

COMMITTEE: SOUTH WEST AREA REF NO: SWAC/18/05
DATE: THURSDAY 31ST MAY 2018
SUBJECT: BANGLADESHI SUPPORT CENTRE
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HEAD OF SERVICE: IAN BLOFIELD

Short description of report content and the decision requested:

This report requests a funding contribution from each Area Committee towards the overall cost of existing projects run by Bangladeshi Support Centre to enable the organisation to continue to support vulnerable clients in Ipswich (such as the elderly, families on low income and new migrants). The amount requested from the South West Area Committee is £1,019.16.

List of Appendices included in this report:

- a) *Appendix 1 – Case Studies*
- b) *Appendix 2 – Beneficiaries’ Postcodes*

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This report was prepared after consultation with:

External consultees

- *Shayra Begum – Bangladeshi Support Centre*
- *Mojlum Khan – Bangladeshi Support Centre*

The following policies form a context to this report:

(all relevant policies must also be referred to in the body of the report)

- *Building a Better Ipswich 2017*
- *Area Committee Action Plans*

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS AS REQUIRED BY LAW

(papers relied on to write the report but which are not published and do not contain exempt information)

1. N/A

OTHER HELPFUL PAPERS

(papers which the report author considers might be helpful – this might include published material)

1. N/A

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report requests a funding contribution from each Area Committee towards the overall cost of existing projects run by Bangladeshi Support Centre to enable the organisation to continue to support vulnerable clients in Ipswich e.g. the elderly, families on low income and new migrants. The amount requested from the South West Area Committee is £1,019.16.

2. Background

- 2.1 Bangladeshi Support Centre (BSC) is a well-established registered charity ([1104502](#)). The charity exists to alleviate the hardship of those in need through the provision of information, advice and guidance, and through the advancement of education and skills. The organisation runs a number of community-based activities and projects to improve the lives of those experiencing social, cultural, economic and/or other challenges.
- 2.2 The charity is seeking funds from each Area Committee as a contribution to sustain its existing projects and services as they seek a long-term core funding solution. At present, BSC provides the following projects and services:
- The office, based in Ipswich, is open Monday to Friday for a total of 18 hours per week. There is a bilingual Support Worker on hand to provide **Face-to-face Support** on matters such as benefits, council tax, racial harassment, form filling, education and training.
 - The **Befriending Scheme** connects local Bangladeshi people over the age of 50. Befrienders provide individuals with support and information to lead a better quality of life. The befrienders work closely with partners and have organised events to raise people's awareness of healthy living.
 - Bangladeshi Support Centre works in partnership with the Council to deliver the **Tenant Participation Project**. There is a dedicated project worker appointed to help Bangladeshi council tenants with housing related queries and to help reduce rent arrears.
 - Over the past few years, the organisation has offered **Capacity Building Training** to meet the needs of Bangladeshi people living in Ipswich and Suffolk. Courses and training have covered topics such as Interview Technique, Food Hygiene, Health and Safety, First Aid and Welfare Rights Awareness.

- **English for Speakers of Other Language (ESOL) Classes** for BME women are held on a drop-in basis at 19 Tower Street, Ipswich. An ESOL teacher and a bilingual Support Assistance teach English using laptops and other computer equipment.
- The organisation hosts a number of annual cultural events, including the **1 Big Multicultural Festival** and the **Pita Festival**, which combined, attract up to 9,000 people every year.
- Having found out that children from minority communities in Ipswich significantly underachieve at school compared to their peers, BSC set up a **Supplementary School**. Currently funded by BBC Children in Need and Suffolk Community Foundation, the project engages around 120 children and their families in learning English, Maths, Science and extra-curricular activities. BSC also runs a Saturday school at St Helen's Primary school, a homework club at Northgate High School and a sports club at Northgate Sports Centre.
- Working in partnership with local authorities and Suffolk Family Carers, BSC established a **Carer's Project**. Around eighty Black and Minority Ethnic carers and cared for people in Ipswich have been identified for the first time through this project. Although funding for this project has now come to an end, demand for this service remains high.

2.3 Just over 17% of the population of Ipswich is from a non-white British background. Many of the organisation's clients work long, unsocial hours in factories and restaurants and as taxi drivers, and require additional support to access mainstream services, due to barriers such as language difficulties. BSC services and projects seek to facilitate access and to empower people of a Black and/or Minority Ethnic background - men and women, young and old.

2.4 The services provided by Bangladeshi Support Centre are accessed by people of all nationalities (over 40 different nationalities at present), including new migrant communities such as those from Turkey, Africa and Eastern Europe, in addition to those of Asian origin. As a result, they are set to adopt a new name, 'BSC Suffolk', in order to reflect the changing client base, and to promote their inclusivity.

3. Relevant Policies AND Area Action considerations

- 3.1 Building a Better Ipswich 2017 underlying principles:
- A Healthy Community
 - Safe Communities
 - An Enjoyable Place to Live, Work and Study

3.2 To alleviate deprivation in the following domains as identified as priorities in the Area Committee Action Plans:

- Living Environment
- Health and Disability
- Education, Skills and Training

4. Options Considered / Under Consideration

- 4.1 Option 1 – Approve funding of £1,019.16 towards the overall cost of existing projects run by Bangladeshi Support Centre.
- 4.2 Option 2 – Approve funding of an amount less than £1,019.16 towards the overall cost of existing projects run by Bangladeshi Support Centre.
- 4.3 Option 3 – Do not fund.

5. Consultations

5.1 The organisation continuously consults with, and receives feedback from, its clients. They recently hosted three community engagement events in Ipswich, attracting over 150 people. Clients are keen for BSC to continue its work in the community and participation numbers continue to increase, despite funding challenges. The development of this proposal has been made in consultation with the Community Engagement team.

6. Risk Management

Risk Description	Consequence of risk	Risk Controls	Probability of risk occurring taking account of controls (scale 1-6) 1 – almost impossible 6 – very high	Impact of risk, if it occurred taking account of actions (scale 1 – negligible; 4 – catastrophic)	Actions to mitigate risk
Risks relating to specific project activities e.g. events, training	Physical harm to participants, staff or volunteers	Risk assessment and appropriate management of each activity	2	3	BSC staff/volunteers to risk assess activity/venue before delivery
Safeguarding risk to vulnerable people	Emotional or physical harm to a person	Staff and volunteers to have appropriate DBS checks and safeguarding	2	3	BSC to carry out DBS checks on staff/volunteers and provide training on safeguarding BSC to follow

		training			safeguarding policy and procedure
Activities not well attended or well managed	Public funds not well used	Consultation with participants and stakeholders Ongoing monitoring	2	2	Consultation in the development of events/activities/projects BSC to provide regular monitoring reports
BSC do not secure long-term funding	Core costs cannot be met and activities cease	BSC to apply for large grant funding and evaluate current funding model	3	2	BSC has already applied to other grant schemes IBC Community Engagement/Community Action Suffolk to provide feedback on draft applications

7. Environmental Impact Assessment

7.1 There are no environmental impacts identified within this report.

8. Equalities and Diversity Implications

8.1 The activities and events run by BSC have a positive impact on Race and Religion or Belief, these being two of the protected characteristics identified under the Equality Act 2010.

9. Financial Considerations

9.1 The charity is currently awaiting outcomes on applications for funding submitted to other funding programmes and is planning to submit proposals to other funders over the next few months.

- Application for approximately £10,000 submitted for Small Charity Big Impact Awards (the Foundation for Social Improvement) – outcome expected May/June 2018
- Application for £10,000 over 2 years submitted to The Henry Smith Charity – outcome expected May/June 2018
- Application for £60,000 over 3 years to be submitted to Lloyds Bank Foundation
- Proposal for £80,000 over 3 years to be submitted to Garfield Weston Foundation

Expenditure Description	Cost
10 hours of Support Services at £10 per hour for 52 weeks	£5,200
2 hours of Befriending Support at £10 per hour for 52 weeks	£1,040
2 hours Funding Officer at £13 per hour for 52 weeks	£1,352
Total	£7,592
Total amount requested	£7,500

9.2 Each Area Committee is being asked to contribute towards the overall request of £7,500. Bangladeshi Support Centre will cover the remaining £92. The funding split is proportional to current number of beneficiaries living in each Area (Appendix 2).

9.3 **The total amount requested of the South West Area Committee budget is £1,019.16.**

10. Legal Considerations

10.1 The Council has the power to make grants to community project through the Area Committees. The Area Committees have delegated executive powers and devolved budgets.

10.2 Area Committees have the power to award grants in accordance with Part 3, Section 2 of the Council's Constitution i.e. the Area Committee terms of reference.

10.3 Bangladeshi Support Centre is a registered charity with a named committee and officers. The organisation has provided its constitution document, details of a named bank account, year-end accounts and safeguarding policies. It thereby meets the requirements of the Area Committee funding guidelines.

11. Performance Monitoring

11.1 A Community Engagement Officer will monitor the progress and success of the organisations services and activities. Over the course of the year, BSC will report to the Area Committees on the progress of their projects in Ipswich, either by report or by presentation.

12. Conclusions

12.1 Bangladeshi Support Centre offers a valuable service to people in Ipswich in improving access to mainstream services, providing relevant training, running successful community events and offering support for

newcomers to the town. The contribution of funding to the organisation would allow the existing programme of activities and projects to continue whilst they seek a long-term funding solution.

13. Recommendations

- 13.1 That the South West Area Committee consider the options set out in Section 4 and determine the allocation of funding to Bangladeshi Support Centre.

Reason: To determine the merit of providing Area Committee funding to Bangladeshi Support Centre to enable the organisation to continue to support vulnerable clients in Ipswich.

Appendix 1: Case Studies

Case Study 1

Mrs C and Mr K (support with immigration, benefits, health)

Presenting problem: Mrs C is a 65-year-old retired English woman who suffers from Multiple Sclerosis and other health conditions and is divorced from her first husband. She met Mr K whilst on holiday in Morocco and after meeting up several times over the next few months as well as communicating online, by phone and Skype, decided to get married. As Moroccan laws are quite strict, they decided to apply for a fiancé visa for Mr K.

Solution

Mrs C first came to see us whilst she was going through the process of appeal for the fiancé visa. As we are only level 1 immigration advisors, we could not help with the appeal but could support her and talk her through what was expected (she felt she was not getting this type of information from her solicitor). Mrs C and Mr K won their appeal and Mr K came to join Mrs C in UK and they were married in due course. Then Mrs C who was in receipt of disability benefits had some of them stopped so we referred her to Disabled Advice Bureau. We also put in an application for a spouse visa for Mr K. While waiting to hear about the outcome of the spouse visa, Mr K became unwell with suspected appendicitis and was told by the hospital that he would have to pay for treatment. As Mr K was not allowed to work and Mrs C was only in receipt of benefits with which they had to feed two people, they had no savings to pay for this. Mr K had also paid for the health surcharge as part of his application for the visa but the hospital would not accept. We got in touch with Suffolk County Council's financial inclusion and advice service that helped Mrs C and Mr K further.

Case Study 2

Mr C and Mrs T (support with immigration, employment rights) Presenting problem: Mr C is English and Mrs T is Macedonian. Mrs T was two and a half years into her spouse visa and needed to apply for the second half of the probationary period.

Solution

We helped Mrs T with the application and she received correspondence back to say it had been received. Mrs T worked for a nursing home and one day when she went in to work, she was taken in to the office and told that she was dismissed from work as her visa had expired. We asked Mrs T to take the letter from the Home Office to her employer and explain to them that as she had an on time application for the extension of the visa, she was entitled to work and that they could check this online on the government website. The employer refused to do this so we downloaded the relevant information regarding rights of employees in these circumstances and wrote a letter on Mrs T's behalf. Mr T was accepted back in to her workplace as a result.

Both sets of clients suffered with anxiety and worries during these difficult times and reported feeling very isolated. They expressed their appreciation and gratitude for our support as both said that they felt unsupported by other organisations they had approached previously and had felt very welcomed at BSC.

Case Study 3

(From the BSC Supplementary School): Unlike most children, 6-year old Ali is being home-schooled. When he first started at the school, he was very shy and reserved to the point that he would have his coat-on and hood-up; he could not be persuaded to take it off. He was reluctant to talk to the other children and did not want to interact with the tutors. He listened but did not contribute to class discussions and, although he would have a go at some of the worksheets and activities presented to him, he was very reluctant to discuss things with tutors, volunteers or other pupils. Gradually he has become more confident within the group and has displayed an ability to tackle much of his age group level numeracy and literacy. He is now an enthusiastic participant in discussions, although he finds it difficult to wait for his turn and listen to others at times. This maybe because in his home school setting he was often the only pupil!

Solution

Ali has shown that his abilities across the curriculum in arts, craft and games are very good and he is much keener to join group activities and discussion as a result of attending the Supplementary School. What is wonderful is that the family has commented that the school and interaction with other children has made him much happier, lively and engaging. Young Ali is currently now doing much better in education and recreational activities.

Case Study 4

Hassana is an 81-year-old Bangladeshi female who lives with her husband. Hassana and her husband own their own home. Their house only has one toilet upstairs however after a fall Hassana has been finding the stairs difficult. She has also been finding it more and more difficult to cook for her-self and generally finding it difficult with personal care.

Solution

BSC made a referral and then worked with the occupational therapist from adult and community services and the local council to put in a downstairs toilet so that Hassana can remain independent and keep her dignity. She also received other aids such as bath boards and rails to help her with her daily life. BSC also referred her for an assessment regarding the support she needs in order for her to remain at home. They worked with the social worker to agree upon 7 hours a week Direct Payments for Hassana to employ someone to help with her personal care. BSC liaised with Suffolk Independent Living who will hold and manage the Direct Payments and supported Hassana so that she has a better understanding of how the processes work.

Case Study 5

Sakar is an Iraqi female who left her husband due to domestic violence. She and her two-year old son had nowhere to go and were taken in by a male friend. Sakar was in receipt of income support, child benefit and child tax credits, however the benefits agency stopped the income support and child tax credit due to a doubt in this living arrangement. The friend then asked Sakar and her son to move out as these issues were causing a strain on their friendship.

Solution

BSC contacted the Department of Work & Pensions on Sakar's behalf and also wrote letters to explain her situation in order for her income support to be reinstated. They also did the same for tax credits. BSC wrote supporting letters to the local council for Sakar to be rehoused and in due course, she was placed in temporary accommodations. They helped Sakar to put in a new claim for Income Support and tax credits after the move and these are now in payment whilst the previous claims are still under investigation. BSC also referred Sakar to the Disabled Advice Bureau for them to help her with a food parcel. She was also referred to Citizens Advice so that she can receive support with the investigations of the previous claims.

Case Study 6

Mr A is an elderly person and suffers from ill health. Mr & Mrs A do not speak English very well. He has three young children from a second marriage. Because of his language barriers, Mr A needs our help to read and explain correspondence, fill various forms and make phone calls to different organisations (e.g. Council Tax, Housing Benefit and DWP). Without our help, he and his young family would not be able to access basic statutory services as their children are very young there is no one to support them.

Solution

As Mr A is elderly and suffers from many ill-related issues, BSC Befriending Scheme support the family through home visits without which the family would struggle and suffer considerable hardship.

Appendix 2: Beneficiaries' Postcodes

Ward	Support Service Clients	Befriending Scheme Clients	BSC Supplementary School	BSC Homework Club	TOTAL
Alexandra	142	25	4	13	184
Gipping	61	7	0	1	69
Bridge	22	0	3	0	25
Westgate	87	13	2	2	104
St Margaret's	32	4	0	1	37
Castle Hill	14	3	1	0	18
Whitehouse	29	2	2	0	33
Whitton	17	1	3	3	24
Sprites	8	0	0	2	10
Stoke Park	13	0	0	0	13
Holywells	16	1	7	4	28
Gainsborough	54	10	1	2	67
Bixley	8	1	0	0	9
St John's	7	3	3	1	14
Priory Heath	125	18	7	7	157
Rushmere	37	4	14	14	69
IPSWICH	672	92	47	50	861

Committee	Support Service Clients	Befriending Scheme Clients	BSC Supplementary School	BSC Homework Club	TOTAL	Split
North						
West	60	6	6	3	75	9%
North East	52	8	17	15	92	11%
Central	261	42	6	16	325	38%
South						
West	104	7	3	3	117	14%
South East	195	29	15	13	252	29%