



JOB DESCRIPTION

ROLE: Freelance Project Evaluator

TERMS: Freelance fixed term March 2026 – January 2027

FEE: £8,500

REPORTING TO: Director of Engagement

Job Overview

The Royal Exchange Theatre (RET) is celebrating 50 years of theatre making history through a co-created costume exhibition. The project will explore the heritage of the RET, showcasing iconic costumes, oral histories, and behind-the-scenes narratives from the past five decades. The exhibition will be developed with community members from the theatre's Elders and Young Company graduates who will create a performance piece in conversation with the exhibition.

We are seeking a Freelance Evaluator to design and deliver an independent evaluation of the project in line with Heritage Lottery Fund guidance and best practice.

Mythic Reinvention: Five Decades of Costume and Craft.

Launching on 15 September 2026 and running until 21 November 2026, as part of the Royal Exchange Theatre's 50th anniversary programme - *A Homecoming*, the project will bring our extraordinary costume archive to life through a free public exhibition in the Great Hall, alongside a new intergenerational community performance.

Showcasing costumes and accessories from five decades of Royal Exchange Theatre productions, the exhibition - **Mythic Reinvention: Five Decades of Costume and Craft** - will celebrate the skills and craft of designers, artisans and makers and share how storytelling, inspired by the idea of mythic reinvention, is embedded in every stitch, button and drape of costume.

Displayed within the unique architecture of the Great Hall, this visually spectacular and interactive exhibition will offer audiences fresh perspective on both the architecture of the theatre and the work created and performed by artists on and off stage. The exhibition will also highlight the lifecycle of costume, from initial design to reuse, reflecting our ongoing commitment to sustainability.

At the heart of the project are 50 participants, including members from the Royal Exchange Theatre's Young Company and Elders Company who will play a central role, co-creating both the exhibition and a brand-new performance inspired by the costume archive, the theatre's history and stories from Manchester communities.

The immersive exhibition will be curated by Leslie Travers, an award-winning international set and costume designer based in London, whose work spans opera, dance, musical theatre and drama on some of the world's most prestigious stages. Alongside the exhibition and performance, there will be programme of talks, backstage tours and hands-on workshops, offering behind-the-scenes insight into costume-making and sustainable design.

Using money raised by National Lottery players, The National Lottery Heritage Fund supports projects that connect people and communities with the UK's heritage. **Mythic Reinvention: Five Decades of Costume and Craft** is made possible with the Heritage Fund. Thanks to National Lottery players, we have been able develop and deliver this project, celebrating 50 years of theatre-making, focused on preserving and sharing our costume heritage.

Main Duties & Responsibilities

1. Develop a detailed evaluation framework aligned with National Lottery Heritage Fund outcomes
2. Identify effective tools and methods to gather qualitative and quantitative data
3. Work with staff at the theatre to collect and analyse data throughout the project
4. Evaluate the project's impact in areas including:
 - a. Heritage engagement: people's understanding of the costume making and the Royal Exchange Theatre's 50-year heritage
 - b. Community involvement: learning from the co-curation processes with communities and what creative exchange between the theatre and Greater Manchester communities can look like
 - c. Heritage conservation: understanding our costume archive, how we can make it more accessible and how to maintain it for future generations
 - d. Project delivery: learning from the archival, curatorial and design process
 - e. Legacy planning and sustainability
5. Produce a final evaluation report for submission to the National Lottery Heritage Fund, other funders and internal stakeholders
6. Attend selected events, workshops, or exhibition days as part of the evaluation process

Deliverables

- Evaluation Plan (including methodology and timeline)
- Data Collection Tools (e.g., surveys, interview templates)
- Final Evaluation Report
- Executive Summary suitable for public sharing

Person Specification

Essential:

- Proven experience in evaluating publicly funded arts and heritage projects
- Strong qualitative and quantitative research skills
- Ability to communicate effectively with a range of stakeholders
- Excellent report-writing skills, including the ability to present findings in an accessible and engaging format

Desirable:

- Interest in theatre, costume design, or cultural heritage
- Experience working with co-creation or community engagement models