

OUTLINE – APPLICATION FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Executive Summary

Outline provides a confidential telephone helpline and social group meetings to support lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender individuals, the only charitable organisation in Surrey offering such a support service. The Group is based in Woking and is run by dedicated volunteers.

It is a small local charity which struggles to raise the money necessary to maintain its services, and is particularly restricted on advertising its services because of costs. The main areas of service provision are: the Helpline, Outcrowd support group, and Outreach work taking place in the community. Support has been provided by the Council over a number of years and has seen its services reach more and more individuals. The Group has applied to extend its existing revenue funding of £6,000 towards its work in the Borough.

During the past financial year, Outline provided support to 133 phone contacts, 95 email instances. This year, likely linked to changes in human interactions during COVID it noticed a trend that people have been looking for self-help support, prior to directly engaging with Helpline services, however when they do their situations are often more complex, taking longer to support each instance. Also, online Chat and SMS services have been set up recently and were running during lockdown, with 63 contacts being made.

The Group is the only charitable organisation in Surrey offering support to the LGBT+ community, with support and information via helpline, email and the website, as well as a monthly support group ‘Outcrowd’, when Covid restrictions allow. They continually work to raise awareness about their services. The Government estimates that the LGBT+ population in Woking is 9,350 people, so there is a clear need for the services Outline provide. It supports priorities in the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, Woking’s Corporate Plan 2021-22 and the Safer Woking Partnership.

Outline continues to provide an essential support service across the Borough and the County as a whole, and it is recommended that the Council approve its financial revenue support at the level of £5,400 for the financial year ahead, set at the level of last year with a 10% reduction in light of the Council’s financial position.

Recommendations

The Executive is requested to:

RESOLVE That, subject to the outcome of the Council’s budgetary process, a revenue grant of £5,400 be awarded from the Community Grants Budget towards the cost of running the helpline and the support group.

Reason for Decision

To provide support for the organisation and its operating costs.

Confirmation of funding

This award is provisionally made on the expectation that the Council’s budgets for revenue and capital projects remain at the same level allocated for the current financial year. The Council’s overall budget, including the sums allocated for community grants, will be determined by Council at its meeting on 10 February 2022. In the event the grant budgets are set at the anticipated levels, confirmation of the Council’s support will be sent to successful applicants. Groups should not plan

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	for the 2022/23 funding until this confirmation has been received.
Conditions	<p>Accounts. The Organisation must submit audited accounts for the year in which the grant is awarded, including an income and expenditure account and balance sheet. Please note that accounts for other years may also be required.</p> <p>Monitoring Information. The Organisation must submit quarterly monitoring information as a measure of its achievements. Failure to provide details will jeopardise the award. E-mail requests will be sent to the applicant on a quarterly basis.</p> <p>Publicity. Where possible, the Organisation is required to publicise the support received from Woking Borough Council, including on all literature and leaflets produced.</p> <p>Payments. Unless exceptional circumstances exist all invoices must be received quarterly with details of the costs incurred and monitoring information for the previous quarter.</p> <p>Payment Period. Final quarter claims must be made by the second week in March. Unclaimed awards will not be available at a later date unless exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated to the Council before the end of the award year.</p> <p>Joint Working. WBC expects the Organisation to engage positively on health and wellbeing multi-agency joint work affecting Woking. Groups which refuse may place their Council support at risk, e.g. grant, concessionary rent and other assistance.</p> <p>Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. With the introduction of new legislation from April 2018, the council will expect the support of partner agencies in identifying people at risk of homelessness as early as possible to maximise the opportunities to prevent such. Partner agencies / organisations will be expected to be engaged in joint working arrangements to assist in finding suitable housing and support solutions, and where appropriate to undertake and respond to the new 'duty to refer'. Groups which do not support this new legislation and way of working positively, may put their Council support at risk.</p>
Performance Indicators	<p>Users. The Organisation to provide a breakdown of the users.</p> <p>Activities. The Organisation to provide details of activities and events held.</p> <p>Enquiries. The Organisation to provide a breakdown of the enquiries received.</p> <p>Publicity. The Organisation to advise how the Council's support has been publicised.</p> <p>Statement of Use. The Organisation to provide a statement stating the use to which the grant money has been put.</p>
Future Support	The financial pressure on the Council's budgets is expected to continue in the coming years and accordingly the overall level of support available in future years may be reduced. The applicant is therefore to be advised that the award of funding for 2022/23 does not imply that a similar application in 2023/24 would be supported. In particular, it is emphasised that the Council is unlikely to be in a

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position to award any sums above the 2022/23 levels.

In view of this, the applicant is to be advised to ensure that contingency plans for the Group's operations for 2023/24 have been drawn up in the event that the Council is unable to continue its support beyond April 2023. All applicants are strongly recommended to pursue alternative sources of funding and are encouraged to approach Woking Borough Council's Community Support Team for advice and support.

The Executive has authority to determine the above recommendations.

Background Papers:

2022/23 Application Form.

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1.0 Summary of Application	
1.1 Status and Aims	<p>Outline is a dedicated charity helping the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community in Surrey and beyond for over 16 years. It operates a telephone helpline which is open from 7:30pm to 10pm every Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday alongside email support. In addition, a monthly support group is run in Woking Town Centre entitled Outcrowd which provides a safe place for individuals to make friends and reduce their sense of social isolation. Outreach education is also undertaken at public events or in corporate forums with the aim of raising awareness of discrimination, mental health issues and any other matters relevant to the LGBT population in Surrey.</p>
1.2 Employees	None.
1.3 Volunteers	<p>39. Volunteers work on the helpline and at the support group meetings. In addition they also help with other activities such as organising events, management committee, administration, mailshots and other outreach activities.</p> <p>Outline is a completely volunteer led and run organisation, with the majority working on the helpline and the support group. This involves offering support, guidance and signposting people questioning or struggling to come to terms with their sexuality or gender identity. The Group uses counselling type skills to provide a listening ear in order to support people with the difficulties they experience in discovering they have an alternative sexual orientation or gender identity.</p> <p>Each volunteer goes through in-depth face-to-face group training and one-to-one mentoring to ensure they are fully equipped to support the local LGBT community. The key skill used is “active listening”, a communication technique which requires the listener to feedback what they hear to the speaker by a way of paraphrasing what they have heard in their own words, to confirm what they have heard and to confirm the understanding of both parties. Volunteers also rely on the Charity’s extensive library of information (including events, other charities, services and associations) to signpost relevant resources to service users. The work also helps to reduce any sense of isolation in the community which may be felt.</p>
1.4 Clients/Users	<p>Approximately 1,500, including 500 residing in Woking.</p> <p>There is no charge to users of the Charity, although they are given the opportunity to make donations at the Outcrowd events.</p> <p>During the past financial year, Outline provided support to 133 phone contacts and 95 email contacts. This year, likely linked to changes in human interactions during COVID it noticed a trend that people have been looking for self-help support, prior to directly engaging with Helpline services; however when they do their situations are often more complex, taking longer to support each instance.</p> <p>Also, online Chat and SMS services have been set up recently and were running during lockdown, with 63 contacts being made.</p>
1.5 Members	25, comprising:

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	<p>15 male 12 female 4 disabled 2 ethnic minority 8 resident in Woking 25 aged 19-65</p> <p>The purpose of membership is to provide support to the organisation whereas volunteers provide a time commitment to delivering services undertaken by Outline, for example working on a shift of the helpline or supporting an Outcrowd event. The Group has carefully considered the option of charging service users to attend the support group, however the management committee feels that it would be inappropriate for vulnerable people accessing the service, particularly as there is no similar or alternative provision in the county.</p>
1.6 Sum Requested	£6,000 (Revenue)
1.7 Project	<p>Outline has applied for funding towards its work in Woking:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuing to keep the unique Helpline service in operation. Providing phone and email, Chat, SMS support to local LGBT+ population via the Helpline service; • Outreach into local community to let them know of the support available as well as signposting to other local and national support organisations; • Up-to-date information and signposting of local resources via website and the use of local shops / supermarkets; • Awareness raising of discrimination associated with sexuality (sexual orientation) and gender identities including supporting services users to report hate crimes; • Participation and promotion of Outline’s charitable activities and support available at future Surrey Pride events; and • Consider carefully continuing local face to face safe space services.
1.8 Cost breakdown:	<p><u>Operating Costs</u></p> <p>Helpline Operating Costs - £2,500 Volunteering Operating Costs and Training - £500 Local Outreach and Provision - £2,000 Software and Website Maintenance - £1,000 Total - £6,000</p> <p><u>Breakdown of Volunteer Expenses</u></p> <p>Volunteer expenses could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mileage 45 pence per mile (Average volunteer 10 miles) - Train/Public transport costs (average helpline volunteer £10 per shift) - Refreshments on full days training (£5 for breakfast lunch, £10 for dinner) - Office Refreshments - Printing and Paper costs for volunteers working outside of Office.
1.9 Community Benefit	<p>The Group states that around 1,500 people benefit from its work. Given how many LGBT people feel about their identities and through fear of discrimination it is unlikely that all of them answer openly in research projects. In addition, many organisations do not like to ask</p>

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questions around sexual orientation but without such data it is difficult to know the extent of, or the needs of, the LGBT community within the borough.

When looking at the type of issues faced by the LGBT+ population, data collected by Surrey-I shows that some of the issues people face include:

- LGBT+ people may be more likely to use drugs than heterosexual people;
- Younger LGBT+ people may experience homophobic bullying within school, often resulting in the development of symptoms of depression;
- LGBT+ people, especially transgender people, can experience more social isolation and discrimination;
- Transgender people are likely to experience mental health problems;
- Societal ignorance, marginalisation and/or hostility can lead to health inequalities including increased psychological distress, often referred to as “minority stress”;
- LGBT+ young people still experience significantly greater self-harm and suicidal distress than their non-minority counterparts with a low perception of family support often increasing the risk of suicide attempt;
- Psychosocial stressors associated with being transgender, including gender nonconformity, transphobia, lack of support, dropping out of school, family problems, suicide attempts by acquaintances, homelessness, cyberbullying, substance abuse, and psychiatric disorders increase transgender people’s risk of suicide. This may be elevated among minority communities that may strongly oppose LGBT+ people.

By providing a safe space for LGBT people, Outline helps them to live independently and safely. By providing information through work with partner agencies (health, police, local authority), the website and the support group, it would ensure that LGBT people have as much choice and control over their lives as possible, have information about the services and support available to them, and how these can be accessed in local and community settings. By providing a helpline and safe space, and through links with Surrey Police, the Charity will work towards helping people remain safe from abuse.

An annual awareness raising event helps LGBT people to become a more visible group within the local community, breaking down barriers, encouraging community cohesion and demonstrating that Woking is a safe and inclusive town to live in.

1.10 Covid-19 Impact

Given the current climate across the globe in relation to Covid-19, Outline has adapted well to the type of support which can be offered on a remote basis.

To date, Outline has been able to provide volunteers with the facility to log into secure a VPN network which keeps information secure and confidential. There have also been a number of training sessions on Microsoft Teams to help recruit new volunteers to the team. In addition to this further training opportunities were provided for the

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	<p>Trustees to ensure the Charity is still operating in a smooth manner.</p> <p>One area which has been impacted by the restrictions from social distancing within Outline is the face to face Outcrowd service. To combat this shift in reduced social contact it has been promoting the helpline services offered more frequently via online platforms and has recently completed its annual mailout to continue engagement with local services within the area and provide reassurance that Outline is still open for business.</p> <p>The most frequent pathways to reach potential Clients through local GP surgeries and hospitals have been severely limited due to the pandemic but as part of an ongoing effort to reach the wider community information leaflets have been left in coffee shops / supermarkets and hairdressers where there is currently a more steady flow of people from all areas of the community.</p> <p>Outcrowd is unique in the way it provided a safe space for socialising within the area for those looking to provide support for peers struggling with gender identity and sexuality issues. The Group states that providing an increased awareness of the other branches of support is a positive step leading back to when social distancing is less restrictive. It is currently researching local venues within the area with the intention to start a new group in the future.</p> <p>As previously set out, Outline helps service users who struggle with, but not limited, to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Isolation• How people feel about themselves• Awareness of mental health support services through signposting and social prescribing• How people manage their mental health• Coping with negative stressors <p>The social distancing restrictions have exacerbated all of the above focal points and the Group has been consulting with service users who need to air their feelings and reach out in times of hardship. Although face to face contact has been limited, the remote service provided has continued and been of use to the local community.</p>
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2.0 Financial Background	
2.1 Budget	<p>At the time of the application, the Group held £18,000 in the bank, the majority of which is held as restricted reserves as per donations. Also included is the sum of £6,000 held as an annual reserve which is the minimum level for operating the Helpline and website only service.</p> <p>The Group has submitted a breakeven budget for 2022/23 which shows an anticipated expenditure of £7,552, with income identified being WBC Grant (£6,000) and NHS Grant (£1,552).</p>
2.2 Accounts	<p>The Group has submitted accounts for 2020/21 which show an income of £13,788 (£14,311 in 2019/20) against expenditure of £11,506 (£10,816 in 2019/20), resulting in a surplus of £2,282 (£3,495 in 2019/20). The sum of £14,986 was carried forward at the end of the 2020/21 year.</p>

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2.3 Support over the past five years	2021/22 – £6,000 towards running costs and £1,000 for equipment. 2020/21 – £6,000 towards running costs and £1,000 for equipment. 2019/20 – £6,000 towards running costs and £1,000 for equipment. 2018/19 – £5,636 towards running costs. 2017/18 – £5,636 towards running costs and £983 for equipment.
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3.0 Assessment of Application		
3.1 Key Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Constitution ○ Registered Charity ○ VAT Registered ○ Equal Opportunities Policy ○ Safeguarding Policy ○ Reserves Policy ○ Quality Mark ○ Other funding sources pursued ○ Other support by the Council ○ Fundraising ○ Two quotes ○ Regular monitoring provided previously <p>* mandatory rate relief, discretionary rate relief, office facilities at Export House.</p>	Yes Yes No Yes Yes Yes No Yes Yes * Yes Yes Yes
3.2 Assessment	<p>Outline is the only charitable organisation in Surrey offering support to the LGBT+ community, with support and information via helpline, email and the website, as well as a monthly support group 'Outcrowd', when Covid restrictions allow. They continually work to raise awareness about their services. The Government estimates that the LGBT+ population in Woking is 9,350 people, so there is a clear need for the services Outline provide. It supports priorities in the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, Woking's Corporate Plan 2021-22 and the Safer Woking Partnership.</p> <p>In view of the Council's financial situation, it is recommended that a grant be awarded at a reduction of 10% from last year, equating to £5,400 for 2022/23.</p>	

REPORT ENDS