

GRANT APPLICATION 2019/20 – ASSESSMENT AND RECOMMENDATION

Priority Corporate Outcomes	To support residents who are older, vulnerable or who have disabilities to remain independent, stay active and have a good quality of life To integrate health and social care To support the voluntary, community and faith sector to build capacity for meeting the needs of residents	
Organisation	ACTION ON HEARING LOSS	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">ref</div> 6/S/PSD
Address	1-3 Highbury Station Road, N1	
Relevant policy, aims and objectives		
<p>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; and ensuring people have the right support at the right time.</p> <p>Corporate priorities reflect the national disabilities agenda of moving away from specialist service provision to facilitating access to mainstream services with a focus on addressing inequalities. Help with adaptations, assistive technologies and the provision of support services form part of the strategy to facilitate independent living. The development of a unified information and advice portal is aimed at supporting better awareness, prevention and early intervention. The strategy recognizes that gaps exist in the provision for people with sensory impairment, including hearing loss, to maintain an independent life.</p>		
Activities / proposal		
<p>Formerly known as the Royal National Institute for the Deaf, Action on Hearing Loss (AHL) is a registered charity and company limited by guarantee which provides services for deaf and hard of hearing people across the UK, including hearing aid maintenance and support for wearers of NHS hearing aids and deaf people with additional or complex needs; befriending and support services, including specialist help with communication such as by way of sign language and deaf/blind interpreters; and advice and information on issues relating to hearing loss. It also supports medical research and is a campaigning organization, raising awareness of deafness and hearing loss, especially amongst businesses and local authorities, which are supported to achieve its 'Louder than Words' charter mark.</p> <p>Since 2010, AHL has been delivering an aftercare service for hearing aid users in Barnet and adjoining parts of north-west London, inherited after funding for similar work by the Jewish Deaf Association expired. A part-time member of staff and trained volunteers, working in conjunction with the audiology departments at Barnet, Chase Farm and the Royal Free Hospitals (which supplied batteries, other hearing aid consumables and training), general practitioners and Age UK Barnet, helped clients at drop-in clinics twice a week to maintain their hearing aids and get the best out of them, minimizing the need for them to visit one of the hospitals in question. 75% of respondents to a users' survey said that the service, which delivered up to 100 interventions a month, had helped them benefit more from their hearing aid and be more independent.</p> <p>The service, which was free of charge and relieved pressure on the audiology departments, has recently been suspended because of a lack of funding. It is hoped that discussions with Barnet Clinical Commissioning Group will identify alternative ways in which it may be reinstated.</p>		

This application seeks help to create and develop support groups in Barnet for residents who suffer from tinnitus, the medical term for any noise, such as ringing, hissing or roaring, that is heard in one ear, in both ears or in the head, which has no external source. Six million people in the UK have the condition, which has no cure and can have a negative impact on a person's mental health, relationships and ability to sleep, concentrate and work. Most cases are related to ageing, hearing loss or noise exposure, but it may also be a side effect of ear or head injuries and can be triggered or exacerbated by emotional trauma, illness or stress. The prevalence of chronic tinnitus, often linked to depression, increases with age, peaking in people in their sixties. It is estimated that 38,000 people in Barnet live with the condition.

AHL has collaborated with the British Tinnitus Association and other agencies to develop a range of coping mechanisms, therapies and other relief strategies for sufferers, delivered regionally last year through a series of pilot support groups in tandem with an e-learning module for general practitioners. 75% of attendees felt that they could cope better with living with tinnitus with the benefit of the training. The proposal is to roll out the work in Barnet once a month at two loop-assisted locations in partnership with the Jewish Deaf Association, which has offered space, free of charge, for one of the groups at its premises in N12, to be publicized through GP surgeries, audiology clinics and the local press.

The project will have capacity for supporting 60 Barnet residents living with tinnitus and a similar number of carers and relatives in year one. It will particularly focus on the link between stress and tinnitus, embracing different forms of the condition, and how to cope with each, such as through new cognitive behavior therapies, combining music and relaxation techniques and topics such as mindfulness, to be delivered by staff, trained volunteers and guest speakers. It will also offer trials of equipment that may help mask some of the noises typically heard. The key target outcomes will be to strengthen individuals' and families' resilience and to prevent tinnitus from disrupting independent and active lifestyles.

It is acknowledged that acquired hearing loss, including tinnitus, especially later in life, causes frustration, low self-esteem, withdrawal from society and, in some cases, a decline in mental health. The Lead Commissioner for Learning Disabilities and Physical & Sensory Impairment endorses the value and quality of AHL's work and supports the proposal as complementary to the strategy for supporting the client group.

Cost and financial need

In 2017/18, AHL incurred expenditure of £39,350,000 (excluding fundraising costs) on its nationwide operation, reflecting its work not only in directly supporting people with hearing loss but also its parallel roles as a medical research charity and as the leading national campaigner for the needs of its client group and on issues such as age-related hearing loss and links between hearing loss and dementia. The bulk of income is generated from contracts with, and grants from, local authorities and other care providers for the delivery of specialist care and support for people with hearing loss; donations and legacies; and research-related government grants. Funds also derive from the sale of products and training. Net current assets at 31/3/2018 were £10,068,000, of which £2,609,000 were restricted funds, leaving an uncommitted balance of £7,459,000 (16.6% of estimated 2019/20 expenditure), in line with the level of reserves recommended by the Charity Commission for an organisation of this size.

Localized projects, such as the hearing aid aftercare service in Barnet, operate with the proceeds of local or general fundraising. The drop-in clinics in Barnet cost c£23,000 a year to run and have been supported by mainly fixed-term charitable grants over the last eight years, funding that has now expired and which AHL has been unable to replicate. The suspension of the service follows a strategic management decision to discontinue work that is unfunded.

In 2012, AHL was awarded a corporate grant of £8,000 to create befriending groups in the borough for residents who had become isolated due to hearing loss, which ran up 2018.

A grant of £9,600 in 2016 funded work to ensure that the NHS's 'Accessible Information Standard' was implemented in all health and social care settings in Barnet and to improve the reach of the hearing aid aftercare service, such as by introducing home visits to less mobile people and their families.

The request is for a grant of £10,000 to create and run over the next twelve months the proposed new support groups in Barnet for sufferers of tinnitus, of which £6,414 will pay for a part-time manager to lead the groups, including training four volunteers to help deliver the project. Publicity and administrative costs, the purchase of sound therapy systems and CDs and the reimbursement of volunteers' expenses make up the balance of expenditure.

The award recommended trims £500 from the budget in relation to volunteer training, which has been overstated, and is on condition that the project's sustainability, which anticipates future funding through commissioning pursuant to evidence of successful outcomes of its roll out in Barnet, is clarified.

Grant recommendation, type and conditions

£9,500 (from Edward Harvist Charity)

Start-up grant
One-off grant

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Special conditions:

Payment of the award should be made subject to (a) agreement of an implementation plan, to include targets and outcomes for monitoring purposes; (b) submission of a coherent sustainability strategy; and (c) the receipt of quarterly progress reports and an undertaking to provide an evaluation of the project in twelve months' time.

Target grant outcomes

To improve the quality of life, health and wellbeing of people living with tinnitus, enabling them to live independently and as active members of the community.

Date: July 2019