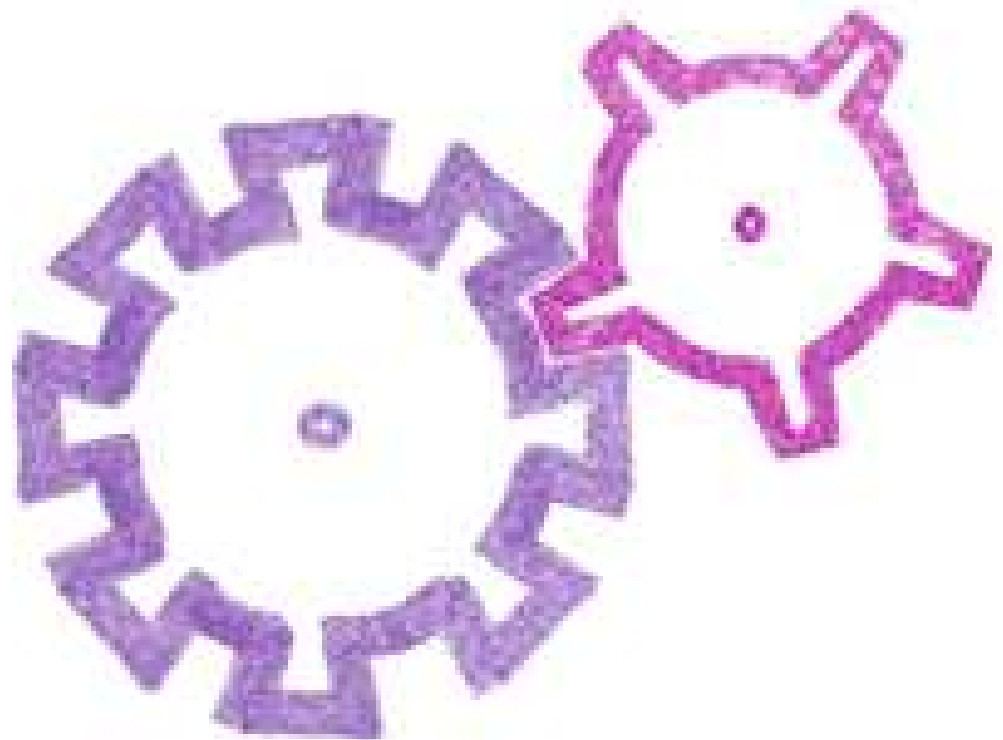




Modernisation Fund Grants Programme delivered  
by Capacitybuilders

Phase One Delivery Review

January 2010



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# 1 Executive Summary

Capacitybuilders is running the grants element of the *Real Help for Communities* Modernisation Fund. The delivery model for the initial phase of the programme has some **innovative characteristics**. Capacitybuilders **engaged directly** with front line services, it provided the first phase as **bursaries** rather than cash grants and used **Local Delivery Agents** to deliver a number of aspects of the programme, including connecting applicants to networks of local advisers.

This rapid review was commissioned to **consider its wider applicability** and to capture **lessons learned**. It was undertaken between October and December 2009 and precedes a fuller outcomes evaluation of the whole programme commissioned by the Office of the Third Sector.

Over 800 bodies were awarded a phase one bursary, which **met the target level for phase one**. At the time of writing over three quarters of bursary holders had received their advice and the overall conversion rate to phase two was running at 65%.

The feedback suggests:

- **Stakeholders in general welcome the model**, balancing local delivery and central co-ordination. While some noted that the devolved element might lead to inconsistency in approaches, many considered it appropriate that delivery should be **tailored to reflect local circumstances**;
- **Bursary holders** found the programme **beneficial** and commended its delivery;
- **Local Delivery Agents** were **positive overall**. All Local Delivery Agents surveyed believed the model should be re-used, albeit a majority would favour some amendments. Most felt their role was appropriately resourced and supported. **Further information/clarification** would in some areas be valued;
- **Advisers** were subject to a selection process in half the Local Delivery Agents surveyed. Availability was stretched in places but overall advisers were well engaged;
- Governance arrangements were **proportionate** and stakeholders were broadly content with levels of **communications**;
- While one bug caused general frustration, users generally **commended the online systems**. The timescales dictated that a **one-off application** was developed for phase one and this **limited back office automation**;
- In terms of additional support, few of the stakeholders consulted had utilised the **Cass Business School self assessment** tool, however those using it found it helpful. Positive feedback was received from those who attended the **bassac workshops**, but many interviewed had expected a different focus to the sessions;
- Many stakeholders found the **timescales** challenging and felt a wider range of organisations would benefit from the support offered.

Overall the model has proved an effective vehicle for the delivery of phase one of the programme and stakeholder feedback suggests it would be a **viable option** in response to broadly similar requirements.

## 2 Background and objectives

### 2.1 The Modernisation Fund Grants Programme

In Spring 2009, the Office of the Third Sector (OTS) launched *Real Help for Communities: Volunteers, Charities and Social Enterprises*, an action plan aimed at providing support to third sector organisations through the current economic downturn.

One of the elements of the action plan was the establishment of a £16.5m 'Modernisation Fund' aimed at promoting merger, collaboration and restructuring to enhance the resilience of the sector. This fund provides support in two main ways, through bursaries and grants; and interest-free loans.

Capacitybuilders is running the grants element of the Modernisation Fund: providing bursaries and grants to help organisations to explore the benefits of collaboration and merger and to pay for some further support.

Phase one of the programme – '*know your needs*' - offered £1,000 bursaries enabling third sector organisations to receive support in identifying options to improve their resilience, including collaboration and merger.

### 2.2 Review objectives

Capacitybuilders has commissioned Grant Thornton to carry out a rapid and light touch review of delivery of phase one. The delivery model has some innovative characteristics, which may prove helpful in the delivery of future programmes. The objectives of the delivery review are to:

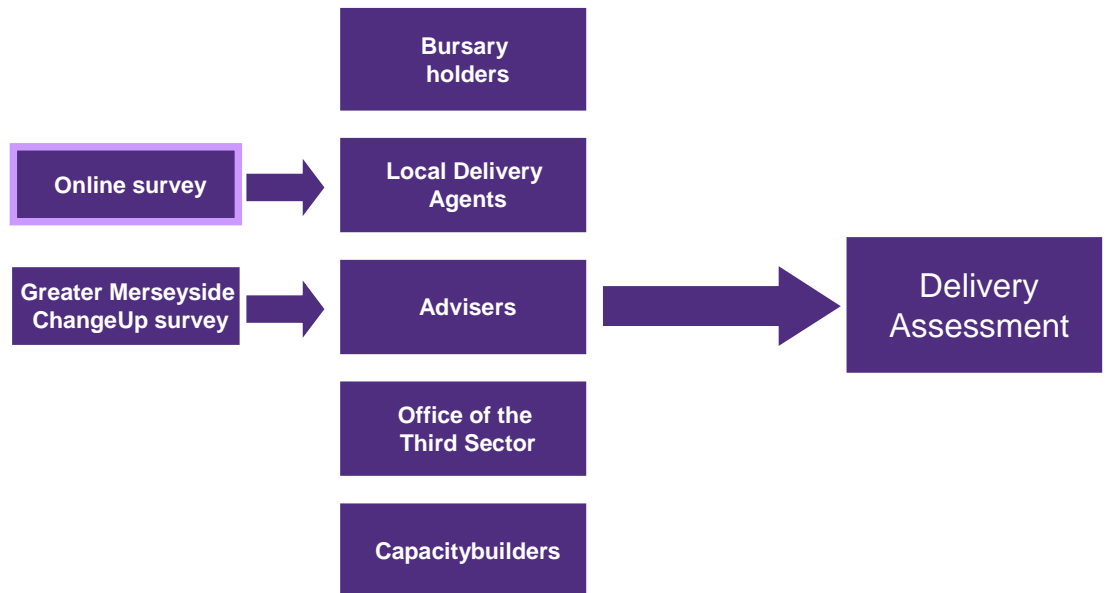
- document the key features of the delivery model and project approach sufficiently for their wider applicability to be assessed;
- capture the perspectives of key stakeholders - commissioners, delivery agents, advisers and service recipients - in order to assess the approach;
- learn lessons in terms of the wider applicability of the approach;
- communicate findings to the wider stakeholder community to foster a sense of transparency and co-development of future initiatives.

This review does not constitute an independent assessment of the execution and outcomes of the programme. Rather, it aims to capture and communicate key learning at the end of this phase. We understand that an independent evaluation of the programme as a whole will be carried out in due course.

## 3 Review approach

### 3.1 Approach

The delivery review was conducted in October - December 2009, following the completion of the majority of the phase one activities. It was conducted primarily by interviews and workshops, supplemented by an online survey and informed by a local survey of advisers undertaken by one delivery agent.



While the online survey was sent to all Local Delivery Agents, we interviewed only a small sample of bursary holders and advisers. The feedback captured appeared representative when set in the context of other comments, but we have not polled the whole cohort.

### 3.2 Stakeholders

We are grateful to all of the stakeholders who gave up their time to contribute to this review. The majority of Local Delivery Agents attended the de-briefing sessions or completed the online survey. In addition to those listed below, a number of individuals fed back their experiences to Capacitybuilders colleagues and Local Delivery Agents.

Name	Organisation
Bob Green	Stonewall Housing
Hilary Simon	Southwark Pensioners Centre
Camille Ade-John	Contact Family Centre
Wendy Grafton	Cornerstone Trust
George Courtice	Northumberland CVS
Martin Preston	ChangeUp Merseyside
Alex Peel	Bradford CVS
Kate Hazlewood	Digbeth Trust
Antony Bewick-Smith	Ealing CVS
Liz Reynolds	Stafford CVS
Greg Cox	Adviser
Ian Beever	Adviser
Eric Appleby	Adviser
Carole Stewart	Adviser
Dr Bette Baldwin	Adviser
Lindsey Bromwell	OTS
Matt Leach	Capacitybuilders
Liz Daw	Capacitybuilders
Kally Barot	Capacitybuilders
Richard Jenkins	Capacitybuilders

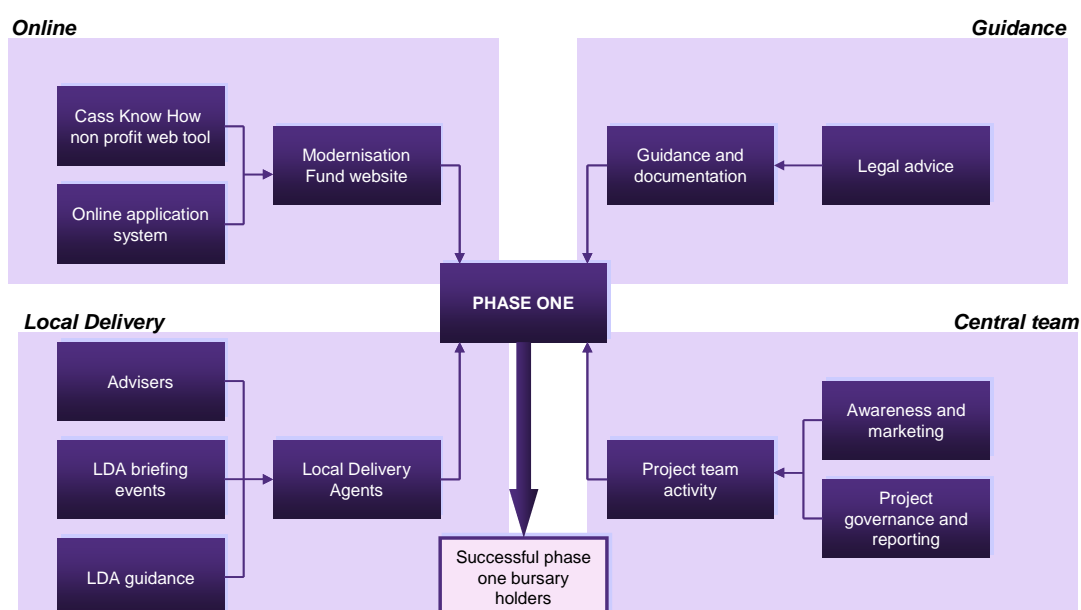
## 4 Modernisation Fund Grants Programme - phase one delivery

### 4.1 Phase one delivery

The programme was rapidly developed during Spring 2009 to ensure that funds could be distributed during the 2009-10 financial year. The programme was unusual in that it involved Capacitybuilders **engaging directly** with front line services through the applications process (and also via phase two grants).

A key feature of phase one was the provision of **bursaries** rather than cash grants - front line organisations were awarded an entitlement to receive advice up to the value of £1,000, which was procured and paid for elsewhere. The delivery structure for phase one had four main elements:

- **devolved local delivery**, built around local agents supporting bursary holders and connecting them to a network of advisers around that locality. It was this devolved structure when combined with the bursary funding that gave the model its distinctive characteristics;
- **an online focus**, comprising information, applications system and self-assessment tool;
- supporting **guidance and documentation**, in part reflecting legal advice;
- a **central team** providing project management, marketing and helpline support.



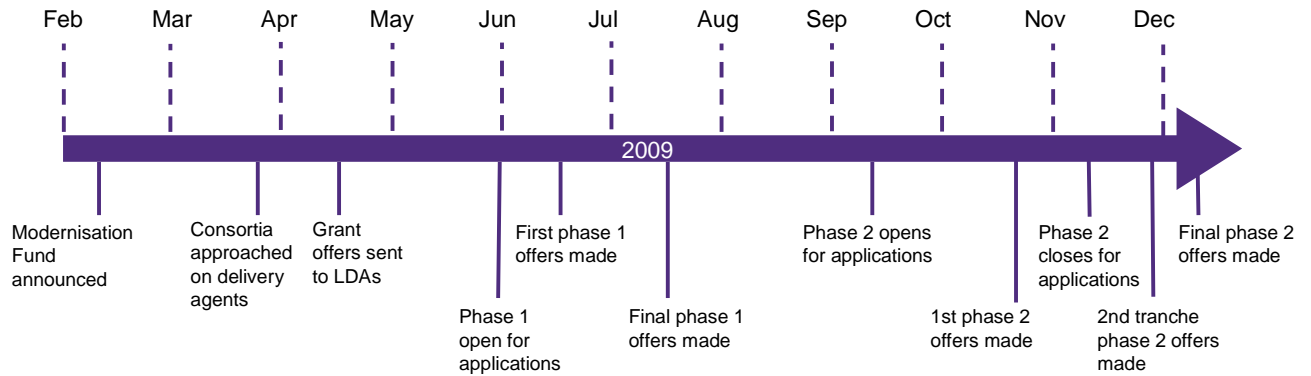
The key elements of the programme are described briefly in the table below:

<b>Online</b>	
<b>Modernisation Fund website</b>	The website provided a focal point for the programme including provision of information about the fund, access to the online application, Frequently Asked Questions, specific information for bursary holders, Local Delivery Agents and advisers and signposts to further relevant information/sources of support.
<b>Cass Know How non profit web tool</b>	An online tool developed by Cass Business School to assist organisations to self-assess their performance in a number of key areas. Online access made the tool available to all.
<b>Online application system</b>	The application for phase one was a fully online system (although a telephone helpdesk was available for support). The application form was brief, reflecting the size of the bursaries.
<b>Local Delivery</b>	
<b>Local Delivery Agents</b>	48 organisations across the country that managed the delivery of the programme in their locality. Responsibilities included: offering a workshop for potential bursary holders, marketing the programme in their area, preparing a list of potential advisers, verifying the information provided by bursary holders, maintaining records of activity of bursary holders e.g. selecting an adviser and receiving advice and paying advisers.
<b>Advisers</b>	Provided support (generally two days) to bursary holders on a range of issues including whether merger or collaboration may be right for them.
<b>Local Delivery Agent briefing events</b>	Events held in Birmingham and London to brief Local Delivery Agents on the programme and expectations of them. They provided an opportunity for Local Delivery Agents to share ideas and ask questions.
<b>Local Delivery Agent guidance</b>	Guidance prepared for Local Delivery Agents regarding the requirements of them in delivering the programme on behalf of Capacitybuilders.

<b>Guidance</b>	
<b>Guidance and documentation</b>	Further guidance and support developed by Capacitybuilders/NCVO for those engaged with the programme to ensure consistency.
<b>Legal advice</b>	Legal advice was sought on a number of matters including the provision of a standard set of terms and conditions between Local Delivery Agents and advisers.
<b>Core team</b>	
<b>Project team activity</b>	Capacitybuilders set up a project team to manage and monitor the progress of the project. The team brought together various specialisms and met weekly.
<b>Awareness and marketing</b>	<p>The marketing of the programme and communication with stakeholders were key to the success of the programme. A workstream within the project team focused on this area.</p> <p>A helpline was also provided to support the applications process.</p>
<b>Project governance and reporting</b>	Project governance arrangements were put in place, which included the project team reporting to OTS on a regular basis.
<b>Bursary holders</b>	<p>Successful applicants for phase one of the programme had access to a £1,000 bursary - to be used in return for time with an adviser selected through the Local Delivery Agent.</p> <p>Phase one bursary holders who took up the bursary were eligible to apply for a phase two grant.</p>

## 4.2 Timetable

The programme timeline was as follows:



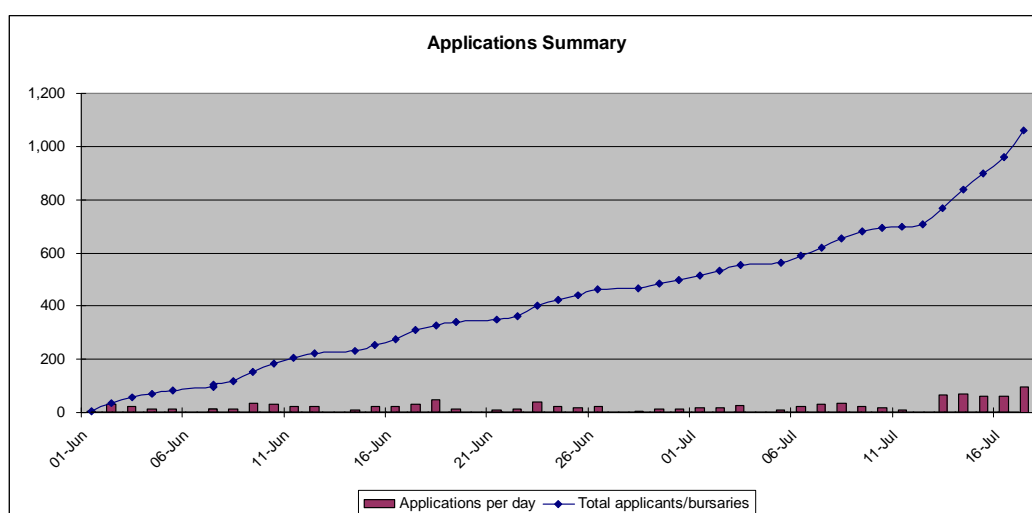
As illustrated the programme was rapidly developed, with the initial announcement taking place in February 2009 and phase one opening for applications on 1 June 2009. During this time the programme was scoped, developed and marketed. Comments on the impact of the timetable on the programme can be found on page 23.

## 5 Outputs from Phase One

### 5.1 Number of applications

Over 1,000 applications were received and passed to Local Delivery Agents. Of these over 800 organisations were awarded a bursary, which met the target level for this phase. The attrition rate was due to a combination of verification issues and withdrawals.

The profile of applications over time is set out below. A fairly constant number of applications were received throughout the application window, with a slight peak in demand towards the end of the period. As at 11 January 2010, 775 bursary holders had received their advice.



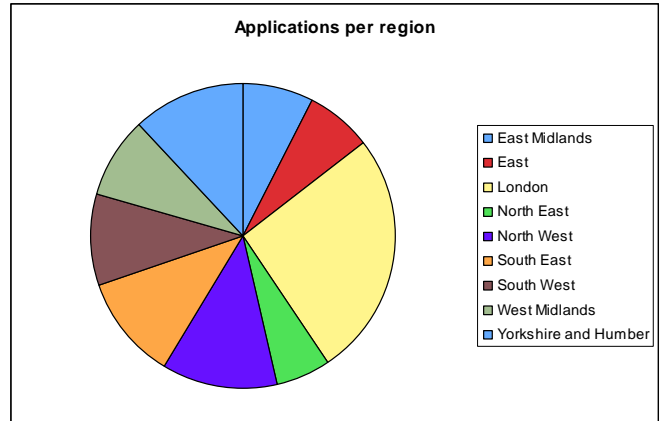
### 5.2 Conversion to phase two

Approximately 75% of those eligible to apply for phase two did so and in the region of 65% of those eligible were offered a grant. This meant that 521 grants of up to £10,000 were made to bursary holders following completion of phase one of the programme and a satisfactory phase two application.

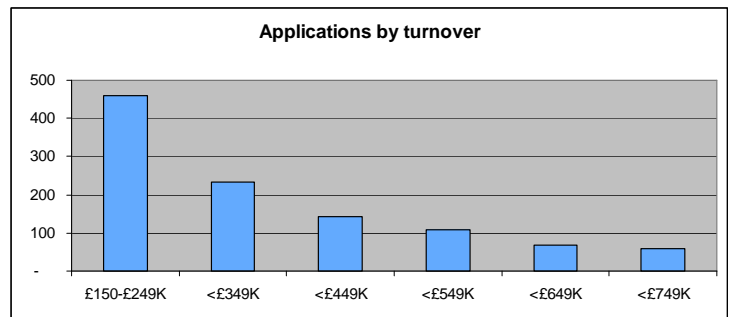
### 5.3 Detailed statistics

The spread of applicants by region, turnover and beneficial group are set out below.

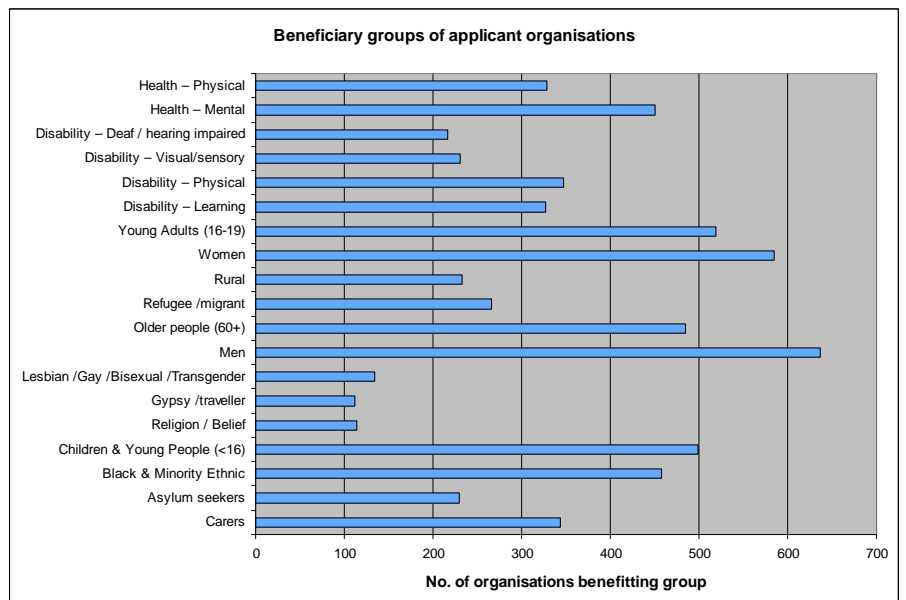
The number of applicants for phase one from each region are as illustrated. The difference in numbers of applications is to be expected given the disparity in population between regions.



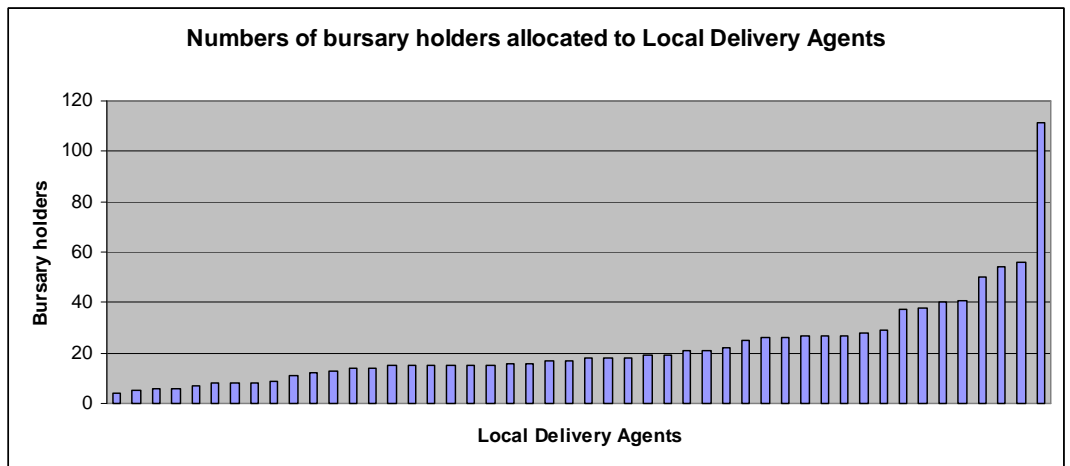
The turnover of the organisations applying for phase one varied. It should be noted that the number of potential applicants increases sharply as the turnover decreases, reflecting the prevalence of smaller organisations.



The applicant organisations reflected a wide range of beneficiary groups, as illustrated.



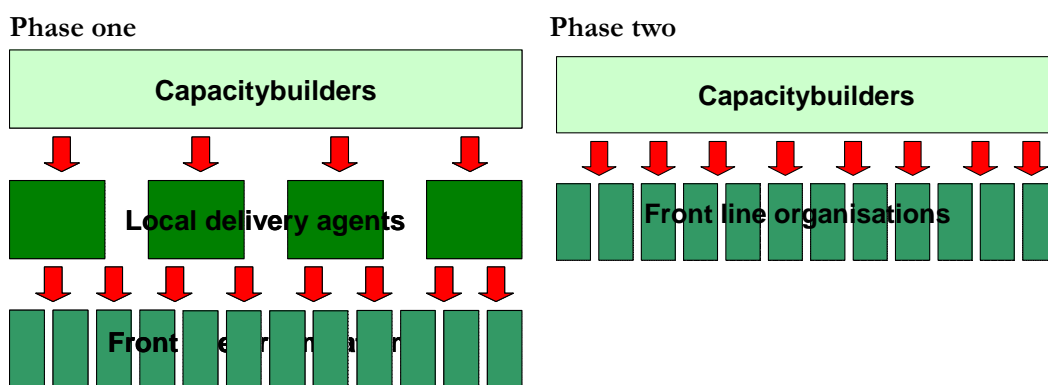
Local Delivery Agents were initially given an indication that they should expect in the region of 25 bursary holders each. However, since the areas covered by Local Delivery Agents followed geography rather than population the spread of numbers of bursary holders was significant. The range of bursary holders allocated to a Local Delivery Agents was 4 to 111. The range of allocations are illustrated in the graph below. This information would enable any future programme to better profile the likely uptake across regions. Local Delivery Agents would therefore be more easily able to prepare appropriate levels of resource.



## 6 Overall Delivery Model

### 6.1 The delivery model

A key feature of the delivery model was the use of Local Delivery Agents to deliver aspects of the programme in each region. The structure for delivery of phases one and two of the programme is set out below.



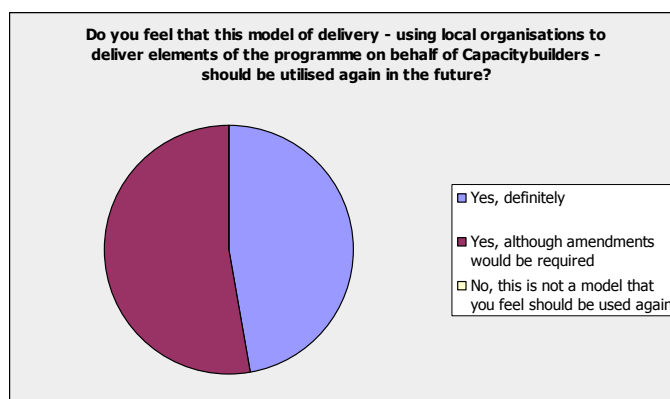
### 6.2 Overall feedback on the model

Overall, **stakeholders considered the model effective**, commending the use of local organisations to deliver key elements with a central team shaping and co-ordinating the programme.

While some noted that the devolved structure might lead to some inconsistency in approaches, many considered it appropriate that delivery should be tailored to reflect local circumstances.

### 6.3 Local Delivery Agent feedback

Feedback from Local Delivery Agents was **generally positive** about the model. As illustrated all respondents to the survey felt that the model should be re-used, albeit some respondents felt amendments would be required.



## 7 Bursary holders

### 7.1 Perception of overall programme relevance

Bursary holders were generally **very positive about the programme** and welcomed the bursary approach - it avoided each bursary holder carrying out a selection process and, for those using a new consultant, they provided a "fresh pair of eyes" on the organisation.

Bursary holders generally felt that collaboration and merger were **important issues**, particularly given funding pressures. Those contacted welcomed the opportunity to access funding to enable this exploration to begin or continue.

### 7.2 Perception of Local Delivery Agents

The majority of bursary holders were **very positive** about their **Local Delivery Agent** - they were particularly appreciative of regular communications and prompting. However, a few commented that staff were difficult to get hold of (particularly where a part-time worker was the contact) and wanted more flexibility, for example in adding advisers to the list.

### 7.3 Perception of advisers and advice

Various feedback was provided by bursary holders on their experience of working with advisers:

- Bursary holders acknowledged the benefits of using **local advisers**, particularly in relation to gaining the maximum time from the advice;
- There were some issues experienced regarding the **selection of advisers**, particularly from those making their choices later when advisers were booked;
- The programme provided an opportunity to access **advice they would be unlikely to be able to pay for**. It would not necessarily be prioritised to pay for support for these strategic discussions;
- The **amount of time provided by advisers** varied quite significantly, with most bursary holders contacted feeling that they received at least the two days specified. Some problems arose when more than one organisation commissioned the same adviser - it was queried whether they each received the appropriate amount of advice.

### 7.4 Other views

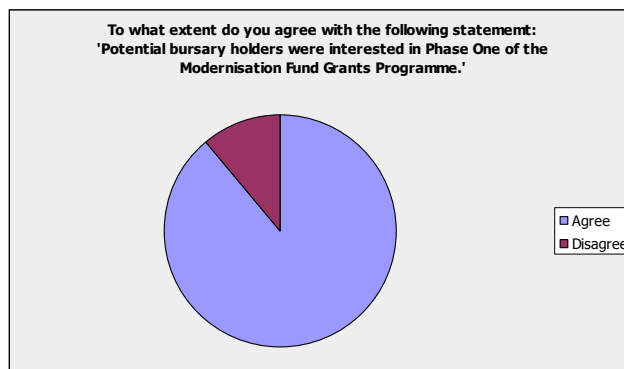
The phase one **application form** was felt to be user friendly and quick to complete. Bursary holders found the verification process straightforward. The **online approach** was welcomed.

The **timescales** were felt to be tight, particularly given the summer break. However all bursary holders contacted (recognising that this was a limited sample) had managed to complete their advice within the given timescales. The timescales were a particular issue for organisations at the smaller end of the threshold, where one member of staff may have been involved in the application and advice.

## 8 Local Delivery Agents

### 8.1 Local Delivery Agents perception of overall programme relevance

The overall shape and aims of the programme were generally welcomed by the sector. As this graph illustrates, the vast majority of Local Delivery Agents felt that **potential bursary holders were interested** in programme. The fact that the target level of bursaries were awarded indicates that there was interest in the programme.



### 8.2 Selection and role of Local Delivery Agents

A lead body in each region was asked to work with consortia to identify the Local Delivery Agent. In some areas, there was more than one organisation keen to take on the role and the consortia had negotiations to determine the most appropriate body. In other areas there was limited interest in taking on the role (sometimes because bodies wished to offer advice to bursary holders, which would have been in conflict with the Local Delivery Agent role). In these circumstances, Regional Managers were able to offer assistance - particularly on building on relationships that were already in existence.

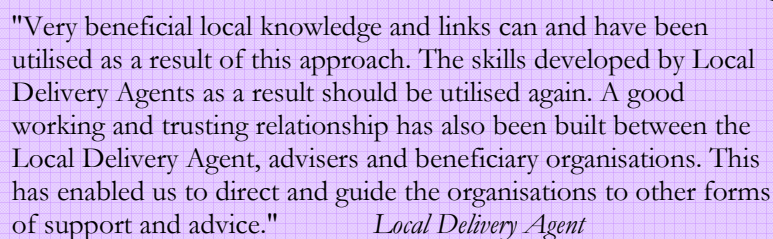
Some Regional Managers felt that taking a **more active role in the selection** of Local Delivery Agents may have been helpful.

### 8.3 Overall feedback from Local Delivery Agents

A range of feedback was provided by Local Delivery Agents, as set out below.

- Local Delivery Agents welcomed the **opportunity to engage** with a broad range of front line organisations.
- There was a **risk of inconsistencies in the decisions** made by each Local Delivery Agent. The central management by Capacitybuilders mitigated this risk although some variations were noted, for instance: at verification the rigour of the test around providing services within the criteria, the process for selecting advisers, and the level of information available about those advisers and willingness to add advisers to the list.
- Local Delivery Agents were in some cases unclear on **whether elements of the programme were mandatory**, for example the legal agreement.
- **Verification** presented issues for some Local Delivery Agents, particularly where there was a lack of clarity on whether the organisation met the requirements regarding services provided. This was particularly a challenge when many organisations have very broad objects.

- Comments were received regarding taking care with **version numbering** of revised documentation/guidance.
- **Changes to deadlines** for phase one (providing more time to complete the work with advisers) received mixed responses.
- Local Delivery Agents that met with bursary holders **face to face** reported that this was helpful - particularly for those that were not eligible since they could be pointed to alternative sources of support.
- **Resources available on the website** were generally felt to be helpful - a few Local Delivery Agents commented that more templates such as letters and standard forms would have been of use.
- Local Delivery Agents were not given comprehensive guidance on **keeping records** although some guidance was provided at a fairly late stage. Local Delivery Agents were in a position to develop the most appropriate tools and use their pre-existing systems where appropriate, but it may have led to some inconsistencies.
- A wider benefit of the programme to Local Delivery Agents was the compilation of a **list of advisers** that may be used on other projects - some Local Delivery Agents commented on their intention to use this list on an ongoing basis.
- The programme put organisations in touch (or back in touch) with **third sector infrastructure organisations** - it was particularly noted that the programme presented an opportunity to build relationships with some larger organisations.
- In a few cases, it was felt that bursary holders may have **scrutinised the work** of advisers more closely had they been paying for the advice directly.
- Local Delivery Agents commented they would have found more **information on phase two** of the programme helpful since organisations looked to them for advice on next steps.



"Very beneficial local knowledge and links can and have been utilised as a result of this approach. The skills developed by Local Delivery Agents as a result should be utilised again. A good working and trusting relationship has also been built between the Local Delivery Agent, advisers and beneficiary organisations. This has enabled us to direct and guide the organisations to other forms of support and advice."  
*Local Delivery Agent*

### 8.4 Funding for Local Delivery Agents

Funding to local delivery agents consisted of £4,000 initial funding for set up and events and £150 per bursary awarded.

- Over half of Local Delivery Agents responding to the online survey reported that the **funding was sufficient** to cover costs of administering the programme.



- Those that suggested additional funding would have been necessary to cover costs generally indicated that a higher figure per bursary would have been helpful rather than a higher initial payment. Some commented that they felt the initial payment was generous.

### 8.5 Communications

Communications with Local Delivery Agents were handled through multiple channels - the availability of the project team and particularly a **single point of contact** for Regional Managers was welcomed and helped to ensure consistency. Briefing and de-briefing sessions for Local Delivery Agents were welcomed.

### 8.6 Verification visits

Following the completion of phase one of the programme, Capacitybuilders Regional Managers visited each Local Delivery Agent. At the time of writing, 35 visits had been undertaken. Feedback from the visits was that Local Delivery Agents had maintained a high standard of record keeping. They had found the Modernisation Fund to be a valuable programme and would wish to be involved again were a similar programme to be run in future.

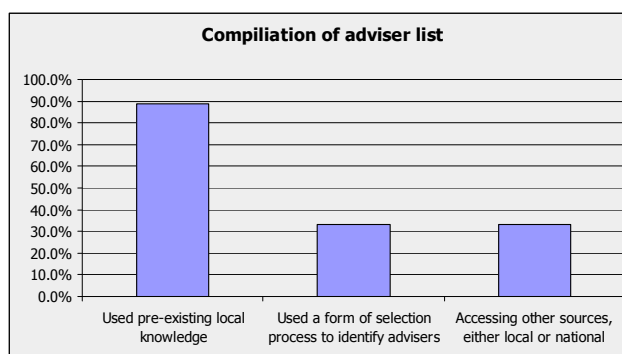
A key part of the verification visit involved Regional Managers reviewing a sample of bursary holder files. The files were found to be in good order, containing records of checks of the memorandum of association and registered charity number and details of selection of advisers.

## 9 Advisers

### 9.1 Identification of advisers

Local Delivery Agents were required to develop a list of at least seven advisers from which bursary holders in their area could select.

A **range of methods** were used to select advisers. The survey suggested that about a third of Local Delivery Agents used a form of selection process.



Various methods were used to distribute information about advisers to bursary holders, such as summarising skills in a single document or forwarding all applications to each bursary holder.

### 9.2 Allocation of advisers

The feedback suggested that:

- There were several examples of bursary holders who intended to collaborate **selecting the same adviser so that their advice could be pooled**. At least one Local Delivery Agent specified that each bursary holder had to spend some time individually with the adviser to ensure that the advice was specific to their organisation;
- There was a perception that there **were not enough advisers in some areas** and some advisers were reportedly turning down work (although this may have been that they were particularly popular and others had capacity).

### 9.3 Feedback from advisers

Feedback from advisers is set out below.

- The **guidance** produced was extremely helpful but it would have been useful to share this with bursary holders at the outset so that they were clear on expectations.
- **Timescales** were an issue for a large number of advisers. Particular problems experienced were organisations being slow to make initial contact and the arranging of meetings during the holiday period.
- Several advisers commented that bursary holders contacted them at a fairly **late stage**, which made meeting deadlines challenging.
- **Advisers that worked with more than one Local Delivery Agent** reported there were different approaches. For example, some provided regular contact and updates

whereas others were less involved. One adviser reported that the Local Delivery Agent booked the adviser appointments - this was felt to be bureaucratic and time consuming.

- Seven of those responding to the Merseyside ChangeUp survey and various advisers that we contacted commented that they spent **more than two days** on the work.
- The majority of advisers contacted welcomed the model of delivery and would be **keen to get involved in similar programmes** in the future.

## 10 Governance and project management

The programme had a clearly defined governance structure which included:

- A **project team**, which met weekly and led the day to day work of the programme. The project team approach and in particular regular meetings were welcomed. They provided a sense of ownership and focus for activity within Capacitybuilders;
- A **project executive**, which also met weekly for the design and initial delivery of the programme. The project executive conducted regular risk reviews and was the formal decision making forum for the project;
- Regular **briefings to OTS** by the Senior Responsible Officer/Programme Director. OTS felt that their relatively high level of engagement was appropriate given the high profile nature of the Modernisation Fund programme;
- Engagement of the **Capacitybuilders Board** and **Audit and Risk Committee** at appropriate points. It was helpful to engage audit at an early stage to ensure that they were comfortable with processes being used.

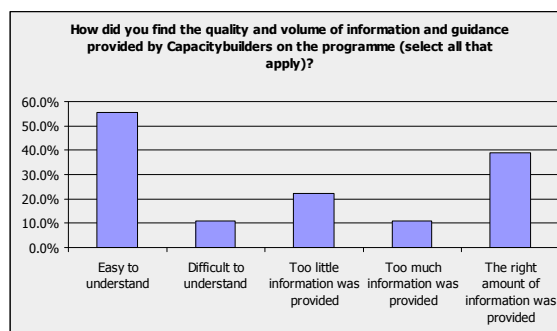
In terms of informal structures, the relationships already held by Regional Managers were beneficial although clarity regarding roles/importance of regular contact was important.

Overall the governance and project management appear to have worked well and were proportionate to the degree of challenge faced by the project.

# 11 Communication and marketing

## 11.1 Overall views

Feedback on the communications and marketing of the programme has been **extremely positive**. Although Regional Managers expressed some concerns regarding the frequency of contact, Local Delivery Agents found the communication to be helpful.



## 11.2 Specific aspects

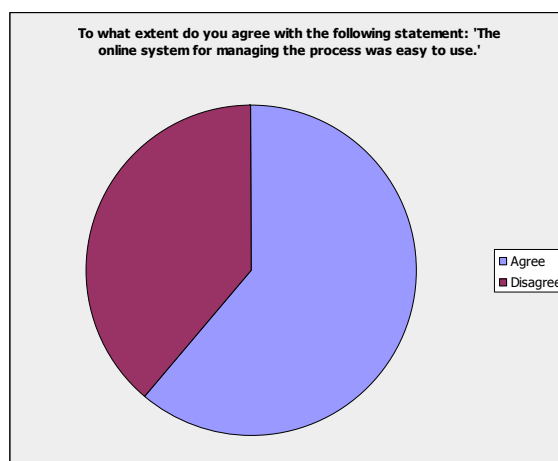
- The **Local Delivery Agent briefings** towards the beginning of the programme were welcomed as a useful mechanism for sharing information.
- **Email communications** were welcomed but messages should be summarised in the first few lines.
- Local Delivery Agents that contacted the **helpline** found the support effective. At least one commented that they would have called more often if the regular email correspondence had not been provided.
- Several Local Delivery Agents commented that they would have found **more information about phase two** helpful and found the lack of direct information to Local Delivery Agents on the second phase of the programme frustrating.
- There were over 26,000 unique visitors to the Modernisation Fund website. Local Delivery Agents found the **information provided on the website** helpful - particularly the ability to find up to date information and documentation to send on to bursary holders and advisers.
- **Consistency and transparency of information** – in terms of circulation, a number of stakeholders commented that it would be helpful to ensure that, as far as possible, all information was copied to all stakeholders and appropriately signposted.
- Some interviewees were confused by the **two parts of the Modernisation Fund** delivered by Capacitybuilders and Futurebuilders. Further clarification of the differences would have been appreciated by some.

## 12 Systems including the online application

### 12.1 Online system

The **simplicity** of the phase one online system was welcomed by bursary holders (the form was felt to be proportionate to the level of award). One described it as "fabulous" with the ease of completion encouraging the organisation to apply.

Local Delivery Agents generally found the system easy to navigate, two-thirds of survey applicants found the system easy to use and it was commented that the system meant Local Delivery Agents "felt in control". However there were some pros and cons, some of which are noted below.



*Difficult to scroll up and down... you needed to use two separate scrolling bars in two different frames to get to where you wanted*

*There was... no way to reflect a withdrawn application*

*System always available*

*Form was hard to manoeuvre round i.e. couldn't see what project on when moved around the form.*

*Saved having to create own method of monitoring status*

### 12.2 Back office systems

Feedback has been received that there was an emphasis on the front rather than back end of the phase one system, which led to additional work for the central team. The speed with which the programme had to be initiated led to additional cost for the development of the phase one system.

## 13 Additional resources provided

### **13.1 Cass Know-How Non-Profit tool**

The majority of those contacted had not utilised the **Cass Know-How Non-Profit** tool, however one adviser used the Cass tool with each of his four bursary holders as a part of the work. Those that had utilised the tool found it helpful.

### **13.2 bassac workshops**

185 people attended the **workshops run by bassac**. Some very positive feedback was received, with 91 participants stating that the workshops were 'very useful'. However, some comments were received regarding expectations that the sessions would concentrate more on the phase two application process.

### **13.3 Other support**

The **links to further support** provided on the website were felt to be helpful - to advisers, Local Delivery Agents and bursary holders.

## 14 Conclusions

### 14.1 Overall themes

In addition to the specific points above, two broader themes emerged from the review.

#### Timetable

Many stakeholders felt that the programme was rushed and would have preferred longer periods to carry out activities. It was felt that this impacted at a number of points, for instance:

- some of the documentation about the programme was updated and changed;
- the timescales available for bursary holders were felt to be too restrictive for some, particularly the time given for organisations to receive their advice (although these timescales were extended from the original deadline given, on which there were mixed views);
- the compressed timescales caused additional cost, for example in development of the IT system.

#### Threshold

Significant feedback was received on the threshold for the programme - a number of stakeholders felt that the threshold should have been lower than £150,000 turnover per annum. If such bodies had displayed a similar level of demand to larger organisations, the programme would have been oversubscribed and some sifting criteria or random allocation would have been required. This could have resulted in large number of organisations making unsuccessful applications. There were specific comments from Local Delivery Agents regarding the impact that the threshold may have had on organisations in rural areas, which may be more likely to have lower turnover.

### 14.2 Conclusions

#### Programme objectives

It is too early to assess outcomes, which will be addressed in the wider evaluation of the Modernisation Programme in the round. In terms of mergers and collaboration, the picture is complicated by the other strands of the wider programme. With these caveats, many of those interviewed suggested that the support offered was relevant and constructive.

#### Phase one delivery model

Almost all of those consulted were broadly positive about the model:

- it provided the right balance of central shaping and local tailoring;
- the bursary approach gave front line organisations choice without burdening them with procurement;
- the Local Delivery Agent/adviser networks were beneficial in their own right as well as supporting this specific purpose;
- it enabled delivery to budget and a challenging timetable.

In learning from the approach:

- slightly longer lead and delivery times would be desirable if possible. Equally, less time is required to initiate and implement the model if used again;
- further clarity of guidance in specific areas would help. This would include greater specification on the expectations of those engaged in delivering the programme at the outset.

Overall, the feedback suggests that model seems a viable approach that might be deployed to meet other delivery requirements.



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