

Part A - General Information

Organisation

Colyton Foundation

Organisation Type/Structure

Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)

Theme/Nature of Project

Social Mobility

Charity Registration Number (if applicable)

1206838

Company/CIC Registration Number (if applicable)

Colyton Foundation

Project Name (if same as Organisation Name, please leave this blank)

Your Future Story

Name of Lead Contact

Nick Wakeling

How did you find out about the Awards?

Other (feel free to specify above)

Website

<https://www.colytonfoundation.org/>

Social Media Handles (Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram etc):

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/colytonfoundation/>

Part B - Project Proposal

Project Mission: A snapshot of the project's intention (50 words max)

Your Future Story will keep 1,000 under-resourced young people from the South West of England on the pathway to high tariff higher education. Through sustained support from Year 7 onwards, it enables high attainment, fosters aspiration, and builds strong peer networks to overcome educational isolation and drive forward social mobility.

Situation (250 words)

The South West of England faces entrenched educational inequalities, particularly for children from under-resourced backgrounds. Despite high potential at primary school, many of these young people fall behind their peers nationally as they progress through education. National data reveals that just 18.7% of FSM (Free School Meals) pupils in the South West progress to higher education, the lowest rate in England, with a stark drop to only 3.1% reaching high-tariff universities (compared to 13.6% in Inner London).

This pattern begins early. Although some children achieve well at Key Stage 2, the region's disadvantaged high prior attainers see an average GCSE Progress 8 score of -0.8, one of the worst nationally. Factors such as rural isolation, limited school resources, and lack of access to enrichment opportunities exacerbate the problem. Many children lack exposure to role models, career insights, and clear pathways to prestigious higher education routes.

Furthermore, outreach activities by universities and charities predominantly target urban centres, leaving rural pupils under-served. Schools struggle to prioritise high prior attainers, as Pupil Premium funding is often focused on later-stage interventions (Key Stage 4) rather than the critical transition period of Key Stage 3. Without early, sustained support, these promising students risk losing both attainment momentum and aspiration.

The current landscape underscores the need for a long-term, upstream intervention that bridges aspiration and attainment gaps from an early secondary stage, sustaining support through to university entry.

Complication (250 words)

The South West is a "special case" in social mobility terms, burdened by compounding challenges of educational isolation, rural deprivation, and low progression rates to higher education. Even among high-attaining pupils at age 11, a sharp decline in aspiration, mental health, and academic engagement is observed by age 14.

This troubling trend is not due to lack of talent, but structural barriers:

- Sparse networks of peers pursuing similar ambitions leave high achievers feeling isolated.
- Under-resourced schools, especially in rural areas, struggle to provide targeted support or specialist teaching.
- Access to cultural capital—university visits, employer experiences, and informed guidance—is limited by geography and funding.

Moreover, interventions often arrive too late. Studies show that by the time disadvantaged students reach Year 11, many aspirations have faded, constrained by a lack of exposure and declining attainment. Early engagement is critical: evidence suggests only 12% of students access outreach before Year 9.

Compounding these factors is a national neglect of the region's needs in funding and policy focus. Existing programmes, while well-intentioned, are fragmented and short-term, failing to build the sustained, cohort-based support systems required.

However, this bleak reality presents a unique opportunity. The Your Future Story programme recognises the potential for transformation by intervening early and staying the course. By nurturing a sense of belonging, providing consistent academic and aspirational support, and embedding schools and families into a strong support network, the programme aims to reverse this decline, creating lasting change.

Solution (250 words)

Your Future Story offers a bold, long-term solution: a 10-year, cohort-based programme designed to support 1,000 under-resourced, high-attaining students from Devon, Somerset, and Cornwall from Year 7 to university entry and beyond.

Central to the model are:

- School leadership development, creating long-term sustainable system change: a school leader from each participating school takes part in a sustained professional development programme focussed on improving high attainer provision at each school,
- Teacher Champions in every participating school, trained to mentor students, monitor progress, and maintain high expectations.
- Enrichment experiences, including university residentials, employer visits, and supra-curricular personal development.
- Family engagement, building parental understanding of university pathways and cultivating a shared ambition for progression.

The programme's cohort structure fosters peer belonging, combating the isolation typical in rural and coastal settings. Participants form supportive relationships through shared experiences, mutual encouragement, and ongoing interaction over eight years.

The programme is backed by a powerful coalition: leading universities (Bristol & Cambridge,), charities (including the Sutton Trust), and educational bodies (Colyton Grammar School, South West Institute for Teaching, Leading Schools South West). These partnerships provide expertise, resources, and credibility, ensuring high-impact delivery and sustainable growth.

From September 2025 we will support a pathfinder cohort of students. Robust evaluation of the programme's impact will unlock further funding to sustain these pupils to university entry and recruit additional cohorts. By keeping the pathway to high-tariff higher education open, Your Future Story will transform individual lives and regional prospects, setting a national example of effective, place-based intervention.

Part C - Wider Support

A key part of the value of being shortlisted for, or winning, an award is the network of partners that becomes available to help you. With that in mind, how would the Stephen Lloyd Award network of partners' support be beneficial to your project? (250 words max)

As a young and ambitious charity, the Colyton Foundation has a bold mission: to create a South West where background is no barrier to higher education. While we have strong expertise in education delivery and have successfully secured early programme funding from leading universities and charitable partners, our experience in strategic growth and diversified fundraising is still developing. To scale Your Future Story from a pilot to a programme supporting 1,000 under-resourced children across the South West, we recognise the need to build our organisational capacity quickly and sustainably.

The Stephen Lloyd Awards network would be invaluable in accelerating this growth. We would particularly benefit from access to specialist support in fundraising strategy development, to diversify income streams and build longer-term funding pipelines. Business planning expertise would help us to refine our scaling model, ensuring robust financial sustainability as we expand cohorts annually. Legal advice could assist with partnership agreements and safeguarding considerations, and mentoring from experienced leaders in social ventures would offer invaluable external challenge and guidance as we transition from start-up to scale-up.

Additionally, introductions to corporate partners and funders within the network could unlock new avenues of financial support and in-kind contributions, helping us to build a diverse coalition backing the Foundation. We are eager not only to receive guidance but to share our learning about rural educational inequality. Our HE partners have indicated that our approach could be replicated in regions with similar contextual factors.

Part D - Financial Justification

How do you propose to spend the winning funds of £25,000 (50 words max). Please provide a general idea.

We will invest in fundraising and strategic development capacity to scale Your Future Story beyond the pilot phase, enabling us to secure new funding, build organisational infrastructure, and expand support to additional cohorts of under-resourced children across the South West.

Part E - Supporting Information

Governing Documents: Where relevant, please upload any recent charity accounts and governing documents as attachments.

- [Management-Accounts-Aug-24-and-governing-doc.pdf](#)

Team: We would like to learn a little more about the individual or team invested into the project. What are your individual credentials? Is there a story behind how you or your team all came together to support the project? (75 words max)

The Colyton Foundation grew from Colyton Grammar School's drive to tackle educational inequality in the South West. Headteacher Tim Harris, a former free school meals pupil, has championed making the school accessible to all and contributing to system-wide improvement through the Colyton Teaching School Hub. Inspired by the Reach Foundation's SW100 leadership programme, Nick Wakeling, Director of Studies, led the creation of the Foundation to harness local expertise and networks into a growing regional movement.

YouTube Video, if you'd like to add one

<https://www.colytonfoundation.org/yfsvideo.html>

Additional References: You are welcome to provide a list of up to 5 links with any relevant supporting material or visuals, as further reference

Colyton Foundation Theory of Change:
https://www.colytonfoundation.org/uploads/1/5/0/9/150998610/colyton_foundation_theory_of_change.pdf

Your Future Story Theory of Change:
https://www.colytonfoundation.org/uploads/1/5/0/9/150998610/your_future_story_theory_of_change.pdf

Your Future Story Programme Overview:
https://www.colytonfoundation.org/uploads/1/5/0/9/150998610/you_future_story_-_programme_details.pdf