

MEETING 19/06/14

Ref: 12146

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY - Improving Londoners' Mental Health

Healthy Living Projects Ltd

Adv: Julia Mirkin

Amount requested: £85,000

Base: Redbridge

Benefit: Redbridge

Amount recommended: £85,000

Purpose of grant request: To help homeless people experiencing mental health issues resulting from sexual, physical, emotional abuse and domestic violence that has led to addiction and homelessness.

Background

Founded in 2001, Healthy Living Projects (HLP) is located in Clementswood ward in the London Borough of Redbridge, which is in the top 20% of deprived wards in the country. HLP aims to reduce poverty and isolation and to improve the health and education of some of the most marginalised sections of the local community. HLP's Welcome Project has approximately 45 street-homeless visitors per day who are referred by Redbridge outreach services; homelessness networks; and the Salvation Army which runs a shelter locally. All of HLP's beneficiaries are unemployed, 71% are Eastern European or Asian, often with low levels of spoken English, and 38% present with mental health issues. A range of support services are delivered, including advice and guidance, ESOL classes, life-skills and a back-to-work programme. HLP offers its beneficiaries healthy meals on a daily basis, health checks, advice and referrals by a nurse.

Funding History

You awarded HLP a grant of £1,900 in 2004 for alterations to an accessible toilet.

Current Application

HLP proposes to increase its nursing capacity at its Welcome Centre specifically to focus on the mental health issues of its beneficiaries. Homeless Link, to which you have offered support on a number of occasions, states in its *Homelessness Mental Health and Wellbeing Guide* that 'Poor mental health is both a cause and consequence of homelessness'. It is common for homeless people to have experienced physical, emotional or sexual abuse earlier in life, for which they have never received treatment. The same document reports that 72% of the homeless population present symptoms of poor mental health compared with 30% of the general population.

Nursing care at HLP is provided by a qualified, independent, nurse. She has received The Queen's Award from The Queen's Nursing Institute specifically for her work with homeless people. As the nurse works for HLP independently and not through the NHS, she is not authorised to offer medical care (she cannot take blood samples or administer medication for example). Although this restriction is frustrating, it ensures that HLP's provision does not infringe on what is offered by statutory health services.

HLP's nurse conducts health check-ups for all beneficiaries as part of an initial assessment; she treats minor injuries, offers health advice and refers people to relevant, local, health services. A range of alternative health treatments, such as

massage therapy, are on offer at the Welcome Centre that help beneficiaries to relax and be receptive to treatment. Beneficiaries who are identified as having mental ill health are monitored regularly by the nurse using a standard Patient Health Questionnaire, called a PHQ9 scale. It is common for street-homeless people to present with a dual-diagnosis, often involving drug or alcohol dependency, which can mask deep-rooted issues and make them difficult to treat. The nurse supports beneficiaries to overcome their fears of engaging with the health authorities, helping them to access the treatment they require. Time is required to prepare beneficiaries for their appointments and the nurse is often required to accompany beneficiaries to hospital. An increase in HLP's nursing provision would allow it to provide the consistent care and support that is required by beneficiaries with poor mental health without compromising the more general health services offered by the nurse.

Financial Observations

Audited accounts for the year ended 31st March 2013 shows total income of £487,032 and a surplus of £40,320 (8.3% of turnover), comprising £39,833 on unrestricted funds and £487 on restricted funds.

The reserves policy is to hold three months' worth of administration and support costs, equating to £86,549 based on current year expenditure. At 31st March 2013 free unrestricted reserves stood at £106,212 which equates to 3.7 months' worth of current year expenditure.

The projected outturn for the year ended 31st March 2014 is a deficit of £22,419 (8% of turnover), comprising £21,419 on unrestricted funds and £1,124 on restricted funds. Income fell by 44% to £273,820 compared to 2012/13 due to grants from Lloyds TSB and Trust for London coming to an end, the shortfall in funding will be met from reserves.

The budget for the current year to 31st March 2015 shows expenditure of £346,197 and a deficit of £62,011 (21.8% of turnover), comprising £36,963 on unrestricted funds and £25,048 on restricted funds. Total income is predicted to be £284,186, of which the organisation has secured £246,806 (86.8%) at 28th May 2014.

At 31st March 2015 free unrestricted funds are expected to be £47,830 which equates to 1.7 months' worth of current year expenditure. The organisation advised that it will submit further grant applications throughout the year for both unrestricted and restricted funding, as well as increasing its fundraising activity by conducting a direct mail campaign.

Officer's Appraisal

HLP offers a specialised service for homeless people with mental health issues which, based in the community, acts as a bridge to medical services. HLP's unique service draws on the experience of the current nurse, who has been recognised for her work with homeless people. Furthermore, HLP's Welcome Project was the recipient of The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service in 2013, in recognition of the excellent work delivered by its volunteers.

Recommendation

£85,000 over three years (£27,500; £28,300; £29,200) for the costs of increasing current nursing provision by two days per week plus a contribution to the HLP's running costs, including the provision of alternative therapies.