

Submission Regarding Main Grants Programme (2019-2022) Recommendations, March 2019.

Thank you very much for your letter informing us of the draft recommendation relating to our recent application to the Main Grants Programme. We are delighted that London Borough of Lewisham has decided to continue to fund our work to support the families of disabled children in the Borough.

We are writing to make representations about the decision made to recommend a grant amount of £49,100 (75%) against an application for £65,382. We believe that the conclusions drawn in the assessment process have not fully considered the value for money represented by the full amount requested in the application. Specifically the assessment states:

“Question 9: With core funding, the organisation states that it would provide advice for 125 families, provide workshops reaching 60 carers, provide four coffee mornings and eight outreach activities per year reaching 670 unique partner carers. The organisation also refers to its quarterly steering group and its quarterly newsletter, which is distributed to 850 families..... There is a question of Value for money in the application given that the £65,382 will only fund a total of 1 FTE post but overall the outputs and outcomes are good.”

The assessment acknowledges the strength of the outputs and outcomes, and we are fully confident that this can be delivered with the staff posts specified. The assessment commentary quoted above did not make reference to the full range of proposed outputs which additionally specified four family events, 16 outreach information and advice sessions, and 240 telephone advice sessions.

All of these outputs and outcomes are achieved not only with staff time, but also a range of other supports, the costs of which appear to have been not fully considered in the assessment's conclusion that the value for money represented by the application is questionable. In order to deliver the outcomes described, we carefully considered all of the costs we will incur to support this work. This included provision for a part time manager post, rental of office space in the Borough of Lewisham, facilities and room hire for parent workshops, travel, refreshments, professional fees for external speakers where appropriate, and printing and mailing costs for our newsletters. The application also included the provision of family events which significantly reduce the isolation of families with disabled children, and these involve transport costs and entrance fees to appropriate leisure activities for multiple family groups. Further, we also incur training costs for staff to ensure the advice and support given to families is accurate and up to date. As we are a national charity, we are able to provide high quality centrally-produced resources for families and staff, and our costs do include a central element which includes monitoring and evaluation of the outputs and outcomes, as well as the production of detailed guides and factsheets.

We believe that these costs are implicit in the application (i.e. not new information) but have perhaps been overlooked or not given sufficient consideration in evaluating the value represented by this grant application.

We would therefore respectfully request that the Local Authority reconsider the amount recommended for this Main Grant application.

Yours sincerely,



Stephanie Armstrong
Trusts and Statutory Officer
stephanie.armstrong@contact.org.uk | 020 7608 8778

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