

**ASSESSMENT CATEGORY - Older Londoners**

**Age UK Bexley**

**Adv: Sandra Jones**

**Base: Bexley**

**Amount requested: £90,224**

**Benefit: Bexley**

**Amount recommended: £90,300**

**The Applicant**

Age UK Bexley (AUKB) – a charity - provides a wide range of services to older people. Its mission is to improve the quality of life for older people in the London Borough of Bexley by providing information, services and support. Currently the main activities include: an Advice and Information Service; Befriending Service; Handyperson Service; Day Centres; Foot Care Service; Wellbeing Centres; Men in Sheds; wheelchair hire and volunteering opportunities.

**The Application**

Funding is sought to continue and expand the organisation's 'Men in Sheds' project over a 2.5year period. This is a service that supports older men who want to get together, share and learn new skills - all in the welcoming space of a 'Shed'. Expanding from a single site workshop, the organisation will run 'virtual sheds' from its network of Wellbeing Centres. Funding, should you agree it, will cover the costs of a 30 hour per week Project Co-ordinator, 5 hours per week Services Manager and associated running costs. This is a new post, developing a new sustainable model of working by building on the work undertaken by the current post holder (currently funded by the Henry Smith Charity with this funding ceasing in the Autumn).

**The Recommendation**

This project has been operating successfully for several years and AUKB is seeking to expand the service and work towards it becoming sustainable. By expanding to other sites, the capacity of the project will increase, thus increasing the number of participants. During the period of the grant the staff will be working with the Shed members and volunteers to enable them to take over the governance and management of the project to become a separately managed resource. The feasibility of this has been evidenced by AUKB.

***£90,300 over three years (£35,600; £35,700; £19,000) for the posts of Project Co-ordinator (30 hours per week), Service Manager (5 hours per week) and associated running costs.***

**Funding History**

None

**Background and detail of proposal**

The current Men in Sheds service operates from one location, with 91% of participants aged 74+ years. The current post holder supports the participants in making a range of items, using plant machinery. The expanded service will run 'Virtual Sheds' from the organisations Wellbeing Centres (currently 5) and is likely to have the same age profile. Kits will be prepared at the main workshop and used at the Virtual Shed sites, enabling the men to assemble a range of items such as bird and bat boxes and other garden items that do not require plant machinery and

specialist skills. These sessions will be done in small and socially dynamic groups, for those men who do not have the skills to manage the equipment needed to make more complex items. Each Virtual Shed will be supported through the recruitment and training of volunteers. For the duration of the project the project co-ordinator will also build skills, operational governance and community management capacity to develop the sustainability beyond the length of the grant. This will include building on the charity's existing corporate sponsorship (both cash and in kind); developing a management committee to maintain the oversight and co-ordination of the Shed project beyond the lifetime of the funding; and building volunteer skills and commitment to support the Shed's membership as a semi-autonomous arm of the charity.

### Financial Information

Income for AUKB decreased in 2017/18 due to a reduction in grants and contracts, the majority of which have been confirmed for 2018/19. In response to the reductions, the organisation undertook a reorganisation which included some redundancy costs. The resultant budget deficit has been funded through free reserves, which still leaves them with a level higher than their free reserves policy. Although their current policy is to hold 3 months free reserves, they are looking to raise this to 6 months to future proof themselves in light of the current financial climate.

Year end as at 31 March	2017 Audited Accounts £	2018 Budget £	2019 Budget £
<b>Income &amp; expenditure:</b>			
Income	753,386	572,975	607,180
- % of Income confirmed as at 09/04/2018	n/a	n/a	51%
Expenditure	(794,915)	(624,154)	(615,833)
Gains (deficit) on investments	36,649	n/a	n/a
Total surplus/(deficit)	(4,880)	(51,179)	(8,653)
Split between:			
- Restricted surplus/(deficit)	3,213	0	0
- Unrestricted surplus/(deficit)	(8,093)	(51,179)	(8,653)
	(4,880)	(51,179)	(8,653)
Cost of Raising Funds	94	25,000	25,000
- % of Income	0.01%	4.4%	4.1%
Operating expenditure (unrestricted funds)	776,654	600,154	553,131
<b>Free unrestricted reserves:</b>			
Free unrestricted reserves held at year end	491,111	439,932	431,279
No of months of operating expenditure	7.6	8.8	9.4
Reserves policy target	194,164	150,039	138,283
No of months of operating expenditure	3.0	3.0	3.0
Free reserves over/(under) target	296,948	289,894	292,996