



Healthier City and Hackney Fund key priorities

Workforce health

Workforce Health is one of the four priorities for our Healthy Activities grant.

Topic in a nutshell

Employee ill health cost individuals, employers and society as a whole. Given the proportion of time people spend at work, workforce health programmes are an opportunity to impact significantly on a person's wellbeing.

We want to fund eligible organisations to work with and support micro-businesses (fewer than 10 employees) and the VCSE sector to develop an effective and sustainable workforce health offer, to improve the physical and mental health of their employees. Workforce health is a priority for us and we aim to support local delivery of national ambitions relating to this by helping small businesses, charities and social enterprises do the best for their employees.

This addresses the health inequity linked to in-work poverty. These grants will help us to understand the needs of City and Hackney employees by capturing baseline activity and develop better ways of helping small businesses and the VCSE sector to create and implement a workforce health offer.

Why is this important?¹

Employee ill-health has costs:

- To the individuals: as well as the physical and mental 'cost' of ill-health to the employee, there is a potential loss of employment and income.
- To employers: output losses due to reduced productivity, sick pay, 'presenteeism', inefficiencies in the use of agency staff and recruitment costs amongst other costs.
- To society as a whole: cost of healthcare, benefits incurred, taxes forgone and negative impact on friends and family.

Given the proportion of an individual's life spent at work, workforce health programmes have the potential to have a significant positive impact on individuals' well-being. It has been recognised that work, paid or unpaid, has the potential to greatly increase a person's physical and mental health.

London faces a number of specific health and work related issues which include:

- Employment of people with disabilities – London has the lowest rate of people with disabilities in employment in England, 45 per cent compared to 50 per cent nationally

¹ GLA, 2012 https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/gla_migrate_files_destination/health-wellbeing-2012.pdf

- Failure to return to work following ill-health – London has the highest proportion of individuals on incapacity benefit for greater than six months in England and the greatest proportion of individuals falling out of work within six months following a return.
- London has a generally more ambivalent attitude to the benefits of work for health than other UK regions. For example a lower proportion of Londoners think that paid work is generally good for physical health when compared to the rest of the country.

Despite employment offering an income to many that will allow people opportunities to improve their own health and wellbeing, this is not the case for everyone. The combination of low pay, stagnating wages and a lack of progression opportunities is locking more people in poverty. 1 in 8 workers are living in poverty and once inflation is taken into account, average workers are still earning £25 per week less than 10 years ago².

What do we know about Workforce Health in Hackney and the City of London?

Hackney

There are 14,725 businesses in Hackney. The City Fringe area around Shoreditch and Old Street is the biggest sub-economy in Hackney and is home to 43% of employment in the borough. The employment in this area is concentrated in the professional, scientific & technical, information & communication and business administration & support services sectors. The number of annual ‘business births’ in Hackney has significantly increased since the financial crisis in 2009. In 2015, the 4,105 business births in the borough was over 160% higher than the 1,570 of 2010.³

99.8% of Hackney businesses fit the official UK definition of a small and medium sized enterprise (SME). 79.6% of Hackney businesses have fewer than 5 employees.

There is a lack of data on the health of the workforce in Hackney and we want to better understand employees’ needs.

City of London

Around 24,000 businesses operate in the City of London of which 99% are SMEs, employing half of the almost 500,000 strong workforce.

The key areas of concern for Square Mile employers, with regards to the health and wellbeing of their employees, are mental health, physical wellbeing and work-life balance.

In recognition of the importance of the role of City employers in addressing challenges relating to the health and wellbeing of their workers, the City of London Corporation have

² <https://www.jrf.org.uk/work/in-work-poverty>

³ London Borough of Hackney, 2017 https://www.hackney.gov.uk/media/2735/Business-and-enterprise/pdf/LEA_Business_and_Enterprise

developed [Business Healthy](#) which is a community and free online resource for business leaders committed to improving the health and wellbeing of their workforce. This currently engages primarily with major employers and organisations with well-developed workforce health offers, but there is an aspiration to support newer businesses and VCSE organisations that could benefit from the knowledge of these more established firms.

What are our areas of interest?

We are looking to fund eligible organisations to support micro-businesses in the private sector (fewer than 10 employees) and the VCSE sector with their workforce health offer to improve the physical and mental health of their employees.

We are interested in VCSE organisations who are eligible for this funding to develop programmes that support their own workforce, or to submit partnership bids, with a local business. We are also interested in bids which will provide an offer to multiple local businesses. These businesses must each fit the criteria set out at the end of this document.

We are interested in the sustainability of the offer following the end of the grant, including demonstrating the low and no-cost ways to supporting employees.

These grants will help us to understand the needs of City and Hackney employees by capturing baseline data on employees health and wellbeing, then understanding how activities impact this.

We will consider applications that propose new ways to address organisations' workforce health, but are particularly interested in how the London Healthy Workforce Charter⁴ can support micro-businesses and VCSE organisations. The Charter is a Greater London Authority (GLA) tool that provides a framework to drive forward health and wellbeing initiatives for all employees, and consists of the following eight standards:

- corporate support
- health and safety
- attendance management
- physical activity
- healthy eating
- smoking cessation
- substance misuse and
- mental health and wellbeing.

We are interested in bids which will look to support the work of the City of London Corporation's [Business Healthy](#) programme to work with Square Mile-based employers to improve the health and wellbeing of their workforce

We are interested in bids which adapt working environments to support healthier behaviours, not just providing activities and information, to overcome real or perceived barriers to healthier working lifestyles.

⁴ <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/health/healthy-workplace-charter>

Topics areas to avoid:

- Working with larger businesses who may already have a workforce health offer.
- Working with organisations who already have a London Healthy Workplace Charter accreditation status (Achievement and Excellence only).
- Programmes which only provide information to employees, rather than activities or tangible changes to working practices.

Criteria for partner businesses:

- Must have strong presence in City and Hackney
- Micro-business(es) with fewer than 10 employees
- Not for profit organisations (with fewer than 100 employees)
- Must be willing to provide baseline data to be collected and shared anonymously, following appropriate data protection protocols.
- Must nominate an employee champion as a point of contact, for the grantee to work with.
- Must not already have a workforce health offer or London Healthy Workplace Charter Status (Achievement and Excellence only)

Please note this priority area is exempt from the Healthier City and Hackney Fund criteria that 80% of beneficiaries must be City or Hackney resident.