

How to set up a youth panel – ten top tips

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The Geffrye Museum's Youth Advisory Panel (known as YAP) is for young people aged 14-24 to help ensure the museum's building, exhibitions, programmes and marketing strategies are youth-friendly. This means the Young People's Programme is planned by and for young people, reflecting their interests, desire for skills development and creativity. Founded in 2009, the YAP is one of the most successful and long-running youth panels in the museum sector.

How is the Youth Advisory Panel run?

- **Recruitment** is through vInspired, social media, leaflets and the local borough Volunteer Centre.
Age of the group ranges from 14 to 24, and can be affected by funding.
- **Staff support** comes from the Education department, with input from other departments.
- **Costs** are around £50 per meeting for travel and food, with additional budget to make YAP ideas happen, including workshops, events and devising new leaflets.
- **Funding for YAP ideas** has come from Arts Council England, but could also come from vInspired, Arts Award, the Heritage Lottery Fund and other funders.

Ten top tips

- 1 **Have a range of ages, backgrounds and abilities.** Aim for at least six members at each meeting.
- 2 **Create the right atmosphere.** Make meetings friendly. Ask everyone to introduce themselves so new members feel welcome. Provide refreshments and reimburse travel expenses.
- 3 **Set an agenda** for each meeting. Have one staff member responsible for this. Follow up anything raised earlier so important things don't get dropped. Involve the panel early in any planning for events, projects or exhibitions. Then they feel included from the start and can see their ideas blossom.
- 4 **Listen to everyone's opinion** so they know their voice is being heard. Ask each in turn. Members can vote to take forward the ideas they like best.
- 5 **Balance fun with getting things done.** It's good to be social, but also have real outcomes and achievements.
- 6 **Use the ideas put forward** and encourage everyone to work on them as a team. If ideas are unrealistic or too expensive, be honest and explain why. Give the panel the chance to make changes and suggestions on how to make their ideas work.
- 7 **Give unique opportunities** such as photo shoots and going behind-the-scenes. This helps members see the collection as inspiration and feel rewarded for their contribution.
- 8 **Shout about it!** Let everyone in the museum know about the panel and boast about what it does. Give other staff and volunteers a chance to get involved. This means everyone is backing you.
- 9 **Support the panel** to gain new skills. Offer accreditation such as the vInspired Awards or Arts Awards, which recognises their work.
- 10 **Make the skills transferrable** by supporting young people to put their panel experience on their CVs, UCAS statements and job applications.

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What does the Youth Advisory Panel at the Geffrye do?

- **Programming** – planning 12 holiday workshops, one large-scale event for families and several events for young people each year with museum staff.
- **Marketing** – working with a design company on the quarterly Young People's Programme leaflet. They also help to update 'The Geffrye Young People's Page' on Facebook and @GeffryeYouth on Twitter.
- **Interpreting the museum's collection** – creating content for the Young People's Mobile Phone Audio Tour and holding handling sessions to come up with fresh ideas on how to interpret the collection.

What the Geffrye young people say

'It gives really good CV enhancing skills for the future, allowing us to have a unique work experience, that most people our age don't.'

'A Youth Advisory Panel encourages young people to creatively plan events which would generate a large audience.'

'Young people give a youthful and creative insight to improving the work of the museum and give it a youthful vibe and it gives them the opportunity to get their voice heard.'

'Having a Youth Advisory Panel is great because you can get a range of interesting ideas from young people as they are the best people to ask about workshops for young people and how to attract them.'

'Young people (who don't usually participate in community events) are given the opportunity to participate and get engaged in the community.'

'I really feel like our voices are being heard in this museum.'

What the Geffrye staff say

'Before the youth panel started programming the 11+ workshops, we had very low numbers of participants – often just one or two, now the workshops are frequently full. The panel come up with very innovative ideas and the participants really enjoy the variety of different skills they can learn through the sessions. This kind of consultation with young people is very important as they know what their age group would like to do at the museum and I truly believe this is why these workshops are so popular.'

'For the museum, the involvement of these young people in our daily work has brought fresh thinking and a new perspective on the role of the museum and its place in society. This programme has shown what can be achieved and how beneficial it can be for the young people themselves, for the staff and for our visitors.'

'The way the museum has engaged and involved young people has changed dramatically over the past four years and it's been a pleasure to be a part of it. I feel proud that working with young people to represent, interpret and make important choices about the museum has really made a difference to what we do and how we do it.'

Find out more...

www.geffrye-museum.org.uk/whatson/events/youth-events/ @GeffryeYouth

www.kidsinmuseums.org.uk

@kidsinmuseums

www.vinspired.com and www.artsaward.org.uk