

Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council

Community grant application form - part A

Please ensure you complete all of this form and Part B and send the following information to enquiries@abingdon.gov.uk:

- forms A and B, completed in full
- your organisation's last set of accounts
- the most recent bank statement for your organisation, which should match the payment information on form B

• About your organisation

Name of the organisation requesting the grant

Mental Health Natters CIC

Please state briefly what the purpose of your organisation is

Mental health and wellbeing support to parents, carers, children and young people who are struggling with school attendance and engagement.

• Your grant request

Please describe the project for which the grant is needed.

The approach of Mental Health Natters (MHN) is based on our Therapeutic Education and Engagement Model (TEEM). An essential aspect of our work is engaging parents, carers and other organisations working with the family, alongside supporting children and young people one to one, offering Therapeutic Mentoring and Tuition. MHN has been supporting families in Abingdon for over two years and has developed strong and positive relationships with local schools and community organisations. Where possible, our one to one support is funded by the child or young person's school. If this is not possible, some families are able to self-fund. However, we have a number of families that do not have a means of funding; it is this part of our work that we would like to request funding for. This would enable all families access to our support and therefore reduce socio-economic barriers. As our rate of referrals is increasing, we would to pre-empt those who can't pay and have funding available for these families. We have had over eighty referrals to date and eight of these have needed provision that we have met either by working on a voluntary basis or from a small pot of funding now spent. Most of the families we work with have had difficulties for some time and we are currently able to begin work with them immediately, at a time when mental health support can be difficult to access.

We would also use this funding to support vulnerable families over the summer holidays, following a successful pilot last summer. We would like to offer a welcoming, nurturing space for young people to have access to mental health practitioners. The research from our pilot showed that having our input over the summer gave young people a place to be that they accessed weekly; in fact we continue to support these same students and they have asked if their friends and siblings can join us! More recently we have identified a need for a youth drop in; many young people congregate in the Charter

area as it offers shelter; longer term we would like to offer a regular safe space to teenagers who may not otherwise access our, or any, support.

Research from the recent DoE Alternative Provision Specialist Taskforce pilot published last month estimated funding of £350 per young person for support over the summer. This would cover staffing and resources such as refreshments and activities. An estimate of 6-8 young people would be supported each week and any monies not spent would be ring-fenced to support vulnerable families over other school holidays, for which schools currently do not pay for. An example of this was over the Easter half term a few weeks ago; two families needed ongoing, consistent, weekly support; one young person had been very recently assaulted in Abingdon walking to our office and the second young person had been very recently groomed online and interviewed by police. This support from a safe, trusted adult was important for both the young people and their parents.

Please find attached a copy of our current leaflet which outlines our achievements to date. We are proud to live, work and support families in the Abingdon community. We adapt to local need; for example, many of our young people are creative so we now offer an Art Award qualification and are starting this week an Art Award after school club at the Carousel Family Centre. Many also struggle with self-esteem and friendships so we now offer small group work and are currently supporting a group of Year 9 girls at Larkmead School.

What is the total cost of the project

£20,000 estimated depending on number of referrals

How much grant are you seeking

£5,000

What percentage of the total cost of your project are you seeking via this grant

25%

How do you plan to raise the rest of the money for your project

From provision funded by schools and parents.

Please show roughly how the costs of the project are broken down

1:1 support for vulnerable students over the summer $£350 \times 8 = £2800$

Ten sessions of 1:1 support for young people where school/ parents can't fund $£400 \times 8 = £3200$

*8 young people based on last year's figure

What fund-raising have you undertaken for this project or others in the past 2 years

Oxford Community Fund- funding for vulnerable families and computer equipment

- **Local benefit**

How many people take part in your organisation's activities? Give local branch numbers if you are a national organisation.

As members

We have eight staff members and also work collaboratively on projects with other residents at the Makespace Charter Studios and with staff at the Carousel Family Centre.

Local connection

Town resident Attend education in town

Neither resident nor attending education in town

- Members

Town resident 3

Attend/ work in education in town 5

Neither resident nor attending education in town 0

- Recipients

Town resident 200e

Attend education in town 60e

Neither resident nor attending education in town 10e

- **Vision and objectives**

Please explain how your project will meet the town councils vision and objectives, which are set out below. **You do not need to respond to each point** but it is important that your project addresses the town council's vision and at least one objective.

4a. Vision

To develop an inclusive community so that Abingdon is the place where everyone wants to live and where the wellbeing of residents is prioritised. In developing this community, the town will be one which is environmentally sustainable, vibrant, resilient and safe.

Our work in the area is embedded in the local community due to our central office location in the Makespace Charter Studios; Makespace renovate under-utilised buildings thereby offering affordable space to local community groups as well as improving the physical environment. Our staff and their families live and work in Abingdon and use the local amenities. By being part of the local community we are able to connect with the families and young people and often bump into them in town.

We are also on the Caldecott Ward Steering Group and have collaborated with the South Abingdon Arts and Culture Project and Community First Oxford to support families in the area. We have run groups at the Carousel Family Centre and attend Oxfordshire Play Association events in the Caldecott community; one of the poorest wards in the county.

Our work is holistic in that we engage with schools and other organisations working with families to ensure that support around a young person is collaborative. This includes working with local schools, the county council, such as LCSS and the Family Solutions staff in Abingdon, CAMHS at the Clock House, Abingdon Bridge, Oxfordshire Youth and other organisations in the county and nationwide that support our families. Where possible we also collaborate on projects that benefit the local community, such as play days, the Arts and Culture Project in south Abingdon funded by Makespace and school based projects such as our transition support for children in Year 6 moving to secondary

school. A vital aspect of our work is supporting the parents and carers and we run monthly parent 'Me Time' evening sessions offering a safe, nurturing space to support wellbeing, held at the Carousel Family Centre or our office at the Charter Studios.

4b. Objectives

1.

To respond effectively and speedily to the climate emergency

2.

To develop a resilient, sustainable town which will provide a home for residents now and in the future

By supporting young people and parents and carers we hope to improve their mental health, aspirations and possibilities for their future. Our work with young people supports them in making safe choices and mitigating risks. We aim to offer our families opportunities to engage in their community, for example, our parent wellbeing group meet monthly as an opportunity for parents to support each other; our young people are involved in the South Abingdon Nature Trail currently being run in Caldecott; as a result of reaching out to local organisations, we have arranged for three of our students to have work experience placements in local businesses in Abingdon. We also take part in local events such as play days and Healthy Abingdon to improve community connections and develop opportunities for families. By living and working in the community we are contributing to a network of support for families that is vital to ensure their children and young people can flourish.

3.

To manage the Council's assets efficiently and effectively to meet for the needs of the community now and in the future

4.

To work with community partners to support those who are vulnerable and in need and to create opportunities to increase social inclusivity

We are part of the Caldecott Ward Steering Group and work collaboratively with Makespace residents in Abingdon and the Carousel Family Centre. We also work closely with local schools and county council teams to identify and support vulnerable families. As mentioned previously our work is holistic to develop a network of support for a family, including local schools, Family Solutions, CAMHS, the Abingdon Bridge and other similar small providers. By offering support in different forms, such as a group for parents in the community, groups in schools, after school club at the Carousel, one to one support for young people either at home, school or the local community, we aim to remove barriers to accessing support. If our application for a grant is successful, it will enable us to support vulnerable young people during the summer holiday, when most other support ceases, and will remove the financial barrier so that low income families can access our support. Provision of mental health support is preventative; young people who don't receive the support are increasingly likely to develop long term mental health issues which impact job opportunities, aspirations and life chances.

- **Other/previous grant awards**

Please provide details of any grant awards you have received from the town council, other councils or large organisations that you have received in the past three years

Community First Oxford- funding to offer Art Award

Christchurch Hospital- to run a pilot parent group and a parent and young person group over the summer

Councillor's Priority Fund- to enable us to move from a shared office to a single office in which we can see families in privacy

Please list any grant applications to other councils or bodies which are currently pending

Lottery Funding

- **About your organisation**

Please explain what structure your organisation has, i.e. is it a charity, a society, or another type of model

It is a Community Interest Company

What is the balance of your main account according to the most recent bank statement?

£2479.77

Additional financial information

Does your organisation have any other finances held in other accounts?

No

If so, please provide full details of all your additional finances, including recent figures.

N/a

If these funds are earmarked for any specific projects, please provide further information about this.

N/a

- **Reporting back on your grant**

Organisations receiving a grant from the town council are required to provide a written report on their event or project within twelve months of the award date. The report should detail how the funds were spent and how residents of Abingdon are benefitting. The report may be included in any town council publicity, including the website or the Town Crier magazine.

Declaration

I declare that the information given in this grant application, both parts A and B, is complete and accurate and that no relevant information has been omitted.

I agree that the organisation receiving the grant will report back to the town council within 12 months of the award of this grant on how it has been used.

Signature

Name Daniella Martin

Position with organisation Director, Founder and Therapeutic Mentor

Date 18.4.24