

CITY BRIDGE TRUST – Delegated Authority (Requests up to £250k)

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY: Bridging Divides - Positive Transitions\Children & young people\With mental health needs

Rethink Mental Illness

Ref: 16651

Amount requested: £128,319

Adv: Julia Mirkin

Base: Lambeth

Amount recommended: £128,300

Benefit: London-wide

Purpose of grant request: Continuation funding of Step Up University, a specialist young people's mental health project in universities across London.

The Applicant

Rethink Mental Illness (RMI), formerly called The National Schizophrenia Fellowship, was founded in 1972. RMI's mission is to lead the way to a better quality of life for everyone affected by mental illness. It offers a range of services including housing, crisis accommodation, residential care, advocacy, carers' support, employment, psychological support and some criminal justice services.

Background and detail of proposal

For the last two years, you have been the sole funder of Step Up University, which upskills and supports Champions to co-design and deliver workshops for their fellow students, who are seeking support with the management of their mental health during their transition to university life.

Working with universities and navigating their systems was new for RMI and during the first year of delivery, the Project Manager struggled to embed the programme; recruit and train Champions and engage with student beneficiaries. This was not due to low demand: the mental health needs of university students are well documented, for example, the Higher Education Statistics Agency (2017), reports that the number of students who have dropped out of university due to mental ill-health has trebled since 2009; and research by IPPR in 2017, found that university students have lower levels of wellbeing than the general population.

The issue RMI faced is that routes into each university are obscure and impenetrable. Valuable time was wasted trying to identify and engage staff who have access to students and the seniority to authorise delivery of Step Up University. These delays caused the programme's launch to miss freshers' weeks. Students were, therefore, already enlisted in societies and extra-curricular activities when the opportunities were promoted, leading to scaled-back delivery and an underspend.

Despite this, 90% of participants surveyed during year one either agreed or strongly agreed that their understanding of their mental health had improved through engagement with the programme; 100% responded that they had learned new skills to manage periods of transition; and 83% felt they would use what had been learned to find the medical services they need. The second year of Step Up University was led by a new Project Manager, a recent graduate, who at the age of 16, set up the award-winning "It's OK" campaign to tackle stigma around teenage depression; she was elected Sussex Students' Union Welfare Officer in 2018, representing the needs of 18,000 students; and has been a Young People's Champion for Time to Change. As a LGBTQ+ and BAME graduate with lived experience of mental ill-health, the

Step Up University Project Manager is well positioned to address underrepresentation of minority groups in mental health services through this programme.

RMI utilised the year one underspend to enhance and upscale the Step Up University programme during your second year of funding. The Grantee has reported on the revised programme's success anecdotally; however, attendees' evaluation forms are currently locked away in universities that remain inaccessible due to Covid-19. As RMI requests continuation funding to deliver Step Up University at the enhanced level, it proposes to deliver the programme in four instead of six universities, resulting in the funding requested remaining consistent with the first grant. If awarded, your grant will fund delivery of Step Up University in University College London; University of West London; the School of Oriental and African Studies and Middlesex University. RMI proposes to deliver 65 two-hour workshops in year one and 75 in year two, each of which will have been co-produced with 50 Champions, recruited across the four sites, who will each have received eight training sessions (totalling 32 hours) of mental health and peer support training. Take up of Step Up University workshops will be determined locally, but RMI is aiming to recruit 390 workshop attendees in year one and 450 in year two across the four sites. Preparation has taken place for online workshop delivery in response to Covid-19, including work around safeguarding when working with young people online. Outcomes remain the same as for your first grant; targets for workshop attendees include 80% of 390 students demonstrating increased knowledge of how to maintain mental health and wellbeing and enhanced ability to communicate about their mental health following engagement with the programme.

RMI has approached the Rayne Foundation for funding to extend the programme to two further universities. Any grant awarded today will be conditional on submission of a satisfactory final monitoring report of your last grant, currently scheduled for September 2020.

Financial Information

In addition to the sum held as reserves, RMI has designated funds of £1,152,000 for expenditure on repairs, refurbishment, ICT developments, capital purchases and pension payments. RMI's 2019 accounts show £3,433,000 in grant debtors. Expenditure that corresponds to this income, which was received after the year end, has been accounted for in 2019. RMI has creditors due within one year in 2019 amounting to £6,046,000, comprising payments due for trade, pension deficit, tax and sums related to undertakings.

Unrestricted income from fundraising events, training, investment income and legacies has been affected by Covid-19. This is due to falling estate and investment values, delays with probate and the time required to redesign training to be delivered online. As RMI delivers residential care services, it has also experienced increased staffing costs and the requirement to provide PPE. To mitigate against the impact of Covid-19 on RMI's finances, it has furloughed some staff and reduced non-staffing related expenditure for staff training, recruitment, ITC upgrades and governance costs (now online). RMI has released some designated funds to invest in a new CRM to support future fundraising. Financial management and reprioritisation in response to Covid has been overseen by a Recovery Group. This group, alongside RMI's Emergency Planning and Contingency Group and Finance Committee, report to the Board every two weeks.

Year end as at 31 March	2019	2020	2021
	Signed Accounts	Forecast	Budget
	£	£	£
Income & expenditure:			
Income	32,699,000	31,566,000	30,510,861
- % of Income confirmed as at	-	-	94%
Expenditure	(33,149,000)	(32,195,000)	(30,247,271)
Total surplus/(deficit)	(450,000)	(629,000)	263,590
Split between:			
- Restricted surplus/(deficit)	(1,289,000)	(518,000)	-
- Unrestricted surplus/(deficit)	839,000	(112,000)	-
	(450,000)	(630,000)	263,590
Cost of Raising Funds	1,251,000	1,299,000	-
% Income	4%	4%	-
Total Expenditure (unrestricted)	33,149,000	32,195,000	30,247,271
Free unrestricted reserves:			
Free reserves held at year end	2,835,000	2,206,000	2,469,590
No of months of operating expenditure	1.0	0.8	1.0
Reserves policy target	3,500,000	3,500,000	3,500,000
No of months of operating expenditure	1.3	1.3	1.4
Free reserves over/(under) target	(665,000)	(1,294,000)	(1,030,410)

Funding History

Meeting	Decision
14/03/2018	£113,000 over two years (£53,000; £60,000) towards the Step Up into University (SUU) Project Manager salary, SUU project costs, evaluation and on-costs.
10/01/2013	£39,000 for a third and final year's support of a p/t (3dpw) Young People's Officer plus related activity costs for the Uthink London project, subject to the receipt of a satisfactory report for year 2 of the current grant.
18/02/2010	£70,000 over two years (2 x £35,000) for the salary and associated costs of a p/t (22.5 hrs) Recovery Officer to support the mental health of young Londoners from BME communities.

Recommendation

This proposal does not seek to offer or replace clinical treatment; it adopts an early intervention approach to prevent the escalation of illness and interruptions to education. Students will be upskilled to support each other, and social networks will be established, supporting the management of health and instilling the confidence to seek help when required. The proposed model draws on lived experience of mental ill-health to empower young people to help themselves and their peers. By valuing the experience of mental ill-health and harnessing it as a source of knowledge, RMI is being asset-based in its approach, transforming the experience of people who, historically, have been disadvantaged and stigmatised.

£128,300 over two further and final years (£62,800; £65,500) for Project Management; line management; project costs; evaluation and on costs for Step Up University In London. Release of the grant is subject to receipt of a satisfactory monitoring report for the current grant.

Approved.....
Chief Grants Officer /
Deputy CGO

Approved.....
Chair

Approved.....
Deputy Chair

Date.....

Date.....

Date.....