

# MUSEUM OF THE HOME

## Reflecting Modern London Action Plan 2021/22 to 2024/25

Across age, disability, race and ethnicity, religion or belief, gender identity, sexual orientation, caring responsibilities and socio-economic background, the Museum of the Home does not currently reflect the diversity of modern London. This lack of representation exists at Board level, in our staff and through our collecting, displays and programming. Before the Museum closed for redevelopment in 2018, our audiences were also not representative of the diversity of modern London.

We must do better and move faster with clear actions and a timeframe for change. Here we underline what is already underway to transform the organisation and what we aim to do within the next 12 months and beyond.

We recognise that making deep-rooted change is required and we are committed to providing a safe environment where it is ok to challenge each other constructively and with kindness.

As a National Portfolio Organisation, the Museum of the Home supports **Arts Council England's** strategy – Let's Create. We are committed to the ACE investment principles: Ambition & Quality; Dynamism; Environmental Responsibility; Inclusivity & Relevance.

### Aim

The aim is for the Museum of the Home to reflect the diversity of modern London through our **staff, Board, programming, collections and commercial activities** by **March 2025**, with demonstrable year-on-year progress.

### Review process

This plan is not static – it is reviewed and adapted on a **quarterly** basis – by the Voices for Change staff forum, the Senior Management Team and the Board of Trustees, and through our Vision in Action plan 2021 - 2025. This plan is also **published** on our website.

We will use latest demographic data on age, disability, race and ethnicity to measure progress on workforce and audience diversity. Museum as Muck is providing advice on monitoring and assessing socio-economic diversity. Programming and collections will use both qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods to assess progress.

### Our commitments

#### 1. Tell a more diverse story of the British Home

Crucial aspects of the history of the home, both design history and everyday experience have been missing from the stories we tell at the Museum – for instance, the impact of colonialism and exploitation on the British home. The Museum of the Home, alongside our communities and partners, will change and evolve both our programming, permanent displays and collecting policies to better reflect stories and people currently underrepresented in the Museum narrative.

## What has happened so far:

- The new **Home Galleries**, launching in 2021, tell a more diverse story of home and home life, with a focus on personal stories. The ambition has been to create a welcoming space for all. The galleries are wheelchair-accessible, with BSL-interpreted film content. **Feedback spaces** hope to capture missing voices, to drive change and development.
- Our **Schools Programme** is now issues-based and co-curated, working with five partner schools over three years. The programme now has the capacity to address home-related issues affecting young people today, such as homelessness or disability. The pilot project **Tomorrowland** will explore the home of the future.
- The **Rooms Through Time** were not in scope for the major capital project completed in 2021. In time for reopening, we have rewritten text panels and incorporated new objects and interpretation, such as better reflecting the LGBTQI+ story that was already the basis for the 1990s room, and highlighting the links between transatlantic slavery, exploitative trading practices and the goods which make up the British Home.
- New creative responses in the Rooms Through Time include:
  - Valerie Bloom and Kremina Demitrova have created **family-focused** poems and illustrations for the Rooms Through Time, addressing the history of slavery and the British home. This content will form part of our **bookable school workshops**.
  - Artist **Michael McMillan** has created a new permanent version of the **West Indian Front Room** to replace the existing 1960s room. *West Indian Front Room* was one of the most popular exhibitions ever staged at the Museum. The new room will be accompanied by an events programme throughout 2021/22 and beyond.
  - We have launched a new commission with [Unlimited](#) to support a disabled artist to develop a creative idea related to disability and the home. Research and development will begin in April 2021. This is a first step in ensuring **disability** is represented within our collections and programme.

## What next?

- We will reopen with publicly visible and transparent consultation on plans to transform the **Homes Through Time (Rooms and Gardens)** by 2025/26. We will:
  - Recruit eight paid **Community Authors** to work in partnership on the role of the room set in the twenty-first century museum – and whose stories should be reflected in new displays. By Spring/Summer 2021
  - Put our new **Collecting Policy** into action to reflect developing plans for these new displays. From April 2022.
- We will continue with the roll-out of **Behind the Door**. A charity partnership focusing on hidden homelessness affecting women and families, with clear goals and objectives to support real change in our communities.
- We have recruited a Community Producer, to work specifically with the **Vietnamese and South East Asian community** in East London and beyond. We will produce a three-year project plan. By June 2021.
- In addition to our focussed work on race over the last six months we will review our artistic strategy for **d/Deaf, disabled or neurodivergent people** as we know we have more to do. By March 2023

## 2. Tell the full story of Robert Geffrye

The Museum of the Home is housed in almshouses built in 1714. The money to build them came from Sir Robert Geffrye (1613–1704) an English merchant who made part of his fortune from his investment in transatlantic slavery.

There is a statue of Sir Robert Geffrye on the Museum's buildings to acknowledge his donation to build the almshouses. The statue is the subject of much debate, with calls for it to be moved from its position of

veneration. Whilst options continue to be explored, the Museum is following current government guidance to 'retain and explain' contested history.

### What has happened so far:

- A new **almshouse trail** tells the story of Robert Geffrye and the almshouses. The trail runs throughout the Museum buildings and gardens and includes the Geffrye statue and funerary plaque in the chapel. In addition a text panel telling the full story of Robert Geffrye has been added to the Kingsland Road gates.
- 2019's commissioned performance **Waiting for Myself to Appear** by Michael McMillan highlights the history of Robert Geffrye and the almshouses. This project is now a film to be shown in Museum when we reopen. It will be on view from Spring/Summer 2021.
- A new **library link display** focuses on the history of the almshouses and the Museum, co-curated with existing almshouse volunteers, mentored by diversity coach [Amanda Parker](#).
- Our relaunched **website** (2019) now tells a fuller story of Robert Geffrye and his connection with transatlantic slavery.
- The new **audio-guide** focuses on diverse stories of home and includes information about Robert Geffrye's links with transatlantic slavery.

### What next?

- We will deliver **Home Heroes**. An installation project in the front gardens and elsewhere on site exploring ideas of veneration and memorialisation, with local participants nominating people who have made a difference to their home lives. Launch Spring/Summer 2021.
- We will **review interpretation in Almshouse 14** to tell the full history of Robert Geffrye and the history of the site as charitable housing. From Autumn 2021
- **A digital dialogue space**, curated with academic partner Queen Mary, will highlight thoughts and feelings about the statue of Robert Geffrye and the wider debate around contested heritage. To launch Spring/Summer 2021.

### 3. Publish staff data and achieve a workforce that's representative of modern London by 2025

*New data to be added here from staff diversity & inclusion monitoring Feb 2021*

### What has happened so far:

- We have overhauled our **recruitment processes** to better welcome applicants from under-represented groups and ensure opportunities reach a wider and more diverse pool, including internal candidates. Job descriptions are now skills-based to encourage applicants with a wider range of experience. We have a close working partnership with Hackney Works, who actively promote our vacancies within the local community. We are also a Level 1: Disability Confident Committed employer and will interview candidates with a disability who meet any vacancy's essential criteria.
- In 2019 we started a staff Equality and Diversity Action Group to drive change at the Museum. This became **Voices for Change** in 2020 with a remit to champion diversity across our staff and activities.
- We're diversifying our **Ambassadors** to be more reflective of modern London.
- In 2019 the Board approved the recruitment of two **Young Trustees** 18-24. Due to the Covid-related suspension of our young people's programme and lack of internal support structures for young trustees, the recruitment was extended to those 30 and under. This has now been actioned with the recruitment of three young trustees in February 2021.
- We have rewritten our staff harassment policy, now called **Dignity at Work**, to ensure it is accessible and staff feel empowered to use it.
- In 2019 we updated our **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy** and published on our [website](#).

- All staff now attend **unconscious bias** training as part of our annual training programme.

#### What next?

- The Museum hosts a number of paid **internship** programmes – including Hackney 100 for local young people aged 16-24 or those residents with a disability or health condition. Voices for Change will review the internship policy and get these programmes up and running again in 2022/23.
- We will implement an **internal secondments programme** to enable progression through the sector. By March 2023.
- The **diversity of the Board** will be increased across all new vacancies. The next Museum-appointed recruitment drive will take place in 2022/23.
- Our **new recruitment strategies** will be reviewed and we will make any relevant changes. By September 2021
- Voices for Change will develop an **inclusive language guide** for all staff and volunteers to use and feel confident in their language. By May 2021.
- Voices for Change will review our **diversity and inclusion training** needs on a quarterly basis, reporting to HR and the Senior Management Team.

#### 4. Partners, suppliers and contractors share our values.

We are committed to working with diverse individuals and companies who share our values. This applies to all that we do across our creative, commercial and operational activities.

#### What has happened so far:

- This objective is in the early stages of implementation, as we prioritise internal change.

#### What next?

- We will roll out a values, diversity and inclusion policy for suppliers and contractors. By June 2021.
- We will endeavour to stock **products in the shop** produced by diverse designers, makers and companies, which reflect a diverse range of people and stories. By March 2022.

**All objectives in this plan are reflected and monitored through the Museum's Vision in Action 2021 – 2025 plan with responsibility for its delivery held by the Director.**