

Front of House Charter for Change

Executive Summary

Introduction

The Front-of-House Charter for Change is a vital tool in understanding and making the case for the value of front-of-house museum workers. The pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis have laid bare the terms and conditions that many in the sector face and this charter sets out achievable aims to ensure the fair and inclusive treatment of front-of-house colleagues.

Sharon Heal, Director, Museums Association

The Front-of-House Charter for Change has been created by listening to the many voices who work in front-of-house roles. The research to create the charter has exposed what lays just below the surface of our workforce, an urgent need to address how we support and value our colleagues. The recommendations outlined here could make a real difference to the individual and to the organisation. The Charter will become a hallmark of a good employer. It is an opportunity to reset and embrace the change the sector needs to make.

Will Tregaskes and Abi Godfrey, Front of House Museums

Background

The Front-of-House Charter for Change was developed in partnership with Front of House Museums. The Charter forms part of the Museums Association's (MA) commitment to workforce and equity in the sector. The aims of the research and the subsequent publication are to

- explore and disseminate best practice approaches to FOH
- raise the profile and provide a voice for FOH colleagues
- raise the profile of the value and contribution of FOH colleagues.

Research participation and engagement was high, enabling us to confidently make recommendations for the sector.

Commitment

Everyone within the sector should reflect on these findings and recommendations and explore what it means for their own professional practice, their teams, and organisations approach to inclusive and respectful treatment of others.

Creating a culture where everyone feels and knows they are valued, trusted, and are fully enabled to meet their maximum potential is a priority.

Key Findings

- Recognition and pay were seen as the most important factors affecting positive wellbeing and experience of work
- 98% of respondents stated their performance would increase if they were more valued and recognised
- 68% of respondents communicated an intention to leave within 12 months, based on their current treatment within their museum
- 87% of respondents stated they would be more likely to apply to a museum that referenced and adopted the Charter for Change

Principles of Practice

Five principles of practice have been developed to provide focus for reflection and action:

Wellbeing - Museums have a responsibility, ethically and legally, to create a safe and secure place to work for everyone, physically and psychologically. Wellbeing is affected by factors both within and outside of the organisation, especially for front-of-house colleagues who have the highest levels of interaction with visitors and communities

Contracts and Conditions - Front-of-house colleagues should be secure in the knowledge of their value and be recognised, rewarded, and respected. Not doing so can affect wellbeing, recruitment, retention and ultimately the museum experience.

Recognition - We need to commit to recognising talent and contribution across all functions and teams in museums, especially front-of-house colleagues, as these roles may have previously been 'side-lined' or diminished as a result of organisational bias.

Inclusion - Front-of-house colleagues have often been seen at the periphery rather than at the core, yet they are at the heart of the visitor and community experience. We need inclusive practices, from recruitment to celebration, from communication to improvement. Including all colleagues working in and with museums creates success.

Professional Development - Front-of-house roles are specialist roles in the same way that a conservator is a specialist role, the difference is the purpose of work, nothing else. Front-of-House is a career in its own right and should be respected and valued equally.

'For example,' recommendations

We appreciate that everyone is on a journey, moving in the right direction is a positive gain for colleagues and visitors. This acknowledges that every museum is different, so action needs to be context specific, and there is a need for flexibility in response.

Detailed research findings and resources are available on the [Museums Association website](#). If you wish to discuss this research and recommendations or would like us to present in your organisation, then please contact us at info@museumsassociation.org.