



BRIDGES is funded by the European Social Fund and the National Lottery Community Fund.

## INVITATION TO TENDER

Procurement for an additional delivery partner for the Building  
Better Opportunities BRIDGES project

Date: 10/09/2021

Version 1.0

Organisation	Steps To Work (STW)
Title of Procurement	BRIDGES
Brief description of supply	Delivery Partner
Estimated value of tender	£150,000 maximum to include all costs
Estimated duration	November 2021 – April 2023
Name of STW contact	Stephanie Hammond Head of Operations BRIDGES <a href="mailto:Stephanie.hammond@stepstowork.co.uk">Stephanie.hammond@stepstowork.co.uk</a>
Timetable	Response deadline 10am 28 <sup>th</sup> September 2020  Questions deadline 10 am 25th September 2020  Notification of award no later than 8 <sup>th</sup> October 2021

## **Background**

### **Building Better Opportunities**

Building Better Opportunities (BBO) is a programme aimed at tackling poverty and social inclusion, by assisting the most disadvantaged people throughout England, and is funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) and The National Lottery Community Fund (NLCF) with the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) acting as the Managing Authority.

The funding was distributed in line with thirty-nine Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) areas, each with its own priorities and strategies as to how the funding should be spent, however all of the projects have the same five key principles

#### **1. Help the most disadvantaged**

It is acknowledged that some individuals are more disadvantaged than others. The European Commission cites the following disadvantaged groups of people as a priority:

- People with parental or carers responsibilities
- Women
- People with health issues and disabilities
- Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups (BAME)
- Refugees and recent migrants
- People over 50 with few or no qualifications and not in employment
- Low income, single earner households with children where one partner is not working
- Disabled people
- Those out of contact with the labour market
- Ex – offenders and offenders
- Homeless people
- People with low or no skills

#### **2. Tackle Social Inclusion**

As social inclusion can severely affect a person's wellbeing and, in turn, have a substantial impact upon their confidence and motivation to seek support and opportunities, this programme seeks to target these issues by addressing individual's barriers to seeking employment.

#### **3. Be focused on the capabilities of each individual**

A 'one size fits all' approach to the most disadvantaged is not sufficient to address individual's barriers and issues. This programme will seek to offer truly individually tailored and holistic support packages to help those engaged overcome the challenges they face.

#### 4. Lead to better coordinated services

For a number of years many organisations have worked in silo which did not always benefit individuals with complex needs and barriers. This programme activity encourages organisational partnerships to enable coordination, and a joining up, of services available to individuals.

#### 5. Create new opportunities for work

If individuals are to be assisted to become more work ready it is essential that there are opportunities available for them to enter employment. Therefore, employer engagement will form part of this programme to ensure that individuals can progress into employment or self-employment.

Funding was available, via a two-stage application process, to a lead organisation that would be legally responsible and financially accountable for any funding awarded. The lead was also to take responsibility for the distribution of funds to delivery partners, throughout the delivery lifetime of the programme, which is presently until June 2022

### **BRIDGES**

Steps To Work (STW) were successful in gaining a contract from the National Lottery Community Fund (NLCF) to deliver, within the Black Country, for their Employment Support Over 24's with multiple needs and complex barriers, with a grant value of £19,368,963.21 and the STW project Building Reachable Individual Dreams Gaining Employment & Skills (BRIDGES) became operational in July 2016

BRIDGES is a multi-faceted programme aimed at reaching the most disadvantaged participants who may have previously fallen through the cracks of services and society. By working with a diverse range of partners the programme is able to offer participants a seamless and supported journey from initial engagement to exiting the programme. This is accomplished by ensuring that each participant has access to fully supported routes to increase social inclusion and develop both personal and employability skills. People engaged upon the programme are able to access innovative and creative activities, both in groups and on a one-to-one basis, and specialist interventions to make the journey towards employment enjoyable and relevant and where all successes, large or small, are celebrated. The programme ensures that all of the activities are appropriate to the individuals engaged and are delivered by experienced and knowledgeable staff whilst ensuring that the programme enhances, and adds value, to existing, and sometimes mandatory, work-related provision.

### **BRIDGES participants**

The delivery of the BRIDGES programme takes place across the Boroughs of Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton, which together form the Black Country. Although the majority of participants live within these Boroughs the programme

support is available to people who live outside of the area providing that they access all of the programme's services within the Black Country.

To be eligible to access support from the programme an individual must be;

- Aged 25 years and over
- Unemployed (cannot be in part time work or on a zero-hour contract)
- Economically Inactive (including those not working who are claiming benefits other than JSA)
- Legally resident in the UK and able to take paid employment in European Union member states
- Have complex needs/multiple barriers which are impacting on being able to enter paid employment
- Require support to fully and independently engage in existing services

### **BRIDGES Current Delivery Partners**

The partnership presently comprises of fourteen delivery organisations which enables the BRIDGES programme to offer a truly diverse range of services to participants

Access 2 Business	Green Square Accord Previously Age UK Walsall	Beacon
Black Country Healthcare Fountain Trust	Gloucester Street Community Centre	Ideal for All
Just Straight Talk	Manor Farm Community Centre	Refugee & Migrant Centre
Sandwell Consortium	Steps To Work	Walsall College
Walsall Council Sports & Leisure Services	Wolverhampton Voluntary Sector Council	

We are seeking an additional delivery partner with a grant allocation of up to a maximum of £150,000 to provide a programme of services, within or across the Black Country, which will enhance rather than duplicate existing activities and services. It is anticipated a delivery commencement date of November 2021, which will include:

- **Community-based innovative and creative soft-skills development-related activities**
- and/or
- **Community-based innovative and creative employability-related activities**

Please refer to Annex 1 current BRIDGES Partnership Activities for an outline of the current programme content

Before deciding to apply for this opportunity, we strongly recommend you read the Building Better Opportunities Programme Guide and the **Employment Support for Over 24's** Black Country LEP project outlines on The National Lottery Community Fund's website

<https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/programmes/building-better-opportunities/black-country>

As well as the programme guide

<https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/programmes/building-better-opportunities>

Addition Information is included in The National Lottery Community Fund's guide to delivering European funding

<https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/programmes/building-better-opportunities/guide-to-delivering-european-funding>

Further information can also be found regarding Steps to Work and it's BBO programmes on the Steps To Work Website

<https://www.stepstowork.co.uk/>

The Expression of Interest form can be found here

[www.stepstowork.co.uk/tender-opportunity-bridges-delivery-partner](http://www.stepstowork.co.uk/tender-opportunity-bridges-delivery-partner)

## Selection criteria

Each Expression of Interest will be scored against the selection criteria and the award criteria as set out below. The maximum score is 35, which is made up of adding selection criteria and award criteria scores to give an overall score.

Each score is set against a RAGG (Red Amber Green Gold) system:

Total possible score				
GOLD	GREEN	AMBER	AMBER/RED	RED
30-35	23-29	15-22	8 to 14	0 to 7

## Selection Criteria

Criteria	Track Record Financial			Track Record Experience	
Weighting	50%			50%	
	Evidence of managing previous funding			Evidence of experience with similar target groups	
<b>Scoring</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
	Very poor	Poor	Good	Very good	Excellent

## Award Criteria

Criteria	Offer	Target Group/Area	Outputs	Price	Innovation
Weighting	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%
	Comprehensiveness	Meeting specific needs	What offer will achieve	Cost	Innovative ideas, devices or methods
	Continuity	Participant involvement & empowerment	Quality of service	Value for money	
		Geographical areas			

<b>Scoring</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
	Very poor	Poor	Good	Very good	Excellent

## Tender Process

We will only accept electronically completed forms which should be emailed, with the heading 'BBO Round 7: Employment support for the over 24s' to:

[Stephanie.hammond@stepstowork.co.uk](mailto:Stephanie.hammond@stepstowork.co.uk) & [simon.carter@stepstowork.co.uk](mailto:simon.carter@stepstowork.co.uk)

Any queries or questions regarding this tender should be directed to [Stephanie.hammond@stepstowork.co.uk](mailto:Stephanie.hammond@stepstowork.co.uk) & [simon.carter@stepstowork.co.uk](mailto:simon.carter@stepstowork.co.uk) stating BRIDGES Delivery Partner Tender Query in the subject line, by no later than 10am 25<sup>th</sup> September 2021.

**All queries, questions and responses will be available on the frequently asked questions page to be found on Steps To Work website and Contract Finder. Due to procurement guidelines Steps To Work are unable to respond to questions directly, all responses will be available via the frequently asked questions page which can be found here**

[www.stepstowork.co.uk/bridges-partner-procurement-faqs/](http://www.stepstowork.co.uk/bridges-partner-procurement-faqs/)

Steps To Work reserves the right to carry out clarifications, if necessary, which may be carried out via email or a clarification meeting.

Closing date for applications 10am 28<sup>th</sup> September 2021. **Please note that any applications received after this time will not be considered.**

Notification of outcome will be received by applicants no later than Friday 8<sup>th</sup> October 2021.



## Annex 1

### Current Bridges Partnership Activities

Outreach delivery of self-employment support, including overcoming primary barriers e.g., ex-offenders, carers, health & challenging welfare dependency. Delivering self-employment-based workshops to encourage and support increased knowledge in order for participants to progress independently.	Social skills development & gradual employment-focussed programme for those accessing primary & secondary mental health services as well as those who have been discharged back to GP, not ready to access a full IPS employment programme.	Delivering activities across the Black Country, including IAG, intensive mentoring, soft-skills, confidence building, social activities 1:1 employability skills support
Wrap-around support service for over 50's to build confidence, increase social inclusion, develop adaptable employability skills through IAG, intensive 1:1 mentoring, support with health issues & volunteering	IAG, life-coaching, counselling, life skills activities, ongoing outreach support, onsite childcare, volunteering within centre	Musculoskeletal management programme with embedded behavioural changes towards employment, health & wellbeing interventions as part of BBO partner programmes
Programme for those with disabilities/ long term health issues: health, wellbeing & social skills development through horticulture workshops, with integrated & practical employability skills support, employer engagement & brokerage service	Social Inclusion & pre-employability activities for visually impaired participants. including independent living support, transport training, job opportunities & employer support	Intensive keyworker approach across Sandwell for, supported referrals across consortium, confidence building, raising ESOL, literacy & numeracy levels especially in BAME communities, work experience placements
Initial intervention activities through dedicated support worker to develop social skills, confidence, optimism and motivation, assist with barriers such as accessing accommodation, & bill payment, referral and hand-holding to specialist support, 1:1 pre-employment sessions.	Provision for New Arrival Communities to improve skills, employment prospects & help assimilate into community: ongoing outreach support, assistance with accessing services, ESOL, basic skills, work experience	Working with BBO partners to source meaningful volunteering opportunities, with ongoing IAG & support, linking to relevant training with support to access this.
Employability-focussed support for people with disabilities & long-term health issues including life-skills, literacy, numeracy, IT, condition management, work placements, work buddies, employer support.	Outreach delivery of employment focused one to one and group sessions, providing confidence and motivation, increasing IT skills and any other necessary support to enable progression to independent jobsearch or employment	