

Researcher Required

Researcher required for 6 month part-time project intern work with the Real Ideas Organisation in Plymouth, focussed on the emerging impact of the redeveloped Devonport Market Hall

This work would suit a suitably qualified early career graduate or post-graduate researcher from an economics, urban development, business/management, social science or similar discipline.

Context

You will be working with the Real Ideas Organisation and focussing on our redevelopment of the Market Hall in Devonport.

Real Ideas (realideas.org) are an energetic, passionate and creative team. We love nothing more than delivering real change for people and communities.

The work is broad, varied and challenging – so bring your a-game and a hefty supply of determination, energy and passion.

Once fully refurbished and open the Market Hall will be a world-class space for creative, digital and immersive experiences, situated in the heart of historic Devonport, Plymouth.

The Market Hall is now home to an awe-inspiring 15m immersive dome – inspired by the dome at SAT in Montreal and the first of its kind in Europe – enabling visitors to explore immersive realities, without the need for a VR headset, opening up a world of incredible creative and immersive experiences. The building will be opening in 2021 and also contains a range of other flexible and innovative business workspace. We hope it will contribute in diverse ways to the ongoing regeneration of Plymouth and Devonport.

The research and work

You will help us carry out a summative assessment and evaluation of the ERDF-funded development of the workspace aspect of Devonport Market Hall, focussing particularly on the project's relevance, outcomes and impact, helping us shed light on the effectiveness and efficiency of our delivery of the project, as well as surfacing policy and practical lessons for dissemination more widely.

In addition to producing a great evaluation within the required ERDF parameters, we also want this work to generate useful data, ideas and connections for us – making sure that the wider Market Hall development continues to focus on clear and identified need, creates value for business, community, city and region and is informed by best practice going forward.

A more detailed scope and plan for the evaluation is attached at **Appendix 1- Summative Assessment Logic Model**. As you will see, there has been some slight slippage due to Covid, but we are still broadly on track.

Often this type of research is carried out by a sub-contracted consultancy. This usually gets the job done to the required quality standard and meets ERDF requirements, but does not always create enough added value. Therefore, given:

- Our existing connections with a number of the region's universities, and strong partnerships with the University of Plymouth in particular;
- The challenges facing young people in the current climate, particularly as they look to build a career and development pathway after graduating;
- Issues of graduate retention in Plymouth and the SW, and the need to create interesting development opportunities for graduates in the far SW...

...we are trying to go about this evaluation in an innovative way and therefore create a stepping stone opportunity that means we get the required high quality evaluation and research and you get chance to apply your research skills and abilities in a real world development context.

You would be commissioned by us as a freelance researcher to deliver the evaluation and related research. The main outcome from your work will be an evaluation report that meets ERDF criteria.

The fee for the work is £7k, inclusive of all expenses and VAT (if applicable), and the project would run from January 2021 through to September 2021. The work would be carried out part time and flexibly. It could therefore fit alongside other responsibilities, studies or work (though note that delivery of contract outcomes is non-negotiable and as with any work of this nature would be linked to payment.)

We would negotiate an appropriate payment schedule with you, based on time, need and delivery of agreed outcomes.

You would be expected to work independently, flexibly and in a self-motivated and directed manner to deliver the evaluation and research, without day-to-day supervision and using your own initiative, resources and connections within the scope of the overall budget. However, given that we are keen to create an opportunity for an early career researcher we would provide plenty of support and help:

- Supervision and contract reporting through our Contract Manager.
- Mentoring and research support from our Head of Impact and Research.
- Support on freelance working and project management from one of our business advisors.
- Membership of Real Ideas – allowing you to use our workspace and buildings, and gain access to other valuable content and events for the duration of the contract.

About you and your skills, experience and abilities

Working to the Real Ideas Contract Manager, and with input and specialist expertise from them and our Head of Impact and Research, you will be responsible for producing the summative assessment of the Market Hall Workspace project – on time and to a quality standard that meets ERDF requirements.

You will therefore need:

- Appropriate and relevant quantitative and qualitative research skills, and some experience using these to carry out self-motivated and directed research in the real world (e.g. through projects, dissertation, thesis or work placements.)
- Ability to design and carry out effective insightful questionnaires, surveys and interviews with stakeholders, partners, community and beneficiaries.
- The communication and personal skills to do this well.
- The ability to present research findings and communicate clearly and sharply in writing. You will be responsible for production of large chunks of the required evaluation report and this needs to be insightful and suitable for the audience.
- The ability to work well in a team, and to hit the ground running in a new context and organisation (given this work is time limited with specific deadlines.)
- The ability to spot and create value for Real Ideas, the Market Hall development and all our partners, communities and stakeholders as you go about this work. This is an engaged and practical piece of research that needs to make a difference.
- A positive, independent and proactive approach to your work and relationships.
- The skills to manage your own time well and set and meet deadlines.
- The determination and persistence to chase down contacts, leads, data and insight from across a complex terrain.
- Evidenced interest in the areas of focus for Real Ideas and the Market Hall (e.g. regeneration and redevelopment; innovation; digital/VR/immersive; social enterprise; business support, growth and development; social, environmental and economic value etc.) and an inquisitive approach to your work.

Applying to carry out this work with us

In order to apply for this project work you should send us a full CV and a covering letter (a referee will also be required at a later date). Together your CV and letter needs to evidence the skills, experience and abilities outlined above.

Your application needs to be sent to RIO HR by 29th January 2021. There will then be a process of shortlisting and we expect to interview from this shortlist on 8th February 2021. In the current context it is likely that these interviews will take place remotely.

We will then aim to appoint to the project with work due to commence 15th February 2021 and complete 31st August 2021.