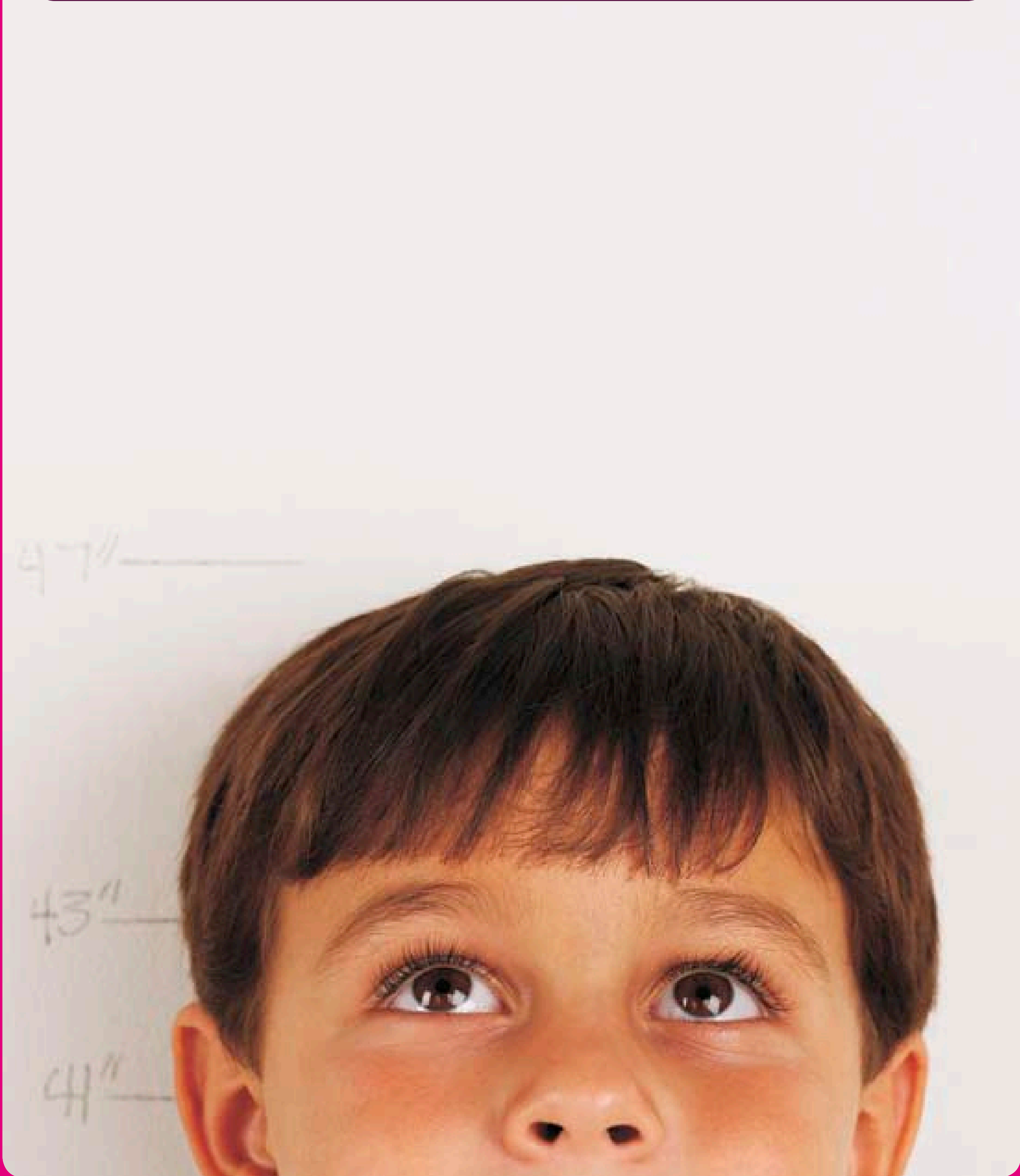
RENAISSANCE
EAST OF ENGLAND
museums for
changing lives

Evaluation toolkit for museum practitioners



Acknowledgements
This toolkit was written by Harriet Foster, Evaluation Officer for the East of England Museum Hub. Special thanks must go to all individuals who commented on early drafts of the toolkit and to Esther Morgan and Amanda Burke for their valuable input when it came to revising the draft document for publication.

This publication has been made possible through funding from Renaissance. Renaissance is the Museums, Libraries and Archives (MLA) Council's £150 million programme to transform England's regional museums. For the first time ever, investment from central government is helping regional museums across the country to raise their standards and deliver real results in support of education, learning, community development and economic regeneration. Groups of up to five flagship museums in each English region, known as Hubs, are working alongside the MLA Regional Agencies and Museum Development Officers to promote good practice and provide advice and support. Renaissance is helping museums to meet people's changing needs – and to change people's lives.

The East of England Museum Hub are:
Norfolk Museums & Archaeology Service (lead partner)
www.museums.norfolk.gov.uk
Colchester and Ipswich Museum Service
www.colchestermuseums.org.uk
The Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge
www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk
Museums Luton
www.luton.gov.uk/museums

Publication information
Published by the East of England Museum Hub, February 2008

Further copies of the publication are available from:
The East of England Museum Hub
Norfolk Museums & Archaeology Service
Shirehall
Market Avenue
Norwich
NR1 3JQ

Tel: 01603 495881
Web: www.renaissance-east.org.uk

This publication is also available in large print and computer disc formats on request from the East of England Museum Hub.

Please note: All internet links given in this toolkit were correct at the time of publication. Some websites may change their address or be removed from the internet at any time and the author cannot be held responsible for these changes.

Contents

1 Introduction

Several toolkits and books have already been produced on evaluation, many of which are useful and practical sources of information (Section 10). However, a review of these revealed that some were not specific enough to museums, and few, if any, provided the full range of current information needed for a museum practitioner to carry out, commission or manage evaluation at the present time.

So, this toolkit has been put together by compiling all the relevant information in these sources, as well as answers to the many practical evaluation questions often posed by museums, in the hope that it will be a fully comprehensive document for museum practitioners.

This toolkit has been produced through investment by Renaissance East of England (Appendix 1) and has been devised principally for museums in the East of England, but it may have wider appeal within the museum, library and archive sector. It grew out of a need for museums in this region to demonstrate the effectiveness of their work, both within their organisations and to external stakeholders, so that they could carry forward and share the lessons learned. Learning is one of the most important outcomes that evaluation can offer organisations, not only so that they can develop effectively and keep pace with current agendas but also so that they can garner valuable support for the worthwhile services that they offer.

Two key points are worth bearing in mind before you use this toolkit:

1. Evaluation doesn’t have to be expensive or time-consuming, however, you do need to commit a realistic amount of time to evaluation. The amount of time you put in when planning your evaluation will have a direct bearing on the quality of your results. A quickly and poorly written questionnaire, for example, is likely to yield poor data. Evaluation should be considered at the planning stages of your project or activity.

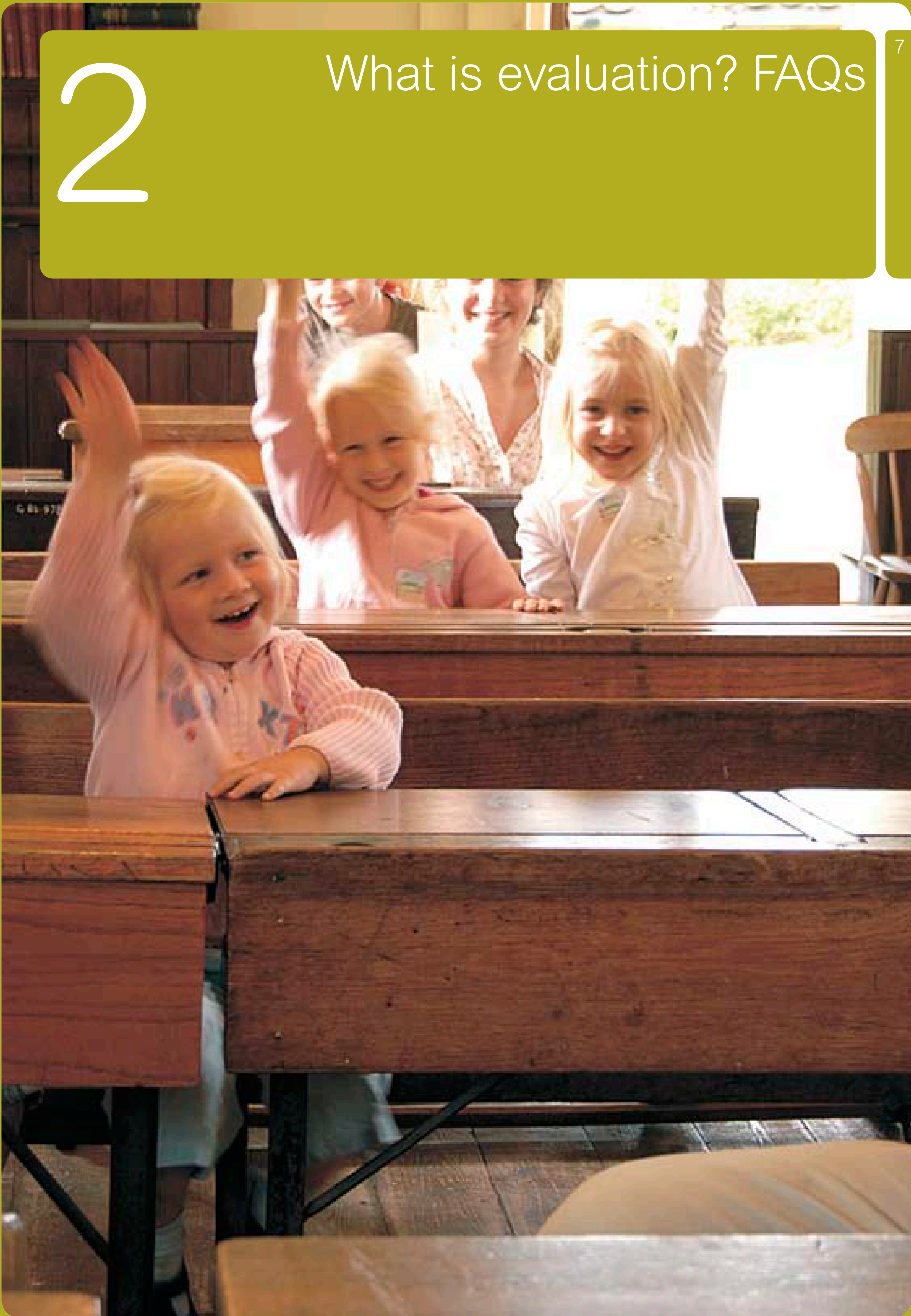
2. This toolkit contains examples of different evaluation methods (e.g. a questionnaire, topic guide, observation sheet, etc.) but these are all included as reference material, rather than as templates that should be adopted as they stand. It is not advisable to use an existing template for any evaluation if it does not ask the questions you would like answered.

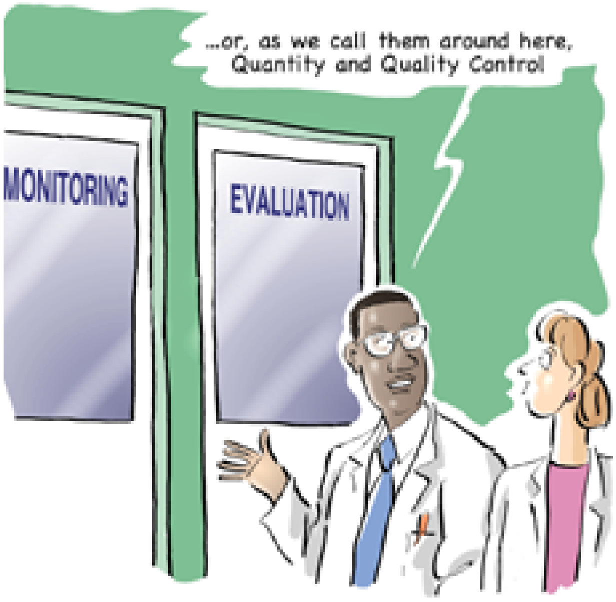
Finally, it should be stressed that your opinions on the usefulness and content of the toolkit are very much welcomed, as additional electronic content may be provided at a later date. To provide feedback, please get in touch with:

The Evaluation Officer,
Renaissance: East of England Hub, Norfolk Museums & Archaeology Service,
Shirehall, Market Avenue, Norwich NR1 3JQ.

Tel: 01603 493657 **E-mail:** amanda.burke@norfolk.gov.uk

2 What is evaluation? FAQs





Monitoring and evaluation: are they different?

Monitoring and evaluation are two different things but are often confused. Monitoring is about the ongoing collection and analysis of information to 'spot check' the progress of an activity at any given time. For example, this might be the collection of visitor figures over a period of time and noting month by month whether they go up or down. Evaluation, on the other hand, occurs at a specific point in time. It may use monitoring information as well as other data to look at the progress made against benchmarks set earlier in the activity. It is a way of measuring the effect and/or performance throughout the activity and may question its overall direction and the benchmarks themselves. For example, in looking at your visitor figures, you might then question whether or not you have achieved your aim of increasing visitor figures and if so, why this is the case. Evaluation, when done well, can also be about the 'how' and 'why' of what worked and what didn't. In this way it can help you and others to understand what it is that you need to continue to do, modify or completely overhaul in future if you are to carry out a similar project or activity.

What are the different kinds of evaluation?

The index of key terms (Section 11) covers some of the different types of evaluation but it is also worth explaining them here in more detail.

Front-end evaluation occurs during the planning stages of a project or activity, when data is analysed to help assess the value of plans before resources are committed to developing the project. It is used particularly during the planning stages of museum and gallery redevelopment. Front-end evaluation includes:

- The process of consulting people as to their expectations of the project's outcomes and their needs (e.g. how can this museum be developed in a way that is inclusive and accessible to everyone).
- Existing national or local data that may provide information about your baseline audience and target audience.
- Surveys set up specifically for the project to gauge your target audience's current knowledge.

Formative evaluation occurs during the process or development of your project or activity. It may involve testing out a prototype or mock-up (e.g. display, text panel) with your users and refining the model until it is sufficiently improved. This means that you do not commit all of your resources to the final product without knowing if it works in practice (e.g. is accessible, readily understood or works mechanically, in the case of interactive exhibits). It can also include other kinds of evaluation that take place while a project is underway, such as staff team meetings to monitor and assess how well a project is progressing with a view to making amendments to the plan if needed. At this point you are considering the question, ‘are we getting to where we want to be?’

Summative evaluation occurs at the end of your project or activity, when you may wish to assess the impact of the ‘finished product’, be it a new gallery, an outreach session or a new brochure. At this point, you are looking back at the project to ask questions such as ‘Did we meet our aims and objectives?’ or ‘What worked well and what didn’t?’

The diagram on the following page sets out the different stages of evaluation. Not all projects or activities will need to be evaluated using all three stages but particularly where you are running a large project it can be a good idea to incorporate front-end and/or formative evaluation with summative evaluation.

Retrospective evaluation happens when you realise that it is too late to even carry out summative evaluation, for example, following the closure of a temporary exhibition. Retrospective evaluation is not recommended, as it will probably mean that you have gaps in your data sources (leading to an unbalanced evaluation). For example, you may find that you have to use visitors’ quotes given in a newspaper article but you will have had no control over how these quotes were gathered or presented. Hence you will not know how representative or reliable they are of the visitors’ feedback.

Learning from evaluation

Sometimes, different types of evaluation can become blurred. For example, if the results from summative evaluation are subsequently used in planning a similar exercise in the future, then they become a form of front-end evaluation (looking back at what was successful or needed developing from past experience). Evaluation should be about learning. If you do not seek to learn from evaluation, then it is a lost opportunity for you and your organisation.

Case study: A fictional example of a gallery redevelopment

Redevelopment of a new gallery on the ancient Egyptians

Front-end evaluation

- Who visits the museum currently?
- Are our museum visitors representative of our local population?
- What are the needs of these visitors and any non-visitor groups?
- How would they like to see material displayed and interpreted?

Formative evaluation

- Do the proposed interactives:
  - work mechanically?
  - help visitors learn?
  - get the intended message across?

Project aims

Summative evaluation

- Did we meet our aims?
- Did we develop the new gallery according to visitors and non-visitors' needs and desires?
- What were the unexpected outcomes?

Front-end evaluation

- What lessons learned can we carry forward from the last redevelopment?

Redevelopment of a new gallery on the Romans

I wish to run a certain type of activity or project. Is there a 'right' evaluation method to use?

The answer to this is not straightforward. It all depends on the resources you have for the evaluation, the people that you are consulting for feedback, and the type of activity or project you are running. So, your evaluation method should be tailored to your activity and your audience. To put this in context, if you are working with children, then you cannot expect them to complete a long and detailed questionnaire. You might instead choose to observe the children's progress, gather informal feedback from parents or teachers and ask simple questions of the children to which they could respond with a 'show of hands'. These methods are simple but if done well, asking 'good' questions (Section 6.2), they will provide you with valid information that can be analysed and interpreted for the purposes of evaluation. Similarly, if you are running a long-term project, then you should expect to carry out a more detailed evaluation (relying on several types of data collection) than would be the case with the assessment of a single event.

Does evaluation need to be complicated to be valid?

The simple answer to this is 'no'. Evaluation can be as simple or as sophisticated as you make it. What makes evaluation valid and robust is giving yourself enough time to devise an effective plan (Section 5), phrasing your questions appropriately (Section 6.2), giving due consideration to the various perspectives of those involved (Section 4) and analysing and presenting the outcome in a way appropriate to your audience (Sections 7 and 8).

Which is better: in-house evaluation or commissioned evaluation?

Both have their merits and disadvantages. Commissioned evaluation is likely to cost more but will provide you with an independent and impartial assessment. However, your external evaluator may not have the necessary insight into museums and how they work to produce recommendations that will be suitable and practical in this context. In-house evaluation or 'self-evaluation' can be deemed to be less objective or robust, as people may tell you things that they think you want to hear or because you are less able to judge yourself or your organisation objectively. However, you may have a deeper understanding of how and why things worked or did not work and may be better placed to make recommendations for the future that are realistic for your organisation to achieve.

3 How can evaluation help me?

Evaluation, as has already been pointed out, is about the ‘how’ and ‘why’ of what worked well or what did not work well. For example, rather than just telling you that people enjoyed or did not enjoy the outreach session, if you ask the right questions, you will find out why they did or did not enjoy it and how you can repeat your successes or improve upon the less successful aspects of the session in future.

This sort of insight, about the ‘how’ and ‘why’, is often the most useful learning to share with others. It provides them with tangible building blocks for their own work, knowing what they can repeat or what mistakes they should try to avoid making. It also means that we are not continually ‘reinventing the wheel’ when it comes to project design.

Here are just some of the things that evaluation can help museum practitioners do, many of them are interrelated. This list has been compiled based on the author’s own experiences, a review of various sources consulted (Section 10) and from feedback by participants at training sessions delivered by the author:

Determine if a project or activity’s aims, objectives and outcomes are being or have been met

When planning a project or activity, you will set yourself aims, objectives and outcomes, ideally including ‘learning outcomes’ or ‘social outcomes’ (Section 4). Evaluation can help you assess to what extent you are achieving or have achieved these goals and what factors affect their success. It can also reveal unexpected outcomes, those outcomes or ‘nuggets’ of information which you couldn’t have foreseen but which are often the most interesting to find out about. This leads on to another key point that demonstrates why it is important to consider your evaluation at the start of your project or activity, when you are planning your goals. At this stage, you need to make sure that there will be some way of assessing whether or not you have achieved your goals. If you aren’t going to be able to do this, then your evaluation will be flawed. Admittedly, not all aims, objectives or outcomes are easily measured, but you do need to consider, for each of your goals, what your measure of success will be. This is covered in Section 4.

Particpating in Consult/Result, a conference on disability and museums run by Colchester and Ipswich Museum Service

Enable us to understand our visitors/users or non-visitors/non-users better (being more user-focused) and improve the services we offer them

This is important as museums can play a key role by actively engaging with the public. All museums should therefore strive to ensure that they are user-focused. This includes considering current users and non-users. So, some questions that evaluation might help to answer in this respect are:

- Are our visitors representative of local or wider communities? If they aren't, is this because we are not presenting ourselves in an accessible way?

- Do visitors understand our intended message, for example, how we interpret our collections through text panels? If they don't, then why is this?

- How do users and non-users learn in an informal learning setting? If we aren't able to understand our visitors' and non-visitors' informal learning processes, then we won't be able to cater for their needs.

Identify strengths and weaknesses (and where resources should be directed in future)

This will provide you with an insight into what contributed to the effectiveness of the project or activity and how you could make future projects or activities more effective. You may decide that no improvements could be made and so resources would be best used elsewhere. In short, evaluation can help inform the development of future projects and set their direction.

Ensure that learning is shared and acted upon within the organisation

Learning has already been stressed as an important outcome of evaluation. Just as important as this is acting upon and sharing the learning, so that it is carried forward in the future and communicated to your colleagues. If learning is not shared, it will be lost when individuals leave the organisation and take their learning elsewhere. A learning organisation is one that demonstrates to outsiders that it keeps pace with the needs of society.

Defines the quality of what we do

Often when it comes to evaluation and demonstrating impact, it can be easy simply to report against the quantity of what we offer, such as the number of visitors to an exhibition or the number of events held. This doesn't necessarily get to the crux of what museums can offer people but evaluation can go one step further and offer an insight into the quality of what we do. This means that we are able to articulate what our intrinsic value is, not only in terms of what outputs we deliver (e.g. visitors, exhibitions, events) but also in terms of the difference that these things make to people's lives (e.g. offering opportunities to learn new skills, build new relationships or even improve community spirit).

Anticipate problems that can be resolved early on

If you always leave evaluation until the very end, then sometimes it can be too late to act on the findings, particularly if you are not going to repeat the exercise again. Formative evaluation, for example, can help shape the final product, so that your resources are not invested in a product that is unusable. Often, monitoring will help you to assess the performance of what you are doing. However, it's a good idea to take time to think in more detail at the early or mid stages of your project about the data collected so far: whether it suggests you are on track to meet your aims or flags up any unexpected outcomes. This does not apply only to long-term activities. If, for example, you are running a series of outreach sessions, then you could get a simple idea of how well they are going by looking briefly at the evaluation results following each session to help shape subsequent sessions.

Strengthen accountability and motivate staff and users

Evaluation can demonstrate to you, your organisation and external stakeholders how effectively you are running a project, programme or activity. This can help make individuals delivering or managing the work more confident and focused on how it should develop. It gives them something to aim for and a framework against which to measure progress, therefore helping to build team vision. Knowing that you are achieving your goals, or knowing what you need to do differently to achieve them, can also be motivational for staff and team morale. If museum users and other stakeholders are aware that you take their feedback into account, it can motivate them, and in some cases new users, into engaging more with museum practitioners. It therefore creates the opportunity in museums for dialogue between colleagues and with users.

Demonstrate to funders the impact of the organisation

Funders usually require some level of evaluation of projects or activities that they sponsor. Sometimes this can be very basic, relying on a standard pro forma that may not allow you to include all the information you wish to. In these cases, if you are to demonstrate further impact, then submitting additional information that has arisen from your evaluation can be a good idea. Funders are unlikely to refuse such additional evidence and it could stand you in good stead should you wish to make future applications for funding, by justifying the reasons for continuing or developing your project or other activities.

4 The basics: what you need to know before you get started

Quantitative and qualitative data

Quantitative data, as its name suggests, is information presented in numeric form, which can be counted or compared on a scale. Quantitative data is easily measured, e.g. the number of participants at an event, the number of people who agree with a statement. **Qualitative data** on the other hand relates to information presented in narrative form that is usually textually or verbally rich in description.

Inputs, outputs and outcomes*

Inputs, outputs and outcomes are covered more fully in the 'Index of key terms' (Section 11). A quick summary is also given here. **Inputs** are all the resources put in to deliver the outputs (e.g. time, funding). **Outputs** are all the things that are delivered as a result, such as courses, exhibitions, talks. **Outcomes** are all the things that happen as a result of your outputs, such as the fact that people are more likely to return to attend another course, exhibition or talk.

Aims and objectives

Aims and objectives are often confused. **Aims** are about the overarching things that you are setting out to achieve. For example,

> 'To increase the range of visitors to the museum'

Objectives set out what needs to be done to achieve your aims and are the means by which you will evaluate the project or activity. For example,

> 'To sustain the participation of existing visitor types as identified in the last exit survey'

> 'To increase participation by younger people (16–25) by 5% within the following 12 months '

Your objectives should always be **'SMART'** which stands for:

Specific
Measurable
Achievable
Relevant
Time-specific

For example, it is not possible to demonstrate that you have achieved an objective if it is not measurable. A 'woolly' objective will be difficult to measure. An unachievable objective is one that is setting you up to fail. An irrelevant or non-time specific objective (e.g. one that extends beyond the life of your project) should not feature in your plans as time and resources should not be committed trying to fulfil it.

* Terms such as impact, outputs and outcomes can be defined in a number of ways. The explanations given define the use of these terms in this toolkit.

Baseline

Your baseline is a measurement that you take or have to hand before you start your evaluation. It is the reference data that you compare future measurements or observations against. It gives you an idea of the state of the situation before your project or activity begins. In some situations, you need to be able to demonstrate the amount of progress made, or 'distance travelled', by participants or the organisation during the life of your project, for example how training may have given front-of-house staff more knowledge and confidence about specific museum collections. It would help to have a measurement of their knowledge and confidence before and after the training to identify what change, if any, there had been.

Measure of success

This refers to how you will demonstrate you have met your objectives; what will you measure the success or otherwise of your objective against? They are much the same as 'outcomes' or 'performance indicators', for example, the number of people who respond positively to an exhibition or the fact that people become repeat visitors. If you are working as part of a team, it is a good idea to decide early on who will take responsibility for monitoring and assessing which measures of success.

Open and closed questions

An **open question** allows for the respondent to give a spontaneous and unstructured response. They are characterised by opening with 'how' and 'what' as well as descriptive verbs such as 'describe' and 'explain' (e.g. 'Describe how you felt when ....'). Open ended questions are useful when you need to gather a rich narrative of feedback from your respondents, e.g. in interviews, focus groups and sometimes in questionnaires. A **closed question**, however, forces respondents to chose either a 'yes' or 'no' answer or an answer from a set of predefined categories (e.g. 'Do you like this exhibit?', 'Do you prefer this exhibition or the previous exhibition?'). Responses to closed questions are easier and less time-consuming to collate and analyse, but will usually not provide you with an understanding of why the person answered the way that they did. This can only be achieved by following up with an open question asking them to explain their response.

Leading questions

These are questions that are phrased in such a way as to suggest that there is a right answer. They bias the respondent to reply in a desired way. So, for example, if you asked someone, 'When are you next planning to visit this museum?', without having established if they are intending to visit the museum again, you are only allowing for the respondent to answer affirmatively. Asking leading questions should always be avoided.

Sampling

Sampling is a way of choosing participants for an evaluation, in some cases so that they are representative of a wider population. There are different methods of sampling, which include the following:

Random sampling is where a group of subjects is selected entirely by chance and each member of the population has an equal chance of being included in the sample. One way of doing this would be to use a list of the individuals in the population you are investigating, e.g. all the children in a school, and go down the list selecting participants using a random number table.

Systematic sampling is similar to the above, however, selection is done using a systematic method, e.g. every tenth person on a list. You need to make sure there is no pattern in the population or on your list that distorts your sample.

Stratified sampling is where the total population are grouped according to characteristics (e.g. age, gender, ethnicity) and you select randomly from each group so that your overall number of target participants are proportionate to those in the total population.

Quota sampling is similar to stratified sampling, however, in this case, an interviewer will have been instructed as to how many people from each sub-group of the population to select (or observe), e.g. 30 females and 30 males. It is not considered 'random' sampling, since, for example, if you are stopping people in the museum or in the street, it is tempting to select people who look more helpful or who are more like yourself.

Recruiting participants

You need to consider which groups of people you wish to consult and why. For example, do you need to target certain groups of people (such as museum staff and volunteers, non-users and current users, teachers and parents, children and young people, older people, students) because you are specifically seeking the views of these people? Some of these groups may be easily reached through contacts that already exist, such as your current users, or more specifically, teacher panels and any friends or museum pass holders (if you have these schemes).

Alternatively, you may wish simply to sample the views of your users and then to involve non-users or under-represented groups too. When it comes to the latter two groups, it is likely that you will have to spend more time eliciting their views, not only in finding participants but in gaining their trust too. Try approaching local community groups to see if you can make contact with their representatives. Also consider speaking to your local authority about any public engagement panels that they may have already set up for other previous or current consultations to see whether you could approach people in this way. Under 'Variations on interviews' in Section 6.4, two methods are described which have been used by Ipsos-MORI to solicit the views of under-represented groups.

Being more inclusive in your consultation also means that you should consider any extra support that your participants may need in order to take part, for example, providing child care, hearing loop systems, translators and sign language interpreters and holding any meetings in venues or at times that are convenient for your participants.

Case study: The Children's Consultancy Project, Ancient House Museum of Thetford Life

Over one week of the school summer holidays in 2007 the Ancient House Museum ran a summer school with ten children, aged between 9 and 14. This summer school was delivered as a Children's Consultancy Project, with the aim of generating ideas for the improvement of the museum from the point of view of young visitors. Although the whole of the museum was considered by the young participants, there was a particular focus on the Ancient Inhabitants Room, a display relating to the lives of four people known to have lived in the Ancient House in the past.

Two children's consultants get into the past

The week took the following format:
- A tour of the museum.
- Group discussion around the question, 'What is a museum for?', putting the various functions of museums (conservation, research, entertainment etc.) in order of importance.
- An exercise involving the use of coloured post-it notes which the children used to identify areas of the museum that were attractive or not; green ones were for immediately attractive and appealing things, yellow ones for things that they might go back to and look at further, and red ones for things that lacked any appeal for them. This was followed by a walk round the museum, analysing the results and a discussion of the reasons for their selections.
- Work on the Ancient Inhabitants Room, including the decision to present the story of the four individuals featured through shadow puppets and to improve the signage with new designs featuring the names of the four people and their trade drawn and coloured in letters formed from relevant objects.
- A visit to the Bridewell Museum in Norwich to discuss:
    - What could be done to improve this museum?
    - Did the children consider this a better museum than the Ancient House?
- Short dramatic scenes involving the use of shadow puppets for a presentation to the children's families at the end of the week.

In addition to observing the children and noting down their feedback, the children's thoughts were also captured via video and evaluation forms. There were some important outcomes for the museum and children:

- Enthusiasm and a strong sense of enjoyment was expressed by the children.
- The museum gained a valuable depth of insight into the reasoning behind the children's suggestions for improvements and modifications to the museum.
- The use of a comparative museum (The Bridewell) worked well, allowing the children to develop analytical skills as external observers.

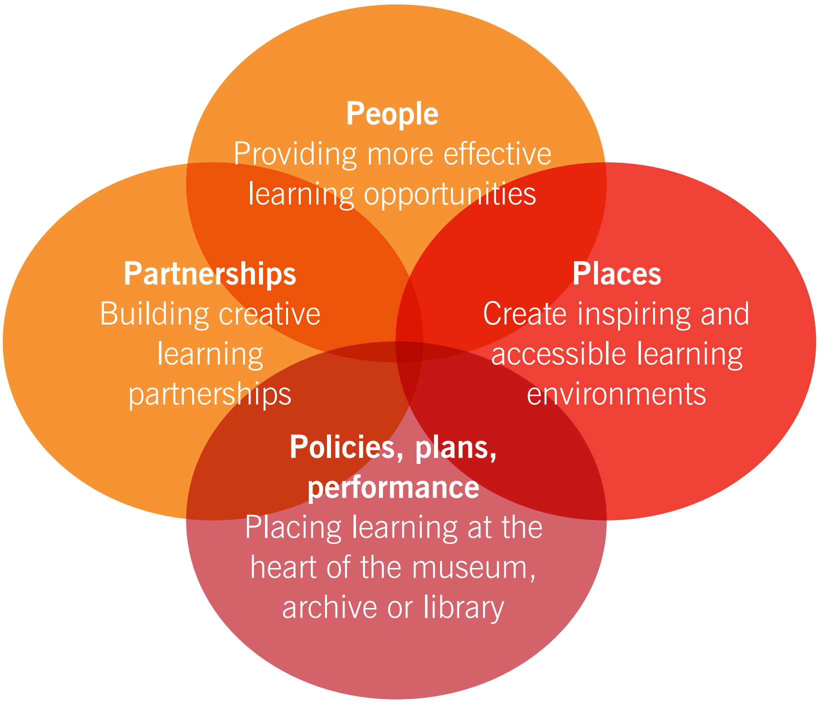
Source: internal NMAS report by George Middleton, 2007

Inspiring Learning For All (ILFA)

ILFA is a framework that helps practitioners to plan for, improve and articulate the learning that occurs in the context of museums, libraries and archives. This relates to informal learning which is defined in Section 11.

ILFA is designed to improve services in museums, libraries and archives and to measure the impact of this on people's learning.

Central to the framework are four key principles that describe the organisational process leading to an accessible and inclusive museum, archive or library that stimulates and supports learning (see diagram):



Further information about these four processes can be found in Appendix 2.

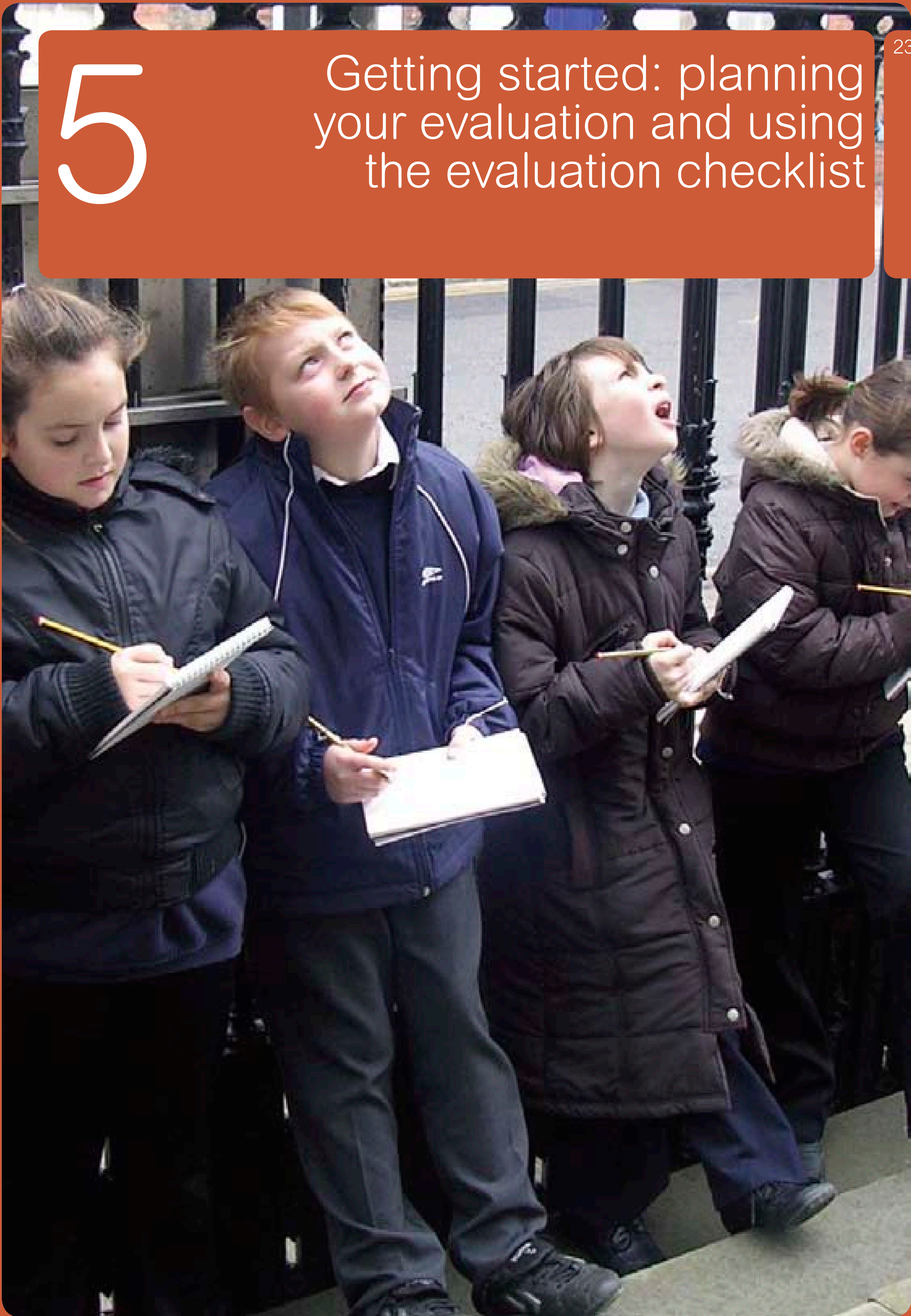
Underpinning the framework are outcomes for users and for museums, libraries and archives (Appendix 2). ILFA can help you to demonstrate that you are achieving these outcomes. Museums, libraries and archives are particularly interested in the learning outcomes for users that take place in these settings through informal learning experiences. To help practitioners evidence such learning, and to give them a common and recognised language to articulate this learning, ILFA advocates the use of generic learning outcomes (GLOs). There are five GLOs:

- Knowledge and understanding
- Skills
- Attitudes and values
- Enjoyment, inspiration and creativity
- Action, behaviour and progression.

It is possible therefore to map the learning outcomes for users against these GLOs, to produce evidence of impact that can be measured across an organisation and between organisations. Further information about the GLOs is given in Appendix 2 and Section 7.3 briefly covers how outcomes for users can be analysed against the GLO framework.

More recently, generic social outcomes (GSOs) have been developed which can be used to look at the broader impact of museums, libraries and archives on groups of people or communities. These are currently being piloted across organisations and the prototype social outcomes framework is available for download from the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council website (see Section 10).

5 Getting started: planning your evaluation and using the evaluation checklist

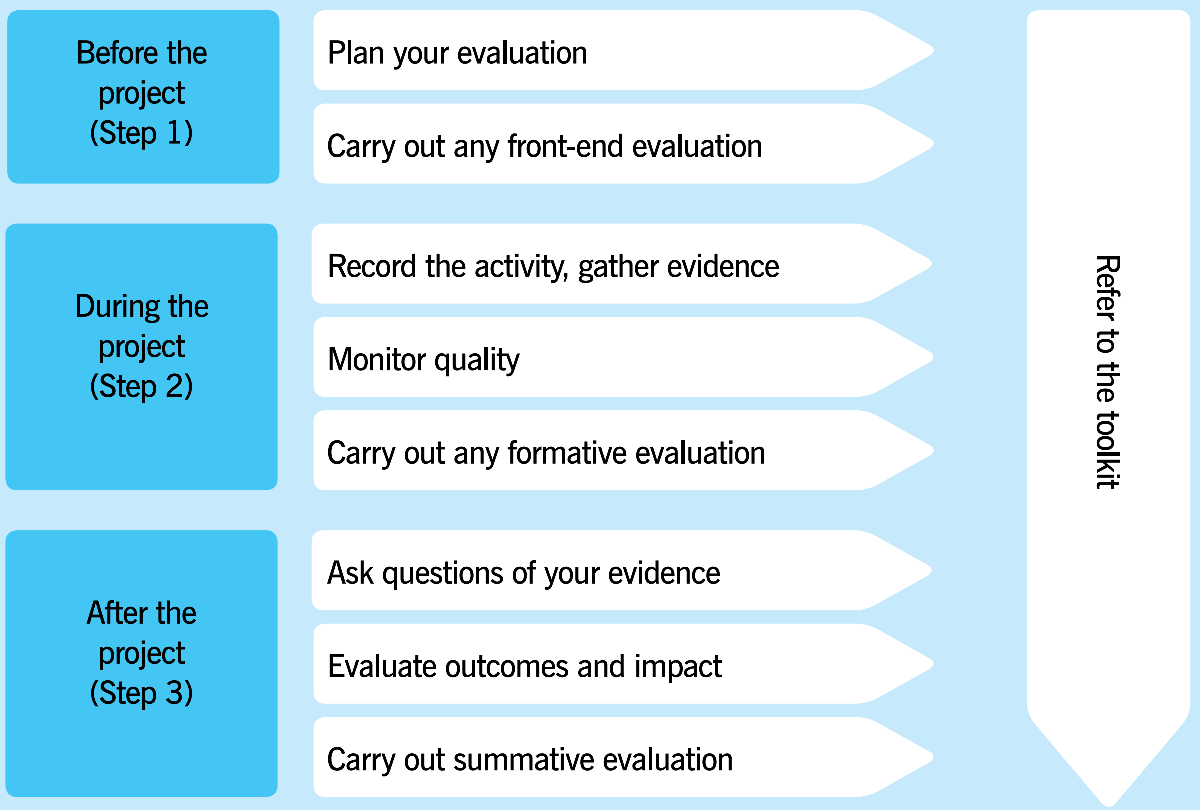


It is very important to ensure that any evaluation being carried out by museums in the East of England is planned and implemented to the same framework. This will ensure that the evaluation process and results are robust and consistent and that different studies can be compared to one another, as they are of the same high quality.

There are three stages to carrying out your evaluation. These are set out in the diagram below and relate to what you need to do before (Step 1), during (Step 2) and after (Step 3) the project.

In thinking about Step 1, remember that the more time committed to planning your evaluation, the more effective it is likely to be. That is why there is a checklist opposite to help you think about all the important issues before you start your evaluation. Each item in the checklist is referenced against sections in this toolkit where you can go for more detailed help. At the back of this pack there is also a pull-out planning tool that will enable you to ensure you have covered all the relevant issues when planning your evaluation. As well as a blank planning tool, an example of a completed one is included using case study information.

For Step 2 of your evaluation (i.e. 'During the project') refer to Section 6 and for Step 3 ('At the end of the project') refer to Sections 7 and 8 of this toolkit.



Source: adapted from Annabel Jackson Associates (2004: p.6)

The checklist: What to think about before starting the project	For more help go to
Rationale and context for evaluation	
• What type of evaluation is it (front-end, formative and/or summative)? If your evaluation will cover more than one of these, how will your stages of evaluation link to one another?	Section 2
• Why are you carrying out the evaluation – what is its purpose?	Section 3
• Why will the findings be of interest and who will they be of interest to?	Section 8
• Set your baselines – establish what quantitative information you have currently that relates to your project.	Section 4
• Decide how you will plan your evaluation and measure any outcomes using the Inspiring Learning for All framework.	Section 4 & Appendix 2
Aims, objectives, outcomes and outputs	
• What are the aims and objectives of this activity/project?	Section 4
• What are the proposed outputs of this activity/project?	Section 4
• What are the proposed outcomes of this activity/project?	Section 4
Methods	
• What are the proposed evaluation methods and how will these capture information that can measure your aims, objectives, outputs and outcomes?	Section 6
• What quantitative baseline information do you have or need in order to demonstrate the progression or 'distance travelled' by your project or activity?	Section 2 & Section 4
Participants	
• Who are your intended participants/target groups and how many people do you need to recruit or involve?	Section 4 & Section 9
• What are your proposed sampling methods?	Section 4
• Are your methods accessible to your intended audience?	Section 9
• Do you need to consider any ethical issues? (e.g. are you working with vulnerable groups, do you need informed consent?)	Section 9
• How will you collect feedback from people delivering the service to your visitors?	Section 6
Recording data	
• What methods do you propose to use to record the data gathered?	Section 6
• Will these allow you to interrogate the data easily?	Section 7
• Will the storage of data comply with the Data Protection Act 1998?	Section 9
• Would it be useful to compare your results to other data? If so, does your design allow for this (e.g. comparable categories for age, ethnicity etc.)?	Appendix 3

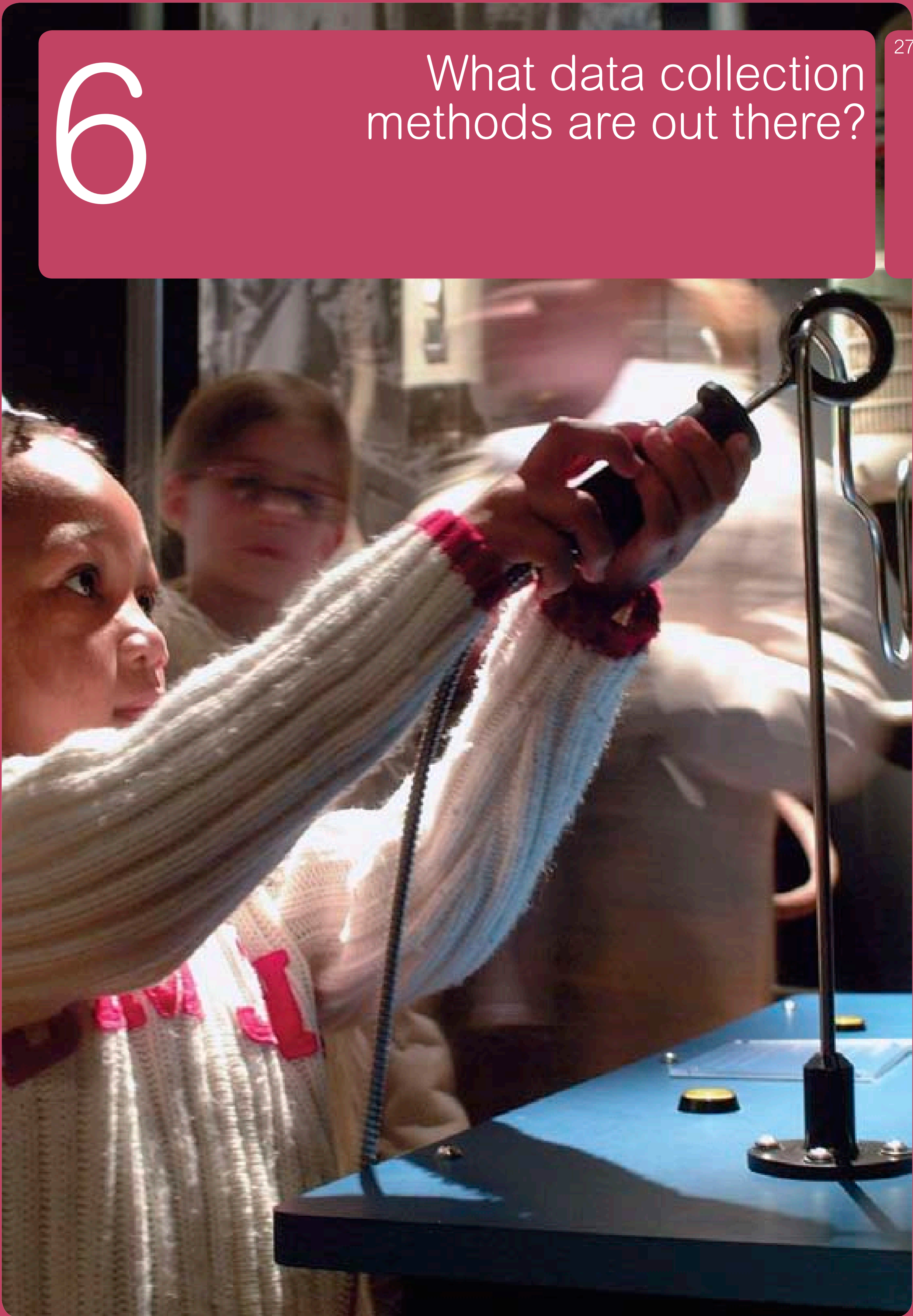
Other important considerations

- What are your time and resources?
- Is there already information available that would save you from duplicating data?

At the very least, in devising a good evaluation design you should:

- Establish the key question the evaluation is seeking to answer.
- Discuss the project/activity with any stakeholders as they can help to shape and design the study.
- Use data collection methods which are feasible in the time available and which will provide robust and meaningful results.
- Feed back your results in an appropriate way (different audiences can call for different styles) and make sure you fulfil any reporting requirements (e.g. progress reports, evaluation reports).
- Ensure you keep the Evaluation Officer informed during the planning, delivery and reporting stages of the process, if you work for a museum in the East of England Hub.

6 What data collection methods are out there?



6.1 Introduction

Which method should I use?

Evaluation does not need to rely solely on the more typical methods such as questionnaires and interviews. There are in fact a wide range of methods that can be used, depending on your resources and the audience you wish to survey. It is key to consider both your resources and your audience(s) as these factors will shape your choice of survey method. For example, a written questionnaire will not work well with young children and, although it might be more suited to use with adult users, if you do not have the time or resources to compile the results, then it will not be suitable either. In many situations, however, questionnaires still do prove to be a useful tool for gathering user feedback.

How many methods should I use?

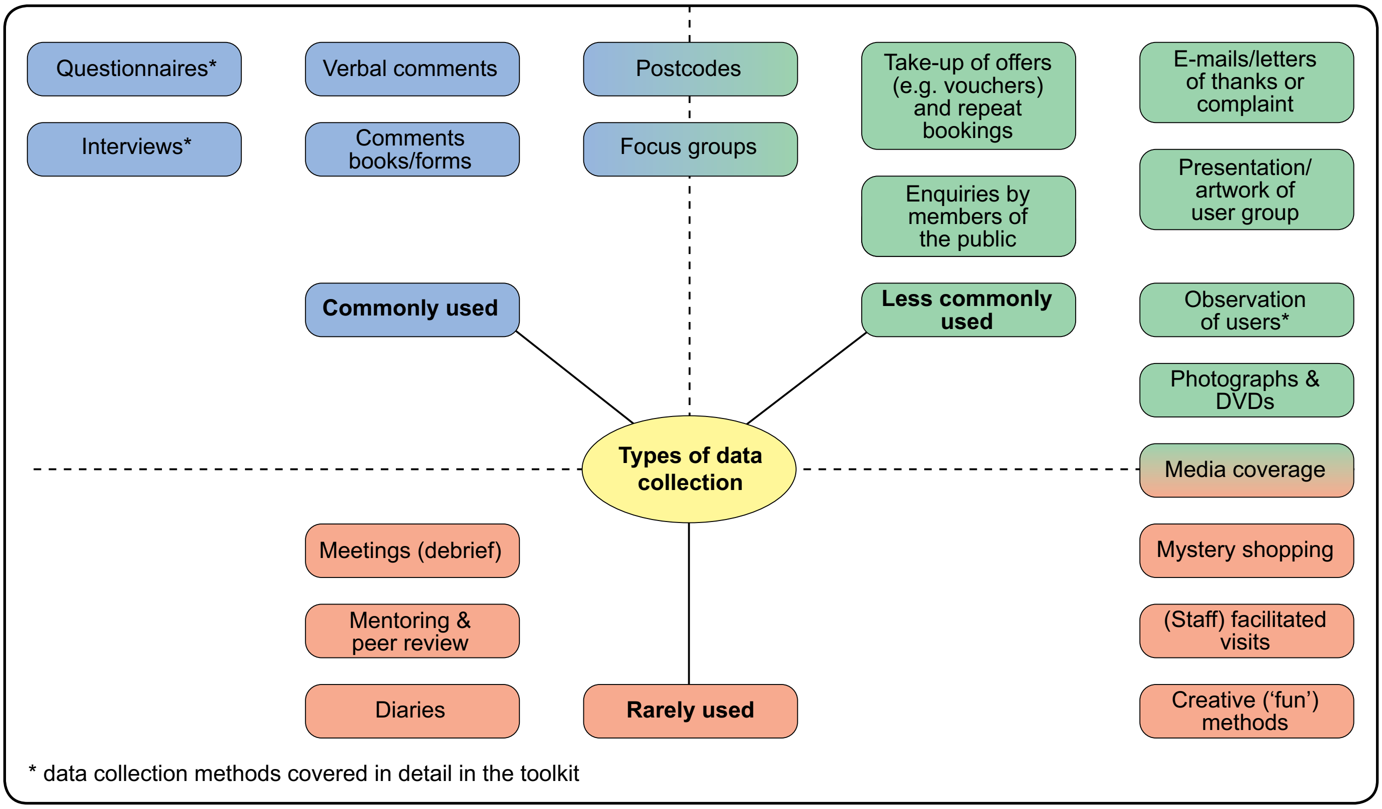
It is often a good idea to use more than one evaluation method to survey your users, particularly if you are running a large project. This means that your methods are more accessible to a range of people (i.e. what might suit one person may not suit another), but can also provide you with more robust results because you are able to overcome data that may be unrepresentative or unreliable. Whether or not you use more than one method will be very much dependent on your resources and on what activity or service you wish to gather feedback on. It would be realistic to use just one method for a one-hour outreach session with young children, but a 12-week exhibition for example, should really seek to use two to three or more methods.

Whichever method you use, remember that you should be realistic at the start about how much time will be needed for the analysis. Quality of feedback (i.e. from a few well-thought out questions) is more important than quantity (i.e. from lots of poorly written questions).

What methods are available?

The diagram opposite covers some of the evaluation methods (types of data collection) that are suited to use in museums, although it is not exhaustive. It is set out to explore the evaluation methods that tend to be commonly used by museums, as well as those that are less often or rarely used. It should be stressed that many museums do already have in place many of the uncommonly or rarely used types of data collection methods in this diagram, but that the information which arises from these is not being utilised fully or coherently for evaluation purposes.

Do bear in mind that evaluation can be fun and can be built into the activities or services you deliver, so that the two become seamless, rather than evaluation becoming an 'add-on' at the end. This too, is covered in Section 6.7 below, under 'Creative data collection methods'.



6.2 How to phrase a 'good' question

One of the most important elements that will have a bearing on the quality of your feedback is the quality of your question. Ambiguous, poorly structured questions are likely to yield equally ambiguous and poor responses. So there are some basic principles that need to be followed in phrasing a 'good' question.

General advice

- Use simple language:
  - Short sentences are best (containing 15 to 20 words maximum).
  - Write in the active voice rather than the passive voice.
  - Avoid jargon or abbreviations and don't use double negatives.
  - Avoid leaving out articles (e.g. 'a', 'the') and pronouns (e.g. 'it', 'them' This usually happens when there is a lack of space but including them can actually help the reader arrive at the meaning more easily. It is better to omit a question if you have run out of space, than to squeeze it in and lose clarity of expression or presentation.
- Make sure your questions are not ambiguous, e.g. 'In the last week …' – depending on the person, this could mean the previous seven days or the previous number of days to the last Monday.
- Ask one question at a time (e.g. 'How would you rate your experience today?' rather than 'How would you rate your experience and enjoyment today?').
- If you would like an open or closed response to the question, use appropriate language when asking the question (Section 4).
- Test out your questions on colleagues, family or friends before using the question with 'real' participants to check that the questions are understood in the way that they were intended.

- It seems quite obvious but … don't ask any questions that you do not need the answers to! For example, you might decide to save time by using a survey written by another museum. However, just because that museum has asked for people's postcodes on the survey, there is no reason to include this question on your survey if you are going to do nothing with this data. If you are going to 'borrow' questionnaires devised by others:
    - Make sure in the first instance that their questionnaire has followed the guidelines stated here.
    - Be prepared to spend time tweaking and improving it to suit your own needs.

Attitudinal questions

- If you want to ask attitudinal questions, you can use what is commonly referred to as 'Likert'-style questions. This will measure graduated responses to a statement. For example, for the statement 'I enjoyed my visit to the museum today', you might have the response choices: (1) Strongly disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Neither agree nor disagree, (4) Agree, (5) Strongly agree.
- You can use an even or odd number of responses. Using an even number by removing the middle, or neutral, category ('Neither agree nor disagree') constitutes a 'forced choice method'. This has the advantage of encouraging respondents to engage with the statement where they may be tempted to go for the middle category as the easy, non-committal option. It may be, however, that the respondents are genuinely neutral about the statement and are being forced to express an opinion where they have none. Whether to use odd or even scales is a topic of debate amongst academics and there is no clear answer, so either approach is acceptable. You should ensure, however, that you are consistent with the number and definition of categories, i.e. you should stick to four, five or six-point scales throughout the survey.
- When using a Likert-style question, it is generally recommended that you use a five or six-point scale. Using a smaller number can mean that your results are less valid (because there is less choice) whereas using a larger number may put people off completing your survey.
- Providing a 'Don't know' or 'Can't remember' category is advisable when asking some questions, such as those that ask people to remember something, or to indicate their knowledge or understanding of a topic.

6.3 Questionnaires

About questionnaires

This method includes self-completion questionnaires (i.e. the respondent completes the survey him/herself) and facilitated questionnaires (i.e. used in structured interviews where the interviewer fills in the respondent's answers). For the purposes of this toolkit, where 'questionnaires' are referred to, this equates to self-completion questionnaires, although the advice presented below is just as applicable to facilitated questionnaires.

Questionnaires are one of the most commonly used evaluation methods. They are particularly suitable when you would like to get a response from a large number of people in a relatively short time (that wouldn't be possible through interviews, for example), or if you would like to have a rolling survey (i.e. one that is ongoing or repeated at regular intervals during the year). They can ask for information about people's knowledge, awareness, satisfaction, expectations, behaviour, preferences and beliefs, as well as demographic data (e.g. respondents' age, ethnicity, gender, etc).

It is not always necessary to collect demographic information, but it can be useful, particularly with longer surveys where you would like to analyse the results to see if certain groups of people are more likely to respond in a certain way (e.g. 'younger people (aged under 25) tended to agree more strongly that they enjoyed the outreach session than older people (aged over 55)'). Don't be fooled into thinking that a questionnaire left in a space for people to complete on their own whim will provide you with a representative picture of the demographics or opinions of your user group. In these instances, the response to the survey is entirely self-selecting (i.e. reliant on the desire of individuals to participate). It tends to be highly motivated people who do participate, often having had polarised experiences ('I had a fantastic time and I want to tell you how wonderful your galleries are' versus 'I had an awful experience and I want to tell you how rude your staff were') or people with the time and inclination to write their response (for example, a mother with three young children in tow is unlikely to be able to do this).

Top tips for writing and using questionnaires

Top tips Basic formatting and content

- Questionnaires can be designed to be relatively short, asking a minimum of questions that would fit on a postcard, or they can ask more detailed questions that warrant more space. Ideally, questionnaires should be no longer than one double side of A4.
- In addition to the actual questions you wish to ask, a good questionnaire should also contain:

  - An introduction explaining the reason for the questionnaire and what will happen with the results (e.g. 'We welcome your feedback on this exhibition. Your response will be treated in strictest confidence and will help us to make continual improvements to our future exhibition programme. Any personal information you provide will be stored and processed according to the Data Protection Act 1998'*).
  - Instructions that tell respondents what to do with the questionnaire when they have completed it – do they post it in the box provided (where is the box situated?), do they hand it in to a member of staff (where and how?) or do they post it back to you (what is your address, is a pre-paid envelope provided?). Also indicate how a respondent is to answer a question ('Tick or put a cross in the relevant box', 'Write your answer in here:').
  - A note thanking the person at the end for completing the questionnaire (and perhaps indicating how valuable their feedback is to you).
- Use upper case for whole words sparingly. If you want to emphasise importance use bold text.
- If you have a double-sided questionnaire, ask people to turn over at the bottom of the first page to make sure that questionnaires are fully completed.
- Number your questions and use Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3) rather than Roman numerals (i, ii, iii).
- Use text that can be easily read – Arial in point size 12 is best.
- Structure your questionnaire so that it asks more general questions first and moves on to specific questions further on.

Top tips Phrasing questions
- Employ a mix of closed and open questions. For example, asking if someone enjoyed their visit (eliciting a 'yes/no' answer) can be usefully supplemented by a question asking them to explain their answer (that way you know *why* they did or did not enjoy their visit).
- If you include demographic questions and are using pre-defined response categories (e.g. ❑ Male ❑ Female), make sure these fit with categories that are already widely used (such as those by the Office for National Statistics or local government offices). This means that you can compare your respondents' characteristics to datasets that already exist (see Section 7 and Appendix 3).
- Questionnaires can seem more approachable if demographic questions are left to the end of the survey.
- Be consistent throughout the questionnaire with your method of selecting a pre-defined category ('Tick' *or* 'Cross the relevant box' *or* 'Circle the relevant answer'). Don't mix and match as this will cause confusion.

Top tips Resource implications
- Never underestimate the amount of time it will take to analyse the results. The longer the questionnaire and the more respondents you have, the more likely it is that you will need to input the data into a spreadsheet for analysis. Data entry can be very time consuming or costly, if you employ someone to do it for you. This is another reason for only asking questions for which you would like a response.

*If you are not collecting personal information then you can omit the last sentence.

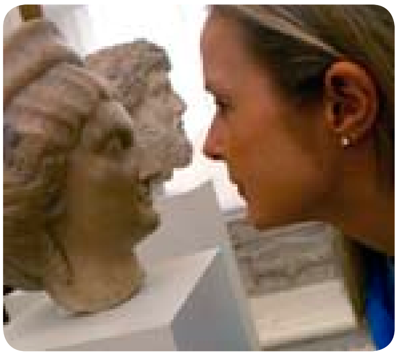
Top tips Other considerations

- If you are collecting personal information on the questionnaire (see Section 9 if you aren't sure what constitutes 'personal information'), the questionnaire and any databases containing the questionnaire data must be stored and processed according to the Data Protection Act (1998). This means, for example, that you cannot leave questionnaires containing personal information out in galleries for public view.
- Trial your questionnaire before you use it properly. This can be as simple as asking a few colleagues, family members or friends to read it through and have a go at completing it. Questions that seem straightforward to you might not to others. Even a quick trial can save you from results that are unusable later on because respondents did not understand questions, leaving them blank or reading their meaning in a way that you did not intend.

6.4 Interviews

About interviews

Interviews can take place informally (e.g. a conversation between a visitor and front-of-house member of staff) or more formally, where the interviewer has a predefined set of questions to ask of the interview participant. Structured interviews involve using only the set of pre-defined questions; semi-structured interviews involve using a set of pre-defined topics but allowing for the interviewer to ask them in his/her own way, depending on how the interview progresses. Interviews can take place face-to-face or via the telephone. With face-to-face interviews it can be easier for the interviewer to read the participant's body language, whereas telephone interviews can have the added benefit of enabling the interviewing of non-users.



Meeting the past at the Fitzwilliam Museum

Top tips for planning and running interviews

Top tips Planning the interview

- Decide how you will identify and chose your participants. Are you seeking views from non-users and/or a specific type of user? Will you need a sampling strategy (Section 4)? Will you need to approach people in advance to arrange their participation or will you approach people 'cold' at the time of the interview?
- Decide on your list of questions. Remember that interviews offer you the chance to gather a richer narrative of feedback from participants and so your questions should reflect this; take the opportunity to ask a few more open questions than would be possible with a questionnaire.
- Only ask personal questions if you absolutely need to do so.
- Decide whether or not you will take notes or make a recording during the interview.

Top tips During the interview

- Make sure the interview isn't any longer than necessary. An exit survey or gallery interview should last no more than 15 minutes maximum.
- Be upfront and honest with your participant at the start of the interview (or when recruiting participants) about the length of time it will take and how their comments will be used.
- If your interview is semi-structured, then it is appropriate to probe the participants for further information if you feel that their first answer doesn't give you the depth of information you were hoping for.
- Leave any personal questions to the end of the interview, when a rapport has been built up and the participant is likely to feel more comfortable about providing you with this information. Try to use pre-defined categories for as many personal questions as possible (e.g. age, ethnicity) to avoid causing any embarrassment. Don't try to cajole participants into providing any personal information they are not comfortable giving!
- Hold the interview in an appropriate place, away from any disruptions but not in an isolated place. Ensure that you have colleagues nearby, should you or the interviewee need to call upon them suddenly.

Top tips Resource implications

- Following the interview, you will need to write up any notes or transcripts promptly to ensure that information is not forgotten. Although this is not as time consuming as with focus groups, it can still take more time than using self-completion questionnaires, particularly if you have used a lot of open-ended questions. Make sure that the necessary resources to do this are considered in the planning stages.

Top tips Other considerations

- If you are collecting personal information during the interview (see Section 9 if you aren't sure what constitutes 'personal information'), the notes/transcripts and any databases containing this information must be stored and processed according to the Data Protection Act (1998).
- Interviews should start off with the interviewer explaining the purpose of the discussion and the rights of the participants under any legislation (e.g. the Data Protection Act 1998) or according to best practice guidance (e.g. the right to withdraw from the research at a later date). Participants should be provided with an information sheet and two copies of a consent form (see Appendix 6). Both copies of the latter should be signed and one returned to the evaluator.

Case study: Analysis of gallery questionnaires at the Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge

The Fitzwilliam evaluated visitors' impressions of their visit to the Fitzwilliam Museum during Museums and Galleries Month Welcome Weekend 2007. Information was collected through a self-completion questionnaire and interviews. Using the data from 122 completed questionnaires, a report was drawn up looking at visitor satisfaction; it included the use of charts and tables. Examples of these for the following question can be seen below:

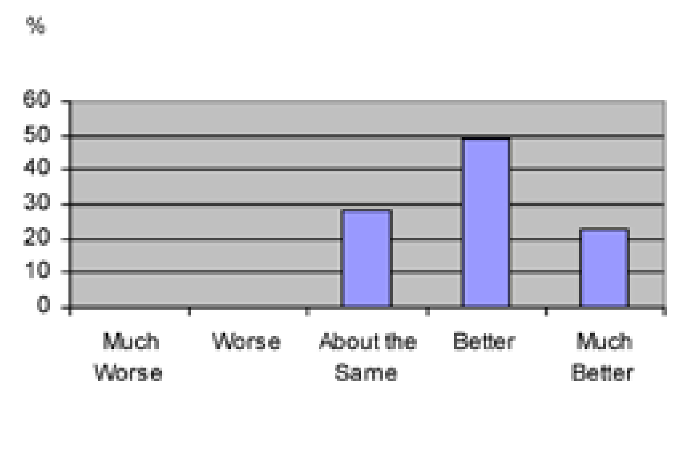
> 'How do you feel about your overall visit today compared with your expectations?'

The following table and chart shows the responses to this question for *all* visitors:

Expectation rating (all)	Number (Total=122)	%
Much worse	0	0
Worse	0	0
About the same	56	46
Better	47	38
Much better	19	16

The data was further broken down for 'first-time' visitors. You can see from the chart and table below, that many more first-time visitors found the experience better or much better than expected:

Expectation rating (first time)	Number (Total=122)	%
Much worse	0	0
Worse	0	0
About the same	14	29
Better	24	49
Much better	11	22



This is explained by the fact that regular visitors are likely to know what to expect and therefore find that the visit meets their expectations. This approach illustrates the usefulness in interrogating the data according to different categories of visitor and of visually representing numerical data so that it can be easily understood by the audience.

Variations on interviews

There are two variations on interviews that have been used successfully by the consultants Ipsos-MORI to solicit the views of under-represented groups. These are ‘pyramid interviewing and peer interviewing.

With pyramid interviewing a ‘seed’ participant is identified. This might be a user with whom the museum already has contact or it could be a non-user, who is then interviewed by the organisation. If they are willing, they are then tasked with interviewing a handful of people, such as non-users, from their friends, family and acquaintances. The seed participant is fully briefed about the issues for feedback and is reimbursed for their time. They then feed back the results of all the interviews to the organisation concerned.

Peer interviewing is slightly more formal but similar in that it involves identifying a person from a specific group of people whom the museum would like to gather feedback from but with which they have no links. One person from this group is fully briefed about the project and given training in best practice skills for interviews, including the themes and questions on which the museum would like a response, and then has the flexibility to interview their peers in the most appropriate way for that group. The results are then fed back to the museum. The peer interviewer is reimbursed for their time.

6.5 Focus groups

About focus groups

Focus groups involve discussion among a group of people on a subject that is the focus of conversation. They are usually facilitated discussions (i.e. the convener will have a set of questions for the group to explore). Focus groups are good at providing you with qualitative information and, when facilitated well, will allow you to tease out a greater depth of information about people’s attitudes, experiences and beliefs on your subject of focus. For example, if participants make certain statements, you can follow these up with a series of probing questions that ask them to explain and qualify their opinions in a way that would not be possible with a self-completion questionnaire (Section 6.4). Focus groups are good at providing you with a rich source of narrative, expressed in your participants’ own words; these quotes often provide useful ‘sound bites’ in reports. Focus groups are unsuitable for providing you with quantitative information because you are generally surveying a relatively small group of people whose views are not necessarily representative of the whole population. The quality of information that comes out of focus groups is reliant on the skills and experience of the facilitator(s).

When are they useful?

Focus groups provide results that are particularly useful in the exploratory stages of a project (e.g. before developing a new gallery) or during the formative stages of a project (e.g. when testing 'mock-ups' of displays). They are suited to situations where you need to get qualitative information from participants more quickly and at lower cost than would be the case with individual interviews. Group interaction may also stimulate ideas and opinions that would not necessarily have been revealed in a one-to-one interview. The focus group approach can also be adopted for staff meetings, where participants are asked to consider a range of questions and are encouraged to discuss their responses openly, with an independent member of staff who has no vested interest in the subject of dialogue, facilitating the discussion.

Top tips on how to organise and run a focus group

Top tips **Organising a focus group**

- Consider who you need to consult and whether or not you are hoping to recruit a specific group of people (e.g. non-users) or a mix of people to provide you with data from a range of different groups (e.g. children, teachers, parents). Participants for focus groups tend to be selected on the basis of certain characteristics, because they have the relevant experience, interest or knowledge in the focus of discussion.
- It can be notoriously difficult to recruit people to take part in focus groups, particularly if you are looking for participants who are not museum users. You should expect this stage of setting up a focus group to be quite time-consuming, and in some cases you might like to seek the help of market research consultants to recruit participants on your behalf. If you do take on this task yourself, a good way to recruit participants would be to approach any 'Friends Society' linked to the museum, teachers from visiting or non-visiting schools, visitors and volunteers in the museum and community groups. Many local authorities have lists of various people who sit on consultation panels. It is worth checking if your local authority can put you in touch with these consultation panels as it is likely that some of the participants will be non-museum visitors.
- Always recruit more people than you think you will need as usually a small number of people are not able to participate at the last minute. So if you anticipate having 12 people in the group, then recruit 15 people. It is advisable to send out a letter or make a phone call to all participants shortly before the focus group to remind them of the time, date and venue.

Top tips **Running the focus group**

- It is best to run a focus group with a trained moderator as they will have the necessary skills to manage and direct the discussion as appropriate, ensuring it runs smoothly. It is a good idea to have a second person who can take notes and deal with any matters while the moderator is involved with the group discussion.

- Recording the focus group is advisable, even if there is someone taking notes. Listening to the recording afterwards can reveal points that were missed in notes taken at the time and will be a useful tool if you want to make transcripts of the discussion.
- Before any discussion starts, it is a good idea to start the session with an ice-breaker which will warm people up and should help them to feel more forthcoming. You can ask everyone to contribute by introducing themselves and telling the group about where they last went on holiday, or you can ask them to talk about another innocuous subject on which everyone is likely to have something to say.
- In managing the discussion, moderators should try to ensure that individuals have an equal opportunity to contribute and that the discussion, although not completely structured, will at least be directed in a meaningful way that provides usable results.
- Most focus groups should have around 8–12 participants and run for around 90 minutes. They are organised through the use of a ‘topic guide’ which is essentially a series of notes for the moderator on the structure of the session, covering the ice-breaker, housekeeping issues (e.g. the toilet and what to do in the event of a fire) and the aims of the focus group as well as the questions to be put to the participants (Appendix 4). Within a 90-minute focus group session, you should aim to have around 12–15 questions.
- Stimulus boards, showing things such as mock-ups of displays, or other examples demonstrating a concept visually, are a good way of encouraging discussion amongst the group.
- Moderators should avoid using leading questions and should allow discussion to flow freely as long as it stays within the focus of discussion and all participants are contributing. If this does not happen, then the moderator will need to bring the discussion back into focus and sensitively encourage participation from anyone who is not being forthcoming.
- It is a good idea to provide participants with refreshments and do expect to offer them a small token as reimbursement for their time and travel expenses (e.g. a voucher or small amount of money).

Top Tips Resource implications
- Following the session, the moderator/evaluator and their assistant will need to write up any notes or transcripts promptly to ensure that information is not forgotten. This can take a considerable amount of time and require skills in understanding the nuances of human behaviour and language. How to analyse qualitative information such as this is covered in Section 7.

Top tips Other
- If you are collecting personal information during the focus group (see Section 9 if you aren’t sure what constitutes ‘personal information’), the notes/transcripts and any databases containing this information must be stored and processed according to the Data Protection Act (1998).
- Focus groups should start off with the moderator explaining the purpose of the discussion and the rights of the participants under any legislation (e.g. the Data

Protection Act 1998) or according to best practice guidance (e.g. the right to withdraw from the research at a later date). Participants should be provided with an information sheet and two copies of a consent form (see Appendix 6). Both copies of the latter should be signed and one returned to the evaluator.

Stimulus board used at focus groups during consultation for the redevelopment of Lynn Museum

Variations on focus groups

Focus groups can be used in a more creative way. For example, the consultants Ipsos-MORI recently employed a technique called ‘bi-focus groups’ when carrying out consultation for a new gallery at the Victoria & Albert (V&A) Museum in London. This involved two focus groups, a group of visitors and the ‘V&A concept team’, in the task of discussing the theme, name and design of the new gallery. Each group met and discussed these themes separately but was watched remotely by the other group. This resulted in the professionals and visitors having an insight into one another’s decision-making process, including the reasons behind the decisions, so that a compromise could be reached by all parties that meant the needs of both groups were met.

6.6 Observation

About observation

Observing how visitors interact with exhibits, other visitors and members of staff can provide an interesting insight into the way in which they respond to and use the museum and what learning takes place in these settings. This type of observation can also be applied to other contexts, such as outreach events. The simplest observational tool is a count of the number of people entering a space, by visitor type (e.g. family group, peer group) and time of day (e.g. morning, lunchtime, afternoon) or weekday. This can reveal patterns about which spaces are more popular with which visitors and at which times. Often this information can be gleaned from ticket sales, particularly if there is different pricing for different groups and you are able to record your ticket sales by time and day of purchase. So, often observation is more useful when it is a little more sophisticated.

Top tips on how to organise and carry out an observation

Top tips **Planning the observation**

- Try to keep your observation of the visitor to a single space, as it will be easier and quicker to complete one observation.
- Design a record sheet for your observers to fill in with a plan of the gallery of interest on the reverse. Ideally the record sheet should be quick and easy to complete, with a mix of pre-defined categories that the observer can select that best describes the visitor and their behaviour and a few open response boxes.
- Consider which variables about your visitors you are most interested in. Is it how different ages, genders, groups (couples, families, friends) or single visitors act in the museum? How will you record these demographics?

- Think about what it is that interests you about how the visitors behave. For example:
  - Is it their interpersonal skills with one another in response to displays?
  - Is it how they make contact with staff?
  - Is it how they are drawn to certain exhibits (and which ones)?
  - Is it the length of their visit in the gallery and/or the length of time they spend at different points in the gallery?
  - Is it the nature of their interaction with the display or others in the space (e.g. touching, talking, looking at, reading label, etc.)

  For all of the above you will need to consider how this information can best be captured. You can ask the observer to note down patterns of behaviour on the gallery plan.
- Decide who will observe visitors and make sure they are sufficiently briefed so that they understand what information you wish to get from this exercise.
- Recording observed behaviour can be demanding and require intense concentration – aim to keep the observation fairly simple and pilot it first.

Top tips Carrying out the observation
- Sample regularly so that you are not biasing the results (e.g. every hour on the hour for 15 minutes or every tenth person who enters the gallery).
- Try to keep notes to a minimum and use agreed abbreviations (e.g. LA = looked at; T = touched; AQ = asked question).

Top tips Resource implications
Be prepared to spend a considerable amount of time analysing your results from the observation exercises. You can look for patterns, as Diamond (1999: p. 56) suggests according to:
- Heavy, medium or light use of different areas
- Complete or incomplete visits (interacting with all or most exhibits versus interacting with only a few exhibits)
- Fast or slow visits
- Intensive, focused or minimal use

Top tips Other considerations
- Make sure there is a clear sign visible that informs visitors that they are being observed and why they are being observed.
- Be prepared for visitors to ask you about the observation study. Don't be afraid to be upfront about the exercise. Do omit anyone from the record who explicitly asks not to be observed.

Case study: Visitor observation in Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery

Over the past year, two studies of visitor observation have been trialled in temporary exhibitions at Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery. Both have been art exhibitions, the first 'From Victorian to Modern' covering the works of three popular female British artists of the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Vanessa Bell, Gwen John and Laura Knight) and the second, a dual exhibition on Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother's Watercolours and the works of Prunella Clough. Visitor observation was adopted for these exhibitions as the Exhibitions Officer had specific questions about visitor behaviour that would not be answered by using the traditional exhibitions questionnaire alone; nor were there sufficient resources to carry out visitor interviews that were likely to be more time-consuming than visitor observation. Observers were recruited from amongst members of the interpreter team who are on hand in the museum to explain and interpret the collections for visitors. These members of staff represent the 'eyes and ears' of frontline services as they interact with visitors on a daily basis. As there would be an interpreter in the exhibitions at all times, it was felt that this offered an ideal opportunity to involve them in learning about visitor behaviour. The interpreters were briefed about the aims of the studies and best practice in carrying our visitor observation and were also given the opportunity to comment on the proposed questions being used on the observation sheets to record visitor behaviour.

Getting a closer look: visitors enjoying 'From Victorian to Modern'

Study One: From Victorian to Modern

A detailed observation sheet was developed that asked observers to record a wide range of information about visitor behaviour (see Appendix 5). This related to key questions concerning, for example, the types of visitors (e.g. whether visiting alone or with others, and by approximate age and gender), their duration of their visit, dwell time at paintings, method of moving round and interacting with the exhibition and any other behaviours observed. The back of the observation sheet featured a plan of the gallery space on which observers could mark visitor movement and areas of the exhibition receiving the most interest.

Case study: Visitor observation in Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery

Study Two: Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother's Watercolours and Prunella Clough

Key questions related to visitor motivation (Did visitors appear to intend to visit one of the exhibitions in particular?), audience cross-over (Did visitors engage with both shows?) and visitor reaction (How was the double-bill experience received?). These questions needed to take into account the behaviour of different visitors by gender, age and group composition (solo, pair and group visits). A simpler record sheet than that used in Study One was used for the visitor observation (see Appendix 5) due to time constraints, both in carrying out the study and analysing the results.

Gallery goers: Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery

Key learning points from the two observations have been:

- While Study One provided a depth of information about visitor behaviour, a considerable amount of time had to be set aside for analysing the data collected.
- Study Two was quicker to complete and its results simpler to analyse but some information (e.g. pertaining to visitor cross-over or exhibits of interest) was not so easily recorded methodically. It did demonstrate that many visitors enjoyed having two exhibitions and especially appreciated the contrast and that visitors often discussed the paintings and therefore, probably learned from one another through this dialogue – a gallery visit is often a social occasion.
- The analysis of qualitative data like that gathered through observation studies is open to subjective judgement and may need to be tempered by triangulation with other methods of data collection. This will be possible as the exhibition also made use of a visitor comments book and an interpreter 'day book' (a form of staff comments book).
- Using Interpreters for visitor observation has many advantages (e.g. they are used to observing visitor reactions in a range of exhibitions, they are skilled at engaging with visitors and can offer an insight into visitor behaviour that outsiders may not have) but there are difficulties in trying to overcome variations in the type and depth of data collected which arise when a large number of non-specialist observers are involved.

6.7 Creative data and collection methods

Some of the ideas given below have been borrowed from Moriarty (2002, p. 36). Others are currently proving to be effective methods in museums in the East of England. They all demonstrate that evaluation can be a fun and creative process. These methods should stimulate discussion, with most requiring some interaction between staff and visitors, because the outcomes from any such dialogue would need to be noted down by someone facilitating the discussion. Only one method (the graffiti wall) is a stand-alone method (i.e. it does not require a member of staff on hand to facilitate it).

Timeline

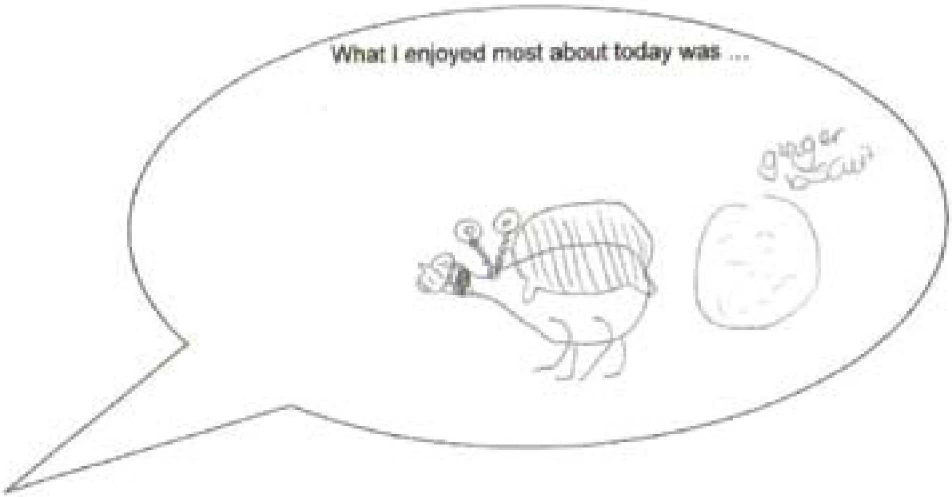
The timeline for a project or activity is set out on a roll of paper and participants are asked to recall and reflect on specific questions about different stages of the project. Their responses are recorded directly onto the timeline or via post-it notes attached to the timeline. The responses are then discussed amongst the group. This method could work equally well where the group of participants are museum users discussing their experience of a museum service or members of museum staff who are reviewing the service.

Imagery

Participants are asked to choose an object or display that best represents their experience of your project or activity. By asking them to explain their choice, you should be able to get an insight into what they have got out of the experience and you can follow up by asking structured questions about what they most and least enjoyed. This type of exercise can also be adapted to ask respondents to represent their experience through a drawing or by using their bodies and props to create images. This is likely to work well with children and in situations where your activity or project is based around art or craft work.

Graffiti wall

This is a twist on a comments book but does appeal to both adults and children alike. Versions of a graffiti wall are used in a number of Norfolk Museums & Archaeology Service venues. Visitors are asked a simple question (e.g. What did you enjoy about your visit today?) and can leave comments on cards that hook on to pegs. The advantages of this method are that comments are displayed so that other visitors can read them, they can easily be taken away for analysis, and if there happens to be any inappropriate comments, these too can be removed. At Peterborough Museum, another version of a graffiti wall is their ‘ideas tree’. This is a large board painted as a tree featuring a changeable statement such as ‘Did you have a good time? Tell us what you enjoyed’. Visitors are encouraged to provide feedback on green notes (‘leaves’) which can then be posted on to the tree. With both versions of the graffiti wall outlined above, a considerable proportion of the feedback is given by children, some of whom provide this pictorially, sometimes with an accompanying explanation.



Response by Megan (aged 9 years) to a Feast of Fenland event about 'Bugs'

A grafitti wall at Time & Tide Museum, Great Yarmouth

The 'ideas tree' at Peterborough Museum

Mobile responses

Getting people mobile can help some groups (e.g. children) to engage more with the questions you are asking, as being active can stimulate thought processes. So, you could label different corners of a room (e.g. agree strongly, agree slightly, disagree strongly, disagree slightly) and ask people to position themselves according to these labels when you make evaluative statements.

Traffic lights

Agreement to evaluative statements is given according to flash cards:
red = disagreement; green = agreement; amber = neutral. Participants are asked to hold up the relevant card in response to each statement put to them. This has been used in Norfolk Museums & Archaeology Service summer schools with children to good effect.

Bull's eye chart

How successful a project or activity has been can also be evaluated using a circular chart where the bull's eye in the middle would represent 100% success and the outer edges of the chart would represent 0% success, with suitable categories in between (e.g. 25%, 50% and 75%). Participants are asked to place a marker on the chart according to each statement and are then asked to explain their response.

Case study: Feast of Fenland staff comments book

The Feast of Fenland Project is sponsored by Renaissance East of England, Renaissance East Midlands and the European Union (via the LeAP LEADER+ scheme). The project has been delivered by a new partnership of community-based museums and heritage sites in the Fens known as the Greater Fens Museums Partnership, led by King's Lynn Museums for Norfolk Museums & Archaeology Service. Running from autumn 2006 to summer 2008, the project involves a combined package of a touring exhibition with a linked events programme, including outreach sessions.

As the touring exhibition would be visiting several venues, it was important to gather the opinions of staff at each venue about the exhibition to identify any teething problems that could be resolved early on and to share the learning between venues. An important element of the overall project evaluation therefore was the staff comments book. This record travelled with the exhibition to each venue where staff and volunteers were encouraged to use it to record their thoughts on the exhibition and their impression of the visitors' experience. This has then been reviewed regularly by the project officer with the aim of identifying any problems with the exhibition and by venues which subsequently received the exhibition so that they might develop on any 'lessons learned by previous venues.

The opportunity to use the staff comments book has been adopted more by some venues than others. Where uptake has been good, there have been some interesting outcomes. One example occurred early in the project. A venue hosting the exhibition put on a Feast of Fenland event but noted in the book that some visitors had come expecting there to be a 'marketplace' of Fenland food and were disappointed that this was not the case. A subsequent venue took this comment on board and did provide some Fenland food at an event they ran in conjunction with the exhibition. This was welcomed by their visitors, some of whom had similar expectations to those noted above. This is a simple example of how 'lessons learned' were shared between venues, using the staff comments book as an effective vehicle for communicating this learning.

This is a comments book that will travel with the exhibition to each host venue. The book is intended for staff and volunteers at each venue to record their feedback and their impressions of the visitors' experience to the exhibition. It is not a visitors' comments book and so should not go on public display.

Please use this book to record:

YOUR THOUGHTS ON THE EXHIBITION
Some points you might like to reflect on to do this are ...

- What works well and why?
- What aspects of the exhibition have you particularly enjoyed and why?
- What does not work so well and why?
- What improvements could be made?
- Any other comments you might have

YOUR IMPRESSION OF THE VISITOR'S EXPERIENCE
Some points you might like to reflect on to do this are ...

- Do you think that the visitors to the exhibition have responded positively or negatively to it? How so?
- Please describe what visitor comments you are aware of (those either overheard or gleaned through conversation with visitors)
- Explain what observations you have made about how the visitors respond to specific displays, e.g.
  - Which exhibits capture their attention? Which do they pass by?
  - Do they seem to connect particularly well / poorly with certain aspects of the exhibition?
- Any other comments you might have

Please remember to:

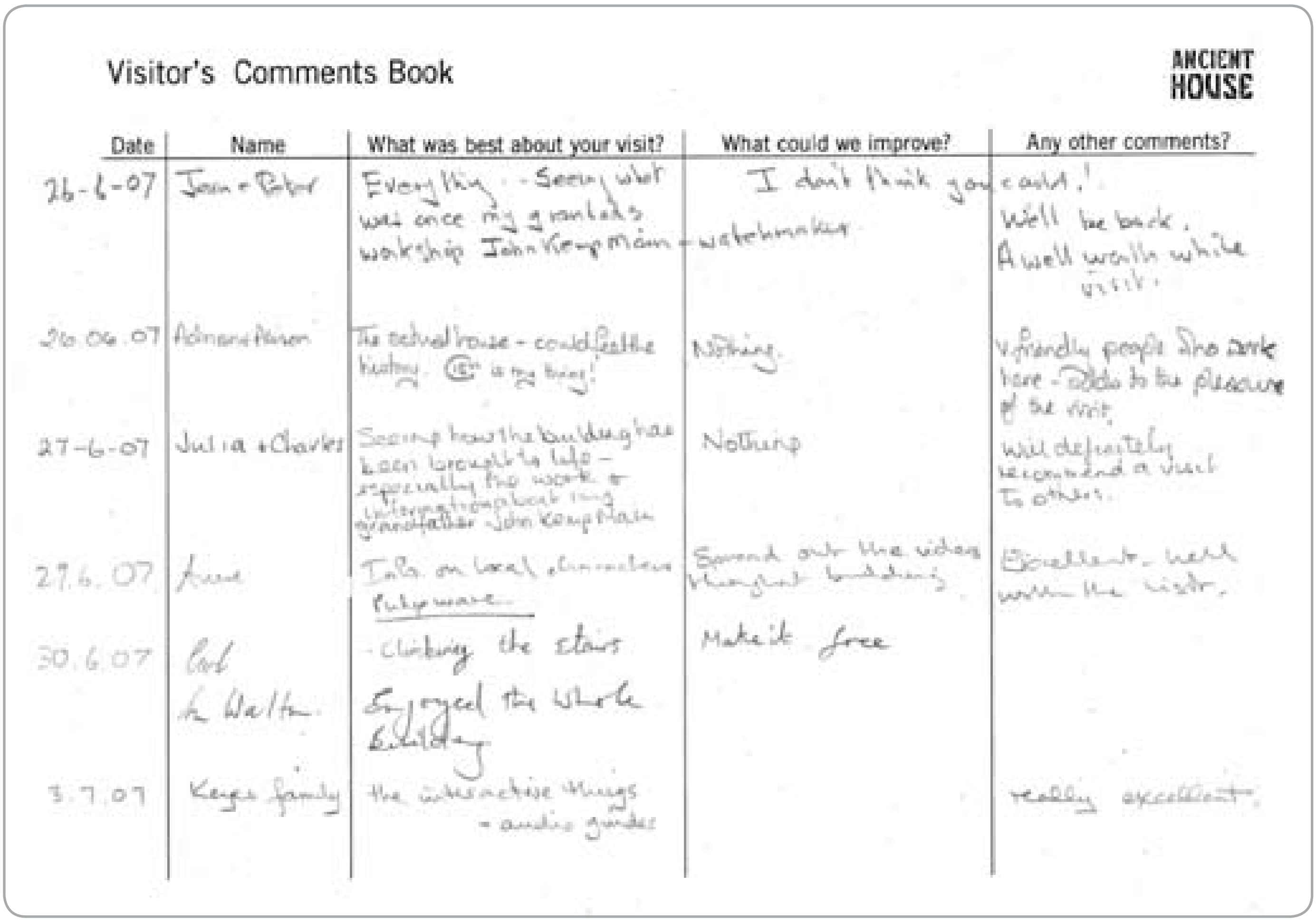
- Date and initial any comments you enter in the book
- Review these comments in your venue regularly to identify if there are any problems with the exhibition that you can resolve.
- Report any problems you cannot resolve to Marie Kennedy (Feast of Fenland Project Officer) on 01553 773450.
- Raise any interesting feedback at the Partnership meetings.

6.8 Other ideas for simple or less commonly used data collection methods

Verbal comments and comments books

Museum visitors will often make comments about the museum, both positive and negative, to members of staff. Too often these comments are not recorded centrally. This means that the comments as a whole cannot be reviewed collectively to look for patterns or shared effectively among all staff. It is a good idea, therefore, to have a book where all staff can record these comments, as well as their own, with at least one member of staff taking responsibility for monitoring the information and using it to evaluate the service. Additionally, many museums do have a visitor comments book. Sometimes the feedback given is constructive and therefore useful. Often however, this isn't the case, with visitors leaving remarks such as 'very interesting visit' or 'nice museum'. It can be a good idea to present your visitor comments book so that you ask for structured feedback, e.g. 'What did you enjoy most about the museum?', 'What could we improve on?' and 'Please provide any other comments'. Remember that for every question asking for positive feedback, you should really also have a question asking for critical feedback. This means that you aren't biasing your visitors' response.

The visitor comments book at Ancient House Museum, Thetford, which asks visitors for structured feedback


Visitor's Comments Book

ANCIENT HOUSE

Date	Name	What was best about your visit?	What could we improve?	Any other comments?
26-6-07	Jean + Peter	Everything - Seeing what was once my grandad's workshop John Kemp Mann watchmaker	I don't think you could!	Well be back. A well worth while visit.
26.06.07	Adrian + Alison	The actual house - could feel the history. [illegible] is a fine thing!	Nothing.	V. friendly people who work here - adds to the pleasure of the visit.
27-6-07	Julia + Charles	Seeing how the building has been brought to life - especially the work & information about my grandfather John Kemp Mann	Nothing	Will definitely recommend a visit to others.
27.6.07	Anne	Talk on local [illegible] Pulp ware	Sound out the videos throughout building	Excellent, well worth the visit.
30.6.07	Carl	Climbing the stairs	Make it free	
	L Walton	Enjoyed the whole building		
3.7.07	Keyes family	the interactive things - audio guides		really excellent.

Postcodes

Some museums collect the full postcode for every visitor. This gives an insight into the geographical spread of British visitors (and so what the local, regional and national profile is for your visitors). Postcodes can also provide socio-economic information about your visitor profile as well as visitors' likely behaviour when it comes to products and services. Consumer segmentation information can be obtained by using software such as MOSAIC (provided by Experian) or socio-economic information (e.g. relating to the level of deprivation) through the Office for National Statistics website (see Section 10), although the latter will only provide you with data for one postcode at a time.

Take-up of offers

Museums generally like to encourage new visitors to their venues. Sometimes, they run taster sessions, outreach sessions or community projects, taking the museum's collections and services to people who rarely or never visit. In these situations, it is useful to see what impact this has subsequently on your visitor profile; do these people then start to visit the museum regularly or for the first time? This can easily be measured by providing vouchers to the participants that allow them free or reduced entry to the museum or reduced prices in the museum shop or café. By collecting these vouchers in and counting them against the total number handed out, you can get some idea of the take-up of this offer and so the impact on building new audiences.

Enquiries by members of the public

Most museums will receive enquiries from members of the public about their museum collections. For local authority museums, these currently have to be logged for central government targets that relate to museum usage, although the museums themselves tend not to make much use of this data. Yet it can be a rich source of information about which collections receive the most interest, what areas of advice museum professionals are most often called upon to give and how much staff time is spent in dealing with these enquiries. This can help museums put in place adequate provision for these services.

E-mails/letters of thanks or complaint

These can be recorded and used in a similar way to verbal comments made by visitors.

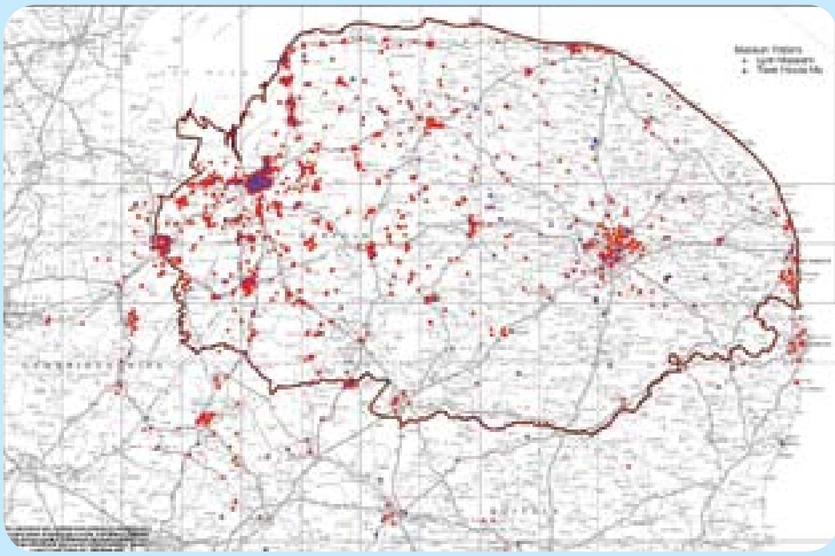
Presentation/art work of user group

If your project or activity has involved users in producing presentations or art work, then these can be used in discussions with the participants to explore what they have got out of the project or activity. It can be a clever way of gathering feedback that is embedded in the activity itself, rather than being seen as an 'add-on' data gathering exercise at the end of the project in the form of a questionnaire or formal interview.

Case study: Using postcode data at Lynn Museum

The Lynn Museum in King's Lynn, Norfolk, is currently in the process of a major £1.2 million redevelopment primarily funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and Norfolk County Council.

A large consultation process has accompanied this redevelopment (including both front-end and formative evaluation techniques) to inform project planning, including specific areas such as the collections and methods of interpretation that people would welcome in the new museum. One method used during the preliminary phase of opening of the redeveloped Lynn Museum building was the collection of visitors' postcodes. Between April 2006 and January 2007 around 5,000 postcodes were collected that could be analysed by Norfolk County Council Demography and Information Department. The postcode locations have been plotted on various scales to provide a visual record of the geographic spread of visitors to the museum. These maps will be used to inform future marketing activities.



Plot of visitor postcodes to the Lynn Museum (red) and nearby Town House Museum (blue)

The postcode data was re-sorted according to Super Output Areas (SOAs)* and were rated against the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)**. The postcodes gathered from the Lynn Museum revealed that from the 530 Lower Level Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in Norfolk, 20% of Lynn Museum visitors came from the top 53 (10%) most deprived LSOAs in Norfolk, with 35% of visitors from the top 106 (20%) most deprived areas.

As Lynn Museum is essentially a community museum for King's Lynn and the West Norfolk area, these figures were also compared at a district level. This revealed that from the 87 LSOAs in the district, 22% of the Lynn Museum visitors came from the top 8 (9.2%) most deprived LSOAs, with 57% of visitors from the top 17 (19.5%) most deprived areas.

Estimates based on the social class of visitors per LSOA (see opposite) suggested that the percentage of lower social class visitors (C2DE) using the museum was almost 58%.

Other analysis was also performed on the postcodes using MOSAIC and this is featured in the final report on the museum's redevelopment.

Source: Jackson, H. (forthcoming) Lynn Museum Consultation Project Final Report. Norfolk Museums & Archaeology Service.

*SOA = a geographical area of consistent size with a fixed boundary. LSOAs are a division of SOAs, and contain a minimum population of 1,000 (mean population of 1,500).

**IMD = method of measuring the relative deprivation across England. So ranking the 32,482 SOAs in England according to their level of multiple deprivation would mean that 1 = most deprived and 32,382 = least deprived.

Grade	Social class
A	Upper middle class
B	Middle class
C1	Lower middle class
C2	Skilled working class
D	Working class
E	Those at lowest level of subsistence

National Readership Survey social class definitions

Photographs/films

Photographs and films can provide clues about how people respond to your museum by examining their body language and facial expressions, and whether or not they talk enthusiastically about the museum or remain silent. They can also be used as a method of gathering and recording feedback, particularly from users who may not respond well to providing written feedback. Photographs and films can also be used in any report on the evaluation of your project or activity.

Cooking in the Farm Kitchen at Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse, one day of a series of events aimed at the over 55s.

Feedback at the last of these days was captured on DVD and made into a short film

Media coverage

Media coverage can provide you with an understanding of how your museum and its services are being presented by a third party, whether favourably or not.

Meetings (debrief)

Staff meetings can be used as debrief opportunities to discuss what worked well and what worked less well with a project, a type of 'staff focus group', convened by an independent member of staff. The meeting could feature a presentation on users' feedback, followed by a discussion amongst staff of their response to this feedback and how they think any useful results could be carried forward in the future. A more holistic approach such as this would also assist the person reporting on the findings to collate and analyse the feedback from all stakeholders.

Mentoring and peer review

These methods can be used to help individual members of staff and staff teams to track and evaluate their personal development at work, highlighting what lessons have been learned and how practices have improved as a result.

Diaries

Diaries encourage reflective practice and are useful in recording your thoughts and any ongoing learning that takes place as a project develops. This type of information is often forgotten by the time you reach the end of the project. It gives an insight into the formative development of the project and, when reviewed regularly, can help you to identify whether you are on track or not.

Mystery shopping

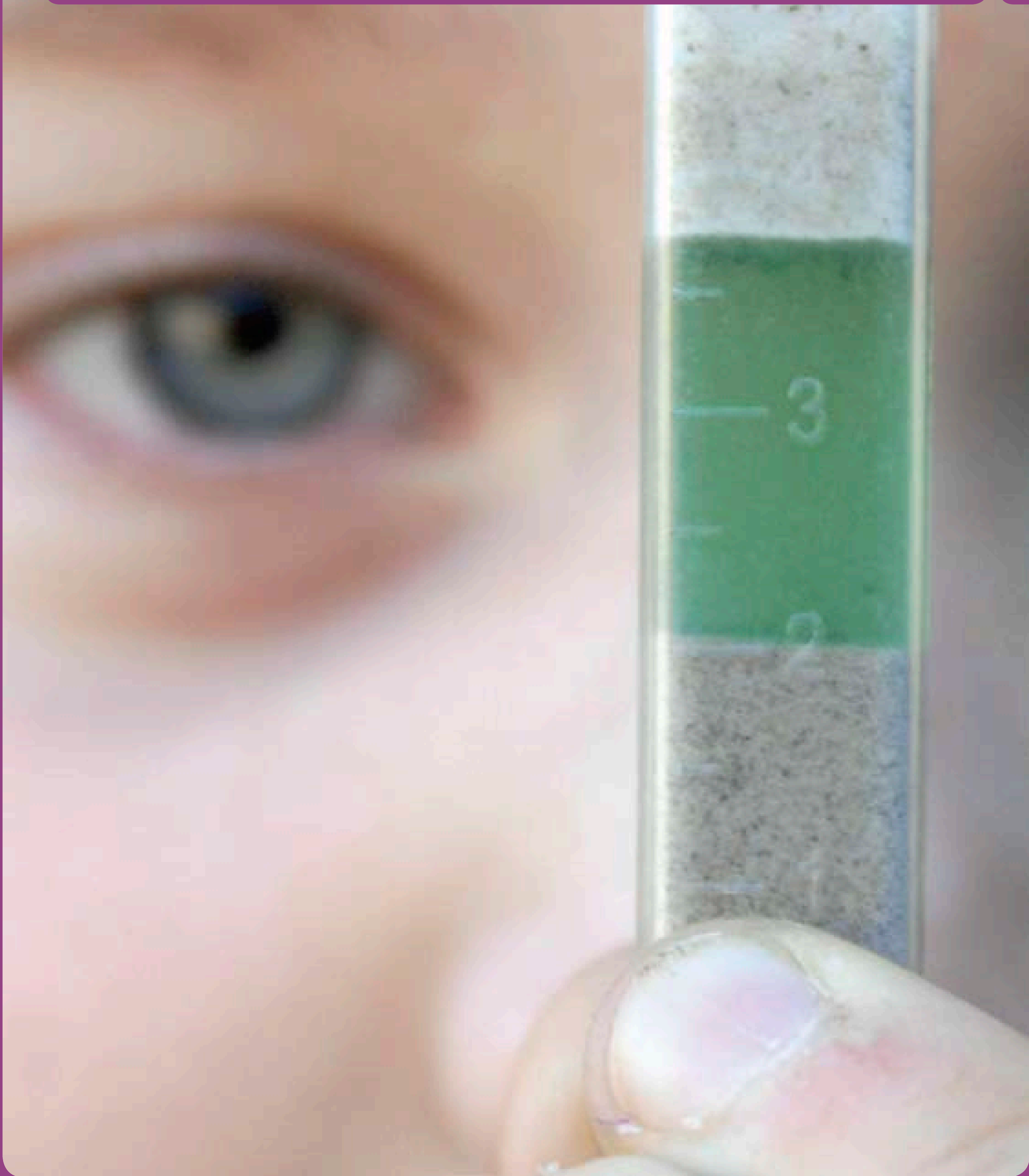
Mystery shopping is something which the retail industry tends to use to help with the quality control of its services. In a museum context, it would involve having an independent person visit your museum to test out the level of service you provide, according to your staff and facilities, without warning museums staff that this was taking place. So, the mystery shopper would score the museum against a set of pre-defined criteria, such as ‘helpfulness of staff’, ‘ease of accessing information’, ‘cleanliness of toilets’ etc. Companies are set up to provide the services of mystery shoppers.

Staff (facilitated) visits

Once you have worked in a museum for a little while, it is fair to say that you can never be a true ‘museum visitor’ again. It is especially difficult to view your museum with a fresh pair of eyes from the perspective of a visitor. One museum recognised this and decided to set up a project where groups of visitors were accompanied by a member of staff. The member of staff was not allowed to provide any information about how to find galleries, toilets, café etc. or to explain any displays or offer any insight into the museum at all. They were meant to be part of the group, experiencing the museum as a visitor would do. Once the staff member had been fully accepted into the group so that conversation flowed easily, it became clear what obstacles were faced by the museum visitors and how interpretation, displays and general museum layout could be improved to overcome these barriers.

Method	Strengths	Weaknesses	Appropriate to these groups	When most suitable
Comments books	• Simple and cheap • Quick and easy to complete • User is free to express opinion	• Only some people complete so you will not get a full range of views • Limited information obtained	• People who are motivated to give opinions (e.g. those with strong views) • Literate people	• Gives a general feel for how exhibition is perceived • Identifies specific issues, e.g. problem lighting
Interviews	• Can obtain in-depth views • Get a better sample than when participants self-select	• Can be time-consuming • Interviewer needs skills and training • Can yield a lot of data	• May be difficult with children and the non-articulate • Can be threatening to some people	• Getting in-depth views from a good cross-section of the population, e.g. consultation
Focus groups	• Obtains in-depth views • Group interaction may stimulate discussion and opens new areas	• Difficulty recruiting an appropriate sample • Skilled facilitator needed • Analysis is time-consuming • Not everyone is comfortable in a group	• May be difficult with children and the non-articulate • Group situations are difficult for some people	• Getting in-depth views of specific groups, e.g. consultation
Questionnaires	• Simple and cheap • Obtains answers to specific questions • Normally, data fairly easily analysed	• Only some people complete so you will not get a full range of views • Questionnaires normally give people a limited range of responses	• People who are motivated to give opinions • Literate people	• Obtaining responses to particular questions rather than consultation
Postcodes	• Normally get a complete set of data • Simple and cheap to collect	• Need appropriate skills and software to analyse • Gives limited information based on where people live	• Most people (apart from homeless)	• For giving a picture of who is using a service and who is not • Service planning and marketing
Visitor observation	• Recording what actually happens, rather than relying on people's accounts • Can get a good sample • Can get either in-depth information or answers to specific questions	• Observation requires skill and good planning • Some observation yields a lot of data • Can be intrusive, therefore need to ensure people can opt out	• Most people	• Service planning, formative evaluation (how people use a display)
Diaries (might include online blog or staff day book)	• Suitable for collecting in depth and/or longitudinal data • Good for understanding processes	• May be intrusive and have confidentiality issues • Recruiting and retaining participants can be difficult	• Literate, reflective, motivated people	• Understanding behavioural changes • Sharing experiences (blog, day book) • Understanding processes
Visual methods (imagery, presentations, art work, photographs and film)	• Suitable where literacy is an issue • Likely to engage certain groups of people, e.g. children	• Hard to analyse • In most cases does not give specific answers to questions	• Those who are averse to other forms of data collection, e.g. writing, giving views	• Obtaining information from groups that do not engage in other methods, e.g. children, young people • To cater for different learning styles
Graffiti walls	• Simple and cheap • Displayed comments likely to engage other users in both graffiti wall and other displays	• Only some people will complete so you will not get a full range of views • A limited range of information is collected	• People who are motivated to participate	• To get a general feel for how exhibition is perceived • Useful for identify specific issues
Mobile responses	• Fun • Easy to analyse by a quick count	• Simple responses to simple questions • Some people may follow others • Not suitable for some groups	• The more mobile, especially energetic children	• For getting responses to particular questions • To get the views of energetic children • To cater for different learning styles

7 Analysing the results



7.1 Introduction
How you analyse the results will depend very much on the data-gathering techniques you have used, the quantity of the information you need to analyse and what you intend to do with the results. Never underestimate the amount of time that you and others will need to analyse and reflect upon the results.

For example, a handful of short questionnaires that have used open questions could simply be collated and read to identify any common themes or opposing viewpoints. Having several hundred returns of a longer questionnaire that has used open and closed questions will need a great deal more time to analyse. Similarly, interviews and focus groups will also need a considerable amount of time to write up from notes or transcribe from recordings.

In many cases, you will first need to collate all the information you have gathered in a written format. Once you have done this, the best starting point is to read through all the data to get a 'feel' for it. Note down any patterns that are emerging, such as a common response to a question, identify problematical questions (e.g. where their interpretation was different to their intended meaning) or unexpected results (e.g. high numbers of visitors over a specific period of time, particular comments etc).

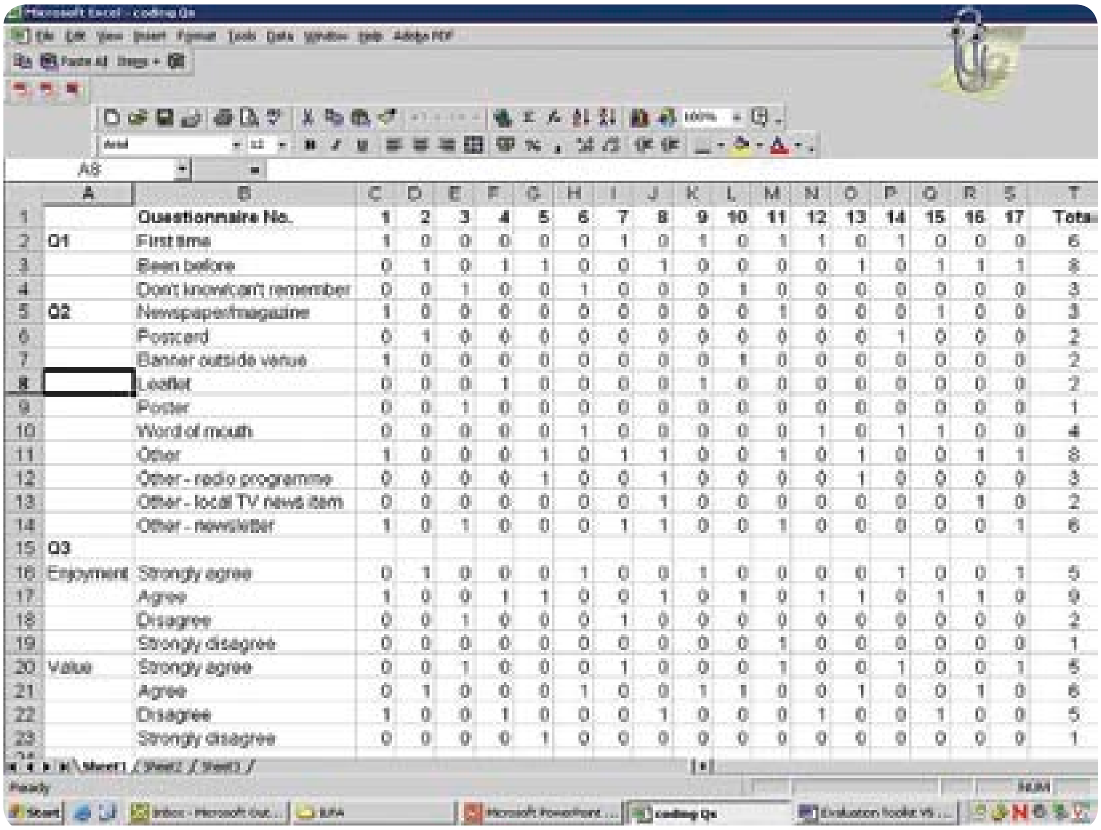
7.2 Dealing with mainly quantitative data and closed-question responses
Here are two methods of analysing a visitor questionnaire using a spreadsheet. The questionnaire itself can be seen on p.57. For both methods, when entering data, each completed questionnaire should have a unique reference number (e.g. 1,2,3) which you should write on the paper copy. This number should also be entered into the spreadsheet. This allows you to check any data entered against the paper copy, should you need to, at a later stage.

Option 1: All information to become binary numeric data
Option 1 is illustrated opposite. Each row represents an answer to the same question and each column represents all the answers within one questionnaire. So, row 2 relates to all people who have said that this is their first visit; column C refers to all the answers given on the first questionnaire entered.

So, for questions with pre-defined categories (e.g. for this questionnaire, Qs 1, 2, 3 and 5), list all the possible responses to each question when setting up the spreadsheet. When entering the data for each of these responses, you enter a '1' for a positive or affirmative response and '0' for a negative or blank response. For example, the respondent in questionnaire 1 has said that this is his 'first visit', the respondent in questionnaire 2 has 'been before'.

For those questions where a respondent has written in an answer to a more open question (e.g. dialogue boxes for questions 3 and 4), you will need to read through all the responses to this question so that you can begin to group certain responses. For example, for nationality you might come up with categories such as 'British' (including English, Welsh, Scottish and Northern Irish), American, Chinese etc.). Having decided on categories and given them a name, enter this on the paper questionnaires and then into the spreadsheet.

In the final column, you can then ask your software (e.g. Excel) to sum up the total number of positive responses to each category. Always keep a master copy of this spreadsheet but make copies if you wish to run different procedures, for example, creating spreadsheets containing only first-time visitors to find out the most common way that they heard about the exhibition.



	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T
1		**Questionnaire No.**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**11**	**12**	**13**	**14**	**15**	**16**	**17**	**Tota**
2	Q1	First time	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	6
3		Been before	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	8
4		Don't know/can't remember	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
5	Q2	Newspaper/magazine	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	3
6		Postcard	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2
7		Banner outside venue	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
8		Leaflet	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
9		Poster	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
10		Word of mouth	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	4
11		Other	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	8
12		Other - radio programme	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	3
13		Other - local TV news item	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2
14		Other - newsletter	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	6
15	Q3																			
16	Enjoyment	Strongly agree	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	5
17		Agree	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	9
18		Disagree	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
19		Strongly disagree	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
20	Value	Strongly agree	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	5
21		Agree	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	6
22		Disagree	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	5
23		Strongly disagree	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

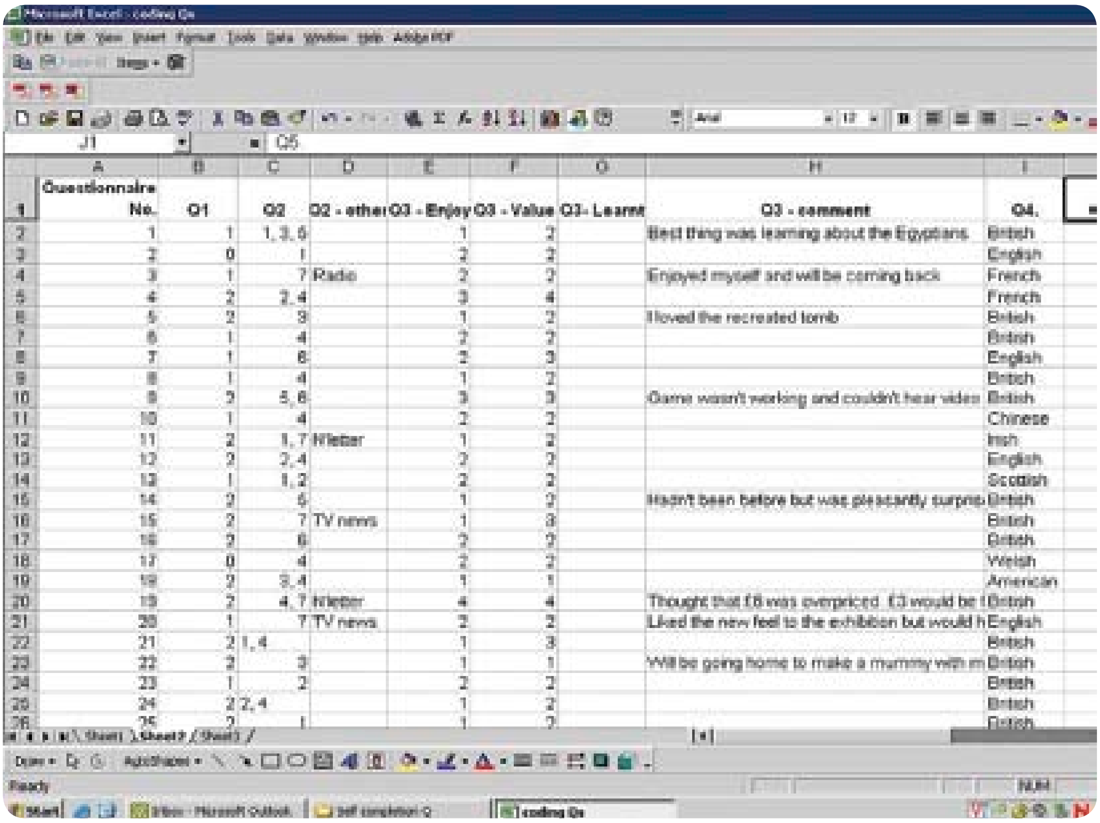
Option 1: All information to become binary ('0' or '1') numeric data

Option 2: Some information to become numeric data

Option 2 is illustrated overleaf. This option can be quicker in the short term. In this case, it is easier to read the data if each row represents all the answers within one questionnaire and each column an answer to the same question. So, you would enter all the question numbers in the first row and all the reference numbers for the questionnaire in the first column.

For questions with pre-defined categories (e.g. in this case, Qs 1, 2, 3 and 5), you code each response for every question numerically. So for Q1, 'first time' = 1, 'been before' = 2 and 'don't know/can't remember' = 3. Any non-responses are coded '0'. This number is then entered for each question depending on the response in that questionnaire. For example, the respondent in questionnaire 1 indicated that this was his first visit (coded '1'), the respondent in questionnaire 2 had not answered the question (coded '0'). When you come to sort the data, be aware where you have recorded more than one response to a question (e.g. 1,3,5) Excel sorts these so that they sit at the bottom, and you will have to manually total the responses up.

For those questions where a respondent has written in an answer to a more open question (e.g. in this case, Qs 3 and 4), you can enter the information as text and then at a later time, group the responses through any patterns that emerge, counting up the numbers in each group that you define.



Questionnaire No.	Q1	Q2	Q2 - other	Q3 - Enjoy	Q3 - Value	Q3- Learnt	Q3 - comment	Q4.
1	1	1, 3, 6		1	2		Best thing was learning about the Egyptians	British
2	0	1		2	2			English
3	1	7	Radio	2	2		Enjoyed myself and will be coming back	French
4	2	2, 4		3	4			French
5	2	3		1	2		I loved the recreated tomb	British
6	1	4		2	2			British
7	1	6		2	3			English
8	1	4		1	2			British
9	2	5, 6		3	3		Game wasn't working and couldn't hear video	British
10	1	4		2	2			Chinese
11	2	1, 7	Nletter	1	2			Irish
12	2	2, 4		2	2			English
13	1	1, 2		2	2			Scottish
14	2	6		1	2		Hadn't been before but was pleasantly surpris	British
15	2	7	TV news	1	3			British
16	2	6		2	2			British
17	0	4		2	2			Welsh
19	2	3, 4		1	1			American
19	2	4, 7	Nletter	4	4		Thought that £6 was overpriced. £3 would be f	British
20	1	7	TV news	2	2		Liked the new feel to the exhibition but would h	English
21	2	1, 4		1	3			British
22	2	3		1	1		Will be going home to make a mummy with m	British
23	1	2		2	2			British
24	2	2, 4		1	2			British
25	2	1		1	2			British

Option 2: Some information to become numeric data

Other tips

- Try interrogating your data, e.g.
  - What was the most common way that people heard about the exhibition?
  - How many people (and/or what percentage) agreed or disagreed with the statements in Question 3?
  - Did a particular age group agree strongly with one of the statements but not with another?
- Present any trends in a table or visual format (e.g. pie charts, bar graphs), as shown below.

Age	14 or less	15-18	19-25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56-65	66 +	Total
Total	14 (3%)	33 (6%)	28 (5%)	43 (8%)	179 (33%)	89 (17%)	95 (18%)	54 (10%)	535 (100%)

Case study: A questionnaire handed out to every visitor at a new museum exhibition. For every one completed, the respondent was given a voucher for a free tea/coffee. Nearly 80% of questionnaires were returned.

Attention all Visitors - Have your Say!

We welcome your comments on this exhibition. Your feedback will be used to make improvements to future exhibitions.

1. *Is this your first visit to this venue or have you been before?* (please tick one option)

❑	It's my first time	❑	I've been before	❑	I don't know / can't remember

2. *How did you find out about the exhibition? (please tick all options that apply)*

❑	Newspaper / magazine	❑	Leaflet
❑	Postcard	❑	Poster
❑	Banner outside venue	❑	Word of mouth
❑	Other - please specify: ___________________________		

3. *To what extent to you agree or disagree with the following statements?* (please tick one option for each statement)

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I enjoyed my visit to this exhibition	❑	❑	❑	❑
I valued having staff on hand to explain the exhibition	❑	❑	❑	❑
I learnt something new at the exhibition	❑	❑	❑	❑

Please explain your answers to the above statements here:

The following questions are so we can understand who our visitors are.

4. *My nationality is* (please write your answer in here): ____________________

5. *My age is* (please tick one option):

❑	14 or under	❑	36 – 45
❑	15 - 18	❑	46 - 55
❑	19 - 25	❑	56 - 65
❑	26 - 35	❑	66 +

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE THIS QUESTIONNAIRE. PLEASE POST IT IN THE BOX PROVIDED

(Office Use Only) Date:

7.3 Dealing with mainly qualitative data and open-question responses

Qualitative data covers information such as conversations, written narrative or individual quotes.

Sometimes this information can be presented as a case study, covering a descriptive summary of events, participants, projects or even the journey of an individual in the life of a project.

However, perhaps one of the most useful ways of sorting through qualitative data is to define categories into which your quotes or narrative will fit. There are two ways of doing this or you can use a combination of the two methods. You can have pre-set categories that you try to group each piece of qualitative data under. For example, you might use the generic learning outcomes, 'GLOs' (Section 4, Appendix 2) as a basis to sort and group a series of quotes from visitors who have indicated some kind of learning outcome in their statements. Sometimes, you will find that each statement can fit under more than one GLO. The ILFA website (see Section 10) offers a downloadable exercise in doing this activity, under 'Resources and Further Info', then 'Download library' and then 'Have a go at coding download'.

Alternatively, or additionally, you may wish to go through all the quotes and create ways of grouping them based on patterns that emerge from the quotes themselves. The easiest way of doing this is to read through all the qualitative data, noting down any common responses or themes that emerge. On second reading, you can start to group these under the headings you first came up with, adding any additional categories that come up. Having each quote or piece of narrative on an individual piece of paper helps when you come to do this as you can physically move them around on the work surface you are using, until you are satisfied that all have been grouped to your satisfaction.

Once you have pulled together some patterns in your data, reflect on your thoughts about the patterns. Are you surprised by any of the results? Do the results support or conflict with data from other sources? How might you explain some of these patterns?

Remember to:
- Involve others in the interpretation process or ask for their views on your interpretation of the results.
- Comply with the Data Protection Act (1998) (Section 9).
- Make sure you allow for a balanced view of feedback – this means considering opposing views in an impartial manner.
- Think about how you might act upon the results. What will your recommendations be as a result of this data? What have been the learning points for you, your team or organisation?

8 Reporting and acting on the results

8.1 Reporting the results

First and foremost you need to think about the audience for your report. This will inform the style of reporting and the level of detail you present. There are many different media for reporting your findings. For example:

- Oral presentation
- Poster
- Written report or article
- DVD
- Internet
- Newsletter.

It could even be just a series of simple notes to yourself or your team. It does not have to be complicated but it does need to get your point across.

Often, museums are concerned about the difficulty of reporting evaluation findings to different audiences, for example, to internal audiences compared with funders. Any report should aim to demonstrate that you have taken into account all stakeholders' feedback which might include feedback from staff or partner organisations as well as from those participating in the activity you are delivering. It should include your reflection on the outcomes of your project, programme or activity and should express the learning points of your work, ideally so that you and/or others may take this forward in the future. Even if your evaluation demonstrates that not every aspect of your project was a success, if you can explain how you will move forward from these areas, then this is likely to be of interest to both external and internal audiences.

Different audiences will respond better to different kinds of reporting styles. For example, funders and policy makers may prefer a written report, oral presentation and/or DVD. Your museum users and participants may be more easily informed through a poster in the museum or newsletter. Presenting your findings on the internet means that you will reach all of the above, including non-users. DVDs often appeal to all different types of audiences as they can be more accessible to a wider range of people than information provided in a written format.

Oral presentations and written reports should cover the same sort of territory, although a written report is likely to be more detailed.

Case study: Museums Luton

Museums Luton regularly carry out evaluation of projects and exhibitions. Most recently they have also undertaken a large-scale front-end evaluation for the redevelopment of Stockwood Discovery Centre, due to open in 2008.

Three recent evaluation reports have been produced on projects and exhibitions:

- An Alternative Way, Museums Working with Learning Mentors
- Mental Health, a Family-Friendly Topic for Museums?
- Across the Board at Wardown Park Museum, Luton (internal report)

Interactive experience at the Louis Wain Art and Mental Health Exhibition, Museums Luton

Central to all these reports is the way in which the views of various stakeholders are gathered and considered in evaluating the projects or exhibitions, including, for example, visitors, a range of museum staff and partners. This gives a more rounded and balanced assessment of their work.

In addition, the reports offer the opportunity for the transfer of knowledge by setting out clearly and concisely the learning points to arise from these activities. In the case of the report for the ‘Across the Board’ exhibition, this includes learning points for Museums Luton, learning points general to any museum and suggestions for the British Museum in future touring exhibitions, as it had loaned the exhibition. This sort of method makes it easier for others to adopt and act on one organisation’s learning. Similarly, in the case of the other two reports, they feature a helpful section at the back detailing the top tips for planning and delivering similar projects, which aids in communicating a best practice approach to the project process.

For oral presentations and written reports (including those on the internet):

- Provide an executive summary (written reports only) that draws together all the key points within the report, presented in the same order as the overall report.
- Your introduction should give the rationale for and context to the project, what the project was about, what you hoped to achieve and should set out the aims, objectives, outputs and outcomes for the project and evaluation.
- Your methodology section will present information on which data collection methods you used, how you sampled your participants and how many participants you were able to survey. If you were reliant on a third party for information that was not forthcoming, it is acceptable to point this out (diplomatically).
- Your discussion will cover whether or not you achieved your objectives, explain why and present the evidence for the statements you make from the analysis of data you have collected. It is advised that you:

  - Maintain participants' anonymity (Section 9).
  - Present both sides of the argument if there are conflicting views.
  - Offer your own commentary on the results by putting them in context – can you explain why visitors commented well or poorly on the gallery tours on a particular day? Indicate how sure you are of your explanation ('These results demonstrate that, suggest that, may indicate that …').
  - Provide the number and percentage that is represented by numeric data, e.g. 'At least 50 people surveyed (80%) commented that …'.
  - Compare your results with other studies or previous studies and discuss any differences or similarities, e.g. 'The outcome from the survey was that the vast majority of people (141 of the 150 respondents or 94%) wanted to see the museum open during the winter, whereas this was not the case five years ago. The reasons for this could be that …'.
  - Support your text with information presented visually, such as graphs and pie charts. These should indicate the total number in the sample.
  - Flesh out your figures and statistics with case studies, quotes, photographs or art work if it is available. For example, 'Twenty-five of the 30 participants in the outreach session (83%) indicated that they had learned something new that day, commenting for example that ... [insert quotes].'
  - Discuss your qualitative data according to the themes that were identified in the analysis stage. You can also organise this information according to the five GLOs (Section 4, Appendix 2).
  - Present examples of any unexpected outcomes and whether or not they were 'good' or 'bad' outcomes.

- Your conclusion should give a summary of the project or activity, covering its strengths and weaknesses and the lessons learned along the way.
- Your recommendations section should indicate how you are going to act on the findings. It should build upon your lessons learned, giving examples of what you would repeat again and what you would do differently and how you might replicate your unexpected 'good' outcomes.
- Ideally, an appendices section will provide copies of your survey methods (e.g. questionnaires, interview guides) and any associated information (e.g. topic guides).

For posters and DVDs:
These need to be visually appealing. Posters can be used to report back to your museum users and participants what the project or activity was about, who you spoke to, what the results of the evaluation were and what is now going to change as a result.

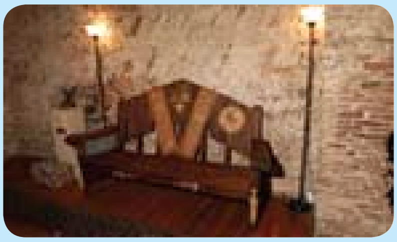
8.2 Acting on the results

There are ways of presenting your evaluation report so that the benefits can be more easily identified and adopted by others outside your organisation. Similarly, there are some simple ways in which you can ensure that the results of your evaluation are effectively carried forward by your organisation in the future. The table below gives you some ideas of how to achieve this.

Ways of making your evaluation count	For internal audiences	For external audiences
Lessons learned An important element of any evaluation is the conclusions and recommendations that arise as a result. This information can be useful to others carrying out similar work and can inform your own future practice. When planning a new project, highlighting what you would like to develop from past experience demonstrates that you are serious about carrying forward this earlier learning. This is demonstrated by the Case Study in Section 2.	✓	✓
Evaluation or Research Coordinator If you work for an organisation that has an Evaluation Officer or Research Co-ordinator, informing them of evaluation projects can be one of the best ways of making your evaluation count. They will be able to advise you how best to carry out the evaluation and should have a good overview of other evaluation projects. This means that they can put you in touch with others who have done or are planning a similar evaluation to your own.	✓	✓
Dos and don'ts documents A really effective way of making use of your evaluation is to use it to change policies in your museum. For example, this might be putting together a 'Dos and Don'ts' document for exhibitions – this document would be updated following each exhibition.	✓	
Team meetings Team meetings can be an effective way of sharing the important outcomes of your work. The 'Exhibitions Team' at one hub museum in the East of England ensures that evaluation features quarterly as an agenda item at its meetings. This means that a wide range of staff can (1) inform each evaluation plan; (2) be consulted for their feedback on current exhibitions; and (3) find out what the outcomes of completed evaluation projects have been.	✓	

Case study: Bench Mark 2004, Colchester and Ipswich Museum Service

Bench Mark 2004 was a joint project between Colchester Museums, the Princes Trust and Essex County Youth Service which ran over four weeks as part of a longer 12-week confidence-building programme. Ten young people participated in the project, working with two ceramic artists, a wood artist and a wood technician in order to produce two benches – an indoor sensory bench and an outdoor bench using recycled wood for the park around Colchester Castle Museum. The project involved two weeks of preparatory activity, including visits to Colchester Museum and the Design Museum in London, and two weeks for the construction of the benches.



Indoor sensory bench

Outdoor bench made of recycled wood

An external consultant was used to evaluate the project and was invited on board in the early stages, meaning that she was able to meet everyone involved. The evaluation process included a total of 14 interviews with young people, artists and museum staff. The evaluator also took part in the first visit to the museum, visited the group in both of the weeks they were creating the benches and attended the final awards-presentation ceremony.

The report on the project includes the views of both the young people involved and the other stakeholders, giving a rounded picture of the project including aspects such as the effects of partnership working:

> 'We hope it is the start of a longer-term relationship with the Princes Trust/Essex Youth Service and perhaps artists working with other museums.' Member of museum staff.

As well as focusing on the very positive nature of the project, the report looks at what did not work quite so well; examining key lessons learned and suggesting improvements for the future. A trip to the Design Museum in London, for example, was not as well-received by the young people as the trip to Colchester Castle. The reasons for this are explored, using quotes from youth workers:

> 'If I was doing this again with hindsight I would explain more about what the Design Museum would be like.'

The evaluation of the Bench Mark project demonstrates the importance of
- Involving external consultants (where used) at an early stage and planning for evaluation at the start of a project.
- Exploring what did not work so well so that lessons can be learned for the future.
- Including the views of stakeholders as well as the views of participants in order to gain a more rounded view of the outcomes of a project.

9 Other issues: ethical and lawful evaluation

9.1 The Data Protection Act (1998)

The Data Protection Act (1998) governs how organisations may acquire, store, use, share and dispose of personal information about people.

What counts as 'personal information'?

According to the DPA (1998), this covers 'data which relates to a living individual who can be identified from those data, or from those data and other information which is in the possession of, or likely to come into the possession of, the data controller'. So postcode data, for example, is *not* personal information. A person's name and postcode together would count as personal information. Sensitive personal information includes data on a person's racial or ethnic origin, religious or other beliefs of a similar nature, physical or mental health or condition, sexual life and offences (including alleged offences).

There are two areas to the Act. In the first instance, anyone or any organisation that processes personal information must comply with eight principles set out below.

Personal information must be:

- Fairly and lawfully processed
- Processed for limited purposes (i.e. specified and lawful purposes)
- Adequate, relevant and not excessive
- Accurate and up to date
- Not kept for longer than is necessary
- Processed in line with the rights of data subjects under this Act
- Kept secure (this means that every available measure is taken to prevent unauthorised or unlawful processing of personal data and accidental loss or destruction of, or damage to, personal data)
- Not transferred to other countries without adequate protection.

The second part of the Act gives individuals certain rights, such as the right to access information about them on computer or in paper records.

If you are going to process personal information ('personal data'), then you must ensure that your organisation (the 'data controller') is registered to do so with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), although some organisations are exempt. This can be done by completing a simple form, available online (see below). Failure to notify the ICO is a criminal offence. Museums that are governed by local authorities or other such organisations should already be registered with the ICO, but it is worth checking that this is the case. Further information about registering can be found at **www.ico.gov.uk**

9.2 Gaining consent from participants

In some circumstances it is strongly advisable to gain written consent from participants. This means that you are adhering to ethical research practices and are protecting the interests of both the evaluator/researcher and participants. This is particularly the case when working with vulnerable groups, such as children, in which case you would seek consent from the parent(s) or guardian(s). Situations where you should be obtaining consent from subjects, preferably written consent, include the taking of photographs and interviews or focus groups. Parental consent is usually needed if interviewing children (i.e. aged 15 and under). The act of filling out a self-completion questionnaire is in itself seen as a sign of consent. If you are aiming to carry out a longer-term evaluation, where you may interview or photograph a subject more than once, then it is acceptable to use one consent form for the entirety of their involvement in the project.

A participant consent form would normally:
- Give the name of the project or evaluation
- State who is the main contact
- Demonstrate that you will use information anonymously (if indeed this is the case)
- Store and process the participant's personal details according to the Data Protection Act (1998)
- Provide a statement regarding their consent to participate.

A place to provide their name, signature and date is required, as are details of how they may withdraw from the project or evaluation if they decide to at a later date. An sample consent form is provided in Appendix 6.

Gaining the consent of individuals to use and publish photographs in which they appear is good practice, particularly where the subjects are children (here parental consent is needed for those aged 15 and under at the very least).

9.3 Keeping participants informed of the evaluation brief

Guidelines issued by the UK Evaluation Society state that all participants should 'receive a proper explanation of the purpose and methods of the evaluation [and] have the right to be fully informed about the purpose of the evaluation and procedures for collection and use of data.'

This can easily be overcome in questionnaires by explaining why you are asking for respondents' feedback and what will happen to the results. In other situations, where participants may be expected to give more spontaneous feedback (e.g. interviews, focus groups, through visual recording), greater clarity is needed about the nature of their involvement. This can be easily achieved through the use of a participant information sheet which gives the name of the project, who is the main contact, explains what the evaluation is trying to achieve and what their participation will entail. You can also stress what they will get out of the project, as this usually helps in recruiting and sustaining participation. An example of a participant information sheet is given in Appendix 6.

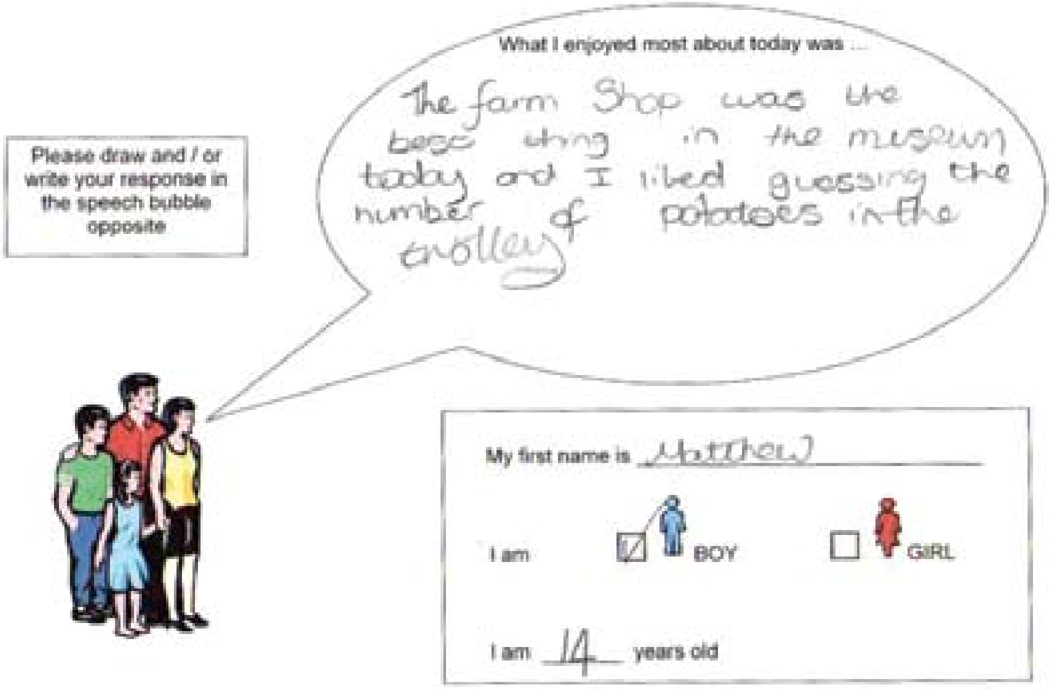
9.4 Maintaining a subject's anonymity

In many cases it may be necessary to keep the identity of evaluation participants anonymous when you report their feedback. This is a requirement where personal information that could be linked to an individual is concerned. Sometimes, individuals are happy for their words to be attributed to them, but in many cases, it is best practice to de-personalise comments. So, for example, you can attribute comments or quotes to that person in a generic manner, e.g. 'a member of the museum learning team pointed out that …' or 'a front-of-house team member suggested that …'. This is also applicable when you are reporting on quantitative responses – you should ensure that an individual cannot be identified from any data you present.

9.5 Being accessible

Museums are striving to become more accessible, yet often they are very reliant on gathering user feedback via written formats (e.g. comments book or questionnaire). This is not particularly accessible to many people. It is best to offer people a range of feedback methods so that everyone has some way in which they feel able to comment. In addition to comments books or questionnaires, you could try some of the following:

- Feedback via your website. Make sure that your internet pages comply with accessibility best practice, e.g. avoid using Flash or moving text, make sure all images are labelled, create a summary of your website on a text-only HTML page etc.
- A dedicated phone-line for visitor feedback that is checked regularly by museum staff and acted upon.
- Use touch screens to gather visitor feedback via an electronic survey, if the resources are available (in addition to having the survey administered by self-completion or facilitated questionnaire).
- Encourage front-of-house staff to undertake informal conversational interviews with visitors and become the 'eyes and ears' for understanding how visitors use the museum and interact with museum displays. Make sure this information is recorded centrally and reviewed regularly.
- Seek feedback from non-users about what would encourage them to use your museum and services. This will involve undertaking visitor surveys outside the museum. Your website can also gather views from non-users.
- Be aware of the different methods to encourage a response from individuals. For example, a postal survey will be more expensive than one carried out in a museum but the benefit is that you can target certain groups more effectively (e.g. non-users). If your return rate on a postal survey is greater than 50% then you are doing well. Another example would be using an incentive (e.g. a prize draw, reduced entry or, where entry is free, a postcard from the museum shop for every returned questionnaire) can encourage people to participate in a written survey. In these instances, you would have to collect personal information (such as the person's name) to make sure that you didn't have duplicate responses from the same person (e.g. completing the same questionnaire on each visit), unless you are interested in the changes of response over time on an individual level.


Please draw and / or write your response in the speech bubble opposite

What I enjoyed most about today was ...

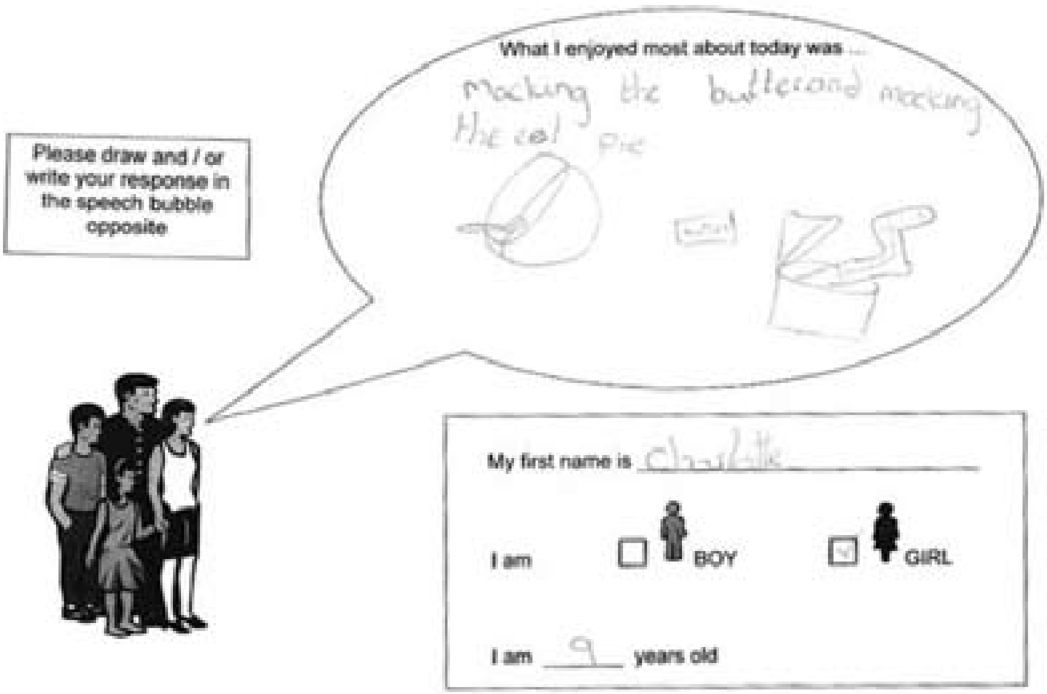
The farm Shop was the best thing in the museum today and I liked guessing the number of potatoes in the trolley

My first name is Matthew

I am ☑ BOY ☐ GIRL

I am 14 years old

Children's questionnaire from the Feast of Fenland project completed by children of different ages, demonstrating how one has chosen to illustrate her response


Please draw and / or write your response in the speech bubble opposite

What I enjoyed most about today was ...

Making the butter and making the eel pie

My first name is Charlotte

I am ☐ BOY ☑ GIRL

I am 9 years old

You can make questionnaires more accessible by:

- Making sure you have spare copies of the questionnaire in large print should anyone need one (e.g. Arial in point size 16 or larger). Advertise appropriately the fact that large print versions are available.
- Making the questionnaire available electronically (e.g. via e-mail or your website).
- Designing questionnaires so that electronic versions are compatible with screen-reader software and voice-recognition software.
- Having questionnaires aimed at children available. These should use language suitable to their reading age. They can feature simple statements that children respond to by colouring in or ticking ‘smiley’ or ‘unhappy’ faces as well as a simple question(s) in speech or thought bubbles in which they can respond by writing or drawing their answer (see previous page). Some children may still need adult supervision to complete these questionnaires.

10 Where to go for more help or information

First of all, check out some of the sources that were consulted to create this toolkit (Section 10), particularly the following excellent resources:

- Diamond, J. (1999). *Practical Evaluation Guide. Tools for Museums and Other Informal Educational Settings.* London, AltaMira Press.
- Annabel Jackson Associates (2004). *Evaluation toolkit for the voluntary and community arts in Northern Ireland.* Available from **www.artscouncil-ni.org**
- RCUK (2005). *Practical Guidelines, Evaluation.* Research Councils UK. Available from **www.rcuk.ac.uk**
- National Trust, The. *Friendly Evaluation Toolkit.* Available from **http://www.museumse.org.uk/ABC_working_with_schools/museums_schools_and_learning/**
- NCC (2007). *Public Involvement Toolkit.* Norfolk County Council Intranet. Available from: **http://intratest.norfolk.gov.uk/cex/communications/publicinvolvement_toolkit.htm** [consulted 29.01.2007]
- Stewart, D. W. & Shamdasani, P. N. (1997). Focus Group Research: Exploration and Discovery. In L. Bickman & D.J. Rog (eds.) *Handbook of Applied Social Research Methods.* London, Sage Publications: 505-526.
- Woolf, F. (2004). *Partnerships for learning, a guide to evaluating arts education projects.* London, Arts Council England. Available from **www.artscouncil.org.uk**

If your museum is in the East of England, then you may be eligible for further training or support. Some Renaissance hubs in other regions also have Evaluation or Research Officers in post. Contact the Evaluation Officer, Renaissance: East of England Hub for more information on **01603 493657 or amanda.burke@norfolk.gov.uk**

Other relevant contacts include:

For the East of England

Museums, Libraries and Archives Council East of England
Caroline Hack, Research and Communications Officer
Tel. 01284 731747
caroline.hack@mlaeastofengland.org.uk
www.mlaeastofengland.org.uk

The East of England Data Observatory provides reports on the socio-economic and environmental development of the East of England, including demographic profiles of and within the region based on 2001 census data and more recent population estimates. **www.eastofenglandobservatory.org.uk**

Local authority data observatory websites also exist:
Cambridgeshire Observatory @
http://map1.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/Phase3/phase3.asp
Hertfordshire Observatory @
www.hertsdirect.org/atozoflinks/statistics/
Luton Observatory @
http://www.luton.gov.uk/internet/Social_issues/Luton

Observatory, Census and Statistics data
Suffolk Observatory @ **http://www.suffolkobservatory.info**
Norfolk Data Observatory @ **http://www.norfolkdata.net**
Norfolk Census Explorer @ **http://www.norfolkcensusexplorer.net**

Nationally

Museums, Libraries and Archives Council
Javier Stanziola
Head of Research and Evidence
Tel. 020 7273 1417
Javier.Stanziola@mla.gov.uk
www.mla.gov.uk

Informal Science supports the field of 'informal learning' by providing resources to build knowledge, share outcomes and improve practice. This includes a useful resources section on evaluation which is applicable to museums.
www.informalscience.com

For **Inspiring Learning for All** or '**ILFA**' (see Section 4, Appendix 2) go to **www.inspiringlearningforall.gov.uk** Check out the 'Resources and Further Info' section for examples of how to use the framework in practice (e.g. exit survey, questionnaires and an ILFA question bank for evaluation, among many other resources). Information about the generic social outcomes can be found at **http://www.mla.gov.uk/website/policy/Communities/gso_intro/**

The **UK Evaluation Society** has its own website at **www.evaluation.org.uk**
A useful and succinct document that can be downloaded from the site is 'Guidelines for Good Practice in Evaluation'.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is a UK government agency that provides social, health, economic, demographic, labour market and business statistics. You can search for statistics on specific geographical areas, such as postcode, county, region or national level. **www.statistics.gov.uk**

11 Index of key terms

Activity in the context of this toolkit refers to a single piece of delivery, such as a talk, event or outreach session.

Distance travelled is an expression which refers to the degree of change a person makes in terms of soft outcomes (see below, under 'Outcomes') within a period of time. To measure distance travelled, you need to have a baseline score against which to compare subsequent measures.

Evaluation occurs at a specific point in time. It may use monitoring information as well as other data to look at the progress made against benchmarks set earlier in the activity. It is a way of measuring the effect and/or performance throughout the activity and may question its overall direction and the benchmarks themselves. See the definitions for front-end, formative and summative evaluation below.

Formative evaluation occurs during the process or development of your project or activity. It involves testing out a prototype or mock-up (e.g. display, text panel) with your users and refining the model until it is sufficiently improved. This means that you do not commit all of your resources to the final product without knowing if it works in practice (e.g. is accessible, readily understood or works mechanically, in the case of interactive exhibits).

Front-end evaluation occurs during the planning stages of a project or activity, when data is analysed to help assess the value of plans before resources are committed to developing the project. It is used particularly during the planning stages of museum and gallery redevelopment. Front-end evaluation includes:

- The process known as 'public consultation', when people are consulted as to their expectations of the project's outcomes (e.g. how can this museum be developed in a way that is inclusive and accessible to everyone?).
- Existing national or local data that may provide information about your baseline audience and target audience.
- Surveys set up specifically for the project to gauge your target audience's current knowledge.

ILFA (or IL4A) stands for 'Inspiring Learning For All' and is a framework to measure and define the informal learning opportunities that museums, archives and libraries provide. It gives organisations the tools to plan delivery, demonstrate their outcomes, particularly soft outcomes, and inform continual improvements to service delivery. Generic learning outcomes (GLOs) and generic social outcomes (GSOs) are part of this framework.

Informal learning refers to learning that is uncertificated, flexible, unstructured and spontaneous, i.e. learning that takes place outside a dedicated learning environment, such as a classroom. Informal learning could also be said to cover the learning that we go through on a day-to-day basis during our lifetime (e.g. 'life skills'). Informal learning is important in a museum context: while users may acquire new knowledge about an object, this does not fully capture all the learning that happens, such as an increase in interpersonal, communication, research and cognitive skills, etc.

Impact* refers to broader and more longitudinal change than that achieved by a single outcome. Impact tends to come about through the cumulative effects of several outcomes.

Indicators are how we measure whether or not our outcomes have been achieved and are the same as 'measures of success' (Section 4). Indicators might include the number of people to attend an exhibition, a positive or negative response in a questionnaire or an increase in the number of visitors year on year.

Inputs are the resources put into the work to deliver outputs, such as time, money, staff and premises.

Milestones are the interim measures that you put in place to monitor the progress of your project, for example, (1) agree data for collection; (2) the collection of all data; (3) the analysis of all data. You may need to report against milestones in monitoring reports.

Monitoring is the ongoing collection and analysis of information to 'spot check' the progress of an activity at any given time.

Outputs* cover the services and facilities that are delivered, e.g. six outreach sessions, nine events, three publications. It can also include the number of visitors or participants.

Outcomes* refer to the changes and effects that come about as a result of your efforts, e.g. people are more likely to visit the museum. Outcomes can be both 'hard' and 'soft'. **Hard outcomes** tend to be clearly definable and quantifiable results that demonstrate how an individual or group of people have moved towards a goal, such as gaining a certificate of participation for a project, 20% of visitors become repeat visitors, 30 volunteers are recruited. **Soft outcomes** are not easily measured directly as they are often intangible. They may include personal achievements that relate to interpersonal, organisational, analytical or personal skills, such as feeling more positive towards museums or finding it easier to order sequences as a result of an interactive exhibit. **Learning outcomes** refer to the things that people have learned as a result of something, such as an experience or participation in a project or event.

Project in this context refers to things like an exhibition, museum or gallery redevelopment or a programme of events, talks or outreach sessions.

* Terms such as impact, outputs and outcomes can be defined in a number of ways. The explanations given define the use of these terms in this toolkit.

Retrospective evaluation happens when you realise that it is too late to even carry out summative evaluation, for example, following the closure of a temporary exhibition. Retrospective evaluation is not recommended, as it will probably mean that you have gaps in your data sources (leading to an unbalanced evaluation). For example, you may find that you have to use visitors' quotes given in a newspaper article but you will have had no control over how these quotes were gathered or presented. Hence you will not know how representative they are of the visitors' feedback.

Summative evaluation occurs at the end of your project or activity, when you may wish to assess the impact of the 'finished product', be it a new gallery, an outreach session or a new brochure. If the results from summative evaluation are then used subsequently in planning a similar exercise in the future, then they become a form of front-end evaluation.

Appendices

Appendix 1: About Renaissance and the East of England Museum Hub

Renaissance is a programme of investment from central government, via the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA), to transform England's regional museums, making them world-class and fit for the 21st century. Between 2002 and 2008, nearly £150 million has been dedicated to help raise standards and make a real difference to learning, social inclusion and economic regeneration.

Central to achieving these goals is the need to:
- Increase and sustain user participation
- Provide benefits to users by developing the organisation and workforce
- Provide benefits to users through improving access and use of collections through better collections development, care and interpretation.

Through the Renaissance programme, nine regional hubs have been created, consisting of up to five museum and museums services in each. The East of England Hub consists of four partners:
- Norfolk Museums & Archaeology Service (lead partner)
- Colchester and Ipswich Museum Service
- The Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge
- Museums Luton.

The Hub, the Museum, Libraries and Archives Council East of England and the Museum Development Officer Network are all key partners in Renaissance East of England.

Renaissance is also responsible for many other initiatives that are making the most of the scholarship, professional skills and public treasures that are housed in England's museums, including:
- The Renaissance Museum Development Fund which offers an important resource for museums across the country.
- The Renaissance Subject Specialist Networks which have brought curators and other experts together to share knowledge in a number of different areas.
- The Renaissance Designation Challenge Fund that supports regional museums with collections of outstanding national or international importance.

Key to ensuring the success of Renaissance is the need to understand what impact the programme is having on museums and their users. Having the ability to evaluate what works well and what requires improvement within the programme ensures that museums and their partners can develop effectively, carrying forward and sharing their learning, therefore making the most of the Renaissance investment.

Appendix 2: ILFA

(Source: http://www.inspiringlearningforall.gov.uk/uploads/Detailed%20framework.doc)

Inspiring Learning For All – Detailed Framework

Inspiring Learning for All is about outcomes and processes. These outcomes underpin the framework.

Learning outcomes for users

- People enjoy themselves and are enriched and inspired by the experience
- People use the services and facilities to develop their knowledge and understanding
- People develop skills as a result of using museums, archive and libraries
- People become more self-confident, questioning, motivated and open to others' perspectives
- People decide to do something different in their lives.

Other user outcomes

- People feel welcomed, respected and supported in their learning
- People have access to the learning opportunities that they want.

Outcomes for the museum, archive or library

- A broader range of people use the museum, archive or library
- New learning opportunities are created as a result of partnerships
- Staff, volunteers and members of governing bodies are effective advocates for learning
- People who work in and for the organisation are continuously learning and developing their practice.

Inspiring Learning for All will help you to demonstrate that you are meeting these outcomes.

Processes – what the organisation does

People – providing more effective learning opportunities	**Places – creating inspiring and accessible learning environments**
You • Engage and consult with a broad range of people to develop learning opportunities • Provide opportunities for people to learn • Broaden the range of learning opportunities to engage with new and diverse users • Stimulate discovery and research • Evaluate learning outcomes of services, programme	You • Create environments that are conducive to learning • Develop your staff to provide support for learners • Promote yourself as a place for learning and inspiration
Partnerships – building creative learning partnerships	**Policies, plans, performance – placing learning at the heart of the museum, archive or library**
You • Identify potential partners and evaluate the benefits of working in partnership to support learning • Work with these partners to plan and develop learning opportunities • Invite people from outside the museum, archive or library to bring new perspectives and broaden the range and appeal of learning opportunities	You • Identify and seek to influence national, regional and local initiatives • Reflect national, regional and local developments in plans and priorities • Demonstrate that the museum, archive or library is a learning organisation through staff development and evaluation processes

Generic learning outcomes (GLOs)

Knowledge and understanding	• Knowing how to do something
	• Learning facts or information which can be:
	  • Subject-specific
	  • Interdisciplinary/thematic
	  • About musems, archives, libraries
	• About myself, my family, my community, the wider world
	• Making sense of something
	• Deepening understanding
	• Learning how musems, archives and libraries operate
	• Giving specific information – naming things, people or places
	• Deepening understanding
	• Making links and relationships between things
	• Using prior knowledge in new ways

Skills	• Knowing how to do something • Intellectual skills – reading, thinking critically and analytically, making judgements… • Key skills – numeracy, literacy, use of ICT, learning how to learn… • Information management skills – locating and using information, evaluating information, using information management systems… • Social skills – meeting people, sharing, team working, remembering names, introducing others, showing an interest in the concerns of others… • Emotional skills – recognising the feelings of others, managing (intense) feelings, channelling energy into productive outcomes… • Communication skills – writing, speaking, listening… • Physical skills – running, dancing, manipulation, making…
Attitudes and values	• Feelings and perceptions • Opinions about ourselves, e.g. self-esteem • Opinions or attitudes towards other people • Attitudes towards an organisation, e.g. museums, archives and libraries • Positive attitudes in relation to an experience • Negative attitudes in relation to an experience • Reasons for actions or personal viewpoints • Empathy, capacity for tolerance (or lack of these)
Enjoyment, inspiration and creativity	• Having fun • Being surprised • Innovative thoughts, actions or things • Creativity • Exploration, experimentation and making • Being inspired
Action, behaviour, progression	• What people do • What people intend to do (intention to act) • What people have done • A change in the way that people manage their lives including work, study, family and community contexts • Actions (observed or reported) • Change in behaviour • Progression – towards further learning, registering as a library user, developing new skills – is the result of a purposive action which leads to change

Appendix 3: Demographic categories

Age categories commonly used for demographic purposes:
It is possible to ask an individual what their age is. Sometime this can cause embarrassment and so people feel more comfortable about asking for and supplying information when it is related to an age category.

Various categories are used for age groups and these are often decided depending on your focus of interest (e.g. 'school children', 'older people', 'young people not in education, employment or training', etc.). Some examples are given below.

<table>
<tr><td rowspan="2">0–16</td><td rowspan="2">0–15</td><td>0–4</td></tr>
<tr><td>5–16</td></tr>
<tr><td>17–18</td><td rowspan="2">16–24</td><td>17–18</td></tr>
<tr><td>19–24</td><td>19–24</td></tr>
<tr><td>25–34</td><td>25–34</td><td>25–34</td></tr>
<tr><td>35–44</td><td>35–44</td><td>35–44</td></tr>
<tr><td>45–54</td><td>45–54</td><td>45–54</td></tr>
<tr><td>55–64</td><td>55–64</td><td>55–64</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">65 and over</td><td rowspan="3">65 and over</td><td>65–74</td></tr>
<tr><td>74–85</td></tr>
<tr><td>85 and over</td></tr>
</table>

National Curriculum Key Stages
Key Stage 1: ages 5–7
Key Stage 2: ages 7–11
Key Stage 3: ages 11–14
Key Stage 4: ages 14–16

Ethnic categories used for demographic purposes (based on those used for the 2001 census):

Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	Mixed – White & Asian
Asian or Asian British – Indian	Mixed – White & Black African
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	Mixed – White & Black Caribbean
Asian or Asian British – Other	Mixed – Other
Black or Black British – African	White – British
Black or Black British – Caribbean	White – Irish
Black or Black British – Other	White – Other
Chinese	Any other - please specify ____________

It is possible that these categories will be subject to change. Recently, new ethnic categories were tested out for the 2011 census. These were very similar to those above, the only differences being the placement of 'Chinese' within the 'Asian or Asian British' group, and the addition of 'Arab' and 'Gypsy/Romany/Irish Traveller' to the 'Any other' category to create an 'Other ethnic group'.

Additionally, the England and Wales test questionnaire for the 2011 census asked for people to indicate their national identity (e.g. English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish, British, Irish, Other). For the time being, it is advised that you use the categories from the 2001 census.

Appendix 4: Focus group topic guide

Moderator/facilitators [give names]

Equipment [provide list for moderator and facilitators]

Introductions and welcome

Housekeeping (e.g. covering fire exits, toilets, length of session, etc.)

Brief outline of project and reason for focus group

[Explain project and what is expected of participants today]

[Hand out participant information sheet and two copies of consent form. Collect in one signed copy of consent form].

Ice-breaker [e.g. what was your last day trip out and what was the most memorable part of the day and why]

Topic 1: What do museums mean to you?
[List 3 or 4 open-ended questions relating to this topic]

Topic 2: What encourages people to visit museums?
[List 3 or 4 open questions relating to this topic]

Topic 3: How do people learn informally?
[List 3 or 4 open questions relating to this topic]

Topic 4: What do you think should be included in the new gallery?
[List 3 or 4 open questions relating to this topic]

End of session [thank participants for their time, make any necessary reimbursements, cover any other information, e.g. how they might find out about the results of the project]

Appendix 5: Observation sheets

FROM VICTORIAN TO MODERN - Observing visitors checklist

Do try to make sure that you aren't repeatedly selecting the same type of visitor to observe (e.g. decide to observe every fifth person or group who enter the exhibition or observe the next person or group to enter the exhibition after you have completed the previous observation).

The floor plan of the exhibition is printed overleaf for reference.

Your initials ☐ **Today's date:** ☐ **The time now is:** ☐

Type of visitor

☐ Individual	☐ Pair	☐ Group (3+ individuals)

Age of visitor(s) Tick all that apply	
☐ 0-15 yrs	☐ 30-50 yrs
☐ 16-30 yrs	☐ 50 + yrs

Gender	Number represented
Male	
Female	

The visitor(s) has / have made this visit following a talk about the exhibition

☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Don't know

Their duration of visit was

☐ Under 5 mins	☐ 5-15 mins	☐ 15-30 mins	☐ 30-45 mins	☐ 45 mins +

If visitors are behaving differently within the group according to the following questions, please feel free to annotate your answers with a fuller explanation.

How is / are the visitor(s) moving around the exhibition space?
☐ Methodically (e.g. one exhibit at a time, missing out few exhibits and/or section by section)
☐ More randomly (e.g. 'flitting about', choosing to look at what captures their attention)

Which exhibits are encouraging the most interest from the visitor(s)?
Please circle relevant exhibits / areas / sections on the plan overleaf.

How are they interacting with these exhibits?

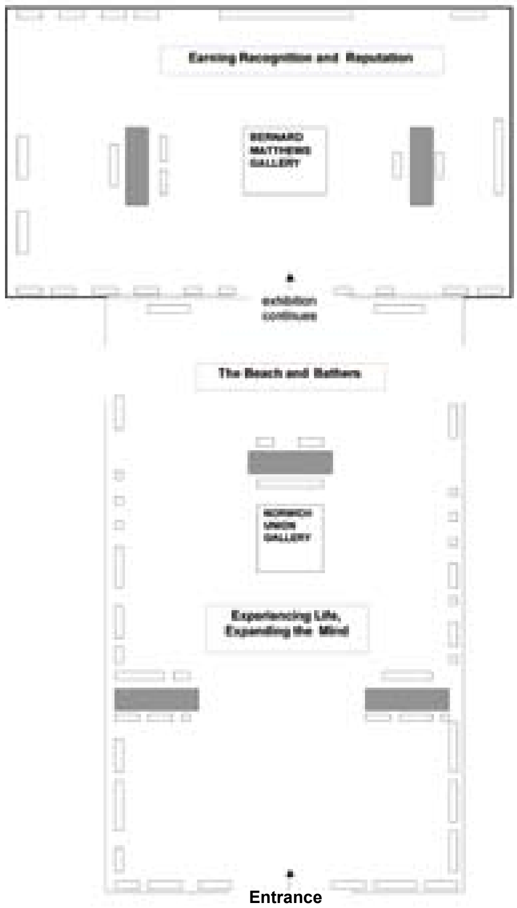
☐ Look at exhibit only	☐ Ask question of interpreter
☐ Read text (e.g. label, catalogue, plan)	☐ Talk to other person in pair / group
☐ Other (specify) ____________________	

On average how long are they spending in front of a piece of work?
☐ Less than one minute
☐ Two to five minutes
☐ More than five minutes

Do you have any other comments to make, e.g.

- Is the visitor(s)' behaviour affected by areas with lower lighting – how?
- If complaints are made about low lighting, do the visitor(s) know about the conservation requirements?
- Does / do the visitor(s) express an interest in finding out more about the subject?
- Has an interpreter's tour encourage the visitor(s) to engage for longer?
- Anything else that you feel is important to note down

Plan of Temporary Exhibition Galleries
Norwich Castle Museum and Art Gallery



Please ensure you don't repeatedly select the same type of visitor to observe (e.g. do decide to observe every fifth person or group who enter the exhibition or observe the next person or group to enter the exhibition after you have completed the previous observation).

Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother & Prunella Clough Exhibitions
Observing visitors response to the double-bill experience

Date & time	Your Initials	Gender Indicate number represented	Approximate age of visitor(s) Tick all that apply	Type of visitor Tick one box only	Audience cross-over and visitor reaction • Did the visitor(s) engage with both shows? • Did s/he or they appear to be interested in one in particular? Note your impression and record which show was of greater interest • How was the double-bill experience of the exhibitions received? Please note your impressions.
		M = F =	☐ 0-15 yrs ☐ 16-30 yrs ☐ 30-50 yrs ☐ 50 + yrs	☐ Individual ☐ Pair ☐ Group (3+ individuals)	
		M = F =	☐ 0-15 yrs ☐ 16-30 yrs ☐ 30-50 yrs ☐ 50 + yrs	☐ Individual ☐ Pair ☐ Group (3+ individuals)	
		M = F =	☐ 0-15 yrs ☐ 16-30 yrs ☐ 30-50 yrs ☐ 50 + yrs	☐ Individual ☐ Pair ☐ Group (3+ individuals)	
		M = F =	☐ 0-15 yrs ☐ 16-30 yrs ☐ 30-50 yrs ☐ 50 + yrs	☐ Individual ☐ Pair ☐ Group (3+ individuals)	

Appendix 6: Participant information sheet and consent form

Participant information sheet

Title of project or study: [provide relevant information here]

Contacts for research: [give names and contact details such as e-mail and telephone number]

Brief outline of project or study: [provide brief details of its aims, methodology and how the results will be useful]

Participants: [e.g. members of staff, members of the public or 'interested stakeholders' usually cover all types of potential participants]

Your participation in the research project and what it means:

- It will entail an interview or involvement in a focus group.
- This will be recorded, on tape and/or through written notes. These records will be destroyed when the study has been completed.
- You will be offered the opportunity to verify notes or transcribed conversations from interviews/focus groups should you wish to do so.
- You may decline to take part or withdraw at any time and for any reason, without prejudice.
- Your cooperation is appreciated. You can be assured that any conversations will be kept strictly confidential and will be reported in an anonymous fashion [you may need to re-word this point if it means that participants' anonymity cannot be guaranteed, although it is good practice to maintain the anonymity of participants].
- Please feel free to ask questions at any stage during the interview/focus group.
- Please be honest and open with the information or views that you provide.
- It is hoped that your participation will enable NMAS to … [provide relevant information here].
- Results will be disseminated via … [provide relevant information here, e.g. the internet, written reports, conference presentations etc.].
- You will be given a copy of this information sheet to keep as well as a copy of your consent form.

If you require any further information please get in touch with the research contact given above.

Participant consent form

Title of project or study: [provide relevant information here]

Contacts for research: [give names and contact details such as e-mail and telephone number]

1. I agree to take part in the above research. I have read the participant information sheet which is attached to this form. I understand what my role will be in this research, and all my questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

2. I understand that I am free to withdraw from the research at any time, for any reason and without prejudice.

3. I have been informed that the confidentiality of the information I provide will be safeguarded.

4. I am free to ask any questions at any time before and during the study.

5. I have been provided with a copy of this form and the participant information sheet.

6. I understand my rights under the Data Protection Act 1998.

Name of participant: ....

Signed: ....

Date: ....

YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS FORM TO KEEP

If you wish to withdraw from the research, please complete the form below and return to [give name and contact details of relevant person here]

Title of project or study: ....

I wish to withdraw from this study

Signed: ....

Date: ....

Photo credits

p5, A young visitor, © The Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge
p7, In the old schoolroom, Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse, © NMAS
p13, The shoe collection, © Colchester and Ipswich
Museum Service
p17, A participant in ‘All Change’, a science event for primary schools,
Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse, © NMAS
p23, Primary school visitors to The Fitzwilliam Museum,
© The Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge
p27, Interactive at Wardown Park Museum, © Museums Luton
p53, ‘Homes and Habitats’, a geography project for secondary schools,
Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse, © NMAS
p59, Lunchtime gallery talk at Norwich Castle Museum and Art Gallery,
© NMAS
p65, Visitors to the ‘Victorian to Modern’ exhibition, Norwich Castle Museum and
Art Gallery, © NMAS
p71, Straw hat collection, © Museums Luton
p75, Part of the butterfly collection, Norwich Castle Museum and Art Gallery,
© NMAS
p79, Young visitors, Wardown Park Museum, © Museums Luton

RENAISSANCE
EAST OF ENGLAND
museums for
changing lives

The East of England Museum Hub
Norfolk Museums & Archaeology Service
Shirehall
Market Avenue
Norwich
NR1 3JQ

Tel: 01603 495881
Web: www.renaissance-east.org.uk