THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

INVITATION TO TENDER — OPEN COMPETITION

DEADLINE FOR TENDER SUBMISSIONS —
16 August 2021, 12pm (noon) UK time

Title: Research into inclusion activities by archive services in the English regions

Return to: Chris Jones at bridgingthedigitalgap@nationalarchives.gov.uk

1   Purpose

1.1   The purpose of this procurement process is for The National Archives (TNA) to select a supplier to conduct research into inclusion work, initiatives, projects, and activities being carried out by archives based in the English regions (excluding Greater London).

1.2   The purpose of the research is to discover the types and topics of work to further inclusive practice – and the types of people and communities that this work is affecting and engaging. The research will also identify how the inclusion work is being funded or supported.

2   Background

2.1   TNA is the official archive and publisher for the UK government and guardians of over 1,000 years of iconic national documents. Archives can be used in a variety of ways, from enabling insightful and pioneering research, and inspiring art and literature, to informing decision making in all types of organisations.

        Since 2012 TNA has held the responsibility for leadership of the archives sector. Part of its purpose is to ensure sustained or improved preservation of and access to the nation's archive collections across the private, public and voluntary sectors.

        In 2021, TNA launched the [Becoming the Inclusive Archive](#) strategy, which spans TNA's workforce, audiences, practices, and position as a global leader. The strategy has a commitment to listen, understand – and learn from others pursuing inclusive practice.

2.2   The Archive Sector Development department (ASD) is responsible for leadership of the archive sector in England, comprising over 2,000 archives. Our work is framed by the strategic vision, [Archives Unlocked](#). Our approach to the leadership role is a collaborative one, supporting partnership working to encourage a sustainable and innovative archive sector. Diversity and inclusion are two of Archives Unlocked's priorities for 2020-22.

3.0   Requirement

3.1   **The Project**

TNA's Archon database of UK archives lists c.1400 archives in the English regions (excluding c.600 in Greater London). This research project will discover inclusion work taking place in eight English regions. These are, in order of most archives to fewest: South East (excl. London), East, South West, Yorkshire, North West, West Midlands, East Midlands, and North East.

The project will gather insight into what archive services are doing to foster a sense of belonging within communities and within diverse groups (users and staff) – this is our broad definition of 'inclusion'. Through this research, we hope to understand the context in which work is being undertaken and how it is being supported or funded.

- Example topics/subjects: addressing barriers to access (for users and staff); well-being; citizen advice; ongoing support during the pandemic; Covid recovery; anti-racism; dealing with potentially upsetting histories; increasing skills in research and accessing information; support for financially insecure families; access to digital infrastructure; topics of relevance to a specific community or locality

- Example activities: Business as Usual activities with a consistent goal of achieving and maintaining an inclusive environment; policy changes; active research; creating a more welcoming space and procedures; training; volunteer projects; archive-led 'outreach' events; community-led events; collaborative events; social media; apps; podcasts; resources

- Example audiences: people who have experienced marginalisation based on age, sex, gender identity (particularly gender reassignment), ethnicity, sexual orientation, marriage/civil partnership, pregnancy/maternity, religion/belief, socio-economic reality, geographic location

- Example sites: online; specific physical site (the archive, a community's location, another organisation's building, etc.); region-wide; across a segment of the archive sector (eg, charity, business, religious group)

TNA has undertaken pilot research to identify (a) networks of archive services and (b) inclusion work known to be taking place in the regions. TNA will supply the findings of the pilot research to the appointed supplier, who will use these networks to request information from archives. An online survey, national or regional, is not an option as a research avenue. The researcher will be expected to find examples of inclusion work not already identified in the pilot research.

- Example regional networks: Archives for Yorkshire, Archives South West, ARA West Midlands, East of England Regional Archive Council, Archives First

- Example subject/type networks: Community Archives and Heritage Group, Association of Performing Arts Collections, CHARM (charity archives), Land Transport Archives Network, Business Archives Council

We know that archives may not necessarily use the brand of 'inclusion' for the work they are doing to be more inclusive and to offer more inclusive environments. The research will find ways of eliciting these practices, regardless of terminology.

Many archives exist within larger parent organisations, such as a business, charity, university library, or museum. We are particularly interested to know what the archive service itself is doing, or the role it is playing in the parent organisation's initiatives.

The supplier will be expected to follow up in geographic areas where the research is not generating data to confirm that little or no inclusion work is taking place in that area, rather than it indicating a lack of communication about the work.

The outcomes of this research will inform TNA's development of support to help archives in delivering inclusion work.

3.3 **Deliverables**

The deadline for submission of the final report is 30 November 2021.

The final report should present its research findings by region. The report should include:
- Some interpretation of data
- Infographics, for example, heat mapping of the inclusion activity in each region
- Suggestions of potential avenues of further research (such as case studies)
- List of archives contacted and those who responded with information

4.0   Budget:

4.1   The budget for this piece of work is £8,000 (exclusive of VAT), inclusive of travel and other expenses.

5.0   How to respond:

5.1   If you have any clarification questions related to your response, please submit these to Chris Jones at bridgingthedigitalgap@nationalarchives.gov.uk by 12pm (noon) UK time on 10 August 2021.

5.2   Please submit your proposal to **Chris Jones** by 12pm (noon) UK time on 16 August 2021: bridgingthedigitalgap@nationalarchives.gov.uk

5.3   **Interviews** will be 6-7 September 2021. (Please keep these dates free.) The **award** decision will be made by 8 September 2021.

5.4   It is for you to determine what format your submission should take so as to describe your offer in a clear, comprehensive and convincing fashion; however, you should note that the information you supply may be used, in whole or in part, to populate the Contract Schedules. As such, please make clear and unambiguous statements about the commitments you are making.

5.5   Your response should include the following:

5.5.1   Your **understanding** of the project and deliverables.

5.5.2   Details of your prior **experience** suited to the project.

5.5.3   Your proposed **methodology** for delivery of the project outcomes.

5.5.4   Names and experience of **individuals** assigned to the project, and their involvement with each phase or unit of the work.

5.5.5   **Your contract price** – including breakdown for costs of each phase or unit of work, day rate of each team member and other costs or expenses.

6.0   Evaluation

Submissions will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

Category	Maximum Score Available	Weighting	Maximum Available Weighted Score
1. Your understanding of the project and deliverables and your incorporation of the pilot research	10	2	20
2. Details of your understanding of the specific needs of the archive sector and inclusion initiatives	10	2.5	25
3. Your proposed methodology for the research and how you will design the outcome report/data	10	2.5	25
4. Names and experience of individuals assigned to the project, and their involvement in the research	10	2	10
5. Price	10	1	20
Total	50	-	100

7.0   CONTRACT TERMS
7.1 The contract will be awarded subject to our standard terms and conditions.
7.2 TNA reserves the right not to award and to complete its objectives through other means.