

**Collections Access Officer**

**Job Description and Person Specification**

Post: Collections Access Officer

Location: Office will be at the Workhouse Museum, with occasional work across all three sites in Ripon. Some travel to offsite venues.

Salary: £26,000 FTE (£18,270 pro rata)

Hours of work: 26 hours per week. Hours can be worked flexibly but some hours may be evening or weekend.

Post length: 2.5 years

Responsible to: Community Curator

Safeguarding: This position is subject to an enhanced Disclosure and Baring Service (DBS) check.

**Job Description – Job purpose, duties and responsibilities**

**About Ripon Museum Trust**

This is a very exciting time to be joining our creative and collaborative team. We have

our exciting ‘Inspiration for a Fairer Future’ project to deliver, which will transform our

museums, and we are also an Arts Council National Portfolio Organisation. Here at

Ripon Museum Trust (RMT), we are passionate about delivering our vision to ‘use our

heritage assets to inspire people to seek a fairer society’. All within walking distance of

one another, the Workhouse, Courthouse and Prison & Police Museums create a rich

tapestry telling the complex story of poverty, crime and justice. Woven from the lives of

the real people who were judged, housed and punished within these institutions, these

museums offer visitors a unique insight into Victorian society.

Our Mission is:

▪ To use the unique trio of the Workhouse, Prison & Police and Courthouse

Museums, our collections and the stories they tell to help people explore big

issues such as fairness, equality, justice and welfare.

▪ Through excellent engagement, programming and outreach together we will

inspire people to become compassionate and active citizens, shaping

society for the better.

▪ To work for greater participation in our heritage which will enrich lives and

improve wellbeing.

▪ To work as one team, with volunteering integral to our organisation.

▪ To make a positive impact on the cultural and economic capital of Ripon and

its region.

**About the ‘Inspiration for a Fairer Future’ project**

Ripon Museums, comprising a Victorian Workhouse, a Georgian Prison, and a Georgian

Courthouse, illustrate the history of poverty, crime, fairness, and justice in Yorkshire.

The "Inspiration for a Fairer Future" project, with a total project value of £3.3m, aims to

enhance visitor experiences, attract diverse audiences, and preserve local heritage. It

will focus on essential repairs at The Workhouse Museum and manage 8,700 artefacts

from the Prison & Police Museum currently in storage. Additionally, the project will unify

interpretation and activities across the museums, continuing to act as a powerful

learning environment, exploring the evolving history and modern context of social

justice and the broader heritage of Ripon. The ‘Fairer Futures’ project is funded by The National Lottery Heritage Fund as well as other funders and donors.

There are three main strands to the project which are:

* The conservation of one of the buildings at the Workhouse (Resident’s block)

including a new roof, repairing and replacing windows and making the building

more energy efficient and accessible.

* Transforming the visitor experience through new interpretation and exhibitions at

the workhouse, and connecting our stories across the three museum sites.

* A programme of activity, delivered in partnership, that will reach broader and more diverse audiences.

This post is key in delivering activities as part of the activity plan for the project. The post-holder will lead in engaging visitors and other audiences with our significant Police History Collection and ensure its preservation for the future. They will set up and manage the ‘Conservation in Action Room’ where the collection will be placed, train volunteers in collections management tasks as required, and facilitate the means for visitors to engage with and respond to parts of the collection. They will run object-handling sessions at both the Workhouse Museum and the Prison & Police Museum, and work with the Youth Engagement & Learning Officer on the creative project with the YMCA Young Leaders group, and with the Learning team on how to make the collection relevant for schools.

**The Collection**

In the region of 95% of our collections relate to 19th and 20thC. policing in Yorkshire and the Humber (incl. regionally significant collections of uniform, restraints, police medals and badges, and truncheons, oral histories, printed manuscripts and photographs). They tell the story of policing past, present and future whilst opening up wider debate on changing attitudes – e.g. on homosexuality, abortion and gender equality.

The collection has recently been moved to the Workhouse from an inadequate store off site, but is still in urgent need of management, including rationalising, cleaning, conservation, documentation, cataloguing, photographing and repacking in archive quality boxes, in turn enabling better access.

**Post-holder requirements:**

* Assist the Community Curator in caring for and managing our collections and archives including our three historic buildings, outdoor spaces and our three historic gardens.
* To help improve access to our collection of objects, books and archives for all of the museum’s audiences.
* Support the Community Curator in ensuring compliance with Museum Accreditation Standards, including the review and updating of relevant policies, procedures, and plans as needed
* Lead in making our collection more accessible through auditing, reviewing and rationalising, packing, photographing and documenting collections and updating information on our collections management database.
* Work with the Project Conservator (freelance) to deal with any conservation issues and deliver training to volunteers when necessary.
* Engage volunteers, visitors and the community in helping us to curate and care for our collection.
* Supervise and train volunteers in collections management tasks and engage them and the community in making decisions about our collections.
* Collaborate with a Collaborative Doctoral Award student during their collections management internship at the museum, supporting and contributing to shared project objectives.
* Set up a conservation in action area that is accessible to visitors to share the progress of the project.
* Improve access to the Museum’s collection through use of website, blogs and social media.
* Work with RMT Staff to set up object-handling sessions and train volunteers to deliver.
* Work with the Youth Engagement and Learning Officer to use the collection for creative engagement activities.
* Liaising / working with the Evaluation Consultant to evaluate activities.
* As we are a small team the successful candidate will be expected to have a flexible and collaborative approach to their work.

**Person specification**

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| **Person Specification:**  | **Essential** | **Desirable** |
| **Knowledge and Experience** |
| Experience of managing and training volunteers  | **x** |  |
| Proven ability / experience of engagement with local communities and young people | **x** |  |
|  Experience of cataloguing and collections management | **x** |  |
| Knowledge of Accreditation standards |  | **x** |
| Excellent IT skills, especially around museum specific packages | **x** |  |
| Experience of working with a social history collection |  | **x** |
| Experience of caring for and conserving a historic collection | **x** |  |
| Experience of managing budgets and project planning |  | **x** |
| **Personal Skills** |
| Committed to the values and aims of Ripon Museum Trust  | **x** |  |
| Articulate with excellent written skills and the ability to communicate with a range of audiences | **x** |  |
| Confident and resourceful with a problem-solving disposition | **x** |  |
| Able to self-manage, set timescales and achieve by target dates | **x** |  |
| Able to work effectively with a range of stakeholders, internal and external, including volunteers, senior staff, trustees, practitioners, older and young people | **x** |  |
| Committed to equality of opportunity | **x** |  |
| Able to work creatively and flexibly in a small team, supporting other colleagues | **x** |  |
| Excellent organisational skills |  | **x** |

This role is based in the museum with some working from home and hybrid working supported. We understand how important work/life balance is for wellbeing and are open to considering a variety of options, including hours of work, work patterns, secondments and job shares. Ripon Museum Trust is an equal opportunity employer. We positively encourage applications from all areas of the community regardless of race, sex, disability, religion/belief, sexual orientation, age or gender identification. This is part of our commitment to equality and reflects the diversity of our population.

**Method of Application:** If you are interested in this position, please complete the application form on our website www.riponmuseums.co.uk showing how you meet the criteria for the position by Monday 14 July 2025.

Please send the completed application form to Tania Berry our Project Administrator at tania.berry@riponmuseums.co.uk or post to The Workhouse Museum, Allhallowgate, Ripon, HG4 1LE. If you have any queries about the role, please reach get in touch with Tania in the first instance. Please do not send a CV – it will not be used for shortlisting. If you have any queries about the role and would like to find out more before applying, please contact Laura our Community Curator laura.allan@riponmuseums.co.uk in the first instance.