

INVITATION TO TENDER

Requirement Title	Focus Group Recruitment Consultant
Issue Date	5 October 2026
Closing Date of Tender	26 October 2026 12 noon
Contact	Kath Knight Email: kath.k@harewood.org

1. **About Harewood House Trust**

Harewood House Trust (harewood.org) is an independent charity which engages around 270,000 visitors a year through its built heritage, 140 acres of Grade I listed landscape and an innovative art and learning programme. It is one of England's finest 18th century country houses, with a significant collection of fine and decorative arts; we are an accredited museum, with a nationally Designated Collection, and the family seat of the Earl and Countess of Harewood. Like many estates and establishments of the period, the House was largely built from the proceeds garnered from the Transatlantic trade in enslaved individuals, and this has been prominently acknowledged through our arts programming and community engagement over the last 30 years. To read more about us, please visit our website www.harewood.org

2. **Background**

HHT is seeking quotes for a focus group recruitment specialist to recruit representatives from the Leeds African-Caribbean community for The National Lottery Heritage Fund Development Phase of the Reimagining Harewood project. In 2023 Harewood undertook focus groups with representatives from the Leeds African-Caribbean community to help inform its Digital Masterplan. We wish to reestablish these focus groups to inform the Reimagining Harewood project including building design, interpretation strategy and programme activity. The focus groups themselves will be facilitated by an Audience Development Consultant and a Curator of Community Voices.

2.1 Our History

Harewood pushes the boundaries of what a historic country house means in the 21st century. Our vision is to lead the transformation of the sector, to support artists, improve access to culture and bring world-class creative programming to the heart of Yorkshire. It drives our 30-year-old award-winning programme, showcases the Designated Collection of our Arts Council Accredited Museum, embraces contemporary art, puts learning at the heart of all we do, and enables us to grow and diversify audiences which now reach almost 300,000 people each year. Managed by an independent charity, Harewood House Trust, we are committed to living responsibly and encourage responsible living. There has never been a more

important time to share Harewood's history, collections and experiences to provoke and inform conversations on social, political and environmental issues facing communities today. Energetically pursuing this ambitious agenda continues to increase our impact as one of the country's greatest cultural assets, influencing a fairer society for everyone.

Our museum is a Grade I listed, 18th-century house, surrounded by 'Capability' Brown landscapes and gardens, with a commitment to supporting local and natural wildlife. One of the first English historic houses to become an Accredited Museum, our Designated status for outstanding art – including significant Old Master paintings, decorative art and furniture – has been held since 1998. Equidistant between Leeds, York and Bradford, our communities represent a cross-section of society. Outreach focuses on improving access to Harewood for those who have previously struggled to connect. We have the power to reach disengaged communities from across West Yorkshire, including Leeds, Bradford, Kirklees, Selby, Chapeltown and Harehills. With a history that spans Africa, the Caribbean and Asia, we have the stories, collections and expertise to reach diaspora communities and lead the sector in improving accessibility to our shared heritage.

Harewood was built in the 18th century using proceeds from the sugar trade and trade in enslaved African people, who laboured on plantations owned by the Lascelles family in the West Indies. In the context of this abhorrent history, Harewood has long sought to be a platform for open conversation and discourse on equality and honesty and has worked to facilitate these conversations for over thirty years, consistently collaborating with contemporary Black artists to interpret and openly share our history, collections, and stories, and reveal their relevance to modern day audiences. Events in recent years have highlighted the need to push this work yet further, and on a platform that has a wider reach, and fewer barriers to entry, than the physical site we occupy.

Shared history is key to building Harewood's relationships with its wider communities. Just 6.5 miles South of Harewood is the North Leeds area of Chapeltown which has a rich, African-Caribbean cultural heritage and is home to Europe's oldest West Indian Carnival, formed in 1967. The area's council ward has a 46.7% non-White population with 18.8% identifying as Black / African / Caribbean / Black British. Harewood's story is intertwined with this population's cultural heritage.

2.2 Reimagining Harewood Project Overview

Reimagining Harewood will 'heal the landscape', reestablishing the connection between the House and other important historic buildings and landscape features, creating a beautiful and biodiverse landscape where people can enjoy historic views and gain a better understanding of the site's history. Key to this will be giving a Grade II listed building (the Bakehouse) a new lease of life as a Visitor Centre. This will be the centre of every visit, providing vital and accessible facilities, welcoming and orientating visitors and providing a sense of place by sharing the complex history of the site from the Bronze Age to the present day, including its links to the West Indian

sugar trade of plantations, enslavement of people of colour, and ownership of ships and warehouses.

The Bakehouse Visitor Centre will combine a restored Grade II listed building with an accessible and sustainable single storey building extension which complements its historic partner and blends with the landscape. This is the space where Harewood will share the important introduction to every visit, highlighting what's on offer indoors and outdoors from the playground and the gardens through to the art collection and interiors. Critically, this is where visitors will read the whole landscape of Harewood through time from the pre-historic Greystone (scheduled monument) to its inclusion in the Domesday Book, the Church of All Saints and Harewood Castle. This is also where we will share information about our complex history so that every visitor understands that the 18th century House and Grounds were built on the profits from the West Indian sugar trade of plantations, enslavement of people of colour, and ownership of ships and warehouses.

Everything visitors need to support and maximise their visit in the way of facilities will be in the Bakehouse Visitor Centre with accessible, family friendly toilets (including a Changing Places facility), a grab and go cafe ideal for those using the adventure playscape, and retail. The Bakehouse will become a destination at Harewood and at the centre of every visit, realising the potential of this beautiful historic building and linking it with paths and views to the House and the Courtyard as was originally intended.

3. Instructions to Tender

3.1 General information

All tenders will be in accordance with and subject to these instructions and other documents comprising the Invitation to Tender (ITT).

HHT reserves the right, without prior notice, to change, modify, or withdraw the basis of its request and/or to reject all proposals and terminate negotiations at any time. In no circumstance will HHT incur any liability in respect of time, effort or cost in regard to either discussions, meetings or reviewing and/or responding to this document or subsequent material.

The issue of this ITT does not bind HHT or any official of it to accept any proposal, in whole, or in part, nor does it bind any officials of HHT to provide any explanation or reason for its decision to accept or reject any proposal. Acceptance of a proposal neither commits HHT to award a contract to any Tenderer, even if all requirements stated in this tender are satisfied, nor does it limit HHT's right to negotiate in their best interest. HHT reserves the right to contract with a tenderer for reasons other than lowest cost. Contract award will be post tender process and may be awarded without discussions or negotiations.

For any queries please contact Kath Knight and allow up to 5 working days for a response. Other than those persons identified, no other representative of HHT may make any representation regarding this procurement process.

All tenders are to be valid for 90 days from the end of the tender submission period to allow HHT to undertake review.

3.2 Confidentiality

HHT have issued this ITT to tenderers to inform their preparation of a tender for this requirement and for no other purpose.

HHT gives this ITT and any other documentation on the basis that they remain HHT's property and tenderers must treat the contents as confidential. If tenderers are unable or unwilling to keep to this rule, they:

- Must destroy this ITT and all associated documents at once; and
- Must not keep any electronic or paper copies.

3.3 Preparation of Tender

A Tenderer must inform HHT of its intention to submit a tender at the earliest opportunity by emailing Kath Knight so that HHT may inform the tenderer of any potential changes to timescales etc.

HHT reserves the right to issue additional documentation or information related to the tender at any time. At the discretion of HHT, the closing date may be extended. Tenderers already having submitted a tender at this point may be invited to re-submit their tenders at their discretion.

3.4 Submission of Tender

By submitting a tender, the Tenderer confirms that they are able and willing to enter into a formal contract with HHT if awarded. The tender shall be signed by persons authorised to submit tenders and make contracts for the Tenderer.

Any applications received after the deadline will not be considered unless agreed with HHT prior to the close of the submission period.

3.5 Evaluation criteria and process

HHT will evaluate tenders against the award criteria set out in section 4.

HHT reserve the right to seek clarification from any or all of the tenderers during the evaluation period. This may be in writing or by means of a clarification meeting.

After initial evaluation, a shortlist of tenderers may be invited to an HHT panel (in person or online via Teams). Following this, final evaluations will take place, and a preferred tenderer nominated and offered the contract, subject to checks. The expected timescales are set out in section 3.7.

3.6 Tenderer's Warranties

In submitting its tender, the Tenderer warrants, represents and undertakes to HHT that:

All information, representations and other matters of fact communicated (whether in writing or otherwise) to HHT by the Tenderer, its staff or agents in connection with or arising out of the tender are true, complete and accurate in all respects, both as at the date communicated and as at the date of tender submission;

It has full power and authority to enter into the contract and perform the obligations specified in the contract documents;

It is of sound financial standing and has and will have sufficient working capital, skilled staff, equipment and other resources available to it to perform the obligations specified in the contract;

It shall indemnify and keep indemnified HHT against all actions, claims, demands and expenses incurred or made against the HHT in respect of any loss or damage which arises from any advice given or anything done or omitted to be done under this tender to the extent that such loss or damage is caused by the negligence or other wrongful act of the Tenderer or its agents.

3.7 Timescales

It is intended that the procurements process for this tender will run to the following timetable. Please note that HHT reserves the right to amend the timescales listed below and will inform tendering organisations of any changes.

Activity/Action	Date
ITT issue date	5 October 2026
Closing date	26 October at 12 noon
Shortlisted tender interviews	Week beginning 9 November
Final evaluation and contract award	Week beginning 23 November
Start of service delivery	1 December 2026

4. **Specification**

4.1 To support the Tenderer to prepare a tender submission, the following specification has been drafted by HHT.

A Focus Group Recruitment Specialist will engage around 30 people from Leeds' African-Caribbean communities and descendant communities to take part in up to 3 focus groups at Harewood House. The Audience Development Consultant will lead these focus groups working with the Curator of Community Voices.

The Recruitment Specialist will be required to approach people from these communities with limited or no engagement with Harewood, in addition to named individuals from community partnerships Harewood already has, that will be provided on appointment. They will report on the process, including feedback from any groups

or individuals that may not want to be involved (for reasons other than availability), and immediate responses to the idea of assisting Harewood.

Through the focus groups, the Audience Development Consultant will determine barriers to engagement with Harewood in these audience groups and look into interpretation development or other activity that could help break down those barriers.

The results of the focus groups will be evaluated, presented and written into a full report, with a suggested strategic content proposal, for the Reimagining Harewood project team, Audience Research consultant and Interpretation consultant.

4.2 Methodology

The Focus Group Recruitment Specialist will be required to approach and engage people from the Leeds African-Caribbean community for up to 3 focus groups.

You should specify the approach that you will take to recruiting people, including:

- What channels you will use to approach people
- What groups you will approach, and why
- How you will approach them, considering the sensitive nature of the ask
- How you will respond to positive and negative feedback
- The resources you will need to facilitate your approach, including any additional support from Harewood
- Ethical and welfare considerations, especially given the potentially triggering and emotive context and discussions

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4.3 Deliverables

- The Focus Group Recruitment Specialist will be required to deliver the following:
- Up to 30 participants from the Leeds African-Caribbean community in up to 3 focus groups (to take place January to August 2027)
- Regular feedback to the Reimagining Harewood project team on responses to approaches and successful recruitment, including recommendations for further approaches

- A summary report of successfully recruited participants

Throughout the process, we expect you to display the following skills, experiences, behaviours and knowledge:

- Experience recruiting for focus groups
- Ideally, experience recruiting for focus groups on sensitive topics
- Excellent communication skills
- Ability to demonstrate empathy and tact with potential focus group participants, who may have emotional reactions to the approach
- Work in a timely fashion to the agreed deadlines for deliverables.

4.4 Budget

The anticipated budget is £2,000 plus VAT. The fee must include travel and subsistence expenses.

5. **Terms required within the contract**

Notice period must not be less than 1 month.

Agreed hourly rates required for roles.

6. **Evaluation process**

The evaluation process will be scored by quality and cost using the form and any supporting material that you provide. No tender will be considered until after the tender process closing date.

6.1 Award Criteria

Please include the following in your proposal:

- Your background and experience, with reference to Harewood's requirements
- A detailed methodology and plan for approaching potential participants
- The number of days you anticipate working on the project
- Your fee for the work, with a breakdown of how this is allocated

HHT will evaluate tenders based on cost and quality as follows:

Cost	20%
Quality: Degree of experience demonstrated in order to complete the work	30%
Quality: Extent to which methodology meets our requirements	40%
Quality: How well the proposal indicates the applicant will work well with the Harewood team and to Harewood's values	10%
Total:	100%

6.1 Cost

Cost will be evaluated on a sliding scale, with a % score awarded as follows: $\text{Score} = (\text{max score}) \times (\text{Lowest Cost} / \text{Actual Cost})$

For example: if cost is weighted as 30% of the overall score - Tender One bids £500, Tender Two bids £750. Tender One scores $30\% \times 500/500$, i.e. 30%. Tender Two

scores 30% x 500/750 i.e. 20%.

Tenderers must fill in the Costing Schedule set out in the Tender Submission Form to provide all the obligations under the Contract. Tenderers can add any extra or alternative costing proposals to the end of the costing Schedule with reasons for including these.

Quotes or tenders may be accepted in Pounds Sterling and quotes must include any VAT or other taxes required.

Tenderers must also show all other costs that will be associated with the contract for example rates or expenses. HHT will not consider claims for extra payment for items that have not been specified.

Abnormally low tenders: If, for a given contract, tenders appear to be abnormally low in relation to the goods, works or services, HHT shall, before it may reject those tenders, investigate the elements of the tender which it considers to be unsustainable. If HHT's investigations determine the bid to be unsustainable, HHT may reject the tender from the process.

6.2 Quality

Quality will be scored on a scale of 0 – 10 as follows:

0 - 1	Very limited or no relevant information.
2 - 4	Response is limited or goes part way to demonstrating the ability to deliver against the specification.
5-7	Tenderers show that they understood the specification and can deliver against the contract as required, with limited evidence of successful delivery
8-10	Tenderer strongly demonstrates that they understood the specification, can deliver against the contract as required and further demonstrate evidence of added value they can bring and evidence of a strong history of successful delivery.

If a score of 0-1 is given for any element of the tender, then it will be determined to have failed and may not be considered further.