



Request for Quotation

Supply of Village Agents

Introduction to this Request for Quotation (RFQ)

a) Introduction

Lancashire County Council (LCC) is inviting quotes on the terms identified in this document for the delivery of Village Agents, supported by the Contract Specification below.

The contract is intended to commence on **1st June 2025**. The contract will expire on the **31st May 2026**. The contract is time-limited to 12 months.

LCC does not bind itself to accept any quote. The price must not exceed £125,000 for the initial year for the full delivery and management of the specification.

All suppliers will be responsible for their own costs relating directly or indirectly to this quote.

b) Service Expectations

Requirement for 4x Village Agents to support diversion from Adult Social Care for low-level social care needs through early intervention and prevention. The four Village Agents will be expected to work collaboratively and cohesively, ensuring that their efforts are integrated and not isolated. These agents will share information, resources, and strategies to provide a unified approach. By working together, they will enhance the effectiveness of their services, avoid duplication of efforts, and ensure that individuals and families receive comprehensive and coordinated support. This collaborative approach will foster stronger, more connected rural communities, where the Village Agents can leverage each other's strengths and expertise to address the diverse needs of those who reside in rural areas.

Village Agents will be required to operate in the Identified Districts within the Lancashire County Council boundary. These roles are intended to provide equitable access to community provision for residents in our rural communities. They will help to bridge the gap between isolated, excluded, vulnerable, and lonely individuals and statutory and/or voluntary organisations which offer specific solutions to identified needs. This means they will work with community support solutions to coordinate information, advice, and guidance alongside community support as an alternative to formal social care provision.

To achieve this, Village Agents will be required to manage and develop relationships with relevant LCC teams, VCFSE organisations, Public Health, Primary Care Networks, Parish Councils, Village Halls and identified community support.

A purchase order will be raised to the successful supplier in accordance with the terms of the quote.

All prices submitted must be inclusive of all costs and exclude VAT.

c) Contract Specification

Definitions

Voluntary, Community, Faith, and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) – This sector encompasses a wide range of organisations that operate for social benefit and are not-for-profit. They may be registered as a charitable organisation, be a faith-based organisation or be a community or specific interest-based group.

Village Agent – A Village Agent is a community-based practitioner who provides practical support and advice to individuals and community groups. They help connect people with the right services, resources, and agencies to address various needs and challenges in their local area. The role of a village agent might include, but is not limited to, helping older adults and families who need advice and support but don't know where to start. They link individuals to local groups, events, and activities, assist in finding the best community support for specific situations, and provide emotional and practical support for entire families. Village agents also offer guidance to help locate information and support agencies for caregivers and support local carers groups. They collaborate with various agencies to bring in additional resources and expertise, ensuring a holistic approach to addressing rural challenges. Through these efforts, village agents help create more resilient and connected rural communities.

Rural Areas – A rural area is a geographic region located outside towns and cities. It is characterised by low population density and large amounts of open space. Rural areas often rely on agriculture or natural resources for their economy. Rural areas require a different approach due to several unique challenges they face. These include limited access to healthcare, education, and public transport, which can significantly impact the quality of life. Additionally, rural communities often experience higher levels of poverty, fewer job opportunities, and a lack of infrastructure compared to urban areas. The geographical isolation and smaller population sizes also mean that services and resources need to be tailored to meet the specific needs of these communities. Addressing these challenges requires a holistic and integrated approach that considers the interconnectedness of economic, social, and environmental factors.

Rural Communities – A rural community is group of people living in a rural area. Due to the smaller size and more intimate nature of rural areas, residents often have a stronger sense of community and local identity.

Rural Urban Classifications for Output Areas – The Output Area classification is used to determine a classification for Local Authorities based on the proportion of their populations in Rural areas and nearer or further from a major town or city.

- Majority rural authorities have 50% or more of their population in rural areas
- Intermediate rural authorities have between 35% and less than 50% of their population in rural areas
- Intermediate urban authorities have between 20% and less than 35% of their population in rural areas
- Urban authorities have less than 20% of their population in rural areas

Authorities are also classified by their population's relative access to a major town or city as:

- Majority further from a major town or city have at least 50% of their population further from a major town or city
- Majority nearer to a major town or city have less than 50% of their population further from a major town or city

Identified Districts – Using data from the Office of National Statistics (ONS) we have identified 4 Districts using the Rural Urban Classification (2021) of Local Authority Districts (2024) in England and Wales:

- Ribble Valley
- West Lancashire
- Chorley
- Lancaster

For further details and analysis, you can view the ONS [Rural-Urban Classification User Guide \(2021\)](#).

Introduction

Nationally there are an increasing number of innovations that are supporting communities to develop their own solutions to personalised community rooted care and support. The Rural population was 9.5 million in 2021 and represented 16.9% of England's population; in 2011 the Rural population was 9.3 million and represented 17.6% of England's population (based on 2021 and 2011 Rural Urban Classifications for Output Areas).

Boosting Village Agent resource within the VCFSE sector will allow essential insight into the challenges for rural communities and how to meet them.

Scope

The scope of work for the village agents includes providing services within the Identified Districts within the Lancashire County Council boundary, targeting adults within those populations. These agents will offer a range of services, including information and referral assistance, support with accessing social care and health services, and help with daily living activities. Additionally, they will engage in community activities to promote social inclusion and enhance the overall well-being of residents. By focusing on these areas, the village agents aim to create a supportive network that addresses the low-level social care needs of the community.

Background

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) launched the Accelerating Reform Fund (ARF), which provides a total of £42.6 million in grant funding over 2023 to 2024 (£20 million) and 2024 to 2025 (£22.6 million), to support innovation in adult social care.

While the care sector has been innovating for decades, sometimes impactful innovations can remain on the margins, rather than becoming the mainstream way of delivering care and support. Through the ARF, the department wants to support the growth of services that make person-centred care a reality for those who draw on it, support unpaid carers to live healthy and fulfilling lives alongside their caring role and respond to rising demand and the changing needs of local populations. Collaboration and communication are vital to embedding and sustaining innovations. The ARF is designed to promote partnership working across local areas, as well as sharing of learning and best practice nationally.

The aim of the ARF is to address barriers to adopting innovative practices and build capacity and capability in adult social care.

The Minister of State for Care has written to all local authorities to set out the department's [priorities for innovation and scaling](#). These 12 priorities cover a broad range of areas under the 3 objectives of their [10-year vision for adult social care reform](#).

The aim of the ARF is to support the adoption or scaling of projects that deliver these priorities. Lancashire County Council identified the following priorities:

Priority 3: investment in local area networks or communities to support prevention and promote wellbeing, enabling people to age well in their communities.

Priority 12 (focusses on unpaid carers): ways to encourage people to recognise themselves as carers and promote access to carer services.

The supply of Village Agents will be funded by the ARF as part of the project for Priority 3. The project aims to enhance community support to reduce social care demand and promote wellbeing. Goals include connecting people with communities, improving information and advice, and exploring alternatives to formal social care provision. We aim to align with other areas of work such as population health, social care market position statements, population demographics and digital transformation, to monitor and track areas of need. The Village Agents will also be expected to align their interventions with other projects and initiatives within Lancashire County Council, to provide a cohesive and integrated offer to residents.

Statement of Requirements

- **Required Outputs/Outcomes**

- Recruitment of 4 x Village Agents. Any employed member of staff under this contract must be paid at least the National Minimum Wage.
- Signposting to services and connecting individuals to alternative solutions for support with low-level social care needs.
- Reduction in the number of calls to Adult Social Care in the rural communities targeted with this pilot.
- Increase in referrals and signposting from Adult Social Care teams to Village Agents and VCFSE / community support.
- Established close working relationships with key staff at Lancashire County Council:
 - Customer Access Service (CAS) teams
 - Wellbeing and Early Support (WES) teams
 - Micro-Enterprise Coordinator
 - Commissioners
- Increase in community support for social participation, for example, provision in community settings.
- Increased awareness of Micro-provision as an alternative for low-level social care needs.
- Established presence in rural communities, including development of volunteer network, facilitating activity and community cohesion.

- **Performance measures & reporting**

- Monthly meetings will be scheduled to monitor development, performance, and delivery.
- Reporting metrics to be agreed with the awarded organisation but likely to include, but not limited to:
 - Number of people supported
 - Case studies including impact and outcomes
 - Where people have been signposted to
 - Challenges and solutions – lessons learned
- A final report within 12 months of contract start date as well as quarterly progress reports.

- **Timescale and Management of the contract**

- We anticipate a small project team and/or project manager will be required to ensure all requirements and objectives are met.
- We require a named contact with contact details are provided to the authority for contract management and project management purposes
- Timescale for completion of this project is 12-months from commencement date.

d) Supplier Queries

Any requests for clarification, including minor points/detail or clarification must be submitted in writing via email to awpicomm@lancashire.gov.uk by **Tuesday 13th May 2025**. Written responses must be secured as a pre-requisite to a supplier placing any reliance upon any responses. Oral information will not be held valid unless and until it has been confirmed in writing.

If a supplier wishes LCC to treat a question as confidential this must be clearly communicated.

e) Submission of Proposals

Please submit your proposal via email to awpicomm@lancashire.gov.uk by **Friday 16th May 2025**. Your proposal should focus on the below areas:

- Understanding of Rural Communities
- Participation, local solutions and sign posting
- Anticipated Outcomes
- Delivery Plan
- Budget

f) Award Criteria

The successful quote will be determined based on the criteria stated below.

Criteria	Weighting
Understanding of Rural Communities	20%
Participation, local solutions and sign posting	20%
Anticipated Outcomes	15%
Delivery Plan	5%
Price	40%

Each criterion will be scored out of 4. The interpretations of the non-pricing scorings are:-

Score	Description
0	Unacceptable Nil or inadequate response. Fails to demonstrate an ability to meet the requirement.
1	Poor. Response is partially relevant but generally poor. The response addresses some elements of the requirement but contains insufficient/limited detail or explanation to demonstrate how the requirement will be fulfilled.
2	Acceptable Response is relevant and acceptable. The response addresses a broad understanding of the requirement but may lack details on how the requirement will be fulfilled in certain areas.
3	Good Response is relevant and good. The response is sufficiently detailed to demonstrate a good understanding and provides details on how the requirements will be fulfilled.
4	Excellent Response is completely relevant and excellent overall. The response is comprehensive, unambiguous and demonstrates a thorough understanding of the requirement and provides details of how the requirement will be met in full.

All providers will be required to achieve a score of 2 for each question to move on to the next stage of the RFQ. Where a provider has scored less than a 2 for any question the tender evaluation panel may not continue to score the remainder of the RFQ submission, and the provider may be eliminated.

The interpretations of the pricing scorings are:

Lowest price scores maximum mark.

- The price score is calculated by arranging the tenderers pricing totals by the most competitive (lowest value) through to the least competitive (highest value).
- The most competitive price scores the full weight available within the pricing criteria. All remaining bids, which are more expensive, are awarded a weighted score as pro rata to the most competitive bid.

g) Terms & Conditions

Lancashire County Council Terms & Conditions shall apply.



Standard%20Terms%
20%20Conditions%2C

h) Confidentiality

This RFQ must be treated as private and confidential. Suppliers must not release details of the RFQ other than on an “In Confidence” basis to those who have a legitimate need to know or whom they need to consult for the purposes of preparing a quote.

i) Insurance

The successful supplier must effect and maintain in force with a reputable insurance company a policy or policies of insurance covering all the matters which are contemplated by the Contract including but not limited to public liability employer's liability and professional liability insurance with minimum cover levels of:

- £5 million in respect of public liability; and
- £10 million in respect of employer's liability; and

For each and every claim the number of claims is unlimited. For the avoidance of doubt the terms of any insurance or the amount of cover shall not relieve the successful supplier of any liabilities under the contract.

Proposal

Criteria – Understanding of Rural Communities

Please provide a summary of your understanding of rural communities and provide a justification of the communities you will target within the Identified Districts, which will be covered by the Village Agents (maximum 300 words).

Criteria – Participation, local solutions and sign posting

Please explain how you propose to increase social participation, how you will keep up to date with local solutions and low-level support offers so you are able to sign post effectively (maximum 300 words).

Criteria – Anticipated Outcomes

Lancashire County Council expects that this project will lead to increased referrals and signposting to community support in rural areas, as well as enhanced connectivity and cohesion within rural communities. We anticipate that the provider will be able to record and report to the authority as a minimum:

- Number of people supported
- Case studies including impact and outcomes
- Where people have been signposted to
- Challenges and solutions – lessons learned

Please confirm and describe how you would record and report these measures, along with any additional benefits and outcomes your organisation can contribute to this project (maximum 300 words).

Criteria – Delivery Plan

Please provide a brief implementation and delivery plan (maximum 1 side of A4).

Criteria – Price

Please provide a breakdown of the overall cost, including roles and administration costs (Maximum 1 side of A4).