

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY - Making London More Inclusive**Ealing Mencap****Adv: Kate Moralee****Base: Ealing****Amount requested: £77,145****Benefit: Ealing****Amount recommended: £77,200****The Applicant**

Established in 1965 Ealing Mencap provides a range of services to people (and their carers) with a learning disability; autistic spectrum conditions; or sensory impairments. It is a registered charity and is currently the lead agent of the consortium delivering the Ealing Specialist Advice Service (ESAS) to vulnerable adults in the borough.

The Application

The Trust is asked to support a p/t Transport and Travel Advice Caseworker, plus associated costs to provide an empowering and preventative service for vulnerable people. The worker will assist individuals in completing forms and contesting incorrect decisions, and work either at a central location or alternative place of choice and accessibility. It is envisaged that 280 travel inquiries will be solved each year, enabling more people to live independently, thus reducing social isolation.

The Recommendation

Ealing Mencap is well placed to deliver this service with over 50 years' experience of delivering services to vulnerable adults. The organisation is well managed and embedded in the local community. The project has been informed by the increase in requests for support to complete application forms for travel and transport received via ESAS. The proposal adopts a preventative approach, supporting and enabling people to access technology, understand the process and complete forms online. Your officer recommends that funding be released on receipt of satisfactory quarterly management accounts whilst the organisation oversees a return to a breakeven position in its budget for 2018/19.

£77,200 over 3 years (£26,100, £25,600, £25,500) for a p/t (3 days per week) Travel and Transport Advice caseworker and associated project costs, with funding released on receipt of satisfactory quarterly management accounts.

Funding History

Meeting Date	Decision
30/06/2011	£179,100 over three years (£62,800; £57,500; £58,800) towards a project supporting young people with learning disabilities through the transition to adulthood in Ealing, Harrow and Brent.

Background and detail of proposal

Ealing Mencap has proposed this service in response to an increase in demand through its general advice service and to the digitalisation of the Transport and Travel application process by Ealing Council. Many vulnerable people eligible for support with transport and mobility (elderly, people with mental capacity issues and disabilities) have difficulty accessing or using the internet or have difficulty understanding information.

Travel and Transport inquiries to the generic advice line are considered lower priority than welfare benefits or housing inquiries, due to deadlines for appeals, evictions and possession orders of the latter. This results in long waiting times for travel and transport enquiries, which in turn reduce the mobility options of vulnerable people and increases their isolation. The introduction of Universal Credit in the borough from April 2018 and the closure of Southall job centre is predicted to further increase pressure on the existing advice service.

A dedicated Transport and Travel caseworker will be able to provide specialist knowledge of different schemes available; allocate quality time to supporting individuals to navigate systems and to complete their own applications resulting in a more efficient and faster service to clients. The service will be provided three days per week from either the Shopmobility site, the Lido advice centre site, or home visits. Referrals will be received from ESAS, GP's, social workers, occupational therapists, carers centres, other generalist advice services and self-referrals.

Financial Information

The organisation has recently used some of its unrestricted reserves for redundancy payments when funding for a project funded by restricted income ended. It has recently secured a £35,000 sustainability grant from Ealing Council to strengthen volunteering, broaden its remit, explore delivering complementary services and diversifying income sources. Although the 2017/18 and 2018/19 budgets continue to predict an operational deficit the charity's Finance Sub-Committee is continuing to work on the 2018/19 budget taking necessary action to ensure a breakeven position month on month by end 2018/19. The high surplus in 2016/17 is due to the revaluation of the building (£284,400) and the dissolution of The Helen Doe Trust, of which Ealing Mencap was the only beneficiary, bringing the assets (£136,051) into the charity, without which it would have operated at a deficit of £74,931.

Year end as at 31st March	FY 15/16 Audited Accounts £	FY 16/17 Draft Accounts £	FY 17/18 Forecast £
Income & expenditure:			
Income	2 224 968	2 546 965	2,087,898
- % of Income confirmed @14/12/17	n/a	n/a	80%
Expenditure	(2 159,457)	(2 201 445)	(2 194 984)
Total surplus/(deficit)	65,511	345,520	(107,086)
Split between:			
- Restricted surplus/(deficit)	(36,037)	264,670	(19)
- Unrestricted surplus/(deficit)	101,548	80,850	(107,067)
	65,511	345,520	(107,086)
Cost of Raising Funds	0	0	16,216
- % of Income	0.0%	0.0%	0.8%
Operating expenditure (unrestricted funds)	1,439,249	1 528,121	1,592,752
Free unrestricted reserves:			
Free unrestricted reserves held at year end	396,030	473,609	366,542
No of months of operating expenditure	3.3	3.7	2.8
Reserves policy target	539,864	550,361	548,746
No of months of operating expenditure	4.5	4.3	4.1
Free reserves over/(under) target	(143,834)	(76,752)	(182,204)