



June 2021

HistoricScot Youth Forum

Recommendations and Actions Report



Introduction from the HistoricScot Youth Forum

Heritage and its conservation has always been a multi-generational issue. However, in the past, young people have often been excluded from this conversation. The establishment of the HistoricScot Youth Forum aims to tackle this problem and actively include young people in the decision-making of what is next for Scotland's heritage. After all, even the present will one day be heritage and we owe it to future generations to preserve it to the best of our ability.

Our youth forum was not only established to investigate how to involve young people in the heritage sector, but also how to make the heritage sector more accessible for young people. We worked with Young Scot and Historic Environment Scotland to create recommendations on how to make the heritage sector more reflective of young people's needs and our society. It was particularly important to us to increase the opportunities for young people of all backgrounds. We hope our recommendations will help shape more opportunities for a diverse and inclusive workforce in the heritage sector. We also hope it will enable more young people to become interested and involved in their local heritage.



Meet the Team



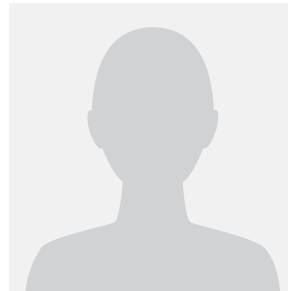
Tom, 14, Edinburgh

"My dad saw it being advertised on a school Facebook and I thought it looked really fun and interesting, so I decided to give it a shot, and step outside of my comfort zone".



Emily, 22, Edinburgh

"I signed up for the Youth Forum because I love history and have been a long-term member of Historic Environment Scotland. I wanted to help contribute to their future events/plans and learn more about the internal running's of the organisation".



Beth, 17, Glasgow

"I wanted to be able to contribute to future events within HES, as well helping to bring people into HES sites. This group also gave me the opportunity to step outside my comfort zone and talk to other people around Scotland who are also interested in History".



Charlotte, 21, Edinburgh

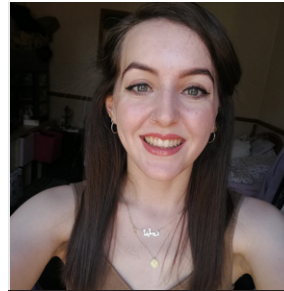
"I got involved because I love history! I've always loved visiting castles and other historic sites, so it seemed like a great way to become more involved in the industry".

Meet the Team



Robyn, 20, South Lanarkshire

"I'm a History undergraduate student and I've always been passionate about the historic environment. I wanted to help make it better reflect and engage young people from diverse communities in Scotland".



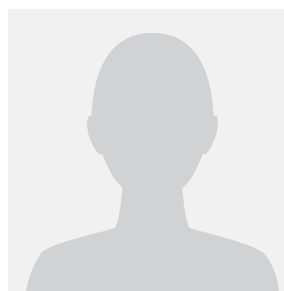
Leyla, 23, Fife

"I'm just about to qualify as a history and modern studies teacher and jumped at the chance to apply for the project. I'm very passionate about history and the environment generally as well as current affairs".



Luke, 21, West Lothian

"Having worked in the heritage sector I have seen the barriers that young people face looking to enter it, therefore I wanted to share and implement some of my ideas to help solve these issues".



Abdullah, 21, Glasgow

"Before COVID hit, I was doing backpacking trips in the UK and was intrigued by the different places for tourism so this opportunity to learn more about the historic sites and tourism, while volunteering, was not one I was going to miss!".

Meet the Team



Maia, 19, Orkney

"I got involved as I believe that it is the right of every child to access local and national history, and I aim to use my knowledge and experience from being disabled to create fully accessible historical areas".



Alice, 23, Stirling

"My Masters research concentrated on how the tourism industry can employ new strategies and activities to increase levels of engagement especially within younger age groups. I wanted to share the knowledge and insights I gained through my research with others and the HistoricScot Youth Forum provided me with a perfect opportunity to do so".



Catriona, 13, Edinburgh

"I got involved with the project because I love history and heritage! I want more people to get involved and excited about it, particularly young people. The project was also a great opportunity to meet more people who share my passion and develop my skills and knowledge of the sector".



Anjali, 15, Renfrewshire

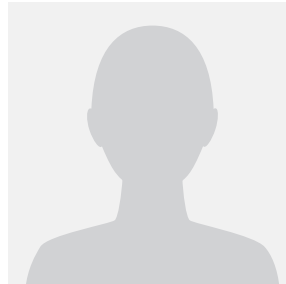
"I wanted to learn more about the country I live in and find out what I can do to make it better. I was also interested to share my knowledge on the lesser known parts of our history that were covered up e.g. The Atlantic Slave Trade and getting involved in the youth forum allows me to share my ideas on how HES can change how we see our past".

Meet the Team



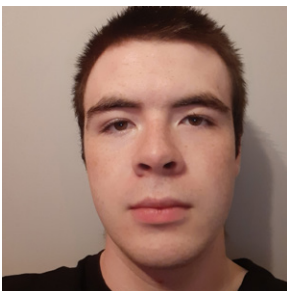
Kirsty, 23, Aberdeen

"I got involved in the HES project because I have previously worked in the heritage and tourism sector and know that it has so much to offer young people but can find that hard to communicate and realise. I hope that by getting involved in this project I will have helped open up HES to be more accessible to many more young people".



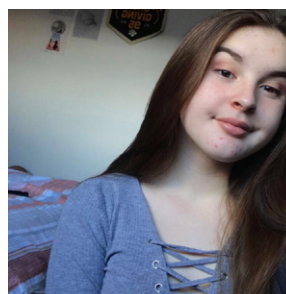
Orla, 13, Fife

"It has been an amazing time learning how climate change is affecting our sites and how a lot of young people don't know about it or the sites. I also have worked with Young Scot before for the Year of the Young People 2018 and I loved it so when this came up, I was so excited".



Joshua, 19, Fife

"I found out about this opportunity from a friend and I decided to apply because I have always enjoyed history and how it affects our lives in the present".



Elise, 14, Inverness

"I found out about this project from a teacher and after my interview I knew I wanted to be involved! Young Scot and HES are such great organisations and the opportunity to work with them both and potentially make a really positive impact is one I am very grateful for!".

Meet the Team



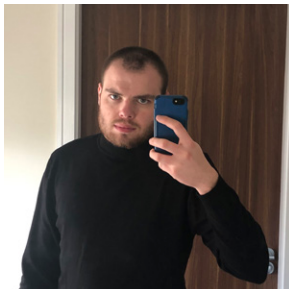
Megan, 24, North Lanarkshire

"The chance to work on a group project with other young people and getting to talk to those already working in heritage was a huge draw for me. The collaborative nature of this project really appealed to me and allowed me to learn more about Young Scot in the process too".



Cara, 23, Moray

"After moving to Scotland to study history and archaeology, I fell in love with Scotland's heritage and wanted to contribute to its conservation. It has been great to be able to express the opinions of young people and ideas for the future of Scotland's heritage sector".



Cameron, 26, South Lanarkshire

"The reason why I chose to apply for the project is because I knew a little bit about HES, and I have been to a few HES sites, but I did not know the History behind them".



Marion, 21, Aberdeen

"It was great to work with motivating people, and although online, I hope our ideas will contribute to making real changes for young people's discovery of the Scottish national heritage".

Meet the Team



Chase, 22, Aberdeenshire

"Throughout my time volunteering with the youth forum, my focus has shifted to what is available around me and telling the stories of local history and heritage rather than a sole focus on far-off lands".



Julien, 20, Edinburgh

"I have had a real passion for history for as long as I can remember and saw historical reenactment for the first time at a year old. As part of that, over the years I visited historical sites all over Scotland and when the opportunity came up to be a volunteer working with the organisation that manages so many of these wonderful places, I decided to apply. So far it has been an eye opening experience, and I have really enjoyed meeting and working with other like minded people."



Hannah, 22, West Lothian

"I've always had an interest in History and I'm currently studying Heritage and Tourism at University. I grew up visiting Historic Scotland sites with my family. They're such a big part of my life and it's always sad when people see them as boring, irrelevant or simply don't have an interest in them. I wanted to volunteer my time to this project to help introduce and build on new ideas to help these sites appeal more to my generation. Plus It's always a bonus to make new friends."

Over the course of the HistoricScot Youth Forum project, 31 young people contributed aged between 13-26 years old. Of those 31 young people, 19 identified as female, 11 identified as male and one identified as non-binary. Six of the young people identified as LGBT; four young people came from BAME backgrounds; six young people stated that they identified as disabled; and two young people came from SIMD 1 and 2 areas.

The young people came from 15 local authorities across Scotland: Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, Dundee, Edinburgh, Fife, Glasgow, Highland, Moray, North Ayrshire, North Lanarkshire, Orkney, Renfrewshire, South Lanarkshire, Stirling, and West Lothian.



HistoricScot Youth Forum Activity

In January 2020 the HistoricScot Youth Forum were able to hold an initial meeting in person and meet with the Historic Environment Scotland team members. We were able to gain insight into the 'behind-the-scenes' of the heritage sector. This helped us to identify 100 questions, which became the foundation for our research and discussions.

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, we were able to continue working online and meet with more members of HES. We were introduced to the existing work HES has done to engage young people, hearing more about what is currently taking place and the opportunities coming up. During multiple meetings with the Directors and the Senior Management Team, our questions were explored further. We had some engaging discussions about our ideas and the issues we had identified. After our questions had been explored with the HES team, we wanted to know more about what other young people thought about the heritage sector. We created a series of Instagram questions and a detailed survey to hear more from other young people in Scotland. The activities were successfully delivered, and the results helped us to gain a better understanding of young people in Scotland's concerns.

In December 2020 we established three working groups to further develop our ideas. These are: **Community and Schools, Volunteering and Work and HES Sites.**

Each working group have also come up with recommendations for the **Website**. We have been working within our working groups to create recommendations and actions based on our discussions, which we think will help HES with the engagement of young people and support young people to engage with the heritage sector.

Over the past 18 months, we have had plenty of long Zoom meetings, thorough break-out room discussions, and interesting presentations from HES. They have all helped to shape our recommendations and actions for the future of Scotland's heritage.



What the Youth Forum have been up to



Survey responses from
young people

140



Group meetings

10+



Working group
meetings

9



workshops
with HES staff

9



Hours
volunteered

1000+



Instagram polls

4



National survey

1

Survey Summary

The survey designed and delivered by the HistoricScot Youth Forum, hosted on www.young.scot, received almost 140 responses from young people across Scotland.

The young people who took part in the survey covered a wide age range, from 12 to 25 years old. More than half (66%) respondents identified as female, with 28% identifying as male and 3% as non-binary. When asked which ethnic group or background they identified as, 80% identified as white Scottish or white British, and a further 14% identifying as from minority ethnic backgrounds. 18% of respondents identified that they considered themselves disabled.

When asked whether they or a member of their family was a member of Historic Environment Scotland, 67% of respondents reported they were not members, however, 35% indicated that they were interested in becoming a member. In addition, 62% of respondents also reported that they had not done anything at school about HES or the historic environment. Despite this, 82% of respondents stated that they had an interest in visiting historic sites in Scotland. The majority (69%) of respondents said that historic sites were interesting to them because they wanted to explore Scotland. A further 69% stated that historic sites were interesting and enjoyable to them because they are interested in history.

Young people who were not interested in visiting historic sites said it was because they were “boring”, were “too far to travel” or because “they had seen bad reviews”.

Over half of respondents (57%) stated that they would be interested in exploring historic sites in Scotland online through interactive digital maps and models. Respondents stated that interactive activities, events and open days would make them more likely to visit a historic site, as well as discounts on admission or opportunities for free visits.

Nearly three quarters of respondents (73%) had never considered a career in the historic environment before. The jobs that respondents were the most interested in discovering were telling stories at historic sites, visitor experience at sites and site preservation.

Nearly half of respondents (48%) reported wanting to visit a historic site but not being able to due to lack of public transport. A quarter of disabled respondents reported wanting to visit a historic site but being unable to due to their disability. This was particularly true of wheelchair users and those with autism.

Theme: Community and Schools

For most young people, school is the first time they will engage with heritage and the historic environment. From our experiences, if you engage with the historic environment during education, you are more likely to engage in your adult life. As part of this, we felt strongly about the emphasis on engagement with people from all backgrounds. By being inclusive and incorporating everyone, the history we make, and the heritage we remember now, will be a better one.

Our recommendations for Community and Schools are not only based on our experiences but on the view of other young people too, from the results of our findings through our digital survey and Instagram poll questions. The majority (62%) of respondents stated that they had not done anything at school with or about HES or the historic environment. Young people stated they would like more school trips to HES sites or visits from HES staff as this would make them more likely to visit a historic site. Nearly half (47%) of participants found historic sites interesting or enjoyable because they enjoyed finding out about their local area and feeling a connection to their heritage. This shows the importance of community links for HES.

Our Instagram poll found that 32% of respondents didn't feel a connection to historical places in Scotland. Our survey told us that some young people instead connected with the history of marginalised groups, such as women or LGBT people, with one survey respondent noted

"there is very little history of LGBT members - even though it is known that many significant members of Scottish history were queer."

HES's social media use and platforms were identified as a real opportunity to engage more broadly with young people and communities directly. Many young people use social media as their primary way to access information from organisations. This means that if young people are not already connected to HES platforms, they may miss out on opportunities, news and events. We also identified HES website's as an opportunity to further engage with young people in spaces they already use, with opportunities for sharing information for communities and schools as part of this. By focusing resources and recognising this would require public facing staff capacity in the outreach and learning team, there are opportunities to expand and make use of the community and education engagement.

Many of the available resources are aimed at primary school aged children, with very little for secondary school aged young people and older. Without this direct focus, young people's awareness of the organisation is an untapped opportunity, with low levels of awareness about HES as an organisation in schools, as well as the sites that they manage. From the experience of the group, we felt that it isn't always clear which sites HES own or maintain, which could be an opportunity for building awareness and further engagement. It was clear that with a lack of awareness there is a reluctance to support and engage with the organisation as many believe it is fully publicly funded.

Marginalised Communities

HES as an organisation and in its sites/buildings should reflect the diversity of Scotland's marginalised communities and their histories and heritage. It should be a priority for HES to make sites and the buildings that they manage more overtly reflective of marginalised communities' histories in Scotland.

Recommendation

Engage in discussions with marginalised communities about how their heritage can be showcased and represented.

- ▶ Research about history and heritage should be done with marginalised communities, not about them, to ensure it is representative and tells their stories from their perspectives.
- ▶ HES should look to specifically encourage young people from marginalised communities to volunteer with HES, creating an inclusive and welcoming environment, open to learning and change.
- ▶ There should be a specific effort to create a more diverse HES board that reflects the diversity of Scotland today, to ensure decisions are being led by those with lived experience.
- ▶ Conversations around marginalised communities' histories in Scotland's national history should be encouraged and actively promoted across all work.



Recommendation

Create more marginalised community history resources that can be broadly accessible for children and young people to connect with their stories.

- ▲ Resources should be created and disseminated to encourage wider engagement, revolving around the LGBTQ+ community, ethnic minorities, minority religious groups etc. in Scotland
- ▲ Resources specifically around for Black History Month, LGBT History Month etc. should be created with young people, showcasing their experiences and views
- ▲ Resources made for a variety of school levels should be created with young people, providing learning packs for teachers to use around marginalised histories (including LGBT History Month etc.), to ensure the stories are accurately represented
- ▲ HES should support marginalised community histories projects for schools, providing the space for investigating local links between HES sites and buildings and marginalised communities; as well as school projects on communities of colour's histories in Scotland etc.
- ▲ There needs to be an increase in broader opportunities for marginalised communities to get involved and tell their own histories and stories in Scotland.

Recommendation

Prioritise funding and grants for marginalised communities to be supported in getting more involved with HES in their own communities, led by them directly.

- ▲ Membership funding should be available for those from marginalised communities, specifically in deprived areas, to promote engagement and awareness.
- ▲ Create opportunities for those from marginalised communities to partner with HES and lead on research and projects led by their communities.
- ▲ Ensure the preservation of buildings and history of importance for minority religious groups, representing their stories for future generations.



Recommendation

Promotion and marketing of HES as an organisation to marginalised communities who aren't already engaged.

- ▶ Better publicity of already existing resources and projects involving marginalised communities, e.g. HES's digital archives.
- ▶ Creating targeted events and activities around specific marginalised communities' histories for all young people to engage in and learn about the variety of the heritage across Scotland.
- ▶ Promote HES as an organisation and the opportunities it can provide, rather than "just a tourist organisation" to better engage a variety of communities, and being actively transparent about the work HES does.

Schools Engagement

HES has a good opportunity to create links with schools local to their sites in order to increase engagement. Creating strong partnerships with schools is beneficial for both HES and the school. HES can access a large number of young people by engaging better with schools.

Recommendation

Engage with schools to develop awareness of HES in the classroom.

- ▲ Ensuring that resources that have already been developed from the Outreach and Learning team are available to schools, and that links with teachers and schools locally are created and supported to ensure young people have access to engaging and relevant information. For example, during a lesson about the battle of Stirling Bridge, ensuring that links to HES are clear in their management of Stirling Castle.
- ▲ Raise awareness and create links to local sites that schools could easily visit and do projects around, ensuring that relationships are maintained and developed to identified opportunities.

Recommendation

Work directly with schools, history teachers and pupils to get feedback on resources and opportunities.

- ▲ When developing resources whether online or physical, working directly with those engaging with them is vital, both through teaching staff and young people.
- ▲ Identifying more opportunities to engage directly with school pupils to share information about career and volunteering opportunities with HES.
- ▲ Continue to seek young people's opinions and ideas on the work HES delivers and resources created.



Recommendation

Facilitate school visits to local sites.

- ▲ Many schools are visiting the same popular sites (e.g. Edinburgh or Stirling castles), leaving local sites of potential interest aside.
- ▲ Facilitating school projects linked with local sites can add to the visit and learning offer.
- ▲ Mentioning the work of HES for the preservation of the Scottish heritage during a site visit will increase HES' reach.

Recommendation

Engage young people by facilitating school or group projects about local sites.

- ▲ Young people could create a project about a local site, historical period or event and display their work as part of a temporary exhibition in this site.
- ▲ This would also help local HES sites to be better known by young people.

Recommendation

Engage with schools to talk about career and volunteering opportunities.

- ▲ Many children do not know about careers in history, cultural heritage, conservation etc and are not aware of any volunteering opportunities.
- ▲ Local volunteers could go to schools and present their work with videos/pictures. Alternatively, this could be mentioned during site visits.



Recommendation

Continue to seek young people's opinions and suggestions on HES work.

- ▶ This could be done by organising online polls, receiving feedback from them after a site visit (What did they enjoy the most? What could have been better? Did they know HES before? Are they interesting in volunteering in the future?).



Theme: Volunteering and Work

Volunteering and Work emerged as a theme due partly to many of our personal aims to enter employment in the heritage sector, and partly due to volunteering being one of the most important factors in individuals entering into further employment or engagement with the sector. The two topics were regularly explored during many of our discussions, and we identified that there was an opportunity to really make an impact in this area.

We found out that most people who are volunteering within the heritage sector were aged 35 and up, male, non-disabled and from the least deprived areas of Scotland. We saw this as an opportunity to get under the skin of this problem and create recommendations that would see more diverse representation in those who take part in heritage volunteering.

Barriers were identified in our discussions, such as a lack of awareness of the kind of employment roles HES offers and what people do in these roles, that the advertising of both volunteering and paid roles were not always easy to find. It can often be difficult for young people to physically get access to HES sites in order to work or volunteer. This and more highlights that this is an important theme that affects young people and their engagement with heritage. We saw it as something we should address to discover opportunities to disrupt the way things are currently done and to improve on youth engagement for the future.

Our survey aimed to help us understand the involvement other young people outside our youth forum have had with HES. We asked the participants how many had thought about a career in the heritage sector and which jobs would appeal to them. The second question about different jobs allowed multiple answers. Out of the 125 participants, 27.2% of people expressed interest in working in the heritage sector. Some people added their personal experiences with HES had included school visits and one person said they had done a university placement. One participant stated they “[had] no personal experiences since [they] didn’t hear about [HES] before looking into possible jobs.” Other people expressed their concerns about the lack of opportunities for volunteering:

“I have visited multiple HES sites and would be very interested in volunteering there. So far, I have not found curatorial opportunities at any of the HES sites”.



When asked about specific jobs, participants overwhelmingly showed an interest in the heritage sector. Research and Curation was the most popular reply, with 44%. On-site visitor engagement was voted the second most appealing job within HES with 40%. On-site conservation came third with 33.6%. Interestingly 'looking after archives or collections of old objects' received the exact same number of votes as on-site conservation.

- ▲ A total of 29.6% of participants were interested in school engagement.
- ▲ While 27.2% had an interest in IT and administration roles.
- ▲ A quarter (25.6%) were attracted to community engagement.

- ▲ As much as 24% would consider roles in site promotion and another 16% were interested in surveying sites.
- ▲ Only 16.8% stated no interest in the listed jobs.

Using an Instagram survey, we discovered that 60% of those who answered would consider working for HES, and we wanted to discover more ways in which HES can become more visible to young people in order to engage the next generation of heritage professionals. These recommendations we hope will help improve this.

Volunteering: General

Offering volunteering roles for young people who are passionate for Scotland's historic environment provides them opportunities to develop their interpersonal and professional skills, as well as engaging in the heritage sector from a younger age. The skills and abilities developed from volunteering are often undervalued due to lack of professional training offered and lack of formal recognition of the volunteering work, but they provide vital development for young people.

Recommendation

Create an online platform to allow young people to have a profile to have their personal statements to showcase their skills and have references available from their volunteer coordinators.

- ▲ The platform can also be a source to apply for any professional development trainings when available.
- ▲ Having access to careers advisors would be very useful for a young person to set up professional profiles and identify all skills acquired from volunteering.

Recommendation

Introduce targets for number of volunteers who move onto gain permanent employment contracts within HES, especially for young volunteers.

- ▲ This will mean volunteers will be encouraged to seek employment at HES or other heritage, culture and historic site organisations.
- ▲ This will open up new, easier pathways for young people looking to gain employment in the heritage sector.



Recommendation

Provide ways for those without access to the internet to gain volunteering roles.

- ▶ A young person with internet access and another without should have equal opportunities to get new volunteering roles.
- ▶ Existing volunteering recruitment methods such as emailing or calling or submitting a paper application should still be an option for those seeking volunteering opportunities.

Recommendation

Improve volunteer support.

- ▶ Work with each young person consistently during their volunteering role to explore the skills developed and to work on new skills that may be gained from existing roles or from other volunteering opportunities.
- ▶ This is vital in allowing them to make the most of the opportunities they have been involved with.



Volunteering: Promotion and Awareness Raising

Young people may be unaware of some skills attained through different volunteering roles as they are not listed on the role description or definitions of skills are unclear to them. They may also be unaware of volunteering roles due to lack of publicity. By advertising these volunteering roles through a variety of methods, the roles will be more widely available to a more diverse range of young people. By working directly and consistently with each volunteer and getting to know them and their skills, more opportunities for development will open up and further connect them with the historic environment.

Recommendation

Promote existing and new volunteering roles through various methods where young people already engage.

- ▲ This could include in the media, in on-site leaflets, or through school and community partnerships.
- ▲ Promoting volunteering roles using a variety of engaging visuals, images, video or podcast can allow an insight into experiences of the volunteering role from existing volunteers for interested volunteers.

Recommendation

Make use of social media, career fairs, schools and communities to engage with young people and design new prospective volunteering roles that would be tailored for a diverse group of young people.

- ▲ A forum of young people should be created to allow young people to design volunteering roles that will align with the values and goals of HES while maximising the skills and talent of young people from a variety of backgrounds.



Recommendation

Work with young people directly to design new volunteering roles within the historic sector, identifying opportunities that are relevant and engaging to them.

- ▲ This will allow young people to identify roles and opportunities that are not only engaging, drawing them into the heritage sector, but will benefit them in their development.
- ▲ Working with schools to provide these opportunities can ensure that the skills gained are transferrable and their time accredited.

Work: Awareness

We believe there is a need to increase awareness of the heritage sector among students and young people. Young people are often unaware of the variety of jobs the heritage sector offers. Some young people might actively look for information and available jobs, but there is a lack of general knowledge about part-time or seasonal positions, as well as roles for students who recently graduated. Young people should not only be made aware of the availability, but also the possibility of finding work in the heritage sector. We think that jobs should be advertised with the intention of encouraging students to apply.

Recommendation

Work with universities to advertise roles.

- ▲ Get in contact with the careers services of universities to advertise seasonal and full-time positions. Many universities offer a careers service or careers hub, which advertises jobs suitable for students regularly.
- ▲ These jobs include summer and part-time positions, but also full-time positions for recent graduates. The universities' careers services will also benefit from this exchange because it will broaden their service and support their students.

Recommendation

Increase local advertisements on sites.

- ▲ Advertise opportunities on information boards at sites with clear instructions on how to apply. It would also be beneficial to state the availability of the positions to students, so they will feel encouraged to apply as well.
- ▲ Clear instructions on the application process will also support this.

Recommendation

Increase presence at careers fairs to directly engage with young people.

- ▲ Promote directly to young people via careers fairs. Especially showing the variety of jobs available in the heritage sector will encourage young people.



Work: Application Process

Improve the ease of access when applying for a job or volunteering post and increase awareness about these positions. Many volunteers in the forum have stated that finding job opportunities within HES is very difficult. Applicants are expected to look through the HES website in order to find the relevant pages. It is also an intimidating process for younger people who are coming into an employment sector where those who are employed are often very knowledgeable and of a different generation. They may not have the right references and the application forms are often detailed and word heavy. It is also assumed that the workforce for HES is majority white, cisgender, heterosexual, and middle class. This makes those who are in the LGBTQ+ community or of ethnic minority backgrounds feel like they may not fit in in the organisation. In addition, there is a low awareness of opportunities and information is usually found out by knowing someone who already works for the organisation. There is an aim to increase the number of young volunteers and create new exciting opportunities that are unique to HES.

Recommendation

Increase awareness by using social media platforms and notice boards at sites.

- ▲ Create adverts for positions and post them on sites such as TikTok, Snapchat, Instagram, and Facebook.
- ▲ Create notice boards at sites with posters explaining what opportunities are available. This allows all young people to access information, even if they do not own their own laptop or have an internet connection at home.

Recommendation

Establish an impartial point of contact for young people considering applying for positions within HES.

- ▲ Employ someone who will be a direct link for young people. They will offer guidance and explain the whole application process.
- ▲ They will provide non-judgemental advice and answers to any and all questions young people have, including rewording certain parts of the job description, offering help with completing the application form, and being a supportive ear for those looking to get into the sector.
- ▲ They should be aware of the issues faced by those who are from ethnic minority backgrounds, the LGBTQ+ community, and those with disabilities. They should be aware of all issues related to equality and inclusion.



Recommendation

Give more weight to personal statements during recruitment process.

- ▶ Young people often won't have referees related to the field, and they also may be inexperienced, this doesn't mean that they wouldn't be appropriate for the job and work hard in what they do.
- ▶ More focus should be put on a young person's passion for the organisation and the job.
- ▶ This will allow applicants from a wide range of backgrounds and age groups.

Recommendation

Increase the variety of roles available.

- ▶ Create positions that are interesting and exciting. Offer the opportunity for young people to become tour guides and give a fresh viewpoint at the sites.
- ▶ Create links with local re-enactment groups, such as Historia Normannis, to teach history in a different way. These would be engaging and unique opportunities that would appeal to a variety of young people.

Work: Employment Practices

It is vital for young people that HES look to aim to increase long term contracts for younger workers and increase the diversity of positions available. Often, positions available to young people are seasonal and unstable for long term employment. HES should look to offer progression routes from volunteer positions to show that careers within HES are possible. This would hopefully improve the experiences of volunteer employees and increase the variety of opportunities available to encourage a more diverse workforce.

Recommendation

Improve progression routes within the organisation.

- ▲ Offer follow on volunteer roles that build on the skills of the last role the volunteer took part in.
- ▲ Create certificates and accreditation that show the transferable skills gained in the positions and regularly offer paid positions within the relevant sectors that the volunteer was involved in.

Recommendation

Allow location changes for jobs.

- ▲ Offer transfers to different sites, and placements at different locations. This would allow the worker to decide what site is right for them and allow them to develop their experiences and insights for their future careers.
- ▲ It would also give them the opportunity to travel while working which would act as an incentive for young people to see more locations across Scotland.



Recommendation

Increase the number of paid contracts available.

- ▲ Set a target for how many new paid contracts are given out year.
- ▲ A portion of these should be offered to young people and those who volunteer.
- ▲ This will act as an incentive and entice young people to engage with the organisation as it will show that career progression is possible.

Recommendation

Improve the experience of new employees.

- ▲ Create a buddy scheme where new employees are matched to those who are more experienced and have been a part of the organisation for longer. This would act like on the job shadowing, allowing young employees to develop their knowledge and be supported in the crucial early stages of their career.
- ▲ This would allow a volunteer or paid employee to gain skills on the job and would decrease the need for applicants to have previous niche experience for roles.
- ▲ This would also build up a stronger and more learned workforce for future projects that require workers and improve communications between disciplines.

Recommendation

Improve transportation for employees.

- ▲ Transportation is often a key issue for young people and plays a massive role in their ability to take up opportunities. Offering driving lessons or cycle to work schemes for employees would provide support to allow them to make the most of opportunities HES has to offer.
- ▲ Alternatively, give a travel bursary to employees for rural or low-income backgrounds to assist with commuting to and from work.
- ▲ This will enable a more diverse workforce from a broader area.

Theme: HES Sites

HES sites should be an interesting and engaging place for all. Our heritage should be available to us in an accessible way. While HES has made their sites great places for families and other demographics, we feel that there are more opportunities to engage with young people specifically. In a changing world, it's more important than ever to feel connected to your history and heritage is relevant and valuable to all young people in Scotland, with travel and experiencing the world around them something that is hugely important to young people.

In the survey conducted by the HistoricScot Forum, we found that 81% of young people who participated would be interested in visiting a historic site. Almost half (48%) of respondents had wanted to visit a historic site but had been unable to due to lack of public transport. When asked why they find historic sites interesting or enjoyable 68% said it was because they were interested in history, and 71% said it gave them an opportunity to explore Scotland. Young people said that they would find a historic site more enjoyable if they were more tech based or if they held more events, such as re-enactments. Over a quarter (26%) of respondents reported being unable to fully access a historic site that they have visited due to lack of provision for their disability. One respondent noted that

“they [historic sites] are so difficult for wheelchair users to navigate.” This is also true of neurodivergent young people, with a respondent noting “I am autistic and sometimes we’ve had to avoid going in places as it is just too busy, especially in the holiday”.

Our recommendations aim to improve the participation of young people at historic sites by creating an engaging experience for all through interesting activities and the use of technology. We also aim to tell the full story of Scotland's history with the inclusion of voices that have not been typically heard in the past.



Gamification

We want to create a more engaging visitor experience for young people at HES Sites. Getting young people to engage with heritage can be difficult. What is more, we often feel forgotten in the historical and heritage sector, with certain age groups that feel more forgotten than others. We have identified gamification as a tool that could be employed across sites to encourage youth engagement across multiple age ranges due to its adaptable and wide sweeping qualities. Gamification techniques are already applied in multiple sectors, namely education. Gamification at the broadest level can be defined as the use of game design elements in non-game contexts (heritage and tourism). We believe this will greatly improve HES sites.

Recommendation

Increase presence of AR (augmented reality) technologies at HES sites.

- ▲ Review all sites to comprehend the level of data coverage at sites to facilitate AR implementation.
- ▲ Utilise sites with strong data coverage to pilot AR activities and engagement opportunities.
- ▲ At unstaffed HES sites, or where there is weak data coverage, utilise partnerships more broadly to increase data connectivity in rural areas to increase accessibility.
- ▲ Identify stories that can be creatively adapted to fully harness AR technologies. Certain stories are better interpreted through AR mechanisms than others. It is important to find ways for these stories to be youth orientated and allow young people to understand their social standings and responsibilities during other time periods.

Recommendation

Create opportunity for community engagement with gamification.

- ▲ Engage with local communities to gather stories being told in the area. Employ gamification techniques in any campaigns to get the stories of young people. They have their own stories to tell, provide ways in which these can related back to heritage stories.
- ▲ Gamification presents opportunity for heritage experiences to be co-created. No one experience would be the same. This enables both young and older people to enjoy HES sites together.

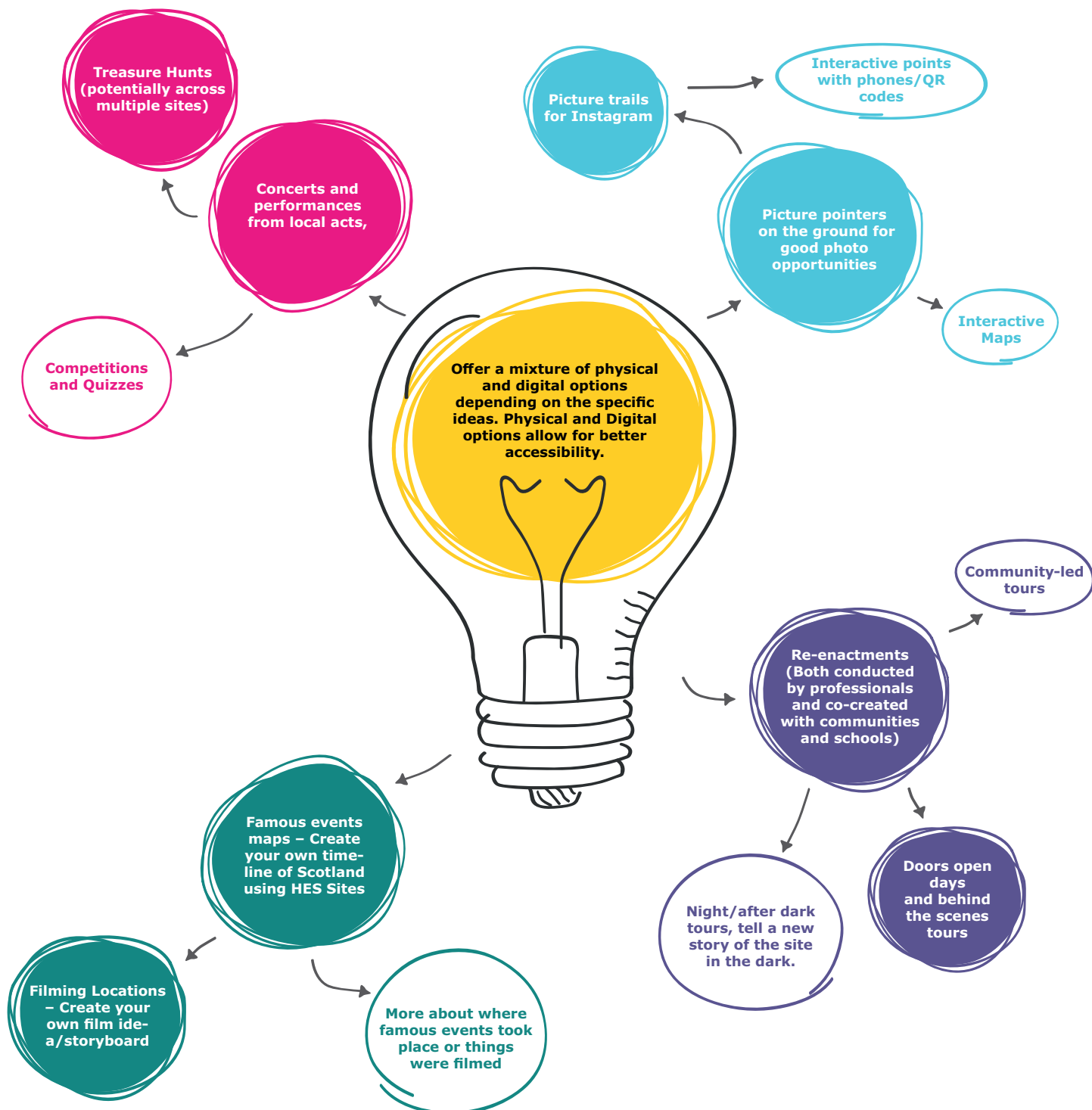


Recommendation

Utilise gamification throughout heritage experience.

- ▲ **Before** - Gamification has strong links to information acquisition. Employing gamification strategies in marketing campaigns presents both an informative and engaging platform for young people to consider visiting HES Sites
- ▲ **During** - The hedonic and socialization benefits of gamification, helps to enhance the experience and create long-lasting connections, aiding in the development of a relationship between HES and young people.
- ▲ **After** - Gamification also presents the opportunity for a creative way to encourage Word of Mouth awareness building surrounding HES sites.

Gamification Ideas



Interpretation Accessibility

There is currently a lack of informative video-form content at HES sites that is accessible to deaf, hard of hearing, dyslexic young people, and people with auditory processing disorders, etc. Access to this type of content allows for information to be fully accessible and inclusive for everyone, thus broadening the demographic of visitors and encouraging further diverse engagement with the heritage sector.

Recommendation

Increase prevalence of interpretation accessibility across the work of HES, ensuring this is easily accessible and clear that it is available.

- ▲ e.g. Braille, Dyslexia-friendly fonts, Autism-friendly spaces.
- ▲ Ensure all videos have captions and are audio-described.
- ▲ Wherever possible, implement dyslexia-friendly fonts.
- ▲ Implement BSL tours.
- ▲ Incorporate basic BSL signs for others to learn around sites.

Recommendation

Recommendation: Improve visitor experience for autistic visitors at HES sites.

- ▲ Ensure quiet, darker spaces are available for visitors with Additional Support Needs in case they become overstimulated or experience a sensory overload and need a safe space to decompress.
- ▲ Have autism friendly days at sites (dimmed lights, less people, less noise etc).



Physical Accessibility

HES sites and buildings must be accessible to all young people in Scotland, no matter their needs or background. When they aren't, this creates a barrier for those with disabilities who want to access the historic environment. Young people with physical disabilities should not have to miss out on heritage and historic activities just because of their needs, and there are a number of ways we feel these barriers could be mitigated.

Recommendation

Implement signage at public transport hubs about onward travel and stops to visit HES sites.

- ▲ There should be clear information with routes, e.g. streets that can be walked to get to the site, to ensure that all young people are able to plan and access sites equally.
- ▲ There needs to be an increase in publicity for policies HES has already implemented (e.g. £1 entry to sites for Young Scot National Entitlement Cardholders and 10% discount to European Youth Card holders) on social media platforms, namely TikTok and Instagram, to ensure that young people with disabilities can be aware of the opportunities and benefit available to them, ensuring they are able to access them.

Recommendation

Ensure all facilities are fully accessible for all ranges of disabilities.

- ▲ Working directly with people with a wide range of disabilities to see what change they wish to see at sites, and what barriers keep them from visiting HES sites, would allow for each site to tailor their experience in a way that is relevant and appropriate.
- ▲ Engaging with charities, organisations and local groups representing physically disabled young people, would allow HES to hear directly from those experiencing barriers, about the issues they face and developing solutions together.
- ▲ Using resources and sites like 'Euan's Guide' which are already available would support the implementation of the changes necessary to mitigate barriers to accessibility identified at HES sites.

Social and Cultural Change

It is vitally important to young people in Scotland that HES aim to decolonise sites and create a wider understanding of the history of Scotland's marginalised groups, for example, the BAME and the LGBTQI+ communities. It is our aim to share our country's unknown histories even if they show Scotland in a less than positive light, but the reality of our heritage. We are all human and we all make mistakes even historical figures who we see as picture-perfect. Although only 3.7% of Scotland's population represent minority ethnic groups, this doesn't mean we should ignore their history.

Recommendation

Clearly show every side to our history and heritage.

- ▲ Create or add to existing plaques on the statues of historical figures to ensure they are representative of the full story, not just the commonly told information.
- ▲ It is important to recognise the disagreeable actions of Scotland's historical figures but not forget the great things they did for our country, showing the wide breadth of both.
- ▲ By adding to a historical information, plaques or statues, in a more cost-effective way, we can share both sides of their stories educating ourselves and others fully.

Recommendation

Through education and information, allow young people to be more aware of the cultural changes in our society.

- ▲ Social media is a great way to educate young people. Tik Tok is a great and engage tool to teach about the lesser known actions and decisions of Scotland's historical figures.
- ▲ It is vital to engage directly with minority groups about how represented they feel in Scotland's history, hearing their stories and views, as well as looking at more recent movements such as the Black Lives Matter movement.
- ▲ Provide a platform for different minority groups to tell their stories, for example, the Windrush Generation. This would be very helpful for young people who are part of these minority groups to learn about their history and their ancestors.
- ▲ Podcasts, Instagram lives and even speaking in schools would be a great way to share stories create by and with young people.



Recommendation

Hold specific events and activities to celebrate the history of minority groups.

- ▲ With June being Pride month, there is an opportunity for HES to do more at their sites directly, holding specific events teaching people about Scotland's LGBTQI+ historical and present figures.
- ▲ Although this can be done for specific key dates, it is vital these take place throughout the year for different minority groups, and do not have to be confined to a specific month or date.

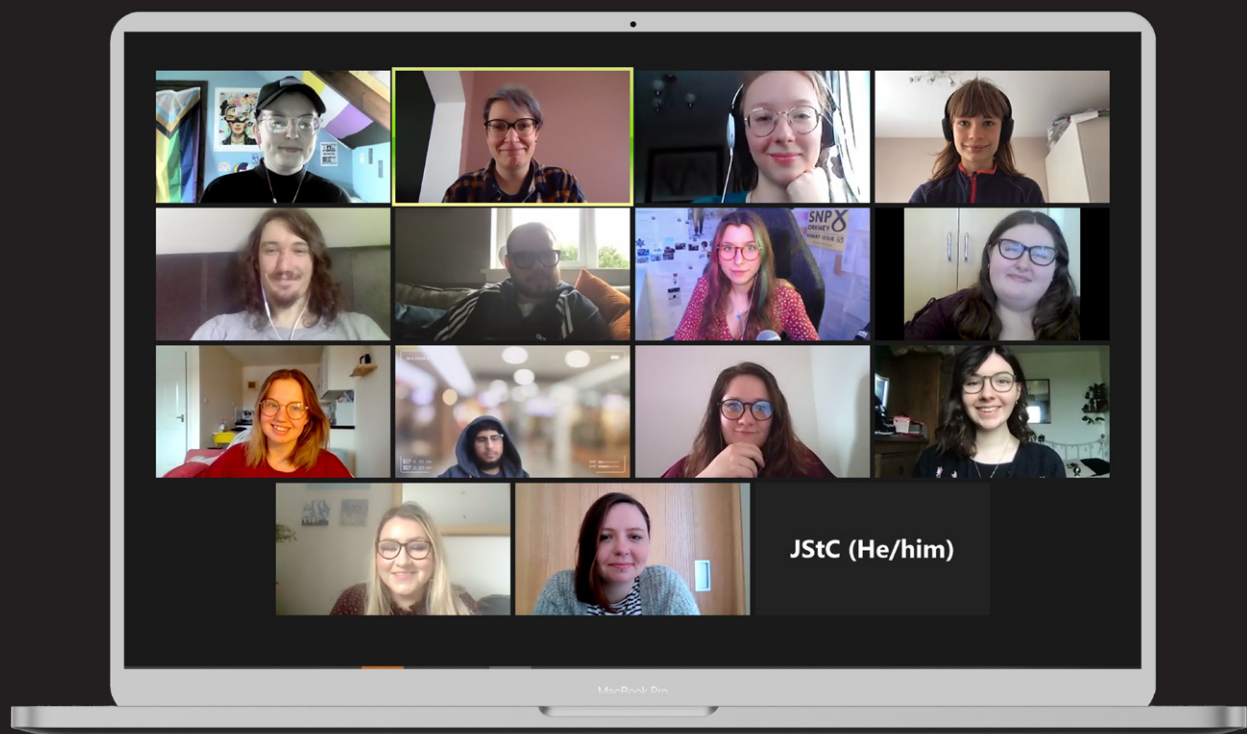
Recommendation

Create new exhibitions and identify spaces focusing on different minority groups' heritage.

- ▲ Although it is of vital importance to hold a variety of events and activities, this would be a more permanent option, demonstrating the value placed on diverse history, and allowing exhibitions to tour across Scotland, sharing the variety of stories. For example, the Sugar Sheds in Greenock could demonstrate the role of Scotland in the Atlantic Slave Trade.
- ▲ Research must be led by minority groups and experts in the field to ensure the stories, histories, spaces and places were representative and relevant to all marginalised communities in Scotland.

Theme: Website

One of the key opportunities to better engage young people identified throughout the project was an improvement to the website and everything this provides. It is well known that young people predominantly find their information online today, more than ever during times of the COVID-19 pandemic. For a young person who is interested in visiting a HES site or finding work in the heritage sector, it is likely that they will visit HES' website as the first port of call. Whilst the website features a lot of great information, we feel it could be improved to help with access and make it easier for young people to navigate.



Community and Schools

We believe that there is a significant potential to improve the 'Learn' section of the HES website. Although the resources themselves are engaging, there is a lack of attention given to the sections layout. We were inspired by the educational resources of other historical organisations and museums from which HES could also benefit from. For example, the Make and Create section gathers a list of links for PDF files. For a children-friendly environment, pictures and colours could be added to the page. Therefore, this new kids' hub would mainly focus on the layout of the current page, to make it more user-friendly and accessible. Although we expect that this work would be substantial, we strongly believe that HES could be better known and increase the engagement with young people online. Developing learning resources in a new visually attractive way would have a greater impact on young people's learning experience.

Recommendation

Create a children and young people's hub.

Improvements on the current platform:

- ▲ The learning resources could be more accessible for children and young people as they are currently directed to a parent or a teacher rather than to young people themselves. This is less engaging for young people to access.
- ▲ By directing information to young people and engaging them in the conversations, engagement and awareness of the sector can be raised as well as dispelling the stigma that heritage is for the older generations.

New resources or opportunities that could be offered:

- ▲ Young people need to be identified as a specific target audience of the Learning section, creating information with young people that is relevant to their lives and interests, tying this into potential school activities that could be embedded into their learning.
- ▲ The platform must be discoverable by all young people, anytime, anywhere so raising awareness is vital.
- ▲ There is an opportunity to increase the number of young people who learn about history by providing fun and engaging activities as part of the platform which can be made use of both in an educational environment and in their own time.
- ▲ By increasing the engagement and interest of young people in history and heritage in Scotland, we can help to increase the number of future volunteers and employees, putting HES on young people's radar.

What the hub could look like:

- ▲ Clearly dividing the resources at the welcoming page into three sections: Primary (age 3-11); Secondary age (11 to 16); and Post-16 for the age 16+.
- ▲ Visuals are vital to engaging both children and young people, so the platform must ensure that there is balance of text and images. As well as adding vivid colours being essential!.
- ▲ Easy and visible headings that catch attention will allow young people to navigate the platform more easily.
- ▲ Developing interactive games and quizzes to explore Scottish history and HES sites according to the visitor's age, that can be used to engage children and young people through schools' activities as well as local interests.

Volunteering and Work

To aid in the recruitment of young volunteers and workers to HES, HES should aim to create a user-friendly platform for prospective applicants and current staff to access information regarding work and volunteering available at HES. The platform will provide visibility of both work and volunteering opportunities, training resources and networking opportunities within the HES organisation and wider heritage sector for both volunteers and employees.

Recommendation

Publicise available volunteering and employment roles within HES clearly on the website.

- Each role advertisement would be supported by more details if available, such as video of experience from current young people involved in the role and a FAQ section for each role advertised.

Recommendation

Create online profiles for both volunteers and employees so that networking opportunities can be formed between employees and volunteers.

- This platform would also allow new employees and volunteers to find mentor pairing at the beginning of their roles so that young people can adjust to new working conditions easily, tying into the buddy system previously described.



Recommendation

Create an online platform for applying for volunteering opportunities and tracking volunteering progress.

- It will also allow a person to set up individual profiles that contain their personal statement, skills portfolio and references from coordinators to support career progression especially for volunteering to employment for young people.
- The platform will contain resources on available continued personal development training, resources for mental health wellbeing and internal networking forums for both employees and volunteers.



HES Sites

HES should aim to develop a more engaging external facing website tailored to the interests of young people, that fully represents the potential of HES sites, as well as adding a virtual experience to complement and enhance the physical experience. Young people will often look online to find out about places they want to visit. As the first interaction with HES sites, the website needs to be accessible for this purpose and have all the necessary information.

Recommendation

Use (more) Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality online to engage young people in HES sites

- ▲ This is more engaging, fun and interactive and gives young people a simple way to understand what the real site will look like.
- ▲ It would be easy to create virtual tours and maps. This could include animated characters moving around the site, which can be seen through a phone camera.

Recommendation

More visually engaging content to showcase each of the HES Sites specifically and what might be involved in their visit.

- ▲ This will also be more engaging and more exciting for young people, therefore more attractive and more likely for them to visit sites.
- ▲ The website should include pictures of sites throughout the year, and colourful pages that show off the great features of the site.





Recommendation

Add games and quizzes to the website related to HES sites to allow young people to engage with sites before their visit.

- These could be site specific and could be used when visiting or could be more general to be done at home to build awareness and understanding.
- More interactive content would support young people to get involved with HES, encouraging further engagement with the organisation and opportunities it offers.
- Some suggestions could be: Spot the Difference, Guess the Site, Who am I? (using famous sites) and quizzes with exciting facts instead of dates or names etc.

Recommendation

Timetables on average numbers of visitors per hour per day (at busier sites where data is easier to collect).

- This can help people, especially young people, who wish to avoid crowds, or people with anxiety, autism etc.
- A simple colour-coded timetable that is easy for users, which is regularly updated, would be best.

Conclusion and Next steps

We hope that our recommendations and ideas in this report start a conversation at HES about how they can make things better for young people. We want history and heritage to be accessible to all. We hope to work with HES to implement our recommendations and to encourage them to keep involving young people in their planning and work long after our group has ended.

From our experiences and exploration, we felt there was a perception of the heritage sector not being diverse and this may put those from marginalised communities, and more broadly young people, off joining the sector or even engaging with it. We felt this adds to the perception that those who live in more deprived areas are much less likely to engage with heritage and history. From the experience of engaging with the sector, there seemed to be a disproportionate underrepresentation from a variety of backgrounds and experiences, including gender, age, and marginalised communities, especially at a senior level. Decision-makers in the sector are often made up of cisgender, heterosexual, white representatives, with most being over the age of 40 or retired. This, reflected in the HES Board, does not currently reflect the diversity of Scotland nor its diverse history and heritage. This doesn't demonstrate the diversity of the sector or bring diversity to the organisation. These barriers need to be overcome to make the sector more accessible to a wider variety of young people.

We hope some of our ideas challenge the stereotypes of history and the historic environment being "boring" and "no longer relevant". Our vision of regular events at sites with the latest technology telling inclusive stories of Scotland's future aims to engage more young people in a history that is relevant and interesting to them. By introducing young people to HES at a younger age through strong links with schools, a culture of love and appreciation for history and the historic environment will prevail across Scotland for years to come.

We look forward to continuing to engage with HES and hope that in the near future, our recommendations are making a real impact on the heritage sector.



Summary of Recommendations

Community and Schools

Recommendation

Engage in discussions with marginalised communities about how their heritage can be showcased and represented.

Encourage representation of marginalised communities in decision making at HES, specifically those currently under-represented groups and from deprived areas.

Provide the open space for discussions on how to better promote marginalised communities' heritage and history in a way that is relevant and appropriate.

Create more marginalised community history resources that can be broadly accessible for children and young people to connect with their stories.

Prioritise funding and grants for marginalised communities to be supported in getting more involved with HES in their own communities, led by them directly.

Promotion and marketing of HES as an organisation to marginalised communities who aren't already engaged.

Co-design and create easily accessed online resources for teachers of both primary and secondary aged pupils, with young people.

Make object handling resources more available for families and schools.

Create an online hub with sections aimed at primary and secondary aged children.

Improve the outreach of educational videos 'Learn, Create and Play' on YouTube.

Engage with schools to develop awareness of HES in the classroom.

Work directly with schools, history teachers and pupils to get feedback on resources and opportunities.

Facilitate school visits to local sites.

Engage young people by facilitating school or group projects about local sites.

Engage with schools to talk about career and volunteering opportunities.

Continue to seek young people's opinions and suggestions on HES work.

Volunteering and Work

Recommendation

Create an online platform to allow young people to have a profile to have their personal statements to showcase their skills and have references available from their volunteer coordinators.

Introduce targets for number of volunteers who move onto gain permanent employment contracts within HES, especially for young volunteers.

Provide ways for those without access to the internet to gain volunteering roles.

Improve volunteer support.

Promote existing and new volunteering roles through various methods where young people already engage.

Make use of social media, career fairs, schools and communities to engage with young people and design new prospective volunteering roles that would be tailored for a diverse group of young people.

Work with young people directly to design new volunteering roles within the historic sector, identifying opportunities that are relevant and engaging to them.

Work with universities to advertise roles.

Increase local advertisements on sites.

Increase presence at careers fairs to directly engage with young people.

Increase awareness by using social media platforms and notice boards at sites.

Establish an impartial point of contact for young people considering applying for positions within HES.

Give more weight to personal statements during recruitment process.

Increase the variety of roles available.

Improve progression routes within the organisation.

Allow location changes for jobs.

Increase the number of paid contracts available.

Improve the experience of new employees.

Improve transportation for employees.

HES Sites

Recommendation

Increase presence of AR (augmented reality) technologies at HES sites.

Create opportunity for community engagement with gamification.

Utilise gamification throughout heritage experience.

Increase prevalence of interpretation accessibility across the work of HES, ensuring this is easily accessible and clear that it is available.

Improve visitor experience for autistic visitors at HES sites.

Implement signage at public transport hubs about onward travel and stops to visit HES sites.

Ensure all facilities are fully accessible for all ranges of disabilities.

Clearly show every side to our history and heritage.

Through education and information, allow young people to be more aware of the cultural changes in our society.

Hold specific events and activities to celebrate the history of minority groups.

Create new exhibitions and identify spaces focusing on different minority groups' heritage.

Website

Recommendation

Create a children and young people's hub.

Publicise available volunteering and employment role within HES clearly on the website.

Create online profiles for both volunteers and employees so that networking opportunities can be formed between employees and volunteers.

Create an online platform for applying for volunteering opportunities and tracking volunteering progress.

Use (more) Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality online to engage young people in HES sites.

More visually engaging content to showcase each of the HES Sites specifically and what might be involved in their visit.

Add games and quizzes to the website related to HES sites to allow young people to engage with sites before their visit.

Timetables on average numbers of visitors per hour per day (at busier sites where data is easier to collect).

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