

MEETING: 23/09/2015

Ref: 12657

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY - Resettlement and Rehabilitation of Offenders

Trailblazers Mentoring Ltd

Adv: Tim Wilson

Amount requested: £99,452

Base: Wandsworth

Benefit: London-wide

Amount recommended: £99,000

The Charity

Established in 1998 in HMP Feltham, Trailblazers' delivers through-the-gate mentoring for young male offenders (18 – 25) in order to reduce recidivism rates. Today the charity works with several prisons including Aylesbury, Rochester, ISIS and Wandsworth. Trailblazers delivers a structured mentoring programme which has been accredited by Skills for Justice, a body concerned with skill levels in the criminal justice workforce.

The Application

Trailblazers' seeks funding for its work with those released from HMPs Wandsworth and ISIS, as well as Londoners who have served time in HMPs Aylesbury and Rochester. The funded activities will include mentoring, advice, advocacy and specialist support to help those preparing for release to address the underlying reasons behind their offending history. Mentoring support continues after release for a further year.

The Recommendation

The charity impresses for its structured approach to mentoring and mentor supervision. Its work has been independently evaluated by the Third Sector Research Centre and the charity now wishes to conduct further research (not subject to this application) to understand better the impact of its support across the wider community. Trailblazers' enjoys good relations with the six host prisons it currently supports and the work proposed to City Bridge Trust is a logical extension of its services. Funding is advised as follows:

£99,000 over three years (£32,000; £33,000; £34,000) for the costs of Trailblazers' work around HMPs Wandsworth and ISIS, as well as with Londoners released by HMPs Aylesbury and Rochester. The funding includes the costs of 0.5 FTE of the charity's Operations Manager who will oversee the work.

Funding History

Meeting Date	Decision
27/11/2014	Application withdrawn following advice from your officer. Revised and resubmitted to today's meeting.

Background and detail of proposal

Prisoners can self-refer to Trailblazers' mentoring programme and the charity also receives referrals from prison officers, as well as from other inmates. The start of the programme, known as the 'resettlement period', begins 3 – 6 months prior to release and is intended to help the prisoner lay a solid foundation for the post-release community work.

The programme is highly structured and follows an accredited work-book format. Pre-release activities involve weekly one-hour meetings covering issues such as personal finance and building relationships. The charity reports that some mentees are much clearer than others about their objectives and that the support can be tailored depending on the individual's intended outcomes. All pre-release work is directed towards personal goals such as finding employment or re-establishing family contact and is aimed at tackling the underlying reasons behind the offender's custodial service. Volunteer mentors guide the prisoners and continue to work with them after release (some even meet their mentee at the gate). Mentors maintain weekly contact for 2 – 3 further months and continue with less frequent for another 9 – 12 months. London work is slightly more straightforward for the charity since ex-offenders usually settle in the capital after release. This makes management of the mentor / mentee relationship easier than is the case with some of the prisons outside London.

Financial Information

Total forecast income for the current year is £470,025, of which £374,512 (80%) had been confirmed by August 2015. Trailblazers advised income has fallen in the current year 2015 as the post of fundraiser became vacant from mid-2013 to March 2014 which saw fewer grant applications being submitted for future years.

Whilst free unrestricted reserves are expected to increase to £60,460 by the end of 2015 this remains below the charity's current target to hold funds equivalent to 4 – 6 months' worth of expenditure (£151k - £226k). Trailblazers has advised that it is working to expand its sources of income through sponsorship activities and developing corporate relationships to increase free unrestricted reserves in the future.

Year end at 31 December	2013 Audited Accounts	2014 Outturn Forecast	2015 Current Year Budget
Income and Expenditure	£	£	£
Income	553,876	561,125	470,025
Expenditure	555,740	572,970	452,818
Unrestricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	28,951	12,075	12,764
Restricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	(30,815)	(23,920)	4,443
Total Surplus / (Deficit)	(1,864)	(11,845)	17,207
Surplus / (Deficit) as a % of turnover	(0.3%)	(2.1%)	3.7%
Cost of Generating funds (% of income)	41,099 (7.4%)	48,708 (8.7%)	52,350 (11.1%)
Free unrestricted reserves			
Unrestricted free reserves held at Year End	35,621	47,696	60,460
How many months' worth of expenditure	0.8	0.5	1.6
Reserves Policy target	185,247 – 277,870	190,990 – 286,485	150,939 – 226,409
How many months' worth of expenditure	4 - 6	4 - 6	4 - 6
Free reserves over/(under) target	(149,626) – (242,249)	(143,294) – (238,789)	(90,479) – (165,949)