



**Better Futures**  
Tameside

## **Membership Prospectus**

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## Introduction

Better Futures Tameside (BFT) is a new consortium, created by a number of not for profit organisations operating in Tameside in order to safeguard and grow high quality Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector (VCFS) service provision for children, young people and families.

It will achieve this by working with commissioners/ funders to co-design services to create a single point of contact and by tendering competitively for public service contracts via a range of channels.

**This prospectus will tell you all about Better Futures Tameside, how it came about and how it will work.**

If you are interested in becoming a member of this exciting new consortium, read this short booklet and complete the short expression of interest form, at the back of the prospectus.

You will then receive a more comprehensive welcome pack and, once you decide that joining is appropriate, the full application form can be completed. Community and Voluntary Action Tameside (ACTION TOGETHER) staff will help you with this process.

*“Tameside Council welcomes the development of Better Futures Tameside. We value the voluntary and community sector (VCS) as key partners, and recognise the important and growing role it has in delivering services to help children, young people and families in the borough.*

*We hope that Better Futures Tameside will provide a focal point for us to be able to commission activities and services from local VCS organisations in future”.*

Jane Forrest  
Head of Commissioning and Resources  
Services for Children and Young People, Tameside Council

## 1. Background

Over the past six years groups and organisations serving families, children and young people, have worked more collaboratively through The Funky Lizard network which has supported organisations to:

- have a voice through representation,
- gain access to good learning opportunities
- and ensures that their contribution to services in Tameside is recognised and celebrated.

As a strong network, members were responsive to the need to look at a more formal collaborative approach when the cuts in public sector finances began in 2010.

After many meetings, and the establishment of a steering group to take decisions forward, Better Futures Tameside has emerged in order to help members survive in a more challenging economic climate, whilst still responding to opportunities to provide innovative services for families, children and young people in the future.

The development of the consortium has been supported by Tameside Council both through funding to ACTION TOGETHER and also by agreeing in principle that BFT can manage the Early Intervention Grant of approximately £200,000 once it is established.

## 2. Benefits of membership – why join?

It is clear that commissioners and funders are moving towards more single contracts and less numerous small contracts. If you want to make sure that your organisation does not lose out in the future then it is important to seriously consider membership.

Being in a consortium means your organisation can be part of much larger tender opportunities than they have been able to access before alone. There may well be new and exciting opportunities available as public services open up to a wider market than has been considered before. Together we can build **better futures** for both the people we work with and for our organisations.

In addition to this, belonging to a formal consortium will bring you all the benefits of being in a network and more. The top ten benefits are listed below:

1. Your organisation will be able to continue delivering whilst BFT will support you to manage the funding environment.
2. All members will receive an updated directory of other member organisations so that if you need to refer the people you are working with to another organisation, or get advice, you will be able to contact them more easily. This means you can better serve the people you work with, being responsive when they need help, and ensuring that their futures are always getting better.
3. Members will share experiences and good practice with each other and so the quality of all members services will be improved through collaborative support.
4. You will have a designated internet chat area which you can use to communicate with other members.
5. Your services will be more attractive to funders and commissioners who will only need to use one contract to procure the services of many diverse organisations. (many of you will have seen this working through the Holiday Activity Grant, or 5 Ways to Well Being funding stream)
6. As part of a collective you will have greater negotiating and bargaining powers with decision-makers.
7. In collaboration, members will be able to deliver more effective and efficient services.
8. Being a member will increase your profile and image, through a collective marketing strategy.
9. Your organisation will have a really strong link to other partners through a partners' hub, which is being developed by the Tameside Children Trust Board. This will reduce the duplication of services and enhance communication across different services.
10. Your organisation will become part of a unique new consortium which will meet the needs of the people you serve in innovative new ways.

### **3. Better Futures Tameside – The Vision**

**The vision of the consortium is for members to work together to make a difference to the lives of families, children and young people.**

It is clear that by working together, not for profit organisations in Tameside can create a more effective, efficient and holistic package of services for the people they work with.

They can respond to need more swiftly and ensure that customers have choice in who they work with. They can actively engage families, children and young people in diverse services so that they thrive and go on to become local providers themselves, should they choose. This in turn will increase the resilience, sustainability and growth of the communities of Tameside.

#### **Mission**

The mission is, therefore, to deliver a formal consortium of not for profit providers that operate in Tameside to improve outcomes for families, children and young people. The consortium will engage in local, sub-regional, regional and national processes, commissioning and trading channels. By working together the consortium aims to win contracts for its members, including small local providers, sustain existing quality services and support developing services to meet new needs.

#### **Values**

Whilst recognising that members will have their own set of values, these values present a complementary statement that all organisations can collectively sign up to.

The values are underpinned by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Children Act 2004. The consortium will operate in an atmosphere of fierce competition for scarce resources but will seek to be collaborative, where appropriate, for the benefit of families, children and young people.

In order to provide maximum benefit to families, children and young people and the community, voluntary and faith sector as a whole, the consortium values:

1. The families, children and young people that they work with and seeks to be child-centred in its practise.
2. The unique contribution and added value of the local community, voluntary and faith sector to enable strong cohesive communities, strengthening social capital, and encouraging local growth.
3. Services which can evidence their existing quality and are willing to work towards better quality all the time.
4. A culture of mutual respect and dignity for all members.
5. Open, transparent and objective operations.
6. The accountability of its steering group and of organisations that commit themselves to delivery.
7. The voice of young people, parents and children in directing their lives and shaping future services.
8. Strong leadership and governance which seeks to steer the consortium towards a positive future.
9. Anti-discriminatory practises, which value diversity and promote social justice.
10. Strong partnerships with other agencies.

The practice of members should reflect these values at all times.

## 4. Better Futures Tameside – how will it work?

### Legal structure

The steering group, made up of not for profit providers of children and families services in Tameside, discussed and reviewed a number of options regarding the structure of BFT and concluded that the best structure for this joint venture is a **formal consortium, set up with a separate legal entity**. It is a Community Interest Company that will be collectively owned by its members. It will initially be established as part of the family (or group structure) of Community and Voluntary Action Tameside (formally known as T3SC) as this already has a track record of managing sub contracting arrangements and working with multiple providers (for example through its grant management activities).

The governing body (board) of Directors of Better Futures Tameside is made up of people from its member organisations and these Directors will be nominated by its membership. Each member organisation will have one vote.

Whilst BFT is part of the ACTION TOGETHER family, legally the ACTION TOGETHER board will need to approve the Directors. After the initial phase, once BFT has established a delivery track record, the intention is for BFT to become fully 'stand alone' in the future (if that is what the members' wishes are).

### Business development / supporting the consortium

The steering group have agreed that ACTION TOGETHER should provide the necessary support functions to BFT. The reasons behind this include the fact that ACTION TOGETHER has a track record of working with a multiple supply chain (for example through its grant management activities).

ACTION TOGETHER also has a number of recognised quality standards which means that it is in a good position to apply for funding on behalf of the consortium. These include:

- PQASSO – Level 2 (Externally Verified)
- NAVCA Quality Award
- Positive about Disability
- CHAS – Certificate In Health and Safety
- Mindful Employer
- Volunteering England Quality Award

Generally, to support the consortium, ACTION TOGETHER staff (overseen by the BFT board of directors) will seek to secure funding and business development opportunities and will ensure the smooth and efficient management of contracts.

### Applying for funding

The Consortium will have a clear and transparent process for members to bid to deliver specific pieces of work that BFT may choose to bid for. These processes will be clearly set out in its policy document 'Processes for Bidding and Allocating Funding to Consortium Members'.

In summary:

- When an appropriate funding opportunity arises, BFT will consider whether it should bid on behalf of its members.

It will not bid if:

- The work is not best delivered using a group of providers (for example, if it is a single piece of work, where the commissioner does not expect a collaborative response).
- The opportunity is work currently undertaken by an existing BFT member, and that member has indicated they intend to seek to bid themselves.
- There is no appetite from BFT members to deliver the work if a bid was successful.
- ACTION TOGETHER will invite views from members about all opportunities, to inform the BFT board to enable it to make a decision about whether to bid
- Where BFT does decide to bid for a tender / contract / opportunity on behalf of its members:
  - The writing of the bid / proposal / application will be lead by the BFT hub (ACTION TOGETHER staff team), bringing in specific skills and expertise from BFT members and externally as required.
  - If there are multiple BFT members interested in delivering the same elements of a bid / contract, the hub will arrange an internal, competitive bidding process for members. Depending on whether all delivery members need to be named in the bid, this may be before the bid is submitted, or once the funding has been secured.
  - Any competitive bidding process / internal competition amongst members will be overseen and assessed by a panel that has no conflict of interest (i.e. it would not include any BFT member which had bid or expressed an interest themselves).

## **Policies**

This document is an outline prospectus. BFT will have a suite of detailed documents, policies and procedures that will govern its operations. The steering group has already approved many of these, on behalf of the prospective BFT membership, and all will be approved before the first contracting opportunity is secured.

The key documents that have been discussed / approved so far by the steering group include:

- Firewall and conflict of interest policy
- Data protection policy
- Processes for Bidding and Allocating Funding to Consortium Members
- Compliments, complaints and suggestions policy

## 5. Membership and Associated Expectations

BFT welcomes all organisations who operate in Tameside and deliver a quality service to families, children and young people in Tameside.

**There will be a single class of membership, and each member will have one vote when it comes to any collective decisions which need to be made.**

Membership is currently free but there will be a number of expectations placed upon members to ensure that trusted relationships are built and that the operations of BFT are smooth, and not fettered by disputes.

Expectations include:

- Interest in, support for, and promotion of the development and furtherance of Better Futures Tameside, as a whole, and not merely the respective agendas or vested interests of certain member organisations.
- Inputting ideas/information into, and providing support for, joint tenders and applications.
- Adhering consistently to the values and underpinning principles of the consortium, including openness and transparency.
- Organisations are responsible for their own delivery, and associated policies.

Full details of membership and expectations are in the welcome pack and full application form.

## 6. Sustaining the consortium

Membership of the consortium is currently free but it will need to be funded. Tameside Council have supported ACTION TOGETHER with the funds to set up BFT, and as ACTION TOGETHER is taking the main risk with the consortium it is committed to:

- Seeking funding, where appropriate, to the furtherance of the BFT.
- Leading ongoing 'horizon scanning' and seeking bidding opportunities.
- Developing bids on behalf of the consortium.

However, the ongoing running costs of administrating and supporting the consortium, and contract management will need to be paid for via what is known as a 'contract top slice mechanism'. This means using a small percentage of contracts to cover costs, whilst ensuring that the vast majority of funding is invested in service delivery.

In practice, a collective approach to funding will mean that fewer resources are used in duplicating bureaucratic systems so that organisations can spend more time focussing on delivery.

BFT will produce a business plan, for approval by members, in due course, which will describe the different streams of funding which will be sought. The collective approach will mean that larger pots of money, such as Lottery or Whole Place funding, can be applied for.

## 7. Approach to Quality Assurance

The consortium will build on the high-quality systems and practices that already exist across the membership.

All members will sign a declaration stating that they are responsible for their own quality assurance. Being a member of BFT is not a kite mark, nor is BFT an inspection body.

The Support and Development team at ACTION TOGETHER will continue to offer individual members a whole range of services, helping organisations to identify their current strengths and weaknesses, and gain the advice and learning opportunities that they need.

Consortium members, and trusted partners, will also help to ensure that the quality of BFT is maintained through a peer support programme. When potential new members express an interest in joining BFT this will be published openly on the BFT web space.

- If there are any concerns about the quality of prospective members' services these concerns should be raised, though BFT, with the organisation in the first instance. The ACTION TOGETHER Support and Development team will assist organisations to respond to concerns and deal with misunderstandings. There is also a mechanism for voicing concerns at any time through 'Compliments, complaints and suggestions policy'.

## 8. How Organisations join the Consortium

The steering group recognises the diversity of the VCFS in Tameside so has tried to create an inclusive membership model and application process which reflects the different tiers of delivery / funding that groups are comfortable with.

So, larger organisations which have greater capacity, more robust procedures and policies, and a stronger track record will be able to deliver a higher level of activity through the consortium. Newer or smaller organisations will still benefit from being part of the consortium, but will not be able to deliver higher levels of activity until the relevant systems, processes and track record are in place. We hope that this will help members in their aims to grow and develop further, and ensure that the consortium takes a 'risk based approach'.

The delivery tiers and expectations for each of these are set out below.

Maximum level of delivery through consortium	Required evidence / criteria
Up to £5,000 (small grant ready organisations)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Independent management committee comprising at least 3 unrelated people.</li> <li>2. The signatures of two members of the management committee will be required for the membership form</li> <li>3. A bank account in the groups' name.</li> <li>4. Appropriate insurance, policies and procedures for safe practice( e.g. risk assessments for activities)</li> <li>5. A constitution or set of rules which clearly states the aims of your organisation and what will happen if the group ceases to operate (a dissolution clause).</li> <li>6. Evidence that the group has completed all monitoring required from any previous Tameside Council grants.</li> <li>7. Appropriate child protection policies and procedures.</li> </ol>
Up to £25,000 (grant ready organisations)	<p>In addition to the criteria above organisations will need evidence of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. Health and safety policy.</li> <li>9. Public liability insurance.</li> <li>10. Employer's liability insurance (if employing staff).</li> <li>11. Equal opportunities and inclusive access policies to ensure your services are youth and family friendly.</li> <li>12. Data protection policy (including handling Freedom of Information requests).</li> <li>13. Environmental management policy.</li> <li>14. Work force development and HR policies covering such areas as recruitment, supervision, appraisals, grievances and learning and development plans.</li> <li>15. Organisations will also need to evidence how they work in partnership to support people and how service users participate in the design and delivery of the project (in line with the values statement of the consortium).</li> <li>16. Two references to showing the organisation's capacity to successfully manage delivery at this level.</li> </ol>

Up to £60,000 (contract ready organisations)	<p>In addition to the requirements above you will need to evidence:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>17. An externally accredited quality mark such as MATRIX, Investors in People, Customer First ISO 9001, and PQASSO (or clear evidence of how you manage quality in your organisation).</li> <li>18. A business continuity plan or 'disaster plan' so that it is clear how your organisation manages unforeseen risks.</li> <li>19. A structured approach to continuous improvement in your organisation.</li> <li>20. That your organisation has never failed to deliver against a contract or been brought into disrepute through internal (HR) or external legal disputes.</li> <li>21. Three references to showing the organisation's capacity to successfully manage delivery at this level.</li> </ol>
Over £60,000 (European procurement ready)	In addition to the requirements above you will need to provide evidence of delivering at least 2 service level agreements over this limit in the last three years.

There are several stages to applying;

### **Stage 1**

Initially organisations need to complete the application form if they are interested in membership.

### **Stage 2**

A member of staff from Action Together will then contact you to confirm receipt of the application form and to advise you if there is any further information required.

### **Stage 3**

A summary of your application will be published on the BFT linkedin Group, for members to comment on (or raise any concerns or objections) until the next meeting of the board of directors.

### **Stage 4**

The board of Directors will consider any comments from other members when assessing your membership application and (if approved for membership) will consider which tier of delivery is most appropriate for your organisation.

You will be informed of the outcome of this assessment, and if approved for membership your organisation will receive a welcome pack, a set of policies and a directory of other members.

Should your application not be approved, you will be given clear feedback and will be supported to re- apply as soon as possible. There will be a clear appeals procedure should you be dissatisfied with the decisions made.