Inequalities Research Network: notes from workshop 18th May 2016

Inequalities research within the University covers various disciplines and areas of lived experience including age, disability, ethnicity, gender, poverty and religion. The aim of this workshop was to build on and develop a network of researchers, practitioners, policymakers, service users and third sector groups working on inequality issues to support learning, collaboration and social change. This workshop provided a forum for wide-ranging discussions on inequalities research projects that can contribute to a fairer society on the following topics:

- Work – in relation to other themes below
  - A. Transport
  - B. Islamophobia
  - C. Mental Health / Young People
  - D. Other pressing inequalities challenges the Network should address. How should the Network operate and what activities should it organise?

A summary of the key points discussed are captured below.

**Transport discussion:**

1. Organisations including Unity in Poverty and Leeds Citizens have been campaigning on the problem that people easily cannot make journeys by bus without going into the city centre and back out again – the bus routes tend to be radial. First Group have been quite receptive to discussions on this. At the meeting we also discussed different models of governance, including the franchising approach used in London where the transport authority specifies a level of service which transport companies then run.

2. James suggested a research question: ‘What traps people in their homes?’

This is motivated by questions coming from transport – including research which has identified a range of issues which make it difficult for people to travel outside their neighbourhood, or even over short distances – this in turn has serious impacts on people’s participation, access to services the employment, education social activities open to people.

Barriers to people being able to travel include affordability and availability of transport.

Beyond this there can be issues including:

- Issues of knowing how to travel independently – it is not always easy to negotiate public transport/maps/timetables/practices of paying fares
- Physical accessibility
- Feeling safe in walking and using transport - safety from roads, harassment
- Confidence

Transport studies has done some – limited research identifying these problems. However we think that understanding the problem and thinking about resolution involves work that cuts across all the themes raised to date in the inequalities network (that is mental health; Islamophobia; young people; work.

Page 1 of 6
**Inequalities Research Network Workshop 18 May 2016**  
**KEY THEME: ISLAMOPHOBIA - notes of discussion**

Participants: Shahab entries (MEND) Ghazala Mir (University of Leeds) Alex Watson and Jane Maxwell (Leeds City Council) Jonathan Taylor (Office of Stuart Andrew MP), Richard Warrington (Voluntary Action Leeds) Adam Ranson (Leeds Development Education Centre)

### What research questions could help reduce inequalities in this area (overlaps with other themes to also be addressed)?

- **How can a Community Organising approach address issues of Islamophobia?**
  - How can communities/individuals be empowered to contribute to addressing Islamophobia?

- **What would a coproduced initiative to reduce Islamophobia, involving community organisations and local public institutions look like?**
  - How do public institutions and community organisations use the initiative in practice?

The possibility of research on the PREVENT policy was also discussed in terms of the Islamophobic element of this strategy. Training on Islamophobia rather than on Islam to counter PREVENT training and the climate of surveillance affecting Muslim populations could help inform more constructive approaches to this counterterrorism initiative. It was agreed that attention to this policy is likely to be incorporated in a coproduced initiative to reduce Islamophobia.

### Appropriate study methods?

- 4 sites where Citizens UK and MEND are active (e.g. Leeds, London, Birmingham, Cardiff)
- Training in Community Organising and Islamophobia awareness
- Listening Campaign to identify testimonies and experiences
- Review existing approaches eg self-assessment process/toolkit
- Local campaign on Islamophobia and support local public institutions/community organisations to use this.

Important to develop constructive approaches/alternatives to the PREVENT policy that can be accepted by policymakers who will not want to lose face
### Who should be involved?

- **MEND and Citizens UK**;
- **Local Authority** - Alex Watson, Director of Human Resources at Leeds City Council and Jane Maxwell also at LCC agreed to consider the proposal
- **Police** - Andrew Staniforth from the Bush West Yorkshire PCC office will be speaking at the next workshop on Islamophobia and policing
- **Educational institutions** - Richard Warrington at Voluntary Action Leads and Adam at Development Education Centre interested in being involved. The Development Education Centre and MEND have conducted some work in Leeds schools on Islamophobia.
- **Policymakers** - Jonathan Taylor works with Stuart Andrew MP, Chair of the all-party Parliamentary group on Islamophobia

### Who might fund such research?

**Nuffield Foundation** [http://www.nuffieldfoundation.org/apply-for-funding](http://www.nuffieldfoundation.org/apply-for-funding)

The Nuffield Foundation has seven grant programmes that support research and innovation:

- **Children and Families**: funds projects to help ensure that social policy and the institutions governing family life in the UK are best adapted to meet the needs of children and families.
- **Economic Advantage and Disadvantage**: funds projects on the distribution of all aspects of individual and household economic well-being, their causes and consequences.
- **Education**: funds projects in our priority areas of primary education, secondary education transitions, science and mathematics.


The following issues are of particular interest: Population groups who may have particular needs, such as first generation migrants, research on the effectiveness of interventions to reduce loneliness and unwanted social isolation and improve health and wellbeing. Health risks of loneliness and unwanted social isolation are well documented.


The Sir Halley Stewart Trust has an open call for its project grants. Priority given to proposals in social and religious areas, with education being a central theme. Projects must be innovative research projects or pioneering ground-breaking development projects. Small one-off grants are available for up to £5,000, and main grants worth up to £60,000 over a period of one to three years.

**Horizon 2020: Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme - 2016-2017**

Specific objectives are to promote non-discrimination, combat racism, xenophobia, homophobia and other forms of intolerance.
| **Racism and xenophobia:** workshops and expert meetings, tools & practices to prevent and combat hate crime and intolerance |
| Promote the identification and exchange of best practices among public authorities which bear a responsibility in implementing the provisions of national legislation on hate crime and hate speech, and in particular provisions transposing the EU Framework Decision on combatting certain forms and expressions of racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law. (Applications to be led by public authorities, co-applicants can include universities) |
| Grassroots projects on preventing and combating Antisemitism and anti-Muslim hatred and intolerance |
| Diversity management in the public and private sector: identification of existing practices, measurement of diversity management benefits, and awareness-raising. The proposed activities may be linked to the launch and implementation of Diversity Charters. |
KEY THEME - Young People (afternoon ‘table’ discussions)

Participants: Richard Warrington (VAL), Lauren (St Augustine Centre); Cuchulainn Sutton-Hamilton (VAL); Alison (Mental Health Trust in Leeds); Alex (Leeds City Council); Sue Kilminster (University of Leeds, Health Sciences), Sarah Irwin (University of Leeds, Sociology and Social Policy, and these notes)

Participants indicated their interests in Youth and some of the work they are currently undertaking. Some specific interests are listed below. The main headline discussion areas were as follows:

1. Most participants in the group were interested in mental health amongst children and youth
2. There was particular interest in possibilities for building partnerships between the University and third sector organisations to make more effective use of evidence, through:
   a. Finding ways to collect and collate ‘anecdotal’ and ‘everyday’ evidence which is bread and butter to third sector organisations yet where it is not captured and considered systematically it is effectively lost, or remains at best anecdotal. Are there mechanisms for making more effective use of such ‘in-passing’ evidence?
   b. Finding ways to translate academic knowledge and evidence into an easily digestible summary format of use to third sector organisations.

There was some brief discussion about possibilities for development work here, for example mechanisms for engaging level 3 undergraduate or MA students in such tasks, and also scoping the possibility for PhD work / a CASE (collaborative) PhD studentship.

Specific areas of interest
Almost uniformly participants highlighted interests in youth and mental health. Areas of work and interest included:

- The demand for mental health support amongst adolescents and young people transitioning to adulthood;
- Youth work provision more generally;
- Child and adolescent mental health especially with refugees, asylum seekers and Roma children;
- Educational and life outcomes for unaccompanied refugee children/youth
- Lifelong consequences of youth and mental health difficulties, especially how to track/understand this
- Mental health and its link to accessing opportunities in training and employment.
KEY THEME – Network

Participants: Alicia Ridout, Richard Warrington (Voluntary Action Leeds), Karen Vinall, Sinead D’Silva, Anthea Hucklesby, Mar Pujades, Ana de la Fuente Herrero

1. What do participants want to get out of the Network?
   a) The network should facilitate connections and share relevant work / activities / research both within and outside of the University.
   b) Bringing together the right people from different disciplines and different sectors to forge new research collaborations / projects.
   c) The group felt it would be useful to have some functionality with enabled registered users to add to the website content and to also have provision for people to exchange ideas and contribute via an online discussion / forum. For example add contact details and initiatives for the Dental Health Practice As a minimum the network should create a collection of “expert voices” who can make a real impact.
   d) Consideration to be given to linking new and existing initiatives, such as Leeds Acts, a partnership between the city’s three universities and third sector organisations, which was established in 2014. Key contacts include Jo Cutter and Gary Dymski. The network should complement rather than duplicate existing networks / groups.
   e) The network should focus on and engage with voluntary sector service providers and service users, particularly given the challenge for many service providers who are funded on a relatively short term basis (typically over 2 -3 years).
   f) Need to confirm the reach and scope of the network – is membership open beyond Leeds, is it regional, national, international etc.

2. Suggested activities / themes for the network
   a) Wider discussion on poverty with a specific focus on women.
   b) Focussed workshops / conferences on specific themes, target audience should include commissioners.
   c) Opportunity to share best practice, examples discussed included research methodologies; tips for increasing engagement with service users, particularly for hard to reach communities.
   Promoting relevant activities / events across the region, e.g. Making Diversity Interventions Count Annual Conference in Bradford on the 1 June 2016.