



Noah's Ark Children's Venture
Macaroni Wood, Eastleach
Cirencester, Glos, GL7 3NF
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Business Lead: Mark Smyth
Registered Charity Number: 1061676

14th March 2019

Appeal against the draft recommendation and notice of proposed change to funding

Noah's Ark Children's Venture (NACV) has offered a unique woodland, residential experience in Gloucestershire for young people from the London Borough of Lewisham with complex needs for over 40 years. The trustees of Macaroni Wood would like to appeal the decision to cut this core grant and our extraordinary bond. Such a cut (from £36,000 to £0) will endanger the services that we will be able to offer in the future.

We have been supported by core funding from the London Borough of Lewisham since 1982. We have worked with over 200 Lewisham organisations. Over more than 40 years, 37,000 people from Lewisham have used our facilities. We have offered children and young people from Lewisham access to 18 acres of woodland and residential services that can house up to 51 people. We offer a large range of facilities that include BMX track, sports hall, classroom, community kitchens and animals from pigs to chickens. This relationship helps you to address directly health inequalities in the Borough and deliver your public health obligations¹.

Over 30,000 people in Lewisham are estimated to have undiagnosed and therefore untreated high blood pressure. Almost 40,000 people a year experience depression, anxiety, panic attacks and phobias². We fully understand the difficult fiscal position the council faces, but we would ask if we can work with you and community user groups to find a solution.

We offer value for money: 31.5% of our guests are Lewisham residents, but the Lewisham Grant represents only 20% of our income. We raise funds to enable us to continue to subsidise Lewisham groups (£100 per night per group of up to 31, i.e. this equates to £3.22 per night per person). Tirelessly we find ways to make ends meet; as with our example of working with Young Lewisham Project.

Noah's Ark Children's Venture supports the Borough's efforts to address mental health inequalities³. 9% of children in Lewisham experienced mental illness in 2015. By becoming more efficient we support the aim "to increase and optimise the use of community assets for mental health and wellbeing initiatives". We help to build resilience, protect and improve mental health and wellbeing.

Without any support from Lewisham, the trustees fear that a step increase to charges for many of the potential 200 Lewisham groups will be too great for many to endure. If you cannot support the main grant, we propose the transition should be gradual to allow for all groups, including NACV, to prepare for life without Main Grant Funding. We recommend, Year One £20,000, Year Two £15,000, Year Three, £7,500.

The charity was named because of a meeting held at the Noah's Ark public house on Evelyn Street over 40 years ago. We would urge you not to sever those long-lasting ties.

Yours sincerely

Mark Smyth
Business Lead

¹ <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng44>

² Lewisham CCG

³ Lewisham Public Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy, 2017

