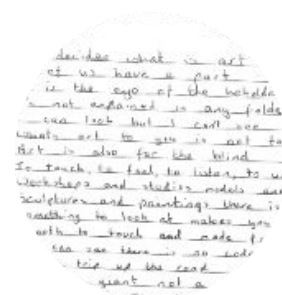


KOESTLER ARTS



ARTS MENTORING PROJECT INFORMATION

This document contains information on

- Koestler Arts
- The Mentoring Projects
- How the Scheme Operates: aims, objectives, mentees
- How the Scheme Operates: mentors, matching
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About Koestler Arts

Koestler Arts is the UK's best-known prison arts charity that awards, exhibits and sells artworks by (ex) prisoners, secure patients & detainees. The Koestler Awards were founded in 1962 by the writer Arthur Koestler (1905-83), who was a political prisoner on 3 occasions. Now based in the former governor's house at HMP Wormwood Scrubs, the scheme receives over 7,000 entries a year from a variety of criminal justice establishments across the UK - prisons, young offender institutions, probation teams, secure units, immigration removal centres and secure mental health facilities.

The awards cover 52 artforms including:

- Calligraphy
- Ceramics
- Craft
- Drawing
- Graphic Design
- Magazine Design
- Music & Performance
- Needlecraft/Textiles
- Painting
- Pastels
- Photography
- Playwriting for radio/stage/TV
- Poetry
- Pottery
- Prose - Fiction & Non-Fiction
- Sculpture
- Spoken Word
- Watercolour painting

Experts from these different fields voluntarily judge the entries, giving feedback to the entrants and awarding nearly a quarter of entries cash prizes from £20 to £100. Through unique curating projects, about 200 artworks are selected for our annual exhibition in London. We have also held exhibitions of work from Scottish establishments and each year hold exhibitions in different NOMS prison regions. If the artists choose, we also offer to sell the works on their behalf - raising over £20,000 for entrants every year.

Our aims as a charity:

- To help prisoners, secure patients and detainees lead more positive lives by motivating them to participate and achieve in the arts.
- To increase public awareness and understanding of arts by prisoners, secure patients & detainees.
- To be a dynamic, responsive organisation which achieves excellent quality and value for money.

The Mentoring Project is one of the key initiatives aimed at meeting the first of these objectives.

The Mentoring Projects

The Koestler Awards have a powerful impact on our entrant's self-esteem, and we have informally supported many individuals to go on to careers as writers and painters. In 2007, we piloted an innovative form of support to address the transition from custody into the community through our arts mentoring scheme. Building on the success of this mentoring programme, we wish to provide continued support to people who have been involved in the criminal justice system and who have an interest in the arts.

Koestler Mentors are experienced artists, writers, producers and craftspeople who are trained by Koestler Arts to provide support to someone who has been involved in the criminal justice system, some mentors have had direct experience themselves. They work on a one-to-one basis with mentees to help them identify the goals they would like to achieve in the arts and have regular mentoring sessions to realise these.

Common Arts Mentoring Goals

- Applying to further education,
- Familiarisation with the local arts community
- Building an arts portfolio,
- Identifying with arts opportunities,
- Disseminating/exhibiting work.

We ask mentees to commit to having approximately 7-10 mentoring sessions with their mentor over a 12- month period.

The Potential Benefits of Mentoring:

For individual ex-prisoners:

- continued enjoyment of arts
- reduced isolation
- high self-esteem
- employable skills
- reduced offending

For organisations:

- for prisons and probation, a new option for resettling prisoners
- for the arts, new professional skills in supporting prisoners, and the accessing of arts opportunities

For communities:

- ex-prisoners' families proud of their achievements
- ex-prisoners able to contribute to community activities
- reduced crime

For policy:

- researched evidence and a service model to feed into:
- Home Office policy on offender management and rehabilitation
- Arts policy on inclusion of marginalised groups

How the Scheme Operates

Aims:

The mentoring scheme run by Koestler Arts seeks to deliver arts input, shaped to the needs of people involved in the criminal justice system, that empowers them to continue with their arts-based activities.

Project objectives:

- To deliver a high-quality, replicable model of arts mentoring for ex-prisoners, detainees and secure patients
- To recruit volunteers from different arts fields trained in supporting individuals
- To engage a reasonably representative sample of offenders in the arts mentoring
- To ensure that the mentees needs are met holistically by integrating the arts mentoring with other resettlement services
- To focus the mentoring on continued participation in the arts, while also supporting wider benefits
- To commission a thorough independent evaluation of the project
- To disseminate the findings to contribute to improved policy and practice

The Mentees

In order to be considered for mentoring by Koestler Arts, applicants need to:

- 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, secure mental health facility, be held in an immigration removal centre or have previously served a custodial or community-based sentence.
- Demonstrate **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. Koestler Scholarship Mentees will have won a Koestler award or awards, and we will ask the award judges to highlight particularly talented entrants.
- 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. We will include applicants with some high levels of need - partly because such needs often lead to some dynamic artistic creativity. We will do this through **partnership with other resettlement services** that can meet mentees social needs while the Koestler mentor focuses on the arts. But we don't want to set the mentees up to fail. There will be some artistically talented individuals who cannot make use of the mentoring because they pose too much of a risk to themselves or to others, or because their lives are simply too chaotic.
- To identify these individuals, the Koestler project staff will seek references from either the prison Offender Supervisor or community Offender Manager, or another professional referee who has worked with the mentee.
- 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.

The Mentors

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 days' initial training and a third day consolidation work two months later which allows for mentors to meet with their mentee in the interim period.

Mentors work to a strict set of policies and procedures specifically developed for the project, to ensure that mentors and mentees work within agreed parameters. These policies set out clear boundaries, so that mentors do not get over-involved with the mentee they work with or create a dependency relationship.

All Mentors are DBS checked and two written references are obtained for them. They receive ongoing supervision from project staff and have access to quarterly group support meetings with their fellow mentors.

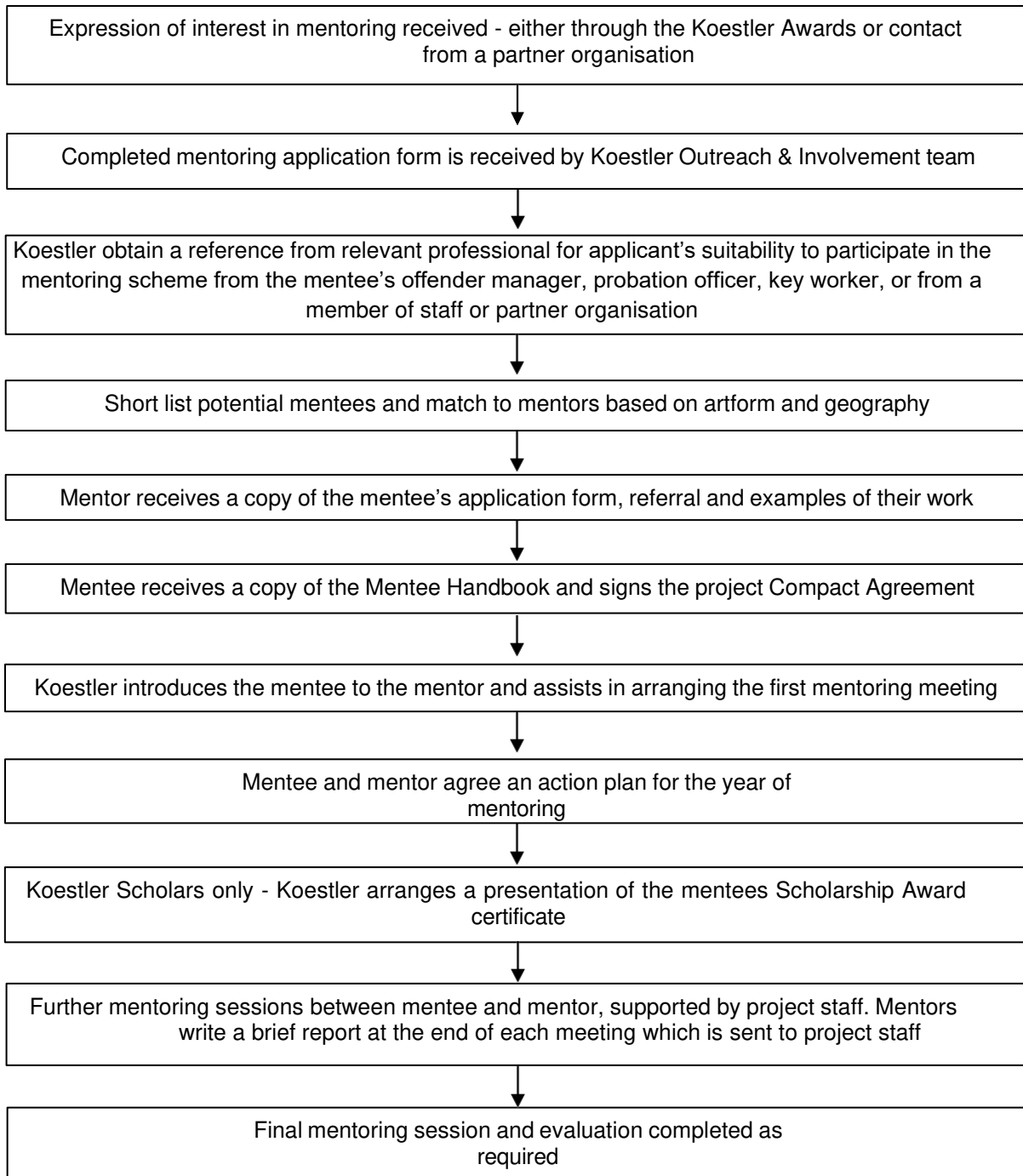
Matching

In the matching of mentees and mentors, the project staff will also consider some additional factors:

- **Age** - We have no upper or lower age limit for mentoring. The Koestler Awards include special prizes for under-18s, which will help us identify teenage candidates for mentoring. We are willing to work with 16-18-year-olds who are being released from Young Offender Institutions. Inclusion of any under 16s being released from Secure Units will depend on the skills of the mentors in working with teenagers and will need to be dovetailed very carefully with the Care Plan and statutory schooling for the individual young people.
- **Art form** - we recruit a wide range of mentors across a variety of art forms in which Koestler Awards cover. However, there may be times when we are unable to support a mentee's artistic development in a niche category.
- **Gender & ethnicity** - It is unlikely that mentees will form a cohort exactly representative of prison population diversity, but we endeavour to ensure that a proportion of the mentees are women or from minority ethnic groups.
- **Geography** - we work across the UK. However, at present mentoring is on offer to those who are currently serving their sentence or due to resettle in England and Wales. Depending on the location of the mentors, it may be necessary to place further limits on travel time and expenses.
- **Length of sentence** - we have previously placed restrictions on who can apply to the mentoring scheme, but we are now able to work with anyone who has been involved in the criminal justice system, regardless of the length of their sentence.

The Mentoring Journey

The below table is designed to show you each of the different stages of the mentoring relationship.



The Mentoring Sessions

Participants on the mentoring pathway will receive between 7 to 10 mentoring sessions over a 12-month period. Mentees and mentors will agree to this commitment prior to their first meeting. This model of support is based on our previous experience.

The first mentoring session usually takes place in the community, but in some cases it may take place while the mentee is still in custody so that the mentor can help them include arts activity in their plans for release, or it may take place. The mentor and mentee will confirm 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 mentor will not set goals for the mentoring but support mentees to set some realistic goals for themselves - e.g. to visit 2 art galleries, to finish 2 sculptures and to submit one of them to a local art competition. However, we will expect the goals to be centred on:

- participation in the arts, aiming to build mentee's confidence and skills;
- activities which are local and accessible enough for the mentee to continue with them after mentoring has ended.

Whenever appropriate to the mentees' needs and views, the mentors encourage further training, education, voluntary or paid work in the arts.

After the first meeting, the following mentoring sessions can last up to half a day each but will be generally about 3 hours at a mutually agreed 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

At or before the last mentoring session, mentor and mentee will reflect on how far they have achieved their goals, consider the next steps for the mentee, and complete evaluation forms.

Partner organisations

For the Koestler mentoring to be able to focus on arts activity, it is crucial that the mentees' practical, social and emotional needs are met largely from elsewhere. It is not possible to secure this help from one agency, because the provision is extremely varied across the country. We will assess the needs and support available for each potential mentee on a case-by-case basis.

At the planning stage we expect there to be 3 main points at which the scheme will seek to identify mentees' non-arts needs and ensure that they are met: -

(i) Selection of mentees. Information from a referee - where applicable this should be an offender supervisor or probation officer, but can be completed by any other professional the applicant proposes. The reference will confirm one of the following:

- that the individual poses too great a risk to themselves or to others to participate in the mentoring - in which case Koestler will not pursue;
- that the applicant is not receiving any special professional input (i.e. they have strong personal resources and good family or community support) - in which case Koestler can proceed directly to offer arts mentoring;
- that the applicant needs particular services to help them resettle - in which case Koestler will offer the mentoring, making clear it will be planned and provided in close partnership with the other support services.

(ii) Planning for resettlement. Koestler Arts will ensure that the art mentoring is included in the plan and will contact the other service providers, to explain Koestler's role and to agree on procedures for communication and joint working. In complex cases, project staff may attend a meeting with the applicant and the other professionals prior to matching.

Where the statutory resettlement system is unable to provide enough support, Koestler staff may refer directly to other agencies to seek support for an applicant. The mentoring will go ahead only when Project staff is satisfied that the mentee's non-arts needs can be met.

(iii) During the mentoring. Once the mentoring begins, responsibility for communication with partner agencies will usually transfer from the project staff to the mentor. From the resettlement plan, the mentor will know the other agencies involved in the case and will keep in contact through regular phone calls and emails, or in complex cases through review meetings, e.g. to avoid clashes of appointments, to hear of any changed circumstances, and to report on progress or concerns. At the end of the mentoring, the mentor and/or the project staff will produce a brief written report summarising the outcomes for the mentee and their future plans for participation in the arts.

Training of the mentors includes a grounding in how to recognise major non-arts needs - e.g. around housing, drug use or mental health - and where to seek help. Mentors also have regular support and supervision from Project staff to help them monitor mentees' progress holistically. In these ways, the mentors are equipped and supported to deal with any non-arts needs that emerge after the initial planning.

How the project is staffed and managed

The Mentoring Scheme is operated by the Outreach & Involvement team at Koestler:

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Registered Charity No. 1105759

How Mentoring activities are funded

In 2007 the Trust received funding from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation to develop the pilot mentoring scheme, and in 2013 received 18 months' worth of funding from the Cabinet Office Rehabilitation Social Action Fund to develop its Mentoring further. In 2016 the project's future was secured for the next three years with of funding from Lloyds and The Henry Smith Foundation. In 2019 we were able to continue the project with funding from the Monday Charitable Trust. The project is currently funded through support from individual donors and charitable trusts, e.g. through our Name an Award scheme to support a number of named Scholarship Awards.

Evaluation

Koestler Arts integrated into the pilot mentoring scheme an evaluation which aimed to demonstrate that the arts can have wide-ranging benefits for people involved in the criminal justice system and their communities - potentially reducing re-offending. The research was undertaken over 6 years by Dr Leonidas Cheliotis and the results of the research were launched in Spring 2014 as 'The Arts of Desistance' Dr Leonidas Cheliotis, London School of Economics.

"The ex-offender mentees developed greater confidence in their abilities, became more driven to achieve success, conceptualised their future in ways opposed to crime, and increased their expectations of staying free from crime. These are all very important outcomes, given that the way individuals think and talk about themselves shapes their future behaviour."

The research found long-term positive effects on the mentored offenders, especially pro-social attitudes that reduce the likelihood of reoffending. Unemployment among the sample group fell from 50% to 33%. Of the total of 94 mentees, 68% had been in prison for serious violent or sexual offences; 14% were known to have reoffended or been recalled to prison during or since their arts mentoring.

Koestler Arts continues to evaluate the effectiveness of the mentoring opportunities it provides in two ways, through external evaluation and through in-house evaluation tools.

Koestler's own in-house monitoring and evaluating of the project are done by carrying out telephone interviews with mentees at two key stages: at the start and at the end of the mentoring. Koestler will also record hard data around how many people apply to the scheme, how many people go on to be mentored, how often they meet with their mentor, and how long mentoring sessions last. This is to help Koestler monitor the projects performance and is also part of the reporting requirement for our funder.

We also continue to work with external evaluators, most recently with Dr Liz Yadley, Professor of Criminology at Birmingham City University, who helped us to assess the social impact of the mentoring scheme upon the people that we support.

All research and our annual reviews and impact statements can be found [here](#).

Film

Koestler Arts commissioned a [film to help explain and promote the mentoring programme to future mentees, mentors and funders](#). The film explains the journey of a mentee that is starting out through to mentee that has attained a higher level with the programme.