

Theme 1 - Tackling Cost of Living Crisis

Scheme A - Advice, information and crisis support

ID	Organisation	Project	Geographical Area Served	Annual Grant Amount	Officers Notes	RAG Rating
8662	The Felix Project	Supporting residents of Tower Hamlets who are in Crisis to get access to nutritious food	Boroughwide	£30,000	Monitoring returns for this period demonstrates that the organisation is on track in achieving expected outcomes.	<b>Green</b>
Short Description	Providing nutritious food and meals for 40,000 people in Tower Hamlets – each year – who are currently facing food insecurity and hunger. Working with 80 community partners in the borough to help people in crisis.					
Progress Update	The Felix Project has had a successful quarter in terms of food supply and distribution, the increase in fresh produce supply and the expansion of outreach efforts are positive developments reported in this periods monitoring returns. The Felix Project rescued and redistributed a total of 172,696 kg of surplus food in the period April through June 2024, providing 412,743 meal equivalents. There was an increase in the supply of fresh produce this quarter.					

ID	Organisation	Project	Geographical Area Served	Annual Grant Amount	Officer’s Notes	RAG rating
8705	East End Citizens Advice Bureau	Advice Tower Hamlets	Boroughwide	£720,000	Project has made very good progress this quarter. It surpassed all of its quarterly KPI targets. This included one target being overachieved by 144.6%, one by 70.1% and one by 56.7%.	Green
Short Description	Advice Tower Hamlets provides free, confidential, independent, quality assured-advice to help Tower Hamlets residents resolve their cost-of-living issues relating to welfare benefits, housing, money/debt, employment, immigration, consumer, education, community care, family and personal issues at a generalist/specialist level. Citizens Advice Tower Hamlets leads the partnership with 12 local advice agencies.					
Progress Update	<p>Extract from Monitoring Return: "All partners are in agreement with the MCGP target numbers and KPI and we have informed all the partners we must all continue to work very hard to achieve our targets.</p> <p>We have again achieved great outcome for the residence of Tower Hamlets, over 5 million benefit entitlements including in work benefits and under claiming benefits. Written off debts over 600,000. MCGP project has helped over 2612 clients improve their income through claiming benefits. All the partners are also working very hard with clients on the move to universal credit which has and will affect most Tower Hamlets residence.</p> <p>The rise in the cost of living is becoming evident as client are seeking debt advice concerned by their ability to pay ongoing liability, especially utility bills. The overall demand for debt advice is for support with a mixtures of priority debts (council tax rent arrears and utility) as well as non-priority such as credit cards, loans and overpayments.</p> <p>Universal Credit, PIP and Housing issues continue remains top enquiry especially regarding entitlement to additional Elements and financial implication of missing out on certain Element which may become retrospectively due following reconsiderations and appeals. We continue to see a demands from residents requiring help with applications to disability benefits (PIP, DLA, Aa and Limited Capability for Work). Partners have seen an increase in the number of people needing more support than we can offer. Due to lack of resources some of the partners can’t take on complex case work and partners are reporting a large number people who have enduring mental health problems who need ongoing help and support with a range of issues, such as housing, welfare benefits and general wellbeing issues. It appears that people are not getting the support they need from other services such as NHS, Local Authority etc, so organisations such as ours are having to pick up the pieces.</p> <p>We should all be able to confidently signpost or refer people to these statutory services in the knowledge they will get the help and support they need, but this is not the case. Overall the MCGP project is working well and will continue to get stronger all the partners are engaged and working very hard to provide help and support to all residence of Tower Hamlets although demand and need of advice is outstretching actual what we can truly provide , all partners unmet needs are higher than MGCP targets most partners are booked up 4 to 5 weeks in advance and we are not sure how stainable this is in the current cost of living crisis."</p>					

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8854	First Love Foundation	Foundation Advice and Advocacy Service	Boroughwide; Poplar	£30,000	Project made good progress against its KPIs in the quarter.	Green
Short Description	Tower Hamlets residents will have access to our AQS-accredited welfare rights advice and advocacy service in person, by telephone and through community outreach. We will explore why each individual and their household is in financial difficulty, what other challenges or crisis they face, and work with them to effect solutions.					
Progress Update	<p>Extract from Monitoring Return: "Over the course of the past three months, the grant has continued to make a significant impact on our service. During this period, we have not only welcomed a new member into our team, but we have also reopened our referral pathways.</p> <p>As mentioned in the previous quarterly report, we decided to close our referrals so that our team could offer the dedicated work necessary to every client seen. This allowed us to prioritise our clients as well as prioritise our staff's well-being. Since then, we significantly reduced the backlog of cases and moved all referrals off the waiting list. Due to this effective working, all referral pathways, including our agency and self-referral forms, opened at the end of April.</p> <p>During this timeframe, we have additionally welcomed our new Assistant Community Advocate. By introducing such a role, we have been able to curate a smoother referral to triage process. The Assistant Community Advocate is now the first point of contact within our service. This lets us ensure we are capturing and understanding the client’s and household’s wider needs so that we may work with the client in the most effective way possible. This is even noted in the graphs and statistics we are presenting this quarter. In comparison to last quarter, we are now witnessing Mental Ill Health to be the leading health issue across our clients. In addition to this, our data is showing a rise in the number of clients who are unfit for work alongside an increase in the percentage of clients who have a physical disability.</p> <p>Such work has awarded our clients £180,787.28 in backdated and ongoing outcomes.</p> <p>While we emphasize the impact of increasing our client’s disposable income, we strive to place equal weight across our unquantifiable soft outcomes. Over the past year, we have advocated on our client’s behalf and have successfully been awarded a variety of soft outcomes, particularly associated with housing and debt-related cases. Outcomes related to housing were showcased as prevention of homelessness, rehousing, and preventing bailiff actions. While soft outcomes across debt cases include, but are not limited to, debt managed, and debt payments negotiated. A full list of outcomes is stated further in our attached report."</p>					

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8998	Stifford Centre Limited	Advice and Crisis Support Project	Poplar; Limehouse; Mile End; St Katherine's and Wapping; Shadwell; Whitechapel; Stepney Green; St Dunstan's	£30,000	Project has made good progress this quarter and surpassed all of its KPIs.	<b>Green</b>
Short Description	The Stifford Centre will deliver a comprehensive 'Advice and Crisis Support Project', offering welfare benefit, debt, housing, employment & financial advice, emotional support, and peer-mentoring to local residents. Additionally, the project will manage a 'Crisis Support Fund' for emergency assistance, actively addressing the cost-of-living crisis.					
Progress Update	Extract from Monitoring Return: “This quarter we have delivered advice/interventions and were open to all who need advice but have tailored the service to meet the needs of the BAME community by delivering culturally sensitive services (e.g., segregated drop-in session) in mother-tongue languages. We had spread the hours of operation across weekdays/evenings/weekends, ensuring everyone has a chance to access support, and dedicated telephone/email time with the capacity for over-the-phone consultations for those who have mobility/social anxiety issues. This quarter we have seen a rise in Universal Credit new claim applications as residents are been given dates to move from legal benefits. Also, a steady rise in housing applications.”					

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9072	Community of Refugees from Vietnam - East London	Support and Advice for Older People in Vietnamese and Chinese Communities	Boroughwide; Island Gardens; Blackwall and Cubitt Town; Poplar; Limehouse; Lansbury; Mile End; Bromley South; Bromley North; Bow West; Bow East; St Katherine's and Wapping; Shadwell; Whitechapel; Stepney Green; Bethnal Green West (formerly St Peter's); Bethnal Green East (formerly Bethnal Green)	£20,000	Project has met all of its KPI targets for April-June 2024, overachieving on three of them.	<b>Green</b>
Short Description	The "Older People Vietnamese and Chinese Project" offers crucial support and guidance to the Vietnamese and Chinese communities in Tower Hamlets. We provide comprehensive assistance to individuals aged over 50, delivering valuable advice and information. Our services are available five days a week at Old Poplar Library, London E14 6RN.					
Progress Update	<p>Extract from Monitoring Return: “The Advice Service project is dedicated to offering comprehensive support and assistance to individuals from Chinese and Vietnamese communities in Tower Hamlets. Our primary focus is on elderly individuals, providing free, confidential, and independent services covering various welfare benefits advice, housing guidance, referral for debt assistance, access to healthcare, and education on debt management, bereavement, and End of Life support. Additionally, we offer IT classes and befriending services.</p> <p>Our Drop-in advice sessions are held:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Every Monday from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. at Dockland Settlement, 4 Saunders Ness Road, E14 3PS (except on Bank Holidays, Christmas, and New Year's Day).</li> <li>• Every Friday from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. at Old Poplar Library, 45 Gillender Street, Poplar, London, E14 6RN (except on Good Friday, Christmas, and New Year's Day).</li> </ul> <p>We also provide advice by appointment, with specialist assistance available for welfare benefits and housing. For inquiries about local health clinic and hospital appointments, please contact our telephone line to arrange transportation and interpreting services. We offer an escort service for users with limited mobility to hospitals and home visits for housebound individuals. Our volunteers conduct weekly befriending visits to alleviate isolation.</p> <p>Our digital and IT classes cater specifically to elderly service users, offering guidance on phones, laptops, and digital accounts to enhance their digital literacy. We host drop-in sessions twice a year for eight weeks at Dockland Settlement, where users can seek assistance with technology and devices anytime between 1 p.m. and 3 p.m.”</p>					

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9054	Wapping Bangladesh Association	Tower Hamlets Bangladeshi & BAME-Led Advice Forum	St Katherine's and Wapping; Shadwell; Whitechapel; Spitalfields and Banglatown; Weavers	£70,000	Project has made good progress this quarter, surpassing all of its KPIs.	<b>Green</b>
Short Description	Tower Hamlets Bangladeshi & BAME-Led Advice Forum is a consortium of trusted and embedded local charities, led by Wapping Bangladesh Association, working together to bring quality information, advice, guidance and support to people at risk during the Cost-of-Living Crisis. Our work focuses in the south-west locality of Tower Hamlets.					
Progress Update	<p>Extract from Monitoring Return: "The Bangladeshi &amp; BME Advice Forum is running very well. We have been successfully delivering the advice and information services for people living in Tower Hamlets to improve their lives since November 2023. As a consortium we have delivered the services collectively as follows for this period of April 2024-June 2024:</p> <p>As a consortium collectively we have seen total number of individual clients 275 with resolving the case matters of 321 and ensured income maximization of £165,249.11 towards addressing the cost of living for the vulnerable people living in the borough.</p> <p>Wapping Bangladesh Association: We delivered services to 115 individual clients with resolving 130 case matters on welfare benefits, housing, debt, utility, employment, education, immigration, family and other matters. We have ensured total income maximization of £76,227.61 with ongoing confirmed £12,708.80 and one off confirmed £6151.89, estimated income £57,366.92. The service has been delivered by experienced advisers and records are kept electronically through advice pro.</p> <p>Bangladesh Youth Movement: They delivered services to 135 individual clients with resolving 143 case matters on welfare benefits, housing, debt, utility, employment, education, immigration, family and other matters. They have ensured estimated income maximization of £89,021.50 with ongoing confirmed £16,340.90 and one off confirmed £8,230.20 and estimated income £64,450.40. The service has been delivered by experienced advisers and records are kept electronically through advice pro.</p> <p>Parent Centre: They have provided service to 16 clients dealing with 21 matters. The Advice worker who constantly receiving training and guideline from WBA has progressed well. They are working hard to gain AQS mark. They undertook 2 awareness sessions and 3 outreach work to reach out the community about the service they are providing for the local community.</p> <p>Boundary Community School: They delivered service to 10 clients with resolving 15 matters. They have carried out 3 outreach sessions introducing their services to local community and have been doing regular publicity since November to ensure advice facility available for the local community. They are also working hard to achieve AQS quality for the organisation.</p> <p>Wapping Noorani Masjid &amp; Cultural Centre: Noorani Cultural Centre delivered service to 9 clients with resolving 12 matters. At present Trainee Advice worker is learning and shadowing with WBA advice worker. She has volunteered 6 sessions under direct supervision of WBA staff at WBA. They are in the process of improving their service as they are also working hard to gain quality mark."</p>					