Role Brief: Project Worker – Oral Histories Programme (Freelance, NHLF-Funded Project)

Project Title : WOVEN into Time

Job Title: Project Worker – Oral Histories Programme
Fee: £26,000 (freelance contract)

Contract Term: December 2026 – 30 September 2027. The role is anticipated to require an average of approximately 20 hours per week, with flexibility depending on project phase and agreed scope.

Project Context

WOVEN is a biennial textiles festival established in 2019 by Kirklees Council and delivered by HATCH. It has evolved into a **community-led, year-round heritage programme**, connecting textile heritage with contemporary practice across industry, education, arts, and communities.

As part of its wider transition to an independent heritage organisation, WOVEN is developing a programme of **oral history collection and preservation**, ensuring that lived experiences of Kirklees' textile industry are recorded, shared, and made accessible.

This project aligns with National Lottery Heritage Fund priorities to:

- **Safeguard heritage** at risk of being lost
- Increase **public engagement with heritage**
- Support **skills development and volunteering**
- Ensure **inclusive representation of diverse communities**

Purpose of the Role

The Project Worker will lead the **delivery of a pilot oral histories programme**, focused on collecting, preserving, and sharing the lived experiences of people connected to Kirklees' textile industry.

The role will:

- Coordinate **participant engagement and interviews**

- Support **volunteer recruitment, training, and development**
- Ensure delivery meets **ethical, archival, and NHLF standards**
- Establish a **replicable model for future oral history programmes**

This is a delivery-focused role requiring strong experience in **community engagement, oral history practice, and project coordination**.

Target Beneficiaries

Primary beneficiaries:

- Volunteers receiving training in oral history skills
- Participants sharing lived experiences of textile heritage

Secondary beneficiaries:

- Local communities accessing heritage content
- Artists, educators, and researchers using oral histories as creative and educational resources
- Future audiences benefiting from preserved and accessible archives

Particular focus will be given to:

- Individuals with direct experience of textile industry work
- Communities historically connected to mill labour, including migrant communities
- Underrepresented voices, including those at risk of being lost due to age or circumstance

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Key Responsibilities

The Project Worker will deliver the following:

1. Participant Engagement and Recruitment

- Identify and engage 10–15 participants across Kirklees
- Ensure representation across geographic areas and communities
- Conduct outreach in partnership with local organisations

2. Volunteer Development

- Recruit and support a small cohort of volunteers (approx. 5)
- Coordinate training in oral history methods (e.g. via Oral History Society frameworks)
- Provide ongoing support to build skills and confidence

3. Oral History Collection

- Plan and deliver high-quality audio-recorded interviews
- Ensure sensitive, ethical, and participant-led approaches
- Capture stories relating to:
    - Textile industry work and skills
    - Community and migration experiences
    - Intergenerational and family histories

4. Content Development and Archiving

- Coordinate editing of selected interviews into accessible formats
- Ensure all material is documented and prepared for archiving
- Work with archive partners to ensure long-term preservation
- Ensure compliance with ethical, legal, and archival requirements

5. Partnership Working

- Collaborate with key partners including museums, archives, and community organisations
- Support alignment with existing heritage collections and initiatives

6. Events and Sharing

- Support delivery of engagement or sharing activity (e.g. small-scale events, presentations)
- Enable public access to stories through digital and physical formats

7. Evaluation and Monitoring

- Work with the WOVEN Interim Director and Administrator to evaluate the programme.

Outputs and Deliverables

The Project Worker will deliver:

- 10–15 recorded oral history interviews
- 8–10 edited and accessible audio stories
- A trained volunteer cohort (approx. 5 individuals)
- Documentation of processes and delivery model
- Archived materials deposited with West Yorkshire Archive Service
- Content linked to and accessible via the WOVEN website
- Evaluation report with recommendations for next steps

All outputs must:

- Meet **archival and ethical standards**
- Be **accessible** (e.g. transcripts, captioning where appropriate)
- Be documented to support **future replication and funding**

Implementation Plan

Indicative timeline:

- **Project start:** December 2026
- **Planning and setup:** December - January 2026
- **Volunteer training:** January – March 2027
- **Interview period:** April – July 2027
- **Archiving and completion:** August – September 2027

Ethical and Legal Compliance

The Project Worker will ensure:

- Full compliance with **GDPR and data protection regulations**
- Use of appropriate **consent and recording agreements**
- Ethical practice in line with **oral history standards**
- Secure storage and transfer of all data

All materials will be archived with West Yorkshire Archive Service, ensuring **long-term preservation and public access**.

Person Specification

Essential

- Experience delivering **oral history or community heritage projects**
- Experience working with **volunteers and community participants**
- Strong communication and interpersonal skills
- Good organisational and project coordination skills
- Understanding of **ethical practice and data protection**

Desirable

- Experience working with archives or museum collections

- Knowledge of **oral history methodologies and standards**
- Experience in audio recording and editing

Contract Details

- **Role type:** Freelance
- **Start date:** December 2026
- **End date:** September 2027
- **Fee:** £26,000 (inclusive of VAT and expenses)
- **Time commitment:** Approx. 20 hours per week (flexible)
- **Reporting to:** Interim Director
- **Working with:** Executive Administrator, WOVEN team, partners

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Payment Schedule

- Initial payment upon agreement of detailed project plan
- Staged payments linked to delivery milestones
- Final payment upon completion and sign-off by HATCH

Application Process

Applicants should submit:

- A proposal outlining relevant experience
- Examples of similar projects and outcomes
- A brief methodology for delivery

Assessment Criteria:

- Experience in oral history and community engagement
- Ability to deliver high-quality, ethical, and inclusive work
- Strength of proposed approach and methodology

Procurement Timeline

- **Application deadline:** 30th November 2026
- **Shortlisting notification:** 4th December 2026

- **Interviews:** Week commencing 11th December 2026
- **Applications to:** emma@hatchprojects.org.uk
