**Funding** **Resilience**

**Wednesday 16th October 2019**

**10am-12pm, Basinghall Suite, Guildhall**

**Attendees**

Tim **Preston** Charity Bank

Amy **Doyle** Commonweal Housing

Bally **Dhaliwal** Henry Smith Charity

Anna **Hoddinott** John Lyon's Charity

Debbie **Howitt** John Lyon's Charity

Mayuri **Raja** London Borough of Havering

Andrea **McDermott** London Boroughs Of Richmond And Wandsworth

James **Banks** London Funders

Geraldine **Blake** London Funders

Grace **Perry** London Funders

Lawrence **Roots** London Sport

Gemma **Rocyn Jones** National Lottery Community Fund

Lucy **Robson** Oak Philanthropy (UK) Limited

Sally **Brammall** Renaisi

Alice **Thornton** Renaisi

Jamie **Firby** Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames

Marcus **Loney-Evans** St Martins Charity

Stacey **Lamb** The Access To Justice Foundation

Julia **Mirkin** The City Bridge Trust

1. Welcome, introductions, purpose of the meeting

*James Banks, Chief Executive, London Funders*

James welcomed all to the meeting and thanks the City Bridge Trust for hosting us.

London Funders launched ‘[The Resilience of People in Community-facing Organisations: What’s the role of funders?](https://londonfunders.org.uk/resources-funders/london-funders-publications/resilience-people-community-facing-organisations-what)’ in April 2019. Since then we have seen resilience reports come through from multiple places across the sector, from serious youth violence to Brexit. Funders are coming together, looking at these trends and building an evidence base to think about how we can collaboratively make a change.

It’s really positive to see the new City Bridge Trust programme, testing and trying ideas, as no one currently has a correct answer. Also thinking about what more we can do as a funding community to support the wider community.

1. Frontline Worker Survey 2018

*Marcus Loney-Evans, Policy and Communications, St Martins in the Fields*

Following our [Frontline worker survey 2018](http://frontlinenetwork.org.uk/resources/), we have collected responses and feedback across multiple frontline sectors.

The report is the discussion of shared expertise across the frontline. This is our second report, totalling 830 responses from frontline workers, giving us a key insight. The overarching themes showed us that wellbeing is the cornerstone of front line work and often, if you don’t have the mechanisms in place for support and provision, then ‘burnout’ occurs amongst workers. Collaborative working and team work was especially important on the front line. Having structured time and support from management was important to workers and their feeling resilient.

For our next survey, in 2019, we want to get the perspective of funders, how funders can feed into the questions we ask the frontline.

Within the employment support sector, access to accommodation became a recurrent theme in our report, with 92% of respondents stating that ‘it was difficult to access specialist accommodation for their clients.’ Alongside this we saw mental health support really difficult to access. More generally it concluded that collaborative working, practice and personal approaches could give better access on a long term basis to someone’s experience with homelessness and mental health.

This report is used as a mirror to the front line rather than a strong lobbying response. We do share our results with other organisations who use our data to take on a strong response from the sector.

1. Responding to the Resilience Risk – what’s being tested

*Julia Mirkin, City Bridge Trust*

[Responding to the Resilience Risk](https://www.citybridgetrust.org.uk/responding-resilience-risk-launched/), launched in May 2019, came into existence because we know we don’t have an absolute answer of how to respond the findings in Frontline Networks survey, or others. We don’t yet know how to support resilience of front line workers that we are funding. We do know it is an important issue and organisations need support and guidance in how they support their staff. This funding will allow to look at different models and start to understand what good practice looks like while also learning what isn’t effective.

We set out a proposal that invited volunteer organisations to propose how they would address resilience in their organisations. We have funded six pilot projects that aim to develop and support front line workers across different sectors and areas in London. The six organisations are vastly different and have all put forward different ways to combat front line worker’s resilience.

At CBT, we didn’t want to assume that we know the correct answer and how organisations should carry out the work. We are working in partnership with [Renaisi](https://renaisi.com/), who will be independently measuring how effective the six organisations work is. They will be measuring this with the use of a specialised resilience measurement tool.

We will be bringing together the results from the pilot to an event in mental health awareness week 2020. This will be to share learning and think about how we can collectively respond with a consistent approach.

Our aim has always been to share the learning and move towards establishing joint understanding of what resilience is across the sector, and how we support it and work together with other funders to support our grantees.

*Alice Thornton, Renaisi (Learning Partner)*

Renasi is an evaluation consultancy and a front line organisation. We offer employment support to people in East, South & North London and have experienced this challenge ourselves.

The six projects are all very diverse so we need to be flexible in how we report on them, using a mixed method approach. Using the [Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale](http://www.connordavidson-resiliencescale.com/) we will be able to see how effective their programmes are over time. This will not report direct comparisons but we will be able to see how different tools have been used. The scale is a set of 20 statements and people rate themselves on a scale of 5, the higher the score the more resilient you are. It’s not a perfect representation, but it is an established and respected academic scale.

On a monthly basis we will ask all the participants to fill in the tool, then we can track their scores and see how they change, or not, over time. We hope to map against types of activities they are doing and the sectors they work in, to dig deeper into the results.

We are new to the tool, so are not sure how it will work. There is concern whether six months is long enough, but we are sure it will at least give us some understanding as to what does or doesn’t work. We are also using qualitative measures and feedback from people taking part (telephone interviews and field work visits). This will give us a sense of how the project has landed in the organisations. We will produce a report and contribute to the event in May.

Questions to Julia & Alice

Q. When you are rating them are you having one score per organisation or are individuals taking part?

A. Individuals will be asking. This ranges from small organisations with only seven people to larger ones with 23. Each person will complete this form monthly and it will be anonymous. We have already collected some baseline scores and can see the range within organisations and different members of staff.

Julia noted that this brings up the interesting link between organisational and individual resilience. This will be feeding into how we develop our core funding offer. Looking at the synergies between the projects and what role individual resilience plays in the overall resilience of organisations.

Q. How were the pilots were developed and will they be able to change as they go through the six months?

A. Central to the project design was that proposals came from the voluntary sector. Projects were designed by organisations who are being funded, with the premise we do not have the answers. We are approaching this as a research project so we can’t change half way through. Our aim is to understand what works and doesn’t work.

Projects might slightly tweak and evolve as they go along, we won’t be there to advise them as they go along, as we are too far removed to sensibly do so. They will be in the better position themselves to know. It’s a short term project so we are not sure how the finished results will look.

Q. What do you see happening next, after the six months?

A. As the scale varies from organisation we aren’t quite sure. Some of the larger ones will be bringing in consultants etc. That creates further questions around sustainability. Not just does the intervention work, but it is feasible to keep going and become embedded within the organisation?

Geraldine noted that feedback from the London Funders report was that there is no equalities lens in it. People are starting from different places in terms of their resilience. How resilience and equalities are linked, might come through and offer up some interesting reflections.

A. We are sure we will have much will answer regarding equalities from this project. As it’s very small and some of the organisations are very small, we have decided to not collect much personal data to keep trust i.e. team of seven becomes identifiable. But will hope to get reflections of individuals at the end.

We might have some results come up through the baseline measurements, but it really depends on the definition of resilience we are using.

Q. Are you considering that different roles in organisations will have different experiences? i.e. volunteers vs. trustees, which in small organisations can become blurred.

A. We are looking at roles. Some of which are very much volunteer based but some are at senior level. It’s very varied and some projects are tailoring needs to different roles.

Q. Will you be capturing data about funders expectations? As funders we are seeing more complex issues and expecting holistic approaches, but many volunteers are not trained i.e. to deal with trauma and child protection issues, but as a funder we expect them to be.

A. We aren’t sure yet, we think with some of the six we will be getting answers. Some are more general, they open the door to support whilst some are targeted and work with specific groups of people.

1. Recommendations for collaborative action from London Funder’s report

*Geraldine Blake, London Funders*

London Funders published the report in April 2019, identifying the people our grantees are supporting.

What struck most, was talking to organisations about training and, especially with volunteers, the lack of it when dealing with vulnerable people.

What the report talks about

1. The emerging focus on good mental Health. There has been a large investment of resources, and we are more open about the discussions. There are online resources and a sets of recommendations for what ‘good mental health at work’ looks like. There is still ways in which we can go further though i.e. labelling employees with mental health provision / resources for staff. There is still an attitude in the sector that, especially amongst front line workers, of sacrificial behaviour.
2. Going beyond good mental health and thinking about resilience, recognising that we struggle with what we mean. There is not a shared understanding of mental health vs resilience. Therefore, there are fewer resources for people to access. We, collectively, need to develop a set of recourses. The recent shift towards core and flexible funding will help this develop as will the CBT pilot.
3. It is not enough to ‘make people more resilient’ we need to change the circumstance of why they need to be so resilient. We need to challenge the environment, think about systems change, policy and campaigning. Take the opportunity to do this together.

Julia defined resilience as:

Resilience is a capacity within us all, we all have resilience. But is something that can develop in people as you would develop any other skills. Some staff might need to develop it through professional development. It is related but different to health and wellbeing. An individual’s mental health is influenced by a whole range of factors (i.e. birth through to daily life) but your capacity to deal with those challenges is something that is separate and can be enhanced. There is no denial that resilience and mental health are linked in some way, but I think you can be suffering with mental health and still be resilient to challenges. Or the opposite, you could have great health but not be resilient on day to day traumas from work and life. We don’t know why some are more resilient than others. If it is the case that we can develop it in people, it is good to know how we can help build people up at work.

Geraldine added to this that resilience is also set of circumstances around a person. Strong networks, learning encouraged, know if you ask for help you will get it, optimism and being able to be flexible with things aren’t working. A person needs those things in pace in order to be resilient.

1. Discussion on potential for funders to work collaboratively to support resilience.
2. What issues are emerging or have changed since starting these conversations around resilience?

* A noticed change in attitudes organisations have had around identifying complex needs. It seems to know be accepted that this is ‘how it is’ and there needs to be a response
* Increased awareness among funding managers who are taking these issues on board when looking at grant applications
* Some funders are now including questions about resilience on their applications to develop their understanding of how they can help organisations

1. What are you thinking of doing as organisations to take this work further?

* Understanding that this work doesn’t sit in silos from organisation to organisation, looking at what we can offer more broadly
* Trying to have a strong focus on wellbeing. Have funded phycologists to come to events and see how organisations manage their caseloads. Looking to develop a partner to work on this with
* Understanding it is not just the capacity of the people but the infrastructure available too. Support needs to be at all levels
* Asking grantees, the right questions, making sure we have the relationship where they are giving us honest answers, rather than forcing conversations with scores attached
* Moving towards core cost funding as an organisation, sharing our learning with other funders

1. What is your appetite for collaboration?

* The desire is there, but can take a long time to make changes in the organisation
* Willing to steer organisations to other funders who are already offering the support until we catch up
* Linking organisations to others with capacity at an earlier stage
* Organisations who are seeking funding from different funders, making sure what we offer is consistent so when they move there is a similar approach

1. What do you want to know / learn more about?

* To know if the issue of resilience is an issue in other sectors, and if so what are they doing to combat it? What can we learn from each other?

1. What can London Funders do to help?

* Sharing examples and reports of what others are doing
* Continue to convene these discussions
* Proactively bring talk of resilience into other conversations/meetings
* Is there a way to make the conversations publicly accessible, the more we talk about it openly the more grantees will feel able to