

**Agenda Item** 8

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**Date** 7<sup>th</sup> December 2023

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**Title** Triangle Trust Grant Strategy focus 2024/25

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### **1.0 Purpose of paper**

For Trustees to decide the proposed area of focus for the second year of the Grants Strategy (to run from April 24 until March 25).

### **2.0 Summary**

When the new five-year strategy was agreed in March 2023 it was also agreed that the focus would be supporting work with young people in contact with, or at high risk of contact with, the criminal justice system. A Theory of Change was developed with the end goal of the strategy being 'Reducing first offences or reoffending rates and young people moving on positively with their lives'.

Trustees also agreed that two funding rounds a year should continue to run and that funding levels would be increased to maximum of £80,000 over a two-year period. To manage application numbers, it was agreed that there would be an annual theme or focus.

- The new strategy was launched at the beginning of April 2023.
- For 2023/24 Trustees agreed that the focus would be 'Sport for Development'. To further manage numbers and produce cohorts of natural peers the first funding round focused on young people who already had a conviction and received 31 applications. The second round had a focus on young people who were at high risk of receiving a first conviction and received 72 applications.
- The Spark Programme continues to form a key part of the strategy.
- This paper provides a summary of key issues faced by young women either in or on the edge of the criminal justice system. This is to inform a discussion to agree the next focus area to enable further work to be developed.

### **3.0 Recommendations**

Trustees are requested to

- (i) Agree young women be the focus for 24/25 and a paper detailing the specific criteria be approved at the March 24 meeting prior to launch in April 24.

## **4.0 Supporting information**

### **4.1 *Women and the criminal justice system – some key stats***

- There are long standing concerns that the criminal justice system is not responsive to the specific needs of women. Women account for a small proportion of the prison population in the UK, in 2022 they made up just over 4%.
- The average daily number of women in the prison population in 2019-20 was 3,426 but over that 12-month period 6,852 were received into prison either on remand or to serve a sentence (in the year up to March 2023 this number was 5,164). These stats demonstrate the high number of short sentences given to female offenders, an outcome that is not shown in male prison numbers. In 2017, 77% of custodial sentences for women were for less than, or equal to, 12 months.
- Prison Reform Trust data shows that women are much more likely than men to self-harm whilst in prison. In 2022, women made up 29% of all self-harm incidents despite making up only 4% of the prison population.
- Whilst reoffending rates are higher for men, women have a higher number of reoffences. Female offenders aged 25 to 29 have the highest rates.
- In 2007 the then Labour government commissioned the Corston Report, which highlighted the underlying reasons behind offending between men and women and their differing responses to interventions and rehabilitation. The report recommended that a different approach was needed to achieve equality of outcomes for women.
- In 2018 the Ministry of Justice published its Female Offender strategy which aimed to; reduce the number of women entering the CJS by intervening earlier with support in the community, have fewer women in custody (especially serving shorter sentences), and create better conditions for women in custody.
- In January 2021 the MoJ announced an additional 500 prison places for women are to be built in existing women's prisons and that there will be a projected 15% rise in the female prison population by September 2026.

### **4.2 The Need and Context**

Trustees will recall that at the October Trustee meeting we heard from Jess Southgate and Nia Clark from AGENDA alliance. They spoke about the work of the Young Women's Justice Project and the findings of three reports that had been published from this work throughout 2021 and 2022. These reports highlighted that young women tend to have a greater number of support needs than young men, suggesting they face additional vulnerabilities which can connect to offending behaviours. The review summarises the ways in which these factors intersect:

"Young adult women (aged 17–25) in contact with the criminal justice system face multiple disadvantage. They have complex, overlapping needs, with their experience of coming into contact with the criminal justice system underpinned by experiences of violence and abuse, poor mental health, addiction, and having no safe place to call home. The challenges they face are mutually reinforcing and take place in a wider context of social and structural inequalities which shape their lives, including gender-inequality and racism."

Young women make up a “minority within a minority” within the criminal justice system both in custody and in the community. In 2020 figures showed there were around 100 18–20-year-olds in prison. By the end of 2023 this number was projected to increase by 50%. According to these same 2020 figures an undetermined number of 21–25-year-olds were in prison, as this data is not routinely provided in prison population figures. This means that information for young women in this age group is consistently under reported.

Data shows that young women entering the criminal justice system are more likely to be cautioned with an indictable offence than their male counterparts and reoffending rates are higher for women than men.

Data also shows that 52% of young women in custody in 2021/22 had been in local authority care as a child and that there are greater levels of ethnic disproportionality amongst young women (18-24) in custody than amongst the adult women’s population as a whole.

Whilst this is a small and niche sector, the needs of this group of young people are significant. The funds and assets that we have to provide support could make a huge difference to not only the young women themselves but to the wider women’s sector. A mapping project that ROSA, a charity formed to address the acute lack of funding for the women and girls’ sector, published in 2022 showed that in 2021 a total of £4.1bn of grants were awarded to charities in the UK but the women and girls’ sector received just 1.8% of these. In addition, 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of all grants for women and girls-focused activity (worth £24.7m) went to organisations with no specific focus on women and girls. This highlights a lack of prioritisation of organisations tackling complex and systemic issues faced by women and girls in the UK, of whom female offenders are a key group.

## **5.0 Proposed focus of funding for year 2 of the strategy**

- **Priorities** - Young women who already have a history of offending or who are at high risk of a registering a first offence.
- **Focus** – Projects that specifically aim to reduce the likelihood of a young woman either committing a first offence or reoffending and support them to move on positively with their lives. Projects would need to demonstrate age, gender, trauma, and culturally responsive approaches to working with young women.
- **Age** – 11-25 years

## **6.0 Key areas to consider and criteria to develop**

- 6.1 There have been a number of key elements to the current funding criteria for 23/24. These are important drivers that underpin our approach and should be retained and enhanced for our next focus area.

- **Priorities** – We know that young people from BAME communities and care leavers are disproportionately represented amongst young female offenders, and these should remain priority groups for us to support. The intersection between these two groups and offending would be worth exploring further and could help us to develop our criteria going forward. Application numbers from organisations wanting to work exclusively with these groups have traditionally been low, despite them being over represented in the criminal justice system, so this could provide us with the opportunity to really reach out to sector specialists with a funding programme that speaks to them and the work that they do.
- **Intervention point** – Currently proposals supporting young people who have already got a conviction can focus on work that either starts whilst still in prison or through the gate. Applicants need to show that they already work with young offenders and have the expertise and a track record of supporting them to secure positive outcomes.

Due to high offending rates amongst women, it feels important that we continue to look at funding work that supports a young woman post release from custody as some of the challenges linked to this are life changing.

- **Intervention point** – For young people at high risk of a first offence, applicants have needed to show that they are targeting those closest to the criminal justice system and not just running diversionary activities to address issues such as anti-social behaviour. We have looked to fund proposals that are targeting young people who have received both formal and informal Out of Court Disposals (OOCOD), those who are linked in with Youth Offending Team Prevention Programmes, other kinds of point of arrest diversion programmes and those who are linked to HMPPS teams.

For work focused on young women we may want to review this final part of the criteria to ensure that we are able to fund work that operates at an earlier intervention point than this. Research by AGENDA on the best ways to provide support suggests that working with those at risk of school exclusions, girls in the care system, during key transition points and by tackling issues preventatively can be most effective. MoJ stats show that over 60% of young women who receive a sentence/caution received free school meals. This is higher than the overall pupil population but also higher than for young male offenders and again points to the value in potentially focusing funding on earlier preventative support.

- **Types of projects** - Due to the funding being for a time limited period we have not wanted to support brand new projects to be set up but instead help organisations build on and enhance what they are already doing. We require applicants to demonstrate in their applications how they are best placed to be working with the young people they are targeting and clearly outline referral routes into the project.

However, one of the key things that seem to be coming from the sector is that the current system isn't working, and new approaches need to be developed and tried. There may be an exciting opportunity here for us to support some innovation and pilots that build on the growing body of evidence being produced. So, this could be an area where we may want to move away slightly from our current approach and take some risks on supporting new ways of working.

6.2 **Capacity building and networking between grantees** - these two strands of the Theory of Change have to date been extremely successful and not only provided grantees with some vital support but brought cohorts together to share best practice and build a network of like-minded practitioners. The Peer 2 Peer aspect of the Spark Programme lends itself extremely well to a tightly defined group of sector experts and this approach has the potential to deliver huge value to the grantees and the wider women and girls' sector. As mentioned previously this sector has been significantly under invested in so the Spark Programme offer enables us to additionally build much needed capacity into the organisations that we fund.

6.3 **Sharing learning linked to what we do** – we continue to be part of the Corsten Independent Funders Coalition (CIFC) which focuses on the needs of female offenders and is a useful platform for sharing with other funders the work that we are supporting. We have started to develop a name for ourselves as criminal justice sector funding specialists and we will be able to build on this and the links that the CIFC provides. This will provide us with a very legitimate opportunity to amplify and progress our work with some like-minded funders.

## 7.0 **Strategic grants**

Again, due to this being such a niche area there will be many viable opportunities for us to support work that meets our strategic grants definition of contributing to some kind of systems level change. With a growing body of research and evidence about the needs of young women in the criminal justice system, a developing strong voice and a sector that is starting to work together, the timing feels very auspicious.