

MEETING: 20/03/2017

Ref: 13835

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY - Reducing Poverty

Vision Care for Homeless People

Adv: Olivia Dix

Base: Tower Hamlets

Amount requested: £51,070

Benefit: Tower Hamlets

Amount recommended: £37,100

The Charity

Founded in 2003, Vision Care provides eye tests and glasses to homeless people, operating currently from six clinics across England, including 3 in London. The service is run by volunteer professionals, optometrists, dispensing opticians, assistants and students from the optical industry and lay volunteers. In 2015/16 1,087 homeless people received free eye tests and spectacles. It has very low overheads and staff costs and much of the equipment it uses is donated. As well as its practical work, the organisation lobbies for better optical care for homeless people and access to services.

The Application

The charity requests funding for a part-time Volunteer Manager to develop volunteer teams to reach more impoverished homeless people in London with eye care services.

The Recommendation

The amount requested was reduced due to the organisation receiving a grant from another Foundation towards year 1 costs. The new proposal is recommended:

£37,100 over 3 years (£2,600, £17,000, £17,500) for the salary of a p/t (2 dpw) Volunteer Manager and associated costs.

Funding History

None

Background and detail of proposal

Homeless people, even those entitled to NHS services, rarely use conventional services to access eye care, although research undertaken by the charity on a sample of 250 of their patients showed a prevalence of visual impairment twice that of the general population. Being able to see properly enables homeless people to access benefits more effectively and to read information relating to job applications etc. It also increases confidence. The organisation is embarking on a growth strategy in London, including a mobile clinic, and needs to recruit and support more volunteers. It recognises that this will require more volunteer teams and dedicated input from a manager to ensure they are properly trained and supported.

Financial Information

The increase in budget in 2017/18 is due to plans to open new centres in Leeds and Exeter and a mobile unit in Tower Hamlets. Whilst confirmed income of 18% for 2017/18 looks low, £36,000 of restricted funding is also expected to be carried forward at 31 March 2017 for utilisation within this year. The cost of raising funds increase is reflective of the anticipated expansion in activities.

Year end 31st March	2016 Examined Accounts £	2017 Forecast £	2018 Forecast £
Income & expenditure:			
Income	108,142	104,249	142,501
- % of Income confirmed as at 12/02/2017	n/a	n/a	18%
Expenditure	(76,357)	(103,443)	(141,005)
Total surplus/(deficit)	31,785	806	1,496
Split between:			
- Restricted surplus/(deficit)	27,756	(4,362)	1,659
- Unrestricted surplus/(deficit)	4,029	5,168	(163)
	31,785	806	1,496
Cost of Raising Funds	1,526	5,480	9,331
- % of income	1.4%	5.3%	6.5%
Operating expenditure (unrestricted funds)	43,632	44,755	69,741
Free unrestricted reserves:			
Free unrestricted reserves held at year end	37,673	40,841	40,678
No of months of operating expenditure	10.4	11.0	7.0
Reserves policy target	27,270	27,972	43,588
No of months of operating expenditure	7.5	7.5	7.5
Free reserves over/(under) target	10,403	12,869	(2,910)