

Leeds City Museum, Family Friendly Museum of the Year 2018

About the Award

Kids in Museums and the Panel of Family Judges said:

“Baby-friendly curator talks, signposted selfie points, ‘Dadstastic’ Days, and excellent facilities are just some of the things that helped Leeds to fend off competition from ten other museums across the UK. Leeds City Museum stood out for its ‘warm and welcoming’ staff, who were present throughout the museum and went the extra mile to help visitors. Families also praised the museum for being representative of the different communities in Leeds in its exhibitions.”



Leeds
City
Museum

Emmajane Avery, Chair of Kids in Museums, said: “I’m delighted that we are able to recognise the fantastic work that Leeds City Museum is doing to engage young people and their families...the team in Leeds really impressed our family judges with their great welcome and willingness to help, as well as their varied and dynamic year-round public activities. My congratulations to everyone at Leeds City Museum and the undoubted inspiration they bring to the next generation of historians and culture lovers.”

About the Leeds City Museum Programme

Family noun - *A family is a group of people who are related to each other, especially parents and their children.* Collins English Dictionary Definition of ‘Family’

As a museum, we think of family as even more diverse, varied and intergenerational. For example, holiday clubs, adults with additional needs and their carers, and playschemes are welcome at family activities, and we have established a programme for Home Educators. Here’s some more information about our Family Programme and how we aim to make the museum feel like home to visitors.

Regular Events

Run by the Front of House team, we have Tiny Tigers messy museum crafts for the under 5s and their carers every Friday morning. On Saturdays, the Rory Saturday Club crafts are for all ages.



Holiday Activities

School holidays are a vibrant time at the museum. We have expanded from our Learning Space into the large central hall of the museum. Listening to feedback from local young people, we have introduced a Soft Play area and a dedicated youth zone with football table in this space. The activities are designed for families to dip in and out of, and adults are encouraged to have a go too! At least once each holiday, the Youth Engagement Officer organises extra activities for young people aged 11+ and these usually run alongside activities for



younger children as we have many visiting families and playschemes with mixed age groups. Additional to crafts and the ever-popular ‘colouring in’, visitors can have a go at different activities like Djembe Drumming, Live Animal Handling, Sensory Storytime, South Asian Dancing. Our partnership with the Grammar School at Leeds enables us to bring some family shows to the museum, like the hugely impactful Chinese Lion Dancing at Chinese New Year. In the longer summer holidays, families are encouraged to decorate the hall, which previously has been an Enchanted Forest or a Journey around the World.

SEND

Families with additional needs can book a ticket to explore a pop-up Sensory Room in school holidays. This is especially important as the museum is very busy in some holidays.

The museum is a special place for many families who have appointments at the LGI Hospital, which is located opposite the museum.

“The museum has become a very important place for us. My son has additional needs and has a lot of hospital appointments at LGI. The museum is always a brilliant and relaxing place for us to come before and after stressful appointments.”



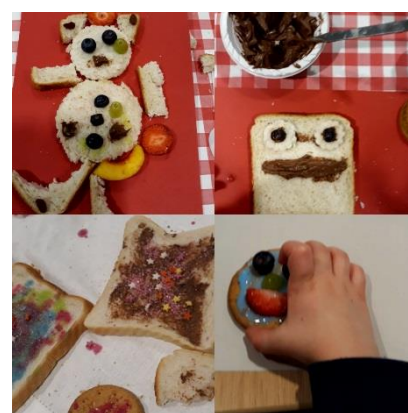
Museum Minis

Families with children under 5 make up a large proportion of our visitors. We experiment with the programme to see what works for them. We run a Multi-Sensory Morning once every 2 months for under 5s who can pop along to the busier, social, sensory event. It runs at the same time as Tiny Tigers crafts so there's things happening in different parts of the museum.

Baby-friendly curator talks are in the programme. These talks are designed for parents/carers/grandparents who can listen to the talk (which is pitched at adults) while breastfeeding and free movement in the room is welcome. There are cushions, colouring in and toys in the room too for toddlers.

Sessions linked to Museums & Wellbeing Week have included Edible Art for the Under 5s and a Happy Hike around the museum.

Other activities have included Dance Together – a project for parents to dance with their children, Singing and Signing, and child yoga. Also Rainbow Bears and Busy Beavers creative sessions linked to special exhibitions.



Museum Spaces

Toddler Town in the Leeds Story gallery is a play area for children under 5. The soft play area in the Brodrick Hall is open to children up to the age of 11 years – it tends to be used by younger children and babies in term time, and then children up to 11 in school holidays. All galleries have hands-on interactives including touch screen games, fossil dig area, touch alcoves, story corners, space to sit and colour together and dressing up for tots to teens (to adults!). There's a Little Leeds Gallery display area for young people to display their artworks for all to see.

Special Exhibitions

We've hosted loads of family friendly exhibitions - Light Lab, For All Seasons, Beavers to Weavers to mention a few. We also love working with family friendly people like Seven Stories, The National Centre for Children's Books, to bring touring shows to Leeds.



Schools Getting Involved

For Takeover Day 2016 and 2017, Year 5 and Year 6 children from 2 local schools took over the Front of House roles. They designed, planned and led activities for children under 5.



Youth Engagement

There are 18 members of the Preservative Party, the museum's group of curators aged 14-24. The group includes young people with additional needs. The group curate exhibitions and displays within the museum. They also lead some object handling and hands-on tours for visitors during school holidays. The museum hosts events for Thought Bubble Festival and Comic Convention annually. See above for holiday activities.



Home Educators

The Home Educator programme is popular. We host special workshop days that home educating families can book onto. The aim of the workshops is to be educational, hands on, interactive and sociable for families who might not know each other prior to the day. The programme has expanded across the Leeds Museums and Galleries' 9 sites.

Linking up with City Events and Groups

- 'Dadstastic' Day hosted by Leeds Dads, was a Father's Day bonanza in June 2016 and 2017.
- Child Friendly Leeds hosted a music concert especially for families in August 2018 on the square outside the museum. The museum hosted a pop-up calm sensory room for the event, and put on extra holiday activities for families to visit as part of their day.
- Leeds Young Film Festival ran a Virtual Reality Zone in 2017 and Animation Central in 2018 at the museum over the Easter weekend.
- The Community Curator works with various community groups and artists to co-curate displays, and to host large scale events, which are inclusive of all ages and often have specific activities for children. For example, Hip Hop day in November.

Benefits for the Museum

Winning the award presents an opportunity for the museum to start more conversations with families to shape the museum and its activities. It gives us confidence in what we are doing and makes us feel proud of how the museum is enjoyed by so many families. We aim to share good practice wider in the sector. It motivates the team to continue to take risks, try new things and have fun with our visitors.



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