

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY: Bridging Divides - Anchor Programme**Inclusion Barnet****Amount requested: £979,230****Amount recommended: £979,500****Adv: Lydia Parr****Base: Barnet****Benefit: Barnet**

Purpose of grant request: To further enable the charity to challenge systemic barriers negatively impacting Disabled People and other marginalised groups to create better person-centred services and more inclusive communities in Barnet.

The Applicant

Inclusion Barnet (IB) is a peer-led Charitable Incorporated Organisation (no.1158632) and Deaf and Disabled People's Organisation (DDPO), established in 2014. IB delivers peer-led infrastructure and participation programmes for the whole community making Disabled people leaders of social change for all – to fully empower Disabled people, support other marginalised communities in solidarity, and tackle inequalities on a systemic level. IB's initial work centred around developing best practice guidance on peer-led management for DDPOs, now IB supports the local voluntary sector through the Barnet Together partnership; runs the UK's only fully user-led Healthwatch (an independent, statutory organisation dedicated to improving health and social care services) and chairs the Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) Alliance for North-Central London. IB encourages organisations across all sectors to become more inclusive through its training and consultancy arm and delivers two front line services.

With Inclusion London, IB lead a Cornerstone partnership to grow DDPO's communication capacity, and a Propel partnership to grow DDPO advice provision. IB delivers a peer support and benefits advice service; health advice for minoritised communities and engages with and networks local (Disabled) people and communities. IB is active in the Disability Benefits Consortium and the Disability Poverty Campaign Group aiming to get Disabled people's voices heard locally, regionally, and nationally. IB systematically collects evidence from its front-line work to feed into its second-tier work, conducting research and creating resources for effective disability rights work.

Background and detail of proposal

IB have been funded by CBT on three occasions, most recently via a five-year Bridging Divides grant contributing to salary costs and related costs of a project supporting voice for Disabled People and disability organisations. The funding is making a significant positive impact. For example, to date, IB have delivered training on the social model of disability to over 150 members of its local community to produce attitudinal change within organisations. IB continue to be part of the Mental

Health Strategic Partnership which is now leading on the creation of a Mental Health charter for Barnet.

IB is applying for seven years' core funding to strengthen its ability to tackle systemic barriers experienced by Disabled People and other marginalised groups in Barnet. The funding would contribute to IB's core costs and the creation of two new posts, Director of Communities and Head of Policy. The Director of Communities role will have a strong emphasis on IB's community services work, enabling IB to engage more strategically, through wider and more systematic intelligence gathering, identifying system issues, and developing advocacy work to address them. The policy role will ensure IB are methodically collecting evidence, proposing policy responses, understanding wider research, and linking local learning with wider campaigns.

Contributions to other non-frontline delivery roles will ensure frontline staff have appropriate support; that IB have the analysis, communications and advocacy capacity required to engage in impactful systems change work; and will ensure findings uncovered through frontline engagement, direct and 1:1 support and network meetings are acted upon. This will strengthen the voice of the groups IB represent, the efficacy of its work, and it will further ensure IB continue to develop and grow as an organisation.

IB proposes to use Anchor funding to provide training and toolkits to organisations, utilising local network organisations and cross-sector national organisations and networks to grow user voice and jointly address structural barriers that create inequality and poverty across intersecting identities. Funding will enable IB to grow collaborative engagement, policy, and campaigning work. Improved capacity will result in an increase in relevant support, training, and resources; an increase in policy work and research, comprehensive collection of frontline evidence and higher engagement in wider policy work including at the most senior levels locally. Continued involvement with the VCSE Alliance will ensure poverty-informed practice is embedded across North Central London.

IB's proposal meets the criteria for Anchor Programme funding. As a DDPO, IB are committed to being user-led and to the social model of disability. 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. Approximately 75% of the staff team, including the CEO and senior management team, declare a disability (including long-term conditions, mental health, neurodiversity). IB are proactive in ensuring that it is otherwise diverse with staff from the Global Majority and LGBTQ+ community. 100% of its board have lived experience, 50% are Global Majority and 75% identify as women. IB's members are Disabled People and family carers in Barnet, who contribute to IB's strategic planning and priorities.

Through user voice work, IB provide second-tier support via training and support to all organisations in the social model of disability, and in using peer leadership, lived experience and co-production to empower those who are marginalised. As members of the Disability Poverty Campaign Groups and the Disability Benefits Consortium, IB

actively work to increase peer representation within and change power dynamics between traditional disability organisations and DPPOs such as IB.

IB aims to address the health inequalities of Disabled People in Barnet and beyond, with full regard to intersectionality and how it impacts on people's life chances. IB look to continuously increase the diversity of the staff team to ensure lived experience of intersectionality is represented to reach diverse communities and serve them well. The basis of IB's work is to actively challenge systemic barriers negatively impacting Disabled People and other marginalised groups to create better person-centred services and more inclusive communities in Barnet and beyond.

IB was formed by a coalition of local people and organisations with key Voluntary and Community Organisations (VCOs) being members and co-delivering services from its inception. IB continues to work collaboratively with other organisations, infrastructure support is delivered in partnership via the Barnet Together Alliance with Young Barnet Foundation, Groundwork, and Barnet council.

London's DDPO sector

DDPOs have a proven track record in creating social change and providing empowering peer support services to Disabled People. Despite this, things are worsening for most Disabled People with rising rates of poverty, exclusion, poorer life outcomes and increasing hostility. The financial crash, followed by a decade of austerity have resulted in many of the gains won by the Disabled People's movement and DDPOs from 1980's to mid-2000's being eroded.

Systemic issues affecting the sector include: statutory relationships with local authorities becoming increasingly transactional and hostile; funding is short-term and non-core resulting in repeat applications; providing adequate levels of support for staff and trustees with lived experience – as well as recruiting and retaining staff with the right skills (and a lack of entry level roles, apprenticeships, and traineeships to up-skill them from); difficulty with intersectionality due to limited resources and lived experience voices; remaining relevant for young people (many older people who campaigned for more rights are now retired).

Inclusion London (the pan-London DDPO umbrella body) shared several recommendations for strengthening the DDPO sector. IB's work fits with a number of these recommendations:

- Delivering disability equality and rights training to local DDPOs who are resourced to deliver this training to their Disabled communities.
- Partnership working and alliance building with wider equality movements.
- Building intergenerational links between Disabled People to empower young Disabled People and support them to become the next generation of leaders.
- Supporting and developing the sector's intersectional skills and practice so DDPOs can become more inclusive, anti-discriminatory and better reflect marginalised groups of Disabled People.
- Carrying out peer research to build a stronger evidence base on disability equality issues and needs of Disabled People and communities.

Supporting IB's proposal would support both systems change around health inequalities for Disabled People and other marginalised groups and strengthen London's under-resourced DDPO sector. IB acknowledge that Anchor funding is not a fix all solution but will give IB grounding to extend its work and impact whilst resources for support and delivery are still overstretched.

Financial Information

| Year end as at 31st March | 2022 Signed Accounts £ | 2023 Draft accounts £ | 2024 Budget £ |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| Income & expenditure: | | | |
| Income | 984,753 | 1,221,224 | 1,482,843 |
| Expenditure | (764,117) | (1,171,486) | (1,474,359) |
| Surplus/(deficit) | 220,636 | 49,738 | 8,484 |
| Reserves: | | | |
| Total restricted | 131,138 | 154,037 | 161,775 |
| Total unrestricted | 299,997 | 326,836 | 327,582 |
| Total reserves | 431,135 | 480,873 | 489,357 |
| Of which: free unrestricted | 292,730 | 319,569 | 320,315 |
| Reserves policy target | 191,029 | 292,872 | 368,590 |
| Free reserves over/(under) target | 101,701 | 26,698 | (48,275) |

IB is in good financial health, a review of the organisation's previous sets of audited accounts shows sound financial stewardship. Income has increased steadily from 17/18 and continues to do so (Anchor income is included in the above table) with 93% of income for 23/24 already confirmed exclusive of Anchor funding. IB's income primarily stems from a variety of multi-year grants and contract income. As the charity is forecasting a modest surplus and free unrestricted reserves under policy it is prudently working to secure additional funding and return reserves to a level within policy. Long-term core funding from the Anchor Programme would further strengthen IB's income position.

Funding History

| ID | Type | Meeting Date | Decision |
|--------|--------------------------------|--------------|---|
| IPP151 | Inflationary Pressures Payment | 21/11/22 | £5,689 one off payment. |
| 15865 | Bridging Divides | 08/07/20 | £284,000 over five years for salary costs and related costs of a project supporting voice for Disabled People and disability organisations. |
| 13329 | Strategic Initiative | 24/05/16 | £23,800 over 12 months towards the development of a new local giving scheme, Barnet Giving, as part of London's Giving. |

The Recommendation

£979,500 over seven years (£129,400; £131,900; £135,800; £139,900; £144,100; £148,400; £150,000) towards core costs to enable Inclusion Barnet to challenge the systemic barriers negatively impacting Disabled People and other marginalised groups in Barnet.