



at The Bridge SE10

We understand that the change in wraparound care provision at The Bridge for the 2022/23 academic year is posing lots of questions. We want you to have all the relevant information so you can make an informed choice about the best wraparound care for your child/ren. Here are some of the questions we think you might have but if there are more, please do email basecamp@thebridgese10.co.uk so we can put your mind at rest.

1. What is The Bridge?

The Bridge is a Community Interest Company; we are self – funded (relying on private hire income, donations and grants) and 100% not-for-profit; governed by a voluntary Board of Directors. Our sessions are also run by volunteers.

We are relied on heavily by families in the local area:

- we are mental health support for mums;
- we are peer support for parents who have children with disabilities or life limiting conditions;
- we are friendship for new mums; we are outdoor learning and physical development for toddlers living without access to outside space;
- we are a delivery of Christmas presents to families who would otherwise have nothing;
- we are a food bank;
- we are donations for the staff at Queen Elizabeth Hospital; and
- we are back to work help for our volunteers.

Your child may have been to a birthday party at The Bridge or been to Forest School with Ruth. We are so much more than just a venue.

We survived Covid due to careful governance and the unwavering dedication of our staff and volunteers who worked tirelessly to secure funding from outside sources including the Royal Borough of Greenwich to keep our doors open and supporting the most vulnerable. The staff and volunteers have also gone above and beyond to get the activities back up and running and to support local businesses with their recoveries. During lockdown, we opened exclusively for the Holly Tree Club to re-start its wraparound care and support local families and we made a loss throughout in order to ensure that this could happen. Our income took a significant hit due to Covid and lockdowns, and it has been slow to recover.

The day-to-day running of The Bridge is led by our General Manager, Lucie Murphy. Lucie was recently the recipient of a Civic Award for her services to the community and we are extremely proud that her hard work and dedication has been recognised in this way. Lucie is supported by our Operations Manager, Ruth Cracknell. We have a number of volunteers that support The Bridge.

The volunteer directors of The Bridge include a qualified lawyer, two qualified accountants, a Forest School teacher and Cllr Linda Bird (former Mayor of Greenwich) as our Chair.

2. What is the relationship between The Bridge and the Holly Tree Club?

The Holly Tree Club has rented The Bridge as a private hire client for a number of years. The private hire contract is renewed annually and each year we enter negotiations for the

forthcoming academic year. The current contract was always due to be renegotiated in July 2022 but we entered into the discussions in March 2022 so this hasn't been a sudden or surprising process for anyone involved. The Halstow School Leadership team have been kept updated throughout the process.

3. Why has the provision changed this year?

Following the challenges of the past few years due to Covid, this year it was important for us to ensure the financial viability of The Bridge for the community and the people that rely on our services. To protect the essential services provided by The Bridge, we have been unable to accommodate reductions in hire rates requested by hirers of The Bridge.

The Bridge has been approached over the years by a number of organisations regarding the hire of The Bridge to provide wraparound care.

It was therefore decided by the Board that the best way forward to ensure a partnership that worked in the best interests of the community and the financial viability of our organisation was to enter into a tender process.

4. What did the tender process look like?

Our current wraparound care provider was given advance notice of the tender process. The process was then launched with a pitch template in which we asked the bidders to commit to a minimum financial commitment and to express how they would support those on lower incomes and children with SEND. We also wanted to know how we could work together to help the community outside of the provision.

5. How was the winning bid decided?

Following electronic submission, the bids were heard in person by a panel of three impartial members of the Board. The head of the panel was Cllr Linda Bird (former Mayor of Greenwich) and a member of Children's Services from the Royal Borough of Greenwich were kept updated. Anyone deemed to have a conflict of interest was excluded from the decision making process.

Each bidder was asked the same series of questions and the outcome was decided based on the answers to these questions and the pitch provided. The contract was awarded to Base Camp based on the overall merits of the proposal including its community-focused ethos as a not-for-profit offering. A member of Children's Services from the Royal Borough of Greenwich has reviewed the tender process and is supportive of the decision taken.

6. Who is behind Base Camp?

Base Camp is a collaboration between two not-for-profit organisations; The Bridge and ProInfinity Foundation CIC (a not-for-profit arm of the widely known ProInfinity Coaching).

For those of you without prior knowledge of the ProInfinity Group:

- they have an academy that takes teenagers (who might otherwise have not succeeded) through their GCSEs and gets them into coaching;
- it teaches PE and multi-sports in many different primary schools across the Borough with great success;

- it runs our Holiday Food & Fun Scheme for children who receive free school meals - allowing them free child care, access to workshops and hot food throughout the Easter, Summer and Christmas Holidays (and has now received funding for this for the next 3 years);
- it also heads up our SEND Saturday Active Camp alongside Tiptoes & Tappers providing multi-sports and dance for children with special needs and disabilities; and
- it runs free sports workshops for marginalised families.

7. Are they Ofsted registered?

ProInfinity Coaching have an Ofsted rating of “met”. As of 2019, the previous ratings of ‘Outstanding’, ‘Good’, ‘Requires Improvement’ and ‘Inadequate’ are no longer used by Ofsted. Out of school care providers are either “met” or “not met”. Base Camp at The Bridge is in the process of being registered as a separate entity.

8. Who will staff Base Camp?

The provision will be managed by Lucy Harper who has worked for the Holly Tree Club for years and many of you/your children will know her. We also have a highly experienced team of ex-teachers, childminders and Learning Support Assistants who will be working with your children.

9. What is the cost?

Breakfast club: £5

After School:

30 mins £3.25

60 minutes £5

3.30 -6pm £12.50

3.30 – 6.30pm £14

10% sibling discount available.

We are facing a cost of living crisis. The savings we can offer families will make a huge difference and we will offer an allocation of FREE places. But we are open to everyone and as a not-for-profit we need fee paying customers too to ensure we can sustain our offering.

10. What age children is it for?

The club is for all primary school age children from reception to year 6.

11. Can I use childcare vouchers?

Yes – you will be able to use childcare vouchers. The booking system will be online.

12. What food will you provide?

We will provide a selection of healthy breakfast cereals and toast, milk (and alternatives) and water. We will also provide fresh fruit. After school snacks will include fresh fruit, dried fruit, crackers, breadsticks, houmous and sandwiches. All food allergies will be catered for.

13. The park gates close at 4pm in the winter; how will your gate procedure work?

We will operate a slightly different gate procedure to the one offered by the Holly Tree Club. We will have a member of staff on the gate from 4pm until 6.30pm (a gate warden). When you arrive at the gate, they will radio an on-site staff member who will get your child/ren ready for you. You will then be able to collect your child from The Bridge yourself – allowing you to collect at a time that synchronises with your schedule.

14. It's so dark in the winter; I don't like my child being in the park at night. What will you do to make me feel more comfortable about this?

We know that it's much nicer in the Pleasaunce in the summer. But we want to make the darker afternoons fun too. We will have a collection of lanterns for the children to carry down to the gate; we will have head torches for them to wear AND every Friday we will have a neon disco party – think light up glasses and neon hopscotch.

15. My child is settled at Holly Tree Club – what should I do?

This is simply a return to more than one option of wraparound care. We don't want anyone to feel uncomfortable or torn. You must choose what is right for your child and family – whether that's friendship groups, setting, cost or staff.

Until a year ago, there were always two offerings for Halstow families (the in-house school offering – a cheaper option - and the Holly Tree Club). Base Camp is here to provide an alternative and we believe it is important for people to have a choice. It will be run professionally and exceptionally. There is room in the community for both our organisations.

We aren't trying to poach families, we are just trying to do the right thing by the community. We only have 35 spaces available for after school care so if it does suit you, please reserve your space.

16. Will Base Camp be as flexible?

You will be able to book regular sessions or ad hoc – if your meeting overruns or you have an appointment, subject to space and ratios we will be able to accommodate you. We want this to work for you and your commitments.

17. How will you re-invest the profits?

As a CIC, you have full access to our public accounts and are welcome to join our Annual General Meetings. You can see what we are spending the money on and how much we are making.

We are planning on hosting funded workshops for children on a monthly basis (yoga, art, music), we want to train our staff in mental health issues (we are facing a post-Covid mental health pandemic in young people) and we want to have special events. We will also ensure there are lots of high-quality play options for the children – board games, puzzles, craft material, sporting equipment.

AND if you struggle to get your child to do their homework, we will have qualified teachers on hand to help them with their spelling, reading and maths.

18. I have questions about the tender process. Who can I speak to?

We undertook a fair and transparent tender process ratified by the Royal Borough of Greenwich. If you would like to ask any questions, please email basecamp@thebridgese10.co.uk

Jon Coppen who heads up the ProInfinity Group will be in the ground floor hall at Halstow School on Monday/Thursday and Friday at 3.30pm so if you have any questions regarding the provision (the activities, the staff, the Ofsted registration etc) you can ask him directly. We appreciate this doesn't work for all parents/carers so we are arranging a series of 'Meet the Team/Q&A' sessions. Please get in touch to find out more.

Thank you for your interest in Base Camp and for supporting The Bridge.

We are for the community, not for profit.

Best wishes,

The Base Camp Team