

Ref Code	Organisation Name
2020-05-R011	On the Out CIC
Visit Date	Visited By
28 th July 2020	Victoria Southwell (Zoom call)
Background to Organisation and governance	
<p>On the Out CIC (OtO) is a Community Interest Company that was formed in Manchester in 2016 by ex-prisoners based on their compassion for others. OtO is run by 3 paid Directors (2 full time and 1 part time) and employs 8 additional staff, 4 of whom are part time. The Directors meet formally every fortnight and are supported by a Steering Group made up of 6 people who have skills ranging from research and evaluation, criminology, criminal justice, addiction and organisational development. The three Directors have significant relevant experience. The founder is a former teacher in prisons and the other two Directors both have extensive experience of serving long prison sentences.</p> <p>A broad Strategic Plan is in place for 2020-22 setting out aspirations and vision but currently lacks any clear targets or measurable goals.</p> <p>On the call I spoke with Helen Brown (CEO) and Michael Bradley (Director and programme author). Michael has personal experience of serving long prison sentences and then navigating the world waiting for him outside of the prison gates with little support and guidance. He developed LifeHab, the support programme that OtO has adopted, to provide support to recently released offenders in Manchester and Macclesfield. Helen has very relevant experience and a deep commitment to the organisation and the men she has supported over the years. Both have strong links with local agencies, deep sector knowledge and OtO has developed a strong profile in the North West due to their vision and person focused approach.</p>	
Aims and Activities	
<p>On the Out is a movement, set up by and for people who have experienced life in prison. They believe that people who have experienced the prison system from within are best placed to change it and that time inside gives everyone the ability and expertise to help others.</p> <p>They work with men and women in Manchester and the wider North West who have recently been released from prison and face complex issues and so have complex needs. Many have mental health and addiction issues, struggle with emotions and loss and face homelessness. Most have broken relationships, are estranged from family and have weak support networks. Many have additionally endured loss and find expression of emotions difficult. OtO's ethos and experience allows them to engage in a unique way with people who can be distrustful and resistant to authority.</p> <p>OtO provides a through the gate service to newly released prisoners in Manchester, helping them to adjust to life outside of the prison regime. This includes meeting recently released prisoners at the prison gate and escorting them to their accommodation, helping them to navigate information about their housing, meetings with the Probation Service, applying for benefits, joining support groups, identifying training, education or employment opportunities and coping with the pressures and stresses of being free. They hold drop-ins in five Probation Service Hostels and receive</p>	

referrals from a range of prisons in the North West, community organisations and self-referrals.

OtO has recently taken over the management of 10 houses in Macclesfield owned by Parasol Homes and begun providing support for residents – all of whom have been in the prison system.

OtO support approximately 600 recently released prisoners annually, the vast majority of whom are men.

Finances

Unaudited financial statements for the year ended 31st August 2019 show income of £128,604 against expenditure of £110,692 resulting in a small surplus of £17,912 for the year.

The balance sheet shows net current assets of £8,640 of which all is unrestricted. There isn't currently a reserves policy although a fundraising policy is planned and developing a reserves policy will be a key part of building the unrestricted element of future fundraising. Fixed assets include a van and IT equipment.

Budgets and funding predictions for 2020 remain pretty consistent with previous years apart from the addition of the income generated via the Parasol Homes programme. This funding will cover staffing costs linked to the 10 houses rather than providing additional income to OtO as a whole. Covid-19 is unlikely to affect 2020 or 2021 existing funding arrangements.

OtO's main funding comes from the Rough Sleepers Initiative, Edward Holt Trust, Allen Lane Foundation and Clothworkers Foundation. In 2019 a grant was awarded by the Big Lottery Fund which does not appear in these accounts. Most funding is restricted but unrestricted donations tend to be used to fund a welfare pot that helps people with buying clothes, mobile phones, travel etc.

Basic financial systems are in place but as the organisation grows and income streams develop a more robust approach is going to be needed. OtO is aware that with the step change in operational capacity comes the need to also grow new systems and develop new skill areas.

Current Situation and need

OtO provides support to recently released prisoners and ex-offenders in Manchester and manages 10 houses in Macclesfield that accommodate 45 ex-offenders. The work in Macclesfield has only been in operation for the past 5 months and came about following a request from Parasol Homes to take on the housing after hearing about their good work in Manchester. OtO has signed a 5 year Service Level Agreement for 25 years with break clauses every five years built into it. There is the potential for OtO to take on further Parasol properties in the future and whilst this is not imminent there are discussions taking place about the prospect of stage 2 housing being developed once the current 10 houses have been in operation for a sustained period.

The work in Macclesfield is a departure from the core work that OtO has traditionally done in Manchester. OtO has developed organically out of the needs that were identified by a core group of ex-offenders who struggled to cope on their release from prison and felt that the support being offered didn't cater to their actual needs. With support from the current CEO this group was formalised and started offering support to newly released prisoners through a programme developed by one of the original

group members, LifeHab. The original plan had been that over time a property would be secured in Manchester for ex-offenders to live in whilst they participated in the LifeHab programme. The Edward Holt Trust, a charity that operates across Greater Manchester by supporting homelessness through providing capital funds and support costs, has offered to purchase a property for OtO's use. The Housing Benefit that OtO would get would fund the LifeHab support costs as the property would be rented to them for a peppercorn rent. The opportunity provided by Parasol Homes changed the order of things slightly but the intention is still to bring accommodation to Manchester which will also add to the revenue that OtO is able to generate back into the organisation.

OtO has grown in reputation since it became formalised and referrers include Shelter, probation, prison resettlement teams from five prisons, local authorities, mental health and addiction services. There is a strong interest locally in LifeHab being set up in Manchester and the properties in Macclesfield provide a perfect opportunity for OtO to be able to get expertise under their belt in running accommodation and support services. By finessing LifeHab in Macclesfield this will enable them to use this experience as a template for additional properties and also build in other income generation opportunities such as becoming a registered provider of Peer Mentoring Training, offering student placements and providing paid training, consultancy and technical advice to new programmes elsewhere in the UK. A LifeHab Coordinator will be crucial in taking these developments forward and planning for the future.

Overall aim of the funding

Funding will enable OtO to focus on the LifeHab programme that is being implemented in the houses they manage in Macclesfield and subsequently use this as a platform to develop LifeHab elsewhere. This will lead to organisational growth and increased income generation.

Expected Key Achievements in Year 1

EKA 1

Improved ability to measure and prove positive change for LifeHab participants.

EKA 2

Increased diversity of income opportunities identified

EKA 3

Development of LifeHab in Manchester

Request and Budget

OtO is requesting £72,526 over 3 years towards the salary of a LifeHab Coordinator.

£27,000 in year 1 - £25,000 (salary), £2,287 (NI contribution), £322 (pension).

£25,000 in year 2 - £25,000 (salary).

£20,000 in year 3 - £20,000 (salary).

Conclusion

OtO were originally shortlisted for an assessment visit in the previous funding round for the rehabilitation of offenders. At the assessment meeting I had with them in Manchester it was agreed to withdraw the application as a number of recent opportunities had presented themselves to OtO. These had materialised post the submission of the application and the foundation of the application was unclear as a result. It was agreed that they would resubmit for this round once there was more clarity around their future direction and priorities.

Since the first assessment meeting OtO has certainly made the most of some of these opportunities and now provide the support service for the 10 houses in Macclesfield

housing ex-offenders and owned by Parasol Homes. This is a significant upscaling in activity from the through the gate support that was being offered in Manchester and represents the beginning of what could become a significant partnership. The Zoom call that I had with OtO highlighted how much work had taken place over the past 5 months and the significant achievement of doing this whilst in the grips of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The houses in Macclesfield provide the perfect canvas for Michael to further develop his LifeHab programme in a residential setting. This programme is seen as being the key to OtO growing over the coming years. Both through partnerships with Parasol Homes (existing and future) and the prospect of being bought a property in Manchester by The Edward Holt Trust to turn into supported housing, OtO has the opportunity to use our funding as a springboard to tap into multiple opportunities that have significant income generation potential. If over the duration of the grant they can embed the programme into the 10 existing houses and ensure that robust evaluation is in place to measure and prove positive outcomes for LifeHab participants, then this could be the key to their long term sustainability.

Currently OtO is a victim of its own success. They have a strong local reputation (that is growing outside of the North West) and build invaluable relationships with key referral and support agencies who they do and will partner with. However, many opportunities cannot be fully utilised at this time due to lack of capacity and resources.

This feels like the kind of application that the grant programme was designed for. If OtO can make a success of LifeHab then Triangle Trust support will play a critical role in helping them make a significant step change organisationally. That said, this grant would not be without risk. Whilst I feel confident that Michael's programme is a key proven strength of the organisation, as are Helen and Michael, there are operational weaknesses too.

Without a doubt Helen and Michael both hold huge amounts of knowledge about rehabilitation, offending and working with challenging people. However, the organisation lacks any great strategic knowledge and input. The Strategic Plan is currently little more than OtO setting out it's stall in terms of aspirations and vision and lacks any tangible targets of goals. I raised this at the assessment and it was agreed that more work would be done on this with support from a couple of key people from the Steering Group. The Steering Group does seem to contain this expertise and could play a wider role in offering support in these areas. I would recommend that if a grant were to be awarded then it should be conditional on a satisfactory Strategic Plan being submitted before the first payment is made.

These kind of issues shouldn't be considered barriers to supporting OtO though. They can tap into support around the business and strategic side of things and our revised reporting process will flag any issues early enough to address any concerns. What they have as an offer to ex-offenders is the key asset that OtO holds and our support would help them to realise this. Therefore I would recommend support as requested.

Recommended Priority Rating

Risk = Medium	Difference to organisation = High	Priority = High
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