

**MEETING: 26/09/2019**

**Ref: 15386**

**ASSESSMENT CATEGORY: Bridging Divides - Positive Transitions**

**Spark Inside**

**Adv: Jack Joslin**

**Base: Camden**

**Amount requested: £57,500**

**Benefit: London-wide**

**Amount recommended: £57,500**

**The Applicant**

Spark Inside (SI), a registered charity, was founded in 2012 to support young people involved in the criminal justice system primarily in London and the South-East. They work with high risk young people aged 15 to 25 providing a programme of life coaching called the 'Hero's Journey' which aims to reduce re-offending and institutional violence. This form of life coaching for young people who are re-entering society has been an effective strategy for improving their life outcomes. The organisation has gone from strength to strength since its inception and is now at a crucial point of development as they look to expand the reach of the charity.

**The Application**

SI is looking for your continued support to contribute to the Charity's core running costs as they go through a period of growth. The organisation seen increasing demand on its services and are looking to offer the programme to more young offenders across London. Funding will contribute to the Chief Executive's salary over the final two years of the grant with a taper in the 5th year.

**The Recommendation**

SI delivers a very professional and transformational programme of work for young people in the prison system. The 'Hero's Journey' Coaching programme has been established as a high-quality intervention since your Committee first awarded funding: Evaluation of the work has always been of a high calibre and this final two-year grant will help the organisation establish itself as a major provider in the criminal justice sector in London. The application meets the outcomes of your Positive Transitions Programme as the majority of SI's work is with ex-offenders leaving custody. Funding is recommended as follows:

**£57,500 over two further and final years (£30,000; £27,500) to contribute to the Chief Executive's salary and the core running costs of the Charity.**

**Funding History**

Meeting Date	Decision
14/07/2016	£90,000 over three years (£30,000; £30,000, £30,000) to contribute towards the Chief Executive's full-time salary, rent and associated office costs.

**Background and detail of proposal**

The Prison System in the UK faces many challenges, with re-offending rates too high and violence at record levels. SI was founded in 2012 with a mission of piloting and running coaching programmes in prison that encourage rehabilitation and reduce reoffending. The "Hero's Journey" coaching programme they deliver runs across London and the South-East. External evaluation of the programme showed how it improved wellbeing and reduced re-offending for previous participants. Your officer

has attended a 'Hero's Journey' taster session offered by the Charity, the session was non-judgemental and insightful, and it was clear the difference it would make to the young men SI are working with. Additional to the Hero's Journey, SI delivers 'The Conversation' which is a systems coaching programme bringing together large groups of prison staff and prisoners in a facilitated group-coaching process to enhance their relationships, improve empathy, and to support sustained, positive cultural change on prison wings. SI have been successful in affecting change within the prison system which has not been an easy process. Many aspects of the criminal justice system make it a difficult and challenging environment to work in. Funding for Charities working in the prison system and complicated procurement methods make it a very difficult environment to operate in. SI seeks funding from Trusts and Foundations to uphold the core running costs of the Charity as these are the most difficult costs to get funding for and are often not considered in prison contracts.

In 2017 Spark Inside were put forward by the Trust to go through a Social Franchising programme to look at ways that the 'Hero's Journey' could be licensed or shared with other providers working within the Prison System. Since finishing the programme, the Charity has a defined vision and are exploring licensing the Hero's Journey – in fact licensing its first 'Hero's Journey' programme this year - and are going to test the viability of this approach while continuing to run their core services across London.

### Financial Information

In the year ending March 2018 the Charity held reserves 3.6 months over its stated policy of holding 3 to 6 months expenditure in reserve. The Charity deliberately built up reserves over its policy in light of the ever changing and difficult conditions they face working in and with the prison system. A consistent change in Minister for Justice and a lack of funding has made it harder for organisations to operate in this environment. The Charity maintains a significant buffer to ensure delivery and a decent cash flow to be able to deliver any payment by results contracts.

Year end as at 31st March	2018 Signed Accounts £	2019 Forecast £	2020 Budget £
<b>Income &amp; expenditure:</b>			
Income	624,028	730,315	992,495
- % of Income confirmed as at 23/7/19	N/A	100%	77%
Expenditure	(476,439)	(683,576)	(992,495)
Total surplus/(deficit)	147,589	46,739	0
Split between:			
- Restricted surplus/(deficit)	18,294	74,804	0
- Unrestricted surplus/(deficit)	129,295	(27,865)	0
	147,589	46,739	0
Cost of Raising Funds	16,200	20,851	28,800
- % of Income	2.6%	2.9%	2.9%
Total Expenditure	476,439	683,576	992,495
<b>Free unrestricted reserves:</b>			
Free unrestricted reserves held at year end	382,709	354,844	354,844
No of months of operating expenditure	9.6	6.2	4.3
Reserves policy target	119,110	170,894	248,124
No of months of operating expenditure	3.0	3.0	3.0
Free reserves over/(under) target	263,599	183,950	106,720