

**MEETING: 26/09/2019**

**Ref: 14955**

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

**The Mix**

**Adv: Tim Wilson**

**Base: Westminster**

**Amount requested: £90,000**

**Benefit: London-wide**

**Amount recommended: £90,000**

**The Applicant**

Established in 1995 by the broadcaster Sir Martyn Lewis, YouthNet UK is a registered charity operating under the name "The Mix". The organisation supports young people under 25 via free-to-access digital, social and mobile channels. The Mix's approach allows for remote engagement, and the charity states this allows it to operate nationally, with almost 3 million annual users, and on its clients' own terms.

**The Application**

The Mix seeks three years of funding under the Trust's Positive Transitions programme. The funding request is effectively a contribution to core activities, proportionate to the number of service users who are Londoners. City Bridge funding is sought to maintain services at the end of the charity's existing grant with the National Lottery Community Fund and to support a programme of planned expansion across several of The Mix's current workstreams.

**The Recommendation**

The digital offer provided by The Mix ensures that its services are accessible to its clients, irrespective of their physical location. The delivery mechanism ensures anonymity yet allows the client to engage over several sessions if this is appropriate to their needs. The charity refers clients to local providers where appropriate and makes good use of client feedback to design and improve its services. The funding sought is towards core operations, but The Mix intends to expand these significantly over the coming 36 months to ensure a greater number of clients can benefit from its work. Funding is advised as follows:

***£90,000 over three years (3 x £30,000) towards the costs of counselling, helpline and live chat services for Londoners delivered by The Mix.***

**Funding History**

Meeting Date	Decision
24/11/2016	£50,000 over 12 months through the Stepping Stones Fund to determine the sustainability of the white-labelling of The Mix youth services.
16/07/2014	£44,700, for a third and final year, towards the costs of the Live Chat service.
15/03/2012	£70,000 over two years towards the costs of the Live Chat service providing advice and support services to young Londoners experiencing poor mental health.

**Background and detail of proposal**

The Mix states that 80% of its client traffic find it organically via key word searches. Often isolated and unsure where best to turn, a typical client will seek information online and find The Mix through the organisation's discussion boards. The charity's

website received more than 3 million unique hits over the past 12 months, and whilst most clients engage for information, follow-up services are available to provide more in-depth support. These include live chats, helpline support and counselling sessions. All are provided online or by telephone. The organisation's counsellors are BACP qualified and assess client progress using recognised clinical measures.

If the grant is awarded, The Mix will work to increase its delivery capacity, increasing its volunteer counsellor pool from 8 to 40, expanding the number of counselling sessions from 450 to 1,800 a year, and growing helpline capacity from 14,500 to 20,000 annual calls. The charity is also working to develop formal agreements with specialist providers such as Rape Crisis so clients can be cross-referred.

### Financial Information

The table below shows a 37% fall in income from 2017-18 to 2018-19 resulting from the scheduled end of a large project from the Money Advice Service and a one-off boost from a gala fundraising dinner. The charity has planned for reduced expenditure to manage the reductions in income.

The Mix has a relatively modest free reserve target because it has low overhead costs thanks to offices donated by Dixons Carphone. Whilst the 2020 budget shows free reserves exceeding target, they remain within the range that City Bridge Trust considers reasonable.

Year end as at 30th June	2018 Audited Accounts £	2019 Forecast £	2020 Budget £
<b>Income &amp; expenditure:</b>			
Income	2,452,015	1,552,143	1,809,835
- % of income confirmed as at 3rd July	n/a	100%	38%
Expenditure	(2,567,727)	(1,526,863)	(1,707,145)
Total surplus/(deficit)	(115,712)	25,280	102,690
Split between:			
- Restricted surplus/(deficit)	(65,231)	96,074	(70,645)
- Unrestricted surplus/(deficit)	(50,481)	(70,794)	173,335
	(115,712)	25,280	102,690
Cost of Raising Funds	417,925	245,340	293,329
- % of income	17.04%	15.81%	16.21%
Operating expenditure (unrestricted funds)	1,637,909	839,131	896,740
<b>Free unrestricted reserves:</b>			
Free unrestricted reserves held at year end	108,974	38,180	211,515
No of months of operating expenditure	0.8	0.5	2.8
Reserves policy target	100,000	100,000	100,000
No of months of operating expenditure	0.7	1.4	1.3
Free reserves over/(under) target	8,974	(61,820)	111,515