

## MONITORING VISIT REPORT: New Horizon Youth Centre - 11157

<b>1.1 Date of visit:</b> 13 <sup>th</sup> March 2015	<b>1.2 Name of visiting Grants Officer:</b> Ciaran Rafferty, accompanied by Alderman Gowman (Deputy Chairman)	<b>1.3 People met with:</b> Jon Snow (Chairman); Sheelagh O'Connor (Director); Stella Howe (Project Development Co-ordinator); plus 2 service users
<b>1.4 Programme Area:</b> Working with Londoners: Improving Londoners' Mental Health		
<b>1.5 Grant value:</b> £135,000 over years (£44k; £45k;£46k)	<b>1.6 What is the grant funding?</b> Salary costs of a p/t (20hpw) Project Leader and 2 Lifeskills Workers (10hpw ea) plus running costs for the Healthy Minds Project.	
<b>1.7 Purpose of the award:</b> To provide a holistic, personally tailored, package of support to young people at risk of mental ill health and to devise appropriate pathways for action.		
<b>MONITORING INFORMATION</b>		
<b>2.1 Project Outcome 1:</b> <b>More young people will receive specialist clinical help, leading to improved mental health.</b>  <b>Progress made:</b> Each person having been identified, or self-referred, as someone with a mental health need has an initial assessment on using the project for the first time. This helps determine what support they need and is the first stage in determining what outcomes they want to achieve, or can aim for. As it is a voluntary process it is more attractive to this cohort. In any one year it is typical for c100 young people to be supported – roughly split 50/50 male/female. The organisation supports the young person to access clinical and/or other specialist help where necessary.		
<b>2.2 Project Outcome 2:</b> <b>More young people accessing mental health services and will have improvements in their wellbeing.</b>  <b>Progress made:</b> As each person's support package is bespoke, they are "managed" by the Project Leader who will, where necessary, liaise with clinical partners and practitioners for feedback on its effectiveness – and amend where necessary. A number of targeted interventions can be offered, depending on the individual needs (eg a core issue may be one of low self-esteem, so a particular intervention may help with this). In year 2, for example, 60 young people were tracked through support packages.		

### **2.3 Project Outcome 3:**

#### **To prevent deterioration in young people's mental health.**

##### **Progress made:**

The project offers a range of complementary sessions and workshops (eg art therapy, music performance, fitness, healthy eating and nutrition) designed to develop confidence, self-esteem, and self-image in order to stabilise the young person to the stage where more in-depth mental health work can be undertaken. All NHYC staff are knowledgeable of the Healthy Minds project so that it is fully integrated into the other work of the Centre and to enable all staff to be supportive of those with mental health needs. The project works closely with University College Hospital (nearby) so that access to other, clinical, services is readily available, as is advice and guidance from staff there.

### **GRANT OFFICER COMMENTS**

NHYC has been providing services for young homeless people (principally the 16-21 age range) for many years and in that time has accrued extensive expertise and knowledge. Its services are available to young people from across London and many do travel from the outer boroughs – not just because of the range of support on offer but also because the Centre is well served by public transport and because they offer a meal, which they find increasingly more needed.

One of NHYC's strengths is its ability to provide a wide range of support as, often, young homeless people are in a predicament because of several factors and not just one. At the Centre they can see a nurse; have a shower and do their washing; take classes (eg in IT); use fitness equipment; get advice on housing, benefits etc; and – with this project – get help with matters which may (or do) impact on their mental health. For those in need of clinical support the charity has a formal relationship with University College Hospital.

The organisation says it has witnessed an increase in young people presenting with mental health problems, with what amounted to 20% of the numbers attending with some issues having risen to 40%. They believe a lot of this increase is due to the increased use of high-strength cannabis (skunk) and referred to recent research by the King's Fund which showed that 25% of instances of psychosis are skunk-related. Other factors which lead to young people accessing (and needing) this project include greater stress on families; increasing use of sanctions on young people; fewer support services being available due to funding cuts.

NHYC believes that this project – and its work in general – is successful because it is focussed, targeted, comprehensive, and all under one roof. The charity is also part of a wider, London Councils funded, consortium where 7 organisations work together to provide a Youth Homelessness Service across London.

In closing mention must be made of the two young service users who attended the meeting to speak of their own experience of the project. From this one could readily sense the value of the support given and the fact that it was person-specific – both had very different needs, background and issues yet both had made tangible progress. This is a very valuable project, expertly delivered.