



## Invitation to Tender:

# Diversifying Museum Visitors Project

January 2017

## 1. Introduction

The project is being commissioned by a project steering group (PSG) chaired by the Association of Independent Museums (AIM). The appointed consultant's contract will be with AIM. It is funded by Arts Council England together with AIM, Museums Galleries Scotland Welsh Government and National Museums Northern Ireland. Collectively the Project Steering Group represent most of the museum sector in the UK, from very small, volunteer-run museums to the largest local authority and independent museums. DCMS sponsored London museums are not a specific focus of this research.

Steering Group – The primary contact will be Tamalie Newbery, Executive Director of AIM.

The project steering group consists of:

Tamalie Newbery, AIM, (Chairing PSG)  
Isabel Churcher, ACE  
Sharon Heal, MA  
Jacqueline Hay / Alison Turnbull, MGS  
Lesley-Anne Kerr, MALD, Welsh Government  
Pamela Baird, Museum Northern Ireland  
Matthew Tanner, AIM and ss Great Britain  
Marilyn Scott, The Lightbox  
Mark O'Neill, formerly Glasgow Life

## Background to the Project

Most museums are not good at attracting diverse visitors - those from lower socio-economic groups as well as the protected characteristics<sup>1</sup>. The Taking Part survey (England only) highlights that whilst the percentage of the population visiting museums has grown over the past ten years, the diversity of visitors has not increased.

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/562676/Focus\\_on\\_museums\\_and\\_galleries\\_final.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/562676/Focus_on_museums_and_galleries_final.pdf). There are other similar studies in the other home nations.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/4>

Whilst there is already a great deal of research available about diversifying visitors (both within the museum sector and more widely) this has not led to a substantial change in the profile of museum visitors. This project looks to address that point and provide routes that will enable museums to make more progress in this area than has happened in the past.

In 2016, in partnership with Arts Council England and the Welsh Government, AIM commissioned research into the impact on museums of charging for admission, or not. The research resulted in two reports and a new Success Guide, all of which can be downloaded from the AIM website. [http://www.aim-museums.co.uk/content/evaluating\\_the\\_evidence\\_the\\_impact\\_of\\_charging\\_or\\_not\\_for\\_admissions\\_on\\_museums/](http://www.aim-museums.co.uk/content/evaluating_the_evidence_the_impact_of_charging_or_not_for_admissions_on_museums/)

One of the findings of the research was that whether a museum charged for admission or not, did not influence how diverse their visitors were, including in terms of socio-economic diversity. The research points out that, whilst there are some examples of both free-admission and charging museums with diverse visitor profiles, the finding is largely a reflection of the lack of diversity amongst visitors to museums.

Given this finding, (and other research that has reached the same conclusion) we conclude that free-admission is not sufficient to ensure diverse visitors for a museum, nor is charging admission an excuse for lack of diversity in museum visits. The thinking about how to increase the diversity of museum visitors needs to move on from the discussion about free versus charged admission, and look at the factors that do enable museums to achieve diversity in their visitor numbers, and how more museums can learn from this to diversify their visitors. The research also highlighted the lack of data regarding the profile of museum visitors, held either by museums themselves, or by sector bodies. Many museums also lack knowledge of the profile of the communities they serve.

There are many reasons why diversifying visitors should be a priority for museums, besides the obvious point that it is part of their charitable purposes or public service responsibilities to ensure that they are accessible and inclusive to all sections of the public. The UK Equalities Act (2010), Well-Being of Future Generations Act (2015) in Wales, the Fairer Scotland Action Plan and potentially other legislation make it a legal requirement in some instances. Diversifying visitors holds with it the likelihood of increasing visitor numbers, which will aid museums' sustainability, as will having more extensive roots across communities.

## **2. Purpose of the Project and Scope**

The purpose of this project is to help museums to increase the diversity of their core visitors. The key focus of the project is on providing tools and guidance to help museums make long-term change in their organisations to achieve this.

- What do we mean by 'diverse'? For the purpose of this research, by diversity we mean a wide-range of characteristics including socio-economic diversity as well as the protected characteristics. Diversity will mean different things for different museums because of their different contexts, so for this research the diversity of museum visitors should be considered in relation to the diversity of its community, rather than in comparison to other museums.

### 3. Project Objectives and Requirements

1. To enable museums to understand the barriers for diverse visitors in visiting museums and feeling a sense of belonging in relation to them.
2. To enable museums to understand and address the internal barriers within organisations which prevent them diversifying their visitors.
3. To co-produce, with a range of different types and sizes of museums, tools and guidance which can be easily and inexpensively implemented, to enable them to achieve long-term improvements in the diversity of their visitors, including providing practical support and guidance to achieve internal support for this.

### 4. Outputs

The following outputs are required. In most cases these should be available in a format that makes them freely accessible to all museums (i.e. online):

- i. Literature review of research relating to the museum sector and beyond, covering only literature focused on long-term change, not one-off projects.
- ii. Advocacy tools which can be used by museums to help make the case internally for the importance of and opportunities associated with diversifying museum visitors.
- iii. A summary of the research insights on the key predictors of museum visiting and the barriers to visiting for the key groups of people under-represented amongst museum visitors, including presentation in a format which museums can use for planning.
- iv. Guidance for museums on how to understand, identify and gain insights into their local audiences and establish targets for diversification.
- v. A summary of the research insights into the internal/organisational barriers that prevent museums attracting more diverse visitors and a framework to help museums address these barriers.
- vi. An analysis of the skills and attitudes that museums need to be effective in attracting more visitors (including both skills relating to working with diverse audiences and organisational, business planning and other skills needed to be effective in diversifying visitors).
- vii. Guidance on embedding learning and activity to diversify visitors within organisations.
- viii. Recommendations for museum sector support organisations on how they can support museums to diversify visitors.
- ix. A prioritised plan for how this work should be rolled out over the next three years including key documents to launch / highlight the research and its most significant findings or recommendations for museums.
- x. Recommendations on how to evaluate this work over a three year period and measures that should be put in place at the outset.
- xi. Presentation of the research / findings at two events.

### 5. Scope

- The study should focus on learning relating to long-term progress in diversifying the people visiting museums' standard offer rather than one-off projects.

- Whilst we expect that this project may help museums increase their visitor numbers, the focus is on diversifying types of visitors.
- The study should consider the experience of and be relevant to a variety of types and size of museum including smaller and volunteer-run museums as well as large museums or museum services with multiple sites. It should not focus on DCMS sponsored London museums.
- The study can include relevant literature and case studies from outside the museum sector and outside the UK.

## **6. Methodology**

The following outline methodology has been discussed by the steering group, but consultants are welcome to propose alternatives in their tender.

1. Literature Review
2. Case studies – to be identified by the consultants and approved by the PSG
3. Co-production of guidance and toolkits with a range of representative museums
4. Recommendations for a plan to encourage take-up of the outputs of the project by museums and for evaluation of the long-term impact of the research.

The steering group envisages the largest proportion of the consultant's time will be spent on the co-production element.

The project steering group will wish to discuss and agree the methodology and any case studies with consultant who is appointed.

## **7. Programme for the Contract**

- a) Invitation to tender issued – 23 January 2017
- b) Proposals to be submitted by – 5pm 16 February 2017
- c) Interviews, if required – 2 March 2017, Birmingham
- d) Inception Meeting – 13 March 2017, 11.30am, Birmingham
- e) Research – March to July 2017
- f) Interim report (meeting with steering group) June 2017
- g) Draft final report (meeting with steering group) – September 2017
- h) Delivery of final report – October 2017

## **8. Budget**

There is a budget of up to £25,000 including VAT and expenses for this work. This should include all the organisation and costs associated with co-production of resources. It does not need to include design or translation costs for any publications that may be produced. There will be an additional budget for travel in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

## 9. Proposal Requirements

Experience of the consultant/s: The PSG is looking for consultants with a range of skills to enable them to complete the different elements of this project. Those bidding for the work must show experience in both the research and co-production elements. Consortium bids are welcome.

Proposals should be no longer than necessary to communicate, succinctly, the information requested below. As a guide, we expect proposals to be no more than eight pages.

Please include:

- a) Why your company or consortium is the right choice for this work. This should include brief credentials and evidence of relevant experience of your company and the names and experience of the people who will work on this project.
- b) Your proposed methodology for the study and how you would identify museums to study.
- c) Outline of how the co-production work would be undertaken and the critical factors for its success.
- d) The key risks involved in the work and how you will mitigate them.
- e) Programme for the work and confirmation you have the resources to complete the work in the required timescale.
- f) Budget for the work, including VAT. You are advised to provide a breakdown of the budget to assist in assessing your proposal.
- g) Two references which can be taken up immediately.

Proposals will be assessed 70% quality and 30% value for money.

**Proposals should be returned by email to [tamalie@aim-museums.co.uk](mailto:tamalie@aim-museums.co.uk) by 5pm on 16 February 2017**

**The subject of the email should be 'Diversifying Museum Visitors Proposal'.**

**If you intend to submit a proposal please inform Tamalie Newbery [tamalie@aim-museums.co.uk](mailto:tamalie@aim-museums.co.uk)** so you can be advised of any amendments to the brief and/or interview date.

## 10. Questions on this brief

Any questions on this brief should be submitted to Tamalie Newbery at the email address above by 10<sup>th</sup> February 2017. Alternatively you can email Tamalie and arrange at time for a telephone call before this date. The anonymised questions and answers will be emailed by 13<sup>th</sup> February 2017 to everyone who has registered their interest.

## 11. Other Information

AIM reserves the right to vary all dates in this Invitation to tender, to terminate this procurement process and/or decide not to award a contract. AIM reserves the right to reject abnormally low tenders. AIM cannot reimburse any expenses associated with preparing and submitting your proposal or attending interview.



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