

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Dated:</b>
City Bridge Trust	<b>21/03/2019</b>
<b>Subject:</b> <i>Ideas Please</i> initiative – Responding to the Resilience Risk	<b>Public</b>
<b>Report of:</b> David Farnsworth, Chief Grants Officer and Director of City Bridge Trust (CGO)	<b>For Decision</b>

### Summary

This Strategic Initiative proposal responds directly to the growing need to develop the resilience of frontline workers in the voluntary sector, an issue raised during a standard Learning Visit undertaken by your officer in December 2017. The same issue was subsequently raised at a meeting of the Children and Young People's Forum, convened by London Funders (LF) and building on this, LF is currently mapping existing resilience support in London. This proposal is to launch a call for applications through your 'Ideas Please' application mechanism, inviting organisations to design and deliver six-month pilot interventions to develop the resilience of their frontline workers. As it is anticipated that pilot interventions will be funded under delegated authority, it is proposed that a professional panel be recruited to support your officer make recommendations for funding. It is also proposed that an external agency be commissioned to evaluate the effectiveness of the funded interventions.

### Recommendations

Members are asked to:

1. Agree the name of the programme as *Responding to the Resilience Risk*
2. Agree the indicative allocation of funds, as outlined in para 24, from your 2019/20 budget and which includes an allocation of £100,000 for pilot grants.
3. Instruct officers to report on funding awarded under designated authority to your Committee in September 2019.

### Main Report

#### Background

1. During a Learning Visit in late 2017, your officer discussed the growing need to support the resilience of frontline workers in voluntary organisations. As statutory services scale back, people with increasingly extreme and complex needs are turning to the voluntary sector for support. Whereas there are established support mechanisms in place for clinical staff, in the form of clinical supervision, there is

no equivalent for frontline workers, who often are the first point of contact with beneficiaries in crisis.

2. The initial discussion that informed the development of this proposal was with an organisation working in the advice sector. However, as mentioned above, the issue has also been raised in the Children and Young People's forum convened by London Funders. It is unclear whether the resilience of frontline workers can be developed with the same approach across different sectors. It is hoped that a clearer understanding of this will be established by funding pilot interventions across a range of organisations as proposed in this paper.
3. Establishing an understanding of individual resilience is not easy. Generally, it is accepted that resilience refers to the ability of an individual to 'bounce back' following shocks or stress. Measuring resilience, therefore, is different from measuring an individual's mental health, which is a state of mind at any given time. Measuring resilience requires assessment of a range of resources and capacities, including the ability to recognise the signs of mental ill health, both personally and in others; self-knowledge; the ability to process experiences; self-care practices; knowing when to seek external support; availability of support networks; and communication skills. Resilience, therefore, is something that can be enhanced to develop staff professionally, forging a link between individual and organisational resilience.

### **Current Position**

4. Resilience overlaps with various existing policy areas, including Mental Health, Safeguarding and Human Resources but is not, arguably, completely encompassed by any one of these policy areas.
5. The Chartered Institute of Personnel Development (CIPD) reported in its Absence Survey 2018 that despite average workplace absence falling in the last decade, the proportion of days lost due to poor mental health has risen. The independent review for government, *Thriving at Work*, by Stevenson and Farmer, published in October 2017, stated that poor mental health (including anxiety, depression and burnout) costs employers between £33b and £42 billion annually.
6. Although these statistics refer to the impact of mental ill-health, some of which may be due to work-related stress and some which may not, they suggest – in the absence of equivalent statistics specifically for resilience – that there is a benefit to understanding more about how to develop the resilience of frontline workers for both organisations, their staff and volunteers, and their beneficiaries.
7. It follows that the resilience of frontline workers should be an issue of concern and potential support for funders, particularly in the context of supporting the longer-term sustainability of organisations and services. This is also the view of London Funders which, as well as conducting a mapping of current practice, has convened a funder forum to focus specifically on this issue. Your officer has contributed to the discussions at forum meetings and has initiated productive discussions with colleagues at The Access to Justice Foundation; Lloyds Bank Foundation; and Henry Smith Foundation. Your officer has also had productive

conversations with the Public Health Strategist in Hackney and colleagues in the Organisational Design and Development department at CoL.

8. There appears to be a growing interest in the resilience of frontline workers from the funding community and, so far, your officer has received one firm expression of interest to be involved in the development of this work from a colleague at the Oak Foundation. In order to maintain and hopefully feed the growing momentum, your officer proposes delivering a pilot programme, the details and underlying principles of which are listed below:

## Options

### 9. Funding principles of the proposed pilot:

- 1.1. An open call for will be launched, during Mental Health Awareness Week, May 2019, for proposals to deliver six-month pilot projects to build the resilience of frontline workers;
- 1.2. All funded pilots will commence in October 2019 and culminate in March 2020. Grantees will be required to report in November 2019 to ensure that projects are on track and submit final reports in April 2020 with a view to disseminating learning in May 2020, during Mental Health Awareness week.
- 1.3. Applicants will be invited to submit their proposals through your '*Ideas Please*' application mechanism;
- 1.4. The call will be open to charitable organisations that meet your eligibility criteria but are not necessarily existing or past grantees;
- 1.5. Applicants will be invited to design and deliver interventions that increase the resilience of their frontline workers;
- 1.6. Applicants will be asked to demonstrate how their proposed activities are additional to those already offered and are distinct from any general well-being activities;
- 1.7. An expert panel will be recruited to support the shortlisting process and the finalising of recommendations for pilot funding.
- 1.8. An independent evaluation agency will be recruited to evaluate the funded pilots and draw out the learning for distribution in May 2020.

## Proposals

10. This project has developed from conversations initiated by different factions of the voluntary sector, indicating that now is the time for funders to be responding.
11. However, there is no established equivalent support model for frontline workers to that of clinical supervision, and we have yet to understand if the support needs of frontline staff are specific to the sector in which they work or if they are generic.
12. It would seem from early discussions that the need for resilience support is widespread in the voluntary sector. There is an argument, therefore, that a consistent approach be taken in the support offered or funded by funders.
13. A group of interested funders has been convened by London Funders. However, feedback suggests that some testing of different forms of resilience support is required to clarify how best to support the sector's resilience needs.

14. An agreed percentage of any grant allocated specifically for resilience support could be an example of a collaborative approach by funders. Alternatively, resilience support may be included in funders' 'Funder Plus' offers or joint procurement of resilience support could be explored.
15. Whilst your officer remains optimistic that a joint approach can be established, it is clear that this proposal to run an open call for pilot projects will help develop an understanding of the resilience needs of frontline staff and how best to address them by drawing on the experience of the sector.
16. By initiating this open call for pilot projects, CBT is maintaining interest and momentum amongst other funders and gathering the evidence-base required to forge the next steps. The support and work of London Funders is a great asset, supporting this proposal.

### **Corporate & Strategic Implications**

17. This proposal meets objective two of the CoL's Corporate Plan: *People enjoy good health and wellbeing*, which sits under the aim to *Contribute to a flourishing society*. It also meets three of the five values that underpin CBT's strategy, Bridging Divides, including: *early action; collaborative working with Londoners and being adaptive, creative and purposeful*.
18. Current mental health initiatives underway at CoL - including the implementation of Mental Health First Aiders in the workplace and the events delivered as part of the Time to Talk campaign - indicate how current the issue of staff mental health is for employers.
19. This point is further supported by a recent motion, backed by a cross-party group of MPs in January 2019, to introduce legislation to put mental and physical first aid on an equal footing through First Aid regulations. This followed the 'Where's Your Head At?' campaign, led by Natasha Devon MBE and Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) England.

### **Implications**

20. As with any new funding stream, levels of interest and eventual uptake are unknown. There is a risk that a disappointing number of applications will be received in response to the 'Ideas Please' open call. The support of London Funders throughout the development and planning stage of this initiative has helped to generate interest and LF's research project offers an appropriate platform from which to launch this programme.
21. The risk of funding weak proposals that are unlikely to succeed will be mitigated by drawing on the expertise of the professional panel to support shortlisting and final recommendations.
22. The risk of failing to encourage other funders to commit to further action following the end of these proposed pilots could limit any future work. Your officer has worked closely with London Funders to convene and spark the interest of a funder forum, members of which share concerns for the resilience and

sustainability of the voluntary sector’s workforce. The forum will continue to meet throughout the duration of the proposed pilots, providing opportunities for your officer to update colleagues and feed their interest in this area of work.

23. As with the development and delivery of any new initiative, there are implications for your officer team’s capacity. An estimate of how much officer time might be diverted from regular Trust work has been calculated in order that it can be costed, resourced and managed appropriately, shown in the table below:

<b><u>Estimate of officer time required</u></b>	
20 hours	programme development and planning launch
10 hours	event
10 hours	creation of panel and evaluation briefs
15 hours	creation of evaluation framework
20 hours	Shortlisting and recommendations
25 hours	grant contracting, monitoring & reporting
10 hours	Final evaluation and learning event
<b>110</b>	<b>hours, equivalent to 16 days</b>
<b><u>Estimate of officer time cost*</u></b>	
6,400	(* based on CBT daily consultancy rates)

24. The indicative budget for the programme is below.

<b><u>Budget - Resilience Pilots</u></b>	
8,000	launch event
9,100	panel expenses
100,000	pilot grants
25,000	evaluation and dissemination
6,400	backfill for officer time
7,425	contingency
<b>155,925</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>

## Conclusion

25. The *Responding to the Resilience Risk* programme aims to work with the voluntary sector to initiate and test potential interventions that will address the resilience needs of its frontline staff. Supporting the resilience of organisations and their staff is one aspect of supporting the long-term sustainability of the organisations and the quality of the services we fund. It is hoped that the learning from these pilot projects will inform a cross-funder approach to tackling resilience in the future.

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