

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY: Bridging Divides - Positive Transitions

INQUEST Charitable Trust

Adv: Shegufta Slawther

Base: Islington

Amount requested: £283,328

Benefit: London-wide

Amount recommended: £283,300

The Applicant

INQUEST Charitable Trust (ICT) was founded in 1981 and registered as a charity in 1995. It is the only charity in the UK which offers specialist legal, practical and emotional support to families bereaved as a result of state-related death. ICT's mission is to end deaths caused by unsafe systems of detention, the use of force, a lack of care, and by multi-agency failures. Where death has occurred, it ensures families are supported and the investigation process enables them to secure justice. The organisation also works to influence policy through generating fundamental and far-reaching change in the systems of care, and the investigation, inquest and prosecutorial processes.

The Application

The request is for the post of a Senior Caseworker to support London-based bereaved families. The postholder will support family members in the very first stages following a death and through the protracted process of the investigation and inquest, as well as through the various stages of traumatic bereavement. The service will range from providing families with information and legal representation to sourcing out counselling and other services specific to their needs, and planning and co-hosting family forums and the family reference group, the Caseworker will be a key source of support and information to London-based families experiencing such isolating and traumatic events.

The Recommendation

ICT has demonstrated its impact in improvements in the investigation and inquest processes and the support offered to bereaved families. Notable past work includes: the provision of expert evidence to numerous government reviews such as the *Corston Report* into vulnerable women in prisons; support to bereaved families and their lawyers through the historic Hillsborough inquests in 2016 which concluded an unlawful killing finding for the first time and exonerated both survivors and those who died; and current work assisting bereaved families and survivors of the Grenfell Tower fire in navigating the complex issues around the Inquiry.

£283,300 over five years (£54,400, £55,500, £56,800, £57,700, £58,900) for the salary and on-costs of a full-time Senior Caseworker (London).

Funding History

None

Background and detail of proposal

The Caseworker will be integral to bereaved families feeling supported, advised, empowered and more able to cope and adapt. Each family will be supported on the immediate steps following a death, and on the investigation and inquest process

through advice and support. Families will receive support at a critical time of trauma, isolation, confusion and stigmatisation. They will be supported in key meetings and inquest hearings, alongside the provision of high quality and expert legal representation, or a legally informed casework if legal representation cannot be secured. ICT is committed to ensuring that the voice and wishes of the family are listened to and inform every process taking place as a result of the death; whether it is during the inquest or in subsequent systemic change work.

In 2018 the charity supported the families of 201 London-based death cases. 37 of these had been prison cases, 45 following police contact, 59 in mental health settings, eight in immigration, and 54 other cases. Of these 54, 32 were Grenfell Tower fire families. As the only organisation in the UK to support bereaved families in such deaths, ICT recognises the need to provide holistic support to these families recognising the severely distressed and stigmatisations of such cases and the nature of traumatic bereavement. Their network and partnerships add value to the support families benefit from with the Inquest Lawyers Group of 298 lawyers to draw upon for expert legal representation.

Financial Information

The charity had significant fundraising costs in 2018 due to a gala fundraising dinner with lawyers. Your officer has explained the SORP requirement of apportioning the relevant staff time to this category of spend, which has not been captured below, but will be done by the charity moving forward. Although the 2020 budget shows a deficit leading to free unrestricted reserves falling below target, the charity has a number of funding applications to trusts and foundations to be submitted or pending decision.

Year end as at 31 March	2018 Accounts	2019 Draft	2020 Budget
Income & expenditure:			
Income	700,834	824,572	789,825
- % of income confirmed as at 08/04/2019	n/a	100%	84%
Expenditure	(661,744)	(815,890)	(878,456)
Total surplus/(deficit)	39,090	8,682	(88,631)
Split between:			
- Restricted surplus/(deficit)	18,437	0	0
- Unrestricted surplus/(deficit)	20,653	8,682	(88,631)
	39,090	8,682	(88,631)
Cost of Raising Funds	19,984	500	2,000
- % of income	2.9%	0.1%	0.3%
Operating expenditure (unrestricted funds)	394,159	340,390	295,000
Free unrestricted reserves:			
Free unrestricted reserves held at year end	118,418	127,100	38,469
No of months of operating expenditure	3.6	4.5	1.6
Reserves policy target	98,540	85,098	73,750
No of months of operating expenditure	3.0	3.0	3.0
Free reserves over/(under) target	19,878	42,003	(35,281)