

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY - Reducing Poverty**Sangam Association of Asian Women (SAAW)****Adv: Kate Moralee****Base: Barnet****Benefit: Barnet**

Amount requested: £173,697
(Revised Request : £182,834)
Amount recommended: £182,800

The Charity

Sangam Association of Asian Women was formed in the 1980's to support Asian women arriving from East Africa. It demonstrated great business acumen and astuteness at the time by raising money to build a Community Building which provides a commercial income stream enabling the organisation to provide services for the local community. Over the years SAAW has widened its client base as needs of the local community have changed. Now many of their clients are from Eastern European communities, specifically Polish and Romanian. The ethos of the organisation is one of involving individuals in solutions to their issues and developing skills and knowledge to support this.

The Application

City Bridge Trust is being asked to support the provision of a dedicated debt advice service including one f/t Debt Adviser, training and expenses for volunteers, provision of training in personal budgeting for individuals and associated organisational costs.

The Recommendation

This is a well led organisation which has its roots in the local community. It understands the changing needs and ethnic make-up of the local community, regularly reviewing its services offer to ensure community needs are being met. This project will provide debt support and advice to individuals as well as "Managing Your Money" training and mentoring in the use of digital channels to empower individuals with the skills and abilities to self-help in the future. The additional amount now requested is due to removal of any additional staff costs (admin) and inclusion of the rental element of the project, discussed at the assessment visit. Funding is recommended:

£182,800 (£61,200, £59,800, £61,800) for a f/t Debt Advice case worker, training delivery and recruitment and support of volunteers.

Funding History

Meeting Date	Decision
26/11/2015	Application was withdrawn by the organisation as it wished to revise its request.

Background and detail of proposal

Sangam Association for Asian Women has delivered general advice services for the local community since the 1980's. This proposal builds on and complements a pilot project funded by Barnet Council in 2012 and since funded by Women India Association at approximately £10,000 per annum. The service currently offers a programme of personal budgeting training to people to empower them to manage their own finances. However there has been an increasing demand for debt specific

advice, identified through monitoring uptake of generic advice services and counselling.

Locally there has been a drastic reduction in provision of legal and advice services, with the closure of Barnet Law Centre, East Finchley Advice Service and Barnet CAB in Collingdale. The only other advice provision in the local area is Hendon CAB, which does not provide any debt specific advice. The CAB provides information on where to find forms online but does not have the capacity to support people to complete these forms.

With the many changes to the Welfare Benefit System and the impending roll out of Universal Credit, demand for all services at Sangham is increasing. Sangham's services include counselling, advice and training with an ethos of empowerment.

This proposal recognises the growing need for debt specific support and advice as financial worries are increasing levels of stress and having a negative impact on mental health and wellbeing. It is recognised that people are experiencing more complex and critical financial difficulties with limited skills and confidence to resolve the issues. Individuals are referred both internally and from external organisations.

This project adopts a person centred approach to supporting people with debt issues. It proposes to offer face to face individual debt advice to address crisis, followed by specific training on managing your money. It also intends to recruit and train a pool of volunteers to support people to access and complete online forms. This approach will support people to have the skills to proactively manage their finances and address any issues at early stage in the future.

Financial Information

This organisation is financially stable with the majority of its income generated through commercial letting of venue space in its property. It maintains healthy reserves, which include delegated funds for operational purposes.

Year end as at 31st March	FY 15/16	FY 16/17	FY 17/18
	Audited Accounts	Audited Accounts	Forecast
	£	£	£
Income & expenditure:			
Income	319,676	264,061	267,000
- % of Income confirmed	n/a	n/a	11%
Expenditure	(303,836)	(287,218)	(272,000)
Total surplus/(deficit)	15,840	(23,157)	(5,000)
Split between:			
- Restricted surplus/(deficit)	(1,719)	(29,402)	0
- Unrestricted surplus/(deficit)	17,559	6,245	(5,000)
	15,840	(23,157)	(5,000)
Cost of Raising Funds	50,333	44,477	30,000
- % of income	15.7%	16.8%	11.2%
Operating expenditure (unrestricted funds)	242,914	246,776	250,000
Free unrestricted reserves:			
Free unrestricted reserves held at year end	111,068	117,313	112,313
No of months of operating expenditure	5.5	5.7	5.4
Reserves policy target	151,918	143,609	134,000
No of months of operating expenditure	7.5	7.0	6.4
Free reserves over/(under) target	(40,850)	(26,296)	(21,687)