

## Comic Relief #ShiftThePower Scotland intermediary funding partner Corra Foundation - Lived Experience Panel Reflection June 2021

### Background

Corra Foundation as intermediary funding partner for Comic Relief committed to finding meaningful ways to progress Comic Relief's vision of shifting the power. As part of Corra's approach to this a direct/lived experience decision-making panel was set-up to approve the recommendations for the Scotland-wide fund.

The panel was made up of representatives who had experience of at least one of Comic Relief's themes. Corra contacted people through their existing networks. Eight people confirmed their interest, unfortunately one person was unable to attend due to personal circumstances. Each person was emailed or telephoned as part of the process prior to involvement. They were provided with an outline of what the panel was for, their own personal time commitment and what support Corra would offer. Each panel member was paid, or their organisation reimbursed for their time. The commitment from each person was attendance at two sessions (induction day and panel meeting) and reading application summaries and recommendations in advance of the decision meeting.

### Evaluation Method

Each panel member was invited to give feedback on their experience either in person or telephone. Three panel members offered their feedback. The interviews were conducted by a Corra staff member not involved in the panel meetings. Additional feedback was gathered from Corra staff on their observations of both the induction and decision meeting.

### What people felt

Everyone interviewed (Corra staff and panel members) felt that overall the decision-making panel had been a positive experience. All panel members interviewed valued the experience, felt they had been listened too and were able to influence the decision-making process.

However, similarly both staff and panel members felt slightly anxious prior to the sessions. This primarily related to this being a new experience; meeting people for the first time, unsure about types of questions that may be asked or not sure of what was expected.

Corra identified the individuals who were all unknown to each other prior to this. An unintended outcome from the panel sessions was the strength in the group dynamic. Everyone reflecting on how helpful it was having different people there with different views and experiences. Panel members spoke about how other group members helped give them confidence to contribute to the conversations and recommendations.

## What worked well

- Importance of having an induction session. This really helped people understand the process and an opportunity to get to know people. Both Corra staff and panel members felt that the induction day was a good way to make changes to the process and help the final decision-making session.
- No job titles. A couple of panel members reflected on the importance Corra had placed on people being treated equally. No job titles was a way to help this.
- The panel members interviewed all complimented the knowledge and work undertaken by Corra staff on the applications prior to the meetings. Panel members felt this supported their role. They talked about feeling confident in asking questions, challenge recommendations and make final funding decisions.

## What we would do differently

- Further clarity on what people would be asked to contribute. People interviewed all had different perceptions on the purpose of the day. One or two people interviewed felt they would need to share their lived or direct experience.
- Additional information for people prior to the induction meeting. A couple of panel members felt it would have been beneficial to provide more information on what would be involved in terms of reviewing applications, background to organisations or the funding programme.
- Review how materials are presented e.g. more visuals (graphs), further background on organisations. A couple of comments related to peoples' personal preference in reviewing information. Corra should look to incorporate preferences and consider different styles or formats.
- Ensure venues are welcoming and offers space for people to move around, get up from a desk, food, plenty of refreshment and comfort breaks. While there were no negative comments about the venue it was recognised that creating the right space is important. Corra staff facilitating sessions in the future should consider leading by example e.g. space in the agenda for regular breaks and time for chatting, getting up and moving about.

### Final Comments

Feedback for the Comic Relief panel was overall positive. All panel members interviewed felt that Corra staff were very helpful and supportive throughout the whole process. The panel members interviewed would be willing to be involved in the future.

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## About Corra

Corra Foundation exists to make a difference to the lives of people and communities. It works with others to encourage positive change, opportunity, fairness and growth of aspirations which improve quality of life. Corra wants to see a society in which people create positive change and enjoy fulfilling lives.

In 2020 Corra launched a ten-year strategy. It is long term because making a difference on the big challenges will take time. At its heart is the strong belief that when people find their voice, they unlock the power to make change happen.

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