

MEETING: 25/07/2019

Ref: 15247

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY: Bridging Divides - Connecting the Capital

Children England

Adv: Julla Mirkin

Amount requested: £60,748

Base: Camden

(Revised request: £279,521)

Benefit: London-wide

Amount recommended: £279,520

The Applicant

Children England (CE) describes itself as the voice for children's charities. Its mission is to 'change the world for England's children by harnessing the energy, ingenuity and expertise of the voluntary organisations that work on their behalf'. As a membership organisation, it supports, develops, networks and represents organisations involved with the care, support, education or the delivery of services for children, young people and families (CYPF). CE draws on expertise from its membership to identify emerging issues and to steer policy development; and it raises awareness through conferences, seminars and by commenting on Parliamentary papers and consultations.

In March 2013, CE ceased to be a strategic partner of the Department for Education, which resulted in an 80% drop in its income, impacting severely on its reserves in 2013/2014. CBT has supported CE since 2015, during which it has cut back its core team; streamlined its programmes and secured alternative sources of income.

The Application

CE's initial application for continuation funding requested funding for one additional year. However, during assessment, the group was advised that, as an infrastructure support organisation, it was eligible for five additional years funding under Bridging Divides. A revised proposal was submitted, which develops CE's approach and extends the proposed activities to cover a four-year period. However, as match-funding from Trust for London (TfL) will be considered in February 2020, activities in the first year aim to maintain the work of the 4In10 network; programme developments will commence in earnest if match-funding is secured from TfL. The delivery plan from year one onwards can be revisited if TfL funding is not awarded.

The Recommendation

This proposal is a strong fit to two of your priorities under the Connecting the Capital strand of Bridging Divides: it offers capacity-building support to civil society organisations, the priority under which the application is submitted. However, it also meets your Voice and Leadership priority, especially in the expanded four-year programme. This proposal also closely aligns with your mission to reduce inequality and two of your underpinning values: 'inclusion and representation' and 'collaborative working with Londoners and Communities'. You have invested in CE for the last four years, helping it to stabilise following withdrawal of DfE funding and in an increasingly challenging operating environment. Continuation funding now is an opportunity to support CE to develop and carve a place for itself in addressing the poverty faced by children, young people and families, for which there continues to be great need. As with your last grant to CE for the 4In10 network, the request includes more than one full-time equivalent post. A grant is advised:

£279,520 over four years (£40,340; £77,220; £79,720; £82,240) towards a F/t Research and Learning Manager and a P/t (0.6 FTE) Community Engagement Officer; 4In10 activities and resources and a contribution to overheads.

Funding History

Meeting Date	Decision
11/05/2017	£44,000 over one year as a contribution to the salaries to support the organisation's involvement in the Way Ahead process.
11/05/2017	£116,000 over two years for a f/t Research and Learning Officer and a p/t Network Membership Officer for the 4In10 programme.
28/01/2015	£104,000 over two years towards a P/t Membership Officer and a P/t Research and Learning Officer to support the 4 in 10 network.

Background and detail of proposal

4In10 is London's child poverty network. It shares knowledge with and develops the capacity of the organisations that work to address poverty amongst children, young people and families (CYPF). Gathering and building upon the learning from its members that work with migrant and BAMER communities, single-parents and families with disabilities, all of whom are greatly affected by poverty, is a focus for the development of the 4In10 network. A key feature of how CE proposes to develop 4In10 as part of this proposal is to establish structures through which its members shape the programme's content: with four years of continuation funding from both TfL and CBT, CE proposes to support and train the smallest organisations in its network to mobilise and articulate, clearly and effectively, how poverty affects the CYPF they represent. Virtual communities of interest will be established from 4In10's membership, creating a structure through which peer support will be offered on policy or practice-related issues. An advisory panel, comprising service-users, will be established, which will determine the content of the 4In10 programme, including the direction of its research; the programme of events and the content of its newsletter.

The Research and Learning Manager post will focus on the issues raised through the communities of interest; the service-user led panel and from 4In10's membership to shape the research element of 4In10's work. The newly developed Community Engagement Officer role will establish a closer and stronger connection between 4In10's members and the work of the core team. It will identify new and good practice amongst the 4In10 membership; forge new relationships and partnerships; mobilise communities of practice; programme training and encourage smaller member organisations to engage with advocacy work. During the four-year potential funding period, CE aims to diversify the membership of 4In10, so that it represents the BAMER and disabled communities and of single parents; it will identify new policy issues and it will develop its programme, including its training, research and communications products to meet the needs of its newly diversified membership.

Financial Information

In response to the challenging 2018/2019 financial year, CE's Board took the decision to use its reserves to maintain operations, allowing the charity to explore new funding relationships.

Early in 2019/2020, CE formed a new funding relationship with Esmee Fairbairn, from which it now receives £80K annually for the next three years. This grant provides a significant foundation for CE's core operational expenditure. Project delivery, such as that for 4In10, will depend on CE securing project funding, such as this funding request. During the remainder of 2019/2020, CE has plans to approach several Charitable Trusts to raise restricted income to cover programme costs, allowing all unrestricted income to be directed towards building reserves. At the time of writing, 80% of income for 2019/2020 had been secured.

Year end as at 31 MARCH	2018 Accounts	2019 Draft	2020 Budget
Income & expenditure:			
Income	356,365	299,227	391,748
Income confirmed as at 12/04/19	N/a	100%	80%
Expenditure	(368,258)	(340,123)	(385,982)
Realised Gains & Losses	1,848	7,128	0
Total surplus/(deficit)	(10,045)	(33,768)	5,786
Split between:			
- Restricted surplus/(deficit)	(9,327)	0	0
- Unrestricted surplus/(deficit)	(718)	(33,768)	5,786
	(10,045)	(33,768)	5,786
Cost of Raising Funds			
- % of income	1.9%	2.3%	1.7%
Operating expenditure (unrestricted funds)	212,810	225,123	252,714
Free unrestricted reserves:			
Free unrestricted reserves held at year end	60,340	26,572	32,358
No of months of operating expenditure	3.4	1.4	1.5
Reserves policy target	45,000	56,281	63,179
No of months of operating expenditure	2.5	3.0	3.0
Free reserves over/(under) target	15,340	(29,709)	(30,821)