



Opportunity Description

We are looking for two new delivery partners to help us scale [Connect](#) - a community partnership addressing social isolation in Barking & Dagenham.

The programme has been designed to test & learn how to work alongside residents to help them build dependable friendships and community connections, so as to:

- improve health and well-being
- create environments for people to flourish and contribute to their community outside a service model
- reduce demand on local health and care services

The work is being led by [Care City CIC](#) on behalf of the [BD Collective](#), with the support of [Community Resources](#). The programme has run in three phases to date, with three delivery partners: [Harmony House Dagenham CIO](#), [Independent Living Agency](#) and [Humourisk CIC](#). **New partners will be joining us in phase 4.**

Phase 1 (Sep 2023 - Apr 2024) was for discovery and design work

Phase 2 (May 2024 - May 2025) was for live learning and delivery, working broadly alongside adults experiencing social isolation in the borough

Phase 3 (Jul 2025 - Nov 2025) was for live learning and delivery, working in a more targeted way alongside residents receiving Adult Social Care

Phase 4, (1st Dec 2025 - 30th Nov 2026) is for learning and delivery, working alongside residents from the below groups, plus residents continuing from phase 3:

- People with learning disabilities and autism
- People from migrant communities (in particular, Ukrainian Migrants)
- Younger People [insert ages]
- People experiencing poor mental health

The work thus far

Phase 1 - Discovery and Design Work

When Connect started, our borough had the [second highest rate](#) of loneliness in London - we have built on work that the community and council have done in recent years to understand why, and to design something different.

We know that people find it far more difficult to maintain good physical and mental health without a strong network of family and friends around them. Phase 1 worked alongside people who have been in this isolated place to understand the challenge in depth and explore the shape of journeys beyond isolation into a space where people can also support others into greater connection.

This phase reiterated the importance of working alongside people to help them build their agency to address 'root causes' in their lives; people experiencing isolation are also frequently experiencing new transitions and complexity.

Phases 2 - 4 - Live Learning and Delivery

This work has been incubating a robust learning approach to addressing social isolation in the borough. All partners need to be ready for staff, who are 'out there seeing people' 1:1 to come together on a weekly basis with other delivery partner staff, and contribute to an environment where testing, failing and learning openly, leads us to continually find better solutions together.

You will need to be open to having pre-conceptions challenged, and to being honest with other partners as we discover what it takes to walk alongside people, connect them and release *them* to be connection catalysts in our community.

We are not delivering a new service or your organisation's service. We are supporting people to draw on the support they need and want to build confidence, health and relationships, and helping them to see a different role for themselves, through knitting together and building out the strengths of our place and people.

In Phase 2 we worked broadly alongside any adults experiencing social isolation, before testing the model alongside residents referred in from Adult Social Care teams in Phase 3.

In Phase 4 we are looking to bring the iterated Connect model to a new group of residents, working intensively 1:1 alongside:

- People with learning disabilities and autism
- People from migrant communities (in particular, Ukrainian Migrants)
- Younger People (16-25)
- People experiencing poor mental health
- Residents referred into Connect during Phase 3, from Adult Social Care.

We will be bringing on board two new delivery partners to work alongside the three delivery partners that have been working 1:1 since Phase 2. This will bring us to a total of five partners who will be working collaboratively alongside residents, one another, and the broader learning team.

The evolving model:

The model we've designed in Connect brings together connected learning systems, all centred around a person, their relationships, and the factors contributing to their ability to build and sustain them in their lives. The below visualises the model, which is testing **what needs to be present in three environments around people**, for connections to spark and sustain. The model continues to be re-imagined together throughout the programme.

The Connect Model

We've been exploring **what needs to be present** within people's environment for meaningful connection to spark and sustain

And **how we need to work together** to bring these things to life

- VCFSE Delivery Partners holding 1:1 relationships with resident referred in
- Cross-organisational learning sessions every week
- Capturing lived experiences as we go

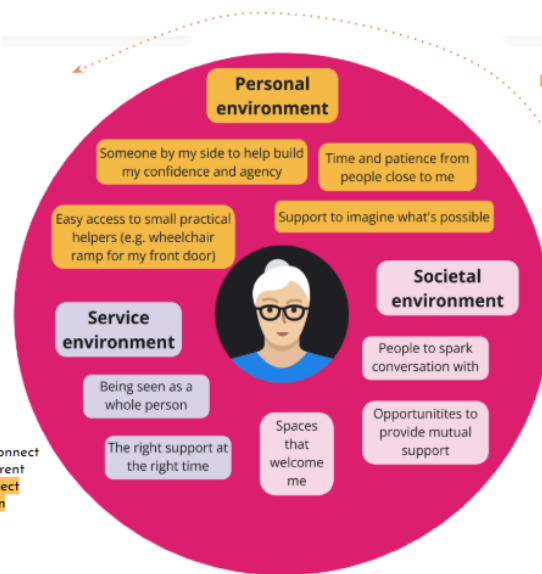
Facilitated learning

- Services coming together to actively connect the dots around a person and test different ways of working - this aspect of the project has been on pause since Phase 3 with an ambition to reengage it in Phase 4.

- Connection Catalysts working 1:1 alongside residents to surface what matters to them, help them build confidence, co-create an approach to acting on their desires.

Facilitated learning

- Residents Groups and VCFSE organisations prototyping ways to create a more connected place



Outcomes of phase 4:

- A robustly tested model which deepens our understanding of how to create environments where people can flourish, and build connection, trust and a sense of belonging together, and grow good health as a result.
- Relational working in a supportive partnership with people - walking alongside them as they discover how to connect into dependable friendships and community.
- A solution which can be scaled and adapted for use across Barking and Dagenham as a place, which demonstrates a positive impact on people's health and wellbeing, and which can be spread to different geographies.
- Improved system-wide intelligence and tested ways of working: This project testing a deeply relational method across multiple partners.

To help us achieve the above as a partnership, we're looking for partners who:

- Can develop an environment conducive to developing connection, trust and belonging between people previously socially isolated
- Can work outside formal interventions and services, celebrating as people build connections independently from delivery partner organisation
- Help people to build agency and resilience, so they gradually grow in independence and in their ability to solve problems, receive support, and offer help to others
- Can meet residents where they are - leading from their passions and experiences
- Will contribute to the learning approach, with a willingness to be open and honest about what has and hasn't worked and to share the learning journey with others for mutual benefit
- Are willing to cross organisational boundaries, working with B&D as a 'place' as the priority – investing in your organisation's capabilities to commit to changing the culture, shifting thinking towards "we" as a sector and place (rather than just "me" and "my organisation").
- Have capacity to work intensively with up to 45 people (annually) experiencing isolation (expected to be the equivalent of a 1.0 FTE role)
- Have a strong and demonstrable commitment to the [BD Collective values](#) which underpin how we work together as partners

Partners will show experience of working with vulnerable people in complex situations, demonstrating an “alongside” approach, which seeks to release the power of others, equipping them to live healthy, connected lives, rather than doing things *for* people or providing a service.

Diversity

We value diversity and partners should show a commitment to the same. As a partnership, we are currently underrepresented in some areas, and we would especially welcome applications from organisations which:

- Are based, or have strong connections, in **Barking area, Scratton Farm and/or Mark's Gate**
- Can assign staff to the programme who identify as [global majority](#) and/or **male**
- Have lived experience of, or expertise supporting residents experiencing, **mental health difficulties**.

Working with data:

Partners will commit to:

- Sharing data informally via learning sessions, and formally via an agreed referrals / monitoring process to support learning
- Collecting qualitative and quantitative data each month, as agreed
- Contributing to the overall learning report at the end of the funding

Partners will also demonstrate good GDPR knowledge, including willingness to meet additional GDPR requirements as part of project delivery.

Budget:

Delivery partners will be paid an annual rate of £52.5k pro-rata, with the exact amount dependent on the date of appointment and the number of residents they are able to support through to 31st November 2026. The exact funding will be confirmed at the time of issuing contracts to successful applicants.

Funding will be restricted for use on the Connect programme.

Timeline and Milestones;

- Expressions of Interest to be submitted by 5pm on Tuesday 24th February demonstrating how the partner will fulfil this spec (see below)
- Interviews will be held on 2nd - 3rd March
- Selection process completed by 5th March
- Contracts with partners in place by 19th March
- Contract end: 31st Nov 2026

How to Apply:

- Please submit an expression of interest (EOI) of no more than 1500 words which details:
 - Why you are the best organisation to meet the aims and objectives of this learning programme
 - How you will approach the work, making specific reference to the desired outcomes and capabilities outlined above, and the knowledge and experience you will bring

- Any partnerships you have in place, and how these will contribute to this work
- Please submit your EOI to michael.roberts@carecity.org by 5pm on Tuesday 24th February.