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*NEW HORIZON YOUTH CENTRE*

***TENDER BRIEF***

For the external evaluation of our ‘Stand by Me’ project for young people impacted by violence, homelessness and the criminal justice system.

***1. ABOUT NEW HORIZON YOUTH CENTRE***

New Horizon works with young people, aged 16-24, who are experiencing homelessness or are at risk of serious violence in London.

We recently launched our [Theory of Change](https://nhyouthcentre.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Diagram-A3-Landscape.pdf), which outlines how we’ll work to ensure young Londoners are:

* **Safe**: safer from emotional and physical harm, and from the harms caused to them by systemic barriers and inequities
* **Healthy:** young people will have improved mental and physical health
* **Housed:** young people will find and sustain long-term youth-appropriate housing they can call home
* **Equipped:** young people will have learned the emotional, financial and practical life skills necessary to succeed
* **Have better services:** better resourced, youth-appropriate and timely services will be available to all young people who are unsafe or experiencing homelessness

***2. ABOUT THE OUTREACH TEAM***

The Outreach team is a specialised team working with young Londoners who might be involved in and/or impacted by serious youth violence, crime, exploitation, or any other situation putting young people at risk.

We work with children and young people across all areas of the criminal justice system and act as their advocates where necessary to ensure they are accessing their rights and entitlements. We also do street outreach, reaching young people who are forced to sleep rough and supporting them into emergency provision and long-term accommodation.

***3. ABOUT THE ‘STAND BY ME’ PROJECT***

**3.1. Context**

The pilot of our Enhanced Constructive Resettlement (ECR) project ran between 2018-2022 and was delivered by New Horizon in partnership with the Camden Youth Offending Service and Camden and Islington NHS Trust. ECR aimed to reduce the high reoffending rates of a small cohort of young people aged 15-25 in Camden, supporting them to improve their life chances and change their lifestyles. Young people involved in the project received intensive, long-term support from a caseworker and clinical psychological input.

In 2021 New Horizon Youth Centre commissioned [an independent external evaluation](https://nhyouthcentre.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/New-Horizon-Enhanced-Constructive-Resettlement-report-Full-report.pdf), to understand the impact of ECR on young people in custody and identify learnings around partnership working between voluntary and statutory sectors. The evaluation found that:

* The youth-informed ECR approach enabled caseworkers to build and maintain strong relationships with children and young people.
* ECR successfully contributed to the reduction of reoffending rates of young people.
* ECR supported young people to change their lifestyles through accessing or better engaging with services, including employment, educational or training courses, leisure opportunities and healthcare.
* The project benefited strongly from a partnership approach and joint working across voluntary and statutory sectors.

The project, renamed ‘Stand By Me’, has since received additional funding from April 2023-2025 to expand the model into three new London boroughs, Lewisham, Lambeth and Brent, with a dedicated referral pathway for young people in need of support in these boroughs. The project aims to deliver outreach and support to **250 young people aged 16-24 over 2 years**.

The Outreach team has also received separate funding from April 2023-2026 to provide casework support to an additional **350 young people over 3 years (600 in total).**

**3.2. Project model**

Trained caseworkers will provide long-term, holistic support to young people including:

* Weekly 1:1 support between 12 weeks to a year
* Personalised needs and goal setting to self-identify positive action
* Practical, material and financial support, including funding for education and training courses
* In custody support and return to community support – preparation to return to the community and engage in positive activity, and support during transitions through different ages, environments and locations

The model prioritises:

* Co-creation and customisation with young people, with sessions tailored to the young person’s interests and priorities
* Engagement and advocacy among young people’s networks, including careful collaborative work with other services/professionals so that young people can access the support they need
* Partnership working and development, and sharing of learnings across systems

**3.3. Project outcomes**

During the delivery of the project, it is anticipated that young people will report:

* Increased self esteem
* Improved mental health and wellbeing
* Improved sense of safety from violence in their community
* Reduced incidences of reoffending and homelessness
* As well as being supported into emergency and long-term accommodation.

We do not expect these outcomes to occur linearly; previous work has shown us that young people go through a continuous cycle of achieving short-term outcomes after we support them through immediate crisis, facing barriers or setbacks, and then achieving sustained change.

***4. OUTLINE OF PROPOSED EVALUATION***

**4.1. Questions**

Over the course of the 3 years that the Stand By Me project runs, we would like the evaluation to build upon what we have learned from our pilot, addressing what is effective about the model; the extent to which it achieves its intended outcomes; and our efficacy in replicating the project and expanding its reach.

**We would like the evaluation to consider the following questions:**

* To what extent does the project achieve its intended outcomes?
* What does the journey of change look like for young people who engage with the project?
* Which aspects/mechanisms of the project most contribute to driving young people’s outcomes?
* Which aspects of the project lead tosustained change (e.g. reduced reoffending; sustained accommodation)?
* What impact do young people’s length and/or consistency of engagement with caseworkers have? How long is engagement needed for sustained change to occur?
* What are the implications of this project for future interventions in the youth criminal justice system, including youth-informed interventions and partnership delivery?
* How has the scaling of delivery to Lewisham, Lambeth and Brent impacted our learnings, taking into account the nature of local need and service context, existing local partnership working and the local socio-political context?

We are conscious that this is an ambitious evaluation and are willing to discuss how to best answer these questions within the resources available.

4.2. Methodology

We are open to exploring the best approach with the appointed individual(s) or organisation, but we would ask to include the following at minimum:

* **A mix of qualitative and quantitative methods**, including interviews with young people being supported during the project. This will include young people in prison and those reached via street outreach.
* **A co-production approach.** In previous evaluations participants were involved in how to evaluate the project, including writing interview questions. We would expect a commitment to continuing a participatory approach and involving young people in the design and delivery of the evaluation.
* **A long-term and comparative approach.** Considering that the project runs over three years and offers the opportunity to observe sustained changes, we are keen to understand what these changes are, what supports these changes, and how length and consistency of engagement affects achievement of outcomes. We would be open to innovative approaches and methods.

The individual(s) or organisation commissioned to undertake this evaluation will ideally have:

* Extensive knowledge of the youth sector, including the youth criminal justice system and/or working with children and young people affected by violence
* Experience working with, and an in-depth understanding of, vulnerable young people aged 16-24 including those with complex needs

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| **Deliverables** | **Dates** |
| Monthly written progress updates and meetings | TBC in consultation with Learning and Impact Manager and Head of Outreach |
| Year 1 write up | 15th April 2024 |
| Sharing learning event | September 2024 |
| Year 2 evaluation report (funder 1) | 15th April 2025 |
| Sharing learning event | End of April 2025 |
| Final evaluation report (funder 2) | March 2026 |
| Dissemination/Launch event | Mid-April 2026 |

***5. TIMELINE***

We anticipate the work will begin in February 2024 and run until April 2026.

The final report and dissemination event should be of the standard that enables us to share the learning for best practice purposes.

In addition, the commissioned evaluator(s) would be expected to:

* Attend meetings to finalise the evaluation plan, methodology, and agree on roles and responsibilities
* Attend meetings to update on progress and review draft deliverable

In turn, we would provide:

* Access to raw individual datasets – we record demographic and background data, casework notes, and 3 month surveys asking young people to rate the level of their mental health, physical health, self-esteem and confidence, life skills, and perception of safety
* Background documents including access to previous external evaluations
* Regular updates on project management
* Access to caseworkers

***6. BUDGET***

The budget for this work is £76,000 total over the three years, inclusive of VAT and expenses.

The budget will be split unequally over the project’s time period, with £33,000 expected in Year 1, £23,000 in Year 2 and £20,000 in Year 3. Please take this into account when writing your bid.

We will work with the commissioned individual(s) or organisation to implement a plan that is realistic for the budget being offered.

***7. TENDER PROCESS***

**7.1. Key dates**

* Deadline for bids: 12/01/24
* Interviews: w/c 29/01/24
* Award: w/c 05/02/24
* Kick off meeting: w/c 05/02/24

**7.2. Tender contents**

Bids should include the following:

* Covering letter
* Proposed methodology to address the evaluation questions described above, ideally providing details of:
  + how you envisage the design of evaluation activities
  + consideration of resource and capacity of caseworkers
  + what data you will be collecting and how you will do this
  + how the evaluation will address matters of diversity, equity and anti-racism, and
  + how the evaluation will meet ethical standards
* Proposed outputs, including reports
* Proposed project management plan
* Schedule of costs
* Names and addresses of two referees
* Short CVs of each individual carrying out the evaluation
* Examples of similar evaluations you have undertaken

We intend to interview shortlisted applicants. The interview panel will be formed of Kate Bond, Head of Outreach, Linda Hien, Impact and Learning Manager, and Polly Stephens, Head of Policy, Learning and Communications.

**7.3. Submission**

Bids should be emailed to [linda.hien@nhyouthcentre.org.uk](mailto:linda.hien@nhyouthcentre.org.uk) with the subject heading ‘Outreach External Evaluation’ by **12th January 2024, 5pm.**

Queries related to the tender should be sent to Kate Bond, Head of Outreach (kate.bond@nhyouthcentre.org.uk).