Museum training scheme launched

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Last Friday, the Northern Ireland Museums Council (NIMC) announced the names of those who have been successful in securing one of the much sought after places on its Collections Skills Initiative phase 2. This training programme is operated by the council, in partnership with the National Museums Northern Ireland (NMNI), and is funded through the Heritage Lottery Fund's (HLF) Skills for the Future grant programme. The training programme provides young people with the opportunity, skills and experience to help them build careers in the sector.

The 2011 scheme produced twelve motivated and enthusiastic individuals, two-thirds of whom are now working in the sector.

The £270,000 grant extension allows the Northern Ireland Museums Council and National Museums Northern Ireland to provide 12 placements allowing trainees to develop practical skills in collections care, research and interpretation whilst on placement in ten museums in Northern Ireland.

Each bursary holder will receive specialist training and undertake a project at one of the ten participating museums over the next year.

Speaking at the launch, NIMC Director, Mr Chris Bailey, said: "We are delighted to launch another round of the Collections Skills Initiative. Working with our partners in the National Museums Northern Ireland, it will enable us to deliver another phase in the eminently successful Collections Skills Initiative.

Ensuring that the museum curators of tomorrow are highly skilled is a key aspect of making the sector sustainable, and an investment that will further protect our heritage for the enjoyment of this and future generations."

The twelve trainees are Daniel Taylor, Heather Taylor, Rebecca Gordon, Elaine McAnarney, Robert Whann, Nuala McCarthey, Karen Logan, Sarah Kingston, Claire Dalton, Joanne Burns, Charlotte McReynolds, and Janine Diamond. After initial training the participants will be involved with specific projects at Ballymoney Museum, Derry Heritage and Museum Service, Mid-Antrim Museum, FE McWilliam Gallery, Newry Museum, Mount Stewart, National Trust, together with the four museums – Ulster Museum, Ulster Folk and Transport Museum, Armagh County Museum and the Ulster American Folk Park – comprising the National Museums Northern Ireland.

Dr Jim McGreevy, Director of Collections and Interpretation at National Museums Northern Ireland said: "National Museums Northern Ireland is delighted to be a partner in this ground-breaking programme. We will be hosting six trainees at our four museums and look forward to providing them with the opportunity to learn vital skills through working with our collections."

The Collections Skills Initiative was funded through the HLF Skills for the Future programme which aims to fund high quality work based training opportunities to equip people with the skills to pursue a career in heritage, to meet indentified skills gaps or shortages in the heritage sector, to enhance the capacity of the heritage sector to deliver sustainable training, share good practice and to increase the diversity of the heritage workforce.

Maurna Crozier, Northern Ireland Committee Member of the Heritage Lottery Fund, said: "The Heritage Lottery Fund is delighted that there has been such a high level of interest in these 'Skills for the Future' placements in Northern Ireland

and we wish this new group of trainees every success for the future as they build their careers in the heritage sector.

HLF is committed to continue funding skills development across the heritage sector and we are reopening the Skills for the Future grant programme in early November 2012. We would encourage other organisations or partnerships who feel they can provide this mix of quality training opportunities and placements to come along to our local workshop on the 19 November."

The bursary holders will commence their training next week and anyone interested in following their progress can find details on the NIMC web site.

Notes to editors

The Northern Ireland Museums Council is the advocacy and strategic agency working with and on behalf of local museums in Northern Ireland. Its primary objectives are to raise the standards of collections care in museums, and encourage greater access to and participation in museum activities.

Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) Skills for the Future was at the time a one-off initiative to support the creation and provision of work based training opportunities within the heritage sector. HLF invested over £17million and generated more than 1,500 training places across the UK. Due to the interest and demand HLF ran a second round of Skills for the Future and awarded a further £13million.

HLF is reopening this grant programme for new applications in early November 2012. HLF has invested over £150m in all types of heritage projects across Northern Ireland.

Further information

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