Leeds Social Sciences Institute
PGR Placement Fellowship Opportunity

Development of Chapeltown CAB’s Social Policy Plan

with Chapeltown Citizen’s Advice Bureau
(10 hours per week for 13 weeks from May 2011)

The Leeds Social Science Institute is launching a PGR Placement Fellowship Scheme for social science post graduate researchers interested in working in a research capacity in a range of local organisations. The Scheme encourages social science post graduate researchers to engage with the needs of external organisations and to build the knowledge gained from the placement into their future research plans.

The successful applicants will receive a bursary funded by University of Leeds Higher Education Innovation Fund.

Research Organisation: Chapeltown CAB

Project Title: Development of Chapeltown CAB’s Social Policy Plan

Length of Fellowship: 10 hours per week for 13 weeks

Proposed start date: May 2011

Location of Fellowship Chapeltown

EXPECTED TASKS

Chapeltown CAB are pushing ahead with their social policy work, and are making it a real priority for their Bureau. As a result a Social Policy Working Group has been set up to identify the priority areas of social policy for CCAB, and then set in place projects to address these. A Social Policy Development Plan is currently being drafted. Elements of this will involve a social policy review, and review of the CCAB’s practices in respect of social policy.

The student would be expected to assist in the development of the Social Policy Development Plan through:

- participate in research relating to Chapeltown CAB priority areas (these have not yet been finalised but are likely to include the impending welfare reforms, which could involve issues such as the abolition of the Sure Start Maternity Grant, the ESA Work Capability Assessment, Housing Benefit changes etc, and other issues such as the ability to pay for fuel costs, the cuts to Legal Aid etc)

- engage in specific projects and analyse social policy on specific areas. This would involve potentially engaging in surveys or information gathering to assess client needs and how services could be improved, liaising with external organisations and drafting reports and evaluations of findings.

The majority of this work will be undertaken directly by the post graduate researcher. The Chapeltown CAB will develop a programme of work for the students and provide suitable office accommodation and equipment.
SKILLS REQUIRED

- Proven qualitative and/or quantitative research skills
- Ability to translate research findings into practical policy proposals
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills
- Ability to work with a wide range of academic and non-academic partners

BACKGROUND

Chapeltown CAB is a community organisation which aims to provide the advice that people need to assist with the problems that they face, as well as to improve the policies and practices that affect people’s lives. They provide a drop in service for assessment of clients’ problems, and are either provided with initial advice, referred for a further advice session or signposted to specialist casework within the CAB or to external organisations. They also run various projects such as advice surgeries at local GPs and Children’s Centres, a learning difficulties project, and they also conduct some home visits. Because of Chapeltown CAB’s community base, they deal heavily with issues of welfare benefits, debt, housing, immigration and so on.

The post graduate researcher will be based with the Chapeltown CAB team and will work closely with policy officers within the Team to deliver the project. The student will also work with the Director of the Leeds Social Sciences Institute to evaluate the success of the placement and identify other opportunities for placements within Chapeltown CAB and partner organisations.

Where the student would be involved in working with vulnerable groups they would have to undergo relevant CRB checks. Any research involving the student in direct contact with the public (eg interviews) would also have to go be approved by the University Ethics Committee.

Leeds Social Sciences Institute will fund the placement through HEIF funds, providing a bursary of £1300, and the placement must be completed by the 31st July 2011.

This project supports the Institutes’ strategic objective to enhance partnerships between social scientists and the public and third sector, to maximise the impact of our research and to make a valuable contribution to society. It is also in line with the ESRC’s strategic objective to extend and deepen knowledge exchange networks across the public, private and third sectors.

The student will be able to use the results of this study (suitably anonymised and with ethical approval from the appropriate University of Leeds committee) to produce a range of academic publications and presentations.

The closing date for this call is 18th April 2011.

Applicants should submit a short cv plus a statement explaining why they would like to take up this opportunity, what experiences and skills make them suited to the position and what this work will contribute towards their research plans to Sophia Kennedy at s.kennedy@leeds.ac.uk.

Applications will be considered by the panel and successful applicants will be notified within two weeks of the application closing date. Written confirmation of support from the applicant’s supervisor will be required with the application.

Any enquiries please contact Sophia Kennedy at S.Kennedy@Leeds.ac.uk

-OR-
Laura Black
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