

**ASSESSMENT CATEGORY - Reducing Poverty****East European Resource Centre****Adv: Jack Joslin****Base: Hammersmith & Fulham****Amount requested: £138,499****Benefit: London-Wide****(Revised request: £110,260)****Amount recommended: £110,300****The Applicant**

East European Resource Centre (EERC), formerly the East European Advice Centre was established in 1981 to assist Polish people stranded in the UK as a result of the introduction of martial law in their home country. A registered charity, its first clients were people who could not return to Poland and therefore needed employment, welfare and housing advice in their mother tongue. The charity continues to provide advice and support services, both through drop in 'clinics' and referrals from other agencies, but has now expanded its client base to include people from all East European EU countries. EERC was originally set up by East European Migrants with lived experience of the UK; today the majority of the staff, trustees and volunteers share these experiences providing insight and understanding to the issues faced by their beneficiaries.

**The Application**

This application is looking to increase the charity's capacity to deliver expert legal advice and support to the Eastern European communities they work with. The organisation has seen an increase in demand on their services since the vote to exit the European Union, with the impact being acutely felt its main beneficiary group. To cater for this increased demand, EERC is looking for support to increase service capacity to deliver debt, housing and welfare advice. They plan to do this by delivering more one-to-one and drop in sessions and to develop their capacity to take on more case work. Funding is being sought to expand the crisis helpline as well as delivering outreach and workshop sessions on emerging issues within the different communities they serve.

**The Recommendation**

EERC is a well-regarded charity with nearly thirty years' experience delivering accredited advice and support services across London. Funding is sought to increase the legal advice provision to Eastern European communities across the capital. With a focus on welfare the project looks to cater to the needs of the organisation's Eastern European beneficiaries in a changing political and policy environment, responding to need as it arises. Further capacity in the organisation is sought to deal with the increased demand on services over the next 3 years as the UK transition out of the European Union. A revised budget was provided during assessment (see Appendix 1 to the application form) to reduce the amount of staff time being requested to fit within your usual funding policy. Funding is recommended as follows:

**£110,300 over three years (£36,100; £36,800; £37,400) for the part-time Senior Welfare Advice Worker (0.6FTE); Helpline and Support Officer (0.4FTE); and associated running costs to provide welfare advice and support to the Eastern European community across London.**

## Funding History

Meeting Date	Decision
15/03/2012	£75,000 over three years (3 x £25,000) towards a part time Project Coordinator and associated running costs for a support service with isolated elderly East Europeans.
17/02/2011	Application withdrawn as within the fallow period.

## Background and detail of proposal

EERC's casework indicates that the clients they work with are usually on very low incomes, with 82% reporting to earn less than £10,000 a year while living in London. Hardly any of the beneficiaries have access to savings or investments with 84% living in privately rented housing, usually in cramped conditions. It is often difficult for these communities to navigate the welfare system, especially as it changes significantly in the current climate. An example given at assessment was related to the charges introduced for overseas visitors using the NHS. One client had been charged retrospectively for cancer treatment they had received 9 years ago as a resident European Citizen. Although the case was easily resolved it was an exceedingly stressful position for the client to experience with no knowledge of the welfare system or how to appeal such a decision. The charity expects to see more cases like this as policies are changed or introduced over the next three years.

## Financial Information

The charity has had a pattern of overspending, usually in its unrestricted expenditure. At assessment your officer discussed the annual challenge they faced to meet core costs. A recent application for core cost funding to the Tudor Trust has been successful for £25,000 a year over three years. Cost of raising funds is low and is based on the amount of time the CEO spends on writing funding proposals. Income increased significantly in 2016/17 due to the charity being successful in receiving significant funding for its work from a number of Trusts and Foundations.

Year end as at 31 March	2016 Examined Accounts £	2017 Draft £	2018 Budget £
<b>Income &amp; expenditure:</b>			
Income	130,312	249,651	288,209
- % of Income confirmed as at 30/10/2017	n/a	n/a	93%
Expenditure	(144,996)	(207,072)	(279,859)
Total surplus/(deficit)	(14,684)	42,579	8,350
Split between:			
- Restricted surplus/(deficit)	(1,995)	(2,546)	23,583
- Unrestricted surplus/(deficit)	(12,689)	45,125	(15,233)
	(14,684)	42,579	8,350
Cost of Raising Funds	0	4,887	4,580
- % of Income	0.0%	2.0%	1.6%
Total Operating Expenditure	144,996	207,072	279,859
<b>Free unrestricted reserves:</b>			
Free unrestricted reserves held at year end	70,925	116,050	100,817
No of months of operating expenditure	5.9	6.7	4.3
Reserves policy target	72,498	103,536	139,929
No of months of operating expenditure	6.0	6.0	6.0
Free reserves over/(under) target	(1,573)	12,514	(39,112)