

**SHARED LEARNINGS FROM**

**GIVING EFFECTIVE FEEDBACK ONLINE WORKSHOP**

**16TH August 2023**

The following is the learning from the attendees of the above workshop. We recognise that all funders have different levels of capacity, staffing and parameters regarding flexibility but there were some key principles for better feedback:

* A grants policy creates the best foundation for decision making and for especially how to deal with issues when grants go wrong.
* As much transparency and clarity in the application process is essential – are the funding criteria clear, is there clarity on how the decision-making process will deal with oversubscription and do applicants know the average % success rate?
* See each stage of the grants application process as a point for feedback – do not leave it until the end point.
* Where possible support or provide advice on the quality of the application which would help the applicant make a better future application, as is signposting to other funders if the funder has the knowledge.
* Use the feedback from the assessment and decision-making process as the basis of the feedback to applicants and be open to being challenged by the applicant as this is where learning happens for the funder.

The following are other points made that we felt worthy of sharing:

Don’t underestimate the benefits of having clear and transparent grants criteria and a good front end – Expression of Interest, application and assessment process.

Expression of Interest process was recognised as a good means of managing applications and workload for applicants/grant makers.

If there is a prioritisation mechanism in the case of over subscription – publicise that in advance to help manage expectations.

Also communicate success rate so applicants can understand the context and competition for their application.

Support to applicants on how to improve the quality of their application and/or sign posting to other funders is useful feedback. Also encourage applicants to apply early.

Some funders use the information provided through the assessment or decision-making meeting as the feedback to applicants – Friends Provident and Peoples Postcode Lottery.

Recognise the challenges of how to get consensual and inclusive decision making – trustees or panel members can bring in their own subjective viewpoints. One member suggested that if a trustee or grants committee/panel member was wanting to reject an application for no clear reason then they could be asked to confirm which part of grants criteria it did not meet.

One funder gives clear and positive feedback for all – recognising fairness.

Another uses a scoring matrix for all assessments that ensures less subjectivity in the process.

It is important to have multiple stages where can give feedback – application, EOI, assessment, final decision.

Consider using the ‘feedback sandwich’ in your communication - positive point/s, constructive point/s, positive point/s.

A couple of funders will put applicants who deliver similar work in the same geographical area in touch with each other and suggest they work together, and potentially put in a joint bid so that they are more likely to be successful.

**The group came to the conclusion that it’s the process you go through and you have to set aside time in order to give constructive, honest feedback. Get your criteria right, get your assessment right and your decision-making right.**