

MEETING: 28/01/2016

Ref: 12920

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY - Making London Safer

Refuge

Adv: Jenny Field
Base: Tower Hamlets
Benefit: Lewisham

Amount requested: £84,591

Amount recommended: £84,600

The Charity

Refuge is the UK's largest single provider of specialist accommodation and support to women and children escaping domestic violence, supporting over 3,000 women and children on any given day. It operates a 24 hour national crisis line, referring women to safe accommodation across the UK; runs shelters providing accommodation and support; and carries out high profile media campaigns aimed at raising public awareness of domestic violence and its effects.

The Application

You are asked to fund the salaries of two part-time (18.75 hours per week) child support workers to work across its three refuges and its Violence Against Women and Girls centre in LB Lewisham over three years. The application meets your programme outcome of *helping children and young people living in refuges access specialist support that helps reduce trauma, increases resilience and gives them a voice.*

The Recommendation

During 2009 -11 you funded Refuge, in partnership with NSPCC, to undertake research into the needs of children and young people affected by domestic violence and to map what provision there was. It found provision extremely patchy across London and also that the needs of children were often overlooked, with efforts more often concentrated on the abused parent. The research, *Meeting the needs of children living with domestic violence* was launched at a well-attended, high profile conference in November 2011 and helped in part to inform the crafting of your *Safer London* programme. Refuge has recently secured a new £0.5m contract to run the Lewisham domestic violence service. However, there is no statutory responsibility to provide support for the children and young people concerned, other than to provide a roof over their head. The two proposed posts will make a real difference to the quality of the service that can be provided for these children.

£84,600 over three years (£27,600; £28,200; £28,800) towards the part-time salaries (2 x 18.75 per week) of two child support workers in Lewisham.

Funding History

Meeting Date	Decision
03/12/2009	£139,500 for the second year salary and running costs of a research project aimed at improving services for children affected by domestic violence across London.
08/07/2008	£133,600 for the first year salary and project costs of auditing services for children affected by domestic violence across London.
10/07/2007	£123,000 over three years (£39,000; £41,000; £43,000) for the costs of a psychologist working with children and families affected by domestic violence.

Background and detail of proposal

The traumatic impact of domestic violence on children and young people is well-documented. Research shows that in 90% of incidents where domestic violence occurs, children are in the same or the next room and that 50% of these children are directly abused. Post-traumatic stress is common, translating into a number of problems such as bed-wetting, nightmares, insomnia, trouble at school and depression. The support workers will provide one-to-one support, as well as help with the mother-child relationship and also group activities, all of which will be individually designed to help that child's recovery.

Financial Information

Forecast income in the current year to 31 March 2016 is £11,164,000 of which £10,599,000 (95%) had been confirmed by 18 December 2015.

Refuge's reserves policy is to hold 6 months' worth of running costs as unrestricted free reserves. This target amounts to £1.2m which equates to a comparatively low 1.4 months' worth of total expenditure. The charity has advised that over 70% of its income is in the form of contracts and should funding cease then the work would no longer be undertaken. Whilst the actual holding of free reserves is ahead of this target at £2.5m, equating to approximately 3 months' worth of total expenditure, your assessing grants officer is of the view that this holding is not excessive and provides an appropriate cushion against unexpected fluctuation in income or expenditure.

Year end at 31 March	2014/15 Audited Accounts £	2015/16 Current Year Forecast £
Income and Expenditure		
Income	10,148,011	11,164,000
Expenditure	10,183,522	11,183,000
Unrestricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	(239,602)	(19,000)
Restricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	204,091	0
Realised/Unrealised Gains/(losses)	26,491	
Total Surplus / (Deficit)	(9,020)	(19,000)
Surplus / (Deficit) as a % of turnover	(0.09%)	0.2%
Cost of Generating funds (% of income)	650,760 (6.4%)	667,072 (6%)
Free unrestricted reserves		
Unrestricted free reserves held at Year End	2,542,468	2,523,468
How many months' worth of expenditure	3	2.7
Reserves Policy target	1,228,904	1,228,904
How many months' worth of expenditure	1.4	1.3
Free reserves over/(under) target	1,313,564	1,294,564