

MEETING: 28/01/2015

Ref: 12411

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY - Improving Londoners' Mental Health

Vietnamese Mental Health Services

Adv: Sandra Davidson

Amount requested: £90,554

Base: Southwark

Amount recommended: £90,500

Benefit: Several NE London

The Charity

Vietnamese Mental Health Services (VMHS) has been providing a range of services to people with mental health needs from that community (and others) since 1989 and has established a very good reputation over the years. It was established to help with the then influx of refugees and "boat people" as they were often called. Many of those who settled in the UK in the late 1980s/1990's, some now in old age, still have mental health problems whilst others, including children have developed mental ill-health as a result of growing up within conflicting customs and values.

The Application

VMHS seeks a three-year grant to develop a Vietnamese counselling service to provide a linguistic and culturally appropriate counselling service to the Vietnamese community in London. The grant requested would cover the costs of a part-time Bilingual Counsellor, admin support and associated running costs to overcome the barriers Vietnamese clients face in accessing talking therapies.

The Recommendation

VMHS has an impressive track record of providing essential links between statutory health services and the Vietnamese community, particularly as there are extremely few speaking Vietnamese-speaking doctors and health professionals within NHS. VMHS plays a crucial role in ensuring their clients are able to access appropriate treatments and therapies. It offers a wide range of practical services including accompanying clients to Outpatients Clinics; undertaking joint visits with Community Psychiatric Nurses and Social Workers; providing telephone advice and support; drop-in day centres providing specialist advice on health matters. It is funded by statutory agencies through grants and contracts to deliver its work in a number of south London boroughs, whilst other funding supports work in other parts of London and beyond.

£90,500 over three years (£29,270; £30,360; £30,920) for the salary of a p/t (2dpw) Bilingual Counsellor, plus admin support and associated running costs.

Funding History

Meeting Date	Decision
10/09/2009	£75,000 over three years (3 x £25,000) for the salary of a part-time (20hrs) Information Officer and the running costs of mental health information services in Vietnamese and Chinese languages.
06/04/2006	£27,000 for a third and final year's contribution to the salary of the Finance/Administration Officer and associated running costs.
22/04/2004	£60,000 over two years (£30,000; £30,000) for the salary of a Finance & Administration Officer and a contribution to the core costs of the organisation.

Background and detail of proposal

The request is in response to research published in 2009 on barriers to Talking Therapies among Vietnamese Communities in London. The research was undertaken as few clients of Vietnamese origin were being referred to mainstream talking therapy services compared to other ethnic groups. Barriers identified include: language, specific cultural needs, and lack of awareness of talking therapies. Consequently, in 2009, VMHS held a 'Mental Health and Well-being' conference and community consultation focused on the needs of the Vietnamese community. The event was well attended with over 100 stakeholders in London. Recommendations for overcoming barriers to talking therapies included: culturally adapted therapies; bilingual therapists; easily accessible service with self-referral.

VMHS is currently providing informal counselling through advice/information, and providing interpreting for counselling and psychology sessions for clients within the mainstream service. Feedback has shown that clients do not feel at ease talking about their emotions with another person in the room. The recruitment of a part-time bilingual therapist will provide short-term counselling (individual or group) with emotional problems and raise the awareness of "Talking Therapies", with the aim of improving emotional well-being and social inclusion. The post holder will provide counselling and outreach work 2dpw with the support of an admin worker.

Financial Information

Forecast income for the current year is £255,216 of which £230,742 (90.4%) had been confirmed by November 2014.

At 31st March 2014 free unrestricted funds stood at £41,557 which equates to 1.9 months' worth of 2013/14 expenditure. The charity acknowledges that this is low and intends to build up reserves to within their target range and is working on new fundraising plans which are intended to increase free reserves from 2015/16 onwards.

Year end at 31 March	2013/14 Independently Examined Accounts	2014/15 Current Year Budget
	£	£
Income and Expenditure		
Income	240,790	255,216
Expenditure	260,419	257,325
Unrestricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	(19,091)	(3,629)
Restricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	(538)	1,520
Total Surplus / (Deficit)	(19,629)	(2,109)
Surplus / (Deficit) as a % of turnover	(8.2%)	(0.8%)
Cost of Generating funds (% of income)	18,000 (7.5%)	11,000 (4.3%)
Free unrestricted reserves		
Unrestricted free reserves held at Year End	41,557	37,928
How many months' worth of expenditure	1.9	1.8
Reserves Policy target	65,105 - 130,210	64,332 - 128,664
How many months' worth of expenditure	3.0 - 6.0	3.0 - 6.0
Free reserves over/(under) target	(23,548) - (88,653)	(26,404) - (90,736)