

Faith and Society Files: Church and School - Giving Young People a Second Chance

The Lighthouse Group (TLG) is a charity with a Christian ethos that enables churches to engage with this issue of children who have been excluded from mainstream schooling, or who are in crisis in their education. This File explores ways in which churches can partner TLG and support their local young people.



The Current Situation

Every day thousands of children are absent from school. The causes are vast and complex, ranging from bereavement to drug abuse, from bullying to family breakdown. For these children the future is uncertain. The majority leave school with no qualifications, many will end up in prison, and more still will end up trapped in a cycle of low esteem, low aspirations and poverty.

Education for those without

Thousands of school-age children in the UK will never see the inside of a classroom beyond the age of 13. With nearly 600,000 young people truanting and a further 2,500 excluded from any given school day in the UK, there are many complex reasons why young people do not attend school.

Human Rights

Education is a fundamental human right. It is education that lifts people out of the state of chronic poverty, raises aspirations, and creates the opportunity to live life with purpose. In the UK, we have the privilege of free education but this doesn't always mean that everyone will be able to access or complete their schooling.

The silent scream for help

Young people don't often know how to communicate their distress and their cry for help can only be seen through their actions. This often results in antisocial behaviour, aggression, apathy, gang culture and sometimes violence; such actions are just the signs of damaged and neglected lives.



TheLighthouseGroup
educating young people, transforming lives

The Lighthouse Group

The Lighthouse Group (TLG) is a charity with a Christian ethos that enables churches to engage with this issue of children who have been excluded from mainstream schooling, or who are in crises in their education. For secondary-age young people, TLG enables churches to set up registered independent schools providing alternative education. At primary level, TLG trains church volunteers to provide a high quality mentoring service for a local school.

Becoming an Alternative Secondary Education Provider

Why Open a TLG Centre?

- Approximately 10,000 young people are permanently excluded from school each year, with many thousands more experiencing fixed term exclusions.
- A recent report involving 200 young people in a Youth Offending Institute found that 48% had been excluded from school, 54% had been truanting and a fifth had Special Educational Needs.¹
- Young people excluded from school are more likely to be known to the police; get caught up in the criminal justice system and end up in prison.

The church is presented with an opportunity to break the cycle of deprivation and offer young people hope, aspiration, engagement with church based youth provision and another way to do life!

¹ Statistics from The Prison Reform Trust: 'Punishing Disadvantage' Report, 2010

What do you need to open TLG Centre?

- A church or community hall building with a main hall at least 7 X 8 metres in size, with toilet facilities, a kitchenette and ancillary rooms for a small office / medical room.
- A good track record of church-based youth work.
- Some financial resources to underwrite the running of an alternative education school.

What TLG brings to the Partnership

TLG will provide the following support to both set up and run an alternative education TLG Centre that is OFSTED registered:

- Capital works and project management support in opening the centre.
- Support in fundraising for capital work and equipment cost of the centre.²
- Professional and technical line management support to the Centre Manager.
- Initial and ongoing support to generate referrals from the LEA and local schools.
- Support with OFSTED registration and ongoing inspection of the TLG Centre.
- Rigorous 'Safer Recruitment' process for all Centre staff.
- ICT installation and ongoing maintenance including emergency support.
- Financial services that invoice and chase up payment for referrals.
- Learning and Development Support including Continuous Professional Development
- 'Fastrack' Intern Programme for Interns working with church partners

What the Church Partner brings to the Partnership

- A building to host the centre, including covering heat and light costs.
- Employed team: Centre Manager and Learning Mentor.³

² Fundraising by TLG or an external fundraising organisation will carry a fee

³ A team of two staff: normally one employed staff and one on an internship or a sessional worker



- A willingness to be the 'Proprietor' of the school.
- Pastoral employment support for the staff team.
- Run part-time education programmes: Monday/Tuesday and Thursday/Friday.
- Run 12-week educational programmes with up to six pupils on each programme.
- Capacity to work with up to 36 vulnerable young people each year.
- Build relationships with local schools and the LEA for pupils referrals.
- Classroom-based and Family Support volunteers to work with pupils and parents.
- Beyond School hours church-based youth provision.
- Buy in and support from the whole congregation of the church.

Primary Early Intervention: £3600 will pay for a group of voluntary behaviour coaches to engage with at-risk children and families in their local primary school for a whole year. A great example of The Big Society in action.

WHAT CAN YOU FUND?

WHAT DOES IT COST TO SET UP A CENTRE?

- Staff recruitment & training
- Volunteer recruitment and training (Family Support & Classroom)
- LA & schools engagement
- Planning of new learning space
- Quality, Curriculum & Ofsted Registration

Secondary Alternative Education: £20,000 will enable TLG to set-up and support an alternative education centre to work with up to 36 young people and their families year on year! An opportunity to kick-start a sustainable model that can withstand the current economic climate.

It takes 6 months to launch a primary Early Intervention Centre

It takes 12 months to launch a secondary Alternative Education Centre.

WHEN WILL WE LAUNCH THE CENTRES?

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What are the resource implications?

Expenditure

- Capital works required on the building - average £20,000 (fundraising).
- Costs to equip the centre - approximately £15,000 (fundraising).
- Staffing costs and centre costs - approximate maximum of £42,500 per annum (from referrals income).

Income

- Partnership charges £1706 - average charge for a 12 week two day programme
- Up to 36 places can be offered each year to schools and LEA's
- Referrals Income split TLG 30% / Church Partner 70%
- Leverage of additional grant income by partner church for the project

It takes at least 8 months to open a TLG centre and the Partnership Agreement is signed for a five-year commitment period.

Give Youth a Chance

The team from Hivings Free Church, Chesham used a Home Mission 'Mission Project' grant to enable them to develop a youth club. Through this, the church is aiming to provide motivation, confidence and hope for the young people, and the anti-social behaviour on the estate has already been reduced. You can find a short video which explains the impact which this has had on the community at www.youtube.com/baptistuniongb#p/u/0/AyS04K2D6cQ



'When a young person attends TLG, they are given intensive support to begin to work through their educational and behavioural issues. Time and time again, we have seen aspirations raised, behaviour patterns recognised and successful integration of young people back into school. We encourage young people to return to their schools or to move into further education if appropriate, all the while reinforcing their achievements, abilities and potential.'

From The Lighthouse Group website
www.tlg.org.uk



Early Intervention in Primary Schools

Young people coming to TLG are at crisis point. Its vision is for local churches to engage with the primary schools in their area to provide a high quality service of mentoring to young children struggling with education, social or emotional difficulties. TLG's Early Intervention programme has been developed to tackle behavioural issues much earlier to avert potential future crisis. By going into schools to mentor and coach children who are at risk of being excluded, TLG hopes to help them overcome barriers in their academic and personal lives.

How Does It Work?

TLG trains 2 - 10 volunteers who are part of the church with some experience of working with children either at home, church or work, to become Behaviour Coaches. Coaches then work one-to-one with a child within a local primary school.

The initial coaching sessions are for 12 weeks, with potential for the support to be extended, or new sessions established with another child. The role involves building relationships with parents/carers and creating opportunities to support them directly.

For this programme the church appoints a co-ordinator who will lead the volunteers and ensure that the team is running well. TLG works closely with the co-ordinator and helps in all management aspects, so that the programme has the maximum impact.

Stringent safeguarding practice is at the heart of the partnership to ensure suitability of those supporting children and young people.

Costs

The full cost of the programme is £300 per partnership per month. TLG will directly fund £100 per month per church partnership. The ongoing costs for the church are therefore £200 per month for a programme.

The costs cover:

- All initial and refresher training for the volunteers and the co-ordinator.
- Advice and resources necessary to establish the partnership with local schools.
- Full management support for the co-ordinator, ensuring that the programme's long term effectiveness.
- Full use of the portfolio of TLG materials, resources and approaches needed to carry out the programme.
- Peer support/learning from coaches and mentors through attendance at an annual TLG conference.

Partnership

Lasting impact in the lives of children, young people and their families, comes from long term engagement and support. Similarly, over the longer term there is a tremendous opportunity to build a productive partnership with local schools. TLG therefore expects an early intervention partnership to be for at least a year. In turn TLG expects a similar commitment from volunteers, due to the high costs of initial training, and the value of continuity.



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The Lighthouse Group (TLG) is a Christian charity that works with young people who have been excluded from school, at risk of exclusion or are at crisis point in their education.

Its vision is to help teenagers that are growing up in some of the toughest circumstances. By combining education with personal development they address behavioural difficulties and the issues that have put a young person in crisis. Its purpose is work with those who are missing out - not only on an education but, more often than not, a childhood.

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Yardley Wood Baptist Church is working with TLG to set up an education centre, which will seek to support schools and young people in our neighbourhood. Minister Trevor Neill tells about the vision to support young people in this way:

'Over the last year, we've been reflecting as a church on how we can best express God's love, and the values of his Kingdom, to the area we're situated in. Yardley Wood is a suburb on the outskirts of Birmingham, part of the ward of Billesley. Having considered a range of needs, we found ourselves drawn to the particular problem of the disengaged young people in our community, who see little prospect for their future. 41.8% of adults in Billesley have no qualifications, and the average number of children achieving 5 or more GCSEs at Grades A*- C (including Maths and English) at the schools in the area are 47% compared with the national average of 65%.

'After several Church Meetings when we reflected on this issue, in July 2011 we voted to sign a partnership agreement with TLG, and we hope to open the doors of the South East Birmingham Education Centre after February half-term, in 2012. Throughout the time of seeking God on this issue, we were genuinely impressed with TLG's values, as well as their willingness to listen to our story, so that the vision of an Education Centre in Yardley Wood could be 'birthed' and not imposed. We're now beginning the process of renovations to our church buildings and hope to recruit a Centre Manager in October 2011.



'We will work with 12 pupils a week, those who are unable to access the full provision of education and support services. This could be as a result of exclusion, truancy, behavioural difficulties, school-phobia, mental or other illness, lack of parental support, family breakdown, bereavement, peer pressure and other related issues. Through one-to-one mentoring and intensive support, we hope these young people will be able to gain GCSE equivalent qualifications, develop their confidence, aspirations and social skills and reintegrate into mainstream education, training or employment.

'In Jeremiah 29, the prophet famously mandates the exiled Jewish community in Babylon to, 'seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.' Our prayer is that as lives are turned round through our TLG centre, we will discover the work to be one which benefits our whole community, and a blessing our church comes to share in the fullness of time.'

Follow the journey at www.ywbc.org.uk



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