

Organisation Name		Reference code (for office use only)
Bright Futures NE		2026-05-YWG05
Organisation Address		
Community Hub 459 John Williamson Street South Shields Tyne and Wear NE33 5HP		
Website Address		
https://brightfuturesne.co.uk		
How did you hear about the Triangle Trust		
Online		
Please describe your organisation's purpose in one to two sentences		
Bright Futures is a multi award-winning charity supporting young women up to age 25 in South Tyneside to overcome challenges and achieve positive futures by providing tailored support, education and opportunities that empower them and amplify their voices.		
Type of Organisation? (tick all that apply and complete relevant details)		
Charity	Registered Charity Number	Date Registered
Yes	1157578	2012
Community Interest Company	Registered Companies House Number	Date Registered
No		
Social Enterprise	Has your organisation been awarded the Social Enterprise Mark?	Year Awarded
No		
Grant Summary		
We are seeking funding to expand EmpowerED, our alternative education programme for young women aged 11-16 who are disengaged from education and at risk of criminal activity. We will use a trauma-informed, youth-led approach to rebuild confidence, support re-engagement in learning and reduce first-time offending.		
Please describe your principal beneficiaries.		
Our principal beneficiaries are young women and girls aged up to 25 across South Tyneside. We are a women and girls-focused organisation, providing safe, supportive spaces where young women can build confidence, develop skills and improve their wellbeing.		
Please describe the specific local needs of the young women and girls you work with that this project will address		
<i>Maximum 4000 characters</i> Bright Futures works with young women and girls who face multiple and overlapping forms of disadvantage, many of whom are falling through gaps in mainstream education, mental health and support services. Based in South Tyneside, an area with high levels of deprivation, child poverty and social inequality, we are seeing a significant increase in the number of young women and girls experiencing school exclusion, severe absence, school refusal, poor mental health, trauma, social isolation and exploitation. This reflects wider national and regional trends. Recent analysis of Department for Education data identified a 266% increase in the number of girls absent from school since 2017, while girls in the		

North East consistently experience the highest rates of persistent absence nationally (19.77% in 2024/25).

Many of the young women and girls referred to Bright Futures face the combined impact of poverty, unstable home environments, unmet mental health needs and limited access to appropriate support services. Local schools and partners report rising levels of anxiety-related school avoidance and increasing pressure on already stretched specialist services. There are strong links between educational disengagement, poverty, vulnerability to exploitation and later involvement in the criminal justice system. Young women and girls who experience exclusion or prolonged absence from school are at greater risk of poor mental health, unsafe relationships, offending behaviours and reduced life opportunities. Many of those we support have experienced adverse childhood experiences including domestic abuse, family breakdown, bereavement, bullying, neglect or trauma. Others have neurodiverse needs that remain undiagnosed or unsupported within mainstream settings. These experiences impact attendance, confidence, emotional regulation and engagement with learning, increasing vulnerability to exclusion, exploitation and criminal justice involvement.

We are also seeing increasing numbers of young women and girls who are emotionally based school avoiders or who have become isolated through home education following negative experiences within mainstream education. Many have lost trust in professionals and services after repeated experiences of feeling misunderstood, unsafe or unsupported. Without targeted intervention, these young women and girls are at significant risk of long-term disengagement from education, unemployment, poor mental health outcomes and future contact with the criminal justice system.

Despite these growing needs, there is limited specialist provision locally designed specifically for marginalised young women and girls. Existing services are often not trauma-informed, gender-responsive or flexible enough to meet complex emotional and social needs. Young women and girls frequently report feeling overlooked within mixed-gender services or unsupported within behaviour-focused approaches that fail to recognise the impact of trauma, inequality and poverty.

Bright Futures EmpowerED programme addresses this gap by providing a safe, trauma-informed and relationship-based programme tailored to young women and girls aged 11-16. Through personalised support, mentoring, group work and positive activities, EmpowerED helps young women and girls rebuild confidence, improve wellbeing, reconnect with learning and strengthen protective factors. The programme directly addresses several risk factors associated with criminal justice involvement, including school exclusion, poor mental health, social isolation and low self-esteem. Our understanding of local need is informed through direct delivery, consultation with young women and girls, referrals from schools and local authorities, and partnership working across education, youth services and safeguarding networks. The voices and lived experiences of the young women and girls remain central to shaping the programme and ensuring it responds effectively to emerging local challenges.

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?

(Maximum 3000 characters)

Bright Futures EmpowerED programme aims to achieve improved wellbeing, increased educational engagement and reduced vulnerability to criminal justice involvement for marginalised young women and girls aged 11-16. The programme focuses on early intervention and prevention, supporting those who are disengaged from education, vulnerable to exploitation or at risk of offending behaviours due to trauma, exclusion, poor mental health and social inequality.

- Improved emotional wellbeing, confidence and resilience
Young women and girls will demonstrate improved emotional wellbeing, increased confidence and stronger emotional resilience. Through trauma-informed mentoring, trusted relationships and safe spaces they will develop improved self-esteem, emotional regulation and coping skills.

- Increased engagement with education and learning
The young women and girls we support have experienced severe absence, exclusion or school refusal and have lost trust in education and professionals. EmpowerED will support young women and girls to re-engage with learning, improve attendance and participation, and develop more positive attitudes towards education and future opportunities. Young women and girls will also be supported to build aspirations around their futures.

- Reduced vulnerability to exploitation and offending behaviours
The programme aims to reduce key risk factors associated with criminal justice involvement, including educational disengagement, low self-esteem, poor mental health, social isolation and unsafe relationships. Through early intervention and sustained support, young women and girls will develop stronger protective factors, improve decision-making and build safer, healthier relationships. We expect this to reduce vulnerability to exploitation, harmful influences and escalation into offending behaviours.

- Stronger relationships and reduced social isolation
Young women and girls will develop stronger peer relationships, increased communication skills and greater trust in supportive adults and services. By creating safe, supportive environments, EmpowerED helps young women and girls feel less isolated, more connected to their communities and more confident accessing support when needed.

- Improved long-term stability and positive future pathways

For young women and girls already in contact with the criminal justice system, EmpowerED will provide stability, trusted support and opportunities for positive progression, they will be supported to increase engagement with education, wellbeing services and positive activities that strengthen long-term outcomes and future opportunities.

Alongside individual outcomes, Bright Futures aims to amplify the voices and experiences of young women and girls to influence wider understanding and practice across the education, young and girls and criminal justice sectors.

Ultimately, EmpowerED aims to ensure young women and girls feel safe, valued, confident and hopeful about their futures.

How will you track the impact you are making?

(Maximum 3000 characters)

Bright Futures is committed to robust monitoring, evaluation and reflective learning to understand the impact of EmpowerED for young women and girls aged 11-16 who are at risk of offending or already involved in the criminal justice system. Our approach combines quantitative and qualitative methods to track progress, capture lived experience and ensure the programme remains responsive to the needs of marginalised young women and girls.

At the start of the programme, each young woman and girl will complete an individual assessment to identify needs, strengths, risks and personal goals. Baseline information will include education engagement, attendance, wellbeing, confidence, emotional resilience, social connection and risk factors linked to criminal justice involvement, including exclusion, poor mental health, unsafe relationships and vulnerability to exploitation. This enables us to track progress over time and tailor support to individual circumstances.

Throughout delivery, staff will record engagement, attendance, participation, safeguarding concerns, progress towards goals and referrals into wider support services. We will monitor outcomes linked to reduced vulnerability and increased protective factors, including improved emotional wellbeing, stronger peer and trusted adult relationships, increased confidence, improved communication skills and re-engagement with education or positive activities.

Young women and girls will regularly contribute feedback through reflective sessions, discussions, surveys and creative evaluation activities. Their voices and lived experiences are central to how we assess impact and shape delivery, ensuring the programme remains youth-led and responsive.

We will use recognised wellbeing and distance travelled tools to measure changes in confidence, resilience, emotional wellbeing and feelings of safety and belonging. Progress will be reviewed regularly through one-to-one support sessions and multi-agency discussions where appropriate.

We will also gather feedback from parents, carers, schools and partner agencies to understand wider changes in behaviour, attendance, engagement and wellbeing. Strong partnership working allows us to monitor progression pathways and identify longer-term outcomes beyond the programme.

Alongside individual outcomes, staff will review emerging themes and learning throughout delivery to strengthen practice and ensure the programme remains trauma-informed, gender-responsive and effective for young women and girls at risk of criminal justice involvement.

As part of our wider commitment to systems change, we will share learning and insights with partners to promote more effective early intervention and prevention approaches. Through this combination of data, feedback and reflective practice, Bright Futures will evidence both the immediate and longer-term impact of EmpowerED on the wellbeing, safety and future opportunities of young women and girls.

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

(Maximum 3000 characters)

Funding from The Triangle Trust would support the expansion and continued delivery of EmpowerED, our trauma-informed alternative education programme for young women and girls aged 11-16 who are disengaged from mainstream education and at increased risk of involvement in the criminal justice system. The young women and girls we support experience exclusion, poor mental health, trauma, low confidence, social isolation and unsafe environments, increasing vulnerability to exploitation and harmful behaviours.

Funding would enable us to expand EmpowerED into a consistent provision, offering personalised learning plans, integrated wellbeing support and targeted early intervention tailored to individual needs. Through a safe, trusted and youth-led environment, young women and girls will be supported to rebuild confidence, improve wellbeing and reconnect with education and positive opportunities.

Key activities will include:

- Trauma-informed one-to-one mentoring and support to help young women and girls build trusted relationships, improve emotional wellbeing, develop confidence and work towards personal and educational goals.
- Personalised education support, including individual learning plans, re-engagement activities and advocacy with schools, colleges and professionals to improve attendance, participation and progression into education, training or employment.

- Small group workshops and peer support sessions focused on emotional resilience, healthy relationships, self-esteem, emotional regulation, communication and personal safety.
- Creative, enrichment and wellbeing activities that encourage self-expression, confidence-building and positive identity development while helping young women and girls develop resilience and new skills.
- Integrated wellbeing and safeguarding support for young women and girls experiencing mental health challenges, exploitation, family instability or other complex needs, including signposting and multi-agency support where needed.
- Youth voice and co-production opportunities, ensuring young women and girls actively shape delivery and influence wider conversations around the barriers they face.

Alongside direct delivery, we will continue working with partners across the education, young women and girls and criminal justice sectors to strengthen understanding of the challenges facing marginalised young women and girls and promote more gender-responsive, trauma-informed approaches.

Through these activities, EmpowerED aims to improve wellbeing, confidence and engagement with education while strengthening protective factors that reduce vulnerability to exploitation, exclusion and offending behaviours. By providing early intervention and sustained support, the programme helps prevent escalation into the criminal justice system and enables young women and girls to move forward with greater safety, stability and opportunity.

Ultimately, EmpowerED helps young women and girls feel safe, valued and confident.

How many girls will you be working over the course of the grant?

48

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

If this project is already operating, please describe how you will 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.

(Maximum 3000 characters)

Bright Futures is currently delivering a successful 12-month EmpowerED pilot programme, developed in response to the growing number of marginalised young women and girls disengaged from mainstream education through school refusal, exclusion, severe absence or unmet additional needs, recognising the links between educational disengagement, vulnerability and later criminal justice involvement. We are increasingly supporting those at risk of, or already coming into contact with, the criminal justice system due to trauma, poor mental health, exploitation, exclusion from education and lack of early support.

The pilot is already generating strong evidence of impact. To date, 32 young women and girls aged 11-16 who were previously home-schooled, severely absent, excluded or at risk of exclusion have engaged with the programme. Young women and girls involved have shown improved confidence, wellbeing, engagement with learning and progression towards positive educational and personal outcomes. Referrals from schools, local authorities and families continue to grow, demonstrating both unmet need and confidence in our approach.

Our work is trauma-informed, relationship-based and shaped through co-design with those we support. Their lived experiences directly inform delivery, helping us create safe, empowering spaces where young women and girls can rebuild trust, develop resilience and reconnect with learning.

EmpowerED addresses risk factors linked to criminal justice involvement, including school exclusion, poor mental health, social isolation, low self-esteem and disengagement from education. By providing consistent support, positive relationships and safe spaces, the

programme helps young women and girls build resilience, improve wellbeing and strengthen their connection to education and community.

Alongside direct delivery, we work with local and national partners to ensure the voices and experiences of marginalised young women and girls inform wider discussions across the young women and girls and criminal justice sectors, promoting more effective gender-responsive approaches.

This application represents the next stage of EmpowerED's development. Funding from Triangle Trust would enable us to build on the success and learning from the pilot by sustaining and expanding provision for young women and girls underserved by existing systems.

Specifically, funding would enable us to:

- increase access to specialist support
- deepen our trauma-informed and therapeutic offer
- strengthen progression pathways into education, training and employment
- enhance evaluation and learning activity to evidence impact
- build organisational capacity to support sustainable growth

We have a strong track record of delivering inclusive education and youth empowerment programmes for disadvantaged young women and girls. We are passionate about ensuring young women and girls excluded by mainstream systems are given meaningful opportunities to thrive.

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.

(Maximum 3000 characters)

Bright Futures has over 14 years' experience delivering high-quality, trauma-informed services that support, educate, empower and advocate alongside more than 3,500 young women and girls each year. We are an award-winning charity with a strong track record of supporting those facing multiple disadvantages, including poor mental health, school exclusion, exploitation, trauma, domestic abuse and involvement with safeguarding and criminal justice services.

Our EmpowerED pilot has successfully engaged young women and girls aged 11-16 who were severely absent from education, school refusers, home educated, excluded or at risk of exclusion. Through a relationship-based and strengths-focused approach, young women and girls have demonstrated improved confidence, wellbeing, engagement with learning and progression towards positive outcomes. Referrals from schools, local authorities and families reflect strong confidence in our approach and the increasing need for specialist provision.

Bright Futures is led by a highly skilled team with expertise across alternative education, youth work, safeguarding, mental health and trauma-informed practice. Staff are experienced in building trusted relationships with those who have experienced adversity, exploitation, unsafe relationships or disengagement from services.

We have extensive expertise in trauma-informed and gender-responsive practice. We recognise that young women and girls often experience trauma, exploitation, inequality and mental health challenges differently, and that mainstream services can fail to respond effectively. Our approach prioritises emotional safety, trust, consistency, choice and empowerment, recognising the impact of adverse childhood experiences, poverty and inequality on young women and girls' lives. EmpowerED creates safe, non-judgemental spaces where young women and girls feel heard, respected and understood, helping them rebuild confidence and resilience at their own pace.

Our staff team holds specialist qualifications and training relevant to supporting young women and girls at risk of offending or already caught up in the criminal justice system. All staff are Advanced Practitioners through the National Working Group for Child Sexual Exploitation. Team members also include Mental Health First Aiders, CEOP Ambassadors, Solihull-trained practitioners, qualified ISVAs and IDVAs. Bright Futures was awarded North East Charity of the Year in 2020.

For the past 11 years we have worked alongside Northumbria Police Complex Abuse Hubs, supporting high-risk victims of sexual abuse and exploitation. Through specialist trauma-informed support, we provide flexible, relationship-based interventions that improve safety, wellbeing and stability while responding to emotional, practical and safeguarding needs.

Co-production and lived experience are central to our delivery model, through feedback, consultation and opportunities to influence wider practice and system change.

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

(Maximum 3000 characters)

Yes. Bright Futures has significant experience supporting young women and girls who are at risk of offending or already caught up in the criminal justice system through trauma-informed, gender-responsive and relationship-based approaches.

For over 14 years, we have worked alongside young women and girls within communities across South Tyneside, delivering early intervention, prevention and long-term support for those experiencing multiple disadvantages linked to criminal justice involvement, including school exclusion, exploitation, domestic abuse, poor mental health, poverty, trauma and unsafe relationships. We understand that young women and girls can become involved in the criminal justice system both as victims of harm and through their own behaviours, often shaped by trauma, unmet needs, exploitation and disengagement from education and support services.

Bright Futures employs staff with specialist expertise relevant to criminal justice and safeguarding work. This includes qualified Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVAs), a qualified Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA), CEOP Ambassadors and Advanced Practitioners through the National Working Group for Child Sexual Exploitation. Staff are trained in trauma-informed practice, safeguarding, exploitation, mental health and relationship-based interventions.

Our approach recognises that young women and girls often experience the criminal justice system differently and may face additional barriers linked to trauma, gender inequality, exploitation and mental health. We provide safe, trusted and non-judgemental spaces within local communities where young women and girls feel heard, respected and supported to rebuild confidence, improve decision-making and make safer choices. We prioritise emotional safety, trust, consistency and empowerment.

Alongside direct support, Bright Futures works closely with schools, local authorities, safeguarding teams, youth services, health professionals and police partners to provide joined-up support and effective referral pathways for young women and girls with complex needs.

Our EmpowerED programme builds on this experience by supporting young women and girls aged 11-16 who are disengaged from education and at increased risk of criminal justice involvement through early intervention, trauma-informed mentoring, wellbeing support and re-engagement with education.

Please explain how the grant will be spent and include a topline budget with brief explanations

(Maximum 3000 characters)

The requested grant of £96,989 over two years will support the delivery and development of EmpowerED, providing trauma-informed, gender-responsive support for young women and girls aged 11-16 who are disengaged from education or at risk of criminal justice involvement.

The majority of funding will be invested directly into frontline delivery to ensure young women and girls receive consistent, high-quality support within safe and supportive community settings.

Budget (2 Years, topline):

•Staffing Costs - £81,320

Contribution towards the salaries of experienced trauma-informed practitioners responsible for delivering one-to-one support, mentoring, group work, safeguarding, partnership working and programme coordination.

• Sessional Staff/Facilitators - £2,050

Specialist facilitators to deliver wellbeing, creative, confidence-building and enrichment activities that support engagement, resilience and personal development.

• Wellbeing and Activity Costs - £2,000

Funding for therapeutic and wellbeing-based activities, group sessions and personal development opportunities that support emotional wellbeing and reduce isolation.

• Venue Costs - £3,000

Safe and accessible community spaces for delivery of mentoring, workshops, group sessions and activities across South Tyneside.

• Resources and Equipment - £1,000

Educational materials, creative resources, wellbeing tools and equipment to support programme delivery and participation.

• Travel and Transport - £1,000

Transport support for young women and girls experiencing barriers to attendance, alongside staff travel linked to outreach and partnership working.

• Food and Refreshments - £2,000

Meals and refreshments during sessions to support wellbeing, engagement and accessibility, particularly for young women and girls experiencing financial hardship.

• Administration Costs (5%) - £4619

Contribution towards organisational overheads, administration, monitoring, evaluation and operational support required for effective programme delivery.

The funding will enable Bright Futures to provide consistent early intervention and long-term support for young women and girls experiencing multiple disadvantages, while continuing to build evidence of the programme's impact on wellbeing, educational engagement and vulnerability to criminal justice involvement. Funding will also support the sustainability and future development of EmpowerED as a long-term community-based programme across South Tyneside.

Who will be responsible for overseeing and delivering this work?

(Maximum 3000 characters)

EmpowerED will be overseen by the senior leadership team at Bright Futures, who bring extensive experience supporting marginalised young women and girls through trauma-informed, gender-responsive and community-based approaches. The project will be managed by experienced staff with expertise across alternative education, safeguarding, youth work, mental health and criminal justice-related support.

Day-to-day delivery will be led by skilled practitioners experienced in working with young women and girls aged 11-16 who are disengaged from education, vulnerable to exploitation or at risk of offending behaviours. Staff are experienced in building trusted relationships with young women and girls who may have experienced trauma, exclusion, adverse childhood experiences, poor mental health or involvement with safeguarding and criminal justice services.

Bright Futures has a highly qualified staff team with specialist expertise relevant to this work. All staff are Advanced Practitioners through the National Working Group for Child Sexual Exploitation. Team members also include Mental Health First Aiders, CEOP Ambassadors, Solihull-trained practitioners, qualified Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVAs) and a qualified Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA). Staff receive ongoing safeguarding, trauma-informed and gender-responsive practice training to ensure support remains safe and responsive to the changing needs of young women and girls.

The team has extensive experience delivering relationship-based interventions and understands the importance of consistency, trust and emotional safety when supporting young women and girls at risk of criminal justice involvement. Staff are skilled in recognising and responding to the impact of trauma, exploitation, poverty, inequality and unmet needs on behaviour, wellbeing and engagement with education and services. Bright Futures' senior leadership team will all also oversee safeguarding, quality assurance and performance monitoring throughout delivery. Regular supervision, reflective practice sessions and team meetings ensure delivery remains trauma-informed, consistent and effective.

The project will also benefit from strong partnership working across South Tyneside. Bright Futures works closely with schools, local authorities, youth services, safeguarding teams, health professionals, police partners and community organisations to ensure young women and girls receive joined-up support and effective referral pathways. Existing partnerships with Northumbria Police Complex Abuse Hubs further strengthen our understanding of the needs of young women and girls at risk of exploitation and criminal justice involvement.

Co-production and lived experience are central to our delivery model. Young women and girls will help shape programme activities and ongoing development through feedback and consultation, ensuring the programme remains accessible, relevant and responsive to their experiences.

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

(Maximum 3000 characters)

Bright Futures is committed to ensuring the long-term sustainability of EmpowerED beyond the period of The Triangle Trust funding. We recognise the ongoing and increasing need for specialist, trauma-informed support for young women and girls who are disengaged from education or at risk of criminal justice involvement, and sustainability planning is embedded within our wider organisational strategy.

Alongside grant funding, we are actively strengthening relationships with local authorities, schools, youth services and safeguarding partners to explore longer-term commissioning and partnership opportunities that support continued delivery of EmpowerED.

The success of our current pilot and the growing demand for support from schools, local authorities and families provides a strong foundation for future sustainability. We are committed to building a robust evidence base through ongoing monitoring, evaluation and reflective learning, enabling us to clearly demonstrate impact and strengthen future funding applications and commissioning opportunities.

Bright Futures has a strong track record of securing funding and sustaining impactful services for young women and girls over the past 14 years. Many of our projects have developed from short-term pilots into established programmes through partnership working and demonstrated impact. Our experience managing multiple funding streams and delivering successful community-based programmes places us in a strong position to continue and develop EmpowerED beyond this grant period.

Alongside funding diversification, we are committed to strengthening local partnerships and embedding EmpowerED within wider support pathways across South Tyneside. By working closely with schools, safeguarding teams, youth services, health professionals and criminal justice partners, we aim to ensure the programme becomes an established part of the local early intervention and prevention landscape for young women and girls.

Co-production and lived experience will continue to shape the future development of EmpowerED. Young women and girls will remain central to informing delivery, helping us ensure the programme evolves in response to emerging needs and remains accessible, relevant and impactful.

We also intend to continue contributing to wider learning and systems change across the young women and girls, education and criminal justice sectors. By sharing learning, evidence and good practice with local and national partners, we hope to strengthen understanding of the barriers facing marginalised young women and girls and encourage more gender-responsive and trauma-informed approaches across services.

Ultimately, our goal is for EmpowerED to become a sustainable, long-term programme that continues to improve wellbeing, strengthen educational engagement and reduce vulnerability to criminal justice involvement for young women and girls across South Tyneside.

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

(Maximum 3000 characters)

Alongside this application we are seeking further funding and commissioning opportunities to sustain and expand EmpowerED long term.

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 (£30,000 to £100,000 with a maximum of £50,000 in one year)

£96989

Proposed grant start date	Proposed grant duration in months
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1/5/2027

24

How much funding is required each year?

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
£47775	£49214	£

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

£473917

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

£471410

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

£154997