**Museum Accreditation – the true story**

There is a good deal of misunderstanding about Museum Accreditation as it relates to museums in England, what it is, how it works, how it can help. There is to be a new accreditation standard published in the summer of 2018 following a review, but in the meantime National Heritage has had a number of inquiries which we felt needed to be answered.

The Accreditation Scheme is administered by Arts Council England and sets nationally agreed standards to help museums be sustainable, focused and able to offer good visitor experiences. It is designed to help museums assess their own performances, and support them in planning and developing their services. ACE summarises it as a measure to ensure public trust in our museums, and you can find out more about it at <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/supporting-museums/accreditation-scheme-0>.

It is not a funding criterion for the Heritage Lottery Fund, a common misconception – HLF might ask why an established museum that applies for a grant is not accredited, but accreditation is not in itself a criterion.

A museum can be excluded from the Accreditation Scheme if its governing body is found to have acted contrary to the agreed standards – for example, Northampton Museums Service was removed and excluded for a minimum period of five years in 2014 due to what was considered the unethical sale of an Ancient Egyptian statue.

It is not essential for a museum to have a published catalogue of holdings to be accredited, but accreditation is aligned to the primary procedures within the UK collection management standard encapsulated in SPECTRUM –

<http://collectionstrust.org.uk/spectrum/>.

The Museum Development Network was begun by the former Museums, Libraries and Archives Council in 2004 as part of the Renaissance in the Regions programme. It was taken on by ACE in 2012as a funding strand that also offers support and advocacy, and could be a good source of guidance at <http://museumdevelopmentnetwork.org/>.

For enquiries, please contact: accreditation@artscouncil.org.uk