

Hackney Advice Grants Framework

November 2018

This framework gives information about the funding streams and the models of advice provision through Advice grants

Please ensure you read this framework before applying for a grant. There are additional guidance notes on completing the application forms

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Advice grants

Hackney's Voluntary and Community Sector Grants programme includes ring-fenced funding for advice services in the borough which are delivered by voluntary and community sector organisations.

The Advice grants introduce a new approach to advice provision in Hackney. Organisations are invited to apply for a grant to provide an advice service that helps the people of Hackney to solve their problems and meets the purpose and principles set out under strand 1- Advice service.

Hackney Council are undertaking a systems thinking approach to improving the way advice services are delivered. We have embedded an enabling leadership approach with providers and proposed a co-design model based on studying and experimentation, with a shared responsibility for learning and improvement.

The overriding principle of advice services should be understanding residents' demand in context and delivering what matters to them. Central to this will be the creation of an integrated advice system that provides clear, simple and open access, including to residents who face barriers to accessing services, and minimises hand-offs between advisors and providers.

Although the demand for advice services is likely to remain high, we will be looking to fund services that can also prioritise those activities that work at depth and long-term with people to help them build resilience and those that can effectively widen access to people or communities who may currently be under-represented.

It will be down to the organisations to state how they will deliver this service based on the purpose, principles, learning to date and guidance laid out in this document.

There are two funding streams and the total value of the budget is in the region of **£890k**

- £855K for the advice service (there will be £120k ring fenced for delivering advice in health settings*)
- 35K for a part time VCS role to support organisations in systems learning and continuous improvement. An amount of this will be ring-fenced for systems thinking training.

*Health setting is a setting where healthcare activities take place. Settings include but aren't limited to GP surgeries, acute-care hospitals, nursing homes, urgent care centres, outpatient clinics, home healthcare, and emergency medical services.

More information on the background of the Advice grants can be found in the A Place for Everyone-LB Hackney Advice grants [Cabinet report](#)

Application dates

Application open	Application close	Application period	Initial recommendations and notification to groups	Final decision	Contract start	Contract length
6 November	8 January	9 weeks	31 January	25 March	1 May	23 months

Interviews will take place for strand 1 on Tuesday 22 and Wednesday 23 January. Please hold both dates. You will be notified of your interview slot on Thursday 17 January. Interview dates for strand 2 to follow.

Strand 1- Advice service

Purpose and principles of service

The advice service will meet the following purpose and principles:

Purpose

Help me to solve my problems and regain independence by promptly giving the right advice and support.

Principles

The service will be:

Responsive- provision of timely and accurate advice that residents have confidence in. Understanding demand and context of the demand to provide an appropriate level and type of service to meet the variety of need presented.

Learning- continuous learning and improvement are integral to how the service operates, with a focus on learning what matters to residents and how to do exactly and only that.

High quality- advice and support are provided in a welcoming and respectful environment and the process is as convenient and smooth as possible, enabling residents to quickly access the help, advice and support they need with minimal hand-offs, internally or to other agencies.

Professional- employing and involving staff and/or volunteers in the principles and purpose of the work who possess both the technical and legal knowledge and have the interpersonal skills to engage with residents to fully understand and meet their needs and ensure that no-one is harmed by inaccurate, insufficient or out of date advice.

Flexible- a service that can offer and/or draw on a variety of responses to different needs including non-advice support.

Enabling- supporting residents where possible to increase their confidence and resilience to be better able to deal with future problems.

Collaborative- working with other agencies and LBH to deliver the purpose, to share

learning and data to understand how far the service is doing what matters, to improve provision, and seek to address and reduce the causes of demand for advice.

Accessible- a service that has open access, including to residents who face barriers to accessing services.

Level and areas of advice

Advice will need to be provided in the following areas

- Welfare Benefits
- Housing and homelessness
- Debt
- Immigration
- Employment
- Family
- Consumer
- Other areas of welfare law

This should not be considered exhaustive and providers should study to understand the typical demand that comes into their service and assume that the needs of the citizen may change, and adapt their service to cater for those changing needs.

Previous learning

As set out in the principles above, there is an understanding that a service can either offer or draw on a variety of responses to different needs including non advice support to deliver what matters to the resident.

The purpose and principles are the result of a review Hackney has undertaken with advice organisations in Hackney and the process has been supported by Systems Thinking consultants. We worked together to learn what matters to residents.

The initial phase included studying demand data to build an understanding of the system from the customer perspective. We:

- Recorded what people said they wanted help with in their own words (demand).
- Noted the context for the demand. We explored what assets and strengths does the person have and what challenges/obstacles do they face?
- Had open conversations with residents as they were using the service about what matters to them about how services work with them.

When we looked at what people asked services to do for them, responses fell into the following categories:

Verbatim Demand	Percentage of Requests
I need help	64%
I need information	5%
I want/need something	28%
I want support with	3%
Total	100%

There is a need for advice services to respond to these fluctuations, monitoring changes in demand and responding to meet the individual customer’s need. Successful providers will be expected to adapt their service to cater for changing need, and those that learn the importance of listening to customers in order to determine what matters to them about the service they receive.

Measures

Measures will be used to enable the council and providers to understand how well the service is achieving its purpose and inform thinking about where to make changes in order to improve.

These measures are developmental and would be expected to change over time as the council and providers understand demand better and learn about additional system conditions ¹that are constraining the service from doing what matters and delivering its purpose.

Quantitative Measures

Access measures

- Number of people **trying to access** the service (by type of demand)
- Number of people **accessing** the service (by type of demand)
- Number of people who **abandon** (by type of demand) and **reason**
- Number of people **turned away** (by type of demand) and **reason**

These measures will give an indication of levels of demand in relation to particular areas. Therefore will highlight potential gaps in provision, the extent to which residents are being turned away completely or are being passed between services in order to manage demand flows, and whether waiting times or other issues mean people give up trying to get help.

The degree to which demand is being met will help us to understand how successfully the service is delivering against its purpose and principles. These measures will also, by

¹ Examples of system conditions include, performance management, process design, regulations.

showing how many people withdraw from the service, at what point, facilitate learning around why this occurs; and how service design can do this. For example, did they leave because they had to wait too long to see the person who could help? Were they unhappy with the advice? Were they unhappy with the way the service works?

Demand Measures

- **% Value** demand
- **% Preventable** demand (**external**) and source
- **% Preventable** demand (**internal**) and reasons

Understanding **demand** is key to the approach we have used.

- **Value demand**- what the service is there for. The demand/work the service wants. For example, benefit checks, providing advice on rights.
- **Preventable/failure demand**- when a service fails to do something or fails to do something right for the customer.
 - External preventable demand: for example, dealing with a benefit claim where there has been an error within another department such as the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). Or a customer not understanding an official letter.
 - Internal preventable demand: for example, a client chasing an action that the advice service was going to do for them

It is important for the service to have an ongoing understanding of types of demand, and trends and patterns in both presenting demand and the context of the rest of residents' lives. Continuing to discuss what constitutes preventable demand, including that which is generated within the advice system itself, and learning how to stop it occurring will be a key driver of improvement.

Capability Measures

- Number of **repeat visits** and reasons
- **% signposted** or **referred elsewhere** and reasons
- Time taken from **first contact to meeting the person who can help**.
- **% engaged elsewhere in the organisation** and reasons
- **End-to-end time**- first contact to resolution

We know from the review that residents bring a lot of issues alongside their immediate advice problem and there is currently limited provision to address these.

When people have more than one problem, they may well have to see multiple advisers, or wait a long time to see the professional who can help them. These measures will help LBH and providers build a body of data about people's journeys into and through advice and help further learning and improvement on service effectiveness. For example understanding how many people are 'handed off' to other organisations, with the aim of minimising customers being passed from one service to another.

Qualitative measures

Qualitative measures will help us to determine how far the service is able to deliver what matters and solve a person's problem. We will move towards individual measures as we can't pre-determine what this will look like for each person.

To enable further learning, some advice organisations have started to have conversations about what a good life looks like to residents asking questions such as:

- What does a good life look like to you?
- What really matters to you in life?
- What are the most important things in your life?
- What can you contribute to achieving your good life?

Along with the conversations on what matters, these have highlighted the breadth of issues of concern people wish to address, but also have enabled people to articulate a positive vision of options.

The following themes have been identified

- **Relationships-**
 - enabling people to feel secure and stable, spending time with family and friends, having people to talk to and helping others
- **Finance-**
 - having enough money to feel safe and secure, having safe and secure housing, having enough money to do the things they love
- **Self-**
 - feeling valued and needed, helping other people, feeling safe and secure, having a balanced life
- **Health-**
 - having a healthy lifestyle and managing stress

Adopting a relational approach with residents and asking these questions will help us to learn how well the service is meeting the purpose and learning about service effectiveness, and demonstrate the capability of services to deliver purpose/what matters.

As part of the application, providers will be asked about their understanding of these measures and how they will use them to improve service design.

What is crucial about measures in the redesigned service is that they will not be benchmarked with standards or expectations, they act merely as the signals of system health that will enable leaders and frontline workers to understand how well the service is achieving its purpose and inform thinking about where to make changes in order to improve.

As we build our understanding of customer demand and how to measure success, and the service matures, the measures may change.

Delivery and continuous improvement

Service delivery

How the service will be delivered/governance model

We are not specifying a service delivery model. It is our view that those closest to service delivery are best-placed to know what will work and we are inviting bidders to outline how the new service will operate to deliver the purpose and do what matters to residents. The successful organisations will be those that demonstrate to us that their service offer and means of delivery are driven by the purpose and principles laid out above and designed against demand.

Continuous learning will be key to help shape future design including delivery configuration, resource allocation, measurement and learning. As commissioners we will adopt a collaborative approach to this, working alongside providers to continuously improve provision and help address system conditions that impact on advice services, where we are able to do so.

A collaborative approach is likely to be needed to bring the mix of experience / expertise required.

Partnerships

Applications by partnerships are welcomed. These can be with or without a lead provider (please see below). In all cases where a partnership is formed we will expect you to demonstrate how the composition of the partnership has been driven by your learning about demand and what matters, and will ensure you can meet the purpose and principles and continue to learn and improve. The Council will analyse proposals to ensure the advice needs of equality groups are met. Any gaps will be addressed during contract negotiations when additional partnership arrangements or targeting of services can be negotiated and put in place.

In line with the Voluntary and Community sector strategy, the Council values the importance of small community led organisations that are embedded in local communities and have an understanding of local people's assets and needs, but recognise that they might not have the infrastructure in place to bid for grant funding. Lead provider bids can be made on this basis, but it will need to be clear how the service delivery model contributes to purpose.

If bids are made by lead providers, the Council will want to meet with a representative from each organisation as part of the application and ongoing learning, which will take place with all providers. This will include us studying together in the work and the new advice service will be based on a principle of shared responsibility between the Council and providers.

Individual applications can be made, however there is an expectation that the grant funded advice service will work collaboratively.

As part of the application you will be required to submit a service delivery model which should include how the partnership will work and how you will learn and adapt together and address barriers into advice provision and link with other partners to provide non advice support.

Advice settings

An amount (120k) will be ring-fenced for delivery in health settings. The provider/s will work with Public Health and Policy and Partnerships to determine where the service will be delivered. Public health will have the final sign-off of locations. The service will continue to be delivered from the Greenhouse General Practice, providing advice and support to homeless residents for at least half a day a week.

This part of the service is aimed at patients that are in need of support who are identified by practice staff or by self referral.

The remaining funding should be used to deliver advice in diverse settings based on evidence of need and barriers to advice. As part of your service delivery plan you should set out how you will learn where advice should be delivered including thinking about community settings and a neighbourhood approach that will enable you to pull in other services when needed.

Data collection, learning and improvement

The measures outlined above are intended to help providers and commissioners work together to continuously improve service provision, and to identify and address system conditions that have a negative impact on Hackney residents and create unnecessary demand for advice and support.

The collection and ongoing analysis of measures data will be central to this approach and providers will be required to take responsibility for ensuring data is available and actively used by staff and managers across delivery partners to encourage learning. Alongside data, we will observe service delivery and talk to customers to help us understand their experience and expect service managers to also learn in this way.

In addition, in the early part of the contract, we will hold bi-monthly joint service review meetings at providers' premises, in order to share learning, discuss potential improvements and ways to prototype change, and address emerging issues in the service or wider system. There will also be communication outside of these meetings when needed so urgent issues or risks are dealt with straight away, rather than being 'saved up' for the next meeting. As the contract progresses the frequency of these meetings will be reviewed.

There will also be quarterly 'whole service' meetings so we can share what has been learnt in the work.

Providers will have primary responsibility for gathering measures data, collating it and sharing it to inform service review meetings.

Strand 2- Support role

As part of the collaborative approach which promotes shared responsibility through the system, there is a grant available for an organisation to develop their knowledge and skills in systems thinking and use this learning to support grant funded advice providers and commissioners to develop a person centred advice service that builds community resilience. The organisation appointed will work with all grant funded organisations and Hackney

Council. The organisation will provide a named worker who will be based within the organisation but will also need to work in advice settings.

This grant funded organisation will support the advice service to meet the purpose and principles set out on pages 3 and 4.

Applications should be made by organisations rather than individuals, but we would expect a named individual to be identified as part of the application process. Organisations can apply for both grants, but there is an expectation that that this role would work with all funded organisations.

Delivery and continuous improvement

The grant funded organisation will:

1. Work with advice organisations to develop their knowledge and skills in system thinking to meet the purpose of advice, by
 - Working with and supporting grant funded advice providers to:
 - Study their systems and learn from demand
 - Prototype a new, collaborative approach to community advice delivery and design
 - Use this learning to support system leaders to experiment to learn how to do perfect one person at a time
 - Support organisations to learn how to make this the normal way of doing things
 - Supporting leaders and trustees, in the work, to be part of the redesign.
 - Promoting continuous learning of people who are part of the advice system, including providers and commissioners. Challenging thinking and helping people learn enough at every opportunity to make an informed choice to continue, and to probe further.
 - Supporting advice providers to interpret measures and use them to inform thinking about where to make changes in order to improve..
 - Working with advice providers and LBH to identify and minimise system conditions
 - Sharing and exchanging practice within the sector, local partners, the Council, external funders and with other areas that are adopting similar approaches and linking this to wider systems change work.
 - Working closely with Policy and Partnership team and Public health.
2. Develop partnerships by:
 - Supporting advice providers to work together to deliver a single service in a relational way that finds ways to help people address wider issues.
 - Helping to shape partnerships to support providers to co-design solutions with residents to help them move towards their “good life”.
3. Undertake systems thinking training and apply the learning to this work

Measures

Each grant funded organisation/partnership will set out their plan for where they want to be in 2 years.

Measures for this grant will be based on the continuous improvement plans set out with the organisations and how your service will help them reach those goals, allowing for flexibility as we learn more and things change.

Learning and improvement

Monthly meetings will be held in the early part of the contract . There will also be communication outside of these meetings when needed so urgent issues or risks are dealt with straight away, rather than being 'saved up' for the next meeting.

As the contract progresses the frequency of these meetings will be reviewed.

There will also be quarterly 'whole service' meetings so we can share what has been learnt in the work.

Please refer to the guidance for this grant.

What happens after you apply

The assessment will be undertaken by Hackney Council staff, partners and a systems thinking consultant who has supported the process.

We will produce a frequently asked questions document If you have any clarification questions please email them to communitypartnerships@hackney.gov.uk . This will be on the [Community grants page](#).

Strand 1- Advice service

Applications will be scored according to the scores shown on the application form. The scores include a minimum and maximum score; applications which do not meet the minimum score for any questions may not be considered for funding.

Organisations will need to state if they are applying for:

- Main advice grant funding
- Funding for advice in health settings
- Both

Please note that main grant funding can be delivered in a variety of settings, including community and health settings. We will be looking for borough wide coverage.

The scores will be used to shortlist and shortlisted applicants will be invited for interview the week beginning the 21 January.

Initial recommendation: You will be notified of the provisional funding recommendations at the end of January 2019. You will then have to submit your organisation's policy documents before your application can be approved for funding.

Vulnerability review: The Advice Grants include a vulnerability assessment which gives organisations the right to request a review of the recommendation.

Cabinet Approval: The funding recommendations are subject to Cabinet approval and you will be notified of Cabinet's decision at the beginning of April.

Contracts will start 1st May 2019.

Strand 2- Support role

There will be a separate application and scoring system for the support role.

Applications will be scored according to the scores shown on the application form. The scores include a minimum and maximum score; applications which do not meet the minimum score for any questions may not be considered for funding.

Organisations will need to identify a named individual in the application. The scores will be used to shortlist. Shortlisted organisations will be contacted about a date for an interview. The named individual would be expected to attend the interview with the project manager.

Initial recommendation: You will be notified of the provisional funding recommendations in February 2019. You will then have to submit your organisation's policy documents before your application can be approved for funding.

Cabinet Approval: The funding recommendations are subject to Cabinet approval and you will be notified of Cabinet's decision at the beginning of April.

Contracts will start 1st May 2019.

If your grant application is successful

Once your grant application has been approved by Cabinet, Hackney Council will send your organisation an award letter containing confirmation of your grant amount.

A member of the Community Investment and Partnerships team will contact you to discuss/confirm your project delivery. Once this has been finalised, a copy of our Funding Agreement will be sent to you for review and you will be invited to a meeting to sign your agreement.

Once Hackney Council has the signed contract, the grant will be paid in line with the agreed profiled amounts by the BACS system.

