

**MEETING: 18/03/2016**

**Ref: 13047**

### **ASSESSMENT CATEGORY - Reducing Poverty**

**South London Refugee Association**

**Adv: Sandra Jones**

**Base: Lambeth**

**Amount requested: £96,088**

**Benefit: Croydon, Merton,  
Lambeth and Wandsworth**

**Amount recommended: £96,000**

#### **The Charity**

South London Refugee Association (SLRA) supports refugees and asylum seekers experiencing severe poverty and hardship. Services include: advice and casework support; befriending; advocacy; ESOL; employment support; and positive activities to build independence and resilience and integration into local communities. SLRA also works with unaccompanied minors, supporting their transition from local authority care to independent living once they reach 18 years.

#### **The Application**

SLRA seeks three year funding for the salary costs of a 0.8FTE Advice Co-ordinator to co-ordinate advice across 4 boroughs through outreach sessions. This includes the recruitment, training and supervision of volunteers as well as undertaking on-going casework. The post is currently funded by the Lloyds Bank Foundation for 3 days per week, although this funding is due to finish in March 2016.

#### **The Recommendation**

The charity has been building its services over the last 20+ years and has a good reputation for delivering quality services to those facing severe hardship. The Big Lottery Fund has recently awarded three year funding for a Volunteer Co-ordinator and it is envisaged that the two posts will work closely together to provide support to the project's volunteers who will be drawn from the refugee communities.

***£96,000 over three years (£31,700; £32,000; £32,300) towards the cost of a part time Advice Co-ordinator (4 days per week), and associated running costs***

#### **Funding History**

None

#### **Background and detail of proposal**

South London Refugee Association (SLRA) has been operating since 1991, initially as a project of Merton Voluntary Service Council, becoming independent in 2003.

The charity operates from two bases, Lambeth and Merton, and also runs outreach community settings in Wandsworth and Croydon. The clients are some of the most disadvantaged and socially excluded people in London. They face challenges that include a combination of poverty and debt; homelessness; poor English skills; mental health issues; difficulties in establishing legal status for residency and employment; problems accessing public services for their family; and lack of confidence and isolation. Some of the adults and families are unable to access support from statutory services and the charity works with them to meet the basic needs of these clients and helps them to stabilise and move their situations forward. The SLRA works closely with the statutory organisations across the four boroughs and are in

receipt of grant funding from both the local authorities and the Clinical Commissioning Groups for specific projects.

The Advice Co-ordinator will work across the drop-ins to provide advice and, where necessary, on-going casework to support clients. The work will be reinforced by a group of volunteers from the migrant communities who will be recruited, trained and supervised to give advice at the drop-ins.

SLRA's drop-in provides a lifeline for some of London's poorest people. The charity has Advice Quality Standard Accreditation, and the Advice Co-ordinator is regulated and certified by the Office of the Immigration Service Commissioner (OISC) to ensure competent, fit for purpose, advice services. It has also gained the London Youth Quality Mark (Bronze).

### Financial Information

Forecast income in the current year is £194,353, and budgeted income for 2016/17 is £206,416; both of these amounts have been confirmed in full. There are additional pending grant applications for 2016/17 totalling £48,311, which includes £31,711 of this CBT grant.

The increase in income and expenditure year on year is due to the increasing and changing demand for services. This has resulted in increased staffing and project costs, as well as additional fundraising.

The charity's accounts do not state the cost of generating funds, although this will be included in future accounts. The figure for 2014/15 was calculated based on the costs of employing a fundraiser plus time taken by the CEO.

Year end at 31 March	2014/15 Independently Examined Accounts £	2015/16 Current Year Budget £
<b>Income and Expenditure</b>		
Income	162,175	203,313
Expenditure	147,725	206,032
Unrestricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	5,605	5,151
Restricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	8,845	(7,330)
<b>Total Surplus / (Deficit)</b>	<b>14,450</b>	<b>(2,719)</b>
Surplus / (Deficit) as a % of turnover	8.9%	2.2%
Cost of Generating funds (% of income)	(£10,500) 6.5%	?
<b>Free unrestricted reserves</b>		
Unrestricted reserves held at Year End	62,972	68,123
How many months' worth of expenditure	5.1	4
Reserves Policy target	36,931 – 73,863	51,508 – 103,016
How many months' worth of expenditure	3.0 – 6.0	3.0 – 6.0
Free reserves over/(under) target	26,041 – (10,891)	16,615 – (34,893)