Designed By Us - Evaluation Partner Brief

1. About the programme

Designed By Us is a five-year partnership between Leeds GATE and Proud Gypsy Traveller (PGT), working to address health inequities experienced by Gypsy and Traveller communities.

Funded by the National Lottery Community Fund the project is delivering a regional programme of work across Yorkshire to improve health outcomes for Gypsies and Travellers. The work is systemic, not focused on delivery.

The organisations are also part of a national partnership convened by the National Lottery Community Fund looking to influence systems and support lived experience leadership. This national partnership will also support the design of a fund at the National Lottery Community Fund. This work is separately evaluated and is not in the scope of this brief.

Our approach works across four interconnected levels and aims to create meaningful changes in access, practice, representation and policy:

Gypsy & Traveller Communities > Gypsy & Traveller Organisations > Public Services > Systems

See Appendix 1 for our working Theory of Change.

We are seeking an evaluation partner to walk beside us on this journey. We want to understand how change happens, how power shifts, what communities experience, what systems do differently and what we learn along the way. We want practical support throughout the project, with a partner using their skills to enhance and support our systems work.

This project will work with Romany Gypsies, Irish Travellers and Scottish Gypsy Travellers who are living in and passing through Yorkshire. All of these groups are protected ethnic minorities who have historic and current experiences of state violence and oppression, racism and unequal outcomes. As such any practitioner working with us needs to be informed about how racism operates structurally and interpersonally and be trauma informed.

www.leedsgate.co.uk

www.proudgypsytraveller.co.uk

2. What we are looking for

We want someone who can work alongside our communities, Leeds GATE and PGT to:

- help us understand and evidence change;
- strengthen our internal ability to evaluate;
- support organisations and community members with resources and training to enable peer research projects;
- capture journeys of change using creative and culturally informed methods;
- capture change at our different impact levels - community, organisational, service and systems levels;
- be relational in your working – establish trust which leads to productive conversations about change and adaptation;
- produce useful evidence for communities, partners, commissioners, practitioners and the funder;
- provide evaluation support in real-time – evidencing our test approaches, supporting our peer researchers, helping us to reflect and growing our approaches;
- work across a programme of work which includes 2 lead organisations, multiple projects, partners and stakeholders.

3. A radical and transformative approach

The approach of our partner needs to be relevant and engaging to Gypsy and Traveller communities in Yorkshire. We are interested in approaches that pay attention to power, are trauma informed, share ownership with communities and make information accessible and useful.

Traditional models of evaluation can replicate harms to communities – extract and lock away information, re-create power dynamics, not pay attention to race and racism, fail to provide care for people sharing experiences of trauma.

We want the evaluation itself to reflect the changes the programme is trying to create in terms of power, relationships and representation. This means moving away from an extractive model towards one of collaboration and valuing all forms of knowledge.

Our approach:

- **Non-extractive and community-owned** – People benefit from participating, understand how their stories are used and have a say in how findings are interpreted and used.
- **Trauma-informed and power-aware** – Evaluation prioritises safety, trust, choice, collaboration, empowerment and cultural context. It avoids unnecessary retelling of difficult experiences, provides appropriate care and challenges traditional power imbalances around whose knowledge counts.
- **Solutions-focused** – Evaluation supports communities to create change, not simply document their experiences. Communities help define what success looks like, building on their strengths, knowledge and priorities.
- **Developmental and systems-focused** – Evaluation supports learning and adaptation throughout the five-year programme, capturing changes in relationships, power, behaviour, policy, commissioning, practice and governance.
- **Creative, accessible and mixed-method** – Evaluation combines meaningful quantitative evidence with lived experience, stories, observation and creative approaches that enable different people to participate.

- **Asset-based and capacity-building** – Evaluation recognises community strengths and builds knowledge, confidence, skills and resilience within communities and organisations.

4. Methods and approaches we like

We would like our evaluation partner to propose methods and are open to new approaches. The following are examples of methods we have used positively in the past.

- Creative methods – including arts and mapping - shoulder to shoulder with communities
- Peer Research including chain referral sampling
- Systems mapping
- Most Significant Change
- Reflective practice
- Storytelling and case studies

Where appropriate, we would also like to explore the use of recognised or validated measurement tools, but only where they are meaningful and accessible to the people involved. We do not want to use tools that disempower or extract.

5. Relational Working

It is our experience of systems work that relational working is key to mutual understanding and navigating change. The person or team matters as much as the methodology and proposal. We are looking for people who are warm, curious, approachable, flexible, reflective, able to build trust, and comfortable with challenge and uncertainty.

You will need to work well with community members, young people, staff, voluntary sector organisations and other practitioners. We do not expect you to arrive as the expert on our communities. We do expect openness to learning from them.

6. What we want to understand

Communities	Are people experiencing greater participation and influence? Do people feel heard and valued? Are people experiencing more fairness and equity in services? Do people feel empowered to advocate for their health and wellbeing? Do people have more knowledge and understanding?
Gypsy & Traveller Organisations	Is infrastructure and sustainability strengthening? Is lived experience leadership supported and growing? Are partnerships effective? Is there impact outside of the project?
Practitioners & Services	Are relationships and understanding changing?

	Is practice improving? Do pathways change and develop?
Systems	Are we seeing changes to commissioning processes? Is there evidence of governance, policy and responsibility about Gypsy and Traveller outcomes? Is information improving? Are organisations being trusted, listened to, valued and paid as partners?
We are particularly interested in the connections between these levels - for example, whether community leadership and evidence lead to different practitioner behaviour, which in turn contributes to commissioning or policy change.	

7. Input and products

We do not envisage evaluation resulting in one large report at the end of the programme. We would like a useful body of evidence that develops throughout the programme. This might include:

Programme Assets:

- Baseline / starting-point work
- Agreed evaluation framework
- Theory of Change development

Peer Research

- Training peer researchers – Young People and adults
- Supporting peer researchers
- Reports / creative outputs from peer research projects

Policy Support

- Supporting policy team with methods for data gathering and analysis
- Mini evaluations of project based work – for example, if we trial a new way of working, we'd like you to support us to evaluate its success
- Support to develop our data on mental health and collaborate with other partners on a shared data set

Programme Evaluation

- Quarterly attendance at Steering Groups and weekly contact with various project based staff
- Quantitative datasets -validated tools where appropriate
- Qualitative evidence and community stories - visual or creative outputs
- Systems-change evidence
- How to or tool kit type products describing our methodology, approaches and success which can be used to level up influence and support other organisations
- Interim evaluation
- Final evaluation

Outputs should be accessible and useful to different audiences.

8. Accountability

The evaluation partner will need to be accountable to the partnership and to the communities involved in Designed By Us. We would expect to agree arrangements covering:

- Community involvement in evaluation governance
- Ethical practice and consent
- Safeguarding
- Data ownership and use
- Feedback to participants
- Publication and communications
- Challenge and disagreement
- How communities influence interpretation of findings

We particularly want applicants to explain how they would prevent evaluation becoming extractive.

9. The Opportunity

Budget available	£212365
Contract period	4 years, 7 months
Expected start date	January 2027
Key milestones	Timings are indicative and subject to change: Induction Jan- Feb 2027 Programme Assets Produced by April 2027 Peer Researchers Trained July 2027 – January 2028 Peer Research Projects Supported January 2028 – January 2029 Policy and Training Team Supported - January 2027 – programme end Toolkits and Practice Models Developed July 2029 – July 2030 Midway Evaluation July 2028 Final Evaluation July 2030. The final evaluation will be completed ahead of programme closure to allow time for findings to be reviewed, shared and used to inform influencing activity, future practice and sustainability planning.

How to apply / respond	Fill in our online form by 12pm January 3rd 2027
Deadline	12pm, 3rd January 2027 Interviews will be held on 12th January – please reserve this date in your diary when you make the application
Contact	Ellie Rogers, CEO, Leeds Gypsy and Traveller Exchange ellie@leedsgate.co.uk
Selection process	The questions are weighted and this is described in the form. Interview will consist of staff and community members from Leeds GATE and Proud Gypsy Traveller.

Funding Available – please note this is inclusive of VAT.

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	TOTAL
40000	41200	42436	43709	45020	212365

Appendix 1: Theory of Change

