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University of Leicester announces partnership supported by Art Fund with leading UK museums, galleries and heritage organisations to advance trans inclusion.

The University of Leicester's Research Centre for Museums and Galleries (RCMG) has established a partnership supported by Art Fund – the national charity for art – with leading UK museums, galleries and heritage organisations to support a bold and ambitious step change in the capacity and confidence of the UK's culture sector to advance trans inclusion.

Confirmed partners include **Amgueddfa Cymru – Museum Wales, Culture Leicestershire, Glasgow Women's Library, National Museums Liverpool, National Museums NI, The New Art Gallery Walsall, Royal Air Force Museum and the Whitworth, The University of Manchester** with more organisations joining as the project develops. They will work closely with a team of experts in trans-inclusion, equalities law and ethics to develop new guidance and practical resources for the UK's culture sector that will be launched in 2026.

The partnership initiative, eighteen months in development, has emerged in response to growing recognition of the need for support for cultural organisations as they seek to advance trans inclusion and equity in the context of increasing hostility towards trans people, misinformation around trans lives and a complex and evolving legal landscape. The recent Supreme Court ruling of 16 April has further increased the need for ethical guidance and resources that cultural organisations can use to take forward their commitments to advance equity and foster dignity and respect for trans people.

The partnership builds on RCMG's long-standing, world-leading research in this field. In September 2023 the Centre published *Trans-Inclusive Culture: guidance on advancing trans inclusion for museums, galleries, archives and heritage organisations* (<https://le.ac.uk/rcmg/research-archive/trans-inclusive-culture>) that has since been accessed by over 9,000 individuals and cultural organisations to support their trans-inclusive practice. The project has also generated interest from numerous international museum and heritage

agencies that have shared the guidance with their members and networks, and advocated for its use amongst their stakeholders.

RCMG's work in this area has already received the backing of leading UK and international culture sector support agencies that represent tens of thousands of museums, galleries and heritage organisations and professionals.

Art Fund's key support for this initiative will continue to help connect museums and people across the country with great art and culture, ensuring cultural institutions across the UK are inclusive, accessible, and welcoming to all.

Professor Richard Sandell, co-director of RCMG comments; 'Cultural organisations of all kinds have shared with us their deep commitment to advancing trans inclusion as well as the challenges they encounter in taking this work forward in the context of increasing misinformation surrounding trans lives. Our partnership will generate strategies and actions that address the uncertainties and anxieties that cultural organisations face and equip them to be proactive in countering the increasing hostility, discrimination and violence that trans communities are facing.'

Jenny Waldman, Director, Art Fund, said; 'This important work by University of Leicester's Research Centre for Museums and Galleries (RCMG) and leading UK cultural organisations acknowledges an increasing need for ethical guidance to build confidence around trans inclusion in the sector. As a charity dedicated to supporting museums, galleries, and historic houses across the UK, Art Fund is committed to helping them be welcoming spaces for all to enjoy. It's inspiring to see cultural institutions leading by example – showing what it means to create truly inclusive spaces.'

Professor Suzanne MacLeod, co-director of RCMG comments; 'Our highly collaborative process brings together leading-edge scholarship and expertise around ethics, the law, trans inclusion and equality to generate practical guidance and resources that meet a pressing and growing need across the cultural sector. The insights and resources we are creating will ensure staff, volunteers, freelancers, leaders and trustees can take this important work forward with confidence, advancing inclusion for all and positively impacting the experiences of trans individuals and communities.'

E-J Scott, founder of the award-winning Museum of Transology and co-author of *Trans Inclusive Culture* comments; 'Research and experience tell us very clearly that museums, galleries, libraries, archives and heritage organisations of all kinds have a unique and powerful role to play in supporting trans communities engaged in struggles for rights, respect and dignity. The involvement and commitment of so many leading cultural institutions and agencies in this new partnership clearly shows how timely and significant this issue is for the sector and highlights the need for more bold and ambitious approaches to trans-inclusive practice.'

The partnership is supported by Art Fund with additional funding via the Economic and Social Research Council's Impact Acceleration Account.

For further information, please visit: <https://transinclusiveculture.le.ac.uk/>

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Notes for editors

The **Research Centre for Museums and Galleries** (RCMG) is part of Museum Studies at the University of Leicester, the UK's oldest and largest academic unit dedicated to museum studies. In September 2023, the Centre published *Trans-Inclusive Culture: guidance on advancing trans inclusion for museums, galleries, archives and heritage organisations* that was written by Professors Suzanne MacLeod, Richard Sandell (University of Leicester) and Sharon Cowan (University of Edinburgh); E-J Scott, Dr Cesare Cuzzola and Dr Sarah Plumb (RCMG).

Art Fund is the national charity for UK museums, galleries and historic houses. For over 120 years, Art Fund has helped museums and galleries across the UK to develop and share collections, invest in people and expertise, and grow audiences.

Art Fund connects museums and people with great art and culture, because access to art is vital for a healthy society. The charity celebrates museums through the prestigious Art Fund Museum of the Year award, the world's largest museum prize.

Independent and people-powered, Art Fund is supported by 142,000 members who buy a National Art Pass, as well as generous individuals, trusts and foundations. The National Art Pass offers free or discounted entry to hundreds of museums, galleries and historic places in the UK, 50% off major exhibitions, and a subscription to Art Quarterly magazine.