

Organisation Name		Reference code
A Way Out		2025-10-YWG01
Organisation Address		
The Gate 1-2 Castlegate Quay The Riverside Stockton on Tees TS18 1BZ		
Website Address		
www.awayout.co.uk		
How did you hear about the Triangle Trust?		
Previous applicant		
Please describe your organisation's purpose in one or two sentences.		
We believe that no one should experience or fear abuse, harm and exploitation. We work tirelessly to prevent abuse, harm and exploitation by empowering women, families and young people to overcome the challenges they face and tackling the injustice and inequality that they experience.		
Type of organisation? (tick all that apply and complete relevant details)		
Charity	Registered Charity Number	Date Registered
Yes	1137535	2002
Community Interest Company	Registered Companies House Number	Date Registered
No	06265354	
Social Enterprise	Has your organisation been awarded the Social Enterprise Mark?	Year Awarded
Grant Summary		
We will codesign a new age, stage, gender, trauma and culturally responsive intervention with young women (11-16) who are outside of education or close to exclusion, have a history and/or are at a high risk of offending and face multiple challenges (e.g. care experienced) to reduce reoffending and support them to move on positively.		
Please describe the specific needs of the young women and girls you work with that this project will address		
We currently work with (by and for) young women (11 to 25) who are at high risk of reoffending or offending (and often known to and signposted / referred by HMPPS, the police and local authorities); experience and/or are at risk of abuse, harm and exploitation (including gangs and county lines); and face challenges including being care experienced, neurodiverse, outside of education or close to exclusion, as well as addiction, homelessness, mental ill health and poverty, or are from minoritised communities.		
A recent sample survey, for example, of the presenting issues of 20 of the young women we support confirmed that 18 had experienced recent or historic trauma, 15 sexual abuse/violence, 13 domestic violence, and 12 childhood abuse/neglect. Additionally, all 20 were experiencing poor mental health (including self harm and/or diagnosed conditions) and low confidence/self esteem, 12 were NEET, 8 had drug and/or alcohol issues, 6 were in care or care leavers, and 4 were homeless or in		

insecure/temporary housing.

Through the design, delivery and monitoring / evaluation of our services (including feedback from young women and partners) we have identified that there are growing number of young women (11 to 16) across Teesside who are outside of mainstream education or close to exclusion and in contact with the criminal justice system (including those who have received either formal or informal Out of Court Disposals (OCD), those who are linked to Youth Offending Team Prevention Programmes, other kinds of point of arrest diversion programmes and those who are known to HMPPS teams or the Police). This includes young women who are at greater risk of offending or reoffending because they have do not have positive role models or support networks (including those who have dysfunctional relationships with and/or regularly witness criminal behaviour by family and friends and have started to normalise offending behaviour and language)and/or who have poorly developed communication / life / social skills such as protective behaviours (including those where this risk is increase because of undiagnosed neurodiversity and/or mental ill health). It also includes young women who are ineligible or excluded (including self) from other services (including education, social care etc) because they do not effectively meet their needs (e.g. neurodiversity) and/or because they have chosen not to access them due to previous negative experience (e.g. care experienced) and/or fear being judged or stigmatised (e.g. those who have already offended).

Feedback from young women and partners also confirms there are no age, gender, trauma and culturally responsive interventions locally to prevent young women offending and that existing provision prioritises those who have already offended (or who are in contact with the HMPPS, the police or local authorities) rather than those who are at risk.

Partners also acknowledged that existing interventions take a 'done to' rather than 'by and for' approach and focus on managing (e.g. school exclusions) rather than preventing (e.g. addressing the psychological impact of trauma) offending behaviour.

"We know that there is an issue with the transition period from child to adulthood and the additional vulnerabilities this creates particularly around exploitation ... this group often go from all the support and statutory protection that being a child provides, to nothing ... this is the age where we see the incident of repeat victimisation start to occur both of sexual and nonsexual crimes and it is also the age where we see females start to commit crimes to survive ... being able to support this group to access better options and choices is critical"

Helen Barker Cleveland Police

We will therefore work with (by and for) young women to create a new intervention to address unmet need and gaps in provision and thereby reduce the likelihood of offending / reoffending.

What are the key outcomes 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? How will you track the impact you are making?

We will work with young women to identify the outcomes they want to achieve (such as to be confident, safe, healthy – emotionally & physically, able to make & maintain positive relationships & knowledgeable) as part of co-designing the new intervention & then to monitor / evaluate (with the support of partners including Universities) our success in working with them to achieve these.

Based on previous experience this is likely to include young women measuring their progress against all of the social impact areas (& therefore reducing the likelihood of them offending or reoffending) through qualitative (outcomes) & quantitative (targets –

i.e. numbers & percentages) measures such as

Individual Development

- Are confident to access support whenever they need it (whether they are in crisis, need to meet immediate emotional &/or practical needs, or are ready to move on with their lives).
- Have built their capacity to address specific needs, such as neurodiversity, through new support networks & skills such as coping strategies.
- Have increased the skills, understanding & emotional capacity to maintain & manage positive relationships, as well as to increase independence & resilience
- Are able to make positive choices about their future & overcome the challenges they face through increased confidence, self-esteem, resilience & wellbeing

Health & Wellbeing

- Have greater understanding of the interrelationship between mental & physical health & the wider challenges, & abuse, harm & exploitation, they face
- Are able to improve their overall mental health & wider wellbeing
- Are able to improve their overall physical health
- Have started to address the wider causes &/or consequences of poor health & wellbeing e.g. addiction

Employability & Education

- Have gained new skills & experience (including wider communication / life / social skills) & built on their resilience
- Are able to engage (or reengage) with mainstream education
- Are able to fulfil their potential through a greater understanding of employment (including apprenticeships) &/or training (including further education) opportunities & how to access them

Social & Community Cohesion

- Have built self-confidence, esteem & worth by taking responsibility for identifying & addressing issues that concern them:
- Are able to challenge & change the views & behaviours of others & address stigma & discrimination, by creating opportunities for their voices to be heard & for them to share their lived experience:
- Have built positive support (including peer) & addressed previous negative relationships

Evidence will be reviewed by staff & trustees to encourage reflective learning & promote ongoing service improvement, shared & discussed with young women we work with to gain further insight & inform ongoing service development (including codesign), & with partners to inform policy & practice & promote wider system change.

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

We will work with Westlands Academy and Hopefields School (confirmed), other pupil referral units and alternative provision providers we have worked with previously (in discussion), and partners including the Police, and Local Authorities (including Youth Justice Teams) to reach (engage) 50 young women who are outside of education or close to exclusion, at high risk of reoffending or offending; and facing multiple challenges This will include working with partners to proactively target (including through outreach, signposting and referrals) those young women whose needs are not being met. We will then (over 2 years) establish 10 groups (based in pupil referral

units, alternative education provision, schools or the community) and work (by and for) these young women to co-design, pilot and then monitor / evaluate a new intervention to address the challenges they face and reduce the likelihood of them offending / reoffending. Young women will use their lived experience, and learning from other groups, as well as previous pilot projects ('smaller piece of work') to develop new ideas and test new ways of working and ultimately develop a new approach that fill gaps in support. Based on previous experience we anticipate this will combine a standard approach (by and for, trauma and gender informed etc) and methodology (co-designed 1:1 and group support over 6 weeks) with 1:1 and group support (content) that is tailored to the individual needs of participants.

Working in small groups (average of 5) will overcome barriers to engagement (e.g. neurodiversity) through holistic / personalised support, create a safe space to explore issues of culture and gender and address trauma, and build trusting relationships with and between (peer) women. It will also create opportunities for young women to use their lived experience to identify the issues they want to address in 1:1 and group support (such as expressing feelings and emotions, conflict resolution, problem solving, communication, positive masculinity, the effects and impact of violence, safety planning, peer pressure and bystander effect).

Delivery by an all-female staff team with extensive experience of engaging and supporting young women within a women only safe space combined with ongoing monitoring to ensure participants voice are heard, understood and valued will ensure interventions are gender informed. Using creative approaches, videos, and newspaper articles to 'de-personalise' sensitive issues, relaxation and other techniques to moderate emotions, and increasing support in response to behaviour that challenges, disengagement, or relapses will also ensure interventions are trauma informed. Co design, as well as staff and trustee understanding of psychological development and cultural sensitivities and experience of forensic and clinical psychology, will additionally ensure interventions are age / stage and culturally appropriate.

Does your proposed project already exist or is this a new piece of work? If this project is already operating, please describe to us how you will use this as an opportunity to build on what you have achieved to date. If this is a new piece of work, please explain what this funding will enable you to do differently.

Evolve was developed by and for young people (8-16), particularly those without positive role models, so they could develop the knowledge, awareness and resource, as well as life (including communication and social skills) to achieve their potential and overcome the challenges they face and is delivered a 6 week programme within schools and the community.

Following consultation with and feedback from young people and partners, we successfully co-designed new interventions (based on Evolve) for young people who were outside of education or at risk of exclusion and (separately) from families experiencing intergenerational violence and therefore at risk of offending.

Independent evaluation of the second programme (for 86 young people) by Sunderland University states that 'quantitative data indicated significant improvements in the behavioural and emotional wellbeing of young people:

- 49.40% of young people showed reduced emotional and behavioural difficulties.
- 67.69% demonstrated decreased aggression, with an average reduction of 15.31 points.
- 62.12% reported enhanced emotional intelligence and social awareness.
- 33.73% improved in pro-social behaviour' and 'qualitative findings reinforced these outcomes, with young people expressing increased self awareness, empathy, and confidence. Many described the programme as "calming" and "like therapy," highlighting its positive emotional impact".

The evaluation additionally confirmed that “Participants also demonstrated an increased understanding of peer pressure, violence, and conflict resolution. Key success factors included the trauma-informed, relational delivery model and the creation of safe, supportive environments where young people felt valued and heard.”

Through this evaluation, and the successful design and delivery of other interventions for those at high risk of offending or reoffending in, we have identified the need to fill gaps in support by codesigning new interventions specifically for young women who are outside of education or at risk of exclusion. Funding will therefore enable us to work with (by and for) young women and partners (using learning and resources from Evolve) to develop and test new ideas, ways of working and (age, stage, gender, trauma and culturally responsive) approaches that meet the specific needs of young women.. This will include (do differently’) opportunities to integrate therapeutic approaches into 1:1 and group support and using a ‘test and learn’ approach to ensure the new intervention is gender and trauma informed as well as age / stage and culturally appropriate. Funding will also enable us to independently evaluate the new intervention and use this (combined with the learning programme) to build and evidence and bolster our case for future funding and to shine a light on under-resourced and underdeveloped areas to promote wider system change.

What expertise and track record do you have to be able to deliver this work successfully? Please specifically mention your expertise linked to gender and trauma informed approaches.

Since 2002 we have worked with thousands of women, families and young people who are at risk of or experience abuse, harm and exploitation to successfully overcome the challenges and wider injustice and inequality they face. Evidence of our expertise and track record includes being the only organisation in the North East with a Silver Trauma Quality Mark award for all our services and working with adult women accessing our Liberty service to co-design new gender informed interventions for young women (Blossom) having confirmed this would have prevented them experiencing abuse, harm and exploitation.

Evolve has been delivered in Northfield School, High Clarence Primary School, Ormesby Primary School, Bowesfield Primary School, and with Outwood (Bishopsgarth and Acklam) and, Unity City Academies. Ongoing monitoring and independent evaluation confirm young people have gained new skills and greater self control so they can think before they act, understand the perspective of others, communicate effectively, and use strategies to manage impulsiveness or aggression. Young people also confirm they have developed positive and trusting relationships with their peers and those who support them so they can function, make changes, and stay safe, during periods of transition (e.g. when leaving care). Evidence additionally confirms we have successfully used gender and trauma informed, and non-judgmental and motivational approaches to build trusting relationships with young people, who have ‘negative attachments’ with friends, family and other organisations to break damaging cycle of behaviour.

“I think the sessions have been really good and useful. It made me reflect on a lot of things and has had a positive on me. Thank you!” / “I enjoyed these sessions very much; I learned a lot about consent.” / “Everything was perfect. Has made me realise a lot about my relationships and I am now so thankful.” / “I’m so glad I’ve been chosen to come here, I have no one to talk to about these things.” / “I have learnt a lot, and this will help me.” (Quotes from Young People)

Monitoring and evaluation of new interventions for young women attending Abbey Hill (i.e. outside of mainstream education) further evidences our expertise with 75% reporting improved understanding on what constitutes a safe and healthy relationship, 63% improved understanding of the differences between flirting and sexual

harassment, 50% improved understanding of how to stay safe in the community, and 75% improved understanding of what to do in an unsafe situation at home. Independent evaluation of Blossom (for women under 25 experiencing abuse, harm and exploitation) also confirms we complement other services and successfully deliver early-intervention by building trusting relationships with young women, through a by and for approach, so they can make informed choices about their future, ensure their voices are heard, and connect/reconnect with other services and the wider community.

Please explain how the grant will be spent

The grant will pay for the cost of two part time workers and support from staff within our psychotherapy service along with associated overheads (line management plus administrative, financial, HR and IT support)

Who will be responsible for overseeing and delivering this work?

The work will be delivered by our Unity Team. The team is led by Charlotte Gibbons (Service Manager) who is an experienced and qualified social worker and includes staff with a wide range of skills (e.g. qualified youth worker) and experience (e.g. within NHS secure settings or working with women who have additional needs). All staff receive regular training and supervision so they can use a trauma and gender informed and culturally appropriate approach, and therapeutic and other techniques, when delivering outreach and support within our own trauma informed space, in community spaces, or in schools and colleges. The team is supervised by Sue Willoughby (Head of Service) who has 30 years experience of working with women within the criminal justice system (including developing and delivering Heading Home modules for NEPACS). Sue is supervised by Kay Nicolson (our Chief Executive) who has over 25 years experience of working within the criminal justice system, including as a senior manager with Probation. Sue and Kay will be supported by Jane Hill (our Service Manager) who has worked as a Probation Officer in the Community and Prison System and David Beuzeval (our Business Development Manager) who has extensive experience of securing grants and contracts for criminal justice services. Further support will be provided by Amanda Butler (our Finance and Resources Manager) who has worked for the charitable foundation of Middlesbrough Football Club and previously in the private sector.

Oversight will be provided by our Board. Robert Thompson (our Chair) has over 24 years experience in social housing following a career working with Social Services and the Royal Navy. David Emerton (our Vice Chair) was an Accident and Emergency Consultant and Medical Director at North Tees Hospital. Andrew Malcolm (Treasurer and Chair of the Finance and Funding Committee) is a qualified accountant with 30 years financial experience in social housing as well as Education, the NHS, and Construction. Michelle Carr is a forensic psychologist who has many years experience of working within prisons and secure mental health care. Julia Allen has recently retired from a long career holding senior roles within the Probation Service and partner organisations delivering criminal justice services. Hassan Al-Bahrani is a Director of IT, Cyber and Data Security with Thirteen and has wider skills and experience in technology and security. Helen Williams is a Senior Lecturer in Criminology at the University of Sunderland where she researches the experience of women within the criminal justice system. Karen Parker has her own digital and marketing company and has charity experience with particular focus on communicating impact and promoting system change.

How do you plan to continue this work once the grant ends?

We plan to continue this work by building on our track record of successfully developing and developing new interventions, our extensive and established partnership networks (including with local authorities – social care, education, public health, youth justice etc – and the police) and growing evidence base, to secure new income (including being commissioned to deliver targeted interventions within schools and the community). Specifically, we will use ongoing learning to demonstrate the need for and benefit of our new intervention including how gender and trauma informed

interventions developed by and for young women can meet gaps in provision and reduce offending / reoffending.

Examples of how we have created and then continued new interventions includes being a key partner in Operation Beech in Middlesbrough (led by Cleveland Police) which gathered intelligence to identify those buying sex, protected the vulnerable women involved in sex work (including those who were being exploited), and promoted system change (including advising on correct terminology and appropriate terminology for control room data gathering processes). Operation Beech won the 'Working Together' category in national policing awards out of 140 national nominations and we continue to work with the Complex Exploitation Team in Cleveland Police. Other examples include working with TSAB (Teeswide Adults Safeguarding Board) to develop the adult sexual exploitation (ASE) toolkit and screening tool and with Cleveland Police to address Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) by engaging and supporting women at greater risk of abuse, harm and exploitation as they transition to adult services through targeted interventions. Further examples include conducting research and presenting our Changing the Narrative report to parliament to promote the need for a statutory definition of ASE with the other STAGE partners; working with Middlesbrough and Redcar and Cleveland Councils to inform the development and delivery of the Changing Futures programme by conducting interviews and preparing a video to identify barriers to accessing services and how to overcome them; and ongoing support to develop and deliver the North East Sex Work strategy with multiple partners.

"As a police service we don't listen to victims enough in understanding 'what works' for them and trust and confidence in the service in recent years has been impacted by a number of high-profile cases involving officers. The support offered by A Way Out offers us an opportunity to get that honest feedback and ideas due to the trust they have".

Helen Barker - Cleveland Police.

Is your organisation led by women and are at least 80% of your organisation's total beneficiaries' women and girls? Please provide a breakdown of your beneficiary numbers for the past 2 years.

Yes. 362 (94%) of the 387 individuals we supported in the last financial year were women and girls. This includes 129 women accessing our Liberty (for adult women who experience multiple disadvantages - including addiction, homelessness, and mental ill health - are socially isolated, involved in street sex work, and fear the consequences of accessing support (criminalisation, repercussions from perpetrators, having children removed into care, or being stigmatised by professionals). and Stage (trauma informed and personalised support for women who have been groomed by individuals or groups of men for sexual exploitation and consequently experience multiple challenges including mental ill health, substance misuse and breakdown of support networks) services. It also includes 115 women accessing Phoenix (specialist support for adult women in the criminal justice system as they transition from the prison gates to the community, recognising that pathways into offending for women are often different to that of men because of the abuse, harm and exploitation they experience and the wider power dynamics within society). It also includes 51 accessing our Blossom service (support for young women who experience stigma, poor mental health, have multiple unmet needs and or disadvantages), 21 accessing our VAWG Project (reaches, engages and empowers girls and young women aged 16 - 26 who are experiencing or have experienced gender-based violence) and 46 accessing Evolve. The other individuals were young males (aged 8 to 13) accessing Evolve programmes designed to address issues such as toxic masculinity.

Does your organisation have existing knowledge and expertise working across the criminal justice system?

We have extensive knowledge and expertise of working across the criminal justice system with female offenders through our gender and trauma informed, and

compassion and solution focused, services which include

Phoenix Women provides specialist support for adult women (over 18) in the criminal justice system as they transition from the prison gates to the community, recognising that pathways into offending for women are often different to that of men because of the abuse, harm and exploitation they experience and wider power dynamics within society. Trauma and gender informed, shame sensitive, and strength-based practice which includes 1:1 and group interventions empowers women to move past previous offending and build a stronger future for themselves and their families. Delivery takes place both in prison and the community and includes advocacy, creative therapy and the delivery of our own compassion and solution focused programme, SAGE. Phoenix Women is delivered as part of the Ministry of Justice women's services contract in the Tees Valley and is led by Changing Lives and Ingeus.

Liberty is an outreach, engagement and recovery service for women (over 18) who experience multiple disadvantages (including addiction, homelessness, and mental ill health) are socially isolated, involved in street sex work, and fear the consequences of accessing support (criminalisation, repercussions from perpetrators, having children removed into care, or being stigmatised by professionals). Proactive engagement, through street-based outreach, peer networks and partner engagement are combined with gender and trauma informed and personalised 1:1 and group interventions, so women can address the abuse, harm and exploitation they experience.

ASEP (Adult Sexual Exploitation Partnership) provides trauma informed and personalised support for women who have been groomed by individuals or groups of men for sexual exploitation and consequently experience multiple challenges including mental ill health, substance misuse and breakdown of support networks. This partnership approach is integrated within the delivery of Liberty and Phoenix Women to provide additional targeted support for women experiencing abuse, harm and exploitation. The ASE Partnership is led by Changing Lives, includes eight other organisations across the North and undertakes research into survivor experiences to influence policy and practice as well as providing targeted support.

Our wider knowledge and experience of the criminal justice include the development of our VAWG advocacy project for young women who have experienced or are experiencing gender-based violence and working with ReNew to develop a forensic approach to complex case management (including for women who are within or at risk of entering the criminal justice system).

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

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)

££77,806

Proposed grant start date

01/11/2025

Proposed grant duration in months

24 months

How much funding is required each year?

Year 1

£38,518

Year 2

£39,288

What was your organisation's expenditure in the most recent

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

financial year?	
£992,074	£1,030,210
What value of unrestricted reserves did your organisation have at the end of the most recent financial year?	
£266,355	