

Case Study: Glasgow City Archives



Archivist Irene O'Brien first considered using the Archives Libraries and Museums Alliance (ALMA-UK) economic impact toolkit at Glasgow Life's Glasgow City Archives (GCA) in June 2018. When asked what had sparked her interest in using it, Irene said that she had thought the toolkit **would enable her to see the economic impact of the archives in their own right, as it was sometimes difficult to differentiate between different museums within Glasgow Life**, with some being very large and others very small.

When she first started using the toolkit, Irene had no reservations about using it and it was more so a case of wanting to make sure that the archives had clear cut evidence which demonstrated the impact of the archive, rather than the economic impact of contiguous venues and museums in Glasgow. Having already heard about the ALMA-UK toolkit in relation to Scottish Government's measuring of the economic climate and Greater Glasgow's 'Tourist and Visitor Plan', Irene felt confident about using the toolkit:

'From when I first received the toolkit, it was easy to use. Whilst I wouldn't be able to say that I absolutely understand all the formula that go into it, I understand the tiers in which it is working and how it looks to show economic impact.'

When asked whether there was any other guidance needed to be able to use the toolkit, Irene said that there was not, as the guidance attached to the toolkit was straightforward and easy to understand.

Whilst the archives have always required visitors to sign in and provide an address, the form has now been revised to include geographic area tick-boxes to allow GCA to more easily collect the information for the toolkit. This has allowed Irene to see the broad reach of the archives, with visitors coming from other parts of Scotland, other parts of the UK and Ireland, and from all over the world.

The only challenge in the toolkit was the potential for **overnight stays** to be omitted from impact for archives, as this is presumed to be more common for museums. The toolkit effectively records the number of overnight stays for users of the archive, and emphatically shows the economic impact visitors' stays can have. For GCA, this is an important element of their impact as they have many users, particularly academic, but also personal users in family history who spend more than one night and often weeks in the City.

The findings from the ALMA-UK toolkit, Irene outlined, have been helpful when looking at the overall performance of the archives and have **aided conversations internally** about who is coming to use the archives, how long they stay, what they do while they're in Glasgow and how this **can fit into the GCA's future strategies**. Looking forward, Irene intends to carry on using the toolkit and document the duration of stay and spend of archive users to gain a greater understanding of the archive's visitors and impact.