

-----Original Message-----

From: Joycelyn hayford [<mailto:bwhafs@btconnect.com>]

Sent: 16 January 2017 14:47

To: Commissioners

Cc: [XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX](#)

Subject: PREMISES LEASE/MAINSTREAM GRANTS PAYMENT

Dear Commissioners

Black Women's Health & Family Support (BWHAFS) is a registered Charity established in 1982 by a group of Somali women to campaign against the harmful practice of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and other health related issues that affects women and their families. BWHAFS has been funded by the London Borough of Tower Hamlets over past 20 years.

We facilitate programmes for both young people and elderly women. We offer Supplementary Education, and Afterschool Club for 7-13 years, and Women's empowerment Programmes (ESOL, ICT, Designs & Textiles), and Health & Well-being programmes for older women aged 50+. We also provide health and social care services for hidden carers and their cared for clients living in the borough. Last year alone 3,004 users benefitted from our services.

As mentioned in our previous email to you, we were only recently informed by one of our Grants officers that our Mainstream grants has been withheld due to the fact that our organisation have no premises lease in place. No formal notification ie. letter, email or fax was received from the council.

In 1997 a lease was sent to us which was not signed due to lack of clarity in certain parts of the legal document. The board of trustees at the time appointed a solicitor (Ms Elisabeth Millar) to act on our behalf. Unfortunately no response was received from the council and no new lease was issued us.

In 2014 our side of the building was measured by a member of staff from the council, who informed us that a lease will be sent to us, which was not received.

BWHAFS acknowledges the need for the organisation to have in place a signed lease which will enable us start paying rent to the council. Our centre has always been used for community provision and not classifying it as a community building is worrying as all our services are free for service users. BWHAFS have very limited funding and that we would have to budget for a reasonable rent, as a sudden increase in rent and overheads would have serious financial impact on the organisation.

Also suspending our mainstream grants until a lease is signed will extremely affect our services, as majority of our beneficiaries are elderly, widows, lonely, isolated and with serious medical conditions.

Members of staff who are single mothers with younger children will live in deprivation due to non payment of salaries. Sadly, members of staff were not paid in December for their families to enjoy Christmas.

The organisation will not be able to pay its invoices on time and late payment charges will be incurred from bankers and some creditors.

We would therefore like the Commissioners to reconsider your decision by releasing our quarterly funding, while we negotiate for the premises lease to be signed to help maintain these valuable services and dedicated staff.

Joycelyn Hayford
Operations Director.

Black Women's Health & Family Support
1st Floor. 82 Russia Lane
London E2 9LU
Tel: 020 8980 3503 Fax: 020 8980 6314
Email: bwhafs@btconnect.com
Web: www.bwhafs.com