**Invitation to Tender – London Metropolitan Archives**

**Audience Development Strategy**

* 1. **About London Metropolitan Archives**

London Metropolitan Archives (LMA) is owned, funded and managed by the City of London Corporation on behalf of London and the nation. It is London’s archive service, collecting, preserving, celebrating and sharing the stories of London and Londoners and its many communities through collaboration, innovation and learning. It is responsible for 100 kilometers of the capital’s documentary heritage dating from 1067 to the present day, from parchment rolls to digital files.

Our vision is to ensure as many people as possible now and in the future have access to the archives in our care on site and digitally, safeguarding knowledge, improving understanding, inspiring participation, and supporting good public governance. We aim to provide a world class service aspiring to the highest standards that is open and engaging, innovative, inclusive, secure and sustainable. As one of the leading archive services in the UK we also have a responsibility to provide leadership within the London, national and international archive sectors.

* 1. **Current Public Engagement**

We engage with these audiences in the following ways:

1. Online - we have 25,000 visits to our websites a month. The majority of these are to our [images website](https://www.londonpicturearchive.org.uk/) and collections [catalogue](https://search.lma.gov.uk) (family history and academic or professional research are the most popular activities). Our service website is currently part of the [City of London’s](https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/things-to-do/history-and-heritage/london-metropolitan-archives) overall local authority site.

2. Online – we have 850,000 visits a month to our content on third party websites that host digitised copies of our documents. The majority of these are to Ancestry.co.uk.

2. Onsite - visitors to the reading room to research (family history and academic or professional research are the most popular activities)

3. Onsite - visitors to the site for events and activities (individuals)

4. Onsite - visitors to the site for events and activities (groups, including schools and community groups)

5. Online – audience members attending online events/ talks etc

We are a free public service and our Clerkenwell site welcomes c. 35,000 visitors a year. Facilities on site include large reading rooms for general and specialist researchers, a temporary exhibition of space, a small conference facility, teaching rooms, tea room for readers to bring their own refreshments,

We are a 10-minute walk from Farringdon & Angel stations, and a 20-minute walk from Kings Cross. Anecdotally, we believe we are underutilised by our super-local audience, which may hold a significant proportion of families and single occupancy households.

The majority of our visitors come to our site to undertake their own research. They arrive with a topic or specific question (e.g. their family tree or to look at planning documents) and our staff assist them to find the documents they need. Across the country for archives services, the numbers of these visitors are in long term decline and it remains to be seen if we will pick up pre-Covid numbers. This is in part due to the greater availability online of the most popular family history record series, and the changing nature of the way people use our records.

Most of our records are not and never will be digitised, so there will always be a need for a reading room and access to original material. This service should continue to be core to our services, but we do not anticipate any increase in research visitors on site. Additionally, our opening hours are 10–4pm Monday, Tuesday and Thursday; 10- 7pm Wednesday, with occasional Saturdays on a seasonal basis or to view our exhibition. These opening hours are likely to define our current audience significantly.

Additionally, our spaces have not been refreshed for over 10 years, and no longer meet the needs of new audiences or new ways of using the collections. There is only one fully accessible room events room for public use, and some of our exhibition is displayed on the main staircase. The archives search room (where original material is presented to those with a History Card) is often crowded, while the resource centre can feel empty. There is insufficient space for people to bring their own devices, and the atmosphere is not conducive to group work or relaxed study. There is no catering offer on site.

**1.3 Goals for Audience development**

We are seeking to grow our public engagement through an expanded programme of ‘facilitated’ engagement. By this we mean activities and learning opportunities where we provide/curate/deliver to the public. This currently includes, but is not limited to:

1. An exhibition programme on site and occasionally in other off-site locations across the City

2. A predominantly free events programme for adults, including a long standing (20 years) LGBTQ strand of programming

3. Volunteer activities

4. Education activities for schools (KS1 – 4) We are very well connected with local and City schools but have an ambition to extend across the London boroughs

5. Bespoke sessions for HE, including university/ college students, research groups and PHD Students, again there is room here to expand our reach

6. Events and training in partnership with community groups

Activities 1-2 are open to anyone.

Activity 3 generally takes place in a digital environment, but there is an appetite from volunteers to do more group work on site

Activity 4 Sessions developed in line with the interest/ research topic of the students. Participation in these sessions is not open to the public at large

Activity 5 is based on a programme, developed for schools. Participation in these sessions is not open to the public at large

Activity 6 are bespoke activities developed dynamically with community organisation leaders and/ or depositors, usually open to the public at large but often targeting specific interest groups connected to the deposit or collection.

It is hard to say without specific data, but currently only a small proportion of our visitors are attracted by our events and activities programme, though we did see an increase in numbers for digital events, particularly during the pandemic period, and our exhibitions can be very popular. *Magnificent Maps*, which opened on 11th April this year has had upwards of 100 visitors on some days. We have a well-appointed exhibition space at Guildhall and a long-standing relationship with the Art Gallery and the Barbican Centre.

The plan to grow and develop the events programme would include:

* Realignment of staff resources, beginning in the next year
* Potentially in time a capital programme to redevelop the visitor areas of our Clerkenwell site, probably including a major third-party funding bid

We want to grow our audience by connecting with new users’ and to be identified as a cultural institution and destination, as part of the City of London Corporation’s [*Destination City*](file:///C:\Users\CharlotteJS\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\INetCache\Content.Outlook\PF8Q6EGC\our%20exhibitions%20can%20be%20very%20popular.%20Magnificent%20Maps,%20which%20opened%20on%2011th%20April%20this%20year%20has%20had%20upwards%20of%20100%20visitors%20on%20some%20days,%20and%20the%20small%20space%20can%20start%20to%20feel%20quickly%20cramped.%20We%20have%20a%20well-appointed%20exhibition%20space%20at%20Guildhall%20and%20a%20long-standing%20relationship%20with%20the%20Art%20Gallery%20and%20our%20displays%20here%20are%20designed%20to%20link%20to%20wider%20City%20events)programme, but also in our own right as one of the largest and most important archival collections in the country. In parallel, we want to develop an exciting and user-friendly digital public offer both as a marketing tool but also as a go-to place for our events and resources.

Current priorities in terms of audience types are yet to be decided, but would likely include:

Younger audiences

Exhibition goers and attendees

Local audiences

Interested in archives/history/research

**1.4 Challenges for Audience Development**

Our principal challenges in engaging this broader audience are:

* we lack the ability to reach diverse audiences and are not representative of all Londoners within our current visitor profile
* archives are not known as a cultural destination, nor well understood outside of specialist research circles
* our existing audience is largely comprised of self-directed researchers
* our existing audience is ageing
* archival research is not as easily accessible to the uninitiated as a museum or a gallery. Visitors are unlikely to just arrive speculatively, as there is not necessarily anything for them to see outside of the exhibition.
* the public spaces on site are no longer suitable for changing user need and our exhibition space is small and quickly becomes crowded
* we lack spaces for group activities to research or use collections
* our education room is small and not conducive to expanding our learning programme.
* we have some rooms for events and for hosting conferences which were well used pre Covid but lack a modern feel and are not able to host hybrid technology or high quality, paid for events.
* we lack a catering offer, though we are close to many (in particular the vibrant Exmouth Market across the road)
* we do not have a visible or inspiring presence at street entrance level and public spaces are on the first floor
* we lack an exciting website for LMA which sells the service effectively as a destination to visit (although plans are developing for a new LMA website).
* we expect that the current conversation rate from digital users (websites, social media channels) to site visitors is low.
* we do not understand the sustainable reach of our programme, and have no data on whether people re-visit or continue to engage with the archive in some way

**1.5 Sources of Information**

Information available (confidentially) to the successful supplier includes:

* Information regarding existing events and activities programme
* Anonymised Information relating to History Card holders
* Customer satisfaction survey (online and onsite)
* Data regarding visitors to the web
* Data regarding our social media channels
* Data relating to our email subscribers (limited background)

**2021 Census data for our location**: Clerkenwell Ward, Islington; 13,386 people, 10,818 working age; 1019 are 65+, 1549 under 15; 49.3% identify as white British. The largest household type is single person, 1959, 7% higher than Islington average. 90.4% of accommodation is ‘Flat’. 70% of accommodation is rented.

**2. THE REQUIREMENT**

We are seeking a partner to help create an audience strategy for the London Metropolitan Archives. Key elements of this work will be:

* To establish some data from key audience groups and potential visitors
* To create direction and focus for our audience engagement
* To provide a simple framework for segmenting audiences and strategy for growth
* Use industry knowledge and analysis to make recommendations for effective engagement with target audiences (formats, timings etc.)
* Make suggestions towards language and tone to apply to future branding work

This should be produced using a good understanding of our current engagement and audiences and future ambitions in public engagement. It should also make comparisons with other cultural institutions.

We anticipate the deliverables comprising (at a minimum):

* A report covering the above
* A slide deck to be used internally and to partner organisations to convey the headlines
* Guidelines for future segmentation and analysis of our data

The maximum available budget for this piece of work is £30,000 (ex VAT).

**3. HOW TO RESPOND**

Please submit your tender response – specifying how you will meet the requirement described in Section 2 above – to emma.markiewicz@cityoflondon.gov.uk by midnight **Friday 29th July.**

Please ensure this response describes your proposed deliverables, methodology, delivery timetable and price. Please also ensure that you supply evidence of your expertise and experience in this area.

If you have any clarification questions, please submit these to

Emma.markiewicz@cityoflondon.gov.uk by **Friday 22nd July**

Submissions will be evaluated as follows:

**Quality of Response 95%**

**Cost 5%**

The successful supplier will be required to accept the Corporation of the City of London’s contract terms and conditions for services.

**4. TIMESCALES**

We anticipate evaluating tender responses and making an award decision during **the week commencing 1st August** and ideally with the work to begin immediately, with an interim reportbeing completed by **week commencing 17th October.**