

**BARNSLEY METROPOLITAN  
BOROUGH COUNCIL**



**DEARNE AREA COUNCIL**

**Assisting employment and skills**

**PROJECT REF:**

**DATE:**

**RETURN DATE:**

**TIME: 12 NOON**

**SPECIFICATION**

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## **SECTION 1**

### **PROJECT OVERVIEW AND SCOPE OF SERVICE**

# **PROJECT OVERVIEW AND SCOPE OF SERVICE**

## **1. Introduction**

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

The Area Council have commissioned a social isolation project in the Dearne for the last couple of years. This project has proved successful with two social groups running on a weekly basis in Bolton and Thurnscoe, as well as one to one support.

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 can be a real issue for some of the residents in Barnsley.

## **2. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT**

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 covers 16 sq. km with a population of 22,841, 16.9% are in the 65+ age bracket, with 12.8% living alone.

Barnsley is a Metropolitan Borough of South Yorkshire, England. The Borough was formed under the Local Government Act 1972. The Borough now forms part of both the Sheffield City Region (SCR) and the Leeds City Region (LCR). Through Barnsley Councils governance arrangements implemented in 2013 the Dearne forms one of the six Area Councils that are planning, delivering, and evaluating services on a locality-based level.

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 and well-being" 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, 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 also influence their recovery.

It is 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 some residents in Barnsley do not have the social connections they need to enable this digital revolution. Aside from face to face contact the COVID-19 pandemic has shown how important other forms of connectivity are for people of all ages.

- **Previous volunteering initiatives**

The Love Where You Live (LWYL) brand has been running as Barnsley's volunteering brand since 2013, during which time thousands of volunteers have become involved in a wide range of social action projects 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 20 Ward Alliances which were established in 2013 and led by local elected members, residents, and Area Teams that commission projects and services 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 and build on the social action work done to tackle social isolation by our Area Councils and Ward Alliances using an asset-based approach. The social inclusion volunteers will be able to use the work already done as a 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 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 several 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 or little 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

### **3.0 Dearne Area Council Priorities**

The Dearne Area Council reviews its priorities on an annual basis and the priorities are, the environment, economy, health and wellbeing, education, employment, and young people. The priorities are set based on the needs of the community and by undertaking consultation with residents. As well as the service ensuring it is working towards the Dearne Area Council priorities it must also work towards delivering elements of the Council Plan.

### **3.1 The Council plan 2021-2024**

The Council Plan will support Barnsley 2030 over the next three years, delivering the borough's vision: 'Barnsley - the place of possibilities'. This provides the framework for making decisions about priorities in the Council and helps to drive performance by setting out what the Council are seeking to achieve and how it will be measured. The plan will help make sure it strives to be even better and make a real difference for Barnsley residents, and to drive forward a modern, inclusive, efficient, productive, and high-performing council

### **3.2 Barnsley Council Priorities and Outcome Statements**

In developing and delivering this service, the provider should ensure that it is contributing to Barnsley Councils corporate priorities and outcome statements as outlined below:



- People are safe and feel safe.
- People live independently with good physical and mental health for as long as possible.
- We have reduced inequalities in health and income across the borough.



- People have the opportunities for lifelong learning and developing new skills including access to apprenticeships.
- Children and young people achieve the best outcomes through improved educational achievement and attainment.
- People have access to early help and support.

## Growing Barnsley

- Business start-ups and existing local businesses are supported to grow and attract new investment, providing opportunities for all.
- People have a welcoming, safe, and enjoyable town centre and principal towns as destinations for work, shopping, leisure, and culture.
- People are supported to have safe, warm, and sustainable homes.

## Sustainable Barnsley

- People live in great places, are recycling more and wasting less, feel connected and valued in their community.
- Our heritage and green spaces are promoted for everyone to enjoy.
- Fossil fuels are being replaced by affordable and sustainable energy and people can enjoy more cycling and walking.

#### **4. Aims and objectives of the service**

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 attending and the wider public
- 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 meetings when requested
- 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 be an important part of the Barnsley approach – although as recognised above, it may not be the solution for everyone. However, because of the high levels of deprivation in the Dearne, internet connectivity levels are lower than the borough average. In addition, the recent COVID-19 outbreak had implications for the previous service and its beneficiaries; therefore we would want the incoming provider to work with services such as 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 older people with others – either family/friends or volunteers – through using existing applications like Skype, Facetime etc.
- Create groups using applications for those accessing the service based on common interest, so that they can connect and communicate with each other
- Promote the virtual personal assistance Alexa for those accessing the service as a way of interaction and setting appointments and medication time etc.
- 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.

## **5. The service activities to be delivered**

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 August 2022 the incoming provider will contact beneficiaries of the existing project, both social groups and those receiving one to one support, to maintain the momentum already made by the existing provider. Before the contract commences links should also be made with the current provider to ensure continuity of service for the volunteers. The incoming provider will also gather local data and intelligence that will be inputted into the

Dearne Area Council quarterly reports.

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, phone buddy, social group assistant, or volunteers that hand hold individuals to already established groups. In partnership with the Area Team 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 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 minimum of 40 volunteers to fulfil the services aims. A minimum of 25 new pairing should be made each year, whilst maintaining the majority of ones that are already accessing the service. It is expected that the social groups that are already operating in Bolton and Thurnscoe will continue and thrive. These groups are well attended and the people accessing those groups feel greater connectivity to their local community.

One of the observations from the current contract is that in the main it is women that access the service. The Dearne Area Council would like to see an increase in men accessing both the social groups' and one to one element of the service. This will require innovation and developing specific activities and or groups that meet the needs of older men in the Dearne area. Although the current contract is predominantly for people over 65, the Dearne Area Council do not want age to be a barrier to engagement. Therefore the incoming provider will consider including younger people that are referred and feeling socially isolated.

The activities arranged for each session should be stimulating for the mind and body and consider the talents of those accessing the support. One of the observations of the previous project was that it was young and fresh and allowed participants to share their knowledge and skills but also acquire new ones. The provider will use recognised tools to evaluate the effectiveness of the service such as the social value engine and the Warwick Edinburgh mental well-being scale.

Throughout this 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 inclusion" project.

The provider will be expected to lead by example.

The interventions/activities to be delivered as part of the project may include 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
- Use the latest technology's
- 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 should work 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 consider 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.

## **6. Target groups and areas**

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. The incoming provider is not expected to work with people who have complex issues, but if referred they should be passed on to a organisation that can assist with their needs.

## **7. Equality impacts**

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.

## **8. Performance measures**

8.1 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.

8.2 Table 1

<i>Outcomes</i>	<b>INDICATIVE Outcome Indicators</b>	<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 Delivery of social groups	Report, targets surveys, and case studies
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	Report, and case studies
Create social networks for people that are socially isolated	Develop and facilitate new groups Increase links with existing groups in the area	Report, and case studies
Ensure people that are socially isolated get the right help at the right time	Increase networks around the person	Report, and case studies
Increase volunteering		Report, targets and case studies

opportunities in the Dearne area		
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9. **PROCUREMENT PROGRAMME**

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

10. **Contract value and duration**

10.1 The estimated annual cost of this procurement is £84,000 in total, over a 3 year period .

11. **contract terms and conditions**

11.1 See Section 4 – Form of Contract.

## **12. contracting reporting and monitoring requirements**

12.1 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

## **13. 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