

Connect London

Expressions of interest

Connecting people, changing lives

Evidence suggests that loneliness increases the risk of premature death by about a third. It takes a toll not just on our mental health – resulting in conditions like anxiety, insomnia and depression – but it also leads to poor physical health and can cause high blood pressure, strokes and diabetes. What’s more, loneliness poses a threat to communities, as people gradually disengage and withdraw from society and it damages our national economy, costing an estimated £32bn per annum.

There are an increasing number of studies to suggest that loneliness does not discriminate when it comes to age. However, the statistics are particularly stark for older people in the UK, over a million of whom are always or often lonely. A recent study showed three in four people - with an average age of 63 - suffer from loneliness. Some go for months without seeing friends or family.

The internet, smartphones and social media is contributing towards a mental health crisis amongst adolescents. Data from the United States shows that, since 2011, levels of loneliness amongst adolescents has risen from around 25 to 32 per cent. Over the same time period, there has been a sharp decrease in the frequency that teenagers leave the house without their parents and in London, young people are twice as likely to feel lonely as their counterparts across the country.

A community response

We work with many organisations already tackling loneliness across the city. We want to identify those that have a proven, successful model and the potential to help many more people. We will help them grow so more Londoners can benefit from their work.

Connect London will identify grassroots organisations which share our aim of tackling loneliness and improving wellbeing in the capital and have potential to grow. We’ll work closely with these organisations, providing them with support, advice and funding to work with new communities which need their help. This could either be in a new area within the same borough or a new borough entirely. We are specifically looking to support growth of existing services into Barking & Dagenham, Haringey, Havering, Lambeth, Lewisham, Merton, Redbridge, Sutton and Waltham Forest.

At this stage we are asking for expressions of interest from organisations that wish to be part of this exciting new initiative. We will be raising funding from our partners to help selected organisations to develop their plans and grow into these locations. Successful organisations should expect to receive grants of around £20,000 to £40,000.

Who can apply

We are looking for organisations with a track record of delivering a particular model of work, with evidence that it is effective in reducing isolation amongst Londoners. We know that there are many reasons why a person might become disconnected from the community around them and it is up to organisations to tell us what they see as being the greatest need for the people they work with, whomever they may be. We are investing in community-led solutions to tackling loneliness and we want to see how these solutions have grown from within the communities themselves.

Organisations must have identified a need for growth into a new area or borough and have evidence of demand in these areas. Applicants should also have an idea of the costs associated with growth into a new area. We don't expect everything to be in place at this stage, we will help you to build that. What we're looking for is the potential to grow and benefit more people.

Your organisation must also meet the following eligibility criteria:

- You must be a registered charity or not-for-profit company. This includes CICs and CIOs. If you have a different legal status please call us to check you are eligible. We regret that unincorporated clubs or associations are not eligible for this fund.
- Your annual income in the last financial year must be at least £100,000. We will be prioritising organisations with limited access to funds.
- You must have been in existence for three years or more.

How to apply

Please complete a short expression of interest form by going to:

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/NSGQNKG>

Optional: If you wish you may attach your business plan, other development plan, evaluation reports, case studies or other information in support of your application.

The deadline for expressions of interest is **Friday 16th March 2018 by 5pm**. If you would like further information please contact:

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