

Meeting	Trustee Board meeting
Date	22 June 2023
Title	Spark Programme additional support
Agenda item	7
Paper by	Victoria Southwell

1.0 Purpose of paper

To provide Trustees with information to enable them to approve the proposed additional funding for Cranfield Trust to provide support for young carer grantees as part of our funding exit strategy.

2.0 Background information

Trustees will recall that as part of the new strategy that was launched in April 2023 we agreed to commit our resources to funding only one sector – young offenders. This meant that we would no longer support work with young carers and this decision was communicated to existing grantees and the wider sector. Whilst this was obviously disappointing news for people to hear, we received a lot of grateful responses about the support we had provided, both in terms of the grants we had made and the extra support we had provided via the Spark Programme.

Following the March 2023 Trustee meeting, where the impact of this news on our grantees was discussed, further thought was given to how we can ensure that the end of our funding is as painless as possible. Whilst it is important for us to understand how our support has contributed to the work our young carer grantees have done it was suggested that we don't ask for a formal end of grant report but rather a summary of what has been achieved. We are currently thinking about a new format for the report that will facilitate this. It was also raised that we could potentially think about how to support our grantees to manage the end of our grants and the wider challenge of income generation in the current climate. Our current relationship with Cranfield Trust and the success to date of the Spark Programme provides a ready-made route into designing something that will specifically benefit both rounds of our young carer grantees. This paper outlines how this support could be delivered and offered to grantees after consulting with them about what would be most useful.

3.0 Suggested way forward

The support that has been provided by the Spark Programme to date has added significant value to the grants that we have made. We have regularly seen through both grantee and Cranfield Trust feedback that the consultancy and mentoring that has been undertaken has been well received and enhanced the organisations and staff. This has been apparent through improved funding bids, newly developed strategic plans, and significant staff development as a result of mentoring. The Peer2Peer exchanges have also provided vital opportunities for staff to share their challenges and make links with other people fulfilling similar roles.

As our funding starts to come to an end there is a further opportunity to enhance the support that we are offering around tangible issues such as future planning, income generation and long-term resilience and sustainability. After feedback from a majority of the 15 young carer organisations we fund there is interest in a number of workshops being run online to tackle some common challenges. These challenges have been identified by our grantees and further work will be done to finalise a set of topics before the workshops are advertised. Broadly the workshops will follow the format as described below;

Pre-workshop – grantees would be asked to watch a webinar related to the identified topic, from Cranfield Trust's "Essentials to Excellence" or "Learning with Leaders" series. This would enable them to gain some insights and ideas beforehand, and it would help to focus their thoughts and generate ideas or questions.

Grantees can then submit questions before, or during the 'workshop' session.

Workshop - A 1-hour session in which 2-3 slides would be presented which summarise the topic, then open up for questions & discussion. This would give grantees the opportunity to relate the webinar material to their own specific situation and gain insights both from Cranfield Trust and, importantly, from one another too (so, like a combination of a webinar, 'On Call' with an expert and Peer2Peer learning).

It is likely that over the course of the next six months we will run around five workshops (one a month). After the workshop grantees will be able to follow up with Sue Elder, who manages the Spark Programme for Cranfield Trust, and also to access Cranfield Trust's 'On Call' service for any further information or advice.

Based on feedback so far with grantees, topics from Cranfield Trust's existing webinar series that have generated the most interest include,

- Investability - 'why should I invest time or money in your charity?'
- How to create a business plan for your charity
- How to Write a Successful Bid
- Financial forecasting in a time of uncertainty
- Charities Collaborating - Why it's important now and how to make it work?
- How To Grow Your Charity: Start With What Works
- Securing the Future for Charities (sustainability)

Other areas that grantees have fed back to us about wanting support around include recruitment, using social media, branding, evidencing outcomes and the effect of the cost-of-living crisis on charities. We will work with Cranfield Trust to identify ways of touching on some of these issues through this programme of workshops.

The workshops will not be compulsory, but we are confident that there will be good engagement in the series and will continue to also look at further ways of ensuring that the connections and opportunities for our grantees to interact with each other are supported.

The current grant that the Cranfield Trust receives is costed based on them working with new grantees so there isn't the ability to cover this additional support from that grant. Therefore, we will need to add in some additional funding if we expand the Spark Programme to also cover this support.

4.0 Recommendation

A further grant of £5,000 over one year is awarded to provide additional support to young carer grantees around income generation, future planning, and organisational resilience.