

City Bridge Trust – Monitoring Visit Report

Organisation: Age UK Richmond Upon Thames	Grant ref: 10689 (TW)	Programme area: Older Londoners\b) Healthy lifestyles of those over 65 years
Amount, date and purpose of grant: 30/06/2011: £106,000 over three years (£35,000; £35,000; and £36,000) towards the salary, activity and support costs of an Outreach Coordinator (2.5 days per week) and a Volunteer Coordinator (1 day per week).		
Visiting Grants Officer: Ciaran Rafferty	Date of meeting: Friday 14 th March 2014	
Met with: Sandra Morrison (CEO); Chair and various Trustees		
1. Introduction to the organisation: The charity works to enhance the quality of life for older people through a range of information and support services. It provides a free telephone helpline giving advice on money and benefits; it runs three centres where older people can take part in a range of social and exercise classes; and it has a handy person service offering assistance with practical jobs around home and garden. The charity currently works with over 900 members. This visit coincided with the screening of a special film about AUKRuT's work, shown at the Olympic Cinema in Barnes.		
2. The project funded: Whilst the charity works with over 900 members at its 3 venues (Barnes, Whitton and Richmond), the scale of need in the borough is much greater. It estimates that there are up to 29,000 prospective clients in the borough, many of whom cannot access the centres either due to physical frailty, or distance from the venue. Funding cuts mean that a significant number of older people in the borough are now ineligible for statutory support. In response, AUKRuT developed this outreach service called the "Welllderly Project" which aims to run activities to promote healthy and independent living.		
3. Work delivered to date: The range of services, activities and general support offered through the outreach service is impressive and truly responsive to declared and determined needs. The organisation has taken a thoughtful and creative approach to how best to engage with and support people with varying needs and across a large geographical area. The range of activities develop to encourage more social contact – and better mental and physical health – includes: dance; computer and smartphone training; tai chi; singing; day-trips; nordic walking' Most of activities are delivered by trained/qualified volunteers whilst the organisation has a distinct but subtle process of supporting people to take part but to eventually access the programmes independently (where feasible). In this way the scheme becomes more sustainable as people need less direct support once settled. The outreach programme makes the most of venues across the borough eg church halls, sheltered housing, whilst permission has been granted for the tai chi to take place on the Common – which is no mean feat.		
4. Difference made: Richmond as a borough has the highest proportion of residents aged 85+ in the country, and one of the highest of those aged 65+ so there is clear need for a range of targeted services, particularly for those living alone or in semi-seclusion within sheltered housing. In any one year the organisation estimates that the outreach service and activities will reach 1,000 people (there are on average 30 different structured activities per week). Outcomes are largely determined by		

feedback forms – with some telephone interviews as well - which captured, for example, that more people felt that they suffered less from depression; felt healthier; had more self-confidence; had more independence; learned new skills; had wider social networks and friendships. The project also helped to engage and deploy more older people as volunteers.

The organisation is convinced, also, that CBT funding of this project has helped it secure a major contract with the local authority (amounting to £400,000 per year for 3-4 years. It feels that the expansion of activities across the borough, and some of which are outside in public spaces, has greatly increased the organisation's profile within the borough and has also demonstrated to funders and commissioners that it can deliver well-run projects with significant outcomes.

5. Grants Administration:

The grant commenced in November 2011 (and is due to end in October 2014) with the appointment of the p/t Outreach Co-ordinator (Tina English until end Feb 2014; replaced by Caroline Gallacher from 3rd March 2014). Sue Hollins, the p/t Volunteer Co-ordinator, was already employed by the charity. Monitoring reports for the first two years have been timely and of a good standard; grant payments claimed and made on time and properly accounted for. All returns to the Charity Commission have been compliant. The grant has been treated as restricted income.

6. Concluding comments:

Boroughs such as Richmond are often perceived by those who don't know them well (including funders) to be low on disadvantage and, by and large, with few intrinsic social problems. AUKRuT has shown that there are clear needs and that loneliness and isolation are one of the biggest causes of poor health and depression, particularly amongst older people of which Richmond has 35,000 aged 75 +. This project targets those who, for whatever reason, are not engaging with others and helps them re-establish meaningful social networks and friendships. I was particularly impressed with the way in which they then gently nudge people to access groups and activities for themselves – giving them the opportunity and confidence to live fuller and more independent lives. As one service user said "*Coming to Age UK gives us a future, and not just a past*".