

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY - Making London More Inclusive**Merton Mencap****Adv: Jack Joslin****Base: Merton****Amount requested: £45,000****(Revised request: £61,603)****Benefit: Merton****Amount recommended: £61,800****The Charity**

Merton Mencap (MM) operates in the London Borough of Merton delivering over 20 services and activities for young people and adults with a learning disability and their carers. Founded in 1964 as a charity MM aims to support people with a learning disability to be safer, healthier and live as independently as possible. They also support family carers to be less isolated and more connected to their community and have a voice in the shaping of local services. The charity is currently based at the Wilson Hospital.

The Application

This application is to support the running costs of a three year programme working with young people with learning disabilities to develop their independence and skills to help with their transition to adulthood. The 'Giving Back Club' looks to support 14 young people per year over a 48 week programme. Young people aged between 16 and 25 will be engaged to take part in 4 hour weekly sessions delivered by experienced staff. The aim is to support young people to partake in volunteering opportunities, provide life-skills workshops and facilitate young people taking part in community activities. This three year programme will have positive outcomes for the young people engaged in the project as they transition in to adulthood.

The Recommendation

MM has been delivering services in Merton for people with learning disabilities for over 50 years. This application is looking to support young people with learning disabilities as they transition into adulthood by engaging them in activities and supporting them to take up voluntary placements within the community and, as such, aligns closely with your Making London More Inclusive programme. A revised budget was submitted during assessment as it was noted by your officer that not all of the posts were being paid the London Living Wage. A new budget has been provided in Appendix 1 to the application form to reflect this increase. Full funding is recommended as follows:

£61,800 over 3 years (£13,900; £23,900; £24,000) to contribute to the salary costs of the Project Manager, Team Leader, and Support Workers and associated running costs for the 'Giving Back Club' project.

Funding History

Meeting Date	Decision
28/01/2015	Officers have been unable to undertake a full assessment as the necessary information has not been provided, despite several requests.

Background and detail of proposal

1 in 2 families with a learning disabled child live in poverty and need considerable support to take part in their communities. As a result, they are more likely to suffer additional health conditions relating to physical inactivity and isolation. Very few opportunities exist which support young people with learning disabilities to develop skills to be more independent. This programme of work looks to confront this need.

The 'Giving Back Club' will provide activities for young people with learning disabilities aged 16 to 25. Activities at the club will be focused on independent living skills like managing money, shopping for and cooking a healthy meal and fitness sessions. Workshops will focus on personal safety, first aid and nutrition. The majority of the programme will focus on support volunteering in the community. The charity already has good links with community businesses who have agreed to take on volunteers. This project will have strong outcomes for the young people involved helping with their transition into adulthood.

Financial Information

During assessment your officer discussed the organisations reliance on Statutory Funding. In February they received confirmation that 6 recent tenders for contracts from the local authority had been successful which puts them in a solid financial position for the next 3 years and without which MM would have utilised their remaining reserves. MM measure their free reserves on total expenditure rather than unrestricted expenditure and this would therefore give free reserves held at year end of 5 months, 3.15 months and 3.7 months respectively below. Unrestricted expenditure has been significantly reduced in 2018 as most of their core expenditure will be covered by contract income and restricted funding. Cost of generating funds was not disclosed in the 2016 Accounts, the charity will ensure this is included in the future and have given estimates for this cost for 2017 and 2018.

Year end as at 31 March	2016 Examined Accounts £	2017 Forecast £	2018 Forecast £
Income & expenditure:			
Income	581,729	371,667	588,420
- % of Income confirmed	n/a	n/a	89%
Expenditure	(543,550)	(523,466)	(588,420)
Total surplus/(deficit)	38,179	(151,799)	0
Split between:			
- Restricted surplus/(deficit)	34,480	(58,301)	(44,694)
- Unrestricted surplus/(deficit)	3,699	(93,498)	44,694
	38,179	(151,799)	0
Cost of Raising Funds	65	35,000	25,000
- % of income	0.0%	9.4%	4.2%
Operating expenditure (unrestricted funds)	44,922	104,997	4,500
Free unrestricted reserves:			
Free unrestricted reserves held at year end	226,974	137,255	181,949
No of months of operating expenditure	60.6	15.7	485.2
Reserves policy target	204,276	196,300	220,657
No of months of operating expenditure	54.6	22.4	588.4
Free reserves over/(under) target	22,698	(59,045)	(38,708)