

Report back to The Funding Network

1. Name of your organisation and date funded by TFN: Best Foot Forward London

2. What was the project you sought funding for from TFN?

What are its aims and objectives? Have these changed since receiving TFN funding?

Best Foot Forward was set up to help women furthest from the job market gain the resilience, confidence and skills required to rejoin the job market, re-engage with their communities and move towards self reliance. The overall objectives have not changed, however the environment we are delivering in has changed. These changes are driving a review of the way the program is delivered the commissioning organisations we work with. The review is ongoing.

3. Were you able to do this work as you described it in your application and presentation?

Yes

What evidence do you have for the success or failure of the funded project?

Best Foot Forward have set out detailed training programs for candidates and mentors. The BFF program has gained accreditation with the NCFE. An initial short trial training program run in Poplar for 26 candidates was a great success with positive feedback from candidates and the commissioning managers at JCP. Mentor training, and assessment program has been trailed with a small group of mentors from government, legal and corporate backgrounds.

4. If you were not able, please explain what happened and why?

Progress since the initial trail training sessions for the Best Foot Forward program has been slower than expected. The landscape for training and development of young people is changing with formal requirements for continuing education now mandatory up to the age of 18 for those not in employment.

We have been working to build partnerships that will provide mentors for the program and now have strong relationships with companies including Balfour Beattie, government departments including the MoJ and FCO and from the Institute of Directors Women's Network.

5. Can you measure, assess or describe the change that happened as a result of this work?

The TFN funding allowed BFF to complete work on the training documentation and prepare it for accreditation.

Twenty six Best Foot Forward candidates joined the initial trial program.

Fifteen mentors were provided training.

6. As a result of presenting at TFN, did you experience any of the following;

BFF are in discussion with a number of corporations for provision of mentors to the program.

These are at an advanced stage and each organisation will provide £1000 per mentor for training, support through the mentoring process and personal accreditation.

We were introduced to Catriona Matthews through a TFN event. Catriona has taken a great interest in the program helping with structuring and approach for the mentoring program. As the program moves forward she will be facilitating the monthly group sessions for mentors which provide a safe space for feedback, enquiry, and discussion; skill development and experiential

learning (particularly around coaching/mentoring skills); and a mutually-supportive peer network.

7. Could you give us an estimate of how many people have been reached by the TFN funded project/work and by how much?

Twenty six Best Foot Forward candidates joined the initial trial program.

Twenty mentors were provided training in two groups.

8. Can you tell us any personal stories to highlight the value of funding from TFN?

Our involvement with TFN has allow us to move the program forward to stage where we have the material, accreditations and people in place to deliver training mentoring and support which our experience shows will make a real difference to young women's lives. Two young women from our initial candidate group have taken up short internships with our team helping to present BFF to prospective mentoring and other service providers. Both have since moved on to take up training and educational placements and felt the experience increased their confidence to put themselves forward for opportunities they may not previously have considered.

9. Since presenting at TFN, has your organisation undergone any significant change(s) which our donors would be interested to know about (these changes do not need to be related to the experience of presenting at TFN).

Changes in the legal requirements for provision of training and education to young people up to the age of 18 and those leaving the care system mean we are reviewing the BFF model and how best to take it forward. We are looking to work directly with LEAs and local authorities to complement their services for candidates with the highest needs.

10. Do you have any other comments regarding TFN funding?

Our team have found the experience of presenting to and working with TFN helpful beyond the funding it provided. Preparing for the presentation helped us to structure our ideas for an audience less familiar with the needs of our candidates and the services we deliver. It also help in building our contact base and very directly with our mentoring program through the introduction to Catriona Matthews.

11. Can you please include any relevant photos or clips that may relate to the project.