
**Leeds
Advocacy
Network**

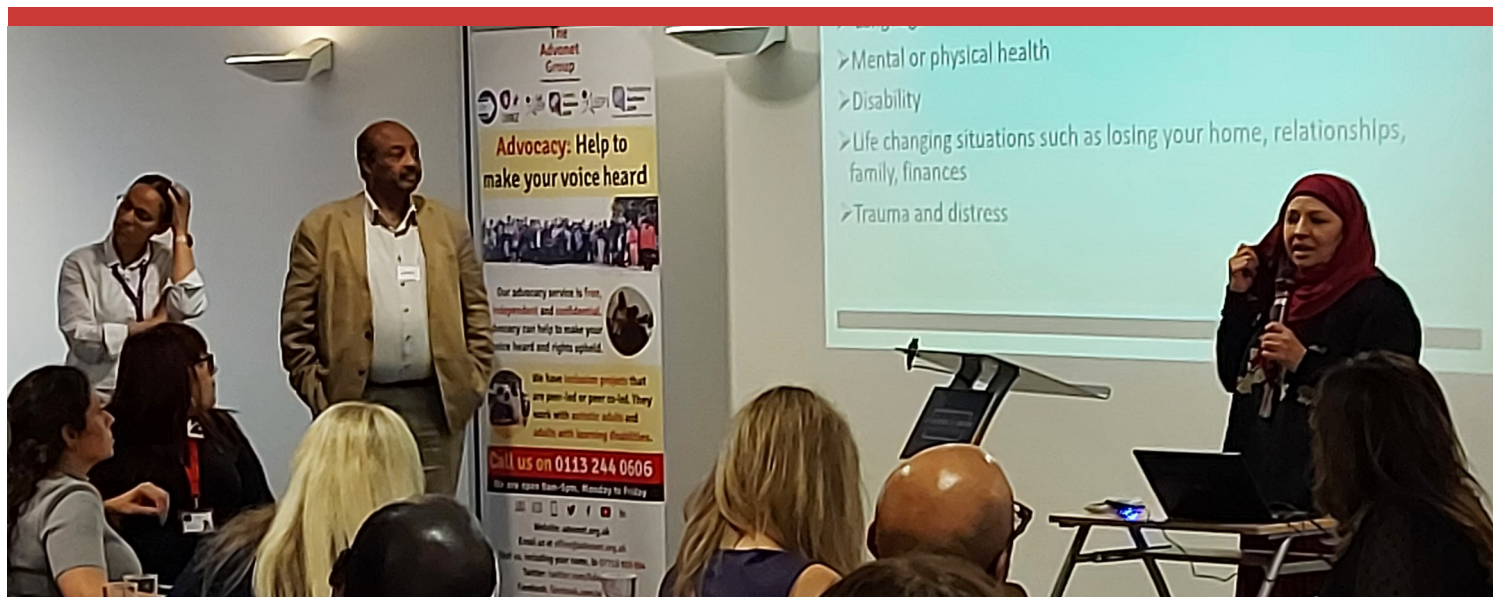
**Advocacy
Development
Fund**



Advocacy Development Fund: Your ideas and next steps

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About this document



In May 2022, we held a free event about a new fund for community groups in Leeds to help them boost advocacy for the people they work with. The Advocacy Development Fund from the Leeds Advocacy Network is led by The Advonet Group, a Leeds-based independent advocacy charity.

It has an initial funding pot of £25,000, with grants of between £500 and £10,000 on offer. To help inform what the fund is for, who can apply and the application process, we had a series of guest speakers from groups including Leeds Refugee Forum and Leeds City Council. On top of that, we also held discussion groups.

Three questions

Split into nine different groups, we asked each of them three questions about the Fund. They were:

- a) How can we make the application process easy?
- b) Where is Advocacy most needed?
- c) How can everyone benefit from the grants?

Your feedback

In this document, we have feedback from all of the groups when asked the above questions. It will be used to guide how the Advocacy Development Fund will work going forward.

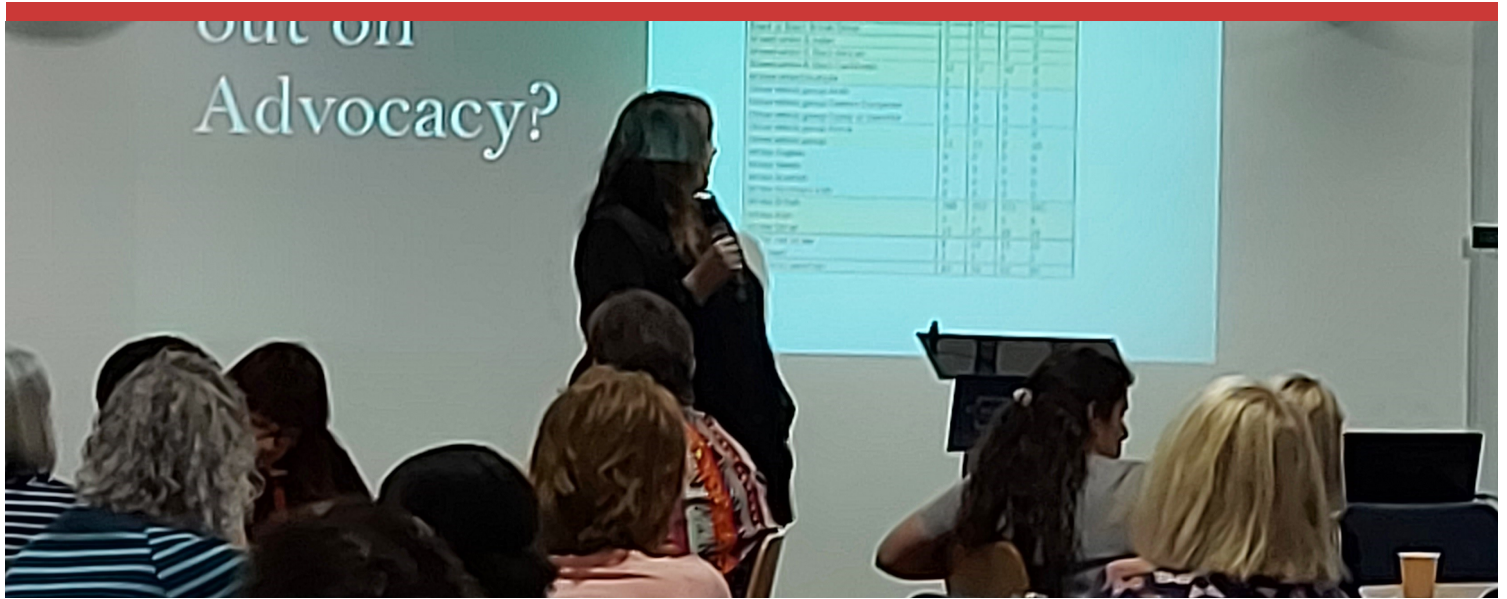
Thanks to everyone who came to our event and gave feedback in the groups. It was very informative and will play a big part in ensuring grants from the fund go to community groups who need it most.

Follow-up event

Later on this summer, we will have an event to launch the Fund. It is on **Wednesday 20th July** from **1pm to 3pm** and will be on Zoom.

If you would like to attend, please register for free at <https://adflaunch.eventbrite.co.uk>.

A) How can we make the application process easy?



Group 1:

- Guidance notes:
 - Is there criteria about who can apply?
 - People may be worried application will fail
 - Make it clear what is 'counted'
 - Do you need to be a company/charity etc?
- Application provided in community languages
- Not too wordy
- Easy read leaflet – some pictures
- Include examples of what funding can be used for
- Option to do a non-written form:
 - Video applications
 - Interview/presentation panel (interpreter if needed)
- Once successful:
 - Some mentoring for orgs/people about organising to spend the funding
 - An organisation to hold the funds on behalf of?
- What criteria?
 - Define advocacy – ensure clear that empowering others
 - Advocacy at core of bids
 - Will it cover new and/or existing?
- Training Offer for Advocacy and upskilling
- Briefing session about grant fund
- Leeds Community Grants – publicise

A) How can we make the application process easy?

Group 2:

- Monitoring:
 - Sharing of experience
 - Choice of medium
 - Versatile
 - Usable impact reports
 - Before and after case studies
- Skill and knowledge
- Priorities:
 - Overview of fund aims
 - Clear understanding among applicants
 - Process
 - Options to display information in multiple ways
- Training:
 - Support organisations to understand how to make a good application
- Clarity on what you can apply for and eligibility criteria:
 - Be very clear!
 - Definition of Advocacy
- Clear expectations and outcomes
- Not too lengthy:
 - Brief overview opposed to multiple points
 - Questions detail
- Flexibility
- Opportunity to be clear
- Direct contact for questions:
 - Partnerships

Group 3:

- Concerns of how money is monitored
- Could we supply a person to help complete forms?
- Maybe give them the resources
- If process is easier, how do we make sure the money is safeguarded / spent wisely
- Should application process be easy?
- Roll out advocacy training
- Think about the whole journey – empower and enable
- Careful of building a dependency

A) How can we make the application process easy?

Group 4:

- Different application formats:
 - Video
 - Audio
 - Application form
- Two-stage process with opportunity to partner based on bid proposal
- Bid plus the opportunity to meet and discuss
- Open, honest feedback
- Outline partnership opportunities
- Restricted reserve funding
- Opportunity to visit organisations
- Charitable fundraising
- Open and transparent
- Simple monitoring and evaluation
- Mindful of organisation size and individual capacity

Group 5:

- Alternatives to paper – via video
- Short, precise questions
- Explicit in criteria to meet
- Contact details for help/advice:
 - Pitch your idea first
 - Help to write the bid
- Easy, understandable language:
 - Make it visual / images
 - Step by step
- Examples of what is a good / not successful bid
- What is required for monitoring:
 - Easy to collate data

Group 6:

- Realistic funding
- Monitoring and evaluation process simple
- How to fill in the form
- Simple words – no jargon

A) How can we make the application process easy?

- Feedback after application
- Application criteria
- Bank recommendations
- Know what is needed for application
- Constitution template
- True representation:
 - Imagery applicable
 - True reflection
- Optional application process:
 - Video, simple form, voice notes
 - Joint applications in partnership with other orgs

Group 7:

- Short video and talk
- Presentation with slides and talk
- Easy and to the point questions
- Closed questions not open
- They can come and visit the applicant:
 - Interview all applicants
 - Connector between client and funding organisation

Group 8:

- A simple form – possibly a video
- Support for developing grass-roots governance – for organisations who aren't constituted
- Clear criteria
- Form to capture stories (outcomes) not just numbers attending (outputs)
- Small groups possibly link with larger organisations for administering funds
- Funding surgery – to access support
- Easy/simple (relational) - project monitoring/evaluation

Group 9:

- Video in local languages
- Speak direct to the funder
- Template
- Face-to-face
- Online application

B) Where is Advocacy most needed?



Group 1:

- Create united voice to raise concerns to policy makers
- Community centres
- Afghan Community
- Geographic areas where people from the communities are living
- Children acting as advocates:
 - Young carers
 - Kids interpreting
 - Link up with Voice & Influence team
 - Young People's Parliament
- Vulnerable people and their families:
 - People with learning difficulties / mental health needs
 - Lack capacity – people who may need IMHA/IMCA
- Events, word of mouth, enabling others
- Where ESL classes / IT sessions are going on
- Gypsy and Traveller community – best way to engage?
- Deaf community:
 - Review conclusion = advocacy needed
 - Add interpretation and emotional support
 - Need to consider how that could work
- Discussion about impact of energy crisis

Group 2:

- Where there is a lack of knowledge about entitlement to benefits

B) Where is Advocacy most needed?

- Where people feel a loss of control
- Welfare appeals
- Where there is a lack of trust and confidence
- Where there is a lack of cultural sensitivity
- Barriers to engagement:
 - Digital exclusion
 - Language barriers
 - Lack of shelter
 - Accessibility due to disability
- Where there is stigma

Group 3:

- Be careful of being proscriptive
- Make sure we're visible and have/share stories:
 - Some are with lived experience
 - Shared experience and stories
 - Tell stories
 - Peer support
 - Support people to tell their stories
 - Different people (e.g. Andrew Edwards – BBC Radio Leeds)
 - Publicly hearing and sharing stories
 - Library of stories
- Careful of patronising people
- Podcasts/video/Facebook
- Link to media students to tell stories
- Social Media

Group 4:

- Where people don't understand their rights/what support is available
- Where there is digital exclusion
- Confidence/exclusion
- Where there are language barriers
- Where communities are not accessing provision
- Distrust of services
- Carers
- Those in overcrowded housing

B) Where is Advocacy most needed?

- Those in receipt of benefits
- Those with no recourse to public funds
- Those with long-term health conditions
- People living with mental health issues
- Older people
- Refugee and asylum seeker communities
- Those with learning disabilities

Group 5:

- Older People:
 - Knowledge of what's out there
 - Digital inclusion
- Young people:
 - Told what they need – not listened to!
 - Gateway to family unit – other social issues
 - Building trust
 - Relationship with schools
- Organisations working with ethnic minorities:
 - Gypsy/traveller isolated
- People who have / are experiencing poor mental health:
 - Trauma
 - Crisis
 - Consent (help to navigate system)
- Smaller groups working in grassroots communities:
 - Funding often awarded to large, established organisations
- Advocacy training:
 - Group/individual

Group 6:

- Acknowledge how people live, speak, cultural differences
- Language and knowledge
- Acknowledge existence
- Social status
- Surveys/feedback needed
- Geography
- Stigma

B) Where is Advocacy most needed?

- Councillor contact for reps
- Everyone
- Local representation
- Less represented
- Local champions, true representation
- Accountability
- Support
- People of intersectionality
- Advocacy to validate a person's experience
- To help be the voice to address the system
- Public bodies to be open to advocacy:
 - Social services, adult social care, NHS, police, GPs
 - Briefed about this fund at earliest stage
- Self-advocacy training

Group 7:

- Language:
 - Need interpretation
 - Confidentiality
 - Trust, same background, good character
- Disability
- Life change:
 - Divorce
 - Children with no documents
 - Domestic abuse
 - No heating
- Trauma and distress:
 - Working with interpreter and psychologist together
- New culture and policies
- Divide all of the above under these four categories:
 - Needs for survival
 - Needs for security
 - Needs for self-actualisation
 - Needs for self-esteem

B) Where is Advocacy most needed?

Group 8:

- Support to access services (i.e. following bereavement / change of circumstance)
- In the community – localised support
- Help people from new communities to understand the system:
 - People new to the country don't know the processes
- Information in one place
- Feedback from signposting outcomes
- Children from new and settled communities need advocacy
- Fuel crisis
- Cost of living:
 - Debt management
 - Food bills
 - Access to suitable housing
- Affordable housing
- Fit for purpose housing:
 - Flag up with Leeds City Council - private rent sector regarding poor landlords
- Access to mental health / wellbeing / counselling support – free
- Culturally appropriate support

Group 9:

- Poverty
- Economically deprived
- Social economic
- Training and upskilling
- Migration – health
- Domestic abuse
- Housing – local authority
- Education – kids, youth
- Social economic – class
- Religious leaders
- Diversity

C) How can everyone benefit from the grants?



Group 1:

- Publicise event in community languages
- Local amenities:
 - Put flyers up in local shops/where there's footfall
 - The community link is really strong
 - People can feel out of place at a group that is not made up of people from their community
- Clear bid:
 - Targeted bids
 - Clear what work you will do and impacts
- Support for organisations:
 - Support, training
 - A forum to support organisations that receive the funding
 - Celebrate stories
 - Share information/training
 - Some need for s/v or case discussion support
- Health advocacy:
 - What services are available to support people after discharge
 - Access to support?

Group 2:

- Focus on learning and development after life of grant
- Increase awareness among service users/community groups

B) Where is Advocacy most needed?

- Direct impact on individuals through increased capacity to deliver services
- Public awareness
- Delivering services
- Improving services
- Rebuilding trust
- Inclusive/Accessible application process
- Partnership working

Group 3:

- Funding Parcel:
 - Really important that this is by 'real people'
 - Look back at CICs – groups that supported people to set up CICs
 - People with creative skills – informal/accessible
 - Wider than just giving out money
- Funding – be more creative:
 - How you get it
 - How you support it
- Enable people who are good at doing the 'stuff'
- Let's not give it to individual people
- Everyone to do Introduction to Advocacy training

Group 4:

- Communication!!
- Supporting unconstituted groups
- Information sharing / events
- Making application process accessible – simple criteria
- Partnership funding:
 - Working as a network
 - Signposting to most relevant grant holder
- Promotion of specialist services
- Ensuring that smaller organisations are represented
- Support system for smaller organisations by larger orgs
- Emerging technologies:
 - Will webtrees or blockchain technology help with A,B+C

B) Where is Advocacy most needed?

Group 5:

- Collaboration between organisations and smaller groups:
 - Advice and awareness
- Training for deliverers:
 - Bespoke to support individual projects/communities
 - Get to know deliverers – build trusted relationships
- Focus on increasing capacity within smaller organisations
- Pre-assessments of needs – needs resourcing
- Publicise in the right places:
 - Voluntary Action Leeds (VAL) website
 - Leeds Community Foundation etc
- Panel members who really know what is needed and can influence funding decisions

Group 6:

- Forming partnerships, network of support
- Generational collaboration
- Volunteering/involvement
- Diverse trustee board
- Reserve
- Integration
- Business plan
- Sustainability
- Resource
- Lumpsum funding and interim funding
- Individual advocacy
- Community role models
- Awarded by a diverse panel
- No/few barriers
- Independence - less reliant, self-sufficient
- Feeling empowered and knowledgeable
- Community driven
- Ongoing projects
- Regeneration
- Certification / education accreditation
- Core costs (staff salaries)
- Participant expenses

B) Where is Advocacy most needed?

Group 7:

- Flexibility
- Convey our special help for more people
- Sharing
- Getting feedback
- Sending volunteers
- Visual feedback questionnaire
- Anonymous questionnaire
- Cover cost of:
 - Rent
 - Volunteer expenses
 - Payments for staff
 - Administration
 - Everyone can benefit

Group 8:



- Amounts available to both small and large groups
- Website – to promote offer of support (use search engine optimisation)
 - Criteria of grant to appeal to smaller groups:
 - Different pots of funds
- Include practical support
- Promote the grant round through broad range of communication
- Help to develop a website
- For everyone to benefit, make accessible to everyone to benefit everyone Participant expenses

Group 9:

- Universal project:
 - Based on priority, essential needs, lived experience, representation within the community
 - E.g. Domestic abuse, special needs, housing
- Lead organisation:
 - Grassroots organisation funded per event – housing, mental health, religion
 - Grassroots bespoke project – e.g. literacy for adults, advocacy skills training
 - Mainstream providers – finance and admin support to SMEs



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