

**Agenda Item**

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**Date** 13<sup>th</sup> October 2022

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**Title** Triangle Trust Grant Strategy 2023

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**1.0 Purpose of paper**

For Trustees to discuss and agree the focus of the new long term grants strategy.

**2.0 Background**

Trustees will remember at the March 2022 Trustee meeting a further one-year strategy was approved that built on the focus of the previous one-year strategy that ran from April 2021-March 2022. This paper suggests the next steps for the 2023 strategy.

**3.0 Summary**

- It was agreed that the strategy for 2022 would be a further one-year strategy with a long-term strategy (length to be agreed) being developed to commence in 2023.
- Funding, since April 2021, has focused on education support for young carers and employment support for young offenders. We have made 7 young carer grants (and are currently assessing a further 10) and 8 young offender grants (the new young offender funding opportunity is currently open for applications).
- The new long-term strategy provides an opportunity to review and reframe our approach to grant making. This review has been informed by sector research, consultation, and input from Trustees via discussions and undertaking the Characteristics of Foundations exercise.
- The Characteristics of Foundations exercise identified five key takeaways;
  - A desire to do more to address the issues that we support and move away from the more 'traditional' type of grant maker we have been
  - Look further at how we can influence systemic change
  - Bring the voices of people who have experienced the issues we support into our decision making
  - Understand more about the impact we are contributing to, and
  - Work with others to amplify our impact and maximise our assets
- Options for next steps include;
  - Continuing to fund work that supports both young carers and young offenders
  - Focus in on just one of these issues, or
  - Identify a new issue to support such as care-experienced young people
- Once the focus of the new strategy has been agreed work can start on building in the detail about what this will look like in terms of overarching aims and objectives, criteria, grant opportunities and future goals.
- Alongside the grants strategy we will also develop the wider strategy for Triangle Trust.

### **3.0 Recommendations**

Trustees are requested to

- (i) Consider the three options outlined in the paper.
- (ii) Discuss the recommendation made for the focus of the new strategy.
- (iii) Agree the top line focus of the new strategy and next steps in the development of the strategy which will need to be agreed at the March 2023 Trustee meeting ready for launch in April 2023.

## **4.0 Supporting information and things to consider**

- 4.1 The development of a new long-term strategy provides us with an opportunity to review more than just the focus of our grant support. It also allows us to think more broadly about the other things we want to achieve and what our wider organisational objectives are. The length of the new strategy will form part of the next stage of the strategy development.

The current focus of our grant making enabled us to link the two issues we support through the broader theme of ‘young people’. This allowed us to connect the two programme areas thematically in a way that we had not done before. Previously this had been done via Development Grant funding, whereby the common thread running through our portfolio was defined by programme criteria rather than issue areas.

Over the past three years our approach to grant making has evolved, with the introduction of emergency grants in response to the early stage of the pandemic to the shift in our programme focus. The disproportionate impact of the pandemic also helped us to identify particular groups who we wanted to focus support on. But despite moving towards a young people focus, we still had the challenge of young carers and young offenders ultimately having very little in common. The kinds of organisations we funded were vastly different, the approaches being proposed differed, and the outcomes being worked towards were not the same, although they were linked by a wider aim of ‘the lives of young people being transformed’.

The Characteristics of Foundations exercise that all Trustees completed in May 2022 highlighted some interesting areas linked to developing the activities and vision of Triangle Trust. The five main takeaways from the Trustees’ positioning exercise were:

1. A clear desire to do more was expressed, especially in relation to areas such as moving away from being a relatively traditional grant maker and developing a more flexible approach, increasing diversity across all of our activities, being more transparent and considering a wider range of time horizons. There seemed to be an ambition for us to become a more ‘transformative’ funder and move away from the ‘stabiliser’ role we have occupied. It was cautioned though that this needed to be balanced with resources and costs,
2. Look at how we can help influence systemic change but also how we can support impact at an earlier point – alongside meeting immediate needs (which should remain a key priority),
3. Bring the voices of people who have experienced the issues we support into our decision making,
4. Understand more about the impact we are contributing to and use that to help us to improve what we do and share our learning, and
5. Work with others to amplify our impact and make the most of the assets we have.

These five drivers have been considered as the top line ideas for the strategy as it has been developed.

## **4.2 Options**

There are three options in terms of focus for the new strategy that have been considered and are being shared with Trustees for discussion and decision.

### Option 1

**Continue with a focus on our two current issues – young carers and young offenders.**

Pro's

- √ Enables us to continue funding two issues that are under supported and experience significant need.
- √ We've run two rounds with this focus already and had a healthy number of applications that are high quality and have funded some really interesting work and impressive organisations. So, we know that there is demand and that we will likely continue to make some good grants.

Con's

- X It's not a neat fit. Although young people link the two issues, they are extremely different and otherwise unconnected, which makes having a clear vision, focus and overarching strategy difficult.
- X Lack of natural linkages makes understanding overall impact challenging due to small datasets and needing two versions of everything. It also keeps us more of a generalist rather than specialist funder.

### Option 2

**Focus on only one of our current issues – young carers or young offenders**

Pro's

- √ Allows us to become experts in a particular field and to build a reputation for this over the long term.
- √ Will better meet the five key drivers that came out of the Characteristics of Foundations exercise.

Con's

- X Will move us away from one of the sectors we currently support, which will leave a gap as we have been supporting both areas for a long period of time and can fall under the radar with other funders.
- X Will narrow the reach of our funding considerably in terms of number of organisations we potentially fund and the types of organisations.

### Option 3

**Focus on a totally new area that potentially links our current areas of support**

Pro's

- √ Could enable us to target our support in an area that has a link to the two issues we currently focus on.

- √ We can completely refresh our strategy and develop a whole new approach and focus that isn't limited by current thinking and practice.

Con's

- X If we take on a totally new area, we will not be building on what we have done and learnt over the past two years.
- X A new focus might be too narrow and may not provide us with the wider opportunities that we are keen to explore through the new strategy.

#### 4.3 Overview of sector needs

One of the main tensions of options 2 and 3 would be walking away from supporting sectors that we acknowledge have significant need. To help understand the current research linked to the needs of young carers and young offenders the following information will highlight the key data out there. This paper also includes a section on a new area that could be considered for funding under option 3.

##### Young carers

It is estimated that there are 800,000 young carers in the UK<sup>1</sup>. The 2011 census found that there were approximately 507,000 children and young people aged 0-24 years who were providing unpaid care across the UK, highlighting the large number of young carers within that number who are hidden or do not realise that they are carers. Caring responsibilities impact heavily on their lives with 39% of young carers saying that no-one in their school knew about their caring role<sup>2</sup> and 27% aged between 11-15 regularly missing school<sup>3</sup>.

On top of this 36% of teachers have said they do not feel confident about how to refer young carers to external support services<sup>4</sup>. The Adult Social Care Reform White Paper, published in December 2021, announced that DfE will amend the school census requirements to include a category on young carers. This means that in the future schools will have to report on the number of pupils they are aware of with caring responsibilities.

Young carers have a statutory right to support, and a young carers assessment and these rights come mostly from the Children's Act 1989 and the Children and Families Act 2014. When a young carer's eligible needs are identified as requiring support, local councils have to provide support directly to the young carer or demonstrate that the 'cared for person's' assessment has provided adequate care and support to prevent inappropriate care being required from the young carer. Many of the young carer projects that we have funded receive funding from a local authority to provide support to local young carers as part of this statutory obligation.

In March 2021 the Children's Commissioner carried out a national survey of England's Children to try to understand the state of the nation for them. They collected the views of over 6,000 children and young people aged 6-17 who reported being supported by a young carers project. There were some positive stats that came out of the report, 66% said they were happy with their life overall<sup>5</sup> but showed higher rates of unhappiness when compared to their peers in areas such as their family's health, their own mental health, their family's financial capability and overall family life.<sup>6</sup>

The Commission also collected data from young people who identified as having caring responsibilities that were not known to others and this showed they were twice as unhappy with their lives overall than carers who were receiving support and three times less happy

with their mental health<sup>7</sup>. As young carers grew older, whether they were supported or not, the differences in their answers became greater and demonstrated growing unhappiness, mounting pressures and the need for earlier support.

Schools were identified as being the ideal place where young carers can be identified and supported, an approach that aligns with the focus of much of the work we will have supported over the current two-year strategy. DfE guidance<sup>8</sup> specifically outlines that Safeguarding Leads in schools should be alert to the needs of young carers, which potentially provides a platform for approaches to be built upon. It is recognised though that more could be done to share and build on best practise in creating better awareness in schools around the needs of young carers.

#### Pro's

- √ Significant number of hidden young carers in the UK who currently aren't supported in their caring roles or have the impact of these caring responsibilities recognised.
- √ Existing routes into providing support through an established carers sector through which grants can be made and learning and networking aspirations achieved.

#### Con's

- X Fewer opportunities to influence the causes of a young person becoming a carer as these are rooted in health inequalities that are too significant and complicated for us to impact. This means we might struggle to find earlier points to intervene and accept that our funding will primarily impact young carers who are already struggling. So, we won't be able to try to 'break the cycle'.
- X There is a statutory obligation for young carers to be identified and supported, even if this doesn't go far enough. It could be argued that some of our funding in this area props up services that local authorities should be providing.

### **Young offenders**

Whilst offending rates for young people have steadily declined over the past ten years<sup>9</sup>, the picture for young people, on the fringes of, or in touch with, the criminal justice system is mixed. The Prison Reform Trust estimates that the prison population will increase by 25% over the next four years. Whilst it is unclear if this represents a significant increase in the number of young offenders serving custodial sentences, the reoffending rates linked to young people (38.5%)<sup>10</sup> are higher than for those of adult offenders. And over two thirds of children reoffend within 12 months of release from a secure institution according to Beyond Youth Custody. So, this would suggest that people who have offended in their childhood/youth will make up a large proportion of this increase. Whilst reoffending rates have seen a slight decrease of 0.2%<sup>11</sup> they remain higher than they were ten years ago.

Whilst these decreases shine a positive light on the sector in terms of progress there are also some troubling statistics that sit behind these results.

The average custodial sentence length given to children increased by more than seven months over the last ten years, from 11.3 months to 18.6 months<sup>12</sup>. And the number of Restrictive Physical Interventions (RPIs) increased by 19% in the past year to around 7,500 incidents.<sup>13</sup> Additionally, the number of self-harm incidents increased by 35% to around 2,500<sup>14</sup>. For both of these, this is the highest number of incidents in the last five years.

Whilst more recent data than these Youth Justice Statistics 2019/20 has been released by the Youth Justice Board and Ministry of Justice, it is influenced by the impact of the pandemic so the falling rates shown come with multiple affecting factors. Whilst the trend in decreasing offence rates continue to fall, it is hard to know how much of this is due to continued success in this area or the periods of restrictions that were in place during lockdowns. With young people being home schooled and not out and about, arrests were less likely to occur. There were also less police on the streets during this time. Other decreases in key areas are likely to be partly caused by court closures, pauses to jury trials, forced changes to people's behaviours due to reduced social contact and changes to custodial regimes. It is likely therefore that future years will see sharp increases in these same stats due to backlogs being cleared and routines going back to normal.

One thing that this data doesn't hide is that the justice system is *"categorically failing on every count to halt the overrepresentation of Black children throughout the system"*<sup>15</sup>. A black child is more likely to be stopped and searched, arrested, held on remand, sentenced to custody and go on to commit another offence within a year. Black children are also 8% less likely to receive community remand than their White counterparts.<sup>16</sup>

An Agenda and Alliance for Youth Justice report published in March 2022 highlights the experiences of vulnerable girls and young women in the criminal justice system. It shows that without immediate action, girls and young women will remain marginalised and locked in a cycle of harm, inequality and re-offending and will continue to experience the trauma and disadvantage this brings.

Key findings in the report show that almost all young women (17-25) in the criminal justice system have a history of violence, abuse or trauma which drives their offending. This could be by being coerced into crime by a partner, sexually exploited or by using drugs or alcohol as a coping mechanism. They are also likely to experience poor mental health, exclusion from education, economic inequality and racism. It is clear that these young women are criminalised for their vulnerability with 90% of young women in contact with the criminal justice system having experienced abuse from a family member or someone they trusted, 63% of those serving community sentences having experienced rape or domestic abuse and there being a greater prevalence of mental health issues amongst young women offenders than young males and older women.<sup>17</sup>

Additionally, Black, Asian and minoritised women and those with experience of the care system are significantly over-represented among young women who have come into contact with the criminal justice system. Black, Asian and minoritised women are forced to endure systemic racism and young women who have been in care face additional stigma and negative stereotypes. In light of the current cost-of-living crisis, the report highlights the likelihood of offending because of poverty and economic need is set to continue for young women. Women under 25 are one of the groups at highest risk of unemployment due to the pandemic – with Black and minoritised young women and young mothers particularly vulnerable.<sup>18</sup>

Pro's

- √ Multiple opportunities for us to disrupt the journey into the criminal justice system at different points – as well as provide support for those already in it.
- √ A sector that has lots of innovation with large numbers of interventions designed through lived experience demonstrating its strong reputation for highlighting user voices and experience.

Con's

- X Offending rates of young people are declining and have been for the past 10 years

- X Changing political agendas and policy can affect the landscape that the third sector is trying to work within.
- X Causes of crime are complex; poverty, parental neglect, inadequate education, low self-esteem and alcohol and drug abuse all feature (The Home Affairs Committee paper Serious Youth Crime, 2019); we need to consider if/where we can break this cycle.

### **Care Experienced Young People**

A group who could potentially feature in Option 3, and who link into both of the current focus areas to some degree are care experienced young people. There are around 103,000 children in the UK who are looked after away from their home. Care leavers experience particularly poor outcomes compared to their peers across a whole range of issues and are over represented in the criminal justice system.

One third of care leavers become homeless in the first two years immediately after they leave care and 25% of homeless people have been in care at some point in their lives.<sup>19</sup>

Across all four nations around 25% of the prison population self-identify as being care experienced<sup>20</sup> with 16% having had a least six placements whilst in care<sup>21</sup>. In England, nearly 50% of under 21-year-olds in contact with the criminal justice system have spent time in care.<sup>22</sup>

45% of looked after children (75% in a residential setting) have a mental health disorder, compared to 1 in 10 of the general population and looked after children and care leavers are between four and five times more likely to attempt suicide into adulthood.<sup>23</sup> 41% of 19-year-old care leavers are not in education and only 6% go to university<sup>24</sup>. 22% of female care leavers go on to become teenage parents<sup>25</sup>, which adds another layer of vulnerability.

#### Pro's

- √ This is an issue that is not showing any sign of improving as the total number of looked after children in the UK has increased every year since 2010 and in the last five years the population of care experienced children has increased by 10%.<sup>26</sup>
- √ There is huge need across a range of different areas that would lend themselves well to a strategy focused on supporting interventions at a variety of different points.

#### Con's

- X This is a new issue area for us and we would be starting from scratch
- X The sector is potentially a large one with lots of different issues being addressed by organisations that might not be linked beyond their work with care experienced young people. So, finding a natural group of organisations for networking and sharing learning might be challenging.

## **5.0 Director's Recommendation**

Whilst focusing on only one issue will be a difficult decision, Option 2 provides us with the strongest opportunity to 1) develop a clear strategy that makes an impact at a number of different points and 2) allows us to fund both grass roots projects directly providing support to individuals alongside strategic work that will influence at a systemic level. It will enable us to develop our knowledge base, understand our impact better and share this more with key

stakeholders. Therefore, I would recommend that we shift our focus to supporting one issue and invest in our time and wider resources in becoming a specialist in one specific area.

When looking at the opportunities that young carers and young offenders present in helping us to do this, young offenders would provide the best fit to this shift. I would recommend focusing our efforts on this area and broaden our current aim slightly to also include those who are at risk of entering the criminal justice system. The stats suggest that once a young person is within the criminal justice system their experiences and outcomes are likely to be poor, particularly those from particular groups. Therefore, supporting work that continues to contribute to the decrease in numbers of young people coming into contact with the criminal justice system, alongside work that supports positive outcomes for those that do, feels crucially important. These interventions have the potential to be transformational for the young people who will benefit from them.

Focusing on Care-Experienced young people would also offer us many of these same opportunities, so Trustees are asked to also think about Option 3.

Trustees are asked to consider which of the above recommendations provide the best opportunities to meet the five drivers identified through the Characteristics of Foundations exercise.

## **6.0 Risks**

Having supported work in both areas for a long period of time there is the risk of the sector(s) we withdraw from having a negative response, which could harm our reputation. However, this would not pose a huge risk to any of our ongoing activities and any reputational damage would be minimal. We are not a public facing organisation, nor reliant on public opinion to raise funds etc. The amount of funding we award in both sectors is relatively small, so any withdrawal won't leave a significant gap. Funders such as Children in Need, Big Lottery and other trusts and foundations do support these issues to varying degrees, so funding is still available.

To mitigate any departure though it would be useful to think about leaving a legacy behind to continue to support the work we have been funding within that sector. This would allow us to look at how we can strategically support work in this area by providing funding over the next couple of years towards something that will have a wide and lasting impact. This activity would form part of the overarching strategy and the detail would be developed alongside the rest of the strategy over the coming months. The hope would be to announce this area of work at the launch of the strategy to minimise the impact of our departure from that sector(s).

Another risk of becoming a single-issue funder lies with having all of our focus in only one area. Whilst this presents many opportunities in terms of impact, learning and more targeted support, it also narrows our reach, which could result in lower interest or application rates. However, with a strategy that is able to evolve alongside having a clear focus and aims we can mitigate any issues that might be identified around relevance and appetite.

## **7.0 Next steps**

Once agreement has been reached about the broad focus of the new strategy, work will begin to build the detail of the strategy. This will be discussed again at the December meeting and finalised at the meeting in March 2023. An additional meeting in January 2023 is planned to allow more time for the strategy to be discussed.

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- <sup>1</sup> The Children’s Society
  - <sup>2</sup> The Children’s Society
  - <sup>3</sup> The Children’s Society
  - <sup>4</sup> Barnardo’s and YouGov
  - <sup>5</sup> Children’s Commissioner - The Big Ask Voices: Shining a Light on Young Carers 2022
  - <sup>6</sup> Children’s Commissioner - The Big Ask Voices: Shining a Light on Young Carers 2022
  - <sup>7</sup> Children’s Commissioner - The Big Ask Voices: Shining a Light on Young Carers 2022
  - <sup>8</sup> Department for Education - Keeping Children Safe in Education - 2021
  - <sup>9</sup> Youth Justice Board/Ministry of Justice – Youth Justice Statistics 2019/20
  - <sup>10</sup> Youth Justice Board/Ministry of Justice – Youth Justice Statistics 2019/20
  - <sup>11</sup> Youth Justice Board/Ministry of Justice – Youth Justice Statistics 2019/20
  - <sup>12</sup> Youth Justice Board/Ministry of Justice – Youth Justice Statistics 2019/20
  - <sup>13</sup> Youth Justice Board/Ministry of Justice – Youth Justice Statistics 2019/20
  - <sup>14</sup> Youth Justice Board/Ministry of Justice – Youth Justice Statistics 2019/20
  - <sup>15</sup> Youth Justice Board Chair (Keith Fraser) – The State of the Youth Justice System 2022
  - <sup>16</sup> Youth Justice Board – The State of the Youth Justice System 2022
  - <sup>17</sup> Agenda and the Alliance for Youth Justice report – Young Women Surviving the Criminal Justice System - March 2022
  - <sup>18</sup> Agenda and the Alliance for Youth Justice report – Young Women Surviving the Criminal Justice System - March 2022
  - <sup>19</sup> All Party Parliamentary Group for Ending Homelessness report – July 2017
  - <sup>20</sup> UK Government Prison Population Statistics - 2013
  - <sup>21</sup> Scottish Prison Service – Prisoner Survey 2019
  - <sup>22</sup> The Centre for Social Justice – Couldn’t Care Less report – 2008
  - <sup>23</sup> Barnardo’s – Neglected Minds report – September 2017
  - <sup>24</sup> St Christopher’s charity website
  - <sup>25</sup> St Christopher’s charity website
  - <sup>26</sup> NSPCC – Looked After Children statistics briefing - March 2021