



# **CONSORTIUM**

for stronger lgbt+ communities

## **LGBT+ Fund**

### **Action Plan for Change**

JULY 2019

## Foreword

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The idea of a dedicated Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans Plus (LGBT+) Fund is one that has been discussed in various contexts over very many years. Despite being a small sub-sector of the wider voluntary sector our LGBT+ communities deliver incredible opportunities and results. This is not possible without income! It remains a constant challenge for all LGBT+ organisations to balance out the need for dedicated fundraising time whilst trying to deliver core services. Evidence shows LGBT+ organisations receive disproportionately low levels of funding relative to the size of the sector. New and dedicated funds for LGBT+ activity are needed to help balance the disparity. Of course, this must be in addition to existing LGBT+ affirmative funding streams, helping amplify those underrepresented voices and opening up further opportunity.

As the umbrella body for the LGBT+ sector, Consortium is committed to exploring these new opportunities for funding the LGBT+ sector and preparing for the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead for us all.

This Action Plan for Change articulates the lead Consortium is committed to taking in support of a more sustainable sector—one that thrives on its ability to take advantage of a range of diverse income streams.

Consortium would like to formally thank IG Advisors for all their hard work and dedication in undertaking the Feasibility Study, to Esmeé Fairbairn and NCLF for investing in the idea, Maria who led the work internally and most importantly to all the LGBT+ organisations who engaged with us during this process and whom we ultimately want to be the beneficiaries and custodians of these ideas.

There are many challenges ahead for both our LGBT+ communities and wider society. However, there are plenty of opportunities and it is those we will stay focussed on, pursuing them with passion. The benefits an LGBT+ Fund could bring to our communities is immense and we are excited to help lead the sector in bringing this to reality.



Paul Roberts OBE  
Chief Executive



Helen Belcher  
Chair of Trustees

## Background and Context

### The Journey So Far

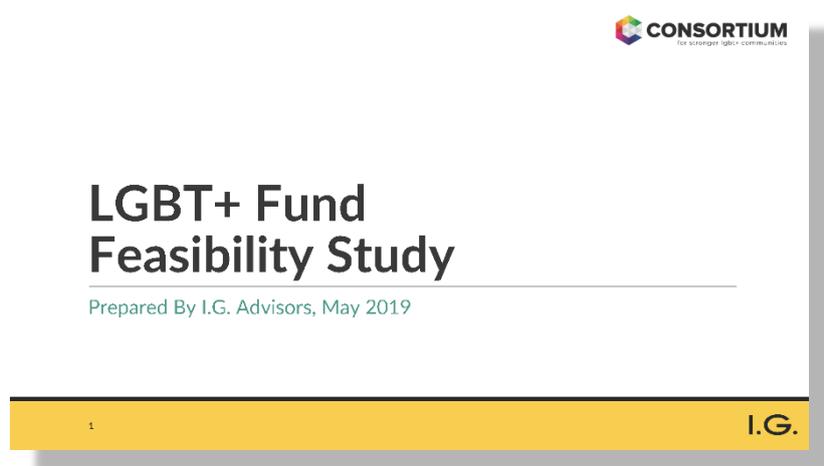
In 2016, Consortium established an Expert Taskforce with a view to tackling the scarcity of funding across the LGBT+ sector. This Taskforce brought together 12 people from across different sectors (LGBT+ Voluntary, Funding, Public sector, Private sector and Academia) to explore what action should be taken to increase funding, community messaging and collaboration.

It was agreed that more evidence was needed to identify what the priorities were and whether there was appetite for the setting up of a physical LGBT+ Fund and tasked Consortium with pursuing this. It was also agreed that beyond direct funding, Consortium was best and uniquely placed to provide the LGBT+ sector with support, guidance and expertise around capacity building and development and should continue to develop these areas.

Thanks to funding secured from The Esmeé Fairbairn Foundation and the National Lottery Community Foundation, Consortium has spent the last 12 months undertaking a Feasibility Study, with support from IG Advisors, into an LGBT+ Fund to provide the evidence, case for support and recommendations.

We are delighted that following consideration of the Feasibility Study findings, Consortium's Board recently met for an away day and formally accepted the recommendations. This document outlines our pledges and commitments for the next stage of development.

The Feasibility Study can be found on Consortium's website at [www.lgbtconsortium.org.uk/FundFeasibility](http://www.lgbtconsortium.org.uk/FundFeasibility)



## Feasibility Study

The Feasibility Study was undertaken by IG Advisors during late 2018 into early 2019, a consultancy on a mission to bridge the gap between fundraisers, business and philanthropists and who are passionate about delivering innovative, practical strategies for impact and growth.

Consortium chose to work with IG Advisors based on previously commissioned work and a desire to add a level of independent thinking to this process.

The Study explored several elements, including:

- Evidence of Need around LGBT+ Funding
- Exploration of Pooled LGBT+ Funds
- The case for a physical LGBT+ Fund
- Modelling of potential solutions
- Exploration of potential governance structure

## Evidence of Need

The following provides a summary of the information contained in the Feasibility Study in order to help set the context of this document.

- Data on LGBT+ funding is patchy and mostly US-centric, but evidence shows:
  - LGBT+ causes receive proportionally very little support across all income streams
  - Funding given does not always meet community priorities
  - Funding levels fluctuate, and are currently in decline
- LGBT+ organisations in the UK raise only 11% of their funding from individual donors, which falls considerably below that of the wider voluntary sector. However, LGBT+ donors do appear motivated to give.
- Companies are increasingly partnering with LGBT+ causes, but mostly at a national level.
- The number and level of grants to LGBT+ organisations is disproportionately low, with a handful of funders being the primary sources of grant funding
- Consultation shows Consortium Members would value our role as a 'broker' in facilitating relationships with donors and partners, drawing in matched-funding and facilitating collaborative fundraising.
- LGBT+ groups favour a grants-based model that brings in new money, facilitates cooperation rather than competition and includes skills training
- It is also important through this grant funding to individual organisations does not dry up.
- Funders find it difficult to reach smaller, grassroots groups. There is a sense a centralised LGBT+ Fund is a real area of opportunity to draw new support from existing LGBT+ funders, individual donors, Trusts and Foundations, and the business sector.

## Feasibility Recommendations

IG Advisors highlight that the idea and plan for an LGBT+ Fund has been long-awaited, heavily discussed and researched, and it is undeniable that need for such a fund exists. The following recommendations were made in the Study, which Consortium has now adopted:

- **Create an LGBT+ Fund adopting a participatory model** to ensure it is innovative, forward-thinking, has meaningful engagement from all stakeholders, and has well-facilitated and inclusive decision-making processes.
- **Identify founding donors**, who are brought together by more than just this Study, but rather to create a unique group who can focus energy on this as their pilot project **through pooled funding**.
- **Funding should be driven by donors**, and **the giving** of funding owned and **driven by LGBT+ people**.
- **Partnership working** should be at the heart of the LGBT+ Fund's development encouraging knowledge-sharing, pro bono support and capacity building.
- **Governance structures** need to be **robust and represent LGBT+ needs**, experience and capability to help lead and shape the ideas.
- **A phased approach** to an LGBT+ Fund, which begins as a fund within Consortium. Over time the Fund could potentially spin out into a partial-subsidiary or Donor Advised Fund. It could also become an independent not for profit organisation in formal partnership with Consortium.

## Consortium's Pledge

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Consortium, both operationally and strategically, has considered the Feasibility Study and makes the following pledges and commitments to action to begin the development of an LGBT+ Fund. We will publish an annual update on our progress on these, along with further pledges.

### Participatory Model

Consortium is a Member-led organisation and passionate about delivering results for LGBT+ organisations. We want any LGBT+ Fund to adopt a participatory model so LGBT+ communities remain at the heart of decision-making. We have taken this approach throughout the feasibility stage and are committed to continuing in this way. In order to support this, Consortium pledges to:

- Establish an Advisory Panel reporting to Consortium's Board who will provide expertise, knowledge and influence to leverage new funding into the LGBT+ sector.
- Establish a Members Panel who will provide opportunities oversight and consultation on emerging needs, intersectionality and community campaigns
- Engage with other external stakeholders to share knowledge, expertise, and proactively explore potential for future collaboration on income generation.

### Fundraising

Consortium recognises that an LGBT+ Fund can only be developed if money is secured for its development, and founding donors are identified. Consortium pledges to:

- Seek development funds in line with the Financial Plan in the Feasibility Study to establish a new team within Consortium focussed on the Fund's start-up.
- Once development funds are secured, the starting team will focus attention on articulating the ask of founding donors and seeking out those people and organisations.
- Bring new money into the LGBT+ sector, and not simply look to redistribute existing funding already in the sector. This includes encouraging existing grant funders to invest more, and in different ways.
- Provide annual updates on how new money has been brought into the sector.
- Build a strong public case for encouraging individual donors to give to LGBT+ causes.
- Explore new opportunities for income generation, consult Members on the opportunities they present, and further action Consortium should take to pursue.

## Beyond Money

When looking at an LGBT+ Fund, money is not the only solution. Good relationships to foster collaboration and reduce competition across LGBT+ organisations, support to build capacity and capability across LGBT+ organisations and brokering new relationships with external stakeholders including government and the private sector are all key components of its potential for success. In line with this, Consortium pledges to:

- Continue development of our core Member Engagement services, offering a diverse range of training and engagement opportunities to support sustainability, income generation and collaboration.
- Seek additional funding to maintain our existing level of Member Engagement provision, supporting LGBT+ organisations with their capacity and capability.
- Explore new and existing brokered opportunities between the LGBT+ sector and the private sector, such as an LGBT+ mentoring programme.
- Publish further LGBT+ data on sector insight, giving and sector needs.

## Community Messaging

For any LGBT+ Fund to be successful, it is vital we have community buy-in. Throughout the feasibility stage we were driven by this and will continue to adopt the same approach during all next stages. Without agreed messaging LGBT+ communities we risk losing out on future opportunities. Therefore, Consortium pledges to:

- Publish an LGBT+ Outcomes Framework, and seek LGBT+ sector consensus on its use to provide a common framework for articulating outcomes and impact.
- Using the Outcomes Framework as a baseline, support the development of core LGBT+ community messages/narratives to help inform coordinated campaigns and fundraising.
- Ensure that coordinated messaging doesn't conflict with individual organisation's ability to nuance their own needs.

## Consortium Structures

Consortium welcomes the recommendations on developing a phased approach to an LGBT+ Fund. This will allow for flexibility and responsiveness as it develops and provide greater opportunity for sustainability. Therefore, Consortium pledges to:

- Establish a new service area of Consortium called 'Philanthropy and Giving', which will sit alongside our existing work on Membership & Engagement, Voice and Communication, and Networks and Collaboration.

- Build on the learning from the Government Equalities Office funded LGBT+ Futures Fund to help shape the internal processes for an LGBT+ Fund.
- Be transparent and accountable with our processes, including being open about who is engaged with our advisory groups and key points from their discussions.

## Timeframe for Development

Consortium recognises this is a new and ambitious programme of activity. However, we are confident that now is the right time for a major shift in how the LGBT+ sector approaches funding, fundraising and sector sustainability. Whilst it is important we remain able to be flexible on timeframes to allow the best chance of success, we recognise that longer term delays could prevent an LGBT+ Fund from being established. Therefore Consortium is pledging to:

- Seek funding for the next stage of development as outlined in the Feasibility Study by March 2020.
- Identify at least two founding donors by June 2020.
- Aim to launch the LGBT+ Fund, with open applications, by Dec 2020.

For more information about Consortium's plans for an LGBT+ Fund please contact [admin@lgbtconsortium.org.uk](mailto:admin@lgbtconsortium.org.uk) or 020 7064 6500.