

SESSION 4: 12.25 - 1.05PM

Kate Thompson, Charlotte Rhoades and Alice Fenyoe, *Imperial War Museum*

More than Money: Understanding Visitor Decision-Making

LUNCH (1 HOUR)

VSG AGM: 2.05 - 2.45PM

VSG elections announcement, membership and financial update, hear from the VSG mentorship programme and help us shape the future of VSG events, non-members welcome



the
Visitor
Studies
Group

SPEAKER



VSG CONFERENCE 2024

Charlotte Rhoades, Imperial War Museum
More than Money: Understanding Decision-Making for Lower Socio-economic Audiences



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VSG CONFERENCE 2024

Kate Thompson, Imperial War Museum
More than Money: Understanding Decision-Making for Lower Socio-economic Audiences



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VSG CONFERENCE 2024

Alice Fenyoe, Curiouser
More than Money: Understanding Decision-Making for Lower Socio-economic Audiences

More than Money

Understanding decision-making for lower socio-economic audiences

IWM's Branches

Free (with free exhibitions):

- IWM London
- IWM North (Manchester)

Paid:

- Churchill War Rooms (historic site in London)
- IWM Duxford (airfield near Cambridge)
- HMS Belfast (ship in London)

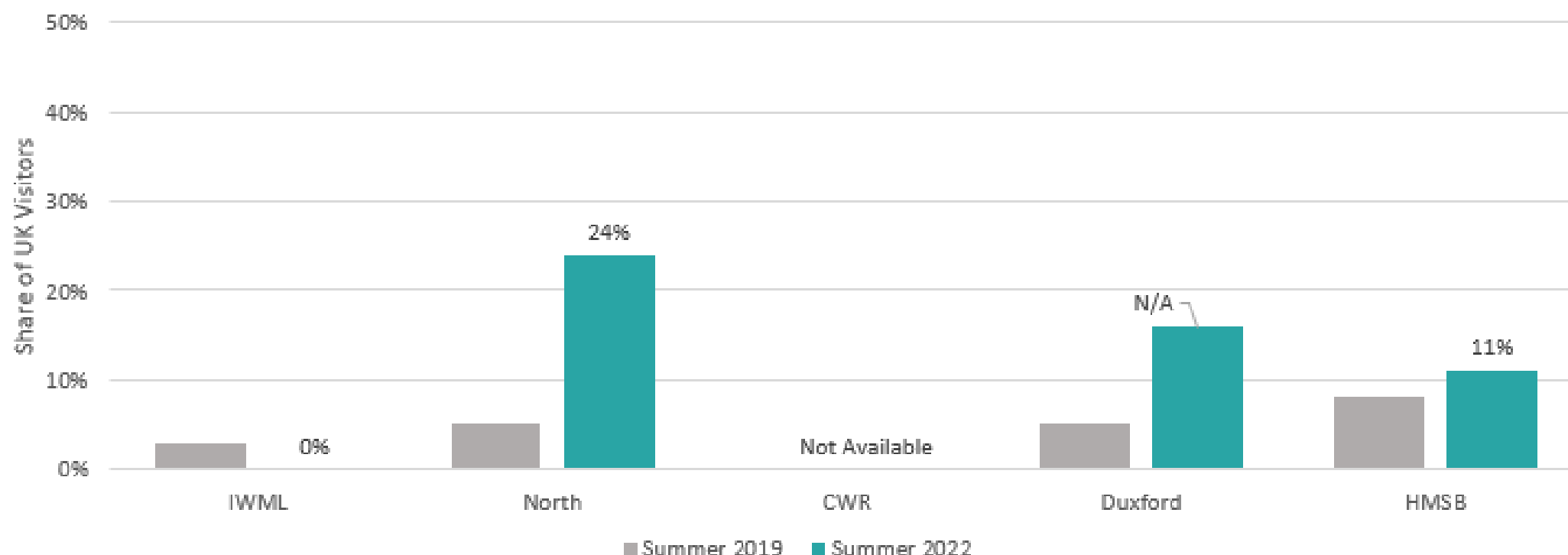


Inspiration for research on under-represented audiences at IWM



Summer 2022: UK Visitors who Identify as Global Majority*

There were statistically **zero global majority visitors at IWM London** in Summer 2022.



Sources: BVA-BDRC and DJS Research. Visitors from the UK only; share of visitors in party.

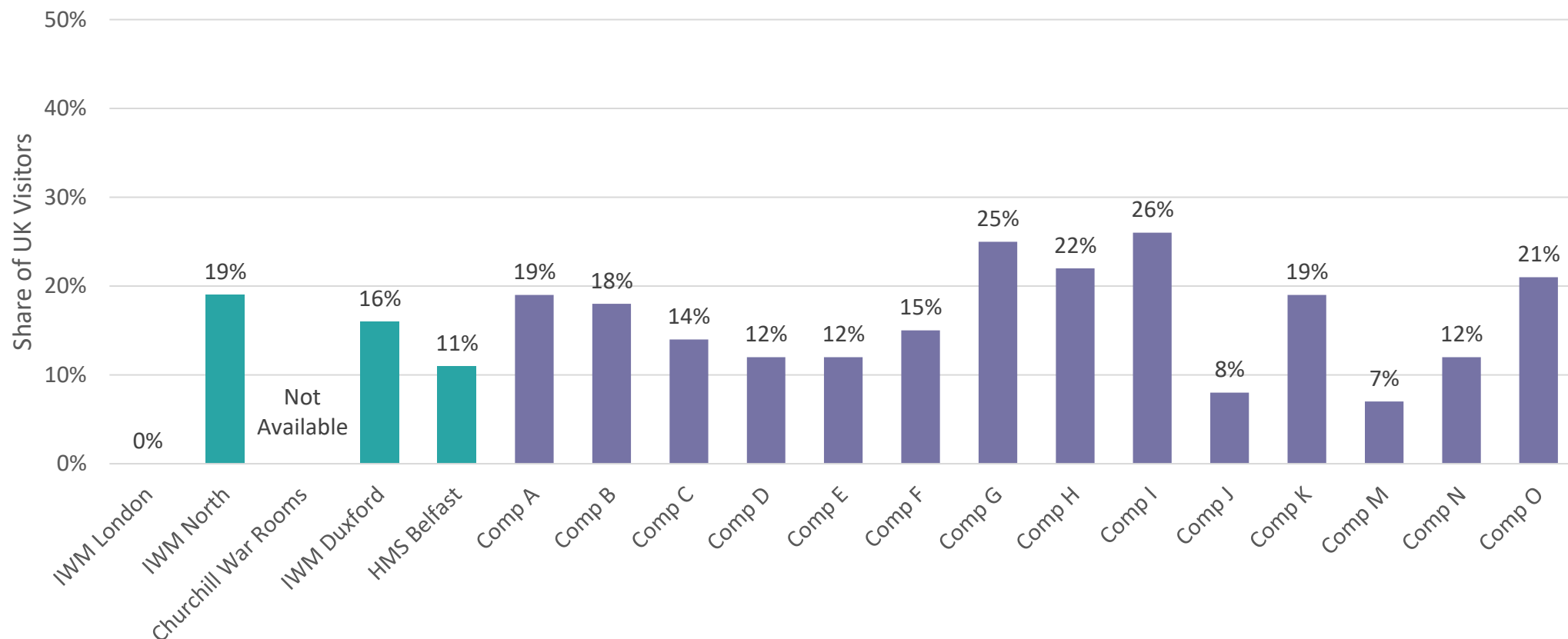
Data not available at CWR due to low domestic sample size. More ethnicities were included in 2022 than in 2019.

*The numbers above include those who identify as having a mixed ethnicity background but not those who identify as a white minority.



Summer 2022: Benchmarking Global Majority*

Representation at **IWM London was far below** all other museums in the data consortium.

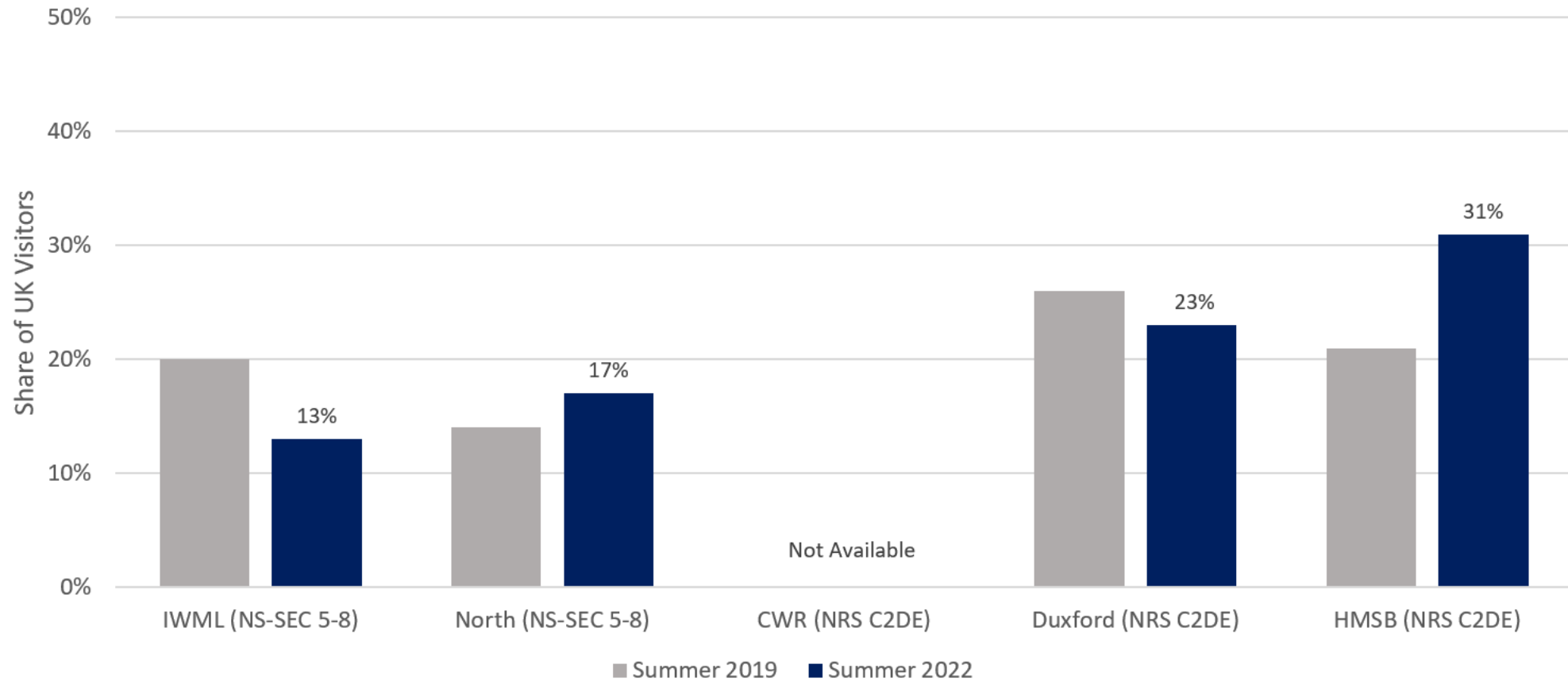


Sources: BVA-BDRC and DJS Research. Visitors from the UK only; share of visitors in party.
Data not available at CWR due to low domestic sample size. *The numbers above include those who identify as having a mixed ethnicity background but not those who identify as a white minority.



Summer 2022: UK Visitors from Lower Socio-economic Groups

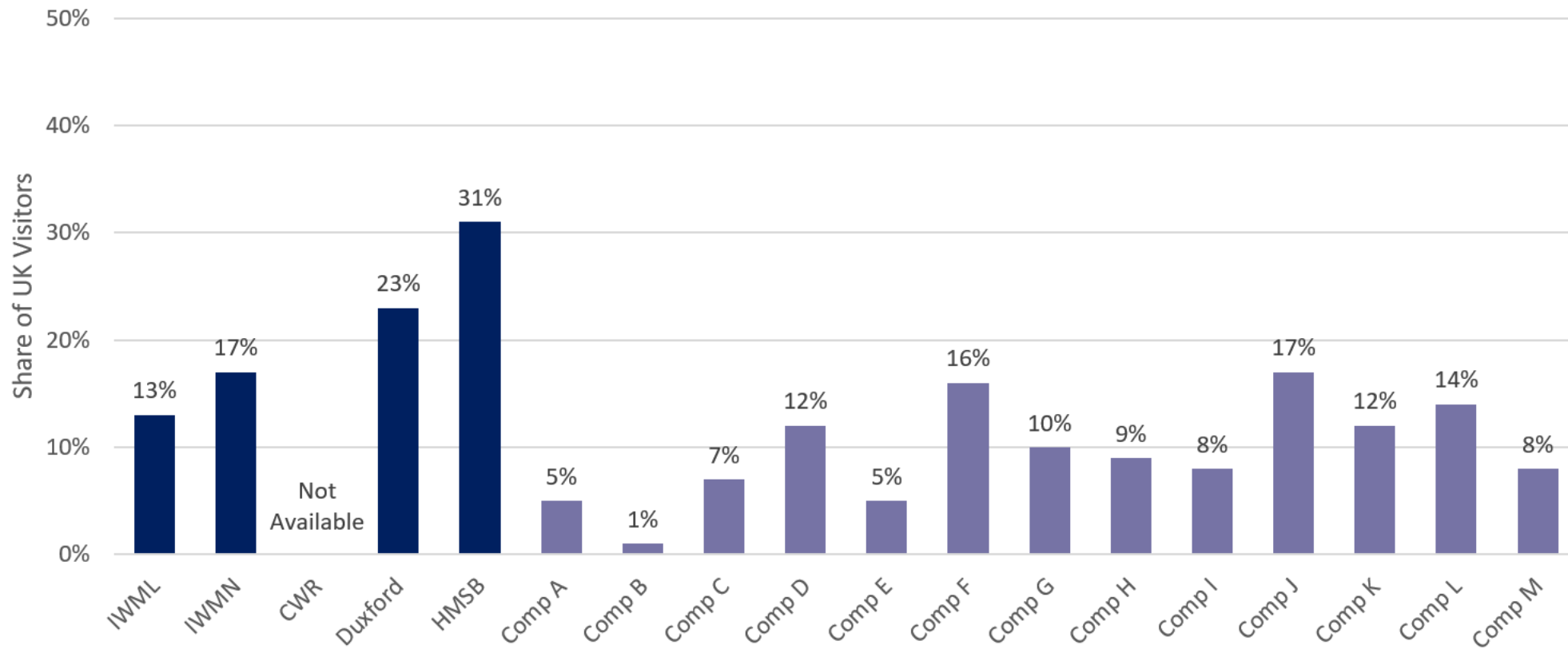
Visitors from lower SEGs increased the most at HMSB but was down at IWM London and IWM Duxford.



Sources: BVA-BDRC (using NRS C2DE) and DJS Research (using NS-SEC classes 5-8). Data is for UK residents only.
Data not available at CWR due to low domestic sample size.

Summer 2022: Benchmarking UK Households from Lower Socio-economic Groups

Representation at IWM sites is above most similar museums, **except at IWML**.



Sources: BVA-BDRC (using NRS C2DE) for Duxford & HMSB and DJS Research (using NS-SEC classes 5-8) for all others.

Data is for UK residents only.

Data not available at CWR due to low domestic sample size.



Goals of research

Provide basis for building **new access & inclusion strategy**

- Head of Access & Inclusion role already approved

Better **understand under-represented audiences**

- Expectations of IWM
- Experience with IWM (onsite or offsite)
- Reasons for engaging or not with IWM

Identify the **internal approach to access and inclusion**



Choosing the supplier



Brief included both audience research and internal review.

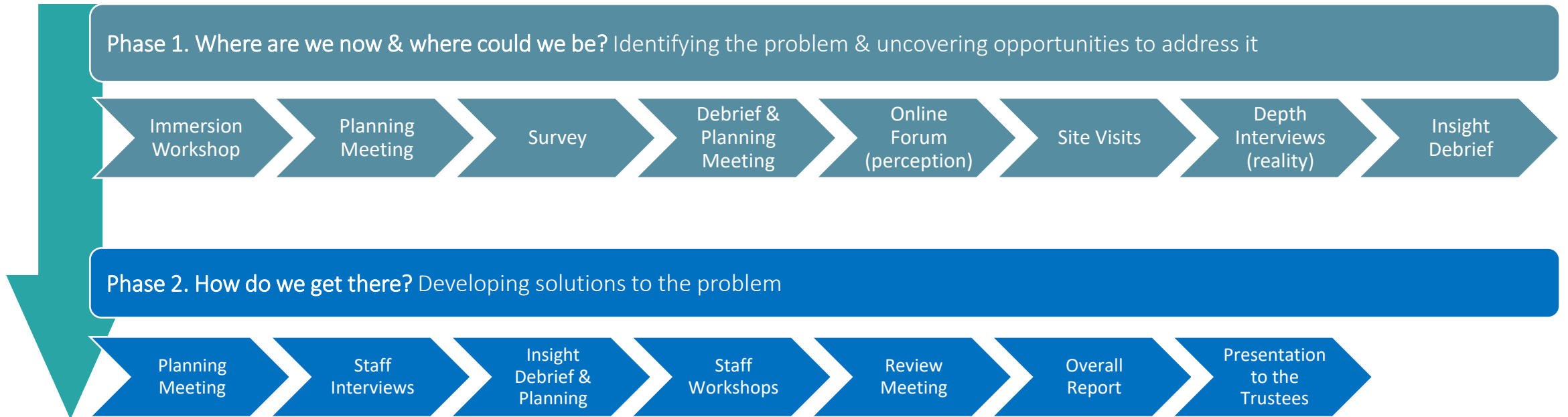
Vendors were asked to **arrange for a partner if needed** to ensure that the brief could be fulfilled.

IWM interviewed four vendors who were able to supply both sides.

Curiouser's tender was successful:

- Brought **additional individuals with complementary expertise** into the tender.
- Provided a detailed plan to:
 - **Understand the audiences** across our sites
 - Explore the **internal motivations and barriers** to this work
 - **Embed this work** throughout IWM

Project programme



Building support



Leadership champions

A member of the Executive Team **highlighted the importance** of understanding these audiences and our work with them

- Championed the business case
- Engaged throughout the research process

Members of Senior Team **supported project development**

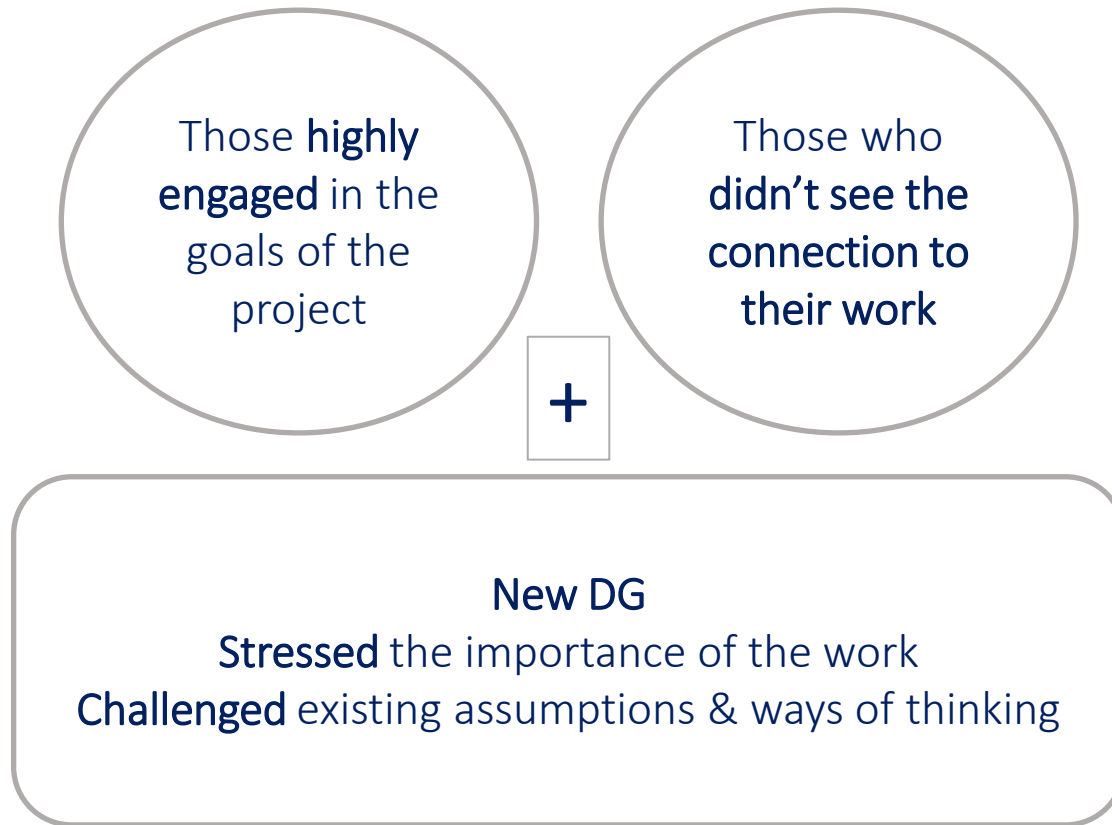
- Development of business case
- Creation of research brief & appointment of research partner
- Building supporting among internal stakeholders

New Director-General (DG) started during tender process and **supported goals**



Immersion workshop

Brought together internal stakeholders to explain direction of project



Engaging staff



Staff interviews

20 staff were chosen across teams & levels

Participants were shown results from audience research to inform discussion

Interviews explored understanding and assumptions about access & inclusion

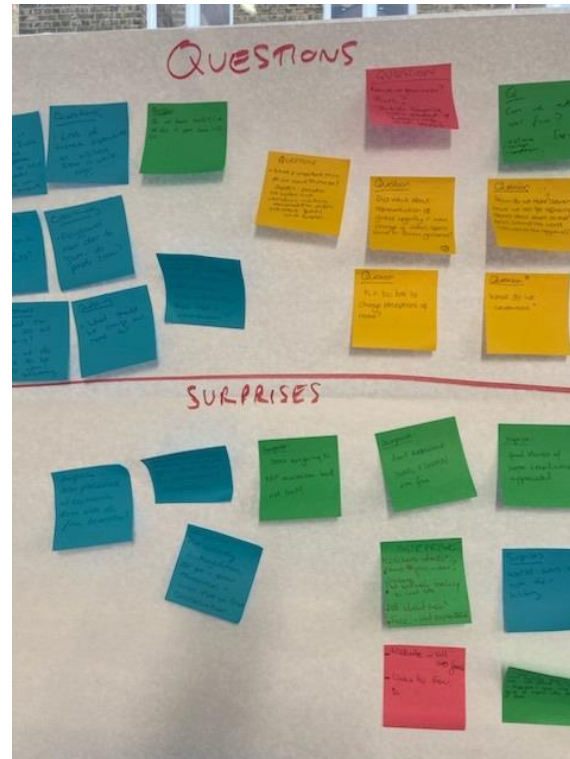
Provided insight into existing approach: tickbox vs. embedded in work



Development workshops

Presented audience research findings & connected them to staff interviews

30 staff across all levels, including more than half of leadership



Mix of **tactical** and **strategic** ideas across many functions



Recruiting audiences



We identified lower socio-economic groups in a different way to the standard approach.

What is the current employment of the Chief Income Earner in the household?

AND

What was the employment of the Chief Income Earner in your household when you were 14?



We asked people
whether they
'enjoyed' visiting
heritage attractions

Wanted to understand why those in the 'heritage market' weren't visiting IWM
So, we asked ...

Q3a. Which, if any, of these places do you enjoy visiting?

Theatres	1
Cinemas	2
Funfairs	3
Art galleries	4 → Continue
Exhibitions	5 → Continue
Museums	6 → Continue
Historic buildings, like a stately home or ancient monument	7 → Continue
Parks	8
Shopping centres	9
Sports events	10
None of these	11

All respondents must enjoy visiting at least one of art galleries, exhibitions, museums or historic buildings.



Enabling participation



We know that people from lower-socio economic groups can be less confident about expressing themselves in the ways research expects – especially if they're being asked to talk about something they don't feel that knowledgeable about.



A multi-method approach



Audience-led conversations

Culturally I was brought up Indian. My life revolves around:

1. Nursery life as a team leader

2. My adorable pets!

3. Wedding planning!

4. And Studying

I also love to travel and have a pact with my fiancée to go away twice a year!

My Name is Alex, I am 22, soon to be 23
I am Transmale

I am studying Health Sciences at a degree level

I studied ancient history at GCSE and I enjoyed learning about the battles and about

I like to think I am open-minded, and I enjoy talking to a variety of people!

My interests include cooking, growing vegetables (Or attempting to), quad bikes, dogs and playing video games!

I work as a Personal Trainer

I love music

I love travelling



Time to build trust



Be warm, spend time getting to know them

Reassure them this is not a test but a chat

Allow them to be the expert

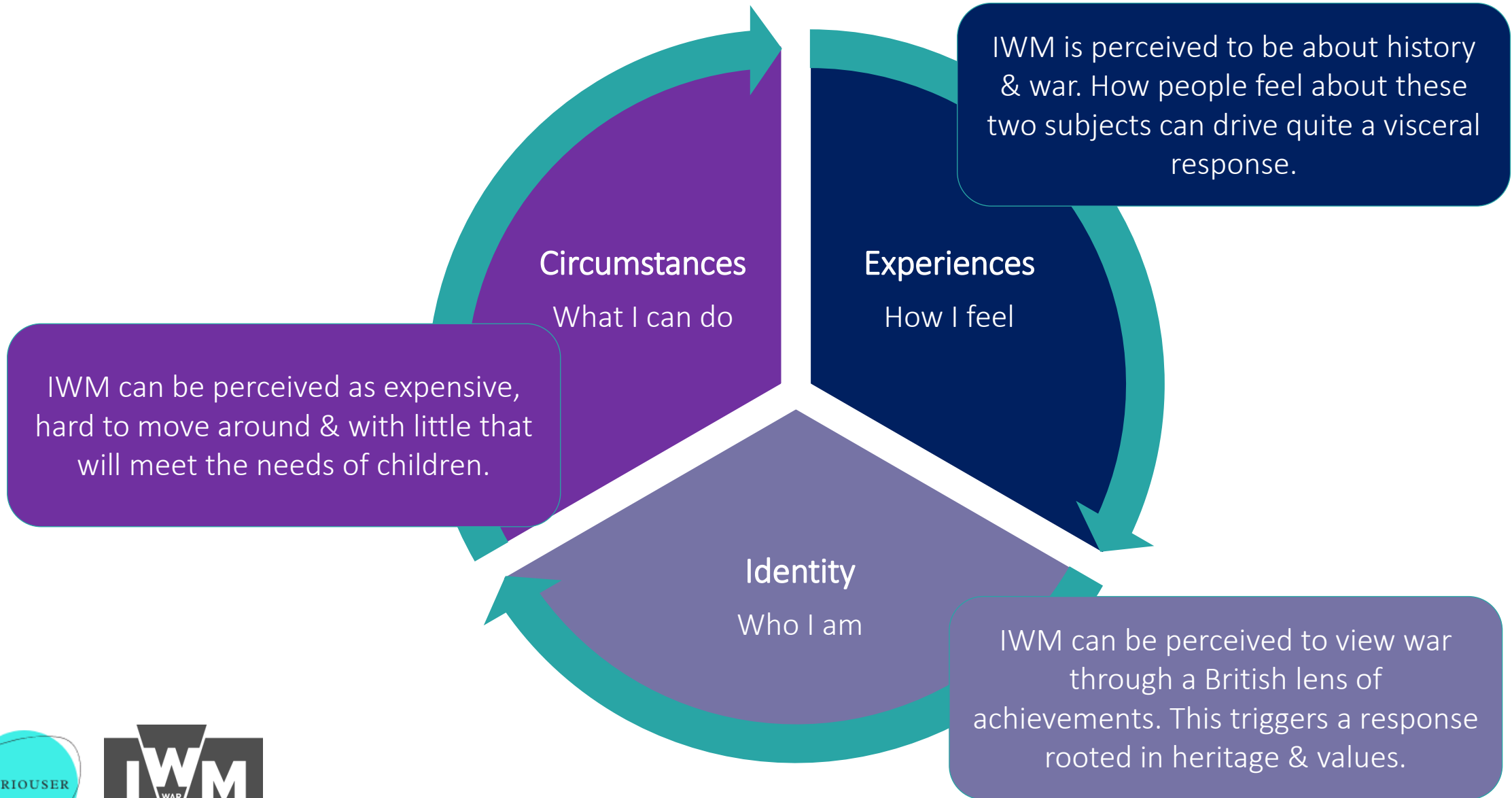


Understanding attitudes (and the deep-rooted emotions that underpin them)



Barriers to IWM were about more than money –
and emerged from three aspects of people's
identity, experiences & circumstances.





Children are a key
driver & enjoyment is
important

Enjoyment + Education for Everyone



What we have learned



Understanding the audience

See people in their totality

Don't make assumptions about drivers of decisions based on demographics

Appreciation of conscious and subconscious considerations

Understanding practical and perceptual motivators



What is driving decision making?

Subject matter
Assumptions of knowledge

*I feel like I might not
know enough about the
Second World War, I
mean I know the basics
but ...*

*It's about war! This doesn't
seem like a subject that's
fun or enjoyable. I know
it's history but on the
surface it doesn't seem like
a pleasant subject*



What is driving decision making?

Value systems

Language and visual signifiers

Value for money and perceptions of 'whole day' costs

The tickets (IWM Duxford) are enough for the whole shopping for a week! So I would have to sacrifice other children and take one.



Key Takeaways

View lower SEG audiences and their needs and motivations as a spectrum and not framed primarily through cost

Provide an overarching narrative for the site and its surrounds so visitors know what to expect and can make informed decisions on planning 'whole day' trips

Be clear on your values

Consider the external perceptions of your institution: physical presence and comms: are they welcoming? Do they use a language/signifiers that are accessible and reflect your values?

Provide a variety of interpretation and background knowledge for perceived 'common knowledge'



How do we action these findings?

Executive Team/Senior Team, Board of Trustee briefings

All hands staff briefing and report sharing

Building into wider Access and Inclusion strategy



Thank you & any
questions?