

INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY FUND SUMMARY REPORT



INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY FUND - ENSURING EVERYONE CAN BENEFIT

In 2019, Camden Giving created the Inclusive Community Fund in partnership with Camden Disability Action, funded by the London Borough of Camden's Community Impacts programme.

The Inclusive Community Fund programme welcomed proposals of up to £20,000 to meet the aims to bring together disabled adults and non-disabled adults and by funding projects such as:

- Facilitation training to up-skill disabled adults so they can deliver community activities such as yoga classes or arts clubs.
- Enhancing access to arts and culture for disabled adults such as BSL theatre performances.
- Providing sports activities that include tailored equipment and specialist support for adults with physical disabilities.

There are 31,500 working age people in Camden who define themselves as disabled, equivalent to 18.1% of the working age population, compared with 15.3% for London. The health inequalities within Camden can be understood by location, gender, economic status and ethnicity, with disabled people experiencing poorer health on average.



INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY FUND PANEL

Funders often have the power to dictate what services are provided, and grant-givers often lack lived experience of the issues facing Camden's people. At Camden Giving we prioritise shifting power to a varied range of voices to make decisions on our funding, because we believe that people who are surviving local inequalities are the ones we should look to for the solutions.

We recruited a diverse group of 6 Camden residents from across the borough, each with an experience of living with a disability, to become community panellists and decide which organisations to award funding to. The panellists had no previous experience as grant-makers, but each brought their own direct experience of a disability and barriers to inclusion to 3 training and co-creation sessions, working together to design and shape the fund criteria and priority areas, application and reviewing process.

Focused on making Camden more inclusive for everyone, our 6 panellists came together in November 2019 and selected projects that encourage community cohesion and increase access to services for disabled adults.



INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY FUND - PARTICIPATORY GRANTMAKING PROCESS



INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY FUND - PANEL DECISIONS

The Inclusive Fund Panel met in November 2019 to assess the applications and decide which projects they wanted to fund during a 4-hour panel meeting. The fund was heavily oversubscribed, with 3 times more applications to the fund than we could award, and ideas ranging from capital greening initiatives to peer-training programmes to sensory arts programmes.

The panel awarded £82,100 to 7 organisations, each delivering a unique series of programmes, activities and approaches to create more effective ways to support disabled adults in Camden to participate in their services alongside non-disabled adults. 2,620 Camden residents will benefit from the decisions made by the Inclusive Fund panel, covering a wide range of disabilities and reaching a broad geographical area and types of activities; from accessible theatre performances for Deaf residents to sports organisations providing specialist equipment to young athletes.

We hope this fund will begin to improve social cohesion between disabled and non-disabled adults, as well as disabled adults, who because service providers can sometimes operate in silos, may not always have the opportunity to meet people with different disabilities.



INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY FUND - KEY LEARNINGS | SUPPORTING ORGANISATIONS

The fund originally existed as a 3-stage application process, but applicants reached out to us to say that they found this to be an intimidating and complicated process. Smaller charities are often quite new to writing bids, so the process also seemed a complex way to apply to funding. More established charities have also expressed that they were hesitant to bring new beneficiaries into their programme as a 'one off opportunity' and then disappoint people if they could not continue supporting them by growing their project. It was also not guaranteed that, if they received a small grant of £2500 to try something, they would then get a larger grant to scale and support more people. Also, for a grant of £2500 they said they could not really cover core costs (eg staff time) to do important engagement and outreach.

Based on this feedback, we were fortunate to have the flexibility to change the funding allocation process to a 1-stage application process, instead of a phased grant process to enable organisations to apply for grants of up to £20,000

We also offered disability rights workshops before and after the fund closed with Camden Disability Action. This was an opportunity for organisations to ask questions about disability openly and candidly with someone with direct experience of a disability and barriers to accessing services. The workshops were well attended by both successful and unsuccessful applicants, which highlights a real commitment to increase accessibility from Camden organisations.



INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY FUND - KEY LEARNINGS | GRANT PROCESS

The Inclusive Community Fund is a more complex grant programme than we have managed previously. From changing our communication/delivery style and type of support for the panellists (who each have varied participation requirements) to ensure everything they received was accessible and understandable for each individual. We have also recognised that the organisations this fund aims to help require more guidance and advice from us to ensure they're adopting their new practices in the most impactful way.

We would love to continue our work on inclusive grant-making and work to create a blueprint for other funders to learn from. One way we could do this is by strengthening our own processes and practices by undertaking a 'disability audit' of our operations at Camden Giving, for example looking at; our recruitment practices (for our staff team, trustee board, volunteers, panellists); our accessibility as a funder and other services we deliver; and the accessibility and inclusivity of a range of our communications and media content.

“I want to use this as a personal development opportunity, to build my own confidence as well as changing people’s attitude and perceptions about hidden disabilities.”

Inclusive Fund Panellist



