



Invitation for proposals to undertake an independent evaluation of the Practice Development Unit

June 2021



1. Introduction

Nottingham Community and Voluntary Service (NCVS) invites proposals from suitably qualified organisations or individuals to undertake an independent evaluation of the Practice Development Unit (PDU).

2. Background

The PDU is a project run by NCVS in partnership with Opportunity Nottingham. Opportunity Nottingham is part of the National Fulfilling Lives Programme and is funded by the National Lottery Community Fund until summer 2022. The programme aims to improve the lives of people with multiple disadvantage (defined as a combination of some of the following: homelessness, mental ill-health, substance misuse, domestic abuse and offending) through directly delivering services and achieving system change.

3. Overview of the PDU

The PDU was started in autumn 2017, with the goal to support Opportunity Nottingham's system change aims, facilitating the sharing of good practice and promoting more collaborative work among services from the voluntary and statutory sectors who provide support to people facing multiple disadvantage.

Opportunity Nottingham funds an NCVS employee as full-time Project Coordinator to research, plan and organise regular learning events (including, for example, workshops, seminars and communities of practice) and to manage an online resource hub, which hosts good practice resources from external sources and an e-learning suite developed by the PDU in partnership with Opportunity Nottingham and Framework.

To date, the PDU has delivered a total of 68 standalone learning events, and 33 Community of Practice sessions to 1049 individuals from 181 organisations. The PDU online hub hosts 119 external resources, 14 e-learning modules and is subscribed by 981 individuals from 250 organisations.

4. Aims and objectives of the PDU

- Improve the skills and knowledge of professionals working in the field of multiple disadvantage
- Facilitate the sharing of expertise, good practice and resources across sectors
- Promote and facilitate collaborative learning across sectors
- Create opportunities for promoting innovation and working practices across the city
- Improve outcomes for beneficiaries through contributing to system change and increased coordination and collaborative working between agencies

5. Aims of the evaluation

The PDU is entering the final year of its funding from Opportunity Nottingham and the National Lottery Fulfilling Lives Programme. We are looking to understand how successful the project has been in what it was set out to achieve and collate evidence of its impacts to support with future business development.

We are therefore seeking to engage an evaluator to help us:

- Understand what impacts the PDU's activities (events and online hub) have had on the working practices and collaborative approaches of professionals and volunteers in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire
- Understand how supporting PDU activities has impacted on its contributors, including Steering Group members, event speakers, and volunteers with lived experience of multiple disadvantage
- Identify "unintended" or "unexpected" impacts of the PDU's activity and analyse its potential to influence change outside of its core scope (*"trickle-down effect" and opportunities for growth / further development*)
- Assess the success of the PDU in contributing to Opportunity Nottingham's system change aims (Opportunity Nottingham's system change plan will be provided to the evaluator)
- Understand if and how the PDU is promoting a Human Learning Systems (HLS)¹ approach in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire

6. Scope

We are looking for a mainly qualitative evaluation of the impacts of the PDU's activities in the local Nottingham and Nottinghamshire workforce, as well as its contributors, who may cover other geographies. This evaluation will include:

- Attending one workshop, one CoP and exploring the online resource hub
- Conducting interviews (and/or using other qualitative data collection methods) with event participants, online hub users, event speakers, lived experience volunteers and Steering Group members
- Producing a qualitative analysis of the data collected based on the evaluation aims
- Where appropriate, using already available data provided by the PDU from the year 2 external evaluation and ongoing monitoring for a comparative analysis²

¹ <https://www.humanlearning.systems/>

² An external evaluation of the PDU was conducted two years into delivery of the project. Some insights were gathered around the engagement with PDU activities; however, it was considered too early to understand what impact these had on local working practices. The PDU Coordinator regularly collects quantitative and qualitative feedback from participants at PDU activities and holds comprehensive quantitative monitoring data on the

We are also seeking to understand if and how the PDU promotes a HLS approach. This evaluation will include:

- Research of available literature and public information on HLS
- A qualitative assessment of the data collected and insights observed at PDU activities based on the HLS beliefs

7. Required outputs

The evaluation will provide the following:

- A report setting out the methodology and outlining the approach, to be submitted by 10th September 2021
- Periodic analysis of the data with commentary, in a format and timeline to be agreed with the PDU Coordinator
- A final report reflecting the full findings of the evaluation, intended for the Coordinator and internal stakeholders, to be submitted by 30th November 2021
- A final summary report reflecting the key highlights from the evaluation findings, to be made available to the public, to be submitted by 30th November 2021

8. Contract value

The budget available for this evaluation is £7,500: 25% of this will be paid upon signing the contract. The remaining amount will be paid on delivery of the final report.

9. Application process

Please answer all questions listed below on a Word document, attaching all additional documents as specified. Please submit your application via email to enquiries@pdunottingham.org by 12 noon on Friday 12 noon on 16th July 2021.

Shortlisted applicants will be invited to meet with the PDU Coordinator and the appointment of the evaluator / evaluation service will be made shortly after this meeting.

If you have any questions or would like more information about Human Learning Systems before submitting a proposal, please email enquiries@pdunottingham.org.

Question 1

How would you conduct the evaluation in order to meet the requirements outlined above?

This section should demonstrate your understanding of the brief and include a clear rationale for your approach

Question 2

Please provide a project plan.

make-up of the PDU audience. The year 2 report and ongoing monitoring data kept by the PDU Coordinator will be made available to the evaluator for background and comparative analysis.

This section should include:

- *how you would design and implement evaluation tools*
- *how you would liaise with the PDU Coordinator*

Question 3

Please evidence your relevant experience and, where applicable, organisation profile.

In addition please attach:

- *your current CV*
- *contact for two referees from organisations who have previously engaged you in evaluation*