

North, Central and South Manchester Clinical Commissioning Groups and Macc are seeking to appoint an organisation to carry out the evaluation of a Grant Programme to reduce social isolation and loneliness.

Description of Grant Programme

A total of £550,000 has been set aside by South, Central and North Manchester Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) to provide grants to Voluntary and Community Sector Organisations (VCSOs) to reduce the isolation and loneliness of older people (50+). The Grant Programme is administered by Macc, the main infrastructure organisation for VCSOs in Manchester. The Grant Programme is governed by a Programme Board made up of representatives from CCGs and other stakeholders. It is intended that the Grant Programme presents opportunities for learning by all participants at every stage. Each of the larger projects will be partnered with a nominated representative from the appropriate CCG.

The grant programme will offer two forms of grant, a small grant pot of up to £10,000 per project and larger grants of up to £50,000 (the evaluation will focus mainly on the larger grants). The maximum length of grant is 18 months. The approach of the grant programme is light-touch to encourage each VCSO to create projects that build on their organisational capability and on their knowledge, experience and understanding of their client group. Some of the grants will be for city-wide projects and some for projects in each of the CCG areas. It is expected that between 10 and 20 larger projects will be funded. VCSOs will be asked to include sufficient management time within their costings to allow them to be fully engaged in the evaluation process.

North, South and Central Manchester CCGs are all working to improve the health of their local populations, so that people stay healthier for longer. Reducing social isolation is one of the drivers by which this may be achieved.

Reducing social isolation and loneliness of older people across the city of Manchester the primary is the aim of the programme. It will therefore be a requirement for the evaluation process to firstly evaluate any impact, and then demonstrate how the impact will support the Manchester CCGs in achieving their strategic priorities.

The secondary aim of the Grant Programme is to build effective working relationships between CCGs and VCSOs.

There are a number of equality objectives which will be met in part or full by successful VCSOs and form part of the overall evaluation of the Grant Programme which are to:

- Strengthen the knowledge, understanding and evidence base about communities in order to increase community cohesion and design services that meet everyone's needs.

- Tackle discrimination and narrow the gap between disadvantaged groups and the wider community and between Manchester and the rest of the country.
- Celebrate the diversity of Manchester and increase awareness of the positive contribution that diverse communities make to the city.

A series of events are planned during the Grant Programme to encourage and facilitate learning for all the parties involved. A rough outline of each event is described below:

- 1) Launch event: This event will introduce the grant programme, explain the priorities and concerns of each CCG, present a range of current thinking to reducing isolation and loneliness and facilitate creative discussions between CCGs and VCSOs about solutions.
- 2) Mid Programme Event: This event will involve presentations in some form from the larger projects on progress made, the progress of the evaluation and discuss ways of improving the projects.
- 3) End of Programme Event: At this event the overall success of individual projects and the Grant Programme will be discussed and debated.

Key Information

A total of £50,000 (inclusive of all incidentals and VAT) has been set aside for evaluation of the Grant Programme.

The evaluator will be required to participate in the bid specification design, to ensure the qualitative and quantitative requirements of the evaluation programme are outlined at the outset and events to promote the fund. This work is expected to start in November and the application period for grants will be in January.

The intended **outcomes** of the evaluation, in order of priority, are:

- 1) To have identified the impact of the interventions delivered through the £10k-£50k projects on:
 - a. Social isolation
 - b. Loneliness
- 2) To have identified a demonstrable link between the project impact on social isolation/loneliness and the Manchester CCGs' strategic priorities, using either primary evidence or the body of research literature in this field.
- 3) To have described and analysed the way in which the Grant Programme and individual projects met the Equality Objectives of the programme.
- 4) That the evaluators have significantly increased the understanding of key stakeholders within the Programme Board, CCGs, and VCSOs about the potential impacts of social isolation/loneliness on CCG priorities.
- 5) To have improved the ability of VCSOs who received a grant of £10k - £50k to demonstrate their potential to impact on CCG priorities in future grant opportunities.
- 6) To have illustrated how the Grant Programme has impacted on relationships between CCGs and VCSOs.

The **outputs** of the evaluation will include but not be limited to:

- 1) Data sets from each of the larger projects, based on individualised agreements with each of the VCSOs running the projects.
- 2) A mid-programme event and end of programme event.
- 3) A summary report in PDF form of the outcomes of the Grant Programme including short descriptions of the projects funded by the small grants of £5-£10k.
- 4) 250 copies of a printed and attractively designed short summary document also available in PDF.

Discussion of Approach

It is expected that the successful applicant will negotiate and agree the final methodology with the Programme Board and will provide regular reports on progress to the Board.

The overall approach is one that emphasises the engagement and learning of key participants and seeks to improve the quality and effectiveness of the projects throughout their lifetime.

The evaluation will require extra data collection from the participating VCSOs but whenever possible this should be integrated with their routine data collection systems. Where there are additional requirements these should be designed to enhance the long-term capacity of the VCSO to demonstrate their impact on service users.

Linking outputs with outcomes and impacts to CCG priorities may be evidenced in a number of different ways, using both primary evidence and also the literature evidence base. However, it is of critical importance that these evidential links are sufficient to demonstrate to CCG decision-makers of the robustness and reliability of the outcomes of the evaluation, so that they can make informed choices about future funding.

The mid-programme and final programme event are to be included in the costings of the evaluation. The form and content of the events will be co-designed by members of the programme board and the evaluator. The evaluator should set aside an amount of £3000 for the two events within their costings. This amount will cover venue hire, refreshments, equipment, publicity etc. but not the time of the evaluators.

Anonymised data collected by the evaluators must be published as an Open Data freely available to all who wish to use it. The evaluator is free to use the data to publish further research papers but will need to secure permission from VCSOs to use information specific to their projects.

Application and Selection Process

Application is by email to Pauline Clark by 9 a.m. on Monday 4th of November. Interviews will take place on 11th of November. Pauline@macc.org.uk

If you have any questions about the tender please contact Beth Plant beth@macc.org.uk 0161 834 9823.

The application should describe the intended approach to carrying out the evaluation, how the evaluation will be managed, who will carry out the work and include indicative costings.

The application should also

- Demonstrate an understanding of CCGs approach to strategy and funding
- Demonstrate an understanding of the context and policy environment of work with older people living in urban population centres including an understanding of the present state of social aging research.
- Demonstrate ability to successfully deliver complex projects of a similar scale on time and to budget, with appropriate attention to detail.
- Provide evidence of sufficient financial sustainability to deliver the project over the entire timescale.
- Provide evidence of previous successful work with VCSOs
- Describe experience of providing capacity building work to improve ability of VCSOs or other organisations to conduct monitoring and evaluation.

The main applications should be no longer than 5000 words not including attachments.

Attachments should be limited to:

- 1) Two examples of successful evaluations that relate to the content of the application.
- 2) CVs of the key staff that will carry out evaluation.
- 3) Short history of the work of the applicant organisation.

The applications will be assessed by a sub-group of the Programme Board who will shortlist and then interview one or more of the shortlist before awarding the contract.

Appendix 1

Selection Criteria to be used by selection panel

- 1) Credibility Authority of the research team; researchers subject knowledge, experience and skills - including experience of involving stakeholders
- 2) Reliability Evidence of ability to deliver within timescales
- 3) Quality Evidence of quality of output and reporting; detailed and thorough plans - clear presentation and easy to understand
- 4) Ability Robust delivery plans; creative approaches; innovation; sound and sustainable methodology; understanding of issues
- 5) Partnership work
- 6) Value and impact Cost; value for money; mechanisms for achieving
- 7) impact; approach to dissemination