

MEETING: 27/11/2014

Ref: 12386

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY - English for Speakers of Other Languages

Women's Centre Sutton

Adv: Tania Bronstein

Base: Sutton

Amount requested: £60,608

Benefit: Sutton

Amount recommended: £57,700

The Charity

The Women's Centre Sutton (WCS) is a small charity run by and for local women and was established 30 years ago. It functions in a small property donated to the charity by the former Greater London Council, from which it offers an informal and friendly setting to support local women who are disadvantaged and on low income. WCS offers a drop-in; counselling and support groups for survivors of domestic and sexual violence; mothers and toddlers groups; basic skills training projects; and a weekly citizens' advice bureau advice surgery.

The Application

WCS seeks three years' funding to provide English language classes for migrant and minority ethnic women in Sutton. Each year, WCS would run one 36-week course for absolute beginners; and three "fast track", 12-week, ESOL courses for women wishing to progress on to take Level 1 or 2 exams. The classes would employ qualified tutors and offer a crèche service, essential to the women's ability to participate. This proposal is similar to your previous grant, which was satisfactorily monitored. As three years have elapsed since that grant ended, this application is eligible for your consideration.

The Recommendation

WCS has experience in running English language classes; its learning spaces and resources are appropriate; and it can provide access to qualified tutors and facilities to cater for learners with responsibilities for small children. The original request included the costs of running IT classes, which fall outside your criteria. This has been explained to the organisation and it has amended its proposal accordingly, although it is prudent to ensuring this as a condition of funding. A grant is recommended as follows:

£57,700 over three years (£18,700; £19,200; £19,800) towards English classes for women speakers of other languages in Sutton. Release of the grant is subject to receipt of the courses' syllabus and publicity showing ESOL as the project's sole focus.

Funding History

Meeting Date	Decision
26/03/2009	£24,500 over two years (£11,900; £12,600) towards the provision of ESOL classes targeting women from BME and refugee communities.

Background and detail of proposal

LB Sutton's Black and Minority Ethnic population comprises 15.2% of the borough's population. While ESOL is needed in areas with significant newer communities, the

need can be acute in boroughs such as Sutton where provision is limited. There are no local classes catering for women with little previous formal education and who care for small children and who cannot access mixed gender classes, either for cultural reasons, or because they are in relationships that limit freedom and choices.

Your previous grant was successfully monitored and enabled WCS to provide English classes to women speakers of other languages. Besides gaining language skills needed for everyday interactions, learners were able to take up other support available at WCS (e.g. for domestic violence problems) and most have now built social networks in which English is the language spoken.

This application seeks funds to run the following in each of three years: (a) 36 weekly two-hour sessions of English for beginners; (b) 36 two-hour weekly IT classes; and (c) a 12-week ESOL Course at level 1 or 2. WCS was advised that English classes, but not IT could be funded. SWC has since revised its proposal to provide: (a) 36 weekly two-hour classes for beginners, aimed at enabling women to communicate in everyday situations; and, (b) three 12-week ESOL courses at level 1 and 2 in each of three years. This means that more women will benefit (48 instead of 36 annually) and more of them would be able to progress on to the next level. Total costs are now lower - as reflected in the recommended grant level.

Financial Information

Forecast income in 2014/15 is £41,357, of which £32,315 (78%) was confirmed by 25th September. Fundraising is carried out by the Treasurer who is a volunteer, which explains the low cost of generating funds. Although this cost is not separately shown in its 2014/15 forecast, WCS advises that it will be reported at year-end and is expected to be similar to the previous year. Income fluctuations across the years shown below are attributed to the variable level of grants received. However, a five-year grant from the Big Lottery, awarded in 2013/14, will provide steady annual income of approximately £30k.

Year end at 31 March	2012/13 Independently Examined Accounts	2013/14 Draft Accounts	2014/15 Current Year Forecast
	£	£	£
Income and Expenditure			
Income	25,718	69,168	41,357
Expenditure	26,741	44,586	50,737
Unrestricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	(294)	4,519	(228)
Restricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	(729)	20,063	(9,152)
Total Surplus / (Deficit)	(1,023)	24,582	(9,380)
Surplus / (Deficit) as a % of turnover	(3.9%)	35.5%	(22.7%)
Cost of Generating funds (% of income)	0	460 (0.7%)	0
Free unrestricted reserves			
Unrestricted free reserves held at Year End	17,972	22,491	22,263
How many months' worth of expenditure	8.1	6.0	5.2
Reserves Policy target	6,685 - 13,370	11,146 - 22,293	12,684 - 25,368
How many months' worth of expenditure	3.0 - 6.0	3.0 - 6.0	3.0 - 6.0
Free reserves over/(under) target	11,287- 4,602	11,345 - 198	9,579 - (3,105)