



Invitation to tender for a Volunteer Driver Scheme

Catalyst in partnership with SBC are leading on the tendering to provide and coordinate a volunteer driver scheme, from 1st January 2024 to 31st December 2024

About Catalyst

Catalyst is a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee, located in Stockton-on-Tees. Our mission reads as follows: 'Catalyst is a forward thinking and modern strategic infrastructure organisation, facilitating leadership for the voluntary, community & social enterprise sector (VCSE) in Stockton-on-Tees.'

In practice, most of our work involves us in supporting other VCSE organisations in Stockton-on-Tees. We help them to find funding, we bring them together to identify issues in the community, and then to develop solutions to those issues, and we represent them in discussions with colleagues in decision-making organisations in the public and private sectors. We also routinely run 20-30 small projects, funded by a range of different organisations and charitable sources. We report to a Board of Trustees which meets monthly. Our work requires us to work from home, in the office, and routinely to visit other partners in Stockton and across the Tees Valley. There is little business beyond that area.

Background

Research by Catalyst into gaps in services in the Borough has identified a strong view that there is a need to provide additional community transport. Whilst public transport is generally comprehensive and there are a number of community transport services in place that are available to clients with specific needs or medical conditions, the gaps exist for people who:

- cannot afford public transport, which has been further exacerbated with the Cost of Living situation
- are uneasy about leaving their home.
- need to travel on routes that are not covered by public transport.
- struggle to access public transport due to a disability or mobility issue.

This has been discussed in a variety of forums over the past year and there is shared appreciation of the need. There have been many examples described to Catalyst staff working in the community about people who are anxious about using public transport or taxi services. This may be due to them being socially isolated, particularly following the pandemic, and loss of confidence in using existing services. It has been reported that some people feel that they need extra support, time and understanding to access transport provision. Reducing this barrier for people will enable them to access services and activities that could improve both their physical and mental health and wellbeing.

Specification

During meetings between colleagues from Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (SBC) and Catalyst, the following proposal was agreed for a scheme whereby volunteers provide lifts in their own cars to members of the client group. The service will be free at the point of use for these clients. The scheme requires an organisation to recruit, train, support and coordinate volunteer drivers and this is expected to be a part-time post. The organisation contracted for this service will need to ensure appropriate insurance and safeguarding arrangements are in place. The coordinator will be employed to make bookings, be the central point of contact for service users, and to explore developing the scheme by the promotion of volunteering opportunities. The option of using existing SBC vehicles or other vehicles owned by external organisations, when not being used, may also be explored to increase capacity, through some further dialogue with the Council. As part of the outcomes it is requested that the organisation is able to demonstrate how they will make this scheme sustainable.

Funding

Following conversations with VCSE organisations currently operating volunteer driver schemes in other areas, the approximate annual cost has been calculated to be £35,000. SBC has agreed to half fund this model, offering £17,500 for a pilot year which would need to be match funded by the lead organisation. Catalyst will provide support to the lead organisation, as required, to source and apply for funding for this. There may also be the option of finding funding using Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) from the private sector who may be interested in sponsoring the scheme.

Outputs and outcomes

Responses to this tender must include full details on the following:

- How the budget of £35k for one year delivery of the service would be spent. This includes the £17.5 provided by Stockton on Tees Borough Council and the required match funding of £17.5k provided by the delivery organisation.
- Which groups in the community you would target to benefit from the service. Please note, only individuals living at addresses within the Stockton on Tees Borough Council area would be eligible to use the service.
- How you would ensure as many individuals as possible are able to access the service.

- How you would target promotion of the service to ensure it helps those who experience inequalities in accessing services and support, and what would the proposed criteria for this be.
- How you will ensure safeguarding protocols are met and procedures are followed.
- How you would ensure that the project was sustained beyond the funding provided and what the approach be to ensure this.

Please also include:

- The number of volunteers you intend to recruit to deliver this service.
- The number of individuals you will provide transport for as a result of the project.
The number of journeys you will provide as a result of the project.

Monitoring

The following evidence will be gathered as monitoring of the effectiveness of the project.

- Budget monitoring reports (quarterly)
- Delivery information i.e. number of volunteer hours and number of clients supported (quarterly)
- Case studies demonstrating how the service has supported individuals to access other activities, services, appointments etc. and how this has benefitted them as individuals in the longer term
- Ongoing learning on how things change and adapt through the lifetime of the project to better understand which areas people are seeking support/why/could we support these individuals through wider volunteer schemes become comfortable with public/other forms of transport. Regular liaison with the Catalyst Project Manager

SBC and Catalyst will also be part of the ongoing evaluation and the ongoing assessment process of the project.

Instructions to Tenderers

We envisage the contract extending from 1 January 2024 to 31 December 2024. We also envisage that the majority of support will be covered by the terms of the contract, with minimal additional costs being required.

Tenders should set out the following:

- A description of how the scheme will be delivered.
- Details of the organisation's relevant experience in recruiting volunteers or volunteer drivers in particular.
- Details of the organisation's experience in managing volunteer activity
- The organisation's policy and procedures around safeguarding
- Timescales for delivery of services
- A breakdown of expected costs such as volunteer expenses, training, DBS checks etc.

- The names and contact details of three referees. At least one of these should be a small business with under 20 employees, and ideally an organisation in the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector.

Tenders should be submitted by Friday 6th October 2023.

Jon Carling, Chief Executive Jon.carling@catalyststockton.org

Catalyst Stockton-on-Tees Ltd

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Stockton-on-Tees TS18 3NJ

Timetable

Deadline for tenders: Friday 6th October 2023

Meetings with shortlisted providers: w/c 9th October 2023

Decision to award: Friday 13th October 2023

The Project Co-ordinator will need to be in place and ready to operate from 1st January 2024, with the service ready for clients by 1st April 2024.

Please raise any queries about the content of the tender, or the process, with Jon Carling at the email address above or on 07851 011361.

Scoring process

Pricing: 30%

(includes the annual cost, broken down into different areas of service as necessary, and with clear details of what services or products will not be covered by the contract)

Service provision: 30%

(Includes a description of how the services will be delivered, brief details of the experience and qualifications of the accountants who will provide the service, details of what will be included within the contract, and what will be subject to additional charges)

Customer care: 30%

(includes customer care policy, KPIs and Performance Standards, timescales for delivery of services)

Supplier's Terms and Conditions: 10%

Terms and conditions for the tendering process

Neither Catalyst nor organisations assisting Catalyst with the tender can be held responsible for any costs incurred by bidders in processing or responding to this invitation to tender. In submitting this tender, bidders acknowledge that they will bear any costs associated with the preparation / submission or subsequent discussion / presentation of the tender.

Post-contract award

Following contract award, the selected Tenderer shall undertake the following:

- Appoint a part-time coordinator to recruit, train and manage volunteer drivers.
- Ensure that all relevant Health and Safety and Safeguarding procedures are adhered to. This should include DBS and Driving Licence/Insurance checks for all drivers.
- Provide full training for all volunteers to prepare them for the role and ensure that they are aware of the boundaries needed to keep them and others safe.
- Promote the service throughout the Borough of Stockton-on-Tees so that the public are aware of the help available.
- Meet regularly with the Catalyst CEO/SBC representative /Project Manager to discuss progress of the project and mitigate difficulties encountered.