

THE COUNSELLING PARTNERSHIP – APPLICATION FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Executive Summary	
<p>The Counselling Partnership is a mental health charity which provides face to face therapy to anyone who needs it, offering a subsidised service for those who are on low incomes. The Charity supplies up to one year of talking therapy to assist with matters such as relationship issues, bereavement, depression, domestic abuse and carers' issues.</p> <p>The Partnership relies on donations, one off grants, fundraising and client contributions in order to continue to provide subsidised therapy to those on low incomes. During 2020/21, the Group delivered 1,685 counselling sessions, with each client attending on average 32 sessions. A total of 22 clients are based in Woking.</p> <p>The Counselling Partnership has requested funding of £5,000 to contribute towards the salary of the Charity's Administrator and Clinical Services Manager. The amount requested represents an increase of £2,000 on the current year's level of support – the Council has to-date provided annual funding of £3,000.</p> <p>It is proposed that the Council continues its support of the Partnership. However, it is recommended that the level of funding is set at £2,500. This will contribute towards the running costs of the charity supporting residents who need access to quality counselling provision locally. The Charity is also encouraged to seek funding advice from the Council's Funding Officer if not doing so already and to reduce revenue costs by seeking alternative venues where possible.</p>	

Recommendations	
The Executive is requested to:	RESOLVE That , subject to the outcome of the Council's budgetary process, a grant of £2,500 be awarded from the Community Grants Budget towards the salary costs of the part-time Administrator and Clinical Services Manager.
Reason for Decision	To enable the Counselling Partnership to continue their work within the Borough of Woking.
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 for the 2022/23 funding until this confirmation has been received.
Conditions	Accounts. The Organisation must submit 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. Monitoring Information. The Organisation must submit quarterly

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	<p>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 websites and literature / leaflets produced.</p> <p>Payments. Unless exceptional circumstances exist all invoices must be received quarterly with monitoring information for the previous quarter.</p> <p>Payment Period. Final quarter claims must be made by the second week in April. 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. Following the introduction of new legislation from April 2018, the Council expects 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 are 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>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	<p>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 position to award any sums above the 2022/23 levels.</p> <p>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.</p>

The Executive has authority to determine the above recommendations.

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Background Papers:

2022/23 Application Form.

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1.0 Summary of Application	
1.1 Status and Aims	<p>The Counselling Partnership is a mental health charity which has been operating for over twenty years and prides itself on providing high quality face to face therapy, regardless of financial circumstances with the aim to help improve mental wellbeing with the North Surrey community. Many vulnerable clients who come to the charity include people in abusive relationships, have limited financial means and cannot afford one to one therapy in the private sector.</p> <p>The key objectives are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Promote the Charity’s work across North Surrey where there are known pockets of deprivation or adults over the age of 17 who are on low incomes. ○ Provide one to one talking therapy to those who otherwise could not afford it. ○ Provide good quality supervision/mentoring to train and support volunteer counsellors who in turn serve the clients. ○ Develop partnerships with local voluntary services, including Carer support groups and Victim Support Surrey, to maximise their reach within the community.
1.2 Employees	2, comprising the Office Administrator and the Clinical Service Manager.
1.3 Volunteers	<p>32.</p> <p>Two volunteers assist with non-clinical office work supporting the Administrator and eight volunteers are Trustees. The remaining volunteers are counsellors who have completed a postgraduate training course to provide one to one counselling for clients for up to three sessions per week, with four volunteers acting as supervisors. The counsellors are supervised in accordance with the requirements of the British Association of Counselling to which the Group is accredited.</p>
1.4 Clients/Users	<p>152, comprising:</p> <p>41 male</p> <p>110 female</p> <p>4 disabled</p> <p>15 ethnic minority</p> <p>22 resident in Woking</p> <p>No charge is levied to the users although donations are requested from those who would be able to make a contribution. A counselling centre is held in Maybury for three hours, three times per week.</p>
1.5 Members	None.
1.6 Sum Requested	£5,000 (Revenue)
1.7 Project	The Counselling Partnership has requested revenue funding of £5,000

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	to part fund the salary of the Charity's Administrator and Clinical Services Manager. The combined annual cost is £37,855. It would also cover the costs of the Maybury Centre for counselling Woking Residents which is estimated at £2,760 (this figure will be less due to the Maybury Centre remaining closed due to Covid).
1.8 Cost breakdown:	<p>Gross Salary – Administrator: £17,699 Gross Salary – Clinical Services Manager: £18,956 Pension: £1,200</p> <p>The Charity's latest estimate is that the cost of one counselling session is £49, therefore a grant of £5,000 would provide 102 fully funded sessions to Woking residents.</p>
1.9 Community Benefit	<p>The Charity will use the grant to benefit vulnerable people in Woking to address stressful personal issues. This would include the following community benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - positive changes to people's mental health and well-being; - positive impact on families, friends and children through the work of the charity with young people from the age of 17 years as well as older clients and carers; - improved outlook and attitudes through long term counselling to 'move on with their lives' and understand how to cope with future events; and - improved social interaction through the counselling sessions by building confidence and developing a greater sense of autonomy and self-esteem. <p>During 2020/21, the Group delivered 1,685 counselling sessions, with each client attending on average 32 sessions.</p>
1.10 Covid-19 Impact	Some of the challenges faced by the group include being unable to provide face to face counselling and adapting to using zoom / skype, resulting in a 20-30% reduction in sessions and fewer new enquiries. It is anticipated that the lockdowns have affected many people's mental health and therefore the Group expects increased demand post lockdown. Many of their existing clients have been unable or unwilling to accept digital media counselling. Due to Covid, all fundraising events have been postponed until 2021.

2.0 Financial Background	
2.1 Budget	<p>At the time of the application, the Group held £50,000 in the bank. The sum of £40,000 is reserved for closure costs as required by the Reserves Policy.</p> <p>The Group has submitted a budget for 2022/23 which shows an anticipated income of £71,673 against an anticipated expenditure of £70,100, resulting in an anticipated surplus of £1,573.</p>
2.2 Accounts	The Group has submitted accounts for 2020/21 which show an income of £62,399 against expenditure of £62,072, resulting in a surplus of £326.
2.3 Support over the	2021/22 – £3,000

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past five years	2020/21 – £3,000 2019/20 – £3,000 2018/19 – £3,000 2017/18 – £3,000
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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 	Yes Yes No Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes No Yes N/A Yes
3.2 Assessment	It is recommended that a grant of £2,500 should be awarded for 2022/23, at a reduced level of 16% from the previous year. This will contribute towards the running costs of the charity supporting residents who need access to quality counselling provision locally. The Charity is also encouraged to seek funding advice from the Council's Funding Officer if not doing so already and to reduce revenue costs by seeking alternative venues where possible.	

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