

MEETING: 12/03/2015

Ref: 12582

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY - Older Londoners

Sydenham Garden

Adv: Julia Mirkin

Amount requested: £39,084

Base: Lewisham

Benefit: Lewisham

Amount recommended: £39,100

The Charity

Sydenham Garden (SG) is a well-being charity that helps people recover from physical or mental ill-health through engagement with gardening and arts activities. It was established 13 years ago and negotiated a 40-year lease for its site in 2007. SG's building opened in 2011, following a £0.5m capital project, towards which CBT contributed. The building is situated within an acre of garden and nature reserve; beneficiaries, who are referred to as 'Co-Workers', participate in therapeutic gardening sessions, either in the gardens, the Victorian-style conservatory, or inside in the building's activity room. Beneficiaries are referred to Sydenham Garden by local GPs, Lewisham and Bromley Mind and other local mental health charities.

The Application

SG proposes to build on its current six-month programmes for people with early onset dementia by offering ongoing "Sow and Grow" sessions, which develop in terms of the cognitive and physical challenges the beneficiaries present. Singing and dance sessions, which offer new forms of stimulation, will also be introduced.

The Recommendation

The evaluation of SG's dementia programme demonstrates its success in bringing about positive outcomes for beneficiaries in relation to their health and well-being. Requests by beneficiaries for the programme's continuation demonstrate its popularity. The proposed activity not only continues existing activity but builds upon it, ensuring that beneficiaries' improvements are not only sustained but also progressed. This proposal is a strong fit to your criteria for the Older Londoners programme and capitalises on work funded by the Lewisham's Clinical Commissioning Group.

£39,100 over three years (£12,770; £13,030; £13,300) towards the costs of a p/t (1dpw) Project Worker's salary, project costs and overheads.

Funding History

Meeting Date	Decision
14/07/2005	£108,000 towards developing a horticultural project for people with mental health problems; i.e. £100,000 towards a new building and £8,000 to develop a business plan and revenue strategy.
29/01/2004	£5,000 towards equipment and tools to enable the group to administer and run activities in Sydenham Green.

Background and detail of proposal

SG proposes to introduce two new sessions as part of its dementia programme, in response to feedback from Co-Workers. The new 2.5hr session would allow ten Co-Workers to continue attending Sow and Grow on a weekly basis. Different flowers and vegetables will be planted, watered, and nurtured throughout the year; Co-Workers will engage in more challenging physical activities in the garden, developing their strength, coordination and flexibility. During periods of bad weather, Co-

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Workers engage with arts and craft sessions and compile scrap books, helping them to remember what they have been doing and the new people they have met. SG has successfully piloted singing and dance sessions with the dementia group, which has led to their inclusion in this proposal. Singing and dance complements the Sow and Grow sessions by encouraging different modes of expression and group working. Sessions are carefully planned to draw on preserved memories of songs and dances that were popular in years past. Regular exercise and cognitive stimulation delays the symptoms of dementia and has been shown to reduce the behavioural and psychological symptoms associated with the disease (*A Raglio, et al (2008), Alzheimer Disease & Associated Disorders. Vol 22, p.158 – 162*). This element of the programme will be programmed with support from Age Exchange, a CBT grantee, with which Members will be familiar.

During the twelve months up to April 2014, 26 Co-Workers completed the dementia programme and a further 39 completed the programme by the end of December 2014. During 13/14, SG commissioned an evaluation of the programme, which showed that 92% of Co-Workers reported a positive change to their quality of life; 85% of Co-Workers reported improved physical ability and feelings of social inclusion and 77% reported improvements to their mental well-being.

Financial Information

Sydenham Garden has secured all forecast income of £198,249 in the current year. Budgeted income for 2015/16 is £260,092, of which £167,880 (64.5%) had been confirmed by February 2015. Included in the budget are three pending applications to London Borough of Lewisham.

The figures in the table for the cost of generating funds are low but the charity advises that these do not include the time contributed by the charity's Trustees, who fundraise in a voluntary capacity.

Year end at 31 March	2013/14 Independently Examined Accounts £	2014/15 Current Year Budget £	2015/2016 Following year budget £
Income and Expenditure			
Income	167,406	198,249	260,092
Expenditure	148,088	154,498	235,184
Unrestricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	7,985	25,605	6,916
Restricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	11,333	20,152	17,992
Total Surplus / (Deficit)	19,318	43,751	24,908
Surplus / (Deficit) as a % of turnover	11.5%	22.1%	9.6%
Cost of Generating funds (% of income)	1,349 (0.8%)	7,718 (3.9%)	-
Free unrestricted reserves			
Free unrestricted reserves held at Year End	17,717	43,322	50,238
How many months' worth of expenditure	1.5	3.4	2.6
Reserves Policy target	37,022	38,625	58,796
How many months' worth of expenditure	3.0	3.0	3.0
Free reserves over/(under) target	19,305	4,697	(8,558)