

MEETING: 26/09/2019

Ref: 15058

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY: Bridging Divides - Positive Transitions

Volunteer Centre Kensington & Chelsea

Adv: Sheguftha Slawther

Amount requested: £109,713

Base: Kensington & Chelsea

Benefit: London-wide

Amount recommended: £93,000

The Applicant

Established in 1969, Volunteer Centre Kensington and Chelsea (VCKS) is one of the larger the volunteer development agencies in London, leading good practice in the development of volunteering. The charity supports organisations in the sector seeking volunteers as well as volunteers seeking opportunities. It has a strong focus on supporting people transitioning into independence; especially carers, ex-offenders and disabled people.

The Application

VCKC is seeking continuation funding for a further two years for its 'Inside Out' project which offers structured support to serving and ex-offenders as well as volunteer involving organisations. The funding requested will enable the organisation to support ex-offenders who are older and those with mental health issues for an additional two years.

The Recommendation

The charity has demonstrated the positive outcomes of 'Inside Out' over the last three years. The amount recommended is reduced as the original request included costs that fall outside the scope of your funding.

£93,000 over two years (£46,000, £47,000) for the FT salary of the Resettlement Worker and project running costs for 'Inside Out'.

Funding History

Meeting Date	Decision
13/05/2015	£125,000 over three years (£41,000; £43,350; £40,650) for a part-time (17.5 hpw) Resettlement Worker plus a contribution to the running costs of "Inside Out"

Background and detail of proposal

'Inside Out' was originally established to work with people convicted of minor crimes but soon evolved to support a wider range of beneficiaries. With referrals received from probation and prison staff as well other organisations that work within prisons, the project has supported a changing profile of offenders and ex-offenders in London. The effects of austerity along with changes to policy and practice within prisons and probations services with significant cuts to budgets, the needs of these beneficiaries are deeper and more diverse than when the original grant was approved.

The three years' delivery of 'Inside Out' has demonstrated the good outcomes of engaging this cohort of beneficiaries and their complex needs in a challenging environment. Volunteering has assisted these individuals in addressing their mental

health issues, engage with the wider community and supported them towards securing paid employment.

VCKC was closely involved in the response to the Grenfell Tower fire and had the opportunity to form even more effective relationships with statutory and non-statutory services across London, as well as with local people. Following the fire, a number of support services that were not Grenfell-specific found themselves cast into the shadow of the disaster, as commissioners and funders raced to respond; first to the emergency needs, and then to the longer-term requirements of those most directly affected. As the focus of attention has gradually returned to the needs of the wider population and the importance of developing people's needs to live independently, 'Inside Out' is of high priority with regards to needs, but against a backdrop of reduced support and funding available for these beneficiaries.

Financial Information

The charity reported an increase in income in 2018 due to funding from the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, London Funders and others in relation to its work in response to the Grenfell fire. Specific money has been set aside for the future requirements of Grenfell projects having supported the immediate humanitarian work. As an anchor organisation in the community, the charity holds funds in reserves to support the community which has been fragmented by a hike in resources that are now depleted, hence free reserves are currently higher than target.

Cost of raising funds had not been reported in 2018 accounts but will be moving forward.

Year end as at 31st March	2018 Signed Accounts £	2019 Draft Accounts £	2020 Forecast £
Income & expenditure:			
Income	585,685	466,715	526,942
- % of Income confirmed as at 04/07/2019	N/A	N/A	88%
Expenditure	(443,068)	(483,299)	(526,812)
Total surplus/(deficit)	122,597	(16,584)	130
Split between:			
- Restricted surplus/(deficit)	75,105	0	0
- Unrestricted surplus/(deficit)	47,492	(16,584)	130
	122,597	(16,584)	130
Cost of Raising Funds	0	7,300	7,487
- % of Income	0.0%	1.6%	1.4%
Operating expenditure (unrestricted funds)	289,212	196,576	150,730
Free unrestricted reserves:			
Free unrestricted reserves held at year end	169,134	152,550	152,680
No of months of total expenditure	4.6	3.8	3.5
Reserves policy target	110,767	120,825	131,703
No of months of total expenditure	3.0	3.0	3.0
Free reserves over/(under) target	58,367	31,725	20,977