



Interview with Andrea Winn, Curator of Community Exhibitions, and Chiara Ludolini, Marketing and Digital Assistant at Manchester Museum

Manchester Museum, part of The University of Manchester, first opened in 1890. With over half a million visitors a year, it is the UK's largest university museum with a collection of about 4.5 million items from every continent. The Museum's vision is to build understanding between cultures and a sustainable world. Over the next two years, the Museum is working towards an exciting new £13.5 million project hello future, to transform and develop the Museum becoming more inclusive, imaginative and caring to the diverse communities it serves.

How has the Manchester Museum responded to the lockdown due to the pandemic and what has it done to keep in touch with the public?

The need to entertain, educate, free access to exhibitions, learning resources, jobs and volunteer opportunities could not cease with the closure. The idea of a virtual opening came from the Museum director Esme Ward who, together with Alia Ullah, Head of marketing and communication, recognized that, although the Museum already had fantastic online resources for the public, these were hard to find. By curating them in a single site optimized for mobile devices, the museum was then able to 'reopened' not only to the city but to the whole world.

The mmfromhome.com site is intuitive and fully accessible and its offerings appeal to everyone, with a focus on parents and teachers. There are seminars, a cultural first aid kit for carers and resources for adults, researchers and volunteers.

What does it mean for the Manchester Museum to be "age friendly"?

Manchester Museum began developing Age Friendly programmes in 2009, when the city of Manchester was recognised by the World Health Organisation as an Age Friendly City. The Museum works with older adults as participants, artists or activists, to develop programmes that share the



museums ambition to be inclusive, caring and imaginative. The museum also leads the city's Culture Champion programme, which is a cultural activism and leadership scheme for people aged 50 and over. This approach seeks to improve the quality of life for older people and make the city a better place to grow older.

What is the relationship between museum programmes for people with dementia and health services in your country?

At the Manchester Museum our programmes for people living with dementia have been developed with specialist support from third sector charity organisations, such as Together Dementia Support, Shore Green specialist supported housing community and the Alzhemia's Society. We have worked together to develop and pilot programmes bringing together expertise from the organizations and the Museum to ensure we fully support the participant museum journey. We would like to move to a system of social prescribing, where a General Practice Doctor or Practice Nurse can prescribe participating in Cultural activities to the person in receipt of a diagnose of dementia as research shows that keeping active and enaged can, in some cases, slow progress on the cognitive decline.