

Tackling Loneliness project

Context

Two strands available:

Youth Strand

The Youth Strand is made up of £2 million, which will be distributed by the [Co-op Foundation](#), making grants of up to £80,000. It will open for applications in **August 2018** – [find out more on the Co-op Foundation blog](#).

The Youth Strand will be open to organisations with existing youth-focussed activities that could be effective at helping young people avoid long-term loneliness. Successful applicants will receive funding to explore youth loneliness in greater depth, test youth-led innovations within their existing provision, and share their learning as part of a national network. You will be supported to evaluate your activities and capture your impact, which will add to the evidence base.

Main fund strand

The main fund is made up of close to £9 million, which will be distributed by the Big Lottery Fund, making grants of between £30,000 and £100,000. [It is open for applications now](#).

Deadline of Friday 24 August by 12 noon We're offering funding to organisations with existing projects that are already helping to build connections to prevent or reduce loneliness and want to do more to build on this work. We are interested in funding projects that could reach more people and / or join up with others and include ways of utilising existing expertise in the sector, increasing geographical reach and improving impact.

The fund aims to:

- increase social connections, helping people form strong and meaningful relationships and creating a sense of community and belonging, and helping people feel more connected
- support organisations to build on their **existing work**, eg by reaching more people, or working in a new area or with a different method or group of people
- encourage organisations to join up with others locally
- improve the evidence base and use learning to inform longer term policy and funding decisions.

Project Brief

Aim

The project will build communities on the ground using our branch (and local group) model. Bringing in the work we do already in the development of social networks: in pastoral care, FtF, and other areas. Developing the model of increasing activity to engage more people, but bringing in a more pro-active style of advertising to a wider community and making sure they are able to attend events and social (including paying for them to be picked up, etc). We could also include a dialogue strand to the project which would specifically bring together isolated religious and non-religious people together. We could also include an LGBT strand to bring together LGBT organisations in the locality.

Short version:

The project will build communities in 5 areas of England, bringing **isolated and vulnerable people (I&VP)** together in social and supportive activities. The project will connect I&VP with each other and active community groups in the area, both to encourage new connections, and to sustain those connections. Additionally, the project will have a focus of specific groups of I&VP, namely LGBT people, apostates, and the elderly. Finally, the project will explore the impact providing pastoral care in these settings have on sustaining engagement with I&VP.

Why is this project the best project to fund? Why are we special?

Humanists UK is a human rights based charity with over 70,000 members and supporters across the UK and Channel Islands. Our 125 year history has allowed us to establish ourselves as a respected organisation by successive governments, as well as various central departments, statutory bodies, and other charitable organisations.

We are the national organisation who working on behalf of the non-religious to achieve a fair and just society, where people are free to express their religion and beliefs. Our unique approach and extensive reach, has meant that for many people, we are the go to source of community for those whom belief is a significant aspect of their identity. Through are many initiatives and programmes, hundreds of thousands of people every year come into contact with us via our humanist ceremonies, pastoral support, local groups, events, sections, campaigns, and volunteering opportunities every year.

We tackle issues others shy away from, like the rights of apostates (those leaving religion) and the isolation and vulnerability that can leave them experiencing. This puts us in a unique position to reach parts of the community that other organisations find difficult to access. However, we are not exclusive and do not only work with non-religious people, but rather, our services are available to all, regardless of religion or belief.

We are well placed to take on this work as we are experienced at reducing isolation through our programmes, and this fund will allow us to test if this joined up, local approach will provide an impact greater than the sum of its parts. Our pastoral support network of 250 volunteers, for example, only set up in 2015, is already reaching out to ten of thousands of people in institutional

and community settings - creating social connections for people that until recently simply did not exist.

Also, do you have evidence that the groups you identify as I&VP want this kind of intervention?

Survey - needs to be sent out to all services and partner groups we are working with. Done - waiting on results:

We have conducted a small scale survey of people who engage in the activities in our branches and services. The initial results suggest, on a nine point loneliness scale, of the 1,400 people asked, 82 responded, there was an average drop in loneliness experienced by one point after becoming engaged with our activities. In people who rated their loneliness as more severe (6 or higher), the average drop was two and a half points after becoming engaged with our activities.

Comments as to why this might be have included : 'Feeling of community belonging', an apostate said 'It is great meeting other people who have a similar experience and understand what I've been through', and 'I actually feel more connected to the local community through the humanist group'. 'Found Humanism 40 years ago and finally found an identity. It completely transformed my whole life as at the time I thought I was the only skeptic in the world. The real loneliness was being shouted down by just about everyone. I dare then to challenge my 'Non-Theist views now however.' "I think it has been great to find people who will talk about the topics and issues that others were not often interested in talking about - I feel like my whole self is accepted in a Humanist meeting and that I can be myself without ridicule (I don't feel pressure to 'fit in' when I don't)"

We estimate we engage with around 10,000 people a year through our local groups, and a further 25,000 through our pastoral and apostate services. Our network of over 250 pastoral carers, also provides people of all ages to engage in meaningful volunteering activities with others, and engage with others in the national network united by a common purpose.

Stakeholders and 'partner' organisations

Ask = does the organisation have local community activity to reduce isolation where they would be willing to work with us to promote each other's activity

Men's Matters (work in Windsor to reduce the isolation experienced by older men)

Mind

Red Cross?

Local community centres? (TP to ask local groups)

Age UK

Outhouse East (Colchester LGBT charity)

I am sure you have heard of the Ami project in Oxfordshire as this seems to be an excellent model for volunteer involvement with the community to tackle loneliness. <https://www.withami.co.uk/>

They can also be found on Facebook.

Locations

So, the project would be based in five locations across the country

1 - Isle of Wight Humanists (branch)

2 - Liverpool Humanists (branch)

3 - Colchester Humanists (branch)

4 - Windsor Humanists (have an in principle agreement by email) - interested in lgbt, apostasy, and interfaith and belief

5 - Birmingham Humanists (have an in principle agreement by email)

Pastoral Support offered in the community

- Coffee shops
- Stall/booth in city centres
- Black cab?
- Community centres

Outcomes

- To increase the number of isolated, vulnerable, and lonely people engaging in community activities through local groups/branches. [from a baseline of 10 per site to 50 per site]
- To improve the quality of interactions with other people, based on shared interests and activities. [Which will be self-reported using XXX survey]
- Increased number of activities and events available to lonely people. [from a baseline of one activity per month to five activities per month]
- Surveys of attendees show, where they considered themselves to be lonely or isolated, those experiences have diminished. [Which will be self-reported using [UCLA loneliness scale](#)]

Comment: Need to ask around what the best QoL survey would be to use for this.

Comment: +simon@humanism.org.uk

Outputs

- Each local group will run five new regular social activities in their community for 15 - 30 people
- Each local group will engage with at least five new activities that engage with the national loneliness agenda
- A pastoral support induction course for 12 participants, which aims to target pastoral care to individual in community settings
- A Pastoral support CPD day for carers already in the network but interested in the project
- Guides on 'how to run tackling loneliness activities'
- Communications and marketing materials for groups to encourage others in the community to participate
- An evaluation and recommendations report which includes an evaluation on improving the evidence base for 'at risk' groups, eg apostates, older LGBT people, and those isolated as a result of leaving institutions (like prison or mental health) and use learning to inform longer term policy and funding decisions.

Activity

- Group activity based around social activities (coffee mornings, brunches, nature walks, dialogue on a small scale, y, z) (A/C)
- Specific targeting of particular groups of vulnerable people (LGBT, Apostates, religious minorities, elderly, etc), including a strategy of ensuring access to events (putting on taxis, organising community buses, etc) (A)
- Collaboration with other groups in the area to maximise outreach, Red Cross communities connectors - projects like Great get togethers, Death cafes, the Good Gym, Be More Us, Buddy scheme, (C/B)
- Expansion of pastoral care in the community - care homes, drop ins, roving pastoral care (like in the back of a black cab), (B)

5. Gather evidence of effective practice that reduces isolation and loneliness and compile this data into an evaluation and recommendations report. (D)

Management

1. Project manager to coordinate, write reports, manage money, support with communication, liaise with networks (like pastoral care), write evaluation of project, Line manage the PoC
2. Point of contact (PoC) in each branch/local group to coordinate activity on the ground
3. The PM will be line managed by the DCS for accountability and governance
4. Pastoral activity in each location will also be reported to the HoPS, who will also arrange for supervision and additional training as needed.

Timeline (24 months)

Month one

- Develop full JD and PS (pre-start activity) (pm)
- Develop PM and PoC outline Action Plans (pm)
- Hire PM and PoCs (pm)

Month two

- PM to develop full project action plan (pm)
- Baseline activity in the pilot locations (5)
- Discussion of potential activities with each PoC (pm)
- Agree timeline of activities with each PoC (pm)

Month three

- Delivery timetable for pastoral care element of project agreed with Head of Pastoral Support (pm)
- Groups identify and reach out to potential collaborators in local area (3)
- Local and regional community organisations contacted to collaborate on activity (3)

Month four

- Pastoral Support Induction course delivered (4)
- First report against project activity delivered measured against project action plan (pm)
- Local and regional specific community organisations contacted to collaborate (LGBT, apostasy, religious minorities) (2)
- Project comms and marketing materials developed (pm)
- Groups commence engagement with local collaborators (3)

Month Five

- Social events activity (1) in local groups start
- Baseline, where possible, the levels of isolation and loneliness experienced by new participants in the group activities (5)

Month six

- Pastoral Support CPD day delivered for carers in network interested in participating in the project (3)
- Pastoral support community project launched (4)

Month seven

- Hubs/groups run/participate in additional social events, increasing programme to at least two regular social events (1)
- Groups first collaboration with local initiatives (3)

Month eight

- Report against local group project activity written (5)
- Activities for specific vulnerable people start, with baseline taken of the loneliness experience (2)

Month nine

- Groups second collaboration with local initiatives (3)

Month ten

- Hubs/groups run/participate in additional social events, increasing programme to at least three regular social events (1)

Month eleven

- Group adds second vulnerable group to offering to reduce loneliness (2)
- Report against local group project activity written (5)

Month twelve

- Groups third collaboration with local initiatives (3)

Month thirteen

- Hubs/groups run/participate in additional social events, increasing programme to at least four regular social events (1)

Month fourteen

- Report against local group project activity written (5)

Month fifteen

- All activity continues (1-4)

Month sixteen

- Hubs/groups run/participate in additional social events, increasing programme to at least five regular social events (1)

Month seventeen to nineteen

- All activity continues (1-4)

Month Twenty

- Evaluation and report started, final data collected and analysed (5)

Month Twenty one

- Groups plan for celebration event to showcase the activities, events, and impact they have had (1/pm)

Month twenty two

- Final report and evaluation published (5)

Month Twenty three and four

- Celebration events in locations occur (1/pm)
- Dissemination of report at conferences and events

Budget (for 24 months, with staggered activity)

PM - £18,200 (one day a week for 24 months - £25/hour, seven hours, 104 days)

General expenses for PM - £1,500

PoC (group/branch) - £36,400 (5 x £7280) (£20/hour, 3.5 hours, 104 days - about a half day a week for 24 months)

Expenses for PoC - £2,500 (£500 per PoC)

Volunteer expenses - £5,000 (5 x £1,000)

Funding for activities - £10,000 (5 x £2,000)

Marketing, advertising, and promotion - £1,000
 Pastoral care training - £5,000 (one training course, plus CPD)
 Celebration events - £1,500 (5 x £300)
 Evaluation costs - £4,500
 Management and overheads - £8,000
Total - £93.6k

First 6 months:
 PM = 4550
 PM expenses = 300
 PoC = 9100
 Expenses for the group = 1875
 Funding for activities = 2000
 Marketing, advertising, and promotion - £1,000
 Pastoral care training - £5,000 (one training course, plus CPD)
 Management and overheads = 2000
 Total for period = 25825

Month 7-18
 Pm = 9100
 PM expenses = 900
 PoC = 18200
 Expenses for the group = 3750
 Funding for activities = 4000
 Management and overheads = 4000
 Total for period = 39950

Month 19-24:
 PM = 4550
 PM expenses = 300
 PoC = 9100
 Expenses for the group = 1875
 Funding for activities = 4000
 Celebration events - £1,500 (5 x £300)
 Evaluation costs - £4,500
 Management and overheads = 2000
 Total for period = 27825

Total for period = 27825

The Questions to answer are here:

1. Your current work

How is your current work helping to prevent or reduce loneliness?

- Describe the work you are currently delivering and how it helps to build connections to prevent or reduce loneliness
- Describe what impact your work has made on tackling loneliness so far, e.g. evidence of the difference it is making, the impact on people and communities and how many people are currently benefiting
- Tell us how you know your approach is working, about your organisation's experience and the skills of your staff.

Suggested answer length: **At least three paragraphs.**

Throughout our 125 year history, Humanists UK has successfully committed to promoting the humanist values of wellbeing, human dignity, and the importance of building connections and maintaining relationships. These values have ensured we consistently deliver work of the highest standard that connects individuals, and prevents and reduces loneliness and social isolation. Our mission is inclusive and far-reaching, and our passion for combating loneliness is echoed in the legacy of humanist MP Jo Cox, in whose memory the Jo Cox Commission of Loneliness was established.

Humanists UK's Community Services reach out to those who are at risk of isolation, with the aim of building connections between individuals who share a non-religious identity in order to develop a vibrant and flourishing community. Examples of projects that work to build connections include our Non-Religious Pastoral Support Network (NRPSN), which was established in 2015 and is helping to make sure that non-religious people in hospitals, prisons, and universities are not alone and have the opportunity to connect with others who share their worldview. The NRPSN comprises of over 250 volunteers already, and since its conception we have experienced exponential demand for their services. We are proud to say that NRPSN volunteers are successfully reaching tens of thousands of people in institutional and community settings across England and Wales and making a significant contribution to preventing and reducing the loneliness of people in crisis. The NRPSN also serves to prevent loneliness through providing the opportunity for people of all ages to engage in meaningful volunteering activities and build relationships with others in a national network united by a common purpose. Another example is our Humanist Ceremonies™ network, whose celebrants connect people at key turning points in life. So far in 2018, our ceremonies have brought together over 400,000 people from diverse backgrounds as they celebrate weddings and namings, and share losses and memories at funerals. Moreover, we encourage an interdisciplinary approach to building connections and handling relationships, and within the Humanist Ceremonies™ network more than 1 in 10 funeral celebrants are trained as non-religious pastoral carers, providing additional support to prevent and reduce the loneliness of those affected by a bereavement.

As well as these core programmes, our various Sections provide a much needed opportunity for like-minded people to connect and serve to prevent and reduce loneliness. Our Faith to Faithless programme, for example, provides support and guidance to apostates (those who have left their

religion) in a community setting, allowing participants an opportunity to shape and develop their new identity alongside others with similar experiences. By building connections between apostates, the Faith to Faithless network also helps reduce the number of apostates who are isolated as a result of leaving their community. This year we have been able to reduce loneliness through directly supporting 70 apostates in England and Wales. Similarly, our LGBT Humanists network currently delivers a programme of events and social occasions for LGBT members of Humanists UK. The section currently has 2179 members, 459 of whom are over the age of 55. It has been consistently proven that age is a significant mitigating factor in increasing social isolation, especially within the LGBT community. Therefore, we view the high percentage of over-55s in our network as a positive example of how we are preventing social isolation and reducing loneliness through the provision of social opportunities, encouraging people to connect later in life. Furthermore, it is not only through our networks that we strive to build connections between people in order to reduce loneliness and social isolation. We provide many opportunities for people to build connections with like-minded individuals on a regular basis through our sixty seven local groups, engaging lecture series, annual convention, through participation in national and local campaigns, and by offering voluntary placements in our head office in London.

We completed a recent evaluation of our activities in order to demonstrate the current impact of our work in tackling loneliness, and to indicate the extent to which our work already supports the national loneliness agenda. This evaluation was conducted in line with the best practice recommendations set out in the 2016 'Trapped in a Bubble' report by the Red Cross, and used the 9-point loneliness scale (where 1 = 'daily meaningful interaction with others', and 9 = 'little interaction with others from week to week'). To gather data, we disseminated a survey amongst service users across our local groups and networks.

From the data collected, it is possible to demonstrate how engagement with our networks and services makes a substantial positive impact tackling loneliness for individuals. For those who rated their loneliness as more severe (6 or higher), the average drop after engaging with one or more of our activities was two points. Comments that substantiate the findings included: 'feeling of community belonging', and the most popular terms that emerged from the evaluation included 'sharing', 'experience', 'understanding and 'community'. Indeed, forging community and building connections are two of the most prominent themes emerging from our evaluation. To illustrate, one apostate said 'it is great meeting other people who have a similar experience and understand what I've been through'. Moreover, it is not only possible to evidence our impact on individuals, we are also able to evidence an impact on existing communities. One respondent noted that they 'feel more connected to the local community through the humanist group'. We estimate we are currently engaged with around 10,000 people a year through our local groups, and a further 25,000 through our pastoral and apostate services, meaning the total beneficiaries number roughly 35,000. However it is vital to recognise that all our activities benefit a community of 70,000 members and supporters, and we encourage participation and community engagement through public events that are open to all.

We know our approach is working. From data collected from the survey we were able to evidence that, on average, there was a reduction of loneliness (by an average of one point on a nine point scale) experienced by all participants after becoming engaged with our activities. Among those

considered themselves to be very lonely, this reduction was 2.5 points, on average. The most often made comment was they felt less lonely as they were 'in a community with people with whom I share many things in common'. Further, all our Community Services programmes have gained external recognition, including the OCN Quality Mark for excellence in training. All of this goes far to demonstrate our competency in service provision. Staff members involved in developing and implementing Community Services programmes at Humanists UK have all developed extensive skills and experience throughout their professional careers. This diverse team includes two teachers, a psychotherapist/counsellor, and a humanist celebrant with many years experience. The growing demand for our Community Services is testament to the quality of delivery that we have become synonymous with in recent years.

The project will be run with two delivery partners, Birmingham Humanists, and Windsor Humanists. They.....[details of groups' activities, expertise, etc]

2. Your project idea

What is the project you would like funding for, and why is it needed in your area?

- Describe your project idea and why is it needed in your area
- Tell us how many people approximately will benefit from this project and who they might be
- Tell us about how you will reach people in the community and make your project inclusive

Suggested answer length: **A couple of paragraphs.**

Community Services delivered by Humanists UK have a proven track record of connecting people and reducing loneliness by building individual and community relationships- leaving a positive impact on those of all ages, all beliefs, and from all walks of life. However, we believe that there is opportunity to capitalise upon our current success, expand our reach, and make our impact more sustainable by situating our current services in five 'communities' across England. By establishing communities on the ground using a branch model, we can not only provide continued access for isolated and vulnerable people (hereafter 'I&VP') to our existing networks (Faith to Faithless, NRPSN, etc.), sections (LGBT Humanists, etc.), and services (Pastoral support, etc.), but we can also expand the provision of such networks, and create a space for I&VP to connect with each other and with other active community groups. To make this vision a reality, we are applying to the Big Lottery Fund and Loneliness Action Group for funding to establish communities in five locations across England- the Isle of Wight, Liverpool, Colchester, Windsor and Birmingham. These pilot communities will operate from within existing community centres and offer group activities such as coffee mornings, brunches, nature walks, and dialogue events, as well provide a base from which to begin building lasting connections between individuals and their community and expand our provision of pastoral care. For example, we would be able to expand the provision of non-religious pastoral support in care homes, establish drop-in services around the community, and even facilitate the provision of 'roving pastoral care'. As well as providing a service, our project will contribute to the developing dialogue and research surrounding the impact of the provision of pastoral care on sustaining engagement with I&VP.

This is a project that is desperately needed. Religious groups benefit from well established communities of shared values, but for the non-religious, sourcing valuable social activity with like-

mindful individuals may be much harder to find. Indeed, whilst members of religious communities have the option to congregate in places of worship and collaborate on group activities, such communities and related activities are often absent for many non-religious people, meaning many can become isolated, vulnerable and lonely. Furthermore, 53% of the UK population currently identify as non-religious and the number is growing, meaning the demand for such communities is only set to increase alongside levels of social isolation. We have selected these locations because they are all areas where we have activity already underway (Isle of Wight, Windsor, Birmingham), or because we have resources and capacity in place already to be able to undertake this work (Liverpool and Colchester). All of the locations indicated currently have a team of committed volunteers who are looking to become more active in our work, something we feel is important to ensure the project is successful and has a sustainable legacy.

This project will have a specific focus on the LGBT community, apostates, and the elderly, for we believe these constitute the demographics we work with that are most at risk of loneliness and social isolation. Based on data currently available to us through our existing networks and programmes, we can approximate that these proposed communities will benefit on average 50 people per site, per year. However, it is vital to recognise that the secondary beneficiaries will be diverse and far-reaching, and so it is likely that the number will be much higher. Furthermore, the project will have a commitment to expansion and is structured in such a way that it is possible to scale-up sustainably, so the initial approximation of 50 in 2019 may rise to 150 in 2022 and 450 in 2025. We will retain a commitment to diversity and inclusivity, and have highlighted several steps we will take in order to reach people in the community and remain representative of the locality. These include, but are not limited to, being proactive in advertising the services and programmes offered, the inclusion of a dialogue strand to the project to bring together isolated religious and non-religious people together, opening up the communities to LGBT organisations in the locality to encourage participation within the LGBT community, and a commitment to a strategy of open access to events that may include the provision of taxis or community busses.

How will you increase your impact by reaching more people and/or joining up in collaboration with others?

- Describe the additional support you will be able to offer with the funding
- Describe the groups, organisations, and stakeholders you work with within your area that ensure you are fully connected in tackling loneliness
- Tell us about how you will ensure that the impact is sustained after this funding finishes

Suggested answer length: **A couple of paragraphs.**

With funding provided by the BIG Lottery Fund, we will be able to offer additional support to I&VP (members of the LGBT community, apostates, and the elderly) in the five locations by financially supporting new social activities, expanding the training and sustained provision of accessible non-pastoral care, and producing implementation evaluations to support the development of best practice for engagement with 'at risk' groups. We have already worked with approximately 2,000 I&VP across England and Wales in 2017 and heralded fantastic results, but receiving additional funding would allow us to reach more people in the five locations, and provide additional support to individuals that has a more sustained impact. Already 15% of people we have worked with us would

say they felt more connected to the community as a result of our work, with users saying, "It is great meeting other people who have a similar experience and understand what I've been through". In particular we would want to highlight, Simon*, a user of Faith to Faithless services, who was brought up as a Jehovah's Witness. He says "Coming out to my parents as an atheist AND as gay resulted in me experiencing a strict form of excommunication which involved total shunning from my family and from the community in which I grew up. As young JWs aren't allowed to have friends who aren't also Jehovah's Witnesses, I was suddenly alone and completely isolated not only from my family and former friends, but I also found myself without the social and practical skills to survive in the world. I also ended up homeless. My upbringing caused me to have little respect or regard for secular institutions, so it didn't even occur to me to reach out to social services. I thought I was the only one, but after a considerable period of isolation, I found a community of ex-religious people who understood what I was going through, Faith to Faithless. Since being a member of F2F, I've been able to go to meetups, receive peer support, guidance and signposting to the organisations that I should already have known about. Even then, had I approached social services at that time, their advice would have been to reconcile with my family, which was impossible given their beliefs. Social services having a better understanding of how to safeguard ex-religious people would have been invaluable at a time when I was most vulnerable., and that's what F2F does. F2F has allowed me to feel more confident in my own identity and to be a much happier and more fulfilled person. yet we are not able to maximise our full potential. With the funding from the BIG Lottery Fund, we can increase our impact, broaden our reach, and offer the following:

1. Five new regular social activities developed in each of the five communities. Each activity involves 15 - 30 people.
2. At least five new activities that support the national loneliness agenda supported in each of the five communities. These are likely to include; peer support groups, social events like brunches and games nights, and other interest based events.
3. A pastoral support induction course for 12 participants. The focus of the course will be on pastoral care to individuals in community settings.
4. A Pastoral support CPD day for carers who are already members of the NRPSN, but who are also interested in the project.
5. Creation and dissemination of 'How-to' guides on running activities specifically focused on tackling loneliness.
6. Development of communications and marketing materials for the communities, to encourage others in the local community to participate in available social activities.
7. An implementation evaluation and recommendations report titled 'Approaches to reducing loneliness on a local level'. This will include an evaluation on improving the evidence base for 'at risk' groups (including apostates, older LGBT people, and those isolated as a result of leaving institutions e.g. prison). Both implementation evaluation and the report will be used to inform longer term policy and funding decisions.

The funding will also support the recruitment of a Project Manager responsible for the coordination of the new communities, supporting with communications, generating marketing materials, conducting the implementation evaluation and producing the report titled 'Approaches to reducing loneliness on a local level'. The Project Manager will support the entire project and is crucial to its successful implementation. This role is only sustainable with the funding. The Project Manager will

also be pivotal in building relationships with external stakeholders and forging and solidifying existing partnerships with partner organisations.

We currently have working partnerships with external stakeholders and other charitable organisations that further our aim of preventing and reducing loneliness for I&VP. These include Mind, Men's Matters, the British Red Cross, Age UK, Ami, and Outhouse East where we have started building relationships to be able to provide a broad range of loneliness reducing activities. As the programme develops, we aim to source and secure partnerships with more groups, organisations, and stakeholders in the local area who will ensure we are addressing the location-specific causes of loneliness for each of our focus groups.

Most importantly, the project sets out to facilitate activities across the five locations that that forge and curate human relationships that have a sustained impact to people's lives. However, it is also possible to track how elements of the project can be managed to ensure the impact is sustained. For example, following completion of the pastoral support induction course, pastoral care volunteers will be able to join the Non-Religious Pastoral Support Network and develop professionally beyond the timeline of the project through opportunities for CPD available through Humanists UK. Moreover, we envisage that the proposed evaluation and recommendations reports for alleviating loneliness for 'at risk' I&VP will have a sustained impact upon national policy decisions for many years to come, and that the guides on how to run activities will remain a useful resource both within the five locations and across England and Wales. **MORE ON HOW IMPACT WILL BE MEASURED**

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Assigned to Edward Prout
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3. Project activities

Provide a brief outline of your delivery plan, including the main activities and milestones that will demonstrate your achievements

If your project ends before March 2021 only fill out the fields for the period your project will run until.

What do you hope to achieve for the period until March 2019?

Suggested answer length: **A couple of paragraphs.**

To provide an appropriate outline of our delivery plan, we have categorised our plan into four priority areas: Planning, reporting and recruitment; Working with external stakeholders and partners; Pastoral support; and Events and activities. For each priority area, the main milestones are outlined below. Where appropriate, dates are also included.

Planning, reporting and recruitment

- Develop full Job Description and Person Specification for Project Manager
- Develop plans for Project Manager and Point of Contact at each location
- Hire Project Manager and recruit Point of Contact for each location
- First report on project activity conducted against project action plan (January 2019)
- Project communications and marketing materials delivered (January 2019)
- Record levels of isolation and loneliness experienced by new participants in group activities (March 2019)

Working with external stakeholders

- Points of contact approach identified collaborators in local areas
- Local and regional specific community organisations contacted to collaborate (LGBT, apostates, religious minorities)
- Groups commence engagement with local collaborators (December 2018)

Pastoral Support

- Delivery timetable for pastoral care agreed with Head of Pastoral Support, Humanists UK
- Pastoral Support Induction course delivered (January 2019)
- Pastoral Support CPD day delivered for carers in network interested in participating in the project (March 2019)
- Pastoral support community project launched (March 2019)

Events and Activities

- Project manager holds discussion with each Point of Contact of potential activities and timelines following an analysis of participants from the baseline activity in the pilot locations (November 2018)
- Agree timeline of activities with each Point of Contact
- Social events activity (1) in local groups start (February 2019)

What do you hope to achieve for the period from April 2019–March 2020?

Suggested answer length: **A couple of paragraphs.**

Planning, reporting and recruitment

- Report against project activity written (May 2019)
- Report against project activity written (August 2019)
- Report against project activity written (November 2019)

Working with external stakeholders

- Groups first collaboration with local initiatives (April 2019)
- Groups second collaboration with local initiatives (June 2019)
- Groups third collaboration with local initiatives (September 2019)

Events and Activities

- Local groups run, organise, or co-produce additional social events, increasing programme to at least two regular social events (April 2019)
- Activities for specific vulnerable people start, with baseline taken of the loneliness experience (May 2019)
- Local groups run, organise, or co-produce additional social events, increasing programme to at least three regular social events (July 2019)
- Local groups run, organise, or co-produce additional social events, increasing programme to at least four regular social events (October 2019)
- Local groups run, organise, or co-produce additional social events, increasing programme to at least five regular social events (January 2020)

What do you hope to achieve for the period April 2020–March 2021?

Suggested answer length: **A couple of paragraphs.**

This final phase of the project plan focuses on building upon the experience of the project in order to develop and share best practice. This will be presented in the form of both an implementation evaluation and a concurrent recommendations report titled 'XX'. The implementation evaluation will critically assess the impact of the programme on reducing loneliness for I&VP across all five locations, using a multi-case study approach. This will be particularly useful in isolating where successful activities, services and support are location-specific, and where it can be assumed there are successful nationally. Moreover, by evaluating both the activities and the way in which they were developed, the implementation evaluation will be a vital tool for further projects to refer to, should more funding be received. The recommendations report will be a key addition to the developing research dialogue surrounding the provision of pastoral care to 'at risk' groups, and will stand as a tangible legacy of the project. Building on the success of Humanists UK's influence in the spheres of campaigning and public policy, the recommendations report will be a valuable tool used for influencing policy practices and decisions at a local and national level. It is projected that both the implementation evaluation and recommendations report will be disseminated at conferences and events from March 2021 onwards.

In addition to the evaluation and reports, we intend to showcase the activities, events, and impact that each community has had through a series of celebratory events in August 2020. This will be an opportunity for the communities to demonstrate their impact, and to thank stakeholders and partner organisations for support throughout.

4. Building social connections

How will the project help to build or increase social connections and relationships between individuals and communities?

- Describe how the project will increase social connections, sense of community and/or belonging
- Describe how people and communities are involved in the project
- Describe your plans for supporting connections in the future after the funding stops

Suggested answer length: **A couple of paragraphs.**

Our proposed project focuses on increasing the opportunity for social connections through structured activities and the increased availability of non-religious pastoral care as a way in which to develop five thriving non-religious communities within which I&VP (apostates, LGBT and the elderly) can feel a sense of belonging. We believe that creating avenues for these I&VP to connect socially is of the utmost importance, as apostates, LGBT individuals, and the elderly can often struggle to find a sense of belonging subsequent to coming out as LGBT, rejecting religion, or aging. We aim to curate this sense of belonging through actively implementing programmes that will increase social connections both with other I&VP, such as expanding our Faith to Faithless and LGBT networks as well as by partnering with special interest groups that currently hold a place within the local community. As aforementioned, non-religious individuals do not always have the option of connecting and resonating with like-minded individuals, yet, our local branch model has proven to be an effective introduction into how it is possible to increase social connections through connecting

like-minded people in the local area. For example, our Humanist Student societies on university campuses have provided a strong sense of community among humanists at university, providing an opportunity to make friends, attend activities, and meet new people, both religious and non-religious. However, with the funding provided by BIG Lottery Fund we will be able to expand upon this success, and create a sense of community and belonging for I&VP that is sustainable. Further, by committing to maximising inclusivity, and prioritising a strategy of accessibility to all of our proposed activities, we will be opening up an avenue for I&VP who may not have the opportunity to engage in social activities and develop their social connections.

Our existing networks and programmes (Faith to Faithless, NRPSN, Humanist Ceremonies™ etc.) are all 'people-focused' and by funding their development, we will be able to grow the networks so that they provide assistance to an increased number of I&VP. Not only do we seek to increase social connections and forge a sense of community for I&VP, but our project aims to also increase engagement with the local community in each of the areas. Our collaborations with external stakeholders and partner organisations will be particularly important in this regard. For example, we hope to encourage participation for LGBT I&VP by running programmes in collaboration with local LGBT charities such as Outhouse East (Colchester) to encourage sustained participation within the LGBT community in the local area. Similarly, Men's Matters will be working alongside the community in Windsor and Windsor Humanists to alleviate the loneliness felt by elderly men. Moreover, our project is unusual in including a dialogue project to engage religious and non-religious communities in a manner that fosters the building of relationships irrespective of religion or belief. This is indicative of the way in which we will position the five 'communities' within their existing locations. It is vital for the success of the project that all of the participants feel 'more connected to the local community through the humanist group'.

Once the funding for the project has stopped we will continue to support and expand the connections being made at the local level through our branches and local groups. This will be done by ensuring that the majority of activity is being run and organised by volunteers, keeping costs to a minimum. We will also approach a variety of funding bodies once we have evaluated the successes of the project in order to continue to raise funds for the activity. In addition to this, we are a membership organisation and have discretion to direct funds to proven successful activity, which we would intend to do through our branches and networks.

5. Evaluation and impact

How will your project help you improve your learning and understand more about the impact you are making?

- Describe how your project will help add to collective evidence and learning about what works in preventing or reducing loneliness
- Describe the types of information you are going to collect
- Describe how your approach will build on previous learning

Suggested answer length: **A couple of paragraphs.**

We anticipate that this will be a crucial addition to collective evidence and learning about what works in preventing or reducing loneliness. Currently, we know that our programmes and networks individually help people feel less lonely, however we do not know how much this could be improved through curating programmes and opportunities that link all our services. By tracking the improvement to people's experience of loneliness over an extended amount of time, and comparing this to those who are only engaged in one of the networks, we will be able to isolate what works best in preventing and reducing loneliness. Furthermore, the implementation evaluation will be a vital tool in assessing what works, and we aim for this to be as critical and reflective as possible so as to capture the full experience.

We have identified some measurable aims of the project that will be used to track progress and monitor success.

- The total number of activities that are started and run regularly
- The total number of participants attending the activities
- The total number of participants who self-report a reduction in the amount of loneliness they experience.

6. Project location

What regions will your project cover?

Choose all that apply: North East, *North West*, Yorkshire and the Humber, East Midlands, *West Midlands, East of England*, Greater London, *South East, South West*

Where will your project take place?

7. Your project budget

How much grant funding are you applying for in total?

- We need a breakdown of how you plan to use our funding, so please tell us about full details of all the costs involved, including the salary and hours of key delivery staff, and any other funding that will be used for this project, where it's from and if it has been secured.
- Projects do not have to be a set length of time but must be finished by March 2021 and start by January 2019.
- If your project ends before March 2021 only fill out the fields for the period your project will run until.

How much do you plan to spend for the period until March 2019?

What do you plan to spend the money on for the period until March 2019?

Please note that we require you to spend a minimum of 20% of your whole budget in the first quarter of the project. We will ask you to evidence this in April 2019.

Suggested answer length: **A couple of paragraphs.**

Our total spend for the period until March 2019 will be **£25,825** broken down as follows:

- Project Manager (0.2FTE) + associated expenses: £4,850

- Point of Contact at each location (.5 day/ week), responsible for coordinating the activities on the ground and linking with stakeholder organisations to maximise attendance, as well as conduct outreach to advertise the activities available: £10,975
- Funding for activities (including promotion): £3,000
- Pastoral Care training course: £5,000
- Management and Overhead costs: £2,000

During the phase of the project we will create individual project and site specific action plans and hire the Project Manager and 'Points of Contact' for each site. We will baseline the activity in each site, baseline the level of loneliness in each site with those who already engage in activities, and agree the timeline of activities. We will create the evaluation framework that will be used to measure the success of the project and the reporting to inform each stage. To develop our partnerships, we will identify and contact any additional stakeholder organisations with whom to support outreach and begin engagement with I&VP in each site. Any communication and marketing material required for promotion will be created. We will run the pastoral training course and any CPD required, and launch pastoral support alongside the activities in each site. The first report will be written to assess if the project is on track and if any short term reduction in I&V has been measured. Most importantly, the first set of activities will start to which I&VP will be encouraged to participate.

How much do you plan to spend for the period until April 2019–March 2020?

What do you plan to spend the money on for the period from April 2019–March 2020?

Suggested answer length: **A couple of paragraphs.**

Our total spend for the period until March 2019 will be **£39,950**, broken down as follows:

- Project Manager (0.2FTE) + associated expenses: **£10,000**
- Point of Contact at each location (.5 day/ week), responsible for coordinating the activities on the ground and linking with stakeholder organisations to maximise attendance, as well as conduct outreach to advertise the activities available: **£21,950**
- Funding for activities (including promotion to new I&VP): £4,000 Management and Overhead costs: **£4,000.**

Within this period we will run additional social events, increasing the programme of activities at each of the five communities to at least five regular social events and we will also collaborate with local initiatives. Specific programmes for LGBT people and apostates who are I&V will start during this period. To indicate how and where the project is on track for delivery, we will write two reports during this period, at which point any successes or improvements needed will be identified, and if any short to medium term reduction in isolation and loneliness has been measured.

How much do you plan to spend for the period until April 2020–March 2021?

What do you plan to spend the money on for the period April 2020–March 2021?

Suggested answer length: **A couple of paragraphs.**

Our total spend for the period until March 2019 will be **£27,825** broken down as follows:

- Project Manager (0.2FTE) + associated expenses: **£4,850**

- Point of Contact at each location (.5 day/ week), responsible for coordinating the activities on the ground and linking with stakeholder organisations to maximise attendance, as well as conduct outreach to advertise the activities available: **£10,975**
- Funding for activities (including promotion to new I&VP): **£4,000**
- Celebration event at each site to celebrate the successes of the project: **£1,500,**
- Evaluation and final report costs: **£4,500)**
- Management and Overhead costs: **£2,000**

Within this period we will run both the social events and the specific programmes for LGBT people and apostates, and sure we retain a focus on their sustainability beyond the end of the project . The final report and evaluation will be written during this period to indicate how and where success has been identified, any weaknesses the project highlighted, and if any medium to long term reduction in isolation and loneliness has been measured. The evaluation will also include the model of delivery created and recommendations for how other community based groups might develop their approach to reducing loneliness. Finally, we will also hold a celebration event in each site for all participants and stakeholder organisations to celebrate the successes the project has enjoyed.

8. Your organisation

Organisation legal name

If your application is successful we will use this address to send out a conditional offer letter and it will also be used for checks.

Building and street

Town or city

County

Postcode

Registered charity number

Companies House number

9. Main contact

Who should we contact if we have questions about your application?

First name

Last name

Email address

Phone number