

MEETING: 25/07/2019

Ref: 15084

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY: Bridging Divides - Positive Transitions

Trailblazers Mentoring Ltd

Adv: Samantha Grimmitt-Batt

Amount requested: £71,000

Base: Wandsworth

Benefit: London-wide

Amount recommended: £71,000

The Applicant

Established in 1998, Trailblazers Mentoring Ltd (Trailblazers) delivers through-the-gate mentoring for young male offenders aged 18-25. It aims to support young men and reduce recidivism rates by providing high quality structured programmes in several young offender institutions and prisons (HMYOs and HMPs), and in the community.

The Application

Trailblazers seeks continuation funding for two further years of its work with young offenders released from HMP Wandsworth and HMYOI ISIS as well as Londoners who have served time in HMYOIs Aylesbury and Brinsford. The funded activities will include specialist support, advice, and advocacy to help those preparing for release to address the underlying reasons behind their offending history. Support continues after release for up to a year.

The Recommendation

In 2018 the re-offending rate for young people working with a Trailblazers mentor was 18%, a third of the national average of 58%, and the organisation has consistently delivered similar results. Its work has been independently evaluated by the Third Sector Research Centre in 2015 and found to be effective. The charity has refined its outcome targets to build on the work already delivered.

Following the award of your previous grant, Trailblazers struggled financially and recorded a deficit for 3 consecutive years. This was addressed and the organisation is now more financially secure. All service delivery covered by your grant during this period was completed and good monitoring reports were received. Your officer has discussed the financial strategy, and steps taken to stabilise, with the charity and is satisfied that appropriate action has been taken. Funding is advised:

£71,000 over two further and final years (£35,000; £36,000) for the costs of Trailblazers' work in HMPs Wandsworth and ISIS, as well as with Londoners released by Aylesbury and Brinsford YOIs. The funding includes the costs of 0.5 FTE of the Project Manager(s). The grant is conditional upon receipt of the five-year organisational strategy.

Funding History

Meeting Date	Decision
23/09/2015	£99,000 over three years for the costs of work at HMPs Wandsworth and ISIS, as well as with Londoners released by HMPs Aylesbury and Rochester.
27/11/2014	Application withdrawn and later re-submitted.

Background and detail of proposal

Prisoners can self-refer to the service and the charity also receives referrals from prison officers, drug and alcohol services, chaplaincy, and other inmates. Mentoring is provided primarily by trained volunteers, with the support of a small staff team. The programme broadly follows a work-book format, but support is tailored, depending on the individual's intended outcomes. Work begins prior to release and involves weekly one-hour meetings covering issues such as personal finance and building relationships. This lays a solid foundation for post-release community work whereby mentors maintain weekly contact for two to three months and continue with less frequent contact for another nine to twelve months.

Financial Information

Despite some financial turbulence in recent years, the charity has stabilised, following the appointment of a new CEO and board of trustees in 2016/2017. The new management oversaw a refocusing of service delivery back to the core offer of mentoring only, as well as a restructuring which included the closure of two services (not impacting your grant) and redundancy of 4 staff. This accounted for the drop-in income and expenditure in 2018. Both income and expenditure subsequently increased, with surpluses being produced in 2017, 2018 and 2019.

A five-year strategy is being developed, which includes investment in marketing and PR to increase income. Corporate income will also increase, via new relationships with identified construction firms. If you approve a grant, the initial payment will be made contingent on the Trust receiving a copy of this strategy. The cost of raising funds was not disclosed in the 2018 accounts but will be disclosed from 2019.

Year end as at 31st December	2017 Signed Accounts £	2018 Draft Accounts £	2019 Budget £
Income & expenditure:			
Income	322,744	271,175	345,373
- % of income confirmed as at 28/05/2019	N/A	N/A	87%
Expenditure	(297,951)	(248,939)	(341,065)
Total surplus/(deficit)	24,793	22,236	4,308
Split between:			
- Restricted surplus/(deficit)	5,771	17,149	(1,355)
- Unrestricted surplus/(deficit)	19,022	5,087	5,663
	24,793	22,236	4,308
Cost of Raising Funds	1,154	0	18,000
- % of income	0.4%	0.0%	5.2%
Operating expenditure (unrestricted)	131,689	84,964	161,318
Free unrestricted reserves:			
Free unrestricted reserves held at year end	25,800	30,887	36,550
No of months of operating expenditure	2.4	4.4	2.7
Reserves policy target	43,896	28,321	53,773
No of months of operating expenditure	4.0	4.0	4.0
Free reserves over/(under) target	(18,096)	2,566	(17,223)