



Crafts Council

Let's Make Consultancy brief

Date March 2021

Introduction

We believe craft has the potential to tackle inequalities in society.

Crafts Council is looking for external expertise to support the development of our participation activity. Between May and June the consultant will produce a framework for a 'season' of exploration into craft's role in social justice.

Details below.

1. The Opportunity

Project summary

We believe craft plays an important role in social justice agendas; from everyday making to targeted interventions. The last 12 months have shown this to be even more important than ever.

We want to expand our participation work so that it becomes a significant part of our 2023-2026 Business plan - our programmes, advocacy and sector leadership role. The focus will primarily be on deepening our understanding of craft participation, best practice and successful impact in order to better support craft participation more widely, this is likely to identify gaps where direct delivery is needed and who is best placed to respond to these needs.

Our Arts Council England NPO funding application will be submitted in winter 21/22 and will respond to these business plan priorities.

To determine the shape of this work we will undertake a period of research, consultation, conversation and experimentation – a 'season of exploration', called Let's Make during 2021 (timings to be confirmed). We would like an experienced consultant from the field of participation and social engagement to shape this period of exploration, with the outcomes informing our NPO application and our 23-26 Business Plan.

Background and context

The Crafts Council has undertaken some activity within this field:

- Make Shift Do Festival: 2015 to 2018 – supporting makerspaces across the country to programme events to encourage public interaction with the aim to widen engagement with new technologies and making, and

‘demystify’ the spaces. We have an extensive list of organisations who took part in these events and could be engage with again.

- Make Shift Do Action Research Projects: 2019 & 2020 – six partnerships between makerspace and local community group to co-design activity to meet a local need. Case studies, training and new resources about cocreation produced and shared. The experience of working with these partners provides useful insights into the ways we can further support participation activity within the sector.
- Get Creative: Ongoing – Crafts Council sits on the steering group and has delivered ‘Hey Clay!’ as part of the festival since 2015. Ceramics studios and workspaces are supported to offer taster sessions to introduce clay making activities to public audiences. In 2021 we are expanding this across all craft disciplines to become Hey Craft!. The partners of the Get Creative steering group provide a strong network to enable us to widen our participation work.
- Craft Club: 2009-2019 – For over a decade we have championed everyday making in community settings, lead by volunteers. Surveying of Craft Club leaders and some participants highlighted that the opportunity to meet and make together was a lifeline for many that felt isolated or experienced mental health issues. However, it was clear that the support we provided (newsletters, tutorials, training, etc.) had limited reach and impact (reports with full detail are available). The Let’s Make season and our long-term commitment will find ways to be more effective in supporting and celebrating the work of Craft Clubs.
- Young Craft Citizens: 2016 onwards – our emerging young people’s initiative providing varied opportunities for 16-25year olds to engage in and shape the work we do as an organisation. We are now working towards an Advisory Group that has more strategic impact, with a YCC Trustee being nominated in 2022.

Key initiatives that we must connect with and develop partnerships with:

Creative People & Places	We have connections with national coordinator through Get Creative and some focused relationships with Super Slow Way a CPP project
Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation	No existing links but should draw their The Civic Role of Arts Organisations work
Paul Hamlyn Foundation	Limited links but opportunity to build relationship as part of their commitment to arts access and participation.
Cultural Institute at King's College London	Towards Cultural Democracy Paper
Get Creative	We are a steering Group member – plans for festival development and engagement with all partners key to this work.

64 Million Artists	We have connection through Get Creative that can be built on.
MARCH network	Our Head of Research & Policy is co-chair of its Arts, Crafts and Mental Health special interest research group.
Others will be identified in discussion with consultant and colleagues.	

Challenge/Opportunity

We are looking for a consultant with experience of the world of participation to shape a framework for this Let's Make season of exploration with Crafts Council – the exact timings of this 'season' will be confirmed as this work develops.

The Crafts Council will use the consultant's work to secure external funding to action the framework and deliver the Let's Make season. This will lead us to:

- A clear set of recommendations for a long-term, deep enquiry
- clarity on our role within the debate and how to best use resources
- An emerging community of practice and opportunity for peer support

Objectives

This work will result in:

- A clear framework for Let's Make season of exploration – this will align with Crafts Council Project Planning Process (which includes Theory of Change, budget planning, evaluation methodology etc.).
- Identification of target audiences and needs.
- Identifying the costs involved in delivering Let's Make activity.
- Identifying key partners and initiatives we should be linking to.
- Criteria for success and ways in which we can share this.
- Ways to continue to embed understanding of how craft participation connects to, and shapes the whole Crafts Council team. We want *everyone* to be confident about the language and potential impact of craft participation so that it is an organisational approach and not siloed to the Learning & Participation Team.

Outputs/deliverables

The Let's Make season framework will include:

- Activity to include (but not limited to) debate & conversation, action research, consultation, and project work & events – show how these will inter-connect and inform each other. Each strand of activity will have:

- Potential partners
- Delivery plan (eg. frequency, duration, facilitation, resources required, venue, etc.)
- Indicative budget
- A clear evaluation methodology will ensure all insight from all activity strands are fully captured, analysed and shared. Ensures that criteria for success is agreed.
- Desk research to identify policy and thinking provides a solid bedrock in which to situate our exploration and forward strategy.
- Suggestions for who / how we share our findings from the Let's Make season – particularly beyond existing Crafts Council routes.

Who will be managing the project

The consultant will be reporting to Nicky Dewar, Learning & Skills Director and drawing on expertise from the Learning & Participation team, Public Programmes team, Communications team and Trustees.

The Learning & Participation team will be able to support consultation and communication with partners and key groups. This could include providing some administration support for surveys, meetings or other activities as designed by the Consultant.

2. Practicalities

Fee

£3000 is offered for this work. You will provide detail about how many days this will cover.

Process for application

To apply, please send a CV with any examples of comparable experiences, two references and a short letter stating why you would like to undertake this opportunity and what you will bring to the task.

If you would like to share your information in other formats please get in touch.

Please email this to Nicky Dewar, Learning & Skills Director at n_dewar@craftscouncil.org.uk

Timeframes

Application deadline 12noon Monday 19th April.
 Online Interviews Thursday 22nd April
 Work starts from Monday 3rd May

3. Background information

The Crafts Council

Founded in 1971, we are the national charity for craft.

We inspire making, empower learning and nurture craft businesses. We believe craft skills and knowledge enrich and uplift us as individuals, and, in doing so, will change our world for the better.

In 2019/20 we reached more than 1.9m people in the UK and beyond through a range of activities:

We support craft makers and businesses to help them grow in the UK and overseas, through training, mentoring, advice and by showcasing makers through our directory. In 2019/20 we supported over 10,000 makers and craft businesses.

We hold the national Crafts Council Collection, acquired over our 50-year history. 1,700 objects chart pivotal moments in craft. Our holdings cover all craft disciplines: ceramics, glass, textiles, furniture, metalwork, jewellery, lettering and bookbinding.

Our primary collection is complemented by a handling collection of c.700 items as an inspiring learning resource; an archive of c.7,300 items, research library of c.6,000 books and catalogues, many unavailable elsewhere; and an archive of past Crafts Council exhibitions.

In 2019/20 more than 490,000 people saw objects from our Collection in exhibitions across the UK.

We also present exhibitions – in our own gallery in London and in partnership with venues around the UK. Based in Islington, our Gallery will open in November 2020 - one of the few free visual arts spaces in the borough.

We run learning and participation programmes for all age groups. In 2019/20 more than 154,000 people of all ages and background took part in our programmes.

We're a key campaigner for craft education, shaping debate with decision makers, strengthening the creative education agenda and sector.

We publish a magazine – Crafts magazine, six times a year, featuring inspiring stories about craft and making across the globe.

We present Collect: International art fair for modern craft and design annually in London, with leading craft galleries from across the globe participating. In 2019/20 we debuted at Somerset House and showcased 42 international galleries, 440 artists and audiences of over 12,000.

We celebrate, promote and share the work of the wider craft sector through our communications channels – helping more people learn and discover craft in all its many facets – from everyday making through to museum exhibitions and shows. We have more than 600,000 followers across our combined social media channels.

We undertake research and advocacy, building a rigorous evidence base for the sector and for policy makers, helping people understand the social, economic, and cultural value of craft, and advocating for policy changes that support the growth and development of the sector.

In May 2020 we published the Market for Craft in partnership with partners including Creative Scotland, Arts Council Wales, Craft and Northern Ireland, which provided valuable evidence to understand more about how best to stimulate, support and grow the craft market.

We convene Craft UK – a network of organisations with an interest in craft. It's a forum to share best practice, tackle challenges, and forge new partnerships for collaboration.