



Merchant Adventurers' Hall

Heritage and Visitor Wellbeing Report 06 July 2022

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Key

AV = Anonymous Visitor

2. Overview

Amy Luck from the Manchester Centre for Public History and Heritage at Manchester Metropolitan University, in partnership with Merchant Adventurers' Hall, undertook a quantitative and qualitative study into the impacts of Merchant Adventurers' Hall on visitor wellbeing, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council. In person visitor surveys based on public healthcare and psychologically accredited measures were undertaken on site during March 2022 with 102 visitors. The aim of the research was to understand the impact of visiting Merchant Adventurers' Hall on visitor's wellbeing and to provide robust, rigorous, and significant evidence of this to support Merchant Adventurers' Hall.

2.1. Merchant Adventurers' Hall supports visitor wellbeing

The site:

- Had a **measurable** and **significant positive impact** on visitors' subjective wellbeing
- Provided visitor experiences that support the New Economics Foundation (NEF) Five Ways to Wellbeing:ⁱ
 - Enabled visitors to **Connect, Keep Learning** and to **Be Active**
- Positively impacted the National Accounts Framework Wellbeing Indicators:ⁱⁱ
- Measurably improved **Personal Wellbeing**
 - **Emotional Wellbeing:** this included increased positive feelings and reduced negative feelings
 - **Positive Functioning:** visitors felt increased interest and attentiveness, engagement, meaning and purpose
 - **Resilience and Self Esteem:** visitors felt prouder, and more optimistic
 - **Life Satisfaction:** visitors felt happier and more satisfied with their lives
 - **Vitality:** visitors felt more active
- Measurably improved **Social Wellbeing:**
 - Facilitated the development of **Supportive Relationships** with family and friends and a sense of **trust and belonging**

'Seeing our history helps with mental health' (Visitor, 2022)

3. Methods

Quantitative psychological wellbeing methods (Positive and Negative Affect Schedule - PANAS) and personal wellbeing and happiness measures (Modified Wellbeing Scale - MWS) were used in this study to investigate and measure the wellbeing impact of visiting Merchant Adventurers' Hall, alongside qualitative methods including open-ended questions and free comment space. Surveys were completed at the start and end of the visit to Merchant Adventurers' Hall. This pre/post methodology provided data on change to participant's wellbeing after the visit.

Key indicators for improved wellbeing were based on NEF's five evidence-based actions for wellbeing, which include: to connect; be active; take notice; keep learning and give (Figure 1).



Figure 1: Five Ways to Wellbeing (www.wellbeinginfo.org/self-help/wellbeing/5-ways-to-wellbeing)

Survey questions were based on measuring the ability of Merchant Adventurers' Hall to generate a sense of belonging, to connect people to each other and their local environment, to act as mechanisms for personal and communal interaction with one another and with their environment, supporting learning, and being physically and mentally active. Additional indicators for determining the impact of visiting Merchant Adventurers' Hall on wellbeing were identified from the National Account of Wellbeing personal and social indicator framework. These included social wellbeing indicator questions (Supportive Relationships and Trust and Belonging), and personal wellbeing indicator questions based on the five components (Emotional Wellbeing, Satisfying Life, Vitality, Self Esteem and Resilience, Positive Functioning) and respective sub-components (Figure 2).ⁱⁱⁱ

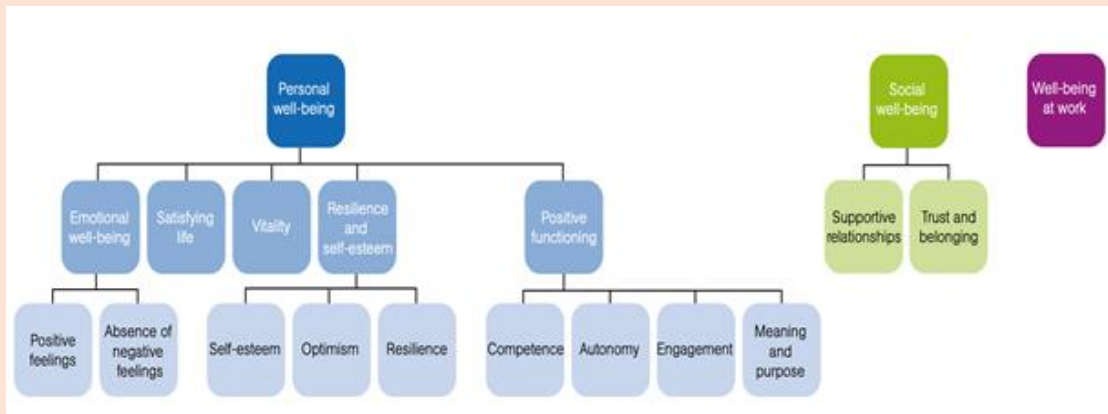


Figure 2: National Accounts of Wellbeing Framework indicator structure^{iv}

3.1. Modified Wellbeing Scale (MWS)^v

This utilized modified elements of the General Health Questionnaire, the ONS Wellbeing Survey and the Warwick–Edinburgh mental wellbeing scale and incorporated the NEF five wellbeing key elements and National Account of Wellbeing personal and social wellbeing indicator framework.^{vi} This project used a simplified 1–5 Likert-type scale. If the participant provided higher scores after their visit their subjective wellbeing would be deemed to have improved.

3.2. Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS)^{vii}

Developed to measure positive and negative moods, specific words are linked to positive and negative emotions, measured by individual choice against a 1-5 Likert scale. The participant chooses a number from one to five for each emotive word on the list: positive words included attentive, interested, alert, excited, enthusiastic, strong, inspired, active, proud, determined; negative words included distressed, jittery, guilty, afraid, irritable, ashamed, scared, hostile, nervous and upset. If scores given for positive emotions increased wellbeing would be deemed to have improved. Likewise, if scores given for negative emotions reduced individual’s wellbeing would be deemed to have improved.

4. Analysis

Participant's before and after surveys/scores were matched and if one score was missing (e.g., a participant had not completed both the before and after survey) then the participant was excluded from the data set, as without this change to wellbeing after visiting could not be assessed. As such the number of participants was reduced to 98.

Quantitative analysis was conducted on PANAS and MWS results. Percentage differences between mean results from before and after visits were compared to enable an understanding of overarching data patterns. Statistical hypothesis testing was conducted to determine the significance of changes to individual's wellbeing after visiting Merchant Adventurers' Hall, and the probability that any change was not a result of chance and showed a true reflection of the target population. The Pair-Sample Sign Test (a non-parametric related sample test) was applied, where the null hypothesis assumed that the median of differences between [measure (e.g., 'Attentive') pre-test] and [measure post-test] equalled 0. Results were deemed to be statistically significant when the p-value returned by the test was below 0.05 (5%). Results were determined to be highly significant below 0.01 (1%). The two-tailed test was conducted to test for change to wellbeing, rather than improvement or reduction. The direction of change was determined by the greater number of positive or negative differences observed in matched pairs. If there were more positive matched pairs than negative, for example, the direction of change was determined to be positive.

Standard deviation from the mean was calculated to ascertain variability. Standard deviation demonstrated how far away on average each answer was from the mean average; the smaller the standard deviation, the more results were clustered around the mean and the less variability in the data. Standard deviation differences between the 'before' data and the 'after' data were calculated to assess whether variability had increased or decreased after visiting Merchant Adventurers' Hall. Lower variability between results was deemed to illustrate patterns of behaviour.

Qualitative data was thematically analysed, with the support of NVIVO software. Key themes identified were linked to National Survey of Wellbeing Indicators. Results of quantitative and qualitative analysis were triangulated.

5. Results

5.1. Demographics of Respondents

67.05% of respondents described their gender as female

32.95% of respondents described their gender as male

53.68% were over the age of 50

89.01% did not consider themselves to have a disability

91.11% described themselves as white

27.55% visited a heritage site once month or more, increasing to 60.20% visiting once every three months or more

40.82% were visiting as a tourist

**Note: percentages based on those who answered optional demographic questions*

5.2. Quantitative Analysis

5.2.1. Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (Figures 3, 4 and 5)

Negative Affects

- Reduction in mean scores for irritable, nervous, jittery, distressed, afraid, upset, guilty, hostile, and scared.
- Increase in mean scores ashamed.
- Statistically **highly significant** decreases in irritable and nervous.
- Statistically **significant** decreases in distressed and jittery.
- Standard Deviation (SD) reduced (less variation) for irritable, nervous, jittery, distressed, afraid, upset, guilty, hostile, and scared.
- SD increased for ashamed.

Positive affects

- Increase in mean scores for all positive PANAS associated emotions (from **5.04%** and **21.65%**).
- Statistically **highly significant** increase in attentive, determined, enthusiastic, excited, inspired, and proud.
- Statistically **significant** increase in alert and interested.
- SD reduced for attentive, alert, interested, and strong.
- SD increased in inspired, active, proud, enthusiastic, excited, and determined.

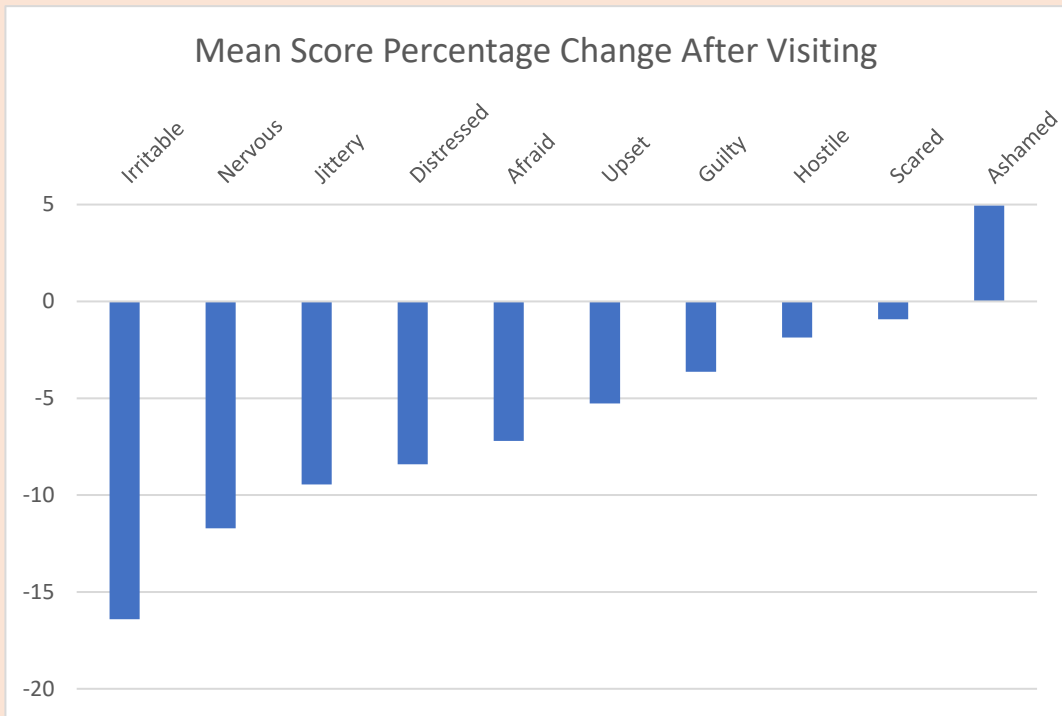


Figure 3: PANAS Negative Affect Mean Scores Percentage Change After Visit

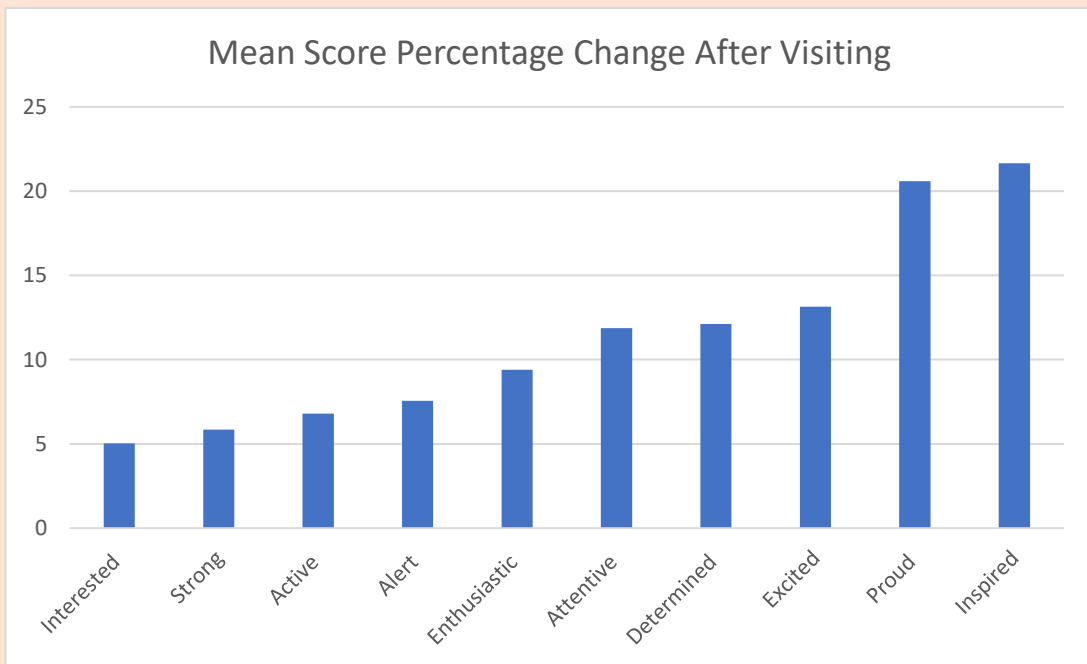


Figure 4: PANAS: Positive Affect Scale Mean Scores before and after visit

Measure	P Value	Significance level	SD Percentage Change	Mean Score Percentage Change
Afraid	0.125		-54.39	-7.21
Ashamed	0.180		40.91	4.95
Distressed	0.039	Significant	-47.54	-8.40
Guilty	0.508		-26.09	-3.64
Hostile	1.000		-26.83	-1.87
Irritable	0.000	Highly Significant	-53.97	-16.41
Jittery	0.039	Significant	-33.33	-9.45
Nervous	0.008	Highly Significant	-45.33	-11.72
Scared	1.000		-33.96	-0.93
Upset	1.000		-38.18	-5.26
Active	0.080		2.75	6.80
Alert	0.017	Significant	-2.48	7.55
Attentive	0.000	Highly Significant	-4.85	11.87
Determined	0.001	Highly Significant	7.44	12.11
Enthusiastic	0.000	Highly Significant	4.81	9.39
Excited	0.000	Highly Significant	6.60	13.14
Inspired	0.000	Highly Significant	1.82	21.65
Interested	0.021	Significant	-1.27	5.04
Proud	0.000	Highly Significant	3.33	20.60
Strong	0.175		-0.83	5.84

Figure 5: PANAS Results including Mean Score Percentage Change, Standard Deviation Percentage Change, P Value and Significance Levels.

5.2.2. Modified Wellbeing Scale (Figures 6 and 7)

- Increased mean scores for all MWS measures (from **0.75%** to **8.41%**).
- Statistically **highly significant** increase in a sense of accomplishment, connected to the people around me, the opportunity to learn new things, optimistic about my future, and people support each other.
- Statistically **significant** increase in connected to the local environment, physically active, and satisfied with my life.
- SD reduced for optimistic about my future, I have freedom of choice, connected to the people around me, satisfied with my life, connected to the local environment, my life is worthwhile, interested in the world around me, happy with my life, secure about my source of income, a sense of accomplishment, I belong to a neighbourhood, the opportunity to learn new things, I can overcome challenges, people support each other, and physically active.
- SD increased for I can trust people.

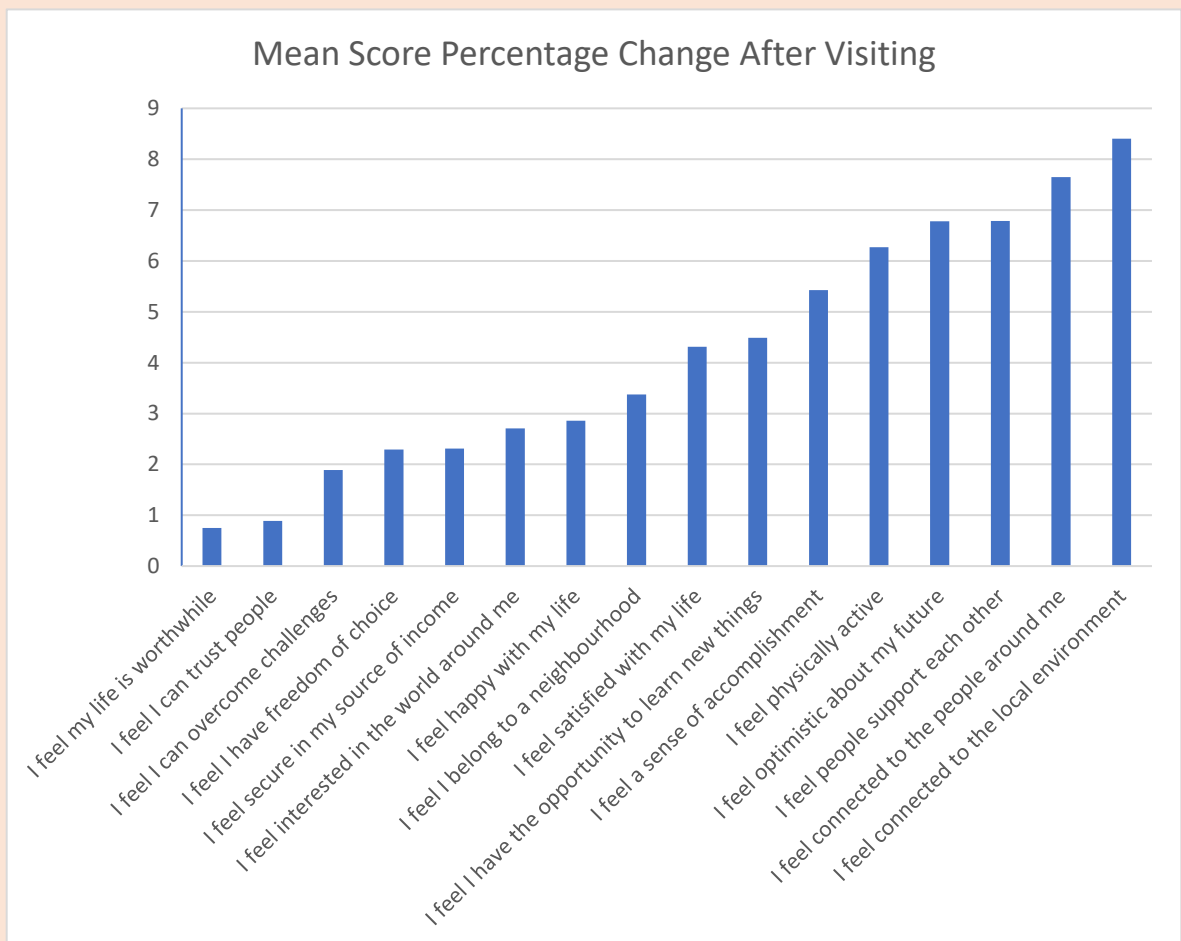


Figure 6: Modified Wellbeing Scale mean results percentage change

Measure	P Value	Significance Level	SD Percentage Change	Mean Score Percentage Change
I feel...				
A sense of accomplishment	0.009	Highly Significant	-8.33	5.43
Connected to the local environment	0.014	Significant	-11.11	8.41
Connected to the people around me	0.007	Highly Significant	-13.08	7.65
Happy with my life	0.186		-9.28	2.86
I belong to a neighbourhood	0.472		-7.32	3.37
I can overcome challenges	0.337		-5.15	1.89
I can trust people	1.000		3.96	0.89
I have freedom of choice	0.377		-13.40	2.29
I have the opportunity to learn new things	0.006	Highly Significant	-6.38	4.49
Interested in the world around me	0.063		-10.75	2.71
My life is worthwhile	1.000		-10.89	0.75
Optimistic about my future	0.001	Highly Significant	-14.41	6.78
People support each other	0.002	Highly Significant	-5.00	6.78
Physically active	0.018	Significant	-2.83	6.27
Satisfied with my life	0.049	Significant	-11.43	4.31
Secure about my source of income	0.648		-8.87	2.31

Figure 7: Modified Wellbeing Scale Results before and after visiting Merchant Adventurers' Hall, including Mean Score Percentage Change, Standard Deviation Percentage Change, P Values and Significance levels

5.3. Qualitative Analysis

“Did you feel your visit impacted your wellbeing? If so, how?”

Key emotive words used included: **Interesting, Enjoy, Connected, Inspiring, Positive, Relaxed, Happy**

Visiting Merchant Adventurers’ Hall impacted **NEF Five Ways To Wellbeing** in enabling visitors to:

- **Connect** with each other, providing visitors with a space to *‘share this experience’* (AV) with loved ones, which *‘Helps families bond’* (AV). It enabled visitors to connect to the *‘stream of history and enhances the awareness of that connection – that I am part of a great continuum and a ‘story’... I realise I am not isolated, but part of a wider tapestry which is still unfolding’* (AV). *‘Connecting to the past’* (AV) aided visitors to *‘know more about culture, which ultimately helps me know more about - and feel connected to – the world’* (AV). Visiting *‘helped to connect in some small way with the community of York and its history’* (AV), *‘the environment where I live’* (AV), and also a sense of national identity *‘links me to the glorious history we have in the UK’* (AV), *‘makes me aware of our heritage and a reminder of our history’* (AV). This *‘link with the past’* (AV) also allowed visitors to connect with people from the past *‘made me feel aware of the achievements of people past present and future’* (AV), *‘reveals how similar people’s values were then’* (AV) and *‘Connected to past efforts, endeavours’* (AV).
- **Be Active**, visitors commented that visiting was *‘a little tiring’* (AV) implying they had engaged in physical activity.
- **Take Notice**, visiting enabled visitors to feel *‘joyfull’* (AV), *‘focused’* (AV), *‘stimulated’* (AV), *‘absorbed in the moment’* (AV) and *‘inspired’* (AV). Visiting supported visitors to *‘takes your mind off the worries in your own life’* (AV), *‘get out of my head and enjoy what I’m doing in the moment’* (AV) and appreciate both *‘the history’* (AV) and the present *‘lucky to live in an era and a place in which my needs are well met’* (AV).
- **Keep Learning**, many visitors stated their visit was *‘educational’* (AV), they *‘increased my knowledge’* (AV) or *‘Learnt something new’* (AV) which left them feeling *‘enriched’* (AV) and *‘stimulated by the opportunity to learn more’* (AV). Visitors were *‘able to connect this new information to new/old information’* (AV) suggesting their visit reinforced previous learning. Visits inspired future learning, including *‘opened my mind and inspired me about history’* (AV) and *‘there were aspects which made me want to know more’* (AV).

Visiting Merchant Adventurers' Hall impacted **Personal Wellbeing** and the components of:

- **Emotional wellbeing:** Visitors frequently suggested their visit had a *'positive impact on my wellbeing'* (AV) or *'had a massive impact on my wellbeing'*. Through providing *'an experience'* (AV), a *'educational'* (AV), *'visually inspiring'* (AV) *'cool place'* (AV) with a *'wonderful sense of peace'* (AV) visitors were able to *'focus on something different'* (AV) and *'be present with whats around me'* (AV). This resulted in increased **positive emotions:** after visits *'my mood has improved and I feel happier'* (AV), *'increased mindfulness'* (AV), *'More positive, smiley'* (AV), *'Amazed & inspired'* (AV), *'Feel relaxed + content'* (AV), *'I am calmer than when I walked in'* (AV), *'made me feel at ease'* (AV). Visitors also noted their visit had reduced **negative feelings** *'decreased anxiety + stress'* (AV), *'relieves the stresses of normal life'* (AV), *'feel less stressed than when I arrived'* (AV), and *'Takes your mind off the worries in your own life'* (AV).
- **Resilience and Self-Esteem:** Visitors noted how Merchant Adventurers' Hall contributed to a sense of pride (**self-esteem**) *'Just so proud'* (AV), *'Made me feel proud'* (AV). Visiting provided a mechanism for visitors to feel *'more positive about the contributions I can make & make a difference'* (AV), inspiring **optimism** *'makes me optimistic for the future'* (AV), *'it makes you appreciate the life that we have now'* (AV).
- **Positive Functioning:** Visitors frequently commented on their **engagement**. Visitors thought it was *'interesting'* (AV) and were *'stimulated'* (AV) and *'educated'* (AV). Visiting *'Opened my mind'* (AV) and enabled visitors to *'enjoy learning and experiencing new things'* (AV) and *'actively using my brain to learn new things'* (AV). Merchant Adventurers' Hall stimulated visitors to think about how their own lives could have **meaning and purpose** *'it made me more motivated to work hard and achieve something that could make a difference'* (AV), *'makes me think about what I want to do with my life and the legacy I want to leave'* (AV).
- **Vitality:** Visitors commented that coming to Merchant Adventurers' Hall was an experience that supported them to be physically and mentally active *'I do feel more awake than I did when we entered and I think that may be because I am actively using my brain'* (AV), *'a little tiring'* (AV).

Visiting Merchant Adventurers' Hall impacted **Social Wellbeing** and the components of:

- **Trust and belonging:** Visitors commented that their visit enabled them to feel *'connections with the past'* (AV). Multiple visitors mentioned feeling part of something larger (**belonging**) *'I feel that visiting this place connects me to the stream of history and enhances the awareness of that connection - that I am part of a great continuum and a 'story'... I realise I am not isolated, but part of a wider tapestry which is still unfolding'* (AV), *'I feel as though I am a very small part of history'* (AV), *'Provided an awareness of history + all the people who*

have come before me' (AV). Visitors referred to '*seeing our history*' (AV – emphasis added), implying a sense of ownership and connection '*Lovely to see the basics of our history and how we deal with challenges through the ages*' (AV- emphasis added), '*Makes me aware of our heritage and a reminder of our history*' (AV – emphasis added). Visitors also felt '*more connected to York*' (AV) and '*the community of York*', '*makes me feel more connected to the city in which I live, which is a reassuring feeling*' (AV), '*Sparks interest and connections with the past and with the environment where I live*' (AV). Visitors also related to people from the past '*reveals how similar people's values were then*' (AV) and remembered their own pasts '*I'm nostalgic for childhood holidays*' (AV) further engendering a sense of **belonging and trust**.

- **Supportive relationships:** Enabling people to have a place to enjoy spending time and share experiences with loved ones '*Spending a few hours w/ my family + sharing this experience (chatting about things/discussing the museum) makes me really happy*' (AV), and improve relationships '*Helps families bond*' (AV), '*I have been able to distance myself from my parents whilst we looked around - they have been getting 'on my nerves' all morning and making me feel irritable + annoyed + frustrated. I am now in a more positive frame of mind*' (AV).

6. Research Summary

'Knowing more about history helps me know more about culture, which ultimately helps me know more about - and feel more connected to - the world.' (Visitor 2022)

Qualitative results indicated that Merchant Adventurers' Hall supported visitors to **Take Notice, Connect, Be Active** and **Keep Learning**. Results showed that visiting Merchant Adventurers' Hall improved wellbeing, specifically in the following components:

- **Social Wellbeing:**
 - **Supportive relationships**, providing a social space to develop supportive relationships through providing a place for time and quality interactions with family, friends and loved ones.
 - **Trust and belonging**, through enabling connections with the locality and the past, including through their own lived experiences.
- **Personal wellbeing:**
 - **Positive functioning**, in **engagement**, with visitors feeling interested and stimulated, and engaged in learning about the history of Merchant Adventurers' Hall. Visiting provided visitors with a sense of **meaning and purpose**.
 - **Emotional wellbeing**, high frequencies of **positive feelings**, including feeling happy, relaxed, and calm and absence/reduction of **negative feelings**.
 - **Resilience and self-esteem**, engendering feelings of pride (**self-esteem**) and inspiring **optimism** and future endeavours.
 - **Vitality**, enabling visitors to be physically and mentally active.

Quantitative results indicated that Merchant Adventurers' Hall supported visitors to **Connect, Take Notice, Be Active** and **Keep Learning**. Results showed that people visiting Merchant Adventurers' Hall felt a measurable improvement and change in wellbeing as a direct result of their experiences, specifically:

- **Social Wellbeing:**
 - **Supportive relationships**, visitors felt more connected to the people around them and that people support each other
 - **Trust and belonging**, visitors felt connected to the local environment
- **Personal Wellbeing:**
 - **Positive functioning**, visitors felt more **engaged** (interested, alert and attentive), **competent** (a sense of accomplishment), **meaning and purpose** (the opportunity to learn new things) as a result of their visit.
 - **Emotional Wellbeing**, visitors experienced a reduction in **negative feelings**, including distressed, nervous, jittery, and irritable and an increase of **positive feelings** including enthusiastic and excited.
 - **Satisfying life**, visitors felt increased life satisfaction

- **Resilience and Self Esteem**, visitors felt increased **resilience** (determined) and **optimism** (optimistic about the future, inspired) and **self-esteem** (proud) after their visit to Merchant Adventurers' Hall.
- **Vitality**, visitors felt more physically active as a result of visiting Merchant Adventurers' Hall.

Combined, quantitative and qualitative data both showed that Merchant Adventurers' Hall had an impact on visitors' subjective wellbeing:

- Providing visitor experiences that supported visitors to **Be Active, Keep Learning, Connect** and to **Take Notice** of the world around them.
- Improved **Social Wellbeing** specifically in facilitating the development of **supportive relationships** with loved ones and a sense of **trust and belonging**.
- Improving **Personal Wellbeing**, specifically in **positive functioning**, enabling visitors to be engaged and feel that they had a meaningful and purposeful visit in which they learnt; in **emotional wellbeing** by supporting visitors to feel more positive and less negative; **satisfying life**, improving life satisfaction; **resilience and self-esteem** engendering visitors to feel prouder (self-esteem) and more optimistic; **vitality** supporting visitors to feel more active.

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