



## **Collections in Focus**

*Volunteer Curatorial Programme Brief*

### **Overview**

Collections in Focus is a structured, year-long volunteer curatorial programme at Bradford Police Museum, designed to develop practical skills in research, storytelling, and exhibition-making through live museum projects.

Funded through MD North, the programme brings together volunteers to work collaboratively on three distinct exhibitions, each guided by a professional exhibition framework and supported by a clear, phased approach to delivery.

Rather than traditional volunteering, this programme offers the opportunity to take part in the full curatorial process, contributing to real public-facing outputs while building confidence and experience within a supportive team environment.

### **Programme Structure**

*The programme is made up of three consecutive exhibition projects:*

#### **Exhibition 1: Authority and Power**

*11<sup>th</sup> March – 1<sup>st</sup> July 2026*

Exploring how authority has been exercised, experienced, and challenged within the historic courtroom and cells.

#### **Exhibition 2: Innovation and Investigation**

*8<sup>th</sup> July – 28<sup>th</sup> October 2026*

An education-focused exhibition exploring how investigative methods have developed, designed for primary school audiences.

#### **Exhibition 3: People and Community**

*11<sup>th</sup> November 2026 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2027*

A socially focused exhibition foregrounding individual stories and community voices within the collection.

Each exhibition runs for approximately 17 weeks and follows a consistent structure, allowing volunteers to build and apply skills progressively across the programme.

### **How the Programme Works**

Volunteers work as part of a small, collaborative team, contributing approximately 5 hours per week (Wednesdays, 10am to 3pm) across a structured 17-week exhibition cycle (approx. 85 hours per project)

Each project is supported by:

- A Volunteer Team Leader, responsible for guiding the group through the exhibition framework
- A clear project structure, including timelines, templates, and defined outputs
- Light-touch professional support at key stages

Volunteers are able to join at any stage of the programme and will be supported to integrate into the current phase of work.

### **The Exhibition Framework**

All projects follow a structured five-phase exhibition framework, designed to guide volunteers through the complete curatorial process while embedding learning into real outputs.

#### **Phase 1: Define & Lock**

*Develop a central question, identify the target audience, and research and select objects.*

#### **Phase 2: Shape the Story**

*Build a clear exhibition narrative*

#### **Phase 3: Add Depth**

*Enhance interpretation through carefully selected elements such as audio, digital content, or interactive features.*

#### **Phase 4: Build & Install**

*Plan layout, handle and install objects, and bring the exhibition into the physical space.*

#### **Phase 5: Promotion & Review**

*Promote the exhibition, engage audiences, and evaluate impact to inform future projects.*

### **Skills and Experience You Will Gain**

Through participating in Collections in Focus, volunteers will develop practical experience in:

- Research & Collections Work

- Curatorial Practice
- Writing & Interpretation
- Storytelling & Audience Engagement
- Exhibition Design & Delivery
- Creative & Digital Skills
- Evaluation & Reflection

### **Team Structure**

Each exhibition includes a range of volunteer roles, which may include:

- Research & Documentation
- Narrative Development & Writing
- Audio or Digital Content
- Layout & Installation
- Education & Workshop Design (for schools-focused projects)
- Promotion & Evaluation

Volunteers are encouraged to rotate roles across projects, allowing for broad skill development and progression over time.

### **What Makes This Programme Different**

- Structured, project-based volunteering with clear outcomes
- Real responsibility for shaping exhibitions seen by the public
- Embedded learning through doing, rather than separate training
- Opportunities to build skills across multiple areas of museum practice
- A supportive, collaborative team environment

### **Getting Involved**

Volunteers can join the programme at any stage. Whether you are interested in history, storytelling, education, or creative practice, Collections in Focus offers a unique opportunity to gain hands-on experience within a working museum.