

Lankelly Chase

Invitation to Tender – Learning Support for Lankelly's Place-Based Work

October 2021

Lankelly Chase is seeking a partner (or partners) to provide learning support to the team involved in our place-based work. This is needed over two years, beginning in April 2022.

There are three elements to this:

- Holding us to account for our impact according to agreed indicators
- Supporting us to reflect on and adapt our approach as we go
- Checking our use of power and the extent to which we are embodying the change we want to see

We are open to partnership arrangements to cover these tasks or to approaches from individuals/organisations with an interest in focusing on one or more.

The focus of this work is the role and practice of Lankelly Chase but it needs to take place in the context of a wider networked learning strategy across the places Lankelly is working in.

About Lankelly Chase

We are an independent charitable foundation striving for a world healed by justice, equity and inclusion...

..by challenging existing systems, and creating the conditions for much healthier systems to emerge.

We work with others to shift patterns of perspectives, power, and participation.

What we do

We connect, support or fund organisations and networks that are seeking to disrupt patterns or help new patterns that contribute to a world healed by justice, equity and inclusion.

We feel that 'just outcomes' are more likely to result from 'just processes' such as systems thinking, co-creation, conflict resolution and community empowerment.

We will support work that unites all those who can contribute to change from people with direct experience, policy makers, journalists and activists.

We are pushing ourselves to model the change we want to see, because we are all part of the systems we want to change.

We support action that reveals → questions → dismantles → heals → reimagines → transforms systems.

Lankelly's place-based work

What is happening

Lankelly is committed to working deeply and for the long term in 5 places¹. There are large numbers (100s) of people connected via strong and weak ties to the work we are supporting. Many of these people see themselves as part of something bigger than the specific work they are doing - as part of a wider action inquiry about how to change the systems that perpetuate severe and multiple disadvantage in a place (at Lankelly we no longer use this language – we now talk about systems of oppression and marginalisation).

Structures and activities vary but there is always:

- A core group of some kind steering and facilitating the local work
- A financial decision making function (sometimes within that core group, sometimes fully delegated, sometimes still sitting within LC)
- An 'associate' role – someone tasked with weaving or knitting the different elements together, providing coordinating capacity and 'backbone'
- A larger cross-silo, cross-hierarchy network of interested people
- Work to understand the local system
- Work to invite more people in, especially those who have traditionally been excluded from decision making/influence/power
- Work to spread systems thinking ideas and practices (often via Lankelly's Systems Changers programme)
- Experimental action of different kinds
- Work to resource the leadership of people with direct experience of marginalisation and oppression

There are connections and meeting points across the places, mainly supported by Lankelly but starting to be initiated by associates and others.

We're also involved in the Corra Foundation's work in one place in Scotland, we're members of Local Motion and we support various other partners taking place-based approaches. We spend less time on this work than the work in 'our' places.

What's Lankelly's role?

At the moment, the role of Lankelly team members looks something like this:

Making sure flexible resourcing is available to create the space for this work, managing the actual processes of getting money out to people

¹ Barking & Dagenham, Gateshead, Greater Manchester, Oxford and York

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| Ongoing support/mentoring/coaching for key people involved |
| Connecting people, initiatives, ideas across the places |
| Bringing in ideas/methodologies/practices from elsewhere as and when called for |
| Making sure there are learning processes in place |
| Holding a continual focus on system-level action and extreme marginalisation |
| Clearing the path as and when we are asked to – using our rank, profile and reputation to help maintain the space for our partners to do their stuff locally, including liaison with local funders |
| Modelling a different role for a funder as protagonist, fellow traveller and as open to resourcing differently (putting resource at disposal of local people) |

We are keen to promote the devolution of these functions to local places as far as possible so that Lankelly is gradually edging out of a leadership position in the work.

What's the point?

We are doing this work so that **the underlying dynamics of the 'way things are done'² in a place change to be more equitable, inclusive and just** (using the [System Behaviours](#) as a guide to what that looks like).

For this to happen, we need **to support the infrastructure for local people to collaborate to determine what this looks like and how to do it**. We are helping to 'build the muscle' for this work to happen on an ongoing basis. So, in short, we are **supporting the development of locally-led collaborative change processes**.

The change processes we help to build need to be ongoing and adaptive because:

- The work is never 'done', it is continual. We will never get to a moment where it is possible to say '*the ways things are done here are perfectly just, equitable and inclusive*' (and even if this did happen, it would only be temporary because in reality things are always changing)
- There is no known route to this kind of change, so it is inevitably an exploratory, open process with many false turns.

Importantly, this is not change for the sake of change. It is being led by people who are immersed in the reality of failing systems, extreme poverty, oppression and injustice and who are deeply disturbed and frustrated by what they see. They know what's wrong now *and* they are holding their nerve to keep the focus on what would ultimately help things to radically shift.

It is the right approach for us, for now, because it is based on:

- The appropriateness of learning-based emergent strategies for promoting change in situations of complexity (evidence based, justifiable)

² How people and organisations relate to each other, how they make decisions, who is involved, on what terms etc

- Our ideology – what we believe is right and how we want the world to be (summed up in the system behaviours, our key messages, our concern about extreme marginalisation etc)

What do we hope to achieve?

We can pack up our bags and leave once there are **robust, diverse, ongoing, interconnected, open, collaborative, power-aware, non-exploitative, reflective, well-resourced processes for continual change going on**. When these processes are so embedded that the help of a relatively small funder is not needed any more. This is the muscle we are helping to build. This is the purpose of the work.

So, the working hypothesis is:

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| If.... | Diverse networks of people come together across a local area in ways that embody the system behaviours, with time, space and resourcing to take experimental action... ...And they are motivated by a desire to fundamentally change the dysfunctional and unjust 'way things are done' in relation to people subject to marginalisation |
| Then.... | Positive change in the experience of people subject to marginalisation will emerge, but exactly what it will look like cannot be predicted |
| Because.... | In reality all things are changing all the time. New behaviours, rules, structures and other aspects of 'the way things are done' are continually coming into being. The conditions that are being supported/promoted/embodied through our work (the system behaviours, an emphasis on justice, collaboration, power-awareness, good relationships, whole-system focus etc) make it more likely that what emerges in this context of inevitable continual change is 'good' (ie it embodies those conditions) |

What is the change we are seeking?

The overall change we are seeking is summed up in our key messages:

We are striving for a world healed by justice, equity and inclusion. A world where all people can live with dignity and opportunity in supportive communities.

However, we have to accept we may never know where the work gets to, and proving a causal link with the actions Lankelly Chase takes is probably impossible. We are starting the work running, and supporting its development, on the basis of our hypothesis.

How will we know this is happening?

We may not ever know whether our actions have had a direct causal link with the change we want to see.

However, we can hold ourselves to account for the extent to which we are helping to build the muscle described above.

*“At the level of each action inquiry (or pattern disruption), **it should be possible to agree some indicators of what success might look like and when it is time to exit.** This might be (for example) when the conditions for change (change makers, bonders and bridgers) are all working together as a well-resourced, self-regulating system that doesn’t need the help of a small funder any more. It might also be noticing what transformative possibilities start to emerge when patterns have been disrupted and the space for difference opens up”* (from an internal LCF strategy paper)

The role of learning

If the work is necessarily exploratory and adaptive, we need to continually reflect on our implemented strategies, and adapt them accordingly. In other words, we take action while at the same time noticing how a situation is developing and making necessary adjustments. This is why we refer to the work as an action inquiry.

This approach is suited to change strategies in situations where the effects of change may not be easy to predict due to the complexity of factors involved.

We need help to hold rigorous processes for this cycle of learning and adaptation. These processes need to be designed with the following in mind:

- Learning is not an activity that can be separated out from the work. It is going on all the time in our human-to-human connections in the work and our own thinking, and is highly contextual (ie a lot of it sits between people in a relationship in a specific situation and can only be accessed through people’s memories of meaningful conversations). This kind of wisdom/learning needs to be valued but it isn’t easily turned into shareable material. However, without an effort to do that, the risk is that it is fleeting and unsharable beyond the people involved.
- In the work, activity and reflection is happening simultaneously at multiple levels which are all complex in themselves, are interconnected, and which have blurry edges:



Alongside the process of learning and adaptation, we are increasingly hungry for accountability and challenge around the impact of our work. This is not straightforward because our focus is on creating the underlying conditions for change and because we understand we are working in situations that are complex and dynamic and where cause and effect may never be clear. However, we think it should be possible to develop some rigour around some agreed indicators of the change we want to see.

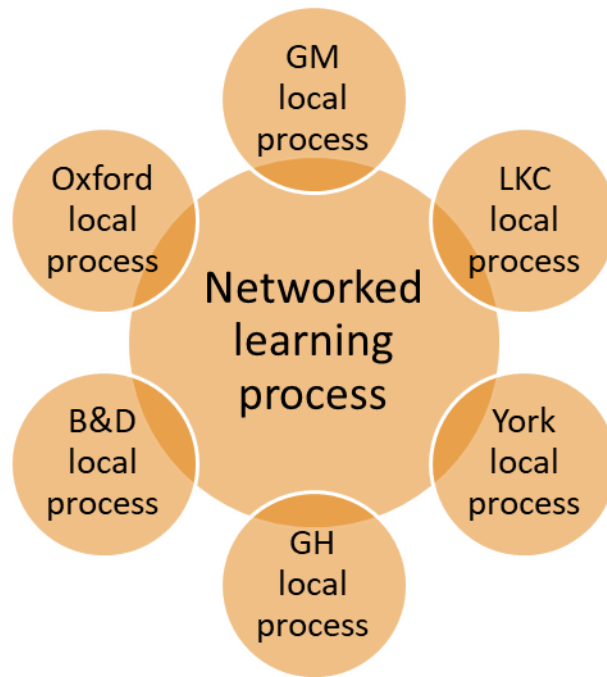
The support we need

The team at Lankelly need support over the next two years to design and facilitate processes to:

- **Hold us to account for our impact** - if our role is to support the development of robust, diverse, ongoing, interconnected, open, collaborative, power-aware, non-exploitative, reflective, well-resourced processes for continual change, to what extent is this happening? We are in a position of amazing freedom, with relatively large resources – are we making the most of this?
- **Support us to reflect on and adapt our approach as we go** – helping us to spot patterns, achieve new levels of awareness about what is happening and our role, and to steer our work accordingly
- **Check our use of power** - reflect back to us the extent to which we are embodying the system behaviours and the change we want to see in the world

You will mainly be working with the team at Lankelly but we want to be transparent about our work as we go along so we will want you to be producing material we can share externally. It will also be necessary to seek the views of local partners and associates in the work.

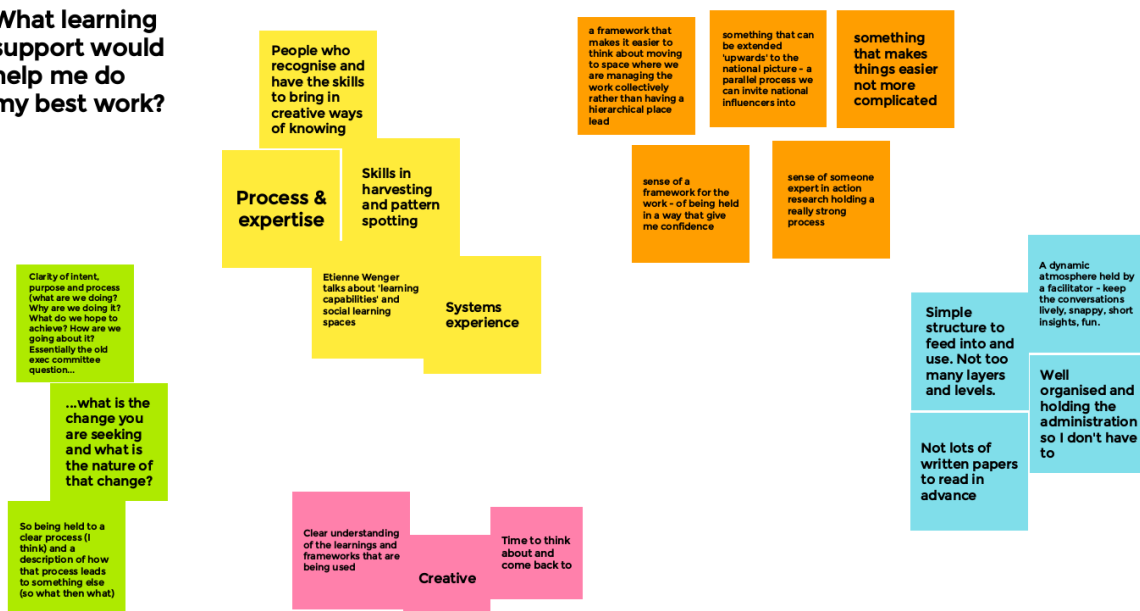
The work with the Lankelly team is also part of a networked learning approach across the places:



Support for each of the places, and the process across the places will be arranged separately. **This tender is specifically about support to the Lankelly team and focused on Lankelly's role and practice.** However, there is an expectation that you will support the overarching process to be as open, honest and useful as possible, and will work collaboratively with whoever leads that, and the people involved in local processes.

The team at Lankelly have discussed what we want from someone supporting our learning:

What learning support would help me do my best work?



We have also said we want **the way you work** to be:

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| Purposeful | Helps to create momentum, drives the work forward, supports change and adaptation in the now, anchors work to purpose |
| In the work but not of the work | Close enough to understand what is going on but detached enough to spot patterns not visible to those 'in the weeds' |
| An accountability mechanism | Provides constructive feedback and challenge (not just a confirmatory/self-congratulatory loop) |
| Expert, rigorous & confident | Has lots of useful processes and methodologies to draw on and expertise in systemic work, action inquiry/action research, helps to shape questions/a process which feels meaningful/useful, is a great facilitator, helps people feel confident in the counter-cultural space we hold |
| Builds expertise & is responsive | Listens to what people involved want, is generous with the transfer of skills and expertise |
| Helps to strengthen and builds networks | At the level is it operating at, and across multiple levels |
| Creative | Non-traditional, open, dynamic, fun! |
| Produces useful and accessible outputs | Does the work of capturing and sharing material in ways that are useful and accessible to lots of people |

Tasks

We expect you to carry out the following tasks:

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| Hold us to account for our impact | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - With other stakeholders, agree indicators for the success of Lankelly's involvement in the place-based work - Develop a mechanism for collecting data on these indicators, for synthesising this and for reporting back to the team at regular intervals - Develop mechanisms for sharing progress externally |
| Support us to reflect on and adapt our approach as we go | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop a flexible framework for ongoing learning and adaptation within the Lankelly team leading the place-based work - Facilitate this process |
| Check our use of power and the extent to which we are embodying the system behaviours and the change we want to see in the world | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure these issues are at the forefront of the work above and embedded into any processes you lead - Identify whether other mechanisms are necessary to understand this and design and implement these as necessary |

About you

We don't have preconceptions about where you might work or the kind of institution you come from. You could be an independent consultant, a collective, a team from a university

or a charity or a partnership drawing in people from different disciplines/with different skills. You might know Lankelly or be new to working with us.

We do want to work with someone/a team who is:

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| Values aligned to Lankelly and genuinely driven by the need for deep social change |
| Reliable, organised and delivery-focused |
| Curious and able to critically reflect on your experience and assumptions |
| Willing to make space for others, not driven by ego |
| Keenly aware of the power dynamics inherent in philanthropy and very alive to issues of equity and justice |
| Good at relationship management, able to balance appreciation and support with constructive challenge |

Application process

There will be a staged process with opportunities for shortlisted candidates to find out more about Lankelly and to develop your approach in dialogue with us. We want to have someone ready to begin working with us from April 2022.

Stage 1 – Expression of interest

Please send us an initial response to this brief, in whatever format you prefer (but please don't make it too long). We would like to know:

- About you - the values, background, skills and experience of the people who would be involved
- Why you are interested in this brief
- How you would approach working with us
- How you would structure your involvement
- What you would bring to the role (taking into account what we've said we want)
- Your views on the brief as we have set it out
- Your estimate of what is involved and how much it would cost

The closing date for this will be: **Monday 15th November, 5pm.**

Please send your response to: edel@lankellychase.org.uk

Stage 2 – Interviews - understanding each other (November-December)

We will invite shortlisted people/groups to an interview where both sides will have the opportunity to ask questions of each other and explore what it would be like to work together.

Candidates successful at this stage will be invited through to stage 3.

Stage 3 – developing a full proposal, further dialogue (December – January 2022)

We will resource the time of people/groups going forward into stage 3. This will involve a revision and development of the expression of interest into a full proposal and the facilitation of a session with the Lankelly team.

We aim to make a final decision by February 2022.

If you have any questions you are welcome to contact us. Please send an email to edel@lankellychase.org.uk in the first instance and she will arrange for a member of the team to contact you.