People's History Museum

Director of Collections & Engagement

Collections & Engagement Team

Job Pack
October 2026

About the role

The Director of Collections & Engagement provides strategic leadership and holds responsibility for the collections and public programme, including the permanent galleries, exhibitions, public events, learning and community engagement activity, and champions care and access for our nationally designated collections.

You will bring together people working across different disciplines and functions to deliver a shared vision, setting strategic priorities in areas such as audience development and collections' care, and driving forward a vibrant public programme. Using our unique collection of 65,000 objects as the catalyst for community engagement, public events, exhibitions and learning, you will foster a collaborative approach that enables the museum to deepen relationships with existing audiences, reach new communities, and deliver meaningful, lasting public impact.

This role is key to our ambitions for gallery redevelopment; you will set strategic vision, work with the teams to develop content, and build a network of relationships to ensure that the new galleries are empowering, exciting, and welcoming for visitors with a wide range of identities, experiences and needs.

Key priorities of the role

- Deliver a sector-leading audience experience, by working with teams to programme innovative, inclusive, and impactful exhibitions, public events, and learning and engagement activities that grow audiences, extend reach, build trust, and support our pathway to gallery redevelopment.
- Plan strategically to support collections management, care, and conservation, and make our collections more accessible, physically and digitally.
- Foster partnerships and relationships with key stakeholders, organisations, and communities that strengthen the museum’s reputation and impact.
- Support fundraising and income generation, deliver against budgets, and ensure that projects meet funder objectives while furthering PHM’s mission.

About People’s History Museum

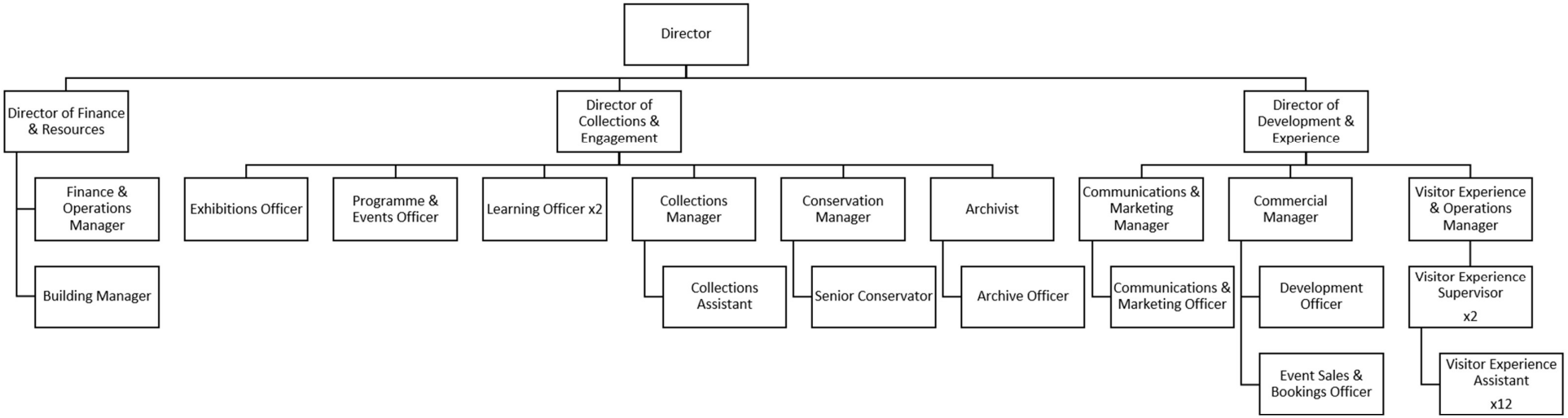
People’s History Museum (PHM) is the national museum of democracy, telling the story of its development in Britain: past, present, and future. We invite people to explore radical stories of people coming together to champion ideas worth fighting for, and to be empowered by the past to make a change for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

Our galleries and exhibitions are free to visitors and we welcome a local, national, and international audience, attracting over 80,000 people annually. We involve audiences and communities in many aspects of our work, including by using models of co-curation, collaboration, and co-development. These approaches have underpinned some of our most significant past projects such as 'Never Going Underground', 'Migration', and 'Nothing About Us Without Us'. We are committed to working with our audiences to shape authentic content, offering an inclusive space for their voices, stories, and ideas.

Our nationally designated collection is made up of around 65,000 objects, which includes the world’s most significant collection of trade union and protest banners, cared for through our Conservation Studio. Alongside our object collection, we hold extensive archive material, including the archives of the Labour Party and of significant grassroots movements such as Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners.

We are an independent museum and a charitable trust, and we are governed by a Board of Trustees. Our turnover is around £1.5 million per year and our biggest funders are the Arts Council England (ACE), and Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA).

Staff structure



Job description

Job title:	**Director of Collections & Engagement**
Salary:	£44,000-£48,000 p/a full time or £35,200-£38,400 p/a part time (0.8 FTE) plus 10% pension contribution
Hours:	Full time (35 hours per week) or part time 0.8 (28 hours per week). Flexible working or requests for alternative part time arrangements will be considered at PHM's discretion.
Annual leave:	24 days plus bank holidays (pro rata if part time)
Contract:	Permanent
Responsible to:	Director
Responsible for:	Collections & Engagement Team
Location:	Based at People's History Museum with the opportunity for some agile working in line with PHM's flexible working policy.

Key responsibilities

- Set strategic vision, using PHM's unique collection and stories to build compelling multi-year programmes of exhibitions, public events, and learning and engagement activities which are exciting, impactful, and accessible to audiences.
- Drawing on visitor data, set our audience development strategy and ensure activity delivers on its priorities.
- Be a supportive leader and line manager for the Exhibitions, Learning, Public Programme, Collections, Conservation, and Archive Teams. Motivate and develop staff and set effective KPIs and objectives to deliver activity that supports PHM's organisational ambitions.
- Foster cross-team collaboration within managed areas and with other teams such as Development, Communications & Marketing, Visitor Experience, and Venue Hire.
- Connect project ambitions with fundraising opportunities, identify relevant schemes and partners, support funding applications, sponsorship opportunities, and partnerships.
- Lead on funder and Board reporting in relevant areas, including reporting to major funders ACE and GMCA.
- Lead on gallery updates, including establishing and overseeing the workflows for a major gallery redevelopment.
- Contribute to organisational leadership, business planning and projects as a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), working closely with the Director and other SLT members.
- Ensure compliance with professional standards, legislation, and best practice across all areas of responsibility, including SPECTRUM standards, intellectual property, and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).
- Lead on safeguarding, ensuring PHM continues to embody best practice.

- Oversee departmental budgets and manage resources effectively, in line with the overall organisational business plan and financial policies.
- Build productive external relationships with artists, performers, freelancers, schools, universities, community groups, cultural organisations, trade unions, and other stakeholders.
- Develop and oversee the delivery of strategic plans to improve access to the collection and address gaps in digitisation, cataloguing, object photography, and copyright knowledge.
- Work with the Collections, Archives and Conservation Teams to ensure the collection is appropriately stored and cared for, including leading on discussions and planning around a possible object store move.
- Manage risk appropriately while encouraging ambition and innovation.
- Foster a collaborative, supportive, and inclusive working culture, modelling high standards of professionalism.
- Be an advocate for PHM, its mission, values, and collections.

This is not an exhaustive list and responsibilities may vary, according to the business needs of People's History Museum.

Experience, skills, and knowledge

- Strong leadership, strategic thinking and planning.
- Excellent project management and organisation of workload and workflows across teams.
- Deep commitment to access and inclusion.
- Supportive people management and positive staff engagement.
- Excellent communication, relationship building, and influencing skills.
- Data-led decision making and flexible, proactive approach to problem solving.
- Strong financial management skills in areas of responsibility.

Specification

Essential:

- Experience of senior leadership in a publicly accessible museum, art gallery, or cultural institution, managing teams across multiple disciplines, including two or more of the following areas: exhibitions, public engagement, public programming, learning, conservation, collections, and archives.
- Experience of programming innovative exhibitions, public events, and engagement activities within a museum or equivalent cultural context that support mission, excite audiences, and extend reach.
- Experience of working in collaboration with communities, for example through co-curation or co-development.
- Experience of setting multi-year strategies and effective KPIs for projects and individuals.
- Demonstrable commitment to the professional development of staff through supportive, effective line management.
- Experience of successful fundraising for activities in managed areas, identifying and responding to funding opportunities.

- Demonstrable experience of complex project management, workload management, and successful project delivery.
- Experience of upholding professional standards in key areas such as collections care and strategic planning for a museum collection.
- High standards of communication, with experience of building positive relationships with internal and external stakeholders.
- Demonstrable commitment to access and inclusion.
- Knowledge of and demonstrable interest in cultural, political, and social issues relevant to PHM's collection and stories (e.g. the history of democracy, the trade union movement and workers' rights, struggles for equality) and the strategic landscape in which PHM operates.
- A degree or evidence of an equivalent level of professional experience in the context of a museum, art gallery, or cultural institution.
- A strong track record of values driven leadership.

Desirable:

- Experience of working in an ACE National Portfolio Organisation (NPO).
- Experience of writing successful fundraising bids.
- Experience of leading teams in the wake of organisational change.
- Experience of overseeing improvements to digital access for museum collections.
- Experience of strategic planning for a gallery redevelopment or equivalent capital project.
- Demonstrable knowledge of copyright or GDPR in relation to collections.
- Media experience, including giving interviews on behalf of an organisation.

How to apply

Please outline how your experience, skills, and knowledge meet the job description, by sending your CV (up to three sides of A4) and a covering letter (up to three sides of A4) to Jackie Royle, Finance & Operations Manager at hr@phm.org.uk. The information provided will be assessed and scored against the job description.

Deadline for applications: 10.00am Monday 23 November 2026

Interviews: First interviews to be held w/c Monday 7 December 2026. We expect to hold second interviews w/c Monday 14 December 2026. Candidates are asked to indicate their availability for these two weeks.

If you have any queries or access needs relating to the application process, please contact hr@phm.org.uk. Any questions about the specifics of the role can be asked at interview.

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 sector currently underrepresents global majority, disabled, LGBTQIA+ people, different socio-economic backgrounds, 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.