**Coordinated Crisis Support pilots:**

*Expression of interest form for councils interested in participating*

**Introduction**

An exciting new partnership between The Children’s Society, Local Government Association, Trussell Trust, the Church of England, Lloyds Bank Foundation for England and Wales and BBC Children in Need will shortly be piloting a new “coordinated crisis support” programme to better coordinate provision of emergency financial assistance within local areas.

We believe there is a key role for the voluntary and community sector to work together with local government to better coordinate crisis provision to ensure effective support for people facing a financial crisis and stop households falling through the net. The key aims of the coordinated crisis support programme are to:

1. Address the gap in emergency support provision left following the elimination of Crisis Loans and Community Care Grants through better networking of different local agencies (including the council) involved in the provision of emergency assistance.
2. Reduce repeat instances of financial crisis by addressing underlying causes of crises, as well as the immediate emergency.

Initially, we are seeking to work in three local areas across England and Wales, and to work closely in partnership with councils providing local welfare assistance schemes to deliver the programme. With this in mind, we are delighted to invite relevant councils to submit an expression of interest for their areas to be involved in the pilots.

**Commitment from councils**

With no ringfenced funding for local welfare assistance schemes, and no legally binding requirement to deliver them, councils have understandably faced considerable challenges in delivering these schemes.

Nonetheless, we know that many councils are committed to taking a leading role in the provision of crisis support – which both responds to immediate needs and works to prevent crises recurring in the future. The coordinated crisis support programme is looking to work with councils to support them in this.

We are particularly keen to hear from councils with a passion for tackling poverty and social injustice in their area, who are committed to working in close partnership with the voluntary and community sector.

We don’t expect councils in the pilot areas to already be delivering the perfect local welfare assistance scheme – but we do expect them to be delivering one (or willing to set one up), and be committed to working with the voluntary and community sector to review and improve it over the coming years.

**What support will we provide to the pilot areas?**

Local provision of crisis support works best when councils play a key role. The coordinated crisis support programme will provide a package of key support and resources to the pilot areas, to help the council to work with the local voluntary and community sector to better coordinate emergency support provision. This includes:

* **£40,000 funding per year** (for a three year pilot period) - which we will distribute to local voluntary and community sector organisations to help enable them to be involved in better coordinating and delivering crisis support in their local area.
* **Bespoke mapping of crisis support need and provision within the local area –** as part of the programme we will produce and share a report highlighting crisis support need and provision within the local area.
* **Coordination capacity** – including support to set up and deliver a local project steering group who will lead on local programme development
* **Access to programme resources** – including template data sharing agreements and marketing materials, and a training programme for local staff working on delivery of emergency support.
* **Learning and evaluation support** – helping the council and other local organisations to learn about what works well within their area, and what changes could be made to implement further changes – including access to a small “test and learn” programme budget to trial small changes in practice.

**What are we looking for?**

Initially, we are seeking to work with 3 local areas to set up pilot projects providing the support, guidance and resources local community organisations need to better coordinate crisis provision within their area over a 3 year period.

Since a key aspect of the programme is to improve delivery of Local Welfare Assistance schemes, partnership working with councils will be crucial to success. For this reason we are seeking interest in involvement from councils currently delivering Local Welfare Assistance schemes (or who are willing to establish one) - which will normally mean top tier authorities.

In some areas responsibility for Local Welfare Assistance have been devolved to district councils. In such cases we would particularly welcome joint expressions of interest from individual districts in partnership with the relevant top tier authority.

Whilst the programme will set out clear guidelines for what a local project should look like, and provide support with delivery, the development of the operational detail will be determined by local groups (including both the council and local voluntary and community sector organisations) themselves in consultation with the national programme coordinator. Each project would have the following key components:

***\* Improving access to crisis support schemes***

***\* A simpler, supported, application process***

***\* Addressing underlying needs to prevent the recurrence of crisis***

***\* Providing aftercare***

***\* A commitment to ongoing learning***

Further information about the pilots can be found here: <https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/what-we-do/resources-and-publications/co-ordinated-crisis-support-provision-proposal>

As well as looking for councils willing to be involved in the pilots, we are also seeking a small number of “learning partners” who would work with the pilot areas to help them learn from, and improve, the approaches they are taking, and to consider changes they could make in their own areas. *If you are interested in learning about effective approaches to the delivery of crisis support, but couldn’t commit to full involvement in the pilots, please do consider expressing an interest in acting as a learning partner.*

**What next?**

If you are interested in being considered as a pilot site for project, please complete the expression of interest form on the following page, answering the questions with as much detail as possible. The form should be signed by the chief executive and lead member for finance and resources (or equivalent), and returned to rebecca.jacques@childrenssociety.org.uk by COP **Friday 28th June**. If you are interested in being a learning partner for the programme, please do just get in touch at the email address above (you do not need to complete the full form below.)

Following a review of the expression of interest forms, we will short list councils for further discussion to help us to select the three pilot sites.

The attached *‘Coordinated Crisis Support Proposal’* document provides further information on the project. But if you have any questions or require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact Rebecca Jacques on rebecca.jacques@childrenssociety.org.uk

Expression of Interest - questions

*Please complete & return this form to* *rebecca.jacques@childrenssociety.org.uk* *by end of* ***Friday 28th June****.*

*The information provided in this form will only be used for the purposes of selecting pilot sites for this project and will not be included elsewhere in The Children’s Society’s, or any of our partners’ work. The forms will only be seen by the panel involved in reviewing the applications and selecting the pilot sites*.

1. **Why are you interested in being involved in this pilot?**
2. **If the coordinated crisis support programme was piloted in your area, how would you work with the voluntary sector to improve the provision of local crisis support?**
3. **How would you use this pilot as an opportunity to improve your understanding of, and respond more effectively to, the need for local crisis support??**
4. **Do you have anything else you would like to tell us about why your council would be a good area in which to pilot a coordinated crisis support scheme?**
5. ***(For district councils only)* How would you work with your county council to improve the provision of crisis support within your area?**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 (Chief Executive)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 (Lead Member for finance

 and resources, or equivalent)