

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY - Older Londoners

Neighbours in Poplar (NIP)

Adv: Tania Bronstein

Base: Tower Hamlets

Benefit: Tower Hamlets

Amount requested: £75,000

(Revised request: £85,500)

Amount recommended: £85,500

The Charity

Neighbours in Poplar (NIP) offers services for older people in four neighbourhood hubs in Poplar and the Isle of Dogs. These include weekly luncheon clubs with healthy living, social, and leisure activities; twice-monthly Sunday dinners; shopping and leisure trips; celebrations at Christmas and other festivities; and an outreach service (the subject of this application). While the main focus is older people, NIP also runs summer projects for children and a winter night shelter for homeless people.

The Application

The original application sought a contribution towards two outreach workers' wages (one full-time, another part-time), and has been revised. NIP now seeks a grant for one full-time Outreach Worker's salary and associated running costs (also over three years). The postholder would identify isolated elderly people aged 75+, link them with statutory and other services they need, and recruit and support volunteers to befriend and regularly visit those who are housebound or too frail to take part in community activities.

The Recommendation

NIP has an impressive history of supporting older people through neighbourly action. You are recommended to agree the revised request and higher level of grant as, besides enabling NIP to recover its costs, this would more clearly specify the funded work and hence provide a clearer framework to report and account for the project's outcomes:

£85,500 over three years (3 x £28,500) towards a full-time Outreach Worker and associated running costs for a project working with isolated people aged 75+.

Funding History

None in past 10 years.

Background and detail of proposal

NIP began as an initiative of local people to help their isolated older neighbours with their shopping, gardening and other small chores. Over time, services expanded as a result of a programme to improve outcomes for older people, funded by the Department for Work and Pensions and piloted in five locations, one of which was Tower Hamlets. Since the pilot's completion in 2008, the local Clinical Commissioning Group (formerly the Primary Care Trust) and Tower Hamlets Council have been funding NIP along with other four local charities running services for older people. NIP remains rooted in neighbourly good-will and is able to engage with over 500 elderly people every week, thanks to 40+ local volunteers who support the charity's small paid staff team.

This project plans to outreach into community settings such as pharmacies, GPs, and post offices to identify and engage with isolated elderly people aged 75+ who are struggling with deteriorating health and reduced finances and who may be too proud to seek help. The Outreach Worker would ensure that these older people take up services they need (from NIP and from others), and advocate on their behalf with service providers. In addition, volunteers would be recruited and supported to offer regular visits and companionship to housebound elderly people with no family or community support.

During this application's assessment, NIP identified that it could not properly account for the grant's outcomes on the basis of its original request (an annual, "general", contribution of £25,000 towards one full-time and one part-time post). It is now requesting you to instead consider providing £25,000 towards one full-time Outreach Worker plus £3,500 for running costs, as detailed in the appended breakdown to the application form, and which will provide more focus to the grant, should you agree it.

Financial Information

Forecast income for the current year 2015/16 is £221,825 of which £197,424 (89%) had been confirmed as at 16th November 2015. The charity's trustees have hired a professional fundraiser this year to address reduced funding from corporate sources and foundations since 2013/14.

Expenditure is forecast to increase in 2016/17 with the appointment of a Manager when the founding trustee who runs the charity on a voluntary basis retires. These costs may be funded initially from reserves, which will reduce the level of free reserves to their policy level.

The costs of generating funds are not disclosed in the annual accounts. The figure in the table below, provided by the Hon. Treasurer, includes the fundraiser's fees and time spent by staff raising funds from local and community sources. The charity has advised that these costs will be disclosed in its accounts in future.

Year end at 31 March	2013/14 Independently Examined Accounts	2014/15 Independently Examined Accounts	2015/16 Current Year Forecast
	£	£	£
Income and Expenditure			
Income	271,340	222,566	221,825
Expenditure	258,183	229,634	221,880
Unrestricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	24,326	10,170	22
Restricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	(11,169)	(17,238)	(77)
Total Surplus / (Deficit)	13,157	(7,068)	(55)
Surplus / (Deficit) as a % of turnover	4.8	3.2	0.02
Cost of Generating funds (% of income)			£24,744 (11.2%)
Free unrestricted reserves			
Unrestricted free reserves held at Year End	75,987	87,356	87,378
How many months' worth of expenditure	3.5	4.6	4.7
Reserves Policy target	64,546	57,408	55,470
How many months' worth of expenditure	3	3	3
Free reserves over/(under) target	11,441	29,948	31,908