

Invitation to Tender:

To reveal how the media reports and covers “severe and multiple disadvantage¹” (sometimes called complex or multiple needs) and to research drivers, challenges and opportunities to enable the media to engage with and report the stories behind the subject more fully in the future.

1. Project summary

Our overall project aim:

We want to build collective knowledge and understanding of how the media is currently covering severe and multiple disadvantage.

We want to do this so that:

- We can understand what is needed, if anything, to change the culture of reporting and storytelling.
- We can understand how we, and our partners can work with the media to bring more diverse voices and different stories into mainstream media.

We believe a free press is vital in helping to engage audiences and readers in social issues. While the national, local and digital media can be very good on single-issue stories like homelessness, domestic violence, mental health and ethnic inequality, we’ve observed that it is much more difficult to engage commissioners and journalists on stories which focus on the complexity - and reality - of people’s lives.

We are seeking an organisation experienced in media research techniques to help us fully understand how key media (print, broadcast and digital) reports and covers the cross-sector issues.

¹ ‘Severe and multiple disadvantage’ is a term we coined to describe the interlocking nature of different issues in the lives of people facing extreme marginalisation. These issues include things like homelessness, extreme poverty, substance misuse, domestic abuse, contact with the criminal justice system, mental ill health and discrimination.

It is generally used to refer to clusters of problems that appear together in the lives of some people facing disadvantage.

We feel the following areas and questions could help inform the project aims:

1. How is 'extreme disadvantage' understood and described in the media?
2. How the media are reporting the stories of people facing extreme disadvantage.
3. Are the media reporting on the multiplicity of issues or only on single-issues?
4. We want to know what drives coverage.
5. Is there a dominant narrative and if so, what is it?
6. What are the tones and types of messaging?
7. Are the media choosing specific sources for information and advice on severe and multiple disadvantage? If so, which?
8. What are the breaking points/critical mass which facilitate reporting on multiplicity of issues?"
9. Where are the opportunities to change the stories?
10. What do journalists need to lean into these opportunities?
11. Does the tone of reporting change as a person experiences different circumstances e.g. bereavement and / or moves through different life stages?

We envisage the researchers will use a combination of qualitative and quantitative methodologies. This will include a story count in pre-identified media spaces over a period of time such as 1 - 2 weeks, plus interviews with journalists, commissioning editors, media opinion formers and academics who might be designing or running media and communication courses.

We'd also like to explore how this issue is reported beyond the mainstream media, for example on digital media channels like Twitter, Instagram, Medium or on digital news sites such as BuzzFeed, Huffington Post, The Pool or Vice News.

We do not expect the project to cover every single national newspaper or digital media channel or every broadcast outlet/programme, but a representative and meaningful sample. Along with our research partner, and our national partners, we would identify some key media to ensure the research is robust and use these as an indicator to the wider media narrative on severe and multiple disadvantage and the lives of the most marginalised in society.

Deadline for tender: 25th May 2018

Interviews: 4th June 2018

Ideal kick off meeting: 14th June between 9am–11am or 15th June between 1030am-1230pm

Ideal outward facing launch date: Early September

Total Budget: 50k including VAT

2. Background

Lankelly Chase has a vision, shared by many, of a society where everyone has the opportunity to live a rewarding life. We believe that we've all got a shared humanity and given the right conditions, everyone can thrive.

As an independent foundation we're working in partnership with people and local organisations, across the UK, to change the systems that perpetuate severe and multiple disadvantage. We also work with a number national of national partners whose work is cross-cutting and aims to influence policy. They are [Agenda](#), [Expert Link](#), [Family Rights Group](#), [MEAM](#), (Homeless link, Clinks, Mind) [Pathway](#), [Revolving Doors](#) and [Synergi Collaborative Centre](#).

Our mission is to get to a place where people want to, know how to and are free to create systems that are effective in responding to the interlocking nature of severe disadvantage including homelessness, extreme poverty, drug misuse, violence abuse, mental ill health and discrimination.

Please see [our website](#), [Our approach to change](#), [Hard Edges](#) and [The lives behind the numbers](#) for more insight.

3. Challenges

We have suggested several challenges that may go some way to highlighting how and why the media does not cover the complexity of people's lives who are most marginalised in society. It may be that these are used as hypotheses to test out with this research -

- a. **Time Pressure** - the fast-moving nature of news means that simpler narratives are easier to report and more likely to be picked up by journalists
- b. **Timing** - time of year could impact on coverage
- c. **Communications** - it may be that people within the voluntary or statutory sectors have not yet been so successful in communicating the complexity of the lives of people facing "severe and multiple disadvantage" in a way that captures the imaginations of the media
- d. **Jargon** – do the voluntary or statutory sectors use too much jargon for the media?
- e. **Lack of familiarity with the story** - with audiences fed a regular diet of single issue stories editors, journalists and commissioners may be reluctant to 'change the narrative' into one that is more nuanced, more complex and possibly harder to grasp in a 700-word article or 2-3-minute news broadcast
- f. **Identifying opportunities to tell the story** – the voluntary and statutory sectors may not know what the barriers are so are less likely to know where the opportunities lie.

- g. **Knowledge** – the people who get to decide what's of public interest can be far removed from the reality of people most marginalised in society. There is an imbalance of formal power and knowledge.
- h. **Other influences** - we suspect there may be other forces at play within media organisations which could influence what stories are being told e.g. the need to increase readership to drive advertising revenues.

4. Expectations

The successful organisation will have:

- a. Substantial experience in monitoring and content analysis of a range of broadcast, print and digital media
- b. Contacts at national and local media level and in academia to identify a range of journalists, academics and other opinion formers to engage in qualitative research
- c. The ability to engage with journalists, commissioning editors and academics / course designers on this subject to elicit insights and information which Lankelly Chase, our partners and others working in this field, can use to better support future our work
- d. A desire to learn about the complexity of the lives of people who are most marginalised in society
- e. An understanding of how the knowledge gained from this research might be applied to your wider work

5. Programme Deliverables

- a. Identify existing examples (case studies) of relevant good practice in reporting around severe and multiple disadvantage including whose voices are heard and what were the ingredients that made it 'work'. Which media is covering this subject well? Do longer programmes such as Panorama or The Guardian for example, with its investigative journalism series on Stoke or BBC 4's documentary series on Leeds and street prostitution cover this more than 'news?'
- b. Which media tends to avoid issues around the complexity of multiple disadvantage? Do some media outlets cover these stories but maybe not in the way that we define it? Is there a difference between old and new media outlets? Is multiple disadvantage a subject that is

discussed on social media e.g. Twitter/Facebook/blogs and are there particular angles that capture the imagination for example gender and The Pool

- c. We would expect some statistics and facts and figures as deliverables. Some of these should be written facts while others could be delivered as a timeline that might result in a change in narrative or infographics e.g. *'During the month of May 2018 (insert name of media) covered the issue of multiple disadvantage on at least ten occasions. This compares to nearly 100 occasions when they ran stories on single issues such as homelessness or domestic abuse'*
- d. Interview, either in groups or individually, with at least 10 journalists who write about social issues for the national, local and broadcast media. Why do they/don't they cover this subject? What do they think of the quality of press releases or reports they receive on these issues? How could they be improved and made more engaging? How supportive are their editors around these stories?
- e. Interview a mix of 10 commissioners of programming, media opinion formers and university media and communications course designers to inquire into what challenges or barriers to covering complex issues
- f. Organise an omnibus question of the general public on this issue
- g. Identify and recommend the core principles, processes, ideas and capabilities that could inform a workable framework for Lankelly Chase, our partners and potentially even the media and people creating media and communications courses to work with going forward

Please feel free to recommend a broad range of methods for soliciting ideas, including participatory and listening methods and social media.

6. Budget and timescale for delivery

We anticipate that this work will be undertaken over three months and we would like to launch our findings in the second week of September; there is a maximum budget of £50k for the project, which is inclusive of VAT and all expenses.

7. Management of delivery

This project will be overseen by the Communications Manager with support from a steering group of national partners and people with lived experience.

8. Submitting a tender

The tender should contain the following information (following points A to H):

a. Organisational background

Provide brief information on the organisation(s) submitting the tender.

b. Overall approach, scope and methods

Specify your approaches to the key deliverables, providing as much detail as possible.

c. Timetable

This should set out a schedule for the key deliverables, outlining how long they will take to complete and showing dependencies and linkages between the different project elements.

d. Budget

The budget must include all relevant costs including expenses and provide a clear breakdown of major elements. VAT, where applicable, should be included. In relation to staffing, if daily rates are to be used then please indicate the number of days to be worked.

e. Staffing & Project Management

Please include brief information about the main individuals who will deliver the work e.g. current post; previous experience of delivery of similar work; Applicants should also clarify project management arrangements.

f. Technical/data related issues

This should cover the proposed approach to issues around personal data collation and storage.

g. Ethical issues

This should cover any ethical issues arising and how they may be dealt with.

h. Contact details

This should be for the lead individual who will be working on the Programme and who has been involved in developing this tender.

Appendices may be attached, but these should be kept to a minimum and should be highly relevant to the tender. The maximum length is **2,000 words** not including summary or appendices. Applicants are asked to be mindful of the criteria for making decisions noted below when they submit their tenders.

Please e-mail or WeTransfer a complete version of the tender. The e-mail must be sent by **12pm, 25th May**. Tenders should be submitted to carrina@lankellychase.org.uk

9. Selection

The following criteria will be used in coming to a decision on tenders submitted:

- The experience, ability and capacity of the applicant or company to carry out the work and complete it on time
- Priority will be given to proposals where the work will be led by organisations with significant media research experience
- The ideas, creativity and insight that the applicant applies to the brief we have presented, including how they will develop an understanding of the field of reporting around severe and multiple disadvantage, will be a significant factor
- Demonstrating that thought has been given to communicating – with Lankelly Chase - the findings of the research study; delivering tweetable and shareable infographics and headlines around the insights and willingness to participate in a seminar to share the research headlines post-delivery.

10. Closing date

The deadline for an email of full proposals is **25th May at midday**. Late submissions cannot be accepted.

If shortlisted, you will need to be available for interview on the **4th June**.

12. Contact details

If you have any questions about this tender, or if you want to have a conversation about your ideas, please contact Carrina Gaffney on 020 3747 9930 or by email:

carrina@lankellychase.org.uk.

Thank you in advance for your efforts, it is much appreciated.