

Mark Brangwyn,  
Grants London Councils  
591/2 Southwark Street  
London SE1 0AL

25 January 2013

Dear Mark

**Application for funding - right to reply**

We wish to appeal against the recommendation not to fund: **London Hazards Migrant Worker Health and Safety Project ID: 7577**. We wish to appeal under all three headings.

**1. Misinterpreted information submitted in your application**

It is stated: *“the application does not sufficiently make the case that it fully addresses the aims on the specification in supporting VCOs to increase skills in management, service delivery”*

Basic health and safety knowledge of the law is essential for good human resource management in VCOs. It will improve the service delivery, although it is often neglected especially when budgets are tight, and there is a competitive drive to keep costs down. All employers have a duty of care to employees, volunteers and all those affected by their activities. VCOs need to consider fire safety, violence and lone working, manual handling, stress, welfare regulations and office safety as a bare minimum. This is part of the development of the good management infrastructure needed in all organisations. However by neglecting health and safety, VCOs neglect their staff and this may lead to increased absences or staff turnover because of work related illnesses.

Our application clearly states that it will train managers and workers in VCOs in the basics of health and safety law. We said this will increase their skills in management of their organisations. It will save them money as HSE says 80% of work related illness and injury is caused by management ignorance, good health and safety reduces absences. The HSE Code of Practise on Stress is, on its own, a good management blueprint, and part of our training is signposting VCOs to such tools. In addition it may save them wasting money on employing expensive health and safety consultants who often recommend unnecessarily expensive solutions. It will help them provide a better service to their service users, who may be seeking help because of problems - injuries or ill health - caused or exacerbated by poor health and safety.

**2. Given incorrect weight (either too much or too little) to information submitted in your application**

It is stated our project *“outlines a service in particular for migrant and/or BAMER backgrounds who **may** face language or information barriers in accessing appropriate services”* suggesting that this is not necessarily the case.

**We think too little weight was given to the real problems many migrant workers face and which are described in our project bid. They are not hypothetical.**

Migrant workers and asylum seekers **do** face language barriers and are exploited because of lack of knowledge about their rights. The Unite Migrant Workers Project, which we have recently worked with, are running free informal learning sessions on Saturdays, in English as a Second Language, ESOL and IT, which hundreds attend every week, taught by unpaid volunteers, because they cannot get the training elsewhere. The 3 year residency rule applies for training provided by adult education charity Workers Education Association, WEA, and all Further Education colleges which excludes the migrant workers we wanted to target, both for ESOL courses and health and safety. We intended to make health and safety training sessions part of the informal learning programme. They will be aimed at workers in big cleaning companies and those working in hospitality. The Workers Education Association - who we would have worked collaboratively with - will confirm that many of these workers would not be eligible for free health and safety training; and the people who attend are too low paid to pay for classes. We have done the same with the Latin American Workers Association. Similarly we highlighted the fact there is very little appropriate health and safety training materials for use on ESOL courses for construction workers (we know of one booklet). Migrant workers can take the Construction Skills Certification Scheme, CSCS, test in their own language

or in English - but some English is best on site and the Migrant Resource Centre identified a need to provide some pre-CSCS safety training for the workers they deal with.

We have reported on several inquests and HSE prosecutions where the victim could not speak English. We have reported the death of a Polish worker, who was only 21, where the fine for the company was only £750. We do not think his family knew they could have had legal representation, this is partly a language issue. We intended to use our project to help raise awareness of basic rights, services available and provide some translated material to plug some gaps.

**For question 1.(c)** We referenced HSE reports on this issue; that is McKay, Crow, Chopra (2006) *Migrant Workers in England and Wales* HSE; EHRC *Inquiry uncovers mistreatment and exploitation of migrant and agency workers* (March 2010); HSE (*Research Report 502, 2009*) so believe we should score higher.

**Overemphasis for Questions 6 a,b,c low marks when we get full marks for 6 d & e.** This is a small specialist project aimed at serving a particular niche group, not asking for a lot of money, so it is unfair to mark us down because we do not cover all 8 protected characteristics in detail.

### **3. Ignored relevant information submitted in your application (Questions 7 & 9)**

It is stated: *"The application does not provide sufficient information of having delivered relevant similar services previously."* In fact our application specifically mentioned recent training delivered to:

- 5 Refugee organisations covering 11 London boroughs;
- the following pan - London organisations: Latin American Workers Association, the Migrant Workers Project and Migrant Resource Centre.
- our current commission which over the last six months delivered training to over 100 BMER organisations. We have been providing information and advice to Londoners - including newly arrived migrant workers - for nearly 30 years.
- we mentioned a three year project funded by the Big Lottery which delivered training to over 200 BMER organisations across all 33 London boroughs. We can supply more details about any aspect of this work if required.
- we said the day to day financial management would be provided by Camden VAC Community Accounting Project.
- we proposed a more pro-active way of involving service users and more modern ways of monitoring work done.

**Also, Questions 3: b, c, d: the low scores are inconsistent with the full marks for questions 2d, e since all questions relate to explaining how we will work across all London boroughs; & Question 4: c, d,e the low scores are inconsistent with full marks for 4 a.**

Finally, we would like to say that we put forward a bid for a project for which there is a real need. At a briefing in September we were all invited to put in "innovative" project bids. There are aspects of this bid - mainly that the training will be incorporated into ESOL programmes that will be new for us but we have already piloted this type of work with the migrant worker organisations indicated, and will be guided throughout by them. We feel we have been wrongly penalised for not having delivered relevant similar services previously (9c). We would argue that we have, and if you want innovation as you said you did, it is unfair to penalise a proposal for having aspects that are new. We hope London Councils will reconsider our bid.

Yours sincerely,

Margaret Sharkey,  
Advice Worker,  
for the London Hazards Centre Management Council.