

**MEETING 30/01/2020****Ref: 15567****ASSESSMENT CATEGORY: Bridging Divides - Positive Transitions****Sutton Mencap****Adv: Kate Moralee****Base: Sutton****Amount requested: £156,434****Benefit: Sutton****Amount recommended: £156,400****The Applicant**

Sutton Mencap (SM) is a local charity which works to improve the lives of people with learning disability and their carers in Sutton Borough. It is an established charity registered in 1956, with a long track record of delivering services for adults and children including: play, leisure and learning opportunities; after school clubs; Saturday and holiday clubs; day activities; circles of support and friendship groups.

**The Application**

Your Trust is asked to support a Digital Paths to Inclusion Manager, sessional support and associated costs to support people with learning disabilities to develop their digital skills in a positive and safe way to enhance the quality of their lives and increase inclusion across the borough.

**The Recommendation**

SM is a well-run and led organisation which has strong connections both at micro local level and across the borough. It works well in partnership with the Local Authority, local businesses and community organisations and is a member of national networks e.g. The Learning Disability Alliance England. The project development has been informed by a pilot carried out which has created podcasts of reviews of community venues and by research evidencing that many clients have mobile phones and access to the digital world without the skills to fully access this world. This project will increase the opportunity for people with a learning disability to use the online and social media world safely by producing an online newsletter, providing online reviews of local community facilities and businesses, safely sharing stories and discussing matters important to them. It will also offer user-led training to businesses and organisations to become more inclusive by acknowledging and addressing the needs of people with a learning disability. This is a scoping/pilot project. This proposal meets the outcomes of your Positive Transitions programme area and Choice and Control priority area and is recommended:

**£156,400 over 3 years (£52,100, £50,100, £54,200) towards a Digital Paths to Inclusion programme which combines the use of digital technology with increasing the voice of people with a learning disability in their local community.**

**Funding History**

Meeting Date	Decision
12/03/2015	£102,000 over three years (£33,000, £33,000, £36,000) for the salary of a p/t (0.6fte) Community Activities Project Manager and related project costs.
20/01/2011	£21,500 for a third and final year, towards the costs of the post of Adult and Youth Services Manager,

## Background and detail of proposal

People with learning disabilities can be excluded from the digital world as evidenced by the “Finding Freedom” report, which highlights how digital inclusion can provide greater opportunities for people with learning disabilities to be visible and involved in their local community. Poverty and Social Exclusion reports “The depth of digital exclusion for people with disabilities is generally much greater than for the wider population” which contributes to levels of poverty, isolation and reduced access to government services.

This proposal aims to increase relationships with local communities and offer the opportunity to create “trip advisor” style reviews of local community facilities, it will raise the profile of service users as customers with rights. It is also looking to identify “Safe Places” as identified by service users in partnership with local venues. This will be carried out with Sutton Borough Council and may include certification. It is the aim of SM that this service will be commissioned in the future, once there is evidence of its impact.

## Financial Information

Income has increased slightly over the last three years, mainly as a result of the renegotiation of contracts with London Borough of Sutton, to accurately reflect the cost of the delivery of a quality service.

Although the organisation reports only 25% confirmed income at 30.6.2019, this purely reflects income invoiced for services. Income is reported as confirmed when invoices for services are submitted. SM is confident that the income from both children’s and adults’ services will be realised as it has long term relationships with its service users and the local borough council.

SM has a small deficit in the 2020 budget, this is due to planned project expenditure which will only take place if the funds are secured first, it is also now on target for a break-even budget or slight surplus for 2021, which will improve the free reserves position. SM carries forward a restricted surplus of £30,063 from 2019 accounts to cover the restricted deficit at 31/03/2020.

Year end as at 31st March	2018	2019	2020
	Signed Accounts £	Draft Accounts £	Forecast £
<b>Income &amp; expenditure:</b>			
Income	676,995	777,330	781,138
- % of Income confirmed as at 8/10/2019	N/A	N/A	25%
Expenditure	(706,102)	(742,640)	(804,653)
Total surplus/(deficit)	<b>(29,107)</b>	<b>34,690</b>	<b>(23,515)</b>
Split between:			
- Restricted surplus/(deficit)	2,201	(3,018)	(18,424)
- Unrestricted surplus/(deficit)	(31,308)	37,708	(5,091)
	<b>(29,107)</b>	<b>34,690</b>	<b>(23,515)</b>
Operating expenditure (unrestricted funds)	577,253	678,047	742,460
<b>Free unrestricted reserves:</b>			
Free unrestricted reserves held at year end	134,182	175,125	170,034
No of months of operating expenditure	2.8	3.1	2.7
Reserves policy target	144,313	169,512	185,615
No of months of operating expenditure	3.0	3.0	3.0
Free reserves over/(under) target	(10,131)	5,613	(15,581)