

MEETING: 10/01/2017

Ref: 13772

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY - Resettlement and Rehabilitation of Offenders

Upper Room (St Saviour's with St Mary's)

**Adv: Olivia Dix
Base: Hammersmith & Fulham
Benefit: London-wide**

Amount requested: £107,114

Amount recommended: 107,114

The Charity

The Upper Room began as a simple soup kitchen in 1990 but it now runs three inter-linked projects which focus on giving socially disadvantaged people the tools or skills they need to improve their lives. One of its projects, UR4Meals, provides hot and nutritious, three-course meals to 90-120 people, five evenings a week. It also provides clothing, bedding, volunteer opportunities, support with health and housing and onward referrals. UR4Jobs is a multilingual employment support and job training facility for economic migrants from Central/Eastern Europe; and the third project is UR4Driving.

The Application

The request is towards the costs of the UR4Driving Project, which improves the employability of ex-offenders through giving them the motivation and specific skills to find employment and thus break the cycle of re-offending and long-term unemployment.

The Recommendation

The organisation is well-run with a clear strategy for all its employment projects and a good success rate, given the nature of its clients. The UR4Driving Project, having been funded by the Big Lottery up to 2015, was independently evaluated by Roehampton University and found it to be "...a sustainable attempt to tackle the rates of re-offending." Recommendations arising from the evaluation have been incorporated into the project going forward. A grant is advised:

£107,114 over three years (£35,000, £35,700, £36,414) for 2 dpw of the Project Co-ordinator salary plus project costs of the UR4Driving Project.

Funding History

Meeting Date	Decision
18/07/2012	£34,100 over three years (£11,400; £11,200; £11,500) for one day a week of counselling support plus associated costs for Upper Room's work with homeless clients.
09/09/2010	Declined as did not meet the programme criteria.
02/07/2009	Declined as the proposed delivery partner was in mid restructuring so not appropriate time for grant.

Background and detail of proposal

UR4Driving is an established project that was inspired by a work experience programme funded by the Mercers' Company in 2009. Ex-offenders have a much higher than normal tendency of becoming increasingly less employable the longer they remain unemployed. The transport industry is one which has been traditionally

open to employing ex-offenders and a valid driving licence opens up real employment opportunities not only in that industry but also for self-employment as a tradesman. However the project is not just about employability training but about reducing re-offending and helping ex-offenders re-integrate into society. Each applicant, who comes with a risk assessment from the referring agency, is assessed for suitability, based on whether they are at the stage of wanting to engage with society and work. Successful candidates compile a personal Action Plan and sign a Code of Conduct. They have to undertake 80 hours of voluntary work, attend personal development workshops and workshops in CV writing, interview skills and disclosure workshops. They are supported in obtaining the driving licence theory test and the organisation pays for driving lessons. Once participants have a driving licence, they are offered support into work through UR4Jobs. The evaluation of the project showed that 70% of participants had not reoffended within five years, which is impressive. Over the next three years the aim is to recruit 180 ex-offenders and while they allow for a 50% drop-out rate (still much better than many projects with ex-offenders) the drop-out rate for the current cohort has only been 20%. The project has a waiting list of 40 potential participants.

Financial Information

Forecast income in the current year is £384,546 of which £361,214 (94%) is confirmed as at 30.11.16. In 2015/16 the organisation was left a legacy of £76,000, which is being used for a capital project to create more space and to replace a van.

Year end at 31 March	2014/15 Independently Examined Accounts £	2015/16 Independently Examined Accounts £	2016/17 Current Year Forecast £
Income and Expenditure			
Income	494,170	522,326	384,546
Expenditure	477,064	466,246	323,294
Unrestricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	17,106	41,076	61,252
Restricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	0	15,044	0
Total Surplus / (Deficit)	17,106	56,080	61,252
Surplus / (Deficit) as a % of turnover	0.04%	12%	19%
Cost of Generating funds (% of income)	0.06%	0.05%	0.06%
Free unrestricted reserves			
Unrestricted free reserves held at Year End	88,327	56,477	57,548
How many months' worth of wind-down costs	3.04	2.53	2.58
Reserves Policy target 3 months wind down costs	87,000	67,016	67,016
How many months' worth of wind-down costs	3	3	3
Free reserves over/(under) target	1,327	(10,539)	(9,648)