

MEETING: 27/11/2014

Ref: 12423

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY - Improving Londoners' Mental Health

Sound Minds

Adv: Ciaran Rafferty

Amount requested: £90,001

Base: Wandsworth

Benefit: Wandsworth

Amount recommended: £72,000

The Charity

Sound Minds was established in 2000 and uses the arts to improve the lives of people living with, or recovering from, long term mental health conditions. Based within a vibrant and inclusive arts community in Battersea, it offers music rehearsal, recording, film-making, visual art facilities, and a theatre group. The charity delivers group and individual sessions, which include courses accredited by the Open College Network. One of its other projects, *Canerows*, is the subject of this application.

The Application

Canerows, a project of Sound Minds and with its own advisory group, is a peer-to-peer Hospital Ward-Visiting and Post-Discharge support scheme. Working with the local NHS Trust, the project targets (but is not exclusive to) people from the Caribbean, African and other Black communities as they are disproportionately represented on mental health wards. (In Wandsworth, people from these communities account for 25% of admissions but represent about 7% of the local population.) The project is unsophisticated, but no less effective. It provides support to people at a very low point through offering basic human kindness, friendship, encouragement, and practical support from those who have been in their situation.

The Recommendation

Peer supporters are paid on a sessional basis and have time invested in them in training and management. The majority of them will have spent time as patients on the same wards and, in addition to knowing the value of having pre- and post-discharge support, are very keen to "give something back". The project, previously supported by Comic Relief, has developed strong links with the local NHS staff, who have verified that this project brings tangible benefits to the mental health of the inpatients. As the organisation holds free reserves substantially in excess of its policy, it is reasonable to expect that it should make a contribution to this project. Also, the sums requested for the peer supporter wages are based on a level of activity which is optimistic, especially in years 2 and 3. For these reasons a lesser sum is recommended than has been requested:

£72,000 over three years (£22,000; £24,000; £26,000) for the salary of a p/t (3dpw) Project Worker, plus a contribution to project and management costs of the Canerows project.

Funding History

None.

Background and detail of proposal

Canerows is a user-led project working to improve the experiences of people in the local mental health system and who are from, principally but not exclusively, Black,

Asian and other minority ethnic backgrounds. A pilot of the scheme in 2008 was independently evaluated and confirmed good outcomes. This led to three year funding from Comic Relief, which ended in late 2013, but the project has continued, albeit in a reduced capacity, funded from the charity's reserves. The project incorporates four key elements: a ward visiting service; a post-discharge community support service; regular training and consultation events; and a programme of arts-based activities to foster involvement and achievement. More often than not people who have benefitted from their own visitors whilst in-patients, later become peer supporters. These peer workers are fully trained and cleared as ward visitors and, as they are paid on a sessional basis, it is a valuable – and often the only – route back into meaningful employment.

Financial Information

Due to the organisation holding free reserves in excess of its reserves policy target, a grant is recommended which is £18k below the sum requested. Funding of this reduction from free reserves should see those reserves reduce to approximately £75k by the end of the current year, which is considered a reasonable level compared to the charity's reserves target to hold between £33k and £65k.

Of the income forecast for 2014/15, 97.5% was confirmed as of 1st November 2014.

The organisation has not identified previously the cost of generating funds in its accounts. However, it has provided an estimate for the current year based on the purchase of goods which are to be resold in the community café, and 10% of one employee's salary costs. The organisation will review the disclosure of these figures, as part of its year end process.

Year end at 31 March	2012/13 Audited Accounts £	2013/14 Draft Accounts £	2014/15 Current Year Forecast £
Income and Expenditure			
Income	149,619	150,496	129,651
Expenditure	141,560	130,115	130,671
Unrestricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	20,339	14,833	(688)
Restricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	(12,280)	5,548	332
Total Surplus / (Deficit)	8,059	20,381	1,020
Surplus / (Deficit) as a % of turnover	5.4%	13.5%	0.8%
Cost of Generating funds (% of income)	-	-	4,600 (3.5%)
Free unrestricted reserves			
Unrestricted free reserves held at Year End	94,561	94,394	93,706
How many months' worth of expenditure	8.0	8.7	8.6
Reserves Policy target	35,390 – 70,780	32,529 – 65,058	32,667 – 65,335
How many months' worth of expenditure	3.0 – 6.0	3.0 – 6.0	3.0 – 6.0
Free reserves over/(under) target	59,170 – 23,781	61,865 – 29,336	61,039 – 28,371