

Ref Code	Organisation Name
2022-05-YC16	The Junction Foundation
Visit Date	Visited By
13 th September 2022	Victoria Southwell
Overall aim of the funding	
To employ a Post 16 Education and Training Development Worker to build upon a successful pilot within schools. This will ensure that young adult carers are supported into, and able to maintain, further education aspirations and achievements.	
Background to Organisation and governance	
<p>The Junction Foundation (JF) is a registered charity that was established in the early 1990's by a group of local volunteers in response to local need that required reactionary services and support. It became a charity in 2008. JF employs 65 staff and has 27 current volunteers. A board of 5 Trustees meet every six weeks and have a range of skills that includes public health, local government, HR, IT, risk, information governance and marketing and branding. Two new Trustees are about to be appointed and they have knowledge around finance and the civil service. A recently retired Trustee is also staying on in an advisory role as a Safeguarding Advisor. There is also a Finance and Risk sub-committee that meets in-between the board meetings.</p> <p>A Strategic Plan is in place for 2022-27 setting out strategic aims across 8 key areas that make up the strategic objectives. This is underpinned by a clear Theory of Change linking to all elements of the work JF undertakes. Trustees also attend 2 board development days annually and the last one was used to agree the strategic plan.</p>	
Leadership and expertise	
<p>At the assessment I met with Beth Major (CEO) and Simon Nott (Head of Development). A Trustee was unable to attend the assessment meeting.</p> <p>Beth joined JF in 2018 and has a background in youth work. Her career has included grass roots youth work and senior roles in statutory settings including as Deputy Head of Youth Services in Hartlepool. She holds a teaching qualification to teach youth work courses and still works one evening every fortnight at JF's youth drop in to ensure that she stays close to the issues being supported. She describes herself as authentic, open and collaborative. Locally she sits on the South Tees Carers Forum and chairs the Young Carers Task Group ensuring connectivity strategically to developments. This means that she and the work of JF are well linked into local carer issues.</p> <p>Simon has been with JF for 18 months and has 25 years' experience in working in charity and public sectors. He has a master's degree in Business Administration, he is a Chartered Manager, has a Chartered Institute of Fundraising Diploma, an Advanced Diploma in Accounting and is a qualified PRINCE2 Practitioner. Simon has extensive experience of developing and resourcing projects and project management.</p>	
Aims and Activities	
JF aims to empower children, young people and their families to embrace life with confidence, facing life's challenges in a positive way. They do this through listening, genuinely caring, not judging and empowering.	

JF support children, young people, and families across the Tees Valley. They have a number of areas of work drawn together with shared goals and all focusing on making a difference to the lives of children, young people and their families including: Children and Young People's Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Support; Youth Employment; Young Carers' Support; Youth Work and Children and Young People's Specialist Transport.

Information, advice and guidance features heavily in their delivery models and they employ multi-disciplinary teams of professionals with backgrounds in psychology, social work, counselling, youth work and youth employment as well as other qualified and experienced practitioners who: Understand the issues facing children and young people, Have the skills to effectively support them in identifying their own solutions and, Can deliver evidence-based interventions to maximise positive outcomes for young people.

In 2020 – 2021 they supported over 1,700 individual children, young people.

Safeguarding

JF has a detailed and reflective approach to safeguarding. All staff are trained up to Level 3 and subsets of staff receive additional specialist issue training depending on their role. JF works closely with a Safeguarding Consultant to access ongoing support and advice. Quarterly Safeguarding Leads meetings are held to review JF's approach and Beth is also part of South Tees Safeguarding Children's Board.

Safeguarding Champions sit across the organisation and provide support and peer review issues raised by colleagues. They share information across the organisation to help identify trends that might need to be picked up in their approach. Safeguarding is used in its broadest term and is about the promotion of welfare and wellbeing. Over the course of a year 20% of incidents that are identified as concerns need to be referred externally onwards.

Finances

Audited accounts for the year ending 31st March 2021 show income of £1,337,127 against expenditure of £1,099,964 resulting in a surplus of £237,163 of which £199,195 was unrestricted.

The balance sheet shows net current assets of £772,170 of which £517,269 is unrestricted and £92,834 designated for work towards building maintenance costs linked to an owned property. The reserves policy states that JF strive to maintain at least 10% of annual income being used to increase general unrestricted reserves whilst aiming for a reserve level of up to 33%. This is currently being achieved. The levels of reserves are reviewed annually by the Finance and Risk Sub-Committee.

Main funding is received from Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council, South Tees CCG, Health Education England and Middlesbrough Council. Trust and Foundations funding includes Children in Need, Big Lottery and Tudor Trust. Income and budgets for the coming years are stable with a new 3+1+1 tender won in April 2022. The Head of Development has a huge amount of experience in income generation and will be an important part of future growth.

Clear financial systems are in place and there is strong oversight from the Board via the Treasurer and the Finance and Risk Sub-committee who meet in between Trustee meetings to look more deeply at finances. Internal processes are managed by the Finance Manager who works closely with the Deputy Chief Executive Officer. Additionally, the new Treasurer will meet with the Deputy CEO quarterly.

<p>Current Situation and need</p> <p>Carers Trust national research shows that young carers have significantly lower education attainment than their peers, are twice as likely to be NEET (not in education, employment or training), 1 in 4 reports being bullied due to their caring role and 39% report that no one is aware of their caring role. Over the past two years JF has worked with the local adult carer provider, Carers Together, on a piece of participative research with young carers approaching the transition to adulthood. They also spoke to young adult carers and asked them to reflect on their experiences and identify what would have supported them. This research highlighted the need for a bespoke transitions support service for young adult carers and led to some funding being allocated for a post to work across two local authority areas that would provide some support to this group. This is primarily focused on group and 1-2-1 support but the scope of the project is limited due to capacity.</p> <p>Alongside this project JF also runs a school's project that works in local primary and secondary schools and provides support to both young carers as well as the school. It helps to identify Champions within each school who take a lead role in highlighting and pushing forward issues linked to better recognition and support for young carers. One key element of the project is to support the roll out of young carer passports. These serve the purpose of better articulating the needs young adult carers may have in a range of settings to inform wider professionals of those needs. Quite often decisions are made about young carers' education without the knowledge of what the young carer needs to succeed in that environment, support their attendance and attainment.</p> <p>Whilst this project has seen some strong successes in terms of raising awareness of issues for young carers with teachers and pupils, identifying hidden young carers and reducing stigma, this work is focused in secondary school settings. It has highlighted the gap that exists in post 16 education settings and the need for a similar role to be working with colleges, training providers and universities. This would complement the current transitions work taking place with young carers by focusing on the education journey they face and building on the "moving into adulthood" focused support that the already funded element of the work offers.</p> <p>The proposed project will provide support networks for young adult carers through identifying Young Carer Champions in colleges, universities and training providers in South Tees. This will ensure that young carer issues are highlighted with EET settings and that all young adult carers have a point of contact within settings to ensure their needs are addressed. The project will also continue with the roll out of young carer transitions passports which are seen as vital tools in recognising the support that needs to be put in place. A part time Post 16 Education and Training Development Worker will be employed to take this project forward.</p>
<p>Expected Key Achievements in Year 1</p>
<p>EKA 1</p> <p>Improve the level of knowledge and understanding within colleges, universities and other training establishments about support that is beneficial to young carers.</p>
<p>EKA 2</p> <p>Improve the availability, accessibility and appropriateness of support provided to young carers as they attend colleges, university, and other training establishments.</p>
<p>EKA 3</p> <p>Increased levels of support being accessed by young carers in colleges, university, and other training establishments in the South Tees area.</p>
<p>Request and Budget</p> <p>JF is requesting £52,376 over 2 years to employ a part time Post 16 Education and Training Worker and associated project costs.</p>

£26,099 in year 1 - £17,715 (salary and associated costs), £6,634 (business support costs), £1,100 (group sessions) and £650 (laptop).
£26,277 in year 2 - £18,543 (salary and associated costs), £6,634 (business support costs) and £1,100 (group sessions).

Conclusion

This is an impressive organisation led by a dynamic and knowledgeable CEO. South Tees is an area of great need that faces multiple types of deprivation and challenges. The Junction Foundation is a vital source of support for young people living there. It provides a wide-ranging offer that applies a holistic approach to engagement and support that has been developed through vast knowledge and ongoing consultation and collaboration. It fits the criteria due to holding the statutory contract for services for young carers (and has done so for many years) despite working with beneficiaries that extend beyond this group.

The work they do with young carers is a core part of their work and was the first piece of statutory funding they ever received. So, whilst they are not a young carers organisation in the strictest sense, they have the needs of young carers running through their DNA. There is also an added benefit of the organisation providing services that go beyond just meeting the needs of young carers. The other projects they run are able to be accessed by young carers in a seamless way, maximising the amount of focused support offered. Interestingly they said that at the end of each year they look at the services that have been accessed and if a young person has accessed less than 3 different services then they review the offer as they don't believe that any one service can sufficiently provide the level of support the young person needs.

The current work taking place in schools has been well received by schools and gone some way to filling some of the gaps that exist for young carers. 36 schools locally already have Champions via JF support across primary and secondary settings. This shows that their model works and this provides reassurance that this could be replicated in higher education and training environments. And whilst work isn't actively taking place in many of these settings there are connections and relationships already in existence which will provide an ideal base to build up from. This project will also complement the other work currently taking place with young adult carers around their transition into adult services and other challenges linked to this. This won't replicate what is already taking place in that project but rather will amplify the reach and impact.

This is an expert organisation working in a challenging geography with so much to be able to share with other grantees. They also are keen to learn and continue evolving their service. Beth, the CEO, when talking about their Strategic Plan said that the objectives can be flexible and change so long as you stay true to your values and mission and this seemed to sum up the culture of the organisation. They are experts who are always looking at how they can improve and enhance what they do but without compromising the ethos of the organisation.

The proposed project could make a huge difference to the outcomes of many young adult carers and help them to stay in education, opening up opportunities that might not otherwise be possible for them. This is a well-planned project that will be able to draw upon the expertise and partnerships needed to achieve the anticipated impact. Therefore, I would strongly recommend support with a grant as requested.

Recommended Priority Rating

Risk = Low	Difference to organisation = High	Priority = High
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