"What I produce is what the public see though, and like to get their feedback via the evaluation cards, I take that on board and adapt it to make things more user friendly for them."*

*"I have been asked to organise meetings and have enjoyed that, it has made me learn more. I have done research too, it gets broader and broader."*

*"My typing skills are much better, think I have just improved all round really. Have learnt lots about how a business is run, how to work promotions, advertise and hook people in."*

*"When I first started out I thought 'I don't want to stand in front of these kids, I am a bit scared of how to interact with them' then I got the confidence to do that and moved onto schools with special needs and was worrying 'how do I do this?' and then last week I went to a school with brain damaged children. It was really hard on me the first day, I was thinking 'why does that happen to some children?' but then I got on with it and thought 'That is how it is. How can I make it work for them?' There is such a gap between where I am now, compared to where I was last week."*

## **5.5 Analysis of the Initial Personal Development Interview and Exit Interview**

The findings from the interview part of the evaluation process were reinforced by the comments made in the initial interview and exit interviews. Each of the documents analysed demonstrate that participants felt they had gained a significant range of key skills, many of which were absent from the initial development interview record, showing the level of achievement and the nature of the journey young people go on, and the extent to which expectations are exceeded. Skills acquired are extremely wide ranging and include:

### **Soft Skills**

- Increased confidence
- Using own initiative
- Interpersonal skills and communications

### **Hard Skills**

- Financial form filling
- Typing and wpm
- ICT
- General administration
- Use of Cash Register / Cashing Up
- Writing press releases
- Working with visitors
- Explaining exhibits
- Setting up new exhibitions
- Designing exhibitions
- Building display cases

*"They have put me on lots of courses which have really helped me improve my skills."*

## **5.6 Outcomes for Young People**

As described throughout the report, the outcomes of the Stepping Stones project have been profound and far reaching for many participants. The wide range of skills and experience many young people gained has allowed them to grow in confidence but also widened the range and scope of jobs that they will consider and apply for in future.

*"There are a lot of skills in my role that could be applied to anything, I'm doing a lot of admin, a lot of purchase orders, so I could go to an office with those skills. Also I have to deal with a lot of clients and the public. It's very multi-skilled, and I feel like I could try for jobs either in events or in an office."*

*"I have been thrown in at the deep end a couple of times because they have such belief in me, I think I will sink, but I actually find out that, although I might go under a bit, I can swim."*

*"The whole thing has been positive, I haven't had one day when I have thought 'ugh, work again'."*

*"I think museums are communities too within the staff, all working towards putting something great out, constantly positive. If you have been out of work for a long time it is a great environment to come into."*

*"I think I have gained more than I had hoped to."*

### 5.6.1 The Impact on Confidence and Self-esteem

All of those who took part in the evaluation were positive that the experience of working within a museum had given them a huge confidence boost. The comments young people made were in stark contrast to those that describe their feelings during their period of unemployment, emphasising just how far they had travelled during a very short time.

The confidence gained had a profound impact, with some making positive changes in their personal lives, but many indicating that their new found confidence would be directly applied to their professional lives and search for employment. Even the very act of successfully maintaining a full-time job increased the sense of confidence and ability among many participants.

*"If I was afraid of something before I would back away, but now I won't shy away from it. I think it has made me a bit more reflective and think of different ways to get around things."*

*"People sometimes make jokes about you signing on and going to pick up your cheque, don't think they realise how hurtful it is. I think this experience has proved to people that not everyone on the dole just wants to sit there and do nothing. I have tried really hard with this and have done really well."*

*"I have quit smoking since I have been working here, because I have had something to do all the time. I was only smoking because I was bored. I am also thinking that I want to learn how to drive, because the commute has been a bit of a nightmare. I have never done a full time job before, was worried that I was going to be tired all the time, but I'm not."*

*"Before the project started I was really down, I didn't have anything to do, I spent all my time applying for jobs and not getting anywhere, really depressed, didn't think I could really do a job, and having been here for about 5 months everything has changed, it's brilliant, and hopefully it will just propel me into going far. It has proved to me that I can do all this work."*

*"It has given me confidence to get out there and do something different. Now I have got all these qualifications behind me I can go out there with an open mind and get out there and get myself a good job."*

*"It has helped my confidence, I can do more things now, I have got more money than before too, which makes me feel good."*

*"I feel far more confident. I have got far more confidence in my ability to go out there and do a job."*

*"It's made quite a big difference, I am a lot more confident and find it easier to talk to people that I don't know. I am also a lot more bubbly and friendly and more up for taking on new skills."*

*"I am just talking to you now, having a normal conversation, whereas at the start of all of this I would have been very nervous and stuttery."*

*"I feel like I have a lot more fight in me when applying for jobs. Before I would actually avoid applying to places that said 'we won't get back to you if you've not been successful, as we will have so many applicants', it became very self defeatist."*

### **5.6.2 Feelings about the Future**

While there were inevitable concerns about what the future might hold, many respondents felt that the experience of working within the museum would give their chances of finding work in future a significant boost.

*"I'm a bit worried because money is important to everyone. I just have to hope that another job comes along. However, before this job I wasn't very attractive to another employer, but now I have got these qualifications it will make it easier to get a job."*

*"I think it will be so much easier for me to find a job now, because I have experienced so many different things – have worked in the shop, in the café, have done projects getting people into the museum, designing a float for the carnival, so many different things."*

*"I really don't want to leave, but I think I will find it easier to find a job now I have experience in everything...so many more options have opened up for me now."*

*"I finish in August, am a bit worried that I will get stuck in the job market again, but now I have got some money I am thinking about going to do a masters in art design and book."*

*"I thought about doing an MA after graduating, but didn't have any money, and after a few months being unemployed I thought that I would never end up going back (to do my MA) and I had probably lost all the skills I had learnt and wouldn't be good enough, but now I feel like I can do it, and have got loads of stuff I can do."*

*"I think that before, you almost forgot that you could do anything, but this helps you remember what you can do, it hopefully should propel you forward, but I do think a lot getting a job is luck, being in the right place at the right time, so I don't know how much more the project could do."*

*"I think it has been brilliant. I was going out of my mind with boredom, I didn't think I would ever leave home and now I have prospects."*

*"I wanted to work in construction, but I need to do my driving test and also do a college course, so doing this has given me money to be able to learn to drive and I will also have experience."*

*"Before this job I wasn't very attractive to another employer, but now I have got these qualifications it will make it easier to get a job."*

*"I would happily go for another job and would be thinking that I am more likely to get it, because I can put down what I have done here."*

*"I am planning to do a PGCE and then hopefully become a museum education officer. But no matter how disappointed I will be when it's finished I would still never take it away – the things that I have done and achieved, the people I have worked with, I have a hell of a lot to write on my CV.."*

*"I have 2 months left in my placement and I've enjoyed every minute of it. It's given me so much confidence and I'm like a different person than I was when I first started. I've met some wonderful people that I will never forget and I'm really sad that it's coming to an end! I've learnt so many new facts that have really interested me. This job has made me realise I want to be a history teacher and has given me the belief that I can achieve what I want in the future. I would recommend to anyone to grab this opportunity because it's been the best experience ever."*

### **5.7 Reservations and Concerns about the Future**

While all young people taking part in the evaluation felt the jobs and apprenticeships would help them secure future employment, many also voiced significant concerns about this. This also came through in the online forum that the young people participated in, with several commenting that it was excellent to have been able to share worries and concerns this way. It was equally insightful as part of the evaluation process.

The chief concern was that having enjoyed all the positive effects of period of employment, and in particular the enjoyment of working in a museum environment, many were worried that once the jobs and apprenticeships were finished, they might be hit even harder by the prospect of unemployment and end up 'back at square one'. That is to say, struggling to find employment, due to the tough economic environment, or even more depressed at having reaped the emotional benefits of employment, only to have lost them.

*"I am still very afraid of ending up back where I was."*

*"It is giving me an experience of really good skills for the future, but one of my biggest fears is going back into the real world. I don't think a lot of people will be prepared for how we will feel when we leave."*

*"I don't want to leave, because I feel comfortable, everyone is so nice and they support me."*

*"That is the one problem, the concern of being back to square one. I think I will be more likely to get a job, but if I don't then I will be back to square one."*

*"I have gone from not working to going to work, and now I feel confident that I go straight into another job, but the only thing is that I don't necessarily feel confident that I could get another job."*

*"The dropping off the cliff moment for me would be if I went straight back onto JSA. Ideally I would go into another museum job, if not that then any job."*

*"I am concerned that I'm not going to get a job straight away, I am looking for work now. I had an interview last week, but I didn't get the job and I got quite down about it. It was a*

*job inside a school as a design technology technician, which is something I was applying to before this. The reason I didn't get the job before was because I didn't have enough education experience, but now I am building that up in the museum, and was able to say that in the interview, I have more to offer now, but I was turned down because I didn't interview very well and they felt I was over-qualified for the position, which is really frustrating. I am trying not to focus too much on it."*

*"The only thing that I am worried about is that this is going to end and I am going to end up back in the dole queue, I have got less than 2 months left."*

*"I think it's a valuable experience, no matter what. The only problem is that museums are vastly competitive, some people are saying 'I am going to go into museums'. I have got a degree, but the people I work with have got masters from Oxford or Cambridge and they are still struggling to get curatorial assistant positions. It's a great industry to go into, but then you don't want to leave it."*

*"I am really enjoying working both at the archives and at the museum, and I'm having a wonderful time. I have picked up new skills as well as improving and enhancing on my existing ones. It feels really good to be in a working environment after a long time of unemployment, where my confidence was at its lowest, but now I feel that my confidence has grown day by day. I am having such a good time here that it will be sad when this comes to an end. I am working with some wonderful people and they have made me feel welcome from day one and supported me, and for that I would like to say thank you to them. I wish there was a way to extend this employment contract."*

It is vital that in order to ameliorate the effect of leaving the museum and re-entering the job market, museum staff and mentors position the jobs as short term, and as a stepping stone, so that the young people do not start to think of them as permanent, or almost go into denial that they will come to an end. Rather, the emphasis needs to be on preparation to re-enter the job market, building up skills, preparing and adding to CVs and where relevant, building up a portfolio of work completed. This was happening in many cases, and these young people felt more confident and prepared for the challenge ahead. This also helps ensure that the return to the job market is less of a shock for the young people, and limits the risk that they will go back into a spiral of negativity and low confidence.

*"I think you should just enjoy it and much as possible, but remember 'I'm not going to be here forever'. For the first few months I was thinking 'I want to be here forever' but I have come to understand now that I'm not going to be able to stay there forever."*

Some of the young also experienced conflicting feelings about their next steps, not wanting to cut short their time at the museum, which many clearly enjoyed enormously, but at the same time feeling they ought to keep an eye out for more permanent work opportunities. There is a case for suggesting that seeking work while still employed is better for the participant in the long term, and that they will feel more positive and confident. Once again, this is an area than some young people were unsure about and needed support and advice perhaps to encourage them to continue job hunting throughout their time at the museum. The risk was that some were encouraged to feel their time at the museum could be extended and hold off job hunting as a result.

*"I think I am going to have to start looking for a new job sometime soon, but I don't want to leave before I have to."*

*"I feel like I have such a wide range of skills and confidence given to me from this apprenticeship but because of the economic climate I still might be forced back to unemployment (which obviously is not the apprenticeship scheme's fault, as I'm very grateful for it). When do we consider looking for another job? I've got 3 months left and I'm starting to look now which is a bit of a downer. Even more so that everyone I've met working in cultural services has been very interesting and awesome."*

*"I'm not sure when to start looking for a new job either! I had been waiting a long time for this and really don't want to be jobless for a long time again, but the thought of looking for another job so soon really is depressing. I have enjoyed my time here so much, I can only hope that the next job I have will teach me as much as this one and I hope that all the people there will be just as friendly as they have been here."*

### **5.8 Impact on the Museum**

Many young people felt they had been able to make a very positive contribution to the museum, especially those with a specific project, as well as ongoing day to day duties.

One of the key benefits appears to have been that those with no knowledge or prior experience of the museum sector are able to look at these organisations with fresh eyes, a lack of preconceptions, and also with a view about what young people like themselves, and within their peer group, may want or need from the museum environment to engage them.

*"I think I have been really useful and I get told that I have been."*

*"I definitely think they value me, they tell me so on numerous occasions. We have a sports exhibition coming up, which includes horse racing, and I have thousands of contacts in horse racing, so can get them all sorts of signed things for them. Also the fact I am qualified in the building trade is useful for them, I know all these building skills."*

*"I think I've had a fresher look at the museum, different things that they could do to bring new people in."*

*"The gates of the museum really bugged me, they were getting really rusty, they hadn't even noticed it because they have been there so long, but they said I could do it if I wanted, and it has made such a big difference because it is what everyone sees first."*

*"Most of my friends laughed at me when I first told them about this, because I'm so not a museum type of person, but I have learnt so much since I have been there."*

*"My boss always says that it is really good to have me around and saying 'what am I going to do when you go?'"*

### **5.9 What was gained specifically from working in a Museum**

All who took part in the evaluation felt that the museum environment lent itself perfectly to the Stepping Stones project, and the task of up-skilling young people in unemployment, due to the

extraordinary breadth of work and skills available with the one organisation, and the nurturing, supportive atmosphere. This element should not be underestimated, and the evidence suggests that the museum environment may be unique in being able to take in young people, some of whom are at a real low point, or have very limited work experience, and in a very short time give them the means to thrive and prosper.

*"I have (up to now) thoroughly enjoyed my time working at the museum. I have found the stepping stones/future jobs initiative to be everything it 'says on the tin'; offering an influential and useful transition stage between pre-working and working life."*

*"The skills I have taken on board during the past two months are invaluable and I feel overjoyed to have been offered the chance to work in such a professional and versatile environment."*

*"The sheer variety of work involved within my particular role allows me to learn something new everyday and to take on new endeavours - allowing for great job satisfaction!"*

Many commented that they had expected something quite academic, but their experience had been of a very professional environment that was run as a real business, and therefore offered skills and experience that would be of universal interest and appeal to future employers in all sectors.

*"It is different and it covers things that not all other jobs do. It gives you the public side of things, as well as working within a team environment, it takes a different angle on things. I have had numerous amounts of tasks given to me, not just one specific task...it definitely opens up your options a lot more."*

*"It's a different way of life, I never thought a museum would work that kind of way. You get an insight into what goes on and how things work, it opens up your eyes to see what goes on out there, because normally everything is hidden behind closed doors."*

*"I would imagine that other work environments don't have that constant atmosphere of reassurance. I think it is important. It is quite a lot to take on, you need a crash course in confidence, and reassurance is a big part of that."*

### **5.10 Stepping Stones Process Evaluation**

From the perspective of the young people, the Stepping Stones project was managed extremely well once the jobs and apprenticeships began. The supporting documentation, in the form of templates to record initial personal development, exit interviews, personal training and the ongoing learning log were effective. The learning log in particular helped the young people build up a record of achievement that they felt would support their search for further employment.

*"Writing things down in the diary really helped me see what I have done in my time here, and boosted my confidence."*

Many of the young people also described regular meetings and briefings with their manager or mentor which was extremely important in helping them develop and feel supported.

*"Weekly debriefs was helpful because I got to talk about things I wasn't sure about or talk about what I had learned."*

### 5.11 Mentoring and Support

Reactions to the mentoring and support received were extremely positive in almost all cases. Mentors and managers had an excellent understanding of the role of the Stepping Stones project and in many cases worked closely with the young people to ensure they gained the maximum from the experience.

In some cases, managers had helped the young people to put together a portfolio of examples of the work they had done, especially those who were working in creative disciplines. Others were being supported in what to consider adding to their CVs. Many managers and mentors were also looking actively at the training needs of the young people and arranging the necessary courses, again with a view to enhancing the skill set of the participants and increasing their opportunities in the wider job market.

The findings suggest that the best practice is a manager or mentor who meets regularly with the participant to gauge progress and explore options for further experience or training, and who actively supports them in translating this into a record of achievement that can be used to seek further employment.

*"Everything I do here has a certain appeal to different people. She (manager) has been really supportive and has been really good on one-to-ones, she got me volunteering on education and I go to education team meetings sometimes. She has been really good at getting me different experiences and getting me involved in different things that will appeal to employers afterwards."*

*"My colleague has been building up a portfolio for me of all the work I have done, so that I can take it with me to my next employer. They have put me onto a college course for Photoshop, it's quite a technical software, but they managed to scrape together the funding to put me on the course. I really enjoyed it, that will definitely help me with any design or graphic job in the future."*

*"I am being mentored a lot, especially with the portfolio, that will really help me out in the future. And anything I get stuck with they are always happy to help me out, all really friendly."*

*"My mentor is being very good, she helped me prepare for my interview. She is doing all that she can to help me go into the next position, even if it means me leaving before the 6 months is up. The job that I applied for would have started in September, about a month before this one finished and I think she understood that. Her first reaction was 'that is great that you have an interview', not 'oh, so you might be leaving early?'"*

*"(my mentor) bought me a diary so that I could write down the different tasks that I have been doing, so that at the end of my time there I can look back and see all the things I have done and be able to put them on my CV."*

*"They have been so good. We have monthly meetings where we talk about all the things that are going on in the museum."*

*"He (mentor) has always said to me 'Is there anything you would like to do? Is there anything that you don't know about that you would like to learn more about?' and that has really helped."*

## 6. Apprenticeship Evaluation

### 6.1 Background

Most of the jobs were for a 6-month period but 7 out of 32 were offered as 12-month (or in one case 18-month) apprenticeships where the young person is attending a local college on day release to gain a recognised apprenticeship qualification. Their apprenticeship courses include the new Creative Apprenticeship for museums (4 people), Customer Care, Business Administration and Farming linked to a rural museum site.

At the start of the programme museums were asked to express a preference for hosting a 6-month job or a 12-month apprenticeship. Museums that offered apprenticeships had to identify an appropriate course in their locality and work with the college to integrate the job at the museum with the requirements of the course.

12 museums were originally interested in hosting apprenticeships but some had to change their plans for various reasons including lack of a local college or appropriate apprenticeship course, dates of courses which didn't coincide with the Future Jobs Fund deadlines for starting jobs or in one case difficulty in recruiting to an apprenticeship.

### 6.2 Main Findings

While the findings from the evaluation were extremely consistent across the sample, there were a number of issues that arose during the evaluation that are specific to the apprenticeships, outlined as follows:

#### *Fit with coursework*

A number of young people on apprenticeships commented that the course work did not fit well or relate to their work within the museum. Some felt that the higher education institutions they were studying with did not fully understand the nature of the apprenticeship or have the resource or the courses in place to accommodate their needs.

In some cases there was a positive dialogue between the museum and the FE colleges with a view to addressing these issues. The key learning from this was that it comprises a learning curve for all concerned and communication between museum and FE colleges is essential to ensure that the coursework reflects and supports the apprenticeship per se.

*"The only bad thing is that the college course didn't really fit in with my work, it is a business admin course. I still carried on with it though, because it's an extra qualification, another thing on my CV."*

*"I'd prefer if it (coursework) could relate more to what I was doing with the computer software I'm using at work."*

A couple of participants also felt uncomfortable attending the college element of the apprenticeship, being the only student and feeling the lack of any form of group dynamic.

*"When I go to college I am on my own with my tutor because I am the only one doing an apprenticeship."*

The level of the coursework was also variable, with some finding elements of it too basic. This suggests that the college element of the apprenticeship needs to take account of the wide variation in the skills and backgrounds of those taking part.

*"It's a bit relevant, but it feels like I have spent a whole term working towards one presentation, whereas here we work so fast. We are doing key skills, which feels a bit unnecessary. It sounds a bit snobby, but I have done A levels, and it feels like they assume that I won't know how to use a computer...it's rubbing salt into the wound a bit, it makes me feel belittled. It would have been good to have an assessment for college to see what level I am at."*

*"It's a bit out of sync. Some of the things I am asked to do don't really fit with my job, it is mostly front of house, so I have to go out of my way to do the things that front of house to tick the boxes. The only reason I have got anything from unit 1 is because I had an interest and passion in understanding how museums work."*

### ***Impact of day release***

Several also mentioned that the day release element of the apprenticeship could disrupt their work at the museum, especially where working to specific deadlines or as part of a team. For some, this was more to do with shortcomings in the course itself, or a lack of fit with the work part of the apprenticeship, but for others, it was simply that they were so involved in their work, and enjoying it so much, they couldn't help but resent what felt like an interruption.

*"Sometimes the team will have had a meeting when I have been at college and I miss out on bits of information or events that happen to be on the same day."*

*"I get quite resentful of college, I would rather be at work, it seems a waste of time, I just want to be here, I don't want to miss anything."*

Some also mentioned the logistical challenge of getting to college when it was in a different town or location from the museum, or the participants home. This appeared to have the added effect of putting a greater distance between the mentor at the museum and the college tutor.

*"It is also the physical difference, I have to travel for about an hour. If the college was closer there might be able to be more of a connection with work. For the first six months my mentor and tutor never met, so there was no connection there."*

### ***Feelings about the Future***

As with many participants on the Stepping Stones programme, some of the apprentices were anxious about the future and gaining further employment, although they had experienced the same boost in confidence and skills. Some expressed a desire to remain working within the museum sector but accepted that in the current climate, this may not be possible, and recognised the need to keep their options open.

*"Yes, I worry that I will just go for another similar position because it's easy to get that now, rather than because it's what I want to do. But on the other hand, I don't think I should necessarily throw away what I have done here to go back to art."*

*"It's hard because, in most cases, after being an apprentice you usually move on to a proper job role, so if they could do something to make that happen...."*

### **6.3 Apprenticeship Reflector Interviews**

As with those who had completed their jobs with museums, the apprentices were all re-contacted and invited to comment on their experience. Due to the timing of the apprenticeships, some of the young people had yet to complete them, but were sufficiently far through to have a view on the experience as a whole.

Comments were extremely consistent with those made earlier in the process, that the experience as a whole had been excellent and highly beneficial for the participants. The only negative comments related specifically to the college courses, and the lack of fit between coursework and their roles within museums, and the lack of support from the college. This was in contrast to the support young people felt they received at the museum.

*"I think that the college needs to change not the work place. The support I received from where I work was fantastic, I got so much help and advice from everyone there, but I didn't feel that the college offered much support all the time."*

*"The tutor I had was great, but she also had other classes to teach so therefore was rushing around some of the time and I didn't feel like we had her full attention all of the time."*

*"My tutor was helpful and did the best she could and I don't blame her, I blame the college, they get in freelance tutors, why not hire one that knew what she was teaching?"*

*"The course didn't really fit with what I was doing in the museum, but they (museum) sorted extra training for me to fill the gap."*

### **Feelings about the Apprenticeships now finished /almost finished**

As with the other young people, those who had taken part in apprenticeships were concerned about the next steps, although they did feel that the experience had given them an increased focus and specific skill set that would result in future employment. A number had also been offered continued employment within the museum, although in most cases they were continuing to seek more secure or permanent employment elsewhere, or go on to pursue higher education.

*"I feel that I have gained some real inside knowledge on the museum service and the ins and outs of how everything works. I have also gained a lot of confidence with it as well."*

*"My contract has been extended to the end of September so hopefully after that I shall be able to stay on, but with all the council cutbacks its anyone's guess what will happen at the moment!"*

### **1. Methodology**

A briefing event was held to introduce the evaluation to staff at the museums who have involvement in the project, as managers and mentors of the young people, and / or as part of the interviewing and selection process. A key objective was to understand the impact of the Stepping Stones project on the museums involved, and a group discussion was held to explore this in depth. Ten staff from eight host museums were able to attend the session. Of the 24 museum sites that took part, this represents a third, with others provided with the opportunity to feed back their experiences via email.

### **2. Objectives**

The overall objectives for the research are to evaluate the outcomes of the jobs/apprenticeships programme for both young people and host museums. More specific objectives for host museums are to understand:

- As a result of this experience, do museums think differently about the way they recruit staff and volunteers, for example the manner in which they advertise and the specifications used?
- As a result of this experience, do museums think differently about the type of staff and volunteers they need?
- What benefits have there been in participating in this project?
- What difficulties have there been?

### **3. Executive Summary**

The message was a largely positive one, with museums considering they have benefitted from the experience in a number of ways:

- Encouraging staff to think outside of the forms and paperwork associated with recruitment, and to look instead at the individual, and rely more on gut instinct;
- The young people bring with them an infectious enthusiasm and fresh ideas about how to benefit museum visitors;
- The experience of helping and supporting young people in difficult circumstances, and in most cases see them transform and flourish, has provided real satisfaction for many staff within the museums, as well as helping develop management skills among staff mentoring the young people;
- Museum staff have witnessed just how productive the museum environment can be in offering a range of skills and positive environment in which to nurture young people, which can make them look differently at the role of the museum in the wider community;
- The public have benefitted from the way many of the young people are able to interact with visitors in a positive way, especially in the way they are able to mix with, and relate to other young people visiting the museum.

Overall, in many cases the experience has energised and enthused staff across the museums in a way that was entirely unexpected, and worked to bond people together in a common cause.

## 4. Main Findings

### 4.1 Application and Interview Process

Many suggested that the Stepping Stones / Future Jobs scheme offered museum staff the opportunity to deviate from the standard recruitment and interview process, and that in many cases, this was a liberating experience, with unexpectedly positive outcomes. Although rigorous, for some, the local authority apprentice recruitment process has not always been a success. In addition, there is the risk that those who may need or benefit from a form of apprenticeship, can be excluded due to lack of basic interview or application skills, or lack of educational attainment. With the Stepping Stones / Future Jobs scheme, many were able to bypass the standard recruitment approach and instead, rely more heavily on gut instinct. In many cases, the results have been fantastic, and the museums have been able to give opportunities to those with the most to gain, who in turn have benefitted the host museums in a number of ways.

*"The thing I found most interesting is the difference between the apprentices from the local authority scheme and the Future Jobs one. The apprentices via the local authority went through a rigorous recruitment process... However, they have been a complete disaster, even though they have been through that rigorous process. By contrast, with the Future Jobs Fund I bypassed every recruitment process that we have in place because didn't have time, and went a lot on gut reaction. With one vacancy we didn't take the person we thought would be right for the job, we took the biggest risk because that is what the scheme is about... and they are all absolutely brilliant."*

*"I really enjoyed the freedom that it gave us, not having to be stuck through the usual regimented local authority way of recruiting."*

*"He (young person) has a huge number of skills, but paperwork is not one of his strong points – his application form was so badly written that in a normal application process it would have gone straight out of the window. It reinforces the need to look behind the paperwork."*

The learning from this experience suggests museums could benefit from taking a more flexible approach to the recruitment of apprentices in future, with a view to relying more on instinct and the individual circumstances of the applicant, and less on the standard criteria normally applied to the recruitment process. Findings suggest some are already reviewing recruitment policy and procedure as a direct result of the success of the Stepping Stones / Future Jobs scheme:

*"The idea that we could do something and make a difference beyond the normal recruitment process. Our intention would be to keep her longer if we could, whereas with a lot of already qualified people we train them up and off they go to another job. We had to look at our systems, policies and procedures, but that was a good thing."*

*"The speed at which they needed to be recruited meant adopting a more flexible approach to the recruitment process with more weighting on enthusiasm rather than experience and qualifications. We have been able to compare the success of the FJF programme with that of the more formally recruited apprenticeship scheme and deemed*

*the FJF fund programme to have been far more successful, hence it has even resulted in us questioning our whole recruitment process for young people especially."*

*"In terms of recruitment, the programme has reinforced the importance of flexibility and open-mindedness when writing job descriptions and person specifications for museum jobs. A workforce should be broadly representative of its locality and users and effective recruitment, across all museum jobs, enables good representation and good access to a range of career opportunities."*

*"As part of the interviewing process Job Centre Plus selected 3 candidates for us, of which only 2 turned up. The calibre of the two was incredibly high, which we were really surprised with. We had a choice between someone who was quite confident on the computer and the admin side or someone who was a lot more hands on and with a real enthusiasm, so we appointed that person. I think it is one of the best things we have done. He is really grasping the opportunities. It's a bit like having Tigger in the building! I think it has had a very positive effect all round. There are three people working with him and there is a real can-do attitude, he has not been ground down over the years, they are taking the opportunities."*

Several also commented on the need to adapt the interview process itself, so as to be less formal and meet the needs of the young people, and take an account of the fact that this may well have been the first job interview. This has been successful in identifying the best candidate for the position, and as supported by the young people themselves, was a positive experience that allowed them the best opportunity to show their potential.

*"One of our three boys changed our way of interviewing and use of words, it was a very practical interview session. We met with them round a table, one of the lads was pouring with sweat and shaking, he hadn't done a CV because he didn't think he would get this far and hadn't bought a shirt for the same reason, and he was the one we appointed."*

*"When we looked at recruiting we looked closely at what questions we would ask, wanted it to be slightly more informal, more of a conversation, to get from them who they were, rather than what their skills were, we wanted the enthusiasm and the interest in the service, and thinking about the future we wouldn't do wrong to think about enthusiasm and interest, over highly skilled, because skills can be learnt."*

*"I really enjoyed the freedom that it gave us, not having to be stuck through the usual regimented local authority way of recruiting."*

## **4.2 Role of Jobcentre Plus**

Some did question the role of Jobcentre Plus, and their ability to select the appropriate candidates for the jobs and apprenticeships.

*"Jobcentre Plus selected six people for us, then we did a formal interview process with them. Two didn't turn up, which was disappointing. We also had a 52 year old who had been selected, good candidate but a bit too old! We were left with three candidates, one of whom was fantastic, offered him the job, but he accepted a job somewhere else*

*instead. I think the problem is that top candidates can be looking for something more than you can offer them – a job, as opposed to a 6-month position.”*

*“We thought Job Centre Plus would be the best people to find the candidates for us, but actually I think we could have done as well.”*

*“I think JCP were very good at communication, the only problem was with actually selecting the candidates for us.”*

*“Everything JCP could have done wrong they did wrong. They kept losing people’s applications forms. One of the conditions of the apprenticeship was that they couldn’t be a graduate, but our JCP sent us someone with a degree.”*

Many, however, had a largely positive experience with Jobcentre Plus, who were found to be communicative and efficient at sourcing a good selection of appropriate candidates.

*“My experience was very good with Jobcentre Plus in Essex. We had a lot of support from our HR. Three candidates were sent, but it was a very smooth process.”*

### **4.3 How the Project was Managed**

The Stepping Stones programme was managed overall by the Partnerships Manager at Renaissance East of England with support from Renaissance and Norfolk CC finance staff. The project had to be managed in line with a Future Job Funds contract with the Dept for Work & Pensions (DWP). A slim-line version of this contract was drawn up between Norfolk CC (the ‘banker’ for the funding) and each museum with a monthly claim form to draw down funding in line with DWP reporting requirements. Briefing meetings were held for museums to go over the terms and conditions of the funding and the systems for meeting these.

The funding was based on delivering 30 jobs to a monthly job start profile. A Project Co-ordinator was appointed on a consultancy basis for 60 days to help get the jobs/apprenticeships up and running in time to meet the targets, to liaise between museums, Jobcentre Plus and colleges (for the apprenticeships) and to help monitor the project.

Templates (initial interview, development plan, learning log, exit interview) were provided for museums to use with the young people to ensure that their development needs were identified and that a plan was in place to meet these. Museums were asked to provide mentors for the young people and mentoring workshops were provided for museum staff.

Reactions to the way the project was managed were extremely positive. Staff from the host museums who attended the group discussion were grateful for the fact they could contact either project co-ordinator virtually 24/7, and be sure of clear guidance and support.

*“I found it useful to have more than one person to liaise with – someone like (co-ordinator name) who was almost on 24 hours call!”*

*“Yes, she (co-ordinator) was always there for us.”*

*"I think (co-ordinator name) is always a really calming influence, it must have been difficult for both (co-ordinators) because they don't know about the complexities of each of the organisations."*

*"I wouldn't have wanted another person, but having two was ideal."*

*"(Co-ordinator name) seemed to be available all day and night."*

*"Meeting someone from a more human level of mentoring and coaching was really nice."*

*"She (co-ordinator) was very interested in how you were and how the young person was doing, it was a really nice partnership."*

While there was felt to be a lot of paperwork, the support materials and templates that were provided, worked well to support the evaluation of the scheme, and the development of the young people.

*"There is lots of it, but I don't know whether they could have done it without it all."*

*"Once you get going it all lessens off."*

*"Sometimes it looks more difficult than it is, once you get down to it, it's fine."*

#### **4.4 Suggested Improvements**

Overall, the experience of host museums has been incredibly positive, with beneficial outcomes for all concerned. A number of suggestions were made, however, about how the experience could be further improved and refined in future.

Due to a number of factors beyond the control of Renaissance East of England, the lead time given to some museums was quite short, and this put pressure on the museums and their HR function, as well as the local authority. The upside was that staff have realised how quickly things can be achieved when a particular deadline or time pressure is applied.

*"A longer lead in to the recruitment process, I was up against the Christmas holiday, getting the offers out, getting everything back in order to meet the DWP requirements, that didn't allow for things like CRB checks to be done, and references were a bit off the hoof..."*

*"There were times when I didn't think we'd be able to pull it off."*

*"Local authorities who are keen to get involved with these young people have done things faster than I have ever seen them done before."*

Where JCP were being passed information about the positions by the host museums, in some cases, this did not appear to be making it through to the candidates prior to the interviews.

*"I found that, despite us giving JCP lots of information about the museum, none of the candidates had been shown it."*

Many felt that an increased involvement or responsibility at this early stage, or improved communication with the local JCP would help to identify the most appropriate candidates, but also provide the young people with the information they needed to decide if the jobs and apprenticeships were right for them. In particular, a concern was voiced that the short term nature of the positions should be made clear at this initial stage.

*"I think JCP will just send you those people that they want to get off their list, but they don't even know what the job is about."*

*"They are just numbers, these people have been unemployed for long enough, send them along."*

*"I didn't want to put that extra workload onto HR, which is why I went to JCP, and also because it was something we hadn't done before."*

*"Everyone was on an incredibly tight learning curve with this - both us and JCP. Also think each of us were offering different roles, not a generic position."*

Some also commented that the process was overly bureaucratic, especially in terms of the documentation they were required to provide to JCP, and the involvement of the local authority.

*"The lead in took a while, a lot of waiting from DWP to approve the scheme, then there was the whole aspect of trying to understand, particularly in terms of paperwork trail, in terms of what DWP required and what the colleges required. Even at the November meeting there was still a lot of confusion in the air because we were all feeling our way with it. One of my members of staff commented that there is a huge amount of paperwork with this, which they find quite a struggle."*

#### **4.5 The role of Stepping Stones Project**

In consideration of the time pressures and the fact this is a new scheme to museums, all respondents considered the outcomes for both museum and young people to have exceeded expectations.

Some also felt that they were 'learning on the job' how to manage the scheme, and how to approach the role of the young people within the museum. Findings suggest that 'best practice' is to look at the individual, rather than the museum, and think about how different experiences within the museum environment could support the young people in making the transition to future employment.

*"Maybe we shouldn't have expectations of them, and should just focus on what their expectations are and help them get the most out of it."*

*"The expectation I have from my guys is for them to be the best candidate for whatever job they choose to go for, that is what I work on using techniques, such as confidence building."*

*"It's for them to gain the best that they can out of it, was never about what we would get out of it, and think she has got the best out of it."*

*"It's just being there for them."*

*"We can open doors for them and act as guidance."*

#### **4.6 The Outcomes for Young People**

In a reflection of the sentiments expressed by the young people themselves, many museum staff have seen the young people in their museums develop skills and confidence very quickly, and progress to become valued members of the team.

*"By the time December comes her knowledge will be as good as anyone else who has been there for a year, we would recruit her now, but there might not be a recruitment opportunity."*

*"Ours knows it is only for 6 months, but she doesn't know what she wants to do with her life, so she has been trying to spend time in all the different areas. It has given her so much more confidence and she is really part of the team."*

*"Our apprentice thinks it has now put her on the right track, so she has a career path planned now."*

*"I think it gives confidence, and for two of our people, it has given them a home, because they are from very fragmented backgrounds."*

*"It has been a very positive experience. A young man came to us who had very little chance of a job, but now he has got a job and has made a lot of friends in the museum service. There has been a team approach to his development."*

*"Our lad left last week and they collected £65 for him, which is more than when people with 5-10 years experience leave us, shows how popular he was."*

*"In an ideal world we would be employing the four people full time, they have all stepped into the roles just as if they had been recruited for a permanent position."*

*"She has no intentions of working in museums in the future, she wants to work with children, but her enthusiasm is infectious."*

*"One of ours has even been to Pakistan as a youth representative as part of our Truck Art Project. He is now volunteering out in Pakistan for a voluntary group to help set up their website using skills he has developed here."*

#### **4.7 Issues and Concerns**

Again, reflecting what the young people commented, there were some concerns that they would find it hard to adapt to the jobs and apprenticeships finishing.

*"They will be disappointed if there isn't a job at the end of it. Our apprentice just loves to be there, she is enjoying the work and would like to have a future there."*

Some also echoed concerns of the young people, that other staff within the museum would be tempted to treat them more as a 'work experience' candidate, thereby undermining confidence and esteem, and limiting the positive effects of the scheme. This again emphasises the need to ensure that all who come into contact with the young people are aware of the broader objectives of the scheme.

*"I am concerned when I see people from my staff treating the Future Jobs Fund person like a work experience person. It's very different for the staff to work out what the Future Jobs Fund person's role is, we are all learning all the time."*

As with some of the young people, concerns were raised by a couple of the host museums about the shortness of the jobs, and that within a 6 month time frame, both because projects could not always be completed in this time and because there was not always time for the host museum to realise the benefits of the training for the organisation.

*"The only problem is that not all work can be fitted into simple 6 month contract - consequently, left with a few 'loose ends.'"*

*"With a 6 month contact it's not easy to realise the time invested in training and work practices as the contract comes to a conclusion all too quickly and you no longer have the resource."*

#### **4.8 Outcomes for Museums**

Many also indicated that the museum benefitted considerably from the presence of the young people, both in terms of taking pressure of existing staff and resourcing specific projects or tasks, but also in their ability to see things through fresh eyes, and from a different perspective. Many also commented that the young people brought with them an infectious enthusiasm that helped re-energise those they worked with.

*"He was treated by everyone as a full member of staff immediately and it seems to have energised everyone."*

This in turn has been beneficial to visitors to the museum, enabling changes, improvements and an increase in what the museums are able to achieve, how they communicate and interact with young people in the wider community, and even developing the management and mentoring skills of existing museum staff.

*"Our 18 year old hosted and welcomed the work experience session for 13-18 year olds, and he took one of the more shy lads under his wing and persuaded him to sit up the front with him."*

*"Ours (young person) has enabled us to strengthen our capacity within our Design Team and we now have an extensive number of our collections recorded electronically as a result of (their) hard work."*

*"Because ours is working in the marketing department she has helped us get feedback from younger people. We are re-branding, so having her input has been great."*

*"There has to be a tangible service, times are hard and we have to justify every penny. It has to be more than just helping these youngsters. I think it cost us £2k more than what we given to do this, didn't realise it would cost us that. We did this to get a young person's perspective on one of our projects, so it has to have outcomes."*

*"It has enabled us to do a lot more exhibitions work than we have been able to do before. It has helped the exhibitions officer, because he now has someone he is mentoring and managing, so it has helped his career and personal development too."*

*"Our person told us that she thought museums would be really quiet, but it couldn't be more different and she has taken that back to her friends who have applied to be volunteers because she has fed back to them how much she has enjoyed the experience."*

*"I would use the apprentice in the recruitment process for another apprentice. I used her for our work experience students."*

*"Coming from a small museum with a lot of staffing issues there was an opportunity here. We had already identified a need and then this came along and ticked all of the boxes for us. In most museums there just isn't enough staff capacity and that helped that."*

It was equally evident that the host museums were able to lend themselves extremely well to the task of mentoring and developing the skills and confidence of young people – as one respondent put it: *"Museums are universities waiting to happen and this is the first leg of that."*

*"The whole process has been amazing, we have enjoyed the whole thing. Our apprentice is enthusiastic, interested and wants to learn. It has helped us to review our systems and policies. We are very impressed with her and don't want to let her go, she is an asset to us."*

*"We have invested in ours, because if we recruit she will be a candidate and a member of our team."*

*"We are a public service, very good at showing things to people, but this was totally real and tangible, and gave us a feeling that we could make a difference to someone's life. I am insistent on making both our guys a success."*

*"It has been a very positive experience. A young man came to us who had very little chance of a job, but now he has got a job and has made a lot of friends in the museum service. There has been a team approach to his development."*

Many were keen to continue a similar work or apprenticeship scheme within their museums, feeling that now they had taken part once, the teething problems would be eliminated and they would feel more confident about the process and the benefits and outcomes for the museum and the young people.

*"Wouldn't it be great if something like this carried on? My biggest concern is that so much effort has gone into this and I think all of us would like it continue."*

*"A number of the teething problems we had this time wouldn't happen now because we have gone up the learning curve."*

Based on the experience, one of the museums has developed a Training Guide which they have taken forward to implement with four further candidates, one of which also went on to secure full-time employment only halfway into the process. This museum is now planning to have the guide ratified and develop an NVQ with the potential to attract subsequent Government funding.

Another museum indicated that the experience had given them the confidence as a service to go on and plan to take on another four apprentices in future.

*"It worked so well for us, and also for the young person, and it just seems such a win-win for everyone."*

*"It made a significant impact on the ability to deliver services to more users and allowed us to develop more resources to support that learning."*

One of the host museum also indicated that the scheme had allowed them to train young people who were then in the ideal position to fill vacancies that arose and 'hit the ground running', thereby addressing a long term need for both the museum and young people.

### 1. Background

Each participant was invited to take part in a 'reflector interview'. These are short telephone interviews that take place 6 to 12 weeks after the jobs have finished, in order to complete the circle and understand what the young people have been doing since finishing, and what they think of the Stepping Stones project in retrospect, and in the light of returning to the job market. As some of the Apprenticeships remain ongoing at the time of this report, these young people were still participating at the time of the interview, but far enough through the apprenticeship to be able to reflect on the experience.

### 2. Main Findings

#### 2.1 Summary

Reactions were mixed as some of the participants had not managed to go straight into further employment, and found themselves once again applying for positions, while some felt they had compromised significantly by taking up employment that was not inline with their qualifications, abilities, aims or ambitions. However, across the sample, all felt that on reflection, the experience of working in a museum had been invaluable and given them a real confidence boost, resilience and far better chance of securing future employment.

*"It was the best thing that could have happened to me at the time. Now I'm confident, I know I can do anything, and I've got practical skills that are useful in so many different jobs."*

#### 2.2 Current / Future Employment

The young people who took part in the reflector interviews were in a range of situations.

As described, a number had recently finished their 'jobs' at the museum and were still seeking future employment. This felt different to their previous experience of unemployment, as confidence levels were significantly higher and all felt they had real practical skills and a value to potential employers that they could use in applications and at interviews. In spite of this, some expressed fears and concerns about their immediate future and were experiencing similar issues as before the museum jobs. They were at pains, however, to emphasise that this was a reflection of the current job market and in no way a reflection of the museum jobs.

*"I'm really worried I'll end up yo-yoing onto job-seekers and the next government job scheme."*

*"I've had a few knock back applying for jobs. It was easier to cope with when I was working at the museum."*

*"I've applied for a number of jobs, and at least getting to interview stage this time. I get good feedback and been told I interview well and I'm a nice person, but I get beaten on experience."*

Those who had secured further employment were in a number of different fields, from hospitality to teaching. While a compromise in many cases, respondents were glad to be in employment and felt that the experience of working in the museum had broadened their horizons and provided the breadth of practical skills to appeal to employers in a wide range of sectors.

*"I'm really disappointed with the job I've got, it's not as good as being at the museum, but I've got lots of experience now and can turn my hand to anything,"*

Some had also been able to remain working with the museum in some capacity, or were continuing their involvement by volunteering. They felt they were continuing to gain not only good work experience but also maintaining the strong friendships and support that had been built over time.

*"I'm keeping in touch with the museum who are being really helpful while I look for something else."*

Some had also successfully applied for permanent work within their museums, the experience having focused their minds on remaining within the sector.

*"I applied for an attendant job and got it. I am so excited, it's amazing."*

### **2.3 Feelings about the Jobs now finished**

As described throughout the report, feelings were extremely positive, and this had not diminished once the jobs had finished. Key to this were the range of practical skills and experience gained, which translate directly into confidence applying for new jobs, as well as the degree of independence engendered among participants.

*"It's changed my whole view. I've been on courses and got references. They do way more than they have to, it's really helped me a lot."*

*"You're learning new things all the time, without even knowing it."*

*"I think it was a great idea to get people back into work, who had been out of work for such a long time. It provided an excellent opportunity for me to gain new skills and experience."*

*"I am currently looking for another job. I've applied to couple of jobs and waiting to hear from them. The main thing I gained from the whole experience is that it has helped me to gain new experiences, which I can put down on my CV. This hopefully would enable me to get another job soon."*

*"Before, I had no direction, no purpose. Now I have discipline – I'm a better person. I'm confident with the public and know I can do it (full time work)."*

### **2.4 Suggested Changes or Improvements**

Participants were asked if there was anything they felt that the organisers could have done to help them further, or should do differently in future.

There were a number of comments, however, that jobs could have been more beneficial had they lasted for more than 6 months. This was especially the case with a couple of young people who,

for various reasons, had had to finish before completing projects they had been working on. While this was a disappointment, the findings suggest that it did not detract from the skills and confidence gained, or the outcomes of the experience.

*"I feel that the experience should be extended to a year, instead of 6 months. Speaking from my experience I felt that by the time I got used to the system and settled myself, it was time for me to leave my post. I think that extending it would be beneficial in the long run for both the employer and the participant."*

*"I think it was PERFECT! Nothing should change."*

Some also felt it was a shame that they were not able to work towards a qualification at the same time as gaining work experience:

*"It seems a shame there's not a qualification linked to the process, an NVQ or something more like an apprenticeship."*

## *Part 4 - Summary and Outcomes*

The Stepping Stones / Future Jobs Fund project has been extremely effective and of great value for young people and participating museums alike.

The evaluation demonstrates that the key objectives of the project are exceeded, and young people experience:

- A boost in confidence;
- A more positive attitude to achieving future employment;
- Transferable skills and experience;
- A broader scope of the types of future employment they might consider;
- Improved mental health;
- A wider social network;
- Ongoing support from their mentors and peers within the museum.

The outcome is young people who feel they genuinely have something of practical value to offer potential employers, beyond education, which will help them compete effectively in the current job market.

## Appendix 1

### Project partners:

#### **Museum and Local Studies Services**

Braintree District Museum Service  
Cambridge & County Folk Museum  
Cecil Higgins Art Gallery and Bedford Museum  
Chelmsford Museum  
Colchester and Ipswich Museum Service  
Cromwell Museum with Huntingdon Archives & Local Studies  
Ely Museum  
Epping Forest District Museum  
The Farmland Museum & Denny Abbey  
Fitzwilliam Museum  
Museum of Harlow  
Museums Luton  
National Horseracing Museum  
Norfolk Museum & Archaeology Service  
North Herts Museum Service  
St Edmundsbury Borough Council Heritage Service  
Southend Museums Service  
Stevenage Museum  
Wisbech & Fenland Museum with Wisbech Library

#### **Colleges:**

Bedford College  
City College Norwich  
Easton College  
Hertford Regional College  
North Hertfordshire College  
South East Essex College

Beryl Perez, Consultancy & Research: Lifelong Learning  
Department for Work & Pensions  
Discovery Research Ltd  
Jobcentre Plus  
The National Apprenticeship Service  
Renaissance East of England

## Appendix 2 – Support templates

These were based around the following:

### Initial Personal Development Interview

- How do you feel about starting this job? What interests/worries you?
- What do you hope to get out of this job?
- Strengths: What do you do well?
- Challenges: What new skills do you think you'll need to do this job?
- Aspirations: What do you hope to do in the future?

### Personal Development Support Plan

	Learning and development or support needs identified	Activities planned to support development	Timescale for development	Needs met, learning applied - examples
<b>Practical skills</b> - eg IT, cash register				
<b>Soft skills</b> - eg confidence, people skills				
<b>Skills/attitudes for working life</b> - eg timekeeping, appropriate dress				
<b>Other</b> – eg health, dyslexia				

### Learning Log - please complete at least once a fortnight

Date	What did you do?	What did you learn?	How will you use this in the future?

### Exit Interview

- What did you think of your experience here? What went well? What didn't?
- How did you find working for this museum? What can we improve in the future?
- Strengths: What do you do well?
- Skills: What new skills have you developed through this job? (practical, social, attitudes to work)
- Future plans: What do you plan to do next?
- Do you feel that this experience will help you to find work in the future? (If yes – in what way? If no – why not?)



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Renaissance East of England  
Young People Depth Interview Discussion Guide

J2079 MD

June 2010

*Research Objectives*

*The overall objectives for the research are to evaluate the outcomes of the jobs/apprenticeships programme for both young people and host museums. For young people, specific objectives are to explore;*

- *To what extent do participants gain in confidence in areas that relate to their ability to progress to and remain in employment or further training?*
- *To what extent do participants gain transferable skills that will enable them to progress to employment or further training?*
- *To what extent do participants develop life skills in a work environment that will better enable them to progress to and remain in employment or further training?*
- *What if any additional outcomes have there been for participants, for example, expanded social networks, improved mental health?*
- *What factors within a museum setting contribute to the outcomes for participants?*

*Introduction and Warm-up*

**Moderators Introduction:**

- ➔ **Introduce the purpose of the session:** to understand more about the Stepping Stones programme from the perspective of young people taking part
- ➔ **Housekeeping:** Timings / toilets / refreshments / voice recorder / confidentiality / impartiality

**Respondents Introduction**

Ask to introduce themselves:

Name

Museum name / type / size / location

Their role / position / responsibility within museum

*Background*

Ask them to describe:

Experience of school / education / educational attainment

Work experience / attitudes to work

Home life

Personality:

How would they describe themselves / how would others describe

Probe: personality / characteristics / likes and dislikes

Outgoing / confident / reserved / low confidence

How, if at all, have things changed in recent weeks / months

Extent to which they / others have noticed any changes since starting on stepping Stones

Probe: How / why – what has changed, why do they think this is

## *Stepping Stones Evaluation*

### **Initial Stages**

When / where / how did they first hear about the Stepping Stones project

Probe: What were their initial reactions

Did they have any reservations / concerns – did they raise them at all – why / why not

How do they describe their initial expectations from the project

To what extent have these been met / unmet / exceeded - reasons

How did they feel about the initial referral / interview process

Probe: extent to which the nature of the project was communicated to them

How did they find the interview process – what words do they use to describe this

What, if anything, would they change / improve about this initial stage of the process

### **Working in the Museum**

How do they feel about the experience so far

Probe: what have they enjoyed the most / least

What, if anything, has challenged them

How would they describe their own role within their museum

Probe: Specific tasks

How do they feel about the work they are doing

Probe: what skills are they gaining from this experience – list out

Is there anything they would like to be doing more / less of - reasons

What have they, personally, learned from the experience to date

How has participation in the project made them feel about:

- Their future
- Work
- Training
- Their skills

Has anything changed in the way they regard themselves as a result of the museum work experience – what / why

### **Impact on the Museum**

What sort of impact do they think they have had at the museum where they are working

What do they think they might have brought to the museum that is different from other people who work there

Probe: How might this impact on the museum; the staff; the visitors

### **Outcomes for Young People**

What do they expect to be the outcomes from their experience of taking part in the project

Probe: look for differences between apprenticeship / short term job

Probe: extent to which expect to continue working within museums – reasons why / why not

What skills do they feel they have / will have gained

What else do they feel they have / will have gained

Probe: confidence / esteem / social skills

Propensity to seek further training / employment

Explore, one at a time, the extent to which they feel:

- They have gained in *confidence in areas that relate to their ability to progress to and remain in employment or further training;*
- *They have gained transferable skills that will enable them to progress to employment or further training;*
- *They have developed life skills in a work environment that will better enable them to progress to and remain in employment or further training.*

Which areas / objectives considered met / unmet to date

Extent to which this will change over time

Suggested improvements

What else have they gained from the experience:

Probe for things that might be less obvious or not directly related to work, e.g. expanded social networks, improved mental wellbeing etc,

Is there anything specifically about working in a museum that has contributed to the experience or the outcomes

Probe: How has working in a museum been different to other work experience

How do they feel about working in a museum

How, if at all, have their views of museums changed as a result of the experience – how / why

## The Future

What hopes and aspirations do they have for the future

How, if at all, has this been affected as a result of their experience working at the museum

What, specifically, do they plan to do once they have completed the work placement

Probe: Extent to which the museum work experience has contributed

What, if any, fears or concerns do they have about the future

Probe: is there anything that the Stepping Stones project could do to address these

## Mentoring and Support Evaluation

How do they feel about the way they have been managed or supported on the project so far

Probe: ask them to describe this in detail - the type / amount of support received / required

Prompt with the support planned:

- *Induction to introduce workplace, colleagues, role*
- *Line manager to oversee day to day work*
- *Mentor (can be the line manager) to map skills needs and support development*
- *1 to 1 meetings with line manager/mentor every 4-6 weeks (could use these to review learning logs)*
- *Support to fill in learning logs and update CVs*
- *On the job development and training opportunities*
- *Exit interview.*

Reactions to the scope / nature of the support supplied  
Reactions to the scope / nature of the information recorded / line management process  
    What, if anything, do they feel they are gaining from this  
    How, if at all, do it support the work/apprentice experience – how / why  
Anything they would change / improve – reasons  
Anything missing / not necessary - reasons  
What, if anything, would they change, improve, do differently – reasons

### *Global Summary*

Which elements of the project would they describe as 'best practice', i.e. that could be taken forward if the programme is rolled out nationally

Probe: do's and don'ts

Introduce the objectives / desired outcomes:

*This regional programme is delivering short-term jobs and apprenticeship opportunities to meet the needs of those who are unemployed but keen to enter or re-enter the workforce.*

*The programme aims to enable participants to develop confidence, transferable skills and life skills that will facilitate their progression into employment or further training.*

Reactions to these aims / outcomes – how credible / relevant to them as participants

To what extent do they feel the project is delivering on the objectives – reasons why / why not

Probe: Is there anything they feel could be working better

Is there anything they would change / improve about the programme

What do they think are the key benefits in participating in this project

Probe: long-term vs short-term

What advice would they give to the organisers of the project if they were considering doing this again in future

***VOX POPS: With their permission, ask them to summarise their views of the project to date, and any areas of best practice they have identified.***

Thank and close



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### Renaissance East of England Staff - Workshop Discussion Guide

J2079 MD

April 2010

#### *Research Objectives*

*The overall objectives for the research are to evaluate the outcomes of the jobs/apprenticeships programme for both young people and host museums;*

*More specific objectives for host museums are to understand:*

- As a result of this experience, do museums think differently about the way they recruit staff and volunteers, for example the manner in which they advertise and the specifications used?
- As a result of this experience, do museums think differently about the type of staff and volunteers they need?
- What benefits have there been in participating in this project?
- What difficulties have there been?

#### *Introduction and Warm-up*

##### **Moderators Introduction:**

- ***Introduce the purpose of the session:*** to understand more about the Stepping Stones jobs/apprenticeship programme from the perspective of the host museums
- ***Explain how the discussion will work:*** All views are valid – would like to hear from everyone. May need to move the discussion along in order to cover all the subjects we want to discuss.
- ***Housekeeping:*** Timings / toilets / refreshments / voice recorder / confidentiality / impartiality

##### **Respondents Introduction:**

Ask them to introduce themselves one by one:

Name

Museum name / type / size / number of staff / number of young people in Stepping Stones within museum (job vs apprentice)

Their role / position / responsibility within museum

Ask each to describe the young person working at their museum (explain this is purely for context):

Age, gender, background, personality etc.

## Background

When / where / how did they first hear about the Stepping Stones / Future Jobs project

Probe: What were their initial reactions

Did they have any reservations / concerns

What did they consider would be the advantages / disadvantages

What words do they use to describe the programme

*If necessary, prompt: innovative; forward thinking; unrealistic; misguided; effective etc*

How do they describe their initial expectations from the project

To what extent have these been met / unmet / exceeded - reasons

How would they describe their own role within the Stepping Stones project

Probe: Specific tasks, e.g. monitoring, mentoring etc

What have they, personally, learned from the experience to date

Extent to which it has challenged any previous preconceptions in terms of recruitment and personnel – reasons why / why not

How has participation in the project made them feel about young people in unemployment

## Project Management Evaluation

How do they feel about the way the project has been:

- Introduced
- Implemented
- Managed
- Supported

Reasons for reactions

Reactions to the support materials provided (templates etc)

Extent to which they have felt able to manage the project with the support / information / materials / support provided – reasons why / why not

What, if anything, would they change, improve, do differently – reasons

## Jobs / Apprenticeship Evaluation

### Perceptions of the Project

What do they understand to be the role and remit of the Stepping Stones project

Probe: How do they feel about this

How credible / achievable are the objectives

Introduce the objectives / desired outcomes on a board:

*This regional programme is delivering short-term jobs and apprenticeship opportunities to meet the needs of those who are unemployed but keen to enter or re-enter the workforce. The programme aims to enable participants to develop confidence, transferable skills and life skills that will facilitate their progression into employment or further training.*

To what extent do they feel the project is delivering on the objectives – reasons why / why not

Probe: Is there anything they feel could be working better  
Is there anything they would change / improve about the programme

### **Experience to Date**

How do they describe their experience of the Stepping Stones programme so far

Probe: successes and failures

High points and low points

Difficulties and barriers

Key learning for themselves / museums

What, if anything, do they feel that the programme has delivered for the young people taking part

### **Outcomes for Young People**

What do they expect to be the outcomes for the participants of the project in their museums

Probe: differences between apprenticeship / short term job

What skills do they think participants will have gained

What else do they think participants will have gained

Probe: confidence / esteem

Skills and abilities

Propensity to seek further training / employment

### **Impact on Host Museum**

How, if at all, has the project impacted upon them / their colleagues as host museums

Probe: level / type of impact on day to day basis

The type / amount of support received / required

How do they describe the support they provide for participants

How does this compare to other employees

How does this affect staff involved in managing the Stepping Stones project

How do they describe the impact of the Stepping Stones project on:

The museum

Staff/volunteers at the museum

Customer / visitors to the museum

### **Outcomes for Host Museum**

As a result of this experience, to what extent do they think differently about the way they recruit staff and volunteers - reasons

Probe: How / why

For example, the manner in which they advertise and the specifications used

And as a result of this experience, do they think differently about the type of staff and volunteers they need – reasons why / why not

Probe: what, if anything, would they do differently in future

What do they think are the key benefits in participating in this project

Probe: long-term vs short-term

## ***Support Evaluation***

What kind of support have they / their staff provided for young people participating (or intend to provide ongoing)

How do they feel about this – too much / too little / about right

Extent to which meeting the needs of participants – reasons why / why not

Extent to which placing pressure on host museum – reasons

*Prompt with the support planned:*

- *Induction to introduce workplace, colleagues, role*
- *Line manager to oversee day to day work*
- *Mentor (can be the line manager) to map skills needs and support development*
- *1 to 1 meetings with line manager/mentor every 4-6 weeks (could use these to review learning logs)*
- *Support to fill in learning logs and update CVs*
- *On the job development and training opportunities*
- *Exit interview.*

Reactions to the scope / nature of the support supplied

Reactions to the scope / nature of the information recorded / line management process

What, if anything, do they feel they are gaining from this

How, if at all, do it support the work/apprentice experience – how / why

Anything they would change / improve – reasons

Anything missing / not necessary - reasons

## *Global Evaluation*

Re. Evaluation project:

What areas of feedback are they interested in

Probe: what questions would they like to put to participants

What do they expect us to find out – reasons

Overall, how do they think the project will have achieved the objectives set for young people taking part:

- *Participants gain in confidence in areas that relate to their ability to progress to and remain in employment or further training*
- *Participants gain transferable skills that will enable them to progress to employment or further training*
- *Participants develop life skills in a work environment that will better enable them to progress to and remain in employment or further training*
- *Additional outcomes have there been for participants, for example, expanded social networks, improved mental health*

Which areas / objectives considered met / unmet to date

Extent to which this will change over time

Suggested improvements

Which elements of the project would the describe as 'best practice', i.e. that could be taken forward if the programme is rolled out nationally

Probe: do's and don'ts

*VOX POPS: With their permission, go around each respondent and ask them to summarise their views of the project to date, and any areas of best practice they have identified.*

Thank and close