

Final | Confidential

London's VRU

MyEnds evaluation.  
Thematic report 3: Onwards  
grants

July 2024

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# 1 Executive summary

## 1.1 What are MyEnds onwards grant programmes?

MyEnds is an ambitious programme funded by London's Violence Reduction Unit (VRU). It promotes highly-local, place-based approaches to reducing violence in eight London neighbourhoods which have experienced high and sustained levels of violence (sometimes referred to in this report as 'sites'). Consortiums of voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations were awarded funding to develop and deliver the local programme in each site.

MyEnds onwards grants programmes are one of the activities developed and delivered in neighbourhoods participating in MyEnds. The grants programmes award small pots of funding to local grassroots organisations to deliver activities or support in MyEnds areas. They aim to increase the funding available to organisations and individuals that may not find other funding routes accessible. Most MyEnds onwards grants programmes also involve the provision of capacity building support to grantees. The combination of funding and support is designed to increase the capacity of grassroots organisations to deliver activities in their local communities, during the MyEnds programme and beyond.

## 1.2 What have MyEnds onwards grants programmes achieved, and how?

Onwards grants programmes have increased the array of organisations and activities involved in MyEnds and broadened engagement with target community members. They have also built grantees' credibility, promoting systems change in favour of the grassroots sector in MyEnds areas and supporting grassroots organisations' sustainability and opportunities to contribute to violence reduction.

Sites have valued onwards grants programmes as a means to build capacity in the grassroots sector and as a mechanism for community engagement. They have supported grantees through training, organisational development, and linking them to wider funding opportunities. Effective delivery has required strong understanding of sites' local grassroots sectors, and was resource intensive.

## 1.3 How do onwards grants programmes fit within the MyEnds model?

Within the MyEnds model there are four key activity strands. Together they aim to strengthen community networks in order provide stronger foundations for violence reduction and to enable the delivery of interventions which engage young people and community members in the local areas. They also contribute, in different ways, to promoting the sustainability of work implemented under MyEnds. For instance, onwards grants programmes have the potential to support increased capacity, skills and standing of grassroots organisations in the longer-term, which is independent of the MyEnds programme. The strands are:

1. Community and youth-led co-design and engagement.
2. **Supporting and building capacity in the grassroots sector.**
3. Targeted hyper-local interventions.

#### 4. Strengthening collaborative network approach.

Interaction between the different activity strands is an important part of the MyEnds model. Therefore, some activities cut across – and have potential to deliver outcomes in – more than one strand. Equally, all activity strands are supported and informed by the set-up, key components and ethos, and system-level mechanisms of change which are reflected in the model.

The MyEnds model is explored in more detail in thematic report 1. Thematic report 2 examines strengthening community networks activity, including community and youth-led co-design and engagement, and strengthening collaborative network approach. This report, thematic report 3, focuses on supporting and building capacity in the grassroots sector through onwards grants programmes. Thematic report 4 explores targeted hyper-local interventions. Lessons and implications for MyEnds are brought together in thematic report 5.

### 1.4 About this report

This report summarises the key findings from the MyEnds evaluation 2021-24 in relation to activities undertaken by local MyEnds programmes to deliver their onwards grants programmes. It:

- Explores the impact of onwards grants programmes on grassroots organisations' ability to engage with, and deliver activities to, their local communities, particularly those affected by violence.
- Considers emerging impact on the grassroots sectors local to MyEnds areas, with particular reference to grassroots organisations' ability to develop skills and relationships and deliver activities into the longer term.
- Provides a summary of monitoring data from six of the eight MyEnds sites, detailing the number and size of grants awarded and a high level profile of funded organisations and activities.
- Outlines approaches taken to developing and delivering onwards grants programmes, including showcasing specific examples from local areas.

The findings in this report are based on:

- Extensive qualitative consultation with a range of stakeholders throughout the three years of MyEnds programme delivery in 2021-24
- Analysis of responses to an e-survey shared with stakeholders in local sites over three time points (Spring 2022, 2023 and 2024)
- A review of the final monitoring data submissions covering the extension period (April 2023 to March 2024 inclusive)

The evaluation methodology and research questions are detailed in Annex 1.

Thank you to everyone who has taken part in consultation activity or shared information with us to support the evaluation. Without your input, we could not have gained the insights and learning included in our reports.

## 2 Overview of key findings

### What has the impact of MyEnds onwards grants programmes been?

- 1 Onwards grants programmes have **increased the array of organisations** involved and activities delivered as part of MyEnds.
- 2 Grantees have **broadened engagement** with target community members.
- 3 Sites have **built grantees' credibility, capacity and sustainability** to deliver activities into the longer term.
- 4 Onwards grants programmes have **promoted systems change in favour of the grassroots sector**, supporting its contribution to violence reduction.

### How have onwards grants programmes been implemented and delivered?

- 5 Consortiums have **commonly used and highly value** onwards grants programmes as a means to **support and build capacity in the grassroots sector**.
- 6 Onwards grants programmes provide **forums to engage communities and young people** in discussions and decision making about violence reduction.
- 7 Delivering an effective onwards grants programme is **resource intensive** and requires a **strong understanding of the make up, strengths and needs** of the local grassroots sector.
- 8 Onwards grants programmes have included four main types of capacity building support: training, organisational development, policy and process support, and help to access wider funding opportunities.

### Future focus

Utilise data from community needs assessments to target onwards grants funding.

Support sites to understand and respond to demands of grassroots capacity building from an early stage.

Facilitate opportunities for grassroots organisations to share learning on engaging with communities affected by violence.

Support sites to generate opportunities for match funding grassroots grants.

### Case studies

In Haringey, Home Cooked have successfully involved young people in the design and planning of local activities by engaging them in their Community Grant Fund Panel. Young people's meaningful engagement was supported by effective training; equal responsibilities; a welcoming and safe environment; and sharing their feedback widely. For young people, their involvement increased their sense that their views are valued, and developed their self confidence and skills. It has also led to the selection and funding of more innovative activities, aligning with young people's needs.

In Southwark, Gamechangers have supported the sustainability of their grantees by providing needs led organisational and personal development support and advocating for grassroots organisations in their local network. Gamechangers' prioritisation of sustainability from the outset allowed time for grantees to embed changes they made in response to development support. It also enabled Gamechangers to cultivate a local network of funders, demonstrate to them the strengths of grassroots organisations, and encourage them to direct funding to this sector.

In Newham, ACT-AS-1's organisational development fund and capacity building support has helped grantees to achieve outcomes supporting their sustainability. These include focusing grantees on their strengths and areas for development; strengthening grantees' policies, processes and governance structures; broadening their reach; and improving their ability to secure funding. Their recruitment of a former grantee and local business mentor contributed to the accessibility, relatability and utility of ACT-AS-1's support offer.

### 3 What has the impact of MyEnds onwards grants programmes been?

#### 3.1 **Key finding 1: Onwards grants programmes have increased the array of organisations involved and activities delivered as part of MyEnds**

Sites' onwards grants programmes have significantly broadened the number of organisations involved in MyEnds and the range of activities delivered. Several sites have funded over 20 grantees each, thereby expanding capacity to deliver activities beyond those led by consortium and delivery partners.

Some sites perceive the networks and relationships built through their onwards grants programmes to be sustainable beyond the MyEnds programme, supporting the continued delivery of this broader range of activities. For example, Gamechangers' onwards grants programme has contributed to lead consortium partner Active Communities Network becoming a lead for grassroots engagement in Southwark. The organisation plans to continue working with these groups, recognising their valuable skills and ability to engage vulnerable young people.

#### 3.2 **Key finding 2: Grantees have broadened engagement with target community members**

Grantees' ability to engage with target members of the community was considered by sites as a key success of their onwards grants programmes. In many cases, grantees had set up their organisations or activities having identified a lack of support for people like themselves and intending to address this gap. This personal experience of issues they were seeking to address through their activity, coupled with in depth local knowledge having been born and raised in the community, contributed to a strong level of affinity between grantees and community members. Grantees were therefore able to locate, engage and empathise with, and appropriately deliver activities within target groups.

Funding grantees from within target groups has also supported sites to engage with community members within other aspects of the MyEnds programme. For example, some of Ecosystem Coldharbour's grantees are local residents with experience of gang involvement. As well as utilising this experience to encourage target groups to engage in their grant funded activities, these grantees have also harnessed their backgrounds to support Ecosystem Coldharbour's response to critical incidents. Having built a relationship through the onwards grants programme, Ecosystem Coldharbour were able to quickly mobilise these grantees during a critical incident to work with young people who remain involved with gangs and who were heavily affected by the incident.

In some cases, sites have partnered grantees with other organisations within their network that have the skills and resources needed to amplify their engagement. For example, THICN funded a local media specialist to produce a first responder video. This specialist was partnered with a larger production company who provided additional funding and supported with marketing the

video, which has been translated into Somali and Bengali and shown during trailers in local cinemas.



**Future focus: Facilitate opportunities for grassroots organisations to share learning on engaging with communities affected by violence**

Grassroots organisations' ability to engage communities affected by violence has been highlighted as a strength by local and VRU stakeholders. Facilitating opportunities for them to share learning on this with future MyEnds consortium and delivery partners and VRU stakeholders could strengthen engagement with these communities across MyEnds and VRU activities.

**3.3 Key finding 3: Sites have built grantees' credibility, capacity and sustainability to deliver activities into the longer term**

Sites have supported grantees' sustainability by strengthening their organisations and their capacity and ability to deliver activities successfully, during the MyEnds programme and beyond. For example, grantees have been supported to develop structures, policies and processes which place them on a more secure footing and help them to deliver more effectively. They have also been supported to develop skills they can continue to apply beyond the MyEnds funding, including leadership skills and recruitment skills. These structures, policies, processes and skills are likely to increase their attractiveness to wider funders, and make them better able to meet funder requirements.

Grantees have also been supported to engage with funding opportunities, through support with applications and interviews, and connected to and encouraged to apply for these opportunities to secure follow on funding. In the case of Gamechangers, this support has been particularly proactive, extending to the development of networks with wider funders and generating match funding opportunities. This has included advocating for changes to the local authority's funding strategy, which now promises a larger percentage of their community funding to go towards local grassroots organisations (see section 6).

Having received capacity building support from MyEnds sites, many grantees have been successful in securing further funding, thereby strengthening their sustainability beyond the programme.

*"Every week I'm being told grantees have received further funding. We're proud that they're now at a point that they can seek funding elsewhere and are sustainable without our support."*

Local programme manager in a MyEnds area



#### **Future focus: Support sites to generate opportunities for match funding grassroots grants**

The most effective sustainability efforts from the first iteration of MyEnds have been those that have involved developing strong relationships with wider funders, and in particular, opportunities for match funding. Future MyEnds sites could be supported to identify local funders, possibly through community needs assessments. They could also be given training on how to build relationships with wider funders, and develop funders' understanding of and trust in grassroots organisations to deliver interventions.

### **3.4 Key finding 4: Onwards grants programmes have promoted systems change in favour of the grassroots sector, supporting its contribution to violence reduction**

As well as supporting the development of individual grantees and the local grassroots sector, these activities also promote some of the mechanisms of systems change included within the MyEnds model. All MyEnds onwards grants programmes have enabled their grantees to deliver at a greater scale and demonstrate their skills and strengths. This increases their credibility within the community and with wider system stakeholders, such as statutory partners and funders. This is particularly effective where grantees and grassroots organisations are proactively promoted to these wider system stakeholders, as shown by Gamechangers, who built networks with wider funders and then used these as forums to showcase the strengths of grassroots organisations (see section 6). This initial investment and increased credibility in turn contributes to a shift in resource flows and strategic norms in favour of the voluntary, community and grassroots sector.

Stakeholders consistently highlighted the ability of grassroots individuals and organisations to engage with communities affected by violence. This shift in support and resources towards the grassroots sector may therefore contribute to strengthened engagement and relationship building with these communities, in turn facilitating the provision of interventions and support geared towards violence reduction.

## 4 How have onwards grants programmes been delivered?

### 4.1 Profile of MyEnds onwards grants programmes

This section provides key findings from the analysis of monitoring data collected by six sites<sup>1</sup> in relation to their onwards grants programmes during the extension year of MyEnds<sup>2</sup>.

Figure 1 shows the number of grants awarded by each site in the extension year. It shows that there was a total of 66 recipients of onwards grants funds, which is an average of 11 grants per site. Ecosystem Coldharbour awarded the most grants (16) and Home Cooked the fewest (7).

Figure 1: Number of onwards grants awarded, by site

Site	Number of onwards grants awarded	Onwards grants awarded as %
ACT-AS-1	11	17%
Ecosystem Coldharbour	16	24%
Gamechangers	14	21%
Home Cooked	7	11%
Rise Up East	10	15%
THICN	8	12%
<b>Total</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>100%</b>

Figure 2 shows the total size of onwards grants awarded by each site in the extension year. It shows that a total of £323,935 was distributed in onwards grants funding. On average, sites awarded £53,987.50 in onwards grants funding. Gamechangers awarded the greatest amount of grant funding (£101,000, 31% of the total funding awarded). THICN awarded the smallest amount of grant funding (£30,000, 9% of the total funding awarded).

<sup>1</sup> Two sites, MyEnds West Croydon and One Flow One Brent, engaged small grassroots organisations by recruiting them either as delivery or consortium partners, rather than through onwards grants programmes. Their data is therefore excluded from this analysis.

<sup>2</sup> The VRU introduced a new mechanism for sites to report onwards grants activity part way through the programme, and changes in the way monitoring data was reported meant it was not possible to combine quantitative data from submissions in different years. However, data from the extension period provides a useful snapshot of the activity and learning in sites, once the programme was well established.

Figure 2: Total size of onwards grants awarded, by site

Site	Onwards grants total	Onwards grants total as %
ACT-AS-1	£49,000.00	15%
Ecosystem Coldharbour	£39,900.00	12%
Gamechangers	£101,000.00	31%
Home Cooked	£60,000.00	19%
Rise Up East	£44,025.00	14%
THICN	£30,000.00	9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>£323,925.00</b>	<b>100%</b>

Figure 3 shows the spread of activities delivered by onwards grants recipients in the extension year, according to categories of activity recorded in monitoring data<sup>3</sup>. It shows that the five most frequently used activity categories were: workshops/ group work (28 grant recipients; 42% of all grants); after school - academic/ social enrichment (26 grant recipients; 39% of all grants); creative (music, arts, drama) (25 grant recipients; 38% of all grants); mentoring (group) (25 grant recipients; 38% of all grants); and sports based (21 grant recipients; 32% of all grants).

Figure 3: Activities delivered by onwards grants recipients

Activity type	Total	Total as % of all grants awarded
Workshops/ group work	28	42%
After school – academic/ social enrichment	26	39%
Creative (music arts drama)	25	38%
Mentoring (group)	25	38%
Sports based	21	32%
Holistic 1:1 support	14	21%

<sup>3</sup> The activities each onwards grants recipient delivered were recorded according to 15 pre-defined activity categories. Onwards grants recipients could be recorded as delivering activities across multiple categories. As onwards grants recipients could be recorded as delivering activities across multiple categories, percentages in Figure 3 do not total to 100%.

Activity type	Total	Total as % of all grants awarded
Mentoring (volunteer/ peer led)	7	11%
Training (CYP parents/carers)	6	9%
Awareness campaigns	5	8%
Schools/ educational based	5	8%
Training (professional)	5	8%
Therapy/ counselling	4	6%
Needs assessment	3	5%
Other	3	5%

Figure 4 shows the spread of participant groups targeted by onwards grants recipients in the extension year<sup>4</sup>. It shows that almost all targeted children and young people (62 grant recipients; 94% of all grants). The next most common target participant groups were parents/ carers (13 grant recipients; 20% of all grants); and other (e.g. community) (8 grant recipients; 12% of all grants).

Figure 4: Participant groups targeted by onwards grants recipients

Participant group	Total	Total as % of all grants awarded
Children and young people	62	94%
Parents/carers	13	20%
Other (e.g. community)	8	12%
Youth practitioners	6	9%
Other professionals	1	2%
Teachers	1	2%

<sup>4</sup> Each onwards grants recipient was recorded as targeting defined participant groups. Onwards grants recipients could be recorded as targeting multiple participant groups. All onwards grants recipients were recorded as targeting at least one participant group, and the highest number of different groups targeted for one onwards grants recipient was four. As onwards grants recipients could be recorded as delivering activities across multiple categories, percentages in Figure 4 do not total to 100%.

#### 4.2 **Key finding 5: Consortiums have commonly used and highly value onwards grants programmes as a means to support and build capacity in the grassroots sector**

Six of the eight MyEnds sites developed onwards grants programmes as their main means of supporting and building capacity within their local grassroots sectors, which is an important aspect of strengthening community networks. Two sites took a different approach to engaging small grassroots organisations, and instead did so by recruiting them either as delivery or consortium partners.

Sites have been successful in delivering these programmes, contributing to increased grassroots capacity in their local areas. For most sites, funding grassroots organisations through onwards grants is a new activity. They are particularly proud of the growth of this strand during MyEnds.

*“This is when you see the whole programme blossom – supporting grassroots organisations to deliver their interventions.”*

Local programme manager in a MyEnds area

#### 4.3 **Key finding 6: Onwards grants programmes provide forums to engage communities and young people in discussions and decision making about violence reduction**

As well as being a mechanism for engaging and supporting grassroots organisations, onwards grants programmes have acted as forums for engaging communities and young people. Decision making about grants has provided a clear focal point for community members and young people to influence decisions taken by the programme, and therefore to have a say in approaches to violence reduction locally. This is an example of the way in which different MyEnds activity strands can intersect.

Sites have targeted their grant funding according to the needs and interests expressed by community members. In some cases, sites have consulted with their local communities prior to rolling out onwards grants programmes to understand the types of activities or organisations they would like to see funded.

In most cases, sites have sought community input by recruiting community members to decision making panels tasked with awarding grants. Some sites have also involved young people in these panels, eliciting their ideas and feedback on applications to increase the appropriateness of funded activities for young people and the community. Sites have trained community members in these roles, upskilling them in the process.

In some instances, it proved challenging to recruit panel members for initial grant funding rounds, due to a lack of awareness of the programme. For instance, this was a challenge for Home Cooked in Haringey (see section 5). Recruitment was more successful once the programme had begun to embed in the local area.



#### **Future focus: Utilise data from community needs assessments and Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs) to target onwards grants funding**

In the first iteration of MyEnds, sites largely focused on incorporating community feedback in their onwards grants programmes through the recruitment of community members to their funding decision making panels. Most sites did not formally gather community feedback to inform the marketing of these programmes to local grassroots organisations. For future MyEnds sites, incorporating insights from EqIAs and community needs assessments into the planning and marketing of onwards grants programmes will help to further align these programmes, and the grantees applying for funding, with community need.

Incorporating an assessment of the local grassroots sector within these needs assessments will also support sites to understand the level of capacity building support grassroots organisations may require.

#### **4.4**

#### **Key finding 7: Delivering an effective onwards grants programme is resource intensive and requires a strong understanding of the make up, strengths and needs of the local grassroots sector**

Targeting funding effectively and delivering the right capacity building support requires a detailed understanding of the local grassroots landscape. This includes knowing the organisations and individuals working locally, their strengths and their support needs.

Consortium partners brought a solid level of understanding to the table at the start of the programme, due to their existing networks and experience of working locally. They have honed this understanding over the course of the MyEnds programme, enabling them to continue to develop and refine their approach to working with grassroots grantees or potential grantees. This is in keeping with the culture of ongoing reflection and learning which the MyEnds model seeks to promote. For example, THICN waited until year two of the programme to award their onwards grants, seeking to build understanding and engagement with the grassroots sector in the local area, and to gather community feedback on where funding should be directed.

Capacity building support has been particularly successful when sites have worked with grantees at their own pace, taking time to understand their future goals for their activities and organisations, and helping them to identify how to develop in order to achieve them. Given grantees are in early stages of their development, sites have found the demands of the capacity building role to be quite intense, requiring a significant portion of their own capacity. It has therefore not always been possible for sites to provide support to their full intent, alongside other programme demands.

#### 4.5 **Key finding 8: Onwards grants programmes have included four main types of capacity building support: training, organisational development, policy and process support, and help to access wider funding opportunities**

Sites have provided grantees with four main types of capacity building support:

- **Training** in response to needs identified by grantees, helping them to develop skills that they can apply to the delivery of their MyEnds funded activities and beyond. This has included leadership training and support with monitoring and evaluation.
- **Development of policies and processes** such as on health and safety and safeguarding. This both supports their ability to deliver their activities safely, and potentially increase community engagement as a result.
- **Organisational development**, for example helping grantees to strengthen their governance structures, set up an organisational bank account or set up as a CIC.
- **Identifying and engaging with wider funding opportunities.** Sites have identified wider funding opportunities that align with grantees' activities and encouraged them and supported them to apply, through application and interview guidance.



##### **Future focus: Support sites to understand and respond to demands of grassroots capacity building from an early stage**

In the first iteration of MyEnds, sites noted the significant capacity building needs of grassroots grantees and the high level of resource required to respond to these needs effectively. Future MyEnds sites could be supported to assess these needs at an early stage of their onwards grants programmes, and understand and allocate an appropriate level of resource to respond to them. The planned community needs assessments will contribute to a greater understanding, but further consultation may be needed with grantees or potential grantees once they are recruited.



##### **Case studies**

The rest of this report consists of three case studies which showcase some of the ways in which MyEnds sites have implemented onwards grants programmes. The case studies focus on:

1. Engaging young people in decision making mechanisms for issuing onwards grants funding in Haringey.

2. Supporting the sustainability of grantees through organisational and personal development, and strengthening their position among wider funding partners in Southwark.
3. Developing grantees' capacity and sustainability through a designated fund for organisational development in Newham.

## 5 Involving young people in decision making via a grant panel in Haringey



### Key findings

- In Haringey, Home Cooked have successfully involved young people in the design and planning of local activities through engaging them in their Community Fund Grant Panel. Their meaningful engagement was supported by: providing effective training; offering equal responsibility; creating a welcoming and safe environment for them to share their views; and sharing their feedback with unsuccessful applications for their activities' redesign, thus increasing their influence over future activities.
- This approach has contributed to positive outcomes for young people including an increased sense that their opinion is valued by decision makers; improved self confidence; and the development of skills supporting their education and employment.
- Young people's engagement in the panel has had a positive impact on grantee selection, including the development of activities and support that align with young people's needs, and the selection of more innovative activities for the local community.
- Recruiting young people to the panel remains a challenge, and young people have represented a minority compared to other panel members, which has limited their influence. Scheduling future panels at quieter times during the academic year could support young people to engage without feeling overwhelmed.



### Overview and purpose

Young people's engagement in Home Cooked's Community Fund Grant Panel, which awards Home Cooked's onwards grants funding. This aims to include young people's perspectives in the design and delivery of activities and support provided within the Home Cooked programme.



### Rationale

Home Cooked have engaged young people in their Community Fund Grant Panel, seeking to increase youth participation in decision making that shapes the Home Cooked programme and affects the local community in Tottenham Hale. A further aim was to involve young people with lived experience of serious youth violence, though in the event the young panel members did not have this experience.

Through their involvement, young people themselves wanted to make a positive difference in their community, learn new skills to support their education and employment, and meet new people.



### Development

Home Cooked developed the Community Fund Grant Panel to award the first round of funding from the Community Fund, however young people were not part of this first panel. Following feedback from community members that highlighted young people were missing from the panel, and in an effort to increase youth participation in the Home Cooked programme, young people were invited to apply for the panel for the second and third rounds of funding.



### Delivery

Home Cooked raised awareness of the panel opportunity through newsletters, social media, and their links with the Haringey Youth Advisory Board. Young people applied via a short application form which was assessed by Home Cooked staff. Staff then provided training to successful applicants, outlining Home Cooked principles, a code of conduct for the decision making process, and the assessment criteria.

Young people were given the same roles and responsibilities as other panel members. Each panel member assessed and scored a share of applications and discussed their decision with the rest of the panel, before coming to a final decision by consensus. They then provided feedback for each application.



### Outcomes

- Increased sense among young people that their opinion is valuable and valued by decision makers.
- Improved self confidence among young people.
- Young people's development of skills and experiences that support their education and employability.
- Improved knowledge and awareness among young people of services and activities in the area.
- Funding and development of activities aligning with young people's needs.
- Selection of innovative activities.

## 5.1 Relationship to the MyEnds model

### 5.1.1 Involving young people in design, planning and delivery

The panel represents an innovative way of supporting young people's contribution to plans and ideas for activities in the area. Young panel members were motivated to make this contribution and noted feeling a strong sense of responsibility to select the most appropriate grantees for their community. Young people's meaningful engagement in the panel was supported by:

- **Effective training.** Young people reported being well trained by Home Cooked staff. This helped them to fully understand the onwards grants giving process, what was being asked of them, and how to conduct themselves as panel members. This built their confidence in the role and allowed them to meaningfully participate alongside other panel members, who may have been more experienced.
- **Equal responsibility.** Young panel members and other panel members were each responsible for reviewing, scoring and presenting their own share of applications. This indicated that everyone's decisions were equally valuable.
- **A welcoming and safe environment.** Young people reported feeling supported and encouraged by Home Cooked staff and other panel members to share their views, reinforcing the idea that their opinion was valuable.
- **Sharing feedback to inform wider activities.** Young people offered feedback to unsuccessful applicants. Home Cooked staff reported that this went on to inform the redesign of their activities, with young people's perspectives in mind. This enabled young people's views to inform the development of activities beyond the grant award.

### 5.1.2 Supporting and building capacity in the grassroots sector

The skills gained by young panel members as a result of their training and experience have increased their capacity to contribute to future grant panels. Home Cooked staff have further enabled this by introducing young people to other organisations in the area who were looking for grant panel members.

### 5.1.3 Fostering innovative practice

Both Home Cooked staff and young panel members agreed that the presence of young people on the panel led to the selection of more locally informed and innovative activities, as young people tended to select less traditional activities than other panel members.

## 5.2 Contribution to young people's engagement and development

### *Increased sense that their opinion is valuable and valued by decision makers*

Young people reported an increased sense that their opinion was valuable and valued by decision makers. This was attributed to the support and reassurance shown by Home Cooked staff and other panel members, which helped them to overcome initial feelings of nervousness and express their views to the rest of the panel more confidently. Once they had done so, the subsequent respect their opinions were shown by the other panel members reinforced their sense of value.

### *Improved self confidence*

The support, reassurance and respect shown by Home Cooked staff and other panel members also contributed to increased self confidence among young panel members. Home Cooked staff highlighted that this was exemplified by young people's increased ability to express their views and contribute to panel discussions more freely as the sessions progressed. The experience of interacting with new people, such as other panel members, also supported this outcome, with young people reporting that they felt more confident socially, for example when introducing themselves to new people.

### *Developing skills and experiences that support education and employability*

Young people reported that joining the panel presented an opportunity for them to learn new skills. For example, having to assess applications and report and defend their decision to a group improved their critical thinking skills, communication skills, and ability to work with others effectively. They highlighted that they could apply these skills in educational settings when delivering presentations, and at other Home Cooked events, where they addressed senior members of statutory services such as the local council and police. Developing these skills also encouraged them to take up other similar panel opportunities, introduced to them by Home Cooked staff. They also felt that being able to demonstrate these experiences on their CVs could increase their employability.

### *Funding and development of activities aligning with young people's needs*

Both stakeholders and young people agreed that young panel members had a positive impact on grantee selection. Young people emphasised that they had a more realistic view of how activities or services may be received by other young people. They felt they encouraged the panel to select activities that young people would be interested in, and therefore more likely to engage with, and avoid choosing activities because other panel members felt they were the kinds of things young people 'should' be doing.

*"I always saw it from my perspective, would I like to do this? Would it help me?"*

Young Community Fund Grant Panel member

Young people also provided feedback on unsuccessful applications, allowing applicants to hear directly from their intended service users. They could then make changes to their activity or service to further align it with young people's needs and preferences before applying for later rounds of funding.

### *Selection of innovative activities*

Home Cooked staff and young people reported that young panel members offered a fresh perspective on activities and were willing to consider more innovative options, whereas some other panel members held relatively traditional views about local service provision. Young people indicated this was due to their curiosity about the potential positive impact of these activities for other young people and the local area.

## 5.3 Key learning



**Positive practice: Creating a welcoming and safe environment for young panel members.** Young people reported feeling supported and encouraged by the environment created by Home Cooked staff and other panel members, which underpinned their sense of value and their confidence to offer their opinions. In particular, Home Cooked staff were reassuring and offered gentle encouragement in response to young panel members' concerns around the burden of responsibility they felt about selecting activities for their community. The decision makers were also kept anonymous, helping young people to feel safe to freely offer their perspectives on different applicants.



**Positive practice: Sharing young people's feedback with unsuccessful applicants.** The practice of providing young people's feedback to unsuccessful applicants has allowed them to hear directly from their intended service users and instil corresponding changes to their activity to further align it with young people's needs. This has broadened the influence of young people's perspectives on the design, planning and delivery of future activities in the area, beyond the grant award.



**Challenge: Recruitment and engagement.** Recruiting young people to the panel remains a challenge. Across the three funding rounds, only three young people participated in the panel, meaning they represented a minority compared to other panel members. They reported this may have limited their influence over final decisions. Stakeholders reported that two young people dropped out of the panel towards the end of the term due to school pressures.

Organising panels during quieter academic periods may make it easier for young people to balance academic and panel commitments without feeling overburdened. Young people expressed that recruiting more young people would increase the diversity of views captured by the panel and could help further align selected activities with the needs of young people in the area.

*"We need more varying views. I don't speak for all the young people in the borough and their views would help."*

Young Community Grant Fund Panel member



**Future opportunity: Engaging young people with lived experience of serious youth violence.** None of the young people engaged so far in the Community Fund Grant Panel reported that they had lived experience of serious violence. Engaging young people with this experience may support the selection of activities aligning with their needs, interests and preferences. Home Cooked could potentially improve their recruitment of panel members with insight or lived experience of serious violence by engaging with the youth offending service or raising awareness of the opportunity via detached youth workers.

## 6 Promoting sustainability of grantees and the wider grassroots sector in Southwark



### Key findings

- In Southwark, Gamechangers has provided support to ensure the sustainability of grantees beyond the My Ends programme. Key to its success is the focus on both internal factors, such as organisational and personal development among grantees, and external factors, such as the funding context in Southwark.
- Prioritising grantees' sustainability from the outset of the onwards grants process was important. This enabled grantees to implement changes early on and embed them throughout the grant period in preparation for the conclusion of MyEnds. It also gave Gamechangers time to build a network of wider funders prepared to fund grassroots organisations, further supporting grantees' sustainability.
- The positioning of Gamechangers as a broker between grassroots organisations, the local authority and other external funders enabled them to advocate the strengths of grassroots organisations in the network and support the development of relationships between both groups. This led to an improved understanding of grassroots organisations' strengths amongst funders, thereby improving their access to funding.
- Gamechangers' approach has contributed to emerging systems change in Southwark. Gamechangers' advocacy for grassroots organisations has built the credibility of the grassroots sector locally, subsequently directing resource flows and influencing strategic norms in Southwark in their favour.



### Overview and purpose

Gamechangers is supporting the sustainability of the grassroots sector in Southwark through: a) providing capacity building support to grantees from its onwards grants programme; and b) building a network of trust and collaboration between grassroots organisations, the local authority and other funders. This seeks to equip grantees with the skills and resources they need to continue to provide their activities beyond their grant award. It also aims to improve understanding and recognition of the strengths of grassroots organisations in the local area, thereby strengthening the environment in which they are operating and supporting their longer term development.



### Rationale

The two pronged approach taken by Gamechangers recognises areas for development for grassroots organisations themselves, as well as the difficult context they face without MyEnds support. Gamechangers have therefore sought to address both internal factors within grantees' organisations, and external contextual factors that may inhibit their sustainability. More broadly, focusing on the sustainability of grassroots organisations aims to enable them to contribute to reducing serious violence in the longer term.



### Development

Gamechangers has focused on the sustainability of grassroots organisations since issuing their first round of grant funding. Their approach to support, outlined below, has remained constant throughout the programme.



### Delivery

When applying for a Gamechangers onwards grant, organisations undergo due diligence checks related to governance structure; financial management; safeguarding and health and safety policies; and risk management and mitigation. They are then supported to implement any changes required to meet the standard necessary for grant award.

Successful grantees then receive a generic training package alongside tailored personal and organisational development support, adapted to their individual needs. This may include support with finances, team leadership, or setting up as a C.I.C.

Simultaneously, Gamechangers has built relationships with other funders, enabling them to link grantees to wider funding streams. This has included advocating for local funders to increase the funding available for grassroots organisations; signposting grantees to funding pots; and supporting funding applications.



### Outcomes and mechanisms of systems change

#### Outcomes

- Grantees needs are heard and responded to.
- Improved ability to build lasting engagement with communities affected by violence.
- Emerging evidence of improved ability to deliver activities into the longer term.

#### Mechanisms of systems change

- Outcomes build credibility with community and wider system organisations and stakeholders.
- Practice, resource flows, culture and strategic norms all improve in favour of grassroots organisations.

## 6.1 Relationship to the MyEnds model

### 6.1.1 Strengthening trust and relationships, shared beliefs and goals

Gamechangers have advocated for and acted as a broker between grassroots organisations and other organisations in their network, including the local authority and other external funders. In doing so, they have increased other funders' trust that it is worthwhile investing in grassroots organisations because of their strong understanding and engagement of the local community and the impacts they can achieve, even if they may not be as developed as other organisations they have funded historically. Gamechangers are able to use the success of their own onwards grants programme as evidence of this.

Gamechangers' advocacy has also contributed to shared beliefs and goals in the network. Gamechangers have increased the local authority's awareness of the need for community based and community led activities, encouraging them to be more flexible with their intended outcomes and to adapt these to community need. In turn, grassroots organisations are well placed to respond to these community focused outcomes.

### 6.1.2 Increased funding and capacity for organisations traditionally excluded from mainstream funding or who may lack capacity to apply

Grantees reported that Gamechangers provided support that enabled them to increase their funding and capacity. They did this by tailoring support to each organisation and linking them to wider funding streams. Grantees reported that in comparison to other funders, Gamechangers' approach was adapted to them as smaller, newer organisations. This enabled them to meaningfully engage with the support and monitoring requirements without putting strain on delivery. As a result, they were able to develop their capacity to deliver and to engage with wider funding opportunities introduced to them by Gamechangers.

*"With other funders, we felt like we were under a microscope in terms of evaluation and reporting, and that created a strain on the organisation. With Gamechangers, I don't feel pressure or anxiety. They've created spaces for us to take steps forward... for example, we don't have a designated bid writer, so they've circulated opportunities alongside advice and comments to support our bids."*

Gamechangers grantee

### 6.1.3 Promoting key mechanisms of system change

The sustainability support has contributed to the following emerging aspects of systems change in Southwark:

- **Outcomes build credibility with community and wider system organisations and stakeholders.** The Gamechangers onwards grants programme has exemplified how, through appropriate organisational and personal development, grassroots organisations can be supported to achieve outcomes related to serious youth violence. These examples of outcomes

and promise, combined with Gamechangers' advocacy and brokerage role, have built the credibility of grassroots organisations and contributed to a change in the local system's attitude towards them.

*"This is what a lot of funders are focusing on - how do we reach the grassroots and those affected by our decisions."*

Gamechangers local stakeholder

- **Practice, resource flows, culture and strategic norms all improve** in favour of grassroots organisations. The increased credibility described above has contributed to changes to resource flows and strategic norms in Southwark, in favour of grassroots organisations. This is exemplified by changes to the local authority's funding strategy, which now promises a larger percentage of their community funding to go towards local grassroots organisations. Lead consortium partner Active Communities Network (ACN) and United St Saviour, a local place based funder, have also announced a £100,000 devolved grants and capacity building programme for grassroots groups in Southwark, building on the successes of Gamechangers' onwards grants programme.

## 6.2 Contribution to grantees' capacity, sustainability and ability to engage communities

In addition to outcomes achieved by grantees described below, the wider grassroots sector in Southwark may benefit from Gamechangers' advocacy and networking role. This has developed local funders' understanding of the strengths of grassroots organisations and how they might align with opportunities local funders have available, thereby increasing local funders' willingness to consider grassroots organisations as safe investments.

### *Grantees' needs are heard and responded to*

The flexible and bespoke nature of the support was highlighted by grantees as key, as it meant that their individual needs were heard and responded to. For example, grantees who had a clear understanding of their goals and the support they required to achieve them valued the time Gamechangers spent to listen to them. This meant Gamechangers could fully understand their needs and provide or signpost them to appropriate support, at their pace. Grantees who had less clarity on their goals and needs reported that Gamechangers helped them to identify the support they required through the initial due diligence process, and then implement identified changes through continued mentoring.

### *Improved ability to build lasting engagement with communities affected by violence*

Grantees reported that the sustainability support has enabled them to provide more consistent and higher quality activities in the community. Grantees noted how the consistency of support from Gamechangers has enabled them to provide more stability for their staff, thereby decreasing staff turnover and providing more consistency in the activities they deliver. In turn, this has enabled them to build

stronger, trusted relationships with beneficiaries. One grantee also noted that Gamechangers helped them to find a safe space for their activity and improve their safeguarding procedures, both of which supported increased feelings of safety among beneficiaries. These increased feelings of safety and trust have been supportive of lasting engagement within the community.

### *Emerging evidence of improved ability to deliver activities into the longer term*

Grantees reported that they have learnt skills that will help them to deliver activities into the longer term. They highlighted that support to link them in with other funding streams and complete funding applications had been crucial in securing longer term funding. For example, a grantee reported that Gamechangers highlighted potential funding sources relevant to their organisation, encouraged them to apply, and provided them with structured support to complete their application. Their application was then successful, enabling them to expand provision.

Grantees also reported that Gamechangers' support to develop their governance structures, including setting up as C.I.C., has been particularly useful. External funders have highlighted these as essential factors in attracting funding. These developments have therefore reduced grantees' dependence on Gamechangers' funding, increasing their potential to deliver their activities into the longer term.

## 6.3 Key learning



### **Positive practice: Heavily investing in relationships with grantees.**

Grantees reported that they felt that Gamechangers staff were genuinely invested in helping their organisations to succeed. Their presence at events held by grantees was repeatedly highlighted by grantees as evidence of this support. Grantees reported that their relationship did not feel transactional, and this put them at ease and made them more receptive to the support Gamechangers suggested.

*"They are a constant presence and I respect them a lot. We have put in the work, but they are really gamechangers."*

Gamechangers grantee



### **Positive practice: Choosing a well networked consortium leader.**

The positioning of Gamechangers between grassroots grantees, the local authority and other external funders was highlighted by stakeholders as being key to the success of the sustainability support. Gamechangers used the funding provided by MyEnds to effectively grow and develop the network of grassroots organisations in the area, with lead consortium partner ACN at the centre as consortium leader and the go to organisation for grassroots support. Gamechangers were then able to leverage this position, alongside their existing relationships in the area, to broker relationships between grassroots organisations, the local authority and other funders. This has included bringing grassroots organisations to meetings with the local authority. For grantees, being trusted by such a reputable consortium, and being seen to successfully deliver activities with the support of Gamechangers, may have encouraged other funders

to be willing to invest in them. For funders, ACN's knowledge of and relationships with the grassroots sector has helped them to direct funding to appropriate grassroots organisations to meet their intended outcomes.



**Positive practice: Prioritising sustainability from the outset.**

Gamechangers prioritised grantees' sustainability as soon as they applied for funding. This enabled changes to be implemented early on and embedded throughout the grant period in preparation for the conclusion of the MyEnds programme. This has enabled grantees to develop in a way that reduces their dependency on Gamechangers. Simultaneously, Gamechangers have built a network of wider funders prepared to fund grassroots organisations, further supporting grantees' independence and sustainability.



**Challenge: Reducing over reliance on Gamechangers.** A potential challenge for Gamechangers lies in sustainably developing these grassroots organisations in the limited time period of the MyEnds programme.

Some grantees reported that, while the support had enabled them to grow rapidly, they were nervous about operating without Gamechangers. This was evident from a grantee who highlighted that they have not yet hired staff with bid writing experience, and are still dependent on Gamechangers for support to submit funding bids.

*"What we have done is immense, words can't even explain, we have been moving so fast... we have ticked so many boxes, but we need more support."*

Gamechangers grantee



**Future opportunity: Developing a step-down model to reduce over reliance on support.**

A possible solution to the challenge identified above may be stepping down support gradually over the course of the grant period. This could involve grantees receiving more intensive training initially, gaining experience while they have some support in place, and then tapering away support to enable them to undertake tasks independently.

## 7 Promoting grantees' organisational development and sustainability in Newham



### Key findings

- In Newham, ACT-AS-1's organisational development fund is a designated pot of funding specifically for grantee organisational development and capacity building support. Alongside this, ACT-AS-1 staff and a paid local business mentor and former grantee provide further capacity building support. This aims to improve grantees' ability to deliver activities for the community and support their sustainability beyond MyEnds.
- Through an organisational health check meeting and consultation with grantees about their capacity building needs, ACT-AS-1 have supported grantees to achieve positive outcomes, including an increased focus on their strengths and areas for development; developing their governance structures; broadening their reach into new locations and participants; and improved skills and confidence to seek and secure funding.
- ACT-AS-1's recruitment of a former grantee with strong entrepreneurial skills has contributed to the accessibility, reliability and utility of the capacity building support on offer. Her background in offering culturally competent wellbeing support has also enabled her support grantees with cultural competency.
- ACT-AS-1 may benefit from increasing their own capacity to deliver organisational development and capacity building support to grantees. Recruiting a wider pool of former grantees as mentors may support with this.



### Overview and purpose

ACT-AS-1's organisational development fund is a pot of funding (£500 per grantee) specifically for grantee organisational development and capacity building support. Grantees of ACT-AS-1's onwards grants programme, the Neighbourhood Wallet, can apply for this in addition to their activity funding. Alongside this, ACT-AS-1 staff and a paid local business mentor and former grantee provide further capacity building support. This support offer aims to improve grantees' ability to deliver activities for the community and further their sustainability beyond MyEnds.



### Rationale

During previous rounds of grant funding, ACT-AS-1 staff highlighted that grantees lacked designated funding and infrastructure for organisational development and capacity building support. The organisational development fund sought to provide this for grantees.



### Development

ACT-AS-1 introduced the organisational development fund for successful applicants of the final round of the Neighbourhood Wallet. Previously, grantees had received more informal capacity building support from ACT-AS-1 staff.



### Delivery

All applicants to the final round of the Neighbourhood Wallet were made aware of the organisational development fund in the initial Neighbourhood Wallet advertisement. If successful grantees are interested in applying for the fund, an organisational health check meeting is arranged by ACT-AS-1 staff. This seeks to assess grantees' perception of their organisational 'health', asking them to rank themselves as 'planning', 'progressing' or 'mastering' tasks within the following seven categories: governance and finance; strategic planning; income generation; safeguarding; monitoring, evaluation and learning; communications; and community engagement. Grantees then note which tasks they most want support to focus on, and indicate their capacity to engage with support.

Following this, grantees are offered a one-to-one consultation with a local business mentor and former grantee. In these sessions, the mentor addresses grantees' motivations, challenges and visions for their organisations, and provides bespoke advice on how best to utilise support to address their needs. ACT-AS-1 staff then support grantees to finalise their application for the fund accordingly.

Grantees can use the fund to access support from ACT-AS-1 directly or through other organisations signposted by staff. Support from ACT-AS-1 includes advice on bid writing; implementing safeguarding policies and procedures; highlighting external funding opportunities; and further sessions with the business mentor. Externally, ACT-AS-1 has signposted grantees to organisations who can assist with their identified needs such as providing leadership training; mental health support to staff; and registering as a charity.



### Outcomes

- Focusing grantees on their strengths and areas for development.
- Development of grantees' organisations.
- Broadening reach into new locations and with new participants.
- Improved skills and confidence to deal with challenges in securing funding.

## 7.1 Relationship to the MyEnds model

*Increased funding and improved capacity for organisations traditionally excluded from mainstream funding or who may lack capacity to apply*

By offering a designated fund for organisational development and capacity building, ACT-AS-1 have supported grassroots organisations to identify and address issues that may have previously limited their capacity to apply for further funding. Examples include application skills and developing governance structures. This has contributed to their increased appeal to wider funders.

*Developing routes for community engagement and building on existing assets*

Through ACT-AS-1's recruitment of a former grantee and local business mentor to provide capacity building support, they are drawing on and further supporting the development of a local asset. Grantees and stakeholders highlighted the utility of the consultation sessions due to the business mentor's understanding and personal experience of the challenges facing grantees, as well as her extensive business experience and knowledge of local networks. Simultaneously, her involvement has furthered community engagement in the onwards grants process, contributing to it being locally informed.

*Cultural competence*

The former grantee and business mentor runs a wellbeing service for racially minoritised people in Newham. This background has enabled her to provide culturally competent support to other racially minoritised grantees, and similarly to support them to take a culturally competent approach in their own activities. For example, following an initial consultation with a grantee, she provided mental health training for staff working with racially minoritised young people. The grantee reported that this had upskilled their staff, improving their confidence to deal with mental health related challenges among their activity's beneficiaries, and contributing to an improvement in the access to and quality of their activity.

## 7.2 Contribution to grantees' development, capacity and sustainability

*Focusing grantees on their strengths and areas for development*

Grantees highlighted that the organisational health check and the consultation with the business mentor were particularly helpful in identifying their strengths and areas for development. Improved awareness in these areas has helped them to understand where to implement changes or seek support to respond to issues they may have previously neglected or been unaware of. For example, through this process, a grantee identified a need to develop team leadership and management skills. She subsequently attended leadership training, undertook a skills audit of her staff and offered a team training day.

*"They helped me to identify my strengths and weaknesses and what I need to improve upon."*

ACT-AS-1 Neighbourhood Wallet Grantee

### *Development of grantees' organisations*

Some grantees have developed their organisational structures as a result of the support from ACT-AS-1. For example, following an organisational health check meeting, a grantee highlighted that they required support to register as a charity. ACT-AS-1 staff were able to signpost them towards Compost (a team of community development professionals based in Newham), who supported them with this otherwise costly process for free. This kind of development may also be supportive of grantees' sustainability, helping them to appear more attractive to external funders when applying for other sources of funding.

### *Broadening reach into new locations and with new participants*

Grantees reported that the support has enabled them to expand their offer and deliver activities in a wider range of locations and with a wider range of participants. This was exemplified by a grantee who received support to update their safeguarding policy, enabling them to deliver interventions in local schools. Another grantee was signposted to an organisation that helped them develop their recruitment processes and recruit volunteers. With this support, they developed a work experience programme for young people and older volunteers, thereby broadening their reach and impact in the community.

### *Improved skills and confidence to deal with challenges in securing funding*

Grantees' heightened focus on areas for development included a drive to develop skills to help them secure funding, which ACT-AS-1 were able to support with. For example, ACT-AS-1 staff reported supporting a grantee to complete funding proposals and providing feedback on a mock presentation. The grantee was then able to improve the quality of their application and their confidence in applying, contributing to them successfully securing funding. Future support on website development and governance structure for grantees currently going through the application process for the organisational development fund may also increase their attractiveness to external funders.

*"We are not just giving out funds, we are helping grantees to develop where they go next."*

ACT-AS-1 local stakeholder

## **7.3 Key learning**



**Positive practice: Organisational health check tool.** The tool ACT-AS-1 have created to guide the initial organisational health check discussion is an innovative approach to identifying the needs and goals of grantees. The tool focuses on key factors a grassroots organisation may need to address in order to develop, bringing these to the attention of grantees at an early stage, even if they are not all factors they want to work on immediately. Having thought through their progress in relation to each of these factors, it asks them to prioritise them in order of importance, helping to guide the direction of support according to grantees' needs and interests. It also asks about current capacity, helping ACT-AS-1 to adapt their approach accordingly.



**Positive practice: Consultation sessions with a local business mentor and former Neighbourhood Wallet grantee.**

The recruitment of a former grantee and local business mentor to provide support was highlighted as positive practice by both grantees and stakeholders. The support provided helps grantees to consider their goals and ambitions and focus them on the key factors that they may need to address to achieve these, from the perspective of a fellow grassroots community member who has gone through the grant programme themselves. Grantees reported that the relevance of the mentor's experience meant their sessions were relatable, accessible and engaging.



**Challenge: Capacity of ACT-AS-1 staff.**

Grantees highlighted that they felt that ACT-AS-1 staff took time to understand their organisations and worked closely with them to identify the support that they needed. This was especially the case early on in the support. However, grantees also reported that challenges with staff capacity and turnover contributed to issues with communication and delays in implementing support. To make the most of their innovative approach to capacity building, ACT-AS-1 may wish to consider allocating more resource to providing support to grantees. This could help maintain momentum from the organisational health check and ensure staff are able to promptly support grantees with the needs identified.



**Future opportunity: Broadening the opportunities for business mentors.**

Given the success of the current business mentor and former grantee role, ACT-AS-1 may wish to recruit more former grantees as mentors. This could a) increase the capacity of the currently overstretched team; b) help maintain momentum from the health check process; and c) allow grantees more time to embed identified changes before the completion of the MyEnds programme. Depending on interest from former grantees, ACT-AS-1 could allow grantees to select a mentor whose skills and knowledge are best aligned to their organisation. This could further increase the relatability and relevance of support.



**Cordis**Bright Limited

23/24 Smithfield Street, London EC1A 9LF

<b>Telephone</b>	020 7330 9170
<b>Email</b>	<a href="mailto:info@cordisbright.co.uk">info@cordisbright.co.uk</a>
<b>Internet</b>	<a href="http://www.cordisbright.co.uk">www.cordisbright.co.uk</a>