

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY - Improving Londoners' Mental Health

Africa Advocacy Foundation (AAF)

Adv: Tania Bronstein

Base: Lewisham

Amount requested: £119,948

**Benefit: Lewisham, Lambeth
And Southwark**

Amount recommended: £106,500

The Charity

Africa Advocacy Foundation (AAF) runs several projects focused on: HIV prevention and support; training for employment; mental health wellbeing; and educating communities on the harmful impacts of female genital mutilation (FGM). The charity also runs targeted work with senior citizens and young people, and annually reaches over 7,000 people originating from African countries.

The Application

AAF seeks a grant over three years to support young women aged 16 to 24 whose mental health has been adversely affected from having undergone FGM. The project would offer one-to-one support, specialist counselling, and run facilitated group work, including provision of arts-based therapeutic activities.

The Recommendation

AAF is a well-established charity with a good track record in working to prevent the practice of FGM within South London's African communities. This project addresses a gap in provision to support survivors over the mental health impacts of FGM. A few of the activities in the original proposal were not directly related to supporting this funding programme's outcomes, hence the amount recommended.

£106,500 over three years (£35,700; £35,500; £35,300) towards a part-time salary (3.5 d/p/w), project costs and overheads of a project to support young women in addressing the psychological impact of female genital mutilation.

Funding History

None

Background and detail of proposal

FGM is a harmful practice that involves partial or total removal of the female external genital organs for non-medical reasons. About 137,000 women and girls in England and Wales, mostly from communities hailing from Africa, and some Middle East and South East Asian countries, have undergone FGM. According to research in 2015, most survivors in the UK live in London, with 4.7% of women in Southwark, 3.9% in Brent and 3.2% in both Lambeth and Newham having suffered this practice. The health impacts of FGM can be lifelong and severe. These include urinary and kidney problems, infertility, pain during sex, and serious complications at birth. Less attention has been given to the psychological impact. Research on FGM-practising African communities indicates similar levels of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder as in adult survivors of early childhood abuse. Depression, anxiety, flashbacks, and issues stemming from difficulty with sexual relationships are reported to be common.

For the past four years AAF has been undertaking prevention and education work within African communities, and building statutory agencies' competencies to identify

and safeguard girls at risk. This work has been funded by Trust for London. It is part of a £2.6 million funders' collaboration that has been instrumental in mobilising communities and raising awareness of statutory agencies of the need to protect girls and women in FGM-practicing communities. Services addressing the physical health impacts of FGM are in place, but there is a dearth of culturally sensitive mental health support for survivors. There is one charity offering this help, but this is in Islington. This new project is especially needed in South London.

AAF is in contact with many African young women experiencing severe emotional distress as a result of FGM, and is well equipped to competently deliver the work.

Financial Information

Forecast income for the current year ended 31st March 2016 is £395,032, all of which had been confirmed as at 26th February 2017. Budgeted income for the following year ended 31st March 2016 is £441,431, of which £248,288 (56%) had been secured at the same date. Both income and expenditure in 2016/17 include this grant application to City Bridge Trust of £40,052.

The costs of generating funds are not disclosed in the accounts for 2014/15. However the charity advises that these costs will be included in its accounts in future. In the meantime the charity has provided an estimate for 2016/17. The charity has advised that it pays relatively low wages, and therefore the cost of generating funds is also relatively low.

Year end at 31 March	2014/15 Independently Examined Accounts	2015/16 Current Year Forecast	2016/17 Next Year Forecast
Income and Expenditure	£	£	£
Income	393,689	395,032	441,431
Expenditure	350,081	312,230	383,685
Unrestricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	0	40,466	14,836
Restricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	43,608	42,336	42,910
Total Surplus / (Deficit)	43,608	82,802	57,746
Surplus / (Deficit) as a % of turnover	11%	21%	13%
Cost of Generating funds (% of income)			£17,310 (3.9%)
Free unrestricted reserves			
Unrestricted free reserves held at Year End	£19,682	£60,148	£74,984
How many months' worth of expenditure	0.7	2.3	2.3
Reserves Policy target	£87,520	£78,057	£95,921
How many months' worth of expenditure	3	3	3
Free reserves over/(under) target	(£67,838)	(£17,909)	(£20,938)