INVITATION TO TENDER:
BRIGHTER FUTURES PROGRAMME EVALUATION

1. PURPOSE

Cumbria Community wishes to engage a suitably qualified organisation/consultant to evaluate the Brighter Futures programme over a three-year delivery period.

2. BACKGROUND

The Brighter Futures programme supports care experienced young adults in West Cumbria and Barrow to achieve their goals and build positive, independent lives. Making the transition to adult life is a difficult time for most young people, but especially difficult for young people leaving care who may not have enjoyed the stability of a settled family life or the support of their own family. Brighter Futures aims to support these young people in their transition to adult life, providing the support and resources they need to build stable, fulfilling lives and achieve their full potential

The three-year programme forms part of the national Care Leavers Programme managed by UK Community Foundations, a £3.6m match fund scheme funded by the Local Authorities' Mutual Investment Trust (LAMIT), a shareholder of the UK's biggest charities asset manager, CCLA. Match funding has been provided by a number of charitable trusts, companies and private donors, including BAE Systems and John Laing Charitable Trust.

2.1 Delivered in partnership

Brighter Futures is managed by Cumbria Community Foundation and delivered in partnership with two well-established local charitable organisations, Cumbria Youth Alliance and Inspira, with the support of Cumberland Council and Westmorland and Furness Council. The programme has two phases:

1. Firm Foundation: Delivered by Cumbria Youth Alliance, this phase focusses on building emotional resilience, social skills, and raising aspirations through personal mentoring and skills-based activities.

2. Flourish: Delivered by Inspira, the second phase focusses on the transition to becoming work-ready by providing tailored work placements, training and employment opportunities, supported by mentors from the business community. In addition, Flourish also engages with training providers and employers to help them better understand how to engage with care-experienced young people in the workplace and adapt working practices to better cater for their individual needs.

2.2 Governance

Programme delivery is overseen by a steering group comprising members from Cumbria Community Foundation, Cumberland Council, Westmorland and Furness Council, Department of Work and Pensions, Cumbria Chamber of Commerce, and representatives from local businesses. The group meet on a quarterly basis to scrutinise and review progress and provide advice regarding delivery.

2.3 Year One delivery

Delivery of the Brighter Futures programme began in June 2024 with a strategic pilot phase. In its first year, the programme is focusing on engaging young people who are closer to being work-ready. This approach will ensure a strong start and enable the refinement of delivery plans for future years. This initial phase also provides an opportunity to enhance the knowledge and expertise of programme leaders and local employers.

2.4 Other support

Cumbria Youth Alliance also manage a small expenses fund which is used to remove barriers to full engagement with the programme, e.g. cost of work clothes, travel expenses. Both Cumbria Youth Alliance and Inspira support young people to access additional external funding opportunities as required, e.g. educational bursaries and grants.

It is intended that the programme will include recognition of successful completion. 'Graduates' will be asked to remain involved in the programme and support others as ambassadors/advocates.

3. BRIGHTER FUTURES PROGRAMME INTENDED OUTCOMES

3.1 For care experienced young people:

- Improved ability to cope with independent living.
- Improved confidence and self-efficacy.
- Increased employability skills and work readiness.
- Improved understanding of and active engagement in career pathways informed by supported work experience.
- Improved future potential e.g. positive aspirations and projected income.

3.2 For delivery organisations:

- Increased knowledge, skills, and expertise to help care experienced young people thrive.
- Developed much improved collaborative working practices with both local authorities and other providers to ensure no care experienced young person is left behind.
- Opportunity to influence national policy and shape best practice models.

3.3 For employers and training providers:

- Greater knowledge and understanding of the needs of care experienced young people and how they can be best supported, helped and encouraged both in the workplace and in training situations.
- Increased confidence and openness to offering care experienced young people work experience placements and employment opportunities.
- Increased commitment to supporting care experienced young people to overcome barriers, develop skills and thrive.

4. BRIGHTER FUTURES EVALUATION

There is a requirement to independently evaluate the Brighter Futures programme in order to:

- Understand what has worked well, what outcomes have been achieved and how care experienced young people have benefitted
- Identify challenges and areas for improvement
- Make recommendations for future development, to ensure effective delivery and maximum impact
- Provide a case for future investment and support

We expect that the resultant findings will be shared with a wide range of stakeholders and influence approaches to support care experienced young people into employment nationally.

4.1 Evaluation scope

The evaluation should provide distinct assessments of the effectiveness of each phase of the Brighter Futures Programme:

- 'Firm Foundation': Assess the impact on emotional resilience, social skills, aspirations, and independent living skills.

- 'Flourish': Assess the effectiveness of work placements, employer engagement, and improvements in career readiness.

We would like the evaluation to consider the following questions:

- How effective has the Brighter Futures programme been in:
    - delivering the programme outcomes?
    - engaging with care experienced young people?
    - improving independent living, self-confidence and personal ambitions of care experienced young people?
    - increasing work-readiness, employability skills, career pathways and projected income for care-experienced young people?
    - engaging with employers, including the creation of work-experience placements, paid employment opportunities, and increasing knowledge/awareness/adjustments of businesses in order to support care experienced young people into employment?

- To what extent have collaborative working practices between the public, private and third sector organisations improved, and how are these relationships ensuring that tailored support is offered to care-experienced young people by the right organisations, in the right manner and at the right time?

- Has the Brighter Futures programme demonstrated good examples of best practice and/or innovation? If so, please explain how and why this is the case.

Each year of the evaluation should inform future years delivery.

The evaluation will be used to inform and influence the future direction of the Brighter Futures programme in Cumbria, as well as the national Care Leavers Programme managed by UK Community Foundations. Its contents will also be shared with policy makers, local authorities, government, potential philanthropists and/or donors, funders, businesses and other third sector organisations.

4.2 Methodology

The evaluation should include both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. Quarterly reports from our delivery partners (Cumbria Youth Alliance and Inspira) will be made available, whilst anonymised data relating to the young people being supported will also be shared.

The evaluation should actively engage care experienced young people who have participated in the programme, ensuring their lived experiences inform the findings.

Additionally, consultations should be conducted with Cumbria Community Foundation staff, steering group members, delivery staff from Cumbria Youth Alliance and Inspira, employers and other key stakeholders.

Relevant research should also be undertaken to inform the wider context of the evaluation and additional information should be sought as required to address the evaluation objectives and questions outlined above.

The evaluation should also consider the objectives of the national Care Leavers Programme being managed by UK Community Foundations (on behalf of CCLA).

4.3 Timescales

The Brighter Futures programme completes its first year of delivery in May 2025. We would like the evaluation of year one to be undertaken over the period May-July 2025. Evaluators will be expected to provide interim findings and recommendations through a progress report at the midpoint of Year Two to support real-time programme improvements.

- Year One Evaluation: May - July 2025 (Report due by 31st August 2025).
- Midpoint Progress Report: May - July 2026 (Report due by 31st August 2026).
- Final Evaluation May - July 2027 (Final report due by 31st August 2027).

4.4 Budget

The total budget available for this work is £20,000 inclusive of VAT.

5 TENDER REQUIREMENTS

5.1 Tender Content

Tenders should detail the proposed approach to the project and the planned staging of the various elements of the work. They should also provide the following information:

- A statement demonstrating that the tenderer understands the project tasks and proposed outputs.

- Any key assumptions made in formulating the tenderer's approach or in estimating the resources for the assignment.
- A statement of how the tenderer proposes to tackle the assignment, clearly stating:
    - various stages of the project and the associated tasks at each stage;
    - proposed methodology and tools for data collection and research.
    - proposed sources of data and information;
    - proposed methodology for stakeholder engagement;
    - proposed timeline for each stage (noting that some activities may be undertaken concurrently)
    - personnel responsible for each task;
    - the proposed time input of each individual.

- Details of relevant references where similar work has been carried out must be given.

5.2 Financial Information

All costs must be quoted in POUNDS (£).

Tenders must cost each element of the work outlined in their proposal and the sum should include staff costs, travel and subsistence, printing and all other overheads/costs associated with the delivery of the research. VAT, where applicable, should be shown separately – but must appear on the proposal. A breakdown of the total cost should be provided i.e. the number of days, daily rates being charged in respect of each individual to be involved in the project etc.

5.3 Submission Details

An electronic copy of the proposal should be submitted by email to:

Annalee Holliday
Head of Grants Practice & Programmes,
Email: annalee@cumbriafoundation.org

Final date for submission of proposals is **10am, Monday 7th April 2025**.

Shortlisted tenderers may be invited to an online interview to discuss their proposal.

6. CRITERIA FOR AWARD OF CONTRACT

The contract will be awarded to the qualifying tender on the basis of the following award criteria:

Area	Weighting
Understanding and quality of the proposal and level of conformance with the requirements specified	20%
Level, depth, and nature of experience of the organisation/individual/consortium in the area of work	30%
Demonstrable and proven expertise in providing the type of work specified	30%
Proposed approach to this work and capacity to deliver within the specified timescales	10%
Pricing	10%

Tenders will be scored according to the below schedule; scoring and comments are confidential and will not be shared with any applicants.

Score	Comment
4 – Excellent	Proposal meets, and in some places exceeds, the required standard
3 – Good	Proposal meets required standard
2 – Acceptable	Proposal meets the required standard in most respects, but is lacking or inconsistent in others
1 – Poor	Proposal falls short of expected standard
0 - Unacceptable	Significantly fails to meet required standard or does not provide the relevant answer

7. GENERAL CONDITIONS

The successful tenderer will be responsible for ensuring:

- Compliance with all applicable codes of ethics and all legislation.
- Having in place all appropriate insurances.
- Monthly progress reports must be submitted throughout the duration of the contract.

CCF reserves the right to reject in whole or in part any or all tenders received, and in particular to source the requirement from more than one party. CCF will not be liable in respect of any costs incurred in the preparation of tenders. In addition, CCF will not be liable in respect of any costs incurred in preparing or attending any subsequent presentation.

8. ABOUT CUMBRIA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

We are an independent award-winning grant making charity dedicated to meeting the needs in our communities by providing financial support to local charities and voluntary organisations as well as supporting individuals in Cumbria. We bring people together. People who want to give their time, money and expertise so those in need can meet the challenges they face and achieve their potential. Since 1999, with the help of our generous supporters across the county and beyond, we have raised and given out almost £70 million to help over 4,000 groups and 8,000 individuals.