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**Expression of Interest:** **Expert Eye 2020-21**

Many of us have objects or unique collections in our museums that we know little about. A lack of knowledge can sometimes prevent us from sharing them with our visitors and wider audiences. This is where Expert Eye can help. West Midlands Museum Development (WMMD) has been running the programme for five years, supporting museums across the West Midlands region to improve their knowledge, expertise and confidence about some of the collections they hold.

17 museums have taken part in Expert Eye since 2015. The scheme has four main aims:

* To improve documentation and management of underused collections
* To improve staff knowledge and confidence
* To work towards interpreting and displaying collections
* To share knowledge throughout the staff team; curatorial staff, outreach and learning, front of house, back office staff and volunteers.

A wide range of collections subjects have been covered including; agricultural collections, costume, archives, ceramics, pharmaceutical and medical collections, a fluid specimen collection, archaeology, industrial collections, military medals and world cultures. This list is not exhaustive, and you may have something different which you wish to explore.

This programme aims to improve collections management and care of collections skills. It will support museums with the **Managing Collections** requirements of the 2018 Museum Accreditation Standard, with particular reference to **5.2 and 6.2**.

**What the project involves**

WMMD will support the cost of a subject specialist for a maximum of two days to work with up to four museums. They will help you to develop your organisation’s knowledge and understanding of the collection area you have identified. This work will be carried out remotely as visits to collections stores may not be possible at the current time. The subject specialist will work directly with a member(s) of your collections team and advice on identification, gaps in documentation, methods of display and ideas for interpreting the item. This information can then be disseminated to staff and volunteers across the museum.

**What we will need from you**

* Select the area of the collection that you would like the subject specialist to work with. Please note that their time is restricted, and large numbers of items can not be covered so please be realistic with the number of objects that you would like them to look at.
* As the specialist will be working remotely check that you can accommodate them using online methods such as Zoom or Microsoft teams. Do you have WIFI in your collection stores or will you need to move the items somewhere else so that they can be viewed on screen?
* Do you have good photographs of the items that you can email to the subject specialist?
* Are you able to let the subject specialist access any existing documentation?

**Conditions of participation**

* Open to Accredited museums or those officially registered as Working Towards Accreditation in the West Midlands region
* Dates will need to be agreed with the Subject Specialist and WMMD
* Participating museums must provide a member of staff to work with the Subject Specialist
* Work with the Subject Specialist must be concluded by **Friday 26 February 2021**
* A sharing event must take place before **Friday 19 March 2021** to disseminate the information from the work with the Subject Specialist to members of staff, volunteers and Trustees as appropriate (this can be online)
* The museum is asked to write a brief case study of the programme for submission to WMMD by **31 March 2021**

**Project timetable**

* Submission of Expression of Interest forms by **Friday** **2 October 2020**
* Successful applicants notified by **Friday 9 October 2020**
* The project must be completed, and all sharing events taken place, by **19 March 2021**

**Further information**

If you have any questions about the programme please contact Helen Johnson by email on helen.johnson@staffordshire.gov.uk

**Expression of Interest:** **Expert Eye 2020-21**

**Please complete all areas of the form**

 **Your details:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Museum:** |  |
| **Name:** |  |
| **Job title:** |  |
| **Email:** |  |
| **Telephone:** |  |

**1) Please state which area of your collection you feel would benefit from specialist advice.**

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**2) Please give an approximate number of the objects that you would like the Subject Specialist to work**

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**3) Please outline why your museum will benefit from this specialist advice (max. 100 words)**

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**4) Please confirm that you will be able to run the project remotely using an online platform to give the Subject Specialist access to the collections as required.**

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**5) How you will make the collection accessible to visitors as a result of this programme (max. 100 words)**

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| **I confirm that I will fully participate in the programme and have the permission and support of my senior management team.** |
| **Signed:** |  | **Date:** |  |

Please return completed Expression of Interest Form to wmmd@ironbridge.org.uk no later than

**5pm, Friday 25 September 2020**