

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY: Bridging Divides - Connecting the Capital

Harmony House Dagenham CIC

Adv: Jenny Field

Amount requested: £155,000

Base: Barking & Dagenham

Benefit: Barking & Dagenham

Amount recommended: £91,500

The Applicant

Harmony House (HH) is a community interest company that provides a variety of activities for the benefit of the local community. These include three day nurseries that between them offer 202 full-time places, with over 370 children on the roll; a basic English and employability programme for the long-term unemployed; and its Silvernet programme for older people in the borough. Silvernet's activities include:

- 17 social clubs benefitting over 400 older people per week who meet for food, advice, entertainment and social interaction
- A telephone befriending service whereby 86 older people who would not otherwise speak to anyone all day receive a daily telephone call
- 3 silver surfer clubs
- A handyperson and small jobs service
- 8 large events annually which could include tea dances, outings to places of interest, or external speakers.

The Application

Building on its experience with telephone befriending service, it is proposed to engage three befrienders, each working 12 hours per week, to undertake fortnightly visits to an initial cohort of 48 older people who are known by HH to be the most lonely and socially isolated. As the project develops, the befrienders will encourage at least 18 of the cohort to take part in one of the social clubs run under the Silvernet programme by making introductions and arranging transport. This will enable new referrals to be made which will be encouraged through agencies such as social services and through GP surgeries. In addition, a minimum of three volunteers will be recruited annually to work with the befrienders either to undertake additional home visits or to help a befriended person to 'gel' with a social club.

The Recommendation

Harmony House was originally established in 1993 in response to the needs of newly arrived refugees in the borough. As the number of refugees have reduced it has channelled its resources to meet other community needs locally. It has a wide reach for those living and working in Barking & Dagenham and a good track record of working with older people.

Funding has been requested for five years. However, as this is a new project, funding for three years is recommended at this stage. This would not preclude the organisation from applying for continuation funding of two years once the project has been able to demonstrate its success.

£91,500 over three years (£30,000; £30,500; £31,000) towards the part-time salaries (12 hours per week each) of three Befrienders, funding in each year subject to the receipt of satisfactory management accounts.

Funding History

Meeting Date	Decision
18/04/2013	Funding towards an existing programme. The applicant has not made a sufficient case that the work fits the outcomes of your programme for 'Older Londoners'.
25/09/2003	Group income far exceeds small grant limit of £50k. Organisation has skill and funds to support the project.

Background and detail of proposal

The proposed befriending scheme has the potential to be a very useful addition to HH's offer for older people. An important element of the project is its ambition to support those who are currently housebound to access social activities and make new friends.

Financial Information

HH's reserves are considerably below its target of three months' worth of running costs. The Board is committed to increasing its reserves by identifying future opportunities for self-generated income, for example by increasing the number of lettings of its meeting space and/or increasing number of childcare places available. However, it is considered prudent to include a condition of grant that funding each year is subject to the receipt of satisfactory management accounts.

Year end as at 31st March	2018 Signed Accounts £	2019 Draft Accounts £	2020 Forecast £
Income & expenditure:			
Income	2 045 200	1 958 316	1 997 443
- % of Income confirmed as at 01/08/2019	N/A	N/A	60%
Expenditure	(1 973 194)	(2 102 300)	(2 121 522)
Total surplus/(deficit)	72 006	(143 984)	(124 079)
Split between:			
- Restricted surplus/(deficit)	2 368	(249)	1 447
- Unrestricted surplus/(deficit)	69 638	(143 735)	(125 526)
	72 006	(143 984)	(124 079)
Operating expenditure (unrestricted funds)	1 893 340	1 966 772	2 085 763
Free unrestricted reserves:			
Free unrestricted reserves held at year end	380 113	236 129	110 603
No of months of operating expenditure	2.4	1.4	0.6
Reserves policy target	473 335	491 693	521 441
No of months of operating expenditure	3.0	3.0	3.0
Free reserves over/(under) target	(93 222)	(255 564)	(410 838)