

## **SCOREscotland DIRE FUNDING SITUATION 11 February 2016**

I am making this deposition on behalf of SCOREscotland to formally raise your awareness of the fact that budget cuts from 1<sup>st</sup> April pose an existential danger for SCOREscotland after 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016.

We are grateful that Education, Children and Families department has extend our existing contract from April to September to fund only those elements of our work which fit in the new definition of 'Youth Work'. The total amount of this contract is £28,650. We have also managed to secure (£38,000) which is half of the amount for which we had applied through the grant scheme. Both these sums have a small element of contribution towards running costs proportionate to what has been selected for funding purposes.

For a small organisation, it proved impossible for us to develop applications to different CEC departments within the same period in order to cover our core costs while we fundraise resources needed to sustain the whole organisation after 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016.

SCOREscotland has been successful at attracting funds from other sources including BBC Children In Need, the Lottery, Robertson Trust etc. and we continue to seek to diversify our funding base in order to enhance our sustainability and to further realise our great potential to serve minority ethnic people and the whole community in our area of benefit. However, we urgently need bridging funds to enable us to do this. In addition we seek flexibility from the department in the way we can use the secured funds above. This should buy us time to bring in more resources and deliver our proposed objectives.

We worked with a Consultant and carried out an organisational review between September and December 2015. This timely review enabled us to examine both the internal and external environment in which we operate. It also presented a golden opportunity to gather the views and experiences of a variety of key stakeholders. The findings have informed and shaped our new five year business plan which we now need an opportunity to implement. Similarly, we would like to action the recommendations in the overall report. This will enable us to secure this vital service for our client groups and enhance our effectiveness in key elements of SCOREscotland's work, such as family support, information and advocacy to vulnerable families. In our opinion, your definition of 'children and families' is too narrow to include many families which are vulnerable due to a variety of reasons including racist abuse and or harassment in their homes and neighbourhoods.

We are aware that as our local authority the following components of the public sector equality duty namely, to (i) tackle unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, (ii) advance equality of opportunity and (iii) foster good relations are placed on you. As it happens, these are in line with SCOREscotland core objectives and we believe that our continued existence and partnership working with you and others facilitates achieving these vital goals.

In the CEC Progress Report – A ‘Framework to Advance Equality and Rights 2012/17’ and ‘A Framework to Tackle Poverty and Inequality it is stated:

***The Council and its partners continue to deploy a wide range of mechanisms to engage with community and third sector groups that are engaged in advancing equality and rights, and tackling poverty and inequality. The Council and its partners have agreed to strengthen their approach to this area of work through the new Equality and Rights Network (EaRN).*** What does this mean for us?

SCOREscotland is the only Race Equality organisation in the new South West Locality, for example. How will the Equality and Rights Network achieve its outcomes without strong grassroots organisations such as SCOREscotland? And how will new developments such as Localities effectively engage with diverse communities?

As our work helps the City of Edinburgh Council to meet its obligation to positively promote equality as required by the Public Sector Equality Duty, it is not unreasonable to seek an ongoing core funding arrangement with our Local Authority to facilitate this work. Our dedicated services make a positive difference to so many people in this area.

In addition, through our Local COMMUNITY Voices project (LCV) (funded by the Scottish Government) SCOREscotland is playing a key role in local partnership developments such as the Open Space (BOLD Project) now morphed into the Living Well Wester Hailes. This collaborative work is enriched by SCOREscotland’s involvement and meaningful participation. The project has recently attracted 3 years funding from the Hunter Foundation to further develop this inclusive community work. These exciting developments will not be inclusive without SCOREscotland’s continued involvement.

Also given the current environment of ongoing global hateful atrocities and increasing Police Scotland reported local race hate crimes, concerning racist bullying of BME children in local schools and, given Scottish Government current strategies including Getting it Right for Every Child, New Scots Refugee Integration, the Scottish Race Equality Framework etc, we believe SCOREscotland’s role in finding local solutions and contribution to making all this work at grassroots level is still essential. Based on our strong track record in delivering on agreed goals and outcomes, engaging with diverse communities, attracting funding from different sources and effectively managing our funds, SCOREscotland adds value in our area of benefit.

We therefore seek your intervention and support to help SCOREscotland survive, bring in more resources and continue our valued role in our local community.