

MEETING: 27/11/2014

Ref: 12404

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY – Making London Safer

ADVANCE

Adv: Sandra Jones
Base: Hammersmith & Fulham
Benefit: London-wide

Amount requested: £90,000

Amount recommended: £90,000

The Charity

Advance was established in 1998, initially as a domestic violence organisation. It has a reputation for expertise on issues that stem from domestic violence, such as homelessness, mental ill health, debt and substance misuse. Its focus is on preventing domestic violence against women and children and on challenging and changing how women are treated in the justice system, whether as victims or offenders. This is done through primary prevention; early help and on-going support to meet women's needs; protection and risk reduction interventions to maximise safety; and partnership working with voluntary, statutory and community agencies to improve coordinated responses, influence practice and increase impact within local communities.

The Application

ADVANCE is seeking £90,000 over three years towards the salary of an Engagement Officer, and associated running costs. This will focus on three main areas of work: developing a survivor consultation mechanism, including setting up a service user forum; devising tangible solutions to current failings experienced by domestic violence victims, survivors and families; increasing access to services and improving the attitudes and practice of agencies to survivors.

The Recommendation

The charity has a strong track record of delivering quality services around domestic violence and to women in the justice system. The project will empower survivors of domestic violence to scrutinise and comment on services that are provided. This information will be used to feed into briefings and workshops for practitioners, which will lead to improved responses and access to services across London. It is recommended to support the application as it will be improving services for those subjected to domestic violence, and at the same time empowering those survivors of domestic violence.

£90,000 over three years (3 x £30,000) towards the salary of an Engagement Officer, plus management and project running costs.

Funding History

| Meeting Date | Decision |
|--------------|--|
| 28/04/2011 | £94,000 over two years (2 x £47,000) towards a full-time key worker supporting women at risk of re-offending. |
| 24/10/2002 | £50,000 over two years (2 x £25,000) towards salary and running costs to support survivors of domestic violence. |

Background and detail of proposal

The aim of the project is to improve the planning and delivery of domestic violence and other public services by listening and learning from survivors' experience. This

information will be shared with those agencies across London which provide services to women. Research studies, including a recent HMIC inspection of national police forces have shown that the majority of survivors of domestic violence have poor experiences of services provided, particularly within the statutory sector. In response to this, ADVANCE is proposing to deliver a project to counter unacceptable practice to vulnerable women and children by listening to their experiences, learning how to validate them, and how to give them a safe space in which to make choices and improve the life-changing services on offer.

The project will empower survivors through one-to-one sessions, monthly focus groups and quarterly questionnaires and telephone surveys. There will also be a service user forum developed. Information gleaned from the survivors will be used to provide practitioner briefings/workshops to local services (including GPs, housing officers, teachers, community organisations, and police). Best practice and findings of what works will be shared, as will recommendations for current and future work.

Financial Information

ADVANCE's reserves policy states that the organisation aims to hold free unrestricted funds equivalent to between three and six months of unrestricted running costs, which is equivalent to a modest 0.3 and 0.6 months' worth of 2014/15 total expenditure. The charity advises that this level is adequate due to its strong position in this field and because it receives substantial grant and contract income from Local Authorities and the Home Office, as well as from charitable trusts.

Forecast income in the current year 2014/15 is £1,512,550, of which £1,279,650 (84.6%) had been confirmed by July 2014.

The charity advises that the increase in the cost of generating funds over the period shown in the table below is due to increased efforts to generate voluntary income, the costs of which include staff costs and expenditure on fundraising events.

| Year end at 31 March | 2012/13 Audited Accounts | 2013/14 Forecast | 2014/15 Current Year Budget |
|---|--------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------------|
| | £ | £ | £ |
| Income and Expenditure | | | |
| Income | 1,450,896 | 1,711,429 | 1,512,550 |
| Expenditure | 1,347,500 | 1,713,812 | 1,649,383 |
| Unrestricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit) | 245,171 | (143,559) | 269 |
| Restricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit) | (141,775) | 141,176 | (137,102) |
| Total Surplus / (Deficit) | 103,396 | (2,383) | (136,833) |
| Surplus / (Deficit) as a % of turnover | 7.1% | (0.1%) | (9.0%) |
| Cost of Generating funds (% of income) | 12,000 (0.8%) | 41,408 (3%) | £68,400 (4.5%) |
| Free unrestricted reserves | | | |
| Unrestricted free reserves held at Year End | 266,689 | 123,130 | 123,399 |
| How many months' worth of expenditure | 2.4 | 0.9 | 0.9 |
| Reserves Policy target | 36,366 – 72,732 | 48,441 – 96,882 | 43,659 – 87,318 |
| How many months' worth of expenditure | 0.3 – 0.6 | 0.3 – 0.6 | 0.3 – 0.6 |
| Free reserves over/(under) target | 230,323 -193,957 | 74,689 – 26,248 | 79,740 – 36,081 |