

Opportunity to Tender: Establishing a 'knowledge hub' on ethnic inequality and severe and multiple disadvantage

Project summary

Lankelly Chase is commissioning a two-stage project to design and establish a new 'knowledge hub' which aims to support lasting positive change to transform the lives of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) people facing severe and multiple disadvantage, including mental ill-health.

The knowledge hub will do this by encouraging and enabling different groups of people (at local and national levels and including commissioners, policy makers, politicians and activists) to understand and make better use of available data in order to improve decision making and inform effective advocacy strategies.

Deadline for expressions of interest: Monday 12 October 2015

Funds available: A total funding envelope of up to £1.25m is available for this work

Timescale: Phase 1 – design and set up – 9 months to 1 year
Phase 2 – launch and operation – (4 years)

1. Background

Lankelly Chase Foundation works to promote change to transform the lives of people facing severe and multiple disadvantage, by which we mean the persistent clustering of serious social harms such as mental ill health, substance misuse, experiences of violence and abuse, homelessness or inadequate housing and contact with the criminal justice system.

From the earliest stages of developing our work, we have been aware of the need to build an understanding of the extent and nature of the relationship between ethnicity (or more precisely the disproportionate levels of poverty, structural disadvantage and discrimination within systems experienced by BAME people) and severe and multiple disadvantage.

We have a longstanding interest in ethnic inequality in mental health as it is our conviction that the way structural disadvantage and the operation of institutional discrimination converge is a striking manifestation of severe and multiple disadvantage and a 'litmus test' for how it might be tackled.

The problem

There is no credible, independent, authoritative voice communicating usable, easily accessible, nuanced and contextualised data on ethnicity and mental health and interrelated dimensions of disadvantage and the efficacy of different responses. This directly undermines good decision making in commissioning and makes it difficult for wider stakeholders to engage with the system.

This has been particularly acute since the end of the annual 'Count Me In' census of mental health inpatients which was designed to support the Department of Health's five-year action plan for improving mental health services for BAME communities in England, Delivering Race Equality in Mental Health Care (which ended in 2010).

This results in a lack of understanding about the extent and nature of the role of ethnicity as a variable in the way disadvantage of different kinds manifests, plays out and intersects. Activists and others rely on high level information ('Black men are overrepresented in the criminal justice system') which hampers their ability to make useful recommendations for action which might actually lead to change. Commissioners and policy makers may realise there is a problem but such messages leave them at a loss as to what to actually do.

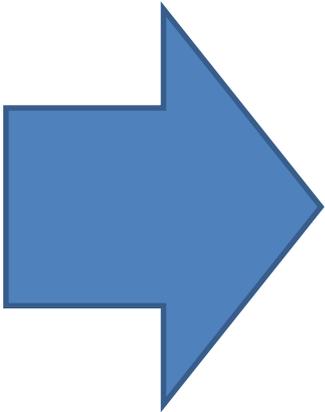
Detailed work does exist, in academia and in the voluntary sector, but this is not brought together or synthesised. It is not mined for the stories it tells about people's lives or the insights it provides about what might make a difference. It is not systematically fed into change processes or to people advocating for change.

In the developing field of 'multiple' or 'complex' needs, the lack of good data (among other things) means the nature and extent of the relationship between ethnicity and severe and multiple disadvantage is not really understood (what are the active variables at work in different situations: poverty, class, gender, age, geography, ethnicity, faith, behaviours of different systems?) so 'BAME issues' are always something of an afterthought and intersectionality in terms of identity is barely acknowledged.

Perhaps related to this, and/or to other political issues, there is a widespread perception that ethnicity and discrimination is currently off the agenda, except when viewed through certain lenses such as radicalisation.

The change we want to see

We want to see the following changes:

Where we are now		What we want to see
Ethnicity and discrimination are off the agenda except through certain politicised lenses such as extremism		Ethnicity is talked about, and in terms which reflect the reality of people's lives
(Incomplete) high level data signals a problem in very broad terms (particularly in mental health and criminal justice)		Clear and nuanced stories about how and why certain groups of people end up in certain circumstances are brought together
The voices of people with lived experience are not heard and responded to		The voices of people with lived experience are central to policy making
Commissioners and others do not know what the available data means for them and their services – 'what does this mean and what do I do about it?'		Solutions (both direct and indirect) become clearer
Activists have not fashioned a message relevant to today's political and demographic reality		Advocacy becomes more sophisticated and relevant
In the multiple needs field, the absence of BAME people from some services (and therefore data) has led to their absence from the discourse		A detailed picture of the way ethnicity and severe and multiple disadvantage relate to each other emerges and becomes a core part of the discourse in that field

Purpose of the knowledge hub

There is a need for an independent, credible and authoritative 'knowledge hub' to **collate, synthesise, interpret and communicate** data on ethnic inequality in mental health and other related domains over time. The purpose is emphatically not to just restate the broad problem of disproportionality because this is already well documented. The value will lie in more granularity (to avoid unhelpfully sweeping statements about the experience of BAME people and/or particular ethnic groups) and in explanation: **how and why certain people end up in certain circumstances.**

Early iterations of the knowledge hub idea were focused on quantitative data and large national data sets (in a sense looking back to what was lost when Count Me In ended), but this has since evolved. We now think that the creation of the knowledge hub is an opportunity to bring together **different kinds of information (both**

quantitative and qualitative) to illuminate and contextualise each other in order to create an authoritative picture. When we talk about data, therefore, we have in mind a broad definition which includes national statistics and quantitative academic research but also ethnographic research, 'practice-informed knowledge' including reports and evaluations undertaken by community organisations and 'citizen (or participatory)-knowledge' drawing on lived experience. **This is not about new research but about putting available knowledge to use as a tool for change.**

We have arrived at an understanding of the need for a knowledge hub through our focus on ethnic inequality and mental health but we are clear about the interrelationship of this with other issues including but not exclusively substance misuse, homelessness and inadequate housing, entanglement in the criminal justice system, experiences of violence and abuse, school exclusion, experience of the care system etc. The knowledge hub will not draw exclusively on health data but must connect and make sense of these interrelationships with a particular focus on **severity and multiplicity of disadvantage.**

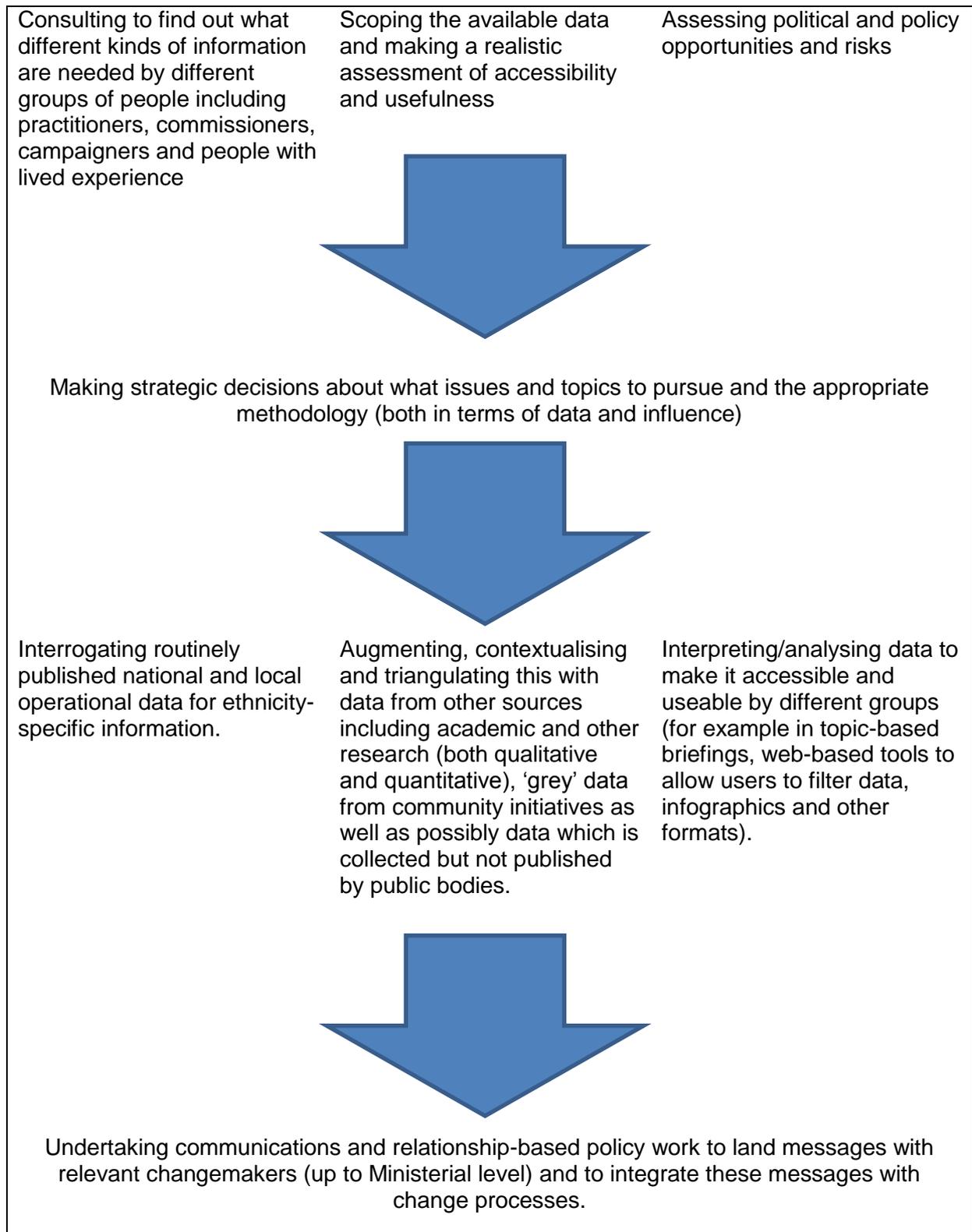
The process of designing and building the knowledge hub should have the needs of eventual data users at its heart and **be focused on achieving change.** Whatever it produces must be useful in a practical sense (it must be timely and relevant to current policy developments for example, or feed into existing change mechanisms in the NHS or other statutory agencies). At this stage we can anticipate some groups of data users and some of their needs. Any scoping exercise undertaken as part of the design/set-up work must investigate this much more thoroughly. It will also need to prioritise them and make recommendations for sequencing.

The knowledge hub will aim to:

- Create a **sense of momentum, capacity, optimism and long term commitment** and provide **an intellectual point of focus** around which all those with a concern can galvanise.
- Gradually **build a detailed and nuanced picture** of the relationship between structural disadvantage as experienced by BAME people, discrimination within systems and severe and multiple disadvantage (beginning with mental health).
- Examine key aspects of the relationship between ethnicity and severe and multiple disadvantage, including crunch points in systems, in order to **provide a more sophisticated and nuanced purchase on the levers of change.** This may increase confidence about how new campaign messaging can be formulated in an era when demographics (new and younger communities with different experiences, increasing overall numbers of BAME people) and politics combine to make old messages look outdated. It should also help to clarify indirect ways of achieving change (the example often given is the minimum wage and its disproportionate impact on BAME women).
- Feed useful, easily usable knowledge to relevant bodies and individuals to **inform decisions by statutory institutions and enable activists to hold systems to account.**

Role

In practice we expect the knowledge hub to work in the following way:



This is a simplistic rendering and the process will be cyclical rather than linear, with relationship building and stakeholder management a core element of each phase.

Structure

The knowledge hub could be hosted by a university or by a third sector organisation. The spread of expertise required (research plus political and community connectivity and communications) means a partnership will be needed. Whatever the arrangement, it will need separate branding so that it appears fresh, different and exciting ('knowledge hub' is only the working name – we expect the contractor to arrive at a name which is suggestive of something more dynamic).

Necessary resources are likely to include a lead researcher/Director, two post-doctoral level analysts, communications and policy expertise and administration. A physical 'institute' is not necessarily envisaged – a facilitated and branded network or consortia with a website could be a possibility.

Lankelly Chase has a sub-group of Trustees which will form the initial governance group for the project until a permanent arrangement is put in place (with Lankelly Chase representation). A high-profile, politically astute and well-connected (and possibly paid) Chair will need to be found.

The permanent governance group should include senior academics, people with lived experience, senior statutory figures and activists (who will also be expected to take on ambassadorial roles for the project). It will be important to structure governance and advisory arrangements to include people with a range of views so that debates about the role of the knowledge hub will take place 'inside the tent' and tactical decisions be made collaboratively.

Positioning and Connections

The overall aim of the project is to **create lasting positive change** and as such the knowledge hub has to have credible routes to change. Thinking about change mechanisms must be built into the design phase. The work of the knowledge hub must be relevant to and connected with individual or institutional changemakers and change processes, both statutory and voluntary sector. These may be quite different and there are likely to be tensions between them.

The default position on material produced by the knowledge hub should be that it is open source. However, we acknowledge that there may be legitimate reasons why this cannot always be the case. In generating earned income, the knowledge hub may undertake bespoke analytical work for particular institutions, the results of which may not be published (or published only in limited form). Such work may also be politically and tactically useful if the data generated is feeding change within statutory institutions. The risk that undertaking this kind of work undermines transparency and alienates certain groups of stakeholders will need to be managed. The tactical need for a tiered approach should be agreed collaboratively with as broad a range of stakeholders as possible. The governance group may decide that it will not accept funds from certain bodies for ethical reasons and the aspiration should be that at least 25% of the knowledge hub's income should be independent grant funding in perpetuity to ensure independence.

There should be a flow of ideas and information into as well as out of the knowledge hub from people with lived experience, practitioners, campaigners, commissioners and others with an interest. This should be more dynamic than a traditional 'advisory group' arrangement. Consideration of how to facilitate this should be part of the design phase.

The knowledge hub should be **constructive and solution-focused**. It should provide credible interpretation and analysis to help all those with a concern about these issues to do things differently to achieve change. This will mean establishing good relationships and listening to the needs and concerns of all stakeholders.

Knowledge Hub Outputs

We expect the knowledge hub to undertake at least two substantial data synthesis and communications projects each year, beginning with a focus on mental health. We envisage the launch of a number of smaller products alongside these, either responding to external opportunities or building on the larger projects. We expect the knowledge hub to run events, to blog, to have an active social media presence and to work with partners to disseminate messages.

Challenges and tensions

We have already identified a number of challenges to the success of this endeavour and inevitably there will be more. The contractor will need to bear in mind and to respond to:

- The need for pragmatic clarity about what aspects of the 'change ecosystem' in this field (top down? local?) should be within the knowledge hub's remit and which are without, and the relationship the knowledge hub should have with those without.
- Related to this, the need to prioritise and to balance different tasks.
- The need for expertise and credibility alongside innovation, creativity and fresh thinking.
- The risk of pathologising whole ethnic groups by setting up a body which connects ethnicity with disadvantage including mental ill health and the need for this to be managed through a sophisticated communications strategy, by granularity (looking at distributions within populations) and by extreme caution when making general statements about the characteristics of a community when moving from describing to explaining.
- The difficulty of accessing some of the necessary data sets (and the risk of setting up an unhelpfully antagonistic dynamic if Freedom of Information requests are relied on) and the potential weakness of the available data.
- The contested nature of the issues.
- The need for the knowledge hub to develop a sustainability plan over time and gradually to take on workstreams that have the potential to generate income, for example in the provision of bespoke analytical services to different agencies and the potential for this to 'pull' against mission.
- The need to include reference to religion as well as ethnicity.

2. Aims

- To develop a business plan for the knowledge hub
- To constructively engage the necessary strategic partners including people with lived experience.
- To establish the knowledge hub and conduct the first phase of its work.

3. Tasks

Task 1: To establish appropriate developmental advisory and steering arrangements for the design phase.

The contractor will work in partnership with Lankelly Chase and its trustees, who will form the initial governance group for the initiative, to establish an appropriate arrangement to oversee and guide the design phase of the project. The involvement of those with lived experience of the issues under consideration should be planned for at this stage.

Task 2: To engage potential data users and changemakers in the knowledge hub project and to garner their views on its role, name and design.

The contractor will need to identify who the data users might be, what they need, in what form and when (this will involve consultation with potential users, including those with lived experience). It will be important to involve statutory and voluntary sector changemakers from the beginning and to consider from the outset how the knowledge hub can be structured and positioned to achieve change. Relationship management will be key. This phase may also include work on branding including arriving at a name.

Task 3: To assess the data task including prioritising and sequencing as well as feasibility.

The contractor will need to assess the feasibility of the data task, in particular data access and to prioritise what data is most important and urgent. There will also be a need to describe potential 'products' to make data usable, including dynamic web based information, infographics and online tools.

Task 4: To develop a business plan for the knowledge hub including a workplan and budgets.

The business plan will need to describe the governance, management, financial accountability and operational systems and structures. It will set out the financial, human and other resources necessary and a timed plan for establishing the knowledge hub and for the first four years of its operation. It must include a communications and influence strategy.

Task 5: To establish the necessary governance, management, financial and operational systems and structures for the knowledge hub as per the business plan.

This phase will include transition to new permanent governance arrangements.

Task 6: To launch the project (with website and initial products) and begin operations.

The need for credibility and profile should guide the launch.

Task 7: To operate the knowledge hub for the first four-year phase of its work.

Review and future strategy development will need to be built in as well as plans for formative and summative evaluation of the project. There will be break clauses in the contract with Lankelly Chase at the end of Task 4 and after the first two years of operations.

Summary of outputs

- End of Task 1 - The establishment of appropriate developmental steering and advisory arrangements
- End of Task 3 - Presentation of an interim report to Lankelly Chase and the interim steering group or equivalent
- End of Task 4 – Presentation of business plan
- End of Task 6 – Launch of knowledge hub, website and initial products
- End of Task 7 – Final evaluation report

4. Reporting

The contractor will be expected to work closely with Lankelly Chase staff and advisors and, until appropriate and agreed permanent governance arrangements are in place, to report to an interim project governance group formed of Lankelly Chase trustees.

Lankelly Chase will set out its minimum requirements in terms of structure, approach and reporting at the contract negotiation stage and these will form part of the initiative's terms of reference.

5. Tender requirements

Parties wishing to tender should submit an expression of interest of not more than 8 sides of A4 in the first instance giving a brief summary of:

- Who they are
- How they would approach the task and what issues they would prioritise
- How they would bring data expertise, credibility, political and community connectivity, communications and influencing expertise and innovation to the table

- The main challenges and tensions they can identify in addition to the ones outlined here

Expressions of interest should be submitted to:

Oliver French, Programme Manager
Lankelly Chase Foundation
Greenworks
Dog and Duck Yard
Princeton Street
London
WC1R 4BH
oliver@lankellychase.org.uk

Shortlisted applicants will be asked to submit a full tender. There will be opportunities to discuss approach with Lankelly Chase and partners during the full tender process.

6. Selection

For information, the following criteria will be used in coming to a decision on tenders submitted:

- The experience, ability and capacity of the applicant to carry out the work.
- The soundness and appropriateness of the plan for how the work will be undertaken.
- The extent to which the contractor can demonstrate an understanding of the policy and practice dimensions including sector politics.
- Their credibility and political connectivity.
- Their communications and influencing expertise and capacity.
- The extent to which the work will consult with and include the voices of people with lived experience of the issues under consideration.
- The extent to which the approach is innovative, creative and fresh.
- Clear attention to issues of diversity in terms of the team involved in establishing and driving the initiative.
- An understanding of data access issues, questions relating to data protection and management and maintenance of data.
- A thorough understanding of the overall subject issues relating to the relationship between ethnicity and severe and multiple disadvantage, and particularly mental health.

7. Closing date

The deadline for receipt of email and hard copies of expressions of interest is **12 October 2015** and unfortunately, late submissions cannot be accepted.

8. Contact details

For any queries about this tender, please contact:

Cathy Stancer, Director, Equalities and Rights, Lankelly Chase Foundation

Tel: 020 3747 9930

cathy@lankellychase.org.uk