



Case Study

Dunollie House

WHY TAKE PART ?

The museum had never previously taken part in Takeover Day. Dunollie House took the opportunity to create a children's focus group, enabling staff to gain insight into how to display and interpret objects for local interest. The Learning and Events Officer also wanted to develop the relationship between the museum and local schools.

WHO TOOK PART ?

Twelve children, aged 11-14, from the High School (who all lived in a hostel but go home at the weekends), and seven children from a local primary school (aged 6-10), who had all been to the museum on a previous school visit.

WHAT DID THEY DO ?

Children worked as curators, surveying the museum and giving critical feedback on longstanding and new displays. They checked light and humidity levels and reviewed space in the stores.

HOW DID THEY SPEND THEIR TIME ON THE DAY ?

The Learning and Events Officer carried out two preliminary visits to the primary school during which the teachers alerted her to the needs of SEN/autistic spectrum students. During these visits, she discussed display methods and asked the students to bring valued objects from home which she then used to create a display for Takeover Day. She also visited the older students in their hostel and invited them to the museum. On Takeover Day itself students took on roles as:

- Curators – visiting the museum and giving critical feedback on displays, text and labelling
- Critics – reviewing the displays created from their own objects
- Technicians – checking light and humidity levels, using correct scientific equipment
- Conservators – attending the museum stores and assessing how objects are stored and acquisitioned

WHAT HAPPENED NEXT ?

Verbal feedback was given throughout the day and children wrote 'thank you' cards to express their delight that their opinions had been genuinely valued and acted upon. Teachers felt that the activities effectively linked to the school curriculum and the children's needs. Museum staff considered the day extremely successful, despite some initial reservations. The exhibition of the children's work remained on display as part of the *Oban Festival* for a further two weeks. Many families visited the museum during this period and Takeover Day created extensive local publicity for the museum and the local community.

As a result of the High School feedback, museum staff plan to:

- Create an object handling collection
- Be more self-critical when labelling and interpreting displays
- Build on and further develop their new relationship with the local primary and High School to develop new, enhanced links
- Invite High School students to form a focus group to find new ways to attract teenagers into the museum

'Takeover Day required lots of preparation but has been extremely worthwhile as the children benefited from participating in activities that addressed a wide range of abilities and learning styles' Learning and Events Officer