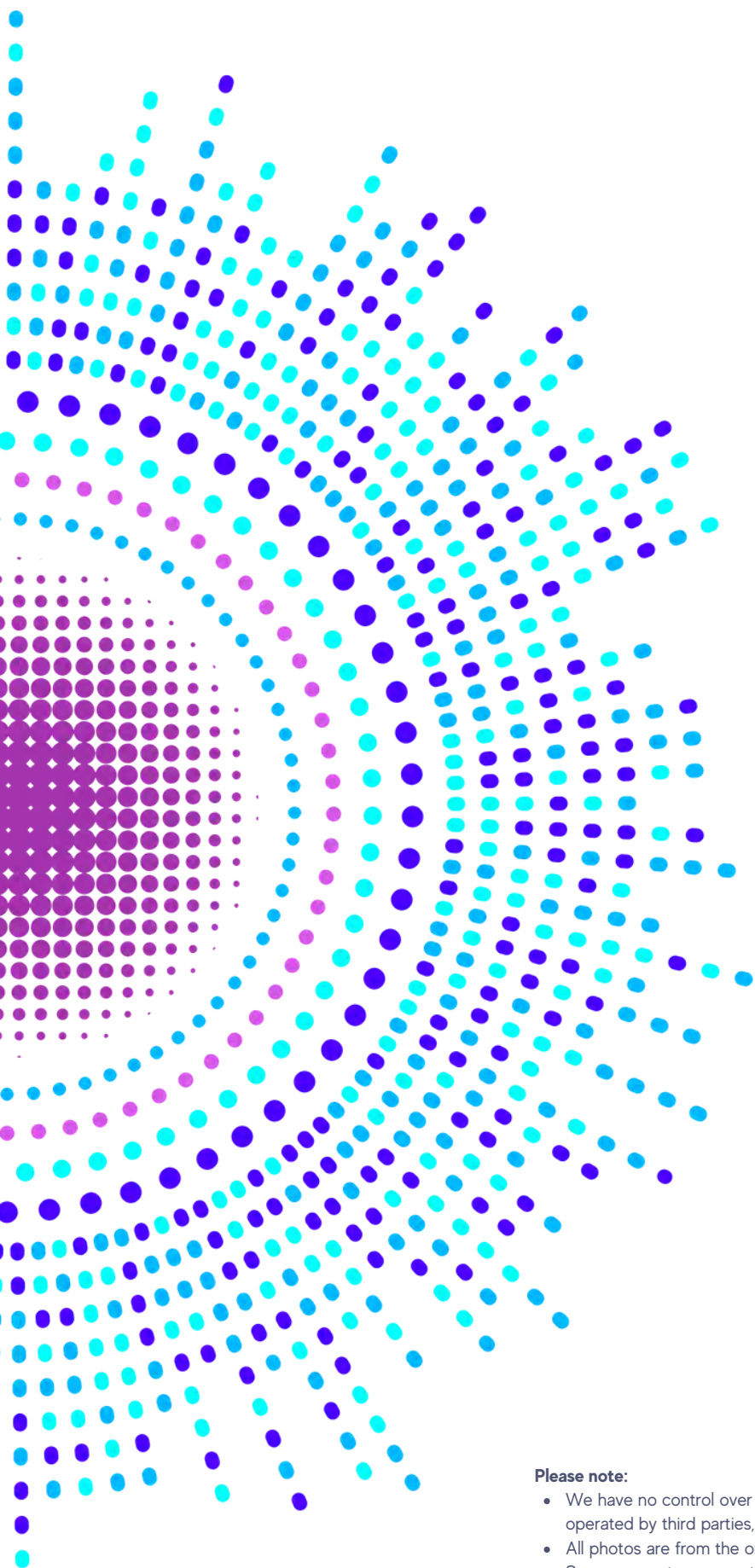# LivedExperience Leaders

LEARNING PARTNER

Final Report
Part A

Please note:
- We have no control over the contents of any websites or documents owned and operated by third parties, and are not responsible for them, their content or availability.
- All photos are from the organisations and projects funded through the programme.
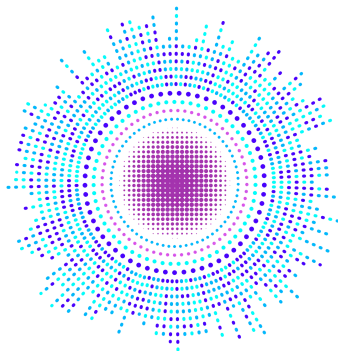- Some percentages may total over 100% due to rounding.

LivedExperience
Leaders

LEARNING PARTNER
Final Report

Part A

Background information

This Part is accompanied by Part B and Part C
which can be downloaded from lex-project.co.uk

CONTENTS

1

INTRODUCTIONS

Introduction to the report

In 2019, The National Lottery Community Fund (TNLCF) **launched a new funding stream**, entitled the Lived Experience Learning Fund.

The fund was formed for community organisations with a broad range of social justice missions to invest in and enable, the development of lived experience (LEx) leadership. This was to occur either internally within their organisations or through enabling/empowering their communities, who were, through their experiences, socially disadvantaged.

?

What is a lived experience (LEx) leader?
A lived experience leader is defined as someone who uses their first-hand experience of a social issue to create positive change for, and with, communities and people they share those experiences with.

To learn more about the Fund visit:
tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/ programmes/leaders-with-lived-experience

Following a series of convening events bringing established Lived Experience (LEx) Leaders together to collaboratively design the fund and how it would be operationalised, a pilot phase commenced. This phase enabled 20 organisations to receive up to £50,000 for up to two years for projects that supported the development of LEx Leadership. This included either those employed by the grantee organisation or through the creation of LEx leadership development opportunities for their community members. Grantees came from a wide range of sectors, and from across the UK.

2019 PILOT PROGRAMME

20 x projects

funded up to **£50K** per project

2020 PROGRAMME

50
x projects

funded up to
£50K
per project

Following the success of the Lived Experience Leadership Pilot, a further round of LEx Leadership funding was awarded from 2021-23. In this Leaders with Lived Experience 2020 programme, 50 projects received an award. Similarly, the grantees were funded for up to two years and up to £50,000. Again, the successful organisations represented a wide range of social or community issues and geographical regions.

An independent learning partner, EP:IC has been involved in both funding rounds, engaging with all grantees throughout the lifetimes of their projects, and sometimes beyond this.

Since 2019, EP:IC has explored pertinent questions relating to the fund. Some of those questions included:

What does good LEx leadership look like?

Under what conditions can LEx leadership thrive?

What can funders do to enable and support LEx leaders?

An internal interim update on the pilot fund was submitted to TNCLF, as well as a final summary update of the pilot fund; both reports informed the development of the grant. Learning from the Lived Experience Leadership Pilot can be found online in the form of an infographic and report.

To view the Lived Experience Leadership Pilot infographic, visit
lex-project.co.uk#interim

To read the Lived Experience Leadership Pilot report, visit
lex-project.co.uk#interim

An internal progress report for the Leaders with Lived Experience 2020 programme was submitted at the end of the first year of funding and now, as it draws to a close. EP:IC present three separate but coordinated reports as a final output:
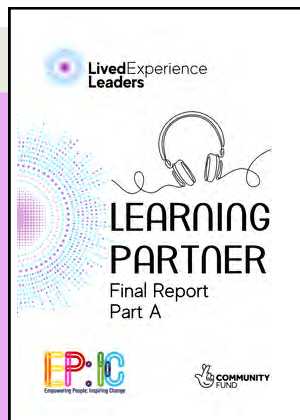
PART A

Part A provides background information about the work undertaken and those funded at an aggregate level.
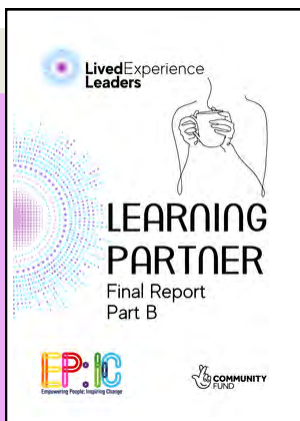
PART B

Part B provides information about all 50 of the organisations funded by the Lived Experience Fund in the Leaders with Lived Experience 2020 programme. This includes information about their intended and actual use of the fund, along with any changes, challenges and celebrations.
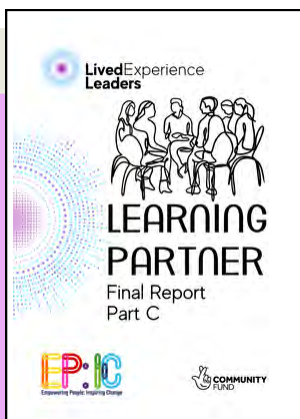
PART C

Part C provides more thematic learning about LEx leadership, focusing more on the aforementioned questions, and also some of the additional learning gleaned over the learning partner journey.

While the reports focus primarily on our learning from the Leaders with Lived Experience 2020 programme, we do draw upon learning from the pilot fund where it is appropriate. All three parts can be found at lex-project.co.uk

This report forms Part A of the final report for the LEx leadership programme.

Introduction to EP:IC
and the learning partner approach

EP:IC are an engagement and research organisation, passionate about social change.

To learn more about the Fund visit:
**tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/
programmes/leaders-with-lived-experience**

Our team comprises of a blend of lived, living and learned experience which we believe strengthens our approach, namely in terms of innovation, connection and reach.

Our vision for the learning partner role was to be a trusted soundboard to the grantees, and a conduit of learning between them and TNLCF. We recognise that an inherent power dynamic can exist between a funder and a grantee, and saw our independence as being valuable in this relationship.

We were keen that our role in creating learning opportunities needed to avoid intrusive extraction. Instead, our hope was to share gained knowledge back to the grantees in a mutual and reciprocal manner. This became an important part of the learning journey, and EP:IC have facilitated opportunities for grantees to connect using a network approach, enabling us all to explore a wide range of issues together.

We were introduced as the learning partner to all Leaders with Lived Experience 2020 programme grantees at point of grant award, and were able to share our approach at an online welcome event hosted by TNLCF. As such, we were embedded as the learning partner at the start of the journey. From mobilisation of projects, we were able to discuss expectations about engagement, and the mutual benefit of working together.

From the pilot we heard this cohort struggled to find the time to attend network events, and complete interviews and surveys. Often these small, mostly grass roots organisations' resources were fully utilised engaging with their communities. Additional tasks outside of this were seen as unpaid work, not factored into original budgets and staffing profiles. This struggle was acknowledged by TNLCF and alleviated significantly on the Leaders with Lived Experience 2020 programme through the decision to award each partner with an additional £6,114 to their funding.

This 'uplift' was to be used at the partner discretion towards two things:

① Increasing accessibility to those with additional needs, such as physical disability, learning disability, mental ill-health, neurodiversity, or language needs

② Engaging with the learning partner and towards their own reflections and learning from the programme

We found the combination of the early introduction to EP:IC's learning partner responsibilities, and the additional funding, considerably changed the dynamic of the relationship between the learning partner and the grantees, as it encouraged significant uplift in levels of engagement, resulting in a closer journey travelled alongside the partners, and deeper understanding of the challenges and successes for each organisation.

Introduction to the partners

In the pilot phase, an unprecedented number of applications were received (over 650), for a maximum of 20 awards. This popularity ensued and the Leaders with Lived Experience 2020 programme saw 698 applications, for a maximum of 50 awards.

Just with the pilot phase, applications were encouraged in various formats to enable easier access to the fund, including videos, which was welcomed. In the pilot grant, LEx leaders were part of the assessment process and in the second phase, applications were assessed by a panel incorporating grantees from the pilot phase, embodying the values of placing LEx leaders at the centre of the fund. These leaders were able to feed learning from the pilot phase into the process, as was a representative of EP:IC.

Initially, 49 grants were awarded to projects spanning a wide range of sectors, geographical areas, and timescales. However, during the lifetime of the grant, one of the grant holders experienced a change to their organisation whereby the partnership divided. This resulted in both the project and grant being split. EP:IC therefore worked alongside 50 organisations in the Leaders with Lived Experience 2020 programme, until one organisation terminated their project with TNLCF as they recognised they could not deliver the project as planned.

Part B of the report more thoroughly details the individual projects, their goals, challenges and successes, but we have aggregated some wider learning into this section. Grants were awarded to the following, listed in alphabetical order:

Action Disability Kensington and Chelsea (ADKC)

Afghanistan and Central Asian Association (ACAA)

Black Beetle Health CIO

Black United Representation Network CIC (BURN)

Breakthrough UK Ltd

Bridge Creative Enterprise CIC

Brighton and Hove LGBT Switchboard

Catalyst 4 Change CIC

Changing Tunes

Connect: North Korea

Cooperation Town Ltd

Cymoedd Creadigol CIC

Darkside Rising CIC

Deafblind Scotland

Disability Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly

DIY Theatre CIC
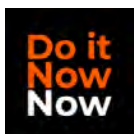
Do It Now Now CIC

Excel Women's Association

Forward Culture CIC

Gendered Intelligence

Hope in the Heart CIC

Inclusion Barnet

Inner City Life

Jukebox Collective

Kids Kitchen Collective CIC

Manchester Deaf Centre Ltd

May Project Gardens CIC

Midaye Somali Development Network

Millennium Community Services

MoMENtum CIC

Mums In Need

My Life My Choice

People First

Positive Stepz

Red Rose Recovery

Resilience Learning Partnership Ltd

Revoke

Ruff and Ruby

SISU

Social Rights Alliance Manchester

SpeakUp Theatre

Sunderland Bangladesh International Centre

The Black and Minority Ethnic Young People's Project

The Hummingbird Project CIC

The Love Tank CIC

The Well Communities CIC

Triple C

Your Voice Counts

Youth Ink

In terms of the primary sectors the organisations represented, the table below outlines the spread within the grantee cohort. The most commonly represented sector was disability rights, followed 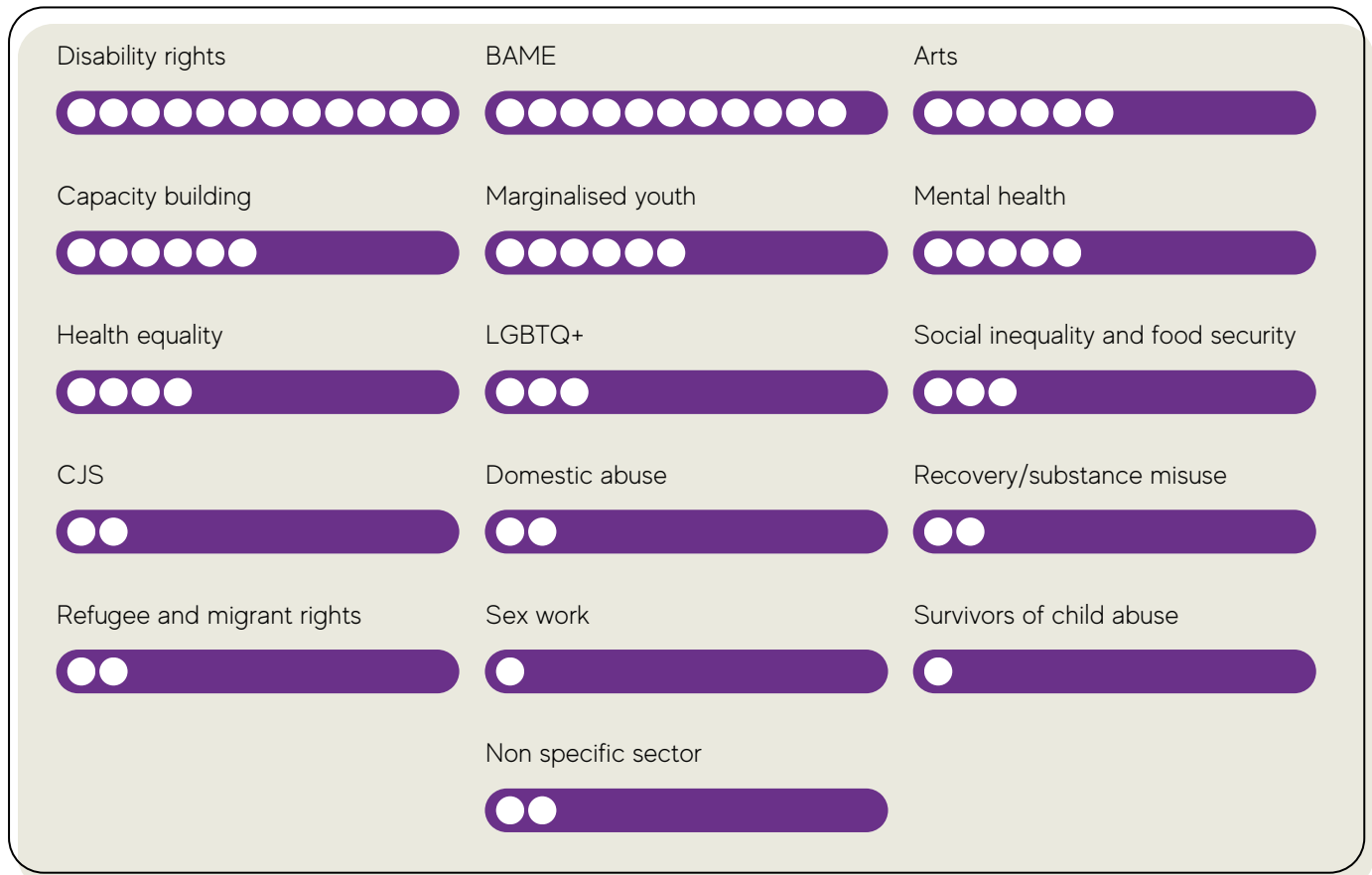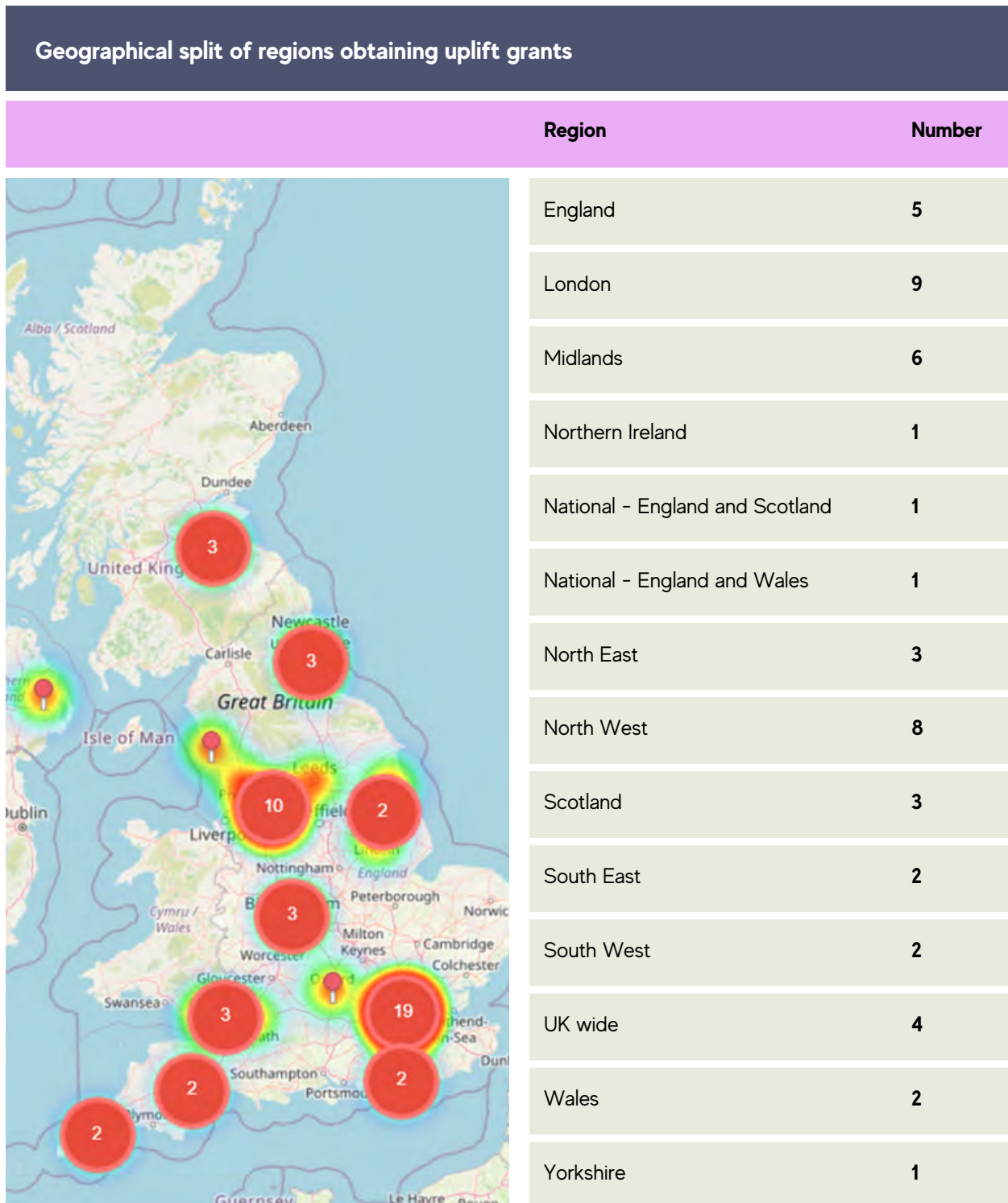very closely by racial justice. Where some organisations had more than one focus, they are represented more than once in the table, hence it does not total 50.

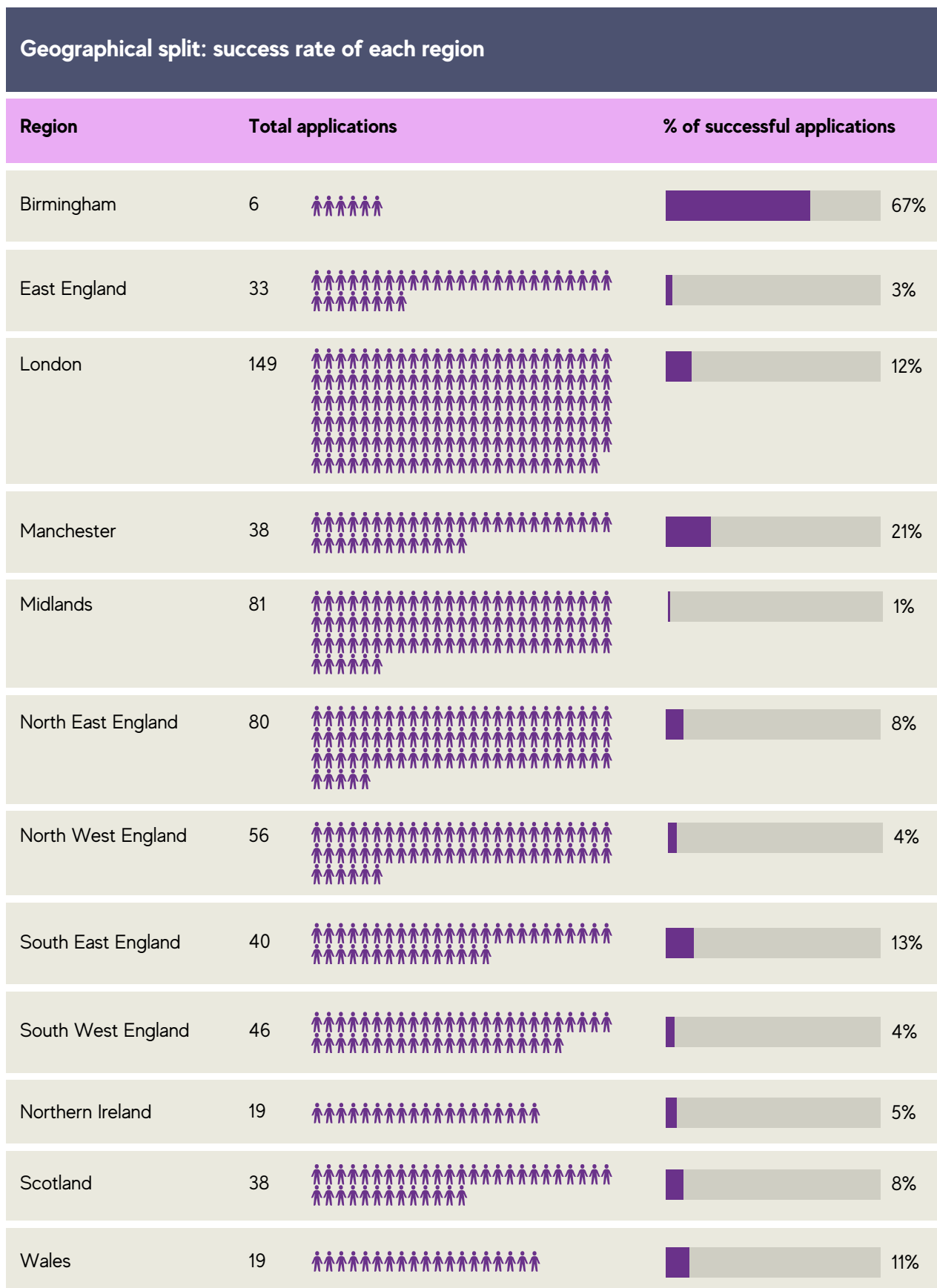| Disability rights	BAME	Arts
●●●●●●●●●●●●	●●●●●●●●●●●	●●●●●●
Capacity building	**Marginalised youth**	**Mental health**
●●●●●●	●●●●●●	●●●●●
Health equality	**LGBTQ+**	**Social inequality and food security**
●●●●	●●●	●●●
CJS	**Domestic abuse**	**Recovery/substance misuse**
●●	●●	●●
Refugee and migrant rights	**Sex work**	**Survivors of child abuse**
●●	●	●
	Non specific sector	
	●●	

LEx leaders from the social justice sectors told us that their personal, and subsequently professional lives, mean that they have a deep personal and professional understanding of intersectionality. They understand that, more often than not, a presenting problem is not the full story and as such, solutions must be diverse and multifaceted. Therefore, these leaders and community organisations have multiple work streams and organisational knowledge that cuts across many sector silos. LEx leaders told us that sometimes intersectionality can hinder access to funding, due to intersectional organisations appearing less specialist and more generic, However, they asserted that recognising intersectionality permitted more holistic offers and challenged more traditional siloed approaches to resolving collectively held challenges. The ease in which LEx leaders communicated with each other within the network across disciplines and issues spoke to this intuitive and strongly held understanding of the complexity and entanglement of social justice problems.

Looking closer at the geographic spread, there is a reasonably even split amongst the regions of England, with less awards given to the devolved nations. Within cities, eighteen London based organisations received the grant, Manchester based services were awarded seven, making these by far the most well-funded cities. Some of the organisations based in those cities did however provide services/support to other regions, which also true of several other regional organisations who supported their target demographic through outreach and online methods.

The following chart and heatmap shows the spread in more detail:

Geographical split of regions obtaining uplift grants

Region	Number
England	5
London	9
Midlands	6
Northern Ireland	1
National – England and Scotland	1
National – England and Wales	1
North East	3
North West	8
Scotland	3
South East	2
South West	2
UK wide	4
Wales	2
Yorkshire	1

16

We took a deeper look into the geographic spread, and considered the success rate of each region:

Geographical split: success rate of each region

Region	Total applications		% of successful applications	
Birmingham	6	👤👤👤👤👤👤	▰▰▰▰	67%
East England	33	👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤	▏	3%
London	149	👤👤👤	▰	12%
Manchester	38	👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤	▰▰	21%
Midlands	81	👤👤👤	▏	1%
North East England	80	👤👤	▰	8%
North West England	56	👤👤	▏	4%
South East England	40	👤👤	▰▰	13%
South West England	46	👤👤	▏	4%
Northern Ireland	19	👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤	▏	5%
Scotland	38	👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤	▰	8%
Wales	19	👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤	▰	11%

The three largest cities in England, London, Birmingham and Manchester all had the highest success rates except for the South-East which also had a similar success rate. All four places were in the range of 12% to 21%. Wales closely followed with an 11% success rate.

When Manchester is included in the North-West figure it brings that region up to 11% of successful application. Although the wider North-West lags with only 4% of successful applications.

The Midlands had significantly lower success rates at only 1% (one successful application out of 80), than any other area. Birmingham at 14% does raise the whole Midlands area up, but still only to an overall figure of 4%.

London and its corresponding area, the South-East, has consistently higher success rates across both the city and wider region, the only part of England where this was found to be the case. Wales at 11% also as a wider area also had a high level of success rate compared to other areas of the country.

Most grantees applied for funding for 24 months in the Leaders with Lived Experience 2020 programme of funding, with the average funding period being 20.3 months (the median of the project length in theWave 2 was 24 months). This was higher than in the pilot phase, where the average was 17.7 months and the median was 18 months. This is explored in the following charts:

Duration of LEx Leadership project (Pilot Phase)		
Number of months funding was for	**Frequency**	**Total number of months in this category**
12 months or less	𝍩𝍩𝍩𝍩𝍩	72
15 months	𝍩	15
16 months	𝍩	16
18 months	𝍩𝍩𝍩𝍩𝍩𝍩	108
24 months	𝍩𝍩𝍩𝍩𝍩	144
Totals	𝍩𝍩𝍩𝍩𝍩𝍩𝍩𝍩 𝍩𝍩𝍩𝍩𝍩𝍩𝍩𝍩	**355**

Duration of LEx Leadership project (2020 programme)

Number of months funding was for	Frequency	Total number of months in this category
12 months	👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤	204
15 months	👤	15
18 months	👤👤👤	54
23 months	👤	23
24 months	👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤	576
Not answered	👤👤👤	
Totals (answered)	👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤	**872**

The range of grants awarded in the Leaders with Lived Experience 2020 programme was between £22,550 to £50,000, with a mean of £43,610 and a mode of £50,000. The median of the budgets was £46,478. This shows the grants awarded were clearly leaning towards the upper figure of £50,000. This was consistent and expected, as the length of the projects funded was also skewed to the upper part of the range in months.

There were 6 grantees who requested additional funding to their projects and TNLCF made the decision on the awards (rather than a wider decision-making panel). Awards were between £4,358.16 to £9,651 and the total awarded in additional funding was £34,859.16. The purpose for additional funding responded to community needs, cost of living and the desire to maintain and progress projects.
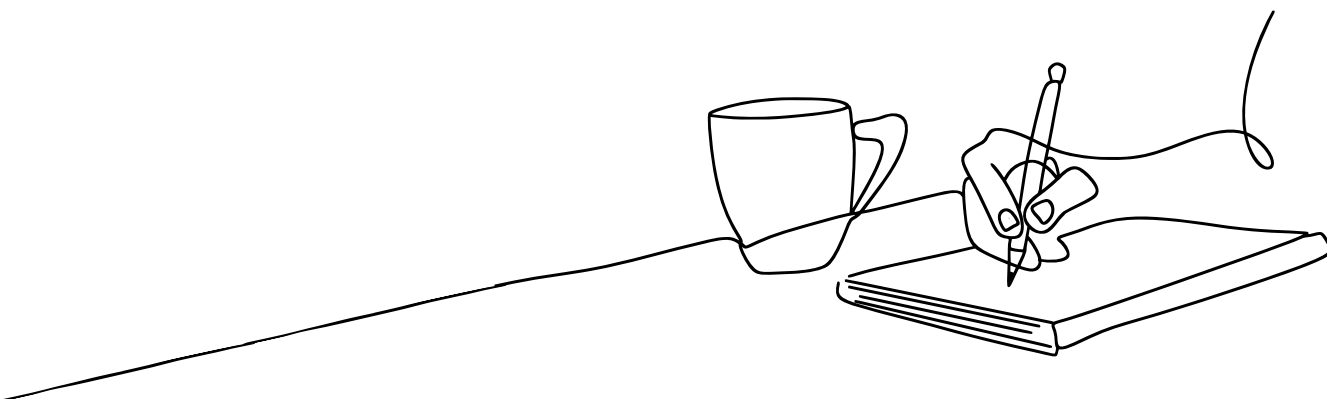
2

THE
ENGAGEMENT

Outline of engagement work undertaken

Following two introductory Zoom meetings, where 100% of partners attended alongside TNLCF representatives, EP:IC undertook a variety of engagement activities with partners.

These were underpinned by an understanding that not everyone responds in the same way to events, correspondence or opportunities. We encouraged partners to send us updates as milestones were reached or changes were made, independently from planned engagement activities. We draw upon the data gathered throughout the remainder of this report, as well as in Parts B and C of this report series.

A full table is provided in the appendix regarding each activity, although a summary is provided below. In all engagement, we see numbers declining, as projects drew to a close, and project staff leave or work on other projects.

Year	Timeframe				Activities
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
Pre-project kick off					Initial interview
Year 1	✓				Check in call; Network event; Newsletter
		✓			Check in call; Network event; Virtual lunch; Introduction to evaluation workshop; Gift of Lived Experience workshop; Newsletter
			✓		Check in survey; Optional check in call; Network event; Virtual lunch; Mental Health Awareness workshop; How to blog workshop; Newsletter
				✓	Check in call; Network event; Virtual lunch; Newsletter
Year 2	✓				Check in call; Network event; Newsletter
		✓			Network event; Optional check in call; Snap poll; Wave 1 learning event; Social media training workshop; Newsletter
			✓		Check in call; Newsletter
End of programme			✓		End of project survey; End of project call; End of project blog

One to one engagement

Following initial in-depth interviews with every partner at the point of award, we committed to connect with them individually for a 'check in' once a quarter by video call. This engagement was undertaken with the following:

Year	Timeframe				Activities	Numbers
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
Pre-project kick off					Online one to one introductory meeting	49
Year 1	✓				Quarter 1 check in calls	47
		✓			Quarter 2 check in calls	35
			✓		Quarter 3 optional check in call	3
				✓	Quarter 4 check in calls	24
Year 2	✓				Quarter 5 check in calls	29
		✓			Quarter 6 optional check in call	0
			✓		Quarter 7 check in calls	15
End of programme			✓		End of project reporting call	36

Networking

In addition to the one-to-one engagement, we also sought to create a grant holder network. Pilot partners told us that networking was important to them, though they found few opportunities in which to engage in such activities. Given this knowledge, we set out to bring partners together quarterly using an online platform, which we called network events. These were themed to provide each event with a specific focus. Often the themes related specifically to one of TNLCFs central questions. The following outlines the topics of each network event, and the number of organisations represented at each.

Date	Activity	Details	Numbers
July 2021	"Connecting & exploring what does lived experience mean to you"	We hosted 2 events on the same day, one at 12 noon and one at 7pm.	38
October 2021	"What are the barriers of being a Lived Experience Leader and how does this stop you from being the leader you want to be"	We hosted 2 events, one at 12.30pm on 19th October and one at 7pm on 26th October.	33
January 2022	"What are the key factors that contribute to an environment where leaders with Lived Experience flourish and enable change?"	We hosted 2 events on the same day, one at 12.30pm and one at 7pm.	24
April 2022	"Showcasing projects coming to an end & sharing wave 1 learning"	We hosted 1 event at 12.30pm.	9
July 2022	"Q&A with Paula Harriott"	We hosted 1 event at 12.30pm.	8
October 2022	"Lived Experience, Language & Power"	We hosted 1 event at 12.30pm.	14
April 2023	"Final network event"	We hosted 1 event at 12.30pm.	10

> "Bringing together a diversity of LEx organisations was an eye opener and very interesting/useful. I really liked the broadening of LEx beyond the 'usual' disability cohort. I also think the constant feedback loop is very useful and a far better way of evaluating Lottery projects/money that the usual start/end method."

To strengthen our hope to connect organisations, we generated a directory of grantees, and circulated this to all partners, enabling them to research and link in with one another in their own time if they wanted to. Forty organisations out of the initial 49 contributed a page to this directory to promote their organisation.

Additionally, we created 'Network News' which was sent to all partners quarterly. Network news contained information from TNLCF, details of upcoming events with the learning partner and details of upcoming external LEx events. We gave space for partners to share news about their organisation or their LEx project, and encouraged blogs and other content to be shared. Partners were asked if they wanted to contribute news each quarter. The following table outlines how many organisations engaged with each edition:

Issue 1
July 2021

Number of contributions

Issue 2
October 2021

Number of contributions
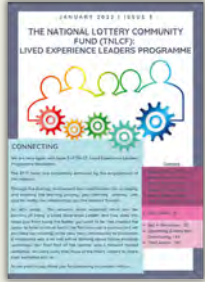
Issue 3
January 2022

Number of contributions

Issue 4
April 2022

Number of contributions

Issue 5
July 2022

Number of contributions

Issue 6
October 2022

Number of contributions

Issue 7
January 2023

Number of contributions

Issue 8
April 2023

Number of contributions

To read the newsletters, visit:

lex-project.co.uk#newsletters

Further, some partners told us they appreciated the opportunity to network, but would like the opportunity to meet with others without a theme or a facilitator. We therefore set up 'virtual lunch' events which ran once a quarter, and had no set agenda.

Date	Number of attendees	Date	Number of attendees
3 November 2021	👤👤👤👤👤👤	7 January 2022	👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤
2 March 2022	👤👤👤👤👤	5 May 2022	👤👤👤👤
8 June 2022	👤👤👤		

Wider learning opportunities

We learned that some partners were keen to learn more about certain topics on their LEx leadership journey. We reflected on what was discussed during networking events and set up learning events online which were open to all. The following table outlines each event and the number of organisations in attendance at each:

Name of workshop	Facilitator	Date	Number of attendees
Introduction to evaluation *	Lucy Wainwright, EP:IC	November 2021	👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤 👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤
How to blog	Russell Webster	March 2022	👤👤👤👤👤
Disclosure of LEx and the right to privacy	Micheala Booth ^	October 2022	👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤
Wave 1 learning event *	Lucy Wainwright, EP:IC	November 2022	👤👤👤👤👤👤👤
Making social media work for your organisation	The Media Trust	December 2022	👤👤👤

* To view the presentations from these events, visit:
lex-project.co.uk#events

^ This workshop took place within a quarterly networking zoom

Two partners offered to host a learning session, which can be seen in the chart below. Each organisation gave up their time to share their lived experience and their associated wisdom with partners. The events were:

Name of workshop	Facilitator	Date	Number of attendees
Gifts of Lived Experience hosted	Hope in the Heart	November 2021	👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤
Mental Health Awareness	Cymoedd Creadigol	January 2022	👤👤👤👤👤👤👤

Surveys

We devised a number of surveys to help bolster the learning, which were sometimes additional to our quarterly check ins or were sent in place of the check-in (with the option of a call where partners would find it helpful).

Timeframe	Facilitator	Responses
January to March 2022	Quarter 3 check in survey; leadership styles	31
October to December 2022	Quarter 6 check in survey	11
April 2022 onwards	End of project reporting survey	41

Overall, there were a total of 603 unique engagements over the 2-year period for the Leaders with Lived Experience 2020 programme. We reflect on findings from all of these engagement methods through the report, pulling out statistics or quotes where appropriate to illustrate points.

2020 PROGRAMME

603
unique engagements

Levels of engagement

We saw some significant fluctuations in the degree to which partners engaged with EP:IC. For example, in regard to one to one or networking activities, some partners have been highly engaged, attending over 90% of the events or meetings on offer, whereas others have attended just over a quarter.

The mean was 64% overall, which compared very favourably in comparison with the pilot fund where engagement was not as well embedded.

The table below anonymously looks at each grantee and their engagement with EP:IC:

2020 PROGRAMME

64%

mean level of engagement

Grantee	Engagement in core activities Quarterly check in activity and network events	Engagement in extra activities Workshops and informal events	Overall engagement levels
1	93%	81%	88%
2	93%	36%	88%
3	90%	25%	71%
4	90%	22%	58%
5	80%	38%	61%
6	80%	25%	56%
7	80%	64%	73%
8	79%	18%	52%
9	79%	45%	64%
10	79%	18%	52%
11	77%	60%	70%
12	75%	57%	67%
13	75%	9%	43%
14	73%	18%	50%
Average	**64%**	**24%**	**46%**

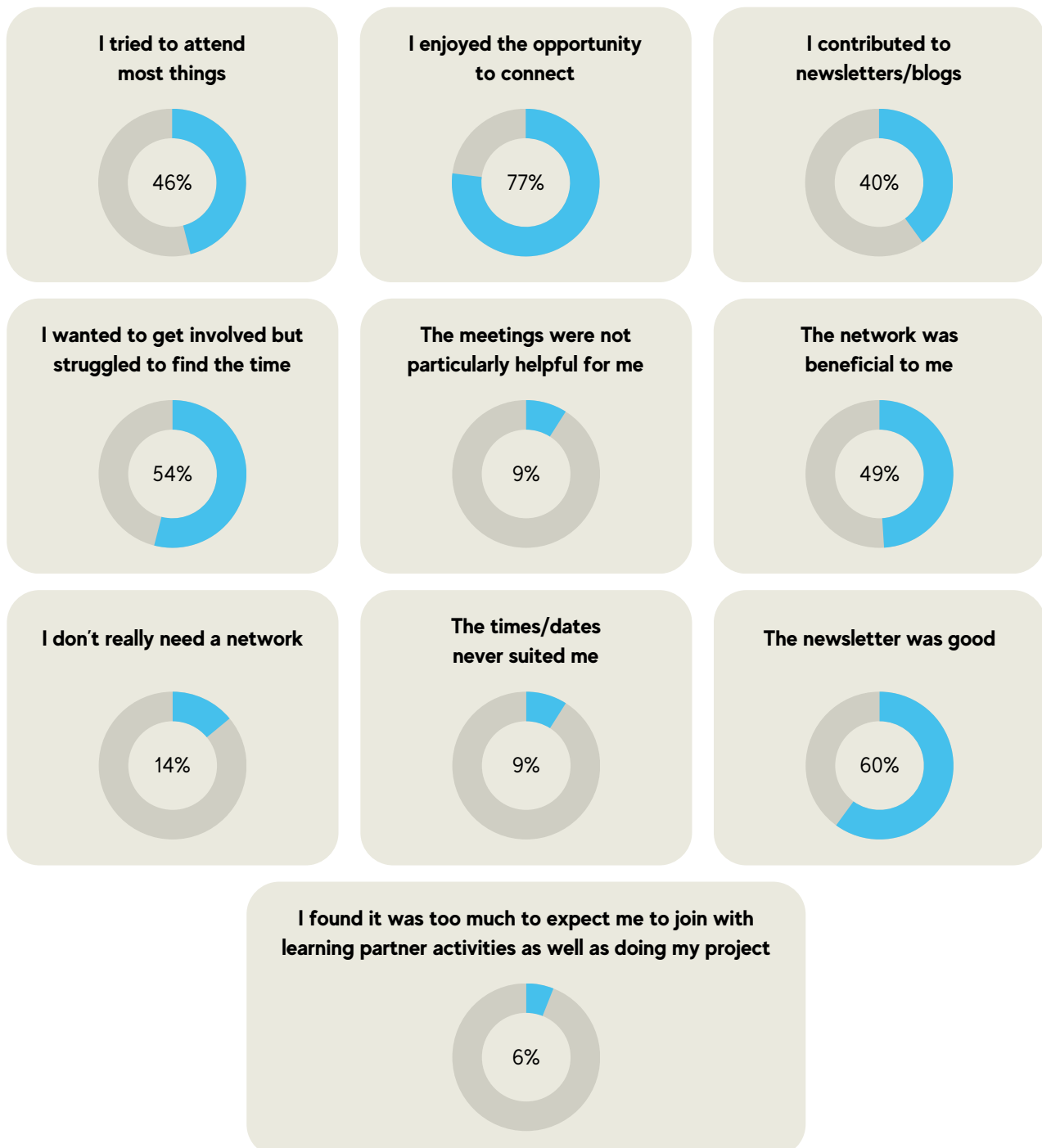| Grantee	Engagement in core activities	Engagement in extra activities	Overall engagement levels
15	73%	20%	48%
16	71%	18%	48%
17	71%	56%	64%
18	71%	9%	44%
19	71%	36%	56%
20	71%	9%	44%
21	67%	36%	54%
22	67%	13%	41%
23	64%	45%	56%
24	64%	36%	52%
25	64%	18%	44%
26	64%	9%	40%
27	63%	13%	38%
28	62%	79%	68%
29	60%	18%	42%
30	60%	27%	46%
31	60%	9%	38%
32	60%	18%	42%
33	60%	18%	42%
34	58%	0%	30%
35	58%	38%	50%
36	57%	36%	48%
37	57%	9%	36%
38	55%	11%	35%
39	54%	10%	35%
40	53%	45%	50%
41	50%	33%	44%
42	50%	9%	32%
43	50%	9%	32%
44	50%	9%	27%
45	47%	9%	31%
46	47%	18%	35%
47	45%	0%	23%
48	43%	9%	28%
49	38%	25%	31%
50	29%	0%	16%
Average	**64%**	**24%**	**46%**

2020 PROGRAMME

82%
completed
the survey

As a learning partner, we were intrigued as to why some organisations engaged less with the learning partner, whereas some have been fully engaged from the start and maintained their engagement.

Grantees were asked to complete an end of project survey to accompany their end of project call with EP:IC. Some questions relate to their experience of the learning partner, the network and the engagement activities. 41 out 50 completed the survey. The table below outlines the results:

I tried to attend most things

46%

I enjoyed the opportunity to connect

77%

I contributed to newsletters/blogs

40%

I wanted to get involved but struggled to find the time

54%

The meetings were not particularly helpful for me

9%

The network was beneficial to me

49%

I don't really need a network

14%

The times/dates never suited me

9%

The newsletter was good

60%

I found it was too much to expect me to join with learning partner activities as well as doing my project

6%

While participation was voluntary, it is useful to explore learning partnerships further. We provided an open text box for partners to reflect on their engagement. The most common reason for not engaging was related to capacity and not having the time to be involved in activities on top of daily activities.

> "Unfortunately, with other key activities going on across the organisation that required my attention, I was not able to spend as much time on the learning activities as I would have liked."

> "In the beginning we tried to attend all meetings, and really benefitted from them. As the project became more and more successful we didn't have the time or capacity, which we're sorry about."

Following this, the next most common reason related to managing the challenges of staff changes.

> "Due to staff changes and project changes, we struggled to maintain engagement with the learning partner as much as we would've liked. However, we appreciated not being pressurised into this support as we focused on our community and retaining trust and connection through a period of change."

> "I took over half way into the project and unfortunately, didn't have any knowledge of what learning partners had to offer and how they were associated with the funding."

Next, it was a case that part-time working arrangements made it difficult to complete all requirements, with networking events falling occasionally on non-working days.

There was some discussion with organisations who were either inexperienced with grant funding, or who had changed staffing part way through, that there was confusion over how they should allocate their uplift funding. Given that TNLCF gave the partners the autonomy to choose how to use the additional funds, it was entirely reasonable that they did not engage in all learning partner activity, though the flexibility did lead to some challenges with decision making.

There was no difference in engagement between smaller and less experienced organisations and larger ones.

We asked partners about the frequency and intensity of learning partner engagement. Generally, partners seemed to think there were sufficient opportunities, with no-one feeling they would have benefitted from more. However, the choice to attend and the flexible approach seemed to be valued.

> "We found the learning partner to be supportive without putting too much of an extra burden on us. We've enjoyed engaging with them!"

> "We think that EP:IC did a good job in this regard. We did not feel that their involvement added additional effort or onerous obligations to our project which is very important to us. We appreciated the opportunity to benefit from networking and training opportunities."

Grantees were encouraged to continue engaging with EP:IC and the learning journey past the closure of the projects if this ended within the two-year period. There were eight occasions on which a grantee engaged past project closure. This involved either submitting a blog, completing a survey or attending a network event. All blogs that were completed by partners throughout the duration of the grant can be viewed at lex-project.co.uk#blogs

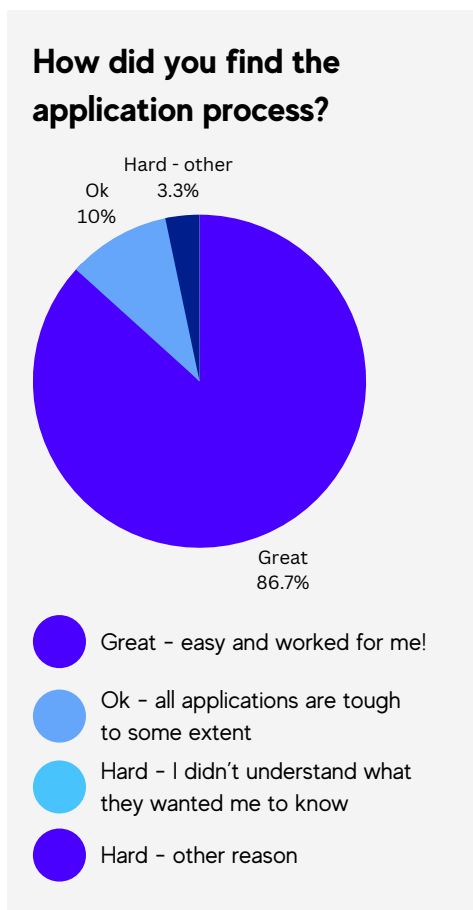**To view the blogs**, visit
lex-project.co.uk#blogs

3

THE PROJECTS

Experience of applying and fund management

In a similar way to the pilot fund, grantees in this funding round were generally happy with the grant application process with 86.7% commenting that they didn't have any issues.

In the pilot fund, this was 100%^. They were asked in their initial interview, and the following chart shows the findings:

How did you find the application process?

Great
86.7%

Ok
10%

Hard - other
3.3%

- ● Great - easy and worked for me!
- ● Ok - all applications are tough to some extent
- ● Hard - I didn't understand what they wanted me to know
- ● Hard - other reason

^ One pilot partner did not engage with EP:IC at all, so this was based on 19 of the 20 organisations.

Several grant holders highlighted how accessible the application process was, which was important for those with neurodivergent needs as well as those who struggled with literacy and language.

> "Glad they did a video, as both dyslexic so writing it would have taken forever."

> "It was really great application process - it was really accessible."

One grantee commented that the informality of communication was particularly helpful, and wished other funders could operate in the same way.

> "If every funder thought about how they communicated and gave opportunities for face to face conversation this would be a good step forward."

> "The approach to this fund is very refreshing. Would like more funders to consider this approach. Like speaking to a friendly face rather than being too corporate."

We asked how grantees had heard about the project. We learnt that just over a quarter (27.5%) had heard of the fund through word of mouth, a colleague in the sector or someone involved with the pilot fund, and the same proportion (27.5%) heard from TNLCF directly. Just under a quarter, 24%, said they had no idea how they came across the fund opportunity, while others mentioned social media, or funding bulletins.

Interestingly, despite the growing familiarity of the term 'lived experience' in funding circles, many grantees were not familiar with the terms lived experience leadership, or LEx leadership until they were recommended to apply, which indicates there may be other organisations who missed the call for funding due to a lack of awareness around the concept, definition and wider movement.

> "We hadn't heard of a Lex movement … so [this is] really exciting to meet and network and see us emerge from the shadows."

> "LEx leadership wasn't something we knew about - as a phrase."

Some were enthused by the movement, and wanted to learn more and see real change as consequence of the coming together of LEx leaders.

> "More work needs to be done to give the 'LEx movement' momentum. How can we use this movement for the better? How can we strategies LEx?"

The grantees were similarly asked again at the end of their projects what their experience was of the fund. Everyone who responded was positive about what the fund had enabled them to do, and were positive about the relationship they had with TNLCF.

> "We are extremely grateful for having had this opportunity to demonstrate the effectiveness of the model, and which has further strengthened our organisational philosophy of supporting the development of services led and informed by lived experience."

Project rationale

When EP:IC enquired with each partner about the rationale behind their projects, most spoke about gaps in service they had either encountered personally, or that they had seen in a professional role.

Many of these gaps were spoken about as emerging through austerity measures or as a consequence of the covid pandemic. However most were decades old, or longer term persistent societal challenges or inequities.
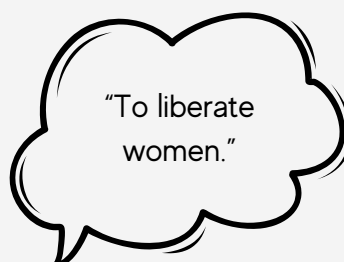
"I had a colourful/complex youth, and knew I wanted to go into Youth Work. I wanted to be that person I needed as I grew up."

"We saw a gap in provision in Scotland. There was a lack of focus on the individual, the people living and actually affected by sex work. This is partly due to the lack of services and support available to Sex Workers specifically, and partly due to the strong stigma that has Sex Workers afraid to get help when they need it."

"It originally started up as a support group meeting in coffee shops. But as it grew it felt there was a needed for a specific youth project for young BME people."

"Claim their rights and to take control of their own lives."

"To liberate women."

"We are building true partnership – my vision is to set up a big version of what we are doing."

"Growing up in prison system, I know there is a massive gap in role models. Wanted to see YP in that career path, being role models to other young people caught up in the system."

"Cuts everywhere. Also saw rising youth violence. We got together, me and another 2 people (who were earlier in their journey). We opened a youth club, a healthy holidays club (for the summer), a mentoring programme for black lads who are not engaging with the local community."

One particularly poignant response to this question does suggest the depth of basic but essential need that continues in some communities, and how important funding programmes are to society.

"We wanted to make food accessible to all."

We noticed a desire in everyone to change societal perceptions, and social norms. This was seen across the board, and was the driving force behind much of the motivation of the LEx leaders.

"Society tend to look at what you can't do rather than what you can do. When we talk about what we need, we are looking at it from a support point of view, whereas society looks at it from a care perspective. Not enabling, but keeps you down."

"That we change public perception and that we understand how positive identity is developed and move past shame and disappointment to navigate purposeful life."

"Challenging perceptions. What it is to be a woman, and strong. What it means to be a neurodivergent woman."

"Enabling sex workers to develop their skills/ diverse to empower them to make choices."

We found that around half of organisations have used the funding to concentrate on a specific cohort within their usual beneficiary group, for example women or girls, an example of how organisations have sought to plug a gap within their own existing service.

A significant number (12 out of 50) have used the funding to develop LEx leadership in young people; a focus that emerged through an organisational recognition to address the specific needs and skills base of this cohort. They explained that by responding to the needs of young people, this helped them stay current, helpful and as relatable as possible to their community. These grantees also reflected that developing young leaders not only breathes new ideas into the organisation, but also encourages longevity of the organisation.

"Develop our current young people to take on leadership roles, using their lived experience to inform solutions for their own communities."

"Development of a youth council; support, train and mentor young refugees to settle, integrate and achieve their leadership potential. Also, to strengthen internal organisationally for the future leaders."

"My aha moment was thinking about the next generation of LEx leadership and how to make space for that new generation."

"My dream is for anyone with a LD to be recognised for their aspirations and hopes, and have a chance to make them a reality. Instead of 'oh thats nice' and the brick wall."
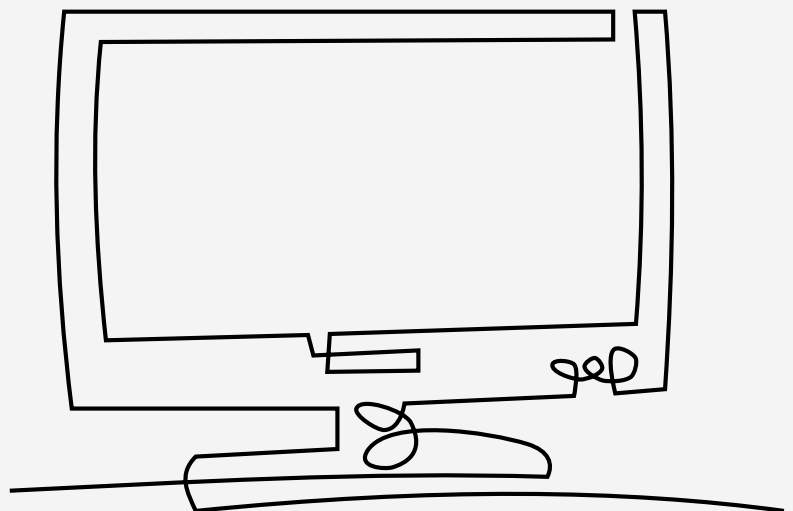
Ambitions across the grant holder projects varied, from upskilling employees within organisations, to training community beneficiaries, to restructuring and redefining leadership (sometimes trustees) within organisations.

"The aim of the project is to 'hand over' the project to people with LEx. So, the ambition is to train up and enable people with LEx to run an organisation and also to elevate the charity to the next level."

"To learn more about leadership, to harness gift of time and to have the space to strategise. This will support our leaders to have a sustainable organisation and ultimately serve more."

"We are looking to build internally via investment in our team leader. Shadowing and training. But also we want to enable the community to be the best you can be - we would love to see them develop businesses one day to become a thriving community rather than an exploited community."

"Build network of MH changemakers. To allow/support/address barriers, stigma wider inequalities that MH service users face. To make sure voices are heard. In 2 years support 20 people develop as changemakers with lead LEx to enable others in the community, develop a network to create wider system change."

Generally however, a more overarching theme was clear in almost all organisations, the desire to empower people with LEx, so to enable more equitable power sharing opportunities in society and to ensure those who lead can provide empathetic and authentic leadership to the communities they serve.

"The mission is to give people hope."

"My dream is for anyone with a LD to be recognised for their aspirations and hopes, and have a chance to make them a reality. Instead of 'oh that's nice' and the brick wall."

Alongside this, we observed a tendency for organisations to look beyond the funded project, to explore how it can elevate individuals and communities. Importantly, we recognised an intention for organisations to influence and systems change and shift policy through strengthening the depth and breadth of LEx leaders.

"We're strategic. In the future would like to be able influence policy. The project will hopefully lead into this."

"From this project we will be better equipped to answer commissioners because we will know what the LD community need and what grants to find in the future."

Use of funding

We looked at the intended uses of project funds, to determine **how** organisations hoped to use their grant.

The following table shows the number of organisations who proposed to use each of these methods in their project to encourage and promote LEx leadership. There was a total of 168 methods mentioned in the proposals over the 49 organisations.

Name of workshop	Number
Internal training	𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆
Networking	𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆
Mentoring	𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆
Online platform development (to provide training/outreach)	𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆
Core service development and support	𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆
Staffing costs	𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆
Obtaining external training	𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆
Workshops	𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆
Other	𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆𝌆
TOTAL	**168**

'Other' methods included research, events, community action, creative enhancement, shadowing and counselling.

It was interesting how many organisations proposed using 3 or more methods, and none proposed just 1 as shown in the chart below. The mode number of uses was 3 as was the median. The average number of direct uses outlined at the outset of their projects was 3.3.

The most popular method of enabling LEx leaders was through internal training, some of which was developing a bespoke package of training for this project.

We noted that some were looking to have their training accredited, which ensures a legacy beyond the funding programme, and most who were training employees had sustainability in mind.

Number of intended uses of fund	Number
1	0
2	6
3	26
4	13
5	4

"Extending programme so that the Leadership Programme becomes accredited and becomes under the Training Academy of Red Rose Recovery."

"To learn more about leadership, to harness gift of time and to have the space to strategise. This will support our leaders to have a sustainable organisation."

"The grant has enabled us to have conversations on What is Leadership? What does leadership look like in Switchboard? Look at the different ways we want to lead. Offer opportunities to lead in different ways. Because of staff increasing to more management/supervisory roles we have been able to create assistant roles in turn creating entry level positions. We have also done development days to build staff confidence. Giving staff the confidence to make decisions so they don't have to come to me on every decision."

"In the 2 years we have learnt what our community needs in terms of leadership development and where our true strengths lie. We have what works well in learning and how hybrid models of delivery using a mix of face to face and digital are best!"

Networking with others in the sector was the second most popular method of promoting LEx leadership in the cohort. This is through shared learning spaces, and a desire to share knowledge, both themes that arose in the pilot programme. When speaking about why this was important, there was a focus on a sense of belonging being a protective factor for people, as well as being motivating in leadership.

Similarly, when talking about mentoring, acceptance and belonging was alluded to in the sense that there is 'one less thing to worry about [in learning skills]' as they don't have to put on a pretence about their experiences, strengths or struggles. Further, it was noted part way through the programme that the mentor / mentee relationship can be mutually beneficial.

"Although the young people will get individual support, they will also be part of something bigger - and belong to LEx movement. So, they stand for something rather than fall for everything. Creating opportunities."

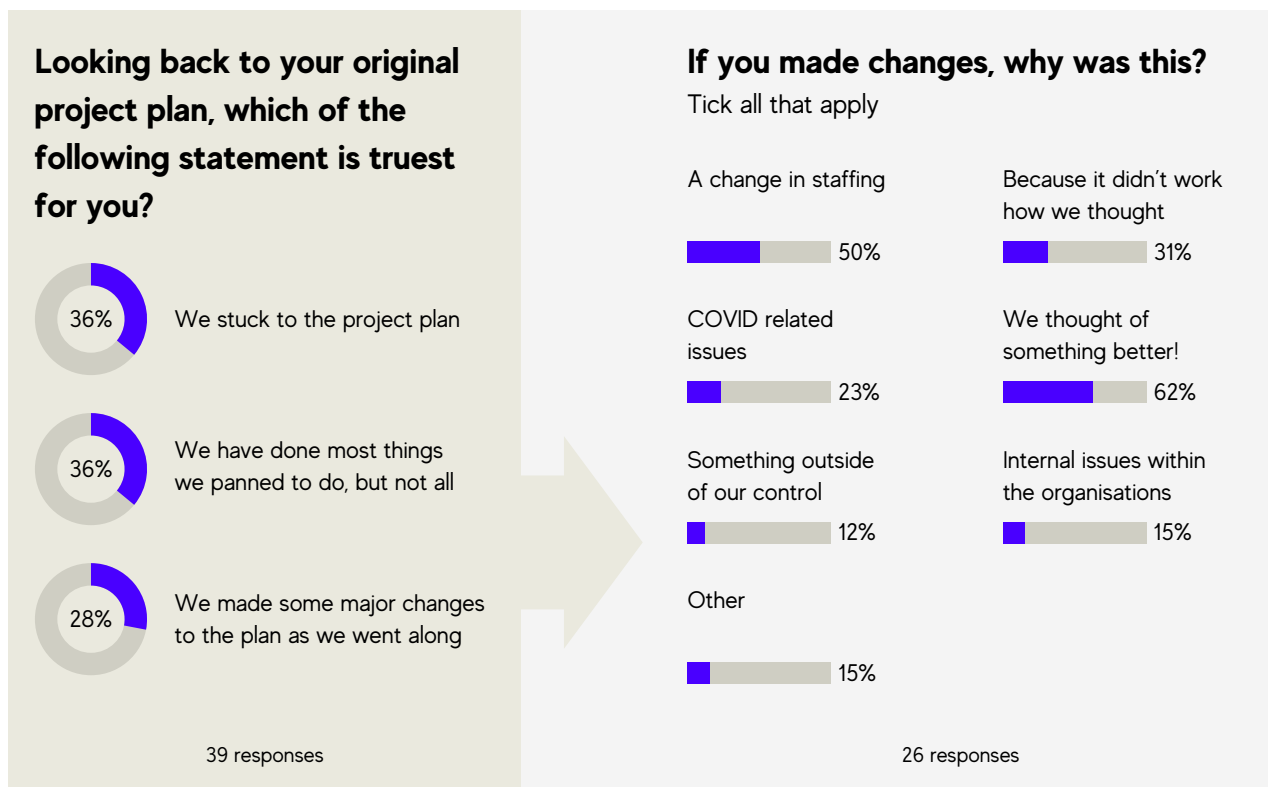"The power of belonging over oppression and how that motivates us."

"It is not always possible to be authentic in non-peer environments and we often need to pick what and when to challenge, this can create frustration or limit impact."

"The value of a mentor, particularly a peer, it's a 2-way process revealing the value and extent of our own experiential knowledge…"
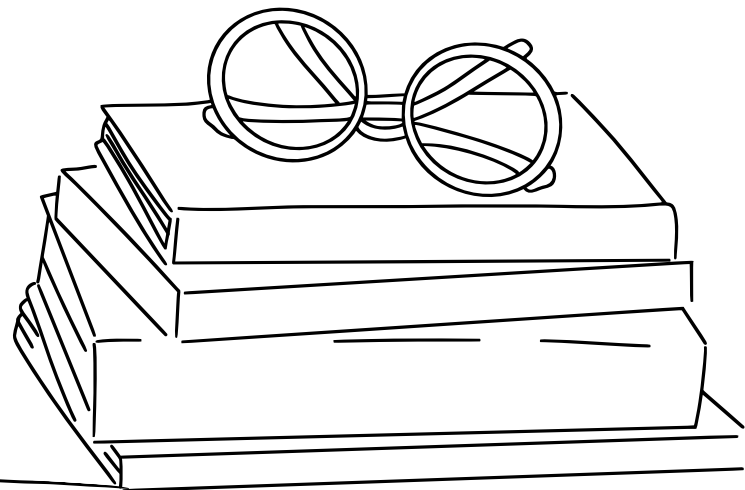
Trajectory of project

It is interesting that by the first check in point, in summer 2021, almost half the cohort had already changed their original plans, indicating that LEx projects are not always linear as they develop.

One of the key learning points from the pilot grantees was the importance of flexibility in regard to grant management. This was particularly noticeable because of the covid pandemic. However, in this second cohort, we also see flexibility and change as projects progress. This has continued throughout 2022, with 22 of the original partners making project changes by the first check-in.

Looking back to your original project plan, which of the following statement is truest for you?

36% We stuck to the project plan

36% We have done most things we panned to do, but not all

28% We made some major changes to the plan as we went along

39 responses

If you made changes, why was this?
Tick all that apply

A change in staffing
50%

Because it didn't work how we thought
31%

COVID related issues
23%

We thought of something better!
62%

Something outside of our control
12%

Internal issues within the organisations
15%

Other
15%

26 responses

We understood there was not always a single reason for making changes, but that enhancing the original proposal having had time to reflect on it since the application, was the most popular reason for change. Staffing changes was the second most common reason.

> "We changed the beneficiaries for the second Cohort to frontline workers working with young people to support upskilling them around working with those at risk of youth violence. It was important to be dynamic and support the local community's needs instead of being rigid and sticking firmly to the original plan. It meant we could continue to work with the first cohort of young people who had been subjected to a lot of trauma following a series of violent events against and by local young people."

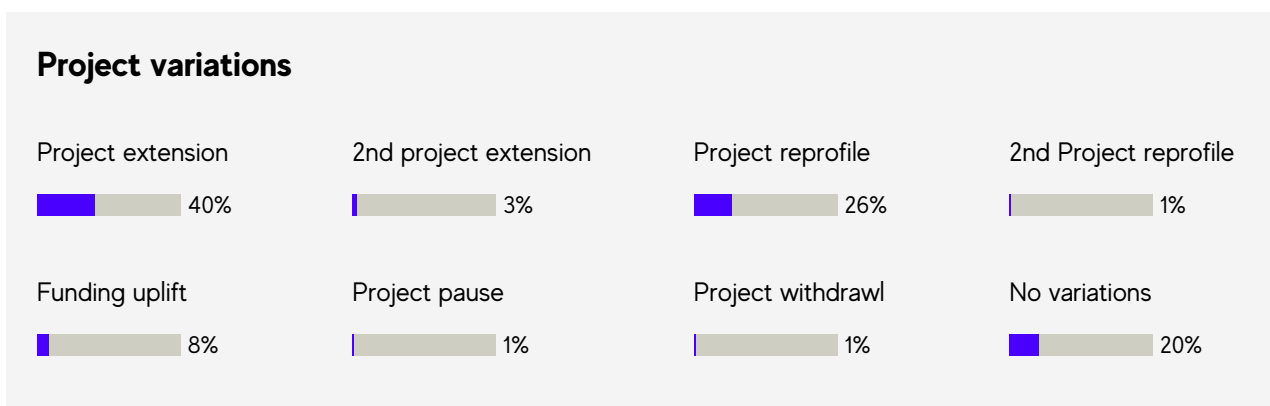> "We learned so much as we went along and chose to adapt our plans to our learning rather than constraining the programme to the plan that we had created beforehand. We allowed the experiences, needs and preferences of our participants to lead the project rather than our own pre-ordained ideas of what would be helpful and empowering. The result was a far more organic and exciting learning process for everyone involved. The project therefore varied in the specific details rather than broad strokes intentions and outcomes which stayed the same."

The flexibility and openness of the grant managers allowed grantees to request project changes (including extensions). At the time of writing, 36 (72%) had made project changes. Of the 50 organisations, 15 had no variations.

The remaining 36 organisations averaged just under one and a half variations (1.44 variations).

The following chart shows the reasons for the variations:

Project variations

Project extension	2nd project extension	Project reprofile	2nd Project reprofile
40%	3%	26%	1%

Funding uplift	Project pause	Project withdrawl	No variations
8%	1%	1%	20%

Several organisations positively reflected that TNLCF managed grants differently to other funders, or to 'the norm'. They felt this had been ground-breaking, and that their projects have thrived as a consequence.

"Been the most flexible of all the projects we've worked with and it's been so good. I mean, right from the beginning when you know we had to delay the start and unexpectedly long recruitment. The flexibility about how we could spend the money, and the fact that there was even an uplift …. all of those things. They've been absolutely great."

"I think the involvement of the learning partners was good. It made a huge difference to not have to write lengthy reports every 6 months."

"I think, being led by the LE and letting them be flexible in order to have the best impact on the ground."

Use of uplift grant

The aforementioned £6,114 uplift, which was unexpected by partners at the time of their award, was also praised as being innovative and unusual.

> "I think it's such a positive thing that they put in that uplifting around access. Yeah. And that it wasn't too prescriptive. I think that was a really good initiative and it's something that we would, you know, from our point of view, there should always be some sort of ring-fenced pot for access. Only the lottery's more forward thinking."

As this was a new facet to the funding, we wanted to learn more about grantee understanding of this additional income. In initial interviews, we found over half (56.3%) did not understand its purpose, and an additional third (34.4%) said they weren't entirely sure. Clarity around the uplift was deemed important, including guidance at the start.

Our early interviews gave grantees the opportunity to discuss any concerns or gaps in their understanding. At this early stage, there were a wide range of ideas coming from the cohort regarding how to use the money. Mostly grantees were grateful, and excited, to receive it.

> "There are so many possibilities, I feel motivated to do well with it, because I'd love them to think if you give someone some money, then it'll be a good thing and there will be positivity from it."

> "I know we will achieve so much with this uplift grant."

40 grantees were able to share how they have spent their uplift grants outside of engagement (with some telling us they had not yet utilised the money). We have categorised these and the chart below provides information about these categories:

21% Training, learning or development	**14%** Communication needs - BSL and language interpretors	**14%** Individual access needs
9% Digital or software needs	**9%** Media outputs	
9% Costs for venues, transport or childcare	**5%** New projects for LEx leaders	**5%** Printing or posting
5% Research	**5%** Office needs	
2% Project promotion	**2%** Recruitment	

We observed that there was a real breadth of creativity when considering the uplift, and where we have information, we have included this below. It is important to note that not everyone will have used the full sum on accessibility.

The most common use of the fund was to use the uplift to pay for external services or support to enable more people to join in with the LEx project.

Social Rights Alliance
provided child care for parents whose children had additional needs, so that their parents could engage with the programme.

Afghanistan and Central Asian Association (ACAA)
provided transport for those who were unable to access the project via any other means.

Breakthrough UK Ltd
were able to pay for interpreters in the evenings (who charge more) and for one-to-one support to enable people to engage.

Speak Up Theatre
paid for ESL workshops to refuges, provide BSL interpreters and streaming at our live performances, recorded performances so that they can be shared with those who can't get to the theatre and translated physical resources for women unable to speak English.

Disability Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly
were able to pay for BSL where needed, and also to put on training, such as domestic abuse for Disabled People's Organisations

Action Disability Kensington and Chelsea (ADKC)
put their uplift money towards creating more unifying hybrid events so people were able to gain as much from attending online as in person.
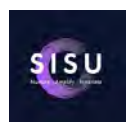
SISU
continued their online work via zoom subscription and by purchasing laptops for remote working. They were able to post supplies to sex workers unable to travel to the central space.
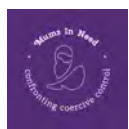
Deafblind Scotland
paid to ensure communication needs were met on online training, such as through BSL interpreters and guide communicators within homes

Manchester Deaf Centre
were able to pay for professionals to converse with people in their preferred language.

Mums In Need
has focused on dyslexia, and has supported people in paying for a dyslexia diagnosis, as well as purchasing Grammarly (a tool for people who are dyslexic – grammarly.com), and to purchase required coloured overlays to support reading.

Ruff & Ruby
paid for bespoke life coaching for young people with various learning and cognitive needs and also for a therapeutic music project (SOUND ADVICE) to support three LEx leaders who would not normally access interventions due to PTSD and other behavioural needs.

The Love Tank CIC
printed all training materials and sent them to participants in response to learning difficulties.

Changing Tunes
provided transportation for disabled participants.

Catalyst 4 Change
set up a Project Support Fund, which participants could apply to if they needed something (such as a laptop) to access services.

Hope in the Heart
spent additional time building rapport and connections with participants of their programme who had mental health needs, and utilised more accessible venues for their workshops.

Inclusion Barnet
increased the length of time their project officer was in post to reach a wider pool of people and for longer.

Inner City Life
spent on translators to involve more people for whom English was not the first language.

We saw a sizeable proportion who used the money towards staff training, or developing policies and creating an ongoing change to the way the organisation operates.

Midaye Somali Development Network
activated a peer support group for parents with children with additional needs. This has grown, and there are now two (in demand) groups. They also purchased training, ran feedback sessions and delivered activities specifically for these parents and their children.

DIY Theatre
developed accessible policies using Photosymbols and Easy English with group of members - these are now accessible on our website to ensure everybody can access and understand our DIY policies.

Black Beetle Health
appointed two disabled professionals, with personal access support, who were supported in line with guidelines generated through an Accessibility Guide.

Cymoedd Creadigol CIC
intended to purchase a ramp, although this is currently going through planning permission.

SISU
has conducted further research into the needs of disabled sex workers to understand barriers to participate and employed a lived experienced accessibility officer for a period of time to help support the organisation in its evolution and also subtitled an advertising video.

My Life My Choice
have been generating more accessible materials.

The Love Tank CIC
close captioned their Lived Experience videos, and dictation software was purchased for the organisation which will support projects in the future.

Darkside Rising CIC
internally supported / mentored participants who struggled with their executive function and mental health, providing them with strategies and support to maintain attendance and progress on the project.

Cooperation Town Ltd
paid for staff training around accessibility, to put this knowledge towards their ongoing 'warm hub' project.

Brighton and Hove LGBT Switchboard
have started an access audit internally, the start a more strategic and process driven approach to access across all activity.

The Well Communities
decided to start creating podcasts, to reach more people who would not usually engage, interviewing prominent leaders in the field of addiction and recovery.

Red Rose Recovery
made "crucial adaptations" to their building, to ensure it is fully accessible and accommodating for individuals with diverse needs.
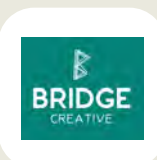
Bridge Creative Enterprise CIC
invested time in their leaders, to enable them the time to think and implement a pathway for others to become directors of Bridge Creative in the future which considered materials and mindset.

Resilience Learning Partnership Ltd
undertook a logo and website change to make them more accessible, and captioned their existing podcasts.

Kids Kitchen
connected with two organisations they wouldn't have been able to connect with without the uplift. These organisations taught them about connection and working with children with autism.

While the majority of the uplift funding went towards supporting the LEx projects or the organisations, there was also evidence of this being used to influence the sector more broadly. For example, several organisations who create podcasts and videos, have been able to make these more accessible to others not known to the project/organisation (as above) with the help of this uplift funding.

The Love Tank CIC

Black Health Matters - Taz
https://youtu.be/XEQkze59l2k

Further, Black Beetle Health used some of the money towards the launch of their online '**Guide to Accessible Working in a Remote Workplace**', which had been separately funded.

Black Beetle Health

A Guide to Accessible Working in a Remote Workplace
blackbeetlehealth.co.uk/a-guide-to-accessible-working-in-a-remote-workplace

Also, Triple C stated:

"We used a portion of the uplift money to create a set of Inclusive Writers' Room guidelines. These are designed to help TV production companies plan more inclusive, productive writers' rooms and story conferences. They were written by a small group of disabled screenwriters, in consultation with a wider group of 50+ disabled, deaf and/or neurodivergent screenwriters and other off-screen professionals, all of whom have worked in non-disabled spaces and wish to use these experiences to help all creatives in the future. They are intended to help production companies ensure that the writer they are employing is able to do their best work job without shouldering the extra (often invisible) burdens of self-advocacy, educating the room and overcoming access barriers. The guidelines are also proving useful to individual screenwriters who may not feel confident about providing feedback on workplace practices on an individual level. Around 50 screenwriters have contributed to this document. We decided everyone will remain anonymous, so the guidelines come from the collective voice of deaf, disabled or neurodivergent screenwriters."

TripleC

Guidelines For Inclusive Writers Rooms
triplec.org.uk/writers-room-guidlines

Some chose to use some of the uplift to attend network events and contribute to the learning partnership, and others have said they would invest some on internal evaluation.

"Will use the uplift to put towards research after the programme is complete. The research will come from the learning of the participants."

It was clear that the autonomy afforded to the grantees to self-determine how they spent the money was immensely valued. And people felt their teams and organisations had benefitted from it.

"What is invaluable is the principle of having a pot of money."

"The impact of these efforts has been profound. Individuals with accessibility needs have had increased access to valuable leadership development opportunities, which they may have otherwise been excluded from. This has empowered them to develop their skills, build confidence, and actively participate in decision-making processes, fostering a sense of belonging and self-advocacy. For our organization, the uplift has allowed us to strengthen our commitment to inclusivity and accessibility, enhancing our reputation as a leader in promoting equitable practices. It has also broadened our reach and engagement, attracting a more diverse range of participants and stakeholders. The impact on the organisation has been transformative, as we have learned from and been inspired by the unique perspectives and contributions of individuals with accessibility needs. Overall, the uplift provided by TNLCF has made a significant difference, enabling us to create a more inclusive environment and positively impacting individuals with accessibility needs, our organisation, and the broader community we serve."

The outcomes

The funding was overwhelmingly considered a success by participants, who spoke with positivity about their projects and any differences made to the community they serve.

We observed partners ending their projects feeling proud and exhilarated and with a sense of optimism for the future.

> "This was transformational for us as an organisation and enabled us not only to fill a critical gap in capacity but learn what we needed for the future in terms of organisational structure and leadership."
>
> "We are more resilient - and we have increased the amount of self-generated income."
>
> "We have never completed a two year funded programme before and it feels good, we have learnt so much on the way and it has convinced other funders we are trustworthy."

Unlike many other projects funded by TNLCF, the LEx Leadership fund did not require grantees to send in an end of project report. This was praised by several grantees.

> "I loved the 'light tough Lottery evaluation. Tailoring funding in this way is very beneficial and unusual."

> "We've found the light touch approach to work really well. It's been great to have guidance without overbearing reporting."
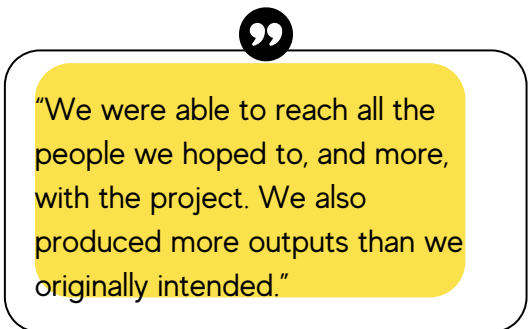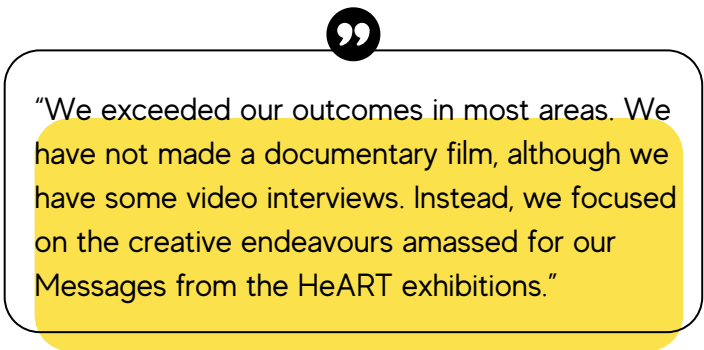
However, we are aware that at least 12 organisations have completed (and submitted) an end of project evaluation, and there are still projects due to finish due to extensions who may do the same. For those who did undertake an end of project evaluation, these were a mix of public or in house use/informal evaluations. We have provided links for any external evaluations within Part B. It was heard on multiple occasions that organisations still felt it was important to complete an evaluation; even if it was informal. Verbatim reasons for this were:

"It is important to reflect and acknowledge the work completed".

"It's just what we always do and good practice."

"Good evidence for future funding application and business development."

Four grantees chose to use video format to document their project journey. Other grantees to choose to document their projects in other outputs such as Podcasts, newsletters, events, concerts, exhibitions, and performances.

Several felt they had exceeded their planned outcomes, or where these became less important, side stepped them, achieving something different in their place.

"We exceeded our outcomes in most areas. We have not made a documentary film, although we have some video interviews. Instead, we focused on the creative endeavours amassed for our Messages from the HeART exhibitions."

"We were able to reach all the people we hoped to, and more, with the project. We also produced more outputs than we originally intended."

> "We were able to provide leadership opportunities for more than just the initial three members of the team we'd initially set out to empower. We were able to use those resources to provide more, smaller leadership opportunities instead, which proved even more fruitful."

Several felt they had exceeded their planned outcomes, or where these became less important, side stepped them, achieving something different in their place.

> "We exceeded our outcomes in most areas. We have not made a documentary film, although we have some video interviews. Instead, we focused on the creative endeavours amassed for our Messages from the HeART exhibitions."

> "We were able to reach all the people we hoped to, and more, with the project. We also produced more outputs than we originally intended."

And although not shared by everyone, ambitions for the future were evident.

> "In addition, from the outcomes created by the RAW project, we are exploring the potential to create our own training centre, delivering accredited personal training qualifications. This will allow us to expand our potential to mentor LEx leadership in the sport and physical activity sector, as well as ensuring that new personal trainers in the field understand the importance of respecting and supporting lived experience."

We asked grantees to estimate the number of beneficiaries of their work. This was a difficult question, with some answering "immeasurable".

> "Directly reached: 388. Indirect reach: immeasurable! 100s we believe, as our audiences take the message into their lives."

From the figures provided, the number of beneficiaries was a huge 25,357. This included direct and indirect beneficiaries.

2020 PROGRAMME

25,300+
direct and indirect beneficiaries

Considerations

It is important to reflect on some of the challenges, and while we do this in greater detail in Parts B and C, we have also listed some of the key ones here.

Firstly, in 2021 when the fund launched, the COVID-19 pandemic was still a feature of our lives. This impinged on people's ability to see participants face to face, and particularly impacted people's ability or willingness to mix in groups. While most partners had amended their bids on the understanding that COVID-19 may still be a factor to consider, this had an impact on project delivery. While the day-to-day impact has subsided at the time of writing this report, the long-term impact of covid on people's willingness to meet face to face, and their mental health is yet to be determined, and may be a consideration for future programmes.

> "The Covid pandemic really hampered the project. We experimented with various ways to grow and develop the Social Rights Alliance Manchester, incubate local rights-based campaigning and develop local leadership, but Manchester was in lockdown for a significant amount of the first year of the project. In the last few months, being able to engage with people face to face has made a real difference to being able to mobilise local leadership. It felt as if the project is just getting going, just as it is finishing."

> "We are on track to deliver most of our outcomes. There was not much take up from participants (Members) in delivering this training. In part due to social isolation caused by covid, Members' confidence had been affected and they were cautious about meeting large numbers of new people while maintaining social distancing/shielding safely etc. To address this we have developed/enhanced/expanded our original plan to deliver 'Get On Board' training, to also cover knowing your rights and confidence building."

Another challenge which does appear more long term for the sector (rather than topical like COVID), is staffing. Short term funding for projects gives way to temporary contracts, which can be problematic. Frustratingly for partners, this can mean the expertise acquired through the project can be lost, and gaps, common-place where temporary staff find permanent employment elsewhere. Many organisations told us they had to navigate staffing gaps and needed to re-induct and bring new team members up to speed, using up valuable resources.

"As a staff members contract was coming to an end we lost the staff member to another organisation, this is down to good management of staff and as a lived experience leader (our staff member) she has gone on to better things (which we are proud of - as it fits majorly with the ethos of the funding and aims) however this has impacted our business slightly."

"Our primary LEX leader left at the end of the two - year period which has paused the project but it will be taking off again in the next Month."

There was a desire expressed for there for continuation funding. This was highlighted by the partners in the pilot stage, and emerged again in the second phase. As mentioned, some organisations did apply to TNLCF for additional funding, and were granted this, but communication regarding continuation funding would be valued.

"We felt that we have achieved ALL our outcomes we set out to do with our project and just wish that we could access more funding to do follow on work to develop such a successful project in Stoke on Trent where lived experience is valued & welcomed."

"The 2 directors took part in the Bringing Change to the Board training which was funded through the Year 1 LEx leaders fund. It would be great to have this available again for new directors."

Throughout, partners told us they would benefit from additional training, and as a cohort, be provided with future funding to enhance leadership. There were some useful insights offered as to what would have been most valuable.

The responses of 33 respondents are shown in the chart below, with the most popular response relating to business skills, including managing growth. It was said these additional training opportunities would have further supported the development of LEx leaders and enhanced their capacity to drive meaningful change within their communities.

Topic	Responses
Business development – recruitment, HR, finance, strategic, governance, policy	👤👤👤👤👤👤👤
LEx leadership training – how to use it, learning from LEx, sharing LEx, building networks	👤👤👤👤👤
Identifying and accessing funders	👤👤👤👤
Evaluation/measuring impact	👤👤👤👤
Leadership and management	👤👤👤
Models/frameworks of working	👤👤
Marketing and press	👤👤
Communication, public speaking, presentations	👤👤
Campaigning, advocacy	👤
Peer support	👤
Supervision for LEx	👤
Social media	👤

One grantee reflected on elements of a leadership programme they believed could be transformative for LEx leaders. They felt it could be embedded as part of future funding for LEx Leaders, as their paths to leadership often look very different. The components are:

> **Advanced Leadership Strategies:** A comprehensive training program focusing on advanced leadership skills and strategies would have been valuable. This could include topics such as strategic planning, change management, conflict resolution, and effective communication techniques. Strengthening these skills would have enabled LEx leaders to navigate complex situations with confidence and achieve even greater impact.

Fundraising and Grant Writing: Training sessions dedicated to fundraising and grant writing would have been instrumental in equipping LEx leaders with the knowledge and skills necessary to secure additional resources for their community projects. This training could cover topics such as identifying funding opportunities, crafting compelling proposals, and building relationships with potential funders.

Advocacy and Policy Development: Training sessions that focused on advocacy and policy development would have empowered LEx leaders to effectively engage with policymakers, advocate for systemic change, and influence decision-making processes. This training would have provided them with the tools and strategies needed to bring about sustainable, long-term impact at a broader level.

Building and Sustaining Networks: Training on building and sustaining networks would have been beneficial in equipping LEx leaders with networking skills, fostering partnerships, and creating collaborative alliances. This training could cover areas such as building effective relationships, leveraging social media platforms for networking, and maximising the power of community connections."

The future

Some grantees were keen to express their view around how TNLCF could manage future funding opportunities, and the discontinuation of a funding programme dedicated to LEx leaders.

Grant holders were initially disappointed that a commitment to LEx leadership was seen to dissipate though the termination of the fund, and the important aspects of the fund that recognise and celebrate LEx leadership may be lost, despite being grateful for the opportunity to be involved.

"Keep it going. It could be very useful to the sector. I loved the 'light tough Lottery evaluation. Tailoring funding in this way is very beneficial and unusual. We need funding that does what we want it to do rather than following someone else's agenda all the time. We need to thrive rather than survive. We're full of skills and expertise – let us show it to you and the world!"

"This was such a lovely fund to be involved with – please just keep doing what you're doing as it really does make a difference!"

"Carry doing as you are but be as accessible, flexible and inclusive where you can. We recognise that we have quite a unique organisational model so understand that we are not always going to fit into a standard way of doing things."

"LEx Leadership is much needed project and we advise TNLCF to continue to fund this work as a way of supporting LEX leaders to support local services for better outcomes, increase engagement and participation."

"This is a unique fund that should continue. It would be good to fund longer projects as a lot of issues are hard to address in two years. A five-year fund would be better as it gives more certainty to Members/ beneficiaries that support won't end too soon."

"The project has validated the importance of LEx to us. I think it is spread more across society and a little more understood. More work still needs to be done. We have the language but not the full capacity to use it."

"It is felt that this somehow dilutes a specific and bespoke allocation for what is rapidly becoming a movement, and a new way of supporting people with lived experience to take control of and deliver services more relevant and accessible to their peers. What we may see instead is many organisations with general portfolios 'ticking that box' and then subsequently delivering to, rather than with, lived experience communities."

"We do hope that this is something that the Lottery (and indeed other funders) will consider carefully going forward. That said, we are extremely grateful for having had this opportunity to demonstrate the effectiveness of the model, and which has further strengthened our organisational philosophy of supporting the development of services led and informed by lived experience."

Overall grantees expressed positive feelings about the work achieved through the fund and had a great deal of pride in accomplishments.

"We were delighted to have delivered the project as we set out, as well as finding new ways to deliver due to COVID restrictions."

"We are working with 3 women from the RAW project, who are now enrolled on a Level 2 / 3 Personal Trainer qualification and interning at the gym with a view to becoming strength coaches and working for us."

"We identified and trained our target number of LEx leaders. We developed a range of online resources to support our programme of work. We formed a network of existing lived experience leaders. We worked in partnership with a range of statutory and community-based organisations to recruit people with lived experience."

"We achieved our outcomes and more. The success of the CLERO has seen us input on the new National Drug and Alcohol Standards, 10 Year Drug Strategy and we are close to ring fencing funding for LEROs across the UK."

"We exceeded our outcomes in most areas. We have not made a documentary film, although we have some video interviews. Instead we focused on the creative endeavours amassed for our Messages from the HeART exhibitions."

SUMMARY AND NEXT STEPS

This report has provided context and information about the LEx leadership fund, it's grantees, and the types of projects supported.

There was huge appetite for the fund and the extent of applications was testament to this. The vast majority found the application process to be easy and accessible. Applications came from a range of sectors and geographical areas, and the successful grantees were representative of this. LEx leaders told us how they straddled multiple sectors, and despite identifying with one or two primary sectors when pushed, more often than not, a presenting problem is not the full story. As such, solutions must be diverse and multifaceted.

Most grantees applied for two years, but some expressed trepidation at applying for longer, especially those new to funding. Most applications however were pitched towards the upper bound of the financial envelope. Some successfully applied for additional funding to extend projects, although not everyone knew this was an option, or which other funds might be applicable to them.

EP:IC engaged with partners for two years using a variety of methods. Challenges to engagement included mixed interpretations of expectations, measured decisions as well as confusion around the uplift fund, and also staff changes within some organisations that did not contain a handover regarding engagement with the learning partner.

Without doubt, partners wanted to see social change and improved outcomes for their communities. Most projects looked to fill a gap in provision or knowledge, and to empower those benefitting from their service. Grantees used multiple methods, but the most common methods were internal training, networking and mentoring. Three quarters of grantees made changes to their projects as they went along to ensure the needs of beneficiaries were met.

An uplift was provided to grantees to both engage with the learning partner and to improve accessibility. Over half found this to be confusing at the start, but at the close of the project, we witnessed how grantees had used the uplift in a range of innovative and creative ways. The most common use was to pay for external support to enable more people to engage.

While several issues were highlighted, ultimately, grantees were incredibly proud at the end of the project, and expressed gratitude to TNLCF for the opportunity afforded to them. Over 25,000 were estimated to have benefitted which is a fantastic legacy on which to build.

LEARNING PARTNER

Final Report
Part A