

Ref Code	Organisation Name
2023-10-YO46	Saints Foundation
Visit Date	Visited By
23 <sup>rd</sup> January 2024	Victoria Southwell
Overall aim of the funding	
To fund the continuation of the Switching Play project which supports young people, referred by the Youth Justice Service in Southampton. The project provides 1-1 support for up to 24 weeks using sport as a hook to engaging the young person with ongoing mentoring support to steer them away from a life of crime.	
Background to Organisation and governance	
<p>Saints Foundation (SF) is a registered charity that was established in 2001 when Southampton Football Club moved into their new stadium. Whilst SF is independent from the club, they are part of the wider club family and share many of the same facilities and resources. The CEO runs the organisation with the support of up to 90 staff, 65 of who are full time and the rest are sessional staff or volunteers.</p> <p>A Board of eight Trustees support the CEO and they meet formally every two months. The board has a range of experience that includes commercial and business, teaching, young people, health, partnerships and public affairs. The CEO of Southampton FC is a Trustee, alongside a second club employee. Several of the Trustees have been recruited in the last 12 months after a refresh that was undertaken to ensure that Trustees reflected a revised focus that SF was adopting.</p> <p>SF has a Strategic Plan that runs from April 2023 but without an end date. This isn't because the strategy doesn't focus on a fixed period but rather that the needs of the local area and beneficiaries will be regularly reviewed, and the strategy adjusted accordingly. The plan is detailed and well thought through, focusing on 7 areas SF believe will best support Southampton over the coming years. To enable this five key goals have been identified; 1 – use the power of Saints badge to support people in need across the city; 2 – maximise impact and enhance reputation as a trusted partner; 3 – connect with and inspire staff, fans, and the wider community; 4 - leverage unique assets to help sustain and grow work; and 5 – maintain strong foundations to drive operational standards. Under each of these are 3 specific KPIs for the year which are regularly reported on to the Trustees. This is articulated in a strategy document developed through consultation with stakeholders, participants, and staff.</p>	
Leadership and expertise	
<p>At the assessment I met with Greg Baker (CEO), Jamie Skinner (Head of Project Operations), and Anne Hendon-John (Trustee).</p> <p>Greg has been CEO at SF since 2014 and has led the work that has taken place around finessing the focus of the charity and the impact it makes. His background is in sport for development, fundraising and partnerships. He is from Southampton and a lifelong Saints fan, which he feels adds huge value to his understanding of the issues that SF address and the value that the link to football brings.</p>	

Jamie was a professional footballer who suffered a significant injury that led to his retirement aged 25. He went on to work at Leicester Football Club in delivery roles before moving into programme management. He has been at SF for five years.

Anne has been a Trustee for eight months but has been involved with SF for many years through her previous role as Headteacher for Southampton's Pupil Referral Unit. She was head there for 20 years so has extensive knowledge of the needs of young people who are excluded from mainstream education.

### **Aims and Activities**

SF's purpose is to support people in need throughout Southampton, providing life-changing opportunities to help the city and its communities thrive. They do this by delivering projects that respond to the ever-evolving needs of the people of the city and helping those who feel the impact of inequalities the most by connecting with those communities using the power of the Saints badge.

SF delivers projects across five key themes – health, education, gender equality, employability and pathways (projects focused on working with those involved with the criminal justice system). All of these areas link into specific Sustainable Development Goals and have the overriding objective of supporting participants to reach their personal goals.

SF works with around 5,000 participants annually. They only deliver projects within the city of Southampton (in specific postcodes) and have intentionally chosen not to cover a much wider area to increase the difference they are able to make. They do not deliver projects that provide football opportunities for the sake of playing football (Southampton FC do this) and offer a range of activities for participants including boxing and climbing.

### **Safeguarding**

SF's Safeguarding Policy is part of the wider Safeguarding Policy of Southampton Football Club. The policy sets out a proactive response to safeguarding and outlines their duty to keep children, young adults, and Adults at Risk safe. It is signed by key stakeholders across all levels of the club and Foundation including the club CEO, Managing Director, Director of SF and the SF Safeguarding Trustee.

The policy is compliant with all relevant legislation and statutory guidance and has been developed in line with the FA Premier League rules and Standards. The approach is articulated through 11 key safeguarding principles that guide how the policy is implemented. The Foundation benefits from the infrastructure of the club who have a dedicated Safeguarding Team led by the Chief Legal and Risk Officer who is the Senior Safeguarding Lead and reports directly to the Board. Below this across the club and the Foundation are a number of Safeguarding Leads (named in the policy) who have delegated responsibilities for safeguarding and who are supported by Safeguarding Champions. These Champions (also named in the policy) help disseminate key messages, support safeguarding concerns, and contribute to raising safeguarding awareness and have received enhanced Safeguarding training.

There are clear processes in place for raising immediate and less immediate concerns and the CPOMS system is used for internal reporting. Safer Recruitment processes are in place for new staff and all staff require a DBS check. All new staff receive Safeguarding training as part of their induction, and this is refreshed annually. Alongside this there is ongoing training around the issue and where relevant staff can undertake additional training to support their roles.

## **Finances**

Audited accounts for the year ending 30 June 2022 show income of £2,434,832 against expenditure of £2,213,618 resulting in a surplus of £221,214 of which all was unrestricted. Net current assets stand at £995,472 with a reserves figure of £1,000,178, all of which is unrestricted. The reserves policy states that the charity should hold reserves to meet approximately 6 months expenditure. This is currently being met.

Budgets and funding predictions for the two-year period of the grant show a consistent level of expected expenditure with the current year. SF have been relegated to the Championship though and this impacts the amount of money they will receive from the Premier League. This will represent a £168,000 reduction in the current financial year and a £300,000 reduction thereafter if they remain in the Championship. SF have done significant financial planning but to achieve a break-even budget going forward for the next financial year they will need to lose 11 paid roles. Just over 2/5 of the planned income for 24/25 and 25/26 has been secured to date. Main funding comes from football linked pots of money (such as PL, FA etc), Trusts and Foundations and event and corporate fundraising. The fundraising strategy for SF aims to ensure that a mixed source of pots make up the portfolio to ensure that an over reliance on one type of funder doesn't occur. Current funders include Police and Crime Commissioner, Southampton City Council, Children in Need and National Lottery.

Strong financial systems are in place with day-to-day management being undertaken by a Finance Manager. Whilst there is not a specific Treasurer role on the Trustee Board, a Trustee with business expertise oversees the production of financial information and supports the team in producing this. Management accounts are produced for Trustee meetings and SF benefits from the wider financial systems and expertise across the football club ensuring good financial rigour.

## **Current Situation and need**

Southampton's youth offending rates are significantly higher than the national average, with specific types of crime, such as violent crime, disproportionately involving young people. Local statistics also indicate that 1 in 5 children and young people in Southampton live in deprivation, something that is known to contribute to high risks of young people becoming involved in crime.

Southampton's Youth Justice Service's strategic plan identifies several key problems to address; the custody rate remains above the national average, with 18 young people receiving a custodial sentence in the past year, the reoffending rate for young people is 13% higher than the national average and first-time entrants to the criminal justice system are also above the national average. Data also shows that 40% of young people involved with the Youth Offending Service are not engaged in full time education, employment, or training.

SF have to date been delivering their Switching Play programme, which supports young people caught up in the criminal justice system, through participating in the biggest Social Impact Bond in Europe. Between September 22 and August 23, SF has worked with 70 young people and the data they have collected has shown that 70% have not reoffended six months after they have stopped receiving support from the project. 30 of these young people also went on to record transitioning into at least one positive development opportunity. The funding for the project has come from the Youth Offending Service via the SIB but this is now running out. Southampton City Council has a deficit budget for the current financial year (and likely future years) and so funding for young people has significantly contracted, as has the direct provision that it provides across the city. This makes the Switching Play programme even more

important as it fills a gap that is not currently being filled elsewhere and a waiting list is now in place for young people being referred to the programme.

These young people include those who have been identified as future gang leaders and the city's Inclusion and Prevention team, who sit below the Youth Offending Service, are starting to make referrals to the project. This provides a key opportunity and moment to engage with young people before they tip into the more formal points of the youth justice system.

The Switching Play project focuses on achieving outcomes for young people in four key areas; reduction in reoffending, improved mental well-being, increased aspirations, and positive connections. Up to 35 young people are worked with at any time and are provided with weekly 1-2-1 mentoring sessions that use sports as a means to engage whilst providing mentoring and guidance. These sessions are delivered by trained youth workers who also have coaching qualifications. Out of these sessions personal action plans are developed and these will be implemented as part of the mentoring journey. The young person will receive support for between 12-24 weeks and at the end of this will be helped to transition to other relevant Saints Foundation projects. This transition support is an important part of ensuring that the young person is able to access other projects that better reflect the point that they are now at and the ongoing support they need.

The grant will cover the salary costs of the Project Coordinator, a key role is enabling the ongoing delivery of the project.

#### **Expected changes in Year 1**

##### **Social Impact Area 1**

Social and Community Cohesion

- Increased social capital and trust
- Reduced anti-social behaviour
- 

##### **Social Impact Area 2**

Individual Development

- Improved motivation
- Improved self-efficacy
- Improved managing emotions

##### **Social Impact Area 3**

Employability

- Enhanced career prospects
- Increased aspirations and career goals
- Young people entering sustained employment

#### **Request and Budget**

SF is requesting **£65,682** over 2 years towards the salary costs of the Intervention Coordinator.

**£32,356 in year 1** - £32,356 (salary).

**£33,326 in year 2** - £33,326 (salary).

#### **Conclusion and Recommendation**

SF is a well-run organisation that has clear aims around how it can best use the full set of assets it has to make a difference to those in most need in Southampton. Whilst not being part of Southampton FC the charity is inextricably linked to the club and on the whole benefits from this relationship. However this is a very separate organisation in terms of autonomy and ambition for the work SF does across the city. I was really

impressed by the passion and vision for the foundation and the deep understanding that the team there have of the issues that many in Southampton face.

The team have made a conscious decision to focus their work on a small number of beneficiaries so that they can do deep, informed and impactful work with participants. They have done a lot of work to identify where the areas of most deprivation across Southampton are and decided to only work across those communities. This differs from many big football club charities who roll out numerous football clubs and holiday camps to show they have a foot print across their city. SF's approach has informed the work they have done with young people involved in the criminal justice system and has been fundamental in the development of this. The links and relationships that are held with key stakeholders, many of whom are also referral agencies, was really impressive and have gone a long way to ensuring that there is both a demand for the project as well as genuine collaboration. SF staff sit on a weekly city-wide Youth Justice Decision Making Panel and contribute their thoughts about young people who are discussed there and have influenced the outcomes of several of the discussion that have taken place. These deep relationships with local youth justice agencies is exactly what I was hoping to see in applications as these moments of referral have the potential to be catalysts in preventing a young person moving further down an offending path.

As part of the assessment visit, I visited a local gym and met a couple of young men on the programme and it was obvious that their engagement with the project was significant for them. It also highlighted the huge amount of skill that the two Intervention Project Officers have. I was hugely impressed with the project and the expertise that runs through the delivery.

SF does fall outside of the advertised criteria in terms of the income that the charity receives annually. However, there are compelling reasons why this project should be funded. Firstly, Southampton has areas of significant deprivation and no one else is delivering this kind of programme to young people from those communities. So, this project both meets a need and fills a gap. The current portfolio doesn't fund any work in this part of the UK and Southampton Council has a huge black hole in its finances, so better youth justice provision is not going to come locally. Southampton FC were relegated from the Premier League at the end of the 22/23 season and with this comes a decrease in funding for both the club but also the foundation. Next season the foundation will be around £450,000 worse off through not being able to access PL core funding if they do not achieve promotion this season. There is a commitment to meet some of these costs through reserves, alongside fundraising, but this is not a sustainable long-term plan and at some point, the foundation will need to cut its cloth accordingly and reduce the projects it delivers. To lose this exemplar project would be devastating. Finally, this is amongst the best work that I have seen that uses sport for development to work with young people involved in the criminal justice system. The addition of this project to the wider portfolio would add huge value to the wider cohort who would undoubtedly learn huge amounts from what SF has achieved to date.

This is an incredibly strong and well-planned project and I recommend support with a grant as requested.

<b>Recommended Priority Rating</b>					
Risk =	Low	Difference to organisation =	High	Priority =	High
Requested amount	£65,682	Recommended amount	£65,682		