

## **NNS Connected Communities: Community Development Project**

As part of our Neighbourhood Networks, Connected Communities project we are offering up to £260,000 over 2 years (with the option to extend until 2027) to work with our three priority communities in Birmingham:

- LGBTQ+ communities
- Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller communities [GRT]
- Deaf BSL communities

We are seeking an organisation with expertise in Asset Based Community Development, to recruit and host three community development workers. Each worker is required to focus on one of the three communities, whilst also working as a small team sharing resources where appropriate. The community development workers will each need the relevant skills, knowledge, and passion to be effective at engaging citizens from the community they work with. Alongside this they will need to excel at partnership working with a wide range of voluntary and public sector organisations. The host organisation would be responsible for recruiting the workers, providing ongoing management of the project and supervision of the workers. The host organisation will need to ensure the impact captured and reported to Heart of England Community Foundation and Steering Group. We are looking for each worker to provide approximately 30 hours per week. An essential part of the role will be for the workers to find and build trust with citizens from these specific communities. We will expect to see the facilitation of networks to support citizens to express what matters to them, what they love about their community, and what they want to change. The principles of Asset Based Community Development and coproduction are central to this project, and an understanding of adult social care is also desirable. There will be the option of small amounts of funding for grass roots community activity. The NNS Connected Communities steering group will be able to direct the worker to this, and other, grant funding for appropriate projects that align with the gap analysis findings.

Applications are welcomed from voluntary and community sector organisations working in Birmingham. Local authority or other public sector organisations are not eligible to apply.

### **What are Neighbourhood Network Schemes**

Neighbourhood Network Schemes (NNS) are commissioned by Birmingham City Council, Adult Social Care, to develop local support and activities which are needed for citizens to lead happy, healthy, independent lives in their own homes and communities. The main beneficiaries of this work are adults with a disability, or additional need, and older people. There are ten NNS' across the city, one per constituency, most of which are run by a range of voluntary and community sector organisations.

More information on this can be found here: [Neighbourhood Network Schemes | Prevention and Communities | Birmingham Connect to Support](#)

### **NNS Connected Communities**

NNS Connected Communities was developed to address the potential gaps in community-based activities and support for smaller minority or community of interest groups who are spread 'thinly' across the city that may not be suitable for or deemed a priority of the wider constituency NNS. It is

an integral part of the recommissioned NNS model from April 2022 and works within the overall aims, objectives, and 'Prevention First Outcomes' of the wider NNS. Where possible, the work of NNS Connected Communities will be underpinned by the principles of Asset Based Community Development (ABCD). The project team leading Connected Communities is a partnership between; the Prevention and Communities Commissioning Team, Community Partnership Worker, and Heart of England Community Foundation (HoE). Decisions are taken to a partnership steering group.

### Identifying Priority Communities

BVSC Research were commissioned to complete an initial review of data to identify the most underserved communities and help us decide which to prioritise. Based on the findings of that report, three communities were identified as the initial priorities for NNS Connected Communities:

- LGBTQ+
- Deaf BSL
- Gypsy, Roma, Traveller communities [GRT]

### Gap Analysis

Building on the findings from BVSC Research, the steering group decided to commission three providers to conduct an in-depth gap analysis of each community to better understand the challenges, gaps and asks from each community. For the GRT and LGBTQ+ communities this exercise did not identify clear priorities to commission against. Whilst for the Deaf BSL communities there were some clear priorities to commission against. The three communities have unique characteristics, strengths, and challenges. For the next stage we realised there were benefits to bringing this together into one project whilst maintaining a dedicated worker for each community. The gap analysis also highlighted that, across all three communities, the first step to realising meaningful change must be a focus on gaining the trust and confidence of the community through building meaningful partnerships. This was particularly the case with GRT communities who were hard for us to find and engage with and it was recognised that we need a better approach to doing this which will be trusted by all three communities.

### Proposed Community Development Project

Based on the learning from the gap analysis, we are now looking to commission a single provider to deliver this crucial work through the recruitment of three Community Development Practitioners who will work to deliver the following:

### Key Outcomes

- **Prevention First:** The goal of this project is to provide better outcomes for citizens which will align with the objectives of Prevention First, with a particular focus on; Increased social participation, healthier lives, independent living, and carers feeling more supported. Please refer to the Prevention First document for more information.
- **Develop Relationships:** Proactively reach out to and engage with the three specific communities to build strong, trustful relationships. Organise and facilitate community meetings, workshops, and events.

- **Build Resilience:** Work to overcome the specific challenges, barriers, and gaps identified within the community.
- **Community Development:** Take an ABCD approach to work in partnerships with members of the community and stakeholders to recognise and build on what is already strong, whilst implementing targeted activities that overcome the specific challenges, barriers, and gaps identified within the community.
- **Increase and Raise Awareness:** Raise the voice of each of the three communities to increase awareness of their challenges and achievements among the wider public and policy makers. Work to influence positive policy changes and improve service provision, especially within health and social care.
- **Partnership Building:** Develop and maintain effective partnerships with local authorities, NHS, the VCFSE sector, service providers and other stakeholders, to enhance support networks and resource availability for the communities. To work with and enhance any existing networks.
- **Reporting and Evaluation:** Monitor and evaluate the impact of community projects and initiatives, providing regular reports to steering groups and stakeholders.
- **Increase Capacity:** Look for new opportunities to secure additional funding and investment to support existing efforts, increase capacity, or expand the community offer.

As well as the outcomes above, there are specific outcome priorities that have been identified for each of the respective communities:

### LGBTQ

Key Findings:

- Repeated themes around the challenges of intersectionality and lack of safe and sober spaces
- Barriers to accessing sports and physical activities – lack of venues and beginner sessions.
- Grassroots community groups feel unsupported and burnt out.

### Deaf BSL

Key Findings:

- Increase numbers of accessible social activities work with Deaf citizens to develop preferred activities.
- Improve accessibility of mainstream social, arts and cultural activities
- Improve accessibility of mainstream leisure centres / gyms / pools
- Healthy lifestyle information and advice – lack of information in BSL.

- Deaf citizens feeling isolated within hearing families- an issue for Deaf adults in a predominantly hearing family.
- Developing volunteering opportunities to Deaf people in local communities to develop skills and confidence.

### **Gypsy, Roma, Traveller**

#### Key Findings:

- Members of the community experience high levels of social isolation
- Communication and language barriers can make it difficult to access activities and services.
- Members of the community often feel they don't have a voice and are overlooked.

### **Application and Assessment Process**

The application and assessment process will comprise 3 stages over a period of approximately 12 weeks. We anticipate that the successful bidder will begin mobilisation of the project September/October 2024.

- **Stage One – Initial Expression of Interest**
  - Expressions of interest should be submitted by 2.00pm, Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> June 2024.
  - Applications will be assessed for suitability and those who are successful will be shortlisted and invited to apply for the next stage.
- **Stage Two – Full Application**
  - Full Application forms and guidance will be sent to applicants no later than Wednesday, 26<sup>th</sup> June 2024.
  - It is **strongly recommended** that you meet with a member of the Commissioning team to discuss your application before submission.
  - Completed applications should be submitted no later than 2.00pm, Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> July 2024.
  - Submissions will be assessed and scored, and those who meet the threshold will be invited to present to the 'Expert by Experience' panel.
- **Stage Three – Expert by Experience Panel**
  - Final stage. Successful applicants will be invited to give a short presentation and Q&A to the panel.

**Important Note:** The successful bidder will be required to include a member of the Connected Communities Working/Steering Group to sit on the interview panel when recruiting for any of the Community Development Practitioner roles.

If there are already internal candidates eligible to fulfil the role, then they will still need to be interviewed by the Working Group/Steering Group member before starting the role.

**Expressions of interest**

We'd like to hear your proposals for delivering this project. If you have suggestions about the best way to achieve the aims and outcomes of this project, we'd like to hear from you.

Submissions should be no longer than 500 words.

include some background information about your organisation.

any relevant previous experience working with hard-to-reach communities,

how you plan to achieve the aims and outcomes for the identified communities.