



DRAFT Phase 1: Reaching Out Project Yorkshire and Humber Lee Gap Fair 17th September 2019

Some background

Lee Fair is reputedly the oldest charter fair still in existence, with a history dating well over 800 years, and its name is believed to derive from that of local vicar Dr Lee who helped to keep the fair in existence in Tudor times.

In its peak, the horse fair lasted over three weeks from 24th August to 17th September but it now takes place on those days only with a gap in the middle, with the 24th known as First Lee and the 17th as Latter Lee. If either date happens to fall on a Sunday, the fair moves to the next day, the Monday, instead.

The fair is organised by the travelling community and includes stalls that sell household items, clothing, food, and drink. Also plenty of horses, ponies, and some incredibly cute puppies!

What story goes untold?

Gypsy Travellers have the poorest health of any ethnic group in the population; they also have an inverse relationship between their health needs and access to healthcare services.(P Van Cleemput 2008).

We want our project to be driven by the community and very much focused on their needs, by attending the community fair we were able to explore collective problems of families and the community at a local level. Informed by the literature and directed by the York Travellers Trust, we narrowed down questions to explore at the event.

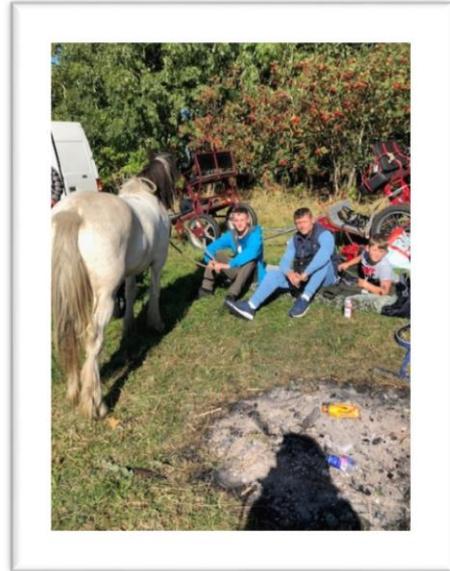


We wanted to know what the focus of our research should be; this was narrowed down to bad nerves (mental health), children or sick and elderly. We conversed with a wide range of community members from small children to elderly pensioners. Although we provided people with options, we also captured other thoughts and interesting topics, which people spoke about. Some amazing inspirational stories and some very upsetting things to hear which provides motivation to do more!

How do we share our work?

Feedback from the GTC is that often research is carried out; we get involved etc but then hear nothing about it! We wanted to ensure that we do not make this mistake so we asked how best to communicate our findings, research or anything we produce. Again being directed by YTT we provided options which included Facebook, YouTube, or on paper. We also captured anything else, which people suggested but found that generally the votes fell into these categories.

The event was truly a community event with everyone supporting each other, we got a real community feel and felt very welcomed.



Points to consider

- *Having someone from the community working with you makes a huge difference. Working with YTT has been inspirational and having them at the event was amazing. People immediately felt more comfortable talking to us when they saw people they recognised.*
- *People are not used to be consulted with, provide background and the reasons why you are asking the questions etc.*
- *Always ask permission when taking pictures of community, most people are very happy to pose for you so just ask and don't assume it's OK!*

What's next?

Our consultation at Lee Gap has helped focus the next stage of our project. The community told us they want to challenge negative perceptions of GTCs for example, by **collecting positive stories** about how people **look after sick relatives**. They also talked about **children** and how the project could provide opportunity **for home schooled children** to get valuable experience, **by working with University researchers**.

Next we are holding a Stakeholder workshop where we will provide opportunity for members of the community to tell researchers and the NHS what matters most to them and help refine the next stage of the project.

Inspirational learning

People want to share their story; they want to be heard and to speak up about their challenges. They are also willing to help find solutions but there is a **time and place**.