

# Bi Funding Research: Key points

This research is about why bi organisations currently get so little "LGBT" funding, and how the obstacles could be addressed. It was produced by three bi community organisers in the UK, based primarily on experiences of fellow organisers.

- On average as a demographic, bi people **fare as badly as, or worse than, lesbian & gay people** on many outcomes. Bisexuality is stigmatised and ignored.
- **Nominally "LGBT"** projects or spaces **aren't necessarily doing anything** for the "B".
- **Bi spaces** can be very important to people for various reasons: feeling understood, freedom from anti-bi prejudice, etc.
- Almost all current UK bi spaces are run by **unpaid volunteers** in limited amounts of "spare" time. Many areas have **no bi group** at all.
- UK bi communities have a long tradition of "**creatively making do**" - but **could accomplish much more** with adequate funding. Key areas include **outreach** and **access**.
- We recommend:
  - **ring-fencing** a percentage of "LGBT" funding **in proportion** to the percentage of bi people, with half or more under the direct control of a bi panel.
  - creating a "**virtual bi centre**", where one or more workers is embedded within a larger organisation, to provide **practical support** for grassroots groups and cross-group projects.
  - **hiring bi organisers** to reach, train and support bi organisers.
  - adapting **funding methods** for grassroots groups to be **simpler**, less formal, and **less of a gamble**, especially where amounts are small.
  - making basic group-running **resources** available to volunteer organisers on request, such as books, printed flyers, or support with online calendar updating.

- where **nominally "LGBT"** organisations apply for funding, making it **conditional** on whether they can demonstrate **genuinely serving the "B"**.

## Bi communities and the funding landscape

It's possible that around **5% to 10%** of the UK population, or more, has experienced some attractions not limited to "gay" or "straight" - without necessarily calling themselves "bisexual".

Funders have historically assumed that money reaching "LGB"/"LGBT" groups is already being used to support bi people. This is often not the case.

→ [Organisation] got a **very substantial grant** to do a 'what's available' guide to one city. It says it has "**hundreds** of LGBTQ+ services" listed. **Click on "Bi"** and the **single thing** that appears on the map is labelled "**Gay men's** walk-in clinic".\*

A common myth is that bi people "have it easier" than lesbians and gay men, because we're "only half gay", and "can pass as straight". However, being **invisible and stigmatised** isn't a healthy position.

Typical elements of anti-bi **prejudice** include "confused", "greedy" and "unreliable". It's also common simply to ignore or deny our existence. Prejudices about bi people can appear in LGBT spaces as well as in mainstream culture.

Many bi people find **bi-majority space** to be **supportive to their wellbeing**.

→ I think that bi organisations are really important to provide spaces where we can **feel understood**, and not afraid of the myths and ignorance that's present even among generally open-minded people and spaces.

→ Bi Cardiff has been **a lifeline** to me as someone who came out later in life (in my 40s). Just to be able to meet and chat with other bi people, share experiences, and ask about places to go for support (eg with mental health issues related to my orientation) has been so important.

---

\* Each arrow represents the start of a different person's comment. Bold text is added.

What resources exist **specifically for bi people** in the UK in 2021 are almost entirely **volunteer-run**. There are two volunteer-run charities, and a handful of groups with constitutions and bank accounts; however, a typical grassroots bi group can run for years without ever becoming a legal entity.

Most of the smaller groups or events have **never applied for grant funding**. We asked why not; most frequently ticked was "**Expecting not to get the money, hence waste of effort**".

→ You put a lot of time into the application, then you **get nothing**.

So far, very little grant funding has ever gone to bi community groups, so it makes sense not to gamble limited time with poor odds.

Other commonly chosen answers to that part of our survey were "Would have to set up bank account" and "We could use £10, £50, £500, but they want you to apply for thousands".

Instead, there's a long **tradition** of "creatively making things work on a shoestring", and dipping into the community's own pockets, informally or via more structured crowd-funding.

→ We automatically first think, **well how can we do this with what we've already got?**

Contributors to our research were enthusiastic about **what might be possible** with more money and more time.

→ If we had finance or time to get some **training or support for volunteers**, that would be amazing.

→ People need to **learn more** about us still, 'cause it's still so erased and **underrepresented**.

→ Funding for **closed captioning** to make the Zooms more accessible.

→ If we did have a one day a week sessional worker, I would want them to do a proper scoping exercise about **how to find older bi people who are not part of the LGBTQ community**.

→ A lot of our spare funds we have now are spent on **inclusion**, so it would be great to **continue that with someone in charge**.

→ We've seen **how successful we can be** running **shoestring events**, and shoestring organisations, which have, you know, decades of life, but no money. What could [an organisation] do if it was **funded** from the beginning?

---

For more info, please see one or other of the following:

- Bi Funding Research: Funders' Briefing
- Bi Funding Research: Full Report (with more detail, more history, more references/links, and more quotes from bi people).

This research was commissioned by LGBT+ Consortium as part of its National Emergencies Partnership funded programme. Researchers were Jennifer Moore, Libby Baxter-Williams and John G, in May and June 2021. Thanks to everyone who gave their time to speak to us!

