

CITY BRIDGE TRUST – Delegated Authority (Requests up to £250k)

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

Peter Bedford Housing Association

Ref: 15938

Adv: Kate Moralee

Amount requested: £125,688

Base: Hackney

Benefit: Hackney

Amount recommended: £125,700

Purpose of grant request: To expand its Creative Industries programme to support learning disabled people in Hackney and Islington develop their creative abilities, as a route towards greater independence, including soft employment skills.

The Applicant

Peter Bedford HA (PBHA) is a Community Benefit Society and registered social housing provider established in 1969. It works with vulnerable people including those experiencing homelessness, poor mental health, learning disabilities and substance misuse. It provides supported accommodation, advice and learning opportunities with several social enterprises providing opportunities for people who use its services. Its vision is a society where everyone is valued as having something to contribute.

Background and detail of proposal

People with learning difficulties are likely to experience barriers to employment caused by lack of skills arising from exclusion from mainstream training and education. The Equalities and Human Rights Commission found that disabled children are around six times more likely to be excluded from school contributing to poverty in adulthood.

This proposal has been informed by learning from a Reaching Communities project working across all its service users to develop employability skills through its social enterprises. PBHA recognised that people with learning disabilities responded specifically to the creative industry opportunities, however they required more intensive support to engage effectively. This proposal will provide specific support to people with learning disabilities to access creative opportunities as an entry point to develop social, life and pre-employability skills. It will also provide access to a stretch pathway “Supporting Makers Programme” to develop skillsets for creative entrepreneurship and encourage participation in PBHA Timebank sharing new skills with the wider PBHA community.

The proposal includes group activities including trips to museums, art galleries, theatre etc alongside workshop sessions in art, drawing, textiles, print making etc. These sessions will provide opportunity for participation in creative activities to develop skills in maths, money management, independent travel, IT etc. whilst also increasing confidence levels, social networks and communication skills. Artists will be able to display work through exhibitions etc using the workshop spaces of PBHA.

PDHA provides a Psychologically Informed Environment, structuring environments to facilitate a calm person-centred approach. Each participant in this programme will

co-develop their own programme of activity and development with support to achieve goals through a community of mutual support. PBHA creates space for both staff and tenants to reflect, converse and review practice to improve work. It has implemented an organisational approach to creating this environment by introducing mandatory training in Trauma Informed care; Solution Focussed Brief Therapy; Restorative Justice and Motivational Interviewing.

PDHA has been working on a digital inclusion programme “Power Up” for 18 months which placed it in an advantageous position entering lockdown due to Covid-19. It has been able to rapidly respond and adapt services, providing Champions with digital equipment, purchased wi-fi packages for vulnerable people and provided online learning facility platforms through zoom etc. There have been significant challenges as not everyone has digital literacy skills or access to internet or digital device.

Following discussion with your officer the applicant has identified it would benefit from being able to convert year 1 of the project into core costs to support the core and staffing costs of its Enterprise and Training Team to engage with beneficiaries remotely either through providing telephone befriending and support, or online social groups and activities. The prevailing issues identified to date are loneliness and isolation, likely to have longer term detrimental impact on people’s mental health and wellbeing, as well as motivation. This proposal is also in line with its Psychologically Informed Environment (PIE) principles and in particular with Key Element 1 Building Relationships in that 1) relationships are recognised as the principle tool for change; 2) the impact of positive peer relationships is harnessed; 3) clients with complex needs are not excluded. It will review needs across the year in response to Covid-19 developments.

Financial Information

PBHA has a stable income from rents and service charges, alongside large service contracts worth £400,000 with LB Islington. Whilst income is currently stable PBHA does foresee potential challenges around income from tenants whose circumstances have changed through furlough, job losses and Universal Credit delays. Free reserves shown in the table below include fixed assets as that is the organisation’s stock in trade. However, the organisation has reported free unrestricted reserves (without including fixed assets) of £234,740. PBHA does not specify a monetary amount for its reserves rather aims to maintain a level of reserves to ensure day to day running and allow for investment in improving and increasing its housing stock. PBHA recently sold a property, with the capital from the sale designated to refurbishment and development of existing properties and would not be available to fund the proposal before you.

Year end as at 31/03	2019	2020	2021
	Signed Accounts	Forecast	Budget
	£	£	£
Income & expenditure:			
Income	3,238,321	3,383,015	3,447,212
- % of Income confirmed as at 22/6/2020	N/A	N/A	86%
Expenditure	(1,168,597)	(3,200,609)	(3,258,820)
Total surplus/(deficit)	2,069,724	182,406	188,392
Split between:			
- Restricted surplus/(deficit)	0	0	0
- Unrestricted surplus/(deficit)	0	0	0
	0	0	0
Operating Expenditure	3,060,036	3,200,609	3,258,820
Free unrestricted reserves:			
Reserves held at year end	6,958,505	7,140,911	7,329,303
No of months of operating expenditure	27.3	26.8	27.0
Reserves policy target	0	0	0
No of months of operating expenditure	0.0	0.0	0.0
Free reserves over/(under) target	6,958,505	7,140,911	7,329,303

Funding History

Meeting Date	Decision
08/07/2020	LCRF: A grant of £9,615 to fund the essential and urgent costs outlined in the application, so that the organisation can carry on providing support to Londoners.
14/11/2018	£3,500 to meet the cost of the Access Audit.
22/09/2016	Rejected Stepping Stones application: The role of social investment in the proposed work is insufficiently clear, and it appears possible for the organisation to grow the enterprise services by reinvesting surplus.

Recommendation

£125,700 over 2 years (£61,600, £64,100) for a Creative Industries Enterprise Coordinator p/t (25hrs per week) and associated costs to provide a creative industries programme of activities and opportunities for people with a learning disability to develop life and employability skills.

Approved.....
Chief Grants Officer /
Deputy CGO

Date.....

Approved.....
Chair

Date.....

Approved.....
Deputy Chair

Date.....