

Inclusive Museums Conference 2025 Special Focus—Galleries, Libraries, Archives & Museums: Engines of Innovation and Social Participation

Abstract

Something New was a collaboration between Amgueddfa Cymru - Museum Wales, Welsh charity Innovate Trust, purpleSTARS and Rix Inclusive Research Team. The project was funded by UKRI as part of the Museum Association's Mindsets + Missions programme to support cultural organisations to engage underrepresented groups with knowledge, research and innovation.,

<https://www.museumsassociation.org/funding/mindsets-and-missions/case-studies/amgueddfa-cymru-museum-wales/>

A team of inclusive researchers with and without lived experience of learning difference and disabilities (LDD) co-researched and co-produced sensory interactives and a role-play quest game to enhance accessibility and representation in museum spaces. People with LDD were included in the research project design process and created a sustainable impact on how museums approach inclusivity.

The key aims of the project were to establish a working group of people with LDD to create a space where their voices could be heard, to pilot a research framework for sensory engagement with collections to enhance representation, and to ensure participants felt better represented in museums and more welcome in our museum spaces.

Sensory engagement took precedence, embedding ideas around museum objects on display in the Life is Gallery at St Fagan's National Museum of History, just outside of Cardiff. We created a sensory version of a role play quest game called 'Operation Dragon', based on Dungeons and Dragons and with an accompanying sensory belt connecting objects and historical characters from the gallery to their 'sensory powers'. The game reinforced the importance of engaging with museum collections through alternative approaches. We learned the power of gamification, adding a layer of engagement far greater than anticipated.

<https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/1001142476>