

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY - Improving Londoners' Mental Health**Maya Centre****Adv: Sandra Davidson****Base: Islington****Benefit: Islington****Amount requested: £110,866****{Revised request £52,692}****Amount recommended: £52,700****The Charity**

The Maya Centre offers a specialist counselling service run by women for women providing free, long-term, psychodynamic counselling for some of the most vulnerable and marginalized women in the community: women who have experienced severe trauma through domestic violence, sexual assault, abuse or neglect in childhood, or war and conflict overseas. All clients are on low income and can access up to 48 weeks of sessions with a qualified counsellor. It is open 4 days per week. Counselling is provided in clients' mother tongue and all therapeutic staff are trained to deliver culturally appropriate counselling.

The Application

The Centre wants to 'bridge this gap' and enhance what is offered to better support vulnerable women in severe distress. The original application to the Trust has been revised, with a lesser sum now requested, following a successful application to the Henry Smith Charity to recruit a part-time (4dpw) Community Support Worker.

The Recommendation

As a result of increasingly severe and complex needs, a growing number of the clients are unable to fully engage with the counselling or to complete the course. In 2013, 53% of clients attended every session but 21% of the others attended all but the final session. Endings are always the most difficult time, when women feel at their most vulnerable and some simply cannot face the end, however well planned. The appointment of a CSW will establish regular drop-in sessions for women using the counselling services to provide informal peer support (with a view to ultimately be user-led) and provide women with non-therapeutic support to resolve issues arising in their private lives which may become barriers such as help with housing, benefits, access to children etc.

£52,700 over two years (2 x £26,350) towards the running costs of 'Bridging the Gap' project including counselling costs, non-therapeutic sessions, weekly drop-in sessions and related overheads.

Funding History

Meeting Date	Decision
03/05/2007	£37,500 (£7,500; £15,000; £15,000) towards the salary and other costs of a counselling service for older women who have experienced violence or other trauma.

Background and detail of proposal

The Maya Centre has been operating for over 30 years and is accredited by the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP). It is based in Islington and works with a clearly defined female group (aged 18+; on an income of less than £10,000 pa or £15,000 pa with dependents; based in Islington or, less frequently, the boroughs of Hackney, Haringey, Camden, Enfield and Barnet; and

unable to access other mental health services). These boroughs have high BAME populations while Haringey has the third highest refugee population of all London boroughs. Not only is there a higher likelihood of refugees and asylum seekers having experienced trauma but there is also significant stigma attached to mental illness in these communities. In 2013, Maya worked with 150 women providing 1,636 sessions of which 73% (604 sessions) were cancelled or missed.

This proposal aims to develop 'Bridging the Gap' project to ensure the most vulnerable women in areas of high deprivation can benefit from therapeutic support. It costs Maya £45 per 50 minute session (based on a fairly standard sector rate which includes some on-costs, but not full cost recovery) which compares favourably with NHS provided 'talking therapies' which costs between £66-£115 per session. Outcomes are measured using the recognised CORE (Clinical Outcomes in Routine Evaluation) system commonly used for psychological interventions. 57% of women gained (or regained) better mental health, putting them into the normal/healthy range, while the remaining 43% showed significant improvement.

These additional activities will result in more women with chaotic lifestyles completing their counselling; women will gain support from peers, reducing isolation, so encouraging service users to continue to engage with their therapy. It is anticipated that the CSW will work with about 60 women p.a.

Financial Information

Forecast income for 2014/15 is £361,204, of which £292,304 (81%) had been confirmed by September 2014 with the remainder subject to pending grant applications including this request to City Bridge Trust. Forecast income at this level represents an increase of £89,078 (33%) over the prior year and expenditure is forecast to increase at a similar rate. The charity explains that these increases are due to the need to expand of its existing activities, which will enable a greater number of women to access its services.

The charity acknowledges that its holding of free reserves is currently below its target level, however it has advised that it has received positive feedback from its funding applications and increased fundraising efforts, and anticipates reserves to increase in subsequent years.

Year end at 31 March	2013/14 Independently Examined Accounts £	2014/15 Current Year Budget £
Income and Expenditure		
Income	272,126	294,542
Expenditure	278,663	290,890
Unrestricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	36,149	(3,652)
Restricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	(42,686)	0
Total Surplus / (Deficit)	(6,537)	()
Surplus / (Deficit) as a % of turnover	(2.4%)	(2.8%)
Cost of Generating funds (% of income)	£6,250	10,720
Free unrestricted reserves		
Unrestricted free reserves held at Year End	66,070	55,856
How many months' worth of expenditure	2.8	1.8
Reserves Policy target	75,000	75,000
How many months' worth of expenditure	3.2	2.4
Free reserves over/(under) target	(8,930)	(19,144)