

Press release

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Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport

DCMS/Wolfson arts funding to make museums and galleries more accessible for people across the country

- *33 museums and galleries across England are set to receive a share of £4 million from DCMS/Wolfson Museums and Galleries Improvement Fund*
- *Funding will help make museums more accessible through initiatives like building ramps and improving displays*
- *Particular focus on helping organisations to be more sustainable and adopt energy saving measures*

Museums and galleries across England will receive a share of £4 million to improve displays, protect collections and make exhibitions more accessible to visitors.

The cash boost will go to 33 museums, 26 of which are outside London, from the joint DCMS/Wolfson Museums and Galleries Improvement Fund. Both DCMS and the Wolfson Foundation contributed £2 million to this round of the fund, which has benefited more than 400 projects in its 20-year history.

The fund aims to help museums and galleries make their collections as accessible to the public as possible, whether that be through building accessible ramps and facilities, improving collection storage to protect them for the future or getting more of their collections out on display.

In this latest round of funding, the People's History Museum in Manchester will receive a grant of £214,300 to improve access to the museum for people with disabilities by installing accessible doors, lifts and toilets, improving stairs and walkways with handrails and ramps, and installing signs around the museum to make it more accessible.

This year there has also been a particular focus on supporting museums and galleries in adopting energy saving measures and improving sustainability.

The National Motor Museum in the New Forest, for example, will use its grant of £200,000 to install new heating and lighting to improve environmental performance. Abbot Hall Art Gallery, in Kendal, will use £40,500 to review its environmental controls for collections to reduce energy use.

Arts Minister Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay said:

"The DCMS/Wolfson Fund aims to make sure more people can access our brilliant museums and galleries right across the county.

"Thanks to this combination of public funding and private philanthropy, these awards will help people who may have previously found visiting museums and galleries difficult and make sure everyone can enjoy and engage with the wonderful collections and exhibitions they offer.

"With 80 percent of the money going to museums outside the capital, this funding is further evidence of the Government's commitment to levelling up and widening access to culture."

Paul Ramsbottom, Chief Executive of the Wolfson Foundation said:

“We’re delighted to continue our longstanding partnership with DCMS, which has now awarded over £50 million to outstanding museums and galleries over the past two decades.”

“While the projects funded are many and varied, they will all improve access to the treasures of our museums and galleries - allowing more people to enjoy and learn from these impressive collections, as well as safeguarding them for the future.”

The Bowes Museum which manages a Grade I listed building as well as a designated collection and parkland in County Durham has received a grant of £254,900 to develop four new gallery spaces - bringing more of their collections to the public. The new galleries will be created together with the local community to make sure they are fully accessible for people with reduced mobility and sensory impairments.

£71,700 will help Derby Museums to improve accessibility at Grade I listed Pickford’s House to help the museum use virtual reality to bring the house to a wider audience. Kelham Island Museum in Sheffield will receive £45,000 to improve displays in collaboration with their local communities.

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Notes to editors:

Full list of awards by region:

East Midlands

Pickford's House: £71,700 for The Reimagined Home: Changing views of Home, Work and Family for an Inclusive, Digital Age

East of England

Food Museum: £89,600 for Bridge to the Future

London

Grant Museum of Zoology: £100,000 for Species under threat

Royal College of Music Museum: £33,000 for Bringing early instruments to life through 3D modelling

Jewish Museum London: £80,000 for Build of new collections storerooms: Under-represented heritage

Museum of the Home: £200,000 for Homes Through Time Redux

London Transport Museum: £80,000 for LTM Lab

The Wallace Collection: £50,000 for the creation of a new display space and relocation of the cloakroom

Natural History Museum (South Kensington): £100,000 for Mammals Galleries Project (Mammals Hall)

North East

Oriental Museum: £104,500 for New Voices: Redisplaying and Reinterpreting the Malcolm MacDonald Gallery of Chinese Art and Archaeology

The Bowes Museum: £254,900 for Inspiring Communities - Collections, Curiosity and Conversations

North West

People's History Museum: £214,300 for Nothing About Us Without Us – Creating Access for Everyone at People's History Museum

Manchester Art Gallery: £150,000 for transforming storage and access for Manchester's Civic Collection

The Whitworth: £80,000 for The Whitworth Welcome

Abbot Hall Art Gallery: £40,500 for Testing Ground

South East

Discover Bucks Museum: £60,000 for Creating Collections Capacity

Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust: £100,000 for No.1 Smithery – Forging the future of display, conservation, and interpretation of maritime collections.

Mary Rose Museum: £74,900 for safeguarding and storing the Mary Rose Collection and Archive

Museum of English Rural Life: £54,300 for Developing Display: Improving Exhibition Spaces at St Andrew's Hall

Museum of Natural History: £125,000 for Life, as we know it – Redisplaying Oxford University Museum of Natural History

National Motor Museum: £200,000 for Motoring into the Future - Phase 1

Hampton Court Palace: £201,400 for Re-opening of the Wolsey Rooms and re-interpretation of an iconic Tudor Art collection

South West

Tate St Ives: £54,300 for Barbara Hepworth Museum Accessibility Ramp

The Wilson Art Gallery and Museum: £202,500 for Making Connections

Torquay Museum: £250,000 for Journey through the Ice Age – re-engaging communities with our Designated Quaternary collection

The Etches Collection – Museum of Jurassic Marine Life: £219,500 for protecting and preserving our internationally important fossil collection

The Tank Museum: £100,000 for the transition to passive storage

National Maritime Museum Cornwall: £237,000 for revitalising the museum's boat hall

West Midlands

Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery: £150,000 for enabling the redisplay of Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery's (BMAG) Ancient Civilizations Galleries

Yorkshire and The Humber

Experience Barnsley Museum & Discovery Centre: £37,500 for Barnsley's Chamber of Treasures

National Science and Media Museum: £100,000 for Sound & Vision

Kelham Island Museum: £45,000 for More to See

Temple Newsam: £140,100 for What the Butler Saw: revealing treasures, improving access and creating capacity at Temple Newsam House

About the Wolfson Foundation

[The Wolfson Foundation](#) is an independent charity with a focus on research and education. Its aim is to support civil society by investing in excellent projects in science, health, heritage, humanities and the arts.

Since it was established in 1955, some £1 billion (£2 billion in real terms) has been awarded to more than 12,000 projects throughout the UK, all on the basis of expert review.

Twitter: [@wolfsonfdn](#)

Additional quotes

Hannah Fox, executive director of The Bowes Museum, said:

"We're delighted to be awarded this funding which will play a significant role in enhancing the Museum's relationship and place within the local community. It will support our ambitions to work with our communities in shaping the museum by co-producing new accessible galleries. These will be spaces where curiosity and creativity can be sparked and come alive as people interact with the collections in a new way. We want to allow more natural light back into the building, bringing the beautiful landscape into the galleries and enticing those outside to venture in. We'll also create new collection storage facilities that encourage people to see how we look after the objects we care for. This process will open up the Museum, increase the sense of local ownership and help spread the word that The Bowes Museum is a place for everyone to enjoy"

Maya Harrison, Principal Keeper, Leeds Museums and Galleries, said:

"We are really excited that the DCMS /Wolfson Fund will be supporting our project at Temple Newsam. This funding will contribute towards the next phase of development of this great Grade I Listed house: getting more historic interiors on the public route; improving access, interpretation and conservation; strengthening the site's service delivery; supporting the development of heritage craft and conservation skills. Helping to make sure that Temple Newsam is appealing and accessible to diverse audiences."

Dr. Cathy Putz, Director of Programming, Derby Museums, said:

"We are thrilled that Derby Museums has been awarded funding by the DCMS/Wolfson Museums and Galleries Improvement Fund for our project: The Reimagined Home: Changing Views of Home, Work and Family for an Inclusive, Digital Age. The project will enable us to

develop Pickford's House, we will explore what Derby residents would like to know about the Georgian townhouse and will place our communities at its core as the site becomes a local hub of activity. We will make material improvements to the display, interpretation, and collections at Pickford's House to enhance visitor experience, improve accessibility and enhance the civic value of this site."

Becky Peters, Interim Director, People's History Museum, said:

"For the past 5 years People's History Museum has been working with a committed steering group of disabled people to develop a landmark programme Nothing About Us Without Us, which explores how disabled people have been represented in the past, the hard fought campaigns that have created change and the journey yet to come. The vision for this programme extends beyond the headline exhibition into People's History Museum's long term commitment to being an exemplar for accessibility and inclusion. This vital funding from the DCMS/Wolfson Fund will enable us to make changes to the fabric of our building in line with this vision and create a welcoming civic space for everyone in the heart of Manchester. We are absolutely thrilled and grateful to receive this funding."

Jon Murden, Chief Executive, National Motor Museum Trust, said:

"This is exciting news and I am glad that we are on our way to a bright new future for the National Motor Museum. This major grant will enable us to start the first phase of our planned works next year. It is the first step on a long road, with bold plans to raise £15-20 million over the next seven years to fully realise our ambitions.

"We must improve our museum spaces, equipment and interpretation for younger visitors, as well as upgrade facilities for the conservation and restoration of our 285 display vehicles. We also plan to open up our internationally-acclaimed stored collections of more than 1.9 million items of automobilia, and make them accessible for everyone to see. The world of motoring is rapidly changing and we must keep pace to tell its story."

Kim Streets, CEO, Sheffield Museums, said:

"We are delighted that the DCMS/Wolfson Museum and Galleries Improvement Fund has awarded its first grant to Kelham Island Museum. The funding will help us to invest in our display infrastructure so that we can share more stories of Sheffield with visitors and create more displays produced collaboratively with people and communities."