



MUSEUMS PARTNERSHIP READING

# Youth Strategy

## 2019 - 2022



Supported using public funding by  
**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**

## Youth Strategy

Museums Partnership Reading (MPR)'s youth strategy is a joint development by the Museum of English Rural Life and Reading Museum.

It will enable them to reach out from a position of complementary strengths, building and deepening engagement with children and young people.

**The strategy covers work by both museums over three years, 2019-2022.**

**It has been planned within the policy landscape of both Reading Borough Council and the University of Reading.**

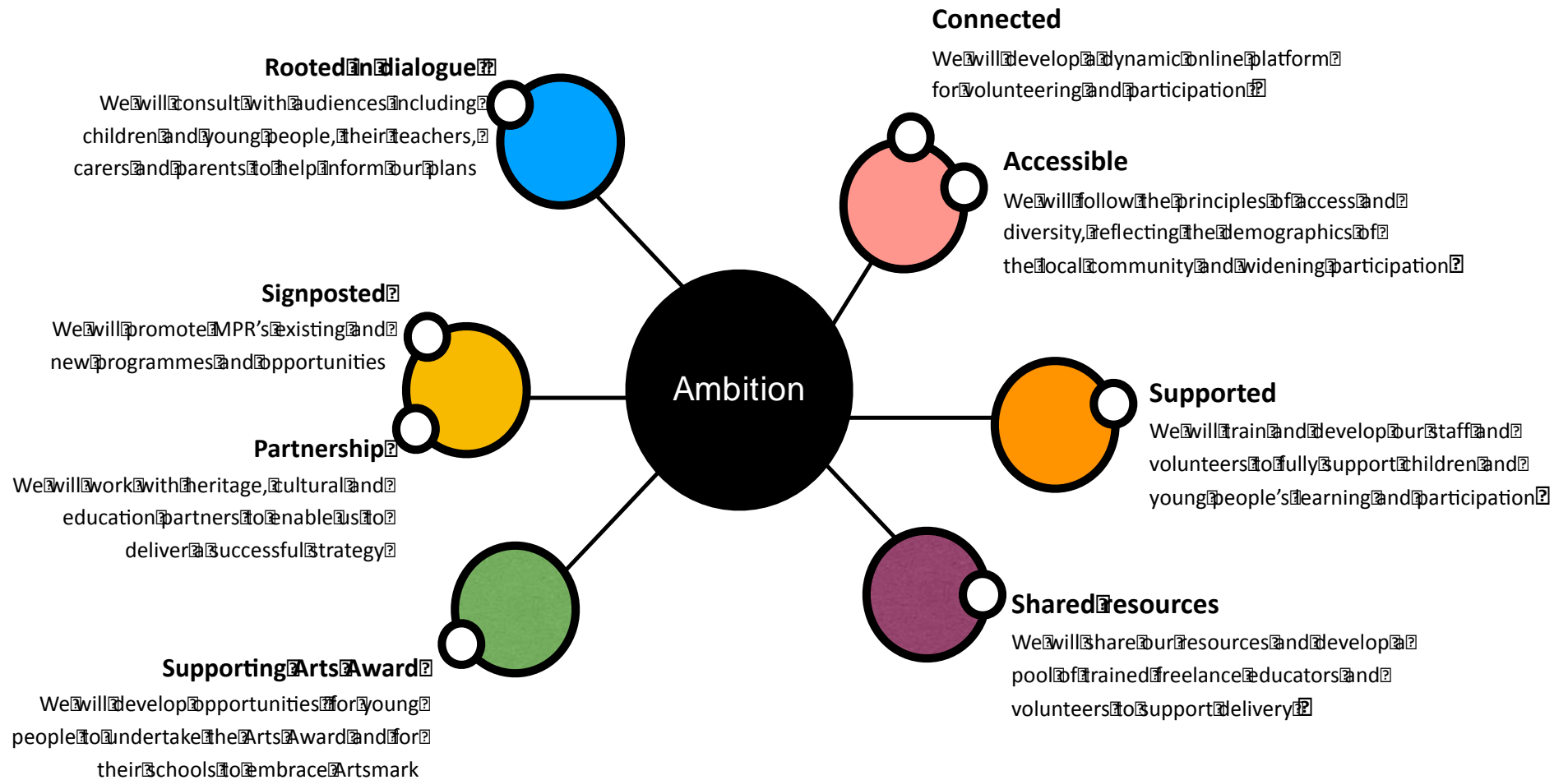
**It aligns with the mission of Arts Council England (ACE): *Great art and culture for everyone* and its quality principles for working with young people.**

## Our vision

Every child and young person in Reading will benefit from the MPR through opportunities to:

- ▶ See, touch and understand the relevance of museum collections to their lives
- ▶ Participate in high quality age appropriate learning activities
- ▶ Enjoy safe and welcoming museum spaces
- ▶ Make their own creative contributions

## MPR Youth Strategy at a glance



## The process of developing the strategy

**A small group across the two museums worked with external consultants over a period of five months to undertake strategic planning. This process included meetings, interviews and discussions, within a wider context of ongoing dialogue : within the museums and with stakeholders. Research was undertaken by the consultants into current and best practice to inform the plan. Draft documents were circulated to a wider group of staff for their input and this document, including the action plan, was the result. The action plan is a working document to assist with future planning.**

### **A wide scope**

This is a strategy with a wide scope: it represents two museums, working in partnership. It aims to be sustainable, building on existing strengths and capacity. It looks to the future: including stretch goals to embed ambition and aspiration. Its target groups align with both Reading Borough Council and University of Reading policies. Finally, it covers a wide age range: 0-24 years.



## Arts Council England

Our vision is underpinned by the mission of Arts Council England:

*Great art and culture for everyone.*

This sets out a 10-year vision, with five ambitious goals.

**Goal Five** focuses on children and young people. We aim to meet this goal:

- More children and young people will experience the richness of the arts and museums in Reading
- More of Reading's children and young people will receive a high-quality cultural education in and out of school
- Museums Partnership Reading will deliver high-quality arts and cultural experiences for local children and young people.

We will also be following Arts Council England's

**Quality Principles** for working with young people:

1. Striving for excellence and innovation
2. Being authentic - by involving young people at all levels, consultation, participation, co-creation
3. Being exciting, inspiring and engaging
4. Ensuring a positive and inclusive experience
5. Actively involving children and young people
6. Enabling personal progression

## National Portfolio Organisation

Museums Partnership Reading has been designated by Arts Council England as a National Portfolio Organisation. Together the two museums have developed comprehensive museum learning work with children and young people, based on many years of experience.

The strategy puts schools in the centre, as the key to reaching out to children and young people across a range of diverse backgrounds.

This model will be evaluated and disseminated for others to follow.

## Underpinning policy

The youth strategy aims to sit within the current policy context, both nationally and locally. In addition to Arts Council England's mission, it aligns with the objectives of the Reading Cultural Education Partnership. It also recognises the partnership's responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality of Duty Act 2010.

Reading Borough Council strategies include: *Strategic Priorities for Culture and Heritage 2015 – 2030*; *Sustainable Community Strategy (2011)*; *Child Poverty Strategy*.

University of Reading's main relevant strategy is *Museums and Special Collections Services, Learning and Student Engagement Strategy 2016 – 2018*.

## Background

Reading Museum and the Museum of English Rural Life have been developing a funded collaborative partnership over a number of years, supported by Arts Council England (ACE)'s Strategic and Resilience Funds. In 2017 they made a successful bid to become one of ACE's National Portfolio Organisations (NPO) from 2018 – 2022 and formed Museums Partnership Reading (MPR).

The two museums have areas of collecting in common, such as material relating to local firms: Suttons Seeds and Huntley & Palmers. They also share visitors and over the last 3- 5 years, each has been delivering a substantial HLF funded capital project.

In 2016, a joint Community Engagement Statement was agreed by staff of both museums. This enabled sharing of information about local audiences, leading to opportunities for engagement and outreach to targeted Reading communities. As part of this new phase of co-working, it was decided that this shared Youth Strategy should be created.





## Local context

Reading is a vibrant economically successful town at the heart of the Thames Valley. It is a major commercial and retail centre, and home to many leading multinational high-tech companies. However, despite its prosperity, Reading contains some of the most deprived wards in the country.

Reading has a high proportion of children and young people, representing 20.3% of its total population. Of the school population, 49.4% belongs to an ethnic group other than White British, compared to 25% in England overall. An increasing proportion is bilingual, with 30% of pupils speaking English as an additional language and 150 first languages in the area. 28.4% of Reading pupils are eligible for the Pupil Premium, compared to 22.6% in the South-East and 29.5% for England.





## Research and best practice

During September 2018, a best practice review and comparable work with children and young people was undertaken.

Information was gathered and case studies produced on: schools; literacy projects in museums and galleries; personalised study programmes; working with looked after children; collaboration with families and young people; incentives for engaging young people; youth panels; digital learning projects; object-based learning in universities; volunteering; museum loans to schools. As the work of MPR progresses, there will be a bank of recently gathered examples of best practice to underpin project planning.

### Equalities

**MPR recognises its responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty, which requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities.**



## Aims

The MPR Youth Strategy will:

1. Be rooted in **dialogue and consultation** with audiences including children and young people, their teachers, carers and parents.
2. **Promote MPR's existing services and opportunities** for children and young people offered by Reading Museum and the MERL (loans, events, outdoor learning, *Lates*, exhibitions)
3. Seek to renew and **extend each museum's complementary offer for children and young people** to strengthen partnership with this audience and to enable sustainability and resilience.
4. **Include children and young people with most need** (through working alongside their teachers) including those at schools in receipt of high levels of pupil premium funding and schools with low participation rates in higher education.
5. Offer a **youth engagement strand for key MPR partnership projects** (Animals exhibition, digital strategy, volunteering).
6. Follow the **principles of access and diversity**, reflecting the demographics of the local community and widening participation

## Objectives

We will achieve our aims by:

1. Developing a **dynamic online platform for volunteering** and participation aimed primarily at young people and offering a variety of opportunities to develop skills for the workplace and for further study.
2. Developing opportunities for young people to undertake the **Arts Award** and for their schools and colleges to embrace Artsmark.
3. Exploring and developing **new and sustainable ways of working** with children and young people, within our available resources.
4. Ensuring our MPR team **work in partnership across both museums** to deliver a successful strategy.
5. Underpinning the strategy with the development of a **shared pool of skilled freelancers, casual staff, artists and other specialists**.
6. **Training and developing our staff and volunteers** to fully support children and young people's learning and participation.
7. Working **in partnership with other organisations** in the heritage, cultural and education sectors and with community groups.

## Key target audiences

Based on the policy and strategy rationale, research and in-depth discussion with project teams, the initial key audiences for the MPR youth strategy will be:

Audience	Reached through
Children 0-16, including children in need /looked after/ with disabilities	Schools [WP, PP, SEN], community groups, children's services, families
Children needing help with language and literacy	Schools, RBC literacy advisors
Young people 16+	Schools, colleges, places of learning
Young people (18-24)	Community groups/ gatekeepers
Students in tertiary and higher education	University of Reading departments

## Progression from Year 1 – 3

**Year 1:** The programme begins with time to consolidate and sustain each museum's current services for CYP; develop partnership and implementation methods; explore and research potential; dialogue with schools; develop volunteering; strengthen networks and pilot projects.

**Year 2:** This year MPR starts to build on Year One, while retaining the work begun. It will respond to evaluation; dialogue with young people directly and begin dissemination, for example through conferences.

**Year 3:** By this year, MPR is ready for cutting edge work with schools and young people; for example developing a co-curated exhibition, and a youth manifesto looking forward to the next 3 years.



## Key strands

- ✓ Young people's manifesto
- ✓ Training and skills development for staff and volunteers
- ✓ Work with children and young people in the community – piloting new work and extending successful previous projects for ages 0-24 years
- ✓ Partnership working – within the MPR, with the British Museum, with local groups and services
- ✓ Improved, targeted marketing of the opportunities MPR offers for children and young people
- ✓ Work with local schools including those with high numbers of Pupil Premium students
- ✓ Inclusive work with children and young people with Special Educational Needs
- ✓ Widening Participation projects to encourage young people to consider going to university
- ✓ Arts-based projects with local partners, including Arts Award in schools
- ✓ Opportunities for work experience, including supported placements and internships
- ✓ Digital platform for young volunteers

## Example activities

**Volunteer makers:** a national programme supported by Arts Council England, including a digital platform for volunteer management, used by over 50 museums across the country.

It has been shown to produce measurable improvements in volunteer engagement and opportunities for new volunteers.

**British Museum partnership:** The British Museum has embarked on a programme of transferring stored objects to a new store in the Wokingham area. In connection with this move, new opportunities for national-local partnerships are currently being explored. By Year 3, a positive mutual partnership will act as a model for other museums.

**Marketing to schools:** key to the strategy. In year 1, research will be undertaken for example in digital communication and social media; pilot activity will focus on the existing offer and ArtsMark. In year 2, it will roll out across the Partnership.





## Implementing the strategy

A detailed action plan has been created, which acts as a working document, to be updated regularly, taking into account evaluation and feedback from activities, new opportunities and unforeseen challenges.

Staff at both museums will be developing new partnership work and trying out new ways of working together to meet shared aims.

Dialogue, both internally, between museums and with external stakeholders, will be key to the successful implementation of the strategy.

A process of review and reflection will enable the MPR to measure impact and to ensure that plans beyond the term of the strategy are based on evidence.

### Advisory Group

The MPR Youth Advisory Group will meet 4 times a year to share learning and to review the Youth Strategy's action plan. This will ensure that the strategy continues to inform project planning and decision making across both organisations.

### Delivery Group

The MPR Youth Strategy Delivery Group will oversee the implementation of the Youth Strategy, plan new work and keep the action plan up to date. It will manage evaluation and data collection and report to Arts Council England, the MPR board, senior management and other stakeholders as necessary.

## MPR Youth Strategy Action Plan 2019 – 2022

(Year 1: April 2019 – 2020; Year 2: April 2020 – 2021; Year 3: April 2021 – 2022)

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