

MEETING: 27/11/2014

Ref: 12451

**ASSESSMENT CATEGORY - Strengthening London's Voluntary Sector**

**National Association of Child Contact Centres**

**Adv: Ciaran Rafferty  
Base: Outside London  
Benefit: London-wide**

**Amount requested: £65,650**

**Amount recommended: £65,700**

**The Charity**

When separated parents are unable to agree on arrangements for their children to have time with their non-resident parent, they may be referred (or refer themselves) to a Child Contact Centre. These Centres – currently there are 47 in greater London - provide a safe, friendly, neutral, place where a child can spend time with that parent and other family members. The National Association of Child Contact Centres (NACCC) was established in 1991 as a second-tier organisation providing support and development to the hundreds of independently constituted Child Contact Centres which exist throughout the UK. (A second-tier organisation is one which supports other organisations to deliver front-line services.)

**The Application**

Most of the individual Centres operate on a shoestring, often with part-time staff or volunteers, and rely heavily on NACCC for the support needed to provide services which are effective and of a consistent quality. In 2010 you awarded a three-year grant for the costs of a p/t London-based Support Manager. This grant has recently ended but the need for the work continues hence this application for a further two years' support for the work to help develop and improve the London Centres.

**The Recommendation**

NACCC provides support, advice and training to member Contact Centres and undertakes their accreditation to ensure that they meet national standards. No other organisation does this for this service area hence this application, for a further two year's support, can be deemed as eligible for consideration. Monitoring of the initial grant demonstrated both the need for NACCC's work and the value of it. Furthermore, recent legislative changes which impact on the family justice system and separated families, have led to greater demand on many Centres, coupled with a need to adapt their offer. A grant as below is recommended:

***£65,700 over two further and final years (£32,500; £33,200) towards the salary and associated costs of a p/t (3dpw) Support Worker for London.***

**Funding History**

Meeting Date	Decision
11/11/2010	£75,000 over three years (£24,000; £25,000; £26,000) towards the salary and associated costs of a p/t (30hrs) Support Manager for Greater London.

**Background and detail of proposal**

Contact Centres, sadly, are sometimes the only mechanism whereby a child can have access to a non-resident parent – especially where the parental separation has

been "difficult". There are two types: *Supported Centres* where risk of harm is low (these are usually small community organisations run on a low budget and staffed by volunteers); and *Supervised Centres* where risk is greater and so contact is observed and recorded by qualified staff.

Recent changes in legal aid criteria, and in the Children and Families Act 2014, have meant that many families are unable to access free legal advice and/or Contact Centres need to be amend some of their procedures. In response to this, NACCC has piloted a new online Safe Referral System which enables parents to refer themselves to a Centre. Referrals are assessed where necessary by NACCC social workers to ensure appropriate and safe arrangements are made. Without professional help many parents struggle with separation issues and, additionally, many staff and volunteers lack the skills and training to handle these situations (which can also include issues such as domestic abuse, drug and alcohol misuse, and mental health difficulties). NACC will work with Centres to develop their capacity to respond to new and increasing needs. There will also be a focus, necessary in London, to ensure that Centres are more culturally sensitive and responsive.

### Financial Information

The charity aims to hold free unrestricted reserves equivalent to between 4 and 6 months' worth of expenditure. Within this target the charity has specifically set aside £100,000 as designated funds in connection with funding from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). The DWP is funding a project on a payments-by-results basis and the organisation deems it prudent to set these funds aside to mitigate against any shortfall in the eventual grant payments received for this work.

Forecast increased income for 2014/15 is largely due to the, new, DWP funding of £340k. Of the income forecast for the current year, £668,262 (94%) had been confirmed as of 1<sup>st</sup> October 2014.

The cost of generating funds in 2014/15 has not been stated in the forecast as it will be calculated as part of the year end process, however it is expected to be at an equivalent level to 2013/14.

Year end at 31 March 2014	2013/14 Audited Accounts £	2014/15 Current Year Forecast £
<b>Income and Expenditure</b>		
Income	512,117	713,262
Expenditure	405,130	766,377
Unrestricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	(20,944)	(115)
Restricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	127,931	(53,000)
Total Surplus / (Deficit)	106,987	(53,115)
Surplus / (Deficit) as a % of turnover	20.8%	(7.4%)
Cost of Generating funds (% of income)	40,926 (8.0%)	-
<b>Free unrestricted reserves</b>		
Unrestricted free reserves held at Year End	363,335	363,220
How many months' worth of expenditure	10.8	5.7
Reserves Policy target	135,044 – 202,566	255,000 – 383,000
How many months' worth of expenditure	4.0 – 6.0	4.0 – 6.0
Free reserves over/(under) target	(228,291) – (160,769)	108,220 – (19,780)