

Ref Code	Organisation Name
2023-10-YO20	Exit Foundation
Visit Date	Visited By
29 th January 2024	Victoria Southwell (Zoom)
Overall aim of the funding	
To deliver a mentoring and physical activity programme to 60 young people known to the police, Newham's Youth Justice System, or social services, with the aim of supporting behaviour change so participants avoid future convictions.	
Background to Organisation and governance	
<p>Exit Foundation (EF) was established in 2012 and became a registered charity in 2017. EF currently employs 9 staff, four of who are part time. Three Trustees support the Director and staff team, and they meet quarterly. The Trustees have a strong mix of expertise in areas such as education, careers and youth work, safeguarding, housing, business, and charities. Two additional Trustees are currently in the process of being recruited and they have been identified to bring wider representation of ethnicity to the board. The Head Trustee provides direct support to the Director.</p> <p>EF has a Strategic Plan that runs from 2024 – 2027. Five service areas are highlighted in the plan and alongside each of these up to three goals identified. To support the plan a detailed SWOT analysis has been undertaken which demonstrates a good understanding of the assets that EF has alongside the local and wider context they are working in. EF is rooted in consultation so that key developments that have been articulated are based on ongoing engagement with beneficiaries alongside wider local stakeholders including family members of participants, partners, and future beneficiaries. The Head Trustee worked closely with the Director to develop the plan and the other Trustees fed into the process as required. The plan is reviewed at Trustee meetings. This is an area where EF is keen to retain the expertise of Cranfield Trust through the Spark Programme.</p>	
Leadership and expertise	
<p>On the call I spoke with Paul Dayes (Founder and Director), Yemisi Cedar (Senior Mentor) and Sarah Grimshaw (Trustee).</p> <p>Paul founded EF as a result of 35 years of drug addiction and offending. He served several prison sentences and can link his offending behaviour back to entering the care system as a child. After managing to address his drug use on release from prison he started working in the youth sector where he had a natural gift engaging with complex young people. His relatability was seen as a key factor in hard-to-reach young people building authentic relationships of trust with him, something that extended also to local statutory services. EF was founded to ensure that medium to high-risk young people who other services have been unable to positively work with had a chance to receive support that would significantly change their life outcomes.</p> <p>Yemisi has been with EF since 2021. Her own personal journey plays a key role in her approach to working with young people, and like Paul this makes her a relatable and real person. She has extensive knowledge of working with young people at all points of the criminal justice system and deep knowledge around gangs and trauma informed approaches. She has a Level 3 in Safeguarding.</p>	

Sarah has been a Trustee for a year and has previously been an EF employee. Her background is in careers guidance in prisons working with 18-25-year-olds. She is also the Safeguarding Lead at the college that she currently works at.

Aims and Activities

Exit Foundation's vision is that "Love Never Fails". They aim to achieve this through equipping, empowering, and encouraging ex-offenders, adults and young people that want, need, or require help to make positive life choices, leading them to a brighter future. They work across the London boroughs of Newham, Redbridge and Lambeth.

Key activities that EF undertake include;

- Delivering intensive mentoring programmes which aim to stop clients reoffending and lead them into education, training, apprenticeships, or employment,
- Assisting those with drug/alcohol addiction into rehabilitation
- Helping gang affiliated clients to relocate,
- Delivering gang awareness training to relevant organisations,
- Mentoring young people deemed to be at high risk of becoming involved in offending behaviour, and
- Providing emergency 28-day housing support for young people placed into care and providing staff for semi-independent living for those transitioning from care to independent living or needing to relocate for their safety.

Safeguarding

3PP has a detailed Adult and Young Person's safeguarding policy that is reviewed annually. It covers all areas of their work and also clearly links to other relevant policies such as Internet Policy and the Admissions Process. They follow Safer Recruitment guidance and have a robust induction process that provides Safeguarding training and ongoing training that is identified in a staff member's personal development plan and recorded on EF's training matrix. At a minimum all staff receive annual updated training and are trained to Level 3.

Good record keeping is in place for recording and reporting concerns and a 'lessons learned' process is conducted after concerns are raised to continually improve the actions EF take. The CEO is named on the policy as the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Senior Mentor deputises for him when needed. One of the Trustees is a Safeguarding Lead at their work place and so provides support and advice as well as oversight at board level.

Finances

Independently examined accounts for the year ending 31 March 2022 show income of £214,894 against expenditure of £183,073 resulting in a surplus of £31,821 all of which was unrestricted. Net current assets are £97,413 and the reserves stand at £110,105, all of which is unrestricted. The reserves policy states that EF should hold approximately six months of expenditure in reserves, and this is currently being met.

Budgets and funding predictions for the two-year period of the grant show an increase in planned growth of income and expenditure. If all applications currently pending or planned were to be successful this would nearly double historical income. However, budgets have been developed in such a way as to plan for both business as usual and to plan for expansion. In terms of business as usual the majority of the funding for the next two years has been secured or is deemed as being extremely likely - as comes via spot purchases from organisations such as Newham and Lambeth Leaving Care

Teams. Other funders include LB Newham Children Services, Newham Youth Offending team, Children in Need and fundraising in churches.

Good financial systems are in place for an organisation of this size and the current structure, which is overseen by the Office Manager, would be able to cope with growth. An external book keeper works with the Office Manager to produce management accounts and a cash flow and one of the Trustees has a business background so provides financial oversight at board level.

Current Situation and need

Newham has more children and young people than any other borough in London and 89.5% are from ethnic backgrounds other than white British. It is the third most deprived London borough with the most deprived areas for children under the age of 16 being centred around Custom House and Canning Town.

During 2022, Newham was the borough with the highest count of criminal offences (41,220) with a crime rate 8% higher than London as a whole and 22% higher than England, Wales, and Northern Ireland. It is also one of three boroughs with the most notable County Lines problem, seeing one of the highest numbers of referrals to Rescue and Response. This is a pan London County Lines support service for vulnerable young people up to the age of 25 who are caught up in County Lines drug distribution networks and subject to criminal exploitation.

EF has for the past five years worked alongside Newham Gangs Prevention Programme working closely with Police, Victim Support, Social Services, and the Youth Offending Service to combat gang crime via mentoring. Work has focused on supporting young people into education, employment and training as well as helping to secure safe and stable housing. Most of the young people they have worked with have experienced loss, violence, or hardship whilst they were growing up and had difficulty at school due to having Special Education needs or learning/behavioural difficulties. This led to high numbers being excluded from mainstream school and attending other educational provision. But this has often laid the way for more difficulties. The Institute of Race relations talks about a PRU (Pupil Referral Unit) to prison pipeline. It is known that young men from BAME communities are over represented in the prison population and in Newham it is recognised that numbers of boys excluded from school continue to rise and that a significant percentage are from this group.

To address this, EF provide intensive mentoring to young people to reduce their involvement, or risk of involvement, in criminality and/or violence and to improve their education, training and employment outcomes. This is paired with sports coaching and this, alongside the mentoring, is mutually reinforcing. Young people learn strategies to manage their emotions and behaviours and help them to identify situations that may lead them to perpetrating or being around violence. This will give them improve abilities to avoid risky situations and reduce their engagement in these kind of activities. Mentors also work with the young people to identify goals linked to their future aspirations. This might focus on re-engaging with education and acting as an advocate for the young person with their teachers.

Young people take part in a 16-week programme that will aim to support behaviour change and which will be divided into four monthly sections that are tailored to the needs of each individual. Sessions take place over two hours and include a mixture of mentoring and a physical activity at EF's gym. After the end of the 16-week programme each young person will still have the option to continue with their sports

programme and ongoing support around other issues will be provided as required. This ensures that EF is able to maintain ongoing contact.

EF is requiring funding for a mentor and sports coach to deliver eight 16-week programmes to up to 60 young people over the two-year grant period.

Expected changes in Year 1

Social Impact Area 1

Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved attendance at school or college • Increased motivation and engagement in school • Fewer discipline problems
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Social Impact Area 2

Individual Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved self-esteem • Improved motivation • Improved managing emotions
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Social Impact Area 3

Health and Wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased physical activity • Improved family relationships • Improved sense of mental wellbeing
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Request and Budget

EF is requesting **£79,956** over 2 years towards the salary costs of a Mentor, a Sports Coach, and project running costs.

£39,978 in year 1 - £25,200 (Mentor salary), £12,000 (Sports Coach salary), £1,578 (admin support) and £1,200 (refreshments).

£39,978 in year 2 - £25,200 (Mentor salary), £12,000 (Sports Coach salary), £1,578 (admin support) and £1,200 (refreshments).

Conclusion and Recommendation

Exit Foundation is a founder led organisation that harnesses the passion and personal life experiences of the Director and the wider team to effectively work with extremely challenging young people. Paul, the Founder, has had an extraordinary journey to arrive at the point he now finds himself, running a charity, but all of his life experiences have come together to give him a unique insight into the needs of young people and the barriers to engaging them effectively.

This proposal stands out for a number of reasons. This is a black led organisation that is deeply informed by lived experience and both of these things make it an authentic and relatable place for young people to come for support. Its independence means that those who are reluctant to accept support from statutory agencies are willing to engage with EF, closing the loop so to speak for those who are not connected with services. But at the same time the strong and deep relationships that EF has established with statutory agencies means that it all remains connected.

The areas and communities that EF operate in face multiple layers of deprivation and disadvantage, and all of this contributes to the challenges that EF works with. The deep understanding of these that exist across the whole staff team and the well planned and person led support that will be offered help to address this and takes all of this into account. They know that the behaviour of the young people they work with is rarely about just one thing and so this wider picture approach is crucial to supporting change to happen.

This project is an example of a text book application. It is both targeting the exact group we wanted this funding to support and has the appropriate referral routes in place, increasing the chances of it making a difference to young people teetering on the edge of the criminal justice system. Numerous examples were shared at the assessment of young people who have been supported by EF and the impact this had on their lives and their outcomes. This is exactly the kind of grass roots, beneficiary informed work that I had imagined when the programme was developed.

EF is at an exciting point in their evolution. Paul recognises that because some key people in his life saw his potential and offered him unconditional support and challenge he was able to turn his life around. He carries this principle with him in the way that he recognises potential in others and pays this support forward. This means that as the organisation grows, it provides increased opportunities for others with lived experience to develop and grow and inform the future direction of travel. This makes for a unique opportunity to continue to evolve as an organisation that is deeply rooted in first-hand knowledge of the issues being addressed, something that will continue to be a compelling offer for many of those at the most risk. As EF undergoes this growth the support of the Spark Programme and being part of a wider cohort of grantees will add a huge amount of value to their journey. Paul will equally provide significant value add to the wider portfolio with his own knowledge and personal experience.

This will be an exceptional addition to the portfolio and as such I would strongly recommend support with a grant as requested.

Recommended Priority Rating			
Risk = Low	Difference to organisation = High		Priority = High
Requested amount	£79,956	Recommended amount	£79,956