



WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL

Youth Services Grant

APPLICATION FORM

(PLEASE COMPLETE ELECTRONICALLY)

Organisation			
Name of Organisation	Synolos		
Registered Address (including Post Code)	Synolos Centre, Unit L-M Country Park IND EST, Avenue 2, Station Lane, Witney, Oxon, OX28 4YD		
Website	http://www.synolos.co.uk/	Telephone	01993 222555
Facebook/Twitter	(FB) @synolos (T) @Witney_Synolos	Email	kelly@synolos.org admin@synolos.org
Contact Name	Kelly Gough		
Position in Organisation	Co-director (i.e. Chairman, Treasurer, Secretary)		
Registered Charity	YES/NO (CIC) Community Interest Company	Registration Number	
What are the activities and/or aims of the organisation?			
<p>Our Purpose</p> <p>At Synolos, we believe that every person has the potential to live a successful life. Unfortunately, we are not all given the same opportunities to identify and fulfil that potential. Our purpose is to work with individuals, not only to identify their strengths, but to help carry them through into a practical setting. To fulfil this purpose, we have various approaches at our disposal that we can offer, depending on the needs of the individual.</p> <p>Our goal for all those we work with is to help guide them into employment, self-employment, voluntary work or further training. Our aim is a simple one, but of paramount importance. By creating relevant opportunities that help people identify their strengths, we help them to improve their lives and build the future that they aspire to.</p>			

We work with individuals:

- * With learning difficulties and autism
- * Who are NEET (Not in Education, Training or Employment)
- * With low or no qualifications
- * Struggling at school in years 7-11
- * Who are young and unemployed
- * Struggling with mental health issues
- * Who are long-term unemployed, aged 24 – 50+
- * On long term sick/leave, who are seeking to get closer to employment

Synolos is built on the foundation of what we call our 3 Elements 2 Success, each person we work with needs different developments and these three element cover most needs, they are:

- * Education & Training
- * Social Enterprise - www.inndi.co.uk
- * Wellbeing

Synolos is a Community Interest Company which has been established in the Witney community for over 10 years.

Membership

How many members do you have?	72
Approximately how many of your members live in Witney?	83.4%
Is membership restricted in any way?	Connect 4 is a service specifically aimed to support young autistic people (16-30) without a learning disability.
What is your annual subscription, if any?	£0
Are you affiliated to Oxfordshire Youth or other similar umbrella organisation? If so, which one?	In the process of making contact with David Cruchley from Oxfordshire Youth. In close contact with NEET team, OCC Social Care and Education Teams. Currently making connections with the community and return to networking

Local venue/meeting place (if applicable)	Synolos wellbeing hub
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Grant-Funding

Purpose for which the grant is required:

The grant will be used as start-up funding for Step 2 of our newly developed Connect 4 service. We have a safe building and plenty of space within it, however, we have limited access to games, activities, etc., that our young people can freely access outside of, and during activities, workshops, etc.

We are hopeful to gain quality resources that will have appeal to young autistic people. The reason being, that many young autistic people find it difficult to leave their homes due to overwhelming anxiety, difficulties with transition and feelings of vulnerability. Therefore, we aim to provide stimulating, attractive and rewarding activities for our young autistic people to enjoy.

We anticipate that most of our members who will access Step 2 will be funded through their Personal Budget/Direct Payment through Health & Social Care. We have already generated a waiting list of members directly through Social Workers, other organisations and professionals. Young people or their families can also directly refer to the service and pay for their admission – for instance, we charge a relatively low hourly rate for attendance - young people can pay for activities they wish to attend. This could be paid for from their Personal Independence Payments (PIP), or Universal Credit Payments. If a young person does not have access to these benefits, we can support with applications.

What is Connect 4

Please see appendix 1 for a full overview of the new Connect 4 service.

Connect 4 is based on the traditional principles of a day care setting, however, customised to meet the needs, expectations and cognitive ability of the young people of whom we aim to support.

After over a year of extensive research, meeting families, ~~and~~ young people and learning from other professionals in Health and Social Care, including Primary (NHS), this is a unique opportunity for autistic young people to access a pathway of support, which consists of a baseline of support with a structured positive exit strategy for the young person. There are currently no similar services for young autistic people in West Oxfordshire.

Apart from consulting with local young autistic people and their families, we have met with a multitude of different professionals from doctors, mental health workers (psychologists, MH nurses), occupational therapists, housing officers, social workers, teachers, etc. They are all very optimistic about the service and agree this service could be very beneficial for autistic young people.

We aim to open the service over 3 days per week (one day being a Saturday), opening from 9am to 4pm on operational days. To promote independence and self-management skills, the service will operate similar to a hub and have free flowing flexibility for all our members. For example, our members can come and go as they please, accessing the activities and resources that most appeal to them.

The 3 operational days will consist of a planned timetable of activities, learning opportunities and events. For Instance –

	Monday	Wednesday	Saturday
AM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basket weaving with Katie • PC Joe Blogs – County Lines Awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn to make a curry with Pip • Vinyl art with Vanessa 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baking with Kelly • Weird Creatures visit - reptile morning
PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computer Programming with Vic • Green Screen animations and editing with Lee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photography classes with Lee • Jenny from Community Connect (Social Prescribing) to meet with members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Woodwork with Olly • Ben (from garage) coming in to discuss working as a mechanic

*Please note, this is an example timetable

We are currently working / aiming to work on developing relationships with the police, fire service, town/district/county authorities, Job Centre, local businesses (to encourage careers discussions) and local artisans to provide a range of structured and supported activities. We also aim to include personal safety, self-management and introduction into work, training and education workshops. Other activities might include outings to museums, zoos, garden centres, etc. So, we are providing our members with the opportunity to gauge an understanding of how best to support themselves as they become more independent.

Outside of timetables activities, young people will be able to:

- access independent activities, such as computer gaming, knitting and textiles, online courses, arts & crafts, reading, etc;
- contribute in peer led group activities, such as card games (Warhammer, Pokemon, Magic; The Gathering), group pc/console gaming, pool, etc);
- chill out in breakout spaces;
- Share drinks (coffee/tea/squashes) and snacks in a social environment;
- Generally, hangout with other likeminded autistic young people in a safe autism friendly environment.

Furthermore, as Synolos encompasses a wellbeing hub, we have the resources and staff which will provide a sound mechanism to support young people with their mental health. We intend on regularly sub-contracting a psychologist in the future to further support our members with their mental health needs, which is beneficial in the current climate when it is generally difficult for young people to access statutory services due to increased waiting lists. Synolos is also one of seven organisations in Oxfordshire to have a CAMHS Community In-Reach (CIR) worker in post.

Why is Connect 4 needed

Step 2 forms a fundamental service in the Connect 4 pathway. Step 1 being the baseline, we anticipate that we will support many recluse, isolated and physically/mentally unwell young people as they have gradually slipped into an unhealthy state of daily living.

Many young autistic people, particularly boys who become socially isolated, will seek refuge in the safety of their bedroom and rely upon the parents/carers to support them with their daily needs, such as cooking, cleaning, medication needs, form filling, etc. Many of these young people have already endured a traumatic childhood, whilst they have struggled for most of their life to fit into society, mainly mainstream schools, receiving support when already a lot of damage has been done to the young person's self-esteem and confidence. This then becomes an 'unpicking exercise', supporting the young person to overcome poor lifestyle choices, past experiences and trauma, before they are even in a suitable headspace to anticipate making any progression into bettering their life. Issues manifest such as poor sleep routines, including sleeping through the day and being awake all night, poor hygiene – finding it difficult to brush their teeth, bathe, shave and might not even see the point as they do not see anyone. The physical impact of this is also detrimental as young people suffer vitamin D deficiencies due to a lack of sunlight. Medical issues caused by a lack of vitamin D can cause

- Seasonal Affective Disorder, or SAD, is a form of depression triggered by a lack of sunlight;
- Rickets in Children & osteomalacia in adults.

Because autistic people usually tend to be fussy eaters due to their associated sensory limitations, vitamin D is not easily sourced through recommended food types, such as oily fish, red meat and liver.

From our research we found that –

- 37.93% of young autistic people do not attend school, college, volunteer or work;
- 62.07% of young autistic young people find it hard to leave their bedrooms;
- 6.90% of young autistic people accessed hobbies outside of their house (crafts, sports, clubs);
- 20.69% of young people cannot travel independently and need a parent or carer to support.
- 24.14% of young autistic people said they are not comfortable around other people but would like more friends whilst 34.48% said they would prefer to mix with peers with a similar interest;
- 20.69% of young autistic people stated their family are their friends;
- 72.41% of young autistic people said their mum/dad/carer supports them;
- 62.07% of young autistic people do not have any support through statutory services

Aim of Connect 4

Step 2 of Connect 4 is a bridging the gap between Step 1 (outreach support) and Step 3 (education) of the service pathway. As our Step 1 service grows, Synolos has a tangible and meaningful safe place for our young people to work towards. In most cases, the transition between outreach support (at home) and the thought of returning to education is an overbearing transition.

All young people entering Connect 4 via any step entry will be supported through an individualised and person centred support plan. Throughout our members Connect 4 journey, they will be working towards their own individualised short term, medium term, and long term personal goals.

Step 2 aims to be: -

Meaningful

- Similar to a day centre, provide an enriching timetable of activities;
- a reason to get out of bed in the morning;
- a tangible reason to leave the house / work towards leaving the house;
- a safe environment, specifically arranged to meet the needs of autistic people;
- staff who have understanding and knowledge of autistic young people, who can provide a wealth of support;
- a reason to move from step 1 to 2, and work towards accessing step 3 and 4
- tangible equipment and resources that may 'act as a carrot' for young people to access the centre and to subsequently, build upon their skills.

Independence

- Young people can access a range of workshops such as how to manage their money, how to stay safe online, how to be aware different forms of exploitation, learn to cook, etc;
- Learn to travel in the community in a range of ways with the goal to become increasingly more confident to travel independently;
- Access professionals for independent advice in a safe way whereby they can become less reliant on their parents or carers for support, for instance, job coaches, housing officers, medical practitioners, etc.

Social

- To meet new people, create a friendship circle with likeminded young people;
- begin to develop social skills and confidence amongst new people, a transferable skill required in most places of employment;
- to develop communication and listening skills, a skill which cannot be achieved in isolation;
- begin to transfer friendships out of the wellbeing centre and meet independently outside of the sessions.

EET (Employment, Education or Training) ready

- A discreet way of motivating young people to become more creative and consider returning to education or work with minimal pressure;
- a way of forming healthy routines – getting up in the morning, getting prepared (dressed) and leaving the house on a regular basis;
- an opportunity to explore different professions and activities through our visitors and visits;

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> social, emotional, confidence, self-esteem building in an already established education centre. The young person is more likely to access education and training in a place they are comfortable, or access outside opportunities with staff they know and trust. 	
Amount of grant applied for	£5000
Has your organisation previously applied to the Town Council for a grant?	YES/NO
If YES, please give details	
Have you applied for a grant to any other body or organisation?	YES/NO
If YES, please give details	<p>Persimmon Homes - £1000</p> <p>Currently exploring other grants as just started to apply.</p>
Financial	
Please enclose a copy of your latest audited accounts, a financial projection for the period following the balance sheet or a Business Plan if a new organisation.	
Fundraising	
<p>What fundraising events or activities will your organisation be holding this year?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We regularly attend car boot sales as a seller to sell donated goods. Inndi website and our in-house shop Open days Student enterprise and development of micro business 	
General	
Please provide or attach any additional information which may assist the Council in reaching its decision.	

Please see appendix 1 as an overall synopsis of what Connect 4 (steps 1 to 4) means as a service.

I certify that the above information is true to the best of my knowledge and belief, and that I am authorised to make this application for Grant-aid.

Signed:	Date:
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If posting, please return your completed application form to the address overleaf, for the attention of the TOWN CLERK

For office use only:			
Acknowledged		Previously Applied	
Grant Aid Awarded/Amount	Y / N	Chq No.	