

GRANT APPLICATION 2017/18 – ASSESSMENT AND RECOMMENDATION

Priority Corporate Outcomes	To ensure that children and young people receive a great start in life and identify and address any issues that may impede a successful childhood To help disadvantaged children and young people who are at risk of not achieving their potential to close the gap with their peers; make a positive transition into adulthood; and prevent later difficulties To help change damaging behaviour	
Organisation	ART AGAINST KNIVES (in partnership with Future Paths Barnet)	ref 9/E/CTY
Address	1-2 Alfred Place, WC1	

Corporate policy, aims and objectives

The Corporate Plan, 2015-20, and the Children and Young People’s Plan, 2016-20, reflect a focus on improving outcomes for Barnet’s younger population, creating the conditions for children and young people to be kept safe, active and healthy and to develop skills and acquire knowledge to achieve their full potential and lead successful adult lives. Support is especially targeted at young people aged 16 to 24 who are not in education, employment or training (‘NEET’) and those who have disabilities or complex needs. The voluntary and community sector plays a key role in developing social networks; encouraging participation and achievement; and building resilience within the community, including amongst young people.

The Education Strategy for Barnet attaches importance to identifying young people at risk of NEET at an earlier stage of their school career and to developing appropriate support, such as mentoring and coaching, in partnership with other agencies, including the voluntary sector.

Activities / proposal

Art Against Knives (AAK) is a registered charity and company limited by guarantee formed in 2010 following the unprovoked stabbing of a student in East London, aimed at preventing serious violence amongst young people through the provision of creative projects, targeting adolescents experiencing multiple and complex risks and socially and economically-deprived communities. It offers in-house expertise, such as with gang-associated young people, challenging behavior and domestic violence, and, together with partners, seeks to divert clients away from negative behavior; prevent them from becoming victims or perpetrators of violent crime; and help them to progress into education, training or employment.

The charity, which began operating in Hackney and Tower Hamlets, is rooted in delivering support in functioning spaces in local communities, reaching out to young people who lack access to positive activities; struggle to engage with formal education; and face barriers to support services. Its strategy is to build trusted relationships with clients; provide tailored individual support; and help them gain an understanding of their circumstances, risks, needs and ambitions. Projects supplementing this core work have included a partnership with London College of Fashion to help young people gain work experience in the industry and ‘Pop-Ups’, introducing clients to new environments, the corporate sector and positive role models.

AAK currently works almost exclusively in Barnet, where its projects include:

* ‘In Our Hands’ - weekly community nail bars in N12 and on the Dollis Valley Estate, Barnet, offering help to girls (aged 12+) and young women with school work; mentoring; skills and accredited employment-related training (for clients aged 17+); and safe space for socializing;

- * 'Creative Collaborations' - 'on trend' industry-standard training and mentoring to develop mainly young men's personal and professional skills at The Lab, a weekly pop-up music studio, and 'Studio N2', a new partnership with 'Grange Big Local' on the Grange Estate.

AAK has supported over 1,200 young people to date at risk or involved in violent crime, in many cases self-referred. In Barnet, where referrals are also made by the police, the youth offending team and Pavilion Study Centre, it has engaged with 462 girls/young women through the community nail bars since 2016, 70% of whom presented as high risk, especially in the areas of domestic violence/abuse, requiring the intervention of specialist independent advisers. 72% of clients received mentoring; 40% were helped to end violent or abusive relationships; and 30% were supported into employment. In 2017, 94 young people engaged with AAK through the Creative Collaborations projects.

This application relates to the proposed development, in response to feedback from clients and the number of young people presenting with multiple or complex problems, of a dedicated education, employment and training (EET) 'hub' (at the Grand Arcade) in N12, as part of the charity's strategy to expand the targeted support it provides to vulnerable young people with complex needs who struggle most in education or in hunting for a job. The new service, which will be run on a weekly basis in partnership with Future Paths Barnet, a specialist provider of employment-related services in the welfare-to-work and skills sectors, and have capacity for supporting up to 120 clients in year one, will offer:

- * one-to-one help to identify further education and training opportunities and with job searches, applications and interview techniques, in collaboration with schools and colleges, Job Centre Plus, Barnet's welfare reform task force and other statutory services;
- * 'progression coaches', helping to overcome practical barriers to securing training or work, such as opening a bank account or obtaining a national insurance number, and addressing additional needs like housing and benefits;
- * a 'personal development specialist', to help safeguard participants, maintain momentum and manage appointments and referrals.

AAK states that many of the young people with whom it works, including those at school or of school age, have impoverished, disorganized or chaotic family backgrounds; little or no parental support; and may engage in 'alternative' activity to make money. Lacking aspiration, resilience and organizational skills, they struggle to sustain activities such as following up on applications or keeping a job. It points to its skills and success in building trust and a relationship with such clients, who are harder to reach and often distrustful of statutory agencies, and the scope that it offers to guide them along positive and safe future pathways.

The charity is acknowledged by a range of agencies and funders in London involved with young people who are NEET for the innovative nature of its work. 'In Our Hands' has been featured in the national media as an example of best practice in targeting support at vulnerable young women. AAK has been engaging with the council in several ways, including discussions with Barnet with Cambridge Education about the delivery of work at the Pavilion Study Centre and Oak Hill School, and is awaiting the outcome of a tender bid to deliver community-based work under the gang prevention programme.

Barnet with Cambridge Education endorses the proposal in the context of the capability of voluntary groups like AAK to connect with disengaged and hard-to-reach young people. Although programmes are in operation, supported by the European Social Fund, for NEET young people aged 16 to 18, there is a shortage of re-motivational opportunities, not only for that cohort but also young people over the age of 18, for whom there is limited provision and which the project will also target.

Cost and financial need

In 2016, AAK, which has two permanent members of staff, incurred expenditure of £200,383. Twelve qualified freelance workers are currently engaged on a contractual basis to deliver services, complemented by volunteers who make up a key part of youth project delivery. It operates mainly by way of fixed-term grants in support of individual projects, mostly by charitable trusts, including an investment of £30,000 by John Lyon's Charity towards the delivery of creative programmes in Barnet, supplemented by £50,000 of charitable funding towards core costs. A trading subsidiary (Art Against Knives Gallery in Shoreditch) is expected to generate up to £10,000 this year through the sale of donated artwork. No charges are levied on clients. Net current assets at 31/12/2016 were £80,456, of which £59,179 were restricted funds, leaving an uncommitted balance of £21,277(9% of estimated expenditure in 2017).

The council's Chipping Barnet and Finchley & Golders Green Area Committees helped kick-start the nail bar on the Dollis Valley Estate and The Lab music project with grants of £9,999 and £9,060 respectively in March 2016, both of which have been sustained with funding from other sources. Barnet Homes is supporting the Studio N2 music project with a £5,000 grant.

The cost of delivering services from the new EET hub over the next twelve months is shown as £19,478, made up of direct projects costs (staffing by AAK, rental and materials) of £16,371 and overheads and management of £3,107. Future Paths Barnet, drawing on its own funding streams, will provide carers advisers and the progression coaches at no cost to the project. A grant of £10,000 is sought on the basis that other funding will make up the balance.

The project's sustainability is predicated on the demonstration of successful outcomes to, and future funding by, other funders, a strategy that has proved effective in sustaining other projects given the number of charitable trusts that have an interest in its area of work. Bids have been made for core funding to underpin the hub, to be complemented by revenue generated from hiring out the space at weekends and from the proposed conversion of one of the nail bars to a social enterprise, serving paying customers on a second day each week.

The grant recommended is a 50% contribution to costs in year one, subject to matching funding.

Grant recommendation, type and conditions

£9,739

Start-up grant

One-off grant

Special conditions:

Payment of the award should be made subject to (a) matching funding; (b) agreement of targets and milestones in year one for monitoring purposes; and (c) the receipt of progress reports and client data on a quarterly basis and an undertaking to provide an evaluation of the project at the end of twelve months.

Target grant outcomes

To improve the life skills, resilience and motivation of vulnerable young people to prevent them from becoming NEET; to rectify damaging behaviour; and to support their transition to adulthood.

Date: February 2018