**Brief for a Decolonisation specialist –TWAM Decolonisation Strategy**

Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums (TWAM) is a regional museum, art gallery and archives service. We manage nine museums and galleries across Tyneside and the Archives for Tyne and Wear.

Arbeia Roman Fort - <https://arbeiaromanfort.org.uk/>

Discovery Museum - <https://discoverymuseum.org.uk/>

Great North Museum Hancock - <https://greatnorthmuseum.org.uk/>

Hatton Gallery - <https://hattongallery.org.uk/>

Laing Art Gallery - <https://laingartgallery.org.uk/>

Segedunum Roman Fort and Museum - <https://segedunumromanfort.org.uk/>

Shipley Art Gallery - <https://shipleyartgallery.org.uk/>

South Shields Museum and Art Gallery - <https://southshieldsmuseum.org.uk/>

Stephenson Steam Railway - <https://stephensonsteamrailway.org.uk/>

Tyne & Wear Archives - <https://twarchives.org.uk/>

You can find out more about TWAM its governance, mission, and goals here <https://www.twmuseums.org.uk/>

We are seeking to engage an experienced decolonisation specialist to kickstart the development of an organisation wide decolonisation strategy.

In 2021, The Great North Museum: Hancock, one of our nine venues, undertook decolonisation strategy scoping work. This scoping work drew on the combined expertise of external consultants with experience in supporting organisations on race equity and inclusion, museum staff, as well as input from a small number of stakeholders who participated in exploratory interviews. Consultees included individuals from the university, the university students’ union, local community organisations, staff at the museum and representatives from key museum stakeholders the Natural History Society of Northumbria and the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne.

The stakeholders considered what a successful strategy would look like, identified specific issues to address, considered the risks involved in the strategy creation, and considered the right process for developing the strategy, including stakeholder engagement. They also highlighted reasons why this work was important. A summary of this work is available here: <https://greatnorthmuseum.org.uk/files/407665-great-north-museum-hancock-decolonisation-scoping-exceutive-summary-v3.docx>

TWAM now plans to continue this work for our organisation as a whole and is looking to engage a decolonisation specialist, to work with us as a critical friend, to support our strategy development and action plans. Due to the time limitations of this contract, we are not expecting a deep dive into the collections of each venue.

**Context**

TWAM is committed to being an anti-racist organisation and has embarked on several initiatives to ensure our organisation is tackling inequality and representation. We are in a process of learning as an organisation about the changes we need to make. We believe that decolonisation of our museums is part of this process by which we mean addressing colonial legacies in our collections, displays, and practices. This is an ongoing process, and we are looking for a specialist in decolonisation to work with key staff across TWAM and stakeholders to help us develop a strategy that will underpin this process.

There are a number of objectives for this strategy development exercise:

* Define what decolonisation means in practice for TWAM.
* Identifying how we can address colonial legacies in our collections, displays, and practices. (Policies relevant to this work can be found here https://www.twmuseums.org.uk/corporate-publications-and-policies/policies
* Establish an action plan with clear initiatives, reforms, and **milestones** for decolonisation.
* Expand and diversify our audiences.
* Ensure equitable engagement with external stakeholders.
* Promote understanding and engagement among key stakeholders.

We seek external leadership and facilitation from a decolonisation specialist who can work with us, to produce a strategy for decolonisation that will guide us, stakeholders, and the public through this process, leveraging experience in community work and organisational change.

The decolonisation specialist will be responsible for;

* Facilitating discussions with key staff across TWAM and stakeholders,
* Establish an action plan for the organisation, with reforms, and **milestones** for decolonisation
* Produce recommendations for a final strategy document.

Decolonisation is a critical area for TWAM to explore; firstly, it provides TWAM with an opportunity to better understand enduring legacies of empire, migration, and the experiences of diaspora communities in the region; and secondly, it provides a space to reimagine a museum where those legacies no longer dictate approaches and practices.

Following this work TWAM will use the recommendations to help us ensure the process of decolonisation considers all relevant factors, TWAMs process will explore each of these elements through the lens of decolonisation, asking:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Vision and mission**  *Why do we exist and*  *what is our promise to*  *our stakeholders?* | * What is the transformative vision of a decolonised TWAM? * What are the ultimate goals of decolonisation for TWAM? * How does decolonisation align with TWAM's mission and goals? |
| **Strategy**  *What are our key*  *challenges and how*  *will we address them?* | * What should be the strategic approach for decolonisation? * What are TWAM's key priorities and desired results for decolonisation, and how do we gauge success? |
| **Activities and service offer**  *How do we meet our*  *audiences’ and stakeholders’*  *needs and wants?* | * How does decolonisation intersect with restitution and repatriation policies and practices? * How can we build trust and engage new and current audiences in decolonisation while maintaining their support? * How can we foster co-production, and power sharing as part of this work? |
| **Skills and capacity | structure | culture**  *How do our people*  *help us deliver?* | * How can we empower TWAM staff with the necessary skills and incentives to achieve a decolonised museum? * How can we ensure that our workforce engaged and actively involved with our decolonisation goals? |
| **Overarching questions on colonial legacies** | * How do the effects of colonial legacies influence TWAM's current work and practices? * How can we confront colonial legacies and rectify unequal power dynamics? |

QUESTIONS ON

**Location:**  Home or venue based

Must be able to travel to Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums sites as required

**Fee:** Up to £5700 including VAT and travel. This work is offered as a freelance contract, for a fixed fee including VAT and all expenses. The appointed individual will be responsible for all tax, national insurance etc. This equates to approximately 12 days' work.

**Status:**  The contract is with TWAM/Newcastle City Council as a freelance supplier.

**Duration:**  Timeline to be discussed on appointment

We envisage the work will begin in May 24 with completion by December 24

**Experience**

We are looking for a decolonisation specialist who will work with us and who has:

* Experience of working through a process considering Decolonisation
* Evidence of significant professional experience including working in a museums/ cultural sector environment
* Experience of working on Equality, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion projects,
* Knowledge and experience of working with museums/heritage through a process of change
* An effective communicator, able to work creatively with communities, external stakeholders, and museum staff
* Attention to detail when it comes to research
* A flexible, adaptable, and diplomatic approach to working with a range of staff, trustees, volunteers, and external stakeholders
* Proven ability to work to deadlines
* Excellent, concise, and accurate reporting and analytical skills

**How to Apply**

Applicants are asked to submit their CV and covering statement in response to the brief. The statement should include:

* An outline of the proposed method of approach for this work
* Overview of previous experience of delivering similar projects in the heritage sector
* Demonstration of suitability for the role, including the experience and competencies outlined above. How the budget for the work will be allocated including expenses and VAT
* Availability for the proposed consultancy period
* Names and contact details of two referees who have knowledge or personal experience of the applicant’s freelance work.

For an informal discussion please contact Clare Smith

Deadline for submission 18/3/24

Shortlisted applicants will be invited to interview w/c 8/4/24

Please send applications by email to clare.smith@twmuseums.org.uk