

MEETING : 09/07/2015

Ref: 12680

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY - Reducing Poverty

**Disability and Social Care Advice Service
(Wandsworth)**

Adv: Sandra Jones

Amount requested: £99,160

**Base: Wandsworth
Benefit: Wandsworth**

Amount recommended: £99,200

The Charity

Disability and Social Care Advice Service – Wandsworth (DASCAS) was established in 1977 to provide support and advice to disabled people on any aspect of disability and social care issues. During 2013/14 the charity dealt with 4,619 enquiries with 1,350 on-going cases of which 562 required home visits. During the year they successfully claimed £1,229,865 for 368 clients as well as assisting with an increasing number of Employment Support Appeals for vulnerable clients. The organisation is AQS accredited.

The Application

DASCAS is seeking funding to deliver advice to disabled people, their families and carers in the London Borough of Wandsworth through home visits, as well as providing advice in the office and via the telephone. These services will be provided by a Disability and Social Care Advisor (4 days per week) and trained volunteers.

The Recommendation

The organisation has strong links locally, both with the voluntary and statutory sectors, with a good track record of delivering quality advice. This post had been funded through the Henry Smith Foundation, and since that grant ceased, through the organisation's reserves. This position is not tenable in the long term and so the organisation is seeking funding to cover the post and associated costs. Apart from undertaking casework the post holder is responsible for training and supervising volunteers.

£99,200 over three years (£32,400; £33,100; £33,700) for a Disability and Social Care Advisor (4 days per week) and costs for trained volunteers to provide advice to disabled people in Wandsworth.

Funding History

None

Background and detail of proposal

DASCAS is the only specialist organisation in Wandsworth giving independent disability benefits advice. With the transition from Incapacity Benefits to Employment Support Allowance (ESA) and Personal Independence Payment (PIP) the demand for their services is growing as local people and agencies grapple with the changes. It is anticipated by the charity that demand will continue to increase when the transition to PIP will affect the majority of long term recipients rather than just the new claimants who are affected at the moment.

Often clients are not in a position to visit the office for support and so need to have home visits. The Advisor would do an initial visit to ascertain the level of support

needed and to undertake a risk assessment. If on-going support is needed, either the Advisor would continue to visit if the case is complex, otherwise a volunteer would undertake the case under the supervision of the Advisor. The organisation has a comprehensive lone worker policy and all volunteers must have an enhanced DBS.

Not all cases require a home visit, and the charity undertakes advice in their office as well as in other local community venues. A telephone service is also offered.

This service is currently provided by the charity, and so evidence of need has clearly been provided. With other grant funding ceasing, DASCAS has requested funding from City Bridge Trust to continue this service. The major funder for the organisation is the Local Authority which has committed to funding for at least the next two years. They also received a one-off amount from the CCG for last year, which meant that the organisation was in a healthy financial position at year end. This funding is not likely to be forthcoming for the current year.

Financial Information

Forecast income for 2015/16 is £143,461, of which £110,050 (76.7%) had been confirmed by June 2015. The remainder mostly relates to this pending application to City Bridge Trust for £32,401.

DASCAS has acknowledged that it is holding free unrestricted reserves in excess of its reserves policy target and has advised that these will be used to meet the increased demand for its services and investment in training of its staff.

DASCAS state that the cost of generating funds is nil, as its Trustees are responsible for raising funds and it relies on skilled volunteer support to help with delivering its advice services. However, DASCAS has advised that it will monitor its cost of generating funds and the disclosure in future accounts.

Year end at 31 March	2013/14 Audited Accounts	2014/15 Draft Accounts	2015/16 Current Year Budget
	£	£	£
Income and Expenditure			
Income	99,869	125,801	143,461
Expenditure	98,239	103,772	106,271
Unrestricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	(678)	17,126	945
Restricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	2,308	4,903	36,245
Total Surplus / (Deficit)	1,630	22,029	37,190
Surplus / (Deficit) as a % of turnover	1.6%	10.8%	25.9%
Cost of Generating funds (% of income)	0	0	0
Free unrestricted reserves			
Free unrestricted reserves held at Year End	26,434	43,560	44,505
How many months' worth of expenditure	3.2	5.0	5.0
Reserves Policy target	24,560	25,943	26,568
How many months' worth of expenditure	3.0	3.0	3.0
Free reserves over/(under) target	1,874	17,617	17,937