



Working in place: Collaborative funding in practice

*Young Harrow Foundation:
Embedding the Young People's
Foundation model in Harrow*



Acknowledgements

With thanks to our interviewees who took the time to support this research and shared their experiences with us openly and honestly.

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Young Harrow Foundation leads:



youngharrow
foundation

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This case study is one of five exploring how independent charitable funders and local, regional and national public agencies can work together in a given geographic area.

The case studies are part of IVAR's wider work on place-based funding approaches, which includes *Working in Place: A framework for developing and designing place-based funding approaches* and *Working in Place: Collaborative funding in practice*.

This document shares learning on independent and public funders working together in place from the perspective of the key partners involved. It is based on interviews with the funders, council representatives, local voluntary sector organisations delivering services to children and young people (members) and local infrastructure bodies.

For the full research series, please visit
[**www.ivar.org.uk/research-projects/place-based-funding/**](http://www.ivar.org.uk/research-projects/place-based-funding/)

Young Harrow Foundation 'at a glance'

Young Harrow Foundation is based on John Lyon's Charity's new model of support for voluntary sector organisations working with children and young people, within a climate of decreasing statutory provision and support. Young Harrow Foundation is one of seven Young People's Foundations, which seek to find new ways to strengthen relationships between funders and local organisations, and to establish more effective ways of supporting and delivering activities to meet the needs of children and young people.

Young Harrow Foundation has been set up as a charitable foundation, which means they can provide small grants locally and raise funds on behalf of other local youth organisations. It is run by three permanent members of staff and overseen by a Board of Trustees. The key partners involved in the design and delivery of activities are: local voluntary sector organisations delivering services to children and young people, Harrow Council, local infrastructure bodies and John Lyon's Charity.

Key components of the partnership are:

1. Developing a shared vision across Harrow about youth needs and what is on offer to young people.
2. Development of an online platform, where young people can find out about services in their area, and which can also support the process of referring young people to the right service. There are approximately 250 services for young people in the area, but often young people are only aware of a small proportion of these, and referrals are not happening between services. The platform should also help to identify any gaps and increase/decrease in needs.
3. Fundraising/bid writing support. So far this has involved bringing together a range of voluntary sector organisations to collectively bid for and deliver larger contracts.
4. Small grants pot to support small and medium local voluntary sector organisations to meet the needs of young people in Harrow.

Who provided funding?

- John Lyon's Charity
- City Bridge Trust

Provided as core funding in instalments of £200,000 per year. City Bridge Trust has committed to the model and are matching John Lyon's Charity (JLC) funding.

Timescale of the initiative

Early 2016 to 2019.

This section summarises key learning about collaborative place-based funding from Young Harrow Foundation.

- **Risk and relevance of a place-based approach** — Young Harrow Foundation demonstrates that it is possible to bring a range of different stakeholders together within an area to focus on a shared issue. However, it is inevitable that these stakeholders will have different relationships with place and Young Harrow Foundation has had to actively manage and reflect on this. For example, although much of the emphasis on this place-based approach is about supporting localised solutions, some argued that a localised agenda risks homogenisation of services. Speaking specifically about the needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) young people, one delivery partner said that in their experience place-based delivery 'doesn't work', as young LGBT people are more comfortable accessing services outside of their area. By taking a place-based approach, some organisations may be forced to provide holistic solutions when, in reality, there will always be a need for some specialist services, that people can access no matter where they live. The aim of the Young People's Foundations is to protect organisations' mission and vision and not homogenise.
- **Independent and public funders working together** — One of the aims of Young Harrow Foundation is to apply collective expertise to develop solutions focused on wider system changes as well as immediate interventions. This requires an understanding of how partnerships between the voluntary sector, public agencies and independent funders are changing. Power has shifted as independent funders are now the ones with the money. In this context the local authority and other agencies need to consider how they can use their democratic legitimacy and links to broader networks in order to add a different kind of value.
- **The role an independent funder can play** — John Lyon's Charity approached Harrow Council and local voluntary sector organisations with a clear vision for how youth services could be supported and strengthened in the borough. However, operationalising this vision was left up to Young Harrow Foundation and its members. Young Harrow Foundation and the Council said they hope to have

more two-way conversations like this with other trusts and foundations as funding opportunities arise, rather than simply feeding information in after the decision about what to fund has already been made. John Lyon's Charity have played an engaged role in the work: 'door knocking' to other funders on the Foundation's behalf, attending London-wide meetings, e.g. MOPAC (Policing and Crime), City Hall, in order to bridge city-wide and borough-level conversations, and being an active presence at Young People's Foundations' trustee meetings so that they have a handle on the conversations, decisions and actions being taken at that level. John Lyon's Charity sees their role in doing this as keeping the Young People's Foundations framework alive and ensuring that it does not become too localised, maintaining a standard in terms of their infrastructure, governance and resourcing.

- **Risk and failure** — Because it has core funding secured (from John Lyon's Charity and City Bridge Trust), the Young Harrow Foundation can take bigger risks and be innovative in its approach to fundraising on behalf of the sector. The sector does not usually have the opportunity to think strategically in this way, as they are generally preoccupied with fundraising to secure their core costs. However, there were still concerns about the potential ramifications of perceived 'failure'. They have spent a lot of time and resource in their first year building relationships and gaining the trust of members, yet in order to maintain this trust there is pressure for them to demonstrate 'a way of doing it in a new way'.
- **Leadership and governance** — It was acknowledged that each Young People's Foundation is likely to be heavily influenced by the experience and background of the different CEOs brought in to oversee them, in addition to being influenced by the borough context in which they are operating. John Lyon's Charity said they thought that working in this way requires an exceptional individual who is able to adapt their varied skillsets to different sectors. They need to be well-networked within an area or have the networking skills sufficient to build the necessary relationships quickly.

'The money's not there, and because the money's not there, the ability to work differently together is more of a challenge. So it cries out for a different form of leadership within the Council and within the sector.'

3.0

About Young Harrow Foundation

3.1

John Lyon's Charity and Young People's Foundations

John Lyon's Charity is a place-based funder. Many of the projects that they fund are locally focussed and have an emphasis on community development, bringing together a number of local stakeholders to focus on a specific issue. Young Harrow Foundation is one example of a model – the Young People's Foundations – that is being trialled across seven London boroughs: Brent, Barnet, Camden, Ealing, Hammersmith & Fulham, Harrow, and Westminster. The idea of the Young People's Foundation is that the concept can work in any area that does not have a youth infrastructure. While the focus of John Lyon's Charity is London, they believe that the model could be applied elsewhere in the country.

The Young People's Foundations were set up as charitable foundations between 2015 and 2017 and are being funded by John Lyon's Charity, City Bridge Trust and, in some boroughs, part-funded by the local authority.

The overarching structure of Young People's Foundations is designed to provide the following core functions:

- **One-stop shop** – for any organisation that wishes to deliver cross-sector services to young people. Consortia can often be too big for small/medium local organisations to engage in; this is smaller and thematically specific, and so provides an easier opportunity to engage. Young Harrow Foundation effectively acts as the prime contractor, identifying potential funding streams and bringing local organisations together to look at the potential for designing a joint bid.
- **Venue bank** – an online platform that will list available buildings/rooms that can be booked for youth activities in each borough.
- **Capacity building** – identifying where the strengths and weaknesses are and where capacity is needed, empowering the youth sector in each borough to become more sustainable.

- **Small grants pot** – for the inner boroughs this is an aspiration but for the outer boroughs it is a requirement. Each borough gets to decide the parameters of the grants pot but it can include salaries and core costs. All three of the outer boroughs have just finished the first round of small grants and will fundraise for the second round.

Beyond these core functions, the direction for each Young People's Foundation is determined by the needs and opportunities identified within each borough and allows for variations in the oversight of the local model. There is a sense that, inevitably, each Young People's Foundation will be heavily influenced by the experience and background of the different CEOs brought in to oversee them. For example, whilst some have chosen to identify a range of different funding bids that will support different aspects of, and approaches to, delivering youth services in the borough, others have chosen to focus on one or two single bigger bids that perhaps concentrate on one aspect of youth services.

London Youth has been appointed to oversee the Young People's Foundations network, which provides support and guidance to all the Young People's Foundations. They are looking at developing a quality mark which would act as an accreditation for the Young People's Foundations. At network meetings, young people's consortiums from other boroughs (where there is already an existing structure) are also invited along.

3.2

Young Harrow Foundation

Interviewees described how, in the last few years, youth services, networks and buildings had '*disappeared*', some closing virtually '*overnight*'. At the same time, the voluntary sector in general has experienced significant reductions in funding from statutory and public agencies and been left with '*a very skeletal, shrinking infrastructure*'. John Lyon's Charity, which has been funding youth work in Harrow for over 25 years, said its decision to fund the setting up of the Young People's Foundation in Harrow, Barnet and Brent was partly a pragmatic one, as cuts to public funding for youth services in these areas had been so severe that John Lyon's Charity feared they would have '*to do our job without anyone to work with!*'. Independent funders are therefore being asked to fund both core costs of

organisations as well as the infrastructure that keeps things together – things like networks, strategic thinking etc. Without the same level of resources that used to come from government, funders have to *'bring together what's left'*.

Despite the wide-scale cuts to youth services, there was no suggestion from the individuals interviewed for this study that there had been a reduction in the need for these services. Harrow has also witnessed a spike in youth issues such as gang affiliations, anti-social behaviour and sexual assaults over the last two years and, although only anecdotal, there is evidence to suggest that these spikes have been most prevalent in areas where youth services have closed.

Although its own status as a funder has shifted dramatically, Harrow Council still maintains strong links with the local voluntary sector and continues to be involved in, and support, the work of Young Harrow Foundation. For example, they invited Young Harrow Foundation to sit on various strategic boards responsible for discussing the future of youth services. Young Harrow Foundation has its own vision independent of the Council, but has contributed to the development of Harrow Council's new Youth Strategy and helped the Council to identify partners who could support them in its delivery.

3.3

Young Harrow Foundation activities

Since Young Harrow Foundation's CEO was appointed in early 2016, its main activities have been:

1. **Sport England bid:** £13m to spend on sports activities in the five most socially deprived areas.
2. **Youth Offer:** launched in December 2016. Young Harrow Foundation supported Harrow Council in the design of the Youth Offer and helped them to obtain £35,000 funding to support the creation of an App and online platform. The initial thematic focus of this platform will be on crime and anti-social behaviour. The Youth Offer is being jointly delivered by Harrow Council and Young Harrow Foundation.
3. **MOPAC funding:** Harrow Council got some additional Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) funding in 2016. Following discussions with the

Young People's Foundation about how they might do things differently, Harrow Council is funding some voluntary sector organisations to trial new initiatives/ approaches. This includes a two-year drug and alcohol programme in schools aimed at reducing low level drug dealing.

- 4. Capacity building:** Young Harrow Foundation works with Voluntary Action Harrow as they also have a remit to help build the capacity of the voluntary sector in Harrow more generally. Whilst Voluntary Action Harrow's focus is on understanding organisations' broader needs, e.g. safeguarding or M&E training, Young Harrow Foundation is more focused on the factors that funders will be looking for, e.g. theory of change, evidence of long-term impact, sustainability plans, etc. *'The thing for us [Young Harrow Foundation] is, what would help you be more fundable? But also, what is the need in society that you and your expertise fit and why, if there's a major need, why are you not able to deliver more?'*
- 5. Future in Mind bid:** Young Harrow Foundation brought together a consortium of voluntary sector organisations to put forward a tender (under the Young Harrow Foundation name) to deliver commissioned mental health services to children and young people in Harrow. Young Harrow Foundation and the tender lead (one of the voluntary sector organisations) worked with the other partners involved to design and write the tender. Unfortunately, the tender was won by a national charity but this prompted further discussions between Young Harrow Foundation and local agencies about how to provide more opportunities for small voluntary sector organisations to get involved in larger tenders for commissioned work in the future.

3.4 Strengthening youth sector partnerships in Harrow

Both voluntary sector members and Harrow Council see Young Harrow Foundation as providing them with an opportunity to strengthen their networks. One member said that Young Harrow Foundation has sent the message to Harrow Council to: *'Make the most of these organisations that are already working well within the community'*. For voluntary sector organisations, their hope is that this may open up opportunities to provide their existing work to a wider range of individuals or work

together with other organisations to provide a service. For Harrow Council, it provides them with a clearer picture of the sector and the range of organisations within it which fits with their strategy to be able to take a more holistic, family approach to tackling youth issues. Harrow no longer has a Council for Voluntary Service so, along with consortiums like Harrow Community Action and the Voluntary Action Harrow, they share the responsibility of representing the collective voice of the voluntary sector.

Interviewees suggested that having a body like Young Harrow Foundation, whose remit is to bring the sector together, helps to troubleshoot. Importantly, it is not competing for funds, so people can call them to talk through any issues and talk to them frankly. The fact that they are not competing for funds has also meant that Young Harrow Foundation gets invited to strategic Council meetings, enabling them to act as an independent voice and to represent voluntary sector organisations and their role in contributing to youth services. Young Harrow Foundation said that, in reality, it cannot pretend there is no conflict of interest as they want more money to go to the third sector.

3.5

Opportunity to access funds and be part of bigger funding bids

One of the aims of Young Harrow Foundation is to help bring together organisations providing services to young people in Harrow to jointly bid for, and deliver on, larger contracts. For Young Harrow Foundation, their focus is on trying to ensure the vibrancy and diversity of the voluntary sector is reflected in the delivery of local services. This means that when bringing together organisations to jointly deliver on a project, they look at how they can make the most out of organisations' existing areas of expertise, *'If an organisation can deliver against what the real need is we need to let them do that. Let's not start putting other pressures on them to do other things.'* This was an important point for many of the organisations we spoke to, concerned that they should be able to continue to deliver the services that they had been set up to deliver for their core constituents, and that any partnership working should enhance this work rather

than lead to mission drift. One member described it as needing to have *'fingers in all the pies'* in order to try to access funding and replace the loss of statutory funding, but without wanting to lose sight of their core purpose and mission.

Young Harrow Foundation said that one of the challenges is that, because of the size of the organisation (two staff), they are unable to cover every aspect of youth services, so some youth organisations will have had more of a chance to get involved in these joint projects than others, depending on their area of specialism. Young Harrow Foundation is concerned that this may have caused frustration amongst some organisations and is hoping that Harrow Council and Young Harrow Foundation's 'Youth Offer' will provide something that all of their members can benefit from. The Youth Offer includes an online hub and offline events where organisations in Harrow working with young people can find out information about potential partnership and funding opportunities. They will also be able to search for and book spaces where they can host youth activities, as lack of such spaces is, at present, a major barrier.

4.0

How Young Harrow Foundation worked in practice

4.1

Design and delivery

Young Harrow Foundation is a registered charity funded by John Lyon's Charity and City Bridge Trust. Young Harrow Foundation currently has two full-time staff members, a CEO and an Operations Manager. They are managed by a board of trustees, many of whom run, or work within, local voluntary sector organisations in Harrow.

Young Harrow Foundation is member-led; currently it has 59 delivery organisations signed up to its vision, 38 of which are registered as 'members' and 21 as 'partners'. This includes a range of small-to-medium voluntary sector organisations as well as other groups, agencies and businesses in Harrow who have an interest in supporting young people locally. The individuals interviewed for this study give a sense of the diversity of those involved in the design and delivery of Young Harrow Foundation.

They include:

Harlow Council

- Provides strategic oversight on youth issues.
- Links in with Young Harrow Foundation regarding possible joint funding and partnership opportunities with youth voluntary sector organisations in Harrow.

Voluntary sector organisations

- **AQ Arts** uses a combination of dance, music and poetry to provide people of all ages with opportunities to get involved in the arts.
- **Capable Communities** is a social enterprise focused on the development of social capital.

- **Hope Harrow** is a parenting charity that provides a range of parenting support to families and in schools in Harrow.
- **Mind Harrow** is an independent charity affiliated to National Mind.
- **Mosaic LGBT Youth Centre** is a non-profit organisation that aims to support, educate and inspire young lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT+) people in London.
- **Securing Success** provides support to supplementary schools in Harrow and carries out quality assurance checks.
- **Watford FC Communication Sports and Education Trust** promotes the education, participation and inclusion of young people through sport.
- **The WISH Centre** provides support to young people on self-harm and sexual abuse.

4.2

Relationships

Young Harrow Foundation said that they have generally taken one of two approaches to mapping out a picture of youth activities in the area and building relationships:

- **Targeted services for young people** – Young Harrow Foundation has gone out into the community to find out who is delivering what. It has also relied upon a combination of staff's own existing networks within the community and the networks of Voluntary Action Harrow. Each time they meet a new organisation they ask them, 'who else have you worked with?' in order to pick up on organisations not already on their radar.
- **Other services that work with young people** – Young Harrow Foundation have relied upon members' networks to reach organisations, e.g. scouts groups, and groups that are working with young people but might not be classed as delivering targeted services to young people, e.g. supplementary schools and faith groups.

In addition to the above, the CEO of Young Harrow Foundation had a lot of existing relationships with youth organisations and youth sector workers in the area, as he was previously director of a local youth organisation, sat on several local strategic boards and has worked in the area for 15 years. A lot of the individuals interviewed felt that a lot of what Young Harrow Foundation had achieved so far was as a result of the CEO's ability to broker relationships and the time and capacity he had spent doing this.

Voluntary sector organisations interviewed for this case study had heard about Young Harrow Foundation through a variety of routes including: their relationship with John Lyon's Charity (which funds some member organisations); existing relationships with Young Harrow Foundation's CEO from his previous work in the borough; Harrow Community Action; existing connections with Harrow Council; and being based in the same office as the Young Harrow Foundation team. Young Harrow Foundation recognised that one of their challenges is to identify those organisations and individuals that sit outside of the more formal networks. The interviewee who had learnt about Young Harrow Foundation as a result of sharing an office with them said that, had this not been the case, they may not have been as open to getting involved in a joint bid that Young Harrow Foundation were coordinating. The informal relationship established with the Young Harrow Foundation team had built trust and confidence in what was being asked of them in terms of their contribution to the bid.

One member highlighted the importance of not just bringing together the usual suspects, but ensuring that any new partnerships are made up of people who will challenge each other's thinking and perspectives and are *'open to a different way of viewing the world'*.

4.3

Structures

As part of the agreement with the funders, the Young People's Foundations all had to have a board in place as the first order of business. Because a lot of Young Harrow Foundation's board members also run local voluntary sector organisations, they have an agreement that where there is any conflict of interest, e.g. their organisation is involved in a joint bid that Young Harrow Foundation is facilitating,

they will not be involved in these discussions. Young Harrow Foundation said that the motivations for their board members are potentially quite different to other charity boards, as *'Young Harrow Foundation is about having a heart for what the funding will eventually go to, rather than a specific cause'*. By this they meant that Young Harrow Foundation is not supporting a specific cause or organisation but aims to provide support to a number of youth organisations.

Young Harrow Foundation has also hosted a series of open events for members where organisations have an opportunity to talk about their activities, network with other organisations and hear about potential partnership and funding opportunities for youth services. Young Harrow Foundation said that a lot of their focus in the first year has been on getting information about what members need, doing this through face-to-face conversations and regular online surveys.

Whilst a number of interviewees commented that they trusted in the genuine passion and enthusiasm of Young Harrow Foundation's CEO and staff team and their ability to build the right relationships, some expressed a concern regarding the level of transparency and clarity around Young Harrow Foundation's governance and decision-making processes. There was some uncertainty, therefore, as to whether certain decisions regarding which partnerships to form, or funding bids to go for, had been strategically informed or more pragmatic. Some organisations thought that Young Harrow Foundation's work was probably connected into broader strategic plans for the borough, e.g. Joint Needs Assessments, Harrow Council's strategy for youth, but weren't sure. They said that they would find it helpful to have a clearer understanding of Young Harrow Foundation's strategy, setting out the needs of young people in Harrow, the strategies/interventions already in place, where the gaps are, and how Young Harrow Foundation will be contributing to addressing these gaps. They thought that Young Harrow Foundation probably did have such a strategy in place but that it hadn't been clearly communicated to all the members, and suggested more communication about this with members over email, at the AGM, public events, etc., while ensuring that the smaller groups who are members do not get left out.

Talking about the balance between making strategic and pragmatic decisions, Young Harrow Foundation said that to date they have chosen to focus on the bids

that have a time limit on them, which has meant a lot of time and capacity has been focused on the process of writing or facilitating bids, with limited time to step back and take a strategic view. They also said that, in order to stay informed about potential opportunities arising in Harrow, they have to actively seek this information: *'It's still that matter of being at the right board meetings, meeting with the right key people.'* It had therefore sometimes been a challenge to find a balance between responding to the diversity of its members and spending time having the right conversations with the right people in order to be bringing money in, whilst not losing sight of the need for strategic level change.

A number of interviewees talked about the role of young people in contributing to, and influencing, the discussions and debates about youth provision in Harrow. There was a feeling that Young Harrow Foundation, and other stakeholders working with youth, need to ensure they are engaging with existing youth accountability structures, such as Harrow Youth Parliament, but that more needed to be done to engage those young people who are on the outside of these youth structures:

'Quite often, the voice of young people is dealt with via professionals, not the voice of young people. We as professionals need to be more interested in what young people are actually telling us. What are the anxieties, what are the issues? And the fact that they might be able to diagnose what their issues are a lot better than professionals can'.

(Delivery partner)

Discussing some of the ways in which Young Harrow Foundation could be engaging young people, the sorts of suggestions made were: through existing youth platforms, social media, partners' networks, existing consortiums and forums (e.g. Voluntary and Community Sector Forums), etc.

Part of the appeal of Young Harrow Foundation, particularly for some of the smaller organisations who are members, is the idea that they are able to shoulder some of the risk and 'buffer' the smaller organisations:

Young Harrow Foundation are able to give the people who perhaps aren't able to take risks support so that they feel able to do a little bit more within the community.'

(Member organisation)

John Lyon's Charity also described their role as the funder as acting as the 'risk capital' and said that one example of taking on risk was being willing to be quite light touch in terms of monitoring and evaluation demands: '[We] *want this to be a long-term solution and therefore can't ask for outcomes in the first year*'. John Lyon's Charity acknowledged they were partly able to take this approach as they have been operating in the borough for a long time and have built up strong relationships. One member also said that as a new organisation they were trying to take as little risk as possible at the moment but they liked the idea of being part of a collective bid as it would provide someone 'to answer to', in terms of having an overarching quality controller. Another member said that having the opportunities coming through Young Harrow Foundation gives them the opportunity to learn and ask, 'is this right for us?' and said that previously they would not have actively pursued larger bids due to the risk and a lack of capacity.

5.0

Benefits of Young Harrow Foundation

5.1

Benefits for young people

One member said that they hope that, in time, young people will see a more focused youth offer as they will have a say in what they are involved in and better, more focused opportunities for young people:

‘Since Young Harrow Foundation we’ve made stronger links with young people within the council (e.g. Harrow Youth Parliament) ... and this fits back to young people knowing what we’re about.’

(Member organisation)

Commenting on the benefits of connecting up local organisations, one member said, *‘There are so many youth services in Harrow and I’m trying to do something that’s a little bit different ... identify partnerships that might not be the most obvious. Partnerships should therefore allow for creative thinking in formation of [new] partnerships.’*

5.2

Benefits for the organisations involved

Organisations that had been involved in a joint bid to deliver mental health services for young people in Harrow commented on the benefits of being involved in the process. One organisation said that they think partnership projects and bids undoubtedly help the smaller organisations as they provide learning, evaluation, IT, governance and fundraising support. Another said it had been a really good opportunity for them to do some partnership work and learn from others as well as bid for tenders that might have otherwise been unavailable to them. They also said that they felt the experience of putting together the tender had been an example of good partnership work and the organisations involved had worked

well together and not been competitive. Young Harrow Foundation have begun to be able to contribute to bottom-up influencing of youth spending and infrastructure in Harrow and hope to see this expand. One member who is working with refugees and asylum seekers said that they wanted to offer swimming lessons to the young women they work with and hire a pool to do so and Young Harrow Foundation was able to direct them towards funding that would enable them to do this.

5.3

Benefits to wider systems

Harrow Council said that Young Harrow Foundation has helped to open their eyes to the breadth of youth activities in the area and the potential for partnership. They said that they would like to be in a position to do more outreach, such as making sure there are services where they are needed and looking at the pathways to engage people. Young Harrow Foundation is also able to play a brokering role and help to link them up to the various voluntary sector organisations. Members of Young Harrow Foundation said they also valued the fact that Young Harrow Foundation has *'their ears to the ground'* and can help them to make links where there are opportunities. One organisation interviewed said that they feel like they are kept in the loop much better than before.

6.0

Challenges encountered

6.1

Time and capacity

The large majority of organisations that are members of Young Harrow Foundation are small, locally based organisations, ranging from one person operating from their living room to organisations with a small staff team and turnover of up to £1m. Limited staff time, capacity and ever-reducing resources means that these organisations have to think very carefully about any activities they engage in outside of the day-to-day running of their organisation. Whilst they see the added value of working with Young Harrow Foundation, they have to weigh this up against the time and capacity required to engage in joint bids. One organisation said that this is also compounded by the fact that for larger bids they are also often up against bigger organisations with more internal bid-writing capacity or professional tender teams. Talking about their experience of being involved in one of these bids, an interviewee said that the process took a lot of figuring out, for example carrying out a collaborative due diligence process (when not all of the smaller charities have the necessary policies and processes in place) and finding an IT system that could suitably support client data management across all partners. One organisation did reflect that the process of putting together these kinds of bids and partnerships ought to get easier each time, as they would have learning from previous experiences to draw upon. As a result of coming together through bid writing processes, some Young Harrow Foundation members have also formed new relationships and started working together more closely, independent of Young Harrow Foundation.

Young Harrow Foundation described the balancing act in terms of spending time building relationships and just getting started, and said the challenge was *'not work so fast that they get it wrong, but not so slow that it [Young Harrow Foundation] is perceived as another community offer that doesn't go anywhere.'*

Reflecting on their own time and capacity to network and form relationships, one member said, *'the networking has been easier when we've had core funding'*, as it has meant that they have had more time and flexibility to go out and attend

meetings. They also thought that the attitude that voluntary sector organisations should give their time *'for free'* needed to change. They pointed out that if a business or private company were providing expert advice then you would expect to pay a consultancy fee. *'If there is no carrot at the end of the stick, why would you?'* A balance needs to be struck between finding individuals who have an interest in working in partnership, and recognising that for each of these individuals and/or their organisations, there also needs to be a clear incentive to get involved, e.g. the opportunity to benefit from others' knowledge and experience in the partnership or the potential to access future funding.

6.2 Funding opportunities versus funding needs

Young Harrow Foundation does have a small grants pot for distribution, which local organisations have the opportunity to bid for. However, one member said that, for them, the size of these small grants would need to be enough to justify the amount of work required to put together a bid.

It is good to work strategically and good to have foundations that can garner funds ... but nevertheless someone from the organisation has to do it.'

(Delivery partner)

They said that Young Harrow Foundation had listened to feedback from voluntary sector organisations about the size of grants, versus the amount of work required to apply for them. Young Harrow Foundation are now offering two grants rounds per year as well as providing bid writing support to organisations and signposting them to other funding opportunities.

One member said there was also a concern shared by other voluntary sector organisations working with youth in Harrow, that they cannot go to others with their bids. She said that they were worried that, in the eyes of other independent funders, they might see Harrow as 'done' because they have Young Harrow Foundation. Their concern was that it will be the smaller charities in Harrow

that will be affected the most as they are grant-dependent. In areas where organisations have the opportunity to get involved in partnership working and joint bids with other organisations on specific issues, this should not preclude them from being able to also pursue other funding opportunities.

6.3 Voice and advocacy

Some interviewees talked about other external factors which had increased or could potentially increase the vulnerability of small local organisations. One delivery partner said that because of changes to government planning laws which mean that offices can now be converted into flats, there is a reduction in affordable office space. In addition, rent prices have increased. One member said that their rent had just doubled at the same time as their income was reduced by £15,000. Another participant highlighted the realities for small voluntary organisations in terms of raising funds to cover their basic costs, such as building rent, staffing costs, etc. They said that whilst they were aware that funders have their strategic priorities, the aspects of projects that the funders do not fund still need to find funding from somewhere. They felt that it would help if Young Harrow Foundation could act as a vehicle to allow small organisations to voice their needs on these kinds of issues.

6.4 Structures and public agencies in Harrow

There was a concern about what might happen if there was a change in local political leadership and that local authority budgets will continue to be reduced. Harrow Council said that they have been in conversations with the voluntary sector about the changing funding situation and coming up with different solutions, for example, where there might be opportunities to create new and different funding streams.

One participant said that there were also challenges within Harrow in terms of getting other public agencies to work together and work with the voluntary sector and local government. Their view was that the Clinical Commissioning Group is not working with the Public Health team in Harrow Council as well as

they could, and there is little strategic coming together. They felt Young Harrow Foundation has a tough job to convince people of the need to come together. Referring to building relationships with the police, one member said that the attitude of the police has been, *'if it costs us money we're not doing it'*. He said that the police have neighbourhood officers that they can't afford to fund. He thought that these officers could potentially be a huge resource to local voluntary sector organisations.

What happened next?

Since the case study interviews took place, Young Harrow Foundation has continued to develop and grow. The Young Harrow Foundation team has identified that there are two key areas that it needs to focus on to further strengthen its place-based funding and support approach based on initial feedback and learning.

Conduct an in-depth needs analysis.

This will help to understand in *'a new and different way'* what the issues are for both children and young people in Harrow, as well as the organisations that serve them. This would allow Young Harrow Foundation to be strategic in the way it brings funding into the borough, rather than purely being reactive to new available streams of funding.

In light of this, Young Harrow Foundation has agreed a strategy of splitting its approach, with 50% of staff time spent reacting to new funding opportunities and 50% based on working on the needs analysis. This approach has allowed Young Harrow Foundation to act as a core information hub and advocate locally for issues affecting children and young people. It has also worked with Harrow Council in the creation of a 'Youth Offer' app and website to enable young people the ability to find services locally through one central platform.

Creating and encouraging strong partnerships and networks.

Challenging silo working and promoting active partnership work can be a slow process. The Young Harrow Foundation team have found that organisations seem to be aware of the benefits of partnership work but often view the process of relationship building taxing. There needs to be a consistent effort put into working with organisations to enable them to make organisational changes to the way they view partners and partnership work.

In one effort to raise funds, Young Harrow Foundation secured a match funded, crowdfunding opportunity for local groups. Organisations raise a set target of funding via crowdfunding, and then either the council or another funder would match the raised amount. It was found that although Young Harrow Foundation had created a way for organisations to diversify their funding and created the structure for this to happen, even the prospect of raising a relatively small amount for some was overwhelmingly daunting. Active face to face work with organisations has been key to tackling issues of insecurity of skills, and helping them think about organisational change that is key in approaching true partnership work.

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Study funders:



Lankelly Chase



The Old School
Exton Street
London SE1 8UE

020 7921 2940
enquiries@ivar.org.uk
ivar.org.uk

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