

MEETING 26/03/2020

Ref: 15672

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY: Bridging Divides - Positive Transitions**School-Home Support****Adv: Natalie Jordan****Amount requested: £108,000****Base: Newham****Benefit: Lewisham****Amount recommended: £108,500****The Applicant**

School-Home Support (SHS) is a charitable company that aims to break intergenerational cycles of deprivation, low aspiration and inequality through targeted support for children, young people, and their families, in partnership with schools and other community services. The charity began in Tower Hamlets in 1984, and its work spread initially across East London. It now has national reach and delivers work in 5 Alternative Provision (AP)/Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) schools in Greater London. SHS takes a holistic approach to supporting young people, addressing issues that may affect a children's learning such as poverty, housing, and mental ill health. It provides direct one to one support, group work and support accessing specialist services, alongside additional support for families and schools. In 2019, SHS received a commendation from the Centre for Social Change for its work in education.

The Application

This application is to establish a new School-Home Support Practitioner role and associated costs in Wize-Up Academy in Lewisham, an AP school. The practitioner will manage a small case load of 18 young people per year with mental health issues, providing intensive, tailored, and holistic support. The aim is ultimately to support a young person to transition back into mainstream schooling, but many will require longer term support within the AP setting. Young people will be prioritised in partnership with the school for support based on their mental health needs and their need for support in reengaging with their education.

The Recommendation

Whilst your policy ordinarily excludes direct work in schools, it makes an exception for specific mental health work as it can enable the delivery of support to children and young people with mental health issues who are unlikely to be reached outside of a school setting. Whilst there is some statutory mental health support available for young people, take up of those services, availability and consistency can be low, whilst rates of developed mental health problems are higher for young people who are excluded from mainstream education. The role will support access to those services and build positive relationships between services and young people and their families. The practitioner will be better placed to provide consistency and a trusting relationship than those from institutions that may otherwise be mistrusted by young people who otherwise come from chaotic backgrounds. A small increase in funding is recommended to include inflation on the contribution to non-salary costs, and an annual contribution from Wize-Up has been pledged subject to confirmation of other funding such as your grant if you agree it:

£108,500 over three years (£36,000; £36,200; £36,300) for the salary and associated costs of a School-Home Support Practitioner (37.5hpw, term time only) to support the positive transitions of young people with mental ill health in Alternative Provision. The release of funding is conditional on the provision

of a finalised Job Description for the role that includes specifications relating to experience of mental health work and any relevant qualifications.

Funding History

None.

Background and detail of proposal

A 2018 report from the House of Commons Education Committee (*Forgotten children: alternative provision and the scandal of ever increasing exclusions*) details that an estimated one in two pupils in AP have social, emotional and mental health as their primary category of Special Educational Need, as opposed to one in fifty in the general population. Many children referred to PRUs and AP come from the most deprived backgrounds and chaotic homes.

This role will be SHS's first practitioner role with a dedicated focus on mental health, but its practitioners based in other AP schools in London already predominantly deal with mental health issues. One officer, based in Mayesbrook Academy, Dagenham, reported that 80% of the young people supported have mental health issues, including anxiety and trauma-induced psychoses.

Financial Information

Funding is applied for over 3 years with the ambition that costs will be picked up by schools, AP or local authorities. SHS uses recognised tools for monitoring its impact, such as the Wellbeing Star, that will be used to evidence the benefit of its approach to providers. It has previously been successful in securing Department for Education Opportunity Area funding for its work in Blackpool and maintains a number of contracts with other schools. Whilst shrinking school budgets have resulted in some schools terminating contracts with SHS, it has been able to maintain a balance with new contracts.

Year end as at 31st August	2018	2019	2020
	Signed Accounts	Draft Accounts	Budget
	£	£	£
Income & expenditure:			
Income	2,328,326	2,089,205	2,468,529
- % of Income confirmed as at 03/02/2020	N/A	N/A	100%
Expenditure	(2,327,991)	(2,083,134)	(2,436,851)
Total surplus/(deficit)	335	6,071	31,678
Split between:			
- Restricted surplus/(deficit)	37,348	(19,069)	0
- Unrestricted surplus/(deficit)	(37,013)	25,140	31,678
	335	6,071	31,678
Operating Expenditure	870,348	877,152	872,844
Free unrestricted reserves:			
Free unrestricted reserves held at year end	165,165	161,873	193,551
No of months of operating expenditure	2.3	2.2	2.7
Reserves policy target	130,000	145,000	145,474
No of months of operating expenditure	1.8	2.0	2.0
Free reserves over/(under) target	35,165	16,873	48,077