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: Leeds City Council**

**Project Title:** The Impact of the 2010 Spending Review on Public Services in Leeds

**Length of Fellowship:** 2 days per week for 13 weeks

**Proposed start date:** April 2011

**Location of Fellowship Leeds**

**Purpose of the Study**

To explore the impact of the Spending Review on public services in Leeds, with particular emphasis on the effect of reductions in government funding on services provided by the public and third sectors.

**Research Programme**

The study will complement and draw from several other strands of work currently being undertaken by Leeds City Council. These include reviews of:

- the impact of the increases in tuition fees on our universities and the city;
- the likely effect of changes to the benefits regime on communities across the city;
- the impact of City Council policies on businesses in the city; and
- a retrospective analysis of third sector activity across council wards.

The study will cover all the major public sector providers including the City Council, the NHS, the universities, further education institutions, the Transport Authority and the Police and Fire and Rescue authorities. The secondary effect on the third sector and the services they provide should also be assessed.

**Outcomes**

The outcomes to include:

- a summary of the effect of the reduction of public sector funding on the public sector partners listed above (in financial terms, service and job impact);
• a summary of the secondary effects on third sector providers within Leeds;
• recommendations of how this analysis can be used to affect future policy.

The majority of this work will be undertaken directly by the post graduate researcher. Leeds City Council 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

The Spending Review announced on 20th October 2010 set out the Government’s spending plans for the four years from 2011/12 to 2014/15. The Review presented a significant challenge for public services with unprecedented reductions in Government financial support across the sector. Local authorities have been particularly affected with a real terms reduction in funding of 26% over the Spending Review period that is significantly front-loaded.

The effect on local authorities and their public sector partners has been profound and the impact at ground level, on the communities we serve, is only now becoming clear.

This change to the level of resource available to the public sector is accompanied by the potentially significant changes to the relationship between the citizen and the state set out in the Localism Bill.

The post graduate researcher will be based with the Finance team at Leeds City Council 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 Leeds City Council and partner organisations.

Mentoring Arrangements

The Council contact will be Mike Woods, Senior Financial Manager will meet regularly with the research student during the course of the study and will facilitate contacts with other council officers as required.

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 (e.g. 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 **Friday 8 April**

**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-

Mike Woods, Senior Financial Manager, Leeds City Council (0113 395 1373), e-mail: mike.woods@leeds.gov.uk.