

MEETING: 12/03/2015

Ref: 12295

**ASSESSMENT CATEGORY - Reducing Poverty**

**Kingston Churches Action on Homelessness**

**Adv: Julia Mirkin**

**Amount requested: £87,786**

**Base: Kingston**

**Benefit: Kingston**

**Amount recommended: £87,800**

**The Charity**

Kingston Churches Action on Homelessness (KCAH) was established in 1993 by 55 churches working collectively in the borough to tackle homelessness in Kingston. It now offers local people information, advice and services in relation to housing. Current activities include a hostel and night shelter placement service; the 'Access Project', which offers temporary supported accommodation for homeless people with low-level support needs for up to two years; a weekly job club; a healthy eating and hygiene course; housing and benefits advice and advocacy support. Although Kingston is seen as an affluent borough, it has pockets of extreme deprivation: 23 LSOAs (Lower Layer Super Output Areas) in Kingston fall in the 10% most deprived in the country in the domain entitled: 'barriers to housing and services' according to the 2012 borough profile. During 2012/13, there was a 58% increase in the number of rough sleepers picked up by Kingston 'Street Link' compared with the previous year. Despite growing demand on KCAH's services, it remains the only specialist housing support service in Kingston. The charity's current lease is soon to expire though negotiations are advanced concerning possible relocation to other premises.

**The Application**

This application is for three-years funding towards the cost of one of KCAH's two part-time Housing Adviser posts. The project budget has been revised since the application was submitted, following a benchmarking exercise for the salary of Advisor post. Although the salary has been increased, the request remains the same, reducing the proposed contribution to overheads from c.20% to c.10%.

**The Recommendation**

KCAH holds the prestigious 'Quality Mark', awarded by the Advice Quality Standard, for providing housing and welfare benefits advice. One of KCAH's Advisers is a Barrister in training and the other is an ex-service user, offering a rich foundation of knowledge and experience. The charity is well supported locally with approximately £102K received from local church donations each year; 50% of the Operational Director's salary is covered by the local authority; and in-kind support is received from local businesses in the form of sleeping bags, rucksacks, toiletries and food.

***£87,800 (£27,900; £29,240; £30,660) towards the part-time (25 h.p.w) Adviser post, direct costs of the Housing Crisis Intervention Service and a 10% contribution to overheads.***

**Funding History**

Meeting Date	Decision
25/09/2014	£3,000 (7.5 days @ £400 per day) to provide an eco-audit.
16/05/2002	£20,000 over two further years (£10,000; £10,000) towards the salary of the Operational Director.
19/10/2000	£14,700 for one year to part-fund a salary to assist young homeless people in RB Kingston.

## Background and detail of proposal

KCAH's Advisers provide high-quality advice about housing law and welfare benefits as part of a morning drop-in service or by appointment in the afternoon for more complex cases. Post holders manage a caseload of active cases; they may attend tribunals or make housing applications on behalf of clients and are the first point of contact for KCAH, dealing with daily visitors and making referrals to hostels or other accommodation where possible. 59% of KCAH's drop-in clients declared themselves to be homeless. Having registered and received support from KCAH in 2013, 93% of clients reported improvements to their mental health. Since KCAH's job club started in March 2013, 14 beneficiaries have gained employment and one has started college. During the funded period, KCAH proposes to support 450 new clients and 1,500 existing clients per year; housing will be secured for 150 people and 75 beneficiaries will be helped in the prevention of losing their home each year.

KCAH currently sublets its premises through Kingston Council from the lease-holder, Marks and Spencer. This arrangement will end on 24 March 2015. KCAH aims to relocate to St. Peter's Church in Norbiton by the end of 2015, where it can lease more space for a similar rent, allowing it to create more onsite shelter space for people with higher-level needs and from which it can earn income. If you agree to award a grant today, it is your officer's recommendation that grant instalments in year two be contingent on confirmation of new lease arrangements for the charity.

## Financial Information

Forecast income in the current year 2014-15 is £445,734, of which £424,734 (95.3%) had been confirmed by 12/02/15. £435,584 (90%) of budgeted income for 2015-16 had also been secured, with just the CBT application pending and £20K of budgeted donations still unconfirmed. The charity has stated that it has a Fundraising Committee which meets to improve, monitor and develop its ability to increase voluntary income. It hopes that the sheltered accommodation will be able to cover its costs in the near future, and it is in the process of recruiting a fundraiser to bring in community donations, which it will use to raise free reserves to the target level.

Year end at 31 March	2013/14 Audited Accounts	2014/15 Current Year Budget	2015/16 Following Year Budget
	£	£	£
<b>Income and Expenditure</b>			
Income	540,028	445,734	483,982
Expenditure	491,605	467,766	518,386
Unrestricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	64,043	(22,032)	(34,404)
Restricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	(15,620)	0	0
Total Surplus / (Deficit)	48,423	(22,032)	(34,404)
Surplus / (Deficit) as a % of turnover	9.0%	(4.9%)	(7.1%)
Cost of Generating funds (% of income)	-	-	41,000 (8.5%)
<b>Free unrestricted reserves</b>			
Free unrestricted reserves held at Year End	162,129	140,097	105,693
How many months' worth of expenditure	4.0	4.0	2.1
Reserves Policy target	122,901	116,943	129,597
How many months' worth of expenditure	3.0	3.0	3.0
Free reserves over/(under) target	39,228	23,154	(23,904)