

MEETING: 11/05/2017

Ref: 13985

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY – Anniversary Programme – Bridge to Work

Muscular Dystrophy Group of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Adv: Ciaran Rafferty

Amount requested over 5 years: £277,772

**Base: Southwark
Benefit: London-wide**

Amount recommended: £276,000

The Charity

Muscular Dystrophy UK (MDUK) was established in 1959 to improve the lives of people affected by muscle disease. Muscular dystrophy is an umbrella term for over sixty relatively rare and progressive muscle-wasting conditions for which there is currently no cure. The charity's work is aimed at both improving the lives of people currently affected by muscle wasting conditions and at investing in research to establish cures and treatments for the future.

Recent Funding History

Meeting Date	Decision
9/7/2015	£113,000 over three years to continue the Trailblazers (work experience) programme
18/4/2013	£42,500 over two years for a work experience programme

The Proposal

Since 2013 – and with CBT funding – the charity has provided internal work experience opportunities to people who have otherwise struggled to find the opportunities to take this crucial step on their way to full employment. It has also run employment skills workshops, inviting speakers from across various industries to share their experiences and offer advice to their peers and, more recently, worked with external organisations to create further work experience opportunities for participants. As this model has worked well, the main thrust of this proposal is to continue it but also to augment it with providing advice and support on employment rights and opportunities targeted particularly at young people in universities, clinics and colleges across London. Through the Bridge to Work programme MDUK hopes to offer better support to people as they leave higher education.

At the centre of this work will be a cohort of young disabled people themselves who will be trained by the Disability Law Service. They will be ambassadors and will co-facilitate the workshops to be run at relevant institutions across London, equipping young disabled people with the knowledge and confidence in their rights they need to move into the world of work. This approach addresses the concern that there are not enough advisors in this area who have direct experience of disability. Over the next five years MDUK will also develop its online resources by continuing with its 'careers spotlight' blog and introducing more audio and visual content. It will then be shared with universities and colleges, encouraging them to integrate it into their own online disability careers support.

Principal Outcomes

1. Over 5 years, 75 young disabled Londoners will have taken part in the MDUK placement programme and will be more confident in their abilities and be in a better position to secure paid employment thanks to better CV and interview skills and office working experience.
2. Up to 50 external organisations will have taken part in the project offering placements or advice and support at our employability workshops. These organisations will be in a better position to support disabled employees in the future.
3. Each year, 4 young disabled people will be trained by the Disability Law Service, giving them the skills and knowledge so they can support their peers.
4. At least 6 workshops held every year at higher education establishments (universities or colleges) and at clinics – as well as other suitable locations – for young disabled people to learn more about their employment rights and opportunities and feel better equipped before moving into the world of work.
5. Through increasing online content, MDUK will develop a more holistic employability service giving young disabled people the opportunity to get the support they need when they need it and in whatever format they choose.

Recommendation

MDUK's work on employment with and for disabled people is well known to your Committee as you have supported it for a number of years. It is of a high quality and can demonstrate success. This proposal continues that work but also aims to address a real gap in support – namely for disabled young people in further education, where the advice offered is often not what it could be. Additionally, MDUK can bring many years' experience in campaigning and influencing policy so that those systemic issues which hinder access to employment for disabled people can be highlighted and addressed. A grant is recommended:

£276,000 over five years (£51,000; £53,000; £55,000; £57,000; £60,000) for the Project Manager (3.5dpw) and other staff and operational costs of the Bridge to Work project. The grant in years 4 and 5 is subject to the project achieving satisfactory progress in the first three years.

Financial Information

Of the income forecast for the current year 2% was confirmed as at 1st April. However, this is not unusual as the bulk of the charity's income is unrestricted and derived from fundraising over the whole year. (The charity's fundraising team has exceeded its targets in the past two years.) The charity states that its reserves policy is to hold £1.5m in free unrestricted reserves (ie excluding unrestricted designated funds). In the table below the reserves figures shown as held at the end of each year are inclusive of designated funds. These funds have been set aside (and drawn upon) for 3 major strategic projects - a clinical trial, the creation of a new translational research centre in Oxford and investment in a database for Duchenne.

Year end as at 31st March	2016	2017	2018
	Audited	Draft	Forecast
	£	£	£
Income & expenditure:			
Income	8,340,000	7,572,984	6,934,641
- % of Income confirmed	n/a	n/a	2%
Expenditure	(6,653,000)	(8,056,098)	(8,596,057)
Total surplus/(deficit)	1,687,000	(483,114)	(1,661,416)
Split between:			
- Restricted surplus/(deficit)	836,000	(256,114)	(43,866)
- Unrestricted surplus/(deficit)	851,000	(227,000)	(1,617,550)
	1,687,000	(483,114)	(1,661,416)
Cost of Raising Funds	2,106,000	2,039,188	2,166,827
- % of income	25.3%	26.9%	31.2%
Operating expenditure (unrestricted funds)	4,656,000	6,395,472	7,201,417
Free unrestricted reserves:			
Free unrestricted reserves held at year end	4,793,000	4,566,000	2,948,450
No of months of operating expenditure	12.4	8.6	4.9
Reserves policy target	1,500,000	1,500,000	1,500,000
No of months of operating expenditure	3.9	2.8	2.5
Free reserves over/(under) target	3,293,000	3,066,000	1,448,450