

GRANT APPLICATION 2014/15 – ASSESSMENT AND RECOMMENDATION

Priority Corporate Outcomes	To promote a healthy, active, independent and informed over-55 population To increase resilience amongst older people and help them to age well To encourage new integrated responses to the health and social care needs of residents	
Organisation	BARNET SENIORS' ASSEMBLY	ref 55/C/EPW
Address	c/o 7 St Augustine's Court, Somerset Road, New Barnet	

Corporate policy, aims and objectives

The council is committed to helping people to be independent and live active lives, recognizing that some people need more support than others to achieve this. The transformation of adult health and social care set out in the Care Act 2014 and Department of Health publications 'Our Health, Our Care, Our Say' and 'A Vision for Social Care, Capable Communities and Active Citizens' places growing emphasis on preventative services; delivering targeted information and advice, such as regarding healthy lifestyles; and ensuring people have the right support at the right time.

The Older Adults Strategy, 'Living Longer, Living Better', and the Older People's Commissioning Strategy, 2008-17, 'Independence, Choice and Control', focus on developing preventative services; tackling inequalities; and the wider well-being agenda. Barnet's Health and Well-Being Strategy and Integrated Care Model seek to promote the health and well-being of older and disabled people, helping them to achieve key outcomes, including the best possible quality of life, and to remain part of the community. Engagement with older people to capture their views is a key element of health and social care service planning.

Activities / proposal

An unincorporated association, Barnet Seniors' Assembly (BSA) was formed in February 2014 by the merger of Barnet 55+ Forum, predominantly a campaigning group, and Barnet Older People's Assembly (BOPA). It aims:

- * to support and represent the interests of, and act as an information resource for, senior residents of the borough;
- * to provide a mechanism through which matters of concern to Barnet residents may be raised, policies developed and action pursued;
- * to work in partnership with the council, the health authorities and other organisations on issues of concern to, or affecting, senior residents.

BSA seeks to unify the work of the two former groups, whose common objectives were to enhance the quality of life of older people affected by reduced circumstances and/or physical/mental ill health and help them to retain their independence. The new organisation states that it is committed to consultation and collaborative working to achieve better services and outcomes for older people whilst respecting the right of all members to express their views individually. Membership is open to anyone aged 55+. BSA currently has 200 members and direct links to over 1,000 other older people in Barnet who belong to affiliated organisations.

There are monthly social meetings for members, focused particularly on tackling isolation amongst, and improving the quality of life of, the 12,000+ older people in Barnet who live alone. Meetings are held at community centres and church halls across the borough. Activities, which

include group discussions and film shows, are complemented by social activities and outings. General assemblies, scheduled at present to be held twice a year, are larger gatherings generally focusing on a particular issue or theme, often with visiting speakers giving expert advice and audience interaction. The latest such assembly in October celebrated Older People's Day.

BSA works collaboratively with Adults & Communities and the Barnet Clinical Commissioning Group (BCCG) to promote new initiatives, such as personal budgets and greater integration of health and social care services, and to facilitate a two-way dialogue between those agencies and older people in Barnet, capitalising on its membership's local knowledge, for example, to identify changing needs. Represented on the Health and Well-Being Board, it actively supports the council's Ageing Well project, particularly in galvanising grassroots activity and community cohesion in designated areas through the 'Altogether Better' programme.

This application seeks help to employ a part-time paid co-ordinator to develop and expand upon BSA's work. A primary objective is to recruit and train older people to assist as volunteers in sustaining its activities, such as leading on delivery of new activities for members, aimed at developing new skills and interests, and representing BSA at meetings and reporting back to its executive committee. The incumbent will also be responsible for increasing the number of assembly events each year; for developing new cultural sub-groups in recognition of the diversity of older Barnet residents; and for introducing a newsletter for members and supporters to extend BSA's scope and reach.

Adults & Communities supports the development of BSA, as it did the former BOPA, as a systematic and effective way of incorporating older people's views into health and social care planning. Decisions and/or recommendations from BSA feed into the Older Adults Partnership and Health and Well-Being Boards. As an independent, user-led group, BSA adds value to other consultative mechanisms, such as consultation forums and focus groups, and directly supports implementation of many of the council's prevention programmes. The need for a skilled co-ordinator, not least to develop the role of volunteers, is duly endorsed.

Cost and financial need

BSA's budget for 2015 shows expenditure of £17,530, of which £9,000 is the cost of employing a co-ordinator for two days a week. Publicity and production of a newsletter (£4,000); the general assemblies (£2,500); and hire charges for the monthly meetings (£600) constitute the other main elements of the budget, which also includes one-off equipment costs (£500). Income (£5,500) includes membership fees, donations and the proceeds of fundraising and assumes that Adults & Communities will continue to defray the cost of the two existing annual general assemblies, as it has for several years when organised by BOPA.

The grant request is for £7,500 towards the cost of the part-time co-ordinator post over twelve months, including on-costs. BSA states that it will contribute the remaining £1,500 and will make up the further shortfall of £3,030 on the overall budget from balances, having inherited the net current assets of BOPA and the Barnet 55+ Forum in the sum of £7,200 upon its formation.

The cost of retaining the post beyond one year if it is considered necessary to do so forms part of the group's sustainability strategy, which is based upon a combination of earned income (from fees and charges for new activities and events) and future fundraising. The council's endorsement of BSA's aims and objectives, exemplified by the grant recommended, will serve to strengthen future bids to the many other sources of charitable funding that exist for work of this nature.

Grant recommendation, type and conditions

£7,500 (from Edward Harvist Charity)

Start-up grant

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One-off grant

Special conditions:

Payment of the award should be made subject to (a) agreement of a work plan for the part-time co-ordinator, with targets and milestones for monitoring purposes; (b) the receipt of quarterly progress reports and an undertaking to provide an evaluation of the effectiveness of the post after twelve months; and (c) formalisation with Adults & Communities and BCCG of the future role that BSA will play in supporting community resilience work and community engagement.

Target grant outcomes

(a) To enhance the role of BSA in engaging with older people in Barnet and representing their views in health and social care planning and (b) to maintain the independence, and improve the quality of life, health and well-being of vulnerable elderly residents.

Date: January 2015