

MEETING: 26/09/2019

Ref: 15203

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY: Bridging Divides - Positive Transitions

Jigsaw4u

Adv: Gilly Green

Base: Merton

Amount requested: £159,470

Benefit: Merton & Sutton

Amount recommended: £158,000

The Applicant

Jigsaw4U, a registered charity, aims to help children and young people with difficult lives put the pieces back together. It also seeks to make sure children and young people have their voices heard in decisions made about their lives. It offers a range of one to one and group work services including pre- and post- bereavement support, help for those affected by domestic abuse, and works with children and young people who are 'missing' and at risk of sexual exploitation.

The Application

Jigsaw has been delivering a volunteer-based specialist support service for children, young people and their families affected by domestic violence since 2013. In the first three years it supported 628 service users. The service provides crucial support for families at the point of transition, often after leaving a refuge and helps families find their feet and to access help with the legal, emotional and practical problems they face. For some families the needs are complex with the perpetrator still present in the children's lives through contact orders or the family facing significant financial challenges. Originally funded by the Lottery for 3 years and with a positive external evaluation, the project was subsequently picked up by MOPAC on a time limited, part time basis. It now seeks funding to enable it to return to providing a full-time service. This is in response to evidenced need. The application is to provide the salary costs for a full-time Co-ordinator over 3 years to recruit, train and supervise volunteers who support families for up to one year, plus some volunteer costs.

The Recommendation

Jigsaw is a well-connected, responsive children and young people's service serving the boroughs of Merton and Sutton. The organisation is represented on key strategic planning and delivery groups and has successfully reached the many diverse communities in both boroughs. The need for the project is well understood and the outcomes well evidenced. It is a forward-looking and the application fits well with the priorities under your Positive Transitions programme with its focus on providing specialist support services which aim to helping young people to be more resilient. The grant advised is slightly less than that requested as the organisation can make a contribution to some of the core costs identified:

£158,000 over three years (£54,000, £54,000, £50,000) for the salary costs of a Co-ordinator, volunteer training, and a contribution to management and office costs.

Funding History

Meeting Date	Decision
25/09/2014	Application withdrawn.

Ref: 19174504

Background and detail of proposal

The project is a tried and tested model which has worked with a significant number of families over 6 years with good outcomes and positive feedback. Nearly half of all volunteers are survivors of domestic abuse, and the voice of service users is clear within the organisation. The project is not a crisis service but has a focus firmly on rebuilding and reintegrating families with children who have been through traumatic and abusive situations. Within the organisation, the commitment to safeguarding is exemplary with high levels of expertise at board level, a strong commitment to regular training and review and regular supervision of volunteers. The long-standing previous CEO retired at the end of 2018 and her replacement, promoted from within the team demonstrates an ambitious but realistic ambition for the charity.

Financial Information

Jigsaw has a diverse funding base and whilst it has lost some contracts over the last two years, it has gained others. All its current contracts have been awarded for three years with one or two-year possible extensions. Reserve levels are healthy, and the financial year end predicts a continued pattern of annual surpluses. The current fundraising plan identifies a focus on securing a greater proportion of funding from Trusts and Foundations. The significant reduction in fundraising costs for 2020 is due to the bi-annual charity ball which will not fall within this financial year. Whilst this fundraising event brings in considerable funds for the charity, it also requires considerable expenditure. Other fundraising costs are covered within a designated staff member's salary.

Year end as at 31 MARCH	2018 Examined Accounts	2019 Draft accounts	2020 Budget
Income & expenditure:			
Income	817,807	934,380	875,137
- % of income confirmed as at 23rd July 2019	n/a	100%	89%
Expenditure	(742,928)	(786,914)	(754,828)
Total surplus/(deficit)	74,879	147,466	120,309
Split between:			
- Restricted surplus/(deficit)	65,205	103,707	151,508
- Unrestricted surplus/(deficit)	9,674	43,760	(31,199)
	74,879	147,467	120,309
Cost of Raising Funds	18,825	12,630	500
- % of income	2.3%	1.4%	0.1%
Operating expenditure (unrestricted funds)	367,665	391,321	377,664
Free unrestricted reserves:			
Free unrestricted reserves held at year end	163,302	207,062	175,863
No of months of operating expenditure	5.3	6.3	5.6
Reserves policy target	91,916	97,830	94,416
No of months of operating expenditure	3.0	3.0	3.0
Free reserves over/(under) target	71,386	109,232	81,447