

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY: Bridging Divides - Positive Transitions**Blind in Business Charitable Trust****Adv: Geraldine Page****Base: City****Amount requested: £84,000****Benefit: London-wide****Amount recommended: £84,000****The Applicant**

Blind in Business (BiB) is a national charity based in the City whose main activity is to help blind and visually impaired (BVI) graduates to obtain employment, but it also supports employees diagnosed with sight loss to remain in employment. The charity advises employers on recruitment and on-the-job support for BVI staff and engages them in events to acquaint users with their staff selection processes. Since 1992 BiB have helped on average 90-120 young people (16-25yrs) in London each year, towards education or employment.

The Application

In November 2015 you awarded BiB £98,700 over 3 years towards the salary costs of an Employment Manager and Life Coach who supports BVI young people throughout their journey to employment. This application is for a further 2 years' continuation funding, which is allowed under your Bridging Divides programme.

The Recommendation

BiB's recent 3-year grant which came to an end in December 2018 has been very successful and exceeded targets. BiB has a track record of helping its very disadvantaged users to obtain rewarding jobs with high quality employers. This project fits well with your Positive Transitions programme outcomes and priorities, hence funding is recommended:

£84,000 over two further years (2x £42,000) for the full-time cost of the Employment Manager and a contribution towards Life Coaching to support Blind and Visually Impaired Young Londoners (16-25) into employment.

Funding History

Meeting Date	Decision
26/11/2015	£98,700 over three years (3 x £32,900), towards 70% of the inclusive salary costs of a full-time Employment Manager (£27,900) and 11% of the inclusive salary costs of a full-time Life Coach Manager (£5,000).

Background and detail of proposal

Blind and partially sighted young people are among the most disadvantaged groups in our society. 90% of those who lose their sight in youth won't work for more than six months in their lives and nearly 70% of blind and partially sighted young people are living on the poverty line. Sight accounts for 80% of all learning and being blind affects the skills development of young people. Sight loss impairs people's ability to learn from experience and reduces their exposure to age typical experiences. This means they often come to the job market with less maturity and experience than

their sighted peers. This is compounded by the fact that employers are generally unreceptive to offering blind young people long term opportunities, based on perceptions that they won't be able to deliver the work effectively, or that they would need continuous intensive support. Technological advances enable BVI people to do almost any job, but they need support and confidence to compete for vacancies. BiB supports graduates through all aspects of securing a job, while 20 alumni in banking, law, and other professions enhance this work by volunteering as inspirational role models. BiB also advises employers on the skills needed to support BVI employees to succeed in their jobs. The charity has extensive contacts in the City (including with employers such as Bank of England, PWC, Allen and Overy, and others) who engage in events to skill up BVI job hunters to present their skills, potential, and capabilities to prospective employers. BVI people face significant barriers to employment so it is notable that nearly 60% of BiB's beneficiaries secured jobs in the last year.

Financial Information

BiB is funded by way of general appeals to charitable donors and trusts and is reliant on grant income. Its finances are stable, and reserves are in a healthy position, however BiB are in the process of moving offices due to the sale of the building they occupy. The cost of the move is circa £20,000 which will have to be funded from the unrestricted reserves in the next few months. The cost of the move has been factored into the expenditure budget for 2019 and despite this it will remain close to their free reserves target.

Year end as at 31 March			
	Examined Accounts 2017	Examined 2018	Budget 2019
	£	£	£
Income & expenditure:			
Income	181,560	250,308	200,611
- % of Income confirmed as at 16/11/18	n/a	100%	40%
Expenditure	(193,863)	(199,003)	(272,851)
Total surplus/(deficit)	(12,303)	51,305	(72,240)
Split between:			
- Restricted surplus/(deficit)	4,305	55,273	(32,448)
- Unrestricted surplus/(deficit)	(16,608)	(3,968)	(39,792)
	(12,303)	51,305	(72,240)
Cost of Raising Funds	30,851	30,203	30,203
- % of Income	17.0%	12.1%	15.1%
Operating expenditure (unrestricted funds)	101,805	99,008	143,453
Free unrestricted reserves:			
Free unrestricted reserves held at year end	127,551	115,704	75,912
No of months of operating expenditure	15.0	14.0	6.4
Reserves policy target	76,354	74,256	53,806
No of months of operating expenditure	9.0	9.0	4.5
Free reserves over/(under) target	51,197	41,448	22,106