**National Development Manager – Northern Ireland Opportunity**

**Do you have a passion to support older people experiencing loneliness and social isolation?**

**Do you believe that the church has a key role to play in addressing these issues in communities across the country?**

**Do you have experience of working at a strategic level within the faith, charity or corporate sector?**

**This role could be for you………**

# Dear friend,

# Welcome!

Thank you for showing an interest in this role. If you can answer ‘yes’ to these questions, then this exciting role could be for you!

4.2 million people in the UK report that they ‘always or often’ feel lonely? 1 and this is a sad fact which is not likely to improve in the near future according to research.

Linking Lives UK is at a key stage in its development as a charity in addressing these issues nationally. We have seen significant growth during the past two years as we have continued to build partnerships with many new churches and individuals seeking to address loneliness in their communities.

We are now excited to be in a position to proactively develop our work across Northern Ireland and this new role will enable us to achieve this aim. We are very much aware of the need to be sensitive to the cultural, political and religious aspects of life in Northern Ireland and so we are looking for a National Development Manager who has a good understanding of these issues; experience in the charity and/ or faith sector – ideally in community development roles; and a passion for addressing loneliness and social isolation among older people. Although this is initially a one-year fixed post it is our hope that this will continue after the first year. In the first year of the project, we aim to have made significant progress and built on the foundation we already have in Belfast. We would like to develop five new befriending schemes across Northern Ireland, along with embedding the ‘Good Conversations’ training framework, having a significant impact that will attract further funding and support.

Building relationships with existing stakeholders and potential new partners will enable a greater breadth and cohesion in cross-sector working between agencies working to reduce loneliness and isolation.

As a Christian charity, we believe that God has created us to be in relationship with one another and as a result, loneliness is not part of His ideal design. One of our favourite verses in the Bible highlights this:

***‘A defender of widows is God in His holy dwelling. God sets the lonely in families’***

If you share our passion to address these issues and have the skills and experience necessary for this exciting role, please do look at the job description and person specification and contact me if you would like to discuss any aspect of the role. Thank you for expressing an interest in the work of Linking Lives UK.



Simon

Simon Betteridge – National Director

# About Linking Lives UK

# Our Aims

Our primary aim is to inspire, equip and resource churches and Christian organisations to develop effective responses to loneliness and social isolation in local communities which impact the lives of older people. We are also very much aware that older people have much to offer to the rest of society, and we encourage our local partners to value and celebrate these contributions and experiences.

We also believe that the church has a key role to play in addressing these key issues of our time, and that many are recognising the need to respond in their local communities. This was highlighted recently in a report produced by Benefact Trust which found that ***78% of churches consider loneliness and social isolation will be the biggest issues in their communities during the next three months, and 58% expect a similar situation in the next twelve months 2***. We are seeing this prediction continuing to be a real concern today. We are excited at the prospect of continuing to support churches in this way, and this role will be a key one in enabling us to meet our objectives at this important time.

# Who we are and what we do

Linking Lives UK has emerged from the initial work of a church-based community project in Berkshire which began in 1998. We began working on a national level in 2012, so that our befriending model could be replicated in other areas, and in 2016 Linking Lives UK became registered as a separate charity to focus on this national work. We now operate in three main ways:

* **Inspiring Individuals** – Through our ***‘Power of One’*** package, we deliver regular webinars aimed at individuals keen to address loneliness in their day to day lives. We provide practical hints, tips and suggestions as well as written resources and short films showing examples of good practice.
* **Training Volunteers** - We deliver training through our ***‘Good Conversations’*** package to volunteers in organisations working with those who may be experiencing loneliness. Settings could include community cafés, drop-in centres or lunch clubs and training includes skills in effective listening, safeguarding and valuing people.
* **Supporting churches** – Using our tried and tested model – ‘***Two’s Company Befriending’***, we provide training, documentation and support to churches wishing to set up a befriending scheme in their local community. Local schemes arrange weekly visits or phone calls through volunteers and those receiving visits are also encouraged to attend local social events and activities where possible or visit places of interest with their volunteer. We are currently working with around 65 partners across the country.

**Our Values**

We operate according to a set of values which permeate all aspects of our work. The strapline for the charity is:

Improving quality of life through friendship
We achieve this in accordance with five specific values which are important to us as a charity and those with whom we collaborate as key partners:

* We want to serve those who feeling are most alone and to bring hope.
* We particularly value one to one relationships
* At the heart of everything we do is the love of Jesus
* We want to build mutually beneficial relationships of trust
* We deeply value understanding everyone’s story acknowledging that we are all equal.

**Organisational Structure**

The Board of Trustees is responsible for the overall governance of the charity and the board works with the National Director in agreeing future strategy and direction in addition to considering ongoing developments throughout the year. Currently, the National Director is overseeing the development of our work in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland as well as commencing a new initiative focusing on chaplaincy roles. The structure below shows the lines of management within the charity.

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**Appointment Process**

Should you wish to express an interest in this role, please send an up to date CV along with a supporting statement explaining how you believe your experience and skills are relevant, and what you are able to bring to the role. Please also include details of two referees. Your application can be sent to Simon Betteridge at simon@linkinglives.uk and for an informal conversation, Simon’s phone number is 07923015066.

# National Development Manager – Northern Ireland

# Job Description

**Based: Home-based**

**Status: Employed**

**Hours: 40 hours per week (Part Time role is an option)**

**Contract: 1 Year (subject to 3-month probationary period)**

**Salary: (£31,250-£34,375 FTE)**

**Pension available after probation**

**Summary and Main Purpose of Role**

The main focus of this new role will be to spearhead the strategic development of the work of Linking Lives UK across Northern Ireland. This will specifically involve three main objectives:

* Creating ‘Two’s Company Befriending Schemes’ in partnership with churches and Christian organisations.
* Facilitating ‘Good Conversations Training’ for volunteers engaged in community activities and groups
* Assisting in the coordination and development of volunteer chaplaincy roles in liaison with our partners

**Specific responsibilities**

1. **Development of Two’s Company Befriending Schemes**

Using our existing framework in an adaptable way that is contextually appropriate for creating befriending schemes, and partnerships with local churches and Christian organisations to enable five schemes to be set up. This will involve:

* Carrying out research into existing services, projects and activities focusing on social isolation and loneliness among over 65’s with a particular focus on befriending projects
* Identifying those communities less well-served and which could benefit from a Two’s Company Befriending Scheme
* Engaging with key local and regional agencies including churches, local authorities, emergency services, health bodies (including GP surgeries, clinical commissioning groups and social prescribing bodies), adult social care teams, charities and other relevant organisations.
* Contacting partner project representatives monthly to maintain progress towards setting up of befriending schemes.
* Assisting with delivery of Introductory Training course (following participation in the training with members of Linking Lives team)
* Ensuring that the milestones for the project are being monitored and met effectively
* Liaising with Linking Lives UK in following up potential new projects in Northern Ireland secured through national links and relationship-building
1. **Good Conversations Training**

To facilitate Good Conversations Training sessions which engage with volunteers working in settings such as community cafes, lunch clubs and drop-in centres. This will involve:

* Publicising the course using all suitable opportunities
* Identifying organisations and groups looking for such training and making arrangements for online or face to face sessions to be carried out
* In liaison with our Training Manager, to deliver these two-hour sessions as required
* Collect and review monitoring and evaluation feedback from those attending sessions.
1. **Chaplaincy Training & Development**

In liaison with partners and Two’s Company Befriending Schemes in Northern Ireland, enable volunteers to receive chaplaincy training. This will involve:

* Liaising with Two’s Company Befriending Schemes in Northern Ireland to identify suitable volunteers wishing to carry out these roles
* Ensuring that appropriate recruitment and vetting of volunteers is carried out
* Coordinating chaplaincy training
* Oversee the ongoing good practice and professional development of chaplains in liaison with local befriending partners.
1. **Other features of the role/ special requirements**

Other aspects of the role will include:

* Raising the profile of Linking Lives across Northern Ireland through various means including media, attendance at events, online publicity and informal networking
* Contribute appropriately to the advancement of the Christian faith in all aspects of the role and personal conduct
* Contributing positively to regular team meetings including prayer times.
* Developing inter-denominational church engagement
* Building effective partnerships with national, regional and local government bodies and charities
* Engage with National Development Managers in Scotland and Wales to share good practice and learning.
* Explore options to adapt governance of operations to ensure ongoing sustainability.
* Proactively seek ongoing funding for the sustainability of the project in Northern Ireland.

**For an informal conversation about the role, please contact:**

**Simon Betteridge (National Director) –** **simon@linkinglives.uk** **07923015066**

# Person Specification

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| --- |
| **Skills & Experience Required** |
|  | **Essential** | **Desirable** |
| **Education & Training**Educated to degree or A-LevelComputer literate with experience of Word, Excel and Office 365 | **✓** | **✓** |
| **Experience**Developing and delivering strategic visionWorking effectively as a member of a teamUsing own initiative where necessaryThe role of voluntary, community & faith sector organisations in local communitiesCombating loneliness and social isolation among older people.Community Development training and practice | **✓****✓****✓****✓** | **✓****✓** |
| **Knowledge of:**

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| --- | --- |
| A range of national secular and faith-based social action/ community initiatives

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| A clear and strong commitment to the Christian values and ethos of Linking Lives UK |

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 | **✓****✓** |  |
| **Skills**

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| Leadership skillsTact and diplomacy Good communication and interpersonal skills Good, independent judgmentAn ability to think creativelyA willingness to speak your mind |

 | **✓****✓****✓****✓****✓** |  |
| **Other**IntegrityTeam playerA commitment to extending their knowledge and understanding of the work, philosophy and values of Linking Lives UK | **✓****✓****✓** |  |