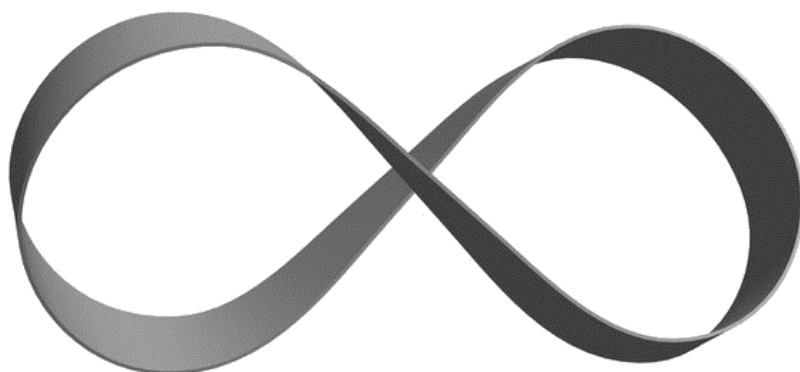


Research into suitable skills sharing models for the London museums sector



Report for the London Museum Development service

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Executive Summary

1. Skills sharing models across the sector can be categorised into these four areas:
 - a. Formal models
 - b. Informal models
 - c. Peer to peer (personal)
 - d. Peer to peer (networks)
2. Informal and peer to peer models of skills sharing appear to be more effective and meet the needs of the current museum workforce more effectively.
3. Skill sharing needs to be embedded within the sector at all levels, so it becomes second nature to share.
4. Museum Development Services across the country, and their skills sharing offers, need to be more ambitious in scope, be prepared to take risks, and deliver activities that are informative, engaging, and enjoyable. This will help them meet the needs of the workforce and react quickly to emerging trends, needs, and external pressures on the workforce.
5. Networks are an essential aspect of skills sharing. Working with and supporting existing and emerging networks will help skills sharing across the London region and help develop sustainability within the networks.
6. Peer to peer (personal) models of skills sharing are very successful and demand for them is high. The Museum Development Service should help to facilitate these and explore ways they can be achieved at relatively low cost to the organisations and people involved.
7. The Museum Development Officers are uniquely positioned within the region as they have regular interactions with museums and the workforce across the whole of London. This 'intelligence' needs to be more effectively used to identify areas of skills gaps and emerging skills needs.
8. Skills sharing in collaboration with the London Museum Development Team needs to become more integrated within the culture of the Museum of London. There is also scope for more skills sharing support and collaboration from the other Major Partner Museum, The Horniman Museum, and the museum sector National Portfolio Organisation, The William Morris Gallery.

Background & Context

Whilst preparing its bid to Arts Council England (ACE), to continue as provider of Museum Development Services for London in 2015-18, the existing service based at the Museum of London undertook a consultation with the sector on the current

state and future development of the Museum Development programme within the region. One of these exercises was a questionnaire-based survey and report, the other was a large consultation meeting run by London Museums Group (LMG – the federation representing museums in London).

One of the observations from the research, arising particularly from the open meeting held by LMG, was that London Museum Development Officers (MDOs) could do more to support skills sharing. For the purposes of this report ‘skills-sharing’ is defined as:

“the workforce sharing skills with each other freely or at very low cost. Skills-sharing could take a very wide variety of forms – individuals setting up free sessions for others on specific topics, practitioners freely offering sessions or relevant venues/tours as part of more formal training events, museum networks inviting guest speakers, museums opening out their own in-house training, observation sessions, peer mentoring/peer to peer support, etc.”

To investigate this issue, the LMG Committee and Museum Development service jointly arranged a meeting with the manager of ‘Share East’, the East of England programme which is often regarded as the beacon of best practice in museums sector skills-sharing. There is recognition on the part of LMG and ACE that London Museum Development, with its much smaller staff complement, would not be able to deliver or support a skills-sharing programme of wide ranging size and scope. However, there was agreement that an ACE-funded piece of research should be commissioned by the London Museum Development service to identify appropriate skills-sharing models for London, given the museum sector structures existing there and the capacity of both the Museum Development team and volunteer LMG members.

Museum Development Services and their skills sharing activities vary greatly around the country. This is a result of funding arrangements and agreed regional priorities with Arts Council England, and existing regional and local provisions within museum development regions. It must also be recognised that although the MLA Council’s Renaissance programme was wound down in 2011 with closure of the MLA Council, there are still echoes of the provision it supported and the structures it created throughout museum development provision in England.

With this in mind one should consider how effective and efficient skills sharing models could be delivered by services. There is no one size fits all, as by its nature, museum development services and the skills sharing activities they undertake need to respond to the needs of the regional stakeholders.

The ability of museum development services to conduct skills sharing activities is also dictated by their size. In some areas the museum development services are very small but effective, in others, such as the East of England region, they are well developed and financed services that integrate into existing Local Authority museum

development provision, and in others, such as in London, the service is of medium size to meet the needs of the capital but does not have Local Authority support.

Methodology

The London Museums Development Team commissioned Paddy McNulty to explore how different models of skills sharing were being used across the sector. This research is designed to enable the Museums Development Team to evaluate their current skills sharing models and see whether they are meeting the needs of museums and their workforce in London, and explore new models or approaches to skills sharing over the 2015-2018 period.

The time frame for the project was very short. The methodology was to interview and consult with key strategic organisations, Museum Development Services, Major Partner Museums, and regional networks to discover what skills sharing models they used, what they thought was most effective, and what support could the Museum Development Officers in London provide to help facilitate skills sharing.

Despite the short time frame the project had strong support from the sector and over four weeks 27 face-to-face and telephone interviews were conducted, 2 online responses collected, and information was provided on skills sharing from a range of agencies, organisations, and museums.

More detailed information from the interviews and consultation can be found in Appendix 1.

Identified skills sharing models within the sector

There are a wide range of skills sharing models being deployed across the sector. These can be broadly categorised into the following:

- a) **Formal models** – ‘traditional’ base models of training delivered usually in half or one day courses (though this can be longer depending on subject). These offer delegates structured learning opportunities and can be of great value in practical skills development, such as collections care, documentation, etc. They tend to be cost intensive per delegate (cost of course/number of delegates), as they are by nature small (≤ 20 delegates)
- b) **Informal models** – These can range from workshops, through to seminars and site visits. The main aspect of informal models is that attendees are there to hear about and share experiences, skills, techniques, and strategies. There are a wide range of formats that this can be done in, including more ‘structured’ events with presenters, panel discussions, and question and answer sessions; or facilitated models such as Action Learning Sets; these informal models also include site visits to

museums to see best practice in action and to share skills on-site. All of these informal models require some form of facilitation to help them get established although as they are more informal in nature, they are more flexible and can address a range of skills and development opportunities. They are successful with larger audiences (≤ 60 attendees) and can be delivered in a range of venues. Utilising existing networks can be very successful as they can provide intelligence on members (and the sector's) needs, access to venues and speakers (including those from outside of the sector).

- c) **Peer to peer models (personal)** – This includes mentoring, work shadowing, observation, placements, and secondments. Peer to peer models can bring great benefits to those involved as they provide participants with the opportunity to have discussions and share skills on a one-to-one basis. There are successful existing programmes undertaken within and between Nationals (and some large Local Authority museums and museum trusts). An essential part of any peer-to-peer model is the role of a central facilitator or brokers. There needs to be a person/organisation who has the oversight to match the needs of the participants and ensure that the relationship is developed. There is a demand for more peer-to-peer models to be supported as many people within the sector see it as an effective route to share and learn skills as well as continue their professional development
- d) **Peer to peer networking.** This includes formal constituted networks – such as the London Museums Group and the London Museums of Health and Medicine group – and informal groups - such as the Central London Historic Collections Group and the West London Museums Group. These networks provide the sector, and the MDO team, access to a wide range of museums and individuals and already have communication and facilitation structures in place. At present the MDO team are not represented on all of the groups (and it would not be feasible to do so) and when they are, they usually play a more passive role, mainly updating the groups on the MD programmes. There is a desire for more two-way communication between the groups and the Museum Development Team in how they can work together - whether this be in the form of support for a group, the MDOs facilitating and supporting events and training, or where the group may be carrying out activities that may be of interest to the wider sector (and thus using the MDOs as a conduit to the wider sector).

Findings

In addition to identifying the models currently used by the sector, a number of other findings were also identified that contribute to our understanding of the sector's current skills sharing planning, facilitation, and delivery. These are:

1. **Informal skills sharing** opportunities were highlighted as the most effective and cost-efficient means within the sector. The format these sessions take is very flexible and it is in this flexibility that is their strength. The opportunity to provoke discussion and facilitate the sharing of knowledge and skills were the features that interviewees highlighted. Additionally they provide the opportunities to meet a wide range of people face to face (and not just from within the sector), helping people build contacts, supportive peers, and new networks.

Informal skills sharing events and opportunities can be supported by existing and developing museum networks and it is likely that these networks will know the needs of their members well; the support they are likely to need from Museum Development Officers is in facilitation and communication with the wider sector and workforce.

2. **Peer to peer skills sharing** in the form of work shadowing, observation, placements, or mentoring were identified in many of the practitioners interviews as being one of the most beneficial ways for developing and sharing skills. The key to success with this form of skills sharing is having a broker/facilitator who people can approach to help form the initial relationship. This is relatively easy for those in larger organisations where they have a range of staff and back-office support to do this.

Work programmes for placements/shadowing and mentor training are required to make this successful. There is scope for this to be supported by Museum Development Officers but the amount of co-ordination involved must be identified in the first instance and plans put in place to develop such a scheme in the long term to make it sustainable.

Action Learning Sets have been successful within the Nationals and apart from initial setting up and facilitation, have the potential to be an effective skill sharing activity that could support museums in the region.

3. **Skills banks** (as developed by Renaissance South East before 2010), can help provide a baseline of the workforce skills within a region and could help to match people together but are resource intensive and become out of date very quickly.
4. The Museum Development Officers are ideally placed to be the **facilitators of skills sharing** as well as the programmers. With increased pressure on the resources of the Museum Development team there is scope for them to move beyond programming skills sharing events and offering advice. With their broad knowledge and overview of the sector and its workforce they have the potential to become brokers or facilitators between museums/networks/individuals with skills strengths and needs.

5. **Networks** were considered to be a vital resource to facilitate skills sharing. All of the networks that were consulted are keen to work more closely with the MDOs to help skill sharing across the region. The MDOs have a unique position within the region as they have knowledge, experience and contacts across London, not just within a museum's specialist area, locality, or workforce. It was suggested that the MDOs could become more proactive in working with networks to identify the skills they have, need, and what could be shared. Similarly, practical support in communicating each networks work and events to the wider sector could be supported by the MDOs.
6. It is apparent from the interviews that successful skills sharing – in any format – is achieved through having an **ambitious programme**, taking risks, learning from failures, and thinking long term, but with a degree of flexibility that allows museum development services to react to their regional needs quickly. The MDOs have access to a wide range of museums, support organisations, and individuals and this sector 'intelligence' should be used so that skills sharing plans and activities are developed in a creative and ambitious manner.
7. Successful skills sharing comes from being **embedded within the workforce's and organisations' cultural outlook** and the MDOs can support this. To enable this cultural change within individuals and organisations, Museum Development can offer carrots -grants and discrete projects- and sticks – recipients of grants and support being required to contribute to skills sharing in the region; this contribution could and should be in a format that suits the recipients and sector, such as contributing to training sessions, informal sessions, writing articles or blog pieces, providing site visits, etc. There is little impact on the recipients' resources to offer further skills sharing to the wider sector and it helps Museum Development services achieve a wider impact. To make this work the MDOs must have the confidence to follow up with recipients to make sure they deliver further skills sharing. Over the long term the idea of receiving support from the MDOs and giving support back to the sector becomes embedded within the workforce. This has been particularly successful in the East of England regions (SHARE East), helping them to continue to develop a cost effective skills sharing offer.
8. **National Museums** can help deliver and facilitate skills sharing – they have a concentration of expertise that is on the doorstep of London museums. They, National Museums Directors' Council (NMDC), and the MTN (formerly the Museum Trainers Network) want to encourage this flow of knowledge across museums in the sector and such flows of knowledge can be of mutual benefit to all participating museums. In addition to this many National museums already deliver successful training, peer-to-peer skills sharing, and leadership and management development programmes to their staff and thus have expertise in delivering these skills sharing models. Further collaborations between the Nationals, the Museum Development Service, and regional museums should be explored, supported, facilitated and/or

developed by the MDOs, but is important to realise that they are more likely to be successful if they also meet the strategic goals of the Nationals.

9. **Management and leadership skills** are developed within the Nationals and larger museums (and those museums that are part of other organisations, eg Local Authority museums, university museums, and museums in larger charities or professional organisations) but there is little scope for smaller independent museums to develop staff in this way. It would be beneficial to the museums and their staff in the region to access existing provision but this may be problematic in terms of suitable programmes. Exploring this provision and whether it is feasible for smaller museums to access it (and for larger organisations to facilitate access) is an area that could be explored in more detail over the forthcoming eighteen months.
10. **Digital resources and learning** are of growing importance to the sector. There is a need to embed the concept that museums and their workforce need to more fully comprehend the extent to which these technologies will continue to impact on practice, and how they can be used to facilitate skills sharing in the future. The Learning Team at the Museum of London have shown their increasing potential to provide leadership to the sector in the use of digital technologies. The London Museum Development Team is already working closely with them on skills sharing as part of a new digital programme.

Findings from Museum of London

11. The Museum Development Service have, over the 2012-15 period, run a range of successful skills sharing programmes that have had a direct beneficial impact on the museums and participants involved. The programmes have included formal training on Accreditation, and targeted programmes such as the Income Generation support programme, Marketing Support grants, Share London Skills Sharing grants, and Survive and Thrive.

Particularly successful has been the peer programme as part of the Survive and Thrive resilience programme. Many of those who have benefited from the programme have gone on to volunteer their time as peers, mentoring other museums, and some have gone on to provide extra help beyond this, helping the sector to thrive and be supportive. Finding more ways to acknowledge and celebrate this voluntary peer support might encourage more to give their time.

The Museum Development Team hosted by the Museum of London originated from the Renaissance Hub Museum Development Team. This has meant that, to some extent, the team and their activities are still seen as outside of the core functions of the Museum of London. A knock-on effect of this is that the role of Museum of London staff in assisting and working with the London Museum Development Team to deliver and facilitate skills

sharing across the region has sometimes proved difficult. The senior management team at the Museum of London recognise this and are looking at embedding a regional skills sharing ethos throughout the departments. This would be of great benefit to the Museum Development Team and the sector as a whole.

The Learning Department and Collections Care departments have a wide range of skills that can, and are, being shared regionally. The Collection Care and Conservation department has a dedicated regional development officer and its collections care and conservation courses are very popular and effective. It is working on ways to meet the needs of the region through both their own and other MDO programmes. The Fusion training – mixed half a day documentation training with half a day of collections care training – is being trialled in 2015-16 and could be an interesting addition to some more formal training programmes already delivered by the MDOs.

The Learning Department within the Museum of London has been developing skills and experience in a number of areas and are keen to share these with the wider sector. They already support the informal Secondary Schools Network, Special Educational Needs Network, and Early Years Network and there is scope to work with these networks to deliver some form of skills sharing events to the wider sector and those not active but with an interest in these Networks' work. Here the use of regional based networks – such as LMG – would be of assistance to the MDO.

The Learning Department have also been leading developers for digital learning within the sector. Whilst their capacity to support the sector in the same fashion as before has decreased, in particular with Blended Learning techniques, there is scope within the department for them to work with the MDOs and the wider sector and contribute to skills sharing activities around Online Learning. In addition to this the department has developed interpretation work for schools based on the prehistory and Roman collections – this may be of value to museums in the region that hold such collections but are unsure how to utilise them successfully in the Learning programmes.

The Collections and Conservation department at the Museum of London have a well-developed skills sharing programme and a regional development officer for collections and conservation within its staff structure. Their support for the region covers practical training (one day courses and programmes), regular evaluation of the region's needs, and digital resources. Their Collection Cleaning Course is a ten week course (1 day per week) that is over subscribed and people/organisations must bid to attend; this demonstrates that there is a real practical need for collections care training within the region. The Regional Collections Care team are keen to expand their offer and are exploring ways to enable more opportunities to access their training.

The Visitor Services Team are actively engaged with skills sharing and encourage their staff to offer informal advice, attend and support networks, and try and develop work shadowing opportunities. These activities not only help upskill the sector but also contribute to the professional development of members of the Visitor Services team within the Museum of London. A key aspect of success in their skills sharing activities was the understanding that it is people who make up these networks and offer the opportunities for sharing, and that one cannot underestimate the value and importance of face to face contact.

The Museum of London is not the only ACE funded major museum within the region. The Horniman Museum is also a Major Partner Museum, and the William Morris Gallery recently gained National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) funding to work with contemporary artists. If these three museums in receipt of major funding from ACE can work more actively together to develop and share skills across the region, there will be a benefit not only for these museums but also for the regional workforce and museums, although there may be barriers to further collaborative working due to organisational structures and cultures.

Recommendations

1. Informal skills sharing events should be developed and facilitated by the Museum Development Officers. Working in conjunction with existing networks to identify themes, speakers, panels, and venues; thought provoking and challenging events can help start conversation between delegates and museums, and lead to a better flow of knowledge than more formal 'traditional' training. Informal training events should also be enjoyable, and they don't always have to be in the traditional 9 to 5 structure – if there is something/someone people want to see, hear, or do, they will come.
2. Make it a requirement that museums and staff receiving more targeted supported from the MDOs, contribute to skills sharing activities in the region. This already happens with Survive and Thrive, but could also apply to other programmes. This could be by contributing to (informal) events, being peers or mentors, writing articles or blogs for the LMG website or the museums weekly e-update, hosting site visits, speaking at conferences, etc. It is vital that these skills sharing requirements are met just as much as budget and reporting requirements are. The long term effect will be that skills sharing becomes more embedded within individual and organisational culture and lead to more sustainable (and unsupported) skills sharing.
3. To continue to be relevant and ensure that they meet the needs of their stakeholders, museum development services across the country need to be

ambitious and be prepared to take risks in planning, support, and activities. This was a strong message from interviewees across the sector. The MDOs should try to do new and exciting things to help share skills and inspire the sector. This could be as simple as taking the sector out of its comfort zone by using new venues, controversial speakers, or getting other sectors to tell us how they are successful. One of the main things is that if one doesn't ask or try, one will never know if it could have been a success. There are risks involved, but learning from when things didn't go to plan helps develop more successful events, programmes, and support in the future; and helps to deliver a fresh, engaging and enjoyable range of support and activities to the sector and other stakeholders.

4. Support and work with networks to help deliver skills sharing. The different networks across the region had different foci but are an important resource - the MDOs can help these networks share their expertise with the wider sector. There may be a risk that the MDOs could be perceived as trying to 'lead' the networks but this is low. Many of these networks are keen to share and work with the MDOs for the wider benefit of the sector, and the MDOs must have the confidence to grab these opportunities. The MDOs should liaise with the different networks to explore the ways in which they can help facilitate skills sharing between them and the wider sector – whether this is in improved communications, utilising networks' existing skill strengths for the benefit of the sector, or helping to support and develop networks to increase their membership and sustainability. It is the wide range of networks – from geographical, subject specialist, through to wider museum foci specific and wider regional sector networks – that present skills sharing opportunities for the sector and the MDOs.

In certain localities museums are contemplating the formation of new geographical networks. Given the enthusiasm of the sector for MDOs to work proactively and take a lead, it is logical for these new networks to consider names or boundaries which are consistent with MDO areas, so that structures are as simple as possible for all to follow.

5. Peer to peer skills sharing in the form of work shadowing, observation, placements, or mentoring is in demand. The risk here is that the resources required to recruit mentors and host organisations and matching them with partners may outweigh the benefit to the sector. This could be addressed by encouraging the Horniman Museum, as a Major Partner Museum, and The William Morris Gallery, as a National Portfolio Organisation, to work more closely with the Museum of London and the Museum Development Team to develop and deliver skills sharing activities, especially as there are five sites and a range of expertise between them.

6. There are 12¹ National Museums in the London region that have a wealth of skills and expertise that could benefit the region's museums and workforce. The MDOs are already engaged with the Nationals and some of their training networks (eg MTN) but more could be done to explore how best this engagement can be translated into practical support. The Nationals are keen to assist in this area, and it makes sense for museums and museum development services to make use of their 'local' National; but there needs to be more strategic alignment with what the Nationals' goals are and what they can do achieve these goals whilst supporting the Museum Development Service and skills sharing within the London region. One area where Nationals may be well placed to offer support and potential people is in peer-to-peer skills sharing models, such as mentoring, work-shadowing, and action learning sets. The MDOs should explore whether more of the regional museums can access these activities within, or in partnership with National museums.
7. The knowledge the MDO's have, and will gather, through their everyday interactions with museums, agencies, networks, etc is unquantifiable but one that needs to be utilised so that the team can respond to what the sector needs. By listening to their stakeholders and discussing (as a team) emerging trends the MDOs could programme, support, and facilitate skills sharing opportunities much more flexibly and efficiently, evolving from skills sharing programmers to facilitators to meet the needs of their stakeholders.
8. The London Museum Development Team aims and objectives need to become more embedded within the ethos of the Museum of London as a whole; and their work recognised as being of importance to the other Major Partner Museum in the region, The Horniman Museum and museums with NPO status, such as the William Morris Gallery. This would allow them to access and utilise a wider range of expertise from across the region for the benefit of the sector in London. It would also have benefits through sharing skills across museums and departments; demonstrating to the sector in London that the regional MPMs/NPO are taking a position on leading and disseminating best practice. If necessary, Arts Council England is happy to facilitate more regional MPM/NPO collaboration.

¹ Multiple site Nationals, such as the Tate, have been included as one entity

Appendix:

Interviews and notes

In total 27 people were interviewed, with an additional two people completing questions online.

The interviewees can be placed into five broad categories, as defined below, and individual responses have been collated under these categories to aid analysis.

Please be aware that the interviewers points/notes have been collated here and there may be duplication. The points noted here are not within their narrative context but are recorded to demonstrate evidence for the findings and recommendations.

It may be of additional value for the London Museums Development Team to carry out their own analysis of the points taking into account their deeper knowledge of the strategic and budgetary direction of the team for 2015-18.

National Museums

- National Museums can share skills (beyond exhibition and loans) with the wider museum sector and want to do so
- NMDC can help facilitate skills sharing and are keen on developing wider sector skills; but will have their own strategic priorities. Matching these would result in mutually beneficial skills sharing projects
- Museums should utilise their local (nearest) National/NMDC museum
- The sector should start to consider how it can encourage existing staff and new entrants to the sector to think beyond their current specialist areas and realise that there are a wider set of skills that are needed by museum professionals, in particular in smaller to medium sized museums where people often take on a variety of roles and tasks beyond their job description.
- A museums 'CPD' curriculum for the sector would provide a good grounding that would meet the needs of modern museums and benefit staff, volunteers, and the sector over the longer term (though there is no actual provider strategically developing this). This should include:
 - Digital skills and knowledge (including the digital strategy)
 - Collections Care
 - Interpretation and engagement
 - Business skills – accounts, people management, contract management
 - Business skills – encouraging innovation and development, risk taking, and new initiatives
- Work placements/shadowing have been very successful in developing staff and organisations skills.

- Work placement/shadowing opportunities are low cost but time intensive – they require someone to facilitate the placements/shadowing and negotiate the aims and objectives of the participants. A MDO may be well placed to do this on a regional level through their knowledge of the different museums, and people’s strengths and development needs.
- Mentoring can provide long term benefits to those involved at a relatively low cost. If backfilling is not required (as organisations and participants should see it as an organisational, as well as personal, development opportunity) the only cost is in mentor training and time. As with placements the real catalyst to success is a knowledgeable and effective broker (ie an MDO)
- Action Learning Sets are very effective ways for small groups of professionals to share skills, solve problems, and develop themselves. They require help in being set up and participants must commit to attending them. Once established they should be able to become self-sustaining as they are low cost and low resource.
- London museums are relatively poor in their engagement with the ‘local’ Nationals and this should not be the case. The Nationals would like to know what the London museums actually want and this can only happen if they talk to them.
- London based National Museums are looking at how their regional programmes can address London museums needs; there has been a tendency for London based National Museums to not realise that London museums are also regional museums, there has been an out of London focus.
- If regional museums can work in partnership with National Museums they may be able to develop programmes and offers to funders that will be to mutual benefit – for instance The British Museum’s Museum Pathways project.
- National Museums have great resources to develop leadership skills within their own staff and thus develop their own staff internally. There must be many regional museums with middle or senior management who could benefit from leadership development – is this something that museum development services could address?

Museum Development Services, Major Partner Museums, leading regional museums

- Establishing and nurturing a successful regional skills sharing programme takes time (2 to 3 years).
- Make use of experienced and ‘keen to share’ sector professionals to inspire other professionals to skills share.
- You need a co-ordinator, one person/team who is the ‘broker’ between the sector and its workforce and the skills providers/sharers.
- Skills sharing needs to be a priority – working to make it work – so that it’s embedded within everything the MD Service does; and embedded within the sector and its workforce. Skills sharing should become second nature.

- Skills sharing is more than events – it includes blogs, articles, encouragement, and signposting.
- Skills sharing can be encouraged by making sure that skills sharing terms and conditions are embedded in all MD grants/support, and the MD team need to make sure it really does happen by chasing people up – this could be in the form of formal training, informal skills sharing/museum visits, writing blogs/articles for the MD site, speaking at conferences, writing articles for updates/newsletters.
- Skills banks can be useful for MDOs as they help identify professionals/volunteers within the sector who are willing to share and can be used by MDOs to facilitate peer-to-peer skills sharing.
- Skills banks can provide a baseline of the skills in the sector and skills gaps at the time of creation. They are hard to keep up to date and require resources – people/time/budget - to do this on an on-going basis. It is also difficult to gather a true evaluation of the resource.
- Supporting existing networks is a cost effective and efficient way to facilitate skills sharing across regions. The networks have the contacts and knowledge to know what is needed and what will work. Support can be in many forms – including practical support by sourcing venues and speakers, supporting the development and sustainability of the network (MDOs can help organise meeting, get new members, etc for embryonic or small networks), providing financial support for networks to deliver shared (MD and network) skills sharing priorities.
- The past model of formal training is becoming more difficult to justify in terms of cost and effectiveness. More informal skills sharing models – open space, informal workshops/seminars, action learning, etc – can be more successful and be accessed by more people. MDOs can help in the organisation of these informal models.
- Informal does not mean unfocused – have a theme as a focus to build informal sessions round.
- Don't duplicate/recreate – signpost to other organisations if they are doing something the sector needs. Signposting is a vital part of MD support to the sector –MDOs have a wider overview of the sector and what is going on, the museums don't.
- Try not to think within the bubble of museums/cultural heritage – look across the sectors and see where skills can be shared and learnt.
- MDOs should facilitate skills sharing between the workforce rather than programme it. Be led by the workforce's needs, not think you can lead them
- MDO skills sharing models/programmes/support should be creative. The MDOs are in a position where they can take risks – try something new – and they need to do so.
- It's not just professionals (paid staff) who have skills to share but also volunteers – their experience and skills are often overlooked.
- Volunteers are increasingly a vital part of all museums operations – their skills needs have to be met and recognised for the benefit of the organisations they volunteer for in the wider sector.

- Larger museums and MPMs have a responsibility to share skills and promote best practice – these ideals should be instilled within all senior/middle management across the museums.
- It is increasingly difficult for smaller/medium museums to justify releasing staff to attend events – consider truly half day events (ie. no lunch – people are okay with this) or events starting later (post 3pm) and finishing later (post 6pm)
- Renaissance funding developed an expectation within the sector that training is provided free, or below cost. This is not feasible in the current economic climate (or in future economic predictions). MD Services have a responsibility to help the sector realise this.
- MD Services should inspire the sector to skills share and be honest with the sector itself that it needs to develop sustainable skills sharing models – there might not be much in the terms of MD provision post 2018 (2016 possibly as this is post-election)
- Theme>Focus>Learn>Upskill>Share – Repeat. Ripple out learning from the centre.
- Shadowing and placement opportunities are being requested by the sector and we (MD Service North East) are looking at how to support and facilitate this.
- Supporting regional networks is vital (MD NE)
- The MDO role in facilitating relationships between different types of museums, organisations, sectors, and stakeholders is a key part of promoting successful skills sharing throughout a region.

Strategic and professional organisations

- Informal training is more effective for smaller museums – it gives them the opportunity to meet, learn, and share at the same time; especially as formal training is expensive per head. MDOs can help facilitate this.
- Work shadowing and placements can be useful, but for the smaller museums this may not be feasible as a member of staff would have to be off-site.
- Mentoring can be very successful – there is a need to invest in training for mentors but once this is done, mentors and mentees can meet at any time and in any place at their convenience.
- MDOs should support networks with a light touch approach and support them, not manage them.
- Invest in people - the MDOs – give them knowledge and skills to help the London museums. If they are well prepared and can support, signpost, and match people/skills/museums, they will be successful.
- Attaching skills sharing requirements to smaller grant or projects will help people share.
- Museum Development needs to be ambitious – without this it may stagnate
- A desire to take risks and programme and facilitate skills sharing accordingly will help the dynamism of skills sharing within the region.

- The three London Major Partner Museums should work together to lead the sector with the Museum Development team able to facilitate this. ACE is there to help with this if there are stumbling blocks.
- All museums in London are London Museums, and this includes Nationals. There is a concentration of National Museums in the region with which the Museum Development Team should liaise, to help facilitate skills sharing between them and the regional museums.
- Work with the existing networks – LMG is a great resource and partner, not just formally but informally.
- Skills sharing is not just about sharing existing knowledge and skills – it can be used to provoke debate, start conversations, challenge people and help them make connections and thus share and address the challenges they and their museums face.
- Modern skills sharing should be enjoyable and have something to offer beyond the ‘traditional’ formal training models.
- Museums are under pressure – financially and resource wise – by making skills sharing events something people want to go to they can be delivered either at the end of the day or outside of office hours.
- Increasing use of online resources, or signposting to these, is important. There is an increase in the uptake of personal CPD through MOOCs (Massive Online Open Courses), Ted talks, iTunes U, etc.

Museum networks

- There is a mixture of formal (constituted) and informal networks; all are networks for debating members needs and concerns.
- Smaller and specialised networks (eg Health and Medicine) will have a concentration of skills within them that are easily accessed by the members but could be of benefit to the wider sector –MDOs can work with the networks to see if this is the case.
- MDO representation at regional networks meetings can be beneficial - it can help networks to know about MD priorities, and conversely MDOs can discuss with networks how to contribute to the skills sharing needs of the sector.
- Networks are created and exist for many different reasons; and these can change over time.
- MDOs can support and help facilitate skills exchanges between networks and sector, although MDOs must be led by the network.
- MDOs should not duplicate existing work that networks do – MDOs need to liaise with networks to find out what they are doing; this could be by regular or occasional (eg AGM) attendance at meetings.
- Peer to peer support (mentoring/shadowing) is much easier to organise within a network – members already know each other.
- Management and leadership skills need to be developed by smaller museums but it is difficult for networks to meet these needs – is there a role for MDOs to help facilitate this? (exchange/learn from larger museums)

- Successful networks have a focus and dynamic members – this is the responsibility of the Chair and committee members (but can be supported by the MDOs).
- Networks can help MDOs facilitate skills sharing – they are vital and should be supported.
- MDO should ask the networks – what can we do to help you? It can be more beneficial than hearing about the MD team.
- Support isn't necessarily about money – support for communications, encouraging new members, identifying needs and strengths are also useful.
- Identify which networks suit priorities – LMG has a large and sector wide reach but has a less specialised identity; smaller networks – less reach but easier to identify specialised skills within – MDOs can facilitate skills sharing between small/large networks and the sector.
- The weekly update is one of the best ways to learn about what is going on (though the new style is generally thought to have not been a success) – it in itself is helping skills sharing; and smaller/specialised networks need to get details of their work on there more often.
- MDOs need to know about and signpost/promote all of the networks in London – not only in person but also on the website (new entrants won't necessarily know them all).
- MDOs need to instil the idea of continuing CPD to museum practitioners at all levels.
- Shadowing/placements would be great but are difficult to make happen – networks have members but could MDOs help facilitate cross-network opportunities?
- Formal training has a place for specialised or specific skills (especially conservation, for other skills informal methods are more successful).
- Something as simple as holding events in different museums and providing people with guided site visits helps share skills and get people to network.

NOTE: The London Museums of Health and Medicine network suggested that it might be beneficial for a MDO to attend their annual planning meeting.

Museum of London

- The Learning Department are keen to support skills sharing and see it as an important part of their work (especially as they are a MPM)
- Supports networks – Secondary school network, SEN (Special Education Needs) network, and Early Years network
- They want to share their expertise with the sector where possible
- There is an emphasis on developing skills sharing over the next 3 years
- Supported networks are not formal and help in peer-to-peer skills sharing
- Digital skills sharing – is being refocused due to reduced staffing and resources – especially Blended Learning offer

- Online learning is becoming more important – opportunity for the London museums to learn from the Museum of London online learning development (though this is supported by the MCG, GEM, DLNet networks – museum can and should utilise these networks)
- Opportunities for London museums to learn how the Museum of London uses its prehistory/Neolithic/Roman collections to delivery learning opportunities
- Learning departments key skills sharing areas are Secondary [school], SEN, Early Years, Digital (online learning experiences), and using collections (prehistory/Neolithic/Roman).
- Position of Museum Development needs changing – historically seen as outside of the Museum of London but they are not.
- Internal advocacy is needed with the Museum of London to make all departments realise the MD is part of the Museum of London and that the Museum of London staff need to contribute to regional MD programmes/skills sharing as part of their core work. Needs an internal shift in attitude so that the idea of skills sharing is embedded within managers' mind-sets (and consequently the people they manage).
- Skills sharing with the wider sector should be seen as of strategic benefit to all departments within the Museum of London – it helps the sector as a whole and also helps the Museum of London think beyond its own boundaries.
- MD can help the Museum of London connect with London museums and further engage with the regional sector.
- Mutually beneficial partnerships between the Museum of London and other museums helps share skills and facilitate the flow of knowledge in both directions.
- The Museum of London has many specialist skills - MD can help in getting these specialist skills out to the region – MD can match skills/people/networks/ museums. MDOs can support networks to access these skills.
- Regional conservation team embedded within the Conservation & Collection Care department – is the key to its success
- Trying to provide a fully developed offer – not only in training delivered/ offered but also in tracking and evaluating success and development needs re collections/conservation of the region.
- Offer goes beyond training & skills sharing to include practical assistance – including four freezers located in regional museums, online and CD-ROM guidance, and pocket guides. Also loan of equipment.
- Collection Cleaning Course (CCC) is very successful and is over subscribed (formal course: 6 museums + 2 LAARC vols)
- CCC delegates have created their own informal support and skill sharing network that continues – supported informally by Regional Collection Care Officer.
- Is there scope for collections training to be delivered together with other training, i.e. Accreditation training in morning session, collections based training in pm session? This 'Fusion' training could help upskill smaller

museums so that they would get the chance to attend collections based training at the same time as helping them achieve accreditation. (*NOTE – IMO not a bad idea*).

- Communication about opportunities needs to improve internally and externally – more working together between the Regional Museums Team and the Collections team.
- Developing contacts is an essential part of skills sharing.
- Networks of people are a key success to skill sharing, can these be supported?
- A lot of skills sharing is delivered free of charge and by goodwill. People need to be encouraged to share and be supported to share (i.e. SHARE East)
- “People in museums need forums which allow them to meet people doing similar roles. Once they have met they can then start to develop relationships which will allow for skill sharing”
- “I have worked in the sector in London for 7 years and I know of no formal networking groups. Everything I am involved with is informal and relies on the goodwill of the people involved to make it happen. If this was a bit more structured then I think it would happen a lot more and a lot more opportunities would arise. We can all learn from each other big and small and surely the important thing is to improve what we offer to our visitors so lets learn from each other. So if more work could be done to create networks that would be great.”

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MTN

Museum of London Group

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Central London Historic Collections Group

Orleans House Gallery

SHARE East

The British Museum

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