 

**ACTIO AND CULTURE CONSORTIUM SHROPSHIRE (CCS)**

**CALL OUT FOR RESEARCHER/S**

***Culture Consortium Shropshire and Actio are seeking a research partner with a proven track record to work alongside us to develop a best practice digital toolkit. The toolkit will be for practitioners and organisations who deliver arts and cultural activity for children and young people with SEND (Special Education Needs & Disabilities) and their families.***

**Researcher Fee - £15,000 (to include expenses) and Budget to create online digital Toolkit - £5,000**

**Duration of Contract – September 2021 to June 2022**

**Application Closing Date:** **Monday 19 July 2021 – 12 noon**

CCS (Culture Consortium Shropshire), a Local Cultural Education Partnership (LCEP) and partner Actio, are seeking a researcher/s to create a digital practice based toolkit as part of ‘*The Impact Partnership Programme’*.

We welcome proposals from individuals (or a team of researchers) with a demonstratable range of skills that meet the project brief. Our preference is for researcher/s with strong links to a University or other prestigious organisations.

**THE RESEARCHER/S WILL:**

* Collect, collate and disseminate learnings from the Shropshire ’All In Short Breaks’ programme (funding for providers to deliver activity out of school, for children and young people 0-18 with SEND) and other similar programmes happening in other areas, to identify what constitutes quality participation and engagement for children and young people with SEND.
* This research should reflect a range of activity happening in different settings and in particular focus on the arts and culture opportunities, the cohort are engaged with.
* Use the research to create a practical digital Toolkit, for practitioners working with children and young people with SEND. The toolkit will have an arts focus but will also be accessible to other practitioners and facilitators. This will be a practical ‘toolbag’ that can support and enhance the practice of those working with children and young people with SEND.
* The high-quality Toolkit should include: guidance; lessons learnt of ‘what works well and why’ when working with this cohort; national research, testimonials, top tips and present transferable learning.
* The Toolkit should cover topics such as; sensory engagement, total communication, engagement of a hard to reach cohort and support of families, differentiated activity and child-led practice. However, we are keen to explore the chosen topics with the researcher to ensure that this toolkit is comprehensive, user-beneficial and accessible.
* The researcher will have access to the current ‘All In Short Breaks’ activity menu, providers and practitioners to use as a research test bed for collating best practice and information. This menu includes arts, sport and youth activity. The researcher will also be able to utilise our information and training to date. This includes some audio and visual content. We would also expect the researcher to look at other best practice examples already created to then include in the toolkit. We would expect a minimum of four cases studies to be included in the Toolkit.
* The researcher will be responsible for creating the finished Toolkit, including design. The aim is that this digital Toolkit will have high visual values, be easily updateable and widely used. There is additional resource to fund the production of the toolkit itself (£5,000). The researcher will also need to consider accessible formats for the Toolkit such as font and text size, captioned videos e.tc. The selected contractor can choose whether they have the digital skills to produce this or if we partner with an agreed third party.
* The researcher will update and review progress at key agreed points with Ignition CIC, Actio and funders Arts Connect and Shropshire Council
* The researcher will be working alongside strategic lead organisation for the *‘Impact Partnership Programme’* Ignition CIC, to ensure the Toolkit meets all the desired outcomes. Ignition have completed some initial research.
* We will also expect the researcher to present the outcomes alongside Ignition CIC at a final sharing seminar to Shropshire CCS, West Midlands wide LCEP’s and other stakeholders, including our funders Arts Connect and Shropshire Council. We would require the researcher to assist with wider dissemination of the Toolkit, utilising their contacts and networks.

**KEY SKILLS & REQUIREMENTS OF RESEARCHER/S:**

* Demonstratable knowledge/experience of working with children and young people with SEND and their family carers preferably in Arts/Culture settings.
* Demonstratable knowledge/experience of working with children/young people typically excluded from taking part in arts/cultural activities.
* Knowledge of children/young people who have neurodiverse participation and learning styles.
* Experience of working with children and young people who have additional support needs in order to participate in arts/culture.
* Understanding of neurodiverse learning styles.
* Demonstratable experience of, and commitment to, action research as an iterative process.
* Understanding/willingness to work alongside of the needs of children using alternative communication styles.
* Experience of engagement with families - to overcome barriers to inclusion in the arts.
* Experience of engagement with activity providers and organisations delivering participatory work.
* Demonstratable leadership skills.
* Strong written, communication, presentation and interpersonal skills.
* Demonstratable ability to work with partners and as part of a team.
* Strong track record of published research.
* Strong research and evaluation skills/techniques.
* Good presentation style.
* Demonstratable strong project management skills.
* Experience of producing a tool kit for practitioners.
* Strong digital skills or ability to work alongside a digital partner.
* Be DBS checked, hold a UK driving license and have access to a car.

**MANAGEMENT:**

The Researcher/s will be managed day to day by Hannah Prior (Ignition Create CIC) and report to Alexa Pugh, Arts Development Officer, Shropshire Council, who will manage the contract and finances for Arts Connect, Actio and CCS (Culture Consortium Shropshire).

**BUDGET:**

* Total research budget: £15,000 – to include all expenses
* Digital Resource to produce online toolkit: £5,000 (to be negotiated/agreed)

**Total – £20,000**

**Payment Schedule –** 50% on award of commission and 50% on completion, once the Toolkit has been signed off and agreed by all partners and funders.

**TO APPLY PLEASE SEND by Monday 19 July 2021 – 12 noon:**

* Please submit a written or video application outlining your proposal for fulfilling this commission. (Please let us know if you have any access requirements for completing this).
* Your proposal must include a budget setting out a full breakdown of costs, which should include all expenses, goods and services.
* Examples of your work – research papers, Toolkits, resources, film etc.
* 2 x references who can provide a reference support your work, with research and with children and young people.
* Information about whether or not you have a current enhanced portable DBS.

**Please send all the above documents electronically to:**

**Please email your proposal to Hannah Prior (Creative Director Ignition CIC, Strategic Lead for the PI Impact Partnership for CCS and Actio)**: hannah@i-gnition.co.uk

Please mark your email with the subject heading “Research Commission, Impact Partnership Programme”.

**TIMESCALES:**

* Deadline for applications: **Monday 19 July 2021 – 12 noon**
* Shortlisted applicants will be invited to attend an interview via Zoom on: **Tuesday 27 July 2021** (please pencil this date in your diary)
* The successful candidate/s will have an induction meeting in early September.

**For further information** or to arrange an informal conversation about the commission please contact, Hannah Prior by email, before the 15th July: hannah@i-gnition.co.uk

More information about ‘*Impact Partnership’*, *‘All In Short Breaks’*, Actio and CCS are available below on page **4.**

If you are invited to an informal conversation, please let us know if you have any access requirements.

Actio and CCS are committed to delivering the recruitment and selection of staff in a professional, timely and responsive manner. All candidates will be treated fairly, equitably and efficiently, with respect and courtesy, aiming to ensure that the candidate experience is positive, irrespective of the outcome. We are particularly keen to receive applications from candidates who identify as disabled or have lived experience of disability.

This commission is funded by Arts Connect and Shropshire Council and administered by Ignition CIC on the behalf of Culture Consortium Shropshire (CCS) and Actio.

Thank you for your interest in this commission.

**ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

**Impact Partnership:**

This research toolkit is part of a strategic research and development programme funded by Arts Connect and Shropshire Council. The programme and funding are a key priority and focus for Culture Consortium Shropshire. It will enable children and young people (0-19) with SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities), to take part in more and better-quality arts and cultural activities.

CCS (Culture Consortium Shropshire), in partnership with the Actio Consortium, are running a four year programme for children and young people with SEND. This programme has been developed from research, commissioned by Shropshire Council, showing that children and young people currently accessing activity through the ‘All In Short Breaks’ programme would like opportunities to participate in a broader range of activity particularly in arts and culture. CCS and Actio secured funding Partnership Investment from Arts Connect, matched by a range of other partners.

The programme helps enable children and young people aged 0 to 19 with SEND and their families to take part in more and better-quality Arts and Cultural activities. The programme looks at barriers to engagement and addresses these, ensuring the activities on offer are accessible, relevant and delivered by people with the right skills and training.

Research and development is fundamental to the programme, looking at ‘what works well and why’ in providing arts and cultural opportunities for this group and their families.

This research based Toolkit, for practitioners and organisations to use is a fundamental part of the programme.

**Other Key strands of work include –**

* Development days for Professionals (across all disciplines) using arts and cultural techniques for training and upskilling
* Best practice for working with children and young people with disabilities
* Seminars and sharing findings
* A series of cultural journeys /case studies tracking the child or young person’s experience of taking part
* Direct investment into the cultural sector
* Artist in Residence within ‘All In Short Breaks’

The programme supports partnerships across the cultural sectors and wider, with learnings being applicable to a number of disciplines such as sports and leisure. The aim of the work is to bring about a culture change, repositioning Shropshire as leaders in the field of developing high quality, meaningful and inclusive cultural opportunities for this cohort of children and young people.

**Actio - *positive inclusion for everyone*:**

Actio is a partnership of three organisations, Energize, PACC (Parent & Carers Council) and Ignition CIC.

As a consortium Actio aim to improve the lives of children and young people aged 0-25 (with diagnosed or suspected SEN and Disabilities) across Shropshire by supporting organisations to provide high quality activities to offer ongoing physical and personal development, the chance to try something new, develop skills and to make friends. Actio want to support children/young people and their families to access activities that meet the needs of their child/young person, our priority will always be good quality services provided by qualified and skilled staff and volunteers.

**For more information on Actio go** [**here**](https://actioconsortium.wixsite.com/website/about_us)

**Arts Connect:**

We are a development agency connecting and supporting communities across the West Midlands, to enable children and young people (from 0-25) to enjoy a rich and meaningful arts and cultural life.

We achieve this by working with partners in education, arts and cultural organisations, local government and others to lead change and improve opportunity of access and engagement.

We work across the West Midlands, including the metropolitan local authorities of Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley, Sandwell, Solihull, Stoke on Trent, Telford & Wrekin, Walsall and Wolverhampton, as well as the shire counties of Herefordshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Worcestershire and Warwickshire.

We believe that all children and young people have the right to quality-rich arts and cultural opportunities. We know that involvement in the arts and culture contributes to a thriving childhood and evidence shows this. We know that it impacts positively on learning, achievement, wellbeing, creativity and progression into higher education as well as the wider benefits of actively participating in and feeling part of society. We want this for all children and young people in the West Midlands.

**Culture Consortium Shropshire (CCS):**

The Culture Consortium Shropshire is a Local Cultural Education Partnership. The consortium, is supported by Arts Connect (the Arts Council England funded Bridge organisation for the West Midlands).

It’s a network of organisations, from; arts, culture and heritage organisations, festivals, education sector, Music Service and Music Hub; libraries; museums; local authority and other relevant organisations.

We believe that by working together collectively, we can improve the cultural offer for children and young people living in Shropshire and ensure there are more opportunities for children and young people to access high quality arts and culture. **For more information on CCS go** [**here**](http://www.cultureconsortiumshropshire.com/)