

**MEETING: Delegated Authority**

**Ref: 15665**

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

**Action on Disability**

**Amount requested: £220,663**

**Amount recommended: £220,800**

**Adv: Clare Payne**

**Base: Hammersmith & Fulham**

**Benefit: Hammersmith & Fulham**

**The Applicant**

Action on Disability (AoD) was established in 1979. It is a registered charity and company limited by guarantee, working with young deaf and disabled people across West London. Its principal delivery location is Hammersmith and Fulham and it provides most of the youth provision to young disabled people in the borough, in the following areas: Employment Service, Youth Service, Independent Living, and Peer Support and Advocacy. It has a strong focus on co-production and applies the ethos and principles of the social model of disability in all its work. All activities are user led and open to non-disabled young people. This focus on building understanding and friendships between disabled and non-disabled young people is a strength and one it promotes to public and voluntary sector partners. It has ten trustees and an organisational policy that 75 % of its board must be disabled. It has 15 full-time staff members and 6 part time employees. It works with up to 170 young people a year and has managed to move many of its support services online during the current pandemic.

**The Application**

AoD is requesting core funding over five years to sustain its work with young disabled people in three specific areas – the delivery of a weekly youth club; support for young disabled people to access the Duke of Edinburgh Awards Scheme via the Action on Disability Youth Service (a directly licenced centre); and an inhouse volunteering programme to enable young disabled people to gain work experience and skills. These activities will assist participants to build confidence and interpersonal skills, emotional resilience and self-awareness and move them towards independence and a place from which they feel able to make a real contribution to society. It is anticipated that 75 people per year will benefit from this project.

**The Recommendation**

AoD has considerable expertise in working with young disabled people and its focus on co-production has been used as a model for other service providers by Hammersmith and Fulham local authority. Its ethos of breaking down negative perceptions by creating opportunities for interaction between disabled and non-disabled young people offers a solid foundation for its aim of supporting young disabled people to become independent. Safeguarding is of paramount importance and it has the appropriate systems in place for disclosure. A significant amount of its restricted income is generated from youth contracts with Hammersmith and Fulham – it has been receiving such contracts for over 30 years. These are awarded for a four-year period and the organisation's current contract runs until March 2022, after which it will go through a retendering process. It has never had any issues raised, despite quarterly monitoring and annual reviews of contracts, which bodes well for retendering. AoD delivers the bulk of its activities from a leased community space but is in the process of fundraising for a capital project in partnership with the local council and Shepherd's Bush Housing Group. This would see the redevelopment of land opposite its current location, which will provide housing, but also a large ground

floor purpose-built space for AoD. The latter needs to fundraise a contribution of £188,000 by March 2021, having raised £64,000 to date. It is currently waiting to hear on an application to the GLA Good Growth Fund of around £140,000. Funding is advised as follows:

***£220,800 over five years (£44,500; £42,800; £43,230; £45,970; £44,300) towards staff costs, sessional costs and overheads for programmes with young people.***

### **Funding History**

Meeting Date	Decision
12/03/2015	PROJECT DESCRIPTION £121,300 over 3 years (£41,400, £39,600, £40,300) towards a full-time Independent Living Officer and associated running costs.

### **Background and detail of proposal**

95 % of the disabled young people accessing the services of AoD will have a learning disability or learning difficulty and a large proportion have a diagnosis of autism. It reports that many of these young people find school and the curriculum extremely difficult to navigate and are more likely to drop out of the educational system than their non-disabled peers with obvious impact on their employment opportunities. These young people may also struggle to build friendships and peer networks, becoming isolated as a result. AoD has, over forty years, developed an approach that builds confidence and self-esteem in young disabled people, both in a social and workplace environment. It refers to this approach as a “pathway to independent living” and in 2010 developed a ten-year plan to work towards the inclusion of isolated and excluded young disabled people within mainstream provision and society. This document has influenced its relationships with partners such as the local authority, local further education colleges and arts organisations such as the Lyric Hammersmith and Lyric Youth. Over five years AoD will use core support to assist young disabled people in acquiring life skills, gaining a positive perspective on their disability, building friendships, independence and in many cases gaining employment.

### **Financial Information**

AoD is assessed to be in a stable financial position, although its free reserves for the year ending March 2020 are below its minimum threshold, which the Board and staff are focused on addressing. It has a large contract confirmed from the local authority until March 2022, several ongoing contracts with local colleges and has engaged a freelance fundraiser to assist in fundraising from charitable trusts. In the financial year April 2020 - March 2021 the organisation is anticipating receipt of £140,000 which will be ring-fenced for a capital project and recorded within its fixed assets. It is likely that much of the money (if received) will be spent by the end of March 2021 as construction is already underway. This unconfirmed amount is included in income and expenditure for the financial year ending March 2021, which gives the perception that free reserves are too low, when in fact they are adequate. The organisation will add capital income to its balance sheet as fixed assets but is yet to work out how much depreciation it will pay each year, so this has not been applied in the figures below. It will not own its new premises but instead have a 250-year lease. Fundraising for the capital project has been unaffected by COVID-19 and remains on track. The pandemic has had no impact on income secured from current local

authority contracts or existing Trust funding, whilst the charity has insignificant earned income so will not be affected by losses to that.

Year end as at March 2019	2019	2020	2021
	Signed Accounts	Forecast	Budget
	£	£	£
<b>Income &amp; expenditure:</b>			
Income	1,083,747	956,358	1,011,214
- % of Income confirmed as at	N/A	100	78%
Expenditure	(1,030,204)	(909,584)	(1,066,274)
Total surplus/(deficit)	<b>53,543</b>	<b>46,774</b>	<b>(55,060)</b>
Split between:			
- Restricted surplus/(deficit)	4,695	22,011	(13,462)
- Unrestricted surplus/(deficit)	48,848	24,763	(41,598)
	<b>53,543</b>	<b>46,774</b>	<b>(55,060)</b>
Total Operating Expenditure (minus cost of Raising Funds)	1,026,649	869,784	1,043,674
<b>Free unrestricted reserves:</b>			
Free unrestricted reserves held at year end	177,589	202,352	160,754
No of months of operating expenditure	2.1	2.8	1.8
Reserves policy target	256,662	217,446	260,919
No of months of operating expenditure	3.0	3.0	3.0
Free reserves over/(under) target	(79,073)	(15,094)	(100,165)

**Approved.....**  
Chief Grants Officer /  
Deputy CGO

**Date.....**

**Approved.....**  
Chair

**Date.....**

**Approved.....**  
Deputy Chair

**Date.....**