

Poole Museum

Takeover Day – More than a day, 6-year Case Study 2010-16

Poole Museum has taken part since the early stages of Takeover Day. Here's how they have used their experiences to develop and deepen the involvement of young people in their organisation:

The early years 2010-13

What they did

Inspired by the Takeover Day at Museum of London, the learning team invited 6-10 young people to run the public face of the museum, with young people invigilating in the galleries, greeting visitors at the reception desk, answering phone calls, dealing with local history enquiries, giving tours and talks for visitors. Originally aimed at Year 10 and 11 pupils, the offer was expanded to all secondary-aged pupils and sixth-formers, who applied to take part via an application form which was sent to all secondary schools. Young people followed a rota throughout the day so that they experienced all the tasks. Each year the programme was amended and improved in response to participants' feedback.

Taking it forward

- Because the programme for the day is quite intense, the museum found it beneficial to bring young people in to train them in advance, learning directly from members of museum staff. At first, training was held every Thursday evening in the six weeks leading up to Takeover Day. After a few years this changed to a more intensive one-day training session which was a more successful format for the young people and staff. Having this interaction between staff and the young people, in advance and on the day, makes for a noticeably positive ambience. Takeover Day has become a highlight of the museum's calendar. Many staff and volunteers make a special effort to attend on the day.
- A strong tradition has developed of Takeover Day participants staying involved with the museum – approximately three-quarters of the young people either join the young persons' advisory panel or sign up to the formal volunteering programme. Even those who choose not to are spotted returning to the museum as visitors.
- Learning from working with young people on Takeover Day has fed into exhibition development at the museum and young people have written text panels. One year there were a number of young people with additional needs – ADHD and young people on the autistic spectrum – this challenged staff to reconsider the design of the programme and the experience empowered them to make changes within other programmes at the museum, such as the Young Archaeologists Club.

'You don't stop throughout the whole day, but it's such a lovely feeling at the end of the day, you can see the impact that it's had on the young people and the impact that it's had on the staff, just in terms of working together and feeling good. It's about young people representing themselves to older people, there's a lot of anxiety between generations at the moment and actually this is one of those things that, in that very small way, helps break down some of those media stereotypes and prejudice.' Learning & Access Manager, Poole Museum

2014-16

What they did

Museum staff continued to refine the Takeover Day programme and encouraged young people from a range of backgrounds to apply each year. Working with schools they targeted certain groups of pupils, for example those with SEN, in receipt of pupil premium grants or young people without evidence of extracurricular activity but an interest in history. Traditionally November is a quiet time so the museum has taken additional steps to build an audience for the young people's talks and tours, for example by appealing to their volunteer base. Staff have rethought the programme

to respond to particular challenges. At the start of the project a 'code of conduct' is set out by the young people to give an expectation of behaviour during the time they spend at the museum. For example the expectations include, waiting for others to finish speaking before you speak, being respectful and turning up on time. This combats unsupportive group dynamics and by agreeing shared behaviours with the young people it better supports young people with additional needs. Running the museum's social media accounts and blogging have been introduced to the task list and in the most recent year a staff and young people's lunch was organised to further conversations and learn from each other. Every single staff member gets involved in some way – either through training the young people, supporting them on the day or coming to the lunch.

Taking it forward

- As much as this is an opportunity for the young people, Takeover Day at Poole Museum is very much seen as an opportunity for staff and volunteers to learn and develop. For example, Front of House staff witnessing the welcome that young people give visitors on arrival gives them a renewed appreciation for the importance of their role. The museum staff will be starting to offer tours and talks for the public which have always been part of the Takeover Day programme. How the young people have approached the task has taught staff a great deal about how they should design the new tours and talks.
- On 2015's Takeover Day, the young people were invited to a meeting with fundraising consultants, who were creating a fundraising strategy for the museum. The young people were able to influence the perception of the museum amongst the consultants which was reflected in the strategy. The museum subsequently created a fundraising trust and on 2016's Takeover Day, young people were invited to attend a board meeting highlighting their involvement in the museum to board members.
- The museum wants to share the success of their Takeover Day model more widely within Poole and is developing the project to partner with local businesses. This will secure funding and partners will be invited to take part as the audience on Takeover Day. Opportunities to share knowledge and skills will be extended over longer periods of time. Additional funding will help to break down barriers e.g. by providing transport costs for pupils who cannot afford to get to the museum.

'It's just another way that we're keeping in contact with our community. It's easy for us, in terms of our location, to attract tourists, it's much harder to reach out into our local communities and this is one way that we do it.'

Learning & Access Manager, Poole Museum

'I loved working the till because I haven't done anything like it before. Finally the Poole History Centre was very interesting because we got an insight in what people wanted to know and find out about. All in all takeover day has been quite fantastic.'
Tom, age 12, Takeover Day participant