

MEETING: 28/11/2019**Ref: 15557****ASSESSMENT CATEGORY: Bridging Divides - Positive Transitions****Doctors of the World UK****Adv: Tim Wilson****Amount requested: £299,756****Base: Tower Hamlets****Benefit: London-wide****Amount recommended: £300,000****The Applicant**

Established in 1979 when a group of doctors broke away from Médecins Sans Frontières to form Médecins du Mond, Doctors of the World (DOTW) became a registered UK charity in 1998. In addition to raising funds to support international work, Doctors of the World delivers clinical services in East London and Brighton for people excluded from NHS healthcare, either as a result of their immigration or housing status. The organisation also campaigns for policy change (such as its recent push to stop the use of NHS records in immigration enforcement) and other systemic practices that might prevent people from seeking medical support. Members of this Committee may recall that the October 2019 Common Council approved a 3-month pilot for DOTW to run a mobile clinic for the City's homeless.

The Application

DOTW seeks funding for health services offered to migrants and refugees at its Stratford clinic in the London Borough of Newham. Annually, this work costs around £300,000 and the charity raises most of this money from a range of independent Trusts and Foundations. Each year, the clinic provides immediate healthcare to 1,000 people through a medical consultation with a GP or nurse (this can be on a drop in or pre-booked appointment basis). The clinic also supports 2,000 people with a social consultation (run by volunteer caseworkers) and assistance in accessing longer-term NHS support. Clients are referred by grassroots groups and migrant community support organisations. The charity also runs a medical advice line, handling over 15,000 calls each year.

Clinical services are offered 5 days a week for drop in and appointments as well as a designated day for women and children. Medical services are run by volunteer GPs and nurses, and the charity estimates that 90% of clinic attendees are not registered with a GP. DOTW aims to see most of its clients just once, working to support them to register with mainstream primary providers consequent to their Stratford visit.

The Recommendation

DOTW's Stratford clinic offers high-quality support in a bright and welcoming space. The service seeks to mitigate the risk of individual and public health crises. The charity responds to the number of migrants in London who are not registered with a GP either because they have been wrongly refused by a practice, or because they are fearful that medical staff may report them to the Home Office. There is some evidence of a consequent cost to Hospital services, with BBC data indicating at least 15,000 A&E attendances in London from people who are not registered for primary healthcare.

Funding costs are higher in the first year as DOTW seeks to update its clinical database and casework record system. This is judged to be instrumental in the

quality of client outcomes and therefore recommended as part of the grant offer from City Bridge Trust. Funding is sought on a tapered basis and recommended as follows:

£300,000 over five years (£70,000; £65,000; £60,000; £55,000; £50,000) towards the staff and running costs of the Stratford Clinic run by Doctors of the World for vulnerable migrants.

Funding History

Meeting Date	Decision
06/06/2013	£50,000 over two further years to provide emergency primary healthcare for people unable to access statutory services.
02/12/2010	£25,000 over one year towards the costs of a project providing a bridge to healthcare services for vulnerable people.

Background and detail of proposal

NHS guidance makes clear that it is unreasonable for a GP surgery to refuse registration to people who do not have proof of address or personal identity to hand, stating that *“this also applies if you’re an asylum seeker, refugee, homeless patient or overseas visitor, whether lawfully in the UK or not”*. 2018 data published by DOTW and based on 12 months of primary research to register 2,189 of the charity’s patients with GPs highlighted that wrongful refusal was commonplace (accounting for 19% of the attempted registrations) and frequently in contravention of NHS guidelines. In response, NHS England and DOTW have co-published guidance on GP registration

DOTW does not seek to replace mainstream provision but rather ensure clients can access what they are entitled to on a timely basis, so their health outcomes do not suffer.

Financial Information

The table below shows a 51% reduction in income from 2018 to 2019 matched by an equivalent reduction in expenditure over the same period. This was largely a result of the expected end of some restricted grants. The most recently audited accounts show DOTW’s free reserves below target, and they are expected to remain below target for the next two financial years although slightly improved by the end of 2020. The charity is seeking to build free reserves by implementing a cost-saving programme and prioritising fundraising towards core costs and UK programmes.

Year end as at 31st December	2018 Audited Accounts £	2019 Forecast £	2020 Budget £
Income & expenditure:			
Income	2,665,439	1,294,121	1,764,000
- % of income confirmed as at 30th October	n/a	77%	15%
Expenditure	(3,221,914)	(1,442,910)	(1,744,000)
Total surplus/(deficit)	(556,475)	(148,789)	20,000
Split between:			
- Restricted surplus/(deficit)	(472,059)	(149,325)	0
- Unrestricted surplus/(deficit)	(84,416)	536	20,000
	(556,475)	(148,789)	20,000
Operating expenditure (unrestricted funds)	642,367	534,120	584,000
Free unrestricted reserves:			
Free unrestricted reserves held at year end	89,697	90,233	110,233
No of months of operating expenditure	1.7	2.0	2.3
Reserves policy target	160,592	133,530	148,000
No of months of operating expenditure	3.0	3.0	3.0
Free reserves over/(under) target	(70,895)	(43,297)	(35,767)