

Accreditation - finding the right tools for the job

Sarah Oswald
Dr Simon Woodward

Museums & Heritage Show 2006

Our Aims



- To support you in achieving Accreditation
- To provide easily implemented ideas
- To tailor old tools to a new job
- To help raise standards throughout the sector

Why Accreditation?



- Public recognition that you meet approved standards
- Generates confidence in your museum - donations
- Funding eligibility and recognition
- Shared ethical basis for museums
- Setting a minimum standard for all areas
- A reason for investment

Why not raise the standards?

Accreditation Requirements



- Section 1: Governance and management
- Section 2: User services
- Section 3: Visitor facilities
- Section 4: Collections Management

Focus on Sections 1-3

Understanding your users



- Mechanisms to assess users
- Identify and address access issues
- Consult with users
- Analyse and use results
- Support users' enjoyment and learning

Consider an Audience Development Plan

Audience Development Tools



- Follow HLF Guidelines
- Simple visitor surveys
- GLOs assess visitor experience
- Easy focus groups

Simple Visitor Surveys



- **Case Study:**
Wigan History Shop



Simple Visitor Surveys



• Case Study: Wigan History Shop - Questionnaire

June-July 2008

WIGAN HISTORY SHOP
~ User Questionnaire Survey ~

We would be very grateful if you could please take a few minutes to answer the following questions (please tick the boxes or write in the spaces provided). The information will help us understand what you think about the Wigan History Shop and its facilities and allow us to improve our service to ensure that it meets your needs. Thank you for your help.

~ About You ~

Age Group: Under 20 21 to 40 41 to 60 Over 60

Sex: Male Female Your postcode:

Your Employment Situation:

Employed (full-time)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Employed (part-time)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student (full-time)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Student (part-time)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Retired	<input type="checkbox"/>	Looking after home / family	<input type="checkbox"/>
Permanently sick / disabled	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other.....

~ Your Visit ~

How many people visited the History Shop with you today (including you)?

1 (i.e. you were on your own)

2 3 4 5 to 10 people More than 10

On average, how often do you visit the History Shop?

This is my first visit	<input type="checkbox"/>	Every week	<input type="checkbox"/>
Every month	<input type="checkbox"/>	Regularly but not frequently	<input type="checkbox"/>
Occasionally	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other.....

What is the main reason for your visit to the History Shop today?

To buy something at the shop	<input type="checkbox"/>	To attend a meeting	<input type="checkbox"/>
To research family history	<input type="checkbox"/>	To research local history	<input type="checkbox"/>
To see the exhibition (downstairs)	<input type="checkbox"/>	To see the exhibition (upstairs)	<input type="checkbox"/>
To attend an activity/workshop	<input type="checkbox"/>	General interest	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other (please specify)

If you have visited the History Shop before, what was the main reason for that visit?

The shop	<input type="checkbox"/>	Meeting room(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Family history research facilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	Local history research facilities	<input type="checkbox"/>
Exhibitions (downstairs)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Exhibitions (upstairs)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Attending an activity/workshop	<input type="checkbox"/>	General interest	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other (please specify)

How did you first hear about the Wigan History Shop?

Word of mouth	<input type="checkbox"/>	What's On	<input type="checkbox"/>	Leaflet	<input type="checkbox"/>
Past Forward	<input type="checkbox"/>	Poster	<input type="checkbox"/>	Library	<input type="checkbox"/>
Internet	<input type="checkbox"/>	Can't recall	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other

How would you grade the physical access to the History Shop (doors, stairs etc.)?

Poor	<input type="checkbox"/>	Below Average	<input type="checkbox"/>	Average	<input type="checkbox"/>
Good	<input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/>		

Aside from the History Shop, do you use any other services run by the Wigan Heritage Service? (please list)

.....

Please use the space below to tell us how facilities at the History Shop could be improved or how you would like to see it develop in the future:

.....

.....

.....

Assessing with GLOs



Using GLOs to code visitor feedback

Case Study - The Highland Museum of Childhood



Coding Feedback



Attitudes and Feelings:

Brought back memories of childhood toys.

Enjoyment, Inspiration and Creativity:

My children love coming here especially dressing up and love looking and playing with the toys.

Knowledge and Understanding:

I lived in Preston, (Lancs) in the 1930s and had no idea that the lives of children in the Highlands was so different.

Easy focus groups



- **Case study -**
The Tank Museum, Bovington



Easy focus groups



- Invite access representatives on site
- Use contacts to target users / non-users
- Walk, talk and listen!
- Create an audit together
- Identify barriers and find solutions
- Create a paper trail

A Sound Forward Plan



- Should be part of your existing management toolbox in any case
- Must be focused on **your** museum or service
- Will inform, and reflect, other documentation including:
 - Audience development plan
 - Business plan
 - Education, learning & outreach plan
 - Marketing plan
 - Training plan

Forward Plan - Typical Contents



- Vision/ Mission Statement
- Review of present provision & issues
- Strategic aims
- Objectives
- Action Plan

Append supporting documentation

Sample action plan



Action	Time	Resources	Who?
1. Improve local history displays	2006-7	Existing resources	Museum curator, design team, local wildlife trust
2. Fully document costume collection	2006	Existing resources, Regional MLA grant	Costume curator, volunteers
3. Increase retail take per head	2006 →	Existing resources	Commercial manager, external support

Concluding comments:



- Start early, plan ahead
- Rise to the challenge
- Raise the standards
- Seek advice - Regional Agency, MDOs

If in doubt, call in the consultants!

Problem Solving.
Creative Thinking.

