

MEETING: 09/05/2019

Ref: 14670

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY - Improving Londoners' Mental Health

West London Mission Methodist Circuit

Adv: Gilly Green

Amount requested: £114,351

Base: Westminster

Benefit: Several London boroughs

Amount recommended: £114,350

The Applicant

The West London Mission Methodist Circuit, operating as West London Mission (WLM) has been serving people affected by homelessness and poverty since 1887. As part of the Methodist Church (although a registered charity in its own right) it retains a strong Christian ethos and runs a range of housing and community services employing 70 staff in seven locations across London.

The Application

Seymour Place (SP), is a drop-in service for homeless people based in Westminster and is a project of West London Mission. It aims to help those sleeping rough to come off the streets. It has seen a significant increase in the number of people with mental health problems it supports and many are not accessing appropriate mental health services. Mental health issues can often be a trigger for homelessness, and in turn homelessness can seriously exacerbate or cause a range of mental health issues. SP estimates that 70% of their service users need support with mental health issues. It has previously employed a mental health specialist but the independent funding for this has now ended. This application is to enable WLM to employ a full-time specialist mental health worker based at Seymour Place for the next 3 years.

The Recommendation

Seymour Place is a well-used and important resource for London's street homeless and vulnerably housed people. The charity makes a strong case for support, demonstrating the value of the previous role in helping their most vulnerable clients' access, treatments and support. Unusually for street homelessness projects almost a third of users are women. The project meets your programme outcomes for Improving Londoners Mental Health by enabling access to appropriate support. A grant is advised as follows:

£114,350 over three years (£34,740; £39,238; £40,372) to cover the salary and on costs of a specialist mental health worker for homeless people to work alongside a multi-disciplinary team at Seymour Place.

Funding History

Meeting Date	Decision
10/01/2017	The applicant has withdrawn the application following success in securing the project funding from another funder.
20/10/2011	£123,000 over three years (£40,000; £41,000; £42,000) for the salary and related costs of a full-time Mental Health Project Worker,
04/06/2009	Application declined as was insufficiently focussed on mental health issues to warrant funding.

Background and detail of proposal

West London Mission welcomes people from all backgrounds and 75% of clients originate from outside the UK. Currently at least 30% of service users are refugees – and many experience depression or post-traumatic stress disorder. Without specialist mental health provision, the organisation struggles to support its vulnerable rough sleepers who access their services. The organisation has strong links with local mental health teams and other partners and it also hosts satellite services with other outreach teams – including those working on the night buses – to ensure that the more hard-to-reach rough sleepers are encouraged to access its services. WLM provides advice and support with accommodation, employment and benefits as well as specialist services including an on-site NHS homeless health team.

Financial Information

WLM has over £11m in investments and over £6m in property assets. Some properties are used for the housing services; others are let at market rents. These assets combined generate significant annual income on which WLM depends to help sustain the core activities of the charity. Additional funding comes from housing benefit, corporate and charitable donations. WLM still requires its individual projects to fundraise the costs of their services and Seymour Place, which receives no statutory income, has an annual fundraising target of approximately £500,000. The reserves policy does not state actual figures but says instead there should neither be a surplus or deficit on the income reserve, taking one year with another. The charity's current practice, having paid out its core activities (such as the maintenance of ordained ministers) is to give all remaining income to its social work projects. Clearly, WLM has significant resources and could support this post itself, but this is an important resource for London's rough sleepers, including many women and a grant would support a valuable project for some of London's most vulnerable homeless people.

Year end as at 31 AUGUST	2017	2018	2019
	Audited accounts	Audited accounts	Budget
	£	£	£
Income & expenditure:			
Income	2 281,000	2 450,000	2 591,000
- % of income confirmed as at 08.04.19	n/a	n/a	92%
Expenditure	(2 168,000)	(2 430,000)	(2 650,000)
Gains on investment	643,000	1 506,000	0
Total surplus/(deficit)	756,000	1,526,000	(59,000)
Split between:			
- Restricted surplus/(deficit)	(4,000)	12,000	0
- Unrestricted surplus/(deficit)	760,000	1,514,000	59,000
	756,000	1,526,000	59,000
Cost of Raising Funds	21,000	21,000	23,000
- % of income	0.9%	0.9%	0.9%
Operating expenditure (unrestricted funds)	833,000	911,000	928,000
Free unrestricted reserves:			
Free unrestricted reserves held at year end	11,831,000	13,345,000	13,404,000
No of months of operating expenditure	170.4	175.8	173.3
Reserves policy target	0	0	0
No of months of operating expenditure	0.0	0.0	0.0
Free reserves over/(under) target	11,831,000	13,345,000	13,404,000