Barriers To Entering Careers In Museums, Libraries And Archives

Report Prepared For MUSEUMS, LIBRARIES & ARCHIVES COUNCIL

By Zebra Square Ltd
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES  
1.2 RESEARCH METHODS AND SAMPLING  

1.2.1 Young People  
1.2.2 Postgraduates  
1.2.3 Parents  
1.2.4 Careers Teachers And Connexions Personal Advisers  
1.2.5 About This Report

## 2 THE CONTEXT: CAREERS ADVICE, INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE

2.1 CAREERS INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE: KEY FINDINGS  
2.2 INFLUENCE OF PARENTS/CARERS ON YOUNG PEOPLE’S CHOICE OF CAREERS  
2.3 YOUNG PEOPLE’S PERCEPTIONS OF DESIRABLE CAREERS

## 3 PERCEPTIONS OF WORKING IN MUSEUMS, LIBRARIES AND ARCHIVES

3.1 AWARENESS AND PERCEPTIONS OF WORKING IN MUSEUMS  
3.2 AWARENESS AND PERCEPTIONS OF WORKING IN LIBRARIES  
3.3 AWARENESS AND PERCEPTIONS OF WORKING IN ARCHIVES  
3.4 PARENTS’ VIEWS OF THE SECTOR  
3.5 POSTGRADUATES’ VIEWS OF THE SECTOR  
3.6 CAREER PROFESSIONALS’ VIEWS OF THE SECTOR
PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF MUSEUMS, LIBRARIES AND ARCHIVES

4.1 PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF MUSEUMS
4.1.1 Perceptions of Museums
4.1.2 Museum Visiting

4.2 PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF LIBRARIES
4.2.1 Perceptions of Libraries
4.2.2 Usage of Libraries

4.3 PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF ARCHIVES
4.3.1 Perceptions of Archives
4.3.2 Usage of Archives

4.4 PARENTS' VIEWS OF THE SECTOR

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 CONCLUSIONS: BARRIERS TO ENTERING THE SECTOR
5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS
5.2.1 Recommended First Steps
5.2.2 General Recommendations
5.2.3 Suggested Action Points By Audience
1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

The MLA “Museum, Libraries and Archives” Council was established in April 2002 as the national development agency working with and on behalf of the museums, libraries and archives sector.

The MLA serves to provide strategic leadership, to promote collaborative working and to advise and inform government policy making, in order to fuel innovation and future development, throughout the sector.

“Investing in Knowledge” is the MLA’s five year “vision”, designed to increase citizen access to information and knowledge, by modernizing and raising the profile of services, across the sector. It also aims to support the Government’s access, learning and social agendas.

Encompassed within this overall vision, several programmes have been developed. The “Workforce Development” agenda is one such programme, specifically developed to tackle key employment issues affecting the sector. This includes concerns surrounding the disproportionate number of BMEs employed in Museums, Libraries and Archives, in relation to the communities that they serve.

In 2005, the MLA commissioned Zebra Square to conduct independent research to explore the barriers to employment within the sector, particularly at professional levels.

The research mainly focused on the views of young people. In meeting this overall objective, the research also explored:

- Influences and influencers of choice of career for young people
- Sources of information currently utilised by young people when making career choices
- Motivating factors in terms of career choice
- Perceptions of working in the sector
- Attitudes, experiences and perceptions of museums, libraries and archives
In addition to exploring the views of young people, small-scale qualitative research was conducted with:

- BME Parents (during the research process these had been identified as a key influence on career choice for young people from BME communities)
- Careers Teachers and Connexions Personal Advisers
- BME Postgraduates who had undertaken a related postgraduate qualification and were working or were looking to work in the sector

The findings of above research have been used to provide additional context to the views of the young people.

This report details the findings of the research which was conducted by Zebra Square between February and July 2005.

1.2 RESEARCH METHODS AND SAMPLING

1.2.1 Young People

Qualitative Research

The research with Young People combined qualitative and quantitative approaches.

The first stage of the research with young people was qualitative in nature and took the form of **fourteen peer group triads**. Triads are made up of three individuals who all share similar characteristics. The advantage of this approach was that it combined the creativity of a focus group but, due to the smaller number of participants, enabled the moderator to spend a greater amount of time with each respondent and discuss comments in detail. Peer group triads were also selected because they are less formal and intimidating than a one-to-one interview or a traditional focus group of eight respondents.
In addition:

- Respondents were in Years 9, 11, & 13. These year groups were identified as “critical” years for career and future decision-making. The Year 9 young people were considering their GCSE choices, the Year 11 students were studying GCSEs and were about to select post-16 options and the Year 13 respondents were studying A-levels or the equivalent and were considering their post-18 options.

- The triads were conducted with either male respondents or female respondents (that is, single gender groups were conducted) as young people can often feel self-conscious about participating in mixed gender groups. (There may also have been cultural and religious sensitivities around this issue.) The triads were evenly split between male and female participants.

- Where possible, each triad was made up of one ethnic group and various BME communities were represented across the research including Afro-Caribbean, African, Pakistani, Indian and Bangladeshi groups. Two triads were also conducted with White young people as control groups.

- All triads were recruited through schools and took place on school premises. Generally, the respondents already knew each other. This was felt to be important in terms of encouraging participation, particularly for the youngest respondents.

- The groups were held across London, Leeds, Birmingham and Manchester. These cities were selected primarily to reflect the distribution of England’s BME population, and because of the high number of museums, libraries and archives located in these areas which could potentially be accessed by respondents.

The triads broadly follow a pre-agreed topic guide which covered all key question areas. Various creative exercises were utilised to explore young people’s views. Sufficient time was allowed for spontaneous comments and to explore views in detail where required.
Quantitative Research

The MLA and Zebra Square Project Team felt that it was important to quantify the findings from the qualitative research, and to identify any potential differences in opinion between different BME communities, age groups, region, and levels of museum, library and archive usage. The Team also decided to include the views of White young people in order to identify which views and issues were common to all young people and which varied by ethnicity.

A self-completion methodology was used to quantify the views of young people. A total of 1,250 self-completion questionnaires were sent to Schools and Colleges across the nine MLA regions. Zebra Square made initial contact with Schools and Colleges; all potential participants received a questionnaire, a freepost envelope and an introductory letter. The questionnaire incorporated the language and the findings of the qualitative research in terms of the wording of the questions and the closed responses provided.

A total of 303 questionnaires were returned. Participation levels were relatively even between White young people (50.1%) and young people from BME communities (43%). The profile of participants is shown in Figure 2.
### Figure 2: Profile Of Quantitative Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-15</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-19</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School Year</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 8-10</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 11-13</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnicity</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>White</strong></td>
<td>50.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White British</td>
<td>48.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Irish</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Other</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mixed</strong></td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed – White and Black African</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed - White and Black Caribbean</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed – White and Asian</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed – Other Mixed Background</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Black</strong></td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/ Black British – African</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/ Black British – Caribbean</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/ Black British – Any</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Asian</strong></td>
<td>24.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/ Asian British – Pakistani</td>
<td>14.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/ Asian British – Indian</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/ Asian British – Bangladeshi</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/ Asian British – Other</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer not to say</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other</strong></td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Base**: 303
1.2.2 Postgraduates

Four face-to-face in depth interviews were conducted with BME respondents who were completing or who had completed a sector relevant postgraduate qualification. Two respondents were currently studying and two respondents had completed a postgraduate course (one of them was now working in the sector). All respondents had carried out work experience or had volunteered within Museums and Libraries to varying degrees.

The route to course selection was explored with respondents. Also discussed in the interview were any issues surrounding ethnicity which respondents had encountered in the sector, perceived barriers to those from BME communities to entering related professions, and perceptions and attitudes of respondents’ families and peers.

1.2.3 Parents

Six face-to-face in depth interviews were conducted with parents from BME communities. Four interviews were undertaken with Asian parents (of Pakistani and Indian descent) and two were carried out with Black parents (African and Caribbean).

The interviews explored the influence and role of parents in terms of young people’s career decision making process, how various careers were perceived and what factors were thought to be important when selecting a career. Perceptions, attitudes and levels of knowledge about career opportunities in the museum, library and archive sector were explored as well as views about the sector in general.

1.2.4 Careers Teachers & Connexions Personal Advisers

A total of six face-to-face depth interviews were conducted with Careers Teachers and Connexions Personal Advisers, working within major cities in England.

Conducting research with Careers Teachers provided insight into the type of careers guidance and information available to young people and the role of careers staff in the career-decision making process. Knowledge of the sector and the level of information available about careers in museums, libraries and archives were also explored.
1.2.5 About This Report

- In the research with Young People, due to the self-completion methodology, not all questions were answered by all respondents. (The number of respondents completing each question is shown in the base for each table.)

- The “rounding up” in the tables means that not all total responses add up to 100%.

- Quotes are taken from the qualitative research and from the additional comments made by respondents on the self-completion questionnaires.

- For the purpose of analysis, the following ethnicity classifications have been combined:
  - “White” encompasses White British, White Irish, English Gypsy, Irish Traveller and White Other
  - “Mixed” is made up of respondents describing themselves as White and Black African, White and Black Caribbean, White and Asian and Other Mixed Backgrounds
  - “Asian” includes Asian/Asian British Pakistani, Asian/Asian British Indian, Asian/Asian British Bangladeshi and Asian/Asian British Other
  - “Black” encompasses Black/Black British Caribbean, Black/Black British African and Black/Black British Other
  - “Other” is made up of Chinese respondents and those describing themselves as other ethnic groups not included above

- Data in the provided tables include responses in the following categories:
  - “All” refers to all respondents who completed the question
  - “All BME” encompasses all Mixed, Black and Asian respondents as well as Chinese respondents.
  - Columns of data relating to White, Asian, Black, Mixed and Other relate to the definitions indicated above.

- Unfortunately, 33 respondents did not complete the question on ethnicity or preferred not to provide details. The findings from these questionnaires have been included in the data for “All” young people but could not be analysed by ethnicity.
2 THE CONTEXT: CAREERS ADVICE, INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE

In order to understand the context to working in the sector, general careers advice and guidance issues were explored with respondents.

2.1 CAREERS INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE: KEY FINDINGS

In terms of the formal provision of careers-related advice and information at schools and colleges, the following key findings emerged:

- Most careers professionals and young people thought that the provision of **one-to-one advice** was relatively limited. Most young people felt that they had to be pro-active in sourcing information about careers and in suggesting areas of interest themselves, rather than receiving suggestions from careers teachers and advisers. Although all schools did offer at least one one-to-one careers session with young people, some colleges did not. Most young people used computer programmes and self-tests as a way of finding out about potential careers and as a means of identifying areas of interest. They did not necessarily feel, however, that there were opportunities to discuss any outcomes with their careers teacher or adviser. Young people generally did not receive one-to-one guidance until Year 11.

  "(Year 9) Most wouldn’t have an individual interview; guidance is more likely to be delivered through group sessions”

  Careers Adviser

- **The careers resources varied in schools and colleges.** Some schools and colleges, for example, had extensive careers libraries and provided access to computers for searching the internet and/or completing self-tests such as Kudos. Some schools and colleges invited employers to parents' evenings and/or organised trips to external “careers fairs” whilst others did not. Where talks and workshops were organised in schools and colleges, these generally resulted through pro-active contact from a professional body or similar or were arranged by respondents because they were thought to reflect the needs of several students.
“If you are going to arrange something, it will be a talk from someone in a popular career, something that’s got wide appeal. Perhaps the police or the armed services or the NHS”

Careers Adviser

- Careers Teachers and advisers commented on various “milestones” within the provision of careers-related information and guidance. For example, discussions surrounding careers advice and guidance first began to be discussed in Year 9 however the information delivered was reported to predominantly surround GCSE option choices. Similarly, guidance received by Year 11 students was predominantly focused upon A-Level option choices whilst advice available to Year 13 respondents centred around UCAS applications and university options. Careers professionals reported that those young people who were not pursuing further education tended to receive most help and support in Year 11 compared to those going on to further education.

“It tends to be those that are leaving education at 16 or those with special needs that have most careers advice”

Careers Adviser

- Most of the young people had participated in work experience for the first time in Year 10. The extent to which individual young people were actively involved in selecting work experience placements varied. Generally, however, most schools had links with employers in “popular careers.”

- Careers professionals felt that it was difficult to keep their knowledge of careers and sectors up-to-date. Some professions (particularly the legal sector, the police and the armed forces) were thought to be pro-active in providing accessible information for both young people and careers professionals themselves.

- Those working in careers felt that young people were influenced by a range of factors. Parental influence was thought to be important, particularly within BME communities. Respondents reported that they had also noticed the impact of popular television programmes on raising awareness of, and prompting interest in, careers such as forensic medicine, psychology, the fire service, medicine and the police service.
The young people who participated in the qualitative research generally felt that they had received little, if any, formal information relating to careers. The youngest respondents (in Year 9) were least likely to feel knowledgeable about potential future careers and some of these young people found it difficult to recall the content of any information that they had received.

“I’m not sure I’ve actually had anything”
Female, aged 15, Afro-Caribbean

“You make your decisions in the dark”
Male, aged 14, Pakistani

In the quantitative research, respondents named various sources of careers information and advice. Both school/college based sources and family members were frequently cited.

When asked who they were most likely to listen to when making decisions about their future job or career, however, young people were most likely to name their mum, dad or carer and over half of them (56%) gave this response. These findings were relatively consistent across all ethnic groups; Black respondents were least likely to give this response but, at 44%, this remained the most popular information source.

Figure 3: Who Young People Most Listen To In Making Decisions About Jobs & Careers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>All Young People</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>All BME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Head Teacher or principal</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Careers Teacher at school or college</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other teachers/tutors at school or college</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Mentor</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connexions Personal Adviser</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mum, dad or carer</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brother or sister</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other family member</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base* 212 111 81
“I live with my aunty and she’s a nurse. She’s the person who influences me the most.”

Female, aged 16, African

2.2 INFLUENCE OF PARENTS/CARERS ON YOUNG PEOPLE’S CHOICE OF CAREERS

The influence of parents in career choice was explored in the qualitative research.

The role of parents in providing careers advice and guidance, as described by the young people, varied across the sample. Some young people reported that their parents had a “hands-on role” in supporting them with education and career-based choices or described their parents as being very vocal about their preferred career; others felt that whilst their parents did not “sit down and discuss” options, they did make comments about certain jobs or professions and in doing so, influenced their views. A number of boys, for example, reported that their fathers had told them the importance of “getting a trade”; other young people explained that their parents had “put them off” some potential career choices.

“They convince you not to do things, like acting; they say so many horrible things, you just leave it”

Female, aged 16, African

“My dad always says “Get a trade boy” ”

Male, aged 15, Afro-Caribbean

“I’ve been having careers advice since I was young from my mum, “you’re going to be a doctor, you’re going to be a nurse” and I’m like,” ok” “

Female, aged 17, African

Most young people felt that their parents had preferred careers in mind for them, however, the type of career and the extent to which respondents felt that they had to follow these choices varied.
• **White respondents** were least likely to feel that their parents had fixed ideas about acceptable career choices. Generally, they thought that their parents would support them in any career. Several White respondents reported that their parents wanted them to choose a career path that would simply make them “happy”.

  “My mum would support me if she knew it was something I wanted to do”
  
  Female, aged 15, White

• Respondents of **Asian** descent felt that their parents and other family members had high expectations of them and had very clear ideas of “acceptable” career choices. Desirable career choices amongst Asian families tended to be “high status”, “professional” jobs; law, accountancy, medicine and IT were commonly cited professions which respondents thought that their family valued. Several respondents were concerned that they would not be supported by their family if they chose careers which were not deemed acceptable.

• The views of Black respondents were similar to those of Asian young people in that they also felt that their parents had fixed ideas of acceptable and appropriate careers. The careers cited by Black respondents, however, tended to be vocational and included nursing, hairdressing, beauty therapy as well as engineering and mechanics.

• Both Asian and Black respondents felt that their parents were attracted to specific careers because these were based on a skill or specialist knowledge, and were well-established, “safe” and well paid.

  “I think most black families think nursing is the best and that’s what I’ll do. It’s not what I want but if I get the qualification, I’ll always have that to fall back on”
  
  Female, aged 16, African

• The **role of the wider family** also appeared to be far greater amongst BME respondents than amongst White respondents. BME respondents reported that their aunts and uncles often vocalised feelings about their future and many felt that they were often compared to their cousins or other family members.
One or two respondents who had been interested in careers which were not thought by their parents to be acceptable, described how their wider family had been “brought in” to help change their minds.

“My parents always said unless it is a doctors’ course or a lawyers’ course there’s no point going for it so they thought my degree was a waste of time”
Female, Pakistani, Postgraduate

“They want us to do well so that when we are older we can have good jobs and then they can say to their friends that their sons and daughters have good jobs”
Male, aged 14, Pakistani

“My dad wasn’t so pleased (when I said I wanted to do beauty therapy). He said I could get a better job than touching people’s hair and I could do something for more money and get a better job than that”
Female, aged 17, Pakistani

2.3 YOUNG PEOPLE’S PERCEPTIONS OF DESIRABLE CAREERS

In the qualitative research young people were asked to “brainstorm” the attributes which were most important to them in terms of a job or career and moderators explored why certain sectors were felt to be more desirable than others. All young people identified similar factors, regardless of age, ethnicity or gender. The most desirable factors for respondents were:

- **High salary.** Respondents were very “money conscious” and several reported that they wanted to be “rich when they were older.” A high salary was linked to achieving high status and to respect.

- **Respect** from family and friends. As indicated above, this was often perceived to relate to salary and position, although community figures such as youth workers were felt to have achieved respect even though they were not thought to earn high salaries.
**Interesting work.** Young people were concerned about “being bored.” There was debate about the extent to which a high salary could compensate for a dull job. Some respondents thought that the type of work was more important than the salary whilst others expected to receive “more money for a boring job.”

Other important factors identified by young people related to the number of working hours, the working environment and work colleagues.

“Doctors...They get a lot of money and respect”
Male, aged 14, Pakistani

“A new challenge and loads of money”
Female, aged 15, Afro-Caribbean

The questionnaires captured data relating to preferred jobs and careers. Young people were asked to spontaneously name the career or job in which they were most interested. (This was an “open” question which required them to write in a response rather than choose from a set list.) Around nine out of ten respondents (89%) had at least some idea of what they wanted to do in the future and named a specific job or career.
A wide-range of occupations were cited across the sample of young people as a whole and the overall findings were fragmented with each “top” choice achieving relatively low percentages in terms of interest in them. When explored by ethnicity, however, some clear differences in career choice emerge as indicated in Figure 4, below.

Across all young people, the most frequently cited career choice was a lawyer or solicitor. One in ten respondents said that they wanted to work in this sector in the future. Similar numbers of respondents also cited teacher and doctor (8% and 7% of the overall sample respectively).

Reflecting the overall findings, the choices cited by White young people are relatively fragmented and again, several careers are named but there are relatively few clearly preferred options. The most commonly cited career choice amongst White young people was “teacher” which was given by just 9% of respondents and lawyer/solicitor, sports person and accountant which were all cited by 7% of this group. Other careers and jobs achieved very few responses.

Figure 4 Young People’s Top Career Choices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Mixed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lawyer/Solicitor (10%)</td>
<td>Teacher (9%)</td>
<td>Doctor (20%)</td>
<td>Hairdresser (16%)</td>
<td>Actor (11%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher (8%)</td>
<td>IT (7%)</td>
<td>Lawyer/Solicitor (19%)</td>
<td>Nursery Nurse (12%)</td>
<td>Teacher (11%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctor (7%)</td>
<td>Lawyer/Solicitor (19%)</td>
<td>IT (12%)</td>
<td>Teacher (8%)</td>
<td>Accountant (6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT (6%)</td>
<td>Accountant (7%)</td>
<td>Teacher (5%)</td>
<td>Accountant (8%)</td>
<td>IT (6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountant (6%)</td>
<td>Sports Person (7%)</td>
<td>Accountant (4%)</td>
<td>Sports Person (8%)</td>
<td>Nursery Nurse (6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurse Nurse (5%)</td>
<td>Manager (5%)</td>
<td>Manager (4%)</td>
<td>Actor (8%)</td>
<td>Midwife (6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports Person (4%)</td>
<td>Nurse Nurse (5%)</td>
<td>Hairdresser (3%)</td>
<td>Doctor (4%)</td>
<td>Mechanic (6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hairdresser (4%)</td>
<td>Doctor (3%)</td>
<td>Nursery Nurse (3%)</td>
<td>IT (4%)</td>
<td>Engineer (6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager (4%)</td>
<td>Actor (3%)</td>
<td>Optician (3%)</td>
<td>Manager (4%)</td>
<td>Photographer (6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actor (3%)</td>
<td>Hairdresser (3%)</td>
<td>Actor (1%)</td>
<td>Writer (4%)</td>
<td>Building Trade (6%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In contrast, amongst the BME sample, there was less variation in responses and BME young people named fewer careers overall compared to White respondents.

Asian respondents in particular, were most likely to cite common career choices and the two most favoured options, doctor and lawyer/solicitor were named by significant numbers of young people. One in five Asian respondents (20%) reported that they wanted to be a doctor and lawyer/solicitor achieved a similar response (19%). Interest in IT was also relatively high at 12% of this group.

Overall, Black respondents were more likely than Asian or White young people to cite vocational careers. The most commonly named career amongst Black young people was hairdressing (or hairdressing and beauty) and this was cited by 16% of respondents in this group. Around one in eight (12%) named nursery nurse and working in sports and 8% of Black respondents wanted to work as an accountant, an actor or an engineer.

All of the young people which named a preferred career or job were asked why they been attracted to this choice. The following statements were provided and respondents could tick any options which they felt answered this question:

- The pay
- My mum, dad or carer would like me to have this sort of job
- Family members would look up to me
- Other people would look up to me
- I think the job will be interesting
- I think that the people I would work with would be friendly
- I think the people I would be like me
- I would be able to travel around
- I know people that work in these jobs
- I have heard good things about working in these jobs
- I think that it would be easy work
- I could get a job close to where I live

Broadly, the reasons why young people were attracted to their career choice reflected the career attributes which they perceived to be desirable.
The most popular reason for choosing their named career was “I think this job will be interesting” and over three-quarters of respondents (79%) cited this. This finding was relatively consistent across all ethnic groups.

Four out of ten respondents (40%) had been attracted to their chosen career because of the salary. Asian respondents were most likely to have been attracted to a career because of pay (49% cited this reason) whilst Black respondents and those of Mixed ethnicity were least likely to mention this (24% and 25% of each group).

Around a third of respondents (34%) had been attracted to their named careers because they had “heard good things about this sort of job.” Black respondents and those of Other ethnicities were most likely to cite this reason.

Overall, around one in seven young people (15%) were attracted to their named career because “my mum, dad or carer would like me to have this sort of job.” Asian respondents were almost twice as likely as average to hold this view (29% agreed with the statement in question). In contrast only 8% of Black respondents cited this as a reason for choosing their preferred career.

Over half of respondents who had a career in mind (56%), already knew someone working in this type of job. Young people were most likely to choose a career in which family members other than parents and siblings were already working (26% of all those with a career in mind gave this response).
3 PERCEPTIONS OF WORKING IN MUSEUMS, LIBRARIES & ARCHIVES

In the qualitative research, young people’s spontaneous perceptions of working in the sector were recorded. Views were then explored in detail through the construction of “mood boards” onto which young people selected words, images and famous people which they associated with working in museums, libraries and archives.

Various careers and jobs which are available in the sector were tested with respondents to explore whether these were associated with museums, libraries or archives.

The quantitative research measured perceptions of working in the sector through various attitudinal statements. Respondents were asked whether or not they associated the following statements with museums, libraries and archives:

- Fascinating
- Boring
- For older people
- Fun
- Helps me with school or college work
- Unfriendly
- Interesting
- Quiet
- Welcoming
- Old fashioned
- Modern
- Somewhere I would choose to go
- Not for people like me
- Staff make me feel welcome

3.1 AWARENESS AND PERCEPTIONS OF WORKING IN MUSEUMS

Various jobs and careers which are available in museums, libraries and archives were tested with respondents to ascertain awareness and associations. Generally, there was low awareness of the different careers across the sector.

In museums, respondents were most likely to be aware of the jobs and careers that they had actually seen when visiting. It was generally assumed that some staff would “work with” museum objects but there was a lack of knowledge about what this work actually entailed.
Older respondents were most likely to be aware of the role of a curator, although knowledge was generally limited. Respondents who had never visited a museum or had not done so for a number of years were least likely to be able to name any museum careers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High awareness</th>
<th>Low awareness</th>
<th>No awareness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tour guide</td>
<td>Graphic designer/designer</td>
<td>IT</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attendant</td>
<td>Curator</td>
<td>PR</td>
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<td>Retail staff</td>
<td>Education Officer</td>
<td>Marketing</td>
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Careers relating to PR, IT, human resources, marketing and finance were not associated with museums and respondents expressed surprise that this type of work was available in the sector. Marketing and PR related careers in particular were not thought to reflect respondents’ views or expectations of working in a museum.

A job in a museum was perceived to be a hobby rather than a career with prospects. This may have been because respondents associated museums with low-skilled or manual work, limited working hours and low pay. In addition, respondents’ awareness and knowledge of museum-related careers was very low and, typically, as indicated above, reflected the roles of “visible” staff with whom they had come into contact or had seen when visiting.

“You’re not doing much, just showing people ‘round really so it might not pay much money. There wouldn’t be much variety in your day”

Female, aged 15, Afro-Caribbean

“But I think if people don’t go there they can’t make much money so they can’t pay you very much”

Female, aged 14, Bangladeshi

“It’s like bottom of my list because we’re younger and stuff we want a job that pays... I want something more energetic”

Female, aged 15, Afro-Caribbean
A number of respondents felt that working in a museum would be “peaceful” and “quiet”. This view was partly shaped by the perception that staff and visitors “couldn’t talk” in museums but also by the view that that few people chose to visit. Related to this latter perception, several respondents thought that working in a museum would be “boring.”

“If you think about it not a lot of people go to museums it’s just people who find a common interest so it won’t be that crowded, it would be a peaceful place to work”

Female, aged 14, Bangladeshi

“When you think of museums you think of quiet places and white walls”

Female, aged 16, African

Respondents in the qualitative research were asked to name personalities, characteristics and hobbies that they associated with people who work in museums. Responses across the triads were consistent and the “typical” person working a museum was described in the following ways:

- **Upper class, posh and rich.** These perceptions may relate to the view that museum jobs were poorly paid and were hobbies rather than careers.

- **Clever** and knowledgeable and, related to these, studious. Interestingly, these descriptions were always spontaneously suggested in the triads however, when respondents considered their views in more detail there was always debate about whether staff were clever or not.

  Some young people felt that staff had to be knowledgeable because part of their job was “to answer visitors’ questions”; others felt that staff did the same work everyday and therefore learnt the necessary information but did not add to this.

- **Older** than respondents. Staff were described as “middle-aged” or elderly.

- **Quiet.** Museums were thought to be quiet and the personalities of staff working in them were thought to reflect this. Several respondents also thought that people who worked in museums would be boring.
Generally, staff working in museums were expected to have hobbies related to the home because they were not thought to go out and/or socialise with other people. Suggested hobbies included listening to classical music, watching documentaries and reading. Respondents also thought that museum staff would be interested in history and antiques.

“I think these people (who work in museums) like to go to auctions a lot and exploring, going onto the internet and finding really old sites.”

Female, aged 15, White

“Old, boring – well not boring but getting more knowledge about old stuff”

Male, aged 15, Pakistani

“Interesting people who know about graphics and history”

Female, aged 16, Afro-Caribbean

“Anne Robinson would work in a museum”

Female, aged 16, African

“Middle aged people work there who listen to orchestra music”

Female, aged 14, Bangladeshi
Respondents in the qualitative research were asked to name any famous people who they thought would work in a museum. The most frequently named celebrity was **Ross from the TV Show “Friends”** generally because he works in a museum. Ross was not necessarily perceived to be a positive role model because he was seen to be “boring” and was described as a “geek.” Other famous people associated with museums were **Anne Robinson** (because “she is unfriendly,” “intimidating” and “is well spoken”) and **Sharon Osbourne** (because “she is rich, has lots of houses and can work in a museum for a hobby”).

Reflecting the qualitative findings, awareness and knowledge of careers was relatively low across the quantitative sample. Around two-thirds of young people (64%) agreed with the statement, “I don’t really know what people in museums do.” Black respondents were most likely to feel this way with 76% agreeing with this. Reflecting this finding, when asked how much they knew about working in a museum, 63% of young people responded with “nothing” and a further 35% said that they knew “a little.”

Black respondents were most likely to say that they knew “nothing” about working in museums (80% gave this response).

No respondents spontaneously named working in a museum as a career in which they were interested.

Positively, by far the majority of respondents in the quantitative research agreed with the statements “there are lots of different museums to work in” (82% of the sample) and “there are lots of different jobs in museums” (72%). The qualitative research suggests, however, that young people may not necessarily be aware of the range of museums on offer or the different careers within them. In particular, when asked about the jobs available in museums, most of those which were cited by young people were the “visible” positions such as attendant, tour guide and shop worker. There was low awareness of jobs such as curators.
White respondents were most likely to feel that there were a number of different museums to work in as around nine out of ten in this group (92%) agreed with this statement. This may be related to higher levels of usage (see Section 4.1.2 below). Just under three-quarters of BME young people (72%) felt that there were lots of different museums to work in.

The findings suggest that young people did not necessarily identify with museum staff. Two-thirds of respondents (66%) agreed with the statement “I would not fit in if I worked in a museum.” White respondents and those of other ethnicities were most likely to agree (75% and 77% of each group). Similarly, one in five respondents (20%) felt that “there are lots of people like me working in museums.”

The aspects of a job or career which young people found motivating were tested in relation to museums:

- **Interesting work.** On balance, young people were more likely to feel that jobs in museums were “boring” than not (58% agreed with the related statement). White respondents and those of Mixed ethnicity were most likely to feel that “jobs in museums are boring” (62% and 67% compared to 51% of Asian respondents, 48% of Black respondents and 39% of those of Other ethnicities.)

- **High salaries.** Reflecting the qualitative research, the majority of respondents did not relate working in museums to high salaries. Around a quarter of respondents (24%) agreed that “jobs in museums are well paid”. Asian respondents and young people of Other ethnicities were most likely to perceive working in a museum to be well-paid (31% respectively).

- **Respect.** Generally, young people did not associate being “looked up to” with working in museums. Overall, only 12% of the sample agreed that “people would look up to me if I worked in a museum” although there was some variation in views. Black and respondents of Other ethnicities were most likely to associate this statement with museums (28% and 23% of each group); White young people were least likely to do so (9%).

One in five respondents (20%) reported that they would be “interested in work experience in a museum.” Black respondents were twice as likely as average to express interest in work experience (40% of this group agreed with the statement in question).
3.2 AWARENESS AND PERCEPTIONS OF WORKING IN LIBRARIES

There was little perceived differentiation between working in a museum and working in a library. Both museums and libraries were associated with a quiet working environment, generally older staff and “traditional” buildings.

“All libraries are the same; they are brown, sad buildings. I wouldn’t want to work there”

Female, aged 16, African

“You always have to keep the noise down in a library, you can’t even communicate”

Female, aged 16, African

Respondents were only able to name one library-related career, a librarian, and typically described this occupation as consisting of:

- Stamping books
- Receiving and storing returned books
- Tidying shelves and ensuring that books were placed in alphabetical order
- A minority of respondents associated librarians with answering questions and “finding information” for people

A librarian’s work was seen as “the same everyday” and, like museum jobs, was seen as a relatively unskilled hobby.

Most respondents were negative about working in libraries. Those respondents who were positive about working in the sector tended to have favourable perceptions of libraries. They generally enjoyed reading and perceived having access to books as a benefit of working in a library.

“I’d feel good working in a library as I could borrow books whenever I need them”

Female, aged 15, Afro-Caribbean

The characteristics and personalities of librarians were similar to those associated with people working in museums and included:
- **Middle-aged or “old.”** Respondents did not associate young people with working in libraries.

- **Love books/reading.** It was assumed that this was essential in order to become a librarian. Other hobbies which respondents associated with people who worked in libraries included listening to classical music and “watching documentaries.”

- **Clever/knowledgeable.** Most respondents thought that librarians “must be clever” because they had to answer questions about books.

- **Quiet.** It was assumed that quiet people were attracted to working in libraries. Interestingly, a minority of respondents thought that librarians “would need to be good at talking to people” because they had to welcome “different types of people” into the library and answer their questions. In contrast, other respondents thought that people working in libraries were unapproachable or difficult to communicate with.

- **Lonely/sad.** Several respondents thought that librarians were lonely and/or sad. These views generally related to perceptions of the working environment and to a perceived lack of library users.

> “You have to be very knowledgeable to work in libraries. You need good communication skills; you get all sorts of people asking you things”

Male, aged 15, Afro-Caribbean
“I just think of lonely people in libraries”
Female, aged 16, African

“They’d watch documentaries on the discovery channel”
Female, aged 16, White

Respondents could not name any famous person who they felt would work in a library.

“I can’t think of anyone; you forget boring people and famous people are the type of person who’d work in a library”
Male, aged 15, White

In the quantitative research, around half of young people (54%) said they knew “a little” about working in libraries. One third (34%) of respondents reported that they knew “nothing” about working in libraries. Asian respondents were least likely to be aware of working in the sector (87% of this group). Only one respondent in the quantitative research cited working in a library as their chosen career choice.

Positively, the majority of respondents (80%) thought that “there are lots of different libraries to work in” although the qualitative research suggests that, whilst young people were aware of different libraries, they perceived them to be similarly negative in terms of atmosphere and environment. Only around a third of respondents (34%) agreed that “there are lots of different jobs in libraries”. Interestingly, BME respondents were much more positive in relation to this factor than White young people and 43% of BMEs agreed with the statement in question compared to 28% of White respondents. Black respondents
were most positive about the different jobs in libraries and over half of this group (56%) agreed with the related statement.

Respondents were generally positive about library staff. Only 15% of young people thought that “people working in libraries aren’t friendly.” Black young people were more than twice as likely as other ethnic groups to agree with this statement (32% of Black respondents felt this way). Asian respondents were most positive about library staff and only 10% of this group agreed with the related statement.

Overall, the majority of young people did not relate to working in libraries. Only one in five (20%) felt that “there are lots of people like me working in libraries” and around one in two young people (59%) agreed that “I would not feel that I fitted in if I worked in a library.” White respondents were more likely than BMEs to be negative about both of these aspects (17% and 68% respectively compared to 25% and 50% of BME respondents).

The aspects of a job or career which young people found motivating were tested in relation to libraries:

- **Interesting Work.** Respondents’ views towards jobs in libraries were generally negative with almost seven in ten (69%) feeling that “jobs in libraries are boring”. White respondents were most likely to agree that “jobs in libraries are boring” (76% agreed with the statement). Black respondents were least likely to feel this way (44% of this group).

  Working in libraries (69%) was perceived as more “boring” than working in museums (58%).

- **High Salaries.** The perception amongst the majority of young people was that occupations in libraries were not well paid; only 12% agreed with the statement “jobs in libraries are well paid”. Black respondents were most optimistic about salaries in libraries (28% agreed with the related statement). White young people (7%) and those from Other ethnicities (8%) were least likely to associate high salaries with working in libraries.

- **Respect.** The majority of young people did not feel that working in a library would earn them respect in terms of how other people viewed them. Fewer than one in ten respondents (8%) felt that “people would look up to me if I worked in a library”. Black respondents were much more likely to be positive about being respected (36% agreed with the statement in question); Asian respondents were least likely to feel this way and only 4% of
this group felt that “people would look up to me if I worked in a library.”

Around one in five respondents (19%) said that they would be interested in undertaking work experience in a library. Overall, BME respondents were almost twice as likely as White young people to be interested in work experience (27% compared to 14%). Black respondents were most likely to express interest as 44% of this group did so.

3.3 AWARENESS AND PERCEPTIONS OF WORKING IN ARCHIVES

The majority of respondents were not aware of archives and were generally unfamiliar with them as places to visit or use. “Archiving” and “archives” did have some relevance to young people however, as they connecting the term to mobile phones and computers.

“It’s a mix of a museum and a library”
Female, aged 15, White

“I’ve heard of it but I’m not quite sure what it is”
Female, aged 15, Bangladeshi

“When you don’t want some stuff, you just put it there in case you need it again some time”
Female, aged 16, African

“Archives- you get them on your phones, on your mobile phone. You archive text messages”
Male, aged 14, Pakistani

As a result of the lack of awareness, respondents had no knowledge of jobs or careers within archives. This lack of knowledge, however, did
result in respondents asking questions about archives and there was some interest in finding out more information about the sector.

Reflecting the qualitative research, awareness of working in archives was very low across the quantitative sample. By far the majority of young people (85%) reported that they knew “nothing” about working in an archive. Young people’s perceptions of working in the sector therefore need to be analysed in relation to this finding.

No one named working in an archive as a career in which they were interested or had considered.

Only 15% of respondents agreed that “people working in archives aren’t friendly.” This data broadly reflects attitudes towards museums and equals the findings for libraries. Around half of young people (52%) thought that “they would not feel that they fitted in” if they worked in an archive; views were slightly more positive about archives compared to museums and libraries.

Around half of respondents thought that “there are lots of different jobs in archives” (49%) and that there were lots of different archives in which to work (48% of respondents).

The aspects of a job or career which young people found motivating were tested in relation to archives:

- **Interesting Work.** Half of the sample agreed that “jobs in archives are boring”, particularly young people of Other ethnicities (69%). A much lower proportion of Black respondents (28%) perceived working in archives to be boring. Archives were viewed more favourably in this respect than either libraries or museums.

- **High Salaries.** Around one third (32%) of respondents associated working in archives with high salaries. Working in the archives sector was perceived to offer higher salaries than working in museums and libraries.

  Black respondents (36%) were slightly more likely to feel that “jobs in archives are well paid” compared to young people from other ethnic groups.

- **Respect.** As with museums and libraries, the majority of young people did not feel that they would be “looked up to” if they worked in an archive. Just over one in ten (12%) respondents agreed that “people would look up to me if I worked in an
Young people of Black and Mixed ethnicity were more likely to relate this statement to archives (24% and 22% respectively) than young people from other ethnicities, particularly White respondents (7%) who were least likely to do so.

Around one in five young people (18%) said that they would be interested in work experience in an archive. BME respondents were almost twice as likely as White young people to be interested in doing so (25% of all BMEs expressed interest compared to 13% of White respondents).

### 3.4 Parents’ Views of Working in the Sector

Parents’ views of working in the sector were gained through the interviews with parents and also through the research with young people.

It was apparent that no parents had considered the sector as a potential career option for themselves or their children. There was little differentiation in terms of awareness and perceptions of working across museums and libraries and, like young people, there was little knowledge of archives. Generally, the views of parents in terms of perceptions of working in the sector reflected those of young people.

There was a lack of awareness of different careers within museums, galleries and archives. Parents did not know anyone already working in the sector and had never discussed doing so with their children. Although parents had generally heard the term “museum curator” and were aware of “librarians”, they were not aware of the types of work carried out in this role. Almost all sector jobs were seen as low-skilled or semi-skilled.

As indicated in Section 2, the parents interviewed in this research, generally had strong views about the type of career or sector which they perceived as “respectable”. These perceptions often related to how the career in question was viewed by others (particularly family members), salary and progression routes. The sector was not thought to offer these and, in contrast, was associated with limited opportunity for progression and low pay. Working in the sector was not thought to engender respect.

The perceived personality, skills and characteristics of someone working in the sector also reflected young people’s views. Librarians, for example, were variously described as old, boring and interested in
reading; museum workers were seen as sharing similar characteristics. Respondents of Asian origin said that they had not seen anyone of this ethnicity working in the sector.

In the qualitative research, respondents were asked how they thought that their parents would react if told that their son or daughter was interested in working in a museum, library or archive. Almost all young people thought that their parents would be “surprised” or even “shocked.”

When questioned about whether they thought their parents would be supportive of the decision, young people’s views varied. Some felt that their parents had long established ideas of acceptable careers and that this attitude would be a barrier to them pursuing alternative careers. BME respondents, and in particular young people of Asian origin, were most likely to feel that their parents would not support a decision to work in the sector because it not seen as a known or “acceptable” career choice.

“I think they would say” why would you work in a library when you can go out and go places?“

Male, aged 17, Indian

“It’s not an Asian thing to work in museums. I have never once seen an Asian person working there. It is not a job that would really be considered”

Parent, Indian, Yorkshire

“We are not supposed to have pictures in the house, when we pray, we pray five times a day and when you pray you are not supposed to have any pictures of anything in the house and because you pray so much you can’t keep putting pictures up and down. So opening an art gallery, a place full of pictures would be seen as an insult”

Female, Indian, Postgraduate

“She’d say there’s no prospects working there”

Female, aged 16, African

“They’d say what a joker, what are you going to do there?”

Male, aged 14, Pakistani

“For boys, you don’t go to university unless you are going to do a really good degree, like law or medicine. Unless you do that course there is no point and my family really believe that”

Male, Aged 17, Pakistani
To further explore parents’ views, in the questionnaire young people were asked whether or not they agreed with the statement “my parents would be happy about me working in a .... (museum, library or archive).” For museums, libraries and archives, more respondents disagreed than agreed.

- Overall, a third of respondents (33%) agreed that “my parents would be happy about me working in a museum.” White respondents were most likely to agree (41%) whilst Black young people were least likely to do so (only 12% agreed with the statement in question). The average level of agreement across the sample of BME respondents was 27%, which was the lowest score for the sector.

- Across the sample as a whole, 35% of young people thought that their parents would “be happy” about them working in a library. The views of White respondents reflected this average whilst the average agreement level amongst BMEs was slightly higher at 39%. Those of Mixed ethnicity and Black respondents were most likely to agree that their parents would be positive (56% and 44% respectively). Respondents of Other ethnic groups were most negative (only 15% of this group agreed with the statement in question).

- Overall, 29% of the sample agreed that “my parents would be happy about me working in an archive”. This average was broadly consistent across White and Asian respondents (30% and 32% of each group) whilst Black respondents and those of Other ethnicities were much less likely to feel this way (16% and 8% respectively). Respondents of Mixed ethnicity were most positive about their parents’ reactions and 50% of this group agreed with the statement in question.

3.5 POSTGRADUATES’ VIEWS OF THE SECTOR

The research with postgraduates supports the work with parents and young people in that these respondents felt that the sector was not viewed positively by their parents or other family members or even by others in their community.

One respondent, for example, said that she was not only the only non-white person on her museum-related course but on the campus of her university, where courses being taught were of an arts-based nature.
Most of the Postgraduates had “discovered” museums particularly through visiting with school or College. None of the respondents had visited museums in their childhood with their family. Respondents generally had less experience of archives and had a lower awareness of them than of museums and libraries.

Whilst Postgraduates felt overwhelmingly positive about museums, libraries and archives, most felt that their family and friends were largely negative about the sector, citing similar perceptions to other parents and young people who participated in the research. A number of respondents reported feeling “different” from their peers and many did not believe that their interests and their subsequent chosen career path within the sector were understood or respected.

“My friends all call me a weirdo. It’s just something I’m interested in”

Pakistani, Postgraduate

“It’s funny because my Asian friends don’t like going to galleries and museums so I always have to go on my own or someone on my course”

Pakistani, Postgraduate

Some respondents cited examples of their parents withdrawing support on discovering that they wished to pursue qualifications or career choices related to the museum, libraries and archives sector. Asian respondents, in particular, were most likely to report that negative views were expressed by their wider family and that were made to feel “embarrassed” or ashamed of their choices.

“Most of the family were like, what is your daughter doing, and I was an embarrassment to them and it really hurt but I thought it was something I really wanted to do”

African, Postgraduate

“My mum never gave me proper support, in fact she didn’t even want to come to my graduation, because she didn’t think it was a real degree”

Indian, Postgraduate

As a result of the negative and disapproving perceptions of family and peers it was apparent that respondents were extremely dedicated and passionate about their course of study and had, in some cases, sacrificed relationships with family members to continue their chosen career path.
“I was fascinated by art itself and really wanted to work in art galleries and museums, it seemed a course that would be really interesting, I really wanted to do it”

African, Postgraduate

“I have always had a real love for museums. That’s the only reason why you would pursue working in museums or galleries, because you have a passion for it”

Pakistani, Postgraduate

Most respondents, however, had experienced difficulties in trying to secure employment within the sector on completion of their postgraduate study. Largely as a result of a lack of family support, a number of respondents had worked whilst studying in order to fund their courses and because of this, had not been able to volunteer or undertake work experience placements within the sector. Consequently, many lacked the necessary experience to be able to seek paid work.

“It is so hard to get a job, people are completing five years of study up to their eye balls in debt and then can’t get a job, it’s crazy”

African, Postgraduate

“Basically everyone wants more experience and I’m just thinking when was I supposed to get that experience? I was working throughout university to pay for my course, I had no choice”

Pakistani, Postgraduate

“There isn’t much opportunity out there and that is off putting, if there was more opportunity then I’d work in a museum or gallery tomorrow but I’m lost now, I did my degree for three years and I can’t get a job in the sector and sometimes I wonder if my family were right after all; maybe I shouldn’t have done it”

Indian, Postgraduate

Amongst postgraduates who had not found work in the sector, there was a lack of awareness of positive action schemes or any moves within the sector to diversify the workforce and attract people from BME communities.
3.6 CAREER PROFESSIONALS’ VIEWS OF THE SECTOR

As indicated in Section 2, those working in the area of young people’s careers advice and guidance described the sectors about which they had to be aware of as “numerous.” They reported that they often found it difficult to keep their knowledge up to date, particularly in terms of new developments and changes.

Respondents’ awareness of professions in the museums, libraries and archives sector was explored and the following key findings emerged:

- **Limited demand from students.** None of the respondents could remember being asked by a student about working in a museum, library or archive. In practice, this meant that the sector was rarely discussed, if at all, by respondents.

  “I think young people tend to perceive libraries are a service. It’s generally seen as a low profile job, not many young people talk about working in libraries. They tend to want to work in noisy, vibrant places”
  
  Careers Adviser

  “I don’t think that it is necessarily the sector that is the problems as such, I just think that other careers seem far more glamorous and are far more visible to young people”
  
  Careers Adviser

- There was a **lack of awareness** about information relating to careers within the sector which may have resulted from the low level of demand for information from students. (Unless asked about museums, libraries and archives, respondents did not feel the need to source information.) Most respondents recognised that they themselves knew very little about professions in the sector.

  “There is a lack of exposure to careers in the museum, libraries and archives sector. There is a lack of awareness of the different job roles that can be undertaken there. Awareness of jobs generally surrounds what people can see so museum attendants, ticketing staff, not designers or photographers”
  
  Careers Adviser
• **Other professions were thought to be more pro-active**
  than the museums, libraries and archives sector in terms of providing information that was user friendly for students and careers professionals. It was reported that the literature of some professions prompted interest from young people because of the way it had been designed and the information which it contained. Web-based information and CD Roms were also said to be attractive to young people. (Respondents were not aware of either of these being produced by the sector.)

  "I have found that a lot of employers offer to come into the schools to give talks on the different professions. It's seen to be a really good way to educate young people about different job roles. Most are unaware of what jobs actually entail, often just heard of them, if at all."

  Careers Adviser

• **No awareness of changes within the sector.** Again, some sectors and professions were said to provide regular updates about developments and changes. Some sectors were said to be regularly featured in careers-publications and/or in the general press and this also ensured that respondents “kept up to date” with changes. No respondents had seen updated information from the sector, but there was interest in finding out about recent developments. In particular, respondents were interested in the sector’s moves towards diversity in the workforce.
4 PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF MUSEUMS, LIBRARIES AND ARCHIVES

Perceptions and experiences of museums, libraries and archives were explored in the qualitative research. Initially, spontaneous views were generated. Moderators then used word games and mood board techniques to elicit further, considered responses.

In the quantitative research, respondents were provided with a range of words and statements and were asked to indicate which of these they associated with museums, libraries and archives. The words and phrases had been generated through the qualitative research and included the following mix of positive and negative descriptions:

- Fascinating
- Boring
- For older people
- Fun
- Helps me with my school or college work
- Unfriendly
- Interesting
- Quiet
- Welcoming
- Old fashioned
- Modern
- Somewhere I would choose to go
- Not for people like me
- Staff make me feel welcome

4.1 PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF MUSEUMS

4.1.1 Perceptions Of Museums

Awareness and experiences of museums were extremely mixed. Some respondents could not name any museums whilst other young people had visited several. Location of the research did not have an impact on young people’s awareness and knowledge of museums.

“The only museum I’ve heard of is the war museum and I don’t know where it is”

Male, age 15, Afro-Caribbean
“I can’t remember if I’ve ever been to a museum. I think I went once on a trip with primary school but it was so long ago”
Female, aged 15, Afro-Caribbean

“Wouldn’t even know where there was a museum”
Female, aged 16, African

Initially, the words and images which respondents associated with museums were negative. The most commonly cited words were:

- **Quiet**. Respondents thought that both visitors and staff “had to whisper” in a museum. There was a perception that noise or talking was forbidden or frowned upon.

- **Education**. Museums were primarily linked to school and “learning.” Initial perceptions focused on passive learning (“looking” and “being told” information by staff) rather than on interactives or demonstrations, although these did emerge as associations later in the discussions. Museums were not seen as somewhere to visit with friends.

- **Old** was used to describe both “things” (as in displays) and the “people” that were thought to be typical museum visitors.

- **Boring** generally because they were not thought to feature anything in which they were interested. Respondents were not aware of museums which reflected their own hobbies or interests, such as sport, film or fashion.
- **Expensive.** Generally, respondents were not aware that many museums have free entry and almost all assumed that entry fees would be expensive. Going to a museum was also expected to be expensive because of other costs that might be incurred, such as travel costs. Cafés and shops in museums were also expected to be expensive.

- **Still/unchanging.** Respondents thought that displays in museums “stayed the same.” Related to this, they were also perceived as **old-fashioned.**

Museums were perceived to be **traditional** both in terms of their buildings and their displays and respondents described the latter as consisting of “glass cases” and “models.”

Unlike libraries and archives for which spontaneous and considered responses remained similar, the findings related to museums indicate that young people’s initial perceptions could differ from their actual experiences of museum visiting. When moderators probed to find out whether all museums matched the words and images which they had initially cited, several respondents were able to name museums which did not reflect these views.
Frequently named museums included the Science Museum in London and Millennium Point in Birmingham. Respondents had either visited these museums or had seen related publicity and used words such as “technology”, “modern”, “interactive” and “fun” to describe their experiences or their impressions of them.

When probed, respondents were positive about potential careers in these “modern” museums and thought that the work of staff would be “interesting.”

“The Science Museum, it’s interactive, there’s more to do. You’re basically there to learn. When you go to other museums, you’re there just to look at things from a hundred years ago”
Male, aged 17, Indian

“I’ve seen the Science Museum on the TV and it looks quite cool”
Male, aged 15, Afro-Caribbean

“I would work at Millennium Point, it’s new technology, you’d learn about what’s going to happen in the future”
Male, aged 14, Pakistani

The findings from the quantitative research indicate variation in perceptions and attitudes across the sample which may be related to respondents’ experience of different museums or to the methodology of self-completion questionnaires.
On balance, respondents in the quantitative research were generally positive about museums. The most commonly associated words and phrases were interesting (which was cited by 62% of respondents) and welcoming (60% of young people). “Old-fashioned” was also a key perception which around half of respondents (52%) associated with museums; fewer respondents (34%) thought that museums were “modern.” Around half of respondents (51%) associated “helps me with my school or college work” with museums.

Respondents were slightly more negative than positive about staff with 49% of the sample agreeing that “staff make me feel welcome” although only 13% felt that museums were “unfriendly.” Views were relatively evenly split for “fascinating” (46% of the sample), “not for people like me” (45%) and “boring” (41%).

Across all the words and phrases tested, BME respondents were generally more positive about museums than White young people. (The extent of these differences in views does vary, however.) The only exception was “fun” which was cited by a third respectively of BME and White respondents. White young people were also much more likely to associate “helps me with my school or college work” with museums than BME respondents (64% of White respondents compared to 39% of BMEs) although this view could relate to a range of factors such as visiting patterns and subjects being studied.

In particular, BME respondents were much more likely than White young people to describe museums as “modern” (45% overall compared to 29%). BME respondents were also less likely to view museums as “quiet.”

BME respondents were more likely than White young people to perceive museums as “somewhere I would choose to go.” Black respondents, those of Mixed ethnicity and those from Other ethnic groups were most positive about staff. Asian respondents were least likely to feel welcome across the sample overall.

### 4.1.2 Museum Visiting

The most popular level of frequency of museum visiting was once a year or less, and this described the visiting pattern of 44% of all young people. Relatively small numbers of respondents (6%) were visiting museums once a month or more often although over a quarter of young people (27%) a “couple of times” a year or more often. Around one in five young people (21%) had never visited a museum (although
this number could be higher as some young people did not respond to any questions about visiting).

White young people were slightly more likely than BME respondents to have visited a museum (18% of White respondents had never visited one compared to 24% of BME Young People). White young people were also slightly more likely to be visiting museums frequently (8% of White respondents visited once a month or more often compared to 4% of all BMEs).

The visiting patterns of Black young people were most fragmented across the BME sample. This was the only BME group to describe any of its visiting behaviour as “very frequent” at least once a fortnight or more often (4%) but they also had the highest level of non-visiting of any group. Around a third of all Black respondents (32%) said that they had never visited a museum compared to 26% of Asians, 11% of respondents of Mixed ethnicity and 8% of Other ethnicities.

All the young people that had visited a museum had done so with school or college. Visiting with family was also relatively common; just over half (56%) had visited a museum with their mum, dad or carer, 28% had visited with a brother or sister and 30% had visited with “other family members.”

White respondents were much more likely than BME young people to visit a museum with a mum, dad or carer. Two out of three White respondents (66%) had visited in this way compared to 47% of BMEs. Black respondents were least likely to visit with a mum, dad or carer (this visiting group accounted for 35% of visits). BME young people were slightly more likely than White respondents to visit museums with family members who were not their mum or dad.

In comparison to other visiting groups, relatively low numbers of young people visited museums alone. On average, one in ten young people visited alone although this figure is higher amongst most BME respondents as 13% respectively of Asian and those of Mixed ethnicity visited in this way, along with 18% of Black respondents.

Although initial comments from the qualitative research suggest that museums were not viewed as somewhere to go with friends, across the quantitative sample around a quarter of young people (23%) were visiting in this way. BME respondents (except those of Mixed ethnicity) were much more likely than White young people to visit museums with friends.

Young people’s visits to museums were not necessarily recent. Around four in ten of all young people (39%) reported that they last visited a
museum “a couple of years ago.” White respondents were more likely than BME young people to have visited a museum recently. A third of White young people had visited within the last couple of months compared to 18% of BME respondents. Of all the BME groups, Asians were least likely to have visited recently; almost half of this group (47%) had visited “a couple of years or longer” ago.

Visiting behaviour was explored in the qualitative research and these key findings emerged:

- The importance of school and college visiting. Many respondents had been introduced to museums through school trips and most young people had visited with their primary school. As respondents had become older, however, these organised visits had become less frequent and some young people had not visited a museum since progressing to secondary school.

- Some BME respondents, particularly those from Asian communities, reported that they tended to visit museums with family from overseas as part of a “day out” along with other “tourist attractions.”

- As indicated above, exhibitions and displays in museums were not thought to change. Respondents, therefore, did not perceive a need to re-visit museums even though they may have visited several years previously.

  “It’s not something I’d go again to, if you go to it once then you’ve already seen it”
  
  Female, aged 15, Afro-Caribbean

  “I don’t go to museums, all of the big ones in London I’ve been round. My Dad took me when I was very small”
  
  Female, aged 16, White
Figure 5: Frequency Of Museum Visiting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>ALL</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>ALL BMEs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Very Frequently</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a week to once a fortnight</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Frequently</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a month</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Occasionally</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A couple of times a year</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Not Often</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a year or less</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Never</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No Response</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Base</strong></td>
<td>303</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6: Who Respondents Tend To Visit Museums With

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>ALL</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>ALL BMEs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>School</strong></td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>College</strong></td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Friends</strong></td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alone</strong></td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mum/Dad/Carer</strong></td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Brother or Sister</strong></td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other Family Member</strong></td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other</strong></td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Base</strong>*</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*multiple responses were available; base is number of respondents who have visited a museum

Interestingly, although White respondents were more likely to visit museums and do so more regularly than BMEs, as indicated above, their perceptions of museums were slightly less positive across all of the words and phrases tested in the quantitative research.
4.2 PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF LIBRARIES

4.2.1 Perceptions Of Libraries

In the qualitative research, **quiet** was generally the first word which respondents spontaneously associated with libraries. “Books” were also a key association; interestingly few, if any, comments were made about computer or internet facilities and where these were mentioned, it was usually as a result of probing by the interviewer.

All respondents associated education and/or studying with libraries and most young people reported that this was the only reason that they visited or would consider visiting one. The extent to which respondents actually used the resources in a library for studying varied, although, typically, most took their own school or college text books with them. This behaviour may have influenced the perception that a library provided space rather than an opportunity to “do something.”

Like museums, library buildings were seen largely as “traditional” and “old-fashioned” and although respondents did not necessarily view their school or college library in this way, this was the dominant image which was described.
Respondents' views were divided in terms of whether they thought that libraries were “fascinating” or boring.” Experiences and perceptions of staff and whether they were “friendly” or “moody” also varied.

Libraries were viewed as “safe” environments for young people, however, there was a general perception that they were aimed at either “old people” or “young children” because of associated services, clubs, societies and “storytelling” sessions. In particular, there was thought to be little to interest or “excite” teenagers.

Reflecting the qualitative findings, “quiet” and “helps me with my school or college work” emerged as the main words and phrases which respondents associated with libraries in the quantitative research. Almost nine out of ten young people (85% and 86%) matched these words or related phrases to libraries. Around one in seven young people (14%) thought that libraries were “unfriendly.”

Welcoming and boring were cited by around half of respondents (51% and 50%). Overall, respondents were more likely to be positive than negative about staff. Just over half of all young people agreed that “staff make me feel welcome” (52%).
Although respondents in the qualitative research generally viewed libraries as traditional, in the quantitative research, young people were slightly more likely to describe libraries as modern (41%) than old-fashioned (34%).

Generally, BME young people were more positive about libraries than White respondents. The only exceptions were “helps me with my school or college work” (92% of White young people agreed with this statement compared to 86% of BMEs) and “welcoming” (53% across both groups).

In terms of differences within BME groups and between BME and White respondents the following significant findings emerged:

- BME respondents were more than twice as likely as White respondents to associate the word “fascinating” with libraries (39% of BMEs compared to 17% of White young people). Black respondents were most likely to view libraries in this way; just over half (52%) of this group described libraries as “fascinating.”

- BME respondents were much less likely to view libraries as being “for older people.” Just over a quarter of BME young people (27%) associated this phrase with libraries compared to 40% of White respondents.

- BME respondents were more likely than White young people to perceive libraries to be “modern” (51% compared to 38%) and, related to this, were less likely to associate libraries with the word “old fashioned” (27% compared to 40% of White respondents).

- BME young people were much more likely to perceive libraries as “somewhere I would choose to go” compared to White respondents. Over four out of ten BME respondents (42%) selected this statement compared to around a quarter of White young people (24%). Almost half of Black respondents (48%) associated libraries with “somewhere I would choose to go.”

4.2.2 Usage Of Libraries

Respondents were much more likely to be visiting libraries, and were doing so relatively frequently in comparison with museums and archives. This finding may be related to the time of year of the research (April/May is often a time of revision for young people) although this data was consistent across all age ranges.
Around half of respondents (46%) were visiting a library at least once a month, and around one in four (27%) were visiting once a fortnight or more frequently. BME Young People were much more likely than White respondents to be frequent visitors to libraries. Around four in ten BMEs (39%) visited a library at least once a fortnight and a further 24% visited once a month, compared to 21% and 16% of White respondents respectively.

BMEs were also more likely than White respondents to have visited a library recently. Almost half of BMEs (46%) had visited a library within the week preceding the research, compared to 36% of White respondents.

**Figure 7: Frequency Of Library Usage**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>ALL</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>ALL BMEs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Frequently</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a week to once a fortnight</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequently</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a month</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A couple of times a year</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Often</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a year or less</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Base</strong></td>
<td><strong>303</strong></td>
<td><strong>153</strong></td>
<td><strong>117</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The qualitative research indicated that the main reasons for using libraries related to education, such as revising or completing homework. Most BME respondents who participated in the qualitative research were living in households with large or extended families and had less quiet space in their home in which to study or revise. In contrast, the White respondents tended not to share bedrooms with sibling and/or had their own study in which to work.

These findings may explain the higher level of usage amongst BME respondents compared to White young people.
The visiting patterns of BMEs may also explain why the perceptions of libraries amongst this group were generally more positive than the views of White young people.

**Figure 8: Who Respondents Tend To Visit Libraries With**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>ALL</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>All BMEs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alone</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mum/Dad/Carer</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brother or Sister</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Family Member</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*multiple responses were available; base is number of respondents who have visited a library*

Respondents were most likely to be visiting libraries with school or college (57% of the sample) or alone (46%). White respondents were much more likely than BME young people to visit libraries with their mum, dad or carer (41% compared to 27%) although BMEs were slightly more likely to visit with brothers or sisters and were significantly more likely to visit with “other family members.” (This finding may reflect the family make-up and the level of contact with extended family members.)

### 4.3 Perceptions and Experiences of Archives

#### 4.3.1 Perceptions Of Archives

As indicated in Section 3, respondents who participated in the qualitative research had low awareness of archives and were unable to associate words or images with them.

In the quantitative research, most words and statements about archives received relatively low levels of agreement compared to museums and libraries and this may also be related to a lack of awareness.

“Not for people like me” was the statement with which most respondents agreed. Around half of all young people (55%) felt that this statement reflected their views of archives. Reflecting this finding,
only around one in nine respondents (11%) associated “somewhere I would choose to go” with archives.

Half of respondents (50%) thought that archives were “boring” although around one in five young people (22%) associated the word “fascinating” with them.

Like museums and libraries, archives were also thought to be “quiet” (42%)

4.3.2 Usage Of Archives

Usage of archives was very low across the sample. Seven out of ten respondents (71%) reported that they had never visited an archive (although this figure may be higher as other questions indicated lower levels of usage). Of those accessing archives, the most common level of usage was “once a year or less” (9% of all respondents). In this research, Black young people and respondents of Mixed Ethnicity were most likely to be using archives (although the bases for both samples are very small and are therefore inconclusive).

By far the majority of users of archives (80%) accessed them with school or college. Usage with “mum, dad or carer” was also relatively high at 40%

**Figure 9: Frequency Of Archive Usage**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>ALL</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>ALL BMEs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Frequently</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a week to once a fortnight</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequently</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a month</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A couple of times a year</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Often</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a year or less</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Base</td>
<td>303</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 10: Who Respondents Tend To Visit Archives With

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>ALL</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>All BMEs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alone</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mum/Dad/Carer</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brother or Sister</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>16%</td>
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<td>19%</td>
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<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base* = 89  37  40

*multiple responses were available; base is number of respondents who have visited an archive

4.4 PARENTS' VIEWS OF THE SECTOR

Parents' views of the sector were gathered through the primary research with parents and were ascertained through the work with young people. (Young people were asked about their parents' views and whether they visited/used museums, libraries and archives.)

Generally, parents were more positive about the role of libraries although they did not necessarily personally use them. Museums and archives were least likely to be accessed and only two respondents had visited a museum. Interestingly, those respondents who were visiting museums did not feel that this behaviour was typical of other people in their ethnic group. Parents and young people provided a range of reasons for not visiting museums or not doing so on a regular basis:

- Perceptions that museums, in particular, were not relevant. Respondents did not feel that museums would be of interest to them. They did not expect museums to feature exhibitions or galleries that reflected their culture or interest. Awareness of archives was very low and respondents did not know why they would use one.

- Lack of visiting tradition. Some young people reported that their parents had never visited a museum and did not perceive a need to do so. Parents who were first generation immigrants to the UK were least likely to visit museums. This may have been because of language barriers and the perceived lack of
relevant (as indicated above). Young people also felt that their parents did not visit museums because they had not done so as children.

“They never had museums or galleries back in Pakistan, I don’t think, so it’s not something that’s been part of their life.”

Female, aged 16, Pakistani

“I am not like most Asian people, I go to museums with my family, I think they are good for educating children. I think the older generation didn’t go because they couldn’t speak English so they stayed at home. They didn’t take their children so their children don’t go”

Parent, Indian

- Reflecting the views of young people, most parents assumed that museums would be expensive to visit.
5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 CONCLUSIONS: BARRIERS TO ENTERING THE SECTOR

This research has highlighted a wide range of potential barriers to entering professions in the museums, libraries and archives sector relating to:

- Delivery of careers advice in schools and college
- The influences of young people’s career choices
- Young people’s perceptions of “desirable” careers
- Perceptions of working in the sector
- Perceptions and experiences of museums, libraries and archives

These potential barriers are interrelated. For example, experiences of visiting a museum can influence young people’s views of what it would be like to work in one. Young people’s perceptions of the sector may mean that they do not view it as an attractive career choice and therefore do not request careers information. Careers professionals may hold traditional views about the sector and do not associate it with perceived “modern careers.” There is a need, therefore, for the MLA to take a holistic approach to addressing barriers to entering sector professions.

Furthermore, the barriers identified through this research are not exclusive to young people from BME communities; there were several common perceptions across all young people regardless of ethnicity. In some sector areas, views of young people from BME communities were more positive than those of White respondents. The key difference between White and BME respondents however, related to the level of influence of parents on the career decision making process. Although the research with BME parents was small scale, the findings do suggest that this group is not positive nor knowledgeable about careers in the sector; there are also issues surrounding engagement in the sector and the extent to which museums, libraries and archives are seen as relevant.
Delivery of careers advice

The approach of schools and colleges in delivering careers advice and information varied. Some schools, for example, encouraged young people to attend external careers events and organised talks by employers or professional bodies. When the latter did occur, however, they generally related to careers and sectors which were perceived by careers professionals to be “popular” choices amongst young people.

In most schools and colleges, there was a need for young people to be proactive in terms of gathering information about careers; often young people had to suggest careers and jobs in which they were interested. Computer programmes which are, in practice, self-tests were commonly used.

In order for career in museums, libraries and archives to be discussed, therefore, the subject is likely to have to be initiated by a young person or a careers professional. The research indicates that knowledge of professions in the sector is low amongst both of these groups.

Influences on career choice

Around half of the young people who had a career or job in mind (59%) already knew someone working in that occupation. It may be therefore, that young people are more aware of careers if they have an established link with them.

Young people across all of the different ethnic groups within the research were most likely to listen to their parents or other family members for careers-related advice. The qualitative research, however, suggests that the extent to which parents’ views on careers are adopted by young people does vary by ethnicity. Young people from BME communities were more likely than White respondents to feel that certain careers were “acceptable” in their family. This view also extended to choice of degrees and other subjects. Amongst the postgraduate respondents, there were examples of family support being withdrawn because Arts-related courses were not seen as “worthwhile” by family members.
Careers professionals reported that some sectors/professional bodies actively promoted themselves to young people, provided “young people-friendly” information and undertook a range of activities to raise their profile (such as exhibiting at careers fairs). The armed forces, the legal sector and the police were all said to actively target young people and careers professionals. The media was also thought to prompt interest in sectors.

In contrast, the museums, libraries and archives sector was not thought to be active in promoting itself. Careers professionals and young people could not recall any information relating to professions in the sector. Careers professionals themselves thought that their knowledge of the sector was limited and likely to be outdated. The careers professionals, however, were motivated by the sector’s plans to diversify its workforce and this in itself may have served to challenge perceptions of museums, libraries and archives.

The key influence on young people’s career decisions, particularly in BME communities (that is, parents) do not appear to have favourable views of the sector. The actions of some professions in terms of proactive promotion of their sector may have led to changes in expectations and needs in terms of information type and provision.

Young people’s perceptions of desirable careers

Young people were attracted to careers which they perceived to be interesting, offer high salaries and opportunities for progression and which they thought would result in respect and positive associations from others. Other key factors were working with people with whom respondents felt they would get on and a positive, friendly working environment.

Although young people generally shared the same views on the factors which were attractive in a career, the occupations in which respondents were interested suggest differences across ethnicity. Whilst the career choices of White young people were fragmented across a range of sectors and occupations, the desired careers of young people from BME communities generally centred on fewer occupations. Asian respondents were most likely to cite the same careers; these were reflected by parents’ views of desirable careers.
Perceptions of working in museums, libraries and archives

The factors which respondents found motivating in a career were not associated with museums, libraries or archives. Perceptions of careers in the sector largely related to respondents’ views and experiences of museums, libraries and archives, but also to the “visible” jobs in the sector with which respondents would have come into contact on visiting.

Typically, jobs in the sector were seen as low-skill, low status and low paid. There was also an association that jobs were “hobbies” rather than careers. This may have related to the perception that staff in museums, libraries and archives were “posh” and “rich” and could, therefore, “afford” to work for low salaries. The personification exercises with young people indicated that they did not view themselves as sharing the characteristics of sector staff. The quantitative research also suggests that the majority of young people did not identify with staff working in museums, libraries and archives.

Awareness of the range of careers on offer across the sector was very low. Respondents were much more likely to be aware of occupations such as attendant, tour guide and shop assistant than curators, conservationists and other professional roles. The job of “librarian” was generally viewed very narrowly. There was no awareness of careers in archives. Perceived “modern” skills and sectors such as marketing, PR and technology were not associated with museums, libraries or archives.

One very positive finding, however, is that around a fifth of young people participating in the quantitative research would be interested in work experience in the sector; this finding suggests that there is potential for the MLA to introduce young people to working in museums, libraries and archives.

Perceptions and experiences of museums, libraries and archives

Awareness and usage of archives was very low across the research. The majority of young people had never used an archive and they were uncertain about why or how they would go about doing so. Young people did, however, did identify with the word “archive” to some extent as they were familiar with “archives” and “archiving” through text messaging and IT.
Museum visiting was relatively frequent across the sample in that over a quarter of young people (27%) were visiting one to two times a year or more often. Around a fifth of young people however, had never visited (21%). The research highlights the key role of schools and colleges in museum visiting; all visitors had been to a museum with their school or college. White respondents were more likely than those from BME communities to visit museums regularly and to do so with their family. There were a number of issues surrounding the extent to which parents from BME communities engaged with museums and libraries and this research raises general questions about identity, awareness and language barriers in terms of visiting.

Young people were more likely to visit libraries and do so more frequently, than museums or archives. The main reason for using libraries was educational; typically, respondents visited libraries to study or revise. BME respondents were more likely than White young people to visit libraries and were generally more positive about their experiences.

Both museums and libraries were generally viewed as old-fashioned and traditional. Museums were not thought to relate to respondents’ hobbies and interests. When young people’s perceptions were further explored in the qualitative research however, some respondents were able to name museums which they thought were “exciting”, “modern” and “different.” Interestingly, these venues were not classified by respondents as “museums.”

The impact of negative perceptions and visiting experiences on attitudes to working in the sector was clear; young people thought that they would dislike the museum and library working environment. They expected not to be able to interact with colleagues. (It was believed that museum and library staff had to remain silent.) They did not associate the sector with a modern, dynamic workplace.
5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.2.1 Recommended First Steps

- Perceptions and attitudes to museums, libraries and archives were relatively similar and share a number of common, largely negative, themes. It is recommended that, where possible, the sector adopts a **combined approach** to these three service areas and works together to promote itself. This joint approach would utilise and maximise marketing/promotional activity and budgets, and would enable benefits to be experienced across the sector.

- Prior to promoting the museums, libraries and archives sector as a career destination, however, the MLA must **review its current “offer”** in terms of diversity to ensure that the experience of future sector entrants is positive. In particular, it is essential that the MLA carries out critical audits in terms of:
  
  o **The current culture**: is the current culture positive about diversity? Does it/can it support the MLA’s diversity agenda? What is the experience of BME members of staff within museums, libraries and archives? Is training re: the need/benefits of diversity required?

  o **Visiting/usage experiences** of both young people in general and visitors/users of all ages within BME communities. Do these groups have a positive experience of museums, libraries and archives? Although there are numerous differences within the sector (for example, in terms of “type”, location, primary audiences and so on) is there a “common standard” of experience for all users/visitors? Is training required?

  o **Available careers and opportunities**: is the sector able to offer sufficient opportunities to meet demand if this demand was created through marketing and promoting the sector? What opportunities are available? Which skills/roles is the sector lacking or finding difficult to recruit? What progression routes currently exist in the sector?

  o **Current routes to museums, libraries and archive-related professions**: do the current routes meet the needs of less traditional candidates? Do the current routes reflect the workforce diversity strategy?
- It is essential the MLA maps its current workforce and monitors the sector in terms of diversity in order to benchmark and evaluate its actions. Monitoring would also provide data which could be disseminated to show the MLA’s commitment to diversity and to help overcome existing negative perceptions.

### 5.2.2 General Recommendations

- It is clear that the work of a number of different groups within the MLA have the potential to impact on the development of the workforce strategy. In particular, it is essential that these different groups work together to raise awareness of museums, libraries and archives and to overcome negative perceptions of the sector which underpin attitudes to working in it. It is important to have a common strategy which incorporates workforce development, diversity, marketing, PR, education, outreach groups and any other groups which are involved in overcoming the barriers identified through this research.

- This research has identified seven potential audiences which the MLA needs to target. These are:
  - Young people up to the age of 16 years, particularly in the years leading up to work experience placement selection and GCSE options
  - Young people studying A-levels/the equivalent and making choices about their post-18 route
  - BME undergraduates across a range of disciplines
  - BME postgraduates who have studied a relevant qualifications
  - Careers Teachers and Connexions Personal Advisors, plus related industry bodies
  - BME Parents
  - The Media and other Stakeholders whose views and portrayal of the sector impact on wider perceptions

- Each audience requires a different set of communication messages and related actions. Although there are some similarities across several groups (for example, this research suggests that a number of these audiences share similar, largely negative and traditional views of the sector), the type, level and delivery of information required by each audience would vary. We recommend that the MLA prioritise the different audiences and produces action plans for each.
A number of issues have arisen through this research and we recommend that further work is conducted with some groups in order to measure and quantify these findings. In particular, this research indicates that there is variation in views, perceptions and experiences between different Black and Minority Ethnic groups. Furthermore, the research with White young people suggests that some views and perceptions are shared by all young people. There may therefore be some commonality between the views of White and BME undergraduates and postgraduates. We recommend that the following further work is carried out:

- Further quantitative research with Parents to quantify issues raised in this research and to measure differences in perceptions, attitudes and needs across different ethnic groups
- Further qualitative and quantitative research with undergraduates across a range of subject areas
- Further qualitative and quantitative research with postgraduates with a relevant sector qualification

The **common themes** identified in this research lead us to make the following recommendations:

- The sector needs to find its “**unique selling point**”, that is, aspects of working in it which differentiate it from other potential careers/jobs. Salaries in museums, libraries and archives may not reflect those of other sectors and it is therefore important to identify and communicate other benefits. Although the young people in the research were motivated by high salaries, they also valued “interesting” work and a positive working environment. Careers such as youth workers were motivating to some groups of respondents (particularly Black young people) because of the associated levels of respect, suggesting that high salaries are not always essential in terms of being attractive career options for young people.

- There is a lack of awareness of different careers in the sector and generally only those which are seen by users/visitors are known. Any information produced by the sector must communicate the **range of careers available**. In particular, the sector needs to be seen to be linked with careers which are not traditionally associated with the sector (particularly careers which are thought to be “modern” such as marketing, PR, business studies, media studies).
Reflecting this, the MLA needs to be providing links between the sector and a wide range of subject areas, as it is typically assumed that only specific subjects (such as art, history and English) lead to careers in museums, libraries and archives.

- The MLA must carefully consider how it positions information about the sector. This research suggests that due to a lack of awareness of careers in the sector combined with largely negative perceptions, young people, careers teachers/advisers and parents are unlikely to be motivated by communication which is solely positioned as careers in the “cultural sector” or The Arts. It is important therefore, that there are other information routes which lead to the sector; for example, net-based searches or computer programmes need to be sufficiently wide-ranging.

- Any information produced must be designed, developed and written with the target audience in mind and we strongly recommend that any careers-based materials are tested before being launched.

- We feel that a programme of work experience which can meet the needs of different audiences offers great potential for the MLA. In addition to actual work experience, this could provide insight into the sector, available careers and the working environment. (As with the initial audits however, it is important that the work experience programme is monitored to ensure quality and consistency of experience. The MLA should consider piloting and evaluating a small scale programme before developing this nationally.) In terms of work experience, we recommend:

  - The MLA offers certificates to young people who complete work experience as recognition for their input. (This could also apply to volunteering.) The number of certificates/completed hours could be monitored and promoted to other young people and to careers teachers. Testimonials/evaluation forms could provide real life case studies which could also be communicated.
A number of undergraduate level courses require a work experience placement, sometimes for a year. Often these courses are in subjects which are not associated with the sector (for example, HND in Business Studies). We recommend that the MLA establishes links with such courses as a way of introducing “non-traditional” students to the sector; again, their experiences can be used as case studies to raise awareness about working in museums, libraries and archives.

BME postgraduates reported difficulties in gaining necessary work experience in the sector. One issue surrounded the difficulty in volunteering whilst at the same time needing to financially support oneself, often by working in a different sector. The MLA could consider small bursaries to fund short-term work experience and also investigate the possibility of flexible placements (for example, at weekends) which enable candidates to continue to work in paid employment.

5.2.3 Suggested Action Points By Audience

In addition to the above recommendations, we have made some specific suggestions relating to the target audiences identified.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Audience</th>
<th>Recommended Actions</th>
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| **Young People under 16 years** | - Positive exposure to the sector - through work experience, open days  
- Motivated by aspects of the sector which are exciting, modern, technology-based; this needs to be incorporated into communication/experiences  
- Information about careers in the sector to be developed, designed and evaluated with Young People  
- Presence of sector at Careers Fairs and exhibitions and similar events |
| **Young People aged 16+ years** | - Similar to the above but likely to require more specific advice on careers, particularly in relation to A-level/equivalent options  
- Most likely to require information to use with Parents |
| **Careers Teachers/Advisers and Young People related agencies** | - Communicate the range of opportunities within the sector, its developments and plans to diversify the workforce, perhaps through regular updates via newsletters or e-communications  
- Open evenings to communicate the work of the MLA Workforce Development Team (and subsequent achievements) and to challenge general perceptions of the sector  
- Build links with professional bodies (such as the Institute of Careers Guidance) and participate in related conferences/open days  
- Target relevant industry press (for example, Times Ed Supplement, Careers Guidance Monthly, Young People Now)  
- If the MLA chooses to design communication through consultation with young people, this approach would appeal to careers organisations (Connexions in particular) and this activity should be communicated across the sector |
- Case studies related to young people's positive experiences of work experience, the number of hours of work experience achieved by young people, the number of certificates presented and so on are likely to be motivating to careers staff and challenge perceptions and should be communicated.

- In addition to providing information to school and college based careers libraries, the MLA needs to ensure that this is also available at other young people contact points (such as Connexions Access Points).

- Consider how the MLA can be part of the government's vocational learning agenda, perhaps building links with local colleges and work-based learning training providers; this may be an opportunity to extend the routes to careers in the sector and may encourage diversity.

- Build links with other agencies that come into contact with young people; youth workers, for example, were very respected by some young people and it may be that they can provide links to particular community groups. Again, consider targeting relevant press as well as utilising the work of sector outreach workers.

- Develop volunteering opportunities with the appropriate bodies.

- Young people use a variety of computer programmes to identify possible career options; the MLA needs to explore whether these programmes accurately reflect the sector and the range of careers within it. If these programmes simply reinforce traditional stereotypes, there is a need to communicate with the organisations responsible for developing them.
| BME Undergraduates | NB: This research only looked at the views of a small number of BME undergraduates. It may be necessary to extend this research and to include the views of White undergraduates.  
- BME students are over-represented in some degree subjects but under-represented in Arts subjects. There is also variation in terms of the numbers of BME students studying at different universities. It is important for the MLA to use this sort of information in its communications strategy.  
- The MLA needs to audit its current approach to providing information to university-based careers services and explore whether this communication is relevant and/or motivating. (This was not explored as part of this research.)  
- Positive Action/Diversity-related information is required to challenge views of the sector. |
|-------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| BME Postgraduates | NB: As above, this research only looked at the views of a small number of BME postgraduates and it may be necessary to extend this research and to include the views of White postgraduates.  
- Main barriers identified were finding employment and gaining work experience.  
- There was a lack of awareness of Positive Action Traineeships/Policies which needs to be addressed.  
- Consider where vacancies are advertised and whether this best meets the needs of the target audience.  
- Case-studies need to be promoted, again in media which is reflective of this target audience. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BME Parents</th>
<th>NB: As above, this research only looked at the views of a small number of BME Parents; it may be that some views/attitudes are shared by White Parents.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- It is important that differences within the BME population are recognised within any strategies as variations in perceptions, attitudes and current usage within our BME sample emerged in this research.</td>
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<td>- Potential route to Parents is through young people, venues themselves and community groups.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Museums, libraries and archives themselves could display leaflets relating to careers in the sector, young people’s views and related case studies.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Media</td>
<td>Although outside of the scope of this research, the media clearly has an impact on attitudes, perceptions and awareness of the sector.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- The MLA needs to adopt an integrated plan to media relations/PR which incorporates the requirements of the workforce development strategy; this plan needs to incorporate actions to reach different elements within the media and we recommended that these are prioritised (for example, publications relating to careers/young people may be prioritised).</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Many of the action points outlined above should challenge the perceptions of the media provided sufficient accompanying PR activity is carried out.</td>
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