

**GRANT APPLICATION 2017/18 – ASSESSMENT AND RECOMMENDATION**

<b>Priority Corporate Outcomes</b>	To ensure that children and young people receive a great start in life 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 support Barnet’s children in care to achieve their goals and aspirations	
<b>Organisation</b>	<b>BARNET FRIENDS OF THE VIRTUAL SCHOOL</b>	<b>ref</b> 55/E/CTY
<b>Address</b>	North London Business Park, Oakleigh Road South, N11	

**Corporate policy, aims and objectives**

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. The council is committed to continuing to raise educational standards and to close the achievement gap between pupils and their peers. Support is especially targeted at 16 to 24 year-olds who are not in education, employment or training (‘NEET’) and those who have complex needs. The Pledge for Children in Care & Care Leavers signifies the council’s commitment to work with partners to support Barnet’s looked after children to achieve their goals and aspirations.

The theme of resilience underpins the Children’s Service’s ambition for strong communities in which children and young people can thrive and achieve. Strategic objectives include commissioning and facilitating the development of a wide range of provision and building capacity for vulnerable young people to engage in positive extra-curricular activities.

**Activities / proposal**

Barnet Friends of the Virtual School (BFVS) is a recently formed not-for-profit group seeking registration as a charitable trust which aims to support children in the council’s care and care leavers to succeed and have the best possible life chances through the provision of enrichment activities that go beyond its statutory corporate parenting responsibilities.

The ‘Virtual School’ is a team of educational specialists responsible for ensuring that all looked after children fulfil their educational potential, irrespective of whether they attend schools in Barnet or in other local authorities. It monitors their attendance, attainment and achievement and prioritizes their educational success in the context of care planning.

Over 60% of children in care are looked after due to abuse and neglect. Four times more likely than their peers to have a mental health difficulty, they have a lower level of educational attainment and incur a higher rate of offending. Recent data shows that 34% of care leavers in the UK were NEET at the age of nineteen compared to 15.5% of all young people. .

BFVS is primarily a fundraising body in pursuit of three main objectives:

- \* encouraging children in care and care leavers to follow their passions and explore their interests, be they activities such as swimming lessons or art classes or more adventurous out-of-school pursuits or expeditions;
- \* equipping children in care and care leavers with the life skills they need to fulfil their potential, such as through training opportunities or learning to drive;

\* inspiring children in care and care leavers to succeed by providing advice and guidance on skills and career development, to include mentoring opportunities and work experience

539 children and young people up to the age of 25 are currently eligible for this support.

Two fundraising events to date have generated a net profit of £1,032 in support of a creative writing trip for children in care from school years seven to ten and other upcoming activities. BFVS has a fundraising target of £100,000 in year one, of which £60,000 is earmarked for providing every child in care with financial assistance to pursue an activity of their choice, travel opportunities or residential / educational trips. Other fundraising objectives include an award scheme to recognize academic achievement or other success and a life skills course for 14 to 18 year-olds. In tandem with its fundraising role, BFVS will also actively help to create a proposed mentoring scheme and work experience placements with partner agencies.

This application seeks a grant to develop a branded website to provide a central source of information; to publicize BFVS's aims and activities; and to encourage donors and volunteers, a request that is recommended for support having regard to the contribution that the proposals will make to achievement of corporate priorities.

### Cost and financial need

The cost of developing the website, including design, branding, hosting and security, based on the cheapest quotation obtained, is shown as £4,990, equal to the grant request.

An award will additionally aid BFVS's application to register with the Charity Commission, which requires evidence of a certain level of income. The attainment of legal status as a charity will serve to bolster its fundraising capacity, facilitating bids for grants, especially amongst grant-giving trusts, donations and sponsorship, to be backed up by a programme of regular fundraising events.

The fundraising target for year one includes £20,000 to cover co-ordination, administration and materials, overheads that BFVS will seek to meet from its ongoing fundraising activities.

### Grant recommendation, type and conditions

£4,990 (from Edward Harvist Charity)

Start-up grant

One-off grant

#### Special conditions:

None.

### Target grant outcomes

To stimulate the personal development and improve the life chances of children in care and care leavers, helping them to make a positive transition into adulthood.

**Date:** November 2017