

## **The issue**

Despite falling numbers of children and young people in youth custody, outcomes for those sent to prison have got worse. Reoffending rates remain stubbornly high with over two thirds of young people released from secure institutions reoffending within 12 months of release. This shows the destructive cycle of crime that some young people fall into and struggle to get out of.

Employment is recognised as being a key pathway to reducing reoffending as it offers independence, status, earning power, a structured routine, social contact and a sense of purpose and direction. Yet many young offenders lack workplace skills and experience and stigma associated with offending can have a profound impact on employment opportunities.

Many of these young people have had complicated and chaotic lives and can be resistant to education and training due to bad experiences at school.

Covid-19 has had a huge impact on employment opportunities for young people. Many of the industries that have traditionally employed young people have been hard hit by the economic consequences of the pandemic.

## **Funding**

We want to fund projects that will help young offenders find meaningful and secure employment. We understand that the path to employment can be complex and that building strong relationships of trust is a vital part of supporting someone on their journey. Therefore we will not fund projects that are solely recruitment services for young people.

We welcome applications that:

- Have specific outcomes and targets related to securing employment for participants. *General employability and training programmes that make participants 'employment ready' or 'better skilled' will not be considered.*
- Show that they will also work with employers and provide post placement support to both employee and employer.
- Demonstrate that they understand the wide range of challenges and issues that will need to be addressed to help a young person succeed on their employment journey.
- Show existing work with young offenders already taking place and can evidence a track record of helping them to achieve positive outcomes. You might already provide employment support or want to add this focus to the current support you offer young offenders.

Funding can only be used to work with young offenders even if your organisation works with vulnerable young people more broadly. We will prioritise proposals that:

- Exclusively target young offenders from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities,
- Young women, and
- Young offenders who have been 'looked after'

If you already work specifically with adult ex-offenders around employment you will need to show us in your application that you understand the unique challenges faced by young offenders and that your project will offer support that is appropriate and effective for their needs. This might be through working with another organisation who have this specific expertise of working with young people.