

MEETING: 30/01/2020

Ref: 15591

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

Adv: Tim Wilson

Base: Croydon

Amount requested: £288,526

Benefit: Croydon

Amount recommended: £288,500

The Applicant

A registered charity, Young Roots was established with Lottery funding in 2004 to work with young refugees in Barnet. In 2011 the organisation extended its operations to Croydon and its current work remains focused on these two boroughs, supporting clients to improve communication skills, manage practical challenges and reduce levels of anxiety. Services includes youth clubs, sports projects and one-to-one casework. Its clients are young refugees and asylum seekers (aged 11-25) who face multiple disadvantages such as poverty, homelessness, insecure status and poor mental health. Young Roots states that 95% of its clients are in the UK without their families, and that 70% are escaping human rights abuses or armed conflict in their countries of origin. The charity holds a Silver Quality Mark from London Youth.

The Application

Young Roots seeks five-years of support under the Trust's *Positive Transitions* programme for its casework services for young refugees and asylum seekers in Croydon. Funding would be used to cover the costs of one full time staff member plus on costs in a team of 2.3 FTE Croydon staff. Some funding for participant travel is also requested which is considered reasonable given the levels of poverty amongst the client cohort. The caseworker would be expected to support clients to achieve reduced isolation, increased belonging, reduced stress and anxiety, and increased engagement with Young Roots' partner organisations.

The Recommendation

Young Roots has established a strong network of partners in its relatively short history. This means it can operate effectively as a support hub, building trust with children and young people in difficult circumstances, and then referring them to others for technical assistance where appropriate. Youth work services act as the gateway for Young Roots' discussions with clients, and there is strong demand for the charity's support with referrals from Croydon Refugee Network and GPs (as well as word-of-mouth). The casework service is well structured with effective supervision in place to assure both the quality of support offered and the wellbeing of the caseworkers. Funding is advised as follows:

£288,500 over five years (£53,500; £55,500; £58,000; £60,000; £61,500) for 1 FTE Croydon Caseworker along with support and on-costs associated with the service for young refugees and asylum seekers.

Funding History

None.

Background and detail of proposal

The charity's casework services were established in 2016, with an initial aim of 40 support clients each year. Demand has been far higher, with the organisation

providing case support for over 100 clients each year. Work is based out of advice and support hubs at Young Roots' Croydon youth club and Brent football project. A typical caseworker would support 35 young refugees and asylum seekers each year from a service open 5 days a week over 50 weeks each year (colleagues provide cover during staff absence). In addition to direct support and advice, casework services are also based on partnership services with Off the Record (for counselling), Coram (for legal support), Instalaw (for age assessments) and Shelter (for housing support) as well as others providing psychological assistance, ESOL tuition, and immigration advice. Caseworkers receive clinical and casework supervision.

Financial Information

Young Roots expects steady growth from 2018-20 as a result of increases in grant income. Since most of its turnover is from restricted funding, free reserves are only expected to increase gradually over the period shown in the table below, and to remain below the trustees' target, but not at a level to cause concern. The director and trustees review finances monthly to ensure that the rate of income growth does not outstrip the level of free reserves.

Year end as at 30th November	2018	2019	2020
	Examined Accounts	Draft Accounts	Forecast
	£	£	£
Income & expenditure:			
Income	344,372	452,425	566,257
- % of Income confirmed as at 19th December	n/a	100%	64%
Expenditure	(330,724)	(472,019)	(568,865)
Total surplus/(deficit)	13,648	(19,594)	(2,608)
Split between:			
- Restricted surplus/(deficit)	(12,256)	(26,497)	(8,208)
- Unrestricted surplus/(deficit)	25,904	6,903	5,600
	13,648	(19,594)	(2,608)
Operating expenditure (total funds)	330,724	472,019	568,865
Free unrestricted reserves:			
Free unrestricted reserves held at year end	75,466	82,369	87,969
No of months of operating expenditure	2.7	2.1	1.9
Reserves policy target	82,681	118,005	142,216
No of months of operating expenditure	3.0	3.0	3.0
Free reserves over/(under) target	(7,215)	(35,636)	(54,247)