

2024

**FUNDING
JUSTICE
FOR DPOS**

A Call to Action

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1) Commit to Funding Self-Representation.

a) Create Dedicated Long-Term Core Funding Programmes for Our Sector.

Why It's Important: Disabled Peoples Organisations (DPOs) and Disabled People-Led Groups (DPLGs) are essential in advocating for and addressing the unique needs of Disabled people. Dedicated long-term core funding ensures sustainability and allows these organisations to focus on impactful, systemic change.

What's Needed: An increased number of funding programs specifically for DPOs, intersectional DPOs¹, and DPLGs; where all schemes are co-produced from the beginning with compensated DPOs, incorporating their insights to design effective funding models. Disabled people represent a minimum of 20% of all communities funders aim to support - this should be reflected in the distribution of programmes.

How Funding Organisations Can Achieve This:

- Collaborate with DPOs during the design phase of the strategic priorities for your organisation and for dedicated funding programs to ensure they meet the actual needs of the Disabled community.
 - This includes providing multi-year funding to enable strategic planning and development.

b) Meet Our Full Access, Support, and Inclusion Costs.

Why It's Important: Many DPOs cannot fully participate in funding opportunities without adequate support for disability-related costs. These

¹ Intersectional Led By-And-For groups: A community organisation governed and operated by individuals from the intersectionally marginalised communities it serves (e.g., Deaf migrants).

costs, which are not covered by Access to Work, are essential for effective communication and operation.

What's Needed: Separate and fully covered disability-related support, inclusion and communication costs, including developing Easy-Read documents and BSL interpretation, in both the application, programme and evaluation.

How Funding Organisations Can Achieve This:

- Collaborate with DPOs to understand how specific grant budget lines should cover these access costs.
- Ensure that these expenses are easily claimable without additional bureaucratic hurdles, allowing DPOs to focus on their primary objectives.
- Include the development of Easy-Read documents and BSL interpretation in all costs.

c) Equitably Distribute Funds to Intersectional, PwLDs², BSL-Led, D/deaf-Led, and D/deafblind-Led Grants.

Why It's Important: Intersectional DPOs, BSL-led, D/deaf-Led, D/deafblind-led, and people with learning disabilities (PwLDs)-led groups and organisations face significant marginalisation and lack of representation within the Disabled movement. Equitable funding ensures these groups can advocate effectively and address their unique challenges.

What's Needed: An increased number of funding programs specifically for Intersectional DPOs, BSL-led, D/deaf-Led, D/deafblind-led, and people with learning disabilities (PwLDs)-led groups and organisations; where all schemes are co-produced from the beginning with these compensated organisations, incorporating their insights to design effective funding models. Prioritisation of award giving to these organisations in DPO programmes.

² Persons With Learning Difficulties or Disabilities.

How Funding Organisations Can Achieve This:

- Foster relationships with local Intersectional DPOs, BSL-led, D/deaf-Led, D/deafblind-led, and people with learning disabilities (PwLDs)-led groups and organisations to understand and address their specific needs.
- Collaborate with these organisations during the design phase of the strategic priorities for your organisation and for dedicated funding programs to ensure they meet the diverse needs of the Disabled community.

d) Fund for Intersectional Work.

Why It's Important: Disabled people with multiple marginalised identities face compounded discrimination and barriers. Intersectional DPOs are not only marginalised in the disability rights movements but face additional challenges in finding appropriate funding for their work. Simultaneously, non-intersectional DPOs and organisations representing other social justice movements are not resourced to develop an intersectional strategy or support the intersectional needs of their existing members.

Funding intersectional work is crucial for addressing these overlapping issues and promoting social justice.

What's Needed: An increased number of funding programs specifically for intersectional DPOs and other intersectional organisations. Recognition and support of intersectional work through a social justice lens. Funding to enable other DPOs to develop intersectional practices and understanding.

How Funding Organisations Can Achieve This:

- Compensate and work with Intersectional DPOs to design programmes specifically for intersectional communities.
- Offer training or fund DPO development programmes that helps DPOs incorporate intersectional approaches into their work.

e) Divest³ From Organisations Led by Non-Disabled People and Organisations That Create Harm.

Why It's Important: Organisations not led by Disabled people are actively harmful to our organisations⁴. Divesting from these organisations demonstrates a commitment to Disabled leadership and self-representation.

What's Needed: An equitable re-distribution of resources and decision-making power away from charities that claim to speak for disabled people but are not led by disabled people and *towards* the disabled community.

How Funding Organisations Can Achieve This:

- Introduce Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to current grantees to evidence their inclusion of the communities they claim to serve, from boards to volunteers.
- Organisations that seek disability-related funding but cannot demonstrate that 75% of their board and 51% of their staff and volunteers are Disabled should be divested from.
 - Reallocate these funds to DPOs and grassroots DPLGs, prioritising Intersectional, PwLDs, BSL-led, D/deaf-Led, and D/deafblind-Led groups and organisations.

f) Ensure Representation in Your Grantee Capacity Building.

Why It's Important: Capacity building is more effective when provided by those who understand the Social Model of Disability and Disability Justice from lived experience.

³ For an in-depth explanation of divestment, please read our analysis '[Divestment and the Injustice of Misrepresentation](#)'.

⁴ For an in-depth explanation of divestment, please read our analysis '[What are Non-Representative Organisations?](#)'

What's Needed: All capacity-building and Funder plus⁵ Consultants for funding organisations should represent the communities of funded organisations, and understand the sector they work in.

How Funding Organisations Can Achieve This:

- Ensure consultants hired by funders to offer capacity building and support to DPOs are themselves Disabled and adhere to Disability Justice, Intersectional, and Social Models of Disability frameworks.
- Establish a roster of qualified, Disabled consultants and DPOs who deliver capacity-building training.

2) Commit to Justice and Equitable Power Redistribution.

a) Shift Priorities toward long-term Systemic Change.

Why It's Important: Short-term project-based funding often fails to address the root causes of systemic discrimination and injustice. Long-term core funding allows for sustained, impactful change.

What's Needed: A large pool of long-term and core funding for led By-And-For organisations to deliver systemic change, social justice, and human rights work.

How Funding Organisations Can Achieve This:

- Commit to distributing 10-year grant programmes to organisations Led By And For structurally discriminated communities by 2030.
- Work with these organisations and groups to shift funding priorities from service-based programs to those aimed at systemic change.

⁵ **Funder Plus** is a term that describes a range of activities that are in addition to a grant or the grant-making process. It can also be referred to as "grants plus". Funder Plus programs are designed to help funded organisations improve their capacity, resilience, and sustainability.

b) Shift Decision-making power from a funding board to grassroots communities.

Why It's Important: Grassroots communities have the best understanding of their needs and the most effective solutions. Decentralising decision-making power away from funding organisations to marginalised communities ensures that funding is more relevant and impactful.

What's Needed: Participatory grant-making processes and trust-based relationships between funders, DPOs, and other Led-by-and-for organisations. Complete transparency in funding decisions with accessible media for the community to challenge such decisions.

How Funding Organisations Can Achieve This:

- Create advisory panels of grassroots community members.
- Make funding criteria and decisions publicly available and open to feedback.

c) Include Disabled people with intersectional experiences at every level.

Why It's Important: Representation at all levels of grant-making ensures that Disabled voices are heard and considered in every step of the process.

What's Needed: Disabled and D/deaf people, particularly those with intersectional experiences of marginalisation, need to coproduce the design of criteria, shortlisting filters, and selection processes for disability-related grant programmes.

How Funding Organisations Can Achieve This:

- Recruit Disabled and D/deaf people, prioritising those with intersectional experiences of marginalisation who understand the Social Model of Disability and Disability Justice, to join grant-making panels and selection processes.
 - Provide training, compensation and access support for their participation.

d) Develop a Comprehensive Understanding of Our Sector.

Why It's Important: From the inaccessibility of applications to vertical programmes that aren't designed for the needs of our community – all systemic issues in the funding landscape are rooted in a misunderstanding of what DPOs are, why led By-And-For organisations are irreplaceable, how we're run and the values that drive us. Funders cannot effectively support DPOs without a deep understanding of their unique needs and contributions to society.

What's Needed: A sector wide shift in education and culture around disabled people, DPOs and communities leading their own change.

How Funding Organisations Can Achieve This:

- Funders must educate themselves about DPOs and work closely with them to gain insights into their roles and contributions.
- Conduct regular training sessions on disability justice and the social model of disability.
- Engage in ongoing dialogue with DPOs to stay informed about their needs and challenges.

3) Break the Bureaucracy and Enhance Accessibility

a) Design end-to-end, accessible programmes based on Disability Justice principles and the Social Model of Disability.

Why It's Important: Bureaucratic hurdles and restricted vertical programs, which are rooted in colonial legacies⁶, disproportionately affect DPOs intersectional organisations and grassroots community groups; preventing

⁶ The bureaucratic processes inherent in funding schemes, from application to evaluation, often reflect colonial legacies, perpetuating control and power imbalances. To learn more and how to decolonise your funding program, read our Analysis '[Scheme Structure: Decolonising Processes](#)'.

them from accessing necessary funding and creating the long-term systemic change our marginalised communities need.

What's Needed: A decolonised and community-centred funding system, from a funding organisation's strategic goals to community led evaluation.

How Funding Organisations Can Achieve This:

- Simplify application forms, provide them in multiple accessible formats, and ensure all materials are easy to understand and complete.
- Increase the flexibility of funding criteria to accommodate different communities' unique needs and circumstances, including intersectional communities.
- Design application and monitoring processes that are fully accessible and grounded in Disability Justice principles.
- Expand restrictive vertical programmes to encompass a broader range of initiatives that address systemic issues and promote long-term social change.
- Prioritise multi-year funding, which allows organisations to engage in strategic planning, invest in capacity-building, and sustain meaningful initiatives over time.
- Work with a diverse and intersectional network of grassroots and community led By-And-For organisations to implement the above changes and begin a dialogue about how we can collectively decolonise the funding system.

b) Create reasonable application deadlines.

Why It's Important: Tight deadlines prevent DPOs from submitting thorough and thoughtful applications, especially when additional access needs are not considered.

What's Needed: Freely accessible and transparent funding programme timelines at least 2 years in advance, to allow DPOs and other community groups ample time to prepare and apply.

How Funding Organisations Can Achieve This:

- Publish a long-term funding calendar and stick to the announced deadlines to help DPOs plan and prepare adequately. Ensure that timelines are available in Easy Read and BSL interpreted.

c) Provide fair evaluation processes.

Why It's Important: Evaluation processes that are too burdensome or not accessible disadvantage DPOs and often ask questions that fail to capture DPO's true impact.

What's Needed: Accessible and fair evaluation processes, designed by communities to assess the changes they need, and multiple formats for data submission.

How Funding Organisations Can Achieve This:

- Develop evaluation criteria in consultation with DPOs, and other led By-And-For community organisations, to ensure they are fair and accessible. Provide training on evaluation techniques to DPOs.

d) Free the ownership of data about our communities

Why It's Important: Data collected about communities should be owned and freely accessible to these communities to empower their advocacy and creating change. Funding organisations, through their reach and position, collect and evaluate a large body of data about marginalised communities – it's their responsibility to distribute that data back out to the community they wish to serve. The need for a large body of data to demonstrate the oppression of our communities is needed now more than ever!

What's Needed: A free, accessible, databank pooling data from multiple community led By-And-For organisations to demonstrate the experiences of their community.

How Funding Organisations Can Achieve This:

- Commit to gathering data about marginalised communities from funded organisations only when it is necessary.
- When data collection is necessary, work with community led By-And-For organisations to iteratively design data submission processes that are accessible and non-exploitative.

- When data collection is necessary, work with community led By-And-For organisations to iteratively design open data policies, and databanks that allow community organisations to access, and use collected data.
- Ensure data collection methods are inclusive, respectful and anonymised.
- Capture and share data on how many DPOs / led By-And-For organisations are funded.

e) Design end to end, accessible applications.

Why It's Important: Barriers⁷ in the application process can prevent DPOs from accessing needed funds, and privilege larger organisations with a funding team.

What's Needed: A complete and coproduced redesign of the funding application process, working with compensated DPOs and other community led By-And-For organisations.

How Funding Organisations Can Achieve This:

- Redesign the application processes with input from DPOs; we'll be able to provide tailored guidance to your organisation. For now, here are some things to consider:
 - Eliminate repetitive information requests: such as requests for information and financial details which are publicly available via the charity commission, 360 Giving or the organisations website.
 - Streamline application processes to reduce time burdens.
 - Tailor application processes to accommodate additional administrative needs of Disabled people.
 - Ensure applications are designed to accommodate various accessibility needs.
 - Avoid requiring explanations of fundamental concepts like “Disabled Peoples Organisation”, “Social Model of Disability” or “Disability Justice”.

⁷ We explain what barriers Disabled People's Organisations face in funding applications in our '[Position Statement: Funding Justice for DPO's](#)'.

- Use plain language to reduce jargon and complexity.
- Conduct accessibility audits and make necessary adjustments to ensure inclusivity.

4) Recognize Our Movement!

a) Develop a comprehensive understanding of Disability Justice and our movement at all levels of your organisation.

Why It's Important: Recognising disablism/ableism as a structural system of oppression is crucial for funders to align with the Disability Justice movement.

What's Needed: A sector wide shift in education and culture around Disability. Even when we coproduce your funding strategy with you, funder's confidence in Disability Justice is the only way to ensure that you co-design programmes that liberate disabled people.

How Funding Organisations Can Achieve This:

- Provide mandatory training on Disability Justice, Intersectionality and The Social Model of Disability, that is designed and delivered by Disabled experts, for all staff in your organisation.
- Engage with DPOs to deepen understanding of the movement.
- Increase awareness of the Disability Justice movement and its importance parallel to other social justice movements with your network.

b) Hire Disabled people as expert consultants to train and evaluate your internalised ableism/structural oppression.

Why It's Important: We need a sector wide shift in education and culture around Disability. Only Disabled people have the lived experience and expertise to effectively explain, address and dismantle ableism and structural oppression within organisations.

What's Needed: Funding Organisations need to address the internal and systemic disablism/ableism in their organisations and sector.

How Funding Organisations Can Achieve This:

- Train your organisation and sector on the Social Model of Disability, Disability Justice, Self-Representation, and Co-production by hiring exclusively self-representative consultants, i.e., DPO.
- Hire DPOs and Disabled Intersectional Consultants to evaluate your internal and systemic disablism/ableism, racism, cis-heteronormativity, classism, xenophobia, colonialism, sexism in your organisations.
- Commit to, and coproduce a plan to break down disablism/ableism, racism, cis-heteronormativity, classism, xenophobia, colonialism, sexism in your organisations and the funding sector.

c) Divest all resources from all organisations that mirror the charitable and medical models of disability.

Why It's Important: Charities that are not led by disabled people are actively harmful to our community. They appropriate our language about empowerment, but will not hire disabled people to lead their organisations, campaigns or policy work. This is not restricted to disability charities, but all organisations that are not led by disabled people and claim to work for us. They perpetrate a paternalistic and charitable marginalisation and exploitation of disabled people that appears as benevolent. Many organisations still work under the Medical model of Disability by focusing on impairment that they claim prevents us from 'accessing' society; these organisations typically focus on sympathy and non-consensual serving over liberation⁸.

What's Needed: A complete transfer of resources and power from organisations outside of the community they claim to serve to the

⁸ To learn more read our Analyses 'Divestment and the injustice of misrepresentation' and 'The Tragedy model versus the Social Model of Disability'.

communities. In the funding context, this specifically means the divestment from non-disabled people led organisations to DPOs and DPLG's.

How Funding Organisations Can Achieve This:

- Introduce Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to current grantees to evidence their (1) inclusion of the communities they claim to serve, from boards to volunteers, and (2) focus on Disability Justice and the Social Model of Disability.
- Organisations that seek disability-related funding but cannot demonstrate that 75% of their board and 51% of their staff and volunteers are Disabled should be divested from.
- Organisations that seek disability-related funding but work under Charitable and Medical/Tragedy models of Disability should be divested from.
 - Reallocate these funds to DPOs and grassroots DPLGs, prioritising Intersectional, PwLDs, BSL-led, D/deaf-Led, and D/deafblind-Led groups and organisations.
- Ensure that redistributed funds go directly to community Led By-And-For organisations to focus on the Liberation of Disabled Communities, Disability Justice and the long term, horizontal break down of intersectional disabling/ablest oppressions in society.

What next?

We believe in the power of coproduction and know that changing the funding landscape cannot be done alone. We want to coproduce a strategy for change with you!

If you would like to join us on our journey, please contact us. Details can be found on our campaign page: <https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/funding-justice>.

Discretionary Funding Asks

We have included below a list of discretionary funding to support the DPO sector. If you would like to coproduce these asks, please contact us.

Details can be found on our campaign page: <https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/funding-justice>

- 1) Core 5–10-year funding for a DPO Forum Consortium with an equitable intersectional DPO Wing.
- 2) Seed funding to launch DPOs in regions currently without a DPO. If you would like to learn more, please contact us.
- 3) 5-10 year horizontal and justice focused funding to continue to develop the DPO sector.
- 4) Multi-year horizontal and justice focused research funding to understand the DPO sector.

FOUR FUNDING JUSTICE 4 DPOS

STEPS TO FUNDING JUSTICE

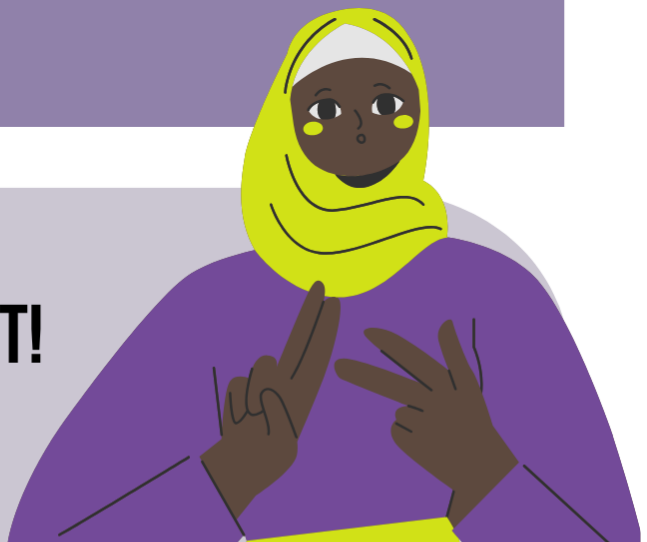
1 FUND SELF-REPRESENTATION



2 DISTRIBUTE POWER EQUITABLY

3 BREAK THE BUREAUCRACY, ENHANCE ACCESSIBILITY

4 RECOGNISE OUR MOVEMENT!



JOIN THE MOVEMENT!

THE TIME TO GIVE POWER BACK TO THE COMMUNITY IS NOW