

MEETING: 11/09/23

REF: 20345

**ASSESSMENT CATEGORY: Bridging Divides - Anchor Programme**

<b>Consortium of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Voluntary and Community Organisations</b>	<b>Adv: Nat Jordan</b>
<b>Amount requested: £1,407,820</b>	<b>Base: Outside London</b>
<b>Amount recommended: £1,408,400</b>	<b>Benefit: All London</b>

**Purpose of grant request:**

Consortium LGBT (Consortium) (charity no. 1105502) will use core funding to sure up key strategic roles for the development of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT+) sector in London for the long term, enabling the retention of key talent, and the maintenance and growth of trusted relationships with LGBT+ sector organisations.

**The Applicant**

Consortium is a registered charity founded in 1998 and a national specialist infrastructure and membership organisation. Its objects are to promote the LGBT+ voluntary sector for the public benefit. It hosts the UK's largest network of LGBT+ organisations with over 580 members. It delivers direct and tailored one-to-one and group support to its members and brings together specialist networks to provide peer support and develop strategic action on agreed focus issues. Consortium also plays a key role as a resilient anchor organisation that can work in solidarity with and represent the sector, with a greater capacity for exposure to risk than more vulnerable smaller organisations, making it an effective channel for activities that work towards systems change, including those which are public facing.

Whilst the organisation's registered address is in Exeter, it operates without an office and all of its London team are based in London.

**Background and detail of proposal**

The funding requested includes the full-time salary and associated costs of two key strategic roles for London: a London Engagement Lead and London Development Officer.

The Lead, alongside the Head of Membership and Engagement, is responsible for the planning, co-ordination and delivery of the Consortium's work in London to ensure that member organisations in the region have access to a range of relevant support, resources and opportunities. The Officer provides direct support to the LGBT+ voluntary sector and will be responsible for the delivery of work that brings organisations together, including the practical delivery of an advisory board, leadership programme facilitation, and setting up other policy related events and summits.

Both roles work closely with colleagues with direct responsibility for developing work on racial justice and trans engagement (not included in this request) to ensure a continued intersectional focus across all of its work. Budget is also allocated within the requested funds to develop and maintain an advisory board that will be led by member organisations and will aim to be as representative as possible of the sector and the people that it supports, including both smaller and larger organisations. The exact objectives, size and shape of this group will be formed over the initial 18 months of funding, in recognition that its priorities and scope should be genuinely led by the sector. Where sector voice can sometimes lack unity of focus on specific issues, this advisory group will steer the focus of Consortium's work, levelling influence between larger organisations alongside smaller organisations working directly on intersectional issues. Funding will enable these organisations to be appropriately reimbursed for their engagement, as well as addressing access needs, to ensure limitations on capacity are addressed as far as is possible

A leadership development programme will also be overseen and developed by these roles and through this funding, which responds to skills and retention needs within the sector. It will build on previous work, including a trustee brokerage and mentoring service that was developed in partnership with Lloyds bank which saw 15 LGB staff of Lloyds become trustees of LGBT+ organisations in the UK and facilitated 12 mentoring and coaching relationships. Whilst the model saw positive outcomes in adding skills to sector leadership, Consortium identified the need to diversify the sources of talent (such that one organisation's members doesn't oversaturate the sector), and it saw an overrepresentation of cis white men in those taking up mentor roles. This is reflective of the makeup of senior leadership of LGBT organisations in the UK and in London (though London's gender representation is more balanced). With long term funding and continually developing relationships both within and outside of the LGBT+ sector, Consortium plan to develop a range of mentorship and support opportunities for LGBT+ leaders with greater support from a more diverse range of mentors in order to ensure that emerging leaders can access support from those with shared lived experience and relevant understanding for more effective relationships.

Consortium, itself led by and for LGBTQ+ people, has a strong track record of using its position relative to the wider sector, and harnessing the expertise and insights of its members, to influence change at systemic levels. It has been a key partner for CBT and other funders in this regard, acting as an equity partner alongside other key equity infrastructure bodies in the design and development of collaborative programmes such as the London Community Response, an emergency response to the Covid-19 pandemic, and currently the funder collaboration, Propel, where it advocates for the sector, providing intelligence and insight and influences the development of the programme to be more inclusive of LGBT organisations, and contributes to ongoing learning. This has already resulted in concrete developments in funder practice, including the prioritisation of funding for LGBT+ led organisations, and the better assessment of equitable practice. CBT, for example, improved its reach to LGBT organisations over the pandemic from 5% in earlier waves of funding, to 12 and 8% in Waves 4 and 5 (where a stricter definition of user led was applied).

The LGBTQIA+ Plan for London is an example of work that Consortium has driven with as systems change focus. It was able to take advantage of its role in relation to wider systems, including its relationship with the GLA, to develop a set of recommendations that align with the wider London recovery missions, and resulting in direct engagement from the GLA, facilitating direct conversation and connection between its member organisations and larger institutions that drive regional policy, where they may otherwise overlook the relevance of LGBT+ issues and specific needs of communities.

### **London's LGBT sector**

Consortium's London membership has increased 89% from 109 to 206 between 2020 and 2023, and member organisations have reported increasing levels of demand on their services in that time.

LGBT+ communities experience complex and intersectional systemic inequalities which impact on individuals, communities and organisations. Developments in many areas of LGBT rights are historically recent, practically all within living memory, and as a result the sector is young and early in its development. Whilst there are a number of larger and more well-resourced LGBT organisations, most of the sector comprises smaller grassroots organisations. Of Consortium's members, 15% have no income, and nearly half an income of under £10,000 annually. By contrast, only 9% have an annual income of over £500,000.

LGBT+ organisations face challenges to accessing of funding due to prejudice and discrimination, and smaller organisations lack the power to influence decision making as it relates to cuts in public spending and the development of new funding programmes. Organisations are finding that their work is less popular amongst funders, and they therefore rely more highly on fundraising from the public. However, generating support from the public has its own challenges, with public complacency common due to misconceptions that equality for LGBT+ people has been achieved (for instance since marriage equality came into effect in 2014).

The issues facing LGBT communities in London (and more broadly in the UK) are evolving quickly. Due to limited capacity, LGBT community organisations continually find themselves in a reactive state to these issues. Recent examples of quickly emerging issues that the sector have needed to respond to have included changes to school policies as they relate to trans students, and evolving guidance from the Equality and Human Rights Commission on issues which affect trans communities, such as guidance on single sex services. Consortium's vision is that, with longer term funding and less risk to loss of staff in key roles, it will have the greater capacity to anticipate and plan for responses to emerging issues, rather than fire-fighting as they arise.

The capacity of Consortium's members to engage with its activities is limited due to a variety of factors. Staff turnover in the sector is high, in part because the increases in funding seen over the pandemic has been ending, while demand increases and the cost of delivering services rises. Anti-LGBT+ sentiment, and resulting abuse and hostility, has been rising, largely with the increasingly visible and polarised public

discussion on trans rights issues. This comes with an emotional toll on LGBT people in general, and particularly affects the staff and volunteers of organisations working closely on these issues whether at a strategic level or at the level of direct support of those experiencing resulting needs at the acute end.

Through building capacity and sustainability over a prolonged period Consortium will create the visibility and confidence for the sector to have a louder collective voice from a larger and more secure platform, resulting in greater understanding and impact.

### Financial Information

Year end as at 31st March	2022	2023	2024
	Signed Accounts £	Management Accounts £	Budget £
<b>Income &amp; expenditure:</b>			
Income	881,725	741,372	564,027
Expenditure	(531,745)	(1,119,218)	(766,687)
<b>Surplus/(deficit)</b>	<b>349,980</b>	<b>(377,846)</b>	<b>(202,660)</b>
<b>Reserves:</b>			
Total restricted	536,036	90,234	80,664
Total unrestricted	212,615	280,571	87,481
<b>Total reserves</b>	<b>748,651</b>	<b>370,805</b>	<b>168,145</b>
Of which: free unrestricted	205,960	273,916	80,826
Reserves policy target	60,828	80,549	86,164
Free reserves over/(under) target	145,132	193,367	(5,338)

Consortium's income primarily comprises restricted grant funding, with some unrestricted income from a combination of membership fees, donations, and earned income from training and consultancy activity.

Its reserves policy is to hold equivalent to four months of overheads (this increased from three to four in 2022/23). In the two most recently concluded financial years (2022 and 2023), free reserves held have been in surplus to this policy. Earned income levels during the pandemic were higher than anticipated, increasing from a relatively steady income level of around £500k a year prior to 2020. This influx of earned income has resulted in the retention of more unrestricted funding. Some of this is being spent on core staffing, with the creation of new roles (including a Head of Development and Partnerships and Comms Officer), but Consortium is taking a cautious approach to this to avoid the contraction of staffing levels further down the line. These roles provide more capacity to take on paid work to diversify sources of unrestricted income through promotion of the organisation's work and developing partnerships.

Consortium have, in the last few years, developed an onward grantmaking mechanism to deliver funding for LGBT communities. The receipt of these funds for onward disbursement has not followed an even annual cycle, resulting in higher income in some years, with funds carried forward for disbursement in later years. This peaked in the YE 2021 and has reduced annually in 2022 and 2023. No income has been forecast relating to onward grantmaking in the budget provided for 2024. This therefore contributes to reduced income and annual deficit in YE2023.

Consortium's budgeted income for 2024 is also relatively conservative: 63% of the forecast income is confirmed, and the majority of unconfirmed income relates to this proposal and one other to the National Lottery Community Fund. The budget does not include other opportunities for funding that Consortium consider more speculative, and this deficit is not expected to be realised in full.

## Funding History

At the time of assessment Consortium has two live grants with CBT. Its current Bridging Divides grant (19337), due to conclude in 2026, also contributes to the cost of an FTE London Engagement Officer. While it shares a job title with one of the requested roles in this proposal, it is a separate role which acts as a key entry point for day to day support for member organisations providing practical one on one support. Consortium's Strategic Initiative currently contributes the London lead role, and two part time officer posts, that would be replaced by this funding as it concludes in December 2023. Consortium's involvement in the Propel programme as an equity partner is separately resourced by CBT through a grant to London Funders.

ID	Type	Meeting Date	Decision
19337	Bridging Divides – Connecting the Capital	05/12/2022	£226,900 over three years (£75,130; £75,360; £76,410) for 1 FTE London Engagement Officer, member engagement costs, networking and training event costs, accessibility costs and related project overheads.
19411	Anchor Programme - Resourcing Grant	20/06/2022	£3,450 to support participation in a design group co-creating City Bridge Trust's Anchor funding programme.
18727	Cornerstone Fund	30/09/2021	£25,000 towards the development of new, sustainable funding models and collaborations which will support equity-focused work across London.
18822	COVID19 London Community Response Fund (Wave 5)	14/07/2021	£2,500 to support increased reach for the London Community Response
18227	COVID19 London Community Response Fund (Wave 4)	28/01/2021	£9,840 to a hosted application on behalf of LesFlicks.
18229	COVID19 London Community Response Fund (Wave 4)	28/01/2021	£788 to a hosted application on behalf of Lambeth Links.
17734	Strategic Initiatives	17/09/2020	£290,000 over three years 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.
17856	COVID19 London Community Response Fund (Wave 3)	17/09/2020	£10,000 LCRF grant for core operational costs to support increased reach by the London Community Response and to participate in wider recovery activities in the capital

16937	COVID19 London Community Response Fund	08/07/2020	£15,000 to support increased reach for the London Community Response in LGBTQ+ communities
16192	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.
13987	Strategic Initiatives	15/06/2017	£217,000 over three years 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.

### The Recommendation

***£1,408,400 over ten years (£145,000; £126,100; £134,000; £136,500; £144,600; £141,700; £138,900; £147,200; £144,600; £149,800) of core funding towards core London team roles (2 FTE), resourcing member engagement in activities at a policy and strategic level, development and costs to participation in an advisory board and the development of LGBT sector leadership***