

VCSE Brokerage Framework – Information and Guidance for the Communities against Cancer programme

Published date:	6 th November 2024
Deadline for clarification questions:	28 th November 2024, midday
Deadline for proposals:	18 th December 2024 - 5pm

This document includes information and guidance for VCSE organisations to make proposals to deliver activities to address the desired aims, impact and outcomes of the Communities against Cancer programme.

Funding has been made available from NHS England through the Somerset, Wiltshire, Avon and Gloucestershire Cancer Alliance (SWAG) to BNSSG ICB Cancer Team, who are looking for a host organisation to deliver this programme of work.

Hosted and led by one VCSE organisation and delivered in local communities this programme has specific aims:

- to help raise awareness and understanding of possible signs and symptoms of cancer, encouraging the public to see their GP to help improve early diagnosis (which in turn improves patient outcomes).
- to encourage people to participate in or attend cancer screening.
- to help the public understand how to reduce their risk(s) of developing cancer through lifestyle choices.

The opportunity for Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) organisations to make proposals to meet the aims, impact and outcomes, set out later in this document, is provided by the BNSSG VCSE Brokerage Framework. We are inviting proposals from VCSE organisations that have either been accepted onto the VCSE Brokerage Framework (with or without conditions) or have an application in process¹.

The VCSE Brokerage Framework is a new system-wide approach to enable a diverse range of VCSE organisations to deliver health and wellbeing improvements in local communities, through investment from Integrated Care System (ICS) health and social care partners. The Framework provides a standard, robust and inclusive process for assessing the best proposals for community activities. This approach (which includes this investment opportunity) is being co-designed and tested during 2024, with an anticipated full launch in 2025. We are interested in your feedback on this process – please see Your Feedback (below).

Things to note when developing your proposal

- All parts (the blue boxes) of the proposal form should be completed.
- Word limits – maximum word limits are included. We encourage organisations making proposals to be proportionate and use the number of words needed to answer the

¹ The quality assurance process (joining the VCSE Brokerage Framework) must be successfully completed before any proposal can be recommended for investment by the evaluation panel. This means that a VCSE organisation must be accepted onto the framework before the evaluation panel reviews all proposals.

questions. Please don't feel that you need to reach the maximum word count, if you can respond with fewer words. Additional words over the limit will not be considered.

- Proposals can be for new or continuation of existing activities. We acknowledge that, for new activities, a longer implementation/set-up time may be needed.
- Explanations and guidance are shown in *italics* throughout the proposal form.
- For help when completing the proposal, you should attend the Engagement Event/s and/or note the deadline for clarification questions (see Timeline below).
- Partnerships and collaborations – in this period, while we co-design and test this new way of working, we are inviting individual organisations to make proposals. If your proposal specifically includes other partners, please include explanation about your relationship (for example, contract or memorandum of understanding), how the work may be allocated between partners, and any budgetary implications².
- Budget proposal – please refer to the guidance notes in the Budget Template and make sure all parts (the blue boxes) of the template are completed. Your completed budget template should be submitted with your completed proposal form.

About the Communities against Cancer programme

The target in the NHS Long Term Plan (LTP) is that by 2028, the proportion of cancers diagnosed at stages 1 and 2 will rise from around half now to three-quarters of cancer patients. ([NHS Long Term Plan v1.2 August 2019](#)) In part, this needs to be achieved 'from the ground up' by encouraging better understanding of signs and symptoms so that the public present to their GP in a timely manner, as well as increasing participation in national cancer screening programmes and adopting healthier lifestyle choices.

The Communities against Cancer programme will help raise understanding and awareness of cancer signs and symptoms, to help improve early diagnosis and to encourage people to attend cancer screening in our area. It will also convey messages about 'reducing your risk' through healthier lifestyle choice.

Community organisations are a trusted voice and can play an important role in providing information within local communities to increase symptom awareness, reduce risks of cancer and support to those who may face concerns or practical barriers to taking up cancer screening.

This programme is expected to focus on people living in the most socio-economically deprived areas, across Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire (BNSSG) as evidence shows that they are 20% more likely to have their cancer diagnosed at a late stage and face almost 25% more emergency admissions in the last year of life compared to people in the least deprived areas. However, the Inner City and East Bristol Locality already has a separately funded project and is therefore not included within the remit of this investment opportunity.

The Communities against Cancer programme requires a host VCSE organisation to take a lead role; employing a project manager who will encourage 'understanding and reducing cancer

² Partnerships and collaborations – we know that these are valuable and achieve impact for people and communities; the plan is to develop partnership proposals further in the intended Brokerage Framework full scale launch in 2025.

risk' conversations, and deliver cancer awareness training to other organisations and community groups.

The host VCSE organisation will also hold a budget and work closely with, and allocate funding to, a wide range of smaller and specialist VCSE organisations across BNSSG for initiatives that encourage or support improving early diagnosis and might also:

- Reduce health inequalities in their local community
- Contribute to creating healthier lifestyles

If your organisation is interested in being part of the programme, but do not feel they are right for the host role, please submit an Expression of Interest to the Brokerage Team via proposal@bnssgvcsealliance.org who will then pass details onto the lead organisation once they are appointed.

This opportunity is to support communities to design and implement their own solutions to improve the earlier diagnosis of cancer, increase screening uptake and convey healthy lifestyle choices to reduce cancer risk.

Some examples of models delivered elsewhere across the country, which are provided for guidance are:

- [Early Diagnosis Community Engagement :: Cheshire & Merseyside Cancer Alliance](#)
- [Communities Against Cancer - Welcome to Wessex Cancer Alliance](#)
- [Cancer Champions - Humber and North Yorkshire Cancer Alliance](#)
- [Cancer Champion Programme :: South Yorkshire, Bassetlaw & North Derbyshire Cancer Alliance](#)
- [Cancer Champions | Let's Get People Talking About Cancer](#)

Examples of documents which have helped inform this programme of work are:

- [NHS England » Core20PLUS5 \(adults\) – an approach to reducing healthcare inequalities](#)
- [Not-just-ticking-boxes-Connecting-Health-Communities-IVAR-Sep-23-Final.pdf](#)

What may be funded?

This funding aims to:

- Improve early diagnosis of cancer.
- Reduce health inequalities in BNSSG.
- Contribute to creating healthier lifestyles.
- Deliver education/training, to organisations/groups in face to face or online sessions; and staff and venue costs can be included.
- Support the development of local, relevant information resources identified through needs assessment for a specific group or community.

Reasonable overhead costs can be included in proposals.

What cannot be funded?

This funding is not for large capital spends or anything that does not support direct provision.

Inner City and East Bristol Locality already has a separately funded project and is therefore not included within the remit of this investment opportunity.

Which organisations can make proposals?

Proposals must be from VCSE organisations based and/or working in Bristol, North Somerset, or South Gloucestershire and that have either been accepted onto the VCSE Brokerage Framework (with or without conditions) or have an application in process.

We especially welcome proposals from small / micro VCSE organisations that have built strong, trusting relationships within their local communities.

If you are yet to submit an application to join the Brokerage Framework we cannot guarantee your application will be reviewed and confirmed prior to the proposal due to the required timeframe for the quality assurance process. However, you are still encouraged to submit an application and the Brokerage Team will endeavour to process it in time.

If you would like to do so, please visit the VCSE Brokerage website and complete the linked application forms: - [VCSE Brokerage Framework - BNSSG Healthier Together](#)

Outcomes and impact

All VCSE organisations that deliver funded projects/activities will be asked to collect some outcome measurements, to help us understand their impact. The outcome measurements for the Communities against Cancer programme are:

- Improved community confidence about understanding the symptoms of cancer.
- Improvement in people within communities knowing who to contact if they are concerned about a possible symptom of cancer.
- Improved community understanding of how to reduce the possible risks of cancer and the importance of screening.
- A reduced concern within BNSSG communities around speaking with a medical professional about a possible cancer concern.
- Improved understanding within communities around how to reduce the risk of cancer through healthy lifestyle choices

These programme outcomes are linked to the following Healthier Together System Outcomes:

- We will increase population healthy life expectancy across BNSSG and narrow the gap between different population groups (POP1)

- We will reduce early deaths from preventable causes in the communities which currently have the poorest outcomes (POP2)
- We will increase the proportion of people who report that they are able to find information about health and care services easily (SERV7)

There will be a standard requirement for all VCSE organisations to coordinate and provide diversity data of the participants/beneficiaries of funded activities.

How proposals will be evaluated and scored

The proposal form includes a standard set of questions that are given weightings (as shown in the proposal form) and feed into the following evaluation themes.

Evaluation themes	Weighting
Ability to serve the community	5%
Improving access and reducing health inequalities	25%
Integration, collaboration and connections	25%
Quality, improvement and innovation	25%
Economic and financial standing	5%
Realistic costing and value for money	5%
Social Value ³	10%

These evaluation themes are based on the Provider Selection Regime³ and the ICB's Standing Financial Instructions, including the Grants and Contracts Standard Operating Procedures.

Evaluation of the proposals for each health programme/investment will be facilitated by the Brokerage Team and a specific Evaluation Panel will be chaired by the programme manager/majority budget-holder and will comprise ICS and VCSE experts related to the specific programme/investment in question. Declaration of interest processes will be followed.

All evaluated questions will be scored on a scale of 0 to 4, as follows.

Assessment	Interpretation	Score
Deficient	A significantly deficient answer, unanswered or unacceptable response.	0
Limited	A limited answer that does not meet the stated requirement or one that provides little detail or evidence.	1
Acceptable	An acceptable answer meeting the stated requirement with a sufficient level of detail and evidence.	2
Good	A good answer, with a comprehensive level of detail and strong evidence.	3

³ The Provider Selection Regime is a set of rules for procuring health care services in England [NHS commissioning » NHS Provider Selection Regime](#)

Excellent	An excellent answer, exceeding the stated requirement with exceptional detail and evidence and/or one that is likely to result in increased quality, improved patient experience or innovation.	4
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Evaluation panel members will score independently and, after all scores are collated by the VCSE Brokerage Team, the Evaluation Panel will meet to discuss and moderate scores. Any outstanding Quality Assurance conditions or notable points will also be considered by the panel.

Depending on the programme, the panel will discuss the range of awardable proposals, how they meet the overall programme aims/impact/outcomes and note potential award conditions. Award recommendations will be based on (moderated) scores, diversity and portfolio of activities and reach. Following due diligence⁴, the programme manager/majority budget-holder will coordinate the process of finalising grant agreements or contracts, as well as communication and implementation.

Financial information

Total fund:	£225,000.
Source of funds:	Somerset, Wiltshire, Avon and Gloucestershire Cancer Alliance (SWAG).
Duration of funding:	Two years.
Anticipated start date:	April 2025.

It is anticipated that a significant proportion of the total funding will be allocated to smaller/specialist VCSE partners that have reach into excluded communities. Proposals will need to describe the approach to identifying and establishing effective collaboration with such organisations. Arrangements should be clearly defined (for example, with contracts or agreements), describe how VCSE partners will be supported and enabled to deliver, have fair and transparent financial arrangements (for example, full-cost recovery and payment in advance) and describe how delivery will be monitored etc.

It is anticipated that the investments for the Communities against Cancer programme will be made through a contract.

The contract will be finalised as soon as possible after due diligence and clarifications have been completed. Terms and conditions, including the payment schedule and reporting requirements, will be included in the contract agreement. As this programme welcomes proposals from smaller organisations, and we know that cash flow can sometimes be challenging, the intention is that an element of the awarded grant will be transferred up front when the contract agreement is finalised.

⁴ This includes economic and financial standing checks – these may include capacity, cash flow forecast, debt and credit, as per the ICB’s Standing Financial Instructions.

Timeline and what happens next

6 th November 2024	Invitations for proposals
14 th and 26 th November 2024	Engagement Event/s and Q&A
28 th November 2024, midday	Deadline for clarification questions
18 th December 2024 - 5pm	Deadline for proposals
w/c 6 th January 2025	Evaluation scoring
14 th January 2025	Evaluation panel meeting
w/c 20 th to 27 th January 2025	Recommendations and awards
February to March 2025	Mobilisation and comms
April 2025	Anticipated commencement of delivery

Dates and actions are subject to change; if changes happen, the VCSE Brokerage Team will update organisations on the framework and other stakeholders.

When the VCSE Brokerage Framework team receives your completed proposal form they will check to ensure all the required information has been provided. Your organisation will also receive an acknowledgement of receipt.

Feedback and complaints or representations

Feedback will be offered to all organisations that make proposals. Such feedback may include overall scores, comparisons with other scores, moderation overview and qualitative feedback.

Further guidance and support

For help when completing the proposal, you should attend the Engagement Event/s and/or note the deadline for clarification questions.

Please contact the VCSE Brokerage Team if you have any questions when you are developing your organisation's proposal - proposal@bnssgvcsealliance.org

The answers to questions will be published on the Healthier Together website on a weekly basis, up until the deadline for clarification questions.

Please note that the VCSE Brokerage Team will be unable to provide any updates on progress with your proposal once the deadline has passed and the Evaluation Panel is reviewing applications received before the deadline.

Your feedback about this process

The VCSE Brokerage Framework is in a test-and-learn pilot year during 2024 and 2025.

The learnings and feedback gathered during the pilot will be used to further refine the Framework, with the intention of a wide-scale launch in 2025. Please share your experience of participating in or using the Framework by completing our [feedback form](#).

<https://bnssghealthiertogether.org.uk/staff-and-partners/voluntary-community-and-social-enterprise-vcse/vcse-brokerage-framework/feedback-form/>

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