

GRANT APPLICATION 2016/17 – ASSESSMENT AND RECOMMENDATION

Priority Corporate Outcomes	To ensure that children and young people receive a great start in life and identify and address any issues that may impede a successful childhood To help disadvantaged children and young people who are at risk of not achieving their potential to close the gap with their peers; make a positive transition into adulthood; and prevent later difficulties To develop stronger, safe and more engaged and resilient communities	
Organisation	SERAD (Skills, Education, Research & Development)	ref 334/C/CTY
Address	c/o 14 Abbots Road, Edgware	
Corporate policy, aims and objectives		
<p>The Corporate Plan, 2015-20, and the Children and Young People's Plan, 2016-20, reflect a focus on improving outcomes for Barnet's younger population, creating the conditions for children and young people to be kept safe, active and healthy and to develop skills and acquire knowledge to achieve their full potential and lead successful adult lives. Support is especially targeted at 16 to 24 year-olds who are not in education, employment or training ('NEET') and those who have disabilities or complex needs.</p> <p>The council is committed to continuing to raise educational standards and to close the achievement gap between pupils and their peers. Local communities and voluntary groups can play a part in promoting and complementing the school curriculum, addressing some of the needs that the education system struggles to meet as its population becomes more diverse, building confidence, well-being and other characteristics important to a child's education, especially amongst migrant and minority ethnic communities and socially excluded and educationally deprived groups from which pupils are under-achieving.</p>		
Activities / proposal		
<p>Set up as a volunteer-led self-help group in 2010, SERAD is a registered charity and company limited by guarantee which seeks to address and alleviate the problems faced by disadvantaged communities living in Burnt Oak, Colindale and Edgware, focussing particularly on the needs of children and young people.</p> <p>Its work, delivered mainly by volunteers with some paid help on projects supported with fixed-term funding, has included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * the provision of information, advice and guidance on issues such as welfare reforms, housing and employment, including help with interpreting and translating, work that continues on a weekly basis with outreach advocacy for housebound clients; * an Ofsted-registered supplementary school (at Watling Community Centre) attended by 366 underperforming children at primary school since it was created in 2012, also supporting a small number of students studying for GCSEs each year; * a family intervention programme, embracing parenting skills, the teaching of English as a second language, ICT classes and youth sports activities; * a pilot health and fitness programme for older people, now continuing in the form of fortnightly volunteer-led walks. <p>In 2015, SERAD saw 377 clients, of which 278 were from refugee communities and/or of African origin. Other users were from the Middle East, Afghanistan and Eastern Europe. The majority of clients lived in Burnt Oak and Edgware.</p>		

The charity, which is about to take up a new shared office base in Grahame Park, originally sought help to work with young people aged 14 to 19 who are NEET, addressing barriers to them starting work and their life aspirations, a proposal that was unlikely to be recommended for support in view of the many other similar projects and activities that exist to support the client group. The intention remains to implement the project, but on an entirely voluntary basis.

Pursuant to a dialogue with the post-16 education and skills team in Barnet with Cambridge Education to identify gaps in provision, SERAD has submitted a new proposal ('Filling the Gap') that focuses on NEET preventative work in the locality. To be launched as a pilot in conjunction with Deansbrook Primary School and London Academy, one of the highest producers of NEET young people in the borough, the project, which follows consultation with the two schools in question, parents and students, will target underachieving pupils, particularly from black minority ethnic and refugee communities, identified as being at risk of failing to progress, disengagement, truancy and/or exclusion.

It will offer targeted one-to-one personal development training and motivational support, embracing issues such as conflict management, geared to cultural sensitivities, especially amongst African and Afro-Caribbean communities, and one-to-one help with core curriculum subjects and homework, aimed at building self-confidence and self-esteem and guiding participants to make positive life choices. Advocacy and mediation support will also be provided for parents and students, especially those who are unfamiliar with the education system and distrustful of statutory agencies, such as to facilitate the transition from primary to secondary education.

Barnet with Cambridge Education endorses the proposal as a constructive and flexible response to discussions about how SERAD may work more collaboratively with schools in the prevention of young people becoming NEET, a view that reflects how voluntary groups can connect with hard to reach parents and students in ways that are beyond the capability of schools and positive feedback from other funders of the charity about the delivery of services that they have supported.

Cost and financial need

SERAD continues to be a largely volunteer-driven charity without any core funding. The development of its work has been achieved mainly with the aid of fixed-term grants. These have included a three-year grant by BBC Children in Need in support of the supplementary school, which expired in 2014, and one-year awards by the North West London Community Foundation and the Big Lottery which helped launch the information and advice service and the family intervention programme respectively. A small one-off grant by Barnet & Harrow Public Health kick-started the health and fitness programme for older people in 2013.

Annual revenue costs (accommodation hire charges and the payment of teachers attached to the supplementary school) are currently met from sessional charges and fundraising. Income (£18,713) exceeded expenditure by £10,000 in 2015, the imbalance reflecting a Big Lottery award of that sum, shown on the balance sheet as a restricted reserve carried forward to 2016.

The charity was invited by Barnet with Cambridge Education in August 2016 to tender for a contract to deliver re-motivational programmes for the most vulnerable NEET young people, but a problem with its email box resulted in it missing the deadline for the submission of bids.

The request is for a grant of £9,832 to cover the cost of delivering the Filling the Gap project on a termly basis over one year, comprising part-time staffing costs (to include a trained youth advocacy worker) of £8,832 and room hire (£1,000).

The application identifies a number of potential future funding sources that may sustain the project once the grant comes to an end. The receipt of a coherent sustainability strategy, a critical element of all start-up grants, will be a condition of any award.

Grant recommendation, type and conditions

£9,832

Start-up grant

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One-off grant

Special conditions:

Payment of the award should be made subject to (a) agreement of an implementation plan, to include a strategy for collaboration with the two schools selected to participate in the pilot to target underachieving students at risk; (b) the formation of a steering committee, to include representation from the schools in question; (c) endorsement of targets and milestones for monitoring purposes; (d) the submission of a sustainability strategy; and (e) the receipt of quarterly progress reports and an undertaking to provide an evaluation of the success of the project after twelve months.

Target grant outcomes

To improve the self-confidence, life skills and resilience of vulnerable children and young people, especially from black minority ethnic and refugee communities, to prevent them from becoming NEET and to support their transition to adulthood.

Date: February 2017