

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY - Reducing Poverty**Positive East****Adv: Shegufta Rahman****Base: Tower Hamlets****Amount requested: £111,942****Benefit: Multiple East London Boroughs****Amount recommended: £111,900****The Applicant**

Positive East (PE) is London's largest HIV charity. Based in East London, the charity has over 25 years' experience of supporting people affected by HIV on journeys from crisis to sustained financial stability and emotional well-being. Annually, the organisation provides direct support to more than 1,700 people, with an additional 1,500 who receive a free HIV test in its offices or at its outreach sessions. Most service-users are from marginalised communities, whose experiences of HIV is exacerbated by poverty, poor housing, isolation, treatment literacy, cultural/linguistic barriers to accessing services, and HIV-related stigma.

The Application

The charity is seeking funding for an Advice Service Worker, who will support the delivery of PE's Advice Service for HIV positive people. Working alongside two other Advice Service Workers, this service will support people living with HIV in London out of poverty and hardship. PE expects 900 people living with HIV to be supported through this Advice Service each year.

The Recommendation

PE is East London's primary HIV service provider and the only charity in London offering AQS2 accredited HIV specialist advice work. The Advice Service has supported individuals with initial claims through to undertaking mandatory reconsiderations and appeals, where PE's success rate is almost 100%.

£111,900 over three years (£36,200, £37,300, £38,400) for the full-time post of Advice Service Worker.

Funding History

Meeting Date	Decision
15/06/2017	£281,000 over three years (£108,000; £88,000; £85,000) strategic initiative grant to GMI Partnership supporting the LGBT community.
24/11/2016	£35,000 Stepping Stones grant over one year to support investment to demonstrate buying propensity for Re-mind.
25/09/2014	£86,000 over two years (£47,000; £39,000) towards a Clinical Psychologist and Support Worker salaries and project costs.
07/09/2011	£112,500 over three years (3 x £37,500) for the salary and operational costs of the Re-Assure Women's Project.

Background and detail of proposal

PE operates in east London's eight boroughs (Hackney, Tower Hamlets, Waltham Forest, City of London, Newham, Redbridge, Havering and Barking & Dagenham), in which HIV prevalence is 6.3 diagnoses per 1,000 people; four times the national average, with health profiles for East London showing lower life expectancy and lower healthy life years than London in general (Public Health England). PE's Advice

Service provides information, advice, casework and advocacy (including representation at tribunals) on welfare benefits (primarily ill-health and disability benefits), housing, and generalist advice issues. The service is delivered through a number of different mediums; a telephone advice line, available five days a week and serving as a triage; face-to-face appointments in HIV clinics, hospitals and at home where appropriate; and a drop-in service at PE's office. With a holistic approach towards supporting beneficiaries, the service focusses on building a relationship of trust, identifying other key needs and linking individuals with peer support, counselling and group services. This approach promotes client independence and increases the potential for making clients' financial futures more sustainable, e.g. through being able to return to work.

Based on last year's outputs, the organisation expects to secure £650,000 per year for beneficiaries through assisting them to successfully complete benefits claims. Through accessing the Advice Service, the charity will support individuals to achieve financial stability and independence to be better able to manage finances, empowered and informed to deal with benefits issues and on rights relating to benefits and housing. They will also achieve better physical health through adherence to Antiretroviral Therapy (ART) and feel more confident communicating with health and social care professionals.

Financial Information

PE's reserves policy is to hold between £325,000 and £425,000, with an ambition to reach the latter in within a three to five-year period. The figures below illustrate that the charity is on track to stay within this target. The level of free unrestricted reserves is based on total operating expenditure in the table below as most of PE's activities are restricted. The exceptional surplus in 2017 was due to timings of funding restrictions which were implemented at a much slower pace than anticipated and enabled PE to recover from a significant deficit the previous year. Due to the reduction in statutory funding, surplus at this level is not anticipated in the future.

Year end as at 31 March	2017 Audited Accounts £	2018 Forecast £	2019 Budget £
Income & expenditure:			
Income	1,322,658	1,364,795	1,318,629
- % of income confirmed as at 01/12/2017	n/a	61%	53%
Expenditure	(1,170,518)	(1,329,737)	(1,329,736)
Total surplus/(deficit)	152,140	35,058	(11,107)
Split between:			
- Restricted surplus/(deficit)	0	12,207	(38,472)
- Unrestricted surplus/(deficit)	152,140	22,851	27,365
	152,140	35,058	(11,107)
Cost of Raising Funds	147,880	107,000	107,000
- % of income	11.2%	7.8%	8.1%
Total operating expenditure	1,170,518	1,329,737	1,329,736
Free unrestricted reserves:			
Free unrestricted reserves held at year end	347,956	370,807	359,700
No of months of operating expenditure	3.6	3.3	3.2
Reserves policy target	325,000	325,000	325,000
No of months of operating expenditure	3.3	2.9	2.9
Free reserves over/(under) target	22,956	45,807	34,700