

More than 370 museums and galleries eligible for DCMS/Wolfson Fund

- £4 million of new funding will improve displays, protect collections and make exhibitions more accessible
- Fund has provided more than £48 million to over 400 projects over the past 20 years

Museums and galleries across England are being encouraged to apply for a share of £4 million of new funding to improve displays, protect collections and make exhibitions more accessible to visitors.

The cash boost has been added to the joint DCMS/Wolfson Fund as the fund marks 20 years of the two organisations working together to support the arts and culture.

Both DCMS and the Wolfson Foundation will contribute an extra £2 million through their partnership as the government ramps up its plans to level up access to the arts and culture by improving collections and exhibitions in museums and galleries across the country.

Over the last 20 years the fund has awarded £48 million to over 400 projects at museums and galleries, with organisations including Manchester Museum and the Oriental Museum in Durham receiving grants to improve entrances and display exhibits in accessible ways.

Arts Minister Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay said:

This is a brilliant example of what can be achieved when public funding and private philanthropy come together. I encourage organisations from every part of the country to apply so we can support even more museums and galleries to make sure everyone has access to the incredible benefits of art and culture.

Chief executive of the Wolfson Foundation, Paul Ramsbottom said:

The collections of our outstanding museums and galleries tell us so much about our shared history and heritage. For over 20 years, we have worked with DCMS to support an impressive range of institutions to improve access to fascinating objects and art.

We are delighted to continue our longstanding partnership with DCMS and to announce another round of funding. This support will allow museums and galleries to enhance the display and interpretation of their collections, giving greater access and enjoyment for visitors.

Commissioner for Cultural Recovery & Renewal, Lord Mendoza said:

Museums and galleries work hard to serve communities across the country. This enduring and exemplary partnership between a leading charity and government provides a specially targeted £4 million to help museums and their professional staff improve collections, interpretation and access. It is heartening to see the effects of the last round on a broad range of recipients from Tullie House in Carlisle to the Sunderland Museum to SS Great Britain in Bristol.

The partnership has led to fascinating collections previously not on display being shown. Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery in Carlisle recently received £252,500 to conserve and display 40 outfits for the first time as part of a fashion exhibition looking at styles from the 18th century.

The fund has acted as a catalyst to encourage people to learn about their local history. In 2005, Strangers' Hall in Norwich received £31,000 to develop an interactive exhibition for school children on the Tudors. Thanks to its success, the museum secured further funding which led to it being able to extend its opening hours and increase visitor numbers.

Reyahn King, Chief Executive, York Museums Trust said:

DCMS/Wolfson Museums and Galleries Improvement Fund grants have supported us to carry out transformative work to our museums and galleries. At the Yorkshire Museum, the installation of 'Jurassic Yorkshire' enabled us to mount a high quality, interactive and technologically creative suite of new permanent galleries that attracted more visitors than at any time since York Museums Trust was founded in 2002. Support for York Art Gallery's redevelopment in 2013 assisted us to hugely increase our display and exhibition space and establish CoCA, the Centre of Ceramic Art. We also received support towards our permanent 'Shaping the Body' exhibition at York Castle Museum, which examines our costume and social history collections through the contemporary lens of body image.

Sarah Newman, Manager, Russell-Cotes Art Gallery and Museum, said:

At the Russell-Cotes Art Gallery and Museum, a Victorian villa overlooking the Bournemouth coast, we were awarded £115,174 by DCMS/Wolfson which enabled us to leverage further funding and deliver a major project to redisplay and reinterpret three historic rooms (two bedrooms and our unique 1920 Japanese museum-in-a-museum). We have been able to create a new way of interacting with these once forgotten and out of date rooms. Visitors now appreciate these rooms for their original function and glorious views and regularly compliment us on it. It is no exaggeration to say that it

has transformed our visitor experience, delivering a fitting and compelling experience, beyond even our expectations. It is wonderful that this particular funding stream has been renewed as it enables museums to make significant, sustainable capital improvements which can be step-changing in their impact.

Kat Nilsson, Director of Museums & Cultural Programmes, UCL said:

Thanks to the DCMS/Wolfson Museums and Galleries Improvement Fund, we now have a new entrance to the Petrie Museum of Egyptian and Sudanese Archaeology. It creates an accessible route in by giving context to this stunning collection.

Professor Stephen Toope, Vice-Chancellor, University Of Cambridge said:

On behalf of the University of Cambridge, I am delighted to celebrate the renewal of the DCMS-Wolfson Museums & Galleries Improvement Fund. The extraordinary collections in UK museums and galleries are vital in helping us understand both ourselves and our place in the world. From our Museum of Zoology's invaluable record of life on earth to the remarkable collection of modern and contemporary art at Kettle's Yard, the University is committed to contributing to this store of knowledge. Renewing the Fund ensures this national heritage reaches the widest possible audience.

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Notes to editors:

- More details on the most recent [DCMS/Wolfson Fund award winners](#).
- Museums and galleries interested in applying for the DCMS/Wolfson Fund, please visit the online [guidance](#).
- The fund is open for applications from May 9th. More than 370 museums and galleries across 130 museums/museum groups are eligible to come forward.
- The [Wolfson Foundation](#) is an independent charity with a focus on research and education. Its aim is to support civil society by investing in excellent projects in science, health, heritage, humanities and the arts. Since it was established in 1955, some £1 billion (£2 billion in real terms) has been awarded to more than 12,000 projects throughout the UK, all on the basis of expert review.