

**Agenda Item** 7

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**Date** 21<sup>st</sup> March 2024

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**Title** Triangle Trust Grant Strategy focus 2024-25

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### **1.0 Purpose of paper**

For Trustees to agree the Grants Strategy focus for 2024-25.

### **2.0 Summary**

At the December 2023 meeting Trustees agreed that the focus of the funding rounds for 24/25 would be on young women. This forms part of the five-year strategy that was launched in April 2023 that focuses on young people in contact with, or at high risk of contact with, the criminal justice system.

- The new focus will be launched at the beginning of April 2024.
- The criteria will focus on;
  - Young women in contact with, or at high risk of contact with, the criminal justice system.
  - The age range is recommended to change to 11-30 years old.
  - Funding levels remain at a maximum grant of £80,000 over a two-year period.
- It is recommended that two funding rounds a year should continue to run to manage application numbers and provide more opportunities to make an application.
- It is proposed that the focus of the first funding round be to provide opportunities for organisations from the women's and girls' sector to test out solutions to stopping girls from offending and reducing the reoffending rates of young women who already have a criminal conviction. An evaluation would run alongside this funding.
- The Spark Programme will continue to form a key part of the strategy and provide consultancy and mentoring support and Peer 2 Peer Exchanges for each cohort.
- Up to 20% of the annual grant spend will be allocated to strategic grant funding. An application from Prison Reform Trust has been included in the meeting pack with a recommendation for funding.

### **3.0 Recommendations**

Trustees are requested to

- (i) Approve the strategy focus and criteria in advance of the first funding round opening on 9<sup>th</sup> April 2024.

## 4.0 Supporting information

4.1 In December 2023 Trustees agreed that the focus of our 2024/25 funding would be young women and girls. The rationale behind identifying this focus was linked to some key statistics that reinforce long-standing concerns that the criminal justice system is not responsive to the specific needs of women, and also that women have additional vulnerabilities which may connect to offending behaviours:

"Young adult women (aged 17–25) in contact with the criminal justice system face multiple disadvantage. They have complex, overlapping needs, with their experience of coming into contact with the criminal justice system underpinned by experiences of violence and abuse, poor mental health, addiction, and having no safe place to call home. The challenges they face are mutually reinforcing and take place in a wider context of social and structural inequalities which shape their lives, including gender-inequality and racism." (AGENDA Alliance)

Other relevant statistics:

- Whilst women account for a small proportion of the prison population in the UK (only 4% of the total prison population in 2023), their outcomes remain poor. Committing less serious offences, they receive shorter custodial sentences, with over half of women in 2022 being sentenced for six months or less. This is still disastrously disruptive to home life and prospects for employment.
- In 2021/22, just over half of young women in custody had been in local authority care as a child.
- In 2022 women made up 29% of all self-harm incidents in prisons, despite only making up 4% of the population.
- Young women (18-24) of colour are disproportionately represented among the women's prison population.

In addition, these figures are likely to be consistently under-reported as this data is not routinely provided in prison population figures.

In 2018 the MoJ published its Female Offender strategy which aimed to;

- reduce the number of women entering the CJS by intervening earlier with support in the community,
- have fewer women in custody (especially serving shorter sentences) and
- create better conditions for women in custody.

In January 2022 the National Audit Office said that the MoJ had made "limited progress on its Female Offender Strategy to improve outcomes for women in the criminal justice system because it has not prioritised investment in this work".

So, while this is a small and niche group of beneficiaries, their needs are significant. The funds and assets that we have to provide support could make a huge difference to not only the young women themselves but to the wider women's sector. A mapping project published in 2022 by ROSA, a charity formed to address the acute lack of funding for the women and girls' sector, showed that in 2021 a total of £4.1bn of

grants were awarded to charities in the UK, but the women and girls' sector received just 1.8% of these. In addition, 1/3rd of all grants for women and girls-focused activity (worth £24.7m) went to organisations with no specific focus on women and girls. This highlights a lack of prioritisation of organisations tackling complex and systemic issues faced by women and girls in the UK, of whom female offenders are a key group.

#### 4.2 **Focus of strategy**

- **Priorities** - Young women and girls who already have a history of offending or who are at high risk of a registering a first offence.
- **Focus** – Projects that specifically aim to reduce the likelihood of a young women and girls either committing a first offence or reoffending and support them to move on positively with their lives. Projects would need to demonstrate age, gender, trauma, and culturally responsive approaches to working with young women and girls.
- **Age** – 11-30 years (this has been increased from 25 in recognition that many women under the age of 30 struggle to engage with services designed for older adult female offenders).

#### 4.3 **Grant size and length**

The current Sport 4 Development funding rounds have a maximum grant size of £40,000 a year for two years. This has worked well and addressed the previous issues linked to grant size and the ability to recruit full time members of staff. Therefore, it is recommended that this remain as the grant size and that two years of funding also continues to be the grant length.

#### 4.4 **Number of funding rounds**

Having two funding rounds each year works well for the Trust. It enables us to manage application numbers with the resources that we have available and provides the sector with two opportunities to make an application, which helps with planning.

An additional benefit of having two grant rounds is that we can also tweak the focus between each round and can maximise our learning to ensure that our funding opportunities remain relevant to the sectors we are seeking to support.

Strategic grants will continue to be considered at any Trustee meeting to ensure that decisions can be made in good time to be able to capitalise on opportunities when they arise.

#### 5.0 **Criteria**

Once the first round of applications has been received and shortlisted at the June 24 Trustee meeting, a recommendation will follow for the second funding round. This recommendation will be based on the quality and quantity of the applications

received in round 1 and temperature testing with the women and girls and criminal justice sectors.

The advertised criteria that will appear on the website will be based on the bullet points below.

- **Priorities** – We know that young people from BAME communities and care leavers are disproportionately represented amongst young female offenders. The intersection between these two groups and offending is an important one to acknowledge and name and should be a key priority in work that we fund.
- **Intervention points** – Due to high reoffending rates amongst women it is important that we continue to fund work that supports young women post release from custody, as some of the challenges linked to this are life changing. Work that takes place in prisons, through the gate and ongoing post release support should all be within the funding criteria.

Equally important though is work that tries to prevent a young woman or girl from either offending in the first place or receiving a conviction.

This might be through projects that are targeting those closest to the criminal justice system who have received both formal and informal Out of Court Disposals (OCD), those who are linked in with Youth Offending Team Prevention Programmes, other kinds of point of arrest diversion programmes and those who are known to HMPPS teams or the Police.

However, earlier interventions are also really important to prevent girls entering into offending behaviour and the criminal justice system. So, projects that target working with girls who are in the care system, known to be involved in low level gang activity and those who are excluded from school (or are on the edge of exclusion) would also be eligible.

- **Focus** – Applicants would need to demonstrate that their projects are culturally responsive, and trauma and gender informed. They can work with any age group between the ages of 11-30 but we would be unlikely to support proposals that plan to work across this whole age range. Projects that provide peer support from women with their own lived experience would be welcomed and projects that can demonstrate that they have been co-designed with the voices of young women and girls would be prioritised. In an effort to fill the gaps in support for this group of young women and girls we would be keen to create a space for new ideas to be developed and new ways of working to be tried. Whilst we will fund existing projects we also want to support organisations to try out new approaches or grow a much smaller piece of work – so long as it can be shown that it is informed by the experiences and voices of young women and girls.
- **Types of organisations to fund** – For the first funding round organisations eligible to apply will need to show that they exist primarily to support women and girls. Whilst this might exclude some organisations who are doing really good work with women and girls alongside other groups, this provides us with an opportunity to also support the wider women and girls' sector and respond to some of the issues flagged in the Rosa report. We can decide in June 24 if the second round should be widened to include organisations who will be ineligible for round 1.

## 6.0 Additional Activities

Alongside our grant making we will also provide support in the following areas;

6.1 **Evaluation** One of the goals of this funding is to support the development of work to fill some of the gaps that exist for young women and girls caught up in the criminal justice system. For many of these grantees it will be an opportunity to test out a new approach or project that could become a core part of their future delivery. To assist their ability to build an evidence base that will bolster their case for future support from other funders is an important part of providing these grants. This is an under resourced and developed sector so would be vitally important, especially for smaller organisations that don't have the capacity to do this themselves. It is proposed therefore that an evaluation be built into the funding to help identify what works and to use as a resource for making strong cases of impact and need in the future.

6.2 **Capacity building and networking between grantees** - these two strands of work will continue to be delivered in partnership with The Cranfield Trust through the 'Spark Programme'.

As many of the organisations we might fund are likely to come from an under resourced and under invested sector, funder plus opportunities have the potential to impact these grantees significantly. Consultancy and mentoring will be a key part of helping to build capacity and infrastructure within these organisations and add additional value to the grants.

Networking will continue through the Peer 2 Peer exchanges which Trustees will recall are 90-minute facilitated action learning sessions focused on key issues identified by the participants. The grantee area on the website will also include an ongoing programme of opportunities to share and encourage collaboration.

6.3 **Sharing learning linked to what we do** – we continue to be part of the Corsten Independent Funders Coalition which focuses on the needs of female offenders and is a useful platform for sharing with other funders the work that we are supporting. The Prison Reform Trust proposal came through the CIFC and is a funding collaboration between three members. I would hope that this will be the start of further opportunities to work with other funders in this way. We will also continue to build our presence at ACF events, participate in relevant issue-based networks and develop relationships that will link to our future strategic grant priorities, alongside looking for new opportunities to work in partnership with others.

## 7.0 Strategic grants

In line with the Trustees agreement to allocate up to 20% of the annual grants budget to strategic grants, a proposal from Prison Reform Trust that focuses on women has been recommended for funding.