

<b>Agenda Item</b>	10
<b>Date</b>	15 <sup>th</sup> October 2020
<b>Title</b>	Strategic grants for 2020

### **1.0 Purpose of paper**

To inform Trustees of the proposed two strategic grants to be made under the 2020 strategy and agree to full assessments being undertaken.

### **2.0 Summary**

Trustees will remember that at the December 2019 Meeting it was agreed the 2020 strategy would include making two strategic grants of up to £50,000 over 12 months to benefit the sectors currently supported. This paper provides further detail on initial conversations held with two organisations around their work with kinship carers and women in the criminal justice system.

- Two organisations, Grandparents Plus and Women in Prison have been identified as sector experts with whom we can deliver pieces of strategic work where our funding can make a significant difference.
- Grant support would be focused in two key areas.
  - a) On increasing the involvement of kinship carers in local and national decision making (with the long term goal of a Kinship Care Act being passed) and;
  - b) supporting the development of more Women's Centres across the UK to provide support to women in the criminal justice system.
- Following on from initial discussions with both organisations and the submission of brief concept notes we now need to ask them to develop fuller proposals for assessment.

### **3.0 Recommendations**

Trustees are requested to:

- (i) Support a strategic grant being awarded in each of the areas of kinship care and women in the criminal justice system.
- (ii) Support a request for a full proposal from Grandparents Plus and Women in Prison for the work described in this paper in section 4 (page 3 onwards) for consideration at the December 2020 or March 2021 Trustee meetings.

## **4.0 Focus areas**

### **4.1 Kinship Carers**

- Kinship carers had already been mentioned as an area of keen interest amongst some Trustees and there was an appetite for increasing the support we provide around this issue.
- Kinship carers are underrepresented in our current portfolio despite having huge needs. They are also facing additional challenges to the everyday ones they deal with as a result of Covid-19 and the impact this has had on them and the children they look after.
- Grandparents Plus is the national kinship charity for England and Wales and use their experience and expertise to support kinship carers work through problems and find the best way forward, connect carers to each other and help professionals understand kinship carers and how to support them. Also through research and campaigns they make sure that kinship care is understood and Government knows what changes are needed. They currently work with around 5,500 kinship carers.
- Kinship Carers funding would be targeted at supporting kinship carers on a local level to become campaigners, highlighting local needs and contributing to a national campaign for a Kinship Carers Act.

### **4.2 Kinship care supporting information**

Kinship care is when a child lives full-time or most of their time with a relative or friend (kinship carer) who isn't their parent, usually because their parents aren't able to care for them. It is estimated that around half of kinship carers are grandparents, but other relatives such as older siblings, aunts, uncles and family friends and neighbours can also be kinship carers. Kinship care can come in the form of legal orders such as a Special Guardianship or Child Arrangement Order or for the vast majority can just be an informal arrangement.

- There are around 200,000 children in kinship care in the UK – around three and a half times as many as in foster care.
- Kinship carers will often step in to do the right thing for a child, often turning their lives upside down in the process, but only one in 10 say they get the support they need.
- Over half (53%) are given no notice and take on the children in a crisis situation and in 70% of cases, kinship carers understood that the children would be taken into care if they did not step in.

Most kinship carers come from traditionally disadvantaged groups. Taking on the kinship role therefore exacerbates existing personal, financial and social vulnerabilities and insecurities. Taken together this makes kinship carers more vulnerable than other types of carers such as foster carers and adoptive parents. Despite this kinship carers have no universal entitlement to even basic support, leaving 76% of children living in kinship care in poverty.

Children in kinship care have had similar early experiences to children in local authority care, with a significant body of research confirming that two-thirds

experienced abuse and/or neglect whilst in the care of their parents. Despite difficult beginnings though, children in kinship care generally have more positive outcomes than children in local authority care. Kinship care families provide continuity, commitment, stability and love; which all significantly benefit children and young people not only throughout their childhood but also the rest of their lives.

In 2018 Grandparents Plus published a report, *Growing up in Kinship Care*, which highlighted the importance of peer support for kinship carers. From this learning Grandparents Plus developed 'Kinship Connected', an initiative that brings carers together to help them and each other break down social barriers to build strong networks to establish resilient kinship communities. The establishment of this network has been funded by **nesta** and the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport.

Grandparents Plus now want to build on these networks and identify a core group of campaigning kinship carers to establish local objectives and lead local activities that support their national campaign to secure a Kinship Care Act. This would ensure that all kinship carers had an entitlement to; independent advice and information, including legal advice; training and support to help kinship carers prepare for their role; a financial allowance to cover the costs of raising someone else's child; comprehensive support for children and carers, that meets their needs as the child grows; and access to peer support.

They plan to pilot this in two regions in the next 12 months, South Wales and the North West – chosen due to existing high engagement with kinship carer communities and scale of need.

#### 4.3 **Female Offenders**

- Women who are leaving prison are also significantly underrepresented in our current grant portfolio. The majority of the projects that we currently support either work exclusively with males or the vast majority of beneficiaries are men.
- Women in Prison is a national charity that supports women affected by the criminal justice system and campaigns to end the harm caused to women, their families and communities by imprisonment.
- Rehabilitation of offenders funding would be focused on supporting the work that Women in Prison is doing through the National Women's Justice Federation. This involves leading the campaign for every Local Authority to have a specialist Women's Centre offering holistic support that is proven to reduce reoffending more effectively than a prison sentence.

#### 4.4 **Female offenders supporting information**

The UK has one of the highest rates of women's imprisonment in Western Europe. Even though women make up a small minority of those in the criminal justice system (representing less than five percent of the prison population) historically the outcomes for women sentenced to imprisonment have been poor. 48% of women are reconvicted within one year of leaving prison and this rises to 61% for sentences of less than 12 months. Their needs are often overlooked in policy, planning and

services despite the drivers and patterns of women's offending generally being different from men's.

- Women's offending is more likely than men's to be prompted by their relationships. 48% of women in prison when asked reported committing an offence in order to support the drug use of someone else (compared to 22% of men).
- It is estimated that 53% of women in prison have survived emotional, physical or sexual abuse during childhood.
- Seven in 10 women in prison are survivors of domestic abuse.
- Women are more likely than men to be in prison under sentence for a first offence. Sentenced women are nearly twice as likely as men to have no previous convictions or cautions.
- Two in five women leave prison without settled accommodation and five percent are street homeless on release.

Most of the solutions to women's offending lie in improved access to community based support services. These enable women to address underlying problems which may lead to offending but which the criminal justice system cannot solve.

Women's Centres can provide a centre of excellence for helping women with multiple and complex needs. Numerous evaluations and studies of their work highlight a range of benefits and positive outcomes for women accessing them. There are also reported benefits for the wider health, social care and criminal justice systems and evidence Women's Centres are both preventative and cost effective.

Women in Prison run three of their own Women's Centres and in partnership with Pecan (another charity) run South London Women's Hubs. They also coordinate the National Women's Justice Federation, a growing network of Women's Centres that advocates for investment in the Women's Centre model of providing a safe, non-judgmental space for women to access all the support they need under one roof.

The Federation is currently a "loose alliance" of a five Women's Centres, and made up of the Directors of each Centre who give their time for free. Whilst there is no intention to turn the Federation into a formal organisation or charity there is a need for specific resources provided from each of the current partners to take the strategic aims of the Federation forward. Lloyds Foundation have committed some funding to all five partners for the next three years but there is a need for further investment. This would enable Women in Prison's Chief Executive to take on more of a lead role and engage the 40 plus other Women's Centres and other relevant women's organisations in the UK in the campaign and strengthen their collective voice and power.

## **5.0 Considerations**

- 5.1 The decision to make two strategic grants in 2020 in our current focus areas provides the opportunity to contribute to a systemic change in these sectors. This has the potential to benefit a significant number of carers and ex-offenders in a long term way and have a larger impact than the Development Grants we have been making.

Kinship carers and female offenders are both groups that are especially disadvantaged and likely to experience some specific challenges due to Covid-19.

## 5.2 **Outcomes and Impact**

A Theory of Change will be developed for each grant that will identify the change that the funding is aiming to achieve and highlight the outcomes that we are hoping we will contribute to.

## 5.3 **Risks**

Systemic change has a high risk of failure and takes time. Therefore, if funding is agreed, we need to determine the impact and outcomes for these grants carefully. A Theory of Change for both pieces of work should help to clarify this and identify the impact that we have contributed to as a funder. These grants would give each organisation an important springboard for developing this work further.

Both Grandparents Plus and Women in Prison were selected for original discussion due to being sector leaders and experts with long track records of working in their specific fields and achieving good outcomes. Both also have previous experience of campaigning and achieving movement with policy. Additionally, they are also strongly embedded within the beneficiary groups they serve so can authentically identify needs and gaps. All these factors contribute to reducing the risk to the success of this proposed funding.