

Report back to The Funding Network

1. Name of your organisation and date funded by TFN:

The Maytree Respite Centre, June 2015

2. What was the project you sought funding for from TFN?

Maytree provides non-medical residential befriending support to people in suicidal crisis, offering a safe, calm and confidential place where they can receive personal, intensive and specialist emotional support during a stay of up to five days.

TFN's funding had the aim of supporting us to increase the number of people we serve.

This aim did not change since receiving TFN funding.

3. Were you able to do this work as you described it in your application and presentation?

Yes. Our organisational records show that, from June 2015 to February 2016 (9 months), we had 2,016 people in suicide crisis to whom we provided support. In the same period the previous year, we supported 1,562 people, which is an increase of 29%.

4. Can you measure, assess or describe the change that happened as a result of this work?

Beneficiaries have stated that our support has reduced their suicidality, anxiety and concerns. This is evidenced through their making e-mail, written and verbal statements to us which communicate narratives such as improved self-assertiveness, reduction in feelings of fear, improved self-knowledge so that they better engage with others, acceptance of life situations, not feeling judged, increased self-esteem, increased openness with others, feeling heard and acknowledged, feeling relieved at being able to make confidential risk-free disclosures about taboo subjects, or similar. TFN funded 1.3% of our work.

5. As a result of presenting at TFN, did you experience any of the following;

New volunteers to your organisation: Yes, we recruited 72 new volunteers.

Other benefit (please describe): Yes, as a result of presenting at TFN, we acquired greater credibility and profile when describing our sources of funding to new potential funders who wanted assurance that we were a well-managed organisation with credible financial support.

6. Could you give us an estimate of how many people have been reached by the TFN funded project/work and by how much?

TFN's funding has allowed us to continue our work and support 2,016 people in suicide crisis, as well as recruit 72 new volunteers.

7. Can you tell us any personal stories to highlight the value of funding from TFN?

Yes, in this period we have received the following testimonials from former users:

"I have continued with my struggles and had a stay in a crisis house, but it didn't have the same impact as Maytree. The thing about Maytree was being able to talk about the same thing over and over with all the different volunteers. With my sessions with the coordinators, I learned a lot about myself and could continue to work on this when I left. I still have suicidal feelings since then, but I'm still here, and I am almost certain now that I would never end my life which is huge progress I think."

"Life is still very much a daily battle and tomorrow is still uncertain, but so far I continue to do battle! It was hard coming back to the silence after a week of sounds and interaction. Life feels like hoops to jump through and it's exhausting."

“ I feel very lucky to be here for Christmas with my family, I want to thank you for helping me through a very dark time. Thank you for the comfort and compassion and hope you gave me when everything felt so hopeless. ”

“ I wanted to let you know that I have started a part-time job and it’s going well, It’s helping my confidence and feeling part of something again. I feel very grateful to Maytree for letting me in during a very difficult time when I didn’t know how to make things better. I am now smiling again and bit by bit things are getting better, thank you for your genuine care and support. ”

“ Thank you to all the staff and volunteers for saving my life. Now 6 months on, from being a virtual stranger, I now have a boyfriend, my first for 13 years. My depression is at bay and long may that continue. ”

“ A heartfelt thank you, I am still struggling but I’ve got this far! ”

“ I never thought I’d see this Christmas, so thank you. I’ll never forget your kindness, patience and support. ”

“ When I arrived at Maytree five days ago I felt devastated, helpless and lost, I’m not going to pretend that being here has solved all of that. I still have times of being overwhelmed by the sense of devastation at my current situation and that still leaves me feeling lost. But I do now have hope that things will get better. I have stamina and strength to get to the point where things will get better. ”

“ I couldn’t help but notice how many compliments I was receiving from volunteers. Slowly, surely they were rebuilding my confidence in myself and making me feel worthy of love once again – this is something which had eluded me for many months and it was this, more than anything, that was breaking my heart throughout my darkest hours. ”

“ I went to bed still wondering what I was actually expecting from Maytree, I didn’t feel like I was in an “alien” place. I was beginning to understand that these few days could be precious – and I may never get the same chance to so thoroughly examine my own past and what it all means for my future. ”

“ Thanks. You helped me feel that my emotions are justified. I often feel anger towards my family, then feel bad about feeling angry. This leads to spirals of guilt and sometimes, depression. You helped me realise that my feelings are normal – and that others in my position would feel just as angry, if not more. ”

“ I never talked so much in my life as I did at Maytree. I can see future and a reason to “stay”. That’s pretty priceless really. ”

8. Since presenting at TFN, has your organisation undergone any significant change(s) which our donors would be interested to know about (these changes do not need to be related to the experience of presenting at TFN).

Since presenting at TFN, we have reinforced and increased our credibility amongst both potential users and other suicide prevention stakeholders. As a result:

- We received a private and confidential visit to the Maytree house from Prince William, Duke of Cambridge and Catherine, Duchess of Cambridge in March 2016.
- We acquired contacts and profile in UK Parliament.

Our Director, Natalie Howarth, was invited on 9 March 2016 to the House of Commons by Jeremy Corbyn to attend an informal evening drinks reception, with other voluntary sector organisations working in the mental health and suicide prevention field. The event was to acknowledge and celebrate the excellent work we do.

- Luciana Berger, Shadow MP for Mental Health visited Maytree to find out more about our work and model and to discuss the local challenges and issues within mental health service provision. Natalie attended All Party Parliamentary Group discussions on Mental Health and Suicide.



- We acquired Alastair Campbell as a Patron. Alastair is a journalist, broadcaster, political aide and author, best known for his work as Director of Communications and Strategy for Tony Blair, Prime Minister, between 1997 and 2003.

- We received support from the London City firm, ICAP, as part of its Charity Day in December 2015. On this day, celebrities broker financial deals and all proceeds go to charity. Our celebrities were Alastair Campbell, the actor David Robb (from Downton Abbey) and the TV sports presenter Steve Rider. ICAP are funding a Maytree suicide awareness and prevention advertising campaign targeting men, using London Premier League football stadiums and audiences in 2016.

- Maytree was featured in a documentary that was broadcast on BBC TV *Suicide and Me* (Oct 2015, with repeat broadcast), in which the rapper Professor Green took a personal journey to uncover the truth behind the suicide of his father, and why suicide is the biggest killer of men under 45 in the UK. Maytree's unique befriending approach was featured in detail, and Professor Green took part in suicide support role-plays with our volunteers.

9. Do you have any other comments regarding TFN funding?

We are very grateful for the support given to us by TFN.

