

Main Grants 2017-18 report

Name of organisation	Advice Lewisham
Date of meeting	28 September 2016
Names and positions of attendees	Rachel Braverman, CEO CAB Liz Yalmaz, Advice Services Manager, LMLAS Audrey Hart, administrator, Evelyn 190 Kathy Wade, Advice Lewisham Co-ordinator James Lee, Head of service, LBL Winston Castello, Community Enterprise Manager, LBL

Group Name:	Total	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Total funding received 2015-16	£39,150	N/A	£13,050	£13,050	£13,050
Total funding to be received 2016-17	£52,200	£13,050	£13,050	£13,050	£13,050

Outcomes	Support
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strengthened relationships between Advice Lewisham partners and other voluntary and statutory agencies. 2. Use of Advice Lewisham Advice Finder Tool by the community and other agencies to access appropriate advice services in the borough. 3. Policies and procedures developed for the increased use of data from Advice Lewisham partners and Forum members for Social Policy purposes. 4. Options available and plan developed for the setting up of Pro Bono advice services available across the borough through the provision of an Honorary Legal Advice service which will lead to increased availability of free high quality advice services. 5. Options identified for increasing the provision of immigration advice within the borough identified. 6. Increased number of volunteers available to work at partner agencies. Volunteers receive high quality training and support. 7. Information regarding available interpreters more easily accessible, increased number of trained interpreters. 8. Annual Open Days held to promote available free advice services 9. Increased and improved skills of partner Trustee Board members

	2015-16 Target	2015-16 Q2	2015-16 Q3	2015-16 Q4	2015-16 Total	% Achieved	2016-17 Target	2016-17 Q1	2016-17 Q2	% Achieved TD
Outputs:										
Quarterly Advice Lewisham Steering Group meetings. Quarterly Advice Lewisham Forum meetings	3	1	1	1	3	100%	Awaiting figures			
5,000 visits to the Tool in the first year	5,000	917	1,804	1,956	4,677	94%				
Social Policy Strategy and policies and procedures developed with a plan for future implementation.				1	1	Achieved				
Strategy developed for options of developing an Advice Lewisham Free Legal Advice Service				1	1	Achieved				
8 volunteers trained each year across the partner agencies	6				4	66%				
Development of language bank available to partners. Number of interpreters trained and recruited.						Being developed				
One Open Day will take place			Achieved			Achieved				
Resources developed to enable partner agencies to carry out a skills audit of their Trustee Board members				Achieved		Achieved				

1. Remove funding from under-performing groups/those performing least well

Have you achieved at least 90% of the agreed reporting outputs and outcomes in all quarters since the start of the programme?

The key agreed outputs for Advice Lewisham are:

- Facilitate quarterly advice steering groups
- Number of visits to online advice tool
- Development of strategies in social policy, legal advice service, immigration advice
- Facilitate training and placement of volunteers
- Development of language bank for partners
- Organise open day
- Resource development of skills audit tool for the trustees of their partner agencies

In the first three quarters of operation, all the targets were achieved, with the exception of the target requiring the placement of six volunteers, as only four were placed.

Have you achieved all of the wider outcomes outlined in the initial grant application?

The organisation achieved the outcomes as stated in their application.

Good progress has been made towards improving joint working and the policies developed with the partnership provide good data for future funding applications.

However, it should be noted that during the course of the year, the principal partnership development activity relates to the development of a common approach to all the grant-funded advice organisations working in a co-ordinated way, including the development of a single gateway for initial enquiries.

The Advice Lewisham Co-ordinator has spent a significant amount of time working with partners and London Borough of Lewisham officers to plan and contribute to the design of a re-configured Advice Lewisham service. Although this was not specifically stated as one of the objectives during the course of the year, it has become the prime focus of Advice Lewisham's work.

The organisation's objectives for the remainder of 16/17 and for 17/18 will need to better reflect the need to play an active part in developing the new borough-wide service.

If no to either of the above:

- what are the mitigating factors?
- what plans are in place for improving performance?
- what progress has been made against actions agreed with your Development Officer?

As stated above, the organisation has achieved its targets in the main. However, for the remainder of this year, the organisation's priority will be aimed at developing the new Lewisham-wide advice service.

What local support/evidence of need can you identify for the work you are undertaking?

The changing welfare benefits landscape continues to place great demand on advice organisations as they seek to support residents who require help in negotiating changing legislative requirements.

Advice Lewisham, along with partner agencies, plays a key role in working with residents to increase confidence in accessing the increasing number of services that are provided digitally. Advice Lewisham is an active partner in the GO ON partnership which aims to develop the digital skills of residents.

2. Negotiate reductions and seek alternative funding streams

Are there any proposals that you can put forward that will deliver significant saving against current expenditure? This can include capital investment to change your delivery/business model.

Advice Lewisham has explored different collaborative approaches, including sharing IT maintenance services and possibly developing community accounting initiatives which have the potential for making significant savings for individual agencies.

The network is also looking at using Google Apps as a common framework for all the agencies, which would improve communications. Additionally, the network will be looking at cost-effective approaches to volunteer recruitment.

What alternative funding streams are you already pursuing?

Advice Lewisham will work with organisations to encourage closer collaboration. One of the initiatives being developed is to work with the Evelyn 190 Centre to develop an infrastructure support bid to City Bridge Trust. This would enable the partnership to deliver support services not currently provided by the London Borough of Lewisham.

Are there any other funding streams that you can identify that the council can support you to access?

Advice Lewisham is seeking to apply to the Lloyds Foundation for funding of a Freephone advice line. This could possibly be facilitated through Lloyds Bank's partnership with the Lewisham GO ON initiative.

3. Work with groups to consider mergers or asset sharing

Are there any organisations doing similar work to you in the borough who you may consider sharing resources or merging with? Who have you considered/approached?

Although Advice Lewisham is already a partnership-based initiative, possible savings could be achieved through looking at co-location of services with an existing partner.

Are there other groups in the local area that you could share resources with even if they are delivering a different type of service? Again, who have you considered/approached?

Advice Lewisham will continue to seek to work more effectively with partner agencies, and the forthcoming move of a significant element of the advice service to the Leamore Centre could make a contribution towards increasing the sharing of resources.

What support might you need to move these suggestions forward?

Advice Lewisham will work closely with the Council through the Advice Review Project Board where initiatives can be prioritised and progressed.

4. Pro-rata reductions across all groups

What would a 25% cut in your grants look like in service delivery terms? What are the wider impacts?

The organisation states that it would look at staffing, possibly reducing the number of staff from two part-time posts to one part-time role. Other options could include reducing the hours of both the current part-time staff. Both options would involve reducing the current number of services provided to the partnership, particularly the role of providing support in developing funding bids.

Have you modelled this cut and developed an action plan for its implementation?

Advice Lewisham is currently mapping service delivery across the borough. This will include identifying alternatives to some of its current activities.

Conclusion

Any other comments / areas discussed

The Advice Lewisham agreement is currently contracted through Lewisham CAB. However, the day to day planning for the service is undertaken by the existing advice partner organisations. This can sometimes create a degree of confusion in terms of Advice Lewisham's governance. It is therefore recommended that the CAB's management system for Advice Lewisham is reviewed.

Conclusion and recommendation

Advice Lewisham will continue to play an important role for the advice service in the coming year, as the development of common advice provision across the borough is taken forward. **It is therefore recommended that the organisation receive a pro rata reduction in grant.** The organisation will be working as part of the advice review and will

be contributing to the common gateway for clients. This recommendation is conditional on the full involvement of the organisation in the review and the organisation's commitment to jointly plan and deliver advice provision across the borough.

Equalities groups disproportionately impacted by recommendations

Ethnicity:		Pregnancy / Maternity:	
Gender:		Marriage & Civil Partnerships:	
Age:		Sexual orientation:	
Disability:		Gender reassignment:	
Religion / Belief:			

Commentary and potential mitigations:

The organisation works across the borough and focuses on working with organisations as opposed to individuals. There are no particular groups that would be disproportionately affected by a reduction in services. The advice review and the re-prioritisation of services will aim to address any adverse impact on service users.