



Learning partner opportunity:

Changing marginalised people's relationships with each other and systems

1. Background

Leeds GATE are a community members organisation for Gypsies and Travellers based in Leeds, West Yorkshire. Established for 15 years, our overall goal is to improve quality of life for Gypsy and Traveller people. We do this through working toward four main aims:

- Increasing citizenship and social inclusion
- Improving Health
- Improving Accommodation
- Improving access to education, employment and financial inclusion.

Leeds GATE is a collaboration between Gypsy and Traveller communities and non-Gypsy Traveller communities and our work is firmly based upon our collective values, co-produced with our members.

A set of organisational behaviours also guides our work and we are committed to being a learning organisation, a creative organisation, and an asset based organisation.

Lankelly Chase is an independent foundation working in partnership with people across the UK to create a system that is effective in contending with the interlocking nature of severe disadvantage. We commission, co-design and grant fund a variety of practice, policy and research programmes which help us in this mission and help to tell us how change really happens for people living difficult lives at the margins of society.

Lankelly Chase and Leeds GATE have been working together for 3 years. An initial enquiry into using asset based community development in Gypsy Traveller communities was concluded in July 2017.

2. Aims

Following the conclusion of our previous work, we have identified new areas to build on and gaps in our understanding. We now wish to engage a learning partner to work alongside Leeds GATE and Lankelly Chase to examine the primary learning aims of:

a) Exploring the role of expressions of solidarity between different marginalised groups in changing their relationships to each other and their relationships to organisations, processes and policies impacting on their experiences and outcomes

Our experience suggests that solidarity can be a powerful tool for groups on the margins who often struggle to be heard. We think that a collective voice could be stronger than speaking individually. We also think that sharing collective experiences and learning from each other could provide opportunities for growth and sharing best practice amongst groups that due to their marginalisation are often unconnected to wider movements for change.

We will further our enquiry into the theme of solidarity, seeking to identify:

- What are the collective assets and experiences of those on the margins in Leeds?
- How can these be used together to influence change in the perception and treatment of marginalised groups?

We want to work with a learning partner to establish a feedback loop which can drive our collective learning. The partner would assist us to frame and articulate our ideas in a way which amplifies our voices and those of our solidarity partners within spaces and places which have the power to create change.

b) Exploring the assets and experiences of Gypsy Traveller young people and how these can be articulated in relationships to organisations, processes and policies impacting on their experiences and outcomes

We have so far learnt that Gypsy Traveller young people are often multiply excluded from public assets, and this appears to be worsening through cuts to culturally specific services and changes to the schools system. We have observed a deepening of young people's exclusion through their community assets also being eroded, a lack of accommodation and increasing stress on relationships to wider communities.

We wish to further our understanding of this through Gypsy Traveller young people delivering their own enquiry into their assets, seeking to answer:

- What are the collective assets and experiences of Gypsy Traveller young people in Leeds?
- How can these be articulated back to systems and influence change?

The enquiry will be led by young people and driven by their interests and talents.

3. Key responsibilities

The role of the learning partner is to act as a supporter, guide and 'critical friend' to our project group consisting of Leeds GATE staff and Lankelly Chase staff and other project partners.

The term 'learning partner' is used instead of 'evaluator' or 'researcher' deliberately, as we are not asking for an evaluation. We are looking for a dynamic rather than static approach: an ongoing action learning process of 'collecting and reflecting' with specific outputs yet to be negotiated between the project partners. We are looking for assistance to place our learning and ideas within an academic and social policy framework that allows us greater ownership of the ground on which we stand. This could be delivered by an independent consultant or partnership, research company, academic department or any similar organisation.

We anticipate that activities and outputs would include, but not be limited to:

- Establishing context: understanding of position of Gypsy Traveller people in UK society and other marginalised groups
- Designing and implementing a process of reflection, including; structured contact time, facilitated discussions, exchange with other networks and learning from within and outside of sectors
- Active participation in a "learning loop" of Leeds GATE / Lankelly Chase / Partners / Learning Partner
- Regular internal and external communication e.g. blogs on project learning
- A training, support and quality control framework which supports Leeds GATE to undertake research activities and 'own their own knowledge'
- Working directly with Leeds GATE's youth worker and young people to establish models for collecting and analysing information, including participatory research methods
- Production and communication of learning. 'Traditional' reports are part of a useful picture, but we are also keen to explore other forms of collecting, analysing and reporting learning. We are interested in an approach which can communicate information and data in creative ways to a variety of different audiences and help to amplify our learning.

4. Qualities and experience/skills

The partnership is based on a strong sense of shared values and principles, so we are looking for a learning partner who shares a commitment to openness, honesty, empathy and reflection. In responding to this opportunity, we would expect potential learning partners to outline:

- a) Their initial ideas on how the learning outcomes might be achieved
- b) Knowledge, skills and experience relating to the fields of community development, youth work, innovation and marginalised groups including experience of sharing research methodologies with delivery staff and young people/ community members / facilitating peer research;
- c) Demonstrable experience of, and commitment to, harnessing and amplifying the voices of marginalised communities and framing community owned knowledge;
- d) Experience of capturing learning and sharing it in creative ways and formats;
- e) An understanding of questions relating to data protection and the management and maintenance of data;
- f) An understanding of safeguarding and an ability to work in an asset based way with vulnerable people;

g) Experience of relationship building and stakeholder engagement

5. Responding to this opportunity

We are happy to accept submissions from consortia/partnerships, in the knowledge that different experiences and skillsets may be required to deliver the best work across the two learning aims.

We are open to informal approaches and discussions about this opportunity, but will also require written information on the above to enable a shortlisting/decision process between Leeds GATE and Lankelly Chase (see below).

For informal enquiries, please contact Ellie Rogers, Deputy CEO at Leeds GATE:

ellie@leedsgate.co.uk

0113 2402444

Interested parties should produce a proposal, detailing how you would approach this request and **what you will do to meet the specification detailed above in section 4**, this should be up to four sides of A4.

Full applications should be sent to yasmin@lankellychase.org.uk

In addition, applicants should supply a summary of the costs and resources for the work. It is suggested that at a minimum this sets out the different types of costs the project will incur, and when these are likely to occur.

The budget available for this work is expected to be **£20,000**.

The project will run until July 2020 and there is an expectation of between 30-60 days contact time, to be negotiated.

Timescales

- **February 2018: call issued**
- **23rd March: deadline for expressions of interest**
- **9th April interviews to be held in Leeds**
- **April 2018 learning partner appointed and work begins**

The majority of work will take place in and around Leeds, but occasional travel to London (where Lankelly Chase is based) will also be required, plus potentially other locations as appropriate (eg knowledge sharing).

Appendix 1: Leeds GATE history and context

www.leedsgate.co.uk

Leeds GATE is a community members organisation for Gypsy and Traveller people in West Yorkshire. Our aim is to improve quality of life for our communities. We work in partnership to address the issues which affect our homes, our health, our education and employment, and our circumstances within UK society.

Leeds Gypsy and Traveller Exchange (Leeds GATE) was started by Gypsy and Irish Traveller people working with colleagues and friends from other communities who want to improve quality of life for our families and communities. To this day, in line with our governing document, the majority of the members of our Executive Board are from the Gypsy and Irish Traveller communities.

Leeds GATE run a number of projects to achieve our aims including advocacy, youth work, community development, heritage and training. We also work strategically to develop policy and services that value our members assets.

Appendix 2: Lankelly Chase and the 'system conditions'

Over time, Lankelly Chase has refined the best way of achieving our mission from 'funding what works' to 'spreading the *preconditions* of what works'. Across a wide range of current and previous projects working on various elements of multiple disadvantage, we have learned that the most successful change projects tend to have the same fundamental principles in common, and exhibit the same basic pillars in their approach. We describe these 'system conditions' as:

- People see themselves as part of an interconnected whole
- There is shared purpose and vision
- Feedback and collective learning drive adaptation
- People are viewed as resourceful and bringing strengths
- Leadership is collaborative and promoted at every level
- Power is shared and equality of voice is actively promoted
- Decision making is devolved
- Open, trusting relationships enable effective dialogue
- Accountability is mutual.