

Quarterly Report

2025/26 Q2



Leeds Museums
& Galleries

Q2 2025/26

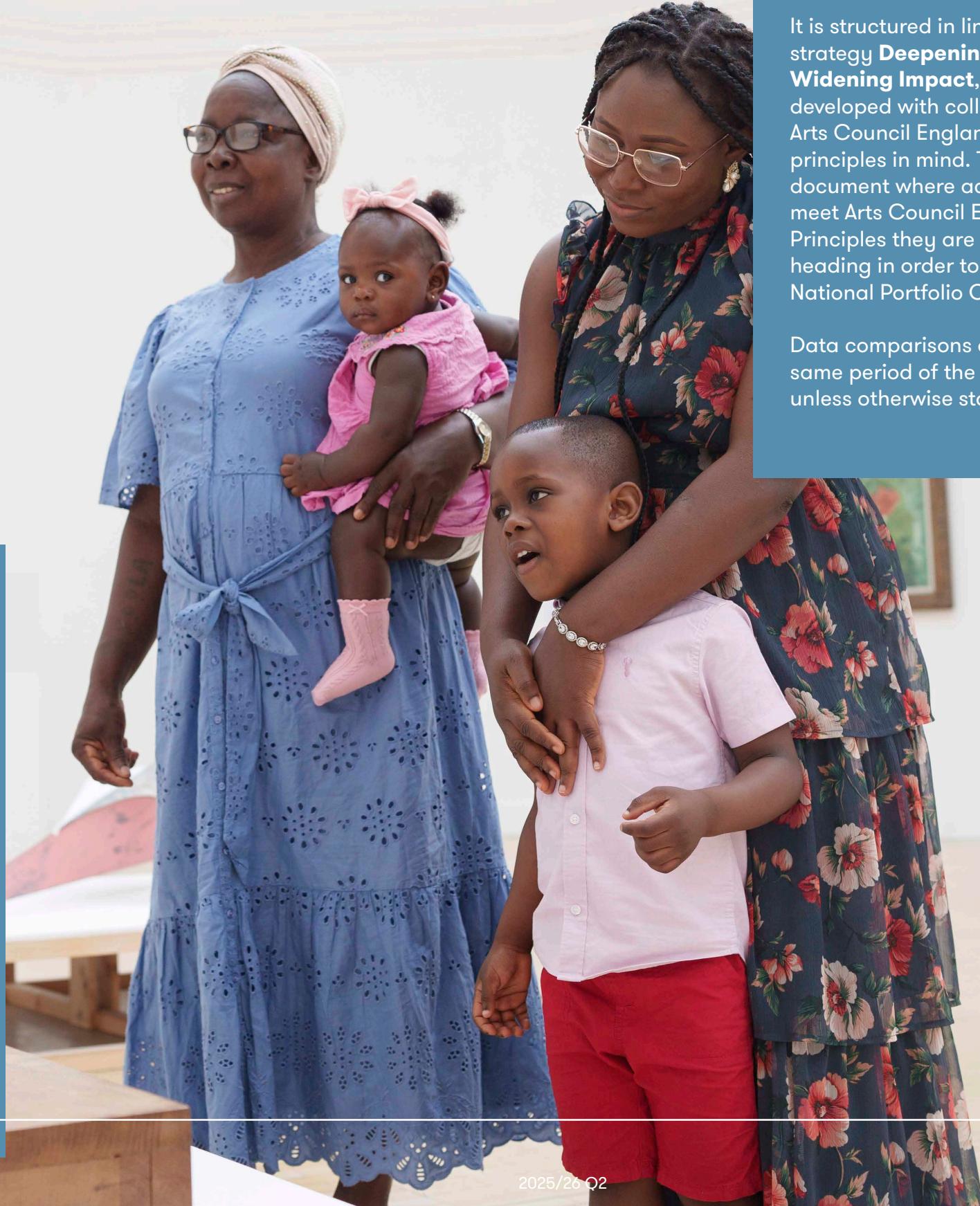
This document celebrates achievements and summarises key activity from Leeds Museum & Galleries (LMG) over the period July to September 2025.

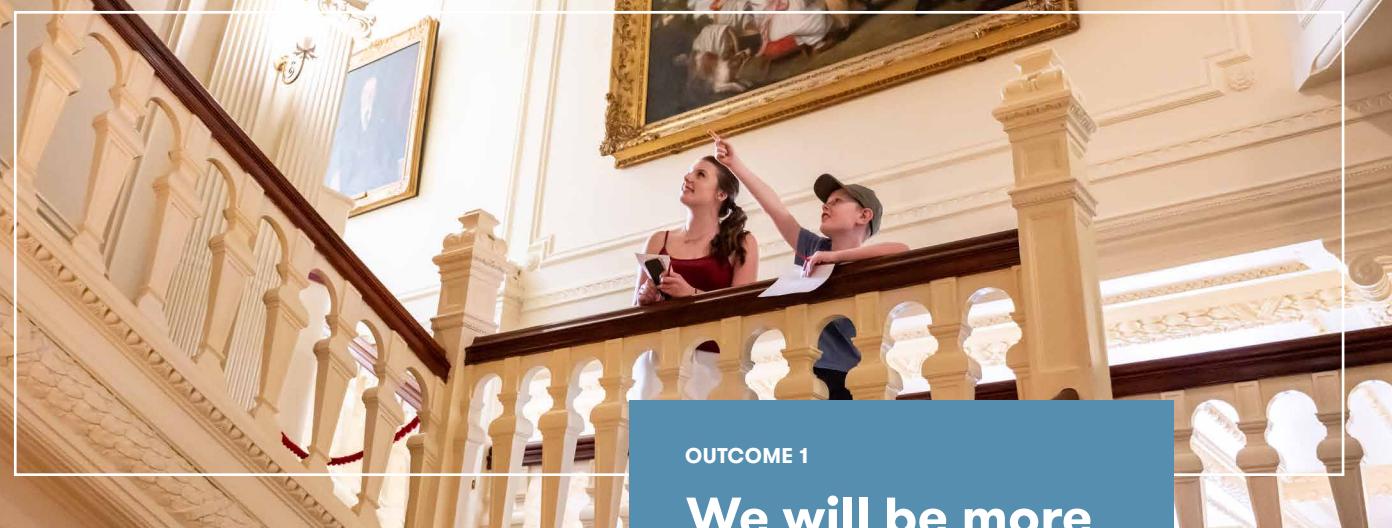
It is structured in line with our 5-year strategy **Deepening Connections, Widening Impact**, which has been developed with colleagues, partners and Arts Council England's core investment principles in mind. Throughout the document where activity and achievements meet Arts Council England Investment Principles they are referenced under each heading in order to report progress for our National Portfolio Organisation status.

Data comparisons are made with the same period of the previous year unless otherwise stated.

Leeds Museums & Galleries' Strategic Outcomes

- 1 We will be more sustainable and responsible, financially and environmentally
- 2 We will provide higher quality audience engagement and experiences, both physically and digitally
- 3 We will continue to be a leader in collaborative, sustainable, accessible cultural learning and creative skills development
- 4 We will have an audience and workforce that is representative and reflective of the city
- 5 We will have collections and heritage assets that are better known, better understood, and better cared for
- 6 We will have international reputation and reach





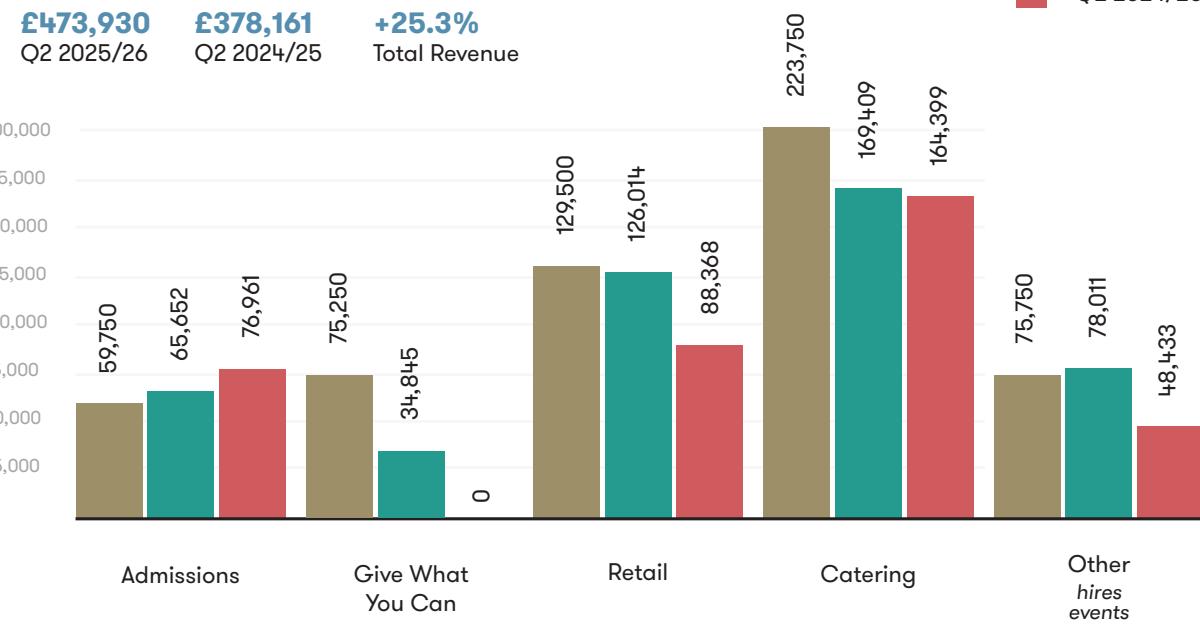
At a glance

Earned income continues to be a focus, with retail performing well due to strong sales at Leeds City Museum. Admissions remain stable, and a new Give What You Can approach has been introduced at several venues.

OUTCOME 1
We will be more sustainable and responsible, financially and environmentally

→ ACE IP MET
 Dynamism
 Environmental Responsibility

Revenue



Q2 25/26 are draft figures due to new LCC finance system.

Headlines

LMG applied for Museum Renewal Fund (MRF) support and was successful with an initial award of £702k.

We subsequently applied for a top up and the final award was £952k. Two thirds of the funding will meet current budget shortfalls as well as delivering ten projects to support future sustainability.

We have started consulting key stakeholders for LMG's strategic review and have appointed a consultant to support this process funded by MRF.

At our service wide all-staff morning colleagues took part in a fundraising workshop run by Good Fundraising.

Leeds Industrial Museum has decarbonised heating infrastructure, removing gas connections – reducing carbon footprint and standing order costs.

Leeds City Museum worked with partners across the city to secure funding or in-kind support for the new Music Leeds Us exhibition, to the value of approximately £25,000.

Retail has remained strong at Leeds City Museum due to the success of the Miffy exhibition, with both Leeds Industrial Museum and Abbey House Museum improving.

Assistant Community Curator at Leeds City Museum worked with local primary schools and SEND provision to recycle the playful build from the Miffy exhibition.



In Focus

On the 17 June we launched our new Give What You Can (GWYC) scheme at four of our venues, Leeds City Museum, Leeds Art Gallery, Leeds Discovery Centre and Kirkstall Abbey (replacing the current admission charge for non-Leeds residents).

This has been a significant change both for visitors and staff and has required a small investment in the required infrastructure to accommodate contactless payments.

Progress is being monitored regularly including the impact of the locations of the podiums, donation amounts, most successful days of the week, take up of gift aid and the impact that prior booking has on this with GWYC events. Some changes have been made to the suggested donation amounts displayed on the devices to more closely reflect visitor donation patterns, along with the location of key donation points.

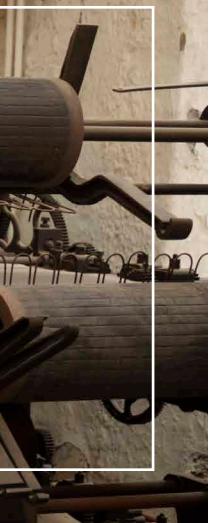
All frontline staff have been supported through training to give them the confidence to make the ask and to communicate key messages to encourage giving in a non-intrusive way. Uptake has been encouraging and has generated more donations than ever before. Surprisingly, 38% of all donations are cash.





OUTCOME 2

We will provide higher quality audience engagement and experiences, both physically and digitally



At a glance

We've had a very positive quarter with visitor numbers on the rise, fantastic press coverage and engaging activities across the board.

Venue Visitors

578,691

2025

485,031

2024

+19%

Year to date visitors

ACE IP MET
All

Press Highlights

New exhibition curated by acclaimed artist Lynette Yiadom-Boakye at Leeds Art Gallery – Yorkshire Post

Helen Chadwick stripped off inside a cooker — and changed art – The Times

Hidden industrial heritage uncovers city's history – BBC News

Murals marking city's sporting heritage unveiled – BBC News

Council-run museums and galleries bring Leeds a £47.3m boost – BBC News

Leeds Discovery Centre spiders exhibition aims to ease fears – BBC News



Visitors

306,572

2025/26

253,801

2024/25

+21%

Venue visitors



Socials

364,245

2025/26

344,042

2024/25

+6%

Social media followers



Website

236,244

2025/26

238,184

2024/25

-0.008%

Website visitors



Views

2,122,754

2025/26

868,811

2024/25

+144

Webpage views

Headlines

Over the summer holidays, Leeds Art Gallery got involved in the Art Fund initiative Kids Aloud – the campaign saw family-focused events programmed including a loud gallery tour and drop-in poetry workshops.

To Improvise A Mountain saw over 30+ pieces of press coverage, including favourable reviews in **The Sunday Times** and **Yorkshire Post** as well as more than 85,000 visitors (+14% on same period last year).

Using a national benchmark of 5 Ways to Wellbeing, research has shown that out of a score of five, participants gave 'I feel welcome' an average score of 4.86; 'I feel safe', 4.91 and 'I feel happy', 4.67.

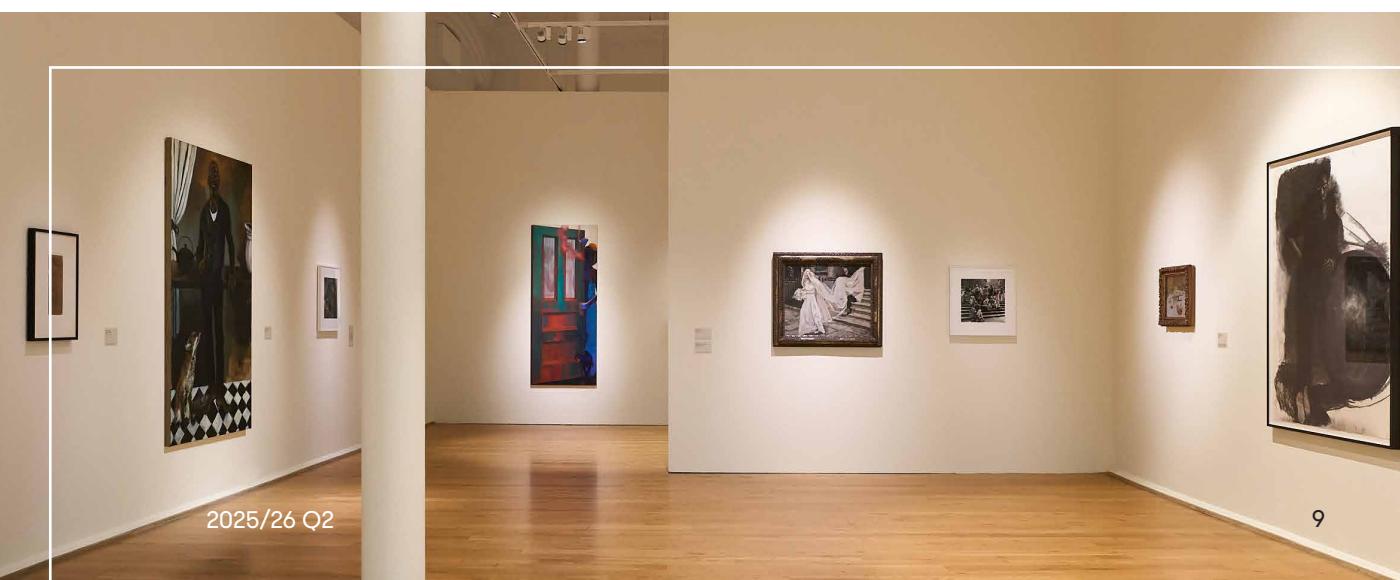
Kirkstall Art Trail ran in Kirkstall Abbey's grounds featuring **work by local creatives** with stone carved sculptures, outdoor installations including a weather-proof mindful maze entitled 'The Labyrinth', and more.

Miffy's 70th Birthday exhibition closed on 7 September with visitor figures reaching 128,034 – the highest recorded for a special exhibition at Leeds City Museum.

Leeds Industrial Museum hosted summer family theatre performances by **Wrongsemble** in the recently developed picnic grounds.

The Audience Development team attended The Great Yorkshire Show with a consortium of visitor attractions which saw high levels of audience engagement with leaflets and event promotion.

The Audience Development team launched a new online form to better streamline the event publication and promotion process, this quarter they have uploaded 302 events to our website.



2025/26 Q2

In Focus

This quarter saw Leeds Industrial Museum open its newest community exhibition, Reel-ise, a project that began back in January.

The project has been co-curated with fifteen volunteers and Dr Melanie Bell from the University of Leeds and the Leeds Animation Workshop. Reel-ise celebrates Leeds' long history with film making and the film industry, with a focus on women who have previously been overlooked.

This work has gained attention from BBC Radio Leeds and the National

Science and Media Museum, further propelling the excellent work of volunteers.

Four of the volunteers on this project went on to get volunteer or secure paid opportunities outside of LMG after the project's completion.

"I thoroughly enjoyed my time volunteering with you and the Reel-ise team, and getting to experience the behind the scenes aspects of the museum and heritage space!"

– Participant



OUTCOME 3

We will continue to be a leader in collaborative, sustainable, accessible cultural learning and creative skills development

At a glance

This quarter we hosted the Group for Education in Museums (GEM) national conference at Leeds City Museum and Leeds Art Gallery, welcomed families for summer holiday activities across our venues, and started the new academic year with 21 member schools and a wide range of workshops.



Pupils

5599
Q2 2025/6



Family

42,287
Q2 2025/26



SEND

14
2025/6

7388
Q2 2024/5

-24%
Engaged through workshops, self led and outreach

35,991
Q2 2024/25

+17%
People engaged in family activities

4
2024/5

+250%
Workshops differentiated for pupils with SEND needs

*MyLearning analytics: The apparent drop in user numbers is due to a shift in how we report analytics, moving from total event counts to meaningful metrics like active users and page views. This change avoids inflated figures caused by tracking minor interactions such as scrolling or clicking.



ACE IP MET
Dynamism
Environmental Responsibility
Inclusion & Relevance

MyLearning
74,000

Unique Users
Q2 2025/26

130,774

Page Views

927

Downloads

1067

Watched Videos

Headlines

A £4000 grant from LEGO via the Real World Science Network with the Natural History Museum enabled 12 climate-focused family activities, alongside school workshops.

Careers for All continues to make an impact: 'J' attended outreach workshops in school, volunteered at Leeds Industrial Museum, then progressed to a placement cataloguing the numismatics collections. He used these experiences to support a successful UCAS application to read History and Media at University of Leeds.

Family engagement over the summer included the sensory room at Leeds City Museum. One parent said, 'I live in Leeds and have never been to the museum before. I saw this event and thought that's a way we can visit...Both my boys (11 and 14) have autism and ADHD. This is great, coming in here first. I now feel we can explore the museum'.

Sarah-Jane Mason and Kalisha Piper-Cheddie were artists-in-residence at Leeds Art Gallery working intergenerationally with families. They noticed more adult engagement than usual: 'Not done anything since I was a child, but had so much fun today' and words that repeated in the evaluation were calm, inclusive and peaceful.

We began a partnership with the Children's Book Project, have started a conversation with Novus about education within the criminal justice system, and are an active participant in the Leeds City Council Disability Inclusive Steering Group.

Planning began for the second year and fourth cohort of families for Mini Wonders, the Early Years research programme with NESTA and Art Fund.

Leeds Industrial Museum worked with an access consultant with lived experience of neurodiversity, Emily Elsworth, to audit and improve access across site.



In Focus

We continue to support training, networking and mentoring within the cultural learning sector:

In September 2025, we hosted the annual national Group for Education in Museums (GEM) conference at Leeds City Museum and Leeds Art Gallery for 500 delegates over three days (in person and online). The conference theme was sustainability, including environmental, financial and social sustainability. We held two 'in practice' visits to Leeds Art Gallery and Leeds Discovery Centre and had speakers in three workshops and panels.

In Q2, we hosted two peer learning visits from the National Galleries of Scotland and Rotherham Museums and Galleries looking at our best practice examples for school programmes. We chair and convene the Yorkshire Accessible Museums Network, sharing practice to make museums more inclusive, hosting three workshops per year for around 30 delegates.

September's workshop focused on visual stories and accessibility welcome areas. We are actively involved in GLAM Cares, a network supporting cultural professionals working in sensitive community engagement settings. Staff are regional reps for both the GEM and Engage, representing gallery educators.

We mentor nationally for the Associateship of the Museums Association and GEM and internationally through the Network of European Museum Organisations (NEMO). In Q2, we supported five individuals. These cement our leading role in the sector.





OUTCOME 4

We will have an audience and workforce that is representative and reflective of the city



At a glance

We've had a busy quarter of co-curated events and community creative sessions alongside some impactful support and development work with groups and individuals.

6 -14%
Co-curated displays

187 +21%
Community creative sessions

58 -25%
Generous hostings



Volunteers

119
2025/6

117
2024/5

+2%
Volunteers



Hours

2641
2025/26

2646
2024/25

-1%
Hours contributed by volunteers

71 (+196%) co-produced events with our community partners



Headlines

LMG continues to provide support and mentoring to 2025's three Accelerator Bursary artists in partnership with Assembly House studios, funded by Leeds Art Fund. A second year of the scheme with three recent graduates has been recruited to in Q2 with one artist from University of Leeds, Leeds Beckett and Leeds Arts University respectively to begin from January 2026.

In September we hosted a visit from the Art Fund Vivmar trainee who is currently working with the V&A. They will be in regular contact prior to spending the final six months of the traineeship with Leeds Art Gallery from August 2026.

Colleagues from across the service marched in this year's Leeds Pride parade in July.

Leeds City Museum hosted the first Outing Leeds, a day of talks and performances about Leeds' LGBT+ history.

Leeds City Museum hosted groups from the national British Sign Language (BSL) conference, which was held in Leeds in July. The Museum arranged deaf-led tours and showcased the new BSL interpretation in the Life on Earth gallery.

New members of staff joined Leeds Industrial Museum as Visitor Assistants, having volunteered and engaged in the work of LMG previously.

Leeds Industrial Museum worked with Migration Yorkshire in July to host a meeting of 70+ refugees and asylum seekers and their families from across the north of England.

LMG's annual all-staff meeting took place at Leeds City Museum in September. Workshops included fundraising, LEGO building on the sustainable museum and painting to promote creativity and wellbeing.

In July, Leeds Art Gallery hosted the Yorkshire Sculpture International Sculpture Network 2025. Fifteen artists living and working across the region were selected for this development opportunity from an open call.



In Focus

In July, Leeds City Museum's Supported Internship Placement successfully concluded. Through the scheme we supported one student from PINC College in a work placement emulating an employed role.

The student, with staff and mentoring support, worked with the front of house team to practise the role of a Visitor Assistant, as well as embarking on an ambitious behind the scenes project; creating a system to easily record, categorise and navigate visitor feedback.

After five months in this role the student expressed a strong desire to continue the administrative work of this placement, sharing that they feel welcome and supported by the site team. We therefore created a

new volunteering opportunity specifically for Supported Interns to progress into, called Specialist Project Assistant.

This will be a long term, supported and flexible volunteering role - where the volunteer can shape their work based on their personal interests. Currently the volunteer is coming to site two days a week to work on improving their feedback report and researching a new blog series.

In January 2026 they will also be leading on a digitisation project at Leeds Discovery Centre. It is a tremendous achievement for this young person, who is now working independently and confidently on various outputs. Their feedback report will be presented to the Leeds City Museum team so the entire site can benefit and feed into this work.



OUTCOME 5

We will have collections and heritage assets that are better known, better understood, and better cared for



ACE IP MET
All

435 +112%
Objects conserved

1225 +454%
Objects condition checked

446 +7%
Enquiries answered

6729 +518%
TMS records updated

3492 +789%
Records amended as a result of community input

423 +23%
New records created

68 +94%
Researchers accessing collections



At a glance

It has been a busy period for conservation and condition checking to prepare objects for exhibitions. Loans in and out have increased this quarter, including growth of the Picture Library membership.

Visitors to objects on loan out

130,445

Q2 25/26

96,886

Q2 24/25

+35%

Long Loans (12 months+)

182 out +0%

1001 in from 70 lenders +1%

Short Loans (up to 12 months)

293 out to 27 venues, 6 international +133%

2194 in from 210 lenders +158%

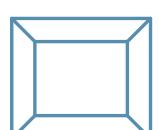
The Picture Library

Members Loans

447 580
2025/26 2025/26

414 522
2024/25 2024/25

+8% +11%
Members Artworks on loan



Headlines

Music Leeds Us exhibition at Leeds City Museum which opens in October has attracted an unprecedented **946** community loans.

New acquisitions connected to Music Leeds Us include drum sticks from Gang of Four, a setlist from Yard Act's gig outside the museum on Millennium Square and the first objects representing hardcore punk.

Connecting with September being known as spider season in UK homes, LMG's Curator of Natural Science was in the press talking about our spider collection, including BBC coverage.

An Operations and Maintenance Manual for Leeds Industrial Museum has been generated through the MEND project and will assist in understanding and caring for the site into the future.

Locomotives from the collection at Leeds Industrial Museum have been moving back into the Locomotive Shed which has been significantly improved through the MEND project. The space will be further developed as a gallery for visitor engagement.



In Focus

LMG's major project, On the Pitch, Off the Pitch: Sporting Heritage in Leeds, funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund successfully concluded in August.

The project set out to increase the representation of sports in LMG's collection and our city, create connections between the collections and the public realm, and recognise the important role sport plays in the culture of the Leeds. The project was guided by a volunteer Steering Group working closely with the Project Curator.

Together with our community partners we have created 15 oral histories, five films and five murals around the city; collected 120 objects; hired two full time members of staff for one year each; given paid opportunities to five artists, five photographers and five film makers; worked with 33 volunteers and engaged with approximately 400 community partners.

As a legacy from the project elements of the updated sports collection will go on display in the Community Cases on the Leeds Story Gallery at Leeds City Museum from late October into 2026.





OUTCOME 6

We will have international reputation and reach

At a glance

This quarter colleagues have welcomed international visitors, presented at an international conference and sent loans out to venues around the world. We also ran a workshop at the Eurocities Culture Forum hosted by Brno, one of Leeds' twin cities.

ACE IP MET
All

Headlines

LMG has displayed loans from the Netherlands for Miffy's 70th Birthday exhibition at Leeds City Museum and from Amsterdam, Switzerland, France, Netherlands, New York and Chicago for the exhibition *To Improvise a Mountain: Lynette Yiadom-Boakye Curates at Leeds Art Gallery*.

Leeds Industrial Museum hosted numerous groups of foreign exchange students from across Europe during the summer months.

A visit by a cohort of 17 Dutch cultural policy officers from across the Netherlands to Leeds Art Gallery was hosted in September, including a tour with the Principal Keeper and time finding out about the gallery's community programme during a Meet and Make session.

In September, our Head of Service visited Brno, met with the director of the Civic Museums of Brno and led a workshop on the creation of a heritage framework for Leeds at the [Eurocities Culture Forum](#) which was being hosted in the Czech city, twinned with Leeds.

The Project Curator presented at the international Museum Next Digital Summit in September with colleagues from Art UK on Using Digital To Preserve Fleeting Heritage around public murals based on their experience of creating five murals around Leeds for the On the Pitch, Off the Pitch project.

Headlines

As a result of hearing about the Music Leeds Us exhibition, Gang of Four, a band who originated in Leeds and now live around the world, got in touch to donate drum sticks and a signed 7" single to the collection.

Susan Hiller's Monument, Colonial version, 1980-81 has travelled to The Museum of Contemporary Photography in Chicago for the forthcoming exhibition 'Channeling: body ←Image→ viewer' which includes photography, video, and installations that memorialise, bear witness and pay tribute to our humanity.

Other international loans from LMG's collection are out at venues in Lanuvio and Passariano in Italy, Chemnitz in Germany and Versailles in France.



In Focus

On 24th September Mr Nylander, Co-ordinator at the Sierra Leone National Railway Museum (SLNRM) and Helen Ashby, Founding Chair of the Friends of SLNRM visited Leeds Industrial Museum.

On the occasion of the SLNRM's 20th anniversary, they presented a plaque to us to mark our continuing support for the museum in Freetown. LMGs' Curator of Industrial History showed the visitors progress in the newly refurbished locomotive shed and some of the Hunslet Engine Company architectural drawings.

Leeds Industrial Museum has enjoyed a fruitful partnership with SLNRM since 2015. Several Leeds companies made railway equipment for the Sierra Leone Government Railway. The early exports to Sierra Leone were handled through the Crown Agents, the body responsible for co-ordinating the supply equipment with former colonised territories within the former British Empire.

The earliest of these locomotives was made in 1915 by Manning Wardle, based in the Hunslet district of Leeds. This locomotive now at the SLNRM has been formally 'twinned' with Leeds Industrial Museum's 1888 Manning Wardle locomotive 'Aldwyth'. The Hunslet Engine Company and Hudswell Clarke were the major suppliers of locomotives throughout the life of the railway. Robert Hudson & Co. of Gildersome made large numbers of wagons for different uses, including diamond mining and military use during World War Two.

LMGs' Curator of Industrial History received an Art Fund Jonathan Ruffer grant to visit SLNRM in 2020 as part of their 15th anniversary celebrations.



Quarterly Report

2025/6 Q2