

**** Press Release****

For immediate release, Wednesday 8 July 2020

**Coventry University calls out to “Creative Freelancers”
to contribute to key research study on business models and place-based
growth**

Today, 8 July 2020, Coventry University has launched a call for Creative Freelancers living and/or working in three locations to come forward to support an important new study that will address a critical evidence gap around the contribution of freelance workers to the economic and place-based impacts of the creative industries.

The study will focus on creative freelancers that live and/or work in three specific locations:

1. The London Borough of Waltham Forest (London Borough of Culture 2019);
2. Coventry City (City of Culture 2021); and
3. The County of Northumberland

Today’s announcement calls for anyone that identifies as a ‘Creative Freelancer’ providing services in any part of the arts and creative industries to come forward as potential subjects for in-depth interviews. The interviews will help the research team to establish a ‘typology’ of freelancer business models that will enable policy makers, funders and development agencies to develop more targeted strategies for supporting this part of the creative economy, the vulnerability of which has been exposed further by the impact of the Covid-19 crisis.

Commissioned by the Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre (PEC) and led by Coventry University in partnership with **Coventry City of Culture Trust, Creative United, Northumberland County Council, Waltham Forest Borough Council** and **Warwick Institute of Employment Research**. the study will generate new insights into the business models of creative freelancers and their relationship to local labour markets, creative networks, supply chains and innovation ecosystems – as well as identifying the challenges that they face.

As a first step, creative freelancers living and/or working in these three localities are being invited to complete a two-minute survey which can be accessed via this link:

<https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/CreativeFreelancers/>

One of only six projects funded nationally, and led by the Centre for Business in Society at Coventry University, the research proposal responded to the PEC's open call for projects that could help to demonstrate how freelancers and micro enterprises contribute to the UK's creative industries.

Professor Nick Henry of Coventry University said, "When we were awarded this project, we knew that freelancers are a lifeblood – but potentially vulnerable lifeblood - of the booming creative industries. We wanted to know how do they, and their different business models, engage with and embed in place? And with what economic and social outcomes? We still want to know, but that vulnerability has been laid bare by the pandemic crisis. Our funders and partners want to know more, because they are committed to creative freelancers and because place-based policy opens up possibilities to support them to be sustainable and resilient – even in times of crisis. We look forward to some great interviews and some innovative policy discussions."

Mary-Alice Stack, Chief Executive, Creative United says: "Freelancer workers are and have always been the beating heart of the UK's thriving arts and creative industries. As an organisation that is committed to supporting the growth and development of this sector, we are acutely aware of the evidence gaps that mean this population of uniquely skilled and talented individuals is often overlooked and under-supported.

With the help of our partners and the freelance community itself, we are determined to take steps now to address this issue by documenting the business models adopted by creative freelancers so that their particular way of working and economic contribution can be properly understood and appreciated as an essential part of our creative economy."

Designed to produce 'deep dive' qualitative evidence on creative freelancers, this research will increase understanding of the economic relationships, dynamics and business personas of freelancer models in order to directly support locally-based investment and policy responses to creative industry business models.

The study is expected to complete in late autumn 2020.

To find out more about the project and the full portfolio of six research projects that the PEC have commissioned, please visit: <https://www.pec.ac.uk/news/our-first-commissioned-research-projects>

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Editor's Notes

CBiS/Coventry University

Coventry University is a dynamic, global institution with a tradition of teaching excellence, impactful research and bold international partnerships. Described in the Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide 2019 as “one of the most innovative modern universities, bold with its vision of what the 21st century student experience should be”, the university’s approach to higher education developments has been central to its success.

The Centre for Business in Society (CBiS) is the home for specialist researchers within the Faculty of Business and Law. Through understanding the impact of organisations’ activities, behaviours and policies, CBiS’s research seeks to promote responsibility and to change behaviours so as to achieve better outcomes for economies and societies.

<https://www.coventry.ac.uk/research/areas-of-research/business-in-society/>

Coventry City of Culture Trust

In 2017, Coventry won the title of UK City of Culture for 2021. Coventry City of Culture Trust is currently working on an exciting programme of activity and events for 2021, which we expect to announce later this year. The Trust recently announced that UK City of Culture will run from May 2021 to May 2022.

The 365-day Coventry 2021 cultural programme will reflect Coventry as a diverse, modern city, demonstrating that culture is a force that changes lives, moving Coventry and the region forward.

Coventry is known internationally as a city of welcome, a city of activists and pioneers, a city of peace and reconciliation, a city of innovation and invention, and now a City of Culture.

www.coventry2021.co.uk

Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre (PEC)

The Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre (PEC) works to support the growth of the UK’s creative industries through the production of independent and authoritative evidence and policy advice. Led by Nesta and funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council as part of the UK Government’s Industrial Strategy, the PEC comprises a consortium of universities from across the UK (Birmingham, Cardiff, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Work Foundation at Lancaster University, LSE, Manchester, Newcastle, Sussex, and Ulster). The PEC works with a diverse range of industry partners including the Creative Industries Federation.

www.pec.ac.uk

Creative United

Creative United is an entrepreneurial community interest company, and Arts Council England (ACE) National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) sector support organisation, that strives for economic growth and social impact in the arts, cultural and creative industries. We provide a range of programmes and business services which enable the development and sustainability of organisations and enterprises operating within these sectors.

Our vision is for artists, creative enterprises and cultural organisations to have access to the specialist skills, professional advice and services they need to achieve their ambitions for growth and impact within their communities.

www.creativeunited.org.uk

London Borough of Waltham Forest

Waltham Forest Council is a local authority in north east London. In 2019, it was the first ever London Borough of Culture - awarded by the Mayor of London - and the recipient of the Municipal Journal's Local Authority of the Year. We are building a legacy on the back of these significant achievements by investing in our heritage buildings, opening new cultural venues and ensuring our borough is an inclusive place for all.

Bursting with energy and opportunity, Waltham Forest is a place changing rapidly. It is a place people want to live, raise a family and start a business. We are creating liveable neighbourhoods, where people have access to quality housing and the services and facilities that they need, along with vibrant town centres that have thriving shops, restaurants and entertainment.

<https://www.walthamforest.gov.uk/>

Northumberland County Council

Northumberland County Council's Cultural Strategy; *Our Creative Landscape* has a priority goal on economy and growth setting out our ambition to invest in a strong and dynamic cultural sector together. Working within the context of both the North of Tyne and the Borderlands growth deals, Northumberland aspires to become a national exemplar for rural growth and productivity whilst respecting our considerable natural and cultural assets. Creative industry and tourism are at the heart of this vision. We want all our cultural businesses to flourish and grow and as a county we're prepared to develop new ways of working that will scale up our individual enterprises and their collective supply chains and increase the quality and sustainability of the jobs available to our residents.

www.northumberland.gov.uk

Warwick Institute of Employment Research (IER)

With over 30 years' experience of researching the labour market and its relationships with the wider economy, IER has a substantial track record of delivering high quality research. IER has worked successfully with local Government and partnerships, major Government departments, research councils and agencies at national and international levels. Its research is interdisciplinary, relevant to policy makers and practitioners, and has a strong demonstrable record of success in achieving user impact through the development and transformation of new knowledge.

<https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/ier/>

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