

LEARNING VISIT REPORT
Solace Women's Aid 12614

<p>1.1 Date of visit:</p> <p>12/07/2017</p>	<p>1.2 Name of visiting Grants Officer:</p> <p>Shegufta Rahman</p>	<p>1.3 People met with:</p> <p>Sandjea Green – Senior Manager</p>
<p>1.4 Programme Area & Outcomes:</p> <p>Improving Londoners' Mental Health Improving Londoners' Mental Health\More children and young people receiving specialist help, resulting in improved mental health Making London Safer\More survivors of domestic violence accessing good quality support services that help them to improve their safety, health and well-being</p>		
<p>1.5 Purpose of the award:</p> <p>£98,200 over two years (£49,100 x 2) towards the salary and associated running costs of a full-time Children and Family Support Services Manager working with children and young people affected by domestic violence</p>		
<p>MONITORING INFORMATION</p>		
<p>2.1 Project Outcome 1:</p> <p>Each year 90% of the children and young people (aged 0-21) affected by domestic and/or sexual violence accessing specialist services improve their mental health through engagement with a family support service at Solace Women's Aid.</p> <p>Progress made:</p> <p>Over two years of delivery, the charity reports that 100% of children and young people showed improved mental health as a result of accessing specialist services in this project.</p>		
<p>2.2 Project Outcome 2:</p> <p>Each year 90% of children and young people (aged 5-21) affected by domestic and/or sexual violence accessing our services increase their understanding of the impact of abuse on their mental health through engagement with a family support service at Solace Women's Aid.</p> <p>Progress made:</p> <p>98% of children and young people said they had increased their understanding of the impact of abuse on their mental health through engagement with the family support services at the charity.</p>		
<p>2.3 Project Outcome 3:</p> <p>Each year 90% of mothers accessing specialist parenting support increase their knowledge of the impact of domestic and/or sexual violence on their child's mental health through engagement with a family support service at Solace Women's Aid.</p> <p>Progress made:</p> <p>98% of mothers report that they had increased knowledge, skills and ability to support their children to recover from the impact of domestic violence on their child's mental health and help them avoid poor mental health in the future.</p>		
<p>2.4 Project Outcome 4:</p> <p>Each year 100% of Practitioners improve their knowledge of children's safeguarding</p>		

in the context of domestic and sexual violence through attending specialist training sessions at Solace Women's Aid.

Progress made:

100% of practitioners fed back via training evaluations that they had improved their knowledge of children's safeguarding in the context of domestic/sexual violence through attending the specialist training sessions.

2.5 Project Outcome 5:

90% of the young people participating in our schools and community programme increase their understanding of domestic and sexual violence issues.

Progress made:

98% of young people engaged through schools and community programmes reported an increase in their understanding of domestic and sexual violence issues.

GRANT OFFICER COMMENTS

The charity has exceeded each of its targets for both outputs and outcomes on this project. In total, 613 children and young people attended individual sessions in a safe setting with a specialist worker, which included play therapy, arts therapy, and 1to1 support with referrals coming through schools, colleges, youth and community settings, and hospitals. 517 children and young people engaged in sessions within the refuge setting to enable them to understand the impact of abuse is not their fault; to help them understand healthy relationships, power and control dynamics; and to recognise earlier signs of abusive/controlling behaviours and what to do to get help and support. Over 471 mothers affected by domestic violence participated in specialist parenting sessions to increase their understanding of the impact of domestic violence on their children's health and improve their parenting skills and capacity in the immediate and long-term future. This included eight-week programmes working with mothers, and three to six-week programmes working with mothers and their children. Comprehensive training was provided to 85 practitioners by the charity, and an additional 39 staff members attended external children's safeguarding training delivered by their Local Safeguarding Children's Boards within the boroughs they are located to ensure they know relevant local expectations and pathways for referrals. Through its prevention work, the charity engaged over 2,500 young people through sessions delivered in 35 new settings across Barnet, Brent, Camden, Enfield, Haringey, Hackney, Islington, Redbridge, Southwark, and Waltham Forest.

What has been interesting are the changes the charity has made to the role you have funded over the two-year period. Initially the role was anticipated for the provision of generic children and young people's services, and as a women's organisation, provided support to children impacted by domestic and/or sexual abuse. But harmful practices, sexual abuse, and child sexual exploitation have all changed. Specific specialist services were needed to be developed in response to these changes. The narrative has changed dramatically; children are more vulnerable and susceptible to these issues. CAMHS and social services are unable

to meet demand. An ever-increasing number of children do not meet the threshold of need. Therefore this role needed to change and adapt within children and young people, particularly from a child setting background, with a focus on safeguarding and specialities. Changes were made in the skill-set required of this role and since these changes have been implemented, there has been success not just in the delivery of this specialist support, but also in securing funding from other funders. The charity has delivered a pilot project with MOPAC which employed three frontline members of staff in four major trauma centres in London and formed partnerships with organisations tackling both youth violence and violence against women and girls. MOPAC funding has been extended through to 2020, and Children in Need funding ended in November 2016. All of this work has enabled the charity to evidence the significant gap between CAMHS and what is available through the sector. In each project delivered, the number of children supported has exceeded initial targets, demonstrating the clear need for this specialist support. The outcomes data has further evidenced the effectiveness of the support that has been on offer.

The charity reported that whilst overall the service has been hugely successful in meeting its intended outcomes, developing and managing the changes has been tough. Creating quality frameworks around safeguarding, outputs and outcomes has helped. But the nature of the work is such that keep services relevant, accessible and effective is critical to the success of the charity's work. Funding from City Bridge Trust has been instrumental in refining these, which has then supported further successful applications for funding and new partnerships enabling growth in provisions across multiple boroughs.

