



# Co-operative Councils

## Innovation Network

### CCIN innovation funding – 2021 Policy Prototypes Children and Young People’s Services

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#### **Expression of Interest – Policy Prototype CCIN Funding 2021**

**CCIN Member Organisation submitting application: Preston City Council**

**Name of CCIN Lead Councillor/Officer: Rachel Stringfellow, Policy and Research team, Preston City Council**

**Partner organisations: Preston North End (PNE) Community and Education Trust**

**Contact details (Email and phone): Liam Sealey, [liamsealey@pne.com](mailto:liamsealey@pne.com)  
07512275034**

#### **1. What is your idea?**

*Provide details of what your proposed project is, the story of how you identified the need or opportunity for the proposal and how the money will be spent.*

#### ***Our project - SafeSpace***

Preston North End Community and Education Trust is proposing to deliver a new support programme to some of Preston’s most vulnerable children and young people over the school holidays in 2021. **SafeSpace** will combine physical activity sessions, a ‘**SafeSpace**’ activity pack focusing on mental health, and a nutritious meal for participants. It will be targeted at vulnerable young people aged 6-14 in two schools who rely on free school meals or who are at risk as a result of COVID-19.

#### ***How did we identify the need for SafeSpace?***

Preston has a population of approximately 141,000, with over 17.9% of children living in low income families and over a quarter of households (10,820) are recipients of free school meals. Preston is a very diverse community with over 10% being from a BAME background, which is the second highest across the county (Lancashire). Average income across the city is below the national average, with crime and deprivation also following a similar trend. Preston is ranked in the top 40% worst postcodes for crime, with a number of wards situated in the top 20% most deprived in which the above data is a common theme.

Alarming, during the pandemic research from the Mental Health Centre found children from low income backgrounds showed elevated mental health difficulties throughout lockdown. This includes feelings of worry and anxiety, feeling isolated, demonstrating obsessive thoughts and compulsive behaviours.

As a community organisation situated at the heart of the Preston community, Preston North End Community and Education Trust is very familiar with the impact COVID-19 and national lockdown is having physically, mentally and emotionally on the young people and families within our community. Our Physical Education in Schools programme and Alternative Education programme, targeting the most vulnerable young people in Primary and Secondary schools, have found some concerning trends throughout the pandemic which has highlighted the need for **SafeSpace**. These include:

- Limited parental support at home
- Poor nutrition as a result of financial difficulties within the household
- No access to essential educational/sports equipment
- Impact on educational attainment
- Impact on young people's mental health with over 80% of our participants aged 10-14 saying they felt COVID-19 has had a negative impact on their mental health.
- Retention of participants' engagement was poor digitally.

Our partner schools have supported our concerns, highlighting the need to support now more than ever young people from disadvantaged backgrounds who, without intervention, are at risk of falling into the 'widening gap' between vulnerable and non-vulnerable young people. This crisis may impact society for years to come (Children Commissioner 2020). Currently, the impact of the pandemic has resulted in up to 80% of pupils being behind academically as a result of no physical activity, poor diet and the reduction of in school learning. When we take into account lockdown, and the impact this has had on vulnerable young people, it is a major cause for concern.

For this reason we have designed **SpaceSafe** to address the nutritional, mental and physical health needs of some of our most disadvantaged children and young people during the school holiday period when they are most vulnerable. As well as physical activity sessions, **SafeSpace** will provide each child with a nutritional lunch and an activity work pack which will allow them to capture the thoughts, feelings and emotions whilst completing activities which will support them in dealing with challenges and in developing coping mechanisms and emotional resilience.

## **2. Who will you work with?**

*You are not required to work with other CCIN members when applying to deliver a Policy Prototype, though you are more than welcome to!*

There are 55 schools in the Preston area, many of whom are already working in partnership with us as a partner school as part of our Physical Education provision.

**SafeSpace** will be delivered across two partner school sites, which will remain open over the holidays and are situated in two of the top 20% most deprived in the county. Utilising school assets not only provides familiarity for the young people who attend that school, but also provides the opportunity for schools staff to undertake additional support work with the most vulnerable young people if necessary.

The food element of the programme will be provided by an external catering organisation, Fox's Sandwich Deli, who we have worked effectively in the past across our Fit 4 Summer programme, the October half term free lunch service and Premier League Kicks Holiday Activity and Food Camp. Fox's Sandwich Deli hold all the relevant qualifications in food preparation and hygiene.

**SafeSpace** will be targeted at vulnerable young people who rely on free school meals, or have been highlighted at risk as a result of COVID-19. i.e. not engaging at school, poor educational attainment, concerns around child's welfare, vulnerable family, risk of crime and violence, concerns around mental health etc. We will use sports as a 'hook' to fill the void left by the absence of school and face to face interaction. This will provide some much needed additional support to the most vulnerable young people in our community, moreover supporting the development of their physical and mental health.

We will work with a minimum of 80 young people over the Easter, May and Summer holiday periods who have been identified by PNECET, Preston City Council and local partner primary schools as vulnerable due to either relying on free school meals or as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic providing much needed stability, structure, and reliability for the targeted young people.

**SafeSpace** will be delivered three days a week. Each session will split into two individual sessions, mornings and afternoons. Morning sessions will be delivered from 9-11am and then complimented by a healthy meal and will work with a minimum of 20 young people on site at once. The afternoon session will commence with a healthy lunch before the physical activity and 'Safe Space' session from 1-3pm with a different cohort of 20 young people.

This structure enables us to:

- Adhere to the government guidelines with regards to social distancing with fewer numbers on site at once
- Clean the respected areas/equipment during changeover of groups
- Utilise the schools practice guidelines in regards to delivery
- Schools to work with the young people around the times of delivery if necessary.

All sessions will be multi-sports and incorporate social distancing measures ensuring the programme remains inclusive and safe for all involved. After the multi-sport session the young people will complete a task within their '**SafeSpace**' activity pack which is designed to support and develop their understanding of mental health. At the end of the programme all young people will be sign-posted into our alternative provisions, providing opportunities for the young people to sustain their participation in sports away from the **SafeSpace** programme.

**SafeSpace** will be delivered free of charge to participants.

### **3. What are the outcomes you hope to achieve?**

#### ***The outcomes SafeSpace will achieve:***

- More vulnerable young people physically active during holidays and beyond
- Improvements in physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing
- More vulnerable young people access to healthy food
- Improvements in education attainment in school
- Improvements in targeted behaviours (attitudes to physical activity, confidence, self-esteem etc.)
- Increase in number of vulnerable young people accessing our alternative provision.

#### ***How will we measure success?***

- **IEWS** - We will utilise our existing online data monitoring system to record participants details, attendances and outcomes
- **Outcome Wheels** - Our outcome wheels (impact star) will be filled in at the start and end of the programme, measuring the impact the programme has had on young people's behaviours and attitudes in relation to sport and health.

- **Report Cards** - Once the programme has concluded, we will receive feedback from the partner schools on the impact the programme has had on the young people upon their return to education.
- **Increased Levels of Physical Activity** - More young people taking part and sustaining their involvement in physical activity sessions. These will be monitored through attendance at signposted provisions and successful referrals to sports clubs within the Preston area.

#### **4. How does your project support the aims and objectives of the Co-operative Councils Innovation Network?**

*The Co-operative Councils Innovation Network aims to frame the debate on the future of sustainable solutions to public sector challenges. Our work will ultimately improve outcomes for communities by enabling members to develop radical innovation in policy and practice, sharing best practice and learning, and enabling innovators to chart new territory together. Please provide details of how your project will support this aim.*

Preston North End Community and Education Trust is the official charity and community department of Preston North End Football Club. Our aim is to use the power of the badge and the football club to work in partnership with local communities, improving their lives and their environment. We were recently named North West Community Club of the year at North West Football Awards working with over 10,000 people a year across our 26 projects.

The Co-operative Councils Innovation Network aims to frame the debate on the future of sustainable solutions to public sector challenges. No challenge at present is greater than the alarming increase in mental health problems among young people from low income families as a direct result of the pandemic. **SafeSpace** is a new initiative which will address this directly with a targeted offer combining access to much needed social interaction, physical activity and a nutritional meal. In addition, the **SafeSpace** activity pack, which we will design for the programme, will address mental and emotional health needs of young people directly. This is the first time we have developed such a pack and rolling it out through the programme will allow us to monitor and evaluate its impact so we can learn and develop the approach for inclusion in future programmes that we develop for young people. We will also be able to share this learning with the many partners we work with in Preston, including the schools and other influential community organisations including Preston City Council. This will shape future thinking, including our approach to half term provision, and enable us to work collectively to provide support and address the needs of some of the most vulnerable in our society.

#### **5. How does your project demonstrate the Values and Principles of the Co-operative Councils Innovation Network?**

*Our Network is based on the Co-operative values developed by the International Co-operative Alliance: “self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity, honesty, openness, social responsibility and caring for others”. Further details about the CCIN’s Values and Principles are available [here](#). Please provide details of how your project will demonstrate the CCIN’s Values and Principles.*

**SafeSpace** will maintain and embed Co-operative values throughout. The programme is community focused and designed to address the needs of our most vulnerable residents and families across Preston. Preston City Council, local schools and Preston North End Community Trust are united in their approach to working collectively to support families in need. The programme will support and encourage joined up approaches whilst addressing concerns which are prominent during the lockdown for low income families, most notably the growing impact of the pandemic and the lockdown on the mental health of young people. In the spirit of equality and solidarity, **SafeSpace** is targeted at those who are most vulnerable and who would be unable to access any holiday provision for which there would be a charge.

The '**SafeSpace**' activity work pack will encourage participants to display self-responsibility and self-help as they discuss, manage and explore their emotions, develop resilience to challenges and identify coping mechanisms during challenging times.

After monitoring and evaluating programme impact, a consultation will take place with stakeholders and beneficiaries to learn more about the impact the programme and to shape its future direction. It is believed the programme will not be only influential in supporting families during a difficult period, it will have a positive impact which extend into their home life, tackling mental health issues and improving educational attainment during school.