



Date: 7 April 2021

INVITATION TO QUOTE FOR: Concerned About Closure programme 2021-22

Introduction

The West Midlands Museum Development programme (WMMD) is seeking a freelance individual, agency, or team to provide financial advice for museums in the West Midlands as part of a new 'Concerned About Closure' support strand.

About Us

Museum Development in England is delivered by nine regional providers. It extends across the UK and forms the national [Museum Development Network \(MDN\)](#). Each provider tailors opportunities for participation in schemes, training, grants programmes and networks based on an informed understanding of the context and needs of museums in their area.

The programme invests in the development of individuals and organisations via a range of advice, information, initiatives, and small grants and directly supports the delivery of the UK Accreditation Scheme for museums and galleries in England.

[WMMD](#), a Sector Support Organisation (SSO), was established in April 2015 with funding from [Arts Council England](#) and is managed by [Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust](#).

Through grants, free training and projects, the programme supports 141 [Accredited](#) museums and those Working Towards Accreditation across the wider West Midlands region encouraging best practice in all aspects of museum work.

About the 'Concerned About Closure' Programme

'Concerned About Closure' is a new support strand for WMMD, based on a successful model developed by [South East Museum Development](#).

Extended periods of closure due to the Covid-19 pandemic has significantly impacted on museums across the UK, limiting their ability to engage with audiences, generate income, and care for their collections.

Not all museums have access to the financial expertise necessary to know their financial standing or where to go for support for financial difficulties. Museums may be concerned that they are facing permanent closure and unsure of how to proceed.

'Concerned About Closure' will provide confidential surgeries for museums in the West Midlands who believe they may face permanent closure.

The surgeries will be structured conversations that help the museum understand its financial standing and clarify its position on potential closure. Conversations will be structured according to a set template, based on a template developed by South East Museums Development.

Following the surgeries, the team will provide the museum with a written report to accurately reflect the discussion and inform the museums' next steps.

WMMD is seeking a freelance individual, agency, or team with the financial expertise to lead these structured conversations and help museum understand their financial standing.

Aims of the 'Concerned About Closure' programme

The project aims to:

- Provide a formal mechanism for museums in the West Midlands to flag that they believe they are facing permanent closure
- Enable museums to access professional expertise to help them establish whether they are at risk of closure
- Enable museums to access professional expertise for recommendations and next steps if they are facing potential closure
- Provide museums with a written report following the surgeries to inform their planning and decision making
- Involve WMMD throughout the process so it can provide ongoing advice and support in the future
- Enable WMMD to flag any potential closures to Arts Council England (ACE) as part of ACE's ongoing reporting to the Department of Digital, Culture, Media, and Sport (DCMS)

WMMD is looking for a candidate (or candidates*) who will provide support before, during and after the project pilot as follows:

Before launch:

- Review existing plans with WMMD, to recommend any potential amendments and help shape the programme before public launch

Throughout project:

- Lead confidential surgeries with museums, using conversation template, to establish the museum's financial standing and potential next steps
- Liaise with WMMD to accurately record surgeries in a written report, which WMMD will then forward to museums

After the project:

- Provide feedback to WMMD to help inform potential changes to the project/key successes or challenges

WMMD is seeking candidates with the following experience and expertise:

- A background in accounting and financial management
- The ability to understand an organisation's financial standing in a short space of time
- Experience supporting charities or non-for-profit organisations facing closure
- Familiarity with the legal and ethical issues faced by museums at risk of closure (such as the Museum Association's guidance, [here](#))
- Interpersonal skills and the ability to build professional yet supportive rapport with clients quickly
- Strong verbal and written communication skills, with the ability to convey complex financial information clearly and concisely to clients
- Discretion, sensitivity, and the ability to treat all discussions with the upmost confidentiality

*WMMD will consider applications from agencies, individual freelancers, or a team of freelancers if you wish to apply as a group.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, all activity is currently being delivered online and over the phone. As such, WMMD will consider applicants based across the UK.

Timescales and key dates

Timescales are flexible and subject to change depending on how the Covid-19 pandemic develops, however, currently WMMD are working to the current timeline:

- Invitation to quote closes: **5pm, 17 May 2021**
- Interviews: the week commencing **24 May 2021**
- Successful applicants notified: **1 June 2021** at the latest
- Project to launch publicly: **5 July 2021**
- Review and evaluation: **June 2022**

Project budget and payment terms

£3,000 for 8 days work across the year, including VAT and any expenses.

This will be on a retainer basis, required as and when museums request a confidential surgery. The budget has been calculated based on a day rate of £375. We anticipate this will require approximately 7-8 days' work across the year.

Time has been calculated to include:

- 1 x half day to look through conversation templates with WMMD before the project's launch
- Approximately 5-6 conversations with museums requesting support (conversations are estimated to take between 1.5 hours and 3.5 hours depending on circumstance)
- Additional time for any necessary preparation work in the lead up to the conversations
- Time to work with WMMD to record the conversations in a written advisory report
- Time for reflection and evaluation with WMMD at the end of the year

Please note, as this is a freelance opportunity the successful applicant will be responsible for arranging their own National Insurance and tax.

This work is funded with public money through Arts Council England, so it is imperative that we follow 'best value' principles when appointing our consultancy partner.

Monitoring, evaluation and reflection

The programme will be reviewed in June 2022.

Throughout the programme, WMMD and the successful candidate(s) will have opportunity for reflection, with the opportunity to amend the process to ensure it is fit for purpose.

Measures of success include:

- A two-week turnaround between museums requesting a confidential conversation and receiving one
- That museums are provided with a written report within two weeks of their confidential conversation

Interested in applying?

To express interest in this project, please email your CV and a cover letter to wmmd@ironbridge.org.uk by **5pm on 17 May 2021**.

Please include at least one reference, or any testimonials from similar projects you feel would support your EOI.

Applicants will then be contacted to arrange a phone call or online meeting to be held during the week of **24 May 2021**.

Any queries or things you would like to discuss beforehand?

WMMD is more than happy to discuss the project with you beforehand and answer any queries you may have.

Please contact Olivia Basterfield at olivia.basterfield@ironbridge.org.uk to arrange a friendly, informal phone call.

Prepared by:

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