

MEETING: 16/07/2014

Ref: 12278

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY - Reducing Poverty

Southwark Citizens Advice Bureaux Services

Adv: David Farnsworth

Base: Southwark

Amount requested: £160,600

Benefit: Southwark

The Charity:

Southwark Citizens Advice Bureaux Services has existed since 1939. It provides free, independent, confidential advice services to over 12,000 citizens of Southwark and neighbouring boroughs each year. It has offices in Bermondsey and Peckham, and works with partners in local government, and other agencies, to improve the policies and practices that affect the local population. It has recently achieved the top London result (86%) on the CAB UK quality assessment audit.

The Application:

Your funding would pay for a full-time welfare benefits caseworker. The caseworker would provide advice services; further develop referral protocols with local partners; and would train and support 4 volunteers to increase the capacity of the project.

The context for the application is an increased demand on the bureaux's services: In the past year, against a backdrop of welfare benefit advice being removed from the scope of Legal Aid, there has been a 20% increase in demand for such advice. Peckham Job Centre has the highest number of job seeker sanctions in South London, and the CAB in Peckham is the busiest in London.

The Recommendation:

The organisation provides volume advice whilst maintaining high quality standards. Your funding for this post would enable the service to have much needed additional capacity at a time of unprecedented demand for its services. A grant as outlined below is recommended:

£160,600 over 3 years (£52,750; £53,250; £54,600) for the salary of a f/t Advice Worker plus related operational costs.

Funding History

Meeting Date	Decision
01/02/2007	(Declined) Application is for a contribution to a full-time post which would deliver advice to people of all ages and therefore does not meet your priorities.

Background and detail of proposal

If funded, the caseworker would benefit from working within an established, well-networked organisation. Southwark CABx holds the Advice Quality Standard and Specialist Quality Mark. It leads the partnership of independent advice providers in the Borough – Southwark Legal Advice Network. It supports a programme of community engagement: providing training for people active in their communities to ensure they can effectively signpost people they come into contact with to the right

support. It has a team of 80 volunteers, and service-users are involved in all aspects of the management and running of the service.

The caseworker and volunteers would work to reduce the number of people experiencing food poverty, and to improve the economic circumstances of those seeking advice.

Financial Information

The cost of generating funds has not been stated within the accounts. The organisation makes use of volunteer fundraisers. You will note that the reserves policy has changed from an intention to hold 3 months' free reserves to holding 5 months' worth. Of the forecast income for the current year, 86% has been confirmed as at 24th April 2014.

Year-end at 31 March	2012/13 Independently Audited Accounts	2013/14 Draft Accounts	2014/15 Current Year Forecast
	£	£	£
Income and Expenditure			
Income	1,192,407	1,382,036	1,258,885
Expenditure	1,114,404	1,275,653	1,330,512
Unrestricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	128,674	134,442	(28,946)
Restricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	(50,671)	(28,059)	(42,681)
Total Surplus / (Deficit)	78,003	106,383	(71,628)
Surplus / (Deficit) as a % of turnover	6.5%	7.7%	5.7%
Cost of Generating funds (% of income)	-	-	-
Free unrestricted reserves			
Unrestricted free reserves held at Year End	388,641	509,820	480,874
How many months' worth of expenditure	4.2	4.8	4.3
Reserves Policy target	278,601	531,520	554,380
How many months' worth of expenditure	3	5	5
Free reserves over/(under) target	110,040	(21,700)	(73,506)