

Organisation Name	Reference code	
Opportunity Sports Foundation	2023-05-YO17	
Organisation Address		
11 Worlington Close Chorley Lancashire PR7 7JU United Kingdom		
Website Address		
www.opportunitiesportsfoundation.org		
Type of organisation? (tick all that apply and complete relevant details)		
Charity	Registered Charity Number	Date Registered
Yes	142543	2011
Community Interest Company	Registered Companies House Number	Date Registered
No		
Social Enterprise	Social Enterprise Mark Awarded Yes/No	Date Awarded
No		
Grant Summary		
Opportunity Sports Foundation's Reform Sport Project will support 60 young male, and 20 young female offenders aged 15-24, using a sport for development approach, so they can reach their social, educational and employment potential.		
Please describe the needs that this project will address		
<p>In over 12 years of working with YP who have offended, we are still hearing the same disturbing life experiences, such as early trauma and/or abuse, unstable care placements, or being bullied & joining gangs to "feel safe" (e.g. Palmer,2009). These experiences mean that, at first, they struggle to trust our youth workers, feel unmotivated, socially isolated, & disengaged from support. As others have found (e.g. Wright & Liddle, 2014), our YP rely on maladaptive coping strategies such as drug use or self-harming. In addition, structural social issues add yet another level of complexity to our YP's ability to resettle in the community. For instance:</p> <p>90% are care-experienced & now live in poverty. Nearly half are couch-surfing or homeless.</p> <p>60% have no formal educational qualifications.</p> <p>100% are NEET at referral, & their criminal records are a barrier to securing employment (Youth Employment UK,2021).</p> <p>40% have undiagnosed SEND/ADHD (in line with findings elsewhere, e.g. Innovate Project,2021; Young & Cocallis, 2021).</p> <p>90% have unmet mental health needs, putting them at risk of reoffending (COYL,2022)</p> <p>25% of the project's beneficiaries are young women, compared to 21% nationally (ONS,2022) who feel excluded from support mechanisms which tend to favour "male-oriented" resettlement projects (e.g. Bateman & Hazel, 2014).</p> <p>After release, many of our YP move into extremely deprived areas, where crime levels are above average & drugs are readily available - so increasing their risk of reoffending.</p>		

For example, recent research from South Ribble Borough Council (2021) highlights widespread cannabis & Benzodiazepine use, and how YP in this area are at increased risk of county lines violence & exploitation to deal drugs for Manchester & Liverpool organised crime syndicates.

In our view, YP's offending behaviour is a tragic consequence of systemic failures to deliver safeguarding interventions at key points in their development or guarantee protective social factors (Youth Justice Board, 2005). These encompass areas outlined by the Sport for Development Coalition (2014), such as achievement, behaviour, societal integration & social support, that YP need to reach their potential. As the Commission on Young Lives (COYL, 2022) observes, YP like ours have consistently fallen through gaps in support, only to land in the hands of those who would sexually or criminally exploit them.

Our close work with YP helps us to jointly identify their needs and solutions. For instance, receiving support from organisations other than the police is top on their list of solutions (Lancashire Youth Violence Strategy Consultation, 2022). However, resources & expertise beyond statutory support, which YP view as stigmatising, is lacking (COYL 2022). Sport as an intervention is well received, but needs a youth-work focus with purposeful design to deliver sustainable outcomes (Youth Endowment Fund, 2021). Unfortunately, our local area lacks such provisions (Lancs JSNA, 2020; Inspection of Youth Offending Services Lancs, 2019). Notably, young female offenders' experiences are different to those of their male peers but most existing support for these young women focuses on the single aspect of sexual health & behaviour (Centre for Youth & Criminal Justice, 2014). Furthermore, the criminal justice system treats all YP over the age of 18 as adults in law, disregarding the impact of trauma on their reaching key developmental milestones and acquisition of adult life-skills (Wright & Little, 2014). OSF is the only organisation in Lancashire bridging the gaps for wrap-around support in a sports context that is purposefully designed to support YP's complex needs (Sported & Simply Health External evaluation of OSF, 2019). YP often tell us that we are the first people to ever "really listen". This project is therefore urgently needed to reduce YP's ongoing exposure to risks, whilst building their resilience, capacities & capabilities to transition to responsible adulthood.

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

Our trauma-informed, asset-based model uses sport to deliver non-sporting outcomes in education, employment & behaviour (Youth Endowment Fund, 2021). These outcomes overlap with those identified in Sport for Development Coalition's Outcomes Framework (2014) listed in b. above. Furthermore, consistent staff provide stable attachment figures in a sports context that destigmatises support & drives engagement. Anticipated outcomes include:

Improved mental health/well-being as a result of reduced substance misuse & more exercise (NICE 2022), & greater social support (Sport for Development Coalition, 2014).

Increased education & employment prospects. 80% will achieve Maths and English and/or sports coaching qualifications, with additional training & employment opportunities at OSF & partners. This outcome will further improve offenders' social inclusion & support their positive social identities (Sport for Development Coalition, 2014; Oswald, 2022).

25% will be in secure employment 2 years after first engaging with OSF.

Enhanced pro-social skills & positive social networks to increase YP's social capital & mobility (Youth Employment 2030, 2022).

Reaching developmental milestones such as anticipating the consequences of behaviour or accurately judging safety & danger.

Reduced substance misuse (UNDOC, 2021) & offending behaviour (Laureus, 2012)

Newly developed positive values, identities & relationships (Transition to Adulthood Alliance, 2013; Meek et al., 2014; Bajo et. al., 2020).

<p>Reduced probability of custodial sentences. If, at sentencing, YP are involved in our project, it reduces the court's perceived need for custodial sentencing. Women are empowered to find solutions that are specific to their experiences (Edet, 2022).</p>	
<p>What are the key activities you will undertake with this funding?</p>	
<p>OSF's 'Reform Sport' project ensures that 80 YP, referred internally or via partners (e.g. the Youth Offending Team, Lancaster Farms Prison, Nightsafe, Anderton Centre sports & Child Action North West), engage with a structured resettlement programme. Evening delivery (when offending risk is highest) is prioritised. Activities include: Co-creating & monitoring individualised 'Game Plans' to help YP, through sport, identify & achieve their personal & professional development goals x2hrs monthly. Weekly sports-coach youth-worker-with-lived-experience delivery of: Crossfit training x1hr 1:1 mentoring/key-working x1hr Drop-in sessions x3hrs Regular 1:1 outreach to ensure engagement & that basic needs (e.g. housing) are being met Group-work x2hrs to support mental & emotional well-being, social connection, develop healthy coping strategies, address substance misuse & mitigate the risk-of-reoffending Basic skills-training x1hr covering cooking, personal finances & benefits. Access to external sports delivery, e.g. water sports at the Anderton Centre. Supported referrals to specialist drug & alcohol, housing or mental health provisions. Education support to achieve equivalency in maths & English, ASDAN qualifications & accredited sports leader/coaching qualifications. Access to wider professional qualifications, such as the Personal Trainer Qualification for ex-offenders at Active Lancashire. Work experience & placements via existing partners. Training to become peer-mentors & steering group members. Female-only activities include sports training & group mentoring to address their specific needs & guarantee that their safeguarding needs are met. We have a separate project available for girls at risk of sexual exploitation so can refer internally for additional support. As the project progresses, & both our male & female YP develop behaviours that respect boundaries, we will begin running mixed groups.</p>	
<p>Who will be responsible for overseeing and delivering this work?</p>	
<p>Our CEO will oversee the project and have responsibility for liaising with external agencies, supporting referrals at intake, supervising and providing support to youth workers & volunteers, assessing monitoring, evaluation & impact data, and lending ad hoc support as needed. He has overall safeguarding responsibility. Our grant request does not include his salary in Year 1 as we have funding in place for this initial period. Delivery will be led by Senior Youth Workers with lived experience, with responsibility for outreach & consolidating YP's engagement, co-designing individual's "Game Plan" & helping them identify & overcome any obstacles. 1:1 support includes home visits/phone calls, mentoring sessions & supported referrals. Group support includes sports sessions, group mentoring & life-skills training. They will coordinate & support volunteer delivery, & liaise with external delivery partners. They will immediately raise any safeguarding concerns with the CEO, who is our Designated Safeguarding Lead. Above all, their consistent presence & support will ensure that our YP feel safe & have a trusted single point of contact throughout the lifetime of this project.</p>	
<p>Will you be working within the prison estate?</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>How will you engage with YO? (Through HMPs or YOIs or in the community)</p>	
<p>Opportunity Sports Foundation's (OSF) founders had years of combined experience working in children's care homes and with young offenders prior to founding the charity.</p>	

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Former professional footballer and founder Andrew Bell leads on this project, which is staffed by coaches and volunteers with lived experience. As we have seen, and as evidenced by external research, this peer- and lived-experience element, with sport as the framework, successfully engages young people when other directions have failed (e.g. Sportworks, 2015; Youth Endowment Fund, 2021).

Furthermore, we have long-standing referral partners who support our engagement processes. For example, OSF enjoys a close relationship with Lancaster Farms Prison, which is a long-time referrer to our Reform Sport Project. Our crossfit trainer is also the Physical Trainer at the prison, so continuity of contact with young offenders transitioning from custody back into the community helps to support their ongoing engagement. Our other key referral partners include the Youth Offending Team, Nightsafe, The Prince's Trust, the Anderton Centre sports (which runs an outdoor sports project for Young Offenders who refer to us and to whom we refer) & Child Action North West (who run a reparation programme).

Our approach to engagement employs strategies that are sensitive to the individual needs of the young people we work with. Almost all have lived through difficult and distressing experiences, and distrust adults. Building trust is the defining metric for successfully engaging young offenders (e.g. Fullerton et al., 2021), so this is consequently our starting point working with this beneficiary group. Whenever possible, we engage young people in the community via introductions by professionals they already know. In addition, our Senior Youth Workers have lived experiences which resonate with those of our beneficiaries and increase young people's engagement. Ongoing and consistent outreach by this worker, which could include one-to-one support, home visits, phone calls, mentoring sessions or supported referrals, helps our young people feel that they have at least one trusted, credible adult on their side (Prince's Trust, 2007) and provides them with a stable attachment figure.

We also ensure that any structural barriers to desistance and community engagement are addressed. For example, we ensure our young people have secure accommodation, receive mental health support in a destigmatising sports context from the youth worker (Commission on Young Lives, 2022), or via collaborative multi-agency working via supported referrals to specialist services such as drug and alcohol or mental health (HM Inspectorate of Probation, Care Quality Commission and Ofsted, 2015). Consequently, young people join the Reform Sport project activities already feeling supported, heard and enabled to make positive changes.

We are the only specialist sports provision catering for the complex intersecting needs of this beneficiary group in Lancashire. Many of our young people are disengaged from other voluntary and statutory support, but will engage with football and other sports. Within this sports framework, we can support our most vulnerable young people, direct them into sports training pathways and re-engage them with wider services.

Would you describe yourself as a Sport 4 Development organisation?	Yes
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Please tell us about your Sport 4 Development projects or approach

OSF exists to deliver tangible social, economic and health change for disadvantaged young people via opportunities in sport. This has been our approach since our inception and we have been running projects using the "Sport 4 Development" approach since before the 2014 Sport for Development Coalition's Outcomes Framework paper was even published. In addition, our model, otherwise known as "Sports Plus" (Youth Endowment Fund, 2021) or "Sport for Development", is widely recognised as highly successful when it is purposefully designed around outcomes such as education and employment, as ours is and always has been. It is vastly more successful than "classroom" type approaches as

many of our young people associate this context with negative school experiences. In contrast, as we have found during our 12 years' of delivery, sport is a powerful engagement tool - it is destigmatising (Commission on Young Lives, 2022) and acts "as a lever for engagement and as a hook to get young people to engage with employability skills without necessarily recognising it as such." (UK Gov. Youth Employment Initiative Impact Evaluation, 2022).

Our activities range from diversionary sports that reduce risk-taking behaviour to professional sports training, volunteering and employment opportunities (most of our volunteers and many staff members are former beneficiaries), and peer-mentoring programmes. Our networked approach with multiple charity and statutory referring partners means that we are effectively working to address youth homelessness, offending and unemployment. Our approach across all of our delivery encompasses areas outlined by the Sport for Development Coalition (2014), such as achievement, behaviour, societal integration and social support, that young people need to reach their potential.

Some examples of our "Sport for Development" projects include:

Reform Sport Project. For young offenders.

Sport Addict. Works with referrals for substance misuse.

Looked-after children's football. Provides a supportive, empathic community of players and ensures that if needed we are already engaging young people who progress to our...

Care-leavers project. Support via sports, mentoring, training and employment.

Sports for girls. Vulnerable to sexual exploitation.

The activities lead to up to 85% of participants undertaking additional activities that support their ongoing positive economic and social outcomes and transitions to autonomous, happy adulthoods. These include:

Life skills and personal development through sport: This encompasses a broad area which can include objectives centred around a young person's growth and capabilities. We regularly address areas such as personal hygiene, financial management, food preparation and communication skills - always embedded within a destigmatising sport context that promotes peaceful cooperation.

Youth Leadership: Opportunities for our beneficiaries to become peer-mentors, volunteers and input into the organisation's development via the young people's steering group (in development).

Education and Professional Training: Our youth workers support young people to achieve equivalency in English and maths, ASDAN qualifications and professional sports qualifications. We forward refer young offenders to the Active Lancashire programme for personal trainer qualification.

Employment: We have multiple employment partners in our region in sports, manufacturing, construction, beauty amongst others, with whom we enjoy close relationships and who support our young people with either employment, or work-experience, and then provide references or signpost to other employment opportunities. These are employers who understand the etiology of offending, and are equipped to provide in-work support to young people who have experienced complex challenges.

Some of our partners include: Encon, Pro Direct Soccer, Delta Fox Fitness, Rose Plumbing, JSN Painting and Decorating, and OSF itself.

Our community-based sports activities intentionally reduce the focus on offending in favour of a sports-led approach which lauds effort and enables young people to reconstruct their lives from an asset-based position and positive self-regard. Our approach embeds opportunities for our young people to acquire positive self-schema via role models (youth workers, volunteers), by having their achievements in sports activities recognised by adults and peers, and to act as vehicles of social and economic change

with tangible opportunities in education and employment. As the only organisation that specialises in youth work in sports for the region's most hard-to-engage young people, OSF is truly unique. We are proud to be considered by our stakeholders and former beneficiaries as a vital resource and agent of change.

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

Widespread charity closures due to the pandemic & the current cost of living crisis mean that referrals to our project have increased by over 50%, despite falling rates of offending in our local area. Due to budget cuts that ended existing funding for this project, we are seeking an interim funding partner whilst we seek long-term support.

Our contingency plans protect cash & human resources to ensure continued delivery. Reform Sport is one of our stable projects, therefore continuation of delivery is our priority. Diversifying our grant income sources, developing new partnerships & increasing our reserves from 4 to 6 months will attenuate any immediate risks to this project after the grant ends. Our longer-term strategy includes an active & diverse grants fundraising strategy to secure anchor/continuation funders, and growing our unrestricted reserves from commissioned delivery, contracts & paid-for activities. This strategy will allow us to attenuate cash flow risks such as unrecovered contract income or due to increased competition for grant funding whilst simultaneously increasing the amount of unrestricted reserves we can make available to ensure this project's resilience & sustainability.

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

OSF's former professional-athlete founders were working in the Youth Offending Team & local care homes. Seeing that YP successfully engaged with sport as the support mechanism, even when all other approaches had failed, they established OSF in 2011 to sustain & develop this approach in the community. The Reform Sport project, subject of this grant request, has been running since OSF's inception, but local authority budget cuts recently ended its funding & the project is now in jeopardy.

We are expertly placed to deliver this project. Our highly involved board comprises: Secretary of trustees, Shirley Banks, is a Connexions worker & safeguarding officer. Chairman of trustees, Phil Entwistle, is a local councillor with wide local links & advises on business development.

Trustee Farrell Kilbane is a former professional footballer who has worked on offender rehabilitation projects in prisons, a professional sports coach & expert fundraiser. Our CEO holds various coaching badges, & teaching & youth-work qualifications. Our crossfit trainer is a female ex-offender & the current PT at Lancaster Farms prison. All of our youth workers & volunteer mentors have lived experience. Most are former beneficiaries. In addition, our Youth Forum ensures we respond to YP's self-stated needs. Furthermore, OSF is a key provider in our region's support network. Partners include multiple referring agencies already mentioned, as well as housing associations, charities such as Barnardo's & The Prince's Trust, Lifeline's drug & alcohol service, Youth Hubs, & education providers. We are an accredited sports qualification & ASDAN training provider, so YP do not need to refer out for training or education support. Our long-standing partnerships with local employers in sports, manufacturing, building & beauty services, ensure our YP's smooth transition into work.

As soon as we can secure funding for this urgently needed project, we can hit the ground running.

Explain how the grant will be spent

Reform Sport budget 2023-2025. Figures per annum

Crossfit sports delivery:

Training 4x1hr x 48 wks @ £45ph=£8,640

1 x volunteer x48wks =£0

Volunteer stipends @£5pw x48wks=£240

Male Senior Youth Worker 0.5 FTE for outreach, mentoring, specialist group work & supported referrals =£14,000	
Female Senior Youth Worker 0.25 FTE for outreach, mentoring, specialist group work & supported referrals =£7,000	
6-8 xVolunteer mentors: 6-8 hours pw =£0	
Drop-in sessions at Nightsafe x 3 hours pw. Volunteer or in-kind by Nightsafe/OSF =£0	
Project oversight by CEO x2hrs pw for M&E, supervision, ad hoc specialist support, liaising with external agencies @ £25ph = £2,600	
ASDAN/basic qualifications - Free at CTP Blackburn =£0	
Sports leader qualifications @ £12 per certificate x 80 YP =£960	
Materials =£1,000	
Share of overheads =£1,000	
TOTAL PROJECT COSTS p.a. £35,440	
INCOME SECURED/PROJECTED in Year 1=£5,800; Year 2 =£5,800	
Volunteer Stipends = £240 (in kind)	
Project oversight by CEO: Year 1=£2,600; Year 2 =£2,600 (Lloyds Foundation in Year 1; TBC Year 2)	
Sports leader qualifications=£960 (OSF designated reserves)	
Materials =£1,000 (in kind)	
Share of overheads =£1,000 (in kind)	
SHORTFALL Year 1 = £29,640; Year 2 =£29,640	
Will you be receiving funding from any other sources for this project?	
Yes	
Do all staff have enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks? If no please state why.	
Yes	
Reason why not all staff have DBS checks.	
Total funding requested in this application (£10,000 to £80,000 with a maximum of £40,000 in one year)	
£59280	
Proposed grant start date	Proposed grant duration in months
15/09/2023	24
How much funding is required each year?	
Year 1	Year 2
£29640	£29640
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?
£82262	£96669
What value of unrestricted reserves did your organisation have at the end of the most recent financial year?	
£17808	