

## Museum Essentials: Working with Collections - Co-production

### Introduction

Co-production is a method of working with our communities, in this context on collections-based projects. It is a method of working that can provide a wider variety of experience to contextualize collections and associated information. By co-producing exhibitions and interpretation, we can enable our spaces to be more welcoming and usable by a wider variety of people.

### Key benefits of Co-production for the museum

- It provides museums with new interpretations of collections that we may not have gained from associated information
- It gives a chance to enhance the public understanding of the work we do and create advocates
- It can make gallery spaces more welcoming for non-traditional visitors attracting new audiences
- It can enable museums to build relationships with non-visiting communities
- It can challenge traditional interpretation of objects adding new layers to collections information



### Key benefits of co-production for participants

- It allows their voices to be heard and represented in museums
- It can empower them to own their own history
- It can enable access to knowledge and new experiences
- It can provide the opportunity to work with new people as equals
- A participatory approach can improve interpretation, unlocking the hidden potential of objects



### Who can be involved in co-production?

- Collections staff
- Engagement staff
- Other museum staff
- Volunteers & friends groups
- Trustees
- Visitors
- Non-visitors
- Community partners

Co-production has benefits for both the museum and the participants. Before embarking upon a co-production project think about what you want these benefits to be and what you would like to achieve and ask partners to think about this too. It is critical that there is a two-way relationship between the museum and co-production partners.