

**L : E : I : T : H**  
**Anti-**  
**sectarianism**  
**project**

Progress Report to the Scottish Government  
Tackling Sectarianism Programme –

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**Context** - Leith is vibrant, multicultural and busy district of Edinburgh, being home to an eclectic mix of people and cultures. This diversity contributes heavily to Leith's unique and distinct character.

**Supporting Communities to Tackle Sectarianism (SCOTTS)** – In November 2012 Pilmeny Development Project (PDP) was approached by the Scottish Community Development Centre (SCDC) to conduct a piece of community led research for their Supporting Communities to Tackle Sectarianism (SCOTTS) pilot project looking into participants experiences of sectarianism. In addition, PDP participants experiences of intolerance, bigotry and faith based discrimination were also viewed as desirable themes to be explored. The project took place over 3 months from January to March 2013 and a Research Report (copy available on request) evidencing the key issues and the need for further work in Leith was produced. It had been noted that people in different communities experience sectarianism in different ways. Moreover different manifestations of sectarianism require alternative approaches. Whilst substantial research and project work on sectarianism has been undertaken in the West of Scotland – the East coast setting and the area of Leith in which PDP is based, has the potential to provide a fresh approach to understanding the phenomenon of sectarianism.

**Leith anti-sectarianism Project overall aim** – The **overall aim** of the Leith anti-sectarianism Project (LASP) is:

***There is a need to increase the scope of anti-sectarianism development work taking place in the Leith community and to develop reminiscence work exploring the history of sectarianism in Leith in order to help challenge community tensions and to encourage better integration of the religious groups that make up the Leith community.***

**Overview** - The following report has been written by Ryan McKay (Anti-sectarianism Development Worker) in collaboration with Anne Munro (Project Manager) in relation to anti-sectarian activities delivered in the Leith area of Edinburgh, as part of PDP's – *Leith anti-sectarianism Project (LASP)*. The report details work undertaken as part of the Scottish Government's Community Safety Unit – Tackling Sectarianism Fund and covers the grant period 2013 – 2015.

During this period the LASP has developed a range of anti-sectarianism strategies including: reminiscence work, film work, focus groups and 1.1 work exploring the history of sectarianism in Leith to help challenge community tensions and to encourage better integration of the religious groups that make up the Leith community. Furthermore, this report includes descriptions of how these activities were delivered.

The report also provides an exploration of the key findings and learning points, while including challenges and changes that arose over the funding period. Information and evidence, which demonstrates the progress, the LASP has made in achieving each of their sought project specific

outcomes is also provided. Importantly, it also details where these project specific outcomes fit in with the wider Voluntary Action Fund (VAF) framework outcomes. In doing so, this report highlights how the local anti-sectarianism work which has been delivered in Leith, fits in with the wider 'Tacking Sectarianism' programme to challenge intra-Christian sectarianism.

Lastly, 5 recommendations have also been identified along with some suggestions as to how the LASP can move forward.

- 1) Over the duration of the grant period 2013 - 2015, the LASP delivered a wide and varied selection of anti-sectarian activities, which contributed towards tackling intra-Christian sectarianism.

The VAF outcome framework describes the **situation/need** of challenging intra-Christian sectarianism as:

***There is a lack of understanding about intra-Christian sectarianism in Scotland; the extent to which it impacts on and is a priority for communities; and the effectiveness of different interventions***

The LASP has developed **project specific outcomes/indicators** to link with the following **VAF framework outcomes**:

1. **There is greater knowledge, understanding of sectarianism and increased integration of the religious and cultural groups that make up the Leith community.**

- (1.1) People will have improved their understanding of what sectarianism is
- (1.2) % people who demonstrate increased knowledge, understanding and changed attitudes towards sectarianism
- (1.3) Number of people targeted with information on sectarianism in Leith
- (1.4) Baseline data (e.g. levels understanding/respect of other cultures and traditions etc) improved relationships between religious, cultural and community groups in Leith
- (1.5) Pre and post participant surveys will be undertaken

This links with **VAF framework outcome 5: *Increased awareness and understanding of sectarianism and its effects.***

2. **There will be a greater understanding of the key issues and tensions around intra-Christian sectarianism by people living in Leith.**

- (2.1) People will explore some of the reasons why people are sectarian
- (2.2) People will begin to think about the consequences of sectarian actions
- (2.3) People will feel more sure of themselves in relation to the anti-sectarianism agenda
- (2.4) % people who demonstrate increased knowledge and changed attitudes towards sectarianism
- (2.5) % of people who can identify key issues around sectarianism in Leith

Links with **VAF framework outcome 9:** *Increasing our understanding of how sectarianism impacts upon individuals and communities across Scotland*

**3. The local community will have a greater recognition of and more opportunity to celebrate the value of the diverse intra-Christian and multicultural make up of Leith.**

(3.1) Community members views on whether there are improved levels of recognition/ valuing of diversity in Leith

(3.2) People have opportunities to take part in anti-sectarianism activities

(3.3) No of events held

(3.4) No of people and mix of people participating

Links with **VAF framework outcome 3:** *Increased opportunities for people to express their feelings, opinions and experiences of sectarianism*

**4. Partners will have an increased understanding of the sectarian issues that affect Leith.**

(4.1) No of agencies/stakeholders provided with information on project work through practitioner networks

(4.2) Partners will begin to realise that sectarian actions can have a wider impact across the Leith community and Scotland as a whole.

(4.3) No of requests for info/partnership working from other organisations

(4.4) Partners tell us our resources have helped them

(4.5) No of programmes delivered in partnership with other organisations

Links with **VAF framework outcome 5:** *Increased awareness and understanding of sectarianism and its effects*

2) From these **project specific outcomes/indicators** the following activities were delivered to work towards achieving the **LASP overall aim** and to contribute towards solving the **situation/need** set out by VAF:

- Undertaking background research and information gathering
- Planning and delivering Christmas feedback recruitment events
- Attending relevant training and networking events
- Overseeing an excursion to the 'Citizen Kane' exhibition exploring the history of Leith and a trip to see the play 'Leith at War'
- Planning and delivering a 12 week Oral History Programme (OHP)
- Undertaking 8 – 1.1 interviews with relevant stakeholders
- Facilitating a Football and Sectarianism in Leith focus group
- Producing an anti-sectarianism film & delivering a 6 week Filming Group

- Delivering an 8 week – Older Men & BME Male Carers Group
- Staging a Multicultural Event celebrating the diversity of Leith and showcasing the anti-sectarian work which has taken place locally
- Planning and development of an anti-sectarianism resource/toolkit
- Staging a Film Premiere to showcase the anti-sectarianism film – ‘*Calling all Leithers*’

3) From the delivered anti-sectarian activities, a number of key learning points emerged:

1. The use of a community-based approach to exploring intra-Christian sectarianism was highly successful at engaging local participants across all the delivered activities. **(See p.81 main report – for example).**
2. The participatory approach taken in designing and delivering the anti-sectarian activities, contributed significantly to the success of the project. This was achieved through implementing the recommendations made from participants involved in the SCOTTS pilot project. Primarily that they would like to explore the history of sectarianism in Leith, through the use of oral history and reminiscence work. **(See p.9 main report – for example of this).**
3. The importance of creating an exciting programme and taking a wide approach in exploring the topic of sectarianism was fundamental. For example the various topics explored in the 12 week Oral History Programme, ensured participants were engaged throughout. The overarching theme of oral history also acted as an incentive for many participants to join the group, highlighting that the OHP was more than simply a group which met to discuss sectarianism. **(See p.38 main report – for example of this).**
4. From the delivered activities, it is clear that regardless of each participant’s view and understanding of sectarianism, the majority were keen to become involved in the debate. This is very promising for any future pieces of work that may be undertaken and highlights the willingness of local Leith residents to engage with the topic. **(See p.39 main report – for example of this).**
5. In exploring Leith in the past it is clear sectarian issues were far more prevalent than in present day. **(See p.78 main report – for example of this).**
6. Being locally based helped the project significantly in attracting Leith residents to engage with activities. PDP also has established and regular groups already running, which provides a reliable source of volunteers. This encouraged people of all ages to attend sessions, alongside several older men who had formed the core of the group. **(See p.49 main report for example of this).** This in turn helped the older men with social isolation barriers they were experiencing, as well as giving the group an *intergenerational* outlook.
7. The *Equal partner co-production approach* taken across all of the activities delivered, ensured that both participant and facilitator were equal in exploring the topic of sectarianism. In a debate that has previously been top down, this feature helped to promote a strong grass roots ethos. This in turn empowered participants to value their own

- understanding of sectarianism and feel confident in sharing their experiences of intra-Christian sectarianism. *(See p.88 main report for example of this).*
8. Overall the anti-sectarian work undertaken has had a positive impact on the participants who attended. In particular however, the older participants whom the idea for the initial project had stemmed from benefitted particularly well. Having a safe space to come along to, where they could share their experiences and knowledge was fantastic for improving both self-confidence and esteem. *(See p.49 main report – for example of this).*
  9. Over the course of all the activities, the topic of the *Protestant Action Society (PAS)* remained a key discussion point. This was from both older members of the group who already knew about the topic and also from younger members who were unaware. *(See p.57 main report – for example of this).*
  10. Shared learning with others throughout Scotland – Scottish Community Development Centre (SCDC) co-inquiries. A key way in which the LASP was able to inform partners of how sectarian actions can have a wider impact across the Leith community and Scotland as a whole was through attending the SCDC co-inquiries. At these sessions there was ample opportunity for each individual project to describe the sectarian issues that were present in their individual communities. A core part of this work that the LASP tried to emphasise was the misconception that the East coast is and has been, exempt from sectarianism. Most noticeably this was achieved through informing partners who attended the co-inquiries of the PAS and the work that had been delivered on this topic. *(See p.21 main report – for example of this).*
  11. Much of the work that was undertaken was in partnership with other organisations in Leith and Edinburgh. *(See p.23 main report – for example of this).* In exploring a phenomenon as complex as sectarianism, the LASP recognised the great benefits working in partnership can bring. Through joint working, rather than exploring the topic independently, a wider range of skills, resources and support was utilised for mutual benefit. Developing activities alongside a wide range of delivery partners also ensured participants were given as detailed an exploration of sectarianism as possible. By drawing on the skills and knowledge from a selection of delivery partners currently undertaking anti-sectarianism work, resources and expertise could also be shared on how to tackle the topic more effectively. Organisations who became delivery partners in the OHP for example included: Living Memories Association, Youth Scotland, City Arts Centre, SCDC, Engender and X-change Scotland.
- 4) The difference the work has made in relation to the **project specific outcomes** can highlight the success of the LASP. Overall significant progress has been achieved, particularly in relation to **project specific outcomes 1, 3 and 4.**

The LASP was particularly successful at improving the knowledge, understanding of sectarianism and the integration of religious and cultural groups that make up the Leith community. The local community was also supported in having greater recognition of the diverse intra-Christian and multicultural make up of Leith. Partners were also successfully informed of the sectarian issues affecting Leith, with a high number of agencies/stakeholders being provided with information on project work going on. The LASP also received requests for info/partnership working from other organisations. Positively

partners also informed them their resources had helped them. In addition to this, the LASP supported people to improve their understanding of what sectarianism is, while also targeting a high number of people with information on sectarianism in Leith. Furthermore, participants also had the opportunity to engage with a variety of anti-sectarianism activities. Community members' views on levels of recognition and diversity in Leith were also successfully achieved.

One outcome however that the LASP recognises more work could have been done, was on **project specific outcome 2. There will be greater understanding of the key issues and tensions around intra-Christian sectarianism by people living in Leith.** Although participants successfully explored some of the reasons why people are sectarian, and began to think about the consequences of sectarian actions, this was not achieved as frequently as the LASP had initially expected. The sensitive nature of exploring a topic such as sectarianism may have influenced this. It also became clear that the intra-Christian sectarianism that exists in Leith is not as explicit as other communities and remains in many cases hidden. The % of people who demonstrated *increased knowledge* and *changed attitudes* towards sectarianism was also part of this outcome that was difficult to achieve. Although we were positively able to record evidence of people improving their knowledge (92.3%), measuring changes in attitude proved a greater challenge. Evidence gathered highlighted (53.8%) experienced *no change* in attitude, (30.8%) experienced *some change* and only (15.4%) experienced *significant change*. The sensitive nature alongside the limited time the LASP has been running may help explain why this was not fully achieved. Such substantial change as this may require more intensive work with individuals to achieve. Positively in regards to this outcome, participants did become confident in themselves in relation to the anti-sectarianism agenda. This was achieved across all the activities delivered, informing the participants of the wider anti-sectarianism debate.

- 5) **Future recommendations** – The LASP has identified and made the following recommendations for future work to tackle intra-Christian sectarianism in Leith:
  1. **Schooling** – Throughout the OHP the topic of schooling was discussed and led to many interesting debates about the impact of denominational schooling. Central to this debate was the juxtaposition of denominational Catholic schools and non-denominational schooling. The LASP recommends delivering a piece of work that explores this topic specifically.
  2. **Protestant Action Society (PAS)** – The LASP recommends actively promoting this topic. As very much a hidden piece of Leith's history, there is a great deal of learning that can be shared by informing people about the PAS and the activities of John Cormack. One way this can be achieved successfully is through including the topic in the community resource/toolkit that has been designed by the LASP.

3. **Equal partner co-production** – The LASP would like to recommend promoting this feature and emphasising that everyone both facilitator and participant are equal partners in the learning process. This will be achieved by encouraging facilitators to return to future sessions.
4. **Use of films with sectarian themes** – In session 9 of the OHP ‘*Sectarianism and Film*’ the first 2 film clips used, contained themes of sectarianism that was very easy for the group to engage in discussion. Following watching the final clip however, participants had difficulty in relating to the topic as it did not have *explicit* sectarian themes. For any future film based sessions, the LASP recommends maintaining an intra-Christian sectarianism focus. Film clips with more of a distinctive sectarian theme, would thus work better in helping to engage participants in the topic.
5. **Future focus groups** – Following conducting the *Football and Sectarianism in Leith* focus group, it is clear additional work in Leith could further contribute to the understanding of both the nature and extent of sectarianism in Scotland and within individual communities. Moreover from the responses provided on the evaluation feedback form, it is clear the majority of participants would be interested in taking part in additional work, with 94% stating they would like more focussed groups like these. Accordingly, the LASP has identified the following recommendations:
  - **Cross comparison focus group to be delivered** – Firstly, a follow up cross comparison focus group should be delivered with the original participants who took part in June 2014. The LASP recommends delivering a focus group with Leith residents, sharing survey results from another local community such as Dundee. Local Leith residents understanding of sectarianism within their own community could thus be contrasted with local residents views from divergent communities. With the previous focus group retaining a Leith specific focus, this approach would allow any similarities between Leith and other communities to be underlined, while simultaneously highlighting any factors unique to Leith. The use of Dundee results for example, would also stimulate new discussion from what was originally discussed in the initial focus group, as the participants will undoubtedly share different responses depending on what they are asked/exposed to.
  - **Leith Hearts fans focus group** – At the end of the initial focus group there were requests from the substantial number of local Hearts fans in attendance, for a focus group exploring Leith Hearts fans experiences of sectarianism. The LASP recommends developing a focus group, which enables these participants the opportunity to share their views in relation to this. The focus group could also be delivered in line with the *Colour of our Scarves* project visiting Tynecastle Stadium. This could offer the opportunity for the LASP and Supporters Direct to again work in partnership.

For more information about the Leith anti-sectarianism Project, or to request a full copy of this report, please email: [ryanmckay@btconnect.com](mailto:ryanmckay@btconnect.com)