

City Bridge Trust – Monitoring Visit Report

Organisation: Islington Chinese Association	Grant ref: 10474	Programme area: Older Londoners\ a) Work with over 75's
Amount, date and purpose of grant: 17/02/2011: £76,900 over three years (£25,500; £25,250; £26,150) for employment and running costs of a befriending and advocacy scheme for elderly people, subject to clarification of the financial position for 2011-12.		
Visiting Grants Officer: Tim Wilson	Date of meeting: 14 May 2013	
Met with: Dr Stephen Ng (Chinese Concern Project Coordinator) and Gill Tan (Manager), numerous service users.		
<p>1. Introduction to the organisation:</p> <p>Established in 1986, Islington Chinese Association (ICA) works with members of the Chinese diaspora as well as other communities at its Archway centre and through a programme of home visits. Whilst most centre users come from north London, there are also regular attendees from all parts of Greater London and the Home Counties.</p> <p>ICA promotes social cohesion, addresses isolation and deprivation, and seeks to make its services as inclusive as possible. The charity showcases Chinese culture to local residents by, for example, hosting nursery classes, running an open house at Chinese New Year, and holding public events such as a recent 'mass tai chi' in Highbury Fields.</p> <p>On the day of your officer's visit, a luncheon club for older people was running, as well as an ESOL class, mahjong, and a tai chi group. The centre had earlier hosted one of its regular breakfast clubs for homeless people. A wide range of nationalities were attending the centre, but the majority were ethnic Chinese from the wider diaspora.</p> <p>The charity is well-supported by high profile patrons including Cherie Booth QC and Alderman David Brewer (former Lord Mayor of the City of London).</p>		
<p>2. The project funded:</p> <p>City Bridge Trust is funding a befriending and advocacy scheme for older people, with £76,900 awarded by Committee at its meeting in February 2011. First payment was made in April 2011, and the grant is due to conclude in March 2014.</p> <p>The project has four objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To design and distribute 500 bilingual leaflets promoting ICA's services for older people • To retain the pool of existing volunteers whilst attracting new volunteers • For the Coordinator and one trained volunteer to attend 30 housebound clients each year and to accompany 50 clients each year to hospital or GP appointments • For the Coordinator and volunteers to run over 100 weekly advice sessions 		
<p>3. Work delivered to date:</p> <p>The charity produces a quarterly bilingual leaflet with its service timetable and details of other support available which is then distributed via GP surgeries, carer networks, and the local volunteer bureau. In addition, ICA promotes its services via the Chinese</p>		

language press.

ICA has a pool of 15 trained volunteers, many of whom are existing or former service users (and many of the staff are former volunteers). Some new volunteers have attended the centre since the award of the grant thanks to new relationships with the local Age UK.

In the first year of grant funding ICA worked with 45 housebound older Chinese people, a number which increased to 50 in year two. The scale of need remains substantial, as ICA reports that Islington's Meals on Wheels service delivered, at time when the service was terminated in October 2012, 3,109 meals to housebound older Chinese people. The charity has provided 125 medical interpretation support episodes to date.

In the second year of funding, ICA has delivered 2,890 welfare and benefits advice sessions (180 in year one).

4. Difference made:

Monitoring reports as well as discussion with centre staff provide a substantial number of case examples where ICA services have helped to reduce isolation, improve welfare outcomes, enable people to access statutory support, and improved health outcomes by providing accurate interpretation at time of GP or hospital visit. Staff acknowledge that service users are less likely to attend ICA during the winter months when poor weather might discourage them from leaving home, but the home visit programme can help address this. The centre has established 'gateway' activities such as karaoke, mahjong, tai chi, and other social activities that encourage members to start speaking about their support needs, and sometimes new users will suggest and provide new interventions (for example, many recent members are Malay Chinese former NHS mental-health nurses who are now providing group therapy).

5. Grants Administration:

ICA has submitted two monitoring reports to date - 30 April 2012 and 14 May 2013 (the latter not yet reviewed by the Grants Officer at time of monitoring visit). The first report was judged to be satisfactory with a clear account of services delivered and clients served. The report also, positively, included some brief case studies, but would have benefited from more information on difference made by the services delivered as well as some user testimonies.

ICA maintains casework files for all clients benefitting from home visits as well as centre-based support. Volunteers are CRB checked and work in pairs to provide each other with peer support (important in some of the emotionally difficult cases ICA addresses). In addition, the Coordinator provides a de-briefing service for home visit volunteers, and training is arranged on a regular basis from providers such as Voluntary Action Islington, the Evelyn Oldfield Unit, and Volunteer Centre Islington.

6. Concluding comments:

ICA is a well-run organisation with considerable local support. It relies heavily on its network of active volunteers to deliver a broad range of services for its clients. On the day of your officer's visit, the centre's events were very well attended, and clients spoke about the value ICA provided them. The project coordinator noted that there is a high incidence of isolation amongst older Chinese people, and that the centre regularly encounters people who say they have run out of reasons to live. ICA aims to provide a family atmosphere, and is clearly very well regarded by the clients met on this visit.