

MEETING: 11/09/2023

REF: 20385

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY: Bridging Divides - Anchor Programme

Alliance for Inclusive Education
Amount requested: £1,500,000
Amount recommended: £1,500,000

Adv: Abi Sommers
Base: Lambeth
Benefit: London-wide

Purpose of grant request: To strengthen the charity's ability to challenge systemic barriers to inclusive education and support other Disabled-led organisations.

The Applicant

Alliance for Inclusive Education (ALLFIE) is a registered charity (no. 1124424), established in 1990 to promote inclusive education as a right for all Disabled people. ALLFIE is a pan-impairment Disabled People's Organisation (DPO)¹ which endorses the social model of disability.² ALLFIE advocates for inclusive education for all Disabled people in the UK but primarily operates in London, where all but one of its staff members are based. London is the major focus of ALLFIE's work given its proliferation of DPOs and its position as a nexus for policy change. ALLFIE's primary activities include leadership and capacity building, campaigning, influencing and educating, promoting best practice, and amplifying Disabled people's voices. These activities are London-focused but have been known to have a wider impact.

Background and Detail of Proposal

ALLFIE has received prior funding from the Trust towards its Inclusion Champions project. This project equipped DPOs in London to better engage Disabled children, young people and their families, through training, networking, and sharing resources and information. Despite pandemic disruptions, the project was successful and ALLFIE met all its initial target outcomes. Outcomes included improved coproduction and intergenerational working, and a focus on the intersectionality of Disabled people's experiences. The project generated key learnings for ALLFIE around the disparities between Disabled people's experiences across boroughs, the financial state of the DPO sector, and the impact of inequalities on Disabled people's experiences.

ALLFIE is applying for ten years' core funding to strengthen its ability to challenge systemic barriers to inclusive education. Inclusive education includes everyone, with non-disabled and Disabled people learning together in mainstream settings. This requires the education system to recognise that it creates barriers for Disabled learners and adapt to include them. Despite the ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) which recognises the right to inclusive education³ and evidence that inclusive education benefits

¹ DPOs are run by and for Disabled people. Based on criteria from Inclusion London, an organisation is a DPO if, 1) its Management Committee or Board has 75% of representation from Disabled people; 2) 50% of its paid staff team are Disabled people at all staff levels and; 3) it provides services for or work on behalf of Disabled people.

² The social model of disability, developed over the last 40 years by Disabled people, holds that people with impairments are 'disabled' by the barriers operating in society that exclude and discriminate against them.

³ Article 24 – Education: <https://social.desa.un.org/issues/disability/crpd/article-24-education>

Disabled and non-disabled learners⁴, the UK still has a segregated system. The number of children in segregated 'special schools' continues to rise.⁵ For children in mainstream schools, many still receive segregated provision, e.g. in Special Educational Needs (SEN) units. Where Disabled children receive all their education in mainstream settings, significant barriers remain and needs are often not met. This is integration not inclusion. Barriers include inaccessible built environments, lack of understanding of and access to assistive technology, and lack of staff training.⁶ System change is vital as segregated education is both a cause and a consequence of poverty. Poverty is a result of the ways in which people are systematically denied resources. People excluded from the education system often experience social and economic exclusions after, which can deepen poverty and trauma.⁷

ALLFIE proposes to use the Anchor funding to catalyse system change around inclusive education. The funding would contribute to ALLFIE's core costs and enable it to create two new posts, an Events and Admin Officer and a Social Media Officer, and increase hours for existing staff members. The funding would enable ALLFIE to:

- Expand its capacity-building work supporting DPOs in London to campaign and work more effectively for inclusive education, looking at the links between segregated education, poverty and other forms of oppression. Capacity building allows the movement to campaign more effectively for inclusive education and to include the voices of all Disabled people, including children and young people. ALLFIE carries out capacity building to ensure the sustainability and survival of the inclusive education movement.
- Build relationships with non-disabled equity organisations in London to increase the number of organisations applying a disability lens to their work. For example, ALLFIE is currently working with the Runnymede Trust on a research project to help better understand the intersectional experiences of Disabled Black and racially minoritised children in mainstream schools.
- Grow its capacity to campaign around specific issues which intersect with the subject of inclusive education such as violence against Disabled people in care homes and segregated settings, and eligibility for free school meals for Disabled people who are not able to access education.
- Continue to identify and share examples of best practice for inclusive education and relevant research through its website, social media, external engagements and the Inclusion Now magazine. This provides vital resources for policy makers, decision makers and activists to enact change.

ALLFIE's proposal meets the criteria for Anchor Programme funding:

1. It is a user-led organisation – ALLFIE is a DPO. All Board members identify as Disabled and only one staff member is non-disabled.

⁴ *What evidence is there for the benefits of inclusive education for children without disabilities?* (2021): <https://www.disabilityevidence.org/questions-evidence/what-evidence-there-benefits-inclusive-education-children-without-disabilities>

⁵ *Special educational needs in England - Academic year 2022/23*: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/special-educational-needs-in-england>

⁶ *Now is the Time – A report by the CSJ Disability Commission* (2021): <https://www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/CSJJ8819-Disability-Report-190408.pdf>

⁷ Segregated Education: Linking poverty, class, race and disability: https://www.allfie.org.uk/news/inclusion-now/inclusion-now-64/segregated-education-linking-poverty-class-race-and-disability/#_ftn2

2. It provides second-tier support – ALLFIE provides capacity building support for London-based DPOs; provides spaces for organisations to network and build relationships; undertakes research and thought leadership; and ensures different perspectives reach decision makers through policy and advocacy work.
3. It is engaged in systems change work – ALLFIE has a strong track record of systems change work. Other than its capacity building work, it has worked with the UNCRPD to strengthen Disabled people’s rights and scrutinise UK policy and practice; it has worked with local and national politicians to influence government priorities and challenge barriers to Disabled people’s inclusion and participation; and it has built awareness and understanding through media appearances, public engagements and campaigns.
4. It is committed to equitable practice – ALLFIE is not only committed to equitable practice for Disabled people, it also works in an intersectional way, showing the diversity of Disabled people’s experiences. ALLFIE hosts a Disabled Black Lives Matter group which campaigns to address the inequalities experienced by of Black Disabled people and encourages other DPOs to embrace intersectional issues. ALLFIE has also led on supporting young people’s involvement within the Disabled people’s movement.
5. It works collaboratively with other organisations – ALLFIE is well-connected both in and out of the DPO sector. It often works in coalition with others, and helps resource other organisations to work effectively. Examples include collaborating with DPOs and organisations such as Disability Rights UK, Inclusion London, Disabled People’s Forum, and Reclaiming Our Futures Alliance on work including National Disability Strategy, reporting on the UNCRPD, and responding to the Coronavirus Act 2020. The Inclusion Now magazine is a collaboration with World of Inclusion and Inclusion Solutions.

London’s DPO Sector

DPOs in London have a proud track record of creating social change. Despite this, inequalities are worsening for the majority of Disabled people which has impacted the sector. Even before recent crises, the sector had been historically underfunded with many DPOs lacking funding to cover their full running costs, the costs of community and movement building, or the costs of necessary accessibility support. Further, DPOs are excluded from decision making processes. There is currently no effective engagement between the UK government and DPOs nor is there any central government financial support to enable DPOs to take part in engagement and coproduction – all governmental duties under the UNCRPD.⁸ Other issues DPOs face include little capacity to support current and future leaders, difficulty recruiting staff with lived experience, and limited capacity to reach young Disabled people.

Inclusion London shared a number of recommendations for strengthening London’s DPO sector. ALLFIE’s work fits with several of these recommendations:

- Building intergenerational links between Disabled people to empower young Disabled people and support them to become the next generation of leaders.

⁸ *Understanding the needs of Disabled people’s organisations in England* (2021): <https://www.inclusionlondon.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Understanding-the-needs-of-DDPOs-in-England-HQ.pdf>

- Supporting and developing the sector's intersectional skills and practice so DPOs in London can become more inclusive, anti-discriminatory and better reflect marginalised groups of Disabled people.
- Partnership working and alliance building with wider equality movements.
- Carrying out peer research to build a stronger evidence base on disability equality issues and needs of Disabled people and communities.
- Training and supporting DPOs in London on strategic communication, marketing and influencing skills/approaches.

Supporting ALLFIE's proposal could not only support system change around inclusive education, but also strengthen London's under-resourced DPO sector.

Financial Information

Year end as at 31 March	2022 Signed Accounts £	2023 Draft Accounts £	2024 Budget £
Income & expenditure:			
Income	102,804	147,405	310,825
Expenditure	(162,179)	(167,106)	(310,825)
Surplus/(deficit)	(59,375)	(19,701)	0
Reserves:			
Total restricted	49,926	25,625	25,625
Total unrestricted	99,680	104,280	104,280
Total reserves	149,606	129,905	129,905
Of which: free unrestricted	82,792	103,065	103,065
Reserves policy target	54,060	55,702	103,608
Free reserves over/(under) target	28,732	47,363	(543)

ALLFIE's income had shown a downward trend since 2019/20 but started to recover from 2022/23. The decrease in income was mainly due to changes in leadership, the impact of the pandemic and the start of some grants being delayed due to the longer onboarding period often required for Disabled staff. ALLFIE has now secured a number of multi-year grants from a range of funders, meaning the majority of its income is confirmed for 2023/24. Reserves are at a healthy level, predicted to be just under policy level (four to six months' expenditure) by the end of 2023/24. Long-term core funding from the Trust is not included in current projections and would strengthen ALLFIE's income and reserves position.

The funding recommended in year one of the grant could equate to over 50% of the organisation's annual income in 2023/24. The assessor has undertaken an assessment of the organisation's financial sustainability and is satisfied that there is a robust ongoing fundraising strategy in place.

Funding History

ID	Type	Meeting Date	Decision
20051	Anchor Programme – Resourcing Grant	06/03/2023	£3,600 to resource ALLFIE to participate in the advisory panel for City Bridge Trust's Anchor funding programme.
16237	COVID19 Small Charity Emergency Support Funding	13/05/2020	A one-off, unrestricted grant of £13,600, equivalent to one regular quarterly payment for the organisation's current grant.
15919	Bridging Divides	26/03/2020	£109,700 over two further and final years (£54,400; £55,300) towards an Inclusion Champion post (2.5 days per week), the Policy Co-ordinator (0.5 days per week) and a proportion of the Director's time (5 hours per week) and the

			Communications Officer (1 day per month), as well as the costs of developing the e-hub, and training and capacity building costs.
13663	Investing in Londoners	20/03/2017	£166,300 over three years (£55,900; £55,700; £54,700) towards an Inclusion Champion post (2.5 days per week), the Policy Co-ordinator (0.5 days per week) and a proportion of the Director's time (5 hours per week) and the Communications Officer (1 day per month), as well as the costs of developing the e hub, and training and capacity building costs.

The Recommendation

Funding is recommended as follows:

£1,500,000 over ten years (£150,000 per year) towards core costs to help ALLFIE challenge systemic barriers to inclusive education in London and support London's DPO sector.