



**the  
key**

**Project Brief**  
**Transitions Project**  
**Evaluation**

# HELLO!

The Key is a North East charity committed to inspiring young people to believe in themselves, especially those living in deprivation and facing challenging personal circumstances. We want to create a world where all young people are inspired to believe in themselves and are empowered to achieve their full potential.

Our work is built upon four core beliefs that young people should be:

- Empowered to **use their voice** and be heard
- Trusted to lead and deliver **projects and activities** meaningful to them
- Supported to build the **skills and confidence** they need to thrive
- Inspired to become active citizens by exploring **enterprise or tackling social issues** in their community

Our core beliefs are supported by our organisational values of:

- **Collaboration:** We achieve more together than by acting alone
- **Focus:** We keep sight of the goal to achieve our mission
- **Growth:** We constantly strive to be the best we can be



# Background



## A little about us

The Key is a long-standing North East charity that collaborates with over 80 partners throughout the region to deliver our unique programme, the KEY+ Challenge.

The KEY+ Challenge is unique to The Key and provides young people facing challenging personal circumstances with a distinctive opportunity to lead projects and activities that matter to them whilst building their skills, self-confidence and self-belief.

We have ambitions to sustainably grow the number of young people we support to complete the KEY+ Challenge each year. To do so, we need to raise our profile and awareness regionally and then nationally amongst funders, businesses, commissioners, and influencers in the sector.

## The KEY+ challenge

Our proven, youth-led skills development programme, the KEY+ Challenge, brings young people together in small groups and with the support of a KEY+ Facilitator (trained deliverer), they're set the challenge to:

1. **Think** of a project or activity
2. **Plan** what is needed for that project, including a budget
3. **Pitch** their project to a panel of volunteers
4. **Do** their project if given the go ahead by the panel
5. **Review** and reflect on their project, learning, and development.

Young people complete this process up to three times, each time planning more progressively challenging projects with greater personal development. Delivering their first KEY+ project is a great achievement for young people, delivering their second stretches young people further and enhances their skills and at Stage 3, they explore enterprise or social action with their project, providing a way to take action and contribute to their communities.

## PROJECT IDEAS YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE MADE HAPPEN WITH KEY+

A group of young refugees wrote a song to show their experiences of being a young refugee in the UK. They created a music video and shared their song with others online.

A group of young people created cost of living hampers for those most in need. They included school holiday activities for families struggling.

To reduce isolation, a group of young women created a community friendship bench and ran an art competition to create a painted mural for each side of the bench.

A group of NEET young women set up their own micro enterprise, making and selling candles. It inspired the group and encouraged them to re-engage.

# KEY+ in Action



## 23/24 KEY STATS

**995**

individual young people were supported to participate in KEY+



They used their ideas and took the lead to think, plan, pitch, do & review

**248**

of their own projects & activities

Including:

- Food hamper support for struggling families
- Group bonding experiences
- Community fun days
- Environmental campaigning projects



Young people developed their skills by an average of

**25%**

leading to increased confidence, resilience and self-esteem - a 'growth mindset'



**98%**

of young people reported improved confidence thanks to KEY+

**99%**

of young people asked, said KEY+ will have a positive impact on their future



## KEY YOUNG PEOPLE QUOTES

"It has helped me be a better person and become more motivated to attend school. If it didn't happen, I would still be a non-attender."

- Joseph, KEY+ Completer

"It has helped my confidence in myself and I now feel like I can do a lot more things which I couldn't before doing The Key."

- Grace, KEY+ completer

"KEY+ has given me confidence in myself. I feel stronger inside as a person and I'm able to speak out in front of people, something I struggled with before."

- Charlie, KEY+ completer

"I'm more likely to speak to people and not be so stressed around strangers now. I feel like I can make friendships with people now without being worried of their intentions."

- Tori, KEY+ completer



## KEY STORIES

1. **Rock n Roll Sausage Rolls** gained a sense of their influence and impact through the KEY+ Challenge. Together they set about making a difference to their community and used their personal experiences to drive change. They completed all three stages of the KEY+ Challenge and even moved onto participating in KEY+ Changemakers too. [Read more about their journey here.](#)

2. **School 4 Kool** took a unique view of the cost of living crisis and how it was impacting families in a variety of ways. The five young women decided to do their bit to help by running a free uniform event for young people in secondary school to come along and receive free or low cost uniform goods. [See what they did here.](#)

3. **Nature Gang** ran a school wide art competition to promote friendship and kindness. They chose two winning designs and transformed them from ideas to reality onto two wooden benches. The group then donated their painted benches to a local shelter supporting refugee families. [Check it out here.](#)

4. **Funky Phoenixes** tackled climate change with their KEY+ Project but made sure they galvanised others in the process. They launched a recycling competition in school after being shocked at the amount of single use plastic being binned. The group got the school on board and made it a house wide challenge which helped them make a big impact. [Read about it here.](#)

5. **Everyone and a guy named Kevin** took on the KEY+ Challenge as a group of friends in the West End of Newcastle. They thrived through the first two stages and wanted to push themselves at Stage 3. They chose to run a community focussed comedy night from their youth club which turned out to be a real crowd pleased and a fully maxed out event. [See how they found the experience here.](#)

# Project Brief



## Project Scope

The Key is seeking an external expert to support us in evaluating a collaborative school transitions project with Children North East (CNE).

Following a successful pilot year, The Key and CNE have been recommissioned by the North East Combined Authority (NECA) to support an additional 200 young people in schools across Newcastle, Northumberland, and North Tyneside over a 12-month period. This initiative focuses on supporting students in their transition to Key Stage 3 (KS3) through the KEY+ Challenge.

Our intervention, delivered by trained youth workers, targets students identified as struggling with the KS3 transition. Using The Key's tried and tested KEY+ Challenge, it supports students to build friendships, purpose, skills, and confidence to better settle into and thrive within their new school environment.

We are therefore seeking an external expert to robustly evaluate our intervention against the outcomes we set out to achieve, which include:

- **Build a sense of purpose and positively engage in positive activities:** Pupils are empowered to use their voices and ideas to lead and deliver their own projects/activities through KEY+. This makes them feel heard, seen and valued. It empowers them and builds their attitude towards engaging, which increases their opportunity for learning in a non-formal setting.
- **Form and strengthen friendships through our group-based intervention:** The National Youth Agency's Better Together research found that "young people benefit hugely from peer-to-peer support and being able to talk to other young people who have experienced similar challenges." Young people complete KEY+ in small groups and deliver activities that they choose together. It provides them with positive activities to engage in whilst helping them to reconnect with those experiencing similar challenges. This has been particularly important in tackling social isolation amongst vulnerable pupils post-covid.
- **Develop essential life and employability skills by an average of 20%:** The skills that young people work on include making decisions, finding information, taking responsibility, settling disagreements, negotiating, dealing with people in power and authority, communication, coping with stress and tension, and self-awareness. Life-skill building projects have demonstrated their impact on social cohesion, self-confidence, and developing new skills and networking for pupils (NYA, 2024).
- **Improve and build their self-confidence and self-belief:** Young people overcome challenges in KEY+ including pitching to panel and having the autonomy and responsibility to deliver their own project/activity. In doing so, they realise their capabilities and feel a real sense of achievement upon completion. This raises their self-belief and improves their confidence. On average, 90% of young people who participate report improved confidence.

## Internal resource and capacity

The Key has a central data collection system which tracks outputs, and contributes to gathering outcomes for young people. This can be adapted to collect additional specified data enhance our evaluation if required. You will have access to our Operations Team which consists of our Head of Operations, 2 x Youth Projects Co-ordinator and a Youth Project Support Worker. There will also be access by arrangement to participating young people, teachers and Children North East delivery staff.

# Project Brief

## Project deliverables

An in-depth evaluation report that can be shared with NECA, informing us to what extent the project has met the intended outcomes and any additional unintended outcomes.

## Timeline

We anticipate commencing evaluation in December 2024 with initial themes and findings available in April 2025 for a scheduled learning event. A final, in-depth report should be completed by July 2025 and can incorporate any feedback from the learning event.

## Project Budget

The Key has a budget of £3-5k available for this project. Please note that, as a charity, cost is an important consideration in our provider selection.

# Your Response

We are interested in receiving responses to this brief from interested parties who align with our values and are able to achieve the proposed deliverables.

Please send your response to the brief to [leah@thekeyuk.org](mailto:leah@thekeyuk.org) by the response deadline.

In your proposal of no more than 4 to 6 pages, we would love you to tell us the following in your response:

- About you and your relevant experience
- Your way of working and the support you offer
- The breakdown cost of your work
- Any added value you may offer

**The deadline to respond is 9am on Monday 25th of November 2024. We will aim to meet shortlisted respondents within 1 week.**

Some useful resources:

- [Our website](#)
- [Our annual impact report](#)
- [Our animation video](#)

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to get in touch with Leah on the above email.

