

2018-05-C017 Kinship Care Midlothian

Grant Details:

Total Grant: £48,329
 Amount Paid to Date: £29,204
 Amount remaining: £19,125
 Start date: 01/04/19
 End date: 31/03/22
 Date of Report: 23/09/20



Grant Summary:

Kinship Care Midlothian started as a peer group of carers who were either grandparents, aunts, uncles, siblings or friends. Recognising kinship carers were not being adequately supported, the group became a registered charity in 2015 so it could make a real difference by providing support and changing policy.

To build a firm foundation for the charity, it will move into its own premises with an office and meeting rooms and employ an Office Administrator. Kinship Care Midlothian will increase its marketing and networking to support more kinship carers and engage more volunteers, and seek further funding to secure and expand the organisation for the future.

Current Status :

The grant to Kinship Care Midlothian was increased by Trustees to include an additional amount for an external consultant. This was to support the development of an organisational strategy and highlights that this is a small and quite basic charity.

The key objective in year one had been to secure premises but this proved to be difficult due to a dispute about a property that was very nearly rented. However, a new property was identified and Kinship Carers Midlothian moved in (much later than expected) and started benefiting from working out of a space that wasn't the founder's kitchen.

The latest report that has been received from Kinship Carers Midlothian highlights the huge impact that Covid-19 has had on the work of the organisation and how they are struggling to achieve the targets that they set for themselves in the Expected Key Achievements Form at the start of the grant. They are yet to recruit a paid Office Administrator and continue to rely on Trustees for finance and admin support and networking. Plans to identify and link with partners have also not progressed as anticipated with university partnerships being delayed after departments closing due to Covid-19 and emergency funding relationships being prioritised over other fundraising and networking. Work around developing strategic relationships with the Scottish Executive have also been impacted by a change in provider to deliver kinship services across Scotland. This has set Kinship Carers Midlothian back considerably as they have no relationship with the new provider – a foster agency with no previous experience of working with kinship carers.

Whilst Kinship Carers Midlothian are clearly not on track with their progress, based on their original EKAs, it feels important to recognise the challenging circumstances in which they are working. And whilst they took longer to secure premises they are now in a space that meets their needs and they have recruited some much needed new expertise to their Board of Trustees. Due to the universities not operating as usual they have struggled to make progress with building these relationships and the early work they had done building a relationship with CAS, the kinship care provider for Scotland, has come to nothing due to them not retaining this contract. They have also had to understandably focus on applying for emergency funding for kinship carers during the Covid-19 pandemic, rather than some of the more long term funding they had planned to target. So much of the lack of progress was out of their hands.

This remains an important organisation to kinship carers and whilst we may need to refocus some of their original measurements for achievement I do feel that our support is still really vital. I am not unduly concerned about the lack of progress that has been made in some areas but wanted to highlight the kind of impact that we are now seeing Covid-19 having on grantees. Kinship Carers Midlothian are already on six monthly payments and reporting and I would recommend that we carry on keeping a close eye on their progress and remain engaged and responsive to their needs.