Leeds Social Sciences Institute
PGR Placement Fellowship Opportunity
‘The Implementation of Policy Change in Relation to Child Protection Conferences’
with Leeds Children’s Services, Leeds City Council
(10 hours per week for 13 weeks from May 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.

Research Organisation: Leeds Children’s Services, Leeds City Council
Project Title: ‘The Implementation of Policy Change in Relation to Child Protection Conferences’

Length of Fellowship: 10 hours per week for 13 weeks

Proposed start date: May 2012

Location of Fellowship: Children’s Services, Leeds City Council, Merrion House, Leeds

EXPECTED TASKS

The ‘strengthening families’ framework which Leeds Children’s Services are using for their new child protection conference system is designed to progress child protection plans more quickly to successful outcomes for children, primarily by engaging families and children in identifying the concerns and what needs to change so that they are a more active part of the plan and its implementation. In addition, requiring all agencies to analyse their information and to be clear about impact on the child helps to be more focused on what needs to change and parents feel more informed about what they need to do and what is trying to be achieved. West Berkshire have undertaken some initial research on this when they adopted the model, and it is a model recommended in the Munro Report so there have been other studies in some of the London boroughs. Members of the ‘safeguarding’ unit are keen to learn more about the implementation of their new approach and its impacts on service users.

The applicant will work with key staff in Leeds Children’s Services to outline and conduct a review of changes to the practice of all agencies with regard to better quality analysis of risk. Leeds Children’s Services would like to assess the impact and success of these developments.

The Placement holder will:

- Work with staff in Leeds Children’s Services to identify a suitable focus of research to inform the wider analysis of the impact of changes to children’s protection plans.
- Seek professional’s views on whether or not this policy change has improved practice.
- Consider what training, advice and support professionals require or required in order to improve skills in analysis of risk
- Help identify, collate and analyse relevant data in order to assess the impact of policy change on service delivery and service users – children and families.
- Assist in identifying impacts that derive from the new approach.
- Explore and seek to quantify the various benefits and social outcomes associated with the policy change.
- Work with staff and research unit staff to identify the impacts on officers’ time and working practices.
- Possibly engage in interviews with staff regarding the impact of the policy changes on their approach and workloads as well as on the satisfaction of service users.
- Draft and write a summary report and evaluation of findings.

The majority of this work will be undertaken directly by the post graduate researcher. Leeds Children’s Services will develop a programme of work for the Placement holder and provide suitable office accommodation and equipment, as well as access to relevant data and people.

The applicant will need to undergo or hold a valid CRB check. Any research involving the student in direct contact with the public (e.g. interviews) would also have to be approved by the University Ethics Committee.

**Skills Required**
- Good communication and interview skills.
- Ability to work well in a team and excellent interpersonal skills
- Good quality writing skills.
- Possibly the ability to analyse some quantitative data and work with statistical software packages/spreadsheets.
- Ability to translate research findings into practical policy proposals
- Awareness of ethical practice and the need to ensure confidentiality where appropriate.
- Ability to work with a wide range of non-academic partners

It is anticipated that the Placement holder will prepare a report summarising the findings of their work to Leeds Children’s Services.

**Background**

Leeds partnership brings together the following partners: NHS Leeds, Leeds Youth Offending Service, West Yorkshire Police, West Yorkshire Probation, Job Centre Plus, local schools, colleges and children’s centres, the voluntary sector, and Leeds City Council services such as children and young people’s social care, housing, early years, and education and learning. The partners share a commitment to the Children and Young People’s Plan (CYPP) which describes the shared priorities for improvement and is responsible for improving outcomes for children and young people. The business of Children Leeds is managed by the Children’s Trust Board (CTB). The Board is led by Judith Blake, the senior Councillor responsible for Children’s services, and Nigel Richardson, the Director of Children’s services.

The Children and Young People’s Plan sets out the outcomes, priorities and actions designed to improve services for children and families across Leeds. The plan is one of five city priority plans for Leeds and the CTB is one of five boards operating as part of the Leeds Initiative. The other four boards are Safer and Stronger Communities, Sustainable Economy and Culture, Regeneration, and Health and Well Being. The Leeds Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) is responsible for holding those agencies responsible for promoting children’s welfare, and protecting them from abuse and neglect to account for how well they keep children and young people safe. The LSCB is represented on the CTB. The two Boards work together closely and their responsibilities are complementary.

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-

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