

MEETING: 25/09/2014

Ref: 12456

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY - Making London More Inclusive

Over The Wall

Adv: Jenny Field

Base: Outside London

Benefit: London-wide

Amount requested: £102,070

Amount recommended: £102,100

The Charity

Over The Wall is a national children's charity and an independent member of the International SeriousFun Children's Network. The Network was originally founded in the USA in 1988 by the Hollywood actor, Paul Newman, who thought it would be good if seriously ill children could be given the opportunity to "kick back and raise a little hell".

Over The Wall was established in 1999 and provides free therapeutic recreational camps for children with a life limiting illness or disability and their families. Therapeutic recreation is at the cornerstone of the charity's approach, with an emphasis on developing the confidence, self-esteem and coping strategies of the children and young people concerned, through its programmes of fun-filled recreational and educational activities that take place on three sites, in Dorset, the Midlands and in Scotland.

The Application

During 2014, Over The Wall expects approximately 30 children and young people from Greater London to attend its camps. However, it recognises there is great potential to involve many more London families than this. During 2015, it plans to create a new campsite in the south of England, specifically catering for children and young people from Greater London. Following a model it has adopted in other regions of the UK, it is proposed to employ a London Regional Co-ordinator to develop links with London-based referral agencies, including leading children's hospitals, clinics or other charitable organisations, as well as families and community groups. The Co-ordinator would also be tasked with developing a donor base for sponsoring families from London.

The Recommendation

Over The Wall seems to punch well above its weight. It has a relatively small paid staffing resource and involves a large number of volunteers – currently just under 500. Last year, 444 campers attended its sites, comprising 199 seriously ill children, 197 siblings and 48 parents/guardians. This proposal will greatly enhance opportunities for seriously ill children and young people from London to access dedicated facilities:

£102,100 over three years (£35,700; £32,700; £33,700) for the salary of a London Regional Co-ordinator and related costs to greatly increase the number of children and young people from Greater London benefitting from Over The Wall's camps.

Funding History

None [An earlier application is shown as Withdrawn elsewhere in your papers today]

Background and detail of proposal

Over The Wall's camps provide a safe, supportive and fully inclusive environment for seriously ill children and their siblings and families with flexible options, depending on the specific needs of individual families, for example, a 'taster' weekend for a whole family struggling to come to terms with a child's condition. A dedicated team of volunteer doctors and nurses provides medical care and support in an unobtrusive manner that does not interrupt the camp experience. Every child is also provided with a volunteer buddy to provide one-to-one support and to ensure they get the most out of their stay.

The main responsibilities of the postholder would be to grow the charity's London referral network, including children's hospitals, specialist clinics, family support groups and other community groups; co-ordinate London-based fundraising activities; assist families through the application process; and to raise the profile of the charity amongst the business community in London, not only to attract funds for London families but also to widen the referral base.

Financial Information

As a charity, Over The Wall undertakes a lot of fundraising activity in order to raise funds to sponsor places for the families it supports. Nevertheless, its trustees are endeavouring to reduce the cost of generating funds as a percentage of total income. It has recently made changes to its fundraising staffing structure in order to reduce overall expenditure on salaries and to make more effective use of development staff. It has provided information to show that annually it has gradually reduced the cost of generating funds as a percentage of total income from 32% during year ending December 2011, to 25% projected for December 2014. At the same time, the organisation is endeavouring to build free reserves to reach its target figure over the next three years. It holds a loan from the SeriousFun Children's Network of £214,505, repayable by December 2016, which helps it to manage seasonal cash flow requirements.

Year end at 31 March	2013 Audited Accounts £	2014 Draft Forecast £
Income and Expenditure		
Income	831,928	890,900
Expenditure	817,880	839,847
Unrestricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	36,847	47,403
Restricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	(22,799)	3,650
Total Surplus / (Deficit)	14,048	51,053
Surplus / (Deficit) as a % of turnover	1.7%	6%
Cost of Generating funds (% of income)	£216,325 (26%)	222,500 (25%)
Free unrestricted reserves		
Unrestricted free reserves held at Year End	51,785	99,188
How many months' worth of expenditure	0.8	1.4
Reserves Policy target	210,000	210,000
How many months' worth of expenditure	3	3
Free reserves over/(under) target	(158,125)	(110,812)