Leeds Social Sciences Institute
PGR Placement Fellowship Opportunity

Chapeltown CAB Social Policy Project

with Chapeltown Citizens Advice Bureau
(10 hours per week for 13 weeks from April 2012)

The Leeds Social Science Institute PGR Placement Fellowship Scheme is 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. In time it is hoped that the University and the partner organisation will co-fund the fellowships. The student will be employed by the University of Leeds throughout the placement.

Research Organisation: Chapeltown CAB

Project Title: Chapeltown CAB Social Policy Project

Length of Fellowship: 10 hours per week for 13 weeks (there is potentially some flexibility regarding these times, however subject to agreement by CCAB)

Proposed start date: April 2012

Location of Fellowship: Chapeltown, Leeds

EXPECTED TASKS

Chapeltown CAB (CCAB) engages in social policy work as part of its work. We hold regular social policy meetings and have a Social Policy Working Group, which was set up to identify the priority areas of social policy for CCAB, and then set in place projects to address these. Last year we successfully participated in the Leeds Social Sciences Institute placement, and our post-graduate student was involved in a successful project relating to the inconsistent procedure regarding GP charges for medical evidence needed by our clients for welfare benefits appeals, and wrote an extensive report on this topic. Work on a Social Policy Development Plan is ongoing, and elements of this will involve a social policy review, and review of the CCAB’s practices in respect of social policy. Social policy work that we are currently working on includes increases in fees for immigration applications, a review of cuts to bus services and transport fees and the likely impact of this on communities, as well as work on fuel poverty. We are about to commence another sizeable project which will tackle a social policy issue which is important for our Bureau, and we would like a post-graduate student to develop the project.
The student would be expected to assist in the development of the project through:

- participating in research relating to the Chapeltown CAB placement project topic (this has not yet been fully finalised but is likely at this stage to focus on adult social care and learning difficulties, with potential links to the closure of day centres/welfare reforms/the impact of advice provision to the adult social care community etc)

- engaging in specific projects and analysing 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
- Knowledge of social care/learning difficulties would be highly desirable (as it is likely that the project will focus on this area), as would skills of being able to communicate effectively with people with learning difficulties
- Knowledge of welfare issues/interest in the welfare system, including welfare reforms would be highly desirable
- Having a passion for social justice

**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 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 2012.

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 9 March 2012**

**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 Kathryn Kemp at k.r.kemp@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 Kathryn Kemp at k.r.kemp@leeds.ac.uk

-OR-

Laura Black, Chapeltown Citizen’s Advice Bureau, at laura.black@chapeltowncab.org.uk