



Building capacity to secure work commissioned by the public sector

St Giles Trust is a Camberwell based charity which provides support and advice to prisoners and other disadvantaged people. Its core work seeks to break the costly cycle of reoffending by tackling the twin obstacles of prisoners being released without accommodation and without jobs. The cornerstone of St Giles's services is the innovative Peer Advice model where ex-offenders are trained to achieve valuable NVQ Level 3 qualifications, and then to advise and support other prisoners on housing, employment and training before their release.

As part of a programme of support from Impetus Trust, a venture philanthropy organisation, the need to improve St Giles's capacity in bidding for and winning public sector contracts was identified. Impetus approached WCoMC in April 2007 and, following a meeting with the CEO of St Giles, our support commenced shortly thereafter.

Our work encompassed:

- Reviewing recent St Giles experience of bidding for public sector contracts
- Meetings with the Senior Management Team to assess delivery capabilities and business development aspirations
- Developing a targeted programme of organisations and relationship building to better position St Giles in forthcoming procurement opportunities
- Advising on the overall approach to a series of bids and reviewing draft responses

Our support continued over an 18 month period, during which time the success rate of St Giles in bidding for work significantly improved. St Giles has recently won contracts ranging from the London Development Agency and several Local Authorities to new and innovative work that's part of Boris Johnson's Daedalus project. Thinking and bidding bigger and better has allowed St Giles to help 20,000 clients this year, to house 2,700 clients who would otherwise be homeless, help 400 gain meaningful qualifications and get over 150 into full time sustainable employment – all of whom come from the most marginalized parts of our society.

The assignment showed that a more formalised business development process, along with coaching of key staff in how to respond effectively to public sector invitations to tender, could build on the deep operational knowledge of St Giles and help to secure a more sustainable future for the organisation.

Our thanks go to Bob Harris who undertook this work for WCoMC.