

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY - Resettlement and Rehabilitation of Offenders**Only Connect****Adv: Tim Wilson****Amount requested: £135,731****Base: Islington****Benefit: London-wide****Amount recommended: £135,000****The Charity**

Only Connect (OC) is a crime prevention charity working with serving and ex-offenders, as well as young people judged to be at risk of entering the crime cycle. Having started operations as a performing arts programme in Wormwood Scrubs in 2006, the charity now provides skills training, employment support, crime prevention, employability services within prisons and on the White City Estate, and development support at its premises in Kings Cross and West London (which are called 'Centres').

The Application

OC's Centres emphasise the value of belonging to a vibrant, positive community. Participants are known as 'members' and can benefit from creative workshops, accredited training, social activities and therapeutic support. Both Centres have kitchens, and the Kings Cross site runs weekly communal meals, together with a 'Big Wednesday' event once a month where members' creative work is showcased. OC seeks funding to provide catering training and ancillary support to approximately 25 members each year, guiding them towards vocational qualifications and work experience in commercial catering. The charity will engage cohorts of 7 clients each quarter. OC is an accredited training provider, and is able to deliver an industry-recognised catering qualification. The charity has made connections with several well-known restaurants willing to offer professional catering experience.

The Recommendation

The proposed project makes use of the Centres' existing kitchens. Kings Cross will be the primary basis for training delivery, and the charity has planned a pathway to employment through vocational qualifications and work experience. The charity has designed the project based on the level of interest, and previous experience, members have in the topic area. The work fits well with the charity's existing weekly dining programme, and with the connections it has established with commercial caterers. This is a resource intensive project (each member will receive additional coaching and therapeutic support as well as catering training) and the cost per member is relatively high. However, a full breakdown has been provided to your officer and appears reasonable. Work will be overseen by a Project Manager (0.5 FTE). Funding is advised as follows:

£135,000 over three years (£50,000; £41,000; £44,000) for the costs of OC Kitchen, a catering training programme for ex-offenders, including salary costs for a 0.5 FTE Project Manager.

Funding History

Meeting Date	Decision
04/06/2009	£79,200 over three years towards the salary of a resettlement officer supporting ex-offenders to re-settle in the community.

Background and detail of proposal

OC's weekly dinners at the Kings Cross Centre bring members and the charity's supporters together and, once a month, offer the opportunity for members to perform the creative arts activities which they have been rehearsing. Whilst some members have been involved in catering for the dinners, OC plan to put this involvement on a more formal footing and deliver an accredited 10-week training programme leading to an industry-recognised food hygiene and preparation qualification. Members will continue to receive the mentoring and therapeutic support which forms a core part of OC's rehabilitation offer, but will also benefit from the employability training of OC Kitchen, culminating in a work placement with a commercial caterer.

Financial Information

Income and expenditure are forecast to grow by over 50% between the years ended 31st December 2013 and 31st December 2015 as shown in the table below. The charity advises that this is due to planned service expansion and active fundraising.

Free unrestricted reserves at the 31st December 2014 are estimated to total £121k, which is equivalent to a modest 0.8 months' worth of expenditure and below the charity's reserves policy target to hold 3 months' worth. The charity notes that its predicted growth should see a forecast surplus in 2015 of £160k, which would increase free reserves to £281k and equivalent to 1.8 months' worth of expenditure. At 24th October 2014, the charity confirmed that it had raised £1,744,680 (92%) of its expected 2014 income, and £565,000 (27%) of income expected in 2015.

The charity calculates its 'cost of generating funds' when preparing its year-end accounts and, therefore, this is not available for the current year 2014.

Year end at 31 December	2013 Audited Accounts £	2014 Current Year Forecast £	2015 Next Year Budget £
Income and Expenditure			
Income	1,328,504	1,901,131	2,055,000
Expenditure	1,245,745	1,862,508	1,894,878
Unrestricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	36,630	38,623	160,122
Restricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	46,129	-	-
Total Surplus / (Deficit)	82,759	38,623	160,122
Surplus / (Deficit) as a % of turnover	6.2%	2%	7.8%
Cost of Generating funds (% of income)	138,478 (10.4%)	-	-
Free unrestricted reserves			
Unrestricted free reserves held at Year End	82,641	121,264	281,386
How many months' worth of expenditure	0.8	0.8	1.8
Reserves Policy target	311,436	465,627	473,750
How many months' worth of expenditure	3	3	3
Free reserves over/(under) target	(228,795)	(344,363)	(192,364)