

MEETING: 11/05/2017

Ref: 13861

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY - Making London More Inclusive

Heart n Soul

Adv: Rebecca Green

Amount requested: £90,000

Base: Lewisham

Benefit: Lewisham

Amount recommended: £90,000

The Charity

Heart n Soul (H&S) is a creative arts organisation and charity based in the Deptford Albany, working with artists and audiences with learning disabilities. H&S offers opportunities for learning disabled people to take part in creative activities, gain skills and develop artistic talents through interconnected programmes. These include regular creative sessions for adults and young people, multimedia club nights and training possibilities. H&S focus on working towards professional productions, and ensures that people with learning disabilities are involved in all areas of work including production, office and leadership roles. People with learning disabilities co-lead H&S as trustees, artists, co-producers, staff and volunteers.

The Application

H&S requests funding for staff and project costs to run the Expandable project. Expandable seeks to work in partnership with a greater range of organisations, including libraries, galleries, and social spaces and hubs in Lewisham. It will bring H&S's work into the local area, so that H&S artists can be a present, visible and an active part of the community, enabling people with learning disabilities to increase their sense of ownership of local public spaces and venues as performers, artists and audience members. In addition, wider inclusive audiences will have the chance to enjoy the talents and achievements of artists with learning disabilities, promoting social cohesion and inspiring others.

The Recommendation

H&S is a well-respected organisation with an excellent reputation, and its work has been recognised in many sector awards. H&S is entering its 30th birthday year, which will celebrate by sharing stories and cultural activities in the local community. These celebrations will act as a launchpad for Expandable, increasing possibilities for people with learning disabilities to engage in art in the local community.

£90,000 over 3 years (3 x £30,000) towards the Expandable project, including the Project Assistant (2.5 dpw) and associated project costs.

Funding History

Meeting Date	Decision
24/05/2016	This application has been submitted within 3 years of the applicant's former CBT grant and therefore is not eligible at this time. The application has withdrawn its application and intends to resubmit once 3 years have elapsed.
20/10/2011	£90,000 over three years (3 x £30,000) towards the salary of the Co-ordinator and running costs of the Training and Taking Part programme.
01/02/2007	£90,000 (£30,000; £30,000; £30,000) to develop accessible arts events for learning disabled young people and adults in London.

Background and detail of proposal

Heart n Soul is based at The Albany in Deptford. Around 60% of the beneficiaries come from Lewisham and adjacent boroughs and about 50% are from BAME backgrounds, reflecting the diversity of the local population. Deptford is experiencing rapid gentrification and changing quickly. Prohibitive property costs, and the redesign of local areas have made some beneficiaries feel that the 'grittier' parts of the area are being bypassed, increasing a sense of exclusion. In response, the Expandable activity will provide people with learning disabilities with ways to take part in the arts and to raise visibility in local arts spaces. H&S is also engaged with networks focused on rethinking new ways of working with culture and communities in cities.

People with learning disabilities have far fewer life chances and can frequently be lonely and isolated within the community. Their health indices are poorer and their chances of being in work are extremely limited. Over 95% of Heart n Soul's beneficiaries have a learning disability and a significant number experience multiple learning and physical disabilities. Many have little in the way of confidence and ambition: the self-esteem of people with learning disabilities was described as 'chronically low' in Lemos&Crane's 2014 report *Loneliness and Cruelty*. Recent media reports signal how people with learning disabilities can be seen as a second class citizens. H&S's 30 year history has widened opportunities for learning disabled people to take part in the arts, be more connected, have more confidence and work towards more independent lives.

Financial Information

In its internal management reports, H&S shows project expenditure as being restricted even though it will be paid out of unrestricted income. This is presented correctly in the year-end accounts, however it has the impact in the financial table of making unrestricted expenditure appear very low, and hence reserves cover look higher than it should be. However, although recent years have been tough, I feel confident that future plans are sustainable.

Year end as at 31 March	2016 Audited/Examined Accounts £	2017 Forecast £	2018 Budget £
Income & expenditure:			
Income	789,661	762,409	898,655
- % of Income confirmed as at 28/02/2017	n/a	%	65%
Expenditure	(846,799)	(808,960)	(889,589)
Total surplus/(deficit)	(57,138)	(46,551)	9,066
Split between:			
- Restricted surplus/(deficit)	(29,748)	(246,958)	(277,325)
- Unrestricted surplus/(deficit)	(27,390)	200,407	286,391
	(57,138)	(46,551)	9,066
Cost of Raising Funds	42,262	54,900	42,850
- % of income	5.4%	7.2%	4.8%
Operating expenditure (unrestricted funds)	527,574	191,141	194,532
Free unrestricted reserves:			
Free unrestricted reserves held at year end	91,805	53,511	62,577
No of months of operating expenditure	2.1	3.4	3.9
Reserves policy target	70,000	70,000	70,000
No of months of operating expenditure	1.6	4.4	4.3
Free reserves over/(under) target	21,805	(16,489)	(7,423)