

**MEETING: 18/03/2016**

**Ref: 12980**

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

**West London Gay Men's Project**

**Adv: Julia Mirkin**

**Amount requested: £110,766**

**Base: Kensington & Chelsea**

**Benefit: London-wide**

**Amount recommended: £77,000**

**The Charity**

The West London Gay Men's Project (WLGMP) was initially set up to work with the Gay community, which, at that point, was experiencing the highest HIV infection rates in the Capital. WLGMP now targets a broader range of beneficiaries, including African communities, Trans\*(sic) communities and older people, improving health and well-being by providing clear, accurate and credible advice and information about HIV, sexually transmitted infection and sexual health. WLGMP has been providing pioneering services, including its Spectrum service, which is a user-led service specifically for Trans\* people, for 20 years across West London.

Trans\* is a term used to describe people whose gender identity occasionally or always does not correlate to the gender assigned to them at birth. This can include people who identify as transgender, transsexual, non-binary and genderfluid amongst many other identity descriptors. The application before you is to expand the therapeutic element of Spectrum, which will address the specific issues associated with being Trans\*, including gender and body dysphoria, issues around transitioning as well as more general issues of anxiety and isolation.

**The Application**

Funding is requested to expand the counselling and group therapy service for transgender people facing mental health issues, in response to increasing demand.

**The Recommendation**

This proposal is to support WLGMP to become the only voluntary provider of free counselling specifically for gender identity and transition issues, specifically for the Trans\* community in London. The gender identity clinic at Charing Cross Hospital offers counselling to Trans\* people. However, this does not necessarily address the specific issues relating to gender identity. WLGMP has extensive experience of working with excluded groups. It has demonstrated its capacity to evolve in response to changing patterns of HIV infection and in a changing funding environment and is well networked with local authorities, the NHS and other LGBT organisations.

The revised request is lower than the original amount requested as following the assessment meeting, it was agreed that this new Counsellor post would be part-time (20 h.p.w) instead of full-time.

***£77,000 over three years (£25,400; £25,200; £26,400) towards the part-time Counsellor (20 hpw) and the counselling and group therapy service for Trans\* people in London.***

**Funding History**

None.

**Background and detail of proposal**

Research estimates that there are 300,000 people affected by gender variance in the UK, over 48% of which have attempted suicide. The Trans Research Review, 2009,

carried out by NatCen for the Equality and Human Rights Commission, found that 'Trans\* people are among the most discriminated against of any minority group', demonstrated by the fact that 75% of Trans\* people have been physically intimidated or threatened and 60% have been victims of physical violence and/or sexual harassment. An even greater proportion of Trans\* people (81%) regularly avoid certain social situations and public spaces, which hugely affects their daily lives.

Mental health support is required to assist with dealing with these experiences. However, Trans\* people often require more specialised gender-identity counselling, which is not offered as part of the core training of councillors. Over 54% of Trans\* clients seeking support from healthcare professionals are turned away for being Trans\* and presenting problems that are beyond the remit of mainstream services (Trans Mental Health Study, 2012). Furthermore, many councillors who do offer this more specialised support are working privately and therefore, charge fees for their services. This is particularly challenging for this beneficiary group as Trans\* people find it difficult to find and keep themselves in employment: only 48% of the organisation's Trans\* clients are in full-time work.

The applicant proposes to offer free specialist therapeutic support as an addition to its existing Trans\* service that will support 70 clients per year. 480 hours of one-to-one psychotherapy specifically for Trans\* beneficiaries will be offered annually; group therapy, involving people at different stages of their sex reassignment treatment, will also be offered. These new programme elements will be coordinated and facilitated by a new part-time Trans\* specialist Counsellor with support from Trans\* sessional staff.

### **Financial Information**

For the current year to 31 March 2016, forecast income is £472,615 of which £399,299 (84%) had been confirmed by 22 December 2015. The CIC has advised that the reduction in income of £78,963 (14%) compared to the prior year is due to reduced income from public sector contracts. For the forthcoming year commencing 1 April 2016, forecast income is £451,187, of which £259,681 (58%) had been secured by the end of January 2016. This application to CBT is included in the 2016/17 income and expenditure figures in the table.

Historically, the majority of WLGMP's income, which has been awarded for HIV prevention work with Gay men, has come from statutory sources via local authority contracts which have been largely unrestricted and renewed annually. As WLGMP's remit is broadening, it is increasingly eligible for funding from the voluntary sector and is currently applying for multi-year grant funding, from which it aims to raise 20% of its turnover in the future. The charity is also increasingly working in partnership with other organisations or in multiple boroughs in response to a general trend to make efficiency savings across local government, for example, it is currently negotiating a 'tri-borough' health prevention project in Kensington and Chelsea, Hammersmith and Fulham and Westminster.

WLGMP's reserves policy aims to hold 12 months' worth of expenditure to safeguard against potential cuts to its local authority contract income. This relatively high target was discussed with the organisation and it advised that, given its changing sources of income, it intends to review this policy target in time for inclusion in its 2015/16 year-end accounts. On 31 March 2015 the charity held free reserves of £71,288, equating to 1.8 months' worth of expenditure. This is a comparatively low holding, and is considerably short of its 12 months reserves target of £475,908. As noted

above, the charity advises that it plans to increase income and make cost savings both of which should see free reserves increase in the future.

Year end at 31 March	2014/15 Accounts (Exempt from Audit)	2015/16 Current Year Forecast	2016/17 Budget
<b>Income and Expenditure</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Income	551,578	472,615	451,187
Expenditure	475,908	398,871	395,095
Unrestricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	75,670	(6,339)	56,092
Restricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	-	80,083	-
Total Surplus / (Deficit)	75,670	73,744	56,092
Surplus / (Deficit) as a % of turnover	13.7%	15.6%	12.4%
Cost of Generating funds (% of income)	34,729 (6.3%)	-	-
<b>Free unrestricted reserves</b>			
Free unres reserves held at Year End	71,288	64,949	121,041
How many months' of expenditure	1.8	2.0	3.7
Reserves Policy target	475,908	398,871	395,095
How many months' of expenditure	12.0	12.0	12.0
Free reserves over/(under) target	(404,620)	(333,922)	(274,054)