

MEETING: 21/03/2019

Ref: 14990

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY: Bridging Divides - Connecting the Capital

Opening Doors London

Adv: Ciaran Rafferty

Base: Camden

Amount requested: £299,757

Benefit: London-wide

Amount recommended: £300,000

The Applicant

Opening Doors London (ODL) was initially a project of Age UK Camden (and funded as such by the Trust in 2010). In April 2016 it became a limited company in its own right and then a registered charity in June 2016. It is the largest charity providing information and support services specifically for older LGBT people (which it defines as 50+). Its aim is to support the older LGBT community to lead full, vibrant and respected lives free from isolation, loneliness, discrimination and prejudice. ODL's trustee board comprises people with lived experience of the issues they address. You are currently funding ODL for strategic work in training and educating the care sector in London to provide more appropriate – and less discriminatory - services for the older LGBT community. This project is progressing extremely well.

The Application

This application is to enable ODL to expand and develop its existing Ambassadors programme. These are volunteers – older people with lived experience who can promote the work of ODL and, especially, represent the voice of the LGBT community to service providers, policy makers, researchers and in the media. Approximately 15 Ambassadors per annum will be recruited and supported to engage at a local and regional level with commissioners and designers of health and social care services. The grant, if awarded, would enable the training, support and effectiveness of a network of Ambassadors across London.

The Recommendation

Your officer, when attending an ODL conference in 2018, witnessed first hand the power and effectiveness of the Ambassadors when a panel of them spoke from their own experiences of the discrimination, fear and prejudice that many older LGBT people have faced or still do. Their real-life testimonies are very powerful instigators of change and so have a powerful and effective role to play in improving statutory and non-statutory services for older people, particularly those from the LGBT community. The grant requested is to support 2 x part-time posts which combined equate to 42 hpw. Although this is slightly higher than your usual limit of 1 x FTE post, the nature of the work and its likely wide-ranging impact across London can be considered as justifying the additional hours requested. A grant is advised:

£300,000 over five years (5 x £60,000) for the Ambassadors programme, specifically a p/t (21 hpw) Policy Officer and p/t (21 hpw) Ambassador Support Officer plus some operational and support costs.

Funding History

Meeting Date	Decision
15/06/2017	£165,000 over three years (3 x £55,000) for a programme to develop the quality of services provided to older LGBT Londoners by voluntary and statutory agencies.

Background and detail of proposal

The small cohort of volunteer Ambassadors which ODL currently deploys has been extremely effective so far. What makes them so, from feedback garnered, is their life experience and their passion. They are valued for speaking from the heart and for their personal experiences ("good, bad and ugly"). They can expertly represent both ODL and the wider LGBT older community as they are seen to have no agenda other than to make things better. This proposal will enable a wider and more intensive range of recruitment of and support to Ambassadors and will achieve the following:

- The needs and views of older LGBT Londoners are better heard and represented in local and regional policy-making processes, leading to better decision making.
- Health and social care providers are more effective at meeting the needs of this community in London.
- Older LGBT Londoners experience improved wellbeing and capacity to remain independent through improved access to more appropriate services.

In addition to the impact of ageing older LGBT people face increased risk of loneliness and isolation, including being more likely to live alone, to be single and less likely to have children (as evidenced by a previous Stonewall report). Lack of understanding of challenges faced by this community means mainstream services often fail to meet their needs. The work of the ODL Ambassadors will significantly help to change this.

Financial Information

ODL is a subsidiary charity of Age Concern Camden (trading as Age UK Camden). The subsidiary charity was established as this was recognised as a better governance model that would maximise independent fundraising whilst remaining within the Age UK Camden family, thereby having efficient back office support. ODL (the charity) began "trading" on 1 July 2016 when the assets and liabilities associated with ODL (the service) were transferred from Age UK Camden to the new subsidiary. The organisation's reserves policy is to hold 3 months' worth of total income (although unrestricted expenditure is quite low as a proportion of the total). Free unrestricted reserves are chiefly augmented by voluntary donations and legacies and, as such, can be quite unpredictable hence the charity aims to increase its free reserves through offering more training and consultancy services.

Year end as at 31 March			
	Audited Accounts 2017-18	Forecast 2018-19	Budget 2019-20
Income & expenditure:			
Income	338,939	450,727	556,530
- % of income confirmed as at 20/02/19		84%	50%
Expenditure	(315,719)	(393,867)	(551,427)
Total surplus/(deficit)	23,220	56,860	5,103
Split between:			
- Restricted surplus/(deficit)	7,798	0	0
- Unrestricted surplus/(deficit)	15,422	56,860	5,103
	23,220	56,860	5,103
Cost of Raising Funds			
- % of income	4.1%	3.7%	5.0%
Operating expenditure	315,719	393,867	551,427
Free unrestricted reserves:			
Free unrestricted reserves held at year end	20,822	77,682	82,785
No of months of operating expenditure	0.8	2.4	1.8
Reserves policy target	84,735	112,682	139,133
No of months of operating expenditure	3.2	3.4	3.0
Free reserves over/(under) target	(63,913)	(35,000)	(56,348)

