

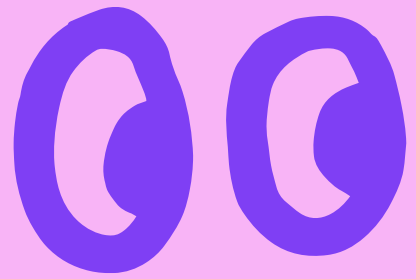
# Young V&A



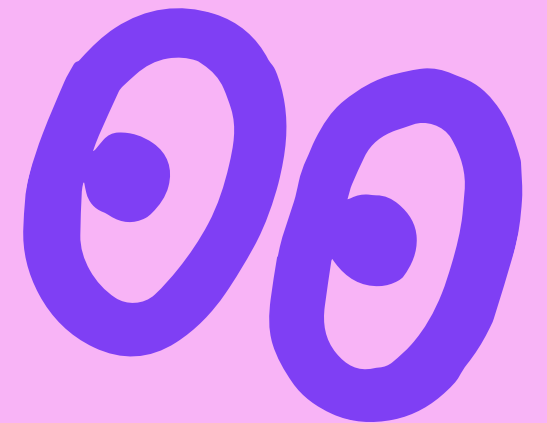
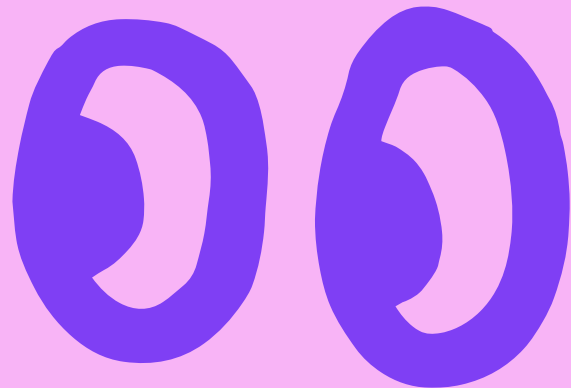
## Banishing the Boring: A Front of House Case Study

Amy Akino-Wittering





What is Young V&A?



# V&A family of sites

2025

2023



V&A  
South Kensington



V&A Dundee



V&A Wedgwood  
Collection



Young V&A

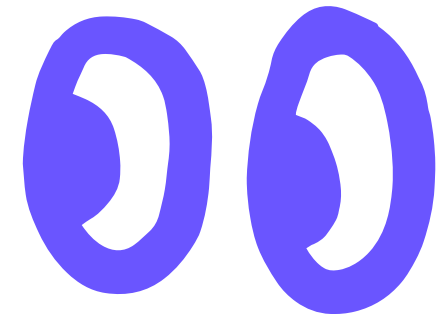


V&A East  
Storehouse

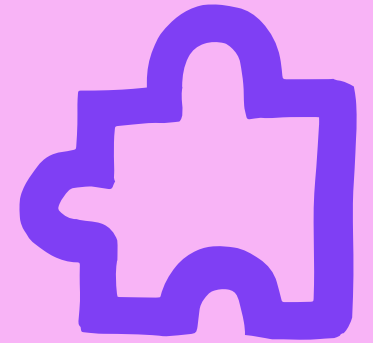
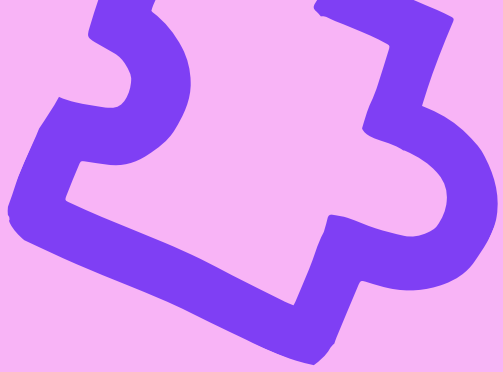


V&A East  
Museum

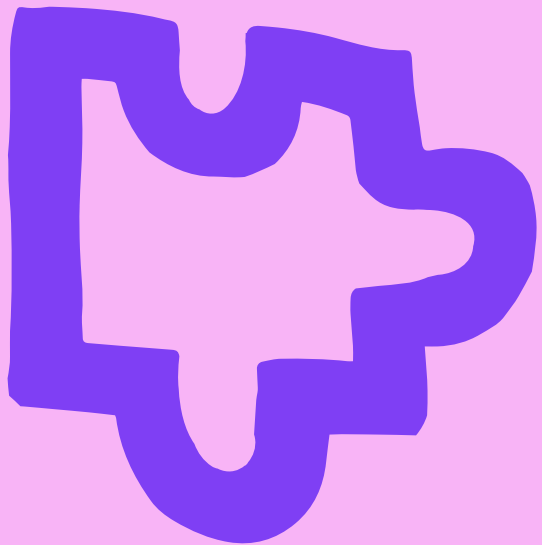
2022







# The Front of House Framework







# Building Blocks

**Imagine 2021-22**  
What *could* Young V&A look like

**Design 2022-23**  
*How* are we going to get there

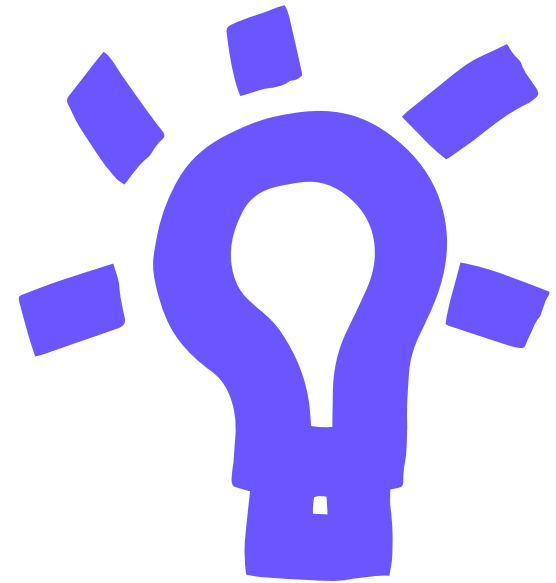
**Play 2023-24**  
*Opening* the doors

1. The existing model
2. Stakeholder relations
3. Business planning
4. Advocacy
5. Iterative improvement

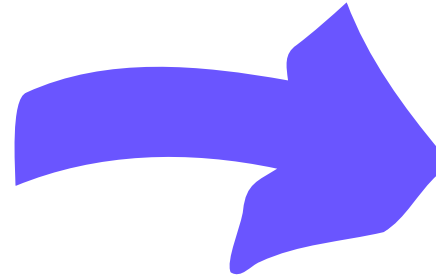
The big idea



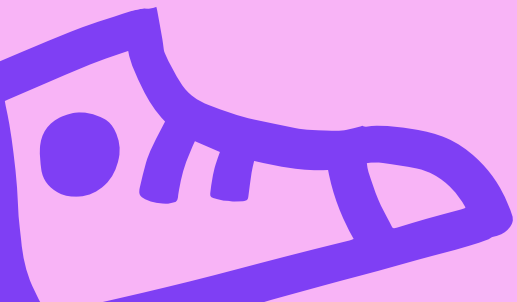
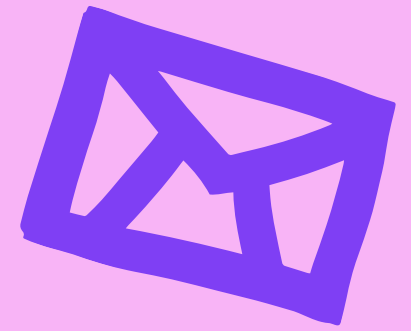
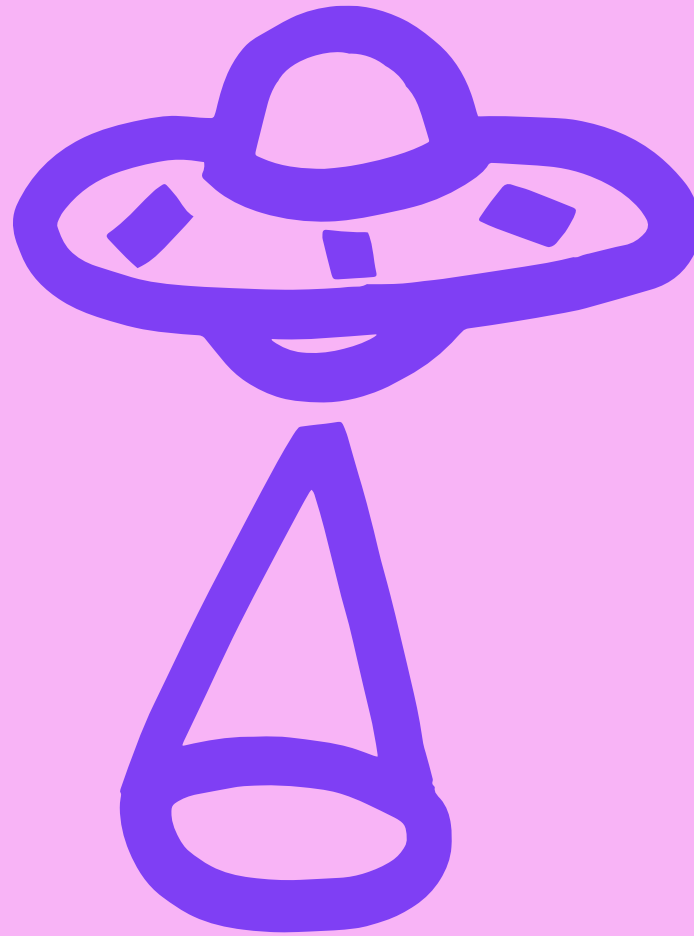
An audience led, efficient, joyful visitor  
experience



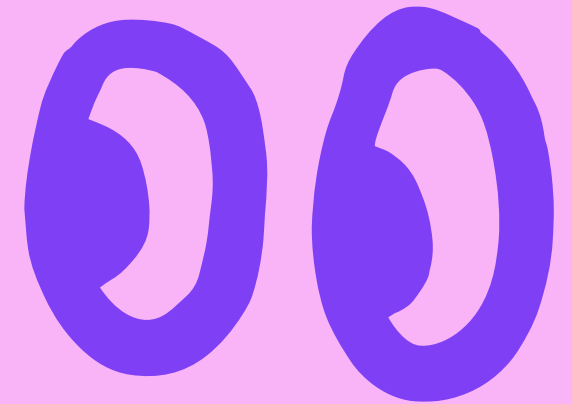
# A new team structure at Young V&A







Recruitment



# A diverse job role



Retail, ticketing, KPI awareness, 'sales through service', membership, donations, Gift Aid

Commercial



Engagement

Visitor welcome and wayfinding, active visitor engagement in galleries, Facilitating imaginative and creative play, detailed knowledge of gallery content



Operations

Visitor flow and capacity, visitor and gallery safety and emergency processes, gallery invigilation, Learning centre check in and invigilation, presentation and housekeeping



Collaboration

Working with and supporting volunteers, working with and assisting Security, Learning, and other centralised stakeholders. Build and maintain positive working relationships



# The process

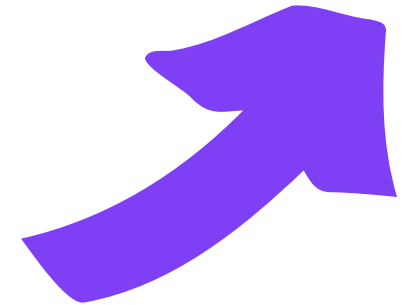
Interactive  
and low  
stress  
assessment  
days

Help and advice for  
potential  
applicants  
including help with  
CV's and  
applications

Behavioural  
led job criteria

Inclusive and  
transparent  
application  
process

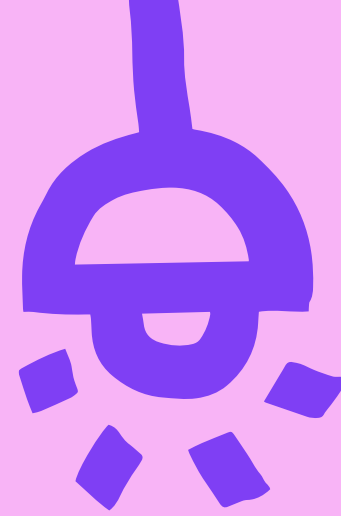
Engagement  
with the local  
community



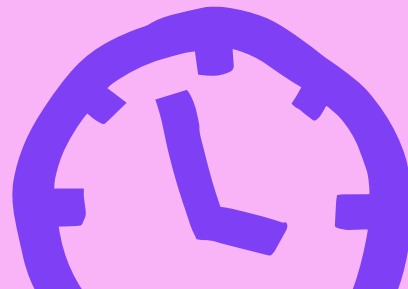


# Local Outreach and Community Partners





## Induction & Training





# The Strategic Overview & Training Content

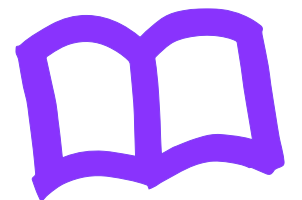
28 new starters

8.5 weeks to learn an entire front of house operation and to build a confident, inspired, and empowered team.

Over 50 brand new training modules and 12 shadowing days

Bespoke sessions from Kids in Museums & Artswork

- Creating family friendly interactions
- SEND family interaction
- Advanced safeguarding







# Becoming a team

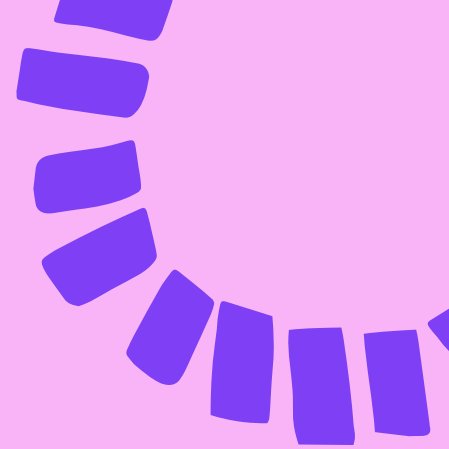
Develop an open workplace culture based on cooperation, transparency and trust.

Create a mutually agreed team charter based on the values and behaviours of the V&A.

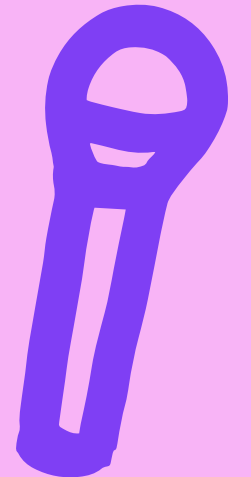
Allow the team get to know one another, build trusting relationships, and develop a positive culture of resilience.







# Team Culture



# Team Charter- Employee Experience directly impacts the Visitor Experience

Proud

Connected

Supported

Joyful

Champion

Diversity

Safe

Challenged

Appreciated

Reliable

Inclusive

Inspired

Community

Playful

Curious

Joyful

Independent

Safe

Included

Welcomed

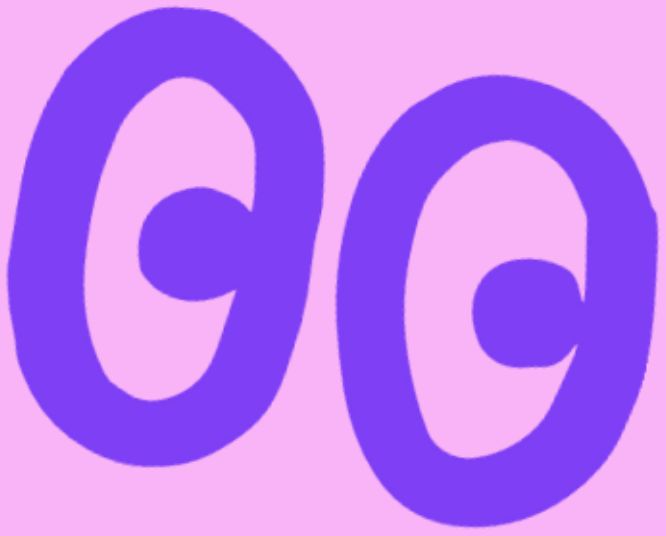
Supported

# 5 key actions

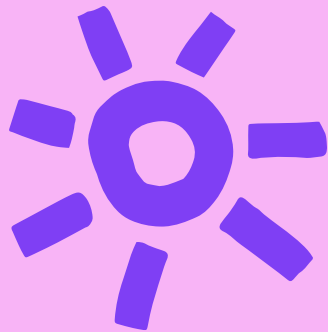
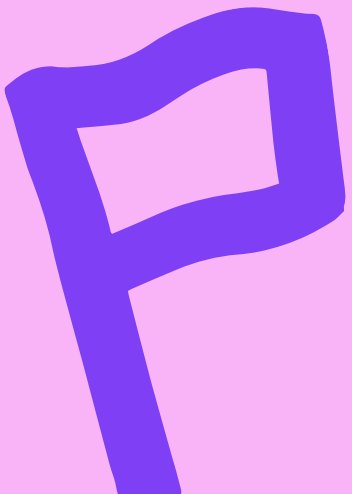


1. Opportunity
2. Regular and clear communication & feedback loops
3. Team time- meetings, socials, updates, breakfast
4. Shadowing from all levels of wider organisation
5. Fun and celebration for the small wins and the big





How did it go?





# People

## Front of House Team

911 applications

140 assessment day candidates

28 positions (10 FT, 18 PT)

## Sources for appointed candidates:

Local sources (36%)

Open Day (14%)

V&A Website (42%)

## Appointed

50% from local 4 boroughs. Of these:

50% Tower Hamlets

29% Waltham Forest

21% Newham

14% Disabled (29% unknown)

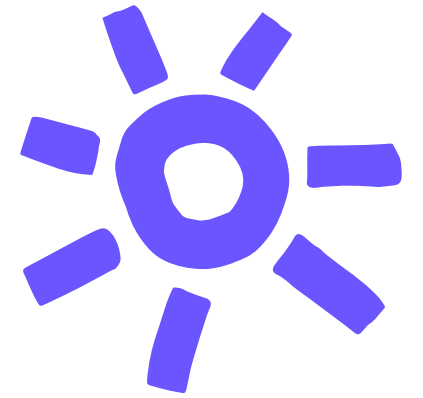
43% BAME

25% Male, 71% Female, 4% N/A

## YTD

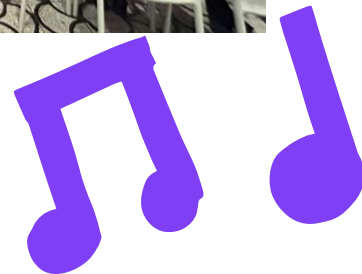
Turnover 27%

Sickness 0.7FTE





# Culture



Dear Young V&A Team

I cannot emphasise enough how much I have enjoyed being a volunteer at Young V&A, this is...a love letter to all the wonderful people I have met here both staff and visitors alike...

I've come to realise that my affection is rooted in the ethos of Young V&A: a supportive and collaborative spirit, genuine care for people, unobtrusive friendliness, and a passion for creativity in arts and education

# Visitor Feedback

*"Fantastic team were exemplary from start to finish... queue managers who were jolly and empathetic when managing a big crowd of people in the rain... fantastic employees and volunteers throughout the museum who were considerate, engaging and encouraging of her to come back and try age-appropriate activities as her baby grows..."*

*"Thanks to everyone for a superb experience from start to finish - one which has had a significant positive and welcoming impact on a new mum and her baby (and hopefully created life-long visitors!)"*

97-99% of visitors rated excellent or good in friendliness, knowledge and welcome from staff

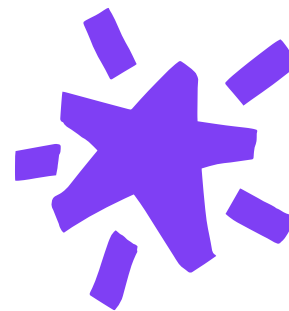
74% strongly agreed that Young V&A welcomes people from a range of backgrounds

69% strongly agree that people like me are represented within the Museum

36% repeat visitors

79 Net Promoter Score

39% visitors hear about Young V&A via word of mouth



*"You guys are all so friendly and lovely. I don't know if it's because you're genuinely nice people, or you're trained to be so friendly, but you all do such a great job! I've been watching you on the galleries, and you're going around, talking to kids, observing & not intruding, picking rubbish up from the floor, this is such a nice place. Thank you for being such a resource to us tired grandparents. "*

*"What a joyous and uplifting experience. The front of house staff were a complete pleasure so friendly and positive!"*





So far...

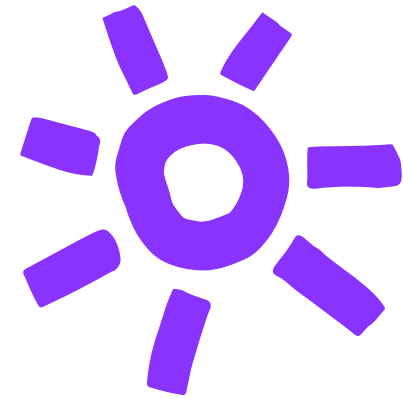
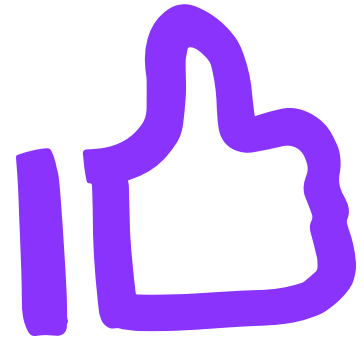
930,000 Visitors welcomed

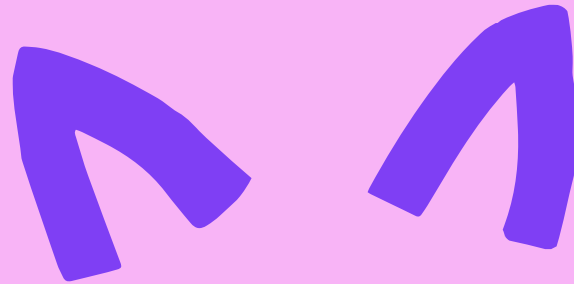
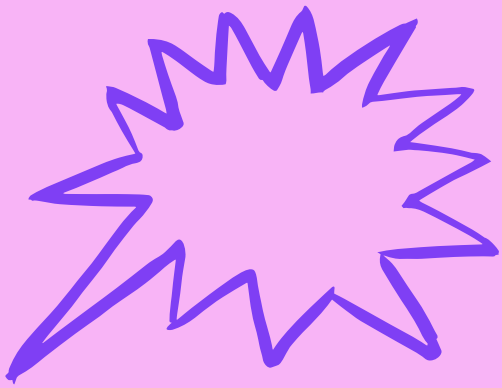
85,000 Exhibition Visitors

Exceeded Exhibition Pass Sales

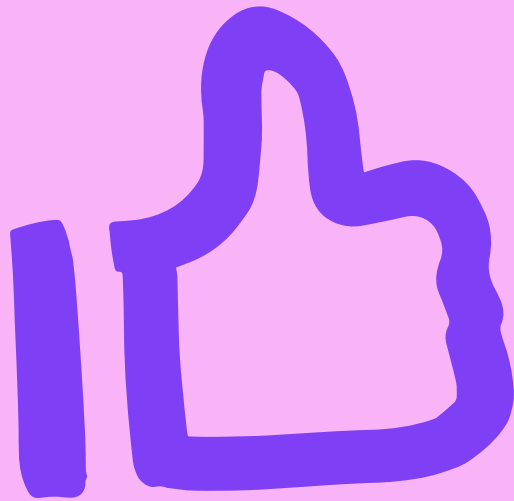
Exceeded Shop Sales

Exceeded Cafe Sales



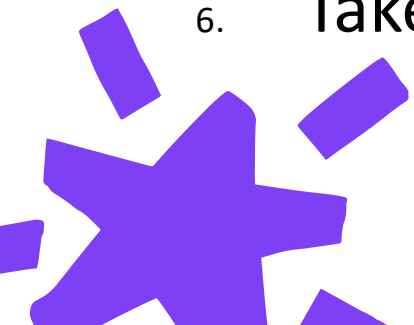
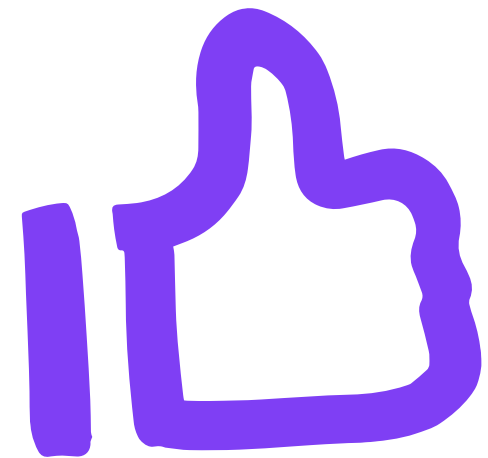


Lessons Learnt



# Key takeaways

1. Start with the basics and build from there
2. Continuous Improvement
3. Build in contingency- time, resource and plans
4. Bring people along on the journey
5. Have a 'North Star' idea to sense check against
6. Take the time to manage and lead teams



Learn how to get things done in your team,  
department, organisation- tailor your work  
and collaboration approach as you would the  
visitor experience



Thank you



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**Website:** [Young V&A \(vam.ac.uk\)](http://vam.ac.uk)

**Blog:** [Young V&A Archives • V&A Blog \(vam.ac.uk\)](#)