

Test & Learn Frontline Delivery Pilots

Grant Specification — Grants of up to £5,000

Local Youth Transformation Pilot (LYTP) | Stoke-on-Trent

Purpose & Context

As part of the Local Youth Transformation Pilot (LYTP), we are commissioning small-scale Test & Learn frontline delivery pilots. These pilots are a core component of the LYTP's commitment to innovation, learning and equity — testing what works, for whom, and under what conditions.

The pilots are designed to explore and evidence approaches that:

- Increase accessibility to youth provision
- Reduce barriers to participation for underrepresented groups
- Create more equal opportunities for young people aged 11–18
- Strengthen inclusive, high-quality youth work practice

Pilots will contribute to the development of the Stoke Model — a connected, neighbourhood-based youth system ensuring equitable access to youth opportunities across the city. This is not a standard grant programme: it is a supported learning initiative. We are seeking genuine insight into what works for young people in our city.

Funding Available

Grant Amount	Up to £5,000 per pilot
Number of Pilots	Multiple pilots will be commissioned
Focus	Innovation, inclusion and access — not extending unchanged existing provision

Priority Neighbourhoods

We particularly welcome pilots aligned to the priority neighbourhoods identified within the LYTP LTO model:

- Meir (North & South)
- Abbey Hulton
- Bentilee
- Blurton
- Burslem
- Norton & Ball Green
- Chell

Pilots in these neighbourhoods should demonstrate how they will connect with the relevant LTO and support the wider place-based approach.

Alignment with these areas is **not essential**. We also welcome citywide proposals and projects focused on specific groups of young people who face barriers to accessing youth provision, regardless of geography.

Focus of Pilots

All pilots must demonstrate a clear and evidenced focus on increasing accessibility and equity for young people aged 11–18. Pilots that simply extend existing provision without adaptation or innovation are unlikely to be funded.

Approaches may include, but are not limited to:

- Detached and outreach youth work, engaging young people in parks, streets and informal community spaces
- Targeted work with girls and young women
- Provision for young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
- Engagement with ethnically diverse communities
- Addressing transport, cost or cultural barriers to participation
- Supporting young people at risk of exclusion, anti-social behaviour or social isolation
- Testing new venues, delivery times or partnership approaches to widen access

We are particularly interested in pilots that test different approaches, innovative delivery models or new partnerships that generate transferable learning for the wider system.

Expectations of Pilot Partners

High-Quality Youth Work

All pilot organisations must:

- Embed recognised youth work principles throughout their delivery
- Demonstrate robust safeguarding policies and practices
- Ensure all environments are inclusive, safe and welcoming
- Clearly define intended outcomes aligned to accessibility and equity

Detached and outreach activity must be appropriately risk assessed and supervised at all times.

Participation in Test & Learn

Pilot partners will be expected to actively engage with the learning process. This means:

- Using Upshot to record participation, demographics and activity data throughout the pilot
- Tracking intended outcomes linked to pilot aims
- Capturing young people's feedback and lived experience
- Reflecting openly and honestly on both successes and challenges

Upshot licences and onboarding support will be provided at no cost where required. The emphasis is on honest, useful learning — not perfection.

Peer Learning & Reflection

All pilot organisations will be expected to:

- Attend facilitated peer learning workshops during the pilot period
- Share insight, challenges and emerging practice with other pilot partners
- Contribute to collaborative reflection sessions that inform the Stoke Model

This collective learning process is central to the value of the Test & Learn approach.

Contribution to System Development

Learning from pilots will feed into the wider LYTP governance and city-level youth system development. Specifically:

- Findings will be reported into relevant governance structures
- Insight will inform future commissioning decisions
- Learning will contribute to the ongoing development of Stoke-on-Trent's Youth Strategy

Pilot organisations may be asked to contribute short case studies, practice summaries or reflective accounts for shared learning purposes.

Support Available to Pilot Partners

This is a supported innovation programme, not simply a grant award. In addition to funding, all pilot organisations will receive:

Mentoring & Development	Dedicated support to help you develop and refine your pilot approach
Safeguarding Guidance	Access to quality and safeguarding guidance relevant to your delivery context
Upshot Support	Training, onboarding and ongoing monitoring support at no additional cost
Peer Networks	Access to peer learning networks and connections with LTOs in relevant neighbourhoods

Monitoring & Evaluation

Monitoring requirements are proportionate to the scale of funding. Organisations will be expected to:

- Record all delivery and participation through Upshot
- Track basic outcome measures aligned to pilot objectives
- Capture young people's feedback and lived experience at regular intervals
- Participate in review conversations during the pilot period

At the end of the funding period, organisations must provide:

Participation & Demographic Data	Submitted via Upshot, covering reach, demographics and activity volumes
Learning Summary	A short reflective document covering what you tested and what you found
Reflections on Accessibility & Inclusion	How did your pilot affect access and equity for the young people you targeted?
Recommendations	What would you refine, scale or commission differently in light of your learning?

What We Are Looking For

We are seeking organisations that:

- Have experience working with young people aged 11–18
- Demonstrate strong safeguarding and inclusive practice
- Understand the specific barriers faced by underrepresented groups
- Are willing to innovate and genuinely test new approaches
- Are open to reflection, challenge and shared learning
- Are willing to use Upshot as part of their monitoring and evaluation

Both hyper-local, community-embedded organisations and specialist organisations working across the city are equally encouraged to apply.

Through these pilots, we want to understand:

- What removes barriers and increases participation among underrepresented young people
- What strengthens belonging, confidence and inclusion
- What should be refined, scaled or commissioned differently to improve equity across the system

Assessment Process

Expressions of Interest will be reviewed by an assessment panel.

The panel will assess applications against the criteria in this specification, with particular attention to clarity of idea, evidence of understanding of the target group, and commitment to learning and reflection.

Key Dates

EOI Launch	Friday 13 March 2026
EOI Deadline	8:00pm, Tuesday 24 March 2026

Further Information

If you have questions about this opportunity or would like to discuss your idea before applying, we actively encourage you to get in touch. This is a collaborative programme, and we want to support strong applications.

Please submit your completed Expression of Interest by 8:00pm on Tuesday 24 March 2026 to Aaron Northmore at aaron@apnsportsolutions.co.uk