

MONITORING VISIT REPORT: Barons Court Project – ref 11114

1.1 Date of visit: 27 th March 2015	1.2 Name of visiting Grants Officer: Ciaran Rafferty	1.3 People met with: Michael Angus (Manager) Emily Danby (Project Worker – postholder)
1.4 Programme Area: Working with Londoners – Improving Londoners’ Mental Health		
1.5 Grant value: £55,000 over 2 years (£27,000; £28,000)	1.6 What is the grant funding? For the salary costs of a full time Project Worker for the Drop-in service.	
1.7 Purpose of the award: To support the delivery of the Drop-in service as a key activity of the Barons Court Project which provides services for those who are isolated, homeless, or at risk of becoming homeless.		
MONITORING INFORMATION		
2.1 Project Outcome 1: More homeless and transient people and trough sleepers accessing mental health services resulting in improved well-being. Progress made: 13% of the people accessing the project are on referral from statutory and voluntary mental health services. The organisation would like to increase this number so will be doing more outreach to make professionals aware of what they can offer. The project also refers people back to those agencies dealing with more acute needs. Funding of this post increased the number of people worked with and enhanced the range and number services provided e.g. Green Palm Group, Women’s Group, Café, Life Skills workshops. More women now use the services which can be provided on a 1-to-1 basis where necessary. In 2014 approximately 500 people used the Project.		
2.2 Project Outcome 2: To enable service users to live independently. Progress made: The Barons Court Project works mostly with people with chronic mental health needs, rather than those with temporary ill health, so not many are able to move on within a short period of time. It’s not a negative thing for some that they use the project for a long period of time as, if they were to move on before they were ready, they would probably end up very isolated and/or in a worse place. Having said that, the Life Skills project in particular has been helpful to supporting people to live more independently, especially the cookery and computer classes. The various activities not only provide the clients with new skills but greatly increase their self- confidence and social networks.		

2.3 Project Outcome 3:

To link service users to other, mainstream, services (including housing providers).

Progress made:

The organisation has maintained and developed strong links with many other service providers, including: Podiatrists, CABx, Victim Support, Healthwatch, MIND branches, Claybrook NHS, and various local authority departments. There is also close work with Hammersmith & Fulham Volunteer Centre to introduce more clients to volunteering and, more importantly, to encourage more local employers to consider using Project volunteers. Volunteering gives service users routine, purpose and value.

GRANT OFFICER COMMENTS

For many years the Barons Court Project had been fully funded by the local authority and other statutory agencies to provide key support for very disadvantaged local people. In the past 3-4 years it has seen this source of funding reduce and has sought to diversify its income. Despite the large number of people assisted, it is a very lean organisation with a small number of f/t staff and relies heavily on dedicated volunteers to deliver a range of high-quality and humane support to clients.

At assessment, and again in this monitoring visit, I witnessed first-hand the care and professionalism taken by the organisation to support some very vulnerable people with a wide range of deep-set issues.

The Trust's support of the full time Project Worker post has been fundamental to the organisation being able to continue working with a large number of clients. This was even more so in 2014 when the organisation's Manager died suddenly and unexpectedly, leaving the organisation heavily reliant on existing staff until a new Manager was appointed. To its credit the charity was able to continue its front-line services with little direct impact on their number or quality.

Most of the clients who access the Project clearly have underlying and often complex mental health needs and require bespoke, holistic, support – which this grant helps to provide. Recently, the Trust awarded a grant for another (third) year's continuation, which will greatly help the charity whilst the new Manager settles in and focuses on catching up with fundraising. (Your officer was able to provide potential sources of funds as a follow-up to the visit.)