

MEETING: 27/11/2014

Ref: 12429

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY - Improving Londoners' Mental Health

CALM, the campaign against living miserably

Adv: Jenny Field

Base: Southwark

Amount requested: £100,000

Benefit: London-wide

Amount recommended: £100,000

The Charity

CALM, the campaign against living miserably is an award-winning charity aimed at preventing male suicide in the UK. It was originally set up as a Department of Health pilot in Manchester in December 1997 in response to the rising suicide rate amongst young men. It registered as an independent charity in 2006 and today provides a free confidential and anonymous helpline and texting service open every day of the year from 5pm to midnight. It is about to launch a new Webchat service aimed at young men and its website www.thecalmzone.net averages 20,000 unique visitors each month. It works with commissioners, policy makers and the police to provide targeted campaigns 'on the ground' to reach men who would not otherwise seek help. A key characteristic of CALM is that it tries to reach men, in particular young men, on their own terms rather than promoting itself as a mental health charity or in clinical terms.

The Application

This is an application for continuation funding to continue to develop its campaigns in London. Previous monitoring reports and a recent monitoring visit have shown that demand for its services have grown rapidly over the past few years. Around one-third of callers to the helpline are from London and you are requested to support 25% of the cost of running the helpline in order to represent the proportional benefit to London.

The Recommendation

Over the last two years, calls to CALM's helpline have increased by 51% and it now receives 4,000 calls a month. Funding would enable it to continue and develop its work in London over the next two years. Although it is a national charity, it is based in London and currently its 100 or so volunteers are Londoners. Whilst three years is the maximum that you can usually fund a project or activity, your policies allow you to consider work which is of strategic importance to London. Given the important nature of CALM's work, officers are of the view that this application fulfils that criterion.

£100,000 over two years (2 x £50,000) towards CALM's work to prevent suicide and reduce self harm amongst men in London.

Funding History

Meeting Date	Decision
20/10/2011	£150,000 over three years (3 x £50,000) towards a London campaign to improve the mental health of young men.

Background and detail of proposal

Suicide is the biggest killer of men under 50. 77% of 5,981 suicides in England and Wales in 2012 were men. Although the national analysis for suicide shows London has the lowest rate of suicide (13.4% per 100,000 population) compared with the England average of 16.4%, this masks the wide discrepancies between boroughs – some areas of London have rates of over 20%. A recently published report from the Office for National Statistics showed that male suicide was at its highest in 2013 since 1998.

As stated earlier, CALM concentrates on targeted campaigns that find men 'where they are at' – in January, it will launch its 'Manuary' campaign, for example. Its award-winning CALMzine magazine is distributed by its volunteers at outlets such as Topman, sports venues, festivals and events. It promotes the helpline on such products as guitar plectra, beer mats and one campaign even used pizza boxes. A recent survey of its helpline users showed that 90% of helpline users said they felt better and/or supported after to speaking to CALM whilst 50% said life had changed for the better as a result of the support, information or signposting offered by CALM.

Financial Information

Of the £582,000 forecast income for 2014/15, £534,000 (92%) had been secured as at 5th November 2014. The cost of generating funds includes expenditure on fundraising, marketing and advertising.

The reserves policy of the charity is to hold free reserves amounting to at least 12 months' worth of expenditure to maintain current service levels. After a discussion with the assessing officer regarding this target, which is on the high side of what most charities determine they require, the charity has advised that it will undertake a review of its reserves policy. The charity's actual holding of free reserves is forecast to be to be £99,155 by 31st March 2015, equivalent to a modest 1.9 months' worth of expenditure. However, the charity is confident that it will be able to slowly build reserves as it has experienced positive feedback from its recent fundraising efforts.

Year end at 31 March	2013/14 Audited Accounts	2014/15 Current Year Budget
	£	£
Income and Expenditure		
Income	634,227	582,000
Expenditure	635,209	619,000
Unrestricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	53,004	16,000
Restricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	(53,986)	(53,000)
Total Surplus / (Deficit)	(982)	(37,000)
Surplus / (Deficit) as a % of turnover	(0.15%)	(6.4%)
Cost of Generating funds (% of income)	21,448 (3.4%)	30,000 (5.2%)
Free unrestricted reserves		
Unrestricted free reserves held at Year End	83,155	99,155
How many months' worth of expenditure	1.6	1.9
Reserves Policy target	635,209	619,000
How many months' worth of expenditure	12.0	12.0
Free reserves over/(under) target	(552,054)	(519,845)