

MEETING: 31/01/2019

Ref: 14920

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY: Bridging Divides - Positive Transitions

Clean Break Theatre

Adv: Gilly Green

Base: Camden

Amount requested: £150,000

Benefit: London-wide

Amount recommended: £150,000

The Applicant

Clean Break (CB) is a women's theatre company (and charity) founded in 1979 by two women prisoners at HMP Askam Grange who believed that theatre could bring the hidden stories of imprisoned women to a wider audience. Forty years on, the organisation delivers high quality arts-based performance to the public and runs the Members Programme - a theatre-based education and training programme to help women with direct experience of the criminal justice system gain employment and reintegrate into the community. Through its theatre and arts based performance CB continues to raise awareness of issues concerning women in prison.

The Application

Clean Break's Education Programme delivered to women offenders over the past 20 years has combined women-only performance and theatre skills, literacy and personal support. Outside of the performance skills much of the programme was delivered in partnership with mainstream colleges. A comprehensive review in 2017 revealed that many women struggled with the college format, and the revised approach known as the Members Programme launched in 2018. It focuses more on helping women develop skills for employment in the theatre and performing arts, as well as providing one to one support for participants, many of whom are dealing with complex issues such as substance issues, mental health distress, domestic abuse housing and immigration problems. It also now provides regular health and wellbeing sessions and specialist advice surgeries around benefits, domestic abuse and legal advice. Women participants also play a more central role in Clean Break's core artistic work (e.g. productions, artist-engagement). The programme is overseen by the Head of Participation, a critical new senior management role to emerge from the review. This core role has lead responsibility for the Members Programme, including member engagement in the company and theatre productions, as well as representing the organisation externally within the criminal justice sector and leading on employment partnerships and other community-based projects. The application seeks support for this post for three years.

The Recommendation

Clean Break is a unique organisation with a strong track record in supporting women who would often be unable to reintegrate into society without this level of trauma-informed, highly specialist support along with real opportunity for employment and further education. It meets the aims of your Positive Transitions priority by helping women reduce reoffending and resettle back in the community. A grant is advised:

£150,000 over three years (3 x £50,000) for the salary and on-costs of a f/t Head of Participation within the Members Programme.

Funding History

Meeting Date	Decision
12/03/2015	Application withdrawn with a view of resubmitting at a later stage.
18/02/2010	£114,000 over three years (£37,000, £38,000, £39,000) towards the costs of a Student Support Manager providing advice and support to women ex-offenders in London.

Background and detail of proposal

Clean Break has been through a major organisational review prompted by significant financial challenges in 2016/17 and feedback on services from women members. The process was comprehensive, inclusive and outward looking and has resulted in a stronger organisation with a clearer purpose. Approximately 70 women will join the programme each year and will participate in a two-year structured series of theatre workshops, delivered over three seasons building performance and artistic skills with the aim of preparing women to engage with Clean Break's public facing work. Aspects of the course also includes stage management, creative writing and production, links with professional artists and writers in residence and matching members with mentors. Personal support will include one to one casework and counselling, referrals to specialist services, and health and wellbeing sessions. Literacy and numeracy support will continue to be offered by mainstream colleges where required. Women previously engaged on the programme have reported improved self-confidence and self-esteem, skills development, improved health and wellbeing and desistance from offending. Numbers on the programme are relatively small but given that many participants have highly complex needs the intensity of support required is high. CB anticipates that more women will find employment through the new programme and part of a recent grant from the Lottery to support the Members Programme will enable CB to review its approach to monitoring and evaluation and improve evidence of the effectiveness of its work.

Financial Information

CB's financial model is based on earned income from performances, substantive four-year core funding from the Arts Council and a range of grants from trusts and foundations. Diversity of income sources is a strength, although each year the organisation starts with a substantial fundraising target. There remains approximately £250,000 to raise in this financial year but the organisation is confident of achieving this through performance income and grant applications currently in the pipeline with decisions due February 2019 and looking hopeful (at stage 2) amounting to over £200,000. The budget for the Members Programme is £379,714 per year and this includes the Head of Participation role. A grant of £475,000 over 4 years from Big Lottery Fund provides a significant contribution towards the overall programme budget but this does not cover the Head of Participation role. The level of free reserves is under target, but Trustees have put in place a plan to bring these in line with their policy of 3 months free reserves by 2022. Figures indicate they are heading in the right direction.

Year end as at 31 MARCH			
	Audited accounts 2017 £	Audited accounts 2018 £	Forecast 2019 £
Income & expenditure:			
Income	1,144,590	996,824	1,272,820
- % of Income confirmed as at January 2019	n/a	n/a	78%
Expenditure	1,248,356	(1,011,086)	(1,246,878)
Total surplus/(deficit)	(103,766)	(14,262)	25,942
Split between:			
- Restricted surplus/(deficit)	(14,524)	(12,857)	0
- Unrestricted surplus/(deficit)	(89,242)	(1,405)	25,942
	(103,766)	(14,262)	25,942
Cost of Raising Funds			
Cost of Raising Funds	132,116	107,113	116,358
- % of Income	11.5%	10.7%	9.1%
Operating expenditure (unrestricted funds)	721,371	646,430	678,927
Free unrestricted reserves:			
Free unrestricted reserves held at year end	66,830	71,251	97,194
No of months of operating expenditure	1.0	1.3	1.7
Reserves policy target	180,342	161,607	169,731
No of months of operating expenditure	3.0	3.0	3.0
Free reserves over/(under) target	(113,512)	(90,356)	(72,537)

