

‘Proceed until apprehended’: Flourish Glasgow Partnership

September 2024



In July 2020 Glasgow City Council convened a Social Recovery Task Force (SRTF), drawing membership from across community planning partners. Mental Health was identified as a core priority for the city's social recovery and the Public Health Oversight Board (PHOB) was asked to lead and respond to this priority area.

Glasgow already had a number of active partnerships dealing with some of the components needed for good mental health, however there was no coherent way for the city to bring these efforts together. In creating Flourish Glasgow Partnership the city would be following in the footsteps of a number of cities, including New York, Bristol and Edinburgh creating Thrive/Flourish Networks.

The purpose of Flourish Glasgow Partnership is:



“To act together to promote the mental well-being of everyone in Glasgow, celebrating and strengthening the resilience of individuals and communities and creating easier routes to support when required”.

Recognising funding challenges

There was a recognition within the partnership of the many challenges that our third sector partners were facing around funding. At a partnership meeting in December 2022 there were discussions on how we could best support third sector partners, recognising the many challenges and frustrations around funding processes. (i.e. different funding streams being available at the same time, funding streams being live over the summer period when organisations have reduced staff capacity, disproportionate levels of monitoring and evaluation requirements).

Exploring a joined-up approach

We realised that we needed to formalise our approach and discussed the opportunity of developing a Glasgow Funding Charter. We approached other Thrive Networks in the UK to learn from their experiences, none of which had developed similar funding charters, although there was support for the idea. This is when Flourish Glasgow Partnership approached IVAR about their Open & Trusting grant-making approach/campaign.

In October 2023, cross-sector partners came together to explore how to develop a joined-up approach to funding in Glasgow, using the Open and Trusting commitments as a starting point for their conversation. There was huge interest in this approach and 34 people attended from 20 different organisations and public agencies. The workshop revealed that many funders were keen to commit to the principles of Open & Trusting with examples of good practices already happening in some cases.

“The Open and Trusting Grant-making programme has been an approach that has helped us significantly within Glasgow to begin discussions around developing a Glasgow Funding Charter. It has provided us the opportunity to discuss collectively with both funders and funded organisations on how relationships can be improved and how we move forward developing a shared vision in relation to grant-making. IVAR’s facilitation has been pivotal in commencing these conversations and providing us with a mechanism to do so.”

– Nicola Fullarton, Health Improvement Lead – Maximising Independence & Flourish Glasgow Partnership, Glasgow City Health and Social Care Partnership

The workshop enabled people to see their role to improve funding practices within individual organisations and to work collectively at a citywide level too. Participants came away with a shared mission to commit to Open & Trusting grant-making.

“We now have a shared vision for grant-making – and it is okay if the back of that tapestry looks like a mess.”

“Let’s tackle blockers together, embracing the enablers and proceed until apprehended.”

An outcome from the workshop was to link with the Funders in Glasgow group which was a group that met historically to share information around funding in Glasgow. The membership of this group was refreshed and had its initial meeting in April 2024. A new terms of reference was developed with several aims that link to an Open and Trusting approach to grant-making:

“Explore opportunities for more effective partnership working between stakeholders in the Glasgow grant funding landscape; To consider ways of improving the journey for organisations seeking grant funding in Glasgow; To promote effective funding practice and share learning.”

From our initial discussions there has been a real commitment to work together to begin to consider ways of improving the journey for organisations seeking grant funding in Glasgow. Our links and support from IVAR very much gave us a platform to begin these discussions.