

Committee:	Date:
The City Bridge Trust Committee	25 September 2014
Subject: Strategic Initiative – Buttle UK evaluation	Public
Report of: Chief Grants Officer	For Decision
Summary	
<p>This report requests funding to enable Buttle UK to commission an external evaluation of the Anchor Project, an initiative being run in partnership with the Trust, to provide families who are survivors of domestic violence with the financial, practical and emotional support they need to re-build their lives.</p>	
Recommendation	
<p>Members are asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve a grant of £21,000 to Buttle UK for the external evaluation of the Anchor Project. 	

Main Report

Background

1. In November 2013, you approved the first of two new partnership programmes that followed your latest Quinquennial Review, as approved by the Court of Common Council in July 2013.
2. You awarded Buttle UK a grant of £470,000 to establish a hardship fund for families escaping domestic violence, as part of an holistic package of support that would also, through a network of referral agencies, provide practical and emotional support to complement the financial assistance provided. It was agreed that grants of up to £2,000 per family would be awarded, larger than Buttle UK's usual size of grant to individuals in need. However, it was hoped that a larger investment combined with support from the referral agency concerned, would strengthen the family's chance of successful resettlement.
3. The hardship fund (called The Anchor Project) was launched at a successful event at Mansion House in May 2014, attended in the main by domestic violence agencies, as potential referral bodies for the project. The launch received coverage in the Evening Standard and London Live.
4. The original proposal was for a three-year project. However, as this was a completely new way of working for the Trust, and, as it was unknown how the actual demand for the project would compare with that forecast in Buttle UK's proposal, you agreed to commit for 18 months initially, with a decision

regarding the future level of funding being informed by an assessment of the first 18 months' progress.

5. It is anticipated that proposals for a second 18-month tranche of funding will be brought to your November Committee meeting.

Progress to date

6. Since launching in May 2014, 58 applications have been received. To date, 29 grants totalling £47,000 have been awarded, with a further 22 applications awaiting additional information. 7 applications have been turned down because they fell outside the eligibility criteria, for example because the family resided outside London or because the applicant was a single adult with no dependents.
7. Referrals have been made from a range of agencies, from both the voluntary and the statutory sectors. Grants have been awarded in 21 of London's 33 boroughs and it is a priority of Buttle UK to ensure that the Anchor Project attracts applications from all London boroughs.
8. A key characteristic of the Anchor Project is its child-centred approach which means that referral agencies must be able to demonstrate the difference a grant will make to the needs of the child or children in the families concerned. This is proving a challenge to those who are used to putting the needs of the mother first, with the assumption that the children's needs will be met as a matter of course. Buttle UK is working hard with the agencies concerned to ensure their applications will meet the best possible outcomes for the child/ren concerned.
9. Grants have been awarded for a wide range of needs, which fall into four broad categories:
 - **household items**, such as cookers, beds and clothing;
 - **educational needs**, such as school uniform, homework clubs and educational toys;
 - **social needs**, including swimming lessons, drama clubs, and football;
 - **emotional needs**, such as counselling and play therapy.

Evaluation

10. The original proposal from Buttle UK included the appointment of an external evaluator over three years at an estimated cost of £40,000 (Yr 1 £10,000; Yr 2 £10,000; Yr 3 £20,000). As your funding was to be over an 18 month period, you agreed a budget of £15,000 for evaluation, that is, £10,000 to cover Year 1 plus £5,000 to cover the first half of Year 2.
11. It was always the intention that the external evaluation should take place alongside the development of the grants programme in order to help shape its design, improve its processes and begin to build an evidence base for improving outcomes for children affected by domestic violence.

12. To this end, Buttle UK has selected an external evaluator which has provided an evaluation plan to cover the whole three years of this initiative. It would be helpful to Buttle UK if funding to cover the whole of the evaluation was secured prior to Buttle UK confirming the appointment of the evaluator. If you agree to this request, evaluation costs would then be excluded from the request for a second 18 months of funding. Payments to the evaluator will only be made on the achievement of key, pre-determined milestones.
13. The cost of the evaluation will be £36,000, including VAT and slightly below the original estimate of £40,000. You have already approved the sum of £15,000 towards this cost and it is therefore requested that you approved a further £21,000 to cover the total cost. If you approve this request today, evaluation costs would not be included in the proposals for the second 18-month tranche of funding.
14. The proposed evaluator plans to use the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) score for children in the family as the key outcome measure. This will be completed at the point of grant award (prior to any effect) and again after a period long enough for any effect of the grant on child behaviour to have filtered through, but not so long for any effect to have been diluted by other factors. The cohort of beneficiaries of the Anchor Project (probably a sample size of approximately 250 families) will be compared with 2,000 of Buttle UK's other families to gauge the extent to which this more in-depth approach brings wider benefits to the children and families concerned.

Financial Considerations

15. A full financial review of Buttle UK was undertaken when the proposals for the first 18 months' of funding were brought to your November 2013 meeting. The Chamberlain has been consulted and has agreed that a further full review should be undertaken before proposals for the second 18-month tranche of funding are brought to your next Committee in November 2014.

Conclusion

16. The Anchor Project has got off to a good start with a wide range of applications from a number of referral agencies.
17. External evaluation of the project is vital in order to provide an evidence base of how the unmet needs of children affected by domestic violence can best be met and it is therefore recommended that you approve an additional £21,000 for this purpose.
18. It is anticipated that proposals for funding the second 18-month tranche of the Anchor Project will be brought to your November 2014 meeting.

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