

Organisation Name		Reference code
Open Lens Media CIC		2022-11-YO38
Organisation Address		
Unit 5, The Tanyard, 65 Lower Forster Street, Walsall, WS1 1XB Walsall West Midlands WS1 1XB United Kingdom		
Website Address		
www.openlensmedia.co.uk		
Type of organisation? (tick all that apply and complete relevant details)		
Charity	Registered Charity Number	Date Registered
No		
Community Interest Company	Registered Companies House Number	Date Registered
Yes	8796303	2013
Social Enterprise	Social Enterprise Mark Awarded Yes/No	Date Awarded
Yes	No	
Grant Summary		
To provide engaging employability pathway support and employment opportunities to young black and mixed heritage boys within the Youth Justice System, within the West Midlands.		
Please describe the needs that this project will address		
<p>This project will address some of the fundamental needs of our beneficiary group that present as barriers to meaningful and secure employment following a criminal conviction. In particular the project will focus on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improving employability through literacy, communication, and soft skills development. - Building confidence and aspirations through 1-2-1 personal progression support coaching. - Supporting behavioural and special education needs through development support and case work. - Securing and sustaining meaningful employment through placement and employment coaching support. <p>These elements of support have risen to the top as specific needs to be addressed for our Black and Mixed heritage boys when seeking employment. We have found that prior to their conviction many of their individual needs were missed or went unmet by mainstream services. These were then exacerbated by their time within the criminal justice system and as such, when they have spent their conviction, many if not all of them are not ready for employment or unable to hold down a position due to complex needs.</p>		

The Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation Thematic report, released in October 2021 supports our finding in that it highlights that of the numbers of children and young people involved in the criminal justice system and YOS caseloads, a disproportionate amount are of black or mixed heritage, who have a higher probability of being remanded in custody and receiving longer custodial sentences than their white peers.

When investigating their profile and needs the report found considerable numbers of Black and Mixed heritage boys most probably come from the most deprived areas, surrounded by high levels of violence that impacts their world view from a young age. They will have most likely experienced discrimination or been excluded from school, affected by criminal exploitation, have a disability or special education needs that have been unmet.

Walsall has a serious issue of overrepresentation and for the past year we have been working with Black and Mixed Heritage boys from Walsall Youth Justice to address their needs and support them into meaningful employment, training, or reengagement in education. During this time, our focus group and research work has revealed much of what these young boys struggle with surrounds the aforementioned issues alongside building trusting relationships when they have felt let down at every stage up to this point.

Our project will centre in on these specific issues and we have built a programme targeting them specifically with the aim secure employment and reduce the likelihood of reoffending.

What are the key outcomes that you will be seeking to achieve for young offenders?

We envision beneficiaries on the programme will experience several benefits. The expected outcomes are:

- 1) Participants have an increase in confidence, social and personal development. Through the guided learning hours and coaching support, we will work with the learner to outline their roadmap to where they want to be and the steps, they need to take to achieve that. Each session will instil a sense of ownership within the participant that will build their confidence in their own ability to successfully move forward.
- 2) Participants are able to access work experience and volunteering opportunities. To achieve this, we will work alongside our new and existing partners to provide work experience and volunteering opportunities within the learners chosen field or specialism.
- 3) Participants will improve their basic English Language and Literacy skills Through our creative writing, CV development, Job searching, presentation and interviewing sessions we will support learners with their English Language and Literacy skills.
- 4) Participants will move into employment upon leaving the project. We will offer concentrated support helping learners to transition into employment upon leaving the project.
- 5) Reduce the rate of young Black and Mixed Heritage boys reoffending within 12 months within the Walsall area.

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

We will deliver our Pathways Employability Programme to young Black and Mixed Heritage boys aged 16-25 with a criminal conviction or leaving the criminal justice system. They will receive 6 months of Employability Skills and development support through one of our established pathways with the aim of successfully transitioning them into meaningful employment.

Main Activities

We will provide 16 hours of guided 1-2-1 employability learner support over 12 sessions for each individual learner under one of the strands of our project highlighted below. Alongside this we will also provide 5 hours of Coaching support for each learner to support their wellbeing needs during this journey. This will be dependent upon the individual learners needs which will be determined at the sign-up stage. Our Pathways project will consist of two pathways, these being

1. Employability pathways
2. Personal progression pathways

Employability Pathway: is for beneficiaries identified as ready for the employment market but in need of specific support to pursue their chosen route. Beneficiaries will receive 1-2-1 guided employability support and coaching, but this will be tailored specifically to their chosen field of progression.

Personal Progression Pathway: is for those identified as being furthest away from the employment market. Learners will receive 1-2-1 guided employability support and coaching development aimed to assist them in setting their goals for progressing and outlining the milestones needed to achieve them over a set period with the aim to then move them onto our employability or media pathway.

Under both strands we will also include pathway support by working with our partners and established relationships to support learners in accessing opportunities in the form of:

- Voluntary/Work Experience
- Apprenticeships or Training
- Education enrolment
- Employment.

Who will be responsible for overseeing and delivering this work?

Project Manager - Responsible for overseeing the management of the project, including partnership placements and employment agreements, recruitment onto the programme, data collection and reporting and adherence to policies and safeguarding procedures.

Project Administration - responsible for co-ordination of session and venue bookings, collection of beneficiary paperwork and documents and general administration as required by the project.

Youth Outreach Worker - responsible for 1-2-1 development session coaching, completion of beneficiary development plans and supporting beneficiaries through placement and employment on site.

Lead Facilitator - responsible for delivery of coaching and technical skills development sessions. Completing debrief and sessional feedback in accordance with GDPR and reporting procedures.

How will your organisation continue to sustain this project after the grant ends?

After the grant ends we intend to have this work commissioned by the Youth Justice and Criminal Justice teams within Walsall and Birmingham. We already have good relationships with these teams and the success of this project will evidence the need for what we are delivering. It will also contribute towards reducing reoffending rates and the disproportionality issues surrounding young Black and Mixed Heritage boys.

We intend to present a proposal with evidence of the outcomes that will seek finance to sustain this project for another 2-3 years.

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

Open Lens Media has ten years of experience of working with children, young people and young adults across Birmingham and the Black Country with multiple complex needs and experiencing barriers to progression including mental health, economic deprivation, anti-social and criminal behaviour, SEN, generational worklessness, and racial inequality.

Since 2019 we have worked closely with Walsall Youth Justice Service (WYJS) to develop interventions and projects that support the progressive needs of young people within the Youth Justice System.

Initially this work began with creative expression; coaching young people in media skills in order for them to create film, audio and content that enabled them to express their feelings surrounding their circumstances and improve their wellbeing. This work was extremely successful, paving the way for us to develop our support offer.

Since 2021, we have been working with WYJS to tackle the issue of Disproportionality; effectively looking at ways to reduce the overrepresentation of Black and Mixed Heritage boys within the justice system. We have been delivering a multi-tiered project which includes training and empowering YJS teams in issues surrounding disproportionality, reviewing practice and strategy across multi-service agencies and supporting Black and Mixed Heritage boys in educational and employment development.

Our track record in delivering this work, places us in a position of understanding from a grassroots and internal level. Therefore, we have been able to assess the needs of our beneficiaries in order to best support them and have seen great success in the fruit of our work.

Explain how the grant will be spent

The grant will be spent on the core project costs needed to facilitate the project. We have already secured the equipment and majority of facilities so the grant will be covering staff time, refreshments for the beneficiaries and travel costs for them to get to and from sessions and workshops.

Project Manager - £11,493 - 876hrs @ £13.12
Project Administrator - £3,600 - 360hrs @ £10
Youth Outreach Worker - £6,560 - 500hrs @ £13.12
Lead Facilitator - £2,880 - 240hrs @ £12
Venue Hire - £1,400 - 70hrs
Printing & Marketing - £500
Refreshments - £700
Travel Costs - £700

Will you be receiving funding from any other sources for this project?	
No	
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.	
n/a	
Total funding requested in this application (£10,000 to £60,000 with a maximum of £30,000 in one year)	
£55,666	
Proposed grant start date	Proposed grant duration in months
03/04/2023	24
How much funding is required each year?	
Year 1	Year 2
£27,833	£27,833
What was your organisation's expenditure in the most recent financial year?	What was your organisation's annual income in the most recent financial year?
£118,180	£72,214
What value of unrestricted reserves did your organisation have at the end of the most recent financial year?	
£0	