

The Young Professionals in Heritage Networking Workshop – Summary Report

Background:

The Young Professionals in Heritage Networking Workshop was held on Thursday 11 September 2025, in person at Made in Stirling in Stirling. The event, hosted by Historic Environment Scotland, was an interactive workshop designed to support those in the early stages of heritage careers to improve their networking skills.

The event was led by Sarah Glover, Youth Participation and Engagement Officer at Historic Environment Scotland. It aligned with the goals of [Our Past, Our Future](#) (OPOF) - the Strategy for Scotland's Historic Environment to support the development of skills, encourage attendees to feel included within the wider historic environment sector, and provided an opportunity to enhance individual resilience through relationship building and the potential for future collaboration. The activity also aligns with the [Skills Investment Plan for the Historic Environment](#), particularly Priority Theme one which focuses on building capacity and growing provision for the sector.

Call to Action:

Young professionals are the future of the sector – the training they receive, and networks they establish, now have the potential to shape our work for years to come. Developing initiatives, like [Heritage Careers Week](#), offer increased support to those looking to enter the heritage sector. However, the support and training available once individuals have entered the heritage workforce is highly variable, depending on the employer and role, and there is limited capacity for individuals to create or develop cross-sector networks.

The Young Professionals in Heritage Networking Workshop indicated there is a significant appetite from those in the early stages of their careers for:

- Additional training support that is specific to the heritage sector
- Accessible networking opportunities (in-person / digital) reflecting breadth of sector
- Mentoring support
- Resourcing to support early career development

There is also the potential for developing the signposting to existing resources such as [Heritage Network Youth Forum](#) or [Annual Heritage Careers Guide](#).

This was a one-off event. The National Strategy team will continue to encourage knowledge-sharing and partnership building to provide additional support to young professionals across the heritage sector in the future, wherever possible.

Attendance:

To ensure comfort levels for participants, attendance was limited to 40 attendees. Tickets were advertised using Eventbrite and were sold out. On the day 31 people attended and included representatives from ten organisations. There were also attendees who were students, with an interest in entering, or returning to, the heritage sector after completion of their studies.

Workshop Content:

11-11.15am: Presentation

Sarah Glover, Youth Participation and Engagement Officer at Historic Environment Scotland, shared a presentation which defined networking and provided a range of networking tips, including a focus on tips to build confidence.

11.15 - 12 noon: Workshop

In groups, attendees discussed a variety of questions about networking in heritage. A summary of the responses given to each question is provided below.

1. What is an ideal networking conversation?

- Create connection, either through work or shared interests
- Be open, relaxed and willing to learn
- Use open-ended questions

2. How can we encourage people to network?

- The importance of relaxed events, where networking is an identified aim
- Articulate benefits of networking
- Ensure venues are accessible and easy to get to

3. Why is networking important in heritage?

- Recognise heritage is a relatively small sector
- Promotes learning / awareness of sector activity and sharing of resources
- Heritage has a focus on community engagement – live it!

4. What are some ways we can feel comfortable talking to others?

- Keep perspective
- Identify where you are most comfortable and try to engineer this situation
- Practice

5. How can we encourage confidence?

- Wear what you feel comfortable in
- Know what you don't know
- Support others
- Acknowledge your worth
- Practice

6. What makes networking challenging?

- Confidence / Expectations
- Finding opportunities / Lack of experience - Increased online work can make face-to-face engagement more challenging
- Lack of accessibility

12.20 - 13.15: Networking Session

Two facilitated activities supported attendees to network with each other and share experiences of being a young professional in heritage.

Post-event Activity

This was a one-off event to support young professionals and those in the early stages of heritage careers. Workshop attendees were encouraged to:

- Create informal support networks from attendees via optional sharing of LinkedIn details
- Engage with existing networks, such as the Heritage Network's Youth Forum
- Provide feedback to scope appetite for potential future activity.

Summary of Post-event Feedback:

A post-event feedback form was shared with all attendees. 14 responses were received.

A summary of answers is provided below.

1. Did you find the Young Professionals in Heritage Networking Workshop useful?

- 5 stars: 8 participants (67%)
- 4 stars: 3 participants (25%)
- 3 stars: 1 participant (8%)
- No participants rated the event with one or two stars

2. Please explain your rating – were there things you particularly enjoyed or areas we could improve?

Attendees enjoyed the relaxed atmosphere of the event, and the opportunity to meet others at a similar stage in their career. Participants appreciated the accessible approach, networking tips, and range of activities on offer, which they would look to adapt into their future practice. The opportunity to share LinkedIn details at the end of the day was appreciated.

Points for reflection included:

- One individual acknowledged they were further on in their career than other attendees and would like to take part in mid-career networking events
- Need to expand definition of heritage beyond museums and heritage buildings
- Desire for similar events in the future.

3. We put a number of accessibility measures in to support you at this event (covering travel expenses for those outwith Historic Environment Scotland, an identified quiet space etc.). Did these measures support you to attend and take part in this event, or is there anything we could have done differently?

Respondents appreciated the accessibility measures that were put in place, particularly highlighting the reimbursement of travel expenses, the use of fidget toys and a quiet space. The choice of a deliberately relaxed venue was also warmly received.

4. Do you have suggestions for other workshop topics that you might find useful (i.e. digital networking, interview skills)?

Suggestions included:

- Interview and Application Skills (sector-specific)
- Engagement with broader range of organisations
- Digital networking
- Routes into heritage sector
- Leadership
- Events for sub-sector (i.e. built heritage, archaeology, museums)
- Cross-generational activity for increased understanding
- Advocacy for Young People's Perspectives
- CPD development

5. Do you know if there is support currently available within your organisation for young professionals and/or people just starting out in a heritage career

(i.e. specific training, chances to network with others at your career stage, mentoring opportunities).

Support available from organisations varied. A number of respondents mentioned that there were no specific opportunities, but their organisations were willing to support attendance at external training and / or networking opportunities. Some attendees responded from organisations that host specific placements or internships for young people, and those from larger organisations noted that there were mentoring opportunities available.

6. Is there support that you would find helpful to develop your career or encourage you to keep working in the heritage sector, that isn't currently available to you?

Attendees identified:

- Opportunities for professional development
- Application skills
- Networking awareness (events, personnel)

7. Do you have any additional comments or feedback you would like to share with us?

Respondents highlighted again how much they enjoyed the workshop and a number noted they would be keen to attend similar events in the future.

Conclusion:

The workshop was a welcome opportunity for attendees to develop their skills and training in a relaxed and accessible environment. Feedback suggests that there is an appetite for similar and further activities in the future, although the scope for this will be dependent on future resourcing.

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