Courtesy Liz Lock

TENDER PACK

Independent Evaluator

RE-CENTRE SALFORD

Evaluation Brief

A ten-year vision for
community-led culture in Salford

Contract period
January 2027 to end April 2029

Re Centre

Independent Evaluation Commission

THE COMMISSION

Re-centre is seeking an independent evaluator for its Arts Council England (ACE) Creative People and Places (CPP) programme, from January 2027 to 30 April 2029.

Re-centre is Salford's new, city-wide CPP programme and the first phase of a ten-year vision for community-led culture. At its heart is cultural democracy: supporting more people to shape, influence and participate in the cultural life of their communities and the wider city. The programme takes a localised and connected approach to creativity and participation, supporting ambitious artistic and cultural activity rooted in lived experience, collaboration and strong local partnerships.

The evaluator will help establish Re-centre's evaluation framework, refine its existing Theory of Change and generate evidence about the programme's progress, outcomes and impact. Working with the Programme Director, delivery team, communities and partners, they will establish proportionate monitoring and evaluation processes, develop accessible resources and train the team to take increasing responsibility for routine monitoring and data collection. The commission will combine independent analysis, constructive challenge and planned reflection and learning to inform programme development and adaptation.

Key outputs include a Place-based Needs Analysis and SWOT, interim evaluation reports in May 2027 and May 2028, and a final three-year evaluation report by 30 April 2029. The evaluator will also undertake a minimum of two of the four required annual Impact & Insight Toolkit evaluations and produce a minimum of two case studies per year.

Fee: £30,000 inclusive of travel and VAT
Contract period: January 2027 to 30 April 2029
Location: Salford, with hybrid and community-based working as required
Proposal deadline: 11:59pm on Sunday 22 November 2026
Interviews: Week commencing 7 December 2026

Re Centre

ABOUT RE-CENTRE

Re-centre responds to the different experiences, priorities and identities across Salford, recognising that the city is not one place with one story. Its ambition is to:

- Unlock potential within people
- Reactivate places that matter
- Mobilise and amplify artistic activity and local insight
- Support communities to shape culture on their own terms
- Create pathways from participation to leadership, decision-making and co-creation
- Build long-term civic impact and cultural change

The programme has been awarded £750,000 in ACE funding and has £300,000 in confirmed match funding. It is led by a Programme Director and governed by a consortium comprising the University of Salford, Salford City Council, Salford Community Leisure, The Lowry and Salford CVS. The University of Salford is the lead organisation and accountable body.

AIMS

As an ACE-funded CPP, Re-centre is committed to achieving the following five national CPP aims:

- Engage more people from eligible places in a wide range of arts and cultural experiences as audiences and/or participants
- Empower communities to lead and shape local cultural provision
- Ensure excellence and relevance in both the process of community engagement and the creative and cultural experiences on offer
- Encourage partnerships across publicly funded, amateur, voluntary, community and commercial sectors, as well as collaboration between cultural institutions
- Take an Action Research approach to community engagement in arts, creativity and culture, learning what works best and sharing that learning

£750,000	£300,000	2026–2029
ACE funding	confirmed match funding	development and delivery

CREATIVE PEOPLE AND PLACES
LOTTERY FUNDED
Supported using public funding by ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND

DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY

April 2026 to March 2027 is a Development Year for Re-centre, focused on building relationships with communities and partners, developing community-led decision-making, and establishing the programme's governance, operating systems and evaluation methodology. April 2027 to March 2028 and April 2028 to March 2029 are its programme-focused delivery years.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Evaluation of Re-centre will be guided by the three research questions that ACE asks all CPP programmes to use in evaluating their impact:

- Are more people from places of least engagement experiencing and inspired by creativity and culture, and what are the most effective ways to achieve this?
- What approaches enable us to deliver on our aspiration for excellence, both in the process of community engagement and the creative and cultural experiences on offer?
- What else are we learning that facilitates better public engagement in creativity and culture?

Alongside these three core CPP questions, Re-centre also seeks to understand its wider impact on Salford's communities and cultural infrastructure, including its contribution to the city's cultural ecology and longer-term cultural change.

Broughton residents artwork at Art with Heart's Broughton Art Show. Photo by Breige Cobane for Art with Heart

THE BRIEF

Re-centre does not yet have an evaluation framework, but has an initial Theory of Change, co-created with programme partners and stakeholders. The evaluator will work with the Programme Director and Board to develop the evaluation framework and refine the existing Theory of Change, ensuring alignment with Re-centre's aims and Business Plan, the three core CPP questions and ACE reporting requirements. Together, these will provide a basis for understanding progress, outcomes, impact and learning, while remaining open to testing and refinement as delivery, evidence and community insight emerge.

Re-centre intends for its programme team to take increasing responsibility for routine monitoring, data collection and input, including surveys and feedback. The evaluator will initially establish proportionate methods and processes, develop accessible resources, and train the team to use them independently. The commission is therefore expected to be more intensive at the outset, focusing on establishing the approach and building the team's capacity, with the transfer of responsibility for routine monitoring taking place progressively as the programme develops.

WHAT WE ARE LOOKING FOR

We are looking for an independent evaluator who can work alongside Re-centre throughout the programme, from January 2027 to the end of April 2029, combining independent assessment with practical support, constructive challenge and shared learning. The approach should be robust, proportionate, inclusive and appropriate to a community-led cultural programme, with community voice informing the evaluation from shaping questions and gathering evidence to interpreting findings.

The evaluator will help Re-centre understand what is working, what could be improved and how change is happening, using evidence to inform programme development and adaptation.

KEY OUTPUTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Develop a monitoring, evaluation and learning framework with the Programme Director and Board, aligned with Re-centre's Business Plan, Theory of Change, aims, the three core CPP questions and ACE reporting requirements
- Review and further develop the Theory of Change, testing its assumptions and refining it as the programme develops
- Work with the Programme Director to develop the Place-based Needs Analysis and SWOT for inclusion in the Final Business Plan, gathering and synthesising existing data and evidence, assessing gaps, and establishing an evidence base to inform priorities and targets
- Establish proportionate monitoring and evaluation processes, including accessible, user-friendly resources, and provide training to the programme team to enable consistent and inclusive collection, management and use of monitoring data and feedback, including through Illuminate, supporting implementation of ACE's data monitoring and evaluation requirements
- Provide independent analysis, reflection and constructive challenge, assessing progress towards the programme's intended outcomes and impact, and helping Re-centre understand what is working, what could be improved and how change is happening
- Support Re-centre's Action Research approach through planned learning and reflection with the delivery team, helping ensure findings inform programme decisions and are shared with the Board and consortium at agreed points
- Work with the delivery team to identify priorities and opportunities for gathering feedback and evidence across the programme, attending delivery-team meetings and undertaking proportionate visits to programme activities to inform the evaluation, with frequency agreed in consultation with the Programme Director
- Produce interim evaluation reports in May 2027 and May 2028 and a final three-year evaluation report by 30 April 2029, synthesising evidence across postcode data, audience reach, Illuminate, Impact & Insight Toolkit evaluations, and other quantitative and qualitative sources to provide a coherent assessment of the programme's progress, outcomes and impact
- Produce a minimum of two of the four required annual Impact & Insight Toolkit evaluations, with the delivery team coordinating survey dissemination and collection, and produce a minimum of two case studies per year, documenting significant programme activity, outcomes and learning for sharing with ACE, partners and the wider sector *

** The number of Toolkit evaluations and case studies to be undertaken by the evaluator is to be agreed with the appointed evaluator.*

RE-CENTRE RESPONSIBILITIES

Re-centre will ensure sufficient staff capacity to maintain programme records and source evidence; collect agreed audience, participant, artist, partner, workforce and postcode information; administer surveys and monitoring tools; and coordinate monitoring information from delivery partners. The delivery team will be responsible for routine data entry and for preparing and submitting required programme monitoring information to ACE, including quarterly activity data through Illuminate, the annual CPP Survey and the Annual Narrative Form, in accordance with the timescales set out in Re-centre's Arts Council England Funding Agreement.

The programme team will participate in the training provided by the evaluator and take increasing responsibility for routine monitoring, data collection, data entry and associated reporting throughout the programme.

FEE AND TIMESCALE

Fee available	£30,000 inclusive of travel and VAT
Contract period	January 2027 to 30 April 2029
Location	Salford, with hybrid and community-based working as required
Employer	University of Salford on behalf of the Re-centre Consortium Board
Proposal deadline	11:59pm on Sunday 22 November 2026
Interviews	Week commencing 7 December 2026
Expected start	As soon as possible following appointment

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HOW TO APPLY

Please submit a proposal covering the following:

- **Understanding of the project** – your understanding of Re-centre's aims and the purpose of the evaluation
- **Approach and methodology** – your proposed approach to developing and implementing the evaluation framework and Theory of Change, including engagement with the programme team, communities and partners
- **Relevant experience** – examples of relevant evaluation work and experience
- **Workplan and timescales** – proposed activities and deliverables from January 2027 to 30 April 2029, including the required ACE reporting deadlines
- **Costs and resources** – proposed allocation of days and the available £30,000 fee, including how you would phase the work and what you consider achievable within the budget
- **Division of responsibilities** – your initial view of how responsibilities could be shared between the evaluator and the delivery team, including any assumptions, support needs or risks, as a starting point for further discussion at interview
- **Referees** – details of two referees who can comment on relevant previous work
- **Supporting information** – relevant quality assurance arrangements, insurance details, business address and any specific supplier requirements

ACE CPP monitoring and reporting requirements and the latest Impact & Insight Toolkit guidance for CPP mandatory evaluation requirements are available online for reference.

PROPOSAL FORMAT

We welcome proposals in different formats, including written proposals, presentations or other accessible formats. Written proposals should be no more than four sides of A4. Supporting information, such as CVs, examples of previous work, referee details and relevant policies, can be provided separately. Proposals can be submitted as a PDF or Word document. Applicants wishing to use an alternative format are welcome to contact us to discuss arrangements.

Please **submit your proposal** to **K.R.Atkin@salford.ac.uk**.

For an **informal discussion** about the role with a member of the Consortium Board, please contact **K.R.Atkin@salford.ac.uk**.