

Organisation Name	Reference	2021-10-YO36
Switch Up		

Visit Date	Visited By
26/09/2023	David Loudon

Grant Summary

Switch Up CIC was awarded a grant of £57,069 commencing in April 2022 to support 22 young people from extremely deprived backgrounds and who have served a custodial sentence.

The end of Year 1 report noted that recruitment for its program had been slower than anticipated due to delays in referrals being made by the Probation service but that to overcome this, contacts were being made with local prisons, Ranby and Nottingham. In addition, SU is adopting an opportunities-led initiative with local employers, to identify employment vacancies which can then be matched with potential candidates.

Visit Details (People met, premises visited etc.)

I met Marcellus Baz, the founder and CEO, Paul Hamnett, Operations manager and Poppy Flint, the Youth officer at their rented premises in a very run down church building in the centre of Nottingham.

Nottingham has an extremely high number of children entering the criminal justice system for the first time (535 per 100k children, compared to 222 per 100k in England and Wales)

The team had prepared a fascinating presentation of the work they do, the challenges they face and the individuals they have helped which Marcellus narrated and included contributions from ex-offenders who had been helped to 'get their lives back'. As a child and young man Marcellus suffered huge deprivation and as a result decided to develop SU, a vision that every young person can reach their true potential which is achieved by supporting individuals on a 1-1 basis from those communities affected by crime, drugs and violence.

In addition to 1-1 mentoring, SU provides employment opportunities, counselling and focuses on twice weekly boxing classes delivered by England Boxing coaches.

Information about the Organisation

SU is a Community Interest Company established in 2013. It currently employs 19 staff, 5 coaching staff and a few volunteers. It has a Board of 5 Directors who have a range of complementary skills.
It has a five year Strategic Plan, 2018-23 which has been interrupted by the Pandemic and more recently by the premises issue (see below)

Issues and Comments

Whilst the good work of SU has continued, it has been severely affected by the conditions of the premises. For at least three and a half months until July this year, the team were unable to use their main hall because of Dry rot, the floor had to be replaced and the landlord would not pay for the work. SU engaged with Morgan Sindall who arranged for this work to be completed.

Nevertheless, this has been a massive interruption and despite these repairs the building still leaks and there seems little doubt that the landlord wants SU to find alternative premises. This is a considerable risk and it is understood they are on one months' notice.

They have been approached about 1.6 acres of land (for £175k) and have plans of the potential new build which is estimated to cost £3.2M and take 2 years to build. Whilst the premises were unusable the team worked hard to raise the profile of SU and have consolidated contacts with almost 50 local businesses. They held a fund-raising event (supported by local business and some local celebrities) and raised £75k towards the project land cost.

Like many other organisations they have also faced rising staff costs because of the cost-of-living crisis.

Marcellus asked whether Triangle Trust would be able to assist with the 'premises issue' which on the face of it is beyond our remit.

Other Feedback

SU is a very well led organisation which has been distracted because of the premises issue.

They expressed their gratitude for the Trust's support and would value any further support we are able to consider.

They also asked whether the 16-24 age group is flexible when considering grant applications.