

Report – The City Bridge Trust Committee

Bridge to Work

To be presented on Thursday, 22nd June 2017

*To the Right Honourable The Lord Mayor, Aldermen and Commons
of the City of London in Common Council assembled.*

SUMMARY

This report requests that the Court of Common Council approves a grant of £775,000 over five years (£161,000; £150,000; £151,000; £155,000; £158,000) towards staffing and operational costs of the joint *Bridge to Work* project by Inclusion London and Action on Disability. This proposal builds on existing, effective, work as well as the knowledge and direct experience from Deaf and Disabled People's Organisations and Disabled people themselves in order to develop best practice and to shape policy in this area.

The principal outcomes of the project are to:

- Reduce the barriers young Disabled people face in accessing and remaining in employment
- Support employers to become more confident, inclusive and accessible employers of Disabled people
- Identify and develop new recruitment routes between potential employers and Disabled employees
- Influence policy and practice in employment support through providing robust evidence as to the effectiveness and impact of employment support models.

RECOMMENDATION

The Court is asked to approve a grant of £775,000 over five years (£161,000; £150,000; £151,000; £155,000; £158,000) to Inclusion London and Action on Disability (with the former as the lead partner and recipient of the grant) towards a Project Manager; other key staff; and operational costs of the Inclusion London/Action on Disability joint *Bridge to Work* project. The grant in years 4 and 5 would be subject to the project achieving satisfactory progress in the first three years.

MAIN REPORT

Background

1. At its meeting in March, your City Bridge Trust Committee agreed a general allocation of the available funds for the Bridge to Work programme, which aims to support disabled people into, and those already in, employment. The total funds available - excluding the Mental Health strand which is the subject of a separate report - amount to £3.3m which, subject to the Court's approval of this proposal, has been fully committed.

Current Position

2. Although the last three governments have aimed to move disabled people into employment and have recognised structural barriers to this, employment programmes have almost exclusively focused on narrowly defined menus of support aimed at individual change rather than addressing structural barriers or engaging and educating employers. They have not, therefore, been as effective as they might. The one successful exception - Access to Work - is not widely promoted and so only serves a small minority of disabled people who could benefit from it.
3. There is good evidence of specialist and personalised approaches to employment support and skills development which have been shown to be more effective for people with learning difficulties or mental health conditions. However, there are very few academic or well-designed studies into what works for other impairment groups.

Inclusion London and Action on Disability

4. Inclusion London is the membership body for Deaf and Disabled People's Organisations (DDPOs) in London. It has ninety such organisations as members and, through those, reaches over 70,000 disabled people. It plays a significant role in influencing local, regional and national policy in equality and inclusion and would be a very important organisation to be involved in your Bridge to Work programme.
5. Action on Disability aims to promote equality of opportunity for people who have a physical or sensory impairment, or learning difficulty, or who experience mental health difficulties. It does this through providing a range of direct, high-quality, services, and also uses learning from its work to influence local and national policy.
6. Inclusion London has been working with 10 DDPOs offering employment and skills support. These organisations are using a range of approaches and between them have engaged with over 20,000 disabled Londoners, with an average success rate of 37% for getting people into employment (Action on Disability's own approach achieves as high as 70%).

Project Details

7. Inclusion London will lead a partnership of London DDPOs to develop, roll out and evaluate effective models of employment support. The project comprises 6 key elements of delivery covering different forms of employment support, engagement and brokerage with employers as well as research, evaluation and strategic policy work.
8. One of the key elements of the project will be the delivery and development of the Action on Disability tried-and-tested model of supported internships, where twelve young people with learning difficulties are placed with an employer for one academic year. They have an on-site tutor; one or two on-site job coaches; and a dedicated class room. They are given work placements within the business and a business mentor. The work placements must be real positions for which there is a business need and they will rotate through three different placements over the year. In the final term the job coaches will assist them to find a job either within the host employer (who usually takes one or two on

permanently) or with another employer. Action on Disability will develop one new supported internship site per year, with each one accommodating twelve young people.

9. Action on Disability has historically worked with larger employers. However, in alignment with the City Bridge Trust's efforts to improve disability awareness amongst Small and Medium sized Enterprises (SMEs), Action on Disability will be taking the learning from that work and bringing it to the local high street by having a dedicated strand of work around high street engagement, which will deliver one of the wider aims for *Bridge to Work* around engaging with SMEs.

Conclusion

10. This report requests that the Court of Common Council approves a grant of £783,925 over five years (£161,000; £150,000; £151,000; £155,000; £158,000) towards staffing and operational costs of the joint Bridge to Work project by Inclusion London and Action on Disability. This proposal builds on existing, effective, work as well as the knowledge and direct experience from Deaf and Disabled People's Organisations and Disabled people themselves in order to develop best practice and to shape policy in this area.

All of which we submit to the judgement of this Honourable Court.

DATED this 11th day of May 2017.

SIGNED on behalf of the Committee.

Alison Gowman, Alderman
Chairman, The City Bridge Trust Committee