

Organisation Name		Reference code
Clean Break Theatre Company		2024-05-YWG14
Organisation Address		
2 Patshull Road London NW5 2LB		
Website Address		
www.cleanbreak.org.uk		
Type of organisation? (tick all that apply and complete relevant details)		
Charity	Registered Charity Number	Date Registered
Yes	1017560	1993
Community Interest Company	Registered Companies House Number	Date Registered
No		
Social Enterprise	Social Enterprise Mark Awarded Yes/No	Date Awarded
No		
Grant Summary		
Clean Break's Theatre Training for Young Women programme (name tbc) is a creative project for young women aged 18 - 25 years old who have experience of, or who are on the fringes of, the criminal justice system, with significant and complex needs and facing multiple barriers to entering the arts and cultural sector.		
Please describe the specific needs of the young women and girls you work with that this project will address		
<p>As a women-only organisation we are acutely aware of the gender-specific needs and challenges faced by women and girls with lived experience of the criminal justice system or those at risk of entering it. We know that women in prison face unique and specific challenges; being only 5% of the prison population, they are a marginalised and often overlooked group. Our work is designed to help women build the confidence, skills and resilience they need to find their voices and access new creative opportunities.</p> <p>In November 2023, Agenda Alliance, in partnership with Young Women's Justice Project, released "Falling Through The Gaps", a report about girls and young women aged 17 to 25 years old in contact with the criminal justice system. It highlights the experiences of Black, Asian and minoritised young women, and young women with experience of the care system as both groups are overrepresented in the criminal justice system.</p> <p>In it, they state "Whilst older adult women in contact with the criminal justice system also face significant disadvantage, the impact and trauma of these experiences in young adulthood - particularly abuse and exploitation in childhood, leaving care, and exclusion from education - means that young women in transition are likely to present with more immediate needs or be 'in crisis' as a result of them".</p> <p>The report evidences what we know from our own practice, that interventions for young women need to help address past trauma, and be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - co-produced with young women, - delivered by skilled and specialist trained staff, 		

- specifically address the needs of black and minoritised young women
- include opportunities for diversion and support and progression
It also highlights that young women with lived experience want access to safe spaces for activities that recognise their skills, strengths, and capacity for joy, despite the hardships they may have faced. Theatre and the arts respond directly to this, offering a non-judgmental space for self-expression, personal growth, new talents and future pathways.

What are the key outcomes that you will be seeking to achieve for young women and girls either at risk of offending or who are already caught up in the criminal justice system?

Our Theory of Change illustrates how our work tracks from activity through change mechanisms to outcomes and impact and underpins how we monitor and evaluate our work. In 2022, we worked with New Philanthropy Capital to co-create this Theory of Change with our Members (women with lived experience of the criminal justice system, or those at risk of entering it), staff and trustees, and developed a framework to support the measuring of impact across our programme.

Our outcomes all feed into achieving the long-term aims identified, namely: "Members will have the agency, self-efficacy and resources to fulfil their potential and live a more fulfilled life, ultimately leading to a reduced risk of (re)offending."

Throughout the project, outcomes for young women primarily include:

- Development of new transferrable skills which can be applied in the arts (particularly theatre) and beyond to support a reduction in (re)offending
- Increase in wellbeing indicators through access to regular support (including free therapy, wellbeing plans and 1-1 support from our specialist team)
- Growth in confidence and career aspirations leading to paid work and financial independence, which in turn can lead to less (re)offending and contact with the CJS
- Opportunities for participation in other projects within and beyond Clean Break utilising the skills developed on the programme
- Building of trusted relationships with other young Members, staff and partners
- Enrolling on our core Members Programme, delivered across three 10 week seasons to continue developing theatre skills, accessing regular support and participating in creative opportunities within Clean Break

We've developed several mechanisms to capture monitoring and evaluation from our core Membership which we'll implement for this project such as individual feedback forms (available in different formats to support access needs), person/group feedback sessions and weekly check-ins with both the creative and support teams.

We will also be introducing digital journalling tools to capture young women's experiences and progress during the programme. We'll work closely with partners to gather sufficient, relevant data and feedback to support organisational reporting needs.

We have a track record of achieving strong outcomes for the young women we work with, as seen in the pilot of the programme; 9 out of 13 young women from our two previous cohorts are now working in the creative industries in paid roles. This is a positive benchmark to work towards and we aim to achieve similar levels of success with this new offer.

Based on the positive feedback and resulting opportunities from the pilot, we anticipate achieving the following outcomes:

- 100% improved confidence and wellbeing
- 100% report new skills in theatre
- 90% report new positive networks
- 70% achieve auditions at drama school
- 60% continue to engage with Clean Break through our core Members Programme

What are the key activities you will undertake with this funding to achieve this?

Outreach Workshops (March-July 2025):

Delivered as 2-hour workshops at referral partner locations (including prisons, youth

organisations & women's centres) by our Participation Manager and a Young Member Artist (who previously participated in the pilot).

We'll host 2 open recruitment days at our studios in July; inviting the young women who participated in the outreach sessions to experience Clean Break before applying to the programme. Other young women (who did not take part in the outreach sessions) will also be invited to attend for maximum reach. To help remove barriers to access, we'll provide travel expenses and a hot lunch to those attending, whilst also hosting wellbeing activities to promote self-care and incentivise attendance.

Through these referral/outreach days, we will engage young women and girls who already have a history of offending or who are at a high risk of registering a first offence.

Outputs = 10 workshops delivered/2 Open Days held

Total number of young women reached: 50

Total number of young women recruited: 8-10

Year-long Programme (September 2025-July 2026):

Delivered by Clean Break, Drama School partners (RADA, CSSD, Rose Bruford and LAMDA) and freelance Clean Break artists. Partners will offer bespoke modules, fee-waived audition places and 'Acting on Screen' workshops.

Structured sessions, 1.5 days a week:

- Tuesdays will focus on confidence building, mental health, self-worth, empowerment and working as a group; this will be led by a Clean Break staff member or delivery artist.

- Wednesdays will focus on acting, drama and theatre skills training, delivered by the Drama School partners, each providing 5 weeks of a specialist module focused on different aspects of Actor Training.

A trauma informed pastoral support worker provide specialist support alongside theatre workshop delivery on both days.

All participating young women will have access to our regular masterclasses, mainstage production rehearsal rooms and shadowing opportunities (e.g stage management to set design). These engagements will further expand young women's knowledge of and interest in the breadth of career opportunities that exist in the theatre industry, which they might not otherwise have the experience of.

Clean Break commissioned play:

Young women will attend workshops with our writer on commission, Emma Dennis Edwards, to contribute to the development of a new short play. Directed by our Associate Artistic Director, the piece will be performed by the young women at a London venue (tbc) following a more intensive rehearsal period over the summer. The play provides a unique opportunity to platform and amplify the skills and talents gained and for them (and others) to see them differently; overcoming stigma and judgement and celebrating success.

Next Steps:

The final month will provide practical & pastoral support focused on progression in the arts e.g CV writing, audition practice, applying to training, support plans

Does your proposed project already exist or is this a new piece of work?

This project is designed specifically to respond to the needs of young women who aspire to a career in the arts. Building on feedback from the young women engaged in our pilot programme (2018-2020), and responding to sector research into the specific challenges of young women with a history of offending or who are at a high risk of registering a first offence, we have revised the programme to enhance what we have already created and achieved to date.

As an organisation, we use every opportunity we can to learn and develop the work that we deliver. Since running the first pilot of this programme, we have refreshed and improved the project to best respond to the needs of young women that are often marginalised and overlooked to ensure we are delivering a creative opportunity that is

meaningful and beneficial to those participating.
 We have made some key changes for this new and improved version of the programme including:

- An increase in delivery days to improve frequency and depth of engagement with the young women
- A new partnership model with drama schools to ensure the young women have access to sector specific training and creative opportunities
- Employing a specialist support worker to work with participants to address specific, complex issues and challenges faced by young women
- In response to the current cost-of-living crisis, we will provide a stipend for materials, play texts and theatre tickets to further access to the arts and increase learning
- Provision of a laptop (rental) to address and remove barriers which might prevent young women participating in the programme
- Access to Masterclasses and theatre trips that are offered on our core Members Programme for current Members/Member Artists
- Digital access to the Programme to enable better accessibility and inclusion in the activity
- Headshots and self-tape opportunities

What expertise and track record do you have to be able to deliver this work successfully?

At Clean Break we pride ourselves on the holistic, trauma-informed support offer that underpins all our work. Our experienced skilled team will work closely with the young women and specialist support worker to address a range of long-term issues and complex needs that affect young women caught up in the criminal justice system, such as housing, mental ill health, poverty, drug and alcohol misuse, or the effects of domestic abuse or violence. By ensuring this support is in place, we are creating sustainable and meaningful change for the long term.

Our intersectional and holistic approach is vital as it ensures that we can organise the necessary and appropriate interventions that will have a transformative effect on young women's lives, including young women from Black and minoritised backgrounds. Weekly workshops will take place at our trauma-informed, women-only studios in Kentish Town, where the young women will build trusting relationships with the Support Team, who will develop insights into individual needs and aspirations in a way that is rarely possible in less specialised environments.

Our specialist support offer includes regular 1-1 meetings, free art/talking therapy, wellbeing support plans, referrals and signposting to support beyond our expertise. We will also pay travel/childcare costs and provide a hot lunch to relieve the financial pressures often associated with engaging in community projects or accessing substantial support services.

Trauma-informed practice is at the heart of everything we do at Clean Break. In 2023, we were awarded our Silver Trauma Informed Quality Mark by One Small Thing in recognition of our trauma-informed practice. We will deliver our trauma-informed practice training, Leading With Kindness, to all delivery partners and supporting organisations, to ensure our Young Members needs are met and partners understand the way we work.

As a women-only organisation, we understand how important our gender-specific identity and practice is to ensure the development, support and wellbeing of the women we work with. By nurturing and investing in the voices, stories, expertise and experiences of women with lived experience, we hope to change hearts and minds around women and criminalisation on stage, in prisons and in the community. This programme is a unique model that will give young women the opportunity to explore creative avenues and share their stories in a way that is often not open to women with experience of the criminal justice system.

Explain how the grant will be spent

<p>Who will be responsible for overseeing and delivering this work?</p>
<p>Our Artistic Director, Anna Herrmann will oversee this project with support from Lakesha Arie-Angelo (Associate Artistic Director), Sophie Connolly (Participation Manager) and our Member Support team who will provide holistic, specialist support to the young women participating.</p> <p>In year 1, we will employ an additional Specialist Support Worker to work with the young Members on the programme. Whilst we do have a dedicated support team in place at Clean Break, many of the women we currently work with are over 25, therefore the needs of this age group aren't typically presented. We understand that young women with lived experience of the criminal justice system and those at risk, have specific needs and face age-related challenges therefore we are committed to acknowledging and addressing the value of having specific training to provide this kind of support in place.</p> <p>Alongside Clean Break staff, we will be supported by staff at the aforementioned drama school partners and our commissioned playwright, Emma Dennis-Edwards.</p>
<p>How do you plan to continue this work once the grant ends?</p>
<p>We will run this project bi-annually and it currently sits outside core activity but we hope to include it in the core programme from 2027/28. Our current business model supports this as we're working hard to increase earned income by investing in a new post (Enterprise and Sales Manager) to generate hires, training and leadership income. The ability to deliver this project successfully in 2025/26 would provide us with an opportunity to establish this programme fully and give us the confidence to approach additional, less risk averse funders who want to see a track record to support this activity once a grant from Triangle Trust ends.</p>
<p>Does your organisation only work with women and girls?</p>
<p>Yes, Clean Break's women-only identity is crucial to our rationale. The treatment of women by the criminal justice system is one of the clearest demonstrations that our society is still unequal, that women are judged by different standards to men and that women's position in society often means the impact of criminalisation is disproportionate.</p> <p>We believe that theatre enables women to challenge their oppression by society in general and by the criminal justice system in particular.</p> <p>We are a trans inclusive organisation, and we welcome non-binary people who actively want to be part of a women's theatre company.</p>
<p>Does your organisation have existing knowledge and expertise working across the criminal justice system?</p>
<p>Clean Break was founded by two women in prison who believed in the power of theatre to transform lives. Our vision is of a society where all women can realise their full potential, free from criminalisation. Through our unique work on stage, in prisons and in the community, we raise difficult questions, inspire debate, and help to effect profound and positive change in the lives of women who are criminalised.</p> <p>On stage:</p> <p>Since 1979, Clean Break has been the only women's theatre company of its kind, and we continue to inspire playwrights and captivate audiences with our ground-breaking plays, keeping the subject of women in prison on the cultural radar. We work with high-profile theatres to co-produce our plays, most recently the National Theatre, Royal Court and Bush Theatre. Our small-scale productions are designed to reach people of influence who can affect change in the CJS. Both give us a powerful platform to share authentic stories which reveal the damage caused by the criminal justice system and reimagine ways of thinking about women and criminalisation.</p> <p>In prisons and in the community:</p> <p>We use theatre to transform the lives of women who have experienced the criminal</p>

justice system, or who are at risk of entering it due to the challenges they are facing, such as mental ill health or problematic substance use. Our theatre workshops and projects in prisons and in the community build women's confidence, resilience and wellbeing, alongside new creative skills.

Members Programme:

Our core Members Programme is designed for women with lived experience of the criminal justice system, or those at risk of entering it. The programme offers a range of theatre workshops and performance opportunities led by acclaimed women theatre artists and is underpinned by comprehensive wrap-around support designed to address the complex needs and challenges faced by women who have had contact with the criminal justice system.

Leadership and Research:

Our training programme and work with research partners enables us to share our unique practices and influence how other sectors/institutions work with women with lived experience of the CJS. Research proves how beneficial programmes like ours are with regards to lack of (re)offending, increased employment prospects, better mental health & wellbeing and engagement with necessary support services.

By delivering across the arts, women's sector and CJS we hope to challenge existing structures that are devastating the lives of women and girls. Just by existing, we are shifting how women with lived experience can access opportunities, share their experiences and learn new skills, in ways that custodial sentences and repeated contact with the criminal justice system does not enable. Our partnership work with organisations such as Agenda Alliance, Birth Companions and Women in Prison, bolsters our influence to seek better outcomes and effect change for women impacted by the criminal justice system.

Will you be receiving funding from any other sources for this project?

Yes

Do all staff have enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks? If no please state why.

Yes

Reason why not all staff have DBS checks.

Total funding requested in this application (£10,000 to £80,000 with a maximum of £40,000 in one year)

£68288

Proposed grant start date

3/1/2025

Proposed grant duration in months

16

How much funding is required each year?

Year 1

£39993

Year 2

£28295

What was your organisation's expenditure in the most recent financial year?

£1178391

What was your organisation's annual income in the most recent financial year?

£1231843

What value of unrestricted reserves did your organisation have at the end of the most recent financial year?

£81825