

CITY BRIDGE TRUST – Delegated Authority (Requests £50,001 to £100k)

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY: Bridging Divides - Positive Transitions\Older people (choice and control)

London Bubble

Ref: 16107

Amount requested: £51,588

Adv: Kate Moralee

Base: Southwark

Benefit: Southwark

Amount recommended: £51,600

Purpose of grant request: To continue delivery of two distinct projects: 'Creative Homes' and 'Rotherhithe Shed' to engage older people in activities that develop sensory skills and encourage social interaction.

The Applicant

London Bubble Theatre Company (LBTC) was established in 1972 to bring professional theatre to outer London boroughs. Now, it is a community theatre company with a focus on enabling participation by those on low-incomes or who are hard-to-reach. Its programmes include a number of established projects, including 'Young Theatre Makers' (YTM), 'Speech bubbles' and 'The Creative Elders Programme'.

Background and detail of proposal

In 2017 you awarded LBTC £66,000 over three years to deliver creative activities for older people in Bermondsey and Rotherhithe. Both strands of the project have been delivered successfully and all reporting has been completed and submitted in a timely and thorough manner.

This proposal has been informed by learning from previous delivery, changing its model to include two facilitators per session with one facilitator moving on to a new group every six months. This has addressed concerns about inappropriate attachments by participants reducing dependence whilst maintaining a level of continuity. It has created unintended outcomes of increased creativity, new relationships and supported clear boundaries.

The budget is slightly higher than previously due to the role of worker changing to include an increased focus on coordination and evaluation across both services. LBTC awaits the outcome of two additional funding applications which will contribute to this project.

LBTC has responded to the challenges of Covid-19 with staff and facilitators delivering existing projects using digital media and sending resources to participants by post. The creative sessions for care homes have focussed on colours and NHS Rainbows with everyone individually making something then combined to make a mural. Artist facilitators are now delivering activities in gardens (socially distanced) and through windows – reading poems etc created by participants to increase face to face interaction and address social isolation.

Participants of The Shed are keen to return to face to face contact, missing connections with other people and experiencing isolation fatigue. Whilst LBTC has provided activities through the post for participants it is now considering how it can

restart face to face activities, either through having smaller groups or possibly hiring a larger space, to ensure effective social distancing. The Shed has helped establish similar projects in Peckham and Walworth a testament to the success of the project.

Financial Information

LBTC reported free unrestricted reserves of £95,355 equivalent to 5 months unrestricted operating expenditure at 31/3/2019. It reports a 2020 deficit of £47,416 across both restricted and unrestricted reserves due to LBTC mis-timing two applications for unrestricted funds, however these are currently being considered. One of its programmes “Speech Bubbles” which was due to be funded by Education Endowment Foundation has been delayed due to Covid-19. However, LBTC is in discussion with Paul Hamlyn Foundation and the Communications Trust to fund the gap and is hopeful for multi-year funding. Currently LBTC is experiencing reduced income from hire of space and schools and young people’s programmes. It has made an application to the small business rates relief, has furloughed staff and is working with skeleton staff. It has secured 85% of its income for y/e 31/3/2021, though is projecting a decrease in income (and associated expenditure) of £70,000 this year.

Recommendation

This programme has delivered effectively over the last three years and this proposal builds on that delivery.

£51,600 over a further and final two years (£24,400, £27,200) towards the salary of a project coordinator and evaluation lead, freelance artists and associated costs, to deliver creative sessions for older people on Southwark.

Approved.....
Chief Grants Officer

Date.....