



**LEEDS  
ARTS RESEARCH  
CENTRE**

**KEF**

**HARRY MEADLEY**

**MY WORLD MY CITY MY**

**SKATE SPOT**

# KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE FRAMEWORK DATA COLLECTION

February 2023

The University's Research & Enterprise Service has requested information on knowledge exchange and engagement with the public and communities. Please complete the form below and return it to Professor Simon Morris ([S.DC.Morris@leedsbeckett.ac.uk](mailto:S.DC.Morris@leedsbeckett.ac.uk)) and Dr Tina Conkar ([t.conkar@leedsbeckett.ac.uk](mailto:t.conkar@leedsbeckett.ac.uk)) by **21 February 2023**.

Many thanks for your support with information gathering for this submission.

<b>Name:</b>	Harry Meadley
<b>Job Title:</b>	Lecturer
<b>Email:</b>	<a href="mailto:h.meadley@leedsbeckett.ac.uk">h.meadley@leedsbeckett.ac.uk</a>
<b>School:</b>	Leeds School of Arts

Please use the template below to detail information on all projects you have undertaken since 1 January 2019 that involved public and community engagement. Please use one form per project.

<b>Project Title:</b>	My World My City My Skate Spot
<b>Project Date(s):</b>	16 April 2022
<b>URL Link to Project:</b>	<a href="https://harrymeadley.studio/my-world-my-city-my-skate-spot">https://harrymeadley.studio/my-world-my-city-my-skate-spot</a>
<b>Brief Description of Project (250-1000 words max.)</b>	
In the field below please give a brief outline of the project and what it entailed.	
<p>Commissioned by Leeds 2023 as part of their My World My City My Neighbourhood programme, My World My City My Skate Spot was a co-created project that sought to work with the Leeds skateboarding community to make "street skating" safer – particularly for the growing number of female and minority gender skateboarders.</p> <p>Beginning with a series of community consultations, both in person and online, the project identified a particular issue surrounding safety in public spaces for female and gender minority skateboarders as well as their desire to help make these spaces more safe and inclusive. Due to existing Leeds City Council byelaws prohibiting skateboarding in urban public spaces, as well as undefined policing and security policies, what became apparent was that skateboarders were not only discouraged from being in these spaces, but that it was enabling abuses of power against them. With almost half of all skateboarders reporting having had particularly bad experiences with police or security guards which included verbal and physical abuse.</p> <p>To counteract this, the project sought to form a partnership between Rolling With The Girls (RWTG), a Leeds-based female and gender minority</p>	

skateboarding collective, and Leeds Playhouse, a cultural institution and popular skate spot. By working with Leeds Playhouse we were able to organise Leeds' first ever safe and permitted street skateboarding session – and was only for female and gender minority skateboarders. The role of the security team was changed from that of potential threat to be avoided, to guardians of the skateboarders. Though this event was an initial advertised occurrence, a formal agreement was made – and promoted – that skateboarders are welcome to make use of the toilet facilities inside the building and that the security team are there to protect them on a more long-term basis.

This project has now been taken forward to be developed into a larger event in the forthcoming Leeds 2023 programme.

<p><b>Organisations Engaged with:</b> Please list the names of any organisations engaged with, such as Schools or Community Groups.</p>	<p>Rolling With The Girls (RWTG), Leeds Playhouse, Leeds 2023</p>	<p><b>Total participants:</b> Please give an approximate figure for the number of people who engaged with your project.</p>	<p>450</p>
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<p><b>Knowledge Exchange Outcomes:</b> If relevant, in brief, please describe any knowledge exchange outcomes such as new approaches to working with a community.</p>	<p>In the development of this project an online survey was conducted of the wider Leeds skateboarding community. Data from this research was presented in the form of a risograph printed zine designed and illustrated by one of the projects co-creators. This document, the 'Leeds Street Skateboarding Survey', was formally presented to Leeds City Council to help inform the redevelopment of Leeds' City Square. A further official consultation to inform the architects designs was held with the co-creators of this project – a group of young female and non-binary skateboarders.</p>
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**Quotes**  
In the field below please include any relevant quotes that you would like to share which evidence the knowledge exchange and engagement your project received.

*"The first focus group with the council in Welcome was amazing, I felt like this was the first time we were being listened to by someone who had any kind of power to do anything. This felt like a major step forward in achieving something. I also loved the girls jam at playhouse! So nice to see so many girls skating outside!" – Jazz Brown, co-creator*

*"I've been putting on skate events for female and non-binary people in Leeds for years, but being able to do a skate event in the city centre that is on show to the public goes a huge way to feeling as if we're not hiding away. That we're here, unashamedly, for people to see and be inspired by. That's huge, in my opinion." Jess Melia, co-creator and founder of RWTG*

*"100% the community was well represented through the turnout of the event, so many people came to support the female and minority genders skate community. Through focus groups, discussions and the event, my voice and my friends voices were heard. Through the publication it spread the word further making people's opinions and voices tangible, allowing more people to listen." – Izzy Almond, co-creator*



*“Being a part of something that could actually change the way skating is viewed by the wider public in Leeds and beyond. Getting female skaters to skate spots they might not have done before. It was in one of the sessions for this project I skated playhouse for the first time unbelievably.” – Lauren Mudge, co-creator*

*“I thought it was a great day not to just skate with other people but to meet and talk to loads of new people about skating, I’d never been to the playhouse before so I didn’t really know what to expect but I thought it was a great area and everyone there was so nice. I really hope that events like this can continue to happen as it can be very intimidating going to skate parks and other places to skate alone and by having a community of people to go with it diminishes all of the fears I had and by having playhouse event it really highlighted the fun of skateboarding and the communities it can build.” – Millie, participant at sharing event*

*“It was amazing! The atmosphere was so supportive and the whole day was so much fun. Events like this really help me to feel connected with other skaters in my community and I really hope more Playhouse events are run in the future.” – Rose, participant at sharing event*

*“It’s definitely allowed me to hope! The hope that Leeds might be finally be changing its outlook on skateboarders and how we’re perceived. I have hope that more initiatives and projects will see the city working with us in how to create spaces that incorporates skateboarders - since I think we can prove that the community cares deeply about their city!”  
– Jess Melia, co-creator and founder of RWTG*

*“As a husband, father (of a daughter) and a skateboarder, I thought it was fantastic. Something which needs to be repeated often. Access and visibility are everything - events like this provide both. On the day of the [...] event, there were more women skating together than were skating in the entirety of the nation only a decade earlier. Where we go next truly is uncharted and events like this one are vital in creating further visibility and acceptance of the huge evolution of a once male-dominated subculture that is finally approaching gender parity.” – Ben Powell, former editor of Sidewalk Magazine*

*“On April 16th 2022, Rolling With The Girls (RWTG) along with artist/skateboarder Harry Meadley, support from Leeds 2023 and hosts Leeds Playhouse worked together to put on the city’s first ever organised and permitted street skating session – a session exclusively for female and gender minority skateboarders. After undertaking a large-scale survey and census of skateboarders in Leeds, it was discovered that 25% of all skaters in the city were female or non-binary – a number not visibly reflected in the city’s main skateparks, let alone skate spots.*

*Seeking to alter this and to work towards establishing safer and more inclusive street skating spaces in the city, this inaugural event at Leeds Playhouse was a celebration of not just of the female and minority gender skateboard community (which is certainly was), but of the possibility of civic and cultural institutions working together with skateboarders to bring about positive change for all. Not only that, but as an artistic and creative act in and of itself, the event was also an occasion to support and encourage more female and gender minority skateboarders to gain experience with filming – an area of our community still overwhelmingly male dominated.” – <https://www.theskateboarderscompanion.com/post/rwtg-x-leeds-playhouse-session-2022>*



**Images**

In the field below please include any relevant images you would like to share.



[Consultation with Leeds City Council hosted at Welcome Skate Store / Co-creators “trial session” at Leeds Playhouse]



### ABOUT

#### Leeds Street Skateboarding Survey

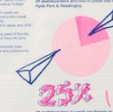
The Leeds Street Skateboarding Survey was conducted in 2023 to gather insights into the skateboarding community in Leeds. The survey aimed to understand the preferences, challenges, and needs of skateboarders in the city. The results of the survey are detailed in the following sections.

### LEEDS SKATE CENSUS

THE LEEDS SKATEBOARDING COMMUNITY: THE SURVEY

**38%**

**25%**



### PUBLIC OPINION

### PARENT OPINION

**86%**

Quotes from Public and Parents

"I think there should be more skate parks and areas for skateboarding in the city. It's a great sport and it's good for the community."

"I have been really interested in skateboarding and I think it's a great sport. I would love to see more skate parks and areas for skateboarding in the city."

### FAVOURITE LEEDS SKATE SPOTS

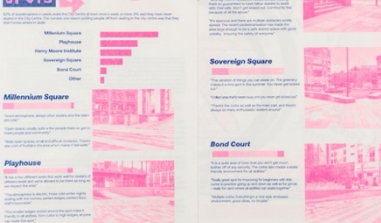
Henry Moore Institute/ Cookridge Street

Sovereign Square

Royal Court

Milennium Square

Playhouse




### SAFETY

Leeds City Council has a duty to ensure the safety of its citizens. This includes ensuring that public spaces are safe for all users, including skateboarders. The following measures are in place to ensure the safety of skateboarders in Leeds:

- Regular maintenance of public spaces
- Clear signage and markings
- Regular patrols and surveillance
- Partnership with the skateboarding community

### CITY CENTRE REDEVELOPMENT

- Being well lit (2.67 average)
- Skate with architecture / architecture (2.00 average)
- Anything other than skate ramps (2.67 average)
- Signage encouraging the area as a skate-friendly (2.00 average)
- Edges of different heights (2.00 average)

### MY WORLD MY CITY MY SKATE SPOT

### CIVIC SKATEBOARDING

Leeds City Council is committed to supporting the skateboarding community in Leeds. This includes providing public spaces for skateboarding and ensuring that these spaces are safe and well-maintained. The following measures are in place to support civic skateboarding in Leeds:

- Regular maintenance of public spaces
- Clear signage and markings
- Regular patrols and surveillance
- Partnership with the skateboarding community



