



South West Chiltern Community Board Funding Recommendation - 2020/21

Date of Decision 2 February 2021

Organisation Name	Transitions UK
Project Name	The Aspire Youth Offending Project
Funding Stream	Community Area Priorities
Total Cost of project	£9,078.75
Amount of Match Funding	£5,078.75
Amount being applied for	£4,000
Amount Recommended	£4,000

Project Summary

The aim of this pilot project is to provide support for four Young People (YP) in the South West Chilterns who are at risk of offending/reoffending as part of a cross Community Board initiative providing support for 16-20 young people overall. The other boards looking to be involved are High Wycombe, Wendover, Aylesbury and maybe North West Chilterns. The project consists of the following:

**ASPIRE PREVENT-** Works with YP at risk of exclusion, criminal exploitation and/or offending between the ages of 13-17. Referrals occur when young people are not attending school regularly, are repeatedly excluded or where there is concern about behaviours and associations. YP can also be referred when they or their families have been involved in crime or are getting into trouble.

Referrals come from several other agencies including, Youth Justice, Health, Social Services and Police, to name a few.

**ASPIRE RESTART** - Supports YP who have offended but have expressed a desire to change. Referrals for this service come from attendance centres, when a young adult has a criminal record or is under a court order.

**Transitions UK Approach:** They provide a support team of 2-3 trained mentors to help each YP progress positively towards adulthood. Crucially the success of this project is based upon the quality of relationships developed over time. After an initial assessment meeting with the YP they design an 18 month to 2-year personal development plan dependent on the individuals needs.

Due to the current lockdown our YP have self reported extreme feelings of isolation, loneliness, low self-esteem, and anxiety. Transitions UK have been to adapt and offer online sessions that give practical guidance to continue their progression, techniques to manage feelings and discussions on how the YP are affected by Covid-19, also workshops from reformed offenders engaging with other support agencies and local businesses.

Their adapted services have taught them a great deal about how useful online sessions are and how comfortable some of our young beneficiaries were in a digital environment. YP will continue to receive

around 6 hours of input per week each overall. However, after the current pandemic support will be delivered using both physical and virtual sessions. Sessions will remain person centred and linked to individual development plans.

**Personal Support Team:** Transitions UK carefully match local mentors who reflect the YPs personality, interests and ambitions. Some support work is also done with family members and other agencies involved to ensure best outcomes. On average, each YP on Aspire Prevent receives around 6 hours of support per week, and those on Aspire Restart receive around 4 hours per week.

Sessions are held in the community and include some social activities and round table discussions. All their support focuses on life planning and techniques to achieve their personal goals.

**Cluster Group:** This adds to the support team model by regularly bringing several YP together with their mentors. Activities will range from life skills training to sports and recreational activities to strengthening positive friendships and encourage socialisation. There will also be opportunities to discuss development and any personal concerns. (These can be delivered physically or virtually).

Part of their cluster group support will be the incorporation of monthly modules supplied by 7Roadlight as part of developing awareness and avoidance skills.

**Continued Support:** Transitions UK expect to work with each YP for up to a two-year period, but as their programme develops, they will gradually reduce support. As they become more independent/confident Transitions will source and recommend employment and further educational opportunities. Below is testimony from four YP aged, 21, 17, 15 and 21 years old respectively.

Quote: "I really do appreciate all the help and support that Chris, Anna and Mike have given me. I think you do an amazing job, and one day I hope that I may be able to give back and help others like you do"

Quote "I can't thank you enough for what you have done for me. If you hadn't walked into the Children's home that day and talked to me, I wouldn't be where I am now. I would still be taking drugs, I wouldn't be in college, and I would have lost my girlfriend"

Quote "Thank you for all your help and support, it has made a huge difference just having that independent person to talk things through with"

Quote: When I met you I really didn't want to be alive, but today I do, I actually feel happy and more confident and I have hopes & dreams"

**The need for this project:** YP can be drawn into crime by association with poor role models, living in a dysfunctional family situation, being poor or experiencing destructive relationships.

For YP who struggle with school, exclusion can lead them into a spiral of damaging relationships which they can find difficult to escape. Local gangs exploit vulnerable YP and often exert huge pressure to join them. They can become victims of violence, be forced to steal or carry drugs and weapons.

Current studies disturbingly show there are 27,000 children in England who identify as gang members (British Crime survey, 2017) and recent home office statistics reported 285 knife fatalities in England, (2018) the highest ever recorded. Alarming, 25% of those deaths were young adult men.

Sadly, YP raised in the care system make up over 30% of the male population and 60% of the female population in youth offending institutions (Youth justice statistics 2014/15). In addition, there are dire consequences for those unable to process life in custody. A 2015 report from Beyond Youth Custody found that 11% of those in the youth offending system have attempted suicide.

These statistics are mirrored by our own experiences and are at least replicated in Buckinghamshire. We are awaiting data, in April from Buckinghamshire Council's Community Safety team, to more effectively map need and therefore the focus of service provision. However, we are aware (from our existing work and from partner feedback etc\ ) that there is substantial need throughout the county and there will be more young people in South West Chilterns who need and want this service than the four young people initially provided for. Nearly all the YP Transitions UK have worked with have either grown up in care or have a violent / dysfunctional family. Some have experienced intense bullying at school or have had suffered extreme feelings of isolation and loneliness. They are desperate for a sense of belonging which often leads to exploitation.

Transitions UK will also work collaboratively with all sectors of the community, including Youth Offending Teams and Attendance Centres, pupil referral units, schools, colleges, police, social care teams and 7Roadlight as mentioned above. They also work with the business community to create training and employment opportunities.

#### How does the project address local priorities?

The Community Board agreed its priorities on 14 July which included priorities for **Antisocial Behaviour and Young People, both of which this project would be associated with.**

This project will contribute towards the working groups objective on funding initiatives around Anti social behaviour and young people throughout the board area.

The project identifies the individual behaviours and mannerisms of young people who have or who are at risk of offending/re-offending. These individuals often go on to be by bullied and coerced into gang related activities of negative behaviours to the detriment of their own mental health and well being as well as potential physical harm to themselves and others.

The effects broaden even wider. Not only to the individual who has engaged in such activity but also to their families, their victims and their families alike.

The project builds community safety and resilience by developing collaboration and partnership working across all sectors of the community, fostering communication and understanding and reducing crime and fear.

Please see the attached leaflet – Changing the world together.

#### How does the project align with the values, objectives and corporate priorities of Buckinghamshire Council?

This project seeks to achieve the corporate priorities around **Strengthening our Communities** and **Protecting the vulnerable.**

**Strengthening our communities::** The Project works collaboratively with referral agencies and both internal services and external organisations to the Council who connect and develop a community as well as being a charity response to growing and urgent need. By improving engagement and reducing anti-social behaviour and crime we benefit the whole community. By providing a mechanism for early intervention, as recorded, will reduce future offending for those assisted through The Aspire Youth Offending Project.

**Protecting the vulnerable::** The project works with young people who are often exploited and drawn into gangs and criminal groups because of their vulnerability. Equally, with crime and involvement being reduced, this will benefit other vulnerable members of the community.

### How does the project achieve value for money?

The total cost of this project is £9,078.75, to which Transitions UK will contribute £5,078.75 and the Community Board £4,000. This project will see a significant reduction in the likelihood of young people offending or re-offending. The following will also be experienced:

- Many YP will improve their quality of life from ending relationships with people who can cause them harm or have a negative influence.
  - Many YP will re-engage with school/ college and increase their educational attainment through making better choices.
  - Almost all YP will self-report an improvement in their confidence as demonstrated with some of the earlier comments.
  - Almost all YP will self-report an improvement in their mental health, feeling less isolated and more supported.
  - All will improve their employment prospects and connect with work experience opportunities and apprenticeship placements. At least 40% will move from **not in** employment, education or training to **in** employment, education or training
- All will increase their knowledge and awareness of the dangers of carrying knives.
- Provide respite for parents and carers of YP on the course who are at risk of offending or re-offending.
  - Contribute to a safer community due to a reduction in anti-social behaviour.
  - Many YP will be able to become role models themselves having lived through their own experiences to enhance The Aspire Project moving forward in a volunteering capacity.

This provision is for four YP residing in South West Chilterns as part of a wider project. Other beneficiaries include their families and siblings, the wider community and the services directly involved by this provision, including police, social care and education.

### Community Board Coordinator comments

This application has been fully assessed by the Covid19 Recovery Group in line with the Community Board funding criteria, and based on this and the evidence above, it is recommended as a project which is suitable to receive funding from the South West Chilterns Community Board.

It was agreed by everyone that this intervention would be so powerful within our board area, fully met our priorities based on the evidence provided and would be a valuable project for South West Chilterns Community Board to contribute funding to.

The funding applied for in this report (£4000) can be accommodated from within the South West Chilterns CAP fund for Anti-social behaviour and Young People projects. This does take into account monies that have already been spent to date.

This decision requires ratification from the Members of the Board based on the recommendation of the Covid19 Working Group from 2 February 2021

**The applicant will be required to agree to terms and conditions, which include a monitoring agreement, as discussed with the Community Board Coordinator before the fund will be formally awarded.**



The flyer is split into two main sections. The left section has a blue background and contains the following text: 'How can you help us make a change?' in yellow, followed by 'Volunteer · Fundraise · Donate' in white. Below this is a paragraph: 'We welcome any support you can give, so please get in touch, as we know the positive impact you can have.' Contact information includes 'Telephone: 01582 380620 - 07939 510922', 'E-mail: support@transitionsuk.org', and 'Web: www.transitionsuk.org'. The middle section has a white background with the 'transitions uk' logo (two overlapping circles) and the tagline 'support that changes young lives'. Below the logo is the text 'Transitions for young people' in a purple-to-blue gradient. The right section features a photograph of four diverse young people smiling. At the bottom right of the flyer, there is a blue box with the text: 'Support that changes young lives! Transitions UK is a charity working to support disadvantaged young people aged 15-25 years, helping them achieve a positive transition to a happier, more inclusive and more productive life as adults.'

**How can you help us make a change?**

Volunteer · Fundraise · Donate

We welcome any support you can give, so please get in touch, as we know the positive impact you can have.

Telephone: 01582 380620 - 07939 510922  
E-mail: [support@transitionsuk.org](mailto:support@transitionsuk.org)  
Web: [www.transitionsuk.org](http://www.transitionsuk.org)

**Our vision at Transitions UK**

Our vision is to ensure there is a support network for every young person in the UK who needs it. We also want the way we achieve this to be an example that others can follow to make even greater change. We aim to become a national charity with a national footprint and a national voice. We know this is a big ambition but we know we can have a positive impact.

[www.transitionsuk.org](http://www.transitionsuk.org)

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support that changes young lives

Registered Office: 21 St Thomas Road, Luton, Bedfordshire, LU2 7UX  
Registered Charity No. 1180190

**Support that changes young lives!**  
Transitions UK is a charity working to support disadvantaged young people aged 15-25 years, helping them achieve a positive transition to a happier, more inclusive and more productive life as adults.

# We provide vital support...

The best way to help change young lives is through positive relationships tailored to each young person in need. We provide this through mentoring, befriending and guidance, whilst helping them learn and achieve the skills and confidence they need to find their place in society. We can help change lives...

ACHIEVE



## ...for young people with learning disabilities and special needs

Transitions UK uses a balance of expert co-ordination and management with proven relational support models to encourage skills acquisition, personal development and independence.

We provide a unique "cluster" support model (including able peer volunteers) alongside person-centred planning: this inclusive approach helps young people make supported choices and gain skills, friendship, confidence and self-esteem.

We integrate school, community and activity based learning to optimise personal outcomes.

AFFIRM



## ...for young people with emotional issues or mental health problems

Many young people today are struggling with their own identity and wrestle with emotional and mental health issues that confine them and limit their potential.

Self-esteem & confidence issues can lead to self-harm, substance abuse, eating disorders and more.

Using personal mentoring and befriending models we provide a ramp towards recovery and towards a positive personal image and sense of value and potential

## ...for young people at risk of exploitation or offending

- Young people often fall into negative patterns of behaviour when they form unhelpful relationships or when they are unable to deal with inner anger or frustration. Some are simply exploited by stronger, manipulative individuals.

We work both to model positive behaviours and to provide alternative patterns of relationship; we work to encourage good choices and support personal aspiration. Befriending and mentoring are key to our approach and fundamental to success.



ASPIRE

## ...for young people leaving care and towards independence

We know that very many young people who have been in care struggle to make the transition towards adulthood and independence because they don't have good support to do so.

Where possible, we work with young people before they leave their care situation. By providing friendship, support and mentoring we help them move forward towards happier and more productive future lives in the community.



ATTAIN

## Transitions UK support that changes young lives