

Organisation Name		Reference code (for office use only)
Safer London		2026-05-YWG24
Organisation Address		
Room 112, The Foundry 154 - 156 Blackfriars Road London SE1 8EN		
Website Address		
www.saferlondon.org.uk		
How did you hear about the Triangle Trust		
Word of mouth		
Please describe your organisation's purpose in one to two sentences		
Safer London's purpose is to support children, young people and families affected by violence and exploitation to increase safety, reduce risk and build brighter futures. Our vision is a society where every child and young person can thrive free from violence, exploitation and harm.		
Type of Organisation? (tick all that apply and complete relevant details)		
Charity	Registered Charity Number	Date Registered
Yes	1109444	2005
Community Interest Company	Registered Companies House Number	Date Registered
No	5190766	NA
Social Enterprise	Has your organisation been awarded the Social Enterprise Mark?	Year Awarded
No		NA
Grant Summary		
Peer group and one-to-one interventions for girls in alternative education who are at high risk of, or have previous involvement with, the criminal justice system.		
Please describe your principal beneficiaries.		
Our principal beneficiaries are young Londoners affected by violence, exploitation, and trauma. Many have lived experience of county lines, criminal exploitation, serious youth violence, and sexual violence. They also often face additional challenges such as insecure housing, unemployment, and exclusion from education. On average, 50% of the young people we support are female, which is unusual among organisations working with young people affected by violence and exploitation. To meet their needs, we have a dedicated Girls and Young Women service with specialist caseworkers, and we lead projects that promote best practice across sectors and among practitioners. Among the young women we support, 25% identify as having SEND and 15% as neurodivergent. Our inclusive delivery model and specialist team enable us to support these girls effectively.		
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> Our project aims to provide targeted support to girls in alternative education settings who are at risk of entering or re-entering the criminal justice system. Recent research (2025) shows teenagers in England and Wales who are permanently excluded from school are twice as likely to commit serious violence within a year of their expulsion than those who were merely suspended (Cornish and Brennan, 2025).		

We will reach girls who cannot attend mainstream school, often because they've been excluded or have complex needs that can't be met in them. Our caseworkers will provide trauma-informed support, premised on a trusting relationship. It has been proven that this kind of relationship is the most impactful for wellbeing, behaviour, and educational outcomes for young people in alternative education settings. With this support, they are better positioned to transition back into mainstream education, where their long-term outcomes are statistically more positive. (Relationship Foundation, Relationships in Alternative Provisions, 2021).

We will work in partnership with two alternative education settings - Young Women's Hub in Lewisham and Saffron Valley Collegiate in Croydon - both located in areas of demonstrable need and with whom we have established relationships. Across both provisions, we will support girls who face heightened vulnerability due to exclusion from mainstream education, past contact with the criminal justice system, involvement in violence or criminal exploitation, and/or SEND or neurodivergent profiles.

Across both alternative education provisions, many of the girls and/or their peers have been involved with the youth justice system or engaged in anti-social behaviour. There are also high-level levels of neurodivergence and SEND, for example 100% of the girls at Young Women's Hub have SEND profiles alongside additional needs including those related to trauma.

SEND and neurodivergence all increase the likelihood of children being excluded from mainstream education and entering the criminal justice system. Children in England and Wales with an identified special educational need (SEN) are at least 7 times more likely to be excluded from mainstream education than their peers. (Gill, K., Quilter-Pinner, H., & Swift, D. (2017).

Evidence from The Michael Sieff Foundation's 2025 report, Justice for children with SEND and neurodivergence, also shows their vulnerability to entering the criminal justice system:

- 80% of children cautioned or sentenced in the youth justice system have SEND or are neurodivergent.
- SEND and neurodivergent young people are more likely to enter custody at a younger age, receive longer sentences, and reoffend.

Lewisham and Croydon are two boroughs with above average levels of youth involvement with the criminal justice system. Lewisham, where the Young Women's Hub is based, has London's highest rate of entry into the criminal justice system. This number has risen year-on-year since 2022, while the overall London figure has remained static, demonstrating a rising and localised need. Similarly, Croydon where Saffron Valley Collegiate is based also has above average levels of youth entry into the criminal justice system. Croydon is also a priority borough for the London Violence Reduction Unit.

The needs of the girls our project will reach are under-documented in relation to their risk of entering the criminal justice system and the support they require. Alongside delivering direct support, we will develop and document best-practice approaches that can be shared with other practitioners and organisations. This will help strengthen wider responses for girls with SEND and neurodivergence who are at risk of entering the criminal justice system.

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)

We will deliver flexible, person-centred support to girls in alternative education settings. The girls we will reach will be at risk of or previously have had contact with the criminal

justice system. A central aspect to how we work is the development of trusting relationships. In 2023, we worked with young Londoners to refine our understanding of what characterises a trusting relationship, and incorporated the principles into our practice:

- Reliability
- Relatability
- Genuineness
- Positive regard

Our interventions are designed in partnership with each young person and respond to their needs, environment, and goals. Working within alternative education settings, we anticipate that topics may include unhealthy relationships, personal safety, building confidence, managing emotions, developing trusting support networks, victim awareness, and consequential thinking. However, the focus of the support will be decided collaboratively with the young people themselves.

Across our peer group and one-to-one interventions, we aim to for girls to achieve outcomes aligned with our theory of change - creating change in areas that we have evidenced lead to reduced individual experiences of violence and exploitation. These areas are:

- Emotional safety - emotional self-care, emotional intelligence, and self esteem
- Relational safety - building healthy networks, knowledge, and awareness of healthy relationships, and understanding of own needs in a relationship
- Physical safety - the ability to navigate safely through their environment including online safety and physical safety
- Future focus - their ability to find a purpose and make steps towards it

This project brings together complementary one-to-one and peer group interventions, which deepen the impact of our work. Working with young people within the context of a peer group:

- Increases the safety of the whole peer group.
- Utilises the strong protective factor for young people's whose safety has been negatively impacted.
- Enables contextual safeguarding - understanding the risks young people might encounter in the community and how to engage with them to keep them safe in their environment.
- Challenges unsafe attitudes within the group
- Improves peer relationships
- Increases empathy
- Supports them to shape solutions to the issues that they face

Beyond our defined outcomes, we will also support girls to set and achieve their own personal goals. Through the action of setting and achieving their own goals, girls develop their self-efficacy. This is important for girls who may feel disempowered by their experiences of exploitation and violence and may feel removed from important decisions about their lives.

The caseworker will work with the girls to establish personal goals at the start of interventions. We monitor the achievement of these goals alongside other outcome measures, and the progress towards them is a success measure and opportunity for the girls to celebrate their accomplishments.

How will you track the impact you are making?

(Maximum 3000 characters)

We begin tracking our impact from before our first engagement with the young person. Prior to the intervention, we will monitor the number of girls referred to our peer and one-to-one interventions, including demographic information, the reason for referral, and any

additional support needs. By monitoring this information before we begin engagement, we can ensure that we are reaching girls who may need our support equitably.

Within the first few weeks of beginning one-to-one work with the girl, our caseworkers undertake a collaborative needs assessment with the young person. The initial assessment acts as a benchmark for outcome measurement and enables the caseworker to build a picture of the young Londoner's needs, their context, and experiences. We carry out similar assessments for our peer interventions. Peer groups are assessed collectively using Safer London's bespoke outcome tool, with input from the young Londoners.

The assessment is not a 'tick box' exercise, and caseworkers are encouraged to apply an analytical and critical approach to assessments. This approach considers individual and group strengths and taking an asset-based approach, builds on these.

We use our tested outcome tool as part of our assessment, planning, and interventions. Our outcome tool captures self-reported outcomes that fall within the domain of our four outcome areas.

Assessments are reviewed bi-monthly and whenever a safeguarding concern arises. Desired outcomes for each peer group are defined through our theory of change. The outcome framework and young people's progress against the outcome areas and their goals will be monitored at the beginning, in the middle and at the end of the intervention. Outcome data demonstrates that our support makes a positive difference to the lives all of young people, and our commitment to inclusive practice ensures positive outcomes for SEND and neurodivergent young people too. Of the young people we've worked with one-to-one, who identify as SEND or neurodivergent:

- 87% noted an improvement in peer relationships
- 73% noted an improvement in setting and achieving goals
- 67% noted an improvement in how they treat themselves

All data is stored on our secure case management system, Apricot, which allows us to store sensitive data and case notes efficiently, securely and in compliance with data protection legislation and best practice (including the Data Protection Act and GDPR).

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

(Maximum 3000 characters)

This funding will enable us to recruit an expert level Girl and Young Women's Caseworker. This full-time worker will work directly with girls across two sites - Saffron Valley Collegiate in Croydon and Young Women's Hub in Lewisham. Alongside their direct support work, they will also document learning into resource for dissemination.

The Expert Girl and Young Women's Caseworker will provide one-to-one and peer group support to girls in the two named alternative education providers. Their support will consist of:

- Supporting groups of between 2 to 10 peers where there is risk of involvement with the criminal justice system. For up to 16-weeks the caseworker will deliver weekly sessions with this group, lasting around 45 minutes per session on average. Duration will depend on the needs of each individual girl as some may benefit from shorter sessions. They will support them to explore topics like peer relationships and unsafe attitudes, working towards the goal of building safety among the group.
- One-to-one interventions. Where girls within the peer group intervention are seen as potentially benefitting from more intensive support they will be offered one-to-one interventions from our caseworker. This individual support will last for up to 12-weeks and will enable a deeper exploration of any emotional wellbeing and/or physical safety needs.

As we will be working within alternative education settings, our support model is responsive to the fast-changing nature of the student body - as young people are excluded from school they enter and leave at different times during the school year. If a girl leaves before her support ends, where possible the caseworker will seek to finish the intervention with them at their new school. If that is not possible, they will follow our process for closing the intervention safely, including final assessments and onward referrals if necessary. Peer group interventions are also sufficiently flexible to allow for changing group size. They require a minimum of two students (up to a maximum of 10) attend and we will work closely with the school to anticipate and plan for the group size as much as reasonably possible.

Another important element of this project is the capture and sharing of learning. As we will reach girls who are frequently marginalised both in their lived experiences and in the understanding of their needs, there is an opportunity to record our learning to help develop best practice. In practice, this means the caseworker will lead on gathering and recording insights from the girls about how they want to be supported, which techniques and approaches are most effective, and what practitioners should take into consideration when working with them. Our aim is for the project to culminate in the development of a new practice resource that can be shared internally and externally to advance approaches to working with SEND and neurodivergent girls at risk of entering the criminal justice system.

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

40

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)

This project brings together our existing one-to-one casework model with a new peer support offer. It also builds on our existing expertise in supporting SEND and neurodivergent young people, with a new focus on girls and young women, a group that is often minimised in conversations about violence and exploitation.

We have a strong track record of working with and delivering positive outcomes for SEND and neurodivergent young people. Across our services, on average 25% of the young people we reach identify as having a SEND or neurodivergence, although we expect the true figure to be higher. To ensure that our services are inclusive and appropriately adapted we have invested in our organisational expertise including additional training for all caseworkers, dedicated staff roles like our Expert Neurodiversity Caseworker and Internal Advisor, and we are proud to be an Autism Inclusion Award accredited organisation.

This investment has enabled strong outcomes for SEND and neurodivergent girls and young women:

- 83% achieve an improvement in how they treat themselves
- 77% achieve an improvement in their peer relationships
- 61% achieve an improvement in their goals/future orientations
- 55% achieve an improvement in their physical safety

Although these outcomes represent huge changes in young lives, we know that the girl outcomes are still lower in some areas than average, such as peer relationships and setting and achieving goals. This is the reason we want to invest specifically in support for this group. The dedicated expert caseworker will tailor one to one support to meet the specific needs of girls and young women. Alongside this, the project will enable us to develop a new peer support model, to help girls to achieve better outcomes.

Our peer support model is based on a growing body of evidence that suggests that when utilised effectively, peer groups can act as a powerful protective factor for young people. Peer support is premised on knowledge that children and young people spend a significant portion of their lives with their peers and often their experiences of safety are connected. Young people's experiences of safety are connected to their peer relationships and cannot always be fully understood or effectively supported without considering peer context.

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)

Safer London has 20 years' experience supporting young people and families affected by violence and exploitation. Our approach is evidence-led and shaped by two decades of practice, research, and the voices of young people, which are central to how we design and deliver our work.

Our work with girls and young women is gender-informed and grounded in intersectionality. We recognise that distinct aspects of a young person's identity influence both their experience of harm and their access to support. We also use trauma-informed practice and contextual safeguarding, so our work addresses the wider environments in which young people live, including their families, schools, and communities.

In 2023, we developed Listen to Learn, a report based on a participatory exploration of how girls and young women affected by violence and exploitation want to be supported by professionals. They highlighted the need for services to respond to the diverse and intersecting realities of girls' lives, with intersectionality embedded throughout so that no young person is overlooked or misrepresented.

Research also points to the frequent mischaracterisation of Black girls. Instead of being recognised as vulnerable to sexual abuse, they can be perceived as displaying "problematic behaviour" over the underlying trauma and abuse, leaving girls without the specialist support they need (Davis, 2019).

This is why our caseworkers are trained in cultural competence and in recognising systemic and structural inequalities. They build open, trusting one-to-one relationships in which each young person's circumstances are understood and respected. We also centre young women's own perceptions of safety, recognising that these may differ from professional assumptions and we are willing to have our views challenged.

We recruit caseworkers with a strong understanding of trauma and provide ongoing training and reflective spaces to deepen their knowledge of how trauma affects young people's lives and how best to respond. This matters because many of the young people we support have experienced traumatic events or live with the effects of trauma, which can influence their physical, emotional, behavioural, and cognitive wellbeing.

We pair our trauma-informed practice with contextual safeguarding, which helps caseworkers identify the social conditions and contexts in which harm occurs and intervene directly in those settings, rather than focusing only on the individual young person or their family. In practice, this includes:

- Considering the wider contexts of children and young people's lives, for example through peer mapping to understand connections, risks, and strengths within their peer groups.
- Developing interventions that improve safety within the settings young people are part of, for example by supporting a peer group, place, or school where there are concerns about young people's safety.

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

(Maximum 3000 characters)

As we work with young people affected by violence and exploitation, supporting them and their parents through the criminal justice system forms a key part of a caseworker's role. Caseworkers help young people, as well as their parents and carers, to navigate the criminal justice system-whether they are involved as perpetrators or victims.

This support can include attending court, contributing to pre-sentence reports, assisting with youth referral order requirements, and supporting visual recorded interviews and Achieving Best Evidence (ABE) interviews. Caseworkers may also advocate for referrals to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM), represent young Londoners in meetings, and regularly liaise with lead officers involved in investigations.

We are expanding our work in prisons and the secure estate. We are developing a caseworker support offer for people in prison who have complex experiences of trauma, undiagnosed neurodiversity, and are experiencing ongoing violence within the secure estate.

We are developing an offer for the women's prison HMP Bronzefield, alongside HMP/YOI Isis. Safer London caseworkers will draw on their expertise in supporting young people affected by violence and exploitation, particularly those with complex trauma, to provide targeted support.

In addition to our direct work, we have also led on important explorations into the experiences of girls within the criminal justice system - in 2024, we published See Beyond, a research-led report and toolkit exploring the experiences of young women involved in the criminal justice system. The report revealed that behind many offences lies a history of trauma, exploitation, and victimisation. It also highlighted how being labelled as perpetrators can exclude young women from the very services meant to protect them, as they are often viewed through a lens of risk rather than care. It also culminated in the development of a toolkit developed in conjunction with young women for practitioners and aims to foster a more compassionate and informed interactions with these young women.

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

(Maximum 3000 characters)

The grant will be a contribution to the cost of a full-time Expert Caseworker, their line management, and direct and indirect costs over two-years.

Year 1: £68,968.22

Caseworker salary: £39,168.55

Line management contribution: £5951.87

Direct staff costs including travel, subsistence, mobile phone and training: £4,770.46

Premises costs: £1,806.78

Administrative costs including recruitment & DSB, software and HR support: £6,940.74

Overheads and management costs: £10,347.95

Year 2: £71,055.92

Caseworker salary: £40,343.61

Line management contribution: £6,130.42

Direct staff costs including travel, subsistence, mobile phone and training: £4,913.58

Premises costs: £1,860.96

Administrative costs including recruitment & DSB, software and HR support: £7,148.96

Overheads and management costs: £10,658.39

Who will be responsible for overseeing and delivering this work?		
<i>(Maximum 3000 characters)</i>		
This project will be delivered by an Expert Caseworker, who will be responsible for planning and delivering interventions, maintaining relationships with the alternative education settings, and leading the development of the learning resource by capturing insights from practice and from the girls involved. The Service Manager oversees delivery and outcomes, holding four-weekly case reviews with the caseworker to assess progress, identify any adjustments needed, and complete a final review when support ends. They also provide day-to-day oversight, guidance, and safeguarding support, acting as the first point of escalation where needed. The Caseworker and Service Manager are overseen by the Service Delivery Leads, who work closely with the Director of Practice, a member of the senior leadership team with overall responsibility for the project.		
How do you plan to continue this work once the grant ends?		
<i>(Maximum 3000 characters)</i>		
This project applies our core delivery model in a new context. While we may not continue working in the same settings after the grant ends, we will maintain the partnerships we have established alternative education settings - Saffron Valley and Young Women's Hub. Through this relationship we will seek to find ways to continue to partner to provide support for the girls in their settings. Learning from this project will be used to further strengthen our future work with girls and all young people in alternative education settings. We continually ensure that learning gained is integrated back into the development of our services, and similarly after this project ends, we will use the learning to improve practice within Safer London and across the wider sector. Some of this learning will be captured and developed into a learning resource or tool, that can be shared within our charity but also disseminated more widely to other community organisations and practitioners.		
Will you be receiving funding from any other sources for this project?		
<i>(Maximum 3000 characters)</i>		
Yes - the remaining project shortfall will be covered through unrestricted income. We will also seek additional dedicated funding to close this gap as we continue to diversify our income through trust		
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)		
£100000		
Proposed grant start date	Proposed grant duration in months	
12/1/2026	24	
How much funding is required each year?		
Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
£50000	£50000	£
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?	
£3662619	£3514480	
What value of unrestricted reserves did your organisation have at the end of the most recent financial year?		
£791688		