

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY: Bridging Divides - Connecting the Capital

RiDC: Research Institute for Disabled Consumers

Adv: Samantha Grimmett-Batt

Base: Islington

Amount requested: £100,000

Benefit: London-wide

Amount recommended: £100,000

The Applicant

The Research Institute for Disabled Consumers (RiDC) is a registered charity founded by the Consumers' Association (Which) and has been operating for over 50 years. It became independent in the 1990's and conducts user-centred research, involving disabled and older consumers, to: provide consumer information and user reviews to help disabled and older people to choose products and services; help businesses improve products and services; and take the voice of disabled and older consumers to decision makers. The charity aims to reduce financial inequality so that disabled people don't have to pay more due to their disability, and reduce social inequality by making sure that disabled people can access products which enable them to be part of the community.

The Application

Building on a pilot, RiDC wishes to involve people with mild to moderate dementia in a collaboration with Innovation in Dementia (ID) and DEEP: the UK Network of Dementia Voices (DEEPUK). The project will create user-led evaluations which provide feedback on the consumer needs and experiences of people with dementia when using arts, sports, health or well-being venues or services in London. The evaluations, which will be both co-designed and co-delivered, will be used both to provide information to the wider sector and to inform the venues themselves of the needs of this user group.

The Recommendation

This project meets two of your Connecting the Capital priority areas well, enabling older people, and disabled people, to participate more fully in arts, sport, health and wellbeing activities, as well as supporting and amplifying their voices, which speaks to your "Voice and Leadership" priority under the same programme. People with dementia are often excluded from participation in this type of consumer research because of a perceived lack of awareness or a belief that involvement will be too difficult. This collaboration between three organisations with very specific expertise will provide a rare opportunity for meaningful involvement in a very worthwhile project with potential long-term benefits for many other Londoners with dementia. Funding is advised:

£100,000 (34,000, £34,000, £32,000) over three years towards the cost of setting up and running a programme of local consumer research projects evaluating arts, sports, health and well-being projects from the perspective of users with dementia.

Funding History

Meeting Date	Decision
25/01/2001	£29,000 towards the cost of producing a booklet providing information on adapting homes for easier living for older people in London.

Background and detail of proposal

This request builds on a UK-wide project completed by RIDC, ID and DEEPUK during 2015-2018. Twelve different facilities were evaluated, chosen by the people with dementia. Examples included Mecca Bingo, local transport providers, and the British Gas museum. The work led to the production of a set of guidelines for researchers, and an evaluation report. RIDC found that the project not only improved wellbeing for individual participants but was also of value to businesses, in terms of feedback and learning. Where businesses were receptive and implemented recommended changes, there were further potential benefits to other people with dementia in the wider community. The charity plans to expand on this with a London-only project, incorporating learning from the pilot and continuing to use the expertise of staff at ID and DEEP to provide a uniquely tailored participatory experience.

Financial Information

Principal income is derived from the Consumers Association (£75,000 pa), grants, and business consultancy. Commercial income is difficult to predict and tends to be cyclical; leading to shifts between deficit and surplus positions over the years. For this reason, the charity had traditionally built/held significant reserves. However, due to recurrent deficits in 2016, 2017 and 2018 the charity has undertaken a financial review, led by a new CEO appointed in early 2019. A programme for sustainable and long-term growth, and a rebalancing of RIDC's financial position was subsequently created. This, alongside a modernisation programme and more targeted approach to business development, is expected to produce a small surplus in 2019 and a balanced budget in 2020. Current unrestricted reserves are within the target level of £450,000-£600,000. £184,000 of these relate to a pension deficit, expected to increase, inherited from RIDC's prior relationship with Which.

Year end as at 30th September	2018	2019	2020
	Signed Accounts	Management	Forecast
	£	accounts	£
	£	£	£
Income & expenditure:			
Income	483,559	532,816	542,101
- % of income confirmed as at 22/08/2019	N/A	84%	49%
Expenditure	(645,228)	(517,712)	(542,101)
Gains & Losses	32,742		
Total surplus/(deficit)	(128,927)	15,104	0
Split between:			
- Restricted surplus/(deficit)	(1,267)	0	0
- Unrestricted surplus/(deficit)	(127,660)	15,104	0
	(128,927)	15,104	0
Cost of Raising Funds	50,022	36,240	42,447
- % of income	10.3%	6.8%	7.8%
Operating expenditure (unrestricted funds)	536,192	449,212	498,873
Free unrestricted reserves:			
Free unrestricted reserves held at year end	472,003	487,107	487,107
No of months of operating expenditure	10.6	13.0	11.7
Reserves policy target	450,000	450,000	450,000
No of months of operating expenditure	10.1	12.0	10.8
Free reserves over/(under) target	22,003	37,107	37,107