

MEETING 13/03/2014

Ref: 12109

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY - Reducing Poverty

Bexley Citizens Advice Bureaux Ltd

Adv: Jemma Grieve Combes

Amount requested: £210,000

Base: Bexley

Benefit: Bexley

Amount recommended: £101,440

Purpose of grant request: To provide debt, welfare benefit and money advice services to the residents of the London Borough of Bexley

Background

Bexley Citizen's Advice Bureau (Bexley CAB) is an independent charity and a member of the national Citizen's Advice Bureaux network. It provides advice to 12,000 people per year across a wide range of areas approximately split between debt (30%); welfare benefits (30%); housing (10%); with the rest including employment, family and immigration. Most advice is provided by its team of extensively trained volunteers. This includes 25 trained advisors who volunteer at least 2 days a week and a further 20 volunteers who help with reception, administration and other functions. At the moment advice is provided through 2 main Bureaux outlets and 2 outreaches. Over the next few months this will change to a 'hub and spoke' model whereby advice will be provided through one main Bureau complimented by outreach in a range of locations, primarily libraries. The organisation hopes this will allow it to reach those who currently find the service difficult to access.

Funding History

None

Current Application

Bexley CAB is applying for funding to continue its successful Money Advice Project for which current funding ends in March 2014. The project helps anyone with debt problems that live, works or studies in Bexley. In the first instance a new client would attend a 'Gateway' interview to understand their needs and how Bexley CAB can help. 'Simple' debt cases will be dealt with at the early stages by volunteers. Where cases are more complicated the client is referred to a specialist Money Advisor. Last year over 4000 people sought Bexley CAB's help with debt problems and 406 went on to see a specialist Money Advisor. Between them clients had £7,046,405 of debts not including mortgages and many were faced with repossession and homelessness. The Money Advisors work with clients to identify a course of action that might include income maximisation; debt management plans; rescheduling and negotiation with creditors; or bankruptcy and debt relief orders. Bexley CAB will also provide support and advice for 'self-help' and feel it is important to empower clients in this way where they can.

Financial Observations

Audited accounts for the year ended 31st March 2013 show a small surplus of £9,494 (3% turnover of £313,896) comprising surpluses of £1,922 on unrestricted activity and £7,572 on restricted funds.

The reserves policy states that the organisation aims to hold free unrestricted reserves equivalent to 3 months' worth of running costs, which equates to £69,287 based on 2014/15 budgeted expenditure. At 31st March 2013 free unrestricted reserves stood at £77,251, which is equivalent to 3.3 months' worth of 2014/15 budgeted expenditure.

The forecast for the current year to 31st March 2014 shows total income of £309,337, all of which has been confirmed. After expenditure of £291,019 the organisation anticipates a surplus of £18,318 (5.9%), comprising £13,684 on unrestricted funds and £4,634 on restricted funds.

The budget for 2014/15 shows anticipated income of £277,270, all of which is confirmed. After expenditure of £277,147 a small overall surplus of £123 is expected, comprising surpluses of £1,742 on restricted funds and a deficit of £1,520 on unrestricted funds.

Officer's Appraisal

This is an impressive organisation with a strong understanding of client needs and commitment to making itself accessible to all those who need its help. It has robust data collection systems which allow it to identify trends and share (anonymised) data with the national Citizen's Advice Bureau and funders. Bexley CAB is audited every three years by the national Citizen's Advice Bureau which includes an audit on the quality of advice provided.

The applicant originally applied for £210,000 to support two full time specialist Money Advisors. This is a higher amount of funding than you would usually award to a relatively small organisation and following advice from your officer the applicant revised its request for the costs of 1 full time Money Advisor. This will not affect the viability of the overall project.

Recommendation

£101,440 (£34,440; £33,320; £33,680) over three years for the salary and on-costs of a specialist f/t Money Advisor in Bexley.

The City Bridge Trust

Investing In Londoners: Application for a grant



About your organisation

Name of your organisation: Bexley Citizens Advice Bureaux Ltd	
If your organisation is part of a larger organisation, what is its name? Citizens Advice	
In which London Borough is your organisation based? Bexley	
Contact person: Mr Roland Haigh	Position: Company Secretary
Website: www.erithcab.org.uk	
Legal status of organisation: Registered Charity	Charity, Charitable Incorporated Company or company number: 275955
When was your organisation established? 09/09/1979	
Aims of your organisation: We aim to provide the advice people need for the problems they face and improve the policies and practices that affect people's lives. We provide free, independent, confidential and impartial advice to everyone on their rights and responsibilities. We value diversity, promote equality and challenge discrimination. Bexley Borough Citizens Advice Bureaux Limited is part of Citizens Advice. Citizens Advice Bureaux deliver advice services from over 3,300 community locations in England and Wales, run by 338 individual charities. Bexley CAB provide these services to people who live, work or study in the London Borough of Bexley. Citizens Advice itself is also a registered charity and is also the membership organisation for bureau	
Main activities of your organisation: The Bureaux offer advice and information to the residence of Bexley, on a wide range of subjects, the main areas being Debt, Welfare Benefits, Housing, Employment, Immigration and relationship. In the last year the Bureaux dealt with 17,828 enquiries, made by 11,718 clients. This means that the Bureaux helped roughly 20% of the households in the Borough. The Bureaux also offer case work in Debt and Money Advice. As a member of Citizens Advice the Bureaux provide evidence to influence policy makers. In the past year the Bureaux offered money advice casework for 710 clients. We have gained £2.5 million in unclaimed benefits for Borough Residents	

Number of staff

Full-time:	Part-time:	Management committee members:	Active volunteers:
6	8	12	40

Property occupied by your organisation

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

Environmental Impact

City Bridge Trust wants to help voluntary sector organisations to have a positive environmental impact. Please tell us how much your organisation is already doing to have a positive environmental impact using the definitions below to help you decide.
Nothing yet: This is not something we have thought about / we have not taken any action.

Grant Request

Details of grant request

Under which of City Bridge Trust's programmes are you applying? Reducing Poverty
Which of the programme outcome(s) does your application aim to achieve? More people accessing debt and legal services More Londoners with improved economic circumstances
Please describe the purpose of your funding request in one sentence. To provide debt, welfare benefit and money advice services to the residence of London Borough of Bexley
When will the funding be required? 01/04/2015
How much funding are you requesting? Year 1: £70,000 Year 2: £70,000 Year 3: £70,000 Total: £210,000
Do you plan to continue the activity beyond the period for which you are requesting funding? If so, how do you intend to fund it? The need for the service we will offer will not disappear it will be our intention to seek alterate sources of funding to contiue it.
If you need any planning or other statutory consents for the project to proceed, what stage have the applications reached?

Summary of grant request

Since 1997 Bexley Borough CABx have been providing a Money Advice casework service for the residence of the Borough. Since then we have helped over 7 000. As a Charity we are primarily funded by our local authority, Bexley Council. The Council fund our core services which are provide general advice, of a mainly legal nature, on a large range of subjects to the public; this is mainly done by volunteers. Our grant from the Council is in two parts one of which is our core funding. The other part comes from a Performance Reward Grant, this has funded our money advice project for the past three years, this pot of money is now at an end.

Last year Bexley CAB helped roughly 12 000 residents of Bexley Borough. About 30% of the enquiries that we deal with are debt related enquiries, this represents about 4 000 people. 710 of our money advice clients were offered help by way of ongoing casework. We currently have 3.4 fte Money Advisers, funded by London Borough of Bexley and Capitalise(The Money Advice Service). In the year 2012-2013 our Money Advice Case workers provided assistance to new and existing clients who are either living or working in the London Borough of Bexley with their debts issues. In that year between them they were able to negotiate voluntary payment arrangements for 68%, while 15% were dealt with under personal insolvency arrangement (Debt Relief Order and Bankruptcy). Following advice, support and empowerment clients continue to deal with 16% of the debts by themselves. Our clients had debts of over £12 million excluding mortgages and over £32 million when mortgages where included, this averages out to £17 300 each.

Unemployment can be said to be a major challenge that is facing debt clients at present. Only 19% of our debt clients are working full time while 28% were registered unemployed, 21% worked part-time or in self-employment and 23 % were either retired or unfit for work. This in turn results in poverty followed by increasing burden of debt with 39% living on a household income of less than £15,600 while 64% living on an individual income of less than £14,000 annually. On an annualised basis in the last year we helped clients gain £2.5 million in unclaimed welfare benefits

More than 50% of our debts clients lived in rented accommodation (social and private tenants) while 33% of clients were owner occupiers (mortgage).

We provided independent Money Advice to homeowners wishing to apply for Mortgage Rescue Scheme (MRS) or to seek more general advice about their mortgage debt. This is being achieved through one day a week outreach sessions at the Bexley Council Civic Centre. The Government has now brought this scheme to an end.

We seek funding to continue this project, we will meet the aim of the trust by providing money advice to residence of the Borough, if we are not able to gain funding there will be no source of face to face money advice within the borough of Bexley.

One of the key parts of good money advice is income maximisation, whether this is by means of benefit advice or helping clients find a cheaper energy supplier, this improves the economic circumstances of our service users. We endeavour to help clients budget so that they have a resonable and sustainable domestic budget

Outputs and outcomes

What are the main activities or outputs you want to deliver? Please include no more than 5. By activities or outputs we mean the services, products or facilities you plan to deliver. If you plan to deliver work over more than one year you should include activities over the full grant period requested. Try to be specific.

To provide specialist Money Advice to the residence of the London Borough of Bexley. This would be delivered by two money advisers.

To assist clients to avoid homelessness, by negotiation with landlords and mortgage lenders and varying possession orders

Negotiate with utility suppliers and ensure clients are on the best value tariff

To ensure clients are getting the correct level of benefit

To negotiate affordable repayments of Council Tax and Overpayments of Housing Benefit

What main differences or outcomes do you hope the activities you have described above will achieve? Please include no more than 5. By differences or outcomes we mean the changes, benefits, learning or other effects that result from the work your project would deliver. These might be for individuals, families, communities or the environment.

For the people of Bexley to be in a better financial position with debts properly managed, it would be our intention to offer money advice case work to 350 new users per year and to enable people to be in control of their finances.

To enable a minimum of 150 families a year to stay in their homes where before intervention they would have been faced with eviction due to mortgage or rent arrears.

That people are aware of options for supply of fuel hence reducing the impact of fuel poverty

Clients are in a better financial state as they are aware of all welfare benefits that they are entitled to

People have more money left for living and priority debts and are not prioritising the wrong debts because of the bailiffs being at the door

Who will benefit?

About your beneficiaries

How many people will benefit directly from the grant per year?

300

In which Greater London borough(s) or areas of London will your beneficiaries live?

Bexley (100%)

What age group(s) will benefit?

16-24

25-44

45-64

65-74

75 and over

What gender will beneficiaries be?

All

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

A range of ethnic groups

If Other ethnic group, please give details:

What proportion of the beneficiaries will be disabled people?

1-10%

Funding required for the project

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

Expenditure heading	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total
Saleries	61,475	62,090	62,711	186,276
Premises	2,500	2,500	2,500	7,500
Telephones	500	500	500	1,500
Postage	1,200	1,300	1,400	3,900
Travel	200	225	250	675
IT(Capital)	3,000	0	0	3,000
Printing and copying	700	700	700	2,100
	0	0	0	0

TOTAL:	69,575	67,315	68,061	204,951
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What income has already been raised?

Source	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total
	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0

TOTAL:	0	0	0	0
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What other funders are currently considering the proposal?

Source	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total
	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0

TOTAL:	0	0	0	0
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How much is requested from the Trust?

Expenditure heading	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total
Salaries	61,475	62,090	62,711	186,276
Premises	2,500	2,500	2,500	7,500
Telephone	500	500	500	1,500
Postage	1,200	1,300	1,400	3,900
Travel	200	225	250	675
IT(Capital Cost)	3,000	0	0	3,000
Printing and Copying	700	700	700	2,100
	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0

TOTAL:	69,575	67,315	68,061	204,951
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Finance details

Please complete using your most recent audited or independently examined accounts.

Financial year ended:	Month: March	Year: 2013
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Income received from:	£
Voluntary income	312,564
Activities for generating funds	0
Investment income	749
Income from charitable activities	0
Other sources	583
Total Income:	313,896

Expenditure:	£
Charitable activities	304,402
Governance costs	0
Cost of generating funds	0
Other	0
Total Expenditure:	304,402
Net (deficit)/surplus:	9,494
Other Recognised Gains/(Losses):	0
Net Movement in Funds:	89,646

Asset position at year end	£
Fixed assets	0
Investments	0
Net current assets	89,646
Long-term liabilities	0
*Total Assets (A):	89,646

Reserves at year end	£
Endowment funds	0
Restricted funds	28,395
Unrestricted funds	61,251
*Total Reserves (B):	89,646

*** Please note that total Assets (A) and Total Reserves (B) should be the same.**

Statutory funding

For your most recent financial year, what % of your income was from statutory sources? 0%
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Organisational changes

Describe any significant changes to your structure, financial position or core activities since the date of your most recent accounts:
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Previous funding received

Please list the funding received by your organisation from the following statutory sources during the last THREE years.

	2010 £	2011 £	2012 £
City of London (except City Bridge Trust)	0	0	0
London Local Authorities	257,515	258,964	261,471
London Councils	0	0	0
Health Authorities	0	0	0
Central Government departments	40,252	30,050	6,126
Other statutory bodies	48,000	65,877	50,330

Previous grants received

Please list the grants received by your organisation from charitable trusts and foundations (other than City Bridge Trust) during the last THREE years. List source, years and annual amounts. Please include the 5 largest only.

Name of Funder	2010 £	2011 £	2012 £
	0	0	0
	0	0	0
	0	0	0
	0	0	0
	0	0	0

Declaration

I confirm that, to the best of my knowledge, all the information I have provided in this application form is correct. I fully understand that City Bridge Trust has zero tolerance towards fraud and will seek to prosecute and recover funds in every instance.

Please confirm: Yes Full Name: **Roland Haigh**

Role within **Company Secretary**
Organisation: