

# **Stepping Stones:**

Supporting vulnerable pupils  
to transition from primary to  
secondary school

**Request for applications**

March 2018

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### Summary

As part of the Mayor's Young Londoners Fund, the Greater London Authority (GLA) is inviting eligible schools to apply for up to £50,000 grant funding to run the Stepping Stones Programme.

The Young Londoners Fund will help children and young people to fulfil their potential, particularly those at risk of getting caught up in crime.

Stepping Stones is a school-based, targeted intervention, aimed at vulnerable pupils who are considered at risk during the transition from primary (Year 6) to secondary school (Year 7). See Appendix A for full pupil eligibility criteria.

The programme was developed and piloted by three London secondary schools in 2016/17. We are now seeking new schools who want to start running it themselves.

Funded delivery will take place over two consecutive academic years, beginning in the summer term 2017-18 and ending in the summer term of 2019-20. This will allow schools to work with two cohorts of incoming Year 7 pupils and provide the foundation for schools to continue running Stepping Stones once this funding period is over.

Schools can apply for funding through a competitive grant process, issued by the GLA Education and Youth Team. **They will need to submit the following documentation to [educationprogramme@london.gov.uk](mailto:educationprogramme@london.gov.uk) by 12 midday on Friday 18 May:**

- Application form
- Budget Breakdown Sheet
- Partnership Declaration Form(s) for other participating schools
- Documentation required for financial due diligence checks

## 1. Background

- 1.1. The transition from primary to secondary school is a period of significant change in the lives of young people. It requires pupils to negotiate and adapt to a new organisation and culture, including a new (often larger) setting with different educational practices, new sets of peers, organisational structures and social interactions.
- 1.2. Many children embrace and adapt to these changes, particularly when they are well supported by parents, families and school.<sup>1</sup> There is, however, a significant minority of pupils who experience uncertainty, risk, and anxiety around transition, or who are not equipped with the necessary skillset to navigate this change successfully. This can adversely impact their educational outcomes including behaviour, attendance and attainment.<sup>2</sup> In fact, “primary to secondary transition is now regarded as the crucial time when learners drop out or are made for life.”<sup>3</sup>
- 1.3. In order to explore ways to better support vulnerable learners in their transition, the GLA commissioned Gladesmore Community School to help design and pilot the Stepping Stones Programme. They collaborated with Gangs Unite and two other secondary schools (The Urswick School and Heathcote School and Science College) to develop a delivery model and pilot the programme during the 2016/17 academic year. This pilot involved all three secondary schools (as well as their feeder primaries) and supported over 200 eligible Year 7 pupils.
- 1.4. A successful transition to secondary school includes:<sup>4</sup>
  - Pupils settling in so well that they cause no concerns to parents/carers
  - Pupils showing an increasing interest in school and school work
  - Pupils getting used to new routines and school organisation with ease
  - Pupils experiencing curriculum continuity
  - Pupils developing new friendships and improving self-esteem and confidence
- 1.5. The Stepping Stones programme has six main elements, all designed to support vulnerable learners:
  - **Engagement days with primary schools:** liaising with primary school teachers, Year 6 pupils and parents, to understand pupil needs and identify those who may benefit from the programme.

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<sup>1</sup> Supporting learning in the transition from primary to secondary school, University of Bristol, 2010  
Evangelou, M. et.al. What Makes a Successful Transition from Primary to Secondary School, Institute for Education, 2008

<sup>2</sup> Rice, F. et al. (2014) Identifying factors that predict successful and difficult transitions to secondary school, University College London

<sup>3</sup> Primary/secondary transition”, Elaine Williams, 2010, Times Education Supplement

<sup>4</sup> What Makes a Successful Transition from Primary to Secondary School?, Institute of Education, 2008

- **Summer school:** running activities during a two-week summer school to help immerse selected incoming Year 7 pupils in the secondary school environment before term begins.
- **Stepping Stones lessons:** key learning sessions for selected Year 7 pupils, helping develop their confidence and ability to deal with different social and academic situations.
- **Peer mentoring:** training Year 10 pupils to support selected Year 7 pupils via weekly one-to-one mentoring sessions.
- **Community mentoring:** adult mentors providing support with peer mentoring and Stepping Stones lessons.
- **Aspirational and career-based activities:** working with external organisations to inspire selected Year 7 pupils about different careers and future goals.

1.6. The Stepping Stones pilot was independently evaluated by OPM Group. The full report is available at [www.london.gov.uk/stepping-stones](http://www.london.gov.uk/stepping-stones)

1.7. The evaluation demonstrates that the programme can help vulnerable young people as they transition to, and settle into, secondary school. It includes evidence of the benefits for Year 7 pupils taking part in the programme in terms of their attainment, behaviour and attendance at school. For example:

- Two out of three pilot schools saw a strong improvement in the proportion of pupils making satisfactory progress in Maths and English, as compared to previous comparable cohorts.
- Two out of three pilot schools saw a strong improvement in attendance rates by the end of the academic year, as compared to previous comparable cohorts.
- In terms of behaviour, all three pilot schools noted that “shy or quiet” pupils improved their confidence both in the classroom and social settings, whilst pupils with behavioural issues improved their self-awareness, maturity and control over their emotions.

1.8. The evaluation also includes evidence that participating Year 10 pupils (acting as peer mentors) were positively affected by the Stepping Stones programme. Overall, peer mentors developed their leadership skills, communication skills, and confidence. They also developed a greater sense of commitment to their schools and were more optimistic about their own future aspirations.

1.9. OPM Group also worked in collaboration with Gladesmore Community School and the GLA to produce an online “Stepping Stones Toolkit”. This toolkit offers schools across London free access to learning insights and resources from the programme, enabling others to run the interventions themselves. It includes an overview of key

costings and benefits associated with each element of the programme, as well as related downloadable resources.

1.10. The Toolkit is available at: [www.london.gov.uk/stepping-stones](http://www.london.gov.uk/stepping-stones)

## **2. Eligibility, budget and requirements**

- 2.1. The GLA is seeking up to 15 eligible London schools to deliver elements of the Stepping Stones programme over two academic years, starting in Summer Term 2017-18.
- 2.2. To be eligible for this funding, the applicant school should have 20% or more Pupil Premium entitlement.
- 2.3. If an applicant school does not meet the criteria for Pupil Premium entitlement, it must provide a clear rationale in its application as to why the school has a particular need to support vulnerable pupils in their transition to secondary school.
- 2.4. The GLA is also particularly interested in receiving applications from schools working in areas of London with:
  - A high proportion of schools rated as ‘requires improvement’ and ‘inadequate’ within the borough.<sup>5</sup>
  - A high rate of exclusions within the borough.<sup>6</sup>
  - A high number of knife crime offences within the borough.<sup>7</sup>
  - A high proportion of young people not in employment or education within the borough.<sup>8</sup>
- 2.5. It is expected that most applications will be led by a secondary school and that, if successful, the secondary school would be responsible for coordinating programme delivery. The secondary school would be responsible for engaging and working with their core feeder primary schools, as outlined in their application form.
- 2.6. If an application is led by a primary school, they would be expected to work closely with a partner secondary school to deliver the programme, as well as engaging with at least one other feeder primary school. Both the applicant primary school and partner secondary school would be expected to meet the Pupil Premium eligibility criteria.
- 2.7. A maximum total budget of £50,000 is available per applicant school - this equates to £25,000 per academic year.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/maintained-schools-and-academies-inspections-and-outcomes-as-at-31-august-2017>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/permanent-and-fixed-period-exclusions-in-england-2015-to-2016>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.met.police.uk/stats-and-data/hate-crime-dashboard/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/young-people-not-employment-education-or-training-borough>

- 2.8. Schools intending to lead delivery of the Stepping Stones programme should apply independently for this funding. They should indicate in their application if they plan to work together with another school who is applying to lead the programme (for example, another school within the local area).
- 2.9. Applications should demonstrate how schools will make use of the Stepping Stones Toolkit to ensure that good practice and resources from the pilot programme are tested out and embedded more widely across London.
- 2.10. Schools must run the peer mentoring element of the programme; however, they can choose which other element(s) they deliver (as outlined in point 1.5).
- 2.11. Each successful school will work with a minimum of 50 eligible incoming year 7 pupils per academic year. See Appendix A for eligibility criteria.
- 2.12. Schools are expected to engage with incoming Year 7 pupils, who are identified as eligible, during the summer term of primary school, the summer holidays (if running the summer school element of the programme) and throughout the whole first year of secondary school.

### **3. Due Diligence**

- 3.1. The GLA will carry out financial due diligence checks prior to the offer of funding – please see Appendix C for full details.
- 3.2. To facilitate the due diligence process, applicants should provide the required documentation at the point of application.
- 3.3. Please note, however, that local authority maintained schools are exempt from the due diligence process.

### **4. Outputs**

- 4.1. Each successful school will deliver and manage elements of the Stepping Stones Programme over two academic years. During this time, they will support:
  - At least 100 eligible Year 7 pupils (minimum 50 pupils per academic year) – please see Appendix A for a definition of eligible pupils.
  - At least 40 Year 10 pupils acting as peer mentors (minimum 20 pupils per academic year) – please see Appendix B for guidance on selecting Year 10 mentors.
- 4.2. Successful schools will be expected to track and report:

- The pupil characteristics of participating Year 7s and Year 10s (for example: gender, Pupil Premium entitlement, ethnicity, pupils with English as an additional language, Children Looked After, pupils with special education needs).
  - The type and total hours of support that each participating pupil receives (through the different elements of the programme).
- 4.3. Schools must run the peer mentoring element of the programme; however, they can choose which other element(s) they deliver (as outlined in point 1.5)
- 4.4. Peer mentoring must take place over (at least) the autumn and spring term of each academic year. Other elements of the programme may be shorter or longer in duration.
- 4.5. Each secondary school will engage with core feeder primary schools in order to successfully run the programme. This activity will need to begin in the summer term of the 2017/18 academic year.
- 4.6. Each school will appoint a Stepping Stones Coordinator, who will be the programme lead for the school and have responsibility for coordination of in-school delivery. This will include: liaising with feeder primary schools, recruiting and managing mentors, encouraging pupils to participate in the programme, providing space and time for delivery, collecting data and producing reports for the GLA and evaluators.
- 4.7. Each school will attend GLA meetings as required, respond to requests for information and provide termly progress updates and termly management reports to the GLA.

## 5. Outcomes

- 5.1. Successful schools are required to track the progress of participating Year 7 and Year 10 pupils across three related outcomes:
- **Improved attendance:** measured by percentage attendance rates.
  - **Improved attainment:** measured by teachers' assessments of satisfactory progress in English and Maths.
  - **Improved behaviour at school:** for example, as measured by results from the Student Attitudes to Self and School (PASS) computer-based test, internal and external exclusion data (combined) and commitment scores.

## 6. Evaluation

- 6.1. The GLA will procure an external evaluator to assess the impact of the Stepping Stones programme and further develop the Stepping Stones Toolkit.



6.2. Schools which successfully apply for funding will be expected to work with the evaluator and GLA to achieve these outcomes.

## 7. Project management

7.1. This programme will be managed by the Education and Youth Team at the GLA. Successful schools will be expected to produce a delivery plan with key milestones, provide the GLA with regular progress reports, linked to key milestones and submit termly claims to the GLA.

7.2. Successful schools will be expected to make themselves available for an inception meeting in June 2018 and may be asked to contribute to future good practice activity undertaken by the GLA as part of their wider education activity.

## 8. Payment

8.1. Payments will be based on achievement of key milestones and outputs, as set out in the applicant's delivery plan and agreed by the GLA. Final payment cannot exceed the expenditure incurred.

## 9. Application criteria

9.1. All applications received will be assessed using the scoring mechanism below.

9.2. The GLA is not bound to accept any proposal and may request presentations or further information from bidders.

9.3. The GLA reserves the right to ask for clarification on applications through an interview process. Qualifying applications will then progress to the next stage of the process and be assessed using the scoring mechanism below.

<p>Strength of rationale and evidence for proposal</p> <p>35%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good knowledge of the issues surrounding primary to secondary transition for vulnerable pupils (both at a theoretical and local/school level)</li> <li>• Good knowledge of the Stepping Stones Programme, including evaluation findings</li> <li>• Strong rationale for introducing the programme into the applicant school, including clear evidence of need for vulnerable learners</li> <li>• A clear outline of how the programme is additional to/will complement existing activity</li> <li>• Clear commitment to supporting vulnerable pupils as they transition from primary to secondary school</li> </ul>
<p>Ability to deliver products and</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commitment to meet desired project outputs and outcomes, with evidence of effective reporting and monitoring systems in place</li> <li>• Strong understanding of the activities involved in the Stepping Stones programme and how these will be delivered in school</li> </ul>

services required 30%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A clear and logical delivery plan</li> <li>• Awareness of risks and issues associated with the programme and how to mitigate these</li> <li>• Demonstrable ability to begin delivery immediately (including having already identified and ideally engaged with feeder primary schools)</li> <li>• Strong project management skills and clear understanding of the role of the Stepping Stones Coordinator – ideally a member of staff will already have been chosen for this role</li> </ul>
Previous experience and expertise 20%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong project management skills</li> <li>• Experience of successfully running other relevant schemes and interventions, particularly where linked to vulnerable learners</li> <li>• Experience of partnership work with other schools (and ideally a track record of collaboration with the feeder primaries who will be engaged in the programme) Experience of successfully engaging with families and parents</li> </ul>
Value for money 15%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ambitious scope and scale of plans</li> <li>• Reasonable and rational allocating of funding across different programme elements</li> <li>• Evidence of match funding</li> <li>• Evidence of sustainability plans and consideration of how the programme might be embedded beyond the funding period</li> </ul>

9.4. Each of the above areas will be assessed in accordance with the following criteria:

0: No response	No response
1: Unsatisfactory	No real evidence
2: Poor	Criteria not met and unacceptable
3: Satisfactory	Not met exactly but acceptably
4: Good	Most aspects of criteria are met
5: Excellent	Meets criteria exactly

## 10. Timescale

The anticipated timetable for the appointment of the successful programme delivery partner is outlined in the table below:

Milestone	Deadline (provisional)
Call for applications issued	Monday 26 March
Applications open	Monday 26 March – 12 midday, Friday 18 May
Deadline for applications	12 midday Friday 18 May
Application assessment	Monday 21 May – Friday 1 June

Successful schools notified	W/C Monday 4 June
Inception meeting	W/C Monday 11 June
Delivery to begin	July 2018
Stepping Stones delivery for cohort 1	July 2018 – June 2019
Stepping Stones delivery for cohort 2	July 2019 – June 2020

## **Appendix A: Eligibility criteria for incoming Year 7 pupils**

Young people about to transition from Year 6 to Year 7 are considered eligible to take part in the Stepping Stones programme if they meet at least two of the following risk variables:

1. Low attainment – based on their teacher’s assessment of their potential
2. Poor attendance – attendance recorded below 90%
3. Have a disability, including Special Educational Needs (SEN)
4. Poor behaviour – based on the assessment of their school and/or parent/carer
5. Cautions – received one or more cautions in the last 12 months
6. Entitlement to Pupil Premium Funding
7. Older sibling with history of poor behaviour, contact with the police/justice system, or gang/criminal involvement
8. Children Looked After or adopted
9. Having English as an additional language (EAL)
10. Low self-esteem and/or confidence – based on the assessment of their school and/or parent/carer
11. Experience of bullying and/or social exclusion – based on the assessment of their school and/or parent/carer

## **Appendix B: Guidance for selecting Year 10 pupil mentors**

Guidance and resources on the peer mentoring element of the Stepping Stones Programme can be found within the Toolkit at: [www.london.gov.uk/stepping-stones](http://www.london.gov.uk/stepping-stones)

This includes advice on recruitment and selection of Year 10 peer mentors, which was approached slightly differently by the three schools involved in the pilot programme. For example, some adopted a more formal application process than others.

### **Schools are advised that they consider the following:**

1. The intended positive impact of the programme on peer mentors, as set out in the Stepping Stones' evaluation report or in the Toolkit
2. The 'personal specification for peer mentors' produced by Gladesmore Community School as part of the pilot programme, available in the Toolkit

### **Essential characteristics for a peer mentor:**

- Due to enter Year 10 in the next academic year
- A good listener
- Reliable
- Confident to work in small groups
- Able to communicate effectively with both young people and adults
- Motivated to help incoming Year 7 pupils
- Empathetic (able to understand and appreciate other pupil's circumstances and challenges)

### **Desirable characteristics for a peer mentor:**

- Experience of overcoming challenges within their own education (including transition to secondary school)

## Appendix C:

### Financial due diligence of applicant organisations

#### Context

- The GLA will carry out financial due diligence checks prior to the offer of funding to ensure that any risk to either the success of the programme and project objectives, or to the funding itself, has been considered and any risk is deemed acceptable. The outcome of the due diligence checks will be provided to the project board to take into consideration alongside the technical aspects of the funding application, when determining the award of funding.
- The due diligence will comprise of the following checks: liquidity, profitability, return on capital employed, debtors & creditors cycle, the review of Credit Safe reports, Charity Commission checks (where applicable), and the review of insurance documents, finance & procurement regulations to ensure that robust governance arrangements are in place to account for and manage the GLA funding.
- Due diligence checks will only be carried out on those organisations who are shortlisted and their project proposal deemed to meet the GLA's criteria for funding.

#### Financial Due Diligence Documentation

- To facilitate the due diligence process, applicants must provide as much of the following documentation with their application as possible:
  - Copy of the most recent audited accounts or copy of the most recent accounts signed by an independent and qualified accountant
  - Copy of the organisation's Financial Regulations
  - Statement of the organisation's cash flow forecast for the current year
  - The organisation's budget for the current year
  - Evidence of Public and Employer's Liability Insurance
  - Name and contact details of bank

#### And if relevant:

- Written Parent Company Guarantee (to be submitted by Parent Companies only)
- Consolidated Financial Accounts for the consortium (to be submitted by the Lead Partner from Consortiums only)
- Details of previous GLA contracts/grants and values over the last 12 months
- Where applicable, details of your organisation and / or any of your directors / partners / proprietors' bankruptcy, insolvency, compulsory winding up, receivership, composition with creditors, or subject to relevant proceedings
- Where applicable, details of any pending or actual investigation by a consultative committee of accounting bodies in relation to accountancy standards or professional conduct for which your organisation and / or any of its

director(s) / partners/proprietor(s) is/has been subject to, including actions taken to put things right.

**The GLA also reserves the right to require further information upon request.**

### **Other Key Information**

- For applicants with a charitable status, the applicant's details will be checked against those held on the Charity Commission's website. Checks are undertaken to ensure that the applicant does hold charity status, that all documents requested by the Charity Commission have been submitted on time and that the Charity Commission has not raised any concerns about their status.

### **Exemptions**

- Local Authorities, Local Authority controlled schools, Government bodies and departments are exempt from the financial due diligence process and therefore their status must be clearly highlighted within the application form.

## **Other formats and languages**

For a large print, Braille, disc, sign language video or audio-tape version of this document, please contact us at the address below:

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