



Transitions from Secondary Education Special Initiative

Phase 2: 2024–2028

Funded by the Mercers' Charitable Foundation

Funding application FAQs

Please read these FAQs alongside the [guidelines](#)

Q: We are an organisation that operates not only in London – can we still apply?

A: Yes, but any funding received would be restricted to work supporting young people in London. The methodology used/lessons learned in London can be used to inform your national work.

Q: Can we submit more than one Expression of Interest (EOI) application?

A: Yes, for different aspects of your work. However, any organisation can only receive a maximum of one grant at any one time.

Q: If an organisation runs a few programmes or projects which fit this fund's aim (e.g., one which supports young people towards apprenticeships and another widening access to higher education) – can that charity/org apply for both programmes within one application, taking a programme approach? We would ensure the whole application and proposal is comprehensive and connected.

A: Yes, that is fine to do.

Q: Do you fund for-profit organisations?

A: No. We only fund “not for profit” organisations. Please see the [guidelines](#) for detail of the types of organisation we fund.

Q: If we are an eligible organisation, can we sub-contract the delivery of the work to a for-profit organisation?

A: Our funding has to be spent on charitable activity and we expect to fund the lead delivery organisation. We understand that certain elements of the project may need to be outsourced to other organisations and you should specify any partners with which you plan to work in your application.

Q: Does the proposed activity need to be completely new and innovative?

A: No. Whilst we are interested in new, innovative approaches, we will consider applications based on proven interventions being used in new ways, or new areas for example to scale up or replicate existing work.

Q: Would you fund a proposal that is entirely research based?

A: No – we are looking for projects which focus on delivery but will consider proposals which include a research element.

Q: How developed do projects have to be to apply for funding?

A: We expect projects to be up and running by 1 October 2025, so your proposal needs to be developed sufficiently to meet this timeline and for you to be able to give us a clear idea of what the project is in the EOI.

Q: Would you consider something that is in development phase or comprises multiple phases, where the second one depends on findings from the first one?

A: Yes, and there is a question on the EOI form where you can explain the stage your project/work is at. We are open to funding pilot projects.

Q: Has your learning from previous cohorts informed your work and thinking for this phase of the work?

A: Yes. Details about the work of previous cohorts can be found on [our website](#).

Q: We were successful in applying for a grant in Phase 1 of the Transitions Special Initiative. Can we apply for a further grant in phase 2?

A: This funding round is not intended to be continuation funding for Phase 1 projects. We will consider applications from previous grantees for either new projects or to scale or replicate previously funded work in new areas in London. However, your current grant will need to have finished by the time the new funding commences. You could also consider applying during the second cohort application round, which is planned to open for applications in summer 2025. If you are an existing grantee and are unsure if your project would be considered, please call us or contact grants@mercercs.co.uk.

Q: Our previous work with the Mercers' supported a combination of existing programmes and expansion of that provision. Could a potential further grant support existing programmes or would it still need to focus on expansion/development of our work in this area?

A: Funding isn't meant to be for continuation or ongoing work. You would need to demonstrate how the work is being expanded in some way, for example through scale or reach, or be able to explain development since your previous funded project.

Q: How does the overarching evaluation of the funded projects fit with any evaluation the individual organisation commissions or carries out?

A: The Learning/Research partner appointed will work with individual grantees to ensure evaluation work is not duplicated. The purpose of the Learning/Research partner work is to evaluate the work of the Early Years Initiative as a whole, with a particular focus on the impact that our funding is having.

Q: Will you consider projects that bridge the transitions from primary to secondary in schools?

A: No, we would not consider such projects. This funding is specifically for projects that support the transition from secondary education.

Q: Do all 3 outcomes have to be met in the application? Is it ok to meet just one area? Will you prioritise or favour applications that cover more than one area?

A: You don't need to meet all three outcomes, you need to meet at least one of them. Outcomes needs to be relevant to your proposed work.

Q: Do you fund care leaver focused projects?

A: Yes., we would consider projects supporting young people facing additional barriers to successful transitions.

Q: Are you including Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) in the scope?

A: Yes. we would consider projects supporting young people making transitions from non-standard education institutions..

Q: Can you please provide a bit more detail about what you mean by providing access to programme pathways. Our focus is forming partnerships to deliver a supported internship. Could we apply in support of the preparatory work and/or delivery of that programme?

A: Yes, we aren't prescriptive on how the support is provided.

Q: Can this funding be used to for activity that support young people not in education, employment or training (NEET)?

A: Yes, the initiative focusses on supporting the transition from secondary education so the beneficiaries would need to be within an appropriate age range.

Q: Are there age restrictions on the young people supported in this programme?

A: The project is aimed at supporting young people currently in or recently left secondary education. Other than that there are no age restrictions as we understand that for effective transitions work may need to start with younger secondary aged children.

Q: Are you expecting to fund 3 cohorts again?

A: No, phase 2 will have cohorts – this one and the second one opening for applications in summer 2025.

Q: How many projects in total are you expecting to fund in this next cohort?

A: 3-5 in this cohort and another 3-5 in cohort 2 which is planned to open in summer 2025.

Q: Do you have any guidance on expected number of beneficiaries per project/per year?

A: No, we don't have minimum numbers you need to be working with. The number needs to be suitable to your project, and we aren't looking for quantity solely. The quality, experience and impact of the project is key.

Q: Would you consider covering a mix of core costs/project costs?

A: Yes, please refer to the [guidelines](#) for more details about funding for core costs.

Q: Does the work have to be pan-London?

A: No, you can work in specific boroughs/locations in London or be pan-London.

Q: Must proposals be 3-year projects? Can they be shorter (2 years)?

A: Funded projects will need to be for 3 years to facilitate the cohort approach and work with the learning partner.