

# People's History Museum

**Collections Assistant**  
Collections & Engagement

Job Pack  
November 2023

## About the role

This is an exciting opportunity to join People's History Museum's (PHM) Collections & Engagement Team at a time of key development for the museum and the collection. The Collections Team are currently reviewing key policies, including the Collecting Policy, to develop more equitable practice, as well as working on key projects including upcoming exhibitions, a research project exploring the use of the raised fist motif in political posters, and a large scale digitisation project. We want our collections to represent all members of society, and the Collections Assistant will be pivotal in helping the museum build representation in our catalogue and share the museum's collection with our audiences.

We are looking for an enthusiastic and organised colleague, who is interested in discovering, documenting, and sharing untold stories of the past from PHM's collection of over 60,000 objects. This role will report to the Collections Manager and will play a vital role in documenting the museum's collection, researching and photographing new acquisitions and collection highlights, and supporting ongoing collection projects. The post holder will be responsible for logging and answering museum collection enquiries, helping to provide information and supervision for researchers, as well as advising colleagues in the museum on key resources, objects, and stories for use in upcoming programmes of events and exhibitions, social media, and website content, and PR and press opportunities. Good organisational and collaborative skills are vital.

The successful applicant will work closely with the Collections Manager and Collections Officers to care for, curate, and manage the museum's collection, and will collaborate with our Conservation, Communications & Marketing, and Engagement Teams to share stories with our audiences.

The role would be ideal for someone looking to start their career within museum collections, with strong problem solving, organisational, and communication skills.

**You do not need to have any previous experience of working with museum collections as full training will be given.**

We are an equal opportunities employer and are fully committed to providing opportunities to all; however, this role involves working in our off-site collection store, which is not as accessible as we would like. Please do contact us if you would like to discuss any adjustments you may need, or would like more information about the accessibility issues.

# About People's History Museum

**People's History Museum** is the **national museum of democracy**, telling the story of its development in Britain: past, present, and future. PHM invites people to explore the radical stories of people coming together to champion **ideas worth fighting for**, and to be empowered by the past to make a change for the future. **We are all together in the fight for a fairer world.**

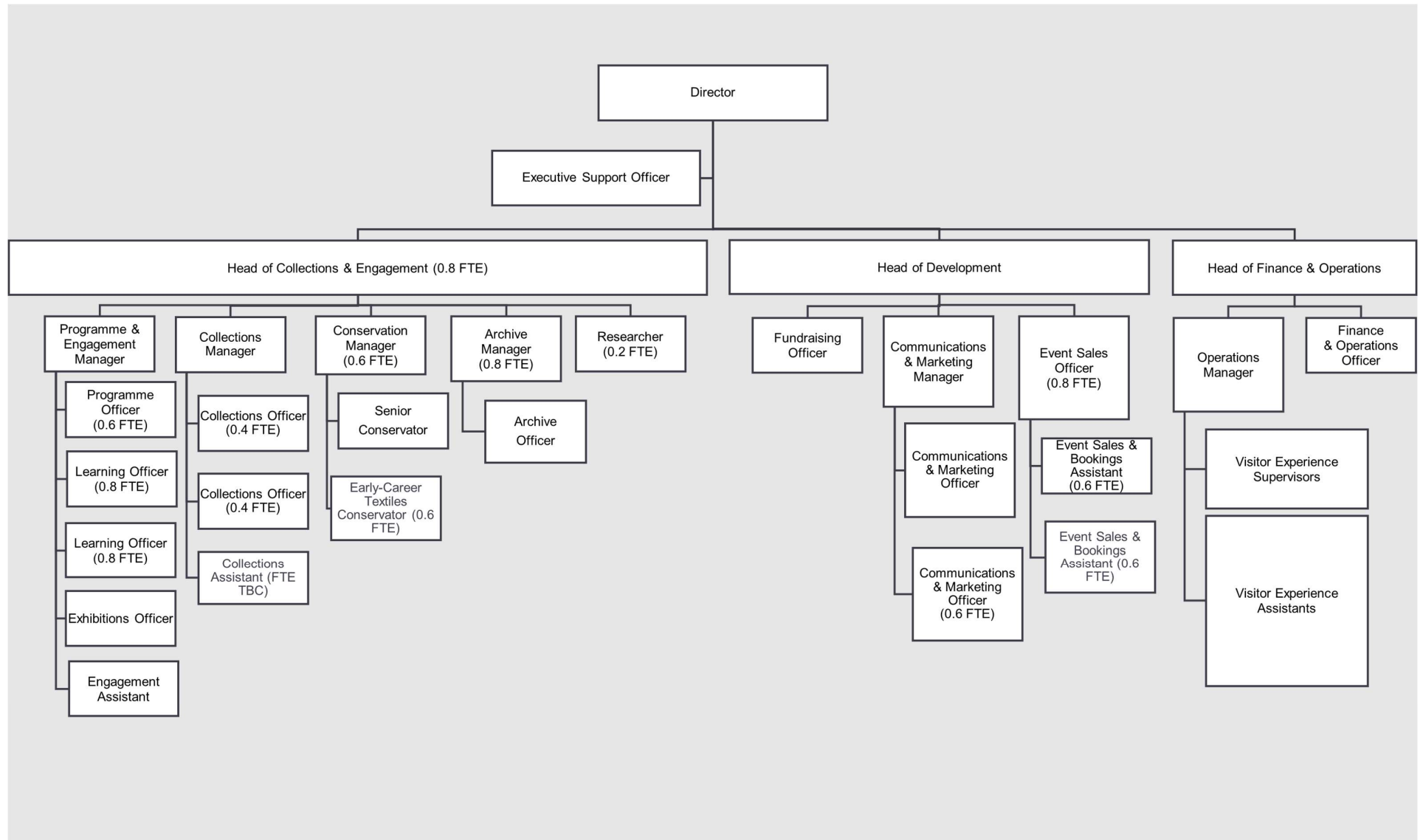
PHM currently welcomes a local, national, and international audience, attracting 125,000 visitors annually, as well as reaching people online through digital activities. The museum involves audiences and communities in all aspects of its work, using models of co-curation, collaboration and crowd-sourcing when developing and delivering programmes of activity. Engaging people directly in the work of the museum helps to build a passionate and committed audience who become supporters and advocates for PHM, while ensuring we are shaping authentic content representative of diverse audiences, providing an inclusive space for their voices, stories, and ideas. PHM's innovative approach explores important subjects and issues relevant to us all today.

PHM has an annual turnover of around £1.5 million, employs over 30 members of staff and has a team of freelance staff and volunteers. PHM is funded by Arts Council England (ACE) as a National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) and by Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) Culture and Social Impact Fund. PHM is an independent museum, charitable trust and company limited by guarantee, with a Board of Trustees, a Trading Company Board, and an Audit and Risk Committee.

The Collections Team is responsible for managing and caring for the museum's object collection of over 60,000 objects, working in close collaboration with the Conservation and Engagement Teams to care for and share our objects with our audiences. The Collections Team includes the Collections Manager and two part-time Collections Officers (0.4 FTE each) who are working on a project basis. The team is currently working on a wide range of projects, including upcoming exhibitions, the digitisation of the museum's collections, and the development of the collection.

The museum's collection covers wide topics and themes around the fight for rights, equality, and justice in the UK. The museum is renowned for holding the largest collection of political and trade union banners in the UK, and also holds thousands of political and grassroots posters, badges, and placards, alongside 3-dimensional social history objects, fine and decorative art, textile and furniture collections. Key themes within the museum collection include: early radicalism and reform; enfranchisement and suffrage; workers' rights, trade unionism and strikes; migrant rights; disabled people's rights and activism; women's rights; LGBTQI+ rights; peace and anti-nuclear campaigns; and British politics from the 19th to the 21st centuries.

# Staff structure



# Job Description

## Collections Assistant

<b>Salary:</b>	£23,114 (£18,491 pro rata) (& pension contribution to the Greater Manchester Pension Fund)
<b>Hours:</b>	Part time (28 hours a week)
<b>Annual leave:</b>	24 days plus bank holidays
<b>Contract:</b>	Fixed Term for 18 months
<b>Responsible to:</b>	Collections Manager
<b>Responsible for:</b>	None
<b>Location:</b>	Based at People's History Museum and off-site store, with the opportunity for agile working in line with PHM's flexible working policy

### Key responsibilities

- Creating and updating digital and paper records for objects in the museum's collection
- Labelling and packing objects
- Photographing objects and editing image files for use by the museum
- Organising loans into the museum and loans by the museum to other organisations
- Installing and deinstalling objects from exhibitions and displays
- Responding to telephone and email enquiries about the collection
- Conducting research about the objects and their histories
- Writing physical and online object labels
- Collaborating with other PHM teams, for example Communications & Marketing, to share the museum's collections with our audiences
- Providing administrative support for the Collections Team where appropriate, such as taking minutes in meetings

### Knowledge, experience, and skills

#### Knowledge

- A basic understanding of and interest in British social and political history from 1700 onwards
- An interest in one or more of the following areas: the history of trade unionism; LGBTQI+ history; the history of ethnically minoritised communities; disabled people's history; women's history
- An interest in current affairs

#### Experience

- Experience of using a digital camera and using photo editing software to carry out basic tasks e.g. image cropping

#### Skills

- High level of attention to detail including with respect to carrying out repetitive tasks
- Excellent written communication skills
- Highly organised

- Able to progress multiple projects concurrently and in accordance with multiple deadlines
- Able to work methodically through tasks
- Able to carry out research about objects using online and hard copy resources
- An enthusiasm for discovering and sharing stories
- Able to work independently with strong problem solving skills
- Able to collaborate and work as part of a team

## **Values**

- A strong commitment to the equitable treatment of staff, audiences, and community partners
- A strong commitment to improving the diversity of stories told by the museum in its permanent and changing exhibitions, in its collection, and in its online content
- A strong commitment to improving access to the museum and its collection

## **How to apply**

Please outline how your experience, skills and knowledge meet the job description and provide details via our online application form. Your application will be assessed and scored against the job description using the information provided.

**Deadline for applications:** 9.00am on Monday 4 December 2023

**Interviews:** Thursday 14 December 2023, in person

If you have any questions or would like to arrange to discuss the role please contact Jackie Royle, Finance & Operations Officer at [hr@phm.org.uk](mailto:hr@phm.org.uk).

## **Equity**

PHM prides itself on being a welcoming and inclusive organisation, profoundly committed to advancing equality and diversity in the broadest sense. We highly value the benefits that diverse perspectives bring to PHM's mission.

We recognise the museum currently underrepresents people of colour, disabled people, LGBTQI+ people and those with intersecting identities in our workforce; PHM is actively working to address this and encourages applications from these backgrounds. While the successful candidate will be selected purely on merit, in the event of a tie between two candidates with equal experience, we may select a candidate who helps us better represent the communities the museum serves.