

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY - Older Londoners**InterAct Stroke Support****Adv: Tania Bronstein****Base: Westminster****Amount requested: £81,513****Benefit: Hammersmith &****Fulham, Hounslow, Lambeth****Amount recommended: £69,500****The Charity:**

Interact Stroke Support (ISS) aims to improve psychological wellbeing, reduce isolation and stimulate language and memory for people who have survived a stroke. The charity uses professional actors to deliver interactive live readings for people in hospital following a stroke, and at stroke clubs in the community. With over 180 actors and an extensive library of diverse stories of varying lengths and genres, ISS currently works in 22 London hospitals (16 in London) and in 50 stroke clubs. In the year to 31.08.2016, ISS engaged with 6,117 stroke survivors.

The Application:

ISS seeks a three-year grant towards the costs of: (a) providing one-to-one live readings to stroke survivors three times a week in each of three hospitals: Charing Cross (Hammersmith & Fulham); Clayponds (Hounslow) and Kings (Lambeth); and, (b) delivering an annual 10-day interactive workshop programme for elderly stroke survivors following hospital discharge. The grant is expected to benefit 1,920 people.

The Recommendation:

This work has been hailed as exemplary in the use of arts to improve rehabilitation outcomes and has earned ISS several accolades in the past. Feedback from users, clinicians and evidence from research indicate that the readings alleviate depression, enhance wellbeing and boost rehabilitation outcomes. The advised grant reflects the likely proportion of eligible beneficiaries within this programme's age group:

£69,500 over three years (£22,000; £23,000; £24,500) towards a live reading service for elderly stroke survivors while in hospital and upon discharge.

Funding History

Meeting Date	Decision
08/07/2010	£70,000 over 3 years (£22,000; £22,000; £24,000) towards a reading service for elderly stroke patients in London hospitals

Background and detail of proposal

The risk of a stroke steeply increases with age. In England, the average age for women to have a stroke is 80, and for men it is 74 (Stroke Association 2017). The aftermath of a stroke is difficult and depressing, especially if communication and speech are affected. Survivors have to cope with sudden disability and long hours in rehabilitation wards, often without quality social interactions. It is at this point that interactive readings by professional actors able to enliven a story and to resort to drama techniques to stimulate communication in ways other than verbal can make a significant difference. Visits last for two hours with actors reading to several patients each time. This simple intervention does not just relieve boredom and isolation, but

has been found to stimulate memory and language recall and boost psychological wellbeing. The group support following hospital discharge is a new intervention developed because anxiety and depression often intensify once people return to their routines. This work offers a supportive, non-judgemental environment where participants enjoy a recreational activity while practicing communication skills, for example through alternating presentations using the Desert Island discs format.

Elderly stroke survivors, who are more likely to spend long spells in hospital, to lack support networks, and to face greater challenges adjusting to the after-effects of a stroke, especially benefit from the social, recreational and therapeutic rewards. While the group work is exclusively for elderly people, the readings in wards are for anyone in the wards. The recommended level of grant reflects the majority presence of patients in their mid and late 70's in stroke rehabilitation wards.

Financial information

ISS draws its income from many sources including individuals, charitable sources and fees (donations last year ranged from just under £5 to £18,334, most being for under £5,000). Given the unpredictable income base, the trustees advise that they are intent on holding reserves above their policy target (i.e six months' worth of unrestricted expenditure). However, following your assessor's visit, they plan to review the policy to better reflect the trustees' intentions. When this review is undertaken the gap shown between the holding and the policy target will reduce. The lower cost of raising funds in 2016/17 below is due to the employment of fundraising staff in previous years.

Year end as at 31 August	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
	Audited/Examined Accounts £	Draft Accounts £	Forecast £
Income & expenditure:			
Income	203,155	182,457	189,140
- % of Income confirmed as at 15.12.2016	n/a	n/a	65%
Expenditure	(237,896)	(176,358)	(187,196)
Total surplus/(deficit)	(34,741)	6,099	1,944
Split between:			
- Restricted surplus/(deficit)	12,477	(2,472)	(13,324)
- Unrestricted surplus/(deficit)	(47,218)	8,571	15,268
	(34,741)	6,099	1,944
Operating expenditure (unrestricted funds)	59,639	54,878	59,732
Free unrestricted reserves:			
Free unrestricted reserves held at year end	57,563	66,134	81,402
No of months of operating expenditure	11.6	14.5	16.4
Reserves policy target	29,819	27,439	29,866
No of months of operating expenditure	6.0	6.0	6.0
Free reserves over/(under) target	27,744	38,695	51,536