

How can we welcome visitors if our museum is closed?

All museums have times when they are closed to the public, either on a particular day of the week, for the winter season, during a refurbishment or simply at night. However it doesn't have to mean that your visitors miss out. It's a great opportunity to do things a bit differently and invite in new people – perfect for Takeover Day!

Why should you go for it?

- You can offer visitors a different and often enhanced experience, looking at different aspects of the collection or by creating atmosphere. *'The children were really excited to get a sneak preview of the new gallery, we kept the lights dimmed and they crept around exploring and whispering about the exhibits. You could tell they thought it was a really special thing.'*
- If you're closed for a while it will remind people that you're still there. *'Young Friends picked meaningful collection objects, then brought them into a different space such as a library, to tell stories about them.'*
- You will have more space to do your activities in. *'The good thing about the museum being closed for that day was the ownership the group felt of both the exhibition space and the facilities, especially since they all had pushchairs to manage – they didn't feel like they were getting in any other visitor's way.'*
- It's an opportunity to work with new audiences as it will appeal to visitors who may feel more comfortable having the place to themselves. *'Most of the group didn't ordinarily visit museums, so it became a less daunting experience to know that the museum was theirs for the afternoon.'*

What can you do on Takeover Day if your museum is closed?

- Have the group make a video guide to the building or audio tour
- Let them take inspiration from the collection to create a performance, projections or installations to go in the windows or on the outside of the building
- Organise object handling sessions, behind the scenes tours, special talks, storytelling
- Invite the group to help with conservation work or preparing a space for an event or exhibition
- Have the group research and script new interpretation e.g. for a mobile phone tour
- Take some of your collection out of the museum and into a community space
- Involve the group in photo shoots for publicity and interpretation purposes
- Hold a youth panel meeting
- Get the group to help you organise a special event, such as a music recital or a film festival
- Hold a sleepover

Things to think about to help your event run smoothly

- **Internal communication** – talk to colleagues to get their support, listen to concerns and ensure that your event doesn't clash with important maintenance work etc.
- **Supervision** – it's best to work with a small, established group with leaders and supervisors in place e.g. a school class or a uniformed group like Brownies.
- **Safety and security** – review your first aid and evacuation processes, consider which staff will be available, think about how the group will gain access when they arrive.
- **Facilities** – the group will need access to the toilets and you may need to consider lunch and refreshment arrangements.