

MEETING: 23/09/2015

Ref: 12693

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY - Improving Londoners' Mental Health

Africans Unite Against Child Abuse

**Adv: Sandra Davidson
Base: Islington
Benefit: London-wide**

Amount requested: £134,213

Amount recommended: £134,200

The Charity

Africans Unite Against Child Abuse (AFRUCA) was set up as a community response to high profile tragic deaths of newly arrived African children, victims of trafficking. It promotes the rights of African children: by raising awareness of safeguarding issues amongst African parents, faith leaders and communities; through training professionals on issues specific to African diaspora communities; and by lobbying for effective action to prevent and put an end to harmful practices such as the branding of children as 'witches' and female genital mutilation. AFRUCA recently opened a Centre for Children and Families in Manchester to offer a range of prevention and early intervention services across the North of England. The charity has undertaken campaigns in Africa to prevent human trafficking and has been supporting young African survivors of trafficking since 2009.

The Application

AFRUCA is seeking a three year grant to develop a mental health project for young people aged between 12-25 who have been victims of trafficking, to begin their journey towards recovery. The project will seek to improve the mental health of 20 children and young people each year by providing 40 counselling/therapy sessions per month. The project addresses a growing level of need. It will help to enable young people to begin to normalise their lives, increase their emotional resilience, and mental health well-being.

The Recommendation

AFRUCA is the leading national charity promoting the welfare of African children. It has a track record of engagement with practitioners, policy and strategic bodies in the UK, as well as in Africa where it addresses the problem of trafficking at source. Young victims need a great deal of emotional support to grapple with the impact of their experiences. The request will fund the salary of a part-time Mental Health Worker/Therapist, to expand the organisation's menu of support services to children and young people victims of trafficking by introducing an in-house specialist mental health service to help bridge the gap in provision across London.

£134,200 over three years (£39,800, £46,820, £47,580) for the costs of a part-time Mental Health Worker/Therapist (21hpw), project costs and overheads for work benefitting young Londoners.

Funding History

Meeting Date	Decision
25/03/2004	£3,000 towards organising induction programmes for newly arrived children.

Background and detail of proposal

Trafficking of children is a growing problem in the UK. National Referral Mechanism statistics for England consistently show that between 22% and 25% of child referrals from top 20 source countries, are African. Many African children are smuggled or come with "aunties" or "uncles" under private fostering arrangements, and once here are exploited into domestic servitude, prostitution, blood ritual, or abused for other purposes. Hidden from view, these children and young people are often deprived of education, health care, and affection and forced to work long hours. Escaping their abusers is seldom the end of their ordeal. Young victims are treated with disbelief by authorities, their age disputed, and their uncertain immigration status often overrides safeguarding concerns and responsibilities. AFRUCA is well equipped to address the young people's linguistic and cultural needs. Its awareness raising work with African faith groups and communities makes it singularly well equipped to identify victims.

Financial Information

Forecast income for the current year is £574,857 of which £365,494 (63.5%) had been confirmed by August 2015. The charity advised that the budget includes the development of a mental health project to meet the ever increasing demand on its services.

At 31st March 2015 free unrestricted funds stood at £56,254 which is equivalent to 1.3 months' worth of expenditure and is below its target to hold three months. The charity advised that it has worked hard to increase its self-generated income which rose by 10% in 2014/15 compared to the prior year. It plans to raise free unrestricted reserves by the cautious diversification of its funding streams to reduce its reliance on statutory funding whilst ensuring the delivery of its core services.

The cost of generating funds is low as the charity advised the majority of its income is received through statutory grants. However, it expects this figure to be higher in future years due to the plans described above.

Year end at 31 March	2014/15 Independently Examined Accounts	2015/16 Current Year Budget
Income and Expenditure	£	£
Income	503,666	574,857
Expenditure	539,894	558,553
Unrestricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	884	16,304
Restricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	(37,112)	0
Total Surplus / (Deficit)	(36,228)	16,304
Surplus / (Deficit) as a % of turnover	(7.2%)	2.9%
Cost of Generating funds (% of income)	8,560 (1.7%)	-
Free unrestricted reserves		
Free unrestricted reserves held at Year End	56,254	72,558
How many months' worth of expenditure	1.3	1.6
Reserves Policy target	134,973	139,638
How many months' worth of expenditure	3.0	3.0
Unrestricted reserves over/(under) target	(78,720)	(67,080)