



# Bracknell Forest Innovation Fund



# Welcome to the Bracknell Forest Innovation Fund launch

## Cllr Megan Wright, executive member for adult services, health and housing:

“We have been really inspired by the work these local organisations do and are so pleased to be able to help them continue and build on the invaluable support they have been providing.

“As part of our health and wellbeing strategy, we are really committed to addressing health inequalities in the borough and hope that these projects can help those who may be feeling isolated as a result of the pandemic, or a long-term health condition, get back into the community and taking part in some fun activities.”

## Nicola Airey, director of commissioning and assurance, place convenor Bracknell Forest:

“The Innovation Fund allows us to get to the heart of some of those issues that can have a negative impact on a person’s wellbeing and support real improvements. We are thrilled to be working in close partnership with Bracknell Forest Council to bring local charities and organisations in Bracknell Forest the chance to benefit from this funding.

“This launch event is also a fantastic opportunity for the chosen organisations to network and learn from previous Innovation Fund funded projects, fostering a supportive environment for sharing knowledge and experiences.”



The impact of COVID-19 has been felt by everyone, but especially those who were considered CEV (clinically extremely vulnerable) during the pandemic. These residents, their families and their carers may still be negatively affected, whether that is in their daily life or their health and wellbeing.

The council and NHS Frimley have worked together to offer local charities, community groups, voluntary sector and not-for-profit organisations the opportunity to bring their ideas to life through the Bracknell Forest Innovation Fund.



## Befriending for over 55's, focussing on those age 75+

Age UK Berkshire provides health and wellbeing support services for older people across Berkshire to help everyone love later life.

We deliver a befriending service in the area but the current need outweighs our capacity. The Innovation Funding will allow us to recruit and train more volunteers to deliver this vital service to Bracknell Forest residents.

We offer home visiting and telephone befriending. This service is ongoing (not time limited) and is particularly valuable to those who find it difficult to leave home or need more intensive support due to long-term health conditions.

We try to connect people with local events and activities, where possible, encouraging independence.

Visits can happen seven days a week during the day or evening, to ensure that they suit the client and we match clients and volunteers closely to ensure that there is rapport and areas of common interest.

If we have a waiting list for home visits, we can usually support with telephone befriending in the first instance or just this service if clients prefer.

We can accept referrals from organisations or residents can contact us directly. Please get in touch in a way that suits you.

Call: **0118 959 4242**, email: [info@ageukberkshire.org.uk](mailto:info@ageukberkshire.org.uk), or visit our website: [www.ageukberkshire.org.uk](http://www.ageukberkshire.org.uk).



## Growing our services

At Age Concern Bracknell Forest (ACBF), we are committed to bringing older people together and reducing social isolation in the community. We provide a welcoming and safe environment for older people to make friends, build networks and enjoy various activities.

We currently run community groups in Priestwood and Bullbrook and a weekend lunch club that provides nutritious meals at our beloved day centre in Forest Park. We have recently started facilitating outings and trips for people to re-connect with their community.

ACBF has goals of expanding and improving our community provision in Bracknell Forest. The Innovation Funding will help us to take our groups to the next level by improving our resources, offering more engaging activities, and expanding to new locations – enabling us to grow both our provision of groups and increase the frequency of our lunch clubs / trips so that more Bracknell Forest residents can benefit.

We work closely with local community leaders and organisations to ensure that our provision is accessible and welcoming to all, so come and chat to us if you or someone you know would like to join in.

Please reach out to our events and community team:

[angela.harding@ageconcernbracknell.org.uk](mailto:angela.harding@ageconcernbracknell.org.uk) or

[emily.smith@ageconcernbracknell.org.uk](mailto:emily.smith@ageconcernbracknell.org.uk)

01344 422048 | [www.ageconcernbracknell.org.uk](http://www.ageconcernbracknell.org.uk)

   @AgeConcernBracknell



## Subsidised travel

The Ark works with people with disabilities and/or long term health conditions, with their carers and with young people who are not in education, employment or training.

Post-pandemic we started a borough wide volunteer-led transport scheme because many of the good neighbours' schemes did not survive. Through our work, and that of our partners, we know transport can be a huge barrier to accessing the community and services/activities on offer.

Bracknell Forest Council originally provided a small grant which we put towards the costs of staff and the administration of the scheme. It also helped cover the cost of journeys to medical appointments and the foodbank where the person has no funds.

However, from our membership of the Bracknell Forest Older People's Consortium and from the enquiries we receive in the office, we know there is a real need for transport to day centres and older people's activities on offer in the area. This transport cost can be unaffordable if individuals are not living close to the activity/service on offer.

This Innovation Funding means that all older people of Bracknell Forest will have the opportunity to access transport to these specified activities which are outside of their immediate area for the cost of the administration fee (currently £3 per journey), with the full cost of the journey (the volunteer mileage) paid from this funding. This will ensure that regardless of their location and financial circumstances older people are supported to increase their social connectivity and relationships, improving their health and wellbeing.

To find out more contact the office on **01344 266911** (between 10am-4pm).





## Befriending for under 75's

The Ark works with people with disabilities and/or long term health conditions, with their carers and with young people who are not in education, employment or training.

We applied to the Innovation Fund in recognition of the need for an all age (adult) befriending service in Bracknell Forest that goes beyond matching a volunteer befriender with an individual for short-medium term support.

We would like to help individuals develop a local circle of support, through befriending (telephone and face-to-face) with a small team of volunteers that can ensure there is always someone available to provide help, support and companionship regardless of sickness/holidays.

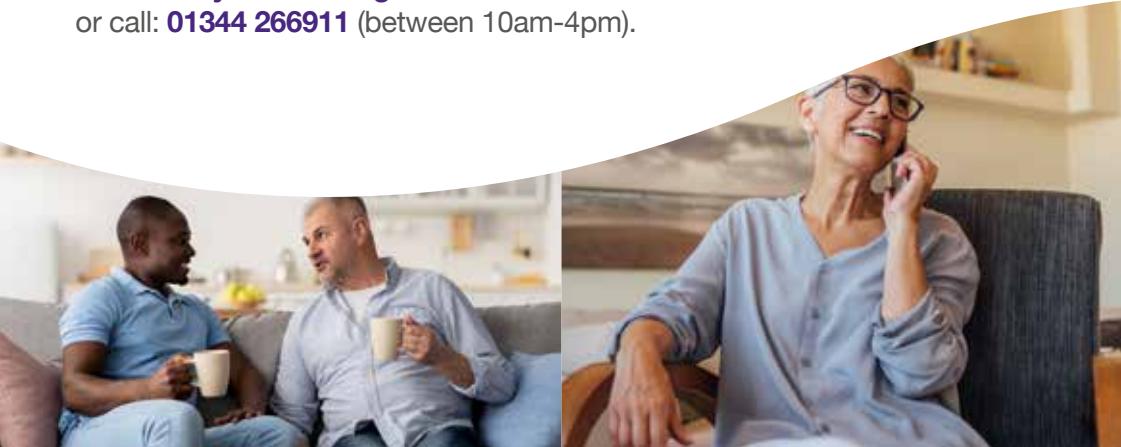
We will work alongside Age UK Berkshire in their successful project of befriending provision for over 75's and together be able to provide this service for all.

Currently social prescribers and other professionals are invited to refer into the service and, as capacity is increased (through funding and volunteer recruitment) we plan to accept self-referrals.

If you would like to make a referral, please email:

**[community@theark.org.uk](mailto:community@theark.org.uk)**

or call: **01344 266911** (between 10am-4pm).





## Walking football

The Berks and Bucks County FA (BBFA) oversee all football within the counties. We aim to ensure we are offering an inclusive game to all from across Buckinghamshire and Berkshire including in Bracknell Forest.

We applied to the Innovation Fund to support us in developing a Neuro Walking Football session, for people within Bracknell, who have Neurological illnesses such as Parkinson's.

We know that taking part in regular physical activity whilst living with Neuro diseases like Parkinson's, slows the disease process, decreases the pain associated, prolongs the independent mobility, balance and strength, improves sleep, mood and memory.

Our free, weekly, fun sessions will be delivered alongside Parkinson's UK and Bracknell Parkinson's and we hope to launch in November 2023

We can learn from colleagues who have successfully delivered these programmes in areas such as Herefordshire with great feedback from participants.

We recognise that we must make this work for the people of Bracknell Forest and are open to conversations with local organisations who may want to help and support us. If you know someone who would be interested to take part, please contact: [callum.salhotra@berks-bucksfa.com](mailto:callum.salhotra@berks-bucksfa.com).

An advertisement for the Berks &amp; Bucks FA Neuro Walking Football Session. It features a large image of people playing football on a pitch, with a smaller inset image of a player in a green vest. The text includes the title 'BERKS &amp; BUCKS FA Neuro Walking Football Session', a description of the session, and details about the location, time, and contact information. Logos for Trinity Health and Care, Involve, and Reading FC Community Trust are at the bottom right.

## Animal experiences

Berkshire Birds of Prey provides benefits to disadvantaged, isolated or older people within the communities of Bracknell Forest and the surrounding areas, by visiting them with our birds of prey.

As a new and growing Community Interest Company, we are looking to build our ability to provide subsidised visits to day care centres, care homes, carers hubs and other settings where those who are older, living with frailty, living with dementia and living with learning disabilities as well as their unpaid carers.

In our visits to date, we have seen verbal skills and concentration in those with dementia improve, a sense of social connectivity over a shared experience grow, increased feelings of wellbeing and confidence and have sparked new interests in older people and new topics of conversation which are bringing people together.

We are looking to work with care homes, day centre, carers hubs and other community locations to provide this wonderful experience to Bracknell Forest residents.

If you would like to find out more, please email:

**[info@berkshirebirdsofprey.co.uk](mailto:info@berkshirebirdsofprey.co.uk)**, call: **07954 380051**

or visit: **[www.berkshirebirdsofprey.co.uk](http://www.berkshirebirdsofprey.co.uk)**.



## Personal Independence Payments

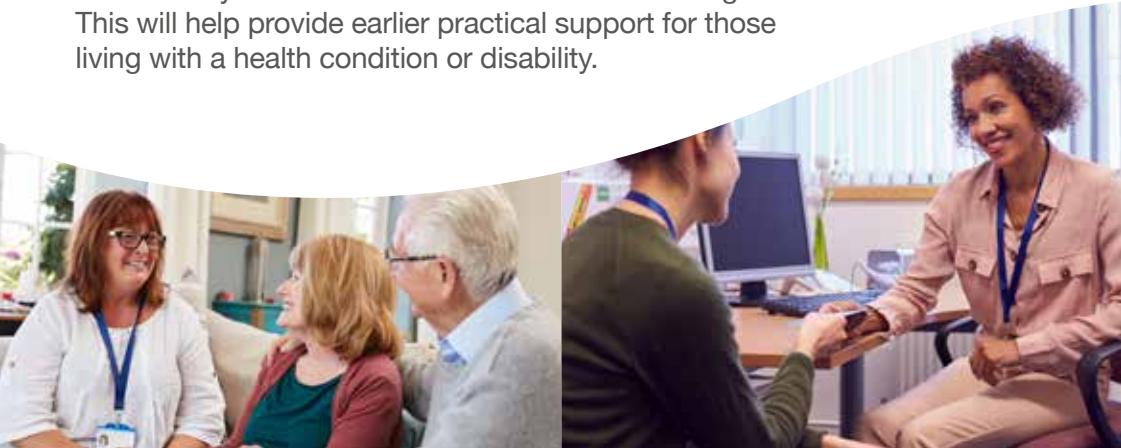
Whoever you are, whatever the issue, we're here to help solve life's problems. We offer free, impartial, confidential and independent advice and information to give people the knowledge and the confidence they need to find their way forward - whoever they are, and whatever their problem.

We applied to the Innovation Fund to help support us with our Personal Independence Payment (PIP) project, that seeks to assist more residents in Bracknell Forest access the PIP payments they are entitled to.

PIP is a welfare benefit that is intended to help working age adults with the extra costs of living with a health condition or a disability. It is non means-tested, non-contributory and tax-free; it is not linked to a person's ability to work and it is available equally to people in or out of work. Despite this, the criteria is complex and the application process can be very difficult for claimants to navigate.

We currently offer a form filling service for PIP and the Innovation Funding will allow us to increase our provision. We are also offering a home visiting service to improve accessibility to our services for vulnerable clients who are housebound.

We invite practice staff, GPs and other health professionals to refer directly to us or via the local Social Prescribing Team. This will help provide earlier practical support for those living with a health condition or disability.





## Animal Assisted Interventions

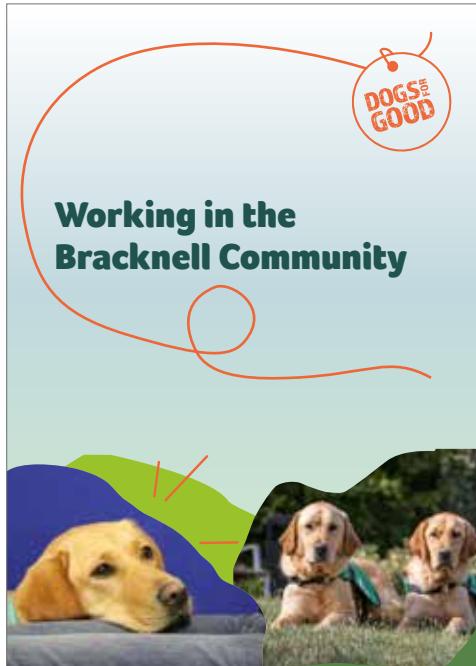
We believe dogs, and the bond we share with them, can help us live happier, healthier lives.

We are a charity with 35 years' experience supporting the most vulnerable in our communities and those closest to them. In 2022 we became the first organisation in the UK, and the second in Europe, to gain accreditation from Animal Assisted Intervention International (AAII) in recognition of our innovative practice and quality standards.

Dogs act as a motivator and aid to help people in various ways such as enabling them to develop life skills, overcome personal challenges and access their local community confidently and safely.

We applied to the Innovation Fund to allow us to increase the provision of our existing Animal Assisted Activities (AAA) and Animal Assisted Intervention (AAI) work, which sees us working with a variety of service providers and organisations (schools, care homes, charities & local authority) across the Bracknell community.

We are a small team and are building up the number of people we can support through the project, and we would be happy to receive any enquiries and discuss your needs. We are particularly keen to receive interest from those who were considered clinically vulnerable during the pandemic. Contact us at [bracknell@dogsforgood.org](mailto:bracknell@dogsforgood.org).



## Generations in motion

IMM is a national not-for-profit organisation which brings people of all ages together. Through the magical power of music we reduce loneliness, boost wellbeing and create stronger communities.

The Innovation Funding will allow us to launch our Generations in Motion project. An innovative intergenerational music and movement health prevention program developed by sport rehab specialists and IMM.

We know music, sport and intergenerational connection can support people in a holistic and sustainable way, improving gross and fine motor skills, breathing and lung capacity, physical mobility and activity and mental capability - not to mention the benefits of social connectivity, self-esteem, confidence and communication skills.

We are looking forward to delivering the programme in four areas; Sandhurst, Crowthorne, Bracknell and Binfield and are pleased to say that we have sourced community venues and that referrals are already coming in.

Whilst delivering this programme, we will be ensuring volunteers and activators are trained, resulting in a cohort of “co-creators of health” practitioners whom will then be able to sustain the project in the area moving forward.

If you would like more information about the programme, please email: [charlotte@imm-music.com](mailto:charlotte@imm-music.com).





## A new minibus

Created in 1989 as a charitable organisation, we provide support for older people in our Sandhurst community and the surrounding area. Our purpose is to ensure the valued older members of our community can enjoy companionship, social activities, hot meals and various care facilities including specialist bathing facilities. We aim to provide for both their social and their health and wellbeing needs.

A key element of our service is the minibus we run which allows us to collect and return members from their homes.

Prior to the pandemic the Trustees were aware of the need to start looking at replacing our minibus which was starting to need costly repairs, with a substantial percentage of the funding needed generated from our charity shop and day centre margins. However, as with many organisations the pandemic hit us hard and with two to three years of non-operation and additional restrictions this income evaporated.

The Innovation Funding, alongside other grants we have been successful in receiving, will allow us to purchase a newer vehicle and therefore enable us to continue to provide this important local service for older people in and around Sandhurst.

Anyone interested in helping or attending the day centre located at: Yorktown Road, Sandhurst, GU47 9BJ, please call: **01252 877601**, email: **manager@sandhurstdaycentre.org.uk** or visit: **www.sandhurstdaycentre.co.uk**.





We would love to hear from you if you, or people you support, get involved in these projects.

Please send your experiences and photos to us at  
[frimleyicb.innovationfund@nhs.net](mailto:frimleyicb.innovationfund@nhs.net).