

MEETING: 28/01/2015

Ref: 12389

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY - Resettlement and Rehabilitation of Offenders

Hibiscus Initiatives

Adv: Jenny Field

Base: Islington

Amount requested: £128,269

Benefit: London-wide

Amount recommended: £122,000

The Charity

Established in 1986, Hibiscus Initiatives (HI) aims to reduce isolation and hardship experienced by its clients in prison, immigration detention and in the community. Its work falls into four broad categories:

- Welfare and advocacy;
- international resettlement;
- combatting trafficking;
- volunteering and community resettlement.

The Application

You are asked to support 'the Bridging Project', a specialist mentoring programme supporting female prisoners in London-based prisons, providing structured, person-centred support pre- and post- release into the community. Three months prior to release, the female prisoner will be assessed by HI, in order to agree a tailor-made action plan. The woman will then be partnered with a volunteer mentor who will work with her to implement the plan prior to her release; meet her at the gate upon her release and then work with her for at least six months following her release to ensure her successful resettlement.

The Recommendation

Hibiscus has an established track record of working with women in London's prisons, including Holloway and Bronzefield. It is experienced in working with women who have complex and multiple needs, a high proportion of which are foreign nationals. It also runs a volunteer and befriending project to help reduce isolation amongst HI's clients in prison. There are approximately 40 volunteers who between them speak over 25 languages. The proposal before you will enable HI to build on its experience and develop a more structured case management strategy. Some of the travel costs included in the budget seemed a little on the high side and the organisation agreed during the assessment that there was scope to reduce these. A grant slightly below that requested is therefore recommended.

£122,000 over three years (£42,000; £40,000; £40,000) towards a part-time (21 hours pw) Community Support Manager, together with associated running costs, towards a specialist mentoring programme supporting women in London-based prisons.

Funding History

None.

Background and detail of proposal

HI was established in 1986. It supports disadvantaged men and women affected by the criminal justice system, providing them with information and assistance to change their lives and reduce re-offending. Its main beneficiary groups are men and

women from BME and migrant communities, asylum seekers and EU nationals, including nationals from the A2 countries and Romani population.

The structured approach that is proposed in this application will enable HI to improve the support it is able to offer to its clients. If women are to be successfully resettled upon release from prison, it is important that the planning process starts prior to release and that they are able to build a relationship of trust with their volunteer mentor. It is proposed that this project is steered by an advisory group which will include prison staff, an evaluator and a service user.

HI holds the Approved Provider Standard accreditation for safe and effective practice in mentoring and befriending, through the Mentoring and Befriending Foundation, itself recommended for funding at today's meeting.

Financial Information

Total forecast income in the current year 2014/15 is £519,285, all of which has been confirmed. Income was £89k (15%) higher in the prior year and the charity advise that this was due to the receipt of funding from the Home Office which has been designated to support work in future years.

The charity explains that the cost of generating funds is low because it does not undertake any direct fundraising activities. The cost shown in the table represents 15% of the Director's time spent completing grant funding bids.

Year end at 31 March 2014	2013/14 Audited Accounts £	2014/15 Current Year Forecast £
Income and Expenditure		
Income	608,332	519,285
Expenditure	474,476	551,446
Unrestricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	148,253	2,873
Restricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	(14,066)	(35,034)
Total Surplus / (Deficit)	133,669	(32,161)
Surplus / (Deficit) as a % of turnover	22.0%	(6.2%)
Cost of Generating funds (% of income)	8,803 (1.4%)	8,863 (1.7%)
Free unrestricted reserves		
Unrestricted free reserves held at Year End	84,168	87,041
How many months' worth of expenditure	2.1	1.9
Reserves Policy target	118,619	137,862
How many months' worth of expenditure	3.0	3.0
Free reserves over/(under) target	(34,451)	42,216