

Going Places

Mentoring Programme Research Report

November 2024

Written by Mairead O'Rourke
and Laura Crossley

Art Fund_



Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Background	4
3. Approach	5
4. Findings	
4.1. Literature and resources	6
4.2. Programme structure	7
5. Going Places Mentoring Programme	9
5.1. Principles	10
5.2. Wider sector support	11
Appendix 1: Going Places Mentoring Programme	
Association for Cultural Enterprises	12
Association of Independent Museums (AIM) Mentoring Programmes	15
The Exhibitions Group Preparing to Borrow Mentoring Programme	18
Group for Education in Museums (GEM) One to One Mentoring Programme	20
Museums Association: Mentoring for All	23
Libraries Connected: Peer Mentoring	25
National Portrait Gallery mentoring programme	28
Appendix 2: Mentoring programme providers	31
Appendix 3: Mentoring programme providers	32

1. Introduction

There is broad awareness across the museums sector that Mentoring can play a crucial unlocking role by facilitating knowledge transfer, developing confidence, fostering peer support, and building leadership capacities.

This report highlights the findings of mentoring research which was undertaken between June and September 2024 as part of the development phase of Going Places.

Going Places is an Art Fund programme made possible with support from The National Lottery Heritage Fund and additional support from Esmée Fairbairn Foundation. Going Places aims to engage and involve underrepresented and underserved audiences with museum collections through high-quality collaborative touring exhibitions and public programmes. The programme builds on the recommendations of the research report [Going Places: Touring and shared exhibitions in the UK](#), commissioned by Art Fund and Creative Scotland.

The aim of the research was to gather information on models of effective mentoring programmes. The objectives were to:

- Identify examples of effective mentoring programmes and establish what factors made them successful.
- Identify what measures of success are being used to evaluate mentoring programmes.
- Develop an understanding of the challenges and barriers to effective mentoring and how they are best addressed.
- Establish data on how mentoring can best support organisations' engagement with local communities.
- Establish data on the financial costs, support and training needed to develop effective mentoring relationships.
- Develop and agree a set of best practice principles for mentoring with the development phase cohort.
- Propose a mentoring programme which will support the delivery of Going Places.

By implementing the Going Places Mentoring Programme, Art Fund are investing in the professional development of staff working across museums. The ambition is that overall, the sector will benefit from greater staff retention, improved leadership capabilities, and stronger ties with their local communities.

This research report has been written for wider dissemination across the museums and heritage sectors. It is intended to provide an overview of the desk research undertaken as part of the development of the Going Places mentoring scheme. Case studies are a key feature of this report, highlighting specific programme approaches, lessons learned and key areas of impact.

This research is accompanied by a practical toolkit and implementation plan for the Going Places Mentoring Programme.

2. Background

For the purposes of this research the EMCC (European Mentoring and Coaching Council) Global definition of mentoring was adopted.

“Mentoring is a learning relationship involving the sharing of skills, knowledge, and expertise between a mentor and mentee through developmental conversations, experience sharing, and role modelling.”

The relationship may cover a wide variety of contexts and is an inclusive two-way partnership for mutual learning that values differences.”

Coaching and Mentoring

It is recognised universally that mentoring and coaching share many of the same characteristics. The key area where they differ is primarily non-directive, a coaching relationship is not defined by skills, knowledge, and expertise.

Key characteristics

- **Coaching**
 - Non-directive
 - Professional and personal development
 - Coach may not have any experience in career area
 - Provides reflection time and space
 - Provides opportunities to build self-awareness, emotional intelligence, and strategies for development
- **Shared**
 - Based around goals
 - Focused on the present and future
 - Usually 1:1 (can be group)
 - Confidence building
 - Leadership development
- **Mentoring**
 - Directive – based on the mentor’s experience
 - Focused on career development
 - Mentor has experience in the area of work

Scope of research

For this research the focus was placed on structured mentoring programmes which have enabled skills development and confidence building for people working in museums and the wider creative sector.

It investigated programmes which are currently in operation, and which have run over the past ten years in UK museums, heritage services and cultural institutions. The following criteria were applied:

- Sector: museums with a view to wider sectors (e.g., libraries)
- Type: Programmes of varying scales and modes of delivery (virtual and in-person).
- Target: Programmes which are aimed at all staff at varying levels
- Subject: Where there is subject specific knowledge sharing

The following were excluded from the research:

- Leadership programmes which often incorporate elements of mentoring
- Commercial mentoring
- Volunteer focused programmes
- Training sessions

The research questions which underpinned the desk research were:

- What do we mean by mentoring?
- What does it look like in the museums sector and wider cultural sector?
- Who is offering mentoring programmes/opportunities?
- What literature is already out there and what research has been undertaken in this area?
- Which programmes can we learn from/ investigate further?

3. Approach

The following activities were undertaken in the development of this work:

Desk research

The key purpose of the desk research was to develop an understanding the differences between coaching, mentoring, and training, scoping existing mentoring offers across the cultural sector and sourcing resources and toolkits being used.

A list of the programmes identified through the desk research is outlined in Appendix 1. There was also a review of existing literature in relation to mentoring in museums. While there appears to be a development in the offer of mentoring programmes at present there is limited research and publications which outline its impact on a sector wide basis. The literature reviewed as part of this work is referred to in Appendix 2.

Case study development

Interviews were conducted with seven leaders of mentoring programmes, and these informed the development of the following case studies:

- Association for Cultural Enterprises
- Association of Independent Museums (AIM)
- The National Portrait Gallery - National Skills Sharing Partnership
- Museums Association - Mentoring for all
- Group for Education in Museums (GEM) One to One mentoring
- Libraries Connected - Transforming Libraries Leadership Programme
- The Exhibitions Group (formally Touring Exhibitions Group) - Preparing to Borrow

Review of Going Place partner requirements

Surveys and data which had been collected about Going Places participants were reviewed. This data highlighted a range of needs across the cohort. Areas of most interest in skills development were sustainability, audience access needs, evaluation, community co-creation and the practicalities of touring.

Going Places participant interviews

Going Places participants were interviewed to gain a better understanding of how a mentoring programme could support the Going Places Delivery Phase.

4. Findings

4.1. Literature and resources

The Character Matters: Attitudes, Skills and Behaviours for the UK museum sector report (2016) remains the key report which underlines the specific skills and personal qualities that sector professionals need to develop to enable the sector to rise to challenges.

This report highlighted that, while particular skills can be developed in a number of ways, the most effective way to effect change in relation to 'personal qualities' is to participate in mentoring; yet this was one of the least utilised development methods within the sector. Beyond this report there is limited literature relating to mentoring in the museums sector.

Most independent programmes have undertaken their own evaluations, usually to provide funders with evidence of the impact of the mentoring relationships. Alongside this they have individually developed their own programme material which usually consists of:

- Recruitment information for mentors/ mentees
- Guidance on managing a mentoring relationship
- Programme prospectus

4. Findings

4.2. Programme structure

Each of the seven mentoring programmes which were reviewed in detail as part of this research had different approaches, target groups, durations, delivery methods and funding models. The following themes were identified across them.

Duration

The average duration for a scheme was between nine months to one year. Some were shorter and longer. Those which were shorter were either focused to address a specific issue, such as the Libraries Connected peer to peer Heads of Service mentoring which lasted 6 months. Many of the programmes reported that mentoring relationships continued beyond the lifespan of the programme.

Participants

On average programmes were designed for between 10-18 mentoring pairs, but some were more focused than this. The Association of Cultural Enterprises has a maximum of six pairings per round. It was noted that a lesson learned in some cases was the need to promote the opportunity as much if not more so to potential mentors and that there could be a pathway developed where those being mentees become future mentors.

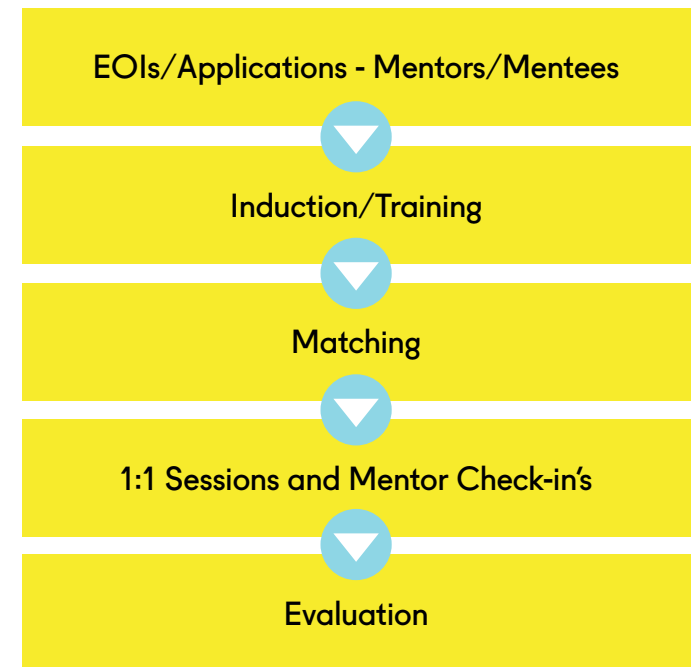
Programmes have been designed for a target audience and they are often restricted to members of the organisation, as is the case with the Association of Cultural Enterprises and Museums Association – although the Museums Association can support applicants with membership bursaries where needed. The Libraries Connected Peer Mentoring scheme is relatively unique in that it is targeted to people in specific roles, Heads of Service. Most other schemes are open to anyone who meets the programme criteria.

Through the application process GEM Mentees and mentors are asked equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) questions via the application process. Mentors are asked if they are particularly willing to support mentees with specific personal characteristics. Mentees can request a mentor with a specific personal characteristic.

Delivery method

Most programmes are delivered in a mainly virtual way. The pandemic was cited as a reason why some schemes changed to or were set up in a virtual way. Alongside this cost and access was noted as a key reason for being virtual by default. As noted by the Museums Association its 'cheaper, more efficient, more inclusive and environmentally friendly.'

The common approach for each programme was:



The average length of a mentoring session is one hour per month (although sessions ranged from 60-90mins).

Informal check-ins are provided by some programmes for mentors. These provide opportunities for mentors to raise any concerns or get advice on a challenge they are supporting their mentee with.

4. Findings

4.2. Programme structure

Recruitment

The recruitment of mentors was highlighted as a challenge in some instances. There were ways in which this was successfully overcome.

Approaches which worked included:

- Targeting mentors in specific areas, through specialist networks
- Allowing ample lead in time and extending deadlines for applications where needed
- Providing clear guidance and being upfront about the expectations for mentors
- In some instances, mentors have been paid a fee

Payment of mentors

Most programmes do not pay their mentors. The exception to this is the Association of Independent Museums (AIM) and The Exhibitions Group. For AIM the fee is £650 a day and this has enabled them to recruit skilled consultants who have specialist skills and experience. For The Exhibitions Group's Preparing to Borrow scheme each mentor received a fee of £1,000 (inclusive of VAT) plus up to £100 expenses per organisation they worked with.

Coordination

In most instances, particularly during the set-up phase of the mentoring programme, external support was commissioned to develop the programme structure, training sessions and to support the matching process and ongoing check-ins. The on-going coordination of programmes is primarily managed inhouse. Having a co-ordinator who knows the applicants was cited as a benefit to the matching process.

Costs

Arts Council England has supported the initial development of most of the sector mentoring programmes, including the Museums Association's Mentoring for All programme, which is now self-funded through participant fees and in-kind support. Initial set up costs are higher than on-going management costs. An initial programme costs in the region of £20-£30K to set up.

Most schemes are free to access to participants, with the exception of the Museum's Association Mentoring for All where mentees pay to participate (participants can apply for 50% or 100% funding to cover these costs). Bursaries were provided by The Exhibitions Group for mentees to support them in making an application to the Arts Council England funded Ready to Borrow Scheme, and participants in the National Portrait Gallery programme received bursaries to support travel, enabling in person meetings.

Success measures

All case studies included evaluations, usually via a survey following completion of the mentee / mentor relationship. Whether participants would recommend the scheme to others used as an indicator of success. Evaluation also used to develop future iterations.

All programmes reported positive feedback and data which indicates that their aims and objectives were met in supporting the professional development of participants.

Mentees reported increased confidence, the development of skills and they valued the external advice and support. Mentors refer to it being a rewarding experience, that supports their leadership development and gives them a wider perspective on the sector.

5. Going Places Mentoring Programme

The mentoring programme is a core element of the Going Places project, designed to support colleagues across the cohort working in partner museums to develop skills and confidence, particularly in areas related to the project.

These could include, for example, touring exhibitions, loans, community engagement, project management, and partnership working.

Providing support through tailored mentoring can help tackle these issues, through expert advice, guidance and support to find workable solutions.

Given the above, key measures of success for the Going Places Mentoring Phase are:

- Increased confidence for mentees and mentors
- Mentors and mentees recommend the scheme
- Individuals and organisations have developed skills
- The sector network has grown (individuals and organisations have grown their networks)
- Fostering positive relationships with the museum workforce (which may translate to new/repeat applications/joint applications)

The mentoring programme is anchored in The National Heritage Lottery Fund's Investment Principles:

Skills developed by mentees will support them to better **save heritage** (e.g. increasing people's connection with collections and the historic and natural environment).

Skills developed by mentees will also support greater **inclusion, access and participation** in heritage (e.g. through delivering robust, innovative community engagement projects for a wide range of individuals and communities). In addition, providing mentoring support to develop participants' skills and confidence may also impact positively on the diversity of heritage workforces and leadership; participants may feel more ready to take on new roles in the sector.

Organisational sustainability will be strengthened through this tailored heritage skills development opportunity. Mentees will develop new skills and expertise, which will contribute to thriving heritage organisations and, through delivering community engagement projects, will support thriving communities. In addition, mentors who have previously not mentored will also develop new skills which they can utilise in the future – for example, supporting other sector colleagues.

Dissemination of the Going Places mentoring toolkit and lessons learnt from the mentoring programme will also impact on **wider sector sustainability**; more sector workers and volunteers will understand the benefits of mentoring and feel better equipped to become mentees and mentors.

5. Going Places Mentoring Programme

5.1 Principles

The following set of principles which will underpin and inform a new mentoring programme which is part of Going Places have been developed based on project participant feedback and the desk research undertaken.

Simple and user friendly

This means that from application/EOI stage to completion the process will be light touch, clear and easy to understand for all participants. There is a commitment to reduce or eliminate unnecessary paperwork and formal feedback.

Flexible and informal

The focus in this programme will be on the mentoring relationship, ensuring that it is effectively coordinated to reduce any potential administrative burdens. The arrangement of mentoring sessions and the content of the sessions will be at the discretion of the mentors and mentees. Alongside the 12 month offer, micro-mentoring opportunities will be available to those who require more targeted and flexible support and advice (on a one off basis).

Open and equal

In line with the overall ambitions of the Going Places programme, mentoring will be open to all participants. Anyone can be a mentor or mentee; there are no specific requirements related to roles which will dictate who can take on which role. Everyone, regardless of their career stage, can benefit from participation. Mentees will all be working at Going Places partner museums; this programme is specifically designed to support Going Places participants. Mentors might work in partner museums but, equally, will be recruited from across the museum sector and beyond, ensuring mentees are able to develop the specific skills and knowledge they need.

Clear in expectations

All communications and processes which form part of the programme will be clear in their ask and/or ambitions. Mentors and mentees will be provided with templates and frameworks which can support them in managing the relationship and getting the most from it.

Collegiate - building on the strength of the networks and partners

Informal mentoring already takes place through the network and the steering group will be drawn from Going Places project participants. There will be specific efforts made to recruit mentors from within the network and supporting partners before going more broadly.

5. Going Places Mentoring Programme

5.2 Wider sector support

Several mentoring programmes exist for those working in the museum sector, including those highlighted in this report. However, each programme has limitations on participation (for example, needing to be a member of the Museums Association or Association of Independent Museums; or requirements to participate in particular projects e.g. National Portrait Gallery); there is still plenty of space within the sector for additional mentoring programmes to support staff development. While the Going Places mentoring programme will specifically support those working in partner museums, Art Fund is committed to ensuring lessons learnt from the programme will be shared with the wider museums sector, supporting more museum workers to become mentors and mentees and more organisations to deliver their own mentoring programmes.

Learnings from the Going Places mentoring programme will continue to be disseminated widely to 1) complement and contribute to sector research around mentoring; 2) support individuals working or volunteering in the museums sector to seek out mentoring opportunities and understand how to get the best out of being a mentee and mentor; 3) support other sector organisations to develop and implement their own mentoring programmes.

Learnings will be disseminated throughout the project, including mentees and mentors sharing their experiences via blogs and at sector conferences. In addition, Art Fund will work with other sector mentoring providers to share and disseminate learnings from the Going Places and other programmes.

Thank you to all the contributing participants to this research, to the case study providers, Going Places Development Phase Participants and supporting teams.

Appendix 1: Case Studies

Association for Cultural Enterprises

The Association for Cultural Enterprises (AfCE) has been running a Mentoring Programme since 2019. To date 40 people have participated in the programme which aims to support the development of commercial and people skills, confidence, strategic thinking, and performance.

The Association for Cultural Enterprises is the only charity and trade body for the arts, heritage and cultural sector that brings together learning, experience and best practice in revenue generation, representing over 1,650 sites across the UK and beyond.

Who is it for?

Mentoring is available free of charge to members of AfCE. There are no formal limits to who can or cannot apply to become a mentee or mentor. Mentees may be in a junior, supervisor, management, or head of department role and mentors may be a head of department, team leader, or director/CEO.

Aims and objectives

It has been designed to help both mentors and mentees in the following ways:

- **Mentees**
 - Help identify which areas of professional life you need support
 - Set appropriate goals and assess actions and progress
 - Commit to action and develop lasting personal change and growth
 - Continually improve your abilities and develop new skills
 - Grow confidence and self-esteem
 - A half-day mentee session
- **Mentors**
 - Be given training in mentoring, emotional intelligence, and how to use questioning techniques in order to identify solutions and actions
 - Support your mentee in setting appropriate goals and methods of assessing progress
 - Encourage a commitment to action and the development of lasting personal change and growth

Appendix 1: Case Studies

Association for Cultural Enterprises

Training

Within each mentoring round there are six one-to-one relationships which are designed to last twelve months. Participants are expected to attend the following virtual sessions:

- Mentors and Mentees: An Introduction and Matching Day
- Mentors: training session
- Mentees: training session

Matching

At the match day mentees are asked to indicate their preference for mentors using a scoring of 1-7. Matching is then undertaken by Director of Digital at AfCE and an externally commissioned provider. Mentees provide a score for their preferred mentor based in a 1-7 preference.

Mentoring meetings

Mentees organise virtual meetings with their mentors. They schedule meetings on average four times a month over the year. AfCE facilitates casual check ins throughout the year for mentors. These are held once a quarter as one hour check ins which are very informal.

Evaluation

Mentors and mentees are sent a survey at the end of the twelve months. The programme has a 100% recommendation rate.

Lessons learned

- People like clear guidance and a framework. An informal code of conduct for mentors/mentees has been very valuable, providing some guidance on how to conduct the conversations and ensuring that people feel empowered in their mentoring relationships.
- Lead time is vital for raising awareness and promoting to potential mentors.
- There is value in creating a peer group for those who are interested as it is a way of building your network.
- Value the matching – feedback from people who have done similar programmes indicates they appreciate the personal connection.

Appendix 1: Case Studies

Association for Cultural Enterprises

Quotes from participants

"Being a first time mentee, I wasn't sure what I would gain from having a mentor; however when I was accepted onto the programme I was delighted. I soon found that my mentor and I were a perfect match. She has helped me to navigate some really tough times at work and come out of the other end with a new level of confidence. Having someone to hold me accountable to my own goals has been something I have found so encouraging and productive."

Mentee 2023

"The Cultural Enterprises Mentoring Scheme is simply brilliant – providing future leaders in our sector with a space to reflect, consider their approach and access direct support. As a mentor, I've found the process incredibly rewarding, not least because of the support provided by AfCE. I hope it continues for many years to come"

Mentor 2022

Appendix 1: Case Studies

Association of Independent Museums (AIM) mentoring programmes

The voice of the independent museum sector, AIM represents, connects and strengthens the UK's independent museums and heritage organisations. As well as providing grants, key resources and collective procurement power, AIM delivers a programme of expertise and practical guidance to staff, trustees, and volunteers. AIM focuses on pragmatism and success to inspire innovation, enabling museums to build resilience, network, and plan effectively.

Objectives

AIM offers a number of opportunities for mentoring. Those who have successfully applied for some AIM grants are offered bespoke mentoring to help them deliver their project to a high-standard. AIM have also recently created a separate mentoring programme, Aspire, which will offer mentees advice, guidance and support to help them and their museum.

All mentoring programmes are coordinated by in-house staff.

Who is it for?

Mentoring is offered to those delivering some AIM-funded projects, including the New Stories New Audiences programme, a grant scheme for AIM small museum members, funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Those on the Aspire programme will meet 4 times for 1-1.5 hours over the course of the programme – September to December 2024. 10 mentoring relationships will be formed each year.

Applications

Prospective Aspire mentees complete a short application, stating why they will benefit from the programme and the skills and knowledge they are looking to develop through mentoring when they apply for AIM's mentoring programmes.

Those who have been matched with mentors as part of AIM grant-funded programmes do not have to complete a specific mentoring application form.

Appendix 1: Case Studies

Association of Independent Museums (AIM) mentoring programmes

Training and matching

AIM have found that mentees sometimes have not had time to fully think through all the skills they would like to gain from mentoring, so AIM staff tend to talk with them to understand more about their requirements and find a mentor who can best support them. Aspire mentees applied to work with specific consultant mentees, depending on the specific skills they wanted to develop, but AIM staff are ultimately responsible for matching and can offer mentees alternative mentors.

Mentors are all specialist paid consultants, so AIM do not provide specific training. AIM only work with consultants they have recruited through a robust application process and who have proven skills in their specialist subject and giving advice. Mentors are paid a standard day rate of £650. AIM deliberately pay generously so they can choose high-quality, skilled mentors and can also attract mentors from a range of sectors (for example, those working in charity governance).

Mentoring meetings

Those on the Aspire programme will meet 4 times for 1-1.5 hours over the course of the programme. Meetings will mainly take place online, with some in-person sessions. In-person meetings are felt to be helpful, so mentors get at least one opportunity to see where a mentee works. In addition, some mentees are not particularly skilled in IT so require in-person sessions. Previous experience of delivering mentoring has also highlighted that some mentees work in shared offices without a quiet space and find it difficult to have confidential online conversations while at work.

Impact

AIM carried out in-depth evaluation of the mentoring provided on their New Stories New Audiences programme. This mentoring was universally valued. Mentees found it very helpful to chat with others, particularly as those working in independent museums can feel quite isolated. AIM recognise that those working and volunteering in museums cannot be experts in everything and feel it is important to provide expertise to support people to solve challenges they are facing.

Appendix 1: Case Studies

Association of Independent Museums (AIM) mentoring programmes

Evaluation

AIM programmes are evaluated and lessons learned used to help shape future programmes. Mentors and mentees have to participate in evaluations.

Lessons learned

- Paying mentors a reasonable day rate (£650 a day) has enabled them to recruit skilled consultants who have specialist skills and experience of mentoring. This is a quality-control measure to ensure mentees all have a good experience and AIM can be confident their mentors are skilled in the role.
- Providing a travel budget to enable mentors to visit mentees can support them to better understand the context in which their mentee is working.
- Free programmes can lead to a big drop-out rate. AIM do not charge for their mentoring programmes (although they do charge £100 for participation in their Spark leadership programme) but are cautious about drop-out rates.

Appendix 1: Case Studies

The Exhibitions Group Preparing to Borrow mentoring programme

This scheme was the first mentoring programme run by the Exhibitions Group (formerly known as the Touring Exhibitions Group), supported by Arts Council England. It aimed to increase the confidence of participants to make an application to borrow collections.

The programme sought to:

- Increase the confidence of the mentee.
- Support the mentee to develop awareness of their personal development requirements to undertake the steps necessary to borrow.
- Encourage the mentee to undertake self-guided learning, to develop new skills, knowledge and competencies.
- Help the mentee develop their professional network.
- Support the mentee to share/cascade their learning with colleagues and make changes, as appropriate, within their organisations
- Embed the structures this work requires as appropriate and as far as possible.

Recruitment - Mentees

In 2017 the Exhibitions Group worked with Museum Development providers to recruit 16 mentees. A targeted approach to recruitment was most successful and it was noted that having the applications open during the summer made it challenging to openly recruit. Mentees from each of the nine Arts Council England areas were targeted for participation.

Recruitment - Mentors

Mentors were drawn from existing Exhibitions Group trainees or new recruits in areas where there was not an Exhibitions Group trainer. To ensure they were prepared for the programme they took part in a training day which was led by an experienced mentor. This day gave mentors a good grounding and created a sense of community between them.

Appendix 1: Case Studies

The Exhibitions Group Preparing to Borrow mentoring programme

Contact time

Each mentee received up to 17.5 hours of tailored, expert support. The support was tailored to enable their organisation to successfully complete a loan application, or application to borrow a touring exhibition.

The relationships were scheduled for seven months. There was no criteria around whether these were in person or on-line.

Bursaries

Mentees were entitled to a £200 bursary to support them in making an application to the Arts Council England funded Ready to Borrow Scheme and they were asked to write a short evaluation report about their mentoring experience.

Each mentor received a fee of £1,000 (inclusive of VAT) plus up to £100 travel expenses per organisation they worked with.

Impact

An evaluation of the scheme highlighted that all mentees benefited from mentoring. Participant feedback included:

‘My main aim was to gain knowledge and confidence about the loans process and I can say this has been certainly achieved’

‘This opportunity allowed me to learn more about my own organisation as well as other museums. I gained confidence in my own abilities and vital knowledge which I was able to apply in my daily work and will be able to apply in future roles.’

The majority of participants continued their relationships beyond the programme.

Lessons learned

- Taking a targeted approach to recruitment worked well, advertising over the summer was a challenge.
- Training the mentors worked well and the costs for this should be factored into the scheme.
- The timescale was challenging and the Exhibitions Group found that to mentor an organisation through a loan that 18 months is required.
- The scheme was successful in achieving its aims of increasing the confidence of participants to make an application to borrow collections.

Appendix 1: Case Studies

Group for Education in Museums (GEM) One to One mentoring programme

The Group for Education in Museums (GEM) supports and empowers its community of colleagues to connect and learn together. Its vision is of a connected and equipped community of people enabling learning across museum, heritage and cultural settings, creating inspiring experiences, relevant for everyone; that promote equity – transform and enrich lives. GEM delivers a range of services to support museum educators.

The One to One mentoring programme is managed by GEM's Mentoring Consultant to lead the application process, matching, supporting if matches do not work out, and do check-ins with participants. The Mentoring Consultant initiated the programme pre-pandemic working with GEM and its team of volunteer mentors. This initiative has been supported by The Linbury Trust in the past. Currently, the One to One mentoring programme receives support from Arts Council England, Nimrod Capital, and the Network of European Museums Organisations (NEMO).

Objectives

Mentees are supported to gain and develop skills and knowledge they have identified as part of their application process. In addition, the programme supports overall career planning and development.

Who is it for?

The programme is for anyone working in learning and participation roles, particularly early career professionals. Preference is given to those working in paid roles, although volunteers are also eligible to apply to the programme.

The programme is open to, and free for, individual GEM members and those working in GEM institutional member organisations, offering added value for those who have invested in GEM membership. Up to 10 NEMO members can apply to the programme every year. Since being developed four years ago, the programme has supported over 700 mentoring relationships. There are no limits on the number of times mentees can apply to the programme. Up to 4 members of staff at institutional members can apply per round.

Appendix 1: Case Studies

Group for Education in Museums (GEM) One to One mentoring programme

Applications

Mentees fill in an application form and give 3 priority areas; where they are in their career; and the type of organisation (collections, role, type) they work in. They are matched based on information given in this application – for example, with mentors who have skills mentees are looking to develop.

Mentors are recruited through an open call. Applicants complete an online form and then have a conversation with the Mentoring Consultant. Those who mentor on the programme are given the opportunity to continue mentoring each year if they wish. They can also take a break from mentoring if they wish or leave the programme completely.

Mentees and mentors are asked equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) questions via the application process. Mentors are asked if they are particularly willing to support mentees with specific personal characteristics. Mentees can request a mentor with a specific personal characteristic. GEM facilitates these requests as much as possible.

Training and matching

GEM initially worked with the Museums Association to develop a joint training provision and this has led to the creation of a number of resources for the programme, particularly focused on supporting mentors. GEM's mentor training focuses on a wide range of areas to support access and inclusion, including neurodiversity and mental health.

Matches are based on the skills mentees want to develop rather than geographical location. Virtual sessions mean that geographical distance is not an issue for people.

Appendix 1: Case Studies

Group for Education in Museums (GEM) One to One mentoring programme

Mentoring meetings and support

Mentoring pairs meet approximately 3-4 times for 1 hour – 90 minutes a time over the course of their relationship. All meetings are virtual to support access and manage costs, and so mentors and mentees do not have to take lots of time out of work to travel. The relationships are deliberately short; feedback from participants has shown that most prefer shorter relationships rather than a longer process.

The programme's dedicated Mentoring Consultant offers ongoing support to mentors and mentees, helping problem solve and offering tailored advice and guidance. A WhatsApp group enables mentors to ask each other general questions and seek broad advice – confidential information about mentees is not shared.

Impact

Over 700 mentoring relationships have been supported through the GEM programme; it has had a huge impact on individuals and organisations in the sector. The programme's specific focus on supporting learning and engagement professionals has been viewed as being particularly helpful for those working in these specialisms.

Lessons learned

- Having a dedicated role to manage the programme has been crucial to its success, offering the required capacity and skills to ensure a high-quality programme, and the flexibility to increasing and decreasing capacity as required by the programme.
- GEM found it helpful to develop a shared understanding of what mentoring is – which is sent to mentors and mentees as guidance.
- It is helpful to provide resources to support mentors e.g. WhatsApp group, training resources.
- Collecting EDI data and enabling mentees to request mentors with specific personal characteristics has helped make the programme more inclusive.
- Mentees are increasingly discussing wellbeing and mental health issues. The Mentoring Consultant is creating a health and wellbeing toolkit for mentors on the programme to help them support mentees.

Appendix 1: Case Studies

Museums Association: Mentoring For All

Aims and objectives

Mentoring for All was launched as a pilot programme for the museum sector in 2017. It was developed by the Museums Association in partnership with Arts Council England in response to recommendations within the [Character Matters](#) report.

It is now a core programme offer of the Museums Association, operating as a yearly cohort. All mentees and mentors are taken through the programme together, which provides opportunities for inter-group learning.

Who is it for?

Mentoring for All is open to members of the Museums Association, specifically for anyone who wants to use conversation to support their professional practice and increase their wider sector contributions. There is a fee of £120 per year for mentees, this fee was introduced to support the associated delivery costs. People can apply for 50% funding to cover these costs, and there are ring-fenced inclusive places that are fully-funded to address barriers to participation and progression. There are on average twenty pairs supported through each round.

Applications

Mentors and mentees complete an expression of interest form to register their interest in the programme. Applications are sifted firstly to identify if this is the right programme for the applicant and then if they are a MA member. Individuals applying for inclusive places and mentors of Global Majority background are prioritised to address under-representation within the sector. All applicants are interviewed for their roles. Successful applicants are invited to training and networking sessions over the course of the relationship.

Training and matching

All participants receive formal training at the start of the programme online. The training content was initially delivered by consultants, but has been re-designed and is now run in-house. Participants are also given resources and tools to support them in their mentoring relationships. Training sessions are scheduled twice, once in the day and one in the evening to facilitate participation.

The MA brokers the relationships between mentors and mentees. This was noted as a success in the pilot evaluation:

'One of the successes of the programme was not to have a hand in choosing. I might not necessarily have chosen my mentor if I had the choice so would have really missed out' - A mentee

Appendix 1: Case Studies

Museums Association: Mentoring For All

Mentoring meetings

The programme is designed to be flexible. Mentors and mentees arrange their own mentoring sessions. There is an agreed contact time of 12 hours per year (usually 1 hour a month, depending on the agreement). Mentors can offer more if they wish. Sessions take place virtually as it is cheaper, more efficient, more inclusive and environmentally friendly.

Monthly emails are sent to participants and supervision sessions for mentors are offered by the Workforce Development lead at the MA through the programme. Alongside this, check-in meetings are held every quarter as a group to ensure people are progressing.

Funding

The initial pilot programme was funded by Arts Council England and supported with in-kind support from the MA. The total budget for research, training, delivery and evaluation was £32,000.

Evaluation

Participants are encouraged to check in throughout their mentoring experience and this is facilitated by the MA. A comprehensive [evaluation](#) of the pilot programme by the museum consultancy highlighted that:

- The pilot successfully achieved its aim of developing and running an inclusive, flexible programme designed to stimulate personal and professional development and increase the confidence and resilience of those involved.
- The programme attracted applicants from a range of organisations and roles, volunteers and those working in a freelance capacity.
- The programme recruited a relatively diverse pool of participants which included 10% of mentees and 11% of mentors identifying as coming from Global Majority backgrounds and 17% of mentees and 7% of mentors disclosing a disability, all higher than the current sector profile. There was however an underrepresentation of men; only 11% of mentors and 17% of mentees were men.

Lessons learned

- Never underestimate the need to clarify what mentoring is and what is involved in the process.
- Mentors are encouraged to work with more of a coaching approach, to give advice last. It is important that mentees are involved in their own decision making.
- Mentoring ran for six months in the pilot and this was not long enough and has now been extended to 12 months.

Appendix 1: Case Studies

Libraries Connected: Peer Mentoring

Libraries Connected is the membership organisation for public libraries in England, Wales, Northern Ireland and the Crown Dependencies. Since 2022 they have run a peer mentoring scheme for library Heads of Service (HOS).

The scheme was initially developed by external consultants, and supported by a Reference Group consisting of Heads of Service and Libraries Connected staff.

Objectives

Through the scheme Libraries Connected is aiming to create a more skilled, diverse and confident leadership across libraries and to remove any real or perceived barriers to progression. It has been designed to complement generous and ad hoc support provided through a Heads of Service Network.

Who is it for?

This peer mentoring project is a structured scheme targeted at Library Heads of Service (HoS). It is specifically aimed at three categories of HoS:

- Newly appointed Heads of Service from a library background
- Newly appointed Heads of Service from a non-library background
- Established Heads of Service facing major changes – positive or negative
- The scheme also benefits the participating mentors, supporting their development as leaders and role models

Libraries Connected invites mentors and mentees to apply to the scheme. In the initial pilot the deadline was extended slightly to allow mentees more time to apply. The recruitment of mentors was particularly successful. Applicants are asked to write a paragraph about themselves and is circulated to mentors/mentees in advance of the launch event.

Appendix 1: Case Studies

Libraries Connected: Peer Mentoring

Training and matching

A launch event is held online at which each participant introduces themselves in a 'speed dating' style approach. This is followed by a joint training session for mentors and mentees.

Following the training each mentee chooses up to three mentors they would like to be matched with. This process is overseen by Libraries Connected. An evaluation report noted positive feedback in relation to this approach.

"The matching of mentor and mentee for me worked really well - felt I had been matched to someone who would listen and support"

Mentoring meetings

This programme is quite intensive. Mentoring pairs meet every 2-4 weeks over six months. Alongside this three 1-hour 'drop-in support' sessions for mentors are facilitated. Not all mentors attend the drop-in sessions. A final event marks the end of the scheme and this is an opportunity for mentors and mentees to share their experiences and learning from the scheme. Some mentors/mentees decide to continue to meet beyond the six months of the scheme.

Impact

An evaluation of the pilot scheme highlighted strong evidence that the mentees developed greater confidence as a result of the scheme. This was especially noted in relation to gaining confidence to manage up within their organisation. For example

"I have gained confidence in standing my ground and pushing back against unreasonable demands - something I was always good at on behalf of the service but less good at when the demands were being made of me personally in my role. I have learned more about managing up and felt reassured that my reading of political situations was on point as a result of being able to discuss it with someone else with experience."

Appendix 1: Case Studies

Libraries Connected: Peer Mentoring

Lessons learned

- Participants value the balance of structure and flexibility within the programme
"I like the structure of the programme e.g. background, matching process, mentoring and final meeting. I also liked that the mentoring wasn't prescriptive and the mentor and mentee could decide what they would like to discuss."
- There was some feedback in the pilot that there was a little too much reporting and paperwork, especially for the timeframe. The scheme has been adapted so there are now less reporting requirements.
- Investing time in promoting and marketing the scheme to mentors worked really well. In doing so they received one more mentor application than mentees which meant they could offer another mentee an opportunity.
- Feedback from mentors also highlighted how the scheme benefited them, particularly in relation to developing mentoring and listening skills.
"I have utilised the mentoring skills I learnt on a mentoring course and have confidence now that I do have mentoring skills and have begun to recognise my own abilities and put myself forward for things."
- For this scheme the timescale worked well for most participants and may have continued their relationships.
"I think the 6 months has been about right although we are planning to meet every two months which I think will be really useful as I develop in the role and gain new challenges"
- Drop in sessions for mentors were highly valued as was having the scheme overseen by a Reference Group.
"They built ownership of the programme. The programme had a clear purpose. Terms of Reference with values for the way we would all work together set the tone etc"

Appendix 1: Case Studies

National Portrait Gallery mentoring programme Part of the National Skills Sharing Partnership Programme

The National Portrait Gallery is home to the most extensive collection of portraits in the world. The Gallery tells the story of Britain through portraits, using art to bring history to life and explore living today.

The National Portrait Gallery (NPG) was the lead partner on the National Skills Sharing Partnership Programme, a 3-year skills and knowledge sharing programme which involved 13 partners including The NPG. The project programme included a number of strands, including displays, partner-led seminars, peer to peer exchanges, placements, a digital platform, open days, internships, and a mentoring programme. The programme was funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Art Fund as part of the Gallery's 'Inspiring People' project.

The mentoring programme was managed by the Gallery's Skills and Knowledge Exchange Manager, overseen by the Head of National Programmes, and the Gallery's People and Culture Team also guided the process. Administration support, provided by the NPG's National Programmes Assistant, provided extra capacity.

Objectives

The mentoring programme was a core element of the National Skills Sharing Partnership Programme. It was designed to support skills and professional development of mentees, all of whom worked in partner museums.

Who is it for?

The programme, which ran for 2-3 years over the course of the National Skills Sharing Partnership Programme, was aimed at staff working in the project's partner organisations. Over the course of the programme, 26-30 mentoring pairs were supported.

Mentees and mentors all worked in museums involved in the National Skills Sharing Partnership Programme. Mentors were not paid; their time was given as part of their overall contribution to the National Skills Sharing Partnership project. Two cohorts of mentors/mentees were delivered during the project.

Appendix 1: Case Studies

National Portrait Gallery mentoring programme Part of the National Skills Sharing Partnership Programme

Applications

Each partner put forward two mentees and one mentor. Mentees had to complete a short application stating what they wanted to get out of the programme.

Training and matching

Matches were suggested by NPG using the mentee's application form. Matches were designed to be challenging (i.e. provide challenge for mentees), but it was also important to ensure they were a good fit. The relationships were very successful overall but did not work for a small percentage of people, or sometimes people became ill or left roles and could not continue. When either of these things happened, NPG tried to match again if the mentee wanted to continue with mentoring.

Training sessions were delivered for mentors and mentees, including good practice pointers. Online delivery was utilised to support access.

Mentoring meetings and support

Mentoring pairs met 4-9 times over the 9-month programme. Meetings were hybrid; virtual meetings supported access, but budget was also allocated to allow for up to 4 in-person visits.

Mentors and mentees had to complete a mentoring agreement, setting out the purpose of the programme and boundaries around confidentiality. Feedback and review sessions with mentors and mentees were arranged to make sure they had space and time to discuss what was going well and what was not going so well. A clear line of communication was set at the beginning of the programme to ensure participants could raise any issues.

Mentors and mentees all had access to the project's digital platform, WorkPlace, where resources could be shared.

Evaluation

Evaluation of the programme formed part of the overall project evaluation.

Appendix 1: Case Studies

National Portrait Gallery mentoring programme Part of the National Skills Sharing Partnership Programme

Lessons learned

- The National Portrait Gallery's knowledge about the project partner organisations, gained through the wider programme, helped create matches that worked well for mentors and mentees.
- The travel allowance offered enabled mentors to immerse themselves in their mentee's working context, which helped them offer more tailored advice and guidance.
- The mentoring agreement meant everyone was clear about what they were entering into and what to do if things were not going well. It was important participants felt they were being supported in this way.
- NPG had a commitment from senior staff at partner organisations to participate in the Gallery's national skills sharing partnership programme; this supported participation in all areas of the programme including the mentoring strand.
- Leave enough time to deliver training, especially in a multi-partner project with time pressures on partners.
- It could be a challenge to find mentors that are a good match for mentees. NPG deliberately did not put people together who were not a good fit for the sake of increasing the number of relationships; they kept these applications until they had a good match for the mentees concerned. Having a plan for what to do when you cannot find a good match for a mentee is really important – you might, for example, contact potential mentors directly or ask networks whether they can recommend someone.
- It is important to have the necessary resource and capacity to support mentoring programmes. Some relationships do not run smoothly, which requires more ongoing check-ins and support. There are times in the programme when lots of capacity is required e.g. applications, matching. Administration can also take a lot of time and needs to be fully resourced.

Appendix 2: Mentoring programme providers

Programme	Sector
ACE Cultural Enterprises	Museums and Attractions
Clore - Emerging Leaders Mentoring	Arts
Association of Independent Museums	Museums
National Portrait Gallery - National Skills Sharing Partnership	Museums
Museums Galleries Scotland - Developing My Leadership Programme	Museums
Mentoring for all - Museums Association	Museums
The British Museum – 1-2-1 and Peer to Peer	Museums
National Museum Northern Ireland	Museums
Arts Emergency	Arts
NEMO/ GEM	Museums
Oxford Cultural Leaders - Course and Coaching	Arts
Accreditation Mentors (Museum Development?)	Museums
Young Cultural Leaders - Norwich Theatre	Arts
Transforming Leadership - City of Coventry Culture Trust	Arts
Transforming Libraries Leadership Programme - Libraries Connected	Libraries
Peer Pals - ARA	Archives
The Exhibitions Group – Preparing to Borrow	Museums
Creative Mentoring	Arts
Happy Museum, No Going Back – Peer to Peer learning	Museums
Arts Marketing Association	Arts
Youth Arts Fundraisers	Arts

Appendix 3: Literature review

Arts Council England

Character Matters; Attitudes, behaviours
and skills in the UK Museum Workforce

Accreditation Mentor Handbook

Museums Association, Mentoring for All;
Evaluation and Phase 1 research report

Museum Sector Alliance, Practical Applications
for Mentoring in the Cultural Sector: Best Practices
and Projects, Giulia Fiaccarini, Melting Pro

Learning Liaison Forum, [Peer mentoring
project evaluation report](#)

Art Fund_



Esmée
Fairbairn
FOUNDATION

Going Places, an Art Fund programme made possible with support from
The National Lottery Heritage Fund and additional support from Esmée
Fairbairn Foundation

Art Fund is a charity registered in England and Wales
(209174) and Scotland (SC038331)