

Neighbourhood Fund Project Proposals

The following applications are recommended for approval from the previously agreed 2019/20 Digital Inclusion budget

Project Name	Organisation	NF Funding Requested (already agreed)
RU Ready for UC	ShARP and Springboard in partnership	£25,000
<p>Springboard and ShARP will continue to work on the next phase of RUready4UC project. This project will raise awareness of public access computers in the Coalfields and support participants in making their applications for Universal Credit. Springboard Outreach sessions will provide support on the basics of using a computer or digital device including tablets and smart phones through a variety of timetabled, structured classes and informal drop in sessions. Focused on the requirements set by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) sessions will be delivered by qualified staff to support participants in accessing the internet for online entries onto Universal Jobmatch, the new DWP 'Find a Job' portal and Universal Credit Full Service (UCFS). Where there is a skills gap of maths and English competency, individuals will have the opportunity, and will be encouraged to, achieve City and Guilds qualifications in Information Communication Technology (ICT), maths and English from foundation level to L2 as well as work on enhancing their employability skills.</p> <p>The close partnership between Springboard and ShARP will facilitate an effective signposting process ensuring participants access the support they required first, participants will have the opportunity to access digital skills or tailored benefit and money management advice when they are ready to engage in each aspect. ShARP will provide a benefits advice check and develop opportunities to work in the Charity Shop as a volunteer and in centre as additional value building.</p> <p>The move to Universal Credit and delay in payments of several weeks has increased the number of people with no income or reduced income, experiencing periods of crisis where they have had to rely on Foodbanks or seek financial support from family and friends to manage as best they can until payments are in place. Our role is to help people migrate onto UC as quickly and as easily as possible. Due to the COVID 19 outbreak and a full country lock down, we now enter unprecedented times, and face increased unemployment in the Coalfield area. This means a change in focus for some new claimants who have recently been made redundant and who will need help and support on how to deal with financial adjustments, look at what benefit to apply for which will mainly be given by SHARP. They may need help with mental health issues and how to cope with increasing debts. Tutors working on the project will work hard to remove potential barriers arising from such a rise in unemployment due to the corona virus crisis. Springboard and SHARP will add additional elements into this project, arising from social distancing measures, offering a more blended learning approach (Zoom, Teams, F2F), as well as prepare for a potential threat of another full lock down while running the project over the next 12 months. Springboard and SHARP will focus on splitting the training with advice given, working more closely on following the journey of the claimant, hoping to help move back into employment.</p> <p>The project will deliver up to 8 sessions per week (this will include drop in sessions, pre-booked or sessions over the phone/internet) across 2 venues of Hetton Hub and ShARP. Sessions will be delivered over 3 hours and will include group type workshops with allocated times following sessions for 1:1 advice.</p> <p>ShARP will make full use of the existing networks and partnerships in the Coalfields area to ensure that the project is known and understood. The project will complement the work of other</p>		

providers including ShARP Advice on Prescription, ELCAP, Hetton New Dawn providing an additional specialist resource to aid with the roll out of UC and the impact that is likely to have on local people if they are unprepared.

ShARP is commissioned to deliver Open Access First Tier Welfare Rights, Debt and Benefit Advice in the Coalfields area. We will discuss benefit entitlement as part of the project but the focus will remain on “Getting Ready for UC” so we will not routinely give additional welfare rights, specific benefits and debt advice but will help people to engage with ShARP FTWR ensuring that there is no duplication of resources. Sunderland Crisis Support Service will be an important resource and as a commissioned service ShARP already has an excellent knowledge of the specialist response and support available through this team. Our project will aim to reduce potential pressure UC may put on this service by working with people to prepare for UC through a range of practical measures to help prevent crisis as their claim is processed. Springboards Foodbank will work collaboratively with Sunderland City Foodbanks to anticipate and alleviate hardship. ShARP works closely with ELCAP, New Dawn provides benefit checks and advice to people in crisis using the foodbanks in the Coalfields.

Recommendation: Approve

Project Name	Organisation	NF Funding Requested (already agreed)
Communities Connected	Springboard	£50,000 (total project cost £83,000)

This proposed project will increase public access to computers, raise awareness of services available within the Coalfields area and provide participants with appropriate training and qualifications to increase their individual digital skills, develop confidence and ability to effectively use a range of services from key stakeholders including, but not limited to, Sunderland City Council, DWP, NHS and Third Sector support organisations. This programme will identify the initial need of the participant and deliver a tapered plan of support to enable them to become self-sufficient in the effective access of digital services and programmes.

A dedicated member of staff will be employed to work with the established network of Coalfield Digital Inclusion VCS Network members, involving all interested parties.

Building on the current work Springboard have completed we will continue to liaise with residents and possible participants across the Coalfields. This collaborative approach will ensure opportunities for innovative methods of delivery are identified and realised, utilising the skills already in place. As part of the programme we will develop the role of Digital Champions allowing local people who have participated within the programme or wish to help those to improve their skills, take a proactive role in supporting others in their community. The dedicated Springboard staff member will be able to provide basic technical advice and support to participating groups and organisations. We have a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) Coordinator who provides support and guidance ensuring staff and participants can access support, training and education on our remote platform.

Supported by qualified staff, participants will receive up to date, appropriate Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) to identify what support they need and receive efficient signposting covering how and where to access services. This database of free services will be made available to anyone without charge and in a number of formats including electronic and hard copy. Initial contact to the project will initiate an assessment process to identify whether the individual requirements are informal or formal.

Informal support will include drop in sessions in the Springboard Community Hub previously the

'Hetton Centre Library'. For those closer to the labour market and seeking employment they can access timetabled programmes of study allowing individuals to attend small group taught sessions covering Employability Training, Vocational Training and Qualifications, Work Experience information opportunities These additional services are offered in kind and are free of charge to participants in receipt of a benefit.

Signposting will inform participants of other drop in sessions in partner sites, these additional sites and times will be agreed with the groups to provide the best fit for local residents situated within the different Coalfields wards and supported by a Springboard Staff member where appropriate.

Times and locations for drop in sessions will be advertised centrally and on our Website and the Hetton Hub social media page. Sessions will provide support on the basics of using a computer or digital device including tablets and smart phones, accessing the internet for online shopping or research for personal interest, sending emails, social media such as Facebook and Instagram, managing money online, staying safe online, access to GP services online and NHS choices and facilitating claimants entries onto Universal Jobmatch and Universal Credit Full Service (UCFS).

Following first contact which can be through a partner or self-referral, participants will undergo a robust initial assessment to identify their specific needs, identify the level they are operating at and agree appropriate and realistic targets they wish to achieve.

By the end of the project the residents of the Coalfield area will be more informed about the range of provision in the area, more confident to use IT equipment and on-line services and be equipped with the knowledge, qualifications and personal contacts to support others in their community who may not possess digital skills or the confidence to approach organisations. We are an active member of the Digital Sunderland Initiative. Working closely with other members based within the Coalfield area we have led on the identification of what is currently available and identify areas of need to support local residents in developing their digital skills

Recommendation: Approve