**Manchester City Council**

**Directorate for Children & Families**

**Volunteer Recruitment Grant to Support the Homelessness Contact Service**

**Prospectus 2017/18**

# 

# Exec Summary

Manchester City Council wishes to commission a service that will recruit, train and coordinate a team of volunteers who are experts by experience, including people with lived experience of homelessness, to support the Homelessness and Housing Options initial contact service.

We are seeking applications for funding from Voluntary, Community Sector and not for profit services/ organisations who are able to provide this service.

Applications for funding can be from a consortium or individual organisations, but they must be based in Manchester and working with Manchester people. The funding can only be offered to one consortium/ individual organisation and cannot be split between bidders. Applications from groups working together in a partnership will require one organisation acting as the lead, accountable organisation.

There is £50,000 available for the volunteer service to support the homeless grant for a 12 month period from the award of the grant.

Important dates to note (see Appendix 1 for full list of relevant dates):

Call for applications: **7th July, 2017**

Closing date: **24th July, 2017**

Decisions: Week commencing: **6th August, 2017**

**Contents**

Introduction

**Section 1**

Context

# Section 2

1. Grant Objectives
2. Service Delivery
3. Who can apply
4. Funding
5. How to apply
6. How will decisions be made
7. What will happen after decisions have been made
8. Monitoring and evaluation
9. Getting help

10. Appendices

# Introduction

Welcome to the Volunteer Recruitment Homeless grant funding prospectus, and thank you for your interest in applying.

This document provides an explanation to the Volunteer Recruitment Homeless grant priorities for funding, the grant application process and guidance on how to make an application.

Bidders are advised to read this document thoroughly, and make note of the scoring criteria.

We wish you good luck with your application.

**Section 1**

# Grant Programme Context

Homelessness is a growing national problem. The number of people presenting as homelessness has been steadily increasing over recent years. In addition to this, in 2016 the number of people sleeping rough in England rose for the sixth year in a row, with an estimated 4,134 people bedded down outside, an increase of 16% on the previous year’s figure of 3,569, and more than double the 2010 figure.

Manchester Council’s Housing Options Pilot has trialled a new way of working that is focused on preventing homelessness by working with residents to create a Personal Housing Plan. The Personal Housing Plan includes actions that residents can do for themselves and actions for the Housing Options Staff to support this process. To develop this approach the pilot has identified that more support could be provided for general advice and guidance, to proactively support people with the first few actions of their Plan and guide people through the Customer Service Centre.

Consultation with the Homelessness Charter Group about the Customer Service Centre has also highlighted that waiting times are a cause for frustration. Additional volunteers to welcome residents, explain waiting times, and direct people to the right area of the Customer Service Centre would improve this experience. Volunteers would also provide appropriate benefit and other advice to address the wider issues that impact on people’s homelessness. Volunteers would be recruited based on their life experience, adding to the diversity of the Customer Service Centre to reflect the range of situations that a resident may come to the Customer Service Centre for. This would include people who have previous experience of using services, including people who have experienced homelessness.

# Manchester’s Homelessness Partnership

The Manchester Homelessness Partnership was developed to create and deliver a multi-agency and partner vision for a homelessness free future in the city. In 2015, the partnership invited people who were homeless in the city, and organisations working to reduce homelessness, to share their experiences, key challenges and concerns. The Manchester Homelessness Charter was the outcome of this work, drawing on best practice nationally and internationally.

The Charter provides the vision for ending homelessness in Manchester and sets out a number of values underpinning this:

* A safe, secure home along with an appropriate level of support to create a good quality of life;
* Safety from violence, abuse, theft and discrimination, and the full protection of the law;
* Respect and a good standard of service everywhere;
* Equality of access to information and services;
* Equality of opportunity to employment, training, volunteering, leisure and creative activities.

The Charter also sets the collective responsibilities of those that work with people who are homeless, which are:

* Good communication, coordination and a consistent approach is delivered across all services
* People with experience of homelessness have a voice and involvement in designing the services aimed at helping them.

# Our Manchester Strategy and Approach

The Our Manchester Strategy is an ambitious statement of where Manchester people, businesses and public services want to get to over the next ten years. The vision is for a city that is:

* Thriving – with great jobs and the businesses to create them
* Full of talent – both home-grown and from round the world
* Fair – so everyone has an equal chance to contribute and to benefit
* A great place to live – with a good quality of life: a clean, green, safe city
* Connected – both physically, with world-class transport, and digitally, with brilliant broadband.

Underpinning the strategy is the Our Manchester approach, which aims to create a more proactive, pre-emptive and creative than business-as-usual public service, focusing on a person's or community's strengths and opportunities. This new kind of partnership of local people, professionals and organisations is developing new answers; some as yet unthought-of and all different. At its centre is delivering things differently with our residents, doing ‘with not to’, and having different conversations with residents about what matters to them.

# Section 2

1. **Grant Objectives**

The overall aim of the service will be:

* Recruitment and coordination of volunteers with previous experience of homelessness.
* Training in relevant policy including housing, welfare and entitlements and how to give advice and guidance, e.g. interview, communication skills to be delivered to volunteers.
* Provide meaningful work experience for volunteers to build their confidence and experience.
* Increase the accessibility of the Customer Service Centre; improve the experience for people who present as homeless, providing: additional support, guidance and advice for a drop in.
* Increase the support for people who access the Housing Options Service.

**2.** **Service Delivery**

The service will recruit, train and coordinate volunteers in order to support the Council’s Homelessness and Housing Options initial contact service. Volunteers will be experts by experience or have some direct experience of homelessness. The training provided would be meaningful and support the volunteer’s development, increasing their knowledge and skills and strengthening their employability.

The volunteer’s role would include, but not be limited to:

* Providing a friendly welcome into the Customer Service Centre and directing people to the appropriate waiting area or facilities as required.
* Supporting the initial basic information gathering.
* Providing a basic advice service.
* Providing support for people to access computers, signing up to Manchester Move etc following their conversations with Advisors.

The Service Provider will be expected to demonstrate the achievement of the following outcomes:

* Improved experience of the Customer Service Centre for Manchester residents.
* More residents using the computers in the Customer Service Centre or library to register and bid for properties.
* Improved follow up of personal housing plans with residents.
* Increase in basic advice provision.
* Meaningful work experience opportunities to increase skills and experience of trained volunteers.

1. **Who can apply?**

To apply for this grant your organisation must have, and be able to produce when asked:

* A safeguarding policy
* An equal opportunities policy
* A health and safety policy
* A data protection policy
* Financial policies and procedures
* Evidence of at least 4 Board / Management Committee meetings in the last year
* A list of Board / Management Committee members, including their roles
* A governing document (i.e. a Constitution)
* Relevant insurance
* A recent annual report and independently verified accounts
* Evidence of significant recent provision of services to Manchester residents.

You must also be a not-for-profit organisation – this includes voluntary, community and faith organisations, co-operatives and mutual societies, non-governmental organisations which are value driven and which principally invest their surpluses to further social, environmental or cultural objectives.

Applications are welcomed from groups working together in a partnership with one organisation acting as the lead, accountable organisation.

You cannot apply if you are:

* A private sector or “for profit” organisation.
* A public sector organisation i.e. local authority, education institution, health authority etc.

# 4. Funding

The funding of £50,000 will be paid through Purchase Order, on a quarterly basis over a 12 month period from the grant award date.

In accordance with the obligations placed upon local authorities by the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the Act), all information submitted to Manchester City Council may be disclosed in response to a request made pursuant to the Act.

In respect of any information submitted by applicants, which they consider to be commercially sensitive, applicants should:

* Clearly identify such information as commercially sensitive.
* Explain the implications of disclosure of such information.
* Detail the envisaged timeframe during which such information will remain commercially

sensitive.

Please note, even where information is identified as commercially sensitive, Manchester City Council may be required to disclose such information in accordance with the Act if a request is received. Receipt of any information marked "confidential" should not be taken to mean that Manchester City Council accepts any duty of confidence by virtue of the marking.

# 5. How to apply

Please send your completed application to: [workingwithus@manchester.gov.uk](mailto:workingwithus@manchester.gov.uk)

(NB – incomplete applications will not be considered).

If you require a paper application form please contact:

Mick Stacey at m.stacey@manchester.gov.uk and/or on 0161 219 3373

Please ensure that you remember / include the following important points:

* Make sure you read the guidance notes carefully.
* Ensure that you understand the application criteria.
* Provide evidence to support your application.
* Answer every question on the application.

The deadline for applications is 4pm on 24th July, 2017

You will receive an acknowledgement of our receipt of your application.

**6. How will decisions be made?**

Applications will be considered by the Scoring Panel, which will consist of senior officers within Manchester City Council, people with experience of homelessness, and people who have good knowledge and understanding in this area.

Each application will be considered on its own merits, from both established groups and new groups, and from established and new proposals.

The Scoring Panel will assess each application and allocate scores based on how well the application can evidence:

* How it contributes to the objectives.
* How it will achieve agreed outcomes.
* How a partnership would work (if the proposal is for partnership, alliance or consortium).
* Reasonable and well thought through costings.

In the event of more than one group bidding to deliver the same service or activity, the grant evaluation panel will consider which proposal best meets the criteria.

**7. What will happen after the decisions have been made?**

All applicants will be notified by email of the panel decision.

The decisions will be made week commencing 6th August, 2017

Written feedback will be provided on request. There is no appeals process.

Officers from MCC will arrange to meet with representatives of the successful applicants to finalise details around service delivery, monitoring and reporting arrangements and grant fund payments.

# 8. Monitoring and evaluation

Manchester City Council is required to safeguard public funds. Therefore, successful providers will be required to provide monitoring information which will evidence agreed outcomes, based on the objectives of the Grants. This information will also be used to inform future commissioning priorities and to secure future financial resources. The monitoring information will be required within two weeks after the end of each financial quarter.

Officers from the Directorate for Children and Families will meet with the successful provider to agree the specific requirements and format of the monitoring information, the frequency of monitoring meetings and the overall governance arrangements.

# 9. Getting help

If you require any clarification, please contact:

Mick Stacey at: [m.stacey@manchester.gov.uk](mailto:m.stacey@manchester.gov.uk)

Key documents that may assist with your application include:

* Manchester Homeless Charter
* Manchester Strategy 2016-2025

If a query is raised by an applicant, any answer(s) given by Manchester City Council may be provided to all applicants, along with the original query. Details of the enquirer will not be disclosed.

# 10. Appendices

**Appendix 1 - Relevant Dates:**

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| Grant Applications issued | **7th July, 2017** |
| Closing date for Applications | **24th July, 2017** |
| Panel assessments | **Week commencing 24th July, 2017** |
| Mediation Panel | **Week commencing 24th July, 2017** |
| MCC Internal Approvals | **Week commencing 31st July, 2017** |
| Announcement of Funding Decisions | **Week commencing 6th August, 2017** |
| Projects to commence | **1st October, 2017** |