

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY - Making London More Inclusive

Vital Xposure

Adv: Tim Wilson

Amount requested: £57,198

Base: Hackney

Benefit: Hackney

Amount recommended: £57,200

The Applicant

Established in 2011, Vital Xposure (Vital) is a registered charity delivering inclusive and innovative theatre with a focus on marginalised and excluded voices. Under the creative leadership of disabled artists, Vital is an Arts Council National Portfolio organisation. The charity operates from the premises of Hackney Empire, which offers rehearsal space at a significant discount.

The Application

Vital seeks funding towards the delivery costs of three related activities: training and mentoring early career disabled theatre practitioners; researching and implementing access provision for disabled people to take part in theatre; and disseminating best practice access advice to arts organisations in London. Work will be led by the charity's Artistic Director, who is a leading practitioner in disabled theatre and well connected with London's arts network.

The Recommendation

The proposed activities fit well with your priorities for inclusive arts. Not only will Vital work directly with disabled theatre practitioners, but it will also share learning from this project and from previous work with a wider network of organisations to promote inclusion. Vital has excellent contacts, and is proposing to build on what already exists in London's arts space. Several City Bridge Trust grantees are referenced in the application materials as project partners, giving comfort that there is high likelihood of project success. The funding cost lines have been discussed with the applicant, particularly the provision for 'contingency', which is not typically covered by City Bridge Trust. Vital Xposure is seeking funds from several sources and since some applications have been unsuccessful, it is your officer's view that the full amount requested in this application could be met, not least because total project costs are seen to be good value. Funding is recommended as follows:

£57,200 over two years (2 x £28,600) towards the costs of Vital Xposure's work to develop and deliver inclusive theatre. The funding is offered on the condition that the full balance of funds required is raised from other sources.

Funding History

None

Background and detail of proposal

Vital is a disability-led charity with a focus on addressing the often-overlapping issues that lead to marginalisation and exclusion. With a successful record of performances and mentoring work since it was established, it is well placed to deliver the proposed activities. Vital has a strong network of prospective mentees, with the ability to reach people not only through its own newsletter, but also social media and the outreach work of project partners including Hackney Empire. The charity would

seek formal applications from candidates, and then select through a casting process. Learning will be disseminated through Vital's own network, as well as via the Arts Council, which has confirmed the charity's status as a National Portfolio Organisation until 2022. The charity wishes to deliver activities for a two-year period, following which it will assess impact and determine the future direction of this strand of work.

Financial Information

The charity's free reserves show a decline in the three years of the table below. This has been discussed with Vital which notes that the forecasts provided for 2017-18 and 2018-19 are prudent, and only include income that the charity is confident it will secure. Vital hopes that both years will in fact be better, and anticipates a surplus on unrestricted funds in 2019-20 because of improved performance and consultancy income.

The cost of generating funds falls significantly between 2016-17 and 2017-18 because of reduced spend on freelance fundraising, and greater use of the charity's core team for this activity.

Year end as at 31 March	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
	Examined Accounts	Forecast	Forecast
	£	£	£
Income & expenditure:			
Income	140,134	174,625	223,018
- % of Income confirmed	n/a	100%	45%
Expenditure	126,804	176,131	239,052
Total surplus/(deficit)	13,330	(1,506)	(16,034)
Split between:			
- Restricted surplus/(deficit)	0	0	0
- Unrestricted surplus/(deficit)	13,330	(1,506)	(16,034)
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Cost of Raising Funds	8,123	4,328	4,635
- % of income	5.8%	2.5%	2.1%
Operating expenditure (unrestricted funds)	126,804	173,376	153,472
Free unrestricted reserves:			
Free unrestricted reserves held at year end	51,333	49,827	33,793
No of months of operating expenditure	4.9	3.4	2.6
Reserves policy target	31,701	43,344	38,368
No of months of operating expenditure	3.0	3.0	3.0
Free reserves over/(under) target	19,632	6,483	(4,575)