Heritage organisations collaborating to tackle



Several organisations are working to improve the diversity of the heritage sector's workforce. Pictured: volunteers with the South Riverside Community Development Centre.

We've awarded more than £840,000 to pioneer new ways of working through our Heritage Innovation Fund.

Thirty-five grant recipients – who each received up to £25,000 – are meeting for the first time today (24 January) to begin working as a cohort for the next six months.

They will explore creative ideas around technology and skills gaps, culture and diversity, the ageing workforce and an overreliance on volunteering, to help make the heritage sector more sustainable, inclusive and fit for the future.

> It will be exciting to see how the organisations we've funded come up with new ideas to solve heritage workforce challenges and learn new skills to share with their colleagues, which will benefit the whole sector.
>
> *Úna Duffy, Director of Investment for The National Lottery Heritage Fund*

Working with The Young Foundation

We've partnered with The Young Foundation to deliver the cohort experience. They will provide structured learning to design and test prototype solutions to the various workforce challenges, alongside masterclasses and peer learning groups.

Dan Farag, Director of Innovation and Practice at The Young Foundation, said: "Our structured learning journey will support grant recipients to diagnose sector-specific workforce challenges and design and test impactful prototypes.

"Taking a 'learning by doing' mindset, we will host masterclasses to strengthen skills, confidence and capabilities, and set up peer learning groups where cohort members can problem-solve together.

"We can't wait to get started, working with a new generation of innovators across the UK to bring fresh ideas and creative ways of working to life."

Responding to the heritage sector's needs

We developed the Heritage Innovation Fund in response to our 2022 UK Heritage Pulse survey, which found that 54% of respondents wanted greater support to help them innovate and test new approaches.

The cohort starting today is the first of what is intended to be a three-phase programme of innovation: explore, test and grow.

> a group of people working together around a table
>
> The organisations receiving grants will work together to develop their ideas, supported by The Young Foundation.

Innovation across the UK

Participants include:

- The **Historic Houses Association** want to re-imagine recruitment methods by scoping a 'dating' platform that supports two-way communication between the sector and its potential workforce.
- **Care for Young People's Future CIC** will test a model for empowering ethnically diverse communities to champion their heritage by training heritage ambassadors from within the Roma community.
- **Wikimedia UK** will investigate the skills gaps that prevent smaller heritage organisations from making their collections available online.
- **Happy Days: Enniskillen International Beckett Festival** will take a creative approach to building capacity in their volunteering community, including workshops to capture the wisdom, aspirations and shared sense of purpose among the volunteers.
- **Suffolk Wildlife Trust** wants to create the future of how people enter careers in nature conservation by designing a scheme that reduces financial barriers and better meets new entrants' needs.
- **Amgueddfa Cymru** will explore with their workforce how the organisation's culture is affected by intense change and produce insights that can help all organisations aspiring to be more resilient.
- **Historic Environment Scotland** will take a collaborative, sector-wide approach to understanding the systematic issues that are holding back Scotland's heritage organisations from meeting their diversity and accessibility goals.

Facing future challenges

Úna Duffy, Director of Investment for The National Lottery Heritage Fund said: “It will be exciting to see how the organisations we've funded through the Heritage Innovation Fund come up with new ideas to solve heritage workforce challenges and learn new skills to share with their colleagues, which will benefit the whole sector.”

Discover more

See the full list of Heritage Innovation Fund grantees.



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An exhibition on the School for the Blind at the Museum of Liverpool.



yers and heritage audiences

Volunteers at Barnyards Marsh Wildlife Reserve. Credit: Alan Anderson, Scottish Wildlife Trust

Collaborate, don’t compete, to support innovation and drive change