

MEETING: 28/11/2013

Ref: 11665

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY - Positive Transitions to Independent Living

Coram Voice (up to October 2013, known as Voice for the Child in Care) **Adv: Karisia Gichuke**

Amount requested: £81,276

Base: Islington

Benefit: London-wide

Amount recommended: £81,300

Purpose of grant request: Provision of specialist advocacy & expert advice to improve the lives of young care leavers, getting their voices heard & ensuring they can access the support & services they need & are entitled to.

Background

Founded in 1975, Voice is a national charity working to represent the needs of young people living in residential care or foster homes. The organisation helps young people to understand their rights and entitlements, and advocates on their behalf with the authorities. This is done via an open phone line through which the young people make initial contact. Voice then has a network of mainly volunteer advocates who work with a small number of allocated young people. It has also developed several specialist programmes for those with disabilities, unaccompanied refugees and young people approaching 16 years old, who are on the point of leaving the care system. Each of these projects is managed by a specialist worker, with the assistance of a team of volunteers trained in that particular field.

In October 2013 Voice amalgamated with the children's charity Coram, becoming a member of the Coram group of charities. To be known as Coram Voice, the charity will move to share Coram's campus in Bloomsbury. Coram Voice will retain its existing charity and company numbers and Board of Trustees.

Funding History

You have funded Coram Voice three times before – in September 1997, with a grant for £75,000 towards its general advocacy work; and in July 2001, a grant of £130,000 supported its young runaways project. In 2008, a grant of £80,000 went towards a new scheme providing advocacy for disabled children in care. All grants were satisfactorily monitored.

Current Application

Around 50% of all enquiries to Coram Voice are from young people between 16-25 whose concerns often relate to their future relationship with the care system. This period of transition is a pivotal time for vulnerable young people whose lives have already been characterised by

instability. This request is to support the provision of specialist advocacy and advice to improve the lives of young care leavers, ensuring they can access the support and services they need. A Specialist Advocate will be funded to provide support via a free-phone helpline. They will provide expert advice to other advocates in cases with issues relating to transitioning and leaving care, and will also manage a caseload of 10-15 young people in the London area at any one time. Part of the project will be increasing the capacity and skills of professionals who work with care leavers; the post holder will design and deliver training programmes (two each year) to improve the knowledge of social workers, foster carers and other advocates and advice centre workers.

Coram Voice anticipates reaching 1,600 young people over the three year project and 540 professionals in London. 50% of the young people served by Coram Voice are from London and so this request is for 50% of the total cost of the project over three years. Coram Voice is actively fundraising for the remaining 50% and a number of other applications are pending.

Financial Observations

Audited accounts for the year ended 31 March 2013 show total income of £2.1m and, after expenditure of £2.3m, a deficit of £175,303 (8.3% of turnover), comprising £152,395 on unrestricted funds and £22,908 on restricted activity. A loss on property revaluation of £154,850 was also incurred, resulting in an overall decrease in funds of £330,153. The charity advises that most of their income (77%) is derived from contracted services and explains that the deficit is due to a reduction in income as a result of the current economic climate and in particular, public sector spending cuts.

The charity's reserves policy is to build and maintain sufficient reserves to cover core costs for three months which based on current year expenditure equates to £213,748. At 31 March 2013 free unrestricted reserves stood at £295,776, the equivalent of 4.2 months' worth of 2013/14 budgeted core costs. The budget for the current year 2013/14 shows total income of £2,191,521 of which 85% had been secured as at 14 October 2013. After budgeted expenditure of £2,375,160 a deficit of £183,639 is anticipated, all on unrestricted funds, which would reduce free unrestricted reserves to £112,137, equating to 1.6 months' worth of core costs.

The organisation has a three-year strategy in place which aims to secure the organisation's future over the longer term. Part of this strategy is the sale of the leasehold building and a move to smaller rented accommodation which the charity advises will lead to an annual saving of approximately £154,000 in running costs. The premises will be shared with Coram children's charity, with whom Coram Voice has just

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amalgamated. Coram Voice advises that an offer has been accepted on the organisation's building, with the aim of completing by the end of the year and moving to Coram campus in January 2014. The charity anticipates that the sale of the building will release approximately £750,000 in equity. After relocation and sale costs that charity anticipates that free unrestricted reserves will total £762,137, approximately 3.8 months' worth of 2013/14 total budgeted expenditure. Additional measures to secure the organisation's future over the longer term include a staffing restructure, gradually diversifying income sources and increasing major donor income.

Officer's Appraisal

This application has been delayed while the amalgamation with Coram was confirmed. It is hoped that the amalgamation with Coram and decision to sell the building will help secure Coram Voice's financial future and provide free reserves to cover future fluctuations in income and expenditure. Securing the organisation's work is important as outcomes for care leavers are much worse than for their peers, and this organisation is one of the few with the expertise necessary to navigate the complex legislation and entitlements in the leaving care field. The next six months will be crucial in securing the future of the work.

Recommendation

£81,300 over three years (£27,000; £27,000; £27,300) towards the salary of a full time Specialist Advocate, and the costs of training and support to London professionals, for young people in London leaving care. The grant is conditional on the receipt of satisfactory updates on the implementation of the new business strategy.



The City Bridge Trust

Charity Registration Number: 1035628

Working with Londoners: Application for a grant

Please read the guidance notes before completing this form

Reference:
(office use only)

11665

Date Received:

21/02/13

Programme
Area:

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1. About your organisation

Name of organisation applying for grant: Voice	
If the organisation is part of a larger organisation, what is its name? N/A	
Address for correspondence 320, City Road, London	
Postcode: EC1V 2NZ Is this your home address? No	
Contact person: Miss Katharine Collis	Position: Senior Trust Fundraiser
Phone: 020 7520 3791	Fax: 020 7713 1950
E-mail: katharine.collis@voiceyp.org	
Website: www.voiceyp.org	
Legal status of organisation: Charity and Company limited by guarantee	
If registered, please give charity number: 1046207	
Year and month organisation established: Feb 1975	

2. Request for funds

Under which of the Trust's themes are you applying (see our website or brochure for further details)? Positive transitions to independent living
Purpose for which funds are requested: (25 words maximum) Provision of specialist advocacy & expert advice to improve the lives of young care leavers, getting their voices heard & ensuring they can access the support & services they need & are entitled to.
How much funding is requested? Year 1: £26,847 Year 2: £27,091 Year 3: £27,338 Total: £81,276

3. Aims of your organisation

Voice exists to enable and equip children and young people to hold the system to account, to challenge and support it to do its job properly and to uphold the rights of children and young people to actively participate in shaping their own lives.

We strive for a society which recognises and willingly accepts its responsibilities to children and young people; where the inequalities and discrimination they currently face have been eradicated; where those children and young people are fully engaged in all decisions that are made about their lives; where the views, needs and feelings that they express are at the core of those decisions.

4. Main activities of your organisation

Our main activities include:

- An independent and confidential advocacy service, accessed directly by young people via a free-phone helpline number.
- Visiting advocacy services to children in residential care, secure children's homes, Secure Training Centres, Young Offender Institutions and psychiatric units.
- Policy and campaigning work aimed at promoting a child-centred care system.
- Provision of Investigating Officers and Independent Persons to deal with complaints against the care system and Secure Accommodation Reviews.
- Provision of an Independent Visitor Service for children with no regular family contact.
- Specialist training programmes for professionals on topics including advocacy, children's rights, leaving care, complaints, participation and young refugees.
- Participation services through which young people can shape both Voice's services and the broader care system.
- Proactively seeking out the harder-to-reach groups (including homeless young people) through outreach work.

5. Number of staff

Full-time	Part-time	Management committee members	Active volunteers
29	24	12	39

6. How do you support your volunteers?

Voice encourages and supports volunteer involvement in our work. We have a Volunteer Worker Policy and a commitment to good practice in volunteering including payment for expenses, supervision and access to learning and development opportunities.

7. Property occupied by your organisation

Is the main property owned or leased/rented by your organisation?	If leased/rented, how long is the outstanding lease/rental agreement?
owned	

8. Finance

From your most recent audited or independently examined accounts, complete the following:

Financial year ended - **31** Month: **March**

Year: **2013**

Income received from:	£
Voluntary income	96,303
Activities for generating funds	9,440
Investment income	109
Income from charitable activities	1,996,647
Other sources	5,580
Total Income	2,108,079

Expenditure:	£
Charitable activities	2,153,032
Governance costs	9,992
Cost of generating funds	120,358
Other	
Total Expenditure	2,283,382
Net (Deficit)/Surplus:	(175,303)
Other Recognised Gains/(Losses)	(154,850)
Net Movement in Funds	(330,153)

Asset position at year end	£
Fixed assets	119,249
Investments	
Net current assets	1,055,970
Long-term liabilities	
*Total A	1,175,219

Reserves at year end	£
Endowment funds	
Restricted funds	
Unrestricted funds	1,175,219
*Total B	1,175,219

* Total A and Total B must be the same and should be taken from your balance sheet

9. Statutory funding

For the financial year above, what % of your income was from statutory sources?
c70%

10. Material changes

Describe any material changes to the organisation's activities, structure or financial position since the date of the most recent accounts:

11. Previous applications to the Trust

Have you applied to the Trust before? If so, please give details:						<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Month/Year: Sep	/ 1997	Ref: 1906	Grant received: £75,000	OR application rejected	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Month/Year: Jul	/ 2001	Ref: 1172	Grant received: £130,000	OR application rejected	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Month/Year: Nov	/ 2006	Ref: 7379	Grant received: £80,000	OR application rejected	<input type="checkbox"/>	

12. Previous funding received

Funding received by your organisation from the following sources during the last **THREE** years:
 (i) City of London (other than the City Bridge Trust)(ii) London boroughs (iii) London Councils (formerly ALG)
 (iv) Health authorities (v) Central government departments (vi) Other statutory bodies (e.g. Housing Corporation, Arts Council) - List source, years and annual amounts:

	Year: 2009	Year: 2010	Year: 2011
(i)			
(ii) Local Authorities (Boroughs)	117,903	403,084	343,032
(iii)			
(iv)			
(v) Department for Education	100,000	100,000	107,800
(vi)			

13. Previous grants received

Grants received by your organisation from charitable trusts and foundations (other than the City Bridge Trust) during the last **TWO** years. List source, years and annual amounts:

	Year: 2010	Year: 2011
Trust for London	£15,000	£15,000
Henry Smith Charity	£25,000	£0
Sofronie Foundation	£0	£25,000
JP Getty Jnr Charitable Trust	£20,000	£20,000
Big Lottery	£85,352	£0
Others: Goldsmiths, John Laing	£201,451	£177,723

14. What steps is your organisation taking to reduce its carbon footprint?

At Voice we accept our responsibility to reduce the environmental impact and carbon footprint resulting from our activities. We therefore commit in 2013-2016 to:

- Audit our carbon footprint annually in two areas (energy and paper) and develop a mechanism to audit our emissions from travel.
- Adopt an annual action plan to minimise our carbon footprint and to deliver continual improvements based on reducing resource consumption, re-using and recycling as much waste as possible.
- Use recycled, low-carbon / sustainable products where available and affordable.
- Avoid unnecessary business travel, exploring solutions such as web-conferencing where applicable and affordable.
- Buy energy-efficient equipment and implement energy-saving measures.
- Raise awareness of best practice with staff and promote 'Cycle to Work' scheme and monitor the introduction of similar opportunities.
- Develop an e-learning portal enabling learners to access training online, reducing carbon footprint of those travelling to the courses and of printed training materials.

15. Purpose

Complete this section whatever the amount of grant requested. **In addition**, if the request is for £25,000 or more in total, a fuller proposal should be sent with this form. Also, if your application is for all or part of new or existing post(s), please enclose a copy of the relevant job description(s) including the salary level.

In order to provide the right information, please refer to guidance note 15 before completing this section.

Need: Last year nearly 10,000 young people left public care, the majority aged 18 but a third aged just 16 or 17. This transition is a pivotal time for vulnerable young people whose lives have already been characterised by huge instability. The outcomes for care leavers are on the whole much worse than for their peers: they comprise a third of the homeless population and half of under 25's in the criminal justice system. For young people leaving care there is no going back: success depends on getting the right support at the right time. The Leaving Care Act has made some impact, but the legislation is complex and open to interpretation. Local authorities are faced with an increasing number of young people for whom they have a potential duty of care, while being restricted by a lack of understanding of the guidance, reduced budgets and a shortage of suitable housing.

Project: Support of our Specialist Advocacy Service for Care Leavers

Our Specialist Advocacy Service (16+) was established in response to the particular needs of care leavers, as over half of the young people coming to us for help are aged over 16 and making the transition to independence. We provide a Specialist Advocate with expert knowledge of the legislation and the particular issues these young people are dealing with e.g. sudden house moves, a complete change in adults in their lives, loneliness and early independence - often complicated by additional barriers e.g. poor literacy and numeracy skills, issues with immigration status, early parenthood, lack of trust in social services and emotional and mental health problems.

Delivery: The project will ensure improved support and outcomes for young care leavers via:

1) Freephone Helpline - care leavers can access immediate support/ advice from a professional advocate who helps them understand their rights and entitlements and gets their concerns addressed by local authorities.

2) Face-to-face advocacy support - our advocates can intervene at short notice, working to resolve their issues e.g. attending meetings, liaising with social services and supporting them to express their views. The Specialist Advocate manages a caseload of 10-15 young people and advises other advocates on cases relating to leaving care.

3) Specialist advice / training to professionals working with care leavers, through courses, seminars, presentations and resources - sharing our expertise and experience to ensure wider impact on support for care leavers.

Objectives: 1) 310 young people each year who have issues with transition/leaving care will be supported via telephone advocacy; 2) 230 young people each year have their issues with transition/leaving care resolved through face-to-face advocacy; 3) 180 Professionals per year will better understand care leavers' needs & entitlements; 4) 80% feel more involved in decision-making process. Ultimately, care leavers will benefit from improved services /more effective support.

Why Voice?: We have 35 years of experience in championing the rights of children in and leaving care. We have been developing our specialisms for those with particular needs since 2004 (e.g. care leavers along with those with mental health issues, disabilities and young refugees) and are unique and well respected in offering this specialist expertise. Professionals regularly come to us for advice. Meeting the Trust's theme: This project directly supports care leavers to live independently and access education and employment opportunities. Advocacy support at this pivotal time can have a major impact on future life chances, helping young people to have a say in decisions about them and ensuring local authorities are held to account, removing barriers to independence and helping them to achieve their potential. Examples of interventions include securing a young person into safe accommodation while a needs assessment takes place or ensuring local authorities provide the educational support care leavers are entitled to.

Principles of Good Practice: Voice is child-driven and engages young people in all aspects of our work, from interviewing our new CEO to informing policy work. In this project, care leavers will support the design and delivery of training to professionals. We value diversity and work to ensure our services are accessible to all, including offering an interpreting service on our helpline and offering information in formats accessible to those with disabilities and in 10 languages.

16. Explain how you will monitor and evaluate both your own outcomes and those of the programme under which you are applying.

Outcomes are recorded using feedback forms and closing case summaries, which are evaluated on an on-going basis. Last year Voice launched a new database, based on a system used by local authorities. This has vastly increased our accuracy of data recording and effectiveness in measuring outputs and outcomes. The database records:

- Young people's issues (e.g. requests to review their documented Pathway Plans held by Social Services or asking for support in accessing further education);
- The support involved (contact with social workers, meetings with young person, legal advice etc);
- The outcomes (whether the issue was resolved / if the young person was happy with the result);
- Feedback on the support they received from Voice.

We will therefore be able to monitor and evaluate the interventions and outcomes for care leavers supported through this project, including numbers supported with issues relating to education and the outcome for the young person.

All learning gained from our direct work with young people will be disseminated through our training programmes and our policy work to ensure young people's views and experiences influence wider practice and policy. Young people are involved in the design and delivery of our training events which we also evaluate through feedback forms. The training we aim to deliver as part of this project for care leavers will provide a great opportunity for professionals and care leavers to come together to share experiences and build on good practice.

17. Beneficiaries

How many people will benefit from the grant per year? **540 young people and 180 professionals directly; 5,400 young people indirectly.**

In which local authority is your organisation based?

Islington

Which borough(s) of Greater London will benefit from this grant?

(if more than one, please give % for each)

Our service is available to all London Boroughs: we provide a safety net of advocacy to all young people regardless of their borough / local authority.

At what address will the activity be located? **Voice Head Office, 320 City Road, London, EC1V 2NZ**

What age group will benefit? **16-25**

What will the ethnic grouping(s) of the beneficiaries be?

	%		%
White - British	30	Black - Caribbean	6
White - Irish	1	Black - African	22
White - Other (please describe)	6	Black - Other (please describe) (Black british inc above)	2
Asian - Indian	1	Black - British	
Asian - Pakistani	1	Chinese	
Asian - Bangladeshi	5		
Asian - Other (please describe)	5	Other (please describe) Mixed (15%) plus other	21
Open to everyone			

What proportion of the beneficiaries will be disabled people?
12%

18. Funding required for the project

What is the total cost of the proposed activity/project?

(List main expenditure headings and amounts)

Expenditure heading	Year 1 £	Year 2 £	Year 3 £	Total £
Total Salary Costs (including benefits)	37,001	37,371	37,744	112,116
Publicity Costs/ Advocacy Info Materials	1,583	1,583	1,583	4,749
Youth Participation Costs	176	176	176	528
Training Costs	630	630	630	1,890
Non-contracted Advocacy Costs	1,750	1,750	1,750	5,250
Management and Supervision Costs	5,550	5,606	5,662	16,817
Evaluation, Finance, IT & Admin Support	7,003	7,067	7,132	21,203
TOTAL	53,693	54,183	54,677	162,553

What income has already been raised?

(List amounts and main sources)

Source	Year 1 £	Year 2 £	Year 3 £	Total £
TOTAL				

What other funders are currently considering the proposal?

The John Laing Charitable Trust; we also have some applications pending to support certain elements of this project (e.g. training) and those aimed at more general support for our advocacy service and work with care leavers.

19. Funding requested from the Trust

How much is requested from the Trust? (List main expenditure headings and amounts)

Expenditure heading	Year 1 £	Year 2 £	Year 3 £	Total £
Total Salary Costs (including benefits)	18,500	18,685	18,872	56,058
Publicity Costs/ Advocacy Info Materials	792	792	792	2,375
Youth Participation Costs	88	88	88	264
Training Costs	315	315	315	945
Non-contracted Advocacy Costs	875	875	875	2,625
Management and Supervision Costs	2,775	2,803	2,831	8,409
M&E, Finance, IT & Admin Support Costs	3,502	3,534	3,566	10,601
TOTAL	26,847	27,091	27,338	81,276

20. Funding requested from the Trust (continued)

When will the funding be required? **mid 2013 (for financial year starting April 2013)**

Is the activity to continue beyond the period for which funding is requested?

If so, how will it be resourced? **Our new strategy aims to increase and diversify our voluntary income from companies, individuals and trusts. We are confident the need for this expertise is recognised, and will only grow with beneficiary numbers rising. We will use the grant period to build partnerships with other potential funders and develop Voice's training programme to enable it to become a valuable income generation tool.**

If any planning or other statutory consents are required for the project to proceed, what stage have the applications reached? **N/A**

Declaration on behalf of applicant organisation

I, **Katharine Collis** (your name)

am an authorised representative of

Voice (Voice for the Child in Care) (your organisation)

within which I am **Senior Trust Fundraiser** (your position)

To the best of my knowledge, all the information that I have provided in this application form is correct

Signature



Date

20th February 2013

Return the completed form to: The City Bridge Trust
City of London
PO Box 270
Guildhall
London EC2P 2EJ

Please

- **do not send this application by fax or e-mail** – unless applying online, applications must be posted to the Trust
- **do send the information in the checklist** – If items are missing, your application will be returned to you
- **do send only the information in the checklist** – if further information is required, we will contact you
- **do ensure you have signed and dated this form** – we cannot accept forms which have not been signed and dated
- **do use the correct postage** – the completed form and additional materials are likely to exceed 100g in weight