



**London Community Response**

**Recommendations  
for improving the  
processes behind  
funder collaboration**



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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.

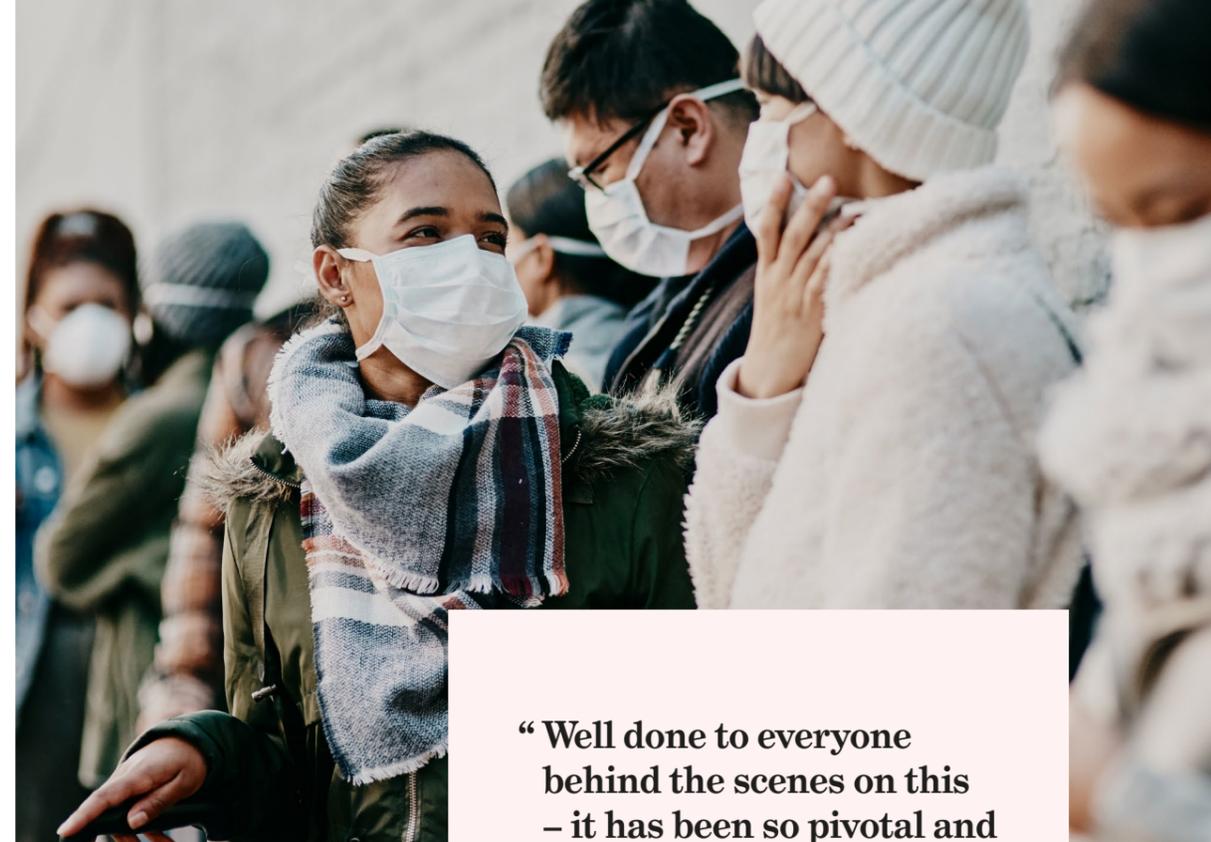
Working together, funders recognised that the social, economic and health consequences of covid-19 have disproportionately impacted those already-marginalised in society. The LCR funding programmes have prioritised supporting groups led by and for Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities, LGBT+ communities,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



“Well done to everyone behind the scenes on this – it has been so pivotal and I really think it will help shape the future of grant making. I hope the learning is shared far and wide beyond London, and hope versions of collaboration can happen on a larger scale in non-covid times.”

— Collaborating Funder

This report answers question one and was written and illustrated by a team from Reos Partners.

Thank you to City Bridge Trust/LCRF, Paul Hamlyn Foundation, the Greater London Authority, United Saint Saviour’s and the London Community Foundation for funding this learning, unlearning and thinking partnership.

## Purpose

This report asks ‘How can we build on the process of the LCR to enable future collaboration?’

The learning process comprised:

- A thorough desk review of relevant materials on the LCR’s process to date;
- An analysis of a reflection survey completed by 36 collaborating funders;
- An analysis of a grantee survey completed by 546 applicants; and
- A workshop with collaborating funders to reflect on the findings.

The following report:

- Summarises the LCR five waves of funding; its core principles and process;
- Sets out detailed recommendations on the process from funders and grantees, with responses from London Funders;
- Gives an overview of the benefits of LCR in the voices of collaborating funders and grantees; and
- Identifies the keys for successful collaboration in the future, and what we are still learning.

# WAVES, PRINCIPLES AND PROCESS

**The London Community Response released five Waves of funding over the year from March 2020. These were:**

## Wave 1 – React

- Small grants up to £5k for food and essentials
- Open for applications from 27 March – 8 April
- 420 grants, £1.8m

## Wave 2 – Respond

- Crisis Response grants up to £10k
- Delivering Differently grants up to £50k
- Open for applications from 9 April – 19 May (Delivering Differently) and 15 June (Crisis Response)
- 1,363 grants, £21.1m

## Wave 3 – Resource

- Small grants up to £10k
- Large Grants up to £50k
- Crisis, Enable and Adapt – prioritising equity and inclusion
- Open for applications from 1 – 31 July
- 800 grants, £18.8m

## Wave 4 – Revitalise

- Small grants up to £10k
- Crisis - prioritising equity and inclusion
- Open for applications from 12 November – 3 December
- 456 grants, £4.4m

## Wave 5 – Renew

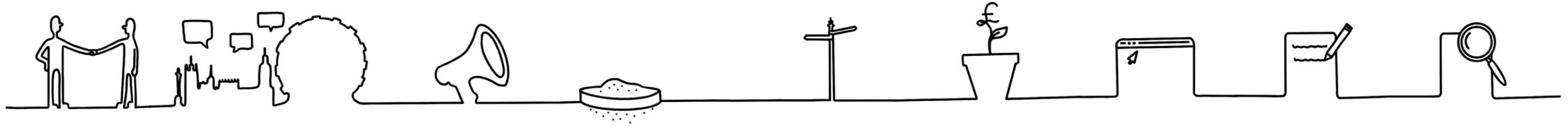
- Small grants up to £10k
- Large Grants up to £50k
- Crisis, project and core grants – prioritising equity and inclusion
- Open for applications from 14 – 21 January (crisis) and to 15 February (project and core)
- 391 grants, £11.3m

Collaborating Funders agreed on a set of eight core principles, which are both embedded in the LCR process overall and apply to all of the funding programmes that are developed through LCR. The principles detailed below draw upon learnings from the previous funder responses to emergencies, including the Grenfell Tower fire.

- **Intelligent:** seeking intelligence from those on the ground about what is needed and feeding this in continually to funder responses.
- **Straightforward:** seeking to do the possible not the perfect in a fast-changing environment and dealing with unexpected difficulties in a straightforward way.
- **Easy:** simplified processes to multiple funders for applicants under severe personal and professional stress: a single application form, light-touch due diligence, and one reporting channel.
- **Quick:** a commitment to appropriate speed, recognising that crisis responses need to be very fast but there will also be a need for more reflective responses over time.
- **Trusting:** managing risk through relationships, putting trust at the heart of what we do.
- **Equitable:** 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.
- **Flexible:** making grants unrestricted where possible to allow organisations to adapt activities, outcomes and deadlines as the situation changes.
- **Reflective:** building in learning and insight about how the sector is changing and preparing to embed the best elements in day-to-day practice when the crisis is over.



The principles are woven through each step of the LCR process:



1.

Outreach/developing partnerships

Equitable | Trusting

- One to one conversations with funders explaining how the collaboration works and why its needed.
- Initial conversations with large funders followed by smaller funders, businesses and local councils.
- Ensure equity partners have the funding and capacity to participate.

2.

Needs assessment

Intelligent

- Gather intelligence to set strategic areas of focus for upcoming funding wave.

3.

Application process

Equitable | Easy | Quick | Straightforward

- 3a. Develop and refine criteria and guidelines for applicants.
- 3b. Develop/refine application form:
  - Development/refinement of a single application form for multiple funders that is accessible to all.
- 3c. Develop FAQ document.
- 3d. Launch program and call for applicants:
  - Application form is made available on the LCR website.
  - Programs are made available on the LCR website for CSOs to view, and read guidance.
  - London Funders, Equity Partners. Collaborating Funders and relevant infrastructure bodies promote programs via communication strategy.
- 3e. Providing Additional Support:
  - CSOs request additional support if needed through the link on website.
- Submission of Application Form:
  - CSOs fill out and submit their applications through the LCR website..

4.

Sifting

Equitable | Quick | Trusting

- Sifting to ensure that:
  - Organisations are eligible.
  - Applications fit criteria.
  - Due diligence has recently (within 2 years) been carried out by one of the collaborating funders. In the case that is has not then undertake basic checks.
  - The application form is complete with all requested documents.
- Liaison with equity partners on training for sifters to provide guidance on equity related considerations.

5.

Funding decision

Equitable | Easy | Quick | Straightforward | Trusting

- 5a. Funders portal:
  - CSO who made it through the sifting process are placed on the funder only portal where funders can search for Wave, geography and theme to locate applications relevant to them.
- 5b. Selections of applications:
  - Funders review applications available on the portal and use the "bagsie" function to express their interest.
- 5c. Funding decision:
  - Funder further assess grants.
  - Grants that are agreed are marked on the portal as completed and transferred to a lost of completed grants.
  - Funders contact applicants and inform them of approval.
- 5c. Rejection:
  - LCR team inform applicants who are rejected.

6.

Reconciliation/ follow-up

Straightforward | Flexible

- 6a. Reconciliation:
  - Making application data accessible to funders in a way that it can easily be merged for their own grant management systems.
- 6b. Coordination/follow-up with grantees:
  - Funders maintain open communication with grantees allowing room for flexibility in a fast changing environment.

7.

Communicating success

Quick

- LCR publish list of grants and running totals of funds secured and distributed on the website fortnightly.

8.

Reporting

Easy | Quick | Straightforward

- Funders use the same core questions for reporting to allow for easy analysis and to combine learning across the partnership more effectively:
  - What did you do?
  - Who did you help?
  - What did you spend?
  - What did you learn?
  - What longer-term changes can you see from this work?
  - What ongoing issues are you, and the people you work with facing?

9.

Learning & evaluation

Reflective

- An analysis of the core reporting questions answered by funders is conducted at the end of each grant period.
- Continuous learning throughout the process is encouraged through open communication between all stakeholders and honest feedback.

Roles

- London Funders team
- Funders
- Equity Partners
- Civil Society Organisations

# BENEFITS OF COLLABORATION

## Grantee Voices

*“This process is a true example of how funding in London should be delivered. It allows small organisation, like us, to receive funding that may not have been available to us previously. It’s had a huge impact on us.”*

*“The support that we received from the LCR was absolutely invaluable. It allowed us to roll out new emergency services during the height of the crisis and then to come up with a longer-term more sustainable response after lockdown ended. It has been an absolute lifeline for our service users.”*

*“It has been really excellent overall. The effectiveness is remarkable, a model for other organisations, groups or projects. Well streamlined, fuss free, and just a helpful encouraging support. Well done very frankly.”*

*“The flexibility reflected that the funders trust London charities as the professionals they are. We were able to deliver rather than focus on communicating with the funder.”*

*“The grant enabled us to continue. Without it our future was uncertain. And it enabled us to be able to deliver to communities who needed us.”*

## Funder Voices

*“The small team at London Funders has done an incredible job over the past months of rapidly creating this collaborative funding scheme in response to the need of local communities. There has never been a response on this scale, to the best of my knowledge, and hopefully there will never be a need for a similar response again. However it has seen huge success in getting money out of the door quickly to those that need it.”*

*“Through aligning funding it has enabled us to reach community groups who would not traditionally come in for funding from us. In being able to pick up proposals from the portal we are now in contact with and funding organisations we haven’t funded previously that support our equality ambitions and this is leading to discussions on longer-term funding.”*

*“As an aligned funder the regular knowledge exchange and sharing of insights from specialist charities on the frontline has been invaluable in informing and evidencing our wider grant-making strategy.”*

*“The overall experience has changed the potential approach of grant funding and how funders can genuinely work collaboratively, which should not be lost.”*

**“The effectiveness is remarkable, a model for other organisations, groups or projects. Well streamlined, fuss free, and just a helpful encouraging support.”**



# KEYS TO SUCCESS



- The core principles that were agreed upon by the London Funders team and Collaborating Funders were fundamental in aligning the large scale of work that was being done.

*“The joint principles reinforce our values as a responsive and flexible funder and have further encouraged positive communication with our grantees in relation to adapting their approaches and plans.” — Collaborating Funder*

- Cultivating a shared sense of purpose among Collaborating Funders.
- The regular intelligence calls and the development of a needs analysis document allowed for a good understanding the needs of the communities.

*“The principles and needs analysis were incredibly important to validate this approach to donors in London for our fundraising.” — Collaborating Funder*

- Clear eligibility criteria for applicants.
- Designing and ensuring the implementation of a fast and efficient process.

*“What was interesting is the speed with which it was done. Compared to how slow the sector generally moves, but they did it so fast when they needed to – its shown that the fast pace is possible. This should be the benchmark on how quickly things should move in the sector” — Collaborating Funder*

- Developing a concise single application form for multiple funders.

*“Charities were pushing to make single application form, single monitoring form since 25-30 years ago. Especially for Equalities organisations which tend to be smaller and less well-funded. London Funders finally did it with LCR.” — Grantee*

*“The application was simple, straightforward process, staff were available to answer questions and we had follow up calls with various members of the team who were genuinely interested to know more about our work and willing to work with us to ensure our application was successful.” — Grantee*

- The central funders portal to access all applications which resulted in quick access to civil society needs and expanded funders reach.

*“Our Trustees, through the portal are exposed to a wider range of organisations, needs and communities. This has been beneficial and will shape our foundation’s strategy” — Collaborating Funder*

- Shared due diligence amongst funders.
- First stage sifters undertaking eligibility checks
- Having regular communication and updates with funders.

- Collaboration around decision-making.
- Light Touch: Simple monitoring and reporting.
- Funders were flexible - adaptable to the changing needs, allowing budget allocations to be targeted where they were required.

*“The flexibility reflected that the funders trust London charities as the professionals they are. We were able to deliver rather than focus on communicating with the funder. The funds were adequately unrestricted.” — Grantee*

- Transparency - grants awarded were transparently published on the website.
- The involvement of a diverse array of equity partners - enabling opportunities for collaboration and learning among equity organisations (in the cohort approach) as their similarities and differences add to the holistic understanding of equity and inclusion.

*“Providing the opportunity to connect with other equality organisations, and we haven’t had that opportunity for years. This is very powerful as we are*

**“Our Trustees, through the portal are exposed to a wider range of organisations, needs and communities. This has been beneficial and will shape our foundation’s strategy”**

*able to consider the different equality strands. 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 for working towards collaboration.” — Equity Partner*

• Ability to mobilise a wide range of funders, including those who have not traditionally been funders in the equality space. Even for funders who have had an equalities lens in their work, LCR has led to them funding new organisations.

• Choice of word – using 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.

• Intersectionality – the acknowledgement that people have their own unique experiences of discrimination and oppression and to consider everything and anything that can marginalise people.

# DEVELOPING PARTNERSHIPS

## WHAT WE DID

- **One to one conversations with funders explaining how the collaboration works and why it's needed.**
- **Initial conversations with large funders followed by small funders, businesses and local councils.**
- **Ensure equity partners have the funding and capacity to participate.**

## Engaging with Equity and Inclusion Partners

### RECOMMENDATIONS FROM FUNDERS

- Involve equity and inclusion partners from the start on a strategic and operational level.
- Engaging more frequently with funders.
- Equity and inclusion partners would like to engage more with funders directly, or at least to understand more how funding works so they can give more relevant recommendations

## LONDON FUNDERS' RESPONSE

**Equity and Inclusion Partners:** Our equity and inclusion partners joined the collaboration during Wave 2. They were fully involved in developing priorities for Waves 3, 4 and 5, in reviewing the questions we asked, in training sifters, questioning decisions where necessary, and in reflecting on learning. In Wave 5, the equity partners helped funders to agree a more challenging threshold for the definition of 'equity-led' and to expand the equity related questions in the application form. The equity partners also took part in a workshop with funders on decision-making on equity-led applications and joined the Advisory Panel for the pooled fund. We have really seen the benefit of involving partners from the start of a wave, and in ensuring there are frequent opportunities to come together for people in different roles in the funders with the equity partners. We will continue to involve the equity partners in shaping, delivering and reflecting on any future waves of funding, and in looking at maximising opportunities for engagement between partners and funders.

# NEEDS ASSESSMENT



## WHAT WE DID

- Gather intelligence to set strategic areas of focus for the upcoming funding wave.

### Needs assessment

#### RECOMMENDATIONS FROM FUNDERS

- Engaging communities in identifying key priorities for funding.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS FROM GRANTEES

- Communicate outcomes of the needs assessment to the voluntary sector in a timely manner to allow them to align their services to the strategy more closely.
- Work closely with civil society support groups to identify needs within a community.

### Policy Influence

#### RECOMMENDATIONS FROM FUNDERS

- Analysis of issues emerging from the practical support provided and linking this with generating evidence for policy change. e.g. going upstream. Exploring how to link up the intelligence from different streams.

#### LONDON FUNDERS' RESPONSE

Communities are engaged in building intelligence about needs through the London Community Response fortnightly survey of civil society organisations and through involvement on the Funders and Civil Society Group and the London Recovery Board. The London Funders website hosts a [covid-19 resource hub](#) of research generated by civil society. The data from the applications is analysed to identify the key issues facing communities and civil society organisations and this is shared through the cross sector resilience groups - e.g. the FCVS group, so that this goes up the chain to government (regionally and nationally) as part of the asks for changes to be made in policy - so whilst some of this work has been less public, we have been doing work "behind the scenes".

# APPLICATION PROCESS



## WHAT WE DID

- **Develop and refine criteria and guidelines for applicants.**
- **Develop/refine application form:**
  - Development/Refinement of a single application form for multiple funders that is accessible to all
- **Develop FAQ document.**
- **Launch programme and call for applicants:**
  - Application form is made available on the LCR website.
  - Programmes are made available on the LCR website for civil society groups to view, and read guidance.
  - London Funders, Equity Partners, Collaborating Funders and relevant infrastructure bodies promote programmes via communication strategy.
- **Providing additional support:**
  - Civil society groups request additional support if needed through the link on the website.
- **Submission of application form:**
  - Civil society groups fill out and submit their applications through the LCR website.



## Application Form

### RECOMMENDATIONS FROM FUNDERS

- Wider consultation on the questions used in the form.
- Be mindful of accessibility requirements.
- Questions should be more specific.
- Ask for context: how covid has impacted the communities they operate in and what response their organisation has/hasn't been able to provide.
- Include formatting differences between heading/questions and the answers when made available on the portal.
- Allow the option for organisations to apply for core funding or for specific projects.
- Tick box for applicants on nature of work - advice/research/practical support etc to help with later allocation.
- Allow for multiple theme selection - often projects fall across themes.
- Consider the distinction between led-by and for with regards to equity pillars.

### RECOMMENDATIONS FROM GRANTEES

- Add: any other relevant information that may be helpful to LCR when making a decision.

## Providing Additional Support

### RECOMMENDATIONS FROM FUNDERS

- Make helplines available to applicants for assistance.
- Equity partners continue to support groups through the application process.
- Provide an online tutorial link so that grantees can really understand what information funders are looking for, and provide video/audio applications spaces.

## Application Guidance

### RECOMMENDATIONS FROM FUNDERS

- Let applicants know the average successful grant amounts for different types of grants.

### RECOMMENDATIONS FROM GRANTEES

- Clearly indicate what cannot be funded.
- More specific application criteria guidelines
- Having a series of blogs/videos from funders outlining key reasons for funding or not funding.

### LONDON FUNDERS' RESPONSE

**Providing Additional Support:** Throughout the process we've welcomed applicants requests for assistance via our central [info@londonfunders.org.uk](mailto:info@londonfunders.org.uk) address and followed up with additional information or a phone call as needed. If we can't provide the support they need directly, we connect them to a funder who can, and will continue this for future waves ensuring it is clear on the website that this is available. Groups can also access bid-writing workshops via the equity partners, which we have participated in to help answer questions directly. We've signposted on the LCR website to resources such as safeguarding during covid, and will add additional signposting to resources that connect to the issues the applicants have told us they need non-financial support with.

**Application Form:** This feedback has been really helpful to us as we make amendments to the application form between each Wave, including revisiting the questions that relate to equity and inclusion. Mindful of accessibility, the equity partners were funded to provide capacity-building support in previous waves, including assisting with completing applications where there were barriers to groups to do so, and we have been listening to their feedback throughout to help further strengthen the accessibility of the form. For Wave 5 we held co-design sessions with collaborating funders and equity partners to take into account the different questions needed for both project and core applications. Both included two separate questions on the nature of work and the theme of the application.

**Application Guidance:** We wrote the criteria for future Waves with this feedback in mind. We've been publishing grant information on the website as decisions are made so that people can see the size of grants made for different organisations, and have also published summary reports of the application and grant which includes success rates and average grant sizes.

## WHAT WE DID

### — Sifting to ensure that:

- Organisations are eligible
- Applications fit criteria
- Due diligence has recently (within 18 months) has been carried out by one of the collaborating funders, in the case that it hasn't then sifters undertake basic checks.
- The application form is complete with all requested documents.

### — Liaison with equity partners on training for sifters to provide guidance on equity related considerations.



## Sifting

### RECOMMENDATIONS FROM FUNDERS

- More training for sifters.
- Create a sifters portal.

## Sifting team

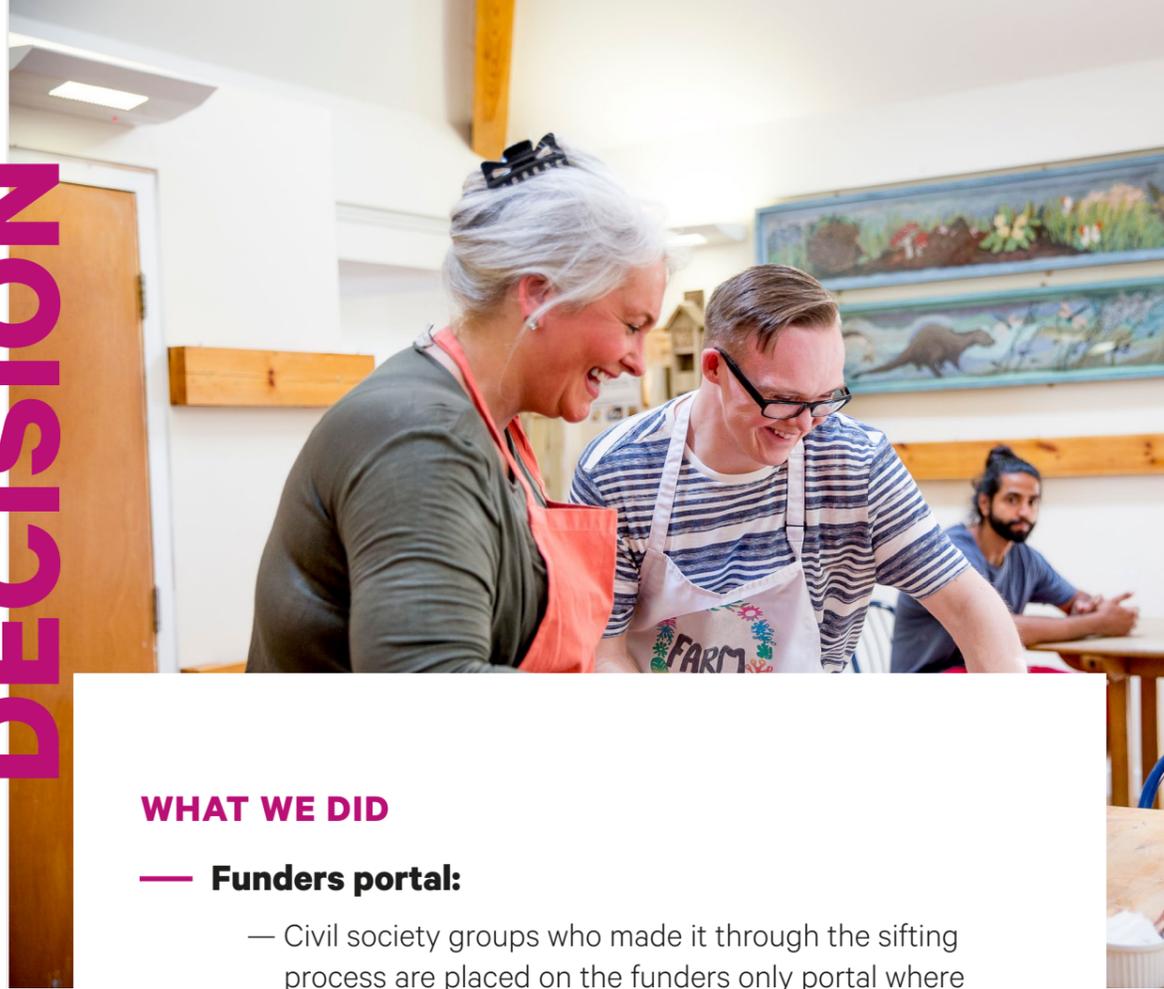
### RECOMMENDATIONS FROM FUNDERS

- Insist on commitment from collaborating funders to provide staff for sifting.
- Streamline the sifting role to standardise quality of sifting.
- Smaller more dedicated team.
- Need to feel empowered by their leadership team to devote time to it, so it might be useful to find out from funders who are wishing to utilise the portal, at the point of their commitment, what (if any) sifting support they can offer.
- Consider diversifying the pool of sifters - training for people with lived experience on how to be sifters.

### LONDON FUNDERS' RESPONSE

**Sifting:** Sifters are an essential part of the LCR process, and we have been hugely grateful for the commitment of some amazing people from across the funding community in the first waves! We worked with our partners throughout to make the sifting process as simple, easy and accurate as possible, and to be clear about what is needed, in order that people from across the collaboration are enabled and empowered to take part.

# FUNDING DECISION



## WHAT WE DID

### — Funders portal:

- Civil society groups who made it through the sifting process are placed on the funders only portal where funders can search for Wave, geography and theme to locate applications relevant to them. Applications can also be sorted by unclaimed so funders can immediately see what is available.

### — Selection of applicants:

- Funders review applications available on the portal and use the “bagsie” function to express their interest.

### — Funding Decision:

- Funders further assess grants.
- Grants that are agreed on are marked on the portal as completed and transferred to a list of completed grants.
- Funders contact applicants and inform them of approval.

### — Rejection:

- LCR team inform applicants who are rejected

## Funders Portal

### RECOMMENDATIONS FROM FUNDERS

- Make the portal more state of the art to deal with the large volume of applicants.
- Improve the search functionality.
- Include an email address attached to comments on applications for funders to easily contact each other.
- A way to record questions asked to charities where answers can be seen by all interested funders to minimise enquiries.
- Include an interested tab so that interested funders receive a notification when a bagsied application is released.
- Improve bagsie function to ensure that applications aren't taken off the portal too soon or for too long - create an alert system so that there could be a collaborative view first of all especially once geography and themes are taken into consideration.
- Search by title in funded projects.
- A dashboard specific to each funder.
- A space for funders bio to explain their approach, priorities and timelines so that other funders can see clearly and the ability to update their bio as their priorities evolve.
- Ability to easily move bids to relevant themes if the provider has chosen wrong.
- Add a function in the portal that enables LCR to more analytically look at who is benefiting from funding.
- Once an application is rejected it disappears from the portal. When that organisation reapplies it would be useful to see previous application status and why it was rejected.
- Funders leave comments on why they have released applications back onto the portal.
- Ability to search in greater detail on applications (and then monitoring) on e.g. borough/level of economic disadvantage would really support EDI monitoring and validation.
- Letting funders know when all applications are on for the areas they look at e.g. CYP - so the applications that go on last can still get looked at.
- Allowing funders to increase the amount to more than requested.
- With funders opening up to applications directly, applicants may come in for funding twice, directly to funders or LCR. Ability to record comments from funders if we are also looking at similar or the same application.

## Funding Decision

### RECOMMENDATIONS FROM FUNDERS

- A tiered approach to let smaller funders working in limited areas to take a first look at new applications.
- A tiered approach that helps those with more flexible budgets then focus on orgs that may not get funding any other way.
- Have a standard time that an application can be held.
- Faster response period.
- Need clear deadline for how long a project can be “live” but not considered before it is then declined. Funders need the ability to give feedback on why they have declined a particular application.

### RECOMMENDATIONS FROM GRANTEES

- Timescale for approved applicants,
- Award grants with sufficient time to mobilize and deliver outcomes.

## Co-Funding

### RECOMMENDATIONS FROM FUNDERS

- A system to allow co funding to take place more easily. Providing a comment with a rationale on why the full fund was not provided.
- Co-funding should lead to an auto email to both funders connecting them up.

### RECOMMENDATIONS FROM GRANTEES

- More clarity in the case of multiple funders providing grants for an applicant.

## Rejection

### RECOMMENDATIONS FROM FUNDERS

- Speeding up the process for those who have not been successful.
- Enable some form of feedback for applicants turned down.
- Include a comment box specifically for grantee feedback where funders that wish to could comment why they didn't fund and all of the comments of that box could then pull through to the rejection letter.

### RECOMMENDATIONS FROM GRANTEES

- Provide applicants who aren't successful more detailed feedback on why they were not successful for learning.



### LONDON FUNDERS' RESPONSE

**Funders Portal:** We continue to seek to improve the portal's functionality and many of these suggestions were embedded in Waves 4 and 5. The usefulness of the portal also depends on funders making full use of the comment box to share intelligence on applications and to let each other know what they are interested in. Note that funders can also search for applications that fit their criteria using the daily csv file provided of everything on the portal. This portal was designed in crisis, for use in crisis - in the longer term, we will review with partners what a 'state of the art' portal could deliver. We've also been mindful throughout the process that we need to balance cost with benefit - at the moment all of the funders who have been part of the partnership have been able to come on board and make grants through the portal at no cost, with the small development costs being met by London Funders and two of the partner funders - we can scope something more "state of the art" if partners can allocate budget to support this. The development costs for the portal represent approximately 0.0007% of the money that has been given out.

**Funding Decision:** We already have a two stage approach with aligned funders getting the first look at applications and the pooled fund only looking at what's already been on for a week or so. It is really helpful for both funders and applicants to have clear timelines on decision making.

**Co-Funding:** We would like to explore the co-funding challenges with partners.

**Rejection:** London Funders is often asked for feedback, and provides it where we can. In Waves 4 and 5, we offer feedback to applicants who had received a 'your application is not eligible' email before they applied again as the reasons are recorded by sifters. Funders are asked to leave comments on the portal if they have reviewed an application and decided not to fund it.

# RECONCILIATION AND FOLLOW UP



## WHAT WE DID

### — Reconciliation:

- Making application data accessible to funders in a way that it can easily be merged for their own grant management systems.

### — Coordination/follow-up with grantees:

- Funders maintain open communication with grantees allowing room for flexibility in a fast changing environment.

## Coordination and Follow up

### RECOMMENDATIONS FROM FUNDERS

- Allow for unrestricted funding.
- Increase the flow of information back and forth between funders and grantees - funder feedback should occur before the end of reporting as a development opportunity.
- Grants Plus support e.g. governance and financial resilience

### RECOMMENDATIONS FROM GRANTEES

- Provide funder feedback at the end of reporting.

### LONDON FUNDERS' RESPONSE

**Coordination and Follow up:** We have fed this back to funders.

# COMMUNICATING SUCCESS

## WHAT WE DID

- Publish a list of grants and running totals of funds secured and distributed on the website fortnightly.



## Communication

### RECOMMENDATIONS FROM FUNDERS

- Externally celebrating the larger funders (that wish) and having mechanisms to promote corporate citizenship/social impact/shared value.
- The impact of the collective response is still something that could be expanded on or promoted to the public in different ways.
- A way of publicly updating on progress- and also after the grants are done - the mini case studies etc that grantees have been sharing on social are really good - but we only see them if they are tagged/shared correctly - how can we capture these without making things too complicated.
- Would be interested to know more/think more about how we can make that less of a blunt instrument approach.

### RECOMMENDATIONS FROM GRANTEES

- Make public a map of all the projects supported through the grant.

### LONDON FUNDERS' RESPONSE

Communication: There is an LCR communications group who share an overview of social media and case studies with regular press releases and videos produced by organisations like Bloomberg that were excellent at shining a light. We've also tried to celebrate the partners through the recognition we have received - for example the HRH Prince Philip Award - and will continue to do so.

We're looking to make more of the data on grants publicly available and interactive.

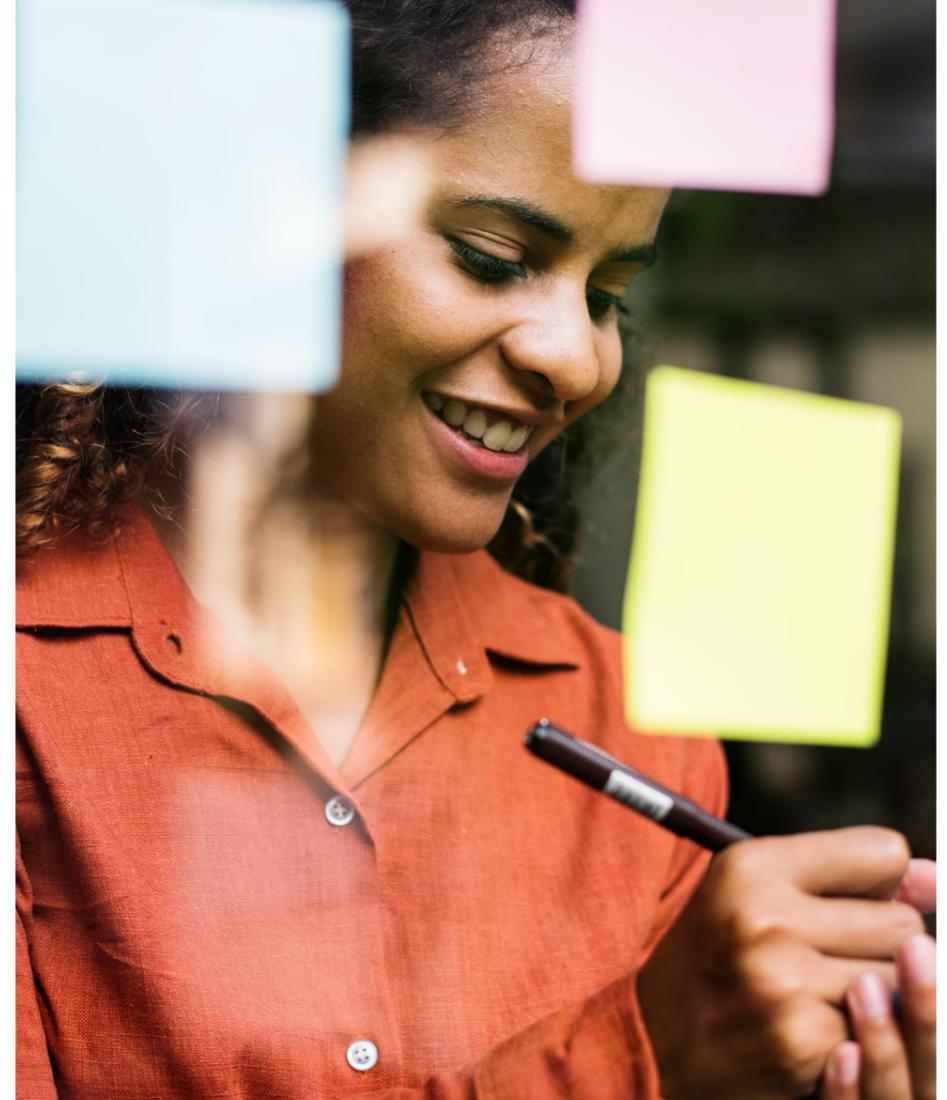
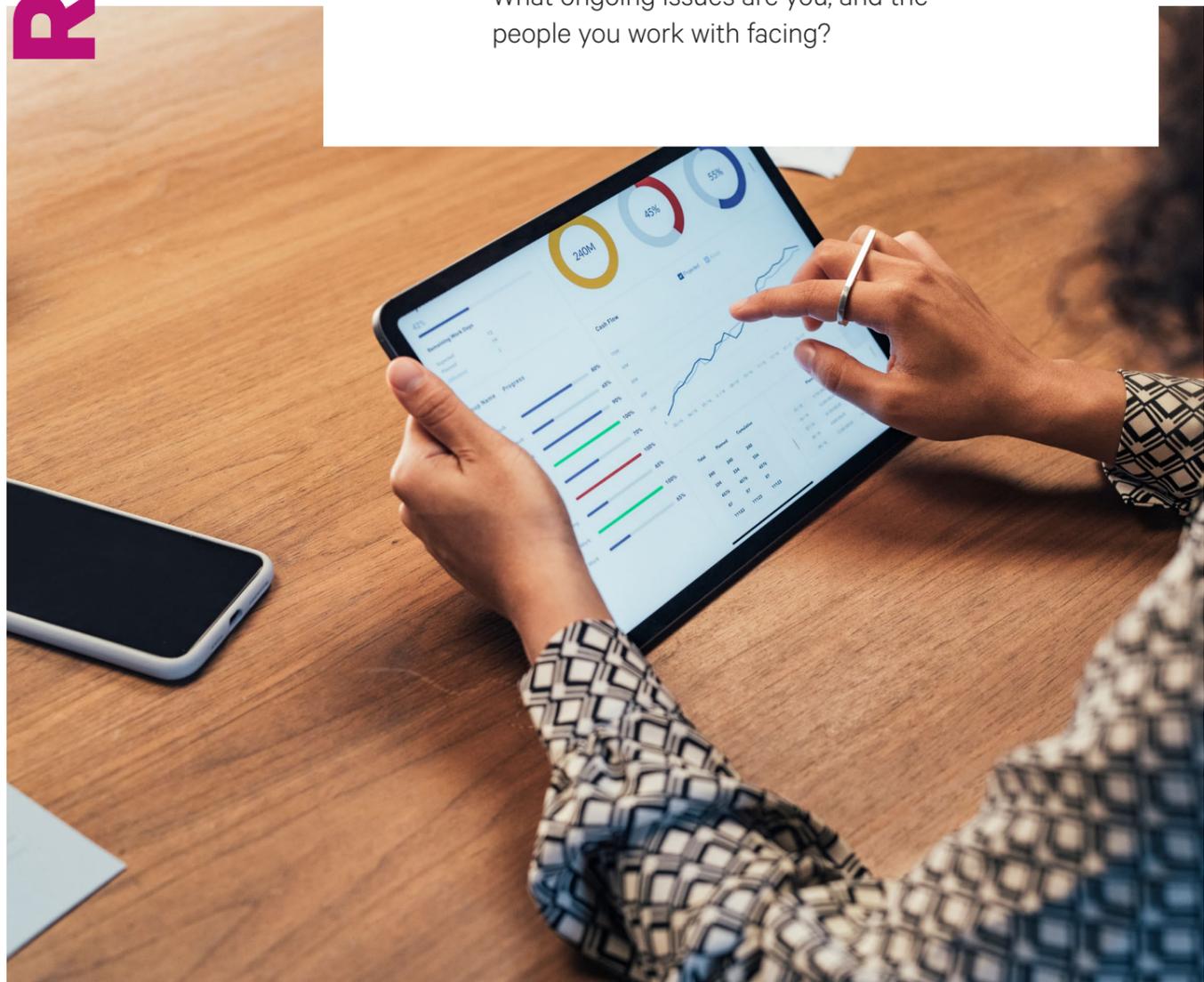
As the monitoring and reporting on grants is completed, we'll have better understanding of the wider impact of our collaboration.

## REPORTING

## WHAT WE DID

— Funders use the same core questions for reporting to allow for easy analysis and to combine learning across the partnership more effectively:

- What did you do?
- Who did you help?
- What did you spend?
- What did you learn?
- What longer-term changes can you see from this work?
- What ongoing issues are you, and the people you work with facing?



## Monitoring/Reporting

## RECOMMENDATIONS FROM FUNDERS

- Agreement in requirements for monitoring data between funders.
- From an equity perspective - may wish to consider using videos and photos for reporting, not just relying on written reports.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FROM GRANTEES

- Provide a monitoring form at the beginning of the project.
- Clarity on reporting requirements

## LONDON FUNDERS' RESPONSE

**Reporting:** Funders have agreed to embed core questions in all of their monitoring but will inevitably need to add questions of their own. Funders are making use of a variety of formats for reporting.

# LEARNING AND EVALUATION

## WHAT WE DID

- **An analysis of the core reporting questions answered by funders is conducted at the end of each grant period.**
- **Continuous learning throughout the process is encouraged through open communication between all stakeholders and honest feed.**



## Learning

### RECOMMENDATIONS FROM FUNDERS

- Confirming grantee recommendation of linking people up - especially those who are undertaking research and/or policy influencing work.
- Share learnings outside London. E.g. LCF has been sharing with UKCF network partners around UK and also with National Emergencies Trust whose funds we have been deploying.
- How can we enable granted orgs to learn in a time of crisis - the point about capacity building/mentoring - something in the application form which indicated need for this as well as the money they needed?
- Encouraging funders to open up and share their experiences more.
- London Funders are encouraged to actively influence funder practice.

### RECOMMENDATIONS FROM GRANTEES

- LCR hosts a learning event to showcase the work done through the funding streams and outcomes achieved.
- Linking up organisations who are applying for similar work.
- Provide capacity building/mentoring to organisations that have weaker applications but are evidently doing good work on the ground that is worthy of funding.

## Process Planning

### RECOMMENDATIONS FROM FUNDERS

- Make the planning process for new waves clearer with clear proposed timescale so that it is possible to make strategic decisions at pace to allow board buy in as boards are starting to move back into the “normal” working patterns.

### LONDON FUNDERS' RESPONSE

**Learning:** There have been lots of welcome suggestions here which we have sought to embed in all our work together. Alongside the work of the LCR Learning Partners, Reos and TSIC, we're co-funding with a number of our members an IVAR review on wider funder practice, building from the We Stand With The Sector statement. We sit on the ACF collaborative hub advisory group. We have given presentations on the LCR to funder forums in other regions, to the thematic groups that lead on justice and social enterprise, to groups from corporates through to technology philanthropists and also have done some overseas work with presentations to groups in other cities and countries.

# WHAT WE ARE STILL LEARNING



**This section highlights what London Funders is still learning about the LCR process according to Funders, Equity Partners, and Grantees**

## For Funders:

### FUNDERS PORTAL:

- We are learning how to improve the functionality of the funders portal as new needs arise.
- We are learning how to ensure that the funders portal can better cater to our specialist funders.

### SIFTING:

- We are learning how to improve the first stage sifting to cope with high volume of applications whilst retaining accuracy and quality.

## For Equity Partners:

### ENGAGEMENT:

- We are learning how to cultivate more direct engagement opportunities between equity partners with funders.

### TRACKING:

- We are learning how to better track groups that equity partners supported to assess whether they ended up applying and receiving funding or not.

## For Grantees:

### APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS:

- We are learning how to balance application requirements for project planning and budget sheets with the understanding that future needs are very much uncertain and the situation is rapidly changing.

### REJECTION:

- We are learning how to better communicate rejection to grantees and provide them with useful feedback for organisational learning.

### PROVIDING ADDITIONAL SUPPORT:

- We are learning how funders can provide non-monetary support for CSO's that have requested capacity-building, etc.

# WHAT NEXT

**London Funders will continue to provide practical support for collaborative initiatives amongst members, and will build on the principles, process and experience of the London Community Response to design platforms for long-term collaborations for the benefit of London's communities.**

London Funders is a registered charity and company limited by guarantee  
Charity number 111620  
Company number 5596299

28 Commercial St  
London E1 6LS

**This is an independent report from Reos, commissioned by  
London Funders, supported by funding from:**

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