

MEETING: 28/01/2016

Ref: 12951

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY - English for Speakers of Other Languages

The Renewal Programme

Adv: Joan Millbank

Amount requested: £69,788

Base: Newham

Benefit: Newham

Amount recommended: 59,300

The Charity

The Renewal Programme (legal title is Newham Community Renewal Programme Ltd) was set up in 1977 with a mission to work with displaced or marginalised people primarily in Newham. Today it is a charitable company limited by guarantee which works with a wide range of people across a broad range of issues and needs. Current work-streams include: accredited education and training for adults; a refugee and migrant project providing advice and practical support; and the provision of supported housing to vulnerable adults. It also runs the Newham Carers Network.

The Application

The applicant is seeking support to run introductory English classes for older women from refugee and migrant communities who have lived in the borough for years but have never learned English. Three levels of support will be provided complemented by a drop-in which is staffed by volunteers who will provide a space for the women learners to practice speaking English, with c.100 older women expected to benefit.

The Recommendation

The project will provide a safe learning space for women aged 60 years and over who are also likely to be illiterate, isolated at home, widowed, unfamiliar with or intimidated by formal classroom settings. Approximately half the women benefiting are expected to be drawn from the local Bangladeshi community. The project extends the range of education and training opportunities including English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) currently provided by the charity. Following discussion at the assessment meeting the applicant has reduced some costs and revised the request and which is reflected in the grant recommendation:

£59,300 (£19,400; £19,800; £20,100) to meet the sessional staffing and running costs of providing introductory ESOL classes for women aged 60 years and over.

Funding History

Meeting Date	Decision
07/06/2007	£143,000 over three years (£49,000; £46,000; £48,000) for the salary of a part-time Older Asian Carers Worker and running costs for activities and events for the benefit of Asian carers aged 60+.

Background and detail of proposal

The project will deliver 3 classes of 2 hour duration each week over 36 weeks per annum for three years. All classes will be delivered by a qualified and experienced ESOL tutor. A maximum of 45 older women learners will be recruited each year, of which 36 are expected to complete their course. Following initial assessment the women will be allocated based on their level of ability range i.e. from non-literate beginners to entry ESOL for learners who are able to recognise and say days of the week, for example. As well as offering user-friendly, classroom-based, learning the

women will be supported through access to an informal drop-in session each Friday where they can practice spoken English. The Friday drop-in also offers a potential platform for delivery of additional activities and information including health and general advice. Women volunteers will be recruited from other Renewal projects to provide this complementary activity. Over time, the older learners will be encouraged to share their skills and time as volunteers, as well as being supported to progress onto other educational and learning opportunities.

Financial Information

Forecast income for the current year 2015/16 is £1,815,609 of which £1,563,205 (86.1%) had been confirmed by November 2015. Over the 3 year period shown in the table below, income has fallen by £470,722 (21%) and the charity advises that this is principally due to the ending of the Supporting People funding stream.

The charity aims to hold free unrestricted reserves equivalent to between 3 and 6 months' worth of expenditure, amounting to between £0.5m and £1m. At 31 March 2014, reserves held were considerably short of this target and stood at £203,502, equivalent to 1 months' worth of expenditure. Reserves are forecast to fall further below the target level by the end of the current year, with £146,008 expected to be held on 31 March 2016. The trustees advise that they have refocused their business model and are in the process of selling a redundant property which is expected to raise £595,000; this sum will be added to free unrestricted reserves.

The charity's cost of generating funds is very low but the charity advises that this is due to approximately 80% of its income coming from statutory sources and from fees. However, due to the charity's need to increase reserves, it forecasts that this cost will increase over the coming year as it will have to target a broader range of funders.

Year end at 31 March	2013/14 Audited Accounts £	2014/15 Draft Accounts £	2015/16 Current Year Budget £
Income and Expenditure			
Income	2,286,331	2,016,483	1,815,609
Expenditure	2,441,957	2,045,025	1,994,774
Unrestricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	(85,126)	4,643	(141,782)
Restricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	(70,500)	(33,185)	(37,383)
Total Surplus / (Deficit)	(155,626)	(28,542)	(179,165)
Surplus / (Deficit) as a % of turnover	(6.8%)	(1.4%)	(9.9%)
Cost of Generating funds (% of income)	8,069 (0.4%)	3,807 (0.2%)	8,400 (0.5%)
Free unrestricted reserves			
Free unrestricted reserves held at Year End	203,501	287,790	146,008
How many months' worth of expenditure	1.0	1.7	0.9
Reserves Policy target	610,489 – 1,220,979	511,256 – 1,022,513	498,694 – 997,387
How many months' worth of expenditure	3.0 – 6.0	3.0 – 6.0	3.0 – 6.0
Free reserves over/(under) target	(406,988) – (1,017,478)	(233,466) – (734,723)	(352,686) – (851,379)