

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY - Older Londoners

Deafblind UK

Adv: Jenny Field

Amount requested: £61,905

Base: Outside London

Benefit: London-wide

Amount recommended: £61,900

The Charity

Deafblind UK is a national charity based in Peterborough, which supports and provides services for people with acquired deafblindness, including those with both visual and hearing deterioration. Those with acquired deafblindness are often born without one of the senses and then lose the other over time. The organisation currently supports over 2,600 people throughout the UK. Deafblind UK ensures that at least 50% of its trustees are deafblind.

Services provided include an adaptive telephone help and advice line; rehabilitation support; technical equipment support; information; counselling; independent living services; respite care; and volunteer befrienders. The charity currently works with 330 volunteers.

The Application

As outlined in the Funding History table below, in March 2012, you approved a grant over three years towards the development of its services supporting deafblind people in London. That grant came to an end in September 2015 and the work has continued using the charity's own funds. However, that is not sustainable in the longer term and therefore funding is requested for a further two years.

The Recommendation

During the life of the previous grant, Deafblind UK increased the number of deafblind older people it supports in London from 150 to nearly 360. Its members are amongst the most isolated and vulnerable people in the country. Many are very lonely, with communication difficulties exacerbated by age-related problems such as impaired mobility. The Campaign Against Loneliness (2010) documents that isolation is more damaging to health than smoking 15 cigarettes a day.

Whilst three years is the maximum period that you will usually fund a project or activity, your policies allow you to consider funding for a further two years, work that is of strategic importance for London. One of the criteria for this is that the organisation "*Can demonstrate that they are uniquely placed (by virtue of the nature of their work) to deliver a particular project or service.*" The only other national deafblind charity that officers are aware of is Sense, which works with children who are born deafblind. Officers are satisfied, therefore, that Deafblind UK fulfils this criterion and can be considered for a further two years' funding.

£61,900 over two years (£30,700; £31,200) towards the part-time salary (3 DPW) and associated running costs of an Outreach Officer (London) to maintain and develop support services for deafblind older people in London.

Funding History

Meeting Date	Decision
15/03/2012	£80,000 over three years (£26,000; £26,000; £28,000) towards the salary and associated running costs of two part-time posts to maintain and expand support services for deafblind older people in London.

Background and detail of proposal

Deafblind UK's Outreach Officer in London offers a wide range of support service to the 148 older members in the Capital, in all four quadrants of London. As well as providing one to one support, there are also three peer support groups that offer a range of activities such as visits to places of interest in London; speakers from health and social services, the fire brigade and the police etc; crafts; and seated exercise classes. If funding is approved, Deafblind UK anticipates it will directly support 85 older deafblind people a year, with a total of 120 people benefitting as a result of contact by telephone, email and the accessible membership magazine, all of which increase awareness of opportunities and entitlements. Skilled volunteer befrienders provide weekly companionship, and help to increase the older person's independence. The Outreach Worker is able to refer the members to Deafblind UK's other services, including advice and information; advocacy support; respite breaks; and support for the individual's family.

Financial Information

Forecast income in the current year to 31 March 2016 is £3,170,756, of which £3,080,932 (97%) had been confirmed by 29 February 2016. Forecast income in the forthcoming year to 31 March 2017 is £2,923,970, of which £1,866,778 (63.8%) had been secured by 29 February 2016.

The charity advises that income reduced in 2015/16 compared to the prior year mainly as a result of loss of contract income and a more competitive funding environment. The organisation also advises that the forecast deficit in 2015/16 is planned and due to investment in direct marketing software in order to boost its fundraising capacity. This also resulted in a higher than usual cost of generating funds figure (12.4% of turnover).

The direct marketing launch during summer 2015 unfortunately coincided with the adverse media coverage of direct fundraising practices following the Olive Cooke enquiry. As a result, the charity has undergone a restructuring and dismantled its direct marketing team. It has introduced a Business Development and Quality Assurance Department in order to improve consistency in its approach to quality assurance and operational policies and procedures and to further it endeavours to grow its self-generated income.

Year end at 31 March	2014/15 Audited Accounts	2015/16 Draft Outturn	2016/17 Current Year Forecast
Income and Expenditure	£	£	£
Income	3,650,646	3,170,756	2,923,970
Expenditure	3,543,805	3,631,447	3,107,909
Unrestricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	97,859	(478,841)	(157,882)
Restricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	8,982	18,150	(26,057)
Total Surplus / (Deficit)	106,841	(460,691)	(183,939)
Surplus / (Deficit) as a % of turnover	3.0%	14.5%	6.3%
Cost of Generating funds (% of income)	179,902 (4.9%)	391,642 (12.4%)	209,153 (7.2%)
Free unrestricted reserves			
Unrestricted free reserves held at Year End	1,593,082	1,114,241	956,359
How many months' worth of expenditure	5.4	3.7	3.7
Reserves Policy target	£885,951 - £1,771,902	907,862 – 1,817,724	776,977 – 1,553,955
How many months' worth of expenditure	3 - 6	3 - 6	3 - 6
Free reserves over/(under) target	Within Range	Within range	Within range