

**MEETING: Delegated Authority**

**Ref: 15632**

**ASSESSMENT CATEGORY: Bridging Divides - Positive Transitions**

**Havering Women's Aid**

**Amount requested: £127,500**

**Amount recommended: £127,500**

**Adv: Clare Payne**

**Base: Havering**

**Benefit: Havering**

**The Applicant**

Havering Women's Aid (HWA) was established in 1978 and is a registered charity and company limited by guarantee. It operates two refuge facilities within the borough of Havering, for women and their children who have had to leave homes due to domestic or sexual abuse. It also delivers a range of services in the community for men, women and children, via its Floating Support and Outreach Services. It runs two helplines for female victims of abuse and one for male victims. It has eight full time staff and four part-time workers, most of whom are funded through various grants or contracts with Havering Council. It works closely with a range of partners, agencies and services across the borough.

**The Application**

HWA is requesting funding over five years to employ a Young Persons Independent Domestic Abuse Advisor (YPIDVA). This individual will provide personalised and holistic support and advocacy to young people – the majority will be women - focusing on their safety in the first instance, then recovery and the journey to independence. The YPIDVA will work closely with the wider team at Havering Women's Aid and with local services to assist young clients in accessing ongoing support in areas such as counselling, secure housing, and activity groups to build self-esteem and social networks. It expects to work with 420 clients per year.

**The Recommendation**

The charity has a considerable track record and expertise in working with women and children, men and young people experiencing or at risk of domestic violence or sexual abuse. It has a small but engaged board with specialist knowledge of the issues it works to address. Safeguarding is paramount and all clients have their needs reassessed every six weeks – every four in the case of a young person. Staff are aware of the vulnerabilities of clients and the need to support safe disclosure and appropriate and joined up signposting between local agencies. It is dependent on contract funding from the local authority but has been in receipt of such since 1978, so the relationship is well established. Contracts run over a five-year period (three years confirmation with a two-year extension following review) after which providers must undertake a retendering process. Its current contract runs from September 2018 to September 2021 and it does not envisage any problems with this being extended. In recent years, the organisation has looked to build relationships with charitable foundations to enable it to respond to emerging needs and increasing demand that cannot be covered by the local authority resource. The volume of referrals relating to young people, particularly from schools, is evidence of the need for a new member of staff to support this client group. Funding is advised as follows:

***£127,500 over five years (£25,000; £25,250; £25,500; £25,750; £26,000) to cover the salary of a Young Persons Independent Domestic Abuse Advisor. Additional costs such as N.I and pension will be met by the applicant.***

### **Background and detail of proposal**

The organisation's Floating Support Team is experiencing high demand and is unable to respond to all referrals. In recent years, it has experienced a rise in referrals from schools and agencies seeking advice and support for vulnerable young people, usually women. It attributes this to gang culture in the borough with young women being drawn into activities via boyfriends; hiding a weapon for a partner is common. Another reason is that the threshold at which a referral to social services can be made has increased, so a young person now needs to have been physically hurt to meet the referral threshold, rather than considered to be at risk of harm. Havering Women's Aid wishes to employ a YPIDVA over a five-year period, to address this gap. This worker will manage outreach and referrals and provide one to one support and signposting. A young person can access their support for an indefinite period. However, it is anticipated that intensive support over three months will address many immediate issues such as housing, sexual exploitation and enable referrals to drug and alcohol support services. Emphasis will be placed on building confidence and self-esteem and those accessing the Advisor will be encouraged to continue with education or training if appropriate. Havering Women's Aid evaluates its impact through both quantitative and qualitative means. It places focus on the latter by asking clients to verbally share "their journey" over a period. In doing so, it can pull out soft outcomes such as improved confidence and self-esteem, building positive relationships and the ability to make informed and safe choices. It is a member of the borough's Violence Against Women and Girls Network and works closely with a range of local services and partners including social services, maternity services, the homeless team, Rape Crisis and probation services.

### **Financial Information**

Havering Women's Aid has secured the majority of income for the year ending March 2020 and a sizeable proportion for the following financial year. Its current council contract runs until September 2021, after which a two-year extension is highly likely. The local authority is currently consulting on retendering every 10 years rather than five, which would be a significant help to the organisation in planning future activities and staffing. Whilst having confidence in the securing of local authority contracts beyond this point, in recent years it has worked to achieve grant income from charitable trusts generating £83,000 in the year ending March 2020. It is forecasting £108,000 of grant funding from this source in the following financial year, £63,000 of which has been secured. Free reserves are above the levels required and the deficit at year end in March 2020 and March 2021 is a result of payment in arrears by the local authority, so not assessed to be of concern.

In relation to the COVID-19 pandemic, the charity remains in a stable financial position due to its multi-year contracts with the local authority. Publicity of the underfunding of refuges for many years and the media coverage of the rise in domestic abuse during lockdown, may help create funding opportunities. In the last six weeks, HWA has received £5,000 from the London Community Response Fund for emergency food for women and children at its refuge. It has applied for and is waiting to hear from the Lottery Funding for Emergency Helpline Staff. If a grant is agreed the organisation is aware that it will have scope to use some of the funding for core costs though the salary costs are a priority at this point in time.

Year end as at March 2019	2019	2020	2021
	Signed Accounts £	Forecast £	Budget £
<b>Income &amp; expenditure:</b>			
Income	451,791	406,630	485,680
- % of Income confirmed as at	N/A	99%	78%
Expenditure	(405,713)	(407,917)	(493,007)
Total surplus/(deficit)	<b>46,078</b>	<b>(1,287)</b>	<b>(7,327)</b>
Split between:			
- Restricted surplus/(deficit)	40,489	(4,552)	(10,752)
- Unrestricted surplus/(deficit)	5,589	3,265	3,425
	<b>46,078</b>	<b>(1,287)</b>	<b>(7,327)</b>
Total expenditure	405,713	407,917	493,007
<b>Free unrestricted reserves:</b>			
Free unrestricted reserves held at year end	125,577	128,842	132,267
No of months of total expenditure	3.7	3.8	3.2
Reserves policy target	101,428	101,979	123,251
No of months of total expenditure	3.0	3.0	3.0
Free reserves over/(under) target	24,149	26,863	9,016