

## Arts Mentoring Frequently Asked Questions

This document is intended to give you further information about Koestler Arts Mentoring Scheme and seeks to answer the following pertinent points:

- ⇒ What is the overall aim of the project?
- ⇒ What are the project's goals?
- ⇒ What is mentoring?
- ⇒ Could I be a mentor with the project?
- ⇒ What kind of arts are you interested in?
- ⇒ Do I need to have any experience in teaching to apply to train as a mentor?
- ⇒ Who would I be mentoring?
- ⇒ What will being a Koestler Arts Mentor involve?
- ⇒ What will a typical mentoring session consist of?
- ⇒ How much time will I need to commit to the project?
- ⇒ What will I get out of being a mentor?
- ⇒ What do mentees get out of participating in the project?
- ⇒ What support and training will Koestler provide?
- ⇒ Will my expenses be reimbursed?
- ⇒ Will I need to reveal my personal contact details?
- ⇒ What security checks will be needed and how long will it take?
- ⇒ I am an ex-prisoner; can I volunteer to be a mentor?
- ⇒ Who should I contact if I have more questions?

### **What is the aim of the arts mentoring scheme?**

To deliver arts input, shaped to the needs of individual ex-prisoners, that empowers them to continue with their arts-based activities.

### **What are the project's goals?**

To support people who have been involved in the criminal justice system to sustain and develop their artistic interests

To ensure that the mentees 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?**

*To be an Arts Mentor you must have:*

- 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 mentee's 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.

### What kind of arts are you interested in?

*Our awards cover 52 art forms including:-*

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

### 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:*

- Have had **some involvement with the criminal justice system in England and Wales**. They may be currently serving a sentence in prison, Young Offender Institution, or secure mental health facility, or have previously served a custodial or community-based sentence.
- Demonstrate a **talent and motivation to further their interest in the arts**. We will seek to support creative mentees who might like to participate in arts activity in the community - either as a regular leisure pursuit, or those who might have a reasonable possibility of undertaking training, education, volunteering or employment in the arts.
- Have enough **practical and social support in the community** from family, friends or other services to be able to make use of arts mentoring without being overwhelmed by more pressing needs such as homelessness or drug use.
- Be **willing and enthusiastic** to participate in the project, and to **commit to meeting their mentor for regular mentoring sessions**. The commitment levels will be agreed on an individual basis with the mentee.

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

### What will being a Koestler Arts Mentor involve?

*To become an Arts Mentor with Koestler participants must:*

- Undertake 2 days of specific training relevant to becoming a Koestler Arts Mentor.
- Commit to a set number of mentoring meetings with your mentee
- Complete session reports after each meeting with your mentee
- Agree to participate in regular individual and peer support sessions.
- Engage in project evaluation activities, which will involve being interviewed and completing questionnaires.
- 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?

Typically the first meeting consisting of the mentor and mentee confirming where the mentee will be getting practical and other support, so that the Koestler work can focus on the arts. The mentor will also make absolutely clear the time-limits and other boundaries of the relationship.

The following mentoring sessions can last up to half a day each, but will be generally about 2 hours at a mutually agreed public meeting place such as a community centre or arts venue. In planning the content of the sessions, within the behavioural and time boundaries agreed by the project, mentor and mentee

can be as flexible and imaginative as they like, and the project will give the mentors a small budget to pay for some activities. The mentor may:-

- give feedback on the mentee's latest artistic creations;
- suggest new forms or inspiration;
- work jointly with the mentee - e.g. both drawing the same subject or both carrying out a writing exercise together;
- suggest reading, websites and other resources;
- give information about events, courses and 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;
- encourage the mentee to submit work to competitions or for publication..

### **How many mentees will I have?**

Our mentors work with one mentee at a time.

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

*A mentor will spend time:*

- Attending two full days training prior to being accepted as a mentor.
- Attending regular support and supervision sessions.
- Preparing informative and engaging mentoring sessions.
- Carrying out up to ten mentoring sessions over a twelve month period

### **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
- Mentors will be automatically invited to Koestler events such as exhibition and sale previews, workshops and conferences
- 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?**

In 2007, we worked in consultation with SOVA (Supporting Others through Voluntary Action) to design and deliver training to our mentors. The Arts Mentor Training Course is delivered as two consecutive day's training.

The Outreach & Involvement team offer a range of support and supervision services to mentors including: one-to-one reviews, small group meetings with other mentors and other opportunities for mentors to contribute to the learning and development of the mentoring scheme.

### **How long after training will I be matched with a mentee?**

Though we hope to match newly trained mentors as soon as possible, there is often a wait. Factors such as probation needing to sign off an applicant before we can take it forward, as well as many of the people applying awaiting release dates, mean there are delays. We are also a mentee led scheme and will prioritise the need of the mentee applicants based on artform and geographical location.

**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 separate mobile phone and email address 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 have a Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) check - these checks normally take between 2 to 6 weeks.

**I have experience in the criminal justice system; can I volunteer to be a mentor?**

The experience and understanding that someone with experience in the criminal justice system will be able to bring to the role of Arts Mentor will be invaluable. We therefore welcome applications from people who have been in prison themselves. 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 Outreach and Involvement team at the Koestler Arts.

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