



Last updated: 20 February 2026

Running order **72**

**Lead applicant**

**Stefan Ramsden**

University of Strathclyde

**Project name**

'It didn't just kill them at sea': an oral history of health and wellbeing in British fishing communities, c.1960 – present.

**Coapplicants**

**Lead reviewers**

Dolly Jørgensen

Stacey Heath

**Sponsors**

Arthur J McIvor - University of Strathclyde

**Conflicts**

Recused:

Limited: Ola Demkowicz

**Scheme**

Early-Career Award

**Award value**

£614,552

**Duration**

48 months

**Reference number**

337609/Z/25/Z

**Office notes**

Comments for this meeting:

Notes from shortlisting meeting: ECA 05 - Dec 2025

- Ambitious proposal engaging an important topic which intersects with exciting contemporary work.

- Combination of engaging blue humanities with coastal health, deindustrialisation and coastal subjectivities is excellent and exciting.

- Methodologically strong, incorporating many other types of data including public health records, parliamentary debates and media sources.
- Questions raised about community involvement in the research, and how communities will benefit from the research.
- Concerns that the outputs of 6 touring exhibitions would be too ambitious.
- Excellent research environment, both host organisation and supervisor are strong fit for this project.

Notes from shortlisting meeting: ECA Shortlisting Ratification - Dec 2025



Full application

Completed

# Early-Career Award

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## Application title

'It didn't just kill them at sea': an oral history of health and wellbeing in British fishing communities, c.1960 – present.

## Lead applicant

Dr Stefan Ramsden

## Application reference

337609/Z/25/Z

## Administering organisation

University of Strathclyde

Last edited

16 February 2026, 15:14

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- Your research environment details
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- Your mentor

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# Application summary

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## Application title

'It didn't just kill them at sea': an oral history of health and wellbeing in British fishing communities, c.1960 – present.

## Proposed length of funding (months)

48

## Proposed start date

01/05/2026

## Administering organisation

**University of Strathclyde**  
16 Richmond Street  
Glasgow  
G1 1XQ  
United Kingdom

# Research proposal summary

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## Research summary

The health and wellbeing of coastal communities dependent on fishing is inextricably linked to the health and wellbeing of the seas. Over the last 70 years, environmental changes and governance measures linked to declining fish stocks have piled pressure onto an industry long characterised by dangerous working conditions and precarious employment, with health implications for coastal communities throughout the world. In Britain, the decline of the fishing industry since the 1950s has contributed to a coastal health crisis, whilst severing longstanding connections to the sea for many communities. This project places oral history and community engagement methodologies at its core, asking those who have lived and worked in British fishing communities about the impact of changing oceanic health on individual and community health and wellbeing. The project will seek to understand how the health risks of a dangerous trade changed over time, how these have been managed and remembered within communities across generations, and how processes of deindustrialisation and disconnection with the seas have affected community wellbeing over the long term. The project places communities at the heart of questions about their health and wellbeing, with historical change as the mechanism for enabling them to shape their own narratives.

**Is this or a similar application for funding currently under consideration elsewhere?**

No

**Is this a resubmission of an Early-Career Award application submitted to Wellcome?**

Yes

**How is this application different? Significant changes are needed for the second application. You do not need to contact us first.**

I have made the following changes:

- All three case studies are now situated in Britain – the expert reviewers felt that a French case study was an outlier and introduced too many variables.
- Responding to comments from the interview panel, there is now a greater emphasis on communities contributing to project outputs – community arts methodologies ensure that local audiences are able to engage with the research in a variety of ways.
- Expert reviewers and the interview panel wanted more detail on methodology and in particular on the integration of different types of source material. I have now made methodological approaches and theoretical assumptions more explicit in the application; in particular how each type of source helps to address specific areas of research interest by bringing different voices into tension. I have reduced the range of source materials (removing social media) so as to focus the analysis.
- The interview panel were concerned about mitigation of risks around the potential for migrant workers' disclosure of information; the current iteration addresses this directly.
- Responding to amplified global concerns about human/ocean interactions, the application pays closer attention to communities' understandings of the wellbeing and health implications of their dependency on changing oceanic environments and ecosystems.

# Your research vision

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## Research vision

- **File name** Ramsden research vision pdf.pdf
- **File size** 88.5KB

The uploaded file is included in this PDF starting on the next page.

## Aims

In 2023 I interviewed Tracey about memorialisation of women from Hull's former fishing community. Embodied legacies of fishing were prominent in her narrative, as she connected her poor health to a family background in fishing – Tracey's fisherman stepfather was alcoholic and abusive, her mother committed suicide – and to pressures caused by its decline:

'That industry killed too many people. And it didn't just kill them at sea.'

Fishing has always been a dangerous and precarious industry that puts high strain on the health and wellbeing of workers and their families. However, its decline has exposed coastal communities to the stresses of worklessness and the unravelling of community cultures that once mitigated dangers and precarity. Environmental change has driven deindustrialisation, as declining fish stocks create competition for diminishing resources. Formerly thriving trawler ports have closed, and remaining fishing communities are challenged by sustainability agendas to develop new relationships with the sea. Today there is a 'coastal excess' of preventable disease in British coastal communities (Depledge et al 2017; Whitty and Loveless 2021).

The World Health Organisation defines 'health' as 'a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity', implying the interlocking of objective and subjective dimensions and the mutual constitution of individual, social and environmental wellbeing (Langevin 2024). Understanding the 'coastal excess' therefore requires attending to coastal subjectivities, and to the links between individual, community and environmental wellbeing. Fishing communities are particularly exposed to changes in marine ecosystems, which have recently accelerated (Merchant, Allan, Embury 2025); now is a good time to learn what lessons these communities can teach us from their historical experience.

The study will combine insights from 'blue humanities', sociology/historiography of health, and deindustrialisation studies to offer a unique perspective on the human costs of marine over-exploitation. Central to the analysis will be the multigenerational perspectives of fisheries workers and their families from three case-study areas – the Humber, Aberdeenshire, the Firth of Clyde – but I will also review industry, governance and academic views to consider the evolution and interaction of different discourses. The research will result in an experiential and emotional history of connections between the health and wellbeing of fishing communities and the ocean in the period from the productive peak of the British fishing industry (c.1960) until today.

## Research questions

1. How have fishing communities experienced, understood and narrated environmental and other changes affecting their industry, health, and wellbeing since c.1960?
2. How are these experiences and understandings shaped by natural environment and intersectional characteristics including locality, nationality, generation, gender, race, ethnicity?
3. What changes have taken place in the ways that fishing communities link health and wellbeing to the seas?

4. How have stories of coastal health and wellbeing told within fishing communities echoed or cut across wider discourses (medical, governmental, journalistic, academic)?

#### Expected outcomes

The research places community collaboration at its heart: outputs will be coproduced through oral history and community arts methodologies to give populations in the case-study areas agency to shape findings.

Academic outputs will include: a monograph for Manchester University Press; three academic journal articles (e.g. *Social and Cultural History*; *Social History of Medicine/Medical History*; *Journal of Public Health*); conference presentations (e.g. Society for the Social History of Medicine; Deindustrialisation and the Politics of Our Time).

Essential to the collaborative ethos, the researcher will work with community arts organisations to run six arts workshops in each area resulting in 'capstone' exhibitions with accompanying public events (one in each case-study area), content for the project website and a documentary film aimed at elevating community perspectives.

I will disseminate findings widely to policy makers and public via: a project website; press releases targeting specific media (e.g. the BBC's Out of Doors in Scotland radio programme); papers for *History and Policy* and *The Conversation*; papers at the EurOCEAN conference (2027); evidence presented to the UK Parliament's All Party Parliamentary Group on Coastal Communities and the Scottish Parliament's Cross Party Group on Fisheries and Coastal Communities.

#### The background and work which has led up to the project

This project sits within a research trajectory in which I explore how local industries, including fishing, underpin community and identity, and how community stories about the decline of industries encode emotional and affective truths (Ramsden 2016; 2016 b; 2017; forthcoming). A focus on fishing communities allows me to draw on three distinct but complementary literatures – blue humanities, literature on health in coastal communities, deindustrialisation studies – promising new insights connecting the health and wellbeing of coastal communities with marine environmental change.

Oceans are central to thinking about manmade climate change and its destructive consequences. The 'blue humanities' explore the cultural dimensions of this, highlighting how dominant discourses reflect and enable exploitive and extractive relationships with both labour and the natural environment (Opperman 2023; Steinberg 2001). According to Moore (2017), the exploitation of oceanic resources and maritime labourers proceeds in tandem, with deleterious effects on the health of both. Overfishing has led to near collapse of many global stocks of larger fish, leading to 'fishing down the food chain' and further upending delicate marine ecosystems whilst exacerbating the challenges of a dangerous and precarious occupation for fishing communities (Roberts 2013). Empirical literature points to a host of climate-change related developments affecting fishers and coastal communities disproportionately: extreme weather events shape maritime risk; 'blue growth' increases competition for marine resources; rising sea levels threaten coastal inundation leading to coastlines becoming sites of anxiety (Deloughrey 2017; Woodhead et al 2018; King et al 2021; Sainsbury et al 2021; Gill et al 2023). Sustainability agendas promise healthier

coastal futures but can adversely and disproportionately impact fishing communities, as larger areas of the oceans are dedicated to conservation and wind farms, quotas are imposed and fishers are cast as despoilers of marine environments (Whitmarsh 2001; Thorvaldsen et al 2022; Nightingale 2013; Williams 2021). At the same time, fishers' traditional marine stewardship is bypassed and devalued (Pálsson 1991; Nadel-Klein 2003; Nightingale 2013).

A recent, connected literature points to a health crisis facing coastal communities in the UK. The Chief Medical Officer of Health's 2021 report identified coastal communities as having the worst health outcomes in England, with low life expectancy and high rates of disease, drug use and suicide (Whitty and Loveless 2021). The CMOH suggests multiple causes: peripheral locations unattractive to health professionals; multiple occupancy properties housing tenants with complex problems; low educational attainment; unemployment caused by the decline of coastal industries. However, the CMOH also draws attention to health benefits that proximity to the sea can bring (Whitty and Loveless 2021).

Insights from deindustrialisation studies, depicting the loss of industry as a process taking place over time with intergenerational and gendered impacts, point towards the importance of taking an historical perspective. Deindustrialisation divests working-class towns and cities of employment, leading to hollowed out communities, high mortality and morbidity rates and 'deaths of despair' (drugs, drink, obesity, suicide) (Linkon 2018; McIvor 2024; Mah 2012; Tomlinson 2020; Martinez 2018; Emery 2019; Case and Deaton 2020; Apaydin 2020; Clark 2023; Walkerdine and Jimenez 2012). Though fishing communities feature little in this literature, they have much to tell us about how work and its loss shape health and wellbeing. Fishing knits many coastal communities together economically and socially, underpinning belonging and identity (Nadel-Klein 2003; Byrne 2022; Ross 2012); many fishers speak about their love of the job and of the sea itself as a source of wellbeing (Ross 2015, Nightingale 2013, Mullenger 2024; King et al 2021). However, fishing is a highly dangerous occupation, seven times more dangerous than the next most dangerous job in the UK (Carpenter, Williams, Scurrah 2020). Historically, the work patterns, precarity, and dangers of the fishing industry drove low uptake of health services, negatively impacted family life and mental health, and prompted compensatory behaviours including alcoholism and drug abuse (Tunstall 1962; Byrne 2022; Turner, Szaboova and Williams 2018; Uberoi et al 2022). Decreases in fishing employment – from c.47,000 in 1948 to c.11,000 in the UK today (Carpenter, Williams, Scurrah 2020) – weakened communities' relationships with the sea and with each other, and increased pressure on remaining fishers, threatening wellbeing still further (Ross 2012; Jones 2013; Acott et al 2018; Nightingale 2013; Christy, De Jong, Knippenberg 2021).

Historians have highlighted the importance of fishing for coastal identities, and considered the industry's decline from a cultural perspective (Nadel-Klein 2002, Byrne 2022, Watson 2023), but have not prioritised health and wellbeing as a frame. Tracing stories of health and wellbeing in fishing communities, incorporating insights from blue humanities and deindustrialisation literature, will produce new understandings of the 'coastal deficit' in health, and of the ways that the wellbeing of the seas and those who live alongside them are entwined.

## Your approach, methods and how you will address challenges

In addition to archival research, the project will use coproduction methodologies to shape outputs that will be shared widely within case-study communities. Community members will be recruited to the project steering committee; oral history interviews and witness seminars will encourage participants to express their own narratives; community arts workshops will engage those who are more comfortable participating in a sensory and creative exploration of the issues (Edwards and Brannelly 2017; Phillips, Strynø, & Frølund, 2022). Findings will be reviewed by research participants through an online conference bringing together communities from the three case-study regions.

Capturing a variety of voices will enable multiple analytic strategies, and provide both deeply localised and broader national insights – crucial for understanding and informing the challenge of fisheries decline and the health and wellbeing impact on coastal communities.

I will interrogate historic voices of fishing communities in archived oral history collections to address the evolution of discourses and attitudes in relation to health and wellbeing (Beier 2008; Lawrence 2016; Sutcliffe-Braithwaite 2018; Savage 2005). Experiential dimensions of wellbeing encoded in oral histories will be unpacked by reading against the grain (Taylor 2021; Andrews and Wilson 2020). Relevant oral history collections for the case-study locations include: c.30 interviews from the 1980s in Hull Fishing Heritage Centre; c.40 interviews recorded by Angus Martin in the 1970s on the Kintyre Peninsula (School of Scottish Studies); c.35 interviews conducted by Paul Thompson's team in the 1970s in Aberdeenshire (British Library; Thompson *et al* 1983). In addition, I will consult archived oral histories from across the UK to further reflect the diversity of fishing communities (Scottish Fisheries Museum; Fomartine oral history archive; Queenspark, Brighton; 'Catching Stories; Recording Morecambe Bay'; Assynt Fisheries oral history project; Northumberland Archives; Port Isaac Heritage).

To explore interactions and contradictions between community and governance discourses, I will use archival records of government, public health bodies, charities, commentators and fisheries experts, including: Medical Officer of Health reports (Wellcome Collection, TNA); newspaper and film reports (National Library of Scotland); records of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries; Board of Trade Committee of Enquiry into Trawler Safety 1968-9 (TNA); parliamentary debates (Hansard); oral evidence given to parliamentary enquiries into the impact of Brexit (TNA); archives of the Fishermen's Mission (Portsmouth) and Seafarer's Hospital Society (Wellcome Collection); historic editions of *Fishing News* (Blaydes Maritime Centre, Hull).

I will conduct new oral history interviews to shed light on how memory of coastal pasts shapes wellbeing (Portelli 2011; Abrams 2016). I will recruit interviewees from three different generations in each of the case-study areas who work(ed) in fishing and auxiliary industries (fish processing, logistics, engineering) or are related to those who did (75 interviewees in total). Interviewing different cohorts will show how experiences and memories of fishing and its decline pass across generations, providing an emotional context for wellbeing in the present (Hirsch 2012; Preece 2020). It is important to register intersectional gender and racial impacts of change, and I will include the widest possible range of voices present in fishing communities (Zhao *et al* 2014). There will be additional interviews (5 for each region) with stakeholders external to the fishing community (industry leaders, union officials,

fisheries scientists, MPs, councillors, doctors, Medical Officers of Health, journalists, researchers).

Three 'witness seminars' will be held in each case-study area to further explore the views of groups with distinctive positionality (generation, occupation, gender, ethnicity). Memory narratives shared in groups differ markedly to those from individual interviews, offering insights into how interpretations are constructed collaboratively and socially (Nicholls 2020; Coupland 2015).

The researcher will work with community arts organisations (Square Peg in the Humber; Aberdeenshire Council Arts Team; CHARTS Argyll and the Isles) to design and deliver six community art workshops in each region. These organisations will help to identify local groups who might prefer to engage through sensory, creative means (these may include disability, youth or elderly groups) and artists who can deliver workshops using painting, sculpture, textiles, pottery, murals, poetry, songwriting, or photography according to the preferences of the groups. A film-maker will document the community arts workshops and work with participants to create a film reflecting the issues explored in the research. Creative outputs will be shared through the project website and in co-curated project exhibitions (the 'capstone exhibitions') which will tour to different venues in each region. Accompanying the exhibitions in each location will be a live event in which research participants can meet to discuss and review the research, as well as hear from public health organisations and support groups (including the Fishermen's Mission, Sailors' Hospital Society, the NHS, COAST, and the Coastal Communities Alliance).

Finally, there will be an online conference in which research participants will be invited to peer-review research findings and discuss research themes.

Three case-study areas with contrasting fishing histories have been chosen to represent heterogeneity in British fishing communities, affording a wide perspective from which to consider change. The inclusion of two case studies in Scotland allows assessment of the extent to which the current discourse on health in coastal communities is meaningful beyond the English context that has been the focus so far.

The English case-study, the Humber, includes Hull and Grimsby, once Britain's largest fishing ports. These ports declined in the 1970s and 1980s as the redrawing of national maritime borders shut British trawlers out of Arctic fishing grounds. In the 1950s, around 850 distant water trawlers operated from the Humber; today there is no fishing fleet in Hull and only a small inshore shellfish fleet at Grimsby (Starkey, Reid, Ashcroft, 2000; Byrne 2022). Both cities are beset by economic and social deprivation; Hull's former fishing district is among the 1% most deprived wards in England (Hull City Council 2019) and 'healthy life expectancy' in the Humber area is amongst the lowest in the country (Health Foundation 2025); water tested at the mouth of the Humber estuary contains exceptionally high quantities of painkiller and antidepressant drugs (University of Leeds 2019). Deindustrialisation will be a prominent frame in this case-study, including consideration of ways in which memory of coastal pasts shapes health and wellbeing for generations born after deindustrialization.

The western Scottish case-study, Firth of Clyde (including Campbeltown, Tarbert, Ayr, Troon, the Isle of Arran) represents small-scale inshore fishing, and environmental change will be particularly to the fore: in the 1970s, overfishing brought an end to the Firth's once

prosperous herring fishery, and fishers turned to creeling for shellfish and trawling for scallops, prawns and langoustine. Trawling scoured the Firth of Clyde seabed, now one of the most degraded marine environments on Earth, causing tension between groups of fishers and models of ocean stewardship (Martin 2002; Thurstan and Roberts 2010; Coull 2001; Nightingale 2013). Fishing employment has continued to decline in the region, adding to social problems including a declining and aging population, unemployment, poverty, and substance abuse (Thomson 2001; Morris and Barnes 2020; Campbeltown Community Council 2021). North Ayrshire (including part of the Firth of Clyde coast and the Isle of Arran) has the lowest healthy life expectancy in Scotland (The Health Foundation 2025).

The third case-study area, Aberdeenshire, including the fishing ports Fraserburgh, Peterhead and Buckie, makes an instructive contrast with the others. Rather than decline and deindustrialisation, Aberdeenshire is currently the most successful fishing area in the UK, accounting for around half of current UK fish landings (Scottish Government 2021). However, this success masks fragility and fragmentation: the capitalisation of the industry and its centralisation in a few ports has significantly altered labour relations, severing once deep connections between many of the region's communities and fishing (Nadel-Klein 2003; Jamieson 2009; Williams 2014). As the industry became less attractive to local workers, skippers recruited migrant labourers, often Filipinos, who are vulnerable to exploitation and abuse (Djohari and White 2022). The local fleet faces many of the more general pressures affecting the fishing industry, and as other sections of the local economy are in decline (Brookfield, Gray and Hatchard 2005), the region has social, economic and health challenges, including in Fraserburgh the highest per capita rate of heroin addiction in Britain (Aberdeenshire Council 2021; Djojari and White 2022).

Significant challenges envisaged in this project include:

- 1) Workload – to assist with researching three case-studies using coproduction methodologies it will be necessary to employ a post-doctoral research associate to support the oral history collection and public engagement.
- 2) Recruitment and ethical challenges in relation to research with human participants (dealt with in the ethics section of the application form).

Key stages in your research plans, indicating location and milestones

(see next page)

Task	Year 1 (5.2026-5.2027)				Year 2 (5.2027-5.2028)				Year 3 (5.2028-5.2029)				Year 4 (5.2029-5.2030)			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Archival research		■	■	■	■	■										
Steering Committee meets	■				■				■				■			
Ethical frameworks/research protocols/obtain ethical clearance	■															
Establish project website	■	■														
Training (management, oral history, digital humanities)	■						■									
Consultation with community groups		■	■													
Recruit of community arts partners/planning				■	■											
Oral history interviews/ community arts workshops, Humber						■	■	■								
Interviews/workshops Aberdeenshire								■	■	■						
Interviews/workshops Firth of Clyde									■	■	■					
Research Associate: recruitment (3 months); employment (3 years)				■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Witness seminars												■				
Write journal articles													■	■		
Write monograph													■	■	■	■
Conferences						■				■				■		



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**Have you used generative AI in the writing of your application?**

No - I have not used generative AI

**Does your proposal involve human participants or human biological material?**

Yes - only involves human participants

## Details of study design for research involving human participants

Research will include oral history interviews with three generations living in coastal communities who either work or worked in fishing and its ancillary industries or who have a close relative who worked or works in these industries. Interviews will be conducted after securing institutional ethical approval and informed consent from participants. There will be three 'witness seminars' in each case study area and six community arts workshops.

Participants will be recruited via gatekeepers (e.g. fishermen's associations, heritage groups, community groups, Fishermen's Mission). Community sampling will take place to take account of gender, ethnicity, generation and occupation. Migrant fishermen will be recruited through the Fishermen's Mission and Filipino Church in North East Scotland. Community arts workshops will take place with previously constituted groups known to community arts organisations (Square Peg in the Humber, CHARTS Argyll and the Isles, Aberdeenshire Council Arts Team).

All participants will be given a copy of the Participation Information Sheet prior to involvement which explains the project aims, how they can be involved, and their rights to withdraw or to take part anonymously. Participants will sign release forms after their contribution, specifying any conditions attached to the use of their contribution.

Where possible, oral history participants will be interviewed twice to build relationships and trust (Beier 2008). Interviews, lasting up to two hours, will follow a life-history approach, semi-structured around key episodes and events in both personal and community history with health and wellbeing implications. The interviews will allow space for interviewees to express their own concerns and interpretations whilst also encouraging discussion of sensory, affective aspects of past experience (Bornat et al 2000; Beier 2008; Andrews et al 2014; Barron 2019; Andrews and Wilson 2020; McIvor 2024). A research instrument will be constructed as a guide rather than a straightjacket, focussing on: family and community approaches to health and access to healthcare; attitudes to health and safety amongst fishers and related occupations; work stress and unemployment; changes in fishing (species, techniques, governance); attitudes towards and experiences of the sea; how environmental initiatives were experienced and perceived; key events and episodes in community history (loss of life at sea, closure of fishing companies and factories); how public health services and initiatives were experienced and perceived.

Research on these issues may trigger traumatic memories or disclosure of dangerous practices and abuse. In collaboration with the Scottish Oral History Centre, I will develop

protocols to be followed in case of distress or disclosure, balancing the rights to privacy of research participants with the need to prevent harm and to comply with legal requirements. A protocol for dealing with disclosures of abuse will follow Djohari and White (2022) who, in interviews with migrant workers, decided that where there was 'clear evidence and claim of serious abuse and/or illegal practices that could lead to harm' they would report this to relevant authorities in consultation with interviewees.

Researcher wellbeing is important in research on difficult subject matter (Norkunus 2013), and the protocols will take account of this. Having two researchers working on the project will enable regular debriefs, peer-monitoring and stepping back from interviewing where necessary. Researchers will be aware of sources of support provided by the University's Employee Assistance Programme, and will undertake advanced training with the Oral History Society which covers traumatic interviewing.

Interviews will be recorded on an encrypted device at a location that protects both parties (interviewee's home, private room in community centre, museum or library, subject to risk assessment). Recordings will be transferred promptly to a secure university server and deleted from the device.

Professionally produced transcripts will be created promptly and stored in the 'oral interview' folder on a secure university server. All interviews will be transcribed and a copy will be provided to the participant, who will have the right to have any content redacted. Upon completion of the project, oral recordings and transcripts will be deposited in the Scottish Oral History Collection (managed by the University Archives) and Figshare (an online research repository).

I will guard against analytical bias through the use of NVivo software to deductively determine themes and categories, and through the use of text analysis methodologies (involving keywords and collocates) using Antconc software.

**Outline your strategy for recruitment and describe the inclusion or exclusion criteria for study participants (if applicable).**

I am an experienced oral historian with knowledge of techniques for recruiting participants from a range of backgrounds to research projects. I have made contact with relevant community groups from the case-study areas and will develop these links (for example, the Bullnose Heritage Group in Hull, Clyde Fisherman's Association, the Fishermen's Mission, Filipino Church North East Scotland, Buchanhaven Heritage Group, UK Women in Fisheries; Square Peg community Arts; CHARTS Argyll and the Isles; Aberdeen Council Arts Team); initial recruitment will take place with the assistance of these groups. Press and social media will also be used to reach possible interviewees. I will give talks to community groups in the case-study areas to explain the project and to recruit participants. 'Snowballing' recruitment techniques will also be used, as participants suggest further interviewees from their networks. As noted above, careful attempts will be made to include different genders, members of different racial/ethnic groups, sections of stratified communities (including former fishing vessel skippers, deck hands, and fish processing workers, for example). The research design and target population means that several underserved groups need to be represented in the sample, including socio-economically disadvantaged, people living in remote areas; individuals from age extremes (over 75), people in full-time employment; migrant workers. Further research will be undertaken to determine the characteristics and demographics of the community case-study areas, so that the interview samples do not miss important sections of the population. Recruitment of participants who represent socially marginalised, ethnic minority, and LGBTQ+ groups will be undertaken in consultation with community associations and charities that represent these underserved groups in each locality.

**How have you involved patients, participants, patient advocacy groups or communities in developing this proposal? What ongoing involvement will they have in the research?**

The proposal draws on conversations with representatives of fishing heritage groups in Hull (the Bullnose Heritage Group and the Headscarf Revolutionaries group), Clydeside (Angus Martin of the Clydeside Heritage Society), Aberdeenshire (Buchanhaven Heritage Society, Peterhead) as well as Ali Godfrey, the Deputy Chief Executive from the Fishermen's Mission and Stephanie Lucas, Coordinator of the UK Women in Fishing network. These groups will continue to be involved in the research; they will be consulted in the development of research instruments, and representatives of communities in each case-study area will be invited to participate in the project Steering Committee. The proposal draws on conversations with Square Peg Community Arts, CHARTS Argyll and the Isles and Aberdeenshire Council Arts Team on engaging communities in the case study areas through arts.

**Describe the oversight arrangements for the study. For example, the membership and composition of the Steering Committee and Data Monitoring Board.**

An eight-person Steering Committee will be established, consisting of two members of each of the case-study communities. Efforts will be made to ensure that the Steering Committee contains a range of genders and ethnicities. The Steering Committee will include two academics from outside of the host institution. These academics will include experts in public health, deindustrialisation and coastal communities (possible names include: Dr Louisa Evans (Exeter); Professor Alice Mah (Glasgow); Professor Stephen High (Concordia); Professor Christine Whalley (MIT); Dr Emily Murray (Essex)).

**Who has, or will, review the ethics of the project and when? Detail any other regulatory approvals you have, or will try to get.**

An ethical framework will be devised in consultation with senior members of the Scottish Oral History Centre and following its guidelines on best practice. The framework will refer to existing ethical frameworks established by HE institutions, Wellcome Trust and relevant professional organisations (the Oral History Society, for example), as well as legal frameworks including copyright law and GDPR. Particular areas for ethical consideration include: recruitment of research participants; interview protocols and relationship with participants; the risk of disclosure of abusive and/or illegal practices (e.g. in interviews with migrant fishers); storage, processing and use of participants' data; rights of participants to the intellectual property of research; rights of research participants to review and redact publications; recruitment, employment and career support of the Research Associate. Feedback from the project Steering Committee, including members of the case-study communities, will feed into this ethics framework, subject to review and approval by the University of Strathclyde's ethics panel. The ethical frameworks document will be reviewed yearly by the Steering Committee. Research design will be informed by consultation with the communities concerned, through the Steering Group and through conversations with local groups.

**Will you be using facilities, staff or patients within the National Health Service (NHS) in the UK?**

No

**Which organisations have agreed to act as the formal sponsors for your project?**

University of Strathclyde

**Confirm you have, or you will try to get, appropriate informed consent to use any potentially commercially exploitable results from tissues or samples derived from human participants.**

Not applicable

**Describe how you will undertake your proposed research in an environmentally sustainable way.**

Fieldwork related travel will be kept to a minimum, with researchers conducting conversations with community groups online as much as possible. Meetings, archival appointments and interviews will be clustered into blocks of time to minimise travel to and from the case-study locations. Travel will take place by train in standard class rather than by air or car. Half of the project Steering Committee meetings will be held online. Conferences will be selected which can be attended by train or online, with flights to conferences only selected as a last resort and where these can be justified using Sustainability Exchange's 'Conference/Meeting Air Travel Justification Tool', with appropriate offsetting being made. Research data will be made publicly available via the University of Strathclyde's institutional repository and Figshare.

# Outputs management and sharing

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## Provide an outputs management plan

The interview transcripts and audio recordings will be useful for historians and social science researchers with interests that include: health histories, health anthropology and sociology, deindustrialisation, community studies, maritime studies.

All data will be produced in Microsoft Office and will include descriptions of project methodology. All interviews will be described using standard Dublin Core metadata elements for oral history work: Title, Identifier, Creator, Contributor, Coverage, Date, Description, Subject, Type, Format, Source, Language, Rights.

Research participants will be informed of the intention to share data via the project consent form, which will include the words 'With your permission, your contribution will become part of a research archive that will be stored for long-term reference in an appropriate public archive where it will be preserved as a permanent resource for use in research, publications, education, lectures, broadcasting and internet dissemination'. The outputs will be made available once the data collection stage is completed and participants have had the chance to make redactions.

In addition to being stored and made available via the Scottish Oral History Centre at the University of Strathclyde Archives (with full open access where narrators agree), data outputs will be made available with a CC-BY license on the open online digital repository Figshare. Figshare is fully searchable. The datasets will have a persistent DOI which can be used to publicise its availability in project peer reviewed publications and via articles in *Wellcome Open Research, History and Policy* and *The Conversation*.

Redactions will be made according to the wishes of participants. Interview transcripts will be anonymised where requested, though in oral history projects of this kind, it is common for participants to be named – enforcing anonymity across all participants would be likely to be seen as a deterrent to taking part by many prospective interviewees – this has been SOHC policy with all its oral history projects since 1995.

Recordings of interviews will be made and stored as a series of audio.wav files and Word transcripts. Data will be stored on University of Strathclyde approved (and securely backed up) servers and/or computers.

The Principal Researcher will work with data specialists at the University of Strathclyde in the first year of the project to produce a detailed data management plan, and in the final

year of the project will ensure that all data is findable, accessible, interoperable and reproducible.

No Intellectual Property outputs are anticipated.

Select the approach you will use to maximise the impact of your significant research outputs to improve health and benefit the wider research community. If an outputs management plan is not needed, select 'Not applicable'.

Make research outputs available for access and re-use

# Collaborations

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Are any collaborations essential for this proposal?

No

# Location of activity

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Will the funded activity take place at more than one location?

No

Wellcome Trust supported facilities

No

Will you need funds to be awarded directly to more than one location?

No

# Research involving animals

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Does your proposal involve the use of animals or animal tissue?

No - does not involve animals or animal tissue

# Risks of research misuse

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Confirm that you have considered whether your proposed research could generate outcomes that could be misused for harmful purposes.

I confirm

Have you identified any tangible risks of this type?

No

# Freedom to operate and conflicts of interest

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**Describe any freedom to operate or other intellectual property related issues that might affect your ability to do the proposed research or to use, share or commercialise the research outputs. Explain how you will address these.**

Not applicable. Research participants' intellectual property rights in relation to the interviews and transcripts will be assigned to the project as part of the informed consent process; as noted in the outputs management plan, participants will be given the option to redact the interview transcripts before these are deposited with the University of Strathclyde's data repository and Figshare.

**Describe any conflicts of interest which might affect your ability to do the proposed research or to share or commercialise the research outputs.**

Not applicable

# Lead applicant details

## Full name

Dr Stefan Ramsden

## Current position

Job title	Start date	End date – if known	Department	Organisation	Main employer
Freelance Heritage Consultant	29/09/2024		Self employed - multiple contracts	N/A	Yes

## Previous roles

Job title	Department	Organisation Name	Country	Start date	End date
Research Associate	History	University of Manchester		04/10/2022	29/09/2024
Knowledge Exchange Fellow	History	University of Hull		08/07/2021	07/07/2022
Foundation Year Tutor	Faculty of Health	University of Hull		08/07/2020	07/07/2021
Lecturer (teaching and scholarship only)	History	University of Hull		19/09/2017	07/07/2020
Research Associate	History	University of Hull		19/09/2016	18/09/2017
Hourly paid tutor	History	University of Hull		19/09/2011	06/07/2016
Freelance Heritage	self employed - multiple	N/A		15/06/2014	15/06/2015

Job title	Department	Organisation Name	Country	Start date	End date
Consultant	contracts				

**Have you taken any career breaks?**

Yes

**When did you take any career breaks and how long did they last?**

Since I was awarded my Ph.D in 2013, I have worked in a succession of fixed-term, part-time, teaching-only contracts at the University of Hull and as a freelance heritage consultant, with one year in a fixed-term research position at the University of Hull (2016-17), and a two-year post on a part-time (.9) fixed-term research contract at the University of Manchester (4 October 2022 until 29 September 2024) (total postdoctoral research employment equalling less than three years at the point of application on 30 September 2026). During this period I have also been the principal carer for my partner, who has MS, which has restricted my ability to move around the country to take up research positions. These conditions have limited the scope and range of my research and publishing track record. However, despite limited research employment I have been able to publish a monograph as well as articles in several peer-reviewed journals across this period.

Since finishing my contract at the University of Manchester in September 2024, I have worked as a freelance heritage consultant on contracts for Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council, East Riding of Yorkshire Council and Animate Projects.

**Add your current or most recent salary**

Salary grade	Basic annual salary	Currency
32	39347	British Pound

**Add all your sources of personal salary funding**

Salary source	Percentage contribution to salary	Type of contract
AHRC	100	Research

**Add your current and previous qualifications and any relevant training**

School	Country	Degree or qualification	Subject	Start date	End date (or expected)
University of Hull	United Kingdom	Doctor of Philosophy (PhD;Dphil)	History	24/09/2008	21/01/2012
University of Leicester	United Kingdom	Master of Arts (MA)	Museum Studies	21/09/2001	15/09/2003
University of Cambridge	United Kingdom	Bachelor of Arts (BA)	History	20/09/1994	07/06/1997

**Are you a healthcare professional?**

No

**Have you completed a PhD, or an equivalent higher research degree?**

Yes

**When did you pass your viva?**

21/01/2012

**Do you want to do this grant part time?**

No

**Will you be 'clinically active' during the grant?**

No

**Current and recent research funding (including Wellcome grants)**

N/A

**What percentage of your time will you spend on research during this grant?**

100

**What percentage of this research time will you spend on this project?**

100



**Upload a letter of support from your current supervisor (500 words maximum).**

- **File name** Hannah Barker letter of support\_Wellcome.pdf
- **File size** 134.8KB

The uploaded file is included in this PDF starting on the next page.

16/9/2025

### **Stefan Ramsden reference for Wellcome Trust**

I was Dr Ramsden's line manager from October 2022 to October 2024, during which period he worked as Research Associate on the project 'Our Heritage, Our Stories' (on which I was Co-Investigator).

Stefan's role on the project demonstrated the value of 'community generated digital content' for historians. He wrote research-based case studies that shed new light on various themes of modern British History, including disability rights activism, music making, rural race relations, post-memory of the Second World War and the practices of commemoration within fishing communities. Stefan has worked effectively as part of a large research team and has built relationships with external stakeholders that have supplied crucial data to the project. His additional contribution was to prepare research for publication in peer-reviewed outlets (one co-written article and two sole authored pieces). Stefan had his own research identity within the project and worked independently, bringing his own research interests and methodological expertise (oral history) to produce key project outputs with significant success.

In his published work, Stefan has established a distinctive and promising scholarly trajectory, offering original insights into the dynamics of continuity and change in working-class communities since the 1950s. Relevant to his current proposal, his research emphasizes the pivotal role of work in shaping working-class social life and identity during the post-war period. He argues that both contemporary social science and later historical narratives have often underestimated the significance of work, particularly workplace culture, in fostering a collective sense of identity. He makes impressive use of diverse sources, including oral history, to support his revisionist thesis. His 2017 monograph, *Working-Class Community in the Age of Affluence* (Routledge), stands as a key historiographical contribution, addressing major questions of post-war social change through detailed micro-level analysis. One of Stefan's key strengths lies in his nuanced approach, avoiding simplistic binary models of 'traditional' versus 'modern,' and instead offering insightful interpretations of the complexities of everyday life. The monograph and his research articles have been extensively cited and used in teaching.

Stefan has already established himself as an original voice in modern social and cultural history. Leading his own research project is the logical next step in his research

career, and undertaking this project will provide the pathway to his future career success in academia. His proposed post-doctoral project on deindustrialisation in fishing communities grows naturally from his work to date (including on Our Heritage, Our Stories), but takes it in new and exciting directions. He is well prepared to produce timely and original postdoctoral research and publications of the highest quality that will shed new light on the important topic of deindustrialisation and its impacts on health and wellbeing.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Hannah Barker". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Hannah Barker, Professor of British History

# Your research contributions

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## How have you contributed to the generation of knowledge?

The central theme running through my research is an examination of shifting patterns of working-class community in twentieth-century Britain. For my PhD, I collected over 100 oral history interviews to trace changes in working-class community life across the post-war 'age of affluence'. My thesis and subsequent peer-reviewed publications challenged standard renditions of this period as one of epochal change and introduced a more nuanced assessment which highlighted considerable continuity within working-class communal cultures. In subsequent publications, I demonstrated that the 'age of affluence' was a time of both continuity and change, and provided an analysis of different life stages and contexts to critique narrow conceptualisations of community.

- Stefan Ramsden 'Remaking working-class community: sociability, belonging and "affluence" in a small town, 1930-1980' *Contemporary British History*, 29:1, 2015, 1-26.

This article, based on my PhD research for the journal *Contemporary British History*, set out the argument that it was necessary to reappraise conventional understandings of the postwar age of affluence as a period of fundamental social change for the British working classes. It was the journal's most downloaded article that year. The article appeared on the University of Cambridge tripos reading list, and on the basis of the article I was invited by the editor of Routledge's Perspectives in Economic and Social History series to submit a monograph proposal (see below).

- Stefan Ramsden 'The role of the industrial workplace in working-class community, 1945-1980', *Family and Community History*, 19:1, 2016, 34-49.

In this article I outlined the interweaving economic and social factors that underpin my view of postwar continuity in working-class life, arguing that industrial workplaces continued to be central to the construction of social networks and local identity across the three post-war decades, and that the decline of British manufacturing, which gathered pace in the 1970s and 1980s, was more detrimental to working-class community life than the supposed post-war shift towards consumerism and individualism.

- Stefan Ramsden "'The community spirit was a wonderful thing.'" On nostalgia and the politics of belonging', *Oral History*, 44.1, 2016, 89-97.

In this article I reconceptualised the role of nostalgia in oral history narratives, arguing that narratives of community decline can serve as a means of registering and understanding

dramatic change, helping to preserve a sense of place at a time when

collective memories are threatened by the destruction and remaking of urban environments.

- Stefan Ramsden *Working-Class Community in the Age of Affluence* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017). ISBN: 978-1-138-20716-5.

My monograph (published by Routledge) represents the first sustained historical analysis of change and continuity in working-class community living during the age of affluence. It suggests not only that older social practices persisted, but also that new patterns of sociability could strengthen as much as undermine community. The book invites historians to rethink assumptions about the decline of local solidarities in this pivotal period, and to recognise community as a key feature of working-class life across the twentieth century. The book was described by a reviewer (in *Contemporary British History*) as 'an important contribution to the history of affluence and the working classes in modern Britain'.

I have undertaken research in the area of health histories in my work as Research Associate on the project 'Crossing Boundaries. The History of First Aid in Britain and France, 1912-1989'.

- Stefan Ramsden and Rosemary Cresswell, 'First Aid and Voluntarism in England, 1945-85', *Twentieth Century British History*, 30.4, 2019, 504-530.

In this article, Dr Cresswell and I used the lens of voluntarism to investigate the shifting boundaries between state and non-state actors in twentieth-century emergency medicine. This article helped to break new ground, and a subsequent major Wellcome funded project, 'Border Crossings: Charity and Voluntarism in Britain's mixed economy of health care since 1948' has developed the themes we explored in this piece.

More recent work has included a contribution to new ways of thinking about 'community-generated digital content' (CGDC) as a source material for social history of late twentieth century Britain, explored in 'Our Heritage, Our Story' project blogs (<https://ohos.ac.uk/project-blogs/>), in joint publications and in forthcoming sole author publications.

- Ewan D. Hannaford, Viktor Schlegel, Rhiannon Lewis, **Stefan Ramsden**, Jenny Bunn, John Moore, Marc Alexander, Hannah Barker, Riza Batista-Navarro, Lorna Hughes, Goran Nenadic 'Our Heritage, Our Stories: developing AI tools to link and support community-generated digital cultural heritage' *Journal of Documentation*, 80:5, 2024.

This article defines CGDC as a valuable and overlooked source for history from below and

argues that the challenge of integrating CGDC into larger archives has effectively silenced diverse community voices. The paper outlines a project to use multidisciplinary methods, AI tools and a co-design process to make previously unfindable and unlinkable CGDC discoverable in our virtual national collection.

## How have you contributed to the wider research community?

My employment in two team research projects ('Crossing Boundaries: The History of First Aid in Britain and France, 1909-1989', and 'Our Heritage, Our Stories') has included extensive collaboration, and I have played a full role in shared research, writing, dissemination and Knowledge Exchange activities.

Whilst working at the University of Hull, I helped to establish and run a collaborative oral history group comprising academics and postgraduate students at the Universities of Hull and Huddersfield, obtaining funding to support postgraduates to attend our seminars. In my most recent position at the University of Manchester, I was co-convenor of the 'Historians in Progress' group of post-doctoral history researchers which meets monthly to discuss work in progress.

I have held a number of teaching positions, and have taught undergraduate and post-graduate historians, including supervising undergraduate and postgraduate dissertations and examining a Ph.D. thesis (Efstathia Dorovitsa 'Tracing the Norwegian Ice Trade in Northern France 1870-1920: Reception, Controversies and the Politics of the Trade').

I have written book reviews for *Contemporary British History* and *Cultural and Social History*, as well as reviewing academic book proposals.

I have given papers at a number of international conferences, including the European Association for the History of Medicine and Health conference, and recently have spoken at the conference of the Oral History Society, The Royal Historical Society's 'History and Archives in Practice' conference, and the conference of the International Maritime History Association.

# Your research environment details

**What considerations led you to choose this research environment and any sponsors for your research? How will this setting help you to develop your research identity and explore your research questions, and be ready to lead your own independent research programme at the end of the grant?**

University of Strathclyde is the ideal home for this project, with research strengths in health histories, oral history and environmental justice. Working in the Department of Humanities, immediate intellectual contexts for my work will be the Centre for the Social History of Health and Healthcare (CSHHH) and the Scottish Oral History Centre (SOHC). I will be able to learn from a range of outstanding scholars whose work is cognate to my own, including: Professor Arthur McIvor (labour history, health and deindustrialisation, oral history); Professor Jim Mills (social history of health and medicine); Dr Yvonne McFadden (gender, class and wellbeing, oral history); Professor Matthew Smith (history of psychiatry and mental health); Dr David Wilson (historian of fisheries, coastal communities, and aquatic environments). I will have the opportunity to build on established cross-faculty research collaborations centred on health, wellbeing, and environment, including scholars focused on healthy and sustainable coastal communities: Dr Brian Garvey (Work, Employment, and Organisation); Professor Tracy Morse (Civil and Environmental Engineering); Dr Francesco Sindico (Law).

Strathclyde is a partner in the international research project 'Deindustrialisation and the Politics of Our Time', examining historical roots and lived experiences of deindustrialisation, and an active member of the One Ocean Hub, an international programme of research for sustainable development working to promote fair and inclusive decision-making for healthy oceans, with a focus on small-scale fishing communities. Both provide important transnational context for my study.

Arthur McIvor, Professor of Social History, is mentor and sponsor. Professor McIvor is the foremost British historian on work and the body, deindustrialisation and health, founder of the SOHC and member of CSHHH. McIvor has published extensively on industrial illness, health and safety and deindustrialisation. His mentorship will be a considerable intellectual and methodological asset to the project and to my own development as a researcher.

**How will you contribute to a positive and inclusive research culture? This could include, for example, plans for collaborative activities, people management or research integrity training, diversity and inclusion activities.**

I will contribute to a positive and inclusive research culture at the University of Strathclyde, working with the University's Equality and Diversity team to ensure that my research activities are fully inclusive and equitable (including training for myself and the research associate in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion). I will work with the team to devise strategies to recruit research participants from the widest possible range of ethnicities, genders and disabilities. Similarly, the recruitment of the Research Associate will be designed to encourage applications from the full diversity of qualified individuals; my mentorship of this researcher will be informed by principles of equality, diversity and inclusion. I will participate in the intellectual life of the University, including attending, presenting (and helping to organise) seminar series held by the Department of Humanities, the CSHHH and the SOHC. I will set up a work-in-progress group following the model of the 'Historians in Progress' group I helped to make successful at the University of Manchester, again with the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion embedded. I will become involved in the training and mentorship of postgraduate students, especially where they are using oral history as a methodology or are studying topics close to my interests. Through my work on the 'Our Heritage, Our Stories' project, I have become interested in the use of new technologies for the recording, analysis storage and dissemination of oral histories, as well as in the potential for these technologies to facilitate collaboration between historians and diverse communities who are investigating and recording their own histories. I will establish links between the Scottish Oral History Centre and digital humanities scholars from my networks at the Universities of Manchester and Glasgow in order to explore how new technologies can underpin more inclusive and diverse (oral) historical scholarship.

**Your organisation will give you and the staff employed on your grant a minimum of 10 days a year to do training and continuing professional development. Explain how you will use this time.**

Budget has been requested for training, which will include: management training for the Principal Researcher, and for both Principal Researcher and Research Associate advanced oral history training provided by the Oral History Society (covering traumatic memories and remote interviewing); digital humanities training from the Oxford Digital Humanities School (building on my interest in digital histories acquired during my previous post as Research Associate on the digital 'Our Heritage, Our Stories project' and applicable to developing content for the website); equality diversity and inclusion (EDI) training provided by the University of Strathclyde's Equality and Diversity team.

I will allocate set periods of time to undertake focussed mentorship activities with the Research Associate, identifying resources and support within and external to the University of Strathclyde to assist this member of staff to create a career plan and identify development opportunities. I will hold regular meetings with the RA to assist in the meeting of CPD goals and will tailor the workplan to make sure it offers the best opportunities for the RA to gain valuable experiences and learning opportunities to further their career goals.

Given the strong Scottish focus of the project, I will take advantage of access to the wider Scottish history community, particularly historians working in Glasgow's three universities, exploring research synergies and attending and contributing to research seminars on themes relevant to my research interests (health histories, working-class studies, deindustrialisation studies, blue humanities, oral history, engaged research, digital history).

# Your sponsor

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## Full name

Prof Arthur McIvor

## Current position

Job title	Start date	End date – if known	Department	Organisation	Main employer
Prof of Social History	01/06/2007		History / Humanities	University of Strathclyde	Yes

**Describe how you have developed or contributed to the career development of students or researchers. These may be in your group or elsewhere. Include the positions they held and their current position.**

I have supervised 28 PhD students to completion. Most have established successful careers, such as Kenefick, Dundee University, the late Annemarie Hughes, Glasgow University, and Clark, Univ. Stirling. Two became professors (Johnston retired Glasgow Caledonian Univ.; Perchard, Otago, NZ).

The Scottish Oral History Centre (SOHC) has also provided a supportive base for ECRs under my leadership since 1995, employing several ECRs in RA positions, including Bartie and Ugolini (now at Univ. Edinburgh), Robb (Univ. Northumbria), McFadden and Turner (Univ. of Strathclyde), Johnston and Perchard (above). I have further promoted ECR development through co-authorship, supporting ECRs to lead the development of articles in high impact journals and internationally-recognised publications (Kenefick, Johnston, Perchard, Robb, Bartie, Turner and McFadden).

My close collaboration with the Centre for Oral History and Digital Storytelling in Montreal, from 2011, provided opportunities for SOHC postgraduates and ECRs to engage with scholars in cognate fields in North America (for example through our PG Summer Institute), widen research networks and engage with transnational comparative approaches (eg Bartie; Perchard; Clark; Chatellier) with some publishing from this in *The Deindustrialized World* (University of British Columbia Press, 2017). My involvement in the SSHRC-funded *Deindustrialization and the Politics of our Time (DePOT)* project as CI since 2020 supported the development of a new generation of scholars, with the career development of several of my students/ECRs benefitting significantly, including Ferns, Clark, Wilson and Chatellier.

I have led on KE activities in the oral history field over several REFs, including high performing public impact cases studies (latter top ten in the UK in REF2021). ECRs have had opportunities to participate and engage with a range of heritage stakeholders around memory as heritage, including Historic Environment Scotland (Chatellier; McFadden), Glasgow Museums (Stride; Walker; Chand; McFadden), the Imperial War Museum (Douthwaite) and the whisky industry (Walker).

**Confirm that the organisation will meet the requirements for supporting applicants and any staff employed on the grant.**

I confirm

**What additional support will you provide to the applicant?**

I will make myself available to meet with Dr Ramsden monthly to discuss progress with the research project and offer guidance and support, facilitating his development towards full research independence. His proposed research project links closely to my research experience on deindustrialization and health so I will provide robust support including networking opportunities with scholars actively working on deindustrialisation, health and the environment and discussion of archival sources and research methodologies – including sensory oral history interviewing (I am currently working on olfactory heritage through memory). The SOHC and the CSHHH provide perfect environments for intellectual engagement with fellow scholars, and Stefan will join our 'Health and Environment' Humanities research group, designed to support ECRs and provide opportunities for collaborative research and publications with other departments and faculties in the university - including civil and environmental engineering, fisheries science, and social policy - through the groups' close collaboration with the Strathclyde Centre for Sustainable Development. The SOHC will provide the opportunity to critically reflect on, refine and master techniques, including digital humanities, filming interviews and interviewing in trauma contexts. Dr Ramsden will also have access to leadership and management training through the University's ongoing programme of career development.

**Describe your approach to developing and supporting a positive and inclusive research culture.**

As a senior Faculty member I actively support a positive research culture through mentoring younger colleagues (including current Head of History and Director of Research), acting as reviewer in the Annual Development Review process and of colleagues' publications in our REF audit process. Through my leadership in oral history / SOHC I have actively promoted community engagement, collaboration and an interdisciplinary research culture (across History, Medical Humanities, English and Creative Writing, Journalism, Modern Languages, Gender Studies). Over the past 30 years I have managed a series of ECRs in the SOHC who have been nurtured in a truly positive and inclusive research environment (see above), exposed, for example to inspirational leaders in the field as visiting professors (such as Portelli and High). And the promotion of research integrity has always been at the forefront of the research culture at the SOHC, as we are intimately involved in issues around ethical practice, informed consent, data protection (GDPR etc) in oral history interviewing with human subjects. Indeed, the SOHC has provided training over the past 30 years to community groups, external organisations and partners on these issues, including groups as diverse as Glasgow and Edinburgh Museums, the Coalfield Communities Landscape Partnership, and health and disability charities such as the Mental Health Foundation,

ENABLE and the Scottish Council on Deafness. My approach has adhered to the fundamental principle of inclusivity, 'sharing authority' (Frisch) with interviewees, and accepting responsibility for their well-being as a primary concern.

This is supported by a wider University / Faculty and Humanities School context, with Athena Swan status, where a really positive and inclusive research culture is prioritised. Strathclyde's commitment to positive and inclusive research culture was recently demonstrated by its successful bid (led by the Humanities) to host the first Anti-Racism Observatory for Scotland.

**Are you intending to work for more than three months outside your administering organisation?**

No

# Your mentor

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Name, including title (for example Professor, Dr)

Professor Arthur McIvor

Department

Humanities (History)

Organisation

University of Strathclyde

Title of current post

Professor of Social History; Co-Director Scottish Oral History Centre

# Currency requested

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Select the currency you would like the grant to be paid in

GBP

Is this your local currency?

Yes

# Costs requested and justification

Are you asking for a lead applicant salary?

Yes

## Lead applicant salary

Cost type	Role	Name	Basic annual starting salary	Salary grade or scale	Period on project (months)	% time	Cost requested
Salary	Principal Investigator	Stefan Ramsden	£47,389.00	Gr 7, sp 37	48	100	£260,314.00
							<b>Total: £260,314.00</b>

## Are you requesting staff?

Yes
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## Staff costs

Cost type	Number of staff	Role	Name (if known)	Basic annual starting salary	Salary grade or scale	Months on project	% time	Cost requested
Salary	1	Research Associate		£41,103.00	Gr 7, sp 31	36	100	£162,679.00
								<b>Total: £162,679.00</b>

## Justification for staff

The project has an ambitious design, with interviews, witness seminars and community arts projects taking place in three different locations, to take account of the ways in which the intertwined wellbeing of fishing communities and the oceans is shaped by local cultural, social and economic factors. To help with this workload, it will be necessary to employ a Research Associate to assist with the data collection (conducting oral history interviews), with planning and delivering the community arts and public engagement (website, dissemination activities) and with writing project outputs (peer-reviewed journal articles). It is necessary that the Research Associate has a Ph.D. in a relevant area and has skills and experience in oral history or qualitative research interviewing and analysis, and therefore that the salary is at post-doctoral level. Ideally the Research Associate will have a specialism that complements rather than replicates my own, perhaps in environmental histories; it is possible that the Research Assistance will have academic knowledge in the area of fishing or coastal communities, but comes from a cognate discipline such as human geography, and therefore will bring different and complementary theoretical perspectives to bear on the research. It is desirable that the postholder develop their own research identity as part of the project, contributing to the analysis of data and to the writing of project publications under my mentorship. The duration of employment is set at three years, to allow the Research Associate to share in the collection of interviews and witness seminars and the delivery of community arts programme (two years), and also to contribute to data analysis and writing of research articles including one joint authored and one sole authored article for peer-reviewed journals (one year).

### Are you requesting adjustment support?

No

### Are you requesting a relocation allowance?

No

## Are you requesting training and continuing professional development?

Yes

### Training and continuing professional development

Cost type	Description	Cost requested
Continuing professional development and professional skills training	Institute of Leadership and Management Course	£600.00
Research skills training	Oral History Society Advanced Interview Training	£312.00
Research skills training	Oxford Digital Humanities School	£1,500.00
		<b>Total: £2,412.00</b>

### Justification for training and continuing professional development

I have not previously managed staff in a research capacity, and will benefit from the Institute of Leadership and Management course.

Advanced interviewing training will be useful for both Principal Researcher and Research Associate to update and refresh skills around conducting interviews on potentially traumatic subjects, and also for learning more about remote interviewing which may be useful for allowing participants who have left the case-study areas to be involved.

Digital humanities skills training will be useful for both researchers to develop their skills in archiving oral history interviews and other research data, and for disseminating project results via the website and social media.

EDI training will be essential for both recruitment and management of the Research Associate and to ensure that recruitment of, and engagement with, research participants is fully inclusive.

**Are you requesting materials and consumables?**

No

**Are you requesting animals?**

No

**Are you requesting equipment?**

Yes

## Equipment costs

Type	Type of equipment	No. of items	Cost per item	Cost of maintenance contract	Contribution from other sources	Cost requested
Equipment purchase	Zoom H5 portable recorderS	2	£193.00	£0.00	£0.00	£386.00
Computer equipment	Laptop	2	£1,000.00	£0.00	£0.00	£2,000.00
						<b>Total: £2,386.00</b>

## Justification for equipment

It will be necessary for both the Principal Researcher and the Research Associate to have a recorder for conducting interviews, since they will be working simultaneously and independently in case-study locations, and it will also be necessary for each researcher to have a laptop for working away from the University.

**Are you requesting a piece of equipment with a list price of £100,000 or more?**

No

### Are you requesting access charges?

No

### Are you requesting overheads?

No

### Are you requesting travel and subsistence?

Yes

### Travel and subsistence costs

Type	Description	How much carbon will this offset (in tonnes)?	Cost requested
Other travel	London 2 x archival trips 2 x trips to National Archives (c.100 per journey, £200)	0.08	£200.00
Other travel	Edinburgh (Scottish Studies Centre, Angus Martin oral history interview collection, Fomartine oral history collection) – 1 x archival trip (c.100 per journey) £100	0	£100.00
Other travel	Fareham (Fishermen's Mission Archives) – 1 x archival trip (c.150) £150	0.06	£150.00
Other travel	Berwick on Tweed (Northumberland Archives) -1 x archival trip (c 100) £100	0.01	£100.00
Other travel	Brighton (Queenspark records) – 1x archival trip (c.130) £130	0.06	£130.00
Other travel	Hastings (fishermen's museum oral history collection) – 1x archival trip (c.130) £130	0.06	£130.00
Other travel	Hull to Ullapool (Ullapool museum oral history collection) – 1x archival trip (c.250) £250	0.06	£250.00

Type	Description	How much carbon will this offset (in tonnes)?	Cost requested
Other travel	Hull to Grimsby (c.£10 per trip x 15) = £150	0	£150.00
Other travel	Researcher 8 x Hull to Firth of Clyde ports, return (average c.£200 per journey, some journeys include ferry), £1600	0.32	£1,600.00
Other travel	Researcher 4 x Hull to Aberdeenshire ports (average c.200 per journey) £800	0.24	£800.00
Other travel	Research Associate 8 x Glasgow to Aberdeenshire ports (average c70 per trip)£560	0.16	£560.00
Subsistence costs	8 nights in London (over two different trips, accommodation £150 per night, subsistence £40 per night) £1520	0	£1,520.00
Subsistence costs	4 nights in Edinburgh (c.£150 per night accommodation, subsistence £40 per night) £760	0	£760.00
Subsistence costs	48 nights accommodation in Firth of Clyde region (8 separate trips – 8x 6 nights) (c. £120 per night accommodation, subsistence £40 per night) £7680	0	£7,680.00
Subsistence costs	Research Associate 48 nights accommodation in Aberdeenshire region (8 separate trips = 8x 6 nights) (c. £120 per night accommodation, £40 per night subsistence) £7680	0	£7,680.00
Subsistence costs	Researcher 12 nights accommodation in Aberdeenshire region (4 separate trips, 4 x 3 nights = 12 nights) (c. £120 per night accommodation, £40 per night subsistence) £1,920	0	£1,920.00
Subsistence costs	3 nights accommodation Fareham (Fishermen's Mission Archives) (c.120 per night, subsistence £40 per night) £480	0	£480.00
Subsistence costs	3 nights accommodation, Berwick on Tweed (Northumberland Archives) (c. 120 per night accommodation , subsistence	0	£480.00

Type	Description	How much carbon will this offset (in tonnes)?	Cost requested
	£40 per night) £480		
Subsistence costs	3 nights accommodation Brighton (Queenspark records) – (c. 120 per night accommodation , subsistence £40 per night) £480	0	£480.00
Subsistence costs	3 nights accommodation Hastings (fishermen's museum oral history collection) (c. 120 per night accommodation , subsistence £40 per night) £480	0	£480.00
Subsistence costs	3 nights accommodation Ullapool (museum oral history collection) (c. 120 per night accommodation , subsistence £40 per night) £480	0	£480.00
Conference attendance	8x attendance at academic conferences for researcher in UK, Europe and US, including travel and accommodation (£2000 each year) £8,000	0	£8,000.00
Conference attendance	6x attendance at academic conferences for Research Associate in UK, Europe and US, including travel and accommodation £6,000	0	£3,000.00
Collaborative travel	2 delegates from Aberdeenshire, 2 nights in Glasgow for each meeting = 4 x return travel from Aberdeenshire to Glasgow (c.70 each, £480)	0.08	£480.00
Collaborative travel	2 delegates from Hull, 1 night in Glasgow for each meeting = 4 x return travel Hull to Glasgow (c150 each, £600)	0.15	£600.00
Collaborative travel	2 delegates from Firth of Clyde, 1 night in Glasgow for each meeting = 4 x return travel Campbeltown to Glasgow (.c50 each, £200)	0.08	£200.00
Collaborative travel	2 delegates from UK universities, 1 night in Glasgow for each meeting = 4 x return travel from unspecified UK city to	0.08	£600.00

Type	Description	How much carbon will this offset (in tonnes)?	Cost requested
	Glasgow (c.150 = £600)		
Subsistence costs	Delegates from Aberdeenshire, 4x 1 nights accommodation and subsistence in Glasgow (c.200 each, £800)	0	£800.00
Subsistence costs	Delegates from Hull, 4 nights accommodation and subsistence in Glasgow (c.200 each, £800)	0	£800.00
Subsistence costs	Delegates from Firth of Clyde, 4 nights accommodation and subsistence in Glasgow (200 each, c.£800).	0	£800.00
Subsistence costs	Delegates from UK universities, 4 nights accommodation and subsistence in Glasgow. (c.200=£800)	0	£800.00
			<b>Total: £42,210.00</b>

### Justification for travel and subsistence costs

It will be necessary for myself and Research Associate to be present for periods of time in the research community locations in order to undertake local archival research, consultation, build relationships with community groups, find interviewees, conduct interviews and witness seminars and be involved in the community art activities and final capstone exhibitions and events.

I will also to spend time consulting archives in TNA and the British Library in London, the Centre for Scottish Studies and the National Library of Scotland in Edinburgh, as well as smaller local archive and heritage centres (eg. Northumberland Archives, North East Lincolnshire Archives, Fishermen's Mission archives in Portsmouth) to consult records detailed in the research summary.

Steering Committee staff will need to be recompensed for their travel and accommodation for two meetings in Glasgow across the course of the project.

**Are you requesting overseas allowances?**

No

**Are you requesting fieldwork expenses?**

No

**Are you requesting clinical research?**

No

**Are you requesting public engagement and patient involvement?**

Yes

**Public engagement and patient involvement costs**

Description	Cost requested
Website	£2,000.00
Community Arts workshops	£18,000.00
Documentary Film	£18,260.00
Capstone events and Exhibitions	£38,400.00
	<b>Total: £76,660.00</b>

## Justification for public engagement and patient involvement

Since the project is concerned with the impacts of exploitation (of the seas and of workers and communities), it should minimise any further exploitation through the power relations of knowledge production. As a result, it is important to engage members of the case-study communities both as producers and consumers of research knowledge.

Public engagement will include working with local community arts organisations (Square Peg; Aberdeenshire Council Arts Team, CHARTS Argyll and Isles) who have both the arts expertise and the local connections to make this work meaningful.

Figures have been estimated in consultation with Square Peg community arts and YSP Media.

### Community arts workshops

£1000– two artists (Artists' Union UK recommends a day rate of £352 per day), refreshments, travel, access requirements for participants, materials, preparation, promotion, and evaluation.

Six workshops in each region (18 workshops) = **£18,000**

### Capstone exhibitions

Exhibitions will include the work produced in the community arts workshops and stories from the oral history research; exhibitions will tour three venues within each region.

Co-curation meetings between researcher, community arts groups and research participants (half a day's artist rate and room hire) = £500 x 3 = £1500

Printing/production of exhibition materials (including braille): £750

Room hire: £1200

Installation: £450 x 3 = £1350

Transport of exhibition materials: £300

Community arts organisation fee including managing, marketing/promotion: £5000

Total = £10,100 x 3 = **£30,300**

### Capstone event

Costs for invited public health organisations etc: £1000;

Costs for travel of c.50 research participants from around region to event: £1000.

Catering (c.70 attendees): c. £700;

Total for capstone events = £2,700 x 3 = **£8,100**

**Documentary film**

Onsite filming, meetings with research participants, editing and production: **c. £18,260**

**Website**

To disseminate research and co-created project outputs: **£2000**

**Public engagement total = £76,660**

**Are you requesting contract research organisations?**

No

**Are you requesting other costs?**

Yes

**Other costs**

Type	Description	Cost requested
Material for clinical, epidemiological and qualitative research studies	Transcription	£41,760.00
Subject/volunteer expenses	Honoraria for Steering Group members - meetings in Glasgow	£4,000.00
Subject/volunteer expenses	Honoraria for Steering committee members - online meetings	£4,000.00
		<b>Total: £49,760.00</b>

## Justification for other costs

The proposed research will generate up to 165 interviews, plus 9 witness seminars, each at an average of two hours long, totalling 348 hours of interview recording. Transcriptions are essential for analysis and for the future useability of the data. It can take up to six hours to accurately transcribe one hour of interview. It will be preferable to outsource this work rather than taking research, analysis and writing time away from the researcher. Interview transcription is a highly skilled job and it is usual in interview and oral history research to apply for funds to pay for professional transcription.

Transcription services for 348 interview hours, which the Scottish Oral History Centre prices at £120 per interview hour, will cost £41,760.

It will be necessary to pay an Honoraria to Steering Committee members in recompense for time taken out of their work to help with the project. This is calculated as follows:

£250 per meeting for each member

2 x meetings for 8 delegates in Glasgow =  $250 \times 16 = \text{£}4000$

2 x online meetings for 8 delegates online =  $250 \times 16 = \text{£}4000$

= **£8000**

# Summary of costs requested

Total funding requested in this application

£596,421.00

# Full economic costing

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Is your organisation based in the UK?

Yes

Is your organisation calculating the full economic cost of this proposal?

Yes

What is the total full economic cost of your research proposal in sterling (GBP)?

1124054

# **Expert and lead reviews**

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# Expert review:

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## Reviewer number

3

## Reviewer name

Luke Telford

## Reviewer organisation

University of York

## Confidential comments

N/A.

## Is this proposal bold?

This is an excellent research proposal that possesses considerable merit, particularly by proposing to undertake mixed-methods, multi-sited research across three different fishing communities. It is also interdisciplinary and timely. In this sense, it is likely to generate new insights that advance existing knowledge.

In the aims section, though, there was quite a bit 'going on' and it would have been better to 'get to the point' more quickly/clearly.

## Is this proposal creative?

Yes, it addresses an important social issue – the health and wellbeing of fishing communities. It is also highly interdisciplinary and contains a robust mixed methodology.

## Is this proposal high quality?

The proposal is generally high-quality. Proposing to put co-production at the core of the research project, it is collaborative involving various community arts organisations.

The methodology is also rigorous, particularly involving making use of archival records, oral history interviews, stakeholder interviews and 'witness seminars'. As such, the research will elicit a multitude of sentiments from people of varying backgrounds and ages.

All three research sites – the Humber, Firth of Clyde and Aberdeenshire - offer similarities and differences in terms of their historical trajectories and current social issues including the current state of their fishing industries. Indeed, the inclusion of Aberdeenshire – currently the UK's most buoyant fishing area – will offer some very interesting empirical comparisons to the other two places which have generally been in decline for some time.

The researcher plans to disseminate the findings to a broad range of audiences, reaching people beyond the confines of the academy. These plans are ambitious, but achievable within the project's timescale.

The information on the methodology could have been presented a bit more clearly as there were times where I – the reader – got 'lost in the detail'. More information could have also been provided on using social media as a research tool to aid participant recruitment, since it was not clear how this would be achieved. Moreover, how the proposed empirical work in Hull fundamentally differs from the author's previous work in the city could have perhaps also been made clearer.

## Is this proposal high quality?

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## Animal use

No

## Questions for interview

I don't have any specific suggestions, though given what we know from relevant, existing studies I would encourage the researcher to ask the older participants about nostalgia. In our current political landscape including the discontent of many disadvantaged communities, nostalgia among residents is largely dismissed as a regressive cultural force. As such, it will be interesting to see if the respondents are nostalgic in this study; what they are nostalgic for; and if this is a regressive form of nostalgia.

## Overall assessment rating

Excellent
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## Overall assessment reasons

Please see my comments above - the slight deficiencies mentioned are why I did not award it 'outstanding'. Nonetheless, it is an excellent research proposal that - in my view - deserves to be funded.

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# Expert review:

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## Reviewer number

4

## Reviewer name

Anoop Nayak

## Reviewer organisation

Newcastle University

## Confidential comments

N/A

## Is this proposal bold?

The proposal is bold, seeking to conduct research in the fisheries of the Humber, Aberdeenshire and Firth of Clyde to understand how environmental issues and de-industrialisation have affected health and wellbeing since around 1960. As such, the study draws attention to issues of social inequalities in coastal towns and former fishing areas. The research adds to work on the impacts of de-industrialisation but frames this around concerns of health and wellbeing. This is an important aspect that has been found in many post-industrial areas that have been built around a shipyard, colliery, or engineering plant. The study should spark an interest in the correlation between environmental change, de-industrialisation and health in local

## Is this proposal bold?

communities.

Although some of the research is archival based, there is a very good attempt to engage with local communities through workshops, 75 oral histories with participants, stakeholder interviews and exhibitions. I particularly welcome the intersectional approach, as this avoids the 'smoke-stack nostalgia' that can permeate some de-industrial accounts. By exploring the voices of women, migrants, youth and other populations the research makes important contributions to studies on health, the environment and de-industrialisation.

## Is this proposal creative?

The proposal is highly creative. While oral histories and archival research is widely practiced, the collaborations with community arts organisations is particularly innovative. A good deal of effort has been placed on scoping out who these organisations are with the possibilities of community engagement through pottery, murals, song or photography. The use of a film maker to document these practices that will lead to public exhibitions in each of the three case study sites is exemplary. While this takes a lot of logistical planning, the thought processes are well configured in terms of the different stages of the fieldwork. I am unfamiliar with 'witness seminars' but this sounds similar to focus groups. The ethics of the research are well thought through in the further details sections.

The study combines existing ideas and approaches in new ways. A strength is the community participatory approach and forms of co-production used to develop shared knowledge of health and wellbeing in decaying fishing resorts.

## Is this proposal creative?

## Is this proposal high quality?

The proposal is certainly ambitious with three locations, but it is of high quality. The employment of a post-doctoral researcher should certainly help in this case. It is clear that the applicant has a deep knowledge of local histories related to shipbuilding and fisheries that add rigor to the research. This is evident from the references and wider literature used.

The outputs are highly appropriate for a 3 year study of this kind. A monograph and 3 academic articles which tell important stories about fishing towns, the people who reside there and how socio-economic inequalities are generative of poor health.

The archival work, while historically interesting is arguably less impactful than the 75 oral histories that will be conducted across the sites. The analysis will be rigorous bringing together past and present histories.

A strength of the proposed study is the willingness to engage with diverse communities, young and old, men and women, people of different ethnicities and heritage. The intersectional approach adds an important dimension to the research in ways that make for an inclusive and carefully thought through research design. The final conference and inclusion of local people is important as are the 'capstone' exhibitions and filming which may offer more participatory and inclusive forms of knowledge-making.

## Animal use

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## Animal use

No

## Questions for interview

Why are history and the arts important for understandings of health and wellbeing in disadvantaged societies?

Does the research risk offending local fishing communities, where deep-sea dredging and over-fishing are in part responsible for the environmental damage that has taken place in coastal towns and globally?

How might this work add to the public knowledge of health and offer solutions to some of the societal issues faced around health and wellbeing?

## Overall assessment rating

Excellent

## Overall assessment reasons

The study is excellent for all the reasons stated above. It has a degree of originality but it is high risk in terms of sufficient recruitment and the public engagement tasks suggested. As such, the research has the potential to advance research on de-industrialisation, the environment and public health in ways that are internationally recognised.

The only reason I have not classed it as 'outstanding' is that it is humanities based and is more concerned with documenting health (e.g. archival research) and environmental impacts rather than changing this. Despite this, I do believe the co-production work will enable more people to engage in public health and hopefully

critically engage with the role that deep-sea trawler fishing, net-fishing and fishing industries have had upon the natural environment and populations.

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# Expert review:

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## Reviewer number

5

## Reviewer name

Lisa Taylor

## Reviewer organisation

Leeds Beckett University

## Confidential comments

There are no conflicts of interest.

## Is this proposal bold?

Yes the proposal is bold. It promises new conceptual and empirical insights as a result of combining three literatures that have not been in dialogue before (blue humanities, socio-history of health, deindustrialisation studies). In doing so it offers a genuinely original and intellectually valuable proposal for analysis. It manages to reframe the 'coastal health deficit' as a bio-medical/socio-economic issue but also as a consequence of environmental transition. By bringing together individual, community and environmental wellbeing as an analytic frame it foregrounds fishing community stories as sources of valuable affective and historical knowledge about environmental change without relegating them as 'nostalgia'. It also reads coastal health inequalities as multigenerational and historically grounded - which pushes

## Is this proposal bold?

beyond the presentism of the CMOH (2021) report. The idea of 'experiential histories' of oceanic relationships potentially deepens environmental humanities and medical history literatures.

While it does not develop new tools it innovates methodologically in relation to qualitative community-engaged research. For example, reflexive comparison between three contrasting case studies (deindustrialised, degraded, successful-yet-fractured) is a design that could yield methodological insights for cross-regional health and environmental history. The decision to use two Scottish case studies is important, as the proposal argues, to provide inclusion beyond existing knowledge of the 'English context.' Also the participant peer-review process (online community conference) offers an unusually rigorous model of community validation and ownership in humanities research which is commendable. The triangulation of individual, novel group 'witness seminars' - which serve to again lift and validate 'from below' experience - and creative workshops allows comparison of how wellbeing and environmental narratives are made across mediums and contexts. Work on coastal areas is much needed in deindustrialisation studies. I would argue these features of the proposal extend existing methods.

The proposal offers new interpretive knowledge that has the potential to redefine how health, environment and industry interrelate in coastal contexts.

## Is this proposal creative?

This is a highly creative and conceptually innovative proposal. It bridges environmental humanities, public health, deindustrialisation studies, and community-based oral history, offering a genuinely fresh way to understand the historical and emotional ties between marine ecosystems and human health. Where existing research on "coastal health deficits" is epidemiological or policy-driven, this frames the question through an experiential, intergenerational, and sensory humanities approach — a bold departure that significantly expands the terrain of inquiry. The novel synthesis of bringing together blue humanities, medical history and deindustrialisation studies is genuinely original. Oft-times projects stay confined to one or two lenses — here, the connection between marine environmental

## Is this proposal creative?

degradation, industrial decline, and wellbeing is both intellectually and emotionally compelling.

The proposal is challenging disciplinary boundaries: the project repositions fishing communities as a site for understanding entangled human–ocean well-being, not as sociological case studies alone but as part of a broader ecological and cultural story. The emphasis on lived experience links “the wellbeing of the seas and those who live alongside them” and thereby provides an almost poetic and conceptual pivot rarely made in historical or policy work. The creative strength is the brave conceptual leap to treat health, identity, and marine ecology as co-produced systems — and this clustered approach, read through narrative and emotion — strikes me as highly innovative. My slight reservation is that the proposal could assume somewhat romantically that historically coastal workers had the key to unlock avenues to 'better' well-being, health and identity - and this may not be the case.

The methodological design is impressively multimodal. Archival research is interwoven with new oral histories. Also the idea that the empirical work will be in dialogue - scoping for contradiction and discordance - with the official backcloth offered by industry, government and academic views is a helpful analytical framework. Witness seminars and arts workshops aim to yield sensory and emotional data, as opposed to just textual. A film and touring exhibition are co-produced research outputs, positioning artistic practice as analysis rather than just outreach. The combination of social history methods with community arts to collect, analyse, and display knowledge transcends typical academic dissemination and “reading against the grain” of historic oral histories to interpret embodied or affective dimensions shows interpretive sophistication. The coproduction ethos - really working *with* rather than *on* community - and integration of creative arts are exemplary—this goes beyond token “impact” activity to make creativity integral to research design.

The inclusion of community steering groups, co-curated exhibitions, and collaboration with health and policy actors (NHS, Fishermen’s Mission, etc.) elevates the project into participatory research as creative practice. The arts workshops and capstone exhibitions—bridging personal storytelling, marine ecology, and health—reflect a high level of social imagination. Essentially, the project treats communities not as subjects but as *co-authors*, blending rigorous research with creative, therapeutic, and restorative processes. My only potential reservation lies in how to

## Is this proposal creative?

ensure community members will offer their participation in arts-based activities and methodologies - particularly given the brutalising and adverse factors that have led to the deleterious health consequences in which these communities are living.

The framing quote “That industry killed too many people. And it didn’t just kill them at sea.” provides a deeply human and affective narrative hook. Beginning with that voice is a powerful and creative rhetorical decision that grounds theoretical ambition in lived experience. The narrative arc — from danger and precarity at sea, through deindustrialisation and environmental change, to coastal health crises — has emotional and intellectual breadth. Its emotional storytelling approach to academic work stands out as relatable and humane. I would hope such narrative vignettes would also feature in the envisaged outputs of the project. It is important that such stories - reflecting community voices are included.

## Is this proposal high quality?

This is an exceptionally high-quality proposal. It is conceptually rich, empirically grounded, and methodologically diverse. The writing demonstrates a strong grasp of relevant literatures, framed by clear and relevant research questions. The case for academic and social significance is compelling, and the proposal is well-evidenced throughout with credible citations. It demonstrates real strength in clear articulation of the problem and its societal context, strong rationale for integrating historical, environmental, and health perspectives, it shows rich interweaving of qualitative methodologies and community engagement.

The project demonstrates a strong inclusive design ethos: gender and generational variation built into the sampling frame. Intersectional attention to class, gender, race, and nationality are explicitly acknowledged. I wonder what mechanisms are in place for ensuring intersectional inclusion, especially given the historically white working-class base of these communities. Artistic and sensory workshops designed for participants less comfortable with conventional interviewing — increases accessibility, though may not eliminate all barriers to creative practice among respondents - see my questions to the applicant section. The use of regional arts partners ensures inclusion of people with physical or cognitive barriers to

## Is this proposal high quality?

participation.

The study design is strong and appropriate. The qualitative, comparative, and multi-sited approach fits the exploratory and interpretive nature of the research questions. The link between questions, methods, and anticipated outcomes is clear. Questions 1–4 are consistent with a historical and sociocultural research agenda. Three case studies (Humber, Firth of Clyde, Aberdeenshire) ensure variation in geography, economy, gender, and post-industrial experience — an effective comparative design. The use of both archived oral histories and new interviews ensures longitudinal depth. The inclusion of community arts workshops and witness seminars operationalises coproduction and extends epistemic reach beyond conventional interviews.

Clear documentation of data collection (interview guides, archiving, ethical procedures) supports transparency. Coproduced validation (community peer review of findings via an online conference) acts as an internal reliability check. Archiving of interviews and creative outputs would further assure reproducibility for future scholars (not explicitly stated but could be added).

The analysis plan and sample design are appropriate, rigorous, and proportionate to the aims and methods of this qualitative study. The proposal includes strong *qualitative validity measures* — triangulation, participant feedback, and comparative control — that ensure reliability and trustworthiness of results.

This is a high-quality, well-conceived, and methodologically robust proposal. It squarely meets its research aims and is capable of delivering meaningful, publishable, and impactful outcomes.

## Animal use

No

## Questions for interview

## Animal use

Has thought be given to barriers to creative arts participation in working-class communities - might some respondents be reluctant to participate, given historically poor teaching in schools' art-provision across the UK coupled with the idea that the arts are the preserve of middle-class people endowed with cultural capital? Art, heritage, history of place are often assumed to be shared interests in such communities - my own experience is that that is an assumption of middle-class academics but not necessarily the communities we hope to join and collaborate with. What contingency plans are in place for other methods - beyond the arts - of eliciting data for those who resist?

Though its spirit of inclusion is robust, could the proposal could go further by detailing accessibility provisions (travel subsidies, translation support, consent for participants with disabilities, etc.)?

The scope is ambitious — spanning multiple disciplines, three case study regions, numerous data types, and coproduction activities. This breadth may stretch resources and time. There could be risk of producing *breadth over depth* in analysis. How might resourcing and timelines be effectively managed?

## Overall assessment rating

Outstanding

## Overall assessment reasons

This is a highly creative proposal, outstanding on multiple levels. It is emotionally intelligent, theoretically adventurous, methodologically experimental, and socially embedded. It reimagines what “health history” and “blue humanities” can mean, and it uses creative practice as an embedded research engine. It as an exemplary model of interdisciplinary and coproduced humanities research. It is internationally leading in concept, scope, and creativity. and stands out for its ability to redefine links between environmental humanities, health history, and community wellbeing,

offering a novel, integrated framework that few projects attempt.

The proposed approach—to my knowledge —is at the research frontier. Comparable work likely exists elsewhere but this project would be among the first major UK-led investigations to treat coastal health as a historically, environmentally, and emotionally entangled system, rather than as a purely social or economic problem. If realised as planned, the study would advance theoretical and methodological frontiers across multiple disciplines. The proposal frames wellbeing not simply as medical or social, but as ecological and intergenerational—a major conceptual advance. By combining archival analysis, oral history, and creative arts, it reimagines what counts as *evidence* in public health history. The integration of community narrative as both data and analytical tool creates a model that other humanities and social science fields could emulate. I would argue that it is highly original. The cross-sectoral synthesis (deindustrialisation, blue humanities, health studies) essentially defines a new subfield—perhaps a “blue health humanities.” This project is boundary-expanding in at least three ways:

1. Thematic innovation – it links maritime environmental decline to public health and emotional life — a connection rarely theorised or empirically explored.
2. Methodological innovation – it institutionalises co-production and participatory creative methods as legitimate means of scholarly analysis, not just outreach.
3. Policy impact – its multidisciplinary framing has the potential to influence coastal health policy, sustainability debates, and cultural heritage practice simultaneously.

This is therefore a high-reward project: if executed well, it would transform understanding of how environment, labour, and wellbeing are historically intermingled.

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# Expert review:

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## Reviewer number

6

## Reviewer name

Mark Holton

## Reviewer organisation

University of Plymouth

## Confidential comments

None

## Is this proposal bold?

I think this is a bold and ambitious project that seeks to draw together a broad variety of archival and primary data to help explore the research problem. The methods are particularly creative and layer in such ways as to offer some potentially very innovative outcomes. I'm also impressed by the scope for producing outputs that are likely to appeal to both academic and non-scholarly, public audiences. The researcher has really thought this through carefully. Finally, the collaborative nature of this research also makes this an exciting prospective project, and I can see great potential emerging from drawing together this diverse group of stakeholders, research participants and creative organisations to co-produce knowledge in new

### **Is this proposal bold?**

and exciting ways.

### **Is this proposal creative?**

As above, there is a significant amount of creativity in this proposal. The ambition is also high, and there will inevitably be challenges in managing such a breadth of data sources, but the researcher presents a compelling case both for the inclusion of such breadth, and in how this will be achieved. I think the researcher is very convincing in arguing a case for creativity here, and this far outweighs the risk. As I mentioned above, the potential for creativity to be woven through this project from inception to dissemination is very clear, and I am encouraged by the evidence the researcher builds into this proposal in terms of where data, methods, participants and outputs may be derived from. This is a very secure and professional approach. I also see potential here for this collaborative and creative approach to have wider impact, both in terms of how findings could be 'given back' to researched communities and other stakeholders in a variety of non-academic ways (e.g., using film, art, music etc.).

### **Is this proposal high quality?**

I think this is a very professionally written proposal that proposes high quality, high impact and deliverable research. There is clear evidence of a strong foundational knowledge in this area, and the researcher really understands how to draw together this multi-disciplinary approach in such ways as to make meaningful contributions to knowledge. The outputs, while ambitious, are focused and meaningful. Choosing to focus on delivering a monograph and three academic articles is manageable and ensures the knowledge produced is meaningful and not diluted. The range of public and creative outputs is very interesting, and the collaborative approach to this, while speculative at the point of proposal, has been justified in later sections of the application. While the project does not draw on statistical analysis, I am encouraged

## Is this proposal high quality?

to see potential sources and sample sizes of qualitative materials / participants indicated in the proposal. The research design is inclusive and thought has gone into exploring varied ways of engaging, recruiting and researching with participants and stakeholders from a range of social and cultural backgrounds. This is also clearly emphasised in the recruitment and ethics sections of the application.

## Animal use

No

## Questions for interview

How will you ensure your oral history interviews are genuinely co-produced and collaborative?

The witness seminars are likely to generate contrasting and potentially conflicting opinions. How will these be managed to ensure knowledge is produced ethically and equitably?

This project proposes generating and drawing together a lot of primary and secondary data. How do you intend to draw these broad findings together into the outputs proposed?

## Overall assessment rating

Excellent

## Overall assessment reasons

I think this is an excellent research proposal that holds significant potential to deliver new and impactful knowledge. The project is high risk, primarily in the

boldness and ambition of the research design, but the researcher presents a compelling case for how and why these approaches are necessary - I think the inclusion of primary data really elevates this proposal. I'm unsure that this will 'push the boundaries of existing knowledge' but that shouldn't take away from the potential here for highlighting the intergenerational trauma associated with the declining UK fishing industry, and I could see these results having impact internationally through the public-facing outputs.

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# Expert review:

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## Reviewer number

12

## Reviewer name

Graham R Smith

## Reviewer organisation

Newcastle University

## Confidential comments

None

## Is this proposal bold?

The proposed research is likely to generate new insights in the impact of deindustrialisation on the health of members of fishing communities that operate in different ways. It is unlikely that the proposed research would generate new tools or advance research techniques, although that is not a stated aim (see below).

The strength of the application is that the research would be situated in a significant network of oral history, health and deindustrialisation expertise that the applicant has ably drawn on in making this application. Understanding the decline of fishing communities in the framework of deindustrialisation would be important in itself, that the applicant aims to understand the subsequent health impacts makes the

## Is this proposal bold?

application bold and ambitious.

The research questions are broad, especially the second which seems to move away from subjective understandings of change and propose to understand those understandings in much wider natural and cultural contexts. If the aims are realised, this would be a very significant project for our understanding of wellbeing and health.

It is more likely that the impact of this work would be to stimulate new and innovative research in deindustrialisation studies than in community or public health. One reason for this is that the resources requested to meet all three aims is insufficient.

Where the project could make a wider contribution in health is in impact, rather than in research. This would be immensely valuable in the identified communities. The dissemination strategy points to this.

## Is this proposal creative?

As noted above, the originality in the research is in the combination of health and deindustrialisation in fishing communities. This tests an existing approach in a new setting. The recognition of the diversity within the communities also offers the possibility of new insights as does the intergenerational approach. But there is a risk that including so many different variables, and trying to do so much, will result in rather broad findings that fail to offer and test new concepts or adequately address the research aims.

The comparative approach although not novel (see Thompson's *Living the Fishing* – 1983), would raise new and important conceptual questions. Combining an intergenerational approach with a history of the communities would be additionally challenging, but certainly would, if successful, offer new insights.

The proposal, as presented, does not demonstrate an approach that would test new methods, although the proposed use of qualitative data analysis software may offer possibilities to do so (see below). This could have been more clearly expressed in the proposal.

## Is this proposal creative?

## Is this proposal high quality?

The applicant makes an excellent case for undertaking a comparative study across three different fishing communities; however, the study design could be more clearly focused and methods better integrated. There is a great deal of proposed research, from archives through to community engagement, that makes community comparisons even more challenging.

Coproduction methodologies could have been explored in greater detail in terms of process and not simply inclusion through steering committee representation and community arts outputs. The applicant could have made much more of the contacts that they have developed and offered greater insights into how these existing collaborations have influenced the study design.

The archival sources are well identified, and they are focused on the proposed research site. It is unclear how the researcher will “interrogate” historic voices apart from these will be read in transcript (not listened to?) “against the grain” which may not help to identify changing discourses of health and wellbeing except at a superficial level. This reading is unlikely to identify contradictions between community and governance discourses *and* address the community diversity that is claimed elsewhere in the application. The archival reuse work as set out could take much longer than the period specified. A pilot here would have helped to determine the quality and relevance of the sources listed to the proposal and informed the design.

It is unclear whether there is enough resource in the project to conduct sufficient interviews, especially if inclusive and intergenerational across three distinct sites. The applicant writes of “interview samples” and aims to include a very diverse population. However, the application is less clear about how this might be achieved through the proposed interview strategy (that includes individual interviews and witness seminars). If there is sampling, what are the samples?

The data collection approach is qualitative and based on oral history. However, there

## Is this proposal high quality?

is not a great deal of specific understanding demonstrated on how the materials will be analysed with the research questions in mind. On the one hand there is a nod to oral history theory from a humanities tradition (Abrams) and to the memory/literary turn (Portelli), and then on the other hand, qualitative analysis software is proposed that is based on social science, grounded theory along with a corpus analysis toolkit for close written textual analysis. This is not to discount the use of the mixed approach or the software, but rather to expect that there might be an explanation of the analytical approach, the collection approach, the more general statements that suggest orality and memory would be an analytical focus, and the use of text and thematic analysis tools.

In summary, the study proposal covers a lot, but in doing so may have produced a proposal that is not be achievable using the proposed methods.

## Animal use

No

## Questions for interview

What new insights into the way that deindustrialisation impacts health do you anticipate arising from the research?

Given the breadth of focus, including the comparative community element, and number of variables how many interviews do you think will be required in each of the localities?

Can you say more about the significance of subjectivity and memory in your proposal?

## Overall assessment rating

Good

### **Overall assessment reasons**

The proposal's merit and originality can be found in the way that deindustrialisation and health are linked within what have been single industry communities. The research would advance the field of deindustrialisation studies and the applicant would be well placed to do so. The weakness is in the research design - too much is being attempted methodologically and greater clarification of how the design serves the research aims would be required to make the proposal excellent or outstanding. Too much is currently being promised and a stronger more coherent plan for delivery and/or a tighter research focus would potentially make the proposal outstanding as is its potential.

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# Lead review

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## Reviewer name

Oisín Wall

## Reviewer organisation

University College Cork

## Research proposal

The proposal makes a really strong argument for the importance of this study – drawing attention to fishing as a neglected field of study both in terms of British industrial and deindustrial history. Pointing to the scale of deprivation and prevalence of deaths of despair in fishing communities, I thought really highlighted the contemporary importance of this kind of project. It intersects with some really interesting contemporary conversations that have really gathered pace in the last decade or so, from coastal studies, to working class masculinities. As I said in relation to Gabriel Lawson's application, this history, in conjunction with mental health history is an urgent issue, and the project is very timely. In fact, This project shares an awful lot of similarities with Lawson's application and I really wish we could get them working together.

Framing the research in terms of the Blue Humanities brings it into an interesting set of rapidly evolving conversations and overall, Methodologically, I think the project is very strong. From an oral history perspective I think it is a very well designed project. The targets are both ambitious and realistic. Interviewing 75 people is a lot, but with NVivo and professional transcription it's manageable. More importantly the candidate has a track record of similar projects, doing 100 interviews for his PhD thesis, and think that shows in the provision of a realistic timeframe for achieving it.

In terms of study design I think there are real strengths to the project. Comparing contemporary and historic oral histories seems like it would be a really rich seam of research and would offer some fascinating comparisons. The intergenerational

## Research proposal

nature of the contemporary oral histories is another real strength. Similarly the use of witness seminars is a great idea. And the aim of doing two interviews with each participant is a really good one and speaks to an understanding of the importance of building trusting relationships, though obviously this will cause some issues at the recruitment stage, so I think: good principle, but maybe don't hold to it too closely.

My one reservation is that migrant communities have not been mentioned in the study design, even though they have, for many years, made up a significant portion of the fishing industry.

The output plan is solid – a monograph, a few articles, and a policy document. Classic outputs for this kind of project, and very realistic in the time frame. My only concern was about the touring exhibition which seemed ill-thought through and tacked on.

## Applicant

The applicant has a good reference that speaks to strengths that would be key for the project. He has several articles and a monograph on related subjects, which is impressive given the precarious nature of his contracts so far as well as his caring responsibilities, mentioned in the career break section. I liked the thought, albeit brief, given to the CPD and future career of the Research Associate, this showed a real potential for academic as well as research leadership.

## Research environment

I think Strathclyde is an excellent fit for the project too. There are some excellent people there, Arthur McIvor will be a great mentor and the connection with the project on deindustrialisation could make for some really interesting intersections. The CPD plans are clear as are the available supports.

## Research environment

## Other comments

## Questions for interview

What is the role of the exhibition in your community engagement strategy?

Large numbers of people working on British fishing vessels are from migrant backgrounds, but migration and migrant communities do not seem to feature in this study.

Can you discuss how you would account for, and engage with, these communities in your study?

## Suggested referees

Dr Luke Telford, Lecturer in Criminal Justice & Social Policy, University of York, [luke.telford@york.ac.uk](mailto:luke.telford@york.ac.uk)

Dr Katherine Georgina Watson, Lecturer in Modern History, University of East Anglia, [Katherine.Watson@uea.ac.uk](mailto:Katherine.Watson@uea.ac.uk)

Prof Anoop Nayak, Professor of Social & Cultural Geography, Newcastle University, [anoop.nayak@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:anoop.nayak@ncl.ac.uk)

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# Lead review

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## Reviewer name

Eleanor Frances Jupp

## Reviewer organisation

University of Kent

## Research proposal

This is a very interesting project, I liked the ambition of bringing together blue humanities, coastal health, and studies of de-industrialisation. The proposal evidences unusual and subtle thinking around the relationships between health, history and environment, including the concept of 'coastal subjectivities', at a time when there is significant policy concern about the health and wellbeing of coastal populations. The proposal is well rooted in appropriate literature.

Overall the methods are appropriate I but I do have some concerns about the public engagement and impact activities. There are a number of different strands of activities proposed, including community arts projects, six touring exhibitions and witness seminars. I was not convinced that the practicalities of these had been clearly thought through and felt they were too ambitious. They are also not pulled through into aspects of the proposal including sections around ethics and wellbeing of participants - which would be relevant when considering public displays and collective activities such as witness seminars. Overall I was not quite clear why doing these activities were being proposed and what they add to overall research design. This would need to be explored at interview and I would encourage the applicant to reduce the volume of activities proposed.

## Applicant

The applicant has had a somewhat complex and disrupted trajectory since his PhD including career breaks due to significant caring responsibilities.

It is therefore impressive that he has remained committed to the study of working class communities and histories and has continued to publish in this area. The proposed project would clearly allow him to develop significant new skills and experience.

## Research environment

The research environment at Strathclyde seems excellent, with appropriate connections to Scottish oral history project and relevant academics, including those researching on de-industrialisation. He would benefit from a highly experienced project sponsor.

## Other comments

## Questions for interview

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- Why did you select the public engagement activities proposed?
- What are the practical, logistical and ethical challenges of the kinds of community arts programmes planned?

## Suggested referees

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## Suggested referees

- Lisa Taylor, Leeds Beckett University
- Mark Holton, University of Plymouth

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