

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY - Strengthening London's Voluntary Sector**Homeless Link****Adv: Sandra Jones****Base: Lambeth****Amount requested: £148,095****Benefit: London-wide****Amount recommended: £148,100****The Charity**

Established in November 2001, Homeless Link (HL) is a national membership charity supporting and representing organisations working directly with homeless people across England. The charity works to make services for homeless people better and campaigns to change the perceptions of homelessness, and improve the policies that affect homeless people. This is achieved by offering its members advice and support; information, research and training; influencing government; networking and events; and funding.

The Application

HL is seeking funding to enable small charities working with Londoners who are homeless, to improve their monitoring, evaluation and impact reporting. This will be achieved through a number of training courses and group sessions, individual support, licenses for In-Form Community for participating organisations, dissemination of good practice and sharing information and resources online. The funding will cover staff, associated running costs and the costs of events and training sessions.

The Recommendation

HL provides quality services to organisations working with homeless people, many of which have suffered from a decline in the level of funding available over recent years. In a competitive funding climate, it is more important than ever that organisations are able to demonstrate their effectiveness and to work in partnership. This project has been developed from feedback received from the charity's stakeholders, which identified the issues that the programme addresses as being priority for smaller (those with less than £500,000) charities. In London this equates to 67 members.

£148,100 over 3 years (£49,400, £48,700, £50,000) for a London Development Officer (0.7FTE), Research Officer (0.2 FTE), Policy Officer (0.1FTE), associated running costs and the costs of events and training sessions.

Funding History

Meeting Date	Decision
28/07/2011	£38,000 for a third and final year's support of the salary and running costs of a project to improve mental health services to homeless people in London.
04/06/2009	£77,000 over two years (£38,000; £39,000) towards the salary and running costs of a project to improve mental health services to homeless agencies and their clients.

Background and detail of proposal

The charity is currently in receipt of a grant from London Councils to support London-based groups in areas of financial sustainability and providing high quality provision

and advocacy in areas of housing and social welfare. Feedback from participants of this project demonstrated the need for more individualised, in depth support around evidencing impact of their services. HL have developed an approach to demonstrate impact – Picture the Change – which is based on collecting and analysing relevant data to highlight the value of services and needs of users, and translating information into impact to improve services and influence local decision makers. The charity also developed an In-Form database which is a specialist tool for organisations concerned with homelessness and housing to track users' progress and analyses outcomes. This database includes the Homelessness Outcomes Star that measures progress in users' soft outcomes.

The project proposed will be working with small charities to use the above tools to develop robust monitoring and evaluation systems. Participating organisations will be given individual support as well as training, networking and best practice events.

Financial Information

Homeless Link advised that there was a substantial decrease in income and expenditure from 2013/14 to 2014/15 due to the ending of the Homelessness Transition Fund (HTF), where in 2013/14 it received £4m from Central Government (Department for Communities and Local Government), which it paid out as grants to the voluntary sector enabling them to set up schemes to tackle and prevent rough sleeping.

Forecast income in the current year 2015/16 is £3.8m of which £2.6m (67%) had been confirmed by June 2015. The small drop in the 2015/16 budgeted income is due to a reduction of £250k in the charity's core funding from DCLG for administering the HTF programme. The cost of generating funds as a percentage of total income is low, which Homeless Link advised is due to 75% of its income being generated from DCLG contracts. The figure represents the salary and on-costs of their Head of Fundraising who is responsible for raising grants from Trusts, Foundations, Big Lottery and other Government Departments.

Year end at 31 March	2013/14 Audited Accounts	2014/15 Draft Accounts	2015/16 Following Year Forecast
	£	£	£
Income and Expenditure			
Income	7,726,661	4,047,655	3,829,975
Expenditure	7,627,090	3,780,254	3,775,236
Unrestricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	232,411	73,829	54,077
Restricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	(132,840)	193,573	662
Total Surplus / (Deficit)	99,571	267,402	54,739
Surplus / (Deficit) as a % of turnover	1.3%	6.6%	1.4%
Cost of Generating funds (% of income)	33,752 (0.4%)	55,845 (1.4%)	-
Free unrestricted reserves			
Free unrestricted reserves held at Year End	758,562	848,541	902,618
How many months' worth of expenditure	1.2	2.7	2.9
Reserves Policy target	725,418	725,418	725,418
How many months' worth of expenditure	1.1	2.3	2.3
Free reserves over/(under) target	33,144	123,123	177,200