

Ref Code	Organisation Name
2022-11-YO34	OMG Training & Development CIC
Visit Date	Visited By
17 <sup>th</sup> January 2023	Victoria Southwell
Overall aim of the funding	
To fund an additional Outreach and Development Worker to support 50 young offenders per year to go through OMG's Ready, Steady, Work employability programme and progress into either paid work, apprenticeships, or further education.	
Background to Organisation and governance	
<p>OMG Training &amp; Development (OMG) is a CIC that is limited by guarantee and was established in 2018. OMG currently employs 6 members of staff and 6 instructors who are employed as sessional workers. One Director, who is the Founder and a paid employee, leads the organisation with the support of a senior management team of 3 other people.</p> <p>OMG creates an annual strategy each year at an away day that includes all staff. Out of these away days the year's aims are identified and written up into what essentially forms a workplan of priorities. It also provides the basis of a SWOT analysis that helps to identify areas of concern that need addressing. Progress towards the areas identified in the plan is reviewed quarterly by the SMT.</p> <p>OMG has been operational for five years and achieved the goals originally identified and so the team feel that they now also need to create a longer-term plan for the organisation to cover the next five years, as there is ambition for continued growth. This isn't currently an exercise that there is internal expertise to take forward and finances also don't allow for investment in external support. The Spark Programme would be a good way of helping to achieve this if a grant is awarded.</p>	
Leadership and expertise	
<p>At the assessment I met with Jamal Miah, Founder and Project Manager. He is the sole Director of OMG.</p> <p>Jamal set up OMG in 2018 after having worked in youth work roles for Fairbridge, The Princes Trust and a number of smaller charities targeting at risk young people. He also helped to set up a charity in Croydon prior to starting OMG. Jamal has lived experience of many of the issues that OMG support. He did poorly at school and as a young man became involved in the criminal justice system. He credits his love of music with helping him to move away from offending and recognise the possibility of a different kind of life. An opportunity to participate in a Raleigh International 3-month programme in Costa Rica transformed his aspirations for the future and set him on a path of wanting to help young people who were like him resist a life of criminality.</p> <p>Jamal is supported by a senior leadership team who have brought significant additional expertise to OMG.</p>	
Aims and Activities	
OMG is a grassroots provider of education, training, and mentorship, delivering innovative learning programmes to some of London's most disaffected and vulnerable	

young people. They focus primarily on engaging a community of learners with multiple barriers to participation. They strive to protect the rights of young people, reduce their disadvantages, and help them to face the challenges of life. OMG aims to be recognised as a leading youth organisation, to increase the impact on the number of learners they work with and to make a difference.

OMG runs a number of programmes that include;

- Ready Steady Work which provides pre-support to young offenders to prepare for progression into traineeships, apprenticeships, and work. The programme combines mentoring with personal social development activities and accredited qualifications for up to 50 young offenders at any time with 88% progressing.
- Through the Gate which works with HMP Feltham to support young people to resettle after release and move onto the Ready Steady Work programme.
- Preventative NEET which supports young people at risk of becoming NEET to sustain their education
- Gangs Prevention Project which targets young people involved in, or on the fringes of, gang activity, and moves them away from crime and into positive destinations such as re-entering education.

Over the past 12 months OMG has worked with 350 young people to help them gain accredited qualifications, desist from crime, and find employment.

### **Safeguarding**

OMG has a comprehensive safeguarding policy that covers all elements of their work and is in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019. The Project Manager is the named Safeguarding Lead in the policy. The policy feels very rooted into the work, and culture, of the organisation and the language used is very accessible and covers a wide range of areas of concerns beyond more traditional issues such as county lines, FGM and up skirting.

All staff undertake safeguarding training as part of their induction and then receive annual refresher training either online or delivered through London Youth. Regular team meetings and casework meetings discuss and sometimes identify concerns and agree appropriate actions – whether that be escalating externally or an internal intervention.

Safeguarding is discussed at all team meetings and caseload meetings where both new and ongoing concerns are reviewed and discussed. Safeguarding processes are audited annually. Outreach and Development Workers regularly attend safeguarding meetings with learners to ensure that they have support. OMG is regulated by the Multi Agency Networking Panel for Tower Hamlets which ensure processes are up to date.

### **Finances**

Unaudited Financial Statements for the year ending 30<sup>th</sup> April 2022 show income of £422,579 against expenditure of £443,929 resulting in a small deficit of £21,350. Net current assets amount to £610 and a reserve figure which is shown as Shareholders Funds of £26,704. Of this £26,094 are tangible assets. The management accounts for the current financial year are showing a surplus of £37,850 for year end.

Budgets and funding predictions for the two-year period of the grant show an increase in expenditure to £582,913 and all of this income has been secured apart from this request. Room hire income and an annual fundraising concert have the potential of securing a surplus of just under £20,000. In 2024/25 £362,827 has currently been

secured against planned expenditure of £504,598. Main funding comes from London Learning Consortium, Newham Council, Groundwork and City of London.

Day to day finances are overseen by the Project Manager and Contracts Manager. The Project Manager uses Xero to do the book keeping and also produces a monthly cashflow that aligns with the annual budget. An accountant works with OMG to produce the end of year accounts and processes the payroll. Over the next 12 months the creation of a Business and Finance Director is being prioritised as OMG recognises that financial systems are reliant on one key person which isn't ideal.

### **Current Situation and need**

OMG is located in Tower Hamlets, a multi-cultural London borough which is the 10<sup>th</sup> most deprived in the UK and the most deprived borough in London. Trust for London research shows that 39% of residents live in poverty and ongoing cuts to services have seen a scaling back of support options for residents, especially young people.

OMG currently runs the only youth hub in the borough and provides a venue for young people to get support from staff with the same lived experience as they have. The venue is a four-story building with interactive classrooms, music creation software and suites, and hang out spaces and attracts referrals from probation services across London. Being based in Tower Hamlets the team have strong links with local Black and Bangladeshi communities, many of whom are living in poverty and lack access to good jobs and social capital. Many young people who offend from these communities are known to be primarily involved in crimes such as dealing drugs to earn money as other options are not available to them through traditional routes and providers.

OMG currently runs a couple of projects that support young offenders to find employment and help them to move away from criminal activity. Their Through the Gate contract with HMP Feltham allows OMG to build relationships with young people who are due for release by running workshops within the prison which enables them to identify young people who will be suitable for further support. They then meet the young person on the day of their release at the prison and help them with the difficult job of resettling within their community and identifying a positive way forward. The next step would be to join their established Ready Steady Work programme which has been designed to develop the interpersonal and employability skills needed to find and secure employment. On this course the young people receive a minimum of six weeks mentoring and training which ends with a pathway to progress plan that is shared with other agencies working with the young person. Most young people continue with the programme and go on to complete Level 1 qualifications in business admin, music production or events management. This then provides a platform for OMG to work with music industry partners to help secure job placements and paid employment. Other young people will be supported to enrol in college and achieve a Level 2 qualification with the offer of employment support to follow.

With the requested funding OMG plans to employ an additional Outreach and Development Worker who will work exclusively with ex-offenders. All Outreach and Development Workers have lived experience and have achieved a minimum of Level 2 in Youth Work and will provide mentoring, group activities and community outreach to the young person alongside the classroom sessions. Through weekly mentoring, the Outreach and Development Worker builds rapport and develops the skills and personally traits within the young person that employers look for and that also reduce the risk of offending, such as self-esteem, professionalism (appropriate clothing) and good time keeping. Over the course of 24 months 100 young offenders will be supported with 88% achieving a positive outcome.

<b>Expected Key Achievements in Year 1</b>
EKA 1
Young offenders will have significantly improved their prospects of entering employment.
EKA 2
Young offenders will show increased skill levels by completing Level 1 qualifications and demonstrate progress by enrolling in Level 2 qualifications of Apprenticeships.
EKA 3
Young offenders will progress into paid employment or traineeships.
<b>Request and Budget</b>
OMG is requesting <b>£60,000</b> over 2 years for the salary costs of a full time Outreach and Development Worker and project costs.  <b>£30,000 in year 1</b> - £25,000 (salary), £1,900 (admin support), £1,700 (travel), £780 (phone and laptop), £320 (events) and £300 (teaching resources). <b>£30,000 in year 2</b> - £25,000 (salary), £1,900 (admin support), £1,700 (travel), £420 (phone), £680 (events) and £300 (teaching resources).
<b>Conclusion</b>
OMG is a dynamic, ambitious, and exciting organisation that is led by an ethos of knowledge and inclusion. Jamal the Project Manager is OMG, and his background, passion, commitment, and vision has enabled OMG to become a valued education provider and an accessible and transformative project. The link to music is clearly a huge draw to the young people who join the programme, many of whom have struggled to make a success of more formal education and who have become difficult to engage.  Jamal's own personal story is a huge part of this determination to provide opportunities for young people that he sees himself in, and the work they have developed in prisons, particularly the Through the Gate support offered to young men leaving Feltham, has been informed by his own experiences. This project has made a huge difference to the outcomes for many young prison leavers who have been able to avoid a swift return to custody because of the support and focus that OMG has given them.  The proposed project is a natural progression from this and provides OMG with an opportunity to expand their staff team and have a dedicated Outreach and Development Worker for those who have left prison. This provides a vital line of support for them as they navigate their way back into their lives and try to move forward. The OMG courses provide a useful focus and structure for the young person, but they need additional support to address the multiple other challenges that they face and resist the pressure of reoffending.  Jamal is an impressive person who has a clear connection with the young people who enter OMG. His own story is inspirational and informs all that OMG strives to do. This makes him very relatable and a vital role model to the young people who enrol on the programmes at OMG. His links with the music industry and wider community also make placements and ultimately paid employment opportunities within that sector realistic. He is an incredibly skilled youth worker and by his own admission the past 5 years that OMG has been in existence has been a learning curve.  I do not doubt that OMG will engage with some young offenders via this programme who will change their trajectory because of this intervention and move away from offending behaviour. I think that some of the outcomes are a little on the high end and it is likely that larger numbers will move into Level 2 qualification education rather than

actual paid employment, but this would still represent a strong outcome for them and likely lead to future opportunities. My main concern though is around OMG and the reliance on Jamal and the gaps in his knowledge.

I felt excited and genuinely energised meeting with him and being in their amazing building. Jamal is an open and transparent person who was quick to highlight gaps and weaknesses in the current structure and where mistakes have been made in the past 5 years. This was rather refreshing. It did make these shortcomings front and centre of the assessment and a funding recommendation though. Jamal is the sole Director of OMG and even though he has a senior team who he makes all decisions with, ultimately accountability and control stop with him solely. He is keen to explore bringing in additional Directors who would have a non-executive role (Trustees essentially) and to expand the operational team once income grows. This would increase the capacity for more people being involved in core areas such as finance and planning. But this is a longer-term plan and not one that would happen quickly, which makes the current structure one that we have to feel totally comfortable with.

This is a clear example of an organisation that would benefit as much from the grant funding as they would from the support that Cranfield Trust would be able to offer through the Spark Programme. Consultancy to help develop OMG in some of these areas, and mentoring for Jamal, could make a huge difference to the long-term resilience and professionalism of OMG, which would benefit from long term sustainability as well as making them an attractive recipient of funding and contracts.

Based on other assessments I do feel that the risk attached to making a grant to OMG at this point is high. I feel that there will be other opportunities for OMG to apply in future years and would be keen to encourage a further application from them once they have made some progress in these core areas. To help them do this though I would recommend that we still fund Cranfield Trust to work with them via the Spark Programme to help with consultancy and mentoring to ensure that this work is able to take place. At this point in time though I would not recommend support with a grant as has been requested.

Recommended Priority Rating		
Risk = High	Difference to organisation = High	Priority = High