

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY - Older Londoners

London Children's Ballet

Adv: Sandra Davidson

Amount requested: £60,000

Base: Kensington & Chelsea

Benefit: London-wide

Amount recommended: £60,000

The Applicant

London Children's Ballet (LCB) was founded in 1994 to give talented young dancers aged 9-14 (boys up to 16) the opportunity to perform as part of a professional ballet company, regardless of their background. In 2016 LCB was granted Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) status. Every year, LCB commissions a composer and choreographer to devise a new piece of work. This annual production gives young dance professionals their first West End showcase to an audience of 8,000. LCB dancers rehearse on Sunday afternoons from January to April, with intensive daily rehearsal over their Easter holidays. In total young dancers receive 100 hours of free, specialist ballet tuition and a West End performance experience. Over 450 children and young people auditioned last year for The Secret Garden with 30 places available. In addition to the main company a further 48 children are chosen from auditions to dance with LCB's touring companies. Outreach work takes ballet into state schools, care homes, hospices and special needs centres in and around London with touring companies performing up to 3,000 shows a year.

The Application

This application seeks support over three years to enable older people across London greater access to ballet by taking the touring companies into care homes. During the season at the Peacock Theatre, LCB ran a very popular 'Ballet for £1' programme, that widens participation in and access to ballet for those unable to afford standard ticket prices, or for whom attending ballet is outside their families' experience. Twenty-five per cent of tickets to LCB's annual production (2,000 tickets) are made available (at £1.00) to charities, the elderly and primary schools in areas of deprivation. Audience assessment of LCB's elderly guests found that many live in acute isolation, often struggling with mobility or illnesses associated with ageing.

The Recommendation

The project proposal meets your Older Londoners priority. It will provide the opportunity for older isolated people to see young people perform in a vibrant display of dance with stunning costumes to beautifully played music, written especially to accompany ballet. The charity's touring company of 12-15 dancers will take an abridged version of LCB's new ballet on tour in the community amongst local care homes. The grant requested is towards some of the production cost, reserving at least 400 seats for older people benefiting from 'Ballet for £1' and tour expenses. Overall, the package is expected to benefit up to 1,000 residents each year.

£60,000 over three years (3 x £20,000) towards the Ballet for £1 and LCB tours for older isolated people across London.

Funding History

Meeting Date	Decision
15/04/2010	£15,000 over three years (3 x £5,000) towards the Ballet for £1 programme for older people across London.

Background and detail of proposal

Since inception, LCB has sought ways to widen access to its performances to those who would not otherwise engage with (due to lack of familiarity) or be able to afford theatre tickets. Initially extending an invitation to residents of a local care home, LCB then started a more formal programme that grew into Ballet for £1 which now accounts for 25% of all tickets. LCB has run Ballet for £1 and touring companies for over 15 years with the programme expanding as demand has increased. The programme is hugely popular amongst its beneficiaries and is over-subscribed. LCB work closely with Age UK, Contact the Elderly, Charterhouse and the Claremont Project, amongst others, providing the opportunity for older people, many isolated with mobility or illnesses associated with old age, to engage with ballet, music, performance and young people. A team of dedicated volunteers welcome guests and offer support with seating. Following each performance, LCB's young dancers meet the audience.

Financial Information

In 2016/17 LCB went through a difficult period where two new appointments did not turn out as expected. As a result, fundraising was severely impaired, and the amount raised was much lower than expected. The charity has now returned to its larger base the Peacock Theatre which allow them to return to larger audience capacity. Trustees have reviewed their fundraising strategy, appointed a fundraiser and now anticipate an increase in funds over the next three years through increased grants and increased ticket sales. The budget for 2019 does not include additional funds expected to celebrate their 25th anniversary that year.

Year end as at 31 July	2017 Examined Accounts £	2018 Forecast £	2019 Budget £
Income & expenditure:			
Income	177,261	534,429	478,400
- % of Income confirmed	n/a	n/a	0%
Expenditure	(308,244)	(530,912)	(560,000)
Total surplus/(deficit)	(130,983)	3,517	(81,600)
Split between:			
- Restricted surplus/(deficit)	0	0	0
- Unrestricted surplus/(deficit)	(130,983)	3,517	(81,600)
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Cost of Raising Funds	33,824	89,043	80,000
- % of Income	19.1%	16.7%	16.7%
Operating expenditure (unrestricted funds)	308,244	513,912	560,000
Free unrestricted reserves:			
Free unrestricted reserves held at year end	100,634	104,151	22,551
No of months of operating expenditure	3.9	2.4	0.5
Reserves policy target	77,061	128,478	140,000
No of months of operating expenditure	3.0	3.0	3.0
Free reserves over/(under) target	23,573	(24,327)	(117,449)