

Agenda Item	4
Date	1 st February 2023
Title	Thematic approach

1.0 Purpose of paper

For Trustees to discuss and agree the annual theme of 2023 open grants.

2.0 Summary

At the December 2022 Trustee Meeting we decided which young offender applications to take to assessment. As part of this process a paper was circulated sharing data about application numbers. We received 76 applications for that round – significantly higher than other rounds and 28 more than the previous year.

- Applicants have to complete an eligibility quiz before being given access to the application form, but 17 out of the 76 applications received during the last round fell outside of the advertised criteria and a number of others only marginally fitted.
- The youth justice sector is broad and breadth of work taking place vast, so it will be vital to control application numbers so that we can:
 - Manage workloads and keep application numbers at a level that can be efficiently processed
 - Identify good work that aligns with our aims and strategy goals,
 - Keep turn down rates as low as possible to avoid applicants wasting time on applications that won't be successful, and
 - Ensure that we understand our impact and the outcomes we contribute to
- Alongside having a clear Theory of Change that articulates our strategy aim, having clear criteria that describes the kind of work we want to support will be vital. To additionally manage focus and applications, I recommend applications are accepted around an annual theme each year.
- For 2023 it is recommended that the theme of the strategy be Sport for Change. Future themes will be agreed by Trustees at the December meeting for following years.

3.0 Recommendations

Trustees are requested to

- (i) Agree the recommendation that year one of the new strategy has a Sport for Change theme.

4.0 Supporting information and things to consider

- 4.1 The decision to fund work with young offenders in 21-22 and 22-23 has offered us the opportunity to fund some really impressive and innovative work that meets a real need. Despite falling offending rates, the number of young offenders who reoffend is much higher than adult reoffending rates, and targeting opportunities to break this cycle of offending is clearly high on the agenda of organisations that work with vulnerable young people.

The breadth of work that takes place around the criminal justice system is vast and ranges from diversionary work to keep young people away from anti-social behaviour, to prison and through-the-gate support. Support can vary from light touch interventions that employ more traditional youth work approaches, to intensive post release support. So, interest in, and competition for, funding in this area is likely to be fierce. Our work with a focus on young offenders securing paid employment outcomes as a route to reducing reoffending has shown that even with a clear focus and criteria, application numbers can be high.

By having explicit and specific criteria, and application processes such as our eligibility quiz, we had hoped to effectively manage the number of applications that we received and ensure that those submitted were a strong fit. Despite these efforts we saw high application numbers for the 2022 round of young offender funding (the second time we had run the programme), which was possibly in part due to wider awareness of the funding because of the previous opportunity. We found though, a high number of ineligible applications. Of the 76 applications we received (compared to the 48 in 2021), 17 were considered outside of the criteria so scored a zero in the first shortlisting sift. If the eligibility quiz had been answered honestly in relation to these applications, most would not have proceeded to the application form. Whilst we can look further at the questions on the eligibility quiz to make this clearer, it is also indicative of the huge need in the sector.

Going forward this strengthens the requirement for Triangle Trust to have a specific focus for funding rounds so that workloads remain manageable, turn down rates are not huge and we are able to understand and identify the impact we are contributing to. Therefore, as discussed previously, adopting an annual thematic approach to our open grant making is a sensible way forward.

Trustees discussed applications with a sport-based focus at the December 2022 Trustee meeting, and there was an interest in this approach. Therefore, the information below provides more detail on Sport for Change as a methodology and how this links well with supporting work with young people involved in the criminal justice system.

4.2 Sport for Change

Sport for Change, also known as Sport for Development (S4D), uses sports to achieve crucial outcomes for children and young people. This is most commonly seen in learning, health, empowerment, and protection. It differs from playing sport for fun, as it is an intentional intervention that uses sport and physical activity to

achieve specific social development objectives. Sport for Change interventions give priority to the achievement of these objectives above any objectives linked to sporting performance.

In 2000 Nelson Mandela famously said *“Sport has the power to change the world. It has the power to inspire. It has the power to unite people in a way that little else does. It speaks to youth in a language they understand. Sport can create hope where there was only despair. It is more powerful than government in breaking down racial barriers. It laughs in the face of all kinds of discrimination.”*

Sport for Change interventions can work in all kinds of settings and have proved effective within international development, gender equality work and in engaging with hard-to-reach young people. The approach has been used with great success to address issues such as gang conflict and violence, community conflict (territorialism, sectarianism etc), inclusion, as well as developing employment skills and improving mental health.

4.3 **Why should Triangle Trust focus on sport approaches?**

Engaging young people who are outside of education, employment and training has been an area where a Sport for Change approach has worked well. And with a focus on developing social and life skills rather than promoting sporting excellence, these programmes can be accessed by beneficiaries who might not have previously had the confidence to join a sports club or team. Using a range of sports, programmes can be designed to attract certain groups – girls who may have been put off by sport in the past might be more open to taking part in something that uses less traditional sports/activities. As the focus is not on excellence, this also has the effect of levelling the playing field, with activities designed for mixed gender and mixed ability groups.

Internationally, the NGO Skateistan has effectively used skateboarding in Afghanistan, Cambodia and South Africa to empower children and young people, with 50% of participants being girls.

The link between Sport for Change interventions and young people and crime has been recognised for several years, and in 2015 The National Alliance for the Desistance of Crime was launched. Its purpose is to provide support and guidance to those using sport for the prevention and desistance from crime. It unites Sport 4 Development and the criminal justice system. Members of the Alliance work across four key areas; prevention and early intervention, community sentences, custodial sentences and resettlement and services for people leaving prison. Across all of these areas, Sport for Change is seen as being a useful tool in helping to inspire positive change and achievements with those who are considered to be most disengaged and most likely to commit crime.

There is an active and growing sector focused on using this intervention to actively engage people at risk of crime, either as a first or reoffence. Outcomes are often grouped into four key programme delivery areas;

- Distraction: activities that divert a participant away from anti-social or offending behaviour
- Wellbeing: activities that improve health and mood

- Individual development: activities that develop a wide range of personal attributes that are often enhanced through a coaching relationship; and
- Social and Community Development: activities that achieve broader social benefits.

Across the UK there are multiple examples of organisations who are using Sport for Change approaches to address issues around young people and offending behaviour. These include Fight for Peace who use boxing, Catch 22, The Change Foundation who use cricket and dance amongst other sports, and even Brighton Table Tennis Club!

This is an established sector with significant expertise and we are already receiving applications with this focus. In the first round of funding for Young Offenders we supported 3Pillars Project (who use rugby), Cat Zero (who use sailing), and Switch Up (who use boxing). We are currently assessing Rochdale AFC Community Trust who use football. Sport for Change interventions lend themselves well to the kind of outcomes we are looking to contribute to and the fact that there are organisations out there already delivering this kind of work makes this an ideal year one theme for the strategy.

5.0 Future themes

- 5.1 If Sport for Change is agreed as the focus for 2023 then future years will also be allocated a theme. This provides an opportunity for Trustees to remain engaged with the strategy over the five-year period it will run for and know that ongoing there will be key points for continued inputs.

The strategy for the past two years has had priority groups identified within the criteria. These were young people from BAME groups, young women and young people who have been in the care system. Each of these would be a strong case for a discrete focus for one of the years of the strategy as they are likely to remain key groups of concern. Other areas that Trustees may want to consider in the future include art-based interventions, gangs, the voices of young people and further support for employment focused projects.

Alongside these themes we would also actively look for work to support through strategic grants which could link into areas outside of the advertised criteria such as earlier interventions and prevention work.

6.0 Theory of Change

- 6.1 The Theory of Change is not impacted by adopting a thematic approach as we would expect the projects that we fund to be working towards the 5 year strategy aims and goals no matter what kind of intervention they are using. The Theory of Change names the target group for the strategy, 'young offenders and those at high risk of offending' and identifies the impact we are trying to achieve with the strategy as 'young people avoid involvement with the criminal justice system and are able to move on positively with their lives'. The ultimate goal is 'reducing reoffending rates and first offences for high-risk young people on the edge of the criminal justice

system'. The additional key activities identified in the Theory of Change - supporting grantees to network with each other, funding the capacity building of grantees and sharing learning linked to what we do - would all work well across a specific thematic cohort of grantees.

7.0 Risks

- 7.1 The adoption of a thematic approach will stop some organisations from being able to apply to us for funding. By linking our opportunities to either a specific target group or intervention, we are narrowing the type of work that we will support and limiting the number of potential applicants. Organisations who don't work within the theme of that year will need to wait at least another year to apply, and perhaps longer.

However, we are not a well-known big player in this sector and the amount of funding that we distribute doesn't represent a significant investment in the sector. Therefore, it is hard to see that this approach would genuinely negatively impact a potential grantee as we are not a 'go to' funder for work with young offenders. In addition, our strategic grant funding will enable us to work with those who are doing interesting and important work, but don't meet the criteria of our open grant making. The bigger risk is that without narrowing our criteria and focus we will be overwhelmed with applications and unable to achieve our wider aims as an effective grant maker.