Case Study

Woodhorn Museum

Access for All Cohort 2025-26

museum development md north

Supported using public funding by ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND

In 2025-26, **Lindsay Craig**, Visitor Experience Supervisor at **Woodhorn Museum** (part of **North East Museums**) in Ashington, Northumberland took part in our **Access for All Cohort**. Lindsay wanted to gain a better understanding of accessibility and wanted to explore the positive steps the museum could make towards improving their visitor experience.

Lindsay took part in the online and in-person sessions, hearing from sector experts and finding out what other museums were working on in areas such as visual impairment, autism, disability awareness and welcoming SEND families. The cohort were supported to create accessible resources for their visitors and were given examples of consultation and evaluation best practices.

Lindsay said, 'The knowledge gained from being part of the group has helped to shape our new sensory maps and improve our visual story. After changing Woodhorn's maps we are now working on these across our other 11 sites.'

What was the Access Cohort?

The cohort brought together delegates from **14** museums across the North of England who shared the aim of improving their offer for disabled visitors. The programme included a range of in-person and online events, combining sessions led by access consultants with lived experience, a range of expert guest speakers and case studies from museums who are leading the way in access and inclusion in the region. A new group of museums are currently taking part in 2026-27.

New sensory maps at Woodhorn Museum

Lindsay's Top Tips for Other Museums

1. Visiting other museums is so useful
2. Talk to visitors and other staff members, they all have so many good ideas
3. Join the next Access Cohort!

After hearing about the **Kids in Museums Family Friendly Awards** when visiting **Experience Barnsley** as part of a cohort visit, the museum applied and have been shortlisted in the 2026 **Best Accessible Museum** category!

They also received a **MD North CPD Bursary** which they used to undertake **Access Audit training**. Lindsay said, 'This training has been really useful for all of our venues and the audit process identified areas of improvement.'

Being part of the cohort has also impacted Lindsay's professional development:

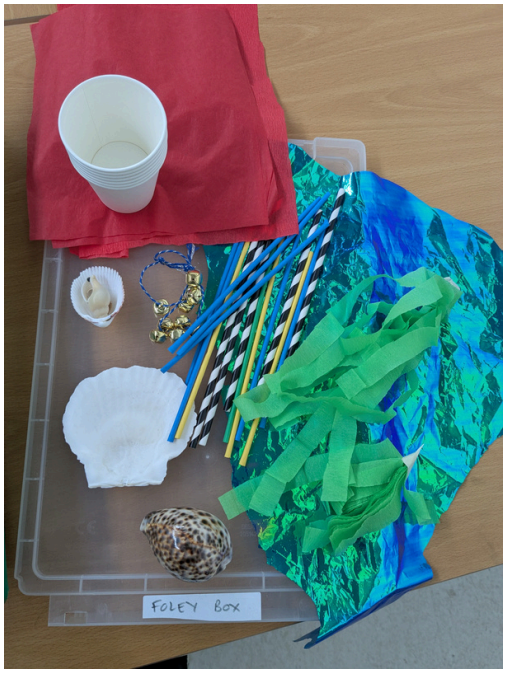
'Being part of the cohort has made me think of access in a broader sense and empowered me to share learning and best practice with my colleagues, including our Access Working Group.

I was one of the cohort members who spoke at the **Access in Museums Conference** - I have never done anything like that before but it made me realise how far the group had come - we all learned so much from each other.'

Access in Museums Conference bursary recipients

What's next for the museum?

Lindsay said, 'In the future we hope to be able to make films to highlight our accessibility, ideally co-creating them with a local group of disabled, autistic and neurodivergent filmmakers. We have also started developing a Foley Sounds box after the 'Employing a Multisensory Approach' session, which will be used in our early years' story time.



A Foley Sounds box in development

Find out more about how MD North can support you to make your museum more accessible on our website or contact Liz Denton
liz.denton@museumdevelopmentnorth.org.uk