

MEETING: 12/03/2015

Ref: 12524

**ASSESSMENT CATEGORY - Improving Londoners' Mental Health**

**Shepherds Bush Families Project & Children's Centre**

**Adv: Joy Beishon**

**Amount requested: £67,484**  
**{Revised request: £130,563}**  
**Amount recommended: £96,000**

**Base: Hammersmith & Fulham**  
**Benefit: Hammersmith & Fulham**

**The Charity**

There are 1,942 children living in temporary accommodation in Hammersmith & Fulham. The Shepherds Bush Families Project and Children's Centre (SBFP&CC) is the only voluntary sector organisation in the borough specifically targeting its support services at homeless families in temporary accommodation; and families living in overcrowded homes or homes in a state of disrepair.

**The Application**

This application is to fund a family counselling project. 90% of parents using SBFP&CC are refugees and asylum seekers, many from war-torn nations and countries with poor human rights records. Exposure to violence, torture, abuse and displacement has created acute emotional and psychological needs. Getting parents into counselling locally and quickly is vital to prevent crises developing into disasters. Early intervention before escalation reduces pressure on public health and social services, who are obliged to intervene when situations spiral out of control.

**The Recommendation**

SBFP&CC has a history of supporting some of the most vulnerable families living under severe housing stress in Hammersmith and Fulham. Most of the families supported are from marginalised communities and have English as a second language. The family counselling project is aimed at intervening at the earliest opportunity to prevent further decline within a family.

The applicant mistakenly assumed that a strategy of applying for two years' funding would be more advantageous on the basis that the Trust would favour smaller awards – regardless of the actual cost of the project or the need of the client group. The amount requested has subsequently been revised upwards from two to three years' funding (which is permissible), although it now incorporates a significant element of core costs unrelated to the family counselling project and which would not be directly compatible with your priorities. These, unrelated, core costs have been excluded from the sum recommended, hence it being significantly less than the revised request:

***£96,000 over three years (3 x £32,000) for the costs of delivering 720 hours of family counselling per year and related running expenses. Each year the grant is to be apportioned as: Family counsellor – 60% of sessional payment costs of £18,200; Project management of £2,300 and 10% contribution to overheads of £11,500.***

**Funding History**

Meeting Date	Decision
01/11/2007	£90,000 over three years (3 x £30,000) towards the salary costs for Children & Young People's Service Co-ordinator.

## Background and detail of proposal

Homelessness isn't only about sleeping rough on the streets. Housing insecurity and homelessness cover a wide range of situations. Many homeless people have a roof over their heads without having a proper home, because where they live is temporary, insecure, overcrowded, unsanitary or unsafe. The SBFP&CC offers a range of services and facilities. Child support includes a parent and child drop-in for homeless parents. The drop-in brings together families experiencing similar problems, promoting mutual support, helping to break down the stigma and isolation that accompanies the experience of homelessness and poor housing. Children's services include a pre-school playgroup (particularly vital for children living in unsuitable accommodation lacking the space to play freely) and a holiday play scheme. An after-school club offers educational support for those with limited opportunity to study at home. Facilities for parents include access to a fully stocked kitchen, laundry equipment, computer room, and families' area.

SBFP&CC is well-regarded by, and has recently received income from, a range of funders including Livery companies (Drapers' and Goldsmiths'), family trusts (John Lyons), local trusts (Daisy Trust), corporate foundations (Lloyds), public donations through media campaigns (Help a Capital Child, BBC Children in Need), and the public sector (LB Hammersmith & Fulham).

## Financial Information

All forecast income of £237,568 for the current year has been confirmed. The charity has advised that the reduction in expenditure of 13% is the result of restricting delivery to fully funded family activities, children's groups and outings to reduce the deficit seen early in their 2014/15 budget. The organisation aims to hold 3 months' worth of expenditure in unrestricted funds. As at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014 free unrestricted funds stood at £19,772 which equates to 1 month of expenditure. The charity has a plan in place to build on links with local companies and individuals, which it hopes will increase free unrestricted reserves to the target level within 5 years.

Year end at 31 March	2013/14 Independently Examined Accounts £	2014/15 Current Year Budget £
<b>Income and Expenditure</b>		
Income	241,233	237,568
Expenditure	241,484	209,399
Unrestricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	14,696	5,962
Restricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	(14,947)	22,208
<b>Total Surplus / (Deficit)</b>	<b>(251)</b>	<b>28,170</b>
Surplus / (Deficit) as a % of turnover	(0.1%)	11.9%
Cost of Generating funds (% of income)	11,000 (4.6%)	-
<b>Free unrestricted reserves</b>		
Unrestricted free reserves held at Year End	19,772	25,734
How many months' worth of expenditure	1.0	1.5
Reserves Policy target	60,371	52,350
How many months' worth of expenditure	3.0	3.0
<b>Free reserves over/(under) target</b>	<b>(40,599)</b>	<b>(26,616)</b>