

MEETING: 17/09/2020

Ref: 17734

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY: Strategic Initiative**Consortium LGBT+****Adv: Ciaran Rafferty
Base: Outside London
Benefit: London-wide****Amount requested: £292,158****Amount recommended: £290,000****The Applicant**

Consortium LGBT+ (Consortium) is a national infrastructure and membership body. Formed in 1998, in 2003 the desire for greater diversity from members saw Consortium expand its brief to include trans voluntary and community organisations. In 2018, in recognition of the ever-increasing diversity of LGBT+ organisations, it included the plus (+) to proactively highlight its support for those LGBT+ organisations serving diverse parts of the sector. The charity's aim is to develop and maximise the effectiveness of voluntary organisations run by and for lesbians, gay men, bisexual and transgendered people. Much of its work is with and for London based organisations, including the convening of networks, capacity-building, campaigning on specific issues, and delivering some direct services (eg leading a partnership of organisations tackling hate crime). It currently hosts the largest network of LGBT+ groups, projects and organisations in the UK and its importance to the sector in London is shown by the fact that it has been engaged as a sector-specialist organisation to support the work of the London Community Relief. It has also been chosen recently as a specialist partner to distribute Covid-related funding to the LGBT+ sector on behalf of the National Emergencies Trust.

The Application

In June 2017 you agreed strategic funding to three initiatives to support various elements of the LGBT+ sector which was extremely fragile at the time. One of these was a Consortium-led project which aimed to research and create an interactive map of all services across the capital and to offer a programme of networking and support. The map – called *FindOut* – was created and launched in 2019 and has proven to be a valuable resource. This proposal is to build on that initial work over the next three years but within the current context of the pandemic and its effects, now and in the future, on the LGBT+ sector and the people it serves.

Background and detail of proposal

This project, which will be delivered in conjunction with the specialist LGBT+ charity (Health Equality & Rights Organisation - Hero) which was involved in the previous initiative, will be informed by using *FindOut* to assess the initial impact that Covid-19 has had on the LGBT+ Sector and Services in London. The partnership is in a unique position enabling it to produce snapshots of the Covid-19 impact over this multiyear project and the two organisations are agile enough to respond to the changing needs that will unfold over the next few years as well as to deliver on work known to be essential through learning from the previous initiative.

Throughout this project they will deliver practical support to LGBT+ services and organisations to rebuild, sustain and enhance their work. Although we don't know what the 'new normal' will look like in this – or any other - sector, we know that charities must continue to develop thriving, *diverse*, incomes to minimise future

disruption to services. This project will not only focus on supporting the LGBT+ Services and Sector to recover from the Covid-19 impact but will reach beyond that – so that they can develop to be more sustainable and resilient for the future. Consortium will need to work with funders, commissioners, and the wider charity sector to explore what income diversification looks like over the next 3 years.

There will be a number of key milestones and deliverables over the funded period, as outlined below by the organisation:

Phase 1 Research

- Through FindOut (the interactive map), we will re-map LGBT+ London support/services post Covid-19 to identify how existing gaps have increased and where new gaps now exist due to closure
- Create a report which will analyse this data and present a plan for the rebuilding phase.
- Begin to improve the accessibility of FindOut
- Identify and communicate LGBT+ Communities needs to decision makers, commissioners and funders.

Phase 2: Rebuild

- Rebuild/update an accurate FindOut
- Build Resilience through delivering training and 1:1 support to LGBT+ organisations to have diverse incomes, including specialist support around commissioning
- Support new groups to emerge from community need
- Support existing LGBT+ Groups to deliver services and develop
- Explore the strategic position of the sector and develop policy work alongside developing strategic relationships with decision makers, funders and commissioners to ensure that LGBT+ voices do not go unheard.

Phase 3: Sustain

- Explore sustainability of FindOut
- Continue to support LGBT+ to develop diverse incomes, including specialist support around commissioning
- Work with Commissioners to understand LGBT+ Services and explore cross borough commissioning.
- Develop a package of sustainable resources and training around commissioning.

Phase 4: Enhance

- Further develop and implement plans that ensures FindOut's sustainability
- Pilot package of sustainable resources and training around commissioning

Throughout all phases the partnership will deliver 1:1 support and training to LGBT+ organisations whose ever-changing needs will be assessed at regular intervals.

Following guidance from your Committee in July, Consortium has clarified that significant, targeted, work will be undertaken to research and support those groups which serve the Transgender community in London. Many of these are extremely small – often with no paid staff and operating through social media etc – and need to have their voice heard through representation and campaigning, which Consortium

will do. Should you agree to support this application there will be specific, ring-fenced, allocation of time and resource within it to focus on the Transgender sector.

The Recommendation

Although diverse, innovative and passionate, the LGBT+ sector has historically been marginalised, underfunded, and thus isolated and disparate. Many groups operate exclusively through the use of volunteers; and income for the sector remains incredibly low (at 0.06% of national charitable income). This sector has been the poor relation for many years. In 2019 Consortium's membership stood at c.360 organisations 73% of which had income of less than £20,000 per year and the majority of those on less than £5,000 annually. It is in need of specialist and sensitive support and development which harnesses and uses the skills of those with direct experience of the issues faced and also of those with the capacity to provide voice, campaigning and leadership.

The hardships faced by LGBT+ people in London arising from the lockdown have been documented (eg individuals in enforced lockdown with others who are unsupportive and even hostile; others suffering increased isolation and mental health problems). There is a need to take stock now and at regular intervals over the next 1-2 years in particular, to determine both the needs and the capacity of the sector to provide support and for the sector itself to have the support necessary for it to be effective and sustainable.

This is a large-scale and far-reaching project, building on work you have supported previously but also very much focused on current circumstances and planning for post-Covid. It aims to work with an entire sector (most of which is underdeveloped) across all of London - which is reflected in the overall cost. It encompasses two key organisations working in a partnership (although they have worked closely together on other projects and Consortium will be the formal grant-holder). There are several postholders incorporated over the three-year time period as this is the best way of ensuring that the work arising from the learning can be constantly modified and targeted over time. A grant is advised:

£290,000 over three years (£90,000; £100,000; £100,000) to research and meet the needs of the LGBT+ sector in London during and post the Covid-19 pandemic. The work will be delivered in partnership with HERO and will ensure specific support is provided to the Transgender sector.

Funding History

Type/Status	Meeting Date	Decision
COVID19 London Community Response Fund	08/07/2020	This purpose of this grant is to fund the work outlined in your proposal, to ensure that London Community Response increases its reach in LGBTQ+ communities
COVID19 Small Charity Emergency Support Funding	13/05/2020	A one-off, unrestricted grant of £15,000, equivalent to one regular quarterly payment for the organisation's current grant.
Anniversary infrastructure support programme	07/09/2018	Declined as not a close enough fit with the priorities of the Cornerstone Fund.
Strategic Initiatives	15/06/2017	£217,000 over three years (£80,000; £69,000; £68,000) to the LGBT Consortium to create and manage an online directory/mapping tool of services in London and to provide capacity-building and general support to the LGBT third sector.

Financial Information

In current and recent years Consortium, in addition to their work as an infrastructure support organisation, has acted as a grant-maker on behalf of other funders – notably central Government in 2019 and the National Emergencies Trust in the current year, therefore in 2019 the majority (55%) of Consortium LGBT's income was from central government. By 2021 the charity expects to double this (by £500K) which will enable it make grants on behalf of other funders. This explains the significant increases in income and expenditure across the three years shown in the table below and also why the balance between the free reserves held and the reserves policy – which is to hold three months of operating expenditure – appears off target. If these grant pots were removed from the figures the organisation would be seen to hold free reserves more in line with its policy. The charity is working to rebuild its minimum agreed reserves of 3 months operational expenditure. Most of the organisation's income is restricted – less than £15,000 pa comes from membership fees and subscriptions – so its unrestricted income is unlikely to be significantly affected by the impact of Covid-19.

Year end as at 31 March	2019	2020	2021
	Signed Accounts	Draft Accounts	Budget
	£	£	£
Income & expenditure:			
Income	449,523	739,342	944,519
- % of Income confirmed as at 25 August 2020	N/A	100%	99%
Expenditure	(428,623)	(767,018)	(956,406)
Total surplus/(deficit)	20,900	(27,676)	(11,887)
Split between:			
- Restricted surplus/(deficit)	35,548	(69,555)	(44,564)
- Unrestricted surplus/(deficit)	(12,648)	41,879	32,677
	22,900	(27,676)	(11,887)
Operating Expenditure	428,623	767,018	956,406
Free unrestricted reserves:			
Free unrestricted reserves held at year end	82,157	124,036	156,713
No of months of operating expenditure	2.3	1.9	2.0
Reserves policy target	107,156	191,755	239,102
No of months of operating expenditure	3.0	3.0	3.0
Free reserves over/(under) target	(24,999)	(67,719)	(82,389)