Felixstowe Town Council Occasional Grant – December 2023

Suffolk Mind - Felixstowe Counselling & Cost of Living Support Project.

The project
To complement the existing practical support provided by Felixstowe Town Council, Suffolk Mind wanted to be able to provide an opportunity for residents experiencing a cost-of-living related decline in their mental health to receive fully funded counselling.

This was aimed at residents who were:

• Benefits recipients whose situation has been exacerbated by the cost-of-living crisis.
• Small business/sole traders who are facing challenging financial pressures.
• People considered part of the squeezed middle.

However, counselling sessions were also available to anyone in a situation where the primary barrier to accessing support was being unable to fund it themselves.

The grant
Felixstowe Town Council generously granted Suffolk Mind's Counselling Service £1,980 to provide 36 sessions of counselling for residents who met any of the above.

Project uptake
The demand for free counselling in Felixstowe has been astronomical as current cost-of-living pressures have affected so many of Felixstowe's residents.

Within 40 days we had allocated all 36 counselling sessions to residents of Felixstowe who were struggling with an array of financial pressures brought on by the current cost-of-living crisis.

Project delivery
We provided and continue to provide counselling sessions in a variety of ways to allow clients to choose how they preferred to interact with their allocated counsellor. Counselling is delivered in person, over the phone, or via Zoom, ensuring easy access and inclusivity.

As Suffolk is such a rural county, we wanted to ensure that clients who couldn't travel or didn't have the funds to pay for public transport and/or childcare to also have the opportunity of receiving fully funded counselling.

Measuring Outcomes
Within our counselling service, use a clinical outcome called CORE-10, this is a self-rated questionnaire which measures psychological problems, and distress.

CORE-10 consists of 10 questions being rated on a 0-4 scale. The higher the rating, the more the client is struggling with the issue concerned.

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We ask clients receiving counselling to complete a CORE-10 form at the beginning and then on their last session.

The scoring means:
- 0 to 5 Healthy
- 6 to 10 Low level problems
- 11 to 15 Mild psychological distress
- 16 to 20 Moderate distress
- 21 to 25 Moderately severe
- 26 to 40 Severe psychological distress

The average starting score has been 23.43 (moderately severe), and we hope that when our Felixstowe residents finish their counseling that they will have an improvement of between 60-70% which determines the impact of counselling.

This would be on track with similar cost-of-living counselling projects delivered across the county which resulted in an average 65.9% improvement in the client's well-being.

Thank you.

Thanks to Felixstowe Town Council we have had the privilege of receiving funding which has enabled us to support several residents of Felixstowe with their current challenges, but also to provide them with skills and techniques to cope with any future issues.

This is why we are so grateful to have your support, as it has allowed us to continue in our mission to make Suffolk the best place in the world for talking about and taking care of mental health.

Thank you, Felixstowe Town Council.

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