

LEARNING VISIT REPORT
Catholic Children's Society (Westminster) 11383

<p>1.1 Date of visit: 9th May 2016</p>	<p>1.2 Name of visiting Grants Officer: Tim Wilson</p>	<p>1.3 People met with: Greg Brister (Head of Service Development), Alison Webster (Service Manager) and Magda Butkiewicz (Family Therapist)</p>
<p>1.4 Programme Area & Outcomes: Improving Londoners' Mental Health - more children & young people receive specialist help resulting in improved mental health</p>		
<p>1.5 Purpose of the award: £105,000 over three years (£45,000; £35,000; £25,000) towards the costs of a full-time Systemic Family Psychotherapist.</p>		
<p>MONITORING INFORMATION</p>		
<p>2.1 Project Outcome 1: To increase the capacity of the Bishop Harvey Family Service through the employment of a Family Psychotherapist Progress made: The successful recruitment of a Family Psychotherapist who has experience from statutory Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and who has remained with the project throughout has enabled CCS' to deliver a wider range of mental health support services than would otherwise have been possible without the Trust's funding.</p>		
<p>2.2 Project Outcome 2: To improve children and young people's mental health and resilience through specialist and intensive early intervention support Progress made: Both qualitative and quantitative data gathered throughout the period of grant funding indicate successful outcomes for children and young people, as well as positive benefits for parents and carers. In addition to client testimonies the charity has used clinically recognised national outcome scales to measure the difference its work has made.</p>		
<p>2.3 Project Outcome 3: To enhance the engagement of parents and carers in therapy sessions Progress made: A typical service period has involved 16 sessions of intensive family therapy over a 6 to 12 month timeframe. Clients normally present with entrenched and 'problematic' family dynamics, and the therapy has been successful in improving parental/carer levels of affection, communication, trust, and engagement with other services.</p>		
<p>2.4 Project Outcome 4: To strengthen family relationships by empowering parents and carers to understand and effectively support the mental health needs of their child</p>		

Progress made: The charity reports good improvements in most family relationships, but notes that situations where there has been a bereavement, or where there is a parental mental illness or a history of domestic violence, it has been much harder to deliver the expected levels of change.

GRANT OFFICER COMMENTS

With permission from the Trust the charity opted to deliver its family therapy services from its Muswell Hill base which is bright and welcoming and which avoids a 'clinical' feel. The charity has made two rooms available for family therapy, with the space selected based on the age of the child.

CCS experienced some difficulty recruiting a Family Therapist and there was a delay before the first grant instalment was drawn down. The charity wished to find the right person who would manage the volume of work and the need to provide some 'out-of-hours' services. Referrals have been received from GPs, CAMHS, schools and word of mouth, and the charity has worked hard to ensure that services are introduced to potential clients in a way that does not judge the quality of their parenting.

After initial assessment, clients start either individual or family therapy, with the potential to switch from one service to another depending on the views of the therapeutic team. Exit strategies are discussed with families at an early stage, and CCS note that, in the majority of cases, it hasn't been necessary to refer clients to other services after the 16 session intervention period. The charity has a high level of managerial and team support in place to assist the post-holder.

Monitoring reports have been consistently good, and indicate the service has worked with around 50 children and young people each year. The total number of parents/carers has been approximately 70 each year, lower than the 90 expected at time of application, because the charity has engaged more clients from single-parent households.

The charity is maintaining the family therapy service, using its own voluntary income to cover the costs of the post-holder at present, and attempting to raise funds from other Trusts and Foundations. CCS reports that it is a difficult fundraising task since very few grant-makers award the same level of funding as City Bridge Trust, and there is a common (mistaken) assumption that the level of support offered by the charity should be provided by statutory services. In fact, CCS is attempting to deliver early intervention therapy that prevents issues from escalating. Unfortunately, whilst this preventative model is effective, it is less readily funded than crisis intervention services which would typically be delivered with clients after problems had become acute.