

**Call for proposals**  
***Integrated Voices: 'Living with Voices'***

**Submission deadline:** 14 February 2018

**Available fee:** £6000

Hearing the Voice at Durham University is working with members of the voice-hearing community to develop *Integrated Voices* (IV) – a new web resource that will help people find clear, balanced and comprehensive information about voice-hearing.

We are currently seeking an individual voice-hearer or group of voice-hearers to co-produce written content for a section of the website on 'Living with Voices'. This section of the website will focus on the everyday experience of hearing voices, and present practical information and coping strategies for dealing with distressing voices in a variety of contexts.

**About Hearing the Voice**

Hearing the Voice (HtV) is an eight-year multidisciplinary research project that combines insights from the humanities and sciences to provide a better understanding of the experience of hearing voices. The project is funded by a Wellcome Trust Collaborative Award in Humanities and Social Sciences until 2020.

Voice-hearing is an important aspect of many people's lives. It is an experience that can be distressing and upsetting, but also positive and meaningful. Our project examines this experience from a range of different perspectives, including including anthropology, cognitive neuroscience, history, linguistics, literary studies, medical humanities, philosophy, psychology and theology. It involves researchers from all three faculties of Durham University, along with voice-hearers, clinicians and academics from national and international partner institutions.

More information about Hearing the Voice can be found here: [www.hearingthevoice.org](http://www.hearingthevoice.org)

**About *Integrated Voices***

Hearing voices affects up to 1 in 10 people, but there is a lack of high quality information available about how to manage the experience when it is distressing. *Integrated Voices* is a new website that aims to fill this gap by providing balanced, non-biased information about voice-hearing in an easily accessible format. Confirmed partners in its development include the English Hearing Voices Network, Rethink Mental Illness, and the NHS.

IV will draw together information about understanding and managing distressing voices that is clear, accessible and free. The primary audience for the website is voice-hearers and their families, and the information will also be relevant to researchers, health professionals and policy makers. The web site will have three key sections or themes:

<b>Core section/theme</b>	<b>Description</b>
Understanding Voices	A range of different ways of understanding or making sense of voices, including psychological, neuroscientific, historical, literary and spiritual approaches to the topic.
Living with Voices	Comprehensive practical information and coping strategies based on people's everyday experience of living with voices.
Working with Voices	Information about different therapeutic options for dealing with distressing voices, including psychopharmacology and 'talking therapies'.

Each section will have modules linking to a variety of resources, multi-media, freely accessible research articles, personal narratives, reviews of the evidence base for specific therapies and (where appropriate) sources of support.

## **Brief**

This commission invites an individual or group with personal experience of voice-hearing to write and coordinate content for the 'Living with Voices' section of the website, in collaboration with the IV editorial team.

'Living with Voices' will provide practical information about the everyday experience of coping with hearing voices, and incorporate strategies and techniques for dealing with distressing voices in a range of different contexts and situations. The section will be divided into different 'modules' or topics, each with a different focus. The exact focus of each module is yet to be determined, but the topics covered might include information about voices and physical health, stress, sleep deprivation, and how to cope with distressing voices at home, in the family, in the workplace, and at school or university. We believe that it is important that this section of the website is developed by people with personal experience of hearing voices and includes a variety of different perspectives and experiences. We want the website to reach out to as many people as possible, to feel accessible, engaging and 'real', and to showcase knowledge gained through lived experience, alongside that which comes from research.

The role is ideally suited to a UK-based individual or group who:

- Has personal experience of hearing voices. (Note: groups might also choose to include those with experience of supporting someone who hears voices)
- Has experience of writing for diverse audiences using a variety of different formats (e.g. blog posts, web copy, reports)
- Feels confident talking to individuals and groups of people about distressing voice-hearing experiences, the way they impact on their life and the techniques they use to deal with them
- Is interested in a range of experiences, and has the commitment and ability to explore and represent this diversity in the content they develop
- Has good links with voice-hearing networks across the UK, including peer support groups for people who hear voices or have other unusual experiences

The appointed individual(s) will work with us to create a suitable structure for 'Living with Voices' and develop written content for the modules it contains. We currently envisage that this will involve the production of approximately 10 000 words, though the section may include links to longer personal testimonies and articles. Ideally, the commissioned material will:

- Originate from and be accessible and relevant to voice-hearers and their families from a diverse range of social and cultural backgrounds and communities (e.g. young people aged 16+, older adults, Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities)
- Foreground the diverse voices, lived experience and personal testimonies of voice-hearers and those who support them
- Be informed by direct communication and consultation with voice-hearers, their friends, families and health and social care professionals (for example, through workshops, visiting peer support groups, interviews and surveys), as well as research into currently available online resources on voice-hearing

It is also important that the content for 'Living with Voices' addresses the information needs and concerns highlighted by the results of our ongoing stakeholder consultation, which has already engaged over 100 voice-hearers, family members and clinicians in identifying key priorities for the

site. A summary of the consultation results will be provided to the appointed individual(s) by Hearing the Voice.

## **Roles and responsibilities**

*Integrated Voices* is led by a team which includes individuals from Hearing the Voice, voice-hearers, graphic designers and website developers. The development of the content for 'Living with Voices' will be an iterative process undertaken in close collaboration with the IV editorial team. The Editorial Lead, Dr Victoria Patton, will be the main point of contact for the group or individual appointed and will work closely with them to make sure that the project runs to the agreed timescale, that the necessary information is included in the section, that it is clearly authored by members of the voice-hearing community, reflects its diversity, and retains consistency of style with other sections of the website. The website has an underpinning ethics statement to which the appointed individual or group will be expected to subscribe and adhere, and an end-user group, which includes voice-hearers, their families and friends, as well as health and social care professionals. Members of this end user group will be invited to give feedback on the content for 'Living with Voices' part way through the content development process.

Those submitting proposals for the commission should be aware that, if they are appointed, they will be asked to:

- Provide, or be prepared to undertake, DBS checks required for individuals working with vulnerable adults.
- Secure written consent to include any anonymised personal testimonies and individual coping strategies on the *Integrated Voices* website from all content contributors
- Attend monthly editorial meetings in Durham (March through to July, details to be confirmed)
- Share a work-in-progress in a presentation on 'Living with Voices' at the Waddington Street Community Centre in Durham on Thursday 10 May 2018, 5–7pm

## **Timescales**

- Submission of proposals – Wednesday 14 February 2018
- Award of commission – by Friday 23 February 2018
- Submission and approval of final content plan for 'Living with Voices' – end of March 2018
- Development of content – April–May 2018
- Work-in-progress presentation at Waddington Street Community Centre, Durham – 10 May 2018
- Presentation of draft content to consultation/end user groups – early June 2018
- Delivery of final content – by end of July 2018

## **How to apply**

Proposal submissions should be sent to **Victoria Patton** (Communications, Engagement and Impact Lead, Hearing the Voice) at [victoria.patton@durham.ac.uk](mailto:victoria.patton@durham.ac.uk) **by 5pm on Wednesday 14 February 2018.**

Proposals should comprise:

- A cover letter including a statement of the group or individual's understanding and experience of voice-hearing and information on their suitability to undertake the commission

- CV or similar for the group or individual applying to carry out the commission, highlighting any relevant experience or past projects which evidence work in online communications and instances of collaborative working
- An example of your writing that you feel demonstrates your ability to write content for this website
- A statement (maximum 2 sides of A4) explaining how the group or individual would propose to go about working on the commission, including information about how website content will be acquired from the voice-hearing community and reflect its diversity
- A detailed breakdown of costs. Please note that the available fee must cover all time and materials for the commission, including any relating to research and/or communication with voice-hearers and those who support them. Travel and accommodation costs for attending meetings in Durham will be covered by Hearing the Voice.

### **Informal enquiries ahead of submission**

For any enquiries ahead of submission please contact Victoria Patton at [victoria.patton@durham.ac.uk](mailto:victoria.patton@durham.ac.uk) or on 0191 334 8167.