

# Volunteer: The Power Of People

**Visitor Experience Group Conference**

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# V&A

Caption



# Who are we?

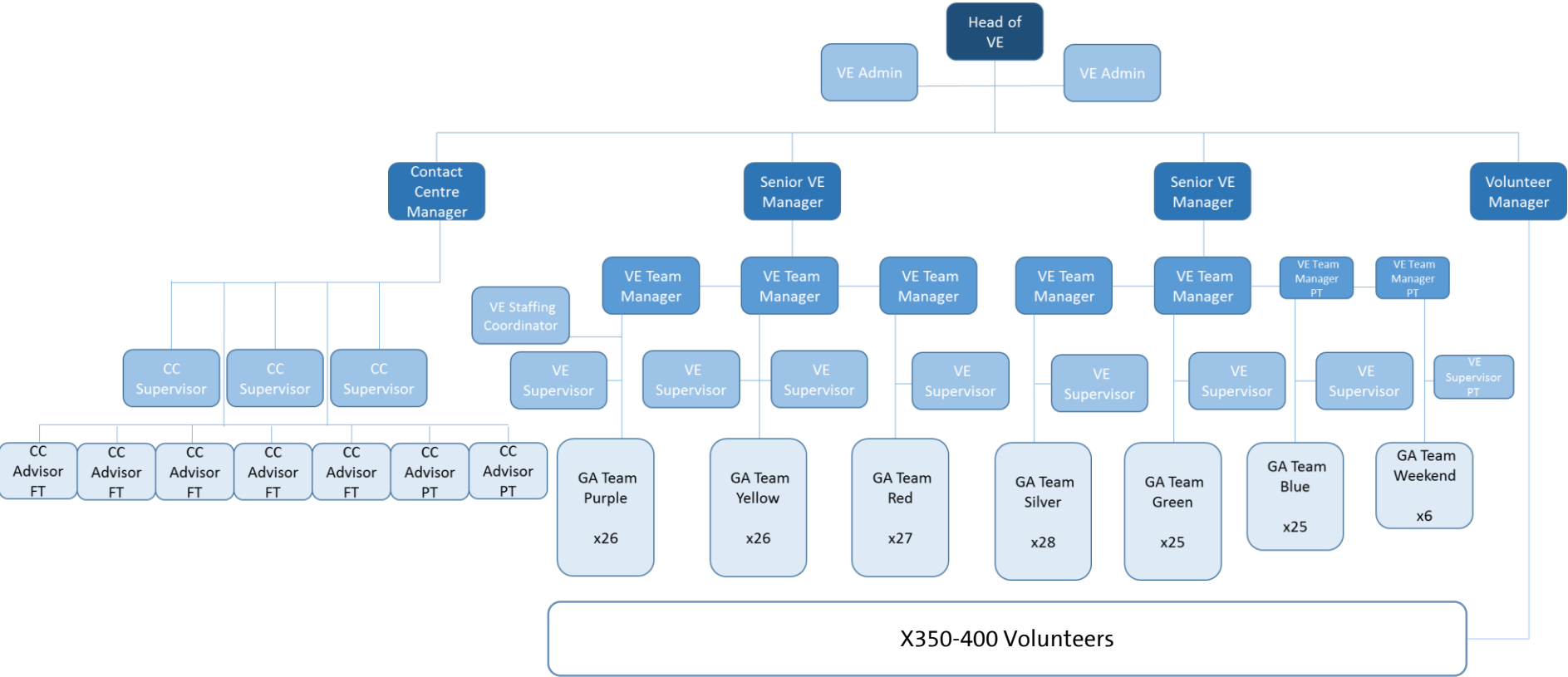


# Created for the people

- The museum opened in 1857 in South Kensington
- The first Director Sir Henry Cole declared that the museum should be a “schoolroom for everyone”
- The V&A opened the world's first museum restaurant with different prices for all of its visitors.
- When first opened, the museum was a free museum and this continues today
- The museum stayed open late so that working members of society could come after work and enjoy the museum.



# Who are VE?



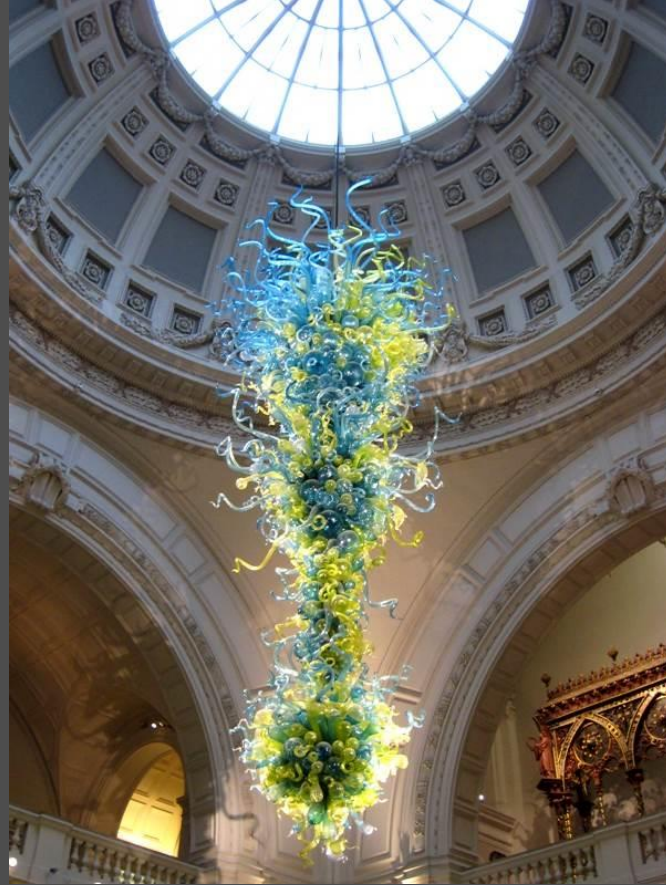


# Our People of Power





# Visitor Experience at the V&A



# How the volunteer programme began

- 120 information desk and Tour Guide Volunteers





# Heritage Lottery Funding

- **Our Promise to HLF:**
  - to increase and diversify the team
- **Our targets:**
  - To increase team by 50% by June 2017 (420 volunteers)
  - BAME communities – target: 20% of new recruit
  - Disabled – target: 8% of new recruits
  - Long term unemployed
  - NEETs





# Research is key

- Understand and accommodate different profiles
  - Young graduates
  - Retired
  - Homemakers
  - Successful Professionals
  - Long term unemployed
  - Learning difficulties
  - NEETS
- Engage your core volunteers



# Go to them, don't assume they will come to you





# Promote what you do



# Simplify the process

- Simplify application process
- Eliminate barriers: CV, references, long application forms
- Allow flexibility for those for whom the recruitment process itself is a barrier
- Be open-minded, recognise potential





# Results to Action

## Our targets:

- To increase team by 50% by June 2017 (420 volunteers)
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## Results

- Team increased to 450
- BAME 2016 = 23%
- BAME 2017 = 26%
- Disability 2016 = 4%
- Disability 2017 = 10%



# Results to Action

## Further Success:

- Approx. 45,000 hours of volunteering a year
- Last year 31,568 visitors attended the 20 different tours the V&A team offers
- 25 volunteers have become V&A Gallery Assistants
- 30 volunteers got jobs or internships in other V&A departments and 70 volunteers gained employment at other organisations in Museum, Gallery, Art, Visitor Attraction sector





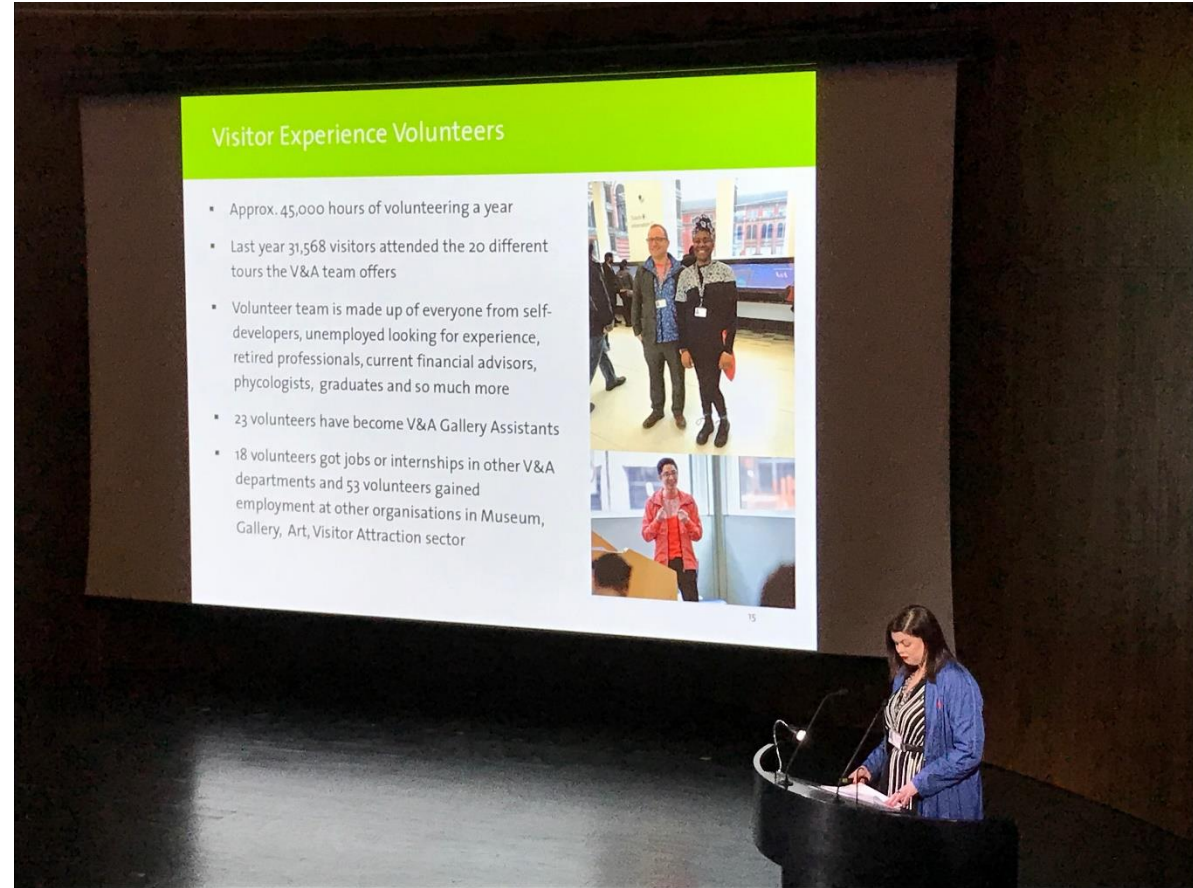
# Don't just take our word for it

“I was promoted to team leader in the volunteer team at the V&A, and after about 6 months I got a job at the Design Museum as a part-time gallery assistant. The volunteer experience at the V&A was a very important part of that initial success, and now I have a full-time job at the V&A”

“I recently applied for job and one of the reasons they gave me for being successful was the way I applied my learning and skills from the volunteering position at the V&A”

# Diversity and Inclusion is more than a tick box

Why is this so important to us?





**Why is  
representation so  
important?**

**What does it mean  
to you and your  
institution?**



# Recent Report from the V&A

‘Visitor Experience has been leading on DEAI over recent years. Volunteering underwent a huge cultural change for the Exhibition Road development. [...] Enormous effort was invested in changing the culture through recruitment, training and close monitoring. A process that is also being carried out with the Gallery Assistant team too.’

Pre-work Report for Museum As Site for Social Action Meeting

# There's always more

## Special tours:

- LGBTQ+
- Family led
- Female Voices
- African Heritage
- BSL
- Touch tours

## Training:

- Autism Awareness
- Dementia Friends/Champions
- Diversity Champions
- Unconscious bias's
- Professional development
- Gendered Intelligence





Be the change you want to see.

Thank you

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