

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY: Bridging Divides - Positive Transitions**Shpresa Programme****Amount requested: £51,961****Amount recommended: £52,000****Adv: Samantha Grimmett-Batt****Base: Newham****Benefit: Newham, Barking, Redbridge and Enfield.****The Applicant**

Shpresa Programme (known as Shpresa) is a registered charity which works with the Albanian-speaking community. It was established in 2003 to address the needs of people from Albania, Kosova and Macedonia who had fled persecution, claimed asylum and, as a new community, faced barriers to settling and integrating.

Today Shpresa offers a broad range of services to enable its service users to play a positive and active role in the communities in which they now live, with a focus on women, children and young people. Last year it supported over 200 women who were survivors of domestic violence and trafficking, had mental health needs, or were otherwise vulnerable. The charity has developed strong cross sectoral partnerships, including with Newham Adult Learning Services, and receives referrals from the Refugee Council, Hestia, Women's Aid, social services, and various solicitors, in addition to self-referrals. Shpresa fully facilitates participation, accompanying service users to appointments and placing Albanian speaking workers within already established services.

The Application

Albanian-speaking women often experience barriers to education due to cultural restrictions, gender inequality, lack of childcare, and illiteracy. Some face domestic violence and/or are prevented from accessing mainstream services, especially if the service is mixed gender. Shpresa is seeking a continuation grant of two years' funding to meet the cost of providing English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes to engage and support Albanian-speaking women, which it is qualified to deliver at entry level 1 and 2.

The Recommendation

Shpresa is an established and trusted organisation within the community and is well placed to provide this service. The charity has reported well on the initial grant. This work continues to be a good fit for your Positive Transitions priority and a grant is recommended:

£52,000 over two further and final years (2 x £26,000, £26,000) for the salary of a part-time (21 hpw) Development Worker plus project running costs, to provide ESOL classes for isolated and vulnerable Albanian-speaking women.

Funding History

Meeting Date	Decision
26/11/2015	£71,200 for the employment of a part-time (21 hpw) Development Worker & running costs to provide ESOL classes.
02/07/2009	£105,000 over 3 years towards a support programme for Albanian-speaking refugee women experiencing trauma.
14/02/2008	Declined as not sufficiently targeted.

Background and detail of proposal

The project will run for 40 weeks pa, with 40 women, delivering two classes per week in Newham, Barking, Redbridge and Enfield. Women accessing these services are often vulnerable and lacking in confidence so traveling too far away from home is a barrier to accessing services. These local sessions are therefore vital. The service will include a creche and internal referrals for support with education, training, volunteering and other services.

Financial Information

Reserves are increasing year on year but are predicted to reduce, in terms of number of months of operating expenditure, in 2020. The charity is aware of the need to maintain sufficient reserves and will continue to build them to 6 months of committed expenditure, as per their published policy. This is prudent given the reliance on restricted funds. Although the charity is strongly reliant on restricted income, this represents grants from a diverse range of funders. It also supplements its income by providing consultancy services.

The draft accounts for 2019 show a deficit on restricted funds of £91,670 which was covered by funds brought forward on 1st April 2018. The cost of raising funds was not reported in the 2018 accounts but will be accounted for in subsequent published accounts (2019 and 2020 amounts relate to the use of a fundraising consultant and 1 day per week of the CEO's time).

Year end as at 31 March	2018 Audited accounts £	2019 Draft Accounts £	2020 Budget £
Income & expenditure:			
Income	428,400	295,741	481,992
- % of income confirmed as at 23/05/2019		100%	61%
Expenditure	(417,114)	(362,343)	(479,840)
Total surplus/(deficit)	11,286	(66,602)	2,152
Split between:			
- Restricted surplus/(deficit)	(23,786)	(91,670)	0
- Unrestricted surplus/(deficit)	35,072	25,068	2,152
	11,286	(66,602)	2,152
Cost of Raising Funds	0	5,981	12,673
- % of Income	0.0%	2.0%	2.6%
Operating expenditure (all funds)	417,114	362,343	479,840
Free unrestricted reserves:			
Free unrestricted reserves held at year end	138,360	163,428	165,580
No of months of operating expenditure	4.0	5.4	5.5
Reserves policy target	104,279	181,171	239,991
No of months of operating expenditure	3.0	6.0	6.0
Free reserves over/(under) target	34,081	(17,743)	(74,411)