

Community Researcher – Cultural Vitality Labs

Key information

- **Purpose:** Facilitation and community research with diverse communities in Norwich.
- **Contract:** Freelance.
- **Working pattern:** Estimated 5 days between January – July 2026. The role will require 3 in-person workshop days in Norwich.
- **Fee:** £1,400 plus expenses.
- **Deadline for applications:** Monday 5th January 2026, 09:00 am.

About the Project

Norwich Creative City Compact, The Forum Trust, and Norwich City Council are excited to be bringing the national Cultural Vitality Labs project to Norwich.

Cultural Vitality Labs is a participatory research project led by the Centre for Cultural Value. Taking place in three locations across the UK, the project brings together communities, councils and cultural organisations to co-create frameworks that reflect what culture means to local people.

Through hands-on workshops and community-led research, we'll uncover the cultural strengths, priorities, and conditions that matter most to people in Norwich. These insights will inform local cultural planning and contribute to a national conversation about cultural value across the UK.

Community Researchers are at the heart of this work, ensuring that community voices are heard, respected, and embedded in the frameworks we develop. Your insights will help to inform new and ongoing plans to make Norwich a vibrant, inclusive and sustainable centre for culture.

About the Community Researcher role

We're looking for a freelance Community Researcher to support the Cultural Vitality Labs in Norwich.

Working alongside the Creative City Compact, The Forum Trust, Norwich City Council and the Centre for Cultural Value, the Community Researcher will support workshop delivery and research activities between January and July 2026.

You will be an experienced and inclusive facilitator and confident working with people and communities of diverse backgrounds. You'll be passionate about empowering communities to co-create cultural life, as we work to make Norwich a creative, fair and

thriving city for all. You don't need to have an academic research background to be our Community Researcher.

We anticipate that the role will require 5 days' work, including 3 workshop days, follow-up participatory tasks, and some check-ins with the Centre for Cultural Value and local project team.

Role responsibilities

The Community Researcher will:

- **Bring people together:** Support three in-person Cultural Vitality Lab workshops, creating welcoming spaces where participants feel safe to share ideas.
- **Facilitate dialogue:** Assist the research team in guiding inclusive conversations that uncover local cultural priorities.
- **Capture community insights:** Use creative, accessible methods (e.g. photowalks, reflective tasks, and informal conversations) to gather stories and perspectives.
- **Keep the connection alive:** Follow up with participants and partners, ensuring their voices continue to shape the process.
- **Be the local link:** Provide feedback and insights that help ground the Cultural Vitality Framework in real community experience.

Person specification

This role is perfect for someone who is:

- Experienced in community engagement, outreach, or participatory arts.
- A skilled facilitator who can create inclusive, respectful spaces.
- A great listener who easily builds trust and rapport with diverse groups.
- Organised and reliable, with confidence managing small-scale activities.
- Passionate about cultural participation, community identity, and local life.

Familiarity with local communities and organisations in the **Heartsease & Pilling Park and/or West Earlham & Bowthorpe** areas is desirable but not essential for this role.

Fees, time commitment and support available

- **Commitment:** Around 5 days between January and July 2026 (flexible). This time includes:

- 3 workshop days
- Follow-up participatory tasks
- A small number of check-ins with the research and project teams.
- **Fee:** £1,400 plus expenses.
- **Support:** You'll be embedded locally and supported by the Creative City Compact, Norwich City Council and the Centre for Cultural Value. We'll provide:
 - A project introduction session.
 - Clear guidance on workshop structure, tasks and timelines.
 - Ongoing support throughout the project.
 - You won't need to design workshops or do academic analysis in this role.

Why Join Us?

- Make a real difference in shaping cultural life where you live.
- Work alongside national and local partners on a project that values creativity and community voice.
- Gain experience in participatory research without needing an academic background.
- Be part of a national conversation about cultural value.

How to apply

To apply for the role of Community Researcher, please send your CV and cover letter (max. 2 sides of A4) to info@theforumnorwich.co.uk. **Please note that applications will be shared for review with project partners at Norwich City Council.**

The deadline for applications is 9:00 am on Monday 5th January 2026.

For a confidential discussion about the role, please contact Flo Reynolds, Culture development coordinator, Norwich City Council, on floreyolds@norwich.gov.uk, before 17th December 2025.

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to interview during the week of 19th January 2026. The successful candidate will need to be available to start the role by the end of January 2026.