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## Crawley County Local Committee Community Initiative Fund application



**CLC Reference:** 373/C

**Local Councillor:** Chris Oxlade

**Status:** Preparation Stage

Overfunding enabled (refer to 'what we'll deliver' section)

**Project Cost:** £3,778.00

**Project Title:** PRESENCE

### About:

The project is to support the establishment of a women's centre, 'PRESENCE - Women's Resource Centre' in Crawley. The physical space has been acquired and set up to function within Crawley.

The women's centre is a place where members of the local community concerned with women's and gender-related issues could access the resources needed. Women will be able share space and information in order to work together toward common goals. Women's and gender-related issues will be the main focus so that the needs of women will continue to be addressed. PRESENCE will benefit mainly isolated and in-need women as Rivers continues to empower women seeking to improve their lifestyles and Rivers will support them to remove obstacles and challenges along the way. The wider community also seeks to benefit from investing in local women helping to grow, develop and inspire them. Encouraging community engagements enables women to better understand the community they live in and allows for organisations to better understand the complicate needs of our local women.

## **Project Delivery Manager: Rivers LPC**

### **About:**

Rivers LPC is a local, independent charity based in Crawley, West Sussex. Rivers LPC was officially formed in 2014, having existed since 2011 as a community group. It exists to break down barriers women face when seeking help and support; women who may be excluded from mainstream support services and/or find it hard to engage with such services due to being economically, socially isolated; or are isolated due to health issues or language barriers. Many local women miss out on vital support available in the community and are have not been able to find assistance from other organisations, mainly because they are unaware of the existence of these organisations or there is mistrust due to cultural differences. Many of the women who Rivers LPC supports simply need help without the involvement of formal authorities, or statutory bodies. All our services are directed from PRESENCE Women's Resource Centre. This provides a safe space for women where their needs can be addressed discreetly and respectfully. The Women's Resource Centre is also a 'one-stop-shop' for women in the local area, and allow Rivers LPC to respond to the particular needs of women in areas such as, literacy, employment skills, CV support, mental health and wellbeing, signposting support for domestic violence.

Website: <http://www.riverslpc.org.uk>

### **What we'll deliver:**

- Organise community events and activities, such as cultural awareness week, Parliament week, International women's Day
- Activities aimed at developing skills for residents to benefit them and the area
- Helping groups and organisations to develop their resources to support the communities they come from
- Helping communities influence the planning and delivery of local services; develop others to support small communities
- Taking note of significant events and community achievements
- Adult education for women, IT classes, computer classes, community awareness classes
- Community integration, English classes, adult literacy classes
- Wellbeing workshops; Coffee mornings
- Support the awareness of domestic violence, adult abuse, modern day slavery
- Signpost and support vulnerable women with no financial support

### **How any extra funds raised from overfunding will be spent:**

- 1) Stationery
- 2) Computers
- 3) Training

**Why it's a great idea:**

To provide a safe space for women where their needs can be addressed discreetly and respectfully. Create a central and welcoming space will have a huge impact on the local women and their communities. Provide a 'one-stop-shop' for women in the local area, and allow Rivers to respond to the particular needs of women in areas such as, literacy, employment skills, CV support, mental health and wellbeing, signposting support for domestic violence, housing, financial support. As Rivers has a diverse range of volunteers from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds, we can provide more tailored support for individuals or groups in a quick and relatively low-cost manner, when compared with the larger and separate local charities/organisations. Grow and retain the peer-to-peer support volunteers who have been providing in the community and allow them to have a space where they can offer more tailored support; empower and provide more vocational training programmes to help local women.

**Steps to get it done:**

- Creating more workshops for the next twelve months
- Promote good mental well being
- More workshops to help skills like sewing, arts
- Increased number of community events
- Own and lead more empowerment classes
- More media projects created by local women

It is important for Rivers to secure the venue as it is being hired at a special community hire rate, if we were to secure a premise commercially our charity will not be able to survive. It is needed as the only one in the area that supports women who are socially isolated or excluded, sometimes through no choice of their own. Rivers provides a host of different services for local women within Crawley, including but not limited to: IT workshops, Summer Reading classes, CV writing and interview techniques workshops, health and wellbeing workshops, cultural exchange events and workshops and an open coffee morning group. However, the three main services that Rivers is known for within the local community is our weekly English language and Community Awareness classes; the 'Rivers Employment Awards Training Scheme' and Rivers SPACE which offers practical support and signposting to women needing support, encouragement and information from other women or organisations.