

SUBMISSION FROM BIG LOTTERY FUND

The Big Lottery Fund (BIG) is the largest lottery distributor in Scotland and we invest over £1m a week in Scotland's communities. We can fund a range of organisations as long as there is public benefit and not private gain, however we cannot fund individuals.

BIG is committed to bringing real improvements to communities, and to the lives of people most in need. We believe in:

- making best use of Lottery money
- using knowledge and evidence, and
- being supportive and helpful

Investing in Communities is our main funding programme in Scotland. It will invest in projects that help people, families and communities most in need. There are three strands to this programme; Supporting 21st Century Life aims to support projects that build stronger families and stronger communities. Growing Community Assets aims to help communities have more control and influence over their own future through ownership of assets. Life Transitions aims to support projects that help people at key times of change, helping them to make their lives better for the future. We want this funding to have a real impact on need and have therefore identified specific priorities and outcomes for our funding for each of these strands. Groups can apply for between £10,000 - £1 million.

Through its Investing in Communities portfolio BIG has supported a number of homelessness projects, with funding in excess of £13m. Many of the projects work to support people who are already homeless however, many also support preventative approaches to homelessness. These projects assist in a variety of ways, both directly targeting the impact of homelessness and offering wider support such as, family mediation, support in setting up and keeping a home, employability skills, independent living, and supporting people at key time of change. We would like to take this opportunity to share some case studies from these projects.

These projects share some common themes which help support young people who are homeless, or at risk of becoming homeless:

- Understanding the impact that neglect, trauma and abuse has upon the emotional development and behaviour of young people and as a cause for homelessness
- Providing support to manage and resolve conflict within key relationships and work to strengthen the whole family before homelessness occurs
- Person- centred approaches offering support that is bespoke to the individual service user and have the flexibility to adapt support in response to need
- Care leavers are a high risk group
- Young people who have been in care experience great difficulty in making the transition to independent living
- More supported accommodation options are required
- Support in setting up home independently
- Practical skills to maintain a tenancy

Shelter has just received £694,985 grant for a three year project that will benefit young people aged 14 to 24 who have run away from home or are at risk of doing so, and the siblings and families for these young people. The project will operate across Dundee, Fife, Angus and Perth and Kinross. The project will be delivered in partnership with Relationship Scotland and will work to prevent homelessness before it happens and offer practical support for young homeless people and long term tenancy sustainment and housing support.

The main theme for this project is that prevention of homelessness amongst young people needs to begin with work with children and families. The new Safe & Sound project in Tayside was developed in response to evidence that family breakdown is a key trigger for youth homelessness – children who have run away from home before they are 16 are much more likely to be homeless as young adults. The new approach being taken by Safe & Sound is threefold: mediation between young people and their families to manage and resolve conflict; support in setting up home independently for those people who are unable to return to the family following mediation; and work to strengthen the whole family to avoid a recurrence of the same issues with younger siblings.

The Rock Trust aim to build the social networks of young homeless people in Edinburgh, reducing social isolation, building confidence and self esteem whilst improving individuals' interpersonal, social and creative skills and has received BIG support for two projects.

Networks Project, which has now come to a close, received £214,162 and provided one-to-one support sessions, established interest groups and encouraged volunteering. This project recognised that the impact negative relationships or relationship breakdown has as a cause for homelessness, amongst young people. This in turn linked with prevention which was why they introduced a mediator into the service at the point of crisis. Alongside prevention it was recognised that relationships have an impact on long term tenancy sustainment. Having their own informal support was essential for the young people to sustain their tenancies. These relationships helped develop skills and access to education and employment. This in turn impacted positively on tenancy sustainment.

Underground Café, is a new project which recognises that a safe, youth friendly, space is essential for young people accessing homeless services. BIG is supporting this project with £625,208 of funding. The evidence which supported this application stated that once young people access mainstream homelessness services they are made vulnerable to exploitation and abuse and that young people demonstrate a fear on accessing mainstream homelessness services. Youth work is an effective model for engaging young people who have become homeless. An approach which places them at the centre, with the emphasis on them being a young person with the same difficulties and issues as other young people their age, focuses their attention on the wider issues which may have brought them to be homeless. These may be health, relationships or education. It has been found that this approach is more effective than focusing on the homelessness alone.

Streetwork UK received £462,468 to deliver the 'ESIST' project based in Edinburgh which is currently in year 2 of the 3 year project. The project works closely with a number of key agencies to continue to provide a one-to-one support, outreach, and advisory service for vulnerable young people with a range of complex needs

equipping them with the skills required to sustain tenancies and better prepare them for the transition to independent living.

Streetwork UK say that homelessness work is not simply about teaching young people the practical skills to maintain a tenancy, though these are important too. It is primarily about understanding the impact that neglect, trauma and abuse has upon the emotional development and behaviour of young people. This requires an approach which is patient and sensitive and focuses on building positive relationships with the young person to use as a platform for on-going support. Services that can work on supporting outcomes that are bespoke to the individual service user, not the project, and have the flexibility to adapt support on a weekly basis in response to need would be of most benefit to young people. Learning from the ESIT project also indicates that in terms of accommodation for young people, there needs to be more options. Young people who have been in care experience great difficulty in making the transition to independent living. More supported accommodation options that are flexible and tolerant of presenting behaviours, staffed by people who are trained specifically in working with young people with multiple and complex needs are necessary. Length of stays in these accommodations should not be standardised but should be determined by the needs of the individual service user.

Impact Arts (Projects) Limited's 'My Home, My Life: Fab Pad and Creative Pathways for Care leavers' project aims to work with young care leavers to provide intensive homemaking support and/or a structured training programme, to build confidence and self-esteem to enable them to maintain a tenancy and as a consequence more able to access training and employment. This project received £442,602 from BIG for this three year project. My Home My Life works with young people at a time of crisis and stress: when they are moving to or trying to sustain their first tenancy however our strengths based approach alleviates this stress by providing a positive focus for the young person on both their personal environment and future potential. Young people say that designing and hand-making a personalised home develops a sense of ownership and stability. This ownership and stability transfers into their self esteem, resilience, relationships and sense of responsibility. They observed that participants change throughout the project as they develop identity, maturity and a sense of place and purpose. My Home My Life works closely with the young person in their home exploring and realising the persons personal ideas for making their house a home. Participants have experience of being looked after by their local authority so their sense of 'home' requires to be explored: this develops resilience as the person is able to exert some control over their home and the self exploration about what is important to them in a home has a lasting consequence. We observe that young people experience a huge increase in the confidence and outlook towards their future; My Home, My life takes a holistic approach therefore all the issues that could arise are supported or prevented.

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