

Arts Mentoring

Frequently Asked Questions For Potential Mentors

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What is the overall aim of the project?

To innovate a model of arts input, shaped to the needs of individual offenders, that empowers them through the transition from prison to community.

What are the project's goals?

- To enable emerging offender artists, participating as mentees, to both maintain and develop their arts activity in the community.
- To ensure that the offenders needs are met holistically by integrating the arts mentoring with other resettlement services.

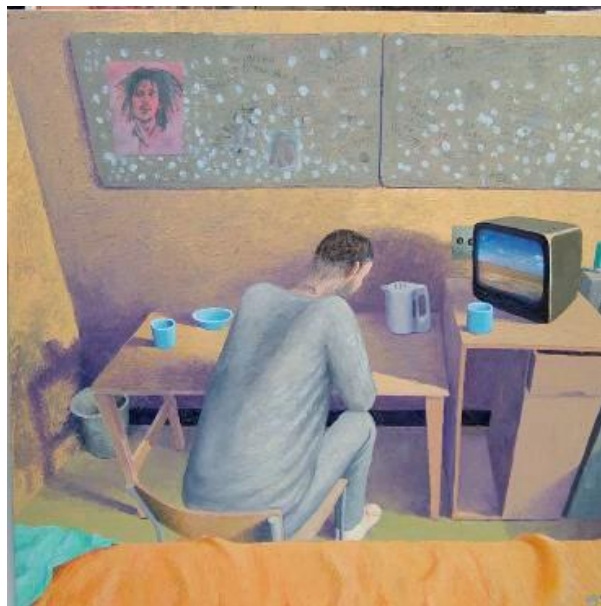
What is Mentoring?

Mentoring is a one-to-one, non-judgmental relationship in which an individual voluntarily gives time to support and encourage another. This is typically developed at a time of transition in the mentee's life, and lasts for a significant and sustained period of time. For people with an offending background the role also includes communicating with other support services both statutory and non statutory.

Could I be a mentor with the project?

To be an Arts Mentor you must have:

- At least 3 years experience of arts practice as either a professional or a committed amateur.
- A thorough knowledge of current practice, resources and available opportunities in at least one field of the arts.
- An ability to identify and access arts amenities in the mentee's local community.
- An ability to give constructive feedback to mentees about their artwork.
- An ability to plan imaginative and engaging activities which will encourage the mentees involvement in the arts.
- Excellent interpersonal skills that balance warmth and clarity, as well as good listening and communication skills.
- An ability to keep accurate records and to strictly follow guidelines and procedures.
- Excellent time-keeping and ability to make travel arrangements.
- A strong commitment to the aims of the mentoring project and to the principles of equality and inclusion as laid out in the Koestler's equal opportunities policy.



"D3-11" oil painting by inmate of HMP Preston
2006 Koestler Award winner

What kind of arts are you interested in?

Our awards cover 52 art forms including:-

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|----------------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| • Ceramics | • Film | • Play writing |
| • Computer Graphics | • Magazines | • Poetry |
| • Craft | • Music composition | • Sculpture |
| • Drawing | • performance | • Story telling |
| • Fashion and Beauty | • Needlework | • Web design |
| • Fiction | • Painting | |
| | • Photography | |

Do I need to have any experience in teaching to apply to train as a mentor?

Mentors are not required to have any specific formal qualifications although training in the arts, education, counselling or other relevant fields may be an advantage.

Who would I be mentoring?

To be eligible to become a mentee participants must:

- Be an inmate in a prison, Young Offender Institution, secure unit, immigration removal centres or High Security Psychiatric Hospital in England or Wales. The project will specifically focus on assisting individuals who are under 30 years of age.
- Be due for release in the next twelve months.
- Have demonstrated talent, interest and achievement in the arts.
- Have won a Koestler award or awards.
- Have enough practical and social support in the community from family, friends and other services to be able to make use of arts mentoring without being overwhelmed by more pressing resettlement needs such as homelessness, drug addiction etc, although many mentees will still have a high level of need.

All mentees who participate in the project will be doing so voluntarily.



“Bus to Goa” oil painting by inmate of HMP Birmingham
2006 Koestler Award winner

What will being a Koestler Arts Mentor involve?

To become an Arts Mentor with Koestler participants must:

- Undertake 3 days of specific training relevant to becoming a Koestler Arts Mentor.
- Agree to participate in regular individual and peer support sessions.
- Engage in project evaluation activities, which will involve being interviewed and completing questionnaires.
- Offer your mentee at least 10 mentoring sessions over a 12 month period.
- Adhere to the projects policies regarding confidentiality, personal safety and boundaries and follow Koestler’s ‘Good Practice Guidelines’.

What will a typical mentoring session consist of?

- The first mentoring session will usually take place within the prison and will revolve primarily around helping the offender identify and set realistic arts based plans for releases. At this meeting the mentor will also lay out the boundaries of the mentoring relationship and the time limits involved.
- Post release mentoring sessions will last up to half a day each, but generally 2 hours, and the mentor and mentee can be as flexible and imaginative as they like providing that appropriate boundaries are adhered to. The sessions might be used to:
 - Give feedback on the mentee's latest artistic creation,
 - Suggest new forms of inspiration,
 - Work jointly with the mentee – e.g. both drawing the same subject or both carrying out a writing exercise,
 - Suggest website, reading materials or other local resources,
 - Give information about events courses or other opportunities,
 - Introduce the mentee to other local artists or groups,
 - Accompany the mentee to arts events e.g. an exhibition, a performance or a poetry reading,
 - Accompany the mentee to open days or interviews for courses.



“Left Behind” Acrylic by inmate of HMP Grendon
2006 Koestler Award Winner

How much time will I need to commit to the project?

A mentor will spend time:

- Attending three full days training prior to being accepted as a mentor.
- Attending regular support and supervision sessions.
- Preparing informative and engaging mentoring sessions.
- Carrying out ten mentoring sessions over a twelve month period (overall around 1 day a month)

What will I get out of being a mentor?

- You will be doing something meaningful, enjoyable, constructive and challenging.
- You will develop coaching and counselling skills that are transferable to your personal and professional life.
- Mentoring can revitalise your interest in your current work - and you inevitably get a greater understanding of key issues through reflection with your mentee.
- Mentoring can be rewarding as the person you mentor develops and progresses.
- You can opt to accredit your mentoring training through the Open College Network.
- Mentors will be automatically invited to Koestler events such as exhibition and sale previews, workshops and conferences.
- Both Mentees and Mentors will be given the opportunity to raise the profile of their work through Koestler's website and through the pilot project's dissemination activities which will include an exhibition of mentee and mentor work.
- Koestler will provide you with a reference detailing the work you have undertaken as a mentor.

What do mentees get out of participating in the project?

We hope that, through arts mentoring, the mentees will:

- Develop their self confidence and self esteem.
- Continue their enjoyment and engagement in the arts.
- Learn to reflect on their work and the ways in which they learn best.
- Develop a range of employable skills.
- Gain access to art's networks not otherwise available.
- Receive practical advice and information.
- Feel less isolated.

What support and training will Koestler provide?

- Thorough training will be provided in conjunction with SOVA, the leading national organisation for voluntary service with offenders, ex-offenders and their families.
- Excellent support and supervision; the Outreach & Education Co-ordinator will support both Mentor and Mentee throughout the process and will be available to assist with arranging accessible meetings for both parties if required.

Will my expenses be reimbursed?

All reasonable travel expenses will be reimbursed and out of pocket expenses will also be refunded. Money will be available for participating in artistic activities such as visiting a gallery or attending a play, as well as a small subsistence allowance.

Will I need to reveal my personal contact details?

Participants on the mentoring scheme may use email and the telephone to communicate in between face-to-face meetings. It is up to the mentor and mentee to agree a contact method that is mutually convenient and acceptable. It will not, however, be necessary for mentors to give their mentee their home address or home phone number. A mobile phone will be provided to mentors for their work with us.

What security checks will be needed and how long will it take?

All mentors need to be CRB checked and these checks normally take between 4 to 6 weeks. However, they can sometimes take a lot longer. We will keep any potential mentor informed about any delays and keep them updated regarding the situation. Some mentors will also be required to be cleared by the prison in which their mentee is held. These enhanced checks should, again, take between 4 to 6 weeks,

I am an ex-offender; can I volunteer to be a mentor?

The experience and understanding that an ex-offender will be able to bring to the role of Arts Mentor will be invaluable. We therefore, welcome applications from ex-offenders. However, since the role will require working with vulnerable adults some serious offences and/or any sentence completed less than one year ago may preclude you from becoming a volunteer. It should also be noted that the project will involve working in co-operation with the Prison Service and Probation and that we will seek their views on appropriate matches between mentors and mentees.

Who should I contact if I have more questions?

If you have any more questions regarding the scheme please do not hesitate to contact the Mentoring Co-ordinator;

Vikki Elliott
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London, W12 0TX
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Email: velliott@koestlertrust.org.uk



“Time” oil painting by inmate of HMP Shepton Mallet
2006 Koestler Award Winner