

Organisation Name		Reference code
Imago Dei		2024-05-YWG24
Organisation Address		
PO Box 830 East Grinstead West Sussex RH19 9GU West Sussex		
Website Address		
<a href="https://www.idprisonministry.org.uk/">https://www.idprisonministry.org.uk/</a>		
Type of organisation? (tick all that apply and complete relevant details)		
Charity	Registered Charity Number	Date Registered
Yes	1165176	2016
Community Interest Company	Registered Companies House Number	Date Registered
No		
Social Enterprise	Social Enterprise Mark Awarded Yes/No	Date Awarded
No		
<b>Grant Summary</b>		
To support young women leaving prison and reintegrating back into the community to do this well and to live crime free lives post prison, through a programme of one-to-one mentoring with tailored support to meet the specific needs of each individual.		
<b>Please describe the specific needs of the young women and girls you work with that this project will address</b>		
<p>Young women in contact with the Criminal Justice System, those in prison and young women leaving prison are a minority, within a minority and frequently marginalized by the system. With women only making up around 4% of the prison population in England and Wales and services tailored to meet the needs of men, there is already a lack of women specific support. With young women having even more limited access to age and gender specific support.</p> <p>Many young women in contact with the Criminal Justice System have come from a background of violence, abuse, or trauma, which is often the underlying reason for offending. With many of them being mistrustful of the system and finding it hard to work out who they can trust, they are far less likely to voice their needs and challenges. Frequently the system can inadvertently retraumatize young women, particularly where they have no control over what's happening to them, or when services are just not suitable. Agenda Alliance notes that "young women themselves come to be seen as the problem - blamed for their lack of engagement and labelled as 'hard to reach' - rather than the problem being identified as a lack of professional expertise or appropriately tailored provision for young women, in a system which perpetuates the experiences of disadvantage which brought them into contact with it in the first place." When meeting these challenges young women will frequently throw up barriers or appear to be difficult or disengaged. It is vital to work in a way that can breakdown these barriers to ensure that young women are getting their needs met.</p> <p>Working through the Chaplaincy department allows us to hear first-hand, the challenges that the women are facing, as we often interview women on their arrival in prison and, conduct exit interviews. We see women who have been released and then</p>		

recalled to prison and are able to hear their struggles, and why they have ended up back in prison. What we hear is, that many women who end up in prison have had a difficult and often traumatic background with a lack of good role models and guidance. For those leaving prison, there was a lack of support once they had left and, in many cases, they had no permanent/secure accommodation to go to and were often living on the streets, or sofa surfing.

Reintegrating back into the community after spending time in prison is a hugely difficult transition to make. You are leaving an environment that has been controlled for you, when to get up, when to eat, when to leave your room, to a life that is uncertain. The challenge is heightened if a person feels alone in this struggle, without positive people to support them and offer encouragement and help.

Any skills learned and progress made in prison can seem a million miles away and no longer relevant. Women leaving prison face multiple barriers to being able to move forward positively with their lives after prison.

These are just a few of the most pressing needs that young women we work with who are leaving prison have.

- No secure place to live
- Poverty
- Mental health needs such as anxiety and depression, often related to past trauma and an uncertain future
- Barriers to employment, training, and education due to having a criminal record
- Lack of positive relationships and support networks in the community
- Behavioral struggles

Without consistent, trusted, and tailored support how can we expect these young women to reintegrate well back into society, to thrive and live crime free lives after prison.

As a result of the lack of good support, around 58% of women leaving prison end up returning due to reoffending.

**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?**

We have 9 key area's that we are looking to see outcomes for, these are based around the needs we see for women leaving prison. Housing, Employment, Education, Wellbeing and Purposeful Activities, Family life, Children and Parenthood, Displaying new/positive Behaviors, Signposting and Partnership work, Living Independent, and Finance.

Not every Community Beneficiary will need support in all areas.

Outcomes include:

All young women in secure permanent and safe accommodation in an area that doesn't cause them distress, within 6 months to 1 year of leaving prison.

For all women wanting to work to explore the job market, apply for jobs, securing job interviews and employment.

To secure education or training in their field of choice.

Mental Health on the outside can be just as difficult as on the inside so we are looking to see outcomes related to Wellbeing and purposeful activities to support improved mental health.

- To see young women are engaging in purposeful, and enjoyable activity that is relevant to them,
- To demonstrate personal wellbeing practices, and that they are reporting a sense of improved wellbeing.

Where appropriate we want to see young women engaging positively with family life, this may include rebuilding relationships with family members.

We want to see that young women are developing and displaying new positive

behaviours and are looking to see that they are developing in the following areas:

- Showing resilience
- Showing empathy
- Positive self-reflection
- Showing kindness
- Exercising self-control
- Demonstrating endurance
- Moving away from a harmful behaviour
- Expressing emotion
- Moving away from toxic relationship
- Asking for help
- Showing integrity

It is our goal to support the young women we work with to live well independently so we will be monitoring goals around managing finance, pursuing opportunities, attending appointments, and managing responsibilities.

We work closely with other agencies and where appropriate we will refer the young women we support to other specialist agencies for specific support or where they want to reach a specific goal.

In addition to the outcomes, we ask the women to set goals for themselves and look at ways in which we can support them to meet these goals. These maybe around individual health and wellness, or much bigger goals such as setting up and running their own business.

Over 12 months we expect to have supported at least 35 women. We track this progress through Inform our CRM with clear outcomes set out that we monitor progress against. We also ask for regular feedback from our beneficiaries to check that we are supporting them well, conduct a survey once a year and are setting up an advisory board of women with lived experience to ensure we are meeting their needs and that are services are appropriate. By supporting women in these key areas, we are empowering them to have the best possible opportunity to thrive after prison.

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

Our community support is both practical and pastoral and is tailored to meet each young woman's specific needs. We aim to provide helpful and relevant support for each individual, whatever their circumstances. Activities include:

- Assistance with housing & independent living;
- Help with filling out forms or any paperwork;
- Support to access education and training opportunities;
- Help with managing finances;
- Attend appointments, such as Probation, Job Centre etc;
- Spiritual support, helping access faith communities;
- Employment preparation and job-hunting,
- Health and wellbeing support;
- Signposting to other useful services in the community;
- Taking them out for meals to share together;
- Applying for grants for them;
- Writing letters of advocacy and support;
- Mentoring/Emotional support, as regularly as they would like it.

Community support begins before a young woman leaves prison. Since all of our ID Essence Workers in the prison also work in the Community Support Team, we can create consistency from inside prison to outside prison for those resettling into the community. This is something that not many other interventions are able to provide and is really appreciated by the young women as they do not feel passed around, and do not have to build another relationship from scratch.

Our Community Development Lead, supplements support for those inside, visiting

young women who are approaching release to see what help and support they need after leaving prison. These visits begin 3-6 months prior to release, allowing the young women to build relationship with another member of the team, in preparation for the next chapter of their lives.

During these sessions, they will look at what the individual wants to achieve after they leave prison and what their individual needs might be immediately on release and looking forward to the future. Based on these conversations the Support Worker will start to look at ways to help each individual, which might include; liaising with their Probation Officer, looking at housing provision in a particular area, or exploring their aspirations for education, employment, or training.

We offer Through-the-Gate support on the day of release for those who don't have anyone else to meet them on the day they leave prison. For all young women wishing to receive community support, we send them a Release Parcel within a few weeks of their release. It will include a variety of items; some practical (e.g. notebook, pens, cookbooks), and some for wellbeing (e.g. encouraging quotes, a journal), and a hand-written card reminding them of our contact details, and that we're cheering them on.

Each person's journey after prison differs, but we are a source of consistency, support, and encouragement. Ongoing support will typically look like regular telephone calls, in-person meetings for coffee/a meal, text check-ins, and being on-hand to share in anything they're celebrating, or difficult experiences.

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

Essence began as a project of Kahila Church in 2012 when they began delivering myLife courses in HMP Holloway prior to its closure and then moved to delivering them in HMP Downview when Holloway closed. In 2016 they began providing Through-the-Gate and Community Support services. The community support work began with just a few women who expressed an interest in having sustained and continued support once they left prison this has grown over the intervening years and ID Essence currently have 35 women on their community support case load. In 2021 Essence merged with Imago Dei an existing charity that works with women in the Criminal Justice System and became ID Essence a project of Imago Dei.

ID Essence aim to continue delivering excellence in their field of Community Support work supporting young women to live well post prison. We are in the process of setting up an experts board made up of women we have supported both in prison and once they have left prison. Our Experts Board is an opportunity for us to hear from and be shaped by those we support, putting beneficiary voices at the heart of what we are doing. We will use the advice and information that we gather from our experts board to build on our current Community Support work. Ensuring that we are meeting the needs of young women leaving prison and re-integrating back into life on the outside.

We also intend to develop some paid internships for prison leavers and those on ROTL (Release on Temporary Licence) in the ID Essence team over the course of the next year and this grant will help us to achieve this. Enabling us to bring more lived experience and peer support into the organization and supporting young women gaining valuable work experience to assist them into permanent work.

Alongside this we will be setting up and facilitating group meet ups for our Community Support Beneficiaries where they can come together, share their successes and challenges, and provide each other with support.

We aim to grow our Community Support work to be able to support more young women leaving prison and are beginning to look at ways of expanding our capacity.

As an organization we are seeking to not only provide support to women in the Criminal Justice System but to grow the diversity within our team by having more women with lived experience working in the organization.

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

Imago Dei are an organization that works solely with women that have contact with the Criminal Justice System, those who are either in prison or who are prison leavers. CEO Tracy has been working in women's prisons since 2010 and founded Imago Dei in 2016 as a response to the need to provide women specific services to women in prison.

ID Essence have been working with young women in prison since 2012 when they began delivering myLife course in HMP Holloway to 18- to 25-year-old women. In 2016 Essence began supporting women on their journey post prison, this was primarily driven by seeing a need for holistic support, which was informed by hearing from the women the need for support that starts in prison and continues once they leave prison. One of our beneficiaries said, "the great thing about Jo is that we will see her outside". ID Essence have worked with and supported 366 women with myLife course in Prison with 211 of these gaining OCR qualifications, and 84 women in the Community, of those we still have contact with 16 are working, 2 are in training or education, some are full time parents, and recent prison leavers are resettling.

By having a team of diverse, approachable, and supportive staff that are representative of protected characteristics that are represented in the women, we can meet the women on an equal footing and break down barriers. Our team have over 28 years collective practical experience of working with women in prison. We regularly undertake training to ensure we are working in a trauma informed way, including regular trauma awareness/informed training and ACCT document training in prison (ACCT is a used to support people in prison who are at risk of self-harm and suicide), Diversity, Equity and Inclusion training and CPD to safeguard against perpetuating racial trauma, Mental Health First Aid training, and ADHD training to support working with neuro diversity. Our Community support team have also received coaching and training from Rivers Coaching and Sister System to help ensure what we are delivering is culturally responsive, effective and trauma informed support to our beneficiaries. We pride ourselves in seeing each woman that we work with as an individual and not a project, working with them to build trustworthy environments where women feel both physically and emotionally safe. Ensuring that our support is trauma responsive as it's participant led, so as to not replicate any traumatic power dynamics or removal of choice they have experienced in the past (and continue to experience in prison). Our long-term model of working also helps with our trauma informed approach as there isn't the need for beneficiaries to rebuild relationships, or retell their story when they are passed to a new support worker. We will work with a woman for as long as she needs in whatever way supports her best to live well post prison.

**Explain how the grant will be spent**

**Who will be responsible for overseeing and delivering this work?**

Our ID Essence Project Manager is responsible for overseeing and ensuring the delivery of project work. She manages a team of 4 who between them provide myLife courses in prison and support in the community. We have:  
One part-time dedicated Prisons Worker, who is in prison 2.5 days per week delivering myLife courses,  
One full-time Community Development and Support worker who spends 1 day per week in prison meeting women approaching release and the rest of her time supporting women in the community.  
One part-time Community Support worker,  
Two full-time team members who split their week between in prison work and Community Support work.  
We are proud to have a team of diverse women delivering this work, including team members with lived experience of the Criminal Justice System, some who have been care affected, and who come from a range of back grounds, ethnicity, and faiths.

Having a team that is representative of the diversity of the women we work with helps us to engage with these young women.  
The Project Manager is line managed by the CEO of Imago Dei who is then directly answerable to the board of Trustees. We currently have 6 trustees and are actively seeking a 7th who is a woman with lived experience of the Criminal Justice System.

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

We recognize that it is vital to continue to provide consistent support for young women who have been in Prison and become prison leavers as many things in their lives have been erratic and inconsistent. It is our intention to continue to provide on-going Community Support for women leaving prison.  
We will continue to apply for additional grants to sustain our Community Support work after the end of this grant. The charity as a whole is also working to diversify our income streams and we are working to grow our individual giving programme to boost our unrestricted income as the majority of our individual giving is unrestricted. We have begun developing some corporate partnerships and will continue to grow these going forward. We have also been developing our community fundraising and events fundraising to support our income. We would also like to grow our Major Donors and will be looking for some project specific Major Donors in the future.

**Does your organisation only work with women and girls?**

We are a for women by women organization all of our staff members are women, and the majority of our Trustee board are women, we have 6 trustees, 4 women and 2 men, we are currently looking for a 7th trustee and would like it to be a woman with lived experience of prison and the Criminal Justice System.  
Imago Dei only works with women who have had contact with the Criminal Justice System. Currently we are working with women in 3 Prisons and with women in the community who have left prison. We are in the process of setting up a house for women who would otherwise be leaving prison homeless, we are currently looking for a house to purchase and hope to open by the end of 2024.  
Our ID Essence project primarily work with young women aged 18 - 25 although this can extend up to age 30 particularly for women on our Community Support case load as we will support a woman for as long as she needs after leaving prison

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

Imago Dei is a charity that was set up specifically to work with women in the Criminal Justice System, and has been working in prison since 2016 and our ID Essence project have been working in prisons since 2012 (Essence began as a project with another organization and merged with Imago Dei in 2021). We work through the Chaplaincy department in the 3 prisons that we work in, but none of our support is faith dependent, we work with women of all faiths and none and are not a faith promoting organization. We work closely with the Offender Management Unit (OMU) in Prisons, and many of our referrals come from OMU, we also work alongside the Education Department and the Mental Health teams in prisons.  
In addition to working in the prisons we also work with Probation outside the prisons, we are able to offer women with community hours to serve a placement with us, and volunteering roles in our charity shop. We often have close engagement with Probation when supporting our Community Beneficiaries as well.  
Our CEO has been working in prisons for more than 11 years and the ID Essence Project Manager has been volunteering and working in prisons for 14 years, 1 year in men's and 13 years in women's prisons. Collectively our front-line delivery team have more than 28 years working in the Criminal Justice System, with some of our team having lived experience of prison and the Criminal Justice System.

Our ID Essence project was asked to work with Young Women's Justice Project (Agenda Alliance and Alliance for Youth Justice) which highlighted ID Essence as an example of good practice - YWJP-Final-Report.pdf (agendaalliance.org)	
<b>Will you be receiving funding from any other sources for this project?</b>	
We currently have some funding for our part-time Community Support Workers salary and funding for some of our Community Development workers salary until November 2024. plus 2 outstanding applications	
<b>Do all staff have enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks? If no please state why.</b>	
No	
<b>Reason why not all staff have DBS checks.</b>	
The majority of our staff have CTC clearance as they need this to be able to go into the prisons. This clearance is a higher level than an enhanced DBS check therefore enhanced DBS checks are not required by our staff. Those staff that don't have CTC clearance either don't work directly with vulnerable women or don't require it for their role.	
<b>Total funding requested in this application (£10,000 to £80,000 with a maximum of £40,000 in one year)</b>	
£70000	
<b>Proposed grant start date</b>	<b>Proposed grant duration in months</b>
11/1/2024	24
<b>How much funding is required each year?</b>	
<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>
£35000	£35000
<b>What was your organisation's expenditure in the most recent financial year?</b>	<b>What was your organisation's annual income in the most recent financial year?</b>
£302776	£265561
<b>What value of unrestricted reserves did your organisation have at the end of the most recent financial year?</b>	
£46980	