

## **Bridges Projects**

### **Background**

Over the past 10 years Bridges has developed a range of community projects to meet local needs. These projects have progressed to become embedded in local service provision, and have gained recognition both locally and regionally as models of good practice. Bridges currently delivers six projects across Monmouthshire. We are also working with partner organisations in Blaenau Gwent and Torfaen to share our approach to supporting people in communities. All of the Bridges wellbeing services are focussed on assisting people to stay well and independent and to avoid social isolation and ill health. Much of our work is enabled by volunteers who donate time to support others in the community.

### **Staff and Volunteers**

The Bridges wellbeing services currently employ 15 members of staff, plus 6-10 sessional staff. We manage and support approximately 350 volunteers across the county. The projects fit into three teams: -

1. Community Transport and Older People
2. Volunteering
3. Disability/Inclusion and Young People

### **Strategic Links**

The Social Services and Wellbeing Wales Act emphasises that there must be a focus on prevention and early intervention in services for people with care and support needs and their carers. Third sector organisations are playing a vital role in this, helping people to avoid crisis or intervention from statutory services. The Gwent Regional Partnership Board and Monmouthshire Integrated Health and Social Services are working with local organisations, such as Bridges, to provide community based support and transition from a medical model of care to a social model, where communities are more self-sufficient and resilient.

### **Funding**

The Bridges wellbeing services have often been initially funded with support from the National Lottery Community Fund. This has enabled projects to establish, develop and be tried and tested. Our current services are funded primarily from the Integrated Care Fund (ICF), with additional support from Aneurin Bevan Health Board (ABUHB) and Monmouthshire County Council (MCC). We also receive generous and committed support from volunteers and fundraisers.

### **Reporting**

Quarterly reports are required for our funders, trustees and stakeholder groups. Evidence and evaluation of the impact made by our services is continually gathered to inform funders and commissioners of the benefits to health and wellbeing, value for money and social return on investment.

## **Sustainability**

The Bridges Wellbeing projects are well established and valued. They are providing useful practical and emotional support to people at a lower cost than statutory services. The primary cost is to employ our skilled and experienced team of staff, ensuring safety for those we support and safe and enjoyable experiences for volunteers. We are currently dependent on short term grant funding but aim to move to a more sustainable model by establishing Service Level Agreements from statutory services and utilising funds raised through the Bridges Centre and community shops. The Projects Director will work with the Bridges Business Director and trustees to develop opportunities for sustainable income generation and to secure contracts and grants for service provision.

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