

GRANT APPLICATION 2013/14 – ASSESSMENT AND RECOMMENDATION

Priority Corporate Outcomes	To promote a healthy, active, independent and informed population To increase resilience amongst older people and help them to age well	
Organisation	AFRICAN CULTURAL ASSOCIATION	ref 8/C/CTY
Address	28 Church End, NW4	

Corporate policy, aims and objectives

The council is committed to helping people to be independent and live active lives, recognizing that some people need more support than others to achieve this. Development of the Big Society in Barnet seeks to make greater use of local creativity and entrepreneurial spirit and help galvanize new citizen- and community-led projects to address local issues.

The Older Adults Strategy, 'Living Longer, Living Better', and the Older People's Commissioning Strategy, 2008-17, 'Independence, Choice and Control', focus on developing preventative services; tackling inequalities; and the wider well-being agenda. The Prevention Framework seeks to promote the health and well-being of older and disabled people, helping them to achieve key outcomes, including the best possible quality of life, and to remain part of the community. The provision of culturally specific services to support older people from minority ethnic communities is a key element of both strategies to overcome the problems of social exclusion.

Activities / proposal

The African Cultural Association (ACA) is predominantly an advice agency (offering a translation/interpretation service) for the African and Afro-Caribbean communities, accessed also by members of other minority ethnic communities, which runs self-help programmes targeting people who are socially isolated and vulnerable. Its advice work, accredited by the Legal Services Commission through the award of a Quality Mark, focuses on welfare benefits; housing, employment and immigration-related issues; and other problems that require an understanding of cultural traditions within the African community, such as towards marriage. It has been instrumental in improving access to information and advice in Barnet through membership of the 'Advice Barnet Project', led by Barnet Citizens Advice Bureau Service.

ACA is also a registered UK learning provider for adults and young people. It has provided work experience training for 425 graduates, school leavers and young people who are not in education, employment or training. Over 300 vulnerable or disadvantaged adults have taken part in short courses and other training activities. These include weekly adult craft and dressmaking classes for adults with mental illness or mild learning difficulties, which the association has sustained through a volunteer leadership programme since the council helped set them up in 2011.

Over 1,500 use ACA's services each year, including single parents who utilise its nursery facilities and children and young people who are taught African culture, history and language.

This application seeks help to launch an outreach support service for people aged 65 and over from black and other minority ethnic communities to reduce loneliness and mental health problems amongst isolated older people, encouraging them to take part in healthy (outdoor) activities; learn new skills; and mix with others of their own age, and helping them to access other health and social care services to improve their quality of life and well-being.

The new service will target elderly people from minority communities who have no families; are recovering from illness (such as a stroke), including those with mental illness, mild learning difficulties or complex needs; or are just harder to reach, and live in Burnt Oak, Colindale or West Hendon Wards, which have the highest levels of poverty and deprivation in the borough.

Two part-time outreach workers will visit, assess and engage with clients in their home, extending into the community the provision of advice and information to people who have become disconnected. The aim is to provide low intensity support on a flexible and needs-led basis to people lacking in motivation, if necessary embracing living and budgeting skills to empower clients, and to liaise on their behalf with a range of agencies. All clients will be supported (by volunteers) to participate in activities offered by ACA such as walks and keep-fit classes; art and craft classes; and a lunch and social club for older people.

The scheme will aim to work with at least 100 elderly clients over the next twelve months, who will ultimately be given an opportunity to train as volunteers on some of the association's youth activities, adding an inter-generational dynamic to the proposal. Measurable outcomes will include reductions in stress, anxiety and symptoms of depression; improved levels of physical activity, cognitive functions and self-esteem; greater independence; and a reduction in hospital admissions.

The Adults and Communities Directorate (ACD) supports the application on the basis of its strategic relevance to the new Health and Well-Being Strategy, the 'Ageing Well' programme and the new model for day care services, which recognize the importance of the voluntary sector in developing neighbourhood and community-based support networks for older people; increasing inclusion; and improving access to information about health and well-being services.

Cost and financial need

ACA is mainly reliant on fixed-term project grants and voluntary donations to fund its annual programme of activities. An annual council grant of £3,000 linked to its advice work was discontinued in 2010 as resources were re-focused on a new borough-wide community advice contract. In 2011, the association was awarded £7,730 from the corporate grants programme to launch the craft and dressmaking classes for adults. A programme of positive activities for young people in 2012 was funded with a grant of £4,265 by the Children's Service. In 2011/12, ACA incurred a loss of £3,607 on a turnover of £23,109, reducing its net current assets at 31/3/2012 to £5,701.58 (19% of projected 2013/14 expenditure).

A grant of £10,000 is requested to set up and run the new outreach service for over 65s for one year, estimated to cost £10,800. Of this sum, £8,640 is to pay for two part-time outreach workers (£4,212), volunteers' expenses (£540) and project management (£3,888) for three days a week over 36 weeks. The balance of expenditure mainly comprises recruitment costs, CRB training, publicity, overheads, insurance and administration. ACA will contribute £800 to towards premises and utility costs.

The project's sustainability is predicated on the proposed formation of a 'BME Senior Citizens Club', to be run entirely by volunteers, trained in year one to take ownership of it in year two and thereafter, charges for classes, outings and other activities organised under which will generate income to defray the ongoing paid elements of the outreach service. The plan is for the club to become a self-help programme, to be developed in conjunction with the Barnet African Caribbean Association (BACA), with which a dialogue is under way, and ultimately expanded to embrace emerging elderly African communities in other wards.

The application is recommended for full support on the basis of ACA's strong track record of

service delivery; the effectiveness of the strategy adopted for sustaining the previous project funded from the corporate grants programme; and the value for money that this proposal represents in the context of staffing costs and face to face service delivery.

Grant recommendation, type and conditions

£10,000 (from Edward Harvist Charity)

Start-up grant

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One-off grant

Special conditions:

Payment of the award should be made subject to (a) agreement of an implementation plan for the outreach support service in year one, to address issues such as the process for identifying clients, especially those who are harder to reach, and development with BACA; (b) consultation with ACD on how the project will link to the re-development of day opportunities for older adults and other related initiatives: and (c) the receipt of quarterly progress reports and an undertaking to provide an evaluation of the project after twelve months.

Target grant outcomes

(a) To maintain the independence, and improve the quality of life, health and well-being, of vulnerable elderly people from minority ethnic communities and (b) to support their integration into the wider community.

Date: May 2013