



## **London Community Response**

# **Learnings from the London Community Response's equity-centred grantmaking during Covid-19**



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# WHAT IS THE LONDON COMMUNITY RESPONSE?

The London Community Response (LCR) is a collaboration of 67 funders, powered by London Funders – the membership organisation for funders of London’s civil society. Responding to the covid-19 crisis, funders involved in the LCR have been working together to provide coordinated funding to support groups responding to the needs of the capital’s communities

**T**he single application point for charities and community groups has enabled organisations to access funding from multiple funders in a fast and efficient way. It has been designed based on insights from groups working with Londoners, to ensure that it is flexible and responds to needs as they emerge over time.

One year on from its inception, over £57.5m has been given out in grants through the LCR - with investment moving from crisis response in the early days of the pandemic, to building towards the recovery and renewal of civil society.

Working together, funders recognised that the social, economic and health consequences of covid-19 have disproportionately impacted those already-marginalised in society. The LCR funding programmes have prioritised supporting groups led by and for Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities, LGBT+ communities, Deaf and Disabled people and/or women.

## Learning Partners

To support the process of learning, unlearning and thinking for the future, London Funders appointed two Learning Partners - Reos Partners and the Social Investment Consultancy – to work independently, but alongside, the LCR partnership. Working together, both organisations have focused on the experiences of working across sectors, and have sought to capture how best London Funders and the wider LCR collaboration can influence the funding sector to maintain new and better ways of working in the ‘new normal’.

We had four questions to answer together:

1. How can we build on the experience of the LCR to enable future collaboration?
2. How can the experiences of civil society groups inform future ways of working?
3. How can we continue to strengthen our approach to equity and inclusion?
4. What should the key areas of focus be as we look towards renewal?



This report is our answer to question three, and was researched and written by a team from the Social Investment Consultancy.

We are grateful for the time and thought of the many people who have shared their insights and ideas to help us to inform this report and consider the future potential for funders. We also welcome your feedback on how this report can help lead to action today to help in transforming the city into a place where all Londoners can thrive.

TSIC has reviewed data from the LCR applications from Wave 2, 3 and 4 based on analysis conducted by London Funders, and conducted additional data analysis. We conducted two workshops with the four equity and inclusion partners (Ubele, Inclusion London, Women’s Resource Centre, LGBT+ Consortium) in October and December 2020, and a workshop with funders in March 2021 to support funder decision-making on equity led applications; as well as observed

various meetings of the Advisory Panel for the pooled London Community Response Fund (LCRF).

We took a rapid review approach in September and October, to ensure that learnings could be embedded into Wave 4 and 5, and conducted additional analysis in the first quarter of 2021. This included hosting two meetings jointly with funders and equity partners - one in December 2020 to review equity-related questions in the application form for Wave 5, and the second in March 2021 to support funder decision making on equity led applications.

London Funders has taken a collaborative approach working with us, while providing us autonomy in ensuring that the research insights are independent and robust. This learning project is part of London Funders’ wider learning agenda for LCR, in partnership with Reos Partners.

In addition, TSIC also conducted 12 one-to-one interviews (three equity and inclusion partners and representatives

of nine funders). These funders were suggested by London Funders as interviewees, given their expertise in equity and inclusion, and to reflect the diversity of funding organisations who make up the membership of London Funders. The funders interviewed are:

- **Dinah Cox**, City Bridge Trust, and Wembley National Stadium Trust
- **James Fitzpatrick**, Joseph Levy Foundation
- **Rachel Oglethorpe**, Peter Minet Trust
- **Lin Richardson**, Vision Foundation
- **Kelly Rust**, London Community Foundation
- **Farah Elahi**, Greater London Authority
- **Natasha Friend**, Camden Giving
- **Sarah Hale**, Hackney Council
- **Louise Mousseau**, Guy's and St Thomas' Foundation

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to the learning agenda so far and we hope the report will share much-needed insights to advance equity in the grantmaking sector. Beyond the publication of the report, we will continue to share insights informed by deeper-dives with funders in terms of how they embed equity in the funding decision-making process, as well as further observations from Wave 5 of the LCR.



**“There has been a cohesive approach to funding during Covid 19, probably thanks to the equitable funding principles that were developed early on by funders.”**

# CONTEXT SETTING

*“The collaborating funders have placed a strong emphasis on equity and inclusion, recognising that the pandemic is disproportionately affecting already marginalised and discriminated-against communities.”*

—London Funders, July 2020

LCR has adopted an equity and inclusion approach, which can be summarised as follows:

- **Including equity related questions** (Annex 1 and 2) in Wave 2-4 applications, and improving on them for Wave 5 applications (Annex 3);
- **Funding equity and inclusion partners** (see below) to strengthen the design and reach of the funding programmes;
- **Including “equitable” as a funding principle**, i.e. ensuring that funding decisions are as inclusive as possible and take account of the diversity of the sector - particularly of smaller organisations and organisations working with, and led by, marginalised communities;
- **Prioritising funding to reach target communities, namely Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME), LGBT+, Deaf and Disabled People, and the women’s sector** – equity and inclusion was a theme that organisations could apply under, as well as a cross-cutting principle.
- **All of the above were further strengthened in Waves 4 and 5.**

Looking at the needs analysis, London Funders recommended that the role of equity and inclusion partners be delivered by infrastructure bodies that have an established reach into target communities, namely BAME, LGBT+, Deaf and Disabled (D&D) people, and the women’s sector.

Four equity and inclusion partners, Ubele (with Council of Somali Organisations and London Gypsy Travellers as partners in Wave 2), Inclusion London, LGBT+ Consortium and Women’s Resource Centre, were funded throughout LCR with the following objectives:

- **Strengthen the reach of LCR’s funding programmes;**
- **Ensure that groups working with the most affected communities are supported to apply for funding to the collaboration, and;**
- **Provide support to the funder partnership to strengthen LCR’s approach now and for the longer-term.**

The partners have successfully reached out to communities in their networks to encourage and support applicants and provided intelligence to London Funders and the wider network on the funding process and priorities of communities.

# ACHIEVEMENTS OF EQUITY & INCLUSION APPROACH



The Covid-19 pandemic has amplified the inequalities in London, particularly for marginalised groups such as Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities, women, Deaf and Disabled people, and LGBT+ people.

Clearly, there is a need for marginalised communities to benefit from support provided by groups led by people with lived experience. LCR's equity and inclusion approach has achieved the following:

Over all five Waves of the London Community Response, **£28 million pounds** has been channelled to organisations led by people with lived experience most impacted by Covid-19.

Based on Wave 2, 3, 4 and 5 funding data, the total amount channelled to groups is over £28m, including 73.5% of all grants in Wave 3, 86.4% of all grants in Wave 4, and 70.4% of all grants in Wave 5 with the following breakdown:

	Wave 2 (£)	%	Wave 3 (£)	%	Wave 4 (£)	%	Wave 5 (£)	%
<b>Total grants distributed</b>	<b>£21,090,267</b>		<b>£18,820,746</b>		<b>£4,390,850</b>		<b>£11,300,914</b>	
BAME-led	n/a	43.8%	£9,249,010	49.5%	£2,650,523	60.4%	£5,668,532	50.2%
D&D-led	n/a	8.0%	£2,001,797	10.7%	£334,217	7.6%	£963,638	8.5%
LGBT+-led	n/a	5.8%	£1,130,019	6.0%	£329,267	7.5%	£726,621	6.4%
Women-led	n/a	58.8%	£6,582,399	35.2%	£1,679,856	38.3%	£3,121,492	27.6%
Total to equity-led orgs	£2,585,121	n/a	£13,739,473	73.5%	£3,792,917	86.4%	£7,952,685	70.4%

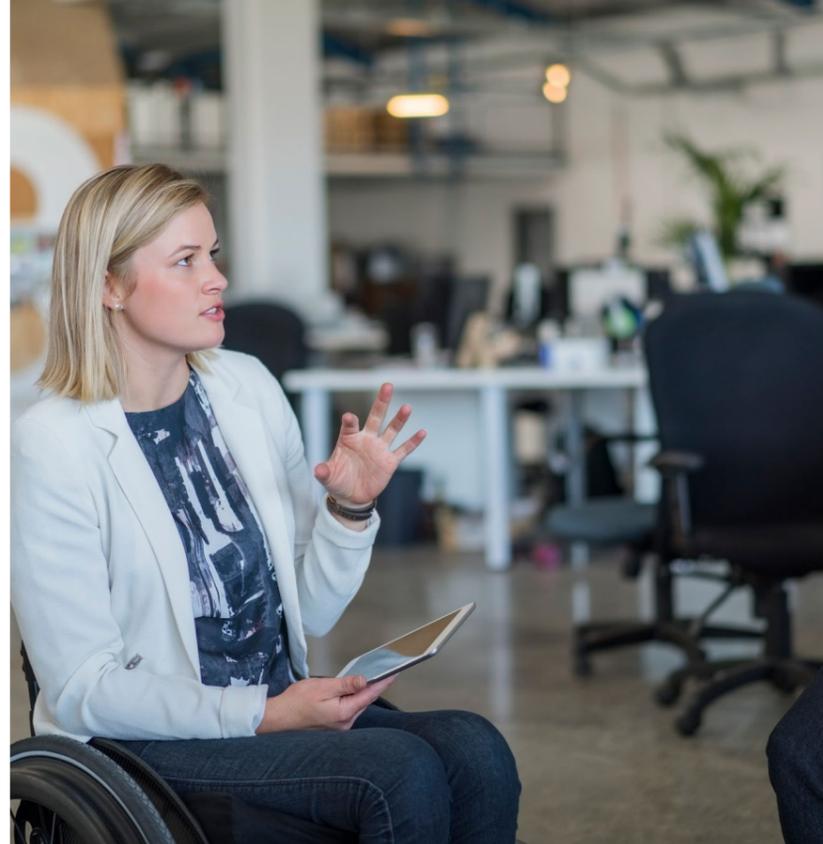
Note that the cumulative total of the four equity pillar rows in the table above is larger than the total for equity led grants amount in the bottom row as some of the grantees are intersectional and belong to more than one equity and inclusion pillar. The equity questions were added part of the way through Wave 2, so the percentages for Wave 2 in the four equity pillar rows are based on a sample over 4 weeks, but the total in the bottom row is the actual total of grants made to applicants who answered this question was answered. And the threshold for 'led by' was increased in Wave 5 (see p24) so the percentage of grants were expected to drop. However, the grants data have verified that equity and inclusion have indeed been at the centre of LCR. **The amount of grants channelled to these groups – considering how they have been historically underfunded – is testament to the success of the equity and inclusion partners to encourage a wide range of groups to apply.**

Intersectionality – the acknowledgement that people have their own unique experiences of discrimination and oppression and we should consider everything and anything that can marginalise people – has also been considered by LCR. Most funders interviewed cite that this is a relatively new area for them even though equity partners have thought a lot about this and advocate for an intersectionality approach to ensure that structural inequalities are being addressed. Looking at the data from LCR, 27% of the groups funded are led by groups facing more than one category of disadvantage. **The most common intersections are as follows:**

Pillars	Wave 3 number	Wave 4 number	Wave 5 number
BAME, Women	109	84	42
BAME, Deaf & Disabled, LGBT+, Women	9	3	3
BAME, LGBT+, Women	8	10	2
BAME, Deaf and Disabled	5	7	1
BAME, Deaf & Disabled, Women	5	4	6
LGBT, Women	4	3	3
BAME, LGBT+	2	8	4
Deaf and Disabled, Women	2	4	0
BAME, Deaf & Disabled, LGBT+	1	0	0
Deaf and Disabled, LGBT+, Women	1	0	0

Additional data analysis has been conducted to understand the barriers intersectional organisations may have.

All of the equity and inclusion partners are very positive about LCR's approach to equity and inclusion and that it is something new in the funding sector.



In individual interviews with equity and inclusion partners and the workshop, the partners are very positive about the approach. They were able to qualify LCR's unique approach to equity and inclusion, as shown by the following quotes:

*“From our perspective, there has been a cohesive approach to funding during Covid 19, probably thanks to the equitable funding principles that were developed early on by funders. We have been pleased with the increased focus on inclusion.”* — Maria Antoniou, LGBT+ Consortium

*“Our work with London Funders is definitely best practice. Being able to track the grants data from an equalities perspective. Not only are we part of the discussion about collecting equalities data with the funder, we are also involved in interrogating and interpreting the data, so it informs decision-making.”* — Yvonne Field, Ubele

*“We really value the opportunity to be formally part of a partnership of inequality organisations in a critical friend role and under the leadership of London Funders. The leadership set up an emergency funding response to Covid, but there is need for a better strategy – to make sure that deeper issues and structural inequality is being addressed and not just about emergency funding for the next six months... It is important for funders to add additional funding for grassroots organisations to work with other organisations, and come up for air (away from providing just service delivery).”* — Tracey Lazard, Inclusion London

*“Pooling of funders – getting so many funders to work together is the best way to tackle diversity and inclusion, and it's the genuinely central aim of the work. They have been committed to understanding deeper causes, funding us to be a formal critical friend as well as for outreach.”* — Tracey Lazard, Inclusion London

*“Their approach in engaging with the equity partners and prioritising led-by and for- organisations working with discriminated against groups, I think that is brilliant. We need to continue*

*the journey we have started and do more and keep improving, going, changing. It's a great thing because it is a coalition of funders that have come together, the first time that ever happened. This is an amazing opportunity for a shift in resources to tackle the central issue of structural inequality. It's been a first for us - and it's a challenge that London Funders is embracing.”* — Vivienne Hayes, Women's Resource Centre

The partners also appreciated being able to meet with other equality organisations, in this cohort approach, as their similarities and differences add to the holistic understanding of equity and inclusion:

*“The GLA Roots fund and LCR have provided that opportunity to connect with other equality organisations, and we haven't had that opportunity for years. This is very powerful as we are able to consider the different equality strands, and enable that to happen at every level. Good to have a chance to work with the other partners. Sharing experiences has been an informative and positive experience. Made us realise there is much more out there and it's helped working towards greater collaboration.”* — Tracey Lazard, Inclusion London

## Some funders involved in LCR have also been more exposed to equity and inclusion

Covid-19 has led to a renewed focus among funders to equity and inclusion, even those who have not historically funded with such a lens. There is evidence that LCR funder partners have been more exposed to equity and inclusion given LCR's efforts; most commonly cited is the webinar convened by London Funders with the equity and inclusion partners for the LCR funders during Wave 2 which led to questions being added to the application form, and from Wave 3 onwards, the explicit prioritisation of equity-led applications. A few also drew the focus on the choice of word – saying equity, not equality, as equity puts an emphasis on the fact that there is not a level playing field and that philanthropy needs to address the structural disadvantage.

*“LCR has done this really well; by saying that they will focus on BAME, LGBT+, disability, women, and actually say that we will exclude other organisations – wonderful to see. Funders coming together and agreeing on this has been wonderful. Equality issues are usually in the background, so it's great they had an agreement to reach specific groups. Constant discussions about the equality issues are also really healthy, it made us think more about the needs of LGBT+ organisations, for example”* — **Dinah Cox, City Bridge Trust**

*“Working with the partners deepened our understanding of the detail underneath to be able to broaden our outreach. Some of the most interesting conversations are with outreach officers, who also got to learn how decisions are made with trusts and foundations”* — **Farah Elahi, Greater London Authority**

*“The equity and inclusion partners were offering extra support; I know that Ubele was running regular Zooms on how to apply, how groups can answer the questions.”* — **Sarah Hale, Hackney Council**

Most of the funders interviewed at this stage of the research state that they are already relatively experienced with equity and inclusion, in the sense that this is already a funding focus for them, and that they have equity and inclusion strategies for their organisations. So in that sense, LCR did not add things that they didn't already know. Nonetheless, the experienced funders also said that it was positive to see funders talking about this as a collective.

*“What's been helpful for me and the two Trustees, is that one of the values of the portal is that it exposed us to organisations and needs and communities that we wouldn't*

*otherwise be exposed to. Part of our existing grantmaking strategy is that we're closed to unsolicited applications – but we will go out and select partners. This has meant that our Trustees, who have always been quite removed from grantmaking, have been more involved – two of them who have been through the portal have been exposed to a wider range of organisations, needs, and communities. This has been beneficial – hope this will influence the conversations over the next six months.”* — **James Fitzpatrick, Joseph Levy Foundation**

*“We attended all of the London Funders briefings, became aware of their commitment to equity and inclusion; so we discussed that more in our weekly meetings.”* — **Rachel Oglethorpe, Peter Minet Trust**

## A wide range of funders have been funding equity and inclusion directly through the LCR

LCR has also been able to mobilise a wide range of funders, including those who have not traditionally been funders in the equality space, to support user-led organisations. The table below summarises the number of funders who have contributed to user-led organisations in Wave 3 (note that this includes additional funders which have provided contributions directly to City Bridge Trust, London Community Foundation, and United St Saviour's through the collaborations they lead within LCR). More than 20 funders have supported more than one equity and inclusion pillars, with an additional 27 funders involved in the three pooled funds.

### Funders who have contributed to user-led organisations in Wave 3

Funders	BAME-led	D&D-led	LGBT+-led	Women-led
City Bridge Trust*	Y	Y	Y	Y
Cripplegate Foundation	Y			
East End Community Foundation	Y	Y	Y	Y
GLA Youth Team	Y	Y	Y	Y
Hackney Council	Y	Y	Y	Y
John Lyon's Charity	v	Y		Y
Joseph Levy Foundation	Y			
Kensington and Chelsea Foundation	Y			
London Community Foundation*	Y	Y	Y	Y
London Legal Support Trust	Y			Y
Mercer's Company	Y	Y		Y
St Giles Parochial Charities	Y			
Trust for London	Y	Y	Y	Y
United St Saviours Charity*	Y	Y	Y	Y
Vision Foundation		Y		
Walcot Foundation	Y	Y		
Westminster Foundation	Y			

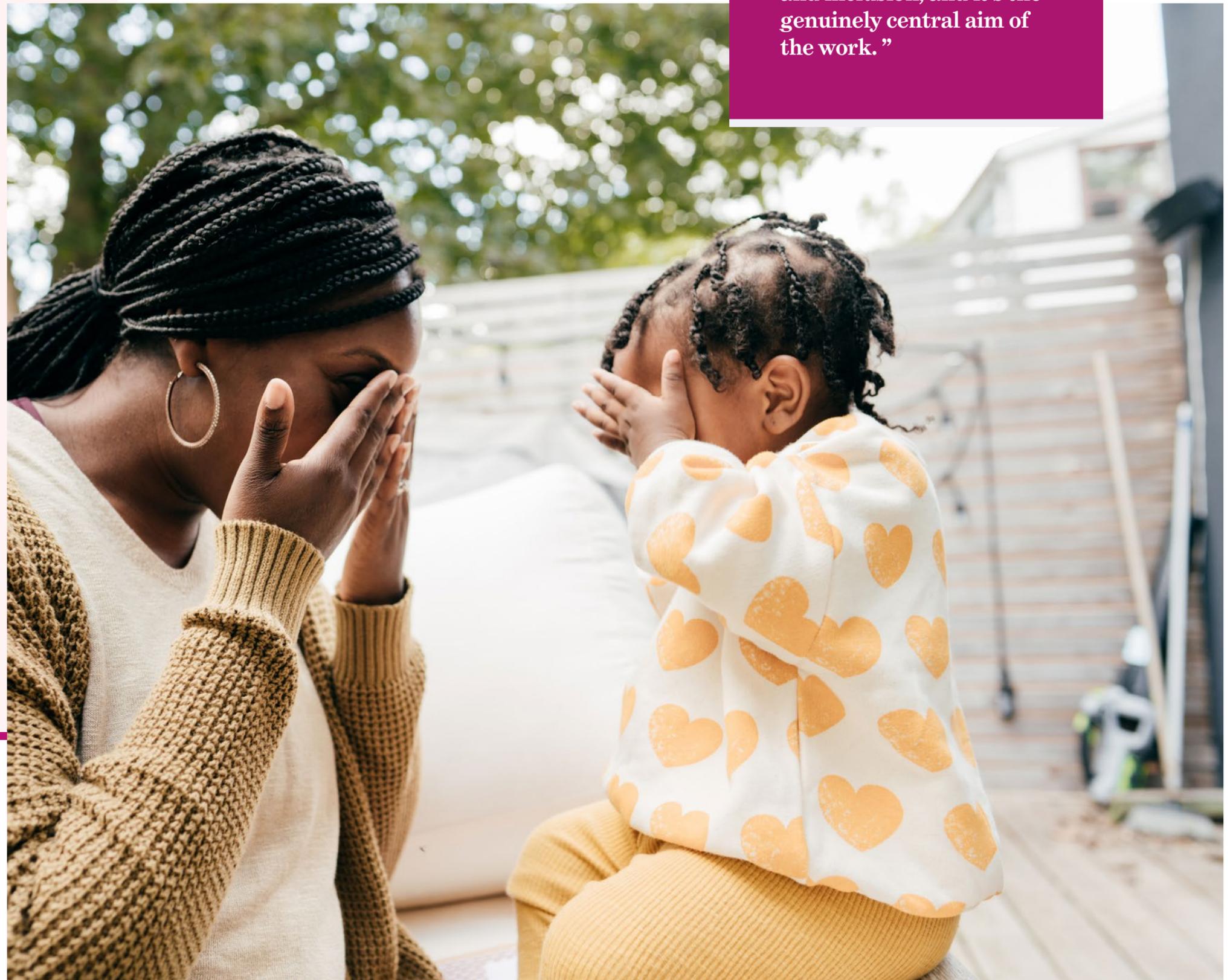
Even for funders who have had an equalities lens in their work, LCR has led to them funding new organisations:

*“One of the big draws, knowing the audience that they have in aligning funding programmes with LCR, it was able to have the opportunity for organisations that are really small who won’t apply to City Bridge Trust, Trust for London, etc... We supported new organisations we haven’t supported before historically.”* — Sarah Hale, Hackney Council

*“There was the element of shared risks by the collaboration, and it buffers the sense of risk-taking so more equity-focused organisations may have come through. By pooling resources together it increased capacity to do follow-up – for equity applicants, a huge follow-up amount was happening by assessors. (e.g. there are some organisations who didn’t have detail in their applications).”* — Farah Elahi, Greater London Authority

One of the worries raised by LGBT+ Consortium is that it would be the same funders funding LGBT-led organisations through LCR, but the data on the previous page shows that a wider range of funders are being engaged than the “usual suspects”.

**“Getting so many funders to work together is the best way to tackle diversity and inclusion, and it’s the genuinely central aim of the work.”**



# OVERVIEW OF FUNDING'S EQUITY DISTRIBUTION



The data given in this section is for Waves 2,3, and 4 only.

## Sifting – checking eligibility for funding

**The first stage for all applications received to the LCR was sifting, or a series of eligibility checks – is the organisation eligible for funding, is the work eligible under the criteria for this wave, are the costs requested eligible. These checks were carried out by a team of experienced grant managers from the collaborating funders.**

The eligibility statistics from Waves 2-4 provide an understanding of the sifting stage:

Eligibility of equity led applications	W2	W3	W4	
Eligible — all applications	64.7%	82.1%	72.2%	
Eligible BAME led applications	53.8%	74.9%	74.2%	(of all BAME-led applications)
Eligible Deaf & disabled led applications	55.2%	85.2%	81.7%	(of all D&D-led applications)
Eligible LGBT+ led applications	54.3%	74.6%	72.3%	(of all LGBT+-led applications)
Eligible Women led applications	73.7%	80.3%	76.4%	(of all women-led applications)
Eligible 'Not led by' applications	no data	86.4%	66.3%	(of all 'not led by' applications)

The eligibility for all applications was 64.7% in Wave 2, 82.1% in Wave 3 and 72.2% in Wave 4. The increase in eligibility rate for equity-led applications between Waves 2 and 3 is likely a result of the support the equity partners offered to applicants and the additional training and guidance provided by the equity partners for the sifters. Eligibility went down for Wave 4 but not as much for the equity-led applications as it did overall or for those who weren't equity-led. The disproportionately smaller decline among equity-led applications may be due to ongoing support for equity partners.

The gap in eligibility among the various types of equity-led organisations is also closing – most likely as a result of training that the equity partners provided to the sifting teams, and additional guidance on equity issues that was provided to sifters.

## Success rate

We can see that success rates dropped for all applications over the three Waves, so that provides some context for the slight drops in all categories except LGBT+-led where there has been good progress. Success rates for all led-by applications are consistently higher than for all applications, and significantly higher than for 'not led-by' applications.

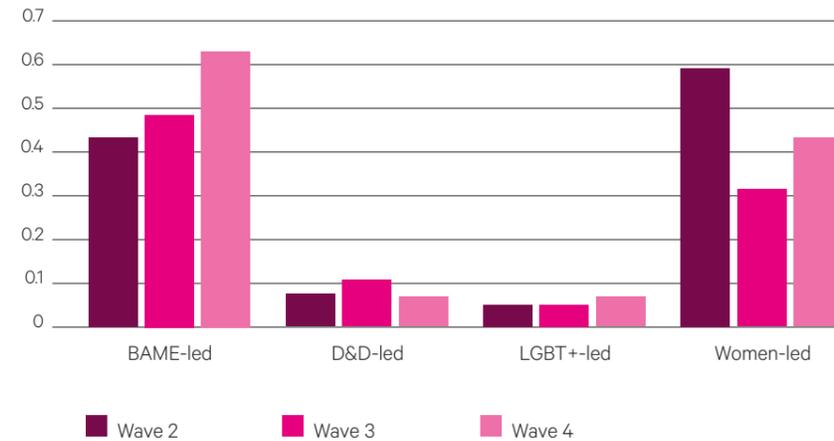
Looking at trends among organisations being funded across Wave 2 and 3, BAME-led and women-led organisations make up the largest proportion of grants offered in number. Comparing Wave 2 and 3, grants to BAME-led organisations have increased in number, from 43.8% in Wave 2 to 48.9% in Wave 3, to 62.7% in Wave 4 (18.9% increase), as well as to LGBT+-led organisations, from 5.8% in Wave 2, to 5.7% in Wave 3 (a slight drop) and 7.9% in Wave 4.

Success rates of eligible applications	W2	W3	W4	
All grants	66.0%	38.0%	34.3%	
BAME led grants	46.9%	45.7%	42.9%	(of eligible BAME-led applications)
Deaf & disabled led grants	33.3%	54.0%	38.3%	(of eligible D&D-led applications)
LGBT+ led grants	38.6%	47.9%	52.9%	(of eligible LGBT+-led applications)
Women led grants	42.6%	44.8%	43.4%	(of eligible women-led applications)
'Not led by' grants	no data	26.6%	16.7%	(of eligible 'not led by' applications)

The number of grants to Deaf and Disabled People's Organisations stay roughly similar, from 8% in Wave 2, to an increase of 3% to 11.1% in Wave 3, but going down to 7.9% in Wave 4 (-0.1% decrease). Number of grants to women-led organisations have declined even though they still make up a substantial percentage – 58.8% in Wave 2, 31.5% in Wave 3, and 43.4% in Wave 4.

The drop between Waves 2 and 3 is a result of adding an additional question in Wave 3 about which communities the activities would target – so funders were able to understand the connection between being led by women (a high proportion of community organisations) and led for women, and target their funding more accurately to those organisations that do both.

**% of grants to equity led organisations (number)**



**“This is an amazing opportunity for a shift in resources to tackle the central issue of structural inequality. It’s been a first for us – and it’s a challenge that London Funders is embracing.”**

Grants offered in value, compared to grants offered in numbers of organisations, are largely the same for BAME-led, women-led, and LGBT-led organisations across the two waves, which mean that organisations are receiving generally similar amounts. The only discrepancy is for Deaf and Disabled-led organisations in Wave 2: while they make up 8% of all grants offered in numbers of organisations, they only make up 5.1% of all grants offered in value. However, this discrepancy was not present in Wave 3, which saw a general increase in average grant size.

**Average grant size**

Equity pillar	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 4
BAME-led	£12,456	£24,023	£9,268
D&D-led	£9,987	£23,009	£9,284
LGBT+-led	£11,045	£25,112	£9,146
Women-led	£12,884	£26,542	£9,940

# KEY INSIGHTS FOR MOVING FORWARD

## 1. Outreach / developing partnerships

In terms of reaching out to potential applicants, equity partners generally felt that this has worked well, though they are not able to keep track of whether the groups they helped ended up applying and getting the funding.

*“The thing that came back to us from people who attended the webinars; 1:1 sessions with bid-writers is that they came away feeling more confident. It’s been confidence rather than people’s ability and people’s work that has been hindering them to apply. They now felt that had a right to write the funding applications. We’ve got some feedback from people who said what they took from it. Webinars were popular, well-used.”* — Michael Hamilton, Ubele

*“With our experience in Southwark, we found that there was a high level of awareness of the fund and there were lots of grants available – these were helpful for us in terms of outreach.”*

— Rachel Oglethorpe, Peter Minet Trust

## 2. Engagement between equity partners and funders

Equity and inclusion partners have mentioned that they would like to engage more with funders directly, or at least to understand more how funding works so they can give more relevant recommendations.

*“We would welcome more engagement with funders and opportunities to raise awareness of the needs of our communities.”* — Maria Antoniou, LGBT+ Consortium

*“Certainly I haven’t operated in the world of trusts and foundations - I don’t know much about them, where they get money from and different ways they use it. As we don’t have massive knowledge about funding, maybe we are not able to ask the right questions. Not knowing how a fund operates means that we might be missing something,”* — Vivienne Hayes, Women’s Resources Centre

In Wave 5, equity partners have been invited to participate in the LCRF Advisory Panel meetings for the pooled fund with funders and so far, there’s been positive feedback about their contribution, particularly on advising whether an organisation meets the equity-led definition, and on the needs of specific communities.

### 3. Removing barriers in the application process

The application form was designed to be simple and accessible whilst still providing the information required by the 67 collaborating funders. There has been generally positive feedback on the application process (that it is simple, relatively short, and with a quick turnaround), and this is especially important for equity applicants. However, some areas of concern specific to the application have been raised by more specialist (in terms of theme and geography) funders, which may speak to potential barriers that equity applicants face:

*“The form had 3-4 times as many questions as my funding application, which was giving around 30k. From our experience in Southwark, the application process was quite onerous, not easy. The process itself, we found, put off people. We had to help them through it. Maybe in other areas of London, it wouldn't have happened. A lot of the amazing groups couldn't navigate it.”* — Rachel Oglethorpe, Peter Minet Trust

*“LCR made it harder to support blind and partially-sighted people because there are lots of organisations that help people with visual impairments but is not the main focus... They put in quite general applications. For example, older people have visual impairments. I went into LCR expecting there are lots of charities with blind and partially-sighted people – what I found is that it was hard to find those projects. They weren't trying to target Vision Fund. I*

*can't support them, and this brought a lot of frustrations, in knowing that people need support, but the way charity wrote their application in a general way to meet 67 funders – as a specialist charity, I just can't support them. If they applied to me directly, they would tell me things I needed to hear.”* — Lin Richardson, Vision Foundation

*“Thinking beyond the standard application form and a grantmaking process - we need to move beyond the structural system, as otherwise there is a risk that they will perpetuate inequalities. In the shorter term, the focus on project funding in the middle of a crisis was not that helpful from an equity perspective. Some small organisations will have to spend a long time putting together a proposal, time that they don't have. We are actually not asking organisations to fill in applications anymore – we go to see them, and we help them fill in applications. However, we are aware that not all funders can do that – we can do it because we are place-based and have the capacity.”* — Louise Mousseau, Guys and St Thomas Charity

During the application process, the equity partners spent additional time supporting unincorporated groups to access funding through being fiscal hosts.

*“We have acted as fiscal hosts for two organisations - we can do this because we have a stronger governance structure, but it is very time intensive.”* — Paul Roberts, LGBT+ Consortium

### 4. Sifting and assessing applications

A few mentioned briefly that the sifters are not always well-placed to comment on the equity and inclusion dimensions of the applications, or are not aware of the local dynamics, but remedial measures have already been implemented by London Funders. The example from the Southwark funder collaboration sheds light on how this can be done differently, by recruiting representatives from affected communities that would serve as critical friends to those sifting or assessing applications:

*“We encouraged Community Southwark, which supports groups in Southwark, to run a surgery to Black-led groups on how to apply to Wave 3. United St Saviours were actively helping people on the phone. But the frustrating thing is that these groups applied, and we then heard that the sifters had knocked them back, but we wouldn't know that...”*

*We also employed representatives of Black community to be a critical friend, and we realised how much we were learning. We found a way radically to go forward as a group. This came with our decision to ringfence funding to Black-led groups. The two representatives we employed sense-checked and criticised the applications coming through, and what we learnt is how little we understood. It was so refreshing to have their insights, one was a shielding volunteer, and the other worked for Community Southwark”* — Rachel Oglethorpe, Peter Minet Trust

## 5. Funding decision

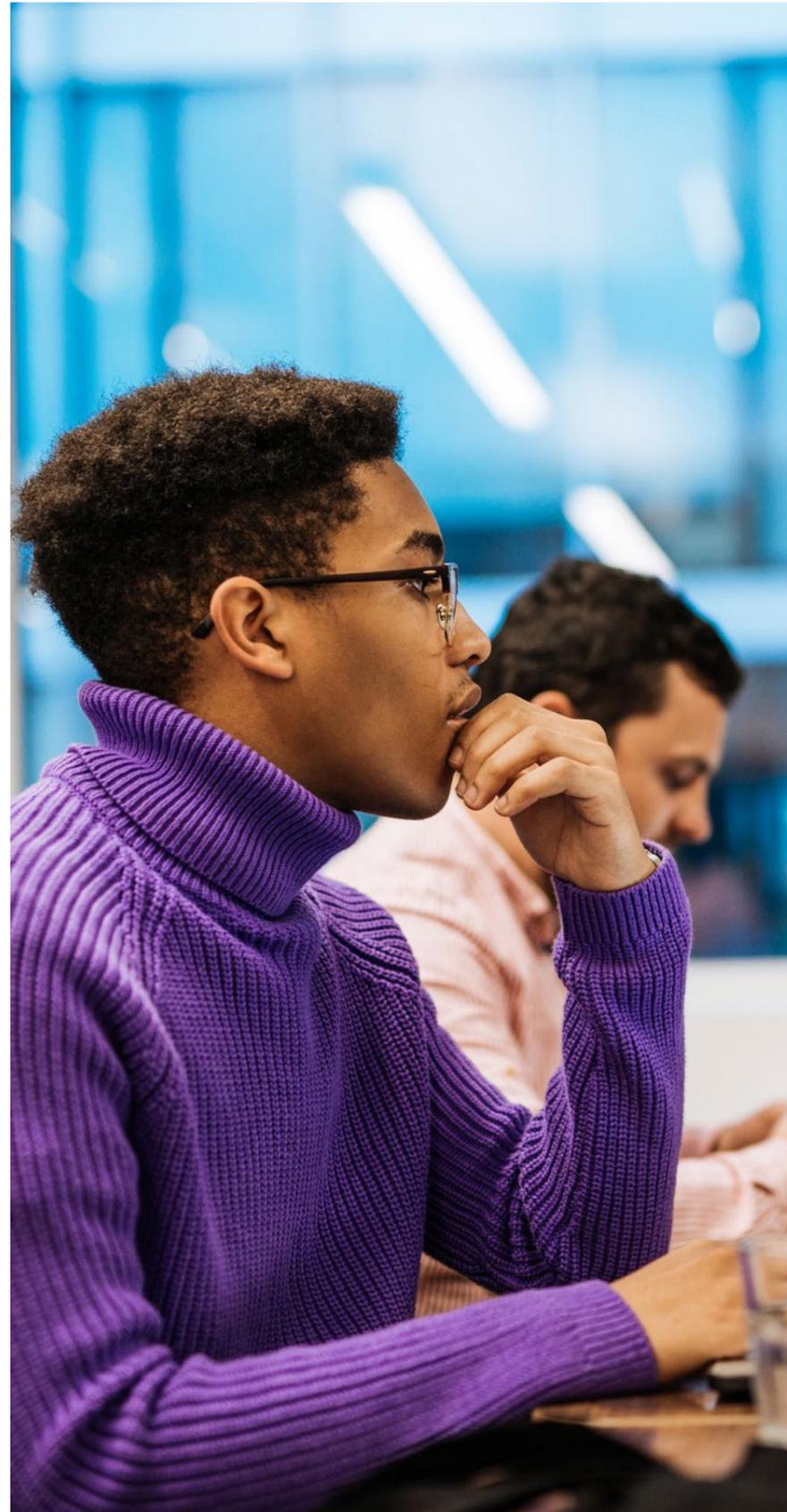
Interviewees who commented on this stage of the process all referred to the portal in that it was a great way for them to learn about the projects and enabled them to make funding decisions. Yet given the different ways funders make decisions, it is suggested that the next phase of the learning project goes into further detail and consider how power dynamics play out.

A funder, Camden Giving, has very different ways of making funding decisions that may be interesting for local partners of LCR to consider, and warrants further exploration:

*“My view is that participatory grantmaking is infinitely better than participatory consulting. The point is that people with lived experience have good decision-making. How differently participatory panels react to different applications – you can't make things they know into formulas because they have lived through them.”* — Natasha Friend, Camden Giving

Equity partners would like to know how they could play a role in funding decisions. Inclusion London mentioned in the workshop that, “some of the most interesting experiences for us was not just outreached to disabled peoples' organisations to apply, but when the organisation is rejected, going back to look at this, playing a mediation role. We have had applications rejected, then resubmitted, then got awarded.”

Our observation of the LCRF Advisory Panel for the pooled fund in Wave 3 showed that the funders took a relatively high level of risks and had assessors go back to the groups to get more clarifications. In Wave 5, equity partners also became members of the LCRF Advisory Panel feeding into the funding decision process for the pooled fund, which enabled the views of the communities to be represented in a more equitable manner.



## 6. Experience of grant funding

Given that interactions with grantees have been relatively limited in this element of the learning project, we have analysed the survey data gathered by Reos Partners in October 2020. This included surveying grantees from Wave 2 and 3, regarding their experience with LCR.

As mentioned, LCR has captured information whether organisations fall into more than one equity and inclusion pillar – also categorised as “intersectional organisations”, that they are led by communities facing intersectional inequalities. In conversations with equity partners, it appears that some of these groups’ needs could warrant further attention; and based on the experience of Eleanor Lisney, who founded an

organisation led by disabled women, intersectional organisations often find it difficult to secure the support they fully need. Hence, we analysed the responses to the question, “To what extent did the support that you received enable you to better support communities in London during early phase of the Covid-19 crisis?”, and sought to understand whether there are differences between intersectional organisations and non-intersectional ones (though still equity-led ones).

Based on our analysis, 73% of non-intersectional organisations said very well, only 63.6% of intersectional organisations said very well – 10% difference and this difference is statistically significant, as shown in the tables below.

In order to understand why this might be, more discussions and reflections with equity partners would be needed. From our observations, intersectional organisations are working with and are led by populations facing multiple and severe disadvantage, and find it more difficult to find the appropriate support they need. According to Eleanor Lisney, there is often a sense of needing to pick between being a women’s organisation or a DPO, and that support is often tailored to each of the two groups but not a disabled women-led organisation, which has a distinct set of challenges as well as compounded existing challenges that apply to these groups.

### Intersectional dummy variable

\*Verywell=1

			.00	1.00	Total
Intersectional organisation dummy variable	0	Count	113	310	423
		% within intersectional organisation dummy variable	26.7%	73.3%	100%
	1	Count	55	96	151
		% within intersectional organisation dummy variable	36.4%	63.6%	100%
Total	Count	168	406	574	
	% within intersectional organisation dummy variable	29.3%	70.7%	100%	

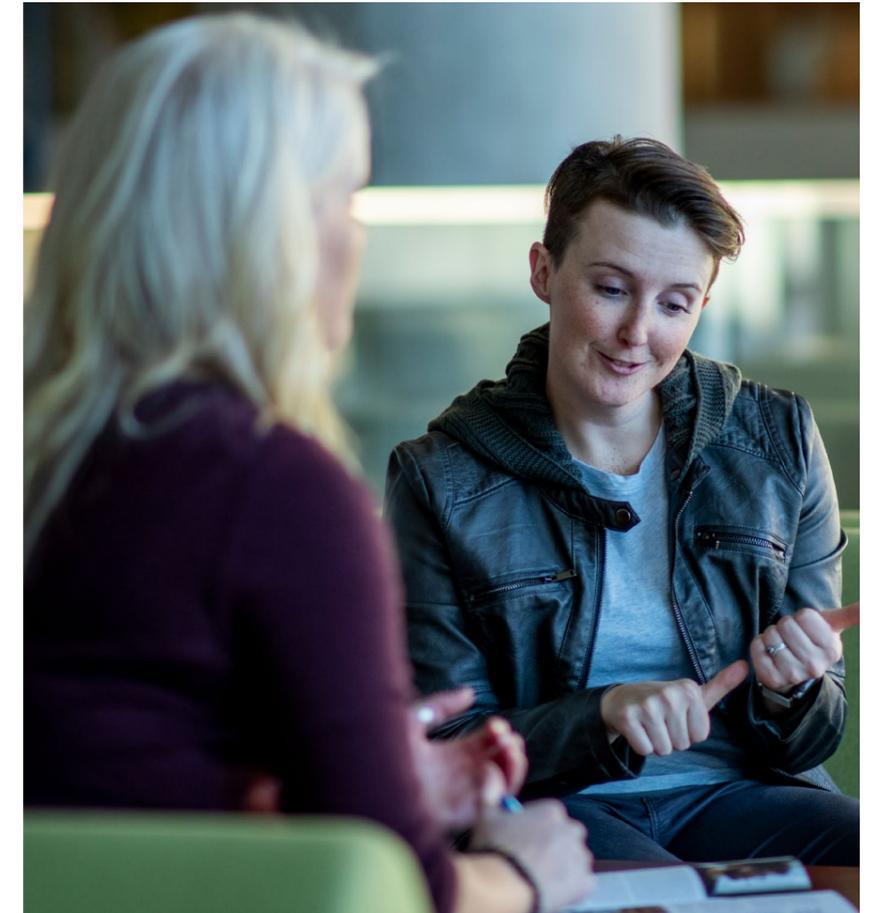
### Chi-Square Tests

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 44.20

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

	Value	df	Asymptomatic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5.068 <sup>a</sup>	1	.024		
Community Correction <sup>b</sup>	4.610	1	.032		
Likelihood Ratio	4.938	1	.026		
Fisher’s Exact Test				.029	.017
Linear-by-Linear Association	5.059	1	.024		
N of Valid Cases	574				

“We need to make sure that deeper issues and structural inequality is being addressed and not just about emergency funding”



## 7. Learning and other support to grantees

There is a question about how to support groups that did not manage to get the funding? There was a recommendation from James Fitzpatrick that, “LCR should add itself to Grant Advisor to get anonymised feedback from applicants, grantees and those who didn’t apply.”

In terms of maintaining relationships with grantees, other interviewees have suggested that LCR should consider funder plus support, especially supporting smaller groups with governance, as well as moving towards unrestricted funding, which are especially important for equity applicants. Some of the LCR funders will already offer funder plus support to the organisations they grant fund, but this was not standard across the collaboration.

When asked about LCR’s role, most interviewees said that one of its roles is learning through research and insights – and from this, LCR can take a role in influencing funder practices. However this needs to be investigated further in the next stage of research, through the deep-dives with funders that will continue past the publication of this report. It will also be important for the learnings from this report to be shared back with the interviewees, with the LCR network, and the wider funding sector.

## 8. Understanding equity-led organisations

Equity and inclusion partners have stated that there needs to be more clarity around the definitions of equity-led organisation.

For LGBT+-, BAME- and women-led organisations, the standard definition is 51% of Board (or equivalent governance body) and Senior Management Team members being from the community. This definition has been used for Deaf and Disabled-led organisations but at Inclusion London, the definition of user-led organisations, i.e. Deaf and Disabled People's Organisations (DDPOs) is that their Management Committee or Board has at least 75% of representation from Deaf and Disabled people, not 51%.

The original definition adopted by LCR caused concern from Inclusion London. Tracey Lazard from Inclusion London reflected that:

*“There is a health warning regarding analysis of Wave 3 data. A lot of non-DPOs are being funded that LCR think are user-led. Loads of non-DPO's are being funded under the umbrella of DPO's. For instance, there was a project to enable deaf kids not to learn BSL? They are missing out on Deaf and Disability Politics – funders need to know about the social model of disability.”*

Tracey Lazard mentioned that this definition is adopted because in the disability sector, there has been a history of non-disabled people taking up resources that should go to disabled people; and the 51% does not allow for disabled people to have full control and

power over the organisation. Tracey also mentioned that most funders need to move from basic to sophisticated understanding of the equality sectors, especially of the disability sector, and that only Trust for London has adopted their definition of DDPOs, launching a fund that specifically funds DDPOs.

After a discussion among equity partners in December, it was proposed that LCR adopt the definition of D&D-led organisation for all equity-led organisations. There were slight concerns among the LGBT+ sector that organisations would be inadvertently asked to 'out' their identities given the 75% threshold, but the concern was eventually addressed. This is an example of solidarity, as while the various sectors had their own definitions, this was an opportunity to create a shared definition. Funders of LCR then accepted the proposal and this has been used for Wave 5.

Another theme that emerged from the discussion among equity partners in December was the human rights approach. All equity partners discussed that it is important to understand whether applicants are taking this approach, as it helps situate the focus on tackling structural inequalities. Hence, an additional question, “is your organisation's mission focused on tackling inequalities and advancing the rights of a particular group?” has been added to the application.

In Wave 5, funders also began to offer the following as a footnote where 'BAME' was used:

\* in this guidance and on the application form we have used the abbreviation BAME. We recognise the diversity of individual identities and lived experiences, and understand that BAME is an imperfect term that does not fully capture the racial, cultural and ethnic identities of people that experience structural and systematic inequality. There is space on the application form to describe your community, and we will use your description when talking about the grants made wherever possible. We will be working with partners from across London's diverse communities to find better language for any future waves of funding from the London Community Response.

See Annex 3 for the updated questions in the application form for Wave 5.

## 9. Distinction between led-by and for

Another area to consider is the distinction between led-by and for. Several interviewees have mentioned this, especially in instances where it might not be possible for organisations to be led by people with lived experience:

*“There was an application for learning disabled people. The organisation wasn't led by learning disabled people (with complexities with the Charity Commission mentioned) – but the work was very much centred on learning disabled people. Or with a dementia group – ensure their voices are heard. Mission and leadership should be looked at together.” – Dinah Cox, City Bridge Trust*

*“So, it's not just about being BAME-led; it's also about BAME beneficiaries as well. Which I think is definitely part of a jigsaw of funding because, for a lot of organisations, funding from the London Community Response will just be one element of the funding that they're getting... I'd say are there any beneficiaries or priority areas which are what we should be focused on that we aren't, but also how we best have impact with reduced funds and increased demands?” – Kelly Rust, London Community Foundation*

Given the lack of clarity over the overlap (or lack of) between led-by and for-, or between the demographics of leadership and that of beneficiaries, we have conducted further analysis of Wave 3 data. We found that demographics of

organisations leadership and beneficiaries match with each other to a large extent.

Where all demographic groups identified in the description of the leaders of the organisation, this was counted as a full match. Where only some of the demographic groups identified of the beneficiaries were present in the description of the leaders of the organisation, this was counted as a partial match. The key findings are:

**685 applications were a full match**, of which 604 were approved (88%).

- Given that the total applications (including those not led by) in this wave were 2,570, 26% of all applications had full match between demographics of organisational leadership and stated demographics of beneficiaries.
- 43% of all equity-led organisations (n = 1,565) had full match between demographics of organisation leadership and stated demographics of beneficiaries.
- Full matches were more likely to be approved than the applications overall (83%).

**304 applications were a partial match** – 11% of all applications or 19% of equity-led applications.

While most equity-led applicants are led-by and for groups belonging to the same demographics, it is not to the full extent – it would be helpful to understand deeper the relationships between the two.

**“Not only are we part of the discussion about collecting equalities data with the funder, we are also involved in interrogating and interpreting the data, so it informs decision-making.”**

After reviewing qualitative data, we found that 283 additional applications had a stronger than stated match. Some of these will already have been recorded as a partial match.

We have identified some reasons why this may have been the case.

- Organisations which are not exclusive to a given group yet have a high proportion of beneficiaries of a given group do not wish to appear exclusive.
- People receiving mental health support are not widely recognised as disabled people, despite being legally protected as disabled people under the Equality Act 2010.
- Some faith groups stated targets BAME, whilst other organisations offering services to those of the same faith did not state targets BAME.
- Some organisations offering services to refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants stated targets BAME, whilst others did not. Some using wider term, BAMER.
- Many disabled people were listed as beneficiaries but not stated as targeted, even for well recognised impairments such as cerebral palsy.
- Tick boxes were non-compulsory; consider adding a Not Applicable box and making it a compulsory question.
- Some may have felt that the tick boxes were obsolete given their clearly typed answer.

These may help improve the way we collect data moving forward.

# CONCLUSION

**In the past few years, diversity, equity and inclusion have become a strategic area for funders to focus on. While there are multiple initiatives in the UK to spearhead this agenda in the foundations sector, LCR is one of the few funder collaborations that channels actual funding to organisations, beyond knowledge sharing and learning.**

During Covid-19, there are a few funder collaborations that channel funding to equalities organisations but they almost exclusively focus on only one of the equality groups, such as Comic Relief's funding in partnership with National Emergencies Trust for BAME-led organisations or UK Community Foundation's funding to BAME infrastructure organisations (also in partnership with National Emergencies Trust). Compared to these initiatives, LCR has a pan-equalities remit which not only ensures that a broad spectrum of marginalised groups are supported, it also facilitates moving beyond the silos, recognising that many of the issues that marginalised groups face are interconnected. One area that LCR may benefit from in the future is the 360giving's Equalities Data Standards project, also coordinated by TSIC, aiming to provide a taxonomy for those funding voluntary sector organisations to adopt in streamlining how equalities data is being collected and used.

From TSIC's initial analysis and observations, it is clear that LCR has demonstrated very good practice in equity and inclusion, and that it should continue to maintain its current focus on user-led organisations. To strengthen its focus on equity and inclusion further, adjacent is the list of recommendations.

**To facilitate the work of equity and inclusion partners, London Funders can:**

- track whether the groups they helped ended up applying and getting the funding;
- provide them with designated contacts for specific things (such as communications, engagement with funders, data and evaluation);
- provide avenues for them to engage more with funders directly, or at least to understand more how funding works so they can give more relevant recommendations; and
- share the learnings more actively with funders.

**Generally speaking, the LCR collaborating funders can:**

- consider funder plus support, especially supporting smaller groups with governance;
- move towards unrestricted funding, which is especially important for equity applicants;
- consider further support for intersectional organisations;
- reconsider their own definition of D&D-led organisations (from 51% to 75% representation for Board);
- consider possibilities of simplifying application forms or enabling customisation so equity applicants can target specific funders; and
- consider how equity partners could play a role in funding decisions, especially mediating when funding applicants are not successful.

Moving forward, the next phase of the learning project should focus on digging deeper into how funders make decisions and how different power dynamics play out, and how they may affect the chances of equity applicants in getting funding. It may also be interesting for others interested in research, to understand successful and non-successful equity applicants' experience of the process, and their barriers when accessing funding, which has not been fully addressed by this research but is evidenced as an important area to truly understand how funding can be truly equitable.

## Annex 1: Equity-related questions in application forms in Wave 2

### Are you an organisation led by and for marginalised communities and those most affected by the covid-19 crisis?

We define 'led by' as when more than 50% of an organisation's senior leaders (trustees and managing staff) are people with lived experience.

#### Yes/no tick boxes for

- BAME
- Deaf and disabled
- LGBT+
- Women
- Not led by and for marginalised communities

### Who does your organisation help?

For example, do you focus on particular age groups, gender groups, black and minority ethnic groups, deaf and disabled people, LGBT+?

## Annex 2: Equity-related questions in application forms in Waves 3 and 4

### Are you an organisation led by and for marginalised communities and those most affected by the covid-19 crisis?

We define 'led by' as when more than 50% of an organisation's senior leaders (trustees and managing staff) are people with lived experience.

#### Yes/no tick boxes for

- BAME
- Deaf and disabled
- LGBT+
- Women
- Not led by and for marginalised communities

### Who does your organisation help?

For example, do you focus on particular age groups, gender groups, black and minority ethnic groups, deaf and disabled people, LGBT+?

### Is the work you are seeking funding for targeted at a particular ethnic group?

Yes/No

### Is the work you are seeking funding for targeted at the LGBT+ community?

Yes/No

### Is the work you are seeking funding for targeted at people with a disability?

Yes/No

### Is the work you are seeking funding for targeted at women?

Yes/No

## Annex 3: Wave 5 equity questions

### Are you an organisation led by marginalised communities and those most affected by the covid-19 crisis?

We define 'led by' as when more than 75% of an organisation's Trustees are people with lived experience; and more than 50% of staff members (including senior) are people with lived experience.

#### Yes/no tick boxes for

- Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME)
- Deaf and Disabled
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT+)
- Women
- Not led by and for marginalised communities

### Is your organisation's mission focused on tackling inequalities and advancing the rights of a particular group?

For example, do you focus on particular age groups, gender groups, ethnic groups, deaf and disabled people, LBGT+? Please specify.

#### Yes/no tick boxes for

- Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME)
- Deaf and Disabled
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT+)
- Women
- Other: Please specify

### If yes, please give us an example of what you do that shows the equalities focus of your work.

Max word count 50

For example, is this included in your governance and articles of association, and/or recent materials you have published?

### Is the work you are seeking funding for targeted at a particular marginalised group, which is most affected by Covid-19 crisis?

By targeted we mean more than 75% of the funding will benefit a particular group

#### Yes/no tick boxes for

- Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME)
- Deaf and Disabled
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT+)
- Women
- Other: Please specify

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