



Brain Health & Housing

A Global Brain Health Institute & Respond Partnership

Invitation to submit a tender: To develop an evaluation framework for the 'Brain Health Village' project.

Closing Date for submissions is 2pm, 9th March 2023.

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1. Invitation to tender

Respond wishes to contract a consultant, researcher or organisation to develop an evaluation framework for the Brain Health Village Project. This project is being developed under, the Global Brain Health Institute (GBHI) and Respond partnership, which is examining the application of brain health to housing design and sustainable communities.

This is an open invitation to tender, seeking applications from suitably qualified individuals, teams and partnerships who can bring their skills and experience of developing evaluation frameworks in the field of social, community based or action research. This is an innovative, pathfinder project, bringing together the disciplines of brain health and housing. Applicants are not required therefore, to have previous experience or knowledge of these specific subject areas. You will bring the rigour and analysis of social research and evaluation to the project to assist in the development of this evaluation framework to help capture the learning from this project.

2. About the Global Brain Health Institute and Respond partnership

The Global Brain Health Institute's (GBHI) mission is to improve the brain health of vulnerable populations across the world. Through its fellowship training program, GBHI brings together a powerful mix of disciplines, professions, backgrounds, skills, perspectives, and approaches to develop new science-based solutions to improve brain health and prevent dementia.

As a not-for-profit housing resource and service provider, Respond, an Approved Housing Body, plays a central role in providing homes and supporting communities around Ireland. Respond also provide a range of services, including family homeless services, day care services for older people, early childhood care and education, family support, and refugee resettlement services.

The partnership between GBHI and Respond aims to examine our understanding of brain health and how it can be applied to housing design and to the provision and development of sustainable communities. This approach inherently touches on social justice and equity, reflecting both Respond and GBHI's core mission and identity. Housing and the built environment can impact on brain health and cognitive development and 'having a home' can contribute significantly to an individual's well-being, quality of life and their capacity to recover from illness and adversity.

3. The Brain Health Village Project – contextual information

Led by GBHI and Respond, this initiative is in its early stages and seeks to develop, implement, and evaluate a model framework for establishing a brain health friendly community. It will be co-developed with community stakeholders in Baltinglass.

This initiative will define and create best practice in the emerging area of brain health and apply it to a housing and community setting, leveraging and contributing to GBHI's global network. Additionally, it will support Respond's wider work through phased implementation of learnings from this project, into ongoing and future community and housing developments.

It is envisaged that this project will be a 'pathfinder' to establish 'proof of concept' for the model framework developed, which will then be replicable in other settings and jurisdictions. Therefore, whilst the project will be developed in Wicklow, Ireland, a core component of the model's development will include a focus on how it can also be developed and replicated in other settings nationally and internationally.

What is a brain health friendly community?

Brain health is an emerging concept¹, and while there is broad agreement around definitions, there is

¹ Chen Y, Demnitz N, Yamamoto S, Yaffe K, Lawlor B, Leroi I. Defining brain health: A concept analysis. *Int J Geriatr Psychiatry*. 2021 Apr 30;37(1). doi: 10.1002/gps.5564. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 34131954.

less consensus on how to translate this concept into practice and specifically a housing and community setting. From a policy and implementation point of view, it is possible to view brain health sitting at the intersection of many factors (including biomedical and psychological, but also socially determined environmental and economic factors), all of which impact the brain health of the individual across the life course.

The application of brain health as a health promotion value, to the area of housing and community development is relatively unexplored, although arguably some of the concepts falling under the 'brain health umbrella' such as, age friendly/dementia accessible design are increasingly well codified. In short, we know in general terms what we wish to achieve, but there is no clear definition of what a 'brain health friendly community' could operate like in practice.

Potential site

A new estate which has recently come into Respond's ownership and management, has been selected for this project. The estate consists of 56 homes which incorporates a converted convent building at the heart of the development, surrounded by a range of modern houses and apartments and a Primary Health Care Centre. There is a mix of 1, 2 and 3 bed homes. There is also a block of apartments on the edge of the estate, delivering 'Housing First'² and other housing for people who have been homeless. This block is owned and managed by a specialist AHB.

Due to the mix of unit types and sizes, (22 x 1 bed, 24 x 2 bed, 10 x 3 bed) we anticipate a broad mix of individuals and families of all ages. The scheme is also being used to house Iraqi and Syrian families as part of the Refugee Resettlement Programme. Respond has also been appointed to deliver support under the Refugee Resettlement Programme.

The scheme has a large amount of communal green space as well as an enclosed multi use games area. It is located within a 5 minute walk of the town centre where there is a full range of shops and services.

The local Tenant Relations Officer (TRO) has developed close relations with the local community. He is developing ideas with local organisations about future collaborations in delivering local services to the community, which will also be a valuable and key aspect of developing this brain health village model.

Proposed systems framework

The proposed conceptual framing for this work sees a 'brain health friendly community' being built upon 4 pillars:

- **Built component:** based on universal design principles it should be adapted, accessible, liveable, brain health supporting, green/environmentally sustainable and integrated.
- **Training and awareness:** at community, service (Respond) and policy level i.e. Local Government). Schools program, brain health community champions, train the trainer. This links well with Respond's work on tenancy management and developing 'the Respond Way', looking at specialisms and applying these to meet local needs. Building strong links with the local community also plays a key role here.
- **Community connection:** arts and creativity informed and embedded, community hubs.
- **Integration with primary care:** testing - Kobe model social prescribing³.

² Housing First model aims to provide a person sleeping rough or someone who has been long-term homeless with their own secure accommodation as the first step in addressing their homelessness. Intensive and specialised support services are then provided in housing to help sustain the tenancy. See more here: <https://www.housingagency.ie/housing-information/housing-first>

³ <https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/healthwellbeing/our-priority-programmes/mental-health-and-wellbeing/hse-social-prescribing-framework.pdf>

These pillars are integrated, and inherently self-supporting. Additionally, this approach integrates with Respond's underpinning principle of becoming a trauma informed organisation, given the psychosocial and mental health components of our understanding of brain health.

Project proposal

The initial phase of the project would focus on:

- Developing the overall framework,
- Evaluating the as-is 'brain health' of the community,
- Developing brain health awareness within the community and;
- Prioritising actions and initiatives for ongoing work.

This is a crucial step and one in which many from the community may wish to participate. Either way, raising the awareness of Brain Health with tenants will likely influence positive engagement going forward.

We would see three core work packages in this phase: '**define**', '**train**', and '**evaluate**'. As such, it would be largely a scoping exercise but would also generate data, establish baselines, and build local awareness, knowledge and engagement. Each work package would have a team to lead its main activities.

4. Developing an evaluation framework

As noted above, a key component of this project is the development of a comprehensive evaluation framework. A key objective for the project is to take a robust approach to developing and implementing the evaluation framework and process, which will support the longer-term outcomes of developing, evidencing and sharing new best practice in the field.

The approach to the evaluations could include but are not limited to:

- Evaluation of overall brain health of the community at baseline and at intervals as the project progresses. This should ensure that we capture evidence across the age spectrum, from very young people through to older generations ensuring we demonstrate the links with brain health and trauma experienced at various life stages.
- Overall process evaluation of the project as a whole, to capture the experience and learnings of the project.
- Discrete evaluation of an outcome/impact of certain agreed initiatives within this project (e.g. training).

A key requirement of this tender/evaluation aspect of the project, will be to utilise a practical and measurable methodology that incorporates:

- A proposal and approach based on evidence of 'what works' nationally and internationally for similar projects.
- Community and individual assessments and outcomes.
- Views and experiences of service users.
- Identifying and utilising data already collated, that will be useful to this project.
- Identifying opportunities to capture data on brain health, using existing data collection sources e.g. adding new questions into our National Tenant Survey.
- Pinpointing additional data required for evaluating this project specifically and developing these as 'in built' metrics, as far as possible, to try and counter survey fatigue.
- A clear rationale to determine the baseline data.
- An initial process for identifying and differentiating 'attribution' versus 'contribution' outcomes.
- An approach to capturing data on unintended/unexpected outcomes from the project.

The evaluation approach will also need to:

- Incorporate the needs and preferences of service users, tenants and their families and the local communities.
- Identify the internal/organisational interfaces and how these can be strengthened to support the evaluation and delivery of this project.
- Identify the interfaces with statutory and other services and any gaps that need to be addressed, to support the project development and evaluation, such as for example research ethics requirements.

5. Management of the research process

A Project Management Group and Steering Group will be involved in discussing and approving aspects of the evaluation design and instruments, as well as advising and supporting the evaluation team to undertake tasks that require involvement from Respond and GBHI staff, tenants and service users. They will also advise on all aspects of the evaluation and in developing recommendations and proposals for implementation as appropriate. Day-to-day management of the contract will be led by Respond's Policy Manager who will also act as the key contact person.

6. Reporting and outputs

The appointee will be required to submit regular progress reports and to attend review meetings with the Project Management Group and the Steering Group.

In addition, the final outputs will include:

- Implementation of the evaluation framework.
- A detailed report of the evaluation process and rationale developed for implementing the final process and framework.
- A detailed report on the findings of the evaluation.
- A guidance document outlining the framework methodology and steps for implementation for future projects.
- A summary of the strengths, weaknesses and caveats of the approach.
- Ideas on future work and development of the framework.
- An analysis on how the evaluation framework meets the highest ethical considerations, specifically where it may be necessary to apply for separate research ethics approval

7. Format of tenders

Applicants should submit a tender document which addresses the points listed below in the order given. The tender document should be no more than 3,000 words (excluding CVs and references, which should be added as appendices). Please find the information headings to be addressed in the tender document below.

General information

- Name, address, telephone number and e-mail address of the applicant, identifying who will be the principal / day to contact as appropriate.
- Name, address, telephone number and e-mail address of any third parties, partners or collaborators involved in the tender, along with a description of their role or the element of the contract that they will fulfil.
- Confirmation of acceptance by the applicant and any third parties of the conditions of the tendering process as set out.
- A copy of the applicant's Tax Clearance Certificate, or, in the case of a non-resident applicant, a statement from the Revenue Commissioners confirming suitability on tax grounds.

Previous relevant experience and expertise

- Outline of the qualifications and relevant professional experience of each member of the

evaluation team. Please add a summary CV of each member of the team, as an appendix to the tender document. Each CV must not exceed two A4 pages.

- In particular, please describe how the team's expertise and competencies relate to the area of work described in the tender, substantiated with evidence such as published work if possible.
- Provide evidence to demonstrate the team's knowledge of current relevant national and international policy and practice and/or methods of acquiring these.
- Outline your understanding of data protection legislation including responding to data access requests, sharing of information etc.

Methodology

Outline how the project will be undertaken. This should start with an overview of your proposed approach covering the following areas:

- The proposed elements/areas of investigation/examination;
- Methods to be used to investigate each element;
- Approach to identifying and consulting key stakeholders, staff and experts
- Nature and types of data to be gathered;
- Specific approaches and tools to be used to gather data and ensure it is robust;
- Methods used for analysis of data;
- Your approach to ensuring high ethical standards are applied before, during and after the project/research duration.

Timetable

State the overall project timescale, outlining the key milestones and actions to be undertaken and the calendar / timeframe for each.

Schedule of costs

- Quote costs in euro (€).
- The indicative budget is €70,000 inclusive of VAT
- The budget must show the total costs of the research project, including VAT, any expenditure to third parties, collaborators or subcontractors.
- Use the following as main headings for the breakdown of costs, subdivided as required.
 - Salaries (include details for each person involved and note their role or position in relation to the project).
 - Data collection and processing costs, including IT.
 - Administration (explain the basis of apportionment of costs).
 - Overheads (give details of cost headings for overheads, and explain the basis of apportionment of costs).
 - Other costs appropriate to a project of this nature (which must be specified and defined).

8. Requests for further information or clarification

Requests for further information or clarification of any aspect of this process or expectations for this evaluation can be made by email to: reyhana.cushnan@respond.ie. To ensure equitable treatment of prospective tenderers, where such additional information or clarification is provided, Respond will seek to make relevant information available to all. Therefore, please provide a contact email address with your tender to facilitate this information-sharing.

9. Terms and conditions

Ownership

Respond are the contracting partner. Respond and GBHI are joint commissioning partners, and will remain the sole owners of all end-products including, but not limited to, research data, reports, manuals or other documentation, programmes, information, etc., irrespective of whether or not the

project is completed. The contractor's work shall be acknowledged by Respond in materials produced and disseminated on the basis of work completed under this contract.

Proposals for scholarly/academic publishing under the name(s) of the researcher(s) arising from this research can be discussed with Respond and GBHI, as owners of the data and other products of the research, and are to subject to prior approval in writing from Respond.

Conflict of interest

Any registered interest involving the contractor and Respond, their staff or relatives must be fully disclosed in the response to this Invitation to Tender, or should be communicated to Respond immediately upon such information becoming known to the contractor. In any case, such information must be made available prior to the award of the contract. The terms "Registered Interest" and "Relative" shall be interpreted as per Section 2 of the *Ethics in Public Office Act 1995*. Failure to disclose a conflict of interest may disqualify a tenderer or invalidate an award of contract, depending on when the conflict of interest comes to light.

Garda clearance

All personnel who may be required to work directly with children and families throughout this project will be subject to Garda clearance. If any such personnel has been living or working outside Ireland in the past three years, Respond may also require equivalent clearance.

Freedom of information

Information supplied in respect of this tender may be disclosed by Respond under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act, unless it is exempt from Disclosure under that Act (e.g. personal information or commercially sensitive information where the public interest in non-disclosure outweighs the public interest in disclosure). Tenderers are invited to indicate if they consider any information supplied to be sensitive. Under Section 29 of the Act, any tenderer must be consulted by Respond before any decision to disclose such information.

Changes to invitation to tender

Respond reserves the right to update or alter the information contained in this document at any time, but not later than seven days before the closing date for the receipt of tenders. Participating tenderers will be informed as the need arises.

There is no obligation on Respond to accept the lowest cost or any tender, and it may be decided, following the review of the tenders, not to proceed or to proceed with a new invitation to tender or an amended version of the proposed research.

10. Submission of tenders

Tenders should be submitted by email attachment as a single PDF or Microsoft Word document (with researcher CVs as appendices) to: reyhanacushnan@respond.ie Receipt of tenders will be acknowledged. **The closing date for receipt of completed tenders is 2pm, 9th March 2023.** Incomplete tenders, tenders that do not follow the format prescribed above, or tenders received after the closing date will not be considered.

11. Assessment of tenders and selection

All tenders will be evaluated against set criteria as outlined below. Respond in its commitment to quality and value for money will evaluate tender submissions on a cost/ quality basis, with 30% being awarded for cost and 70% for quality. There will be a minimum threshold score of 35 marks for quality. All submissions below this level will be automatically excluded.

- Overall alignment with research brief and relevant experience and expertise. (15 marks)

- Methodology. (20 marks)
- Knowledge and experience of the subject area. (10 marks)
- Timeframe and evidence of ability to meet deadlines. (10 marks)
- Budget, taking into account our commitment to value for money. (30 marks)
- Capacity for project management, administration, and to develop and maintain relationships with the various stakeholders. (5 marks)
- Ethics and ethos. (10 marks)

Respond reserves the right to seek additional information and/or interview tenderers in connection with its assessment of their tenders. It is anticipated that a number of tenderers will be shortlisted for interview.

The lead contact person and other key members of the research team should be available to attend the interview. Respond will not be held liable for any costs incurred by tenderers in relation to the tender submission or the assessment/interview process.

Respond reserves the right not to award the contract in the event that no tender is found to be suitable.