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Description automatically generated**West Yorkshire UKSPF Pillar 3 People and Skills**

**Call 1 – Work & Health Programme “Rise 2 Thrive”**

### Background

West Yorkshire is a ceremonial county in the Yorkshire and Humber region, it includes large urban centres such as Leeds and Bradford, and small parts of the Peak District National Park, characterised by steep valleys and rural towns and villages. As a result, there is a need to develop flexible provision that can respond to diverse needs across different geographies. Traditional social inclusion provision has focused on concentrated areas of deprivation, targeting beneficiary groups in areas where they can be found in significant numbers. This approach does not necessarily work well in geographies where people are more dispersed and there are small pockets of deprivation covering a wide variety of different beneficiary groups.

West Yorkshire Combined Authority are inviting applications for delivery of the UKSPF People and Skills Pillar. Better Connect have designed a model to deliver Call 1: Work and Health Programme, addressing priority areas E33: Employment Support for economically inactive people, E34: Courses including basic, life and career skills, E35: Enrichment and volunteering activities to improve opportunities and promote wellbeing, E37: Progression in the Workplace and E39: Green skills courses.

Research and consultation by The West Yorkshire Combined Authority has shown that there are 10,700 workless households accounting for 14% of all households in the region. West Yorkshires other all employment rate is below the national average, with 24% of the population characterised as economically inactive, with disadvantaged groups having below average employment rates. A number of reasons cited for this include health related barriers, long term disabilities, mental health, existing MSK conditions exacerbated by inadequate homeworking equipment and long covid. Economically inactive residents face complex and multiple barriers and are often ineligible for mainstream support, therefore are further isolated from economic opportunities.

There is also a need for local action in West Yorkshire on employment and skills to contribute to improvements in the wider economic performance, particularly around productivity, earnings, and employment. West Yorkshire faces a significant gap in its productivity performance and pay levels in relation to the national average; as well as facing skills shortages and gaps with many people’s skills being under utilised in the local labour market.

People facing these challenges are likely to require intensive support to help them first to access and then to sustain employment. Within this diverse group, older people, lone parents, ex-offenders and people with mental health or other health issues face particular barriers to and in, work and discrimination in the labour market. Trying to tackle these barriers can be very daunting, especially if the appropriate support is not in place. People facing these challenges are likely to need more focused and targeted help, perhaps over a longer period, to help them to progress into work and thrive in the workplace.

### Purpose of Rise 2 Thrive West Yorkshire

Better Connect’s proposed partnership programme has been built up on tried and tested, successful community delivery models, such as Action Towards Inclusion (ATI), Reducing Inequalities, Supporting Employment (RISE) and Thriving at Work (TAW), funded by the European Social Fund and National Lottery Community Fund.

This funding opportunity will establish a specialised Keyworker and Intervention support model that.

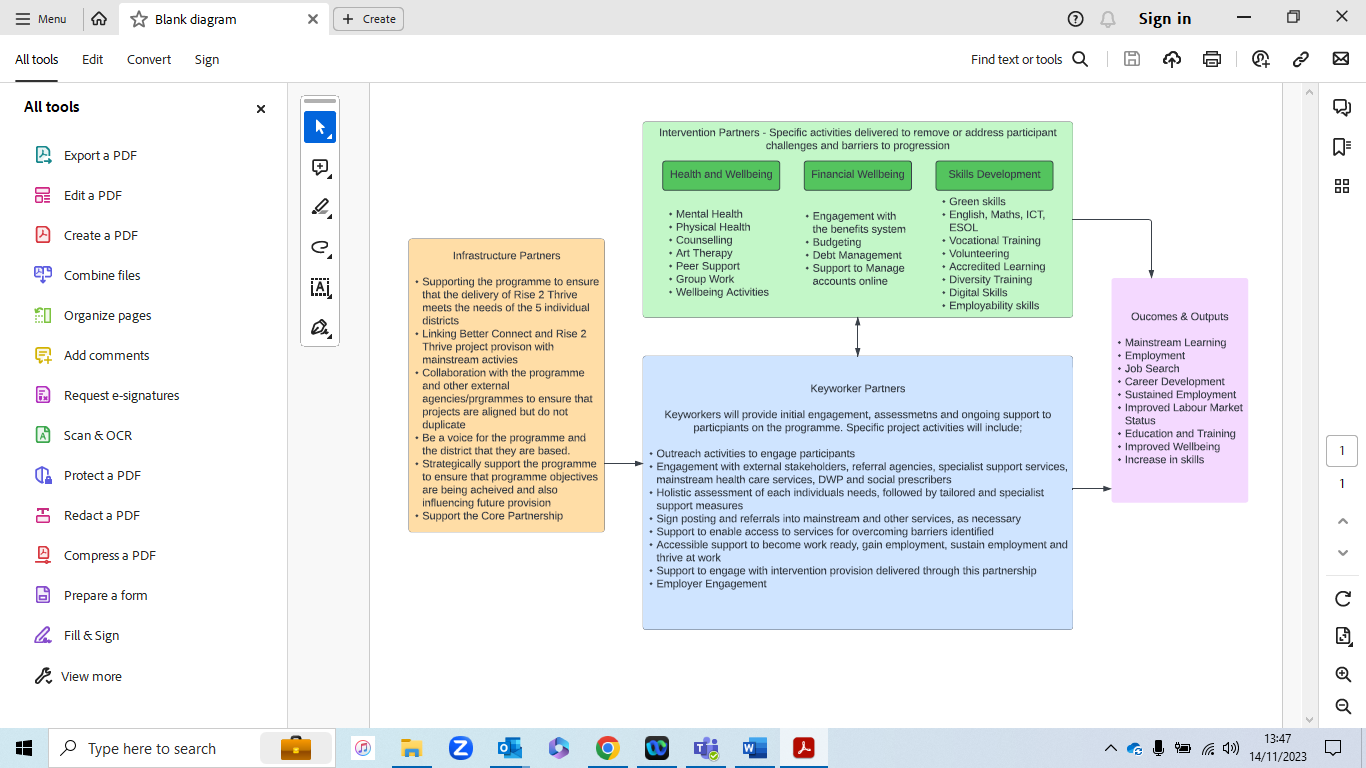
* Supports economically inactive people to help them to move towards education, training, and employment.
* Supports and reduces the number of workless households.

and

* Helps people in work to support them to stay in work and progress in work, supporting them to identify opportunities to reskill, upskill and use their under-utilised skills and experience in the workplace.

This project will provide support to the most disadvantaged groups in West Yorkshire who are furthest from the labour market and who experience significant barriers to work and people who are struggling to thrive and progress in the workplace. It will do this by engaging these priority ‘hard to reach’ groups and providing them with support to move towards and into employment, and progress in the workplace. It will achieve this by combining holistic, tailored, and person-centered Keyworking support with specialist interventions, focusing on financial wellbeing, mental and physical health and skills development that includes green skills and courses that improve basic, life and career skills.

### Better Connects Delivery Model



This delivery model above will require a large and diverse partnership comprising of a range of local providers, embedded in West Yorkshire communities, who will have a long-term relationship with participants (Keyworker partners) and specialist or niche providers who will offer specific short-term interventions to remove barriers (Intervention partners).

### Delivery Partner Roles

***Keyworker Organisations:*** locally embedded organisations who can engage with members of the local community, providing holistic and tailored support to participants, enabling and empowering them to progress towards the labour market and in the workplace. Keyworkers will be expected to offer 121 support to their participants, help to identify barriers to engagement and create action plans to address these. Keyworkers will be a consistent contact for the participant and will support them to engage with the project’

s intervention partners and existing provision that sits outside of the Rise 2 Thrive project. Keyworkers will be responsible for recruiting participants to the project.

***Intervention Partners:*** delivery partners offering specific activities that address participant barriers and challenges that are preventing progression in life and work. Interventions are shorter-term provision and fall under one of three categories – Health and Wellbeing, Financial Support and Skills Development. Intervention partners will receive referrals to their provision from Keyworkers but will also have the opportunity to recruit participants directly. It is anticipated that participants who engage with intervention provision in the first instance may wish to access further project support. The relationship between intervention partners and keyworker organisations will be crucial for the success of this model. We will require a minimum of 50% of interventions to be via Keyworker referrals rather than direct recruitment.

***Infrastructure Partners:*** Ideally, we are looking for 1 infrastructure partner per West Yorkshire district (5 partners in total). The role of the infrastructure partners will be to support and promote the programme, ensure the provision is strategically meeting the needs of the local district and to ensure the programme is linking well with existing external provision to facilitate progress pathways and prevent duplication. It is important that each district has a voice that feeds into the wider delivery of the programme and infrastructure partners will play a key role in ensuring this programme is well integrated within local communities.

***Evaluation Partner:*** We believe that evaluation of provision and programmes should begin at the start of delivery. We are seeking an experienced evaluation partner who can help us to demonstrate impact, identify areas for improvement, measure social value, provide comparisons to alternative provision and ultimately to evaluate the overall effectiveness of the provision.

### The role of Better Connect

Better Connect specialise in developing, creating, and leading partnership programmes that meet the needs of local communities. We are a Yorkshire-based (addresses in Knaresborough and Leeds) not-for-profit organisation that aims to create a Yorkshire where every person is empowered to thrive in their life and work. Founded in 2007, we have an established track record of leading successful partnership projects, working with a wide range of locally based delivery partners rooted in the heart of communities.

We partner with organisations across all sectors, with a particular focus and specialism of supporting and strengthening organisations from the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector (VCSE). We believe that locally rooted organisations with a strong social mission who work in effective partnership with others have the biggest impact on individuals and communities. We exist to create and lead those partnerships.

Outside of the general programme management of this provision, Better Connect are committed to providing the following;

* Opportunities and facilitation of a delivery partner Peer Support Network (delivered at district level across West Yorkshire). This network brings together delivery staff, providing a safe place for peer-to-peer support, sharing best practice, and forming better connections.
* Run and facilitate a series of partnership engagement events, using the Theory of Change model to collaborate on the continuous development of the programme.
* Development of efficient monitoring processes, both delivery and financial, that meet the needs of the funding while being as clear and straightforward as possible for organisations to comply with, ensuring they do not detract from programme delivery.
* Celebrate success and support by finding solutions to challenges that may arise throughout the lifetime of the programme.
* Provide and share performance data and evaluation and impact information that will support organisations to progress and develop, build capacity, and inform future programmes.
* Produce case studies, in a variety of formats that celebrate our participants, our delivery partners, the partnership approach, and demonstrate impact.

### Funding available by role and geography

Whilst the financial model for this programme follows an actual cost methodology, we will be using a unit cost model to determine notional budgets and maximum contract values for programme delivery. This is to ensure that funding is awarded in an equitable way to all partners who are included in the Rise 2 Thrive partnership.

The funding we have allocated to our delivery offers are as follows:

* **Key Worker Delivery** - £2,000,000 to support 1670 participants of which 1165 will be economically inactive and 505 requiring in work support.
* **Intervention Delivery** – £1,000,000 allocated to deliver 2,000 individual interventions with a unit cost of £500 per person.
* **Infrastructure Support** - £100,000 to arrange and facilitate quarterly meetings, advocate on behalf of the programme and support with the linking of existing provision, ensuring that services are aligned, and that duplication is avoided. We are looking for 1 infrastructure partner per district.
* **Childcare, travel, training, and other costs** - £400,000 to provide needs-led services that will remove an individual’s barrier to engagement.
* **Events** - £25,000 allocated to delivery partnership events, engagement with employers and external stakeholders.
* **Evaluation -** £75,000 allocated to the continuous evaluation of the programme.

**PLEASE NOTE**: At this point, you do not need to make a final decision about whether you would like to be a Key Worker or Intervention partner (or both). The purpose of this application process exercise is to identify a strong partnership of organisations who have the capacity and capability to deliver on this contract. Final contract outputs, values and specific delivery will be agreed through negotiations that will begin following submission of your EOI but will not be finalised until we know the outcome of our application to West Yorkshire Combined Authority. As part of the application to join the partnership you will be asked to indicate which role(s) you may be interested in and in which geographical areas, however there will be opportunities to change this throughout the process.

**Available funding by Geographical Area**

The total amount of funding awarded to each of the districts is based on the number of documented workless households, the funds have been apportioned accordingly. (Bradford 20%, Calderdale 9.5%, Kirklees 16.5%, Leeds 42.5%, and Wakefield 11.5%). The proposed number of keyworker are the minimum number we would like for each district.

The below table shows the split by district in terms of both contract value and participant numbers.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Geographical area** | **Proposed Total Value per area** | **Total volumes per district** | **Of which are inactive** | **Of which are employed** | **Proposed number of keyworkers** |
| West Yorkshire - Keyworkers | £ 2,000,000 | 1670 | 1165 | 505 |  |
| *Bradford* | *£ 400,000* | *334* | *233* | *101* | *9* |
| *Calderdale* | *£ 190,000* | *158* | *110* | *48* | *4* |
| *Kirklees* | *£ 330,000* | *276* | *192* | *84* | *7* |
| *Leeds* | *£ 850,000* | *710* | *496* | *214* | *18* |
| *Wakefield* | *£ 230,000* | *192* | *134* | *58* | *5* |
| **Total** | **£ 2,000,000** | **1670** | **1165** | **505** | **43** |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Geographical area** | **Proposed Total Value per area** | **Total volumes per district** |
| West Yorkshire - Interventions | £ 1,000,000 | 2000 |
| *Bradford* | *£ 200,000* | *400* |
| *Calderdale* | *£ 95,000* | *190* |
| *Kirklees* | *£ 165,000* | *330* |
| *Leeds* | *£ 425,000* | *850* |
| *Wakefield* | *£ 115,000* | *230* |
| **Total** | **£ 1,000,000** | **2000** |

**What can organisations apply for?**

We are seeking applications from delivery partners covering the whole geographical area, please note that organisations delivering keyworker or intervention provision are not expected to cover all areas by themselves. We do not anticipate that any district will be limited to just one delivery organisation and would encourage there to be geographical coverage within areas (e.g., provision in both rural and urban areas of each district.).

Please also note that financial allocations, delivery in the identified districts and delivery of specific intervention types can be flexible and based on need of the participants that are engaging with the programme.

Organisations can apply for more than one role in more than one district. We ask that applications are realistic and are deliverable. WYCA have confirmed that any underspend cannot be rolled over into future years funding, and we therefore have a responsibility to ensure that we reach as many individuals as we can with the programme and ensure that we use the funding available to have the greatest impact on people’s lives.

**Organisational eligibility**

Applications will not be considered from any of the following:

* Individuals or sole traders
* Branches that don’t control how they are run and how money is spent.
* Applications made by one organisation on behalf of another.

**Project participants**

All participants must be:

* legally resident in the UK and able to take paid employment.
* economically inactive or in employment
* aged 16 years and over.

For participants who are economically inactive, the project will have a specific focus on those who are out of work, furthest from the labour market and people who are most at risk of social exclusion. This includes, but is not limited to:

* people with health barriers (physical and/or mental health problems, long term disabilities or work limiting health conditions, including addiction);
* People from workless households
* people with social or skills barriers (ex-offenders, people from Black and Ethnic Minority (BAME) communities, unpaid carers, lone parents, older workers (50+), forces families and ex-forces, victims of domestic abuse, care leavers);
* people with economic or financial barriers (people with housing/homelessness issues, long term benefit dependents, people who are not engaging with the benefits system).

For participants who are in employment, the project will have a specific focus on those who are in work but are not considered to be thriving and/or progressing in the workplace and those who are struggling to sustain employment. This includes, but is not limited to:

* People who are neurodivergent, have a disability or work limiting health condition or experience mental health challenges.
* People who are returning to work after periods of sickness absence (including long covid), long term sickness, maternity/paternity leave and/or adoption leave.
* People who are looking to upskill or retrain.
* People who have existing musculoskeletal conditions that are exacerbated by inadequate homeworking equipment.

As per the guidance from WYCA, the target age group for this programme is 16+.

**Application Timescales**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Key Dates** | **Activity** |
| 23rd November 2023 | Application round open – Expression of Interest. All forms and supporting documentation are available to be downloaded from the Better Connect website |
| 7th December 2023 | Online event for all interested partners. Hosted and delivered by Better Connect, with the opportunity to ask questions. |
| 18th December 2023 | Deadline for applications by midnight. |
| January 2024 | All applicants notified of bid outcome. Feedback will be available for all partners who have not been included in this partnership. |
| 5th January 2024 | Better Connect to submit this partnership bid to West Yorkshire Combined Authority. |
| January & February 2024 | Awarding and negotiation stage. Better Connect will present partners with notional budgets and minimum delivery profiles linked to programme delivery.  Contracting will take place once these are agreed (subject to awarding) |
| March 2024 | Programme launch, including all monitoring processes (subject to awarding) |
| 1st April 2024 | Delivery begins (subject to awarding) |

**Support and Guidance**

Better Connect is committed to ensuring that the application process is as simple and straight forward as possible in order to give all organisations the opportunity to submit a bid.

If you have any questions about your organisation’s eligibility for the programme or any questions about completing the application form, please contact Emma Lyons, Business Development Manager on 01423 795305 or e-mail Emma on [elyons@betterconnect.org.uk](mailto:elyons@betterconnect.org.uk)

**Detailed guidance to complete the Application Form**

This Expression of Interest has been designed to minimise the number of open questions the applicant must complete. Please ensure that where we have asked for more detail, it is provided in the box indicated. We have not stipulated a word count but encourage organisations to keep their answer concise.

Where we have provided an opportunity for you to add any additional relevant information, please also keep this concise. It is not mandatory to complete this part of the question. Please only use this if you feel that you have something to add that will strengthen your application.

The table below provides an overview of the application form, including the weighting of each question and any maximum word counts. This is included to help you plan the completion of your application form. More detailed guidance is provided below for each question.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| No | Question | Value | Additional information |
| 1 | Organisation Details | I | Information only |
| 2 | Eligibility | I | Information only |
| 3 | Financial Systems and Audit | I | Information only |
| 4 | Organisational Capacity | *scored* | Description of current capacity and capability to deliver |
| 5 | Performance Systems | I | Information only |
| 6 | Quality Systems | I | Information only |
| 7 | Track Record | *scored* | The answer to this question will support and enhance the answers provided in previous questions. |
| 8 | Your location | I | Information Only |
| 9 | Delivery | *scored* | Description of your intended delivery model |
| 10 | Aims and Objectives | I | Information only. Outline of your main aims |
| 11 | Participant Groups | I | Information only. Tick all that apply |
| 12 | Geographical Locations | I | Information only. Tick all that apply and provide details |
| 13 | Services to be delivered | scored | Details of what you would like to deliver |
| 14 | Volumes | I | Information only. Provide participant numbers |
| 15 | Project Costing | I | Information only. Provide budget breakdown |
| 16 | Match Funding | I | Information only. Provide match funding breakdown |
| 17 | Additional Information | I | Assurance of policies in place |
| 19 | Declaration | I | Signature and Date required |

**Application Form – Detailed Guidance**

|  |
| --- |
| 1. **Organisation Details** |
| Complete all contact details and relevant information as requested. |
| 1. **Eligibility** |
| Please read and tick all eligibility requirements.  Tick boxes in section a) to confirm your organisation is not currently being investigated in relation to fraud or irregularity under any existing contracts and that your organisation is not in a state of insolvency, voluntary administration, compulsory winding up, composition with creditors, company voluntary arrangements or subject to equivalent proceedings.  Tick boxes in section b) to confirm that your organisation has policies relating to Equality and Diversity, Safeguarding, Health and Safety and Data Protection as well as confirming that you have employers’ liability and public liability insurance (or include a confirmation letter if you ensure insurance is in place prior to the start of the project).  *If you have any doubt about your organisation’s eligibility, please contact us before submitting an application.* |
| 1. **Financial Systems and Audit** |
| Please ensure that an answer is provided to each of the questions in this section. Your answers to these questions will not affect your eligibility to deliver provision on this project but will help Better Connect to understand the support we would need to put in place should we be successful with our application to the WYCA.  Where we have asked you to provide a short summary of the skills, experience, and qualifications within your organisation, please include the following;   * Skills, experience, and qualifications that are specifically linked to finance and audit systems. * Examples of projects where similar financial controls are in place. * If there are members of your board or trustees that are able to offer additional support with these processes, should they be required. * Do you have a finance subcommittee where project spend vs delivery is a rolling agenda item?   Where we have asked for information of your organisations internal audit systems, please include the following;   * Staff roles who are responsible for conducting these internal audits * Their skills and relevant experience and qualifications * Do you use spot checking? * How often do internal audits take place? |
| 1. **Organisational Capacity** |
| Please ensure that an answer is provided for each of the questions in this section. This section is designed to help us establish your organisations capacity to deliver this programme.  The dates for delivery are mandated and we need to be confident that we can delivery all intended profiles, outcomes and outputs and ensure that the funding can be spent of project related activity.  Please provide assurance that you will be able to deliver the programme in the dates indicated, you should include the following;   * Why you are confident you have the capacity to deliver this programme. * If you have delivery staff in mind, please include the information here. * If recruitment is needed, how will you ensure that delivery begins on 1st April, if recruitment was delayed or vacancies prove hard to fill.   Please provide a short summary of the skills and experience of your staff team in relation to delivery. |
| 1. **Performance management systems** |
| Please ensure that an answer is provided for all questions in this section. Whilst Better Connect will be responsible for the overall programme performance and will provide performance management support to all delivery partners, it is important that you are able to confirm you have internal systems in place to support this and your delivery of project provision.  With this programme being fixed for 1 year, it is important that we are able to address under performance in a positive and supportive way, but also in a way that rectifies any issues quickly. |
| 1. **Quality Systems** |
| Please ensure that an answer is provided for all questions in this section.  Quality of provision, support for beneficiaries and staff are very important to Better Connect. We want to work in partnership with organisations that have a strong social mission and can provide assurance that their delivery offer is of high quality. We want to make sure that our programmes have the greatest possible positive impact on all beneficiaries but also the organisations that contract with us.  Please describe what you do to monitor quality and how you go about measuring and maintaining high standards. |
| 1. **Track Record – this is a scored question** |
| Please answer all the questions in this section. This is a scored question, and we would expect all partners to score at least 50% to be taken forward in this partnership programme.  Each part of the question is equally weighted.  If you don’t have experience of delivering outcome-focused projects, please answer the questions honestly but use the boxes to describe how you intend to meet the needs of the programme. |
| 1. **Your location** |
| If you have answered ‘No’ to either of the questions in this section, please provide assurance in the box that you are able to deliver in West Yorkshire and where you intend to deliver provision from. How are you going to ensure that local provision is available for local people? Have you successfully delivered in West Yorkshire on previous contracts? |
| 1. **Delivery – this is a scored question** |
| In this section you should explain the ways in which your organisation ensures effective implementation and delivery of projects. Your answer should address the following:   * How will you recruit participants effectively and how will you make sure that they are eligible for the programme? * What steps will you take to ensure high quality of delivery? * How will monitoring and evaluation be integrated into the delivery of your project? * Which referral agencies, external stakeholders are you linked to that will be vital for engaging with contributing to the success of the project. These can be at the start or exit from the project for beneficiaries. * How you intend to engage with employers, to either support participants into work, sustain employment, progress in the workplace, and generally thrive. * How you intend to embed provision that is person centred, tailored, flexible, holistic, and accessible. |
| 1. **Aims and Objectives** |
| This should be the mission statement or core aims of your organisation. Though the specific aims of this project do not need to be the primary aim of your group, you should indicate how this project adds value to or complements your organisational aims and objectives. You should include your organisational footprint (geographical coverage) and provide any additional information relevant to your social aims and values. |
| 1. **Participant Groups** |
| In this section you must tick **at least one** of the participant group boxes to indicate the types of participants your project will engage. If none of the boxes apply or you have an additional participant group not listed, please tick the ***Other*** box and provide details in the space provided.  Please note, if you are applying to be an Infrastructure Partner or an evaluation partner, please leave this section blank. |
| 1. **Geographical Locations** |
| In this section you must tick **at least one** of the geographical location boxes to indicate where your project delivery will take place. You should also provide further detail about the specific cities, towns and/or villages that you currently deliver services in and indicate any additional areas where you could provide outreach services, if relevant to the role. |
| 1. **Services to be delivered – this is a scored question** |
| In this section you should tick any boxes that apply to indicate which services you would like to provide as a part of this programme. In the space below, you should provide further details about how you will deliver each of the services and what you intend to deliver under each heading, for each box you have ticked. Please note that this programme is intended to be flexible, and person centered, you are able to evolve your offer based on participant need as the programme progresses.  You should include information about the following for each service:   * Format and delivery methods * Group sizes and delivery style * Length of programme/participant support * Progression routes (if applicable) |
| 1. **Volumes** |
| In this section you should give the numbers of new, eligible participants that you believe you could engage during the lifetime of the project. The numbers you include in this section should represent the minimum number of participants you would expect to fully complete the project activities and need to be a realistic and achievable target. Consideration should be given to the hard-to-reach nature of the clients this programme aims to engage and we are not looking for the projects that engage with the highest numbers but the projects that deliver appropriate and high-quality services to a realistic number of eligible participants.  Please note, only Keyworker and Intervention organisations need to complete this section.  Where we have asked for any additional relevant information, please only complete this if you have any extra information that you think we would like to be aware of. It is acceptable to leave this part of the question blank, should you wish. |
| 1. **Project Costing** |
| Please answer all questions in this section.  Please ensure that you use and return with your application the Project Costings spreadsheet and the Expenditure template spreadsheet.   * Project Costings spreadsheet – designed to help you calculate your maximum contract value based on the number of participants that you intend to deliver each service too. * Expenditure template – designed to support your staff costs calculation. This information is crucial for our bid submission to the WYCA and will inform our granular budget for the whole programme. Naturally there will be some changes before 1st April, (staff have moved on, pay rises and role changes) so we will be as flexible with this as we can be.   In the main body of the application, where we have asked you to complete the cost type and the estimated value, please note that it is acceptable for some cost lines to be left blank. It is likely that if we are successful with our application, we will be able to revisit theses.  The total value in question 15 should match the total value on the Project Costings spreadsheet.  Please complete **and** submit **both** the ***Costings Spreadsheet*** and ***Expenditure templates*** |
| 1. **Match Funding** |
| it is a requirement of the project to source a minimum of 10% additional match funding for Call 1 – Work & Health programme. If we are to apply for £4M we will need to secure an additional £444,444.00.  Better Connect are working hard to secure this as a cash match and are in conversation with a number of potential funders.  If we are unable to secure the full value, we are proposing to use a salary match model as match funding for the programme. We are asking all partners to dedicate some additional resource by way of staff costs to the programme and help us secure this fund. Usually, the staff time donated would be where you seek support from team members who you would not usually be claimed for but are still offering the programme support. This staff time would be ordinarily funded by other means e.g., core costs.  Example 1 – dedication of 1 day per week CEO time (7.5 hours) to support the staff team delivering the programme, help make strategic links that would enhance the programme, and be an advocate for what we are trying to achieve.  Example 2 – 10% of a finance assistants time per month to help support with the pulling together of finance claims  Evidence requirements for this would be the same as for the staff whom you would be claiming for. This is a model that Better Connect have experience of using and successfully applied this methodology to our Thriving at Work programme that was part funded by the European Social Fund.  Please complete **and** submit the ***Expenditure Template*** |
| 1. **Additional Information** |
| Please provide an answer to all the questions in this section. At this stage we will not be asking partners to provide copies of these. If organisations don’t have these policies in place, please do get in touch and Better Connect will support you to create them. |
| 1. **Declaration** |
| Please read the declaration statements and sign and date in the box provided. **We are happy to accept signatures that are electronic copies of your original signature or typed.** |

Before submitting your application form, please check the following:

* All questions have been fully completed.
* The declaration has been signed and dated.
* Costings spreadsheet and Expenditure template for staff costs have been submitted with your application form.

Please return your completed application, along with the required documents **by email** to, Emma Lyons, [elyons@betterconnect.org.uk](mailto:elyons@betterconnect.org.uk) confirmation of receipt will be sent to each applicant once the application has been logged.

**Deadline for applications: Monday 18th December 2023, midnight**

To ensure transparency and fairness to all applicants, Better Connect will not answer any questions from individual applicants in relation to required application content. However, if you have any questions about your organisation’s eligibility for the fund or any practical questions about completing the application form, please contact Emma Lyons, Business Development Manager on 01423 795305 or e-mail Emma on [elyons@betterconnect.org.uk](mailto:elyons@betterconnect.org.uk)

***Please note: Better Connect cannot be held responsible for the accuracy or completeness of any submissions.***

***Applications will not be read until the deadline has passed.***

***Applications received after this deadline will not be accepted.***

***Please ensure your submission is sent prior to the deadline and includes absolutely everything required as detailed in the information and guidance document. We will not be able to inform you if anything is missing.***

***We will not read past or take into consideration any detail that exceeds the indicated word counts.***