

MEETING: 12/03/2015

Ref: 12498

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY - Making London More Inclusive

Action on Disability

Amount requested: £124,090
Amount recommended: £121,300

Adv: Sandra Jones
Base: Hammersmith & Fulham
Benefit: Several West London
Boroughs

The Charity

Action on Disability's (AoD) purpose is to promote equality of opportunity in the community for people who have a physical or sensory impairment or learning difficulty or who experience mental health difficulties. This is done through the delivery of high quality services; influencing local and national policy; and supporting the removal of barriers to full participation in society. The work of the organisation comes under three main strands: youth projects; opportunities for independent living; and access to welfare benefits.

The Application

AoD seeks funding towards the salary and project costs of '21st Century Citizens'. This aims to support disabled people in West London acquire the skills and confidence to be able to successfully navigate life in the 21st Century. Beneficiaries are drawn from Hammersmith and Fulham, Kensington and Chelsea, Westminster and Ealing.

The Recommendation

The charity is a well-regarded disability organisation, known for providing quality services for 35 years. From the organisation's research it has been identified that many local disabled people lack social interaction, lack confidence to challenge poor access to services and feel excluded from IT and the internet. This application is a culmination of piloted approaches to tackle these issues:

£121,300 over 3 years (£41,400, £39,600, £40,300) towards a full-time Independent Living Officer and associated running costs.

Funding History

Meeting Date	Decision
11/07/2002	£105,000 over 3 years (3 x £35,000) towards the costs of a project improving access to transport for disabled Londoners.
22/02/2001	£15,000 over two years (£8,000; £7,000) towards the costs of running a disabled Londoners consultation forum.

Background and detail of proposal

AoD has many years' experience providing services that respond to the needs identified by local disabled people. The 21st Century Citizens project will be delivered through peer led training courses, peer support groups and social activities, the emphasis being on building the skills and resilience of disabled people to overcome barriers, both on their own and together in groups.

Training consists of two different courses, each of which will be delivered over four weeks and repeated throughout the project. The first course, 'Know your rights', aims to build confidence by exploring what it means to be a disabled person through

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people's personal experience and teaches disability rights and how to use them in practical ways. The second course, 'Digital inclusion', takes people from complete beginners to a basic working knowledge of e-mail, the internet and social media. At the end of the course participants will be given guidelines on buying hardware, information on broadband options, accessibility advice, and signposting to further support and training. Each course will be delivered four times per year.

The charity will facilitate Peer Support Groups for the course participants on a monthly basis, the direction of the groups will be decided by the participants. There will also be a specific IT peer support group for people to continue learning further skills and pass them on to other disabled people. Bi-monthly social activities will be run from various venues where issue based discussions, e.g. employment, might take place.

A reference group of participants and the Independent Living Officer will review progress against targets and ensure the peer led ethos is maintained.

Financial Information

Total forecast income in the current year is £1,234,423, of which £1,171,446 (95%) had been confirmed by February 2015.

The reserves policy is to hold a minimum of 3 months running costs amounting to £318k. Actual reserves held at 31st March 2014 amounted to £119k and, following the anticipated current year unrestricted fund deficit of £82k, are forecast to fall to £36k by the 31st March 2015, which equates to 1.5 weeks' worth of expenditure. AoD acknowledges that the current level of unrestricted funds is low and falls short of its target and has advised that its Trustees are working to reach the target in the next three years. AoD hopes to continue to diversify its funding sources and increase earned income (e.g. the charity run a payroll service). In addition, AoD is reviewing its current activities to maintain tight controls on expenditure and identify potential reductions if necessary.

Year end at 31 March	2013/14 Audited Accounts £	2014/15 Current Year Forecast £
Income and Expenditure		
Income	1,222,230	1,247,673
Expenditure	1,271,689	1,274,410
Unrestricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	43,710	(82,169)
Restricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	(93,169)	55,432
Total Surplus / (Deficit)	(49,459)	26,737
Surplus / (Deficit) as a % of turnover	(4.0%)	2.1%
Cost of Generating funds (% of income)	68,445 (5.6%)	-
Free unrestricted reserves		
Unrestricted free reserves held at Year End	119,011	36,842
How many months' worth of expenditure	1.1	0.3
Reserves Policy target	317,922	318,603
How many months' worth of expenditure	3.0	3.0
Free reserves over/(under) target	(198,911)	(281,761)