



SUPPORTING

# Heritage

The next steps



# A voice for heritage

Prospect is proud to represent a growing membership of over 10,000 members across the heritage, culture and arts sector.

They work in areas such as curatorial, conservation, archaeology and visitor services. They work in museums and galleries, historic gardens, heritage sites, archaeological trusts, library collections and archives, in roles ranging from curatorial, conservation and archaeology to marketing and visitor services.

The contribution they make to our society and to our economy is unique and valuable.

But heritage sector pay is shockingly low, especially when qualifications, skills and commitment are taken into account. Working conditions and career pathways

are also often far below what they have a right to expect.

This leaflet sets out why heritage is so important, and what Prospect is doing to get heritage workers more widely recognised and more fairly rewarded through our **World class heritage – Second class pay** campaign.

If you are a Prospect member, please share it wherever you can so we can build public understanding and support for our heritage industry and the workers who make it happen.

If you work in heritage and are not yet a Prospect member, we hope you will join us.



# World class heritage

The contribution that heritage workers make to our society and our economy is invaluable.

## Enriching our lives

Museums, libraries and heritage sites have been shown to:

- improve individual health and wellbeing
- support education and social inclusion
- boost local pride and community cohesion.

One study found people attending museums or libraries were 20 per cent more likely to report good health. Four in five people say that heritage sites and projects make their town or city “a better place to live”.

## An economic asset

Heritage is also a vital part of the economy – the value it adds to our economy is on a similar scale to that of agriculture, film and TV production, or the motor industry. In a single year our heritage attracts millions of visitors from overseas, spending billions of pounds here as a result.

Analyses have shown that money invested in heritage projects and institutions more than pays for itself in the additional growth and prosperity generated – sometimes many times over. These impacts are particularly important to areas of high deprivation and regions that politicians say they want to “level up”.



KEVIN COOPER PHOTOLINE

By focusing on the conservation, use and re-use of precious assets, the heritage sector also exemplifies the principles of sustainable growth and the “circular economy”.

# World class workforce

All this is made possible by the heritage workforce, including:

- archaeologists
- archivists
- conservators and curators
- botanists and horticulturalists
- education and outreach specialists
- others working at museums, heritage sites and historic gardens, from front-of-house staff to essential technicians
- surveyors, architects, restoration professionals, craftworkers and other skilled and specialist workers supporting heritage projects.

They work across a range of different organisations, large and small, in the public, private and voluntary sectors, throughout the country, devolved nations, and regions.

Based on the economic value they create, heritage workers are among the most productive in the country, each adding an average £67,000 a year to our prosperity.

Based on the difference they make to all our lives, our communities and our environment, their contribution is priceless.

## Second class pay?

Despite this, pay in our heritage sector is often shockingly low.

Many heritage organisations rely on large numbers of workers paid less than, or barely above, the independently

calculated Living Wage. Prospect analysis suggests that this is the situation of between 1 in 5-10 of workers at museums, heritage sites and botanical gardens.

Even above these levels, salaries are typically way out of line with workers' levels of skill, expertise, and experience. A high proportion of heritage workers have graduate or post-graduate qualifications but entry-level salaries do not reflect this and there is often little opportunity for promotion or progression.



In addition, working conditions are not always what they should be. Job insecurity is common. Some roles require long hours at short notice. Stress levels can be high, leading people to question their choice of career.

The current cost-of-living crisis and the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic have brought into sharp focus the longstanding issues of low-pay and underfunding within the sector, which we're campaigning to resolve.



# Our goals for heritage

We believe it's time we properly valued the experts and specialists who bring so much value to our lives and to our economy. This means:

## Valuing and investing in heritage

Public funding for heritage has too often been seen as an easy target for cost-cutting. Successive rounds of austerity at national and local levels have seen it cut to the bone. On top of this the Covid crisis had a devastating impact on other sources of income.

We need to see greater value and recognition given to heritage and heritage workers, with sustained increases in funding and investment to rebuild its resilience, restore irreplaceable assets and recover lost growth in revenue and employment.

Evidence shows this would generate significant returns to the economy and public finances as well as transforming places and communities.

## Rewarding skills and expertise

Centrally-imposed caps and controls have left many public sector heritage organisations – from museums, galleries and gardens to key agencies – unable to recruit or retain the workforce they need or help hard-working staff through the cost-of-living crisis.



YORK ARCHAEOLOGY

There needs to be greater employer flexibility on pay, terms and conditions, to enable wages to better reflect skills, qualifications, knowledge and experience.

This needs to be coupled with a plan to raise wage levels for heritage workers across the public, private and third sectors, ensuring all staff are paid at least above the Living Wage and bringing salaries for specialist and professional workers into line with their qualifications and experience.



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campaign resources



## Get involved

### Inclusive and sustainable careers

As well as tackling low pay we need to improve job security, career pathways and flexible working that works for employees as well as employers.

Too many heritage workers feel stuck in entry level roles or find their vocation incompatible with owning a home, starting a family, or saving for a pension. Working in heritage shouldn't only be an option for people without family responsibilities or those with other forms of financial security.

We want to see family-friendly working practices mainstreamed and meaningful pay progression mechanisms to ensure heritage staff can progress their careers and earnings.

This is what Prospect is working to achieve – in our negotiations with employers as well as our lobbying of governments and wider campaigning.

We have been successful in winning significant pay rises and better terms and conditions for many of our members in heritage – we want to build on and extend this.

We have also played a leading role in improving understanding and appreciation of the value of our heritage workers among politicians, policymakers and the wider public.

If you are already a member, make sure you connect with your branch and your dedicated full-time organiser to discuss actions your branch can take to support the campaign.

Check our campaign Linktree at [linktr.ee/prospectheritage](https://linktr.ee/prospectheritage) for further campaign resources and links to quick and effective actions you can take to support and grow the campaign, such as:

- Write to your MP/MS/MSP: Using template letters you can send to engage your political representatives.
- Hold workplace meetings and share campaign materials with colleagues, trustees, and board members.
- Network with other Prospect reps and members across the sector.
- Encourage your colleagues to join Prospect and the campaign.

You can also find out how to get more involved in campaigning and organising at local and national levels at [prospect.org.uk/get-involved](https://prospect.org.uk/get-involved) and even undertake some dedicated Prospect campaign training for your branch, progress workplace interests, and amplify your voice at work

### If you're not already a member

Sign up today and start adding your voice to the future of the heritage sector – [prospect.org.uk/join](https://prospect.org.uk/join)