
Applicant Comments and Suggestions

APPLICANT PERCEPTION REPORT®

PREPARED FOR

Trust for London

February 2021



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The Trust for London

**Applicant Comments from October 2020 Applicant Perception Report
Conducted by the Center for Effective Philanthropy**

Please note that comments have been edited or deleted to protect the confidentiality of respondents.

Please comment on the quality of the Trust's processes, interactions and communications. Your answer will help us better understand what it is like to work with the Trust.	
Applicant Comment	
Feedback is important to [us]. On this occasion, the criteria was not thoroughly considered which ended in a rejection. An important lesson learned. [We] consider the work that we do to fit in with the Trust and although we have not yet been successful, we have found all processes, interactions and communications to be positive. Therefore, we will look to reapply in the future and with a stronger application.	
A behind closed doors funder. As a connected organisation in London, we have no idea who they fund and why. Poor experience, but the portal works fine. No idea what to do with them, likely to not bother in the future. We have mentioned this to other funders.	
After spending so much time on the application, receiving a decline means there's no more interest in what the Trust has to say or anything else about the Trust.	
Comparable funders offer pre-application chats and feedback on draft applications - this would be very helpful to avoid wasting lots of time writing a proposal that gets rejected.	
Confusing, inconsistent and unfair.	
Describing an application as "not sufficiently strong" is not particularly helpful as it provides no detail. I appreciate that the Trust has limited resources, but so do the charities who are applying for important support.	
Early review of proposals prior to application by staff would save time and avoid disappointment later.	
Excellent.	
Good.	
I found the Trust information fairly informative and helpful,, but I was still unable to secure funding. Maybe I needed training on bidwriting.	
I think the hardest part of the application process was applying current COVID conditions to the strategy areas. It was mentioned that priorities might be different due to the current climate but it was not indicated how they were different, so it was hard to know how to meet the funding criteria. Further guidance on that would have been extremely valuable. The Trust has been one of the only funders to provide personal feedback and that was invaluable for myself and the organization.	
I think the Trust has a good process.	

Please comment on the quality of the Trust's processes, interactions and communications. Your answer will help us better understand what it is like to work with the Trust.

Applicant Comment

I think Trust for London's application process is far too complicated. Looking back at our declined application form, when downloaded it runs to 17 pages in length. It also requests a lot of detailed information on the organisation's finances and governance, which require senior staff time to respond to (a project/programme lead could not answer it all by themselves). I think this is far too much to ask from applicants at the first stage of the application process. My organisation is funded by a wide range of trusts and foundations, most of whom limit the first stage application to something in the region of 3-5 pages, or 4-5 key questions mostly focused on narrative description and a rough top line budget. They may then ask for the more detailed information, or more financial/governance information, only after proceeding to the second stage.

By requiring so much at the first stage you are taking a great deal of staff time away from your applicants, which is a significant waste of resources for all those who don't make it to the second stage. Furthermore, this hits smaller organisations with less staff and money even harder, as the loss of person-hours is proportionally more significant. Therefore there is a risk your pool of applicants is skewed towards larger organisations with bigger teams, who can afford to invest staff time into lengthy applications that may only have a limited chance of success.

On the positive side, I'm impressed with the level of detail TFL provides about its grantees. These are all listed by year and by programme and downloadable from the website, with names of successful grantees and amounts easy to find. Some trusts and foundations are not so transparent, or the information is difficult to locate.

I'd also praise TFL's willingness to discuss ideas for applications with grantees before they submit. This provides invaluable feedback, which ultimately saves time for both sides. Not all trusts and foundations are willing to invest their staff time in this.

I was disappointed and somewhat annoyed to read in the rejection email the following: [redacted] This "emphasis" was completely absent in the published guidance. Had it been included I would not have submitted an application and wasted three days of my time.

I was discouraged from applying by a telephone conversation with someone in the Trust who told me that the Trust had covered this area before and was unlikely to cover it this time around. It did not make me feel like I would succeed which made me put more effort into other matters and I did not do a second application as a result. My view is be clearer on what you want.

Improve funding access with suitable projects better than you did.

Initially I met one of the Assessors at Trust for London [with whom I have a long relationship]. I discussed the organisation with him and my work. I was encouraged to apply to the Trust and from my experience with TFL, I felt our work and our overall objectives fell within the criteria. From my understanding of the assessment, nobody phoned us or wanted to arrange a meeting with us to discuss our submission, or even show an interest in what we were doing, which we felt came within the criteria of the Trust. Additionally, I feel that groups like ourselves have an issue which I think needs to be highlighted.

What I am writing could be an assumption but from my experience I feel that this is what is happening:

Our group works with the ... community. If when applying there are some more submissions from the [specific] community, the bids are "sort of lumbered together" and I do not think that they are given an individual identity. The ... community is an entity on its own with diverse needs and one organisation cannot support all its operations. Furthermore more generic ... organisations are supporting a different niche and it is not the same. This issue is relevant to Africans, Muslims, Hindus etc. Each application should be assessed on its own merit and if one helps one African Group in a special category, does that mean another African Group does not stand a chance. This is an area that I would be happy to discuss because I believe that this is happening across the spectrum with funders.

It took a while to receive the negative decision. It was just disappointing to learn the bid had been unsuccessful.

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Applicant Comment	
It was all good.	
it was good summary of feedback and will help our future applications.	
It was very straightforward and concise. The form was simple and succinct and the signposting with regards to help if needed was clear. Also, there was a delay in letting us know the outcome which was due to the volume of applicants, we were informed and kept up to date throughout which was extremely appreciated.	
Management were entity not happy about he Trust's decision.	
My bid application was made under ... following a conversation and email correspondence with a TFL Grant Manager in February 2020.	
I was told that my project proposal was very strong and that the Trust/other Grant Managers were excited to work with me around the implementation of the project. The application was shortlisted....	
I was then contacted by the same Grant Manager and was given a detailed explanation about the reprioritising of grants due to Covid-19 and that my application was going to deferred to the June funding round. I agreed that funds should be used where need was greatest but understood that my application was to be put on hold.	
Following several unanswered emails about the deferred application, I learnt that the original Grant Manager I was dealing with was on long term sick, leading me to contact another TFL representative.	
At this stage I found the whole process fell apart, from what had been a very clear and transparent progress to vague, with little to no direction. I was asked at short notice to submit an update to the work and delivery plan of the original application which wasn't to exceed two pages, this was all the guidance I received so assumed that my original application was being used with the additional support documents requested.... I was very disappointed in the process and how my application was dealt with in the June 2020 funding round.	
No comment.	
No guidance, no contact and no support.	
One of the reasons given when the bid was turned down was that other organisations were doing what we were trying to achieve and that we should partner with them. We feel that what we are trying to achieve is unique and not replicated by other organisations, all of whom we are aware of or liaise with.	
Overall the experience of applying made it seem like the Trust only funds organisations/projects which are known to them already.	
Poor communication. Seems as if it was another collection of applications to justify the need for financial support in the city. Not helpful.	
Processes, interactions and communications all feel fairly standard and automated, which is understandable given the volume of work the Trust has to deal with, but if more detailed feedback were provided, and a better sense of whether a future application would nor would not be more favourably considered, that would save work for both applicant and Trust in future by ruling out applications which are certain to fail.	
Professional, non biased, helpful. Being such a big funders, funds are highly competitive.	
Reason for declining the application and guidelines for applying were different.	

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Applicant Comment	
The application form is far too long. A shorter expression of interest form should be put in place to assist applicants in making proposals that the Trust actually wants to receive.	
The funding guidelines appear to be clear but unfairly exclude organisations who are care charitable but also provide social care. The funding guidelines state: "We primarily support small and medium-sized organisations, usually with an expenditure of less than £2 million a year. Larger organisations can apply but will need to meet most of the criteria." -This is totally misleading! ... Making this decision purely on organisational income levels disregards the needs of an underserved population in London.	
Please look at the work that charities actually do rather than their income levels. By doing this, you will achieve so much more for vulnerable people living in the capital....	
The application process was straight forward. However I do feel that detailed feedback on why an application is declined will be valuable especially for smaller grantees.	
The communication has always been transparent and processes easy to follow.	
The communications were thoughtful and courteous. It was our mistake for not making clear how our submission related to the clearly stated objectives of the Trust.	
The criteria were not clear on what 'advocacy' meant - this has a lot of different meanings in different contexts.	
The funding criteria is clear.	
Timelines and deadlines were clear and met by the Trust.	
We requested feedback and this was provided in a very helpful and honest way.	
While we did not receive the money we requested we understood why and felt that the Trust had some understanding of our work and was interested in it.	
The criteria regarding waiting a further year before applying again was waived which encouraged us that our application was not too wide of the mark and we may consider applying again.	
The issue for us is that we are part of a larger very separate organisation and regardless of the work we do we are going to find it difficult to obtain funding from organisations like TFL. The fact that there had been other funding was something that was held as a reason why we would not get funding from TFL regardless of whether any of this funding would be there in future.	
The process was fair and well described. Our proposal failed to meet a technical priority of the Trust which we felt we could have worked around and still provided an excellent outcome.	
The process was fine, however our charity is a very small one so not sure if we have chance to receive a grant.	
The processes are actually fine. I think the Trust's priorities could perhaps do with a tweak to reflect the need for specific work in local communities.	
The processes seemed fairly standard and we were contacted for clarification of a number of issues. Therefore apart from the disappointment in not being funded, there were no particular issues that arose for us. In retrospect, it might have been sensible to ask for feedback, but we did not do this as we know that trusts are generally overwhelmed with applications and are often unable to give detailed feedback.	
The quality of information from the Trust is always good and helpful. I believe the fund is very much oversubscribed, and must be very competitive. I have no complaints around communications, processes and interactions. I apologise for not being able to answer all the questions in the survey, but I do not have all the information to hand at the moment.	
The reason given was that our organisation was working on a ... model rather than a purely ... model. In the conversation, I had with the Trust for London staff, I explained that the organisation had been run on a ... model and that this had led to the organisation nearly shutting and the "users" being taken advantage of financially. Many of the users who were involved at the time, clearly remember this as not a happy time saying "I don't want to speak about it". ... I am keen not to repeat the same mistakes again and to co-create an environment where the users can flourish and feel supported.	

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Applicant Comment
The Trust could have done a MUCH better job at letting applicants know an outcome sooner. Given the current climate, and the financial situation many community groups and charities have found themselves in (whilst still supporting their communities), a wait like this feels excessive and almost agonising.
The Trust's decline letter specifically stated that it was their policy not to provide any feedback, so I'm not sure why we're
The Trusts goals and objectives seemed conceptual (rather than practical) and its opaque (rather than informative). It was difficult to contact advisors able to give clear guidance. Though investing a substantial commitment of time ourselves the Trust did not seem accessible through the process.
There have been a few times that we had called them for some support for our application but no one seems to have the time to spend with us and go through some of the issues. Also, every time we spoke to someone, they didn't seem keen or helpful and felt that they just wanted to get off the phone. It is not everyone in the organisation, just some individuals that we spoke to at the time.
We know that they can be extremely busy as everyone is trying to get the same support which leads the staff to be under pressure. We don't want to be in a position in disrespecting any of the good staff that does do a good job for Trust for London. We know that there are people that may have got the funding for their project -possibly the same organisation that they always fund.
They seem to determine which organisation to fund.
This comment is somewhat direct. It is written not to cause harm, but to inform and hopeful help. I apologise if it causes any offense. We are a BAME led organisation. I found the application process, including the guidance provided was not inclusive enough and did not take into consideration the hurdles we had to overcome to be bold enough to apply for such a fund. We may apply for future funding, however will have to use an English grant writer, who can write funding applications much more effectively had we can, in a style which is written for white English readers. To ensure our application has a better chance of being successful, we will also probably have to address an area of concern that we assume the application assessors/criteria can relate to, rather than addressing a need that can only be seen by those who are BAME and or are from the most disadvantaged of backgrounds.
Tried to contact the Trust on a number of occasions but could nobody returned my calls.
Very brief but this is often the case with Trusts and Foundations - as a major charity ... we feel v much aligned with the work of the Trust - but unsure as to what they might fund.
Very good quality and was always available to support u when we had questions or wanted further clarification.
We did approach Trust for London to fund a project addressing ... which was escalating to great proportion within the BME communities in London. Most of the young people [affected] were from marginalised communities within London and it was almost impossible to access funding to address this issue. We thought that since the deaths were centred within London Trust would have been a very central point of support. We were just told that they do not fund.... We had tailored our Bid to address issues affecting marginalised communities in the London Boroughs. I tried into call them to explain our predicament, but help was not forthcoming and then we were faced by COVID19. We have not approached Trust for London again as at present everything is upside down. There are so many issues needing to be addressed.
We felt that the Trust may have wanted our users to seem pitiable and helpless to deserve support whereas our mission is to promote positive representations of disabled people.
We found the application process a little impenetrable, which a number of the questions just asking for the same information in a different way. We also thought the application made little account of the changing landscape (i.e. redundancies from COVID), which could allow for a more agile approach in determining best outcomes. We submitted a draft version of our application in advance of the deadline (about a week) asking for feedback, but received none, we submitted anyway, but with an apprehension that we were not answering 'the exam question' (which were unclear anyway. Needs a more succinct, agile process.

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Applicant Comment

We had applied for both a grant and an impact loan as part of our strategic objectives. We were denied the grant but the ... was approved. ... at the Trust was at all times both highly personable and professional in dealing with us and we were impressed with the manner and timeliness of the support we received as well as the due diligence conducted. We have for many years believed that we needed to develop a partnership with the Trust but apart from our mutual support for the living wage campaign, we had failed to receive grant funding from the Trust. The insight to apply for a social impact loan, as well as grant funding, helped open the partnership. I think the ... offer that the Trust provides allows us to articulate our needs and aspirations as an organisation.

We have never heard formally from the Trust. We were quite encouraged by the visit but just assume we have been rejected as we haven't heard after months. The application was long winded but that is reasonable in normal circumstances but in times of COVID we accept there is no normal...

We made the application during the strict lockdown when it was harder to make contact.

We revised the proposal on the basis of the feedback from the Trust and it was subsequently successful. I think that generally the Trust's processes, interactions and communications are very clear, helpful and accessible. My only piece of constructive feedback is that the Trust tends to expect/ask for more information than it is physically possible to include in the application because of the word limits. It might be helpful to consider increasing the word limits to allow applicants to include all the information that the Trust expects applicants to submit.

We strongly believe there is room to improve in our ability to apply for funding. We are a start-up organization cannot afford yet to have someone working full time on applying for funds. So we prioritized our community members who need us most.

We were quite surprised by the feedback we received and were left with the impression that the Trust did not have a strong understanding of the area in which we work, the underlying causes of systemic racism in Britain, and the core dynamics of change. That said, this issue appears to be a reflection of wider systemic problems within the UK charity sector, and is not wholly unique to this funder.

We would have appreciated more feedback than the line of "This is because your application did not fit with your priorities." It would have enabled us to fully understand and appreciate where we went wrong in our interpretation of our priorities to the application guidelines.

We, on the advice of some fundraising experts - requested a call with a representative from the Trust - to talk through the project - that person was very distracted throughout the call - had forgotten that we'd booked a call in fact - and I had to spend some time trying to reach them. But when I talked through the project - they told me it was a very good fit - although in hindsight I wish I had listened to my feeling that they weren't properly engaged or listening. But we were under a lot of time pressure to get this bid in - and we didn't have time to perhaps try and talk to this person's superior - and it felt a bit difficult to do that. So instead we hoped it was a misplaced feeling of mine - and worked towards feeling this was useful feedback and we proceeded to put a lot of time in putting the project together and submitted. To then get the one line from the Trust that the project did not in fact fit their aims - when there's other charities funded doing similar work - felt somewhat like the feedback on the application was a tickbox response. Given the tone of that email and how dismayed we were - we didn't feel like following it up was useful.

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What specific improvements would you suggest that would make the Trust a better funder?
Applicant Comment
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- More BAME staff who are professional in how they use their voice amongst non BAME peers/colleagues- Diverse led training for Trust London staff, trustees and grant givers.- Scrutinise rate of successful funding, each year ensure BAME led organisation, who's leadership team are also BAME received eased assessment during selection process- Have a diverse panel of non-executives / steering group- Provided feedback- Keeping asking these very important questions.
[Our organisation] will be able to answer this question once we are successful and develop a relationship.
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Better understanding and assessment on quality and effectiveness of service2) A more transparent and honest application process3) Less reliant on certain groups of organisations/individuals to determine applications from organisations outside these groups/individuals4) Be genuinely open to changes and scrutiny of its funding process5) Be genuinely open to review its equal opportunity policy and practice to reflect the diverse community of its grantees, prospective grantees etc6) Maintain total independence by not being influenced by other funders including organisations/individuals funded by other funders. So as to prevent its trust to be influenced by selective white middle class groups etc.
<p>1. We pitched a ... project, but we're not sure the Trust had the expertise to evaluate it. We were quite surprised that it was rejected, when we have an outstanding track record in the field and when the project was closely related to the Trust's priorities. So gaining expertise in evaluating tech projects would helpful.</p> <p>2. Offering pre-application support, e.g. if the Fund could look at a 2-page proposal before asking for a full proposal, would save applicants a lot of time.</p> <p>3. We were advised to look at reapplying with a partner, which we didn't find helpful. Partnerships can be great for policy projects, but they're likely to be distracting for tech projects, where you don't want multiple stakeholders working directly on the product. (Instead you want a product manager who talks to and understands the needs of users, who has the autonomy to translate those needs into product choices without interference.)</p> <p>This is another example of the need for the Trust to get better at evaluating tech projects. The general point I'd like to make here is that the Trust should frame its feedback on applications by explaining the *outcomes* it wants from the project (e.g. policy change) rather than trying to impose its views on how to make the project work in a field where it doesn't itself have expertise.</p>
A one to one call with prospective grantee.
A stage one/Letter of Enquiry step would rule out unlikely proposals at initial stage saving time and resources on both sides.
A wider range of funding available and less time offered in between applying for applications.
Appropriate communication mechanism on guidelines.
As per the earlier answer commenting on the Trust's processes, I would encourage you to slim down your first stage application requirements by at least 50%, to make it easier for smaller organisations to apply, and so that the investment of staff time is much less if an organisation is unsuccessful
As stated previously- perhaps greater interrogation of work on the ground and how important joined- up projects can be.

What specific improvements would you suggest that would make the Trust a better funder?
Applicant Comment
Be more flexible about how funding gets to grassroots organisations, and for what purpose. We proposed a project that had the backing of grassroots leaders from across London, yet it was summarily declined. The lack of understanding of the needs of grassroots community work was disappointing.
Better communication. Quick action.
Demonstrate more knowledge.
Don't know.
Extending the funding period to a minimum of 1 year as opposed to 6 months.
Fair assessment with good decision of every project.
Give feedback and indication for successful grant application.
Given the challenges facing charities post Covid - I think that it should be encouraged for charities to be able to talk through projects at an early stage with people who are listening. We have a good relationship with ... where they indicate projects they're interested in and this saves us spending a lot of time discussing, planning, conceiving and writing up projects which get binned. Be very specific in what you want from a project - we jump through a lot of hoops - it'd be useful to build in ways we can grow our projects into things that you might fund OR be aware you are not the funder we should be applying to. Make it simple - make it accessible - make it easy.
Go through suitable contexts for funding.
Hold meetings with voluntary organisations. Don't make Trust for London seem elite.
Get people doing the phone calls who can engage with the leaders in a more effective way.
I am not sure, because I did not receive feedback.
I appreciate that face to face meetings are not possible during our covid crisis. I think it would have helped to have had an appointment with a member of the Trust's team to discuss our plan, but this clearly wouldn't have been possible at the moment. It's very difficult to explain complex proposals in a limited number of words.
I can't fault the Trust.
I often feel that the outcome of the funding application is fairly clear from the start. This might as well be recognised with an early short communication before applicants do so much work. TFL is by no means the worst for this and I think they recognise this. However, as someone who has had both successful and unsuccessful applications over the years I think the sector would trust them on this. This would not rule out more in depth applications for newer areas of work or funding outside their regular streams.
I think the trust has been a good funder and I would not ask for any specific improvements.
I think they are doing good job but they could do better by talking to the organisation and discussing grant application with them.
I thought the Trust was conversant with issues affecting BME communities within London and ... was a daily issue in newspapers, local TV stations, word of mouth and there was a general fear on the streets of London. I was very surprised that their answer to us was that they did not fund ... which was happening at their doorsteps. We felt rejected and with nowhere to turn to. I did call them to explain our predicament but they were not very interested. We were very disappointed as we had explained ... to fit into the criteria which supports minority communities in London. Yes ... was a new phenomena within London and we had expected Trust for London to have shown some interest to help us.

What specific improvements would you suggest that would make the Trust a better funder?
Applicant Comment
<p>I would recommend that the Trust reviews and improves its underlying theory of change in relation to the underlying causes of structural racism in Britain - and in particular the role of the media in perpetuating these problems.</p> <p>Unfortunately there still seems to be an assumption that institutional racism within society can be tackled by running more/better charity awareness-raising campaigns – rather than by trying to tackle the deeper structural issues within the media that have, to date, prevented those positive awareness-raising efforts from having much of an impact.</p> <p>Despite the marked lack of success from such approaches, a lot of work still seems premised on charities seeking to secure "friendly" media coverage from media outlets which are - for structural reasons - fundamentally hostile to anti-racism work.</p> <p>If we are to move beyond this, then it's vital that funders seek to understand and tackle the deeper economic factors which incentivise hostile and discriminatory media coverage in the UK - which is a key driver of racism within wider society.</p>
<p>I would suggest that the grant funding process needs some re-working in the following areas:</p> <p>The use of closing dates for various funds adds an unnecessary time-urgent burden on applicants and triggers a traditional master-servant relationship which ironises the aims of the Trust.</p> <p>Perhaps consider reaching-out to partner directly with organisations that the Trust identifies, to assist them plan and resource their strategic goals that align with the Trust's goals.</p> <p>Consider further articulating the variety of financing options beyond grants or loans?...</p>
<p>I would suggest that the Trust reviews comprehensively how it funds organisations that work with people [in our field]. The Trust is welcome to visit our organisation and seek feedback from the group and the volunteers.</p>
<p>I would suggest that the Trust should understand the hard condition we work under such as limited fund and staff.</p>
<p>Just continue to develop.</p>
<p>Like many, they don't come and speak to us. Interaction with robots on a portal over humans who make the decisions is important. I don't think they know our field of work, perhaps that is why we know no one who has ever received funds from them. They need to be more prescriptive over what they want to fund, - where, who, to what end, otherwise the whole of London's VCS will be applying to them and we won't get any further forward.</p>
<p>Making the application process shorter in the first round. If the first round application does not match the fundamental goals and interests of the Trust, then a lot of the application (e.g. budgets, job descriptions etc.) will never even be looked at and so it seems unnecessary work for organisations to produce this.</p>
<p>More approachable would be good!</p>
<p>More support and better communication over the application process.</p>
<p>My impression is that they are very professional and do a good job. We have just been unlucky.</p>
<p>No comment.</p>
<p>No comment.</p>
<p>None.</p>
<p>Our community is in one of the most deprived parts of London. Our event is the only one most people are able to get to, or can afford to attend (it's a free event). We are a low income, multi-ethnicity community. We rely on grants to be able to put on our event as we receive no public funding. We are all local volunteers who freely give up our time. We all work full time, so organise this event in our spare time. We are not professional bid writers. It's very disheartening and discouraging to be continually rejected.</p>
<p>People on the field who could come and see what small organisation without funds are able to accomplish.</p>
<p>Perhaps more clarity on what is and is not funded by the Trust.</p>

What specific improvements would you suggest that would make the Trust a better funder?
Applicant Comment
Perhaps more engagement on a regular basis about the priorities of the Trust and in depth information on what they are looking for in the applications. It is often difficult for applicants to gauge the nuances that trusts are seeking within a programme. This engagement could also be on line forums looking at the various funding strands.
Please do more research into the community we operate in and how our work is crucial and integral to saving more lives in these communities.
Please see response in previous box regarding increasing application word limits
Remove the restriction on only applying once per year as for a multi-programme organisation this is very restrictive.
Respond.
Return applicants' phone calls. Be more sensitive to the needs of small charities working directly with [vulnerable populations].
Support for smaller charitable companies and not for profit who do not have designated fundraisers. Larger charities have unfair advantage as they have more resources. Apps are too time consuming. Maybe shorter selection process then coach projects you would like to fund.
Telephone interview to better understand the needs of the charity as sometimes it can not be displayed only through and application form. many funders are now also excepting video applications whivh i think is great.
The scores I have given for this area reflects the fact the we are a new organisation still trying to develop our strategy and goals. And of course we applied mid-COVID-19 so everything was up in the air for everyone. I think the Trust did an excellent job of understanding the information we provided especially given that they are not a funder focused on [our field] and we were all adjusting to new ways of working. We never felt that our funding application did not succeed because the Trust failed to grasp something we had explained or shared.
The Trust priorities are restrictive - focussed a lot on campaigns. It could benefit from a review to include practical interventions.
The Trust should clearly state its funding criteria in the guidance.
The Trust's objectives and processes need to be expressed in practical and not conceptual terms.
They need to spend more time getting to know the applicant, which can't always be explained on paper. Sometimes, it would be nice to put over your ideas verbally and to explain some difficult issues that we face working in the community. We understand that not everyone can get the funding if it does not meet Trust for London criteria but it would really help if they could show more concern and support for those organisation that did not get funded and perhaps encourage them to fill out another one with support from a grant funder to guide and outline the best way in filling out the form. We do understand the importance of filling out the whole application form but with some organisations they might find it extremely difficult to explain their circumstances due to the questions that are phrased on the application.
To continue enabling applicants/customers to have the opportunity to ask questions, obtain futher clarification and responses as early or quickly as possible.
To give all Trust staff a diversity training.
Use a shorter expression of interest form to save applicants from making applications that do not meet the Trust's requirements.
Reconsider the eligibility criteria regarding the leadership/staff representation of ... groups. You might think that this is helping to encourage organisations to be more representative but it is a 'chicken and egg situation'. Representation of people with ... in leadership roles and employment will continue to remain low if the funding is not available to support organisations to develop leaders and support people into careers.
To give an example, our board and staff make up does not meet the Trust For London's minimum levels of representation. However, we have whole programmes that are run by people with lived experience. We wanted to apply to the ... programme but were told that we were ineligible due to the minimum representation requirements - despite the particular project being run 100% by people with [our area of focus].

What specific improvements would you suggest that would make the Trust a better funder?
Applicant Comment
Very clear priorities using examples and very clear exclusions again using examples, and more feedback on unsuccessful applications - otherwise it just creates more work for us as well as you because we will apply again.
We understand the need to ensure funding is targeted effectively and to bona fide providers, but the level of scrutiny will put off the smaller providers, who may be more agile in producing the Trust's desired outcomes. It would good to see more pilot or testing programmes (smaller funding, shorter timescales), with a caveat that they can be terminated at any time but a proviso that greater funding would be made available if the pilot/tester was successful. More smaller providers would apply then.



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