

MEETING: 28/01/2015

Ref: 12374

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

**Mentoring and Befriending Foundation (MBF)**

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

**Amount requested: £116,245**

**Amount recommended: £116,300**

**The Charity**

Mentoring and Befriending Foundation (MBF) was established in 2000 to help mentoring and befriending projects increase their effectiveness. It provides information, training and advice and guidance on quality assurance, monitoring and evaluation and impact measurement. It is qualified to accredit its constituents with the Approved Provider Standard (APS), the national standard for mentoring and befriending schemes. It also encourages its members to share good practice and learning, for example, through its online forum.

**The Application**

This application requests continuation funding for a further two years of a project helping mentoring and befriending organisations to improve their monitoring and evaluation systems in order to enable them to evidence their impact.

**The Recommendation**

Whilst three years is the maximum period that you will fund a particular project or activity, your policies allow you to consider funding for a further two years, work you consider to be of strategic importance to London. In the past, you have treated organisations providing capacity building services as satisfying this criterion. On this occasion, MBF received two years funding previously and are requesting a further two years to enable them to build on this and take the work to a new level. Monitoring of the previous grant has been of a consistently high standard and funding as requested is recommended.

***£116,300 over two years (£56,900; £59,400) towards the salary and associated running costs of a programme to improve how mentoring and befriending organisations monitor and evaluate their services and report on their impact.***

**Funding History**

Meeting Date	Decision
12/01/2012	£100,000 over two years (2 x £50,000) towards a package of tailored support to enable mentoring and befriending projects in London demonstrate their effectiveness.

**Background and detail of proposal**

Highly dependent on volunteers, mentoring and befriending organisations can make a big difference to some of the most isolated and vulnerable people in society. There are currently 740 mentoring and befriending projects/organisations across Greater London who are active MBF network members. Many are small (a high proportion of those worked with during your previous grant had a turnover of less than £10,000) and support to help them understand how to measure their success is very important. During the past two years, MBF used your grant to work with over 110 organisations not only improving the effectiveness of their monitoring and

evaluation systems but also increasing its own knowledge of the core issues affecting an organisation's ability to monitor and evaluate its work.

From its consultation with its constituents, MBF is aware that monitoring and evaluation remains problematic. Over half of the projects surveyed said that they were under increased pressure to provide evidence of their outcomes whilst just under a quarter had seen an increased demand for social impact reporting from funders. The nature of befriending work means that many of the outcomes are 'soft' (e.g. reduced isolation; increased well-being, etc) and hard to measure, therefore, and difficult to isolate from other services that are being provided.

Over the next two years, it is proposed to develop an online tool to help mentoring and befriending projects to identify appropriate outcomes and outcome indicators and how to choose the right monitoring and evaluation tools. Training will be provided to help organisations interpret and analyse the data they collect more effectively. This will be complemented by one-to-one advice and support to enable organisations develop tailored systems to best meet their needs.

### Financial Information

Forecast income in the current year 2014/15 is £587,208, of which £514,716 (87.7%) had been confirmed by October 2014. The fall in income and expenditure compared to 2013/14 is due to two of MBF's time limited funding streams ending in 2013/14. These were from the Ministry of Justice NOMS (2013/14: £143,896) and a BIG Lottery project with Remploy (2013/14: £119,800). However, MBF hopes to increase income and, as well as submitting grant applications such as this request to City Bridge Trust, is working on new bids to the Big Lottery Fund and Remploy. The charity also intends to develop its services to generate greater earned income and increase unrestricted reserves.

MBF's audited accounts for the financial year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014 do not include a figure for the 'Cost of Generating Funds'. This was discussed with the organisation during the assessment and MBF agreed it would review this with its board of trustees and auditor. The organisation has since provided an estimate for the current year as shown in the table below.

Year end at 31 March	2013/14 Audited Accounts £	2014/15 Current Year Forecast £
<b>Income and Expenditure</b>		
Income	880,664	587,208
Expenditure	939,843	670,940
Unrestricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	(25,400)	(84,506)
Restricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	(33,799)	774
Total Surplus / (Deficit)	(59,199)	(83,732)
Surplus / (Deficit) as a % of turnover	(6.7%)	14.2%
Cost of Generating funds (% of income)	-	94,262 (16.1%)
<b>Free unrestricted reserves</b>		
Unrestricted free reserves held at Year End	356,110	271,604
How many months' worth of expenditure	4.5	4.9
Reserves Policy target	469,921	335,470
How many months' worth of expenditure	6.0	6.0
Free reserves over/(under) target	(113,811)	(63,866)