

LONDON FUNDERS – Strategic 3 Year Plan – 2014/17

A safe place for funders to think, share & learn - which facilitates collaboration and action.

Context and Introduction

London is a complex city and its funding landscape is changing dramatically. This change is being driven by a combination of factors including the redefining of the role of the state (both national and local), the changing profile of poverty and the needs of the population within London, and the increasingly complex governance and public policy landscape that our members operate within.

London Funders is a unique network. Our members invest in every aspect of London’s life, from the arts through to welfare, and they fund across all 32 boroughs and the City of London. These funds are invested in London through a number of channels including the voluntary and community sectors, social enterprises and the private sector, as well as directly to the citizens of London.

London Funders needs to change the way that we work (and what we do) to reflect the new economic and political landscape that our members are working within. We need to combine being a safe place to think and talk (something that we do well) to become an effective place that can facilitate collaboration and action. We need to develop as the voice for funders (and funding) in London, to seek to actively use our collective knowledge to inform national and regional policy, and London’s complex and multiple governance structures. We need to demonstrate our impact in supporting our members achieve their varied and diverse missions.

Our strongest asset is the diversity, creativity and reach of our members work; our biggest challenge is how we support our members to help them “do more with less”?

This plan sets out our ambitions for the next three years, focussed around three core objectives for our work:

1. To provide the space for learning and collaboration between funders;
2. To be a voice for funders and to actively engage in policy debates;
3. To identify and promote effective funding models;

Our strategy is ambitious but also, we believe, achievable. It sets out both our main purpose (the space for learning and collaboration) and the core activities that support this purpose, together with new initiatives that we wish to develop, but for which additional resources may be required.

This three year strategy is underpinned by a more detailed annual workplan, both of which are regularly reviewed by the London Funders Board. The work of London Funders is undertaken by a small (two person) Executive team, supported by an active Board of trustees who meet four times a year to oversee the delivery of the London Funders strategy and the governance of the charity.

Our Mission	Our mission is to strengthen and support funders and promote effective funding practices, to meet the needs of Londoners		
Our core objectives	<p>1. To provide the space for learning and collaboration between funders</p> <p>Our aim is to provide an independent space which brings together public, private and charitable funders so that they can share information, collaborate and learn from each other in a way which promotes effective funding.</p>	<p>2. To be a voice for funders and to actively engage in policy debates</p> <p>Our aim is to be a voice for our members and to actively inform policy development and debate in key areas which impact on types, levels and mechanisms for funding in the Capital.</p>	<p>3. To identify and promote effective funding models</p> <p>Our aim is to galvanise the expertise across our membership – and across London more generally – and to promote effective and new or innovative funding models which can be used to unlock wealth and enrich the lives of Londoners</p>
Our activities (New areas are highlighted)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Run an annual event for members which encourages the sharing of information and learning across a range of different topics.</i> • Run our annual core programme of expert seminars / training events which facilitates learning and collaboration on specific issues. • Facilitate occasional ad hoc meetings and events on topical issues. • Publication of a monthly e-bulletin of relevant and timely information and resources relevant to funders • Maintain and update the website to include information on meetings and events and news/updates for funders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate both reactive and proactive Horizon scanning by staff & board so that key issues are flushed out for board debate and within the wider membership. • <i>Canvass members experience and concerns via a variety of mechanisms.</i> • <i>Produce occasional information and research briefings around key topics.</i> • <i>Create opportunities for London Funders to engage in discussion and debate with policy makers and London’s governance structures.</i> • <i>Publication of: “trend data for London”; an annual / quarterly “state of London funding report”;</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>An annual conference on effective and new or innovative funding models.</i> • A series of seminars to showcase effective and new or innovative initiatives. • <i>Develop an on-line space for funding model discussion and debate amongst the members.</i> • <i>Develop an “annual of best practice” / “index of funders” which members would WANT to be profiled within.</i>

<p>Outputs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 600 members attending 26 events a year ✓ New partnerships / relationships brokered on the back of our networks / forum. ✓ Members kept regularly updated on the state of funding in London. ✓ London Funders attracts new members including private sector corporate funders. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Clear strategy to influence/ inform policy including ad hoc rapid response items if required. ✓ 6 information or research briefings on 4 topics reaching an audience of 300 (e.g. funding relating to welfare reform; funding relating to children / young people etc) ✓ Range of publications, reaching a combined audience of 15,000 including: “State of London Funding”, “Annual Index of Funders”, which together provide an up-to-date map of funding and funders in the Capital as well as highlighting best practice. ✓ London Funders attracts new members including private sector corporate funders. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 60 members attend annual effective funding conference. ✓ London Funders on-line forum. ✓ Annual publication to showcase effective funding ✓ London Funders attracts new members including private sector corporate funders.
<p><i>These are outputs from activities due to be implemented over the next 3 years. The exact individual timetable will be developed in line with the availability of resources and our capacity to develop these new areas.</i></p>			

<p>Outcomes</p>	<p>We have identified some key outcomes (below) which will monitor the impact that London Funders has had. In addition, we will be developing specific key performance metrics to further measure this impact, to monitor collaborations that have taken place and better see the influence of London Funders on policy and funding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Sharing of intelligence and good practice within the membership ✓ Our members and the wider funding community is clearer about the state of funding in London including issues of supply and demand; areas of overlap; gaps; and, the potential for new partnerships / models of funding. They therefore feel in a better position to make intelligent funding decisions. ✓ Policy outcomes achieved against agreed topics of relevance to funding in London ✓ 20 new partnerships, including private sector corporate funders ✓ Over 20 London Funders publications a year, including meeting reports, e-bulletins and occasional policy briefings.
<p>Policy priorities</p>	<p>Our member’s interests cover every aspect of London’s life. Most of London Funder’s work including networking opportunities, the e-bulletin and learning seminars will remain targeted at general funding policy and practice in London. However, to increase the impact of work around collaboration and policy influence we have identified three broad policy themes that reflect the diversity of our members. These will underpin a range of events, activities and outcomes for the next three years.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. Poverty, inequality and destitution; II. Children and young people; III. Health and wellbeing.

Our events

London Funders fulfils its mission by providing and facilitating a space where members can think, share, learn and collaborate together, and this is achieved through a range of activities, including an annual programme of events and meetings:

Funder Forums (4 meetings) – Broad policy/topical issues focussed, audience mostly from membership but may be opened up to other funders (and occasionally others) on a case by case basis and paid for. May be done jointly with other partners;

Learning from Funders (4 meetings) – Members only – training and learning network focussing on specific technical aspects of the funding process, or on the challenges facing funders in their relationships with those they fund;

Project Groups (Thematic and cross-cutting) – Project groups are member lead and look in detail at specific areas of interest and that cut across our policy priorities. Currently two are in operation. Open to all members and self-selecting.

- Assets (3 meetings)
- Project Group Research & Evaluation (3 meetings)

Action Groups (issue or policy based) – Action groups are time limited and focussed on developing a specific response or outcome, including examples of practical collaboration, around our policy priorities. Membership is to be drawn from members, and other players, on a case by case basis.

The learning and knowledge gained from this annual programme of events contributes significantly to the fulfilment of our other two core objectives:

- To be a voice for funders and to actively influence policy
- To identify and promote effective funding models