

MEETING: 26/11/2015

Ref: 12909

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

**Waterloo Community Counselling**

**Adv: Tim Wilson**

**Amount requested: £102,000**

**Base: Lambeth**

**Benefit: Lambeth**

**Amount recommended: £102,000**

**The Charity**

Established 20 years ago, Waterloo Community Counselling (WCC) evolved from a community-based GP service focused on health and well-being services at a time when there was very little mental health provision in the area. Today WCC offers a 'general service' providing subsidised counselling to people on low incomes, and a 'multi-ethnic service' offering counselling to refugees and asylum seekers. 70% of referrals to WCC come from GPs and statutory mental health services, with the remainder from voluntary sector organisations providing alcohol and drug dependency support. Self-referrals also occur. A standard support package typically involves 18 weeks of one-to-one or group therapy. The majority of service delivery takes place at WCC's Lambeth base, but the charity recently extended operations to Brent where it maintains services established by an organisation that had insufficient funds to continue.

**The Application**

WCC seeks funding to provide mother-tongue counselling to refugees and asylum seekers experiencing trauma, grief and loss. The funding would cover part of the costs of WCC's Project Manager (who is herself a qualified counsellor) as well as the time of several freelance therapists. Funding will enable WCC to support over 300 new clients via one-to-one counselling, and 30 new clients through group-work. In addition, a small contribution towards core costs will help with WCC's ancillary services such as crèche facilities and a craft club. The charity expects 70% of the clients it works with to experience significant improvements, whether their presenting needs relate to trauma, anxiety or depression.

**The Recommendation**

The charity impresses for the professionalism of its approach to mental health support. The client group it works with are particularly vulnerable since many are traumatised by experiences in their countries of origin, but isolated due to limited English-language skills and the absence of local support networks. Whilst the local Clinical Commissioning Group provides funding to support WCC's work with clients who are eligible for statutory services, City Bridge Trust is asked to assist with those refugees and asylum seekers who have no recourse to public funds. Funding is advised as follows:

***£102,000 over three years (£33,000; £34,000; £35,000) for the costs of Waterloo Community Counselling's Project Manager and freelance fees for counsellors working with refugees and asylum seekers experiencing trauma, grief or loss.***

**Funding History**

Meeting Date	Decision
19/02/2009	£102,000 towards the charity's Multi-Ethnic Counselling Service, supporting traumatised refugees and asylum seekers.

### Background and detail of proposal

Most of the clients WCC works with experience anxiety and depression. Many self-medicate through drugs and alcohol, and the charity notes that it is often the 'last port of call' when mental health has deteriorated significantly. WCC starts work by identifying what would be most useful for the new client and uses recognised metrics to assess levels of anxiety and depression. Clients are often isolated and the service offers space to talk which helps people stabilise, moving from what is frequently an acute suicidal mind-set to a more optimistic outlook.

In addition to the therapeutic services offered WCC has established partnerships with local advice centres and foodbanks so that clients can benefit from support if they are hungry or homeless.

WCC's services take place in an environment where there has been a reduction in the availability of mental health support in the target area. The Refugee Council has closed its South London services and Maudsley Hospital its trauma clinic in recent months.

### Financial Information

At 22<sup>nd</sup> October the charity had confirmed £399,668 (92%) of its forecast income for the current year 2015-16.

Year end at 31 March	2015 Independently Examined £	2016 Current Year Budget £
<b>Income and Expenditure</b>		
Income	445,726	432,481
Expenditure	417,778	430,254
Unrestricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	27,948	7,727
Restricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	0	(5,500)
Total Surplus / (Deficit)	27,948	2,227
Surplus / (Deficit) as a % of turnover	6.3%	0.5%
Cost of Generating funds (% of income)	26,433 (5.9%)	29,076 (6.7%)
<b>Free unrestricted reserves</b>		
Unrestricted free reserves held at Year End	115,760	123,487
How many months' worth of expenditure	3.3	3.4
Reserves Policy target	208,889	215,127
How many months' worth of expenditure	6	6
Free reserves over/(under) target	(93,129)	(91,640)