

SECTION 1

PROJECT OVERVIEW AND SCOPE OF SERVICE

1. **INTRODUCTION**

The Dearne Area Council wishes to commission a provider to deliver a social connection project in the Dearne Area of Barnsley. Barnsley's approach to "social connectivity" will be to further develop an existing service over a two year period in order to develop, deliver and sustain a project that meets the needs of Dearne's aging population.

Previously Stronger communities have partnered with other Cities of Services in the Yorkshire and Humber Region and the Dearne Area Council, to pilot a social isolation project that focussed on residents 60+. This project has proved successful with 3 social groups running on a weekly basis in Bolton, Goldthorpe and Thurnscoe. In the first year alone the service paired 30 social isolated older people with Befrienders.

The key to the sustainability of this project is that the provider recruits volunteers from the local area, with a focus being on recruiting, training and retaining volunteers of all ages to undertake the role of a befriender and social club assistant. The incoming provider will also work with existing organisations and groups in order to recruit the beneficiaries of the services.

With a large and increasing ageing population and continued feedback from projects supporting (particularly) older people, we know that social isolation and loneliness are real problems for us in Barnsley.

2. **BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT**

- 2.1 The Dearne Area sits in the East of the Borough of Barnsley and is part of the Dearne Valley link which brings Barnsley together with Doncaster to the North and Rotherham to the South. The Dearne Area Council consists of Highgate, Thurnscoe, Goldthorpe and Bolton.

The Area has seen a number of major physical changes over the last 10 years including the development of both commercial and residential properties and new road schemes. The area covers 16 sq. km with a population of 23,237. 97.2% are White British and 16.9% are in the 65+ age bracket, with 12.8% living alone. The Dearne Area is one of the most deprived areas of Barnsley and has higher than the National average in relation to some of the major health inequalities, leaving residents of the Dearne with a shorter life expectancy.

A person's social networks can have a significant impact on their health. Evidence suggests that having positive social relationships can have a significant role to play in

long term illnesses, reducing unhealthy lifestyles and mortality rates. Therefore this project is key in relation to the improving “health” priority set by the Dearne Area Council.

Loneliness is an increasingly important Public Health issue. Loneliness and social isolation are damaging our health, both mentally and physically. There are links between health, inequality and social isolation; many factors associated with this are unequally distributed in society.

Being cut off from social interaction is not only a problem for the elderly but also younger people, and the impact it has on our bodies is thought to be equivalent to smoking over a dozen cigarettes a day. Recent studies have shown that social isolation and loneliness are associated with a 50% excess risk of heart disease (Public Health England, 2015). Social isolation is the inadequate quality and quantity of social relations with other people at an individual, group, community and larger social environment, whereas loneliness is an emotional perception that can be experienced by individuals regardless of the breadth of their social networks (Public Health England, 2015).

The Campaign to End Loneliness (2018) has described how loneliness places individuals at greater risk of cognitive decline. People who are lonely are more prone to depression and loneliness and low social interaction are predictive of suicide in older age. People who experience loneliness are more likely to visit their GP, have a higher use of medication, higher incidence of falls and increased risk factors for long term care and chronic illness. Also it is reported that two in five people admitted to hospital do not have a visitor, which can have an effect on their recovery.

It is now possible to spend a day working, shopping or travelling without speaking to another human being and for some people this can be repeated day after day (HM Government, 2018). Our society is changing and we are experiencing a digital revolution which brings innovation, opportunities and possibilities to communicate and connect with others in ways that we have never seen before. However, we know that too many residents in Barnsley do not have the social connections they need or want

Previous volunteering initiatives

The Love Where You Live (LWYL) brand has been running as Barnsley’s Cities of Service volunteering brand since 2013, during which time over 11,000 volunteers have become involved in a wide range of social action projects in order to improve their local communities, many for the first time.

Initially focused on environmental and green space improvements, the LWYL brand has massively expanded, and now includes social action projects which span a range of locally identified passions, from community gardens to health and wellbeing events, from environmental projects through to multi-cultural events to boost cohesion and tolerance within newly diverse communities.

Running alongside and complementary to the Love Where You Live brand are 6 Area Councils and 19 Ward Alliances which were established in 2013 and led by local elected members and Area Teams that commissioned over 1600 locally delivered social action projects, using over £2 million per year of devolved mainstream Council funding to meet carefully targeted local needs.

We want to grow our existing work to support volunteers to help others through our LWYL programme and to build on the social action work done to tackle social isolation by our Area Councils and Ward Alliances using an asset based approach. The Next Generation volunteers will be able to use the work already done as a fantastic foundation to bring a more coherent and volunteer focused approach to supporting those who are isolated from their communities and those around them.

The provider will also need to consider what we mean by 'socially isolated' and 'lonely' and recognise that individuals have very varied needs which may be met in very different ways. We want to focus on older people (60+) who are socially isolated for a number of potential reasons:

- People who find it difficult to leave the house because of a physical or mobility issues
- People who are isolated from the wider community because they have a lack of confidence
- People who have no family connections in the area
- Those who have lost their main social contact due to bereavement
- People who have worked with the social prescribing programme, My Best Life, and now need to be moved on to other support to allow others to benefit

In developing and delivering this service, the provider should ensure that it is contributing to the Council's Corporate Priorities and outcome statements. Thriving and vibrant Economy, Stronger Resilient Communities and People Achieving their Potential are at the heart of everything the Council and Area Councils do. Therefore Sustainability, community support, self-reliance, resilience and reciprocity should be built into the service design and delivery. Also and where possible provide work experience placements, apprentice opportunities and local labour should be used.

STRATEGIC VISION AND VALUES

3.1 Barnsley MBC's Vision is to '***Work together for a brighter future, a better Barnsley***'

Our Values include:

Working Together

- We work as “One Council” to do the best that we can for our customers
- We build partnerships and work with others to achieve the best for Barnsley
- We are understanding and supportive of others, respecting and valuing differences
- We are open and honest about what we are able to achieve, the decisions we make and how well we are doing
- We are true to our word, reliable and fair
- We are responsible and accountable for our actions

Honest

- We are open
- We are honest
- We are true to our word
- We are fair

Excellence

- We are committed to quality and value for money
- We learn from our successes and mistakes
- We are flexible, adaptable and respond positively to change

Pride

- We are proud of the work we do and services we deliver
- We are proud to support our communities to make Barnsley a better place
- We are proud of our achievements

4. COUNCIL PRIORITIES AND OUTCOME STATEMENTS

4.1 In developing and delivering this service, the Service Provider should ensure that it is contributing to the Council's corporate priorities and outcome statements as outlined below:

<p>Thriving and vibrant economy</p>	<p>Create more jobs and businesses through appropriate provision of business, enterprise and employment programmes. Reduce worklessness amongst those currently unemployed and increase the skill levels of current and future workforce.</p>
<p>Supporting strong resilient communities</p>	<p>Ensure people of all ages have a much greater involvement in the designing, delivery and evaluation of services in order to actively participate in improving their lives and Barnsley</p> <p>Ensure customer services and the citizen experience of access is improved, and facilitate greater self-help</p> <p>Use the knowledge, capacity and experience which exists at community level to create a more resilient and self-reliant community.</p>
<p>Citizens achieving their potential</p>	<p>Target young people, families and communities who may need extra help in gaining the skills and experience they need to succeed</p> <p>Prioritise the safeguarding of vulnerable children and adults, and ensure that the risk of them getting harmed is kept to an absolute minimum</p> <p>Make the improvement of people's health and wellbeing everybody's business, with an emphasis on prevention and the contribution that all services can make</p> <p>Ensure that the Council plays a strong part in keeping the Borough safe, and work with others to improve community safety</p>

5. SPECIFIC AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE SERVICE, INCLUDING SOCIAL VALUE OBJECTIVES

Under this contract the successful provider will be required to actively contribute to the achievement of specific social value objectives. These reflect the vision and corporate priorities of the Council outlined in Section 3, and include:-

- Increase volunteering in the Dearne Area by recruiting and training volunteers to work on this project
- Develop and facilitate groups that come about from the interests of the socially isolated with assistance from the Area Team
- Reduce loneliness and isolation for the residents of the Dearne Area
- Work with all the partners supporting this age group (Age UK, BMBC Health & Social Care, Clinical Commissioning Group and Public Health, My Best Life, Barnsley CVS etc.)
- Work with the Dearne Area Council and its partners to look at learning points and gaps that can be met through a partnership approach.
- Make links with and attend the Dearne Area Council.
- Work with Barnsley Council and the NHS (the two largest local employers) to explore whether those retiring in the next 12 months could be encouraged to support this project through its inclusion in pre-retirement programmes.
- Include younger volunteers, particularly to support the tech parts of the project
- Local spend

The use of technology to support people who are lonely or isolated will also be an important part of the Barnsley approach – although as recognised above, it may not be the solution for everyone. We have an offer of help from the Barnsley Digital Media Centre (which is home to emerging tech start-up companies) to help us to identify potential tech solutions using the expertise of their companies.

Because of the high levels of deprivation in the Dearne, internet connectivity levels are lower than the borough average because of cost implications. We want to work with the Digital Media Centre to explore the following uses of technology to support this group to become more involved:

- Recycling of older hardware from businesses and public sector employers to provide technology for older people to learn tech skills
- Using landlines and mobile phones more innovatively to connect up older people with others – either family/friends or volunteers – through using existing applications like Skype, Facetime etc.
- Working with the Barnsley Council Digital Champions programme to help upskill older people and to provide some funds for connectivity.
- Encouraging younger people to support older members of their community with tech, whilst the older people share more 'traditional' skills which are currently popular with younger people – for example: baking, knitting, crafts activities.

6. THE SERVICE/ACTIVITIES TO BE DELIVERED

- 6.1 The appointed provider will develop and deliver a service that addresses the needs of residents in the area, meets the specified objectives; and delivers the outcomes outlined in this document.

It is expected that prior to the contract starting in September 2020 the incoming provider will make contact with beneficiaries of the existing project, both social groups and one to one work to maintain the momentum already made by the existing provider. The incoming provider will also gather local data and intelligence that will be inputted into the Dearne Area Council quarterly reports.

In addition the provider will use an asset based approach and recruit and train local volunteers that will take on a variety of roles assisting in the delivery of this service. The roles may include being a good neighbour, digital champion, social group assistant, or volunteers that hand hold individuals to already established groups. In partnership with the Area Teams the service may wish to develop and deliver new groups for those that are normally isolated. By the end of year one it is expected that the project is delivering against all of its objectives and targets that have been set.

Development of a strong collaborative working relationship with the Dearne Area Council members and its partners will be key to the success of this project. The provider will be expected to adopt a community development role and build upon the assets already existing in the Dearne community. Crucially they will possess the ability to realise the projects through project design, recruitment, leadership and motivation of volunteers.

The recruitment of volunteers is key to the project success and at any time the service should have a bank of 40 volunteers to fulfil the services aims. 25 new pairing should be made each year and links should be made with the current provider in order to ensure continuity of service for the volunteers and beneficiaries of the current service.

Links should also be made with the current provider in order to sustain the 3 weekly social groups that have already established in Bolton, Thurnscoe and Goldthorpe. These groups are well attended and the people accessing those groups feel greater connectivity to their local community.

The activity's arranged for each session should be stimulating for the mind and body. One of the observations from the current contract is that in the main it is women that access the service. The Area Council would like to see an increase in men accessing both the social groups' and one to one element of the service. This may mean developing specific activities and or groups that meet the needs of older men in the Dearne area, this may include promoting the service at local pubs and clubs.

Throughout this two year contract the incoming provider will continue with the delivery of the project, increasing and sustaining the projects volunteers, working with partners and evaluating the “social connectivity” project. The provider will use recognised tools in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the service such as the social value engine and the Warwick Edinburgh mental well-being scale.

The provider will be expected to lead by example.

The interventions/activities to be delivered as part of the project may include delivering the following activities:

- Attending local groups
- Visit supported housing schemes
- Visiting people in their homes
- Attending events
- Work alongside local services
- Develop new groups
- Social media presence
- Develop and use social media
- Work with organisations to identify potential volunteers from those due to retire
- Develop a workplan
- Scope existing provision
- Launch a promotional campaign
- Recruit and train volunteers
- Evaluate the project
- Hold a celebration event

The above is not an exhaustive list and there may be other activities you wish to include. The provider will be expected to act as the “eyes and the ears” in the community and be responsible for reporting other matters not necessarily within their scope of responsibility so that this can be actioned by the respective Council service.

This would include reporting:

- Housing issues
- Environmental issues
- ASB issues
- Safeguarding concerns

Instructions on how these reports should be made will be provided.

It is expected that the set-up, DBS checks and ongoing costs of materials, volunteer expenses and equipment will be met by the provider.

The provider works with the Area Council and BMBC Communications Department to highlight the work taking place, the improvements being made to the health and wellbeing of local residents. Use social media and other forms of communication to encourage and show the work being undertaken.

In times of austerity, sustainability is key. The provider will be expected to give consideration to the whole lifespan of the project. This should include a well-planned exit strategy to ensure that the additional capacity within the community continues to benefit the Dearne Area even after the contract has concluded.

7. TARGET GROUPS AND/OR AREAS

- 7.1 The Service should be delivered proportionately across each of the two wards of the Dearne Council Area Within the funding stream that was granted for this project it was to target those 60+ using volunteers of all ages and backgrounds. Working with local groups and the existing groups previously developed by the provider.

8. EQUALITY IMPACTS

- 8.1 The successful service provider will be required to ensure that the service is free from bias and acknowledges and respects gender, sexual orientation, age, race, religion, culture, lifestyle and values. If any needs are required as per the Equalities Act, such as language or disability, these needs will be provided for during the term of the contract.

Please also refer to Section 4 - Form of Contract.

9. PERFORMANCE MEASURES/OUTPUTS

- 9.1 Service Outcomes and Measures: Table 1 below details the outcomes or results that the service provider is required to achieve as a consequence of the service being delivered. A list of possible outcome measures is also provided. This is indicative only and Tenderers are required, as part of their tender return, to propose their own list of outcome measures, along with realistic targets, baselines and methodology for gathering the data/measuring. Final measures and targets will be agreed prior to contract commencement. Please refer to Section 2 – Tender Quality Questionnaire.

9.2 Table 1

<i>Outcomes</i>	INDICATIVE Outcome Indicators	<i>(Evaluation Methodology – provider to make recommendations in their tender return)</i>
Reduction in the feeling of loneliness and isolation	Increase the number of people accessing opportunities outside their home. Increase the number of people reporting improved levels of wellbeing. Increase the number of people accessing technology in order to stay in touch	
Establish a volunteer network in the Dearne	Increase opportunities for local residents Show Impact volunteer through various roles Increase volunteers to the service Increase new volunteers Train and support new and sustained volunteers	
Create social networks for people that are socially isolated	Develop and facilitate new groups Increase links with existing groups in the area	
Ensure people that are socially isolated get the right help at the right time	Increase networks around the person	

See appendix A for project plan

10. PROCUREMENT PROGRAMME

Indicative Programme:	
Tender Return	
Tender Evaluation	
Standstill Period and Feedback	
Award Contract	
Contract Commencement	

11. CONTRACT VALUE AND CONTRACT DURATION

11.1 The estimated annual cost of this procurement is £54.000 in total, over a 2 year period .

12. CONTRACT TERMS AND CONDITIONS

12.1 See Section 4 – Form of Contract.

13. CONTRACT MONITORING AND RECORDING REQUIREMENTS

13.1 The Provider will need to be able to demonstrate the effectiveness of the service in terms of delivering the agreed outcomes, outcome measures and outputs. There is a key requirement of the provider to:

- Meet the Contract Manager for a monthly operational meeting for the first three months of the contract.
- Thereafter provide a quarterly report to the Contract Manager. This information will be shared with the area council.
- Collect, collate and report on a range of agreed indicators on a quarterly basis (see milestones) as part of a quarterly report. This should also include the submission of 2 case studies per ward (group, individual or illustrating good practice/ innovative work) together with supporting photographs.
- Attend quarterly meetings with the contract manager to discuss the quarterly report and request any additional information/provide clarification, if required.
- Attend the Area Council Meeting as requested.
- Attend the Early Help Adult Partnership as and when required.
- An end of year report to be submitted (see milestones)
- An end of Project report and lessons learned to be submitted 3 months before the contract end date.
- Collate local intelligence and data
- Recruit and retain volunteers
- Develop guidance and training for volunteers to the service
- A celebration event for volunteers and participants of the service.

The Area Council Manager will review performance in liaison with the Dearne Area Council and may reasonably ask for additional information at any time.

Service provision will be subject to annual review

14. QUALITY STANDARDS

The provider will have all relevant policies and procedures in place.

The provider of this service will be required to adhere to the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 at all times and any other relevant guidance and directives in force or subsequently issued.

The Service Provider will ensure that:

- They are fully compliant with the new data protection regulations
- Use the BMBC procedure for reporting safeguarding concerns
- All staff are equipped with appropriate training
- A volunteer handbook and guidance are developed by the service provider

- All staff employed or engaged by the Service Provider are informed and are aware of the standard of performance that they are required to provide and are able to meet that standard.
- Robust mechanisms are in place for supporting volunteers and dealing with any issues that may arise
- The adherence of the Service Provider's staff to such standards of performance is routinely monitored and that remedial action is promptly taken where such standards are not met
- All staff employed or engaged by the Service Provider have been subject to a DBS clearance, where required, and an acceptable outcome determined.
- For the avoidance of doubt, nothing in this specification is intended to prevent the Service Provider from setting higher quality standards than those laid down in the Contract.

Additionally:

- The Service Provider will have a robust system for monitoring complaints and suggestions; feedback from service users will inform service delivery.
- The Service Provider will submit reports summarising any complaints, investigations and remedial actions

Please also refer to Section 4 – Form of Contract