

MEETING: 25/07/2019

Ref: 15300

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY: Bridging Divides - Positive Transitions

British Refugee Council

Adv: Geraldine Page

Base: Newham

Amount requested: £79,193

Benefit: London-wide

Amount recommended: £79,200

The Applicant

The British Refugee Council (BRC) is a leading provider of services for asylum seekers and refugees (AS&R), and a prominent advocate for refugee protection in the UK. Its services address pressing resettlement needs of AS&R, including poverty, housing, mental health, and employment. The charity also offers dedicated help to unaccompanied minors and supports refugee community organisations in building their institutional capacity. BRC runs services in various locations in England, and directly supports an annual average of between 1,300 to 1,500 people in London.

The Application

This application is for two years' continuation funding towards staff costs of its therapeutic support service which you initially funded in 2016 to help AS&R in London in addressing the psychological impact of their traumatic experiences. The grant would meet the costs of delivering at least 12 one-to-one counselling/psychotherapy sessions to 140 individuals.

The Recommendation

BRC is long experienced in providing quality assured counselling and psychotherapy to comprehensively support AS&R with mental health problems in their journey to recovery. BRC are widely considered as an expert on refugee mental health. It delivers training to professionals on the mental health needs of refugees including working in partnership with the South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust to train frontline professionals. Additionally, at the invitation of the Home Office BRC convene the NGO working group for mental health provision for refugees. This is a well-managed service delivered by competent professionals and fits very well with your Positive Transitions programme, funding is recommended:

£79,200 over two further and final years (£39,000 and £40,200) for the costs of a Full-time Psychological Therapist In London.

Funding History

Meeting Date	Decision
21/03/2019	£220,800 over three years (£90,900; £68,900; £61,000) towards the establishment of a forum to enable refugee community organisations to engage effectively with policy and decision makers in London.
07/09/2018	£20,000 towards staffing and associated running costs to explore the development of a pan-London forum to enable Refugee Community Organisations to directly influence the bodies whose policies, practices and strategies impact the lives of refugees and asylum seekers.
14/03/2018	£25,000 towards the salary of a Community Co-ordinator to support Refugee Council's engagement with The Way Ahead.
11/05/2017	£50,000 for a salary, associated on-costs and operational costs. The grant is to be spent over a minimum 10 month period to support the organisation's involvement in The Way Ahead and is subject to a review

	after 6 months.
24/05/2016	£112,000 over three years (£36,200; £37,300; £38,500) towards staffing, running costs and overheads of a counselling service for refugees in London

Background and detail of proposal

Refugees and people seeking asylum can have complex, untreated psychological needs due to past experiences and as result of the practical and psychological stresses of navigating the complex asylum process once in the UK. Many have faced horrific experiences in their home countries, such as torture, war, rape and persecution. BRC service monitoring confirms these trends: last year it supported 93 women through one-to-one therapeutic support, and 55 disclosed sexual abuse, 47 experienced domestic violence, 30 had survived trafficking and 12 survived torture. Upon arrival in the UK, a range of compounding factors place people seeking asylum at a greater disadvantage. They are left to survive alone in an unfamiliar country with a new language, and culture. They may suffer from the loss of family members, concerns about those left behind and severe social isolation. People seeking asylum in the UK without independent financial means are often placed temporarily in Initial Accommodation (IA) centres before being dispersed to other parts of the country. These experiences can have long-lasting negative consequences on individuals' mental and physical health through issues such as depression, anxiety, unwanted pregnancies in the cases of rape, and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

BRC delivers a specialist therapeutic service in London, which operates from its service delivery hub in Stratford and from Initial Accommodation (IA) in East Dulwich. Co-locating the service in IA offers a unique route to a large number of clients very early during their time in the UK and is a particularly difficult and vulnerable period for many.

Financial Information

BRC's reserves policy is to hold between £2million and £3million in free reserves. From the information in the table below you will see that the level of reserves in 2017-18 were at the upper end of this target. However, in the current financial climate, this is considered prudent. In addition, free reserves are forecast to reduce slightly in 2018-19 and 2019-20. BRC's source of income is primarily a combination of donations, legacies, grants (trusts and statutory) and a small amount of trading activity.

Year end as at 31 March	2018	2019	2020
	Audited Accounts	Forecast	Budget
	£	£	£
Income & expenditure:			
Income	8 550,000	9,396,245	10,395,353
- % of Income confirmed as at 23/11/19		99%	72%
Expenditure	(8 960,000)	(10,291,309)	(11 314,948)
Total surplus/(deficit)	(410,000)	(895,064)	(919,595)
Split between:			
- Restricted surplus/(deficit)	(323,000)	(1 296,873)	(694,595)
- Unrestricted surplus/(deficit)	(197,000)	401,809	(225,000)
- Endowment	110,000	N/A	N/A
	(410,000)	(895,064)	(919,595)
Cost of Raising Funds	1,364,000	1,184,291	1,402,550
- % of income	16.0%	12.6%	13.5%
Operating expenditure (unrestricted funds)	2,361,000	2,562,891	2,896,777
Free unrestricted reserves:			
Free unrestricted reserves held at year end	2 839,000	3,240,809	3,015,809
No of months of operating expenditure	14.4	15.2	12.5
Reserves policy target	2 000,000	2 000,000	2,000,000
No of months of operating expenditure	10.2	9.4	8.3
Free reserves over/(under) target	839,000	1,240,809	1,015,809