

Organisation Name		Reference code
Proud to be me (PTBM)		2024-10-YWG39
Organisation Address		
The Civic Center, 600-608 Old Kent Road Peckham, London county of Greater London SE15 1JB county of Greater London		
Website Address		
https://proudtobeme.org/		
How did you hear about the Triangle Trust?		
Newsletter		
Please describe your organisation's purpose in one or two sentences.		
ProudToBe Me empowers at-risk girls and women (13-25) through mentoring and programs focused on Creativity, Employability, Entrepreneurship, and Leadership. We aim to build confidence, prevent offending, and foster positive community engagement.		
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	08377261	2013
Social Enterprise	Social Enterprise Mark Awarded Yes/No	Date Awarded
Yes		
Grant Summary		
This grant will fund a peer mentoring program to empower young women and girls at risk of offending or already involved in the criminal justice system, providing them with support, skills, and positive role models to reduce offending and improve life outcomes.		
Please describe the specific needs of the young women and girls you work with that this project will address		
<p>The young women and girls we work with face multiple, intersecting challenges that increase their risk of offending or reoffending. Based on our experience and current research, we have identified the following key needs:</p> <p>Low self-esteem and confidence: Many of our participants struggle with poor self-image and lack confidence in their abilities. This can lead to negative decision-making and vulnerability to negative influences. Research shows that low self-esteem is a factor affecting the relationship between socioeconomic status and peer relationships, which can increase the likelihood of antisocial or criminal behavior (Gifford-Smith et al., 2005).</p> <p>Economic hardship: A significant number of our young women come from low-income backgrounds. Economic deprivation is linked to higher crime rates, with research showing that neighborhoods with higher levels of income deprivation record more crime (Ochoa et al., 2023). This economic stress can push young women towards criminal activities as a means of survival.</p> <p>Negative peer relationships: Many of our participants are surrounded by negative peer influences, which research has shown can have a stronger effect on girls than boys in terms of antisocial behavior (Piehler, 2011). Unsupervised and unstructured social time</p>		

with peers can increase the likelihood of criminal behavior.

Trauma and adverse childhood experiences (ACEs): A high proportion of our young women have experienced trauma, including physical abuse, sexual abuse, or exposure to domestic violence. Studies show that girls sentenced in the youth justice system have higher rates of mental health concerns (81%) compared to boys (69%) (Girls, 2024.). These experiences can lead to mental health issues, substance abuse, and increased risk of offending.

Lack of positive role models: Many of our participants lack positive female role models in their lives, particularly those who have successfully navigated similar challenges. This absence can make it difficult for them to envision positive futures for themselves.

Limited awareness of coercive relationships: Our work has shown that many young women lack understanding of coercive control in relationships. Research indicates that only 16% of 16-year-olds in a recent survey had heard of and understood the term "coercive control" (Lagdon et al., 2023). This lack of awareness can lead to involvement in unhealthy relationships that may contribute to offending behavior.

Poor mental health: Mental health issues are prevalent among our target group, often stemming from trauma, stress, and difficult life circumstances. These issues can contribute to substance abuse and offending behavior if left unaddressed.

Limited life skills and employment prospects: Many of our young women lack basic life skills and struggle to find employment due to limited education, criminal records, or lack of work experience. This can perpetuate cycles of poverty and offending.

Difficulty accessing and navigating support services: Our experience shows that many young women struggle to access and effectively use available support services, including health, education, and social services. This is particularly true for those from ethnic minority backgrounds.

Lack of safe spaces and supportive communities: Many of our participants lack safe, supportive environments where they can process their experiences, develop new skills, and form positive relationships. This absence can hinder their personal growth and efforts to avoid offending.

By addressing these specific needs through our peer mentoring program, we aim to reduce the risk of offending and reoffending among our participants, while empowering them to build positive, fulfilling lives.

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?

Our peer mentoring program aims to achieve the following key outcomes for young women and girls at risk of offending or already involved in the criminal justice system:

1. **Reduced offending and reoffending rates:** Our primary goal is to decrease the number of first-time offenses and reduce recidivism among participants. We aim for at least 80% of participants to avoid offending or reoffending within 12 months of completing the program.
2. **Improved self-esteem and confidence:** Through mentoring relationships and targeted workshops, we seek to significantly increase participants' self-esteem and confidence levels. This will be measured using validated assessment tools at the beginning and end of the program.
3. **Enhanced life skills and coping strategies:** Participants will develop crucial life skills, including financial literacy, conflict resolution, and stress management. We aim for 90% of participants to demonstrate improvement in at least three key life skill areas.
4. **Increased awareness of healthy relationships:** Our program will focus on improving understanding of healthy relationships and recognizing signs of coercive control. We target a 50% increase in participants' knowledge and awareness in this area.
5. **Improved mental health and well-being:** Through support and access to

appropriate services, we aim to see a measurable improvement in participants' mental health, with at least 70% reporting better emotional well-being by the end of the program.

6. Increased engagement with education or employment: We'll help 60% of participants engage in education, training, or employment within 6 months post-program.

7. Developed positive peer networks: By fostering supportive relationships within the program, we aim for 80% of participants to report having at least two new positive peer connections by the end of the program.

8. Improved access to and utilization of support services: We will track the number of referrals made and successful engagements with external support services, aiming for a 40% increase in service utilization among participants.

9. Enhanced decision-making skills: Through mentoring and workshops, we aim to improve participants' decision-making abilities, with 75% demonstrating improved skills in this area by program completion.

10. Increased sense of empowerment and agency: We will measure participants' sense of control over their lives and future, aiming for a significant increase in scores on empowerment scales.

11. Reduced substance misuse: For participants struggling with substance abuse, we aim to see a 30% reduction in reported substance use by the end of the program. These outcomes will be measured through a combination of quantitative data (e.g., offending rates, employment statistics) and qualitative assessments (e.g., self-reported improvements, mentor evaluations). Our goal is to empower young women and girls, reducing their involvement in crime and helping them build fulfilling futures.

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

Our project will be implemented in four strategic phases:

- Preparation (Nov-Dec 2024): Recruit staff, develop curricula, establish partnerships
- Delivery (Jan-Mar 2025): Weekly workshops, ongoing mentoring, mid-program review
- Evaluation (Mar-Apr 2025): Assess outcomes, analyze results, prepare final report

To achieve our targeted outcomes, we will implement the following key activities:

1. Peer Mentor Recruitment and Training:

Recruit and train women with lived experience
Provide ongoing support and supervision for mentors

2. One-to-One Peer Mentoring:

Match participants with trained peer mentors
Facilitate regular mentoring sessions focusing on goal-setting and personal development

3. Group Workshops:

Conduct weekly sessions on:

- Self-esteem and confidence building
- Life skills (financial literacy, conflict resolution, communication)
- Healthy relationships and recognizing coercive control
- Mental health awareness and coping strategies
- Employment skills and career planning

4. Experiential Learning Activities:

Organize monthly outings or activities (e.g., art therapy, sports, volunteering)
Provide opportunities to practice new skills in real-world settings

5. Education and Employment Support:

Offer individualized education and career guidance
Facilitate connections with local employers and educational institutions

- 6. Mental Health and Well-being Support:
Conduct initial mental health assessments
Offer in-house counseling and referrals to specialized services
 - 7. Family Engagement (where appropriate):
Organize family mediation sessions
Provide parenting support for young mothers
 - 8. Community Integration Activities:
Facilitate introductions to positive community groups
Organize community service projects
 - 9. Technology-Enhanced Engagement:
Implement a text message support system
Develop an online platform for resources and peer support
 - 10. Substance Misuse Support:
Provide targeted support and access to specialized services
 - 11. Practical Support Services:
Assist with accessing housing, healthcare, and other essential services
Provide emergency support (e.g., food bank referrals, transportation assistance)
 - 12. 'Through the Gate' Support:
Provide intensive support for those leaving custody
Assist with practical resettlement needs
 - 13. Peer Support Groups:
Facilitate regular meetings and peer-led activities
 - 14. Personal Development Planning:
Create and review individual plans
Celebrate achievements and milestones
 - 15. Trauma-Informed Therapeutic Activities:
Offer trauma-specific interventions (e.g., art therapy, mindfulness sessions)
 - 16. Cultural Awareness Activities:
Organize events celebrating diverse cultures
Provide culturally specific support
 - 17. Ongoing Evaluation and Feedback:
Conduct regular program evaluations
Gather participant feedback for continuous improvement
- This holistic program empowers participants to build crime-free futures by addressing multiple needs, developing skills, and providing personalized support.

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.

The oversight and delivery of this work will be managed by a dedicated team with relevant expertise:

- 1. Project Director: Lola Owolabi (CEO)
 - Overall strategic oversight
 - 20+ years' experience as a magistrate
 - MA in Coaching, ILM Level 7 in Executive Coaching and Mentoring
 - Extensive experience in youth development and criminal justice
- 2. Project Manager: To be recruited
 - Day-to-day management of the project
 - Experience in managing mentoring programs and working with at-risk youth
 - Background in criminal justice or social work preferred
- 3. Mentor Coordinator: To be recruited (part-time)
 - Responsible for recruiting, training, and supporting peer mentors
 - Experience in volunteer management and peer support programs
- 4. Lead Counselor: Nike Odubola (Board Member)

- Oversight of mental health support and trauma-informed practices
 - Senior psychiatric nurse with expertise in working with at-risk youth
 - 5. Education and Employment Specialist: Esther Koroma (Board Member)
 - Lead on education and employment support activities
 - Experience in career counseling and youth employment programs
 - 6. Peer Mentors: To be recruited
 - Deliver one-to-one mentoring and support group activities
 - Women with lived experience of the criminal justice system or overcoming similar challenges
 - 7. Workshop Facilitators: Existing staff and external specialists
 - Deliver specialized workshops on various topics
 - Expertise in areas such as financial literacy, healthy relationships, etc.
 - 8. Evaluation Lead: Esther Koroma (Board Member)
 - Oversee the monitoring and evaluation of the project
 - Experience in program evaluation and impact assessment
 - 9. Safeguarding Lead: Debra Sokunbi (Board Member)
 - Ensure all safeguarding procedures are followed
 - Experience in child protection and safeguarding in youth work settings
- This team structure ensures a mix of strategic oversight, day-to-day management, specialized expertise, and lived experience. The board members involved bring a wealth of relevant skills and knowledge, while the new recruits will add fresh perspectives and specific project management expertise. All team members will receive ongoing training in trauma-informed and gender-responsive approaches to ensure consistent, high-quality service delivery.

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.

ProudToBeMe has a strong track record of supporting young women and girls since our establishment in 2013. Our expertise includes:

1. Gender-responsive programming: Our organization was founded with the specific mission of empowering teenage women. We have developed and refined our approaches to address the unique needs of young women, including those at risk of offending.
2. Trauma-informed practice: Our staff and volunteers are trained in trauma-informed approaches. We recognize the high prevalence of trauma among our participants and incorporate this understanding into all aspects of our work.
3. Lived experience: Many of our staff and volunteers have personal experience of the challenges faced by our participants, including involvement with the criminal justice system. Our program is led by individuals with direct experience of the criminal justice system, including our CEO's 20 years as a magistrate. This enhances our credibility and effectiveness.
4. 'Through the Gate' Expertise: Our experience in supporting young women from custody through to community reintegration offers a continuity of care that's often lacking in other programs.
5. Established partnerships: We have strong relationships with local authorities, schools, and criminal justice agencies, facilitating effective referrals and collaborative support.
6. Proven outcomes: Our existing programs have demonstrated success in improving participants' self-esteem, life skills, and educational/employment outcomes.
7. Cultural competence: Our team's diversity and cultural understanding allow us to provide uniquely tailored support to young women from various backgrounds, particularly crucial given the overrepresentation of BAME women in the justice system.
8. Evidence-based practices: We continuously update our methods based on the latest research in youth development, criminology, and psychology.

9. Holistic support: We offer a comprehensive program addressing multiple needs simultaneously - from mental health to practical skills - providing a uniquely integrated approach.
10. Youth participation: We actively involve young people in program design and evaluation, ensuring our services remain relevant and engaging.
11. Adaptability: We have a track record of successfully adapting our services to meet changing needs and circumstances, as demonstrated during the COVID-19 pandemic.
12. Technology-Enhanced Engagement: Our innovative use of text support and an online platform ensures continuous engagement beyond face-to-face sessions. Our CEO, Lola Owolabi, brings significant expertise to this project. She has been a magistrate for 20 years, giving her deep insight into the criminal justice system. She holds an MA in Coaching and is certified in Executive Coaching and Mentoring (ILM Level 7), ensuring high-quality oversight of our mentoring programs. Our expertise in trauma-informed, gender-responsive approaches and proven success supporting young women uniquely qualifies us to deliver this.

Please explain how the grant will be spent

The grant will be utilized to create and implement a comprehensive peer mentoring program for young women and girls at risk of offending or already involved in the criminal justice system. Here's how the funding will be allocated:

Staffing and Volunteer Support: (40% of the expenses)
A significant portion of the grant will go towards hiring a dedicated Project Manager and a part-time Mentor Coordinator. These roles are crucial for overseeing the day-to-day operations of the program and ensuring its success. The Project Manager will coordinate all aspects of the program, while the Mentor Coordinator will focus on recruiting, training, and supporting our peer mentors. We'll also allocate funds for a sessional counselor to provide specialized mental health support. Additionally, we'll cover travel expenses for our volunteer peer mentors, many of whom come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. This ensures that financial constraints don't prevent these valuable team members from participating. We'll also invest in high-quality training materials and resources for our mentors, equipping them with the skills needed to support our participants effectively.

Program Activities and Resources: (30%)
Funds will be dedicated to developing and running our core program activities. This includes creating materials for our workshops on topics such as self-esteem building, life skills, and understanding healthy relationships. We'll also fund experiential learning activities, which are crucial for putting newfound skills into practice. A portion of the grant will go towards developing and maintaining a technology platform to facilitate ongoing support and communication with participants.

Direct Participant Support: (15%)
Recognizing the often-challenging circumstances of our participants, we've allocated funds for direct support. This includes an emergency assistance fund to help with urgent needs, transportation vouchers to ensure participants can attend sessions, and education/training bursaries to support their personal development and future prospects.

Evaluation and Monitoring: (8%)
To ensure the effectiveness of our program and to inform future improvements, we'll invest in robust evaluation tools and processes. This includes purchasing data collection tools and hiring an external evaluation consultant to provide an objective assessment of our impact.

Operational Costs: (7%)
A small portion of the grant will contribute to essential operational costs. This includes a contribution to rent and utilities for the spaces where we'll conduct our activities, insurance to protect our participants and staff, and some administrative support to keep

the project running smoothly.
 By allocating the grant in this way, we ensure that we have the necessary human resources, tools, and support structures in place to deliver a high-quality, impactful peer mentoring program. This approach allows us to provide comprehensive, long-term support to young women and girls, addressing their complex needs and helping them build positive, crime-free futures.

Who will be responsible for overseeing and delivering this work?

The oversight and delivery of this work will be managed by a dedicated team with relevant expertise:

1. Project Director: Lola Owolabi (CEO)
 - Overall strategic oversight
 - 20+ years' experience as a magistrate
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 - Experience in program evaluation and impact assessment
9. Safeguarding Lead: Debra Sokunbi (Board Member)
 - Ensure all safeguarding procedures are followed
 - Experience in child protection and safeguarding in youth work settings

This team structure ensures a mix of strategic oversight, day-to-day management, specialized expertise, and lived experience. The board members involved bring a wealth of relevant skills and knowledge, while the new recruits will add fresh perspectives and specific project management expertise. All team members will receive ongoing training in trauma-informed and gender-responsive approaches to ensure consistent, high-quality service delivery.

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

- Our program aims to create lasting structural change in several key areas:
1. Criminal Justice: Influence courts for alternatives to custody
 2. Education/Employment: Create pathways, challenge barriers
 3. Mental Health: Bridge criminal justice and mental health services
 4. Community: Change perceptions through participant projects
 5. Policy: Influence national approach via parliamentary involvement
 6. Recruitment: Prioritize lived experience alongside qualifications

We will implement these structural changes through our direct work, advocacy, and by sharing our model and findings with other organizations and policymakers, creating a ripple effect across the sector.

To ensure the sustainability of these changes and continue our work beyond the grant period, we will:

1. Diversified Funding Strategy:
 - Apply for follow-on funding from other trusts and foundations
 - Explore statutory funding opportunities, leveraging our track record
 - Develop corporate sponsorship partnerships
 - Implement a individual giving campaign targeting our supporter base
2. Social Enterprise Model:
 - Develop a training program for other organizations on peer mentoring, generating income
 - Explore the potential for a social enterprise arm (e.g., participant-run cafe) to provide both employment opportunities and revenue
3. Volunteer Development:
 - Continue to recruit and train volunteer peer mentors, reducing staffing costs
 - Develop a 'mentor to paid staff' pathway to retain expertise
4. Partnership Development:
 - Strengthen partnerships with statutory services for potential commissioned work
 - Collaborate with other charities to share resources and apply for joint funding
5. Cost-Effective Delivery:
 - Transition some services to online/hybrid delivery where appropriate
 - Train staff in multiple roles to increase flexibility and efficiency
6. Evidence-Based Impact:
 - Use robust evaluation data to demonstrate our impact and cost-effectiveness to future funders
 - Publish and present our findings to build our reputation in the sector
7. Community Engagement:
 - Develop a 'Friends of ProudToBe Me' scheme for regular donations
 - Organize community fundraising events to raise both funds and awareness
8. Alumni Network:
 - Create a network of program graduates who can support newer participants
 - Engage alumni in fundraising and advocacy efforts
9. Technology Utilization:
 - Leverage the online platform developed during the grant period for ongoing support
 - Explore partnerships with tech companies for pro-bono support
10. Board Engagement:
 - Utilize our board members' networks and expertise for fundraising and pro-bono support

We aim to create a sustainable model by building strong evidence of impact, diversifying income streams, and embedding the project within the community, ensuring continued success beyond the grant period.

Are 80% of your beneficiaries women and girls? Please provide a breakdown of your beneficiary numbers for the last two years.

Yes, over 80% of our beneficiaries are women and girls. ProudToBe Me was established specifically to support and empower young women and girls, and this remains our primary focus. Here's a breakdown of our beneficiary demographics:

1. Gender Distribution:
 - Approximately 95% of our beneficiaries identify as female
 - The remaining 5% include those who identify as non-binary or transgender
2. Age Range:
 - Our primary target group is young women and girls aged 13-25

- Approximately 70% are between 13-18 years old
 - 25% are between 19-25 years old
 - 5% are over 25 (typically young mothers we continue to support)
 - 3. Ethnicity:
 - Our beneficiaries reflect the diversity of the communities we serve
 - Approximately 60% are from Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic backgrounds
 - 4. Socioeconomic Status:
 - The majority (around 80%) come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds
 - 5. Risk Factors:
 - Approximately 40% have had some contact with the criminal justice system
 - 60% are considered at risk due to factors such as family history, school exclusion, or living in high-crime areas
 - 6. Additional Vulnerabilities:
 - About 30% have experienced or witnessed domestic violence
 - 25% have mental health concerns
 - 20% have a history of substance misuse
 - 7. Education/Employment Status:
 - 50% are in education (school, college, or university)
 - 20% are employed (often in part-time or insecure work)
 - 30% are not in education, employment, or training (NEET)
- Our commitment to supporting women and girls is reflected not only in our beneficiary demographics but also in our organizational structure. Our board of directors and staff team are predominantly female, many with lived experience similar to our beneficiaries. While our focus is primarily on young women and girls, we occasionally work with young men when they are part of our beneficiaries' support networks (e.g., in family mediation sessions). However, these instances are limited and do not detract from our core mission of empowering young women and girls.
- This strong focus on female beneficiaries aligns with the Triangle Trust's priority of supporting organizations that primarily serve women and girls, making us well-positioned to deliver impactful work in this area.

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

Yes, ProudToBe Me has substantial knowledge and expertise working across the criminal justice system. Our experience spans prevention, intervention, and post-release support for young women and girls. Key aspects of our expertise include:

1. Leadership Experience: Our CEO, Lola Owolabi, has been a magistrate for 20 years, providing deep insight into the criminal justice process. Board member Patricia Knightley has extensive experience counseling youth involved in the criminal justice system
2. Prevention Work: We run programs in schools and community settings to divert at-risk young women from offending. Our workshops on healthy relationships and recognizing coercive control help prevent young women from being drawn into criminal activities
3. Court Liaison: We provide court reports and recommendations for young women in the justice system. Our staff attend court hearings to support participants and their families
4. Youth Offending Team Collaboration: We have an established partnership with local Youth Offending Teams, providing complementary support to young women on community orders.
5. Prison In-Reach: We deliver workshops and one-to-one support in women's prisons, preparing young women for release.
6. Through-the-Gate Support: We provide intensive support for young women

<p>transitioning from custody to the community. This includes practical assistance with housing, benefits, and education/employment</p> <p>7. Probation Partnerships: We work closely with probation services, offering additional support to young women on license or community orders</p> <p>8. Restorative Justice: Several team members are trained in restorative justice practices, which we incorporate into our work where appropriate</p> <p>9. Policy Influence: We contribute to local and national consultations on youth justice and women in the criminal justice system. Our CEO is a member of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Women in the Penal System</p> <p>10. Trauma-Informed Practice: All our work is underpinned by trauma-informed approaches, recognizing the high prevalence of trauma among justice-involved young women</p> <p>11. Cultural Competence: Our team's diversity allows us to provide culturally sensitive support, particularly important given the overrepresentation of BAME young women in the justice system</p> <p>12. Lived Experience: Several of our staff and volunteers have personal experience of the criminal justice system, enhancing our credibility and understanding</p> <p>This comprehensive expertise across various aspects of the criminal justice system enables us to provide holistic, informed support to young women at all stages of their involvement with the system. Our established relationships with key stakeholders in the criminal justice sector further enhance our ability to navigate the system effectively on behalf of our participants.</p>	
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.	
Total funding requested in this application (£10,000 to £80,000 with a maximum of £40,000 in one year)	
£80000	
Proposed grant start date	Proposed grant duration in months
1/1/2025	3
How much funding is required each year?	
Year 1	Year 2
£40000	£40000
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?
£58612	£83184
What value of unrestricted reserves did your organisation have at the end of the most recent financial year?	
£15000	