

UK Community Renewal Fund

Evaluation Methodology - Bridge the Gap (BTG)

Commissioning the evaluation of Bridge the Gap (BTG) funded through UK Community Renewal Fund¹ (UKCRF)

CXXK are commissioning the independent external evaluation of the Bridge the Gap (BTG) project to explore and report on the early messages along with learning and impact during the test and learn phase in addressing the UKCRF objectives for this project. The Levelling Up White Paper published in February 2022² and messages from the UKCRF projects will influence future UKSPF funding and models of delivery.

Organisations looking to submit a proposal will be expected to provide a comprehensive evaluation outline, budget and reporting framework, schedule as part of the selection process (please refer to section 4 below along with evaluation guidance from Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC)³).

1. Purpose of the UK Community Renewal Fund

1.1 Objectives of the UK Community Renewal Fund (UKCRF) ⁴

The UK Community Renewal Fund is supporting communities to pilot programmes and new approaches ahead of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. Through these pilots, the expectation is to unleash new ideas and pilot programmes to better support people and communities in need across the UK.

The aim is to support innovative responses to local challenges and local need across the UK, spanning urban, rural and coastal areas. To use the UK Community Renewal Fund to test greater integration of types of interventions and greater flexibility between investment themes than under EU structural funds. This includes removing barriers that people face in accessing skills and local labour market opportunities, building the evidence base for future interventions and exploring the viability of new idea.

1.2 UKCRFs proposal for supporting people into employment

The intention is that investment will help places provide local, tailored, wrap-around support to those furthest from the labour market – focusing on individuals who find it difficult to engage with mainstream provision or for whom mainstream provision is not an option. The projects will support people in overcoming a variety of additional barriers to employment or mainstream programmes, which they are unable to fully utilise without additional support.

Its proposed projects will draw upon and enhance multi-agency delivery teams, including the community and voluntary sector along with public provision. These will bring together a range of service providers to embed and provide a coordinated service to support individuals along the journey to employment.

Innovative projects will focus on delivering bespoke programmes, utilising a needs-based approach to support individuals to overcome their multiple or complex barriers which inhibit

¹ [UK Community Renewal Fund: successful and unsuccessful bids - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/uk-community-renewal-fund-successful-and-unsuccessful-bids)

² [Levelling Up the United Kingdom \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/levelling-up-the-united-kingdom)

³ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/uk-community-renewal-fund-further-monitoring-and-evaluation-guidance-for-project-deliverers#national-evaluation>

⁴ [UK Community Renewal Fund: prospectus 2021-22 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/uk-community-renewal-fund-prospectus-2021-22)

their ability to gain employment. The pilots should support those most disengaged from the labour market. These will include, but are not limited to, interventions that address:

- **Supporting people to engage with local services which support them on their journey towards employment** – such as bringing together multi-agency teams to join up a variety of services around an individual to address the variety of barriers to employment they may face; or key-worker support to connect individuals with existing public or voluntary provision.
- **Identifying and addressing any potential barriers these individuals may face in gaining employment or moving closer to the labour market** – such as the use of key-worker support to work with beneficiaries to identify barriers to employment, working with and connecting individuals to the most appropriate services throughout the employment journey.
- **Raising aspirations, supporting individuals to access Plan for Jobs employment support, jobs and find sustainable employment** – such as providing holistic support to address the long-term barriers to employment including but not limited to support for alcohol and drugs interventions, skills for life such as timekeeping, confidence building and, employability support, including work experience, CV writing or interview preparation.
- **Supporting people to gain the basic skills they need to develop their potential for sustainable work** – such as English, Maths, Digital and English for Speakers of Other Languages skills and training courses. Other suitable provision could include support intended to develop communication, interpersonal and presentation skills.
- **Testing what works in helping people move towards work** – such as testing new initiatives which support people along the employment journey to understand how different interventions, or targeting approaches, can maximise the effectiveness of employment programmes aimed at those furthest from the labour market.

Projects test various interventions with a view to providing an evidence base to understand what really works in supporting people into employment. They are intended to test ways of working collaboratively at a local level, taking a multi-agency approach Working with Jobcentre Plus and including the community and voluntary sector to provide the complete suite of support that those with additional or complex barriers might face.

2. CXXK Project

2.1 Bridge the Gap - aim & purpose

Bridge the Gap is supporting and empowering the unemployed, economically inactive and vulnerable, particularly those designated unable or unwilling to take advantage of any current employability or learning provision available.

Bridge the Gap focus is on providing differentiated support to all ages and particularly priority beneficiaries (e.g. long-term unemployed adults and young people, care leavers, risk of homelessness, impacted by Covid restrictions) that need re-introduction to both learning and the labour market, benefiting from a fresh, person-centred approach aimed at removing barriers, building self-motivation, confidence and re-integration.

Project outcomes need to lead to successful progression into national programmes that would not have been suitable without support from BtG.

2.2 CXK project seeks to:

1. *Integrate unemployed, marginalised, or isolated people into their communities and sustainable employment.*
2. *Understand and recognise the positive effects of this on employers – changing attitudes, opportunities and working practices.*
3. *Establish and celebrate the impact of these on communities and the labour market by measuring distance travelled by our beneficiaries*

2.3 Geographical Reach⁵

As part of our initial research into the communities in Kent the following priority areas were identified with the percentage of activity to be undertaken as follows:

- Swale (30%)
- Canterbury (30%)
- Thanet (40%)

2.4 Principles of Bridge the Gap (BtG)⁶

- ✓ Action Research - model combining an integrated internal CXK monitoring framework and externally commissioned evaluation to monitor and measure success (short and long term benefits), impact, shortfalls and new learning using test and learn values.
- ✓ Supporting employers to prepare and understand the needs and barriers our beneficiaries face through a dedicated employer engagement role.
- ✓ Supporting our beneficiaries to be more self-sufficient, successful with learning, and participate with their local communities and have the confidence and motivation to realise their visions.
- ✓ Use of a flexible bursary that will enhance the core funded development activity that funds learning, resources and consumables to support beneficiary progress to learning and employment.
- ✓ Address the key priorities within local plans for employment and engaged communities.
- ✓ Partnership model with local experts, voluntary and community organisations, employers and providers to progress beneficiaries to access progression opportunities - into education and training; gaining qualifications, engaged in life skills support, ready to start JCP programmes and activities.

2.5 Core Elements to the Project

- Extensive local employer integration & engagement to prepare for needs of our beneficiaries.
- Ongoing monitoring and evaluation frameworks – internal/external.
- Access to an additional bursary to provide targeted interventions to address extensive barriers.
- Targeted beneficiary recruitment informed by local data and need.

⁵ [List of 100 priority places \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

⁶ [Bridge the Gap - CXK](#)

2.6 The Programme Overview (Annex D)

Phase 1 - Outreach and Engagement

- ✓ Establishing creative ways of managing and nurturing the network of referral pathways for beneficiaries by a dedicated coach providing 1-2-1 support.
- ✓ Plan for progression

Phase 2 – Motivation and Development

- ✓ Dedicated mentoring to gradually reduce barriers and reinforce positive behaviours and skills for success.

Phase 3 – Pre-employment and Progression

- ✓ Mentor led delivery with employers and learning providers to motivate, develop behaviours, knowledge and confidence.

Phase 4 – Support and Sustainability

- ✓ Focus on retaining positive development and progression to destinations.
- ✓ The coach will support transition through bi-weekly tracking.

2.7 Inputs, activities and outputs (planned)

Agreed inputs, activities and outputs for each of the identified 4 phases of the project to be delivered through the 'test and learn' approach (see Annex D). Evaluation to identify which aspects had the greatest impact on beneficiaries motivation, confidence and engagement etc. (as per the original proposal) reported through a hierarchy of impact.

2.8 Marketing, promotion and social media

2.7.1 - **Beneficiaries** - to use the existing CXK social media channels to communicate, engage and celebrate beneficiaries stories, the focus adopted, reach and impact of campaigns on understanding and participation.

2.7.2 - **Employers** – to explore the impact of existing CXK social media channels to share messages with employers to increase opportunities for beneficiaries to access. If employers understood our messaging and could relate it to their business, recruitment and CSRs.

2.7.3 – **Providers, stakeholders and community groups** – to explore the impact of existing CXK social media channels to engage and access opportunities locally for bursary spend when needed by beneficiaries to address needs. To also facilitate innovation in design and delivery of activities to meet beneficiary specific needs.

Existing CXK social media channels:

- ✓ [Twitter](#)
- ✓ [Facebook](#)
- ✓ [LinkedIn](#)

To review CXK messaging, communication and reach for Bridge the Gap project, the offer and opportunities to potential and engaged beneficiaries, employers, providers, stakeholders and community groups.

3. Evaluation of the Project

3.1 CXXK – Evaluation of project - focus and approach

“We are committed to a full, thorough, and honest self-evaluation of the project. We believe it is a model with the potential to transform the lives of our beneficiaries, developing local communities and growing sustainable employment. We are equally committed to sharing what we learn from the evaluation to influence policy and practice across the South East, and possibly further afield if the project is as transformational as we believe it will be.” **CXXK bid submission, June 2021**

3.2 Evaluation methodology

We are commissioning an **independent external evaluator** to provide **ongoing evaluation** and produce an **end-of-project evaluation report**, working proactively to a **pre-agreed framework** to collect, analyse and review both quantitative and qualitative data that identifies beneficiary impact, challenges and progression. In addition, the evaluator will use CXXKs own Impact Framework, which is a tool designed for measuring the holistic impact of work with beneficiaries. This framework is utilised across CXXK and uses 12 outcome measures⁷ including: Confidence, Life Choices, Pathways to Work, Life Skills, Connections, Resilience, and Health.

Project evaluation will also need to develop broad learning on multiple topics including (Captured within Annex C guidelines):

- | | |
|--|--|
| ✓ Delivery model, design and appropriateness | ✓ Impact on beneficiaries, employers and wider community |
| ✓ Management and performance | ✓ Value for money |
| ✓ Outcomes ⁸ and progressions | ✓ Best practice and lessons learnt |
| ✓ Participant engagement & support needs | |
| ✓ Participant developmental needs | ✓ Distance travelled |

BtG will have established data sets being captured as part of the delivery planned from the outset, this will include the following sources:

- Beneficiary feedback from surveys, case studies and interviews
- Anecdotal feedback from case studies, video feedback, focus group discussions and photographic evidence.
- Employer and stakeholder feedback using surveys, interviews, and focus groups
- Beneficiary progress review data
- Progression and sustainment data

Wider and more focussed data may need to be identified and collated and this needs to be incorporated within the scope of the evaluation proposal.

⁷ [CXXK: Our Impact as a Charity](#)

⁸ Annex A – Core Outcome Indicators People

3.3 CXK timeline and revisions

Project Dates & Milestones	Existing	Proposed	
Project Start Date	1 st August 2021	1 st December 2022	
Project End Date	31 st March 2022	30 th June 2022	
Milestone	Existing Target Month	Proposed Target Month	Variance Yes/No
PROJECT MOBILISATION and LAUNCH: Following a 4-week mobilisation period, where the project team and initial/existing staff and sub-contractors will be inducted and trained, the Project will officially start supporting beneficiaries. This will follow a 2–4-week period in each locality area, when stakeholders will be informed, plans will be implemented, and referrals will be primed (Phase 1).	Aug 2021	Dec 2021	Yes
RECRUITMENT and PROCUREMENT of staff, partners, and sub-contractors (where required) will be completed.	Sep 2021	Jan 2021	Yes
PROGRESS and EVALUATION- At least 25% of beneficiary numbers will have been referred into the service, and support and engagement interventions with them will have been completed (Phase 1 and Phase 2). An initial Evaluation report will review the initial stages of the project and the delivery model. Test and Learn principles will be embedded and lessons learnt will be applied to subsequent delivery.	Nov 2021	29th April 2022	Yes
PROGRESS and EVALUATION -At least 75% of beneficiary numbers will have been referred into the service, and work with them been completed (Phase 1 and Phase 2 for most, some at Phase 3 and Phase 4). A second Evaluation compact-report will review the progress of the project, and final lessons learnt recommendations will be applied to subsequent delivery for the final part of the project in readiness for the End of Project Evaluation report on 31/03/2022.	Jan 2022	30th June 2022	Yes

4. Submission of your tender. What do we need from you?

Please submit a response that cover the following points (considering the national evaluation framework⁹):

1. The approach needed in undertaking interim and final evaluation reports (informed by sections 1 – 3)
2. Scope of the proposed evaluation (as a minimum)
 - Methodology and plan for engaging beneficiaries, key delivery providers, staff and partners (Annex C – Evaluation Reporting)
 - Capturing and recording innovation & how this can be replicated
 - Impact of the staff roles on beneficiaries and employers
 - Activity and approach needed for both the interim and final reporting on evaluation activity (Annex C – Evaluation Reporting)
 - Timeframes and timeline
3. References and track record
4. Budget (costings by activity)

⁹ [UK Community Renewal Fund: further monitoring and evaluation guidance for project deliverers - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/uk-community-renewal-fund-further-monitoring-and-evaluation-guidance-for-project-deliverers)

Annex A – Core Outcome Indicators People

Core Outcome Indicators Outcome Indicator	Definitions	Unit of Measurement
People in education/training following support ¹⁰	<p>People who have received support and who are newly engaged in education (lifelong learning, formal education) or training activities (off-the-job/in-the-job training, vocational training, etc.) immediately upon leaving the operation.</p> <p>Education or training is defined as a structured and agreed programme of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ lifelong learning; ➢ formal education; and ➢ educational and/or vocational training activities (this may include on the job and/or off the job vocational training or a combination of the approaches listed). <p>'Mandatory' training (e.g. job-search related / CV writing) and other non-vocational / non-educational support such as confidence building, life-skills and personal effectiveness support cannot be considered as 'education' or 'vocational training' (even though such activities may, of course, be useful and important support measures).</p>	Number of people
People gaining a qualification following support	<p>People who have received support and who gained a qualification following that support.</p> <p>Qualifications should be recognised by Ofqual's Regulated Qualification Framework (RQF) https://www.gov.uk/find-a-regulated-qualification</p>	Number of people
People engaged in job-searching following support	<p>Economically inactive people who have received support and who are newly engaged in job searching activities following that support.</p> <p>Economically inactive is defined in Annex B.</p> <p>"Engaged in job searching" is to be understood as persons usually without work, available for work and actively seeking work i.e. unemployed as defined in Annex B</p>	Number of people
People engaged in life skills support following interventions	<p>Economically inactive people or people who have been unemployed for over 18 months who have received support and who are newly engaged in life skills activities following that support.</p> <p>Life skills support is defined as additional support which improves confidence, resilience or motivation around the process of job searching and may include communication skills, presentation skills, activities which reduce social isolation or encourage appropriate employment related behaviours.</p>	Number of people
Economically inactive individuals engaging with benefits system following support.	<p>Economically inactive people not previously on benefits who have received support and are now in receipt of Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) or are in the Intensive Work Search Regime within Universal Credit (UC) or those within specific conditionality regimes in UC following that support.</p>	Number of people

Annex B – Employment Status Definitions

Employment Status Definitions Employment Status	Definitions
Unemployed	<p>As defined by the International Labour Organisation (ILO), unemployed persons are those:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Without a job, have been actively seeking work in the past four weeks and are available to start in the next two weeks. ➢ Out of work, have found a job and are waiting to start it in the next two weeks. ➢ Not all unemployed persons claim unemployment-related benefits. This is due to either not being entitled to claim unemployment-related benefits or choosing not to do so. Here, unemployment-related benefits is defined as those in receipt of Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) or are in the Intensive Work Search Regime within Universal Credit (UC).
Economically Inactive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Economically inactive individuals are those not in work and not actively seeking work (unlike unemployed individuals who are actively seeking work). ➢ Not all economically inactive individuals claim benefits. ➢ For those that do, this would include those claiming either "legacy" benefits or those within specific conditionality regimes in UC <p>The former here includes Employment Support Allowance (ESA), Incapacity Benefit (IB) and Income Support (IS).</p> <p>The latter here includes claimants within the Preparation Requirement or Work Focused Interview Requirement conditionality regimes.</p>

¹⁰ Throughout these definition "following support" is to be understood as up to four weeks after the support ended.

Employed	<p>People aged 16 and over who did one hour or more of paid work per week or were temporarily away from work (e.g. because they were temporarily sick or on holiday). This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Employees (permanent and temporary workers, the latter including those on fixed period contracts, agency temping etc.). ➤ Self-employed. ➤ Family workers (unpaid). ➤ People on government-supported training programmes, engaging in any form of work, work experience or work-related training. ➤ Persons on maternity or paternity leave
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Annex C – Evaluation Reporting

Evaluation Report (suggested structure) with a short early message impact measure report as per 3.3.

1. Introduction

- Executive Summary
- **Delivery model, management** and **appropriateness of initial design** (model and messages flexibility, successes and lesson learnt)

2. Outcomes and impact

- Beneficiary perspective (engagement/progression/impact/bursary success) links to the CXK impact framework [here](#) in line with a hierarchy of impact evidence base. Impact of coach and mentor roles
- Partnership working – reach, messages and impact on beneficiaries. Communication and messaging to beneficiaries, partners and stakeholders
- Provider partner responsiveness (innovation/ responsiveness/learning)
- Stakeholder feedback (DWP/Community groups/LAs/others)
- Bursary Spend (volumes/focus/impact/innovation) through case studies
- Employer Engagement (engagement/their learning/supporting beneficiaries) – impact of the employer engagement role
- Case studies – demonstrating impact (using both CXK impact framework and UKCRF criteria)
- Practitioner perspective (staff messaging and case study)
- Data to evaluate **progress against targets** (beneficiary/bursary spend/ employer opportunity) to demonstrate the change as a result on BtG interventions
- Hierarchy of impact – measure capturing the identified activity (Annex D) within each phase and effect on beneficiaries, employers and stakeholders informed by the principles of BtG (see section 2.4) within the project timeframe

3. Best practice and lessons learnt

- **4. Recommendations** – messaging and new ways of working (particular reference to flexibilities of bursary/employers roles)

5. Concluding comments - **value for money** and **lessons learnt?**

6. References

7. Appendices

Annex D – Model of delivery



