

The Brief
'Sherlock's Home - Portsmouth Then and Now'
Conan Doyle Collection
Mini Exhibition

Background

The Arthur Conan Doyle Collection, bequeathed to the city of Portsmouth by Richard Lancelyn Green, brings together an unparalleled variety of books, documents and objects connected to Holmes and the life of his creator. An archive research centre is available in the city's Central Library which allows access to Richard's amazing collection. At Portsmouth City Museum there are many extraordinary items from the Collection within the '*A Study In Sherlock*' exhibition situated on the ground floor, including unique photographs, film posters, and letters from the influential and the famous.

The Conan Doyle Collection holds approximately 3,500 objects - Conan Doyle's personal items, props from films, Sherlock Holmes merchandise and more. There are 16,000 books including Sherlock Holmes books in other languages, books relating to Spiritualism, other Victorian and Edwardian people, and notably 40,000 archives, such as scripts, screenplays, personal photographs of Conan Doyle and his family as well as magazines and newspaper cuttings.

Project Outline

In July 2025, Portsmouth City Council's Conan Doyle Collection received National Lottery Project Grant from the Arts Council for Sherlock's Home - Portsmouth Then and Now.

This project will examine Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's time in Portsmouth through the archives and books, looking at Victorian Portsmouth and London and how they compare to now.

We are seeking a freelance curator who will work with community groups to develop their themes into a small exhibition, showcasing items from the Conan Doyle Collection in our new museum case, and then producing copy and images ready to be sent to graphic designers for two pop up banners per group.

The themes are:

- Attitudes to Imperialism in Victorian Britain
- Comparing Doyle and other Victorian authors and their relationships e.g. Charles Dickens, Oscar Wilde
- The comparisons between Victorian London and Portsmouth - rich v poor, overcrowding and sanitation
- Comparison of Victorian and contemporary writing
- Increased travel options in Victorian Britain, magazines (Tit Bits and The Strand) give first hand evidence to social standing and education of this time
- Create their own creative response to these

All of the workshops and exhibitions need to be truly accessible for all (one of the groups will be a visually impaired and blind group), and the work produced needs to be interpreted to entertain, educate and promote the Conan Doyle Collection.

The exhibitions will need to take place from mid January - March 2026.

Facilitator's Role

We would welcome tenders from anyone that meet the requirements below. There are four main tasks to fulfil this role:

- Able to work with various community groups to help them pull together an exhibition comprising of archives and books from the Collection as well as two pop up banners per group, based on one of the themes above.
- Experience of breaking down and delivering short workshops to a range of people with different abilities and setting work/research that can be done outside of the workshops and be able to translate ideas in a practical way within the set budget.
- Experience and practical knowledge of curating small exhibitions
- An innovative solution and delivery of this brief, especially around making exhibitions accessible

This commission needs to be completed between September 2025 - March 2026.

You will need to have Public Liability Insurance of £10 Million, Employers Liability Insurance of £10 million (if applicable) and Professional Indemnity Insurance of £5 million and be DBS checked.

Budget

2 sessions per group x 4 = 8 days @ £300.00	£2400.00
4 half day set up @ £150.00 per day	£ 600.00
Total maximum budget available:	£3000.00

Please note:

- There is a separate budget for audio description and accessibility.
- We work with many volunteers (called Detectives) who can assist with finding items and supporting access to the Collection, audio describing and supporting workshops.

The budget will cover all costs such as personal fees, materials, hire of additional equipment (e.g. basic equipment and materials), meeting fees, additional venue hire, travel and parking costs, own publicity and marketing, public liability insurance and DBS checks.

Assessment

At the short listing and interview stages, proposals will be assessed against several criteria including the following:

- Accessibility qualities of the proposal, in workshops and engaging the groups to curate their own exhibitions
- Value for money
- How your proposal meets the points detailed in the 'Facilitators Role' section of this paper, and how it would help advertise the Conan Doyle Collection.
- Examples of your experience of similar projects, and the skills you would bring to the project

Evaluation

You will be expected to write a thorough evaluation report, detailing statistical and qualitative information according to the Arts Council's requirements for evaluation. We would also like a diary to be kept, recording thoughts after each workshop, and about the project overall. More information will be provided at the start of this project.

Tender Process

Please send in no more than 2 sheets of A4, a proposal detailing what you intend to do and how you meet the 'Assessment' criteria described above.

Management

Portsmouth City Council will appoint and manage the facilitator(s). The selected candidate will work closely with PCC Education and Learning Coordinator, Laura Weston.

Selection Process

The candidates will be firstly shortlisted and then selected as a result of a further interview process in line with the City Council's equalities processes, both interviews will be with volunteers and staff.

The deadline for submitting tenders is **5 September 2025**. They should be e-mailed, posted or delivered to:

Laura Weston
Education and Learning Coordinator
RLG Conan Doyle Collection
Central Library
Guildhall Square
Portsmouth
Hampshire
PO1 2DX

Applications can be e-mailed in a suitable format (preferably Word or PDF files) to Laura.Weston@Portsmouthcc.gov.uk

Short listing will happen between 8 - 12 September, and interviews will take place on 17 September 2025.

Further Information and Contact Details:

Laura Weston

Education and Learning Coordinator

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